



न्यायालय मुख्य आयुक्त दिव्यांगजन

COURT OF THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN)

दिव्यांगजन सशक्तिकरण विभाग/Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)

सामाजिक न्याय और अधिकारिता मंत्रालय/Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment

भारत सरकार/Government of India

5वाँ तल, एन.आई.एस.डी. भवन, जी-2, सेक्टर-10, द्वारका, नई दिल्ली-110075; दूरभाष : (011) 20892364

5th Floor, N.I.S.D. Bhawan, G-2, Sector-10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075; Tel.: (011) 20892364

Email: ccpd@nic.in; Website: www.ccpd.nic.in

Case No. CCPD/15564/1141/2024

In the matter of —

Suo-motu cognisance regarding the absence of/lack of adequate government-recognised Sign Language interpreters in the inclusive as well as special schools across the country.

Versus

- (1) The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities,
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment,
Through: The Secretary,
5th Floor, B Wing, Pt. Deendayal Antyodaya Bhawan
CGO Complex,
New Delhi – 110003
Email: secretaryda-msje@nic.in
- (2) The Secretary,
Department of School Education & Literacy,
Ministry of Education,
Room No. 124-C, Shastri Bhawan,
New Delhi-110001
Email: secy.sel@nic.in
- (3) The Principal Secretaries,
Education Departments of
Through: The Chief Secretaries
All States and Union Territories
- (4) The Director,
National Council of Educational Research and Training [NCERT],
Sri Aurobindo Marg,
New Delhi-110016;
Email: director.ncert@nic.in

- (5) The Chairman/Member Secretary,
Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI),
B-22, Qutab Institutional Area,
New Delhi - 110016
Email: cprci-depwd@gov.in
- (6) The Secretary,
Central Board of Secondary Education [CBSE]
Shiksha Kendra, 2, Community Centre,
Preet Viha, Delhi-110092
Email: secy-cbse@nic.in
- (7) The Director,
Ali Yavar Jung National Institute of
Speech and Hearing Disabilities (Divyangjan) [AYJNISHD]
K.C. Marg, Bandra (West),
Reclamation, Mumbai-400050
Email - ayjnihh@vsnl.com
- (8) The Director,
Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre [ISLRTC],
Module No.403-405, 4th Floor,
NISC Business Park, Okhla Industrial Estate,
New Delhi-110020
Email: *islrtcnewdelhi@gmail.com*
- (9) The Chairperson,
National Council for Teacher Education,
G-7, Sector-10, Dwarka,
New Delhi - 110075
Email: cp@ncte-india.org
- (10) The Chairperson,
National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS),
A-24/25, Institutional Area,
Sector-62, Noida,
Dist: Gautam Budh Nagar,
Uttar Pradesh - 201309
Email: cm@nios.ac.in

1. Gist of the Case:

1.1 This Court took suo motu cognisance of the lack of government-recognised Sign Language interpreters in both inclusive and special schools across India. He highlighted the acute shortage of government-recognised Sign Language interpreters in both inclusive and special

schools across India. This gap disproportionately affects children with hearing impairments—who represent about 20% of the disabled population between ages 6 and 20—leading to high dropout rates and a loss of national potential. Despite the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 mandating the standardisation of Indian Sign Language (ISL), development of curriculum resources, and its use as a medium of instruction, implementation remains limited. The policy also tasks the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) with developing quality ISL modules, yet these measures were seen to have made little progress.

1.2 This Court also took cognisance that key government digital education platforms like DIKSHA and NISHTHA, intended for teacher training and resource sharing, still lack Sign Language interpretation tools. At the same time, NCERT yet to convert educational materials into ISL. Additionally, even with specialised programs like the Diploma in Education (Hearing Impairment) offered by RCI-recognised institutions, there has been negligible recruitment of hearing-impaired teachers, and the Ali Yavar Jung National Institute of Speech and Hearing Disabilities (AYJNISHD) has not actively promoted Sign Language. These persistent gaps underscore the need for urgent systemic reforms to ensure equitable and inclusive education for students with hearing impairments.

2. Hearing (I): The hearings in the instant case were conducted on **07.08.2024, 09.10.2024, 16.01.2025** and the Record of Proceedings of which have been issued and are in the public domain.

3. Recommendations:

3.1 Mandating ISL as a Language Subject in All Schools: All central and state education boards, including CBSE, must immediately incorporate Indian Sign Language as a standalone language subject from Class I to XII. ISL must also be offered as a literature subject at the university level, on par with other Indian languages.

3.2 Time-Bound Curriculum Conversion and Resource Deployment: NCERT, in coordination with ISLRTC, NIOS, and CBSE, shall ensure the complete conversion of textbooks for Classes I to XII into Indian Sign Language within three months. The process must be tendered out or expedited using public-private collaborations. The

material must be made available simultaneously with general curriculum books, in line with the direction in *National Federation of the Blind v. UPSC* [(2014) 1 SCC 768].

3.3 Recruitment and Capacity Building of Sign Language

Professionals: The Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) and ISLRTC must ensure an immediate upscaling of DISLI and DTIL courses, including opening new centres, relaxing eligibility, and funding scholarships. All State Governments shall be directed to appoint a minimum number of SLIs in all inclusive and special schools based on a student-teacher ratio.

3.4 Inclusive Teacher Education under NCTE Mandate: NCTE in consultation with the RCI, shall revise its norms to mandate the inclusion of ISL training in B.Ed. and D.Ed. curricula for all special and general educators. Refresher courses shall be compulsory for all in-service special educators teaching students with hearing impairments.

3.5 Digital Inclusion and Accessibility Enforcement: The Ministry of Education must ensure that DIKSHA and NISHTHA platforms comply with digital accessibility standards under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017, and the Guidelines for Indian Government Websites (GIGW). ISL tools, video content, and interpreters must be integrated by default.

3.6 In terms of Section 76 of the Act, the respondents are recommended to submit the Action Taken Report on this Order within 3 months from the date of this Order.

4. Accordingly, the case is disposed of.

(Rajesh Aggarwal)
Chief Commissioner