

Current status of Tamil symbols naming issue

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N4430 L2/13-047 is the standing proposal for the encoding of 55 Tamil characters denoting fractions and symbols. 23 of these characters have Tamil words as part of their names since these are not translatable as noted in the original proposal L2/12-231 p 61. There have been differing opinions as to how these Tamil words should be spelt as part of these names.

In L2/14-038 dated 2014-Jan-28, the Tamil Virtual Academy (hereafter TVA) – which is the representative of Govt of Tamil Nadu (hereafter GoTN) to Unicode – informed the UTC that a seminar will be conducted to finalize this spelling issue and that recommendations will be sent afterwards. It is important to note that the TVA has requested that “the final decisions in this regard by Unicode may be postponed till then”.

The open seminar mentioned in the TVA’s letter was conducted on 2014-Mar-03. Based on the feedback obtained there, the GoTN appointed a committee to decide the naming issue by formulating a standard for rendering Tamil words as part of Unicode character names. By the GoTN’s letter #1115/mi.ā.1/2014 dated 2014-Jun-30, among others I was invited to be part of the committee.

Said committee met at Chennai on 2014-Jul-25 and decided on a transliteration standard conforming to the Unicode character naming rules given in ISO 10646:2012 (E) clause 24.2 p 38. This standard is documented in L2/14-210 (see p 2).

It is however important to note that this Tamil language document submitted to the UTC registry is merely a FYI document as of now and does not carry recommendation status yet. It is merely a copy of the Tamil language letter sent by the TVA to the GoTN informing it of the results of the meeting. The Tamil text below the table on p 3 translates as: “... the above (standard) may be recommended to the Unicode Consortium.”

I am informed that the GoTN is processing this document. Hopefully the UTC and ISO WG2 committees will receive a formal recommendation (in English) soon. I recommend to the UTC and ISO WG2 that they wait for this formal recommendation of the GoTN before making a final decision on this issue.