

Providing accessible, affordable and sustainable energy to boat owners in Manipur



Imagine a life without electricity supply, where sunlight is the only constant source of light till it goes down. This is exactly how the communities living in Loktak floating huts of Manipur have been living. With no possible way to secure a grid connection, not only are evenings synonymous to darkness but also depressing and inconvenient for the community.

Fishing in the lake continues to be the only source of income for the natives. Although, they seem content by this livelihood option but the same expression doesn't extend to other facets of their life. Lack of electricity meant that children were unable to study during evenings. Other than this, they often worked through the night to dry the fish. Conventionally, they've been using firewood smoke fueled by kerosene and candle to do this. This puts them at a high risk every single day, as the huts, that are primarily made of wood, are exposed to potentially catching fire and burning to ashes. Searching for alternate sources of energy, some of the hut owners have procured small petrol generators to power few lights. However, the improper fitting has resulted in exposed electrical wires, which again is risky.

Some boat owners, who procured solar panels and battery from the market, did not use proper charge controller. As a result, their batteries exhaust in quick time.

With the intent to provide customized solutions to the inhabitant's problems, CLEAN Member, SNL Energy Solutions contacted one of the hut owners to discuss about the customized solar system that could be installed properly with Module Mounting System (MMS), without exposing

the wiring. SEVA Manipur supported the initiative through end-user financing. The boat owner happily agreed to the proposition. Thereafter, SNL extended the installation of 20W solar system in a few huts on a trial basis.

SNL Energy Solutions was started in 2018 after the incubation program of Selco Foundation with a goal to provide reliable, affordable & environmentally sustainable energy solutions to the underserved homes and business. The focus was on the rural areas of Manipur with customized technology, appropriate financing and door step service.

The boat owner community's response to services provided by SNL Energy Solutions is heartening. The inhabitants are almost overjoyed about the quality of SNL's installation and servicing. SNL is gradually expanding the installation and servicing to more number of huts. The enterprise is also exploring financial linkages that they can help establish with Banks, MFIs or any other financial sources to ease the installation process for the boat owners.

Through its efforts, SNL has been able to reach out to 500+ rural household and is constantly trying to reach out to and support more number of households with convenient technology, innovation & affordability.

SNL in partnership with local NGOs, Banks, MFIs & village heads continues to innovate appropriate financial mechanisms to bridge the gap between needs and affordability.