

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

LOK SABHA

Unstarred Question No.1876
To be answered on 11/03/2025

INDIAN SIGN LANGUAGE

1876. SHRI G M HARISH BALAYOGI

Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the details regarding the percentage of the Indian population that are deaf and dumb and use Indian sign language;
- (b) whether the Government has any plans/initiatives to make Indian sign language as an official language, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has undertaken any initiatives to include Indian sign language in the educational curriculum of the country;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether the Government has any plans/initiatives to include Indian sign language as an optional subject in the education curriculum of the country, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (f) the details regarding the steps taken by the Government to include Indian sign language as a mode of instruction for various professional and skill development courses; and
- (g) the details regarding the steps undertaken by the Government to promote the usage of Indian sign language in different forms of media?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI B.L. VERMA)

- (a) The Government primarily relies on Census data for demographic statistics of PwDs. According to the Census 2011, a total of **2.68 crore persons** in India were reported as having disabilities out of which **19% have hearing disabilities.**

(b) The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 provides adequate provisions for the recognition, protection, and promotion of Indian Sign Language (ISL).

(c) to (e) In line with the RPwD Act, 2016 and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the Government has undertaken various initiatives to incorporate Indian Sign Language (ISL) into the education system. The Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), New Delhi has undertaken the following key initiatives:

Conversion of NCERT Textbooks into ISL: Under an MoU signed between ISLRTC and NCERT in 2020 and renewed in 2023, NCERT textbooks from Classes 1 to 6 have been converted into ISL and made available on online platforms. Further, textbooks for Classes 1-3, developed under NEP 2020, have also been converted into ISL.

ISL as a Language Subject: ISLRTC, in collaboration with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), has developed a curriculum for ISL as a language subject at the secondary level.

ISL Dictionary: ISLRTC has developed an ISL dictionary that includes academic terms sourced from NCERT textbooks.

(f) To promote skill development among PwDs, the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) is implementing the National Action Plan for Skill Development of PwDs (NAP-SDP). Under this plan:

Training in ISL is provided for Deaf PwDs through Skill Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPwD) and certified trainers.

Various skill training programs, including basic ISL communication and employability courses, are conducted, with Deaf trainers imparting training through ISL.

ISLRTC has developed a two –year RCI-approved professional course called Diploma in Teaching Indian Sign Language course, where Deaf individuals are trained to become ISL teachers, with ISL as the mode of instruction.

(g) To enhance accessibility and promote the use of ISL in media, ISLRTC has developed several digital resources:

A dedicated website and mobile application "Sign Learn" for ISL Dictionary.

Educational content in ISL is made available through DTH Channel No. 31 under PM e-Vidya, which is also live-streamed on YouTube.

ISL resources and videos are regularly shared on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.
