

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
CULTURE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2096  
ANSWERED ON:07.12.2005  
ANCIENT LANGUAGE STATUS TO SANSKRIT  
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**Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:**

- (a) the criteria being followed for according status of 'ancient language' to a language;
- (b) whether the Government has decided to accord Sanskrit language the status of ancient language; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

**Answer**

MINISTER FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURE (SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY)

(a) The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India has created a new category of languages called 'classical languages' and not 'ancient languages'. The criteria for classification of a language as a classical language is as under:

- (i) High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500 - 2000 years.
- (ii) A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers.
- (iii) The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community.
- (iv) 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.

(b) & (c) : As per Notification issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Sanskrit Language satisfies the above criteria and has been classified as a 'Classical Language'. There is no such category as ancient language.