



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Perunthalaivar Kamarajar"

A school closure that must be called out

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Context

The order to close down the only **Gondi-medium school** in a village of Maharashtra raises important questions.

The school was started in Mohgaon village in the **Fifth Schedule area** of the Gadchiroli district, in 2019, as a result of a **resolution by the gram panchayat**, for tribal students to achieve better learning outcomes by imparting **primary education in their mother tongue**.

This initiative was in consonance with **Article 29 of the Constitution**, which provides **minorities the right to preserve distinct languages, scripts and cultures**, and **Article 350(a)** which mandates that the **state should make adequate provisions so that children of minority groups may receive instruction in their mother tongue**.

However, the local administration has argued that as the school is not registered under the Right to Education Act, 2009, its standards cannot be monitored. Non-recognition would also jeopardise the future of students when they transition to higher classes.

Gond Tribe

The Gond or Gondi (G?ndi) or Koitur are a **Dravidian ethno-linguistic group**.

They are **one of the largest tribal groups** in India. According to the 2001 census, their population was nearly 11 million.

Distribution: The states of **Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and Odisha** are home to the largest Gond populations.

Gond tribes also live in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Gujarat.

Gonds are mainly divided into four tribes, namely Raj Gonds, Madia Gonds, Dhurve Gonds, and Khatulwar Gonds.

The majority of Gond people speak dialects of Gondi, a language of the Dravidian language family.

Some Gonds have lost their own language and speak Hindi, Marathi, or Telugu, depending on which is dominant in their area.

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Sixth Schedule & Fifth Schedule of the Constitution

The objectives of the **Sixth Schedule** of the Indian constitution are:

- 1 To provide for the **administration of tribal areas** in the **northeastern** states of **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram**.
- 2 To **protect tribal land** and resources and **prohibits the transfer** of such resources **to non-tribal individuals** or communities.
- 3 To ensure the tribal communities are not exploited or marginalized by non-tribal populations and that their **cultural and social identities are preserved** and promoted.

The provisions of the **Fifth Schedule** shall apply to the administration and control of the **Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes in any State OTHER THAN the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram**

Eighth Schedule of the Constitution

It lists the **official languages** of the republic of India. **Part XVII** of the Indian constitution deals with the official languages in **Articles 343 to 351**.

The Constitutional provisions related to the Eighth Schedule are:

- 1 Article 344: Article 344(1) provides for the constitution of a Commission by the President on expiration of five years from the commencement of the Constitution.
- 2 **Article 351**: It says that it is the **duty of the centre to promote Hindi language** so that it may serve as a medium of expression for all the elements of the composite culture of India.

However, it can be noted that there is **no fixed criteria for any language to be considered for inclusion in the Eighth Schedule**.

The Parliament can add or remove languages from the Eighth Schedule

The Eighth Schedule to the Constitution consists of the following **22 languages**:

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Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri.

Of these languages, **14 were initially included** in the Constitution.

Sindhi language was added by the 21st Amendment Act of **1967**.

Konkani, Manipuri, and Nepali were included by the 71st Amendment Act of **1992**.

Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santhali were added by the 92nd Amendment Act of **2003** which came into force in 2004.