

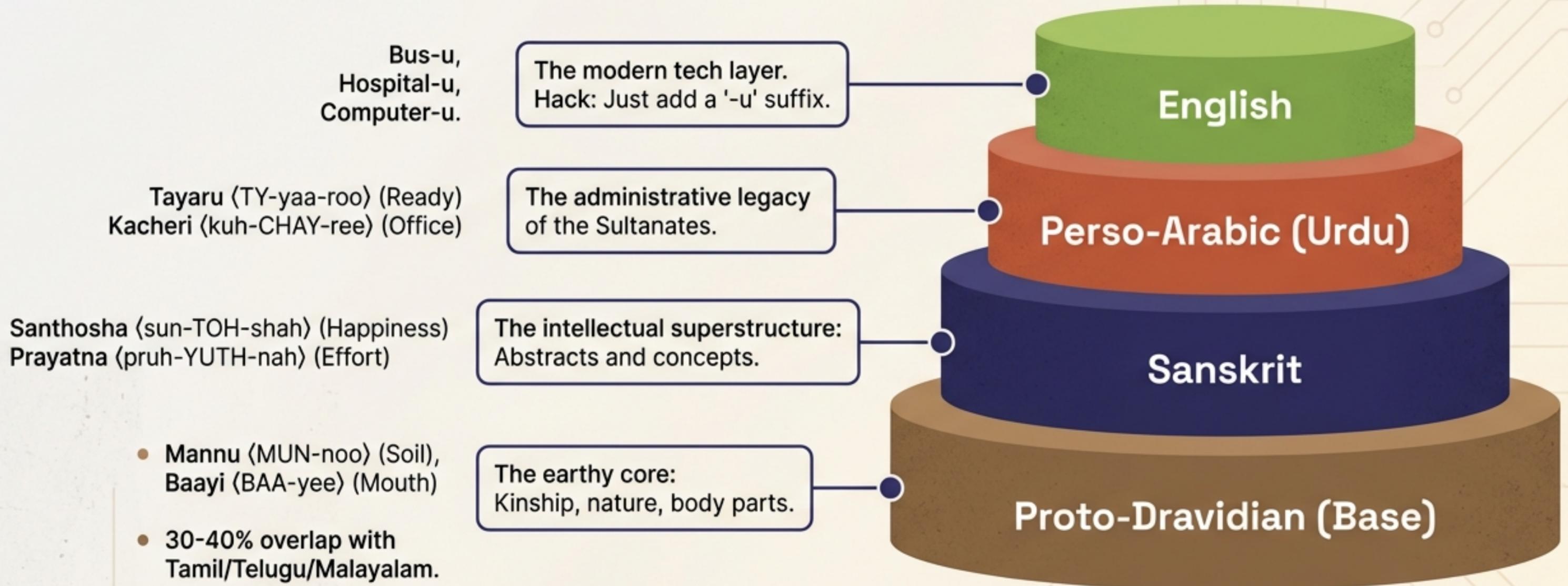
Namma Bengaluru: A Hacker's Guide to Spoken Kannada

Unlocking street-smart vocabulary, auto-rickshaw protocols, and local slang for expats and professionals.



The Linguistic Layer Cake

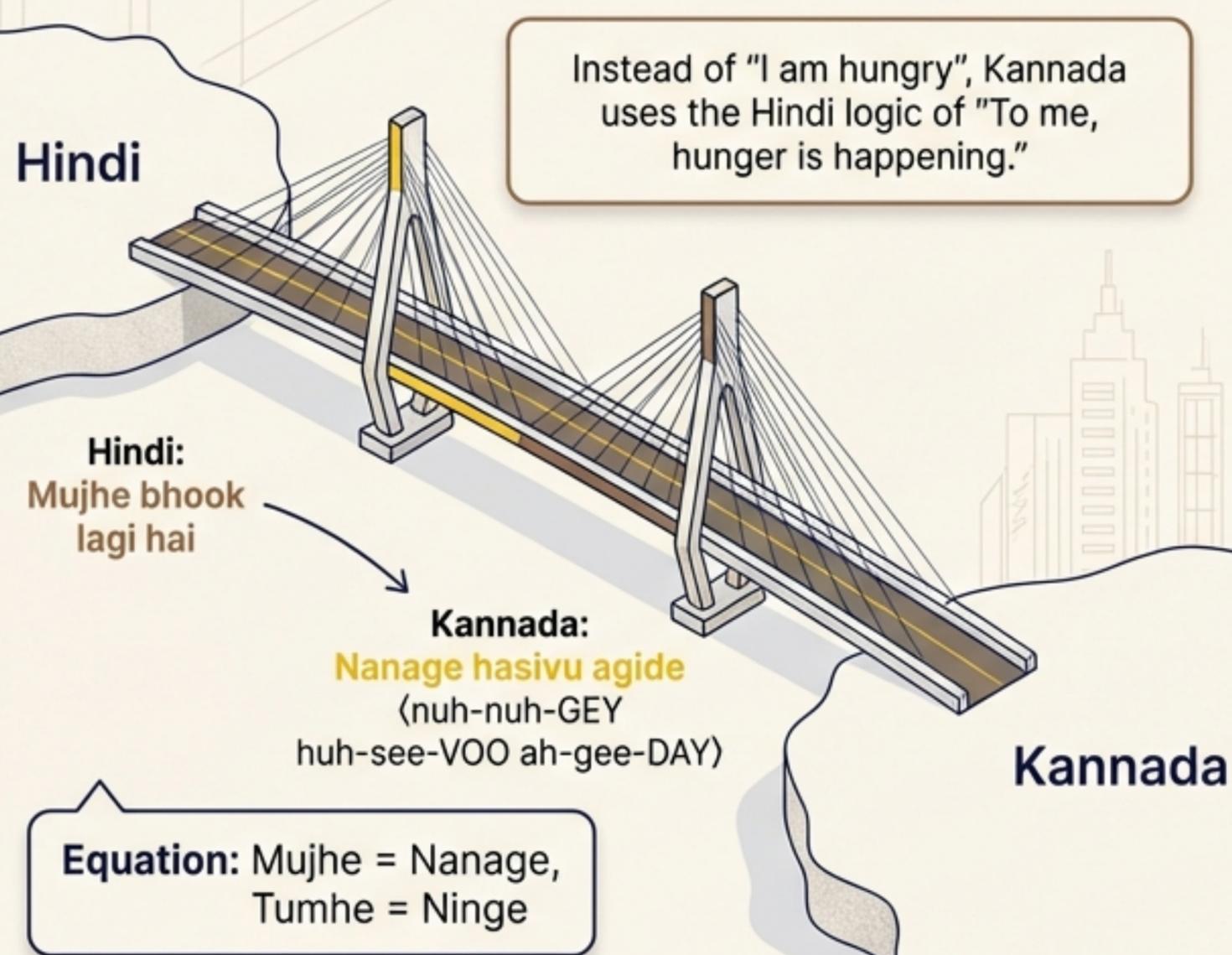
Kannada reflects millennia of history. If you speak another Indian language or English, you already have a massive head start.



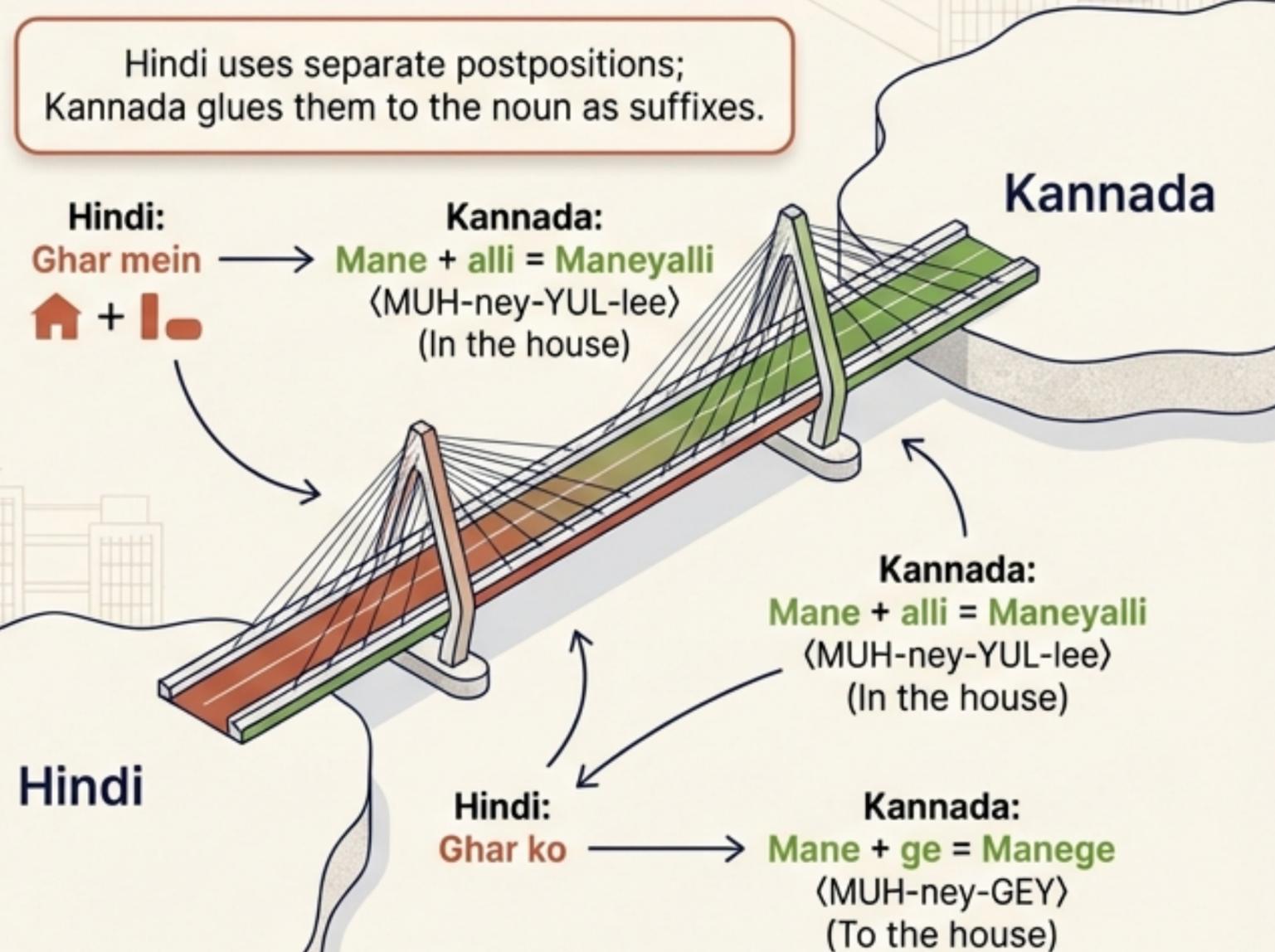
The Grammar Bridges

Bypass rote memorization by mapping the underlying logic.

Bridge 1: The 'Mujhe' Connection (Dative Case)



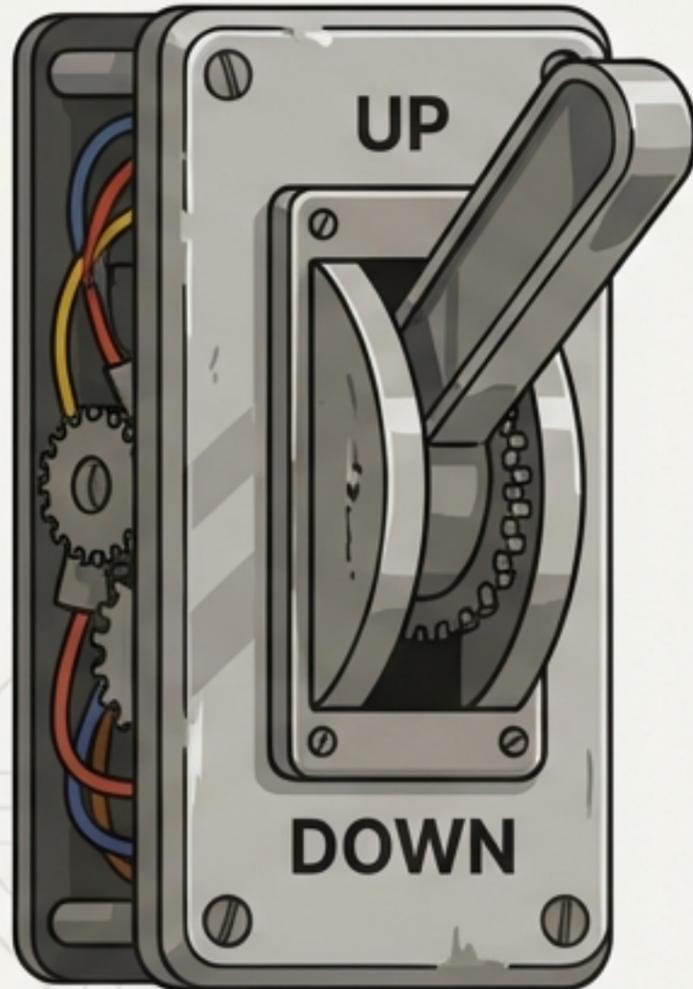
Bridge 2: Agglutination Logic (Suffixes)



The Binary Engine of Needs

Clear expression of your desires, boundaries, and reality

The Desire Toggle



Bēku

⟨BAY-koo⟩
(Want / Need / Must)



Example: Neeru bēku
(I want water)

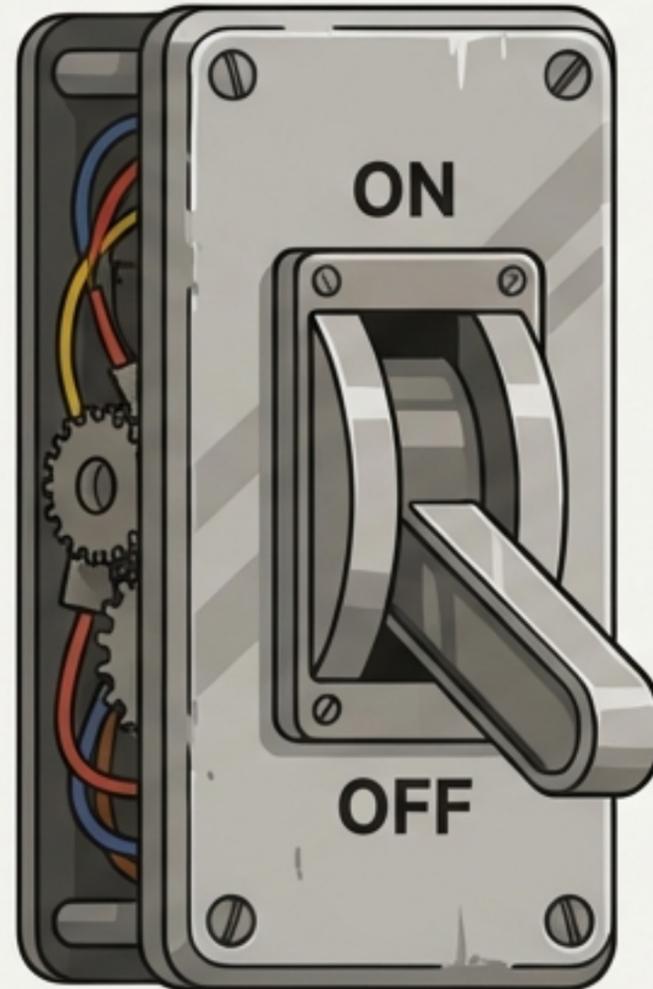
Bēda

⟨BAY-dah⟩
(Don't want / Don't need)



Example: Coffee bēda
(No coffee)

The Reality Toggle



Gothilla

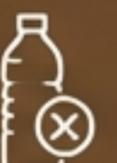
⟨goh-TILL-lah⟩
(I don't know)



Example: Nanage Kannada
gothilla (I don't know Kannada)

Illa

⟨ILL-lah⟩
(No / Not here / Absence)



Example: Neeru illa
(There is no water)

The Hierarchy of Respect

Bengaluru social grammar is built on indirect politeness. Using the wrong form can be offensive.



Green Light (Safe/Default): **Neevu** ⟨NEE-voo⟩ (Aap/Tum).

Always add **-i** or **-ri** to the verb root.

Baa → **Banni** ⟨BUN-nee⟩ (Come). **Hogu** → **Hogi** ⟨HOH-gee⟩ (Go).

Yellow Light (Caution): **Neenu** ⟨NEE-noo⟩ (Tu).

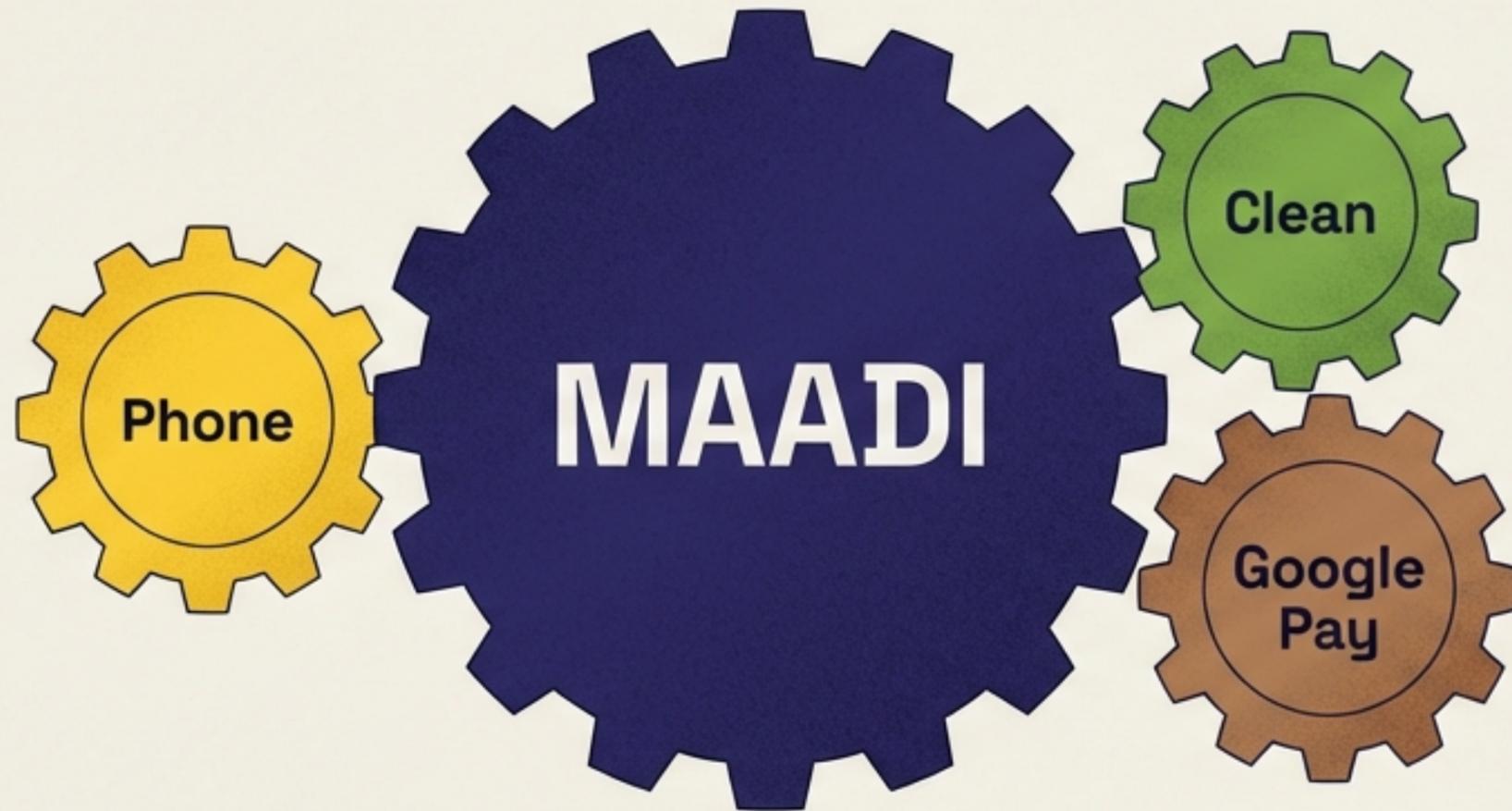
Use only with very close friends or children.

Red Light (Danger):

Dropping suffixes with strangers is blunt and rude.

Hogo! (Get lost!)

Core Actions & The 'Maadi' Engine



The Maadi Hack:

Maadi (MAA-dee) is the universal 'Do' verb (Karo/Kijiye). Attach it to any English noun to create a Kanglish verb.

Phone maadi (Call me) | **Clean maadi** (Clean this) | **Google Pay maadi** (Pay me)

The 6 Core Commands (Always Respectful):

Kodi (KOH-dee) (Give)		Thagonli (tuh-GOHN-lee) (Take)		Nillisi (NIL-lee-see) (Stop)	
Nodi (NOH-dee) (Look)		Heli (HAY-lee) (Tell/Say)		Kalsi (KUL-see) (Send - e.g., 'Location kalsi')	

Time, Numbers & Transactions



The Transaction Anchor:
Esht-aithu? (ESHT-eye-too)
(How much did it become?)

The critical phrase for all financial exchanges.



Base Numbers (1-10):

Ondu (1) **Eradu** (2) **Mooru** (3) **Naalku** (4) **Aidhu** (5)
Aaru (6) **Yelu** (7) **Entu** (8) **Ombathu** (9) **Hattu** (10)

Zero is **Sonne**. **Hundreds** is **Nooru**.

Fractions: **Ardha** (Half), **Kaalu** (Quarter).

Time & Scheduling:

Eega (EE-gah) (Now) vs. **Aamele** (AAH-may-ley) (Later).

Ivathu (ee-VUH-too) (Today) vs. **Naale** (NAA-ley) (Tomorrow).

Example: 'Naale sigona (see-GOH-nah)
(Let's meet tomorrow).

Social & Office Etiquette

Move from visitor to local colleague with these cultural staples.

The Universal Icebreaker:

Oota aitha? (OO-tah EYE-tah) (Had lunch/dinner?)

In Bangalore, you don't ask "How are you?"—you ask about food.



Office Status Updates:

- **Kelsa** (KEL-sah) (Work) + **Mugithu** (moo-GEE-too) (Finished/Over).
Example: "Meeting mugithu."
- **Swalpa** (SWAL-pah) (A little) is a polite softener.
"Swalpa busy iddini."



The Cultural Goodbye:

Never say "I am going" (inauspicious). Always say **Naanu hogi bartini** (NAA-noo HOH-gee bar-TEE-nee) (Literally: I will go and come back).

The Auto-Rickshaw Protocol



Step 1: Destination Check.

Always ask before boarding:
"[Location] hoguttha?"
(HOH-goo-THAH) (Will it go to...?)



Step 2: Pricing Demand.

- "Meter haaki" (MAY-ter HAA-kee)
(Put the meter down).
- Refusing surge: "One-and-half bēda"
(BAY-dah).



Step 4: Speed.

'Bega hogi' (BAY-gah HOH-gee)
(Go fast) vs.
'Nidhana hogi' (Go slow).



Step 3: Directing Motion.

Mundhe (MOON-dhey) (Forward)
Edagade (ay-duh-GAH-dey) (Left Side)
Balagade (buh-luh-GAH-dey) (Right Side)
'Illi nillisi' (ILL-lee NIL-lee-see) (Stop here).

Household Logistics & Management

Renting & Utilities:

Baadige

⟨BAA-dee-gey⟩
(Rent)

Current hogide

(Power is gone)

Neeru barthilla

(Water is not coming)



Directing Domestic Help (The Nuance of Cleaning):



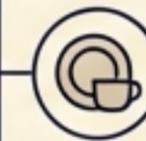
Kasa gudisu

⟨KUH-sah goo-DEE-soo⟩
(Sweep the floor)



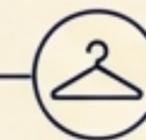
Nela oresu

⟨NAY-lah oh-RAY-soo⟩
(Wipe/mop the floor)



Paathre tolee

⟨PAA-trey toh-LAY⟩
(Wash vessels/hard objects)



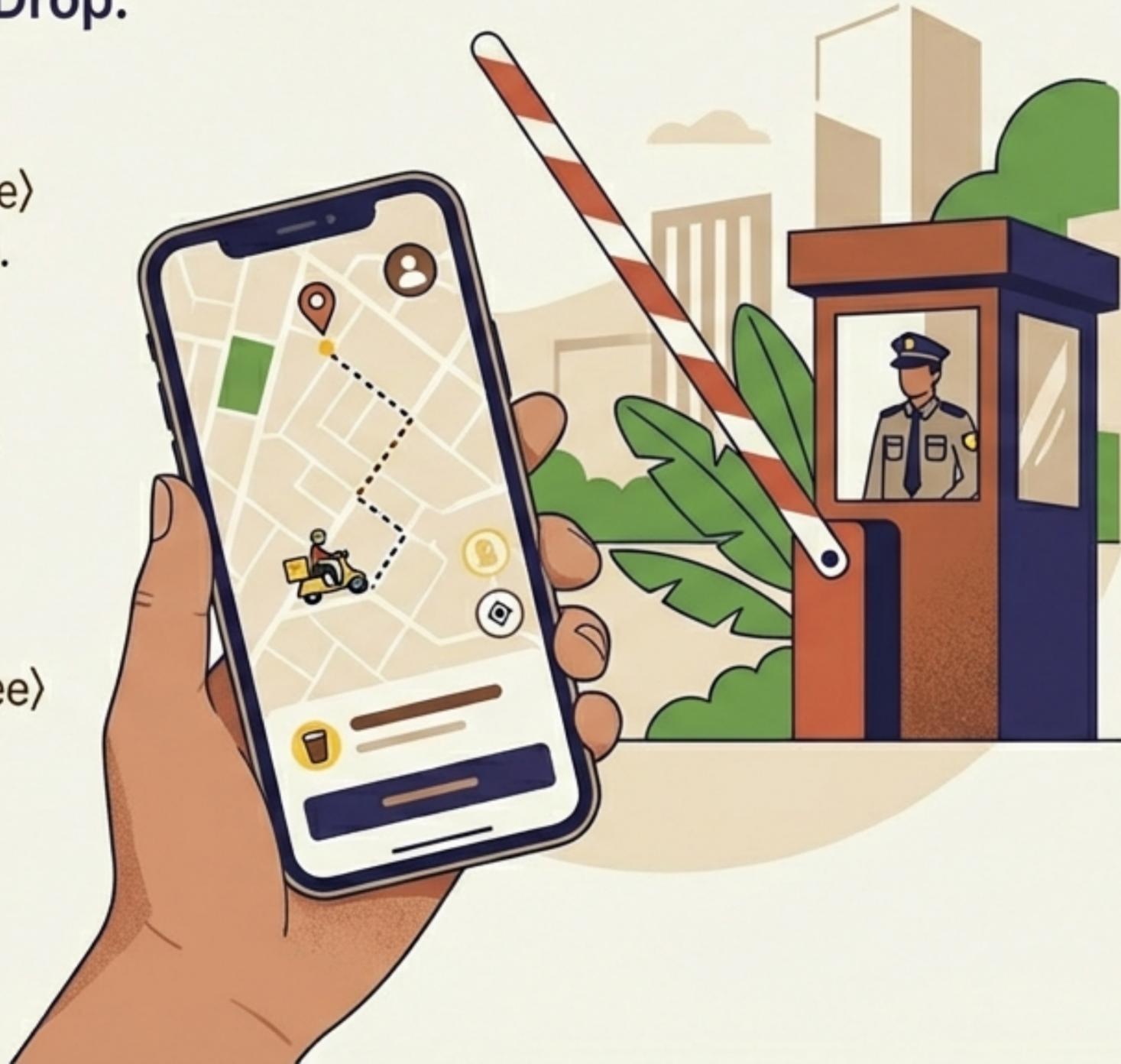
Batte ogey

⟨BUT-tey OH-gay⟩
(Wash clothes/fabrics)

Delivery & Campus Navigation

The Swiggy/Zomato Drop:

- **Location kalsideeni**
(location kul-see-DAY-nee)
(I have sent the location).
- **Gate hatra bidi**
(gate HUH-trah BEE-dee)
(Leave it at the gate).
- **Olagade banni**
(OH-luh-guh-dey BUN-nee)
(Come inside) vs.
Horagade iri
(Stay outside).



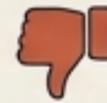
Tech Park Security:

- **Naanu illi kelsa maadtheeni**
(NAA-noo ILL-lee KEL-sah MAAD-thee-nee)
(I work here).
- **ID Card ide**
(ee-DAY)
(I have my ID card).

Descriptors & Adjectives

Quality:

Ketta
(KET-tah)
(Bad)



Chennagide
(chen-nah-GEE-dey)
(Good/Nice)

 'Oota chennagide' (Food is good).

Size/Quantity:

Chikka
(CHIK-kah)
(Small)



Dodda
(DOD-dah)
(Big)

Bargaining:

Kami
(KUH-mee)
(Less)



'Swalpa kami maadi'
(Make it a little less).

Jaasthi
(JAAS-tee)
(Too much)

Sensation:

Thannige
(THUN-nee-gey)
(Cold)

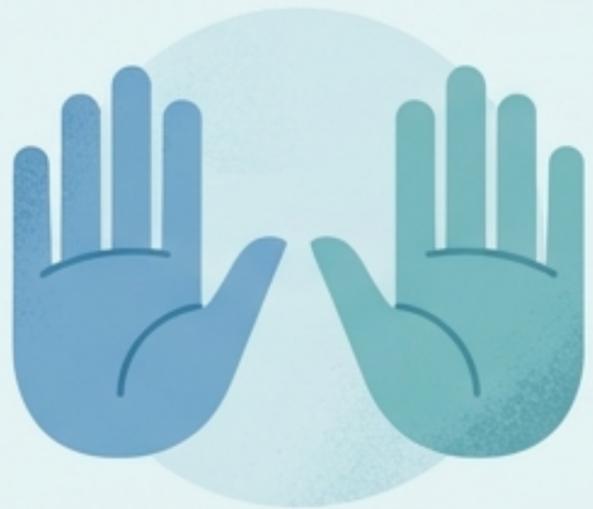


Bisi
(BEE-see)
(Hot)

Khara
(KHUH-rah)
(Spicy)



Sihi
(SEE-hee)
(Sweet)



Conflict & Medical Emergencies



De-escalation Tactics:

- **Summane iri** ⟨SOOM-muh-ney ee-REE⟩ (Just be quiet / Calm down).
- **Thondre illa / Parvagilla** ⟨THON-drey ILL-lah⟩ (No problem / It's okay).
- **Nanna thappu aaythu** ⟨NUN-nah THUP-poo AAY-too⟩ (My mistake happened - the safest way to apologize).

Medical Emergencies:

- **Bega hospitalge hogi** ⟨BAY-gah hospital-GEY HOH-gee⟩ (Go to the hospital fast).
- **Nannige help bēku** ⟨NUN-nee-gey help BAY-koo⟩ (I need help).
- **Tale novu ide** (My head is aching).

Bangalore Slang & 'Kanglish'



The Brotherhood:

Macha / Maga (MUH-chah / MUH-gah): Universal term for a close male friend or peer (Bro/Dude).

Guru / Boss (GOO-roo): The universal, slightly respectful address for auto drivers or strangers.

Street Descriptors:

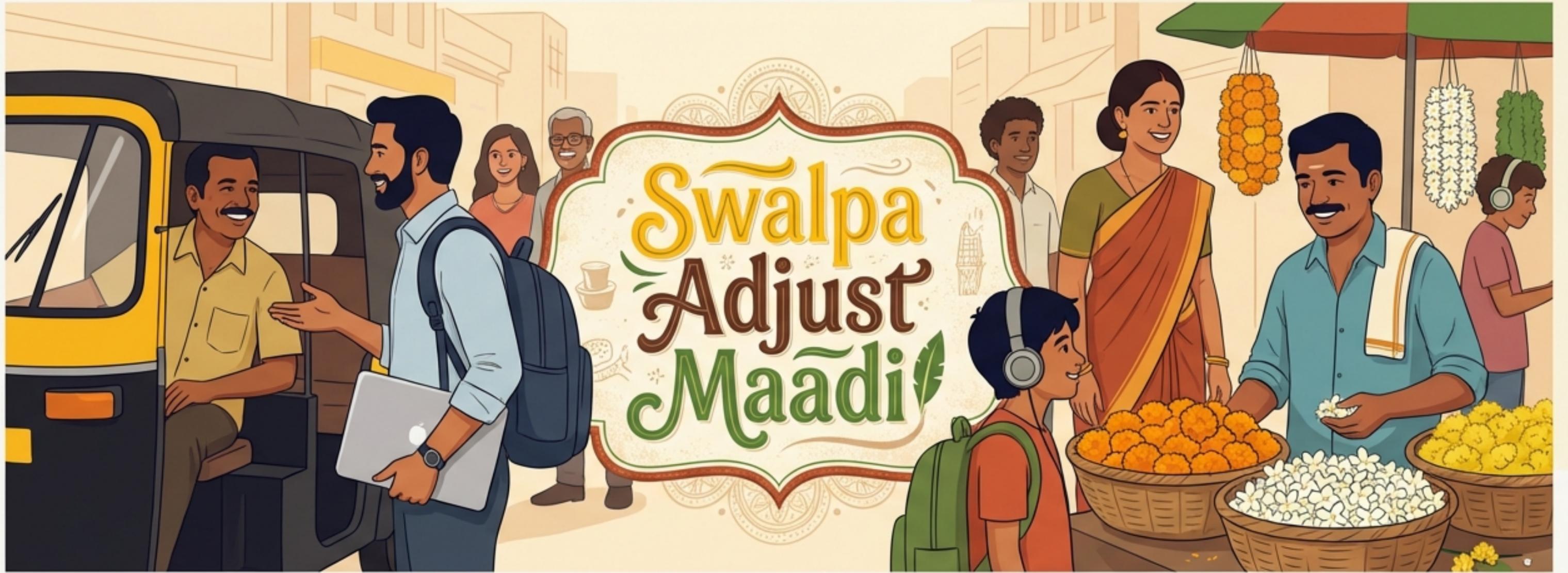
Bomabaat / Sakkath (bom-BAAT / SUK-kuth): Fantastic / Super. "Movie sakkath agithu."

Dabba (DUB-bah): Useless, broken, or low quality (literally: tin box).

Dabba (DUB-bah): Useless, broken, or low quality (literally: tin box).

Scene illa: No chance / No issue. Used to instantly dismiss a problem.





Swalpa Adjust Maadi <SWAL-pah adjust MAA-dee>

Please adjust / compromise a little.

This is more than a Kanglish phrase; it is the cultural cornerstone of Bengaluru. Whether you are asking an auto driver for 5 rupees change, negotiating space on a crowded Metro, or dealing with a delay—this phrase diffuses tension and signals a cooperative attitude.

Master this, and you are no longer a visitor. Welcome to Namma Bengaluru.