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| **Interviewer name** | INTERVIEWER |
| **Sub-contractor organisation** | ARU |
| **Interview date** | XXXX |
| **Duration of interview audio recording** | 1hr 05 mins 08 secs |
| **Face-to-face or virtual interview** | Virtual |
| **Interview participant** | |
| * **Code** | I4 |
| * **Participant name** | RESPONDENT |
| * **Organisation name** | XXXX |
| * **Gender** | Male |
| * **Stakeholder category** | Development professional working in NGO for equitable development |
| * **Country** | India |

INTERVIEWER: Good afternoon, XXXX.

RESPONDENT: Good afternoon.

INTERVIEWER: Good afternoon, as you know that this is part of this research project that we are doing from Anglia Ruskin University as a part of a Cambridge initiative to understand how sustainable development goal 7, which promises equitable access to energy has played out in the global south in terms of gender equity in access to energy.

RESPONDENT: Mhm.

INTERVIEWER: And highly appreciative of your time in participating in our study. And we hope to have a better understanding of energy access and gender equity in India, specifically, in the specific regions you're worked in - we would be very grateful for you share your information and knowledge with us.

RESPONDENT: Thank you.

INTERVIEWER: Before we start, yeah, before we start, I would like to check that you have completed and returned the consent form and restate some points from that. So, have you completed and returned the consent form?

RESPONDENT: Yes. Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Through this interview, we would request you to share your experience and expertise as someone working in the energy sector and development sector as well as your views and opinions on gender equity in energy access. Is it okay if we record the interview for our documentation purposes?

RESPONDENT: Yes, that's fine. Please go ahead.

INTERVIEWER: The recorded interview will be transcribed for analysis and a copy of the transcript will be shared with you for your approval. All the information we obtain serves the sole purpose of the study and will be seen only by the research team. Your name and any other identifying features will not be used, anywhere in reports and other publications emerging from the study. And the interview will take more or less an hour.

RESPONDENT: Understood.

INTERVIEWER: Shall we proceed?

RESPONDENT: Yes, please.

INTERVIEWER: So, can you start by briefly telling me a bit about your current role and position, and the organization and department you work for?

RESPONDENT: I work with XXXX XXXX, XXXX XXXX is a XXXX-year-old grassroots development organization in XXXX. I'm currently the XXXX, and I've been in this role now for about XXXX years. My work is primarily with village communities. Most of it is in XXXX. And we work on various aspects of the quality of life of these communities, enabling them to build a more dignified quality of life. And that involves working on issues around water- around livelihoods - around habitat, energy and technologies- around sanitation and hygiene. And we do this through a strategy where we build village level capabilities, institutions, the institutional systems that implement- you know, carry on with the work that- we kind of initiate it and we work a lot with the government as a collaborator.

INTERVIEWER: This is a non-governmental organization?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: And how long have you been involved with different aspects of energy within your work?

RESPONDENT: So, XXXX XXXX has itself started our work when we were formed in 'XXXX. And from the first year onwards, we've been working on renewable energy. In the first decade, we worked on biogas, and when biogas was an emerging area of- emerging technology product. We worked we- we were instrumental in the development of the XXXX. We did a lot of a field research related to that. And between XXXX, we built nearly XXXX biogas plants across villages of XXXX when biogas became a large government proXXXX, the national proXXXX for promotion of biogas and all that. So, we didn't really feel the need to continue doing the kind of implementation and we drew a- we exited from biogas as in- as a proXXXX area and enabled the- we had a fairly large number of technicians and masons who were trained during the previous show. XXXXXXX

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and how much -how much of - I mean- what part is energy access in these proXXXXs? I mean, equitable access of energy in these proXXXXs, how much is that part of the proXXXX?

RESPONDENT: The whole proXXXX is around access, right? I mean, I mean the – the, the instrumentality of building a plant, or, you know, doing the technology part of that is primarily around the- the primary focus is to enable access to safer, better energy options, initially to surround replace of- replacing fuel wood. And it has moved largely to lighting and some motive power. But the access is what we focus on. And because we work in areas where service providers are either impossible to reach or irregular service providers, we, we take up the mantle of service providers.

INTERVIEWER: If you could tell me a little bit about your background?

RESPONDENT: My own? Yeah, okay.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: I've been working in the development sector now for 25 years? Yeah, 25 years and I've worked- about half of that is-

INTERVIEWER: I just- I just missed the number of years in the sense something- the sound dropped.

RESPONDENT: 25 years and about half of that has been in XXXX. I spent about XXXX years in the XXXXX. I came, I mean, I worked largely around community- strengthening community institutions, community development around multiple issues, a lot of it around habitat and energy, livelihoods, governance and water related.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and how long have you been working within- in East India, the eastern part of the country?

RESPONDENT: So, I worked XXXX and now XXXX onwards. So about XXXXX years.

INTERVIEWER: And your training was with development?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I- I have a degree in XXXX.

INTERVIEWER: You’re from XXXX, right?

RESPONDENT: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, I have good friends in XXXX. Could be your contemporaries also, we shall discuss that post interview. And have you noticed when you're looking at access and equitable access, especially since you're working in the remote parts of XXXX or other areas in East India.

RESPONDENT: Can you repeat that, please?

INTERVIEWER: When you're working in remote parts, like what you were saying that access is the- is what you work around in terms of energy, because you're trying to deliver a kind of living condition- living standard to some of the remote parts of Eastern India. Have you noticed a differential access for energy in your work, like within electrification proXXXXs or policies or tech projects? Have you seen a difference in access?

RESPONDENT: Well, I- yes. The straightforward answer to your question is yes, and so, most of these services tend to favour people- one, who live closer to urban centres or you know, where the service provision is easier- two, people who are assumed to have the ability to pay and - three, people who have the kind of political agency to make a claim and you know, kind of get the claims - get their claims faster. So, the standard ways in which service provision is made has been biased towards such people and therefore, biased against people living in remoter parts, people from poorer economic background, people who cannot just make a noise around either the government or the local administration. So, there is a bias of that nature. Second issue has been even when public systems have gone ahead to kind of you know, broaden or widen the base- the supply network, there is substantial difference in the quality of service to urban- peri-urban areas have more assured, let's say if it's electricity, more assured supply of electricity, more steady voltage, whereas, if you go inside into the rural areas, that is almost nil, you know, you have three or four hours of electricity supply, so, that is with respect to electricity, with respect to cooking fuels, I think case is the same till, till about a couple of years ago. The- the distribution system for LPG for instance, was- was heavily, heavily skewed against the remoter parts, there is some improvement now, because of the XXXX proXXXX in terms of supply- on the supply side at least at demand side is a different matter. So, there is, on that count, there is definitely improvement in terms of access of late, but I think electricity continues to be a-

INTERVIEWER: A challenge.

RESPONDENT: Challenge, yes. Improved, but not sufficiently, because I can- villages where we had initially motivated communities to take up their own decentralized generation system, whether it is micro hydro or solar power. So once the grid came into play, they kind of abandoned their - because managing their own system means, you know, there is a cost, there is time involved. So once grid came, they kind of reduced attention or abandoned their alternate system. But after three, four years of grid experience, they realize that they have to now come back and build it back because when they were using the alternate system, the supply was more certain the voltage levels were steadier - with grid, so many villages where they used renewable energy power for say, three, four years and got used to regular supply -while they thought the grid would be cheaper and easier, they realized that it was not reliable at all. There are some - some of these are my experiences, respectively.

INTERVIEWER: So that actually goes back to also a point against the centralization and piped water, piped electricity and other developing local initiatives to be self-sufficient, right?

RESPONDENT: I'm sorry, I lost you in between.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So, this also kind of gets down to us understanding how especially probably in context of India, self-sufficiency in smaller groups probably work in a far more secure manner when it comes to meeting energy and say even, water needs than depending upon a central grid system, right?

RESPONDENT: Yes, technology- technology permitting; yes, completely.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: One were to look at more decentralized solar power systems when XXXX XXXX has -water supply is our largest work area and we know that now, because there is a lot of focus on centralized larger bulk water transfer based drinking water schemes and we find the immediate fallen quality between smaller decentralized village level supply system versus a larger system and electricity unfortunately, we do not have so many examples to contrast the experience, but the few that we have, I know for sure that the distributed decentralized distribution system is way more effective. We cannot say the same about fuel cooking technology- cooking fuel.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, sure, sure. But you do I mean, what about when you move towards solar cooking?

RESPONDENT: It is not a viable cooking option.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: It doesn't cater to the needs of a family without huge behavioural, occupational kind of, you know-

INTERVIEWER: -shifts.

RESPONDENT: Shifts, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: In relationship to the policy context, which shapes your work, what current issues and developments in policies at state and national level you find influencing your work and what do you consider are the key policy challenges?

RESPONDENT: One of course is there is definitely a tendency towards greater centralization you know, till about probably a decade ago, national and - national policy primarily because the state policy is essentially a copy of what the national directions are, policy was still favourable towards decentralized distributed kind of systems. What seemed to have changed in the last decade or so, is the- the whole definition of cost effectiveness and efficiency and that seemed to have worked against the interests of you know, the remoter, more scattered kind of locations. And I think this, this focus on centralization is actually leading to greater exclusion, because technology options available say for distribution, whether it is for water or for electricity is seemed to be designed for the average- for the median and not for the you know, the 20% that is outlying you know, for instance in water now, with Jal Jeevan Mission, which is the new large Government of India proXXXX for piped water- tap water supply at home, they have taken a position that for the smaller habitations, which are hilly, remote, it is fine to have a solar power - solar pumping system that is not necessarily house connected. Now that kind- that is kind of exclusionary because you are building upon reinforcing an exclusion, a marginalization struc- structural poverty matter by saying that, oh, these people are remote so they only need another quality- another service level altogether.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, you don't need piped water into your home, you should go to a- this is something I heard about, about the community solar pump and people can come and fill their water and go, go back-

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: And that essentially again becomes a woman's job to supply the water to her household. So, what does equitable energy access mean to you?

RESPONDENT: Being available on tap.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: I think that is- because equity both in terms of men and women, adults and children, equity in terms of whether I live 5 kilometres away from a town or 25 kilometres away from a town on a hill or on a plane, whether I'm a tribal or a -not, not a tribal whether I'm a farmer or a forest dependent or a fisher, fishing dependent. So, I think to me, if the system - public systems, general systems can enable, respond, enable supply in a way that responds to demand and the instant it addresses to great extent, great extent the issue of inequity, but that is not sufficient of course, because- but in case of energy and to a great extent, water - my experience is that very micro level inequities are not structural. So, it is not that the light is shared more taken more by the men in the family than, than the women. Or the, of course, the men use a mobile phone. So, the plug point will always be there, it's not the women and not that the men- because a woman will not have a device to be charged. Let's say TVs, TV time is seemed to be- I mean, the experience that I have had is, TV time seemed to be more evenly distributed between men and women in the household. So, light being not of a personal use kind of a service. If we can, at a meso level, if equity is at the village level, if certain factors of equity addressed, I guess, a lot of the intra family, intra household things get sorted out by de- by default.

INTERVIEWER: So, what does then gender equity in energy access mean to you?

RESPONDENT: See I think this is the gender- for me, the gender equity in energy access is- it's the reverse of the gender inequity in energy access, because the - the- primarily in cooking, for instance. So, if there is no gas available biogas or LPG available, which means she can turn a tap and start cooking, the load of collecting the fuel wood falls - falls entirely on the woman. So, I mean, you can't design for cooking energy access for women, if you designed for cooking energy access for a village for the household, I guess it is addressing that - that element of the physical discrimination. But in terms of lighting, I am- I haven't come across- this is my experience just trying to recollect if there are instances of that where not having a light affects the woman more than it does the men. Trying to think. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So, do you think- do you think it should be a policy priority in terms of understanding energy access?

RESPONDENT: No, energy access in general? Yes.

INTERVIEWER: I'm talking about gendering of energy access.

RESPONDENT: See gendering of energy access- I mean. How'd that work out on ground I’m not able to put my finger on, I mean, you know, what is- what is the women's angle? Other than -other than removing drudgery and the physical pain and the waste of time that she does? Because I- I’m not, I’m not- I don't know if energy as a service is divisible between men and women.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Right. So, how is demand for energy determined in your work? How do you understand needs- consumer needs? Is there any mapping you do? Is there any diversity mapping that you do?

RESPONDENT: Yes. So, you know when we look at, let's say a solar home lighting-

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: The two- I think the two key points we do, first is to the- three lighting point in terms of lighting let's say, there are three use that a family typically comes up with or we explore in greater detail- one is does it light up the kitchen and make the you know the kitchen, the cooking space for the woman because her cooking space is also where she does or you know, grinding and her, you know, the winnowing and all that. So, lighting for that has definitely come up as something that we need to be focusing on rather than lighting in general inside the house. Second there is lighting for children to study. And third is lighting in general for safety. So, these three are things that we in our- in our kind of - so for instance, when we help build, I mean, install a home lighting system in a villa- in a house. These are definitely three points that we asked them about. Where do you want the fixtures fixed?

INTERVIEWER: Okay, right, okay. But I'm talking more in terms of data collection, do you- how where do you access? I mean, do you do any data collection yourself within your organization, do you depend on government sources?

RESPONDENT: The data collection for what?

INTERVIEWER: To understand the needs, understand consumer needs understand energy-

RESPONDENT: Yeah, we work directly with the consumers, no?

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So, you do on ground data collection yourself to understand the various needs?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So, in that data collection, do you have any criteria by which you map diversity- in energy access?

RESPONDENT: The- the way I mentioned. Where does a woman need light for her cooking, where does a woman need space- light for education…

INTERVIEWER: Okay, right. Okay. Okay, right, understood. Yeah, so actually, that's, yeah, so that's, that's where gender becomes a criteria. Is there any other diversity that you have noticed, which has come up through your data collection? Other than the rural urban, which you already talked about?

RESPONDENT: Rural urban, I mean, the spatial is of- I mean, spatial locational is the key one.

INTERVIEWER: And economics, of course?

RESPONDENT: See economics is a slightly- little more dicey conundrum? It is - because the economic diversity can be within a village.

INTERVIEWER: Sure. So that's what I meant by diverse -diversity, like when you -even when you're looking at one region? Are there ways you can- in your data collection -how do you capture these diversities?

RESPONDENT: So we- I mean, see our data collection is not data collection, per se, but implementation planning-

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: It’s implementation planning, yeah. For instance, our work with rural communities on water, for instance, is it is necessary that every household participates, there's a certain amount of cost sharing that they do for the initial capital, and then they also have to share pay part of the maintenance, everybody gets the same level of service. So, three taps for every household, that's the one - what we do in water. Energy, our work is in that sense much, much less except for large work in biogas in the past, where the location of the biogas where biogas by itself was a very exclusive intervention, the poorer people would not have cattle and therefore, they would not have a biogas plant. So, you -you know you had to be a farmer, you had to have some land for which you would keep three or four heads of cattle. So, biogas in that way is- is caters to the kind of the middle of the economic strata.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: Because the- in the -in the better off families, the woman would refuse to do that work, the manual work of mixing of the slurry in the morning and all that.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. So, how equitable do you find energy access at community level and household level in terms of gender?

RESPONDENT: So, left to itself the men will decide where the light should be. So, unless there is deliberate intervention to involve women at the planning stage, there can be -there could be designed for- design leading to excluding women's priorities.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Yeah. So, I mean, actually, it comes down to basically the tasks within a household, okay. So, if you look at the different tasks within a household, and do men and women use energy differently to, to do the tasks that they do within a- within a household?

RESPONDENT: So, see if you- energy is too general a term to refer to- to answer to that question. In terms of cooking, of course, it's entirely women's domain. So, men, it's very rarely that men share the load of collecting fuel wood. I mean, to intent cases, even that sharing would be periodic, not always. When it comes to lighting, like I said, if you don't involve the women- in the plan- the planning stage, it's very likely that the light will be fixed in the front of the house, right? To kind of the TV room and not so much in the kitchen, because it won't appear in the men's- with the man's- that she needs. I mean, he would think, oh, she's anyway lighting fire, why would she need more light?

INTERVIEWER: Right, right.

RESPONDENT: And children will get excluded, because I think more than women when it comes to lighting, especially with the kind of expansion in schools and learning in the villages, the lighting for children, both boys and girls, for their learning for the studies is an important aspect. The only, I think the only area where men seem to have a natural claim over energy is when it comes to say, irrigation and that kind of the other one very, very, it's increasingly there. But I had a couple of instances where women wanted the street lighting to be focused around the water sources than generally on the street, you know, the hand pumps, so that, you know, they will feel safe to go and collect water, these are in villages where there is no piped water supply. Women wanted the light, better lighting around their, you know, water points, the hand pumps, etc, which typically men won't bother about.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. So, this -these are actually essential ways that gender is, has a direct effect on how energy is getting used, right? Different uses of energy?

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So, according to you, even within women, do you see a differential access maybe in terms of older and younger women, income groups, and even like community or social or religious or ethnic backgrounds?

RESPONDENT: So, the occupational pattern wise, is what comes to my mind first. So, a lot of the communities that we work with women go out to work in the farm, in the field, very, very early in the morning. And then it is in those, those communities that we find the demand for lighting to be the highest, because they- they are then able to spread their amount of the work the household work in the evenings much better. So, let's say something like grinding their grain, which many of them do at home and in their own ‘*dhenkis’*, household, all household level things or, you know, lifting and winnowing grain to store even cutting vegetables. I have first-hand experience of women saying that the light has helped them plan kind of more leisure for them. Otherwise, they would be forced to do it all in like a short period of time before the sun goes down.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, right, right.

RESPONDENT: So that is occupational wise for women who I mean, this is for women who work throughout the day outside and then have to do their home-based work later in the evening. I mean, it's not the case for women who do not go out for work.

INTERVIEWER: You're talking about farmers, women farmers?

RESPONDENT: So, farmers also there are better off farming families, where the women will only go to work for a certain period during the day and they can afford to come back and do their home housework. And there is still sun, bright sunlight, otherwise poorer families where the women - where the woman is a very, very critical element of the farm labour. She has double the work- she has to work the whole day in the field and then come back and do household work. And lighting is, like big boon for them.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. So actually, you're saying that over there the demand for electricity, I mean, lighting is - seems to be higher amongst families and households which have a low slightly lower economic level because they need the women to go out and work during the day?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. I'm just like summarising-

RESPONDENT: It is not always; it is not demand- it is not willingness backed by ability to pay it is-

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: It is- it is more latent. And if, if factors align well. So, it is- it is more in terms of who does who does lighting benefit more if provided? And therefore, how does policy or interventions look at that?

INTERVIEWER: Right. And in this do you see any further diversity in terms of say you've worked with villagers and tribal communities and also older and younger women - age wise do you see that there is a different- difference in demand and access? … It’s okay if you have not just-

RESPONDENT: Yeah, no, I'm just thinking if there is anything because access to TV something that I've seen that the younger women have greater interest in, I'm just wondering if there is anything other than that.

INTERVIEWER: And these are regions where- if you can just elaborate for our understanding?

RESPONDENT: So, I'm speaking of, of the southern southwestern parts of XXXX substantially, these are these are around -and around- the around or on the Eastern Ghats. So, these are hilly terrains, and about two thirds of the population is likely to be tribals.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and the nearest town is?

RESPONDENT: So, this would be Berhampur, Bhramapur in XXXX, some which are closer to Vishakhapatnam, but it's in XXXX.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right, I mean, this is just also to kind of translate the diversity in India, you know, because just last week, I interviewed people, certain people working in Ker- in Kerala. So, diversity is quite a vast range which we need to capture.

RESPONDENT: Mhm, mhm, mhm.

INTERVIEWER: So, you've already kind of answered in terms of the key energy infrastructure that your organization has been involved in that is the biomass, right?

RESPONDENT: Biogas.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Biogas. Sorry. Yeah. So, what new energy infrastructure - when a new energy infrastructure and technology is planned or provided- what in your view are the differences between men and women in terms of who benefits out of it?

RESPONDENT: I think I have referred to some of those specific points earlier when it comes to say lighting-

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: So, if you're talking about a village, which is largely outdoor oriented in terms of farm work, where the water sources are around, and more livelihoods is linked to a lot of work around land, and forest, etc, I think the provision of lighting benefit women more than men.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, right, right. And beyond your specific work, what are your views on gender differences in terms of, you know, who makes decisions about what technologies and appliances are to be purchased and used in the home? Does it matter what infrastructure is and how it is provided?

RESPONDENT: So, no, communities that we work with the, you know, purchase of appliances, etc, is not something that happens very often - electrical appliances, particularly energy driven appliances. But you know, if it's something for the kitchen, women seem to have more say.

INTERVIEWER: But you were talking about mobile phones, no?

RESPONDENT: No, mobile phones is almost entirely a man's preserve. Very, very few women other than say, younger women who are probably working- have kind of wages … salaried jobs even for them, I found to be much less so compared to a man who's gotten a job in a nearby town or something. The woman is likely- the girl is likely not to have a phone compared to a man of the same category - of the same job.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, otherwise, television is one big- one, one appliance and I don't know, I think that - I think men who go out buy it, don't know if there is consultation within the household on that. Water pumps are other- other- other appliances that I can imagine. Then there are these smaller local livelihoods so a *kirana* (grocery) shop buying a refrigerator or-

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. Within the home, what kind of penetration have you seen if you compare, say mobile phones versus any appliance which makes say the, cooking easier, for example a mixer or something?

RESPONDENT: So, kitchen appliances, I've- I know that mixers- mixer grinders are something that- that gets bought first.

INTERVIEWER: No, I'm comparing because, for example, a phone can cost 2500 rupees, and mixer grinder can also cost 2500 rupees, so-

RESPONDENT: Phone - phone will be preferred first.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: Because use of a mixer grinder would also mean that there is a new bride- I mean, daughter in law, who's brought it as part of her dowry, or, you know, there's a lot of migration in these areas? So, when, say boys go back from Kerala, they carry a mixie as a gift, so mixie is definitely something that I have heard and seen in these villages - in the kitchen. Of course, gas stove is something with LPG that that comes with the Ujjwala scheme itself. So, gas stove, mixies, refrigerators are still making an entry, but not really. I've not really seen inside the houses many refrigerators in the kind of areas that we work with- we work in.

INTERVIEWER: Right. It’s more in shops and commercial establishments.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. Yeah, refrigerators come to the *kirana dukaan* (grocery store) because then they start selling cold drinks and stuff like that.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. And do you think men and women participate- I mean, you've already answered it partially but I'm just asking, again, men and women participate equally in decision making about energy access at a household scale, even a local community scale or in bigger scales?

RESPONDENT: No, left to itself, no. Unless somebody externally facilitates, a par- kind of a process where women's opinion - women's participation is sought out. I don't think it happens by default.

INTERVIEWER: -automatically.

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Also, in relation to making decisions about finance, related to energy technologies and access, I mean, it's similar to the question I was asking before- who makes these decisions about finance?

RESPONDENT: See left to itself - it is the men in whom the decision is manifested, whether there is a- I mean, many families have their own internal systems of the man asking the wife - asked- or telling her beforehand, etc, but in terms of process, I think it is it would generally be the men doing it.

INTERVIEWER: Right. What about in terms of cooling needs if you have seen anything like fans because women also stay at home more right? So-

RESPONDENT: Not in our case.

INTERVIEWER: Oh, yeah, okay. Right.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, fans have come in yeah, I think that I missed fans definitely, the- no - no big no- fans are there. Lights and fans, I mean, I probably have bracketing light and fan together. Most houses have at least one table fan the and the newer ones -no table fan is still more popular than a ceiling fan. Because it's portable, right, it can be moved.

INTERVIEWER: It does get rather hot during the afternoons, right, in XXXX.

RESPONDENT: See, at least in most of these cases, even if the house is a new prime minister, Indira was using a concrete house- people don't spend too much time indoors. And except during monsoon and peak winter, they don't sleep inside either. There is a courtyard or they just- men actually sleep on the veranda.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so that is probably the reason why cooling is not such a high priority or-

RESPONDENT: Also, because see the ones who are forced to stay inside are the newly married younger women and then lactating mothers.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: And, and there is definite bias against them because I don't think unless the husband is very, very careful or the husband has just - has been away and just come back you know, from Kerala or from Tamil Nadu where he is working - he brings a fan and takes- especially when the baby and the mother are there.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: So that is a category I mean, definitely a category that gets excluded - newly married brides and- because their ability to come out is much, much limited socially and in case of mothers. I mean, given their condition, new mothers-

INTERVIEWER: With small kids.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah, lactating mothers particularly.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. So, is gender equity in energy access different between urban and rural contexts?

RESPONDENT: I reckon so because of the- because in the urban context, the equity is more the user of the household, it's within the household and the user level, right. And it's much more determined, the, the, the, the, the extra- I mean- external factors of supply are not as much a factor. Whereas in rural the- the equity issue is gender equity second, the access to the village of the locational equity is first.

INTERVIEWER: Right, you're right. So that would also elevate the gender inequities, wouldn't it- if you already get less energy?

RESPONDENT: Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, right. So-

RESPONDENT: But it won't- I don't think it will come out as starkly to a viewer as it does in urban areas. Because, you know, in urban areas, you're talking about exclusion for something that is already there for somebody. Whereas in rural areas, it is exclusion of something that is not there.

INTERVIEWER: Not there in the first place, yeah, okay. And what do you base all this knowledge of that- I mean, whatever you're telling me right now, is it based on certain evidence or experience that you draw on for your knowledge and information regarding the above issues?

RESPONDENT: First-hand observations and experience and also, because we implement a lot of the -lot of these projects, you know, things that you hear from colleagues, but a lot of the energy related work because I myself had managed XXXX XXXX's energy work very early in the micro hydro and the solar work in the early 2000s. We were doing for the first time and as you're planning at the village level, etc. So, a lot of first-hand experience is there.

INTERVIEWER: Could you tell me a little bit more about your -about the micro hydro project? And like, how, how and where and…).

RESPONDENT: I think there are five projects in XXXX district of XXXX.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

RESPONDENT: Done, built during 2002 to 2007. And I think after that once is, once the renewable energy funding substantially reduced, there was no funding available for the capital cost. I don't think we've built- anybody has built anything after 2010.

INTERVIEWER: Right, okay. How many people or households do you think these projects are-

RESPONDENT: .. These are remoter, smaller villages, but I think these five together would be catering to about 200 or 250…

INTERVIEWER: Households.

RESPONDENT: Together. Anywhere from 7 kilowatts to 50.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right, right. So, to what extent does gender equity factor in your work on energy access- in terms of project design, prioritization, policies or even internal processes within your work?

RESPONDENT: Substantially.

INTERVIEWER: If you could give some example.

RESPONDENT: For instance, like I said, household level lighting planning will start with the woman and her need for lighting for her, her chores. And children- children as well. Then the village level institutional systems that we- that we help build to manage these things, has to have equal participation of women, both at leadership levels and general levels. Women are equally - I mean- they have to be equal participation and decision-making responsibilities are equally distributed amongst men and women. Yeah, so, I mean women play a substantial role at the planning during the implementation and the management space.

INTERVIEWER: And this happens, as you said, because you I mean, you obviously plan for that inclusion.

RESPONDENT: Yes, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Right. And how effective do you feel this is in terms of providing gender equity for energy access?

RESPONDENT: Well, I guess, I- I mean- I can say that minus this the provision of service would be suboptimal.

INTERVIEWER: Right, and-

RESPONDENT: It could be in one form or the other above- at the planning and the implementation stage is necessary to make sure that the service I mean, the service provision results in the desired, you know, improvement in quality of life.

INTERVIEWER: Right. And so, what are your views on- I mean, if you- do you feel that there are still some challenges, that if there are some issues, despite you planning for it- if there-

RESPONDENT: When you- the current move towards centralization actually takes away agency from any kind of participatory processes.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: Nobody- I mean, moment you plan- when you're planning for a decentralized solution, there is greater scope for everybody to take part. And, you know, you don't need a representative system to represent the village, you can have everybody in the village coming together and talking and deciding. Whereas, when you have when you- when you -when you -when a system is being built for a whole XXXX Panchayat, which has 10 villages, very few people are going to be there at the decision-making level. So, this representative democracy based decision making leads to substantial exclusion, because the last person's voice is never heard.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

RESPONDENT: That last person can be an old man and old woman, you know, a new bride. In most cases, the last person will be a woman almost by default.

INTERVIEWER: Right. So how do you think energy access policies in your region or within your sector that you're working- how do you think they should be gender sensitive?

RESPONDENT: Can policies be gender sensitive? I don't think so. But if policies provide for broader consultation, and make participation, wider participation a necessary condition, I think equity and many of these factors will get addressed quite automatically. And often policies do not provide for the process, it only provides for the end result. And therefore it - the policies actually tend to become abstract target oriented. And then nobody who follows the policy, I mean, who's implementing the policy has any incentive to do a certain process, which is equitable, which is participatory, etc. So I think it is the intent and the way the policy is detailed that matters.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Right. So, do you think there are policy gaps? I mean, this is the policy gap that you're talking about the- that-

RESPONDENT: Yeah. And then also policies tend to be at a very, very high level.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: And policies tend to be designed above the median.

INTERVIEWER: Right, okay. So, it's more like these supernatural goals, and it doesn't have the granularity that you need from on ground, to make them effective on ground, is that what you mean?

RESPONDENT:To make them equitable to make them inclusive.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. So, what related social policies do you feel have an impact on energy equity?

RESPONDENT: I'm sorry, can you…

INTERVIEWER: Social policies, what kind of social policies do you feel would have an impact on energy equity?

RESPONDENT: What do you mean by social policy?

INTERVIEWER: Well, social policies- there are many such examples actually. For example, if you're just looking at lighting like what one of the things you were talking about was, how lighting is not differential within the household, but it has been seen that with the- this LED bulb and electrification of maximum number of villages and all these proXXXXs within different states, there has been an impact on women's education. As in the greater the electrification, the more the woman gets educated. So it, so that's- that's the energy policy, which has an impact on a social equity. Right? So similarly, do you think there are certain social policies which can have an impact on energy equity?

RESPONDENT: So, policies, proXXXXs that promote greater, you know, participation for women, say like self-help groups, which also kind of provides for some amount of financial inclusion etc., definitely have an impact on energy planning and energy service provision, because these platforms help the women find more voice, both solidarity and in terms of, you know, substantive political voice. And because if the - such platforms were not there, their ability to participate would be much less. I think the one, one very common social, social political policy that has had an influence on women is the reservation in XXXX.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, because that's like doing that representation part, which you were saying was a problem to a problem for-

RESPONDENT: It doesn't solve the limitations of representative democracy, but it gives women far more confidence.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Right. Okay. Interesting. And what changes do you think are required within these equitable access policies? If you could name a few specific changes, which you think would immediately impact equity?

RESPONDENT: Like, I mean, I think the one point that I mean, I'm repeating it is, can policies also say what the process should be? Not-

INTERVIEWER: I understand. Right. And also, centralization was one point you talked about?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, yeah. I mean, of course. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Yeah. So, imagining that there is no policy and financial constraint for a moment, what in your view would be best practice for achieving gender equity in energy access for your region? Or your work?

RESPONDENT: Sorry, can you - assuming there is no policy or financial constraints-

INTERVIEWER: Financial constraint. What in your view would be best practice for achieving gender equity in energy access within your work and region context?

RESPONDENT: Handover energy management to women.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, and why?

RESPONDENT: I find that they are better managers of community infrastructure than men are. I mean, when I say infrastructure, not just the physical infrastructure, but also the - the service provision, and, and their understanding because both energy and water and I'm speaking in the context of both energy and water, I think the- the -the- the balance of benefits fall much greater for women than men. And that water, definitely a lot more -energy, maybe it's evenly balanced. But both cases, women seem to have greater managerial capability than I mean, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Interesting, so-

RESPONDENT: Even, even a- a co participant, I mean, equal number of men and women being there.

INTERVIEWER: Right. So how do you think this can be achieved?

RESPONDENT: Well, if, if, if user pays is a very strong neoliberal principle user owns this can be an equally strong principle, right?

INTERVIEWER: Interesting. That's a very interesting model, which actually should not be too hard to implement if there is intention, right?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So, I mean, in fact that the- the -the- a lot of the irrigation related institution building talks about men owning it, because men are the ‘farmers’, right? Then drinking water should completely be with women, because they are the ones who use it to -men have - men just consume it in a glass or in a bucket.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Right. So, what would be the challenges in achieving this for women?

RESPONDENT: Oh. Because it's not women making policy. Even if it’s women making policy they are more men than women themselves. So, you need more women - women making policy.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, right. So, in your current position in your current work, do you think there is a way you can achieve this?

RESPONDENT: Well, we- we do we try our best. We- we- we've- in fact, villages that we have been working with in the past did not I mean, so we- we kind of move on from a village once a certain amount of interventions are done. Now, we are going back and examining what has happened to the institutional system, we are making very, very specific interventions where we found that men had taken over control, excluding women, so, we are taking definite steps to bring, I mean, wherever they had slipped out, to bring the women back, to understand why they slipped out, and what kind of institutional- better institutional systems need to be put in place to ensure that women continue to have a decision-making role. So, we are doing that.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Coming to financial structures for energy access, how gendered do you think financial- gender aware, gender sensitive do you think financial structures or financial processes are for energy access, especially renewable energy access?

RESPONDENT: Very little, I guess, I don't know, if any energy related- related financing looks at women as a-

INTERVIEWER: -separate stakeholder with different needs? That's not, you don't think that's registered in- within finance processes.

RESPONDENT: Because there aren't too many finance processes when it, I mean, other than public finance, I mean, subsidies and government schemes, and maybe some mixed in, some grant making donors. There isn’t the very, you know, evolved or even evolving financial support - financial ecosystem for energy, right? As in-

INTERVIEWER: As well, there are even loans and micro loans, which are given for different uses.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I mean, the micro loan already looks at the woman as a customer, not as an energy user, I mean, she is a member of the SAG. And whether it's a energy loan, whether it is a sanitation loan, or whether it is a, you know, consumption loan, it's a loan to a woman. So, there isn't any energy specificity in that. There is general finance provision, there is definitely- the self help groups and the micro finance systems have brought in a certain amount of certain perspective on, you know, kind of a gender perspective there. But I don't think there is anything specific to energy in that.

INTERVIEWER: Right. So there, they are not gender aware, according to you, they don't really see if there is a difference- different need.

RESPONDENT: The- the energy specific finances, I think yeah, what you said is right.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Is there anything else you would like us to add to this discussion, which I have not really covered? Any experience you want to share specific to this topic?

RESPONDENT: Nothing I can kind of think of top of my head.

INTERVIEWER: So, I wanted to ask one question, you know, in the villages and the rural areas in the tribal areas that you work in, could you just ballpark give me an approximate idea of like household income levels?

RESPONDENT: Oh, cash incomes would be very …. So, what- about 40,000 rupees annual income would be better off.

INTERVIEWER: Would be the better off groups.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So, 40,000 would be way about- way above median. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And educational level?

RESPONDENT: Increasing now. But if you take a population average, for instance, in XXXX, where we work, recently, we had completed a survey around migration and this- the median is class 7, I think.

INTERVIEWER: Class 7? And when we factor in gender? Women’s education?

RESPONDENT: Much less. I don't, I don't remember exactly, but definitely much less.

INTERVIEWER: And because you've specifically worked on migration, approximately what percentage of the household would you think of the - number of households would be sending, I would assume they are men outside to work?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, most men because- so this one, I mean, cu- we're now doing extensive surveys in four blocks. And the range of current migration is -current interstate migration is from 20 to 23, 24%.

INTERVIEWER: 24%? Of the-

RESPONDENT: Yeah. 20 to 24% of the households. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Of the households send their- and it is principally the men who go out to work or do the women do?

RESPONDENT: Of the total migrants only about less than 5% are women in our case.

INTERVIEWER: And they work interstate meaning they mostly work in other parts of India, which is which regions mainly?

RESPONDENT: South and the West.

INTERVIEWER: South and the West, okay. Thank you so much. I think I'm more or less done with my - I would think, it was very interesting discussion. If there are any follow up questions that arise when we are analysing the information and the various data we are collecting, would it be okay for us to send you back an email with follow up questions?

RESPONDENT: Sure, yes.

INTERVIEWER: And thank you so much. And I will be sharing a copy of the interview transcript very soon. Okay?

RESPONDENT: Yes, thank you.

INTERVIEWER: So, I'm just going to switch off the recording.

RESPONDENT: I realised I didn't- I was watching you but my video wasn't on. Sorry about that.