GUNJALA GONDI SCRIPT
Subtitle: A New Tracing

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Abstract:

   This paper explores details of a particular kind of Gondi Script has been found, it was recognized with the impact of regional local languages and the Font designing. One such kind of Gondi script of one hundred years antiquity, it still alive in the village 'Gunjala', Narne Mandal, Adilabad district in Andhra Pradesh.

   Yet, time to time they strive to formulate new script with the help of (previous?) indigenous knowledge. One such effort was made hundred years ago. Gunjala script lies in their manuscripts very intact. It is based on a firm regulated format to create alphabet.

   The font has been designed and the first text book in Gunjala Gondi Script has been designed and the Book "Undi Vachakam" has been released on 17th Jan 2014 by The District Collector Mr. Babau. A. and Project Officer, ITDA, Utnur, Adilabad, Mr. J. Nivas at Gunjala on "Gondi Lipi Dinotsav".

Key words: *Gunjala Gondi Lipi, Gondi Lipi, Gunjala Gondi Lipi Adyayana*

Introduction

1.1 Linguistic Culture:

   India has so many intricate and cultural angles. Much latent diversity is despite in Indian literary back grounds prevalent of the advocated oneness and unity of the nation. If observed keenly, this phenomenal diversity is characteristic feature of India. These cultures and languages survive without much sociological tantrums. Most of the languages, and the cultures adherent with these disguise in languages, of multi lingual back ground of the nation are neglected.

   One has to notice that, to keep aside these abundant linguistic cultures means turning ones back to so many vestal linguistic cultures', Each language mirrors the specific lifestyle, culture and heritage.

1.2 Historical background

   Gondwana history and their powerful identity is spread amongst eight States of India-Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chattisghad, Uttarpradesh, Western Orissa and Northern Andhra Pradesh.

Present Central part of India is known as Gondwana Kingdom with strong Gond Culture. The vast kingdom was abundant and full pledged Free State with strong and singular identity.

The impact and influence of languages like Marathi, Urdu, Telugu and English as they are languages of medium of instruction in education and further in administration caused a measurable harm to Gondi language.

1.3 The New Tracing

These recently found manuscripts help us to trace the reminiscent of the script.

Figure: 1.

Figure: 2.

Figure: 3. Horoscope chart in Gunjala Gondi Script

(Figure 1,2 and 3) few among the Manuscripts found in Gunjala.

1.4 Making of the Vachakam - a step ahed

First and foremost thing in making a Reader is to develop a font for the script. Considering the needs of a Reader, a single line armature of each alphabets and other shapes have been developed.

We have not planned to design a font or a set of fonts to publish the content in Gunjala Gondi Script and this development shall take place in the second phase by designing atleast a light and bold font in a font family.

Our main focus is to create an even thick font which is based on the key skeliton line.
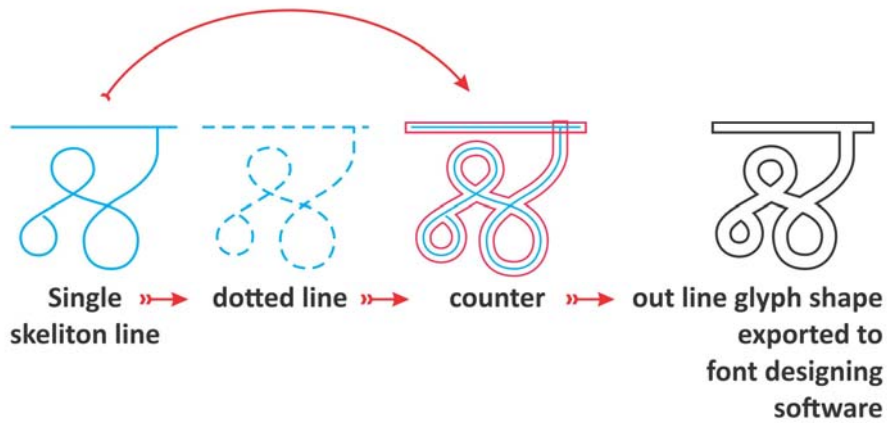
Figure: 4 glyph designing Process for work sheet in Readers

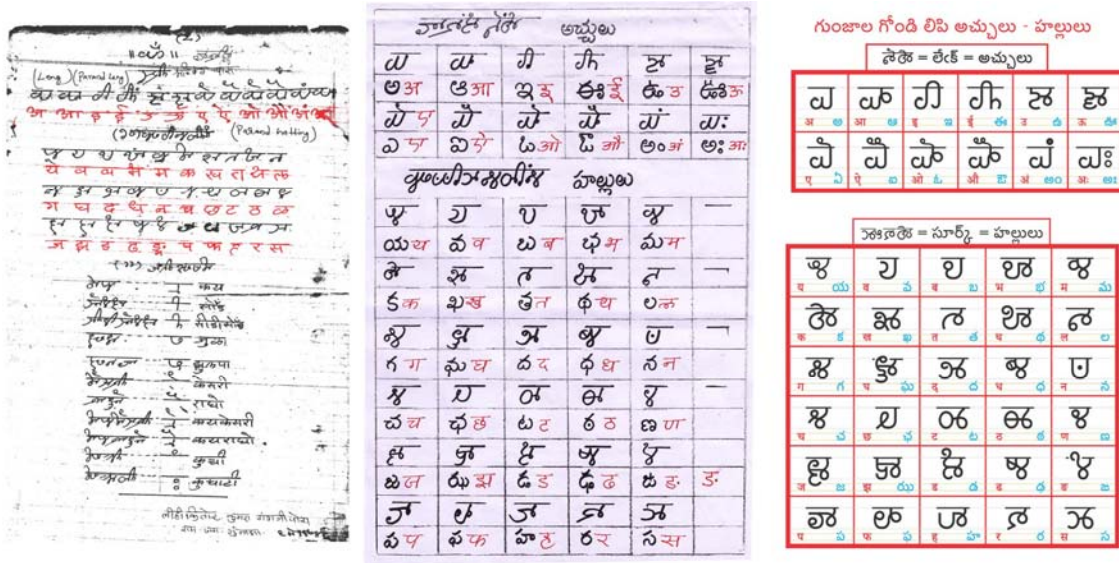*Figure: 5 The structure which is needed for work sheet in Readers*

Figure: 6 The journy from manuscript to glyph shape in Reader

1.5 Comparison between Gunjala Gondi Script and other forms in Gondi Script.

The Books available in Gondi by some of the publishers are compared for character set and shapes.

   a. "Shivlingapothi Gondi Lipi" by Kusram Hanmanth Rao Gangaram. First Published in January 11, 2005. (Gondi lipi was hand written in this book)

   b. "Koyaboli" by Tiru. Sitaram Mandale. Revised second edition January 30, 2011. (Gondi Script has been designed as a font by Shri Mukund Gokhale, Pune)

Figure: 7 Titles of the books in Gondi (including the book in Gunjala Gondi lipi-in middle)

The shapes shown in Sivalingapothi have been modified for some extint in Koyaboli by Thiru Sitaram Mandale.

Gondi script which is seen in the Sivalingapothi Gondi Lipi by Mr. Kusram Hanmanth Raos Gangaram and Koyaboli by Thiru Sitaram Mandale (font by Shri Mukund Gokhale) matches datings around 1st Century as shown in "Finding - Chart for Major Indian Scripts through 2000 years" in the Ganesh-Vidya, The traditinal Indian approach to Phonetic Writing - by L.S. Wakankar, Script Study Group, Bombay - 1968, Printed by the Tata Press Ltd., Bombay 1968.

Published on the eve of Xth Congress of the Association Typographique Internationale, Paris (6-10 Nov. 1967) by R. Subbu, Convenor, Script Study Group, Bombay, and Printed by him at Tata Press Limited, 414, Veer Savarkar Marg, Bombay 25-DD India.

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1.5.1 Visual similarities? Modi Script and Gunjala Gondi Script
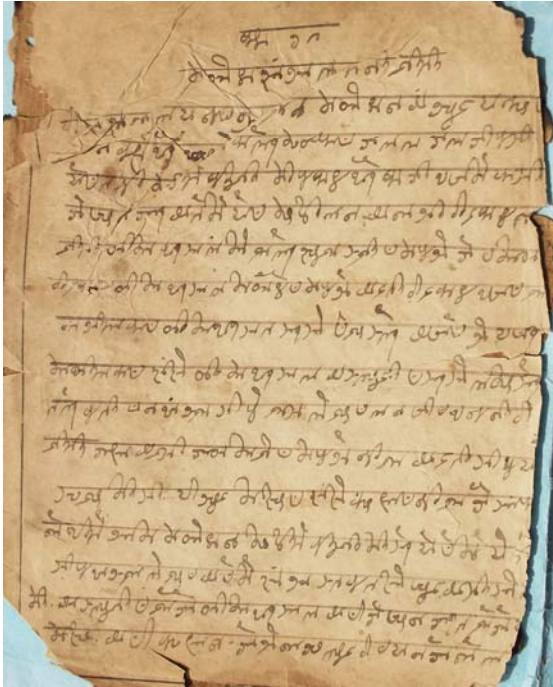

Figure: 8 Sample of Modi script

Figure: 9 Sample of Gunjala Gondi Script - seems optically similar.

1.6 Conclusions

The journey of Gunjala Gondi Lipi - started from 27th January 2006, when found in the Village of Gunjala, Narnur Mandal, Adilabad Dist., till today was not so easy.

As a Typograher, designing a font for Gunjala Gondi Script was a great learning and challenging project.

The efforts done till date by Prof. Jayadhir Thirumal Rao, Visiting Professor, (CDAST) and Sridhara Murthy Srikantham, Guest Faculty (NIFT, Hyderabad) through Center for Dalith and Adivasi Studies and Translation (CDAST), University of Hyderabad and ITDA Utnoor, Gunjala Gondi lipi has been developed as a font to Print "Undi Vachakam" (1st class Reader) and making present children of Gondi community to learn the script of their language.

Our next step is to complete the Gunjala Gondi Unicode font (presently in Devnagari encoding) which allows educated Gondi people who can type in unicode Devnagari script and can change script in to Gunjala Gondi lipi (transliteration) to contribute their experiences and share knowledge to the people who are learning Gunjala Gondi lipi.

ಕ್ಲಿಂಟಿ ಣಲಿಇಟಿ ಇಲಿಂಂಲಇಭ

गोंडि लिपि दिनोत्सव

Figure: 10 Sample of Gunjala Gondi Script transliterated from Devnagari Unicode.

Such facility of trasliteration has not been taken up by any one.

We wish the Gondi community spread in several states of India to unite and enjoy - easy to write, more advanced writing system of Gunjala Gondi Lipi.

Further research to be done on 'how come the script was not spread among the Gonds' of other areas.

Acknowledgement

"Shivlingapothi Gondi Lipi" (Kusram Hanmanth Rao Gangaram). First Published in January 11, 2005

"Koyaboli" by Tiru. Sitaram Mandale. Revised second edition January 30, 2011.

Ganesh-Vidya, The traditinal Indian approach to Phonetic Writing

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1. "Shivlingapothi Gondi Lipi" (Kusram Hanmanth Rao Gangaram). First Published in January 11, 2005.

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3. Ganesh-Vidya, The traditinal Indian approach to Phonetic Writing - (by L.S. Wakankar, Script Study Group, Bombay - 1968) Printed by the Tata Press Ltd., Bombay 1968.

4. Modi Script sample : Anshuman Pandey e-mail: pandey@umich.edu.