

Classical Languages

July 16, 2020

Recently 93rd edition of the Akhil Bharatiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan, a resolution was passed demanding the declaration of Marathi as a 'Classical' language

History of classical languages

Tamil academicians made the first call for a classical language. They asserted that the anthologies of Sangam should be regarded as classical languages. It is an ancient language and old Tamil is the prototype of the Dravidian family language. The govt took note and consulted the Sahitya Akademi specialists afterwards. A committee was later created to grant the status of Classical Languages and some criteria were developed

Criteria related to Classical languages in India

The criteria evolved by Government to determine declaration of a language as a Classical language is as under:

High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500-2000 years.

A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers.

The literary tradition is original and not borrowed from another speech community.

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

Current classical languages

Tamil (2004)

Sanskrit (2005)

Kannada (2008)

Telugu (2008)

Malayalam (2013)

Odia (2014)

Benefits to Classical languages (By Ministry of Human Resource and Development)

Two major annual international awards for scholars of eminence in classical Indian languages

A Centre of Excellence for Studies in Classical Languages is set up

The University Grants Commission is requested to create, to start with at least in the Central Universities, a certain number of Professional Chairs for the Classical Languages so declared