Response to the encoding of Jihvamuliya and Upadhmaniya in Devanagari

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Background documentss

L2/25-121: Proposal to encode JIHVAMULIYA and UPADHMANIYA in Devanagari — Srinidhi A and Sridatta A

L2/25-091: Recommendations to UTC #183 (April 2025) on Script Proposals (Section 5.4)

Discussion and Seek for Approval

The SEWG sought feedback and raised concern as seen below.

"It seems that at least some fosnts use the existing characters in a way that this proposal is asking for, and we would like to avoid creating two different ways to encode the same text."

- Currently, only one major font, Tiro Devanagari Sanskrit, uses the proposed glyphs.
- For non-encoded characters and scripts, many fonts have reused and mapped them to existing code points. Fonts may design and map glyphs to any code points. These are temporary solutions at the font level, not permanent solutions at the character level, which is the basis for Unicode.
- Jihvamuliya and Upadhmaniya are consonants that represent a voiceless velar fricative and a voiceless bilabial fricative, respectively. The only difference is that they do not occur independently along with vowel signs. Consonants are encoded independently in each script. As observed, Jihvamuliya and Upadhmaniya have been encoded as script-specific characters in many scripts.
- Therefore, the use of Tiro Devanagari Sanskrit should be considered as experimental, with the reuse of existing code points being a temporary measure at the font level due to the lack of distinct characters in the Devanagari script. Encoding of these characters should not be seen as disrupting current practice, as there is no largescale usage.
- It would not be appropriate to unify consonants from one script with another and hold off encoding due to limited usage in a few fonts. We advocate for the encoding of these consonants in the Devanagari script to provide distinct representation at the character level. These consonants are also used in Varnamala (as shown in Figure 1 of the proposal), and they have distinct glyphs and conjunct behaviour, as previously stated.