

GENDER STUDIES IN INNOVATION: SOME REFLECTIONS

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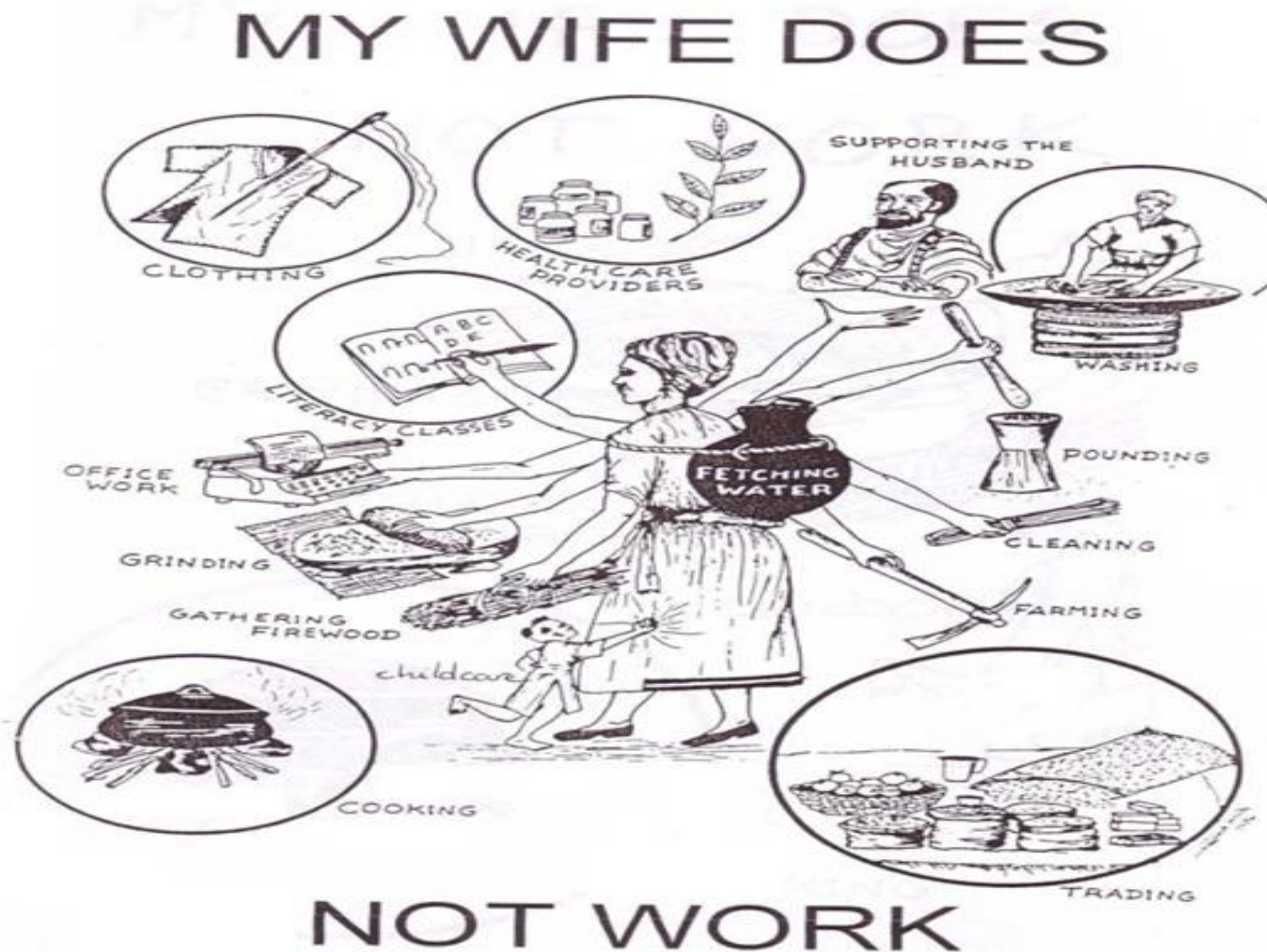
Outline

- Understanding key concepts
- Insights from renewable energy resources
- System approach and inclusive innovation as potential analytical frameworks for gender research

Understanding key concepts - Gender roles

- People are born female or male, but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. They are taught what the appropriate behaviour and attitudes, roles and activities are for them, and how they should relate to other people. This **learned behaviour** is what makes up **gender identity** and **determines gender roles** and responsibilities.
 - **Gender roles** are the “**social definition**” of women and men and vary among different societies and cultures, classes and ages, and during different periods in history (Lober, 1994)
- While both men and women are involved in **productive work** that may define gender roles, much of the **reproductive work** is undertaken by women, and this involves many tasks which are not recognized as work or paid for.

Gender roles: Productive versus reproductive roles



Understanding key concepts

- Gender Gap: used to refer to the **difference** in the **scores** between **men and women** on **attitudes, interests, behaviours, knowledge and perspectives** on particular **issues** such as technologies/innovation, policy preferences, voting preferences etc.
- Gender mainstreaming - acknowledges that all activities and operations under any programme/activity/project have a gender impact and do not automatically benefit men, women, children, PWDs, youth etc equally.

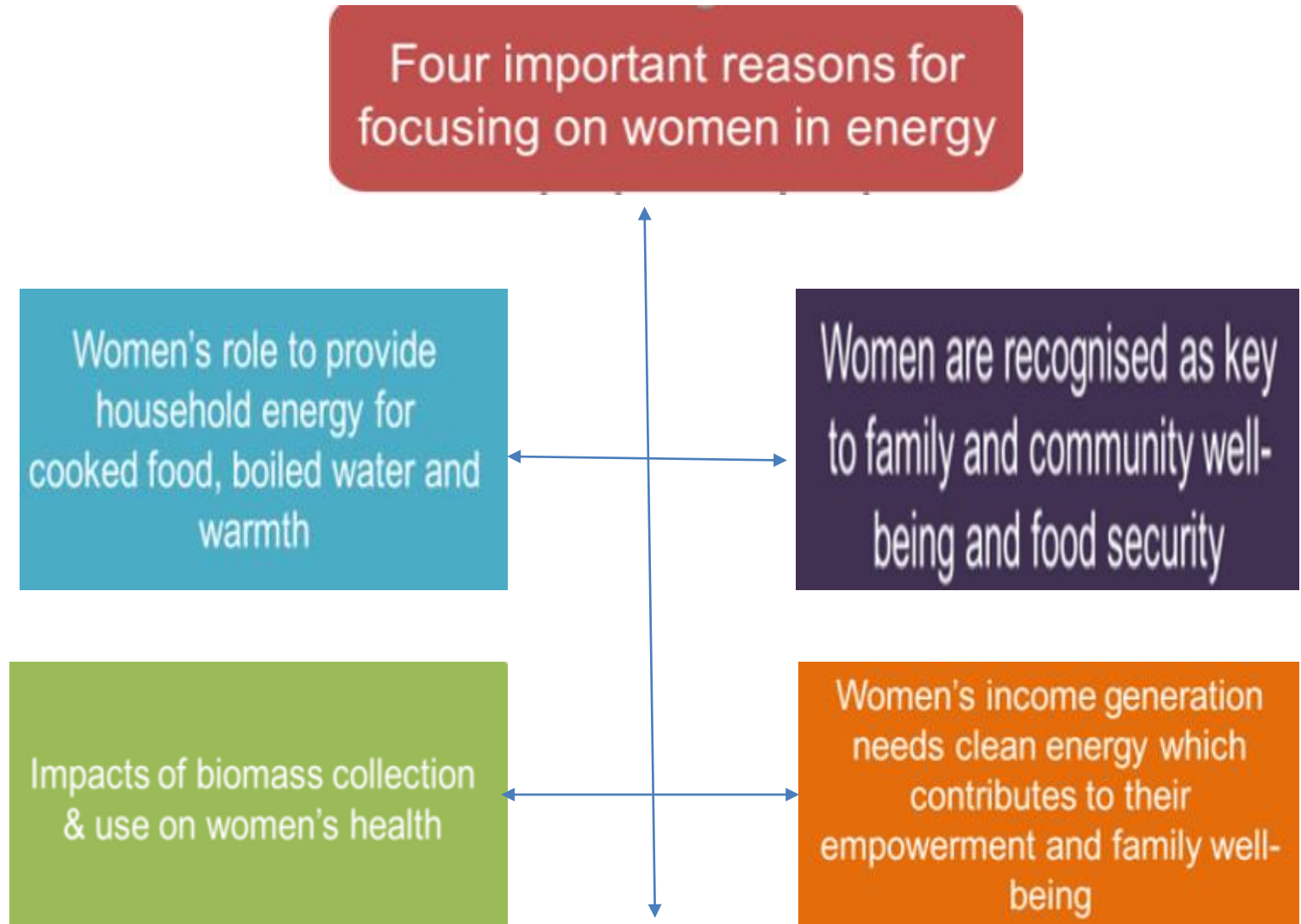
Gender & Energy

- The target 7.1 of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 7 relates to “ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”
- Energy (as a resource) is useful at the communities rural setting for household use like lighting, cooking and heating but also at the national level for accelerated development.
- access to energy for all would imply meeting the energy needs of the disadvantaged in the communities such as women, persons with disabilities (PWDs) etc, in an affordable, reliable and sustainable way.
- Challenge is securing access to energy in form of electricity, clean fuels or cooking technologies requires consideration of energy systems that are not always connected to the grid.

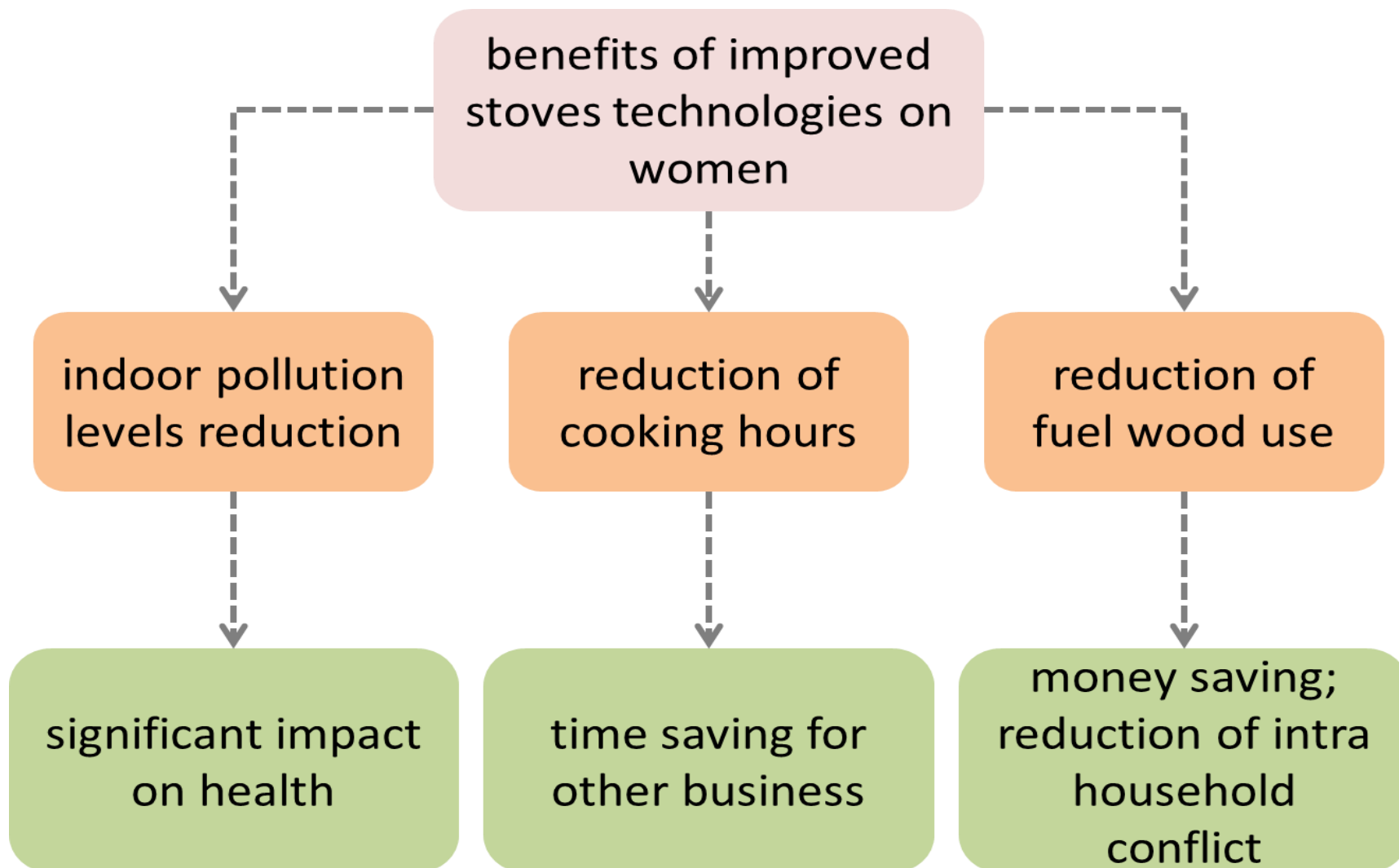
Gender & Energy contd

- Promotion of **modern and clean technologies** for rural electrification such as wind and solar energy can provide rural communities with **affordable energy**, while also providing **opportunities for empowerment** through rural enterprises (Khaemba and Kingiri 2020).
- There is evidence that **gaps in access to energy** and **clean cooking fuels** can **perpetuate gender inequalities** (ENERGIA 2019; OSSREA 2015; Khaemba and Kingiri 2020).
- Process of transitioning (from unclean energy sources like biomass) to modern and clean energy services has been hampered by failure to address the **gender dimensions of energy** (Pachauri and Rao 2013).
- Both **energy access** and **gender equality** are very instrumental in attainment of SDGs (e.g SDG 7) especially in the economies under transition.

Women gender and energy



Improved energy resources and gender – the case of improved cookstoves



Traditional gender analysis in renewable energy resources (clean/improved technologies)

Gender Analysis

Why?	How? =Analysis	Results
Recognizing the differences in roles and needs.	Who? What?	Sex and Age Disaggregated Data and Information. = Guides Targeting
Recognizing the different power relations in household resource use	Who? What? Why?	Decision making = Participation & Opportunities
Recognizing different uses for energy	Who? What? When? Why?	Energy Resources, Needs & Opportunities = Actual priorities.
Understanding the differential impacts of energy access and use for men, women, boys and girls	Who? How? Why?	There is always a difference = One size doesn't fit all.

Inclusion, Innovation and SDGs (and gender)

- The SDGs may help us to see the connection between inclusivity; and innovation/development
- Inequality/inclusivity are concepts that run across almost all the SDGs
- Goal 10 - reducing inequality within and among countries
- Goal 5 - achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls
 - Overall **sustainable development** requires an understanding of both women's and men's roles (or other disadvantaged social groups) and responsibilities within the community and their relations to each other – **gender & gender roles**.
- Goal 9 encompasses three important aspects of sustainable development: infrastructure, industrialization and **innovation**
 - It links inequality and/or inclusivity to emerging technologies or innovation/s
 - Enhancing inclusivity is the pathway through which transformation for all could be achieved towards sustainable development (that may be driven by innovation).

Why gender studies in innovation ?

- Innovation is now accepted as a key driver of sustainable development
- Gender considerations in innovation may have positive implications for innovation processes
- **Gender research** has ignored **innovation** component
 - One reason - inadequate capacity conceptually and theoretically by researchers to undertake gender related innovation studies (i.e. ensure the merging of innovation research, and insights from gender research and analysis).
- Gender studies in innovation – this is much more than gender analysis, or ensuring participation of women, men and other social groups in innovation process
 - It calls for holistic and well thought approach to gender and innovation which is important for enhanced inclusivity and economic growth as well as transformational change.
 - It calls for investigating the innovation systems and reconfiguring them to align them to gender needs and address gender gaps.
 - It calls for gender learning and system empowerment/capacity building

Reflections on holistic approach to gender studies in innovation - Innovation systems framework

Can it be used as a knowledge-based tool to analyse gender issues?

The framework may be suitable for analysing innovation through a gender lens because of its emphasis on **institutions** and **actors** that create “**gendered**” patterns of **interaction** (Kingiri 2013).

- The innovation systems perspective further gives emphasis to the wider notion of **innovation capacity**.
- Exploration of **innovation capacity** provides an expanding range of entry points for gendering innovation through **gender empowerment** at a **systems level**
- It also helps us begin to look at gender from a **gender learning perspective**.

Innovation systems and gender research

There are two critical aspects of the innovation systems idea that offer great promise:

1. Shift from gender analysis to gender learning

- Giving emphasis to **learning** as a way of **changing products and services**, & **learning new ways to work** differently towards **different goals**.
- Ways of **gendering innovation process** need to be **learnt** and **shaped** by the **local context** in which this learning is taking place.
- **Guidelines** can be used as a useful experimental starting point, but focus critically on the **quality of the learning process**;

2. Shift from women's empowerment to systems empowerment

- The innovation systems perspective gives emphasis to the wider notion of innovation capacity.
 - Understanding innovation capacity in a more systemic sense reveals many more entry points through which gender concerns can be addressed.
- This view of capacity goes beyond skills and actions of individuals, but encompasses the behaviour of the system as a whole and is shaped largely by the policy and institutional dimensions of that system:

Inclusive innovation as an analytical framework

- Inclusive innovation thinking incorporates the following:
 - Innovation that addresses **product** and **process needs** of **low income** and **excluded populations**.
 - Most work focuses more on **poor as consumers** but some more interested in **poor as producers**
 - Could include **meeting environmental goals** although this is not a feature of all interpretations
 - **Governance issues** are **not addressed explicitly** in much of the literature
 - **Inclusion** does not necessarily mean radical transformation – it **may imply modification**
- It **focuses on analysis** that begins with **micro** (firm/organization) **level**
 - as a conceptual framework is rooted in analysis of **micro** and to **a lesser extent on meso** (sector/regional) and macro **level innovation** dynamics which are also important.

Reflection – how appropriate is the concept in studying innovation especially in the rural/informal setting in the global south?

Inclusive innovation in gender studies

- Unless inclusivity is addressed, most innovation processes will often discriminate against the opportunities for certain disadvantaged social groups like women to participate in, and benefit from innovation processes (Crowden, 2003).
- Gender equality (towards social inclusivity) has been considered as a pathway to meeting the sustainable goals, but there is lack of systematic approach on how this can be advanced in many sectors (energy sector, agriculture, ICT, digital innovation, health etc).
 - The inclusive innovation concept could be used to provide insights into understanding the gender implication on the deployment of innovations or technologies in a sustainable way, in a given setting e.g. rural communities.
 - Questions to ask in a gender studies in innovation:
 - What evidence exist of gender implication on the deployment of technological innovations in a given context?
 - How is inclusion enhanced in the deployment process?
 - Others?
- The concept need testing – has been done in some countries – Susan will talk more on this. We are writing a paper using clean energy as a case study in Kenya

END

Thank you for listening

Questions!