

AIR Spotlight - Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panelists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, a discussion about the scheme Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana is featured.

Participants:

- Narendra Taneja, Energy Expert
- Divesh Mishra, Journalist

Context:

The article will discuss the Ujjwala Scheme and various concepts related to the energy sector in India.

What is Ujjwala Yojana?

- In May 2016, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MOPNG) introduced the 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' (PMUY) as a flagship scheme with an objective to make clean cooking fuel such as LPG available to the rural and deprived households which were otherwise using traditional cooking fuels such as firewood, coal, cow-dung cakes, etc.
- Usage of traditional cooking fuels had detrimental impacts on the health of rural women as well as on the environment.
- The scheme was launched on 1st May 2016 in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh by the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri. Narendra Modi.

Know more about the [Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana](#) in the linked article.

Aims and targets:

- The target under the scheme was to release 8 Crore LPG Connections to the deprived households by March 2020.
- In September 2019, the Hon'ble Prime Minister handed over the 8th Crore LPG connection in Aurangabad, Maharashtra.

Benefits provided:

- Cash assistance for PMUY connections is provided by the Government of India – Rs. 1600 (for a connection 14.2kg cylinder/ Rs. 1150 for a 5 kg cylinder). The cash assistance covers:
 - Security Deposit of Cylinder – Rs. 1250 for 14.2 kg cylinder/ Rs. 800 for 5 kg cylinder.
 - Pressure Regulator – Rs. 150.
 - LPG Hose – Rs. 100.
 - Domestic Gas Consumer Card – Rs. 25.
 - Inspection/Installation/Demonstration charges – Rs. 75.
- The customer bears the cost of the Hot Plate and the purchase of the first refill. The customers have the option to take Hot Plate on purchase of first refill or both on a loan basis from OMCs at zero interest and the same is recovered through EMIs.

Achievements:

- The release of 8 Crore LPG connections under the scheme has also helped in increasing the LPG coverage from 62% on 1st May 2016 to 99.8% as of 1st April 2021.

Major Beneficiaries:

- Uttar Pradesh has been the number one beneficiary state with approximately 1 crore 40 lakhs households availing the benefits of the Ujjwala Yojana, followed by West Bengal with approximately 80-85 lakhs households and then Bihar with approximately 80 lakhs households.

PMUY 2.0:

- Under the [Union Budget for FY 21-22](#), provision for release of an additional 1 Crore LPG connections under the PMUY scheme has been made.
- In this phase, a special facility has been given to migrant families.
- The second edition of Ujjwala was launched from UP's Veerbhoomi – Mahoba.
- Many people migrate from villages to cities or to other states for work. There they face the problem of producing an address proof.
- Ujjwala 2.0 scheme will give maximum benefit to lakhs of such families. Now, these workers from other places need not run from pillar to post for address proof. All one has to do is give a self-declaration of the address for getting a gas connection.

Benefits of the Ujjwala Scheme:

- It provides clean cooking fuel solutions to poor households, especially in rural areas.
- The use of fossil fuels and conventional fuels like cow dung, kerosene, biomass, etc. has serious implications on the health of rural womenfolk and children. The use of LPG as a cooking fuel helps in effectively addressing health hazards associated with the use of conventional sources of cooking fuels.
- Improved the standard of living and transformed the lives of women.

LPG Vs Electric Cooking:

- Electricity will be used for everything in the future such as for transportation, for cooking, even for flying.
- To fulfill the demand for electricity for different purposes there will be more energy consumption and that will require more fossil fuels, natural gas, etc. to produce electricity.
- Taking all these factors into consideration, LPG is the best option at present. Over a period of time, the government can assist the market to switch to electricity but, that will take time.

Demand for Kerosene:

- In many areas, people still demand kerosene as a matter of convenience where they find a shortage of power, interruptions, issue of accessibility to power.
- But, the use of kerosene will go down over a period of time and electricity will replace all the conventional sources.
- This is a work in progress and the government is taking all the efforts to make this happen.
- Some of the states that are in coastal areas or that are prone to natural disasters demand more kerosene such as West Bengal. But, states such as Uttar Pradesh have declared themselves 'kerosene free'.

Conclusion:

The government is strongly headed towards making the country energy efficient and making all the efforts to lay the transition from conventional sources to modern sources of fuels and energy.

