



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Ujjwala Yojana

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Why is in news? Cabinet approves expansion of Ujjwala Yojana

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister has approved the extension of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) for release of 75 lakh LPG connections over three years from Financial Year 2023-24 to 2025-26.

According to the **World Health Organization (WHO)**, approximately 2.4 billion people worldwide (which is around one-third of the global population), rely on open fires or inefficient stoves fuelled by kerosene, biomass (such as wood, animal dung, and crop waste), and coal for cooking.

This **leads to harmful household air pollution**, contributing to an estimated 3.2 million deaths annually in 2020, with over 237,000 deaths being children under the age of 5.

Achieving a sustainable and pollution-free future requires addressing the issue of household air pollution, especially to prevent suffering among women and children.

About:

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana is a scheme of the **Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas** for **providing LPG connections to women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households**.

The scheme was **launched on 1st May 2016** in Ballia, Uttar Pradesh.

Usage of traditional cooking fuels had detrimental impacts on the health of rural women as well as on the environment.

The target under the scheme was to release 8 Crore LPG Connections to the deprived households by March 2020.

Under the Union Budget for FY 21-22, provision for release of additional 1 Crore LPG connections under the PMUY scheme has been made. In this phase, special facility has been given to migrant families.

As on 1st March 2023 there are 9.59 crore PMUY beneficiaries.

Eligibility criteria:

Applicant must a woman above the age of 18 and a citizen of India.

Applicant should belong to a BPL (Below Poverty Line) household.

No one in the applicant's household should own an LPG connection.

The household income of the family, per month, must not exceed a certain limit as defined by the government of the Union Territories and State Government.

Applicant must not be a recipient of other similar schemes provided by the government.

Kamaraj IAS Academy

Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthy Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040
Phone: **044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833**

Objectives:

Empowering women and protecting their health.

Reducing the serious health hazards associated with cooking based on fossil fuel.

Reducing the number of deaths in India due to unclean cooking fuel.

Preventing young children from significant number of acute respiratory illnesses caused due to indoor air pollution by burning fossil fuel.

Under Ujjwala 2.0:

Migrant workers would no longer have to struggle to get address proof documents to get the gas connections.

They workers would only be required to submit a self-declaration of their residential address to get the gas connection.

The Ujjwala scheme has contributed to **enhancing the safety and security of women**, as they no longer need to venture into isolated and potentially unsafe areas to collect firewood or fuel.

Initiatives to expand LPG coverage:

PAHAL (Pratyaksh Hastantarit Labh): Instead of providing LPG cylinders at subsidized price, those were sold at market price, and applicable subsidy was directly transferred to individual's bank account electronically. This reduced "ghost" accounts and illegal use of household cylinders for commercial purposes, ensuring that only the intended beneficiaries receive the benefits.

GIVE IT UP: Instead of removing subsidies forcefully, people were encouraged to voluntarily surrender their subsidies. Through extensive promotion, millions of people willingly gave up the subsidies, which helped redirect the funds to those who genuinely needed assistance in acquiring LPG cylinders.

During Covid-19 pandemic lockdown in 2020, free refill scheme under **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana** was implemented. Under this scheme, assistance of Rs. 9670.41 Crore was given to PMUY beneficiaries in support of 14.17 Crore LPG refills.

Per capita consumption of PMUY beneficiaries which was 3.01 in 2018-19 has increased to 3.71 in 2022-23. PMUY beneficiaries took more than 35 Cr LPG refills a year now (2022-23).