

HARNESSING BEHAVIOUR CHANGE FOR

PROMOTING ENERGY EFFICIENCY



BACKGROUND

Human behaviour has a critical role to play in fostering deeper energy savings. Decisions relating to energy use, including indoor temperature settings, adoption of star-labelled appliances, or participation in demand-response programs, are all intricately linked with human behaviour. The actions and attitudes of individuals play a key role in cumulative energy consumption. The rationale for leveraging behavioral tools for the promotion

of energy efficiency comes from the realization that humans are the centre of energy efficiency action and that barriers preventing the adoption of energy-efficient practices are not entirely technical in nature. Rather such barriers also tend to have a strong sociological and behavioral underpinning. Behaviour change can, thus, be a vital force to generate and sustain energy efficient action.

OBJECTIVES OF THE REPORT

The central purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the ecosystem of behaviour change by outlining the relevant behaviour theories. In tandem, it also outlines common behavioural initiatives deployed in energy efficiency and extracts key learnings from these initiatives which can in turn inform the future design of behavioural interventions.



- Review the theoretical underpinnings from behavioral research and identify recommendations for designing interventions for promoting energy efficiency.



- Analyse and summarize best practices and key lessons from international initiatives, studies, pilot programs on behavioral energy efficiency.

LEVERS TO STEER CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

⚡ PERSONALIZED & STRAIGHTFORWARD MESSAGING

Behaviour change communications should target to utilize one core idea at a time. Addressing too many issues at one time is not advisable as it might add to the complexity and cognitive burden of the audience. Tailored and personalized information tends to be more effective than generic mass media campaigns that try to target as many people as possible.

⚡ HIGHLIGHT THE GOOD ACTIONS OF THE PEERS

People's tendency to abide by social norms can be leveraged to influence individual decisions and bring behaviour change. For instance, comparative informational intervention by informing people about how their energy use compares with their neighbours can have a significant effect on behaviour.

⚡ UNDERLINE WHAT IS BEING LOST

The uptake of energy-efficient products, for instance, can be influenced by informing consumers about the loss being accrued with the use of energy-inefficient products rather than highlighting the gain of a certain amount of money by using energy-efficient products.

⚡ USE OF DEFAULTS

Energy efficient behaviour can be made easy for people by presenting the energy-efficient option as the default. Defaults, as a policy tool, can create a great impact in contexts where people show resistance to change.

⚡ OPT FOR OPT-OUT

If the behaviour being promoted is in the interest of the most people, opt-out systems can be used to increase participation. Participation in an opt-out programme where people are automatically enrolled in a scheme/programme tends to be higher than opt-in programmes where people have to make an active choice to participate

KEY FINDINGS



There are a variety of cognitive biases and motivational factors that come into play when we look at energy use and purchase behaviour. People tend to stick to the default settings, are loss averse and risk averse and tend to rely on a single trait/ characteristic while deciding between different alternatives.



The effectiveness of feedback mechanisms can be pushed by ensuring that the information being communicated to users is clear, simple, and meaningful.



Home Energy Reports leverage the power of social norms; providing frequent, personalized, salient, and actionable tips as well as and set a strong anchor for consumers through comparison with their historical energy consumption.



Real-time feedback's effectiveness primarily relies on two factors – the saliency of the information and the level of user engagement with the device. Strategic positioning of the display device that ensures active user engagement is crucial.



Social interaction programs can initiate discussions among peers and its success hinges on how inclusive and engaging the programs can be. It is important to ensure that change in behaviours as a result of social interaction programs persists beyond the duration of the program.

WAY FORWARD

The work undertaken in the preparation of this report shall be taken forward and further strengthened by undertaking formative research to design culturally appropriate Behaviour Change Communications for optimum AC setpoint temperature settings in India.

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