

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:256  
ANSWERED ON:24.02.2010  
CLASSICAL LANGUAGE  
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**Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

- (a) the criteria adopted for selecting classical languages;
- (b) the number of languages which have been notified as classical language;
- (c) whether Malayalam language belongs to classical category;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SMT. D. PURANDESWARI)

(a) As per information furnished by Ministry of Culture, criteria adopted to determine the eligibility of languages to be considered for classification as a 'classical language' are as under :-

- (i) High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500-2000 years.
- (ii) A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers.
- (iii) The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community.
- (iv) The classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

(b) In addition to Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada have been notified as classical language.

(c) No.

(d) & (e) Does not arise.