

Thanks to the tech-savvy Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gone are the days of LPG woes for a consumer. Now, one can order a new connection, book a refill, register a complaint or seek emergency service for cylinder leaking over a click or phone call



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FEW years back, subscribing a domestic cooking gas connection was luxury. The waiting queue would extend as long as three to six months, unless a consumer had the 'capability' to break the line and secure a new cylinder. This was not the end—a consumer had to visit the dealer to book a refill, as most of the time the agency would not respond to phone calls.

Thanks to the tech-savvy Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gone are the days of LPG woes for a consumer. Now, one can order a new connection, book a refill, register a complaint or seek emergency service for cylinder leaking over a click or phone call. The customer grievance redressal mechanism has been made fast, IT-enabled and transparent. This is also closely monitored by petroleum minister

Dharmendra Pradhan.

This drastic change for LPG consumers is driven by smart professionals who manage the web sites, mobile app and the call centre. Today, the interaction between a LPG consumer and his dealer takes place over an IT-enabled platform and there are limited needs for physically visiting the distributor.

Noida-based Cyfuture India manages the website and mobile app for

Indane, the biggest cooking gas seller from Indian Oil Corporation. At the same time, it also operates the toll free and emergency helplines for the three LPG distributors—Bharat Gas, HP Gas and Indane. Recently, Pradhan launched a 24x7 LPG emergency helpline—1906.

"It is an important tool in boosting efficiency and transparency in delivery of citizen centric services. We have seen in the past how adoption of

IT transformed the entire ticketing process of Indian Railways. Similarly, Cyfuture helped Indian Oil successfully launch and implement the 'E-SV' scheme through its online portal indane.co.in," said Anuj Bairathi, chief executive officer of the firm, which also offers data centres and cloud hosting services. The website is a one-stop online platform to deliver various consumer services to Indane LPG consumers and distributors.

The toll free number for LPG consumers (1800 2333 555) saw nearly 50,000 calls a day when direct benefit transfer of LPG (DBTL) or Pahal, the name chosen by Modi-government, was launched pan-India in January 2015. Most of the initial queries were related to availing subsidy benefits and issues such as how to add bank accounts and Aadhaar to consumer numbers.

With more than a year of success-

ful implementation of Pahal, the programme also recognised by Guinness World Records, the number of calls have reduced to around 35,000 everyday. Of these, after answering the FAQs, close to 15,000 complaints are registered in a day. These complaints are resolved in a time frame varying from immediately (if it is a case of leak from a week's time. Other than subsidy related grievances, customers complain about delayed or non-delivery of refills. About 600 executives around the clock shifts work for the call centre managed by Cyfuture.

"The helpline eliminated the need for LPG consumers to visit a distributor or an oil marketing company

TACKLING CHANGE

► Total households in India:

270 million

► Domestic LPG consumers:

163.5 crore

► Consumers opted for GivetUP:

6.7 million

► LPG subsidy bill April-December 2015:

₹12,093 crore

LPG gets a digital makeover

(IOC, BPCL or HPCL) office to resolve their queries or register a complaint with regards to their LPG connection. Consumers can simply pick-up the phone and speak to a customer care executive at the helpline and get their queries answered or register their complaints," said Bairathi, who is also the co-founder of Cyfuture.

Cyfuture, which has bagged the contract to operate the customer care service for two years, has put in place a back-end network that connects a consumer to the distributor as well the oil marketing companies. Most queries are of FAQ nature, which are handled by the customer care executives. Of the remaining queries and complaints, the ones related to distributors are forward to distributors and follow-ups done by executives. Only for special queries or complaints that require intervention of the oil marketing companies, are forwarded to respective oil agencies for resolution.