

INDIA

Caregiver Name: Tara
Age at Implantation: 2

Child: Ovi
Age Today: 2



In our small farming village in India, silence was the only language my family ever knew. My husband, our eldest daughter, and I are all deaf. When our youngest, Ovi, was born, we realized she shared our silent world. While we loved her dearly, we dreamt of a different future for her—one where she could hear the birds chirp and, most importantly, speak for herself.

Our biggest challenge was a paralyzing combination of fear and financial pressure. As farmers, our income is tied to the unpredictable cycles of nature. In India, a cochlear implant can cost between ₹6 lakh and ₹12 lakh—a sum that felt like an impossible fortune to us. For a family living off a low agricultural income, this financial barrier was an absolute wall. We feared that pursuing the surgery would lead us into a debt trap or cost us our farmland, which is our only source of livelihood. In our community, deafness was something you simply lived with; a "medical miracle" felt like

a luxury reserved for the wealthy.

Our greatest support came from the kind principals at Ovi's school, who intervened. Their generosity was not just financial, but deeply emotional because she had once been my principal too. They recognized Ovi's potential and bridged the gap that we could not cross alone. By securing funding through one of the esteemed schools committees and coordinating with a fellowship at the hospital, our financial worries disappeared. This act of institutional courage shifted the focus from our empty pockets to Ovi's future. They provided "handholding" advocacy, explaining the science to us in a way we could understand and taking full responsibility for the procedure's success.

Ovi's surgery took place on September 8th, 2025, and it marked the first time the cycle of silence in our family was broken. **Her greatest achievement to date is her incredible spirit during speech therapy. In a household where four members are deaf, seeing Ovi respond to her name and mimic sounds feels like a victory for all of us.** This success is only possible because the institution's generosity extended beyond the surgery and into the long-term commitment of Auditory Verbal Therapy, ensuring the implant translates into a voice.

To achieve better access, we had to change our mindset and trust in the kindness of organizations. **My advice to any parent around, is to not let the fear of cost silence your child's potential. The path is long and the financial hurdles are real, but with the right support system, the "silence" of disability can be transformed into a "voice" of opportunity.** Ovi is now the bridge between our silent home and the hearing world.

