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Title: Need to include Malayalam language in the Language Development Programme in all Central Universities/Institutes.

*SHRI P.K.BIJU (ALATHUR) : Chairman Sir, Malayalam is the mother tongue, of all Keralites who are spread cross the world; and it is also the official language of Kerala, Lakshadweep and Mali. But Malayalam too is facing challenges that are retarding its growth.

Malayalam is the mother tongue of 3.5 crores of people; and it takes the 27th place in the list of world languages spoken by the largest number of people. This means more people speak Malayalam than Greek or the Swiss language.

Kerala became the first Indian state to attain 100% literacy, and this was achieved in Malayalam language.

The *Vashappalli* inscriptions dating back to A.D. 830, shows the antiquity of the Malayalam script.

Linguists like Herman Gundert, says that Malayalam and Tamil both evolved out of the *Adi Dravida* language.

It is also note worthy that Malayalam is the mother tongue of all the people of Kerala, cutting across cast or religious barriers.

Thereby, it fosters the secular traditions of this country.

For centuries Malayalam was the language of administration in Kerala. Even during the days of British Colonialism, the language of administration was Malayalam.

After independence from 1969 onwards, the Government too recognized Malayalam as the language of administration in the state.

Tamil and Sanskrit language influenced Malayalam the most. Malayalam has not only words from rest of the Indian languages but it has also assimilated words from other world languages.

The sea trade Kerala carried on with the rest of the world, has helped our language to evolve.

Hindi, Arabic, Urdu and European languages and Chinese have enriched the vocabulary of Malayalam. Lakhs of books in different genres like stories, poetry, novel, academic studies are published in Malayalam. The language has produced world renowned literary figures too. Malayalam, is the first regional Indian language in which a translation of Artha Sastra was published.

The original text of Artha Sastra was recreated with the help of this Malayalam translation, that came out in 12th century by the name *Bhasa Kautilyam*. Vedas and epics, had their translations in Malayalam may centuries ago.

Malayalam publishes the maximum number of translations among all Indian languages. The scientific and technological development and the sentiments of nationalism have influenced the growth of Malayalam language. Herman Gundert the clergyman published the first Malayalam dictionary and a work on Malayalam grammer. This was followed by several other works on linguistics, which were published at the second half of the 19th century.

Malayalam has several newspapers and journals. Next to Hindi a Malayalam newspaper has the maximum numbers of readers. Malayalam Wikipedia ranks 5th in the world in terms of page depth; and it has the top most rank among Indian languages.

But it is regrettable that centre has not given enough encouragement to Malayalam language, which figures among the 22 official languages mentioned in the 8th schedule. Several centrally sponsored schemes have not included Malayalam among the languages that are to be benefited.

The latest instance is the omission of Malayalam from the Central Government language development programme. Though the other three Dravidian languages, namely Tamil, Telugu and Kannada are being included in the centre's language development programme, Malayalam has been neglected.

Several other programmes and policies that were meant to promote Malayalam language and culture are now inactive, due to the luke warm approach of Government institutions, and other state universities.

Chairman Sir, the Malayalam department, which was part of Modern Indian languages department in the Delhi University; is

not functioning for the last few years. I urge the Government to confer classical language status to Malayalam and include Malayalam as part of the Central Government Language Development Programme; and further make Malayalam a part of the Department of Modern Indian Language studies in all central universities.