

THREE-LANGUAGE POLICY UNDER NEP 2020 - POLITY

NEWS: *The Centre has withheld funds to Tamil Nadu under the **Samagra Shiksha scheme** due to the state's refusal to implement the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** and its **three-language formula**.*

- Tamil Nadu follows a **two-language policy (Tamil and English)** and has consistently opposed the introduction of Hindi, viewing it as a threat to its linguistic identity.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Centre Withholds Samagra Shiksha Funds Over Tamil Nadu's NEP 2020 Rejection

The central government has withheld funds allocated to Tamil Nadu under the **Samagra Shiksha** scheme due to the state's refusal to implement the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** and its associated **three-language formula**.

Tamil Nadu has long adhered to a **two-language policy**, with **Tamil and English** as the mediums of instruction. The state has consistently opposed the introduction of **Hindi**, considering it a threat to its **linguistic identity** and cultural heritage.

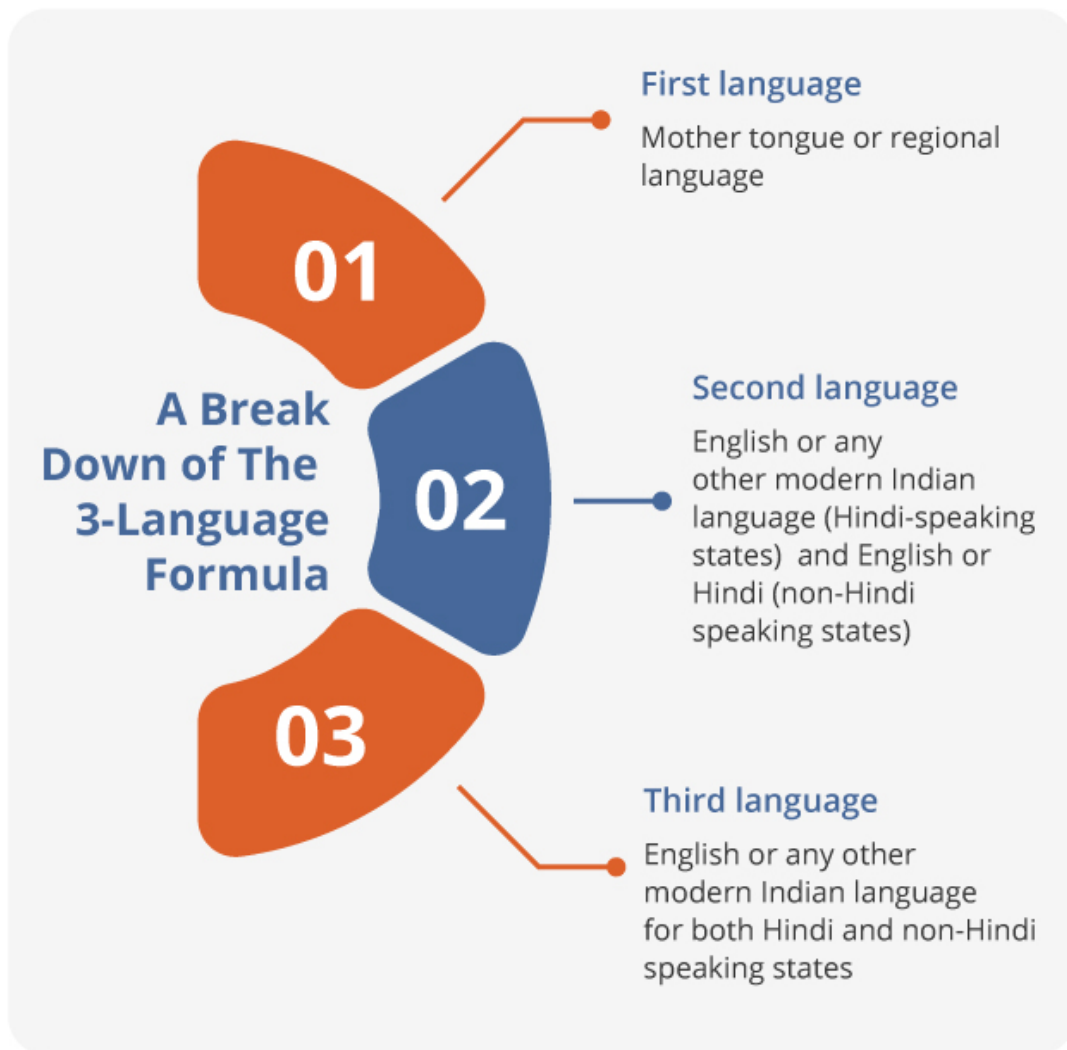
Understanding the Three-Language Formula

The **Three-Language Formula** was first introduced in the **National Education Policy (NEP) of 1968** with the aim of promoting linguistic harmony across the country. It mandated different language requirements based on whether a state was Hindi-speaking or non-Hindi-speaking:

1. **For Hindi-speaking states:**
 - **Hindi** as the primary language
 - **English** as the second language
 - A **modern Indian language** (preferably a South Indian language) as the third language
2. **For non-Hindi-speaking states:**
 - **State's regional language** as the primary language
 - **Hindi** as the second language
 - **English** as the third language

The **NEP 2020** retained this three-language formula but made notable modifications:

- The choice of languages is left to **states, regions, and students**, provided that at least **two languages are of Indian origin**.
- While **Hindi is not explicitly mandatory**, students in **non-Hindi-speaking states** are still encouraged to learn it.
- Emphasizes **bilingual education**, prioritizing **the home language/mother tongue and English**.
- **Sanskrit** is given **special emphasis** and is offered as an **optional choice** within the three-language formula.



Significance of the Three-Language Formula

The Three-Language Formula aims to achieve several educational and socio-cultural benefits:

- 1. Enhances Multilingual Proficiency:**
 - Encourages students to develop strong **cognitive skills**, linguistic adaptability, and improved communication abilities.
- 2. Promotes National Integration and Cultural Exchange:**
 - Seeks to bridge the **north-south linguistic divide** by encouraging Hindi in **non-Hindi states** and regional languages in **Hindi-speaking states**.
- 3. Expands Employment and Mobility Opportunities:**
 - Proficiency in multiple languages increases career prospects, particularly for those seeking **higher education or employment in different states**.
- 4. Strengthens Regional Languages:**
 - Ensures that regional languages continue to be actively used and preserved, preventing linguistic erosion.

Concerns and Criticisms of the Three-Language Formula

Despite its intended benefits, the policy has faced criticism from various stakeholders, particularly from non-Hindi-speaking states:

1. **Perceived Imposition of Hindi:**
 - States such as **Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, and Karnataka** argue that the policy is a disguised attempt to impose Hindi on non-Hindi speakers.
 - Tamil Nadu has historically rejected the three-language formula, emphasizing its two-language system of **Tamil and English**.
2. **Practical Implementation Challenges:**
 - Many **government and rural schools** struggle to find **qualified teachers** to effectively teach an additional language.
3. **Increased Academic Burden on Students:**
 - Learning a third language adds to the academic load, especially for students who **struggle with language acquisition**.
4. **Potential Neglect of Foreign Languages:**
 - Some critics argue that instead of a third Indian language, students should be encouraged to learn **foreign languages like French, German, or Mandarin**, which would improve international academic and career opportunities.

Three-language formula

- **First language:** It will be the mother tongue or regional language.
- **Second language:** In Hindi speaking states, it will be other modern Indian languages or English. In non-Hindi speaking states, it will be Hindi or English.
- **Third Language:** In Hindi speaking states, it will be English or a modern Indian language. In the non-Hindi speaking state, it will be English or a modern Indian language.

Need for three-language formula

- The committee's report observes that learning languages are an important part of a child's cognitive development.
- The primary aim is to promote multilingualism and national harmony.

Issue in implementation

- The states like Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Tripura were not ready to teach Hindi and Hindi-speaking states did not include any south Indian language in their school curriculum.
- State governments often do not have adequate resources to implement the three – language formula.
 - The inadequacy of resources is perhaps the most important aspect of the challenge.

Constitutional provision

- **Article 29** of the Constitution of India protects the interests of minorities. The Article states that any section of the citizens who have a “...distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.”
- **Article 343** is about the official language of the Union of India. According to this Article, it is to be Hindi in Devnagri script, and numerals should follow the international form of Indian numerals. This Article also states that English will continue to be used as an official language for 15 years from the commencement of the Constitution.
- **Article 346** is about the official language for communication between the states and between a state and the Union. The Article states that the “authorised” language will be used. However, if two or more states agree that their communications shall be in Hindi, then Hindi may be used.
- **Article 347** gives the President the power to recognise a language as an official language of a given state, provided that the President is satisfied that a substantial proportion of that state desires that the language be recognised. Such recognition can be for a part of the state or the whole state.
- **Article 350A** facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at the primary stage.
- **Article 350B** provides for the establishment of a Special Officer for linguistic minorities. The Officer shall be appointed by the President and shall investigate all matters relating to the safeguards for linguistic minorities, reporting directly to the President. The President may then place the reports before each house of the Parliament or send them to the governments of the states concerned.
- **Article 351** gives power to the union government to issue a directive for development of the Hindi language.
- **Eighth Schedule** of the Constitution of India contains a list of 22 languages recognised schedule languages.

PM SHRI scheme

Aim: The scheme aims to turn existing government schools into model schools.

1. The scheme is for existing elementary, secondary, and senior secondary schools **run by the central government and state and local governments around the country.**

Funding: It is a Centrally sponsored scheme **for the period of five years from 2022-23 to 2026-27 for transforming nearly 14,500 schools across the country.**

Samagra Siksha Abhiyan (SSA)

The scheme extends from pre-school to class XII and aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education.

The Scheme subsumes the three erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).

The major objectives of the Scheme are:

1. Support States and UTs in implementing the recommendations of the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020);

2. Support States in implementation of Right of Children to Free and Compulsory

Education (RTE) Act, 2009;

3. Emphasis on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy;

4. Strengthening and up-gradation of State Councils for Educational Research and Training (SCERTs)/State Institutes of Education and District Institutes for Education and Training (DIET) as nodal agency for teacher training;

5. Promoting vocational education.

Under the Scheme, financial assistance is provided to all the States and UTs for undertaking above activities.

Way Forward

A **constructive dialogue and a balanced compromise** between the Centre and the state governments is crucial to resolving this issue.

- The **Concurrent List** includes **education** as a shared responsibility between the Centre and the states. This means that both should collaborate rather than engage in **policy disputes**.
- Disagreements over the **third language policy** should not result in the withholding of **Samagra Shiksha** funds, as this is a key program aimed at **improving school education** across the country.
- A **flexible and inclusive approach** should be adopted, ensuring that language policies respect **regional linguistic identities** while also promoting **multilingual learning**.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/why-is-the-three-language-policy-controversial-explained/article69252232.ece>