

Supreme Court on the Use of Urdu on the Signboard

Prelims (GS I) - *History and Culture of India.*

Mains (GS I) - *Indian heritage and culture.*

Why in news?

The Supreme Court recently upheld the use of Urdu on a municipal signboard in Maharashtra's Akola district, declaring that language should unite, not divide.

- **Origin of Urdu** - Urdu is an **Indo-Aryan language** emerged around the 12th century in Northern India.
- **Constitutional Status** - In India, it is an **8th Schedule language** and it has been adopted as the second official language by several states.

Article 345 of the Constitution of India states that a state's legislature can adopt one or more languages or Hindi as the official language of the state.

Supreme court Judgement

- The Supreme Court *described Urdu as the finest specimen of Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb*, or the Hindustani Tehzeeb.

Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb (Hindustani tahzeeb)

- **Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb** - It refers to the syncretic Indo-Islamic cultural tradition that developed in plains of northern and central India.
- The term is a metaphor derived from these two rivers the Ganga and the Yamuna (Jamuna), which flow separately but eventually meet and blend their waters.
- **Ganga-Jamuni** - Hindi word, meaning mixed.
- **Tehzeeb** - Urdu word, meaning civilization, culture, and development.
- It represents the harmonious **blending of Hindu and Muslim** cultural elements, traditions, arts, architecture, music, cuisine and language.

- **Similarities with Hindi** - Supreme court noted *that Hindi and Urdu were fundamentally one language* with similarities in syntax, grammar and phonology.

The main difference is that Urdu is mainly written in Nastaliq script and Hindi in Devanagari script.

- **Exchange of vocabularies** - The word Hindi itself comes from the **Persian word Hindavi**.

- Urdu also has many words borrowed from other Indian languages, including Sanskrit.
- **Hindi-Urdu controversy** - The separation of Hindi and Urdu was partly due to moralist on both sides where *Hindi became more Sanskritised* and *Urdu more Persian*.
- **Religious polarization** - The framing of Hindi is the language of the Hindus and Urdu of the Muslims undermines the principles of unity in diversity and universal brotherhood.
- Sc emphasized that *A language is only a means of communication and does not represent a religion*.
- Language is the yardstick to measure the civilizational march of a community and its people.

Reference

[The Hindu| Supreme Court on the Use of Urdu on the Signboard](#)

