Education in Regional Languages

Why in news?

The importance of using mother tongue in the teaching-learning process and creating educational materials has been emphasised in the New Education Policy (NEP) and initiatives like the NIPUN Bharat Mission.

What is a regional language?

> *Article 29-Protection of interests of minorities- Any section of the citizens having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.*

- It is a term used to refer to a language that is spoken by a sizeable number of people but it is not the de facto language of communication in the rest of the country.
- The language is used by people who have a population less than the majority of the state or nation.
- It is *not the official language* of the country.
- **Article 350A**- It facilities for instruction in *mother-tongue at primary stage.*
- It shall be the endeavour of every State and local authority to provide adequate facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups.
- The *President may issue such directions* to any State as he considers necessary or proper for securing the provision of such facilities.

To know about languages of India, click here

What is the significance of teaching in regional language?

- **Language as an identity**- In a diverse and culturally rich country like India, language is more than just a means of communication; it is the essence of our identity.
- **Crucial skills-** The foundational years of education lay the cornerstone for a child's future intellectual growth.
- It is imperative that children acquire and enhance their Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) skills, and language should not hinder the development of these crucial skills.

> *Neuroscientific research reveals that more than 85% of a person's brain development takes place before the age of 6.*

- **Fosters inclusivity-** It makes Right to Education under Article 21A a 'substantive right'.
- By offering education in regional languages, it breaks down language barriers, making education accessible to a wider audience and ensuring that no child feels left behind.
- **Preserve linguistic heritage-** Embracing regional languages in education helps preserve India's linguistic heritage.

India has over 22 officially recognised languages and hundreds of dialects, each with its own unique cultural and historical significance.

- **Enhance language proficiency-** Research suggests that multilingual individuals tend to have stronger communication skills, greater adaptability, and improved cognitive abilities.
- **Build an equitable education system -** It will ensure unbiased education and will be culturally and academically inclusive with better learning outcomes.
- **Incredible learning experience-** It allows the students to absorb the knowledge effectively leading to a higher level of optimism among students and boost students self-confidence.

Initiatives Taken to Promote Regional Languages
• **National Education Policy 2020-** It states that wherever possible, the medium of instruction must in the mother tongue or local languages. • This must be done until at least *class 5, but preferably till class 8.* • **NIPUN Bharat-** National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy is launched under *National Education Policy 2020.* • It promotes mother tongue-based instruction as an integral aspect of achieving Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) goals. • **Bhasha Sangam-** It is an initiative under the '*Ek Bharat Shreshta Bharat*' mission implemented by NCERT. • It aims to teach 100 sentences in 22 scheduled vernacular languages sentences in 22 scheduled vernacular languages in Devnagri script with translation in English language. • **Publication grant-** The *Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology* is providing publication grant towards the publications of University Level Books in regional languages. • **National Translation Mission-** It is implemented by the *Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore*. • The text books of various subjects prescribed in universities and colleges are being translated in all languages of the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India. • **Centre for Endangered Languages in Central Universities-** It is implemented by University Grants Commission (UGC) to promote regional languages in higher education courses and supports 9 Central Universities.

What lies ahead?

- There is a need to implement ***LEAP*** — Language Enrichment for Advancing Progress which nurtures multilingualism and provides adequate training and resources to teachers.

- It helps to develop linguistic ability, improve cognitive development, enhance FLN skills, and create a more culturally rich and intellectually stimulating educational environment.

References

1. Business Line- Education in regional language fosters inclusivity.
2. PIB- Schemes to promote education in regional language