

Hindi Alphabets: Do We Need Renovation?

SOHAN KUMAR

Research scholar

Department of Linguistics

Banaras Hindu University (Varanasi), India

Abstract:

Hindi is used as 1st language in Hindi spoken areas and used as 2nd language not only in Indian subcontinent but also in many countries out of India. It has its own grammar, user (for writing, speaking and reading) and great history. Being an autonomous language, it uses the Devanagari script to symbolize its sounds and has borrowed about vocabularies from various languages (Arabic, Sanskrit and etc). The aim of my paper is to throw a light with the following questions on the current need of modification in Hindi alphabet chart – (1) having been written in the same script, Hindi and Sanskrit are different languages. Why are the sounds of Sanskrit being applied in Hindi language when they do not exist in this language? (2) Hindi has borrowed words from various languages (Arabic, French, and English etc). Why don't we have symbols for the words of those languages except Sanskrit? (3) Why don't we make Hindi alphabet easier in terms of society and technology?

Key-Words: Hindi, Sanskrit, Devanagari Script, vowels & consonants.

1. Introduction:

According to the current circumstances, Hindi is not only used as the mother tongue by 80cr and used as second language by 30cr in India but also used by 10cr speaker outside of India. Being a flexible and simple, it has richest vocabulary among the languages of the words. Hindi, a language of Indo-Aryan belongs to the Indo- European language family. Hindi is normally spoken using the combination of around 52 sounds including 11 vowels, 40 consonants, nasalization and a kind of aspiration. These sounds are represented in the Devanagari script by 13 characters traditionally regarded as vowels and 40 lettering as consonants. Today, when we discuss about change or reformation of a language, it does not mean that we are against of those alphabets. It's a natural process that it gets change over time. As you know, today's Hindi is not as same as it was in medial age which was different from ancient age. The aim of my paper is to pay attention on the necessity of modification in alphabet system.

2. Devanagari script:

Devanagari is part of the Brahmic script family of India, Nepal, Tibet, and South-East Asia. This script is superior to other existing scripts because each Devanagari character represents either combination of a consonant and a vowel or a vowel and consonant itself. Its consonants are normally considered to have a basic form which consists of a consonant pronounced with an inherent 'a' sound similar to the vowel sound in the English words. In other words each its character normally represents a complete syllable.

Devanagari is relatively easy to learn because it is largely phonetic, that is to say that mostly the script is a representation of the actual sounds. The sounds of spoken Hindi are generally written in Devanagari script, which is also used to write Sanskrit, Nepali, and Marathi. The precise number of its characters is not easy to work out. Sometimes people say there were in Sanskrit 52 characters. In Hindi people often say there are 13 vowel and 33 consonant symbols. However, it all depends what you define as a character. In practice, there are 13 vowels, 33 consonants, four common conjuncts and seven characters with dots under them that represent sounds not found in Sanskrit.



Table-1 Hindi Varnamala (scanned copy of book taught in U.P. schools)

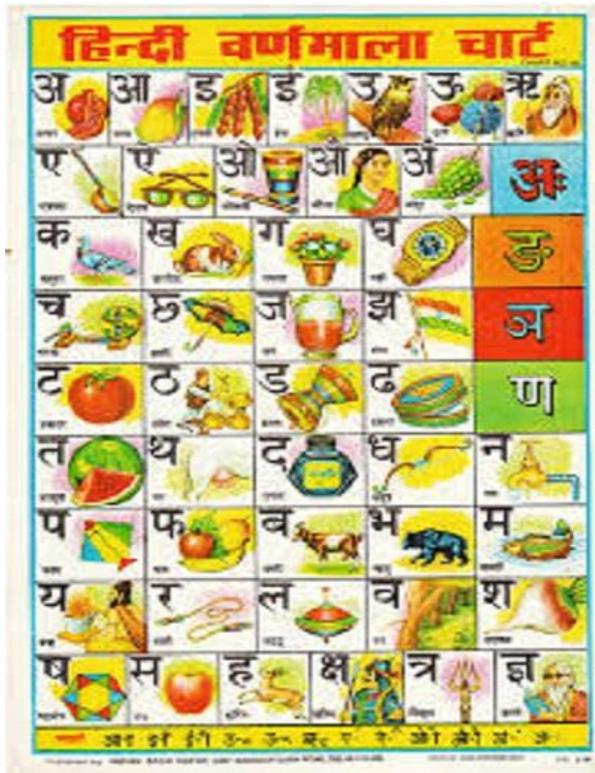


Table-2 for Hindi Alphabet (scanned copy of book taught in Indian schools)

3. Requirement of renovation:-

Emergence, development, change and death of a language depend on the society. Changing in a language is natural process which takes place from person to person, place to place and time to time which can be seen at sound, word, meaning, and grammatical level. Sound change includes processes of change in a language that effect pronunciation or sound system structure. It can be consist of the replacement of one speech sound by another, the complete loss of the affected sound, or even the introduction of a new sound in a place where there previously was none. When we come across Hindi in terms of sound change, we get number of changes taken place at several times. Sound of current Hindi is not as same as it was in medial age (Pali, Prakrita and Apabhhransa) which was dissimilar from ancient age (Vadic and Classical Sanskrit).

Changes in Hindi alphabet are necessary because of following reasons:-

1. it's a trend in language, when a sound is not used for a long lime by its speakers, results either it dies or merges into another sound. For example

sound of current Hindi is different from old Hindi. So in terms of existing Hindi Alphabet such changes are needed.

2. Many sounds or letters are either out of writing or too taught to write, so they need reformation for being written, see following Hindi sound as example-

Letter variants	
Standard form(New)	Variant form(Old)
अ	अ्र
आ	आ्र
ओ	ओ्र
औ	औ्र
झ	भ
ण	ण

Table-3 New form old form (Google online)

There are many letters which need proper correction.

3. Borrowed sounds which are being used in Hindi for long time also need proper place in concern script.

4. Method & Data analysis:

In order to do the analysis the alphabet renovation of Hindi, data of 500 words was collected. For this method first the words were not consulted from the dictionary instead speakers of Hindi language were employed and asked to pronounce the words in order to check the correctness of sound or letter of these words. All data were collected form UP, from Hindi speaker, form Hindi

movies and songs. All the speakers were given a list of Hindi words and asked to pronounce naturally and correct sounds were encrusted.

5. Result:

1. /ऋ/ has its origin from Vedic Sanskrit where it was pronounced correctly. But now, it is articulated correctly neither by Sanskrit speaker nor by Hindi speakers. In Hindi, /ऋ/ found in only loan words, which has been merged into /रि/ (RI). It had been placed as vowel but now used as combination of consonant and vowel.

Example:-

Correct word	using word
ऋषि	रिषि
ऋतु	रितु
ऋतुराज	रितुराज
ऋण	रिण
ऋग्वेद	रिग्वेद

2. Visarga /अः/ is a sound like /h/ which appears at the end or middle of a word or syllable. In Hindi Varnamala, it has been included in vowel but neither matches with vowel nor with consonant. Hindi does not have /अः/ yet it is being used for most Sanskrit loan words.

Example:-

Correct word	using word
छः	छ
दुःख	दुख
निःस्वार्थ	निस्वार्थ
निःशुल्क	निशुल्क

3. Nasal sound

There are five nasal sounds in Hindi language like- /ङ/ /ज/ /ण/ /न/ /म/. Phonological rule of Hindi says that last 5th word of each group of plosive

(spars) consonant gets nasalization which is used with the consonant of the same group. But now an Anuswaar /अँ/ is being used in stead of these (ङ ज ण न म) nasal sounds. In current Hindi scenario /ङ/ and /ज/ are out of use and has been merged with /अँ/ vowel. So /ङ/ and /ज/ should be replaced.

क ख ग घ ङ
च छ ज झ ञ
ट ठ ड ढ ण
त थ द ध न
प फ ब भ म

Example:-

	Correct word	using word
कवर्ग-	उमङ्ग	उमंग
	गङ्गा	गंगा
	पङ्कज	पंकज
चवर्ग-	पञ्चम	पंचम
	पूर्वाञ्चल	पूर्वाचल
	चञ्चल	चंचल
टवर्ग-	खण्ड	खंड
	पण्डित	पंडित
	फण्ड	फंड
तवर्ग-	हिन्द	हिंदू
	जिन्दगी	जिंदगी
	शान्ति	शान्ति
पवर्ग-	परम्परा	परंपरा
	नवम्बर	नवंबर
	सम्भव	संभव

4. Sibilant sound

Hindi has three sibilant consonants /श/, /ष/, /स/. /स/ sound is used more in comparison to both other sounds. In Sanskrit, the pronunciations of these are separate for each other but condition is not same in Hindi. In Hindi, /ष/ sound is used as same as /श/ when both sounds have different place of articulation. /श/ sound is post-alveolar when /ष/ is retroflex.

Example-

Correct word	using word
विषय	विशय
शेष	शेश
षड्यंत्र	शड्यंत्र
कृषि	कृशि
ऋषि	रिशी

5. Conjunct consonants:-

In Hindi language, 3 conjunct consonants (क्षत्रज्ञ) are considered, but when we go in detail we find, all are combination of a consonant without vowel + consonant with vowel like क्ष-कछ

त्र-त्र्

ज्ञ-ज्य

In current scenario separate consonant for these consonants are not needed because Conjunct consonants can be constructed with help of consonants. To see the alphabet charts of English, Chinese and etc

6. Conclusion:

1. There are many alphabets which are used only for loan words although, they either don't have their use or has been replaced by another sound. Like /ऋ/ and /अः/ are not used in Hindi. Nasal sounds /ङ/ and /ञ/ has been replaced into Anuswar (ँ) and Sibilant /ष/, into /श/. Conjunct consonant are useless except Sanskrit loan words. So renovation is needed in them.
2. Many letters has their existence in Hindi but not being used in Hindi Alphabet example- कड़क, सड़क, गढ़, गढ़ना चाँद. So exist sound should be placed in Hindi Alphabet chart.

3. Much amount of loan words except Sanskrit is being used in Devanagari, yet they have not been maintained in Hindi Alphabet. So see the conclusion, need of renovation is felt. Example- **ऑफिस, ऑफिसर, डॉक्टर, हॉस्टल, हॉस्पिटल, गजल, अखबार, कफ़न, मुफ़्त, तोहफ़ा**. So these are also need to be settled in alphabet chart.

REFERENCES

1. Web pages: "What is Devanagari Script", www.wikipedia.org , accessed on 10th October, 2014.
2. Laderfoged. P. *Courses in Phonetics*: Harcourt brace Jovanovich, Newark: 2004
3. Kumar, Dr. Arbind. *Sampurn Hindi Byakaran*:lucent publication, Patna: 2013
4. Tiwari, Dr. Bholanath. *sound structure of Hindi language*: Sahitya Sahakar Delhi: 1997
5. Ohala, Manjari. *Aspect of Hindi phonology*: Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas,1982
6. Bhatiya, Dr. Kailash Chandra. *Hindi Bhasha me shabda ki sima*: nagari pracharni sabha Varanasi:1990
7. Pandey, P.K. *Sound and their pattern in Indic languages*: centre for linguistics, JNU, New Delhi:2004
8. Tiwari, B.N. *Linguistics (in Hindi)*: Allahabad, Kitabmahal:1992
9. Varma Dharendra. *Gramin Hindi*: Sahitya Bhavan Allahabad:1999
10. Lohar, G.T. *Asociolinguistics survey of the Bhojpuri language*:M.A. thesis, central department of linguistics, T.U.:2006
11. Maharotra, R.C. *Hindi Phonetics & Phonemics*: Munsiram manoharlal pub. New Delhi:1970
12. Kachru, Yamuna. *Hindi*: John Benjamins North America, Philadelphia: 2006.
13. Shapiro, Michael E. *A Premier of Modern Standard Hind*: Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi:1989.
14. Ohala, Manjari. *Aspects of Hindi Phonology*: Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi: 1983