



The story of two brothers



Hameed and Armaan, aged five and three years, were brought to us by their poor parents, from Bengaluru in the neighbouring state of Karnataka. The family of five – the brothers have an older sister - had relocated to this metro from their village in the east-Indian state of Bihar, a few years back, in search of a better life.

Life did get better – the father got a job as a labourer earning Rs 15,000/- a month (roughly \$270) and they managed to rent a house – but didn't stay that way for long. The couple had noticed that both their sons were not responding to sound even by eight to nine months of age; normally, a baby looks for the source of a sound by around four months. Later on, the parents realised that they were not speaking as well.

The boys were taken to a hospital in Bengaluru and confirming their parents' worst fears, both of them were diagnosed to be severely deaf in both ears. Owing to the fact that their condition could not be resolved with hearing aids, the parents were advised to go in for cochlear implants for the children.

Unlike hearing aids that work by amplifying the sound that enters the ear, these devices bypass damaged portions of the ear to deliver the signals directly to the auditory (hearing) nerve and the brain.

Through one of the schemes under the Chief Minister of Bihar, the couple raised a few lakhs of rupees for each child but the amount was nowhere close to the minimum of 7.8 lakh rupees, over 11,000 dollars, needed for the surgery for one child. The cost of the implant alone ranged from six to 15 lakh rupees.

*"Blindness cuts us off from things but deafness cuts us off from people."
- Helen Keller*

Utterly desperate – one child was getting close to the critical age limit for implantation - and not knowing how they were going to raise what seemed an impossible amount, they came to us as a last resort.

It was around this time that the [Graeme Clark Foundation](#) based in Melbourne, Australia, which raises funds to support people with sensory - hearing, vision and touch – disorders, announced that they would provide 12,000 Australian dollars (nearly 6 lakh rupees) for implanting one deserving child with profound hearing loss.

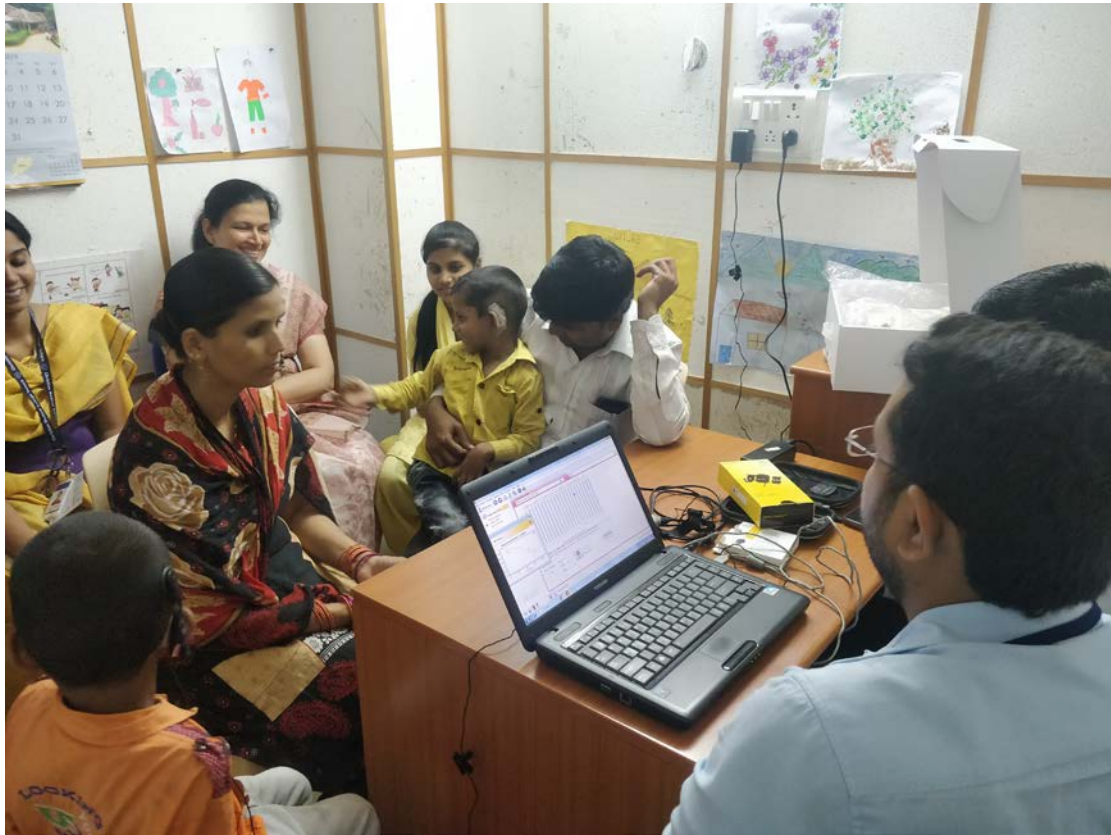
So we shared the story of Hameed and Arman with the Foundation. To our delight, they responded graciously and raised enough money for two cochlear implants, which came to around Rs.16.5 lakh rupees or nearly 34,000 Australian dollars. The Foundation specially acknowledged the Simone Jeha family for their contributions.

The boys had their implant surgeries on the 19th and the 21st of June and both implants were switched on, on the 6th of July.



The children with their parents, the Director, Dr. J. V. Peter (to their right) and the Paediatric ENT team.

Currently, the boys are undergoing auditory verbal therapy here at CMC, to teach them how to listen, and to speak.



Since 2017, CMC has been empanelled under the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme for cochlear implants, which has enabled the ENT department to help 40 children, from Tamil Nadu, recover hearing with the costs completely covered under the scheme.

As the Paediatric ENT team, it gives us immense pleasure to share the story of God's provision through the Graeme Clark Foundation, which made it possible for us to give the gift of hearing to these two young boys from a disadvantaged family.

(Names changed)