

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^{1,2}.

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 ^D	11	ஐ	o
2	ஐ	ā	7	ஐ	ě	12	ஐ	au
3	ஐ	i ^A	8	ஐ	e	13	ஐ	h ^E
4	ஐ	ī ^B	9	ஐ	ai	14	ஐ	(^F)
5	ஐ	u ^C	10	ஐ	ō			

^A Variation: ஐ ஐ.

^B Variation: ஐ ஐ.

^C Variations: கு ku, னு ñu, சு chu, னு ñu, டு tu, னு ñu, து tu, நு nu, பு pu, மு mu, யு yu, ரு ru, லு lu, etc.

^D Variations: கூ kū, னு ñū, சூ chū, னு ñū, டூ tū, னு ñū, தூ tū, நூ nū, பூ pū, மூ mū, etc.

^E Absent in the original table.

^F Pronunciation without a vowel: க் k.

III. Consonant characters

1	க	ka	10	ம	ma	19	ஐ	ja ^A
2	ங	ña	11	ய	ya	20	ஸ	sha ^A
3	ச	cha	12	ர	ra	21	ஷ	ṣha
4	ஞ	ña	13	ல	la	22	ஸ	sa ^{AB}
5	ட	ṭa	14	வ	va	23	ஹ	ha ^A
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	ṇra
9	ப	pa	18	ன	ṇa			

^A Characters borrowed from the Grantha script.

^B Special syllable character: ஸ்ரீ sṛī.

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.