Gender Factor in Political Economy of Energy Sector Dynamics

INDIA | NEPAL

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RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Providing responses to the question whether a gender responsive approach provides greater empowerment to women and girls than traditional approaches in the energy sector.

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METHODS

Used feminist political economy analysis of data collected through review of available literature, survey through qualitative-quantitative methods, interviews with policy officials at micro, meso and macro levels. The 10 research sites included 5 rural areas in 4 districts each of India and Nepal. Research reach: 700 women and men.

"We can buy LPG with our own money. We will never go back to cooking with wood."

Rural women engaged in agricultural and allied enterprises in Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, India

FINDINGS

- While policy for energy access may include gender considerations, at macro level, the outcomes at micro level are often diminished by socio economic norms. Our research shows that in both India and Nepal, organizations of rural women as active agents (such as in self-help groups in agriculture and allied enterprises) leads to GREATER USE by women of productive resources, including clean energy and the appliances based on modern energy services.

- Evidence shows that the valuation of women's labour is needed for subsidized LPG programmes, such as India's women-specific Ujjwala scheme, to result in fuel switching to clean cooking fuel.

KEY MESSAGES

The importance of women's agency through income earning, with greater control over earnings, and ownership of land are key to bring about change in energy transition and in gendered social norms. It is necessary to assess the impact of energy interventions on a vector of gender inequality, which may require addressing the influence of gendered norms in policy and practice.

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