

Amit Khare:

Shaping India's Administrative Ethos



By

Dr. R.G.Anand

MBBS, MD, MHA, FHM, PDCR, LLB, LLM

**AMIT KHARE: SHAPING INDIA'S
ADMINISTRATIVE ETHOS**



By Dr. R. G. Anand - MBBS, MD, MHA, FHM,
PDCR, LLB, LLM



AMIT KHARE: SHAPING INDIA'S ADMINISTRATIVE ETHOS

Copyright © 2025 by **Dr. R. G. Anand - MBBS, MD, MHA, FHM, PDCR, LLB, LLM**

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this book may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

ISBN

CONTENTS

Preface	i
About The Author	i
Acknowledgment	1
Introduction - A Bureaucrat's Odyssey in Modern India	1
Early Life and Education - Foundations of a Civil Servant .	2
Joining the Indian Administrative Service - The Making of an Officer	4
Exposing the Fodder Scam - Courage and Integrity in 1990s Bihar	6
Educational Reforms and Academic Leadership - Khare's Foray into the Education Sector.....	9
Central Government Roles: UPA and NDA Eras - Policy Continuity Across Regimes	12
Spearheading the National Education Policy 2020 - A New Vision for Education	15
At the Helm of Information & Broadcasting - Regulating Media and Digital Platforms	17
Advisor to the Prime Minister - Overseeing Social Policies at PMO	20
After retiring from regular service on 30 September 2021, Amit Khare was almost immediately appointed as an Advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 12 October 2021[16][89]. This move signified the government's desire to continue leveraging his experience and skills even after his formal retirement. The position of Advisor to PM is a highly influential one, albeit behind the scenes. Advisors in the PMO (Prime Minister's Office) typically are entrusted with specific domains to guide and monitor on the PM's behalf. In Amit Khare's case, he was given charge of overseeing social sector initiatives and policies in the PMO[10].	20
Leadership Style and Legacy - The "Doer" Behind the Scenes	22
Conclusion - Reflections on Public Service and Nation-Building	26
Appendix - Chronology of Key Positions and Initiatives..	28
References	31

PREFACE

In writing *Amit Khare: A Life of Service and Reforms*, the aim is to chronicle the journey of an Indian civil servant whose career has spanned decades of transformative changes in governance and public policy. This biography offers an in-depth look at Amit Khare's life, from his humble beginnings and education to his ascent through the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and key positions in state and central government. The book highlights not only the factual timeline of his postings and achievements, but also the historical and political contexts in which he worked. As Amit Khare's career coincided with major events in India's administrative and political history – from the infamous fodder scam of the 1990s to the formulation of the National Education Policy 2020 – this account situates his contributions against the backdrop of these developments.

Civil servants and public administrators comprise the primary audience of this work, and thus the narrative is both **comprehensive** and **analytical**. It examines how Khare navigated complex bureaucratic and political landscapes while maintaining integrity and a reputation as a results-oriented officer. The reader will gain insight into his leadership style, the challenges he faced, and the strategies he employed to implement key reforms. The emphasis is on his contributions in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in recent years – a role that signifies the pinnacle of a bureaucrat's career in India – and how his expertise in education and information policy has been leveraged at the highest level of government.

This biography is intended to serve as a ready reference for those in public service and anyone interested in governance. It is backed by references from reputable sources to ensure accuracy and credibility. By delving into **every facet** of Amit Khare's profile – personal background, professional milestones, policy initiatives, and legacy – the book aims to inspire and inform future generations of civil servants about the impact that a dedicated bureaucrat can have on public administration and national development.

Sincerely,

Dr. R. G. Anand

MBBS, MD, MHA, FHM, PDCR, LLB, LLM

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. R. G. Anand is a dedicated public health expert, humanitarian, and advocate for child welfare, whose life and work exemplify the power of commitment and service. With a career spanning decades, he has left an indelible mark on the lives of countless individuals, particularly children and marginalized communities.

Dr. Anand's journey began in the humble surroundings of a village in Pudukottai district, Tamil Nadu. Born to parents who were schoolteachers, he imbibed the values of education, hard work, and compassion from an early age. These early lessons became the foundation of his life's mission: to serve those who are often overlooked by society.

After earning his MBBS degree and an MD in Preventive and Social Medicine, Dr. Anand pursued a Fellowship in HIV Medicine at Christian Medical College, Vellore, and later obtained a Bachelor of Legislative Law (LLB) to champion the cause of child protection. His academic pursuits reflect his belief in combining medical expertise with legal and policy advocacy to address healthcare challenges holistically.

Dr. Anand's professional journey is as remarkable as it is inspiring. In 2012, as a Program Officer with the National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), he played a critical role in reducing mother-to-child HIV transmission rates in Tamil Nadu. His efforts contributed to achieving a zero-transmission rate, a milestone in India's public health history. Later, as a Member of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), he traveled across the country, conducting over 250 health camps and safeguarding the rights of vulnerable children.

Beyond his professional accolades, Dr. Anand is a champion of grassroots change. He has organized over 500 free medical camps, supported the education of thousands of underprivileged children, and launched innovative programs like "Samvedana," a tele-counseling initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic that provided solace and guidance to children.

Dr. Anand's philosophy is rooted in the belief that healthcare and education are fundamental rights, not privileges. His vision is one of a society where every child, regardless of their circumstances, has the opportunity to thrive. Through his work with organizations like WHO and UNICEF, he has amplified this vision on a global scale, collaborating with international leaders to implement sustainable healthcare solutions.

Recognized by numerous awards, including the World Book of Records acknowledgment for his disaster management efforts, Dr. Anand remains grounded and driven by a simple yet profound principle: "True success lies in the lives we uplift."

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Writing this comprehensive biography required support and input from many individuals and organizations. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the **Government of India's Press Information Bureau (PIB)** and the Ministry of Education for providing archival information on Amit Khare's initiatives in education policy. The **Press Trust of India** and various news outlets such as *The Indian Express*, *Hindustan Times*, *Livemint*, and *Rediff* have been invaluable sources of factual details and commentary, which are cited throughout this book[1][2]. I am thankful to journalists like Ritika Chopra and Aditi Phadnis who have profiled Amit Khare's career; their insights helped shape several chapters[3][4].

Special thanks are due to the **staff of Kendriya Vidyalaya, Hinoo (Ranchi)** and **St. Stephen's College, Delhi**, for sharing records and anecdotes of Khare's early years. The principal and teachers of Kendriya Vidyalaya provided background on his school achievements, and even decades later, take pride in their alumnus's accomplishments[5][6]. I also acknowledge *The Telegraph* newspaper for covering those nostalgic reflections, which are referenced herein.

I am grateful to members of Amit Khare's family and colleagues who, through their public remarks and writings, offered a glimpse into his character. Although I did not interview them personally, quotes from contemporaries like Saryu Roy and Sushil Kumar Modi have been sourced from published material to add depth to the narrative[7][8]. Their perspectives help paint a balanced picture of Khare's professional ethos and the respect he commands in administrative circles.

Lastly, I thank the **reader** - especially those in the civil services - for their patience and interest. This book is the result of meticulous research and fact-checking. Any errors that remain are mine alone. It is my hope that Amit Khare's story will not only inform but also inspire aspirants and serving officers to uphold the values of honesty, dedication, and innovation in public service.

Introduction – A Bureaucrat’s Odyssey in Modern India

Figure: A retired IAS officer known for his quiet efficiency, Amit Khare has been entrusted with key reforms in India – from unearthing a major corruption scandal in a state treasury to shaping national policies on education and digital media[14][15]. In October 2021, after 36 years in the civil service, he assumed the position of Advisor to the Prime Minister of India, a role reserved for the most seasoned and trusted bureaucrats[16][17]. This appointment crowned a career during which Khare held critical portfolios both in his home cadre state and at the center. He is often described as a “doer” – a man who delivers results without fanfare[18]. Indeed, his reputation for probity and effectiveness was established early on, when as a young officer he exposed the infamous fodder scam in Bihar in the 1990s[19][20].

Amit Khare’s journey reflects the evolving nature of India’s bureaucracy over the last four decades. Born in 1961, he entered public service in the mid-1980s, a time when India’s political landscape was seeing the stirrings of coalition politics and economic change. His rise through the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) coincided with landmark events: the liberalization of India’s economy, the bifurcation of Bihar state to create Jharkhand, and the digital revolution that transformed governance. Navigating these changes, Khare remained focused on sectors close to his interests – education and information management – and eventually oversaw reforms in both. He played a pivotal part in rolling out the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, India’s first new education policy in 34 years[2], and in formulating the Information Technology (Digital Media) Rules 2021 to bring online media under a regulatory framework[14][15].

This introduction sets the stage for an exploration of how an IAS officer can leave an indelible mark on public policy while largely remaining behind the scenes. Amit Khare has never been a headline-seeker; colleagues note that he fits the image of the “faceless bureaucrat” who lets his work speak for itself[21]. Yet, as later chapters will show, his contributions have been anything but invisible. From district offices in rural India to the power corridors of New Delhi’s South Block (which houses the PMO), Khare’s odyssey is emblematic of a civil servant’s potential to effect change. In the chapters that follow, we delve into each phase of his life, drawing lessons and insights for current and future civil servants.

Early Life and Education – Foundations of a Civil Servant

Amit Khare was born on 14 September 1961 in Nagpur, India, into a family with strong academic and professional credentials[22]. He hails from a Chitraguptvanshi Kayastha family, a community often noted for valuing education and public service[23]. His upbringing was imbued with a sense of discipline and learning. In the late 1960s and 1970s, as India was undergoing social and political changes post-independence, young Amit's family environment remained focused on scholarly and ethical values.

His early schooling took place at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Hinoo, located in Ranchi (then in Bihar, now Jharkhand). Kendriya Vidyalayas (Central Schools) are known for imparting education to children of transferable central government employees, and the one at Hinoo was where Amit Khare's formative years took shape. He graduated high school in 1977 as the school topper, securing 79.3% marks in his Class XII board examination[24]. Notably, during the 1970s, scoring nearly 80% was considered an exceptional achievement, reflecting his academic excellence even by the standards of that time[24]. The school proudly recorded his name on the Honour Board of toppers. Decades later, on the day a key verdict in the fodder scam case was announced in 2013, teachers at his alma mater were literally teaching a lesson about their famous alumnus, reminding students that "truth always wins" using Amit Khare's story as inspiration[6][25].

Education was something of a family tradition. Amit's elder brother, Atul Khare, joined the Indian Foreign Service and would go on to serve in important diplomatic and international roles[23]. Atul too had been an outstanding student – he topped the all-India Kendriya Vidyalaya exams in 1975 with an even higher score of 85.8%[26][27]. The brothers' academic feats were a matter of pride for the school and indicative of the values instilled by their parents. Amit Khare often attributes his ethical foundation to lessons from school, recalling a principal who taught him the importance of honesty and fearlessness in life[28]. These lessons would later guide him in challenging moments of his career.

After finishing school, Amit Khare pursued higher education at one of India's most prestigious institutions. He attended St. Stephen's College in Delhi, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree with Honors in Physics[23]. St. Stephen's, known for its rigorous academics and prominent alumni, would have exposed him to a broader intellectual environment and possibly ignited his interest in public service. Following his undergraduate studies, Khare sought to broaden his horizons in the field of management. He secured admission to the esteemed Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A) and completed a post-graduate degree in Business Administration (MBA)[29][30]. The combination of a physics background and management training gave him a unique analytical outlook – a trait that later proved useful in administrative problem-solving and policy planning.

Equipped with a strong educational foundation – a blend of science and management – Amit Khare was academically well-prepared by the early 1980s to take on the challenges of the civil services. During his time at IIM-A, he would have developed skills in decision-making, economic analysis, and organizational management, complementing the broad-based knowledge gained through a liberal science education. This rare mix of skills distinguished him among his peers, and perhaps contributed to his confidence in handling diverse portfolios from finance to education in his later career.

It is also during these years that Khare likely nurtured the ambition of joining the Indian Administrative Service. The IAS, being the premier civil service of India, attracts many talented graduates. Khare's decision to enter the civil service, rather than pursue a private sector career (which an MBA would easily afford), suggests a dedication to public service influenced by family values and personal conviction. In 1985, at the age of 24, Amit Khare cleared the Civil Services Examination, one of India's toughest competitive exams, and entered the IAS as part of the 1985 batch[31]. This achievement marked the end of his student life and the beginning of a new chapter dedicated to serving the nation.

Joining the Indian Administrative Service – The Making of an Officer

Upon joining the IAS in 1985, Amit Khare was allocated to the Bihar cadre, which later became the Jharkhand cadre after the state of Jharkhand was carved out of Bihar in 2000[31]. The early years of any IAS officer typically involve training at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) in Mussoorie and district training postings. Khare's induction into the service would have immersed him in lessons on Indian law, economy, and administrative practices. As a young officer in the mid-1980s, he started his career at a time when India was still a decade away from economic liberalization, and the bureaucratic system was more traditional in its approach.

Khare's initial postings likely included roles such as Assistant Collector (Probationary) and Sub-Divisional Officer in various parts of Bihar. These assignments at the grassroots are crucial for understanding field administration. Bihar in the late 1980s presented a challenging environment: the state was marred by underdevelopment, law and order issues, and political volatility. For a newcomer, this was baptism by fire. Yet those who observed Khare note that he possessed a "sharp mind" and a calm demeanor[7]. Such attributes would have helped him in gaining the trust of both colleagues and the public.

By the early 1990s, Amit Khare had risen to the position of District Magistrate (DM) (also known as Deputy Commissioner) of a district – a significant responsibility in the IAS hierarchy. One of his notable early postings was as DM of West Singhbhum district with headquarters in Chaibasa, in what was then southern Bihar. He took charge in April 1995 as the Deputy Commissioner of West Singhbhum[32]. This role put him at the helm of district administration, responsible for everything from revenue collection to law enforcement and development projects in the area.

It was during this tenure in Chaibasa that Amit Khare's integrity and proactive approach truly came to the forefront. In late 1995, Bihar's state finances were under strain and the state government's Finance Secretary, V. S. Dubey, issued directives for all district magistrates to investigate unusually large withdrawals from the treasuries[33]. This was an unusual order, but it was prompted by growing suspicions of fiscal irregularities in the Animal Husbandry Department. Khare, being a diligent officer, swiftly complied and began scrutinizing the accounts in his district. What he discovered would not only define his career but also have far-reaching political ramifications, as described in the next chapter.

Outside of the specific Chaibasa episode, Khare's early IAS career is characterized by steady dedication. Colleagues from those days recall him as unassuming yet effective. He was not one to seek the limelight, aligning with the traditional expectation that bureaucrats remain "faceless" implementers of policy[21]. This trait, however, did not mean he shied away from tough decisions. The ethos that guided him can be summed up in the Sanskrit maxim he was known to appreciate: "Satyam Bruyat, Priyam Bruyat, Na Bruyat Satyam

Apriyam” - meaning “Speak the truth that is pleasant, do not speak unpleasant truths”[34]. In practice, Khare was candid yet tactful, a balance that served him well when dealing with both superiors and the public.

In summary, Amit Khare's induction and initial years in the IAS laid a solid groundwork for what was to come. He gained firsthand experience with the challenges of governance in one of India's most challenging states. He learned to navigate bureaucratic hierarchies and political pressures, skills which would prove crucial in the face of the massive scandal he was about to help uncover. Little did the young officer know that his name would soon be linked with one of India's largest corruption exposés, propelling him into the national spotlight.

Exposing the Fodder Scam – Courage and Integrity in 1990s Bihar

After the storm of the fodder scam in the mid-90s, Amit Khare continued to move through various positions in the state administration, navigating the shifting sands of Bihar's politics and eventually the transition to the new state of Jharkhand. By 2000, the Bihar Reorganization had taken place – Jharkhand was formed out of Bihar, and Khare, like many other Bihar-cadre IAS officers originally from the region, opted for the Jharkhand cadre[57]. This period of the late 1990s and early 2000s was one of significant change for him, as it was for the administrative machinery in the region.

In the late 1990s, before Jharkhand's creation, Khare had stints in the Bihar state government's departments, likely at the level of Deputy Secretary or Director. One notable posting after his tenure at the Leather Corporation (which lasted around a year) was as District Magistrate of Patna, the state capital of Bihar[58]. Serving as Collector of Patna (a position he did hold, according to his official profiles[58]) would have placed him in the heart of Bihar's governance center, dealing with a large urban population and high-profile responsibilities such as overseeing general elections in the district or coordinating major public events. Although details of his Patna tenure are less documented in public sources, it undoubtedly added to his administrative acumen, exposing him to the complexities of governing a major city.

With the dawn of Jharkhand in November 2000, Amit Khare's career entered a new phase. Jharkhand inherited both the challenges and resources of the mineral-rich Chotanagpur region, and it needed experienced administrators to establish its governance structures. Khare was a valuable asset in this effort. In the early years of Jharkhand, he was entrusted with high-responsibility roles. For instance, he served as Development Commissioner of Jharkhand, a senior position often held by an Additional Chief Secretary-rank officer[59][60]. The Development Commissioner typically oversees the planning and development departments, coordinating between various arms of the government to implement development schemes. In a newly formed state, this role was critical in setting up administrative processes and kick-starting economic development initiatives.

Khare also held the post of Principal Secretary to the Governor of Jharkhand during 2004–2008, under Governor Ved Marwah[61]. This assignment was somewhat unique – serving as a principal secretary to the Governor often means acting as a key advisor and administrator in the Raj Bhavan (Governor's office). Governor Ved Marwah was a former police chief appointed to oversee Jharkhand during a time of political flux (the state saw President's Rule and frequent leadership changes in its early years). Khare's role would have been to assist the Governor in constitutional matters, especially when the state was under direct central rule or when there were unstable coalition governments. His tenure at Raj Bhavan implies that he had earned the trust to handle sensitive political-administrative

coordination. As the Governor's principal secretary, Khare gained insight into the interface of bureaucracy with constitutional authority, a perspective relatively few IAS officers get firsthand.

Parallel to these administrative roles, Amit Khare continued involvement in the education sector at the state level, reflecting his long-standing interest in education. Jharkhand's government appointed him at various times as Secretary of departments like School Education. Moreover, he served as Vice-Chancellor of Ranchi University for a period[59]. This role as a university administrator showcased the breadth of his capabilities. Ranchi University, being one of the prominent higher education institutions in the new state, required modernization and academic improvements. Khare's experience and academic background made him well-suited to guide the university. While specific accomplishments from his vice-chancellorship are not widely reported, the very fact that an IAS officer was given charge of a university indicates the government's trust in his leadership in educational affairs.

During these years in Jharkhand, Khare also held the position of Finance and Planning Secretary (or Additional Chief Secretary) in the state government[62]. In this capacity, he was the key official managing the state's finances, budgets, and economic strategy. Former colleagues have cited an anecdote from around 2015 when Dharmendra Pradhan (then Union Petroleum Minister) was trying to implement the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (a national scheme to provide LPG connections to women in rural households). Jharkhand needed to allocate its own funds to make the scheme successful in the state. As the story goes, Khare, then the state Finance Secretary, readily agreed to fund the program, surprising Pradhan because finance officials are typically very cautious about new expenditures. This incident, which was remembered at Khare's farewell function in 2021, highlighted his willingness to support welfare initiatives and his cooperative attitude toward central schemes that benefited people, even if it meant loosening the state's purse strings a bit. It showed he was not a stereotypical "bean counter" bureaucrat; instead, he could see the larger social purpose behind the numbers.

Throughout the state-level assignments, Amit Khare built a reputation for unquestionable integrity and quiet competence. Politically, Jharkhand was tumultuous - governments changed frequently, and there were significant pressures on bureaucrats. Khare, however, managed to stay above partisan politics. His colleagues often observed that he was equally trusted by different political dispensations. This was in part due to his apolitical stance and also due to the network he built in the education sector. Remarkably, much of his career (by some accounts, 16 out of his 36 years in service) was spent dealing with education, whether at the state or central level[63]. This continuity in one domain allowed him to become an expert in that field, which later proved beneficial when he took on national roles in education.

In summary, Amit Khare's state administration phase, spanning roughly 1997 to 2008 (with overlap into 2015 for state roles after a central detour), shows a trajectory of an IAS officer moving from district administration to state secretariat leadership. He experienced first-hand the formation of a new state, handled finances, advised governors, led educational institutions, and formulated development policies. These experiences not only broadened his administrative toolkit but also solidified his standing as a versatile bureaucrat. By the time he was heading back to the Central government in 2008 for a significant Union Government role, Khare had accumulated a rich and varied experience at the state level that would underpin his contributions on the national stage.

Educational Reforms and Academic Leadership – Khare’s Foray into the Education Sector

Education has been a recurring theme in Amit Khare’s career. His academic pedigree and personal interest in the sector naturally aligned with many of the roles he took on. Long before he became India’s Higher Education Secretary, Khare had been influencing the education landscape in Jharkhand and even briefly in Bihar. This chapter details his contributions to educational administration leading up to the pinnacle role in the Ministry of Education.

In the newly formed Jharkhand of the early 2000s, one of the pressing tasks was to build a robust education infrastructure. As mentioned earlier, Khare served as Secretary of the Department of Human Resource Development (HRD) in Jharkhand, which in state terms means he oversaw school and possibly higher education for some time. He spearheaded initiatives to improve elementary and secondary education. While granular details of state-level reforms are not widely published, having an officer of Khare’s caliber at the helm meant strategic planning for expanding schooling in tribal and remote areas – a key issue for Jharkhand. Under his guidance, the state likely focused on increasing enrollment, improving literacy rates, and introducing vocational training in school curricula to suit the local context (given Jharkhand’s tribal population and mining economy). These efforts in state education administration added to his expertise and reputation in the education domain.

Amit Khare’s tenure as Vice-Chancellor (VC) of Ranchi University is particularly noteworthy. Appointed to the VC position likely in the early 2000s (possibly around 2003, though exact dates are not readily available publicly), he would have been responsible for academic and administrative leadership of one of Jharkhand’s largest universities[59]. Ranchi University, established in 1960, has numerous affiliated colleges and a diverse student body. As an IAS officer serving as VC, Khare’s mandate was probably to bring efficiency and reform to the university’s functioning. He would have tackled challenges like faculty shortages, curriculum updates, and exam system reforms. It is common for career bureaucrats in such roles to streamline administrative processes (like quicker result publication, digitization of records, etc.) and to liaise with government for grants and projects. Khare’s background would have enabled him to introduce innovations – for instance, tying up with national bodies for research funding or improving governance in colleges. His leadership likely set a precedent in Jharkhand for bureaucrats contributing to higher education administration, bridging the gap between government policy and academia.

The expertise Amit Khare gained in education at the state level seamlessly transitioned into his central roles. In 2008, he moved to the Government of India on central deputation

- marking the beginning of what can be called Stint I at the Centre (2008-2015)[62]. He joined the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) - which was the name of the Union Education Ministry at the time - as a Joint Secretary in the Department of Higher Education[64]. This position placed him in charge of important aspects of higher education policy nationwide, during the tail end of the UPA-1 government and through UPA-2 (United Progressive Alliance governments led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh). Khare's tenure as Joint Secretary from 2008 to 2014 spanned significant developments in education: the implementation of the Right to Education Act 2009, setting up of new IITs and IIMs, and expansion of higher education access. While specific attributions to him individually are hard to isolate, it is known that he enjoyed the confidence of successive ministers - from Kapil Sibal and M. M. Pallam Raju (under UPA) to Smriti Irani (when the NDA government took over in 2014)[65]. Being relied upon by ministers across political parties indicates that Khare was valued for his non-partisan professionalism and deep knowledge of the education sector.

During these Joint Secretary years, he likely dealt with university grants, technical education councils (like AICTE), and regulatory reforms. The period saw debates on allowing foreign universities in India, creating a national accreditation authority, and other reforms - some of which were contentious and remained unfinished. Khare's cautious and calibrated approach is noted in anecdotes; for example, he was known to have a "cautious approach towards possibly controversial issues," ensuring due diligence in policy measures[66]. This temperament was beneficial in navigating the bureaucracy of education - a field where reforms often face resistance from multiple stakeholders (states, institutions, teacher bodies, etc.). His ability to "read the mind of his bosses"[12] would have helped him craft proposals that ministers found agreeable and could politically champion.

In between his two central stints, specifically around 2015-2018, Amit Khare returned to Jharkhand (as earlier chapters noted) and further engaged with education by possibly overseeing School and Higher Education Departments at the state level. Additionally, in this period he worked on state financial planning. This back-and-forth between state and center enriched his perspective: he saw how central policies played out on the ground in states and could take that feedback into future policy formulation.

By the time Khare came back to the Centre in June 2018[62], now under the Narendra Modi-led government (NDA), he was a senior bureaucrat ready for Secretary-level positions. Initially, he was appointed as Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B) in 2018, which we will cover in a later chapter. But soon, in December 2019, he was moved to head the Department of Higher Education as Secretary, Ministry of HRD (later renamed Ministry of Education)[67]. This was the apex position in the education bureaucracy. One of the immediate challenges he faced upon taking charge was the unrest in universities -

notably, he assumed office amidst negotiations with Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) students who were protesting a fee hike[67]. Khare's ability to handle sensitive situations was tested, as he had to balance government policy with student concerns. He managed the situation through dialogue, indicative of his conflict-resolution skills.

As Education Secretary (Department of Higher Education) from 2019 to 2021, Amit Khare's magnum opus was steering the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to approval and initial implementation. We will delve deeper into NEP in the next chapter, but it's important to note here that Khare's decades of experience culminated in this moment - he had seen the education system from school to university, state to center, and was uniquely positioned to understand its needs. His work in educational reforms, therefore, is not just limited to the NEP, but NEP stands as a symbol of his long-standing commitment to improving Indian education.

In summary, Amit Khare's journey through the education sector showcases how a bureaucrat can wear many hats: state education secretary, university vice-chancellor, central policy planner, and finally national education administrator. Each role built on the other. The breadth of his exposure allowed him to approach educational reform not as an abstract policy exercise but as a pragmatic endeavor informed by ground realities - whether that's a classroom in Ranchi or a university in Delhi. His contributions in education are arguably among his most enduring, affecting millions of students and teachers across the country.

Central Government Roles: UPA and NDA Eras – Policy Continuity Across Regimes

Amit Khare's career at the central level is particularly remarkable for its continuity across two very different political regimes – the UPA (United Progressive Alliance) government (2004–2014) and the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government (from 2014 onwards). This speaks to his adaptability and the non-partisan respect he earned. In a landscape where bureaucratic appointments can sometimes become politicized, Khare managed to remain a valued officer no matter who was in charge.

As discussed, his first central stint (2008–2015) fell mostly under UPA rule. During this time, he worked closely with ministers from the Congress-led coalition. For example, under Kapil Sibal's tenure as HRD Minister, several important initiatives were undertaken (like attempts to introduce an education tribunal, and expansion of centrally-funded institutions). Khare, as Joint Secretary, would have been deeply involved in these. His “clear-headed and cautious” bureaucratic style[12] was likely appreciated in the consensus-driven, deliberative style of UPA governance.

When the government changed in 2014, there was often a reshuffle of secretaries and joint secretaries aligning with new priorities. Khare, at that time, continued in Higher Education for a while, even under Smriti Irani who took over as HRD Minister in the first Modi ministry[65]. The fact that he “enjoyed the confidence” of Irani, a minister from a different political party, exemplifies his ability to deliver on what was expected regardless of the political boss[65]. He was seen as someone who could “achieve the desired outcome” by intuitively understanding what the leadership wanted, without necessarily compromising on rules[12]. This is a fine line many bureaucrats struggle with, but Khare seemed to have mastered it.

In mid-2015, Amit Khare left the central deputation (perhaps as part of routine transfer or personal choice) and returned to Jharkhand, where he took up the state roles we've already covered (Finance, Planning, etc.). However, his performance had made an impression on the central leadership. By 2018, as the NDA government entered its second term, he was pulled back into the Government of India fold, this time directly as a Secretary.

His appointment as Secretary of Information & Broadcasting (I&B) in May 2018 was significant[15]. I&B is a high-profile ministry that handles the government's interface with media and oversees broadcasting, the film industry (through agencies like CBFC), and increasingly, digital communications. That the Modi government entrusted Khare with this role indicates it saw him as a capable administrator who could handle sensitive information policy – vital for a government keen on controlling the narrative and implementing new digital regulations. His tenure at I&B was marked by major initiatives, most notably the formulation of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 – commonly referred to here as the IT Rules

2021[14][68]. Although technically under the purview of the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY) and I&B jointly, Khare as I&B Secretary played a coordination role. He liaised between ministries to ensure these rules, which brought social media, streaming platforms, and online news under regulatory oversight, were coherent and implementable[69][70]. One of his colleagues noted that when jurisdictional lines were unclear (since two ministries were involved in regulating online content), Khare stepped in to orchestrate “coordination, synthesis and logic” at the secretary and ministerial levels[69]. This underscores his skill in bureaucratic navigation – aligning different arms of government towards a unified policy goal.

Meanwhile, in late 2019, as mentioned, he was given charge of the Higher Education Department as Secretary, while still holding additional charge of I&B for a time[71]. The dual role was unusual and a testament to how indispensable he had become. It meant longer hours and juggling two very distinct portfolios: one day he might be dealing with university grants and curriculum reforms, and the next day focusing on film certification norms or press freedom issues. Yet, Khare managed it, and in fact, maintained the additional charge of I&B almost till his retirement in September 2021[72]. The decision to have him oversee both education and I&B at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic suggests the top leadership’s trust in him. During the pandemic, communication strategy was crucial – he was tasked with that as I&B Secretary – and simultaneously, the education sector was undergoing massive shifts to online learning, which he oversaw as Education Secretary[73].

One interesting insight into this period comes from Indian Express reporting: Khare’s role in I&B gave him direct insight into “what the PM wants,” and he made a “solid impression” on the Prime Minister[13]. He rarely spoke much in meetings, but when he did, it was clear he had the Prime Minister’s confidence and was reflecting that vision. It is perhaps this impression that smoothed his path to the PMO as Advisor later. Not every bureaucrat in I&B would automatically earn a prized PMO slot, but Khare’s deft handling of both the NEP (which was unveiled mid-2020) and the IT Rules (early 2021) – two major policy areas aligned with Modi government priorities – made him stand out.

What is admirable is that Khare remained policy-focused rather than politically aligned. For instance, he had worked under Kapil Sibal on expanding education access, and later under Prakash Javadekar (who succeeded Irani) on finalizing the NEP draft for Cabinet approval[74]. Regardless of the minister, he drove the agenda forward. As noted in a profile, “he always delivers what is expected of him” – which some critics argue can be a double-edged sword (implying he might sometimes prioritize a minister’s directives over his own dissenting opinion)[75]. Khare’s response to that criticism is essentially that being effective and loyal to the program of the elected government is a bureaucrat’s duty, as long

as it's within the bounds of law and ethics – a stance exemplified by his fodder scam action where the “boss” was the one eventually caught[52].

During his central roles, Khare was not known for seeking limelight through media or public appearances, unlike some civil servants who become the face of policies. He preferred to “remain behind the scenes.” Yet, insiders knew that he was often the driving force behind key initiatives. For example, while the groundwork for NEP 2020 was laid by a committee and his predecessor, R. Subrahmanyam, it was Khare who ensured a comprehensive communication strategy for its rollout – to present the “right narrative” to the public and stakeholders[76][77]. This included simplifying the policy message and extensive outreach, which were critical in gaining broad acceptance for the NEP.

In sum, Amit Khare's central government career demonstrates a model of bureaucratic continuity and contribution. He managed to shape and implement policies that were priorities for successive governments of different political persuasions. His tenure illustrates how an adept civil servant can provide stability and expertise, ensuring that important national programs – whether in education or media regulation – are carried through irrespective of political change. It also shows his personal growth: from a Joint Secretary learning the ropes in Delhi to a Secretary influencing the highest levels of decision-making. This continuity and growth culminated in his final and perhaps most influential appointment, which we discuss next: leading the charge on a new National Education Policy after three decades.

Spearheading the National Education Policy 2020 – A New Vision for Education

One of Amit Khare's signature accomplishments is his central role in the formulation and implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, a comprehensive policy document that outlines the vision for India's education system for the coming decades. The NEP 2020 is often regarded as a transformative blueprint, replacing the 34-year-old National Policy on Education of 1986[78][79]. As the Higher Education Secretary (and briefly also overseeing School Education) during the crucial time of NEP's finalization and release, Khare's influence was significant in giving shape to this policy and pushing it through the corridors of power.

The process of crafting a new education policy had started before Khare took over as Secretary of Higher Education. A committee chaired by Dr. K. Kasturirangan (former ISRO chief) had submitted a draft NEP in 2019. When Amit Khare assumed charge in December 2019, one of his immediate tasks was to work on this draft – consult with various ministries, fine-tune contentious points, and prepare it for Cabinet approval. On 29 July 2020, the Union Cabinet approved the National Education Policy 2020, a momentous event[80]. Khare, as the administrative head of the Education Ministry, was credited with deftly handling this process[9].

What changes did NEP 2020 bring, and how was Khare involved? The NEP introduced sweeping reforms: a new 5+3+3+4 school structure replacing the traditional 10+2 system, emphasis on early childhood education, proposal to impart primary education in mother tongue[81], a holistic multidisciplinary approach in higher education with flexible curricula, and setting up of a new regulator – the Higher Education Commission of India – to replace bodies like UGC and AICTE. It also encouraged vocational training, research through a new National Research Foundation, and opened the door for top foreign universities to establish campuses in India.

Khare's involvement was both technical and strategic. Technically, he and his team in the ministry would have gone through each recommendation, aligning them with governmental priorities and practicality. For instance, one sensitive issue was the medium of instruction in schools. The NEP states that, wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5 (preferably Grade 8) should be the mother tongue or regional language[81]. This became a topic of debate nationally. As Secretary, Khare publicly clarified and communicated that this move was to strengthen foundational learning and was not aimed at undermining English, easing concerns in non-Hindi speaking states[82][83]. Crafting a policy is one aspect; building consensus and understanding is another – Khare did both.

Strategically, he ensured effective communication of NEP's vision. Knowing that such a massive policy overhaul could face resistance or misinterpretation, Khare oversaw the

creation of FAQs, press briefings, and conferences to elucidate what NEP entailed[76]. He leveraged technology – for example, during the pandemic, he facilitated virtual conferences with state education departments, universities, and schools to discuss implementation steps. His strategy was often highlighted as focusing on “the right narrative”[76], meaning he proactively framed the policy in positive terms: as student-centric, modern, and future-oriented.

Another aspect of his contribution was in inter-ministerial coordination. Education policy isn't isolated; it intersects with finance (funding for new initiatives), IT (digital education push), skills ministry (vocational training), etc. Khare's broad experience allowed him to communicate effectively with different ministries. For example, implementing NEP's vision of digital learning (like the push for online education platforms and virtual labs) required working closely with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and others – something he was adept at given his I&B and IT Rules experience.

After the policy launch, Amit Khare didn't let the momentum slip. Under his watch, the Ministry of Education quickly formed task forces to operationalize various NEP recommendations. Within months, work began on a new National Curriculum Framework, the idea of an Academic Bank of Credits was pushed (to allow student mobility between institutions), and regulations were drafted to permit foreign universities. He was instrumental in getting some NEP ideas rolling even before his retirement – for instance, the four-year undergraduate program was piloted in some central universities, and a Higher Education Commission of India draft law was readied.

His holistic involvement in NEP didn't go unnoticed. Media called him “the man behind NEP 2020”, acknowledging that he shepherded one of the most ambitious educational reforms in independent India[14]. An article in Jagran at the time of his PMO appointment explicitly noted that he “shaped and guided the NEP 2020”[84].

It is also important to note that NEP 2020 was generally well-received across the aisle – many state governments, including those run by opposition parties, appreciated its aims (though implementation is a work in progress). Having a bureaucrat like Khare, who was perceived as neutral and expert, helped in that acceptance. He made sure the policy retained a balance – promoting Indian languages and cultural education on one hand, and futuristic concepts like coding for school kids and globalized higher education on the other.

In conversations around NEP, Khare often emphasized that the policy is “transformative, not incremental”, yet also “flexible”[85]. This captures his approach: bold vision with practical execution. Internally, it's said that he ensured the final document was not too prescriptive; it gives guidelines but allows flexibility to states and institutions to adapt, which is key in a diverse country like India.

By the time NEP was launched, Amit Khare had already spent a considerable part of his career in education. Thus, for him, NEP was not just another file or assignment; it was the culmination of years of insight. At the policy's release, he stood alongside Ministers explaining the finer points - a proud moment for any civil servant to see through a landmark initiative from conception to approval.

In conclusion, the National Education Policy 2020 stands out as a pillar of Amit Khare's legacy. It symbolizes how a civil servant can drive change that potentially impacts generations. While it will take many years to fully implement NEP and see its outcomes, Khare's imprint on India's educational future is indelible. His leadership in this domain exemplifies the best of policy administration: informed, consultative, and visionary.

At the Helm of Information & Broadcasting – Regulating Media and Digital Platforms

In addition to education, Amit Khare made significant contributions in the realm of information and broadcasting, especially concerning the rapidly evolving digital media landscape. His tenure as the Secretary of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B), first from May 2018 to December 2019, and then again holding additional charge in 2020[71][86], coincided with a period of important policy-making for media and entertainment industries.

One of Khare's key achievements in I&B was his involvement in crafting the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, commonly known as the Digital Media or IT Rules 2021[14][15]. These rules were formulated jointly by the I&B Ministry and the Ministry of Electronics & IT and were notified in February 2021. They impose obligations on large social media companies to moderate content and establish a grievance redressal mechanism, and crucially, they bring OTT (over-the-top) streaming platforms and online news portals under a regulatory framework for the first time in India[68]. Amit Khare, as the I&B Secretary, played a pivotal liaison role: since MeitY handled the technical aspects and I&B oversaw digital media ethics, he ensured the two ministries worked in harmony[69].

His prior experience in administration came handy when negotiating these rules amidst diverse stakeholders - tech companies like Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, and a press that was vigilant about potential overreach. Khare approached the issue by focusing on coordination and logical policy design[69]. According to a colleague, he was the one talking to counterparts in other ministries to clarify that since I&B traditionally handled content regulation (films, TV, print), it made sense for I&B to also oversee online content standards[87]. This internal consensus-building was key to the government presenting a united front on the policy.

During implementation of the digital media rules, Khare's cautious style was again evident. The rules were not without controversy - critics argued they might enable government censorship of online content. However, from Khare's perspective, the aim was to institute "self-regulation" first and foremost, with government stepping in only if that failed[68]. He communicated that message through press interactions, emphasizing that the rules sought a balance: they provided users with grievance mechanisms and held big tech accountable, but also respected free speech by mandating a three-tier self-regulatory structure (with an industry body and an oversight mechanism)[68]. The fact that he managed to finalize these rules, which had been long in discussion, showed his ability to push through complex policy in a sensitive area.

Beyond digital regulations, Khare also handled the traditional sectors of I&B. This included the film and television industry, press and print media, and the Indian Information Service. Notably, he presided over changes in film certification norms and was involved in initiatives to combat fake news. He had earlier headed I&B briefly in 2018-19 and then returned in 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when media industries were severely hit. Under his watch, measures were taken to support these industries - for example, streamlining permissions for film shootings and rationalizing broadcasting guidelines. The Hindustan Times article referencing his return to I&B in April 2020 noted that his comeback was amidst "serious challenges being faced by the news media" and that he was well-versed with the issues[71][86]. Indeed, Khare had earlier served in I&B (perhaps in another capacity) and knew the media dynamics. He took charge at a time advertising revenues were plummeting and misinformation was rife, and he had to ensure credible information dissemination about COVID-19. He helped devise the government's media communication strategy during the pandemic, coordinating daily press briefings and engaging with private media to amplify important messages[73].

Another area was public broadcasting - Prasar Bharati (which runs Doordarshan TV and All India Radio). While not much is publicly detailed, as I&B Secretary, he would have worked on strengthening the autonomy and reach of public broadcasters, especially since they were crucial for educational broadcasts during school closures in the pandemic (like leveraging TV channels for classes).

Khare's interactions with the press were generally formal and policy-focused. He wasn't known for off-the-cuff remarks or adversarial stances. Instead, as some journalists observed, he was "taciturn" - he spoke less publicly, but when he did, it was measured[66]. This earned him the trust of top leadership in shaping communication strategies. As mentioned, Prime Minister Modi came to rely on him for communications advice - an outcome of Khare's time in I&B[13]. Many attribute his subsequent PMO role largely to the rapport he built through I&B, proving his mettle in an area directly relevant to the PM's image and the government's messaging.

An interesting challenge during his I&B tenure was dealing with the burgeoning OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, etc. Before 2021, these had no regulatory oversight in India. The new IT Rules brought them under a self-regulatory framework under I&B. Khare had to engage with these companies, understand their content issues (like sometimes controversial shows causing public outcry), and incorporate solutions. The rules introduced age-based content ratings and a way for viewers to file complaints. Implementing this system required drafting guidelines and nudging the industry to form a self-regulatory body. Khare oversaw these initial steps so that by the time he left, the mechanism was falling in place.

Within the government, Amit Khare's dual experience in Education and I&B had another synergy: education through media. He was in a position to promote educational content via broadcast and digital means. For example, to implement NEP's digital learning goals, I&B's resources like Doordarshan's educational channels (Swayam Prabha channels) and radio could be harnessed. It's likely he encouraged such cross-utilization of platforms for public education.

By the end of his I&B stint, Khare had left a clear imprint: a more structured digital media environment and a strengthened government communication approach. A Business Standard piece cited in Wikipedia said "Khare was instrumental in bringing key changes regarding digital media regulations"[88]. For a ministry that often grapples with rapid technological changes and freedom of expression debates, Khare's steady hand provided direction.

In conclusion, Amit Khare's role in I&B demonstrates his versatility. It's not common for an IAS officer to make significant marks in two disparate domains (education and media) within a short span. Yet he did, applying the same core principles - consultation, careful planning, and decisive execution. This also highlights how he became a go-to person for the government when it came to complex policy issues. His success in I&B further cemented his stature and undoubtedly was a factor in the government extending his service through the PMO advisory role, ensuring his expertise remained available at the highest level.

Advisor to the Prime Minister – Overseeing Social Policies at PMO

After retiring from regular service on 30 September 2021, Amit Khare was almost immediately appointed as an Advisor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 12 October 2021[16][89]. This move signified the government's desire to continue leveraging his experience and skills even after his formal retirement. The position of Advisor to PM is a highly influential one, albeit behind the scenes. Advisors in the PMO (Prime Minister's Office) typically are entrusted with specific domains to guide and monitor on the PM's behalf. In Amit Khare's case, he was given charge of overseeing social sector initiatives and policies in the PMO[10].

What does “overseeing social sector policies” entail? Essentially, it meant Khare would coordinate and ensure progress in key areas like education, health, rural development, women and child development, etc., aligning with the Prime Minister's agendas. His appointment filled the slot left by a previous advisor, Amarjeet Sinha, who had also handled the social sector[90]. With Khare's background, it's natural that he would pay special attention to education and skill development, but his purview likely extended to any flagship welfare or human development program that needed high-level monitoring.

One of the early tasks in his advisory role was likely the follow-through on NEP 2020 implementation – a cause he championed as Education Secretary. From PMO, he could prod ministries and states to keep up the momentum on setting up new educational structures, digital learning expansion, etc. Another area could be the COVID-19 vaccination campaign and health infrastructure strengthening, given the timing of his appointment when the pandemic was still a major policy focus. Advisors often work in tandem with the Principal Secretary to PM and cabinet secretaries to remove bottlenecks in key projects. Khare's reputation as someone who “reads the boss's mind” and delivers would have made him effective in translating PM's priorities into bureaucratic action[12].

One insight from media reports is that Amit Khare's stint as advisor was extended in 2023 for another two years – specifically, it was made co-terminus with the PM's term[91][92]. An order from the Appointments Committee of Cabinet in September 2023 extended his tenure beyond the initial two-year contract, synchronizing it with the remainder of PM Modi's term (which at that time goes until mid-2024 unless the government is re-elected)[92]. This extension, reported widely, implies that the PMO was satisfied with his contributions and wanted continuity through the electoral cycle. It also suggests he might be involved in preparing social sector reports or initiatives that could be showcased by the government before the 2024 general elections.

During his advisory role, Khare kept a low public profile – as is expected. However, we know from Livemint and other sources that he continued to be seen as a key strategist for

social policies[10]. One area he was rumored to be focusing on is the contentious issue of NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) for medical admissions, especially as it became a political hot potato with some state governments (like Tamil Nadu's) opposing it[93]. The Rediff profile from late 2021 speculated that having Khare in PMO could mean the government wanted an experienced hand to navigate and perhaps negotiate such complex policy disputes in education and health[94][95]. If true, he would bring his experience and calm approach to advise on how to handle opposition from states and find policy solutions (perhaps tweaking schemes or offering alternatives) while maintaining the national scheme.

As PM's Advisor, Amit Khare also likely oversaw programs like Skill India, Digital India (especially aspects intersecting with education and media), Swachh Bharat (in terms of behavioral campaigns), and so on. Given his I&B stint, he might have been tasked with ensuring government communication for social programs remained effective - essentially, ensuring people know about government schemes and success stories, which is crucial in the run-up to elections. His comprehensive understanding of media was an asset in the PMO where messaging is half the battle.

Furthermore, in the PMO he would interact with the Principal Secretary to PM (P. K. Mishra) and other advisors (e.g., Bhaskar Khulbe, another retired IAS officer who served as PMO advisor for administration). Khare's domain being social sector made him a bridge between the PMO and ministries like Education, Health, Women & Child, Rural Development, etc. Often, he might convene meetings with secretaries of those ministries to review progress on targets set by PM. For instance, if the PMO wanted a push on, say, opening 100 new medical colleges or achieving 100% rural tap water connections under Jal Jeevan Mission, Khare would track progress, identify issues and report back solutions or need for interventions.

Colleagues have noted that Khare's ability to remain non-confrontational yet assertive helped him get cooperation from various departments[13]. People knew he had PM's ear, but he wasn't overbearing - a style that often yields better results than brute force in bureaucratic culture.

The Livemint article from June 2024 calls him a "doer" with reappointments indicating trust and notes that this was his third stint at PMO (counting initial two-year and extension)[96]. It emphasizes that he was involved in overseeing social sector policies for the third time since Oct 2021[17], implying periodic renewals of his role. It also recaps that he was instrumental in NEP and IT rules - underlining why he was considered valuable.

Another facet is that as an Advisor, Khare might have had to evaluate proposals for new schemes or modification of schemes. The PMO often acts as an incubator for new ideas which are then passed to the respective ministries to flesh out. Khare's analytical approach

and broad view would be crucial in vetting these ideas. He could gauge feasibility, potential impact, and alignment with the PM's vision.

Additionally, given his rank equivalence as a Secretary to Government of India (advisors are often in the same pay grade), he would also ensure the PMO's instructions are implemented without delay. His presence itself sends a signal of oversight that can expedite work in ministries. Civil servants respect those who have walked the walk, and Khare's career commanded respect.

In summary, Amit Khare's role as Advisor to PM Modi is the culmination of his service – it's an acknowledgment of his expertise and an opportunity to shape policy at the highest level. While not much of what he does in PMO is public, the trust placed in him and the extension of his term indicate he became a crucial part of the PM's inner team on governance. His focus on social sectors means he plays a part in steering India's human development trajectory, just as he did in specific sectors earlier. It's a fitting final chapter of active duty for a bureaucrat who has been at the heart of major policy changes.

Looking at his journey into the PMO, one can see a thread: every prior role – discovering a scam, improving a university, drafting a policy, regulating media – built up to giving him the holistic insight needed to advise at the national level. It exemplifies how varied field and policy experience empowers a civil servant to contribute even at the pinnacle of government decision-making.

Figure: The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) is housed in the iconic Secretariat Building (South Block) in New Delhi, from where Amit Khare has been contributing as an Advisor to the PM[97][98]. In this role, he leverages decades of administrative experience to ensure that India's social sector programs – from education reforms to digital governance – are implemented effectively across the nation. As an advisor in South Block, Khare operates at the nerve center of India's government, coordinating between various ministries and the Prime Minister's vision. His office in the PMO enables him to monitor flagship initiatives, troubleshoot policy execution challenges, and provide strategic input on new reforms. The trust reposed in him for this high-profile advisory position underscores his legacy as a civil servant whose counsel is valued at the highest echelons of decision-making.

Leadership Style and Legacy – The “Doer” Behind the Scenes

Throughout his career, Amit Khare has been often described not by loud accolades or public fame, but by the consistent respect he earned among peers and leaders. His leadership style is characterized by quiet efficiency, integrity, and an uncanny ability to deliver results without courting controversy. In this chapter, we reflect on how he led and the legacy he is set to leave for future civil servants and policy makers.

One of the monikers attached to Khare is the “doer” – someone who gets things done. This reputation took root right from the fodder scam days. While some felt he was just doing his duty, others like senior politician Sushil Modi insisted that “he is extremely honest and a performer”[99], acknowledging that not everyone in his place would have acted as he did. This “performer” tag, in bureaucratic terms, means an officer who achieves targets and fulfills assignments effectively. Khare’s subsequent trajectory – whether implementing Ujjwala in Jharkhand or executing NEP 2020 – reinforced that he had a focus on outcomes.

Importantly, Khare’s style has been described as low-key and faceless in the best sense[21]. Unlike some high-profile bureaucrats, he rarely gave flamboyant speeches or wrote public editorials. Instead, he was taciturn (tight-lipped) and careful. A former colleague noted that he “doesn’t speak much during meetings. However, it was evident from what he said that he had direct knowledge of what the PM wants”[13]. This illustrates two things: Khare listened more than he spoke – absorbing the boss’s vision – and when he did speak, it added value, aligning the team with that vision. Such economy of words can be powerful in leadership, as it commands attention when one finally weighs in.

Khare’s relationship with his political bosses also sheds light on his leadership qualities. He could work under leaders of varying temperaments – from Kapil Sibal’s lawyerly approach to Smriti Irani’s passionate style to Prakash Javadekar’s consensus-building method and then under PM Modi’s results-driven approach. In each case, Khare adapted, showcasing political acumen without being political. He maintained a fine balance of loyalty to the government of the day while upholding administrative propriety. For example, his handling of NEET issues involved advising the PM on both the political sensitivities (opposition from states) and administrative feasibility (alternatives or compensatory measures)[95]. This is a legacy for civil servants – demonstrating that it’s possible to be close to the political leadership’s confidence yet not be seen as partisan or compromising one’s core values.

The integrity factor in Khare’s leadership cannot be overstated. In an era where public trust in officials can waver, Khare remained “unquestionably” honest as per those who knew him[21]. He was never embroiled in personal scandals or allegations of impropriety. This gave him moral authority. When he nudged a subordinate or colleague to do something, they knew it wasn’t for any vested interest but for the task’s sake. His own example of living by the book (recall that even his detractors in fodder scam case acknowledged he acted correctly) likely inspired juniors.

Another facet of his style is mentorship. While direct records are scarce, bureaucrats of his seniority often groom the next generation. By virtue of leading large teams in Education and I&B, he would have mentored many IAS officers. His approach would teach them the value of being thorough (he was known to be detail-oriented, which is how he spotted

anomalies in accounts) and the importance of staying composed under pressure. The fodder scam saw him face political pressure; the media policy saw him face corporate pressure. In both, he navigated calmly.

Khare's legacy also includes the policies he helped institutionalize: NEP 2020 will guide education for a long time, the IT Rules 2021 set the tone for internet governance, numerous educational programs launched under his watch (like expanding IITs, or the PM e-Vidya online learning platform during COVID-19) will continue to benefit students. Those tangible outcomes are lasting contributions.

However, legacy also comes from how one is remembered by the service and the public. The Telegraph once mused "Khare's life can be a good subject for a biopic"[100], an acknowledgment of the narrative-worthy integrity and impact of his journey. If future civil servants read his story (as we hope this comprehensive biography enables), the key takeaways would likely be: stand for what is right (honesty in Chaibasa), be a continuous learner (adapt to new domains like he did with digital media), and work with any government with professionalism (neutrality and dedication).

Khare's critics do exist, and in evaluating his legacy one should address that. Some critiques, as reported by Indian Express, are that Khare could sometimes be too accommodating – achieving ministerial desires as opposed to pushing back on merit. This raises a perennial question in bureaucracy: when to say no. Khare defended himself by citing the fodder scam example, implying he would not cross ethical lines to please anyone[51]. Yet, being a facilitator might have occasionally meant he'd find a way to do what the political side wanted rather than examine if that was the best course in all scenarios. This is a nuanced thing – one person's "pliable" officer is another's "cooperative" officer. In Khare's case, evidence suggests he generally stayed on the right side of that line, using his persuasion to also ensure policies were sensible. His caution on controversial matters (like careful phrasing of NEP language to avoid cultural flashpoints, or phasing implementation) might be seen as not rocking the boat unnecessarily[101].

Ultimately, Khare's legacy is one of steadfast public service. As he himself said, he doesn't consider retirement as an end – even in his farewell speech he hinted he was "superannuating, not retiring," anticipating continued service in some form[102]. Indeed, his advisor role materialized, and even after that, one can foresee him perhaps contributing to academia or governance in advisory capacities. His life underscores that a civil servant can be both effective and ethical – delivering reforms while maintaining the trust of diverse stakeholders.

For civil servants and aspirants reading about him, his journey offers inspiration: a well-rounded education, a commitment to truth early in career, building expertise, staying adaptable, and when in top positions, pushing through meaningful changes. He showed

that bureaucracy is not just about file-pushing – it can be a lever for progressive change if one has vision and the skill to implement.

As the nation marches forward, the foundations laid by officers like Amit Khare in areas like education will play a crucial role. His career, spanning from rural governance to the PMO, is a testament to the scope of impact a single dedicated IAS officer can have. It reminds the civil service fraternity that quiet diligence often achieves more in the long run than overt grandstanding. And it reminds the public that behind many governmental successes, there are unsung heroes like Khare working diligently away from the limelight.

Conclusion – Reflections on Public Service and Nation-Building

Amit Khare's story is more than just the chronicle of one man's career; it is a window into the evolving landscape of Indian public administration over the last four decades. In concluding this comprehensive look at his life and contributions, certain themes and reflections emerge that resonate with the broader ethos of nation-building and governance in India.

Firstly, Khare's trajectory reaffirms the power of the civil services as an instrument of change. Entering the IAS in the mid-1980s, he was part of a cohort that would witness transformational changes in India – economic liberalization, the rise of coalition politics, technological revolutions, and social movements. Amidst all this, the bureaucracy often provided the continuity and institutional memory. Khare exemplified this continuity. Governments came and went, policies shifted, but officers like him ensured that the machinery of the state kept working towards development goals. His seamless service across political regimes highlights how a committed civil servant can uphold democratic governance by faithfully implementing the elected government's mandate while steering it with domain knowledge and caution.

Secondly, Amit Khare's career underscores the importance of integrity and ethics in public service. It is no small feat to spend decades in the system and emerge with a spotless reputation. The fodder scam episode early in his career set a moral compass by which he seemed to navigate thereafter. It sent a message to both his peers and subordinates – that honesty is non-negotiable. The ripple effect of such a stance can inspire clean administration in many pockets. In a country that has battled corruption, stories like Khare's give hope that the steel frame of Indian administration can indeed have steel in its spine.

Another reflection is on adaptability and continuous learning. Khare did not pigeonhole himself into one narrow area. While he had long stints in education, when duty called, he adeptly handled information & broadcasting and even finance and planning at the state level. This versatility is a hallmark of great administrators. It comes from a willingness to learn new subjects and an ability to transfer skills from one context to another. For instance, the analytical rigor from finance helped in education policy budgeting; the communication strategy skill from I&B helped in pushing NEP's acceptance. Future bureaucrats can draw from this the lesson that one must remain a student at heart, ever ready to grasp new knowledge.

Khare's journey also highlights the behind-the-scenes nature of bureaucracy's contribution. Many of his achievements became evident to the public only when outcomes surfaced – be it a scam unearthed, a policy launched, or rules notified. Yet, the countless

hours of meticulous work, negotiations, drafts, and reviews remain invisible. This is true for many civil servants; theirs is often a thankless job away from the limelight. But as seen here, the satisfaction comes from tangible improvements in systems and institutions. Khare can look back with pride that schools in the future will follow a more modern curriculum because of NEP 2020, or that digital media has some accountability frameworks now, partly due to his efforts.

In the broader context of India's development, the areas Khare impacted are central to nation-building: education (human resource development), information regulation (shaping societal narratives and protecting citizens online), and public welfare delivery (through his social sector oversight in PMO). Strengthening education, for example, has a multiplier effect on economic growth, social equity, and innovation. By helping to lay down a forward-looking education policy, he contributed to India's long-term prospects. Similarly, managing information dissemination and digital content has implications for social harmony and democracy. Through a balanced approach to media freedom and responsibility, he played a part in safeguarding democratic values in the digital age.

A thought that emerges is the synergy between policy and implementation in Khare's work. He was both a policy planner and an executor. Too often, good policies fail at execution; conversely, ground-level efforts falter without enabling policy. Khare bridged this gap by virtue of his varied roles. For example, he understood the grassroots from his district days which informed how a national policy might be received locally. In essence, he embodied the cycle of conceive-implement-review that is vital for governance.

As we conclude, it is worthwhile to contemplate what Amit Khare's story means for civil service aspirants and the general public. For aspirants, it is a reminder that a career in IAS is not just a prestigious posting but a platform to effect meaningful change. It shows that success is not measured in publicity, but in problem-solving and institution-building. For the public, it demystifies the bureaucracy a bit - putting a face (albeit one that doesn't seek attention) to the often impersonal machinery of government. It demonstrates that there are individuals in government who are working diligently for the public good, often without our knowledge, and that governance is a collaborative continuum passed on from one honest hand to another.

In closing, Amit Khare's life in service can be seen as a microcosm of the ideals one would want in governance: education (gyan) to frame progressive ideas, integrity (satya) to hold firm to truth and justice, and action (karma) to implement and deliver results. As he steps eventually away from official roles, one can expect that he will continue to contribute in advisory capacities, writings, or mentorship, as many senior bureaucrats do. His journey will continue to inspire and instruct. And as this biography has detailed comprehensively, if one man could influence domains ranging from rural treasury protocols to the digital

cyberspace norms, it speaks to the vast possibilities that lie within India's governance systems when talent and dedication meet opportunity.

Amit Khare's odyssey reiterates that the story of India's progress is often written in the files of self-effacing officers as much as it is in the speeches of politicians. As citizens and analysts, acknowledging and understanding such contributions gives a fuller picture of how our nation's policies come to life. In that sense, this 100-page narrative is not just about Amit Khare, the individual, but a salute to the ethos of the Indian civil service at its best.

Appendix – Chronology of Key Positions and Initiatives

Chronology of Amit Khare's Career and Contributions:

- **1961:** Born on 14 September in Nagpur, India[22].
- **1977:** Completes schooling at Kendriya Vidyalaya, Hinoo (Ranchi), tops his school in Class XII board exams[24].
- **Early 1980s:** Graduates with B.Sc. (Honours in Physics) from St. Stephen's College, Delhi; obtains an MBA (Post-Graduate Diploma in Management) from IIM Ahmedabad[29][30].
- **1985:** Joins the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Bihar cadre (which in 2000 becomes Jharkhand cadre)[31].
- **Late 1980s:** Serves in various sub-divisional and deputy collector roles in Bihar, building ground-level administrative experience (exact postings not publicly documented).
- **Mid-1990s:** Appointed District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner of West Singhbhum (Chaibasa) in Bihar in April 1995[32].
- **Jan 1996:** Unearths the Fodder Scam by investigating fraudulent withdrawals in the Chaibasa treasury, files FIR; this triggers a statewide probe by CBI, ultimately leading to convictions of high-profile politicians[103][36].
- **1996–1997:** Transferred; serves as Managing Director, Bihar State Leather Corporation for roughly a year (a punitive posting following the fodder scam expose)[53].
- **Late 1990s:** Returns to mainstream Bihar administration; serves as Collector (District Magistrate) of Patna, among other roles[58].
- **2000:** Bihar is bifurcated; Amit Khare opts for **Jharkhand cadre** when the new state is formed[57].

- **2001–2003:** Holds key positions in Jharkhand such as Secretary, Elementary and Secondary Education (HRD Department) at state level, working on setting up the new state's education apparatus (tenure inferred from context).
- **2003–2004:** Serves as Vice-Chancellor of Ranchi University, contributing to higher education in Jharkhand[59]. Also around this period, serves as Secretary in Department of Agriculture/Animal Husbandry (possibly leveraging his fodder scam knowledge to tighten systems – this is speculative as an assignment).
- **2004–2008:** Appointed Principal Secretary to the Governor of Jharkhand (Governor Ved Marwah)[61]. Concurrently or subsequently, he is the Principal Secretary/Secretary of Finance and Planning in Jharkhand, eventually elevated to Additional Chief Secretary (Finance & Planning)[62]. As Development Commissioner, he spearheads state economic policies[59].
- **Aug 2008:** Begins **Central Deputation Stint I**. Joins the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, as Joint Secretary, Department of Higher Education[64].
- **2008–2014:** Serves in MHRD under UPA government; oversees higher education initiatives, works with Ministers across UPA and into early NDA (Kapil Sibal, Pallam Raju, then briefly Smriti Irani)[65]. Helps implement programs like the National Mission on Education through ICT, new Central Universities, etc.
- **2014–2015:** After change of government, continues briefly in MHRD; by April 2015, is repatriated to parent cadre (Jharkhand)[62].
- **2015–2018: State Stint II** in Jharkhand. Serves as Additional Chief Secretary (Finance & Planning). Notably facilitates central schemes like Ujjwala Yojana by allocating state funds. Also likely oversees state HRD again in part, given education background.
- **June 2018:** Returns to Centre for **Central Deputation Stint II** under NDA government. Appointed **Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B)**[15].
- **2018–Dec 2019:** Secretary, I&B. Works on media policy, film industry matters, and sets groundwork for digital media oversight. Initiates steps to draft digital media rules in consultation with MeitY.
- **Dec 2019:** Transferred to become **Secretary, Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development** (Ministry was renamed Ministry of Education in 2020)[67]. Takes charge amid student unrest (JNU protests) and with additional charge of School Education.
- **Apr 2020:** Amid the pandemic, given additional charge again as **Secretary, I&B Ministry** (concurrently with Higher Education)[71]. Retains dual roles for several months, handling COVID-19 communications and education's shift to online.

- **29 July 2020: National Education Policy 2020** approved by Cabinet, a major milestone. Khare credited with coordinating its finalization and rollout strategy[9].
- **Feb 2021: Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics) Rules, 2021** notified, with Khare's I&B team contributing significantly to rules on OTT and digital news regulation[15].
- **30 Sept 2021:** Amit Khare retires from IAS service upon reaching the age of superannuation (60 years)[104]. Farewell includes accolades from ministers highlighting his career (Dharmendra Pradhan narrates anecdote from state finance role).
- **12 Oct 2021:** Appointed **Advisor to the Prime Minister**, Prime Minister's Office, in the rank of Cabinet Secretary, on contract for two years[16][89]. Entrusted with social sector portfolios (education, health, etc.)[10]. Joins PMO along with fellow advisor Bhaskar Khulbe (who handles admin)[105].
- **2022–2023:** As Advisor, oversees implementation of NEP, monitors schemes like National Digital Education Mission, Swachh Bharat, etc., and advises on resolving Centre-State issues in social policy (e.g., dialogues around NEET examinations)[95]. Guides the communications strategies for government's social initiatives leveraging his I&B experience.
- **Sep 2023:** Receives **extension as Advisor to PM** beyond his initial term, making his tenure co-terminus with the Prime Minister's term (i.e., likely till May 2024)[92]. This extension order by ACC reflects continued trust in his contributions.
- **Late 2023 – 2024:** Continues in PMO. Focuses on concluding term goals like reviewing NEP progress reports, pushing pending social sector reforms, and pre-election flagship program outputs. Also likely involved in transition planning should there be any changes post-general elections.
- **Beyond 2024 (anticipated):** With an illustrious career behind him, Amit Khare may contribute in advisory roles to academic institutions, think tanks on policy matters, or write/comment on governance. Given his low-profile nature, he may not seek political office (as some bureaucrats do), but rather continue to influence policy in quiet ways.

Key Policy Contributions & Initiatives:

- *Fodder Scam Investigation (1996)* – Brought to light a massive corruption scandal in Bihar's Animal Husbandry Dept, leading to systemic changes in auditing and financial oversight at state treasuries[36][40].
- *State Education Reforms (2001–2004)* – As Jharkhand's Education Secretary and later as VC of Ranchi University, worked on expanding schooling in a new state and improving higher education administration[59].

- *Higher Education Expansion (2008–2014)* – As Joint Secy, facilitated launch of new IITs, IIMs, IIITs and central universities during 11th Plan, and implementation of Right to Education Act provisions (like setting up of NCPCR for RTE). Helped drafting of bills (some like the National Accreditation Authority were proposed though not passed then).
- *Media & Communication (2018–2021)* – Modernized content regulation: merged film regulation role in I&B, formulated Digital Media Ethics Code^[15], strategized government messaging during COVID-19, and initiated revamp of Bureau of Outreach and Communication for better public info dissemination.
- *National Education Policy 2020* – Coordinated inter-ministerial and Centre-State consensus, refined the draft, and executed a public communication plan for acceptance^{[9][76]}. Post-approval, started implementation on multiple fronts (curriculum changes, institutional restructuring, academic credit bank, etc.).
- *IT Rules 2021* – Established regulatory framework for social media and OTT platforms, including grievance redressal and content classification^[68]. Balanced free speech concerns with accountability, under his joint effort with MeitY.
- *Advisor, PMO (2021–2024)* – Monitored and pushed flagship programs: e.g., NEP rollout, Ayushman Bharat health insurance expansion, Poshan Abhiyaan (nutrition) progress, Jal Jeevan Mission (rural drinking water) — essentially ensuring social development schemes meet targets. Acted as a trouble-shooter for policy bottlenecks between Union and States in the social sector^{[10][95]}.

This chronological summary and list of contributions provide a quick reference to the rich tapestry of Amit Khare’s career, complementing the detailed narrative provided in the main chapters. It showcases the breadth of his experience and the depth of impact in each role.

References

1. Amit Khare – *Wikipedia* (Encyclopedia entry with career overview)^{[19][23]}.
2. “Former higher education secretary Amit Khare appointed as PM Modi's advisor” – *The Indian Express*, 12 Oct 2021 (news report on appointment to PMO)^{[106][9]}.
3. Dharendra Kumar, “Meet Amit Khare, the man behind NEP and IT Rules, now in his third stint at PMO” – *Livemint*, 14 Jun 2024 (article profiling Khare’s PMO role and key policies)^{[10][14]}.
4. Aditi Phadnis & Shikha Shalini, “Meet Amit Khare, Modi's New Advisor” – *Rediff News*, 25 Oct 2021 (analysis of Khare’s career and qualities)^{[4][61]}.
5. Shishir Gupta, “Amit Khare returns to I&B, Health Secy Preeti Sudan gets extension in reshuffle” – *Hindustan Times*, 26 Apr 2020 (details on Khare’s re-appointment to I&B during COVID)^{[71][86]}.

6. Ritika Chopra, "Amit Khare: The man in the corner office" - *The Indian Express*, 17 Oct 2021 (in-depth profile, covering fodder scam, education policy, and PMO appointment)[3][13].
7. Chhandosree, "Khare, fodder scam's last straw - School proud of alumnus who took on Lalu & Co" - *The Telegraph (India)*, 04 Oct 2013 (article on Khare's role in fodder scam and school days)[5][54].
8. "IAS officer who stumbled upon fodder scam in 1996" - *The Times of India* (archive via web)[39][42].
9. Sahil Makkar, "Amit Khare unearthed the fodder scam" - *Business Standard*, 04 Oct 2013 (report on fodder scam and Khare's actions)[40][107].
10. Meenakshi Ray, "From unearthing fodder scam to bringing in NEP: Amit Khare now in new role as PM Modi's advisor" - *Hindustan Times*, 12 Oct 2021 (summarizes career milestones and significance)[15][59].
11. Jagran English, "Meet Amit Khare, PM Modi's new advisor who shaped and guided the NEP 2020" - *Jagran*, 12 Oct 2021 (highlights his role in NEP 2020)[84].
12. Press Trust of India, "Amit Khare gets extension as Advisor to PM Modi" - *NDTV*, 26 Sep 2023 (news update on tenure extension)[92][104].

[1] [16] [19] [22] [23] [31] [36] [38] [39] [40] [41] [42] [45] [46] [48] [49] [58] [67] [74] [80] [81] [84] [89] [90] [103] [106] [107] Amit Khare - Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amit_Khare

[2] [9] [15] [20] [59] [60] [68] From unearthing fodder scam to bringing in NEP: Amit Khare now in new role as PM Modi's advisor | Latest News India - Hindustan Times

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/from-unearthing-fodder-scam-to-bringing-in-nep-amit-khare-has-a-new-role-in-pmo-101634046179630.html>

[3] [12] [13] [29] [51] [52] [53] [62] [65] [66] [69] [70] [72] [73] [75] [76] [77] [87] [101] [102] [105] Amit Khare: The man in the corner office | India News - The Indian Express

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/crime/amit-khare-appointed-advisor-to-the-pm-modi-it-rules-nep-implementation-7575384/>

[4] [7] [8] [21] [33] [34] [35] [43] [44] [47] [50] [56] [57] [61] [63] [64] [93] [94] [95] [99] Meet Amit Khare, Modi's New Advisor - Rediff.com India News

<https://www.rediff.com/news/report/meet-amit-khare-modis-new-advisor/20211025.htm>

[5] [6] [24] [25] [26] [27] [28] [30] [32] [37] [54] [55] [100] Khare, fodder scam's last straw
School proud of alumnus who took on Lalu & Co - Telegraph India

<https://www.telegraphindia.com/jharkhand/khare-fodder-scam-s-last-straw-school-proud-of-alumnus-who-took-on-lalu-co/cid/251237>

[10] [11] [14] [17] [18] [88] [91] [96] Meet Amit Khare, the man behind NEP and IT Rules,
now in his third stint at PMO | Today News

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/meet-amit-khare-the-man-behind-nep-and-it-rules-now-in-his-third-stint-at-pmo-11718343632744.html>

[71] [86] Amit Khare returns to I&B, Health Secy Preeti Sudan gets extension in reshuffle |
Latest News India - Hindustan Times

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/amit-khare-returns-to-i-b-health-secy-preeti-sudan-gets-extension-in-reshuffle/story-quDgVk7RnAnB8DghzR3L5J.html>

[78] [79] National-Education-Policy - TimesContent.com

<https://timescontent.timesofindia.com/photo/infographics/National-Education-Policy/652992>

[82] [83] Education Secretary Amit Khare: 'Nobody is against English

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/national-education-policy-amit-khare-explained-live-tamil-nadu-nep-7540687/>

[85] New education policy is transformative, not incremental: Amit Khare

<https://www.onmanorama.com/news/india/2020/08/05/new-education-policy-amit-khare-interview-higher-education.html>

[92] [104] Amit Khare Gets Extension As Advisor To PM Modi

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/amit-khare-gets-extension-as-advisor-to-pm-modi-4423515>

[97] Secretariat Building, New Delhi - Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretariat_Building,_New_Delhi

[98] Prime Minister's Office (India) - Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_Minister%27s_Office_\(India\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prime_Minister%27s_Office_(India))