

NINTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRADHAN MANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA – SCHEMES

NEWS: India marked the ninth anniversary of the **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)**.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Introduction to PMUY (Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana)

- **Launch and Implementing Ministry:** The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) was launched in **2016** by the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** to promote clean cooking fuel usage across India.
- **Core Objective:** The scheme aims to provide **LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas) connections to adult women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households**, thereby reducing their dependence on traditional and polluting fuels like wood, coal, and cow dung.
- **Gender-Sensitive Approach:** By **issuing LPG connections in the name of women**, the scheme not only targets health improvement but also contributes to **women's empowerment and socio-economic inclusion**.

Target Group and Eligibility Criteria

- **Primary Beneficiaries:** The scheme targets **adult women from BPL households**, with a particular focus on vulnerable and marginalised communities.
- **Priority Segments:** Special priority is given to **Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), PMAY (Gramin) beneficiaries, forest dwellers, and tea garden workers**.
- **Inclusion of Migrant Households:** To ensure flexibility and broader coverage, **migrant families are allowed to use self-declaration as address proof**, eliminating the burden of rigid documentation.



Phases of Implementation

- **Phase I (2016–2020):** In the initial phase, **8 crore deposit-free LPG connections** were successfully provided to women from BPL households by the year 2020.
- **Phase II (2021 onwards):** The second phase targeted **an additional 1.6 crore connections**, extending the benefits to **migrant and uncovered households**, with the goal of achieving universal LPG coverage.
- **Cumulative Progress (as of March 1, 2025):**
 - India has a total of **32.94 crore active domestic LPG consumers**.
 - Of these, **10.33 crore women beneficiaries** have received LPG connections under the PMUY scheme.

Significance of PMUY

Health Benefits

- **Reduction in Indoor Air Pollution:** PMUY helps curb the health hazards caused by traditional fuels like biomass, which release high levels of particulate matter and carbon monoxide during combustion.
- **WHO Statistics:** According to the World Health Organization, **around 5 lakh premature deaths annually in India** are linked to the use of **unclean cooking fuels**, particularly impacting women and children.

Women Empowerment

- **Time and Energy Savings:** Access to LPG eliminates the need for **long hours spent collecting firewood**, particularly in forested or remote rural areas.
- **Enhanced Opportunities:** With time saved from laborious cooking processes, women can pursue **education, skill training, income-generating work**, or self-care, leading to improved agency and dignity.

Socio-Economic Impact

- **Improved Productivity:** Clean cooking practices reduce drudgery and health-related absenteeism, thus enabling **greater workforce participation**, especially among rural women.
- **Resource Control and Financial Inclusion:** Since the LPG connection is issued in the name of the woman, she gains **ownership and decision-making authority**, reinforcing her role within the family and community.

Environmental Advantages

- **Cleaner Atmosphere:** The shift from biomass to LPG contributes to a **significant reduction in household-level air pollution**, positively impacting local ecosystems.
- **Climate Co-benefits:** Reduced use of firewood helps in **curbing deforestation** and lowering **carbon emissions**, supporting India's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement.

Formula To Calculate the LPG Price:

- The price of LPG is calculated based on the **formula known as import parity price (IPP)**.

- Basically, the calculations as per the **IPP are dependent on the international market.**
- The IPP calculation is done through Saudi Aramco's LPG price, which is the world's largest producer.
 - The price **involves costs like free on board (FOB) price**, ocean freight, customs duties, port charges and insurance costs, among other things.
- The price fluctuation of **crude oil also affects the international price of LPG.**
 - The inland prices include freight costs, oil company's margins, bottling costs, marketing expenses, dealer commissions and the **Goods and services Tax(GST).**
- The final price thus calculated gives the retail selling price for non-subsidised cooking gas cylinders for consumers across different states.
- **India uses the IPP as most of its consumption is through imports.** The formula of LPG cylinders is revised on a monthly basis.
 - LPG is an important requirement with three major PSU suppliers like Indian oil, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), charging mostly similar prices with different cost structures and operational efficiencies.

Challenges Faced in Implementation

- **Refilling Cost Barriers:**
 - While the initial connection is subsidised, the **cost of LPG cylinder refills** remains high for poor families.
 - In many cases, beneficiaries **revert to traditional fuels** due to the unaffordability of regular LPG use.
- **Administrative Delays and Documentation Issues:**
 - Procedural delays in **identity verification, documentation submission, and approval** can deter or delay eligible households from receiving benefits.
- **Infrastructural Deficiencies in Rural Areas:**
 - Many **remote and tribal regions lack LPG distribution centres** or refilling plants, making accessibility and last-mile delivery a significant challenge.
- **Cultural and Economic Resistance:**
 - In certain rural pockets, **habitual use of firewood persists** despite having an LPG connection, as firewood is locally available and free of monetary cost.

Way Forward: Recommendations to Strengthen PMUY

- **Expand Supply Chain and Delivery Infrastructure:**

- The government should invest in setting up **more LPG distribution points, mini-refilling stations, and mobile delivery units** to enhance last-mile delivery in remote and tribal regions.
- **Ensure Affordability of Refills:**
 - To maintain sustained LPG usage, it is essential to provide **subsidies or flexible pricing models for refills**, especially for the poorest PMUY beneficiaries.
- **Awareness and Behavioural Change Campaigns:**
 - Implement **community-level IEC (Information, Education, and Communication)** campaigns to educate beneficiaries about the long-term health and economic benefits of using LPG over biomass.
- **Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms:**
 - Use **technology-enabled tracking systems and feedback loops** to monitor refill patterns and identify dropouts, enabling targeted intervention.

Concluding Remarks

- **A Catalyst for Health and Gender Justice:** PMUY has emerged as a **transformational social welfare scheme** addressing the health burden of indoor air pollution while empowering rural women.
- **Beyond Access—Ensuring Sustainability:** The next phase of the scheme must focus on **affordability, behavioural change, and infrastructure strengthening** to ensure that the provision of LPG connections leads to **sustained usage** and not just initial access.
- **Integrative Policy Approach Needed:** PMUY should be aligned with **other poverty alleviation, rural development, and women’s empowerment programs**, creating a **multi-dimensional impact on household well-being and rural livelihoods**.

Source: <https://ddnews.gov.in/en/11-years-of-pm-modi-a-milestone-in-clean-cooking-fuel-access-under-pm-modis-leadership/>