India Program/Indic Languages/Hindi/Discussions/2011

2011	Assamese	Bengali	Gujarati	Hindi	Kannada	Malayalam	Marathi	Nepali	Odia	Sanskrit	Tamil	Telugu	Summary of discussions

Discussion with Editor1 from Hindi wiki community

Editor1 is an experienced and active Hindi wikipedian. Here are the important points captured from the discussion with Editor1.

- Editor1 is happy that recently Hindi wikipedia became the first Indic language wikipedia to cross the 1 lakh article milestone. But since Hindi wiki community do not have much relation with the press that milestone didn't received the enough attention it deserves.
- Even though Hindi has a huge speaker base, the community and article growth in Hindi wikipedia is very less. To overcome this issue Editor1 suggested Hindi wiki workshops across Hindi belt. He suggested to target colleges in Delhi in the initial phase.
- Editor1 suggested to target school/college students first since they have lots of potential and time in their daily life compared to working people.
- Editor1 also suggested to target Hindi bloggers since there is a very big community of Hindi bloggers and they already know inputting Hindi text.
- Editor1 emphasized the need of creating more help materials (tutorials) in Hindi wikipedia. FAQ booklet can be used to reach out to new people since that will give a basic idea about Hindi wiki projects.
- Editor1 also emphasized the importance of having small wiki projects inside wiki for retaining the existing users.
- Editor1 suggested to have an Article creation competition to create more awareness.
- Recogonizing the efforts of new wikipedians by experienced wikipedians will motivate new users and might turn some of them into active users.
- Editor1 put forward the idea of having a wikimeetup in Delhi and inviting existing wikipedians in and around Delhi to join for the same. The main reason for the need of such a meeting is, there is no such a meeting happened for Hindi wiki till now. Off-wiki interaction between Hindi wikipedians is very less.
- Editor1 feel the face to face interaction between active wikipedians will fetch good result. According to Editor1's knowledge there are 4 or 5 active Hindi wikipedians in Delhi itself.
- "People want recognisation for their work" is a common behavior among many new wikipedians. So recognizing them in the form of barnstars, congratulatory messages from senior wikipedians, and so on will help to retain new users to wiki.
- The need for activating Hindi wiki mailing list and IRC channel is discussed.

Discussion with Editor2 from Hindi wiki community

1. How did you hear about Wikipedia? How did you reached Hindi Wikipedia?

I heard about Wikipedia from an engineering college friend in the FLOSS circles. As for Hindi Wikipedia, I was adding a section on Devanagari alphabet to the English Wikipedia article on Hindi language. I was facing some problem with the correct display of Indic characters on my computer, and searched for solutions. Google drove me to the Hindi Wikipedia page on "Setting for Indic scripts".

I did make a few minor edits to Hindi Wikipedia subsequently. However the number of readers on Hindi Wikipedia wasn't motivating enough for me to contribute to it. My prime motivation behind contributing to Wikipedia is to build a useful, consolidated knowledge repository (as opposed to, say, "preserving our culture" or "making

knowledge accessible to the poor"). At that time, Internet in India was almost exclusively associated with the English-speaking masses. The few readers who visited Hindi Wikipedia did so for amusement ("Hey! Let's see what Hindi Wikipedia says about sex!") So, I didn't see any point in contributing to Hindi Wikipedia.

2. Why you decided you must contribute to Hindi wikipedia?

Like I've pointed out above, I was skeptical about the usefulness of Hindi Wikipedia. However, with all the buzz around the Malayalam Wikipedia CD in 2010 [1], I felt that Hindi-language Wikipedia might be of value to a number of people in a similar way. There were also reports which had indicated a rise in the number of people accessing Hindi-language content on the Internet. Plus, I wanted a break from the edit wars and politics on English Wikipedia. So, I decided to devote some time to Hindi Wikipedia.

3. What kind of topics you usually edit? Why do you edit?

My edits revolved around maintenance tasks (such as categorization, clean-up and wikification of newbie contributions and template fixes). This was because I realized that almost all the contributors on hi-wiki were busy creating new articles. Hardly anyone bothered cleaning up, categorizing or maintaining the articles created by others. The focus was on reaching the "xyz number of articles" mark. Several templates had been copied from English Wikipedia without necessary changes, and resulted in erroneous displays. Hundreds of bot-created articles on census-designated places contained exactly the same text (except the name of the place), with same error being repeated across all the articles. Several articles translated from English Wikipedia contained syntax (and sometimes grammatical) errors. But no one bothered to fix these. For instance, have a look at this article on Angelina Jolie:

http:/ / hi. wikipedia. org/ w/ index. php?title=%E0%A4%8F%E0%A4%82%E0%A4%9C%E0%A5%87%E0%A4%B2%E0%A4%BF%E0%A4%A8%E0%A4%BE_%I oldid=925583#.E0.A4.AB.E0.A4.BC.E0.A4.BF.E0.A4.B2.E0.A5.8D.E0.A4.AE.E0.A5.8B.E0.A4. 97.E0.A5.8D.E0.A4.B0.E0.A4.BE.E0.A4.AB.E0.A4.BC.E0.A5.80

The article had an easily noticeable problem (due to bad wiki syntax), that no reader could miss . However, the error remained for an year, before I fixed it. This is just one of the several such examples.

I feel that such errors are hurting the organic growth of Hindi Wikipedia. The lack of proper categorization and wikilinking makes it harder to find similar articles. A large number of poorly formatted articles made it look like a poor-quality project, and nobody wants to be associated with a poor quality project. Most active contributors on Hindi Wikipedia are simply contributing to the project out of their love for the Hindi language. I feel presenting a project as a high-quality project is important for attracting more contributors to it. This prompted me to devote a lot of time to maintenance tasks. I also created 4-5 new articles, but my major focus was on maintenance tasks.

5. Have you attended or organized community meet-ups? What was the outcome? What were the positives and negatives from these meet-ups?

Yes, I've attended quite a few. But, the meetups featured very few discussions centered around Hindi (or other Indic-language Wikipedias). Most of the Indic-language-related discussion was the usual "users don't know how to input Indic characters" or "should we use formal Sanskritized Hindi or colloquial Hindi?". If I recall correctly, these discussions later materialized into some introductory editing sessions for newbies.

6. What has been your experience in adding content or encouraging content on specific topics?

I didn't devote my time to specific topics, but my experience is that the India-related articles on Hindi Wikipedia are very India-centric. This makes some sense since most of the Hindi readers are located in India, but it also introduces bias which is uncommon on English Wikipedia. (e.g. "XYZ was a great freedom fighter who fought with the evil British" or "ABC is the most beautiful village inhabited by simple and hardworking people")

The edit wars are almost non-existent due to few users and the general tendency of not editing the articles created by other editors.

7. How are the technical challenges/issues been for your language? Now, is it easy for a new user to start contributing in wiki easily. How about interface translation and other things?

Since I'm a computer engineer by education, I've not faced any substantial technical challenges as such. The only one I remember is problem with some calendar templates, because MediaWiki parser functions don't accept Devanagari numerals. I don't know Hindi typing, so I use transliteration tools. I think, with modern tools, it's not very hard for new uesrs to start contributing to Hindi wikipedia.

8. How is the interaction between Hindi wiki community members? Is there is enough interaction? Or, is it just users working in their own way by just creating articles and not having much interaction with other users? Do you benefit from the discussion with other community members?

The interaction is mostly limited to policy-making, elections for roles like administrator and asking for help. Such discussions are fairly beneficial. But there is very little collaboration on articles. An article created by one user is very less likely to expanded or edited by another user. Even minor edits like categorization or fixing typos in others' articles are rare.

9. Could you share any and all ideas - small or big, sucessful & not-so-sucessful - that you think can help drive Hindi and other Indic language projects?

I think that the articles translated using machine translation tools should go under a rigorous review for style, quality and flow before being made 'live'. A number of articles have been created on Hindi Wikipedia with Google translation, but these serve no purpose. The style and the flow (and the English text in untranslated templates, references section etc.) render them of little interest to a native Hindi reader, and the unfixed errors render them useless to Google (whose interest is most probably lies in improving its algorithms and training its bots with good Hindi-language content). When other editors look at such an article, most of them think "Well, this article already has all the necessary content. There is no need for me to edit this." I think a thousand short, unreferenced and well-formatted articles are better than a million long, translated articles translated from English Wikipedia.

Also, reaching out to schools/colleges and involving students in editing Hindi Wikipedia would be a good idea (maybe as a part of a Hindi subject assignment). Bharatkosh (bharatdiscovery.org), another mediawiki-based project, has benefited greatly from contributions from graduate students.

Discussion with Editor3 from Hindi wiki community

1. How did you hear about Wikipedia? How did you reached HindiWikipedia?

Honestly, I don't even remember now how I heard about it(I've known about it since between 2006 to 2008 I think); but it was probably either

* teachers at my school
* the newspaper (The Times of India)
* surfing the net for some project with wikipedia in the google search results
* But basically, it was during my schooling years that I came to know of it.

2. Why the indic wikipedias aren't growing well enough?

It is quite a known fact that any Indian who's educated enough and rich enough to have access to the internet(and know how to surf it), is most probably educated with English as the medium of education. English still means having a good job, and being considered a class above the rest. It is thus no mystery why we have many more Indians editing the english wikipedia than the indic language wikis.

So basically it is the deep-rooted pro-english discrimination in Indian society(I'm not saying that it is wrong to use english, just that the preference of English over indic languages is causing these languages to suffer as a whole) which is the cause for the much higher number of English language indian wikipedians compared to indic language wikipedians. Obviously, the foundation has no control over the mindset of the people and cannot do much to change it.

Add to this the fact that all science and technical education is mostly in english, which is not startling considering that the past 500 years of scientific development were mostly driven by the western nations like Europe and the

Americas after the renaissance began in Europe.

These two facts combined give us the result:

- Indic wikipedians educated in science and technology are likely to be english-educated
- Anyone out of the (comparitively) very few number of people who've studied science and technology in indic languages; is much less likely to have internet access(and hence, access to WMF wikis)
- This rules out any short-term large developments in indic language wikipedias in the science and technology spheres

3. How I joined the hindi wikipedia?

I should clarify that I myself originally joined the english wikipedia first. I should also add that despite having heard of wikipedia a few years before that, I had never heard of indic language wikis at all. It was much later (even after joining wikipedia) that I came to know that there are other language versions of wikipedia.

I became really active on wikipedia only recently; and that is when I joined the hindi wikipedia. Gradually, I started surfing the hindi wikipedia, just for fun and to know how it was doing. And it was then that I came to know that it could be improved. So, the first problem at hand for me was: "How do I edit it? I don't have anything to input hindi, and I'm obviously not learning the inscript keyboard just for editing wikipedia". That was when I started looking for a software that gave me phonetic(transliteration) input and found Google IME. I still use it to edit.

And, just a note; this is a big problem:"Firstly, most people won't know of indic wikipedias. Secondly, if they do; they won't know that phonetic input is available on it." And frankly, everybody who knows hindi types out SMSes in hindi every other day, they're just written out in the roman script phonetically. Example:"Main ghar jaa raha hu." or "Aapko Diwali ki bahut bahut shubhkaamnaaen." If people knew that they can type out just like this and the software will convert it into hindi, they're much more likely to join, since knowledge of inscript hindi typing, and the availability of the corresponding keyboards with hindi written out on the keys is very low. This fact is also true for other indic languages.

Back to the answer, as I explored hindi wikipedia after getting the IME; I hi:Special:Randomed about a bit and found out (quite shockingly) how much it lacked as compared to the english wikipedia.

4. Why I joined the Hindi Wikipedia?

By this point(after two years of editing wikipedia, albeit not regularly), I was pretty sure I was going to edit and was not leaving the site. For me, choosing the hindi wikipedia over the english wikipedia in priority was mostly a matter of:

- Where can I best help in the goal of "making the sum of human knowledge available to all" (At hi-wp since I'm a native speaker)
- Where my help was more needed (Obviously, at hi-wp since it has very few active users compared to the english wikipedia)

5. How active are you? What kind of topics you usually edit? Why do you edit?

On en-wp, I usually edited on topics related to education. On hi-wp however, due to the lack of active users, my tasks have changed to a variety of things. I categorize any and all articles I find lacking categories or wrongly/overly categorized. I fix(or try to fix) any templates that aren't working as they should. I try to find any copyright violations and get them speedily deleted. I focus on templates and categories since these are things that not many people are working on at hi-wp; and not many people here understand fully how the complex templates work, and so, are unable to fix them). This is also the reason why I'm trying to get gadgets running at hi-wp(since there's nobody else to do that).

6. Have you attended or conducted outreach sessions? If yes, what was the outcome? What were the positives and negatives from these outreach programs?

No, I have not.

7. Have you attended or organised community meet-ups? What was the outcome? What were the positives and negatives from these meet-ups?

No, not done this either.

8. What has been your experience in adding content or encouraging content on specific topics?

I have not really been much of an on wikipedia helper; so my experience in this is very limited. But, from this little experience I feel that if people are pointed to the right policies and/or help pages, their contributions to certain fields can be greatly improved.

9. How is the technical challenges been for your language? Is it easy for a new user to start contributing right away?

The first and biggest challenge is phonetic input. Although we currently have a system for this(and an extension is under development), there is no standard format for phonetic input(Different websites follow different algorithms, and hence someone who's used to any other website's input system will have a hard time adjusting himself/herself to a new system, especially if he/she plans to use both the other website and wikipedia).

Currently, I would say it is very difficult for a new user to be productive in editing hindi wikipedia; primarily because there are not many help pages. There are not many explicitly stated policies/guidelines. Hence, in lack of such a policy-procedure structure, it is difficult for a new user to understand what he/she is allowed to do and what is not acceptable. But we're working on addressing these problems, and I expect(being an optimist here) to resolve most of these by the end of 2012.

10. How is the interaction between Hindi wiki community members? Is there is enough interaction? Or is it just users working on their own way by just creating articles and not having much interaction with other users? Do you benefit from the discussion with other community members ?

Currently, hi:Special:Statistics shows me there are 235 active users. Out of these, I'd rule out most as being new accounts which have made one or two edits and left. The actual regular userbase is not much more than 20 I think. So, we have one user who's editing one field/subject; and another editing an entirely different field/subject.

Hence, there isn't much interaction within the community in regard to article editing. The only place where user-interaction practically takes place is the village pump; where users sometimes ask questions and others reply. These questions can range from why the input script is behaving in a particular way, to policy formation and countering vandalism.

11. **Could you share any and all ideas - small or big, sucessful & not-so-sucessful - that you think can help drive Hindi and other Indic language projects?**

I think I've mixed much of this answer in the above ones. Nevertheless: Nevertheless:

- A (potentially economically nonviable, but very good as regards PR) idea: Set up a domain name for indic language wikis? Maybe something like www.wikipedia.in or (since the .in may be felt wrong by indic language communities outside India), how about in.wikipedia.org(which is not an ISO 369-1 Code)?
- A portal just like www.wikipedia.org which lists the indic wikipedias in priority with a link to www.wikipedia.org at the bottom(not listing the other wikipedias at all, or in lower priorities if the other non-indic wikipedia communities object).
- Some kind of tie-up with the state level education boards trying to promote wikipedias as purely a source of information. Even if one state board recommends an indic-language wikipedia as a potential information source to its schools; we can have exponentially more students browsing indic wikipedias, and some out of those will be potential future editors.
- College fest tie-ups. If even one big(famous) college adds any indic wikipedia related event to its fest; the outcome can be big. This will obviously have to be community-driven since only community will be able to galvanise college support for it. Now that I think of it, this is potentially very hard with the very small communities indic language wikis have.

- For hindi, there is some national committee of some kind that was recently revived and chaired by the Prime Minister(I forgot the name, and seems like google did too). It would do well to bring the fact of the existence of hindi wikis of the WMF to their notice. There are also some hindi-based educational institutions, and it wouldn't hurt much to send out emails and/or posters of indic wikis based events(like any future wikiconferences, hackathons etc in India) to these organizations, to increase awareness if nothing else.

Discussion with Editor4 from Hindi wiki community

1. How you reached Hindi Wikipedia?

I first come across English Wikipedia while doing Google search some 7-8 years ago while I was in college. I came across hindi wikipedia while going through one of the English language article and then navigating to the hindi article. This was some 4 years ago.

2. Why did you decided you must contribute to Hindi wikipedia?

It was the same reason that people do not feel pride in flaunting skills in the local language (especially hindi). It is considered sub standard as comparison to English. The feeling of pride in my mother tongue and lack of content in Hindi prompted me to join Hindi wikipedia as contributor.

3. How active are you? What kind of topics you usually edit? Why do you edit?

I am dormant for last 6-7 months due to work pressure. Earlier I use to contribute substantially. My area of interest were "India " "Indian History" and "Science and Technology"

4. Have you attended or conducted outreach sessions?If yes, what was the outcome? What were the positives and negatives from these meet-ups?

No I have not attended/conducted any outreach session. Though I used Orkut and Facebook in the past to advertise hindi wikipedia.

5. Have you attended or organised community meet-ups? What was the outcome? What were the positives and negatives from these meet-ups?

I have attended Wikimedia meet held at Pune last year in September. I interacted with Ms Bishakha Dutt. This meet was predominately about Marathi wiki and I was only person from hindi wiki.

6. What has been your experience in adding content or encouraging content on specific topics?

The biggest problem for hindi articles is lack of reliable sources. On internet there are very little original/realible hindi articles which you can use as source for articles in Wiki. When I encourage others to contribute their initial enthusiasm vanishes when they find Indic input is too cumbersome and they do not feel comfortable using translator or inbuilt indic transliterate.

7. How has the technical challenges been for your language? Now is it easy for a new user to start contributing easily.

I think this has improved in the past 4 years. However this can be judged by quantifying number of people who are joining and continue contributing for more than one month.

8. How is the interaction between hindi wiki community members. Do you benefit from other community members?

The interaction between hindi wiki members is being carried out through both internal and external means. However for the last 4 years I have seen that number of active contributors at a time is very less. There has always been a divide between the language purist and the young contributors who are more lenient on the use of the language. In the past we had eminent writers and poets as contributor but most of them have stopped contributing because of rift with people who are young and value content more than the language. This was unfortunate.

Most of people contributing on hindi wiki are young students and professional who have not studied anything in Hindi for very long time. This make them use a language which is more in practice rather than from literature or

official vocabulary.

> **9. Can you share any and all ideas - small or big, sucessful & not-so-sucessful - that you think can help drive Indic language projects?**

Some of the Ideas which have not been proposed earlier.

- Develop an Android based app for Aakash (Tab) which is launched by Governement recently. It would help indic wikis to reach to small towns and schools, to the students who are currently away from Internet and computer.*
- Students in the schools should be encouraged to contribute to Indic wiki through assignments and projects.
- Collaborate with NGOs in the education field.
- Collaborate with Universities. Infact I know of a professor in Pune university who encourages his students to contribute to marathi/English wiki as part of class work.

Discussion with Editor 5 from Hindi wiki community

> **1. How did you reached Hindi Wikipedia?**

I adore Wikipedia and its "free nature". After settling myself on English Wikipedia, I thought to increase the dimension of my contribution to other Wikimedia Projects. Now, Commons and Hindi Wikipedia are like my second home Wikis.

> **2. Why you decided you must contribute to Hindi wikipedia?**

When I saw the miserable condition of Hindi Wikipedia—one of the world's major languages, I couldn't refrain myself to remain negligent.

> **3. How active are you? What kind of topics you usually edit? Why do you edit?**

On English Wikipedia, I'm an active member of several WikiProjects like Olympics, Biography, American television, Multi-sport events, Cricket, Pornography, etc. So, I follow the same routine on Hindi Wikipedia too. Right now I'm working on two minor (self-made) projects. I'm also the only new page patroller.

> **4. Have you attended or conducted outreach sessions?If yes, what was the outcome? What were the positives and negatives from these outreach programs?**

Nope!

> **5. Have you attended or organised community meet-ups? What was the outcome? What were the positives and negatives from these meet-ups?**

Nope

> **6:What has been your experience in adding content or encouraging content on specific topics?**

Hindi Wikipedia community is very small, the topics which I prefer to contribute are usually neglected by Hindi Wikipedians, even the cricket, which is pretty shocking to me considering huge fan base in India. So, there is no scope of interaction in that area.

> **7: How are the technical challenges/issues been for your language? Now, is it easy for a new user to start contributing in wiki easily. How about interface translation and other things?**

I'm not eloquent in Hindi. First few weeks were very difficult for me, I knew nothing about the complex phonological rules of language. But I never gave up, and with some external tutorials now I'm able to contribute with an advanced level of Hindi. Hindi Wikipedia is still in its developing mode. We still don't have all the policies and guidelines, e.g. we don't have any standard convention of numerals. Some people use Devanagari numerals whilst some prefer Western Arabic/European numerals, even in a single article you may find usage of both. We don't have any criteria for notability and just revised our deletion policy which IMO is still very lenient compare to English, French or Dutch Wikipedia. So, these kinds of things make difficult for novices to understand Wikipedia.

8: How is the interaction between Hindi wiki community members? Is there is enough interaction? Or, is it just users working in their own way by just creating articles and not having much interaction with other users? Do you benefit from the discussion with other community members?

Very few people are "actually" active, only 3 or 4 (maximum) people take part in crucial community discussions, like new deletion policy was implemented just after the !votes of 3 users and one of them was proposer himself. Mayur is the only person who performs all the administrative tasks, this is a very unfortunate situation because it just overloads him and we "really" need more people in command.

9: Could you share any and all ideas - small or big, sucessful & not-so-sucessful - that you think can help drive Hindi and other Indic language projects?

There are a few big problems with Hindi and other Indic Wikipedias:

- Being India oriented, like more than 20% of Hindi Wikipedia is made by Indian villages, almost all these articles are unreferenced, full with puffery and unwikified. Articles, those should remain neutral of any geography, unnecessarily talks about India only, e.g. coal mining article of Hindi doesn't say anything about "what coal mining is" but it only explains how they do it in India.
- Nationalism, this is something that I've also experienced on English Wikipedia on India related topics. Most of the users just want to show that everything is great in India. Nobody edits/expands articles related to Christianity, Western culture or any other culture except India for that matter, etc.
- POV, people think that they have free will to add anything which suits better to them.
- Neutrality, this is a thing which you'll never find in almost 90% of articles.
- Poor authority, dismally Hindi admins are unaware of even basic policies and guidelines of Wikipedia, like they don't know anything about copyrights, approximately more than 95% images on Hindi Wikipedia violate copyrights, and many of them are uploaded by admins . This is only a small part of big picture. Few suggestions:
- Retest the capabilities and knowledge of admins, so that we can have a better and responsible authority.
- Direct all the Indic Wikis to strictly implement basic policies like verifiability, neutrality, notability, etc.
- Start some motivation program so that users can weigh more on quality rather that quantity.

Discussion with Editor6 from Hindi wiki community

1. How you reached Hindi Wikipedia?

As I remember, I came across a news "Telugu wiki crosses 10,000 articles" . I searched on Google and came to see that Hindi wiki was lagging much behind.

2. Why you decided you must contribute to Hindi wikipedia?

I think that the problem lies with our political system and the educational system. Through education, we have been made what the British wanted us to make.

3. How active are you? What kind of topics you usually edit? Why do you edit?

I am very active. I edit topics of almost all kinds- Science, Engineering, History, Sociology, Geography, Psychology, Medicine etc. I edit in a hope that the articles contributed by me will work as seed articles and give rise to a sort of revolution one day. The day is approaching as digital devices and internet is spreading in rural and semi-urban ares of India.

4. Have you attended or conducted outreach sessions?If yes, what was the outcome? What were the positives and negatives from these outreach programs?

I have not attended or conducted any outreach session.

5. Have you attended or organised community meet-ups? What was the outcome? What were the positives and negatives from these meet-ups?

I have not attended or organised any community meet-ups.

6. What has been your experience in adding content or encouraging content on specific topics?

Sometimes some people oppose some of the 'views'. Otherwise adding content is almost without any opposition on Hindi wiki.

7. How are the technical challenges/issues been for your language? Now, is it easy for a new user to start contributing in wiki easily. How about interface translation and other things?

To some extent, writing Hindi is not that difficult today. But I think most people have proble understanding the wiki markup. If wiki editor were similar to microsoft word, it would be much easier for many people to contribute.

8. How is the interaction between Hindi wiki community members? Is there is enough interaction? Or, is it just users working in their own way by just creating articles and not having much interaction with other users? Do you benefit from the discussion with other community members?

The interaction among the Hindi wiki community is lower than it should be. I myself do little interaction and am busy with adding new content.

9. Could you share any and all ideas - small or big, sucessful & not-so-sucessful - that you think can help drive Hindi and other Indic language projects?

If state govts take initiative and make 'school wikipedias' in Hindi and other Indian languages and distribute it to schools and students free, it will boost reach of wikipedia. People will understand its importance and use it. Many more will be encouraged to contribute.

Discussion with Hindustanilanguage from Hindi Wiki Community

1. **How did you hear about Hindi Wikipedia? How did you reached Hindi Wikipedia?**

Any website which aims to reach out to the non-English masses across the world today has to inevitably incorporate Hindi. Some good example this effect are Google, Gmail, Travlang [2], etc.

2. Why you decided you must contribute to Hindi wikipedia?

Well, I believe that Hindustani is my native language. Hindi is the national language of India. It embodies the essence of the Indian culture and civilization and any contribution in this language can serve to showcase India to the world and also the world to India. Besides, I hold a degree in Journalism and I have contributed to the Hindi literature, both in the print as well as online, including writing articles to websites such as HindiNest [3]

3. What kind of topics you usually edit?

I edit all types of topics and subjects. However, since I contribute to the Wikipedia on a voluntary basis, I make it a point to ensure quality and edit only those article where I can trace and quote the sources easily.

A major point I would like to highlight here is that the Hindi Wikipedia is not the only place on the Wikis which needs contributions in Hindi. There are several templates on the Wikis ('Meta', 'Commons', etc) which have translations available in English, French, Spanish, etc which are widely spoken, written and understood. These templates are also translated in Dutch, Czech which are not as much spoken, read or understood as Hindi. For example I translated 'no watermark' template on Commons which did not have any Hindi translation till I did it. Similarly, the CentralNotice/Generic maintenance notice did not have any notice in Hindi and I had to translate the text.

I have seen admins and contributors exchanging views in French and German on commons but no two Indians exchanging views in Hindi on their respective talkpages. Further, the admins and editors are practically ignorant about uploads in Hindi on the Commons. One such uploader from India posted all her postmarital problems in the forms scanned copies of complaints to police, Maharashtra Government, Union Government, etc. People were confused as nobody knew Hindi, but the general feeling was that the uploads are personal and hence not acceptable on Commons. I am fortunate that I was the only Indian who could provide the translation of the uploaded file. While the file was deleted, the discussion can be seen here.

Every year Wikimedia organizes the Wikimania Conference and I am surprised to see that till Wikimania 2011, no Hindi contributor thought of translating the program and information files, schedules, etc into Hindi. Fortunately, in 2011 I was able to translate and create group of files of the Wikimania event into Hindi for the first time! I also added one or two files of Urdu and three files in Malayalam to these files and created a separate category of files in the Indian languages for the first time!

4. Why I joined the Hindi Wikipedia?

See the response to question number 2.

5. Have you attended or organized community meet-ups? What was the outcome? What were the positives and negatives from these meet-ups?

There a number of Hindi speakers in my city. Unfortunately, not many are aware of the Hindi Wikipedia. I have made formal and informal meetings with these people, separately and in groups to educate them on using and contributing to the Hindi Wikipedia.

6. What has been your experience in adding content or encouraging content on specific topics?

I feel sad to see regrettably low quality of stubs spread over the Hindi Wikipedia. Several articles are no more in length than a sentence. Further, in case of several articles, facts are stated inaccurately. One example I would like cite is the article on Abdus Salam (अब्दुस सलाम). If you see this old link [4] of the article, you will find a line: "अहमदी होने के कारण इन्हें पाकिस्तान ने अ-मुस्लिम घोषित किया और मृत्यु पर इन्हें कोई आदर नहीं दिया।" (because of his Ahmedi origin, Pakistan declared him Non-Muslim and no honour was shown to him after his dead). The English Wikipedia article has more clarity: "Salam was buried in Bahishti Maqbara, a cemetery established by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Rabwah, Pakistan next to his parents' graves. The epitaph on his tomb initially read "First Muslim Nobel Laureate" but, because of Salam's adherence to the Ahmadiyya Muslim sect, the word "Muslim" was later erased on the orders of a local magistrate, leaving the nonsensical "First Nobel Laureate". Under Ordinance XX, Ahmadis are considered non-Muslims." I removed the original text of the article with the edit summary "अघोषित स्रोत के कारण टिप्पणी हटा दी गयी" (Comment removed because the source is not cited). Many more articles on the Hindi Wikipedia need to be checked for accuracy on similar lines.

7. How are the technical challenges/issues been for your language? Now, is it easy for a new user to start contributing in wiki easily. How about interface translation and other things?

I personally feel that this has improved from what it was during the past few years. However this can be judged by ascertaining the number of people who are joining and continue contributing over a substantial period of time.

8. How is the interaction between Hindi wiki community members? Is there is enough interaction? Or, is it just users working in their own way by just creating articles and not having much interaction with other users? Do you benefit from the discussion with other community members?

I suggest that the talkpages and offline reported events should be taken as a measure of the involvement of the members. My personal feeling (may be wrong) is that talkpage exchanges between Hindi Wikipedians are dismally low compared to English and German Wikipedia and should be encouraged so that members cooperate with each other on a greater scale for Wiki Projects.

9. Could you share any and all ideas - small or big, sucessful & not-so-sucessful - that you think can help drive Hindi and other Indic language projects?

I tried to present an idea in the form of a presentation at Wikimania 2011. Although I could not go to the Conference or present my Idea in person, some of the points which I tried to present may be viewed in my submission proposal.

References

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[2] http://travlang.com/language/

[3] http://www.hindinest.com

[4] http://hi.wikipedia.org/w/index.
php?title=%E0%A4%85%E0%A4%AC%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%A6%E0%A5%81%E0%A4%B8_%E0%A4%B8%E0%A4%B2%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%AE&
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