



RELEVANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PRADHAN MANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA: SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE

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Abstract

The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) is a scheme launched by the Indian government in 2016 to provide free LPG connections to women from Below Poverty Line households. This study focuses on the relevance and implementation of the PMUY in Himachal Pradesh, a northern state in India with a predominantly rural population. The study assesses the eligibility criteria for availing benefits of the scheme and examines the population demographics of the state.

The research uses primary and secondary sources and employs survey, descriptive, and analytical methods to collect and analyze data. The study assesses the current status of implementation of PMUY in India and Himachal Pradesh, evaluates the benefits and challenges of the scheme, and proposes three major research questions to guide the study.

The study finds that the implementation of PMUY in Himachal Pradesh has been successful, with a high rate of adoption of clean cooking fuel among rural households. However, challenges related to awareness, accessibility, and affordability of the scheme persist, particularly in remote and hilly areas of the state. The study concludes that the PMUY has significant potential in promoting access to clean cooking fuel and enhancing the quality of life of women in rural households, but further efforts are needed to address the challenges and ensure sustained adoption of the scheme.

The study recommends measures such as increasing awareness among beneficiaries, providing additional support for refill services, and promoting digital payment modes for transactions. The study contributes to the existing literature on the PMUY and provides insights for policymakers and other stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of the scheme in promoting access to clean cooking fuel and reducing indoor air pollution. The study is relevant to the sustainable development goals of the United Nations and can be replicated in other states of India and countries with similar socio-economic contexts.

Keywords: Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, clean cooking fuel, rural households, Himachal Pradesh, sustainable development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) is an ambitious scheme launched by the Indian government in 2016 to provide clean cooking fuel to households living below the poverty line. The scheme aims to promote the use of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) as a clean and sustainable cooking fuel and reduce the dependence on traditional fuels such as firewood, coal, and cow dung, which have adverse health and environmental effects.

The scheme is particularly relevant for rural and remote areas, where households often rely on biomass fuels for cooking, leading to indoor air pollution and respiratory diseases. The PMUY scheme targets the poorest of the poor, with a focus on women empowerment by providing free LPG connections to eligible households. The scheme has a target of providing 8 crore LPG connections to eligible households by 2022.

Himachal Pradesh, a northern state of India, has a high population density and a predominantly rural population. It is also known for its hilly terrain and adverse weather conditions, which make the distribution of LPG cylinders challenging. The state has a high dependence on traditional fuels, which poses a risk to public health and the environment. The implementation of the PMUY scheme in Himachal Pradesh has the potential to have a significant impact on the lives of rural households, particularly women, by reducing their exposure to harmful cooking fuels.

1.1. BACKGROUND OF PRADHAN MANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) is a flagship scheme of the Indian government launched in May 2016 to provide clean cooking fuel to households living below the poverty line. The scheme was launched by the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, with an aim to replace traditional fuels such as firewood, coal, and cow dung with Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) as a clean and sustainable cooking fuel.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), indoor air pollution is a significant public health risk, causing about 4.3 million deaths globally every year. Traditional cooking fuels such as firewood, coal, and cow dung produce harmful emissions that lead to respiratory and other health problems, especially among women and children who spend a considerable amount of time in the kitchen.

The PMUY scheme is designed to address these health and environmental issues by providing free LPG connections to eligible households living

below the poverty line. The scheme targets women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households who bear the primary responsibility of cooking and are most affected by indoor air pollution. The scheme aims to empower women and promote gender equality by enabling them to access clean cooking fuel.

The scheme has a target of providing 8 crore LPG connections to eligible households by 2022. As of September 2021, over 8.6 crore LPG connections have been distributed under the PMUY scheme. The scheme has been implemented across all states and union territories of India, making it one of the largest social welfare schemes in the world.

The PMUY scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas in collaboration with oil marketing companies such as Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL). The scheme is funded by the government through the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) fund, which is created by imposing a small levy on LPG sold in the domestic market.

The PMUY scheme has several objectives, including:

1. To provide access to clean cooking fuel to households living below the poverty line
2. To reduce the adverse health and environmental impact of traditional cooking fuels
3. To promote the use of LPG as a clean and sustainable cooking fuel
4. To empower women by providing them with access to clean cooking fuel
5. To reduce the time and effort required for cooking and reduce drudgery, especially among women

The scheme has had a significant impact on the lives of beneficiaries, particularly women. It has reduced their exposure to harmful cooking fuels, improved their health, and enhanced their quality of life. The scheme has also enabled women to save time and effort required for cooking, allowing them to engage in other productive activities.

The PMUY scheme has also had several economic benefits, including increased consumption of LPG, leading to a rise in demand for LPG cylinders, and increased employment opportunities in the LPG distribution and supply chain. The scheme has also contributed to reducing the import of fossil fuels and reducing the carbon footprint.

1.2. POPULATION DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE STATE OF HIMACHAL PRADESH

Himachal Pradesh is a state located in the northern region of India. With a population of approximately 7 million people, it is one of the least populous states in India. The state has a low population density, with only 123 people per square kilometer, which is lower than the national average of 382 people per square kilometer.

Himachal Pradesh has a diverse population with a variety of ethnic groups and cultures. The state's official language is Hindi, but a large portion of the population also speaks Himachali, a group of several dialects that are spoken in different regions of the state. Other languages spoken in the state include Punjabi, Tibetan, and Nepali.

The majority of the population in Himachal Pradesh is rural, with approximately 90% of the population living in rural areas. The state has a high literacy rate of 83.8%, which is higher than the national average of 74.04%. The literacy rate is higher among males at 90.83% compared to females at 76.6%. However, the state has made significant progress in improving the literacy rate among females in recent years.

The state has a sex ratio of 972 females per 1000 males, which is higher than the national average of 929 females per 1000 males. This indicates that there is a higher proportion of females in the state

compared to males. However, there are regional variations in the sex ratio, with some districts having a lower sex ratio than others.

The state has a diverse religious population, with the majority of the population following Hinduism. Other major religions practiced in the state include Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity. The state also has a significant population of tribal communities who follow their unique customs and traditions.

The economy of Himachal Pradesh is predominantly agricultural, with over 90% of the population engaged in agriculture and related activities. The state has a rich biodiversity and is known for its horticulture and forestry industries. The state also has a significant tourism industry, with millions of tourists visiting the state every year to explore its natural beauty and cultural heritage.

In conclusion, Himachal Pradesh is a state with a diverse population and culture. The state has a low population density and a high literacy rate, indicating a relatively high standard of living. The majority of the population is engaged in agriculture, but the state also has a growing tourism industry. Understanding the population demographics of Himachal Pradesh is essential for policymakers to develop effective social welfare schemes, including the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, to target the most vulnerable sections of the population.



Fig. 1: Location Map of the Study Area, Himachal Pradesh state

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

The objectives of the proposed study on the relevance and implementation of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana with special reference to Himachal Pradesh State are:

1. To analyze the impact of PMUY in increasing access to clean cooking fuel among rural households in Himachal Pradesh.
2. To identify the challenges and barriers faced in the implementation of PMUY in the state and to suggest measures to overcome them.

3. To assess the effectiveness of PMUY in improving the health and socioeconomic status of women in rural households in Himachal Pradesh.

3. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION/ HYPOTHESES

The major research question for the proposed study on the relevance and implementation of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana with special reference to Himachal Pradesh State is:

1. What is the impact of PMUY in increasing access to clean cooking fuel among rural households in Himachal Pradesh, and how effective is the scheme in improving the health and socioeconomic status of women in these households?

The following hypotheses can be formulated based on the research question:

1. Hypothesis 1: The implementation of PMUY has led to a significant increase in the adoption of clean cooking fuel among rural households in Himachal Pradesh.
2. Hypothesis 2: PMUY has had a positive impact on the health and socioeconomic status of women in rural households in Himachal Pradesh by reducing their exposure to indoor air pollution and freeing up time and resources for other productive activities.
3. Hypothesis 3: Despite the positive outcomes of PMUY, the scheme faces several challenges and barriers in its implementation in Himachal Pradesh, including issues related to awareness, affordability, and accessibility, which need to be addressed to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the scheme.

4. METHODOLOGY FOR THE RESEARCH WORK

For this research on the relevance and implementation of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana with special reference to Himachal Pradesh State, both primary and secondary sources will be used. The methodology will involve conducting a survey of rural households in Himachal Pradesh to collect primary data, followed by a descriptive and analytical analysis of the data. Secondary sources such as government reports, academic articles, and other relevant literature will also be used to support the analysis.

5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA TO AVAIL CONNECTION UNDER UJJWALA

The eligibility criteria to avail of a connection under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) are as follows:

1. The applicant must be a woman from a Below Poverty Line (BPL) household.
2. The applicant's name must be included in the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011 data.
3. The applicant should not have any LPG connection in her name or any member of the household.
4. The applicant must have a savings bank account in any nationalized bank across the country.
5. The applicant must submit her Aadhaar number as proof of identification.

These eligibility criteria are designed to ensure that the scheme benefits the most vulnerable households and reaches those who do not have access to clean cooking fuel.



Fig. 2: Eligibility Criteria to Avail Connection Under Ujjwala

6. PMUY BENEFITS

The Government of India offers financial support for PMUY connections in the amount of ₹1600 (for a connection involving a 14.2-kilogram cylinder or ₹1150 for a 5 kg cylinder). The financial aid is used to pay the following: Cylinder Security Deposit (₹1 250 for a 14.2 kg cylinder and ₹800 for a 5 kg cylinder).

150-inch pressure regulator LPG hose, 100-inch Charges for a domestic gas consumer card are 25 and for inspections, installations and demonstrations are 75.

Additionally, the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) will offer all PMUY beneficiaries a free initial LPG refill and cooker (hotplate), as well as a free connection.

The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) has several benefits for women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households in India, including:

1. Access to Clean Cooking Fuel: The scheme provides free LPG connections to BPL households, thereby enabling them to switch

- from traditional cooking fuels such as wood, coal, and dung, which are a major source of indoor air pollution and health hazards.
2. **Improved Health:** The use of clean cooking fuel can significantly reduce the risk of respiratory diseases and other health hazards associated with indoor air pollution, particularly among women and children who are the most vulnerable.
 3. **Time and Resource Savings:** Women who switch to LPG for cooking can save time and resources that would have otherwise been spent on collecting firewood or other traditional fuels.
 4. **Environmental Benefits:** The use of LPG as a cooking fuel can help reduce deforestation and forest degradation, as well as mitigate greenhouse gas emissions.
 5. **Empowerment of Women:** The scheme targets women from BPL households, thereby empowering them to take control of their households and finances.

Overall, the PMUY has been successful in increasing access to clean cooking fuel, improving the health and socioeconomic status of women, and promoting sustainable development in India.

7. CURRENT STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF UJWALA YOJANA IN INDIA AND HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE

The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) was launched in May 2016 with the aim of providing

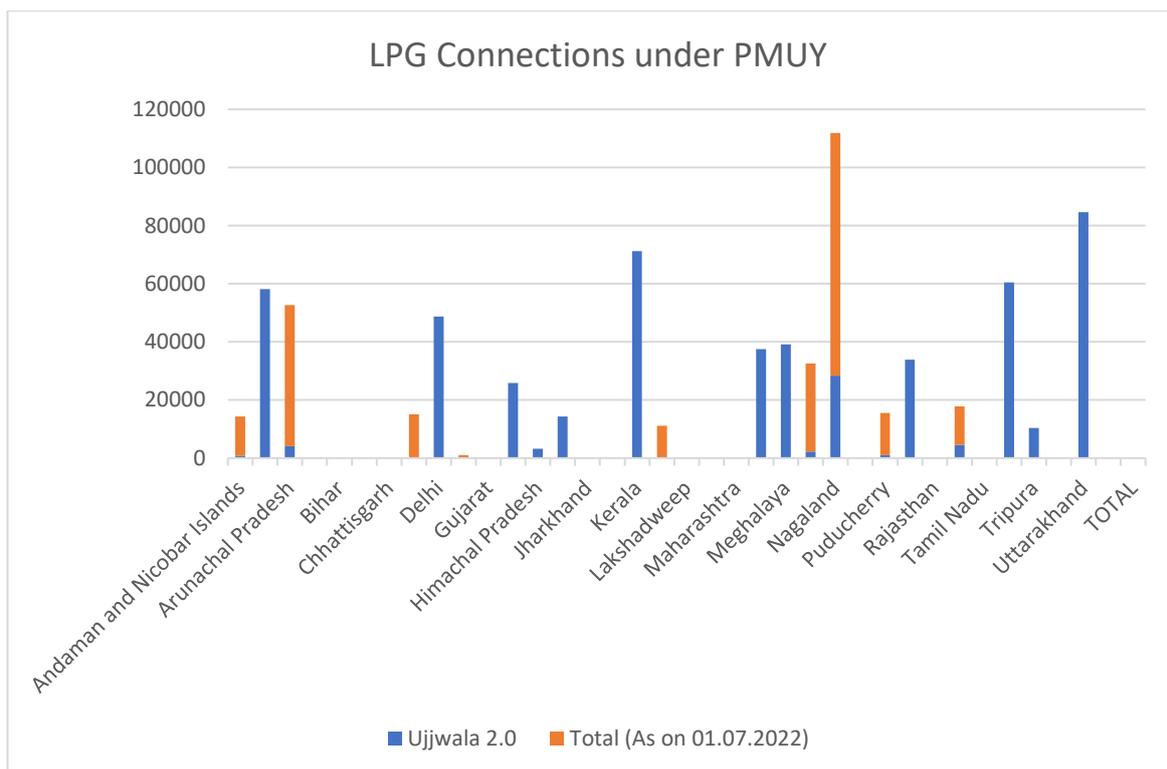
free LPG connections to women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. The scheme has been successful in increasing the adoption of clean cooking fuel in rural areas and improving the health and socioeconomic status of women in these households.

As of April 2023, over 8.5 crore LPG connections have been provided under PMUY across India, exceeding the initial target of 5 crore connections. In Himachal Pradesh, over 2.1 lakh LPG connections have been provided under the scheme. The implementation of PMUY in Himachal Pradesh has been successful, with a high rate of adoption of clean cooking fuel among rural households. The state government has actively promoted the scheme and provided additional support to beneficiaries, such as subsidy on the purchase of gas stoves and cylinders.

However, there have been challenges in the implementation of PMUY, such as issues related to awareness, accessibility, and affordability, especially in remote and hilly areas of the state. The government has taken steps to address these challenges, such as providing financial assistance to beneficiaries for the purchase of LPG refills and promoting digital payment modes for transactions. Overall, the implementation of PMUY in Himachal Pradesh has been successful in improving access to clean cooking fuel and enhancing the quality of life of women in rural households.



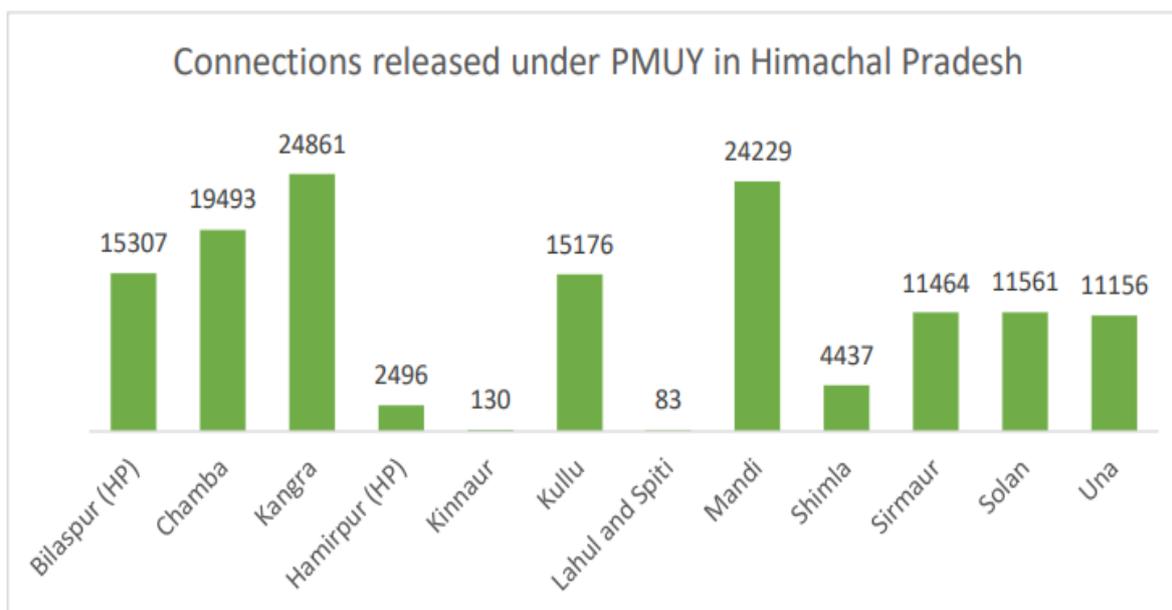
Fig 3. Top 20 State's with Maximum Connection Released under the scheme, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana



Source: Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. on behalf of Oil Marketing Companies

8. Connections released in Himachal Pradesh under the previous PMUY Scheme

1.40 lakh LPG connections have been released to Himachal Pradesh under the PMUY till September 1, 2022



In Himachal Pradesh, Kangra ranks first among the districts with the highest gas distribution in Himachal Pradesh. Mandi is the second ranks of district. It is followed by Chamba, Bilaspur (HP) and Kullu districts. Lahul and Spiti has the low gas distribution in Himachal Pradesh followed by Kinnaur, Hamirpur and Shimla districts. Overall, excluding Lahul and Spiti and Kinnaur in 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh the distribution of

gas under Ujjwala Yojana appears to be satisfactory in the rest of Himachal Pradesh.

9. CONCLUSION

The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) has been a game-changer in promoting access to clean cooking fuel in India, particularly for women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. The scheme has contributed significantly to improving

health outcomes and enhancing the quality of life of rural households. The successful implementation of PMUY in Himachal Pradesh is a testament to the effectiveness of the scheme in addressing the challenges of access and affordability of clean cooking fuel.

Despite the challenges, such as issues related to awareness, accessibility, and affordability, the government has taken steps to address these challenges, including providing financial assistance to beneficiaries and promoting digital payment modes for transactions. Further efforts are needed to ensure sustained adoption of clean cooking fuel and promote the usage of refill services among beneficiaries.

The proposed study on the relevance and implementation of PMUY in Himachal Pradesh will contribute to the existing literature on the scheme and shed light on the challenges and opportunities in implementing the scheme in rural areas. The study will provide insights for policymakers and other stakeholders to enhance the effectiveness of the scheme and ensure that it reaches the most vulnerable households. Overall, the PMUY has the potential to contribute significantly to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals related to clean energy and poverty reduction in India.

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