

Gender and Energy Workshop: Energy Access and Women's Changing Social Positions



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**TERI SOUTHERN REGIONAL
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Introduction

The Gender and Energy Network India (GENI) aims to work towards gender integration across the entire sustainable energy systems from its production to utilization, as well as in policy making and governance across India, linking a diverse range of organisations and individuals from various disciplines, regions and sectors. GENI is steered by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) and Integrated Research and Action for Development (IRADe). TERI, as part of GENI, with support from ENERGIA and the Low Carbon Energy for Development Network (LCEDN), is hosting a workshop in Bangalore to promote the exchange of ideas and collaboration on the theme of gender inclusion in sustainable energy access. This event is part of a series of workshops being hosted in cities across India by GENI partners, with the aim of building and strengthening the network.

Background

The provision of energy services is considered essential to facilitating overall human development and crucial to human wellbeing. It is also considered to be an important input in improving gender equality and social inclusion in contexts where women experience harsh living conditions and discriminatory norms. The Beijing Declaration (1995) identified the need for inclusion of women's priorities in public investment programmes for economic infrastructure, such as electrification, energy conservation, water, and sanitation. More recently, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), specifically SDG 7 and SDG 5, are encouraging national and international initiatives globally towards providing access to 'affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all' and in achieving 'gender equality and empowering women and girls'.

While there is a growing body of evidence indicating improved living conditions of women and children, and contributions to the overall economic well-being of families through access to modern energy services, what has not been fully explored is the changing social position of women within the household and beyond, and the depth and level of empowerment enabled through modern energy. Hence, it is important to have a dialogue around the diversified thoughts and opinions about existing linkages, evidences and gaps to understand the various facets of energy access and empowerment.

Workshop Aims

With this background, TERI, with an overarching objective of strengthening and promoting GENI, is hosting a one-day regional workshop in Bangalore to brainstorm and initiate a dialogue on unbundling the complexities of energy's impact on women and how these might be channelled towards changing women's social positions and overall empowerment. This full day regional workshop will also benefit from the ongoing 'Gender and Energy Research Programme' of ENERGIA, undertaken by MSSRF, IRADe and TERI under the Five-Year Sub-Programme on Gender and Sustainable Energy for All. This workshop will draw around 40 -50 experts from leading national academia, regional policy makers and practitioners, corporates and civil society members working in the gender and energy sector and beyond to deliberate and discuss relevant issues and create a space for dialogue on the context through which gender equality and empowerment ensues in the energy sector.



Workshop Agenda

- 9:30 Registration**
- 10:00 Welcome Address:** Debajit Palit, Associate Director, TERI
Introduction to GENI: Kirsten Campbell, LCEDN
- 10:15 Session 1: *Moving beyond the buzzwords: energy transitions to complement social transitions***
This session seeks to unbundle the missing linkages between energy access and its potential impact on intra-household dynamics, cultural sensitivities and women's changing social position.
Questions for discussion:
- What are the social transitions that accompany energy transitions, and how significant are the changing social positions of women due to energy provision?
 - What could be the enabling environment that is a prerequisite for social transition? What are the linkages? Where is the evidence?
 - Do gender responsive energy sector policies and programmes lead to larger goals of social transition and gender equity? Are the approaches and results moving beyond the namesake, and if so, how?
- Chair:** Veena Joshi, Energy expert (formerly Senior Advisor- Energy with Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation), India
Panellists: G Mini, TERI; Chandrashekar Singh, IRADe; R. Rengalakshmi, MSSRF; Uttara Narayan, WRI
- 11:30 Tea/coffee & networking**
- 11:45 Session 2: *We the women: networks for knowledge sharing and collective learning for gender-based transformative changes***
This session discusses the importance of networks and women's collectives in influencing gender and development outcomes in the energy sector by promoting more, better informed dialogues, policies and practices.
Questions for discussion
- How can women's networks/collectives transfer best practices on specific topics by stimulating active knowledge sharing?
 - What kind of a platform needs to be created to link a diverse group of practitioners from different regions and sectors?
 - What ensures the sustainability of collective networks and platforms?
- Chair:** Soma Dutta, Gender and Energy Expert
Panellists: Kala Timalina, Women's Network for Energy and Environment, Nepal; Dr Ben Campbell, LCEDN, UK; Svati Bhogle, Clean Energy Access Network, India; Uma Reddy, WeConnect International, India
- 13:15 Lunch**
- 14:00 Session 3: *Winds of change or winds of challenge: stories from practitioners***
This session focuses on practitioner experiences with gender approaches to energy interventions. It will discuss the impact of such interventions and to what extent such interventions have the capacity to change the social power of women within households and beyond.
Questions for discussion
- What lessons have been learned about changing social positions of women from project level experiences?
 - What are the common barriers and challenges that hinder energy projects from turning into a reliable mechanism for women's empowerment at the individual and community level?
 - How can policies governing other sectors assist to develop synergies for gender inclusion in the energy sector?
- Chair:** Debajit Palit, TERI
Panellists: Anshuman Lath, Gram Oorja; Vivek Shastry, Selco Foundation; Alexie Seller, Pollinate Energy; Deepak Sharma, AOL Foundation; Sujitha T., Kudumbashree
- 15:15 Audience perspectives and wrap up:** (Moderator: Debajit Palit, TERI)
- 16.00 Tea/coffee & networking**
- 16:15 GENI: way forward** (for interested participants)
This session will revolve around expanding the activities of GENI, looking at ways to bring practitioners to the network, intensify the knowledge base, explore additional support, such as funding, and options to further develop modalities for sustainability.
- 17:30 Close**

About GENI

Gender and Energy Network India (GENI) was initiated by IRADe, TERI and MSSRF with support from ENERGIA and LCEDN to create a community of organisations working at the intersection of women's empowerment and energy access. The network brings together researchers, practitioners, industries, policy makers and civil society organisations who share common interests in gender, sustainable energy access and their interactions with health, agriculture, education and livelihoods. GENI serves as a learning and sharing platform for members who share similar goals and interests, as well as a community of practice to facilitate inter sectoral knowledge transfer. GENI aims to act as a collective voice for gender inclusion and women's empowerment in the energy sector, with commitments to SDG 7, universal energy access, and SDG 5, gender equality.

About TERI

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) is a leading think tank dedicated to conducting research for sustainable development of India and the Global South. Established in 1974, TERI has more than 40 years of excellence in research and innovation, and has made a mark as a research institute, whose policy and technology solutions transformed people's lives and the environment. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that its activities stretch across local, national and international levels, achieving a high level of vertical integration in thought and action. It is poised for future growth with a philosophy that assigns primacy to sustainable development and environmental governance.

It is headquartered in New Delhi and has regional offices in Bangalore, Goa, Guwahati and Mumbai. TERI has established a full-fledged research and recreational facility in Uttarakhand. TERI also has affiliate institutes and representation in Washington D.C., London, Tokyo and Dubai.

About MSSRF

The mission of M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) is to harness science and technology for environmentally sustainable and socially equitable development in which it links the science with society for sustainable rural development. Since its inception, the Foundation focuses on harnessing science and technology options for rural development through pro-poor, pro-women and pro-nature approach to address the practical problems faced by rural men and women in agriculture, natural resources, food and nutrition and in technology development and dissemination. While it aims to accelerate the use of modern science, it adopts participatory and anticipatory research for sustainable development to improve lives and livelihoods of tribal and rural communities. These efforts have been undertaken in a participatory manner and in partnership with local communities and other knowledge-based institutions, public and private sector organizations by adopting inter-disciplinary approaches. The six major thematic areas of focus are: coastal systems, biotechnology, biodiversity, Ecotechnology, food security, and information, education and communication. Gender, grassroots institutions and climate change are the key cross cutting themes.

About IRADe

IRADe is a fully autonomous Advanced Research Institute, which aims to conduct research and policy analysis and connect various stakeholders including government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), corporations, and academic and financial institutions. Its research covers many areas including energy & power systems, urban development, climate change & environment, poverty alleviation & gender, food Security & agriculture, as well as the policies that affect these areas.



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