



Cover Designed by RAVINDRA



SEMINAR ON "SIGN LANGUAGE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING"

Proceedings, papers presented & Recommendations Made

on 4th & 5th November 2011

at Constitution Club, Rafi Ahmed Marg, New Delhi - 110001

Organised by



DELHI ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF

Regd. Office : 92, Kamla Market, New Delhi - 110002



SAIL A MAHARATNA COMPANY



STRENGTHENING THE PRESENT



SHAPING THE FUTURE



स्टील अथॉरिटी ऑफ इण्डिया लिमिटेड
STEEL AUTHORITY OF INDIA LIMITED

There's a little bit of SAIL in everybody's life

www.sail.co.in



RAJIV PRATAP RUDY
Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)
National Spokesperson, B J P



AB-97, SHAHJAHAN ROAD,
NEW DELHI
PHONE : 011-23070300
FAX : 011-23070999
E-mail : rudypr@rediffmail.com

MESSAGE

I am happy that our Association is doing its best to advance the cause of deaf people in the Country, this time by espousing and promoting the development and use of Sign Language, by organising a Seminar on 4th & 5th November, 2011 at the Constitution Club of India, New Delhi.

I extend my best wishes to the organisers of the Seminar and wish them all success.

I also believe, the Seminar will have a positive impact on the participants in the Seminar and in turn, they will become keen crusaders of Sign Language, in their areas.

(Rajeev Pratap Rudy)
Chairman

FORMER UNION MINISTER FOR
COMMERCE & CIVIL AVIATION (INDEPENDENT CHARGE)

Profile of our Chairman

Rajiv Pratap Rudy
Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha)
National Spokesperson, BJP



A Determined Achiever, with a Humane Heart

Commencing his political career as a student union leader, Rajiv Pratap Rudy has a span of more than two decades of active politics behind him. He became a MLA from his home state of Bihar in 1990 at the early age of 28 after serving as the national vice-president of BJYM, the youth wing of BJP. He was elected to Parliament from Chapra representing BJP in 1996 and again reelected in 1999. Inducted as Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry in the year 2001, he was subsequently elevated as Civil Aviation Minister with an independent charge in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee led NDA government in 2003.

The aviation industry witnessed large scale reforms during his stint as Minister ranging from privatization of Delhi and Mumbai airports (Brownfield projects) and Hyderabad and Bangalore (Greenfield projects), launch of Low Cost Airlines and permission of private airlines to travel international with several policy initiatives which lead to a virtual revolution for air travelers.

He is part of several Consultative and Standing committees of the Parliament and was part of the Committee which looked into the Nuclear Liability Bill.

Having lost his father at an early age of five, propelled by sheer dedication and support of family, Rudy rose to achieve a degree in Law from Punjab University. He is enrolled as an advocate in Patna apart from having also rendered his teaching skills as a Lecturer of Economics. Secretary of the Constitution Club of India (CCI) and Chairman of The Delhi Association of the Deaf, he has been a part of the elected political set up for more than two decades. Much concerned about the failing image of politicians, he has embarked on a journey to give a semblance of dignity to the vocation of politics.

The journey of Rudy traversed from General Secretary of the Punjab University Student's Union at Chandigarh to remote rural regions of Bihar and subsequently positioning himself in the National scene. He is a firm believer in destiny and a person with deep concern about issues ranging from poverty, environment, national pride and growth.

Recently Mr. Rudy has been credited to be the only Parliamentarian on the globe, qualified to fly A-320 Jets as a Commercial Pilot, now working as a Captain on Indigo airlines on Honorary basis, which he trained himself in last three years.

His contacts: AB-97, Shahjahan Road, New Delhi.
Phone: 011-23070999, 23070300.
e-mail: rudypr@rediffmail.com
+919811119257.



Dr. (Mrs.) Shakuntala Dawesar
G-27, Ansal Chambers I
3, Bhikaji Cama Place
New Delhi - 110066

MESSAGE

I am happy that the Delhi Association of the Deaf has grown from strength to strength and now has a robust membership of about 1600. It is a matter of pride that the Association has been able to procure land and has nearly completed construction of its own building at the Qutub Institutional Area where it plans to have a Research and Rehabilitation Centre for training people in Sign Language and a centre for Computer Training and other skills which will help in better employment opportunities of the hearing impaired.

My greetings and felicitations to all members of the Association. I wish each one of you every success in all your endeavours.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Shakuntala Dawesar', written over a long horizontal line.

Dr. Shakuntala Dawesar

Dr. Shakuntala Dawesar
G-27, Ansal Chambers I
3, Bhikaiji Cama Place
New Delhi – 110066
Phone: 26104129, 9811440101
e-mail : shakuntaladawesar@yahoo.co.in



SEMINAR ON SIGN LANGUAGE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

The highlight of the year has been the national seminar on "Sign Language for Language Learning" organized by the Delhi Association of the Deaf on 4th and 5th November 2011 at the Constitutional Club of India on Rafi Ahmed Marg, New Delhi.

Sign Language has been recently recognized by the Government of India as a non-spoken Language, thus giving this section of our population a special privileges that were till now denied to them.

The objective of the two day seminar was to create an awareness of the use of Sign Language for communication with those afflicted with the twin disabilities of hearing and speech impairment.

The Delhi Association of the Deaf plans to set up a Research and Rehabilitation Centre for the Deaf. When its new premises at the Qutub Institutional Area is ready for occupation, this Centre will conduct classes in Sign Language and also engage in research for compilation of signs used from across the country in order to evolve a common Sign Language. This will help in better communication amongst those who are hearing impaired and facilitate publication of books which are university understood by users of Sign Language. Research & Training will be in other fields like computer operations, photography, animation, miniature painting etc. etc.

Ms. Rajni Sekhri Sibal, Director General of the Haryana Institute of Public Administration, outlined the step-wise manner in which research should be undertaken so that the labour put in is utilized to the optimum and helps provide the data for successful implementation of the project.

The Australian Deputy High Commissioner addressed the gathering and told us about the myths and shame that used to be associated with any disability a few decades ago. This often led to a denial of the disability with consequent denial of facilities for the disabled. He was happy to note that such attitudes have changed making way for a more positive outlook towards disabilities in general and hearing impairment in particular. He shared some personal experiences with us and stayed on to hear the next speaker.



Dr. Shelly Chadha, Professor of Otorhinolaryngology (ENT) from Maulana Azad Medical College and President of Society for Sound Hearing was our next speaker and she gave a brilliant presentation covering the aspects of preventive and promotive health in respect of the faculty of hearing. She told us the likely causes of deafness, some of which could occur due to maternal ill health or medication during pregnancy and others which could result from exposure to certain diseases and drugs in childhood. She emphasized the need for early detection of congenital deafness in the newborn and detection of acquired deafness at every stage. She also threw light on some of the newer modalities in the treatment of deafness, including cochlear implants. Her talk was followed by a volley of questions from the audience. Many wanted to know whether deafness was an inherited disorder and asked how two deaf persons who got married could ensure that they had a hearing child.

Ms. Roma Roka runs an institute for vocational training for the hearing impaired and has helped train and find employment for many members of the deaf community. She made her presentation in Sign Language and received a huge applause from the audience who mainly consisted of the hearing impaired.

Dr. Vaishna Narang from the School of Linguistic Studies at JNU gave an informative talk on Sign Language and the need to popularize it among the general public so as to improve communications with the hearing impaired.

Dr. Surinder Randhawa of the Indira Gandhi National Open University also made her presentation in Sign Language, much to the delight of the audience. The full text of her speech is available in this souvenir.

The Minister Counsellor of the Embassy of Ethiopia told us about the common signs used in his country and the facilities available for the deaf.

Guan Xeusong, a deaf student from China who is currently enrolled in IGNOU made his presentation in Sign Language and gave us a power point presentation on the incidence of deafness in China and the attempts made for early diagnosis and rehabilitation of the hearing impaired. He mentioned the availability of story books and video tapes for educating the hearing impaired. His lively mannerisms endeared him to everyone who met him.

Mr. V.P. Sah from the Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for Haring Handicapped and Mr. J.P. Gupta of the Rehabilitation Council of India have both been associated for long with the hearing impaired and it was a pleasure to have them address us and assure us of their support when we start the Research and Rehabilitation Centre for the Deaf.

At the valedictory session of the seminar, which was presided over by the Chairman of DAD, Mr. Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Dr. Dawesar gave an overview of the proceedings of the seminar and enumerated the salient points and resolutions which were passed. Mr. Rudy, has assured us that he will forward these resolutions for consideration by the Parliament.

We are grateful to Mr. Gopal Saxena of BSES for providing the laptop bags with pen and

jotter pad for the delegates and to Mr. Rudy for his assistance in holding the seminar at the Constitution Club. We are also grateful for the grant from the Rehabilitation Council of India for partially sponsoring the seminar. The major cost has been borne by the revenue received from the advertisers for the souvenir and from personal donations. Our hearty thanks to all those who gave of their time, energy and money to make this event such a big success.

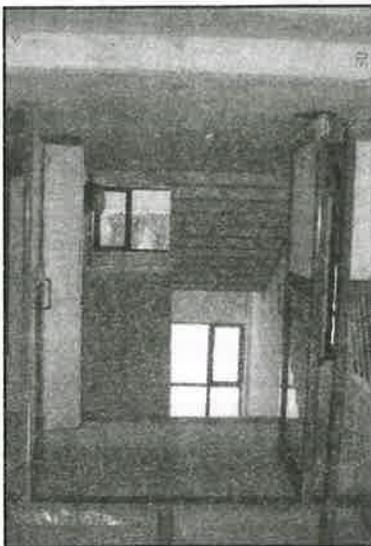
The second great achievement of the Delhi Association of the Deaf has been the resumption of work at the building project at C-12 Qutub Institutional Area, thanks to the untiring efforts of our Advisors, Mr. Sunil Batra, Mr. Lalit Mathur and Mr. Shiv Bansal. The work has been at a stand still for many years due to problems with the contractor. We are also grateful for very generous donation by Mr. Harish Amin and his family towards this project. The final stage of the project is again being held up due to cause beyond our control but we hope that the building is soon completed and the Research and Rehabilitation Centre for the Deaf can be started.

Another commendable activity of the Association has been the holding of an Annual Pranay Sannelan wherein the hearing impaired have an opportunity to meet one another. Many marriages have taken place as a result of this event.

Dr. Shakuntala Dawesar
Vice Chairperson
Delhi Association of the Deaf

RESEARCH & REHABILITATION CENTRE FOR THE DEAF

C-12, QUTAB INSTITUTIONAL AREA, NEW DELHI Ph : 011-26516757



(Now Redy)

Sign Language and Hearing impairments in Ethiopia



By
Mr. Matasebia Tadesse
Minister Counsellor
Embassy of Ethiopia

Women and Men with mental and physical challenges can and want to be productive members of the society. In any country promoting more inclusive societies and employment opportunities for people with challenges requires improved access to basic education, vocational training and adaptation to the labor market demand. In addition, providing necessary information and changing peoples' attitude and correcting mistaken assumptions about challenged people are important. Policies and legal instruments are also decisive in further ensuring the rights and wellbeing of people with challenges.

In Ethiopia various measures are being taken by the government and associations to improve the livelihood of people with challenges. According to UNICEF report of 2009, about 7-10% of the total populations have some type of mental and physical challenges. Out of these about 1 million people have hearing impairments.

The vast majority people with impairment live in rural areas where access to basic service is limited. As ILO quoted one survey, in Ethiopia most persons with mental and physical challenges are self-employed in rural areas in occupations such as agriculture, animal husbandry or forest activities.

The Government of Ethiopia has adopted and implemented a number of laws, policies and standards pertaining to people with mental and physical challenges, including their right to productive and decent work. The main ones include;

- The Constitution of Ethiopia adopted in 1995, article 41(5) describes the responsibility of the State for the provision of necessary rehabilitation and support services for people with Mental and physical challenges.
- Proclamation no. 568/2008 on the Rights to Employment makes null and void any law, practice, custom, attitude, and other discriminatory situations that limit equal opportunities for persons with challenges. It also requires employers to provide appropriate working and training conditions; particularly when they employ women with mental and physical challenges.

Developmental Social Welfare Policy, states to safeguard the rights and opportunities for vocational training to persons with mental and physical challenges.

- National Programme of Action for Rehabilitation of Persons with challenges, aims at providing a better standard of living for persons with mental and physical and mental challenges.
- National Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to end Poverty (PASDEP), includes provision of safety net for persons with challenges.

In order to follow up and assure the implementation of these Legal instruments various Government bodies are given responsibilities according to their respective areas. For example at the Federal level Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is the main organ for the provision of social and vocational rehabilitation of persons with challenges. At the regional level each region has a council with a bureau for labor and social affairs under it.

Ethiopia is also a member to various International Conventions including

- ILO Convention concerning Discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.
- ILO Convention concerning vocational rehabilitation and Employment.
- UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and optional protocol. Ethiopia is also actively working for the implementation of the African Action Plan for persons with mental and physical challenges.

There are also various Associations working on issues of Mental and Physical Challenges. These include;

- Federation of Ethiopian National Association of People with Disabilities.
- Ethiopian National Association of the Blind.
- Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf.
- Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf-Blind.
- Ethiopian National Association for Intellectual Disability.

Are some of the Associations that play active role in the society in this area.

Ethiopian National Association of the Deaf is established in 1971. The main missions of the Association are;

- To see a society that provides equal opportunities and full participation of deaf people.
- To serve as an independent disability rights movement.

The Association also works in the development and promotion of sign language. Three years back the Association inaugurated a new Dictionary of Sign Language for use by people with hearing impairment.

The Ethiopian Sign Language includes a finger spelling system that represents Amharic (an Ethiopian language) orthography. Just as each character of the Amharic alphabet encodes a consonant-vowel pair, each sign in the Ethiopian Sign Language finger spelling system uses hand shape to encode a base consonant, as well as a combination of timing, placement and orientation to encode a base vowel.

The use of sign language among people from different regions of Ethiopia, where different languages are spoken, exhibit unmistakable signs of dialects. So there are different varieties of sign language in the country on the basis of the regional identity of person. However, sign language users understand each other perfectly well, just as regional variation of dialects within the same spoken language does not prevent communication.

With regard to the development of the sign language, The Addis Ababa University is giving courses of sign language and offers an undergraduate programme in Ethiopian sign language. Major courses include Ethiopian sign language, Hearing impairment Culture, Sign Linguistics, Special Needs Education, Sign Language interpretation, etc... Students are trained to be sign linguists and researchers, teachers of the hearing impaired and sign language interpreters.

Such initiative taken by the university will minimize the shortage of teachers of hearing impaired students all over the country. The university has a further plan to set up regional sign language centers. The university also conducts research on Ethiopian sign language.

All over Ethiopia there are numbers of schools specifically for hearing impaired children. In addition separate classes are also arranged for such children in some ordinary schools. All universities are open to the hearing impaired if they pass the entrance exam. Vocational schools for the hearing impaired also play significant role in creating better opportunities.

Productive and coordinated work enables people with mental and physical challenges to realize their aspirations, improve their living conditions and participate more actively in society.

It is to this effect that the Ethiopian Government strictly follows up the implementation of pertinent legal and policy instruments that contribute to the political, social and economic inclusion of people with mental and physical challenges in Ethiopia.

Ethiopian Manual Alphabet



Ethiopian Manual Alphabet
Amharic Manual Alphabet
Old Charts from the Ethiopian
National Association of the Deaf (ENAD)

ETHIOPIA Ethiopian Hand Alphabet

h	l	h	m	s
r	s	sh	q	b
t	ch(č)	b	n	ñ
p	k	kʰ	w	ç
z	zh(ž)	y	d	j(ǰ)
g	t	ch(č)	p	ts
ts	t	p	T	

AgChoras >

plastic tubing
tubing plain
cured, pharma
quality, lot code
laser-etched
www.wm100g.com

**Anubhav
Polymers**
Plastic & Injection
Moulding Parts
Manufacturer (+91
9816857230)
anubhavpolymers.com

Moldmaker
Search Thousands
of Catalogs for
Moldmaker
www.9K63.net.com

**Servo Voltage
Stabilizer**
Leading
manufacturers of
servo voltage
stabilizer
9650566955
www.hvstabilizer.com



SignWriting



SignBank



SignPuddle



SymbolBank



DanceWriting



MouthWriting



Software



Linguistics



Deaf



Research



Teachers



Who



Sponsors



Teachers



Beta Entry

Now
langu
langu
depic

There
Asso
awar

But th
disma
recom
perso
indiffe

Ideal
of alp
T for

There
the n
subst

The s
sign
infras
altern
objec
relate

Socia
Man
integ
sign l
Also
beco

On to
langu
of the
harn

DISPELLING MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SIGN LANGUAGE

Sustained Awareness Creation Efforts Are the Need of the Hour

Now that Government of India has accorded recognition to sign language as a non-spoken language, to win acceptance for it as a language, it has become imperative to take such steps that may depict its true picture.

Therefore, by organizing a Seminar on Sign Language, Delhi Association of the Deaf has taken a much needed step to create awareness about it for which it has to be congratulated.



By- Mrs. Rajni Sekhri Sibal, IAS

But the path is not easy. There are numerous road blocks in the way and these have to be dismantled to ensure it a smooth sailing. For one, the Government despite having recognised Sign Language as a language, due to several reasons – lack of trained personnel, absence of adequate infrastructures, (both need gestation period), social indifference, non-co-operation by parents, and so on, not much can be accomplished.

Ideally the desired results can be achieved through PESTLE approach. In these characters of alphabet each stands for a definite word – viz P for Political, E for Economic, S for Social, T for Technology, L for legal and E for Environment.

There is no gain saying the fact that for implementing any meaningful project, political will is the most essential ingredient. From this all the remaining parts derive strength and substance. In short it can make the mere go.

The second element. Economy, is two pronged. Resources and use there of. In the case of sign language, as stated earlier, there is an acute shortage of man power and infrastructures. Therefore, economy comes in to the picture. Funds are to be mobilized or alternatively canalized from available sources and by using them in a meaningful and objective manner, give wings to the implementation and functioning of sign languages related project(s).

Social sphere, which has to play a pivotal role, comes next. After all not without good reason. Man including the persons with disabilities, has been called a social animal. As an integrated part of society, a deaf person too has to contribute his bit to the national weal. In it sign language plays an important role by bridging the gap between the deaf and the hearing. Also it empowers the deaf with linguistic skills which in turn enables a deaf to learn, earn and become a self reliant and self supporting person and not a burden on the society.

On technology, depends effective development, enrichment and practical use of sign language. It is only by harnessing sign language through modern technology that it can be of the best use to the society. It proves to be vehicle for sign language, which when well harnessed can meet the domestic, educational, training and earning needs of the deaf.

Legal part of the constituents that make the sign language defender of the rights of sign language users is well known and well recorded. So nothing more need be said.

And finally it is Environment. Unless an environment conducive to the teaching, learning and using different aspects of sign language are in place, neither the sign language can play its pivotal role in the lives of the deaf nor can they lead a satisfying and fulfilling life without it.

It can therefore, be surmised that the steps suggested under the 'PESTLE' have to be taken if the misconception about the sign language are to be removed.

These can help in a big way to make people aware of sign language and it's potential.

The next would be the need for personnel who can plan carefully and execute the sign language related developmental projects effectively. There will be the need of a project team comprising of qualified experts, say of 3-4 persons and the stakeholders. And such teams fired with a missionary zeal, committed to the cause and endowed with competency, will be able to deliver the goods.

Its duty will be to collect information, its procurement of data and its dissemination. It will have Project Managers to monitor and control the work under execution.

In other fields such experts committees can prove most useful in grooming potential leaders, communications, inter personal skills, solving problems that crop up in day to day work, time management, monitoring progress etc.

All these measures if taken in letter and spirit will help remove the misgivings and misunderstanding about the sign language and the incompetence of the deaf.

That is by no means the end. Dismantling of ages old misconception is not easy. So more will power and determination will be required to achieve avowed end.

Evaluation is also called for, for ridding off the misconceptions. It will involve self assessment and finding weak links in the chain. Proper documentation of the sign language related issues, achievements, records of the deaf in studies, employment, extra curricular activities, success in business, self employment, in fields of arts and crafts, sports and games etc. have to be put in place to convince the Doubting Thomases that the deaf, given proper opportunity, are second to none.

But resting on one's laurels would be unwise. It would be advantageous if knowledge and expertise gained is applied to teach and train others, develop their skills impart technological knowledge and explore new avenues for successful operations. These steps if taken will break the shackles of training in stereotyped, mundane age old crafts and trades and then charter a course leading to Modern technological fields.

It has to be remembered that in India, sign language has been given recognition only recently. Therefore, it will take sometime to be a power to be reckoned with.

Mean while, it would be wise to plan for the future. Work out the objectives. Gauge out needs and requirements. Define scope. Define activities to be taken up. Work out a

strategy to achieve the objective. Set goals and sub goals, formulate a plan for resources mobilization, work out budget targets and at every stage maintain transparency.

My submission and suggestion before concluding is to take heart. Never be discouraged by deafness. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, at a function at the Govt. Lady Noyce School for the Deaf, Kotla Feroze Shah, New Delhi spoke before a large gathering that those who do not hear with their ears are not deaf, those who do not hear their inner or saner voice are the real deaf.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Victor Hugo, a French novelist in these words "What matters the deafness of ear, when the mind hears. The true deafness, the incurable deafness is that of the mind."

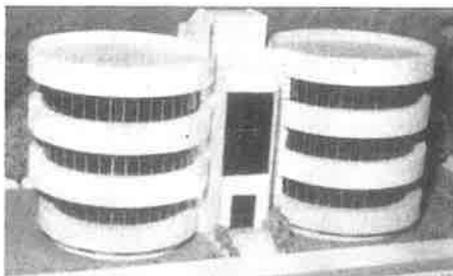
And Bethowen, a poet and composer was deaf. His sonatas are regarded to be the best in the world. He composed, and sang but he could not hear his own creations. He was DEAF. So take heart. Fear not of the misconceptions.

Mrs. Rajni Sekhri Sibal

(An administrator of standing Mrs. Rajni Sekhri Sibal, IAS is keenly interested in welfare activities, especially in the education, training and their socio-economic rehabilitation. She is an excellent orator and has good power of expression. Currently she is working as Director General, Haryana Institute of Public Administration.)

(Editor)

DELHI ASSOCIATION OF THE DEAF
SOLICITS YOUR
VALUED SUPPORT
for Completion of its Project
Research & Rehabilitation Centre for the Deaf
Coming up



At C-12, Qutub Institutional Area, New Delhi-110016

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
[Without reference to a Main Committee (A/61/611)]
61/106 Convention on the Rights of Persons with
Disabilities

Deaf Education and Rights of the Deaf:

The Indian Context



By
Professor Dr. (Mrs.) Vaishna Narang
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi – 110067

The author examines the issue of Deaf education and rights of the Deaf in India in View of the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly:61/106 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Introduction

The impact of hearing impairment on an individual is multifold. It is not limited to difficulties in interpersonal communication alone, but it can affect the individual in practically all aspects of his/her life depending on the age of onset and the conditions under which HI takes place. The total impact can be devastating in terms of cognitive and intellectual growth and development, social and cultural development. It can also have serious implications for acclimatization in the society, beginning with home and family, if HI happens early in life and immediate linguistic and cultural support is not available/provided. Even if HI strikes at a later age, if no medical, linguistic, cultural support is forthcoming, the impact can be visible in terms of socio-cultural, academic and vocational achievements and overall development of the individual. It's not just absence of or lack of communication with the environment as it is assumed by some, but it can seriously hamper the cognitive development of the individual. Case of Chelsea is well known. I have talked about the case of Chelsea in a number of talks and papers, and would like to refer to the same yet again in today's context. Chelsea is the name of the woman who was wrongly diagnosed as mentally retarded and lived the life of one until the age of 34, when by accident it was discovered that she was not mentally retarded; she was only DEAF. Study of Chelsea has opened our eyes to some simple facts, and has also raised a number of questions. The most important question in the present context is regarding the role of linguistic environment in early stages of development for proper cognitive development. We can not say the development of one is contingent upon the other, but the fact remains that the two, the linguistic development and the cognitive development, happen simultaneously and do have

a catalytic effect on each other. Linguistic development can enhance and enrich, support the cognitive development in a number of ways just as the cognitive development does in the process of language development in little babies. In case of Chelsea who was born deaf, there was no language input in the early years, verbal language she could not hear and sign language was nonexistent in her environment. So if she appeared 'to show cognitive deficit like a mentally retarded person, and audio tests may not have been conducted properly, she had to stay with the MR people which worsened her condition. The other important fact which is equally important is the fact that the language input if not through auditory channel, then through the visual medium has to be provided early in life otherwise the ability to master a system like language may be completely lost. Chelsea's hearing was partly restored and extensive language training was provided. But at the age of 34, way beyond the 'critical period' for acquisition of language, she could only master a few words of phrases as simple commands, but could not put together words to make even a simple sentence.

It is important to understand that in case of the HI (hearing impaired) the clinical and the cultural, the emotional and the social always go together. Different societies have handled Hearing Impairment differently, but generally speaking a greater degree of success can be seen in societies where there is a multipronged approach to this multifold, multidimensional impact of HI. The multipronged approach would imply/ necessitate full cooperation (and participation) by different stakeholders in any state or non-governmental initiative.

The UN resolution,

*Resolution adopted by the General Assembly
[Without reference to a Main Committee (A/61/611)]
61/106-Convention on the Rights of Persons with
Disabilities that we examine today shows that if the Deaf
in this country are deprived of education and consequently
placed on the margins of the society in every possible way,
it is the whole system which has to take the blame and the
responsibility.*

**After Article 1, Purpose, Article 2, Definitions and
Article 3, General principles, Article 4, General
obligations clearly states: (a) To adopt all appropriate
legislative, administrative and other measures for the
implementation of the rights recognized in the present**

Convention

- (b) *To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that constitute discrimination against person with disabilities.*

- (c) *To take into account the protection and promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities in all policies and programmes,.....*

As we see in this paper, and in this discussion organized by the Delhi Association of the Deaf, today, we as a nation fail in all the four obligations mention above in case of persons with disabilities, especially so in case of the HI. One HI person not only qualifies, in fact scores a position in top five in the prestigious IAS examination but is denied the honor, and the job because of his hearing impairment. No legislation, no law helps him. As HI it was nearly double the effort to reach that level of education and training, and to achieve what just about five out of so many hundreds of thousands of people with no disability can achieve is really admirable. Instead of recognizing the fact that as HI he did not have easy access to education like others and yet he made it, he is denied a position that he has earned and is rightfully his. (a), (b), and (c) above of Article 4, all of those become meaningless when you see this kind of discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Further, the same Article 4, General Obligations continues Saying:

- (G) *To undertake or promote research and development of, and to promote the availability and use of new technologies, including information and communications technologies, mobility aids, devices and assistive technologies, suitable for persons with disabilities, given priority to technologies at an affordable cost.*
- (H) *To promote the training of professionals and staff working with persons with disabilities in the rights recognized in the present Convention so as to better provide the assistance and services guaranteed by those rights.*

In the context of HI what new technologies and aids are being developed to help the HI if I may ask? Apart from what is happening internationally in the area of audiology and cochlear implants which is neither applicable nor feasible across the spectrum, (young and old, rich and poor, prelingual and postlingual deaf, urban and rural etc) there is hardly anything being done which can be called development of assistive technologies for the deaf. How are we helping them first acquire language, which has to be sign language and then go over to reading and writing, and then go on to dev of s/w and tools and technology which can help them learn to speak.

Practically nothing is being done there. The authorities have neither the vision nor expertise to do that, or even apply what is available in other countries.

- (h) above talks about 'training of professionals and staff....' The authorities are not surprised but shocked when they are told that there is a B.Ed (Deaf) which is meant to train teachers specially for the deaf students. I think the first and the foremost requirement of such a programme should be training in Sign Language of the region. Teachers in this programme should be trained bilingually, and should also be aware of the bilingual programmes for Deaf education. But this course does not even have a basic/elementary/introductory course on what is Sign Language. When

some of these teachers join a school know. They expect little children to learn to lipread, understand their lessons through gestures and body language which varies from one teacher to another, and when they fail to understand, they are beaten up. This is what we have actually witnessed in school after school, across the country.

Close to 250 million people in the world have moderate to severe HI in the world. In India, according to 2001 Census of India report, there are at least 1.62 million HI people, the number goes up if we include moderate HI as well. As per NSSO, 58th round conducted in 2002 the numbers are higher for the rural as compared to the urban; higher for males in rural India and higher for females in urban India. Urban and Rural data in different states compares like this:

High to Low HI: Urban

Orissa Tamil Nadu Andhra Pradesh Himachal Pradesh Rajasthan

High to low HI: Rural

Himachal Pradesh Tamil Nadu Orissa Andhra Pradesh Rajasthan

It is interesting to note that data from the five states compared shows Rajasthan having the lowest incidence of HI both in Rural and urban contexts while Tamil Nadu shows a higher incidence of HI both in rural and urban areas. In HP it appears to be a bigger problem in the rural parts of the state, than the urban areas whereas in Orissa it is more of an urban problem.

This is just to show how much is required and how little is being done.

Apart from Madan Vasishtha's work on Delhi, Bangalore, Bombay and Calcutta varieties of Sign Language and Melissa's work on shillong Sign language and deaf education, there is hardly anything worth a name on sign Language/s used in India, including these six states mentioned above.

Regarding the availability of the clinical and the cultural support, let's look at **Article 7: Children with disabilities** which says:

1. *States Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full enjoyment by children with disabilities of all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with other children.*
2. *In all actions concerning children with disabilities, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.*
3. *States Parties shall ensure that children with disabilities have the right to express their views freely on all matters affecting them, their views being due weight in accordance with their age and maturity, on an equal basis with other children, and to be provided with disability and age-appropriate*

assistance to realize that right.

Little babies have a right to have access to language spoken in their home and family environment to begin with, and larger community and peer group subsequently. Denying them access to language is actually denying them freedom of expression as individuals at par with the others in the society. Going by 3 in Article 7 above the Hearing Impaired should be '*provided with disability and age-appropriate assistance to realize that right*'.

Examining the rights of the persons with disabilities in general and HI in particular, we find that some of the major issues and concerns are regarding:

Availability of clinical and cultural support,

Access to language for proper cognitive and emotional development

Access to education, academic and vocational,

Socio-economic rehabilitation, speech therapy programmes.....

Empowerment through education and alternative means of communication....

.The government bodies and the babudom is not even aware of what is in the best interest of a deaf child, or what is meant by the linguistic rights of a deaf child, how do we expect them to provide the deaf child '*with disability and age-appropriate assistance to realize that right*' or even to create awareness amongst laypersons and society at large including parents and families of the deaf.

Article 8 is on **Awareness-raising** which very explicitly states that the '*State Parties undertake to adopt immediate, effective and appropriate measures: (a) To raise awareness throughout the society..... (b) To combat stereotypes, prejudices and harmful practices relating to persons with disabilities.... (c) to promote awareness of the capabilities and contributions of persons with disabilities*'.

Further in 2, Article 8 it says that the measures to this end include campaigns, fostering at all levels of education an attitude of respect,..... involving media, organizing awareness & training programmes.

Article 9 Accessibility also talks about access to public signage and to provide in buildings and other facilities open to the public signage in Braille and in easy to read and understand forms;

- (E) To provide forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides, readers and professional sign language interpreters, to facilitate accessibility to buildings and other facilities open to the public.

Article 21

Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information is absolutely clear,

unambiguous, and in no uncertain terms emphasizes the use of Sign Language for the deaf. Also recognizing and promoting the use of SL, says:

- (b) *Accepting and facilitating the use of sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communication, and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication of their choice by persons with disabilities in official interactions;*
- (c) *Urging private entities that provide services to the general public, including through the Internet, to provide information and services in accessible and usable formats for persons with disabilities.*
- (d) *Encouraging the mass media, including providers of information through the Internet, to make their services accessible to persons with disabilities.*
- (e) *Recognizing and promoting the use of sign languages.*

Various associations of the deaf in India, NGO's and different stakeholders have been demanding recognition of SL, and setting up SL Academy for the development and promotion of the language, promoting the use of SL in primary education till the child is ready for bilingual education and inclusive educational institutions. All these demands have fallen on deaf ears. The Government does not know, perhaps does not even care to know that a number of SL's across the world have been recognized by their respective governments, BSL, ASL, Dutch SL, Swedish SL and African SL To name a few.

In the end, coming to Article 24, the most important in the present context, I would like to reproduce the following:

Article 24 Education

1. Right to Education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and directed to
 - (a) the full dev of human potential and sense of dignity and self worth
 - (b)
 - (c)
2. In realizing this right, States Parties shall ensure that:
 - (d) Persons with disabilities receive that support required, within the general education system, to facilitate their effective education;

- (e) Effective individualized support measures are provided in environments that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion.
3. (a) Facilitating the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring.
 - (b) Facilitating the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the deaf community;
 - (c) Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deaf blind is delivered in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social/development.
3. In order to help ensure the realization of this right, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including teachers with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and /or Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall incorporate disability awareness and the use of appropriate augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication, educational techniques and materials to support persons with disabilities.
 4. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities.

It is unfortunate that we as a nation fail miserably in all those 1 to 5 of Article 24. Education is a basic human rights issue world over, and yet little that's done, a miniscule of the effort done is actually fruitful. It is not surprising at all that only % of deaf population are actually able to reach secondary education, and only about% are able to go for higher education.

There is no clear understanding in the babudom as to what is the best course for a deaf child. (inclusive-customized, monolingual – bilingual, bimodal, speech therapies, rehabilitation, etc.). As I said earlier in this paper some of the major issues and concerns are:

Availability of clinical and cultural support,

Access to language for proper cognitive and emotional development

Access to education, academic and vocational,

Socio-economic rehabilitation, speech therapy programmes

Empowerment through education and alternative means of communication

Education is recognized as the basic human rights issue the world over; why should the Hl be deprived of education and knowledge, and consequently a life of dignity and comfort.

By de
educa
A num
langua
respec
As o
educa
and tr
follow
visible
dissol
even
cognit
How d
behind
throug
This d
access
on reh
in soci
reitera
societ
degre
multifo
neces
govern
adopte
the pe
bring t
I woul
and gi

Dr. (M
those
appall
shown
right o
have t
and pr
their si
(Repri

By denying appropriate forms of language, we are also denying the deaf access to education.

A number of countries have given recognition to SL, where it is accepted as the first language/ native language of the deaf, and also as language of their identity and self respect, as a means of emotional and cognitive development.

As one step leads to another, SL serves as a means to education, at least primary education, and then as a means to bilingual, bimodal education, development of teaching and training materials for SL, dev of multimedia lexicons, grammars, and text books etc follows subsequently. As the needs and requirements of deaf education become more visible, use of popular media for information and entertainment, societal support, gradually dissolving prejudices and discriminatory practices, etc follows naturally. In India if we don't even take the first step, i.e. ensuring access to language, ensuring proper linguistic-cognitive-emotional development.

How do we propose to prepare the child for education, how do we expect a child who is way behind the others of his age to cope when it comes to formal education which is all imparted through speech/ language that they can not hear.

This document continues on issues as significant as education but as we can see language, access to language and education is the first step, what follows in Articles 26, 27, 28, 29 ... on rehabilitation, work and employment, participation in public and political life, participation in social and cultural life etc can only follow afterwards. I would like to conclude this paper reiterating my point that in case of the HI it is a multidimensional problem. Different societies have handled Hearing Impairment differently, but generally speaking a greater degree of success can be seen in societies where there is a multipronged approach to this multifold, multidimensional impact of HI. The multipronged approach would imply/ necessitate full cooperation (and participation) by different stakeholders in any state or non-governmental initiative. The fact that the document we examine today, the resolution adopted by the Convention does take into account a number of different aspects of rights of the persons with disabilities, we need to impress upon the government to take the initiative, bring together the different stakeholders so as to ensure effective implementation.

I would like to thank once again the Delhi Association of the Deaf for organizing this Seminar and giving me an opportunity to participate in the discussion.

Professor Dr. (Mrs.) Vaishna Narang
Jawaharlal Nehru University

Dr. (Mrs. Vaishna Narang, Professor of Linguistics, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, is one of those rare scholars who recognizes the importance of language in human life and is appalled at the total neglect that society at large and the Government in particular have shown towards the deaf and abdicated their responsibility to meet the basis fundamental right of the deaf to have a language of their own. On her part, she has been doing her best to have this basic need of the deaf met, for which Indian deaf community is beholden to her, and prays that more of her fraternity come forward to espouse the cause of the deaf and their sign language. (Editor).

(Reprinted with the permission of the Author)

THE STRANGE STORY OF INDIAN SIGN LANGUAGE



By
Shri. D.S. Chauhan
Hony. Secretary
Delhi Association of the Deaf

Sign Language, for the benefit of those uninitiated in this silent mode of communication, is a language, as its name indicates, which uses signs as a mode of interaction between two persons, in which either both are deaf or one is deaf and the other is hearing. Only those initiated in to this mode of communication can understand it, for others, it is weird and incomprehensible.

To begin at the beginning, sign language can be said to be the mother of all languages. In Paleolithic and Neolithic ages when our ancestors lived in caves and used tools and weapons made of stones, gestures and signs were their only mode of communication. Later on, they made guttural sounds which in the following period progressively evolved into present day languages.

During this period of development, people settled down in communities at their chosen places and developed a language which was specific to that area. Communities took the shape of nations and with continued progress, each nation developed its own language which now, is largely known by the name of the nation and its location, namely, English for England, French for France, German for Germany and Hindi for Hindustan and so on.

All during the past centuries, the incidence of diseases and disabilities, which are natural, must have occurred. Therefore, it can be taken for granted that there must have been deaf too, more so because of the primitive conditions in which they lived.

Therefore, it is safe to presume that even after different languages took shape, those who were born deaf or became deaf must have developed their own mode of communication in a form of their own. It became their sign language.

Since in the earlier times, modes of communication were limited, inter-action between nations was limited. Therefore each nation or country developed a sign language of its own and in most cases signs for the same words were more often than not, not similar.

This is so because, signs are derived from behaviour, customs, practices, culture, history and even geographical locations and developments in living standards. Since these are generally different from country to country, signs too follow suit and are largely different from country to country.

Not only that, in certain cases, mode and methods of sign language delivery may also differ and, unlike English or other largely spoken and written languages like Spanish, French and

Germ
devel

Now t
Histor
other
Astron

But lit
variou
But th

There
Howe
largely
signs
stand

Thoug
linguis
as a m
eigh

It has,
a vow
starte
dates
signs

The fir
were t

India h
not an

It is di
disting
unity i
Asser
State
divers

This d

German etc, which have numerous users, sign language used by people in smaller or under developed countries may differ.

Indian Back Ground

Now to come to our own country, the conditions vis-à-vis sign language is a mixed lot. History tells us that ancient India was a highly developed nation, more advanced than most other countries, be it in the field of Science, Technology, Religion, Philosophy, Architecture, Astronomy or Medical Health Care systems including Surgery.

But little is known about the deaf people or their status. What is known is that followers of various religions voluntarily adopted the vow of silence, particularly as a religious practice. But they used to write on slates to communicate with others.

Therefore, next to nothing is known about the deaf and their mode of communications. However, it can be safely presumed that they must have a system of expression, to be used largely to express their physical and bodily requirements. So far as can be ascertained, the signs were never used for educational purposes. Nor were the signs codified or standardized.

Though attempts were made to find any written records of Sign Language in India, in linguistic forms, the search remained unfulfilled. It can thus be safely presumed that signs as a mode and medium of instruction may not have been used in India till the advent of the eighteenth century.

It has, however, been learnt that a sect among the Christians, perhaps Jesuits, used to take a vow of silence and some of these priests who came to India, finding several deaf children, started a school for them and taught the children with signs as a medium of instruction. That dates a century and a half back or even earlier. Be as it may, their mode of instruction and signs they used to teach are not on record.

The first school for the Deaf was set up in Kolkota some 125 years ago and though signs were there, their use was frowned upon.

Indian Scenario

India has been acknowledge as a shining example of a country with unity in diversity. This is not an exaggeration but diversity is there predominantly.

It is divided into States and Union Territories. Each State and Union Territory has its own distinct language and script, customs and practices also different but even then a thread of unity is present in these. All these States and Union Territories have their own Legislative Assemblies and Administration. There are therefore, many more matters that differ from State to State and from Union Territory to Union Territory. Despite all the above mentioned diversities, India is socially, culturally and economically united.

This diversity has posed a problem to Sign Language, the so called Indian Sign Language.

So called, because it has less Indian-ness in it and also, it does not fulfill the pre-requisites of a language.

Before discussing the absence of Indian-ness, in this Indian Sign Language, first of all, it has to be remembered that so many States and Union Territories, and each State having more than one language or script and dialect, different culture, customs and practices, the problem arises as to which one sign should be selected from several of the different signs with the same meaning. This is due to local signs differing from one locality to another.

It does not end here. Even if a simple sign for the same words with the same meaning, can be identified from the many in use, the next hurdle with the State comes in the way at State level selection of a sign for the same word spelt, written and spoken in different ways !

The reality is, that no attempt worth the name has been made so far to collect, codify and classify different signs for the same word from different locations. In other words, no action what so ever, has been taken to standardize signs. Without a standard format, there can be no language acceptable across the country.

To be called a full fledged language, many requirements have to be met. Some of these are : a full fledged, all encompassing lexicon, comprehensive vocabulary and a rich literature to qualify for being called a language, with relevant books available across the counter, strict iron-cad grammar rules, own published history, including those making a contribution to its enrichment and of course, a large number of users and teachers.

Is it Indian ?

Now about Indian Sign Language which has been put on a pedestal without field tests and evaluating acceptability.

The brain child of a foreigner, the product is in reality a thesis for a PhD degree. It was drawn up after a period of study and observation in India and Pakistan. It comprises a glossary, sentence formation etc. It was submitted to a foreign university and qualified for a PhD degree.

Under pressure from the United Nations, India had to put in place a Sign Language, good or bad for the simple reason that no one who matters in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, as also, at the Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped (AYJNIHH), the Mecca of the deaf education which runs high level degree courses, without including Sign Language in Training Courses for Teachers of the Deaf, knows anything about sign language.

Though the Research Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment had approved a Project / Proposal for the "Development of a Standard Indian Sign Language" by a noted NGO working in the field of deaf welfare and recommended implementation by the AYJNIHH, the lure of taking untested, unused product available off the shelf was too much to resist and the Government opted for it within months after approval by its own Research Advisory Board.

The moot point is who knows more, a foreigner with a year or two of research, oblivious of India's culture, tradition, customs, history and philosophy or an Indian born, brought up, and living and working among the Deaf for decades, sharing their few pleasures and many problems and aware of the ground realities and plight of this section of society.

But then have not the Deaf been called "Children of a Lesser God"? They do not matter. Hence, without weighing the pros and cons, the product acquired from a foreigner, the material used with joint copy right of the author and AYJNIHH and if in the process the acquired material is dud, who cares? They get money to spend and it is all that matters. Whether the Deaf get any benefit is none of their concern. They have done their duty, purchased merchandise, put it to use, started training courses and as for the quality, standard and acceptance, it is nobody's concern.

The mere fact that a foreigner can come to our country, do research here for a year or two, get the thesis examined in his/her country of origin and then sell his product here, is a sad commentary on the foreign fixation and slave mentality which is still prevalent in our country. Else why would indigenous inputs be discarded for foreign inputs which maybe unsuitable for us?

Results Speak

That the product is mediocre and also disadvantageous for our country will be seen from the following:

Soon after acquiring the imported product without carrying out field tests, training in ABC level courses for interpreters were started in the year 2001. Without offering the comments for a change, the following data will speak for itself

The total numbers of persons trained in ISL (excluding working teachers of the deaf) upto 31-03-08 is furnished as per Performa below:

<u>S.No.</u>	<u>Level of Training</u>	<u>Normal Hearing Persons</u>	<u>Deaf</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	A (only)	Certified: 200 Non-Certified:52	Certified: 46 Non-Certified:40	246 92
2	A + B(both)	Certified: 21 Non-Certified: 7	Certified: 14 Non-Certified: 2	35 9
3	A + B + C(all three)	Certified: 5 Non-Certified: 3	Certified: 4 Non-Certified:1	9 4
			<u>Total</u>	<u>395</u>

Now have a look at the expenditure which had to be incurred to train 9 ABC level interpreters of the Deaf.

INDIAN SIGN LANGUAGE EXPENDITURE

S.No.	Particular	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
1	Honararium	0	181621.00	451057.00	1084230.00	1189653.00	855270.00	1179906.00	1529283.00
2	Postage	0	0	0	0	3350.00	4275.00	2234.00	2508.00
3	TADA	0	25632.00	39705.00	46709.00	51325.00	18467.00	31493.00	8164.00
4	Contingency	0	39070.00	64154.00	31749.00	71754.00	11309.00	20836.00	2590.00
5	Purchased of CD	0	0.00	0.00	1840.00	0.00	5670.00	0.00	0.00
6	ISL Workshop	0	0.00	0.00	9822.00	19218.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
7	VHS Cassette transfer to CD	0	0.00	11810.00	23250.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Total	0	246623.00	566726.00	1197600.00	1335300.00	894991.00	1234469.00	1542545.00

ISL Equipment	1024494.00	304040.00	59480.00	162740.00	42936.00	9980.00	204310.00	0.00
ISL Receipt	0	0.00	3500.00	5400.00	20200.00	22900.00	22900.00	33700.00

ISL – Expenditure on TA/DA and Honarium for the period from 2001-02 to 2007-08

Year	Madan V.		Dr. U. Zeshan	
	TA/DA	Hon.	TA/DA	Hon.
2001-2	0.00	30000.00	15611.00	0.00
2002-03	0.00	15000.00	0.00	0.00
2003-04	6730.00	15000.00	0.00	15000.00
2004-05	8110.00	15000.00	15825.00	15000.00
2005-06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2006-07	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
2007-08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL	14840.00	75000.00	31436.00	30000.00

It will be seen that 7 years expenditure has produced 246 (A level only) 35 (AB levels) and 9 ABC level interpreters at a cost of Rs. 250 lacs.

Counter Productive

A hasty decision, untested product, implementation without planning and non-availability of skilled and experienced persons has caused the project to fail.

The Sign Language, now passing as Indian Sign Language and being used to teach graduate students, was acquired without application of mind. It was not realized that it was not what the illiterate deaf in the country know. The average deaf in our country does not know or use this language.

Unless the interpreter uses the Sign Language which the deaf persons are familiar with, the purpose of interpretation is lost. Since birth, a deaf person who has used particular signs, will only understand if those signs are used. Other signs are equivalent to spoken language which the deaf can neither hear nor understand. Interpreters who learn by passing this ABC course are, therefore, unable to effectively interpret to the deaf. Teaching this new sign language to all the illiterate deaf in India is the only possible solution if the same product by the interpreter and for whom interpretation is done is to be used and this is impractical and impossible.

All taken together it is a strange story of Indian Sign Language as it is not Indian! It is a repeat of the Trojan Horse of Tyre. In the guise of collaboration, an attempt is being made to introduce the British Sign Language in its modified version, in India.

I wonder what the future holds for India? Its own indigenous sign language which has the body and soul of an Indian or an imported alien language for communication in India.

Shahid
Anish

9811038167
9811289047

With Best Compliments
from

S.A. Aluminium Fabrication

Specialist in: All kinds of Aluminium,
Architectural Section Fabrication

All Type of Structural Glazing and Door & Window Partition
12mm Frameless Door ACP Sheet and Interior Works

5/693, Dakshin Puri, New Delhi-110062

TAKING SIGN LANGUAGE TO CLASSROOMS
MAY POSE SERIOUS PROBLEMS UNLESS EFFECTIVE STEPS ARE
TAKEN IMMEDIATELY



By
Shri J.C. Gupta
Ex. Asstt. Director
AYJNIHH Northern Zone

The Government of India has to be lauded for giving recognition to Sign Language as a non spoken language. It has also set up an Indian Sign language Research and Training Centre at some cost to promote and propagate it. No doubt, shade of approval of the Delhi Association of the Deaf's project "Indian Sign Language Academy" approved by the Planning Commission constituted Working Group on Empowering the Disabled during the XI Five Year plan period, which was inspired by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. If the truth be told, this step was not taken after examining the ground realities and proper spade work was not done before hand. It was done to keep face in the international Committee of Nations as the UN had passed the aforesaid Convention, which India had to willy nilly sign and ratify and follow.

This UN Convention recognized not only sign language as a non-spoken language like any other spoken language but it also mandated preservation of deaf culture, treating the Deaf as a Linguistic Minority Community and much more.

Since the few other provisions mentioned in the above para could not be possibly implemented in a hurry and are also invisible to show results, the decision to set an Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre must have been taken because Indian Sign Language created in similar hurry under peer pressure, was implemented without any field tests. It was there to meet at least some visible basic requirement to please other nations.

Well, whatever be the circumstances behind giving recognition to Sign Language, the deed has been done. If properly implemented in letter and spirit, it will prove a boon for those born deaf whose first sign language, the mother tongue, is sign language and the Lingua Franca of educated and uneducated deaf, all of whom will benefit.

But it has to be remembered that use of sign language in the class rooms of the Deaf has been taboo. The entire educational edifice has since long been based on oral mode of teaching these past century and more. This structure can not be demolished at a go. If and when the decision to switch over to sign language has been taken, its implementation would have created problems. This step to start the use of sign language in classrooms was not preplanned and gave no time to adjustment over a period. The problems are many here. The commencement of graduate level education through sign language is a good first. But let us face it. It is symbolic. India is a vast country, with multiple languages and English

medium used may not be meaningful for those who have studied through the medium of their regional languages. An attempt is, therefore, being made to identify the problems and suggest steps to solve them.

Tools of Trade missing

For teaching the deaf, now the tools of trade will be sign languages. As it happens, signs, especially those derived from local customs and practices differ from region to region and therefore, limit their efficacy to the parameter of their region. These too, have neither been standardized, recorded nor made available in print or in compact disc form.

It will, therefore, be necessary first to standardize and make it available over the counter, the regional languages in sign form, at economical prices in a format which is easy to use and easy to understand by deaf and hearing alike.

The teachers who have all along been teaching through the oral system of education, will now have to switch over to sign language mode of education by re-orientating themselves in the regional sign language, once it is standardized and made available in book or disc form, across the counter for use by the teachers and taught alike.

This will not be an easy task. A lot of work will have to be done, high expenditure incurred, personnel who can deliver the goods needed for publications will have to be identified and their services availed of.

The need for sign language based text books may also arise which will have to be met in the long run. Presently there is a total absence of such books and to get these on the counter for sale will require tremendous effort and expenditure.

Thus there will be need to replace the current oral system of education, lock, stock and barrel which will take time and therefore, it will be necessary to phase the switch-over over a period of time. Ideally, a complete switch over at one go will be better but in the absence of logistics this may not be possible. The right course, would, therefore, be to switch over from the lowest level of educational standard, pre-primary and primary levels and then raise it in a staggered manner year by year as may be feasible.

Multiple Languages

In India, regional languages are many and differ in pronunciation and script. Since sign language uses neither of these aspects, it will be better off although, it may not be easy at the national level.

It has to be accepted that a national level sign language which is Indian in body and soul is required to be put in place. This can only be possible after a consensus is arrived at by the leading players in the field of sign language from across the country, if they sit together and accept an agreed sign for a given word. Of course, it is impossible to find signs for all words. What is meant is that the basic structure of the proposed National Sign Language, reflects

the unit in diversity for which India is known the world over. It can be possible to give and take basis with a final test through field trials.

It is worth mention that what now goes as Indian Sign Language is a hurriedly chosen glossary drawn up by a foreigner and signs developed according to the whims and fancy of a few. It is being imposed on an unsuspecting public. The main lacunae in this sign language is that even an illiterate deaf will first have to learn English and then the sign that represents a given English word. This is because in most cases, the interpreters use lips in place of sign and the deaf not knowing any language, will not be able to read lips and hence understand nothing.

Of course, the interpreter can translate the English word and sign in the regional language and interpret through the regional signs if any which are known to both the deaf and the interpreter. But this rarely happens. Thus the Indian Sign Language is difficult to understand by an average deaf and hence its importance and use is restricted to a few familiar with this Indian Sign Language, now in use.

How ever, there being no alternative, it has to serve the purpose till such time as a full fledged standard Indian Sign Language is put in place.

It will thus be seen that taking the sign language to classrooms of an average special school for the deaf, poses problems. There are neither adequate tools of the trade which are easy to use and understand by the deaf and hearing, alike, nor are these tools readily available across the counter.

The Guru Syndrome

This brings us to the teachers of the deaf. The personal observation has been a mixture of good and average teachers. But the Guru Syndrome persists among the many teachers of the deaf. It has been observed that many teachers of the deaf go an extra mile with the deaf to instill basic knowledge among their pupils regardless of the absence of a practical mode of teaching. What is more, they do so selflessly without demand of any sort. They are the back bone of the present system of educating the deaf and deserve all praise. The problem is the indifference of the Government which fails to recognize and reward their selfless efforts.

Sorry to have diverted from the subject matter but the feeling of admiration for such noble souls could not be repressed, especially when merit is ignored.

To return to the theme, as the existing teachers of the deaf have been trained on system to be used for oral mode of instruction, and many among them are die-hard votaries of oral system, determined to make their pupil peacocks with borrowed feathers and turn them into good speakers and writers, but invariably they fail. They will frown on the change over to sign language.

But th
none o
the sig

And o
classr
positio
teache
provid

It has a
under
for the
linguis
school

It is on
that S
him/he

A refer
that th
withou
counte

Mis-u

Sign la
facile.
mode
capab
the ru
expres

Undou
becau
impro

But un
of the

Now a
some
and e
user o
their o

But then where are the teachers trained in sign language mode of instruction? There are none or at best few at present. Therefore, this will be major hurdle in achieving success for the sign language mode of education in the classrooms.

And coming to that where is the sign language fit for academic uses and teaching in classrooms of the special schools for the deaf? Thus the venture will be at a disadvantages position, with out the tools of the trade i.e. sign language. Literature on sign language, teacher's trained in sign language based mode of instruction in the classrooms are yet to be provided.

It has also to be remembered that posting a sign language trained teacher in the schools run under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan which is an integrated system of education is not suitable for the deaf. Atleast not at the level of pre and primary level of education. At that levels, linguistic skills have be developed through the use of sign language medium, in their special schools for the deaf, first and then shift to integrated system.

It is only after a deaf child gains the knowledge of language at par with his/her hearing peers that Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and integrated mode of education can do some good to him/her.

A reference to the two systems of education given above had to be made because of the fact that these are supposed to be the panacea of all educational ills but the case of the deaf without prior instructions in a special school for the deaf based on sign language would be counter productive.

Mis-understood

Sign language has rich potential provided it is approached with a positive state of mind. It is facile. It is easy to learn, use and understand and for the deaf can be the most beneficial mode of instruction in their classrooms. But there is a precondition. It has to be rich, capable of meeting all academic needs. Signs must be easy to use and understood but not the rude pantomimes and gestures copying any movement of hand, body or facial expression.

Undoubtedly many signs have been derived from customs and practices. This is natural because sign language springs from life and is the main source of innovation and improvisement of signs as these come naturally.

But unfortunately, it has been misunderstood. Placed as the last choice for education, even of the deaf. Due to this the deaf community has suffered for ages.

Now a new look has been given to the entire gamut of sign language and though there is some reservation in the top echelons of policy planners and implementers about the use and efficacy of sign language, new wind is blowing, especially among the sign language user deaf who are now trying to claim their birth right. It will be wise, if they are allowed to do their own thing, more so as the world over sign language has acquired the central stage.

Therefore, every effort must be made to make the most of the opportunity which has now become available in the field of education of the deaf and the best way to do this will be to make all out efforts to remove what ever hurdles that circumstances have placed in the path to access the doors of the classrooms of the special schools for the deaf. The stigma of it being ridiculous and laughable has to be erased by show casing its benefits and advantage followed by a prolonged meaningful awareness creation programme.

I conclude with a request to all those present to please explain the plus points of sign language, its efficacy in improving linguistic skills of the deaf. It is easy to learn, use and understand features of sign language. Those born deaf should say that they are proud of their mother tongue which has the greatest potential to raise them to the highest level of education, provided they strenuously work to rise to the top. Their mother tongue is capable of taking them to the pinnacles of success.

Shri J.P. Gupta,

(One of the most experienced persons in the field of deaf education, having an excellent command over Sign Language, Shri J.C. Gupta was till recently Asstt. Director of AYJNIHH, Northern Regional Centre, New Delhi. On his retirement, he has joined Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI) and is continuing his connections with the deaf, and proves most helpful to these deaf who come to RCI for any work.

His scope of activities has now extended to the entire disability sector and has been discharging his duties with élan and efficiency. Of a friendly disposition, he has the knack of putting the help seekers at ease and helps them in single minded manner.)

(Editor)

With Best Compliments

From

Nidhi Ceramics

Sanitary & Hardware Store

Shop No. G-12A, Hauz Khas Market, New Delhi-110016

Tel : 41655261, 26862020

Stockists :

Parryware/Neyeer/Hindware, Sanitary ware, Imported Tiles & Sanitary Ware, Encce's Dripless, Bathroom fittings, Orient, Kajaria, Johnson & Nitco Tiles, Johnson Vitrified Tiles, Designer Tiles, Parko, laquar, Bathroom Fixtures, Veenus & Reocold, Water Heaters, Nirali Kitchen Sinks, Bath Tubs, Shower Pannels & Enclosure, Jacuzes, Steam & Sauna

SIGN LANGUAGE AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION



By
Dr. P.K. Randhawa

Failure of Deaf Education

Two main reasons of failure of Deaf Education are:

- 1) Lack of Linguistic Access to Curricular content at grade level.
- 2) Low expectations.

(Johnson, R.E., Liddell, S.K., & Erting, C.J., 1989)

Lets just focus on the special schools for the deaf

- Present scenario:
- Communication options:
- Oral/aural: Dominant after 1880 Milan Conference
- Total Communication: popular since 1960s
- (Sign) Bilingualism: since 1980s

Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (1994) states that "educational policies should take full account of individual differences and situations. The importance of sign language as the medium of communication among the deaf, for example, should be recognized and provision made of ensure that all deaf persons have access to education in their national sign language."

Use of Sign Language as medium of instruction for the students with deafness means we are talking about Bilingual Education of the deaf.

The Bilingual-Bicultural (Bi-Bi) philosophy says that deaf children need to have a native sign language be it ASL or ISL or any other native sign language as their first language in order for them to learn the very important second language which may be English, Hindi or any other regional language of the majority, and children should have opportunities to be the member of both hearing and deaf culture.

Bilingual Education in context to Indian deaf children would mean making Indian Sign Language as mode of communication and medium of instruction and teaching

Hindi/English or any other spoken language of the majority as second language mainly through reading and writing.

Why (sign) Bilingualism for the deaf

- 1) Both oral and total communication (Simcom) failed to present language in full.

Partial inputs of language produce only partial language outputs.

- 2) Growing number of deaf students with poor L2(schools have been considering L2 as L1
- 3) Language status to sign language starting with Stokoe's research in 1980s (Legislative support to sign lang., new PWD Act, UNCRPD)
- 4) Growing awareness among the deaf about their own language/ language rights i.e. sign language
- 5) Growing awareness among hearing professionals about bilingual education (IT IS THE RIGHT OF EVERY DEAF CHILD TO GROW BILINGUAL (Francois Grosjean, 2001)
- 6) Growing number of deaf wanting to do higher education.
- 7) Research has shown that deaf children of deaf signing parents are at least two or three years ahead of deaf children of hearing parents in all aspects of language development.

Research has also repeatedly shown that use of sign language from early stages does not hinder the learning of speech or second language, rather it facilitate its acquisition.

- 8) Expectations of improved educational outcomes, particularly in the areas of language and text-based literacy. (Mayer and Leigh, 2010)
- The move to bilingual models of deaf education began more than two decades ago with natural signed languages being recognized for the first time as legitimate languages of instruction, and with expectations of improved educational outcomes, particularly in the areas of language and text-based literacy. (Mayer and Leigh, 2010)
 - "... following the establishment of some of the first bilingual programmes for deaf learners in Sweden in the early 1980s, implementation was realized internationally (e.g. USA, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, The Netherlands, and South Africa) over the next two decades. In most cases, this represented a move from prevailing auditory-oral or total communication philosophies to bilingual approaches in which a natural signed language, seen as the first language (L1) of all deaf learners, would be the primary language of instruction.

Common underlying principles of these Sign Bilingual programmes:

- Heightened valuing of the language and culture of the Deaf community,
- A focus on equality of educational opportunity, the empowerment of Deaf people, and the recognition that deaf children have the same potential for language and learning as their hearing peers.
- The goal was to educate deaf children via a natural signed.
- Language – a language that is fully accessible without the use of amplification or specific intervention or training is appropriate learning conditions are in place.
- The premise was that this access would provide the basis for the development of age-appropriate language and cognition, and support the transition to text-based literacy in the majority spoken language.”

It has to be remembered that Sign Language is not a METHOD, it is a LANGUAGE (again not a collection of gestures but a grammatically correct and complete and active language). Being a visual language it however, has no written form but then so many spoken languages of the world also have no written form. (efforts are being done to even develop written forms of sign languages)

- The notion that a deaf child will automatically learn sign language is not correct. Being visual it is fully accessible to the deaf child and hence easier for him to acquire it but it has to be present in the environment. So early exposure to sign language for a deaf child is as important as exposure to spoken language to a hearing child. It will prepare the deaf child to learn the second language on admission to a school. (A school where medium of instruction is Sign Lang.)

Underlying assertion of use of Sign Language as medium of instruction

- That literacy could be developed through reading and writing without exposure to, or proficiency in, the spoken or signed form of the majority language.
- This assertion was based principally on the theory of linguistic interdependence (Cummins, 1989 & 1991), which proposes that a common proficiency underlying all languages allows for the transfer of cognitive-academic skills or literacy-related skills from L1 to related skill in L2.
- In applying this model to the deaf learner it was argued that, if a natural signed language was fully developed as L1 and engagement in text-based activities in L2 (Mayer & Leigh, 2010)
- Challenges
- No Clear Communication policy:

● Oral	123	29.3%
● Total	289	68.8%
Communication		
● Sign Language	8	1.9%
● Total	420	100.00%

Reality : VERY DIFFERENT

● Research findings (Randhawa, 2006)		
● Communication policy	Number of Schools	%age
● Oral/Aural	3	15
● Total communication	11	55
● Oral + Total communication	4	20
● Oral + Total communication	1	5
+ Bilingual		
● Bilingual	1	5

The study showed that there was a high degree of discrepancy in the principal's and teachers responses of majority of schools. It was found that all the teachers of only 5 (25%) schools gave the same answer as the principal where as all the teachers of as many as 7(35%) schools have given different answer than the principal and in rest of the schools there is varying degree of discrepancy. Chi square value is also significant showing that the degree of discrepancy in the answers is statistically significant.

Seven (35%) principals mentioned use of signing of the spoken language as component of Total Communication where as in reality it was not happening as the teachers are not trained to sign Hindi/Punjabi/English and use of gestures along with speech was being labeled as signing of the spoken language. Similarly the term gesture and signs (ISL) was used by principals and teachers interchangeably.

Teacher's opinions about the

Language/communication of/with the deaf

Distribution of teachers based on their opinion

About the primary language of the deaf children.

Distribution of principals based on their opinion about the use of sign language as medium of instruction

Yes	11	55%
No	7	35%
Can't say	2	10%

Distribution of principals based on their opinion about use of sign language for better development of second language

Agree	13	65%
Disagree	5	25%
Can't say	2	10%

Scenario Changing: Positive developments

RCI's initiative: Manual on Communication Options with students with deafness

Other challenges

- Lack of master trainers in Bilingual education
- Lack of trained staff: Major issue: Teacher training curriculum
- Training of in-service teachers, parents
- Lack of ISL vocabulary for different academic subjects
- Lack of TLM ... signed videos for academic topics
- Deaf Teachers
- Deaf role models
- School-family interaction
- Positive Developments: Demand from schools for ISL Training of teachers... CAUTION
- BASSLS
- More face to ISL... ISLRTC... major victory and incentive

Efforts in other countries:

DeafSA conducted a National march in all 9 provinces simultaneously in February 2003 whereby the following was demanded from government

- That South African Sign Language (SASL) be recognized and implemented as an official language subject in the education of Deaf learners in General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET)
- That SASL be fully implemented as the official medium of instruction for Deaf learners in all special schools for the Deaf

- That all educators of the Deaf receive compulsory in-service training in SASL
- That SASL teaching and learning materials be developed

As recent as Sept. 2011, in Philippines

- ACT Teachers Party-List Representative Antonio L. Tinio today urged Department of Education (Dep Ed) Secretary Bro. Armin Luistro to use the Filipino Sign Language (FSL) as the official national sign language for Deaf Education.
- Pushing for the advancement of Filipino Deaf community's basic rights to language, culture, participation and self-determination, Mr. Tinio said **"Filipino Sign Language is the most appropriate medium of instruction for the Filipino Deaf community as it is the native language that they recognize, comprehend and identify with the most,"**

Most important among WFD priorities are Deaf people in developing countries; the right to sign language; and equal opportunity in all spheres of life, including access to education and information.

Nobody has made predications about the future of Sign languages, but the World Federation of the Deaf is worried about more powerful Sign languages in every country (and, especially the American Sign language also internationally) wiping out smaller Sign languages.

14th World Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, 18-26 July 2003). (Resolution 2003: 33)

from Resolution

"As the Deaf world increasingly becomes a small global village, dominant sign languages must not be allowed to destroy 'smaller' sign languages [...]" (from Resolution 2003:33).

- Of course cochlear implants and false expectations about them, as well as genetic engineering, may also participate in diminishing the number of Sign languages: " Strongly condemning the developments and potential use of biotechnology and genetic science that infringe on human rights and dignity and reduce human diversity [...]".
- "Opposing the violation of the linguistic and human rights of Deaf people still common worldwide and reaffirming that **Deaf children have a right to bilingual education in their indigenous sign and written languages [...]**
- **Growing Concern**
- Recognizing the detrimental psychological consequences mainstreaming can have on Deaf students [...]"

To the
you don
Philem
Ph.D Th
"APPLI
BICULT
(Univer
Dr. (Mrs
(Associ
student
a Ph.D
for the c
in 2002
promot
of Natic
editorial
papers
set up
course
educati
Dr. Ran
HEAR M
a film b
which v
in it.)

Conclusions

- India is a big country and use of Sign Language as medium of instruction is and will only be one of the choices but always a favoured choice of the deaf. (same situation in most big countries)
- Lots of groundwork needs to be done to make this option a success... India is almost 25 years behind in Bilingual education (only two schools till now have officially declared Bilingualism as their communication policy.
- Like other countries deaf associations of India have a major role to play.
- Lets all work together to give deaf equal opportunities for right based quality education

To the deaf children of the continent of Africa; may you grow up using the mother tongue you don't acquire from your mother?

Philemon Abiud Okinyi Akach

Ph.D Thesis entitled

"APPLICATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN SIGN LANGUAGE (SASL) IN A BILINGUAL – BICULTURAL APPROACH IN EDUCATION OF THE DEAF"

(University of the Free State) (August 2010)

Dr. (Mrs.) Surinder Randhawa

(Associated with the BA in Applied Sign Language Studies Programme for the deaf students in Indira Gandhi National Open University(IGNOU), Dr. Surinder P.K. Randhawa, a Ph.D in Deaf Education from IIT Roorkee, has been a crusader of need based education for the deaf for the last 20 years. As a Fulbright Fellow in the Gallaudet University in the USA in 2002, she realized the importance of Sign Language for the deaf and since then has been promoting the use of Indian Sign Language at different platforms. She is the Vice President of National Convention of Educators of the Deaf (NCED) - India too. She also is part of the editorial team of Journal of NCED. Dr.Randhawa herself has published many research papers and popular articles. Dr. Randhawa is member of many of the expert committees set up by RCI and is consultant to many NGOs and Special schools for the deaf. She counsels deaf persons, their parents and NGOs on various issues like career and higher education opportunities, deaf rights, life skills and developing better relationships.

Dr. Randhawa was the subject specialist for a film on the lives of deaf persons "DEAF: HEAR ME which won many national and international awards and was also associated with a film by Indian Cancer Society on Cancer awareness, "Cancer is a word, not a sentence", which was made accessible to the deaf community by adding sign language interpretation in it.)

(Editor)

Early Childhood Education through Sign Language

Dr. Vakil Prasad Sah
M.Sc. (Audiology and Speech Reh), Ph.D
Assistant Director AYJNIHH, NRC,
New Delhi

Shri Prasanjit Majumdar
MSW (DU), M.Phil
Social Welfare Officer, AYJNIHH,
ERC,
Kolkatta

Sign Language :

Sign Language is the use of sign symbols used in grammatically correct sentences. This grammar is different from the grammar of other languages. It uses a visual medium using hands, face, and eyes rather than vocal tract or ears. It is independent and not derived from spoken language. Sign Languages are complete languages and each sign language has its own grammar. In India, Indian Sign Language (ISL) is used. Sign languages are natural languages like Hindi, Kannada, English, and Tamil etc. Instead of spoken words sign language uses signs made by the hand. Sign languages have own grammar just like any other natural language. Every country has its own sign language with regional variations. The signs may differ from region to region but the grammar is common to all. The sign language is used primarily by Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. Learning sign language is a professional course in developed countries and it is also becoming true in India for hearing people.

Characteristics of Sign Language :

The sign language is not universal i.e. \neq ASL \neq British sign language. It is not like mime. Some signs may be iconic, but others are not. Mime can use the whole body, whereas the sign language uses only an area between the waist and head. Sign Language users can express anything they want in sign language. The linguistic work has shown that natural sign languages show all the structural properties of other human languages and they have evolved independently of the spoken languages which surround them. The sign language has also all the components of language such as phonology, Morphology, Syntax (FORM), Semantics (CONTENT) and Pragmatics (USE).

Brain and sign language :

Studies done on processing of sign language by fluent adult signers, representation of Sign Language in the brain, and the acquisition of Sign Language by native speaking deaf children show many similarities with the principles of processing, neurological organization, and acquisition of spoken languages of the world. For example, American Sign Language (ASL) is acquired on approximately the same timetable as spoken languages with similar typology. The representation of language area in the brain is like speakers of auditory-vocal languages and it is represented in the left hemisphere of the brain for sign language users.

Need for sign language :

HH,

About 2 to 3 out of every 1,000 children are born deaf or hard of hearing. Over 90% of these children are born to parents who can hear. Early identification of children who are born deaf or hard of hearing is critical to ensure that their families have the resources they need to help their children acquire language, spoken and/or visual, and achieve age-appropriate communicative, cognitive, academic, social and emotional development.

In developed countries the hearing screening is done of all newborns by age one month, confirmation of hearing status by three months, and enrollment in an early intervention program for deaf and hard of hearing babies and their families by six months. However, it is not so in developing countries like ours. The acquisition of language from birth is a human right. Deaf and hard of hearing infants should be given the opportunity to acquire a Language, either spoken or sign language as early as possible. We should not wait for speech if there is no opportunity to access and acquire the spoken language used by their families through the use of assistive technologies and other strategies. If a child with deafness is not identified early and they are not given hearing aids in time, we should also have an option to teach sign language. In case of poor socioeconomic condition of the family, parents of deaf children cannot afford to buy and maintain cost of the hearing aids. In that case, it becomes very difficult to develop spoken language. Such children are likely to have difficulty in using speech to communicate. In such cases it is best for the child to start communication through sign language. This is true for most of the children from rural areas of our country as well as some of the children from urban areas. There are many children with deafness where even digital hearing aids or cochlear implant cannot benefit to the child in learning speech. Therefore, an early sign language intervention center is essential for development of language. In such case, the role of an audiologist is very crucial in giving appropriate advice and taking decision for sign language development.

International law for learning language by Deaf

According to definitions in international law, the Deaf are a linguistic minority.

- a. As per Universal Declaration of Human Rights under Article 2, it is stated that "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without of distinction any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status."
- b. As per Vienna Declaration and programme of Action under article 19 it is stated that "persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law in accordance with the *Declaration on the Rights of the Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, religious and linguistic Minorities*. The persons belonging to minorities have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion and to use their own language in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination."
- c. As per the Declaration on the Rights of the Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities is seen that Article 1 is for

protecting existence of linguistic identity, Article 2 for right to enjoy their own culture, to use their own language without discrimination and Article 4 for adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue.

- d. The convention on the Rights of the Child, under Article 30 it has been mentioned clearly as "right to enjoy his or her own culture, or to use his or her own language."
- e. In General Conference of UNESCO, on 2 November, 2001, during Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity, in Article 5, it is mentioned that "All persons should therefore be able to express themselves and to create and disseminate their work in the language of their choice, and particularly in their mother tongue; all persons should be entitled to quality education and training that fully respect their cultural identity; and all persons have the right to participate in the cultural life of their choice and conduct their own cultural practices, subject to respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Keeping in view of the above, the Sign language must be considered as one of the options in developing language for a child with deafness.

Promoting Inclusive Education for Deaf children

Even though the government had declared free education, the deaf children do not get the opportunity to attend because of lack of specialized teachers proficient in sign language and its environ does not have an integrated unit for the deaf. It is therefore, it is urgently required to make awareness and sensitization of the school environment on deafness, provide Training of parents, family members, teachers and guardians on sign language and exchange visits for the children to other institutions for the deaf.

One of the needs of successful inclusive education is to promote early intervention programme for deaf and hard of hearing babies. The early intervention services usually focus on communication skills. Communication skills can be learned through sign language, spoken language, or both. Family members are the most important people in babies' lives, so early intervention services may include support for family members too.

Bilingual/Bicultural Education

Bilingualism is the ability to know, understand, and to use two languages in one's life. Today, it is very common to see two languages in the home, due to the fact that many families are bicultural. It is important for students to learn about their own culture they were born with as well as the culture they were born into. Brain imaging suggests that the brain can readily handle dual language development (bimodal-bilingual). (Petitto, Katerelos, Levy, Gauna, ec al., 2001). "Being exposed to two languages from birth-and in particular, being exposed to a signed and spoken language from birth-does not cause a child to be language delayed and confused." (Petitto & Kovelman, 2003). "Having to wait several years to reach a satisfactory level in oral language that meets his/her immediate needs (sign language), is basically taking the risk that the child will fall behind in his/her development, be

it linguistic, cognitive, social, or personal." (Grosjean, 2008). Early access to language (spoken or signed) is the best predictor of positive spoken language outcomes. (Yoshinaga-Itano & Sedey, 2000).

Hearing vs. Deaf or Hard of Hearing Children

Hearing children in a bilingual classroom already have learned a native language and can bring that language acquisition process to the classroom to learn a second language. Some deaf children have no language acquisition when they enter a bilingual/bicultural environment, so they are already behind and must be taught a first language. Both hearing children and deaf or hard of hearing children go through the same language acquisition and learning process.

Teachers need to know

Deaf or hard of hearing children need a first language to be able to learn a second one. The teachers must be proficient in Sign Language and in other language. They must understand the importance of eye contact and linguistic uses of eye gaze, also understand the process of first language acquisition, understand how to bridge from Sign Language to other language and other strategies of teaching other language as a second language and be knowledgeable of the requirements of the general curriculum. The classroom should have visual orientation and the sensitivity to visual requirements with full access to communication, and respect for deaf student's community and culture.

References

1. Arehart, K.H., & Yoshinaga-Itano, C. (1999). The role of educators of the deaf in the early identification of hearing loss. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 144, 19-23.
2. www.deafservices.iowa.gov
3. Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L.S. (1996). Consultation as a technology and the politics of school reform. *Remedial and Special Education*, 17(6), 386-392.
4. Lane, H., Hoffmeister, R., & Bahan, B. (1996). *A journey into the deaf-world*. San Diego, CA: Dawn Sign Press.
5. Luckner, J. & Denzin, P. (1998). In the mainstream: Adaptations for students who are deaf or hard of hearing. *Perspectives in Education and Deafness*, 17 (1), 8-11.
6. Luckner, J.L. & Muir, S. (2001). Successful students who are deaf in general education settings. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 146(5), 450-461.
7. Yoshinaga-Itano, C., Sedey, A.L., Coulter, D.K., & Mehl, A.L. (1998). The language of early - and later-identified children with hearing loss, *Pediatrics*, 102, 1161-1171.
8. Lytle, R., & Rovins, M. (1997). Reforming deaf education: A paradigm shift from how to teach to what to teach. *American Annals of the Deaf*, 142(1), 7-15.

9. Marschark, M. (1997). *Raising and educating a deaf child*. New York: Oxford University Press.
10. Moeller, M.P. (2000). Early intervention and language development in children who are deaf and hard of hearing, *Pediatrics*, 106, E43.

Dr. V.P. Sha,

(Presently working as an Asstt. Director, Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped, he is a person of high scholastic attainments. He has been teaching the hearing students for qualifying in Graduate level special education and conducting training courses with excellent results.

Keenly interested in his work, he is engrossed in it and has been discharging his duties efficiently. He is very helpful and attends to the parents of the deaf children who come for help and guidance.)

(Editor)

Pankaj Mishra
Sapphire
NASCENT RETAILS LTD.



Creating a world of care...

**WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF
 NASCENT &
 Changing Lives Every Movement**

Contact
Prem Shanker Gajria
Mobile: 9891377710
(For SMS only)

It is ve
 import
 Deafne
 Doord
 once l
 time l u

Firstly
 which
 Langu
 has lea
 skills a
 as a to
 in Sign

Our vi
 throug
 emplo
 comm
 contrib

Please

With w

Ruma R
 (Founder



www.nd
 C-4/194, S
 Reg.Off. 4
 Mobile: 9



by-
Ms Ruma Roka
(Founder & Gen. Secretary)

It is very important for us who are working with Deaf people to understand the importance of Sign language. When I started NDS 6 years ago, I had no idea about Deafness. I became curious about Sign Language after watching news on Doordarshan and how can be it used as medium of learning and communication. So once I learned the language I started interesting with Deaf people and that was the time I understood kind of problems faced by a Deaf person in the country.

Firstly the shame and the stigma of having a Deaf child is immense in India, adding to which is lack of support systems for parents and huge misconception about Sign Language. The lack of communication language has kept them from education. This has lead the Deaf child to be way below his hearing peers in cognitive skills, social skills and education. At NDS we have used Sign Language as medium of instruction, as a tool for learning All our trainers are very capable Deaf youth imparting the training in Sign Language to our students.

Our vision is to enable the complete integration of the Deaf into the mainstream through education and specialized vocational programs leading to meaningful employment. Our mission is to change the way the world looks at the deaf community and prove them as a viable pool of human resource, capable of being contributive partners of the society.

Please do let me know if you need anything else.

With warm regards,

Ruma Roka
(Founder & Gen.Secretary)



www.noidadeafsociety.net

C-4/194, Sector 36, Noida, U.P.-201303

Reg.Off. 469, Sector 29, Noida, U.P.-201301

Mobile : 9811643244

SIGN LANGUAGE

The Panacea of all the Linguistics ills of the Deaf



By
Shri Sanjay Rathi F.C.A.
Advisor
Delhi Association of the Deaf

I am myself deaf and know the value of language as also the havoc that it creates in the absence of linguistic skills in those born deaf or who become deaf at a tender age.

I am therefore, happy that at long last, under the mounting pressure of the world body, the United Nations, Government of India has recognized sign language not only as a non-spoken language but has also opened the doors of the classrooms in the special schools of the deaf, for it.

But the pivotal role played by Delhi Association of the Deaf can also not be ignored. It is learnt that the Association had been striving to put in place a standard Indian Sign Language for over three decades. But for the Association's efforts, India may have had to wait for some more time.

The Association had submitted a proposal to Standardise Indian Sign Language as far back as 2000, which was approved by the Research Advisory Committee of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped had also recommended its implementation. It is another twist in the tale that after approval and recommendation for implementation, an off the shelf product of foreigner based on a couple of year's research was acquired for implementation.

It is also doubtful if the Association, in dedicated pursuit of its objective, had not submitted yet another proposal for setting up an Indian Sign Language Academy, which was approved by the Planning Commission Constituted Working Group on Empowering the Disabled during the XI Five Year Plan period, Government of India would not have set up the same project under a changed name "Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre" would not have come up.

Since the Association's this achievement is little known and it is necessary to pay tribute where deserved this much had be placed on record and information.

Now about how the Sign Language can be the panacea of all linguistic ills of the deaf, it is stated that experience has shown that mother tongue is the best medium for early education. In fact, it was this realization that internal map of India had to be changed by creating languages based states, by re-organising the existing ones.

What is good enough for the hearing sign language as the medium of instruction in the class is not only good, but better in the case of those born deaf. Research has established that a

child b
age w
first, la
Havin
it stan
earlie
event
child a
Now l
it help
only c
variou
togeth
once
and e
By the
the ye
coach
comm
Thus
under
serve
Thes
and i
heari
conta
self d
But w
unde
know
uned
Thus
This i
In fac
two v
expre
From
shap
Now
does

child born deaf comes to understand and use sign as mode of self expression at the same age when a normal hearing child picks up spoken language. This makes sign language the first, language of those born deaf, which is also called sign language.

Having thus established that sign language is indeed the mother tongue of those born deaf, it stands to reason that it is the mother tongue of those born deaf. And as has been stated earlier, what is good enough for the hearing child is even better for the deaf because eventually it will be the salvation of the child born deaf, more so if both the parents of the child are deaf.

Now let it be explained how sign language can be the panacea for the deaf child. First of all, it helps the child who can not hear and has thus not been exposed to sound, his vision is the only contact with his/her parents. By seeing and observing the activities of their parents, the various forms and shapes that are commonly used the child is able to add two and two together and thus comes to know the specific function of specific organs and over a period, once the parents realized that child is deaf, they start to understand the formation of hands and even the movements of lips, but without giving any name to the lip movement.

By the age of five years – a deaf child starts to use self improvised signs – which have over the years increased in the numbers. If left alone, without any other type of instruction or coaching a deaf child's knowledge of signs grow and that leads to a partial mode of communication.

Thus even for a child, signs prove of great use as these establish a sort of mode of understandable communication between the parents, deaf child and siblings if any, and serve their purpose breaking communication barriers even from the very beginning.

These signs without any word for their untitled signs or their meaning, do serve a purpose and if these go on increasing the both way communication between the deaf and the hearing meet a vital need. It has to be remembered that unless a child born deaf comes in contact with other deaf, his / her understanding and use of signs remains restricted to the self devised signs.

But when a deaf child or deaf grown up meets other deaf child or grown up, through mutual understanding of each other's signs, they get more sign and in this way quantity of signs known increases. This process follows the same process that follows in a hearing but uneducated person.

Thus even in the uneducated, signs become their main stay and serve a specific purpose. This is the basic and valuable role that sign language plays in the lives of uneducated deaf. In fact over the years the meaning of more signs is gleaned. Through the normal process of two way conversations in sign language and over a period, they have enough signs to express themselves but are of limited linguistic value.

From the foregoing, it will be observed that the sign language though in raw and rough shape, it serves its purpose, quite well.

Now about acquiring the linguistic skills of spoken and written languages, sign language does play a very important role. This role was however denied to the sign language under

the mistaken belief that by learning signs, the deaf child would neglect his / her study of the relevant language used in the school.

But denying the use of sign language in favour of oral mode of instructions in the classrooms of the special schools for the deaf denied them understanding. There is no gain saying that oral mode of instruction for the deaf is also useful but it is not the cup of tea for all the deaf, as most of the deaf have a natural attraction for sign language. This is but true, because as the duck takes to water, those born deaf too fancy sign language and use it even in the oral mode based schools. It is natural.

Oral mode of instruction can be most useful only if the base for acquiring linguistic skills is laid on the sign language. After all, it is the mother tongue of those born deaf and has great natural affinity to it. Without this, results achieved in integrated mode of education have proved disastrous.

As is the case, deaf hear with their eyes and a spoken explanation of any question goes over their heads. This is because they do not hear and so became disinterested and pays no or little heed. On the other hand, where a deaf child has received early instruction from pre-primary level upwards to the level of fifth standard or so, in sign language he/she acquires linguistic skill at par with their hearing peers. They do very well and acquire linguistic skills even better than that of the normal hearing peers.

And once the linguistic skills by the use of sign language increases the level of their hearing peers, there is no stopping them. This is so because belying the belief that deaf are morons, several of them have done better than the hearing.

In fact the disability from which the deaf suffer from is not crippling. Far from it, they have no physical disability and as some of the persons in high places of planning and policy implementation are on record saying that the deaf have no problem, they can walk- so they are right – Deaf can walk. But in a human being, merely ability to walk is certainly not everything. They need speech, hearing, education and employment. Do they (deaf) have these or get these. The answer is obviously a big NO. And it is the sign language which opens the closed doors to everything a human being wants or likes to possess. They get educated, find readily paying employment, find a suitable life partner and lead a satisfying happy life. Without sign language nothing can be had. Thus the remedy for the crippling disability of linguistic skills lies in the sign language. The more its used, the less the crippling linguistic disease. But these are still a big BUT.

And this big but is absence of quality and quantity of sign language in India. It differs from place to place. Signs available are few and far between, the result, of decades neglect – a neglect of the obvious, despite continued nudges given by the advocates of sign language. Now summing up, it can be said that sign language has the potential of over coming the hurdles and glitches in the path of progress, provided it is made rich, standardized in format and use, made available over the counter and then a massive awareness creation campaign is launched to propagate and popularise it. There will be need also to bring about changes in mental outlook and attitudes of people towards sign language which many regard, if not obnoxious, at least laughable and is looked down. This mentality can not be

changed in a day. But the ever increasing use of sign language, its enrichment, making it capable of meeting all the academic, socio-economic needs of the deaf, will ensure that the sign language gets its right place as a state language eligible as a minority language. The sooner it happens, better for the deaf of the country and its people.

Shri Sanjay Kr. Rathi, FCA

(Having his roots in Rajasthan, educated in Bihar and working in Delhi, Shri Sanjay Kumar Rathi is partially deaf. Despite this disadvantage, he has qualified as a Chartered Account and has the distinction of obtaining his F.C.A. at first attempt.

Being not deaf by birth, he is not fluent in sign language which he is now acquiring and is determined to master it. Busy in his profession, he gets little time to work with the deaf but uses his spare time to work with and help them.)

(Editor)

RAJIV SAHAI
+91 9811114128

URETEK
Worldwide
Channel Partners

With Best Compliments
from

Mercury Waterproofing
Uretek India Private Limited
R.S. Industrial Sales & Services (Pvt.) Ltd.

"A good place to take a LEAK"

Regd. Office: 61-C, 2nd Floor, Kalu Sarai, New Delhi – 110016

Resi: C-2, Saket, Golf View Apartments, New Delhi – 110017

Tele Fax: 011-26967614, 9868494333.

Email : rajiv@yretej.in/mercurywaterproofing@gmail.com

Web: www.uretek.in, mercurywaterproofing.com

STRUCTURAL REHABILITATION*SOIL STABILISATION*FILL VOIDS*INSULATION
RE-LEVEL/LIFTING CONCRETE*RUNWAYS-TAXIWAYS-RAILTRUCKS-BUILDINGS-DAMS
HIGH TEMP-ADHESIVES & SEALANTS*ON LINE LEAK SEALING SERVICES

SIGN LANGUAGE FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING



**Shri V. Swaminathan, President
Hony. General Secretary
Tamil Nadu State Federation of the Deaf**



**Shri E.K. Jamal Ali,
Tamil Nadu State Federation of the Deaf**

Sign Language for Language Learning is an interesting topic for the Hearing Impaired. In India as most of us know there are as many as 1618 languages spread over 38 States comprising of over 6400 castes / religions. The deaf at the infant stage is taught the mother tongue which is translated as Home Signs. At the school the child enters the second and third language phase – mostly the first mother tongue plus English or the State Language. As per the present Government Orders one language is exempted in India and hence the deaf child is left with the Sign Language and the prescribed two spoken languages. We may call this as “Sign Language and Bi-lingual” – A tough task to the Deaf as well as the teachers.

Secondly as in India no Standard has been achieved in Indian Sign Language due to lack of support – perhaps for each and every word there exists 5 or 6 signs even for the most common words due to the spread of spoken languages. It is time we arrive at a common Sign Language say it as “Indian Sign Language” (ISL). While in some countries the American Sign Language (ASL) and British Sign Language (BSL) is treated as a regular recognized Language right from the school education teaching the deaf has been more easy and the children have acquired good vocabulary. Even the normal students go in for Sign Language as a Course Subject as there is good scope of getting a job as an interpreter and where there are several such hearing impaired persons work. It is reliably learnt that such certified interpreters make \$ 40 to \$ 60 per hour.

Bilingualism is quite necessary as one of the languages is English which has just 26 alphabets and the second is a State Language. So far in India Sign Language as a Language has not been materialized and its use is only a translated version of the Spoken Language which has been thrust upon the deaf. Thus it is a three language formula for the Deaf. Grammar is totally absent in Indian Signs leading to very poor scope for getting employment and mixing with other normal persons at a later date. Let us rise to the occasion and make the Indian Sign Language as a Language of our Country – The Government should extend full support in developing it and entrust the work to Non-Government Agencies who are working for the Hearing Impaired Persons and the Special Schools for the Deaf.

Shri V. Swaminathan

V. Swaminathan met with a motorcycle accident at the age of 5 yrs. in which he lost his hearing power. Despite this disability he completed B.Sc. in 1st Division and underwent training in a leading Cement Industry. He worked later at a welding company & eventually joined the Indian Overseas Bank as a Clerk at the age of 36. He has visited the headquarters of various Deaf organization in different parts of the world and through his rich experience brought about changes to benefit the deaf community in India.

(Editor)

Shri E.K. Jamal Ali

Shri E.K. Jamal Ali is one of the best and most experienced persons among the deaf in India. A versatile person, he knows a number trades which include Batik printing, tailoring, agro-industries including farming, horticulture, irrigation mechanism, building construction, animal husbandry, handicrafts, coir rope making, drip irrigation. He has also undergone training in management practices, administration skill development and so on. He has been associated with Nambikkai Foundation, country's sole agricultural project and is now the Hony. General Secretary of Tamil Nadu State, Federation of the Deaf which is growing from strength to strength under his helms manship.

(Editor)

Association's up-coming Venture

*Research & Rehabilitation Centre for the Deaf
Need Your Generous Help*

Please Contribute Generously to its

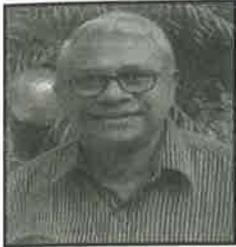
BUILDING FUND

*Mail your crossed Cheque payable to the Credit of
Delhi Association of the Deaf A/c RRCD
and avail (Income Tax rebate u/s 80 G of I.T. Act 1961)
92, Kamla Market, New Delhi-110 002*

Ph. : 23233991, 23218592 E-mail : deafwelfare@yahoo.co.in

Sign Language – India Missed the Bus

Even in the Post-Independence period, Government failed to learn from the Advanced Nations



**By
Shri K.C. Issac, M.A.**

Sign Language is the mother-tongue the first language of those born deaf. Pre-lingual children who become deaf also fall in this category. Their numbers are large. They fall victims to injury or illness and for all practical purpose, their first language is sign language, especially if the parents are also deaf. Others who become deaf at a later age also learn and use sign language.

Now it has been established through scientific research that:

- a) A child born deaf, learns signs at the same age at which a normal hearing child picks up the language and
- b) That mother tongue is the best language for use in the class rooms as the medium of instruction.

We have carved out regional states on the basis of the language of the particular part of the country, where the majority of speakers are of a distinct linguistic genre.

Alas, even with such irrefutable proofs, India kept its eyes shut towards the sign language, a first or mother tongue with what consequences, will be discussed by and by.

First the reasons for ignoring the obvious choice of sign language for use in the class rooms of the special schools for the deaf:

- Belief that by not using signs in the class rooms the children will learn the spoken language better and also it will minimize the use of signs out of the class rooms.
- The fear that if allowed to use sign language in class rooms deaf will never give up use of signs later on which is looked down as vulgar.
- Even parents favour the oral mode of instruction in the special schools for the deaf in the mistaken belief that it is only through oral mode of instruction that their progeny will be able to acquire, speak and develop linguistic skills of a high order.
- Teachers have a view point of their own which is not far from the truth and it is that there are not enough signs to be used for explaining difficult passages in the text books and also where are the training facilities to teach the Teachers by the sign language mode of instruction?

These may appear to be sound but considered in depth, with an open mind, without pre-conceived ideas, these seemingly rational views do not stand to test. This is because what has been stated earlier in favour of sign language.

What may sound to be unthinkable but it is true that there is ignorance at the top. They comment blandly that the deaf have no problem as they can walk. Also the same view is expressed by the politicians who head Ministries of Social Welfare. This statement has been made on the basis of personal experience. If further proof is required the top echelon of the administrative officers undergoing course, after a sensitization programme at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration candidly admitted in so many words, at the concluding session, that those present knew some thing about all categories of disabilities but nothing about the deaf. That is the level of awareness about the deaf in the policy planners and implementers!

With a monopoly of the oral system of education in education of the deaf since long, the results achieved have been devastating. A common and recurring feature of the deaf education across the country in the schools of the deaf, whether run by Government or NGOs is that teacher writes the question at the top on the black board, its answer beneath it and the job of teacher is done, by ordering the hapless pupil to copy the question and its answer in their copy books.

No explanation. No question answer session. No interaction with the pupil. It is upto them to learn these questions and answers by rote without knowing or understanding the meaning.

Self expression by the pupil is, of course, non existent. Even after spending ten or more years, the students come out with knowledge not enough even to write a simple sentence which may be grammatically correct.

But they do have a proof to show either of IX failed or Secondary School passed Certificate. How this is possible is not a secret. And it is the Certificate of having studied upto a certain standard or having passed Secondary School examinations that keep the show going on for the teachers.

How, one may ask? It is fair, all is well. It is no skin off the teacher's nose whether or not the students have any linguistic skills. But the sky falls on the ignorant student when he/she finds the Certificate of little or no value when in the competitive tests for selecting candidates now in force, they can not answer even the objective test where in they have only to tick off the right answer, because they can not understand the posed questions.

The net result, there are no takers for those who have the certificates but not the knowledge and expertise which has to go with these.

This has been going on even before India won its Independence, unchecked. This, as has been stated earlier, has been due to absence of awareness from bottom to the top. It is however surprising, that there was the Social Welfare Ministry at the Centre with a person with disability at a senior position in the Ministry. He had organized a Seminar at Mussoorie in the year 1955 with in 8 years of Independence. The Seminar was on the education of the

disabled persons. A cross section of the disabled persons, visually impaired, orthopaedically handicapped, mentally retarded, hearing impaired had attended it.

One of the participants this Seminar then officiating as Hony. Secretary of Deaf & dumb Association, Delhi had proposed Kinter Gartten education for the deaf as also spoken about the Gallaudet College, (now Gallaudet University) and stressed the need to learn from their example. Both the resolutions were vehemently opposed by the teachers of the deaf.

The point is that even as early as 1955, the Government was made aware of the Gallaudet College, Washington DC, where the afore-said officiating Hony. Secretary of Deaf & Dumb Association had sought admission for higher studies and had even applied for grant to the Ministry of Welfare to study in the USA.

The afore said establishes the fact that though aware of the sign language based education, the Ministry did little to introduce it in India perhaps it was due to misplaced opposition of the teachers of the deaf, or lack of trained personnel and may be could not, rather not allowed to enter the class rooms of the special schools for the deaf.

The devastating impact of this absence of sign language has been given briefly earlier. What is worrisome is that even now no lesson has been learnt. Starting of an Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre, re-christianized of the Delhi Association of the Deaf's project, Indian Sign Language Academy which was approved by the Working Group on Empowering the Disabled during the XI Five Year Plan period, has failed to have any noticeable effect. If the information now available is to be believed, everything there is being carried on adhoc basis. Had the project of Delhi Association of the Deaf which gave full data of staff, their qualifications, experience, proposed pay scales, without add ons like D.A., C.A., HRA etc, this adhocism would not have occurred.

The position now, without the use of sign language in the class rooms of the special schools for the deaf is that the one percent posts reserved for the deaf have no claimants because none, or at the most miniscule numbers clear the test and others get no chance. Not able to express even in Hindi or any other regional language, they are refused posts in the private sector, thus they can not consult a doctor, nor can they answer simple questions of police and are led straight to prison even though innocent, become victims of their scheming siblings who grab their part of ancestral property by cheating and finding a hearing speaking life partner remains an ever elusive dream. The litany is long. The above few examples should suffice.

Thus, their socio, economic, cultural life gets ruined only because they were not taught in a proper manner, were not explained the lessons and led to a garden path by holding out rosy promises. In short they can never lead a satisfying life. The best years of their lives ruined, a whole generation of the deaf has led a meaning less life.

To revert to the theme of the paper, even now not much has been done to learn from the examples of other nations like America. There is no doubt some collaboration either by Indira Gandhi National Open University or Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre with University of Lancashire(?) but it has started from the top, where as the beginning should have been made from the bottom i.e. preprimary? Primary level and raised

progressively to the highest level, thus the Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre has become a show piece without substance, nothing more.

And in the process a whole generation of the Indian deaf people has lost their livelihood, forced to lead a life of misery, cut off from the normal society.

Had the reality of sign language, its value in the education of the deaf been realized and made use of then from the early or mid nineteen fifties, the story of the deaf would have been different. Deaf would have attained the heights in the social sector due to their having acquired linguistic skills at par with their normal hearings peers. Alas, they have missed the bus for no fault of theirs.

But everything has not been lost as yet. The situation can be mended provided the Government realizes the merit of sign language and makes an all out effort to propagate and promote it. The very first step that it has to take is to involve the deaf who are well educated, sign language users and also have a commitment to the work for the enrichment, standardization and make it an ideal medium of instruction through the medium of sign language.

Already, the Rehabilitation Council of India has approved sign language for use in the classrooms of the special schools for the deaf. The monopoly of oral system now defunct, sign language will have a free run and play an important role in the education of the deaf. But there is a long haul ahead.

The first is enrichment of Indian Sign Language. And when we call it Indian, it has to be Indian in body and soul both. No borrowed feathers, however beautiful and attractive can equal an indigenous Indian Sign Language.

Enrichment has to be done by innovation, adaptations, adoption etc but only after Indianising these.

Enrichment will first of all, be done by compilation of signs from all available sources. These will have to be codified, classified and categorized. This will take time as nothing much has been done to compile a sort of corpus of sign for sign language from which to select the right sign for the right word.

Standardisation will be the most difficult assignment but will have to be attempted for. With numerous languages and dialects in the country, selection of a single sign for any given single word, especially those which are based on local practices and customs requires strenuous efforts also funds. But with a give and take approach this can be possible.

The Indian Sign Language, so called, now in use by Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre was bought or borrowed and acquired ready made in haste from a foreigner, without any field tests by Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for the Hearing Handicapped (AJNIHH) for its Sign Language Cell and now it has been taken up by the Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre only by those who have received training in it at the AJNIHH based Cell, can understand it. It is beyond the ken of an average uneducated deaf to understand it. Therefore, a look at it for suitability for instruction at a graduate level has to be checked.

It would, therefore, be wise to have a fresh look at the Indian Sign Language currently used at ISLTRC. A Subcommittee to do so needs to be constituted. It should have well educated deaf persons, with experience in having done sign language related work. It may be given one year to examine, study and submit its report within a year. There after field tests should be held at various centers to elicit opinion of a cross section of the deaf and non-deaf. The feed back of field test should then be evaluated by the subcommittee referred to earlier which can make final decision which could be made binding for all.

To sum up, it can be said that long years have been lost, for the present generation of the deaf, for no fault of theirs, because of forced use of oral mode of communication in classrooms of the deaf. India has as a result become a laggard and is way back compared to the developed nations.

However, there is no use crying over the spilt milk. Learning from the past failures, India should now accept the challenge. It should plough funds, to train sign language based teachers, create infra-structures enough to meet the ever increasing demand, give India a sign language which is rich, versatile in nature, easy to understand and use by deaf and hearing alike and make an all out effort to create awareness about it, especially among the policy planners and implementers.

Over all, involve the selfless votaries of sign language, who are deaf and committed to the cause, and over a period, India could attain the standards of even the highly developed nations.

Incidentally, it is worth mentioning on record that the Government did not act on its own to start sign language training, neither it on its own recognized sign language as a non-spoken language. It was the peer pressure built by the comity of Nations through the United Nations which had first in 2000-2001, passed a resolution to get sign language training for interpreters started and later the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which it signed and subsequently ratified and thus, it became obligatory on its part to fall in line with other nations & follow their steps. But for these nothing could have happened.

Shri K.C. Issac, M.A.

(One of the leading figures among the deaf leaders in the South India, Shri K.C. Issac holds the degree of Master of Arts, which he obtained with good marks, and soon after plunged in the service of the deaf community, leaving his well paid post in a government establishment.

Not money minded, service is his motto. Because of it, he has been associated with an NGO, Nimbakkai Foundation located near Kanya Kumari, at the land's end, for years now.

He has been associated with and conducted on his own a number of surveys about Educational Institutions of the deaf in the South India, results of which have been received with admiration.

He is also concurrently holding the post of President, Kerala Association of the Deaf which under his enlightened helmsmanship is rendering commendable service to the deaf. He is a linguist and apart from Malayalam which is his mother tongue, he also knows English, a bit of Hindi, also Tamil & Telugu.

(Editor)

**GOVERNMENT INDIFFERENT TO THE NEEDS OF THE DEAF
EVERY ATTEMPT OF THE DEAF ENDS INTO A WILD GOOSE CHASE**

By

**Shri Ramesh Gupta
Executive President**

Delhi Association of the Deaf



Disabled persons get a cold shoulder. This is well known to all the suffers with disabilities. Government is supposed to be the protector and care taker of those who do not take care of themselves. The reality is quite the opposite. The persons with disabilities are nobody's concern. Especially

those working in the Social Welfare departments at the Centre as well as in the States.

The working ethics in these offices are to ignore and insult the help seekers. Rude behaviour is the order of the day. Spirit of tolerance just does not exist there. That is not all. Extreme intolerance is shown if any disabled dares to pose a question.

As for the solving the problems faced by disabled Persons at large, it is like day dreaming. If an official be of gentle disposition, he will give you a patient hearing and assures that the needful would be done. Say with in a week of ten days. But regrettably the week or ten days never come. One has to go again and again and run from pillar to post but the end results are nil. Of course, once in a while the needful is also done but such instances are rare.

As for correspondence, one may write his/her grievance seeking redress. It might be sent by registered post but when after a fair interval, the interested party goes to enquire for non-receipt of an answer. The precious document sent, even under registered cover is never found. This story often is repeated 3 or 4 times and then perchance, some response may be given but the problem is still not solved because, the response is soothing intimation that the case is being dealt with but as for the time that will be taken, no assurance is given. Months will pass on mere assurances, so one often gives up.

Such officers or their staff are paid good money which comes from the taxpayers pockets. They are engaged with the stipulation that they would discharge their duties effectively and efficiently. But rather than being helpers, more often than not they behave like Lords of all they survey. They are the bosses, not workers, entrusted with the work assigned to them for disposal.

Litany is long. The all compassing corruption is well known as even the normal hearing persons are not exempted. But they somehow cope with the situation but what can helpless persons with disabilities do? Suffer, There is no other way.

It is time that suitable work ethics are put in place and each employee of government or public sector units made to understand that discharging their duties, timely, efficiently, honestly and truthfully is their duty. That is their moral obligation to not only the disabled persons but to the nation as a whole.

To this end, Government should lay down certain rules and ensure that each assignment given to the worker will be handled with care, speed and efficiency. On failure to do so, Government must take strict step so that the general belief, Government service is theirs till retirement, work or no work. Most feel secure by this inherent but wrong belief.

It is hoped that with hue and cry raised, and mass demonstrations held all over the country against corruption, something positive will result for the good of the country and its people.

Our grateful thanks to

Dr. Shakuntala Dawesar

Mr. Ranjan Kapoor

Ms. Louann McCurdy

Mr. Lalit Mathur

&

Mr. Joseph P. Malone

Past District Governor

Neuse Sunrise Bridgeton Rotary

Bridgeton, NC 28519, U.S.A.

for their support

SEMINAR SNAP SHORTS

Seminar on 4th & 5th November 2011
At Constitution Club of India New Delhi



The Banner about Seminar at the back drop of stage



Dr (Smt) Shakuntala Dawesar, Chairperson delivering her Inaugural-cum-welcome address



Mrs Rajni Sekhri Sible, IAS
Director General Haryana Institute of Public Administration
Being welcomed by Shri D. S. Chauhan, Hony. Secretary



Dr. P.K. Randhawa, Lecturer
Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre



Mrs Roma Roka
Founder & General Secretary Noida Deaf Society
being presented a Bonsai plant



Dr. (Smt.) Shelly Chadha
Professor ENT Maulana Azad Medical College
Being presented a Bonsai Plant by Dr. (Smt.) Shakuntala Dawesar



Mr. Matasebia Tadesse, Minister Counselor, Embassy of Ethiopia being welcomed by Dr. (Smt.) Shakuntala Dawesar, Vice Chairperson



Dr. (Smt.) Shakuntala Dawesar presenting a Bonsai plant to Dr. Vaisha Narang, Professor of Linguistics Jawahar Lal Nehru University



Mr. Matasebia Tadesse, Minister Counselor, Embassy of Ethiopia speaking about the advances made in his country in education, training & rehabilitation of the Deaf and country's Sign Language.



Dr P.K. Randhawa, Lecturer, Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre delivering her Keynote address



Mr. Lachlan Strahan, from Australian High Commission talking about the education & Socio-economic welfare work being done by his country for the Deaf



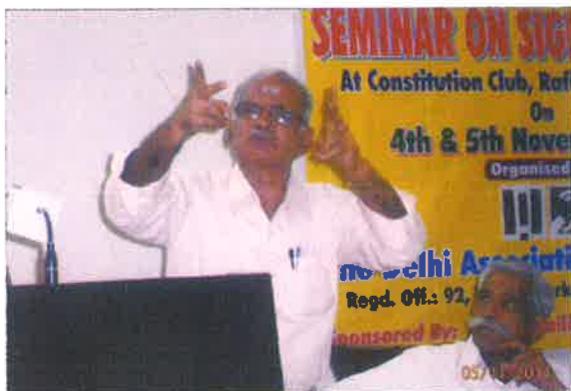
Mr. Guan Xuesong, The deaf student from China at Indian Sign Language Research & Rehabilitation Centre, being presented a Bonsai Plant after his very informative and interesting speech in Sign Language.



Shri Sanjay Rathi, FCA
reading his Keynote address



Dr. (Mrs.) Shakuntala Dawesar delivering her
address on Sign Language and its benefits



Shri V. Swaminathan
President, Tamil Nadu State Federation
of the Deaf making a point in sign language



Shri K.C. Issac
Hon. Secretary, Kerala Association of the Deaf
delivering his speech on importance of sign language



Shri Raji Pratap Rudy, M.P.
Chairman of the Association
Presenting a computer bag sponsored by
BSES Rajadhani Power Ltd. to Shri Anil Varshney



Shri D.S. Chauhan
Presenting a bag to the sign language interpreter
Smt. Sonia Pandey



**Shri D.S. Chauhan, Hony. Secretary
welcoming Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, M.P.
Chairman of the Association**



**Shri Lalit Mathur, IAS (Retd) Advisor to the
Association with Rajni Sekhri Sibal, IAS and others**



**Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy, M.P. delivering Presidential
address at the Valedictory Function**



**A group photo with Shri Anil Varshney, Smt. Sonia
Pandey Interpreter, Shri J.C. Gupta, Ex. Asstt. Director
AYJNIHH North Zone, Dr. Shakuntala Dawesar,
Vice Chairperson and Shri D.S. Chauhan, Hony. Secretary**



**Dr. (Mrs.) Shelly Chadha, Professor ENT, Maulana Azad
Medical College & President, Society of Sound Hearing delivering
Keynote address**



Group photo of Members of Executive Committee

खुदरा ऋण उत्सव अभियान

प्रोसेसिंग
प्रभारों पर
100%
छूट*

लागू ब्याज
दर पर
0.25%
की रियायत*



कार ऋण
2 दिन में

आवास ऋण
6 दिन में



*विशेष रियायतें केवल सीमित अवधि के लिए हैं.

अन्य नियमित अतिरिक्त सुविधाओं और ब्यौरे के लिए कृपया
हमारी नज़दीकी शाखा में पधारें अथवा हमारी वेबसाइट
www.bankofbaroda.com का अवलोकन करें.

आइए, उत्सव मनायें ...

BARODA next
SAID - ON THE ASSET STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART

टोल फ्री नं. 1800-22-44-47



बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा
Bank of Baroda
भारत का अंतर्राष्ट्रीय बैंक

Congratulations

to

The Delhi Association of the Deaf

on its

Diamond Jubilee

BSES

BSES Rajdhani Power Limited

Capture
the essence of
PURITY this
festive season



Gift
Pure GOLD...
Receive
Pure JOY...

For further details, please contact your
nearest IOB branch or log on to www.iob.in
Toll free: 1800 425 4445



इण्डियन ओवरसीज़ बैंक
Indian Overseas Bank

आपकी प्रगति का सच्चा साथी
Good people to grow with

With Best Compliments from



GOYAL STATIONERS

OFFSET PRINTER

Specialist in :
Govt. Forms/Registers & Office Order Suppliers
Govt. Approved Offset Printers



Head Office :
433, Gali Robin Talkies, Old Subzi Mandi, Delhi-110 007
Ph.: 011-23825858 Fax : 011-23825858
E-mail : goyalstationers@gmail.com

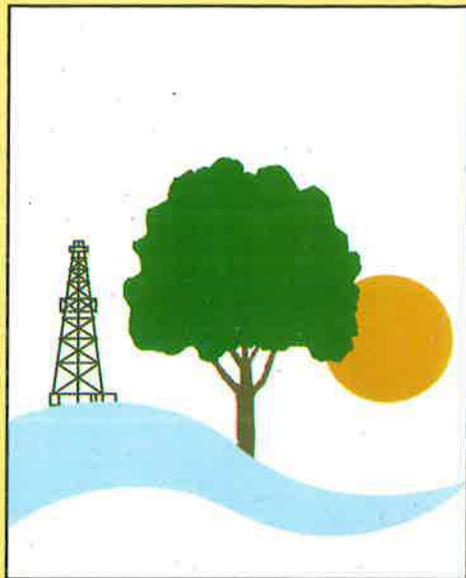
Works :
B-36/9, G.T. Karnal Road, Industrial Area, Delhi-110033
54/16, Site IV, Sahibabad Industrial Area, Distt Ghaziabad

With Best Compliments
from

SHIVA DISTILLERIES LIMITED

Registered Office
1212, Trichy Road
Coimbatore – 641 018
TAMIL NADU
Phone: 91-422-2302277
Fax: 91-422-2309909

OIL INDIA'S PERCEPTION ON CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



Chopped trees, barren earth, polluted water and lifeless jungles - is this the environment that our children will inherit from us? Can a nation achieve progress and development if its environment is abused and natural resources destroyed?

Oil India's concern for environment is not new. The E & P activities require large-scale operations - huge rigs, tankers, hundreds of miles of pipelines - all of which affect the environment. With growing environmental awareness, OIL has devoted considerable time and resources to find ways of reducing their impact on the environment. In the final analysis, however, it is a question of balance between the need for energy and the desire for a genuine commitment to sustainable development.

Environment is our common heritage. Hence it is the people - you and me - who can save our environment, through our actions to conserve natural resources, save energy, safeguard forests and wildlife, and by adopting environmentally sound lifestyles.



ऑयल इंडिया लिमिटेड

(भारत सरकार का उद्योग)

Oil India Limited

(A Government of India Enterprise)