Deprivation of access to quality education is a major factor contributing towards their [indigenous peoples’] social marginalisation, poverty and dispossession.

(John Henriksen, Chairperson-Rapporteur, UN Expert Mechanism on the rights of indigenous peoples, Henriksen 2009: 10)

Worldwide, minority children suffer disproportionately from unequal access to quality education. Disadvantaged minorities are far more likely to receive an inferior education than a good one. Disadvantaged minority children are more likely to start school later than the prescribed age, if at all; they are less likely to be ready or well prepared for school; and more prone to drop out or fail to achieve in school. That perpetuates the cycle of poverty, leaving them unable to later fulfill their human potential, to gain meaningful employment and to become respected members of society.

(Gay McDougall, UN Independent Expert on Minority Issues, McDougall 2009: 7)

1 Introduction: The foundations for social justice and inclusion of the powerless

In this chapter, we will, after a more general introduction to social justice and inclusion of the marginalised, mainly concentrate on educational inequality, because schools are the microcosm of the unjust society; they are the handmaiden of the powerful to maintain their dominance. Educational inequality and discrimination will be presented in relation to the language of instruction in several ways. After this introduction, we consider the following questions: In section 2, we ask what rights people whose first language is not the society’s dominant language have in human rights law? Are these rights implemented? In the following section 3, we ask what the role of mother tongues is in education, and what should be done if we follow results from large-scale educational research. In section 4, we compare educational models, showing which ones achieve positive results; it will be clear from Table 1 what some of the central characteristics of the “positive” programs are. Finally, in section 5, we discuss some of the challenges in trying to reach social justice through linguistic human rights in education.

Thinking of the role of education in the inclusion or marginalisation of people, it is axiomatic that justice is a prerequisite for peace and there will be no peace and justice without the inclusion of the powerless; they have to be able to participate on equal terms in the economic, social, political, cultural and educational domains of a nation. Denial of participation on equal terms entrenches inequality in all of the
above domains. It engenders violence, physical and psychological, in the relationship between different people. It causes marginalisation of some people, which fences them off from resources and destroys their sense of belonging. A recent United Nations Development Programme (2017; referred to in Deen 2018) report, drawing from extensive empirical analysis, shows that marginalisation is one of the main factors that drive young people in many nations into subscribing to the ideology of violence to solve problems and into taking direct action through violent means. Most of the nations in the world are multi-ethnic and multi-lingual, though they may have different policies in relation to their approach to plurality; they may thus have different perceptions of nationhood. A nation is a state whose citizens share and defend voluntarily the idea of belonging to it in spite of their historical, ethnic and linguistic differences. Such a nation may at a given point in time be in the making, it may be developing from a colony, or it may have been a political formation at an earlier point in time. A just and equitable policy about the ethnic and linguistic differences is one of the cornerstones in building a nation that ensures participation on equal terms for all citizens and, consequently, equal justice. This is social justice, which offsets any historical denial of opportunities. This is what will produce an inclusive nation.

When equal participation is denied for reasons of ethnic and linguistic differences to perpetuate the existing power structure (an example of ethnicism and linguicism), those excluded become the marginalised people who do not have control over their lives. They could be referred to by the term minorities in the sense that they are non-dominant people. People can be marginalised by many other ascriptions as well such as religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, the amount of formal education or lack of it, etc., but the various kinds of marginalisation need to be treated separately. The term “minority” does not have any official legal definition. But the term includes people marginalised by their historical origin, by their place in technological advancement and/or by their smaller number. We refer to them as ITMs; this stands for Indigenous (such as the Saami in the Nordic countries) / Tribal (such as Gond in India) peoples / Minority groups (this includes autochthonous, national, immigrant and refugee minorities, the differently abled, and the minoritised/marginalised). The last two are not absolute terms. They refer to people in relation to other people in a power structure. They are appropriately called minoritised people, as “minoritised” carries the semantics of transitivity. They are marginalised by someone denying them agency. This understanding of ITMs as a product of an economic and political process, rather than an independently standing entity, will explain the fact that marginalisation is relative: One people or group, who are marginalised or minoritised in one context of power structure, may be marginalising or minoritising others in another context of power structure. Groups or languages, which have dominant status in a national context, may lack dominance in an international context; those which have dominant status in the regional context of a state or province may lack it in the national context (Mohanty 2019). To give an example, Hindi, being one of the two official languages of India, is a dominant language in the Indian national context of multiple
languages, but not in the international context (though Hindi has more speakers than many so-called international languages). Tamil, the sole official language in the state of Tamil Nadu, is dominant in relation to speakers of other languages in the state, but it is not dominant in relation to other languages in the Indian national context. The ITM languages in general do not have a dominant status in any context of a nation; their non-dominant status does not shift in relational terms.

A people which is numerically smaller (thus a demographic minority) may still be dominant because of historical, political, educational and economic reasons. People numerically in the majority are non-dominant in this case. Two different examples of this could be Russian speakers in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the former Soviet Union, or English speakers in many African countries, both during colonisation and after political decolonisation. In ITM the “M” thus also includes such minoritised populations along with demographic minority populations. Inclusiveness in their case with regard to proportional representation in the political structure demands additional attention that largely lies outside the domain of education and requires a democratic polity. Inclusiveness of all in the polity is the means of ensuring that the proportional representation does not tilt dominance in favour of one group over others. Formal education can be and often is one important means of continuing the exclusion of the minoritised people/s. It can also support the means of starting to break the exclusion and enable the marginalised to start or continue the struggle towards social justice. One way of including the excluded is to refer to their legal rights, which is what the next section addresses. Often the powerless are not aware of which rights they may have in national laws or international human rights law; therefore the legal aspect, especially in education, is crucial.

2 Legal foundations

2.1 General and ITM-specific international instruments

While education can be one of the most important means to ensure social justice and inclusion for the powerless, most importantly for the ITMs, there must be a legal foundation to demand rights to education that supports this justice and inclusion at the national and international levels (see UN OHCHR 2018). Therefore we

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1 The section Legal foundations is to a large extent based on an updated version of Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar (2010).
will describe the most important international and regional instruments (legal
documents) that grant educational and linguistic rights. The literature about them
is vast (see Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson’s [2017] four edited volumes, Language
Rights). The various international instruments described here, from different politi-
cal contexts and pressure groups but with the same goals, work for equity and
human rights.

The principle of non-discrimination in both the International Covenant on
Economic, Social and Cultural Rights3 and the Convention on the Rights of the Child,4
guarantees the right to education for all, thus including ITMs. The Convention on the
Rights of the Child further stipulates:

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to
achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they
shall, in particular:

   (a) Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;
   
   (e) Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduc-
   tion of drop-out rates.

   (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 28, paragraph 1, emphasis
   added)

Article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child expands on the basic right to
education by stipulating:

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

   (a) The development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physi-
   cal abilities to their fullest potential;

   (b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms,
   and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

   (c) The development of respect for the child’s parents, his or her own cultural
   identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in
   which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate,
   and for civilizations different from his or her own;

   (d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the
   spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of the sexes [a reference
   not found in the other instruments], and friendship among all peoples, eth-
   nic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin [a refer-
   ence not found in the other instruments, and a very significant one for our
   purposes; emphasis added];

3 ICESCR (https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx); Article 13.
4 CRC (https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text); Article 28, paragraph 1.
The development of respect for the natural environment [a reference important in relation to the correlational and causal relationship between biodiversity and linguistic and cultural diversity].

Article 30 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* makes specific reference to minority and Indigenous children; drawing considerably on Article 27 of the 1966 United Nations *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) – the well-known “minorities” provision – this Article provides as follows:

> In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.6 [emphasis added]

In such international instruments (and the regional ones below), every word is important from a legal point of view. Their interpretations fill thousands of pages; the short generalization of these resolutions is that still much more is needed, and implementation of many of the rights leaves much to desire (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, and Dunbar [2019] call them “criminally inadequate”). Many more court cases than at present are needed to force states to implement what they have signed and ratified.

### 2.2 Regional instruments

The right to education is also recognized in a number of important regional human rights treaties. For example, Article 2 of the First Optional Protocol of 1952 to the Council of Europe’s *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* of 1950 (the *European Convention on Human Rights*, or the “ECHR”)7 provides that “no person shall be denied the right to education”, and that the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure that such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions. The right to education is expressed even more categorically than in these European instruments in Article 17 of the *African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights* of 1981 (the “African Charter”)8. Its paragraph 1

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6 Although not specifically directed to education, Article 17 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* requires States to “ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health”. It further mentions in (d) a “particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous” [emphasis added].
7 http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/005.htm
8 http://www.hrcr.org/docs/Banjul/afhr.html
simply states that every individual shall have the right to education. But in an African context, this basic right is expanded upon in Article 11 of the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* of 1990, which is generally similar to Article 13 of the *ICESCR*. So, too, is Article 13 of the *Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights*. In addition to the right to education, many minorities and Indigenous peoples could benefit from additional education rights developed in a range of minority- and Indigenous peoples-specific international instruments. It is important to recognise that Indigenous and tribal peoples benefit from provisions directed at minorities as well as those which are specifically directed at them. It should also be noted, however, that many of the most important minority-specific instruments have been developed in a European context with application primarily to European states. There are relatively few Indigenous peoples in the European states (depending, of course, on how Europe is defined; some “European” instruments also include Russia; see, e.g. Zamyatin 2014, 2016a,b).

The most important of the Indigenous and tribal peoples-specific instruments, the International Labour Organisation’s *ILO Convention No. 169 of 1989* and the United Nations’ General Assembly *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (“UNDRIP”) of 7 September, 2007, are both global in scope, but both suffer from certain limitations: ILO Convention No. 169, as a treaty, creates binding legal obligations for those States which ratify it, but thus far, only 23 states have done so. While the UNDRIP received very broad support within the UN General Assembly, such support was not universal. Further, as a General Assembly declaration, it does

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10 Among the provisions which are not found in Article 13 of the *ICESCR* but which are found in Article 11 of the *African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* are that the education of the child shall also be directed to the preservation and strengthening of positive African morals, traditional values and cultures (paragraph 2 (c)), and that States Parties shall take special measures in respect of female, gifted and disadvantaged children to ensure equal access to education for all sections of the community (paragraph 3 (e)).
14 As of December 2019, they include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Denmark, Dominica, Ecuador, Fiji, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, and Venezuela.
15 143 States voted in favour, four opposed the *Declaration* (Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States; all have since accepted it), and eleven States abstained (Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burundi, Colombia, Georgia, Kenya, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Samoa and Ukraine). All but two of the 23 States which have ratified *ILO Convention No. 169* (Colombia, which abstained,
not, strictly speaking, create binding legal obligations; it is part of “soft law” (UN OHCHR 2018: 23). Nevertheless, Paragraph 1 of Article 8 provides that Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture. And Article 13, paragraph 1, states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

Article 13, paragraph 2, continues by obliging the states: “States shall take effective measures to ensure that this right is protected.” Article 14 continues:

1. Indigenous peoples have the right to establish and control their educational systems and institutions providing education in their own languages, in a manner appropriate to their cultural methods of teaching and learning.
2. Indigenous individuals, particularly children, have the right to all levels and forms of education of the State without discrimination.
3. States shall, in conjunction with indigenous peoples, take effective measures, in order for indigenous individuals, particularly children, including those living outside their communities, to have access, when possible, to an education in their own culture and provided in their own language.

State education (mentioned in 2 above) is at least supposed to be ‘free’ – involving no payment of fees. But the Article says nothing about who is to finance the establishing and running of Indigenous/tribal peoples’ educational systems in their own languages. Which ITMs have the financial resources to establish their own schools?

The 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) further specifies the right to education for persons with disabilities “without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity” to “ensure an inclusive education system at all levels” (Article 24). ITMs include all differently abled persons; the Convention, however, mentions the Deaf people specifically.

The importance and the implications of these rights for ITMs and their relevance to their education, and the sad stories about their lack of implementation, are presented in hundreds of books (Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar 2010, Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, and Dunbar 2019, Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (eds.) 2017). If one wants both formal education and human rights to work for the cause of social justice, ensuring the role of ITM languages in education is a central issue.

and Fiji, which was absent), supported the declaration. See http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/ga10612.doc.htm.

3 The role of ITM languages in education

It is noticeable that no direct reference is made in any of the above provisions to a right to education in or through the medium of any particular language or, specifically, to education in or through the medium of the mother tongue or first language of the child, with rare exceptions. It is surprising that there is no separate reference to linguistic groups in the provisions on education (as many human rights treaties do make such a reference). But given the acknowledged close relationship between language and ethnicity, it is unlikely that the omission of linguistic groups would leave such groups outside the protection of rights provision, specifically, in education in or through the medium of the mother tongue of the child.

The issue of the right to a specific medium of education has been addressed in several court cases. Skutnabb-Kangas and Dunbar (2010: 16–17), having examined these court cases, argue that where children with limited linguistic skills in a particular language are subjected to education through the medium of that language, this should be considered to be a denial of the substance of the right to education. We are strengthened in this view by the decision of the United States Supreme Court in a very important case involving the provision of education only through the medium of English to about 1,800 children of Chinese ancestry or origin who effectively spoke no English. The case, Lau v. Nichols,17 is relevant to the question of the interaction of the right to education and the principle of non-discrimination. The Supreme Court observed the following about such interactions in educational practices.

Basic English skills are at the very core of what these public schools teach. The imposition of a requirement that, before a child can effectively participate in the educational program, he must already have acquired those basic skills is to make a mockery of public education. We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful.

The case did not involve a consideration of a right to education, but by concluding that the education here was “incomprehensible” to the students and therefore “in no way meaningful” [the court’s pronouncement] is clearly suggestive of a complete denial of any right to education.

In most countries, ITMs use in their home a language or languages that is/are different from the one/s used in the public institutions created and controlled by the state. Their languages are commonly used as a pretext for their exclusion from the educational system, which is a prelude to exclude the speakers of these languages from any rightful participation in every sphere, economic, political, social, cultural and aesthetic. The status of their home language/s in schools is central to the policy and practice of exclusion. For reversing this exclusion, the ITM language/s must have a central place in the policy and practice of inclusion. Their languages cannot be peripheral or an appendage to the policy and practice in any spheres, starting

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crucially from education. But including the language of education (or language in
general) has not seemed to be necessary in all inclusion planning.

A recent example is the 2018 UNESCO report *Concept note for the 2020 Global
Education Monitoring Report on inclusion*.18 Even when inclusion is both defined
and described in detail in the Concept note, language (as one of the most important
causal factors in exclusion in education) is not mentioned even once! This UNESCO
report discusses the development of the concept of inclusion and gives its own defi-
nition. It takes as its starting point the general comment 4 of the CRPD Committee
in 2016, which specifies that inclusive education “‘focuses on the full and effective
participation, accessibility, attendance and achievement of all students, especially
those who, for different reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalised.’ Inclusive ed-
cuation is a process, not an endpoint.” (p. 3) The concept note continues on the same page with:

Inclusive education has been described in its essence as a statement of political aspiration, an
essential ingredient in the creation of inclusive societies, and a commitment to a democratic
framework for action. It is both a call for democratic education and an education in democ-
Racy. It addresses key questions about the kind of world in which we want our children to live
and the role of education in building that world. Accordingly, inclusive education is not re-
stricted to questions about where education takes place (for example, in segregated special
schools or regular schools), but also involves a range of elements that form educational experi-
ences and outcomes. These elements can include the content of education and learning mate-
rials, teaching and teacher preparation, infrastructure and learning environment, community
norms, and the availability of space for dialogue and criticism involving all stakeholders
(*Concept note for the 2020 Global Education Monitoring Report on inclusion*, p.3)

The mother tongue/home language (or languages) should of course be one of the
main elements listed above in the last sentence. It is the language/s through which
people have their primary socialisation and relate themselves to the natural and so-
cial worlds outside. This role of home languages cannot be ignored for the ITM peo-
ple, but their significance is often undermined by policy makers, as in the UNESCO
report above. Ignoring the home language/s is like valuing life support systems over
natural breathing. But “home language” is not a singular notion, it often refers to
multiple languages in functionally multilingual societies. A person in these societies
is likely to have a language repertoire rather than a single language for primary so-
cialization.19 This is inevitable, and a source of enrichment, in multilingual societies.
Every person must have a choice to use her language repertoire for the purposes she
considers beneficial to her. One or more than one language from the repertoire could
be chosen for social identification of the speaker by the speaker. This is the indexing

18 https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265329
19 Swain’s doctoral thesis in 1972 recognised this – it was called “Bilingualism as a first language”. Mohanty’s (2019) book describes in detail multilingualism as a first language.
function of language. In “normal” circumstances, the home language(s) are chosen for this function. The sense that these language(s) give to their speakers (and signers) a sense of belonging to a speech community does not exclude a sense of simultaneously belonging to the larger society. Multiple identities coexist and are emphasized and distributed in different social contexts and for different social purposes. Everyone in the larger society has a moral and democratic obligation not to use anybody’s home language/s as a tool or pretext for exclusion. Hence social inclusiveness is built fundamentally on home language(s).

Inclusiveness is to have opportunities available to better one’s life by free choice. Availing opportunities is accessing without hindrance the economic, political and social capital of the state; being granted, mainly through formal education, the capabilities to choose. According to Jean Drèze and economics Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, “capability” refers to the alternative combinations of functionings from which a person can choose [...] freedom – the range of options a person has in deciding what kind of life to lead. Poverty [...] lies not merely in the impoverished state in which the person actually lives, but also in the lack of real opportunity – given by social constraints as well as personal circumstances – to choose other types of living. Even the relevance of low incomes, meagre possessions, and other aspects of what are standardly seen as economic poverty relates ultimately to their role in curtailing capabilities (that is, their role in severely restricting the choices people have). Poverty is, thus, ultimately a matter of ‘capability deprivation’.

(quoted from Misra and Mohanty 2000a: 262–263; see also Drèze and Sen 2002: 35–36)

The loci of poverty, and of intervention, are in Amartya Sen’s view, economic, social and psychological, and so measures have to be taken in each of these areas. Misra and Mohanty (2000a: 264) connect this view to education: “Psychological processes, such as cognition, motivation, values and other characteristics of the poor and the disadvantaged are to be viewed both as consequences as well as antecedent conditions which are ultimately related to human capabilities”. The central question in reducing poverty is, in their view: “What is the most critical (and cost effective) input to change the conditions of poverty, or rather, to expand human capabilities?” They respond to it themselves: There is “a general consensus among the economists, psychologists and other social scientists that education is perhaps the most crucial input” (Misra and Mohanty 2000a: 265).

What are the consequences for our argumentation for languages here? If poverty is understood as “both a set of contextual conditions as well as certain processes which together give rise to typical performance of the poor and the disadvantaged” in school, and if of “all different aspects of such performance, cognitive and intellectual functions have been held in high priority as these happen to be closely associated with upward socio-economic mobility of the poor” (Misra and Mohanty 2000b: 135–136), then we have to look for the type of division of labour between both/all languages in education that guarantees the best possible development of these “cognitive and intellectual
functions” which enhance children’s “human capabilities”. What is done today when ITM children are instructed with a dominant language as the teaching language in submersion education is not enhancing but rather curtailing these functions, and thus depriving children of the choices and freedom that are, according to Sen, Drèze and others, associated with the necessary capabilities. An ITM child in a submersion programme may be physically included, but s/he is certainly psychologically and cognitively excluded if she does not understand (most of) what the teachers and the textbook say.

Inclusiveness is also to be a beneficiary in the outcomes of the development of the state. Such inclusiveness means the necessity of investment in all languages of the state and in their resources by the policy makers as well as the private citizens. Social justice is served when this investment is made, and the dividends are shared across the peoples. Social justice, in contrast to criminal justice, is often viewed as correcting historical malevolence that has happened through discrimination. But it is more than that. It is also honouring the rights of the sovereign individuals as citizens and as human beings. This also means honouring their right to their languages.

There is the imputed problem of “self-exclusion” by the minorities from their own speech communities if they surrender their linguistic right of using their home language in public domains such as education even when the country’s constitution provides it (Annamalai 2000). The larger society, including its policy makers and courts, portrays it as a voluntary choice. Yet it is anything but voluntary, if we understand a voluntary action as one that is without implicit pressures and falsely promised incentives. In the choice of language in education there is no such voluntary action. The formal structure of education makes the option of minority languages as teaching languages either non-existent or a kind of “special education” that is stigmatized. Thus, the structure of education forcibly assimilates ITM children and (tries to) transfer(s) them at least linguistically to another group, namely the dominant-language-using group. Linguistic and often also cultural forced assimilation, in other words.

It bears repetition that the indispensable place for dispensing social justice is education and the place of languages in education. It begins in the school. While school is the microcosm of society, it is also the transformer of society. Language policy in education should prevent the school from reproducing the inequalities of the society; it should explicitly be planned to produce equality in the society. Hence the design of mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE), as described below, is of utmost importance. Education, in other words, can be preventive of social ills, including conflict. It is not just a moral imperative; it is an economic (and political) imperative. Emphasizing the importance of education and its role in eliminating violence in society, Jan Eliasson, a former Swedish Foreign Minister and chairman of SIPRI Board of Governors (SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute) points out that “aside from saving and improving human lives, studies suggest that investing $2 billion in prevention [of conflict] can generate net savings of $33 billion per year from averted conflict” (as reported in Deen 2018).
The importance of education is also highlighted from another angle, namely, the waste of human resources. Globally, over 260 million children and youth do not attend school, and 400 million children quit school after completing primary school education, according to UN estimates (released in mid-February 2018; see UNESCO 2018). This education crisis would by 2030 leave half of the world’s 1.6 billion children and youth out of school or without the most basic skills by 2030 (Sanam Naraghi Anderlini, Executive Director of the International Civil Society Action Network, as reported in Deen 2018). A large percentage of these children who do not attend school at all or are pushed out of school early are speakers of ITM languages. Non-use of these languages in school is an important aspect in the push factor (see, e.g. Mohanty 2019). Hence the role of these languages in a well-designed multilingual education system cannot be over-emphasised. Next we describe some aspects of this multilingual education.

4 Multilingual education

Multilingual education emphatically does not mean offering children more than one language as subjects, along with other subjects. There are elite schools that teach selected international languages as subjects besides the national or official language of the state. Schools in India by policy require that students acquire differentiated proficiencies in various languages before they finish school after ten years of schooling (Aggarwal 1991). These schools are not multilingual schools. Multilingual education means using at least two languages as languages of instruction, as media of education, in subjects other than the languages themselves (modifying Andersson and Boyer’s [1970/1978] classical definition of bilingual education).

There are many different models of multilingual education, some with “good” results (see Table 1 below), some less successful. For ITM children, the programmes recommended must create an additive learning situation: The child learns well both the mother tongue/s and additional languages (for instance a dominant language in the country or state where the child lives, and an “international” language). There are many success stories, as described in the literature in our references. One example is in Ragnarsdóttir (2016) and her team’s other publications; these give good overviews of inclusive education and detailed descriptions of how it can be organised.

Unfortunately, most ITM children, if they attend school at all, are in a subtractive learning situation. They learn (some of) a dominant language (which is the main teaching language in these submersion classes) at the cost of their own language/s, not in addition to it/them. The school subtracts from the linguistic repertoire that the child brings to school; the child is submersed (not immersed) in a foreign teaching language, without any support.20 But inclusive education should offer both linguistic majority

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Table 1: Some models of bilingual education programmes/models\(^{21}\) (MIN: minority language, MAJ: majority language).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Segregation</th>
<th>Submersion</th>
<th>MIN language maintenance</th>
<th>Immersion for “majority”</th>
<th>Dual language/two-way</th>
<th>MIN revitalisation immersion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic goal</td>
<td>Dominance in L1</td>
<td>Dominance in L2</td>
<td>Bilingualism</td>
<td>Bilingualism</td>
<td>Bilingualism</td>
<td>Bilingualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Societal goal</td>
<td>Apartheid/Repatriation: prevention of social mobility</td>
<td>(forced) assimilation, marginalisation</td>
<td>Equity and integration</td>
<td>Linguistic &amp; cultural enrichment</td>
<td>MAJ equity Integration</td>
<td>MAJ language cultural enrichment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child’s language</td>
<td>MIN</td>
<td>MAJ + MIN</td>
<td>MIN</td>
<td>MAJ</td>
<td>MAJ+MIN</td>
<td>MIN? Maj?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language of instruction</td>
<td>MIN</td>
<td>MAJ</td>
<td>MIN; MAJ as subject; maybe LOI after gr.8</td>
<td>Min + bilingual later, most often MAJ from gr.7, MIN as subject only</td>
<td>Min + bilingual later (e.g. gr.6: 50-50%; 80-20%) the longer Min. language the better</td>
<td>MIN; MAJ as subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Often mono-lingual in MIN language</td>
<td>Monolingual in MAJ language</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
<td>Bilingual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does child know teaching language?</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>MAJ yes</td>
<td>MIN yes</td>
<td>Initially no</td>
<td>MAJ not initially; MIN yes</td>
<td>MIN? No, or a little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme chosen voluntarily?</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>MAJ?</td>
<td>MIN no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>Both yes</td>
<td>MIN yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are there alternatives?</td>
<td>Often no</td>
<td>MIN no</td>
<td>MIN yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>MAJ yes</td>
<td>MIN? yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>MAJ ?</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{21}\) Tove Skutnabb-Kangas has used these models since the late 1970s; see, e.g. 1990; this version is from 2019.
children and ITM children a chance to become high-level bi- or multilinguals. Table 1 compares six basic models of educational programmes, with “good” or “poor” results. There are many variants of all of these. There is no one-model-fits-all; every model has to be contextualised.

Table 1 presents comparisons of characteristics of some educational programmes with “good” or “poor” results: 1. Segregation or 2. Submersion (for ITMs, with “poor” results), 3. Minority Language Maintenance (for ITMs, with “good” results), 4. Immersion (for Majority, with “good” results), 5. Dual Language (or Two-Way) (for both ITMs and Majorities, with “good” results), and 6. ITM Revitalisation Immersion (for ITMs, with “good” results). “Poor” results mean that at the group level, children do not reach high levels of bi/multilingualism; they under-achieve at primary school, with negative results for secondary and tertiary education and later life; they may have problems with their identities and self-confidence (see Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, and Dunbar 2019 for detailed statistical descriptions of this from Nunavut, Canada). “Good” results means the opposite: high levels of bi/multilingualism; a good chance of achieving at school and later life, healthy self-confidence and positive often bi/multilingual identities. The order of the programmes reflects their historical developments: Both segregation (e.g. in apartheid Africa) and submersion models (most ITMs in western countries, earlier and still today) were initially common for ITMs. Long struggles by immigrant minorities in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in maintenance programmes, which some national minorities (e.g. Swedish-speakers in Finland, French-speakers in Canada and Afrikaans-speakers in South Africa) had had for a long time. Immersion programmes with French as the main teaching language for English-speakers started in Canada in 1967. Later dual-language programmes combined in the same classroom a maintenance programme for minorities and an immersion programme for majorities. And after long Indigenous struggles, Revitalisation Immersion programmes for Indigenous peoples whose languages are seriously endangered or where children no longer speak them are rapidly growing.

A classical submersion programme where a dominant language is the main teaching language, can have ITM children only, or both ITM children and dominant language speaking children (but the teaching through the medium of the MAJ (Majority) language often happens as if this dominant language were everybody’s mother tongue (MT)). The teacher is mostly a monolingual speaker of the teaching language in countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. In other countries the teacher may know (some of) the MT of some of the students but is often officially not allowed to use it. The children or parents have not “voluntarily” chosen this kind of education; for it to be voluntary, alternatives should exist, and, very importantly, in most countries parents are not offered enough high-level research-based information on the long-term consequences of the model. Parents often do not speak or read the languages in which the research is communicated. Often submersion programmes through the medium of English have high status, both in ex-colonial situations but also others, and parents are misled into believing that their children learn English well
in them (see for examples Mohanty 2019; Rao 2017; Bunce et al. 2016; Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh 2011). There are examples of submersion programmes that work, for instance, programmes for Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese etc. immigrant minority children in the United Kingdom and Canada. But the enrolled children mostly have special support for the mother tongues, such as grandparents living with the family speaking the language, new flows of migrants speaking it, extra private MT teaching, summer camps, books at home in the MT, etc. (for Canadian exemplary ones, see, e.g. Cummins 2000, forthcoming).

Mother-tongue-based multilingual programmes are part of the language maintenance programmes in Table 1. Most research shows that the MT should be the main teaching language minimally for the first 6 years, preferably longer. Thomas and Collier (2002), comparing several programmes in a large-scale quantitative study, write, for instance, that the longer the MT remains the main teaching language, the better the results in not only the MT but in all subjects, and, importantly, the dominant language. The language of instruction is also a more important factor than the social class of the students, i.e. ITM children with low socioeconomic status in these programmes can do as well as middle class children taught through the medium of their language. There are thousands of articles and projects and hundreds of books providing evidence to these claims. The arguments against these programmes are political, not scientific.

Table 1 also shows that UNESCO’s (1953) claim that the mother tongue is axiomatically the best teaching language is not that simple. Segregation programmes (such as apartheid teaching in South Africa, or Turkish-medium teaching of Turkish immigrant children in Bavaria, Germany, both in the 1980s and 1990s) have the goal to repatriate the children (for details, see Skutnabb-Kangas 1990). They use the MT of the students, but the teachers do not often have good training, their salaries are low, and the social circumstances are not conducive for positive school achievement for the children. On the other hand, it is perfectly possible to teach some children through the medium of a language that they do not initially know, provided, importantly, that the conditions in Table 1 are met. Again, there are hundreds if not thousands of reports and articles describing these Immersion for Majority (i.e. speakers of a dominant language) programmes. They were initiated in Canada in 1967 and have since spread to many countries.

It is important to compare the features of the Revitalisation Immersion model for ITMs with Immersion for Majority. In both immersion models, the dominant majority language, for instance English, is learned well anyway, even if it is not used as the teaching language for the first years (e.g. not before grade six, most often even later). It is taught as a mother tongue a few hours per week, and the children are surrounded by it in the society where they live. In the Revitalisation Immersion model, many of the children come from families where the mother tongue has ceased to be transmitted from the parent (or even grandparent) generation to the children, and the children are thus either monolingual or very dominant in the majority language.
The ITM language can still be seen as their mother tongue, even if they know only little of it or do not know it at all. In this case the mother tongue is not defined as the language that the child has learned first (often a good definition of an MT) but as a language that the child (and parents) identify with, even if they do not know it (or know only a little of it).22

The Table also shows some of the features that the programmes with either “good” or “poor” results have in common; for instance, both social and linguistic goals for these programmes are positive for the “good” group, whereas the programmes with “poor” results in most cases prevent social mobility of the children. The teachers in programmes with “good” results are bi/multilingual. This enables them to support the development of the children’s metalinguistic awareness (knowledge of how languages function), because they can compare the languages involved. Metalinguistic awareness is, according to Mohanty’s (2019) detailed long-standing studies, probably the main causal factor behind the many benefits that bi/multilinguals as a group have over comparable monolinguals. The teaching with “good” results also has cognitively demanding content.23

We do know how various groups of children should be educated for “good” results that add to bi/multilingual skills: a fair chance of succeeding in school and in later life, deep self-confidence, strong sense of identity, ensured social justice and communal inclusion through participation in society. Why are then the solidly research-based recommendations not followed in most ITM education? There are countervailing forces and counter ideologies advanced by those who resist change in education to perpetuate the status quo, which answer this question partially.

5 Countervailing forces against educational justice

Factors presented against using the optimal models of multilingual education include the following. First, policy makers responsible for language in education often come from the elite class with a market-based view of efficiency in terms of monetary cost. From this point of view, to have a variety of educational models appear as inefficient in several ways. The return of financial investment in MT-based

22 Articles in the 521-page Hinton, Huss, and Roche (2018) book describe tens of these revitalisation situations. Olthuis, Kivelä, and Skutnabb-Kangas (2013) describe in detail one revitalisation project where the two missing generations of speakers of Aanaar Saami were recreated, and the whole community (now numbering some 450 speakers) has got new life. Many speakers of very small Indigenous and tribal languages are in a similar situation; the few native speakers are elders. Obviously, it is incredibly wasteful, and criminal, first to almost or completely kill off these languages, and then laboriously recreate or revitalise them.

23 Many more of them, with comparisons and explanations can be accessed, for instance, in Skutnabb-Kangas (1990), and in Skutnabb-Kangas and García (1995).
multilingual education does not commensurate (measured in terms of GDP), as the policy makers claim. This is an ideological position without empirical support. There is empirical research that suggests the contrary. Walter and Benson (2012) and Grin (2005), among many others, have shown that the costs of good minority education are either marginal, or lower than submersion education. Grin asks both what the costs and benefits are if minority languages are maintained and promoted, and what the costs (and benefits) are if they are neither maintained nor promoted.

Some of Grin’s conclusions from several publications are as follows:

- diversity seems to be positively, rather than negatively, correlated with welfare
- available evidence indicates that the monetary costs of maintaining diversity are remarkably modest
- devoting resources to the protection and promotion of minority cultures [and this includes languages] may help to stave off political crises whose costs would be considerably higher than that of the policies considered [the peace-and-security argument]
- therefore, there are strong grounds to suppose that protecting and promoting regional and minority languages is a sound idea from a welfare standpoint, not even taking into consideration any moral argument (Grin 2003: 26).24

In addition, the enormous global wastage when children do not attend school or are pushed out early is enormous, also economically.25

Secondly, MT-based multilingual education is perceived to be divisive: the claim is that reproducing minorities as “unassimilated” minorities through education is thought to work against national unity (by which policy makers mean uniformity). It is

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24 We summarise Grin’s economic arguments from an email dated 15 January 2019 (partially presented in Grin 2005): “… simulation results comparing education through MT versus education through some LWC [languages of wider communication] show that under plausible assumptions (which would also be testable with suitable data), offering MT-medium education ‘pays for itself’, because it tends to result in lower class repetition rates, thus reducing the average per-student cost – and thus freeing up communal resources. … The positive net effect of offering MT education is further reinforced if one takes into account higher average skills, which gives people access to better jobs – and better jobs, which usually are not just more interesting and more empowering for individuals, also tend to generate higher market value, which in turns gives rise to higher tax revenue. In other words, through this channel too, offering MT-medium education is a sound economic investment, even if you put aside linguistic human rights (LHR) considerations. Putting it another way still, a properly conducted economic analysis of MT education would generally dovetail with and reinforce LHR-based recommendations.”

25 George Monbiot (2018: 109), discussing Universal Basic Income trials in several countries, notes that in “Madhya Pradesh, India – whose levels of poverty ensure that even small payments can make a big difference – strong improvements were seen after six months in health, nutrition and school attendance” (see also SEWA Bharat 2014). If parents can afford it (“small payments”) and if they see that children understand what is said in schools and can participate, ITM children attend school and stay there.
believed that it is language differences that cause conflicts, and therefore they should be eliminated through assimilation; education through the dominant languages is supposed to lead to assimilation. But the opposite is true. Where language-based hierarchies dovetail with political and economic hierarchies, it is these rather than language differences that cause conflict; it is often precisely the lack of language rights that leads to conflict, according to several peace-and-conflict researchers. Linguistic Human Rights (LHRs), also in education, may be part of the solution; they can also work to grant ITM languages more status and may enable ITMs to integrate instead of assimilating. Still, most states continue the shortsighted and counterproductive policies of denying ITM children basic linguistic human rights, including proper maintenance-oriented multilingual education. States may find themselves in a position to pay huge reparations if this is continued. Some of those states which are now apologizing for the treatment that Indigenous children have suffered from in residential and other schools (see The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015) are now faced with their obligation; some others are already following (e.g. the Nordic countries). ITMs as groups may also demand reparations for the loss of their livelihood, sacred places and way of life; there are already many court cases. Granting ITMs educational (and other) LHRs is a necessary part of conflict resolution by giving them dignity and opportunities.

Thirdly, a historically and politically determined hierarchical social positioning of languages in a society has more public acceptability than equality between languages; the “acceptance” is hegemonically manufactured by the very elites who are the beneficiaries of linguistic stratification. This is achieved by the elites, who own or control the instruments of communication such as the media and other resources to influence thought, by framing the public discussion in a self-serving narrative and thus wielding enormous influence over government policies.

Fourthly, the pyramidal structure of education from primary to tertiary levels allows less and less local control of education as the levels go up, and this leaves little room for a multiplicity of languages at the higher levels of the pyramid. The pyramidal structure of education arose to meet the needs of a centralised economic and bureaucratic structure needed to sustain an industrial economy. Decentralisation may to some extent flatten this structure.

Fifthly, the ITM mother tongues learned through multilingual education have today no material use in public domains after school and so learning the mother tongues is unproductive. This puts the cart before the horse. A fundamental goal of multilingual education is to effect a change in the existing linguistic organisation of society, which today excludes the languages of the dominated communities from the life of the wider society. With the changes advocated in this chapter, ITM languages would play some roles in public domains, i.e. there would be demands for them. This can create more supply, which in turn can increase the demand, until the situation is “normalised” (a concept used by the Basques and Catalans in Spain) when the languages have their rightful and just space in society. Multilingual
education prepares ITM students to make the changes successful. The most important issue, however, is for ITM language speakers to maintain the dignity of their languages and to create a space for them in the public sphere.

Dealing with these counter positions and factors, which make “normalisation” of the status of ITM languages more complex, is not helped by the national and state level governments’ subversion of, and indifference to, implementing the good national policies and international agreements that are in place in many countries. The very factors mentioned above probably cause much of the subversion and indifference. The challenge is to cut the circularity in the problem. One way to meet the challenges is through advocacy with and by speakers of ITM languages, so that they might stop believing that these countervailing factors are insurmountable and might not surrender to the forces behind such ideological positions. Instead, they might resist the power of persuasion of these forces through seeing how consent to policies harming their long term interests could be manufactured (see Herman and Chomsky 1988) though various means including education.

This advocacy work with ITM speakers is equally important as advocacy with policy makers at national and international levels. Lo Bianco (2018: 36–37) analyses some of its difficulties in detail. Opponents of minority language advocacy, he writes, “often deploy ‘egalitarian’ and ‘participatory’ arguments” against activities which try to reverse language shift (RLS), especially in “societies that prize democratic involvement of citizens”. In his analysis of these cases, hostility to revitalisation efforts “originates not just in prejudice or negative judgment against minority communities but, perversely, also from the liberal belief in the overriding importance of public and undifferentiated participation by all citizens” (Lo Bianco 2018: 36). In our view, this is a neoliberal ideology of what inclusion means. Lo Bianco continues:

[W]hether originating in political ideologies of liberal participationism, or more conventionally, in nationalist demands for cultural assimilation, minority language advocacy must respond to a series of what I call “entrapment rebukes.” These are arguments used against RLS advocates that the activity of minority language revitalisation traps the community in poverty and the young in atavistic ethnic identity. I have encountered entrapment rebukes in language policy advising and research in Australia, Asia, Europe, Oceania, and North America. Liberal critics use entrapment logic as a reproach, overtly or subtly, while nationalist interests make recourse to entrapment reasoning as a caution against social fragmentation. Both represent a serious obstacle to public mobilisation for language revitalisation activity. Minorities must regularly display political loyalty to the state/nation, its participatory ideals, or its dominant cultural norms, as they search for sufficient cultural autonomy to cultivate inter-generationally secure language maintenance.

(Lo Bianco 2018: 37–38)

19 Social justice and inclusiveness through linguistic human rights in education
6 To conclude

The strength of a good multilingual education is not limited to its educational success. To successfully achieve linguistic justice for speakers of home languages that are not privileged historically, politically and economically, it is necessary to sustain the use of these languages in life outside and after school in political and economic domains in defined ways which go beyond their use in cultural and social domains. Multilingual education lays the foundation for this, but to erect a structure on it is beyond the field of education; the needed expertise must be trans- and interdisciplinary and has to be organised at the national level and coordinated internationally. It needs to challenge the dominance of globalised growth obsessed market forces and authoritarian political forces that move in the opposite direction. Some positive signs can be seen in the use of communication technology by people who organise against injustice and exclusiveness, and in increasing acceptance of the idea that the global is the local, i.e. multiple locals make the global. Linguistic human rights are a necessary but not a sufficient tool in the struggle for social justice, but they do not seem to be forthcoming. It would be rational to reduce poverty through organising ITM education according to research recommendations, i.e. use mother-tongue-based multilingual education. Even if the serious harm of not doing it has been well known for a long time, and the principles for what to do have equally been known, this has not led to mother-tongue-based multilingual education on a large scale. Alexander’s review of educational achievements in Africa concludes “[w]e are not making any progress at all” (Alexander 2006: 9); “most conference resolutions were no more than a recycling exercise” (Bangboso 2002, quoted in Alexander 2006: 10); “these propositions had been enunciated in one conference after another since the early 1980s” (2006: 11); “since the adoption of the OAU [Organisation for African Unity] Charter in 1963, every major conference of African cultural experts and political leaders had solemnly intoned the commitment of the political leadership of the continent to the development and powerful use of the African languages without any serious attempt at implementing the relevant resolutions” (2006: 11). This has led to “the palpable failure of virtually all post-colonial educational systems on the continent” (2006: 16). A similar analysis of other parts of the world would quite probably share Alexander’s conclusions.

We need implementation of the existing good laws and intentions (there are many). The sad situation is manifestly not a question of lack of information about what should be done; the political will for that is mostly lacking. Alexander’s analysis of reasons for it (2006: 16) states:

The problem of generating the essential political will to translate these insights into implementable policy […] needs to be addressed in realistic terms. Language planners have to realize that

26 The United Nations OHCHR (2018) gives many examples from all over the world of Constitutions which not only acknowledge ITM’s rights but make states firm duty holders.
costing of policy interventions is an essential aspect of the planning process itself and that no political leadership will be content to consider favourably a plan that amounts to no more than a wish list, even if it is based on the most accurate quantitative and qualitative research evidence.

What Alexander advocates is that the costs of organising or of not organising Mother Tongue based Multilingual (MTM) education are made explicit in economic terms. This necessitates a type of multidisciplinary approach to MTM education that minimally includes expertise of sociolinguists, educators, lawyers and economists. Without that level of engagement, it seems impossible to even start convincing states of rational policies that would in the end be really beneficial not only for ITMs but for the states themselves, including their elites.

When policy makers realize that hierarchical unequal societies are destructive for all, including the rich, when those in power themselves start seriously experiencing the consequences of the human consumption induced climate catastrophe, and when the economic elites accept that the necessary economic de-growth can and must be combined with the growth of necessary human rights for ITMs, some change in education towards social justice and inclusiveness might be possible – unless it is already too late . . .

References


27 Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) shows that the most unequal societies where the gap is largest between the richest 20% and the poorest 20% suffer much more of ill health, violence, incarceration, mental illness, drug addiction, teenage pregnancies, infant mortality, and obesity. Life expectancy, social mobility, and levels of trust are lower, likewise school achievement and education levels. Inequality does not affect only the poor, but the vast majority of the population, including the rich. The USA and UK are among the most unequal among the countries studied, the Nordic countries and Japan the most equal.


SEWA (Self-Employed Women’s Association) Bharat. 2014. A little more, how much it is . . .: Piloting basic income transfers in Madhya Pradesh, India. New Delhi: SEWA Bharat (supported by


