

**A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LEGAL OBLIGATIONS TO PROVIDE
DEAFBLIND INTERPRETERS IN SRI LANKA: WITH THE UNITED
KINGDOM'S DUAL SENSORY IMPAIRMENT FRAMEWORK**

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This study investigates an important but underexplored void in the law regarding the provision of Interpreters to Deafblind individuals in Sri Lanka: there is no statutory provision requiring qualified deafblind interpreters. This gap directly undermines Deafblind persons' communication rights under Article 21(c) of the CRPD. In contrast, legislation in the United Kingdom, such as the Equality Act 2010 and the Care Act 2014, along with guidance on Deaf blindness set out by Statutory Guidance on Deaf blindness, has established a clear basis for a legally recognised entitlement to Interpreting Services. By means of a comparative analysis of primary legislation, case law, regulatory instruments, and policy directives between the two jurisdictions, this study evaluates the extent to which the United Kingdom meets the minimum UN CRPD Articles 9 (Accessibility); 21 (Freedom of Expression and Access to Information) and 13 (Access to Justice). Through the analysis of findings of the Study, it can be concluded that existing disability laws in Sri Lanka only provide for general accessibility rights and do not set out any specific legal obligations concerning the provision of deafblind Interpreting services, tactile sign language, or specialised communication support. In healthcare, education and justice, effective communication is essential for the full realization of people's human rights. However, the statutory ambiguity associated with these areas of law creates significant barriers to people's ability to access their rights through effective communication. By comparison, a key feature of the UK legal framework is the transformation of interpreter access from a discretionary service to an enforceable legal right. This transformation has been accomplished through specific requirements of public sector equality duties, reasonable modifications, specialist assessment and service commissioning criteria. The evidence presented in this study demonstrates that legislative specificity is key to delivering accountability and standardisation for deafblind individuals and that legislative specificity is superior to general policy goals. Consequently, it is recommended that Sri Lanka should abandon fragmented, policy-based approaches, and adopt a cohesive and comprehensive framework of primary legislation to establish the regulatory, training and funding infrastructure necessary for the establishment of deaf blindness as a distinct disability category and the provision of qualified interpreters as a reasonable accommodation. The resulting legislative framework would help to ensure that domestic legislation is in conformity with the transformative equality objectives of the CRPD, and the procedural clarity associated with the UK legal framework.

Keywords: *Deafblind Interpreters, Dual Sensory Impairment, Accessibility Rights, Comparative Disability Law*