



WASLI is committed to the development of the profession of sign language interpreting worldwide

India

Name of association: Indian Sign Language Interpreters Association (ISLIA)

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The current situation in India for sign language interpreting

Sign language interpreting is a relatively new concept in India. Training programmes are now available at various levels and recognised by the Government. Although government has established training programmes, however, no effort has yet been taken to create jobs for interpreters. The Government has requested that a report be prepared about the need of interpreters, in order to further decide on creating job prospects. This is a good sign of development in India and is the result of our lobbying and working together with the government agencies.

A programme for interpreter trainers is being proposed by the Rehabilitation Council of India. The RCI is a government organisation that regulates all training programmes and monitors them.

The current situation for the Deaf community in India

The Deaf community in urban areas is limited but has come a long way. With a few Deaf Indians attending the International FrontRunners Leadership Program and with their International exposure they have brought back their learning and are sharing it across the country especially with the Deaf youth. The Deaf youth are being empowered day by day by being exposed to the developments in various Deaf communities, knowing about their rights and Deaf identity, and the use of sign language in education for the Deaf. A recent university programme for deaf in Applied Sign language Studies will produce competent sign language trainers and researchers of the future.

Two important achievements since 2007

- We have set up The Indian Sign Language Interpreters Association (ISLIA) and we have conducted a national conference as well as training



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sessions. We had presentations by Deaf sign language instructors and hearing sign language interpreters and we educated the general population by media coverage about the need and importance of the interpreting profession.

- We now have a lot more Deaf people and some organisations who ask for the services of professional sign language interpreters. However, remuneration is still a challenge we have to overcome.

Two major challenges for the sign language interpreting community in India

- Sign language interpreting needs to be recognised as a profession with good remuneration for all interpreters. Interpreters need to be treated as professionals. Currently, qualified people are not attracted to interpreting as profession.
- We need a more intense training module that helps interpreters deal with challenges while interpreting in different settings.

What interpreters in India can offer WASLI in the next 2-4 years

ISLIA would like to offer WASLI to host a regional to boost awareness of the interpreting profession and lobby for recognition of this profession.