

Gist of RSTV Big Picture: National Education Policy 2020 - Languages, Culture & Values

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Guests:

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What's in the news?

- The Government recently approved the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 to bring “large-scale transformational reforms” in both schools and higher education.
- The new education policy for the country comes almost after 34 years and stipulates a complete overhaul of the existing education system
- One of the key highlights of NEP 2020 is the decision to make local language, mother tongue or regional language as the medium of instruction up to class 5.
- The purpose of this move-
 - Analysts believe regional languages help inculcate human values and emotions.
 - Learning mother tongue will also help future generations forge a relationship with their social and cultural fabric.
 - This may create a long-term impact in nation building.
 - It could bring drastic change in the ongoing process of human resource development.

National Education Policy 2020 - Details:

- Multilingualism is the underlying principle of this policy.
- Using the power of language for integration and for understanding of Indian culture and values is the intended objective.
- In Grades 6-8, focus is on vocational studies in school-level, which includes carpentry, electric work, metal work, gardening, pottery making etc, as decided by States and local communities.
- Experiential learning including arts-integrated and sports-integrated education as well as story-telling-based pedagogy.
- The existing 10+2 structure in school education will be modified with a new pedagogical and curricular restructuring of 5+3+3+4 covering ages 3-18.
 - This means the first five years of school will comprise of the foundation stage. The next three years will be divided into a preparatory stage from classes 3 to 5. Later, there will be three years of middle stage (classes 6 to 8), and four years of secondary stage (classes 9 to 12).

Importance of vernacular languages and the mother tongue in primary education:

- The target age group for using vernacular language as the medium of instruction, is the tender foundational age between three to eight years.
 - Ability to learn languages is much higher during childhood rather than in adulthood.
- Children first get socialized in the language which is spoken in the family by parents, so the child is most comfortable in the local language.

- It would be instrumental in instilling a sense of pride and ownership in one's own culture, heritage and linguistic inheritance.

How capable are children in the age group of six - twelve years of learning ancient Indian culture along with multiple languages?

- While scientific research says that children can learn upto 18 languages, according to the ancient wisdom, the number could actually be much higher.
- WHO and UNICEF have laid emphasis on two periods for development of a child's potential:
 - Nurturing care framework - between the ages zero to three.
 - Early childhood education- which is upto the age of eight.
- If the potential of a child is built during these two periods , then a holistic capability can be developed in individuals across physical, emotional , intellectual and sensorial spectrums.
- The earlier the potential building exercises are introduced for children, the better it is.

Necessity:

- As per the People's Linguistic Survey of India (PLSI) 2017-
 - 4,000 of the world's 6,000 languages face a potential threat of extinction, out of which 10 per cent is spoken in India.
 - 400 out of 780 languages surveyed across 27 states of India were most likely to go extinct.
- There are several lesser known languages in India:
 - Santhali- Jharkhand, West Bengal, Assam
 - Gondi - Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Maharashtra,
 - Bhili - Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan
 - Mizo- Mizoram
 - Garo & Khasi - Meghalaya.
- People educated in these languages are actively writing plays, poems, novels and stories.
- Enabling ancient Indian wisdom and combining it with modern science is necessary for the future of both India and the world.

Concerns:

- The absence of quality textbooks and reading material is a cause of concern.
- Finding the exact terminologies in Indian languages for various concepts of science, medicine and engineering disciplines would be a challenge.

Historical problem of the three language formula-

- What is the Three language formula?
 - The three-language formula for language learning was enunciated in the 1968 National Policy Resolution. Its prescribed:
 - The study of Hindi, English and a modern Indian language (preferably one of the southern languages) in the Hindi speaking states.
 - Hindi, English and the Regional language in the non-Hindi speaking States.
- Why was it never implemented on ground?
 - The entire southern India has English, Hindi and its own regional language but the north has confined itself to English and Hindi only.
 - Hindi itself has been used for the purpose of regional language in the north Indian states.
- The three language formula in NEP 2020:
 - The three-languages to be learnt by the children will be the choices of concerned states,

regions and the students, as long as the two of the three languages are native to India.

Best way forward:

- Education must be made as broad and visionary as possible, for enabling a self-empowered and holistic individual.
- Efforts must be made towards adding elements of emotional and spiritual quotient to the already existing intelligence quotient existing in Indian education system.
- India must implement systematically, the provisions of the nurturing care framework of the WHO, for age groups between 0 to 3 years , which India has signed up for.
- Capacity building must be ensured for the teachers and parents for implementation of the new curriculum and pedagogy outlined in the NEP 2020.