

Classical Languages of India

The Classical Languages in India are listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. The Ministry of Culture provides guidelines to be fulfilled to be categorized as a classical language in India. Let's discuss the criteria for being Classical Languages of India and the six languages that have the tag of classical language in India.

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Presently, there are six languages that enjoy the "Classical Languages of India" status.

Tamil- A Dravidian language spoken in Tamil Nadu, was declared as one of the Classical Languages of India in the year 2004.

Sanskrit- Belonging to the Indo-Aryan branch of Indo-European languages and is considered the language of Hindu philosophy, was declared so in 2005.

Kannada- A Dravidian language spoken widely across Karnataka, whose script evolved from the Kadamba script during the 5th century, was declared one of the Classical Languages of India in the year 2008.

Telugu- A Dravidian language spoken mostly in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, was declared as such in the year 2008.

Malayalam- A Dravidian language whose oldest literature work can be traced back to the 9th to 11th centuries, is spoken mostly in the state of Kerala, Puducherry, and Lakshadweep. It was declared a classical language of India in the year 2013.

Odia- An Indo-Aryan language whose earliest literary work can be traced back to the 10th century, and is widely spoken in the states of Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Chattisgarh, was given "Classical Languages of India" status in the year 2014.



Classical Languages of India Criteria

For a language to be given the "Classical Languages of India" status, there are a few guidelines which are listed below -

- It should be ancient, and there must be proof of its earlier script or recorded history over a period of 1500 to 2000 years.
- The literature should be original and not be borrowed from some other language or speech community.
- There must be a body of antique texts, and it must be considered a valuable heritage across generations of speakers.

- The language and literature must be distinguished from the modern, and there may also be a discontinuity between the language and its later forms.

