

### **3. International Mother Language Day**

#### **Why in News?**

- On International Mother Language Day, which was recently celebrated on February 21, 2023, it was revealed that India is losing many of its languages due to modernisation and globalisation, particularly because of the lack of education.

#### **Highlights**

- UNESCO declared 21<sup>st</sup> February as International Mother Language Day in 1999 and the World has been celebrating the same since 2000.
- The day also commemorates a long struggle by Bangladesh to protect its mother language Bangla.
- The resolution to mark 21<sup>st</sup> February as the International Mother Language Day was suggested by Rafiqul Islam, a Bangladeshi living in Canada.
- UNESCO has emphasised the importance of mother-tongue-based education for the preservation of linguistic heritage, and the International Decade of Indigenous Languages has been initiated to safeguard cultural diversity.
- According to the United Nations (UN), every two weeks, a language disappears and the world loses an entire cultural and intellectual heritage.
- In India, this is especially affecting tribal areas where children struggle to learn in schools that do not offer instruction in their native tongues.
- Only 6 tribal languages in the state of Odisha have a written script, leaving many without access to literature and learning materials.
- The UN has designated the period between 2022 and 2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.
- Earlier, the United Nations General Assembly had proclaimed 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL).
- The Yuelu Proclamation, made by UNESCO at Changsha (China) in 2018, plays a central role in guiding the efforts of countries and regions around the world to protect linguistic resources and diversity.