BHARATHIDASAN UNIVERSITY
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Centre for Differently Abled Persons
Programme: Non Major Elective (NME)

Course Title : Introduction to Indian Sign Language (ISL)
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Unit 1

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INTRODUCTION

- Sign language is **manual communication commonly used by people who are deaf**.

- Sign language is not universal; people who are deaf from different countries speak different sign languages.

- The gestures or symbols in sign language are organized in a linguistic way.

Indian Sign Language

IMPORTANCE

- Sign language is **the bridge that connects us to the world of those who have an impaired hearing; or verbal ability.**

- An array of gestures made using hands, fingers, arms, head and also facial expressions; which also helps the deaf and dump to communicate with the people around them and vice versa.

INDIAN SIGN LANGUAGE –(ISL)

- **HISTORY OF THE INDIAN SIGN LANGUAGE:**

  It was **Sibaji Panda**, a deaf teacher, who created and introduced the first-ever formal training course in ISL at the Ali Yavar Jung National Institute of Speech and Hearing Disabilities (AYJNISHD), in 2001.
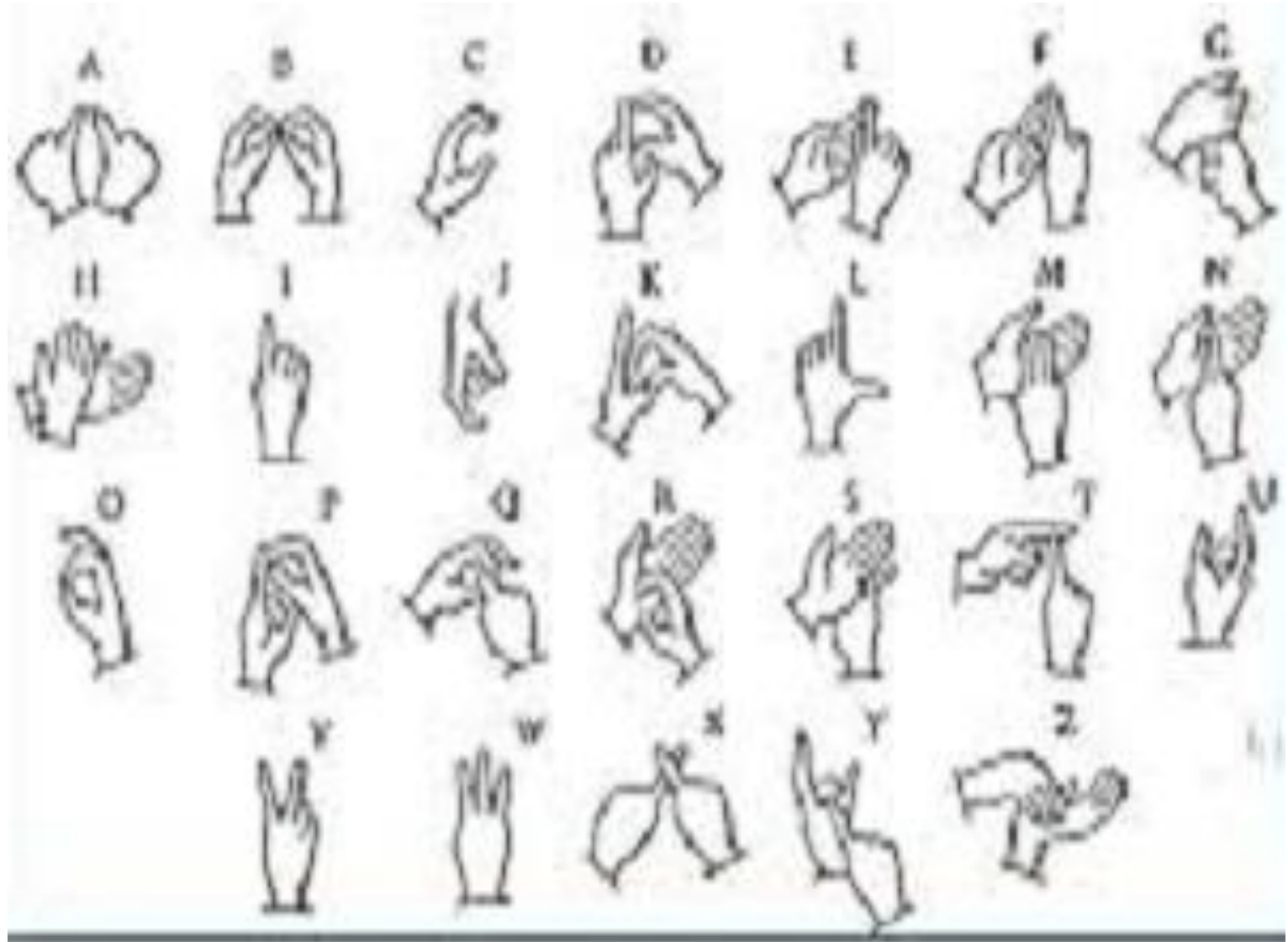

Smile   Welcome   Sorry

Parameters of ISL

- In Indian Sign Language (ISL), we use the 5 Parameters of ASL to describe how a sign behaves within the signer's space. The parameters are

1. handshape,

2. palm orientation,

3. movement,

4. location, and

5. expression/non-manual signals.

APLPHABETS IN ISL

FACTS ABOUT SIGN LANGUAGE

- Sign language isn't as difficult to learn as it looks
- Many deaf people have 'name signs'
- Sign language uses more than just hand gestures
- It's the fourth most used language in the UK.
- Different countries have their own versions of sign language
- There are 300 different sign languages with actually only 130 that are recognized worldwide.

CONT…

- Over 70 million deaf people use sign languages as their preferred communication form.

- Sign language is based on the idea that sight is the most useful tool a deaf person has to communicate and receive information.

- Sign language doesn't *only* use signs to communicate. It uses facial expression, hand movement and position, gestures and body language to communicate.

- Sign languages have their own grammar.

MYTHS ABOUT SIGN LANGUAGE

- If you don't speak sign language, you can communicate just as effectively by writing notes.
- People who speak sign language can also read lips.
- There's only a few types of sign language, and they're all similar.
- When interpreting, it's important to speak to the interpreter first.

1.History:

•The use of sign language in India has been around for centuries, but it was often informal and unrecognized.

•ISL started gaining formal recognition and structure in the late 20th century, with organized efforts to document and standardize it.

2.Recognition:

•While ISL does not yet have the same legal status as spoken languages in India, efforts are ongoing to include it as part of the official languages list.

•Advocacy by Deaf organizations and non-profits has led to greater visibility of ISL in policy discussions.

Importance of ISL

•**Communication**: ISL is crucial for the Deaf community in India for effective communication.

•**Education**: It plays a vital role in inclusive education, enabling Deaf students to learn and express themselves.

•**Cultural Identity**: ISL fosters a sense of identity and community among Deaf individuals.

Key Features of Indian Sign Language

1.Regional Variations:
   •While ISL is becoming standardized, there are still regional variations due to linguistic and cultural diversity in India.
   •Efforts are underway to unify and promote a common ISL framework.

2.Fingerspelling:
   •A manual alphabet is used in ISL for spelling out words, especially for proper nouns or technical terms.

Key Features of Indian Sign Language

1.Visual and Spatial Language:
> •ISL uses gestures, handshapes, facial expressions, and body language to convey meaning.
> •It relies on spatial relationships and visual elements rather than auditory signals.

2.Grammar and Syntax:
> •ISL has its own grammar that differs significantly from spoken Indian languages.
> •It often follows a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) word order, which can vary depending on context.

•**Education**: Schools for the Deaf and inclusive institutions are increasingly adopting ISL for instruction.

•**Media**: ISL interpreters are now included in news broadcasts and public announcements.

•**Technology**: Apps and digital platforms are being developed to teach and translate ISL.

Challenges Facing ISL

Challenges Facing ISL
Limited Awareness:
Many hearing individuals in India are unaware of ISL or its significance, leading to communication barriers.
Myths and misconceptions about the Deaf community hinder widespread adoption of ISL.
Access to Education:
Not all schools for the Deaf use ISL, relying instead on oralism or written language, which can be less effective.
A lack of trained ISL teachers and interpreters limits access.
Policy Gaps:
While ISL has seen growing recognition, there is no official mandate for its widespread adoption in government, healthcare, and legal systems.