Higher education in regional languages

Why in news?

Indian policy's aim to empower the disadvantaged by turning the higher education multilingual has to be analyzed in the prism of internationalization of education

What are the recent developments in this regard?

- The National Education Policy (NEP) emphasized the use of regional languages for instruction at primary and higher education levels
- It has led to the launch of technical courses in five Indian languages by 14 engineering colleges for the new academic year
- There has been substantial demand for vernacular-language educational material in platforms like YouTube
- Several edtech startups have also tapped this market

UN General Assembly had proclaimed **2019** as the International Year of Indigenous Languages

Yuelu Proclamation by (UNESCO) aims to protect linguistic resources and diversity

What are the positive aspects of stressing on regional languages?

- Student enrollment will increase exponentially
- Will equip students to solve local problems with a global mindset
- Diminish the gap between the English-speaking population and those who speak in their mother tongues
- Positive impact on learning outcomes for students at schools
- Improved parental involvement and support in studies
- Promotes familiarity with the mother tongue
- Relevant for first-generation learners who are unfamiliar with the

concepts in an alien language

What are the challenges lying ahead?

- Availability of study material such as textbooks and scholarly literature in regional language is rare.
- For this AICTE has launched an artificial intelligence-powered tool for translation
- Industry placement of graduates trained in regional languages is questioned which could further inhibit job opportunities
- It may sharpen India's language divide
- Availability of faculty for regional-medium courses is another bottleneck
- Regional-medium students may be unable to reap the benefits of internationalisation of education because of language barrier
- It may prevent students from competing in global labour and education markets

Constitutional safeguards of regional languages

- **Article 29** - Right of minorities to conserve their language
- **Article 120 -** Right to members of Parliament to express themselves in their mother tongue
- **Article 350A** - Facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at primary stage
- **Article 350B** - Special Officer for linguistic minorities to be appointed by the President
- **Article 351** - Directive for development of the Hindi language
- The Eighth Schedule recognises 22 languages

What should be done?

- In the words of Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu, we need to move from a "mother tongue versus English" paradigm towards a "mother tongue plus English" approach
- A holistic approach with deep deliberation is needed in an increasingly globalized world

Source: Livemint



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