

GUIDELINES FOR  
BROADCASTING INDIAN SIGN  
LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS ON  
TV PROGRAM FOR DEAF AND  
HARD OF HEARING

Submitted by  
National Association of the Deaf, India

# **Directions and Techniques**

On the following pages, we have some common-sense directions and techniques to help make the inclusion of an Indian Sign Language interpreter on television easy for you and effective for your viewers who depend on Indian Sign Language interpreters to obtain important and timely information

## **INDIAN SIGN LANGUAGE**

When Deaf people and interpreters use Indian Sign Language it may seem that it only involves broad arm, and body movements, but Indian Sign Language includes many subtle movements and features. A small adjustment to the shape of the hands, fingers, mouth, head and body along with facial expressions, can alter meaning. All of these features must be seen clearly on television for understanding to take place.

This is a particular issue with interpreters delivered in an open format, where the signer takes up only a small portion of the television screen, making their hands and facial appear relatively small.

### **On screen presentation**

There is currently no standardization regarding interpreters using Indian Sign language for on screen presentation. The most common presentations are as follows:

- Indian Sign Language on the main screen (interpreter stands net to speaker)
- Indian Sign Language presented using chroma key technology
- Indian Sign Language in a box using picture-in-picture technology. (Box is preferred to oval).

**NOTE:** if given a choice between chroma key or a box (picture-in-picture), viewers prefer chroma key.

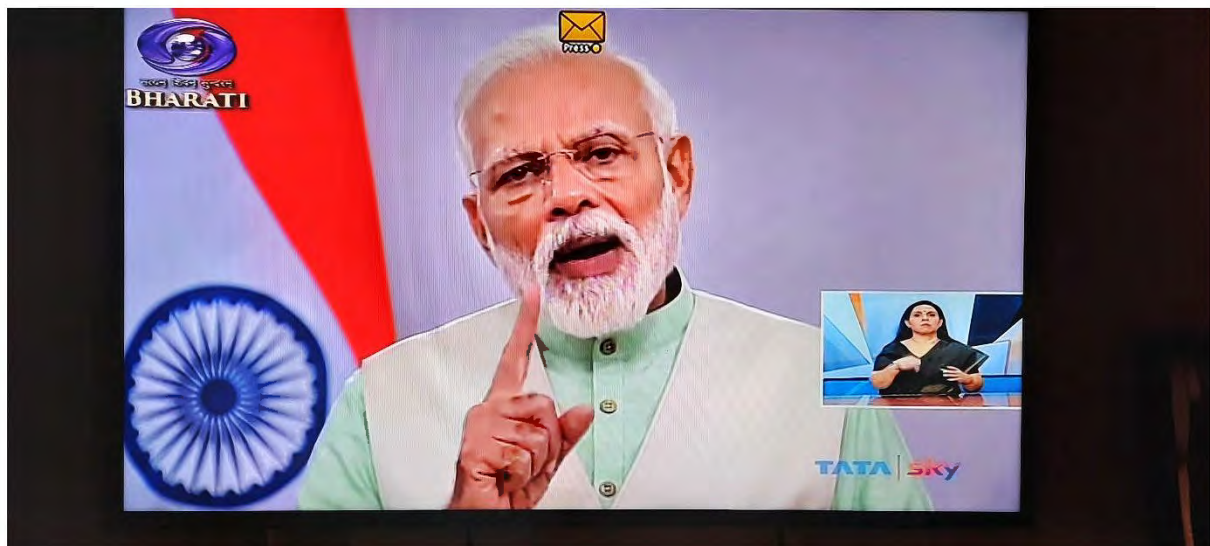
On screen presentation



Screen 50 % without frame



50 % screen without frame

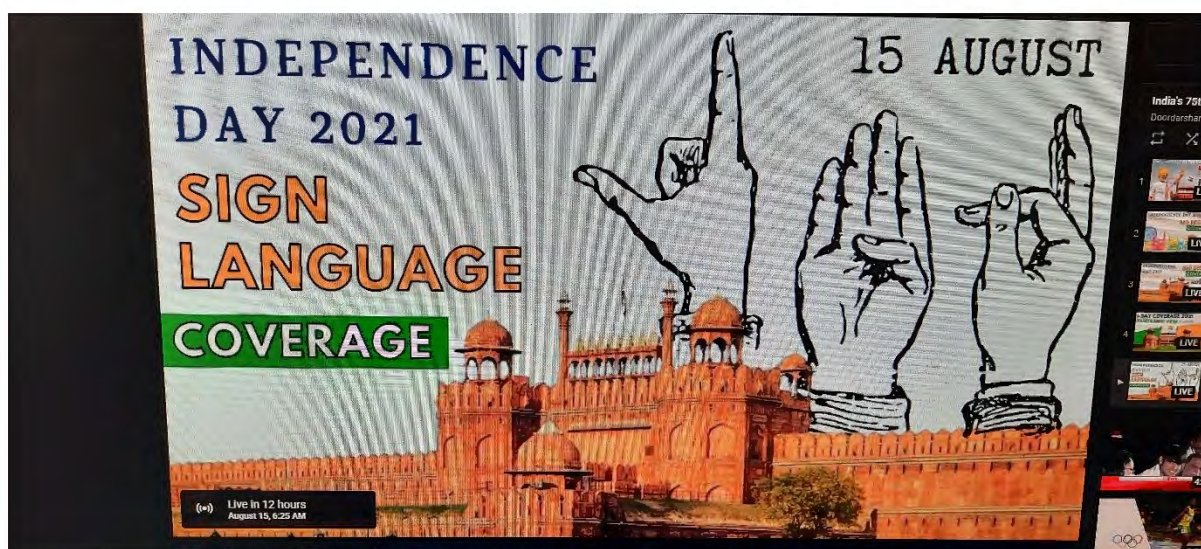


Screen proportions for the ISL Interpreter is not good

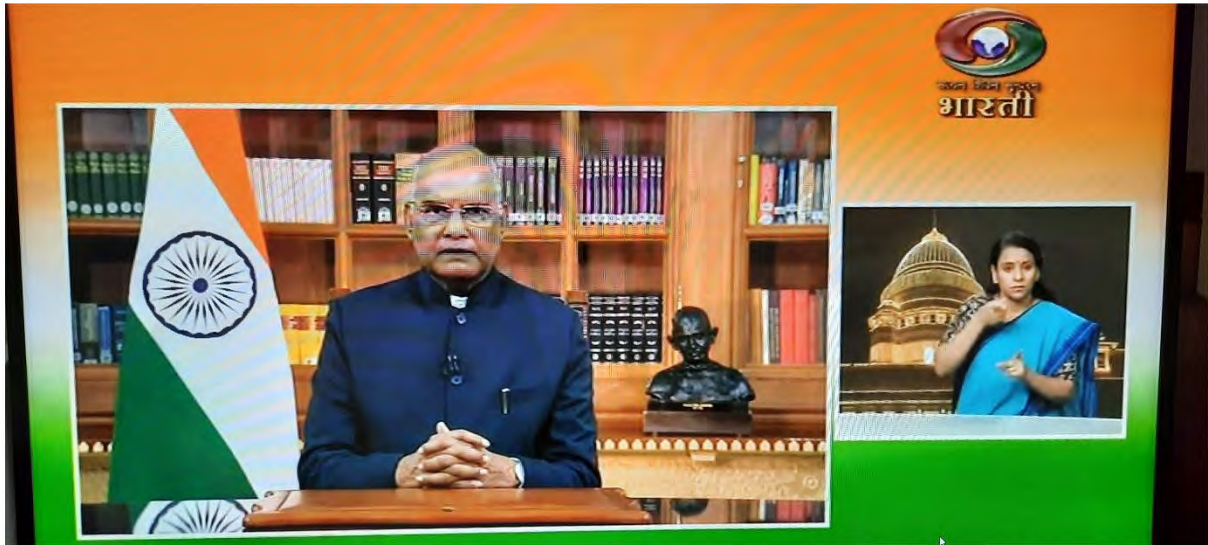




Screen proportions for the ISL Interpreter is not good



Alphabet is wrong. It is from USA. Do not do it again in future. Follow Indian Sign Language.



Screen 50 % without frame



Screen proportions for the ISL Interpreter is not good





It is a very good visual and screen proportion for ISL Interpreter is ideal too



Screen proportions for the ISL Interpreter is too small



## Deaf Signer



Link Source from:-

[Heavy Rains in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka & Tamil Nadu - YouTube](#)

## CAPTURE THE FULL SIGNING SPACE

(High priority)

The full signing space around the signer should be visible at all times. For Indian Sign Language this extends from below the waist to above the head and at least an elbow width to each side.

## **ENSURE THE INDIAN SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER IS LARGE ENOUGH TO BE SEEN AND UNDERSTOOD**

(High priority)

The signer should appear on the screen at a sufficient size and resolution to enable viewers at normal viewing distances to clearly see and accurately recognize all movements and facial expressions.

This requirement is difficult to quantify in terms of an adequate proportion of the picture, because it depends on the size of the viewer's screen, the viewing distance and their visual acuity.

The practical recommendation in the context of standard definition television is that the Indian Sign Language interpreter should be no small than one sixth of the screen.

Nevertheless, and unsurprisingly, research suggests that Indian Sign language users prefer a larger percentage of the screen be used for the ISL interpreter.

## Main screen for Emergency information speech



[Emergency Preparedness \[Sign Language\] - YouTube](#)

## **Talk Shows with Guests who Sign**

- (i)** The guest is the focus of the interaction, not the interpreter.
- (ii)** The host of the program should speak directly to their guests who use indian sign language as they would for any other guest.
- (iii)** The interpreter should be off screen of the main shot. The interpreter should stand behind and a little to the side of the host so that the sight line between host and guest is maintained. Again, the guest is the focus.
- (iv)** The interpreters will use Indian Sign Language (ISL) to the guest and also voice for them, unless the guest uses their own voice and it is clear for those listening. Ask what the guest prefers.



- (v) If the preference is for the ISL interpreter's voice, the ISL interpreter should be provided with a lapel mic.
- (vi) Use a separate, dedicated camera to capture the ISL interpreter and use picture – picture or chroma key technology to present the ISL interpreter.

## **Talk Shows with Guests who Sign**



**Your guests are the focus of the interaction, not the interpreter.**

# Interviewing Deaf People



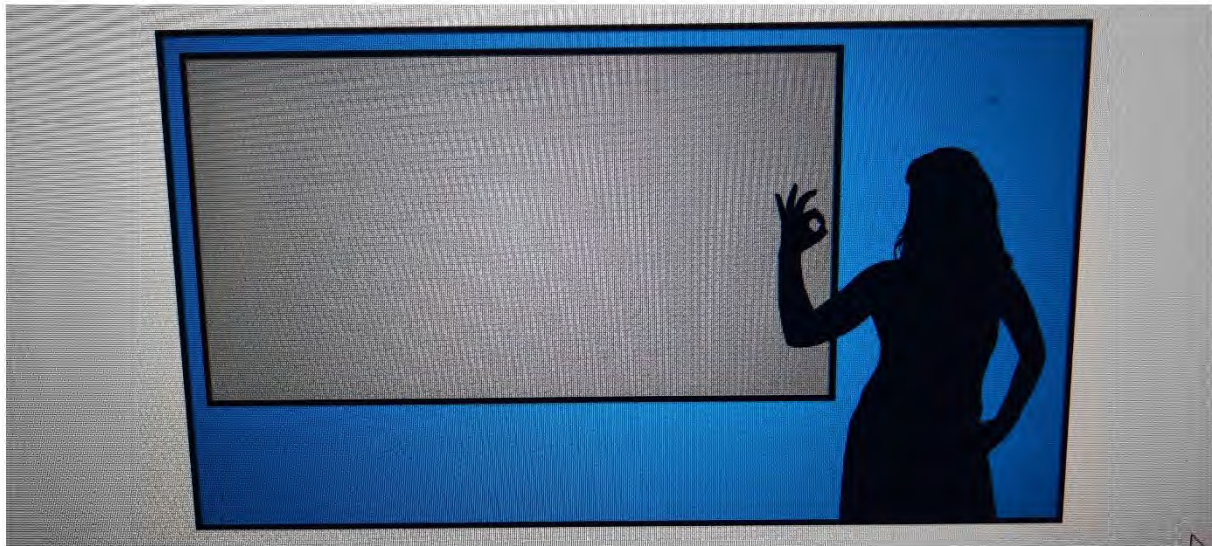
**The Deaf person is the focus of the interview, not the interpreter.**

The reporter should speak directly to Deaf person being interviewed as they would for any other guest.

The interpreter should be off screen of the main shot. The interpreter should stand to the side of the reporter so that the sight line between reporter/camera and the Deaf person is maintained. This also allows the interpreter to voice into the microphone while the Deaf person is signing

# Programs targeting the Deaf Community

For open Indian sign language interpreting of TV programs or for programs specifically targeting members of the Deaf community (where the host of the program uses Indian sign language), the main visual image can be reduced in size leaving a blank area in which the signer can be placed.



# **Accessible Emergency Management**

Indian Sign Language users are often cut off from auditory sources of information in emergency situations, and may make poor safety decisions if they are uninformed about the nature or scope of an emergency.

Captioning of TV broadcasts is not necessarily effective in communicating information to all Deaf people, due to the unfamiliarity of technical language that may be used during such events, variability in the accuracy of real-time captioning, or lack of any captioning at all.

Information delivered in Indian sign language is preferred by many Deaf people as being more immediately accessible than speech represented imperfectly in print.



# **Accessible Emergency Management Press Briefings**

Emergency press briefings must be accessible to all deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Consequently, closed or open captioning during emergency broadcasts is mandated by federal law to meet the needs of many deaf and hard of hearing people, but must be done so with high quality captioning service providers to ensure the live captioning comports with federal standards.

Captioning alone is not enough for many deaf or hard of hearing people to understand important emergency information. Providing Indian Sign Language interpreters help this underserved segment of the population to receive the necessary information to make educated decisions about their own role in emergencies and disasters.

Too often, there are issues with the quality or display of captioning or interpreting during press briefings and public service announcements for emergency planning. These issues include:

The use of unqualified Indian sign language interpreters and/or unqualified captioning service providers.

The captioning may be unduly delayed or is improperly placed and blocks the full view of the interpreter.

Interpreters are sometimes forced out of view of the camera “shot”, obstructed, or viewed in an angle that is counterproductive for effective communication.

## **Press Briefings - Optimal**



# **Accessible Emergency Management**

## **Emergency Broadcasts**

Captioning and interpreting services are required to be visible on all emergency broadcasts regardless of the medium – **television or the Internet.**

**Failure to provide accessible media during emergency broadcasts is a violation of federal law** and broadcasting entities need to make every effort to ensure that all media shared with the public is fully accessible.

**2.** Make sure a highly qualified Indian sign language interpreter is visible at all times in the broadcast next to the emergency official.

At all times during the video broadcast, a Medium 2 Shot should be used of both the public official and the Indian sign language interpreter standing next to each other in the video frame.

At all times during the video broadcast, the speaking official should not block the interpreter and the interpreter should not block the speaking official.

At all times during the video broadcast, the interpreter should stand slightly in front of the podium and to the side of the speaker

**3.** At all times during the video broadcast, provide high quality captioning and ensure that it does not conflict or cover the interpreter or other text such as a scrolling marquee, crawl, or lower-third (or vice versa).

**4.** In advance of all emergency broadcasts and during such broadcasts, broadcast media, emergency management, interpreters, and advocates from the deaf and hard of hearing community should be working together to ensure the diverse needs of all deaf and hard of hearing individuals are met during such broadcasts.

**5.** Whenever possible to ensure the emergency broadcast is understandable to every segment of the population, use images and maps to illustrate what people should be doing or where people should be going during emergencies.

**6.** Ensure that all captioning and interpreting services are clearly visible and not distorted on all re-broadcasts and Internet broadcasts of the same production.

For any media displayed on the Internet:



- Embed closed captioning and Indian sign language interpreter into a single video so captions or interpreter cannot be cut-out in re-broadcasts or Internet streaming.

## **Access to Online Information**

More people are using smart phones and tablets to receive emergency information or broadcasts through live streams through the Internet. However, captioning for Internet live streams has not always been reliable or accurate.

When emergency information is broadcast both on television and through the Internet, captions and interpreting are often not provided on the Internet streaming even though it was clearly captioned and interpreted on the television broadcast.

# **Access to Online Information**

## **Best Practices**

Internet video streaming are required by the Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act to include the captioning provided on the television broadcast no later than January 1, 2022. However, failure to include captioning on Internet video streaming constitutes failure to provide effective communication to the information for deaf and hard of hearing people, and ensuring the captioning is provided immediately is recommended to avoid a failure to warn the population of emergency information.

Embed closed captions and Indian sign language interpreter into a single video so captions and interpreter cannot be cut-out in re-broadcasts or Internet streaming.

## **Hire Qualified ISL Interpreters**

Only employ qualified ISL interpreters. Interpreters who work in the media work with a varied audience with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and also work with an

audience that is not present, so they cannot get feedback from consumers.

It is very important to hire interpreters that are highly experienced, that have worked within a variety of different interpreting settings, and that have had exposure to a wide breadth of Indian sign language users, so that they can adjust to a wide range of registers according to the programs and the audiences they are designed for.

Media interpreters need to be highly skilled interpreters. They should have native-command of the Indian sign language used in the region and they should also have an updated knowledge of the neologisms and terminology of current events.

Media interpreters have to be highly-skilled in their linguistic abilities, and also in their interpreting skills and strategies. They have to be suitably trained for TV interpreting, that is, they should be familiar with using a teleprompter, a visual monitor, signing in front of the camera, and having no feedback from consumers.

**If you have any questions about hiring a qualified Indian sign language interpreter, ask for feedback from the**

**Deaf Community and recommendations from the National Association of the Deaf.**

## **Working Conditions for Interpreters**

Indian Sign language interpretation is a demanding task both physically and mentally. Under standard working conditions an ISL interpreter's performance will begin to degrade after a period of 20-30 minutes.

In standard working conditions, ISL **interpreters work in teams of two** or more, switching places roughly every 20 minutes during a natural break. One interpreter is actively interpreting while the "off" interpreter is monitoring and providing feedback to the working interpreter to ensure accuracy in the interpretation.

Interpreting broadcast news and press briefings is a very demanding task. The news and briefings are typically very fast paced and demanding in terms of specialized and technical terminology. You should expect to hire two ISL interpreters.

## **Preparation Time and Materials**

Preparation time is crucial to ensure a quality and accurate interpretation. It is of utmost importance that the interpreter has time to prepare before providing an interpretation.



Visual materials should be provided to the interpreter in advance. Namely, audio-visual materials, the script, the step outline or the video clips that will be used in the program. These should also be readily available for the interpreter to consult during the broadcast so that signs can be adjusted to these materials.

Providing a teleprompter with the script and a monitor of the visuals during the broadcast is recommended. Remember Indian sign language is a visual language and the interpreter must accurately portray the visual media you present. Having these materials in advance and during the broadcast is very important for accurate and quality interpretations.

## **Establish an Advisory Committee**

Consider establishing an Advisory Committee of people with who are Deaf and hard of hearing who can advise you on how best to reach these populations with emergency information and other content that you need to present to the public.

## **National Disability Law - Statutory Responsibilities**

It is important to note the practices outlined in this document are not only best practices, they are also required by a number of national anti-discrimination, telecommunications access and disaster recovery laws.

In many respects, this extensive body of legislation establishes a framework for emergency preparedness, response, and recovery that is fully accessible to all States in India.

Furthermore, there are several national statutes that require emergency managers to provide accessible response, recovery, and preparedness resources to citizens who are deaf or hard of hearing.

On October 1, 2007, India ratified the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (U.N.C.R.P.D.), much before any other significant country in the world. U.N.C.R.P.D. in India has just been rendered to a paper that the President of India had put her signature on.

The Convention was seen as a significant step in the paradigm shift in India from charity and welfare to rights and empowerment of people with disabilities. But all that it has witnessed in the last 10 years is government

apathy. It is a sad fact that most State departments and officials are not even aware of the existence of this international law.

The Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (C.R.P.D.) was formed to monitor the implementation of U.N.C.R.P.D. It consists of 12 members, one each from Qatar, Jordan, Tunisia, Bangladesh, Chile, Hungary, Kenya, Australia, Spain, Ecuador, Slovenia and China. Though India was the 7th and the first prominent country to have ratified the Convention. Onus now also lies on the Indian disability sector to raise the tempo for the implementation of the Convention in both letter and spirit.

### **UNCRPD article 9 accessibility**

- (i) Information, communications and other services, including electronic services and emergency services.
- (ii) To provide forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides, readers and professional indian sign language interpreters, to facilitate accessibility to buildings and other facilities open to the public;

- (iii) To promote access for persons with disabilities to new information and communications technologies and systems, including the Internet;

## **RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 2016**

The provisions made under Section 29 (h) and section 40 of the RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT 2016 for accessibility for TV program include qualify Indian Sign Language Interpreter and closed captioning.

Establish protocol for immediate securing of qualified sign language interpreters during all emergency situation press conferences through a collaborative effort involving the Public Information Officer, a representative of the deaf and hard of hearing community in your area, and broadcasters. The protocol should entail the process by which a qualified interpreter would be secured quickly in times of emergency. In advance of all emergencies, preparation should include assessing which interpreters in the area are appropriately licensed in the relevant state, as well as qualified and trained to handle emergency management situations and terminology.

Ensure that the ISL interpreter secured for the emergency press conference is visible on television at all times during the broadcast. The Public Information Officer should monitor all broadcasts to ensure that on

all stations broadcasting the press conference, the ISL interpreter's face, body, arms, and hands are visible on the television screen at all times. If a broadcaster needs to show any other graphics or video feed, the video with the interpreter must remain visible on the screen at all times.

Ensure that Broadcasters are able to provide quality live captioning for all broadcasts of emergency information, ensure that all emergency information provided online is fully accessible including with closed captioning and Indian Sign Language interpreting.

Provide ongoing inclusive and accessible training to the deaf and hard of hearing community and to emergency management planners. Federal and local emergency management planners need to engage with representatives from the community to develop accessible training programs and to schedule such training at times and places likely to be attended by members of the community. It is vital for emergency management planners to ensure the deaf and hard of hearing community has hands-on training as well as opportunities to have honest and open conversations with emergency responders.

# Reference:-

[https://wfdeaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/WFD-Postion-Paper-on-Accessbility-12-Feb-2019-Updated.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0JYP4FsQfyhAQm9Ala3z\\_Yq-0a0auKOOICTOJa0Gqp60w4kyJtfQ8rSY8](https://wfdeaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/WFD-Postion-Paper-on-Accessbility-12-Feb-2019-Updated.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0JYP4FsQfyhAQm9Ala3z_Yq-0a0auKOOICTOJa0Gqp60w4kyJtfQ8rSY8)

[https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Persons-with-Disabilities/Documents/Making\\_TV\\_Accessible-English.pdf](https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Digital-Inclusion/Persons-with-Disabilities/Documents/Making_TV_Accessible-English.pdf)

[https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0035/179954/tv-access-services-code.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0035/179954/tv-access-services-code.pdf)

<https://www.3playmedia.com/blog/us-laws-video-accessibility/>