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The student and the three language debate

Tamil Nadu-Centre Tussle Over NEP's Three-Language Formula

Impact on Students

- Public school students (55% of total enrollment) are most affected.
- Private school students can afford coaching, but public school students rely on school education.
- Key question: Will learning three languages improve job prospects?

Challenges in Implementing Three-Language Policy

- NEP has positives but does not fully consider public education challenges.
- Assumes learning an extra language improves cognitive skills and job opportunities.
- AI and technology reduce the need for language proficiency in knowledge acquisition.
- Research supports strong mother tongue foundation before learning other languages.

Reality of Language Learning

- People learn new languages based on professional needs.
- Tamil Nadu workers in other states pick up Hindi/Marathi without formal schooling.
- 2024 ASER survey: 88% of Tamil Nadu's third graders lack basic literacy.
- Even top English-medium students struggle in college due to weak English education.

Prioritizing Quality Education

- Focus should be on improving teaching quality, not adding another language.
- Limited school time should emphasize curiosity, critical thinking, and creativity.
- A third language may reduce time for deeper learning in core subjects.
- Finding qualified teachers for different languages is another challenge.



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Culture, National Unity & Jobs

- National unity comes from respecting different cultures, not enforcing a common language.
- Tamil Nadu students succeed nationally as long as English remains an official language.
- Stronger English skills would provide better global job opportunities.

A Practical Approach

- Make Hindi optional from middle school, starting in district headquarters.
- Expand based on demand instead of enforcing a rigid rule.
- Political conflicts should not limit students' future opportunities.
- Open discussions are needed to find a balanced solution.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/lead/the-student-and-the-three-language-debate/article69282569.ece>

