

Preface

A bilingual approach to language and literacy teaching for Indian education flows from a premise that any language a child understands can be an effective medium of instruction, including languages that have in the past been excluded for one reason or another from school. At the same time, languages that children want to learn, but still do not understand, can also be an integral part of the teaching program, in many ways. In the case of indigenous languages, we can broaden this premise: incorporating a community's language into the school program can provide for a number of important benefits from the point of view of academic achievement. And in addition, we can propose a corollary: excluding one of the languages of a bilingual community from school, aside from restricting access to the benefits of bilingualism, limits language learners' options in the area of academic language development and literacy. The idea that language learning and literacy can be enriched with the inclusion of indigenous languages is what this book is about.

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