

'By opposing NEP, T.N. might miss chance to enhance educational standards'

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Former Vice-Chancellor of Anna University E. Balagurusamy has written to Chief Minister M K Stalin contending that by not being part of the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), Tamil Nadu could miss the opportunity to enhance educational standards and achievements, he cautioned.

According to him, higher educational institutions could face problems with national agencies such as the UGC, AICTE and Medical Council.

It could also adversely affect the possibility of getting funds and grants from central regulatory agencies and government departments for developmental projects and research.

Listing out what he described as "myths" about the NEP, the former UPSC Member said the policy did not seek to impose Hindi. Instead it sought a three-language formula to enable stu-

dents learn an additional language.

Students would not be filtered at the end of 3rd, 5th and 8th standard exams. The aim of the exam is to assess the learning outcomes. It is for the States to decide the pattern of exam and promotion policies, he felt.

He believed that the vocational stream of education that the Policy has advocated is not an equivalent of 'kula thozhil' (hereditary vocation). Instead vocational education paved the way for jobs when students finished school.

While in India only 10% receive vocational education, in Korea it is as much as 96%; in Japan (80%); Germany it is 75% and in the United Kingdom as many as 68% pursue the programme.

Although education was on the concurrent list and the Union government had the right to frame policies, the State could adapt certain provisions to suit the local needs and aspirations. As for

the fears of social justice being undermined, he said the Policy proposed several initiatives to incentivise schemes for SC, ST, OBC students.

The policy would not affect the State's reservation policy, and this had been promised by the Union government.

Mr. Balagurusamy dismissed the argument that the policy would encourage autonomy of institutions and thereby commercialisation. "Autonomy provides greater flexibility towards introduction of new courses, curriculum design, appointment of faculty, assessment methods, collaborations," he said.

Currently, over 70% colleges and 30% schools are run by private managements.

The government proposed to enhance the gross enrolment ratio to 50% which would be possible only if corporate companies would invest in education, he said.