

## Tamil

The United Nations recommended system was approved in 1972 (II/11) and amended in 1977 (III/12), based on a report prepared by D. N. Sharma. The tables and their corrections were published in volume II of the conference reports<sup>1,2</sup>.

There is no evidence of the use of the system either in India, Sri Lanka or in international cartographic products.

Tamil uses an alphasyllabic script whereby each character represents a syllable rather than one sound. Vowels and diphthongs are marked in two ways: as independent characters (used syllable-initially) and in an abbreviated form, to denote vowels after consonants. The romanization table is unambiguous. The system is on the whole reversible.

### Romanization

#### I. Independent vowel characters

1	அ	a	6	ஊ	ū	11	ஓ	o
2	ஆ	ā	7	எ	ě	12	ஔ	au
3	இ	i	8	ஏ	e			
4	ஈ	ī	9	ஐ	ai			
5	உ	u	10	ஔ	ō			

#### II. Abbreviated vowel characters and other symbols (ஐ stands for any consonant character)

1	ஐ	a	6	ஐ	ū <sup>D</sup>	11	ஐ	o
2	ஐ	ā	7	ஐ	ě	12	ஐ	au
3	ஐ	i <sup>A</sup>	8	ஐ	e	13	ஐ	h <sup>E</sup>
4	ஐ	ī <sup>B</sup>	9	ஐ	ai	14	ஐ	(F)
5	ஐ	u <sup>C</sup>	10	ஐ	ō			

<sup>A</sup> Variation: ஐ ஐ.

<sup>B</sup> Variation: ஐ ஐ.

<sup>C</sup> Variations: கு ku, ங ங, சு chu, ஙு ஙு, டு டு, ணு ணு, து tu, நு nu, பு pu, மு mu, யு yu, ரு ru, லு lu, etc.

<sup>D</sup> Variations: கூ kū, னு nū, சூ chū, னூ nū, டூ tū, ணூ ṇū, தூ tū, நூ nū, பூ pū, மூ mū, etc.

<sup>E</sup> Absent in the original table.

<sup>F</sup> Pronunciation without a vowel: க் k.

### III. Consonant characters

1	க	ka	10	ம	ma	19	ஜ	ja <sup>A</sup>
2	ங	ṅa	11	ய	ya	20	ஸ	sha <sup>A</sup>
3	ச	cha	12	ர	ra	21	ஷ	ṣha
4	ஞ	ṅa	13	ல	la	22	ஸ	sa <sup>AB</sup>
5	ட	ṭa	14	வ	va	23	ஹ	ha <sup>A</sup>
6	ண	ṇa	15	ழ	ḷa	24	க்ஷ	kṣha
7	த	ta	16	ள	ḷa	25	ற்ற	ṛra
8	ந	na	17	ற	ra	26	ன்ற	ṅra
9	ப	pa	18	ன	ṅa			

<sup>A</sup> Characters borrowed from the Grantha script.

<sup>B</sup> Special syllable character: ஸ்ரீ srī.

### *Other systems of romanization*

For differences between the UN system and the **ISO transliteration standard ISO 15919: 2001** see the section on the romanization of Hindi.

### References

1. *Second United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names*. London, 10–31 May 1972. Vol. II. *Technical papers*. United Nations. New York 1974, pp. 153–154.
2. *Third United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names*. Athens, 17 August – 7 September 1977. Vol. II, *Technical papers*, pp. 393 etc.