

The Status of Indigenous Languages in South Africa

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ABSTRACT In a multi-lingual country like South Africa, the use of indigenous languages remains a controversial issue. Before independence, African languages were marginalized and only English and Afrikaans were regarded as official languages. Today, English and Afrikaans are still regarded as superior to local languages. The majority of the South Africans are not aware of the National Language Policy Framework which stipulates that all languages are equal. The State is trying to sensitize citizens about the National Language Policy and to uphold the basic rights of all the citizens of South Africa. It aims at encouraging the equitable treatment of all the official languages spoken in the country. The policy is also aimed at strengthening the goals of social cohesion and nation building. The paper recommends that all the marginalized languages should be accorded the same status, if the country is to achieve socio-economic development.