



संकेत
SANKET
ISLRTC Newsletter

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**Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre,
New Delhi**



Message from Secretary, DEPwD

“Language is not only a tool for communication - it is a bridge to equality, identity and empowerment.”



Shri Rajesh Aggarwal,
Secretary, DEPwD

It gives me immense pleasure to note that the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) is bringing out the first edition of its biannual newsletter SANKET. This initiative is a commendable step towards highlighting the Centre's diverse efforts in promoting Indian Sign Language (ISL), advancing research, and creating a more inclusive society.

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) strongly believes that accessibility is the cornerstone of empowerment. ISLRTC's initiatives—be it interpreter training, curriculum development, ISL Dictionary, digital learning resources, community outreach, or capacity building programmes—have been instrumental in advancing this vision.

A recent pioneering initiative, the 14-day Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – ISL Skill & Interpretation Course for SODA (Siblings of Deaf Adults) & CODA (Children of Deaf Adults), successfully concluded on 29th August 2025. The first batch of 17 candidates from across India completed this course, which focused on ISL skills, interpretation principles, ethics, and new trends. This historic milestone recognises the invaluable role of SODA and CODA in bridging communication gaps and further strengthens the pool of skilled interpreters who combine professional expertise with lived experience.

I am confident that SANKET will serve as a valuable platform to disseminate knowledge and showcase innovations that inspire all stakeholders—policy makers, educators, interpreters, parents, and above all, the Deaf community.

My best wishes to the Director and the dedicated team of ISLRTC for their tireless efforts in making education and communication more inclusive for all.



Message from Additional Secretary, DEPwD

“Inclusion becomes meaningful only when every voice - spoken or signed - is heard and valued.”



Manmeet Kaur Nanda
Additional Secretary, DEPwD

I am delighted that ISLRTC is launching SANKET, its official newsletter. This publication reflects the Centre's commitment to accessibility, inclusion, and empowerment of the Deaf community. It is not only a record of achievements and activities but also a testament to the growing recognition of Indian Sign Language (ISL) as a language of equal dignity.

Over the years, ISLRTC has worked tirelessly to expand opportunities for persons with hearing disabilities - through the development of ISL curriculum, interpreter training, teacher education, and innovative online courses. The ISL Dictionary, training collaborations, and outreach initiatives have created sustainable impact and brought ISL into the mainstream of education and public life.

This newsletter is a welcome initiative that will further strengthen awareness, inspire new ideas, and connect stakeholders across India. I am particularly encouraged to see how ISLRTC is building partnerships with educational institutions, civil society, and the Deaf community to widen the reach of sign language.

I extend my congratulations to the Director and the ISLRTC team for this milestone initiative and wish SANKET great success. I hope it will continue to be a beacon of information, innovation, and inspiration for all those working towards an inclusive India.



From the Director's Desk



Shri. Kumar Raju
Director, ISLRTC

Dear Readers,

It gives me immense pleasure to introduce the inaugural edition of **SANKET**, the official newsletter of the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC). This newsletter marks a significant step in our continued efforts to create a robust platform for the promotion, preservation, and proliferation of Indian Sign Language (ISL) across the country.

At ISLRTC, we firmly believe that language is the cornerstone of identity, dignity, and empowerment. For the Deaf community, ISL is not just a means of communication - it is a vital expression of culture, connection, and equality. Recognizing this, our Centre remains steadfast in its mission to elevate ISL as a recognized and respected language at par with spoken languages in India.

Over the past few years, ISLRTC has taken significant strides through research, interpreter training, curriculum development, teacher education, and awareness programs. We are also proud to contribute to the accessibility landscape of the nation through collaborations with institutions, government bodies, and civil society organizations. Each initiative, small or large, reflects our vision of building an inclusive India where information, education, and communication are accessible to all.

Through this biannual newsletter, we aim to keep you updated on our key initiatives, academic contributions, collaborative projects, and success stories that reflect the resilience and vibrancy of the Deaf community. We also hope to engage educators, interpreters, researchers, policymakers, and all stakeholders who share our belief in equal communication rights.

I invite you to read, share, and contribute to **SANKET**, and become a part of our shared journey towards creating a more equitable, inclusive, and linguistically diverse society.



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1. Introduction

Namaste!

We are delighted to present the first edition of SANKET, the official biannual newsletter of the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC). This publication aims to keep readers informed about recent developments in Indian Sign Language (ISL), showcase the Centre's research and training initiatives, and highlight the vibrant and resilient Deaf community across the country.

As per Census 2011, India has over 50.7 lakh persons with hearing disabilities and approximately 20 lakh persons with speech disabilities. These numbers reflect the urgent need to promote accessible modes of communication and inclusive policies that empower persons with disabilities.

Sign languages are fully developed visual-gestural languages that use hand movements, facial expressions, and body postures to convey meaning. Indian Sign Language (ISL) is the primary language of communication for the Deaf community in India. It is widely used in schools, colleges, workplaces, homes, and social settings—particularly in urban areas where the Deaf community has formed strong social and educational networks. However, in rural areas, deaf individuals often face isolation and limited access to sign language.

To address this gap and in response to long-standing demands from the Deaf community, the Government of India established ISLRTC as an autonomous organization under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The Centre was set up to promote the use of ISL, enhance accessibility, and develop a trained workforce in the field of sign language interpretation, education, and linguistics.

Through SANKET, we hope to create a space that informs, inspires, and connects all those who are passionate about accessibility, inclusion, and linguistic rights for persons with hearing disabilities. We look forward to your continued support and engagement as we move forward in our shared mission.





3. Event Highlights

I. MoU with All India Federation of the Deaf (AIFD)



A collaboration with All India Federation of the Deaf to support impactful initiatives for Deaf Empowerment

On 4th April 2025, the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the All India Federation of the Deaf (AIFD) at ISLRTC, New Delhi.

The MoU was formally signed by Shri Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC, and Mr. Roshan Kumar, General Secretary, AIFD, in the presence of Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Director (A), ISLRTC, and Mr. E.K. Jose, Vice President, AIFD.

This collaboration marks an important milestone in advancing the cause of the Deaf community in India. Through this partnership, ISLRTC and AIFD will work together to:

- Undertake impactful initiatives for the empowerment of Deaf individuals.
- Strengthen advocacy, training, and outreach programs.
- Promote inclusion, accessibility, and equal opportunities at all levels.

The MoU reflects a shared commitment to building a society where the rights and dignity of every individual, including members of the Deaf community, are respected and upheld.

II. Mobile Repairing Course Launch under PM-DAKSH

On 16th April 2025, the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), in collaboration with the National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) Technical Services Centre, launched a dedicated Mobile Repairing Course for Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals. The programme was inaugurated at the NSIC Campus, New Delhi, by Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD).

This initiative forms part of the PM-DAKSH (Pradhan Mantri Dakshta Aur Kushalata Sampann Hitgrahi) Scheme and is designed to equip Deaf candidates with the technical expertise needed in the mobile repair sector.

The two-month training programme has been tailored to provide:

- Practical and hands-on learning opportunities.
- Real-world applications of technical knowledge.
- Pathways to self-reliance and economic independence, enabling participants to secure employment or establish small businesses.

Distinguished Guests Present at the Inauguration:

- Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, DEPwD
- Shri Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC
- Shri Gaurav Gulati, Director (Finance), NSIC
- Shri O. P. Singh, Senior General Manager, NSIC
- Shri Rajiv Nath, Centre Head, NTSC
- Shri Vimalash



Empowering the Deaf Community with Skills for the Future



III. MoU with Vision Divyang Foundation



ISLRTC Signs MoU with Vision Divyang Foundation

On 22nd May 2025, the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) formalized a significant collaboration with the Vision Divyang Foundation, Rohini, Delhi, through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The agreement was signed between the Director of ISLRTC and Shri Mukesh G. Gupta, Head of Vision Divyang Foundation.

The partnership is aimed at delivering large-scale, short-term training programmes in Indian Sign Language (ISL) for a diverse group of stakeholders, including teachers, professionals, college students, and parents.

Under this MoU, ISLRTC will contribute its technical expertise in:

- Course design and development
- Conducting skill assessments
- Providing joint certification

By combining resources and expertise, this collaboration seeks to ensure the availability of high-quality ISL training, thereby promoting greater accessibility, inclusion, and awareness across different sectors of society.

IV. MoU with Project Inclusion (Sri Aurobindo Society)

On 26th May 2025, the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Sri Aurobindo Society at the ISLRTC campus, New Delhi. This collaboration is aimed at strengthening Indian Sign Language (ISL) capacity among special educators and counselors, while also delivering short-term ISL training programmes for teachers, parents, students, professionals, and rehabilitation experts.



Project Inclusion Achieves Another Milestone

This milestone represents a significant step forward in the shared commitment to inclusive education. The MoU was signed by Shri Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC, and Dr. Simmi Mahajan, Chief Programme Officer, Project Inclusion.

The collaboration seeks to enhance the professional skills of teachers, special educators, rehabilitation professionals, school counselors, and other stakeholders by integrating ISL into their practice.

The signing ceremony was attended by Shri Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Director, ISLRTC, and Shri Rakesh Kumar Gangwal, Assistant Professor, ISLRTC, along with Shri Rajesh Trivedi and Shri Shantanu Virendra from the Sri Aurobindo Society.

This partnership reinforces the vision of building a society where every voice—spoken or signed—is heard, valued, and respected.



V. CRE Faculty Development Programme (FDP) at CRC Lucknow



Faculty Development Programme for DISLI/DTISL faculties from CRCs and NIs inaugurated by Prof. Sanjay Singh and Dr. Kumar Raju

On 16th June 2025, the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), in collaboration with CRC Lucknow, successfully inaugurated a five-day Faculty Development Programme (FDP) with Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) status.

The programme was specifically designed for faculty members of the Diploma in Indian Sign Language Interpretation (DISLI) and the Diploma in Teaching Indian Sign Language (DTISL) from

National Institutes (NIs) and Composite Regional Centres (CRCs). Importantly, the sessions were conducted in Indian Sign Language (ISL), ensuring full accessibility for all participants.

The inauguration was graced by Prof. Sanjay Singh, Vice Chancellor, DSMNRU, Lucknow, as the Chief Guest. Other distinguished attendees included:

- Dr. Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC
- Dr. Jitendra Sharma, Director, PDUNIPPD
- Shri Himanshu, Director, CRC Lucknow
- Shri Rakesh Kumar Gangwal, Assistant Professor, ISLRTC

A total of 38 faculty members from various NIs and CRCs participated in the programme, engaging in sessions that focused on enhancing pedagogical skills, strengthening ISL teaching methodologies, and fostering a more inclusive approach to sign language education.

This initiative reflects ISLRTC's ongoing commitment to capacity building and to advancing the professional development of educators in the field of Indian Sign Language.

VI. International Yoga Day Celebration

On 21st June 2025, the ISLRTC proudly celebrated the 11th International Yoga Day at the NSIC Campus, in collaboration with the Ministry of AYUSH. The event witnessed the enthusiastic participation of nearly 100 students and staff members, who came together to embrace the spirit of health, wellness, and inclusion. As a thoughtful gesture to promote unity through wellness, the Ministry of AYUSH graciously provided yoga mats and T-shirts to all participants.

The celebration was honored by the presence of:

- Shri Mukesh Gupta, Chairman, Vision Divyang Foundation (Chief Guest)
- Shri Mohd. Faizal, Assistant Director, Ministry of AYUSH (Special Guest)
- Shri Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC
- Shri Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Director, ISLRTC

The session was led by experienced yoga trainers, Ms. Khushi Singh and Ms. Jaswant Kaur, who guided participants through a peaceful yet energizing practice. Their efforts created an atmosphere of mindfulness, harmony, and collective well-being. This celebration not only highlighted the importance of physical and mental wellness but also reinforced ISLRTC's commitment to promoting inclusive participation in national and cultural events.



11 International Yoga Day, 2025

Celebrating Wellness and Inclusion



VII. Vibrant Vibes at Hansraj College



As part of the 11th International Yoga Day celebrations, a parallel event was organized on 21st June 2025 at Hansraj College, in collaboration with the Vision Divyang Foundation and Hansraj College. The programme brought together more than 80 participants, who engaged in a soulful and energetic yoga session.

The session was guided by Shri Abhishek Sharma and Ms. Deepa Yadav, whose expertise created a

perfect balance of physical wellness and inner peace. Their leadership ensured that participants experienced yoga as a holistic practice of harmony, mindfulness, and vitality.

ISLRTC extends its gratitude to the trainers and partner institutions for fostering a spirit of inclusion through this initiative. Special appreciation is due to Mr. Harish Soni, Assistant Professor, ISLRTC, for his excellent coordination, which contributed greatly to the success of the event. The morning was a true celebration of mindfulness, movement, and togetherness, embodying the essence of Yoga for All.

VIII. Inauguration of ISL Finishing School Program for Movie Interpretation

On 1st July 2025, the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), in collaboration with Yunikee, inaugurated the ISL Finishing School Program for Movie Interpretation. This pioneering initiative is designed to professionally train both Deaf and hearing interpreters in the field of media and entertainment, marking a significant step toward creating inclusive and accessible cinema for the Deaf community in India.



ISLRTC, in collaboration with Yunikee, proudly inaugurated the first ISL

The inaugural event was graced by Ms. Manmeet Kaur Nanda, Additional Secretary, DEPwD, MSJE, who attended as the Chief Guest. In her address, she highlighted the government's commitment to accessibility and inclusion, and emphasized the importance of interpreters accurately conveying movie content - including language, tone, and facial expressions - so that Deaf viewers can experience films in their entirety. She further encouraged participants to emerge as future leaders in media accessibility.

A total of 30 Deaf and hearing trainees, all certified in Indian Sign Language, have been selected for this intensive and specialized programme. The training is focused on enhancing interpretation skills specifically tailored for cinematic and visual media contexts.

During the ceremony, Shri Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC, welcomed participants and shared an overview of the initiative. Shri Chaithanya Kothapalli, Co-Founder and Director of Yunikee, underlined the importance of interpreters developing strong bilingual skills and adhering to the highest professional standards.

This initiative sets a new benchmark in media accessibility, advancing the vision of a society where cinema is truly inclusive and engaging for all.



IX. Mental Health First Responder Training in Collaboration with V-shesh



ISLRTC partnered with V-shesh and the Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health (BALM) in a pioneering initiative aimed at improving the mental health and overall well-being of the Deaf community in India. This programme, supported by Bajaj Finserv, was developed in close collaboration with Deaf colleagues, ISL users, and mental health professionals, ensuring that it was inclusive, relevant, and community-driven.

A key highlight of ISLRTC's contribution has been

the creation of 259 new ISL signs specifically related to well-being and mental health. These signs have been disseminated among members of the Deaf community and ISL users, significantly expanding the linguistic tools available to discuss mental health issues in an accessible manner. In addition, ISLRTC has shown strong commitment to the peer support model, which empowers community members to support each other in addressing mental health challenges. This collaboration represents a meaningful step toward bridging the gap between mental health services and accessibility, reinforcing the shared mission of building a more inclusive and supportive ecosystem for the Deaf community.

X. Online English Program for Deaf Learners

On 4th July 2025, the ISLRTC inaugurated the Online English Teaching Programme for Deaf Learners. The virtual launch was attended by the Director, Dy. Director, faculty members, interpreters, staff, and enthusiastic participants from across the country, marking a significant step in advancing accessible education.

This 3-month programme has been carefully designed to empower Deaf learners with essential English communication skills. The curriculum integrates inclusive and accessible teaching methods, ensuring that learners can develop their literacy and language proficiency in ways that align with their specific needs. The initiative reflects ISLRTC's commitment to fostering educational opportunities that enable Deaf learners to participate more fully in academic, professional, and social settings. The inauguration concluded with a message of gratitude to all participants and a call to embark on this meaningful journey of learning, growth, and empowerment.



Virtual inauguration of a 3-month course focused on English literacy using ISL methods.



XI. ISLRTC and AYJNISHD Mumbai Workshop on Basic ISL Skills for Special Educators



ISLRTC in collaboration with the Ali Yavar Jung National Institute of Speech and Hearing Disabilities (AYJNISHD), Mumbai, conducted a workshop on Basic ISL Skills for Special Educators. The training was held approximately 50 km from AYJNISHD, Mumbai, addressing a critical need for ISL skill development among special educators in suburban areas. The sessions were led by experts from ISLRTC and AYJNISHD, including Dr. Abhishek Kumar Srivastava, Dr. Asavari Shinde, and Mr. Jayesh, with

full interpretation support provided by Mr. Ashish Sonkar. The workshop emphasized practical ISL skills for classroom application, equipping educators with tools to better support students with hearing impairments. Educators from Sanvad Karnabhadhir School actively participated, and the event was hosted at Astitva Deaf School, Thane District, benefitting 15 special educators. This initiative contributed significantly to promoting inclusive education practices in the region, while strengthening the role of special educators in bridging communication barriers for Deaf learners.

XII. ISLRTC CRE Programme on English Education for Deaf Students



ISLRTC under the DEPwD, MSJ&E, successfully organized a two-day CRE programme titled “Best Practices for Teaching English to Deaf Students Using ISL”. The programme was held on 10 - 11 July 2025 at the India International Centre, New Delhi, and marked a historic milestone by bringing together national and international experts both in-person and online for the first time since ISLRTC’s inception in 2016. The event began with an inaugural address by Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, DEPwD, and Shri Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC.

Day 1 Highlights:

- Featured insightful sessions by Dr. Sibaji Panda (Happy Hands School), Ms. Sharayu Kadam (TEACH), Shri Sunil Sahasrabudhe (AIFD), and Shri Rajesh Ketkar (MBM & Orjet Foundation).
- Participants engaged in interactive group workshops and a dynamic panel discussion on bilingual education.

Day 2 Highlights:

- Compelling presentations were delivered by Dr. Chithra Prasad (NISH, Kerala), Shri Hari Hara Kumar (Deaf Enabled Foundation), and Shri Ali Abbas Behmanesh (Gallaudet University, USA).
- The day also included a curriculum feedback session on DTISL T5 and T6, followed by a valedictory address by Shri Kumar Raju.
- All resource persons were felicitated for their contributions.

The hybrid format of the programme was managed seamlessly by the ISLRTC team, with Shri Harish Soni serving as Master of Ceremony and Shri Vishwajit Nair coordinating the event. Valuable contributions from student volunteers, MTS, MMD, and office staff ensured its success. Through this initiative, ISLRTC reinforced its commitment to promoting English literacy through Indian Sign Language, while advancing accessibility, academic excellence, and empowerment for the Deaf community across India.



XIII. 5-Day ISL Training for Parents and Families of Deaf Children



Amar Jyoti School | 14th–18th July 2025

ISLRTC, in collaboration with Amar Jyoti School, New Delhi, successfully conducted a five-day ISL training programme from 4th July to 18th July 2025 for parents and family members of Deaf children. A total of 44 participants actively took part in the training, where they learned basic ISL vocabulary related to education, daily life, and effective communication. The sessions were designed to be interactive and impactful, creating a positive space

for learning, bonding, and growth among families. ISLRTC extends its sincere gratitude to Amar Jyoti School for providing the venue, technical support, and mobilizing parents for this meaningful initiative.

Special appreciation is due to the dedicated ISLRTC training team for their valuable contribution:

Shri Islam Ul Haque, Master Trainer

Ms. Sneha Tiwari, Master Trainer

Ms. Khushboo Soni, Master Trainer

Ms. Neha Rajpoot, ISL Instructor

This initiative not only strengthened communication within families but also helped build greater awareness and inclusion in everyday life for Deaf children.

XIV. ISL Skill-Up Training for North-East Educators

The Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), under the DEPwD, MSJ&E, Government of India, successfully organized a CRE-accredited 5-Day ISL Skill-Up Training for special educators from the North-East region. The programme was held from 14–18 July 2025 at the State Academy Training Institute, Imphal, in collaboration with CRCSE, Imphal. The training brought together over 50 special educators from across the region and was designed to



strengthen their ISL communication skills, thereby enabling them to provide more effective classroom support to students with hearing impairments and promote inclusive education practices.

The programme was conducted under the esteemed guidance of:

- Shri Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, DEPwD
- Smt. Manmeet Kaur Nanda, Additional Secretary, DEPwD
- Shri Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC

It was inaugurated by distinguished dignitaries, including Shri W. Birahari Singh, Shri Rakesh Kumar Gangwal, Shri N. Khoibi Singh, Shri Jiteshwor Keisham, Smt. Esther Zingkhai, Shri Shubham Pochat, and Shri Prashadi Kumar Mehtho.

Led by Shri Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC, and coordinated by Assistant Professor Rakesh Kumar Gangwal along with Co-Coordinator Shri Shubham Pochat, the programme offered hands-on sessions designed to enhance practical ISL usage in classrooms.

This impactful initiative reaffirmed ISLRTC's commitment to empowering educators and advancing inclusive learning environments across the North-East region.



XV. ISLRTC Conducts RCI-Approved Online CRE Webinar on “Capacity Building Workshop on Indian Sign Language (ISL) for Special Educators”



ISLRTC successfully conducted an RCI-approved Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) webinar on “Capacity Building Workshop on ISL for Special Educators.”

The programme began with a welcome address and introduction by Dr. Abhishek Kumar Srivastava, Assistant Professor, ISLRTC, who also delivered an insightful session on the pivotal role of ISL in promoting inclusive communication for children with hearing impairments. This was followed by an

engaging presentation by Mr. Sapan Jain, ISL Master Trainer, Haryana Welfare Society, who highlighted the importance of bilingualism in developing age-appropriate language skills among Deaf children.

To ensure complete accessibility, the entire webinar was interpreted live in Indian Sign Language by Mr. Nirbhay Kumar Mall, Ms. Dharana, and Ms. Sakshi.

The session saw the active participation of 135 attendees from across India, including rehabilitation professionals, special educators, and members of the Deaf community. By bringing together diverse perspectives, the webinar served as a valuable platform for capacity building and for strengthening inclusive practices within the field of special education.

XVI. ISLRTC in collaboration with AYJNISHD(D)

On 18th July 2025, the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), Mumbai, in collaboration with the Ali Yavar Jung National Institute of Speech and Hearing Disabilities (Divyangjan) [AYJNISHD(D)], Mumbai, successfully organized an in-person workshop on “Basic Functional Indian Sign Language (ISL) Skills for Parents and Avenues for Learning Sign Language” at Sadhana Deaf School, Dadar, Mumbai.



The workshop focused on:

- Raising awareness among parents of Deaf students about the importance of ISL.
- Teaching practical ISL skills for everyday home and classroom communication.
- Sharing accessible resources for continued ISL learning.

The sessions were led by:

- Dr. Abhishek Kumar Srivastava (ISLRTC)
- Dr. Asavari Shinde (AYJNISHD)
- Ms. Sona (ISL Trainer)

A total of 33 parents actively participated in this interactive and engaging training, which created a positive environment for learning and encouraged parents to foster more inclusive and accessible communication both at home and in schools.



XVI. RPL-ISL Skill & Interpretation Course for SODA & CODA



Historic Milestone in Interpreter Training

The Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) successfully organized the 14-day Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – ISL Skill & Interpretation Course for SODA (Siblings of Deaf Adults) and CODA (Children of Deaf Adults) successfully completed on 29th August 2025.

This first-of-its-kind course marks a historic milestone in formally recognising and strengthening the interpreting skills of SODA and CODA, who naturally grow up bilingual—fluent in both Indian Sign Language (ISL) and spoken languages. Their lived experiences uniquely position them to bridge communication gaps between the Deaf and hearing communities.

Training Focus:

- Enhancing ISL communication skills.
- Theoretical foundation on interpretation principles.
- Ethics and professional standards in interpreting.
- Exposure to new trends and evolving practices in the interpreting field.

Approach: Interactive sessions, practical interpretation exercises, peer-learning, and guidance from experienced ISL educators and interpreters.

Significance of the Initiative

- Recognises natural interpreters (SODA & CODA) as a vital resource for the Deaf community.
- Strengthens the pool of trained interpreters with both professional expertise and lived cultural experience.
- Creates a pathway for SODA and CODA to contribute to inclusive education, accessibility, and advocacy for the Deaf community.

The successful completion of this course by the first batch of 17 participants is just the beginning. ISLRTC envisions expanding such programmes to nurture a larger cadre of interpreters who will play a transformative role in making communication inclusive, accessible, and empowering for all.



XVII. Purple Fair 2025 at Amity University, Noida



The Purple Fest 2025, organized by the SLRTC, New Delhi in collaboration with Amity University, Uttar Pradesh (Noida), was held on 10th–11th September 2025 as a vibrant celebration of inclusion, dignity, and empowerment of Divyangjan.

The festival was organized under the esteemed guidance of Sh. Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, DEPwD and inaugurated in the gracious presence of Ms. Manmeet Kaur Nanda, Additional Secretary, DEPwD and Dr. Balvinder Shukla, Vice Chancellor, Amity University. In her inspiring address, Dr. Shukla emphasized that purple is not just a colour but a symbol of equality, dignity, and confidence, reminding all that persons with disabilities are not weak but uniquely gifted. Ms. Manmeet Kaur Nanda, Additional Secretary, DEPwD highlighted the importance of inclusion, awareness of assistive devices, and normal behaviour towards Divyangjan, stressing that assistive devices are not charity but a right enabling independence and dignity. The program commenced with a welcome address by Sh. Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC, and was followed by cultural and academic sessions.

A special moment was the felicitation of Ms. Gurdeep Kaur Vasu, the first deafblind Indian to secure a government job under the multiple disabled category, who received a Certificate of Appreciation from Additional Secretary, DEPwD for her perseverance and achievements. Day 1 also featured an Art & Craft Exhibition, 22 entrepreneurship stalls, cultural programmes, sports events, and a CRE programme with a focus on ISL, witnessed by nearly 500 participants including students, faculty, and parents.

Day 2 concluded the festival on a grand note with over 1,800 registered visitors participating in sports, cultural, and academic activities. Sports competitions included Cricket, Badminton, Chess, Carrom, and Table Tennis, with an inclusive cricket match between Amity University students and deaf students of ISLRTC standing out as a highlight of camaraderie. Several special schools and institutions, including Amar Jyoti, Akshaya Pratisthan, NIEPID, and AYJNISHD Noida, enriched the diversity of participation. The 22 entrepreneurship stalls received an overwhelming response, generating sales worth ₹2.54 lakh, while ISLRTC also distributed 200 accessible “Veergatha” books by NBT. A CRE Programme with 300 participants further strengthened professional knowledge on inclusivity. The Valedictory Session was graced by Ms. Richa Shankar, Deputy Director General, DEPwD, who emphasized the importance of promoting inclusivity, accepting Divyangjan as equals, ensuring inclusive schools, and appreciating the struggles and achievements of deaf persons. Dr. Jayanti Pujari, Amity University, presented the event report, while Prof. Sanjiv Bansal, Pro Vice Chancellor, Amity University, shared that the festival had successfully achieved its objectives. Sh. S.K. Srivastava also graced the occasion, and Sh. Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC, delivered the closing remarks, acknowledging the efforts of the organizing team and enthusiastic participation. Certificates of Appreciation were awarded by Ms. Shankar to the organizing team and to 16 candidates completing a Mobile Repair Course at ISLRTC, underscoring progress in skill development.

Over two days, Purple Fest 2025 emerged as a vibrant festival of talent, inclusion, entrepreneurship, and empowerment, carrying the powerful message that disability is not a weakness, assistive devices are a right, and respect is not a favour but a necessity.



भारतीय सांकेतिक भाषा
अनुसंधान एवं प्रशिक्षण केन्द्र
**Indian Sign Language
Research and Training Centre**



4. Services

4.1 Interpreting Services

The Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) provides interpreter services to ensure that information is available in an accessible medium for persons with hearing disabilities.

Between April 2024 and March 2025, ISLRTC facilitated interpreting services for approximately 48 programmes, events, and conferences of national importance. These included:

- National Voter's Day
- World Disability Day
- National Award Function
- National Conferences
- Purple Fest, among others

Through these initiatives, ISLRTC continues to promote accessibility, inclusion, and equal participation, enabling members of the Deaf community to engage fully in public events and national celebrations.

4.2 Video Relay Service

ISLRTC provides Accessibility to Deaf community through Video Relay Service. This service enables deaf people to communicate with hearing people vide a sign language interpreter placed at ISLRTC through whatsapp video call. The service is broadly used in hospitals, government offices, educational institutions, bank, work place, interviews, police station and court etc. ISLRTC provides this VRS online interpreting service at free of cost through whatsapp number 8929667579. The Number of beneficiaries from April 2024 to March 2025 is 2028.



4.3 Directory of Deaf Schools in India

ISLRTC is working on the development of a directory of deaf schools in India which is a continuous process. As and when the information is received regarding Deaf schools, the directory is updated accordingly. The purpose of the directory is to provide a comprehensive and consolidated list of schools that impart education to deaf children across India. The directory will serve as resource for families of deaf children to search for and select appropriate schools according to the educational and communicative needs of the child in the selected region of the country and thus initiate the child's formal schooling. The information about the schools has been compiled and consolidated. The directory is available on

<http://islrtc.nic.in/sites/default/files/Directory%20of%20Deaf%20Schools%20%2837%29.pdf>.

4.4 Directory of ISL Interpreters

ISLRTC has made a directory of ISL interpreters by compiling the lists of various organizations/ institutions/ colleges/ university. Updating the directory is a continuous process. The directory is useful for deaf and hearing people who need interpreters. In the directory, interpreters have been classified according to their language skills, and 17 languages have been included – Hindi, Malayalam, Haryanvi, Rajasthani, Bengali, Sanskrit, Bhojpuri, Kannada, Odia, Telegu, Konkani, Khortha, Bundelkhandi, Pahadi, Marathi, English and Indian Sign Language.



4.5 Online Basic ISL Course in Self Learning Mode

Indian Sign Language (ISL) is a visual manual language used by the Deaf community in India. It serves as a primary means of communication for millions of Deaf individuals, as well as for teachers, parents, siblings, and interpreters. ISL plays a vital role in providing accessibility and promoting inclusivity for the Deaf population in various aspects of life, including education, employment, and social interactions. Its distinct grammar and vocabulary make it a rich and expressive language, facilitating meaningful communication within the Deaf community and with hearing individuals who learn ISL.

Description of Basic Indian Sign Language (ISL) course in self learning mode. The Online Basic Indian Sign Language (ISL) course in self-learning mode aims to develop learners' fundamental communication skills in ISL, fostering an understanding of its importance in the Deaf community. This course is designed to create interest, sensitivity, and curiosity towards ISL, with specific objectives including:

- Providing an introduction to ISL and its role in communication and inclusion.
- Teaching basic ISL vocabulary and grammar for constructing simple sentences and engaging in conversations.
- Cultivating awareness and respect for Deaf culture, etiquette, and norms.
- Enhancing participants' ability to communicate in ISL with Deaf individuals and promoting inclusivity.

The course targets various groups, including government employees, educators, customer relation assistants, public-facing staff, and content creators. The syllabus covers ten modules, focusing on topics such as greetings, self-introduction, commonly used words, descriptions, grammar, and situation-based conversations. Each module includes quizzes for self-assessment. The course aims to empower a diverse range of learners to communicate effectively in ISL, facilitating improved accessibility and inclusivity for the Deaf community in various sectors and settings.



4.6 Online Course on Communicative English

ISLRTC initiated an online course on Communicative English to help improve the literacy skills of deaf youth and thus promote the education and job opportunities. The course was conducted from July to Sep 2025 for three months with daily classes on weekdays of 1 hour duration. Total 08 batches were conducted with 103 students admitted and no fees were charged. Assessments were regularly conducted and certificates were issued to successful candidates.



5. Training Programs:

ISLRTC offers a variety of training programs for individuals interested in learning ISL, including:

- Online ISL courses for beginners
- Diploma in Indian Sign Language Interpretation (DISLI) and Diploma in Teaching Indian Sign Language (DTISL)
- Workshops for educators and community members
- Conducting online CRE Programmes.

6. Latest News and Updates

- Video Relay Service (VRS) Integration: ISLRTC has successfully integrated VRS into the National Helpline Number 14456. This initiative is a huge step forward in ensuring accessible communication for persons with Deaf and Hard of Hearing people across India.
- ISL Dictionary Updates: We are continuously updating the ISL Dictionary to include new signs and regional variations. Check ISLRTC Youtube and app.
- Online Basic Indian Sign Language Course: ISLRTC launched a Basic Communication Skills in ISL course, designed for self-learning. The primary aim of this course is to foster basic communication skills in Indian Sign Language. The module is available on YouTube.
- ISLRTC Latest Notifications: ISLRTC provides the latest notifications in Indian Sign Language in ISLRTC website.



7. ISL Resources

- ISL Dictionary: <https://divyangjan.depwd.gov.in/islrtc/>
- Sign Learn App: Android & iOS
- ISLRTC Website: <http://islrtc.nic.in>
- Directory of Deaf Schools: <https://islrtc.nic.in/directory-of-deaf-schools/>
- Directory of ISL Interpreters : <https://islrtc.nic.in/directory-of-isl-interpreters/>
- Teachers
- NCERT Books in ISL link : <https://islrtc.nic.in/ncert-books-in-isl/>



8. Upcoming Events

As ISLRTC looks ahead, we continue to strengthen our mission of promoting Indian Sign Language (ISL) and creating pathways for accessible education, skill development, and inclusion. The coming months will see the rollout of several key initiatives:

- **Six-Month Sign Language Course** : A comprehensive course to help learners acquire strong ISL skills for use in education, workplaces, and community settings.
- **PGDISLI and PGDTISL Courses** : Introduction of Post Graduate Diploma in ISL Interpretation (PGDISLI) and Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching ISL (PGDTISL), aimed at developing a professional cadre of interpreters and ISL educators.
- **NCERT Textbook Translation (Class 1–12)** : ISL translation of NCERT textbooks – making school education more inclusive for Deaf learners nationwide.
- **Collaboration with NIOS** : ISLRTC is actively partnering with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) to promote Indian Sign Language in the mainstream education system. The collaboration includes:
 - a. Supporting the development of ISL as a language subject at Senior Secondary level, which will be launched soon by NIOS.
 - b. Faculty of ISLRTC contributing significantly to the development of ISL as a subject at the C level (Class 8), ensuring early introduction of ISL in the school curriculum ISL Skill Training Programme.
- **Online & Offline CRE Programmes** : Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) programmes—conducted in both modes—to build the capacity of special educators, interpreters, and rehabilitation professionals

9. Contact Information

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