



## Importance of Regional Language

**For Prelims:** Article 343, Regional Language, University Grants Commission (UGC), National Education Policy.

**For Mains:** Significance of Regional Language.

### Why in News?

Recently, the Chairman of the [University Grants Commission \(UGC\)](#) emphasised that **early initiation of learning a mother tongue** is important for a **child's creative thinking**.

### What are Regional Languages?

- Regional language is a **term used to refer to a language that is spoken by a sizeable number of people** but is not the de facto language of communication in the rest of the country.
  - A language is considered regional when it is mostly spoken by **people who reside largely in one particular area of a state or country**.
  - **Article 343(1) of the [Indian Constitution](#)** states that the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagiri Script.

### What is the Need for Regional Language?

- **Remove Dilemma:**
  - To remove the **dilemma regarding giving preference to English language** rather than any vernacular language and let the child think naturally in their own mother tongue.
- **Colonial Mindset:**
  - There was a need to **change our attitudes**, so that when someone asked a question in a class in a regional language, they should not feel inferior.
- **Benefits:**
  - **Subject-Specific Improvement:** Several studies in India and other Asian countries suggest a **positive** impact on learning outcomes for students using a regional medium rather than the English medium.
    - **Performance in science and math**, in particular, **has been found to be better among students studying in their native language** compared to English.
  - **Higher Rates of Participation:** Studying in the native language results in **higher attendance, motivation and increased confidence** for speaking up among students and **improved parental involvement** and support in studies due to familiarity with the mother tongue.
    - Poor grasp of English has been tied by many educationists to dropout rates at the premier engineering education institutions as well as poor performance of some students.
  - **Additional Benefits for the Less-Advantaged:** This is especially **relevant for students who are first-generation learners** (the first one in their entire generation to go to school and receive an education) or the ones **coming from rural areas**, who may

feel intimidated by unfamiliar concepts in an alien language.

## What are the Initiatives taken by the Government for the Promotion of Vernacular Languages?

- The University Grants Commission is in talks with various regulatory bodies such as [Bar Council of India](#) for promotion of vernacular languages, therefore, a **committee had been formed under former Chief Justice of India** which would look into how institutions could provide legal education in local languages.
- The [All India Council of Technical Education](#) too had introduced courses in regional languages in 10 colleges.
  - Further, It is also working with the **High-Powered Committee on Indian Language Development** established by the **Ministry of Education** to identify experts as well as 10-12 disciplines so that books could either be translated or written afresh.
  - The regulatory body was aiming at preparing 1,500 books in regional languages in the next one year across different disciplines.
- The **Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT)** is providing publication grant towards the publications of University Level Books in regional languages.
- [The National Translation Mission \(NTM\)](#) is being implemented through the **Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL)**.

## How would Regional Language be Promoted in Education?

- Either **institutes would adopt a regional language as a medium of instruction** or it would **serve as a learning aid for students in English medium** who may not be proficient in the language.
- **Use of Technology:** There was **artificial intelligence-based technology** available to enable real-time translations that would be seen in classrooms in the future.
- **National Education Policy:** The [National Education Policy 2022](#) lays emphasis on promoting mother tongue which should be a medium of instruction at least till class fifth or class eighth and after which it should be offered as a language.
- It also urges universities to develop study material in regional languages.

## What are the Constitutional Provisions related to Regional Language?

- **Article 345:** The legislature of a **State may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State or Hindi as the Language or Languages** to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that State.
- **Article 346:** The language authorised for use in the Union **for official purposes shall be the official language for communication between one State and another State and between a State and the Union.**
  - **For example-** If two or more States agree that the Hindi language should be the official language for communication between such States, that language may be used for such communication.
- **Article 347:** It gives the **President the power to recognise a language as an official language of a given state**, provided that the President is satisfied that a substantial proportion of that state desires that the language be recognised. Such recognition can be for a part of the state or the whole state.
- **Article 350A:** The facilities for **instruction in mother-tongue at the primary stage.**
- **Article 350B:** It provides for the **establishment of a Special Officer for linguistic minorities.**
- **Article 351:** It gives power to the union government to **issue a directive for the development of the Hindi language.**

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Q. Consider the following statements: (2021)

1. 21<sup>st</sup> February is declared to be the International Mother Language Day by UNICEF.

2. The demand that Bangla has to be one of the national languages was raised in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.

**Which of the above statements is/are correct?**

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

**Ans: (b)**

**Exp:**

- The Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, in its session at Karachi on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1948 proposed that the members would have to speak either in Urdu or in English at the Assembly. Dhirendranath Datta, a member from the East Pakistan Congress Party, moved an amendment motion to include Bangla as one of the languages of the Constituent Assembly. In the same year, the Government of the Dominion of Pakistan ordained Urdu as the sole national language, sparking extensive protests among the Bengalispeaking majority of East Bengal.
- The students of the University of Dhaka and other political activists defied the law and organised a protest on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 1952. After years of conflict, the government relented and granted official status to the Bengali language in 1956. In Bangladesh, 21 February is observed as Language Movement Day. Hence, statement 2 is correct.
- International Mother Language Day is observed on 21<sup>st</sup> February every year. It was declared by UNESCO and not by UNICEF. It is in tribute to the Language Movement and the ethnolinguistic rights of people around the world. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

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**Q. With reference to India, the terms 'Halbi, Ho and Kui' pertain to (2021)**

- (a) dance forms of Northwest India  
(b) musical instruments  
(c) pre-historic cave paintings  
(d) tribal languages

**Ans: (d)**

**Exp:**

- Odisha has a unique place in India due to its vast population of tribals residing in the state. 62 tribal communities live in Odisha which is 22.8% of the total population of Odisha.
- Odisha's tribal language is divided into 3 main language families. They are Austro-Asiatic (Munda), Dravida and Indo-Aryan. Every tribe has its own language and language family. The languages include:
  - Austro-Asiatic: Bhumij, Birhor, Rem (Bonda), Gatah (Didyai), Gutab (Gadaba), Sora(Saora), Gorum (Parenga), Khadia, Juang, Santali, Ho, Mundari, etc.
  - Dravida: Gondi, Kui-Kondh, Kuvi-Kondh, Kisan, Koya, Olari, (Gadaba) Parja, Peng, Kudukh (Oraon) etc.
  - Indo Aryan: Bathudi, Bhuyan, Kurmali, Sounti, Sadri, Kandhan, Aghria, Desia, Jharia, Halbi, Bhatri, Matia, Bhunjia, etc.
  - Out of these languages only 7 have scripts. They are Santali (Olchiki), Saora ( Sorang Sampeng), Ho (Warangchiti), Kui (Kui Script), Oraon (Kukhud Tod), Mundari (Bani Hisir), Bhumij (Bhumij Anl). Santali language has been included in the 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
- **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

[Source: TH](#)

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