

NAD's Annual Activities Report 2013-14

1. Plans for Re-establishing Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) under MSJE as an Autonomous Body

New Delhi on 31st May, 2013

I have been working with Mr. Zorin Singha, President of the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) and Mr. A.S. Narayanan, Secretary and receiving input from various sources including, but not limited to Prof. Ulrike Zeshan. I am getting all this together as the Chief Advisor of ISLRTC. The content of this document is based on your advice to Messers Singha and Narayanan. I have also included some background information and history for your orientation and information.

The document is divided into:

- 1) Chronology of struggle to start ISLRTC
- 2) Establishment of ISLRTC on IGNOU campus
- 3) Proposed step-by-step plan for restarting ISLRTC
- 4) Basic Tenets for autonomous function of ISLRTC
- 5) Proposed structure based on extant MSJE institutes

Thank you very much for your consideration. We are requesting you to please have this document reviewed by experts in your offices and let us know if you need additional information. I am humbly requesting you for a speedy response as more than three years already have elapsed since the Prime Minister ordered establishment of ISLRTC.

Sincerely,

S/d

Madan Vasishtha, Ph.D.
Chief Advisor
ISLRTC

S/d

A.S. Narayanan
Secretary
NAD

**DRAFT PROPOSAL
FOR ESTABLISHING ISLRTC
UNDER MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT,
DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITY AFFAIRS**

1. Chronology of struggle to start ISLRTC

- Steering Committee established to request formation of ISLRTC in 2007
- Planning Commission included the proposal in its draft for 11th 5-Year Plan
- NAD's general secretary Naraynan included in the Planning Commission committee meetings
- No action taken for two years (2007-2009)
- On December 3, 2009, more than 3000 deaf people demonstration in front of the PC office.
- PC Deputy Chairman Ahluwalia went to see PM and requested for his assistance
- PM Manmohan Singh contacted MSJE minister Wasnick to take action

2. Establishment of ISLRTC on IGNOU Campus

- An Ad hoc committee in July 2010 called by the VC Pillai and establishment of ISLRTC by MSJE as an autonomous body on IGNOU campus was announced
- ISLRTC was to start functioning “within a few months”
- No action was taken for a year
- ISLRTC was inaugurated by Honorable Ministers Sibal and Wasnick on 4 October 2011
- I was appointed the director
- Prof. Pillai was replaced by Prof. Aslam in November 2011
- In a meeting of the Steering Cum Monitoring Committee meeting in December 2011, Secretary Acharya announced that the role of MSJE in operating ISLRTC will be limited to “writing the cheque” for funding and that IGNOU was to run it according to its rules and regulations
- I arrived at IGNOU to start working as the director on December 14, 2011, however, was told by Prof. Aslam that due to my age my appointment was illegal. However, in consultation with Secretary Acharya, he offered me the position of Chief Advisor, which was ratified by IGNOU's Board of Management
- During the next full year, all proposals to hire the 35 positions were delayed due to IGNOU's rules and regulations. The advertisement for these positions was posted in February 2012, more than one year later. I made presentations to stakeholders (deaf leaders, teachers in schools for the deaf, parents of deaf children, interpreters and ISL trainers) in four regions (Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bangalore) and collected data on needs in the area of education, ISL learning and interpreting. The results of this needs assessment meetings and workshops were presented to the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC) and Steering-cum-Monitoring Committee (SMC). A few workshops and training sessions were provided to interpreters, however, nothing of significance was achieved.

- During the SMC meetings held in October 2012 and February 2013, you had raised the issues of IGNOU's not following up on its promises (granting 5 acres of land and hiring the 35 positions among others) with VC Pradhan and Acting Director Singh. They did not provide any satisfactory response to your queries.
- In response to your letter to VC Aslam on the same subjects as above, Prof. Aslam has recommended that ISLRTC be moved out of IGNOU
- On May 28, 2013, Prof. Aslam appointed a task force to suggest steps for "disengagement of ISLRTC" from IGNOU. This committee is to present its recommendations to the VC on or before June 7, 2013.

3. Proposed step-by-step plan for restarting ISLRTC

- Office order from MSJE (similar to the order issued to IGNOU in 2011) for establishing ISLRTC using present administrative structure of national institutes.
- Appointment of an OSD with strong background and experience in MSJE rules, regulations and administration for one year
- Appointment of a director with educational training and experience in deafness, ISL and/or interpreting
- Allocation of temporary offices and classrooms for ISLRTC in NCR such as IPH near Bal Bhawan)
- Revision of positions and job descriptions of the 35 positions already approved by MSJE to ensure the 16 Objectives are implemented appropriately
- Advertising, receiving applications, interviewing and selecting candidates to fill the positions in 4 above.
- Developing curricula for diplomas, degrees and training programs as outlined in the attached Chart

4. Basic Tenets for Autonomous Function of ISLRTC

This section details the principles and steps according to which the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) may be established. The key approach is that ISLRTC should be established as an independent entity, not as part of another organisation. A detailed step-by-step work plan is included as an appendix.

1. Principles of autonomy

The Centre must be autonomous and independent. The following aspects are necessary to consider in order to clarify the notion of autonomy of ISLRTC: a) administrative autonomy; b) academic autonomy; c) financial autonomy.

a) Administrative autonomy

It is suggested that out of the two previous committees overseeing ISLRTC - the Coordination-cum-Monitoring Committee (CMC) and the Standing Advisory Committee (SAC), a single new committee be established which shall have oversight over the operation of ISLRTC. Approval for individual administrative actions such as

creation of posts, recruitment of staff, establishment of infrastructure, etc., shall be managed by ISLRTC autonomously with approval of the committee.

b) Academic autonomy

It is suggested that ISLRTC will establish relationships with degree-awarding and accreditation institutions such as universities, RCI, etc., in order to recruit, enroll and examine its own students under collaboration with an academic partner. ISLRTC will develop its own programmes and progress students through academic systems provided by a suitable university or governmental partner. Academic actions involved in the recruitment and examination of students as well as the development of programmes will be taken within ISLRTC, while certification necessary for awarding degrees will be progressed through academic partners.

c) Financial autonomy

In order to operate autonomously and efficiently, ISLRTC needs to operate all budgets granted by the Ministry under its direct responsibility. It is suggested to establish a separate bank account operated directly by ISLRTC officers. Any changes to the budget such as internal reallocation of funds between budget sub-heads, will need authorisation from the committee that oversees ISLRTC. Regular financial reports will be submitted to the Ministry. Day-to-day financial administration and individual actions for expenditures will be operated locally within ISLRTC.

2. Steps towards establishing ISLRTC

We propose that during the initial stages of the Centre, a small office may be rented out in Delhi under the care of the Department of Disability Affairs, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The Director of the Centre must be appointed first. The Director must be a professional user of Indian Sign Language with an appropriate professional background, who can represent deaf sign language users in India and advance the academic agenda of the Centre. The appointment must take place at the earliest for the Centre to function soon.

Once the Centre is up and running, the Ministry can then look for a permanent land in Delhi or NCR with the approval of the Govt. of Delhi or Uttar Pradesh or Haryana.

The Centre should have its own bank account with the Director as its authorised signatory and an Accounts Officer will be appointed to maintain smooth financial functioning of the Centre.

The Centre should have its own Memorandum of Association, and the committee overseeing the Centre should have clear and explicit Terms of Reference..

As it was earlier decided to have 35 posts for the initial functioning of the Centre, we propose that it remains the same and the recruitment of these posts is done at the earliest. The qualifications for these post should keep in mind the current situation of the quality of education and training for the deaf and sign language interpreters. This will require some relaxation of formal academic criteria e.g. a completed PhD, as well as introduction of criteria that have to do with sign language competence and sign language research.

Recruitment for the following posts should take priority during the initial stages of developing the Centre:

1. Director (1)
2. Account Officer (1)
3. Section Officer (1)
4. Master Training (ISL) (4) - deaf candidates
5. Lower Division Clerk (1) - a deaf candidate
6. Peon (1) - a deaf candidate

It is considered particularly important that the large majority of posts are taken up by deaf Indian Sign Language users, as the Centre should be for, with and by the Indian Deaf Community. It is particularly important to have a qualified deaf sign language user head up the Centre, as this will give credibility and reach to the Centre with respect to Indian deaf sign language users.

5. Proposed structure based on extant MSJE institutes

This section is based on information gleaned from MSJE institutes functioning at present. Efforts has been made to conform their byelaws and structure, however, we believe that government lawyers with expertise in registration of government bodies be consulted.

2. NAD Staff met SSP and DSP at Bathinda, Punjab on 30th June, 2013

Mr. Yogesh Kumar, Public Relation Officer, National Association of the Deaf organised the Advocacy Workshop for the Deaf in Bhatinda, Punjab on 30th June, 2013. There were about 55 deaf people who attended the workshop. Mr. Yogesh Kumar and his wife met SSP and PPS from Bhatinda, Punjab on 30th June, 2013. They have opened a way for us to communicate through SMS and E-mail. SSP and PPS can help deaf in any problem Civil & Political Right, Domestic Violence, Rape, Social Security, Property Right, Prevent from Abuse and Torture, Harassment etc. The deaf people can ask their problems to SSP and PPS through SMS mobile number 09815800301 and E-mail:- ssp.btd.police@punjab.gov.in

3. Workshop on the Advocacy Training for the Deaf Commonwealth Youth Program, Asia Centre, Sector 12, Chandigarh 21st July, 2013

We organized the Workshop on the “Advocacy Training for the Deaf” at Commonwealth Youth Program, Asia Centre, Sector 12, Chandigarh on 21st July, 2013. There were about 55 deaf delegates from all over Punjab participating in the Workshop.

The workshop started with the welcome note by Mr. Yogesh Kumar, Public Relation Officer of NAD. Mr. A.S. Narayanan shared his experiences & explained the issues of Government of India, Legal Purpose and showed the PowerPoint presentation about advocacy to deaf delegates. Mr. Bharat Sharma, co-worker of NAD organised fun ice-break games for deaf leaders which led to a good time.

4. State Bank of India inaugurated NAD's New Branch Office in Chandigarh

Booth No. 129, Sector 46-B, Chandigarh
31st August, 2013

Mr. Vishal Arora (Treasurer of NAD), Mr. Dilip Kumar Jangir (Executive Member of NAD), Mr. Jagdip Singh Sodhi (Executive Member of NAD), Mr. Yogesh Kumar (Public Relation Officer of NAD) and Ms. Angel Singha (Interpreter of NAD) organised the inaugural function for opening new branch office of NAD at Booth No. 129, Sector 46-B, Chandigarh on 31st August, 2013.

State Bank of India, Chandigarh Circle, proudly associated with the inaugural function of the National Association of the Deaf at its only office in the north of New Delhi in Sector 46-B, Chandigarh. The SBI had assisted the NAD by providing furniture, computer with printers and projector for the new office. The NAD office is engaged in spreading knowledge about Sign Language, Advocacy, Legal Purpose, Workshop and necessity or normal people to understand the same to be able to assist the deaf in exigencies.

While addressing the gathering, Shri Madhukar Anand, Regional Manager, State Bank of India (Region/Punjab), Chandigarh, explained about various CSR initiatives of the bank which have had widespread impact on the residents of the Tri-City and in particular those who are specially abled.

5. 56th International Week of the Deaf Celebrations 2013 Deaf Awareness March

“Equality for Deaf People”
Jantar Mantar, New Delhi on 27th September 2013

National Association of the Deaf (NAD) is truly a representative organisation of deaf people in India. This includes a strong 4,800 membership across the country. It was formed in December, 2005.

The deaf movement in India is currently in a very nascent state. NAD advocates for the rights of the deaf and liaises with the Government and policy makers. We are currently hosting State Level Meetings across India to spread awareness among the deaf people on their rights and to also recruit more members.

On the occasion of 56th International Week of the Deaf, National Association of the Deaf organised a ‘Deaf Awareness March’ on ‘Equality for Deaf People’ on 27th September, 2013 at 3:00 p.m. from Jantar Mantar, New Delhi. Over 650 deaf persons from Delhi and NCR participated in this march.

Mr. Zorin Singha (President of NAD), Mr. A. S. Narayanan (Secretary of NAD), Mr. Anuj Jain (Joint Secretary of NAD), Mr. Vishal Arora (Treasurer of NAD), Mrs. Geeta Sharma (Women Secretary of NAD) & Mr. Rahul Garg (Co-Worker for Deaf Youth Team of NAD) talked about their views and dreams on equality for deaf people.

We celebrate International Week of the Deaf in the month of September every year through various events. The World Federation of the Deaf announced the International Week of the Deaf to be celebrated from 23 to 29 September 2013. Deaf Associations throughout the world organize events, marches, campaigns and meetings to highlight current topics that they wish to be addressed by local or national authorities. Their aim is to attract the attention of decision makers, general public, and media to the problems and concerns deaf persons face and make them understand that deaf people have human rights too! So the International Week of the Deaf is all about getting together, feeling united and powerful and showing that unity to the rest of the world. This week also increases solidarity among deaf people and their supporters and is used as a way to stimulate greater efforts to promote the rights of deaf people.

6. 56th International Week of the Deaf Celebrations 2013

“Equality for Deaf People”

Indian Social Institute, 10 Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi on 28th September 2013

We organised the 56th International Week of the Deaf Celebrations 2013 on ‘Equality for Deaf People’ on 28th September, 2013 at Indian Social Institute, 10 Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi. There were about 165 deaf members from all over NCR participating in the Workshop. We had invited the special lecturers Mr. Sibaji Panda (International Institute for Sign Languages and Deaf Studies, University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK) & Ms. Melissa, Linguistic (Jawahar Lal University, New Delhi).

The workshop started with the welcome note by Mr. A. S. Narayanan, Secretary of NAD. Mr. Sibaji Panda took a session on Equality for Deaf People to deaf audience. It was an interactive session taking in participants’ view on equality and to identify what all is needed to achieve equality and explaining how to work on the list to be a citizen at par with others.

Ms. Melisa talked on the deaf issues focusing on the linguistic aspect. A deaf community is also a linguistic minority that uses Sign Language for communication. She shared a brief insight of her research with the school system using Indian Sign Language which was still rare and hard to come across.

This year’s theme focuses on equality for deaf people, amongst deaf people and promoted by deaf people. *Equality for Deaf People* recognises contributions by deaf people to global prosperity, human rights of all deaf people, and preparation of deaf communities for future challenges.

Equality for Deaf People celebrates the linguistic, artistic, social, political and cultural contributions and accomplishments of deaf people. This theme also focuses on recognition of sign languages and the rights of deaf people around India. Focus on *Equality for Deaf*

People also prepares us to look towards the future with a clear vision with renewed energies for creating positive change in local communities worldwide.

International Week of the Deaf provides an excellent opportunity to share and discuss ways to promote collaboration on equality for deaf people based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

7. 56th International Week of the Deaf Celebrations 2013 “Equality for Deaf People”

Auditorium, St. Stephen’s School, Sector 45-B, Chandigarh on 29th September 2013

We organised the 56th International Week of the Deaf Celebrations 2013 on ‘Equality for Deaf People’ on 29th September, 2013 at St. Stephen’s School, Sector 45-B, Chandigarh. There were about 950 deaf members from all over Punjab participating in the function. We have invited the Chief Guest Smt. Gagandeep Kaur Dhindsa, wife of Honorable Shri Parminder Singh Dhindsa, Minister of Finance, Punjab.

The function started with the welcome note by Mr. Jagdip Singh Sodhi, Executive Board Member of NAD. Mr. Vishal Arora, Treasurer of NAD spoke briefly on Equality for Deaf People to deaf audience.

The purpose of the event which we have been organizing the past year, is to promote and encourage lifetime achievement among Deaf people. We want them to believe that they can do it – that they are capable and gifted.

Prizes were awarded to deaf men and women for showing performance for drama by Deaf Members from Chandigarh Deaf Friendship Society.

These guests were presented with a Bhangra Dance performed by Deaf Members from Patiala Deaf Friendship Club.

Smt. Gagandeep Kaur Dhindsa, Wife of Honorable Shri Parminder Singh Dhindsa, Minister of Finance, Punjab was the Chief Guest giving away the awards.

We have given the list of Lifetime Achievement Awardees below:-

1. Mrs. Rupinder Kaur, Mohali, Punjab
2. Mrs. Sangeeta Sharma, Chandigarh
3. Mrs. Manpreet Kaur Ghuman, Patiala, Punjab
4. Mr. Amandeep Sharma, Patiala, Punjab
5. Mr. Nikhil Jindal, Ludhiana, Punjab

6. Mr. Deepak Arora, Jalandhar, Punjab
7. Mr. Navneet Khurana, Chandigarh

8. Sign Language Program for Delhi Police Training School

Wazirabad, Delhi on 31st October, 2013

National Association of the Deaf Team joined the students from Cluster Innovation Centre (CIC), University of Delhi in addressing Delhi Police personnel on the 31st October, 2013 at Police Training School, Wazirabad, Delhi. The response was tremendous and the Delhi police are keen to implement certain changes in their working. They are willing to include Indian Sign Language as part of their training module to enable police personnel to interact with deaf and mute people who approach them. Mrs. Sukrita Paul Kumar, Programme Coordinator, CIC University of Delhi hope for active participation from National Association of the Deaf in our student project on Sign Language in formulating this training module. CIC is also preparing a list of official interpreters with their contact details to be handed to the Commissioner, Delhi Police that could be circulated to all the police stations for ready reference.

The program was organized by Cluster Innovation Centre of the University of Delhi (CIC) and attended by around 400 Police Personnel had attended the event.

Mr. Anuj Jain (Joint Secretary), Ms. Sonia Bhatia (Program Officer), Rajul Garg & Rishikesh Anand (Co-workers) of National Association of the Deaf performed a skit on common incidents like robbery and rape. The skit was performed in a contrasting manner where one was acted out without the assistance on a sign language interpreter and the second scenario was with an interpreter. The contrast was visible to all the cadets. The confusion, misunderstandings that existed in the first scenario due to communication gap between the police officer and victim and that gap was solved through the presence of a sign language interpreter in the second scenario. This skit sent a powerful message on the importance of promotion of Indian Sign language.

9. Sign Language Program for Delhi Police Training College

Jharoda Kalan, Najafgarh, Delhi on 1st November, 2013

National Association of the Deaf Team joined the students from Cluster Innovation Centre (CIC), University of Delhi in addressing Delhi Police personnel on the 1st of Nov, 2013 at Police Training College at Jharoda Kalan, Najafgarh, Delhi. The response was tremendous and the Delhi police is keen to implement certain changes in their working. They are willing to include Indian Sign Language as part of their training module to enable police personnel to interact with deaf and mute people who approach them. Mrs. Sukrita Paul Kumar, Programme Coordinator, CIC University of Delhi hope for active participation from National Association of The Deaf in our student project on Sign Language in formulating this training module. CIC is also preparing a list of official interpreters with their contact details to be handed to the Commissioner, Delhi Police that could be circulated to all the police stations for ready reference.

Mr. A.S. Narayanan, Secretary of National Association of the Deaf talked about the problems deaf individuals face while dealing with police personnel & the issues related to effective

handling of cases of violence against deaf persons while presenting at an Orientation session on “The Need for the Police Redressal of Grievances of Deaf and the Use of Sign Language”. The program was organized by Cluster Innovation Centre of the University of Delhi (CIC) and attended by around 1100 Police Personnel and ACP, DCP had attended the event.

Mr. Anuj Jain (Joint Secretary), Ms. Sonia Bhatia (Program Officer), Ashish Goyal (Co-worker) of National Association of the Deaf showed our skits about robbery and rape. The skit was performed in a contrasting manner where one was acted out without the assistance on a sign language interpreter and the second scenario was with an interpreter. The contrast was visible to all the cadets. The confusion, misunderstandings that existed in the first scenario due to communication gap between the police officer and victim and that gap was solved through the presence of a sign language interpreter in the second scenario. This skit sent a powerful message on the importance of promotion of Indian Sign language.

10. Rights of Persons with Disabilities Movement

Shashtri Bhawan, New Delhi on 19th December, 2013

The Disabled Rights Group (DRG) had organized a dharna in front of the Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi on 19th December, 2013. There was about 500 deaf people from National Association of the Deaf, who participated in the protest alongwith the different disabled groups. The new Disability Rights bill that was to be tabled in the Parliament did not happen due to the sudden adjournment of the Rajya Sabha on 18th December, 2013.

During the dharna, a DRG delegation was called in by the Secretary, Department of Disability Affairs, where she herself expressed shock over the sine die adjournment of the Upper house. The delegation along with the Secretary later met the Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment the next morning to carve out a way forward.

11. Save the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill Discussion

AADI, Hauz Khas, New Delhi on 24th December, 2013

Disabled Rights Group (DRG) is convened a meeting (Tuesday, 24th December) of all the NGOs and DPOs based in Delhi, Noida, and Gurgaon at AADI to discuss further steps and strategy in order to ensure that the voice of the disability sector is heard by the Government as well as Opposition. The aim was to discuss a way forward and conceptualize strategies to ensure that the voices of people with disabilities are heard by the Government and the Opposition.

G. Syamala of AADI addresses the group. She is seen along with a sign language interpreter. Participants of the meeting convened by the Disabled Rights Group (DRG).

12. AN URGENT APPEAL: HELP SAVE THE DISABILITY RIGHTS BILL!!

Indian Women’s Press Corps, New Delhi on 27th December, 2013

A press conference was held to illuminate on the need to save the Disability Rights Bill. Below is a copy of the Press Release that went out to the media.

We, the disabled people, families, parents of people with disability, professionals, friends, volunteers and all significant others would wish to draw your attention to a matter that concerns 70 million Indians.

We believe it concerns many more. If any of you have had a fractured leg in a cast or elderly parents, who can't hear or see very well or have dementia it concerns you as well.

In 2007, India signed and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As a consequence of ratification India was to modify her domestic laws to bring them in consonance with the Convention.

6 years later where do we stand?? - Four years of effort that went into the drafting of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill, approved by the Cabinet on 12th December, has gone down the drain with Parliament being adjourned sine die last week. Had the Parliament been in session for 2 more days (as per its own schedule), the Bill would have at least got tabled, if not passed!

Disabled rights activists across the country are deeply anguished over the manner in which the political class has treated them, as for them the 70 million Indians with disabilities are simply not a vote bank!

To make things worse, the huge fear is that with the General Elections looming large over the horizon, the Parliament may not be re-convened early next year for any legislative business. If that happens, all our efforts of more than 4 years will go down the drain and the Disability Rights Bill will get consigned to the dustbin of history.

However, IF, as with the Lokpal Bill, the Congress and the Opposition come together and show some political will, the Parliament can be reconvened in January (even for a single day!) and the Disability Rights Bill can be tabled and perhaps even be passed.

The Disabilities Bill is apolitical. It will ensure rights for persons with disabilities instead of charity.

All that is needed is for the Parliament to be convened even for a day so that the Bill can be tabled and secured.

This is an appeal to every citizen of this country to show your solidarity and extend your support.

Join us to raise awareness and create a political will that will ensure a legislative guarantee for the Rights of People with Disability to be protected.

As a beginning, we are holding a Press Conference in Delhi on the 27th of December and a Candle Light Vigil on the eve of New Year.

Lend your hand in mobilising media national /local, mobilising a national/local political will through any/all of the following - rallies, candle light vigils, press conferences, television shows, articles in newspapers, etc.

Do what you can! Ensure that the Disability Rights Bill gets converted to a Disability Bill.

13. Veer: Salman's 'Being Human' to Launch a Campaign for Specially-Abled

IBN 7 TV News at Studio, Noida on 27th December, 2013

Superstar Salman Khan's Being Human Foundation has joined hands with a news channel to launch Veer, a two-month-long media campaign showcasing case examples of Persons with Disabilities (PwD), who have succeeded in their endeavours on the strength of their self-belief.

Aerated drink Thums Up has joined hands with its brand ambassador Salman's Being Human Foundation and CNN-IBN for the campaign, which has American India Foundation (AIF) as implementation partners.

The initiative aims to reach out to PwDs with skill training and employment opportunities. It will also raise advocacy on issues revolving around inclusiveness, employability of PwDs and workplace accessibility.

In its first phase, the campaign aims to collect funds to train and economically empower at least 1,000 PwDs.

"Together with Thums Up, Being Human has launched Veer, a campaign that recognises the potential of differently abled individuals and provides them with a level playing field," Salman, who starred in a 2010 film of the same name as the campaign, said in a statement.

Towards the cause, several panel discussions are set to be held with participation from noted names from the government, corporates, NGOs, policy makers and donors of the campaign to discuss on the way forward to empower the country's specially-abled.

The launch episode of Veer, which will be aired Saturday, will introduce the viewers to the idea behind the campaign and it will tell how every Indian can get involved.

The series with four episodes will run in conjunction with digital platforms.

Mr. Zorin Singha, President of National Association of the Deaf, Mr. Anuj Jain, Project Director of National Association of the Deaf, 10 Members of NAD, 20 Students of Noida Deaf Society and other disabled group participated in the Veer: Salman's 'Being Human' to Launch a Campaign for Specially-Abled at IBN 7 TV News Studio at Noida on 27th December, 2013.

14. Delegation of Disabled Activists Meets Shri Prakash Karat, General Secretary of Communist Party India
at **CPI (M) Central Committee Office**, 27-29 Bhai Vir Singh Marg, New **Delhi**
on 28th December, 2013

A seven-member delegation of the Disabled Rights Group (DRG) and the National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled (NPRD) met CPI(M) General Secretary Shri Prakash Karat today to garner support for the introduction and passage of the Disability Rights Bill when parliament is convened to pass the Vote on Account in late January/early February.

The delegation tried to impress upon the CPI(M) leader that though the process of drafting the new law started over four years back and has gone through various stages, the delay in introducing this legislation in the Parliament is inexplicable.

The delegation conveyed to Shri Prakash Karat that this extremely important piece of legislation must be taken up by both, the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha for enactment.

The CPI(M) General Secretary who gave the delegation a patient hearing said that his party is for the speedy enactment of this legislation which spells out the rights of persons with disabilities. He offered the full support of the CPI(M) in Parliament in getting this important piece of legislation passed.

The DRG & the NPRD while thanking Shri Prakash Karat hope that other political parties will offer the same amount of support for the speedy enactment of the Disability Rights Bill.

The members of the delegation who called upon Shri Prakash Karat were: Javed Abidi (Convener, DRG), Muralidharan (Secretary, NPRD), Syamala Gidugu (AADI), Merry Barua (Action for Autism), Radhika Alkazi (Aarth-Aastha), Zorin Singha & Anuj Jain (National Association of the Deaf) and Dipendra Manocha (National Association for the Blind).

15. Delegation of Disabled Activists Meets Shri Hamid Ansari, Vice President of India
at Vice-President's House, 6, Maulana Azad Road, New Delhi on 30th December, 2013

A eight-member delegation of the Disabled Rights Group (DRG) and the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) met the Vice President of India, Shri Hamid Ansari this morning in their continuing effort to garner support for the introduction and passage of the Disability Rights Bill when parliament is convened to pass the Vote on Account.

The delegation tried to impress upon the Vice President that there has been an inordinate delay in introducing and passing the Bill which spells out the rights of persons with disabilities, though the process of drafting the new law started over four years back and has gone through various stages. The delegation sought the Vice President's support in ensuring that this extremely important piece of legislation is taken up by the government for introduction and enactment.

Shri Hamid Ansari gave the delegation a patient hearing. He said that he empathises with the

cause and is all for the speedy enactment of this legislation. The Vice President said that since India has signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons (UNCPRD), it is incumbent that India harmonise its laws also in consonance with the UNCPRD.

16. Candle Light Vigil & Protest to Demand Pass the Disability Rights Bill on the Eve New Year

at Jantar Mantar, Delhi on 31st December, 2013

The article below was written by Shri Javed Abidi, Convenor of Disabled Rights Group after the Candlelight Vigil took place.

SAVING THE DISABILITY RIGHTS BILL 2013: It is bone chilling cold in Delhi. To top it, it has rained last night on Monday 30th December, 2013. Braving the weather, in a few hours from now, hundreds of disabled people turned up at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi and thus, history would witness that for the Nineth time in India, ordinary disabled people had to turn out on the streets in order to ensure that they are not forgotten or ignored by the powers that be and that their rights are not trampled upon. As candles were lit at 5 pm on 31st December, 2013, a type of a countdown would begin towards that day in late January or early February, when the Parliament would be convened that one last time before Lok Sabha is dissolved and General Elections are announced. It is this one last chance, one last small window that may, just may make it possible for India's 70 million disabled citizens to make their "Tryst with Destiny"

It is heartwarming to see this kind of an enthusiasm! We were 1000 hundreds disabled people alongwith deaf people to be there at Jantar Mantar on 31st December, 2013. Not to mention the thousands who turned up at various venues in various cities, all across the country.

DEBATE: Once again, it is a 1995 like situation. The Parliament is at the very end of it's tenure. Elections are round the corner and may be announced at any time next month. Disability sector, as always, had dreams and desires. We worked very hard, first of all, for the Government to even agree that there should be a new Disability Rights Law. The drafting of the law took it's own time and then, all the loops and bends of the law making process. Finally, we have a Bill that has been passed by the Union Cabinet! The Bill may not have everything for everyone, but it does have a lot that we don't have today in this country; provisions that would benefit thousands and thousands perhaps millions of people with disabilities. If sanity prevails, this Bill may become an Act next month. However, if confusion is created and the Bill gets deferred, I am willing to lay a bet in this open forum that no new Disability Rights Law (this version or any other/better version) would see the light of the day till at least 2015. The sector in general and hundreds and thousands of disabled people in particular would end up paying a very big price; to not be able to get their very basic rights for at least another two more years. Friends, it has been over four years already. Are we willing to kill two more years in the search of that elusive 'perfection'?

17. Delegation of Disabled Activists Meets Shri Arun Jaitley, MP & Opposition Leader of Rajya Sabha

at Delhi on 1st January, 2014

An eight-member delegation of the Disabled Rights Group (DRG) and the National Association of the Deaf (NAD) met Arun Jaitley, leader of the BJP in the Rajya Sabha, this morning in its continuing effort to seek the support of major political parties to ensure the introduction and passage of the Disability Rights Bill when parliament is convened to pass the Vote on Account in February.

The DRG-NPRD delegation explained to the BJP leader that that though the process of drafting the new law started over four years back and has gone through various stages, the Bill is yet to be introduced in the Parliament.

Arun Jaitley assured the delegation that he is all for the speedy enactment of this legislation and pledged his party's support in getting this important Bill passed.

The members of the delegation which called upon Arun Jaitley were: Javed Abidi (Convener, DRG); Muralidharan (Secretary, NPRD); Syamala Gidugu (AADI); Neelam Jolly (VISHWAS); Radhika Alkazi (Aarth-Aastha); Merry Barua (Action for Autism); and Zorin Singha and AS Narayanan (National Association for the Deaf).

18. Delegation of Disabled Activists Meets Smt. Sonia Gandhi, MP & Chairperson of UPA

at Delhi on 9th January, 2014

A nine-member delegation of the Disabled Rights Group (DRG) and National Association of the Deaf (NAD) met Congress President, Sonia Gandhi today in its continuing effort to seek the support of major political parties to ensure the introduction and passage of the Disability Rights Bill when Parliament is re-convened early next month and also to have a Sign Language Interpreter on TV during the Republic Day Telecast.

The Congress President assured the delegation of her party's full support in ensuring the passage of the Bill.

The members of the delegation which called upon Sonia Gandhi were: Javed Abidi (Convener, DRG), Muralidharan (Secretary, NPRD), Merry Barua (Action for Autism), Syamala Gidugu (AADI), Neelam Jolly (VISHWAS), Radhika Alkazi (Aarth-Aastha), George Abraham (Score) and Zorin Singha & A.S. Narayanan (National Association for the Deaf).

19. Delegation of Disabled Activists Meets Shri. Manish Tewari, Minister for Information & Broadcasting

at Shashtri Bhawan, New Delhi on 10th January, 2014

For the first time in the history of the nation, this year's Republic Day telecast may also include simultaneous Sign Language interpretation. (26/01/2014) Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Manish Tewari assured a delegation of disability activists of Disabled Rights Group (DRG) of his full support on this issue.

The members of the delegation which called upon Manish Tewari were: Javed Abidi (Convenor, DRG), Neelam Jolly (VISHWAS), Zorin Singha & A. S. Narayanan (National Association of the Deaf) with Angel Singha as interpreter. Also, present at the meeting were the Secretary of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and Secretary of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

20. Demand Sign Language Interpretation of Republic Day telecast on all Doordarshan channels, especially DD National

at Shashtri Bhawan, New Delhi on 17th January, 2014

There was one simple demand to make the telecast of Republic Day ceremony accessible via sign language interpretation on ALL 6 channels of Doordarshan, especially on DD National.

After advocating sternly for this issue for days, we were informed the day before that the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Doordarshan will be making the telecast of Republic Day Ceremony 2014 accessible on three channels ONLY – DD Bharati, DD News and DD Urdu. This had hurt the disability sector immensely.

To stand up and fight against this discrimination, hundreds of disabled people gathered outside Doordarshan on Sansad Marg in the evening. The large crowd had then marched to Shastri Bhawan in the beating cold where finally after much wait, a delegation was called in for a meeting with the Secretary of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

The delegation that comprised of Javed Abidi, Convener, DRG; Syamala G., AADI and A.S. Narayanan, NAD apprised to the Secretary, the disappointment and the agitation of the sector. The Secretary would hopefully be holding a meeting on Monday with relevant stakeholders to take up this issue.

21. Dharna by NAD & DRG for Sign Language Interpretation of Republic Day Telecast

at Shashtri Bhawan, Delhi on 20th January, 2013

After our Dharna on Friday (17th January 2013), the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has come under a lot of pressure. Secretary, MI&B has asked Secretary, MSJE to convene a meeting on Monday 20th January, 2013. Hundreds of people with disabilities gathered at Shastri Bhawan to demand Sign Language interpretation of Republic Day telecast on DD National at Shastri Bhawan, Delhi. Ministry of Defence, Prasar Bharati, and Doordarshan are present. That's when it would be decided if sign language interpretation would be available on only 3 DD Channels or on all the 6 DD Channels, especially DD National. To be honest, just the idea of an inset box with a sign language interpreter on an Indian television screen is in itself a huge, historic breakthrough. First time ever since independence; 6 years after India ratified UNCRPD. To have this on not just DD News but 3 channels of Doordarshan is not too bad a deal but we are out here to make an example.

A meeting was held at 3 pm in the Ministry of Social Justice. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Defence, Doordarshan, etc were all present. It was an unsuccessful meeting, clearly visible that the bureaucrats from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting come with a closed mind. They were finding ways to kill time, with only five days away from Republic Day. We weren't impressed as the same information was repeatedly being passed to us i.e., 3 channels with the support of sign language interpretation, which was unacceptable. We came out and had shared the bad news with the crowd. Before we even knew, they all got very angry and marched inside Shastri Bhawan pushing aside the guards and the security personnel. For a moment, my heart skipped a beat. We went in, pacified the people, and they all sat on a Dharna right there, at the entry gate of MI&B. This went on till about 8 pm. Finally, the Secretary MI&B called us again and we went in for a 2nd round of talks. This time, he was a bit more open. He asked us to wait till the next day. They have got the file from Doordarshan/Prasar Bharati. They will examine the concerns raised and supposedly put up the file to the Minister, Manish Tewari. So we waited.

22. Another Dharna for Sign Language Interpretation of Republic Day Telecast

Shashtri Bhawan, New Delhi on 23rd January, 2014

NAD and DRG held another Dharna in the afternoon outside Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi from 3pm to 7pm on 23rd January, 2014. There were about 1450 deaf people who came from NCR, Haryana, Punjab & Uttar Pradesh alongwith supports of other disabled groups.

Since there was a difference of opinion between the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting and the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment on the issue of sign language interpretation on DD National, two things had happened: (1) the matter got referred to the Cabinet Secretariat for a final decision. (2) the Ministry of I&B had decided to issue an advisory to the private channels to take the feed from DD News so that sign language interpretation is also available on their screens when the Republic Day ceremony is telecast. We decided to press one more time that sign language interpretation should be available on all DD channels, especially DD National. If our demand is not conceded to, we will march towards the Cabinet Secretariat/Prime Minister's Office. Members of DRG, NDN and NAD then met Social Justice Minister, Kumari Selja on 24th January, 2014 and reiterated our demand. She had agreed to write to the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

23. Workshop on the Advocacy Training for the Deaf

Commonwealth Youth Program, Asia Centre, Sector 12, Chandigarh
25th January, 2014

We organized the Workshop on the "Advocacy Training for the Deaf" at Commonwealth Youth Program, Asia Centre, Sector 12, Chandigarh on 21st July, 2013. There were about 45 deaf students and 25 deaf members from all over Chandigarh participating in the Workshop.

The workshop started with the welcome note by Mr. Yogesh Kumar, Public Relation Officer of NAD. Mr. Anuj Jain, Joint Secretary of NAD, and Mrs. Geeta Sharma, Women Secretary of NAD shared their experiences & explained the issues of Government of India, Legal Purpose, Basic UNCRPD and showed the PowerPoint presentation about advocacy to deaf delegates. Mr. Vishal Arora, Treasurer of NAD organised fun games for deaf delegates which led to a good time.

24. First Time in India: Republic Day Telecast on TV with Sign Language Interpreter

New Delhi on 26th January, 2014

It was India's 65th Republic Day. At the end, while the whole country watched the telecast on Sunday, 26th January 2014, the Indian Deaf community flickered with happiness since the Republic Day telecast was made accessible through sign language interpretation and to add to the happiness, many private channels like NDTV, India News, Times Now, Headlines Today and Sahara Samay chose to take the accessible feed from DD channels.

25. Maha Rally: Save the New Disability Rights Bill 2013

India Gate, New Delhi on 3rd February, 2014

MAHA RALLY IN DELHI ON 3RD FEBRUARY FOR THE SPEEDY ENACTMENT OF THE NEW DISABILITY RIGHTS LAW.

Thousands of people gathered at India Gate, New Delhi on 3rd February, 2014 to create pressure on the Government and the Opposition to ensure tabling and passage of the Disability Rights Bill.

More than 30,000 disabled people gathered with just one hope in their heart, that the Disability Rights Bill is enacted into a law and that the disabled citizens of India do not have to wait another 2 or 3 or 5 years to get their most basic rights.

26. Dharna for Save the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill 2013

Jantar Mantar, New Delhi on 5th February, 2014

Keeping up with the momentum of the last few days, hundreds of people had gathered at Jantar Mantar today for a candle light vigil.

The demand continued to be the following:

1. To ask the Government to bring the Bill to the Parliament and ensure that it gets tabled.
2. To ask the Opposition to please support the Bill and help us in getting it passed.

27. Dharna for Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill 2013

Vijay Chowk, New Delhi on 21st February, 2014

Hundreds of persons with disabilities once again sat on a Parliament Watch in front of the Congress & BJP offices. This Watch was organised by LokSansad, a coalition of people's movements demanding passage of consensus Bills. This includes the Disabilities Bill.

Later, more than 1000 people, including people on wheelchairs and families of whistleblowers who had been killed, marched to Parliament to demand that Parliament function and pass the Grievance Redress Bill, Whistle Blowers Protection Bill, Disability Rights Bill and SC/ST [PoA] Amendment Bill. The protestors were detained outside the Constitution Club. They demonstrated for more than 4 hours.

Rahul Gandhi, Vice President of Congress came to the protestors at Vijay Chowk late evening. He listened to each of all groups who spoke about the problems of bills are not passed yet in the parliament. Mr. Rahul Gandhi said that he will approach the President for the ordinance pass for the bills.

28. Ordinance Pass for Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill 2013

AICC's Headquarter Office, New Delhi from 24th to 28th February, 2014

25 – 50 deaf people from National Association of the Deaf alongwith LokSansad members and SC/ST, Whistlers Protection Bill group organised the Watch Ordinance for different Bills of SC/ST Amendment, Whistleblowers Protection Bill, Rights of Persons with Disabilities at AICC's Headquarter Office, New Delhi from 24th to 28th February, 2014 from 11am to 2pm.

The Parliament session opened on 5th February 2014 and went on till 21st February. The Parliament passed other bills but the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill 2013 that was tabled in the Parliament, which was still pending.

Mr. Rahul Gandhi, Vice President of AICC promised that he will approach the President for the ordinance pass for the bills.

We decided to watch the ordinance pass for different Bills at AICC's Headquarter Office, New Delhi from 24th to 28th February, 2014.

Disabled Rights Groups decided together to ask for ordinance on this Bill. But at the same time, other disability groups were also protesting against the Bill and wanted the Bill to be

sent to the Standing Committee. The Cabinet, Government of India deciding on the ordinances for the bill decided to send the Disability Bill to the Standing Committee of the Parliament of India.

The national election will take place and then the Government will come to power by May this year.

The Standing Committee of the Parliament on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill 2014 will have the Speaker of the Parliament, Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, 6 Rajya Sabha Members and 12 Lok Sabha Members as the members of the Committee.

The Standing Committee will be making formal announcements in newspapers and websites for gathering suggestions and comments on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill 2014.

29. Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi

Kashmiri Gate, Delhi on 13th March, 2014

Mr. Vijay Dev (IAS), Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi invited AADI(NGO) Nidhi, Muskaan (NGO), other 7 Disabled Group and Mr. Anuj Jain, Joint Secretary of National Association of the Deaf attended the meeting on 13th March, 2014 at Chief Electoral Officer, Kashmiri Gate, Delhi for accessible for polling stations upcoming Lok Sabha General Election in Delhi on 10th April, 2014. Many disabled people were unable to access polling stations for booths. There was no assistance for ramps for wheelchair users, some personal assistance, no signage, no posters showing for deaf people. Disabled persons demanded Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi that they should provide accessible for every disabled persons enter in the polling stations. There will be 2473 Polling Stations in Delhi including 11700 Polling Booths. Mr. Vijay Dev (IAS), Chief Electoral Officer, Delhi said, "Motto is clear - this election 2014 must be a historically different and pleasant, big challenge. Mindset problem-biggest challenge must change mindset of electoral officer. What must do - how do we train them? We trained for electoral management procedural. Disability should become integral. What should be the curriculum? We must have qualified people. Interface down the level. All must be sincere and sensitive to disabled persons till lowest level of officer. We will have zero tolerance of complaints about our officials. We will audit them. And behaviour modification. Infrastructure - wheelchair, ramp, other facilities but need sensitized people. We want to learn from you. what should be the training elements? Please help prepare curriculum. 2nd Issue - physical logistics & hardware on paper instructions for ramp have been there. Is it done at 100% at every places? All categories of disabilities for signages, handouts, seamless travel, outside gate may be closed. Also for management there is a pole which can make a problem. We will all be a team. Best possible - pleasant experience. First limitation - electoral rolls don't have any categorization. Ples provide us list of people who are disabled. We want to flag them. Basic minimum facilities - components of this that do you suggest. We have 2534 locations for polling in Delhi. Fort the first time it will be done in India. Locomotor disability - person who able to enter. We must do the audit. MCD engineer says, I have done it but must have audit. Signage - we should ensure. Make a template for basic facilities. We don't have

much time. Actionable things - so we can achieve this objective. At the end of meeting we should have action plan on logistics & human resource development. We have hardly 20 days left. Financial resources are important. Social welfare dept from Delhi govt can help. How many disabled are there? They can tell us. Auditing can be done by social welfare dept. We will do 5-10 and give you feedback. Give the list of polling stations. They can choose among the list. We are here for this purpose. Without you people we could not do. When disabled are there, the feedback is taken seriously. There must be a template. Your specialization are you can make the template. We have everything ready. Polling station is prepared in 3 days. Finances & logistics will not be a problem. Let's us be clear. We will tell the govt agencies. You be the third party audit. Delhi Election is accessible to blind, wheelchair persons, mental retarded persons, deaf persons etc. Three problems - attitudinal barrier can't tackle now. This long term but we most start. Training is there we can give the training. We will hold people accountable.. People who do mischief we will handle them. Physical access is very important for disabled people. For audit need visual, orthopaedic, and deaf people to do the audit. Simulation exercise must be conducted. Separate category will be there. Training - special education has knowledge."

30. 2nd National Convention for Youth with Disabilities

USI Residency, New Delhi on 25th & 26th March, 2014

National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) organized 2nd National Convention for Youth with Disabilities in USI Residency, New Delhi on 25th & 26th March, 2014.

The objective of the Convention is to reach out to young disabled people and expose them to the social sector movement of India, including disability and other allied fields. This would help us to identify and inspire the next generation leadership of not just the Indian disability sector but also those who could be agents of change in other fields. Mr. Anuj Jain, Joint Secretary of N.A.D. was requested to speak at one of the sessions on 'Disability Movement in India'. He talked about the struggles of the Indian Deaf community of 18 million. Anuj Jain has been working with and for the deaf and hard of hearing sector for over 25 years. He is the Joint Secretary of National Association of the Deaf, the only truly national and grassroots Disabled People's Organisation that fights for the rights of deaf people in India. He has been a part of many developments of the Indian Deaf community but most recently is the accessible telecast of Republic Day Parade 2014 via ISL interpreter, & the Rights of Persons with Disabilities among others. He has demanded Social Welfare Dept., Delhi Govt to vacate the deaf school which they continue its use space for the deaf school was illegal. He also demanded Delhi Govt for providing the driving license for the deaf. He was one of the few selected participants to the Grassroots International Advocacy Leadership Training by Gallaudet University, Washington D.C. He is currently involved in a Sign Language Project where an introduction course on Indian Sign Language is being developed with Delhi University and Delhi Police for cadets in training. He participated in the Chief Electoral Officer Meeting with AADI, Muskaan and many other NGOs regarding accessible for polling stations including polling booths for Blind People, Orthopaedic People, Deaf People and Lesprosy People.

The Convention, a second of its kind, was a 2 day affair which included addresses and interactive sessions with well known voices of the social sector (including social entrepreneurs), senior leaders from the corporate world, and bureaucrats as well as politicians.

They had participation from the top universities, colleges, and other educational institutions of the country including 6 Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. This included the IITs, IIMs, other management, media and law colleges.

31. All India Federation of The Deaf Team Visited NAD's Office

New Delhi at 29th March, 2014

Mr. Onkar Sharma, General Secretary of AIFD, Mr. Suraj Prakash, Treasurer of AIFD, Mr. Vijay Chhabra, & Mr. Suresh Ahuja, Executive Member of AIFD visited the NAD's Office. We, A. S. Narayanan, Secretary of NAD, Mr. Zorin Singha, President of NAD, Mr. Anuj Jain, Joint Secretary of NAD, Mr. Vishal Arora, Treasurer of NAD, Ms. Angel Singha, Interpreter of NAD, & Mr. Raj Kumar Jain, Program Officer of NAD had an informal discussion with them about working together for and with the Deaf Community in India.

32. STATE LEVEL WORKSHOP ON EMPOWERMENT OF DEAF WOMEN

Indian Social Institute, 10 Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi on 30th March, 2014

The State Level Workshop on Empowerment of Deaf Women was held on 30th March, 2014 at Indian Social Institute, 10 Institutional Area, Lodi Road, New Delhi organised by National Association of the Deaf. It was a one day long workshop on empowerment of deaf women from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m..

The workshop started with the welcome note by Ms. Nirupama Kaul, Committee Deaf Women Member of NAD.

Smt. Geeta Sharma is a deaf person and also, the Woman Secretary of National Association of the Deaf, New Delhi. She starts the workshop every month to conduct the workshop for deaf women for NCR/Delhi.

She made various presentations referring to deaf women. Deaf women leaders attended the workshop from Delhi/NCR. Most were enthusiastic and keen to have learnt things presented

by Smt. Geeta Sharma and also Smt. Reena Jain who is a Committee Deaf Women Member of NAD.

Dr. Lucky Chandekar, Gynecologist at Surbhi Hospital, Noida took an interactive session on 'Menstruation' through an informative PPT presentation. The session jogged many participants' brains and solved/addressed all queries of deaf women.

Ms. Abha Bisht, Bachelor of Arts Applied Sign Language Studies was invited to be lecturer to deaf women. She has shown her powerpointpresentation to them about domestic violence and women issues.

Programme was held in order to raise awareness and create a positive space in society for the deaf community, women's issues and women's health issues. 65 deaf women attended the workshop in Delhi.

33. State Deaf Workshop on UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Bathinda, Punjab on 17th – 18th February, 2014

Ludhiana, Punjab on 2nd – 3rd March 2014

Thapar University, Patiala, Punjab on 15th – 16th March, 2014

We organized the first kind of the State Deaf Workshop on UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) between 17th & 18th February, 2014 at Auditorium, Hotel, Bathinda, Punjab between 9:30 am to 5:00 pm. There were about 75 deaf delegates from all over Bathinda, Punjab attended the workshop for two days. Mr. Vishal Arora, Treasurer of NAD, and Mr. Ram Singh, Co-Worker of NAD shared the different PowerPoint Presentations about the Human Rights on Video, the human rights/laws, & UNCRPD.

We organized the second kind of the State Deaf Workshop on UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) between 2nd & 3rd March, 2014 at Auditorium, Punjab University of Agriculture, Ludhiana, Punjab between 9:30 am to 5:00 pm. There were about 87 deaf delegates from all over Ludhiana, Punjab attended the workshop for two days. Mr. A. S. Narayanan, Secretary of NAD, Mr. Anuj Jain, Joint Secretary of NAD, and Mr. Vishal Arora, Treasurer of NAD shared PowerPoint Presentations about the Human Rights on Video, the human rights/laws, & UNCRPD.

We organized the third kind of State Deaf Workshop on UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) between 15th & 16th March, 2014 at Auditorium, Thapar University, Patiala, Punjab between 9:30 am to 5:00 pm. There were about 90 deaf delegates from all over Patiala, Punjab attended the workshop for two days. Mr. Anuj Jain, Joint Secretary of NAD, and Mr. Vishal Arora, Treasurer of NAD shared the different PowerPoint Presentations about the Human Rights on Video, the human rights/laws, & UNCRPD.

It was necessary to have awareness on UNCRPD to help deaf people understand and know the laws and rights of the deaf. It helps to empower them to do themselves by their own decision in their lives in India.

A milestone for the advocacy of the rights of persons with disabilities is now steadily gaining worldwide acceptance and support. This is known as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) refers to a document focusing on international human rights of people with disabilities. It was created by the United Nations and is being monitored by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 13, 2006. The Convention was opened for signature on March 30, 2007. It then came into force on May 3, 2008, after the Convention's ratification by the 20th party. There are a total of 71 countries that have ratified the convention. Some of the countries that have ratified the Convention include Australia, Belgium, China, India, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. The UN.org website has a section where interested groups and individuals can read the latest developments regarding the convention.

The Convention intends to ensure equal rights to people with disabilities. This is done by elaborating in detail the rights of persons with disabilities and setting out a code of implementation.

Guiding Principles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities:-

Eight principles form the base for the Convention and the articles included in it. Below are the guiding principles:

- Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons
- Non-discrimination
- Full and effective participation and inclusion in society
- Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity
- Equality of opportunity
- Accessibility
- Equality between men and women
- Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities

India ratified UNCRPD on the 1st of October, 2007. India was the 7th country in the world and the first significant country to do so. The ratification of UNCRPD was a direct result of the advocacy by NCPEDP and Disabled Rights Group (DRG).

UNCRPD is an international instrument that provides persons with disabilities the same human rights that everyone else enjoys. It marks a radical shift in defining and understanding disability - it moves from a medical/social perspective to a human-rights based approach.

However, UNCRPD is just a paper if it is not implemented. Disabled people have to play an active role in the implementation and monitoring of UNCRPD.

For each change to make the lives of more than 18 million deaf Indians better, we need to understand this international treaty on which the new disability bill is based on.

650 million people, roughly 10 per cent of the world's population, live with a disability, according to the United Nations. In India alone, there are roughly 100 million people with disabilities, which is almost 1/6th of population of disabled people in the world.