

# 100 children get gift of hearing at KEM with cochlear implants from charity

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**Mumbai:** Three-year-old Taranjit Khullar looks around with a dimpled smile and wonder in his eyes. He finds the gathering exciting and claps in delight. While other children of his age say nursery rhymes at top speed, Taranjit only makes odd sounds. That is because till four months ago, he was deaf.

By the time his parents realized this, he had turned two. "We went from pillar to post, but just could not find any cure. A cochlear implant was the only way out. But it was an expensive option," said Sandeep, Taranjit's father. The Nagpur-based family then went to the civic-run KEM Hospital, Parel, where they met charitable organizations that provided funding for the device.

Taranjit is one of 100 children to have received the expensive implant at KEM in the last five years; KEM is the only public hospital to have achieved the feat. In the private sector, Hinduja Hospital

## A DEVICE TO MAKE THE DEAF HEAR

### COCHLEAR IMPLANT

➤ A cochlear implant is a small, complex electronic device that can help provide a sense of sound to a person

who is profoundly deaf or severely hard of hearing

➤ It comprises an external part that sits behind the ear and another that is

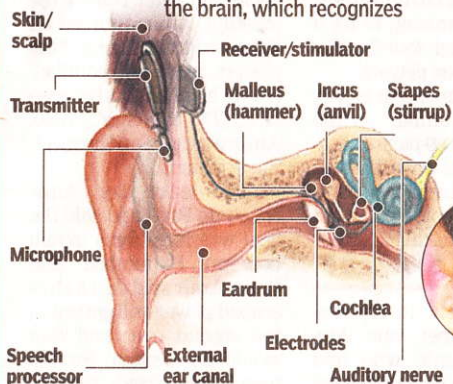
### FUNCTION

➤ Signals from the implant are sent from the auditory nerve to the brain, which recognizes

them as sound

➤ Hearing through it is different from normal hearing and takes time to learn or relearn. But it allows the wearer to recognize warning signals

➤ Its use requires surgical procedure and significant therapy to learn or relearn the sense of hearing. Not everyone performs at the same level with the device



Chief minister Prithviraj Chavan's wife Satvashila at KEM Hospital to mark the start of International Week of the Deaf on Monday

### COMPARISON WITH HEARING AID

A cochlear implant is very different from a hearing aid, which amplifies sounds so that they may be detected by damaged ears. An implant, on the other hand, bypasses damaged portions of the ear and directly stimulates the auditory nerve

**COST**  
₹4.5-9  
LAKH

has been at the forefront as far as cochlear implants are concerned.

Soon, 50 more children with hearing impairment will receive complete fund-

ing from the charity commission to get cochlear implants in KEM Hospital. Chief minister Prithviraj Chavan's wife Satvashila made an announcement on Monday for

the immediate release of 50 such instruments.

Dr Hetal Marfatia Patel, associate professor at KEM's ENT department, said, "A child's brain is at its learning

best below the age of two. It is thus better if a child is diagnosed correctly for deafness and treated at the right time, so that she or he gets an equal opportunity to learn."