

## Interview Series Newsletter Issue 13

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### What is your role in the project?

I am working as a consultant at IWM Nepal under the SoLAR project. In this project, I have contributed to developing a summarized report on the impact evaluation of solar irrigation pumps (SIPs). This evaluation encompasses quantitative data gathered through phone and household surveys, as well as qualitative analysis involving GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) assessment. In a grid-connected pilot project, I am developing a database of monitoring parameters based on the monitoring framework guidelines and overseeing its operation and maintenance activities. To promote gender equality, I actively promote the formation of different gender-based user groups for water governance while ensuring their equal participation. I am supporting the capacity building of the user community in coordination with local government, partner organizations and other stakeholders. I am supporting data collection using primary and secondary research methods and tools. I am also involved in qualitative and quantitative data analysis using different statistical tools. Apart from this, I am also leading and supporting solar technician's training activities with the aim of building skills in the operation and maintenance of pumps across the Terai region districts. Similarly, I am responsible for documentation and knowledge management for workshops, and other events/forums. I am involved in various key areas of the SoLAR-SA project such as research, capacity building, data management and knowledge dissemination. These responsibilities are diverse yet interconnected to promote sustainable solar irrigation practices in Nepal.

### What are the critical questions that your country team is trying to answer?

The project's main goal is to contribute to climate-resilient, gender, and socially inclusive-agrarian livelihoods in South Asia by supporting national government efforts to promote sustainable solar irrigation. In the process, the project will pave the way for sustainable and equitable groundwater governance by tackling policy distortions such as perverse electricity subsidies that have created the current negative interlinkages between the water and energy sectors in South Asia. I believe that the country team is doing great in terms of bringing about positive changes in the cropping pattern, and year-round irrigation supply. Here are some critical questions that my country team is trying to answer.

- How is solar pump being promoted in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and discouraging over-extraction of groundwater?
- Are the solar pumps, a renewable energy women-friendly, and socially inclusive promoting equity for small and marginal farmers ensuring equal access to these technologies?
- How can we add knowledge and skills for inclusive solar irrigation policies, programs, and practices?

### Which aspects of the project keep you motivated?

My work focuses on water management in connection with agriculture, climate change, and energy with a particular emphasis on viewing these dynamics through a gender lens. Also, the project connects farmers with renewable energy, water resource management, and gender aspects at the ground level. There is a touch of three different aspects of sustainability through a common ground and I get more influenced by the water resource management at the community level.

I believe farmers are God to every possible being on earth who is surviving on food. This motivates me to contribute to achieving farmers' needs through this piloting, which is in fact the first ever project with local grid connection. Our country observes winter in the second half of the year when solar pumps are inefficient to use. Therefore, the micro-grid connection supplies an additional source of energy for water pumping during the winter season as well. This aspect of the work fascinates me. Additionally, I possess proficiency in several languages spoken in the working areas of IWM in Terai including Maithili, Bhojpuri, Tharu, and Hindi. My ability to communicate with farmers in their local language allows me to gather raw ideas and information directly from the source for documentation without any distortions.