



CHANGES IN WOMEN'S LIVES THROUGH THE PRADHAN MANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA

Dr. Reenaben M. Patel

In-charge Principal / Assistant Professor, Shri Saraswati College of Social Work, Netrang Taluka: Netrang, District: Bharuch – 393130

ABSTRACT

Swami Vivekananda said that the welfare of the world is not possible until the condition of women improves. Just as a bird can not fly with only one wing, development is impossible without women's development. Therefore, the issue of providing rights and opportunities to women has attracted attention throughout the world. Good health of every member of a family is essential for the development of society. Generally, women are the main persons responsible for taking care of the family. Therefore, it is necessary that women should not only pay attention to the health of family members but also remain healthy themselves and participate in the development of the country. Various efforts have been made to improve women's health, and after independence, several initiatives contributed to the development of women.

KEYWORDS : Women's Empowerment, Improvement in Health, Reduction in Respiratory Diseases, Saving of Time, Reduction in Labour, Improvement in Quality of Life, Cleanliness, Assistance to Poor Families, Women's Dignity, Social Development, Economic Savings

INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, after marriage, women have been given the responsibility of managing the entire household and preparing food for everyone in the family. As a result, women have had to face various health-related problems.

They commonly face problems such as eye irritation caused by smoke, burning sensation in the eyes, headache, dizziness and difficulty in breathing. The condition of women in rural communities has still not improved sufficiently. Even today, many women cannot use modern cooking fuels and continue to use wood, dung cakes, coal and other traditional fuels.

According to WHO estimates mentioned in the paper, nearly five lakh people in India die due to unclean cooking fuel. Serious illnesses include heart disease and lung cancer. Rural women suffer from the harmful effects of burning traditional fuels.

On 1 May 2016, the Central Government launched the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana across India with the slogan of clean fuel and a better life. Its main objectives were women's empowerment, care of women's health, reduction of the serious harmful effects of burning wood for cooking, and reduction of respiratory complaints caused by smoke from traditional cooking fuels. The successful implementation of the scheme in rural areas helped prevent harmful effects on the eyes and body and also reduced environmental damage.

Objectives of the Study

1. To clarify the process of obtaining the benefit of the Ujjwala Yojana.
2. To study the changes in women's health through the Ujjwala Yojana.
3. To examine the present condition of beneficiaries who have received the benefit of the Ujjwala Yojana.
4. To examine the difficulties related to fuel faced before receiving the benefit of the Ujjwala Yojana.

Socio-economic Change and Women's Empowerment in Independent India

The paper states that the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana is one of the major factors for socio-economic change and women's empowerment in independent India. At a workshop on the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas stated that during the previous five years the number of connections had more than doubled. LPG coverage increased from 55% to 67.4%.

The smoke coming from traditional household stoves is harmful to health. Providing safe and environmentally friendly

LPG fuel to poor women has reduced smoke pollution in side homes. However, the work is not yet complete. Strengthening the supply chain and finding innovative methods for LPG cylinder delivery and refilling remain priorities.

Climate change is a concern for the whole world. Energy is an important component of economic empowerment. The government is working towards ensuring energy justice for all Indians. Affordable, sustainable, effective and safe energy through LPG should become a factor in socio-economic change. Beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana participated in large numbers and shared their experiences about how their lives improved after using gas stoves.

2. Women's Empowerment-changes in Women's Lives Through the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

Women's empowerment is connected with the country's energy economy. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas launched the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana to empower poor women of the country. Through this scheme, women receive clean cooking fuel. The scheme was launched as a social movement and is expected to lead to social change and women's empowerment.

The scheme created a new record, and seven crore beneficiary families were connected with Ujjwala. Through the scheme, women received an opportunity to cook food in a smoke-free environment. Their health improved and the time spent collecting fuel was saved. Women can use this saved time to increase their income and participate in social activities.

To take this initiative forward, the LPG Panchayat was introduced. Three main messages were given to women:

1. Clean household fuel is available everywhere.
2. Clean household fuel is economical.
3. LPG is safe and insured.

1. Establishment of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

The scheme was launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Bhai Modi on 1 May 2016 at Ballia in Uttar Pradesh. The scheme was announced in Gujarat on 15 May 2016.

Under this scheme, during the three years from 2016–17 to 2018–19, a total of five crore LPG connections were to be provided in 29 states and seven Union Territories of India.

In Gujarat, the scheme was launched in Dahod, where the number of connections was lowest. Up to 30 June 2016, 4.40 lakh beneficiary households in Gujarat had received the benefit of LPG connections.

States receiving benefits included:

1. Uttar Pradesh – 46 lakh
2. West Bengal – 19 lakh
3. Bihar – 19 lakh
4. Madhya Pradesh – 17 lakh
5. Rajasthan – 14 lakh

Objectives of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

Through this scheme, the Government of India expected to provide more than five crore connections to families below the poverty line. Important objectives of the scheme included the following.

1. To increase women's empowerment.
2. To protect women's health.
3. To reduce the use of unclean fuel used for cooking and its harmful effects.
4. To prevent air pollution.
5. Through the slogan "Clean Fuel, Better Life," to prevent the harmful effects of smoke on the eyes and body caused by traditional cooking.

Changes Among Women Through The Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

1. Changes in women's health.
2. Changes in the kitchen.
3. Changes in the environment.
4. Families received nutritious food.

1. Changes In Women's Health

After rural women received the benefit of the Ujjwala Yojana, they were protected from illnesses caused by unclean fuels, such as headache, cold and cough. As a result, medical expenses were reduced. Women remained healthier and their families also received nutritious food.

2. Changes in the Kitchen

Earlier, women used wood and dung cakes for cooking. This required more time and produced more smoke, which affected women's health. At present, women cook using clean LPG fuel. There is less smoke and fewer illnesses. Women can complete kitchen work more quickly and spend more time with their families.

3. Changes in the Environment

Before the Ujjwala Yojana, rural people used wood and dung cakes as cooking fuel. This contributed to a reduction in the number of trees. Through the availability of LPG fuel under the Ujjwala Yojana, an increase in the number of trees was observed.

4. Families Received Nutritious Food

When rural women used unclean fuel, it often went out repeatedly, producing more smoke and causing difficulties. Cooking was also not completed properly. After women received gas connections through the Ujjwala Yojana, rural families received more suitable and nutritious food.

Data Analysis

Table showing the age of beneficiaries

Analysis of the age of respondents shows that 14 respondents, or 28%, were between 21 and 30 years of age; 17 respondents, or 34%, were between 31 and 40 years.

Age group	Percentage
21 to 30 years	28%
31 to 40 years	34%
41 to 50 years	30%
51 to 60 years	8%

The paper notes that 15 respondents (30%) were in the 41–50 age group, while only 4 respondents (8%) were in the 51–60 age group. The highest number of respondents was in the 31–40 age group, with 17 respondents (34%).

Table Showing Illnesses Faced by Women Before Receiving the Ujjwala Yojana Benefit

No.	Details	Frequency	Percentage
1	Eye irritation	13	26%
2	Difficulty in breathing	12	24%
3	Cold and cough	8	16%
4	Headache	17	34%

The analysis shows that 13 beneficiaries (26%) faced eye irritation, 12 (24%) faced difficulty in breathing, 8(16%) faced cold and cough, and 17(34%) faced head ache before receiving the Ujjwala Yojana benefit.

Difficulties Faced Before Receiving the Ujjwala Yojana Benefit

1. During the monsoon season, wet wood did not burn properly.
2. During the monsoon season, kerosene was not available in sufficient quantity.
3. Dry wood was not easily available during the monsoon.
4. It was difficult to go and collect wood.
5. Wood frequently went out while cooking.
6. Wood sometimes had to be purchased and brought from outside.

Findings

A study of the condition of beneficiaries who received the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, focusing on rural women of Netrang Taluka in Bharuch District, found the following:

- An increase in the number of trees was observed.
- Because the area is a rural tribal region, sufficient employment opportunities are not available to everyone. The price of LPG cylinder refilling should be lower.
- The number of married beneficiaries was high: 49, or 98%.
- Because the area is rural and tribal, lack of educational awareness has resulted in a high number of illiterate respondents: 24, or 48%.
- Because the area is a tribal rural region, all beneficiaries were associated with Hindu religion.
- Even in the tribal rural area, a 100% reduction in the prevalence of health-related illnesses among women was observed.
- Families received nutritious food through LPG gas cylinders.
- Before receiving the benefit of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, 83% of respondents used wood and dung as fuel.
- Even after receiving the benefit, people continue to bring and use wood according to their needs.
- Before receiving the benefit, a majority of beneficiaries used wood and dung collected during summer as fuel during the monsoon.
- After receiving the benefit of the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, improvement was observed in time management at work.

CONCLUSION / OPINION

- The scheme has improved the health of rural women. Compared with the past, women are now less likely to fall ill.
- Because of the scheme, women have to perform less physical labour and no longer need to travel long distances to collect wood and dung for fuel.
- Women have started using LPG cylinders as fuel under the scheme, and as a result the number of trees is better maintained.
- Even today, some people in rural are as avoid using gas cylinders because their economic condition is weak and the cost of refilling cylinders is high.
- Because the level of education is low in rural areas, people sometimes take time to learn how to use gas, and fear also causes some people to avoid using cylinders.
- The scheme has improved women's time management and brought changes in the kitchen.

- By using LPG cylinders, women can cook quickly and without smoke and spend more time with their families. Women fall ill less often and medical expenses are also saved.

Suggestions

- Information about the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana should be delivered to rural people through village meetings and gatherings.
- Since the scheme provides clean and smoke-free fuel, rural women should be informed through meetings and in the local language and encouraged to use it.
- Women should be provided with guidance to remove their fear of using gas cylinders.
- Since the scheme also helps save trees, the government should spread information about the scheme through television, radio and the internet so that more women can benefit.
- The views and experiences of beneficiaries should be collected and shared with other rural women so that the number of beneficiaries increases.
- Poor rural families should receive adequate support so that they can maintain their livelihoods.
- If the price of LPG cylinder refilling is reduced, the number of beneficiaries is likely to increase.
- Since the scheme helps reduce illness among women, advice from doctors encouraging women to use the scheme could make the impact more effective.

CONCLUSION

We know that India is a country of villages and is also an agriculture-based country. Therefore, it is necessary to develop villages along with cities. Various schemes for rural development, including housing, Samaras Gram Panchayat, Jyoti Gram Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, MGNREGA, biogas plant schemes and the Swachh Bharat Mission, have helped villages move towards becoming global villages.

These schemes provide housing and employment opportunities to rural communities so that people do not remain unemployed and can contribute to the livelihood and development of their families. It is important that information about such programmes reaches rural areas on time. People should become aware and participate in their own development, the development of their villages and the development of the country.

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