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Title: Need to confer the status of a classical language to Kannada - laid.

SHRI M. SHIVANNA (CHAMRAJANAGAR): The Government of India has been pleased to accord Tamil the status of a Classical language. It has also indicated that similar recognition will be extended to other Indian languages which fulfill certain criteria. We welcome this imaginative step which will enable languages with a rich heritage spanning several centuries, to accelerate their planned development and thus add to the brightness of the glorious spectrum which we call Indian Literature.

The Government of India have subsequently spelt out the criteria for the recognition of a language as a Classical Language. These are as follows :

- .1 High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a thousand years.
- 2 A body of ancient literature/texts; which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers.
3. The literacy tradition has to be original and not borrowed from another speech community.
4. The classical language could be distinct with its later current form or could be discontinuous.

I submit that Kannada more than satisfies these criteria.

The earliest recorded word is 'Isila', occurring in the Brahmagiri inscription of King Ashoka (3rd Century). Kannada is a member of the Dravidian Family of Languages and has a history of more than two thousand years. Ptolemy of Greece visited India. Names of cities recorded in his travelogues are clearly of Kannada origin. Over 25,000 inscriptions in Kannada have been found, not only in Karnataka, but also in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

The Kannada script is derived from Brahmi. The 'The Courier' the official document of the UNESCO, writing on Asia Scripts (1964 page 16) recognizes the Kannada script as one of the major scripts of the world.

I, therefore, urge upon the Government to accord the status of a classical language to Kannada on priority basis

12.54 hrs.