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## National Calendar, National Song, India-Religious Communities

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### National Calendar

- The Saka year has the normal 365 days and begins with Chaitra as its first month. The days of the Saka calendar have permanent correspondence with the dates of the Gregorian calendar, Chaitra 1 falling on March 22 in a normal year and on March 21 in a Leap Year. The National Calendar commenced on Chaitra 1 Saka, 1879 corresponding to March 22, 1957 A. D.
  - National Animal: Tiger
  - National Game: Hockey
  - National Flower: Lotus
  - National Bird: Peacock

### National Song

- Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's Vande Mataram which was a source of inspiration to the people in their struggle for freedom has an equal status with Jana-gana-mana.
- The first political occasion on which it was sung was the 1896 session of the Indian National Congress.

### India-Religious Communities

The major religious communities of India are the Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Parsis.

### Religious Books

- Hindus Four Vedas, the Bhagwad Gita, the Ramayana, the Puranas, the Mahabharata, the Upanishads, the Ramcharitmanas
  - Muslims- the Holy Quran
  - Sikhs-Guru Granth Sahib

- Christians-the Bible
- Parsis-Zend Avesta

## India - Principal Languages

- India has 18 officially recognised languages (Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali were added to the official list of 15 in 1992) .
- The 1961 and 1971 census had listed 1652 languages as mother tongues spoken in India.
- The Indian languages of today have evolved from different language families.
- **They may be grouped into 6 groups as under:**
  - Negroid
  - Dravidian
  - Austric
  - Indo-Aryan
  - Sino-Tibetan
  - Other Speeches.
- These languages have interacted on one another through the centuries and have produced the major linguistic divisions of modern India. Among the major groups, the Aryan and the Dravidan are the dominating families. Indo-Aryan, the Indic branch of the Indo- European family, came into India with the Aryans. It is the biggest of the language groups in India, accounting for about 74 % of the entire Indian population.
- The important languages in this group are: Western Punjabi, Sindhi, Eastern Punjabi, Hindi, Bihari, Rajasthani, Gujarati, Marathi, Assamese, Bengali, Oriya, Pahari, Kashmiri and Sanskrit. Sanskrit, the classical language of India, represents the highest achievement of the Indo-Aryan languages.
- Although hardly spoken now-a-days, Sanskrit has been listed a nationally accepted language in the VIII Schedule to the Constitution. Dravidian languages form a group by themselves, and unlike the Aryan, Austric or Sino- Tibetan speeches, have no relations outside the Indian subcontinent, that is, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- The Dravidian family is the second largest group in India, covering about 25 % of the total Indian population. The Dravidian language came into India centuries before the Indo-Aryan.

**The outstanding languages of the Dravidian groups are:**

- Telugu, the State language of Andhra Pradesh, numerically the biggest of the Dravidian languages
- Tamil, the State language of Tamil Nadu, apparently the oldest and purest branch of the Dravidian family
- Kannada, the State language of Karnataka, another ancient Dravidian language that has developed individually
- Malayalam, the State language of Kerala, the smallest and the youngest of the Dravidian family.
- Of the 1652 mother tongues listed in the census, 33 are spoken by people numbering over a lakh. With independence, the question of a common language naturally came up.
- The Constituent Assembly could not arrive at a consensus in the matter. The question was put to vote and Hindi won on a single vote-the casting vote of the President. Hindi however was only one of the many regional languages of India.
- The Indian National Congress had advocated the formation of linguistic provinces. The acceptance of this policy involved the statutory recognition of all the major regional languages. The Constitution therefore recognised Hindi in Devanagari script as the official language of the Union (Art. 343) and the regional languages as the official languages of the States concerned (Art. 345) .
- English was recognised as the authoritative legislative and judicial language (Art 348) . The 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule was added to the Constitution to indicate all regional languages statutorily recognised.