

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 736**  
ANSWERED ON 07/02/2025

**Use of Alternate Language in High Courts**

736. SHRI MATHESWARAN V S:

Will the Minister of *Law and Justice* be pleased to state:

- (a) the rationale behind the decision which has stipulated that consent of the Hon'ble Chief Justice of India be obtained on any proposal relating to use of alternate language other than English in the High Courts; and
- (b) whether the Chief Justice of India is declining the request for use of Tamil language in the Madras High Court, if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE; AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS

(SHRI ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL)

(a) As far as Supreme Court and all High Courts are concerned, Article 348(1)(a) of the Constitution of India states that all proceedings in these courts shall be in English language. However, under sub-article (2) of Article 348 of the Constitution of India provides that the Governor of the State may, with the previous consent of the President, authorise the use of Hindi Language, or any other language used for any official purposes of the State, in the proceedings in the High Court having its principal seat in that State. Further, Section 7 of the Official Language Act, 1963 states that the Governor of a State, may with previous consent of the President, authorize the use of Hindi or the official language of the State, in addition to

English language, for the purpose of any judgement, decree or order passed or made by the High Court for that State and where any judgement, decree or order passed or made in any such language (other than the English language), it shall be accompanied by a translation of the same in English language issued under the authority of the High Court.

The question of common language of High Courts in India was considered in the conference of the Chief Justices of the High Courts held in March 1965 under the Chairmanship of the Chief Justice of India. The recommendations of Chief Justices conference along with the recommendations of Official Language Commission (1955) were considered by the Cabinet Committee, which adopted the convention whereby the Chief Justice of India would be consulted before the President gave his consent to any such proposal in its meeting dated 21.05.1965. After the Cabinet Committee's decision dated 21.05.1965 as mentioned above, the use of Hindi was authorized in the High Courts of Uttar Pradesh (1969), Madhya Pradesh (1971) and Bihar (1972) in consultation with the Chief Justice of India.

(b) The Government of India had received proposal from the Government of Tamil Nadu to permit use of Tamil language in the proceedings of the Madras High Court. The advice of the Chief Justice of India was sought as per the convention and the Chief Justice of India vide his D.O. letter dated 16.10.2012 intimated that the Full Court in its meeting dated 11.10.2012 after due deliberations, decided not to accept the proposal. Based on another request from the Government of Tamil Nadu, the Government requested the Chief Justice of India to review the earlier decisions in this regard and convey the consent of the Supreme Court of India in July, 2014. The Chief Justice of India vide his D.O. letter dated 18.01.2016 conveyed that the Full Court, after extensive deliberations, unanimously resolved that the proposals could not be accepted.

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