

## 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**