

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

April 2022

SUPPORTING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Training Support to Para-athletes for
Tokyo Paralympics



Conducted By:



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank the respondents who participated in the study and were very patient to speak with us. We would also like to thank all the coaches, trainers, nutritionists and physiotherapists for their constant cooperation and support in the entirety of the project.

This impact assessment study would not have been possible without the support from HDFC and H T Parekh Foundation and Foundation for Promotion of Sports and Games (Olympic Gold Quest). We express our sincere gratitude to the H T Parekh Foundation team for their continuous support and guidance throughout this study. We are further grateful to Neha Aggarwal, Arnav Jain, and Anukool Bhardwaj from Olympic Gold Quest for their involvement in the study and support in mobilising the stakeholders.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Title | Page No. |
|--|----------|
| Abbreviations | 03 |
| Executive Summary | 04 |
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 09 |
| Chapter 2: Sattva's Approach & Methodology | 15 |
| Chapter 3: Findings of the Impact Assessment Study | 20 |
| Chapter 4: Recommendations | 34 |
| Annexures | 37 |
| Disclaimer and Notice to Readers | 39 |
| About Sattva | 40 |

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------|--|
| CEO | : Chief Executive Officer |
| COVID-19 | : Coronavirus disease 2019 |
| CSR | : Corporate Social Responsibility |
| DAC | : Development Assistance Committee |
| HDFC | : Housing Development Finance Cooperation Limited |
| HTPF | : H T Parekh Foundation |
| MD | : Managing Director |
| OECD | : Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OGQ | : Olympic Gold Quest |
| PCI | : Paralympic Committee of India |
| PwD | : Persons with Disabilities |
| SAI | : Sports Authority of India |
| S4D | : Sports for Development |
| SOPs | : Standard Operating Procedures |
| UNCRPD | : United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities |
| UNDESA | : United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs |
| UNICEF | : United Nations Children's Fund |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Disability inclusion is still in its nascent stage in India. People with disabilities not only face societal barriers, but are also hurdled by institutional and systemic challenges such as lack of accessible infrastructure and discriminatory policies. As a result, they face exclusion from access to education, employment, and community living. This in turn deprives them of opportunities essential for personal development, health, and well-being.

Over the years, research and living examples have proved that access to sport by people with disabilities benefits both the individual and the society. According to the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), *"the universal popularity of sport and its physical, social and economic development benefits make it an ideal tool for fostering the inclusion and well-being of persons with disabilities."*

In India, the sports culture has also undergone a major shift. Rising interest has been recorded in wrestling, badminton, tennis, and other sports played at the Olympic Games. The increase in viewership of these sports has also led to an organic deviation in sponsorship and funding which was earlier limited to the district or the state level governments.

Moreover, Schedule VII of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) law (Companies Act 2013) has identified training in sports, including Paralympic sports, as an activity under CSR. Thus, corporate donors have also been funding the organisations dedicated to shaping the future of the athletes and the para-athletes.

To encourage Olympic sports in India, the H T Parekh Foundation, an initiative of Housing Development Finance Cooperation Limited, has been supporting Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ) since the year 2014-15. In the last six years, HTPF has funded the training of athletes and junior athletes supported by OGQ and has also funded the pilot of the Coaches Excellence Program.

In October 2019, OGQ recognised the need to support Indian para-athletes and started its Para-Athlete Program which focused on training athletes who had a high probability to qualify for the Tokyo Paralympics 2020. HTPF has been one of the key donors to OGQ's program from its inception and has supported 18 para-athletes from November 2020 to August 2021.

OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT STUDY

Sattva conducted an impact assessment study to review and assess HDFC's support of INR 1.57 crore through HTPF towards the implementation of OGQ's Para-athlete program from November 2020 to August 2021. The objectives of the study are outlined below.

- Change in sporting skills, bodily awareness, and physical & mental strength of para-athletes.
- Change in access to high quality equipment and infrastructure for para-athletes.
- Change in the overall performances of Indian para-athletes in international competitions.
- Program's ability to create awareness about para-athletes, para-sports and mobilise support for Paralympics.
- OGQ's role in motivating para-athletes during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- Identify gaps and challenges on ground in terms of project implementation.
- Provide actionable recommendations to strengthen the impact of the program.

DESIGN AND FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

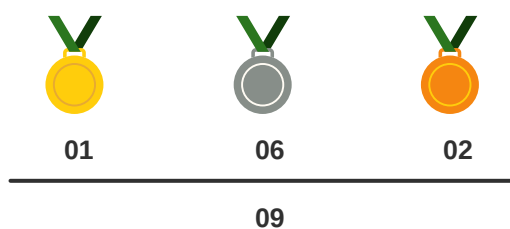
The study incorporated a three-fold approach which was descriptive and cross-sectional in design, and used mixed-methods (qualitative and quantitative) for data collection from primary and secondary sources. The study incorporated the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) principles for evaluation. The framework was contextualised to capture the effectiveness and impact of the support provided by OGQ to the Paralympic athletes.

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Sattva interacted with a total of eight types of stakeholders across the OGQ and HTPF team to get a 360-degree perspective on the program. This included 10 quantitative surveys with the para-athletes, and 16 qualitative in-depth interviews split between the para-athletes, the coaches, the trainers, the physiotherapists, the nutritionists, OGQ research and program team, and the HTPF team.

MEDAL TALLY

Out of the 18 HTPF supported para-athletes, 15 qualified for the Tokyo Paralympics 2020. Of which, nine medals were won by eight para-athletes. The gold medal was won by Krishna Nagar in para-badminton who is supported by HTPF.



Krishna Nagar
Gold - Badminton



Devendra Jhajharia
Silver - Athletics



Mariyappan Thangavelu
Silver - Athletics



Nishad Kumar
Silver - Athletics



Praveen Kumar
Silver - Athletics



Singhraj Adhana
Silver - Shooting



Yogesh Kathuniya
Silver - Athletics



Singhraj Adhana
Bronze - Shooting



Harvinder Singh
Bronze - Archery

KEY FINDINGS



90% para-athletes believe that OGQ's support has given them access to professional trainers and a nutritious diet, both of which are critical for training

- International coaches are brought in for training camps to coach the athletes on strengthening their technical skills.
- Provision of personalized nutrition support is imperative and beneficial for the para-athletes, especially for wheelchair bound athletes facing challenges such as weight gain.

Although training and nutritional support was received by all the para-athletes, coaching and sports psychology support was need based

- 50% of the para-athletes receive coaching, while the rest coach either under the national team coach, or under coaches provided through other affiliations such as the Indian Army.
- 40% of the para-athletes receive mental health and counselling support which has proven to be extremely beneficial in their training and performance.



Most para-athletes reported that access to professional trainers and coaches has resulted in a significant improvement in technical and tactical skills

- 80% of the para-athletes rated their technical skills in their particular sport between two and three on five before receiving support from OGQ. Whereas, 80% shared a four on five rating after receiving support from OGQ.

OGQ provided all the para-athletes with the training equipment required to continue 'practice at home' during the pandemic

- 80% of the athletes reported that they did not have the correct equipment to train at their home base during the pandemic.
- OGQ provided all the para-athletes with equipment and also helped set up home gyms wherever necessary. And this helped the athletes continue training for the Tokyo Paralympics 2020.



All the para-athletes believe that their success has changed the perception of the community towards the differently abled as a whole

- The athletes shared that their neighbours, extended family and people from their hometown are now supportive of other differently abled people taking up sports as a career.
- Athletes also believe that the media coverage and attention towards the para-athletes significantly increased after the Tokyo Paralympics 2020. This has brought about a positive change in the community's perception and opinion of not just para-athletes but towards PwDs at large.

Brand endorsements, partnerships, and government jobs provide financial security to para-athletes and spread community awareness leading to more acceptance

- Six of the 18 HTPF supported para-athletes now have professional representation for potential endorsements or partnerships with brands, as compared with only one athlete having an endorsement before the Tokyo Paralympics 2020.
- In addition, three athletes supported by HTPF have received job offers by state governments and Sports Authority of India.
- Devendra Jhajharia who is a two-time Paralympic medalist was awarded with the Padma Bhushan and is the first Indian para-athlete to be conferred with this honour.



SIMULATION TRAINING



- Sattva found that climatic conditions play a role in determining performance of the athletes. Factors such as heat and humidity have been proven to negatively impact muscle endurance which is important for athletes to perform well.
- Such external factors could be addressed by providing simulation training to the athletes. OGQ could map out locations where an athlete trains, especially considering climatic conditions of the geography where upcoming international tournaments are going to take place.

DEDICATED INFRASTRUCTURE



- Although 50% of the para-athletes shared that their access to training infrastructure has improved after receiving OGQ's support, 30% of the para-athletes still face restricted access to infrastructure.
- Hence, there is a need for dedicated infrastructure accessible to para-athletes which OGQ has addressed in the past by partly financing the national para badminton training academy in Lucknow. OGQ could establish similar training centres for other para sports across the country to improve access to infrastructure for the para-athletes.

SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY SUPPORT



- All the para-athletes who received counselling support shared that it was helpful for them.
- 70% of the para-athletes felt that the COVID-19 pandemic had disrupted their training at the highest degree.
- Thus, it is essential for the athletes to get professional psychological support in addition to learning refocusing strategies for optimal performance. OGQ could hire an in-house full-time sports psychologist for the same.

KEY
RECOMMENDATIONS

DOCUMENT THE PROGRAM PROCESSES



- Sattva found out that the program processes, feedback mechanisms, and other SOPs for the program are not formally documented yet. Sattva also understands that OGQ program team are specialists who customise athlete management practices and every aspect cannot be documented.
- Hence, one of the primary actionable recommendations would be that the common minimum practices such as operational processes and feedback mechanisms to be formally documented and circulated within the organisation in the interest of visibility and process awareness.

CHAPTER 01

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

SPORTS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The notion that sports can be an effective medium of social change and empowerment has been gaining momentum in concept as well as practice. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Sports for development (S4D) uses sports to achieve crucial outcomes like Health, Learning, Empowerment and Protection.^[1]

People with Disabilities (PwD) face institutional and societal barriers in all aspects of life due to a lack of accessible infrastructure and the associated social stigma with impairments. As a result of this they get side-lined from education, employment, and community life, depriving them of opportunities essential for personal development, health, and overall well-being.

As PwD are generally perceived as dependent and weak, sports acts as a powerful transformative tool to help reduce the stigma and discrimination linked to disability. Through sports, PwD acquire social skills, develop independence, and become empowered to act as agents of change. Additionally, sports transform community's attitude about PwD by reducing the tendency to see the impairment of an individual as impediment to success, and instead drawing attention to their skills.

According to the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), "*The universal popularity of sport and its physical, social and economic development benefits make it an ideal tool for fostering the inclusion and well-being of persons with disabilities.*"^[2] Therefore, sports can be utilised as a medium to overcome societal stigma and discriminatory practices associated with disability.

PARA SPORTING ECOSYSTEM IN INDIA

India has been participating in the Paralympics since 1968 and won its first Paralympic medal in 1972. However, the emphasis on sporting rights of the differently abled was achieved in 2007 when India ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This convention recognises the rights of persons with disabilities to engage in sports.

However, this sporting right is yet to be fully realised in India in terms of access to sports. There is a need for para-athletes to receive the same level of support and access as able-bodied athletes. Since 2007, funds have been allocated and efforts have been made in this direction to make existing infrastructure accessible to para-athletes after the Government of India mandated that sports infrastructure be redesigned to accommodate needs of persons with disabilities.^[3]

In 2016, India sent a contingent of 19 para-athletes to the Rio Paralympics and won four medals including two golds. According to the president of the Paralympic Committee of India, Deepa Malik, after the Rio Paralympics in 2016 a combination of attention from media, inclusive policies, and support from the government helped create the right atmosphere for the athletes to train for the Tokyo Paralympics 2020.^[4]

[1] <https://www.unicef-irc.org/research/sport-for-development>

[2] <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/issues/disability-and-sports.html>

[3] <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/paralympics-reality-indian-sports-reality-7501250/>

[4] <https://www.republicworld.com/sports-news/other-sports/deepa-malik-reveals-key-reason-for-success-at-tokyo-paralympics-gen-next-is-ready.html>

The Indian Sports culture has also undergone a drastic shift in the last 10 years with the focus shifting from cricket to sports such as wrestling, badminton, tennis, and other sports played at the Olympic Games. There has also been a shift in sponsorship and funding of these sports which was earlier limited to district or state level governments. The advent of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) law brought on board private and corporate stakeholders as Schedule VII of the Companies Act 2013 identifies training in sports including paralympic sports as an activity under CSR. The pooling of resources has, to a certain extent, helped streamline identifying and honing of talent and supporting them to perform at national and international arenas. Support from corporate donors have led to dedicated organisations offering 360-degree support to shape athletes and para-athletes.

FOUNDATION FOR PROMOTION OF SPORTS AND GAMES & H T PAREKH FOUNDATION

Foundation for Promotion of Sports and Games, commonly known as Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ) was founded in the year 2000 and is the brainchild of Prakash Padukone and Geet Sethi. Together they realised that Indian athletes need 24x7 support teams for sports science interventions, coaching, fitness, and injury management. OGQ began with the singular mission of helping Indian athletes secure Olympic gold medals, and its vision is to identify talented athletes and provide them all the support that they need to excel in their sport and win gold medals. OGQ has supported Olympians including MC Mary Kom, Sania Nehwal, Gagan Narang among other widely successful athletes.

H T Parekh Foundation (HTPF), an initiative of Housing Development Finance Cooperation Limited (HDFC), has been associated with OGQ since 2014-15. Over the years, HTPF has funded the training of athletes and junior athletes supported by OGQ, and also funded the pilot of the Coaches Excellence Program.

OLYMPIC GOLD QUEST'S PARA-ATHLETE PROGRAM

In 2019, OGQ recognised the need to support Indian para-athletes who had the potential to win medals at an international level. Thus, in October 2019, OGQ started its Para-Athlete Program which focused on training athletes who had a high probability to qualify for the Tokyo Paralympics 2020 with an aim to work towards winning a gold medal. This cohort comprised of 30 para-athletes across four sports including para-athletics, para-badminton, para-archery, and para-shooting. 24 of these para-athletes went on to qualify for the Tokyo Paralympics 2020. HTPF then continued to extend support towards OGQ by being one of the key corporate donors to the Para-athlete program from its inception and has backed the training of 18 para-athletes supported by OGQ from November 2020 to August 2021. The tables below outline the list of these para-athletes.



Para-Archery

| Name | World Ranking (August 2021) | Qualification Status for Tokyo Paralympics 2020 | Result |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Shyam Sundar Swami | 17th | Qualified | Round of 32 |
| Harvinder Singh | 23rd | Qualified | Bronze  |
| Vivek Chikara | 13th | Qualified | Round of 16 |



Para-Badminton

| Name | World Ranking (August 2021) | Qualification Status for Tokyo Paralympics 2020 | Result |
|---------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Krishna Nagar | 2nd | Qualified | Gold  |








Para-Shooting

| Name | World Ranking (August 2021) | Qualification Status for Tokyo Paralympics 2020 | Result |
|------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Swaroop Unhalkar | 5th | Qualified | 4th Position |
| Sidharth Babu | 11th | Qualified | 9th & 40th Position |
| Singhraj Adhana | 1st | Qualified | Silver & Bronze   |



Para-Athletics

| Name | World Ranking (August 2021) | Qualification Status for Tokyo Paralympics 2020 | Result |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Praveen Kumar | 3rd | Qualified | Silver  |
| Mariyappan Thangavelu | 1st | Qualified | Silver  |
| Nishad Kumar | 3rd | Qualified | Silver  |
| Yogesh Kathuniya | 2nd | Qualified | Silver  |
| Vinod Kumar | - | Disqualified | NA |
| Ajeet Singh | 8th | Qualified | 7th Position |
| Kashish Lakra | 4th | Qualified | 6th Position |
| Devendra Jhajharia | 2nd | Qualified | Silver  |
| Rana Soman | 7th | Qualified | 4th Position |
| Ramsinghbhai Govindbhai | 5th | Did not Qualify | NA |
| Ajit Panchal | No rank | Did not Qualify | NA |

SUPPORT OFFERED BY OGQ

OGQ provides its athletes support in five key areas: sports science, administrative support, coaching and training, equipment, and support to enable participation in national and international tournaments.

- The sports science support comprises an array of interventions such as physiotherapy, nutrition support, psychological support, medical assessments, and injury management.
- The coaching and training support by OGQ ensures that athletes get the best possible training from international coaches and trainers. OGQ also organises training camps with different coaches to ensure athletes get the required technical and tactical training to develop and enhance their skills.
- OGQ further ensures that the equipment used for training is in line with international standards.
- Administrative support and participation support helps the athletes focus only on their game, while a dedicated team takes care of all logistics and financial aspects of their training and participation.



POTENTIAL IMPACT OF OGQ TOWARDS PARA-SPORTS



The Indian contingent secured 19 medals at the Tokyo Paralympics 2020 which is considered to be the most stellar performance by the Indian contingent at the Olympic and Paralympic level. Of the 19 medals India won at the Tokyo Paralympics, 10 of these medals were won by nine of the OGQ supported para-athletes. Out of these ten medals, nine medals were won by eight of the HTPF supported athletes, as shown in the table above.

India's success at Tokyo Paralympics 2020 has set the stage for para-athletes to become a topic of mainstream conversation, and created awareness among the community members regarding para-sports. Furthermore, the success of para-athletes had an apparent and direct impact on their life trajectory, financial security, and the recognition received. However, the impact of their success on the communities in terms of awareness and perceptions about PwD is consequential. The attention from mainstream media can go a long way in addressing the societal stigma around differently abled people leading to increase in their participation in sports among other avenues.

OGQ aims to create a bigger impact in India's overall performance in the Paris Paralympics 2024 by identifying and supporting more upcoming para-athletes.

CHAPTER 02

SATTVA'S APPROACH & METHODOLOGY



SATTVA'S APPROACH & METHODOLOGY

OBJECTIVES OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY

Sattva conducted an impact assessment study to review and assess HDFC's support of INR 1.57 crore through HTPF towards the implementation of OGQ's Para-athlete program from November 2020 to August 2021. The objectives of the study are outlined below.

- Change in sporting skills, bodily awareness, and physical & mental strength of para-athletes.
- Change in access to high quality equipment and infrastructure for para-athletes.
- Change in the overall performances of Indian para-athletes in international competitions.
- Program's ability to create awareness about para-athletes, para-sports and mobilise support for Paralympics.
- OGQ's role in motivating para-athletes during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- Identify gaps and challenges on ground in terms of project implementation.
- Provide actionable recommendations to strengthen the impact of the program.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY APPROACH

Sattva conducted the study in the following four phases as mentioned below.



DESIGN OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY

The study incorporated descriptive cross-sectional design method where data was collected from a representative population of the beneficiaries to provide a snapshot of the outcome and the associated characteristics, at a specific point in time.

- Did the intervention work as expected to achieve its objectives?
- How were the objectives achieved, what was the process, and what was the timeline for impact?

The in-depth study leveraged Sattva's extensive experience of more than 10 years in impact assessments, an in-built knowledge repository, and tech enabled data collection solution.

The study used a mixed-method approach consisting of quantitative and qualitative data collected from primary and secondary sources. This helped gather valuable impact related insights from a 360-degree perspective across stakeholders involved and was fundamental in providing recommendations towards fine-tuning the model scale in the long term.

FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY

The table below outlines the framework adopted and contextualised for the study. It is based on the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) principles for evaluation of Development Assistance.

| | | |
|----------------------|---|------------------|
| RELEVANCE | Assessing to what extent the program objectives and design respond to the target group's global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if the circumstances change. | INPUT & PROCESS |
| EFFECTIVENESS | Assessing the supporting systems and processes influencing the achievement or non-achievement of program objectives, through concurrent measurement of program outputs . | |
| IMPACT | Assessing the extent to which the program has generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, in terms of local, social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. | OUTCOME & IMPACT |

DATA SOURCES, DATA COLLECTION TOOLS, AND STAKEHOLDERS

The study used primary and secondary data sources to get a comprehensive understanding of the program and its impact on the beneficiaries.

Primary data sources included quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection through surveys, case studies and in-depth interviews with all the relevant stakeholders. Sattva interacted with a total of eight stakeholders across the OGQ and HTPF team. This included conducting 10 quantitative surveys and one case study with para-athletes, and 15 qualitative in-depth interviews with coaches, strength and conditioning trainers, physiotherapists, nutritionists, OGQ research and program team as well as the HT Parekh Foundation team to get a 360-degree perspective on the program.

Secondary data sources included documentation review which helped understand the execution on-ground coupled with desk-based research to understand the sporting landscape in India for para-athletes.

| Stakeholders | Online Survey Form | Key Informant Interview | Case Study |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Athletes | 10 | 2 | 1 |
| Coaches | | 2 | |
| Nutritionists | | 2 | |
| Physiotherapists | | 3 | |
| Strength & Conditioning Trainer | | 1 | |
| OGQ Research Team | | 1 | |
| OGQ Program Team | | 2 | |
| HT Parekh CSR Team | | 2 | |

LIMITATIONS OF THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY

The study had some limitations which are detailed out below.

- **Sample Size:** HTPF supports 18 para-athletes and given the COVID-19 conditions and limited access to athletes, 10 athletes were surveyed and 3 were interviewed for qualitative insights. While quantitatively the number of responses is not statistically significant, the qualitative nature of this assessment captures detailed insights.
- **Response Bias:** There is a possibility of response bias due to the self-administered nature of the online survey. The inaccuracy, or bias, may be deliberate or unconscious on the part of the respondent; it is the result of a respondent being unduly influenced to respond a certain way, or a respondent's unwillingness to answer the questions honestly.
- **Virtual Data Collection due to COVID-19 Restrictions:** Most of the data collection was conducted virtually because of which observational insights on infrastructure and training are very limited. On field data collection would have allowed the Sattva team to observe the dynamic environment in which the athletes train, the infrastructure that they use, confidence levels and the relationship they have with trainers among other factors.
- **Limited Documented SOP:** There was limited documentation available with OGQ on the structure of the program, the interventions, process flows, and needs assessment. Hence, we conducted in-depth interviews with the OGQ team to understand the program during the impact assessment's design phase.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY

The assessment followed the below mentioned ethical protocols in all aspects and at all stages of the engagement.

- **Informed consent:** All respondents and participants were given appropriate and accessible information about the purpose, methods and intended uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails, and what risks and benefits, if any, are involved. The assessment was undertaken only after consent, free from coercion or undue pressure, from the respondents.
- **Voluntary participation:** The interview sessions were conducted in an environment that ensures the privacy of the respondents as per their convenience and comfort. They were made aware of their right to refuse participation whenever and for whatever reason they wish, without fear of penalization or victimisation. Consent was taken regarding the recording and usage of all information acquired - written, verbal, photographic.
- **Anonymity and confidentiality:** The identity of research participants will always be protected through anonymity or confidentiality, unless research participants explicitly agree to, or request the publication of their personal information.

CHAPTER 03

FINDINGS OF IMPACT

ASSESSMENT

STUDY



FINDINGS OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT STUDY

This chapter focuses on the key findings of the Impact Assessment study of Olympic Gold Quest's Para-Athlete Program. The detailed findings from the ground have been triangulated through discussions with multiple stakeholders and are supported by secondary research.

PROGRAM DESIGN

This section outlines insights about the Para-athlete program run by OGQ, which are based on interviews with stakeholders such as the sports science team, the coaches, and the program team.

Scouting: OGQ scouts for athletes through various avenues such as:

- Primary research to identify athletes who are performing well,
- Recommendation from coaches, funders, or sports science teams,
- Athletes reaching out to OGQ for support.

Most para-athletes supported by OGQ are found to be already competing at the international level before receiving support from OGQ.

Structure: Each athlete has a team of support staff who works together to cater to the exact and personalised needs of the athletes. The team for each athlete differs depending on their requirements but can be comprised of a coach, a strength and conditioning trainer, a physiotherapist, a nutritionist, and a psychologist along with the athlete manager appointed by OGQ.

Coaches and Trainers: As per Sattva's findings, OGQ recruits coaches domestically for para-athletes and attempts to offer the best possible training to sportspersons. However, all of the coaches for para-athletes are able bodied and do not have the lived experience of a differently abled sportsperson. Currently, five of 18 para-athletes supported by HTPF receive coaching support directly from OGQ, while other athletes train under their respective national coaches or coaches by Sports Authority of India (SAI).

Monitoring: The OGQ team monitors the progress of each athlete through 'Athlete Management', a third-party software. All information regarding nutritional requirements, injuries, medical assessments, and daily progress are tracked through this software. The team coordinates closely among themselves to address the needs of the athletes.

Partnerships: OGQ partners with various government and private stakeholders. Viren Rasquinha, CEO and MD of OGQ, is a part of the 2016 Prime Minister's task force to plan effective participation of Indian sportspersons in the Olympics games in years 2020, 2024, and 2028. It also focuses on partnering with the government to run national level programs for certain sports. These partnerships are important to effect policy change in the longer run and to provide para-athletes with access to infrastructure where they can train when not at the respective national camps.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE PARA-ATHLETES

The demographics of the para-athletes surveyed are detailed out below, and present the following insights.

- The Indian contingent comprised 25% women at Tokyo Paralympics 2020, while sample of para-athletes surveyed comprised only 10% women, indicating an inequitable gender distribution. OGQ shared that they are consciously making an effort to increase the number of female para-athletes supported. And that they aim to increase the number of female para-athletes to 30% before the Asian Games in October 2022. The OGQ team has recalibrated the performance benchmarks for female para-athletes for the next Paralympics to include not just those who have medal winning potential, but also those who have qualification potential too.
- The average age of para-athletes surveyed is 27.5 years, while the average age of para-athletes in the Indian contingent for Tokyo Paralympics 2020 was 29.4 years.



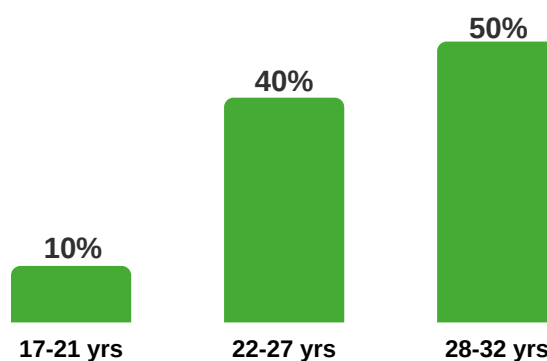
Gender Composition (n=10)



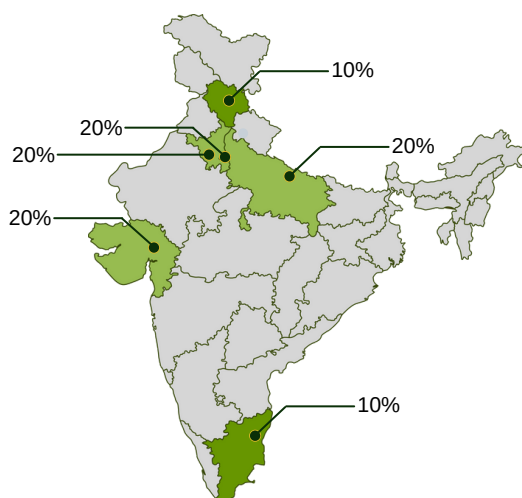
90% Males
10% Females



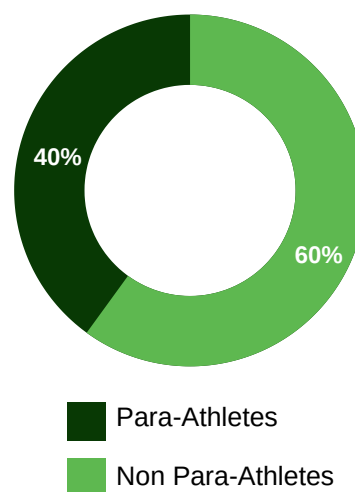
Age Composition (n=10)



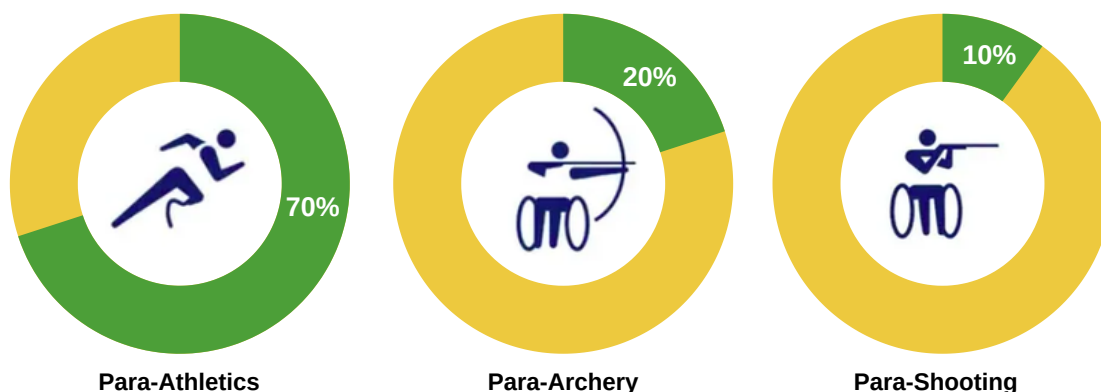
Home State (n=10)



Primary earning members of the family (n=10)



Insight: OGQ mostly supports track and field para-athletes (n=10)

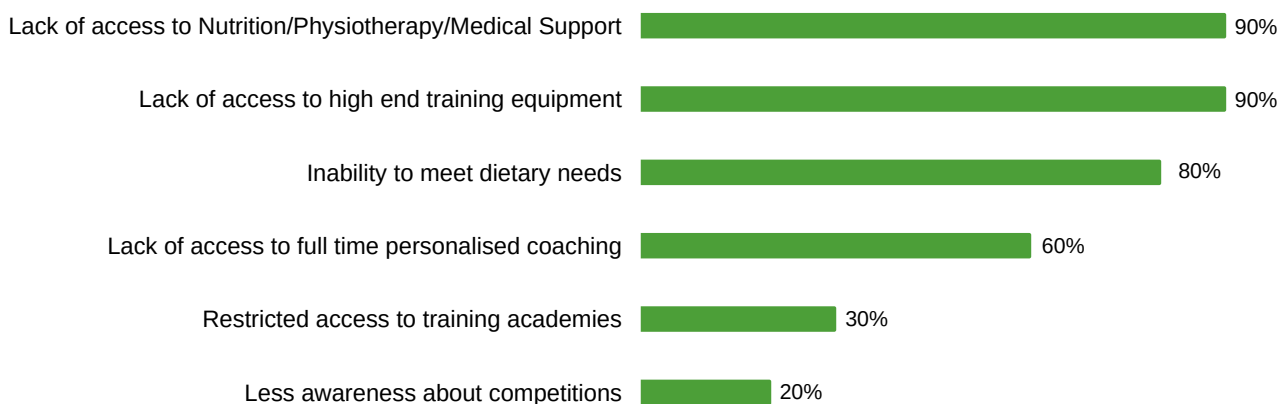


70% of the para-athletes practice para-athletics, 20% practice para-archery, and 10% practice para-shooting. However, no athlete was surveyed for para-badminton because of their unavailability during the data collection. Furthermore, all the surveyed para-athletes reported that OGQ started supporting them in the year 2019.

CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS IN PARA-SPORTS

Insight: 90% of the para-athletes reported lack of access to sports science support and training equipment as a challenge, before being supported by OGQ

CHALLENGES FACED BY PARA-ATHLETES (n=10)



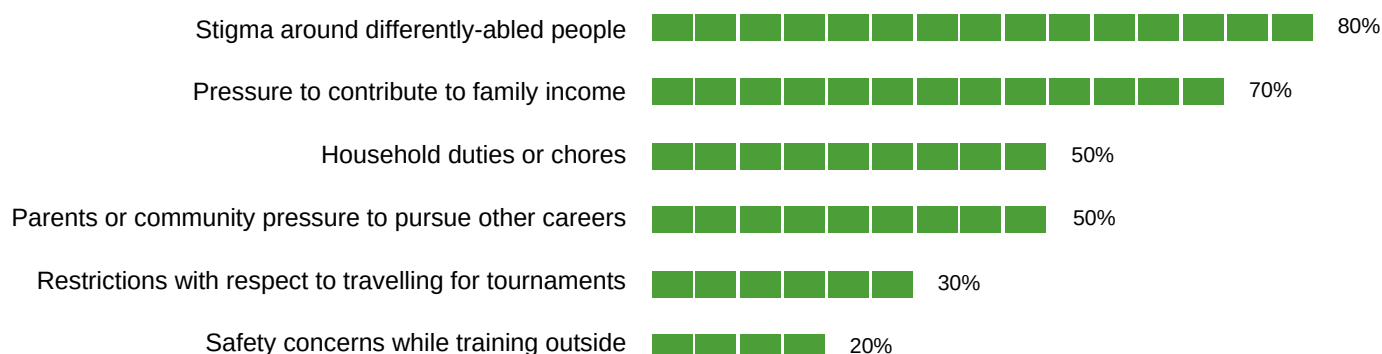
The para-athletes reported that before receiving support from OGQ, they did not have a dedicated support team to take care of the various aspects of training such as nutrition, physiotherapy, and injury management. They have realised that the sports science support is crucial for improvement of their strength, stamina and form. Furthermore, para-athletes require equipment for mobility such as hi-tech wheelchairs and other adaptive sports gear which they are not able to afford individually. This equipment is necessary for athletes to train and perform at national and international tournaments. Additionally, interaction with the head coach of India's para badminton team also brought to light the limited access that para-athletes have to existing infrastructure, primarily because the able-bodied athletes are given priority during allocation of training time and resources.

"The lack of different types of equipment and inability to take nutritional supplements were the main challenges I faced before receiving support from OGQ."

- Para-Athlete

Insight: The social stigma associated with the inability of the differently-abled to perform, acts as a social barrier to the para-athletes' aspiration in pursuing sports

SOCIAL BARRIERS FACED BY PARA ATHLETES (n=10)



80% of the para-athletes reported that the stigma associated with the differently abled people, and their inability to perform poses a societal barrier. The preconceived notion stems from the fact that the community believes that people with disabilities are not independent and incapable of learning and participating in events/competitions. Coupled along is the pressure to contribute to the household income, a challenge facing 70% of the athletes interviewed during the assessment.

In addition, 50% of the para-athletes also face social pressure from their parents and the community to pursue a career other than in sports.

OGQ INTERVENTIONS FOR PARA-ATHLETES

Insight: Although training and nutritional support was received by all the para-athletes, coaching and mental health support was provided on a need basis

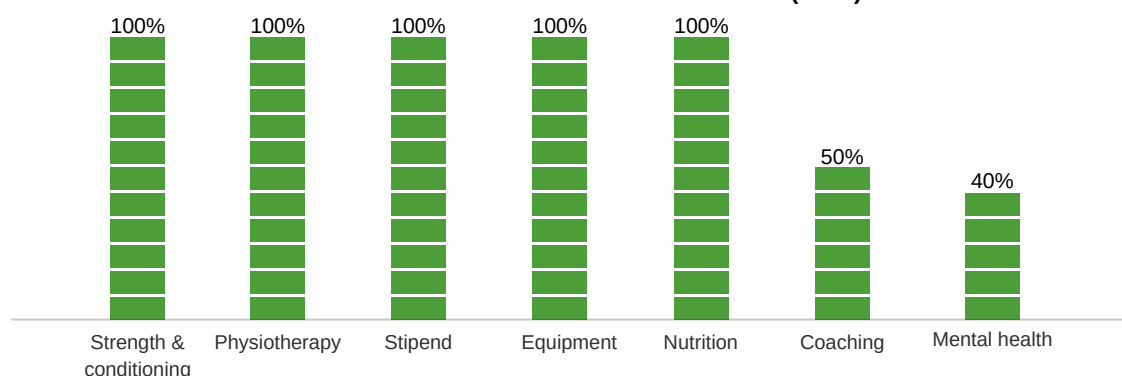
The top three challenges highlighted by the para-athletes are addressed by the OGQ team. All the para-athletes receive strength and conditioning support, training equipment, physiotherapy and nutrition support, and a stipend.

50% of the para-athletes receive coaching, while the rest train either under the national team's coach, or are coached through affiliations such as one with the Indian army. In some cases, the para-athletes have a personal coach who has been training them since before receiving support from OGQ.

The OGQ team shared that before the Paralympics, only those para-athletes who requested mental health support received it, but now the OGQ team assesses the need for it. Before the Tokyo Paralympics 2020, only one para athlete received sports psychology support. Post the Paralympics, 40% of the para-athletes reported receiving mental health and counselling support which has proven to be beneficial in their training and performance. This points towards the potential benefits of provision of mental health and sports psychology support to all of the para-athletes under the program.

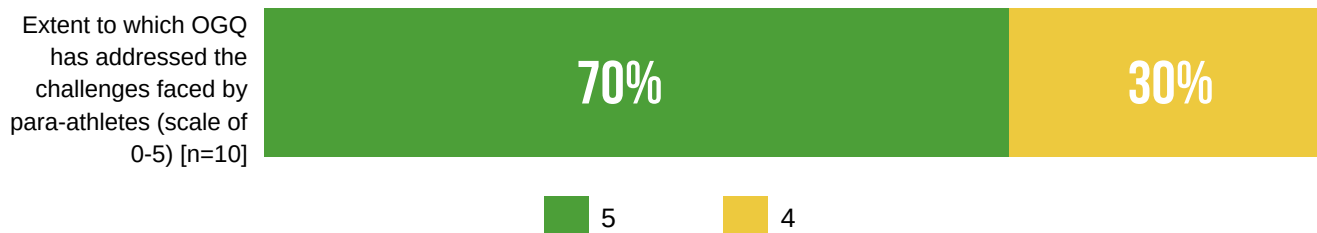
OGQ recognised the need for dedicated infrastructure for para-athletes and addressed it by partially financing a dedicated training facility for the national para-badminton team in Lucknow.

SUPPORT PROVIDED TO PARA ATHLETES (n=10)



“Wheelchair bound athletes have very different needs, we also support them by providing stipends to their family/non-family escort who help them in their day-to-day activities.”
- OGQ team member

Insight: Most para-athletes reported that OGQ helped them overcome all the training challenges

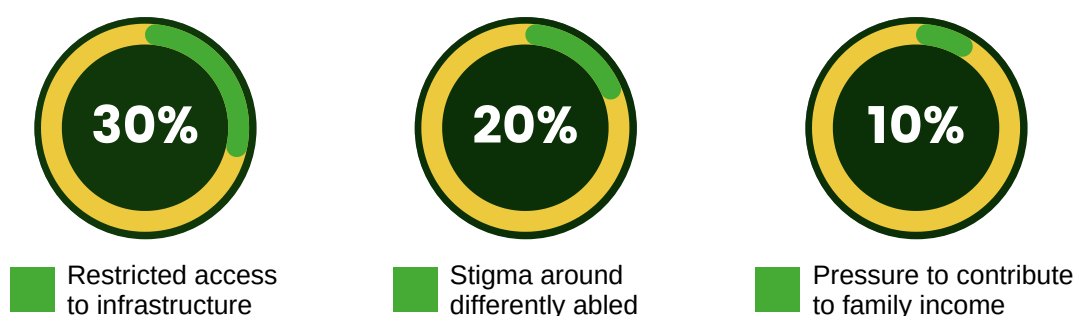


70% of the para-athletes shared that OGQ has completely solved all of their problems and challenges with regards to training and shared a rating of 5 on 5 (0 meaning OGQ has not solved any of the problem; 5 meaning OGQ has solved all of their problems). Whereas 30% of the para-athletes reported that OGQ has somewhat solved their problems and challenges with regards to training and shared a rating of 4 on 5. This indicates that OGQ has been providing the right kind of support to the para-athletes.

“I started receiving support from OGQ in 2019. All my requirements and needs were addressed one after the other. OGQ fulfils all requirements of athletes and helps them grow.”
- Para-Athlete

Insight: Few para-athletes continue to face challenges and barriers surrounding infrastructure, social stigma, and family pressure

CHALLENGES & BARRIERS PARA-ATHLETES CONTINUE TO FACE (n=10)

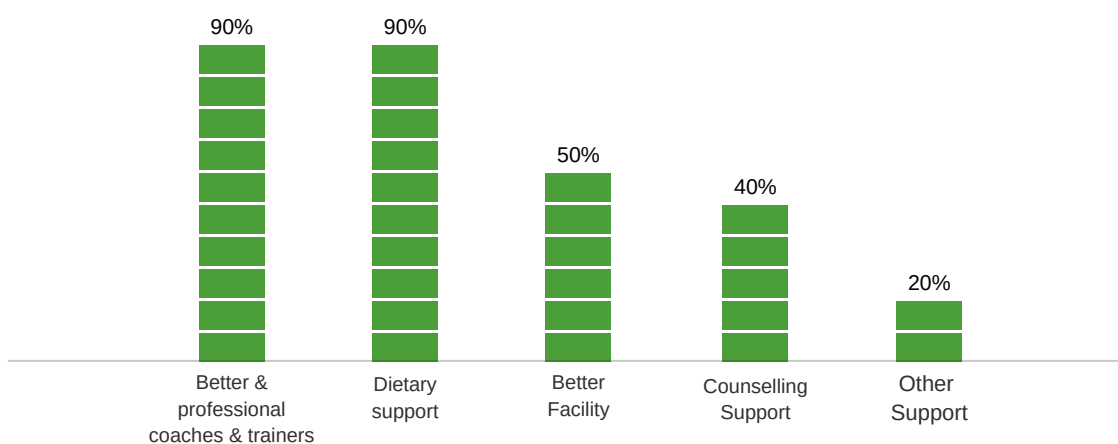


30% of the para-athletes still face restricted access to infrastructure, 20% face stigma associated with differently abled people, and 10% face family pressure to contribute to the household income. On the flip side, none of the para-athletes face challenges related to personalized training, nutrition/ physiotherapy/ medical support, awareness about competitions/tournaments, access to high-end equipment, and ability to meet food/dietary requirements.

Sattva also found out that climatic conditions can play a crucial role in the performance of an athlete. In an interview with the sports science team member, it came to light that an athlete underperformed at the Tokyo Paralympics 2020 due to the humid weather conditions. The athlete has been training in the dry climatic conditions prevalent in the state of Gujarat and change in precipitation level in Tokyo severely affected the athlete's performance. This points towards a need for the athletes to train across different geographies and climatic conditions for a more seasoned development.

Insight: Majority of the para-athletes believe that OGQ's support has given them access to professional trainers and a nutritious diet, both of which are critical for training

INTERVENTIONS THAT HELPED PARA-ATHLETES IN TRAINING (n=10)



90% of the para-athletes reported that OGQ ensures of the athletes training with the best possible coaches and trainers, and providing the required dietary support. International coaches are brought in for training camps that help athletes strengthen their technical skills. Some athletes continue to train under national coaches or army coaches. The intervention is administered by assessing needs on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, athletes bound to the wheelchair face many challenges due to restricted movement. For these athletes specifically, weight gain can be a major problem. As each impairment comes with its own set of unique challenges, provisions for personalized nutrition support proves essential for the para-athletes health.

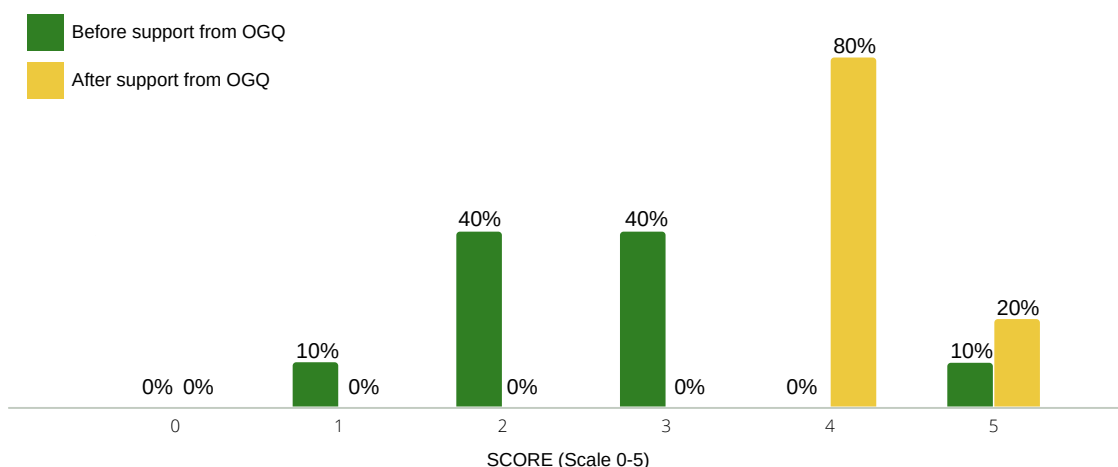
Only 50% of the para-athletes shared that access to training infrastructure has improved after receiving OGQ support. OGQ does not have its own training facility or infrastructure. It partners with private training centres across the country while also maintaining working relationships with the government and SAI to provide adequate access to infrastructure. Examples of partnerships include the access to Padukone-Dravid Centre for Sports Excellence in Bangalore, and access to Gaurav Khanna's (national para-badminton coach) Lucknow based academy.

40% of the para-athletes shared that counselling support helped them train better, and 20% reported getting physiotherapy and well-timed support from OGQ. It was found through qualitative in-depth interviews that both physiotherapy and strength training play an essential role in ensuring para-athletes do not suffer from any kind of injuries because of extensive training.

"I started training for Para Shooting in 2009 but until 2016 I did not even own a rifle for practice. I had to save money over time to buy one. My performance started improving after that."
– Para-Shooter

Insight: Most para-athletes reported that their technical skills have improved significantly after receiving support from OGQ

SELF ASSESSMENT OF TECHNICAL SKILLS (n=10)



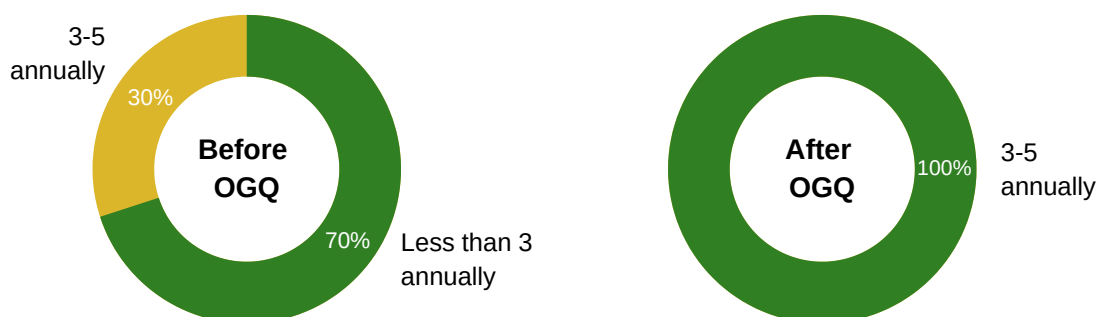
Prior to joining OGQ, 80% of the para-athletes rated their technical skills in their particular sport at either 2 or 3 on 5 (0 meaning their technical skills are non-existent; 5 meaning their technical skills are excellent). After joining OGQ, 80% of the para-athletes rated their technical skills in their particular sport at 4 on 5, while 20% shared a 5 on 5 rating. This indicates a remarkable improvement in the technical skills of athletes after receiving professional coaching and training support from OGQ.

Insight: Majority of para-athletes reported that their annual participation in tournaments has increased, after joining OGQ

Before joining OGQ, 70% of the athletes reported participating in less than three tournaments annually. While 30% reported participating in three to five tournaments annually.

After joining OGQ, all the athletes have participated in at least three tournaments annually. The number of tournaments athletes participate in is expected to increase in the future as the COVID-19 pandemic resolves. This is relevant because most of the para-athletes started receiving support only after October 2019, hence most of the reported time period is during the pandemic.

PARTICIPATION IN TOURNAMENTS (n=10)



“OGQ also helped us with many international tournaments. Although, some para-athletes had already missed the opportunity to participate in major international tournaments, we are now on the track to success and OGQ has made that possible by enabling exposure for the para-athletes”

- National Para Badminton Coach

Insight: Support from OGQ has helped the athletes become more ambitious, and develop confidence in their technical skills to compete in international tournaments and championships



100% felt more confident about competing in tournaments at an international level



100% reported they became more ambitious after receiving support from OGQ

The increase in confidence level of para-athletes can be attributed to the improvement in their performance which boosts their morale. The 360-degree support and motivation that athletes receive upon joining OGQ makes them thrive and set higher benchmarks and goals for their performance. Thus, all athletes aim to compete and win at a higher level after receiving support from OGQ.

Insight: Most athletes reported getting international exposure, after joining OGQ through participation in international events



80% of the Para Athletes reported that OGQ has helped them attend training camps and tournaments internationally

OGQ has supported para-athletes with funding and logistical support to enable their participation in camps or tournaments outside of India. This includes sponsorship, arranging accommodation, travel/ airfare, and meeting all of the other needs.

PARALYMPICS AND FINANCIAL SECURITY

Insight: 75% of the para-athletes that qualified for the Tokyo Paralympics 2020, with support from OGQ, were first time qualifiers

Of the ten athletes surveyed, eight had qualified for Tokyo Paralympics 2020. While two out of eight para-athletes were medallists from Rio Paralympics 2016, the remaining six had qualified for the first time after receiving support from OGQ.

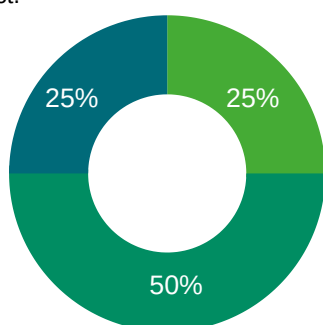
OGQ played an important role in the last leg of the athlete's training for the Paralympics, especially during the pandemic when athletes reported facing the highest degree of pressure and uncertainty about maintaining their form. OGQ took steps to ensure continuity of fitness training, dietary requirements, in addition to motivation and wellness of the athletes.



75% of the Para Athletes qualified for the Paralympics for the first time

Insight: Most para-athletes reported feeling well prepared for Tokyo Paralympics 2020. They also feel that they need to train harder for Paris Paralympics 2024 as of now

50% of the para-athletes shared a rating of 4 on 5 (0 meaning they are absolutely not prepared; 5 meaning they are totally prepared) with respect to their preparedness for the Tokyo Paralympics 2020. While 25% shared a rating of 5 on 5 for the same aspect.



Extent to which the athletes felt prepared for Tokyo 2020 (scale of 0-5) n=8

3

4

5

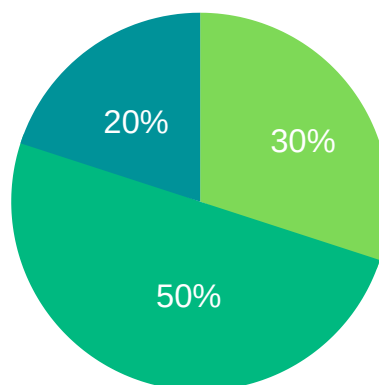
Moreover, 50% of the para-athletes rated their preparedness for Paris Paralympics 2024 at 3 on 5 (0 meaning they are absolutely not prepared; 5 meaning they are totally prepared), while 20% rated 4 on 5. This indicates that the para-athletes are motivated to train harder and win a medal at the Paris Paralympics.

Extent to which the athletes feel prepared for Paris 2024 (scale of 0-5)
n=10

2

3

4



Insight: Brand endorsements, partnerships, and government jobs provide financial security to para-athletes, and spread community awareness

Sattva discovered that commercial representation of para-athletes has changed overtime. Six of the 18 HTPF supported para-athletes now have professional representation for potential endorsements or partnerships with brands, as compared with only one athlete having an endorsement before the Tokyo Paralympics 2020.

The overall interest of the community towards para-athletes has increased tremendously. So much that most of the medalists from Tokyo Paralympics now have influencer management or marketing agency to manage them and represent them for potential collaborations and endorsements.

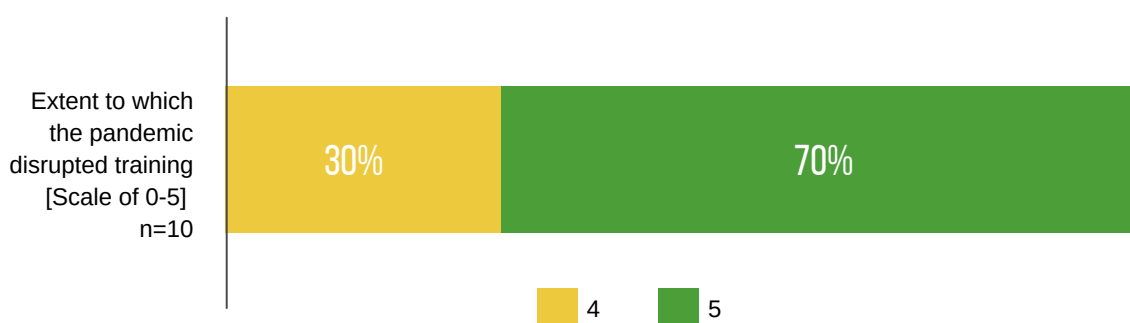
In reality, very few para-athletes have actually secured brand endorsements. Nevertheless, such monetary benefits and livelihood opportunities are helpful for the para-athletes as it provides them with financial stability and sustainability as stated by the OGQ team.

In addition, the para-athletes also work towards securing government jobs through sports quota that allows them to train and compete in sports, and maintain financial security. Three out of the 18 HTPF supported athletes were offered jobs by the state governments which are mostly offered by the athletes' home state government and SAI. Some of the para-athletes held government jobs before the Tokyo Paralympics 2020.

COVID-19 CHALLENGES AND REDRESSAL

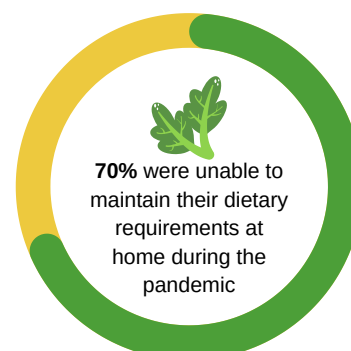
Insight: Majority para-athletes reported that the COVID-19 pandemic not only disrupted their training schedule, but also resulted in stress and anxiety right before the Tokyo Paralympics 2020

70% of the athletes shared a rating of 5 on 5 (0 meaning the pandemic did not disrupt their training at all; 5 meaning the pandemic disrupted their training at the highest degree) with respect to the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted their training routine. The average of extent to which training was disrupted is 4.5 on 5. All the athletes received motivation, encouragement, and training support from their managers and the program team during the pandemic. Only few athletes received professional mental health support from a sports psychologist, the need for which was identified by the athlete's manager and support team subjectively.



Insight: 70% para-athletes were unable to maintain their dietary requirements during the pandemic. OGQ ensured support by providing nutritional supplements

In normal circumstances, the para-athletes are able to maintain their diet while training at institutes or national camps. But during the pandemic, the athletes faced difficulty in procuring and affording the dietary requirements. According to members of the OGQ sports science team, the dietary requirements were readjusted as per the athlete's activity levels while they were at home. Nutritional supplements were arranged for athletes and that helped maintain their fitness and strength throughout the phases of lock down. The distribution of supplements was carried out on a need basis.



Insight: OGQ provided all the para-athletes with the required training equipment to continue practice at home during the pandemic



80% lacked the correct equipment at their home base to continue their fitness training

100% were provided with equipment by OGQ to enable them to train

Most athletes reported not having the right equipment to train at their home base during the pandemic. OGQ provided all the para-athletes with the equipment and also helped set up home gyms where necessary. This ensured that the athletes remained fit to perform well at the Tokyo Paralympics even when away from their training academies.

"During COVID we did not stop training even for one single day. This was possible because athletes had accommodation near our training facility. OGQ supports us by financing the rent for the male athlete's accommodation, thus OGQ's support was important for continuity of training during the pandemic."

- National Para Badminton Coach

Insight: OGQ provided medical support during the pandemic by covering medical expenses and hospitalisation due to COVID-19 for most of the athletes

OGQ provides medical assessment support as a part of their sports science intervention to most athletes. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, this support was extended to include medical health support and related hospitalisation expenses for the para-athletes.



70% were provided with medical assistance and support during covid 19 pandemic

FEEDBACK

Insight: All para-athletes reported that feedback is collected weekly by the program team. However, there is scope for improvement in standardisation of the process

The OGQ team tries to stay connected with the athletes and related stakeholders. Feedback is collected weekly through phone calls. However, the qualitative feedback shared and the concerns reported towards steps for redressal remain largely undocumented. The process flow for the feedback mechanism remains undefined. Further trainers, coaches, physiotherapists and nutritionists reported that the frequency of feedback collection is defined based on need (weekly/bi-weekly) but the process in itself is largely undefined. Similar findings surfaced from Sattva's discussion with the program team. They shared that the athlete managers bridge the conversation between the athletes and the OGQ team to provide weekly updates as and when required.

Furthermore, 100% of the para-athletes surveyed reported that changes are made sometimes but not always on the basis of the feedback shared with the OGQ team. This could be potentially because it is not always logistically possible to incorporate changes in the program offering. If so, this further points towards a need for better documented communication on processes so that athletes can understand why certain changes may take time to incorporate, and the considerations taken into account to arrive at a decision.

"The athlete managers call us as well as the athletes on a regular basis. They are available to speak whenever we need to discuss anything about an athlete's progress."

- Sports science trainer

COMMUNITY PERCEPTION AND AWARENESS

Insight: Most para-athletes reported that their family has been supportive of their sports career



80% of the para-athletes stated that their family members supported them when they decided to take up sports as a career. The remaining 20% stated that their family members were not supportive of their sports career in the beginning, but are now supportive after witnessing their success at the national and international level.

Insight: Most para-athletes believe that their community lacked awareness on para-sports and the Paralympics before their success

90% of the para-athletes reported that their community members were largely unaware of para-sports and the Paralympics before they started participating and winning at an international level. Since their success, family members along with community members started taking interest in para-sports and started following the Paralympics



Support and acceptance from the community is also evident from the innumerable requests and invitations received by the para-athletes to attend the local and the state events as a chief dignitary. The community's perception of the para-athletes is changing to consider them as inspirational figures and role models to draw motivation. One of the OGQ team members shared that winning a medal at the Paralympics is such a great feat that the children have now started looking up to these para-athletes.

"Yes definitely, there are effects of medals across the spectrum, especially in terms of para-athletes. The participation in para-badminton nationals has shot up, there has been a big push after last year's performance. A lot of women with disabilities have started seeing para-sports as an opportunity."

-OGQ Program Team Member

Insight: All para-athletes believe that their success has changed the perception of community towards the differently abled as a whole

100% of the para-athletes reported that their community's perception towards PwDs has changed for the better. They further shared that their neighbours, extended family and people from their hometown are now supportive of other PwDs taking up sports as a career. Though most athletes had previously reported facing stigma due to their impairment, the perception of their respective communities has changed after they witnessed success of the para-athlete and pushed them to look beyond their disabilities.



Since India's success in Tokyo Paralympics 2020, support for the para-athletes has gained immense momentum. Devendra Jhajharia, two-time Paralympic medalist, was awarded with the Padma Bhushan (third highest civilian award) making him the first Indian para-athlete to be conferred with this honour. Jhajharia believes this is indicative of not just the change in perspective on para-sports, but also on PwDs at large. Further, an OGQ team member noted a markable difference within the coaching fraternity itself. An OGQ coach reported that the coaches who once would not consider training para-athletes are now optimistically wanting to train them.

Insight: All para-athletes believe that the attention to para-sports from mainstream media has drastically increased after the wins at Tokyo Paralympics 2020



100% of the para-athletes reported that the press coverage of para sports and attention from mainstream media was significantly higher post their big wins at Tokyo Paralympics 2020. This helped in highlighting the potential of PwDs.

Two of OGQ Paralympic medalists from Haryana were part of Haryana state's tableau at the Republic Day parade in 2022 which featured sports stars from the state. ^[5]OGQ believes that inclusion in such events is a welcome and essential change in positioning para-athletes at an equal footing with able bodied athletes.

"Most people do not know about para-sports but people get to know when someone from the community participates in tournaments. A lot has changed, first after 2016 and then even more after 2020 because of the medals India got. People now follow para-sports. As my match day was coming near, people started recognizing me. My community members celebrated on the day of my match like it was a festival. The attention given to para sports in news has also increased."

-Para-Shooter

[5] <https://www.republicworld.com/sports-news/other-sports/republic-day-parade-haryana-tableau-features-its-sports-stars-number-one-in-sports-articleshow.html>

Swaroop had big ambition and wanted to do something different with his life. He was not going to let his impairment on account of polio get in his way. He started playing sports beginning with the javelin throw, but realized it wasn't a good fit. In the year 2009, he got into shooting and hasn't looked back since!

Until 2019, he faced many challenges with respect to training, nutritious diet, and availability of proper equipment to name a few. Needless to say, this directly affected his performance levels. Up until 2016, he did not own a rifle which also severely impacted his training.



SWAROOP UNHALKAR
34, MALE
PARA-SHOOTER

In 2017, he got an opportunity to train under an international coach for a year under Project Leap of Glory Academy in Pune.

OGQ started supporting Swaroop in 2019 and a lot has changed for him since then. Though he is disabled below the torso, and has a spine problem, OGQ has been consistent in supporting and motivating him. He is provided with coaching, nutrition support, physiotherapy, as well as timely psychological support. To ensure that Swaroop's training needs are met, OGQ collects verbal feedback consistently and regular discussions take place with respect to his training and performance. OGQ supported him during the lockdown, kept him inspired, and also provides a stipend that gives him mental peace to financially support this family.

The para-shooter has been consistently working on his breathing problem under the supervision of the doctors and the physiotherapist at OGQ. This effort has resulted in improving his breathing and consequently enhanced his performance. He secured 4th position in para-shooting at the Tokyo Paralympics 2020 and is preparing for Paris Paralympics 2024 motivated to get a medal for India. He would like to continue para-shooting for the next 20 years!

CHAPTER 04

RECOMMENDATIONS



RECOMMENDATIONS

On conducting a 360-degree assessment of OGQ's Para-athlete Program, several factors stood out. However, few gaps represent an opportunity in the form of areas of improvement. The following strategic recommendations have been formulated keeping in mind the existing gaps in the program.

SIMULATION TRAINING

One of the findings from the study revealed that climatic conditions play an important role in determining performance of the athletes. Factors such as heat and humidity have been proven to negatively impact muscle endurance which is important for athletes to perform well. Similarly, wind, temperature and air resistance can also affect the performance of an athlete. It was found that one of the OGQ supported para-athletes faced a similar issue due to humid conditions in the Tokyo Paralympics, resulting in sub-optimal performance. The primary reason is that the para-athlete had been training in dry climatic conditions, in the state of Gujarat.

Such external factors can be addressed by providing simulation training to the athletes, to replicate the expected situation and make it as realistic and relevant as possible. Exposure to competition like environment will help the athletes avoid performance shock and prepare them to compete and succeed at the international level. Thus, OGQ can map out locations where an athlete trains, especially considering climatic conditions of the geography where upcoming international tournaments are going to take place.

ACCESS TO SPORTING INFRASTRUCTURE

Although, 50% of the para-athletes shared that their access to training infrastructure has improved after receiving OGQ support. 30% of the para-athletes still face restricted access to infrastructure. Additionally, it was brought to light that there is limited access to existing infrastructure for para-athletes as able-bodied athletes are given priority when allocating time and resources.

Hence, there is a need for dedicated infrastructure accessible to para-athletes. OGQ recognised this need and addressed it by partially financing a dedicated training facility for the national para-badminton team in Lucknow. Similarly, OGQ can evaluate the feasibility of similar training centres for other sports. It can also partner with more private training centres across the country to provide adequate access to infrastructure to all the para-athletes.

SPORTS PSYCHOLOGY SUPPORT

All the para-athletes who received counselling support shared that it was helpful. However, not all the para-athletes received psychological health support. 70% of the para-athletes felt that the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted their training at the highest degree. The athletes also faced stress, anxiety and pressure because the Tokyo Paralympics 2020 was just around the corner.

Thus, it is essential for the athletes to get professional psychological support in addition to learning refocusing strategies for optimal performance, especially in light of the uncertainty brought in by the pandemic. OGQ can hire an in-house full-time sports psychologist and provide psychological support to all the athletes. Additional support should be provided closer to the competition, ideally before, during, and after a sporting event.

The OGQ team reported that when the Para-Athlete program started, mental health support was provided only to the athletes who asked for such support. However, with an ever-evolving model they have started creating awareness about professional psychological support among the athletes, and have started offering the same when the athlete's respective manager, coach and/or trainer feels it will be of benefit for them.

DOCUMENT THE PROGRAM PROCESSES

Sattva found out that the program processes, feedback mechanisms, and other SOPs for the program are largely undocumented. This also includes assessment frameworks used to scout and monitor the para-athletes. Although OGQ uses an Athlete Monitoring software to track the progress of athletes, the indicators and metrics tracked also need to be documented.

Sattva also understands that OGQ program team are specialists who customise athlete management practices and every aspect cannot be documented. In this case, one of the primary actionable recommendations would be that the common minimum practices such as operational processes, feedback mechanisms, and other SOPs to be formally documented and circulated within the organisation in the interest of visibility and process awareness.

Further, documentation of mechanisms such as monthly feedback from each para-athlete and sports science team member will allow the team to take corrective action where necessary in scaling the program offering and providing better support to the para-athletes.

ANNEXURES

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

| Theme | Research Questions | Key Indicators |
|---|---|---|
| Relevance The services offered by OGQ are designed to improve overall para-athlete performance, and are relevant to the needs of the para-athletes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How was the need of the para-athletes identified? • Are the project objectives and activities aligned with the needs of the para-athletes? • How were the key interventions identified for the program? • What are the key interventions identified by OGQ for the para-athletes? • Is there a systematic method of selecting para-athletes? • What key selection criteria for trainers and coaches? • What is the socio-demographic profile of the para-athletes? (gender split, family income, number of household members, previous and current occupation/income sources for the family, category) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of needs through needs assessment • Alignment of the project objectives and activities with the needs of para-athletes • Intervention selection process • Forms of support received by para-athletes • Scouting process for the para-athletes (mobilization, and enrolment) • Selection criteria for para-athletes, trainers and coaches • Demographics of the para-athletes |
| Effectiveness The services offered by OGQ are executed on ground to improve overall para-athlete performance, and has achieved or is expected to achieve its objectives and goals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the programs' end-to-end processes and systems defined to bring the desired outcomes? • Is there a well-defined and standardised process for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring & Evaluation process • Feedback mechanisms • Mechanism for corrective actions • Is there a well-defined process to identify and document the key risks and the risk mitigation strategies at the program level? • What are the program quality standards and benchmarks? How are these derived? • How are quality standards enforced to ensure standardisation and quality at the OGQ centre? (Disability friendly training centres, provision of appropriate equipment) • How has the program structure and nature of interventions changed due to COVID-19 pandemic? (connectedness, keeping para-athletes motivated) • How does OGQ identify the special needs of a para-athlete? • How does OGQ ensure retention of para-athletes to ensure reduction in dropouts? 1. How does OGQ empower para-athletes to cope with failure, injuries, stress, anxiety, and attention and success at a young age? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping program activities and outcome indicators • Process to ensure ground-level implementation to enhance para-athlete performance, and mitigate deviations • Monitoring and Evaluation systems and processes are in place to track the progress of the program • Follow-up and feedback mechanisms for the beneficiaries, trainers and coaches • Course correction methods • Process to identify risks and define risk mitigation strategies at the program level • Quality of infrastructure and equipment provided to all the para-athletes through OGQ • Change in program structure and interventions due to COVID • Methods to identify special needs of para-athletes • Change in dropouts • Change in ability of para-athletes to cope with failure, injuries, stress, anxiety, and attention and success at a young age |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Short term Impact OGQ ensures holistic development of para-athletes by providing high-end equipment, coaching, medical and physiological support</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the para-athlete competed in more tournaments/events? • Has the para-athlete's ranking in their respective sport increased? • Has the para-athlete started competing at a higher level since OGQ's intervention? • Is there a perceived change in the required technical and tactical skills of the para-athlete? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of tournaments para-athletes participate in • Change in national and international rankings • Transition in level (district/state/national/international) at which a para-athlete is competing • Increase in the number of medals/wins after OGQ's support |
| <p>Medium Term Impact OGQ's interventions improve performance of para-athletes</p> | <p>Nutrition, Strength & Conditioning, Sports Medicine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a perceived improvement in the para-athlete's strength and stamina? • Has the number of sports related injuries decreased? • Has recovery time for common sporting injuries decreased? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in strength and stamina of para-athlete • Decrease in frequency of injury • Decrease in the number of rest days due to better injury management |
| | <p>Sports Psychology/Mental Agility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has there been a perceived change in the para-athlete's ability to focus? • Has there been a perceived change in the para-athlete's ability to handle pressure and anxiety? • Has there been a change in mindset of para-athletes towards pursuing a career in sports? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in the para-athlete's ability to focus • Change in para-athlete's ability to handle pressure and anxiety • Change in para-athlete's ambitions and aspirations |
| <p>Long Term Impact OGQ is creating long lasting impact in society by creating awareness about Paralympics and careers in sports</p> | <p>Change in Perception</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How has joining OGQ impacted a para-athlete's life and career trajectory? • Has the family's attitude and understanding towards careers in sports changed? • Have the subsequent achievements at the Tokyo Paralympics changed the way the para-athletes perceive themselves? • Has the success at the Tokyo Paralympics changed the perception and attitudes of people towards para-athletes' careers in sports? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in HH income & savings of para-athletes • Change in perception of family towards careers in sports with disability • Change in para-athletes' determination and self-belief • Change in perception and attitudes of people towards careers in sports with disability at a national level |
| | <p>Future in Sports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does OGQ plan on providing long term career support to para-athletes after they stop competing professionally? • Is there a plan in place for OGQ to retain retired para-athletes to support and mentor new talent? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career advancement / job opportunities • Number of retired para-athletes who work at OGQ |

DISCLAIMER AND NOTICE TO READERS

- Sattva Consulting does not assume any responsibility and disclaims any liability, however occasioned to HDFC and H T Parekh Foundation or any other party, as a result of the circulation, publication or reproduction of this report.
- Sattva Consulting has not performed an audit and does not express an opinion or any other form of assurance. Further, comments in our report are not intended, nor should they be interpreted to be legal advice or opinion.
- In accordance with its policy, Sattva Consulting advises that neither it nor any partner, director or employee undertakes any responsibility arising in any way whatsoever, to any person other than HDFC and H T Parekh Foundation in respect of the matters dealt with in this report, including any errors or omissions therein, arising through negligence or otherwise, howsoever caused.
- In connection with the report or any part thereof, Sattva Consulting does not owe duty of care (whether in contract or in tort or under statute or otherwise) to any person or party or entity to whom the report is circulated and Sattva Consulting shall not be liable to any person or party or entity who uses or relies on this report. Sattva Consulting thus disclaims all responsibility or liability for any costs, damages, losses, liabilities, expenses incurred by such third party arising out of or in connection with the report or any part thereof.

ABOUT SATTVA

Sattva (www.sattva.co.in) is a social impact strategy consulting and implementation firm. Sattva works closely at the intersection of business and impact, with multiple stakeholders including non-profits, social enterprises, corporations and the social investing ecosystem. Sattva's work spans across multiple states in India, multiple countries in Africa and South Asia, on the ground, and Sattva has engaged with leading organizations across the globe through its practice in strategic advisory, realizing operational outcomes, CSR knowledge assessments, and co-creation of sustainable models. Sattva works to realize inclusive developmental goals across themes in emerging markets, including education, skill development and livelihoods, health care and sanitation, digital and financial inclusion, energy access and environment, among others. Sattva has offices in Bangalore, Mumbai and Delhi.