

Khubsurat Font

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Abstract

Khubsurat means beautiful in Hindi. Khubsurat font is the process of conceiving the idea of making font inspired from the lotus flower to applying the font. Font was started with the designing of Devanagari letters and then the Roman letters from the very same grid. Many characters of the font could be lost if the size of the same was reduced, hence it could be used as display font.

This was my final year project while completing my Bachelor of Fine Arts in Applied Arts (Elective: Typography) from Rachana Sansad College of Applied Art and Craft, Prabhadevi, Mumbai, India.

Display typeface is one of the major parts of Typography. The reason a font being display font is that, when the font size is reduced, few characteristics of the font can be lost or its aesthetics are lost. Usually such typefaces are used at point size 30 and above unlike regular font which are readable even at smaller font size.

Khubsurat font was made after following the process. It comprises of:

- Selection criteria for the subject.
- Scribbles
- Grid for the font
- Construction of the font on the grid
- Digitalizing
- Naming the font
- Application of the font.

Keywords

Inspiration, display font, grid, font family – Devanagari and Roman.

Introduction

Typography as the word suggest is nothing but study of type and typefaces. It can be also described as a design and use of typefaces as a means of visual communication. Typography is connected to both creation of font and arrangement of it to convey a meaning. Typography is encompassing many fields right from type designer who creates the letterforms to the graphic designer who selects typeface and arranges them. The beauty of typography has no borders. Typography follows four principals

- repetition
- contrast

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-proximity

-alignment

A font is nothing but a way all the letters and characters of the language are designed. When a same design is extended to a font of many languages, a font family is formed.

Type Anatomy (Roman)

Typographic characters have basic component parts. The easiest way to differentiate characters of type design is comparing the structure of the components. Roman script has 26 alphabets having each uppercase and lowercase. Refer fig. 1.

Serif

Tapered corners on the ends of the main stroke.

Sans serif

It is a French word which means 'without serif'. A typeface which has no serifs.

Ascender

The lowercase character stroke which extends above the x-height.

Bar

The horizontal stroke on the characters 'A', 'H', 'T', 'e', 'f', 't'.

Baseline

The imaginary horizontal line to which the body, or the main component of the characters are aligned.

Bowl

The curved stroke which surrounds a counter.

Bracket

A curved line connecting the serif to the stroke.

Contrast

The amount of variation in between the thick and thin strokes.

Counter

The empty space inside the body stroke.

Descender

The lowercase character stroke which extends below the baseline.

Loop

The bottom part of the lowercase like in 'g'.

Shoulder

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The part of a curved stroke coming from the stem.

Stem

A stroke which is vertical or diagonal.

Stress

The direction in which a curved stroke changes weight.

Terminal

The end of a stroke which does not terminate in a serif.

x-height

The height of the body, minus ascenders and descender, which is equal to the height of the lowercase 'x'.

This was all about Roman font, let's have a look at devanagari.

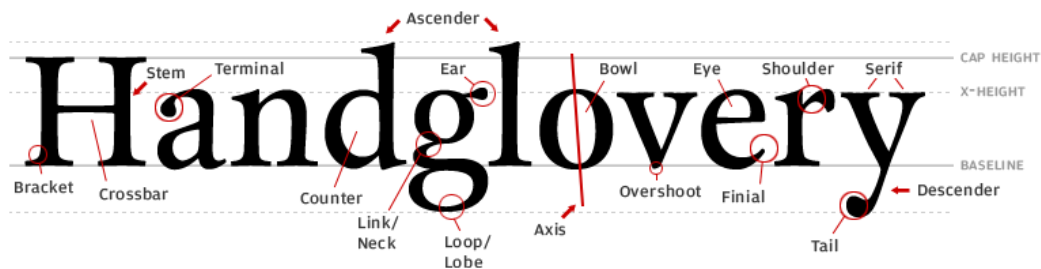


Fig. 1. Type Anatomy (Roman)

Devanagari

देवनागरी Devanāgarī is basically an Indian script used to write languages like Hindi, Marathi etc. In Devanagari script, there are 34 consonants, 14 vowels, renouncing and anuswar. Devanagari script was discovered to write Sanskrit. It is also called as Devwani. Discovery of barakhadi (alphabets) plays a very important part of this script.

In Roman script, there are classifications of letters as in terms of ascender, descender, serif, counter, loop, link etc. but in Devanagari, there is no such classification.

Dr. S.V. Bhagwat took Typography as a subject for his doctorate thesis. In that letters are classified in 3 parts as in full heighten letters, half heighten letters and more than heighten letters. After that he classified on the basis of simplicity, speed, division, and angle letters. Devanagari letters are always rhythmic. Ascender means Matra, Rafar and Velanti. Descender means Ukar and Prithvi sign. Without Matra and Ukar letters are called halfbody means x-height in a Roman script.

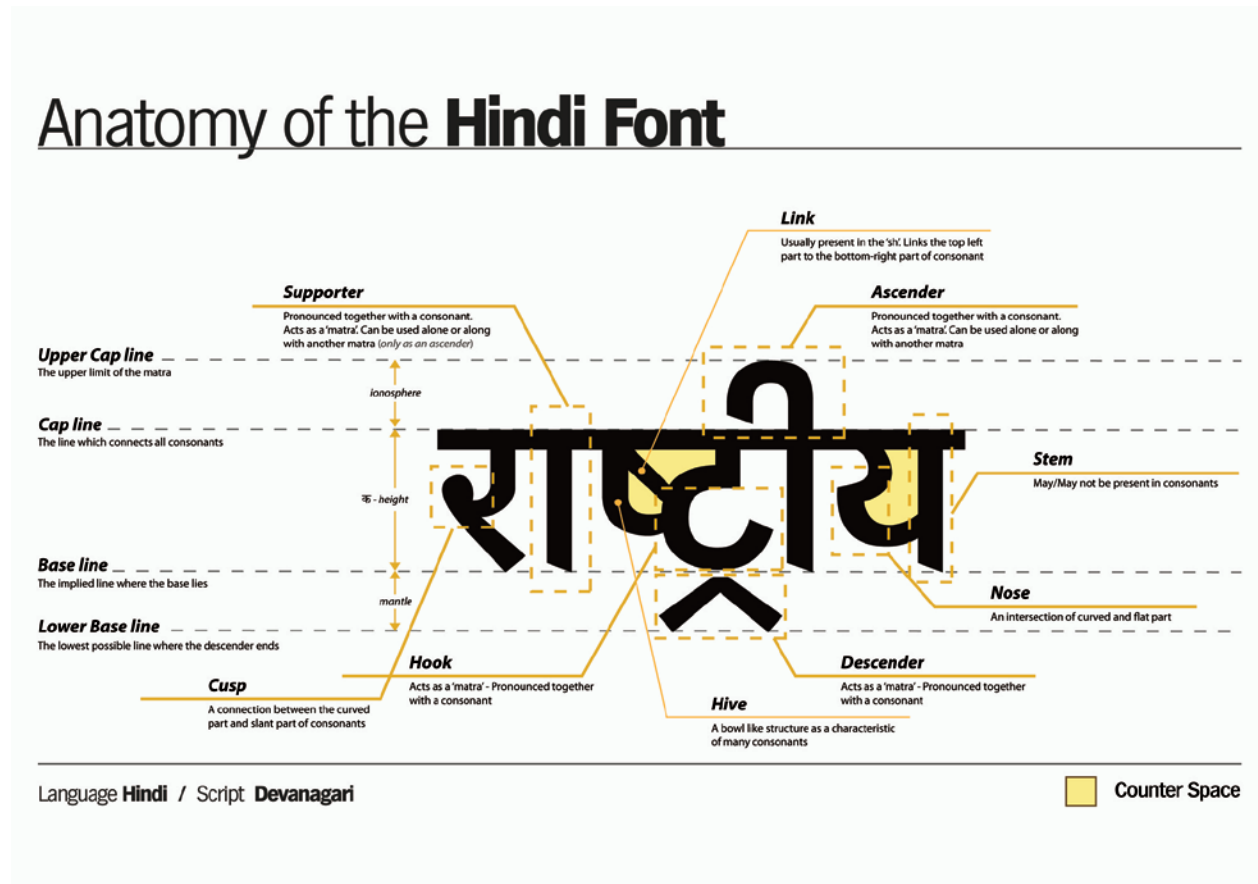


Fig. 2. Anatomy of Devanagari font

Strokes of letters

औ has 14 strokes; झ has 10 strokes; ख, श have 10 strokes; प, फ, ह, ब have 7 strokes; र, ढ, ठ, ट have only 4 strokes, Ukar Matras have 2 and Velanti, Kana have 4 strokes. Two Matra and Kana have 6 strokes.

Letters with same strokes:

ब व क

त ल

र स ख

ग म न

घ च ज ध

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ड इ झ ह

ठ ढ ट द

प फ ष

य थ

उ ऊ

Aim and Objective

The main purpose of this project was to learn and develop a font based on a theme. Also, how a font is made into a font family using same elements and characteristics in two different scripts.

Methodology

The first step was to think of the concept on which the font could be based on. For arriving at the concept, brainstorming technique was used. Idea generated in brainstorming was to keep in mind the use of this font in Devanagari script, which obviously originated from India. Hence the concept should depict a touch or element related to India. Following points were considered in brainstorming:

- rivers of India
- flora fauna of India
- Hinduism/ Gods
- National symbols like national flower, national bird, etc.

From which National flower- Lotus was shortlisted.

Introduction of the topic

Hindus revere the lotus flower with the gods Vishnu, Brahma, and the goddesses Lakshmi and Sarasvati. Often used as an example of divine beauty and purity. Vishnu is often described as the 'Lotus-Eyed One'. The lotus springs from the navel of Vishnu. The lotus blooms uncovering the creator god Brahma. Its unfolding petals suggest the expansion of the soul. The growth of its pure beauty from the mud of its origin holds a spiritual promise. Particularly Brahma and Lakshmi, the divinities of potency and wealth, have the lotus symbol associated with them.

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The lotus always grows in ponds with a layer of moss or mud on top of the water. Lotus symbolizes that, even when it is surrounded by dirt and impurity, it can still grow proud, pure, noble and beautiful. A single lotus growing in a pond can make even the moss and mud look beautiful. In the same way, we should strive to rise up and grow proud and beautiful even when we are surrounded by impurity or ill faith. In this way, lotus flower make our surroundings, not just our physical but also our mental, emotional and spiritual surroundings, more beautiful.

Font

Once the theme was decided, the next step was to start with scribbles. Form many scribbles, the one in fig. 3 was selected. The element of flower was maintained in all the form.

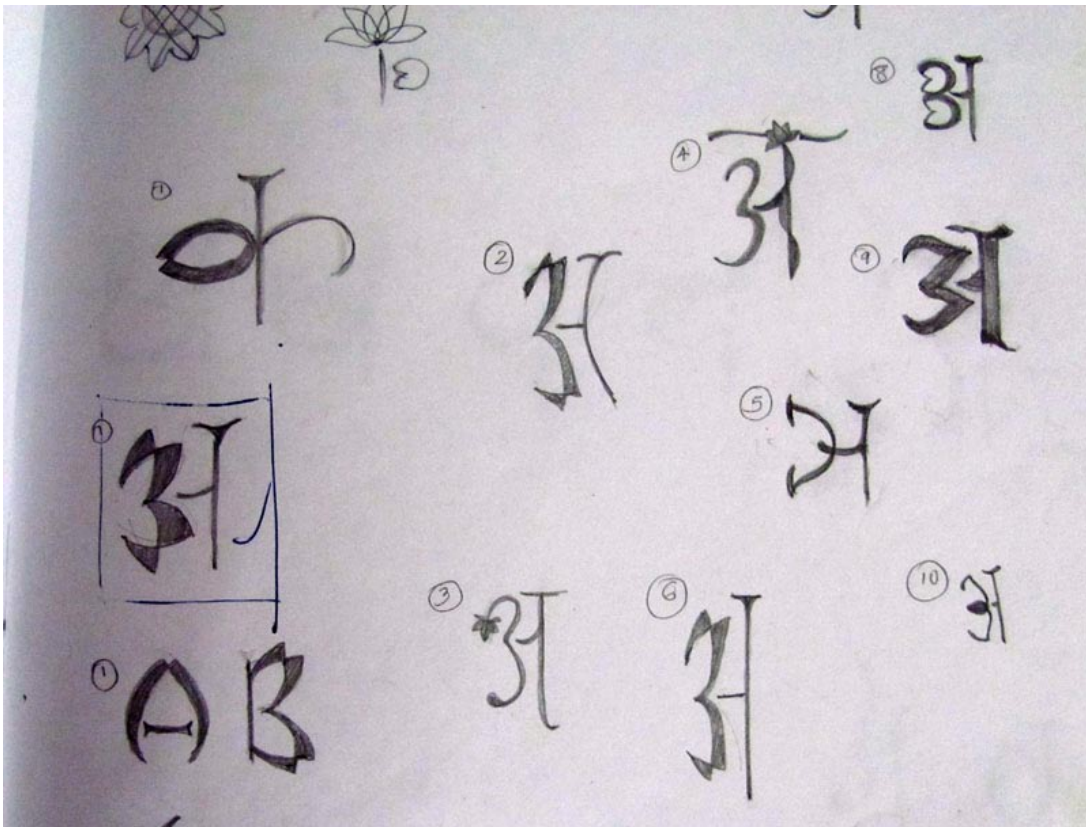


Fig. 3. Selected scribble

Once the selected form was observed, it was concluded that repetition of the petal design could form a grid. The devanagari and roman fonts are both made from the same grid. The grid was made from graphical representation of a petal of lotus flower, with four equal columns and rows. The grid has four major circles from which all the petals have their common base. Refer fig. 4.

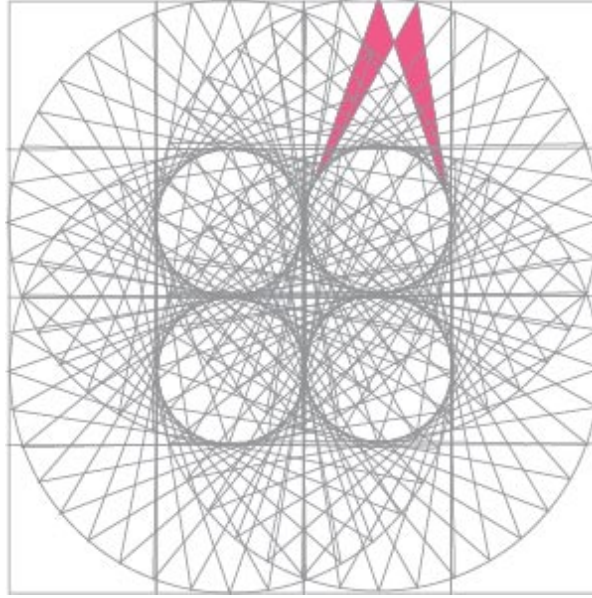


Fig. 4. The grid

The designing of the font was started with **ॐ** from svar, then shifted to vyanjan. The look of the font is elongated. For a 'gaat' a smaller petal was used in order to maintain the look. Here are few of the skeleton of the font. (fig. 5) These were made using tracing sheets placed on grid.

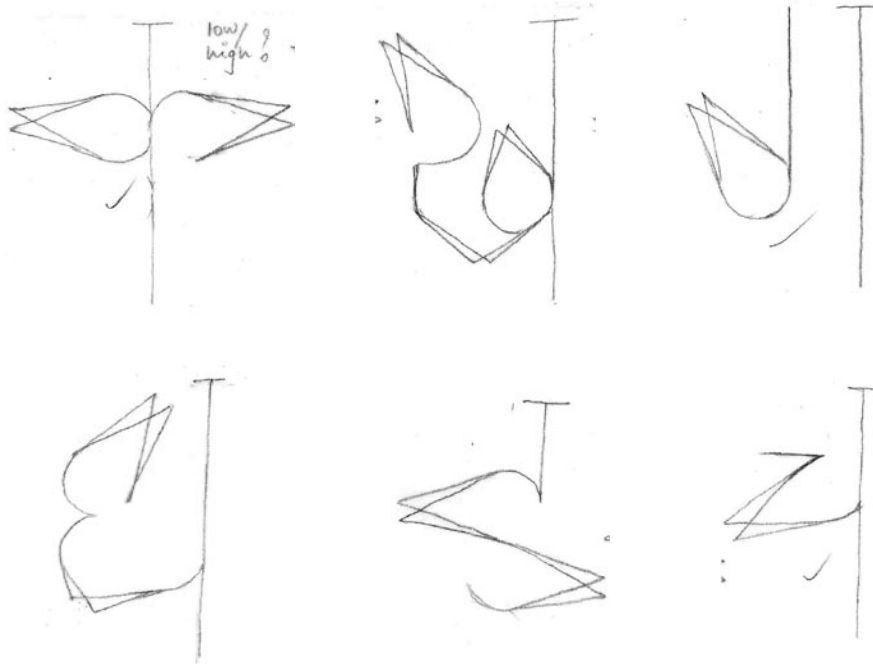


Fig. 5. Devanagari letters- Scribbles

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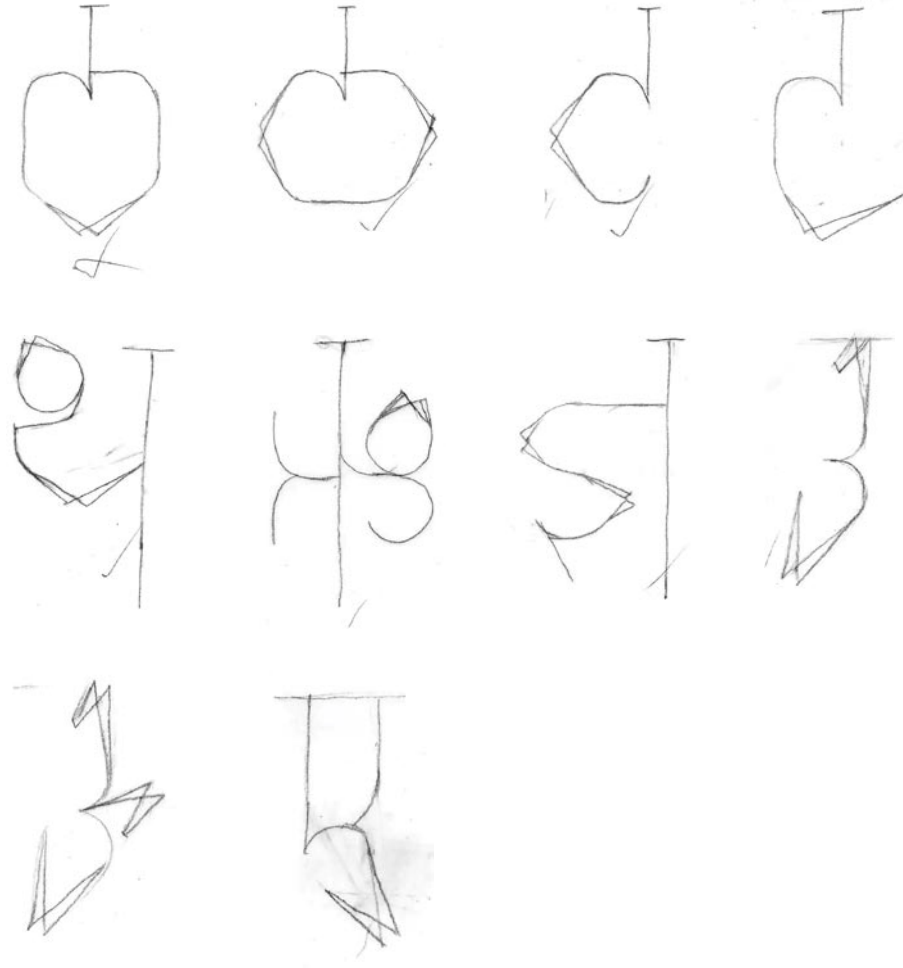


Fig. 6 Devanagari letters- skeleton

Later, while digitizing the font, mass was added. For this, few tweaking of the font were done to make it look appealing.



Fig. 7. Devanagari font- From Skeleton to Digitalization

अ आ इ ई उ ऊ ऋ ॠ
ओ औ अं अः ऋ
क ख ग घ ङ
च छ ज झ ञ
ट ठ ड ढ ण
त थ द ध न
प फ ब भ म
य र ल व श
ष स ह ष ष
क्षि क्षि क्षि क्षि क्षि
० १ २ ३ ४ ५ ६ ७ ८ ९

Fig. 8. The font- devanagari

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The next step was to make roman font. For the lowercase, the x height is the two boxes from the grid. The ascender and descender is one box each on top and bottom. Refer fig. 9 for skeleton of few alphabets.

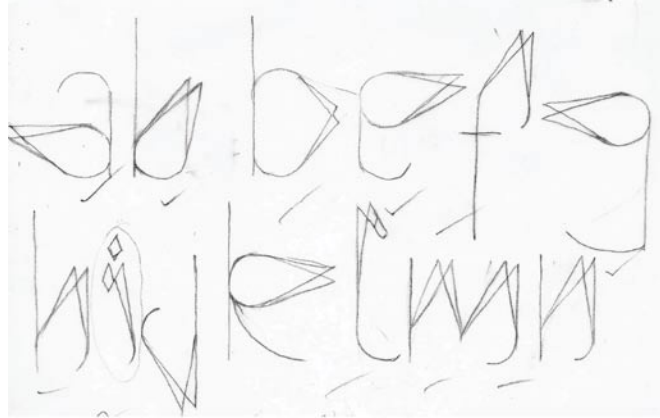


Fig. 9. Lowercase skeleton

For Roman uppercase, the cap height is three boxes. The petal was maintained in all the alphabets as in fig. 10



Fig. 10. Uppercase Skeleton

A B C D E F G G
H H I J K L M N
O P Q R S T U O
W X Y Y Z
a b c d e f g
h i j k l m n
o p q r s t u
v w x y z
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
“ ? . ! # ; % ”

Fig. 11. The font- Roman

Result- Application of the font

As a part of the project, applications for the font had to be designed. Considering the characteristic of the font which looked feminine, a pendent was made using the name of the font - **खूबसूरत**. But the question arose was whether to join the shiro rekha and make the whole word as pendent or only the individual letters like **खू ब सूर त**. But the later was chosen to give a funky look when worn- fig. 12.



Fig. 12. The pendent

The next application was font promoting posters. So posters were made with

- A to Z with punctuations
- a to z with numerals
- vyanjan
- svar with devanagari numerals

Two other posters having the statement- 'the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog' in roman upper case were designed so as to show how the font looks when it is written together (refer fig .13). Also a layout poster using the basic forms used while making the font was designed



Fig. 13. Application layout

The next application I thought was to make logos of the existing brands with the font. The logos were made in Devanagari as well as in Roman.

The brands were

-Titan Raga

-Kalki

-Asmi diamond jewellery

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Since Titan Raga is exclusive range of premium watches for women, the look of the logo was very feminine. The purple and blue color added value to the logo by giving it a royal look. The logo of 'asmi' was made by adding diamond type glitter to 'i'. The same was repeated in Devanagari logo. Since Kalki is a brand of women traditional clothing, a bold color pattern was designed in the font frame of the logo. Refer fig. 14.

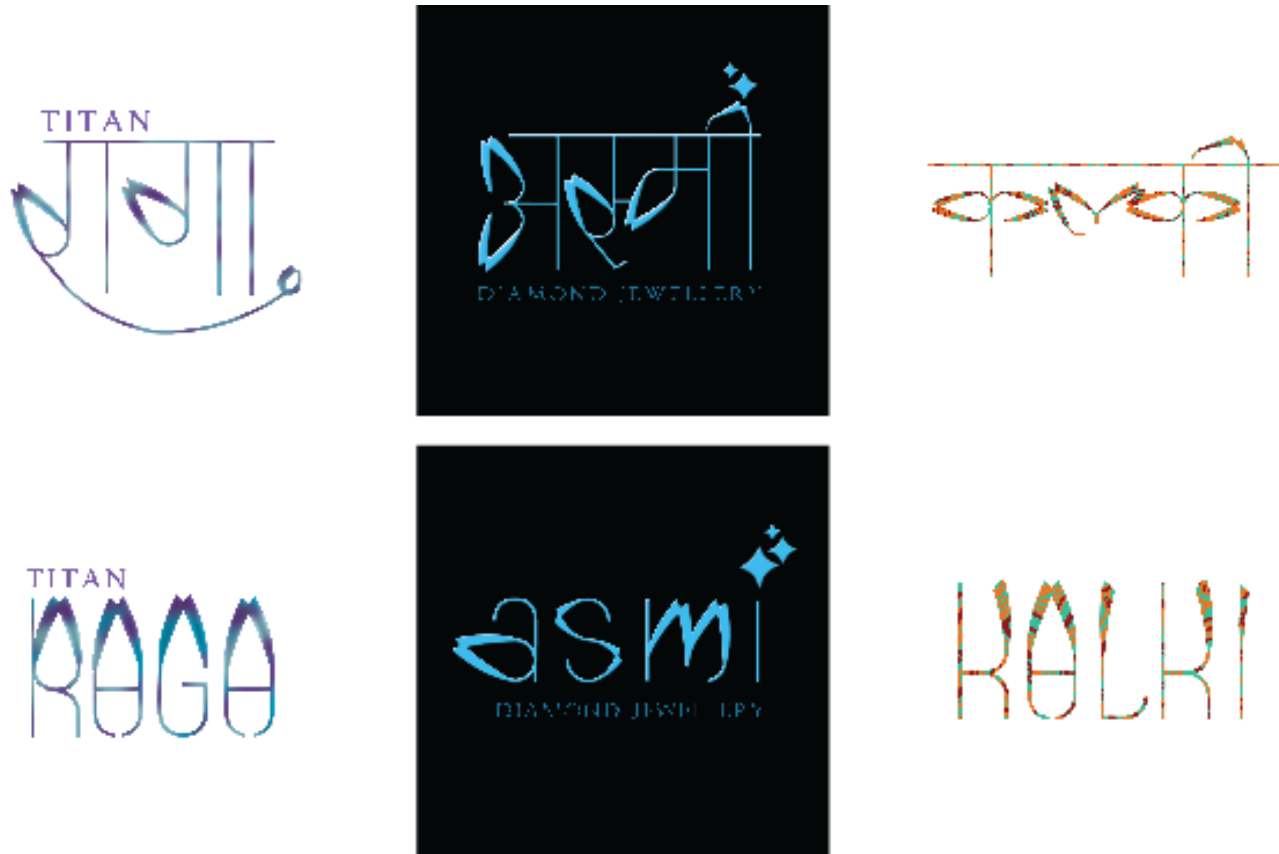


Fig. 14. Logo- Application

The next application made was a diary dated from 1st January 2012 to 31st December 2012. The main color scheme of the diary is red, black and white. With each of the month starting with a black page on which the name of the month is written in devanagari, followed by weekly page. At the end of the month is a 'doodle' page. This page has very tiny and minute exclamations, dollar, percentage, asterisk, hash, at the rate symbols because doodles are random. The size of it is very small because user should not hesitate while scribbling on it and consider it as a designer page. Each month has a surprise of a colorful double spread page so as to break the monotony of the red-black-white color scheme. Refer fig. 15

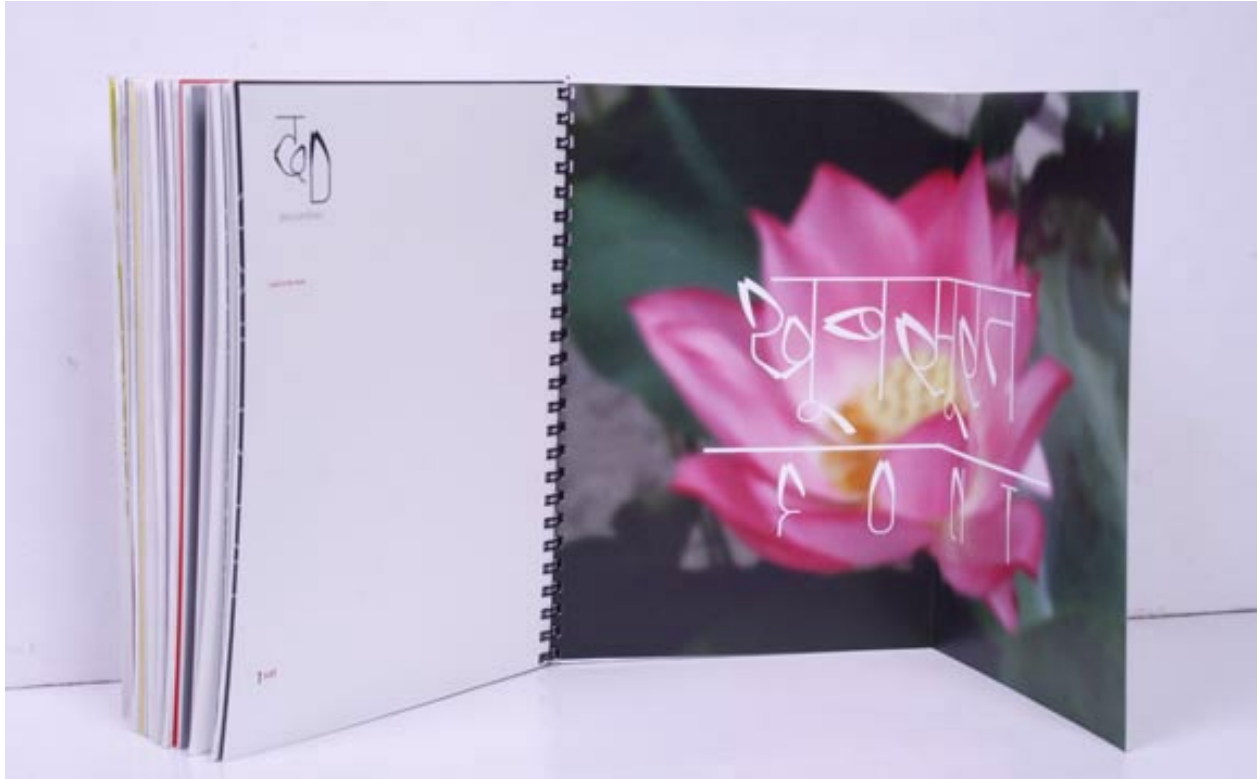


Fig. 15. The diary

A formation of svar was printed on mug as an application (refer fig. 16) so as to give an idea of how the font looks on other surfaces.



Fig. 16. The cup

Discussions and Conclusions

The font was named Khubsurat font because it looked beautiful and delicate. It was concluded that Khubsurat font can be best viewed at larger font size as compared to smaller font size, as the element of the petal design was getting lost.

Future plans

Khubsurat font could be made into a 'ttf' font and make it available for masses on one of sites which provide fonts. Also, few of the logos could be made using this font. This font can be owned by some jewellery making company to start making customized jewellery for their clients. The diary and the cup can be used by the same company who has their logo in Khubsurat font for promotional media or as a memento. This font can also be extended to other application as keychain, postcards, bookmarks, t-shirts etc.

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