

Most Spoken Languages in India by Number of Speakers

India writes in many languages and speaks in many more voices. Language is an important attribute of a population and has great relevance and significance in a pluri-lingual and pluri-ethnic land like India.

Hindi is the most spoken language in India, with 52.83 crore speakers. In other words, 43.63% of the total population speaks Hindi. It is followed by **Bengali** and **Marathi** in second and third positions respectively.

Introduction

- Of the total population of India, **96.71 per cent** have one of the **Scheduled languages** as their mother tongue, the remaining 3.29 per cent is accounted for by other languages.
- The 121 languages are presented in two parts, viz.
 - **Part A:** Languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India (Scheduled Languages) consisting of 22 languages; and
 - **Part B:** Languages not included in the Eighth Schedule (Non-Scheduled Languages) consisting of 99 languages plus the category “Total of other languages” which includes all other languages and mother tongues falling under Part B and which returned less than 10,000 speakers each at all India level or were not identifiable on the basis of the linguistic information available.

Most Spoken Languages in India

The most spoken languages in India with the data of the number of speakers are discussed below:

Hindi

- According to the 2011 Census of India, the Hindi language is the most spoken language in India, having 52.83 crore speakers and **43.63 per cent** of the population speaking this language.
- Hindi is not only the official language of the central government but also the official language of various state governments.
- Hindi is also being used as the alternate medium in recruitment examinations of various important offices, institutions and banks of the central government, even though these examinations have a necessary paper for the English language.

- The official languages of the Union Government (not the entire country) are Hindi and English.
- The Hindi language belongs to the Indo-Aryan family.

Status of English in India

- English in India is a global language in a multilingual country.
- The aim of English teaching is the creation of multilinguals who can enrich all our languages.
- Hindi was declared to be the official language of the Indian union, and English was declared the associate official language in the Constituent Assembly on 14th September 1949.

Bengali

- The second most spoken language in India by the number of speakers is Bengali and has 9.72 crore speakers.
- The Bengali-speaking population is **8.03 per cent** of the total population.

Marathi

- The third most spoken language of India is Marathi and has 8.30 crore speakers according to the 2011 Census data.
- It is spoken by 6.86 per cent of the total population.

Telugu

- Telugu language is one of the languages in the Dravidian family and is widely spoken in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Puducherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and it has 8.11 crore speakers as per 2011 Census data.
- This language is spoken by 6.70 per cent of the total population.

Tamil

- Tamil is also one of the Dravidian languages, and it is spoken by 6.90 crore speakers, which are 5.70 per cent of the total population.

- It is widely spoken in the areas of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Gujarati

- According to the 2011 Census data, Gujarati has 5.54 crore speakers.
- Also, it is estimated that 4.58 per cent of the total population speaks this language.
- It is the official language of Gujarat. Also, the official language of Daman, Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli in India.

Urdu

- Urdu is spoken by 5.07 crore people in India, which is calculated to be 4.19 per cent of the total population.
- Urdu is spoken in many countries around the world, including Britain, Canada, the United States, the Middle East and India.
- In India, it is spoken widely in the areas of Jammu & Kashmir, Telangana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Kannada

- Kannada is one of the Dravidian languages spoken widely in the state of Karnataka. As per 2011 Census data, 4.37 crore people speak this language. That is 3.61 per cent of the total population.

Odia

- Odia is one of the Indo-Aryan languages and has 3.75 crore speakers.
- Almost 3.10 per cent of the total population speaks Odia.

Malayalam

- Malayalam belongs to the Dravidian language family and in India, it is widely spoken in Kerala, Lakshadweep and Puducherry.
- It is spoken by 3.48 crore people, which is 2.88 per cent of the total population.

FAQ about Languages in India

How many languages are spoken in India?

More than 1600 languages are spoken in India and these languages belong to four different language families. India is called a multilingual country because of this linguistic diversity.

What are the language families in India?

There are four language families in India, and they include Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asian/ Munda.

