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CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

23rd February 2025

NEP & Three Language Policy

CONTEXT: Ruling out the possibility of implementing the NEP 2020, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister said that his government was against the policy as it was detrimental to the interests of students and for the State at large.

- *'evolving development needs of India'*
- Overhaul of the Education System
- Replaced **National Policy on Education, 1986** (modified in 1992)
- **Salient features-**
  - Universal Access
  - Shift to a 5+3+3+4 system
  - Multilingualism
  - Inclusive Education
  - GER Enhancement
  - Research Focus
  - Language Preservation
  - Internationalization
  - Enhanced Funding
  - PARAKH Assessment Center
  - Technology Integration
  - Gender Inclusion Fund
  - Special Education Zones

Prospects
- Holistic Development - beyond Rote Learning;
'complexities' of the 21st century
- Improved Equity and Inclusion-
  - ECCE
  - Focus on Mother-Tongue Instruction
  - Seeks to expand RTE, 2009
- Skill Development for Employability - WB data
- Empowering Teachers - four-year integrated B.Ed. degree program

Challenges
- Implementation Hurdles - Funding, Political Will, Collaboration
- Emphasis on Privatization
- Centralization of Power
- Digital Divide
- Teacher Training and Recruitment - NCTE
- Shifting Mindsets - from a rote-learning focused system

OBJECTIVES OF NEP-2020 INVOLVING PEDAGOGY:
1. LEARNER CENTRIC TEACHING
2. DISCUSSION BASED TEACHING
3. DELIVERING VALUE BASED EDUCATION
4. DEVELOPING MULTIDISCIPLINARY THINKERS
5. DEVELOPING CREATIVITY
6. DISCOVERY ORIENTED TEACHING
7. DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKERS
8. DEVELOPIING DECISION MAKING

THRUST AREAS:
- Multidisciplinary and Holistic Education
- Digital Empowerment and Online Education
- Skill Development and Employability
- Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Capacity Building of Teachers for Quality Education
- Governance and Autonomy
- Quality, Ranking and Accreditation
- Equitable and Inclusive Education
- Promotion of Indian Languages and Indian Knowledge System
- Internationalization of Education

NEP & Three Language Policy

CONTEXT: Ruling out the possibility of implementing the NEP 2020, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister said that his government was against the policy as it was detrimental to the interests of students and for the State at large.

Present Context
- The Union Government has withheld **₹2,152 crore** meant for TN under the **Samagra Shiksha** scheme.

About Samagra Shiksha
The Union Budget, 2018-19, has proposed to treat school education holistically without segmentation from pre-nursery to Class 12. Samagra Shiksha - an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class 12 has been, therefore, prepared with the broader goal of improving school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes. It subsumes the three schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).

- The reason: TN's refusal to join the **PM SHRI scheme** due to its opposition to the **NEP 2020**.
- Key point of contention - **three-language formula** in NEP 2020, which TN strongly opposes.

About PM SHRI

PM SHRI School is a centrally sponsored scheme by the Government of India. This initiative is intended to develop more than 14500 PM SHRI Schools managed by Central Government/State/UT Government/local bodies including KVS and NVS in which every student feels welcomed and cared for, where a safe and stimulating learning environment exists, where a wide range of learning experiences are offered, and where good physical infrastructure and appropriate resources conducive to learning are available to all students.
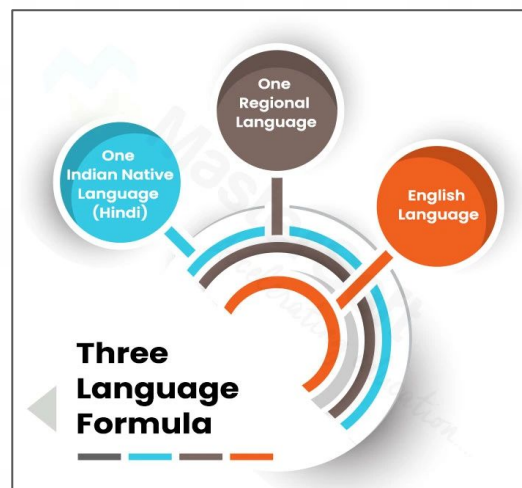
It will nurture students in a way that they become engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by the National Education Policy 2020.

What Does NEP 2020 State?
- Retains - **three-language formula**; 1968 NEP.
- The **NEP 1968** - Hindi compulsory in non-Hindi speaking States, while the 2020 version - allows flexibility.
- **NEP 2020 states that:**
  - Two of the three languages must be Indian languages.
  - Students can choose languages, and Hindi is not mandatory.
  - Bilingual teaching (mother tongue + English) is encouraged.
  - Sanskrit - special emphasis as an optional subject.

Tamil Nadu's Opposition to the NEP 2020

- Long-standing resistance to Hindi imposition - 1937.
- Major **anti-Hindi protests occurred in 1965** - violent agitations and casualties.
- In 1968 - first DMK government - passed a resolution to scrap the three-language formula - remove Hindi from schools.
- TN - two-language policy (Tamil and English)
- Both - DMK and AIADMK - historically opposed - three-language formula.
- In 2019, TN - **Kasturirangan Committee** - drop the mandatory Hindi clause from the draft NEP.

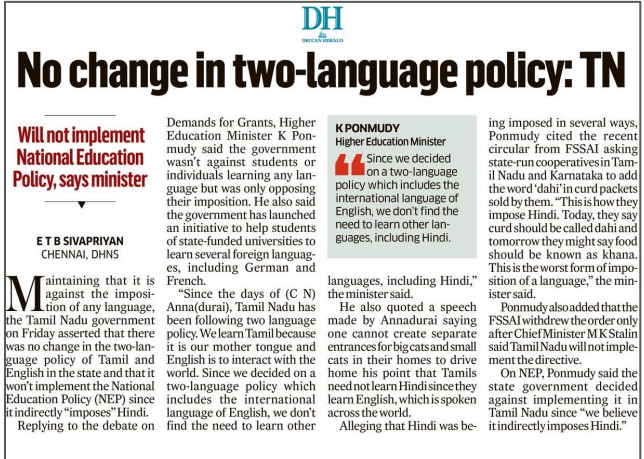Three Language Formula: One Regional Language, One Indian Native Language (Hindi), English Language

NEP & Three Language Policy

CONTEXT: Ruling out the possibility of implementing the NEP 2020, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister said that his government was against the policy as it was detrimental to the interests of students and for the State at large.

Why the Three-Language Formula is Seen as a Hindi Imposition?

- Political parties, activists - TN - **"backdoor" method to impose Hindi**.
- They argue that:
  - Practical implementation of three languages - inevitably lead to **Hindi being pushed**.
  - The Centre - **₹50 crore (2019)** to appoint **Hindi teachers in non-Hindi speaking States** - not provided similar support for **regional languages in North India**.
  - KVs lack sufficient **regional language** teachers, reflecting a **bias towards Hindi**.
- **Union Education Minister's stance:**
  - Mr. Pradhan has stated that the **three-language policy is non-negotiable**; criticized TN for its **"myopic vision"** towards NEP 2020.
- **Tamil Nadu's Response:**
  - CM - Centre attempting to **impose Hindi** under the guise of NEP
  - He has vowed that **TN's interests will not be compromised** as long as the his party is in power

No change in two-language policy: TN

Will not implement National Education Policy, says minister

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

K PONMUDY
Higher Education Minister

> Since we decided on a two-language policy which includes the international language of English, we don't find the need to learn other languages, including Hindi.

Maintaining that it is against the imposition of any language, the Tamil Nadu government on Friday asserted that there was no change in the two-language policy of Tamil and English in the state and that it won't implement the National Education Policy (NEP) since it indirectly "imposes" Hindi.

Replying to the debate on Demands for Grants, Higher Education Minister K Ponmudy said the government wasn't against students or individuals learning any language but was only opposing their imposition. He also said the government has launched an initiative to help students of state-funded universities to learn several foreign languages, including German and French.

"Since the days of (C N) Anna(durai), Tamil Nadu has been following two language policy. We learn Tamil because it is our mother tongue and English is to interact with the world. Since we decided on a two-language policy which includes the international language of English, we don't find the need to learn other languages, including Hindi," the minister said.

He also quoted a speech made by Annadurai saying one cannot create separate entrances for big cats and small cats in their homes to drive home his point that Tamils need not learn Hindi since they learn English, which is spoken across the world.

Alleging that Hindi was being imposed in several ways, Ponmudy cited the recent circular from FSSAI asking state-run cooperatives in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to add the word 'dahi' in curd packets sold by them. "This is how they impose Hindi. Today, they say curd should be called dahi and tomorrow they might say food should be known as khana. This is the worst form of imposition of a language," the minister said.

Ponmudy also added that the FSSAI withdrew the order only after Chief Minister M K Stalin said Tamil Nadu will not implement the directive.

On NEP, Ponmudy said the state government decided against implementing it in Tamil Nadu since "we believe it indirectly imposes Hindi."

Way Forward

- **Constructive dialogue** - Centre and TN - essential.
- Education - **Concurrent List** (moved from State List during Emergency) - both Centre and State must cooperate.
- TN's **two-language policy has proven successful**, with:
  - **High Gross Enrolment Ratio**
  - **Low dropout rates**
- The **Samagra Shiksha scheme** - crucial for education, and disputes over a third language should not hinder **funding for students**.

Mains Practice Question
""The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aims to promote multilingualism through the three-language formula, yet it has faced strong resistance from certain states, particularly Tamil Nadu. Critically analyze the merits and challenges of the three-language policy in the context of India's linguistic diversity and federalism. Also, suggest a way forward to balance national integration with regional linguistic aspirations."

(15 Marks, 250 words)

Human-Animal Conflicts

CONTEXT: Human-Animal conflicts are on rise. In Wayanad, 7 people have lost their life in the last 2 months.

- *'struggles that emerge when the presence or behaviour of wildlife poses a threat to human interests'* - negative impacts on people and/or wildlife.
- Usually occurs in areas - wildlife and human populations overlap.
- Management of HWC is the primary responsibility of the respective State/ UT Government.
  - Recently, Kerala has also declared HWC as a state-specific disaster, shifting the responsibility to the State Disaster Management Authority.

Key Drivers of Human Wildlife Conflict

Ecological Drivers	Anthropological Drivers	Wildlife Drivers
> Seasonal changes, natural calamities, extreme weather events, etc. > Ex. Melting sea ice in the Arctic has increased the probability of negative human– polar bear interaction.	> Changes in **Land use** causing **habitat loss, expansion of agriculture, infrastructure development** including (urbanisation, linear infrastructure, extractive industries, etc.).	> Changes in **animals' life cycles, movement patterns** of animals, presence **of invasive alien species**, etc.

606 (574 in 2019) and 82 (49 in 2019) Human deaths were reported in 2023-24 in various Indian States due to elephant and tiger attacks respectively.

Impact of the Human-Animal Conflict

- **Impact on Wildlife**: threatens survival of species - retaliation or pre-emptive killings
- **Impact on Ecosystems**: damage to crops and livestock population - predator-prey balance
- **Impact on Social Dynamics**: Discord - farmers & conservationists
- **Impact on Local Communities**: vulnerable, poor and marginalised communities
- **Impact on Commodity Production**: affect businesses - agricultural produce - decrease in their productivity and profitability.

- **Other Impacts**: Livelihood insecurity; food insecurity; translocation of animals; etc.

Initiatives taken for mitigation of HWC

- Creation of Protected Areas Networks
- Species specific Guidelines
- Centrally Sponsored Schemes: 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant'
- National Wildlife Action Plan 2017-2035 (NWAP)
- National Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan (2021-26): 'harmonious co-existence and overall well-being'

Way Forward

- **Shifting focus** - 'Conflict to Coexistence' - holistic and integrated approach; Ex. The Wild Life (Protection) Act of India, 1972
- **Holistic understanding the conflict**
- **Building Barriers**
- **Enabling Policy Frameworks**: WWF suggested for inclusion of HWC management plan within the SDGs or UN CBD

Human-Animal Conflicts

CONTEXT: Human-Animal conflicts are on rise. In Wayanad, 7 people have lost their life in the last 2 months.

- **Role of Community**:
  Community-based volunteers or RRTs - 'friends of wild animals'

Mains Practice Question

"Human-animal conflict has emerged as a significant challenge in India's conservation efforts, leading to ecological, economic, and social repercussions." Discuss the causes of human-animal conflict in India and suggest viable strategies for mitigation while ensuring both wildlife conservation and human well-being.

(15 Marks, 250 words)

EU & European Commission

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

AT A time when Europe-US ties are facing unprecedented strain, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will be in India from February 27-28, along with 27 Commissioners of the EU, called the College of Commissioners.

The visit of EU's College of Commissioners together — a member from each of the EU's 27 member countries — to India is the first-ever. Announcing the visit, the MEA said, "This will be the first-ever visit of EU College of Commissioners together to India and among the first such visits since the start of the mandate of the current European Commission in December 2024 after the European parliamentary elections held in June 2024."

Calling the visit "first and momentous", EU's envoy to India Hervé Delphin said on X that the visit "... speaks for itself about the

EU President Ursula von der Leyen

importance both the EU and India attach to taking their strategic partnership to a new level."

During the visit, PM Narendra Modi will hold delegation-level talks with EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

MEA said, "The second ministerial meeting of India-EU Trade and Technology Council and bilateral ministerial meetings between the European Commissioners and their Indian counterparts will also be held during the visit."

The visit was scheduled earlier but the flurry of events surrounding the US-Russia talks in Riyadh seeking to end the Ukraine war — keeping Ukraine and Europe out — has brought a sense of urgency and purpose to the visit.

US President Donald Trump's change in stance to engage directly with Russia, has presented a unique set of challenges for Europe. Sources said the issue is "naturally" going to be part of the discussions between PM Modi and the EU chief and her delegation. India has nuanced its position on the war: moving from "two parties to the conflict" to "parties concerned", faced with the new geo-political reality of US-Russia talks and the rapidly changing contours of the US-Europe trans-Atlantic alliance.

Direct US-Russia talks have rattled Europe and upended the US policy under the Biden administration of not doing anything without Ukraine being part of the negotiations.

Sources said this is acknowledgement of the new geopolitical realities that New Delhi is confronted with and the imperative for diplomatic space as it navigates its way through this change.

That task is cut out. At the Swiss peace conference, India did not sign the joint communique ar-

guing that Russia was not at the table. Now, it remains to be seen how India negotiates when Russia is at the table, but Ukraine is not. "This is most likely going to figure in the discussions, since the EU was very active at the Swiss peace conference," the source said.

It will be von der Leyen's third visit to India after a bilateral trip in April 2022, and the G20 Leaders' Summit in September 2023.

Sources said that issues related to AI and other tech collaborations are also likely to be discussed, following up from the recent discussions at the AI Action summit in Paris earlier this month where Modi and von der Leyen were present. India and the EU have been strategic partners since 2004. "As the two sides enter the third decade of the strategic partnership, the visit of President von der Leyen and the EU College of Commissioners will pave the way for further strengthening of bilateral relations based on growing convergences," the MEA said.

What is European Union?

The European Union (EU) is a political and **economic union of 27 member states** located primarily in Europe. The EU was established by the **Maastricht Treaty**, which entered into force on November 1, 1993. The main goal of the EU is to promote cooperation and integration among its member states in order to enhance economic and political stability in Europe. The EU has its own currency, the **Euro**, which is used by **19 of the member states.** It has a single market where goods, services, and capital can move freely.

What is the genesis and evolution of the EU?

The EU has its roots in the aftermath of World War II when European leaders sought to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the continent.

- **European Economic Community (EEC), 1957**: It was established by the Treaty of Rome. It aimed to create a common market among its member states and to promote economic growth and cooperation.

- **European Free Trade Association, 1960**: It was created to promote free trade and economic integration between certain countries not in the EEC.

- **First direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979**

- **Launch of the Erasmus Programme, 1987**: It is launched to fund university students wishing to study in another European country.

- **Maastricht Treaty, 1993**: It transformed the EC into the EU and expanded the scope beyond economic integration to include political, social, and security policies.

- **Euro introduced, 1999**: The euro was introduced in 11 countries for commercial and financial transactions only.

- **Treaty of Lisbon, 2007:** It aimed to make the EU more democratic, efficient and transparent, and thereby able to tackle global challenges such as climate change, security and sustainable development.

- Croatia became the 27th EU member in 2013.

- **United Kingdom(UK) votes to leave the EU, 2016**: In a referendum in 2016, 52% of voters in the UK voted for the UK to leave the EU.
    - The United Kingdom left the EU in 2020.

EU & European Commission

What is the governance structure of the EU?

There are 4 main decision-making institutions that lead the EU's administration.

- **European Council:** The European Council is made up of the heads of state or governments of the EU member states. It sets the EU's overall political direction.
- **European Commission**: The European Commission is the executive branch of the EU.
- **European Parliament**: The European Parliament is the directly elected legislative body of the EU.
- **Council of the EU**: It is the main decision-making body of the EU. It represents the interests of member states and is responsible for adopting legislation and coordinating policies.

The work of the above institutions is complemented by other institutions and bodies, which include:

- **Court of Justice of the European Union**: It is the supreme court of the EU. It ensures that EU law is interpreted and applied in a consistent manner across all member states.
- **European Central Bank**: It is responsible for keeping prices stable in the euro area and its monetary and exchange rate policy.
- **European Court of Auditors**: It contributes to improving EU financial management and acts as the independent guardian of the financial interests of EU citizens.

European Commission:

About	● European Commission (EC) is the executive body of the European Union (EU). It's responsible for representing the EU's common interests.
Headquarters	● Brussels, Belgium
Roles	**Proposing new laws and policies** ●The EC uses its "right of initiative" to of the EU. **Managing the EU budget** ●The EC manages the day-to-day business of implementing EU policies and spending EU funds. **Ensuring correct application of EU laws and policies** ●The EC ensures that EU policies and laws are correctly applied across Member States. **Negotiating international agreements** ●The EC negotiates international agreements on behalf of the EU.
Composition	●The EC is led by a President and 27 Commissioners, known as "the College", who together make decisions on the Commission's political and strategic direction.
Appointment process	●The candidate is put forward by national leaders in the European Council, taking account of the results of the European Parliament elections. He or she needs the support of a majority of members of the European Parliament in order to be elected.
Tenure	●A new College of Commissioners is appointed every five years.

Principal Secretary to PM

Former Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das has been appointed Principal Secretary II to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said a notification issued by the Secretariat of the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on Saturday.

Mr. Das served as RBI Governor from 2018 to 2024, a crucial period for the Indian economy along with the uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

His appointment is being seen as the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) bolstering its financial management expertise in the uncertain geo-economic situation prevailing currently.

Mr. Das, a Tamil Nadu-cadre Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the 1980 batch, will work alongside Principal Secretary P.K. Mishra, who will continue in his post.

Changes in the Prime Minister's Office at this level have been rare under Mr. Modi, with former Principal Secretary Nripendra Misra retiring from the post only after he had served a whole term from 2014 to 2019.

Mr. P.K. Mishra had been serving as Additional Principal Secretary for a decade, and after Mr. Nripendra Misra's superannuation, he became the Principal Secretary.

The main functions of the officeholder often include, but are not limited to:

- Advising the prime minister on domestic and foreign policy matters
- Overseeing the affairs of ministries and departments assigned by the prime minister
- Coordinating activities in the PMO
- Dealing with official, governmental, important paperwork in the PMO
- Preparing notes on issues to be discussed by the prime minister with senior politicians, bureaucrats, and other dignitaries.
- Placing before the PM critical files of importance for approval and instructions

The Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister is generally considered the latter's most crucial aide

Prelims Booster

The Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of India is the **administrative head of the PMO.** The officeholder is generally a retired civil servant, mostly commonly from the IAS and occasionally from the IFS.

Since 2019, the officeholder has been accorded with the **status of a cabinet minister**.The office holder ranks 7th in the Order of Precedence of India.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of India

भारत के प्रधानमंत्री के प्रधानसचिव

State Emblem of India

Incumbent
Pramod Kumar Mishra and **Shaktikanta Das**
since 11 September 2019 and since 22 February 2025

Accessible India Campaign

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 1 : Schemes for Vulnerable Sections
Newspaper : The Indian Express, **Page No : 12**

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 22

THE COMPTROLLER and Auditor General (CAG) has found in a draft report that the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) did not conduct pre-access audits in around 80 per cent of the old Central government buildings examined by it, before retrofitting them to make them accessible to persons with disabilities (PwDs).

Under the Union government's Accessible India Campaign, launched in 2015, at least 50 per cent of all government buildings in the national capital and state capitals were to be made fully accessible to persons with disabilities by June 2022.

So far, the CPWD, which maintains Central government buildings, has retrofitted 1,100 buildings, according to government data. Another target of the campaign was to complete accessibility audits of at least 25-50 most important government buildings.

In its draft compliance audit report on the implementation of PwD-friendly features in public buildings by the CPWD, the CAG looked at the retrofitting projects in 170 old buildings.

The draft report has found that "pre-access audit was carried out in respect of only 34 buildings out of 170." The report flagged the "lack of planning for monitoring of expenditure" on the retrofitting scheme. It also highlights that the post-access audit was not conducted in 60 out of the 170 old buildings and 23 out of 27 new ones.

The report, which is yet to be finalised and tabled in Parliament, flagged deficiencies in the data reported by the CPWD. Out of 1,110 retrofitted buildings, the CPWD uploaded details of 865 buildings and of the 185 buildings selected for audit, the department provided details of 134 with no photographs of the accessibility features.

Among the buildings covered in the audit are National Museum in Delhi, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie, Central Government Health Scheme dispensaries across Delhi, office buildings of the Income Tax Department and IITs.

When reached for comment, the CPWD said its engineers, who are taught in its training institute by accessibility experts, carried out the pre-access audits in those buildings that were not examined by auditors. It said estimates of the retrofitting projects were prepared after site surveys as per the harmonised guidelines on accessibility issued by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA). "Hence, it is presumed that in-house site survey, i.e. pre access audit, was carried out by the CPWD engineers. Some features of the guidelines could not be complied with due to space constraints and those being structurally not feasible," the CPWD said.

It said the post-audit of the remaining buildings was being done by the CPWD and field units had been directed to comply with the CAG's findings wherever structurally/technically feasible.

"The MoHUA has issued the harmonised guidelines and standards for universal accessibility in India 2016 and 2021. The CPWD has taken up the work to retrofit existing buildings as per these harmonised guidelines.

These harmonised guidelines have been made mandatory and are being complied with in all new buildings being constructed by the CPWD. The field units of the CPWD have been directed to install a suggestion box in the reception of the building, so that changes can be made as per these suggestions," the CPWD reply stated.

The draft report had been sent to the CPWD for its comments by the CAG in October last year, to which the CPWD replied in December.

Nine years ago, the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan, also known as the Accessible India Campaign, embarked on a mission to reshape India into a truly inclusive society. Launched on 3rd December 2015 by the Honourable Prime Minister, this flagship initiative was a direct response to the long-overlooked challenges faced by persons with disabilities. Rooted in the vision of *"Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas,"* the campaign aimed to ensure universal accessibility across three vital domains: built infrastructure, transport systems, and the information and communication technology (ICT) ecosystem.

Accessible India Campaign
Accessible India - Empowered India

India, as a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), had committed to creating an accessible environment for persons with disabilities. Yet, prior to 2015, efforts lacked a cohesive strategy or enforceable timelines. The Persons with Disabilities Act of 1995, though welfare-oriented, did not adequately address accessibility issues or empower persons with disabilities to demand their rights. Recognising this gap, the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan was launched to bring accessibility to the forefront of national development.

The campaign introduced a structured approach, focusing on making public buildings, transport networks like buses and trains, and digital platforms accessible to Divyangjans. It also sought to create awareness and set enforceable standards for accessibility compliance. Although initially planned to conclude by March 2024, the campaign's objectives have been absorbed into the Creation of Barrier-Free Environment Scheme under the broader umbrella of the Scheme for Implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (SIPDA). This transition reinforces the idea that accessibility is a continuous endeavour, requiring sustained efforts to meet evolving challenges.

Accessible India Campaign

SUGAMYA BHARAT ABHIYAN

Key Achievements So Far

1748 government buildings retrofitted with accessibility features.

709 railway stations fully accessible, 4,068 partially accessible.

All 35 international airports now feature accessibility features such as ramps and Braille systems.

95 Central Government websites made accessible under MeitY's Content Management Framework.

3,120 out of 3,533 bus stations across 24 States /UTs equipped with accessibility features.

On pleas from parents and students, Eklavya schools to go English medium from Class 9

Abhinay Lakshman
NEW DELHI

After multiple representations from students of the Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) and their parents, the National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS) has issued a circular introducing English medium of instruction in all EMRS from Class 9, beginning the next academic session (2025-26).

However, the NESTS has said that the existing medium of instruction would continue for those batches going into Classes 10 and 12 in 2025-26. "Schools are advised to organise training sessions, workshops, and provide supplementary learning materials to facilitate the effective implementation of this change."

Ekalavya schools had been set up to provide quality education to students belonging to the Scheduled Tribes. FILE PHOTO

The EMRSs had been set up by the government to provide quality education to students belonging to the Scheduled Tribes. While the Eklavya schools in States such as Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal and some in Chhattisgarh say they have been following English medium, those in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh are using Hindi as the medium of instruction.

Challenging transition
Some of the teachers, principals, and district officials in Rajasthan and Jharkhand told *The Hindu* that transitioning to English would be a challenging task that might take three to four years to take effect. They said there was a "huge aspiration" among the parents to see their children learn a global language like English.

Sources said the NESTS had received multiple representations from parents and students in States such as Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat, requesting English medium of instruction. They also highlighted that not all EMRSs had teachers who could teach in English.

In the circular issued on Tuesday, NESTS said it was introducing English medium of instruction across such schools to bring uniformity and to "enhance the academic standards and professional prospects of all EMRS students". It will help them to better prepare for competitive exams and "broaden their access to universities in India and abroad, where English remains the primary language of instruction". This is also in keeping with the government's stated objective of developing the Eklavya schools along the lines of the Navodaya Vidyalayas.

While principals and teachers in Rajasthan and Jharkhand acknowledge the long-term benefit of the transition, they are nervous about the immediate consequences.

A principal at an EMRS in Rajasthan said, "Hindi medium was being followed so far at the school. We have now started teaching in Hindi and English in Class 6. It will be hard for students entering Classes 9 and 11 this academic session."

About Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS)

- EMRS **started in the year 1997-98** to **impart quality education to ST children in remote areas** to enable them to access the best opportunities in education and to bring them at par with the general population.

- EMRS are established in the States/UTs **from the grants received under Article 275(1) of the Constitution of India.**

- **Features**:

  - EMRS are **co-educational residential schools** from **Class VI to XII.**

  - Eklavya schools **will be on par with Navodaya Vidyalayas** and will **have special facilities for preserving local art and culture** besides providing training in **sports and skill development.**

  - Each school has a **capacity of 480 students** with equal number of seats for boys and girls.

  - **Non-ST students can be admitted** in these schools on seats **up to 10%** of the total seats.

  - **CBSE curriculum** is followed in these schools, and education is completely free.

- The **National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS),** an autonomous organization has been set up under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs **to establish and manage EMRS** across the country.

Government Target: As per the Budget 2018-19, **every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal population will have an EMRS** by the year 2022.

CII
Confederation of Indian Industry

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering Industry, Government and civil society, through advisory and consultative processes.

CII is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led and industry-managed organization, with around 9,000 members from the private as well as public sectors, including SMEs and MNCs, and an indirect membership of over 365,000 enterprises from 294 national and regional sectoral industry bodies.

For more than 125 years, CII has been engaged in shaping India's development journey and works proactively on transforming Indian Industry's engagement in national development. CII charts change by working closely with Government on policy issues, interfacing with thought leaders, and enhancing efficiency, competitiveness, and business opportunities for industry through a range of specialized services and strategic global linkages. It also provides a platform for consensus-building and networking on key issues.

Through its dedicated Centres of Excellence and Industry competitiveness initiatives, promotion of innovation and technology adoption, and partnerships for sustainability, CII plays a transformative part in shaping the future of the nation. Extending its agenda beyond business, CII assists industry to identify and execute corporate citizenship programmes across diverse domains including affirmative action, livelihoods, diversity management, skill development, empowerment of women, and sustainable development, to name a few.

For 2024-25, CII has identified "Globally Competitive India: Partnerships for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth" as its Theme, prioritizing 5 key pillars. During the year, it would align its initiatives and activities to facilitate strategic actions for driving India's global competitiveness and growth through a robust and resilient Indian industry.

With 70 offices, including 12 Centres of Excellence, in India, and 8 overseas offices in Australia, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Singapore, UAE, UK, and USA, as well as institutional partnerships with about 300 counterpart organizations in almost 100 countries, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the language policy under NEP 2020:

1. Students must compulsorily learn Hindi as one of the three languages.
2. Two of the three languages chosen by students must be Indian languages.
3. NEP 2020 promotes bilingual teaching, using the mother tongue along with English.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) Only One
b) Only Two
c) All Three
d) None

Answer: b

Q2. Which of the following are drivers of Human-Wildlife Conflict:

1. Melting sea ice in the Arctic
2. Changes in Land use causing expansion of agriculture
3. Linear infrastructure development in forest areas

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

a) 1 and 2 only
b) 1 and 3 only
c) 2 and 3 only
d) 1, 2, and 3

Answer: d

Q3. Match the following key events with their significance in the evolution of the European Union (EU):

Events	Significance
(A) **Treaty of Rome (1957)**	(1) Transformed EC into EU, expanded the scope beyond economic integration
(B) **Maastricht Treaty (1993)**	(2) Established the European Economic Community (EEC)
(C) **Lisbon Treaty (2007)**	(3) Aimed to make EU more democratic and efficient

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

a) A-2, B-1, C-3
b) A-1, B-2, C-3
c) A-3, B-1, C-2
d) A-2, B-3, C-1

Answer: a

Q4. Consider the following statements regarding Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS):

1. These schools provide free education and follow the CBSE curriculum.
2. Only Scheduled Tribe (ST) students are allowed admission to EMRS.

Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?

a) 1 only
b) 2 only
c) Both 1 and 2
d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: b

Q5. Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister of India?

1. The Principal Secretary to the PM is the administrative head of the PMO.
2. Since 2019, the Principal Secretary has been given the status of a Cabinet Minister.
3. The Principal Secretary holds the 7th rank in the Order of Precedence in India.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

a) Only One
b) Only Two
c) All Three
d) None

Answer: c

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