



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
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# Classical Languages of India

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## Why in news?

*Special centres set up for the promotion of Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia after they were designated classical languages* are *demanding autonomy in their functioning* in order to better carry out their functions.

India has six classical languages — **Tamil, Sanskrit, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia.**

Four of the centres for classical languages function under the aegis of the **Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysuru**, the *centre for Tamil is autonomous*.

For the promotion of **Sanskrit**, *dedicated universities also receive funds* directly from the Union Education Ministry.

The project directors of the centres for Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Odia demanded that their institutes be made autonomous

All the Classical Languages are listed in the **Eighth Schedule of the Constitution**

The Ministry of Culture provides the guidelines regarding Classical languages:

**Guidelines for declaring a language as 'Classical' are:**

- **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 be 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.
- Once a language is notified as a Classical language, **the Human Resource and Development Ministry provides certain benefits to promote it:**
- **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.

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