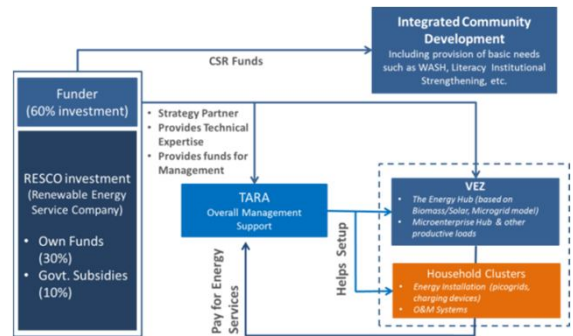


# Village Enterprise Zones (VEZs)

## THE PROGRAMME

The provision of energy services is a vital precursor to economic development. In India, approximately 57% of the population is deprived of reliable electricity supply and thus, very limited options exist for socio-economic development in the country.

The VEZs concept is a comprehensive response to the energy needs of electricity deprived villages in India, with an objective of providing them with reliable, affordable and clean electricity; thereby improving the quality of life, enhancing livelihood security and driving local economic development.



## THE COMPONENTS

Following are the components of the programme:

- **Setting up systems for energy infrastructure and service delivery** – through establishment of a renewable energy based “Village Enterprise Zone (VEZ)” – that will power enterprises and electrify households serving a primary village of 500 households and smaller hamlets in the catchment area
- **Carrying out Integrated Community Development** – through initiatives in the areas of Basic Needs Fulfilment (Literacy, Safe Drinking Water, Sanitation & Hygiene), Employability (Vocational and Life Skills for Youth and Women) and Institutional Strengthening (Youth Club, Women SHGs and Children’s club)



## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Enhancement in income-generating activities; local economic development
- Safe, reliable and clean household lighting
- Adoption of drudgery reduction appliances reducing the work load on women
- Increase in number of people accessing basic needs

## Access to Energy – Success Story

The attractiveness of OORJAgram, a rural enterprise zone in Village Diara Rasulpur in Bihar, lies in concentrating loads from micro-enterprises. Getting the energy services within a defined area convinced entrepreneurs to put forth their demand for energy based facility. The model has the unique benefit of prioritizing productive loads over household loads as a way of setting up businesses.

The energy being supplied to the enterprises and community is renewable. The cost at which renewable energy is supplied is much lower than the cost of diesel based supply. The infrastructure for the shops set up is also of a much higher quality than any in the catchment area. It is a one of a kind innovation to create an ecosystem of services at a single point. It plays the role of an enabler for overall economic development with low cost enterprises for services and livelihood and ready to use solar technology.

In the process of developing this unique ecosystem, TARA, through its engagement mechanism, offered soft finance to community based entrepreneurs and motivated the service based organizations to extend their services to Diara Rasulpur.

OORJAgram is currently home to:

- Three enterprises which are –
  - Community Services Centre
  - General Store and
  - Learning and Entertainment Centre
- *Haat* (Evening Market)

OORJAgram has enabled the environment of continuous income generation and financial security by reducing the dependency on alternative sources of power such as diesel and battery backup from local DG operator and erratic supply from Electricity Board Grid.

