

Title: Need to declare Tamil as a classied language.

SHRI V. VETRISSELVAN (KRISHNAGIRI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, for a long time, there has been a demand of the people of Tamil Nadu to declare Tamil language a classical language as well as an official language.

Tamil is the oldest language and it has a history of more than 2,000 years. This language fulfils all the codes such as age of the language, uniqueness, general acceptability, neutrality and culture, no influence from other languages, etc., which are needed to declare any language a classical language. Out of 600 important languages of the world, only six languages have a history of 2,000 years or more, of which Tamil is one.

Our DMK leader, hon. Kalaingar Karunanidhi, the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has written a letter to the Prime Minister of India to declare Tamil a classical language. Apart from this, the Central Language Organisation in Mysore has also recommended declaring Tamil as a classical as well as an official language. So, I request the hon. Prime Minister to consider the demand of the people of Tamil Nadu and our DMK leader on a priority basis and declare Tamil a classical language as well as an official language. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANPATHI (SALEM): Sir, there has been a demand from the hon. Chief Minister also. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members, please take your seat.

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANPATHI : Sir, let me also associate myself.

The hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has also written to the hon. Prime Minister and asked him to declare Tamil an official language. Time and again, we have been repeating this demand. It has been consistently ignored. ...(*Interruptions*) Almost about fifteen crore people speak Tamil.

MR. SPEAKER: You can only associate; you cannot give a speech.

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANPATHI : Sir, the Government has to respond to this demand because this has been a demand since Independence and there has been no action on this.

There were acrimonious scenes in the House because Tamil had been removed from the signboards on the National Highways. All these things are happening because Tamil has not been declared an official language. Therefore, we urge that it should be acceded to. The hon. Chief Minister has written to the hon. Prime Minister and we want a reply from the hon. Prime Minister. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SHIVRAJ V. PATIL (LATUR): Sir, may I say something on this point? ...(*Interruptions*)

It is the policy of the Government of India to help the people understand the signboards on roads. It is also the policy of the Government of India that three languages should be used. If in Tamil Nadu, people have difficulty in understanding the Hindi language used on the signboards, along with the Hindi language, I am repeating, along with the Hindi language, English also should be used to indicate where the road leads. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANPATHI : We would like to clarify on this point. In several places only English and Hindi are used. We find only these two languages but the local people do not know these two languages. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This has already been agreed upon. The hon. Minister has already agreed to the three-language formula.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANPATHI : Sir, there is a clarification. If English alone were to be added, there would be a lot of problems. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI V. VETRISSELVAN : Sir, the Government must give preference to the Tamil language in Tamil Nadu. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: It has been agreed to.

...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: I think, last time also there was a discussion on the issue and the hon. Minister made a statement. You are all aware of it. Please sit down.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI T.M. SELVAGANPATHI : Sir, it has not been restored back. This is my urge to the Government. Though the Government has assured, yet it has not been restored in any of the boards on the National Highways. Only English and Hindi boards have been formed, but Tamil speaking people do not know how to read them and where to go. This is a very serious situation because nowhere we find this. ...(*Interruptions*)