

SEMINAR AT MIDS

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ADISESHIAH AUDITORIUM, MIDS

IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF SAUBHAGYA RURAL ELECTRIFICATION SCHEME

mids Madras
Institute of
Development
Studies

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While rural electrification programmes are widely considered essential for sustainable human development, rigorous evaluations are needed to understand their effectiveness and inform evidence-based improvements. To assess the medium-term impacts of Saubhagya, we fielded a nationally representative survey of about 33,000 households in 2023 (with recall to 2017), collecting current and retrospective data on assets, energy expenditures, and time use. There are two major results:

- 1) Electrification coincides with rapid diffusion of basic assets (especially LEDs and fans) and meaningful, if smaller, gains in higher-load appliances. Expenditures decline for traditional fuels and increase for modern fuels—most notably a sharp decline in kerosene and growth in electric lighting—and households reallocate time away from domestic/own production toward employment, leisure, and self-care.
- 2) Service quality is pivotal: heavier outages and worse voltage fluctuations are associated with slower adoption of appliances and smaller gains in wattage capacity, especially for higher-load basics, while low-load lighting remains comparatively resilient. While some policy lessons clearly emerge from this cross-sectional study, a longitudinal study would allow for more rigorous identification of the causal effects of electricity consumption and service quality on household welfare, by controlling for unobserved heterogeneity, reducing recall bias, and capturing dynamic responses.

ALL ARE WELCOME!