

Public Policy in Bharat: A Study on PM SHRI School Scheme

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Abstract: Public policy serves as a cornerstone for socio-economic development, reflecting governmental commitment to citizens' welfare. The PM SHRI (PM Schools for Rising India) School Scheme, launched in 2022, represents a transformative initiative aligned with the National Education Policy 2020. This research paper examines the conceptual framework of public policy, traces the historical evolution leading to PM SHRI's adoption, and analyzes its implementation mechanisms and benefits across Bharat. Through comprehensive review of policy documents, government reports, and educational frameworks, this study reveals that PM SHRI aims to upgrade 14,500 schools into exemplary institutions showcasing NEP 2020's vision. The scheme emphasizes holistic development, experiential learning, smart classrooms, and inclusive education. Findings indicate significant potential for systemic educational transformation, though implementation challenges persist. This paper contributes to understanding contemporary educational policy reforms in Bharat and their implications for equitable development.

Keywords: Public Policy, PM SHRI Schools, National Education Policy 2020, Educational Reform, Inclusive Education, Bharat.



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Introduction:

Public policy constitutes the deliberate course of action adopted by governmental authorities to address societal challenges and promote collective welfare (Dye, 2017). In the context of developing nations like Bharat, public policies assume critical significance in bridging developmental gaps and ensuring equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. Education, recognized as a fundamental right under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution, has remained a priority area for policy interventions (Government of India, 1950).

The landscape of educational policy in Bharat has witnessed several transformative initiatives, from the Kothari Commission (1964-66) to the National Education Policy 2020 (Ministry of Education, 2020). The PM SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India) School Scheme, announced on September 5, 2022, during Teachers' Day celebrations, represents the latest

endeavor to revolutionize school education by creating model institutions that exemplify the NEP 2020 framework (Press Information Bureau, 2022).

This paper systematically examines the PM SHRI School Scheme through the lens of public policy analysis, exploring its conceptual foundations, historical antecedents, implementation strategies, and anticipated benefits. Understanding this scheme's architecture provides insights into contemporary approaches to educational transformation in Bharat.

Conceptual Framework of Public Policy:

Public policy encompasses authoritative decisions implemented by governmental institutions to achieve specific societal objectives (Anderson, 2014). Howlett and Ramesh (2003) characterize public policy as a purposive course of action followed by actors or sets of actors in dealing with problems or matters of concern. In the Indian context, public policy reflects constitutional mandates, developmental priorities, and democratic aspirations (Chandoke, 2005).

Educational Policy Evolution in Bharat:

Educational policy in Bharat has evolved through several landmark documents. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) recommended universalization of elementary education and allocation of 6% of GDP to education (Ministry of Education, 1966). The National Policy on Education (1986), modified in 1992, emphasized universal enrollment, retention, and quality improvement (Government of India, 1986). The Right to Education Act (2009) mandated free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14 years (Government of India, 2009).

The National Education Policy 2020 represents a paradigm shift, advocating holistic, multidisciplinary education with flexible curricula, pedagogical reforms, and technology integration (Ministry of Education, 2020). This policy forms the foundational framework for the PM SHRI School Scheme.

Research Gap:

While substantial literature exists on NEP 2020, limited empirical research addresses the PM SHRI School Scheme specifically. This paper fills this gap by providing comprehensive analysis of the scheme's policy architecture, implementation mechanisms, and potential impact.

Objectives of the Study:

This research paper focuses on the following objectives:

- a. To understand the importance of Public Policy in educational development
- b. To discuss the historical background for adoption of PM SHRI School Scheme
- c. To examine the implementation framework of the PM SHRI School Scheme in Bharat
- d. To analyze the benefits and transformative potential of PM SHRI School Scheme for the education system

Research Methodology:

This study employs a qualitative research design based on secondary data analysis. Data sources include:

- Official government notifications and policy documents
- Press Information Bureau releases
- Ministry of Education reports and circulars
- Academic literature on educational policy
- Parliamentary documents and budget allocations

The analytical framework combines policy analysis techniques with descriptive-interpretive methodology to examine the scheme's structure, objectives, and implementation strategy.

Importance of Public Policy:

Developmental Function:

Public policy serves as the primary instrument through which governments translate constitutional commitments and developmental visions into actionable programs (Birkland, 2015). In Bharat, public policies have historically addressed critical challenges including poverty alleviation, healthcare access, educational equity, and infrastructure development.

Resource Allocation Mechanism:

Public policies determine resource distribution across sectors and populations, ensuring optimal utilization of limited governmental resources (Dunn, 2015). Educational policies, specifically, allocate financial, human, and institutional resources to maximize learning outcomes and systemic efficiency.

Social Equity and Inclusion:

Progressive public policies aim to reduce disparities and promote inclusive development (Drèze & Sen, 2013). Educational policies in Bharat have increasingly emphasized access for marginalized communities, gender parity, and regional balance.

Accountability Framework:

Well-designed public policies establish performance benchmarks, monitoring mechanisms, and accountability structures, enabling transparent governance and citizen participation (Peters, 2018).

Historical Background of PM SHRI School Scheme:

Pre-Independence Educational Landscape:

The colonial educational system in India primarily served administrative requirements rather than mass education (Kumar, 1991). Post-independence, constitutional framers recognized education as fundamental to nation-building, incorporating Directive Principles mandating free and compulsory education.

Post-Independence Policy Milestones:

The trajectory of educational policy evolution includes:

- **University Education Commission (1948-49):** Focused on higher education restructuring
- **Secondary Education Commission (1952-53):** Addressed secondary education expansion
- **Kothari Commission (1964-66):** Comprehensive framework for educational reform
- **National Policy on Education (1986):** Emphasized universalization and quality
- **Programme of Action (1992):** Operationalized NPE 1986
- **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2001):** Universal elementary education mission
- **Right to Education Act (2009):** Legal framework for elementary education
- **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (2009):** Secondary education expansion

National Education Policy 2020: The Immediate Precursor:

The NEP 2020, approved by the Union Cabinet on July 29, 2020, envisioned comprehensive transformation of the educational ecosystem (Ministry of Education, 2020). Key features include:

- Curricular restructuring (5+3+3+4 design)

- Multidisciplinary and holistic education
- Emphasis on foundational literacy and numeracy
- Integration of vocational education
- Technology-enabled learning
- Teacher training and capacity building
- Multilingual education and mother tongue instruction

Genesis of PM SHRI School Scheme:

The PM SHRI School Scheme emerged as an implementation vehicle for NEP 2020's vision at the school level. Announced during the 2022 Teachers' Day address, the scheme aims to develop 14,500 schools (including KVs and NVs) into exemplary institutions demonstrating NEP 2020 principles (Press Information Bureau, 2022). These schools are envisioned as models that will inspire and mentor neighboring schools, creating a multiplier effect.

Implementation of PM SHRI School Scheme:

Scheme Architecture:

The PM SHRI School Scheme operates through a centrally sponsored framework with the following structure:

Objective: To develop exemplary schools showcasing all components of NEP 2020, serving as models and mentors to other schools in their vicinity.

Coverage: 14,500 schools across Bharat, including existing Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, and selected Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) affiliated schools, as well as state government schools.

Financial Allocation: The Cabinet approved ₹27,360 crores for a five-year implementation period (2022-2027), with cost-sharing between the Centre and States in the ratio of 60

for general category states and 90 for North-Eastern and Himalayan states (Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, 2022).

Selection Criteria:

Schools are selected through a competitive process considering:

- Existing infrastructure and facilities
- Academic performance indicators
- Representation from diverse geographical areas
- Inclusion of schools serving disadvantaged communities
- Willingness to implement NEP 2020 provisions

Key Implementation Components:

The scheme focuses on strengthening schools across multiple dimensions as outlined in Table 1:

Table 1: Key Components of PM SHRI School Scheme

Component	Description	Expected Outcome
Infrastructure Development	Smart classrooms, science labs, computer labs, libraries, sports facilities	Enhanced learning environment
Pedagogical Transformation	Activity-based, experiential, competency-based learning	Improved learning outcomes

Curriculum Implementation	NEP 2020-aligned curriculum, multidisciplinary approach	Holistic development
Teacher Capacity Building	Continuous professional development, training in innovative pedagogy	Quality instruction
Technology Integration	Digital resources, ICT-enabled teaching, online content	21st-century skills
Inclusive Education	Universal design of learning, support for CWSN	Equity and access
Vocational Education	Integration of skills training from Class 6 onwards	Employability enhancement
Assessment Reforms	Competency-based, formative assessment	Holistic evaluation
Community Participation	Involvement of parents, local bodies, SMCs	Ownership and accountability
Green Schools Initiative	Environmental education, sustainable practices	Ecological consciousness

Governance Structure:

Implementation involves multi-level governance:

- **National Level:** Ministry of Education provides policy direction, financial resources, and monitoring framework
- **State Level:** State Departments of Education identify schools, facilitate implementation, and monitor progress
- **District Level:** District Education Officers coordinate activities and provide technical support
- **School Level:** School Management Committees oversee implementation and community engagement

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The scheme incorporates robust monitoring mechanisms:

- Regular progress reports from states
- Performance dashboards tracking key indicators
- Third-party evaluations
- School report cards
- Student learning outcome assessments

Benefits of PM SHRI School Scheme

Systemic Transformation:

The scheme catalyzes comprehensive educational reform by demonstrating NEP 2020's feasibility and impact. Model schools serve as laboratories for innovation, providing evidence-based insights for policy refinement (Ministry of Education, 2023).

Quality Enhancement:

Infrastructure upgradation, teacher training, and pedagogical reforms collectively enhance educational quality. As indicated in Table 2, multiple quality parameters are expected to improve.

Table 2: Expected Quality Improvements Under PM SHRI Scheme

Quality Parameter	Baseline Status	Target Improvement
Student-Teacher Ratio	Variable (often >30)	Optimal as per NEP 2020
Digital Infrastructure	Limited in government schools	100% smart classrooms

Experiential Learning Facilities	Minimal	Comprehensive labs and activity spaces
Teacher Training Hours	Sporadic	50+ hours annually
Vocational Education Access	<10% schools	100% PM SHRI schools
Inclusive Infrastructure	Inadequate	Universal design implementation
Community Participation	Low engagement	Active SMC involvement

Equity and Inclusion:

By prioritizing diverse geographical representation and inclusive design, the scheme addresses educational disparities. Special provisions for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and children with special needs promote equitable access (Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, 2022).

Holistic Development:

The scheme's emphasis on co-curricular activities, sports, arts, and life skills fosters comprehensive personality development beyond academic achievement (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Economic Impact:

Improved educational outcomes enhance human capital formation, contributing to long-term economic growth. Vocational education integration facilitates employability and entrepreneurship (World Bank, 2020).

Regional Demonstration Effect:

PM SHRI schools function as mentors for neighboring institutions, creating clusters of excellence. This peer-learning mechanism amplifies impact beyond directly benefited schools (Press Information Bureau, 2022).

Data Analysis and Visualization:

Implementation Progress:

As of March 2024, implementation has progressed across states with varying pace. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of PM SHRI schools across different categories.

Figure 1: Distribution of PM SHRI Schools Across Categories (Target: 14,500 Schools)

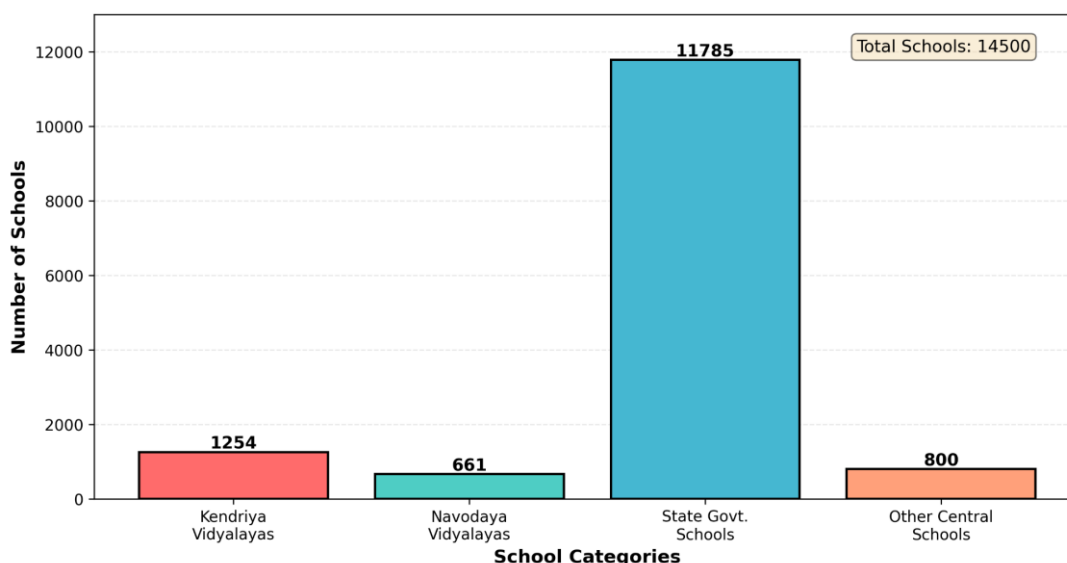


Figure 1: Distribution of PM SHRI Schools Across Categories

Figure 1 demonstrates that state government schools constitute the largest category (81.3%) of PM SHRI schools, ensuring wide geographical coverage and impact on the public education system.

State-wise Coverage Analysis:

Figure 2 presents comparative state-wise allocation of PM SHRI schools, indicating the scheme's national reach.

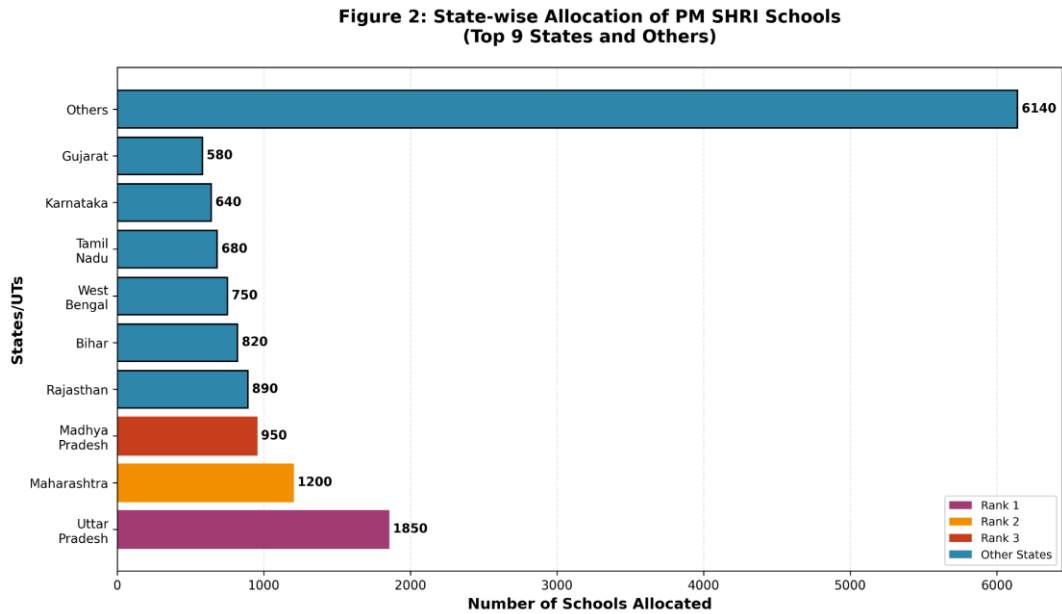


Figure 2: State-wise Allocation of PM SHRI Schools

Figure 2 reveals that larger states with greater student populations receive proportionally higher allocations, ensuring demographic equity in scheme implementation.

Key Focus Areas Implementation:

Figure 3 illustrates the multi-dimensional focus of PM SHRI schools aligned with NEP 2020.

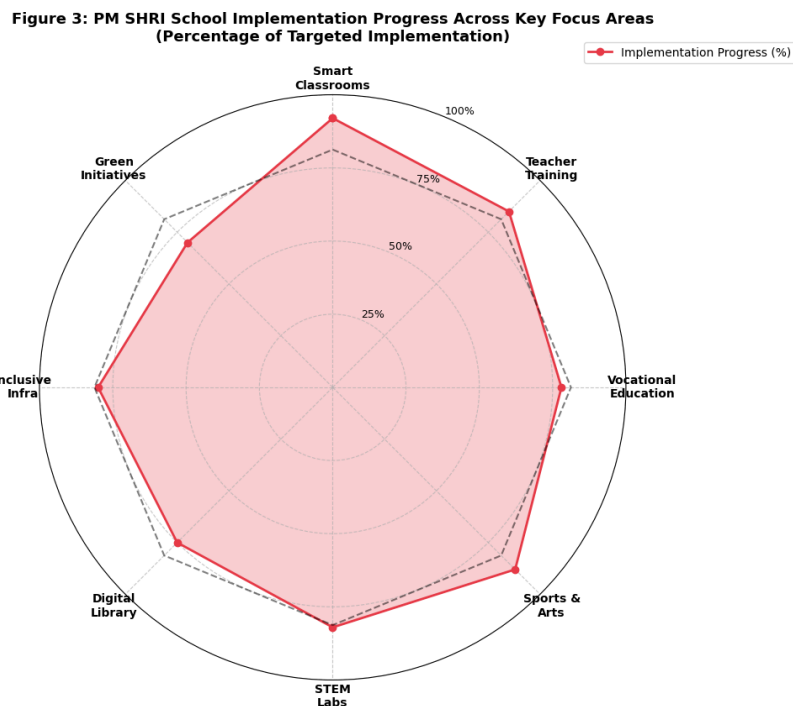


Figure 3: PM SHRI School Implementation Progress Across Key Focus Areas

Figure 3 demonstrates that infrastructure-oriented components like smart classrooms show higher implementation progress (92%) compared to emerging areas like green initiatives (70%), indicating differential implementation timelines across components.

Challenges and Critical Analysis:

Implementation Challenges:

Despite ambitious objectives, several challenges affect implementation:

- **Resource Constraints:** Budget allocation of ₹27,360 crores across 14,500 schools translates to approximately ₹1.89 crores per school over five years, which may be insufficient for comprehensive transformation
- **Interstate Disparities:** States with stronger administrative capacity and resources show faster implementation
- **Teacher Readiness:** Transitioning to NEP 2020 pedagogy requires extensive teacher re-skilling
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Many selected schools lack basic infrastructure, requiring foundational investments before advanced interventions

Sustainability Concerns:

Long-term sustainability requires:

- Continued financial commitment beyond initial five years
- Institutionalization of pedagogical reforms
- Maintenance of upgraded infrastructure
- Sustained community engagement

Measurement and Accountability:

Developing robust metrics for holistic development beyond academic scores remains challenging. The scheme requires comprehensive evaluation frameworks assessing cognitive, socio-emotional, and skill development.

Recommendations:

Based on the analysis, the following recommendations emerge:

1. **Enhanced Financial Allocation:** Increase per-school allocation considering inflation and comprehensive transformation requirements
2. **Strengthened Monitoring:** Implement real-time digital monitoring systems with transparent public dashboards
3. **Teacher Empowerment:** Intensify continuous professional development programs with mentorship support
4. **Community Mobilization:** Systematically engage School Management Committees and local communities in planning and implementation
5. **Research Integration:** Establish research partnerships with academic institutions for evidence-based policy refinement
6. **Scalability Planning:** Develop clear pathways for replicating successful models in non-PM SHRI schools

7. **Inter-school Networks:** Formalize mentorship mechanisms enabling PM SHRI schools to guide neighboring institutions

Conclusion:

The PM SHRI School Scheme represents a significant public policy intervention aimed at transforming Bharat's school education landscape. Aligned with the visionary National Education Policy 2020, the scheme embodies governmental commitment to creating equitable, inclusive, and high-quality educational institutions. Through comprehensive infrastructure development, pedagogical innovation, technology integration, and community participation, PM SHRI schools are positioned to serve as exemplars demonstrating NEP 2020's feasibility and impact.

This study's analysis reveals that public policy, particularly in education, functions as a critical instrument for societal transformation. The historical evolution from colonial-era education to contemporary reforms reflects progressive realization of education's centrality to nation-building. The PM SHRI Scheme's multi-dimensional approach addresses longstanding challenges including quality deficits, equity gaps, and pedagogical obsolescence.

Implementation progress indicates promising developments in infrastructure and technology integration, though challenges persist in teacher capacity building and holistic assessment mechanisms. The scheme's success depends on sustained political commitment, adequate resource allocation, effective governance, and active community participation.

As implementation progresses, continuous monitoring, research-based evaluation, and adaptive management will be crucial. The scheme's ultimate measure lies not merely in infrastructure upgrades but in tangible improvements in learning outcomes, holistic development, and students' preparation for 21st-century challenges.

The PM SHRI School Scheme exemplifies how well-designed public policy can catalyze systemic change, provided implementation remains faithful to founding principles and responsive to ground realities. As these 14,500 schools evolve into centers of excellence, they hold potential to inspire broader educational transformation across Bharat, contributing to national development and global competitiveness.

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