



Gender & Energy

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Poverty-Gender-Development issues

Poverty is a human condition characterized by low income, deprivation, and lack of voice, capabilities, choices and power necessary for change

Women are most susceptible to above characteristics of poverty due to gender inequality in society

Compounded by deprivation of women's full enjoyment of fundamental human rights (abuse, violence, social and job inequality, discrimination)

Community perceptions – given great weight in any assessment – social norms and values tend to overlook women's concerns in S & W Asia

Gender inequality in access to resources and control over it – property, land use, common property resource use, etc.

Access to livelihood – a barrier for women's development

Women are more vulnerable to economic risk than men in general

National accounts in South Asia : statistical invisibility of women, approximately 79 million women are “missing” (selective abortion, familial neglect, deaths related to dowry, property and honour killings)

Gender in development

Gender equality - integral part of national plans to promote growth and reduce poverty

However, poor conceptualization of women's role - retards national growth.

GDP per capita for women is half or one-third of men: India 38%, Sri Lanka 41%, Bhutan 51% and Bangladesh 58% (approx) in 2005.

Human Development Index (HDI) & Gender Development Index (GDI) : South Asia HDI and GDI are 99 points lower than developing countries

Missing labour - household work, home production, and unpaid family labour in agriculture and other areas by women

PRSP : Analyse macroeconomic growth and social policies linked to gender. Pro-poor women inclusive growth

MDGs : Reflect poverty and its linkage with gender inequality. MDG+5 explicitly mentions energy as being 'essential' for achieving the goals

Energy - primary engine of economic growth and development – the more energy, the more growth and development – strong empirical association between GNP and energy use

Energy - Growth – Gender - Development

Besides their role as mothers and wives, women play a key role in

- **Natural resource management**
- **Asset development**
- **Health care**
- **Education**
- **Community development**

Energy plays a critical role in increasing productivity, living standards, health, literacy, education & livelihoods

Key issues :

- **linkages of energy to gender equity**
- **Identification of gender gaps in access to energy services**
- **promoting energy efficiency and sustainable energy for women**
- **strategies to address gender issues at national and regional level**

Energy and Gender Equity

1.1 billion people living on US \$ 1 per day. Two-third of them in Asia Pacific. 2 billion people without access to modern energy services.

Number of poor women higher than poor men. More women-headed households in rural areas. Rural energy severely lacking.

2.4 billion people rely on traditional fuel –wood, charcoal, dung, agricultural residues for cooking and heating

Women – primary energy procurer and manager

Burden of household chores - fuel and water collection, familial responsibilities - result in missed opportunities of education, livelihood and other activities

Energy can not only save time for women, but “empower” women.

Health risks from indoor air pollution (asthma and other respiratory problems) – clean and efficient energy can reduce health risks

Challenges for Bangladesh

Provision of modern energy services to 70% people in rural areas

Traditional biomass- fuel of necessity- increase efficient use to protect women's health and reduce drudgery

Introduce multiple fuels (electricity, liquid, gas)– gender neutral technology infusion

Introduce clean energy (solar, wind, biomass, hydro) - financial support for renewable energy – access to women ensured

Increase productive energy use – water pumping, agricultural processing, cottage industry – keeping women's needs in mind

Develop market mechanisms to support energy for the poor – recognizing women as good 'energy managers'.

Impact of energy

Energy needs for men – agriculture, transportation and industries

Energy needs for women – cooking, heating, post-harvest processing, micro-enterprises

Impact of energy on women

Less drudgery

Time saved for other productive activities

Increased attendance of girls in school

Personal security

Improved health, reduced infant mortality rate

Access to information and entertainment

More opportunities for micro-enterprise development

Raised household income

Better quality of household food consumption

Impact on environment

Less deforestation

Reduced green house gas emission

Actions for Bangladesh

Policy & Institution building :

Complement conventional energy with expansion of sustainable energy

Create a dedicated agency for taking forward the SE agenda :

Sustainable Energy Development Agency (SEDA)

Develop SEDA as one-stop-shop for all services related to SE project development (including CDM energy projects), policy coordination, implementation advice, technical, financial and other support

Task SEDA to ensure women's access to energy

What can we do

- **Government** : create enabling gender sensitive policies and environment for sustainable energy development
- **Private sector** : develop market mechanisms that favour women households and women entrepreneurs
- **Financial Institutions** : develop financial mechanisms to provide energy access to women
- **NGOs** : advocacy, awareness and training on gender-energy linkages, capacity building of women in energy use
- **Donors** : help access Carbon MDG, GEF and other funds for energy projects focusing on gender needs