

Fifteenth Kerala Legislative Assembly
Bill No.279

THE MALAYALAM LANGUAGE BILL, 2025

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Kerala Legislature Secretariat
2025

KERALA NIYAMASABHA PRINTING PRESS.

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[Translation in English of “2025-ലെ മലയാളഭാഷാ ബിൽ” published under the authority of the Governor.]

THE MALAYALAM LANGUAGE BILL, 2025

A

BILL

to provide for the adoption of Malayalam language as the official language of the State of Kerala and Malayalam to be used for all official purposes, to provide for the use of Malayalam language in all sectors in Kerala, subject to the provisions of the Constitution of India, to ensure the growth, dissemination, enrichment and protection of Malayalam language and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Preamble.—WHEREAS, it is expedient to provide for the adoption of Malayalam language as the official language of the State of Kerala and Malayalam to be used for all official purposes, to provide for the use of Malayalam language in all sectors in Kerala, subject to the provisions of the Constitution of India, to ensure the growth, dissemination, enrichment and protection of Malayalam language and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto;

BE it enacted in the Seventy-sixth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

1. *Short title and commencement.*—(1) This Act may be called the Malayalam Language Act, 2025.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

2. *Definitions.*— In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) "authorised officer" means Secretary to the Government in charge of the administration of this Act or such officer as may be authorised by him;

(b) "first language" means the language which shall compulsorily be taught as part of linguistics;

(c) "Government" means the Government of Kerala;

(d) "linguistic minorities" means the people who traditionally use Tamil and Kannada languages for communication and who domiciled in areas declared as linguistic minority in the State of Kerala;

(e) "official language" means the language used for official communication in the State;

(f) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

(g) "State" means State of Kerala.

CHAPTER II

MALAYALAM LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AND MALAYALAM LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

3. *Malayalam Language Development Department and Malayalam Language Development Directorate.*—(1) The existing Personnel and Administrative Reforms (Official Language) Department in the Government Secretariat shall be renamed as the Malayalam Language Development Department.

(2) The Government shall constitute a Malayalam Language Development Directorate under the control of the Department under sub-section (1), by re-deploying the officers of various department of the Government and such Directorate shall perform the duties, as may be prescribed.

CHAPTER III

USE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

4. *Legislative Sector.*—(1) Subject to the Official Languages Act, 1963 (Central Act 19 of 1963), in relation to the law making in the State,—

(i) in Bills to be introduced in, and in Acts passed by, the Kerala Legislative Assembly;

(ii) in all Ordinances promulgated by the Governor of Kerala under Article 213 of the Constitution of India;

(iii) in all orders, rules, regulations or bye-laws issued by the Government under the Constitution of India, or under any law made by the Parliament or the Kerala Legislative Assembly

the language to be used shall be Malayalam and when Malayalam language is so used, a translation thereof in English shall also be published.

(2) Important Central Acts and State Acts published in English shall be translated into Malayalam, incorporating amendments made therein, within such period, as may be prescribed.

(3) The rules made under enactments and published in English shall also be published in Malayalam within such period as may be prescribed.

5. *Official Language Sector.*—(1) Subject to Articles 346 and 347 of the Constitution of India, the language to be used for all official purposes in the State of Kerala shall be Malayalam.

(2) Sub-section (1) shall be applicable to all existing Departments and all Departments to be newly constituted under the State Government and Local Self Government Institutions and Quasi-Governmental Institutions, Autonomous, Co-operative, Public sector Undertakings under the Government:

Provided that English may be used for correspondence with the Government of India, Institutions under the Government of India, foreign countries, other States, High Court, Supreme Court etc., and in any other circumstances where English has to be used as provided by law and with people speaking languages other than Tamil and Kannada, the minority languages in the State.

6. *Education and Research Sector.*—(1) Malayalam shall be the compulsory first language in all Government and aided schools in Kerala up to the Xth Standard.

(2) Steps shall be taken to promote dissemination of Malayalam language in all schools in the State.

(3) Students whose mother tongue is any language other than Malayalam, opportunity shall be given to study Malayalam language in addition to their mother tongue.

7. *Special provisions regarding other State-Linguistic Minorities.*—Notwithstanding anything contained in Section 5 or Section 6,—

(1) The Tamil and Kannada linguistic minorities in the State may use their languages for their correspondence with the State Government Secretariat, Heads of Department and all local offices of the State Government situated in those areas declared by the Government to be linguistic minority areas for the purpose and replies send in such case shall be in their respective minority languages.

(2) Students, whose mother tongue is any language other than Malayalam may pursue their study in the languages of their choice and are available in the schools of the State in accordance with the National Education Curriculum.

(3) Students from other States and foreign countries studying in Kerala whose mother tongue is not Malayalam shall be exempted from writing the examination in Malayalam language in IXth standard, Xth standard and Higher Secondary Level.

8. *Unified Script Layout.*—A unified script layout shall be implemented in the manner as may be prescribed in accordance with the development of Science and Technology.

CHAPTER IV

LANGUAGE IN THE COURT

9. *Language in the court.*—(1) With the permission of the High Court, measures shall be taken in a phased manner, to translate all proceedings, including the judgments and language used in courts up to the District Courts into Malayalam within a specified period. For that purpose, the Government shall provide required infrastructure facilities, as may be prescribed.

(2) A system, as may be prescribed shall be established at the district level for translating judgments into English, required for filing appeal before the High Court.

(3) Notwithstanding any thing contained in any other Act, the orders or judgments of all institutions under the Government having quasi-judicial powers shall be in Malayalam Language:

Provided that orders relating to linguistic minorities shall be made available in their mother tongue or English.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL MEASURES FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF LANGUAGE

10. *General Measures for the dissemination of language.*—(1) The board displaying the name of the Government undertakings or autonomous bodies, co-operative and public undertakings, name of the officers and designations and the boards used in the vehicles under the control of such institutions shall also be in Malayalam and in English as may be prescribed.

(2) The first half of boards displaying the names of commercial-industrial and business undertakings, trusts, counselling centres, hospitals, laboratories, amusement centres and hotels functioning with the approval and sanction of Government or Local Self Government Institutions, shall be in Malayalam and the second half shall be in English.

(3) The particulars displayed on the boards erected under the supervision of various departments in Government, Quasi-Government and Co-operative institutions and Local Self Government Institutions of the State, shall be in Malayalam. If necessary, such boards may be displayed in English or in other language as may be prescribed.

(4) The boards erected in relation to works carried out, by accepting consideration from the Government or Local Self Government Institutions shall be displayed giving prominence to Malayalam.

(5) Boards, advertisements, bills, notices etc. in connection with any project under the Government or implemented, with any kind of consideration, grant, concession from Government, or Allied Institutions or Local Self Government Institutions shall be in Malayalam.

(6) In all industrial products manufactured and sold in the State, the name of the products and directions for its use shall also be in Malayalam.

(7) Advertisements and notifications issued by the Government intended for publication within Kerala shall be in Malayalam:

Provided that such advertisements may be published in the respective language if necessary in the medias of other languages.

(8) The pamphlets, informations, notices etc. of programmes conducted by Government shall be made available in Malayalam.

(9) A fixed percentage of the size of the boards, displaying advertisements and notices published for the information of the general public, in the State, and the Government advertisements published in newspapers, periodicals etc. in the State shall be in Malayalam. For this purpose, the classification of advertisements, the number/percentage of portions of advertisements to be displayed in Malayalam shall be, in such manner as may be prescribed. Except where the use of English is essential, the advertisement shall be in Malayalam:

Provided that advertisements, intimations, boards and notices published for the information of the Tamil and Kannada linguistic minority areas shall also be published in the minority language of the respective area.

CHAPTER VI

USE OF MALAYALAM LANGUAGE IN INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY SECTOR

11. *Use of Malayalam language in Information and Technology Sector.*—(1) Information Technology Department shall take initiatives to develop open source software and accessories for the efficient use of Malayalam language in the field of Information Technology.

(2) The information in the websites of various departments of Government, Quasi-Governmental Institutions, Public Sector Undertakings, Autonomous Bodies, Co-operative Societies shall also be made available in Malayalam as well, the default page shall be in Malayalam and the website shall be modified for selecting any language to be used therein.

(3) The facility shall be made available for the use of Malayalam in the e-governance projects (including mobile governance) being implemented in the Government departments.

12. *Incentives for the dissemination of Malayalam Language.*—Scheme shall be formulated for providing incentives to persons who provide creative suggestions to the Government for the effective dissemination of Malayalam language in the field of Information Technology also.

13. *Act not to override the effect of other laws.*—The provisions of this Act shall be in addition to the provisions of existing laws and shall not have overriding effect.

14. *Power to make rules.*—(1) The Government may, by notification in the Gazette, make rules, either prospectively or retrospectively, for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(2) Every rule made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before the Legislative Assembly while it is in session for a total period of fourteen days which may be comprised in one session or in two successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session in which it is so laid or the session immediately following, the Legislative Assembly makes any modification in the rule or decides that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so however that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

15. *Power to remove difficulties.*—(1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Government may, by order published in the Gazette, make provisions not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act which appear to be necessary or expedient, for removing the difficulty:

Provided that no such order shall be made after the expiry of a period of two years from the date of commencement of this Act.

(2) Every order made under sub-section(1) shall, as soon as may be after it is made, be laid before the Legislative Assembly.

16. *Repeal and Saving.*— (1) The Kerala Official Languages Act, 1969 (7 of 1969) is hereby repealed.

(2) Notwithstanding such repeal, anything done or any action taken under the said Act shall be deemed to have been done or taken under this Act.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The Malayalam Language (Dissemination and Enrichment) Bill, 2015 which emphasize to provide for the adoption of Malayalam as the official language and to be used for all official purposes of the State of Kerala and to provide for the use of Malayalam language in all sectors in Kerala subject to the provisions of the Constitution of India and to ensure the growth, dissemination, enrichment and protection of Malayalam language, was passed by the 13th Kerala Legislative Assembly as Bill No.376 and was reserved for the assent of the Hon'ble President of India. But the Hon'ble President of India withheld the assent to the Bill without stating any reason, on 13th May, 2025.

The Bill was reserved for the consideration of the Hon'ble President as it contains certain provisions repugnant to section 6 of the Official Language Act, 1963. But the Government of India raised certain other objections regarding other provisions in the Bill, such as rights of linguistic minorities, Three Language Formula in accordance with the National Educational Curriculum, provisions in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.

Government have decided to introduce a comprehensive Bill by removing such defects in Bill No. 376 of the 13th Kerala Legislative Assembly.

The Bill is intended to achieve the above object.

FINANCIAL MEMORANDUM

The Bill, if enacted and brought into operation, would not involve any additional expenditure from the Consolidated Fund of the State.

MEMORANDUM REGARDING DELEGATED LEGISLATION

Sub-clause (2) of clause 3 of the Bill seeks to empower the Government to prescribe the responsibilities of the Malayalam Language Development Directorate.

2. Clause 4 of the Bill, seeks to empower the Government, —

(i) sub-clause (2) to prescribe period within which Central Acts and State Acts to be translated into Malayalam;

(ii) sub-clause (3) to prescribe period within which rules made under enactments in English to be published in Malayalam.

3. Clause 8 of the Bill seeks to empower the Government to prescribe Unified Script Layout.

4. Clause 9 of the Bill seeks to empower the Government, —

(i) sub-clause (1) to prescribe required infrastructure facilities to translate judgments including proceedings of the Courts;

(ii) sub-clause (2) to prescribe a system at district level for translating judgments into English required for filing appeal before High Court.

5. Clause 10 of the Bill, seeks to empower the Government, —

(i) sub-clause (1), to prescribe the manner in which boards display the details of Government or institutions under Government and officials, and the boards of vehicles of such institutions;

(ii) sub-clause (3) to prescribe the language for the particulars to be displayed on the boards erected under the supervision of various departments in Government;

(iii) sub-clause (9) to prescribe the classification, the number/percentage of portion of advertisements to be displayed in Malayalam for the information of general public.

6. Clause 12 of the Bill, seeks to empower the Government to formulate schemes for providing incentives for the effective dissemination of Malayalam language in the field of Science and Technology.

7. Clause 14 of the Bill, seeks to empower the Government to make rules, either prospectively or retrospectively, for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

8. Clause 15 of the Bill, seeks to empower the Government to issue order for removing difficulties in implementing the provisions of the Act.

9. The matters in respect of which notifications or orders are to be issued or rules are to be made are matters of procedure and are of routine or administrative nature. Further, such rules after they are made are subject to the scrutiny of the Legislative Assembly. The delegation of legislative power is thus, of a normal character.

PINARAYI VIJAYAN.