

4. Tulu to be in the Eighth Schedule

Prelims Level: Parliament

Mains Level: GS-II Indian Constitution- historical underpinnings, evolution, features, amendments, significant provisions and basic structure.

Why in News?

- Activists are making efforts to include Tulu in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution.

About Eighth Schedule:

- There are 22 languages in the Eighth Schedule of Constitution. Article 346 says that Hindi in Devanagari script is the official language.
- However, English is also allowed to be used as official language.
- The Eighth Schedule to the Indian Constitution contains a list of 22 scheduled languages viz. Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Sindhi (added by 21st Amendment Act, 1967), Konkani, Manipuri, Nepali (added by 71st Amendment Act, 1992), Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Santal (added by 92nd Amendment 2003).
- The list had originally 14 languages only but subsequently through amendments 8 new languages were added.

About Tulu Language:

- Tulu is a textbook example of linguistic discrimination.
- Tulu is a Dravidian language whose speakers are concentrated in two coastal districts of Karnataka and in Kasaragod district of Kerala. Kasaragod district is called 'Sapta bhasha Samgama Bhumi (the confluence of seven languages)', and Tulu is among the seven.
- The Census 2011 reports 18, 46,427 native speakers of Tulu in India.
- The Tulu-speaking people are larger in number than speakers of Manipuri and Sanskrit, which have the Eighth Schedule status.

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What are its Implications?

- If included in the Eighth Schedule, Tulu would get recognition from the Sahitya Akademi.
- Tulu books would be translated into other recognised Indian languages.
- Members of Parliament and MLAs could speak in Tulu in Parliament and State Assemblies, respectively.
- Candidates could write all-India competitive examinations like the Civil Services exam in Tulu.

What does the constitution say about the languages?

- Article 29 of the Constitution provides that a section of citizens having a distinct language, script or culture have the right to conserve the same.
- The burden is it to conserve the distinct language, script or culture of such a section of citizens. Both the state and the citizens have an equal responsibility to conserve the distinct language, script and culture of a people.

Is eighth schedule discriminatory?

- Many languages that are kept out of this favoured position are in some ways more deserving to be included in the Eighth Schedule.
- For example, Sanskrit, an Eighth Schedule language, has only 24,821 speakers (2011 Census).

- Manipuri, another scheduled language, has only 17, 61,079 speakers.
- However, many unscheduled languages have a sizeable number of speakers: Bhili/Bhilodi has 1,04,13,637 speakers; Gondi has 29,84,453 speakers; Garo has 11,45,323; Ho has 14,21,418; Khandeshi, 18,60,236; Khasi, 14,31,344; and Oraon, 19,88,350.

UNESCO's proclamation:

- The **Yuelu Proclamation**, made by the **UNESCO** at Changsha, The People's Republic of China, in 2018, says:
- "The protection and promotion of linguistic diversity helps to improve social inclusion and partnerships, helps to reduce the gender and social inequality between different native speakers, guarantee the rights for native speakers of endangered, minority, indigenous languages, as well as non-official languages and dialects to receive education, enhance the social inclusion level and social decision-making ability by encouraging them to participate in a series of actions to promote cultural diversity, endangered language protection, and the protection of intangible cultural heritage..."
- India has a lot to learn from the Yuelu Proclamation.
- Placing of all the deserving languages on equal footing will promote social inclusion and national solidarity.
- It will reduce the inequalities within the country to a great extent.
- So, Tulu, along with other deserving languages, should be included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution in order to substantially materialise the promise of equality of status and opportunity mentioned in the Preamble.