



MULTILINGUALISM, ENGLISH AND HIGHER EDUCATION: DOMINANCE, HEGEMONY AND INEQUALITY

Ajít Mohanty



The English Goddess



PLAN FOR THE PRESENTATION

- Role of English in Multilingual Societies:
(Focus on India, implications for Multilingualism in global south)
- Theoretical Framework
- Language policy & Practice: English in education
- Childhood Multilingualism, Multilingual socialisation and role of dominant languages & English
- English in Schools & Classroom Practices
- English in HE: Inequality & Discrimination
- New Initiatives for MT based education
- Situating English in a broad MLE framework

Monolingual Education in Multilingual Societies: The case of INDIA



2843 MOTHER TONGUES (1369 listed, 1474 clubbed as 'other' languages)

300 – 400 Languages (PLSI: >780) 159 (ST)

22+1 Official Languages

123 Languages for Print Media

90 AIR News Service+75 Regional

35 Languages in Films

81/41/31 In Primary Education

(1970/1998/2007)

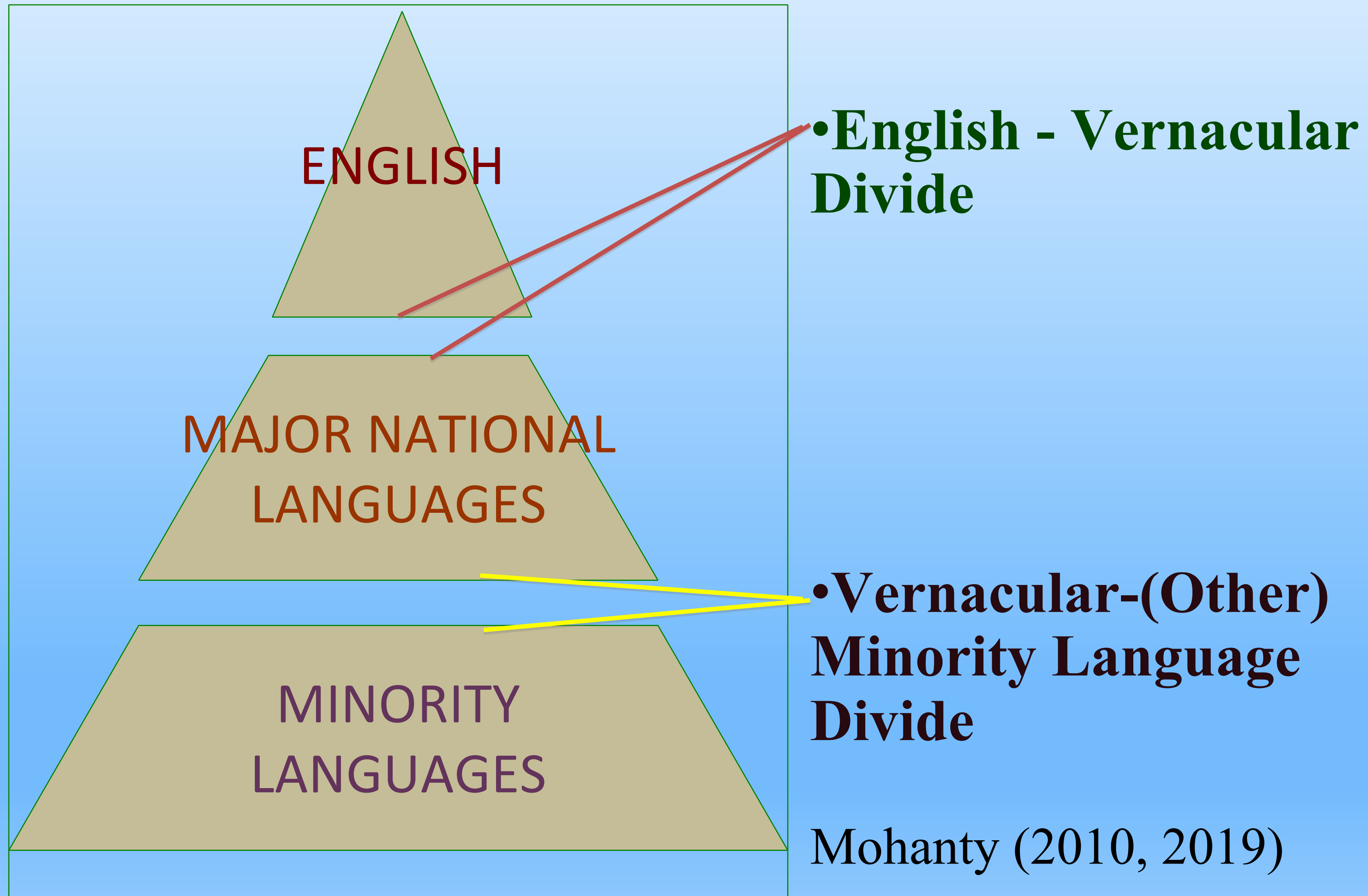
MINORITY LINGUISTIC GROUPS>20% in half of the Districts

Language, Power & Hierarchy

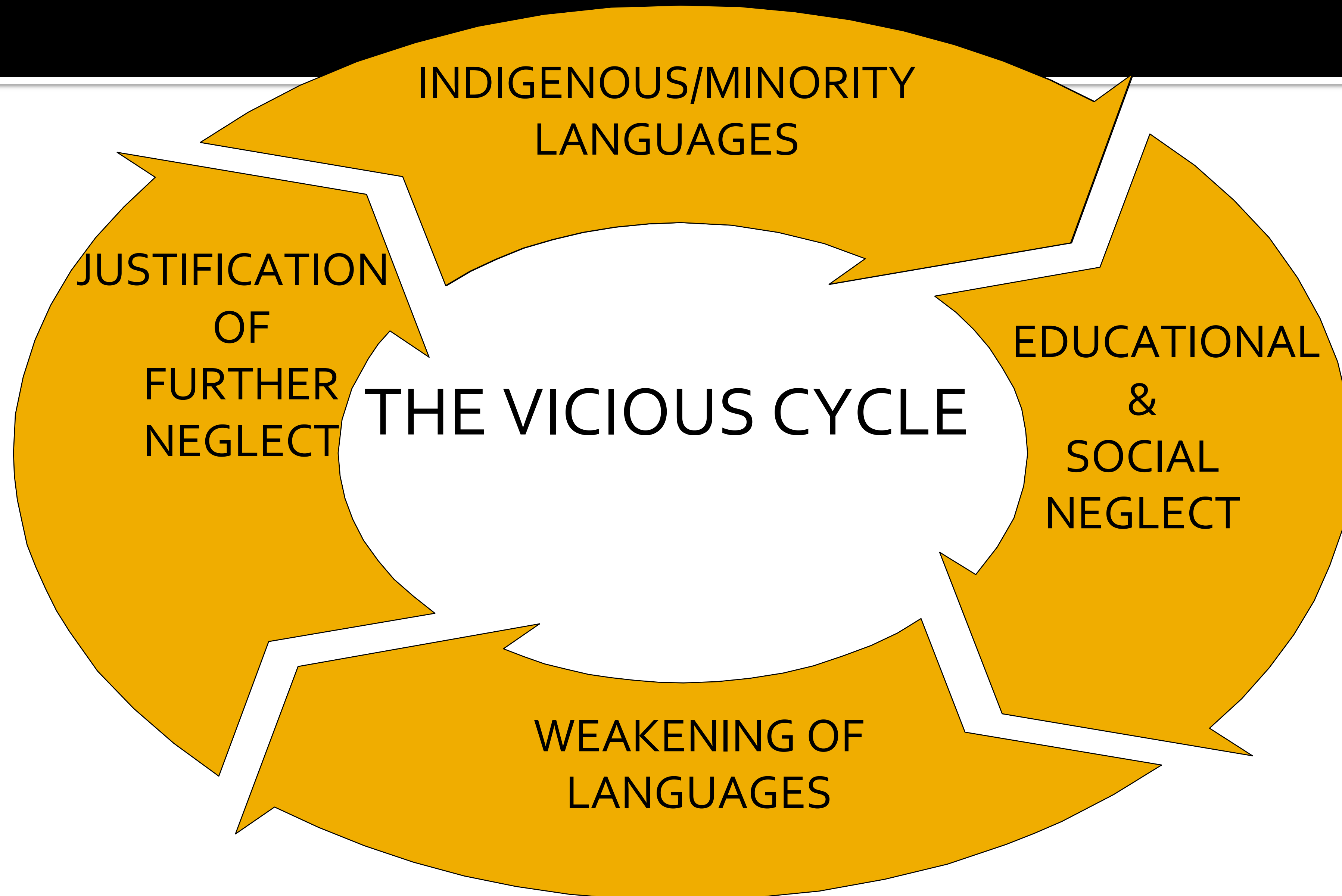
'Multilingualism of the Unequals'

'Linguistic Double Divide' (Mohanty, 2010, 2019)

ENGLISH IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES: THE DOUBLE-DIVIDE



THE VICIOUS CYCLE OF LANGUAGE DISADVANTAGE



Language-in-education Policy & Practice: The Dominance of English

- **Constitution:** English an Associate Official language of the Union; Mandates Instruction in minority MT in primary grades [debated but did not abolish the Dual (Private EM & Public) school system]
- **Policy:** MT-education recommended in ALL policy documents; Three-language formula (MT/Regional Language, Major National Language & English)
- **Educational Practice:** No. of languages in schools (as Mol or as school subjects) declining; Over 40% children in EM Private Schools growing by 10% annually; New EM Government Schools; ITM languages absent; Higher and Technical Education in English

MONOLINGUAL PRACTICES IN MULTILINGUAL SOCIETIES

English in Indian education

- **MOST PERVASIVE MI (among all the languages in school education in India)**
- **ENGLISH AS A COMPULSORY SUBJECT FROM CLASS 1 IN MOST STATES**
- **BETTER PLACED THAN ANY OTHER INDIAN LANGUAGE INCLUDING HINDI**
- **ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOLS AS BASIS OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION: THE NEW *CASTE* SYSTEM**
- **ENGLISH AS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN FAILURE IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS**

Growing up in Multilingual Societies

- Natural/spontaneous movement across languages/sociolinguistic contexts
- Natural ecology of languages: unmarked & equitable distribution of languages in different domains of use
- Fluid linguistic boundaries
- Early Multilingual Socialisation & Differentiation of languages & contexts of use
- Languages represented as holistic/integrated in language users' minds
- Languages “experienced as a network or a totality of communicative acts’ (Mohanty, 2019)
- Dominant Language Schooling suppresses children’s multilinguality (Mohanty & Skutnabb-Kangas, In press)

Moving from Home Language to Concentric Layers of Multilingualism

9

Widening Zones of Communication



MULTILINGUAL SOCIALIZATION & THE ECOLOGY OF EARLY ENGLISH

- **Early English as a taught language: Absence of spontaneity of acquisition**
- **Group/Social Class/Rural-Urban differences**
- **Domain specificity of English (academic/formal/cognitive)**
- **Limited space for English in core personal domains (intimate life style, emotions, core values, kitchen activities etc.)**
- **Social class differences in socialization for English**

(Bujorborua, 2006; Mohanty, 2019; Mohanty et al, 2000, Mohanty & Skutnabb-Kangas, in press)

SUBTRACTIVE EFFECTS OF EDUCATION IN DOMINANT LANGUAGES

- **Submersion education in dominant regional languages in Government Schools supressing ITM children's MT**
- **Private/Government EM schools suppressing MTs of regional majority & ITM language children**

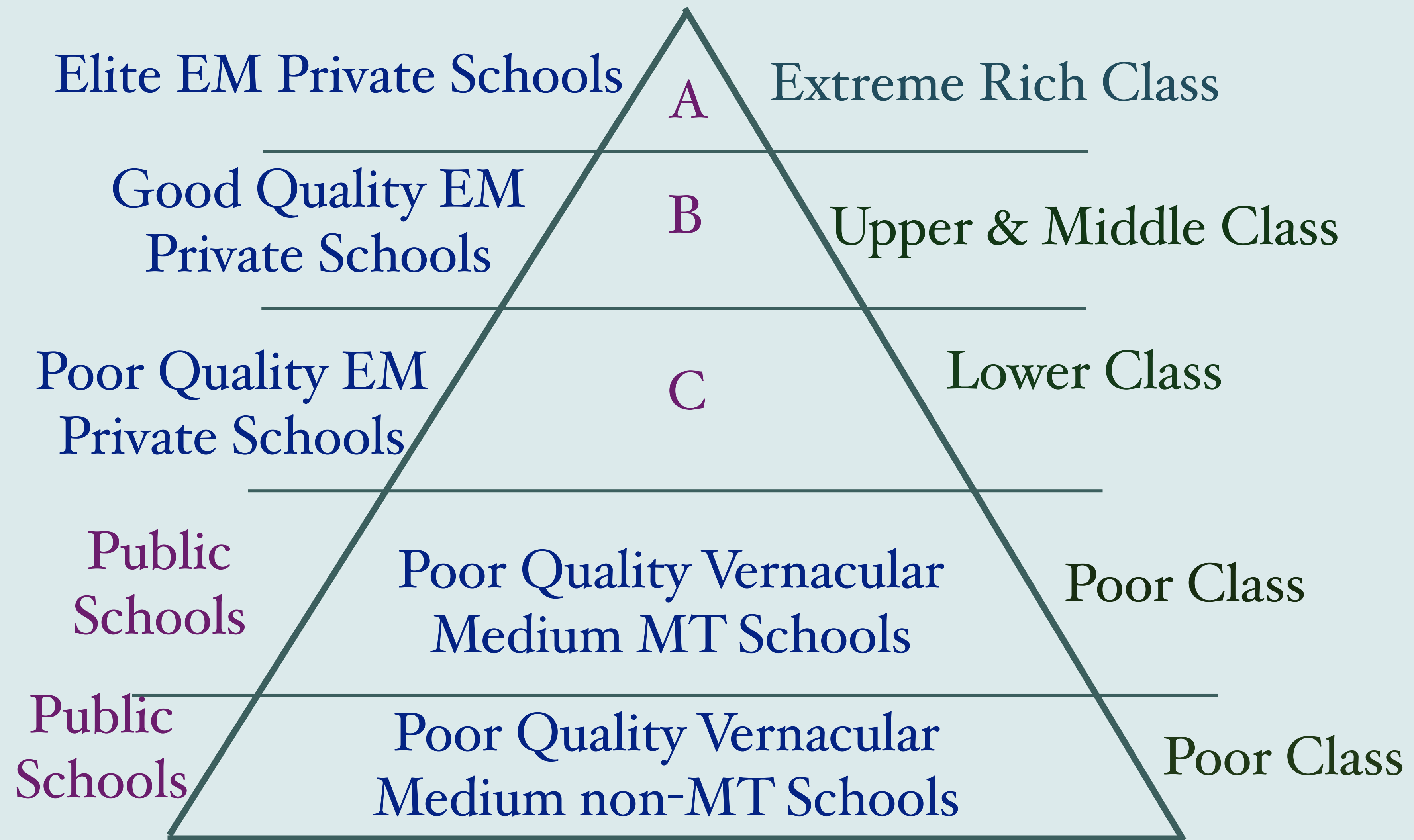
Hierarchical Organization of School Systems corresponding to how is English placed in the system leading to 'English & School Divide'

From Doon Schools to Doom Schools:

English Medium Schooling & the new *Caste* system in India

- i. Exclusive elitist EM residential schools (e.g. Doon School)
(Over \$20,000 US per annum);
 - ii. High-cost EM schools for the privileged class
(\$2000 to 6000 US p.a.);
 - iii. Low-cost EM schools for the less privileged social class
(\$100 – 400 US p.a.)
- No-cost VM government schools (for the poor) mostly with a free mid-day meal
- IV. for the regional majority language groups;
 - V. for the ITM language groups.

The School Divide & the Social Divide



Formal Mol & Classroom Practices

- **Regardless of the formal Mol, classroom practices are multilingual [see Report of Univ. of Cambridge Multilingualism & Multiliteracy - MultiLiLa Project – by I. M. Tsimpli & her team]**
- **It is not uncommon that, in teaching English, children's MTs are used to scaffold learning**
- **Multilingual practices are common in teaching in low-cost private EM schools and Government Schools**
- **In Elite & Good quality (High-cost) EM schools, however, there is exclusive use of English (use of MT or non-English languages are actively discouraged)**

English Monolingual Policy & Practice in HE

- 1043 Universities (including 396 Private); 42343 Colleges & 11,779 standalone Institutions of HE
- All institutions of Higher and Engineering/Medical/Management Education are EM Institutions (32 Universities focused on Indian Languages and few Universities allow students to write examinations in Hindi or other State Majority Languages)
- Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for 18 – 23 year age group is low (27.1%) GER for ITM students is even lower (18%)
- Low representation of Tribal/Indigenous students in Higher Education (5.6%) and in Engineering/Technology (2 – 4%)
- Commercialisation & Englishisation in High Cost Private Universities

Whom do the English Medium Schools Teach & Whom do they Cheat?

The children from the lower socio-economic strata do not learn in poor quality EM schools (the “*doom*” schools)

Parents spend roughly 5% to 10% of income to meet the cost of private EM schools catering the different economic levels (the percentage of expenditure is inversely proportional to SES)

Upper class parents invest much more in supporting English education of children (private tuition, coaching, books, computers). The poor cannot afford the same; the cost of EM schooling is a huge burden for the poor.

Commercial of EM schools teach the upper class children and cheat the poor with low quality ineffective education

The so called “success” schools (EM) of some state Governments are a failure

The Myth of English Medium Superiority

When quality of schooling & SES differences are controlled, Indian studies also show better performance in MT medium schools in different regions of India

(Mohanty et. al. 2008; Nayak, 2007; Sema, 2008; Saikia & Mohanty, 2004, Mohanty, 2019)

Large number of studies from Africa and other parts of the world show the EM schools are not better than MT medium schools

Studies all over the world show home language effective language of schooling

The popular belief that EM schools are better is superstitious, persisting despite all evidences to the contrary.

Whose Development does English promote?

- **Mathew Effect studies show that English benefits the privileged and discriminates against the disadvantaged**
- **In addition, our studies in India and many other Asian and African studies show that the gap actually widens over the number of years of schooling**

English and the new caste system: Whose Development does English promote?

- With the growing craze for English, a large number of children from rural, semi-urban and urban slum areas and low economic strata are joining poor quality affordable (cheap) EM schools where they neither learn English well nor develop academic competence.
- Soon after independence, Indian Prime Minister Nehru was concerned about discrimination between *English knowing caste* and the masses. The English knowing caste is now further fragmented to sub-castes based on the quality of English one knows and speaks.
- The emerging form of discrimination is between those who speak “good” English and those who do not.

Subversion of MT initiatives in Education

- The new initiatives for MLE for ITM language children are subverted despite their demonstrated success
- The first MLE programme in India in 8 Tribal/ITM Languages (1000 Primary Schools) in Andhra Pradesh started in 2004; the programme was highly successful (Mohanty et al., 2009, Panda et al. 2011) in promoting academic achievement. However, in 2015, all the MLE schools were converted to EM schools.
- MLE in Odisha (2006-): 21 ITM languages, 1485 Primary Schools & a declared state policy (2014) for MLE for all tribal children. Despite positive evaluation of the MLE programme, Govt. support for tribal children to join private EM schools and to open Govt. EM schools
- Teaching in HE and Public Examinations in Indian Languages do not attract students due to unavailability of learning materials in these languages

NEP 2020: Promises for Multilingualism in Education

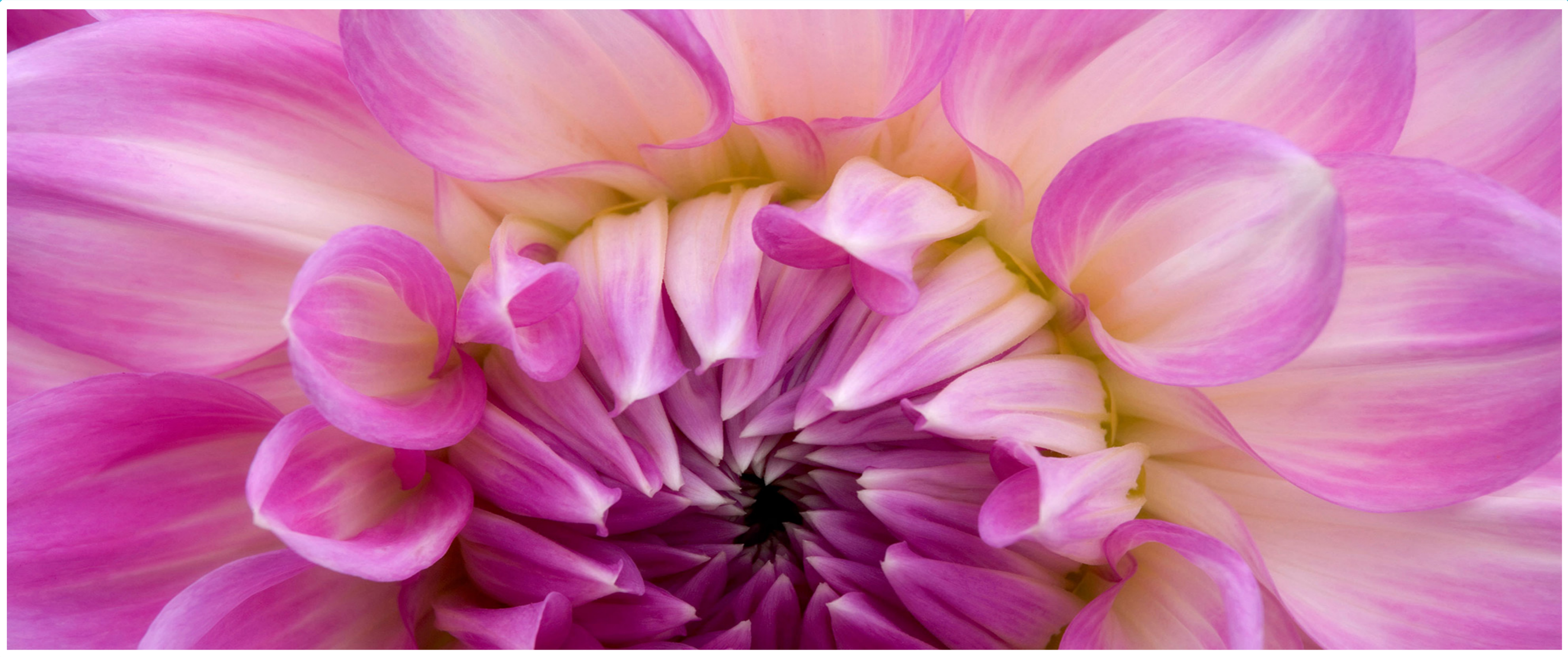
- **The National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 proposes:**
 - **MT based education in early grades in all schools including Private schools**
 - **Promotion of multilingualism in education**
 - **Reiterates commitment to the Three-Language Formula**
 - **HE in MTs and English-MT bilingual programmes**
 - **Emphasis on teaching of Indian Languages and Classical Indian languages**

New MLE initiatives in India

- A number of new initiatives in many states (Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat etc.) for MLE programmes
- However, the MLE programmes in India remain confined to Tribal/Indigenous children only

Looking Ahead: Situating English in a broad framework of MLE

- **Early literacy and schooling in MT along with teaching of English and other languages with MT as the Medium of school education for 12 years**
- **Development of high levels of multilingual proficiency (including English) by the end of school education**
- **English and other language options in HE**



THANK YOU & NAMASTE
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