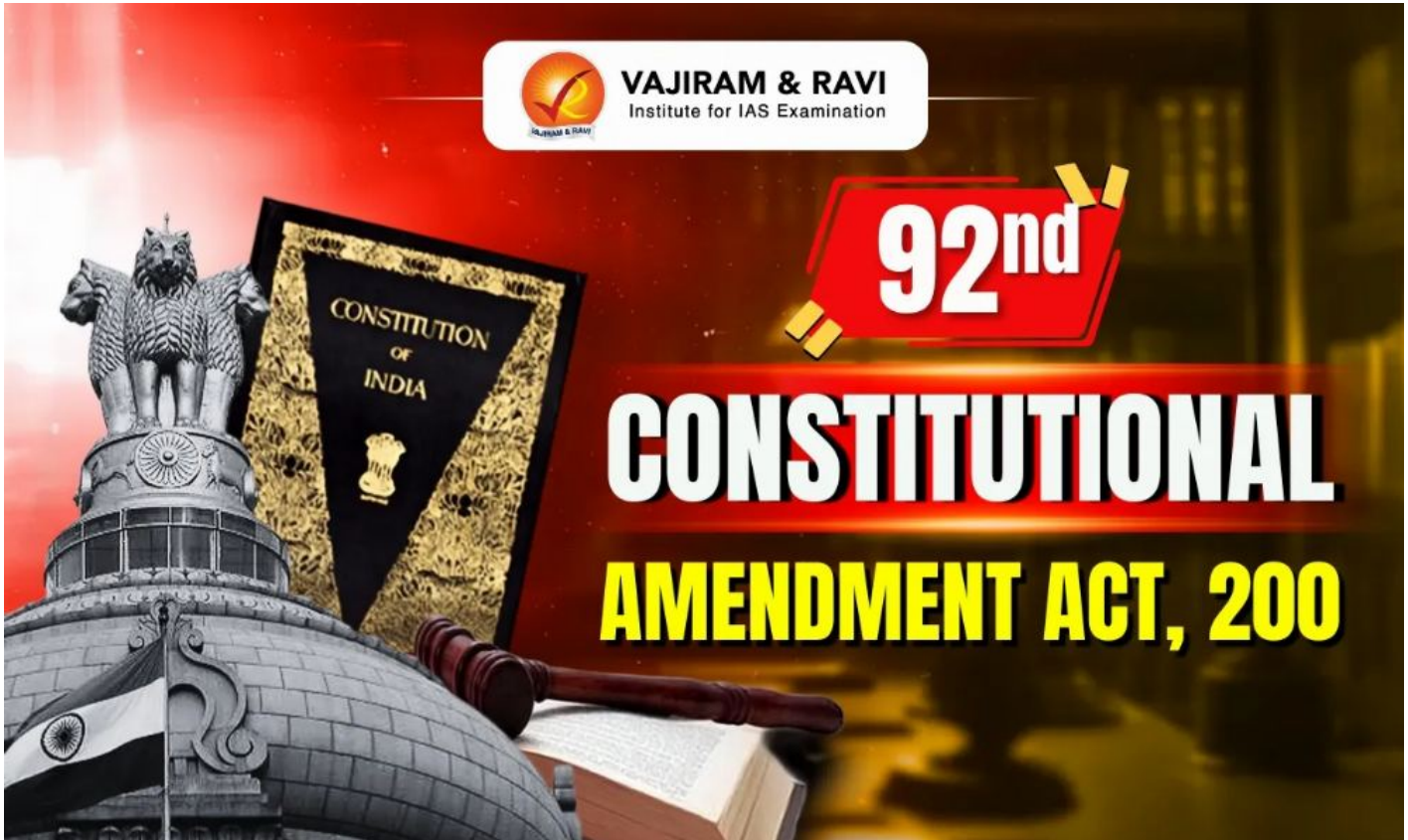


92nd Constitutional Amendment Act 2003, Basis, Evolution

August 10, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



The **92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003** amended the **Eighth Schedule** of the Constitution to add **Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santhali**, increasing the number of Scheduled Languages from **18 to 22**. The amendment strengthened the constitutional recognition of India's linguistic diversity, particularly the linguistic traditions of regional and tribal communities. The Act received the President's assent on **7 January 2004** and came into force on the same date.

92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003 Constitutional Basis

The **Eighth Schedule** forms an important part of India's constitutional framework on language and is specifically referred to in **Articles 344(1) and 351**.

- **Article 344(1)**: It provides for an Official Language Commission and refers to the languages specified in the Eighth Schedule in determining its composition.
- **Article 351**: It directs the Union to promote the spread and development of Hindi while drawing upon the linguistic resources of Hindustani and other languages included in the **Eighth Schedule**.

- **Eighth Schedule:** It contains the list of 22 Scheduled Languages, but inclusion in the Schedule does not by itself make a language an official language of the Union.

The amendment did not confer official-language status on Bodo, Dogri, Maithili or Santhali; the official language of the Union is governed by **Article 343**, while the official languages of States are dealt with under **Article 345**.

92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003 Background and Evolution

The Eighth Schedule originally contained 14 languages, and its expansion has taken place through three Constitutional Amendments.

- **1950:** The original Constitution included 14 languages in the Eighth Schedule.
- **21st Constitutional Amendment Act, 1967:** Sindhi was added, increasing the number from 14 to 15.
- **71st Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992:** Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali were added, increasing the number from 15 to 18.
- **92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003:** Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santhali were added, increasing the number from 18 to 22.

Significance of Eighth Schedule Recognition

- Inclusion in the Eighth Schedule gives a language formal recognition under the Constitution and acknowledges it as part of India's recognised linguistic heritage.
- Under **Article 344**, the Official Language Commission may include members representing different Eighth Schedule languages, giving these languages a place in the constitutional framework for examining language policy.
- **Article 351** directs the Union to draw upon Eighth Schedule languages, along with Hindustani, to enrich Hindi's vocabulary and linguistic expression.
- The **Official Language Resolution, 1968** provides for the use of Eighth Schedule languages as alternative media in All India and higher Central Services examinations, subject to the applicable examination scheme and rules.
- The **Official Language Resolution, 1968** calls for a programme for the coordinated development of Eighth Schedule languages, including their development as effective means of communicating modern knowledge.
- **Sahitya Akademi** promotes literature in 24 languages, comprising the 22 Eighth Schedule languages, along with English and Rajasthani, through publications, translations, literary awards and other activities.
- Eighth Schedule status does not make a language an official language of the Union or a State, does not create an automatic right to government funding, and does not guarantee translation of every Central law or government document into that language.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/92nd-constitutional-amendment-act/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.