



INCLUSION JOURNEY FY23



Ved Prakash, our peer trainer from Himachal Pradesh, with his wife, Meenu Sharma. They wed in February 2023.

Another example that a spinal cord injury is no deterrent to leading a happy, fulfilling life.



Trustee Report

Dear Well-Wisher:

Greetings from The Ganga Foundation [TGF]! We are pleased to hit your desks on Founder's Day, the birthday of our late founder, S Vaidyanathan [Vaidy], with a commentary about our progress made during the financial year gone by.

FY23 represented one of many firsts for TGF. While FY22 was a year for us to stabilise operations post the passing on of Vaidy, FY23 was about consolidation and expansion into newer spheres of activity.

Even as our long-standing initiatives such the Right Wheelchair Programme, Spinal India Peer Trainer Programme and Touch Freedom continue to make good progress, we are gratified by developments seen in other projects flagged off in FY23:

- The Bedsore Surgery Support Programme, which extends monetary support to persons with spinal cord injury [PwSCI] for surgical treatment of bedsores, a condition that can have fatal consequences for person with SCI.
- The Cot and Mattress Programme, which focussed on providing person with SCI with a good-quality cot and mattress – this is critical to preserve skin health and avoid complication arising out of bedsores.
- The Livelihood Support Programme, which enables person with SCI to kickstart livelihood by extending financial support to put them on the path of independent living.
- The launch of our physical rehabilitation centre in collaboration with Arockia Hospital [located in Sivagangai district of Tamil Nadu].

It would not be out of place to express our gratitude to donors who chose to back these initiatives outlined above with generous contributions. The sheer breadth of challenges that person with SCI face is staggering and the benevolence of our benefactors has helped us address a few of them, at least fractionally. There is so much more to be done, still.

We are happy to report that close to 90% of TGF's associates are persons with SCI and they are shining examples of living well despite their injury. We see them as change agents and continue to invest in their personal and professional well-being. Indeed, in early 2023, we organised a training and development programme for all of them at Chennai [to coincide with the Chennai Marathon, which also witnessed a sizeable participation by our team members], the first such meeting of its kind since the onset of the COVID pandemic in 2020. It only reaffirmed what we knew all along – Zoom and other such platforms are poor substitutes for an in-person meeting.

Our spend remains focussed on cause and the attendant impact it can create. We obsess over efficiency of every rupee spent and eschew from excesses of any kind – we think these are de rigueur in the environment we operate in. For FY23, non-cause-related expenditure [read as administrative and miscellaneous spends] stood at 5% of our total spends.

Ultimately, we are in the business of touching lives, one at a time. Unlike other spheres such as education where there's the possibility to create impact on scale without an abundance of resources, the nature of our interventions is more personally targeted and, hence, truly transformative. The journey ahead promises to be long and arduous, but, as Pablo Picasso is said to have remarked, it takes many years to become an overnight success. Even as we travel down this path, we seek your continued support in helping us redraw the narrative on disability.

Truly yours,

Nath Balakrishnan

Operating Trustee





Board of Trustees



Elango Thambiah

Co-Founder and CEO



R Sekhar

Chartered Accountant



Nath Balakrishnan

Co-Founder and Operating Trustee



Suresh Krishnamurthy

Senior Director at CRISIL



Brief of programmes

Spinal India Peer Trainer Programme [SIPTP]

Who is a peer trainer?

A peer trainer is a person with spinal cord injury [SCI] who has demonstrated his/her ability to overcome the constraints imposed by injury by undergoing rehabilitation and is able to live a purposeful, independent life.

What does the SIPTP do?

Peer trainers who are part of TGF act as mentors to other person with SCI and share with them experiences, offer inputs and provide both guidance and psychological counseling, all of which collectively help the latter lead meaningful lives.

How is this process accomplished?

Our peer trainers reach out to their counterparts through mobile phone/video and help them deal with issues and challenges that they encounter. In FY23, with the threat of the COVID pandemic gradually receding, we also encouraged our trainers to carry personal visits to the homes of peers being counseled to enhance the effectiveness of the programme.

What is the genesis of the programme and how many team members are involved? How are costs defrayed?

This programme has been inspired by activities of the Back Up



Aijaz Ahmad Ganaie

Baramulla District – Jammu & Kashmir – SCI – 2012 – Age 25 – Paraplegic

Trust based in UK. It also draws on the belief that persons with SCI are more receptive to inputs from peers who have undergone and overcome challenges imposed by a similar injury, as opposed to able-bodied persons.

At the end of FY23, the programme has 40 peer trainers engaged in peer training activity. During the year, we also added seven members to the team [in May 2022] with a focus on onboarding more women to add to the gender diversity pool.

The entire fees paid to our associates for the services rendered during the year has been almost completely underwritten by Kotak Mahindra Bank. We are incredibly grateful for their support to this pioneering initiative.



Aarti Kumari

East Champaran District – Bihar – SCI – 2000 – Age 20 – Paraplegic

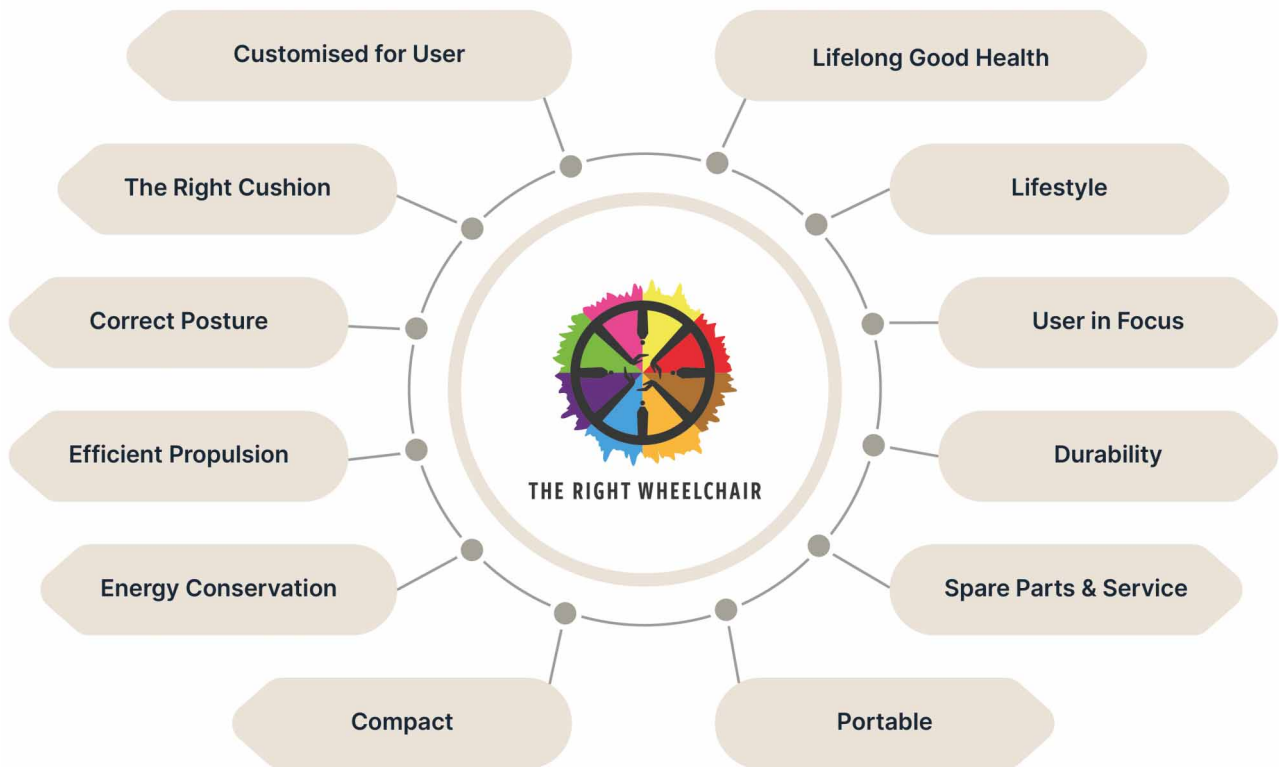
What did we do in FY23?

Technology-based interactions (a)	30,506
Direct interactions (b)	4,341
Home visits	240
Group interactions - rehab visits	948
Group interactions - networking meet	2,632
Individual interactions - rehab visits	351
Individual interactions - networking meet	170
Total interactions (c)	34,847
Unique persons engaged	12,316
(a) as a % of (c)	87.5%
(b) as a % of (c)	12.5%





Right Wheelchair Programme [RWCP]



- The Right Wheelchair is key for a person with SCI to lead a quality, independent life.
- As SCI does not have a cure, a person with the SCI has to utilize a wheelchair for life. It is critical, therefore, that he/she chooses one that is appropriately sized and is comfortable to use.
- The programme is focused on providing beneficiaries with customized wheelchairs, which include a cushion for comfortable seating. Unlike the one-size-fits-all-type wheelchairs that are distributed as part of social schemes, the ones distributed as part of this programme are tweaked to suit the body dimensions of the beneficiary concerned.
- The preferred wheelchair brand is Forza 5000, manufactured by Gurgaon-based Forza Medi; this is an ideal entry level wheelchair that is preferred for a person with SCI looking to kickstart life immediately after an injury. Other brands that were also supplied during the year include Motivation and NeoMotion [preferred for persons with SCI who would want to step outside their homes to pursue livelihood options].





- A total of 166 wheelchairs were ordered during FY23 across all the brands mentioned above. As part of this distribution, we also provided one wheelchair of the motorized variety to a beneficiary with advanced requirements/higher level of injury.
- All beneficiaries are required to submit documentation that includes a family-level income certificate to establish their credentials as deserving of sponsorship.
- Deep gratitude to our corporate sponsors Ford Motor, Ford Credit and a host of individual contributors.



Ashish Kumar Biswal

Jagatsinghpur District – Odisha – SCI – 1997 – Age 14 – Paraplegic



Soma Raul

Paschim Medinipur District – West Bengal – SCI – 2020 – Age 23 – Paraplegic



Zeeshan Ayoub

Anantnag District – Jammu & Kashmir – SCI – 2017 – Age 13 – Paraplegic



Sheela Kanwar

Sawai Madhopur District – Rajasthan – SCI – 2017 – Age 26 – Paraplegic



Bedsore Surgery Support Programme [BSSP]

Genesis of the programme:

- Bedsore (known as pressure ulcer or pressure injury) is the biggest enemy for person with SCI and one of the top two causes (the other being urinary tract infection) of death among persons who are part of the SCI cohort.
- Over three-fourths have bedsores at least once in their lifetime, and this is based on research of persons with SCI who have undergone rehabilitation at a tertiary care hospital that offers quality guidance on best practices of skin care to prevent pressure ulcers.
- Bedsores are a lifestyle- and life-threatening, lifelong condition. They can prevent person with SCI from living well with their injury. As it is common in the early months after a spinal cord injury, they can impact quality, duration, cost of rehabilitation and often lead to impaired lifestyle.
- For a person with SCI, a bedsore can impact their life in a variety of ways:

Inability to sit	Lying prone or on sides 24x7
Break from work/study	Lengthy healing process
Loss of independence	Drop in health quality
Stress on family	Reduction in immunity
Infection	Spasms



Rajesh Pandit

Samastipur District – Bihar – SCI – 2021 – Age 35 – Paraplegic



Tharun

Anantapur District – Andhra Pradesh – SCI – 2017 – Age 13 – Paraplegic

What did we do

- Bedsores are graded depending on the extent of the injury. While sores below a particular grade can be treated at home, more serious sores will require surgical intervention. In this context, we would like to express our thanks to the Odisha-based Thee Trust [run by Dr Abhishek Sanyal], who consented to carry out both surgery and subsequent rehab of persons with SCI at his hospital at subsidized rates.
- While a sizeable majority were treated at the facility mentioned above, we point out that a few more were also admitted into hospitals in locations such as Raxaul, Vellore and Bangalore.
- A total of 21 persons with SCI were treated as part of this programme.
- FY23 represented the first year during which this programme was carried out in a structured fashion. The challenge in front of us is how do we minimize the distance that a person with SCI with a bedsore has to travel before getting treatment – we're having conversations with multiple facilities across the country on how we can collaborate with them to treat such persons
- We would like to call out our donors - Nikita Containers and Ford Motor for being early institutional contributors to this programme and helping us achieve what we did during the year. We hope to scale activity under this initiative in the years ahead.





Livelihood Support Programme [LSP]

- Arguably, the most challenging programme for us to implement during FY23 [and another first-time initiative for TGF].
- After persons with SCI have been rehabilitated psychologically [via SIPTP] and physically [via either RWCP or BSSP], the questions that confronts persons with SCI is, 'How do I go about earning my daily bread?'
- Given the socio-economic class of persons with SCI we deal with, creating an income stream for them is an imperative to help them live independent lives.
- TGF is of the belief that the cycle of rehabilitation is not complete till there is a mechanism for financial independence.
- Our profound thanks again to Ford Motor to expressing willingness to back this initiative in FY23.
- A total of 17 persons with SCI benefitted from this initiative, with grants ranging from Rs 6,000 to Rs 15,000 per beneficiary [think of it as microfinance minus the associated usury].
- On an average, for every five persons with SCI we had conversations with, one person qualified for a grant.
- We were in favour of backing beneficiaries who had prior experience in a particular sphere and were looking for additional capital to add another string to their revenue bow.
- We refrained from backing pure 'ideas' from potential grantees – they represented a low-probability of success and their getting off the ground also needed the generosity of donors apart from us.
- The idea was to ensure that such grants provided can make a meaningful difference – with limited capital at our disposal, we can ill-afford a spray-and-pray approach.
- Skill development is another area of focus for us as part of this programme – in the current year, we're looking to make investments in this area that will result in an enhancement of the employment-worthiness of the person with SCI being supported.



S Jothi

Chennai District – Tamil Nadu – SCI – 2010 – Age 30 – Paraplegic



Chandrika

Tiruvannamalai District – Tamil Nadu – SCI – 2017 – Age 27 – Paraplegic





Cot and Mattress Programme [CMP]

TGF expresses deep gratitude to its donor UST for being the first corporate to support this programme. Thanks to their funding, we distributed a total of 66 cots and 74 mattresses, impacting a total of 78 beneficiaries in FY23.

The project was focused on impacting beneficiaries in the state of Tamil Nadu.

Rationale for project:

- The idea behind providing persons with SCI a cot and mattress is to ensure they avoid developing bedsores, the single biggest challenge for the community. Bedsores start innocuously, but with the passage of time, have the potential to be life-threatening for a person with SCI.
- To help the cohort lead a quality life and pursue independent living [which is TGF's mission], an appropriate cot and mattress represents the first step in the journey.
- Other benefits of a cot and mattress include, among others, helping avoid bites from floor-crawling creatures; during monsoons, ingress of water into rural dwelling units is a common occurrence and a cot helps to avoid challenges posed by that; and, finally, also helping the person with SCI practise what has been taught as part of the rehab exercise [these movements include moving from a wheelchair to a bed and vice versa].

Impact:

- Given the serious consequences that bedsores can lead to, TGF is focussed on ensuring that persons with SCI are provided with the right set of implements that will help them evade this challenge. By helping prevent bedsores, TGF is of the view that person with SCI can continue to pursue an independent life and chase sustainable livelihood opportunities – this is the programme's biggest payoff.
- The financial cost of avoiding a bedsore is also significant. A worsening sore, for example, will require admission into and an extended stay at hospital, apart from the cost incurred on surgery.
- The constant requirement of a caregiver [usually a family member who is forced to give up his/her livelihood to tend to the person with SCI] during this phase imposes a further financial burden. Given the socio-economic background of the person with SCI and his/her family, such costs are best avoided – hence, the overarching emphasis on prevention.



Gowtham

Vellore District – Tamil Nadu – SCI – 2018 – Age 16 – Paraplegic



Saravanan

Trichy District – Tamil Nadu – SCI – 2016 – Age 39 – Paraplegic





Touch Freedom

- Completing its second full year of operation, the programme – which was conceptualized in 2020 to address rehabilitation requirements in the backdrop of the COVID pandemic – remains on a solid footing.
- A well-established team of about 10 peer trainers, complemented by a four-member therapist team, collectively overseen by a therapy lead. The Head of the Programme, Sanjeeb Kalita, a Bangalore-based entrepreneur, volunteered to steer this initiative since 2021.
- A little over 100 persons with SCI graduated from this programme in FY23 [the process of a beneficiary enrolling for the programme and completing the rehab process successfully is what we refer to as graduation].
- About 80% of the graduates in FY23 were paraplegics; quadriplegics accounted for the balance.
- Every person with SCI who comes into the programme also qualifies for a wheelchair under RWCP if he/she does not possess one already.
- Out of the cumulative 6,000 hours of calls made by the team during the year, about 40% were dedicated to video training sessions, with follow-up calls making up the rest.
- Even as over 180 persons with SCI were onboarded into the programme in FY23, drop-outs were a shade over 70. Reasons could be manifold – lack of caregiver to provide assistance during training; medical emergencies; or even financial strife that leads to trainees being unable to afford recharges on their mobile phones, the principal delivery medium of the rehabilitation process.
- Programme is delivered in over six languages.
- Paraplegics graduate from the programme in about 16 weeks; the same figure for tetraplegics is 24 weeks.
- Given the extent of SCIs witnessed annually in India and the commensurate lack of rehab bed capacity, this programme is well-positioned to deliver a solution at a fraction of the cost of physical rehab.



Divyalakshmi
Chengalpattu District – Tamil Nadu – SCI – 2010 – Age 36 – Paraplegic



Sakthivel
Thanjavur District – Tamil Nadu – SCI – 2003 – Age 42 – Paraplegic





Arockia Rehabilitation and Research Institute [ARRI]

Launch of rehab centre at Arockia Hospital in Sarugani [Sivagangai dt, Tamil Nadu]

- Our late founder Vadiy's dream was to set up physical centres that offered rehab solutions at competitive prices for persons with SCI.
- Arockia Hospital was a facility that he identified in late 2020 to set up a rehab centre.
- Recurring waves of COVID, however, significantly impeded our plans to get the facility up and running [several modifications were needed to be carried out at the hospital to make it user-friendly for persons with SCI].
- The facility, called Arockia Rehabilitation and Research Institute [ARRI] was formally inaugurated in the second half of CY2022 with a capacity of 15 beds.
- Samson Daniel, a senior occupational therapist with years of experience at CMC, Vellore, decided to come onboard as TGF's Head of Physical Rehab [he's also the Therapy Lead of our Touch Freedom programme]. Samson decided to move base to the hospital to personally oversee the activities of ARRI.
- The facility was also featured on You Tube [in a video shot by a group of bloggers, all of whom are persons with SCI but are incredibly independent]. This helped in creating awareness about its existence.
- The first person with SCI was admitted into the facility in November 2022; he concluded rehab in February 2023 and is living well independently.
- Equipment for the therapy area have been ordered and have just arrived at the facility [this was after the conclusion of FY23]. In our view, this should help in attracting more persons with SCI from the neighbouring regions, as the facility will be perceived to be more comprehensive in its offering.
- A peer trainer has been recruited at the facility to work with the persons with SCI during the rehab process.
- Services of a nurse, a nursing assistant and a physiotherapist are also available as shared resources from the hospital.



Inauguration of ARRI in August 2022



Dinesh, the first PwSCI to be rehabilitated from ARRI





Events during the year

Several of our team members visited Chennai in January 2023 to take part in the Chennai marathon. 12 of them participated in the 10k event, 8 in the half marathon and 1 in the full marathon.

TGF would specifically like to thank Ashok Leyland for having provided to us, at no cost, a set of three low-floor, fully-airconditioned, wheelchair-access-enabled buses to meet the transportation requirement of our team members over a four-day duration. Without their gesture, it is unlikely that we could have even put together this event.



Coinciding with this visit to Chennai, TGF organized a training programme for all attending team members that focussed on emergency response. Conducted in association with a Chennai-based NGO called ALERT that specializes in this field, the programme was very well received by all our associates. In addition to this programme, we also had sessions on improving communication, inter-personal skills and team-building skills.





Events during the year



At the National Para-Athletic Championship held at Pune in March 2023, Ramesh Shanmugam, our peer trainer won gold in the 1500m event, even as Shailesh Kumar, another peer trainer, picked up the bronze medal.

Ravi Kumar, our peer trainer from Raxaul in Bihar, organized a marathon event over distances of 2km and 5km in March 2023 – this saw participation from over 250 persons, including seven with SCI. Additionally, he also put together a spinal cord injury mela at Raxaul in November 2022, apart from organizing an event at Madhepura Christian Hospital in Bihar to commemorate the International Day for Persons with Disability in December 2022.





Events during the year

Kunilata Barik, our peer trainer, organized an event in January 2023 at Odisha for persons with SCI. Conducted after a gap of two years, she chose a temple as a venue for the event that registered an impressive turnout.



Few of our peer trainers took part in "Vistaar" – Spinal Cord Injury Rehabilitation Conference on March 30, 2023 at Lovely Professional University in Phagwara in Punjab.



Social media presence

We also flagged off our presence on social media in early 2023! While the initial posts have concentrated on people, we intend to broadbase the content gradually. In the interim, feel free to check us out here:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TGF2009>

Instagram: <https://instagram.com/tgf.social>





Our Team Members



Alka B Nikam
Peer Trainer



Allepu Bharath
Peer Trainer



Amartya Sen
Peer Trainer



Anil Kumar Amrawat
Peer Trainer



Atul D Wadhane
Peer Trainer



Balageetha G
Peer Trainer



Beena Kurup
Peer Trainer



Binod Kumar Lohar
Peer Trainer



Deepak Sharma
Peer Trainer



Dildar Ahmad Shapoo
Peer Trainer



Durgadevi G
Therapist



Ganesan Nagarajan
Peer Trainer



Imran R
Peer Trainer



Kamalakanta Nayak
Peer Trainer



Kanmani
Therapist



Kasinathan A
Peer Trainer





Ketki Awhad
Therapist



Kumaresan A
Peer Trainer



Kunilata Barik
Peer Trainer



Madhuri Paturi
Peer Trainer



Manisha Ranka
Peer Trainer



Md Dastagir Fasihuddin
Inclusion Manager



Mithun Giri
Peer Trainer



Mohammad Rafee Parray
Peer Trainer



Mohandoss E
Peer Trainer



Naresh S
Peer Trainer



Nilesh Yadav
Peer Trainer



Nuruddin
Peer Trainer



P Madhan Kumar
Peer Trainer



Parbati Kairi
Peer Trainer



P Sreedhar Raju
Peer Trainer



Poornachandran G
Peer Trainer





Priya Sharma
Peer Trainer



Raj Kumar
Peer Trainer



Ramesh S
Peer Trainer



Ravi Kumar
Peer Trainer



Samson Daniel
Programme Manager



Sarah Sundararaman
Therapist



Satnam Singh
Peer Trainer



Shailesh Kumar
Peer Trainer



Shirley Betsy
Therapist



Shubham S Ware
Peer Trainer



Subbulakshmi Venkatesan
Peer Trainer



Tarun Kumar
Peer Trainer



Udaya Kumar Rout
Peer Trainer



Ved Prakash
Peer Trainer



Viveka Kumari
Peer Trainer



Anurag Kumar S
Volunteer



Imran Khan
Inclusion Advisor



Rayan Fernandes
Volunteer

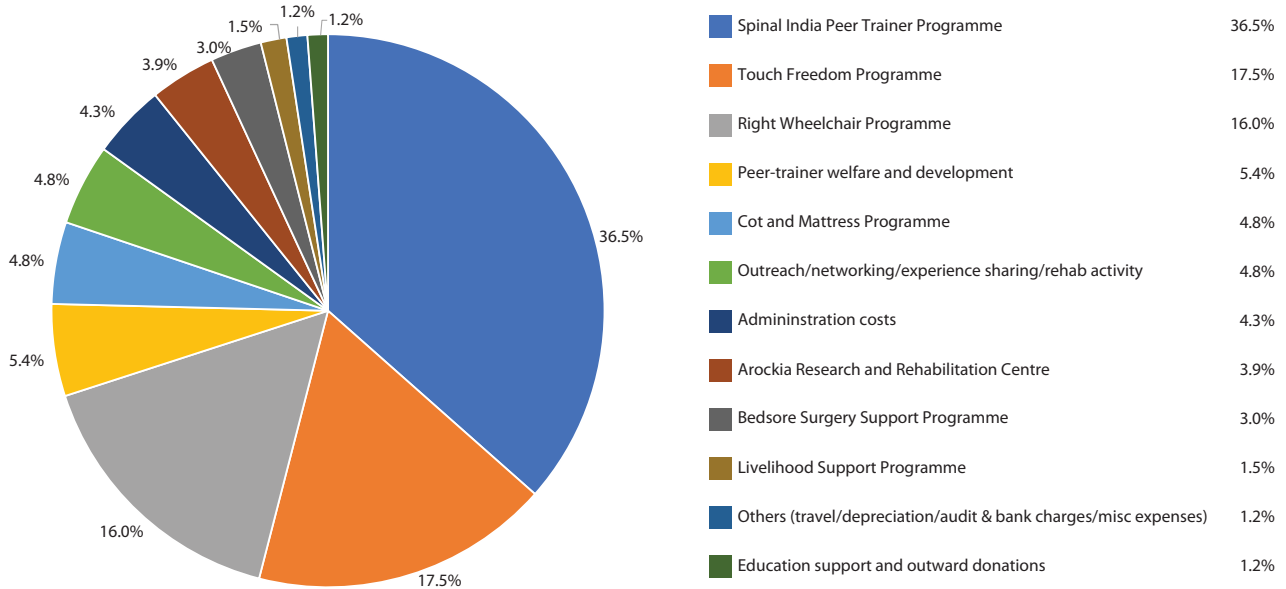


Sanjeeb Kalita
Head, Touch Freedom





How We Spent Your Money



How You Can Help

If you want to make a difference to the lives of person with SCI, here's where you can direct your donations to:

Beneficiary Name	The Ganga Foundation
Bank	Kotak Mahindra Bank
Branch	Porur, Chennai
Savings Account Number	3845950370
IFSC Code	KKBK0000472
UPI Code	gangafoundation@kotak
The Ganga Foundation PAN	AABTT8436G

Donations accepted only from Indian Passport Holders

The Ganga Foundation Legal Status

The Ganga Foundation is a Public Charitable Trust. It is registered under Section 12AA of the Income Tax Act, 1961. Contribution to The Ganga Foundation qualifies for deduction under Section 80G vide URN AABTT8436GF20217 dated 23-09-2021

Philosophy *Aagha Vendiyatha Paaru*

TGF is named after Ganga Singaraman (1925-2002), Vaidy's mother. Her philosophy of *Aagha Vendiyatha Paaru*, a Tamil phrase that means to look ahead; unconditional giving; and simplicity underpin the thinking and work of TGF.

