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Speaks on:

India's energy data: Are we equipped for an inclusive policy design?

Abstract

India's energy sector is shaped by an array of factors, both at the macro-level (national energy endowments, climate change, energy trade, etc.) and micro-level (personal habits and experience, available energy options, household capacity, and affordability, etc.). An educated energy policy design needs to be built and backed by information reflecting such multiplicity. The objective of this paper, which focuses on micro factors, is to present a critical review of large-scale surveys that provide energy data at the bottom-most unit level like household, enterprise, farm or farmer, etc. In the paper, we have focussed on agriculture, micro, small and medium enterprises, and the rural household sector. We have proposed a 'needs and means' framework to analyse the adequacy of energy data in these surveys. We have found that there is an absence of consistent and comprehensive information on variables relating to energy fuels, energy devices, their purpose of use, and other physical and social infrastructure. This lack of information, we argue, limits the design of meaningful alternative energy policies. We conclude that there needs to be a credible and versatile source of energy data available to account for the adjustments to chart the evolution of the energy market over time. As India embarks on the path of sustainable development, we propose an exclusive energy survey for various sectors.

About the speaker:

Hippu Salk Kristle Nathan is an engineer-turned development researcher with an M.Tech. in Thermal Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, and Ph.D. in Development Studies from Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai. Prior to joining IRMA, he was with National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore in the Energy Environment Programme since February 2012. He had industry experience as software professional at Infosys Limited, Bangalore (during 1998-99) and Geometric Global, Mumbai (during 2001-04). As a part of civil society interventions through Peoples Foundation for Scientific Socio Economic Development, he has been involved in education, health, and livelihood issues in urban slums and remote villages of Maharashtra, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh.

Dr. Nathan has won the Elsevier-National Academy of Sciences, India Young Scientist Award 2017 in Social Sciences. He was the Subir Chowdhury Post-doctoral Fellow at the London School of Economics for the academic year 2016-17. Dr. Nathan is also one of the winners in the GDN Awards and Medals Competition 2013 in the category of Outstanding Research on Development. He is a recipient of Young Scientist Award conferred at Odisha Environment Congress-2012. In the doctoral years, his research papers have received best paper awards in four colloquiums: Doctoral Colloquim-2010 (IIM, Ahmedabad), Consortium of Students in Management Research, i.e., COSMAR-2007 and 2008 (IISc, Bangalore), and Student Colloquium in Development Research-2007 (IGIDR, Mumbai). Dr. Nathan's broad areas of interest lie in energy, economic measurement, sustainable use of resources, human development, and socio-political reform. Dr. Nathan's most significant research contributions are 'conceptualization and development of frameworks for both, structuring and selection of sustainable development indicators'; in co-authored works he has proposed 'an alternative approach to measure human development index' and proposed 'a novel method to assess energy poverty'.