

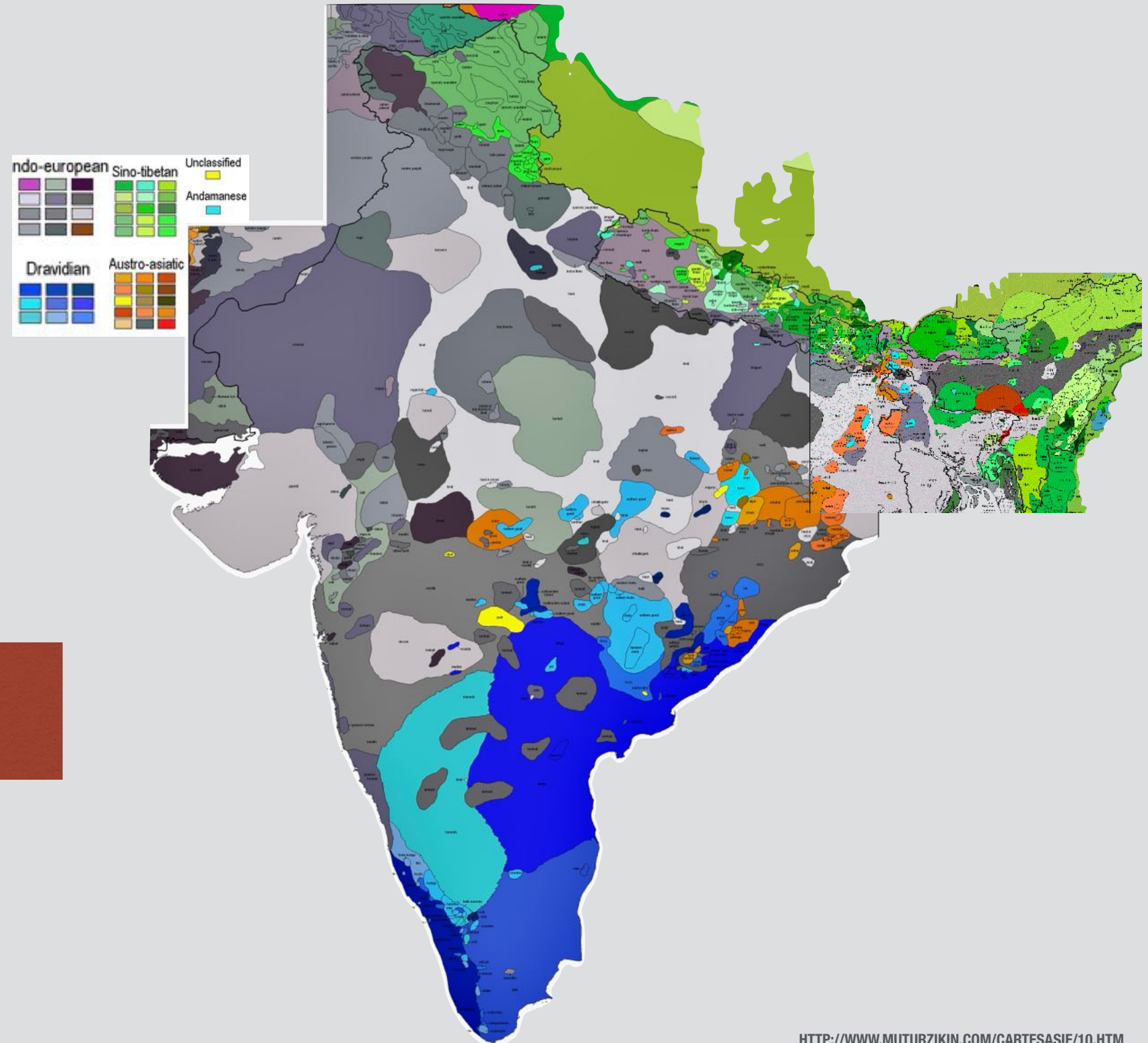
From Counting Languages to Counting on Language in India

AYESHA KIDWAI

DIFFERENT WAYS OF COUNTING INDIA'S LANGUAGES

SHOULD IT REALLY BE SO
DIFFICULT?





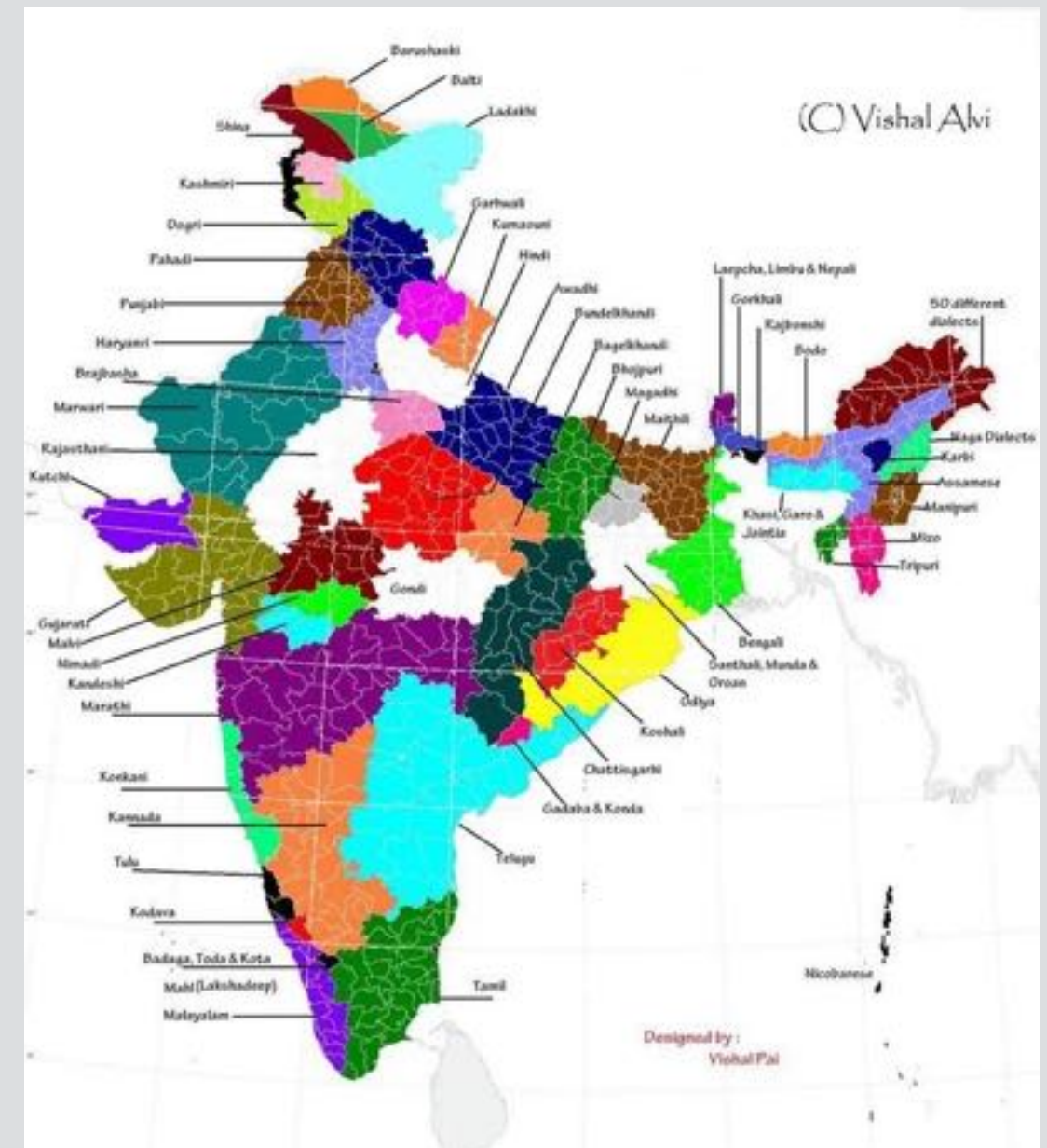
Ethnologue
424 languages

[HTTP://WWW.MUTURZIKIN.COM/CARTESASIE/10.HTM](http://www.muturzikin.com/cartesasie/10.htm)

DEFINING CRITERIA

LANGUAGE FEATURES, LINGUISTIC GENEALOGY

People's Linguistic Survey of India (2010-12) 780 languages



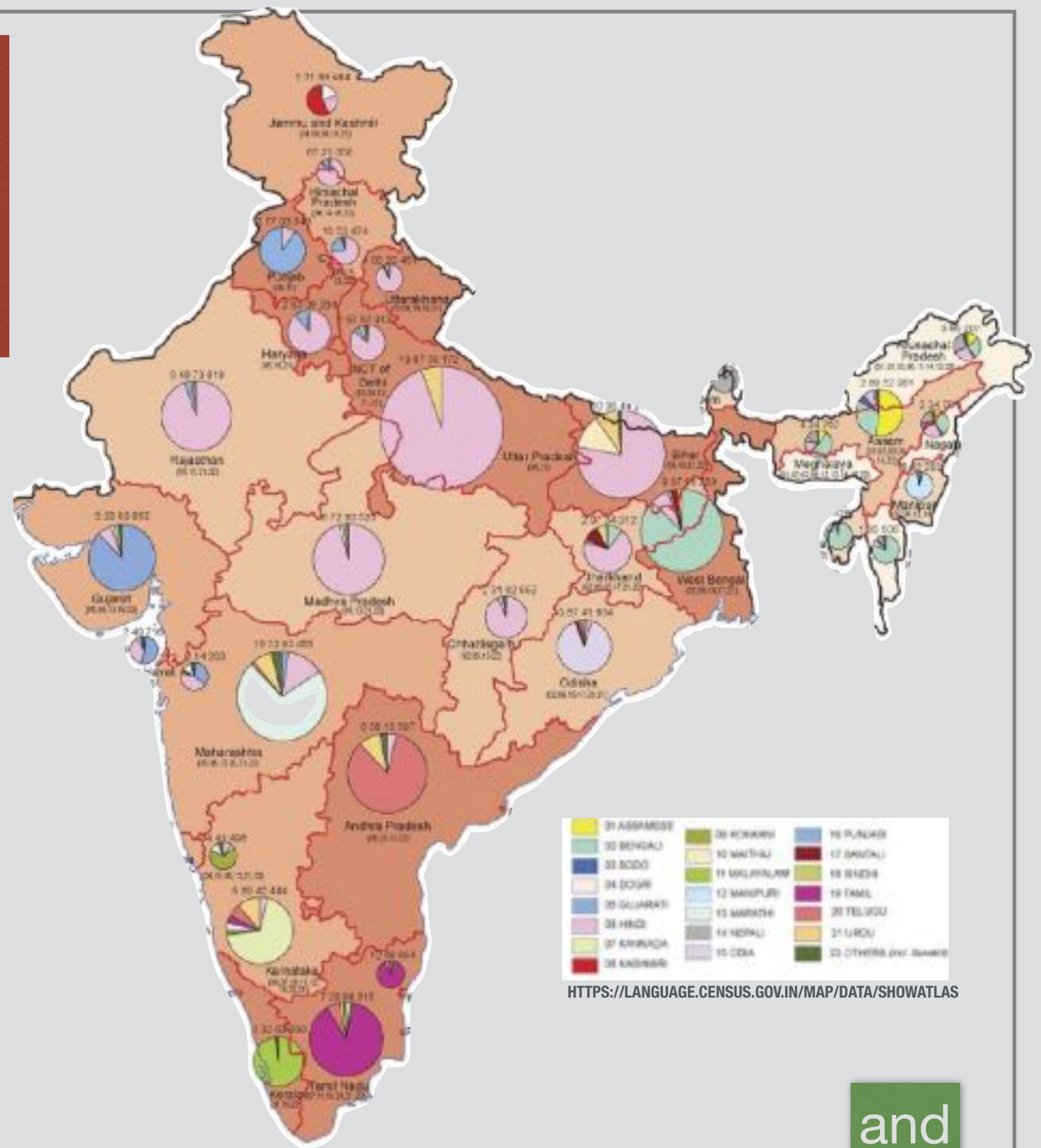
DEFINING CRITERIA
MIXED (INDIVIDUAL, LINGUISTIC, POLITICAL)

Census of India 2011

22 Scheduled Languages

(comprising **123** 'mother tongues')

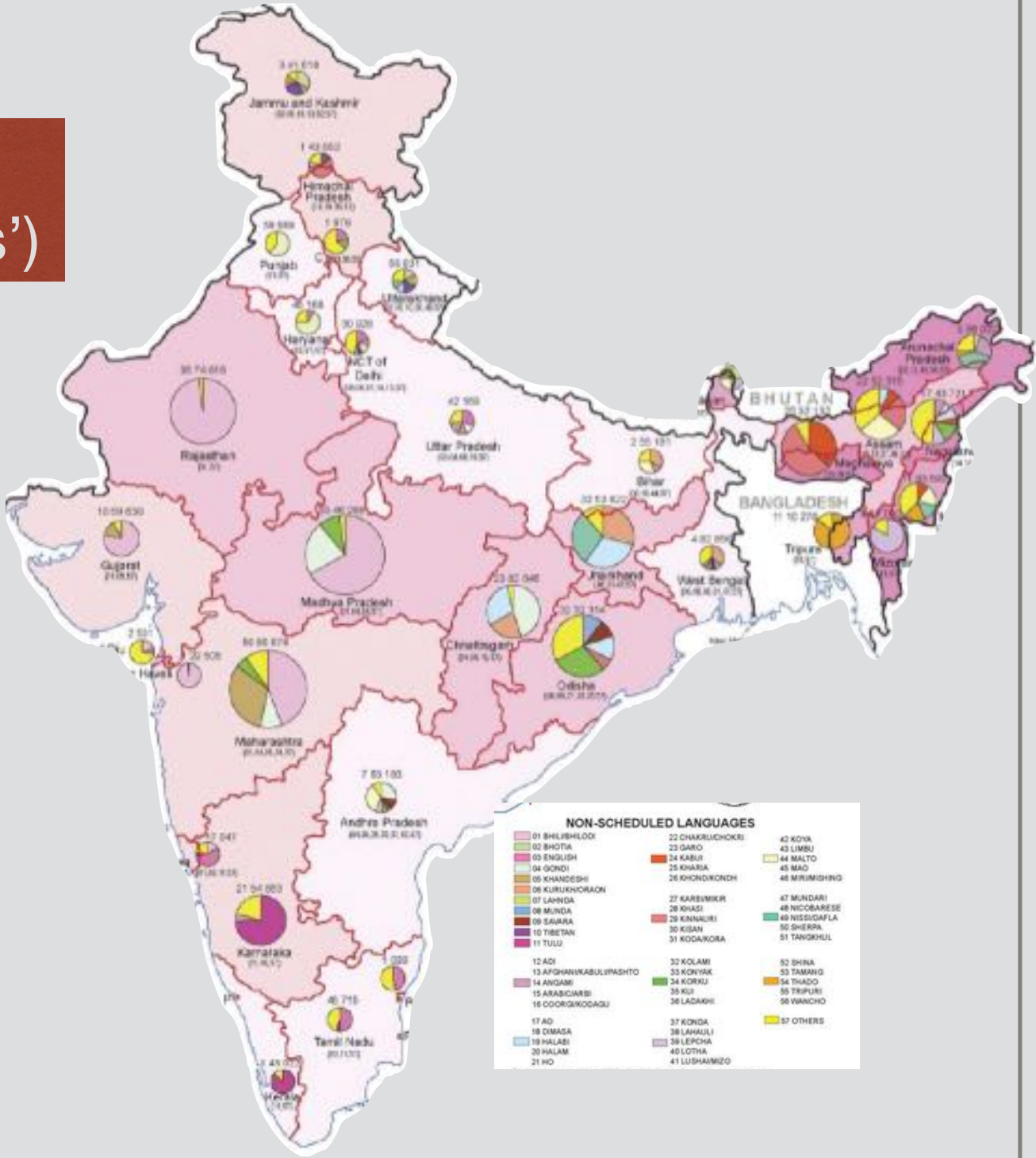
(THIS IS THE ONLY ONE THAT TRULY COUNTS FOR DETERMINING STATE POLICY)



DEFINING CRITERIA: POLITICAL

LISTED IN SCHEDULE VIII OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

99 Non-Scheduled Languages
(comprising 147 ‘mother tongues’)



[HTTPS://LANGUAGE.CENSUS.GOV.IN/MAP/DATA/SHOWATLAS](https://language.census.gov.in/map/data/showatlas)

DEFINING CRITERIA: POLITICAL
NOT LISTED IN SCHEDULE VIII OF THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION

Recording Mother Tongues

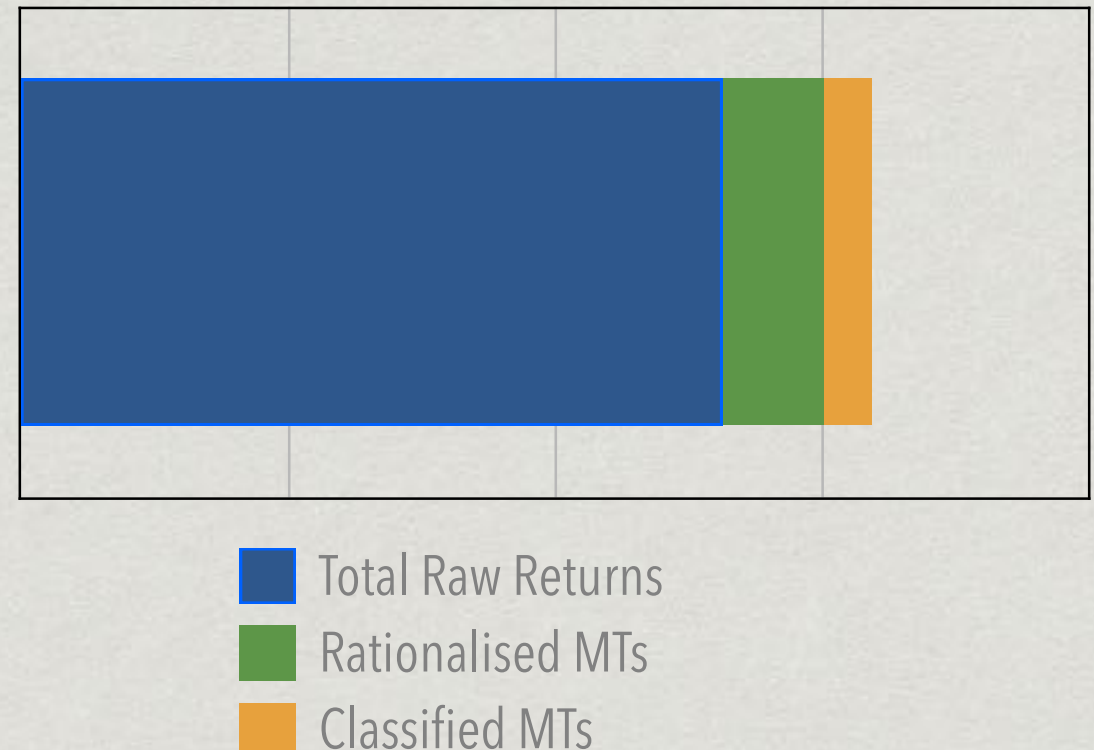
- * **Mother tongue** (MT) is defined as the language spoken in childhood by the person's mother to the person. If the mother died in infancy, the language mainly spoken in the person's home in childhood will be the mother tongue. In the case of infants and deaf mutes, the language usually spoken by the mother should be recorded. In case of doubt, the language mainly spoken in the household may be recorded.
- * *Enumerators are instructed to record the mother tongue in full as stated, without linking it to the respondents' religion or ethnicity. They are asked to visit every house, make no inquiries or claims as to whether it is a dialect of another language, and to interview each adult in the household separately.*

Raw returns

- * **Raw returns** are the sum of answers to the question on mother tongue returned by each individual that are recorded by the Census enumerators.
- * *In the 2011 census, the number of such raw returns of mother tongues totals 19569, because “basically the designations provided by the respondents of the linguistic mediums in which the respondents think they communicate, they ...[are] not be identical with the actual linguistic mediums (Census 2011). Consequently, raw returns are subjected to “thorough linguistic scrutiny, edit and rationalisation”*

Rationalisation

- * **Goal:** To assess the correlation between MTs and designations of the census.
- * *In the 2011 census, this results in 1369 rationalised MTs and 1474 ‘unclassified’ ones.*
 - * *The unclassified MTs are relegated to an ‘Other’ category, and thereafter not named or classified.*



Only 14.5% of Raw Returns were found to be MTs.

Only 48.2% of MTs were classified.

In terms of speakers, the languages of 1,875,542 Indians were not named as speaking any language.

Classifi cation

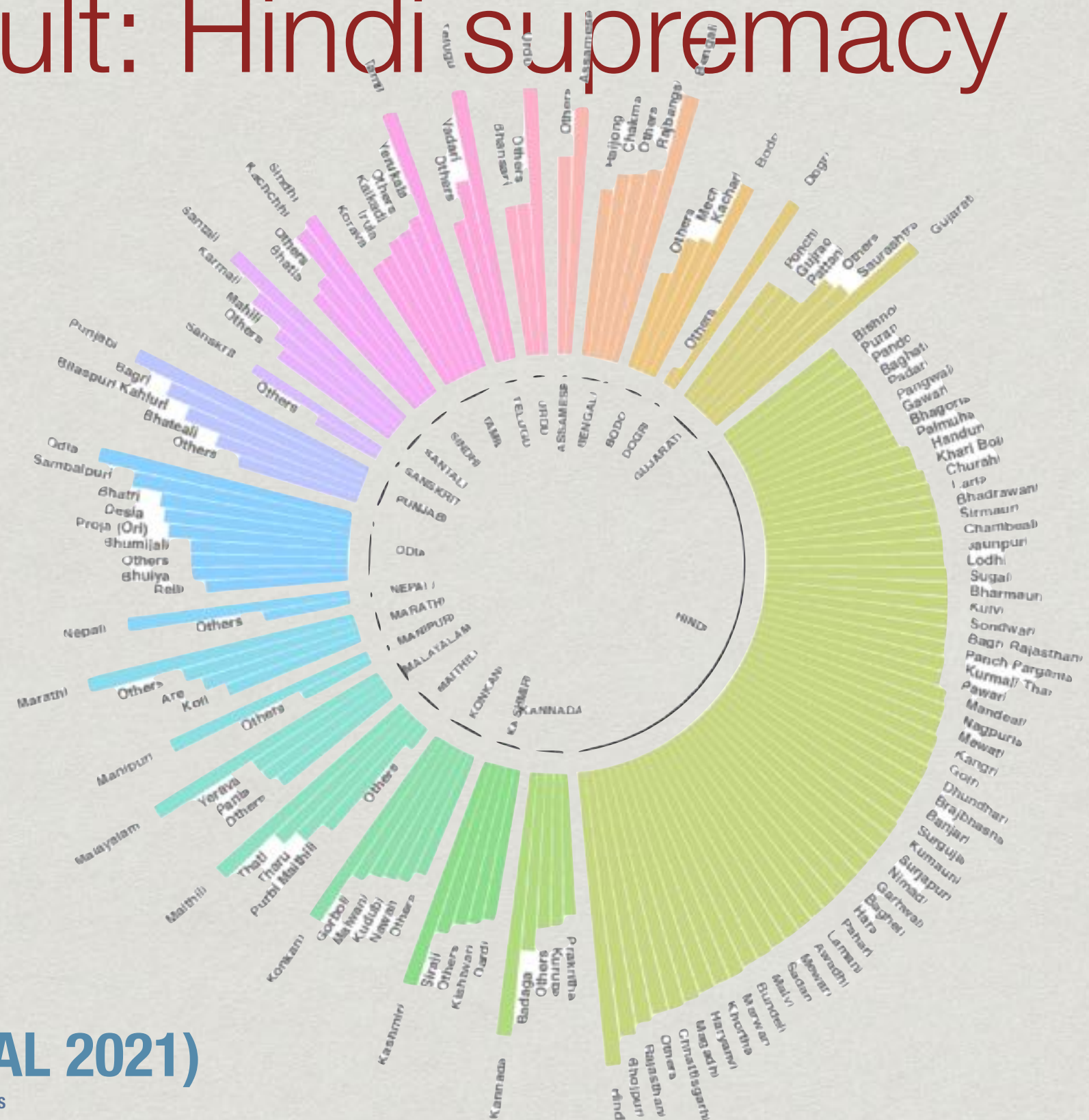
PART-A LANGUAGES SPECIFIED IN THE EIGHTH SCHEDULE (SCHEDULED LANGUAGES)			
Name of Language & mother tongue(s) grouped under each language		Number of persons who returned the language (and the mother tongues grouped under each) as their mother tongue)	
1	2	1	2
1 ASSAMESE	1,53,11,351	Gowari	19,052
Assamese	1,48,16,414	Gojri/Gujari/Gujar	12,27,901
Others	4,94,937	Handuri	47,803
2 BENGALI	9,72,37,669	Hara/Harauti	29,44,356
Bengali	9,61,77,635	Haryanvi	98,06,519
Chakma	2,26,261	Hindi	32,22,30,097
Hajong/Hajong	71,792	Jainpuri/Jaunsari	1,36,779
Rajbanshi	4,76,861	Kangri	11,17,342
Others	2,63,900	Khar Boli	60,196
3 BODO	14,82,929	Khorha/Khotta	80,38,735
Bodo	14,54,547	Kulvi	1,95,295
Kachari	15,984	Kumauni	20,81,057
Mech/Mechhia	11,546	Kurmai Thar	3,11,175
Others	652	Lamani/Lambadi/Labari	32,76,548
4 DOGRI	25,96,767	Laria	89,876
Dogri	25,96,763	Lodhi	1,39,180
Others	4	Megadhi/Megahi	1,27,06,025
5 GUJARATI	5,54,92,554	Nalvi	52,12,617
Gujarati	5,50,36,204	Nandoli	6,22,590
Gujaio/Gujar	15,431	Narwar	78,31,749
Pattani	16,510	Nawari	42,12,262
Pandhi	13,612	Nawati	8,56,643
Saurashtra/Saurashtri	2,47,702	Naguria	7,63,014
Others	1,62,895	Nimadi	23,09,265
6 HINDI	52,83,47,193	Padari	17,279
Awadhi	38,50,906	Pahari	32,53,889
Baghati/Baghati Pahari	15,835	Paimha	23,579
Bagheli/Bagheli Khandi	26,79,129	Panch Pargana	2,44,014
Bagri Rajasthani	2,34,227	Pando/Pandwari	15,505
Banjari	15,61,271	Pangwal	18,668
Bhadrawahi	56,600	Pawari/Powari	3,25,772
Bhagoria	20,624	Purari/Puran Bhasha	12,375
Bhamrauri/Caddi	1,61,069	Rajasthani	2,58,06,344
Bhojpuri	5,05,79,447	Sadan/Sadri	43,45,677
Bichnoi	12,079	Simrauri	1,07,401
Rajbhasha	15,56,314	Sondwari	2,29,768
Bundeli/Bundel khandi	56,26,356	Sugali	1,70,987
Chambeali/Chamrahi	1,25,746	Surjaja	17,38,258
Chhatisgarhi	1,62,46,190	Surjapuri	22,58,228
Churahi	75,552	Others	1,87,11,170
Dhundhari	14,76,446	7 KANNADA	4,37,06,512
Garhwali	24,62,089	Badaga	1,33,550
		Kannada	4,35,06,272
		Kuruba/Kurumba	24,189
		Prakriti/Prakriti Bhasha	12,257
		Others	30,244

Classification

- * **Goal:** To group the rationalised MTs in terms of their linguistic affiliation to actual languages and dialects. The Census claims that Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India (1896-1928) forms the official guide to classification of languages (in terms of linguistic genealogy)
- * *In the 2011 census, this involves grouping the 1369 MTs under language labels that are either Scheduled Languages or non-Scheduled ones.*
 - * *MTs with less than 10,000 claimants are not named, but are classified and listed under as 'Other Mother Tongues'.*

A total of 373 rationalised MTs are not named because of this provision.

The result: Hindi supremacy



(JOLAD & AGGARWAL 2021)

[HTTPS://WWW.THEINDIAFORUM.IN/ARTICLE/WHAT-CENSUS-OBSCURES](https://www.theindiaforum.in/article/what-census-obscures)

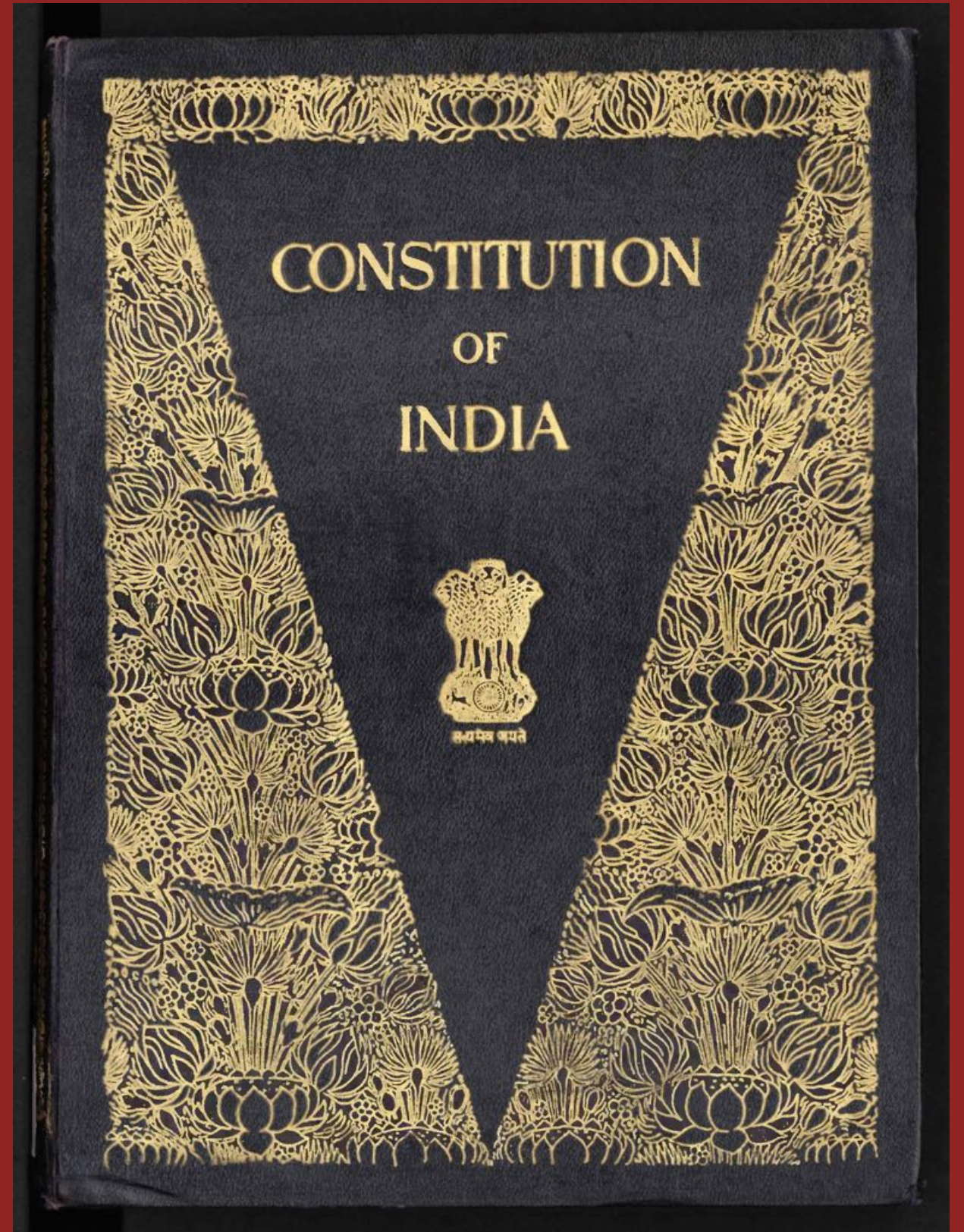
An enduring crisis of credibility... since 1971

Fluctuation in raw returns and number of languages

Report	Raw returns	Unclassified	Scheduled Languages	Non-Scheduled Languages	Total MTs	MTs >10,000
Census 1971	3000	-	15	90	209	-
Census 1981	<3000	-	15	112	145	-
Census 1991	10400	1576	18	96	216	-
Census 2001	6661	1957	22	100	234	474
Census 2011	19,569	1474	22	99	270	373

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

LANGUAGE POLICY IN INDIA



Constitutional Provisions

- ✱ **Official Language of the Union:** Art. 343 authorises the use of the Hindi language in addition to the English language and of the Devanagari form of numerals in addition to the international form of Indian numerals for any of the official purposes of the Union.
- ✱ **Official language or languages of a State:** By Art. 345 the legislature of a State may by law adopt any one or more of the languages in use in the State, or Hindi, to be used for all or any of the official purposes of that State.
- ✱ **Language to be used in representations for redress of grievances:** Article 350— Every person shall be entitled to submit a representation for the redress of any grievance to any officer or authority of the Union or a State in any of the languages used in the Union or in the State, as the case may be.

Focus on Linguistic Minorities

- * **Facilities for instruction in mother-tongue at the primary stage:** By Art. 350A, it should be the endeavour of every State, and of every local authority within the State, to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups.
- * **Special Officer for linguistic minorities:** Article 350B provides for the appointment of such an officer, whose duty is to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under this Constitution and report to the President.

However, the Constitution also contains

- * **Art. 344:** The President shall, at the expiration of five years from the commencement of this Constitution ... constitute a Commission which shall consist of a Chairman and such other members representing the different languages specified in the Eighth Schedule as the President may appoint... It shall be the duty of the Commission to make recommendations to the President as to the progressive use of the Hindi language for the official purposes of the Union; restrictions on the use of the English language for all or any of the official purposes of the Union;...

However, the Constitution also contains

- * **Art. 350**: It shall be the duty of the Union to promote the spread of the Hindi language, to develop it so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India and to secure its enrichment by assimilating without interfering with its genius, the forms, style and expressions used in Hindustani and in the other languages of India specified in the Eighth Schedule , and by drawing, wherever necessary or desirable, for its vocabulary, primarily on Sanskrit and secondarily on other languages.

The Eighth Schedule

- * **Languages currently included in the Eighth Schedule**
(superscripts indicate the year of inclusion):

(1) Assamese¹⁹⁵⁰ (2) Bengali¹⁹⁵⁰ (3) Gujarati¹⁹⁵⁰ (4) Hindi¹⁹⁵⁰
(5) Kannada¹⁹⁵⁰ (6) Kashmiri¹⁹⁵⁰ (7) Konkani¹⁹⁹² (8)
Malayalam¹⁹⁵⁰ (9) Manipuri¹⁹⁹² (10) Marathi¹⁹⁵⁰ (11) Nepali¹⁹⁹²
(12) Oriya¹⁹⁵⁰ (13) Punjabi¹⁹⁵⁰ (14) Sanskrit¹⁹⁵⁰ (15) Sindhi¹⁹⁶⁷
(16) Tamil¹⁹⁵⁰ (17) Telugu¹⁹⁵⁰ (18) Urdu¹⁹⁵⁰ (19) Bodo²⁰⁰⁴ (20)
Santhali²⁰⁰⁴ (21) Maithili²⁰⁰⁴ (22) Dogri²⁰⁰⁴

- * **Benefits:** recognition as a literary language with support for their literature by the union govt; eligibility for selection as a medium of secondary education, as well as for national competitive examinations.

The Eighth Schedule: Changing meanings

- * The way that Eighth Schedule is introduced in the Constitution, it was initially conceived of as a listing of the languages that should serve as sources by which Hindi could be enriched so that it would grow to be a language representative of the Union and to promote its progressive use. But even in the Constituent Assembly, there were voices of dissent. Jaipal Singh (Bihar) asked for the inclusion of Mundari, Gondi and Oraon, three 'tribal' languages. This was negativised by the majority.
- * Over the years, the meaning of inclusion in the Eighth Schedule has come to mean official recognition as a language, both in terms of funding as well as by the Census. It is no wonder therefore that on date, 38 more Indian languages have formally requested their inclusion in the Eighth Schedule.

Moreover...

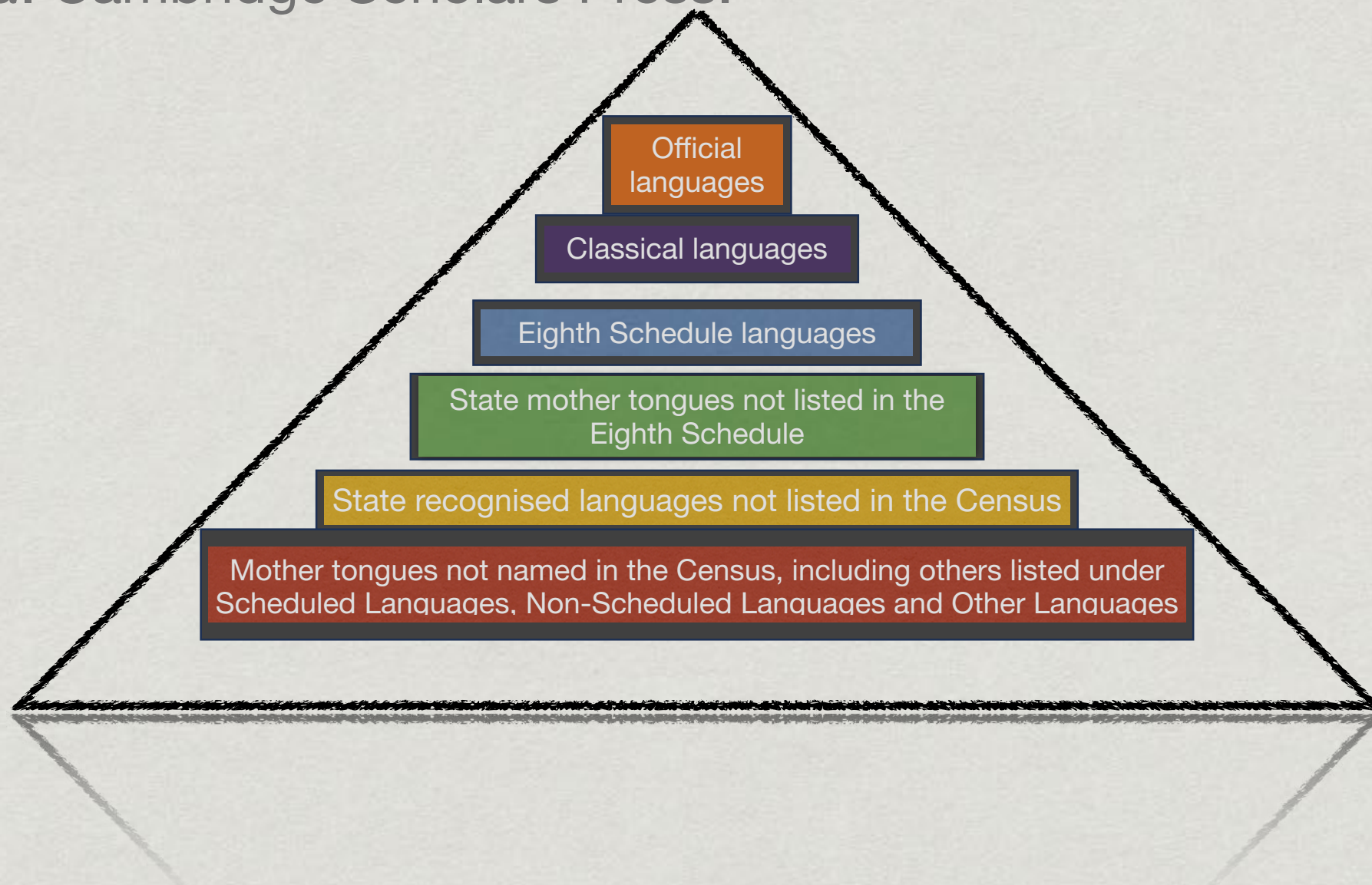
- * Even the most robust Constitutional provisions have not proved strong enough to override the actual policies pursued by the state over the last 75 years. The fact is that rather than pursuing language policies that allow for the implementation of Arts. 347, 350A and 350B, the Indian state has privileged the growth of dominant languages, particularly Hindi. Three signposts in policy:
 - * 1956: The reorganisation of States on a primarily linguistic basis, which strengthened regional subnationalisms, but made no explicit provisions for linguistic minorities within the state.

Moreover...

- * 1968: The introduction of the Three Language formula in education ("Hindi, English and modern Indian language (*preferably* one of the southern languages) in the Hindi speaking states and Hindi, English and the Regional language in the non-Hindi speaking States"). Over time, state-controlled boards of education have ended up prescribing Sanskrit as a modern Indian language!
- * 2004: Introduction of a policy conferring status as a Classical Language, on languages other than Sanskrit.

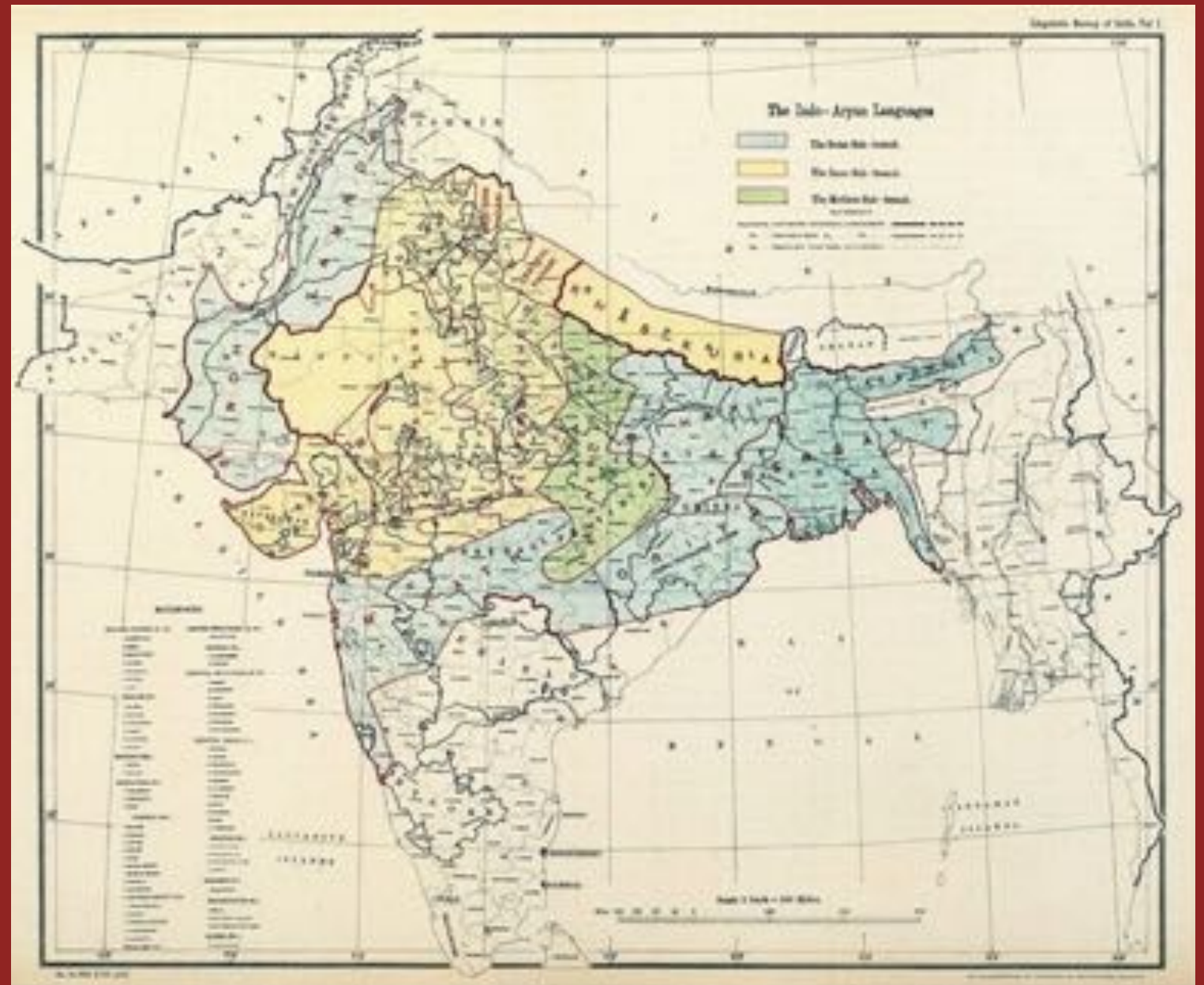
The result

- * Karthick Narayanan (forthcoming) *Multilinguality, Vitality and Endangerment: Insights from the Lived Experiences of Multilingual India*. Cambridge Scholars Press.



A SHORT COLONIAL HISTORY OF INDIA'S LANGUAGE COUNTS

GRIERSON'S
LINGUISTIC SURVEY
OF INDIA
(1896-1928) AND
THE 1901 CENSUS



The Primary Source: The Classified Lists of the LSI

- ✱ To this day, the Indian Census uses the lists published by the *Linguistic Survey of India* (1896-1928) as the basis for its classification of India's languages. Final list in Grierson (1927).

CLASSIFIED LIST OF INDIAN LANGUAGES AS SHOWN IN THE LINGUISTIC SURVEY OF INDIA AND IN THE CENSUS OF 1921.

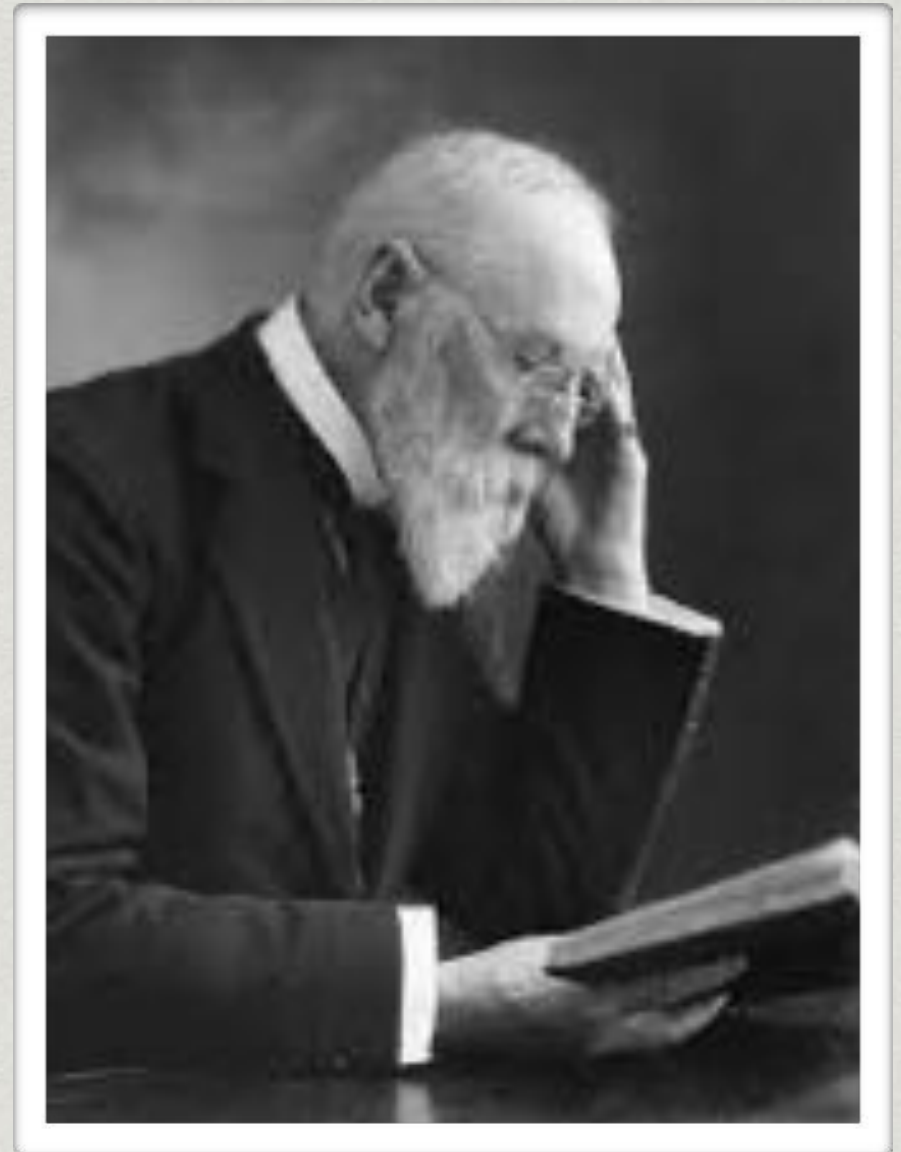
The following pages show the statistical results of the Linguistic Survey of India, compared, so far as is possible, with the language-figures of the Census of 1921.

A few words must be added as to the classification of the languages mentioned in this list. For those which have been dealt with in the Linguistic Survey, I have followed the grouping there adopted. The only exception is Mikir (No. 189), which later information has caused me to transfer from the Naga-Bodo to the Naga-Kuki sub-group. As regards the other languages,—nearly all of which are spoken in Burma,—I have thought it best, for convenience of reference, to follow the classification of the Census of 1921. A Linguistic Survey of Burma is at the present moment in progress, and it seems to me to be advisable to defer any alteration of the Census arrangement until that Survey has put the attempt upon a secure foundation. Any immediate change could only be temporary and provisional.

	<i>Austro-Asiatic Sub-Family</i>	<i>3,052,046</i>	<i>4,523,790</i>	
	<i>Mōn-Khm̄r Branch</i>	<i>177,293</i>	<i>549,917</i>	<small>Except Khāsī, none of the languages of this branch came within the scope of the Survey</small>
	<i>Mon-Khmer Group</i>	..	189,263	
3	<i>Mōn or Talang</i>	...	189,263	
	<i>Palaung-Wā Group</i>	...	147,889	
4	<i>Palaung</i>	...	117,773	
5	<i>Wā</i>	...	13,848	
6	<i>Yanglam</i>	...	12,553	
7	<i>Danaw</i>	...	1,493	
7a	<i>Others¹</i>	...	2,182	
	<i>Khāsī Group</i>	<i>177,293</i>	<i>204,103</i>	
8	<i>Khāsī</i>	<i>177,293</i>	<i>204,103</i>	
9	<i>Standard</i>	<i>113,190</i>	...	
10	<i>Leng-ngam</i>	<i>1,880</i>	...	
11	<i>Synteng</i>	<i>51,740</i>	...	
12	<i>Wār</i>	<i>7,000</i>	...	
	<i>Unspecified</i>	<i>3,513</i>	...	
	<i>Nicobar Group</i>	...	8,662	
13	<i>Nicobares</i>	...	8,662	

The *Linguistic Survey of India*

- Between 1895-1900, a mammoth field linguistics exercise was conducted in British India-- the *Linguistic Survey of India* that provides:
 - An introductory sketch
 - A bibliography
 - A brief account of the grammar
 - A comparative list of words, grammatical forms and test-phrases.
 - Two text 'specimens'--one a fixed text (translation of the Parable of the Prodigal Son) and a free text.
- The volumes of the LSI were published between 1903-1928.



The LSI was not an instrument of the colonial Census

- * The colonial state's endorsement of the LSI was primarily because language was a parameter by which it classified 'nationality.' As I show in Kidwai (2024), it was conceived as a scholarly exercise and represented a consensus between linguists and philologists in the Seventh International Oriental Congress, Vienna, 27-29 September 1886. It was the denial of official patronage to the original scholarly exercise that led to an opportunistic alliance with the Registrar General's office.
- * Overall, although Grierson maintained a loose collaboration with Census officials throughout the period of the LSI, the Survey makes no claims to 'confident colonial or epistemological mastery' (Majeed 2019b: 206). Rather, knowledge about linguistic phenomena is often presented as provisional and incomplete. Many of the LSI's descriptions are replete with Grierson's frank admissions to limitations imposed by the quality of data, the inconclusiveness of particular analyses, and the gaps in knowledge that need to be filled if definitive conclusions are to be reached

A snapshot of the LSI Methodology

- * In April- July 1896, Grierson sent out a circular, along with a form, to all the District level officials asking them to list the names of the ‘genuine local dialects’, i.e. the ‘home-language, spoken in the country away from the cities.’
- * He further instructed respondents that in case multiple names were used for languages/dialects, both should be provided.
 - * “If the local dialect has no special local name, but is called locally by any well-known general term..., then that name should be entered.”
 - * “It is of course to be understood that no language census is asked for.”

The LSI Data was not validated through the Census

- * By early 1897, Grierson had compiled a Rough List of language names sent to him, which he circulated again for comments and then finalised
- * By May 1897, Grierson circulated a call for the 'specimens' the LSI contains.
 - * "It is upon these specimens that I shall base my final list of languages spoken in the Presidency. The correct affiliation of many of the languages named in the rough list is very doubtful and examination of the specimens is the only method of classifying them correctly."

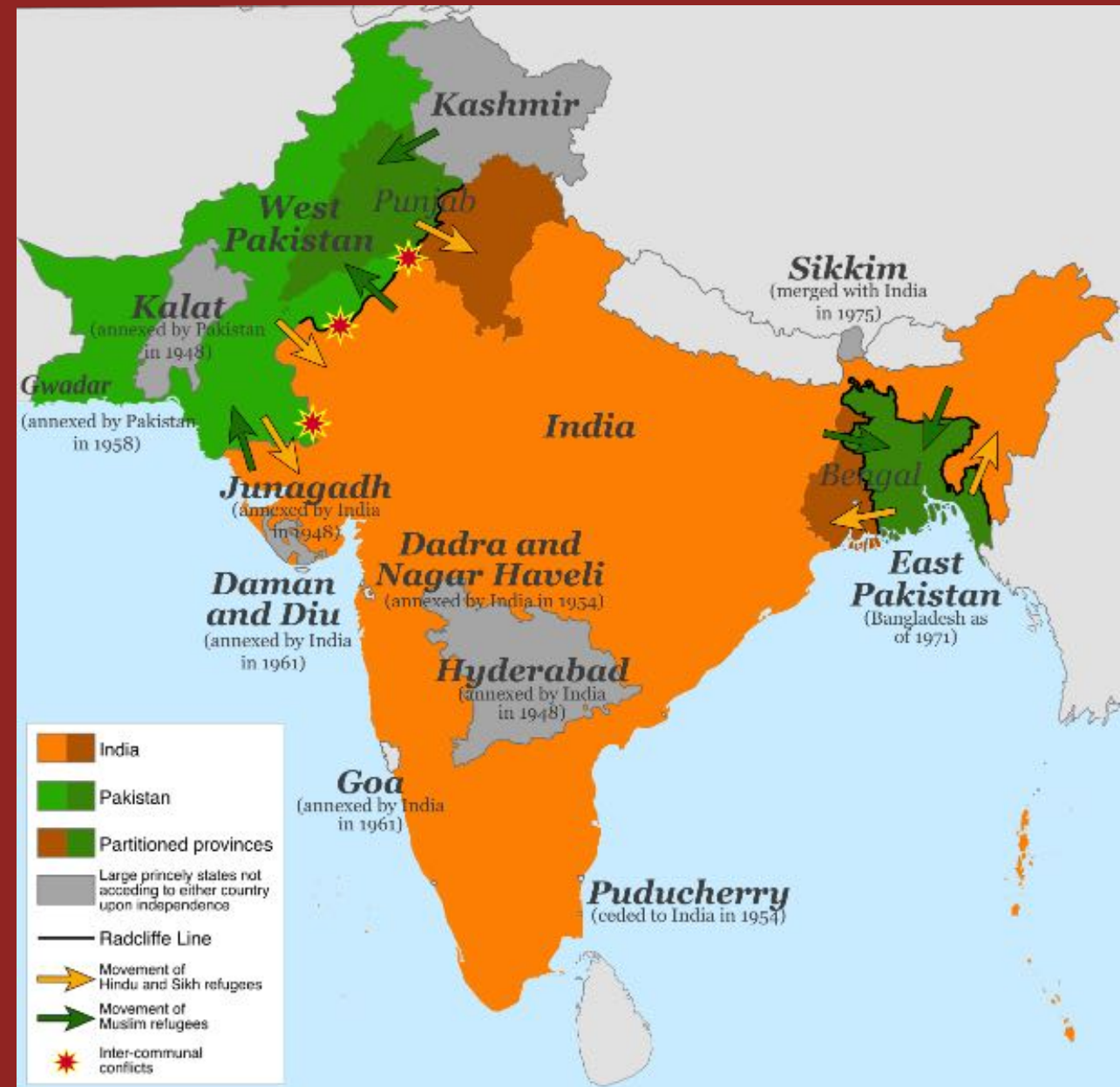
The LSI Results were intended to deconstruct the Census ‘lumps’

- * “The chief difficulty has been experienced in classifying the many languages usually included under the name Hindi. The census, and most of the District returns for this Survey, evidently include under this name languages of many kinds, whether hailing from Lucknow, or from Rajputana, or from Bihar. It is plain that these languages should not all be grouped together under one name.”
 - * The LSI’s lists use linguistics to disaggregate Census returns into ‘languages’ and ‘dialects’. Its groupings show genealogical relationships between speech varieties and its findings are tentative, as the paucity of conclusive data is frequently admitted.
 - * Grierson’s Chapter in the 1901 Census “The Languages of India” (reprinted in 1903) lists the name and speaker strength of every language or dialect.

Separate Listing, Different Meanings

1901 Census	2011 Census
Genetic grouping—name of family/group, and not grouping by political considerations.	Grouping by Constitutional provisions alone
Numerical strength of speakers does not constrain the right to be named and counted. Neither does determination of being language vs. dialect.	Numerical strength of speakers is the determinant for name-ability and countability, although the language vs. dialect distinction is not maintained.
Lack of knowledge about genealogy does not preclude name-ability and countability	Unclassifiability precludes name-ability.

EARLY POST-COLONIAL INDIA



THE 1961 CENSUS

Background

- * WW II put a stop to language and mother tongue data classification in 1941. The large-scale social tension, disturbances and migration, because of the Partition of India and Pakistan, meant that the 1951 Census language data was presented exactly as returned.
- * As the country began to settle down by the mid 1950s, faith in the provisions of the new Constitution and a determination to actualise the promises it made for universal education and social and cultural equality, the Census was chosen as one of the prime instruments by which knowledge was to be gathered about the 'real' India.

Groundwork

- * A lot of work was accomplished by end 1958 to lay the groundwork for the landmark 1961 Census.
 - * All India and State-wise lists of mother tongues returned in 1951 but not traceable in Grierson.
 - * Statements showing mother tongues as returned in 1951 traceable in Grierson according to the LSI Classification, and giving comparative figures from LSI Estimate 1911 to 1951.
- * The tone of what the Census of 1961 was to do was set– to critically engage with Grierson’s classification and to provide a true, postcolonial accounting of India’s linguistic diversity and multilingualism.

Fieldwork

- * A circular was issued 19 January 1960 that asked Sub-divisional Officers, Circle Officers, Block Development Officers or Tehsildars forwarding the names of districts from which lesser-known languages. They were expected to submit reports which indicated
 - * The migration history of the community
 - * Whether the language was used for intercourse within the community or also with outsiders.
 - * Whether speakers had learnt the majority language for intercourse with others.
 - * Gendered patterns of use of the language.
 - * Whether the language has any script of its own or a written literature.
 - * Brief account of folk texts about the origin of the language/ community.

1961 Census Results

- * There are **1652** mother tongues in India, including 103 foreign ones. All mother tongues identified were named, irrespective of the numerical strength of their speakers and whether they could be classified or not.
- * Data is presented in 5 tables:
 1. Statistics of the Eighth Schedule languages.
 2. Statistics of all languages spoken by more than 500,000 speakers, arranged in descending order.
 3. Statistics of all languages spoken by 100,000- 499,999 speakers, arranged in descending order.
 4. Statistics of all languages spoken by numerically weaker languages, arranged in descending order.
 5. Complete alphabetical presentation of all mother tongue or language returns.

A Postcolonial Vision

- * The language data was presented with two objectives:
 - * Firstly, as is normally required by census traditions and standards, it supplied full and detailed information on the strength and area of speakers of language/dialects.
 - * Secondly, it presents an organised linguistic picture of the country by providing a suitable place to each *speech variety* in a technically acceptable scheme of classification. (The Census adopts linguists' arguments against a 'language' vs. 'dialect' nomenclature.)
 - * "A clearer picture of the country would certainly emerge if this large number of Indian mother tongues ... could be represented through suitable classifications."
 - * "But since there were many cases of mother tongues on which information was not available in the Linguistic Survey of India we had to have recourse either to available published researches, if any, or to tentative character of our own collection of information."

The 1961 Census & the LSI

	No. of tongue	Total No. of speakers
1. No. of mother tongue returns	1,652	438,936,918
2. No. of mother tongue attested, in Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India classifications	572	436,224,545
3. No. of mother tongues not traced in the L.S.I. and <i>tentatively classified</i>	400	425,076
4. No. of mother tongues attested in the Linguis- tic Survey of India but <i>tentatively reclassified</i> .	50	1,908,399
5. No. of mother tongues considered unclassi- fiable	527	62,432
6. Foreign mother tongues	103	315,466

- * If the Classification Number against any mother tongue occurs within brackets it means that the mother tongue is classified in the Linguistic Survey of India under the particular language/dialect of that number of the Classified List. The letter T against a mother tongue indicates that it is not attested in the Linguistic Survey of India Classification but has been tentatively classified by the Linguist. The letters TK against a mother tongue indicates that although it has been classified in the Linguistic Survey of India, yet the Linguist had reasons to differ from the Linguistic Survey of India Classifications. As a result the mother tongue has been tentatively reclassified by him.

Transparency

- * The 1961 Census was fully transparent in that it provided its schemes for:
 - * Rationalisation: “In rationalising the names of mother tongues care was taken to restrict the process only to spellings.” It was made only “after due examination of enumeration slips, and in cases wherever necessary through collection of local information.”
 - * It also specified what would be done where multiple names for the same MT existed, when two different MTs were signified by the same name, etc.

Transparency

- * Classification: The following principles guided classification: (1) Departure from the LSI Classified List (as in LSI 1927: appendix 1) is not necessary, but possible; (2) For departures, first consult the LSI for possible affiliation; (3) If not in the LSI, conduct other research or use local information; (4) address wrong classifications in Grierson by reclassifying; (5) Mark out all those MTs as unclassified.
- * Unclassified MTs were annotated for the 1961 Census, and published in Nigam (1971), the trained linguist behind the extraordinary effort that the 1961 Census represents (on deputation from the Anthropological Survey of India at the Census of India, on the Registrar General's request since 1960).

1513/ Tangsa	Since Tangsa speakers were reported to be a distinct section of Naga tribe the mother tongue of the same name was included under Naga group, a separate language in 1961 Census. Actual language data is however not available.	T.B. Sub-family— Naga group.	114 NEFA-114	—
1514 Tanjarvalngo	An unclassified return of 1961 Census. Apparently spurious.	—	1 Maharashtra-1	Will need further scrutiny.
1515 Tankera	A spurious return.	—	1 Punjab-1	Will need further scrutiny.
1516 Tanti	An unclassified language of 1961 Census. Field investigations, however, showed that Tanti speakers spoke a form of Oriya language.	I.A. Sub-family— Eastern group.	100 Bihar-100	—
1517 Tara Dev-Pahari	Apparently name of the mother tongue is given after the name of a particular locality. Possibly spurious. Figures were merged with Kiunthali in 1961 Census.	I.A. Sub-family— Pahari group.	2 Himachal Pradesh-2	Will need further scrutiny.
1518 Tarane	An unclassified return of 1961 Census. Apparently spurious.	—	1 Maharashtra-1	Will need further scrutiny.
1519 Taroa	Unclassified return of 1961 Census. Apparently spurious.	—	1 Maharashtra-1	Will need further scrutiny.
1520 Taroni	An unclassified return of 1961 Census. No further information is available.	—	16 West Bengal-16	If returned again in 1971 Census then location of speakers at the village level need be specified.
1521 Tashwar	Unclassified return of 1961 Census. Possibly spurious.	—	1 Mysore-1	Will need further scrutiny.

1505 Tamboli	Untraceable in LSI. Was tentatively classified with Marathi on the basis of local information in 1961 Census.	I.A. Sub-family— Southern group.	142 Maharashtra-142	If returned again in 1971 Census then location of speakers at the village level need be specified.
1506 Tamil	See Appendix.	Dravidian-Family— South-Dravidian group.	30465442 Madras-28011099 Mysore-854227 Kerala-527613	—
1507 Tanda	On the basis of LSI information, being a name for Banjari Tanda was classified under Rajasthani.	I.A. Sub-family— Central group.	36 Maharashtra-36	—
1508 Tandara	An unclassified return of 1961 Census. No further information could be available.	—	31 Mysore-31	If returned again in 1971 Census then location of speakers at the village level need be specified.
1509 Tandil	Apparently a spurious return.	—	1 Punjab-1	Will need further scrutiny.
1510 Tanganyika	Name given after the country where a large number of Bantu and Arab speech communities reside. A spurious return as such. Swahili is the <i>lingua franca</i> in Tanganyika.	—	1 Kerala-1	—
1511 Tangbo	Was classified under Tibetan in 1961 Census on the basis of scrutiny of individual slips.	T.B. Sub-family— Bhotia group.	9 NEFA-9	—
1512 Tangkhul	A Naga-Kuki language spoken mainly in Manipur State.	Tibeto-Chinese family— Kuki-Chin group.	44020 Manipur-43943	—

Future Plans: The Census as an Institutional Language Survey

- * Asok Mitra, in his introductory Note to the 1961 Census, made it clear that the Census office plans to undertake:
 - * “A more extended long term survey, in the manner of Grierson’s LSI which would continue work in the inter-censal period and would bring in a richer harvest to 1971 and 1981.”

The Hope: The Census as an Institutional Linguistic Survey

- * Such a survey was warranted, because he recognised that the 1961 report “stands for work in progress and is no more than a tentative presentation”, and also that the Census had still to convince the government:
- * “I must accept responsibility for my share in the statements made and the conclusions drawn, even in the Linguist’s Note, which do not necessarily represent the views of the Government, insofar as misstatements, errors or misplacements of emphasis are concerned.”

The Turn from the 1971 Census onwards

- * Mitra also says:
 - * ...This tentative presentation, despite its obvious deficiencies, was decided upon not with the intent of prematurely publicising unfinished work but with the object of sharpening the areas of uncertainty and inviting the comments and suggestions of scholars.
- * But although his call to scholarship was widely embraced by linguists across the world, the collective hope that the 1961 Census had nurtured that a poor and undeveloped country like India would find a way to actualise linguistic rights and represent its linguistic diversity and its multilingualism were soon dashed.
- * Since the 1971 Census, the Classification List of the LSI in 1927 is the sole authority that is cited as determining classification of Indian languages, marking a *re-colonial* turn.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

PRESENT AND FUTURE OUTLOOK



Recoloniality: Growing MT returns

- * With the LSI as the dominant framework for both rationalisation and (re-)classification, and only weak attempts at research and scholarship, and zero transparency, it is no wonder that MT returns are growing exponentially, with unclassified languages now far in excess of classified ones.
- * If the agenda as conceived by the Constitution and the 1961 Census had been allowed to progress, Indians would have become educated about their languages, and used the labels of their MTs knowledgeably. The implicit hierarchisation of languages is actually strengthened.
 - * Speakers' identity ascriptions are based on the categories created by language family and 'tribal identity', which can be rankly majoritarian in character.
 - * As citizens, our relationship to India's languages is defined by the degree of our affective relationship to them— mother vs. other —or in terms of a hierarchical distance based on social privilege— tribal language vs. language.

Recoloniality

- * Recoloniality has entailed that MT returns are acts of identity alone. Karbi (TB) and Sanskrit (IA) both languages registered improbable spikes of growth in speakers between 1981-1991!

Table 2: Growth of Select Languages - 1971, 1981, 1991 and 2001

<i>Language</i>	<i>Persons who returned the language as mother tongue</i>				<i>Decadal percentage increase</i>		
	1971	1981	1991	2001	1971-1981	1981-1991	1991-2001
Gadaba (D)	20,420	28,027	28,158	26,262	37.25	0.47	-6.73
Hindi (IA)	202,767,971	257,749,009	329,518,087	422,048,642	27.12	27.84	28.08
Karbi/Mikir (TB)	199,121	12,600	366,229	419,534	-93.67	2806.58	14.56
Kharia(AA)	191,421	212,605	225,556	239,608	11.07	6.09	6.23
Khond/Kondh(D)	196,316	195,793	220,783	118,597	-0.27	12.76	-46.28
Maithili (IA)	6,130,026	7,522,265	7,766,921	12,179,122	22.71	3.25	56.81
Sanskrit(IA)	2,212	6,106	49,736	14,135	176.04	714.54	-71.58
Santali(AA)	3,786,899	4,332,511	5,216,325	6,469,600	14.41	20.40	24.03
Savara (AA)	222,018	209,092	273,168	252,519	-5.82	30.64	-7.56

Change? in the last 5 years

The National Education Policy 2020

- * Unfortunately, Indian languages have not received their due attention and care, with the country losing over 220 languages in the last 50 years alone. UNESCO has declared 197 Indian languages as ‘endangered ’. ...
- * Moreover, even those languages of India that are not officially on such endangered lists ... are facing serious difficulties on many fronts. Teaching and learning of Indian languages need to be integrated with school and higher education at every level.
 - * Wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/ mother tongue/local language/regional language. Thereafter, the home/local language shall continue to be taught as a language wherever possible.

Change (?) in the last 5 years

The National Education Policy 2020

- * But what are the names of these mother tongues/home/local languages? It is doubtful that without a serious implementation of the 1961 Census agenda that there will be any meaningful change, specially since both the Scheduled Languages and Classical Languages are both promoted by the School policy.
- * Agnihotri (2020) also points out that in the Indian context, linguistic diversity must be conceived of “as multilinguality, and not as a summation of discrete languages as in the case of bi-/multilingualism; it is marked by fluidity, code-mixing, code-switching, nonce formations, and creativity.”

Outlook: Back to a Precolonial 'Golden' Past?

भारतीय भाषा परिवार और राष्ट्रीय एकता

Bharatiya Bhasha Parivar and National Integration

During the colonial rule, several linguistic theories like genetically related Indo-European Language Family, etc. were floated in order to further the interests of the colonial rulers. Subsequently, though such theories were found to be untrue, the same are being taught in the Universities. Though many researchers have written enough articles and books on India as one linguistic area and all the Indian languages belonging to one family, i.e., Bharatiya Bhasha Parivar, such findings were not allowed to be promoted for the reasons best known to them. Now is the time to do further research on this subject, to let the country know about it and to bring the concept of Bharatiya Bhasha Parivar into the mainstream curriculum. The related seminar will work in this direction to create a pan-India awareness and sensitisation on the issue. The seminar will act as a platform for the scholars, researchers, students to discuss and share commonalities among all Indian languages and to promote national integration. The seminar will also come out with quality papers and presentations on 'Bharatiya Bhasha Parivar'.

[HTTPS://BHARATIYABHASHA.EDUCATION.GOV.IN/BROAD-THemes-&-GENERAL-GUIDELINES-FOR-ORGANIZING-PROGRAMMES-WITH-BBS.PDF](https://bharatiyabhasha.education.gov.in/broad-themes-&-general-guidelines-for-organizing-programmes-with-bbs.pdf)

- * The 2021 Census has been postponed because of the pandemic, so we do not yet know whether this will also become a category of the Census analysis, but regardless of that, it looks like that the hostility to linguistics that began in 1971 shall continue unabated.

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