

**AN OPEN LETTER TO SHRI NARENDRA MODIJI, HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER  
OF INDIA FOR INCLUDING INDIAN SIGN LANGUAGE IN THE LIST OF  
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF REPUBLIC OF INDIA**

To,  
**Shri Narendra Modi**  
**Hon'ble Prime Minister of India**  
**South Block, Raisina Hill**  
**New Delhi-110011**

Respected Sir,

This is regarding inclusion of Indian Sign Language (ISL), which is the language (mother tongue) of 18 million Deaf People in the 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which lists the official languages of India.

We are writing this open letter to you, and we earnestly believe that you would understand our concern and promptly facilitate the necessary action for the recognition of Indian Sign Language.

Sir, you recently launched a dictionary of Indian Sign Language and said that Indian Sign Language will be taught in schools. These have been very positive measures for the Deaf community in India. However, unless Indian Sign Language is recognised as an official language, we will remain deprived of the access to our rights – right to information, right to education, right to employment, right to justice and all other rights.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities mandates that sign language be accorded equal status as other spoken languages. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 mentions sign language as a mode of communication, it provides for having sign language teachers in educational institutions, sign language interpretations in media, etc.

In order to fulfil the above-mentioned mandates, the first step would be to add Indian Sign Language in the 8<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

The Indian Constitution has been amended before to add new languages. Initially there were only 14 languages in the Indian Constitution. Currently, there are 22 official languages. The 8th Schedule was amended in 1967, 1992 and 2003. Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, and Santali were added in 2003 by the 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act. About one million people speak Bodo. Dogri is spoken by approximately 2.3 million people. Maithili is spoken by 15 million people in India. **Indian Sign Language is the mother tongue of 18 million deaf people in India. Yet our language remains unrecognized, thus making us totally invisible and “voiceless”!**

We have waited a very long time for this recognition, and we humbly request you to expedite the needed action in this regard. We trust you would see the merit in our request. We the deaf community would remain forever grateful if Indian Sign Language is given its due recognition. Sir, we have great faith in your commitment and support to our cause and we are sure that you will create history by recognising Indian Sign Language as an official language and that day would be a golden chapter in the history of the Deaf movement in India.

Thank you, sir,

Yours faithfully,

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