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Q1(b)

Linguistic elements in Indian population

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2016 · Anthropology GS 2 · 10 marks · Demographic profile of India

2. Demographic profile of India-Ethnic and linguistic elements in the Indian population and their distribution. Indian population-factors influencing its structure and growth.

Core demand of the question

- Write a note on linguistic elements in Indian population
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Indian languages group mainly as Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, **Austroasiatic**, and Tibeto-Burman.

Grierson mapped that skeleton; the **Eighth Schedule** ranks some tongues.

Families do not equal Risley's races.

Tribes speak all four families.

Unscheduled languages still need **Article 29 and 350A**.

Introduction

Linguistic elements in the Indian population are the language families that people actually speak. They cut across caste and state in a four-family map.

Body**The four families**

- **Indo-Aryan** covers most of the north and west, from Hindi belts to Assamese.
- **Dravidian** covers the south and pockets such as **Gondi** and Kurukh in Central India.
- **Austroasiatic** Munda and Khasi speeches mark older tribal belts.
- **Tibeto-Burman** covers much of the Himalaya and North-East.

Why they matter

- **Grierson's** survey still teaches this skeleton. The **Eighth Schedule** politicises some of it.
- **Risley's** races do not match these families one-to-one.
- Tribe and caste both sit inside each family, so language is an element of population, not a synonym of ST.

Flow diagram

Indo-Aryan -> Indian population
Dravidian -> Indian population
Austroasiatic -> Indian population
Tibeto-Burman -> Indian population

Conclusion

Indian population is linguistically four-fold in teaching, with many tongues outside prestige lists. Language is a living element, not a racial fossil.

Facts & figures

Grierson

Linguistic Survey that still frames India's family map.

Austroasiatic

Munda and related speeches of many Central Indian and Khasi groups.

Eighth Schedule

Constitutional prestige list, not a full inventory of elements.

Gondi

A Dravidian tribal language showing family and tribe are not the same list.

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