

# **Indian Sign Language**

## **Code No. 230**

### **Introduction**

Indian Sign Language (ISL) is the natural language of the Deaf Communities in India. It is a full-fledged language on par with spoken languages, and has its own vocabulary and grammatical structures which are different from all spoken languages used in India. The learning of and about sign language is useful for both deaf and hearing people. For hearing people, knowing ISL gives an insight into the workings of a visual language and allows learners to communicate with deaf people they come into contact with. For deaf learners, it is essential to understand the status and nature of their first and preferred language, and to become confident in expressing themselves fully in sign language. Likewise, they need to be able to understand complex information presented in ISL and appreciate linguistic creativity in sign language.

### **Rationale**

The number of ISL users is higher than the number of users of several scheduled languages, and there has been demand to recognise ISL as an official language of India. Meanwhile, ISL is increasingly used in mass media, education, and on the Internet. Rights of Persons with disabilities (RPwD) Act 2016 have mandated the use of sign language in deaf education and in the media, in order to provide accessible information to deaf sign language users. The draft National Education Policy, 2019 has also recommended that “NIOS will develop high quality modules to teach ISL, and to teach other basic subjects using ISL”. Given the increasing importance of Indian Sign Language for deaf and hard-of-hearing learners for communication and education, developing Indian Sign Language as a subject at secondary level can serve as a way of extending and deepening their knowledge and skills in sign language, understanding about the Deaf culture and communities, and the use of sign language in the society, and thereby can interact with the world around them and make significant contribution to the society.

### **Assumptions**

In terms of the learners’ knowledge of ISL it is assumed that they:

- have the necessary fine motor skills to produce signs accurately
- are able to visually follow individual sign language sentences at natural speed of signing
- are able to communicate fluently in ISL about every day, non-technical matters

### **Objectives**

- To explain a range of facts about Indian Sign Language and the community of ISL users.
- To develop understanding about important aspects of Indian Sign Language and its context
- To appreciate and demonstrate creativity in sign language, for example in poems, stories, or presentations;
- To use sign language for everyday life skills;
- To communicate confidently in sign language about a range of personal, interpersonal and factual topics;
- To conduct conversations by initiating a topic, taking turns, interrupting, and winding up in linguistically and culturally appropriate way.

- To make appropriate use of a range of morphological and syntactic structures in the grammar of ISL

### **Scope and job opportunity**

This field has opportunities for deaf people to go on to further training as certified Indian Sign Language teachers or for hearing people to become sign language interpreters. Deaf people can also become employable for roles in NGOs working with the deaf community, or roles in generating ISL materials for use in education and mass media.

### **Eligibility conditions**

**Age:** 14 years

**Qualification:** Communicative fluency in Indian Sign Language

**Medium of instruction:** Indian Sign Language

**Duration of the course:** 1 Year

#### **Weightage**

**Theory:** 40 Marks

**Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA):** 20% Marks of theory

**Practical:** 60 Marks

**Scheme of studies:** Theory (96 hours), Practical (144 hours), TMA (self paced)

#### **Scheme of evaluation**

Theory paper 40 marks (2 hours)

Practical paper 60 marks (3 hours)

Internal assessment (TMA) (20% of theory marks)

**Pass criteria:** 33% Marks

### **Course content**

The following course content has been designed to develop the Indian sign language skills.

#### **BOOK: 1**

<b>SNo</b>	<b>Module</b>	<b>Lesson</b>
01	<b>Module 1: Understanding Indian Sign Language</b>	Indian Sign Language as a complete language: concept, characteristics, and common misunderstandings about sign language
02		The history of ISL: its origin, development, and relationship with other signed and spoken languages
03		Deaf communities and sign languages in other countries, in comparison to ISL

04	<b>Module 2: Sign Language in Society</b>	The community of Indian Sign Language users, their commonalities and diversity
05		Aspects of deaf culture and linguistic identity
06		Legislative provisions for ISL in India
07		Status of use of ISL in deaf education
08	<b>Module 3: Structure and Grammar of ISL</b>	Manual and non-manual components of ISL
09		Word-level structures
10		Sentence types
11		The meaning of signs
12	<b>Module 4: Creative Expressions in ISL</b>	Stories
13		Poems and songs
14		Jokes and humour
15		Mime and drama
16		Newsreading
17		Sign language in social media

## BOOK: 2

SNo.	Section	Practical
1.1	<b>Language Description</b>	Compare linguistics features of signed languages and spoken (written) languages
1.2		React to a set of given statements about sign languages and distinguish facts from myths in these statements
1.3		Identify features of Indian Sign Language in comparison with other sign languages.
1.4		Identify features of Indian deaf communities in comparison with other deaf communities.
1.5		Assign a given set of ISL signs to different time periods to distinguish older signs from more recently evolved signs.
2.1	<b>Language Context</b>	Identify and discuss different sub-groups in the ISL community.
2.2		Comparison of ISL across different areas of the country.
2.3		RPwD Act 2016 and discuss points related to deaf community and the linguistic rights of ISL users in India
2.4		Language skills of sign language interpreters in India
2.5		Cultural aspects of using deaf teachers and Indian Sign Language in education

<b>3.1</b>	<b>ISL grammar and usage</b>	Distinguish between Correct and Incorrect Sample of given sign
<b>3.2</b>		Use language resources to search for ISL materials
<b>3.3</b>		ISL grammar and usage
<b>3.3.1</b>		Non-manual components of ISL
<b>3.3.2</b>		Sentence types: Simple statements, questions, negatives
<b>3.3.3</b>		Describing people and objects (Adjectives and Opposites)
<b>3.3.4</b>		Pronouns and kinship terms
<b>3.3.5</b>		Expression of time, numbers and measures
<b>3.3.6</b>		Verbs and uses of the sign space
<b>3.3.7</b>	Possession (Having and not having)	
<b>4</b>	<b>Creative language production</b>	Creative language production
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Language Production/Inter personal Communicative Skills</b>	Personal diary in ISL about examples of sign language
<b>5.2</b>		Meet a CODA (Child of Deaf Adult) or SODA (Sibling of Deaf Adult) and interview them.
<b>5.3</b>		How to give a presentation in ISL in Live Programme?
<b>5.4</b>		Use ISL in a mock interview situation
<b>5.5</b>		Use an online chat application to have a conversation with another ISL user via sign language video
<b>5.6</b>		Sign the same story to a child and to an adult. Adjust your signing style to suit the child/adult.