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| **Interviewer name** | INTERVIEWER |
| **Sub-contractor organisation** | XXXX |
| **Interview date** | XXXX |
| **Duration of interview audio recording** | 1 hour 20 minutes 26 seconds |
| **Face-to-face or virtual interview** | Virtual |
| **Interview participant** | |
| **Code** | I17 |
| **Participant name** | RESPONDENT |
| **Organisation name** | **XXXX** |
| **Gender** | Male |
| **Stakeholder category** | Technical professional in Government job |
| **Country** | India |

**Introduction**

**INTERVIEWER** 00:11

So, good afternoon, XXXX, thank you so much for agreeing to join in this research project that we are working with, we highly appreciate your time in participating in our study that aims to have a better understanding of energy access and gender equity in India.

**Consent**

Before we start, I would like to check that you have completed in return the consent form and restate some points from that. So have you completed and return to the consent form?

**RESPONDENT** 00:44

Yes, I have I have completed and sent you the consent form. And as well as written on mail as well. And largely, I could gather that you are trying to assess the, you know, the accessibility of clean cooking fuel and electricity, etc. in our country, and how professionals like us who are working with the oil sector firms have been associated with it and what are our perceptions? And what are our learnings and experiences while we made these policies and all this, you know, made available to the last mile and to the people who really needed it.

**INTERVIEWER** 01:28

Yeah, right. So, yeah, that's exactly what we are requesting you to share your experience and expertise as someone working in the energy 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** 01:45

Yeah...you may record.

**INTERVIEWER** 01:46

is a 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 should take about an hour or a little more than an hour.

**Part 1:**

Okay. So, can you start by briefly telling me about your current role and the organization you work for?

**RESPONDENT** 02:19

Okay, I work from for an organization called XXXX. This is the XXXX

**INTERVIEWER** 03:49

Buying of the?

**RESPONDENT** 03:50

XXXXX

**INTERVIEWER** 04:37

Right. And what is your background?

04:44

Oh, I have done my MBA from XXXX earlier than that I was a science graduate. And then I joined this company in XXXX.

**INTERVIEWER** 04:54

So you've been with XXXX the entire time.

**RESPONDENT** 05:00

XXXX years almost...

**INTERVIEWER** 05:02

okay. Yeah. So....

**RESPONDENT** 05:04

for the last XXXX years now,

**INTERVIEWER** 05:07

okay. So other than LPG and LPG and clean cooking fuels, are there others specific energy related activities or programs you've undertaken within your work?

**RESPONDENT** 05:23

Yeah, other than LPG I also dealt with the natural gas programs for my own company, we develop that business for seven eight years. And other than this for the energy part and this is since LPG is the one that you know, which reaches out to every poor household across the country the last difference which I made and so, my efforts are have been largely devoted into gas gaseous fuels, which are the green fuels, which are LPG plus the natural gas these two fields which are very big..

**INTERVIEWER** 05:59

Okay. And to what extent do you think access to energy features in your work?

**RESPONDENT** 06:07

Access to energy features in a very large way because currently... the in the last seven to eight years, the comments and our company's main program has been to make this you know, green energy accessibility or access to all the households... poor households in the country. And with that efforts, let me tell you today, we have reached about 99% of the households in terms of LPG accessibility. With this almost 80 million connections which give it to the poor households in the last three and a half years and another 10 million lined up for this year as well in next two years, which the government has just announced. So, with that, we should be able to you know, touch all the household parameters or the households which would not take this step of you know, buying the connection in the first place. And secondly, then we will be looking at and we are already looking at making these households use this accessible energy which we have provided to them even that is being monitored through various consumption patterns and various interventions by us and as well as government...

**INTERVIEWER** 07:26

Okay, and so, you were talking about the people who can who still cannot access, so, how do you see the differential access for energy in your work like different people with different accessibility issues right to LPG?

**RESPONDENT** 07:46

Like different people with different accessibility issues, yes. Now, when we went around, you know, looking at the reasons for why people were not able to access this energy throughout our country in the last four years before that. So, there are various reasons came out of that. And the number one reason was the affordability factor. Second part was the accessibility factor, whether the energy was made available in the surroundings where they stay. And so, these two factors contributed towards their, not being able to use this energy which was available otherwise to the urban sector places in the country. So, government in their own wisdom, went around attacking these two factors in a very big way, which is called the affordability factor and the accessibility factor, and in both these areas in my company has contributed immensely in terms of participating in providing the first connections to the individuals, especially the woman. All these connections, which we have given in the last six year, four year five years to XXXX have been given to the women and the accessibility we have provided about 10,000 more LPG distributorships in the various you know, *durgam* (far out) areas, as we put it the *door daraaj ilakas* (far flung places)... the areas which were not accessible, new distributorship have been provided in small formats, so that we are able to reach out to these customers more effectively across India. So, as a feature of this, more bottling plants were made operational and more LPG got you know, all their supply chain more LPG got imported, bottled and reached the last mile. Because unless I make all these things available, making just a connection is no use. So I have to service this thereafter throughout the life of that customer. So we have attached importance to each part of this value chain and company is involved. In all these activities and made sure that all these customers which are made in all these areas, were being served by a distributor not more than 10 to 15 kilometers away, and they are in that radius all of them, which is a normal radius for operating and distributors.

**INTERVIEWER** 10:17

Okay, so, clarification about the *durgam* or the *dur daraa*j areas that you are talking about... is it just distance which makes this place in accessible?

**RESPONDENT** 10:29

XXXX, It's not distance, it is a topography also, it is the way... that it can be a desert it can be a hilly area, it can be in the middle of you know, forest areas, where the villages are far flung, but there are people who are staying around it can be your islands, we have all kinds of topography in our country and we have reached all points we have reached all points... North to South, East to West wherever ... Andaman islands or it is Ladakh area or Kargil, or northeastern part of the country, which are you know, accessibility is an issue we have reached everywhere, that's what I mean...

**INTERVIEWER** 10:32

Okay. So, it is mainly physical inaccessibility that you're talking about?

**RESPONDENT** 10:55

Yeah unless I am available to serve the customer, there is a customer and there is a service provider, we all operate through service providers in the country, especially the LPG.. we have LPG distributorships who operate and they serve their customers. So, they have to be located in the nearby areas. And similarly, these distributors are also to be served through by bottling plants, which should also be in the vicinity of 150 to 200 kilometers away. So, that there is an effective network to serve and make this refills available at not more than 24 hours call by the customer,

**INTERVIEWER** 11:58

Okay, so, I wanted to just ask you also whether you have seen any other factors of inaccessibility, other than physical inaccessibility,

**RESPONDENT** 12:11

Other factors, first factor affordability, I think you've captured that also. The major factor is affordability. The people who are not able to or not accessing this energy because they cannot afford it. They could not afford 1000 rupees or let's say the minimum money required to buy a cylinder and even after being given that cylinder today, the next challenge from me for me is to let them have that 500 rupees to 600 rupees to buy the next refill on a 300 rupees to buy a five kg cylinder after that. So, affordability remains my prime you know, prime mover in terms of accessibility even today after providing that right. So, today, we are working around to see that they are able to buy the second refill, the third refill. Though they have money on a day to day basis because of the way they work... but to get out that 300 rupees, 400 rupees at one go to buy a refill is where we are trying to intervene in various ways through various self help groups and al...

**INTERVIEWER** 13:15

Okay. So, within the policy context shaping your work, because you are actually working within a major government policy of 100% LPG connectivity, what current Are there any current issues or challenges that you find which needs policy corrections?

**RESPONDENT** 13:37

I missed your last word... Are there any issues which need policy corrections? Currently, as I see from this perspective, policy corrections, look along the way in the last four years, when we started this scheme, and from the time we started on from where we are, we have from time to time corrected the policy or the scheme to you know, bring more and more people part of the scheme. It started with giving to those people who were part of the socio economic class census done in 2011. We started the scheme in that fashion. Then we realized after a period of one and a half years that only a lot of people have moved out, a lot of people have changed the document is old. So the government corrected that scheme and included the seven most other factors you know, category of people like all the SC categories or the forest dwellers or all those who are in living in economically fragile areas or difficult areas, and were poor to be given that scheme extended the scheme. And in the last phase they again corrected the scheme to include all the tours, but there were many OBC class people who were not being covered in the scheme. again. So, today as the scheme stands, it is for universally for all poors without caste creed culture for all the pores and the female of the family. Some of the corrections were required, there were families who were not having females, the male members were only there. So, for them especially interventions came out and we give it to from some other schemes also. For the current 10 million, which have been you know, allocated again, for this next two years or so, by the government, they are trying to cover tracks again to see that this time if there are any people who are still left out because of any other reasons, like not holding any proof of address, where they stay, or they have migrated and are not carrying certain documentations on their part to take those connections, even there the policy corrections are being brought in, to see that all such people who are actually needing this accessibility to this clean energy are given and none of them is not is deprived, because of any of these policy matters. Normally, what we need for giving these connections is an Aadhaar card or a proof of residence and a bank account to transfer the subsidies. So, all these things are required for giving these connection just to make sure that they get the subsidies in the banks, they have something to you know fall back upon when they buy these refills and all. So, there was a intervention required today the minister again held a meeting and he has mentioned that in case a customer is not carrying a proof of address, formal proof of address, then we can go for self certification kind of situations. So, this is what we are, you know, currently working on to see that all people get covered if there is any thing which is you know, hampering them not to take this connection that should be taken. We are also trying to give them a self service kind of a scenario where they can themselves enroll through an app or a portal. That is also government's objective, though, I really doubt whether any of them will be able to really use them. But we will anyhow provide so that anybody else who can be able to assist them, they can apply on their own also, instead of we going and asking them, the customers will be made, in case they themselves want to take this collection accessible, make it available, they can also go forward.

**INTERVIEWER** 17:37

So I had a follow up question on the male.. women less households that you were talking about? Can you just explain that a bit to me? I mean, I'll just kind of put the context on this. One is of course where I mean it's a family where probably the woman is not there or she has passed away...that is one group. But then there would also be like, what you were talking about migrant population where, you know, groups of men probably live together because they have migrated to work somewhere and the women are back at home. So that's the other group. But the third group, I want you to tell me about within your policy structure and within your work structure ... the non binary like the trans people or people who are outside the binary definitions of household.

**RESPONDENT** 18:31

We have we have kept provision for them as well.

**INTERVIEWER** 18:34

So, could you elaborate a little bit on that?

**RESPONDENT** 18:39

Today, as you rightly pointed out, I can tell you, we are taking care of this group as well... while we give these give these connections.

**INTERVIEWER** 18:51

So, I mean, groups of say homosexual men living together

**RESPONDENT** 18:57

Yeah, all genders in that category...

**INTERVIEWER** 19:01

So they can take a connection by themselves even if they don't follow the...

**RESPONDENT** 19:06

Qualify on the BPL policies.... Yes, they can.

**Part 2:**

**INTERVIEWER** 19:09

Ok, thank you so much. So, what does equitable energy access mean to you?

**RESPONDENT** 19:20

Equitable access energy to me basically means that the energy when it is being made accessible, it does not classify people on any caste creed culture or gender. Or and the only part which can you know make a difference is the affordability factor even that government has intervened to nullify that. So, which means (hindi) that whether it is poor or rich or anybody else, then energy accessibility is open to all - it is not to a certain place, or a certain category or a certain people all have the equal rights and opportunity to buy it. The opportunity when I say I just want to emphasis the fact that the companies may not you know, service certain areas because of inaccessibility things they are being inaccessible or something like that or when it becomes..., but even that is to be considered when we say (hindi) that energy is being made accessible to these people. So, the companies like us, have gone to such extent also to see that all inaccessible areas also where it is difficult for normally the energy to be made accessible on a continuous basis are also serviced through our network which may be located a little bit far away, but they come there on a very regular basis to make those things.

**INTERVIEWER** 20:56

Right. So, I just have a clarification, like you were talking about how energy should be accessible to everybody without gender, caste, and any other factors as barriers. So, all of us who work with like, aspects of gender and all we feel that unless programs have the gender lens and yesterday, for the last two days, I've also been talking to people who are working with caste groups and all. And so, that was one of the first questions What question I had was, have you seen pools of inaccessibility within an accessible area, like say for example, within an urban area or something, have you seen certain pools of inaccessibility, which are either because of places like urban slums, informal housing, that kind of spaces or because of certain racial or caste distinctions? That is number one, and number two is when we are trying to make something accessible to everybody there is this whole conversation that you need to have the gender lens and the caste lens to make these programs gender friendly and cost friendly. So, how do you incorporate these two things? So, these are two separate questions.

**RESPONDENT** 22:21

Answer to the first part of that is that I have really not seen any discrimination occurring on that account in either urban slum areas or wherever we have seen on that basis, the energy is being differentiated or not being made available or is not accessible to any class or any such person in within a class of people it is it's not there that way. It is because frankly, speaking in our databases, we were actually not capturing the class of a person in a sense key, what stature is what you know, cos they belong to that field particularly as was not part of my database at all. I was simply going by we have been simply going by the person who saw that she or he may be as an household and accessible has been the LPG has been made accessible to them. This is how it has been going and as far as the second part of your question was that... what did you wanted know?

**INTERVIEWER** 23:34

I yeah. So, what I was asking is that how do you employ the gender lens and in the context of India caste lens to ensure that that your program is actually gender friendly and coste friendly?

**RESPONDENT** 23:52

Okay. To tell you have a very straightforward answer to this is that when we know it's a practical answer, and it should answer you, when we actually started giving connections under the current scheme, which we have already given about 80 million.... we were... though the scheme you know, said (hindi) that we are going to help all people it was basically pointing out towards the poverty part. The entire... the story or the commentary revolved around poverty base not around a particular caste, creed, culture or it revolved around something economically fragile zones in between which one inaccessible like the, the forest areas... dwellers in the forest, to whom the energy was not being made available. So the such class into glass people will connected but not in terms of as far as to SC/ST/OBC Muslims, or things like that, though, I don't rule out that when they finally look at the numbers and see where whoever who has got within that those groups, they may be able to get certain numbers that A-B-C has got so much, X-Y-Z has got so much...those are fine those are all statistics, but while giving all this or making it available to these customers, these numbers ... these parameters are not being applied at all because, I am not saying I am giving to you because you belong to a SC/ST and I am not giving to you because you are a general category or anything like that. Or though XXXX stated we are only giving to women as a very specific thing that's to empower women there. That was a very, very, you know, thoughtful thing done by the government with a view that the women of the society gets empowered in India and to make them feel part of the entire social program. So that's how the women were chosen over men to be given such connections in the families in the 80 million that we have reached .... that's what I like to say in terms of gender differences.

**INTERVIEWER** 26:06

Right. So, from that question, What does gender equity in energy access mean to you and I don't mean just a clean fuel I mean, in your opinion and understanding of energy, electricity, fuel everything...

**RESPONDENT** 26:26

To us gender... actually, we provided and we just record we do not say we will only give it to any particular gender. Anybody who is having... willing to pay for it ... its gender agnostic. So, whether it is male, female, or transgender or any third category is the accessibility to is open to....

**INTERVIEWER** 26:59

Okay, and...

**RESPONDENT** 27:01

that that goes in in my this thing in my you know, allocation of I mean, when I went in this is providing the energy to the households over your usage. In our company also follow similar guidelines when we have these distributorships and retail outlets and all the things operation, so we follow the government guidelines. So, they're also mostly as till a few years ago, we were only following the it was open to all... They were satisfying all categories also.

**INTERVIEWER** 27:39

And you think the same parameters and same processes will benefit ... all will be accessible to everybody. You don't need to modify your systems and processes or structures to address different needs? XXXX right now, I think right now, my all my structures and everything are aligned to give it to all genders... in fact we really don't look at them this way and I am doing my own things... Okay, okay. So, how is demand for energy determined in your work?

**RESPONDENT** 28:19

The demand for energy in my work is determined through the consumption patterns, how other people are consuming it over a period of time last year, this year, what is a general... how like if I talk to me about LPG. So, we do a calculation of what is the actual consumptions happening urban areas and other places and forecasting how the cooking patterns are changing or things. So, it goes region wise, it goes like India, if I divide into four regions, the North has a different flavor, East has a different flavor, there is a seasonal variation in demands. But then again at the end of the day, I do get a per kg per customer per unit consumption demand really comes out of it, what is a per capita consumption which has come out and why it is low, let's say you know XXXX and why it is higher in urban customers in terms of the alternate use being available to them. So, things like that based on that we do come out with a single digit number or a per capita consumption and have the projection for the next year is how they come out.

**INTERVIEWER** 29:33

Right. So you were just talking about the diversity right like diversity and usage and consumer needs. How do you... what criteria do you have to map these diversity? within your data?

**RESPONDENT** 29:47

Criteria, basically criterias are based on diversity is based on the weather conditions, then the overall places where they stay, then the food habits, plus the kind of you know, socio economic things which are there, which leads to the differential usages patterns and diversity in using the same fuel. And the eating habits also are part and parcel of the same thing how people eat, when they cook. All those things are, you know, it's a study in itself to see how different and it's the same fuel is being used differently by the people across the country.

**INTERVIEWER** 30:35

Interesting, very interesting. And has gender been a criteria in your data collection?

**RESPONDENT** 30:43

No, no, not gender, I consider household as my criteria. Fine. Thankfully, speaking, I considered one connection after I've given I don't even look at the gender who is user and whose name it has gone to. Ultimately... we consider that it's a family of at least three or four, which uses my connection, the name on the connection doesn't really matter whose name it is, ultimately, the users are the core members of the family. So I consider that household as my key factor, not the gender.

**INTERVIEWER** 31:17

Right. So how equitable do you think is energy access at household level in terms of gender? Do you think men and women use same amount of energy in at the household level?

**RESPONDENT** 31:39

Can I have the question again?

**INTERVIEWER** 31:41

Do you think that men and women you use the same amount same quantity of energy at a household level?

**RESPONDENT** 31:50

It will be a very answer to this will be again, I think so both of them. But yeah, the women possibly should be using more of it, as I see it. Because they are more into that side of the field at their homes. Men are sparse users, in terms of they contribute slightly lesser than women in a household in terms of cooking and other things. But when it comes to slightly commercial organizations, and certainly institutions, their men might be the bigger users of these energy. But in terms of how their energy is to be utilized, and at what rate they're there, the men will be using it and certainly more than the women but largely, I see that women are contributing more at the house cooking at the household, yes.

**INTERVIEWER** 32:46

Okay. And but at the community level or public structure level, you are...

**RESPONDENT** 32:50

At the community level, I feel that men will be in a better place... they use it.

**INTERVIEWER** 32:56

Okay, so, like, we were already talking about it, how do you see what is that difference that you're talking about in household that women will be using more energy, why do women use more energy in households?

**RESPONDENT** 33:14

Because women are the lifeline of a household basically, in terms of the traditional roles, which we have, you know, kind of, you know, mindset or roles, which are there in our society for the women from a homemaker to you know, also contributing towards earnings of the home, she is available everywhere. So, in terms of user of energy at home, it will be the woman who will be more at home, after even she does some work outside, to make food for the family and things like that. So, apart from doing all the works which she does, maybe for the sake of family, she is given the role of looking after the household and providing for it in terms of the food. So all those things which are at home, in terms of the kitchen, or whatever the things are being done as a householder, it is a woman who is the prime factors. So they are the ones who really carry the things forward. And the primary user are them only whether it is electricity, or is cooking, or washing or things like that. So that's how I feel that they are a bigger benefactors. Because when I see the accessibility of LPG, how a woman has been helped it is tremendous, tremendous, it has changed their life tremendously. Because all this role they were doing by fetching the wood from the forest. First going out, then getting it, then you know, trying to lit the fire all.... they have cut down almost three to four hours a day.... by single effort of providing the LPG cylinder. They can look after their children well, they can now devote more time towards you know, doing what they were doing in case they were involved in any economical activities at home or otherwise. So, all those who have really adopted to it, there it is their life which has changed tremendously, I must say that, if you go out in certain villages, you will find the change which has brought to their life plus the health factor, they were the ones who are you know, consuming or inhaling this smoke of householder fires which were on the *chullahs* and with this, they are the ones who are you know, much better off in terms of whether pregnant woman or otherwise or the children at home or the elderly which have got the benefit out of it, it is a woman who got the benefit of health as well. So, this is how I look at the entire scenario, how these effort has changed their life in that fashion. So, that itself proves that it is them who were actually undertaking all these activities, because they were the ones suffering in the absence of a clean energy,

**INTERVIEWER** 36:13

Right, right. So, my follow up question to this is that within this specific domain of clean cooking, there are certain challenges which you are facing, I mean, we all know XXXX of course, in terms of connectivity has done tremendously, but there have been some bottlenecks in terms of sustainability like the getting the refills and all especially when the women haven't been there and payments to be done right. So, and many other factors I mean, like in including the inaccessibility into including problems with doorstep delivery etc., there are so many things, which have thrown up challenges to the sustained use of clean cooking fuel, like even if you have a connection, many families use it sporadically or they do stacking, they use it for some some time and when they run out for the next month, they might be using another kind of fuel and it also those kind of challenges have been there within your specific sector. So, I just want you to talk to me, whether you see aspects of gender, influence these challenges in your sector of clean cooking fuel.

**RESPONDENT** 37:27

To answer your question, I like to say yes, we are experiences all these things, as I mentioned during my earlier part of the interview as well that we have experienced that even after providing the connections we are facing issues in terms of sustainability repurchase, consuming the refills constantly or on and off basis. There yes, I feel the people who gender has play... I we find the certain things very which we came out of certain studies and certain experiences what we found that if the male member of the family gets interested in the whole story at home, or the earning member of the family, male or female, let's say, laregly It is male most of the times.. females... they are the younger ones in the family who are just young adults, the family, they get interested in the health story, those are the households which are you know, they start using or adopt to LPG much faster, in terms of they getting interested in terms of how it is impacting their households. So, this is what my perception has been in various things which we have done. So that's why in our talks in our, in our XXXX campaigns, which we did the village panchayats, but we did a to make people aware about using it, we started involving more males into the talks. A male sort of family is also part of the things though earlier, we were trying to only address it to the women or the family. So we started addressing them as well and becoming part of the dialogue and things which are going on so that they get interested in terms of being aware about the ill effects of the health the entire thing has on their family and how on an overall way it is going to economically benefit them by using this LPG because they were actually not considering the money they spend on keeping themselves healthy or when they get to, you know, all those things. So, so those are things which we realized and, and we have seen those households wherever the kids are going to the school or things like that. And the women are self involved in some economic activity. There also, that activity has been faster because she could, you know, devote more time she was able to purchase through her own earnings. So they're also they became so they were different stories coming out of it. But one large commentary came out that males should be equuitable in shouldering this responsibility, and be, you know, informed about all these things, along with the women, though they are the subscribers. That's what I like to say in terms of gender, how they're influencing the buying behaviors.

**INTERVIEWER** 40:47

That's really interesting. So that brings me to the question of how the campaign, the public campaign, which has been strategized, because this is a like a major mass campaign that the government has done for the XXXX scheme, right. But all the pictures, everything was about the woman, no?. So I'm just wondering if that kind of becomes a barrier in sustainability, because as you yourself, relate to me out of your experience, that men actually have a role in maintaining the sustainability, especially because they are the ones, ultimately, the main earners of the family, right? Yeah. So there's some

**RESPONDENT** 41:32

I, we have really not, the basic idea why the campaign has run around women has been very noble, has a very large thought behind it. Because it was emerging our thought process, which is empowering women per se. The empowerment part of the theme and the story was running in a large way when the scheme started. And it since they were the most impacted party in terms of, because as I said, they are the ones who are involved in the household activities, the direct benefit comes to them. And as we all try to see that women do, you know, motivate, instigate, and are the life center of the households, so thought was to project them as the brand ambassadors and the ones who are getting the most benefit, and the children around them. That's what like all campaigns, later on, I think some family things did come up came up. For the largely the story has been around the women, the thought process have been around the women and the men contributing in terms of the Yes, that part of the story we have not brought out in the campaign. You have still not brought out in the templates, though, we can switch over to a family situation. Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER** 42:56

Interesting. So I just wanted to ask you, like, you know, you've been part of the energy sector all your life. And I mean, so XXXX of course, is a whole program which specifically targets women as you have been talking about and tries to benefit and empower women. But when you see other new energy infrastructure technologies are provided. So I'm asking this question outside the clean cooking fuel discussion into the general energy infrastructure and technologies including, you know, petrol and diesel and vehicular fuels etc. new Energy, infrastructure and technologies when they are provided. Do you do you see any difference between men and women in terms of who benefits more out of such programs?

**RESPONDENT** 44:09

Yeah, I heard your question I what I was trying to say was that all the new age fields which are coming up, they are gender neutral, nothing to differentiate between men and not. Whether it is petrol, diesel, biodiesel, CBG natural gas let's say LNG, or the electric mobility or the whatever you call, all those are attainable... nothing. All anybody can exist. They are no accessibility barriers are on the basis of gender.

**INTERVIEWER** 44:50

Okay, okay. Okay. So outside your specific work. This is just the view, opinion that I'm seeking from you. What are your views on who makes decisions about what technologies or appliances are purchased and used in the home? Does it matter what infrastructure is how it is provided? So who are the decision makers, according to you?

**RESPONDENT** 45:16

It should say, this decision makers in our society, even today, maybe around 60% males 40% female, I put it that way, it is not one gender. But it will be a combination of the both. But yeah males are largely making the decisions. That what I feel in many technologies, usage of technologies are the fuel, or things like that. their opinion does matter. But off late, we find that females are equally you know, are able to make these decisions though they do take the help of other people also.

**INTERVIEWER** 46:06

Right. And if we expand the scale outside the home, do you think men and women participate equally in decision making about energy access, say, in local scales, or even bigger national scales? Or Yes, they do it within finance questions, questions of finance? As far as energy access goes...

**RESPONDENT** 46:33

There also it I won't put it, let me put it is not still not very equitable, though women, the percentage of women is really high. Maybe males will be slightly still on a larger percentage basis, will be taking such decisions, maybe it's 35 45% this way, but I see men still taking slightly more percentage of decisions than the women.

**INTERVIEWER** 47:00

Right. Right. So, just wanted to again, clarify with you. So, you feel that even though it within households, women are the main energy consumers and the women spend more time at home and do most of the domestic works at home, while men step out to earn work outside and earn, even then you feel within the household, decision making about energy usage, even today, men would, though women are coming up but men still would have a larger voice is what you what you have seen.

**RESPONDENT** 47:38

Yes, yes. Yes.

**INTERVIEWER** 47:41

Just trying to summarize, yeah. Okay. So, what about between urban and rural context? Do you see a difference in gender equity in energy access between urban and rural context? gender equity differences?

**RESPONDENT** 48:03

Yes, there are gender equity differences, also, I think, urban areas, it is more equitable than in rural areas, I believe. So, and it directly evolves out of the economic independence, what the both the genders have in urban areas. So which gives them the greatest strength and confidence to make certain decisions like that. That's this is how it is and urban areas, I find it is more equitable, is more equal.

Part 3

**INTERVIEWER** 48:43

So since you're working on a project, which is very much targeting women as benefactors of the entire program, I would like you to if you could just elaborate a little bit on like project priorities and policies or specific internal processes that you have employed within your work for this gender equity factor.

**RESPONDENT** 49:12

Okay. In our in our own companies, yes. So, you know, when we started this scheme, yes, we started …., it was directed towards trying to capture the women for the family and making them empowered. So a lot more, you know, women officers and players, and people who are involved in the activity of accessing them and working towards this goal in our own company. But over a period of time, since we have a combination of both the genders working towards it in the field, in the areas in the distributorship levels, in my own company in the process of putting these policies together, somehow all the people who were at the top that time were all males. But it didn't impact in any which ways to, you know, make any policy which was any tilted towards any particular gender. Yeah, we did deal up those issues about those families, we didn't have a female how to deal with them. So we did come up with a very out of the box solutions for such families by putting the funds through our CSR schemes for such families so that we can do. So there we had come out with this particular scheme. And we could do that. But what I feel is (hindi) that in the course of evaluation of these schemes, a lot of people have got involved over a period of time in the last three, four years. A lot of institutions organizations have worked around it, but it really didn't need any special way by a gender to really analyze the entire impact of it or needed a, you know, male to see the things of females to do that, they it came out naturally, it was not very intended that it should be done by AB or C, it all worked, they were more professional on these accounts than anything else. So the companies have been thoughtful on this, but at the same time, there has been no specific inclination towards a particular gender to do such things. Right. And you feel that without that, also, if within your work, you are able to deliver on gender equity, Yes, we are able to deliver. Okay, without that also.

**INTERVIEWER** 51:51

Okay, And beyond your specific work. Do you think energy access policies should be gender sensitive?

**RESPONDENT** 52:03

Energy access policies can be gender sensitive, there are any specific areas where we need to be sensitive about a particular gender, we should be able to accommodate that in our policies. That's what I feel so that it becomes more equitable to all. If a particular point leads to a particular gender, not in a very good advantages position to use that we should let that be part of our thought process and be part of our policies so that that doesn't become a deterrent in not be able to access...

**INTERVIEWER** 52:40

Could you give me an example of what you're talking about? Explain it.

**RESPONDENT** 52:47

I mean, as I said, you know, (hindi) that if, as you said, if there are there's energy accessible policy, and if a particular gender while.... Now what I'm trying to say is he like, for example, in dispensing the New Age fuels. While in my own area of work, let's clean our energy dispensation, what we are doing currently, we are coming out with certain new fuels, from waste to gas fuels, from biofuels and many such things, and the places where it gets dispensed from. And I find that certain places due to certain reasons, a particular gender is not very comfortable dealing and accessing and getting those fuels out of those stations than let's say the service stations or the retail outlets, the females are unable to go and access because of certain various factors in that area or the people who dispense around it. So, what we have done to overcome such apprehensions is to provide certain area certain fuel stations which are being only run by females, which are only being catered by people who are more sensitive towards what they lead in what they do, and are going to be more easier for them to you know, deal with, rather than the other way around. It's like that, we are trying to deal with certain issues which have come to our notice, in the fuel dispensation schemes. Even in the LPG distributions, we have almost 30 to 45% being run by females just to take care of one particular gender dominating the entire supply chain so that people become confident about telling their issues to them and getting the best out of those services. Yeah, something like this.

**INTERVIEWER** 55:01

Yeah. Okay. So, what do you think are... do you think there are any policy gaps around women's access to energy at say international levels or national levels are there do you think...

**RESPONDENT** 55:21

Not that I... its really not stuck me in till now, there are any energy gaps till now, because the whole idea is whenever we are considering a policy, we are making sure that both are able to equitably take it in our systems and in case it is required, we do make certain reservations for a particular class or for females also, so, that they are well represented in the entire mix of things.

**INTERVIEWER** 55:50

Right. Right. Do you think there are social policies which can impact energy equity?

**RESPONDENT** 56:02

Social policies like for example, what is in your mind when you say that?

**INTERVIEWER** 56:07

I mean could be anything for example, education for you, any social policies there are like, like, what we mean is, is energy equity only dependent on energy policies, or there are other factors which impact energy equity?

**RESPONDENT** 56:25

Energy policies come at the last point of time, I mean its the usage, basic things starts from how we start treating genders at our own family level first and how we make those things available as they grow in their lives. Yeah, at the social levels, yes, there are any I won't be able to name such certain things, that things should be made more equitable, I think governments are very aware about that. That's why the education policies and all those have become more equitable in terms of accessibility of the things to women when they want education at all... even at a professional level is also though that gender biases are... gender biases not there, but the ratios are sometimes skewed in certain areas, but the things are improving like in certain engineering fields, you find more males than the female going in that sector. So, those types are differences do come at professional level education. But the policies do not deter, anybody not to enter there.

**INTERVIEWER** 57:33

Right,

**RESPONDENT** 57:33

I think it will be the first year which has been created at these educational institutions, that can be looked into, so that females become more encouraged to enter certain places like that more easily than they think in their minds. But today, I think situations have changed, but there are certain places where I find where the ratios are slightly skewed, who goes where, but then in many other areas, they outnumber the men.

**INTERVIEWER** 58:03

Okay. So, I just wanted to ask you, like for example, the energy sector, which you have been a part of, is considered... is perceived as a very masculine sector, because recently that women have started entering, what do you think are challenges for women in entering the energy sector?

**RESPONDENT** 58:29

Challenges today, the challenge of entering is really not there basically, the challenges emerge out of how they grow up in the country and grow up in the organization. Since I as we all know, they don various hats during the lifespan, but in the energy sector, as we see today, women have reached very top positions in our own company also, they reach the level of highest level which is available to them as executive directors, they do read there, but moving around the country as part of their jobs, sometimes deter them, you know, they look for certain more jobs, which are more stable in terms of where they work at from. In our sector, we are considered an all India sector, we do move around a lot in the country, from operating locations to sales locations to various offices, I still feel females of late have started working in operation operating locations as well. We are heading them also but still the bias is more towards operating those locations which are IT industry information systems or administration offices or such soft skill offices and places where they are trying to be more contributing more in those sectors. In the sale sector also they are doing but again, the ratio level 30% to 40%. So more male because they are able to move, as we see it in in the field area, they are able to move in a particular zone areas more easily than the females are perceived to be. So, I'll blame that on the law and order situations and other all such factors, because the people that deal with are more in terms of the female and male issues are slightly skewed towards the male being operating those locations. So, they... the feeling that they may be overpowered by any other things, but I see that a lot of females today do very well when they even in operating certain situations also. So, yes, these are the factors with deter them... the various movements in various places, the field kind of workings, but they are very comfortable with doing other jobs, which are also equally good, between, you know, bringing out the good part of the things, but then males in the field locations, they are able to, you know, move around much better, more comfortably, not better, I'd say comfortable. Better is again, how they perform.

**INTERVIEWER** 1:01:08

Yeah, but one more one thing is that, especially when I'm talking about something like clean cooking fuel, since your customers are mainly women, wouldn't I mean, of course, I understand that, because of the social and Law and Order structure that we have in our country, a lot of the times for women to move into very remote areas and all might be difficult, but if we did not... if we did not have, don’t you think women actually would be really good at... as field officers, they...

**RESPONDENT** 1:01:42

They are, XXXX, they are, as I said, we have, we have a lot more examples of females are able to perform better in many very, very difficult areas and situations. They hold in fact advantage over men working in those locations, and they are able to connect better with the households and with the females who are the target. And wherever we had these initial workshops or the Panchayats that we have done in the villages, we found females were able to connect better and they performed as good. So, the role in the energy sector for females is definitely there and it is their own mindset sometimes which prevents them from going out there. But wherever they have crossed or crossed over to that side they have performed.

**INTERVIEWER** 1:02:41

But is there any structural support being provided?

**RESPONDENT** 1:02:44

No, structural support is there. Yeah, structural support is there with the entire structure every person who works out in the field, whether it is male or female, has a structure to support at the back. The females are equally supported. And males also. Both have equal kind of support, but females do ... are looked after better. In case we feel there are any such issues...

**INTERVIEWER** 1:03:09

So, yeah, so if you didn't have any policy or financial constraints, what in your view would be the best practice for achieving gender equity in energy access for your context?

**RESPONDENT** 1:03:30

What is it you like to? Can you repeat that question? I will…. didn’t hear it.

**INTERVIEWER** 1:03:36

Yes. So, I just wanted to ask you, if you did not have any policy or financial constraints for a moment or any other constraint, what in your view would be the best way for us to achieve gender equity in energy access within your contexts,

**RESPONDENT** 1:03:59

if there are no financial constraints, nothing and reaching out to for gender equality for me it will be reaching out to you know, since currently also we do not really are not segregating among the people when we talk to them or only in certain areas we are focusing on females for that factor.. will be that I reach out to them with the only the conceptual benefits which arise out of using those energy factors rather than focus focusing on their individual lives or individual genders or getting impacted by it rather go with the thought process of health. For the family, how it is going to impact the overall environment, their own self and how it is going to contribute overall, rather than focusing on certain gender specific benefits when they use it... I would rather like to focus if it is available across the board without any problem.

**INTERVIEWER** 1:05:07

Okay, now I have, for example, what I meant was that you were talking about affordability as a major factor in having clean cooking fuel as a sustainable, accessible energy for women, right? Because at the end of the day, because of our social structure, women are the ones who are doing maximum amount of cooking. So, when clean cooking is not available to Clean Fuels are not available to them, they are using dirty fuels, and there are health impacts the healthy impact is definitely much more for her than for the rest of the family, because she is inside the kitchen. Right? So that is a that is an inequity. Right, yeah. So, if you don't have any financial constraints, and you did talk about financial constraint as a major factor for affecting this change. So, what would be your way to address this situation, then, where a woman can access energy, clean cooking energy whenever she wants or needs it...

**RESPONDENT** 1:06:10

if the financial constraints are not there, that's why I said today, even if even if I say that the woman is my focus, and I try to focus all my promotion and education on the women itself and try to say it is helping them but the financial constraints are not able to she's not able to make such decisions. And if the financial constraints are taken away, and she's in position to make such decisions, so my entire dialogue around that will change. I'll rather focus on how that is going to help her out in a different way. Without focusing, I'd rather focus on accessibility making it available as near to her as possible on the click of a button or a call or anybody around that area. So that now the focus will be to make it available as she wants in the most easiest fashion. So that other factors which impact than non-availability, in terms of, you know, when she needs it, it is two days away three days away. And when she doesn't know where to call whom to contact, if those things, all the logistics factors, which go which are also part of the problem sometimes which you are mentioning, are the ones I will try to focus on and make it available closer to the place of use. And in the fashion and in the packages which she will like to use. And so that when she needs it, it is just available, the way it is made available, like a grocery store. So, I'll make I'll work around in that area more, which is a larger area for me to work on, I'll make the accessibility factor as a larger focus to me, then the affordability factor, forget about the affordability factor complete.

**INTERVIEWER** 1:08:06

Right. Right. That's interesting. So, I mean, I was... XXXX was talking to me about also, you know, the inaccessibility part of like, even if the connection is in the name of the woman, a lot of the times the phone number will be the man's because either the woman does not have a smartphone or she will not be able to put in the like, do the orders and stuff like that. So yeah, how do you think such barriers can be overcome?

**RESPONDENT** 1:08:47

Today I have only technology as one of the answers. Currently where I take calls, I don't need a smartphone for a booking I just need a small call on VRS number to leave a missed call for me to enable and delivered that we have come to that level. That is point number one. Point number two is I have the common service centers, the village level entrepreneurs doing this job for me in terms of booking as well as delivery of cylinders, as and when they she needs it. So, she'd need not have the phone to do it she can simply walk down there and get the booking done and get the cylinder. So, these are the factors which we are we have worked around on those things. And third is to make my delivery person reach out to them on their own to figure out if they need it so they will provide it and book it for them as their own mobile phone and deliver it right there. So that kind of facility I've given to my delivery person today. That if he contacts and meets a person who needs her LPG, he books it right there on his own phone... deliver it right there.. an invoice is given to the customer right there. many such things have come out. So that the customer had multiple ways to reach me, or I reach them?

Part 4

**INTERVIEWER** 1:10:15

Okay. So, now we come to actually the finance question, do you think finance processes for energy need to be gender sensitive?

**RESPONDENT** 1:10:27

Finance processes like well which processes?

**INTERVIEWER** 1:10:34

Oh well I will take it out of XXXX and as you say for example, commercial gas connections okay and there are many women who operate from home or outside the home also as people who produce commercial food, right? Now, for that she might need certain financial support to start up the business, to sustain the business, to get over certain blocks in the business she might need, she might need to upgrade from two cylinders to five cylinders. Are their finance processes, which ...? Are you aware of finance processes which support such livelihood initiatives by women through your sector or other sectors of energy?

**RESPONDENT** 1:11:29

As far as my sector is concerned XXXX, there are business associates in my in our teams who does support certain things like that, where the consumers do not invest in the cylinders, they only invest in the gas. So, I have business associates in the commercial sector, who are.. who are soliciting business on my behalf from their customers and they are entitled, and they are in a process.. in a position to actually fund these connections on their own in lieu, that the refills are being bought by the customer. So, this is one process. As far as my distributors also sometimes do the same thing acting as a business executive. Apart from them, within my own team, these are two actors who does this kind of a work. Other than that, and other things, which I know of, there are certain self-help groups in the areas where they operate, where they provide certain assistance is of this nature, we which... we are also trying in certain villages for the XXXX, pandemic came in between one year we couldn't really do certain things of that nature, where in certain people are able to provide some economic activities in the village in lieu of which they are able to provide these loans to customers as well to run their ventures. So, that is where it can work with the micro financing sector can also work around this, but I still to see a very practical examples out of these the last part of it, but yes, our own business associates do come handy for such ventures who are able to.. or distributors themselves, if they are able to purchase gas on an equitable regular basis. Instead of per se they have they fund for the deposit of the cylinders. And from the gas they provide some discounts for which they are able to use and pay later.

**INTERVIEWER** 1:13:42

But RESPONDENT I don't know whether you are aware, but like within the gender budgeting, knowledge base, there is a clear understanding that women need finance processes to be different from the masculine way of finance processes in the sense that the kinds of processes of loans men can take, those same processes are... do not address women's needs or women's abilities to repay. Or, you know, like for example, if I... if a woman approaches a bank, to take a loan, the first thing of the bank is going to ask is for collateral, and most women don't have land or such wealth or assets to provide as collateral. So immediately she actually gets eliminated from being able to access such loans given by banks, right. So that is where we all talk about the need for gendering of finance processes, where finance processes need to recognize this inequity that women have in terms of owning ownership of wealth. Wealth and assets. So, so that's what So, what I was asking when he was dealing with a whole group of beneficiaries, who are women, are their processes of finance, which are gendered enough to address their specific needs which are different, recognized by all of us working in gender budgeting and etc. recognized

**RESPONDENT** 1:15:27

As of No, I will say no, as of as of now, I will say no to this.

**INTERVIEWER** 1:15:32

Okay. Okay. Right. Okay. So, yeah, I'm kind of more or less done with my questions. I mean, if you can just look at outside your energy sector and look at say renewable energy access, etc., what do you think are key challenges within those for equity of energy access, if you just if you have thought about it at all, like

**RESPONDENT** 1:16:00

Renewable energy is going to you know, be there about 15 to 18% of our energy mix going forward. We are already as a company investing a lot into that. And right now, the you know, the thought process is revolving around how to improve or get away from certain dependencies on the liquid fuels and bring more focus on to the gaseous fuels or the gas base economy is the one which we are looking at from six to 15% and then the renewable energy sector and the electrical sector all these things, you know, they take certain percentages and way forward as we go on. So, then, I assume that in terms of gender equity, whether or not we are making it, because the process of awarding in case I look at the current structure, we are in this, you know, we are in the process of creating a very individual So, there we have (hindi) whatever process has been made When I say women, there they are a gender equitable in terms of who takes these LOIs and puts up these locations, and the accessibility will be equal. I don't think we have created any differential there.

**INTERVIEWER** 1:17:52

One more question. I wanted to ask you specific to your sector, because we've been witnessing this escalating cylinder cost gas LPG costs, right. So when already affordability is such a factor. How is this affecting your sustainable use of LPG?

**RESPONDENT** 1:18:12

it does have an impact. It will have an impact it will reduce the sale, people will switch over those who can't afford will switch over to alternate fuels again, only thing is you will try to give them a smaller cylinder instead. But then, the statistics shows whenever the cost has risen, the consumption has come down. And it is the case how it happens...

**INTERVIEWER** 1:18:39

(hindi) they will stack and use other fuels, right?

**RESPONDENT** 1:18:42

Yes, smaller cylinder means they can afford slightly lesser price. But then when the absolute price goes up, and the subsidies are not rising commensurately earlier, it was rising, that the cost goes up, the subsidies also go up. Of late, it is not happening the same day. So it will impact this sector. Definitely, it will have an impact. Yeah.

**INTERVIEWER** 1:19:05

So that also comes back to the fuel dependency of liquid fuels that you were talking about, right? it does directly connects to that point. This is always... we are import dependent when it comes to any petroleum products...,

Part 5 (Closing)

Is there anything else you feel we should add to this topic that we discussed right now?

**RESPONDENT** 1:19:26

We discussed quite a bit on this. I'm sure you will get a lot more from lot many more people around you. So this is what I had to say, on this particular part.

**INTERVIEWER** 1:19:38

Thank you so much. Would you be available for any follow up questions? Should they arise?

**RESPONDENT** 1:19:44

Yeah, I am available. Yeah, you can.

**INTERVIEWER** 1:19:47

Yeah, thank you so much. Okay, yeah. So is there any one else you think I should talk about? on this topic, do you think

**RESPONDENT** 1:20:00

I can get back to you on this a bit later XXXX on your call.

**INTERVIEWER** 1:20:04

Sure, sure that's, that's absolutely fine. Thank you very much for your time. And after I transcribe the interview, I'll be sending them sending it back to you for your approval. Thanks a lot for taking time out. Okay. Thank you