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## List of languages by number of native speakers in India

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States and union territories of India by the spoken first language[1][note 1]

The Republic of India is home to several hundred languages. Most Indians speak a language belonging to the families of the Indo-Aryan branch of Indo-European (c. 77%), the Dravidian (c. 20.61%), the Austroasiatic (precisely Munda and Khasic) (c. 1.2%), or the Sino-Tibetan (precisely Tibeto-Burman) (c. 0.8%), with some languages of the Himalayas still unclassified. The SIL Ethnologue lists 424 living languages in India.[2]

Overview[edit]

India has not had a national language since its independence in 1947. However, Rule 1976 (As Amended, 1987) of the Constitution of India, mandates Hindi and English as the "Official Languages" required "for Official Purpose of the Union." Business in the Indian parliament is transacted in either Hindi or in English. English is allowed for official purposes such as parliamentary proceedings, judiciary, communications between the Central Government and a State Government. States within India have the liberty and powers to select their own official language(s) through legislation. In addition to the two Official Languages, the constitution recognizes 22 regional languages, named in a specific list as "Scheduled Languages". (Hindi is but English is not.) India's Constitution includes provisions detailing the languages used for the official purposes of the union, the languages used for the official purposes of each state and union territory and the languages used for communication between the union and the states.

Hindi is the most widely spoken language in the northern parts of India. The Indian census takes the widest possible definition of "Hindi" as a broad variety of the "Hindi Belt".[3] According to 2001 Census, 53.6% of the Indian population declared that they speak Hindi as either their first or second language, in which 41% of them have declared it as their native language.[4][5][6] 12% of Indians declared that they can speak English as a second language.[7]

Fastest growing languages of India ? Hindi (first), Kashmiri (second), Gujarati & Meitei/Manipuri (third), Bengali (fourth) ? based on 2011 census of India

Hindi is the fastest growing language of India, followed by Kashmiri in the second place, with Meitei (officially called Manipuri) as well as Gujarati, in the third place, and Bengali in the fourth place, according to the 2011 census of India.[8]

Thirteen languages account for more than 1% of Indian population each, and between themselves for over 95%; all of them are "scheduled languages of the constitution". Scheduled languages spoken by fewer than 1% of Indians are Santali (0.63%), Kashmiri (0.54%), Nepali (0.28%), Sindhi (0.25%), Konkani (0.24%), Dogri (0.22%), Meitei (0.14%), Bodo (0.13%) and Sanskrit (In the 2001 census of India, 14,135 people reported Sanskrit as their native language).[9] The largest language that is not "scheduled" is Bhili (0.95%), followed by Gondi (0.27%), Khandeshi (0.21%), Tulu (0.17%) and Kurukh (0.10%).

As per 2011 census, 26% of Indians are bilingual and 7% are trilingual.[10]

India has a Greenberg's diversity index of 0.914?i.e. two people selected at random from the country will have different native languages in 91.4% of cases.[11]

As per the 2011 Census of India, languages by highest number of speakers are as follows: Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Gujarati, Urdu, Kannada, Odia, Malayalam.[12][13]

List of languages by number of native speakers[edit]

Ordered by number of speakers as first language.

More than one million speakers[edit]

The 2011 census recorded 31 individual languages as having more than 1 million native speakers (0.1% of total population). The languages in bold are scheduled languages (the only scheduled language with less than 1 million native speakers is Sanskrit). The first table is restricted to only speaking populations for scheduled languages.

First, second, and third languages by number of speakers in India (2011 Census)

First language speakers

Second languagespeakers[14]

Third languagespeakers[14]

Total speakers

Language

Figure[14]

% of totalpopulation

Figure[15][14]

% of totalpopulation

Hindi[note 2]

528,347,193

43.63%

139,207,180

24,160,696

691,347,193

57.09%

Bengali

97,237,669

8.03%

9,037,222

1,008,088

107,237,669

8.85%

Marathi

83,026,680

6.86%

12,923,626

2,966,019

99,026,680

8.18%

Telugu

81,127,740

6.70%

11,946,414

1,001,498

94,127,740

7.77%

Tamil

69,026,881

5.70%

6,992,253

956,335

77,026,881

6.36%

Gujarati

55,492,554

4.58%

4,035,489

1,007,912

60,492,554

4.99%

Urdu[[note 3](#)]

50,772,631

4.19%

11,055,287

1,096,428

62,772,631

5.18%

Kannada

43,706,512

3.61%

14,076,355

993,989

58,706,512

4.84%

Odia

37,521,324

3.10%

4,972,151

31,525

42,551,324

3.51%

Malayalam

34,838,819

2.88%

499,188

195,885

35,538,819

2.93%

Punjabi

33,124,726

2.74%

2,300,000

720,000

36,074,726

2.97%

Assamese

15,311,351

1.26%

7,488,153

740,402

23,539,906

1.94%

Maithili

13,063,042

1.08%

13,583,464

1.12%

English

259,678

0.02%

83,125,221

45,993,066

129,259,678

10.67%



Table: Population ordered by number of native speakers

Rank

Language

1991 census of India[16](total: 838,583,988)

2001 census of India[17](total: 1,028,610,328)

2011 Census of India[18][19](total: 1,210,854,977)[20]

Encarta 2007 estimate[21]Worldwide total

Speakers

Percentage

Speakers

Percentage

Speakers

Percentage

Speakers

1

Hindi[[note 2](#)]

329,518,087

39.29%

422,048,642

41.1%

528,347,193

43.63%

366 million

2

Bengali

69,595,738

8.30%

83,369,769

8.11%

97,237,669

8.03%

207 million

3

Marathi

62,481,681

7.45%

71,936,894

6.99%

83,026,680

6.86%

68.0 million

4

Telugu

66,017,615

7.87%

74,002,856

7.19%

81,127,740

6.70%

69.7 million

5

Tamil

53,006,368

6.32%

60,793,814

5.91%

69,026,881

5.70%

66.0 million

6

Gujarati

40,673,814

4.85%

46,091,617

4.48%

55,492,554

4.58%

46.1 million

7

Urdu[[note 3](#)]

43,406,932

5.18%

51,536,111

5.01%

50,772,631

4.19%

60.3 million

8

Kannada

32,753,676

3.91%

37,924,011

3.69%

43,706,512

3.61%

35.3 million

9

Odia

28,061,313

3.35%

33,017,446

3.21%

37,521,324

3.10%

32.3 million

10

Malayalam

30,377,176

3.62%

33,066,392

3.21%

34,838,819

2.88%

35.7 million

11

Punjabi

23,378,744

2.79%

29,102,477

2.83%

33,124,726

2.74%

57.1 million

12

Assamese

13,079,696

1.56%

13,168,484

1.28%

15,311,351

1.26%

15.4 million

13

Maithili

7,766,921

0.926%

12,179,122

1.18%

13,583,464

1.12%

24.2 million

14

Bhili/Bhilodi

9,582,957

0.93%

10,413,637

0.86%

15

Santali

5,216,325

0.622%

6,469,600

0.63%

7,368,192

0.61%

16

Kashmiri

5,527,698

0.54%

6,797,587

0.56%

17

Gondi

2,713,790

0.26%

2,984,453

0.25%

18

Nepali

2,076,645

0.248%

2,871,749

0.28%

2,926,168

0.24%

16.1 million

19

Sindhi

2,122,848

0.253%

2,535,485

0.25%

2,772,264

0.23%

19.7 million

20

Dogri

2,282,589

0.22%

2,596,767

0.21%

21

Konkani

1,760,607

0.210%

2,489,015

0.24%

2,256,502

0.19%

22

Kurukh

1,751,489

0.17%

1,988,350

0.16%

23

Khandeshi

2,075,258

0.21%

1,860,236

0.15%

24

Tulu

1,722,768

0.17%

1,846,427

0.15%

25



Meitei (Manipuri)

1,270,216

0.151%

1,466,705\*

0.14%

1,761,079

0.15%

26

Bodo

1,221,881

0.146%

1,350,478

0.13%

1,482,929

0.12%

27

Khasi

1,128,575

0.11%

1,431,344

0.12%

28

Ho

1,042,724

0.101%

1,421,418

0.12%

29

Garo

1,061,352

0.103%

1,145,323

0.09%

30

Mundari

889,479

0.086%

1,128,228

0.09%

31

Tripuri

854,023

0.083%

1,011,294

0.08%

\* Excludes figures of Paomata, Mao-Maram and Purul sub-divisions of Senapati district of Manipur for 2001.

\*\* The percentage of speakers of each language for 2001 has been worked out on the total population of India excluding the population of Mao-Maram, Paomata and Purul subdivisions of Senapati district of Manipur due to cancellation of census results.

100,000 to one million speakers[edit]

Rank

Language

2001 census

Speakers

Percentage

32

Kui

916,222

0.089%

33

Lushai/Mizo

674,756

0.066%

34

Halabi

593,443

0.058%

35

Korku

574,481

0.056%

36

Miri/Mishing

551,224

0.054%

37

Munda

469,357

0.046%

38

Karbi/Mikir

419,534

0.041%

39

Koya

362,070

0.035%

40

Ao

261,387

0.025%

41

Savara

252,519

0.025%

42

Konyak

248,109

0.024%

43

Kharia

239,608

0.023%

44

English

226,449

0.022%

45

Malto

224,926

0.022%

46

Nissi/Dafla

211,485

0.021%

47

Adi

198,462

0.019%

48

Thado

190,595

0.019%

49

Lotha

170,001

0.017%

50

Coorgi/Kodagu

166,187

0.016%

51

Rabha

164,770

0.016%

52

Tangkhul

142,035

0.014%

53

Kisan

141,088

0.014%

54

Angami

132,225

0.013%

55

Phom

122,508

0.012%

56

Kolami

121,855

0.012%

57

Khond/Kondh[22]

118,597

0.012%

58

Dimasa

111,961

0.011%

59

Ladakhi

104,618

0.010%

60

Sema

103,529

0.010%

List of mother tongues by number of speakers[edit]

Each of the languages of the 2001 census subsumes one or more mother tongues. Speaker numbers are available for these mother tongues and they are also included in the speaker numbers for their respective language. For example, the language Telugu (with a total of 81,127,740 speakers) includes the mother tongues of Telugu (with 80,912,459 speakers), Vadari (198,020 speakers) and "Others" (17,261 speakers).[23] The General Notes from the 2001 census define "mother tongue" as "the language spoken in childhood by the person's mother to the person. If the mother died in infancy, the language mainly spoken in the person's home in childhood will be the mother tongue." [24]

The following table lists those mother tongues that have more than one million speakers according

to the 2011 census:[25]

Mother tongues with more than one million speakers

Rank

Mother tongue

2011 census

Includedin language

Speakers

Percentage

1

Hindi

322,200,000

26.6%

2

Bengali

96,180,000

7.94%

3

Marathi

82,800,000

6.84%

4

Telugu

80,910,000

6.68%

5

Tamil



68,890,000

5.69%

6

Gujarati

55,040,000

4.55%

7

Urdu

50,730,000

4.19%

8

Bhojpuri

50,580,000

4.18%

Hindi

9

Kannada

43,510,000

3.59%

10

Malayalam

34,780,000

2.87%

11

Odia

34,060,000

2.81%

12

Punjabi

31,140,000

2.57%

13

Rajasthani

25,810,000

2.13%

Hindi

14

Chhattisgarhi

16,250,000

1.34%

Hindi

15

Assamese

14,820,000

1.22%

16

Maithili

13,350,000

1.10%

17

Magahi

12,710,000

1.05%

Hindi

18

Haryanvi

9,807,000

0.810%

Hindi

19

Khortha/Khotta

8,039,000

0.664%

Hindi

20

Marwari

7,832,000

0.647%

Hindi

21

Santali

6,973,000

0.576%

22

Kashmiri

6,554,000

0.541%

23

Bundeli/Bundel khandi

5,626,000

0.465%

Hindi

24

Malvi

5,213,000

0.430%

Hindi

25

Sadan/Sadri

4,346,000

0.359%

Hindi

26

Mewari

4,212,000

0.348%

Hindi

27

Awadhi

3,851,000

0.318%

Hindi

28

Wagdi

3,394,000

0.280%

Bhili/Bhilodi

29

Lamani/Lambadi

3,277,000

0.271%

Hindi

30

Pahari[[note 4](#)]

3,254,000

0.269%

Hindi

31

Bhili/Bhilodi

3,207,000

0.265%

32

Hara/Harauti

2,944,000

0.243%

Hindi

33

Nepali

2,926,000

0.242%

34

Gondi

2,857,000

0.236%

35

Bagheli/Baghel Khandi

2,679,000

0.221%

Hindi

36

Sambalpuri

2,630,000

0.217%

Odia

37

Dogri

2,597,000

0.214%

38

Garhwali

2,482,000

0.205%

Hindi

39

Nimadi

2,309,000

0.191%

Hindi

40

Surjapuri

2,256,000

0.186%

Hindi

41

Konkani

2,147,000

0.177%

42

Kumauni

2,081,000

0.172%

Hindi

43

Kurukh/Oraon

1,977,000

0.163%

44

Tulu

1,842,000

0.152%

45

Manipuri

1,761,000

0.145%

46

Surgujia

1,738,000

0.144%

Hindi

47

Sindhi

1,679,000

0.139%

48

Bagri

1,657,000

0.137%

Punjabi

49

Ahirani

1,636,000

0.135%

Khandeshi

50

Banjari

1,581,000

0.131%

Hindi



51

Brajbhasha

1,556,000

0.129%

Hindi

52

Dhundhari

1,476,000

0.122%

Hindi

53

Bodo/Boro

1,455,000

0.120%

Bodo

54

Ho

1,411,000

0.117%

55

Gojri/Gujjari/Gujar

1,228,000

0.101%

Hindi

56

Mundari

1,128,000

0.093%

57

Garo

1,125,000

0.093%

58

Kangri

1,117,000

0.092%

Hindi

59

Khasi

1,038,000

0.086%

60

Kachchhi

1,031,000

0.085%

Sindhi

Notes[edit]

^ Some languages may be over- or under-represented as the census data used is at a state-level.

For example, while Urdu has 52 million speakers (2001), in no state is it a majority language.

^ a b Hindi does not merely refer to "Modern Standard Hindi" (which is based on Dehlavi dialect of

Kauravi), but also broadly many "Hindi languages", which includes Western Hindi (apart from Urdu),

Eastern Hindi, Bihari languages except for Maithili, the Rajasthani languages, and the Pahari

languages apart from Nepali and (in 2001) Dogri, whether or not the included varieties were reported as "Hindi" or under their individual names during census.

^ a b Although linguistically Modern Standard Hindi and Urdu together is classified as a single language called Hindustani, the government classifies them as separate languages instead of different standard registers of the same language due to socio-political reasons.

^ "Pahari" as ambiguous, but in the census returns the language name most commonly comes from the Western Pahari area.[26]

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List of endangered languages in India

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C-16 Population By Mother Tongue ? Town Level

C-16 Population By Mother Tongue

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8th schedule to the Constitution of India

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Kashmiri

Konkani

Maithili

Malayalam

Meitei (Manipuri)

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Garo

Gurung

Ho

Kamatapuri

Kharia

Khasi

Khortha

Kokborok

Kurmali

Kurukh

Lepcha

Limbu

Magahi

Magar

Mizo

Mundari

Newari

Rai

Rajbangshi

Sadri

Sherpa

Sikkimese

Sunwar

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Bagri

Bajjika

Bhili

Bundeli

Dhundhari

Garhwali

Gondi

Harauti

Haryanvi

Kangri

Khandeshi

Kumaoni

Lambadi

Malvi

Marwari

Mewari

Nimadi

Rajasthani

Surjapuri

Tulu

Wagdi

Varhadi



100,000 ? 1 millionspeakers

Adi

Angami

Ao

Badaga

Dimasa

Halbi

Karbi

Khotta

Kodava

Kolami

Konyak

Korku

Koya

Kui

Kuvi

Ladakhi

Lotha

Malto

Mising

Nishi

Phom

Rabha

Sema

Sora

Tangkhul

Thadou

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Sylheti

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Nihali

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Khasi

Lyngngam

Pnar

War

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Munda

Ho

Korku

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Teressa

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Odia

Ranjana

Sinhala

Tamil

Telugu

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Thaana

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Urdu

Sanskritisation

Activism

Bengali movement

Hela Havula

Meitei associate official language movement

Meitei classical language movement

Meitei linguistic purism movement

Newar movement

Nepali movement

Punjabi Movement

Pure Tamil movement

Sanskrit revival

Urdu movement

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