

## Discussion and comments

**Languages in Pakistan:** There was a comment that the actual number of languages may be 63 rather than 69.

**India: *Evaluations:*** There has been no full evaluation of the MBTMLE programs yet but the University of Delhi may be going to do one. One measure that is known is that in some areas maths results were 20% improved.

**Language selection and scripts:** In answer to a query from Nepal on the difficulties with language selection in some areas and with development of scripts, Pam McKenzie said that in India these tend to be top-down decisions. Issues of scripts have often been difficult and contentious. Generally in India it was decided that the script of the State language be used, but in Orissa one group with its own script boycotted the government script and was eventually allowed to use its own. Difficulties are compounded by the fact that some ethnic groups move across borders/states. In cases where there are competing local scripts, some think that using Roman script is best.

A delegate said that scripts issues are highly contentious in Pakistan also, with some language groups using multiple scripts and unable to reach agreement on which ones to use. The issues tend to be not as contentious in Bangladesh, a delegate said. Those communities that don't have their own script tend to adopt Roman script.

**Sceptical parents:** In Bangladesh it was sometimes hard to persuade parents about MLE; they were more interested in when the children would learn Bangla, which is seen as necessary to find work. But advocacy and evidence can sceptical parents—and officials--over.