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# Maharashtra scraps new three language policy

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## Context

- Maharashtra **scrapped the introduction of the three-language policy for Classes 1 to 5 in State government schools** on Sunday, after two months of sustained opposition by academics, activists, and political parties, including the Nationalist Congress Party, which is part of the ruling coalition in the State.
- To decide the future of the policy, the government set up an expert committee to be headed by economist, educationist, and former Rajya Sabha member Narendra Jadhav.
- “The government has put the three-language formula on hold at present. The committee has sought three months,” a senior government official told The Hindu.

## National Education Policy 2020

- The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 mandates that **all students across the country must learn three languages in school**.
- Theoretically, NEP 2020 is **more flexible than the previous versions** of the three-language policy in India, which have always faced resistance not just in south India but also different States.
- Hindi is only one of the many Indian languages, and **States are free to choose any two Indian languages and one foreign language in the mix of three**, according to NEP 2020.
- However, there is this **fear that Hindi will become the default option as the second Indian language** apart from the native language
- **NEP 1968 made Hindi compulsory** across the nation, with specific language requirements for states.
- **Hindi-speaking states were to teach Hindi, English, and a modern Indian language** (preferably a South Indian language).
- **Non-Hindi-speaking states** were expected to teach **local language, Hindi, and English**
- NEP 2020 retains the three-language formula, introduced in the NEP of 1968.
- **Sanskrit is given special emphasis** as an optional choice in the three-language formula. And this is widely used as a third language in North India

## Constitutional Provisions

- Part XVII of the Indian constitution deals with the official languages in Articles 343 to 351.

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- **Article 351** states that, it is the **duty of the Union to encourage the spread of the Hindi language to make it lingua franca** (a shared language of communication used by people who are speakers of different languages) in India
- As per **Article 343(1)** of the Constitution of India, **Hindi in Devanagari script shall be the official language of the Union**. Apart from Hindi, **English was also made official language in India** after resistance to Hindi by Southern states
- The **Official Language Act, 1963** provides under Section 7 that the **use of Hindi or official language of a State in addition to the English language** may be authorized, with the consent of the President of India, by the Governor of the State **for the purpose of judgments, decrees etc. made by the High Court** for that State.

### **Schedule 8 of the constitution**

- **Schedule 8** of the Indian Constitution has recognised **22 Scheduled Languages**, including Hindi as well.
- It includes **Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri**.
- Of these languages, **14 were initially included in the Constitution**.
- **Sindhi language** was added by the 21st Amendment Act of **1967**.
- **Konkani, Manipuri, and Nepali** were included by the 71st Amendment Act of **1992**.
- **Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santhali** were added by the **92nd Amendment Act of 2003** which came into force in 2004.