



WHY WOMEN IN ENERGY SECTOR – THE GENDER, ENERGY & DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

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**Energy Based Livelihoods Contributing To Economic
Empowerment Of The Marginalized Sectors & Women
In SAARC Region**
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Outline of the Presentation

- 1) Why Sustainable Energy in Rural Areas?
- 2) Who are Vulnerable Groups?
- 3) Causes of Vulnerabilities of the Vulnerable Groups
- 4) Why to Address the Issues & Concerns of the VGs?
- 5) Why We Need a Gender Approach in Energy Sector
- 6) Gender Approach Issues in Energy Sector _ Raison d'etre
- 7) Women's Energy Needs & Concerns
- 8) Gender Issues in Energy Sector _ Trends & Constraints
- 9) Energy Interventions for Women
- 10) Addressing Gender Concerns through Renewable Energy
- 11) Energy, Poverty, and Gender Nexus
- 12) Barriers & Constraints
- 13) Key Issues
- 14) Key Recommendations

Why Sustainable Energy in the Rural Areas?

- Energy services are essential for socio-economic development, since they yield social benefits and support income and employment generation;
- The poor obtain energy services by gaining access to modern fuels, electricity and mechanical power. This access is particularly important for women and girls;
- Reforms to the energy sector should protect the poor, especially the 1.1 billion people who live on less than \$1 per day and take gender inequalities into account;

Who are the Vulnerable Groups?

- Vulnerabilities are now viewed as contextually driven
- Vulnerability is defined as *“The conditions determined by the physical, social, economic & environmental factors or processes which increase the susceptibility of a community to a Disadvantaged Position”*
- This may include *“Women, Children, Persons with Disabilities, Older People, marginalized and remote communities as well as different religious groups”*

Why the Need to Address the Issues & Concerns of the Vulnerable Groups

- Men, women, boys and girls are differentially affected by their respective vulnerabilities and have therefore different needs
- Rural set-up remains at a disadvantaged position
- To respond to the needs and priorities of specific groups of the population in a more targeted manner. Interventions should, therefore, be designed with needs of specific groups in mind.
- Designed response ensures equitable access, benefits and opportunities.

Causes of Vulnerability of Vulnerable Groups

Causes of Vulnerability of Vulnerable Groups

- Socio- Economic Dependence
- Inequality
- Reduced physical capacities
- Limited mental capabilities
- Poverty
- Lack of access to basic facilities
- Lack of protection

Consequences & Impact of Vulnerability

- Increased drudgery in life
- Lack of awareness about socio-economic political rights
- Poor or no access to resources
- Perpetuate Feminisation of Poverty

Why We Need a Gender Approach in Energy

- ❖ Out of the 1.3 billion people who live in poverty, 70% are women
- ❖ One-third of households in rural areas have female heads
- ❖ Women are the primary collectors, users and managers of energy for homes
- ❖ Women and men have different degrees of access and control
- ❖ Energy scarcity has a disproportionate effect on women and girls.
- ❖ Women and men have different perceptions about the benefits of energy – and so have the men, women and children with disabilities

Gender Approach in Energy – Raison d'être

- Men and women have different energy usage and needs
- Women are an important target group in developing countries
- Well-intentioned energy projects may even increase women's drudgery without meaning to
- A gender approach can help reduce poverty and help support livelihoods
- One reason why projects fail is lack of inclusive approach – no participation of women, in particular
- Acting against socially accepted gender roles can be a challenge!

Gender Issues In Energy Sector _ Trends & Constraints

Traditional approach to energy in development policy and planning has assumed that:

- Energy is **gender neutral**
- Virtual **exclusion of women's needs**
- **Lack of awareness** of women's potential contributions in energy
- Little attention to energy **demand characteristics of women**
- **Male-dominated** set up in energy institutions
- Merely increasing women professionals does not ensure **gender balanced outcome**_ They need clear mandate

Energy Interventions for Women

	<u>Energy Form</u>	<u>Practical Needs</u>	<u>Productive Needs</u>	<u>Strategic Needs</u>
1.	Electricity	Pumping water: reducing need to carry Mills for grinding Lighting improves working conditions at home	Increase possibility of activities during evening hours Power for specialized enterprises	Make streets safer: allowing participation in other activities Open horizons through radio, TV
2.	Improved biomass (supply and conversion technology)	Improved health through better stoves Less effort in gathering and carrying firewood	More time for productive activities Lower cost of process heat for income generating activities	Control of natural forests in community forestry management frameworks
3.	Mechanical	Milling and grinding Transporting of water and crop outputs	Increases variety of enterprises	Transport: access to markets Social opportunities

Addressing Gender Concerns through Renewable Energy

a) Provide basic services

- Free woman's time from domestic tasks
- Home lighting permits leisure, education
- Enable access to educational media and communications in schools
- Mitigates the impacts of indoor air pollution on women
- Allows access to better medical facilities for maternal care

b) Increase Productivity & Comfort at work

- Permits income generation activities
- Improve energy efficiency of micro-enterprises
- Improved quality of work and output
- Provide better working environments
- More attractive and secure environment for customers
- Open up new entrepreneurial opportunities

Addressing Gender Concerns through Renewable Energy *(Contd.)*

c) Empower women

- Increase disposable income
- Multiplier effect on families
- Social transformation

Women's Energy Needs & Concerns

- Clean fuels & equipment for heating and productive uses
- Access to clean energy more difficult for women
- Women suffer greater from information gaps
- Women suffer disproportionately in entrepreneurship and inheritance due to social discrimination
- Women are under-represented in energy-intervention decision making

Energy, Poverty And Gender Nexus

- Poverty is generally viewed in strict economic terms, and people with less than a \$ 1 a day income are considered as poor
- ***Energy Poverty***: Energy remains the main source for basic needs like cooked food, boiled water, warmth and mobility; Access and affordability of energy is, therefore, equally essential as it is a critical means to secure the basic needs;
- Energy Poverty adversely impacts Rural Women in particular,

Energy, Poverty & Gender Nexus

- ❖ Women and men have different degrees of access and control
- ❖ Energy scarcity has a disproportionate effect on women and girls.
- ❖ Women & men have different perceptions about the benefits of energy
- ❖ Women & Energy are inseparably linked i.e. at basic household level, women are the collectors, managers and consumers of energy sources including collection of fuel-wood biomass on the one hand, and consuming electricity, kerosene oil, and natural gas, on the other hand, for operating cooking stoves, water and room heating etc.
- ❖ Consequently, women remain directly exposed and vulnerable to health and environmental hazards on the one hand and on the other, opportunities for their education and income generation are restricted/blocked

Barriers and Constraints

- ✓ **Practical and social constraints in involving women in energy planning**
 - Lack of ownership and control over productive resources
 - Restrictions on decision-making
 - Education and information barriers
 - Informal nature of women's enterprises
- ✓ **Traditional institutional set up in energy institutions**
 - Lack of women in energy profession
 - Existing institutional mechanisms not women friendly
 - Gender concerns : 'Add and Stir' approach
- ✓ **Gaps in knowledge base on the subject**

Key Issues

1. Absence of gender disaggregated data
2. Lack of awareness & understanding of gender, energy & development nexus
3. Social biases and gender inequality exist
4. Under-representation/absence of women in energy interventions and decision-making
5. Women's lack of knowledge on the use and conservation of renewable energy
6. Rise in energy prices leading to increased unaffordability
7. Linkages between individuals and organizations involved in gender and energy are almost non-existent
8. Lack of relevant case studies that could identify directions for policy and decision-making in this area

Lessons Learnt & Options

- Develop & Demonstrate linkages between gender equality and sustainable energy
- Allocation of funds in energy sector to be based on gender mainstreaming
- NGO's/CBO's be made aware & create awareness
- Women's knowledge on energy conservation and use of renewable sources to be increased
- Financial support for technology adoption be provided
- Include Women in energy policy and decision making
- Women quota in Energy Sector to be observed
- Women education, training on Health, Safety and Environment

Key Recommendations

- Need for Greater cooperation and coordination amongst the players – both at the private as well as at the public level for information and data sharing
- Energy policies and plans need to be gender responsive with greater attention on women's awareness raising and participation in the processes
- Women need to be encouraged in not only at conservation levels but also facilitated and promoted at the entrepreneurship and policy decision making levels
- Paris principles need to be followed by donor community and support partners

Key Recommendations - II

- ✓ REE technologies must be developed with inclusion of women's perspectives and their needs and concerns through consultative process and undertaking need assessments
- ✓ Resource Pool for Gender Experts in Energy Sector must be launched for periodic knowledge sharing and capacity building initiatives
- ✓ SAARC needs to assume an institutional approach in integrating gender mainstreaming in all its efforts – especially the SAARC Energy Centre should make gender as its integral part
- ✓ SAARC must create a special position of Gender Advisor/ Coordinator to consult, coordinate and work with counterparts/ focal points in the regional countries to make its work more meaningful and inclusive
- ✓ SAARC Energy Centre must support and encourage periodic experience and best practices sharing opportunities for women working on gender and energy within SAARC

Key Recommendations - III

- ✓ Mass advocacy & awareness campaign needs to be launched with cooperation of the civil society and the media; School curriculum and the media must highlight women's current & potential role in energy sector and joint social responsibility of energy conservation;
- ✓ Dedicated scholarships for women to motivate them towards entering the energy sector through education need to be announced;
- ✓ Establishing and strengthening linkages between individuals and organizations involved in gender and energy need to be promoted by reflecting this in the policy;
- ✓ Special budgetary allocations [atleast 10%] in the annual sectoral budget need to be dedicated to promote and address specific women's needs and concerns, including undertaking Research and Development in this regard



Thank You