

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN ENERGY PLANNING

Soliciting Participation and Identification of Felt Needs

The involvement of the community in energy planning and management can be achieved by associating individuals and voluntary workers, traditional village organisations, e.g., farmers' associations, cooperatives or tribal groups, associating non-government organisations and the local government.

This study uses the current set-up of the local government in Swat District to evolve a methodology to enlist the participation of the community in energy planning and management at the local level. The exercise was carried out as a case study in one of the largest union councils in the district with about 15,000 people living in 7 electoral wards. This was an attempt to construct a model community participation approach which could be used in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of energy development activities in the union councils of the district.

Under the current local government system, Swat District is divided into 537 electoral wards. Each electoral ward has about 250 to 300 households with an average of 8 members. All the 537 electoral wards are grouped into 69 union councils. Each union council elects one member from each ward. The total membership varies from 5 to 12 depending upon the population and size of the union council. The members of a union council elect their own Chairman. The tier above the union council in the local government is the district council, and it has 33 elected members in Swat. The district council also has its own chairman elected by the members.

The analysis of data collected, regarding the felt needs for energy, showed that the community in Charbagh Union Council gives top priority to the use of fuelwood as a source of domestic energy. The assessment of felt needs and their prioritisation are given in Annex Table 13. These needs were prioritised by households on the basis of a system of scoring. The scores allocated depended upon the importance attached to the form of energy, its possible availability in the area, and resources available (funds, labour, tools, land, etc) for obtaining it through programme execution. Each of these three aspects had a positive or negative rating. Each positive answer was rated as 1 while each negative answer was rated as 0. The selection of form of energy in the priority list was therefore linked with a positive rating from all three aspects (importance, possibility, and resource contribution).

The questionnaire was administered to about 1,800 households. The scores allocated to each form of energy by individual households were aggregated to identify the priority and felt needs for the whole Union Council. The results, thus, obtained, are given in Table 8. It is apparent that given the choice, the local people first prefer to go for energy plantation and they are willing to contribute resources generously to promote energy plantation. About 41 per cent of the households prefer to promote other

traditional energy resources, e.g., fossil fuels and electricity. Among these, LPG received the maximum weightage. A positive aspect revealed by this study was that 9 per cent of the households preferred to go for some form of renewable energy resource. Among these, solar energy appeared to be the most popular. Another form of energy technology that came into the priority list was diesel generators.

Table 8: People's Response on Sources of Energy they Would Like to Promote in Charbagh Union Council, Swat, 1987

Energy Source	% of Residents
Energy Plantation	43.2
Cylinder Gas	14.2
Other Fossil Fuels	13.7
Grid Electricity	12.8
Renewables	9.0
Others	7.0

Once identified, the felt needs of the local people can be used effectively to prepare a plan of action. For example, the wasteland in Charbagh Union Council is estimated to be about 2,000 acres. As expressed in their felt needs, the local people would like to use this land for energy plantation. The people are willing to participate in the development and management of renewable energy resources. However, there is a need to identify feasible projects and implement these through community participation.

Using the technique described above it would be possible to prepare an energy plan of action for Charbagh Union Council. Once approved, the plan can be implemented through the active support and participation of the Charbagh community.

This process of planning with the involvement of community participation can be extended to all union councils in Swat District. Once the action plans for all 69 union councils become available the same can be consolidated into a district plan of action. The criteria for the consolidation of the plan of action (projects) at different levels may be based on people's priority needs, self-reliance, magnitude of affected population, and linkages with other projects/programmes.