

வா.மு.சே.கவிஅரசன்
அமெரிக்கா
தலைவர் (பொறுப்பு)

மணியம்
சிங்கப்பூர்
செயலர் - இயக்குநர்

முனைவர் நாக. கணேசன்
அமெரிக்கா
ஒருங்குறி பணிக்குழுத் தலைவர்

Subject: INFITT Response to Extended Tamil Proposal in Unicode Tamil Block

To

Dated: October 21, 2010

Dr. Lisa Moore

Chair,

Unicode Tech Committee,

Unicode Consortium,

U.S.A.

Dear Dr. Lisa Moore

As you are aware, International Forum for Information Technology in Tamil (INFITT - <http://www.infitt.org>) through its Unicode Working Group has worked on several proposals in the past and is working on many proposal to enrich the Tamil Unicode block and offer advise to other Unicode blocks. Several of our members are experts in multiple languages of the world and technologist who implement Unicode in various IT application areas. Our Members Language knowledge base extends to Tamil, English, Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Sanskrit, French, Spanish, German, Chinese, Korean, Malayan, Sinhalese, Japanese, Arabic to specify a few.

After carefully reviewing the proposal to encode Characters for Extended Tamil (L2/10-256R) authored by Mr. Shriramana Sharma that proposes to add some new characters to an "Extended Tamil Block" in SMP, proposal L2/10-425 written by Mr. Vinodh Rajan to encode in BMP, INFITT Working Group (WG-02) on Tamil Unicode and the leaders of INFITT concluded that the proposed characters do not belong in a Tamil Script block but perhaps Grantha Indic characters used to write other Indo-Aryan / Dravidian Languages. INFITT has also reached out to various Tamil Department Heads, Vice Chancellors , Tamil Language experts, All have opined that the proposal L2/10-256R, L2/10-425 are grossly misleading and have to be rejected outright. We have also enclosed few samples of the letters received from Tamil Scholars and IT industry experts and Tamils over the world. A list of linguists and technologists who have written to us confirming this fact is also listed at the end of this letter. Should you need copy of all letters, please feel free to drop a note, we will submit all the letters calling for rejections of these two proposals L2/10-256R, L2/10-425 to you.

Continuation to our letter dated September 30 2011 and your acceptance no L2/10-363 and in view of the views expressed by Tamil Scholars and other Indic Scholars, if UTC decides to give representation to these additional characters that are created to support other indic languages,

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perhaps UTC can choose to name as below, representing the nature of the character set recommended.

1. Grantha Indic Character
2. Grantha Dravidian Character
3. Grantha South Asian Character
4. Grantha Augmented Character
5. Grantha Linear Character

Unicode Tech committee can choose any of the names to name these new characters in line with purpose they are used for.

We are also pleased inform you that INFITT WG02 working group experts on Unicode are working on the following proposals to further enrich Unicode

1. Adding Archaic Tamil symbols and scripts of Tamil
2. Encoding the correct canonical forms Tamil Characters in the new Extended Tamil block(11B5 to 11CF, requested in the proposal L2/10-408) and Grantha Characters in the extended Grantha block (11D0 to 11D7 requested in the proposal L2/10-408) in SMP, thus extending wide Unicode Usage to Tamil Publishing Industry, currently crippled with limitations.

Should you need clarifications or assistance feel free to reach me in my cell.

Best Regards,

Kaviarasan Va.Mu.Se., USA

Chair(Officiating), INFITT

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Annexure I:

Affidavits from Tamil Scholars, Tamil IT experts and Tamils from worldwide – (Partial List)

1. Perungkavikko Dr. Va. Mu. Sethuraman, Member Classical Tamil Apex Implementation Committee : <http://en.cict.in/node/3>
2. Professor George Hart , Professor Emeritus of Tamil, UC Berkeley
3. Dr. C.R. SelvaKumar, Professor, University of Waterloo, Canada
4. Dr. Naga Ganesan , Chair WG02 INFITT, USA
5. Dr. M. Ponnavaikko, Ex- Vice-Chancellor , BharathiDasan University,India
6. Mr. M. Manivannan, Unicode Task Force Member, TamilNadu Govt., India
7. Mr. A. Elangovan, Unicode Task Force Member, TamilNadu Govt., India
8. Dr. K.Kalyanasundaram, Federal Institute of Technology, Swiss
9. Mr. T.N.C. Venkatarangan, CEO, Viswak, Chennai
10. Mr. Muthu Nedumaran, CEO Murasu Systems, Malaysia
11. Dr. Rama. Krishnan, Member GC, INFITT India
12. Dr. Va.Mu.Se. Andavar, Professor of Tamil, India
13. Mr. P. Chellappan, Palaniappa Brothers, Chennai
14. Mr. Thavaruban, Member GC, INFITT, SriLanka
15. Mr. BalaSundararaman, Member GC, INFITT India
16. Mr. RaviShankar A, Member GC, India
17. Dr. A. MuthuKumar, Professor Computer Science, India

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18. Mrs. Malar Saba , Teacher, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
19. Mr. Naga. Elangovan, Middle East
20. Dr. MaraiMalai Ilakkuvanar, Retd. Professor Tamil, India
21. Mr. Se. Thiruvalluvar, Editor Tamil Pani,India
22. Dr. Na. Mathiyalagan, Professor of Mass Communication, PSG College, India
23. Dr. R. Prabhakaran, Ex-Vice-Chair TNF, Director FETNA,USA
24. Dr. Sornam Sankarapandi, Director FETNA, USA
25. Dr. Arasu Chelliah, Director FETNA,USA
26. Mr. Peri.Chandrasekaran , Georgia, USA
27. Dr. Ilangovan, Ohio State University, USA.
28. Dr. Nagararajan Vadivel, Retd. Professor, University of Chennai, India
29. Mr. Raja K VairaKannu, Middle East.
30. Dr. Senthilvel SriRajaSingam
31. Mr. S.N. Raja, Middle East
32. Mr. M. Vetrivel, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
33. Mr. Vetri, Adiorot System
34. Mrs. MuthuMari Kaviarasan, CEO SethuInc, USA
35. Mr. Jamil M. Salih , UAE
36. Mr. Bala Jeyaraman, Coimbatore, Freelance Translatore and Editor,India
37. Mr. S.Anuraj, Member GC, Canada
38. Mr. VetriPandian, Member GC INFITT USA

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39. Mr. Kannan, Member GC INFITT USA
40. Mr. PandiMuthu Member GB, INFITT USA
41. Mr. S.N. Raja, Saudi Arabia
42. Mr. Arivan, University of Portsmouth, UK
43. Mr. Raja KV, Saudi Arabia
44. Mr. MugunthRaj Subramaniam , Member EC, INFITT, Australia
45. Mr. ElanTamilan, Member EC , Malaysia
46. Mr. Sivapillai, Glasgow University, UK
47. Mr. Anto Peter Member EC INFITT, India
48. Mr. D. Maniam, Secretary-ED INFITT, Singapore
49. Mr. Va.Mu.Se. Kaviarasan, Chair INFITT, USA

Further list can be provided if a request is made.....

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Annexure Letter I
Professor George Hart,
Professor Emeritus of Tamil
Professor of the Graduate School
Chair in Tamil Studies

Dear Rick,

I have taught Tamil almost 40 years and was the Professor of Tamil at UC Berkeley until I retired a year ago. I still hold the Tamil Chair at Berkeley and am a professor of the graduate school. I am writing regarding the bizarre request of Mr. Sriramana Sharma to include many non-Tamil characters in Tamil unicode. To me, this makes no sense whatsoever. Tamil has had the same basic system of representing sounds for over 2000 years. Even today, the Tamil alphabet (or more properly syllabary) follows in every detail the Tolkappiyam, which was written as early as the first century of the common era. The present unicode system uses that 2000-year-old system and it perfectly serves the needs of Tamil people.

It is true that there are many Sanskrit sounds that cannot be written in Tamil, just as there are Tamil sounds that cannot be written in Devanagari. It would be strange indeed if the Unicode Consortium decided to add short e and o and, alveolar r and n, and the fricative l to Devanagari. The present proposal to change Tamil unicode is equally wrong-headed.

I can see that Mr. Sharma wishes to write some Sanskrit sounds in Tamil. If that is the case, he can easily use the Unicode for grantha, which apparently will soon be approved. It is true that in the first half of the 20th century, there were some books published by the Srivaisnava community that mixed Tamil and Grantha and that, as he remarks, these are nowadays said to be in Manipravala. But to my knowledge, it has been 70 or 80 years since any such book has been published. The Srivaisnavas themselves moved to Devanagari for Sanskrit and very few even know the grantha signs. Earlier, they also used the Telugu alphabet for their Tamil works in order to accommodate the Sanskrit sounds -- Telugu people are quite surprised when they see Tamil sounds (and letters) used together with the Telugu alphabet. If Mr. Sharma is to be accommodated for Tamil, he would surely wish to see the Tamil sounds not at present represented in Telugu added to that language.

I write all of this to suggest the utter folly of Mr. Sharma's suggestion. I strongly advise against implementing it.

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Sincerely,

George Hart

Professor Emeritus of Tamil

Professor of the Graduate School

Chair in Tamil Studies

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Annexure Letter II

Dr. Naga Ganesan, Chair WG02 INFITT USA.

Proposal to Encode Grantha Extended Block:

Comment on L2/10-256R, L2/10-425

INFITT (<http://www.infitt.org>)

About INFITT:

INFITT is a global non-profit non-govt. organization devoted to promoting Tamil computing. INFITT objective is to "Help develop Tamil IT and associated standards", "Provide tech. forums and annual meets/ conferences for Tamil IT developer community", "Serve as a key link between regional interest groups, universities, national governmental agencies", "Provide technical expertise support to MNCs and standardization agencies" & "Educate/increase awareness of public to advances, attract younger talents by organizing Tamil IT Workshops" Over the years, INFITT has successfully conducted several International Conferences on Tamil computing, and works towards improving Unicode and other standards for Tamil by interactions with various Government bodies, Universities and Unicode Consortium.

1.0 Tamil and Sanskrit – Two Classical Languages of India:

Tamil and Sanskrit are the two well-known Classical languages of India, each heading a linguistic family. Epigraphists, Archaeologists and Indologists like Asko Parpola, Iravatham Mahadevan claim that the Dravidian language was spoken by the Harappan elites in the Indus valley during the Bronze age before the Aryan

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language speakers made ingressions into Northwest India. It is important not to let Sanskrit (Grantha) script dominate the linguistically independent nature of Tamil script so that Tamil etyma (not the Sanskrit roots) are used for expressing Science in the future. A main difference between Tamil and Sanskrit script letters is that Tamil letters have context-sensitive pronunciations depending on where the letters are placed, where as Sanskrit (Grantha) letters lack this ability. By adding the 26 Grantha letters of **L2/10-256R** (written by S. Sharma) as TAMIL letters, Tamil script and grammar will lose the crucial pronunciation property, and will be a major impediment for the natural Tamil language development.

The letters of the Tamil script, with context-sensitive pronunciation rules, forms the

basis of Dravidian Etymological Dictionary (Oxford University Press) for some 23 Dravidian languages and the addition of 26 Grantha letters of L2/10-256R will severely impair the functioning of Tamil in the world. By function and appearance, the letters of L2/10-256R belong to Grantha script.

That is the reason why Tamil nighandus, grammars, lexicons and dictionaries avoid these Grantha letters and glyphs totally. Tamil linguists, Tamil Nadu government and universities have fixed the total number of Tamil letters and they are all already in Tamil block in Unicode. These core Grantha letters in L2/10-256R should be handled directly from Grantha block or by an Grantha Extended block with core glyph shape and Unicode character names will have to be Grantha itself for any experimental work. These Grantha letters are not Tamil letters, just like English letters cannot be named as Tamil letters.

In the words of A. K. Ramanujan, University of Chicago, the classical nature of Tamil is described thus: "Tamil is one of the two classical languages of India, is the only languages of contemporary India which is recognizably continuous with a classical past." (The Interior Landscape, 1968, pg. 97).

<http://tamil.berkeley.edu/tamil%20chair/tamilclassicallanguage/tamilclassicallgeltr.html>

Prof. George L. Hart, University of California, Berkeley has explained the uniqueness

of Tamil literature different from that of Sanskrit.

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“First, Tamil is of considerable antiquity. It predates the literatures of other modern Indian languages by more than a thousand years. Its oldest work, the *Tolkappiyam*, contains parts that, judging from the earliest Tamil inscriptions, date back to about 200 BCE. The greatest works of ancient Tamil, the Sangam anthologies and the *Pattuppattu*, date to the first two centuries of the current era. They are the first great secular body of poetry written in India, predating Kalidasa's works by two hundred years.

Second, Tamil constitutes the only literary tradition indigenous to India that is not derived from Sanskrit. Indeed, its literature arose before the influence of Sanskrit in the South became strong and so is qualitatively different from anything we have in Sanskrit or other Indian languages. It has its own poetic theory, its own grammatical tradition, its own esthetics, and, above all, a large body of literature that is quite unique. It shows a sort of Indian sensibility that is quite different from anything in Sanskrit or other Indian languages, and it contains its own extremely rich and vast intellectual tradition.

Third, the quality of classical Tamil literature is such that it is fit to stand beside the great literatures of Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Chinese, Persian and Arabic. The subtlety and profundity of its works, their varied scope (Tamil is the only premodern Indian literature to treat the subaltern extensively), and their universality qualify Tamil to stand as one of the great classical traditions and literatures of the world. Everyone knows the *Tirukkural*, one of the world's greatest works on ethics; but this is merely one of a myriad of major and extremely varied works that comprise the Tamil classical tradition. There is not a facet of human existence that is not explored and illuminated by this great literature.”

2.0 Tamil Letters different from Sanskrit

Tamil script derives from the Tamil grammar – the two main texts are (a) the 2000-years old *Tolkappiyam* and then (b) *Nannuul ilakkaNam*. Both prescriptive grammars of Tamil define the need to avoid the Sanskrit (Grantha) letters to maintain the word formations and language sustainability for Tamil and Dravidian heritage. The relevant *cuuttiram*-s are many, an important one being:

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“வடசொல் கிளவி வடஎழுத்து ஒரீஇ

எழுத்தொடு புணர்ந்த சொல்லா கும்மே”

These grammatical rules govern the creation of Tamil script words from non-Tamil words whether they are from English, Arabic, Sanskrit or Japanese. Tamils worldwide do not recognize /read the 26 letters listed in the L2/10-256R Proposal by Shriramana Sharma as Tamil letters at all. INFITT specialists which include Tamil linguists from various countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore where Tamil is an Official language are concerned about new characters being named as “TAMIL” in Unicode character set. It will only be proper to call them as Grantha Indic or Grantha Linear or Grantha Augmented letters, if a separate encoding is needed.

The Tamil Block in Unicode (<http://www.unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0B80.pdf>) contains the Complete set of Tamil letters, and Sequences of Tamil letters using numbered superscripts with 2,3 and 4 other Indian language words are adequately represented as recorded in The Unicode Standard for a decade. Sanskrit being the lead language of Indo-Aryan languages family and Tamil being the lead language of Dravidian languages family, it is very important to name the core letters of each group with appropriate script names. Any Tamil easily recognizes the Tamil letters with numbered superscripts in Sequences while most even have not seen the Grantha letters mentioned in L2/10-256R.

Examples of non-Tamil texts represented in Tamil script with Superscripts:

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ராகம் : பந்துவராளி தாளம் அட

ஹிந்தி³ல்ல ஸ்வாமி முந்தி³ல்லா | கோ |
-விந்த³ நீனல்லதெ³ இஹபரவில்ல

|| ப ||

பரர பே³டி³ப்பந்தெ க³தியாயிதல்ல |
நரர துதிஸி நாலிகெ³ ப³ரடா³யிதல்ல ||
பரவில்ல இஹவில்ல நரஜன்ம ஸ்தி²ரவல்ல |
நரகெ³ பாமரகெ³ பாபத³ பஞ்ஜரகெ³

|| 1 ||

தனுவு தன்னத³ல்ல தன்னவர் தனகி³ல்ல |
அனுகூலவிருவாக³ ஸதி ஸுதரெல்ல ||
அனுவு தப்பி மன தல்லணிஸுவாக³ |
வனஜநாப³ நீனல்லதெ³ யாரில்ல

|| 2 ||

மாதா பித்ரு ப³ந்து⁴க³ளு முந்தாகி³ ஸம் |
-ப்ரீதியொளிரலு மன்னிபரை எல்ல ||
காதரனாக்³யம கொண்டொ³ய்யுவாக³ ஸங்-
கா³த இன்யாரய்ய புரந்த³ர விட்டல

|| 3 ||

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ராகம் : ரேகுப்தி தாளம் : ஜம்பெ

சீ ஹளி தூ² கோ²டி³ பாபி மனவெ || ப ||

குஹக பு³த்தி⁴க³ளன்னு பி³டு³ கண்ட³ய மனவெ || அ ||

புண்ணத³ பீ³ஸணிக³யந்தெ ஹெண்ணு திருகோ³து³ கண்டு³ ||
கண்ணு ஸன்னெய மாடி³ கைஹொன்னு தோரி ||
ஸண்ணத³ஹரளின மேலெ தண்ணீரு ஹோயித³ந்தெ |
கண்ணிலி கெண்ட³வா செலிகொம்பெ³ மனவெ || 1 ||

வாஸு³தே³வன பூஜெ ஒம்மெ மாடெ³ந்த³ரெ |
பே³ஸத்து கொண்டு³ தலெ சட்டிக்கெ குளிதெ ||
ஆ ஸமயத³ல்லொப்³ப³ காஸு கொடு³வென்னெலு |
தா³ஸியா மக³னந்தெ பெ³ன்னட்டி ஹோவெ மனவெ || 2 ||

பக³டெ³ சது³ரங்க³ கவடெ³யனாட³ கரெத³ரெ |
நிகு³ரிது³வு கர்ணக³ளு மச்செயந்தெ ||
ஜக³தீ³ஸனா தி³னதி³ ஜாக³ரகெ கரெத³ரெ |
முகி³ல்ஹரிது³ பி³த்த³ந்தெ த⁴ரெகி³ளிவெ மனவெ || 3 ||

pages 241 & 405, Sri Purandaradasara sangiirthanegaLu (1097 songs),

Sri. Ramavittala Trust, T. Nagar, Chennai, 2000.

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During the last several years, Unicode Technical Committee has been provided with proposals from INFITT to add Tamil letters in the Tamil Block, and we do not find the

letters and glyphs of proper Grantha Block letters as Tamil or Extended Tamil letters.

This can be seen in the Tamil dictionaries and thesauruses. The venerable Madras Tamil Lexicon (1930s, seven volumes) do NOT list the Sharma proposal (L2/10-256R) letters as Tamil letters at all.

3.0 Proposal to Encode Grantha Extended Block

INFITT experts and computer implementers have gone through the proposal L2.10-256R carefully and our recommendation is to encode the 26 letters in pages 2-3 as Grantha Indic or Grantha Augmented or Grantha Linear letters, as these are pure Grantha (but not Tamil) letters used to write Sanskrit and other Indo-Aryan languages and other non-Tamil languages only. THESE ARE NOT USED TO WRITE TAMIL SENTENCES.

For the 26 letters in Sharma's proposal, the Grantha block itself will be adequate in a toned-down font when the conjuncts are to be avoided, or they can be placed in Grantha Extended block with the proper Grantha glyphs and Grantha character names.

For very small number of experimenters, Grantha letters either in the Grantha block or in Grantha Extended block can be allowed with Grantha vowel signs and also vowel signs from other Indian scripts, say those of Telugu, or Tamil or Oriya. UTC can consider allowing other Indian script vowel signs in addition to Grantha vowel signs in some experimental works by few such as Sharma's.

If the 26 letters in L2/10-256R proposal are to be encoded again apart from their presence

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Grantha block, INFITT strongly recommends the use of Character names as

Grantha Indic or Linear Grantha letters in Unicode encoding. And the proper Glyph shapes from Grantha script need to be used in the Grantha Extended block.

Thus those characters that need to be encoded for Extended Grantha block

(with Grantha glyphs in the Unicode Code chart) are:

- 1) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER VOCALIC R
- 2) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER VOCALIC RR
- 3) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER VOCALIC L
- 4) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER VOCALIC LL
- 5) GRANTHA INDIC VOWEL SIGN VOCALIC R
- 6) GRANTHA INDIC VOWEL SIGN VOCALIC RR
- 7) GRANTHA INDIC VOWEL SIGN VOCALIC L
- 8) GRANTHA INDIC VOWEL SIGN VOCALIC LL
- 9) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER KHA
- 10) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER GA
- 11) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER GH A
- 12) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER CHA
- 13) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER JHA

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- 14) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER TTHA
- 15) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER DDA
- 16) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER DDHA
- 17) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER THA
- 18) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER DA
- 19) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER DHA
- 20) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER PHA
- 21) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER BA
- 22) GRANTHA INDIC LETTER BHA
- 23) GRANTHA INDIC SIGN ANUNASIKA
- 24) GRANTHA INDIC SIGN SPACING ANUSVARA
- 25) GRANTHA INDIC SIGN VISARGA
- 26) GRANTHA INDIC SIGN AVAGRAHA

4.0 Summary

If UTC decides that separate encoding for these letters in L2/10-256R are really needed, the Tamil community of scholars , linguists and Indic language computing experts at INFITT strongly recommends that the Grantha glyph shapes and Grantha Indic character names be employed in a separate block that can be called as Grantha Indic / Augmented block.

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Annexure Letter II

BalaSundaraman, GC Member Infitt

1. Tamil grammatical tradition (reflected in the ancient Tolkāppiyam, Nannūl, etc., and the modern grammar works by learned scholars like Mu.Varadarajan, Kamil Zvelebil, Ulrike Niklas) doesn't refer to any such "letters" that have been proposed. Ulrike Niklas, for instance, delves into what is a Tamil ezuttu in prose as well as prosody in much detail in her "Introduction to Tamil Prosody" (cf. http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/befeo_0336-1519_1988_num_77_1_1744)
2. There is no significant precedent for Sanskrit and Saurashtra languages to having used the proposed letters. They have comfortably, for centuries used, either Grantha or Tamil letters with numerals. I have read the Bhagavad Gita with Tamil gloss by Swami Chidbhavananda (who incidentally ran the school I studied in). The versions either used Devanagari for Sanskrit or Tamil with numerals. Similarly, none of my Saurashtra-speaking friends from Madurai have required such a special scheme. Why fix when something is not broken?
3. Saurashtra people are trying to create a writing system on their own. (cf. <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/sourashtra.htm>)
4. In L2/10-379, the authors bring in Marathi and Kannada in an attempt to bolster their claim. Ancient languages have naturally had contact between them and there would be instances where they were written in each other's scripts. That doesn't mean the scripts have to be expanded. There might have been instances when Tamil text was written in Greek or some other language as well. That wouldn't call for expanding the Greek alphabet to represent Tamil characters.
5. By giving undue importance to the peripheral usage of Tamil script, the centuries-old phonological grammar for intervocalical k sounds etc., are getting adversely affected due to hypercorrection. My understanding regarding this comes mainly from my research leading to published papers in the field of

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Computational Linguistics, formal grammars for Prosody and Elutthilakkanam, etc., Our parser for Tamil metrical text is well received by scholars including Jean-Luc Chevillard and we are opening that functionality through <http://www.visaineri.net/> Our research paper on this subject has been accepted for the upcoming Winter International Conference on Linguistics in Seoul. Hailing from Madurai, I have a significant exposure and interest in the Saurashtra Language. I even helped out in incubating the Saurashtra Language edition of Wikipedia (cf. <http://incubator.wikimedia.org/wiki/Wp/saz>).

Annexure Letter III

Prof. Dr. M. Ponnavaikko, Former VC, BharathiDasan University

As you are kindly aware, I was the Director, Tamil Virtual University, represented Tamil Nadu Government in the Unicode consortium and represented the Tamil Nadu Government in the Unicode Technical committee meeting held in May 2007 at California. I was also the Vice-Chancellor, Bharathidasan University during July, 2007 and July 2010.

I have gone through the proposal to encode Characters for Extended Tamil (L2/10-256R) authored by Mr. Shriramana Sharma that proposes to add some new characters to an "Extended Tamil Block" in SMP. The proposed characters don't have any relevance to Tamil Script block. They are purely Grantha Indic characters used to write other Indo-Aryan / Dravidian Languages. I am a Tamil poet myself and a Tamil Language expert. I strongly object to the proposal L2/10-256R since it is grossly misleading. For the following reasons these characters should not be called as "Extended Tamil Block":

1. Tamil is a natural stand-alone language and it does not require

these grantha characters for its functional use.

2. To represent phonemes like, ka, kka, ga, ha, Tamil language does not require separate characters as in Sanskrit. These phonemes are built into the Tamil language structure. The character 'ka' when it

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occurs at the beginning of any word it gains the normal sound as 'ka'. ட and ற will not occur as the first letter of any Tamil word. In a word when 'ka' follows the 'consonant ka - க்' it gains the sound as 'kka - க்க'. In Tamil there are family characters defined for the characters ka - க, cha - ச, ta - ட, tha - த, pa - ப, Ra - ற. The family characters for these characters are gna - ங, jna - ஞ, Na - ண, na - ந, ma - ம, na - ன respectively. In a word when ka - க follows the consonant gna - ங, it gains the sound as ga, as in the word 'தங்கம்'. similarly, ஞ + ச gains the sound ஜ as in 'மஞ்சள்', and so on. When these characters occur in the middle of a word they gain soft sounds like, ha - ஹ as in காகம், sa - ஸ as in பாசம், da - ட as in படம், dha - த as in பதம், ba - ப as in கபடம், rha - ற as in முறம். Thus we don't need superscripts or subscripts to the Tamil characters to render the sound of grantha characters in Tamil. Therefore adding the grantha characters as recommended by Mr. Sharma is unwarranted.

3. These characters will never be used in Tamil for any purpose.
4. This will unnecessarily mislead the learners of Tamil language.
5. These characters, if required for the grantha based Indic language they may be placed in a separate 'Grantha Indic Character Block'.

For the above reasons I strongly object to add these characters as 'Extended Tamil Block' in Unicode.

Any change or modification or inclusion in the character set of any language in the Unicode standards, should be based on the proposal submitted by or request made by the owners of the language concerned.

As for as this proposal is concerned Mr. Sharma is not a Tamil and he has no authority to suggest to add characters into the Unicode Tamil Block. Tamil Nadu Government, and the other countries like Singapore,

SriLanka and Malaysia are the owners of the language Tamil. As you know INFITT is working on the encoding issues of Tamil on behalf of the Tamils in world. They have not proposed this change. In such a

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situation, I consider that this is the responsibility of the Unicode consortium to check up with the Government of Tamil Nadu and INFITT, before taking a decision in the matter.

As an authorized representative of the Tamil Nadu Government in the Subcommittee formulated by the Unicode Consortium to Examine the encoding of Tamil and other scripts of India, I would like to inform you that the Government of Tamil Nadu strongly objects to the implementation of the proposal to encode Characters for Extended Tamil (L2/10-256R) authored by Mr. Shriramana Sharma that proposes to add some new

characters to an "Extended Tamil Block" in SMP.

I , therefore, request your good self to use your good office to stop this unwanted inclusion into the Unicode Tamil encoding.

With kind regards,

M.Ponnaivaikko.

Former Vice-Chancellor, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli,

Director (at the level of Vice-Chancellor), Tamil Virtual University),

Representative of the Tamil Nadu Government in the Subcommittee formulated by the Unicode Consortium to Examine the encoding of Tamil and other scripts of India.

Annexure Letter IV

Mr. N. Elangovan, Middle East

I refer to the "Proposal to encode characters for Extended Tamil" (L2/10-256R)

proposed by Mr.Shriramana Sharma, Dated 10th July 2010. Below are my feedback on it.

1) Section 10 - Part C - Item 3:

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The proposer mentions that Lakhs of Tamilians residing in Tamilnadu, India and elsewhere form the user community for this proposal. It should be noted that the sanskrit speaking' population is just 14,135 all over India and elsewhere, according to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanskrit> If the population all over India is 14,135, it fractions to a few hundreds only who are in Tamil neighbourhood. The proposal is giving a very false information to the consortium.

2) Section 10 - Part C - Item 2a:

The user community in need is just few hundreds. The reference has been made only to two lecturers from two tiny institutions of Tamil Nadu.If this change is a need for the user community all over the world as claimed by Mr.Sharma, then references should have been made to user communities from all over India and the world. To know Tamils spread in the world pl click http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamil_population_by_nation

Hence, the proposal is projecting the user community in disproportion.

3) Impact Analysis:

Both the proposal and the unicode consortium's proposal summary form fail to capture the details of the impact this extension will make on the existing and established Tamil character set, usage and demographics.

Unicode has been adopted as the standard for Tamil by the State Government of Tamil Nadu. Puducherry is another state where tamils live and use Unicode. These states have several universities, few hundred colleges and many thousands of Schools that teach and/or use Tamil every day. Impact on demographics and technology use should be analysed and referred to top forums like Central Institue of Classical Tamil (<http://ta.cict.in/node/49>). As this is an extension proposal, it is essential that the proposal should get a no objection from the authentic government bodies like Central Institute of Classical Tamil, India, Tamil University,

Thanjavur, India etc. to ensure that this changes do not affect the language of the large mass.

Best Regards

Naaga.Elangovan

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Annexure Letter V

Mr. VetriVel, Saudi Arabia

I refer to the "Proposal to encode characters for Extended Tamil" (L2/10-256R) roposed by Mr.Shriramana Sharma, Dated 10th July 2010. Below are my feedback on it.

Unicode has been adopted as the standard for Tamil by the State Government of Tamil Nadu.

Puducherry is another state where tamils live and use Unicode. These states have several universities, few hundred colleges and many thousands of Schools that teach and/or use Tamil every day.

The proposal given by the author enables one to one transliteration of Sanskrit texts from Devanagari in to Tamil like appearance. In that process of achieving what he wants, he essentially destroys what has been traditionally defined as Tamil Script. Tamil Script's essential raison-de-etere was to represent Tamil. Including these characters roposed by the author transforms the character of the script lock, stock and barrel The entire design principle behind the Tamil script would be nailed to a coffin. That would be the starting of the end of Tamil Script as known for 2600 years.

Impact on demographics and technology use should be analysed and referred to top forums like Central Institue of Classical Tamil (<http://ta.cict.in/node/49>). As this is an extension proposal, it is essential that the proposal should get a no objection from the authentic government bodies like Central Institute of Classical Tamil, India, Tamil University, Thanjavur, India etc. to ensure that this changes do not affect the language of the large mass.

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I record my strong objections to the proposal.

Regards,

Vetrivel

President

Indian Tamil Fine Arts Association

Riyadh.

itfaa@yahoogroups.com

Annexure Letter VI

Raja KV , Saudi Arabia

Reference: "Proposal to encode characters for Extended Tamil" (L2/10-256R) authored by Mr.Shriramana Sharma, Dated 10/July/2010.

This proposal is more of a political one rather than a true need. There are 32 languages in India and Tamil nadu spoken by less than 15000 people all over India. Sanskrit has speakers or users to about 10000 to 15000 all over India. In Tamil nadu there are many different languages support the religious needs of different religions. If every such tiny user community and large communities wanted to Extend Tamil character like this there wont be Tamil but mess.

Sanskrit and Tamil belong to two very different language families. Their design principles vary completely. Any script is made up of lines, squares and curves. Any square and curve will resemble another square and curve. Therefore, it cannot be considered as similarities to extend tamil code set. Therefore calling the Tamil as Extended Tamil is simply rude. We request Unicode consortium not to mix up the languages and cause set back to the demographics and the use of tamil technology.

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Attaching a different script-family's characters to Tamil characters is not Extending. It is Intruding. Intruded Tamil cannot become Extended Tamil. We register our deep concerns on this proposal and request the consortium to reject it.

Regards,

Raja K V, Secretary,

Valaikuda Senthamizh Sangam,

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Annexure Letter VII

Dr. Irama Ki., INFITT GC Member

The proposal as written by Shriramana Sharma is very clever. In regard to the information on the user community for the proposed characters (for example: size, demographics, information technology use, or publishing use), he falsely claims that tamilians in their lakhs residing in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere who read Sanskrit (religious) texts will benefit from his proposal, while the real number might not even cross 5000; Perhaps he wants to fool UTC. Apparantly UTC has also fallen for his trick and has suggested to him to use the description "Tamil Character so and so" rather than his own proposition of "Extended Tamil Character so and so". Perhaps they are colluding already in their onslaught.

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The persons who participated along with Shriramana Sharma in this effort are mentioned as Dr Mani Dravid, lecturer at Madras Sanskrit College, Chennai, Dr Venugopala Sharma, lecturer at Shri Jayendra Saraswathi Ayurveda College, Nazarathpet, Kanchipuram and Mr Vinodh Rajan, Chennai. (Most probably it is Mr.Vinodh Rajan who writes in MinTamil maillist as Vinodh, who had earlier created so much "kalaham" at Tamil Wikipedia. Our Dr. Selvakumar is aware of his machinations.

The author has not contacted any members of the user community (for example: National Body, user groups of the script or characters, other experts, etc.) except himself and the three mentioned above. He attempts to create a new interpretation of Tamil Script entirely through arbitrary efforts in the garb of using it to represent Sanskrit.

The author has proposed two different representations of the new characters to be added, one named as "extented - liberal" and other named as "extended - conservative". His final recommendation is the second one. (These character shapes are similar to Tamil consonants with pre-attached superscripts. He doesn't want these superscripts attached as being typed.) The liberal version of the so-called Extended Tamil ("ET-L") imports glyphs from Grantha for all the new characters that need to be encoded for Extended Tamil.

He himself alludes to the possible political backlash that might raise against his proposal. In reality, this is not just innocous, but a politically loaded bombshell.

[Quote:

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I have already discussed in L2/10-085 whether to encode these characters in the Tamil block or elsewhere. Since the positions in the Tamil block corresponding to the 'missing' characters from other blocks are yet empty, it would be very easy to simply fill in those codepoints. However, I strongly suspect that it would not be welcomed by some parties that are already asking for the removal of Grantha-style characters from the Tamil block (which is of course absurd). Therefore, to avoid such a problem, these characters may be encoded in a separate "Tamil Extended" block (just like "Devanagari Extended"), another name for the Tamil Supplementary block I requested in L2/09-317. They may be placed sequentially.

Unquote]

Before we examine this proposal, let us understand our own objective as to why we want to safeguard our language and also the script.

No script is developed/employed in isolation. It is created/borrowed to represent a language. Over a time a language and a script get fused into one entity. We see a language represented through a script. In the development of a nation, when a script is changed it brings in cultural transformation and discontinuity. It is through language that a nation of people address themselves. If you pull out a language the nation collapses. In turn if the script is taken out, the written documents of the language are lost for the future generation. Every such discontinuity induces the nation to loose its identity and merge with the larger entity over and above the nation. We don't want that to happen. We want to protect the Tamil nation. Hence we have to fight against this intrusion in the Tamil Script..

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Historically it is surmised that Tamils developed their script on their own. Whether they might have borrowed a few features from outside - this aspect has not been clearly settled yet. However, the script, also called as Thamizi in historical documents, has been known to exist at least from 4th/5th century BCE. The shape of its letters have evolved over time and a few shapes have also been developed a new. I do not want to go into its development. That is a long story.

But there are few characteristic features that differentiates the thamizi from others, especially the north Indian ones. Briefly they can be described as follows:

1T. Thamizi is alpha-syllabary. [It contain both alphabet (vowels and pure consonants) and syllabaries (vowelized consonants)]

2T. The language grammer emphasizes the primary role of vowels and consonants along with Aytham. They have been specifically called primary letters. Yet the script, due to the usage of various writing techniques and materials/tools over time had continued to opt for the use of syllabary and did not do away with them like the western scripts of Greek and Romans.

3T. The sound of a Thamizi letter is a function of the shape of the letter and also the nearby environment like word intial, word middle and also the presence of nasals, vowels prior to existence of a consonant. This functionality is unique to the language and the script. Here many consonantal sounds (some times as much as three) are represented by just one letter. The relation used is mathematically known as many-to-one (sound-to-shape) relation.

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4T. Thamizi does not use consonantal conjuncts. Use of pulli (called as viraama by the north Indian scholars) to denote pure consonant is specific to Thamizi.

Now the north Indian scripts like Nagari, Siddam, Sharada etc are based on a different design principle.

1N. They are pseudo-alpha-syllabary. They contain alphabets (vowels and consonants with inherent "a") and syllabaries (sign modification of consonants with inherent 'a')

2N. The language derives pure consonants as derived by 'killing' the consonant with inherent 'a'. Pure consonants are not primary entities in these languages/scripts. In modern time, especially with UTC practice, these scripts are called abugida types.

3N. The sound of a Nagari, or a Siddam or a Sharada letter depends purely on the shape of the letter. It does not have any restriction due to its environment. Here there is a one-to one relation between the shape and the sound it is supposed to represent. This point number no.3 is the major difference between the model used in north India and the South India. Later when other south Indian scripts like Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam came up into being, they used the north Indian model. Today Tamil is the only one in the south using the old historical Pulli based model.

4N. All north Indian scripts and a few Dravidian scripts proliferate with consonantal conjuncts. They don;t use pulli at al.

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Prakrit/Sanskrit might have come into contact with Tamil land somewhere around 6th century BCE (or perhaps earlier). Sanskrit was not put into written form prior to 150 CE. Earlier only Prakrit was put into the written form somewhere around 5th Century BCE, most probably in Srilanka. Earliest Prakrit inscriptions (in Brahmi) have been discovered only in Srilanka and not in North India. [This fact changes the whole presumption of the creation of Brahmi script.] Present inscriptional evidence points to simultaneous occurrence of tamizi and Brahmi in the south of the sub-continent. Most probably writing rose in the south of the Indian sub-continent and not in the Asokan north.

As Sanskrit gradually came to be more used in the Ujjaini Gupta court in 3rd/4th century CE, its literature/documents spread to the various parts of India. This practice also got a boost in the south, when Pallava kingdom got established at Kanchipuram. A new script to write Sanskrit based on the then existing Tamil script was invented and named as Grantha. This was an extended Tamil Script, using Tamil letters wherever feasible but following the northern design principle. It may clearly be observed that the script was never called as Tamil; but a new name was given to differentiate its use to represent a different language.

Grantha was developed out of the Tamil Script to support the writing of Sanskrit. Tamil script has sufficient character repertoire to represent the Tamil language. To say that it has insufficient character repertoire to represent Sanskrit language is a different thing. When Phoenician characters were borrowed to represent Greek that was inadequate too. More characters were added; some were dropped But the new script was called Greek and not as 'extended Phoenician'. Same thing happened when Greek letters were borrowed into Etruscan. Further

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changes were introduced and the new script was called as 'Etruscan' and not as 'extended Greek'. Similarly Etruscan morphed into Roman. Every time a new name was given. That was the only proper thing to do.

Now this gentleman borrows the modern Tamil Script and adds a few characters to enable to represent Sanskrit (for whatever reason), goes to UTC and ask for encoding allocation. In this process, he mischivously calls it "Extended Tamil". This is atrocious. Properly speaking, he should call it by a new name, whatever that pleases him but not as extended Tamil.

By saying that the grammer of the script (i.e.orthographic rules such as those of forming consonant clusters) is, that of Tamil, he means that consonant clusters are avoided and that rule number 4T above is used. This is prepostrous. All the four rules are to be followed in toto to call any script by the name "Tamil". Rule no. 3T is completely disregarded in his model and thereby it forfeits to be called as Tamil. Mixing the design principles of north Indian languages and Tamil is meaningless. Both are genuine varieties on their own. Mixing them will only produce a sterile offspring.].

The proposal given by the author enables one to one transliteration of Sanskrit texts from Devanagari in to Tamil like appearance. In that process of achieving what he wants, he essentially destroys what has been traditionally defined as Tamil Script. Tamil Script's essential raison-de-etere was to represent Tamil. Including these characters roposed by the author transforms the character of the script lock, stock and barrel The entire design principle behind

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the Tamil script would be nailed to a coffin. That would be the starting of the end of Tamil Script as known for 2600 years.

He gives a major reason for his proposal as:

It does not consider the problem of rendering pointed out by me in page 11 of my document L2/10-085 (Feedback to Dr Anderson's Grantha Summary). A good look at the samples for ET-C provided hereinbefore will show that the problem is genuine and cannot be resolved by existing means. (Note that in those samples it is not only the superscript digits 2, 3 and 4 but also the apostrophe which gets placed between consonants and their vowel signs.)

This has to be contested technically. How is that various documents are printed with superscripted consonants right now in Tamilnadu to represent Sanskrit content? Are they not able to do it without any separate unicode encoding? What is the need for this proposal, when the user community is hardly below 5000? That too, when it can be managed with the existing technology? If more is required, encoding of Grantha script would be sufficient to meet the requirement.

His statement

"To maintain the recommendation, and yet address the problem of point 4 above, it may be suggested that after the encoding of the Grantha script, codepoints from the Grantha block may be used to achieve Grantha-style glyphs, but such a suggestion should be pronounced dead on

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arrival because it goes against the essence of Unicode. In Unicode one does not use different characters to handle glyphic variants but different fonts"

also needs to be contested technically.

The nature of the present proposal is more political than technical and it needs to be dealt in that plane. It is better we bring it to the knowledge of various pressure groups and take our opposition to as many groups as possible. Mani may release the bar on passage of information to other groups.

With regards,

iraama.ki.

Annexure Letter VIII

Professor C.R. SelvaKumar, University of Waterloo.

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To: Unicode Technical Committee (UTC) through INFITT and personally

From: C.R. (Selva) Selvakumar, Waterloo, Ontario Canada

[Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario,
Canada N2L 3G1; <http://valluvar.uwaterloo.ca/~selvakum/biop.html>]

Date: October 24, 2010

**Re: Proposal submitted to Unicode Technical Committee (UTC) By Shriramana
Sharma, (L2/10-256R) dated July 10, 2010, entitled, Proposal to encode
Extended Tamil**

Summary: There are basic and fundamental flaws in the proposal at so many levels that it needs to be rejected .

[1] It is not the fault of Tamil that Sanskrit does not have a script of its own and to say that Tamil has “insufficient character repertoire to represent the Sanskrit language” is to fundamentally misunderstand and misstate the aim and purpose of Tamil Script. Tamil script serves Tamil language, spoken by some 70 million people and tampering with it would cause great harm and it is not the purpose of Unicode as I understand it.

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[2] One has to genuinely and earnestly ask, in order to write *one language*, not even spoken by a lot of people, how many different scripts are required, and that too explicitly represented in Unicode? Sanskrit had been written using Grantha for centuries. And there is a Grantha block being considered to be assigned in Unicode (Govt of India's efforts in this can be seen in http://www.tdil.mit.gov.in/pdf/Unicode_proposal-Grantha.pdf). Further Sanskrit can be and are written, apart from Grantha, in Devanagari, Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu, Bengali, Oriya, Gujarati, Panjabi and several other scripts. All of these scripts are available in Unicode! And to say that Tamil script had to be somehow “extended” is completely unreasonable.

[3] If one who wants to write Sanskrit using Tamil script (apart from the dozen or so other scripts already available in Unicode), it can still be done so with superscripts as had been done (for example U+00B2, U+00B3, U+2074). Even as stated in L2/10-256R, if the proposer wants to use Grantha for what he calls “missing” sounds, he can do so, if Unicode would permit it, and call it Linear Grantha or Extended Grantha and be kept in a separate block. I would personally advocate deprecating this as it is **redundant in the extreme**. What the proposer says are not Tamil letters at all and they can not be called Tamil letter kha etc., since Tamil letters are indeed well defined in many grammatical works like Tolkaappiyam, Nannul etc. The proposer cites the recent incorrect Unicode designations of “Tamil Letter JA” etc. which are even in elementary text-books properly cited as Grantha or Vada Mozhi Eluttu (see Grade-1 text-book published by Govt. of Tamil Nadu available on-line at

<http://www.textbooksonline.tn.nic.in/Books/01/Std01-Tamil.pdf>, page 62 of the book but in the pdf, 73/97.). Two wrongs don't make it right. There should be **copious documentary evidence** and **support from real authorities and authoritative bodies** to claim the designation **Tamil Letter JA**, **Tamil Letter SHA** etc., but more pertinently now an even more egregious attempt is being made to introduce **26 completely new letters** with the **designation Tamil** in their names in the Tamil block. If such copious documentary evidence and support of authorities, and support of authoritative bodies in the language can not be provided, these new letters can not be introduced with the designation Tamil in their names and further I believe Unicode had to take steps to correct the wrong designation in the existing names (0BB6-0BB9 and 0B9C in <http://unicode.org/charts/PDF/U0B80.pdf>). To illustrate the spurious nature of the proposal, I would ask the proposer to provide evidence for the prevalent use of Tamil Vocalic RR, Tamil Vocalic sign LL etc (the first 8 new characters proposed on page 2 of L2/10-256R).

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[4] Next I wan to point out, very briefly, the inconsistency and double-speak or contradictory statements in the proposal. My intention is not to point out all the inconsistencies and contradictions. Right in the first page, the proposer Sharma says, “It should be noted that this is neither a distinct script from Tamil nor can it be considered a mixture of two scripts (Tamil and Grantha)” where he himself refers to two distinct scripts Tamil and Grantha, but uses a fallacious reasoning of ‘grammar’ of scripts. Just a few lines later he says “Since the apparent “mixture” of the Grantha script”. It is clearly and simply a mixture of two scripts. So obvious and so plain! If he wants to follow Tamil grammar pertaining to Tamil script (letters and their combination), it explicitly prohibits it (non-Tamil characters ‘vaTa ezuttu orii”, “வடசொல் கிளவி வடஎழுத்து ஒரீஇ, எழுத்தொடு புணர்ந்த சொல்லா கும்மே”).

[5] In advancing arguments for Unicode, especially with respect to Tamil, I find that there is a fundamental problem is using citations of spurious and very selective publications or publications of experimental nature. There are a number of instances where people write Tamil letters with roman letters, even for such things as writing one’s names, and hence roman letters can not be called Tamil letter A-B-C-D or call them “extended Tamil”. There are also spurious special publications like Pulavar where they use strange letters to write even Tamil. See below

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பகலணவத் திட்டத்தின் வரிவாக்கே

சத்தணவத் திட்டம் பெரந்தலைவர்
காமராசரின் பகலணவத் திட்டத்தின்
வரிவாக்கம் என்பதே வெளிப்படை.
புரட்சித் தலைவரம் பெரந்தலைவர் காம
ராசரைப் போலவே வறமையைச் சுவைத்
தவர்; ஏழை எளியவரின் நாடித் தட்டிப்பை
நன்குணர்ந்தவர்; அவர்தம் வாழ்வில் வளங்
காணத் தட்டிப்பவர்; தமது நடிப்பால் மட்ட
மன்றித் தம் நடத்தையாலும் நாட்டி மக்க
ளின் உள்ளங்கவர்ந்தவர்; "பொன்மனச்
செம்மல்" "புரட்சித் தலைவர்" என்னும்
புகழ்மொழிக்கு இலக்கானவர்.

(Pulavar, a discontinued periodical, 1982. See <http://www.naalarunool.com/ebooks/15/1472/TM1472.pdf>)

[6] The Tamil script should not be messed up because in Tamil, the phonetic value of several consonants are multi-valued and context-sensitive. In Sanskrit, which doesn't have a script of its own, but which uses other scripts like Grantha and other Indic scripts employ letters which are either single-valued or at the least not context sensitive like in Tamil.

[7] Finally I want to point out that in the proposal (Section 10, pages 12-14), under the section Technical Justification, the proposer had made statements which I seriously question. For question 2, he says:

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” 2a. Has contact been made to members of the user community (for example: National Body, user groups of the script or characters, other experts, etc.)?

Yes. The proposer himself is a member of the user community.

2b. If YES, with whom?

Dr Mani Dravid, lecturer at Madras Sanskrit College, Chennai. Dr Venugopala Sharma, lecturer at Shri

Jayendra Saraswathi Ayurveda College, Nazarathpet, Kanchipuram. Vinodh Rajan, Chennai.”

It is unbelievable that such a small group of people who are not recognized authorities or members of any national bodies pertaining to issues related to Tamil are cited here. Is one or two self-proclaimed “member of user community” decide the fate of a script used by some 70 million people? This sounds very outrageous and unreasonable.

For Question number 3, the proposer makes a statement without any support that “**Tamilians in their lakhs residing in Tamil Nadu and elsewhere who read Sanskrit (religious) texts.**”

I challenge it (that “Tamilians in their lakhs” use this artificially mixed grantha and Tamil)

I also challenge and contest the statements in response to many other questions there especially 5a,5b, 10a. They are not correct or they are misrepresenting the facts.

In summary I ask UTC to reject this proposal.

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Annexure Letter IX

Mr. Manivannan,

Technical Committee for Implementation of 16-bit Encoding for the Government of Tamil Nadu

Rendering non-Tamil sounds with Tamil Script

While Tamil had an ancient script thought to have evolved from Asokan Brahmi family of scripts dated to 3rd Century BCE ¹, scholars assert that the Modern Tamil script was created in the 7th century CE by the Pallava dynasty by simplifying the Grantha script (which itself was derived from Southern Brahmi of the Prakrit Charters of Early Pallavas) and adding to it the Tamil *vaṭṭeḷuttu* letters for sounds not found in Prakrit or Sanskrit² (Mahadevan, 2003, p. 213). This is important to note since from the beginning modern Tamil script has been used to essentially write Tamil letters only, using Grantha script for Sanskrit/Prakrit letters from the 7th century onwards. Tamil script adds a couple of innovations – the basic consonants are indicated with a *puḷḷi* (a ‘dot’ diacritic above consonant letter) and because of that has linearized and completely eliminated conjuncts for its native letters. It is these innovations that are referred to as the “grammar” of Tamil script or the orthographic rules³ by Mr. Sharma in his proposal to the Unicode L2/10-256R.

The modern Tamil script is adequate to represent the core phonology of Tamil⁴. It borrowed five grantha letters to represent consonants and clusters to render loan words from Sanskrit and incidentally are also used to

¹Mahadevan, 2003, p 173

²Mahadevan, 2003, p 213

³Shriramana Sharma, July 20, 2010, L2/10-256R

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render other foreign sounds such as those from English, Arabic, and Persian. Another modern innovation is the use of ancient symbol āytam as a prefix-diacritic to render sounds such as F and X, though there other efforts to systematize use of such diacritics to render non-Tamil sounds as a helpful tool in Tamil dictionaries⁵.

Because the modern Tamil script was designed by the Pallavas to render Tamil sounds only, it does not have characters for voiceless aspirated (such as /kh/), voiced (/g/), and voiced aspirated stops (/gh/). Tamil consonant graphs are phonemic not phonetic⁶ for e.g. க may represent /ka/, /ga/ or /ha/ depending on distribution. And this has kept the Tamil script small (just 247 letters), simple and easy to learn. Over the centuries, those that needed to render Sanskrit letters along with Tamil script have used grantha letters exclusively until relatively modern times when the cost of printing in grantha and the relative ignorance of the grantha characters forced some to add numerical subscripts or superscripts as a diacritic to render the Sanskrit sounds with Tamil letters.

Complaining about the “deficiency” of Tamil script to render Sanskrit and attempt to “reform” Tamil scripts to make it “scientifically and phonetically perfect as Sanskrit” is a cottage industry from pre-modern times to the present among some Sanskrit aficionados. For example, one Mr. Vinodh has the following to say about Tamil script in his website (<http://www.virtualvinodh.com/tamil>) “Tamil has a deficient script compared to other Indic Script. The Tamil Script lacks distinct character for voiced and aspirated consonants. Superscripted Tamil is one of the popular methods to express those Sanskrit-Consonants which are absent in the Tamil Script.” Perhaps the same person or someone else with the same name has this to say at <http://www.tamilbrahmins.com/web-resources/2582-thoorihai-tamil-script-covertor.html>

⁴Steever, Sanford B., 1996, pp 426-30

⁵Chellappan, P., 2000, p 29

⁶Steever, Sanford B., 1996, pp 426-30

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“I have created an Online Tool to enable convert Devanagari/Telugu/Kannada/Malayalam/Latin Tansliteration to Tamil in Lossless Manner (so as to preserve the Sanskrit Pronunciation using superscript numerals) and vice vera. [sic]

If you guys like to Post Shlokas/Mantras in Tamil Script, use this to post them in preserve the original pronunciation. It is highly saddening to see Sanskrit getting degraded while being posted in Tamil Script in a deficient manner”

The popular and highly revered former head of the Kanchi Mutt, His Holiness Sri Sri Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswathi MahaSwamiji had written extensively about the deficiency of the Tamil script not only to render Sanskrit sounds but insufficient to render even Tamil sounds. (See: <http://www.kamakoti.org/hindudharma/part6/chap5.htm>)

Another author, T. S. Narayana Sastry ⁷proposed in 1916 a complete method to convert Tamil as a “Universal Alphabet” with the addition of grantha letters.

Mr. Sharma’s proposal is only the latest manifestation of this attempt to fix the “defective” Tamil script to make it “more scientific and perfect”. Whether this is, as Mr. Sharma claims, is the defense of the rights of the “linguistic minority” or yet another example of a “cultural colonization” or “Sanskritization” is for the anthropologists and historians to analyze, but let us review the technical issues here.

⁷Narayana Sastry, 1916, Appendix II, p27

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Superscripted Tamil

Tamil has a deficient script compared to other Indic Script. The Tamil Script lacks distinct character for voiced and aspirated consonants. Superscripted Tamil is one of the popular methods to express those Sanskrit-Consonants which are absent in the Tamil Script.

See the **Character Matix** to view the complete system. Below is a sample passage in superscripted Tamil

அத² க²ல்வாயுஷ்மாந் ஸுபூ⁴ திர்⁴ப⁴ க³வந்தமேதத³வோசத் - கத²ம்⁰ ப⁴ க³வந்
போ³தி⁴ ஸத்த்வயாநஸம்ப்ரஸ்தி²தேந ஸ்தா²தவ்யம்⁰ கத²ம்⁰ ப்ரதிபத்தவ்யம், கத²ம்⁰ சித்தம்⁰
ப்ரக்³ரவரீதவ்யம் ? ப⁴ க³வாநாஹ-இஹ ஸுபூ⁴ தே போ³தி⁴ ஸத்த்வயாநஸம்ப்ரஸ்தி²தேந
ஏவம்⁰ சித்தமுத்பாத³யிதவ்யம்-ஸர்வே ஸத்த்வா மயா அநுபதி⁴ ஸே²ஷே நிர்வாணதா⁴ தெள
பரிநிர்வாபயிதவ்யா: | ஏவம்⁰ ஸ ஸத்த்வாந் பரிநிர்வாபய ந கஸ²சிதஸத்தவ: பரிநிர்வாபிதோ
ப⁴ வதி | தத்கஸ்ய ஹேதோ: ? ஸசேதஸுபூ⁴ தே போ³தி⁴ ஸத்த்வஸ்ய ஸத்த்வஸம்ஜ்ஞா
ப்ரவர்தேத, ந ஸ போ³தி⁴ ஸத்த்வ இதி வக்தவ்ய: | ஜீவஸம்ஜ்ஞா வா யாவத்புத்³கலஸம்⁰
ஜ்ஞா வா ப்ரவர்தேத, ந ஸ போ³தி⁴ ஸத்த்வ இதி வக்தவ்ய: | தத்கஸ்ய ஹேதோ: ? நாஸ்தி
ஸுபூ⁴ தே ஸ கஸ²சித்³த⁴ ர்மோ யோ போ³தி⁴ ஸத்த்வயாநஸம்ப்ரஸ்தி²தோ நாம ||

Figure 1

That some users have been using Tamil script with its pu||i (dot over consonant) to render pure consonants and the linearization to eliminate conjunct consonants with subscripts or superscripts to render the aspirates and voiced consonants is well known. Even Mr. Vinodh who complained about the deficiency of Tamil script to render voiced and aspirated consonants had provided a tool to render Sanskrit with existing Tamil Unicode as seen in his web page at <http://www.virtualvinodh.com/tamil> (See Figure 1).

As one can see from Figure 1, the superscripts are quite adequate, and they modify the Tamil letters as per the rules of Tamil orthographic rules (i.e.) the diacritics or the superscripts modify the Tamil uyir-meys, the vowel-consonants, after they have been composed as in figure 2:

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க² கா³ கி⁴ கீ² கு³ கூ⁴ கே² கே³ கை⁴ கொ² கோ³ கௌ⁴

க² கா³ கி⁴ கீ² கு³ கூ⁴ கே² கே³ கை⁴ கொ² கோ³ கௌ⁴

Figure 2

Whether or not one encodes pre-composed ligatures of consonants with subscripts, the rendering will be identical to the above except for the last three circumgraphs, the o-kara, O-kaara, au-kaara modifiers (கொ²

கோ³ கௌ⁴).

The question is, should there be a separate encoding just to create pre-composed ligatures with subscripts or other diacritics and whether the position of the subscript or the diacritic makes any difference.

As can be seen from the non-Tamil pages quoted elsewhere in the INFITT document⁸ and from the web page <http://www.virtualvinodh.com/tamil>, superscripts that are suffixes to pre-composed vowel-consonant are equally acceptable alternative to those where the superscripts modify the consonant first and then the vowel modifier is added as circumgraph without loss of meaning or creating confusion. The existing solution to add a superscript is adequate. If however, the Unicode wants to consider allowing the addition of a diacritic or superscript/subscript to the base consonant before its modification by a vowel consonant, it only needs to add a rule that allows such a combination in the case of circumgraphs.

8Sri Purandaradasara sangiirthanegaLu, 2000, p 241, p 405

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It is important to note that addition of diacritics, superscripts, subscripts are not restricted to rendering the existing Tamil script to represent Sanskrit or other modern Indian language sounds not found in Tamil. These can be added to represent, in limited cases such language instruction manuals, dictionaries, etc., where other foreign sounds from Arabic, English or other languages. Such diacritics may be useful to render sounds such as æ f, q, z, etc. Thus, we need to consider addition of diacritics to Tamil characters to render foreign sound as holistic issue to be addressed with some forethought rather than haphazardly adding additional characters to render every language that comes along and claims the use of Tamil script to render it. Addition of such diacritics has been discussed in INFITT Tamil Internet Conferences and is of importance to Muslim Tamils whose have the need to render their Arabic names in a manner similar to those that want to render Sanskrit words using Tamil script.

I have been long involved in working with Unicode and the Unicode Technical Committee in various capacities, as a member of the INFITT Working Group 2 on Unicode, Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee of the Tamil Internet Conference 2002 that hosted the Unicode Consortium at Foster City, as the representative of the Government of Tamil Nadu to the UTC Subcommittee to Examine the encoding of Tamil and other scripts of India in 2007 and 2008, and most recently as a member of the Government of Tamil Nadu committee on Unicode as Tamil Encoding Standard. I would have expected the UTC to use its liaison to INFITT or the Government of India and Government of Tamil Nadu to consult the authorities about extending Tamil Unicode before making a unilateral decision. After all, the Government of Tamil Nadu is seriously working on implementing the current Unicode as the principal standard for eGovernance and all its official purposes. Accepting random proposals from individuals without consulting the language experts or standards bodies tasked with implementing such standards complicates our efforts to work with the Unicode Consortium. I would have expected better cooperation with the Government of Tamil Nadu particularly in light of the long history of its association with the Unicode Consortium.

With that said, I strongly urge the Unicode Technical Committee to summarily reject the proposal L2/10-256 and all its variants, enhancements by Shriramana Sharma.

Thanks,

Best Regards,

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Letters enclosed as annexure Letters I through VIII are views of Individual Authors. It does not necessarily reflect the opinion of INFITT and its constituent bodies or its office-bearers or its members. Should you require more clarification INFITT can try and get more information from the individual letter writers .

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