

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY - POLITY

NEWS: *Union Education Minister stated that Tamil Nadu would not receive funds under the **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan** unless it adopts the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** and implements its **three-language formula**.*

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Centre's Stance on NEP 2020 and Samagra Shiksha Funding

- Union Education Minister **Dharmendra Pradhan** accused the **DMK-led Tamil Nadu government of political bias**, stating that its refusal to accept the **NEP 2020** and the **three-language policy** was “politically motivated.”
- He further stated that **Tamil Nadu cannot act as if it is above the Constitution**, implying that the state must comply with national policies to receive central funding.
- The minister linked the **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan funds** to the implementation of the **NEP and the three-language policy**, suggesting that states not following the central framework would face financial restrictions.

Tamil Nadu's Opposition to NEP and the Three-Language Formula

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister **M.K. Stalin** strongly condemned the Union Minister's statement, calling the **linking of education funds to NEP compliance "fundamentally unacceptable"** and a violation of federal principles.
- The state government reiterated its **long-standing opposition to the three-language policy**, which mandates the inclusion of Hindi alongside Tamil and English in non-Hindi-speaking states.
- Since the 1960s, Tamil Nadu has upheld its **two-language policy (Tamil and English)** and has consistently **resisted the imposition of Hindi** as a mandatory subject in schools.
- Due to this strong opposition, **Navodaya Vidyalayas, a network of central government-run schools that implement the three-language formula, have not been established in Tamil Nadu.**

Background of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

- A **National Education Policy (NEP)** is a **comprehensive framework that guides the development of the education system** in India.
- The **need for an education policy was first highlighted in 1964**, when Congress MP **Siddheshwar Prasad** criticized the government for not having a national vision for education.
- In response, the government formed a **17-member Education Commission** headed by **D.S. Kothari (then UGC Chairperson)** to draft a policy for national education reforms.
- Based on the Commission's recommendations, **India's first National Education Policy was introduced in 1968.**

- The **second NEP was introduced in 1986** under Prime Minister **Rajiv Gandhi** and was revised in 1992 under **P.V. Narasimha Rao**.
- The **third and current NEP was introduced in 2020** under Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, setting a goal of **full implementation by 2040**.
- NEP 2020 **only provides a broad policy framework** and is **not mandatory for states to follow**, as **education is a concurrent subject**, meaning both the **Centre and state governments** have the authority to formulate education policies.

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan: A Centrally Sponsored Scheme

- **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan** was launched in **2018** as an **integrated scheme for school education** in India.
- It combined three existing schemes into one:
 - **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)** – Focus on universal elementary education.
 - **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)** – Focus on improving secondary education.
 - **Teacher Education (TE)** – Focus on training and professional development of teachers.
- The scheme is **jointly funded by the Centre and the states**, with the Centre providing the majority of financial support.
- Tamil Nadu now faces the risk of **losing central funding for school education** due to its refusal to adopt the **NEP 2020 and the three-language formula**.

The Three-Language Formula and Its Implications

- The **three-language formula was first introduced in 1968** as a guideline for language education in schools.
- It mandates that:
 - **In Hindi-speaking states**, students must study **Hindi, English, and one modern Indian language (preferably a South Indian language)**.
 - **In non-Hindi-speaking states**, students must learn **their regional language, Hindi, and English**.
- Tamil Nadu has strongly opposed this policy for decades, arguing that **forcing students to study Hindi would threaten the Tamil language and culture**.
- The state has instead adhered to a **two-language policy**, requiring students to learn only **Tamil and English**.

6. Hindi's Presence in India: Statistical Overview

- As per the **2011 linguistic census**:
 - **43.6% (52.8 crore people) speak Hindi as their mother tongue**, making it the most widely spoken language in India.
 - **8% (9.7 crore people) speak Bengali**, making it the second-most spoken language.
 - When counting those who speak Hindi as a **second language**, the number rises to **over 55% of the population**.

Background of the Language Controversy in India

1. Hindi Diwas and Official Language Status

- **Hindi Diwas is observed every year on September 14** to commemorate the adoption of **Hindi as the official language of India** by the **Constituent Assembly** in 1949.
- While Hindi was given official language status, **English was also retained as an associate official language for a transitional period of 15 years.**

2. The Munshi-Ayyangar Formula and Article 343 of the Constitution

- The **Munshi-Ayyangar formula**, named after **Constituent Assembly members K.M. Munshi and N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar**, was adopted to address language concerns.
- Under **Article 343 of the Constitution (1950)**:
 - **Hindi in Devanagari script was declared the official language of India.**
 - **Indian numerals were to be used for official purposes.**
 - **English would continue to be used for official work for 15 years**, after which it was expected to be phased out.

3. Anti-Hindi Protests and the Official Languages Act

- As the **15-year period neared its end in 1965**, massive protests erupted, particularly in **Tamil Nadu**, against the possible **imposition of Hindi** as the sole official language.
- The protests led to the passage of the **Official Languages Act, 1963**, which **ensured that English would continue as an official language alongside Hindi** indefinitely.
- This issue highlights the **long-standing debate on linguistic and educational federalism** in India.
- **Tamil Nadu's opposition to the three-language policy** is rooted in concerns over **linguistic and cultural identity.**
- The **Centre's push for NEP 2020 and the three-language formula** reflects its desire for a **uniform national education policy**, but this has led to **concerns over federalism and states' rights.**
- The controversy demonstrates **the broader struggle between state autonomy and central policy-making in India**, especially in matters of **language and education.**

NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020

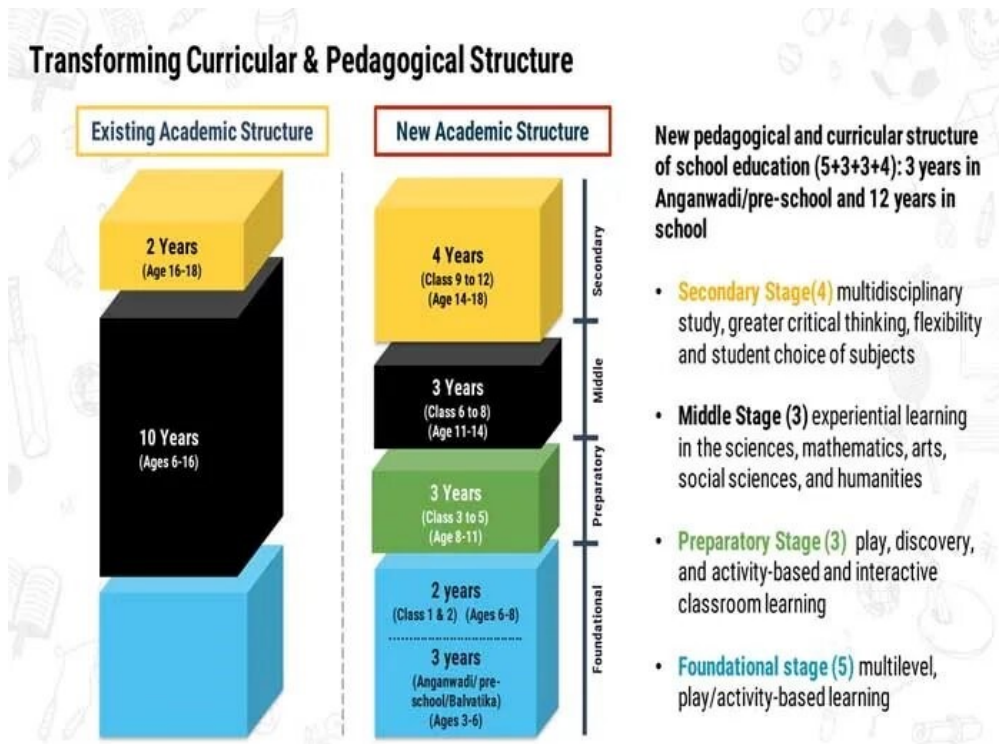
- The NEP 2020 aims at making **“India a global knowledge superpower”**.
- The Cabinet has also approved the **renaming** of the Ministry of Human Resource Development to the **Ministry of Education.**
 - The NEP cleared by the Cabinet is **only the third major revamp of the framework of education** in India since independence.
The **two earlier education policies** were brought in **1968 and 1986.**

Key Points

School Education:

Universalization of education from preschool to secondary level with 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030.

- To bring 2 crore out of school children back into the mainstream through an **open schooling system**.
- The current **10+2 system** to be **replaced** by a new **5+3+3+4** curricular structure corresponding to **ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years**



respectively.

- It will bring the uncovered age group of **3-6 years** under school curriculum, which has been recognized globally as the **crucial stage for development of mental faculties of a child**.
- It will also have 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi/pre schooling.
- **Class 10 and 12 board examinations to be made easier**, to test core competencies rather than memorised facts, with all students allowed to **take the exam twice**.
- **School governance** is set to change, with a **new accreditation framework and an independent authority** to regulate both public and private schools.
- Emphasis on **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy**, no rigid separation between academic streams, extracurricular, vocational streams in schools.
- **Vocational Education** to start from **Class 6 with Internships**.
- Teaching up to at **least Grade 5** to be in **mother tongue/regional language**. No language will be imposed on any student.
- Assessment reforms with **360 degree Holistic Progress Card**, tracking Student Progress for achieving Learning Outcomes
- A new and comprehensive **National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2021**, will be formulated by the **National Council for**

Teacher Education (NCTE) in consultation with National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

- By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree.

Higher Education:

Learning plan

A look at the key features of the new education policy:

• R.V.S. PRASAD



- Public spending on education by States, Centre to be raised to 6% of GDP
- Ministry of Human Resource Development to be renamed Ministry of Education
- Separate technology unit to develop digital education resources

SCHOOL EDUCATION

- Universalisation from age 3 to Class 10 by 2030
- Mission to ensure literacy and numeracy skills by 2025
- Mother tongue as medium of instruction till Class 5 wherever possible
- New curriculum to include 21st century skills like coding and vocational integration from Class 6
- Board exams to be easier, redesigned

HIGHER EDUCATION

- New umbrella regulator for all higher education except medical, legal courses
- Flexible, holistic, multi-disciplinary UG degrees of 3-4 years' duration
- 1 to 2 year PG programmes, no M.Phil
- College affiliation system to be phased out in 15 years

- **Gross Enrolment Ratio** in higher education to be **raised to 50% by 2035**. Also, **3.5 crore seats** to be added in higher education.
 - The **current** Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education is **26.3%**.
- Holistic Undergraduate education with a flexible curriculum can be of **3 or 4 years with multiple exit options** and appropriate certification within this period.
- **M.Phil** courses will be **discontinued** and all the courses at undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD level will now be interdisciplinary.
- **Academic Bank of Credits** to be established to facilitate Transfer of Credits.
- **Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs)**, at par with IITs, IIMs, to be set up as models of best multidisciplinary education of global standards in the country.
- The **National Research Foundation** will be created as an **apex body** for fostering a strong research culture and building research capacity across higher education.
- **Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)** will be set up as a **single umbrella body** for the entire higher education, **excluding medical and legal education**. Public and private higher education institutions will be governed

by the **same set of norms** for regulation, accreditation and academic standards. Also, HECI will be having **four independent verticals namely,**

- National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for **regulation,**
- General Education Council (GEC) for **standard setting,**
- Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for **funding,**
- National Accreditation Council (NAC) for **accreditation.**
- **Affiliation of colleges** is to be **phased out in 15 years** and a stage-wise mechanism to be established for granting graded autonomy to colleges.
- Over a period of time, every college is expected to develop into either an autonomous degree-granting College, or a constituent college of a university.

▪ **Other Changes:**

Digital drive
The new education policy has emphasised the integration of technology in all levels of learning. Some features of the policy:

Technology in education	Teacher education	Financial support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum, will be created for the exchange of ideas on use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning and administration ▪ A dedicated unit for the purpose of creating digital infrastructure, digital content and capacity building will be set up in the ministry ▪ Integration of technology will be done to improve classroom processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a four-year integrated B.Ed. degree 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Meritorious students belonging to SC, ST, OBC and other socially and economically disadvantaged groups will be given incentives ▪ Private institutions will be encouraged to offer scholarships to their students
		Professional education
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Standalone technical universities, health science universities, legal and agricultural universities will aim at becoming multi-disciplinary institutions

- An autonomous body, the **National Educational Technology Forum (NETF)**, will be created to provide a platform for the **free exchange of ideas** on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration.
- National Assessment Centre- '**PARAKH**' has been created to assess the students.
- It also paves the way for **foreign universities to set up campuses** in India.
- It emphasizes setting up of **Gender Inclusion Fund, Special Education Zones** for disadvantaged regions and groups.
- National Institute for **Pali, Persian and Prakrit**, Indian Institute of **Translation and Interpretation** to be set up.

- It also aims to **increase** the public investment in the Education sector to reach **6% of GDP** at the earliest.
- Currently, India **spends around 4.6 % of its total GDP on education.**

Source: <https://indianexpress.com/article/upsc-current-affairs/upsc-essentials/knowledge-nugget-tamil-nadu-protest-against-nep-upsc-prelims-exam-2025-9846191/>