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how is social justice  
related to language  
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## Social Justice and Language Rights Social Justice and Language Rights

Introduction Social justice is best described as promoting just societies through challenging injustice and endorsing equitability. It exists where people share the same humanity and thus have the right to equitable treatment, fair allocation of resources, and upholding of their human rights (Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith & Huo, 1997, P. 1, L. 1-8). Where social justice prevails, people are neither discriminated against nor prejudiced in regards to their gender, sex, age, religious beliefs, political views, disabilities, social class or other distinctive backgrounds. All races, ages, and different people have equal opportunities in undertaking of community activities.

A just and equal world order is perhaps best seen as consisting of people with proper political regimes who fully respect basic human rights. Human rights are expansive, and language rights are part of them. Social justice is all about fairness and equality; language rights protect individuals to choose their preferred language in communication in the public and private spheres. For marginal groups, the opportunity to use ones language is of crucial importance because it protects their collective identity and participation in public life (Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith & Huo, 1997, P. 11).

Laws may restrict people who do not speak the national language from running for office – political posts, hence challenging international obligations that require free elections. During state discussions, the minority groups may suffer if the government insists discussions be carried out in the national language. Foreign language is what is often used to teach the children of the minority. Consequently, the children grow to forget their language and their culture in addition. Higher rates of school drop-outs and unemployment rates

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also follow the children. In the colonial days, the white people wanted to teach the black people children their language but the chiefs realized that it was only robbing their children of their language and culture (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2008, P. 3).

Deaf students are a minority group in our societies, and they have linguistic rights. They have a special form of communication in the form of sign language and the laws in place must cater for them. Deaf children attend special schools and are taught various skills during the period. In the event of completion, they should be seamlessly assimilated in the society (Muhlke, 2000, P. 23). They have the right to speech, freedom of opinion and expression, right to vote and run for an office, and the protection against unemployment. It is the ultimate responsibility of the government to ensure that all sectors do not deprive the deaf-people of information; for instance making it mandatory for a sign language interpreter to be present in all news briefings.

Deaf does not mean mute; a mother anticipates a form of communication from her child (Bouvet, 1990, P. 118, L. 8-9). Hearing-wise handicapped children learn how to communicate in a visual language. They develop a mother tongue from lessons by members of the family. They also learn how to read lips of other people and develop a form of writing and reading. All deaf children are destined to become bilingual and bicultural. They become bicultural in that they belong to both the hearing and deaf worlds (Bouvet, 1990, P. 133).

## Conclusion

It is our responsibility as a society to treat all the minority groups, especially

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the deaf, in a fair and just manner. They should feel welcome in their society, and equal opportunities should be awarded to them so that they can get the maximum from the society. Social justice and language rights complement each other.

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