### Comments on L2/20-069: Encoding of Tamil Brahmi Virama (U+11070)

Dr. Naga Ganesan (naa.ganesan@gmail.com)

# 1.0 Brahmi Anusvara vs. Old Tamil Virama (Pulli)

The document L2/19-402 gives six Old Tamil Brahmi characters for addition. The Old Tamil Brahmi virama is right-spacing, now standardized in the fonts available to write Tamil Brahmi. This property of right spacing is different from that standard Brahmi's *anusvara* which is placed on top of the letter succeeding it.

11070 BRAHMI SIGN OLD TAMIL VIRAMA

Syllable	Generic Brahmi	Tamil-Brahmi
k	Ŧ	÷
kka	‡	++
putta	ιψιζι	1017171

While it is noted the proposed Brahmi Old Tamil Virama character has the same general dot-like shape as the Brahmi Anusvara, its properties would be different as the proposed character is a Virama character with GC=9 and Indic\_Syllabic\_Category=Virama against the GC=0 and Indic\_Syllabic\_Category=Bindu of the Anusvara. Therefore, the Old Tamil Virama is justified to be distinctly encoded.

(from L2/19-402)

Back in the year 2012, I mentioned the problems of LLA in Northern Brahmi and in Tamil Brahmi and their origin and evolution being quite different. Now, I am glad that Tamil Brahmi characters are getting encoded atomically. <a href="http://unicode.org/L2/L2012/12165-brahmi-lla.pdf">http://unicode.org/L2/L2012/12165-brahmi-lla.pdf</a>

#### 2.0 Brahmi Anusvara is guite different from Old Tamil Virama

# L2/20-069 states: " Alternate Positioning

Given that the unified Anusvara/Old Tamil Virama can occur in multiple positions, it would be useful if there would be some mechanism to fine-tune its positioning on a per character basis. The authors would like to receive feedback from the UTC about the ideal way to represent the various alternate positionings of U+11001."

The simple and technically straight-forward way is to encode Old Tamil Virama atomically to distinguish from Anusvara, instead of unifying them both. Invention of Virama (Pulli) id Old Tamil Brahmi was a distinct invention, and had nothing to do with Anusvara. In a way, even in Indic Unicode this Old Tamil invention is used as a fundamental character. Hence, this request not to unify Old Tamil Brahmi Virama with Anusvara in Brahmi block. Now that Brahmi LLA and Old Tamil Brahmi LLA get encoded separately, same thing is requested from Brahmi Virama and Tamil Brahmi Virama as their functions are different.

As the Old Tamil Brahmi is a very minority script, it is requested that OLD TAMIL VIRAMA be encoded as a separate character as per L2/19-402. Its properties as right spacing and Indic\_Syllabic\_Category=Virama can be used. Also, in the Brahmi code chart, if UTC wants, it can use a ring on the right side instead of solid dot for the OLD TAMIL VIRAMA at U+11070. This will help a lot to spread the 2000 years old script among Tamils and Indians who use social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Whatsup increasingly.

Separate Code Point for OLD TAMIL VIRAMA is important for distinguishing Sanskrit words from Tamil words. In India, the two ancient classical languages are Tamil heading Dravidian family, while Sanskrit leading the Aryan language family. Using separate code points for BRAHMI ANUSVARA vs. OLD TAMIL VIRAMA will help in the User community to distinguish between words of the Two important language families. Separating them by different code points will help eliminating confusion in the User community a lot. And, we said before, Old Tamil Virama is right spacing Virama, whereas Northern Brahmi's Anusvara is on Top of the consonants in Aryan language words

# Consonants series with Tamil-Brahmi Virama

k n c n ț n t n p m y r l v l l r n s ś dh (consonant + 0`)

Thanks.