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| **Interviewer name** | XXXX |
| **Sub-contractor organisation** | ARU |
| **Interview date** | XXXX |
| **Duration of interview audio recording** | 1hr 21 mins 45 secs |
| **Face-to-face or virtual interview** | Virtual |
| **Interview participant** | |
| * **Code** | I6 |
| * **Participant name** | RESPONDENT |
| * **Organisation name** | **XXXX** |
| * **Gender** | Female |
| * **Stakeholder category** | Technical professional working in Energy Sector |
| * **Country** | India |

Interview Transcript

**Introduction**

INTERVIEWER: So good morning XXXX, thank you for joining us. And we are very grateful for you taking the time out to interact with us on this very important topic of gender equity in energy access for us to have a better understanding of energy access from the gender perspective within India and specifically within your work role.

**Consent**

Before we start, I would like to check with you a couple of formalities. Have you completed and returned the consent form?

RESPONDENT: Yes, I have.

INTERVIEWER: Through this interview, we are going to request- just one second…through this interview, we would request you to share your experience and expertise as someone working in the energy sector, as well as your views and opinions on gender equity within the question of energy access.

RESPONDENT: Sure.

INTERVIEWER: Is it okay, if we record the interview for documentation purposes?

RESPONDENT: Yes, I’m fine with it.

INTERVIEWER: The recorded interview will be transcribed for analysis and the copy of the transcript will be shared with you for your approval.

RESPONDENT: Sure, thank you.

INTERVIEWER: 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. The interview will take more or less one hour.

RESPONDENT: Sure.

Part 1: Introductions - Overview of role, work priorities, organisation & background

INTERVIEWER: So, if we can proceed with the interview, the formal part of the interview, if you could start by briefly telling me a bit about your current role and position, and the organization or- organization that you work for.

RESPONDENT: Sure. So, I currently work at XXXX, and I'm the XXXX. I've been with XXXX for - for xxx years now. And my background is actually xxxx. But obviously, my work at XXXX has been around really trying to understand how energy intersects with development. Now at XXXX, we were founded in 2010. And we're a not-for-profit organization. But many of the approach and the vision of the organization actually comes from over XXXXyears of experience of the for-profit entity, which is a XXXX, which has been based out of XXXX with the sole objective to say how do we really deliver impact and in a manner that is financially sustainable, which is why it's structured as a for profit?

INTERVIEWER: Can you- can you just repeat the name, there was a drop and I couldn't catch that the name of the for profit.

RESPONDENT: XXXX XXXX. Now, they were primarily focused on trying to see how they saw a big kind of a link between energy and development. And that was basically saying that geographies, which - geographies, or communities, which are lagging behind in terms of development are also the ones which don't have access to energy. So that meant that whether you're talking about, you know, slums in Bangalore - Bangalore, as the city would be electrified, but the community, the more vulnerable communities, which would be maybe lagging behind in terms of development would also have access to energy issues. So that was the whole kind of mandate of the - of the for profit, but they have been working primarily in XXXX and face tremendous issues in actually trying to deliver energy access in communities in more kind of low resource communities. And those factors that were forming their constraints we often refer to as the ecosystem factors. So, they were really, you know, the tech supply chains were missing, the financial models were missing, you know, servicing models were missing, policies were not really favouring, you know, the smaller kind of households to adopt decentralized renewable energy. And that's something that basically meant that other entities like XXXX XXXX would also not be able to deliver energy solutions in a manner that would be sustainable in the long run. And that's, you know, that- that's that process. That thought process was basically how XXXX Foundation was formed. So, it's an independent entity. It has no relation to XXXX XXXX, except the vision itself, the vision and the philosophy. But we focus a lot more across the country, specifically in XXXX states. We also have partnerships which are outside the country. So, we work with, say, XXXXX, where we work with partners to transfer some of the learnings around this ecosystem building factor, enabling environment that will actually help community - communities adopt sustainable energy, in a more kind of a sustained long-term manner. So, my work here specifically focuses on a lot of the research and documentation that we do around our projects. We are primarily a core implementation organization. But we have a small team, which has focused a lot on documenting what we do, because we feel we're an open-source organization, we need to share all our learnings, whether successes or failures with the broader sector at large. So that's, that's my role in the organization currently.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. If you can also in brief, tell me, I mean, you did talk about your background, and why you kind of came into this line of work.

RESPONDENT: Sure. So, as I said, I had- my undergrad is architecture. But after architecture, I was mostly working at an urban planning level, I wouldn't really call it urban planning as, as well, because we were working in small towns, so specifically heritage towns. So, the thing was that we were trying to actually work in XXXX. And trying to see that if heritage tags like if, say, a UNESCO recognizes, recognizes the particular- particular region as a, you know, World Heritage Site, then it brings in a lot of pressure of development, it brings in a lot of external stakeholders, it brings in a lot of investment, but actually is the town ready to handle that in terms of its regulatory mechanisms in terms of its administration. So, it was a lot featured around that. And that's where I got exposed to a lot of other things beyond architecture, you know, economics, political sciences, you know, how to really - how do we really encourage local businesses, you know, what kind of incentives do we give them. So, it was a very, very different experience. And that's when I realized that maybe I want to go towards a bit more around development and policies, and try and understand other aspects that influence that architecture has very little role to play in some of those, you know, things. And that's when I went to XXXXX, I did my masters there in XXXX. And there, I shifted a lot away from architecture. And I started looking a lot more around like unequal development. And that's where my focus was, I was seeing a lot of policies on paper and India, specifically, there are so many great policy papers, but when it comes to implementation, you know, there is an uneven access to the policy itself. XXXXX

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. And how long have you been involved with energy issues from the time you entered XXXX?

RESPONDENT: Primarily, you know, the day one that I entered XXXX, and that's been about XXXX years now, I joined in XXXX.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so what specific energy related activities or programs have you undertaken within your work?

RESPONDENT: Sure. So, when I joined earlier, I was focused a lot more on energy issues and slums in Bangalore. So that's what I started with. A lot of evaluations, a lot of assessments, a lot of program design, on energy in slums, in when I say slums, as well, actually, that's not the right technical term, because I'm talking about squatter settlements. So, these are the invisible slums. So, they're not notified. They're not even in the unnotified lists. And they're like the blue sheet communities that you actually see at the back, you know, and there the urban the energy scenario that we were looking at was not just home, but even like the bridge schools that were run there. Even the health vans that were coming in, helped set small dispensaries that were located nearby, some livelihood activities that might be taking place in those slums as well. So that was a lot around that. From there, I actually moved to looking at a lot of the rural projects as well. Where we had - we have teams which are in XXXX, based out of Kalahandi in the Udupi region, in the Dharwad region. You know, in Guwahati, in Imphal, but being in Bangalore, I was mostly helping them coordinate and attend design programs, monitor programs, you do that kind of basic research, before they actually go into implementation and then seeing like, what were the learnings? What were our assumptions? Where did we fail? Where did we not? Now my role is, of course, a lot more cross cutting - so I'm XXXX at XXXX, which is a team of about XXXX people. And it's, it's generally supporting all other implementations that might be there. Our focus in the organization, about XXXX of our work is see, around understanding the link between energy and livelihoods. That's our main portfolio. Beyond that, we also look at health XXXX, and then we have other - other work around incubation, around sustainable energy efficient buildings.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And what- since you've worked both in, in and around Bangalore, maybe I didn't understand whether you did work within rural XXXX also?

RESPONDENT: Yes, yes. XXXX.

INTERVIEWER: Astr- and then towards the east and Northeast with rural communities and tribal communities over there. Did you see a difference in - if you - did you see any difference in terms of energy with your energy access within these two regions?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, for sure. I mean, even in XXXX, you see a lot of difference. Between South and North XXXX, there is huge difference. Even in North XXXX, you know, an area which is say around Dharwad-Hubli, versus you go towards Raichur, we go towards Bidar- it's, it's very, very different in terms of energy access.

INTERVIEWER: How?

RESPONDENT: One main thing, yeah, one main thing that I'll say is that if you see like South XXXX, it's not really a conversation around electrification as such, it's more around energy reliability, and affordability. So that's the, that's the main thing there. And a lot of people who might be electrified, so to say, like they're electrified on paper, they- they are very willing to invest in sustainable energy or like BRE specifically, because it's more around residents, it's more around investment that will help them save for the future. Also, there is a very good ecosystem that has been built in South XXXX, primarily because of the work - XXXX India has a very, very strong rooted presence in South XXXX. And what I mean by ecosystem is that generally there is a lot of awareness around the benefits of solar energy as well, from the perspective that I just mentioned. There are a lot of NGOs who also when they are working towards mobilization of communities, they also advocate for solar energy - something that people should invest in because it's, it's you know, it helps them in the future. Government, organized government as well institutions as well, whether you're talking about local PCs, you're talking about block education officers, you know, Panchayat leaders, there's a lot of awareness. Financing is easier as well. So, there is a history of financing for solar energy, actually, the first solar loan was given in India for DRE in south by Syndicate Bank, and it was for a XXXX system. So, there is a lot of awareness as well that you know, it's viable and how to finance for solar energy is something that is - that is much better known in comparison to other states. Now, if you look at North XXXX, there's general, you know, there is a lot of poverty in comparison. So, investment capacity of people is lower. So, when you're asking them to invest in something, which is capital intensive, like you know, the capital cost in the beginning is quite high, then you need a loan for it. And financing becomes an issue there because of - you know, drought and things like that there are, you know, farmers who have maybe not been have defaulted on loans earlier, which means that financial institutions can, you know, consider them risky. So, there is a lot of work that needs to go into actually like rebuilding that financial infrastructure or getting the trust back between the end user and the financial institutions before you can move ahead. When it comes to XXXX, XXXX, we were working in Kalahandi region specifically, and while the poles are there, electricity doesn't - isn't that- doesn't exist at all. And it's also because these are mostly forested areas. So, you know, you're talking about like one storm, a tree falls, and you cannot get that line repaired for three, four months after that. There's similar issues in northeast as well. Northeast plains are very different from Northeast hills. So, when you look at the hilly areas, again, the electrification rates might be there, but when you're talking about reliability of energy it becomes, it becomes a huge issue in that sense. So, in these areas, what we primarily feel is, you know, like, even if you're looking at basic energy access, like, you know, a light in my house, maybe those needs are fulfilled, but, you know, the needs for me to run a productive appliance, that's still an issue, primarily. Health centres, you know, I, we've heard so many stories of the waiting time being equal to a day, like you go there and you're just waiting, your tests can't be done because there's no electricity, you come back and you have to go again the next day and obviously, that will influence me wanting to go to a health centre at all. So, those kind of issues on like, you know, where the critical power is required, those kind of issues are still you know, very, very high in - in North XXXX, as well as XXXX, and the Northeast quite a bit, awareness is generally low as well financing and things like that is unheard of many areas in northeast. So, when you want people to invest in something, which is in the long run and financing is absent it again becomes, in that sense, those are some of the - some of the differences, I would say.

INTERVIEWER: Right. What- are there any other differential access that you have noticed within your work, other issues you have - other than this regional specificity?

RESPONDENT: So, I mean, the other aspect that I would say, so, one is obviously regional and of course, there is, you know, urban to rural would also change a little bit because of land tenureship and security and things like that. The other aspect that I would say is also like we at XXXX kind of have this term that we use is basically saying any vulnerable populations or marginalized populations, now that we see kind of change from region to region, in some cases, it might be, you know, gender specific vulnerabilities. In some cases, it might be, say disabilities that no, we might be working towards, in some cases, you will see a belligerent region full of senior citizens. And of course, there are different kinds of accessibility issues that will be there as well. So those are, you know, again, some things that we noticed, for example, you know, when it comes to entrepreneurs or workers who are physically disabled, they don't have many options in terms of livelihoods and moving toward technology. So, so, so you know, and especially in productive use, where there is even you to switch on a generator, we think people struggle to switch on generators, like women struggling, like men struggling to switch on generators, forget, forget women being able to switch those things on. Similarly, a lot of the- like, especially in productive use, in livelihoods, a lot of the technologies that exist for say, agri-food processing, animal husbandry, which are the rural livelihoods, the technologies are more centralized. So, they are huge. And that primarily means that it requires a lot of physical kind of thing from your side also to be able to use it, right. So, to monitor it, like you have to lift heavy loads, you know, put it in the milling unit, then it will you know, give out something, you know, the thing that you will have to wind will require a lot of physical effort. So, all of those things, we feel like, you know, means that certain people are able to operate it, and some certain people are not able to operate it. Similarly, we've also seen that if you see, like a whole value chain of a particular livelihood, right, whether it's like, say, a rice value chain, or a millet value chain, if you see those value chain points as well, the activities that are most drudgerous, are basically done by women or more marginalized communities. Right, so either it will be a scheduled cast member, or you know, someone who's really at the bottom of the pyramid, or a tribe, which is, you know, not really an outside - considered an outsider in the region, or its, its women or its children. So those points also, we feel, you know, the most vulnerable points are actually done by our most drudgery driven and are done by more vulnerable communities. But there is a huge scope to actually intervene there. If you look at sustainable energy, the right technology, the right financing, if you bring in all of that there is a huge scope to actually implement in those, in those aspects as well. So that's maybe another kind of marginalization or different sect, one would see.

INTERVIEWER: Right, and within your work context, what kind of policies- I mean what current issues and development in policies that you see influence your work?

RESPONDENT: So, the-

INTERVIEWER: Both in terms of positive impact, and if there are any challenges that you find at government policy or even regulation or legal systems and processes.

RESPONDENT: Sure. So, as I said, like, you know, especially when we compare our work in India with some of the other countries, we realized that actually, the Indian, the policies and the decentralized system of decision making, is actually you can do a lot with it. So, what we primarily do is, we don't really engage so much with the energy policies only. We look at a lot of policies, which are there for enterprises, you know, for women, under the Women and Child Development Department, under the MSME schemes, you know, NABARD for agriculture. But then it's a DC (District Collector) who has innovation funds under him or the Block Education Officer that might be there. So, we generally look at what other -what policies and programs are generally there in a particular region or state. And we try to influence those, right? If you have like a policy, which is there for farmer-producer organizations, you would generally want to tap into and say you're already buying machines, buy machines which are also sustainable energy, you're already putting money in generator, instead, look at sustainable energy, it's a similar way we would work with health as well, health centres have generators, you know, so in the end, can you actually use the funds that you're using for generators, to instead put into sustainable energy and maintenance and serviceability of that? So, we do feel I think that the, the challenge is more in terms of, as I had said, in the beginning, as well, actual operationalizing and finding champions who want to align themselves to your work, right? If you don't have a DC, who says yes, I have innovation funds available. And you know, can we actually form, you know, cold storage units for our farmers, and actually use maybe some of the FPOs that are already there, SHG mobilization that has already happened in my district to use it, if someone is not willing to see that, it becomes very hard to actually do anything. But I feel like the positive thing is that if you start looking at energy as a cross cutting piece, there is a lot of- there are a lot of frameworks, loads of programs, you know, a lot of champions in other departments, which will actually see that there is energy lacking because of which my work is not happening, my programs are not being sustainable. And so yeah, I have to be able to unlock something and let's do a pilot together. So that's definitely I feel one of the things that is- that is- that is a -that is positive, but also has challenges when it's implementing. The negatives that I feel-

INTERVIEWER: Do you-

RESPONDENT: Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Do you see that there is a systemic interfacing existing? Or is it something which you have to then negotiate and create?

RESPONDENT: We have to negotiate and create for sure. So, there is, I mean, the system is so huge in the end, that there is a lot of siloed thinking that definitely happens, this is my- so you have to understand whose incentive is what you know, who is the champion, who is willing to think systemically, so then, you know, you want to, you know, kind of push them a little bit up. But the other thing is also that- I was thinking of something else. Sorry, what was your question again?

INTERVIEWER: You were ask- you were talking about the challenges.

RESPONDENT: You were saying if we have to push ha-

INTERVIEWER: No.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, so the other thing I was saying was that we've seen a lot of convergence happen during COVID. A very different attitude that has emerged during COVID. So earlier, even at a very like small district level, like if a DC has not invested in a health centre before, they will be like you speak to the health department. It's not my role, you speak to the health department, I will look more at maybe like the community street lighting, community water pump, like you know, I'll go more towards that direction health is health department. Versus now if you're going to a DC, they're like, oh, yeah, yeah, our health centres are not able to cope with the COVID thing. You know, if yeah, we need energy there, like I have funds available, or I will put a request from my side along with the health department too- so in a way COVID because of some amount of decentralized decision making that had to happen at district levels, there is more convergence that is now I mean, we are seeing people opening up to it, but otherwise it's definitely you work in siloes- energy will look at only energy. No - health will look at only health, livelihood will look at only livelihood. In livelihood also Ministry of Food Processing will not interact with Ministry of Agriculture. So those things would definitely be there. But we've seen a change and we're hoping that we are able to leverage enough and create enough positive champions in this period, that it maybe helps create a new way going forward as well.

INTERVIEWER: My only question in this piece is that when we are focusing on champions, it still becomes very individual driven, and not a change within the system where these things become part of the system, no matter which is the individual who's sitting as the district collector or the health officer, right? So how do we do that transition?

RESPONDENT: So how we usually foresee it in, in XXXX, is that when you're looking for early innovations, you need champions, right? Like those what we call as early adopters, right? So right now, for example, energy is not seen as a cross cutting thing at the field level, right? So, when you actually are talking to a health department, you really have to break down why they need to invest in energy on their own. If an energy person does health, they are not going to try and understand what the health needs are and then design energy programs accordingly, they will just go and solar power, or they will just- just make sure, okay, lights are powered, no, they need a baby warmer, they don't need just the lights working. Because in the end, that means that you know, you can't really do anything, I can see the face of the patient, but I can't do any of my tests. I can't vaccinate because vaccines are not there. So, so those kind of things, I feel you need early adopters, you need good champions. And once they start doing it, and actually start advocating for the benefits, it becomes involved. And I think we're in that stage where you need the early adopters right now. And that's where our focus is always to say, get the earlier adopters on the- on, on our side, and then let them advocate to their peers and say, no, it works. You know, it actually, like my work was better because of this. So why wouldn't I allocate money? So why do we look for early adopters, we always try to kind of say, okay, now how do we influence the others through them? So, you have one DC, who's your champion, but then you're telling that DC that, you know, can you connect us to 10 more DCs who are like you, you know, who would be interested in something like this? So, they will be like, yeah, like, I have, you know, five people from my cadre itself, or two people who I worked with earlier, go to them next, and then it slowly kind of, you know, steam rolls into something a lot bigger. And that's what we try and aim for usually.

Part 2 – Understanding of the issues (meanings & practices)

INTERVIEWER: Right. So, what does equitable energy access mean to you? What, what do you think it should look like?

RESPONDENT: So, I mean, I do feel that from the work at XXXX, that we do... energy access is, what equitable energy access would mean is that actually energy is complemented with, with the right technology and the right financing and the right policy. And that will make it equitable. So, what I mean by it is that, like, I can give energy into a woman run enterprise and a male run enterprise- an urban enterprise and a rural enterprise. And it will mostly be the same way, if I'm not understanding it from the technology requirement, the financing requirement and the policy requirement, the- when I get those pieces in, that's when it actually becomes equitable. So, what I mean by it is, again, like, say, for example, if it's a, if it's a milling unit that I'm talking about, right, so if I'm just looking, if I'm looking at it from women perspective, they'll mostly be running these milling units, they would want to start a business like that at their homes. Right, so they will say, in my village, this is a need. In my home, I'm going to have a milling unit, where people can come, other women can come who are actually doing it by hand right now, other women can come and mill their rice or mill their millet, right, that would mean that it will have to be small scale, it will have to be first step, the financial model will also have to be designed then at a small scale, you know, for them to be able to afford that - according to their cash flows according to the, you know, the villagers that they will be catering to. And because you're trying to maybe work with a vulnerable population where women coming as entrepreneurs in villages is anyways going to be a challenge for them to do that, maybe you need early financing, which is actually at a lower interest rate. So, there are loans for example, they have the- Syndicate Bank has a Synd Mahila loan, which is at a lower interest rate, right? But it's only for women entrepreneurs. So, in that case, we're able to say that now we actually have a complete package for women entrepreneurs. Similarly, you have maybe a male entrepreneur who can set it up in a market. Now I'm anyways going there and I know that can run it in a marketplace. Now setting it up in a marketplace means that you are catering to multiple villages, you can have something at a larger scale as well, you can prepare your business model in a certain way as well. And that would mean that you know, your viability and your adoption of that complete solution is going to be a completely different story. And it's going to require completely different kind of support. We've also worked with many organizations who, for example, do training of - training of women in how to start these enterprises. And what we hear often from them is that, and these might be actually not just women led enterprises, but they might also be women who are say, you know, widows or had -have faced physical abuse in the past, have been abandoned by their families, are you know, the only breadwinners in their families. And they're primarily coming to this organization to say, how do I support my children? How do I earn my own income? And when your support system is not there, the kind of hand holding that you need in actually adopting energy and you know, actually making it part of the impact that you will receive over a period of time - it is a completely different kind of hand holding that you would need. So, I feel equitable access is like it requires more work on these enabling factors that make that opportunity, you know, accessible to everyone energy will just create opportunities, but then how to actually adopt it, utilize it and make it impact you is so many other factors that need to come in place. And that's where I feel the you know, how we look at the other aspects, and innovate on that is, is very, very critical there.

INTERVIEWER: So, you've kind of touched on gender equity already within energy access, if you would like to elaborate a little bit in terms of gender equity, and whether it should be a priority for - policies and interventions should be designed for gender equity?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, so, I mean, I just like- remembering. Yeah, so um, I mean, I just like remembering. And I think thew- whole my responses will be in bits and pieces, as I remember certain snippets from the field. But I was just remembering that we've done- we've done an event last year, actually, this time last year, which was in XXX, where about 200 women in the north XXXX region specifically, had been trained to be solar energy advocates in their communities. Or they were using solar energy themselves for as in their households or for their livelihoods. But they were basically enrolled by this enterprise, to be kind of like agents of them so that whenever they convince another woman to take up, or invest in solar energy, they get an incentive for it. So, at that point of time, we had at XXXX, the XXXXXXX she had come in. And she basically said that, whenever we have designed policies, in the department, it's always like a cash transfer, like, you know, you're just doing, you're just giving out money, you're giving out some, some kind of one sewing machine, you give here, one you know something you give here. But it's not been from the perspective of actually empowering them to start something. And that is something that we need more solutions, and more examples for, and more partnerships to happen for that. So, if you have an organization who's focused on creating entrepreneurship, complement that with someone who will also provide softer kind of counselling for women, so that they are, you know, motivated continuously to take new steps, meet other women who have done that in the past, so that they, you know they can share their very personal stories from that perspective as well. So, I feel that was definitely something that stuck with all of us that- that yeah, a lot of women related policies are not- have not been designed in that manner. Where you know, you are creating that exposure, that- that, you know, women can do this, and showing them the way on how as well and sharing success stories and failures also in that manner. So, I do feel that even the current policies that might be there from a from a pure gender perspective, not really energy side, but from a pure gender perspective as well, we need to adopt the energy lens as well, to create solutions which actually empower women, rather than just treat them as someone against whom bad is happening. No, you are vulnerable. Yes, that's why you need this cash transfer. It needs to be maybe going a step further, also.

INTERVIEWER: Confidence building and enabling women to use energy?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. The other aspect that I also see is that we have worked with this entity called XXXX. And through them, what we actually learned was that when you look at slums, especially the more active slums in places like Ahmedabad, Mumbai, maybe even Delhi, you have women who use their homes as their workspaces. And that sometimes, you know, belittles their livelihood as well as belittles their energy requirements that might also be there, so we never really design housing schemes from a livelihood perspective, but for most of the women a home is that workplace, even if they're doing- even if the husband is doing street vending, they are making the food at home, they're doing small embroidery work at home, they're doing, you know, some packaging at home, they're doing some craft work at home. So that was another thing, I feel where it's lacking slightly, I think there's general recognition from the land tenure ship perspective. For, for gender, like, you know, women should own houses, but in the end, we're saying women should own houses, because it's their workplace as well as living space and they should be decision makers of, of that. So that's again, another place where I feel like the angle of energy is not used, energy for productive use, and working is not used. And generally, the way that we do housing as well, we just see it as housing, whereas for low-income communities, housing is workspace. So, it needs to be designed, it needs to be the services that need to be given there is very, very different. That's again, another point, I feel that came to my mind…

INTERVIEWER: I don't think it is only in poorer economic sections, I think women across all economic sections, probably, you know, work from home. And this whole work from home, which has happened with COVID has because the men started working from home, suddenly there was this whole emphasis on workspaces within homes, whereas women have been working from homes for a long time.

RESPONDENT: Yes, yes. That's true. Actually, it's not just the lower economic strata.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Yeah, go ahead- you wanted to-

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I was just saying that the other thing that comes to mind is also that I think generally, with the whole self-help group movement, there is a lot of potential there to untap how women access energy through that. Because there's already like savings groups - there's also already inclusion, from finance perspective, as well. And we've been also tapping into that, but I think generally, like, how do we really use self-help groups, the urban livelihood missions, you know, those kinds of aspects to create more, to include energy access, as well, that's something that also has maybe some scope to looking further.

INTERVIEWER: Right. So, in your work, how do you determine the demand for energy and understand these consumer needs? What is the process you use?

RESPONDENT: So, we actually... go about in multiple ways. So, one is obviously sometimes we have a very good ground network. So, as you can imagine, for example, like the, the, the, the, the enterprises that we work with, so one is the XXXX XXXX itself, but we have incubated over 30 last mile clean energy enterprises, specifically in your XXXX and Northeast region. And all of these guys are very connected to the ground, right. So, they're visiting farmers, they're visiting households, they're visiting dairy farmers, they're visiting craft households, you know, every, every day. And from there, a lot of the problem statements come. So actually, for example, like say, in the first XXXX years, we would have primarily done as the enterprise we would have primarily done lighting, water heating, water pumps. That was primarily it. But how our work at foundation started is basically like the dairy farmer would say, okay, I have to milk my cows five in the morning. I have bought a light for it. But I have 10 cows and it takes me like an hour to milk them and it's very, very painful. Can you please find me a solar powered milking machine as well? Right or I've seen the farm in some other towns using a milking machine- can that also run on solar? So most, a lot of the problem statements in the beginning have actually come-

INTERVIEWER: from the end user.

RESPONDENT: From them itself. And I think majority, the ones that we take up specifically, majority of them come like this. Because the moment someone recognizes a problem, we know that when we come with a solution, they'll help us pilot it, they'll give us feedback. So, having that end user stake on them recognizing the problem and saying, I want a solution for it, please make it make give me something, then we basically go back and say, if we bring something, can you help us develop it with us. So that's one way of getting the problem statement itself. The other thing is that we do some kind of research from our side, which is that we do kind of choose certain themes in our work as like the main themes every year. So for example, this year, we'll be looking at a lot at the complete dairy value chain, we'll be looking at rice, millet, spices, we'll be looking at poultry, and a little bit of piggery in the Northeast Region specifically. And what we do is actually go on the field and understand every activity that is taking place. And then we put on the energy layer there and saying can this activity be made better, either in terms of you know, improved productivity, or in terms of better accessibility for a last mile farmer or marginalized communities? Or can it actually reduce drudgery in some way, if we bring in an energy mechanism, that activity might be manual right now, you know, the end user doesn't even know that the solution that exists that can actually power it or make it mechanized, but we bring in that knowledge from our side, if we feel that there is actually an activity that has scope to improve, because energy access would be coming. So that is more kind of our secondary research that we do. And the other aspect is more in terms of how we would go on the field. And end users itself will say, I need a solution for this. Those are the two ways that we go about.

INTERVIEWER: Right. So, within this, how do you do any… I mean, what criteria do you have for diversity mapping within this process? I would probably think the second one more than the first one...either.

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So, what we - so one is that we rel- rely really heavily on like champions and experts on the field. So, say, for example, one way that we do is if we, if we recognize that there is certain activity that should be mechanized, or can be mechanized with energy, and it's not being done on the field, we will run that by with an expert. So, say, for example, in poultry, we work with this organization in XXXX, where we have an expert who's really developed like poultry SHGs, from scratch, since the past 15 years, knows in and out about, you know, what poultry farming looks like and where the challenges are in the value chain. So, if we go to him, and many others like that, and say that, you know, this portion, we found a solution, we feel that it will bring in impact one, impact two, impact three, do you think it's worth working on it? They would be able to tell us saying that no, no one has value for this right now. Like, you know, it's such a small scale, and it's actually like 20 minutes of work, you will not like.. no one would want to invest in mechanizing of it, it will only work at larger scales. And we know okay, it's not worth really working on it. If someone who spent 15 years on this, on this kind of issue is not able to see the value of it, maybe it's not worth it. But usually, we always kind of go back to them and say that, when will it work? Like what will make it actually someone say that- yes, I need it. They usually give us those parameters, you know, the moment like say, for example, and we did milking as well, right. So, for dairy farmers, we know that if you have less than five cows, mechanizing it does not make sense, because the milking activity finishes in 20- 30 minutes, which is not bad at all. The moment it goes above five, the moment you go to the sixth cow, your arm starts paining, with the moment you go to the sixth cow, it's like 40 minutes of work one hour of work, it becomes you know, a more painful ordeal, it becomes a task. So, at that kind of time, you would want to invest. So one is that we have these champions on the field. The second point that we know is generally secondary research to say like, what is the market potential. Right, so saying that, you know, say how many poultry farmers are there in the country. No, our government policies actually focusing towards boosting this industry, which means that you know, there will be more and more programs, more and more NGOs more and more funding also available for something like that. That's a secondary, again, more secondary research that we people do. The third point would be global relevance. So, because again, we feel that, you know, there are some problems, which are very, very cross cutting some problems, which our partners from other countries are also looking for solutions. So, if we actually look into those, we see like a higher kind of adoption, or higher interest from other players as well, in, in those kinds of things. So those are the three probably in that order itself. Those are the three kinds of things we were looking at.

INTERVIEWER: So, has gender been a criteria within your demand mapping in terms of diversity in energy access?

RESPONDENT: So, the way that we use gender is that we, the internal word that we use is typology, we always try and basically see that any problem that exists when we start building out a solution specifically- no, one is, when the problem exists, we try and understand what is the baseline, like, who is facing that issue is something that we definitely look at. So, in a lot of cases, you will maybe realize that a problem is very simple to solve. If you're looking at a general baseline, but especially if you add the disability or the women lens, then you need to work on a bit more from the social model or the financial model on it. But when we start building out the solution, particularly and we start getting it to the field, what we do internally is that it's like a research that we're doing, right? It's like an experiment in terms of how is this solution going to perform on the field and the more diverse audience that we are actually testing it out with the better it is in terms of the future - we know it works. So, at that point, we ensure that when we say that how many typologies have you tried the solution with- is something that we use internally as an evaluation kind of indicator, right? You - you cannot walk like say if you're looking at blacksmiths you cannot work only in South XXXX, all similar type of blacksmiths with similar type of, you know, market, similar tools that they're making. No, you have to find someone who's making small agricultural tools. You have to find someone who's linked with the construction industry. You have to -to find someone who is, you know, using their family as labour right now to someone who has a much bigger workshop. So, it's that we basically define it as you have to find out different typologies. And that's where usually we use the gender lens as well, saying how many women entrepreneurs have you worked with? How many men entrepreneurs have? How many transgender entrepreneurs have you worked with is something that we're starting to build into our framework as well this year. So yeah, that would be some of our innovations.

INTERVIEWER: How equitable do you think energy access is at household level? As well as community level when we specifically look at it from a gender point of view?

RESPONDENT: I don't know, I feel like the, if you see from purely the energy side, the fact that electrification is seen as a certain percentage of households, and maybe a certain percentage of community buildings, which are, you know, electrified, not seeing reliability, not seeing a three-phase power coming into the houses, that itself shows that it's not completely equitable. You know, like, if the if the, if the house cannot have a three-phase power or reliable electricity, you cannot run a livelihood activity there, you know so, you are favouring certain types of livelihood, certain types of enterprises. If you're looking at a community institutions as well. You know, the, the last mile health care is primarily - all our targets are around maternal health and early childcare health. And if you're not really giving them importance, in terms of not just energy, not just electrification, but energy access for various functions, or services that the sub centres are going to offer, theXXXXare going to offer most of theXXXXare unelectrified, they run out of some rental structures, here and there, in a very ad hoc manner. So, in a way, it kind of shows from an energy perspective that there is not really an understanding of the role of energy in in, I would say equitable development, forget access to energy, but generally like equitable development, you cannot achieve that if if you're not understanding these services, these institutions, the role of a household for various types of communities.

INTERVIEWER: So, what have you seen the like, if you have, for example, if I talk about the one bulb in a house or electrification priority for a community space, what have you seen as the priorities that people- I mean, what priorities define the decisions?

RESPONDENT: So... from the government side, I mean, I, frankly, we haven't really worked in that space that much. So, I wouldn't really be able to say that if we worked in about 100 odd villages, then what was the priority that they showed, as some kind of village administration that might be there? At my, my guess, would be that they usually would see, they usually would see the more community centres, maybe some of the schools as the priority, but I honestly would not know exactly, I wouldn't be this is just from an assumption, I won't be able to say exactly, because we've not really interacted with them for that community institutions that much.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. Within the homes within the household -how do you see energy usage differently between men and women? Based on the tasks they do? Or how do they use energy? Is there any difference you see, in the way men and women used energy within the homes?

RESPONDENT: So, I mean, one thing is definitely that. Like, we- we have, for example, a vertical called the built environment, and that primarily came after like, say, for example, if you're working in a home, the men are usually out of the house in the morning, they will come back in the evening whether you're working on the farm or you are in a city and you have a job. That's the time where one assumes that you know, especially in a place like Bangalore, say you don't really need energy because you have natural light and, and the temperatures are not that bad as well. So, you don't need ventilation and things like that. But if you look at it from women, and maybe children's perspective, the homes are usually so badly designed that you need light and fan throughout the year and throughout the day. So that primarily means that if you don't have that you're either sitting outside the house, or you're sitting, you're trying to, you know, make work make do inside the home itself, when it's really hot. And you know, it's, it's not really very visible also. And we've seen that both in tribal homes, in urban homes, in rural homes as well. So that is I feel like you know, that morning needs of energy that might be there. Which is definitely, you know, something that is different at a household level between women and men itself. The second aspect is, of course, cooking, cooking is not something that we look at a lot in XXXX, we've had huge failures in cooking. We've done pilots about five, six years back where we did about 1000 households, or even more than that, recognised that they were not - the solutions were not really working on the ground and then backtracked and really moved out of it. But cooking is something that is definitely I feel, you know, skewed towards women doing more than men, except when it comes to maybe for business purposes in that case, you will see some men involved in it as well, for example, if they are street vendors, or if they are running restaurants, as part of their homes itself. The other aspect is, again, I do feel that there is a whole scope in looking at the livelihoods that women run in their homes as well. And, as I mentioned earlier, like they do look at it in the starting phases at a much smaller scale. And so that is something that is not really looked at by multiple different people, whether it's embroidery, whether it's you know, normal tailoring that might be there. And that is something again, which is a household requirement. But they're not really looked at as legitimate livelihoods or long-term livelihoods. And so that is something that is not really built upon as well from an energy understanding from an energy perspective. Other than that, for household needs, I don't really see any other difference that might be there.

INTERVIEWER: And you were saying that you've not- you've stepped back from cooking needs within households, but how do you perceive the energy access within say, clean cooking?

RESPONDENT: o again, here also you see a lot of difference geography to geography as well, in terms of cooking anywhere where there is firewood available easily for free, families do tend to you know, go towards that primarily because it's free. So, you have specially in say northeast and XXXX, even if you bring in any other option that might be there, because firewood is easily accessible, and you literally just have to go like less than a kilometre and you will have enough that's available, it's very hard for people to transition. But if you see a lot of parts in XXXX, it's not so- because here you have to pay for firewood as well. So, people do look for other options also, even for example, kerosene, there is a certain limit on it. So, then you have to purchase in black. So again, it has a cost to it, so it's quite different in a way from geography to geography. The reason that we moved out of it is because we felt like the technology itself needed a lot of work on because you were actually giving them a solution which was substandard, still, you won't be able to control the heat the way that you would want to you know like if you have to move from making the dal to a chapatti and you have to monitor the heat it won't be possible with, with, with the stoves that we were piloting at that point of time, because of which people would not take it up. You can look at say, you know, the fuel is - while you require a certain size or certain preparation in terms of how you would need to put the fuel in or you would require certain types of pellets that you would need to purchase and that supply chain would be broken. So, all of those aspects were there which were making people not move to clean cookstoves. When it comes to LPG cylinders and kind of reach of those, again in those as well I've seen in parts of Orissa and Northeast that we work with that people's- people have to carry those cylinders a really long, long way before they can actually, you know, reach their house and there's no delivery, of course. Again, when it's kind of hilly regions, and it's you know, a forested region where there are no roads properly, that itself again becomes a barrier in people moving towards LPG. So again, I'm, I feel it's, it's also a piece of if the fuel wood is freely available to you, that's something that you would always go for instead, we've often heard a lot of other things, you know, the smoke from this kills mosquitoes. So that's why we use it, it warms the house, we here in northeast so you know, it's also heating, plus, you're making the food from it. So, it's like multiple things that are there. But, but yeah, differs quite a bit from, from region to region, and how accessible things are.

INTERVIEWER: So, you find basically energy security trumping health concerns in those kind of situations?

RESPONDENT: Yes, for sure. Sure, I think there is awareness for sure that, you know, the smoke is bad. Especially, I remember visiting a lot of slums in Bangalore, where they used to use kerosene. And the moment this, the stove will start, the small children will start crying because eye really, like you know, it burns. And they-the families know, the mother will be like, the child is crying, because I've started the smoke you know, it burns the eye. But beyond that, you know, it's, it's a long-term kind of a thing, I have to pay something today versus, you know, maybe something will happen in the future. So, I will just look at today right now.

INTERVIEWER: Right, right. Within the women’s groups you have worked, have you seen diversity in energy access? Within women also, like based on, I don’t know… age or income groups, or even community or ethnic or cultural groups?

RESPONDENT: So, I mean, one thing that I remember from one of the earlier evaluations that we had done was, it might be, this is more, I guess, not really a woman's perspective. But generally, in families, I remember that there was a clear difference between how older families who didn't have children or older children were responding to energy. Like, basically, their, their willingness to invest in energy, sustainable energy, versus your families with younger children. The older ones were always like, what is the big deal, I come from home, and I just have to have my food and I will, you know, go to sleep after that. Versus the younger families were always like, you know, I'm working the whole day long, I come back, I want to see my children's face. And you know, I want to spend some time with them before, you know, we go back to sleep. So, I want to have- and they get scared in the night. You know, if there is a small lizard that comes you know, something can bite them, some animals can come in, you know, they, so they, they would feel safer. If it's -if there's a light in the night as well, they would be much more willing in comparison. So not necessarily in terms of gender only, but I feel in that sense, there is a for young, if you have younger children you would be there is a sense of safety and things like that, that, you know, a price that you would pay for safety and wellbeing as well. Some of the families. The other thing I feel is, again, I'm coming in more from the livelihood side, but I do feel that if you compare XXXX with XXXX and Northeast, especially with Orissa, XXXX, like the women, as women as workers and women as entrepreneurs, that ecosystem is a lot more developed, in comparison to obviously a tribal woman in Orissa. And because of that, here, their willingness to actually invest in livelihoods in the support that they get from their families as well to invest in their livelihoods- take a loan for two to three years, which otherwise could have been taken by a male member in the family is a lot more than in Orissa where they would themselves see their livelihood is a small part of the family's income or something that they do for you know, just my neighbour, neighbouring friend. So, they wouldn't want to really invest in something which will be a lot more- cooking I have like not really an idea on but for livelihood I do feel like here there is enough training enough energy SHG mobilization, enough NGOs who are motivating women to take up work in comparison to XXXX and because of which here they'll invest a lot more. It's very hard to find women run enterprises in XXXX, definitely.

INTERVIEWER: What key energy infrastructure does your work help in providing?

RESPONDENT: I mean, as I said, we're primarily looking at livelihood and health. So, and we primarily look at decentralized renewable energy solutions so these are completely off grid or backup systems which are working at a unit level. But they would be for either household needs for livelihood purposes or for health service industry.

INTERVIEWER: Right. And in that, do you find that there are differences in terms of who benefits between men and women?

RESPONDENT: So, I think the health one is definitely you know, a lot more towards women health, prenatal postnatal early child. So that I think is definitely skewed towards women's health a lot more. The whole system is the whole last mile health public health system is a lot more towards that our targets are I think around, MMR, IMR as well. In terms of livelihood, as I said, like we try and make sure that we're, we're getting a good mix of end users that we're working with. If we're not- it's a question that we kind of raised saying why are there no women blacksmiths for example, why are there no women carpenters for example? And then whatever the factor is that is missing we try and kind of put -push our learnings out, put articles out, or like work with training institutes to see if there is a worth in bringing in that extra you know, ecosystem factor that's missing. But in addition to that at a- at a household level again, when we worked in XXXX, our first the company, the first few systems that they sold were actually because women said they needed it. And even the convincing of the household was the man said no, left for the farm, the woman basically said come back and then said you know this is the time when you should come because he will get his money from the farm and I will convince him till then so it's very different obviously XXXX it's a, it's it is the men and the women, but in in XXXX I know for sure that in South XXXX women were the ones who convinced the families and said we need a light in the house because of multiple uses.

INTERVIEWER: So, do you then see that women participate equally in decision making about energy access?

RESPONDENT: I don't think that's true for all geographies again, we've not again really kind of looked at our work so much from that angle. So, I won't be able to say exactly, you know, again, it will be an assumption or an instinctive kind of an answer from different regions. In XXXX, again, I feel because of the whole SHG movement being really strong as well. A lot of the first point of contact with a household is- a lot of the times it's through the SHG groups and in that case, it's the women who are kind of going back and saying you know, we will invest our savings into something like this even going back to their husbands and saying you know, someone came and you know, they -you can use, you can use solar energy in your shop or you know, something like that is available so I think in XXXX, it's, it is quite better or very bett- quite -quite improved or better in comparison to XXXX and Northeast as well in certain states, women are a lot more empowered, like a lot of the decisions- a lot of the enterprises are actually run by women, as you might have heard already, but XXXX because we work in Kalahandi, Koraput area there- I actually- I don't know actually how much women will be involved in the decision making there.

INTERVIEWER: And between urban and rural context do you see that the gender equity vary?

RESPONDENT: In urban our work has primarily been in XXXX and XXXX. Now if I see XXXX, I don't see it vary that - vary that much. In Gujarat we've worked with the XXXX, and XXXX is all about women empowerment. So usually when you work with their communities, women are the ones who are the most vocal, and who're the ones who are really actively kind of working towards not only their households but their communities' resilience as a whole. So, I feel like in those places, it's- it's, it's, it doesn't really differ from geography to geography that much. In urban, in some cases, you see settlements, which are primarily male like people don't really migrate with their families. And in that case, I don't think we can take that case as an example. But otherwise, I'm pretty sure that there will be a difference in XXXX. Again, between the tribal geographies that we work with in Kalahandi, Koraput and others versus if you work towards Puri and Bhubaneshwar, it will be a different story. In Puri and Bhubaneshwar, we've seen a lot of community leaders who are actually women, pottery associations which are led by women. So, so there will be a difference I feel if you look at some of those states.

Part 3 – Policies and Interventions

INTERVIEWER: Right, XXXX, I have still another about 15 more minutes, I think, would you have time now? Or shall we connect back later?

RESPONDENT: Can we go till about 12:25? Because I'll need some time to just prep myself for the next meeting.

INTERVIEWER: Sure, I will also try and go a little fast. So, if we can wrap it up, it's best. So, within your work, I mean, you've already talked about it a bit. But within your work, how much does gender equity factor within energy access? Like for example, the way you design your projects, priorities, internal processes, if you have any specific gender processes that you use?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, so as I said, like, it's primarily the whole idea of when we first start piloting a solution, we make sure that we're covering different typologies of end users. And that's where like gender is a key aspect. The other thing is that we do monitor the typologies differently as well. So when we do our analysis to say like, you know, who is facing what kind of impact or you know, what is the two years down the line, what has been the, you know, larger changes that with a particular enterprise or with a particular health centre or with a particular household, we do kind of segregate it as you know, you have your women led entrepreneurs, you have your women who started enterprises through this intervention versus who are well established, a woman who had the support of a training institute as well, women who had taken a loan previously versus someone who had not - women who are based out of XXXX versus a tribal, you know, women from a tribal family in South XXXX. So, in all our analysis as well we try and see if there are any differences that are coming up, and if certain groups are, you know, able to tap into the opportunity, a lot more than the other than what are the factors here versus there. So those are some of the ways that we try and kind of build it as a part of the approach.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Right. And when we look at energy access policies, do you think that the regional or sectoral policies are gender sensitive? Or should they be more gender sensitive? And in that case, in what ways?

RESPONDENT: I- honestly I don't know...like the ways in which the policies can be made gender sensitive, except like some of the things that I mentioned where, you know, there are schemes which are available specifically for women entrepreneurs, which are at slightly lowered interest rate, training institutions which are promoted to have more, you know, mobilize more women, for whether it's awareness, whether it's, you know, financial literacy, whether it's exposure to entrepreneurship opportunities. I do feel that there is a slight kind of even if, now that I think of it, even if training institutes are, they're providing training for women, it's mostly beautician and tailoring, like that's really it, but I mean, we've seen women doing so much around food processing as well. So much around agriculture, animal husbandry, and maybe they participated in more informally, but you don't see like, you know, training programs, which are focused for women, which is on animal husbandry or like, you know, value addition food products there. So maybe there is, you know, some kind of a clash there. But other than that, I wouldn't really- I can't really think of how, how energy policies could be made, gender sensitive, I would love to know like examples that you come up with, and then maybe I'll be able to say that, you know, would this actually benefit and something maybe we could take forward as well.

INTERVIEWER: Right. So, you've already talked about the gaps also. Especially say for example, in construction industry because you and I both coming from an architectural background, we do see that gap. Right? Do you see any other such gaps evidenced within even at national or international levels? Gaps in policy-

RESPONDENT: Again, no- for the energy gender war?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Again, I feel, and I might be wrong here Monolita. But maybe if you find other evidence, I'll be happy to look at it. But I do feel that the gender energy conversations have been very skewed towards cooking. You know, it's largely around that piece of work itself. Whereas I feel a lot is there that needs to be done from a health and livelihood perspective. Right. And I do feel that once you look at the health and livelihood perspective, it would improve access to cooking fuel, also, because the developmental indicators overall for the family will change, which might mean that the priorities of the households and you know, the, the willingness to invest in an LPG gas, or you know, some cleaner ways of cooking might be there a lot more if, if those indicators are also there. So generally, I feel like when you say gender and energy, everyone talks about cooking only, like, you know, that's the only role of women in the household and as you were-

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

RESPONDENT: That is something that I feel needs a lot more-

INTERVIEWER: Breaking down.

RESPONDENT: -discussions on it. Yeah, yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I mean, one of - some of the things that we've been also seeing is, like, actually fits into this, because LPG connection happens in a woman's name, if you buy any domestic appliances, they all are, you know, women's needs, whereas, so that itself is kind of entrenching a certain gender role that is already there. You have talked about social policies influencing energy equity, if you could elaborate a little bit more on that?

RESPONDENT: Social policies, you mean, like training and things, capacity building wise or-?

INTERVIEWER: No, the - like you talked about that you have looked at other social policies and how they empower energy access, like even in terms of, you know, working with social justice department or social justice laws and regulations, right?

RESPONDENT: Yeah. So, for example, we've worked with even like say, forest departments, forest Rights organizations as well. We've worked obviously, I mentioned like the women and child department. We've also, I would say, like other aspect, because these things that we have talked about a little bit, but the other aspect is like say..., which I don't know if it's if it's relevant, but again, like a lot of the last mile workers, even from the government side are women, right? So, you have like your Anganwadi workers, your Asha workers. So, all of these are actually also women who are travelling into these villages and providing different services, their energy needs are also actually not looked into that much if you can, if that's another thing, because like they are working out of sub centres, which don't have energy, but they are required to stay and live there. Right. So, you have women who are staying in sub centres, you don't have light, you don't have water, you don't have anything at all there, you can't charge a mobile phone, but you are expected to actually report on you know, what you've done in the day and all of those aspects. Similarly, with Anganwadi workers as well, like you have to, there's so many activities that they need to do including survey of villages, but there is no access to energy, there's no access to proper other amenities as well. So, it does make their job quite hard in that sense, right, then you can then if you - if the community is complaining and saying our sub centre doesn't have a nurse, yeah, we didn't really make the arrangements for the nurse to actually live there or the nurse to be able - be, be present there. So, a lot of our work inXXXXand sub centres also, we've seen more impact on the service delivery- delivery agents that are there. Like they are the ones who are like yeah, if I have like portable energy, then I can do deliveries at home. Or I can take do certain quick tests at home like you know, I can check their heartbeat, I can take certain samples, I can get it- get it back to my sub centre, it makes their job a lot more easier. So maybe those would be also some things that- it could be, could be definitely looked into. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: So, what's your vision for gender equity in energy access, if you think of a situation where there is no policy or financial constraints?

RESPONDENT: No policy or financial?

INTERVIEWER: Constraints.

RESPONDENT: I do feel that like, you know, when, when, for example, say like, post-independence, so to say when we were trying to boost agriculture, there is a lot of investment that went into like a, social infrastructure that farmers could leverage upon. Right. So, all the regional rural banks came at that point of time, the main aim was to have banks even in the most last mile area, so that farmers are able to take loans. There were agri-training institutions that were set up. You know, they were kind of institutions that were set up for innovations on farming techniques, as well. And all of that investment led into farming being - grow in a certain manner. And farmers have the confidence to invest in something which is much broader. I think, for women to have equitable access to energy that kind of institution needs to come about-

INTERVIEWER: Financial institution building?

RESPONDENT: Financial institution building, you know, training support institutions building, obviously, a lot of policy incentives for training institutions to mobilize more women, you know, handhold more women in diverse kinds of livelihoods. All of those kind of aspects would actually help make women's accessibility to energy a lot more equitable.

INTERVIEWER: Right. And within your current role, how do you think you can work towards this?

RESPONDENT: So we- what we primarily do is, as I said, like, even in our partnerships, we look for typologies, like typologies is (laughs)... is a main kind of driving thing. So again, we also try and kind of see whether it's training institutes, whether it's like financial products, whether it's certain organizations that are not really looking at gender as a focus, but you know, are willing to kind of take that step say if NABARD wants a scheme, which is specifically for women run farmer producer organizations, and they're saying we're going to create all infrastructure necessary for something like this, right, then it would send a signal to the grassroot organizations as well, they will look at women coming forward as, as farmers and training them and you know, mobilizing them, forming cooperatives with them. So, we try and kind of, we try and look out for organizations who would be willing to partner with us to create that ecosystem. But our work is primarily, you know, focused on those enabling factors itself. We feel like that comes together; energy would happen on its own. That's how we've been - we've been doing it here as well.

Part 5 – Closing (3 min)

INTERVIEWER: Right. Is there anything else you would like to add to this topic? I know you're rushing now.

RESPONDENT: Yeah, (laughs).

INTERVIEWER: Just finished. Just two last questions.

RESPONDENT: I don't think there's- I think I've tried to cover whatever I can, there might not be as answers to your specific questions (laughs).

INTERVIEWER: No, they are, they are. They're really interesting. Yeah.

RESPONDENT: Thank god. But I've tried to- I don't think I have anything to add - if I- if something comes to, I'll definitely write to you Monolita.

INTERVIEWER: Sure. Sure. And would you be available for some follow up questions if they come up?

RESPONDENT: Sure please, yeah do reach out to me.

INTERVIEWER: And I wanted to ask you specifically, like, within XXXX, or I mean, like both your organization or XXXX Solar, where which is more geared towards delivering solutions? Do you think I should speak to somebody specific more to get a better understanding of certain aspects which your work does not, is not involved within in?

RESPONDENT: And I'll actually check with some of my other colleagues, even if it's not XXXX, but maybe some of our partner organizations?

INTERVIEWER: Sure, that would be really good.

RESPONDENT: Maybe I could connect you with one or two people who you could speak to, they might not be core energy, but they would have worked on energy solutions, and maybe their, you know, thing might be a little bit more from the gender perspective as well, they might be able to add more value there.

INTERVIEWER: Sure. That'd be great. That'd be great. Would you be sending me a mail regarding that?

RESPONDENT: Yeah, I’ll just do that.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you so much XXXX, it was really good getting in touch with you and very, very interesting interview and-

RESPONDENT: All the best for your research and all your other interviews as well. And as I said, like, please reach out any question at all I'll-

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, we would try and kind of- a lot of people have told us that they would like to come together with the other resource people to kind of have a energy knowledge exchange, so we'll- we can figure that out also.

RESPONDENT: That sounds great. That sounds great.

INTERVIEWER: Thanks a lot. Thanks a lot.

RESPONDENT: Bye.