Ujjwala 2.0

What is the issue?

With the launch of Ujjawala 2.0, there has been questions arising over the success of Ujjwala Yojana

What was the need for clean fuel?

- Health and safety issues of women and girls, while using firewood and dung cakes
- Indoor pollution, as chulhas (firewood-based stoves) release CO and CO_2
- Deforestation for fuel needs contributes to climate change

What are the initiatives taken by the government regarding clean cooking fuel?

- National Programme on Improved Chulha was launched in 1984 backed by training programs. But these programs failed when the subsidies were withdrawn.
- PAHAL scheme was launched in 2013 providing LPG subsidy directly to the beneficiary's account.
- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMYU) was launched in 2016 to avail LPG to rural and deprived households.

What are the key features of PMYU?

Introduced in 2016 by Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MOPNG)

Objective - To create a smoke free rural India by providing concessional LPG connections to entire nation

- It aims provide 8 crore LPG connections to BPL families, with deposit free LPG connection amounting to financial assistance of Rs 1,600
- The beneficiaries also have an option of zero-interest loan from the public sector OMCs for the stove and the first refill.
- Connections will be issued on the name of women beneficiaries.
- It was expanded in April 2018 to include women beneficiaries from seven more categories (SC/ST, PMAY, AAY, Most backward classes, tea garden, forest dwellers & Islands).
- EMI facility will also be provided for stove and refill cost.
- It is complimentary to PM's GiveitUp Campaign under which 75 lakh middle class and lower middle-class households have voluntarily given up their cooking gas subsidy.

What is Ujjwala 2.0?

- Additional 1 crore LPG connection
- Apart from a deposit-free LPG connection, a free refill worth over Rs 800 and a free stove will be provided
- Requires minimal paperwork
- Migrants will not be required to submit any address proof to get the benefit
- Self-declaration is enough for both ‘family declaration’ and as a ‘proof of address’

How has the scheme been progressing?

- As per the data of Petroleum Analysis and Planning Cell, 2018 94% of all households had an LPG connection as of September 2019
- Yet, many LPG connection holders were found to still be using other fuels like firewood since refill has become expensive.
- The long waiting time is also an additional factor
- So there have also been reports of partial usage of LPGs since conventional sources of fuel are easily available

What is the need of the hour?

- There is a need to promote other affordable alternatives, such as solar energy and solar cookers, smokeless chulhas, biogas plants and electric cookers.
- R&D must be boosted in the public and private sectors to explore alternatives.

Source: The Hindu

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