

Report of Women workshop on Role of Rural Energy in Women Economic Empowerment:

On July 30, 2019, ASERD Program and ADB held a workshop on Role of Rural Energy in Women Economic Empowerment for women from border areas. the workshop was attended by around 70 participants including Mujiburahman Karimi, the Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Mr. Mohammad Ajmal Shinwari, ASERD Program Manager, 35 women from border districts, women from Kabul and Polytechnic Universities Engineering department,



*Mujiburahma Karimi, Minister of MRRD, delivering opening remarks at the workshop
Photo by: ASERD/MRRD*

women from MRRD development programs, two women from E-box project beneficiaries, women from WISE and VTC organizations, and through video conference Mr. Sohail Hasnie, Principal Energy Specialist from Manila, Mr. Hamidullah Durani and Mr. Mustafa Sadat from AFRM . The workshop began with opening remarks by H.E. Mujiburahman Karimi, the Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. He thanked everyone for their participation and stressed on the importance of hearing from women who are living in the border districts. The Minister pointed out that MRRD has always considered women problems and paid attention to reduce the women poverty by implementing its development projects. Through ASERD program distributed 4400 improved cook stoves to women in rural Afghanistan. As well as in Border Districts Electrification Project MRRD has focused on project benefits for women that will meet energy needs of small businesses in border districts. According to the Minister of MRRD in addition to lightening the energy through solar home system will be mainly used in enterprises, agriculture and homemade production by women in border districts which will help generate household's income and improve economy of communities.

MRRD's Minister emphasized the importance of women contribution in rural development and their engaging in rural household's economic activities through energy projects.

Mohammad Ajmal Shinwari, ASERD's Program Manager, presented an overall overview of the rural women, he added women covers 50% of rural population who has been deprived of two main services (education and electricity) and have suffered a lot in past 40 years' conflict, women are working at home without electricity. He said by having electricity mothers play main and key role in their children education and can contribute to serve the country and bring bright future.



*Mohammad Ajmal Shinwari, ASERD Program Manager, presenting overview of women statuses in border districts at the workshop
Photo by: ASERD/MRRD*

According to ASERD Program Manager, Increasing the access to electricity can improve women’s lives directly, including through better health by eliminating kerosene-based light and better education through access to information. It will also pave the ways for new local business opportunities that can contribute to economic growth. Provision of basic services including electricity has also great importance from social and governance perspectives, especially in the area bordering with Pakistan and Iran.

Presentation of Current economic situation of women across the rural areas of Afghanistan was also presented in the workshop in order to get inputs from participants on women engagement, challenges and solutions.

The workshop participants shared their suggestions, challenges, ideas and experience through focused group discussions. the group’s members were containing of local women from different communities, University students, MRRD program’s Gender and Women Economic Empowerment specialists, WISE and VTC representatives.

The main discussed points in the groups were:

1. Women current economic activities in border districts
2. Possible Women initiatives for economic development
3. What are the possibilities to get there?

Further to this; the group’s members discussed six things which are not happening due to lack of electricity as well as; six things that women can do with electricity.

The group’s findings were presented to the workshop mostly by women from border districts local representatives.



Workshop participant shares their inputs on Women current economic activities in border districts
Photo by: ASERD/MRRD



Workshop participant shares their inputs on Possible Women initiatives for economic development
Photo by: ASERD/MRRD



Workshop participant shares their inputs on Possibilities to improve their life and how to get there
Photo by: ASERD/MRRD

Following is a brief summary of topics discussed during the discussion session:

Women current economic activities in border districts

- Animal husbandry
- Tailoring
- Embroidery
- Beauty parlor
- Carpet viewing

- Poultry
- Food processing
- Collecting woods
- Handicrafts
- Dairy processing
- Agriculture (Safran)
- Bee keeping
- Silk process
- Saffron cultivation and processing



A group facilitator presents the summary of their findings in discussion
 Photo by: ASERD/MRRD

Possible Women initiatives for economic development:

- Creating women district center
- Juice/food process
- Equip the tailoring/ Embroidery by electronic machines
- Solar dryer for vegetable and fruits
- Green houses (off season production)
- Contribute in household's income
- Small vocational activities during the night



A group facilitator presents the summary of their findings in discussion
 Photo by: ASERD/MRRD

Six Problems Women have due to lack of electricity?

1. Poor education
2. Difficulties in house works

3. Insecure streets
4. Waste of foods and low food processing
5. Deficiency in handicrafts and other small income generation activities.
6. Unhealthy environment

Six things women can do with having electricity:

1. Create ease in getting water from wells
2. Provision of sufficient handicrafts and other Vocational training activities.
3. Avoid food wastages
4. Connecting with the government and the world
5. More facilities will be established by electricity to the women
6. More business opportunities will be created for women in the market

Presentations were followed by open discussion session. During the session, ASERD's Program Manager and technical team responded to questions and concerns raised by participants.



A participant is asking her concern regarding the energy project
 Photo by: ASERD/MRRD



ASERD Program Manager respond to workshop participant's questions
 Photo by: ASERD/MRRD

The workshop was ended with closing remarks of ASERD Program Manager.