**Habitual Aspect**

**(Actions performed on a regular basis)**

**Habitual Aspect conjugation at a glance** (detailed explanation below after tables)

**Table 1: The binary habitual aspect conjugation as exists currently.** M=Male, F=Female

| Formula: | Stem+ता/ते/ती –> followed by होना present or past (Golden Rule I) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Example | with verb: खाना | | | |
| Pronoun | M Present | M Past | F Present | F Past |
| Singular | Stem + ता/ते –> होना present | Stem + ता/ते –> होना past | Stem + ती –> होना present | Stem + ती –> होना past |
| मैं | खाता हूँ | खाता था | खाती हूँ | खाती थी |
| तू | खाता है | खाता था | खाती है | खाती थी |
| यह | खाता है | खाता था | खाती है | खाती थी |
| वह | खाता है | खाता था | खाती है | खाती थी |
| Plural | | | | |
| हम | खाते हैं | खाते थे | खाती हैं | खाती थीं |
| तुम | खाते हो | खाते थे | खाती हो | खाती थीं |
| आप | खाते हैं | खाते थे | खाती हैं | खाती थीं |
| ये | खाते हैं | खाते थे | खाती हैं | खाती थीं |
| वे | खाते हैं | खाते थे | खाती हैं | खाती थीं |

**Table 2**: **Factoring in** a *non-binary* **voice**
[M = male,  F = female, Proposed NB = non-binary* (In 2014 the Supreme Court of India acknowledged that gender is not binary "male" or "female" only, but to date there is no way to express oneself in a non-binary voice in Hindi.  *See detailed comment at the end of the document)]

| Formula: | Stem + ता/ते/ ती/तो  –>   followed   by होना   present   or past (Golden  Rule I) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Example** | **with verb:**   खाना | | | | | |
| **Pronoun** | **M Present** | **M Past** | **F Present** | **F Past** | **NB Present** | **NB Past** |
| **Singular** | Stem + ता/ते –> होना present | Stem + ता/ते –> होना past | Stem + ती –> होना present | Stem + ती –> होना past | Stem + तो –> होना present | Stem + तो –> होना past |
| मैं | खाता हूँ | खाता था | खाती हूँ | खाती थी | खातो हूँ | खातो थो |
| तू | खाता है | खाता था | खाती है | खाती थी | खातो है | खातो थो |
| यह | खाता है | खाता था | खाती है | खाती थी | खातो है | खातो थो |
| वह | खाता है | खाता था | खाती है | खाती थी | खातो है | खातो थो |
| **Plural** | | | | | | |
| हम | खाते हैं | खाते थे | खाती हैं | खाती थीं | खातो हैं | खातो थों |
| तुम | खाते हो | खाते थे | खाती हो | खाती थीं | खातो हो | खातो थों |
| आप | खाते हैं | खाते थे | खाती हैं | खाती थीं | खातो हैं | खातो थों |
| ये | खाते हैं | खाते थे | खाती हैं | खाती थीं | खातो हैं | खातो थों |
| वे | खाते हैं | खाते थे | खाती हैं | खाती थीं | खातो हैं | खातो थों |

**Decoding the Mystery of the Hindi Habitual aspectual conjugation:**

In Hindi the **Habitual aspect** is used to talk about **actions performed on a regular (habitual) basis**, whether **present or past**. These are equivalent to the English, "**I come**", "**I see**", "**I conquer**", "**I used to come**", "**I used to see**", "**I used to conquer**".

**Formula:** The formula for conjugating (forming) the habitual aspect in Hindi is:

**Stem + ता/ते/ती/तो** (applying Golden Rule I) **followed by होना present or past**

[**Golden Rule I**: **आ** ending for **Masculine Singular** (MS)**;**

**ए** ending for **Masculine Plural** (MP)

**ई (ईं)** ending for **Feminine Singular & Plural** (FS/FP), where **ई** is

**sometimes nasalized in** the **Plural**]

**ओ (ओं)** ending for **Non-binary Singular & Plural** (NBS/NBP),

where **ओ** is **sometimes nasalized in** the **Plural**]

So, for example, the habitual aspectual conjugation of the verb **खाना** would be:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| MS-Present: | मैं खाता हूँ | MS-Past: | मैं खाता था |
| MP-Present: | हम खाते हैं | MP-Past: | हम खाते थे |
| FS-Present: | मैं खाती हूँ | FS-Past: | मैं खाती थी |
| FP-Present: | हम खाती हैं | FPL-Past: | हम खाती थीं |
| NBS-Present: | मैं खातो हूँ | NBS-Past: | मैं खातो थो |
| NBP-Present: | हम खातो हैं | NBP-Past: | हम खातो थों |

and for the verb **सोना** it would be:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| MS-Present: | मैं सोता हूँ | MS-Past: | मैं सोता था |
| MP-Present: | हम सोते हैं | MP-Past: | हम सोते थे |
| FS-Present: | मैं सोती हूँ | FS-Past: | मैं सोती थी |
| FP-Present: | हम सोती हैं | FP-Past: | हम सोती थीं |
| NBS-Present: | मैं सोतो हूँ | NBS-Past: | मैं सोतो थो |
| NBP-Present: | हम सोतो हैं | NBP-Past: | हम सोतो थों |

Note: **(i)** In the **Present Habitual** conjugation, the auxiliary verb होना **can be dropped in the negative.** However, when dropped, **since there is no difference between** the **FS & FP habitual participle** (i.e. the **खाती, सोती,**etc. portion of the conjugation), **the nasalization from the auxiliary verb होना** [हैं] is **transferred on to the FP habitual participle,** making the **FP habitual participle** into **खातीं, सोतीं,** etc., **thereby indicating difference** between the **FS** & **FP conjugation in the negative.**

**Table 3: Feminine Habitual in the affirmative & the negative.**
Example with the verb खाना.

| Pronoun | Feminine Present Affirmative | Feminine Present Negative (with auxiliary verb होना dropped) |
|---|---|---|
| **Singular** | Stem + ती —> होना present | Negation —> Stem + ती |
| मैं | खाती हूँ | नहीं खाती |
| तू | खाती है | नहीं खाती |
| यह | खाती है | नहीं खाती |
| वह | खाती है | नहीं खाती |
| **Plural** | | Negation —> Stem + तीं |
| हम | खाती हैं | नहीं खातीं |
| तुम | खाती हो | नहीं खातीं |
| आप | खाती हैं | नहीं खातीं |
| ये | खाती हैं | नहीं खातीं |
| वे | खाती हैं | नहीं खातीं |

When factoring in a *non-binary voice* conjugation, the same principles of negation observed for feminine voice conjugations apply. **Since there is no difference between the NBS & NBP habitual participle** (i.e. the खातो, सोतो etc. portion of the conjugation), **the nasalization from the auxiliary verb होना [हैं] is transferred on to the NBP habitual participle,** making the **NBP habitual participle** into खातों, सोतों etc., **thereby indicating difference** between the **NBS** & **NBP conjugation in the negative.**

**Table 4: Non-Binary Habitual in the affirmative & the negative.**
Example with the verb खाना.

| Pronoun | Non-Binary Present Affirmative | Non-Binary Present Negative (with auxiliary verb होना dropped) |
|---|---|---|
| **Singular** | **Stem + तो—> होना present** | **Negation —> Stem + तो** |
| मैं | खातो हूँ | नहीं खातो |
| तू | खातो है | नहीं खातो |
| यह | खातो है | नहीं खातो |
| वह | खातो है | नहीं खातो |
| **Plural** | | **Negation —> Stem + तों** |
| हम | खातो हैं | नहीं खातों |
| तुम | खातो हो | नहीं खातों |
| आप | खातो हैं | नहीं खातों |
| ये | खातो हैं | नहीं खातों |
| वे | खातो हैं | नहीं खातों |

So, for example, in the ***present tense plural*** **affirmative female voice** one would say: **हम** गोश्त **खाती है** । But **while negating** the same, ***in the present tense*** one would say: **हम** गोश्त **खाती थीं,** लेकिन अब (**हम**) नहीं **खातीं** ।

By the same token, in the ***present tense plural*** **affirmative non-binary voice** one would say: **हम** गोश्त **खातो है** । But **while negating** the same, ***in the present tense*** one would say: **हम** गोश्त **खातो थों,** लेकिन अब **हम** नहीं **खातों**।

**(ii)** The auxiliary verb **होना** is *never dropped* **in the past habitual conjugation, irrespective of gender.**

\***Why** factor in ***a non-binary voice*** in Hindi verb conjugations?

Until 2014, in India, the parent culture of Hindi, only 2 genders, viz. male and female, were legally recognized. Transgender, non-binary, transexual, genderqueer and gender-questioning people were forced to identify themselves within a binary gender classification. Hindi being a gendered language, we see this traditional binary gender classification in verb conjugations and in a certain class of nouns and adjectives. Personal pronouns on the other hand are gender neutral in Hindi.

In April 2014, in a landmark ruling, the Supreme Court of India formally recognized the rights of transgender, non-binary, transexual, genderqueer and gender-questioning people to determine their gender as neither male nor female, thereby affirming the existence of a third gender, and ending traditional binary gender classifications.

Although this ruling has had a tremendous impact on gender identification, as far as the Hindi language is concerned, other than being able to choose a "third box" which is neither male nor female on official forms, gender expression in Hindi is still binary. While the masculine plural form is often used across genders in some parts of India and hence could conceivably be used as a "gender neutral" expression, it is still problematic for many as it could be perceived masculine. Like many other gendered languages, Hindi has yet to catch up with realities of identity.

Proposing a *non-binary conjugation*, is an avant-garde attempt to address the limitations posed by the gendered nature of verb conjugations in Hindi. It is not (yet :-)) part of the Hindi language.

At the very least, such an attempt will hopefully start the much needed conversation about the gendered nature of Hindi and realities of identity.