Bill seeks national official language stature for those in Eighth Schedule

Syllabus subtopic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

News: A Tamil leader introduced a private member’s Bill, seeking to give all 22 languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution the stature of national official languages.

Prelims and Mains focus: About the Bill, official language status, Eighth Schedule of the constitution,

Demand of the proposed Bill:

- The Constitution Amendment Bill, 2019, seeks to amend Article 343, which states that the “official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script”.
- The Bill proposed by Tamil leader wants that the all 22 languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution should be national official languages.

The Eighth Schedule

- The Constitutional provisions relating to the Eighth Schedule occur in Article 344(1) and 351 of the Constitution.

- Article 344(1): provides for the constitution of a Commission by the President on expiration of 5 years from the commencement of the Constitution and thereafter at the expiration of 10 years from such commencement, which shall consist of a Chairman and other members representing the different languages specified in the Eighth Schedule to make recommendations to the President for the progressive use of Hindi for official purposes of the Union.

- Article 351: It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule, and by drawing for its vocabulary, primarily, on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages.

List of languages in the Eighth Schedule
Committee on Official Languages:

- As the evolution of dialects and languages is dynamic, influenced by socio-political developments, it is difficult to fix any criterion for languages, whether to distinguish them from dialects, or for their inclusion in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India.
- Consequently, two committees viz. the Pahwa (1996) and Sitakant Mohapatra (2003) Committees were formed by the government.
- A Committee was set up in September 2003 under the Chairmanship of Shri Sitakant Mohapatra to evolve a set of objective criteria for inclusion of more languages in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.
- The Committee submitted its report in 2004, which is still under the government’s consideration in consultation with the concerned Minorities/Departments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Recognised</th>
<th>Predominantly Spoken in</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assamese</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Assam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>West Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodo</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Assam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dogri</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Jammu, Himachal Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Most Part of Northern states</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kannada</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashmiri</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Jammu and Kashmir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Konkani</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Goa and Parts of Karnataka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathali</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Parts of Bihar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malayalam</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marathi</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Sikkim and parts of West Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Odiya</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Punjab, Chandigarh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sanskrit</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santali</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Santhali Tribe in Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindhi</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Gujarat, Rajasthan, Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Northern India</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STATE OF LANGUAGE

By the end of the century, the number of people claiming Hindi as mother tongue globally may match English. People's linguistic survey of India highlights India's 10 popular languages, number of speakers, and proportion of people speaking them.

1. **Hindi**
   - % of speakers in total population: 41.03
   - States: Uttarakhand (35.8%), Bihar (14.4%), Madhya Pradesh (12.47%)

2. **Bengali**
   - % of speakers: 8.11
   - States: West Bengal (82%), Assam (2.6%), Tripura (0.6%)

3. **Telugu**
   - % of speakers: 7.19
   - States: Andhra Pradesh (86.4%), Karnataka (4.9%), Tamil Nadu (4.8%)

4. **Marathi**
   - % of speakers: 6.99
   - States: Maharashtra (92.6%), Karnataka (2.6%), Madhya Pradesh (1.8%)

5. **Tamil**
   - % of speakers: 5.91
   - States: Tamil Nadu (91.8%), Karnataka (3.1%), Puducherry (1.4%)

6. **Urdu**
   - % of speakers: 5.01
   - States: Uttar Pradesh (25.8%), Bihar (18.4%), Maharashtra (12.8%)

7. **Gujarati**
   - % of speakers: 4.48
   - States: Gujarat (92.8%), Maharashtra (5%), Tamil Nadu (0.4%)

8. **Kannada**
   - % of speakers: 3.69
   - States: Karnataka (91.9%), Maharashtra (3.3%), Tamil Nadu (2.8%)

9. **Malayalam**
   - % of speakers: 3.21
   - States: Kerala (93.2%), Karnataka (2.1%), Tamil Nadu (1.7%)

10. **Oriya**
    - % of speakers: 3.21
    - States: Odisha (92.6%), Chhattisgarh (2.5%), Andhra Pradesh (1%)

**Tower of Babel**
- States where the highest number of languages are spoken:
  - Anamalai Pradesh: 90 or more
  - Assam: 55 or more
  - Gujarat: 53 or more
  - Odisha: 42 or more

**Little Speech**
- States where the least number of languages are spoken:
  - Haryana: 8 or more
  - Punjab: 12 or more
  - Chhattisgarh: 16 or more
  - Bihar: 18 or more

The use of Portuguese in Goa and French in Puducherry is declining. This is bad news because the two languages are necessary to understand local history.