

***International Workshop on Gender and Energy:***  
**State of the Art and Policy implications for Women's Empowerment**

December 12, 2016, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

***A Background Note***

The provision of energy and modern energy services are crucial to human well-being and is considered essential to support overall economic development. Modern energy is also considered as an important contributor to improving gender equality and social inclusion especially in developing contexts where particularly women often experience harsh living conditions including discriminating norms. At present, studies of the energy sector from a gender lens reveal that access to modern energy tends to improve women's welfare through reduced drudgery, improved health and opportunities for education, and opportunity for socialization. Access to electricity sometimes leads to increased income for women, enhancing their economic empowerment. As to energy interventions initiated by the private sector and NGO's, several programmes have adopted a gender sensitive approach during implementation. Here, women have benefited both as end-users and through their involvement in the supply chain. Yet, energy policies and programs rarely address gender issues explicitly and their approaches are often gender blind. Moreover, gender disparities in opportunities and outcomes continue to restrict the rights and potential of women. A broader perspective is essential – one that actively addresses gender disparities in the distribution and control of resources, technologies and services with complementary efforts to promote gender equitable systems that allow both women and men to reap the full benefits of investments.

On this background, TERI is hosting a flagship workshop to share the state of the art in this realm and invite for dialogue on how women's empowerment through modern energy may be enhanced. This full day workshop is initiated by the ongoing interdisciplinary research project - "Exploring Factors that Enhance and restrict Women's Empowerment through Electrification (EFEWEE)".<sup>1</sup> EFEWEE project's overall research objective is to account for the various factors that enhance and restrict women's opportunities and empowerment through electrification, both as users of electricity services and as (potentially) involved actors in the provision of electricity. By examining these factors for various types of interventions in different contexts (India, Kenya and Nepal), the project intends to provide an analytical comparison of the processes, technologies, and contextual factors that come into play in electrification in terms of how they condition women's degree of empowerment. Findings from the scoping phase of the study clearly reveals some important dimensions like - far too little is known about electricity's effect on women's decision making power and explanations for electricity's effects often remain unclear. And finally the scoping study raises the question to what extent policy has made itself relevant as a tool to promote women's empowerment through electrification.

The objective of the workshop is thus to share the state-of-the-art in the realm of gender, energy and women's empowerment and discuss the role of policy and need for new research. The workshop aims to bring together leading international and national academics, policy makers and practitioners, working in the gender and energy sector, to create a space for dialogue on gender,

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<sup>1</sup> The project is led by the Centre for Development and the Environment at the University of Oslo (Norway), with TERI (India), Dunamai Energy (Malawi) and Seacrest Consulting (Kenya) as research partners. The research project constitutes Research Area 1 (RA-1) under the ENERGIA Gender & Energy Research Programme, a Five-Year Sub-Programme on "Gender and Sustainable Energy for All", financed by DFID (UK).

energy and women's empowerment. In addition, gender experts representing non-energy sectors will share experiences and ideas for cross-sectoral learning synergies.

The workshop is structured in three sessions:

**Session 1: *Empowerment through energy: Which contexts and policies actually work - and what kind of new evidence is needed?***

This session will place gender, energy and women's empowerment in the context of ongoing international energy frameworks and will explore the contexts under which access to modern energy services gives rise to gender equality and the channels through which such change occurs.

*Issues for discussion*

- Under which conditions may access to electricity empower women? Will traditional roles always remain entrenched?
- How could policy and/or the technical and institutional design of programmes offer scope for gender inclusion in the energy sector?
- Would increasing the number of women decision-makers in the energy sector facilitate that energy challenges are met and that gender bias is avoided during implementation and beyond?
- What kind of research agenda would emphasis gender considerations in policy and practice?

**Session 2 - *Practitioners reporting from the field: Is anyone listening?***

This session focuses on practitioners' experiences with various types of energy interventions, to what extent they consider such initiatives to include a gender dimension, and their views of the impacts of gender approaches - or lack thereof.

*Issues for discussion*

- May government and donor institutions, private sector and the civil society reap more effective results by targeting energy programmes that enhance benefits for women, and if so, how?
- What lessons on gender inclusion can be learned from successful practises and missed opportunities in ongoing projects?
- What factors in energy access projects are important for achieving women's empowerment at the individual and community levels?

**Session 3 - *Social transitions for energy transitions: Steps to strides towards women empowerment***

This session will try to understand how the energy sector can enhance gender equality by looking through the lens of opportunities and vulnerabilities in other sectors in order to understand which measures are required to complement social transitions.

*Issues for discussion*

- What are the social transitions that accompany energy transitions? How can women be empowered to take the lead in the energy sector?
- How can policies governing other sectors assist to develop cross-sectoral synergies for women's empowerment?

- What could be the enabling environment that is prerequisite for social transition? What are the linkages? Where is the evidence?

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