

NEWS

AIISH AISIRI

The Institute initiated a public awareness program on communication disorders titled AIISH AISIRI in collaboration with the All-India Radio (AIR), Mysuru, at 100.6 MHz. As a part of the programme, the AIR, Mysuru started broadcasting the talks of experts of the Institute for 20 minutes every week about various speech, language, hearing disorders, assessment procedures, and treatment.



RCI Inspection and Recognition

The Institute obtained recognition for conducting B.ASLP, DHLS, and M.Sc. (SLP) programmes from the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI), New Delhi, for the next five years. A team of RCI experts comprising of Dr. N. P. Nataraja, Director, JSS Institute of Speech and Hearing, Mysuru and Dr. Madhuri Gore, Professor, Dr. SRC Institute of Speech and Hearing, Bengaluru, visited the Institute on 18th June 2020. The team expressed satisfaction over the academic and clinical infrastructure of the Institute and its achievements in the field of communication disorders.



Executive Council Meeting

The 57th Executive Council meeting of the Institute was held under the Chairmanship of Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Hon'ble Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, on 22nd July 2020 in virtual mode. The Council met after a gap of four years.



International Day of Sign Languages

Under the aegis of the Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) unit, the Institute observed the International Day of Sign Languages on 23rd September 2020 in virtual mode with the theme 'Sign Languages for Everyone.' The programme started with a presentation of overview of the Sign Language Day by Dr. Sangeetha M, Head, Dept. of Clinical Services, and Mr. Reuben T. Varghese, Member Secretary, AAC unit. Shri. Rajkumar. R., Special Educator, Department of Special Education and Smt. Rubby, Sign Language Teacher, AAC Unit, Dept. of Clinical Services conducted an orientation program on Indian Sign language and finger spellings, basic vocabulary, and grammar in Indian Sign Language. A total of 23 persons participated in the online orientation program.

New Outreach Service Centre at Madikeri

The Outreach Service Centres (OSCs) of the Institute cater to screening, diagnostic and rehabilitative services to people with speech, language, and hearing disorders. The Institute opened a new Outreach Service Centres at the Kodagu Institute of Medical Sciences, Madikeri on 3rd October 2020. Shri. V. Somanna, Hon. Housing Minister, & District in-charge Minister for Kodagu, Govt. of Karnataka and Shri. Pratap Simha,

Hon. Member of Parliament, Mysuru-Kodagu constituency, inaugurated the facility in the presence of Dr. M. Pushpavathi, Director, AIISH.

Campaign for COVID - Appropriate Behaviour

Supporting the 'Campaign for COVID-Appropriate Behaviour' launched by the Hon. Prime Minister, Shri. Narendra Modi, the Institute staff and students took a pledge on 15th October 2020 to wear a mask, follow social distancing and maintain hand hygiene. Also, the Institute took the initiative to disseminate information about COVID-appropriate behavior by displaying posters, banners, billboards, etc., at prominent locations on the campus, official website, and social media platforms of the Institute.

AAC Awareness Week

The Institute observed the AAC Awareness Week from 19th to 21st October 2020 as a part of the International AAC awareness month. Professor Usha A Dalvi, Treasurer, International Society for AAC (ISAAC), India Chapter, served as the chief guest of the inaugural function held on 19th October 2020 in virtual mode and delivered the key note address on the topic 'Challenges in teaching and learning AAC.' The inauguration was followed by orientation lectures on 'AIISH AAC Unit' by Mr. Reuben T.V., Scientist, B., 'Technological advancements in AAC' by Mr. Karthik Venkat S., Speech Technologist and 'Finger spellings, basic vocabulary and grammar in Indian Sign language' by Ms. Rubby, Sign Language Teacher. Various competitions such as quiz on AAC & ISL, creating story & joke videos in Indian Sign Language, and e-poster design were organized as a part of the event.



Constitution Day

The Institute celebrated Constitution Day on 26th November 2020 to mark the 71st anniversary of the country's adoption of the Constitution and to raise awareness about the Constitution. The programme was held in virtual mode, during which the staff and students of the Institute joined the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi in reading the Preamble at 11 AM on the day from their respective departments and sections in the Institute.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

The International Day for Persons with Disabilities was commemorated at the Institute from 1st December to 4th December 2020. An awareness week was observed till 4th December along with a host of other programmes such as orientation about International Day for Persons with Disabilities, disability-related quiz for clients and caregivers seeking clinical services at the Institute, a webinar on 'Communication Disorders and Government Welfare Measures' and a webinar on Speech and Hearing Disorders, services and facilities available in the Institute for the Rotary club members. The success stories of persons with disabilities were displayed at the Department of Clinical Services as a part of the event.



Standing Finance Committee Meeting

The 51st Standing Finance Committee meeting of the Institute was held under the chairmanship of Mrs. Vandana Gurnani, I.A.S., Additional Secretary (Health), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India on 14th December 2020 in virtual mode. Dr. M. Pushpavathi, Director, AIISH, presided over the meeting.



Three-day Covid Vaccination Drive

The first phase of Covid vaccination programme for staff and students of the Institute was held from 27th to 29th January 2021. During the 3-day programme, nearly 700 staff and students were vaccinated with the covishield vaccine. Mrs. N. Parimala, Assistant Registrar and the senior most employee of the Institute was the first to get the vaccination followed by Dr. M. Pushpavathi, Director of the Institute. A team headed by Dr. Sundara Raju, Dr. Rajeshwari and Dr. Prakash of the Department of ENT, AIISH carried out the vaccination drive. The second doses were given after 28 days from 24th to 26th February 2021.



Six New Outreach Centres

The Institute opened six more outreach centres across the country on 3rd March 2021. Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India inaugurated the centres in virtual mode in the presence of Shri. Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India. Dr. M. Pushpavathi, Director, AIISH, and other dignitaries in the Ministry and the parent organizations of the respective outreach service centres were present on the occasion. The new centres are: 1. Indira Gandhi Institute of Medical Science, Patna, Bihar, 2. Bidar Institute of Medical Sciences, Bidar, Karnataka, 3. Belagavi Institute of Medical Sciences, Belagavi, Karnataka, 4. Karnataka Institute of Medical Science, Hubballi, Karnataka, 5. All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, and 6. Sri Devaraj Urs Academy of Higher Education and Research, Kolar, Karnataka.



World Hearing Day

All India Institute of Speech and Hearing (AIISH) being a premier institute in the country for communication disorders, took the lead role to celebrate World Hearing Day 2021 in India. The theme of the event for the year 2021 was 'Hearing care for all: Screen-rehabilitate-communicate'. Various service-oriented and public education activities were conducted over a span of 30 days till 5th March, 2021 that motivated audiologists and speech-language pathologists throughout the country, resulting in PAN-India celebrations of World Hearing Day 2021. The objectives of the celebration were to increase awareness about hearing health care, the need for early identification of hearing loss and its impact on communication abilities and early identification and



rehabilitation of hearing loss. Dr. Sandeep M., Associate Professor of Audiology coordinated the programmes with the support of the Dept. of Prevention of Communication Disorders, Dept. of Audiology, and Dept. of ENT and a highly motivated group of audiologists and speech-language pathologists of the Institute. Dr. M. Pushpavathi, Director, AIISH carried out the overall coordination and supervision of the World Hearing Day 2021 celebrations.

The activities conducted aimed at screening, rehabilitation, and public education, in sync with the theme of World Hearing Day 2021. They include community-based hearing screening camps, hearing aid distribution camps, orientation programs, radio talks on hearing health care, live phone-in programmes, walkathon, advertisements through photo booths, standees, and gift hampers, audio-video bites by celebrities, publication of newspaper and magazine articles, short movies on hearing health care, etc. Apart from activities at AIISH, camps and public educations programmes were also held in the newborn and outreach centers across the country.

The target group included the general public of all age groups in the rural and urban sectors, medical professionals, educators, students, yoga practitioners, social workers, expectant mothers, and celebrities. Overall, the World Hearing Day 2021 activities conducted by AIISH successfully reached approximately 70 million people across the country.

The highlights of the World Hearing Day 2021 celebrations are given below.

Hearing screening camp for railway employees: The Institute, in association with the Railway Medical Department, Mysuru conducted a hearing screening camp for Railway employees at Mysuru Divisional Office of South Western Railway. A total of 160 staff participated in the camp, and among them, 26 were referred to AIISH for further detailed evaluation. The programme was co-ordinated by Dr. D. C. Pradeep, Assistant Chief Medical Superintendent, Railway Hospital, Mysuru, along with an Institute team led by Shri. Shreyank P. Swamy, Assistant Professor in Audiology,

AllSH. Dr. G. S. Ramachandra, Chief Medical Superintendent, Railway Hospital, Mysuru was present on the occasion.

Live phone-in programme: A live phone-in programme was organized, giving people across Karnataka, an opportunity to clear their doubts and concerns about hearing and auditory disorders from the Institute's experts. There was an overwhelming response from the public to this new initiative.



Radio talk at Community Radio Stations in Karnataka: An interview with Dr. Sharath Kumar K. S. and Ms. Srividya, the audiologists working with the Institute, was recorded and broadcasted over ten community radio stations in Karnataka. The topics covered include 'Ear and hearing care', 'Assessment of hearing', and 'Diagnosis of hearing disorders and rehabilitation'.

Ear and hearing care awareness through competition: Several competitions were conducted in virtual and physical modes to create awareness about ear and hearing health care. The target groups include journalists, central government employees, high-school, undergraduate, and postgraduate students, parents of special children from Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan and the staff and students of SVYM, Sarguru, Karnataka.

Distribution of masks: Custom-printed khadi face masks with World Hearing Day, 2021 message were distributed among the staffs and students of the Institute and among the participants of the hearing screening camps, orientation programs, street plays, and walkathon organized by the Institute.

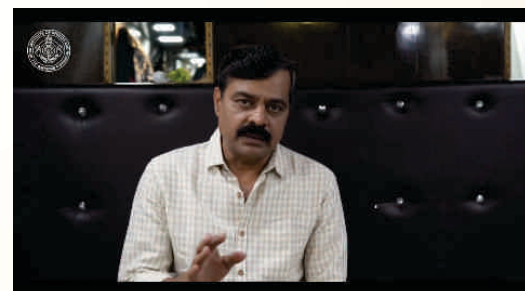
Distribution of gift hampers with World Hearing Day card: Gift hampers consisting wooden spoon, wooden fork, paper straw, sugar, milk powder, salt, tissue paper along with a World Hearing Day card having QR code and facts on hearing were distributed in 130 star hotels of Bengaluru. The QR code directed to the hearing screening and World Hearing Day web page of the Institute.

Display of Standees: To raise awareness on hearing loss, standees carrying information on hearing loss and promotion of World Hearing Day were displayed in 100 localities in Mysuru city including the airport, railway station, University of Mysore campus, central public work department, Mysore city corporation, hospitals, primary health centres, restaurants, hotels, and shopping malls. All the displays had QR code directed to the hearing screening and World Hearing Day web page of the Institute.

Video bytes of cine celebrities: Television and cine celebrities gave video messages on the importance of ear and hearing health care, including the need for early identification and rehabilitation of hearing disorders. The messages were widely circulated over the Institute social media platforms and the personal social media pages of the celebrities.

Short video production: Four short videos stressing the benefits of early identification and effective rehabilitation of hearing loss were produced in Hindi and disseminated on social media platforms.

Publishing newspaper articles: Several newspaper articles were published in different languages on facts about ear and hearing health, clinical services and facilities on hearing care, benefits of early identification, and effective rehabilitation. Also, press releases on hearing screening camps were made and news reports on camps published.



Cyclathon and street play: The Outreach Service Center of AIISH at Sarguru, Karnataka conducted cyclathon and street play on the occasion of the World Hearing Day 2021.

Photo booths: Photo booths displaying the World Hearing Day 2021 theme, 'Hearing Care for All: Screen, Rehabilitate, Communicate' were set up within and outside the AIISH campus. The general public and the beneficiaries of screening camps were encouraged to click photos in the photo booths and use them as display picture on social media accounts to spread the World Hearing Day messages.

Screening camps and hearing aid distribution: The Outreach Service Centers of the Institute located in different districts of Karnataka conducted hearing evaluation and screening camps. The individuals identified with hearing loss were tested with hearing aids, and the suitable hearing aids were provided free of cost.

Free Hearing Aid Distribution:

To mark the World Hearing Day, the Institute distributed hearing aids to the needy people, free of cost on 5th March 2021. On the occasion, Sri. Pratap Sinha, Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Mysuru-Kodagu Constituency gave away the aids to 70 beneficiaries from Mysuru, Mandya, Chamarajanagar, and Kodagu districts. Dr. M. Pushpavathi, Director, AIISH was present.



World Hearing Forum Membership

The Institute was awarded membership in the prestigious World Hearing Forum, a global network of stakeholders promoting ear and hearing care worldwide, created by the World Health Organization in 2018. The award was in recognition of the active participation of the Institute in the World Hearing Day 2021 celebrations.



Speech and hearing screening camp at Gujarat

In commemoration of Mahatma Gandhi's historic Dandi March, the Institute organized speech and hearing screening camps in six villages of Gujarat from 21st to 23rd March 2021. A multidisciplinary team of professionals from the Institute consisting of audiologists, ENT doctors, speech-language pathologists, and clinical psychologists screened a total of 242 villagers in the camps. Dr. N. Swapna, Associate Professor in Speech-language Pathology led the team. The COVID-19 guidelines were strictly followed in the camps.



OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Lockdown Period

In line with the nation-wide lockdown to curb the community spread of COVID 19 from 25th March to 31st May 2020, the Institute suspended all its face-to-face engagements, and instead harnessed the online platforms to perform its activities and offer services. This way, the organization was able to continue the academic activities including regular classes, research, clinical evaluation, therapy, rehabilitation services, and preschool education without much hindrance. Moreover, the lockdown period was gainfully used for developing a number of multimedia information resources useful for professional and public education on communication disorders.

Covid-19 Day Care Centre

A Covid-19 Day Care Centre was set up at the main campus guest house to provide emergency support for corona positive cases among the staff and students. The centre had all the clinical support facilities including oxygen cylinders.

Isolation Center

Rent-free accommodation and free food were provided for corona positive cases and primary contacts among the staff and students at the Institute guest house.

Tele-assessment and rehabilitation

The Institute launched more than 10 WhatsApp groups for various speech and hearing disorder therapies and the therapists had been in continuous touch with those in need of assistance. Through video conference, experts managed to provide services,



including therapy, to more than 150 people in 700 sessions. In addition, the Tele-Centre for Persons with Communication Disorders of the Institute continued its routine tele-assessment and intervention.

Online classes

In response to the national COVID-19 lockdown in March 2020, the Institute moved quickly to online teaching and assessment. The regular classes of all the academic programmes run by the Institute were shifted to online mode and faculty members engaged classes from home throughout the lockdown period.

Counselling for the students

The students held-up in the Institute hostels during the lockdown period were provided with psychological support and counselling.

Development of public education videos

The lockdown period was gainfully used for developing public education videos and pamphlets on the prevention and management of communication disorders with the support of faculty and clinical staff. Those materials were disseminated through the Institute's social media platforms.

Hearing aid maintenance and repair

The in-house repair and servicing of the hearing aids were continued during the lockdown period. The defective hearing aids were received and sent back after repairing and servicing by post. Also, the spares and associated parts like cells of the hearing aids were sent by post to the needy persons.

Online troubleshooting of hearing aids

The Department of Electronics carried out trouble shooting of the hearing aids through video call by narrating how to fix the issues and how to handle home repair. Also, the experts of the Institute prepared videos on preventive maintenance of different types of hearing aids and uploaded on social media platforms.

Post-Lockdown Period

Standard Operating Procedure

With the objective of containing and preventing the Covid-19 after the lockdown period, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was developed and implemented at the Institute in-line with the guidelines of the state and central governments. A committee was constituted in this regard under Dr. Sunder Raju, Dean and Professor in ENT. The

Institute activities including clinical care were monitored according to the standard operating procedure. Meeting of the SOP committee was conducted regularly to take stock of the situation and to device necessary precaution to prevent the pandemic.

Clinical Services

The outpatient services were resumed on 18th May 2020 strictly following the Covid-19 protocols. Safety of the staff and students posted for clinical care was ensured by supplying enough quantities of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits, masks, gloves and sanitizer. Also, six multi-tasking staff were deputed exclusively for sanitization of the Institute premises. All the clinical services including Audiology, ENT and Psychology were made available under one roof to avoid movements of clients across the departments. Also, the Institute extended its assessment and therapeutic services to Saturdays from December 2020 to February 2021.

Education and Training

The regular classes were resumed by following the Govt. of India and the University of Mysore guidance on Covid19 preventive measures. The measures include social distancing in classrooms, hand hygiene, enhanced cleaning and isolation of symptomatic students.

