

Effect of Fuel Subsidy Removal on Poverty Status of Women in Rural Households of Abia State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the effect of fuel subsidy on the poverty status of women in rural households of Abia State Nigeria. The objectives includes: to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the women, examine the income and expenditure level of the women before and after fuel subsidy removal, determine the poverty status of the women in the study area, analyze the effect of fuel subsidy removal on the poverty status of women in the study area. A total of one hundred and twenty (120) women were randomly selected and administered with structured questionnaires. Descriptive, FGT model and Logit regression were used to analyze the data collected. The result shows that 90% of the respondents were married with mean age of 43 years. (74.2%) had formal education (70%) of them were petty traders. More than half of them (56.7%) were not a member to any cooperative society. With regards to the income and expenditure levels of rural women before and after the removal of fuel subsidies. The minimum and maximum income of rural women before subsidy removal were ₦7000 and ₦100,000 respectively, with an average income of ₦62,000. After the subsidy removal, the minimum and maximum income were ₦8000 and ₦120,000 respectively. 22.5% of rural women were considered poor before subsidy removal. However, after the subsidy removal, this figure increased to 25.0%. The result of logit regression showed that fuel price, cost of electricity, cost of transportation, cost of cooking, were significant factors influencing the poverty status of women in rural households in Abia state. Finally, the major constraints were, high cost of transportation, high cost of food stuff, less means of livelihood and increase in child labour. The study recommends a review on the fuel subsidy removal to give the women access to better life.

Key Words: Fuel Subsidy, Poverty, Rural Women and Logit Regression

Background of Study

Nigeria is a country that is rich in mineral resources, including gas reserves and crude oil, making it one of the largest oil producers in the world. However, despite this wealth, the country's people have not seen significant improvements in their standard of living. This is due to issues such as corruption, mismanagement, and inefficiencies in the delivery of processed crude oil products like petrol and gas, which has led to a decline in their availability (Ibanga, 2011). Fuel subsidy removal refers to the government's decision to stop providing financial support to reduce the cost of fuel for consumers.

Initially, the government intervenes by paying the difference between the pump price at petrol stations and the actual cost of fuel importation. This means that petrol (also known as Premium Motor Spirit or PMS) is sold to end users at a lower price than the cost of importing, with direct financial support given to oil marketers by the government. Essentially, the government eases the burden on citizens, especially lower-income earners, by subsidizing a portion of the fuel cost. When the government decides to remove the subsidy, it withdraws this aid. As a result, people are required to pay for PMS based on the actual market price, without any fraction payment by the citizens. In other words, if the global market cost of PMS is 600 naira, and

marketers sell it at 650 naira, citizens will have to purchase it at the full market price of 650 naira.

Poverty is among the social maladies that continually intimidate mankind's existence and survival. Poverty is frequently connected with low income and low standard of living (WorldBank, 2015). It refers to a situation wherein some goods and services vital to an individual's or a family's welfare cannot be owned as a result of absence of economic ability; or wherein the income made by an individual is significantly lower than the mean population income (Ugwu, 2012). According to (Ezeh, (2007), its multi-dimensional nature contributes to its lack of standard definition.

Poverty, as a global phenomenon disturbs people, nations and continents in different ways. It bothers people in different levels and depth at various phases and times of existence and there is no nation that is completely poverty free. The primary changes is the strength and occurrence of this discomfort. It is among the greatest challenges facing Nigeria (Nwaru and Iheke, 2014; Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), 2010; World Bank/International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)/Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), 2009). Poverty is severe mainly in the rural settings, where almost 80 percent of the populace lives lower than the poverty line and with little or no access to social services and infrastructures (Adam, 2007; Littlefield, 2005). The research on the removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria is justified due to its significant impact on the economy and the daily lives of millions of Nigerians. It's essential to investigate the socio-economic characteristics of affected individuals, changes in income and expenditure levels, poverty status, and the constraints associated with subsidy removal. This research aims to provide valuable insights into the consequences of policy changes as it relates to fuel subsidy, and serve as a policy guide to the development of effective mitigation strategies to alleviate the impact on vulnerable households especially women. Rural women in Abia State are particularly more vulnerable to the incidence of poverty and they comprise the bulk of the poor group within communities (Achinihu, *et al.*, 2016).

Objective of the study

The aim of this study is to analyze the effect of fuel subsidy removal on poverty status of rural women in Abia State, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of the study are, to:

- i. to describe the socio-economic characteristics of the women in the study area.
- ii. to examine the income level and expenditure level of the women before and after subsidy removal.
- iii. to determine the poverty status of the women in the study area.
- iv. to analyze the effect of fuel subsidy women on the poverty status of the respondent in the study area.
- v. to identify the constraints associated with fuel subsidy removal.

METHODOLOGY

Study area

Abia state is one of the 36 states in Nigeria. It lies between latitudes 4°45' and 6° 00' North and longitudes 7°00' and 8°09' East. The State is located east of Imo State and shares common boundaries with Anambra, Enugu and Ebonyi States to the North-West, North and North-East

respectively. To the East and South-East, it is bounded by Cross River and Akwa Ibom States and by Rivers State to the South. It occupies a landmass of 5,833.77 square kilometers.

The study was conducted in Bende and Aba-north local government Areas of Abia state, Nigeria. Bende is bounded in the north by Cross River State, Afikpo and Ohaozara, and in the South by Arochukwu and Ohafia. It is made up of thirteen (13) communities, namely, Bende, Ozuitem, Uzuakoli, Item, Itumbauzo, Ntalakwu, Umu-imenyi, Umuhu-Ezechi, Igbere, Ugwueke, Ezukwu, Nkpa and Alayi. Bende LGA boasts a population projection of about 280,500 (50.3% female) in 2022 with a 2.4% annual population change (2006-2022).

Sampling Technique and Sample Size.

Multi-stage sampling technique was used in this study. The first stage was the selection of two LGAs from the state, the second stage was the selection of one district each from the selected LGAs. Third stage was the selection of four villages from Nkpa district in Bende and three villages from Eziamana in Aba-north, which gives a total of seven villages. The last stage involved a random selection of 25% of the population from each village, to give a total of 120 respondents for the study.

Table 3.1 Sample Frame and Sample Size Table

Local government	District	Village	Sample frame	Sample size (25%)
Bende	Nkpa	Ugwu	78	19
		Amadiaba	65	16
		Eluama	47	12
		Obiohia	80	20
Aba north	Eziamana	Osusu	85	21
		Uratta	77	19
		Igbanigbo	50	12
		Total	482	120

Source of the Table: Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation (2023).

Method of data collection

Primary data was used for the study, primary data was collected by the use of well-structured questionnaire which was augmented by interview sessions.

Data Analysis

Objective i, ii and v was achieved by the use of descriptive statistics such as; frequencies, percentages, means, tables as well as charts.

Objective iii was achieved by The FGT mathematical model is presented below:

$$P_{\alpha} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^q \left(\frac{z-y_i}{z}\right)^{\alpha} \quad \dots (2.1)$$

Where,

Z = the poverty line defined as 2/3 of Mean per capita expenditure/income

Y = the annual per capita expenditure/income – poverty indicator/welfare index per capita,

q = the number of poor households in the population of size n,

α = the degree of poverty aversion/poverty aversion parameter and takes on value 0,1,2;

$\alpha=0$ is the Headcount index (P_0) measuring the incidence of poverty (proportion of the total population of a given group that is poor, based on poverty line) ((Ravallion and Shaohua, 2001),

$\alpha=1$ is the poverty gap index measuring the extent to which individuals on average fall below the poverty line, and expresses it as a percentage of the poverty line,

$\alpha=2$ is the squared poverty gap measuring the severity of poverty and inequality among the poor.

Poverty line: Poverty line is described as a borderline that distinguishes poor from non-poor households in terms of their level of welfare (Oluwatayo, 2008). Poverty line could be realized using either expenditure approach or income approach (Igbalajobi et al., 2013). Per-capita income could be used to categorize rural women headed households in agribusiness into poor and non-poor groups using the two-third mean per-capita income as the benchmark. This method was adopted from the studies carried out by Adewunmi, *et al.*, 2011), Ruben, *et al* 2001), Yunez-Naude and Taylor (2001), and Oluwatayo, (2008); and this study employed income approach method as a yardstick to set the poverty line. Respondents whose mean per-capita income falls below the poverty line were regarded as being poor while those with their mean per-capita income above the benchmark were non-poor. The formula is as follows:

$$\text{mean per capita household income} = \frac{\text{Total Household Monthly Income}}{\text{Total Number of Households}}$$

Poverty Line = $2/3 \times$ Mean per capita household expenditure

Objective v was achieved by the use of the Logit regression model.

The implicit form of the model is given as:

$$\text{Where } Y = \ln \left(\frac{Q_1}{1-Q_1} \right) = \beta_0 + \sum_{j+1}^i P_1 X_1 + e_i$$

Y = dependent variable (the binary variable)

β_0 = Intercept

P_1 = estimated parameters

X_1 = explanatory variables

e_i = error term

The explicit form is given as:

$$Y = \ln \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 \dots + \beta_4 X_4 \dots + \beta_5 X_5 \dots + \beta_6 X_6 \dots + \beta_7 X_7 \dots + \beta_8 X_8 \dots + \beta_9 X_9 \dots$$

Y = (1 for poor and 0 for non-poor)

X_1 = Age (years)

X_2 = Marital status (single, married, divorce)

X_3 = Household size (number)

X_4 = Level of education (primary, secondary, tertiary)

X_5 = Income from primary occupation (naira)

X_6 = Price of petrol per litre (naira)

X_7 = Transport fare (naira)

X_8 = Cost of electricity (naira)

X_9 = Cost of cooking fuel. (naira)

Poverty incidence

This is the proportion of women below the poverty line. Mean per capita expenditure is calculated and the poverty line is drawn to separate the poor from the non-poor. It is denoted

as P_0 . $P_0 = \left(\frac{1}{n}\right) q = \frac{q}{n}$

Where

P_0 = poverty incidence

n = total number of population

q = the number of poor households

Poverty gap ratio

Poverty gap is the aggregate short fall of expenditure of all the women from the specified poverty line. It measures the difference between actual expenditure and minimum non-poverty expenditure. It is denoted as P_1

$$P_1 = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i+1}^q \left[\frac{z - y_1}{z} \right]$$

Where

P_1 = Poverty gap

n = total number of households in a population

q = number of poor households

z = poverty line

y_1 = Expenditure of the poor household below the poverty line.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1a. Socio-economic characteristics of the rural women in the study area

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Age			
20 – 30	4	3.3	
31 – 40	24	20.0	43yrs
41 – 50	92	76.7	
Total	120	100.0	
Marital Status			
Single	3	2.5	
Married	108	90.0	
Divorced	3	2.5	
Widow	6	5	
Total	120	100.0	
Household head			
No	111	92.5	
Yes	9	7.5	
Total	120	100.0	
Education			
Primary	50	41.7	7yrs
Secondary	28	23.3	
Tertiary	11	9.2	
Non formal	31	25.8	
Total	120	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The result in Table 1a revealed that most of the women in rural household were between the ages of 20-30(3.3%), 31-40(20.0%) and 41-50(76.7%) respectively that is 20-50(100%) of age. The mean age stood at 43 years, implying that majority of the respondent were in their active working age. This conforms to the findings that most rural women household are of the middle and productive age ranges of 30-50 (Godson-Ibeji, Anyoha, Chikaire and Nnadi, 2016; Olaniyi, Anyaegbunam, Nwakor, Adesina and Adebayo, 2016).

Table 1a shows that 90.0% of the sampled respondent were married, with only a few divorced (2.5%) widowed (5%) single (25%) which implies that most of the respondent were matured and responsible to cater for their household welfare as well as have clear knowledge of their wellbeing.

Result on full household responsibility of the respondent shows that 92.5% of the rural household were headed by male and 7.5% were female, which means women are limited in the aspect of decision making in family. Meaning the males are dominant in the home, and which is in accordance with the norms and customs of the society.

Furthermore table 1a shows that 25.8% had no formal education, while the remaining were educated either by primary (41.7%), secondary (23.3%), tertiary (9.2%) schools which reveals that majority of the rural households were literate and one could deduce that this would reduce the poverty status of women in the study area. Educated individuals are often more capable of accessing information about opportunities around them. Okojie (2002) observed that the higher the educational levels of female farmers, the better their household welfare and the lower the probability of the household being poor. This implied that an educated married rural farmer that has access to agricultural credit leading to increase in farm income may likely be non-poor.

Household size has been one of the major determinants of poverty. The result of the household size distribution among the sample respondent shown in Table 4.1b reveals that the mean household size was 5.39 and the majority of the respondent 83.3% and 13.3% falls between 4-6 and 7-9 persons respectively. This implies that majority of the household have many number of mouths to feed and number of people to cater for. This conformed with the report of NBS (2013) that South-Eastern Nigerian families have large family sizes.

Table 1b shows that 70.0% of rural women in the study area were petty traders, 18.3% marketers, 6.7% civil servants and only 3.3% were agro-processors. This implies that rural women engage in different economic activities and are severely affected by the removal of fuel subsidy. By increased transportation price, reduced profit margin, increase in cost of living.

Table 4.1b revealed that 43.3% of rural women in study area are members of cooperative with a mean of 1.5years of membership while 56.7% are non-members thereby implying that more than half of the women to not have the privilege of the benefits that comes with being members of an association, these benefits are, access to credit, shared resources and collective bargaining power, which can enhance their livelihood despite the adverse effects of fuel subsidy removal.

Table 1b: socio economic characteristic of the rural women in the study area.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Household size			
0 – 3	4	3.3	
4 - 6	100	83.3	5.4
7 – 9	16	13.3	
Total	120	100.0	
Major occupation			
Civil servant	8	6.7	
Marketers	22	18.3	
Petty traders	84	70.0	
Agro processors	4	3.3	
Total	120	100.0	
Membership of association			
No	68	56.7	
Yes	52	43.3	1.5
Total	120	100.0	
Access to extension service			
No	113	94.2	
Yes	7	5.8	
Total	120	100.0	
Extension contact			
No	113	94.2	
Yes	7	5.8	
Total	120	100.0	

Source: field Survey, 2024

Table 4.1b shows that only 5.8% of rural women in the study area had access to extension services and contact while 94.2% had no access to extension service or contact this indicates that extension service among women in the study area is low. This means that rural women in the study area miss out on essential education and updates on technologies that could improve their productivity and livelihood.

Table 1c: Socio economic characteristic of the rural women in the study area.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Access to credit			
No	120	100	
Yes	0	0	
Total	120	100.0	
Cooking method			
Charcoal	42	35.0	
Charcoal and gas	3	2.5	
Firewood	27	22.5	
Firewood and charcoal	42	35.0	
Firewood, charcoal and gas	1	0.8	
Gas	5	4.2	
Total	120	100.0	

Source: Field survey, 2024.

Table 1c reveals that 100% of women in study area do not have access to credit facilities, this could be due to barriers like gender barrier and the male gender been more prioritized in the financial institution, the lack of credit restricts the ability to invest in their businesses, purchase necessary input and expand their income.

The cooking method revealed in table 4.1c revealed that 35.0% of women in the study area use firewood for cooking and 35.0% of them use the combination of firewood and charcoal, 22.5% of them using only charcoal making it a total of 92.5% of rural women using firewood and charcoal in the study area with only a few using only gas or the combination of gas into their cooking routine. This is because

2 Income and expenditure level of the rural women before and after subsidy removal

Due to subsidy government revenue from fuel sales was lower and consumers paid lower fuel prices spending less on fuel and allocating more to other expenses which means increase in disposable income which benefitted all and increase profit potentially for marketers and petty traders which is the bulk of the rural women in the study area. After fuel subsidy removal more is spent on fuel cost reducing disposable income thereby affecting the livelihood of rural women.

Table 2: Income and expenditure level of the rural women before and after subsidy removal

Variable	Before		After	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Income from major occupation				
< 30,000	8	6.5	10	8.3
30001 – 50000	18	15.0	3	2.5
50001 – 70000	70	58.3	14	11.7
70001 – 90000	23	19.2	81	67.5
above 90000	1	0.8	12	10.0
Minimum	7,000		8,000	
Maximum	100,000		102,000	
Mean	62,000		72,554.17	
Expenditure				

< 20,000	91	75.8	10	8.3
20,001-40,000	27	22.5	100	83.3
40,001-60,000	1	8.0	2	1.7
60,001-80,000	1	8.0	2	1.7
Above 80,000	0	0	6	5.0
Minimum	3,000		15,000	
Maximum	80,000		100,000	
Mean	18,304.17		30,957.50	

Source: Field survey, 2024.

Table 4.2 presents data on the income and expenditure levels of rural women before and after the removal of fuel subsidies. The minimum and maximum income of rural women before subsidy removal were N7000 and N100,000 respectively, with an average income of N62,000. After the subsidy removal, the minimum and maximum income were N8000 and N120,000 respectively, with an average income of N72,554.17. This indicates a slight average increase of 17% in income, which can be attributed to increased returns for marketers and petty traders who might benefit from changes in pricing and demand.

However, despite the modest income increase, Table 3 also shows a significant rise in expenditure levels. Before the subsidy removal, the minimum and maximum expenditure were ₦3000 and ₦80,000 respectively, with an average expenditure of ₦18,304.17. After the subsidy removal, the minimum and maximum expenditure rose to ₦15,000 and ₦100,000 respectively, with an average expenditure of ₦30,957.50. This indicates a substantial 69% increase in average expenditure. The increased burden on their limited financial resources could result in reduced savings, lower investment in productive activities, and a general decline in their standard of living. Ugo (2011) found that removing fuel subsidies removal led to a significant increase in the prices of essential goods and services, such as food and transportation, which decreased household spending on non-essential goods and services.

Poverty status of women in the study area.

Poverty line has been defined as the minimum or the cut-off standard of expenditure on food or per capita income below which an individual or household is described as poor (Adekoya, 2014). The poverty line construction frame and the classification of the livelihood status of the rural household heads are presented in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Poverty status of rural women in the study area

Variables	Before		After	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	27	22.5	30	25.0
non-poor	93	77.5	90	75.0
	120	100	120	100
Poverty security line	11974.35		12796.75	
Poverty security incidence	0.225		0.25	
poverty security gap	0.074554		0.145424	
poverty security severity	0.038572		0.08752	

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 presents the results of the poverty status of rural women before and after the removal of fuel subsidies in the study area. The computed poverty lines were ₦11974.35 before subsidy removal and ₦12796.75 after subsidy removal, based on 2/3 mean per capita household income. These thresholds were used to distinguish between poor and non-poor households. Before the subsidy removal, only 22.5% of rural women were considered poor. However, after the subsidy removal, this figure increased to 25.0%. This increase in the proportion of poor households indicates that the removal of fuel subsidies had a negative effects on the economic well-being of rural women. . World Bank (2023) reported that between January and May 2023, a 22% year-on-year increase in the consumer price index (CPI) pushed about 4 million Nigerians into poverty. The rate of year-on-year increase of CPI progressively rose to about 26% by August 2023 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023a), which implies that more Nigerians have been pushed below the poverty line.

The poverty incidence (the proportion of the population living below the poverty line) increased from 0.22 to 0.25. The poverty gap (which measures the average shortfall of the total population from the poverty line) rose from 0.07 to 0.14, indicating that not only did more women fall below the poverty line, but those who were already poor became poorer. The poverty severity index (which takes into account the inequality among the poor) increased significantly from 0.03 to 0.08, highlighting a deepening of poverty among the poorest rural women.

As fuel costs rise, so do the prices of essential goods and services, exacerbating the financial strain on already vulnerable populations. The sharp rise in poverty levels among rural women can be attributed to several factors. Higher fuel prices lead to increased costs for food, transportation, and other essential commodities. For rural women, who often have limited income sources, this translates to a significant reduction in their purchasing power. Reduced Disposable Income: With more money being spent on basic necessities, less is available for savings, investments, or other economic activities. This reduces their ability to improve their living conditions or invest in their businesses. Most rural women typically engage in low-paying jobs such as farming, petty trading, and agro-processing. These activities are highly susceptible to changes in fuel prices, further reducing their income and increasing their vulnerability to poverty.

Table 4: Effect of fuel subsidy removal on the poverty status of rural women

Variable	Before		After	
	Coefficient	z-value	Coefficient	z-value
Age	-0.0103	-0.17	0.0953	1.77*
Household size	0.2318	0.98	-0.2541	-1.20
Cooperative membership	-0.5864	-2.25**	-0.4877	2.36**
Access to Extension service	-0.1264	-0.54	0.1616	0.48
Income	-0.0003	-2.22**	0.0000	-0.97
Price of petrol	0.5864	2.25**	0.0002	2.22**
Cost of electricity	0.0003	1.60*	0.0001	-0.77
Cost of transportation	0.0012	3.06***	0.0001	1.90*
Cost of cooking fuel	0.0008	2.43**	1.4308	2.97***
Constant	7.2750	0.095	-6.8253	-1.89*
No. of OBS				
LR chi2(10)	120		120	
Prob > chi2	15.62***		10.20***	
Pseudo R2	0.0000		0.3346	
	0.7177		0.0733	

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

The results in Table 44 present the effects of fuel subsidy removal on the poverty status of rural women. Before the subsidy removal, the price of petrol (0.5864) and the cost of transportation (0.0012) were positive and statistically significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 probability levels respectively. This indicates that a unit increase in either of these variables may likely increase the poverty status of rural women. The positive coefficients suggest that higher fuel prices and transportation costs directly contribute to higher living expenses, reducing disposable income and pushing more women below the poverty line. Conversely, the coefficients of cooperative membership (0.5864) and income (0.0003) were negative and statistically significant at the 0.5 probability level. This implies that a unit increase in any of these variables may likely decrease the poverty of rural women. Members of cooperative have the privilege of the benefits that comes with association, these benefits are, access to credit, shared resources and collective bargaining power, which can enhance their livelihood despite the adverse effects of fuel subsidy removal. Higher income directly improves living standards and reduces the likelihood of falling into poverty.

Similarly, after the fuel subsidy removal, the coefficients of price of petrol (0.0002), cost of transportation (0.0001), and cost of cooking fuel (1.4308) were positive and statistically significant. This implies that a unit increase in any of these variables may likely increase the poverty status of rural women. This is because increase in price of petrol leads to increase in transportation cost, food price, and overall cost of living, which can exacerbate poverty. Higher transportation costs directly affect the prices of goods and services, making them less affordable for rural women, whose incomes are typically lower. Additionally, the increased cost of cooking fuel directly affects daily living expenses, as it is a basic necessity for food preparation. Akintayo (2023) stated that now that the price of petrol is up to N617, transportation costs, prices of food and other items have shot up tremendously, eliciting anger among workers and the public at large.

Table 4. 5: Constraints associated with fuel subsidy removal

Variable	NS(%)	S(%)	VS(%)	WS	WM	Ranking
Increase hardship	1(0.8)	13(10.8)	106(88.3)	345	2.87*	1 st
Decrease in savings	0(0)	18(15.0)	102(85.0)	342	2.85*	2 nd
Increase in child labour	0(0)	22(18.3)	98(89.7)	338	2.82*	3 rd
High cost of food stuff	0(0)	27(22.5)	93(77.5)	333	2.78*	4 th
Increase in the cost of healthcare services	0(0)	31(25.8)	89(74.2)	329	2.74*	5 th
Increase in psychological stress	0(0)	36(30.0)	84(70.0)	324	2.70*	6 th
Reduction in meal intake	3(2.5)	32(26.7)	85(70.8)	322	2.68*	7 th
High cost of transportation	1(0.8)	44(36.7)	75(62.5)	314	2.62*	8 th

Source: Field Survey 2024. NS= Not serious, S= Serious, VS= Very Serious,

WS= Weighted Sum WM= Weighted Mean.

Table 4.5 Present the constraints associated with fuel subsidy removal. It revealed that high cost of food stuff (2.78), increase hardship (2.87), decrease in saving (2.85), reduction in meal intake (2.68), increase in social vices (2.87) and increase in the cost of healthcare services (2.74) were the major constraint associated with fuel subsidy removal among rural women. Increased fuel costs lead to higher prices for food, making it difficult for rural women to afford basic necessities.

The increase in hardship (2.87) is another critical constraint. With higher fuel costs, rural women face greater financial strain as they must allocate more of their limited resources to cover transportation, cooking fuel, and other essentials. This increased hardship can lead to stress and deteriorate mental health, further affecting their overall well-being and productivity.

A decrease in savings (2.85) is a significant issue as well. As more income is directed towards covering higher living expenses, less money is available for savings.

The reduction in meal intake (2.68) is a direct consequence of the increased cost of foodstuffs. When food prices rise, rural women may be forced to cut back on the quantity and quality of food they consume to make ends meet.

The increase in social vices (2.87) is another concerning constraint. Economic hardship can lead to a rise in crime and other social vices as individuals struggle to cope with their financial difficulties.

The increase in the cost of healthcare services (2.74) is a significant burden. With more of their income being spent on basic necessities, rural women may find it challenging to afford healthcare services.

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