



Institutional Transformation of the PMO in the Modi Era

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Abstract:

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in India has evolved since the first Prime Minister, J.L. Nehru, assumed office. Over the past 77 years since independence, the PMO has experienced substantial growth in its functioning. It initially provided secretarial assistance to the Prime Minister, with primary focus on the Cabinet Secretariat. Its name changed over time, and its role gradually expanded. According to the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961, the PMO continues to provide secretarial support to the Prime Minister. It is the body that remains beyond anyone's scrutiny and plays a significant role. By virtue of managing the work at the Prime Minister's office, there are many facets to it. It assumes the role based on the executive in the office. The office has expanded from a small number of staff to a permanent staff selected through the coveted exams of the Union Public Service Commission. It has evolved as a vital organ of the government, though it functions in the background. It has not been part of a serious academic discussion, but its functioning has expanded. The paper will assess the functioning of the PMO, past and present. It will examine the initiatives taken by the present government led by Narendra Modi and the scope of the PMO in the administration and politics of India. It will also look at the centralisation of functioning and the delegation of work.

Keywords: Prime Minister, Principal Secretary, Office, Administration and Politics.

Introduction

The Prime Minister's Secretariat was established on 15 August 1947 and was later renamed the Prime Minister's Office, effective from 28 March 1977. The Office has grown over the years. The new government of Narendra Modi, NaMo 1.0, was sworn in on 26 May 2014. He held the portfolios of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, the Department of Atomic Energy, the Department of Space, and all policy issues and other portfolios not allocated to any other Minister. He has continued with the same portfolios in the third term as well.

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The Prime Minister, as part of his efforts to connect with people, also interacted with all PMO officers and appreciated their teamwork on the occasion of the completion of the first year of the government in 2015. The Prime Minister addressed the PMO on several occasions. In the third term, Narendra Modi's address highlighted that the role of the Prime Minister's Office should be that of an institution of service as the "people's PMO". He emphasised that the PMO should be seen as a catalyst for infusing energy and dynamism into the system, rather than a "very big power centre" as it was perceived a decade ago.

According to Modi, "My effort has been that the PMO becomes a place for the service of the people. The PMO should be 'people's PMO'. It cannot be Modi's PMO". The vision was not to attain or accumulate power, but to commit to gratifying the 1.4 billion Indians. The emphasis has been on the sole goal of "nation first"; his only motivation has been "Viksit Bharat", with a target set to 2047. The PM took direct control of a project-monitoring body to fast-track investments worth nearly \$300 billion and revive the country's manufacturing sector. The Project Monitoring Group (PMG) was launched by the former Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, in June 2013 to address bureaucratic delays and encourage ministers to clear files. This tendency was termed 'policy paralysis'. Since its beginning, the PMG has helped resolve 197 stalled projects worth about \$110 billion. The PMG was a special cell within the Cabinet Secretariat. It was moved to the PMO in September 2015 to speed up clearances and support the Make in India campaign. Since February 2019, the PMG has merged with Invest India, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The Prime Minister's Office appointed the PMG as the Secretariat to the Monitoring Group in August 2021, which aims to attract direct foreign investment to India. The government has completed 2,795 infrastructure projects worth INR 68.12 lakh crores as of 24 January 2025, listed on the PMG portal. The PMG has helped resolve 7,768 issues in these projects. Since 01.01.2024, the PMG has resolved 693 issues across 353 projects valued at INR 13.88 lakh crores. To support this, the PMG held 173 review meetings with various ministries and state governments under the Cabinet Secretariat and DPIIT to fast-track problem resolution and ensure projects are completed on time.

Table 1: State-wise projects undertaken and investment

States	Projects	Project Investments
Ladakh	4	Rs 2.19 Lakh Cr
Jammu & Kashmir	35	₹3.52 Lakh Cr.



Himachal Pradesh	24	₹2.82 Lakh Cr.
Punjab	62	₹3.81 Lakh Cr.
Uttarakhand	17	₹3.11 Lakh Cr.
Haryana	67	₹ 5.48 Lakh Cr.
Rajasthan	115	₹5.60 Lakh Cr.
Uttar Pradesh	182	₹8.65 Lakh Cr.
Gujarat	127	₹9.62 Lakh Cr.
Madhya Pradesh	132	₹6.34 Lakh Cr.
Bihar	104	₹5.22 Lakh Cr.
Jharkhand	124	₹5.59 Lakh Cr.
Chhattisgarh	83	₹5.38 Lakh Cr.
Odisha	182	₹9.08 Lakh Cr.
Maharashtra	211	₹11.9 Lakh Cr.
Karnataka	97	₹4.58 Lakh Cr.
Andhra Pradesh	103	₹5.06 Lakh Cr.
Tamil Nadu	104	₹5.43 Lakh Cr.
Kerala	38	₹2.95 Lakh Cr.
Goa	9	₹2.30 Lakh Cr.
Sikkim	20	₹2.58 Lakh Cr.
Arunachal Pradesh	34	₹3.44 Lakh Cr.
Assam	42	₹3.95 Lakh Cr.
Nagaland	10	₹2.44 Lakh Cr.
Manipur	18	₹2.63 Lakh Cr.



Mizoram	17	₹2.53 Lakh Cr.
Tripura	12	₹2.45 Lakh Cr.
Meghalaya	21	₹2.53 Lakh Cr.
West Bengal	83	₹4.77 Lakh Cr.
Andaman & Nicobar	4	₹2.18 Lakh Cr.
Lakshadweep	3	₹2.18 Lakh Cr.

Source: Project Monitoring Group

Table 2: Various Projects undertaken

Types of Projects	No. of Projects	Amount
Roads & Highways	1381	₹15.9 Lakh Cr.
Railways	380	₹12.0 Lakh Cr.
Power Generation	234	₹14.7 Lakh Cr.
Oil & Gas	190	₹8.04 Lakh Cr.
Power Transmission & Distribution	158	₹3.85 Lakh Cr.
Coal	138	₹2.36 Lakh Cr.
Health Care	122	₹46.5 Thousand Cr.
Agriculture	69	₹2.90 Lakh Cr.
Shipping	50	₹1.14 Lakh Cr.
Education	39	₹21.3 Thousand Cr.
Aviation & Aviation Infrastructure	37	₹87.9 Thousand Cr.
Steel	34	₹2.82 Lakh Cr.

Source: Project Monitoring Group



The government spent on a variety of projects that helped in developing India's infrastructure and economic avenues, which focused on roads and highways, railways, power generation, oil & gas, power transmission & distribution, coal, health care, agriculture, shipping, education, aviation & aviation infrastructure and steel.

During NaMo 2.0, the PMO was tasked in January 2018 with monitoring 45,000 villages as part of the 112 Aspirational Districts Programme (ADP). The initiative aimed to uplift underdeveloped districts through data-driven and inclusive governance. Monitoring responsibilities were assigned to 750 officers, who were required to conduct three visits within a four- to seven-day period. Each district was overseen by a 'prabhari officer' (In-charge), typically a senior IAS officer. In addition, 322 directors and deputy secretary officers, along with 322 under-secretaries, were designated as 'nodal officers'. The government floated seven schemes across five priority focus areas, such as education, health and nutrition, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion and skill development, and basic infrastructure and social development, which were selected for implementation. The largest number of targeted villages was in Bihar (8,569), followed by West Bengal (7,981), Jharkhand (6,512), Uttar Pradesh (5,130), and Madhya Pradesh (3,048). This initiative aligns with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for a 'New India' by 2022.

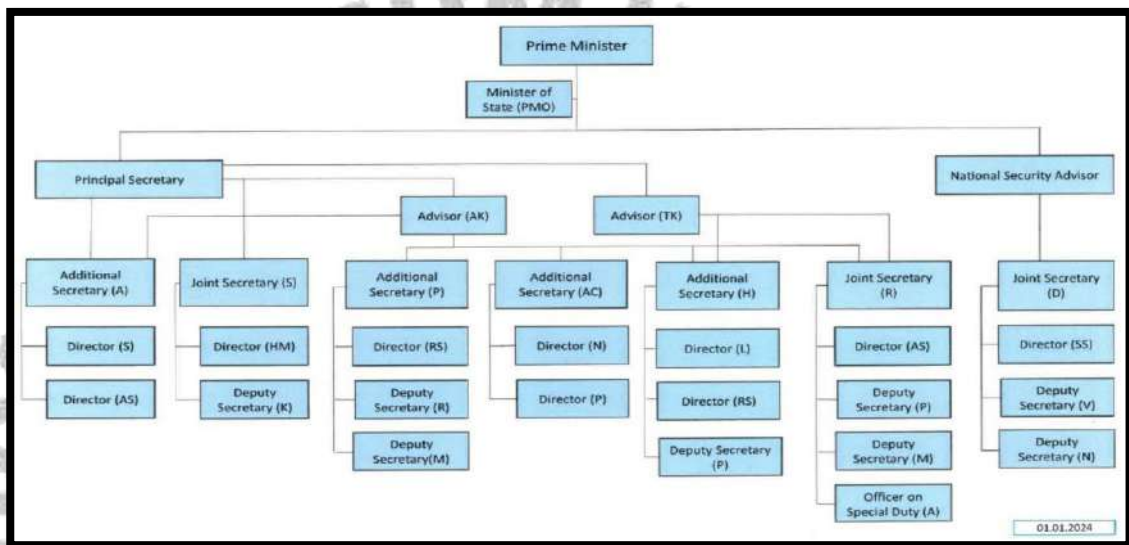
Narendra Modi, in his third term (NaMo 3.0), was sworn in on 9 June 2024. The government had previously eliminated 2,000 obsolete laws to enhance governance. Another notable reform was the extension of the cleanliness drive to workplaces and government offices, involving the removal of scrap material and outdated equipment. This initiative resulted in the reclamation of over 643 lakh square feet of office space and generated ₹2,364 crore for the national exchequer. Under Modi's leadership, the PMO has assumed a central role in policy formulation and governance, driving reforms and overseeing the implementation of key projects.

Organisation and Structure of the PMO

The PMO's functioning has undergone notable changes, with the Minister of State (MoS) assuming a leading role since the first term of the Modi government. Dr. Jitendra Singh Rana was assigned multiple portfolios, including Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for the Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Department of Atomic Energy, and Department of Space. Although these portfolios are directly associated with the Prime Minister, they have been managed by the MoS. Consequently, the MoS

has become the second most influential figure in the organisation, marking a shift in authority from the Principal Secretary to the Minister of State. Dr. Jitendra Singh chaired joint meetings with senior officials from all Science Ministries and Departments to evaluate project progress. He also encouraged officials to maintain an active presence on social media, particularly to engage with youth and emphasise the importance of effective communication in highlighting India’s scientific achievements.

Structure of the PMO



Source: Prime Minister of India

The above organisational chart was made available on the PMO site on 1st January 2024. The PMO is what the Prime Minister wants it to be. There has been no set pattern of PMO staffing right from its inception. As discussed earlier, it shows the change based on the studies. In 2014, the Modi government appointed the Minister of State to lead the PMO. Therefore, the political head at the apex of the structure only reveals that the office has made a major shift in its functioning. The PMO was earlier headed by a Principal Secretary, an appointed head under direct command of the Prime Minister; the final authority was with the PS to the PM.

The PMO has two divisions, one headed by the Principal Secretary and the other headed by the National Security Advisor. The Principal Secretary has two Advisors, who have separate staffing lines but whose work channels are interconnected. A new post was created in the PMO for an additional Principal Secretary. The primary purpose of this post was to familiarise the officer with the role of Principal Secretary and prepare them for it. As visible since 2014, Nripendra Misra took over as the PS, and P.K. Mishra was

appointed as the additional PS; later in 2019, he was appointed as the PS. He had worked with PM Modi when he was the chief minister of Gujarat.

Work Distribution in PMO (w.e.f. 18.09.2025)

Officer	Code	Vertical	Ministries / Departments / Subjects	States / UTs	Director / DS
Atish Chandra SS (AC)	a	Agriculture	Agriculture, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Chemicals & Fertilizers, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Food Processing Industries, Cooperation	Gujarat	Reghu G Dir (G)
Atish Chandra SS (AC)	b	Rural	Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Jal Shakti	Bihar, Jharkhand	Reghu G Dir (G)
Atish Chandra SS (AC)	c	-	PMO Monitoring & Coordination – PM Announcements, Project Monitoring, PRAGATI	-	Mangesh Ghildiyal DS (M)
Atish Chandra SS (AC)	d	Social	Health & Family Welfare, Ayush, Education, Skill Development	Goa, Haryana, Odisha	Reshma R Nair Dir (R)
Subhasish Panda AS (P)	e	Welfare	Social Justice & Empowerment, Tribal Affairs, Minority Affairs, Women & Child Development, Youth Affairs & Sports, Culture, Tourism	UTs	Reshma R Nair Dir (R)
Subhasish Panda AS (P)	f	-	PMO Funds	-	Reshma R Nair Dir (R)
Subhasish Panda AS (P)	g	-	PMO Grievances – Public Branch, Grievance Redressal	-	Reshma R Nair Dir (R)
Ashish Vachhani AS (A)	h	Finance	Finance, Corporate Affairs, Commerce & Industry, NITI Aayog, Statistics & Programme Implementation	-	Saurabh Shukla Dir (S)
Ashish Vachhani AS (A)	i	Economy	Heavy Industries, Steel, MSME, Textiles, Labour & Employment	Madhya Pradesh	Chandra M Thakur DS (C)
Ashish Vachhani AS (A)	j	-	PMO Special Assignments & Projects	Kerala, Tamil Nadu	Parthiban P Dir (PP)
Ashish Vachhani AS (A)	k	Technology	Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Electronics & IT, Communications, Aadhaar, DBT, Digital Payments	Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan	Rugved Thakur Dir (T)
M S Srikar AS (M)	l	Governance	Home Affairs, Parliamentary Affairs, Information & Broadcasting, DONER	NE	Chandra M Thakur DS (C)
M S Srikar AS (M)	m	-	PMO Technology	-	Rugved Thakur Dir (T)

M S Srikar AS (M)	n	-	PMO RTI, Parliament	Chhattisgarh	Shobana Pramod Dir (P)
M S Srikar AS (M)	o	-	-	Karnataka	Saurabh Shukla Dir (S)
Amit Singh Negi AS (N)	p	Infrastructure	Railways, Road Transport & Highways, Shipping, Civil Aviation, Housing & Urban Affairs	Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand	Mangesh Ghildiyal DS (M)
Amit Singh Negi AS (N)	q	Resources	Petroleum & Natural Gas, Power, MNRE, Coal, Mines, Environment, Forests & Climate Change	-	Parthiban P Dir (PP)
Amit Singh Negi AS (N)	r	-	PMO Administration, Capacity Building	-	Saurabh Shukla Dir (S)
Amit Singh Negi AS (N)	s	-	PMO Security	-	A K Sharma OSD (A)
Deepak Mittal AS (D)	t	Foreign & Security	External Affairs (A), Defence	-	Amarbhish Vemuri DS (AV)
Deepak Mittal AS (D)	-	-	External Affairs (B), Space, Atomic Energy, Security Affairs	-	Vipin Kumar DS (V)
C Sridhar JS (S)	u	HR	ACC Files (Sr. Management), Cabinet Secretariat, Personnel (excluding vigilance), Anti-corruption Unit, HR Monitoring, Law, Justice	West Bengal	Pooja Jain Dir (J)
C Sridhar JS (S)	-	-	ACC Files (excluding Sr. Management), CVO, Disciplinary matters, Legislative matters	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana	Manmeet Kaur Dir (K)

Source: Prime Minister of India

The powers and duties of PMO officers and employees are delineated through the office's work distribution framework. As of 18 September 2025, responsibilities are allocated across all 28 states and 8 union territories among seven categories of Secretaries. This overview offers insight into the organisational structure and division of responsibilities within the PMO, though it does not encompass the full range of the office's functions.

The work distribution shows that the Special Secretary to the Prime Minister is at the top of the list, with assignments in the Ministry or Department or Subjects such as Agriculture, Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Chemicals and Fertilizers, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Food Processing Industries, and Cooperation. The Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, and Jal Shakti, the assignment of PMO monitoring & coordination, including PM announcements, Project Monitoring, and PRAGATI (Pro-

Active Governance and Timely Implementation), an integrated and interactive platform launched on 25th March 2015. He was given charge of Gujarat, Bihar and Jharkhand. He has under him two officers appointed as Director and a Deputy Secretary. The Additional Secretary to the PM was assigned to the Health and Family Welfare, AYUSH, and Education and Skill Development portfolios, and the States to be monitored were Goa, Haryana, and Odisha. Social Justice and Empowerment, Tribal Affairs, Minority Affairs, Women and Child Development, Youth Affairs and Sports, Tourism of all the Union Territories. In addition, the PMO funds, PMO Grievances- Public Branch, and Grievance Redressal. The Additional Secretary (2) handles Finances, Corporate Affairs, Commerce & Industry, NITI Aayog, Statistics, and Programme Implementation in general. The specific departments, ministries, and subjects assigned to the economy include Heavy Industries, MSME, Steel, Textile, Labour & Employment. The PMO special assignment and Projects were also part of the assignment. The states of Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu are managed by two Directors.

The Additional Secretary (3) was assigned under Technology with Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Electronics and IT, Communications, Aadhaar, Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), and Digital Payments. He handles governance-related Home Affairs, Parliamentary Affairs, Information and Broadcasting, and the Department of North East Region (DoNER). In addition, PMO Technology, PMO RTI and Parliament. The North East of India was under the Deputy Secretary. The states of Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, and Karnataka were managed by three Directors under the Additional Secretary. The Additional Secretary (4) managed Infrastructure- Railways, Roads, Transport & Highways, Shipping, Civil Aviation, Housing & Urban Affairs. He was in charge of Resources – Petroleum & Natural Gas, Power, MNRE, Coal, Mines, Environment, Forests & Climate Change, PMO Administration, Capacity Building, and PMO Security. Under him was assigned a Deputy Secretary, two Directors and an Officer on Special Duty (OSD).

The Additional Secretary (5), with two Deputy Secretaries, manages Foreign & Security – External Affairs (A), Defence, External Affairs (B), Space, Atomic Energy, and Security Affairs.

A Joint Secretary with two Directors were in charge of the Human Resource- ACC Files (Sr. Management), Cabinet Secretariat, Personnel (excluding vigilance), Anti-corruption Unit, HR-Monitoring, Law, Justice. ACC Files (excluding Sr. Management), CVO, Disciplinary matters, Legislative matters. The states under them were West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. Thus, the work allocation has been well-defined and elaborate, and assistance has been provided to carry out the task.



Narendra Modi's governance adapted to new-generation technology and used it to meet the needs of the time. The rise of social media, including Twitter (now X), the PMO website (PM India), the Narendra Modi App, Mann Ki Baat, and letters to the PM, is among others. He used communication with people as a powerful way to connect with all age groups.

The government undertook an initiative to instil trust in the system through the Third-Party Transparency Audit, the Auditor Agency, under Dr Hari Prakash (Quality Council of India), for the PMO. The reports for the years 2023-24 and 2024-25 have been made available to the public. The third-party audit has been suggested by the PMO to be conducted for the ongoing roads and railway projects. This would help in ensuring the quality control, avoiding project delays and accountability. The ministry should follow the best practices in this regard of other countries, especially Indonesia. The same method of external audit has been followed by Malaysia as well.

The PMO has taken several steps to ensure widespread dissemination of information to the public, and it has been made available in 18 languages, namely Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil, and Telugu, in addition to English and Hindi. This has been done to generate awareness amongst the public, transparency, and reach out to the masses. The initiative was part of the ongoing efforts by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to reach out to people and communicate with them in their own language. The expected outcome is to enhance interaction between people from all parts of the country and the Prime Minister on various issues concerning their welfare and development.

Before the government led by Narendra Modi, some basic information about the PMO was made available on the internet. A little clarity was made about the distribution of work and its structure, known only through an article in 'India Today' magazine and through an official during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's term. The present government has dedicated a website to the PMO.

The PMO's functioning has expanded over the years, as is visible from the above discussion. The government has taken various activities under its jurisdiction since the time of its inception. The style of the functioning of PMO has been guided by the personality of every Prime Minister and their vision, and certainly influenced by the Principal Secretary and the National Security Advisor in recent times. The PMO has become an inevitable as well as integral part of the Indian System. The journey of the PMO has not just been demanding and challenging, but it has also been interesting. The PMO shouldered the responsibility with every Prime Minister and closely worked with the implementation of policies.

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