Mainstreaming gender in Renewable energy

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Organization of the Presentation

- Context: Linkage between energy and gender
- Perspective shifts: recent thinking
- Addressing gender concerns through renewable energy
- Existing barriers and opportunities
- Suggestions
What is “Gender”

“Gender is a system of
SOCIALLY DEFINED roles, privileges, attributes and relationships
between women and men,
which are NOT determined by biology,
but by social, cultural, political and economic expectations”.
Gender Perspectives in Energy

- 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 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.
Gender in Energy- Perspective shifts

✓ Energy’s contribution to sustainable development recognized
✓ Household energy no longer seen entirely as a woman’s preserve

Broader definitions:
• Encompass all activities within a household
• Linkages to a wider system of energy supply and demand

• Plus, Linkages between household energy and other sectors
  • Agriculture (agricultural residues as fuel sources)
  • Health (lung and eye diseases, nutrition)
  • Education (children’s opportunities for after-school study)
  • Income generation (cottage industries)
Situating ‘Gender and Energy’ in sustainable development goals
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 and 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

c) Empower women
   - Increase disposable income
   - Multiplier effect on families
   - Social transformation
## Energy Interventions for Women

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

- Improvement in the quality of rural developmental efforts:
  Addressing the missing link of Gender------Energy------Rural development

- Women as energy entrepreneurs: vehicle for social empowerment

- Multiplier effect of women oriented interventions
  -----Implications for family well being
  --------- long term Intergenerational impacts
What this means is...

Women are more disadvantaged than men in similar circumstances

Ability of women to respond to energy interventions is restricted

Special elements need to be included in projects and programmes to address these
And the pertinent question is ...

...not which technology is best for an end-user, but

...How to enable women to choose which option meets their needs and fits their circumstances

Precondition: Women have to be able to afford to pay for them.

Larger Question:

What role can energy play in addressing women’s needs, and how can they be made to access these technologies and use them?
Suggestions

- Integrate energy access through RETs and finance for income-generation
- Offer a bundle of services to (a) enable women to access improved energy, (b) enhance their entrepreneurial and technical skills, and self-confidence.
- Specifically address women's development needs for labour and time-saving, improved health, security and income
- Prioritize cooking energy and women's health issues.
- Educate people (particularly women) about the benefits of renewable energy, and its potential for improving quality of life
Suggestions

✓ Network

**Record** experiences, opinions, view-points and perspectives of its members

**Disseminate** information, experiences, viewpoints, perspectives, etc., both within and outside the network

**Facilitate exchange** of ideas, experiences and concepts through exchange of materials and that of people

**Advocate** the needs and concerns of the members through collective pressure

**Promote innovations** and develop methodologies.
Suggestions

- Promote interaction between renewable energy sector and development sector
- Adapt and apply specific, proven "best practice" development sector approaches
- Improve sustainability of RET use by including gender tools at all stages in the planning cycle
- Develop a critical mass of gender sensitive and trained men and women