The consonants emerge from the human vocal apparatus. They are mute and cannot be voiced unless followed by a vowel. The consonants that are presented to learners as part of an alphabet have an inherent vowel e.g. **k(a)** , **t(a) , p(a) etc.,** because **k , t , p** etc. cannot be voiced by themselves

The consonants coming from the throat are the 'gutturals'. The other consonants (the 'palatals', the 'lingual', the 'dentals', and the 'labials' follow, moving up to the base of the tongue, to the front part of the palate, to the back of the teeth, finally to the lips. This is the order and sequence in every Indian language. Herein lays the phonetic thread running through all the languages. The interesting aspect is that the sound produced at every stage is the same in the respective languages .When written down the sound symbols may have different shapes but phonetically they are identical. For instance the sound **"pa"** has the same value in all languages even though it has different visual symbols in different languages.

Any Indian word could be broken up into its phonetically component sound-syllables. These component sound syllables form the building blocks of any word of any Indian language. _Whatever the language, the building blocks are the same. Different sequences and combinations of these syllables (building blocks) go to make the thousands of words in the Indian languages._ How many such sound syllables would there be in total? We will find out how many.

In all Indian languages the consonants are presented in the same sequence. The sounds which arise from the tightened throat are given first; they are called 'gutturals'(**ka** variety) ; then the sounds emanating when pressing the base of the tongue to the palate and releasing them; they are called 'palatals'(**ca** variety) ; this is followed by the sound when the tip of the tongue is folded backwards and pressed against the front part of the palate and releasing them sharply; this sound is the 'lingual'(**ta** variety); next is when the tip of the tongue is pressed against the back of the teeth; these are called 'dentals'(**tha** varity). Lastly follows the sound when the lips are pressed together and released in a small burst. This is called the 'labial' (**pa** variety). In all these cases the sound comes as a cluster of single syllables. In each cluster the sounds, though similar, have slightly different shades. The consonant could be sharp, or sharp (aspirated), or soft and thick; or soft, thick and aspirated .**e.g., ka, kha, ga, gha.** The phonetic values of the consonants in their respective categories in each language are the same. **Ka** in Malayalam has the same phonetic value as **Ka** in Gujarati. Giving them common Roman symbols is not a problem. Let us draw a Table and find out how many common symbols are there in the 'consonant' group. Vide **Table 2**.:

Table 2. Consonants

Gutturals & Palatals

Language	Gutturals						Palatals				
Assamese	ক	থ	গ	ঘ			চ	ছ	জ	ঝ	
Bengali	ক	থ	গ	ঘ			চ	ছ	জ	ঝ	
Odissi	କ	ଖ	ଗ	ଘ			ଚ	ଛ	ଜ	ଝ	
Tamil	க		க				ச		ஜ		
Telugu	క	ఖ	గ	ఘ			చ	ఛ	జ	ఝ	
Kannada	ಕ	ಖ	ಗ	ಘ			ಚ	ಛ	ಜ	ಝ	
Malayalam	ക	ഖ	ഗ	ഘ			ച	ഛ	ജ	ഝ	
Marathi	क	ख	ग	घ			च	छ	ज	झ	
Gujarati	ક	ખ	ગ	ઘ			ચ	છ	જ	ઝ	
Gurmukhi	ਕ	ਖ	ਗ	ਘ	ਖ਼	ਗ਼	ਚ	ਛ	ਜ	ਝ	
Hindi	क	ख	ग	घ			च	छ	ज	झ	
Sanskrit	क	ख	ग	घ			च	छ	ज	झ	
Indian-in- Roman	k(a)	kh(a)	g(a)	gh(a)	q(a)	ĝ(a)	c(a)	ch(a)	j(a)	jh(a)	

Number of "Indian- in- Roman" characters for gutturals & palatals = 10

Linguals & Dentals

Language	Linguals	Dentals

Assamese	ট	ঠ	ড	ঢ	ড়	ঢ়	ত	থ	গ	ঘ
Bengali	ট	ঠ	ড	ঢ	ড়	ঢ়	ত	থ	গ	ঘ
Odissi	ଟ	ଠ	ଡ	ଢ			ତ	ଥ	ଦ	ଧ
Tamil	ட		ட				த		த	
Telugu	ట	ఠ	డ	ఢ			త	థ	ద	ధ

Language										
Kannada	ಟ	ಠ	ಡ	ಢ			ತ	ಥ	ದ	ಧ
Malayalam	ട	ഠ	ഡ	ഢ			ത	ഥ	ദ	ധ
Marathi	ट	ठ	ड	ढ			त	थ	द	ध
Gujarati	ટ	ઠ	ડ	ઢ			ત	થ	દ	ધ
Gurmukhi	ਟ	ਠ	ਡ	ਢ			ਤ	ਥ	ਦ	ਧ
Hindi	ट	ठ	ड	ढ			त	थ	द	ध
Sanskrit	ट	ठ	ड	ढ			त	थ	द	ध
Indian-in-Roman	ŧ(a)	ŧh(a)	đ(a)	đh(a)	**ŕ(a)**	ř̃(a)	t(a)	th(a)	d(a)	dh(a)

Number of "Indian- in- Roman" characters for linguals & dentals = 10

Labials

Language	Labials				
Assamese	প	ফ	ব	ভ	
Bengali	প	ফ	ব	ভ	
Odissi	ପ	ଫ	ବ	ଭ	
Tamil	ப		ப		
Telugu	ప	ఫ	బ	భ	
Kannada	ಪ	ಫ	ಬ	ಭ	
Malayalam	പ	ഫ	ബ	ഭ	

Marathi	प	फ	ब	भ	
Gujarati	પ	ફ	બ	ભ	
Gurmukhi	ਪ	ਢ	ਬ	ਭ	ਢ਼
Hindi	प	फ	ब	भ	फ़
Sanskrit	प	फ	ब	भ	
Roman-in-Indian	p(a)	ph(a)	b(a)	bh(a)	f(a)

Number of "Indian- in- Roman" characters for labials = 5