



Toto Language

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Why in News?

The **Toto language**, spoken by only 1,600 people in West Bengal, is on the brink of extinction.

- However, a **trilingual dictionary (Toto-Bengali-English)** called "**Toto Shabda Sangraha**" is set to be released in Kolkata on 7th October 2023, to help preserve the toto language.

What is the Toto Language?

- The Toto language is a **Sino-Tibetan language** spoken by the **Toto tribal people** in parts of West Bengal bordering Bhutan.
 - [The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#) lists it as a **critically endangered** language.
- The Toto language is **primarily spoken orally** and even though prominent community member [Padma Shri-decorated Dhaniram Toto](#) developed a script as recently as in 2015, most people either **write it in Bengali script or write in Bengali language**.

Toto People

- The Toto is a primitive and isolated tribal group residing only in a small enclave called Totopara in the Jalpaiguri of West Bengal, India.
- The total population of Totos is **less than 2000 according to the 2001 census**, all living in Totopara.
- The Totos are considered **Mongoloid people**.
- They are generally **endogamous and marry within their own tribe**.
- The Toto family is **patrilocal**(social system in which a **married couple resides with the husband's parents**) in nature and dominated by **nuclear type**. However, joint families are not rare. **Monogamy** is a common form of marriage among the Toto but **polygamy is not prohibited**. There is **no custom of divorce among the Totos**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. With reference to India, the terms 'Halbi, Ho and Kui' pertain to (2021)

- (a) dance forms of Northwest India
- (b) musical instruments
- (c) pre-historic cave paintings
- (d) tribal languages

Ans: (d)

Exp:

- Odisha has a unique place in India due to its vast population of tribals residing in the state. 62 tribal communities live in Odisha which is 22.8% of the total population of Odisha.
- Odisha's tribal language is divided into 3 main language families. They are Austro-Asiatic (Munda), Dravida and Indo-Aryan. Every tribe has its own language and language family. The languages include:
 - Austro-Asiatic: Bhumij, Birhor, Rem (Bonda), Gatah (Didyai), Gutab (Gadaba), Sora(Saora), Gorum (Parenga), Khadia, Juang, Santali, Ho, Mundari, etc.
 - Dravida: Gondi, Kui-Kondh, Kuvi-Kondh, Kisan, Koya, Olari, (Gadaba) Parja, Peng, Kudukh (Oraon) etc.
 - Indo Aryan: Bathudi, Bhuyan, Kurmali, Sounti, Sadri, Kandhan, Aghria, Desia, Jharia, Halbi, Bhatri, Matia, Bhunjia, etc.
- Out of these languages only 7 have scripts. They are Santali (Olchiki), Saora(Sorang Sampeng), Ho (Warangchiti), Kui (Kui Script), Oraon (Kukhud Tod), Mundari (Bani Hisir), Bhumij (Bhumij Anl). Santali language has been included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.
- **Therefore, option (d) is the correct answer.**

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