



# INCLUSION JOURNEY FY24



TGF's peer trainer, Binod Kumar Lohar, pictured with his wife Suman on the day of their wedding earlier this year.

Wishing the couple many years of togetherness!



## Note from CEO



**S Vaidyanathan**

Founder of The Ganga Foundation  
19 May 1965 – 13 May 2021

### Dear Well-Wisher:

We are pleased to present before you our annual report for FY23-24. We continued to build out The Ganga Foundation (TGF) to help it be better prepared to address the needs of persons with spinal cord injury (PwSCI).

In the early part of the financial year, a couple of key personnel-related changes were effected. The undersigned and Samson Daniel stepped down from the Board of Trustees and assumed executive responsibilities - the former as Chief Executive Officer (replacing Elango Thambiah, who continues to serve as Trustee) to oversee, implement and drive all initiatives of TGF; the latter as the Programme Lead of our pioneering online rehabilitation module, Touch Freedom. .

We were delighted to launch Phase I of the self-help videos for PwSCI targeted at wheelchair skills - this repository of over 85 videos, put together in a collaboration with R2D2 at IIT Madras, has been hosted on YouTube and can be accessed at no cost by any person seeking to hone their wheelchair skills. We believe that this initiative is transformative in the narrative of rehabilitation and are excited at the prospect of launching a couple of more phases over the next two years.

Another area where we made gratifying progress is with our social media presence, on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Championed by a dedicated team, there has been a sizeable uptick in our following across these platforms; engaging content is being posted regularly that appears to be resonating with the PwSCI cohort. We recognise the criticality of this medium and intend to deploy it effectively to boost awareness, improve outreach and leverage it to add to the pool of beneficiaries who could benefit from TGF's array of initiatives.

Our endeavour to create solutions for in-person rehabilitation suffered a bit of a setback, as we had to cease operations at Arockia Hospital in Sarugani (Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu), on account of diverging objectives with the asset owner. We remain convinced about the efficacy of the offline mode of rehab and its complementarity with the online model we offer via our Touch Freedom programme. We will scout for like-minded partners who are willing to provide us with the physical infrastructure required to offer rehab services.

Details about each of our programmes, lives impacted, events held over the past year and how we went about spending your monies are provided on the inside pages. As always, we are incredibly grateful for your support and generosity with contributions and look forward to your continued benevolence.

If there are areas you think we should foray into or you have thoughts about how we can get better at what we do, feel free to drop in a note to the undersigned at the email address mentioned below. Your feedback will be invaluable in helping TGF become the go-to name in addressing the unmet needs of members who are part of the PwSCI community.

Warm regards,

**Nath Balakrishnan**

Co-Founder and CEO

[nb@thegangafoundation.org](mailto:nb@thegangafoundation.org)





## 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.



## Board of Trustees



**Elango Thambiah**

Co-founder and Entrepreneur



**R Sekhar**

Chartered Accountant



**Suresh Krishnamurthy**

Senior Managing Director at TIAA Global Capabilities





## 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 persons with SCI and share with them experiences, inputs, guidance and psychological counseling, all of which collectively help the latter to lead meaningful lives.

#### How is this process accomplished?

Our peer trainers reach out to their counterparts through telephone/video and help them deal with the issues and challenges that they encounter. Since the last financial year, with the threat of the COVID pandemic gradually receding, we also encouraged our trainers to carry out 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 the costs defrayed?

This programme has been inspired by activities of the Back Up Trust based in UK. It also draws on the belief that persons with



**Marykutty Varghese**

Ernakulam – Kerala – SCI – 2000 – Age 36 - Paraplegic

SCI are more receptive to inputs from peers who have undergone and overcome challenges imposed by a similar injury, rather than being counseled by able-bodied persons.

At the end of FY24, the programme has 26 peer trainers engaged in peer training activity. Even as team member count dropped during the year, we note that some of the peers moved on to better opportunities, something we are proud of. We will look to supplementing resources as part of this programme depending on the need.

A few of the peers associated with this programme are also part of our core Touch Freedom team, which delivers online rehab solutions to persons with SCI. While the cost of these trainers is entirely underwritten by Kotak Mahindra Bank, that of others [associated exclusively with SIPTP] is defrayed out of TGF's common pool of donor funds.



**Vijay Shanker Yadav**

East Champaran – Bihar – SCI – 2020 – Age 46 – Quadriplegic

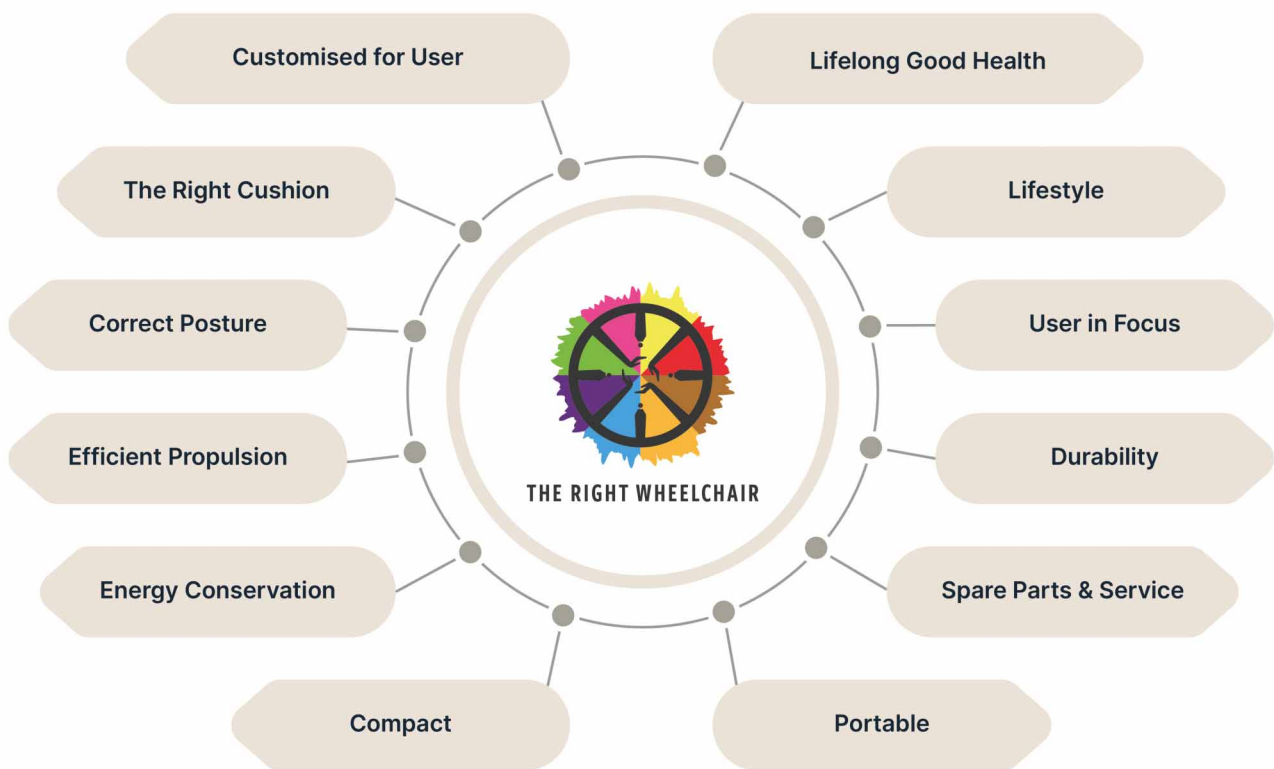
#### What did we do in FY24?

Technology-based interactions (a)	<b>24,522</b>
Direct interactions (b)	<b>2,067</b>
Home visits	81
Group interactions - rehab visits	343
Group interactions - networking meet	1,317
Individual interactions - rehab visits	246
Individual interactions - networking meet	80
Total interactions (c)	<b>26,589</b>
Unique persons engaged	<b>11,395</b>
(a) as a % of (c)	92%
(b) as a % of (c)	8%





## Right Wheelchair Programme [RWCP]



- The Right Wheelchair is key for a PwSCI to lead a quality, independent life.
- As SCI does not have a cure, a person with the injury 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 looking to kickstart life immediately after an injury. We also provided wheelchairs manufactured by Motivation during the early part of the financial year, as production at Forza's facility had to be stopped on account of a fire accident.
- A total of 252 wheelchairs were ordered during FY24 [up by over 50% compared with FY23] across both brands mentioned above.
- All beneficiaries required to submit documentation that includes a family-level income certificate to establish their credentials as deserving of sponsorship.





- One of our peer trainers, Ravi Kumar, set up a wheelchair cushion manufacturing unit in his hometown of Raxaul, Bihar. Ravi embodies the spirit of enterprise, wanting to give back to members of the SCI community in some form. We commenced sourcing cushions from him to cater to our requirement starting from November 2023.
- Deep gratitude to our corporate sponsors Ford Motor, Kotak Mahindra Bank and a host of individual contributors.



**Ranjeet**

Hardoi – Uttar Pradesh – SCI – 2019 – Age 28 - Paraplegic



**Ramanna**

Dakshina Kannada – Karnataka – SCI – 2018 – Age 32 - Paraplegic



**Raj Kumar Hemram**

Paschim Medinipur – West Bengal – SCI – 2019 – Age 24 – Paraplegic



**Ravi Kumar**

Our peer trainer from Bihar started his own venture of wheelchair cushion and other SCI - assistive products





## Bedsore Surgery Support Programme [BSSP]

### Genesis of the programme:

- Bedsores (known as pressure ulcer or pressure injury) is the biggest enemy for persons with spinal cord injury and one of the top two causes (the other being urinary tract infection) of death among persons with this condition that imposes multiple disabilities at one stroke.
- Over three-fourths have bedsores at least once in their lifetime, and this is based on research of persons 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 a person from living well with SCI. As it is common in the early months after a spinal cord injury, they can impact quality, duration and 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:

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

### 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.
- Surgeries were carried out at THEE Trust, Odisha; CMC, Vellore; and The Duncan Hospital, Raxaul.



**Subba Rao**

Malkajgiri – Telangana – SCI – 2020 – Age 35 – Paraplegic

- A total of 13 spinal cord injured persons were treated as part of this programme. Numbers for the year are lower than last year, as we had instances of spinal cord injured persons showing up at the hospital for the procedures only for doctors to discover that there has been concealment of comorbidities that rendered surgery a non-starter.
- We would like to thank our donors Kotak Mahindra Bank and Ford Motor for being contributors to this programme and helping us achieve what we did during the year. We intend to widen the scope of this initiative and include under its scope support for all forms of hospitalization, not restricted to only surgery.



**Hadesh Ray**

East Champaran – SCI – 2021 – Age 35 – Paraplegic





## Livelihood Support Programme [LSP]

- After patients have been rehabilitated psychologically [via SIPTP] and physically [via either RWCP or BSSP], the question that confronts patients is, 'How do I go about earning my daily bread?'
- Given the socio-economic class of patients 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.
- A total of 16 persons with spinal cord injury benefitted from this initiative, with grants ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 15,000 per beneficiary [a form of microfinance without the egregious costs].
- On an average, for every five persons we had conversations with, one person qualified for a grant.
- Avoided backing pure 'ideas'; beneficiaries had some degree of prior experience in the areas for which they were seeking funding support.
- Some of the projects backed during the year include purchase of sewing machine, grocery business expansion, etc.
- 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 being supported.



**Pandiyarajan**

Madurai – Tamil Nadu – SCI – 2015 – Age 38 - Paraplegic



**Praveena**

Medak – Telangana – SCI – 2013 – Age 25 – Incomplete Paraplegic



**Ramki**

Tiruvannamalai – Tamil Nadu – SCI – 2019 – Age 34 - Paraplegic







## Cot and Mattress Programme [CMP]

TGF expresses deep thanks to its donors Ford and Kotak Mahindra Bank for supporting this programme. Thanks to their funding, we distributed a total of 41 cots and 58 mattresses, impacting a total of 58 beneficiaries in FY24.

The project was focused on impacting beneficiaries in the state of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhatisgarh and Andhra Pradesh.

### Rationale for project:

- The idea behind providing persons with SCI a cot and mattress is to ensure that they can 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 PwSCI.
- To help the cohort lead a quality life and pursue independent living [which is TGF's mission], an appropriate cot and mattress represents a key 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 patient practice what has been taught as part of the rehab exercise [these 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 to prevent bedsores, TGF is of the view that PwSCI 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 patient] during this phase imposes a further financial burden. Given the socio-economic background of the patient and his/her family, such costs are best avoided – hence, the overarching emphasis on prevention.



**Shiv Kumar Tandekar**

Mahasamund - Chhattisgarh – SCI - 2016 - Age 32 - Paraplegic



**Basant Kumar**

Giridih – Jharkhand – SCI – 2018 - Age 21 - Paraplegic





## Touch Freedom

- Programme is into its third year currently. Number of graduates for the year stood at 75, taking the cumulative number of beneficiaries since inception to over 280.
- A well-established team of about 13 peer trainers, complemented by a four-member therapist team, collectively overseen by a Programme Lead. Samson Daniel, an accomplished physiotherapist formerly with CMC, Vellore, moved in to lead this programme since June 2023.
- About 85% of the graduates in FY24 were paraplegics; quadriplegics accounted for the balance.
- Every person with spinal cord injury who comes into the programme also qualifies for a wheelchair under RWCP if he/she does not possess one already.
- The reopening of physical rehab centres has resulted in a few patients preferring the offline mode over the online version. This explains the drop in the number of graduations this year [75 versus 102 in FY23].
- Mid-programme drop-outs, which was a significant challenge last year [over 30%] has gratifyingly improved [has reduced by over 10 percentage points].
- Programme is delivered in over six languages.
- Paraplegics graduate from the programme in about 16 weeks; the same figure for tetraplegics is 24 weeks.



**Rameshwar Ray**

Muzaffarpur – Bihar – SCI – 2015 – Age 35 – Paraplegic



**Mannu Keshri**

North 24 Parganas – West Bengal – SCI – 2014 – Age 25 - Paraplegic



**Nadaraj**

Tiruvallur – Tamil Nadu – SCI – 2016 – Age 48 – Paraplegic





## Launch of Touch Freedom videos

The highlight of the year was the launch of Phase I of the self-help videos that was funded by TGF and executed in collaboration with R2D2 at IIT Madras.

Released on YouTube in the latter half of 2023, these videos, which dwell on wheelchair skills (both assisted and otherwise), are available at zero cost to any user across the world.

Created as crisp, short-duration clips (on average between 3-4 minutes per video), we believe this repository will be of immense use to the SCI community. While currently available in only an English voiceover, we believe with the advent of AI it is only a matter of time before the YouTube platform makes available these videos in a host of other languages, which should dramatically improve their addressable constituency.

Here's the link to the entire repository:

<https://www.youtube.com/@officialtouchfreedom>



Sanjeeb Kalita, Head of Touch Freedom, addressing the gathering during the launch of the Touch Freedom videos at IIT Madras Research Park in June 2023.

Phase II of these videos will be worked on during this financial year and we are confident that they should be available to users on our YouTube channel in early FY25.





## Education Support Programme [ESP]

- Targeted at students of school/college who are PwSCI or children of PwSCI.
- Total persons supported for the year is eight.
- Currently being carried out with support from individual donors; our first institutional donor for the programme will come onboard in the ongoing financial year.
- Rationale for the programme is that education possibly provides a good shot to secure livelihood (either through employment or by inculcating the basics one needs to know should he/she want to set up something on their own).
- While funding amounts have been modest (sub 20k per student annually), we are happy to have supported the fees for one trimester at IIM Trichy (amount a shade over Rs 3 lakh) of Abhinav Kumar, a PwSCI who joined their flagship PGDM programme in 2023.
- TGF is incredibly thankful to the support extended by MIV Investment Services which is focused on education as one of the key areas in its philanthropic endeavours.



**Abhinav Verma**

Giridih – Jharkhand – SCI – 2014 – Age 33 - Paraplegic



**Manoj Kumar**

Chennai – Tamil Nadu – SCI – 2010 – Age 20 - Paraplegic



**M Santhiya**

Kanyakumari – Tamil Nadu





## Initiatives on social media

An area where we had a token presence till recently. Recognizing the imperative to be visible on such platforms with the primary intention of helping PwSCI find and reach out TGF for any support we can offer across any of our programmes. We're currently active on Facebook [<https://www.facebook.com/TGF2009>] and Instagram [<https://www.instagram.com/tgf.social>].

A three-member team is focused on generating and posting relevant material.

Content is a) Success stories of members who've been a part of any of the TGF's programmes; b) Events in which our team members have participated/won; c) News articles that are relevant to the cohort of persons with disability; and d) Teaser promos for our Touch Freedom video repository.

The Ganga Foundation Social Media (1 April 2023 31 March 2024)						
	Reach	Visits	New Follows	Content Interaction	New Contacts	Messaging Conversation Started
Facebook	23757	4200	253	5600	30	52
Instagram	5500	1400	115	2200	NA	NA

### Screenshots of popular social media posts

at 23rd Para Swimming Nationals in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh

tgf.social and ncaht\_iitm

tgf.social The collaboration between IIT Madras' NCAHT (National Center for Assistive Health Technologies) and The Duncan Hospital (Raxaul, Bihar) facilitated an intensive wheelchair training program from March 11th to 15th.

Eleven wheelchair users learnt essential and advanced wheelchair skills. From propelling techniques to mastering wheelies, they gained confidence and independence.

Moreover, the involvement of 25-30 professionals enriched the learning experience, emphasizing a holistic approach to assistive-technology education.

The program's positive impact extended beyond physical abilities, fostering a sense of empowerment and a brighter outlook on life. The Ganga Foundation is happy to be associated with such a transformative event, in its capacity as a financial sponsor; additionally, one of the foundation's peer trainers, Ravi Kumar, was associated with the program in his capacity as a trainer.

#wheelchairskills #training #wheelchairusers #independentliving #thegangafoundation

View insights Boost post

Liked by ncaht\_iitm and 72 others  
March 30

Add a comment... Post





### Reach ①

Accounts reached 569

Followers 18.6%

Non-followers 81.4%

Plays 954

Initial plays 737

Replays 217

Watch time 1 hr 50 min 10 sec

Average watch time 8 sec



### Interactions ①

Reels interactions 62

Likes 57

Comments 0

Saves 2

Shares 3

## Update on our rehab centre at Arockia Hospital in Sarugani [Sivaganga district, Tamil Nadu]

You will recall that we had established a physical rehab centre during the course of the last financial year at the facility captioned above. Our first patient, Dinesh, graduated from the facility in January 2023 and is well on the path of independent living.

However, with the hospital wanting to pursue alternative medicine therapies and the attendant requirement of space for patients [a section of beds was earmarked for our use], our continuation at the facility turned unviable. Consequently, we decided to cease operations there, as bed availability and space for therapy-related activities was a prerequisite for our sustained functioning.

Even as this is a setback, we remain convinced that both online and offline modes of rehab can symbiotically coexist. We will continue to examine facilities that are willing to offer us the hard infrastructure to help set up a rehab centre that can offer best-in-class solutions for PwSCI.

On a related note, equipment that we had installed at Arockia is now being moved to another community-based rehab centre called Love and Acceptance Institute for Research and Rehabilitation run by Mr Lalith Natarajan at Udumalaipettai, Tamil Nadu, thereby ensuring continuity of patient benefits.





## Events during the year

To coincide with International Day of Yoga, TGF's peer trainer from Odisha, Kamalakanta Nayak , travelled to Hyderabad in June 2023 with a contingent of 34 persons [of which 30 were PwSCI]. The event also demonstrated that spinal cord injury is no deterrent to practising yoga.



Our peer trainer, Atul Wadhane, was part of the Maharashtra team in the National Wheelchair Rugby Championship held in Pune in September 2023 and his team won the championship.

Allepu Bharath, our peer trainer from Telangana, participated in the Telangana State Para Athletic Championship held in Warangal in December 2023 and won medals in three events: Gold in Discus Throw, Silver in Shot Put and Bronze in Javelin.



Around 40 wheelchair runners took part in the 10 km event in the Chennai Marathon held in January 2024. We had participants from Bihar, Odisha, Telangana and Tamil Nadu. TGF is thankful to Ashok Leyland in providing low-height buses with wheelchair access to help transport participants to the start point of the event and subsequently picking them up from the finishing point.





## Events during the year

Our Peer Trainer from Odisha, Kamalakanta Nayak, won Silver Medal in Javelin Throw at National Para Athletics Championship held in Goa in January 2024.



Kamalakanta Nayak also won three Gold Medals in 100 m Freestyle, 100 m Backstroke and 50 m Backstroke events respectively at National Para Swimming Championship held in Gwalior in March 2024.



The Motivation India Peer Trainer Program was conducted in Bangalore in March 2024 for persons with SCI. It had participants from all over India. Our Peer Trainers, Subbulakshmi and Ganesan, attended the program, which was conducted over a span of six days. Motivation had flown down a couple of their experienced peer trainers from Africa for the event and their sessions were both instructive and informative. TGF and Association of Persons with Disabilities supported the event.



National Center for Assistive Health Technologies (NCAHT), IIT Madras; and The Duncan Hospital, Raxaul, Bihar, facilitated an intensive wheelchair skills training program from March 11, 2024 to March 15, 2024, as part of which 11 wheelchair users learnt essential and advanced wheelchair skills. The program also had involvement of about 25 professionals which enriched the learning experience, emphasizing a holistic approach to assistive-technology education. Our peer trainers, Poornachandran and Ravi Kumar, were involved in this program.







## Our Team

### Peer Trainers



**Allepu Bharath**



**Anil Kumar Amrawat**



**Atul D Wadhane**



**Balageetha G**



**Beena Kurup**



**Binod Kumar Lohar**



**Deepak Sharma**



**Ganesan N**



**Kamalakanta Nayak**



**Kasinathan A**



**Madhankumar P**



**Manisha Ranka**



**Mohammad Rafee Parray**



**Naresh S**



**Nilesh Yadav**



**Nuruddin**





**Pasunoori Sridhar Raju**



**Poornachandran G**



**Priya Sharma**



**Ravi Kumar**



**Satnam Singh**



**Subbulakshmi V**



**Tarun Kumar**



**Udaya Kumar Rout**



**Ved Prakash**



**Viveka Kumari**

## Operations



**Md Dastagir Fasihuddin**



**Nath Balakrishnan**





## Touch Freedom



**Ketki R Awhad**



**S S Rajalakshmi**



**Samson Daniel F**



**Sanjeeb Kalita**



**Sarah Sundararaman**



**Shirley Betsy V**

## Volunteers



**Alka B Nikam**



**Amartya Sen**



**Anurag Kumar S**



**Dildar Ahmed Shapoo**



**Imran Khan**



**Imran R**



**Kumaresan A**



**Kunilata Barik**



**Mithun Giri**



**Raj Kumar**



**Rayan Fernandes**

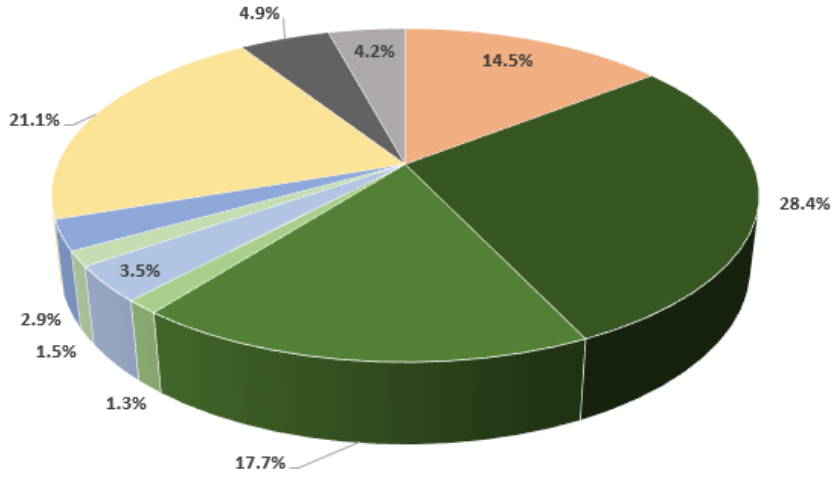


**Shubham S Ware**





## How We Spent Your Money



- Peer trainer costs [ex-Touch Freedom]
- Touch Freedom programme
- The Right Wheelchair Programme
- Bedsores Surgery Support Programme
- Cot and Mattress Programme
- Livelihood Support Programme
- Education Support Programme
- Operations and administration
- Outreach [networking/social media/donations]
- Others [IT & software spends/travel/depn/bank charges/misc]

## 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:

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



Donations accepted only from Indian passport holders.

For donations above the UPI-permitted limit of Rs 1 lakh, please register our bank account as a beneficiary and effect the transfer via IMPS/RTGS/NEFT.

The donation receipt [Form 10BE] to claim tax deductions on your contribution will be emailed in June of the financial year subsequent to the one in which you have made the donation.

### 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

