



Maharashtra Reverses Hindi Language Mandate

Why in News?

The Maharashtra government scrapped its government resolutions (GRs) mandating Hindi as a **compulsory third language** from Grades 1 to 5 in Marathi and English medium schools.

- The government has appointed a committee under renowned economist **Dr. Narendra Jadhav** to study the three-language policy.

Key Points

▪ About the Issue:

- On 16 April 2025, the state government **mandated Hindi as the third language from Grades 1 to 5 in all English and Marathi-medium State Board schools**, citing alignment with NEP 2020 and the State Education Framework 2024.
- Though the move was in line with [National Education Policy \(NEP\) 2020](#), which promotes multilingualism through the **three-language formula**, it was withdrawn due to concerns over linguistic identity, cultural hegemony, and the feasibility of implementation.

▪ Provisions on Language under NEP 2020:

- **Medium of Instruction:** NEP 2020 recommends **using the mother tongue, local, or regional language** as the medium of instruction **at least till Grade 5**, and preferably till Grade 8 and beyond.
 - It also **promotes bilingual teaching**, encouraging the use of the home language or mother tongue alongside English, especially in the early years of schooling.
 - However, the **8th All India School Education Survey (AISES)**, by the [National Council of Educational Research and Training \(NCERT\)](#), shows a **decline in the use of mother tongue** as the medium of instruction.
 - At the primary stage, 86.62% of schools used the mother tongue in 2009, down from 92.07% in 2002.
 - The drop is seen in both rural (from 92.39% to 87.56%) and urban areas (from 90.39% to 80.99%).
- **Multilingualism:** The three-language formula under NEP 2020 marks a **shift from the earlier NEP 1968**.
 - NEP 1968 prescribed **Hindi, English, and a modern Indian language** (preferably a southern language) in Hindi-speaking states, and Hindi, English, and a regional language in non-Hindi-speaking states.
 - In contrast, **NEP 2020 allows greater flexibility** and clearly states that no language will be imposed on any state.
 - It also encourages the **inclusion of classical languages** like Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam within the three-language formula.
- **Foreign Languages:** NEP 2020 allows students to **learn foreign languages** like **Korean, Japanese, French, German, and Spanish** at the secondary level.
 - As per [CBSE guidelines](#), students will study two Indian languages till Class 10, and can choose one Indian and one foreign language in Classes 11 and 12.

Note: The Kothari Commission (1964-66) proposed the three-language formula to promote national

integration and cultural exchange through a common educational framework. This was later adopted in the National Policy on Education, 1968.

▪ **Issues in Implementing the Three Language Policy:**

- **Federal Concerns:** Since **education falls under the Concurrent List**, imposing Hindi without state consultation raises concerns about federal overreach.
 - The **Three-Language Policy has faced criticism** for allegedly promoting Hindi at the expense of regional languages.
 - Tamil Nadu, influenced by the **Dravidian movement**, adopted a **two-language policy (Tamil and English) in 1968**, rejecting the central formula.
 - This stance remains firm, and in 2019, Tamil Nadu's opposition led to the **removal of mandatory Hindi** from the draft NEP 2020.
- **Deviation from NEP 2020 Intent:** NEP 2020 primarily emphasizes learning in the **mother tongue (referred to as 'R1')** and an additional **second language (R2- a language other than R1)**, not three languages, in early years.
- **Cultural and Societal Concerns:** Civil society groups argue that compulsory Hindi could **discourage the use of tribal and minority languages**.
 - Critics have termed it a **"backdoor imposition of Hindi"**, raising concerns over a lack of transparency in decision-making.
 - They also highlight that some state-level Hindi policies were introduced without proper consultation with language experts or public stakeholders.
- **Administrative and Infrastructure Issues:** Many rural schools **lack qualified teachers** for all three languages, leading to uneven quality of instruction.
 - Developing **age-appropriate and integrated curricula** for three languages at the foundational level is a **major challenge**.
 - This often overburdens students and teachers, resulting in rote learning and poor comprehension.

Constitutional Provisions Regarding Language

Provisions	Explanation
Article 29	Protects the right of citizens to conserve their distinct language and culture.
Article 343	Declares Hindi in Devanagari script as the official language of the Union; allows continued use of English for official purposes for 15 years from 1950 (later extended by legislation).
Article 346	Governs the official language for communication between states and with the Union. Hindi may be used if the states involved agree.
Article 347	Allows the President to recognize a language as an official language of a state or part thereof, if a substantial section of the population demands it.
Article 350A	Directs states to provide primary education in the mother tongue for linguistic minority children.
Article 350B	Provides for a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities , appointed by the President, to report on the implementation of safeguards for linguistic minorities.
Article 351	Obligates the Union to promote Hindi while enriching it with elements from other Indian languages.
Eighth Schedule	Lists 22 officially recognized languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, and others, referred to as "Scheduled Languages."

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/maharashtra-reverses-hindi-language-mandate>

