



# A critical analysis on New National Education Policy

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## Abstract

Beginning from 1968, the Central Government has framed and modified National Education Policy throughout the last 5 decades. One of the most Controversial Policy which was included in the National Education Policy from the very start of 1968 was the Three- Language Formula. This makes the school children learn three language which includes two Indian Languages and One Foreign Language. This Policy created a lot of controversial opinions from non- Hindi speaking states like West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka etc., There were lot of struggles conducted against Three Language Formula. The main point of allegation against this policy was that the Three Language Formula attempts to impose Hindi on Non- Hindi Speaking people and that one should learn Two Native Languages which would adversely affect the Non- Hindi Speaking States. Language is not a medium to speak but it is an identity for people. Learning of Hindi by a Non- Hindi Speaking State would necessarily affect the regional language. The implementation of Three- Language Formula in the true spirit, as stated in National Education Policy 2020 is almost practically impossible and learning an extra language would be burden to students. Hence several changes should be made on the Three – Language Policy or Two – Language need to be followed in India.

This paper focus on analyzing need for a three – Language Formula (with its history), tries to Comprehend the various problem that the Non- Hindi Speaking states and to students would face and practical difficulties that is likely to arise. The article would help us arrive to a solution where all the regional languages may be preserved.

Key Words: National Education Policy 2020, Three Language Formula, Problems, Solutions

## The Flaws in Three Language Policy

### 1. Introduction

“Education is the most Powerful weapon we can use to Change the Whole World”

By Nelson Mandela

In order to Reform such “Powerful Weapon” the National Education Policy was/is introduced in India. The aim of the National Education Policy 2020 is to bring about reforms in Education so that the Indian Education meets up the Standard of 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Actually, the National Education Policy 2020 is the third in the series of its kind. The 1<sup>st</sup> NEP was formulated in 1968 by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1986 by Mr. Rajiv Gandhi and now by Mr. Narendra Modi in the year 2020. All the three National Education Policy had one issue in common. That is “Three Language Formula”. The Three Language Formula (according to NEP 2020) is nothing but a policy where a child would be made to learn three languages – 2 Indian Languages and 1 Foreign Language. There are states like Tamil Nadu which are against the Three- Language Formula. The allegation which centered for the rejection of the Three- Language Formula was the Hindi Imposition.

This article analyses the history of National Education Policy and Three Language Formula. It focuses primarily at establishing the various difficulties which the Non- Hindi Speaking State would encounter if Three- Language Formula is introduced. It also tries to Comprehend various problems that a child would encounter while learning three languages and Practical difficulties that would be faced in implementing the Three- Language Formula in its true spirit. In order to make the present Three Language Formula successful, this research paper emphasizes to make several changes in the Three – Language Formula or to formulate Two Language Formula. This Research Article would help us know the problems in three language Policy and the necessary corrections that needs to be done in the Three Language Policy.

### 2. National Education Policy

After India got Independence in 1947, Education Commissions was made in India, with the ultimate aim to bring reforms in the Education system of India. University Education Commission headed by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan was the First Education Commission that was constituted in India. Later, this Commission was followed by two other Commissions namely: Secondary Education Commission 1952 and Indian Education Commission 1964- 1966. Based on the recommendation of Indian Education Commission 1964- 1966, the First National Policy on Education was drafted.

Accordingly, the First National Policy on Education recommended to include the provision for compulsory education in the Indian Constitution. The Policy was of the view that English should be the medium of instruction in schools and Hindi should be our national Language. The Policy also promoted the development of Sanskrit, as the report stated that Sanskrit is the Cultural Symbol of India.

Again in 1986, the Government of India initiated in the creation of a new National Policy on Education. This Policy concentrated on the education among the Schedules Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Caste and Women who were denied education for centuries. Later, the National Policy on Education 1986 was slightly modified in 1992 based on the recommendations made by the Commission under the Chairmanship of Acharya Ramamurti. The 1992 stressed on promoting National Integration through Education<sup>1</sup>.

Now, in 2020, a New National Education Policy has been issued by the Union Cabinet which “aims to pave a way for transformational reforms in school and higher education system in the Country”. It replaces the 34 – year old National Policy on Education 1986.

### 3. History of Three Language Formula

India is Known as “Veritable Tower of Babel”. So is the Linguistic Diversity in India. According to the 2011 Census there are 121 mother tongues in India<sup>2</sup>. A language is more than a mere medium of communication. It is the identity of people. Hence it is a sensitive issue that needs careful consideration.

One of the often accused or often criticized “idea” in all the three National Education Policy is the Three Language Formula. The 1<sup>st</sup> National Policy for Education 1968 had the concept of Three Language Formula. It stated that at the Secondary level of Education the State Government should vigorously follow the Three-Language Formula. It further said that in a Hindi- Speaking State, a child should learn English, Hindi and a 3<sup>rd</sup> Language – Preferably a South Indian Language and in a Non- Hindi Speaking State, a child should learn Regional Language, English and Hindi. The Policy also stated that all the necessary step should be taken to promote Hindi and make it as a “link language in India” as per the mandate of Article 351 of the Constitution<sup>3</sup>.

When the Three Language Formula was first introduced in India, there were lot of opposition from South Indian states namely Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, C.N. Annadurai opposed the Three Language Formula and very famously said, “Why do Tamils have to study English for communication with the world and Hindi for communication within India? Do we need a big door for the big dog and a small door for the small dog? I say, let the small dog use the big door too!”<sup>4</sup>. Due to this

<sup>1</sup> National Education Policy 2020: What Is Three-Language Formula. (2020, August 3). NDTV.Com. <https://www.ndtv.com/education/national-education-policy-2020-what-three-language-formula>

<sup>2</sup> Pruthi, R. (2018, July 6). *Language Census 2011: Surge in Hindi and English speakers; Tribal language speakers decline*. Jagranjosh.Com. <https://www.jagranjosh.com/current-affairs/language-census-2011-surge-in-hindi-speakers-south-indian-language-and-urdu-speakers-decline-1530869001-1>

<sup>3</sup> Bourne, J., & Reid, E. (2003). World Yearbook of Education 2003: Language Education. In *Google Books*. Routledge. [https://books.google.co.in/books?hl=en&lr=&id=0aRAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA231&dq=three+language+formula+india&ots=CZNPTgxyHm&sig=tE99o0jAss29B99adPaDJVcvJs&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=three%20language%20formula%20india&f=false](https://books.google.co.in/books?hl=en&lr=&id=0aRAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA231&dq=three+language+formula+india&ots=CZNPTgxyHm&sig=tE99o0jAss29B99adPaDJVcvJs&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=three%20language%20formula%20india&f=false)

<sup>4</sup> Tamil Screenshot. (2020). #Mummozhi kolgai | Thesiya kalvi kolgai | tamilscreenshot | Marimuthu S [YouTube Video]. In *YouTube*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=314k\\_ACn-6k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=314k_ACn-6k)

kind of an idea, the Three Language Formula was not adopted in Tamil Nadu and Tamil Nadu had Two – Language Formula. In 1986, when the New National Policy on Education was introduced there wasn't any change in the Three Language Formula.

In 2019, Dr. K. Kasturirangan Committee Draft Report 2019, made changes in the Three Language Formula. The Report made “Hindi” compulsory for Non- Hindi Speaking People. But later the word “Hindi” was substituted by “Modern Indian Language”. “Modern Indian Language” are those 22 languages that are listed in Schedule VIII of the Indian Constitution. Based on this Committee’s Report the Three Language Formula was created in the National Education Policy 2020. Now, a child can learn any two “Modern Indian Language” and One Foreign Language. Again, the political parties in Tamil Nadu and a considerable portion of Tamil Nadu are against the new Three- Language Formula.

#### 4. Reason for the Fear that Hindi would be dominated

Linguistic Problem is arisen in different Countries throughout the world. One could see this in Ireland where there was intense agitation concerning the language of Ireland. Though in Ireland most of the people know English they have Irish Language as their Official Language. Many Historians have pointed out the Poland remains a nation till now and aspires to become an independent state, since Polish language and tradition of Poland is alive. Hence a Language is not only a medium of Communication but is an identity for many people.

Initially, the problem started when Indian Congress Committee in its meeting in Karachi, decided that Hindi would be the Lingua Franca of India. This was criticized in states like Tamil Nadu and many agitations started in Tamil Nadu. The reason is India is a Multi- Lingual country and in such a country making one language Hindi as National Language is like making all other people speaking language other than Hindi as a subordinate to Hindi Speakers<sup>5</sup>.

This “idea” of Three Language Formula was deeply criticized by states like Tamil Nadu. The opposition of states like Tamil Nadu for the imposition of Hindi can be seen from the Constituent Assembly Debates itself. When the Constituent assembly wanted to create a National Language for India, in which the whole Constitution were to be written and in which the proceedings of the assembly were to be held, there was a lot of protest from the South Indians leaders namely T.T Krishnamacharya, T.A. Ramalinga Chettiyar, Gopalaswamy Iyengar, K.V. Krishnamoorthy Rao etc., Raghunath Vinayak Dhulekhar, one of the member of Constituent Assembly, on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1946, a day after the constituent assembly was formed, stated that

<sup>5</sup> Bourne, J., & Reid, E. (2003). World Yearbook of Education 2003: Language Education. In *Google Books*. Routledge. [https://books.google.co.in/books?hl=en&lr=&id=0aRAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA231&dq=three+language+formula+india&ots=CZNPTgxyHm&sig=tE99o0jAss29B99adPaDJVcvJs&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=three%20language%20formula%20india&\\_false](https://books.google.co.in/books?hl=en&lr=&id=0aRAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA231&dq=three+language+formula+india&ots=CZNPTgxyHm&sig=tE99o0jAss29B99adPaDJVcvJs&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=three%20language%20formula%20india&_false)

“People who do not know Hindustani have no right to stay in India. People who are present in the House to fashion a constitution for India and do not know Hindustani are not worthy to be members of this assembly. They had better leave”. Later, after a three-year long debate, it was decided Hindi would be the “Official Language” of India<sup>6</sup>. (Jayasundara, 2014)

Moreover, there is a widespread belief that all Indians know Hindi (according to 2011 Census, only 43% in India know Hindi. This 43% also includes Bhojpuri etc.). People in Tamil Nadu are triggered on the basis of the Linguistic sentiments because of various things that happen in India. In August 2020, Ms. Kanimozhi, Tamil Nadu MP, was asked by an CISF Officer as to whether she was an Indian. This was because she asked her to speak in Tamil or Hindi as she doesn't know Hindi<sup>7</sup>. (Kolappan, 2020).

Very Recently, when AYUSH was conducting webinar, the AYUSH official said that those who do not understand Hindi may leave the meeting. In this way, the Non- Hindi speakers always feel that they are neglected<sup>8</sup>.

It is worth mentioning Gandhi, who had enormous admiration for South Indian Languages, was of the opinion, that Hindi/Urdu alone could become the lingua franca of India. So, the agitation that Hindi would be imposed someday on Non- Hindi Language is quite reasonable fear and it was there in India before India got Independence and continues even today.

### 5. Problems created by Three- Language Formula

The most sensitive issue of Language has not been addressed properly in the New National Education Policy 2020. It is truly appreciative if a child learns more than one language in a multi-lingual country like India. But it should be left to a child (or) a person to choose how many languages he/she wants to learn. This Privilege of choosing how many languages is being violated by the National Education Policy 2020.

The Three- Language Formula does not give the full autonomy to the students to choose the language they want to learn. Paragraph 4.5 of the National Education Policy initially says that “Three Languages learned by children will be the choices of States, regions, and of course the students themselves” but later part of the sentence states that “so long as at least two of the three languages are native of India”. Hence one could understand that freedom of choosing languages is subject to restrictions (i.e.) two language being Native of India. Again, the student's scope of choosing his/her own language is restricted to a large extent.

<sup>6</sup> Jayasundara, N. S. (2014, November). *Download Limit Exceeded*. Citeseerx.Ist. Psu.Edu.

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.652.5611&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Kolappan, B. (2020, August 9). CISF orders enquiry after DMK MP Kanimozhi asked “are you Indian” at airport. *The Hindu*. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/cisf-orders-enquiry-after-dmk-mp-kanimozhi-asked-are-you-indian-at-airport/article32309977.ece>

<sup>8</sup> *Tamil Nadu Ayush doctors told to exit webinar as union govt official firm on speaking only in Hindi*. (2020, August 22). *The New Indian Express*. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/tamil-nadu/2020/aug/22/tamil-nadu-ayush-doctors-told-to-exit-webinar-as-union-govt-official-firm-on-speaking-only-in-hindi-2186771.html>

The main point that is said in favor of the Three Language Formula is that while a South Indian would learn English, their regional language and a North Indian Language, North Indians would learn English, Hindi and South Indian Language. Hence, they say, South Indian Language or Regional Language can be promoted. This provision is not a new invention introduced by National Education Policy 2020. Already the other two National Policy on Education had the same kind of provision and this provision has been in operation for nearly 50 years in India. But till now there is no sign of increase in the speakers of Regional Language. The Census Result shows that except Hindi all the regional language speakers are dropping. According to 1971 Census the percentage of Telugu speakers against the whole population was 8.76% and now according to 2011 census only 6.7% Indians speak Telugu. In 1971 the Malayalam speakers were 4% in the total population and now in 2011 only 2.88% people speak Malayalam<sup>9</sup>. If the North Indians were to study the South Indian Languages the speakers should have increased. This evidently shows that already the Regional Languages are in the verge of extinction. If these languages are not given due importance, they would vanish one day from the Indian Society.

Now many National Exams are conducted in English and Hindi. If to promote Hindi, English is removed from the National Exams (because it does not come under the “Modern Indian Language” as it is not in Schedule VIII of the Indian Constitution) and if Hindi is to be the only medium to write the National Exam, it would give unfair advantage to Hindi Speakers as they would have better proficiency in Hindi<sup>10</sup>.

It is not practically possible to implement the Three- Language Formula in its true spirit. The Three Language Formula states that students would be given autonomy to choose the language. But practically it is not possible. As per the policy, the student can choose any two “Modern Indian Language”. There are 22 “Modern Indian Languages” in India. To formulate such a policy there should be minimum 22 language teachers in a school. Mind, Foreign Language Teachers and Regional Language Teachers are not included. How is it possible to have so many language teachers all over India? Naturally, the students will be forced to choose from only one or two languages that a school would offer. Thus, the policy has ignored the practical possibility of implementation and has gone much beyond reality<sup>11</sup>.

Though Central Government has said that for the Hindi Speaking state there would be recommendation for choosing South Indian Languages, in the Three Language Formula a strong offering is made for taking

<sup>9</sup> Pruthi, R. (2018, July 6). *Language Census 2011: Surge in Hindi and English speakers; Tribal language speakers decline*. Jagranjosh.Com. <https://www.jagranjosh.com/current-affairs/language-census-2011-surge-in-hindi-speakers-south-indian-language-and-urdu-speakers-decline-1530869001-1>

<sup>10</sup> B, S. J. (2019, July 21). *Can the Three Language Formula be implemented?* Star of Mysore. [https://starofmysore.com/can-the-three-language-formula-be-implemented/y\\_solutions](https://starofmysore.com/can-the-three-language-formula-be-implemented/y_solutions)

<sup>11</sup> *Three language formula for CBSE - Pros and Cons*. (2017, June 2). Wwww.Careerride.Com. <https://www.careerride.com/view/three-language-formula-for-cbse-pros-and-cons-32066.aspx>

Sanskrit as the Third Language. Hence there is doubt as to which language the Central Government want to promote<sup>12</sup>.

Already the Indian Student have to study Five subjects. Now one more is added. Now a student has study six subjects. This would be hard for a student to learn six languages (i.e.) 3 languages and 3 subjects

Language is not only a means of Communication. It is an identity for the people who speak that Language. Studies show that Language is a very important phenomenon for determination of behavior<sup>13</sup>. Hence Language is a very important aspect of Human Life and hence Government should not interfere in selecting Languages. It should be left with the hands of every individual to choose his/her Language.

## 6. Solution

Bringing changes in Three Language Policy is the need of the hour. The Three Language Formula mandates that a child should learn three languages: two Indian Language and one Foreign Language. Even if a child wants to learn two Foreign Languages, he/ she cannot do so. In other words, he/she can choose extra Foreign Language but not as a part of the Language in Three – Language Formula, but as an extra Language. A child should not be compelled to learn compelled to learn Two Native Language. A language should not be forced on anybody. Choosing of a Language should be based on the Future needs. Future needs differ from person to person. If he/she wants to learn three Foreign Language, as a part of three- Language Formula, he/she should be allowed to do so. Hence, the mandate of learning Two Indian Language need to be removed.

In the same way, he/she may be in a need to learn more Indian Language (i.e.) three Indian Language, the policy should be flexible enough to allow this. A freedom should be given to select the number of Foreign Language and “Modern Indian Language one wants to learn. Hence, the mandate which constraints the freedom of selecting the number of Indian Language and Foreign Language need to be removed.

The present Three Language Formula just recommends the Hindi Speaking state people to take South Indian Language as their Third Language. Instead of this policy being, it would be appreciable if South Indian Language is made mandatory. By doing so, it would be widely believed by the South Indian States that their language is learned by many in India, and that they would find it justifiable to learn Hindi. In this way both Hindi and South Indian Languages would flourish hand- in – hand.

The Three Language Formula must be abolished and Two- Language Formula need to be formulated (i.e.) English and Regional Language. Already one need to learn English to communicate with the world outside India. Learning Hindi to Communicate inside India is truly undesirable. Why should a person from the Non-Hindi speaking state should learn Hindi as a separate link language in India? If Hindi is to be used as Link

<sup>12</sup> P, C. (2020, August 16). *NEP 1: Elephant in the room*. The Indian Express. [https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/nep-national-education-policy-p-chidambaram-6556452/lite/?\\_twitter\\_impression=true](https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/nep-national-education-policy-p-chidambaram-6556452/lite/?_twitter_impression=true)

<sup>13</sup> Ribes-Iñesta, E. (2007). HUMAN BEHAVIOR AS LANGUAGE: SOME THOUGHTS ON WITTGENSTEIN. *Behavior and Philosophy*, 34, 109–121. <http://www.behavior.org/resources/183.pdf>

Language it would create an unfair advantage to Hindi Speaking People as their fluency in Hindi cannot be compared with that of the people in Non- Hindi Speaking States. Instead if English is the link- language, neither of states will have unfair advantage. English will be learned by both Hindi – Speaking and Non- Hindi Speaking states and it would be fair for both Hindi and Non- Hindi Speaking states.

In today's world Artificial Intelligence has reached enormous height. Now AI can translate any language into any language in no time. Now, it is not same as that was in 20<sup>th</sup> century to learn a language. Google can translate anything and everything. Also learning all the language that we might think useful is not a brilliant idea. Our technology is capable of doing everything and there is no need at all to learn all the language. So, it would be desirable to learn our regional language and English instead of learning many languages. In this way one could also have his/her regional language.

## 7.Conclusion

Though the National Education Policy aims at developing the education system in India, the Three Language Policy, one of the most important constituents of the National Education Policy, has lot of flaws in it. Bringing new laws in the subject matter of Language is a much sensitive issue. It is because Language is not a mere means of communication. A Language in order to develop itself takes centuries time. It is a product of society. In one-way Language could be said as a Child of the Society. No mother wants her child to die. Instead, they want their child to live a long life – a long life till the end of the world. But the introduction of the Three Language Policy has the potential to kill the regional language. Moreover, the need for a Three Language Formula is still not felt among the Regional Language speaking States. At least, among the states that oppose the Three Language Formula. If there is a need, surely without any law they would learn three languages. Making law that would force them to learn languages is truly injustice to people. Also, the Present Three Language Formula is almost impossible to be implemented in its true spirit. Moreover, this policy has the tendency to increase the burden of the students. There is a need to change the Three Language Policy or it would be better to abolish the Three Language Policy. In that way, there is a whole lot of possibility to save regional languages of India.