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Technical Education in Mother Tongue

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Why in News

Recently, the **Union Education Minister** has set up a task force for preparing a roadmap on imparting **technical education in the mother tongue** of students.

Key Points

- **The Task force:**

- **Chairmanship:** It will be set-up under the chairmanship of the secretary, higher education, Amit Khare.
- **Objective:** To achieve the Prime Minister's vision that students may pursue the professional courses such as medicine, engineering, law, etc in their mother tongue.

This is part of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** which suggests teaching in regional language till class 8 and enabling teaching the curriculum in a language which a student is comfortable in.

- **Function:** It will take into consideration the **suggestions** made by various **stakeholders** and will submit a report in a month.

- **Reasons for imparting technical education in regional languages:**
 - **Enhances formative learning:** It has been observed that **the human mind is more receptive to communication in the language** in which it is accustomed to thinking from childhood.

When explained in regional languages, especially mother tongue, **grabbing the concepts or expression of the ideas** by the students becomes fairly easy.
 - **Practiced by Many Countries:** Across the globe, classroom teaching is pursued in a variety of regional languages, be it France or Germany or Russia or a country like China, which has over 300 languages and dialects with 8 of them being the major ones.
 - **Creates Inclusion:** It will help in **social inclusiveness, improving literacy rates, reduction in poverty and international cooperation.** Language can become a **catalyst for inclusive development.** Removal of the existing linguistic barriers will help in realizing the goal of inclusive governance.
- **Challenges:** Providing technical education in regional languages requires **teachers proficient** in undertaking classes **in the vernacular medium along with English, textbooks and reference materials** in regional languages, besides **technological assistance** such as audio translation aids.

- **Government Initiatives to Promote Regional Languages:**
 - The recently announced **National Education Policy** 2020 promotes education in regional languages.
 - **The Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT)** is providing publication grants towards the publications of University Level Books in regional languages.
 - It was established in 1961 to evolve technical terminology in all Indian Languages.
 - The **National Translation Mission (NTM)** is being implemented through the **Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL)**, Mysore under which the text books of various subjects prescribed in Universities and Colleges are being translated in all **languages of the Eighth Schedule**.
 - CIIL was established in 1969 under the administrative control of the Ministry of Education.
 - The Government of India is running a scheme known as **“Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages”** for conservation of threatened languages.
 - **The University Grants Commission (UGC)** also **promotes regional languages in higher education courses in the country** and supports nine Central Universities under the scheme “Establishment of Centre for Endangered Languages in Central Universities”.
 - Recently, an initiative **Namath Basai** by **Kerala State Government** has proved to be very beneficial in educating **children from tribal areas by adopting vernacular languages as medium of instruction**.
- **Global Efforts:**
 - The **Yuelu Proclamation made by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) at Changsha, China**, in 2018 plays a central role in guiding the efforts of countries and regions around the world to protect linguistic resources and diversity.
 - The **United Nations General Assembly** had proclaimed **2019** as the **International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL)**.
 - The **IYIL 2019** aimed to **preserve, support and promote** indigenous languages at the national, regional and international levels.

Constitutional and Legal Provisions Safeguarding Regional Languages

- **Article 29** (Protection of interests of minorities) gives all citizens right to conserve their language and prohibits discrimination on the basis of language.
- **Article 120** (Language to be used in Parliament) provides for use of Hindi or English for transactions of Parliament but gives the right to members of Parliament to express themselves in their mother tongue.

- **Part XVII of the Indian Constitution** deals with the official languages in **Articles 343 to 351**.
 - **Article 350A (Facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage)** provides that it shall be the endeavour of every State and of every local authority within the State to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups.
 - **Article 350B (Special Officer for linguistic minorities):** The President should appoint a special officer for linguistic minorities to investigate all matters relating to the constitutional safeguards for linguistic minorities and to report to him. The President should place all such reports before the Parliament and send to the state government concerned.
 - **Article 351 (Directive for development of the Hindi language)** provides that it shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language.
- **The Eighth Schedule** recognises following 22 languages: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri.
- **Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009** says that the medium of instruction shall, as far as practicable, be in a child's mother tongue.

Way Forward

- Countries around the world have successfully **substituted english with their mother tongues** and have been able to produce world-class scientists, researchers, technicians and thinkers. The barrier of language is only as long as there is lack of proper encouragement to the generation of knowledge in the respective language. **The government should encourage original scientific writing, publication of books in regional languages to help this transition.**
- Also, studies around the world have shown that children are able to learn multiple languages if they are taught from an early age. One can **actively promote regional languages without compromising knowledge of English language which can be taught as an extra subject.** It is important to remember that English is one of many skills which one can equip the children with in order for them to fully participate in and experience the world.

Source:PIB