



Lending a kind ear



Dressed in red jumpers, Preeti was playing with her toys when her mother, Sarita, called for her. “*Amma, aayi,*” came the reply. It is hard to believe that this three-year-old was congenitally hearing impaired till four months ago.

When Preeti did not start speaking at age one, her mother took her to a charitable hospital near their house. But the child refused to let

the doctors examine her. After a year, her mother took her to All India Institute of Medical Sciences, where doctors told Sarita about the need for a cochlear implant. The idea was pushed to the back burner as the couple could not afford it.

Preeti’s father, Rama, a tea-vendor, happened to share his problem with his customers at a park where he used to sell tea to morning walkers. The group pooled in money to sponsor Preeti’s cochlear implant and also asked their friend, Dr Sanjay Sachdev, head

Preeti Yadav, 3 Overcoming hearing impairment

What helped

People who sponsored her treatment and the rehabilitation course that helped Preeti catch up with what she missed in the last three years.

ENT surgeon at Max Hospital, Delhi, to take up her case. Max India Foundation and a few doctors at the hospital collected about Rs 10 lakh for the implant and medicines.

Says Sachdev: “The sad part

about children who are born with hearing impairment is that in the absence of treatment, they have to live a handicapped life. And the cost of cochlear implant is quite high, not at all affordable for a poor family. It starts at Rs 8 lakh. Preeti, who is otherwise a mentally alert child, will do very well after the treatment.”

The kind gesture of these people has got Preeti her ears. She is now learning to respond to newer sounds every day and very soon will go to school to learn her first nursery rhyme. ●