

# How Narendra Modi Has Ruled India (2014–2025): Institutions, Policy, and Politics Across Three Terms

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**Abstract:** Since May 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reshaped India’s political economy and state–society relations through centralized executive leadership, welfare expansion at scale, digital public infrastructure, Hindu-nationalist social legislation, and an increasingly assertive foreign policy. This paper synthesizes election outcomes, marquee policies, institutional shifts, and governance outcomes across three terms—majorities in 2014 and 2019 and a coalition in 2024—to assess how Modi has ruled, what has changed, and where the trajectory remains contested. It combines official documents, court judgments, international datasets, and credible reportage.

**Keywords:** Narendra Modi; BJP; NDA; India; Article 370; CAA; Electoral Bonds; Welfare State; Digital Public Infrastructure; Federalism; Democracy Indices; Foreign Policy.

## INTRODUCTION

Narendra Modi rose to national power on 26 May 2014 after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won India’s first single-party parliamentary majority in three decades. The BJP expanded that majority in 2019, then, after a setback in 2024 (240 seats), formed a coalition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government (293 seats) and Modi was sworn in for a third term on 9 June 2024—India’s first coalition under Modi, reliant on regional allies.

## ELECTORAL MANDATE AND POLITICAL STRATEGY (2014, 2019, 2024)

2014: BJP won a decisive majority (commonly reported as 282 seats) on a platform of development, clean governance, and Hindu-nationalist identity politics.

2019: BJP expanded to 303 seats, consolidating support across North, West, and parts of the East and Northeast.

2024: BJP fell short of a majority (240) but the NDA retained power with 293; Modi began his first coalition term, dependent on the TDP and JD(U).

Pattern: Modi’s campaigns blended welfare delivery, nationalism, leader-centric messaging, and organizational strength; 2024 signaled voter desire for balancing forces without ending BJP rule.

## CORE GOVERNANCE MODEL

Centralization & “PMO state.” Policy agenda-setting and branding are tightly coordinated from the Prime Minister’s Office; ministries execute flagship schemes with uniform branding (e.g., Ujjwala, Swachh Bharat, Jal Jeevan Mission, Ayushman Bharat).

Direct benefit transfers & India Stack. Aadhaar, UPI, and DBT enabled high-volume, low-leakage transfers and everyday digital payments at population scale; UPI crossed 10 billion monthly transactions in Aug 2023, then kept setting records.

## ECONOMIC POLICY: GROWTH ASPIRATIONS WITH HIGH-VELOCITY REFORM

Macroeconomic arc. Post-2014 growth aimed to lift manufacturing (Make in India, PLI) and infrastructure while containing inflation; pandemic shock (2020–21) was followed by recovery. (Use World Bank/IMF data for series in your final layout.)

Tax reform—GST (2017). Single market integration with continuing rate-structure and compliance debates.

2016 Demonetization & 2023 ₹2000 withdrawal. RBI's 2017-18 Annual Report showed ~99.3% of the invalidated ₹500/₹1000 notes returned to banks; in the 2023 withdrawal of ₹2000 notes, ~98% had returned by 2024–25—raising questions about efficacy against illicit cash while improving note quality.

## **SOCIAL POLICY & WELFARE EXPANSION**

Flagship schemes scaled rapidly:

Swachh Bharat (sanitation) and PM-Ujjwala (clean cooking)—behavioral change plus infrastructure.

Ayushman Bharat (health insurance)—nationwide eligibility with state variation.

Jal Jeevan Mission (tap water)—sharp increase in household connections during Modi's second term, continuing into the third (consult the government dashboard for updated counts when publishing).

Digital rails (Aadhaar + UPI) under Digital India enabled identity-verified transfers and platformization of welfare payments.

## **INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AND THE CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER**

Jammu & Kashmir: On 5–6 Aug 2019, Parliament and the Union executive rendered Article 370 inoperative and split the state into the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh; on 11 Dec 2023, a five-judge Constitution Bench upheld the abrogation and directed early restoration of statehood and elections.

Citizenship (Amendment) Act—CAA: Rules were notified in March 2024, operationalizing a religion-specific naturalization pathway for certain non-Muslim migrants from neighboring countries, triggering debate over secularism and equal protection.

Electoral finance: In Feb 2024 the Supreme Court struck down the Electoral Bonds scheme as unconstitutional and ordered disclosure; public releases in March revealed donor-party flows and sparked cross-party scrutiny.

## **FEDERALISM AND PARTY SYSTEM**

Modi's governance has combined strong centralization with state-level political competition. The BJP expanded geographically after 2014, then encountered stronger state-level opposition (e.g., 2024 losses in Uttar Pradesh and rural belts), forcing coalition-management in 2024 with TDP and JD(U) as pivotal allies.

## **CIVIL LIBERTIES, MEDIA, AND DEMOCRATIC QUALITY (CONTESTATION)**

International monitors register a decline in India's liberal-democratic scores during Modi's tenure—citing curbs on dissent, civil society regulation (FCRA enforcement), and pressure on media—while the government argues these ratings are biased and unrepresentative:

Freedom House 2025: India rated "Partly Free," with a further score decline.

RSF Press Freedom Index 2025: India's rank remains low relative to peers.

These measures are contested domestically but widely cited internationally.

## **FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY**

Major-power balancing: Deepening U.S. ties (Quad), hedging with Russia, calibrated competition with China.

China crises: Doklam (2017) and Galwan Valley clash (2020) hardened public and elite views on China, spurring border infrastructure and trade scrutiny.

G20 presidency (2023): India brokered a consensus New Delhi Leaders' Declaration with careful Ukraine language and secured the African Union's entry into the G20—hailed as diplomatic agility.

## CASE STUDIES OF MODI-ERA RULE

### Article 370 Abrogation (2019)

A decisive constitutional–security move aligning with long-standing BJP ideology; upheld by the Supreme Court (2023). Implications: tighter Union control, reorganization into two UTs, and a new electoral roadmap for J&K.

### Demonetization (2016) & Cash Management (2023)

Announced as a strike on black money/counterfeits; RBI data later showed ~99.3% of invalidated notes returned. The 2023 ₹2000 withdrawal emphasized clean-note policy over anti-black-money rhetoric; ~98% returned to banks by 2024–25.

### Citizenship Amendment Act (2019 law; 2024 rules)

Operationalization in 2024 intensified polarization around secularism, minority rights, and federal administration, with legal challenges and protests in several states.

### Electoral Bonds (2018–2024)

Designed for donor anonymity to formalize funding; struck down in 2024 as unconstitutional; donor data disclosures reshaped debates about money and influence.

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## THE THIRD TERM (2024–)—COALITION GOVERNANCE AND CONTINUITY

Continuities: welfare delivery at scale, digital rails, infrastructure push, industrial policy (PLI), “Make in India,” and assertive diplomacy.

Constraints: dependence on allies (TDP, JD(U)) alters legislative calculus; opposition is energized; courts and regulators have asserted scrutiny (e.g., electoral bonds). The governing style thus shifts from unilateral majoritarianism (2014–2024) to negotiated majoritarianism (from June 2024).

## CONCLUSION

Modi’s decade of rule marries programmatic welfare + digital state capacity with centralized political control and Hindu-nationalist ideological projects. The model has delivered scale in infrastructure and service delivery and a higher global profile, while generating sustained contestation over civil liberties, minority protections, and institutional autonomy. The 2024 mandate imposes coalition checks, but core priorities—state capacity, geopolitical ambition, and identity-inflected legislation—are poised to continue.