

National-level research institute on sign language to be set

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The government today approved setting up of a national-level institute for research and training on sign language to provide increased accessibility in education, workplace and other activities of life to five million hearing-impaired people.

The proposal to set up Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) was endorsed at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

ISLRTC will be set up as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 and will function under the aegis of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

It shall be located initially at the Institute for Physically Handicapped, New Delhi.

"This decision will help the five million deaf community of the country. It shall provide for increased accessibility for the hearing-impaired in education, in the workplace and in all activities of public life," an official statement said.

Briefing reporters after the Cabinet meeting, Union Minister Ravishankar Prasad said that the decision to set up the institute was taken to ensure proper training to the deaf and dumb community.

The government said that the needs of the deaf community for a common ISL and related matters have long been ignored, and problems have been documented by various organizations working for the hearing-impaired.

"The centre will lead the way in academic development, training and propagation of the Indian Sign Language. Development of sign language interpreters, research and development and new technology will be the focus area of the centre.

"It will provide equal opportunities to the hearing-impaired persons to fully participate in every sphere of life," the official statement said.

The centre will be a Society consisting of a President and 12 Members in the General Council.

There will be an Executive Council consisting of a Chairperson and nine Members, some ex-officio and others as experts from national-level organizations of the deaf/universities/academic institutions and independent experts in ISL, the statement said.