

SUMMARY

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Improved Cookstoves to Combat Indoor Air Pollution: A Randomized Intervention Study in Bangladesh

Professor A. Mushfiq Mobarak

Description of the Research Project: Prof. Mobarak is conducting a large scale experiment in Bangladesh, in which he has randomized the prices at which people can purchase improved indoor cooking stoves. After offering the stoves at randomized prices, he intends to return to Bangladesh a year later to get feedback on the cooking stoves. Through this, he expects to understand cultural and behavioral reasons for why people are reluctant to use indoor cooking stoves, despite the documented health benefits.

Responsibilities: I was assigned the task of designing the follow-up survey that will be administered later this year. Together with Prof. Mobarak and others, I worked on questions relating to stove usage, health issues relating to smoke from stoves, the behavioral economics reasons for why people are reluctant to purchase these stoves, the status of women, etc.

What I learned: I learned how important the survey is as a tool of research. Even in a field experiment, the survey questions are extremely important. Hence, questionnaires are important for both quantitative and qualitative research. When survey questions are designed properly, the researcher can gain a much better understanding of the phenomenon he or she is investigating.

Opinion of SRO Experience:

I found that the SRO gave me a unique opportunity to see how a multi-year research project functions. Unlike in undergraduate seminars, where your research must be compressed into a single semester, graduate and faculty level research spans years. The SRO allowed me to understand large-scale research projects and what they entail.