



Gender and Energy

Empowering women through clean energy

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INTRODUCTION

SDG 5 has always enforced upon gender and equality. This suggests a pathway towards meeting the ends of the gaps. The gender roles defining the division of labour in the households designate the women as the prime connectivity between the Energy and sustainability. Empowering the women, increasing their participation in policy making and decisions undertaken clearly confines the gaps. This is a broader perspective lead to the goal of sustainable development of the rural livelihood especially for the women.

The ill-effects of indoor air pollution result in about 1.3 million premature deaths per year, wherein 44% are due to pneumonia, 54% from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and 2% from lung cancer. The most affected groups are women and younger children. There are reported cases of women suffering from respiratory diseases. But the government has achieved 48.6 million users of clean fuel till date and there has been a 16% rise in clean fuel penetration in India. Here the question arises regarding the sustainability of the implemented schemes and the effective rise in the standard of living of the “target- group”.

HIGHLIGHTS

To recognise the value of the women in the households and their credibility towards an economically sound livelihood in the rural households.

The living standard of the households can be increased through empowering the women through microcredit financing.

Providing participation to the women in the stage of decision-making in economic, policy-making and recommendation for sustainable modern fuels. Increasing the awareness of the women in the behavioural approach towards the traditional fuels need to be focused by the policy makers.

KEY FINDINGS :

1. The selection of the “target-beneficiary” by the government for the implementation of the clean energy supplement schemes is somehow inappropriate as they undermine the consideration of varying socio-economic status of the rural households.
2. The high cost of accessing clean fuel sometimes makes it unaffordable for the rural poor to sustain with the scheme even after the provision of subsidy by the government.
3. The demand of the women is often unexplored or under researched who being the prime household energy consumers or regulators.
4. The rural households fail to ascend a “ladder” of energy consumption rather they are more comfortable in “stacking” process with the traditional fuels which are used in conjunction with the modern fuels.
5. The behavioural approach among the women as well as the men towards traditional cooking pattern, complacent with the available and free traditional sources of fuel and least aware of the detrimental effects on health.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the policies need to enlighten the pathways for upgrading the established policies. These aim to encompass the financial and health empowerment of the women especially.

1. There needs to be widespread awareness through promotional campaigns and dissemination of information on the health hazards and environmental impact of traditional stoves, so the users are aware of the long-run cost to their health
2. The prevalent policies need to be upgraded focusing the target beneficiaries by undertaking a “top-down” approach.
3. Micro-credit finance initiation in the rural households through women-centric self help groups to be included in the policy initiations for a sustainable supply-chain.
4. Modern fuels need to be more “user-friendly” and “demand-driven” especially for the women of the rural households.

Audience

A policy brief for the central government of India, research institutes, multilateral financial institutions, R&D industries, banks, local self-governments, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and its agencies.

Further Reading

Energy and gender: A critical issue in energy sector employment and energy access, IEA.

India 2020: Energy Policy Review, International Energy Agency.

Patnaik, Sasmita, Sara Dethier, Saurabh Tripathi, and Abhishek Jain. 2017. *Access to Clean Cooking Energy in India: Beyond Connections, Towards Sustained Use*. New Delhi: Council on Energy, Environment and Water.

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IMPLICATIONS

1. The socio-economic status will justify the demand of the benefits provided by the governments through various schemes.
2. The perspective of the women will enhance the sustainability of the modern and clean energy usage for a better implementation in the households.
3. Financial empowerment of the women will automatically enhance the education, living standard, health awareness among the rural households.
4. Linking the Self Help Groups for micro-credit finance will help the beneficiaries for taking loan or financial help, thus maintaining a sustainable credit cycle.
5. The behavioural approach towards traditional fuels and the ignorance of the health issues can be curtailed with proper awareness campaigns in the rural areas.

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