

Mitigation Talks

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EDITOR

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From the Series Editor's Desk

The Paris Agreement has established a bottom-up regime. Voluntary participation of a multitude of actors is the defining characteristic of a bottom-up regime. Along with it comes incorporation of and dialogue with multiple approaches. Accordingly, the Paris Agreement envisions a greater role for and participation of a range of actors, particularly in the sub-national and private sectors. Subsequently, the ongoing Talanoa Dialogue provides a platform for cities, industries, and civil society organizations to share their experience and perspective on tackling climate change. Technical sessions and workshops towards developing the Rulebook for implementing the Paris Agreement, focussing on various approaches and aspects of climate policy, examine the issues that go beyond the participation of national governments and include concerns of other stakeholders. The articles in this issue explore certain related dimensions.

Prior experience with successful participation of non-state actors in climate governance has been one of the market-based approaches under the Kyoto Protocol. The proposed mechanisms of voluntary cooperation, including the market-based approaches, under the Paris Agreement's Article 6, thus are fertile ground for large-scale mobilization of bottom-up actions feeding into the global target. The first article of this issue, 'Road to COP24', examines the progress of climate negotiations with the perspective of mobilizing finance through various mechanisms, particularly Articles 6.4 and 9.5. It underscores that while the progress in negotiations is slow, the initiatives from the below are promising. It also calls for negotiators to come prepared to be able to make actual progress with the Rulebook.

A longstanding demand from the civil society organizations has been to give adequate attention to the issues relating to 'gender' in climate policy. Indirectly, some of the issues have been addressed through elevating adaptation on the policy agenda. However, for the first time, a structured process has begun to develop a Gender Action Plan (GAP) within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process. The second article provides a brief background and summary of the GAP workshops held at Bonn in May 2018 and suggests some key issues that need to be explored with a deeper understanding of the 'gender' dimension of global climate policy. The respective article in the section 'India Focus' further examines the issues of integrating gender justice into various development policies. By taking the example of 'UJJWALA' scheme of India, it argues that increasing participation of women in decision making, and simultaneously creating livelihood opportunities for them is necessary for making a sustained impact.

The UNFCCC platform has formally recognized the actions being taken by various subnational and non-state actors across countries. Recent scholarship has underscored the diversity of climate actions as well as actors, and their potential role in achieving global goals. The third article in this issue outlines the nature of multiplicity of actors and actions in India and suggests that they could play an important role in implementing India's global commitments.

Road to COP24: An Overview of the SB 48 Negotiations on Climate Finance

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The major task before climate negotiators prior to COP 24 is to create an effective draft of the Paris Rulebook. The Rulebook would play an important role in determining the level of implementation of the Paris Agreement (PA). An effective and fair rulebook could be the driving force for enhancing transparency and ambition, and delivering on the means to accelerate climate actions. At SB48, many Parties recognized that it is essential to raise the level of ambition to be able to meet the 1.5 °C target. The inclusive process of Talanoa Dialogue, which aims at building trust and enhancing ambition of national commitments by 2020, received well over 200 inputs from Parties, non-state actors, and the civil society. Many non-state actors— including cities, businesses, and NGOs—shared their initiatives on combating climate change, indicative of growing support from the wider society for ambitious climate actions. Yet, the Talanoa Dialogue showed that much is yet to be achieved to protect those who are most vulnerable to adverse climate impacts and emphasized the need for innovative ideas, transformational solutions, and empathetic policies.

However, the laggard negotiating track continued to be the issue of finance. Climate finance is especially vital to making possible the participation of several developing countries in successful implementation of the Paris Agreement as it also influences other negotiating tracks in varying degrees. At SB48, developing countries' negotiating blocs emphasized the need for clear commitments on climate finance, transparency in its tracking, and a degree of predictability in the flows. Besides Article 9, Article 6 of the PA is a key building block for enabling the mobilization and flow of climate finance to developing countries. Article 6 focusses on a framework for countries to voluntarily cooperate using market and non-market based approaches to raising climate ambition. At the negotiations, the emphasis was on three sub-articles—Article 6.2 which is on carbon credits and mechanism for their international transfers, Article 6.4 which is on market mechanisms, and Article 6.8 which is about non-market approaches. In this article, we take stock of negotiations related to finance at SB 48 using the structure of the Talanoa Dialogue and its three central questions—Where are we? Where do we want to go? How do we get there?

Where are we?

Article 9.5 of the Paris Agreement states that developed countries should communicate how and to what degree

they are contributing to climate finance for mitigation and adaptation. The recently released Oxfam Report highlighted that there is a need for shared and transparent accounting standards for climate finance under the Paris Agreement, as in the recent years there has been an increase in loans, with donors reporting this amount at full value, as their contribution.¹ Similar discussions took place at the Suva Expert Dialogues on the issue of loss and damage. While developing countries pointed out the urgent need for finance, developed countries were largely silent on the subject or put forth insurance as the silver bullet for addressing loss and damage. Although loss and damage is not on the agenda for COP24 negotiations for finalizing a Rulebook, the differences in the approaches of developed and developing countries are instructive about future negotiations on finance.

To promote cooperation among the Parties, the PA calls for setting up new market-based mechanisms to implement Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) effectively, and also to address the issues that prevailed in the market-based mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol, especially environmental integrity of the mechanism on the aspects of 'additionality' and 'baselines'. The Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technical Advice (SBSTA), besides other responsibilities, was tasked to develop and recommend the rules, modalities, and procedures for operationalizing new market-based mechanisms under Article 6.4. In this track, Parties differ on their views regarding the requirement of the level of supervision and the extent of fixed and stringent rules. While some prefer these to be under the close supervision of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), others were more in favour of open market-based approaches, with the countries having sovereign rights to decide on the particulars of the implementation. Further, developed countries wanted a single set of rules to be applicable to all, while developing countries, including India, desired differentiation in the applicability of rules to developed and developing countries on the basis of the CBDR (common but differentiated responsibilities) principle. It could be advantageous for developing countries to link the mechanisms under Article 6.4 explicitly to Article 2 under the PA which states that the agreement's implementation should 'reflect equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and

¹ Oxfam. Climate Finance Shadow Report 2018

respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances.'

Where do we want to go?

The over-arching climate finance goal is to generate USD 100 billion to support climate actions in developing countries annually by 2020. To ensure that there is clear and predictable finance available and national ambitions are indeed enhanced, an effective Rulebook is vital. In addition, strong political leadership, mutual trust, and some idealism are necessary to achieve the vital milestones planned for COP24. While there are still no firm commitments for this target, there have been a slew of climate actions from non-state actors, highlighting the increasing level of engagement of the private sector. For example, the investors led Climate Action 100+ was launched to engage the world's largest corporate greenhouse gas emitters on climate-related financial disclosure; financial and institutional investors, including AXA and ING, are announcing commitments to disinvest from coal power generation and focus more on green investments; the upcoming Global Climate Action Summit which plans to showcase the climate actions by states and regions, cities, companies, investors, and civil society, and secure further commitments. It is necessary to create pathways and conditions to enable and enhance private sector investments for climate actions.

Further, while there is a strong business case in mitigation which attracts private investment, finance for adaptation continues to lag and the amount mobilized is still a small fraction of the total requirements. Firm commitments and support for adaptation activities is urgently required. There is scope of leveraging Article 6.4 to enhance the scope of mitigation actions by linking them to adaptation or otherwise contributing towards enhancing climate adaptation actions. This could be by the inclusion of mitigation co-benefits of adaptation actions under these mechanisms or by generating

finance for adaptation actions by levying a certain share of proceeds under these mechanisms. Such measures have been suggested as inputs and included in the informal note. However, there is also a fear that Articles 6.2 and 6.4 could lead to lowering of ambitions with the 'Buyer Parties' relying on these mechanisms instead of taking domestic climate actions to their full potential, or alternatively, with the 'Seller Parties' purposely setting low targets to be able to over-achieve these and thus create additional carbon assets for selling.

How do we get there?

While finance is the key to ensuring success at COP24, it was evident that the weak current situation with climate finance, its below target levels, and lack of communication from developed countries regarding their financing plans and targets, could prove to be the main hurdle for negotiators. COP24 is set to have highly technical as well as political negotiations and to enable tangible progress, it is required that negotiators come prepared to be able to make actual progress with the Rulebook by showing concrete support for one of the listed options under the articles being discussed.

SB48 concluded with three informal notes on the sub-articles of Article 6, with the onus being on the Parties to prepare a draft negotiating text from these for political negotiations at COP24. The next milestone to COP24 is the additional session planned to be held in Bangkok in September 2018. This signals the positive intention of the Parties to meet the deadline and deliver a Rulebook for further negotiations at COP24.

The additional session at Bangkok will be followed by the release of the IPCC Special Report on global warming of 1.5 °C in October 2018. This could be a key opportunity for countries to gauge the need for stronger climate actions and its enablers, thus also inform and strengthen political will for achieving concrete and robust outcomes from COP24 at Katowice.

Understanding the Gender Action Plan

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Background

As climate changes due to various anthropocentric reasons, so will the ways humans interact with nature. Research suggests that climate change will exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, given prevalent social roles defined in the social structure. Different communities will be affected non-homogeneously along the social constructs of class, caste, and gender. Exploration into the social dimensions of climate change is still in a nascent stage, particularly within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

While the discussions on gender dimension in climate negotiations began with decision 36/CP.7 that aimed to improve the participation of women in the representation of parties in bodies established under the UNFCCC, it was only with COP 18, in decision 23/CP.18, that the conversation within the context of gender equality moved beyond representation to the framing of gender-sensitive climate policy. The Lima Work Programme on Gender (LWPG), went a step further to include training and capacity building within the climate change narrative. Another important milestone was the inclusion of gender in the preamble of the Paris Agreement signed at COP 21. In 2017, at COP 23, the Parties decided to develop a Gender Action Plan (GAP) within the purview of the UNFCCC.

In order to further elaborate, even understand, the scope and nature of the GAP (Gender Action Plan), the Parties requested for in-session workshops on gender-responsive climate policy. The first of such workshops was organized during the 48th session of the Subsidiary Bodies (SB48), in Bonn. This issue brief builds on the discussions at the SB48 and elaborates on the key issues on which countries will need to deliberate further during future workshops and negotiations.

The Lima Work Programme on Gender

The LWPG 2014, or decision 18/CP.20, was a clarion call to enhance the implementation of existing gender-responsive decisions and improve participation in delegations, and a moment of reckoning that acknowledged the need for additional efforts to achieve these feats. It brought out the need to train men and women, raise awareness regarding the issue of gender balance and climate change, and build capacities of female delegates to increase effective participation for when parties developed their National Communications

(NCs) or Biennial Update Reports (BURs). It elaborated on the need to support mentioned efforts, especially "...for delegates from Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, including the least developed countries, small island developing States, and countries in Africa" (UNFCCC, 2014).

In summation, the LWPG recognised that all aspects of climate change inherently have gender dimensions (and repercussions). Built into the framework of LWPG, through Articles 11 and 12, was a two-pronged request by parties to organize in-session workshops on gender-responsive climate policy that focussed on mitigation and adaptation respectively. This request was granted, and so gender workshops were undertaken at the SB48 2018, in Bonn, Germany.

Relevance of a Gender Action Plan

The first ever GAP to the UNFCCC was adopted at COP 23. Parties noted "the lack of progress made in delegations and constituted bodies towards the goal of gender balance" and invited "... stakeholders to participate and engage in implementing the gender action plan... with a view to advancing towards the goal of mainstreaming a gender perspective into all elements of climate action" (UNFCCC, 2017). Crucially, parties set time periods to discussions, workshops, and reportage on the conception, submission, implementation, and review of the national GAPs, in line with the review of the LWPG, or decision 21/CP.22.

The foremost goal of the GAP is to support and enhance the implementation of decisions and mandates pertaining to gender, already adopted in the UNFCCC. GAP outlines five priority areas—building capacity, sharing knowledge, and disseminating this knowledge; gender balance and women's leadership; coherence; gender responsive implementation of the Paris Agreement; and finally, monitoring and reporting. Through the set timeline of two years within GAP, the UNFCCC targets revolve around, *inter alia*, inclusion of gender in climate policies and programmes, initiate dialogues on the issue, relegate funds to promote participation of female delegates (especially from the south bloc) in its meetings, and organize training programmes for women.

GAP serves as a crucial conduit to advancing mandates for gender equality that exist under the UNFCCC. Acting as a placeholder, GAP will facilitate actions across mitigation, adaptation, and support programmes until concrete

national and international policy and planning opportunities emerge. The plan represents a country's response to the needs of the often invisible half of the population with respect to climate change. It creates synergies at the national and global policy levels, and acts as a signalling mechanism to the international community. Finally, GAP has the potential to shape the effectiveness and efficiency of climate change in particular and socioeconomic development responses in general.

Gender at SB48

Deliberations at the SB48, focussed at informing and facilitating gender-responsive climate policy, concentrated on three key needs, enumerated further in the paragraph. The first placed emphasis on collecting gender disaggregated data to evaluate gender differential impacts of climate change and climate policy. The second stressed the urgency of moving beyond gender budgeting to the creation of national-level dedicated funds servicing climate action with women as their focus. The final was to improve governance and coordination mechanisms at the sub-national, national, and international levels.

Discussions revolving around country GAPs had an undertone of a North–South divide in terms of the way country GAPs were framed. For developed countries, such as Canada, GAPs were designed in a top-down fashion while for developing and least developed countries, the GAPs were designed in a bottom-up method. Both approaches suffered from the Achilles heel of the GAP itself: the country GAPs spelt out unclear and ambiguous achievements and financial targets, a potential point of problem for accounting and monitoring the success of a country GAP. Especially in the case of developing countries, there was no clear delineation of co-benefits from climate action and actual benefits of the country GAP.

Discussions at SB48 also reiterated the need to challenge prevalent narratives underscored by existing hierarchies. Parties and bodies made a case for active and regular interventions made by civil society, as well as decision-makers at the national level in order to ensure effective implementation.

Critiques of Gender Action Plan and the Way Forward

A GAP for a country will be framed in voluntary manner, implying that a country could take liberties in setting ambition. In addition, GAP is weak on defining specific targets or indicators of success. GAP also lacks a cogent definition of financial commitments or timelines to achieve targets—it concludes with articles that create a space for ambiguity, especially in the context of possible financial aid that interested stakeholders and relevant parties could provide, or the time frame over which such plans may be evaluated for effectiveness.

Further, GAP also neglects to acknowledge intra-national inequalities. Treating the south block as a homogenous entity glosses over the inequalities these countries suffer within their political boundaries. It follows that poor rural women from these regions, who happen to be the socio-economic group most vulnerable to climate change, may never get representation on an international platform due to the existing power relations within their country.

In Bonn, parties demonstrated GAP's salience as an instrument to promote the training of women and capacity building in the arena of climate policy. Given that there are cascading effects of mainstreaming women into climate policy, GAPs need to be designed such that they target specific outcomes that can be evaluated to track progress such that benefits of a policy are clearly delineated from possible co-benefits. GAPs also need to move beyond symptomatic solution engineering to identifying transformative solutions that challenge existing power hierarchies. Policies addressing the structural roots of gendered differences should be envisaged in a way that does not exacerbate existing gendered vulnerabilities.

GAP inherently presents itself as an opportunity for countries to pinpoint grassroots problems and tackle distributional inequities and mal-recognition in tailored bottom up frameworks. It can potentially identify and overcome impediments to participation and decision making through institutional channels. However, the implementation of GAP in a country will be the true litmus test.

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Multiplicity in Climate Actions—The Importance of Understanding the Landscape of Climate Action

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Climate Governance—Then and Now

Climate actions manifest across various governance levels, and are intrinsically linked to scales. While the nation states have pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help communities adapt to the changes unravelling through their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), these are being increasingly complemented by multiple cross-actor actions permeating across vertical levels of governance. The notion of a 'global problem' requiring a coordinated global response is thus being increasingly complemented by a growing trend in non-state and sub-national climate actions.

The literature on climate governance is also increasingly stressing on the relevance of these subnational and non-state actors in enabling an atmosphere that is conducive for proactive climate change planning. These striking examples of emergence of non-state and subnational commitments towards climate action are being witnessed the world over:

- In the USA, states such as California and Washington have pledged to implement carbon pricing as an instrument for environment policy, irrespective of the national policy course on climate change. Moreover, California has additionally pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 80% below the 1990 levels by 2050;
- Elsewhere in Melbourne, Australia, the city administration has taken strong note of climate change and its subsequent impact, and is developing a Climate Action Plan at the municipality level;
- Major companies, such as Apple Inc., on the other hand, have issued green bonds to help strengthen the environment and climate action.

In India, the landscape around climate governance is reflecting this greater proliferation of climate action in underlying governance layers. Exploring the specific case of India, we try to develop an initial understanding on the constantly evolving landscape of climate governance in India—the multiplicity in actors—and seek to explore the many facets of actions and partnerships that are being forged to address the growing needs and concerns.

Climate Governance and India

In the ensuing discussion, we explore the many ways through which climate action landscape in India reflects the global landscape, citing examples of experimentation being carried out across levels:

The Role of States

India is structured as a strong quasi-federal system with the union government serving as an impetus for action for many policies prescribed at lower levels of governance. A similar pattern of federal policy-making in the context of climate policy is also witnessed. Examples of these include the state energy policies and State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCC). The former were largely an offshoot of the Energy Act of 2003. Building on the guidelines formulated under this act, states had then developed and implemented policies around renewable energy with variation in policy methods and outcomes. These policies, serving as regional competition strategies, have led to capitalization and proliferation of wind energy capacity in the country, with states having identified wind energy potential proactively participating in regional policy-making. Likewise, in the case of the SAPCC, the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC), an overarching climate policy directive, has, thus, served as a thrust for states to develop regional action plans based on these directives. Building on the multiple missions prescribed under the NAPCC, the states were subsequently mandated to develop state-specific plans based on regional priorities and needs. Focussing on both aspects of climate action—adaptation and mitigation—these SAPCCs had recognized 'Public Private Partnership' as a direction to stimulate and develop renewable energy in their particular states. These action plans have since initiated a broader regional planning in the backdrop of climate change.

The Role of Cities

An increasingly stark phenomenon around subnational action is pivoted around cities and their commitment

to climate action. In this context, specific examples of city-led actions can be witnessed in India as well. The Indian subcontinent is increasingly bearing the brunt of prolonged and persistent heat waves and cities are at the forefront of its impacts, exposing huge populace to extreme temperatures. In this backdrop, cities have taken the baton, through policy decisions, to reduce its impact. The narrative around cities and heat stress mitigation plans in India stem from Ahmedabad, a city in western India. Ahmedabad in 2013 formulated a city-wide strategy to reduce the impact of grueling summers and climate-proof its populace through targeted interventions. The city administration in collaboration with partners developed a city-wide Heat Action Plan that implemented a sleuth of strategies, focussed at ensuring heat stress mitigation and building capacities for heat stress management in the immediate future. Such actions were replicated in a Heat and Health Action Plan, for the city of Surat (Gujarat), which was piloted in the year 2016². Subsequently, Nagpur (Maharashtra), Hyderabad (Telangana), and Vijayawada and Amaravati ((Andhra Pradesh), in 2016 initiated their own respective heat action plans.^{3,4} Until June 2017, 17 cities and 11 states released or are in the process of developing individual heat action plans.⁵

The Role of Non-State Actors

In addition to state-driven initiatives, voluntary non-state actions/commitments towards climate change adaptation/mitigation are gaining traction in India. Companies have, since the beginning of this decade, pledged to reduce the carbon intensity of their operations in India. Moreover, they have also taken active part in transnational co-operative initiatives towards emissions reduction. Examples of these can be witnessed across sectors, including construction material, pharmaceuticals,

biotechnology and life sciences, chemical industries, and automobile companies, to mention a few. A lot of these actions precipitate towards improving energy efficiency leading to emissions reduction in the near term. In addition to this, a few these companies are also mobilizing green bonds to enable renewable energy technology and implementation proliferation in India.

What next for climate action in India?

There is now a greater momentum towards climate action in India, with multiple actors working, exemplified through the above cases. This growing decentralization and voluntary commitment towards climate action in India has induced a greater conversation and emphasis on widespread climate action. While these actions appear to be encouraging, they are far and wide in practice, and are often a result of multiple factors ranging from national priorities to regional planning needs and to institutional strategies. Moreover, subnational actions (SAPCCs) have been largely crafted along the contours laid by national policies, thereby limiting the extent of experimentation ideal for large scale policy diffusion and replication. On the other hand, while cities have taken lead in formulation of Heat Action Plans, exhibiting greater awareness, jurisdictional and fiscal influences are limiting greater absorption of climate policies at this level. In this light, cross-scalar interactions amongst multiple actors, across scales, is essential to overcome barriers and result in institutionalized long-term climate change planning. Moreover, understanding the evolving landscape and subsequently the factors promoting/dissuading subnational and non-state climate action, and its diffusion across levels will prove to be critical for unravelling the potential of orchestrated action across multiple scales.

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The Women of Ujjwala

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Introduction

In traditional patriarchal societies, such as most of rural India, women are assigned the responsibility of household duties, which includes the preparation of meals, and, by extension, procuring the means to do so as well. This exposes them to the health risks of indoor air pollution, and beyond it, to the risks and drudgery of procuring the energy sources that fuel such pollution. In 2015, the greatest number of deaths due to pollution occurred in India, out of which 1.24 lakh premature deaths can be accounted to indoor air pollution.¹ This worrying statistic is unique to households below the poverty line (BPL), and is particularly true for rural areas of the country due to the usage of traditional energy sources for household needs, particularly for cooking.

In light of this problem, the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) was launched under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India, and predominantly aims to prevent the negative health implications due to the exposure of indoor air pollution. It aims to provide 5 crore LPG connections over 3 years to BPL households, with a subsidy of ₹1600 per connection. Till date, ₹8000 cr has been allocated for the implementation of this programme, and it has provided 4.5 crore BPL households with LPG connections (PMUY official website). The interesting aspect of this scheme is that it is directed at women, and for good reason. As highlighted earlier, women are the direct, and sometimes, only victims of indoor air pollution, and the drudgery and risks regarding safety of firewood collection. However, the first question that arises from this problematic construct is why do women bear these burdens, and eventually, does the Ujjwala scheme adequately address these problems?

Gender and Policy

As of today, no unanimous definition or mechanism to measure 'empowerment' in the context of gender has been officially adopted. Nevertheless, we may understand it here as bridging the inequality between genders with respect to rights, access, and control of resources (economic empowerment), and power to influence matters that concern them (political empowerment).² This inequality is what impacts attitudes towards discriminating gendered norms, employment and fertility rates, division of time (for chores, income-generating activities, education), and correlating to all the factors, energy and fuel usage (such as for cooking). Ultimately, these are the aspects that expose women to risks, including those of health and safety. Further,

the ability to succeed and advance economically through control over resources is gained by the ability to make or influence such economic decisions.³ This inter-linkage and the aforementioned aspects also emphasize the need for participatory decision-making, and should be considered when directing a policy to empower women.

Even when we keep aside the ethics of gender equality, empowering women, especially politically, both at the institutional and household level, is found to positively contribute to the health of households, efficiency, and due to women's direct involvement with the household and its energy use, effective policy-making. These impacts of energy access thanks to a well-formed policy increase the time available to women, who are likely to then involve themselves in income-generating activities and contribute to the economy. There are exemplary cases that reaffirm the benefits of empowering women. In the energy sector for example, there are various cases where the political empowerment of women led to greater efficacy, efficiency, and success, such as in the cases of the Botswana Power Corporation (BPC),⁴ and Power to the Poor (P2P)⁵ scheme in Laos, the Multifunctional Platform (MFP) in Mali, and in the Indian context, Mahila Vidyut Sahayak in Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd and the involvement of women self-help groups as franchisees in energy distribution. Despite its success however, there are very few cases of involvement of women other than the stated examples.

Moreover, identifying and understanding gender roles is pertinent when addressing the issue; under different situations, different concerns impact men and women differently, and vice versa. To understand gender roles, we take an example⁶ of out-migration in rural India. In the relatively highly male populated Himalaya, a large out-migration of men is observed towards townships and areas with more livelihood opportunities, leading to an increase of available opportunities and resources in the region to the leftover population (now largely women), and, eventually to socio-economic and political empowerment of women through increased access to education, development opportunities, leadership, decision-making power, natural resource management, and the growing market. Herein, the situation can be outlined as a subsistence economy with a large male population where the role of earning livelihood is assigned to male members, leading to a male out-migration. Ultimately, the impact is the socio-economic and political development of women in the region categorized by available opportunities, the opportunities



Source: <http://www.pib.nic.in/newsite/photoright.aspx?phid=127054>

seized and converted to results, and the longer-term impact of opportunities, such as access to higher skilled jobs.

This example illustrates that identifying gender roles helps us quantify the impacts of empowering women and identify the issues affecting women, which play a key role in eradicating said issues and lead to more empowered women. Hence, when we look at energy and its gendered impacts, identifying gender roles becomes relevant in order to answer key questions, such as how access to energy benefits women and the significance of the benefits.

How the Ujjwala Scheme Fairs

When we look at Ujjwala and its women-centric approach, it is important to factor in these definitions and thoughts to really assess its impact and sustainability. If we revisit the specifics of the scheme, particularly the support provided, we see that the financial assistance provided is ₹1600 per LPG connection, that is, per household, which covers the security and fitting charges of each connection. Additionally, it allows the household to pay for the stove and the first refill in monthly installments. The cost of refills thereafter, however, has to be borne by the households themselves. If the cost of the first refill is being included in an installment scheme, it may not be a completely repulsive idea to consider that

the cost of subsequent refills (about ₹500 per cylinder, after subsidization) may be unaffordable. With 4.5 crore connections, the scheme has definitely reached a large underserved population, but being doubtful of its sustainability comes as no surprise once these aspects are considered. It has been reported by various publications that households usually do not come back after the first refill.⁷ The direct objective of fuel switching remains unfulfilled when the target population can no longer afford to use the cleaner fuel it was guided towards. The population at a direct loss, however, is women. The time spent by women often goes unaccounted, as it usually does not convert to income-generating activities. These 'roles' are usually assigned to male members of the household through social conditioning. Here, the lack of both economic and political empowerment is noticeable and their importance is highlighted. Further, the relevance of participatory decision-making, particularly at the institutional level, becomes more apparent.

It is possible to strengthen the sustainability of the model by taking into account the perspective of women who have a better understanding of expenditure, both monetary and energy, due to their everyday interaction with the operations. On the face of it, PMUY indicates an idea of empowerment by making women the official owners of these LPG connections and by addressing women empowerment as an objective.⁸ However, there still exists a profound need to integrate actions

that address the issues of these women, as well as recognize the economic and developmental co-benefits of women empowerment that could highly influence behaviour. All facets of the PMUY programme can be influenced or impacted if looked at through a gendered lens. Take for instance the affordability gap issue, which can be addressed by two broad methods—decreasing the price of cylinders, which usually involves subsidies or increasing the purchasing power of households. Empowering marginalized women can help tap into the latter. The more empowered women are, the lesser their time burden and the more likely they are to engage in income-generating activities, and hence, increase the purchasing power of the household. It is to be noted here that India could boost its gross domestic product (GDP) by \$0.7 trillion in 2025 or 16% of the business-as-usual level,⁹ through gender parity. Further, empowered women are healthier and lead healthier households, increasing the likelihood of educated children, which in the long term leads to an even higher generation of income for the household. There are various such

avenues that could be tapped by incorporating the potential of women, such as bringing in women to address the missing monitoring mechanism of such a scheme or including women in decision making for a more holistic and far-sighted policy.

The path to women empowerment in a diverse country like India is a gradual process, with degrees of inequality varying from one region to another. Rural India is more hard-hit in this aspect and suffers from the many negatives that it brings. It is, therefore, important to focus on a holistic, well-thought out, and far-sighted policy that focusses not only on the accrued benefits of empowerment to women, but to entire households. Even solely for the sake of holistic development, gender parity needs to become more than a conceptual checklist in such programmes more often than not. It needs to be quantified, its economic and developmental benefits to all recognized, and it must be integrated in decision making at all levels. Without these factors, implementing policies directed at empowering the marginalized will not be able to tap into *half of its potential*.

Endnotes

- ¹ Watts, Nick et al. 2017. The Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change. The Lancet.
- ² Tanja Winter. 2016. 'Getting the right gender indicators: observations, challenges and strategies'. EFEWEE
- ³ Golla, Anne Marie et al. 2011. Understanding and Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment. ICRW.
- ⁴ BPC, with support from ENERGIA, included women in the planning and implementation processes of the rural electrification programme, hence benefitting the marginalized, who were mostly women, with electricity access. (Botswana Power Corporation. 2011. Gender Mainstreaming in the Botswana Power Corporation. http://www.energia.org/cm2/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/06.-Case_Study_Botswana.pdf)
- ⁵ The programme provided poor households with interest-free loans that enabled them to obtain a connection to the grid and wire their dwellings. Households headed by women were a focus of the program. (Buchhave, Helle et al. 2017. Why Measuring Energy Access for Women Makes Smart Business: The Case of Lao PDR. The World Bank. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/547301506533359927/pdf/120104-BRI-PUBLIC-P151262-M-E-Laos-Energy-and-Gender-Note.pdf>)
- ⁶ Tiwari, Prakash C and Joshi, Bhagwati. 2015. Gender processes in rural out-migration and socio-economic development in the Himalaya. Migration and Development. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21632324.2015.1022970>
- ⁷ 'PM's plan for free gas connections is failing its objective – as government had been warned it would'. <https://scroll.in/article/865853/pms-plan-for-free-gas-connections-is-failing-its-objective-as-government-had-been-warned-it-would>
- ⁸ PMUY website: www.pmujiwalayojana.com
- ⁹ Woetzel, Jonathan et al. 2015. The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in India. McKinsey Global Institute.

The Paris Agreement sets an ambitious goal of keeping the increase in temperature rise well below 2°C. Almost all countries put forward their INDCs as a start towards meeting this goal, which will be further revised as NDCs. Further, countries also agreed to undertake regular stock-taking to assess whether they will be able to reach their commitment and to what extent their efforts are enabling them to keep the GHG emissions trajectory on track with the above-mentioned goal. The achievement of these goals will depend on: i) effective implementation and ii) enabling means of implementation or support. Continued analysis, deliberations, and knowledge sharing is imperative for countries to implement their 'nationally determined contributions' along with identifying specific international cooperation needs. This project aims to contribute to this effort. The focus of the project is on issues related to implementing NDCs in both the international and domestic context. The following activities will be undertaken under this project:

1. Tracking of Nationally Determined Contributions and domestic linkages with SDGs
2. Role of international cooperation and domestic innovation on climate finance
3. Technology cooperation needs for implementing and enhancing India's NDC
4. Understanding gender dimension in mitigation actions

This series of Mitigation Talks acts as a platform to initiate discussions on various issues under these four themes.

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