



Government, Civil Society and Tech Leaders Unite to Build India's First Integrated Life-Cycle Support Model for Persons with Hearing Impairment

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In a significant step towards strengthening inclusive development and accessibility in India, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, has entered into a landmark partnership with the “Coalition of the Willing” to accelerate empowerment and opportunity for persons with hearing impairment. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), signed in New Delhi on 12 March 2026, in presence of Smt. V. Vidhyavathi, Secretary, Ms Manmeet Kaur Nanda, Addl. Secretary, Pradeep A., Director DEPwD, and Shri Kumar Raju, Director, ISLRTC, marks the beginning of a collaborative national framework that brings together government institutions, civil society organisations and technology innovators to build a comprehensive and sustainable support ecosystem for the deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

The partnership aims to pioneer an integrated life-cycle model of empowerment that supports individuals with hearing impairment from early intervention and education to skilling, employment and social inclusion. By aligning institutional expertise, technological innovation and community outreach, the initiative seeks to create systemic change that improves accessibility, expands opportunities and strengthens dignity and independence for persons with hearing impairment across the country.



The Coalition of the willing is a consortium of organizations with diverse expertise in technology, education, accessibility and social empowerment. It includes Yunikee (Gopalakrishnan Foundation for the Deaf), Blee Tech Innovations Pvt. Ltd., Training and Educational Centre for Hearing Impaired (TEACH), WinVinaya Foundation, Buddy4Study India Foundation, VCrop Technologies Pvt. Ltd., and the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC). Together with DEPwD, the coalition will work to design and implement innovative interventions that address multiple dimensions of empowerment.



The collaboration will focus on key priority areas including awareness generation, expansion of accessibility and assistive technologies, strengthening early identification and educational support, promoting skill development and employment pathways, facilitating scholarships, developing Indian Sign Language learning and digital content, and enabling sustainable livelihood opportunities. By combining policy support with technological solutions and community-driven initiatives, the partnership aims to ensure that persons with hearing impairment are able to participate fully and confidently in social and economic life.

Officials noted that the initiative represents a progressive example of public–private–civil society collaboration, where each partner contributes specialized knowledge and resources to address complex inclusion challenges. By leveraging digital innovation, training ecosystems and community networks, the partnership is expected to create scalable models that can benefit persons with hearing impairment across urban and rural India.

Through this strategic collaboration, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities continues to advance its commitment to building an inclusive India where accessibility, opportunity and participation are available to every Divyangjan. The initiative reflects a broader vision of ensuring that technology, education and partnerships work together to remove barriers and create pathways for empowerment, dignity and equal opportunity for persons with disabilities nationwide.

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