



Infographic of Indian language

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Classical Languages of India

Indian classical languages have a long history and a rich, unique, and distinctive literary legacy.

- *Linguistic Experts Committee (LEC) – Constituted in 2004 by the Ministry of Culture under Sahitya Akademi to evaluate languages for classical status.*

Classical Languages

Tamil - 2004
Sanskrit - 2005
Telugu - 2008
Kannada - 2008
Malayalam - 2013
Odia - 2014
Marathi - 2024
Bengali - 2024
Assamese - 2024
Prakrit - 2024
Pali - 2024

All the Classical Languages are mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution except Prakrit and Pali

Criteria for Classical Languages (set in 2005)

1. High Antiquity: Early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500- 2000 years
2. Possession of a Body of Ancient Literature/Text: Considered valuable heritage by generations
3. Knowledge Texts: Presence of an original literary tradition not borrowed from another speech community
4. Distinction/Discontinuity: Classical Languages and literature could be distinct from its current form or could be discontinuous with later forms of its offshoots

3rd criterion was revised in 2024 to "Knowledge texts, especially prose texts in addition to poetry, epigraphical and inscriptional evidence"

Significance of Declaring Classical Language

- Two international awards given annually to scholars of classical Indian languages
- Center of Excellence for Classical Language Studies established



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