

CAG HINTS AT MASSIVE DIVERSION OF LPG

Relevant for: Developmental Issues | Topic: Government policies & interventions for development in various Sectors and issues arising out of their design & implementation incl. Housing

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, in a report on the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), has highlighted the risk of diversion of domestic LPG cylinders for commercial use, as 1.98 lakh beneficiaries had an average annual consumption of more than 12 cylinders.

The CAG said this level of consumption seemed improbable in view of the BPL (below poverty line) status of such beneficiaries.

“Similarly, 13.96 lakh beneficiaries consumed 3 to 41 refills in a month. Further, IOCL [Indian Oil Corporation Limited] and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) in 3.44 lakh instances issued 2 to 20 refills in a day to a PMUY beneficiary having single-bottle cylinder connection,” it said.

The scheme was launched in May 2016 to safeguard the health of women and children by providing them with clean cooking fuel. Its target was revised to eight crore LPG connections.

As on 31 March 2019, the oil marketing companies had issued 7.19 crore connections, which is about 90% of the target to be achieved till March 2020.

To rule out existing LPG connections in beneficiaries' household, de-duplication was to be carried out based on Aadhaar of all family members.

“Audit noticed that out of 3.78 crore LPG connections, 1.60 crore (42%) connections were issued only on the basis of beneficiary Aadhaar which remained a deterrent in de-duplication,” said the report.

Errors in identification

The CAG said laxity in identification of beneficiaries was noticed as 9,897 connections were issued against Abridged Household List Temporary Identification Numbers (AHL TINs), where names of all family members and the beneficiary were blank in the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC)-2011 list.

Lack of input validation check in the IOCL software allowed issue of 0.80 lakh connections to beneficiaries aged below 18. Data analysis also revealed that 8.59 lakh connections were released to beneficiaries who were minor as per the SECC-2011 data, which was in violation of PMUY guidelines and LPG Control Order, 2000.

It also exposed a mismatch in the name of 12.46 lakh beneficiaries between the PMUY database and SECC-2011 data. The CAG, on field visits, also found that connections were given to “unintended” persons.

The audit also highlighted the delay of more than 365 days in the installation of 4.35 lakh connections against the stipulated time period of seven days.

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