

ISLRTC organized Two-Day National Workshop on 'Best Practices for Teaching English to Deaf Students Using Indian Sign Language', in New Delhi

English language skills important to enhance Career Opportunities for Deaf Individuals, while facilitating Effective Communication and Full Inclusion in Mainstream Society: Secretary (DEPwD)

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A Two-Day Offline National Workshop on 'Best Practices for Teaching English to Deaf Students Using Indian Sign Language (ISL)', was organized by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), on 10th – 11th July 2025, in New Delhi. ISLRTC is an autonomous body under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.



The workshop was inaugurated by secretary (DEPwD), Shri Rajesh Aggarwal. In his address, the Secretary emphasized the importance of Indian Sign Language (ISL) as the first language of deaf individuals, noting its vital role in their cognitive and academic development. He also highlighted the need for developing English language skills to enhance career opportunities for deaf individuals and to facilitate effective communication and full inclusion in mainstream society. Furthermore, he advocated for the integration of technology as a means to promote literacy and learning among the deaf community.

The Workshop had featured presentations and interactive sessions led by experienced resource persons:

- Dr. Sibaji Panda, Founder & Director, Happy Hands School for the Deaf; ex-Founder, ISHARA Foundation (now non-operational); researcher in English literacy for Deaf students
- Sh. Sunil Sahasrabudhe, Senior Consultant, expert in bilingual education for the Deaf with 20+ years of experience

- Sh. Rajesh Ketkar, Senior Consultant, MBM News and Orjet Foundation; former Director, ISHARA Foundation, Gujarat
- Sh. Hari Hara Kumar, Deaf Enabled India, Hyderabad; 15+ years of work in English literacy and employment under DEPwD initiatives
- Ms. Sharayu Kadam, Associate Coordinator, English Development Program, TEACH, Mumbai; experienced across multiple education boards
- Ms. Chithra Prasad, NISH, Kerala; 15+ years of experience in Deaf education
- Mr. Abbas Ali Behamanesh, English and ASL Educator, Gallaudet University, USA (online)

The presentations focused on practical strategies, bilingual approaches, and culturally responsive methodologies for enhancing English literacy among Deaf learners through the use of Indian Sign Language (ISL). Participants actively engaged in group discussions to reflect on the insights shared and to collaborate on effective ways to improve classroom practices. The sessions were marked by rich and constructive dialogue, with valuable contributions from special educators, ISL instructors, and Deaf school teachers representing diverse regions across the country.



The programme concluded with a valedictory session delivered by Ms. Manmeet Kaur Nanda, AS (DEPwD). The event witnessed the participation of 180 delegates, including teachers from special and inclusive schools, Master Trainers from National Institutes (Nis) and Composite Regional Centres (CRCs), as well as representatives from NCERT and NIOS.

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