



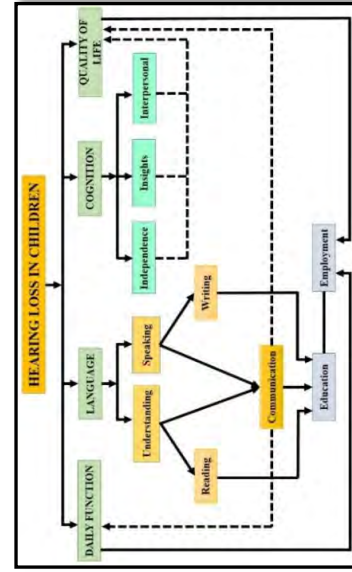
# Reaching the Unreached: Empowering the Hearing Challenged Children



**A**ccessible India Campaign entails providing fairness and reachability by creating a barrier-free environment for inclusion of persons with disabilities. Ali Yavar Jung National Institute for Speech and Hearing is an autonomous organization under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Government of India. It administers a financial assistance scheme for disabled persons for purchase of aids/appliances' (ADIP). Providing hearing aids/devices to the hearing impaired children in the age group of 0 to 6 years, is a part of the Scheme. Cochlear implants have been introduced in the ADIP Scheme for children below 5 years of age.

Children born with a severe to profound hearing loss, or those who acquire it in the first few years, need early identification and intervention. In early years the brain's neuroplasticity is the highest, so addressing hearing loss by fitting of a suitable hearing device is a neuro-developmental emergency.

Use of good amplification devices helps their brain interpret the sounds and the spoken language around them. This is vital for the child to communicate and not become a victim of circumstances. Delay in tackling hearing loss in children has far reaching consequences. Early tackling of deficits in children reduces achievement gap and social cost.



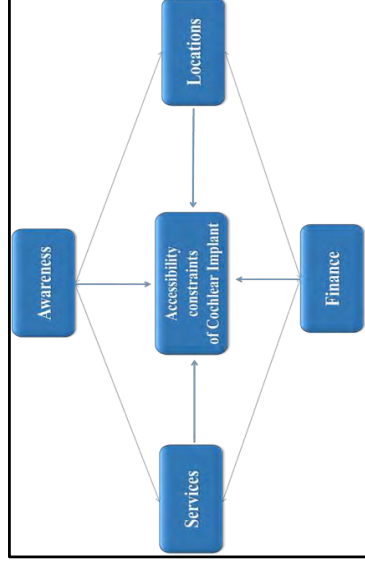
The original ADIP scheme had provisions for body level hearing aids of mild, moderate and strong category along with a cord, chargeable batteries and a solar battery charger. However, the wear and tear issues caused

problems to the crawling babies. In case of profoundly deaf children whose cochlea or the hair cells were damaged the sounds could not reach the brain for comprehension. Therefore, cochlear implants (CI) are preferred worldwide.

Cochlear implant has electrical stimulus that activates the auditory nerve and helps the sounds to transmit to the brain. This technology helps the children with hearing loss to lead a life of normalcy, socialising and schooling like other children.

Cochlear implants have shown promising results in children being able to speak and attend mainstream schools with age appropriate literacy skills. But many families (especially in rural and far off areas) either lack awareness or cannot afford the high cost of Rs. 10 Lakhs or more for the implant followed by regular expenses on therapy and maintenance.

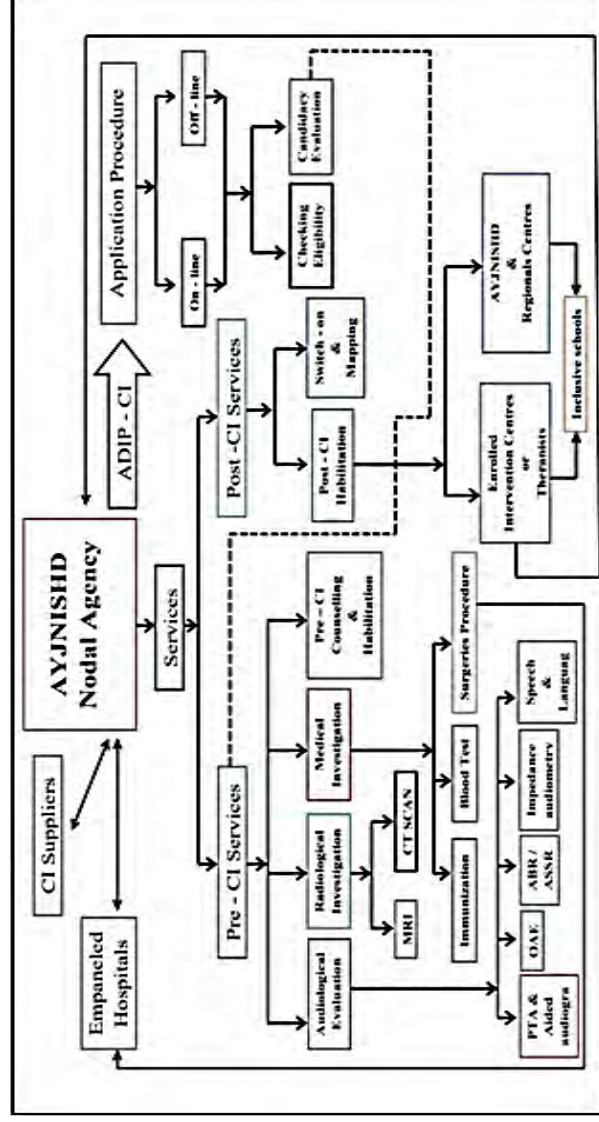
Introducing cochlear implant in the ADIP scheme for young children below 5 years of age has helped reach the unreached children and their families in almost every state of India and brought services to the door step of the families.

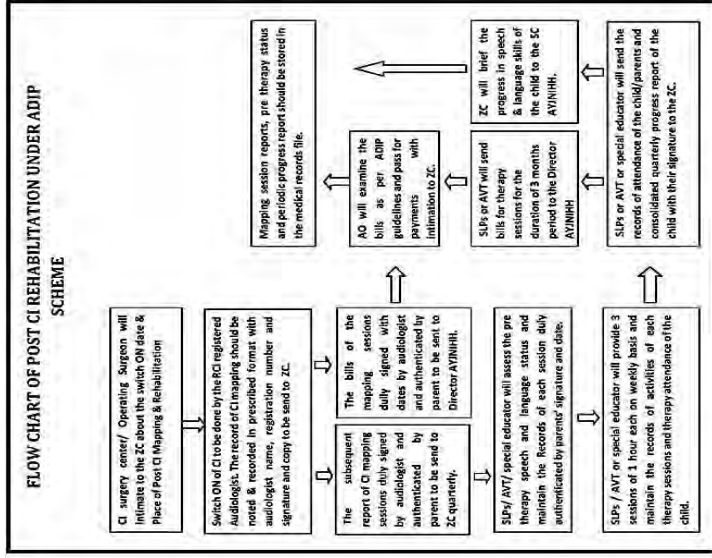
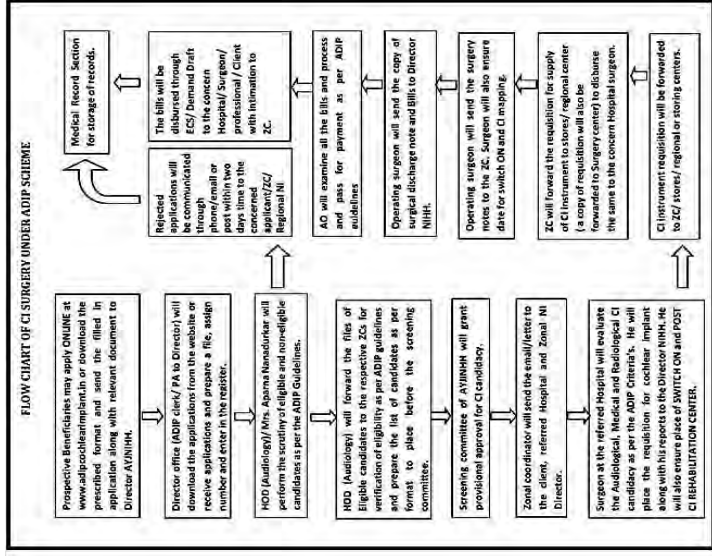


## A5 step innovation to maximize the benefit of the scheme

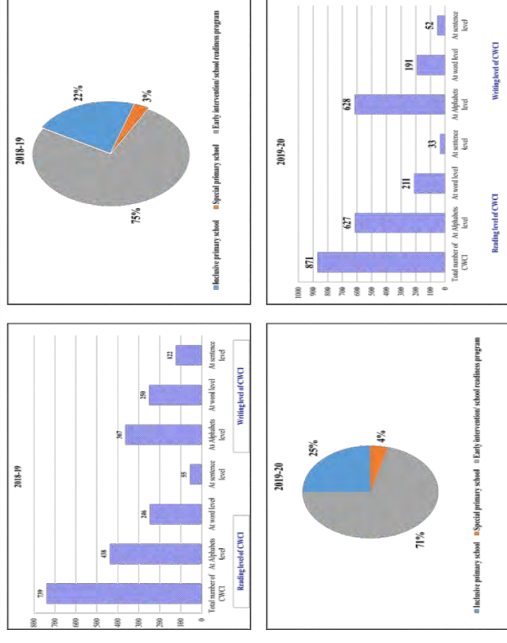
The revised ADIP scheme allocates Rs 6 Lakh per child to cover costs of the device, surgery and post implant habilitation.

### Step 1 - Designing a systematized service delivery model

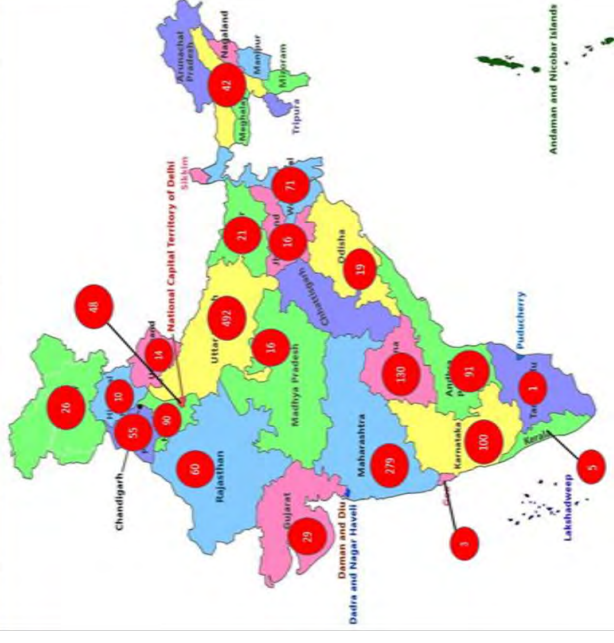




## The Visible Effects...Outcomes and benefit



## Beneficiaries of 2018-20



schools. Teacher and peer support is ensured by conducting sensitization programs and celebrations for attitudinal changes leading to sustainability in inclusive schools.

The rural, difficult-to-reach areas, especially the tribal and north eastern states and under-served areas have been prioritized. Hospitals and professionals in local areas are empanelled so that parents don't have to travel far. Priority is accorded to girl child and children belonging to SC/ST and other underprivileged communities. To reduce costs, instead of bilateral, unilateral implant is done in one ear of the child and the other ear is supported by a hearing aid. The increased demand of cochlear implant devices has brought down its cost from the original Rs.6 lakhs to about Rs.3-5 lakhs, which has further accelerated the reach. The use of CSR funds to finance Cochlear implants by the Corporates has also facilitated the spread.

Cochlear implant technology is advanced and dynamic. All efforts are being made to make it affordable. A dedicated website [www.adipcochlearimplant.in](http://www.adipcochlearimplant.in) has been created to make the system transparent. All applications are submitted online on the website. Periodic reports of children can be tracked and progress on the standardized tests can be seen by parents. Applicants can also ascertain their number in the waitlist. Funds allocated and spent for each child for each service are also accessible to parents. Answers to FAQs are available on the website and a provision for redressal also exists.

To enhance the sustainability of the programme, workshops, mentorship and training programmes are a regular feature for doctors and professionals. Workshops for parents to empower them with device usage, maintenance and developing educational and transition plans are also conducted. Most of the children with cochlear implant attend mainstream