Besides its linguistic diversity, South Asia also hosts a large number of scripts. While the emergence of ethnic groups based on linguistic factors is well studied, research on the influence of scripts on identity formation among ethnonlinguistic and religious communities is still at the beginning. This presentation will give a preliminary systematic overview on the importance of writing systems in contemporary South Asia. By presenting some significant examples, it will make apparent that the growing importance of script is connected to the formation and spread of religions, the emergence of ethnic consciousness and nationalism as well as to the evolution of media technologies, for instance to the introduction of the printing press and computer technology. First conclusions in this presentation draw on a comparative study based, among others, on long-term field studies in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.