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

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