



The Indian Journal for Research in Law and Management

Open Access Law Journal – Copyright © 2025

Editor-in-Chief – Dr. Muktai Deb Chavan; Publisher – Alden Vas; ISSN: 2583-9896

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International (CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0) License, which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium provided the original work is properly cited.

Private Hands, Public Goods: Tracing the NDA Era Revolution in Indian Social Welfare Delivery

- *Kritesh Bhagat*

Introduction:

With the coming of the NDA government in 2014, India has come to see inclusive growth and welfare through the most transformative mechanism, i.e., Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). PPPs have become central to policy because of many challenges that the public sector has faced in the past, such as innovation, scalability, and cost-effectiveness, which were critical. These led to the inclusion of PPPs not only in infrastructure development but also in the broader spectrum of social services, including healthcare, education, housing, and beyond.

This article deals with the NDA government's evolving principles and practical arrangements of PPPs from 2014 onwards, and the real-world impacts on people through health, education, and infrastructure. By using case studies as a material for investigation, the paper explores the future trajectory of PPP-led welfare.

Background:

In India, PPP existed before also and collaborated with many private sectors, but with the assumption of office by the NDA government in 2014, there was a shift in government attitudes towards PPPs. It became more formalised and ambitious in partnering. The slogans like “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas” and “Minimum Government, Maximum Governance” made it clear that the government will harness the strength of the private sector to expand reach and quality by making public funds go further and injecting innovation and technology into undeveloped or stagnant areas.

The government evolved the PPPs' collaborative style from mere (e.g., NGOs or doctors' limited involvement) to franchising, formal contracts, outsourcing and joint ventures. The aim is to provide a long-term engagement, whether it is on health insurance, skill development, or in building large infrastructure. This significant risk-sharing by both sectors provides welfare services in a more improved and advanced way, by keeping the principles of shared benefits and accountability central.

These improvements in PPP strategies by the NDA government emphasised innovation, scalability and efficiency. The concept of PPP was not just economic but philosophical because it highlights the interdependent capacities between public and private actors.

Health PPPs:

In 2018, Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) was launched and stands as a landmark initiative. As a commitment to Universal Health Coverage (UHC), this scheme provides free health insurance to the poorest families up to ₹5 lakh coverage per year. Nearly half of the hospitals in the country are private, so the scheme operates through a mix of public and private service providers. Ayushman Bharat has a deep reliance on private partnerships, aiming for maximum accessibility and quality. The program's dual pillars are Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and the insurance component that extends across both primary and tertiary care.

Studies indicate Ayushman Bharat has expanded health access to millions of people and drastically reduced catastrophic health expenditures (CHE) for poor families. The program has narrowed the rural-urban divide by allowing seamless use of public and private hospitals. However, the scheme's effectiveness can be critically supported if we properly investigate whether a population facing sudden health shocks is getting a health infrastructure. But Ayushman Bharat is able to deliver it till now, especially in pandemic disruptions. Surveys revealed improved financial protection and satisfaction among beneficiaries.

Many states have pioneered PPP contracts not only in hospitals, but also in diagnostics, ambulance services, and disease control (notably Tuberculosis). Field studies suggest beneficiaries have positive responses in both public and private hospitals and report lower out-of-pocket expenditures and increased trust in facility services. Despite challenges remaining in maintaining standards, timely fund reimbursements, and service delivery frameworks.

Education PPPs:

For marginalised communities, it has always been a persistent challenge to get high-quality education. The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment took a step. It launched the Scheme for Residential Education for Students in High Schools in Targeted Areas (SHRESHTA), which provides SC students with access to high-quality residential education in private schools across India. Admission is determined through a national entrance test. This PPP model exemplifies a strategic shift by placing government funds into top-tier private schools, addressing both access and equity. Using private educational infrastructure has helped to uplift disadvantaged groups. Besides SHRESHTA, Skill India Mission and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) aided youths in skill training, vocational education, and tech-enabled learning through public-private collaborations.

SHRESHTA and similar PPP initiatives have increased access to quality education for the students who are often stuck in under-resourced schools. The scheme has improved SC students' exposure to learning environments, co-curricular opportunities, and stronger academic outcomes. By integrating industry partners in curriculum and apprenticeship programs, it has advanced employability and skill acquisition according to the market demand.

The government has put significant effort into bringing private schools and edtech firms to bridge the gap in opportunities between students. However, inequalities persist because of so much of social divisions in India. The success of these programs depends on continuous vigilance, evaluation, and the reimbursement of the government's funds.

Infrastructure PPPs:

The NDA government has put much pressure on the rapid expansion of infrastructure PPPs since 2014. The initiatives that are taken are affordable housing (PMAY Urban), Smart Cities Mission, Sagarmala, BharatNet, urban renewals, water initiatives, etc. The new PPP contracts for roads, ports, airports, and smart utilities have offered multiple benefits for the central budgetary commitment and private investment. The benefits that are delivered by infrastructure PPPs: injecting technology, mobilising private capital, sharing risks, and delivering projects with higher speed and efficiency. Roads and highways are being built now at a much higher speed, which lowers the travel time and mobilisation between places.

The launch of Gati Shakti in 2021 blended multiple transport initiatives into one digital platform to improve transparency and coordination for PPP-based investments. Smart city

PPPs helped to improve intelligent traffic systems, sustainable energy sources, and digitalised public services. Housing PPPs have contributed to reducing slum populations and expanding basic infrastructure for the urban poor.

Despite many challenges like implementation barriers, contractual disputes, and systematic vulnerabilities because of privatisation, a coordinated focus has been able to build standardised and sustainable projects in a country like India. The Golden Quadrilateral, Delhi Airport Metro, and Indore Smart City projects highlight successful PPP-led transformation. Rural connectivity through BharatNet and PMGSY has been improved. The Sagarmala 2.0 (2025) aimed to boost cargo capacity and global investment.

Cross-Cutting Reforms & Challenges:

The NDA government has initiated major reforms by keeping earlier failures in mind – project delays, funding snarls, and regulatory bottlenecks. Project approval mechanisms were streamlined, viability gap funding was upgraded, and resolutions of disputes made PPPs more attractive. State and central governments are working together to reduce investor risks and boost private sector participation. The push towards digital monitoring (e.g., Gati Shakti platform) further increased accountability.

Despite progress with new PPPs initiatives, challenges remain. Ensuring that PPP benefits reach marginalised groups, not just those with access to private providers, is a concern. Many project gets delayed or go over budget because of late approvals. Investors and beneficiaries get frustrated with land-acquisition problems and regulatory hurdles. As banks and private partners struggle to generate long-term funds, funding is another major obstacle. Coordination among different government agencies is often complicated, resulting in poor project management and inefficiency. Other concerns include high user charges or reduced service quality because of low maintenance. Finally, problems with corruption, mismanagement, and weak dispute mechanisms can undermine confidence in PPPs. These challenges need better planning and stronger regulation, which will come through a great commitment to fairness and transparency in delivering public services.

Recommendations for Future PPPs:

PPP is truly a beneficial step for everyone to keep things simple, advanced, and transparent. To make PPPs more successful, both government and private sectors should set clear and realistic goals which can be easy to understand and for no misconceptions in between. Decisions of

sharing risks must be fairly distributed so that no one can be overburdened. But cutting down unnecessary paperwork can make projects start faster and avoid frustrating delays. The best way to fix problems is by regular public updates and social audits, which will also help to build trust. Rural or poor people should be given special attention in healthcare, education, and housing because they need it the most. Trained Government staff can play a significant role in handling PPP projects to improve planning and avoid mistakes. Lastly, if a strong system for solving disputes and handling disputes can be put in place effectively, then it can treat everyone fairly and without misuse. The best ways to make PPPs work more easily and for the common good are simple rules, better teamwork, and listening to people's concerns.

Conclusion:

PPPs in India have the capability and the potential to transform social welfare and infrastructure development, but go through a series of challenges to succeed fully. To improve the outcomes of PPPs, simpler and clearer regulations are essential, which can speed up the approvals for the projects and reduce delays. Transparency in the system is very important, which will come through regular monitoring. It will help to prevent corruption, financial mismanagement and increase public confidence. Most importantly, PPPs' main focus should be on inclusivity, ensuring benefits mainly to the marginalised and rural populations, not just profitable urban areas. The NDA government's new PPPs have come a long way and aligned projects with real needs. With these steps, PPPs can be a powerful tool for India's development if they can be implemented sustainably, efficiently, and inclusively for its people.

References:

- National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC) (2022) *Public Private Partnerships in Health: Compendium of PPP Projects in Health Sector, India*.
https://nhsrcindia.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/PPP%20BOOK%2027.05.2022_0.pdf
- Vikas, P., Gupta, S. & Rao, M. (2024) *Public-Private Partnerships and Health Systems in India: Lessons for Future Health Financing*. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 13(4). <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11042133/>
- Tyagi, A. (2022) *Public-Private Partnerships in India: The Road Ahead*. National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG). https://ncgg.org.in/sites/default/files/lectures-document/Aashi_Tyagi.pdf
- Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJE), Government of India (2023) *Guidelines for Implementation of Scheduled Caste Welfare Schemes*. <https://grants-msje.gov.in/scguidelines>
- Kaur, R. & Singh, P. (2023) *Public-Private Partnerships and Socio-Economic Development in India: An Analytical Review*. *International Journal of Food and Nutritional Sciences (IJFANS)*, 12(3), 1223–1234.
<https://www.ijfans.org/uploads/paper/ce0c42c81b73c56f829d7ece2f3e02d5.pdf>
- Oxford Policy Management (OPM) (2022) *Analysing the Effectiveness of Targeting for Flagship Health Insurance Programme in India*.
<https://www.opml.co.uk/projects/analysing-the-effectiveness-of-targeting-for-flagship-health-insurance-programme-in-india>
- Study IQ (2024) *Schemes of the Indian Government: Comprehensive List and Analysis*.
<https://www.studyiq.com/articles/schemes-of-indian-government/>
- Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India (2024) *List of All PPP Projects in India*. https://www.pppinindia.gov.in/list_of_all_ppp_projects
- Chatterjee, S. (2024) *Can India's PPP Model for Infrastructure Finally Deliver on its Promise?* *Fortune India*, 24 May. <https://www.fortuneindia.com/long-reads/can-indias-ppp-model-for-infrastructure-finally-deliveronitspromise/121685>

