

My No. 2/9/156/6(37)H.

Ministry of Public Administration,  
Independence Square,  
Colombo 7. 26th November, 1980.

To: All Secretaries of Ministries,  
Heads of Departments and  
Heads of Public Corporations.

Use of Tamil Language in Government  
Ministries, Departments and Public  
Corporations

Decisions made by the Government on the above are set out in this circular and it is requested that all Ministries, Departments and Public Corporations co-operate with the Ministry of Regional Development and do their work in Tamil wherever the Constitution so provides. The Ministry of Regional Development will provide the necessary guidelines subject to Cabinet approval.

2. The position of New-Entrants vis-a-vis the Official Language Policy of the Government

(a) Minor Employees

All Minor Employees as defined in Section 26(i) of Chapter XII of the Establishments Code as amended by amendment No. 59 of 29.10.75 will be exempt from the requirement to obtain proficiency in the Official Language. However, if any appointing authority feels that any category of Minor Employees in their Department or work place will need minimum competence in the Official Language, that appointing authority will, before stipulating such a condition, obtain the permission of the Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration, who shall consult the relevant Ministries before approving such a variation.

(b) Technical Grades

Technical Grades and those recruited specially for work in Tamil speaking Districts should be required to obtain only Grade I proficiency in the Official Language.

(c) Law Officers of the State

Law Officers of the State should be required to obtain proficiency in the Official Language up to and including Grade III as is the present requirement.

3. Confirmation

(a) All New-Entrant officers who are required to obtain proficiency in the Official Language should, on receiving appointment, be given facilities on full pay, for a period of six months to obtain proficiency in the Official Language.

- (b) ~~Thereafter they will be required to sit the relevant~~ proficiency examination. In the event of their not passing, they will be given the opportunity to pass the examination within a period of two years immediately after the period of six months on full pay, while they are performing their normal duties.
- (c) In the event of their failure to pass the examination in the prescribed period of two years and six months, their services will be terminated.
- (d) Officers proficient in the Official Language will sit a prescribed examination in the Tamil language and suitable incentives should be provided for their purpose.

4. Consequential action

- (a) Those who have not been confirmed in their appointments or who lost their increments solely on account of their failure to pass the prescribed proficiency tests in the Official Language should, notwithstanding their failure to fulfil these conditions, be confirmed in their appointments immediately prior to their final termination of service so as to enable them to be eligible to receive a pension or gratuity. Increments withheld within the grades in which they are at retirement should be restored to them provided such increments have otherwise been earned. (This means that they will be placed on the salary point they would have reached had those increments been allowed but they will not be paid any arrears of increments).
- (b) All those who passed the Proficiency Tests in the Official Language not within the stipulated time but within the extended period 1965 to 1969 in terms of Treasury Circular No. 701 of 4.2.1966 read with Treasury Circular Letters Nos. G(214) of 22nd March, 1969 and G(274) of 15th December, 1969 and whose promotional prospects had been adversely affected by the application of Treasury Circular No. 769 of 6th September, 1969, should be given promotions but they may be placed below those who have been promoted as a result of obtaining Proficiency within the stipulated time.
- (c) Since at present, Old-Entrant Sinhala officers of the Sri Lanka Administrative Service are exempt from passing the second language if they have passed an examination in Sinhala equivalent to a Senior School Certificate, the same privilege should be accorded to Old-Entrant Tamil Officers i.e. Old-Entrant Tamil Officers should be exempted from passing an examination in the second language provided they have already passed an examination in Tamil of the standard necessary for a Senior School Certificate Examination.
- (d) Where any Old-Entrant Tamil Officer has lost the benefit of salary increase by virtue of the operation of the second language requirement, such lost benefits should be restored to him without arrears.

5. These decisions will take effect from 9th July, 1980.

Sgd: D.B.I.P.S. Siriwardhana  
Secretary,  
Ministry of Public Administration