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Q1(d)

Safeguards for linguistic minorities in India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2022 · 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 safeguards for linguistic minorities in India
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length of about 150 words

Revision summary

Linguistic minorities lack the state's official language as their own.

Articles 29 and 30 protect culture and minority schools.

Articles 350A and 350B add mother-tongue primary teaching and a Special Officer.

The Eighth Schedule is a prestige list, not a complete shield.

Reorganisation created new minorities inside linguistic states.

Introduction

Linguistic minorities are groups whose language is not the official language of the state where they live. The Constitution gives them cultural, educational, and administrative shields.

Body

Constitutional shields

- **Article 29** protects the right to conserve a distinct language, script, and culture.
- **Article 30** lets minorities establish and administer educational institutions.
- **Articles 347, 350, 350A, and 350B** allow a language to be recognised in a state, guarantee representation in a language the person understands, require primary instruction in the mother tongue, and create a **Special Officer for linguistic minorities**.

Practice and limit

- The **Eighth Schedule** lists official languages. It is prestige, not the whole safeguard. Many tribal tongues, including some **Austroasiatic** Munda speeches, sit outside it.
- The **Official Languages Act** and state rules still push Hindi or the regional majority in courts and offices, so the Special Officer's reports often record non-compliance.
- **States Reorganisation, 1956**, reduced some minority loads by drawing linguistic states, but it created new minorities inside each new state.

Flow diagram

Articles 29 30 -> Schools culture
350A 350B -> Mother tongue officer
Eighth Schedule -> Prestige not full cover

Conclusion

India safeguards linguistic minorities through culture, schools, mother-tongue primary education, and a Special Officer. The gap is implementation, especially for unscheduled tribal languages.

Facts & figures

Article 30

Right of religious and linguistic minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.

Article 350A

Directive for adequate facilities for primary instruction in the mother tongue of linguistic minority children.

Article 350B

Provides a Special Officer for linguistic minorities, appointed by the President.

Eighth Schedule

Constitutional list of languages. Unlisted tongues still need **Articles 29 and 350A**.

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