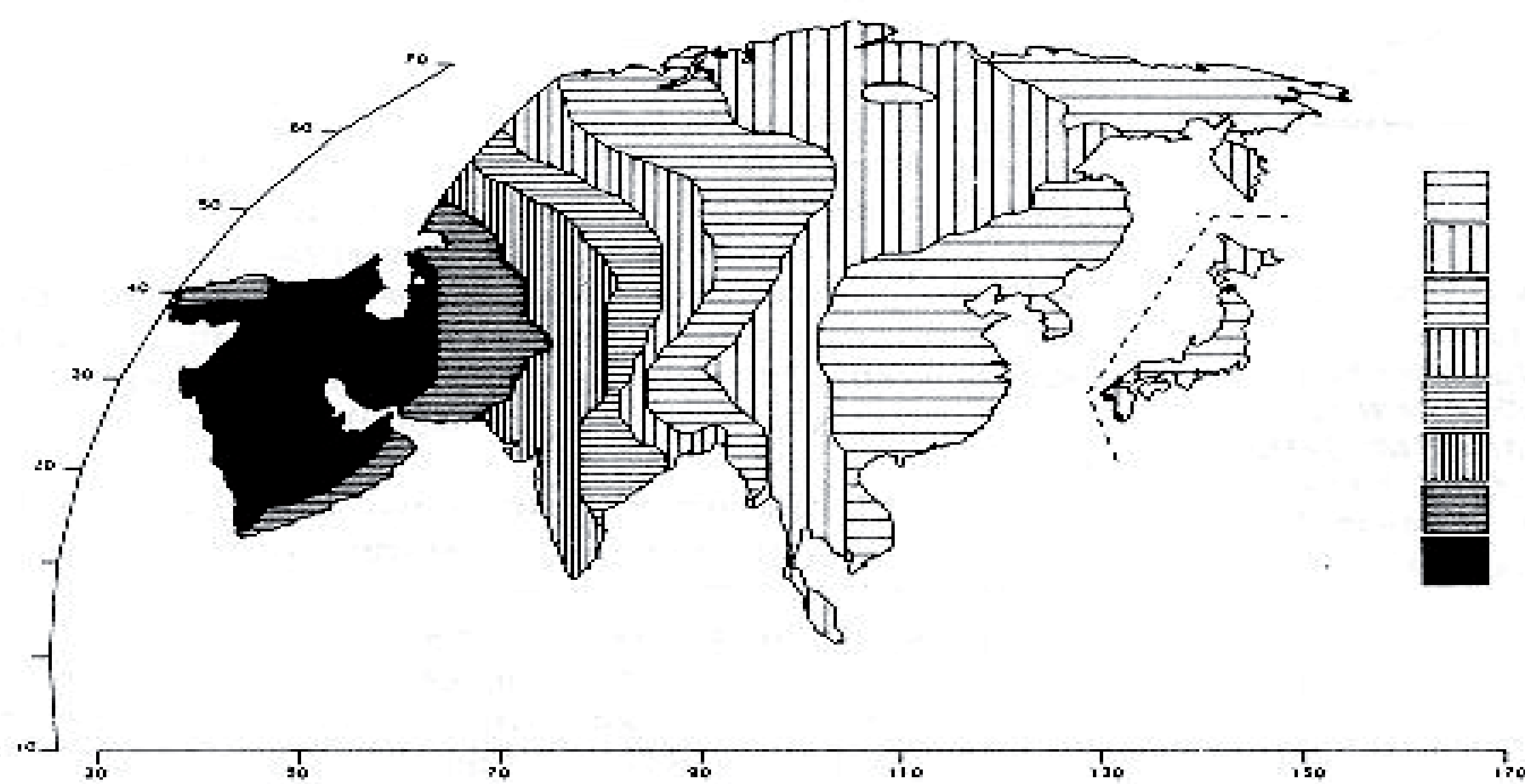


India - A Multilingual Profile

By - Prof. Udaya Narayana Singh



What is known as the **Indo-European** family of languages came to the present cultural space called 'South Asia' about 3800 years ago, from the oases south of the Urals, north of the Black Sea and in western Kazakhstan moved west-ward & east-ward to the south, mixing with the Indigenous linguistic groups in India - the Dravidian and the Austro-Asiatic speakers. The Sino-Tibetan or the Tibeto-Burman ethno-linguistic groups also arrived from the northern neighbors, and settled down in the North-Eastern region.

India and the Range of Multilingualism

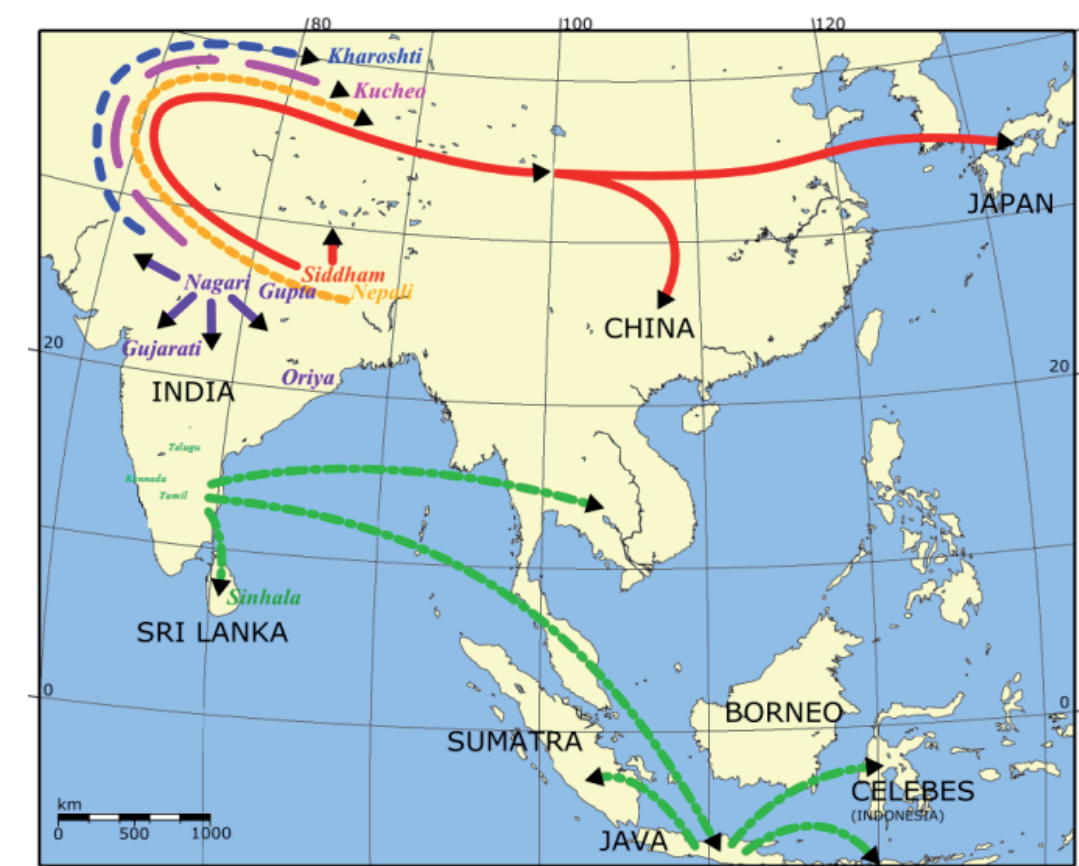
- **1,576 rationalized mother-tongues;**
- **1,796 other mother-tongues;**
- **122 languages as per Census**
- **325 as per People of India (ASI) Survey**
- **416 as per Ethnologue data**
- **96% speak only 20-odd Constitutional languages (IA/ Dravidian).**
- **20 Austric & 98 Sino-Tibetan languages make up about another 2%.**
- **McConnel et al survey(1989) of 96 languages show 50 to be vibrant.**

South Asia is perhaps one of the largest repository of multi-lingual & pluri-ethnic civilization, dating back to 2600 and 1900 BC. This **Indus Valley** Civilization was spread over India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Many inscribed seals found there are difficult to trace them to their origin or linkages Aryan/ Austric/ Dravidian or Unrelated? Both **Brāhmī (5th CBC)& Kharoṣṭhī (4th CBC)** scripts prevailed – resulting in a rich tapestry of scripts →



𑀀	𑀁	𑀂	𑀃
a	ā	i	ī
𑀄	𑀅	𑀆	𑀇
e	ai	o	au
𑀈	𑀉	𑀊	𑀋
ka	kha	ga	gha
𑀌	𑀍	𑀎	𑀏
ca	cha	ja	jha
𑀐	𑀑	𑀒	𑀓
ṭa	ṭha	ḍa	ḍha

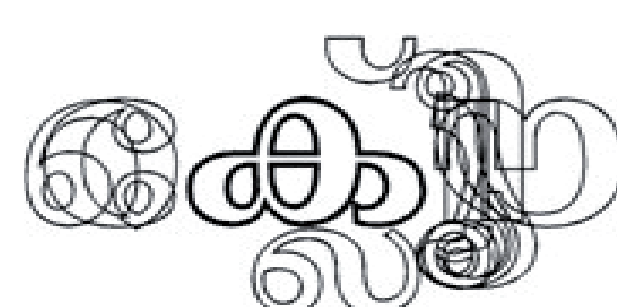
Brāhmī spread to many Asian nations



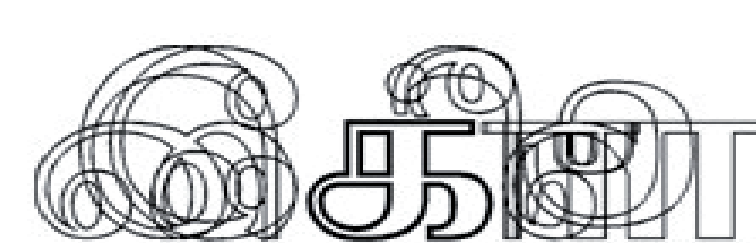
What neo-brahmi scripts look like today



Each indigenous writing system in India has numerous difficulties/ nuances because of the way the sounds/ syllables are captured.



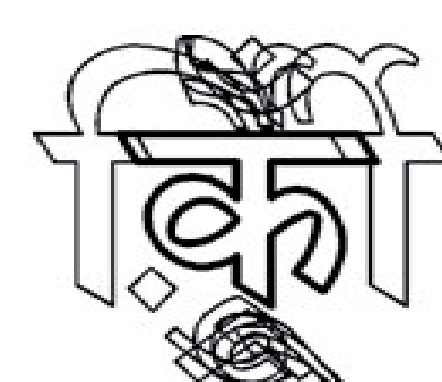
Malayalam



Tamil



Gujarati



Devanagari



Oriya