

Perfective/Completed Action Aspect
(A one-time action that has been completed)

Decoding the Mystery of the Hindi Perfective or Completed Action aspect:

I. In Hindi, the Perfective or Completed Action (CA) aspect is used to convey that an actual one time action has been completed. These are equivalent to the English, “I came”, “I saw”, “I conquered”.

Sometimes, depending on the context, a more detailed time frame is given as to whether the action was completed recently or more in the remote past. The **recent past Perfect tense** is equivalent to the English **I have come**”, “**I have seen**”, “**I have conquered**”, while the **remote past Perfect tense** is equivalent to the English, **I had come**”, “**I had seen**”, “**I had conquered**”.

Formula:

(i) The formula for **conjugating (forming) verbs in the Perfective (CA) aspect** in Hindi is:

Existing binary (Male/Female) conjugations **Stem + आ/ए/ई/ई** (applying **Golden Rule I***)
Factoring in a non-binary**conjugation **Stem + आ/ए/ई/ई/ओ/ओं** (applying **Golden Rule I**)

(ii) To indicate that the action was completed recently, one tags on the present tense of the auxiliary verb होना. The formula for the **recent Perfective (CA) aspectual conjugation** in Hindi is:

with non-binary factored in : **Stem + आ/ए/ई/ओ** (applying **Golden Rule I***) followed by **होना present**

(iii) To indicate that the action was completed a while ago, one tags on the past tense of the auxiliary verb होना. The formula for conjugating the **remote Perfective (CA) aspect** in Hindi is:

with non-binary factored in: **Stem + आ/ए/ई/ओ** (applying **Golden Rule I***) followed by **होना past**

*[**Golden Rule I factoring in a non-binary identification:**

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]**

Note: In # (ii) above, i.e. the **recent past** and # (iii) above, i.e. the **remote past Perfect/CA** conjugations, **the Perfect or CA participle**, in other words the **Stem + आ/ए/ई/ओ** (applying **Golden Rule I**) portion of the conjugation, **for FS & FP conjugation is the same**, and **the NBS and NBP conjugation is the same**. This is because in these time frames, for FS/FP and NBS/NBP ****number is indicated in the होना auxiliary portion of the conjugation**.

So for example, the Perfective/CA aspect of the verb **पहुँचना** would be conjugated as follows:

(i) The Simple Perfect of the verb **पहुँचना** “to reach”, is:

MS: मैं **पहुँचा**

MPL: हम **पहुँचे**

FS : मैं **पहुँची**

FPL: हम **पहुँचीं** (nasalized participle)

NBS : मैं **पहुँचो**

NBPL: हम **पहुँचों** (nasalized participle)

where the Perfect/CA participles **पहुँचा/पहुँचे/पहुँची/पहुँचीं/पहुँचो/पहुँचों** only indicate that the action has been completed.

(ii) In the Present Perfect (**recent completion of action**), the verb पहुँचना “to reach”, would be conjugated as:

MS-Recent Past: मैं पहुँचा हूँ

MPL-Recent Past: हम पहुँचे हैं

FS-Recent Past: मैं पहुँची हूँ

FPL-Recent Past: हम पहुँची (note: non-nasalized participle पहुँची) हैं

NBS : मैं पहुँचो हूँ

NBPL: हम पहुँचो (note: non-nasalized participle पहुँचो) हैं

where the **auxiliary होना conjugated in the present tense** indicates that the action was completed recently. ो

(iii) In the Past Perfect (**remote completion of action**), the verb पहुँचना “to reach”, would be conjugated as:

MS-Remote Past: मैं पहुँचा था

MPL-Remote Past: हम पहुँचे थे

FS-Remote Past: मैं पहुँची थी

FPL-Remote Past: हम पहुँची (note: non-nasalized participle पहुँची) थीं

NBS : मैं पहुँचो थो

NBPL: हम पहुँचो (note: non-nasalized participle पहुँचो) थों

where the **auxiliary होना conjugated in the past tense** indicates that the action was completed a while ago.

The English equivalent of the following Perfective/CA sentences with the verb पहुँचना “to reach”, would be:

मैं समय पर पहुँचा = I **reached** on time

मैं समय पर पहुँचा हूँ = I **have reached** on time

मैं समय पर पहुँचा था = I **had reached** on time

II. ने (Transitive) and non-ने (Intransitive) verbs

The Perfective/CA aspect is the only aspect where we encounter the ergative case marker or “agentive postposition” ने.

The agentive postposition ने occurs when the verb being used has an object, whether explicit or implicit. Such verbs are called **transitive verbs**(or **ने verbs**).

Verbs that do not have an object (largely verbs of motion, etc), are called **intransitive verbs** (or non-ने verbs).

A. Transitive/ने verbs:

Placement of ने: In a sentence, the agentive postposition ने is placed after the person doing the action. It works like a postposition in that every part of speech preceding it that has anything to do with it is in the oblique form.

Furthermore, the occurrence of ने blocks agreement of the verb with so called subject (**person doing the action**) of the sentence. Think of it as a “ने wall” coming up between the doer of the action and the action (verb) itself, forcing the verb to agree with the object of the sentence.

So the transitive (ने) verb खाना “to eat”, would be conjugated as:

MS/FS/NBS: मैंने खाया;

मैंने अंडा खाया; मैंने अंडे खाए;

मैंने मिठाई खाई; मैंने मिठाइयाँ खाई

MP/FP/NBP: हमने खाया

हमने अंडा खाया; हम ने अंडे खाए;

हमने मिठाई खाई; हम ने मिठाइयाँ खाई

MS/FS/NBS-Recent Past: मैंने खाया है;

मैंने अंडा खाया है; मैंने अंडे खाए हैं;

मैंने मिठाई खाई है ; मैंने मिठाइयाँ खाई हैं

MP/FP/NBP-Recent Past: हमने खाया है

हमने अंडा खाया है; हम ने अंडे खाए हैं

हमने मिठाई खाई है; हम ने मिठाइयाँ खाई हैं

MS/FS/NBS-Remote Past: मैंने खाया था

मैंने अंडा खाया था; मैंने अंडे खाए थे;

मैंने मिठाई खाई थी ; मैंने मिठाइयाँ खाई थीं

MP/FP/NBP-Remote Past: हमने खाया था;

हमने अंडा खाया था; हम ने अंडे खाए थे

हमने मिठाई खाई थी ; मैंने मिठाइयाँ खाई थीं

Note: In Perfective/CA aspect conjugations of **transitive verbs** (in other words, in **ने verbs**), the *aspect marker and tense* **agree in gender and number** with **the object** of the sentences or with that to which something is being done.

If no object is specified, more often than not the conjugated verb is in the masculine singular, although sometimes, if the object has been established, the gender of the established object is used even if the object is implied in (immediate) subsequent conversation.

Pronouns used with the agentive postposition ने:

Although the agentive postposition **ने** works as a postposition in that every part of speech preceding it that has anything to do with it has to be in the oblique form, the pronouns used along with it differ slightly from the “oblique pronouns” used with simple postpositions. The pronouns used with the agentive postposition **ने** are as follows:

मैं = मैंने

हम = हमने

तू = तूने

तुम = तुमने

आप = आपने

यह = इसने

ये = इन्होंने

वह = उसने

वे = उन्होंने

कौन? Singular = किसने; Plural = किन्होंने;

कोई = = किसीने

B. Intransitive/non-ने verbs:

Verbs that do not have an object (largely verbs of motion, etc), are called **intransitive verbs** (or non-ने verbs). These are typically verbs of motion. In their conjugation they agree with the “doer” of the action, or in other words, the subject of the sentence.

So the intransitive (**non-ने**) verb **उठना** “to get up”, would be conjugated as:

MS: मैं **उठा**

MS-Recent Past: मैं **उठा हूँ**

MP-Recent Past: हम **उठे हैं**

MS-Remote Past: मैं **उठा था**

MPL-Remote Past: हम **उठे थे**

FS: मैं **उठी**

FS-Recent Past: मैं **उठी हूँ**

FP-Recent Past: हम **उठी** (note: **non-nasalized participle उठी**) हैं

FP-Remote Past: हम **उठी** (note: **non-nasalized participle उठी**) थीं

NBS: मैं **उठो

NBS-Recent Past: मैं **उठो हूँ**

NBP-Recent Past: हम **उठो** (note: **non-nasalized participle उठो**) हैं

NBP-Remote Past: हम **उठो** (note: **non-nasalized participle उठो**) थीं

General note relevant to both transitive and intransitive verbs, and irregular patterns on the next page.

General Note relevant to both transitive and intransitive verbs:

1. Verb stems ending in आ: In the Perfective/CA aspect, if the verb stem ends in the vowel आ, in the masculine singular conjugation, a य is placed between the verb stem and the Golden Rule I आ ending for MS.

So in the masculine singular, the intransitive (non-ने) verb सोना “to sleep”, would be written as:

MS: मैं सोया

MS-Recent Past: MS: मैं सोया हूँ

MS- Remote Past: मैं सोया था

For the masculine plural, one may or may not place a य between the verb stem and Golden Rule I ए ending.

For a non-binary voice, given that the suggested non-binary voice marker (Golden Rule I marker) for a non-binary voice is ओ, one would place a य between the verb stem and the Golden Rule I marker ओ for non-binary singular and ओँ for non-binary plural.

2. Verb stems ending in ई: Similarly, if the verb stem ends in the vowel ई, in the masculine singular conjugation, the ई is first shortened and then य is placed between the verb stem and आ ending of Golden Rule I. For the masculine plural, one may or may not place a य between the shortened ई and Golden Rule I ए ending.

For a non-binary voice, given that the suggested non-binary voice marker (Golden Rule I marker) is ओ, one could place a य between verb stem with a shortened ई and the Golden Rule I marker ओ for non-binary singular and ओँ for non-binary plural, though it is technically not required.

Such verbs whose verb stems end in an ई usually fall in the category of irregular conjugations as their Feminine Singular and Feminine Plural conjugations are just their original verb stem, non-nasalized for FS and nasalized for FPL.

For potential interference/confusion with imperative constructions, see note under irregular verb conjugations.

Irregular Perfect/Completed Action Tense conjugations:

Irregular conjugation patterns in the Perfective/CA aspectual forms largely refer to verb conjugation patterns where the verb stem is slightly modified before applying the general formula. While there is no one formula for such irregular conjugations in the Perfective/CA aspect, one can identify a couple of patterns:

Pattern 1 (Pat 1): **MS** and **MP: X (Special verb stem) + Golden Rule I** (viz. आ/ए)
FS and **FP: X (Special verb stem) + Golden Rule I** (viz. ई/ई)
NS and **NP: X (Special verb stem) + Golden Rule I** (viz. ओ/ओं)

NOTE: If in Pat. 1, X is a consonant with its inherent अ vowel intact, a य is placed right after the X (special verb stem) and before the Golden Rule I आ ending for MS (see example below).

Pattern 2 (Pat 2): **MS** and **MP: X (Special verb stem) + इ + Golden Rule I** (viz. आ/ए)
FS and **FP: X (Special verb stem) + Golden Rule I** (viz. ई/ई)
 *****NS** and **NP: X (Special verb stem) + Golden Rule I** (viz. ओ/ओं)

NOTE: In Pat 2, since in X (the special verb stem) is followed by the vowel इ, in the masculine singular conjugation, a य is placed between the X (special verb stem) and the Golden Rule I आ ending for MS.

The following are some of the more common verbs that have irregular conjugation patterns in the Perfect/CA tense:

Irregular Pattern	Verb	X	MS	MP	FS	FP	NBS	NBP
Pat 1	होना	हु	हुआ	हुए	हुई	हुई	हुओ	हुओं
Pat 1	जाना	ग	गया	गए	गई	गई	गयो	गयों
Pat 2	करना	क	किया	किए	की	कीं	*** कियो	*** कियों

Irregular Pattern	Verb	X	MS	MP	FS	FP	NBS	NBP
Pat 2	लेना	ल	लिया	लिए	ली	लीं	*** लियो	*** लियों
Pat 2	देना	द	दिया	दिए	दी	दीं	*** दियो	*** दियों
Pat 2	पीना	प	पिया	पिए	पी	पीं	*** पियो	*** पियों

(i) ***The NB conjugation for transitive verbs/ने verbs listed above is a theoretical exercise, as currently there are no non-binary inanimate nouns in Hindi. Animate nouns too are currently classified on a binary-gender scale in Hindi. The non-binary conjugations suggested in these notes, for now would largely apply only to people according to their gender-identification.

(ii) The perfective/CA aspectual form of the verb करना can be conjugated either in the irregular form as demonstrated above, or following the pattern of regular conjugations, where the MS would be करा, MP करे, FS करी, FP करीं, and NBS and NBP, when and if it ever occurs, would be करो and करों respectively. In this regular conjugation of करना, the NBS करो is also the imperative/command form for तुम. However, interference is minimal as, besides context (which drives a lot of Hindi ;-)), the ergative case marker or “agentive postposition” ने would leave no ambiguity that it is the perfective/CA aspect at play. This same comment would apply to the NBS perfect/CA tense conjugation of the verb पीना, as पियो is also the imperative/command form for तुम.

****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.



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