



## Shaping the Discourse: Effective Energy Efficient Storytelling

5 July 2023

Tamarind Hall, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi

### EVENT REPORT

#### In Brief

While renewable energy takes up a chunk of the public narrative space on climate action and clean energy transitions, there exists an imperative need to create a similar understanding of energy efficiency. A key agent in realizing this goal is the media. Due to the perception that energy transitions only entail decarbonizing the electricity supply sector with renewable energy, energy efficiency is under-prioritized in the energy transition discourse. While much of this views energy efficiency as a means of achieving industrial efficiency, there is a need to broaden the discussion and include other vital sectors such as MSMEs, transport, household, and agriculture. In this context, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) organized a capacity-building workshop for media professionals to strengthen stakeholder engagement and capacities needed for energy efficiency reporting to meet the country's national climate and developmental goals.

#### Keywords

energy efficiency, SDG 7, discourse, energy transitions, sustainable development

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### **Introduction**

Energy efficiency is a key driver in meeting India's environmental, socio-economic, and climate goals. Widely considered the 'first fuel', it focuses on minimizing energy consumption while performing the same tasks or generating equivalent outputs. Regarded as a cost-effective strategy for mitigating climate change, energy efficiency is vital in minimizing energy loss/wastage. Realizing the pivotal role that it can play in accelerating decarbonization, enhancing energy security, and steering an upwards trend in social and economic mobility, several countries have included energy efficiency in their net-zero commitments.

India aspires to become a USD 5 trillion economy by the middle of this decade. It is also one of the fastest developing countries. Thus, the country is presented with the unique challenge of ensuring economic growth and energy security for its vast population while ensuring clean energy transitions. Energy costs form almost a quarter of the Indian industry's annual operating cost. This calls for making energy usage more efficient by adopting energy-efficient technologies. These goals can be met only when the existing energy systems in the country are transformed. The world's eyes are set on India, a developing country, today as it stands at a critical juncture of forging developmental pathways that ensure just economic growth for its people while staying committed to its climate and sustainability goals. This makes it pivotal for India to tap into the potential of energy efficiency. From policy interventions and technology development to advocacy and lifestyle changes, there is an urgent need to mainstream energy efficiency discourse in the country.

Media then serves as a critical agent in realizing this goal of mainstreaming energy efficiency, energy security, just energy transition, and allied benefits in the public discourse. Due to the perception that energy transition only entails decarbonizing the electricity supply sector with renewable energy, energy efficiency has often been under-prioritized in the domain of energy transition. While much of this views energy efficiency as a means of achieving industrial efficiency, there is a need to broaden the discussion and include other vital sectors such as MSMEs, transport, and households.

### **Rationale**

While renewable energy takes up a chunk of the public narrative space on climate action and clean energy transitions, there exists an imperative need to create a similar understanding of energy efficiency. A key agent in realizing this goal is the media. Due to the perception that energy transitions only entail decarbonizing the electricity supply sector with renewable energy, energy efficiency is under-prioritized in the energy transition discourse. While much of this views energy efficiency as a means of achieving industrial efficiency, there is a need to broaden the discussion and include other vital sectors such as MSMEs, transport, household, and agriculture. In this context, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) with outreach support from Climate Trends and Kaizzen organized a capacity-building workshop for media professionals to strengthen stakeholder engagement and capacities needed for energy efficiency reporting to meet the country's national climate and developmental goals.

The primary audience of this event was journalists and representatives from media houses. This carefully curated one-day-long workshop brought together experts from BEE, TERI, NITI Aayog, TATA Power DDL, Climate Trends, and AEEE. They provided journalists with a holistic and nuanced understanding of energy efficiency. The day-long workshop engaged journalists through strategically designed brainstorming sessions and built their reporting and storytelling capabilities on energy efficiency and its implications in India.

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Brief presentations at the workshop from experts from the domain of energy efficiency and senior journalists reporting on it served as guideposts as the media fellows embarked on the journey of consistent, effective, engaging, and powerful reportage on the need for mainstreaming energy efficiency. With the focus on integrating both supply-side and demand-side perspectives when reporting on energy efficiency, the lectures helped the media fellows move away from a myopic understanding of energy efficiency. The ultimate objective of the workshop, then, was to aid in expanding the scope and quality of the stories that the media fellows and, consequently, the media fraternity developed on energy efficiency.

### Objectives

- By highlighting the gaps, exploring the nuances, and bringing focus on integrating supply-side and demand-side perspectives, the workshop aimed to build the capacity of media for effective reportage on energy efficiency.
- Through consistent, holistic, and nuanced reportage, the media can be a key player in realizing this goal of mainstreaming energy efficiency.

### Structure of the Workshop

| Time            | Sessions  |
|-----------------|---|
| 10:00–11:00 h   | Registration  |
| 11:00–11:10 h   | Welcome Remarks   |
| 11:10–11:20 h   | Framing Presentation  |
| 11:20–11:35 h   | Video Message on Energy Efficiency and Climate Goals  |
| 11:35–11:50 h   | ABC of Energy Efficiency  |
| 11:50–12:05 h   | Energy Efficiency: The Public Discourse and Media   |
| 12:05–12:15 h   | An Energy Efficiency Ice Breaker  |
| 12:15–13:15 h   | Lunch   |
| 13:15–14:30 h   | Panel Discussion<br><i>India's Energy Efficiency Landscape: From Advocacy Push to Policy Pull</i> |
| 14:30–15:45 h   | Breakout Session  |
| 15:45–16:30 h   | Reporting Back  |
| 16:30–16:40 h   | Next Step and Vote of Thanks  |
| 16:40 h onwards | High-Tea and Networking   |

## **Proceedings**

### **Welcome Address**

*Dr Vibha Dhawan, Director General, TERI*

Energy efficiency, often called the first fuel, is a key driver in meeting India's environmental, socio-economic, and climate goals. By focusing on minimizing energy consumption and energy loss while performing the same tasks or generating equivalent outputs, energy efficiency can be beneficial in mitigating climate change.

As India charts its sustainable development pathways based on the country's nationally determined contributions and to decarbonize its economy rapidly, it is vital to tap the potential of energy efficiency.

From policy interventions and technology development to advocacy and lifestyle changes, there is an urgent need to mainstream energy efficiency discourse in India. TERI, too, has played a key role in mainstreaming energy efficiency in the country, especially through policy recommendations and technology development. Energy and energy efficiency were, in fact, the first areas that TERI engaged in when it was established five decades ago. Despite all these efforts, the understanding of energy efficiency is still limited in the public discourse, and, thus, engaging with the media is pivotal. The workshop precisely aimed to achieve this.

### **Ice Breaking and Framing Presentation**

The ice-breaking session conducted during the workshop established an atmosphere of collaboration and active participation among the audience. It effectively dissolved initial reservations and cultivated an open and engaging environment, encouraging fruitful discussions. This session involved introducing all the participants and presenting them with 10 thought-provoking questions regarding energy efficiency in the country, enabling a comprehensive assessment of their knowledge in the field.

The framing presentation commenced by providing an overview of energy efficiency, encompassing an elucidation of both the supply and the demand aspects of energy systems. It further delved into the role of media in promoting energy efficiency, elucidating the objectives, rationale, and structure of the workshop comprehensively.

### **ABC on Energy Efficiency**

Mainstreaming energy efficiency in the public discourse faces several challenges that hinder its widespread adoption and recognition. One significant challenge is the public's limited awareness and understanding of energy efficiency. Many people are unaware of its benefits, relevance to climate action, and the role it can play in adopting energy-efficient practices.

Another challenge is the complexity of the topic itself. Energy efficiency involves technical jargon, calculations, and policy frameworks that may be difficult for the average person to grasp. Simplifying and communicating these concepts in an easily understandable manner can be a challenge for mainstream media outlets.

Energy efficiency also tends to have a lower priority than other pressing issues. It can get overshadowed by more immediate concerns such as energy access, renewable energy, and climate change mitigation. As a result, it sometimes does not receive the attention and focus it deserves in public discourse.

Moreover, there is a perception that to follow energy efficiency, one may require sacrificing comfort or convenience. Some individuals may be reluctant to adopt energy-efficient practices due to the misconception that they will compromise their quality of life.



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Overcoming this perception and highlighting the long-term benefits, such as cost savings and improved well-being, is crucial.

Media coverage of energy efficiency is another challenge. Energy efficiency may receive limited media coverage compared to other topics. Competing with more attention-grabbing stories can be challenging, making it harder to keep energy efficiency in the public discourse consistent.

Furthermore, the narrative around energy efficiency is often fragmented. Success stories and initiatives are localized and not connected, which makes it difficult to create a cohesive narrative. A comprehensive and inclusive storyline connecting different sectors, regions, and stakeholders needs to be developed, demonstrating energy efficiency's broader impact and potential.

Policy and regulatory barriers also pose challenges to mainstreaming energy efficiency. In some cases, existing policies do not effectively promote or incentivize energy efficiency. Moreover, a lack of supportive policies can hinder the mainstream adoption of energy-efficient technologies and practices.

Addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts between energy efficiency experts, policymakers, communicators, and the media. Raising awareness and simplifying messaging is crucial to overcoming the lack of awareness and understanding. It is essential to emphasize the tangible benefits of energy efficiency, such as cost savings, improved comfort, and reduced environmental impact.

Here, media can play a vital role in mainstreaming energy efficiency by telling holistic and nuanced stories. Media outlets can highlight success stories, showcase industrial transformations, and profile individuals and organizations leading the way in energy efficiency. By featuring examples from different sectors and regions, the media can demonstrate the diverse applications and benefits of energy efficiency.

Additionally, the media can advocate for supportive policies and create public dialogue around the topic. Reporting on policy developments, showcasing innovative technologies, and engaging with experts can contribute to shaping the public discourse on it.

To write more holistic and nuanced stories on energy efficiency, media outlets need to adopt several strategies. These include providing clear explanations of technical concepts, using relatable examples and case studies, highlighting the economic and environmental benefits, and showcasing the experiences of individuals and communities. Collaborating with energy efficiency experts and organizations can also provide valuable insights and resources for accurate and engaging reporting.

In the context of India, mainstreaming energy efficiency is particularly crucial. As a developing country with a growing population and increasing energy demand, India faces significant energy challenges. Thus, energy efficiency has a crucial role in addressing these challenges by reducing energy consumption, lowering carbon emissions, and promoting sustainable development. The media can contribute to this by raising awareness, promoting best practices, and advocating for supportive policies in the Indian context.

Overall, mainstreaming energy efficiency in the public discourse requires concerted efforts from various stakeholders, including the media. By effectively communicating the benefits, sharing success stories, and advocating for supportive policies, energy efficiency can become a central focus in the public discourse, contributing to a more sustainable and energy-efficient future.

## **Panel Discussion**

***Dr Ritu Mathur, Senior Energy Economist, NITI Aayog***

Energy efficiency is a holistic concept that extends beyond end-use applications, encompassing the entire life cycle of energy consumption. In India, it is crucial to adopt a comprehensive approach to energy efficiency, considering different stakeholders and tailoring the message to various consumer segments. This involves understanding energy efficiency through induced equipment changes, process changes, fuel switching, systemic changes, and reduced material demand. Policies must address these aspects and involve collaborative efforts among stakeholders. Additionally, India's energy transition story should consider energy security, affordability, and the specific challenges developing countries face. Nudging individuals and communities, spreading awareness about material demand efficiency and circular economy principles, and promoting research and development are key to maximizing the role of energy efficiency in India's sustainable development.

***Mr Abhishek Kumar Yadav, Senior Sector Expert, Bureau of Energy Efficiency***

Energy efficiency is a pressing issue in the face of climate change, depleting resources, and rising energy demands. It encompasses strategies and technologies that optimize energy consumption and minimize waste, from efficient use of electricity and fuel in homes, offices, and industries to the adoption of renewable energy sources. Energy efficiency is crucial for achieving a sustainable future by reducing energy consumption, carbon emissions, and environmental impact. It offers economic and social benefits, such as lower energy bills, reduced operational costs, enhanced energy security, job creation, and improved comfort and productivity. Key strategies include efficient lighting, smart grids, energy-efficient appliances, and building design. Integrating renewable energy with energy efficiency can further reduce greenhouse gas emissions and enhance energy infrastructure resilience. However, challenges like lack of awareness, upfront costs, and policy barriers need to be addressed. As journalists, you have the power to shape public opinion, disseminate accurate information, raise awareness, and hold stakeholders accountable. Your role in promoting holistic understanding and inspiring action towards energy efficiency is crucial for fostering a culture of sustainable energy practices.

***Mr Mayank Aggarwal, Senior Journalist and Member- The Reporters' Collective***

Media plays a crucial role as a bridge between advocacy and policy in the context of energy efficiency. Understanding the media's function and appetite is essential in effectively communicating the importance of energy efficiency. Journalists often cover multiple beats and subjects, so it is important to create opportunities for in-depth understanding and exploration of different aspects. By identifying platforms for interaction and learning, journalists can marry different subjects and explore the layers within them. Building a stronger bridge between policy drivers, advocates, and the media is necessary to enhance communication and enable the media to fulfil its role effectively. This two-way communication can contribute to a better understanding and disseminating of information on energy efficiency.

***Dr Atul Kumar, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University***

The integration of energy efficiency and renewable energy is crucial, as they are two distinct domains that complement each other. The intermittent nature of renewable energy sources and the challenges of high-cost storage highlight the need for integration on both technological and policy levels. However, in India, renewable energy and energy efficiency are managed separately by different ministries, raising the question of how often integration is discussed. To promote energy efficiency, it is essential to follow the approach taken with

solar lanterns, where widespread distribution and market integration led to significant cost reductions and increased penetration. Additionally, material efficiency and demand-side management play a role in achieving net-zero goals. Energy efficiency can be observed through macro studies, particularly in industries with quantifiable monetary benefits and low payback periods. However, issues arise when there is no direct incentive or split incentive. The household sector accounts for a significant portion of electricity consumption in India, and misconceptions about energy-efficient appliances persist. The media can play a vital role in dispelling these misconceptions and providing information on star ratings, variable speed versions, and the benefits of replacing older appliances. It can also help build public opinion and create premium perceptions of energy-efficient buildings. Addressing the poor energy efficiency performance of government buildings, such as using second-hand, inefficient air conditioners without maintenance or cleaning, is another area that requires attention.

***Ms Dipanwita Ray, Head of Department, Customer Experience, Value Added Services, Energy as a Service, TATA Power-Delhi Distribution Ltd***

It is critical to highlight the need for effective communication in promoting energy efficiency. While various schemes and initiatives have been implemented successfully in Delhi, the narrative surrounding energy efficiency remains limited, often focusing on replacing LED lights and lamps. To create behavioural change, there is a need to shift from a push approach to a pull framework. The concept of URJA ARPAN, a TATA Power DDL initiative, which includes a demand response programme and simplified communication in terms of units and carbon emissions, has generated public interest. Collaboration with stakeholders, including policymakers, institutions, and associations, has been crucial in spreading the message. Collaboration among stakeholders across sectors is key in advancing the energy efficiency narrative.

***Ms Supriya Gulati, Communications Manager, AEEE***

Numerous challenges need to be addressed to bridge the gap between technical experts, researchers, and the media when discussing energy efficiency. Simplified narratives and the importance of creating stories and linkages that the media fraternity can easily understand and convey are vital steps in addressing these challenges. A few topics that can be explored to achieve this include thermal comfort in buildings, the role of building materials in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and energy demand, and energy efficiency in agriculture. Identifying appropriate communication channels and different target audiences and purposes for storytelling, including driving investments, spreading awareness, and engaging the youth, are necessary to mainstream energy efficiency in the public domain. Building better stories and narratives around these pertinent issues warrants better training and understanding in communications about energy efficiency and for the media fraternity to directly connect with organizations and researchers to learn and create more impactful story angles. Coherence between long-form media and social media, the emotional aspect of writing, and the role of media in bridging the gap between research and public knowledge is key.

***Dr Vatsala Sharma, Associate Fellow, TERI***

The challenge that India faces today is achieving economic growth while protecting the climate, considering its updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and the goal of decarbonization by 2070. It is, therefore, important to integrate energy efficiency into the overall strategy of decarbonization. Beyond achieving the NDCs, energy efficiency also has a major role to play in ensuring energy security and access for all, aligning with SDG 7.3. However, individual contributions will also be decisive to fulfil these commitments and goals. Communicating relatable stories, such as the impact of energy-saving appliances and



the success stories of energy efficiency policies, with the public can be of value in terms of both wider understanding of the discourse and adoption of energy-efficient appliances and technologies.

### **Breakout Session**

#### **Group 1: What are a few possible story ideas you could attempt for a more nuanced reportage on energy efficiency?**

Group 1 worked towards making a comprehensive list of possible topics and story ideas to report on energy efficiency. From stories based on energy efficiency in residential housing complexes and on Perform, Achieve, and Trade (PAT) scheme data to how energy efficiency can be introduced in MSMEs and SMEs, the group gave insights on the ways in which energy efficiency stories can be humanized to make them more relatable.

#### **Group 2: How can one pitch a story on energy efficiency considering specific sectors such as industry (including MSMEs), agriculture, transport, and residential/buildings?**

Discussions among participants of Group 2 revolved around issues that should be considered while pitching stories on energy efficiency for more nuanced and holistic reportage. Key points such as understanding the implications of energy efficiency in relation to the socio-economic status of various demographics, the aim behind the story-awareness generation, lack of financial flow, and the concept of Energy Service Companies (ESCOs) and how their involvement with MSMEs can accelerate the adoption of energy-efficient technologies by bridging the financial hurdles were among the many points that could make reportage on energy efficiency more engaging.

#### **Group 3: How can one pitch a story on energy efficiency considering the macro picture by linking it to the climate goals and sustainable development goals?**

Group 3 identified success stories, challenges to energy efficiency adoption, policy gaps, and possible solutions as key pointers when pitching a story on energy efficiency, considering the macro picture by linking it to the climate goals and sustainable development goals. The group detailed how stories on energy efficiency should speak about justice and equity, access to energy, and policy development to make renewable energy more lucrative by combining energy efficiency and renewable energy, thereby reducing the payback period on the investment. On a macro scale, the group provided critical insights around developing stories on SDG 7 targets and how energy efficiency can help achieve them. Discussions also focussed on the need to assess the progress made by large polluting industries on their climate targets and how reportage can focus on a push for more stringent targets for said industries and stricter timelines to shift to cleaner fuels such as green hydrogen.

### **Conclusion**

The workshop on ‘Shaping the Discourse: Effective Energy Efficient Storytelling,’ a carefully curated package of enlightening lectures, presentations, and thought-provoking discussions with experts across policy, industry, media, and academia, worked at building the bridges between technical understanding and communicating the energy efficiency to the masses. From discussions on the need for nuanced reportage to channel policy ‘pull’ for advocacy ‘push’ and mainstreaming energy efficiency, energy security, and energy transition within the public domain to how achieving this would warrant humanizing the stories, using appropriate channels of communication (long form or social media), the workshop ultimately helped the participants move away from a myopic understanding of energy efficiency.

## Shaping the Discourse: Effective Energy Efficient Storytelling

With guided deliberations during the breakout sessions and reporting back presentations from each group, the workshop brought a much-needed focus on integrating both supply-side perspectives and demand-side perspectives in energy efficiency reportage, thereby expanding the scope and quality of the stories on the subject and its implications in India.

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## Annexure: Final Agenda

| Time            | Session   |
|-----------------|---|
| 10:30–11:00 h   | Registration  |
| 11:00–11:10 h   | Welcome Remarks<br><b>Dr Vibha Dhawan</b> , Director General, TERI (Video Message)  |
| 11:10–11:35 h   | An Energy Efficiency Ice Breaker  |
| 11:35–11:45 h   | Framing Presentation<br><b>Ms Rumpa Banerjee</b> , Communications Associate, TERI<br>and <b>Mr Shreyas Joshi</b> , Senior Specialist- Comms & Content, TERI   |
| 11:45–12:00 h   | ABC of Energy Efficiency<br><b>Mr Prosanto Pal</b> , Associate Director, TERI   |
| 12:00–12:15 h   | Panel Discussion: Energy Efficiency- The Public Discourse and Media<br><b>Mr Mayank Aggarwal</b> , Senior Journalist and Member- The Reporters' Collective  |
| 12:15–13:15 h   | Lunch   |
| 13:15–14:45 h   | <p><b>Panel Discussion on "India's Energy Efficiency Landscape: From Advocacy Push to Policy Pull"</b></p> <p><b>Chair:</b><br/><b>Mr Ajay Shankar</b>, Distinguished Fellow, TERI &amp; Former Secretary, Ministry of Power, Government of India</p> <p><b>Panellists:</b><br/><b>Dr Ritu Mathur</b>, Senior Energy Economist, NITI Aayog<br/><b>Mr Abhishek Kumar Yadav</b>, Senior Sector Expert, Bureau of Energy Efficiency<br/><b>Mr Mayank Aggarwal</b>, Senior Journalist and Member, The Reporters' Collective<br/><b>Ms Gayatri Ramanathan</b>, Senior Director, Kaizzen<br/><b>Dr Atul Kumar</b>, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University<br/><b>Ms Dipanwita Ray</b>, Head of Dept - Customer Experience, Value Added Services, Energy as a Service, Tata Power-Delhi Distribution Ltd<br/><b>Ms Supriya Gulati</b>, Communications Manager, AEEE<br/><b>Dr Vatsala Sharma</b>, Associate Fellow, TERI</p> |
| 14:45–15:45 h   | Breakout Session  |
| 15:45–16:30 h   | Reporting Back  |
| 16:30–16:40 h   | Vote of Thanks<br><b>Ms Gunjan Jain</b> , Engagement Lead, Climate Trends<br><b>Ms Sonali Mathur</b> , Manager, TERI  |
| 16:40 h onwards | High-Tea and Networking   |

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