Proposal for a Devanagari Script Root Zone Label Generation Rule-Set [LGR]

*LGR Version: 2.0*

*Date:* 28th August 2017

*Document version:* 1.2

*Authors:* Neo-Brahmi Generation Panel [NBGP]

# General Information/ Overview/ Abstract

This document lays down the Label Generation Rule Set for Devanagari script. Three main components of the Devanagari Script LGR i.e. Code point repertoire, Variants and Whole Label Evaluation Rules have been described in detail here. All these components have been incorporated in a machine-readable format in the accompanying XML file named "Proposed-LGR-Deva-20170323.xml".

# Script for which the LGR is proposed

ISO 15924 Code: Deva

ISO 15924 Key N°: 315

ISO 15924 English Name: Devanagari (Nagari)

Latin transliteration of native script name: dévanâgarî

Native name of the script: देवनागरी

Maximal Starting Repertoire [MSR] version: 2

# Background on Script and Principal Languages Using It

The script called Nagari or Devanagari is written from left to right. Historically it derives from the Brahmi alphabet of the Ashokan inscriptions. Devanagari is currently used for 11 out of 22 scheduled languages of India (Boro/Bodo, Dogri, Hindi, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Marathi, Nepali, Sanskrit, Santhali and Sindhi) and around 45 other languages especially the related Indo-Aryan languages: Bagheli, Bhili, Bhojpuri, Himachali dialects, Magahi, Newar and Rajasthani and its dialects: Marwari, Mewati, Shekhawati, Bagri, Dhundhari, Harauti and Wagri. Closely associated with Sanskrit and Prakrit, it is an alternative script for Kashmiri (by Hindu speakers), Sindhi and Santhali. It is growing popular in use by speakers of tribal languages of Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The script is also used in Fiji to represent Fiji Hindi. Hindi is also a language of communication in Mauritius, Malaysia, England, Canada, South Africa, Indonesia as well as emigrant communities around the world. Nepali is the official language of Nepal spoken by over 30 million people.

Devanagari is used by over 120 languages both in India and in South-east-Asia.

## The Evolution of the Script

It is well-known that Devanagari has evolved from the parent script Brahmi, with its earliest historical form known as Aśokan Brahmi, traced to the 4th century B.C. Brahmi was deciphered by Sir James Prinsep in 1837. The study of Brahmi and its development has shown that it has given rise to most of the scripts in India as well as in other countries viz. Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Kampuchea, Thailand, Laos, and Tibet to name a few.

The evolution of Brahmi into present-day Devanagari involved intermediate forms, common to other scripts such as Gupta and Śāradā in the north and Grantha and Kadamba in the South. Devanagari can be said to have developed from the Kutila script, a descendant of the Gupta script, in turn a descendent of Brahmi. The word kutila, meaning ‘crooked’, was used as a descriptive term to characterize the curving shapes of the script, compared to the straight lines of Brahmi. This inheritance is the reason for some of the characters across the scripts that will be considered under the Neo-Brahmi GP to look similar to each other despite belonging to totally different code blocks.

A look at the development of Devanagari from Brahmi gives an insight into how the Indic scripts have come to be diversified: the handiwork of engravers and writers who used different types of strokes leading to different regional styles. The development of the script is outlined below. Figure 1: Pictorial depiction of Evolution of Devanagari illustrates the stages in the evolution of the script[[1]](#footnote-1).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Period** | **Description** |
| 300 BCE | Mauryan : Early Brahmi form the Asokan edicts. Some scholars believe that Brahmi itself evolved from "karoshti" a script written right to left. |
| 200 CE | Kushan/Satavahana Dynasties. |
| 400 CE | Gupta Dynasty |
| 600 CE | Yasodharman |
| 800 CE | Origins of the present day Nagari Script. Vardhana dynasty in the North and Pallava period in the South. |
| 900 CE | The period of the Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas |
| 1100 CE | Continuation of the Chalukya Rule |
| 1300 CE | Yadavas in the north and Kakatiyas in the south. |
| 1500 CE | The Vijayanagar empire. |

Table : Evolution of Devanagari



Figure : Pictorial depiction of Evolution of Devanagari

## Languages considered

Below is the tabular representation of the languages that have been considered for the Devanagari LGR. As per the requirement of the LGR procedure, languages belonging to the EGIDS scale 1 to 4 have been considered.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **EGIDS Scale 1** | **EGIDS Scale 2** | **EGIDS Scale 3** | **EGIDS Scale 4** |
| Hindi  Nepali | Konkani  Maithili  Marathi  Sindhi | Bhatri  Halbi  Kinnauri  Kukna  Panchpargania  Sadri  Wagdi | Bhojpuri  Chhattisgarhi  Dogri  Kashmiri  Limbu  Magahi  Sanskrit  Santhali  Tamang, Eastern  Avadhi  Newar  Saraiki |

Table : Main languages considered under Devanagari LGR

Despite of being classified under EGIDS Scale 5, Boro language is also considered under the Devanagari LGR as it is one of the scheduled languages of India and is widely spoken.

## The structure of written Devanagari

Devanagari is an alphasyllabary and the heart of the writing system is the Akshar. It is this unit, which is instinctively recognized by users of the script. To understand the notion of akshar, a brief overview of the writing system is provided in this Section and the akshar itself will be treated in depth in Section 3.4.

The writing system of Devanagari could be summed up as composed of the following:

### The Consonants

Devanagari consonants have an implicit schwa /ə/ included in them. As per traditional classification they are categorized according to their phonetic properties. There are 5 Varga groups (classes) and one non-Varga group. Each Varga, which corresponds to Stops, contains five consonants classified as per their properties. The first four consonants are classified on the basis of Voicing and Aspiration and the last is the corresponding nasal.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Varga** | **Unvoiced** | | **Voiced** | | **Nasal** |
|  | -Asp | +Asp | -Asp | +Asp |  |
| **Velar** | क | ख | ग | घ | ङ |
| **Palatal** | च | छ | ज | झ | ञ |
| **Retroflex** | ट | ठ | ड | ढ | ण |
| **Dental** | त | थ | द | ध | न |
| **Bi-labial** | प | फ | ब | भ | म |

Table : Varga classification of consonants

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Non-Varga** | य | र | ल | ळ | व | श | ष | स | ह |

Table : Non-Varga consonants

### The Implicit Vowel Killer: Halanta[[2]](#footnote-2)

All consonants have an implicit vowel sign (schwa) within them. A special sign is needed to denote that this implicit vowel is stripped off. This is known as the Halanta (्). The Halanta thus joins two consonants and creates conjuncts, which can be generally from 2 to 4 consonant combinations. In rare cases it can join up to 5 consonants. However the notion of maximum number of consonants joining to form one akshar is not empirical. It is just an observation drawn from the words that have been observed till date. Given the confluence of languages happening in the Internet age, the possibility that one may want a generic Top Level Domain [gTLD] which may have more than the observed maximum cannot be ruled out. Hence, in the LGR work, this limit will not be enforced[[3]](#footnote-3).

### Vowels

Separate symbols exist for all Vowels, which are pronounced independently either at the beginning or after a vowel sound. To indicate a Vowel sound other than the implicit one, a Vowel modifier (Matra) is attached to the consonant. Since the consonant has a built in schwa, there are equivalent Matras for all vowels excepting the अ.

The correlation is shown as under:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| अ | आ | इ | ई | उ | ऊ | ऋ | ए | ऐ | ओ | औ |
|  | ा | ि | ी | ु | ू | ृ | े | ै | ो | ौ |

Table : Vowels with corresponding Matras

In addition to show sounds borrowed from English, some languages using Devanagari such as Hindi, Marathi, and Konkani also admit 2 vowels and their corresponding Matras as in

ऍ ऑ

ऍण्ड /and/ ऑर /or/

Marathi replaces the ऍ by ॲ.

### The Anusvara (ं)

The Anusvara represents a homo-organic nasal. It replaces a conjunct group of a Nasal Consonant+Halanta+Consonant belonging to that particular varga. Before a non-varga consonant the anusvara represents a nasal sound. Modern Hindi, Marathi and Konkani prefer the anusvara to the corresponding Half-nasal:

सन्त vs. संत /sənt/ saint चम्पा vs. चंपा /tʃəmpa/

### Nasalization: Chandrabindu (ँ)

Chandrabindu/Anunasika denotes nasalization of the preceding vowel as in आँख (eye) /ãkh/ eye. Present-day Hindi users tend to replace the chandrabindu by the anusvara

### Nukta (़)

Mainly used in Hindi, the nukta sign is placed below a certain number of consonants to represent words borrowed from Perso-Arabic. It can be adjoined to क ख ग ज फ to show that words having these consonants with a nukta are to be pronounced in the Perso-Arabic style.

e.g. फ़िरोज़ /firoz/

It is also placed under ड and ढ in Hindi to indicate flapped sounds

बढ़ /bədh/

With the exception of flaps, users of modern-day Hindi hardly use the nukta characters today.

### Visarga (ः) and Avagraha (ऽ)

The Visarga is frequently used in Sanskrit and represents a sound very close to /h/. दुःख /du:kh/ sorrow, unhappiness.

The Avagraha (ऽ) creates an extra stress on the preceding vowel and is used in Sanskrit texts. It is rarely used in other languages using Devanagari. In case of LGR, the Avagraha is not part of the repertoire as it is barred in the Maximal Starting Repertoire.

# Overall Development Process and Methodology

Under the Neo-Brahmi Generation Panel, there are many different scripts belonging to separate Unicode blocks. Each of these scripts will be assigned a separate LGR; however Neo-Brahmi GP will ensure that the fundamental philosophy behind building those LGRs are all in sync with all other Brahmi derived scripts. This is the Devanagari LGR, which caters to multiple languages written using Devanagari belonging to EGIDS scale 1 to 4.

## Guiding Principles

The NBGP adopts following broad principles for selection of code-points in the code-point repertoire across the board for all the scripts within its ambit.

### Inclusion principles:

#### Modern usage:

Every character proposed should be in the everyday usage of a particular linguistic community. The characters which have been encoded in the Unicode for transcription purposes only or for archival purposes will not be considered for inclusion in the code-point repertoire.

#### Unambiguous use:

Every character proposed should have unambiguous understanding among the linguistic about its usage in the language.

### Exclusion principles:

The main exclusion principle is that of Acknowledgement to Environmental Limitations. These comprise of protocols or standards which are pre-requisites to the Label Generation Rulesets. All further principles are in fact subsumed under these limitations but have been spelt out separately for the sake of clarity.

#### Acknowledgement to Environment Limitations:

The code point repertoire for root zone being a very special case, up the ladder in the protocol hierarchies, the canvas of available characters for selection as a part of the Root Zone code point repertoire is already constrained by various protocol layers beneath it. Following three main protocols/standards act as successive filters:

*i. The Unicode Chart:*

Out of all the characters that are needed by the given script, if the character in question is not encoded in Unicode, it cannot be incorporated in the code point repertoire. Such cases are quite rare, given the elaborate and exhaustive character inclusion efforts made by Unicode consortium.

*ii. IDNA Protocol:*

Unicode being the character encoding standard for providing the maximum possible representation of a given script/language, it has encoded as far as possible all the possible characters needed by the script. However the Domain name being a specialized case, it is governed by an additional protocol known as IDNA (Internationalized Domain Names in Applications). The IDNA protocol introduces exclusion of some characters out of Unicode repertoire from being part of the domain names.

Example: Devanagari Letter Qa (क़) is not allowed to be a part of domain name. Its decomposed form, i.e. Devanagari Letter Ka followed by Devanagari Sign Nukta (क+़) can be used instead.

*iii. Maximal Starting Repertoire:*

The Root-zone LGR being a repertoire of the characters which are going to be used for creation of the root zone TLDs, which in turn are an even more specialized case of domain names, the ROOT LGR procedure introduces additional exclusions on IDNA allowed set of characters.

Example: Devanagari Sign Avagraha (ऽ) even if allowed by IDNA protocol, is not permitted in the Root Zone Repertoire as per the MSR.

To sum up, the restrictions start off with admitting only such characters as are part of the code-block of the given script/language. This is further narrowed down by the IDNA Protocol and finally an additional filter in the form of Maximal Starting Repertoire restricts the character set associated with the given language even more.

#### No Punctuation Marks:

The TLDs being identifiers, punctuation markers present in brahmi based languages such as Danda (। ) and double Danda ( ॥ ) will not be included.

#### No Symbols and Abbreviations:

Abbreviations, weights and measures and other such iconic characters like Isshar (৺), Abbreviation sign ( ॰ ) etc. will not be included.

#### No Rare and Obsolete Characters:

There are characters which have been added to Unicode to accommodate rare forms especially like DEVANAGARI LETTER VOCALIC RR (ॠ) and DEVANAGARI LETTER VOCALIC LL (ॡ) as well as their matra forms (ॄ) and (ॣ). All such characters will not be included. This is in consonance with the Letter principle as laid down in the Root Zone LGR procedure.

#### No Stress Markers of Classical Sanskrit and Vedic:

Stress markers for classical Sanskrit e.g. (॑) DEVANAGARI STRESS SIGN UDATTA and (॒) DEVANAGARI STRESS SIGN ANUDATTA will not be included. This is also in consonance with the Letter principle as laid down in the Root Zone LGR procedure.

# Repertoire

This section details the code-point repertoire that the Neo-Brahmi Generation Panel [NBGP] proposes to be included in the Devanagari LGR.

One of the major sources of reference to the justification for inclusion of the code-point is the Indian National Standard 'Enhanced Inscript Keyboard layouts' [INSCRIPT]" laying down the language specific keyboard layouts for all the scheduled languages of India. It is officially published and notified in the Gazette of India. The standard specifies key-layouts for each of the scheduled languages of India. The standard among other things provides a comprehensive language-wise list of various characters as used by the scheduled (of which the set of languages under the ambit of the NBGP is a sub-set) languages of the India. The [INSCRIPT] standard carves out a sub-set of characters applicable to each of the languages out of the respective code-page of the script used by that language.

## Code Point Repertoire:

| **Sr. No.** | **Unicode Code Point** | **Character** | **Character Name** | **Unicode General Category (gc)** | **Indic Syllabic Category** | **Reference** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | 0901 | ँ | DEVANAGARI SIGN CANDRABINDU | Mn | Chandrabindu | [INSCRIPT] |
| 2. | 0902 | ं | DEVANAGARI SIGN ANUSVARA | Mn | Anusvara (Bindu) | [INSCRIPT] |
| 3. | 0903 | ः | DEVANAGARI SIGN VISARGA | Mc | Visarga | [INSCRIPT] |
| 4. | 0905 | अ | DEVANAGARI LETTER A | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 5. | 0906 | आ | DEVANAGARI LETTER AA | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 6. | 0907 | इ | DEVANAGARI LETTER I | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 7. | 0908 | ई | DEVANAGARI LETTER II | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 8. | 0909 | उ | DEVANAGARI LETTER U | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 9. | 090A | ऊ | DEVANAGARI LETTER UU | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 10. | 090B | ऋ | DEVANAGARI LETTER VOCALIC R | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 11. | 090D | ऍ | DEVANAGARI LETTER CANDRA E | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 12. | 090F | ए | DEVANAGARI LETTER E | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 13. | 0910 | ऐ | DEVANAGARI LETTER AI | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 14. | 0911 | ऑ | DEVANAGARI LETTER CANDRA O | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 15. | 0913 | ओ | DEVANAGARI LETTER O | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 16. | 0914 | औ | DEVANAGARI LETTER AU | Lo | Vowel | [INSCRIPT] |
| 17. | 0915 | क | DEVANAGARI LETTER KA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 18. | 0916 | ख | DEVANAGARI LETTER KHA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 19. | 0917 | ग | DEVANAGARI LETTER GA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 20. | 0918 | घ | DEVANAGARI LETTER GHA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 21. | 0919 | ङ | DEVANAGARI LETTER NGA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 22. | 091A | च | DEVANAGARI LETTER CA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 23. | 091B | छ | DEVANAGARI LETTER CHA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 24. | 091C | ज | DEVANAGARI LETTER JA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 25. | 091D | झ | DEVANAGARI LETTER JHA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 26. | 091E | ञ | DEVANAGARI LETTER NYA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 27. | 091F | ट | DEVANAGARI LETTER TTA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 28. | 0920 | ठ | DEVANAGARI LETTER TTHA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 29. | 0921 | ड | DEVANAGARI LETTER DDA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 30. | 0922 | ढ | DEVANAGARI LETTER DDHA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 31. | 0923 | ण | DEVANAGARI LETTER NNA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 32. | 0924 | त | DEVANAGARI LETTER TA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 33. | 0925 | थ | DEVANAGARI LETTER THA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 34. | 0926 | द | DEVANAGARI LETTER DA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 35. | 0927 | ध | DEVANAGARI LETTER DHA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 36. | 0928 | न | DEVANAGARI LETTER NA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 37. | 092A | प | DEVANAGARI LETTER PA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 38. | 092B | फ | DEVANAGARI LETTER PHA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 39. | 092C | ब | DEVANAGARI LETTER BA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 40. | 092D | भ | DEVANAGARI LETTER BHA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 41. | 092E | म | DEVANAGARI LETTER MA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 42. | 092F | य | DEVANAGARI LETTER YA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 43. | 0930 | र | DEVANAGARI LETTER RA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 44. | 0932 | ल | DEVANAGARI LETTER LA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 45. | 0933 | ळ | DEVANAGARI LETTER LLA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 46. | 0935 | व | DEVANAGARI LETTER VA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 47. | 0936 | श | DEVANAGARI LETTER SHA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 48. | 0937 | ष | DEVANAGARI LETTER SSA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 49. | 0938 | स | DEVANAGARI LETTER SA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 50. | 0939 | ह | DEVANAGARI LETTER HA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 51. | 093A | ऺ | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN OE | Mn | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 52. | 093B | ऻ | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN OOE | Mc | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 53. | 093C | ़ | DEVANAGARI SIGN NUKTA | Mn | Nukta | [INSCRIPT] |
| 54. | 093E | ा | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN AA | Mc | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 55. | 093F | ि | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN I | Mc | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 56. | 0940 | ी | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN II | Mc | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 57. | 0941 | ु | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN U | Mn | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 58. | 0942 | ू | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN UU | Mn | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 59. | 0943 | ृ | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN VOCALIC R | Mn | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 60. | 0944 | ॄ | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN VOCALIC RR | Mn | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 61. | 0945 | ॅ | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN CANDRA E = candra | Mn | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 62. | 0947 | े | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN E | Mn | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 63. | 0948 | ै | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN AI | Mn | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 64. | 0949 | ॉ | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN CANDRA O | Mc | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 65. | 094B | ो | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN O | Mc | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 66. | 094C | ौ | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN AU | Mc | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 67. | 094D | ् | DEVANAGARI SIGN VIRAMA | Mn | Halant / Virama | [INSCRIPT] |
| 68. | 094F | ॏ | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN AW | Mc | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 69. | 0956 | ॖ | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN UE | Mn | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 70. | 0957 | ॗ | DEVANAGARI VOWEL SIGN UUE | Mn | Matra | [INSCRIPT] |
| 71. | 0972 | ॲ | DEVANAGARI LETTER CANDRA A | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 72. | 0973 | ॳ | DEVANAGARI LETTER OE | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 73. | 0974 | ॴ | DEVANAGARI LETTER OOE | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 74. | 0975 | ॵ | DEVANAGARI LETTER AW | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 75. | 0976 | ॶ | DEVANAGARI LETTER UE | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 76. | 0977 | ॷ | DEVANAGARI LETTER UUE | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 77. | 0979 | ॹ | DEVANAGARI LETTER ZHA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 78. | 097A | ॺ | DEVANAGARI LETTER HEAVY YA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 79. | 097B | ॻ | DEVANAGARI LETTER GGA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 80. | 097C | ॼ | DEVANAGARI LETTER JJA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 81. | 097E | ॾ | DEVANAGARI LETTER DDDA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |
| 82. | 097F | ॿ | DEVANAGARI LETTER BBA | Lo | Consonant | [INSCRIPT] |

Table : Code point repertoire

Apart from the above individual code-points, the Neo-Brahmi Generation Panel also proposes some specific sequences which enable conditional inclusion of the "DEVANAGARI LETTER RRA" in the repertoire.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sr. No.** | **Unicode Code Points** | **Sequence** | **Character Names** | **Unicode General Category (gc)** | **Reference** |
| 1. | 0931  094D  092F | ऱ्य | DEVANAGARI LETTER RRA  DEVANAGARI SIGN VIRAMA  DEVANAGARI LETTER YA | Lo  Mn  Lo | [INSCRIPT] |
| 2. | 0931  094D  0939 | ऱ्ह | DEVANAGARI LETTER RRA  DEVANAGARI SIGN VIRAMA  DEVANAGARI LETTER HA | Lo  Mn  Lo | [INSCRIPT] |

Table : Sequences

## Structural Formation of Devanagari:

All the languages written in Brahmi derived scripts follow a particular way of formation of its words, known as "akshar". In the next section there are detailed akshar formation rules as applicable to representation of "Hindi" language when written in Devanagari Script. These rules need slight changes for different languages written in Devanagari in terms of

- Character addition/deletion (e.g. Nukta [U+093C] character is applicable for Hindi but not Marathi)

- Presence or absence of a particular rule (e.g. Eyelash Ra construct is required in Marathi, Konkani and Nepali but not in Hindi).

In section ‎7, the Whole Label Evaluation (WLE) rules are given which cover all the languages under the purview of the NBGP for Devanagari script.

## Akshar formation rules for Hindi:

This section details the Akshar formation rules as applicable to Hindi. The first section lists the categories of the characters in the form of variables. In the rules, instead of their descriptive names, the variable names are used. The second section lists four operators along with their functions which are assumed while specifying the rules. The following two sections describe the two major categories of the Akshar formations first of which begins with the vowels and the second one with the consonants.

### Variables involved

Dash → Hyphen -

Digit → Indo-Arabic digits [0-9]

C → Consonant

M → Matra

V → Vowel

B → Anusvara (Bindu)

D → Chandrabindu (Anunasika)

X → Visarga

H → Halant / Virama

N → Nukta

### Operators used:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Symbol** | **Function** |
| | | Alternative |
| [ ] | Optional |
| \* | Variable Repetition |
| ( ) | Sequence Group |

Table : Symbol functions

In what follows, the Vowel Sequence and the Consonant Sequence pertinent to Devanagari, when used to write Hindi, are given.

### The Vowel Sequence

A vowel sequence begins with a vowel. It may be optionally followed by an Anusvara (D), Chandrabindu (B) or a Visarga (X). The number of D, B or X which can follow a V in Devanagari are restricted to one.

The possibility of a Visarga following a Chandrabindu or Anusvara is ruled out, since it is used only in Vedic and in Bengali script.

The vowel sequence in Hindi is therefore V [D |B | X]

Examples:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sequence Description** | **Sequence** | **Example** | **Example**  **Decomposition** |
| Vowel | V | अ /a/ |  |
| Vowel + Anusvara | V[D] | अं /aṁ/ | अ ं |
| Vowel + Chandrabindu | V[B] | अँ /aṃ/ | अ ँ |
| Vowel + Visarga | V[X] | अः /aḥ/ | अ ः |

Table

### Consonant Sequence

A consonant sequence begins with a consonant. It may be optionally followed by a Nukta (N), Matra (M), Anusvara (B), Chandrabindu (D), Visarga (X) or a Halanta (H). The number of instances of these characters occurring after a consonant is restricted to one. There is a possibility of further extension of the Consonant sequence after the N, M and H. Each of these has been discussed in the following sections:

1. A single consonant (C)

(The consonant shall be treated as coterminous with the Consonant along with the Nukta sign wherever such a case is pertinent.)

Examples:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sequence Description** | **Sequence** | **Example** | **Example**  **Decomposition** |
| Consonant | C | क /ka/ |  |
| Consonant + Nukta | C[N] | क़ /ḳa/ | क ़ |

Table

2. A consonant optionally followed by dependent vowel sign/Matra [M] or Anusvara [D] Chandrabindu [B] or Visarga[X] or Halant [H]

C [M|B|D|X|H]

Examples:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sequence Description** | **Sequence** | **Example** | **Example**  **Decomposition** |
| Consonant + Matra | C[M] | कि /ki/ | क ि |
| Consonant + Anusvara | C[B] | कं /kaṁ/ | क ं |
| Consonant + Chandrabindu | C[D] | कँ /kaṃ/ | क ँ |
| Consonant + Visarga | C[X] | कः /kaḥ/ | क ः |
| Consonant + Halanta | C[H] | क् /k/  (Pure Consonant) | क ् |

Table

2. A. A CM sequence can be optionally followed by D, B or X

(CM)[D|B|X]

Example:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sequence Description** | **Sequence** | **Example** | **Example**  **Decomposition** |
| Consonant + Matra + Anusvara | CM[B] | कीं /kīṁ/ | क ी ं |
| Consonant + Matra + Chandrabindu | CM[D] | काँ /kāṃ/ | क ा ँ |
| Consonant + Matra + Visarga | CM[X] | कीः /kīḥ/ | क ी ः |

Table

3. A sequence of consonants (up to 4) joined by Halant \*3(CH)C

Example:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sequence Description** | **Sequence** | **Example** | **Example**  **Decomposition** |
| Consonant + Halanta + Consonant + Halanta + Consonant + Halanta + Consonant | CHCHCHC | न्क्र्य /nkrya/ | न ् क ् र ् य |

Table

**Subsets:**

3. A. The combination may be followed by M, D, B or X

Example:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sequence Description** | **Sequence** | **Example** | **Example**  **Decomposition** |
| Consonant + Halanta + Consonant + Matra | CHC[M] | क्की /kkī/ | क ् क ी |
| Consonant + Halanta + Consonant + Anusvara | CHC[B] | क्कं /kkaṁ/ | क ् क ं |
| Consonant + Halanta + Consonant + Chandrabindu | CHC[D] | क्कँ /kkaṃ/ | क ् क ँ |
| Consonant + Halanta + Consonant + Visarga | CHC[X] | क्कः /kkaḥ/ | क ् क ः |

Table

3. B. \*3(CH)CM may be followed by a D, B or X

Example:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sequence Description** | **Sequence** | **Example** | **Example**  **Decomposition** |
| Consonant + Halanta + Consonant + Matra + Anusvara | CHCM[B] | क्कीं /kkīṁ/ | क ् क ी ं |
| Consonant + Halanta + Consonant + Matra + Chandrabindu | CHCM[D] | क्कीँ /kkīṃ/ | क ् क ी ँ |
| Consonant + Halanta + Consonant + Matra + Visarga | CHCM[X] | क्कीः /kkīḥ/ | क ् क ी ः |

Table

These are the basic akshar rules on which the overall Devanagari LGR is based. As languages other than Hindi are considered, some language specific characters and rules are introduced. There are some additional finer aspects to these rules as one takes into account the digits, punctuations and special standalone characters like Avagraha. Those aspects are not discussed here as the MSR on which the LGRs are supposed to be based, excludes those characters.

# Variants

There are no characters/character sequences in Devanagari which can be created by using the characters permitted as per the [MSR] and look exactly alike.

However, Santhali language has a unique requirement for Nukta character (़ U+093C ) positioning which is not common in other Devanagari based languages. Santhali requires the Nukta character to be followed after certain Vowels and Matras. Complete representation of these Santhali combinations necessitated the Whole Label Evaluation rules (given in the ‎7) to be opened up for these specific cases. A regular non-Santhali user mostly cannot even anticipate possibility of such a combination and can mistake it for something else.

This gives rise to a possibility of creation of certain labels which can be deceptively similar to a majority of the Devanagari user-base. Being a unique case of homographic similarity, following variants are being proposed.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Variant 1** | **Variant 2** |
| आ  U+0906 | आ़  U+0906 U+093C |
| ओ  U+0913 | ओ़  U+0913 U+093C |
| ा  U+093E | ा़  U+093E U+093C |
| ो  U+094B | ो़  U+094B U+093C |

Another case of deceptive similarity to a majority of the Devanagari user-base is of a word ending in Halant (U+094D - ्). Even in this case, as majority of Devanagari user base does not anticipate an ending Halant, it gives rise to confusion. Following label-wide variant is being proposed:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Variant 1** | **Variant 2** |
| A word ending in Halant (U+094D - ्) | Same word ending without Halant (U+094D - ्) |

# Whole Label Evaluation Rules (WLE)

This section provides the WLEs that are required by all the languages mentioned in section ‎3.2 when written in Devanagari Script. The rules have been drafted in such a way that they can be easily translated into the LGR specification.

Below are the symbols used in the WLE rules, for each of the "Indic Syllabic Category" as mentioned in the Table 6: Code point repertoire.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| C | → | Consonant |
| M | → | Matra |
| V | → | Vowel |
| B | → | Anusvara (Bindu) |
| D | → | Chandrabindu |
| X | → | Visarga |
| H | → | Halant / Virama |
| N | → | Nukta |
| S | → | Eyelash Reph (C1HC2)  where  C1 is 0931 (ऱ - DEVANAGARI LETTER RRA)  H is 094D (् - DEVANAGARI SIGN VIRAMA)  C2 is either - 092F (य - DEVANAGARI LETTER YA)  or 0939 (ह - DEVANAGARI LETTER HA) |

Below are the specific WLE rules:

1. N: must be preceded only by either of specific set of Cs, Vs and Ms

The specific Cs are:

* 1. क (U+0915)
  2. ख (U+0916)
  3. ग (U+0917)
  4. ज (U+091C)
  5. ड (U+0921)
  6. ढ (U+0922)
  7. फ (U+092B)

The specific Vs are:

1. आ (U+0906) (Required in Santhali language)
2. ओ (U+0913) (Required in Santhali language)

The specific Ms are:

1. ा (U+093E) (Required in Santhali language)
2. ो (U+094B) (Required in Santhali language)
3. H: must be preceded by C or CN
4. X: must be preceded by either of V, C, N or M
5. B: must be preceded by either of V, C, N or M
6. D: must be preceded by either of V, C, N or M
7. M: must be preceded either by C or CN
8. V: Can **NOT** be preceded by H (details in "Case of V preceded by H")

**Case of Eyelash Reph:**

In the WLE rules, there is no specific mention of the Eyelash Reph for two reasons:

1. As the U+0931 is added as a part of permissible sequences in Table 7: Sequences, it gets permitted only with the specific sequences.
2. The last characters of both the sequences of which the U+0931 is part, are consonants. As the Eyelash-Reph can take all the combinations as that of a consonant, no specific handling in terms of context rule is required.

**Case of V preceded by H:**

There could be cases involving multi-word domains where V may need to be allowed to follow an H

e.g. आम्अचार /*aːm əchaːr/* (meaning: Mango pickle)

This is the case where two different words need to be joined together first of which ends in an H. Some sections of the linguistic community require the explicit presence of H for full representation of the sound intended. However, by and large, the form of the first word without an H is considered enough for full representation of the sound intended for the first word.

This is a unique situation necessitated by the lack of hyphen, space or the Zero Width Non-joiner character in the permissible set of characters in the Root zone repertoire. Otherwise, V is never required to be allowed to follow an H. Permitting this may create a perceptive similarity among two labels (with and without H) for majority of the linguistic community, hence this is explicitly prohibited by the NBGP.

In future if required, depending on the prevailing understanding, the future NBGP may consider revisiting this rule.

# Contributors

Neo-Brahmi Generation Panel members.

# References

[MSR] Maximal Starting Repertoire

[INSCRIPT] Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), "Enhanced Inscript Keyboard layouts" (IS 16350: 2016)

*<This is a paid resource managed by Bureau of Indian Standards. NBGP will try to get a copy of the same and then share the same with IP>*

[NBGP] Neo-Brahmi Generation Panel

# Bibliography

The bibliography given below and sorted thematically is a set of documents, books, articles and webographies consulted in the drafting of this report

**WRITING SYSTEMS**

Dillinger. D., The Alphabet. A Key to the History of Mankind. 3rd Edition in 2 Volumes. Hutchison. London. 1968.

**DEVANĀGARĪ**

Agrawala, V. S. (1966). The Devanāgarī script. In: Indian Systems of Writing. (Pp. 12-16) Delhi: Publications Division.

Agyeya, Sacchindanand Hiranand Vatsyayan. 1972. Bhavanti. Delhi: Rajpal and Sons.

Beames, John. 1872-79. A Comparative Grammar of the Modern Aryan Languages of India. 3 vols. London, Trubner and Co. [Reprinted by Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi, 1966.]

Bhatia, Tej K. 1987. A History of the Hindi Grammatical Tradition: Hindi-Hindustani Grammar, Grammarians, History and Problems. Leiden/New York: E. J. Brill.

Bright, W. (1996). The Devanāgarī script. In P. Daniels and W. Bright (eds), The World’s Writing Systems. (Pp. 384-390). New York: Oxford University Press.

Cardona, George. 1987. Sanskrit. In The World's Major Languages. Bernard Comrie (ed.). London: Croom Helm. 448-469.

Dwivedi, Ram Awadh. 1966. A Critical Survey of Hindi Literature. Delhi:Motilal Banarsidass.

Faruqi, Shamsur Rahman. 2001. Early Urdu Literary Culture and History.Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Guru, Kamta Prasad. 1919. Hindi Vyakaran. Varanasi: Nagari Pracharini Sabha. (1962 edition).

Kachru, Yamuna. 1965. A Transformational Treatment of Hindi Verbal Syntax. London: University of London Ph.D. dissertation (Mimeographed).

Kachru, Yamuna. 1966. An Introduction to Hindi Syntax. Urbana: University of Illinois, Department of Linguistics.

Kalyan Kale and Anjali Soman, 1986.Learning Marathi. Shri Vishakha Prakashan, Pune :

McGregor, R. S. (1977). Outline of Hindi Grammar. 2nd ed. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

McGregor, R. S. 1972. Outline of Hindi Grammar with Exercises. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

McGregor, R. S. 1974. Hindi Literature of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

McGregor, R. S. 1984. Hindi Literature from Its Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

Pandey, P. K. (2007). Phonology-orthography interface in Devanāgarī for Hindi. Written Language and Literacy, 10 (2): 139-156. 2007.

Rai, Amrit. 1984. A House Divided. The Origin and Development of Hindi/Hindavi. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Sharad, Onkar. 1969. Lohiya ke Vicar. Allahabad: Lokbharati Prakashan.

Singh, A. K. (2007). Progress of modification of Brāhmī alphabet as revealed by the inscriptions of sixth-eighth centuries. In P.G. Patel, P. Pandey and D. Rajgor (eds), The Indic Scripts: Paleographic and Linguistic Perspectives. (Pp. 85-107). New Delhi: DK Printworld.

Sproat, R. (2000). A Computational Theory of Writing Systems. Cambridge University Press.

Tiwari, Pandit Udaynarayan. 1961. Hindi Bhasha ka Udgam aur Vikas [The Origin and Development of the Hindi Language]. Prayag: Leader Press.

Verma, M. K. 1971. The Structure of the Noun Phrase in English and Hindi. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

**LANGUAGE SPECIFIC**

1. INDIAN SCRIPTS AND LANGUAGES

IS 10401: 8-bit code for information interchange. 1982

IS 10315: 7-bit coded character set for information interchange. 1985

IS 12326: 7-bit and 8-bit coded character sets-Code extension techniques. 1987

ISO 15919, Information and documentation - Transliteration of Devanāgarī and related Indic scripts into Latin characters. 2001

ISO 2375: Procedure for registration of escape sequences. 2003

ISO 8859: 8-bit single-byte coded graphic character sets - Parts 1-13. 1998-2001

IDN POLICY http://mit.gov.in/sites/upload\_files/dit/files/India-IDN-Policy.pdf

Appendix

1. http://www.acharya.gen.in:8080/sanskrit/script\_dev.php [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Unicode (cf. Unicode 3.0 and above) prefers the term Virama. In this report both the terms have been used to denote the character that suppresses the inherent vowel. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. This can be the case when a foreign language word, which admits a large number of consonants, is transliterated into Devanāgarī [↑](#footnote-ref-3)