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WRI India Working Paper – Integrating Electricity Priorities into Healthcare and Education in India: A Review of National and Subnational Policies

While India has made impressive progress in electrifying almost all homes in the country in the past decade (96 percent as of 2020), over a third of its schools (37 percent) and a quarter of its primary health facilities (24 percent) lacked power as of 2020, constraining transformative developmental outcomes.

Improving the delivery of healthcare and education requires interdepartmental coordination. Governmental policies are important instruments in achieving such integrative practices. Hence, we must understand how national and subnational policies discuss the role of electricity in achieving education- and health-related developmental outcomes.

To achieve such integrative policies and practices, “WRI India conducted an analysis of over a 100 policy documents related to health and education, and their linkages to energy in the states of Assam, Jharkhand, and Rajasthan. This report is a culmination of our analytical frame in understanding the gaps in prioritizing energy in health and educational policies across these states, and the difficulties this presents in evaluating the impact of access to power on developmental outcomes,” said Dr. OP Agarwal (Retd. IAS), CEO, WRI India, while participating at the event held to release this *Working Paper* in New Delhi today.

Here are some of our **recommendations** based on our analysis:

- Policies must link electricity with development outcomes based on local information. Flexibility should be embedded in funds (such as untied funds) to provide local decision-makers with some agency in mitigating policy implementation barriers.
- Providing reliable electricity for health centres and schools should be the responsibility of centralized decision-making entities at the state or national level. Individual facilities should not be burdened with provisioning to qualify for policies or programs.
- Effective policy frameworks include strong accountability and enforcement mechanisms, such as policy monitoring systems. Monitoring currently focuses on physical progress and financial spending indicators. It does not evaluate the impact of building assets on overall development and well-being. Such evidence is significant for the development and implementation of integrative policies.
- As integrative policies are useful but insufficient to achieve intended outcomes, instruments that operationalize policies—such as institutional structures, finance, and information and coordination mechanisms—must be in place for policies to be transformative.

Delivering the keynote address at the event, Rakesh Ranjan, Mission Director, Aspirational Districts Programme, NITI Aayog thanked WRI India for bringing out this publication. Mr. Ranjan said, “This reminds us all that before launching a scheme in the social sector, current status of availability of electricity at the field level units should be ascertained and remedial measures, if needed, taken forthwith. This work of WRI will be of great use to policy and scheme implementing agencies at different levels of Government.”

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