

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1454
ANSWERED ON:21.08.2012
CLASSICAL LANGUAGES
Antony Shri Anto

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the criterion for declaration of a language as a Classical Language;
- (b) the details of application received from various State Governments and pending before the Union Government for declaration as Classical Languages; and
- (c) the response of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (KUMARI SELJA)

- (a) The criteria for declaration of a language 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 should 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) & (c) Classical Language status has already been conferred upon Tamil, Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada.

Subsequently, a Memorandum on this subject was submitted by a delegation led by the then Chief Minister of Kerala to Prime Minister in May, 2010. Another memorandum which, inter alia, requests for giving the status of classical language to Malayalam has been received from the present Chief Minister of the State in August, 2012. The Report of the Committee of Linguistic Experts on the subject of according Malayalam classical status is under consideration of the Government.