

# An anthem that raises awareness about children with hearing disorders

Tamil version of the song, originally sung by a Czech artiste, released

STAFF REPORTER

CHENNAI

The Madras ENT Research Foundation and the MERF Institute of Speech and Hearing, in association with Smiling Crocodile, an initiative in the Czech Republic which supports deaf children living under disadvantaged circumstances, launched an international anthem titled 'Because I hear - I live' on Monday.

The anthem, which is part of a worldwide initiative by the Smiling Crocodile, aims to raise awareness about children with cochlear implants, hearing difficulties and their caregivers.

The song, sung by Milan Peroutka, a folk singer based in the Czech Republic, has been translated into eight different languages, including Tamil for which Chennai-based musician Prithwick has lent his vocals.

Prof. Mohan Kameswaran, director, MERF, said that organisations like Smiling Crocodile were working towards

supporting children during their rehabilitation process after they have received their cochlear implant.

## Practical difficulties

"Proper therapy during the rehabilitation phase ensures that they develop listening skills for language acquisition. There are several practical difficulties such as distance and access to centres which parents face. We are working towards bridging this," he explained.

Prof. Kameswaran also noted that early intervention was extremely important. "Over the last two years, we have seen a number of children who have come for cochlear implants, below the age of two, under the Chief Minister's Comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme. There are lesser challenges when there is early intervention and their language acquisition skills can be developed better and faster," he added.

During the launch, children who had received cochlear implants and gone through rehabilitation were felicitated by the organisations. Dagmar Herrmannova, Smiling Crocodile, said they had worked with around 100 children in Tamil Nadu in the past three years.

"In countries such as India and Africa, we found that many parents were having difficulty travelling to therapy centres. Our focus has been on ensuring they have the support to do so as well as provide educational tools and kits for the children," she added.