

THE SUBCONSCIOUS IS ALWAYS RECEPTIVE TO SUGGESTIONS THAT TRANSPIRE FROM YOUR CONSCIOUS MIND

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN MICRO HYDRO PROJECT: Promoting Equal Gender Participation At Community Level



Since its operation on 16 August 1996 the Rural Energy Development Programme (REDP) has been emphasizing for the gender mainstreaming and social inclusion in its holistic approach adopted for the promotion of micro hydro system as the entry point for the enhancement of rural livelihoods and poverty reduction. The local level implementation is carried out following the community mobilization with six basic principles commonly known as MUL MANTRAS namely Organization Development, Capital Formation, Skill Enhancement, Technology Promotion, Environment Management and Vulnerable Community Empowerment (originally coined as Women upto 2003). The REDP implementation modality on gender require equal participation of women in decision making at each phase of the project cycle at the grass root level through the operationalization of appropriate institutional arrangement, discriminative rules and regulations and focused supports. REDP addresses gender issues through incorporating measures in its strategy, operational modalities, institutional arrangement and community mobilization process. Specific measures adopted for gender mainstreaming include the following:

- Women have been identified as one of the vulnerable groups (along with ethnic groups), and their empowerment has been highlighted as one of the six basic principles of REDP community mobilization process.
- At the community level, REDP's operational modality requires one man and one woman from each household to participate in programme activities such as the formation of COs and FGs, training, implementation and benefit sharing thereby ensuring gender balance.
- In programme communities, separate male and female COs are formed, which meet on a weekly basis and who are provided targeted capacity building inputs.
- REDP's monitoring system collects and analyzes gender disaggregated data on a regular basis as an integral component of reporting formats.
- Women are accorded priority in human resources development initiatives. Their self-confidence and capability are built through training and exposure visits.

At the household level, the gender impacts of the activities carried out under REDP are tremendous, and span across all MDGs. These include:

- **Direct impacts:**
Savings on expenditure on energy (kerosene/ batteries); convenience of having light around the house; health benefits from reduced burning of kerosene and biomass fuels for lighting and cooking respectively; time saving and reduction in drudgery involved in collecting fuelwood (from biogas plants and improved cookstoves); and opportunities for education/ leisure/ self development accorded made possible by home lighting.
- **Indirect benefits:**
Increased awareness; equal participation in decision making and benefits sharing; and enhanced information, knowledge and skills.

MINIGRID IMPLEMENTATION IN BAGLUNG DISTRICT

Process has been initiated for implementation of Mini Grid (interconnection of 7 (seven) different Micro Hydro Plants through one common voltage) in Urja Upatyaka of Baglung district. The total power available at MiniGrid Voltage level (1000V) can be in the tune of 128kW. In this regard, the Mini Grid implementation working committee (MGIWC) with representatives from all seven Micro Hydro user's committees will be responsible for the overall implementation and operation.

Successful implementation of Mini Grid shall insure optimization of resources within the cluster and also open up opportunities for establishment of new cottage/small-scale industries with the availability of daytime surplus power. It is envisaged that the Minigrid shall ultimately be connected to National Grid at 33kV Voltage Level through 0.6KM long 33kV sub-transmission line. For this one 150kVA, 33/1kV electrical substation shall be built at Theulekhola MHP of Sarkuwa VDC. With such connection there can be bilateral energy transaction between Mini Grid and NEA's national grid. This will enable Minigrid to earn additional revenue by selling any surplus power to NEA national grid or buy deficit power from national grid to meet its requirement within the limitations of its existing distribution network. *(Information provided by Mr. Sanjay Sharma, REA)*