



UNIVERSITY OF PELOPONNESE

FACULTY OF HUMAN MOVEMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF SPORTS ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

**A PHENOMENAL RISE OF THE INDIAN PARALYMPIANS
IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

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MASTER Dissertation submitted to the professorial body for the partial fulfilment of obligations for the awarding of a post-graduate title in the Post-graduate Programme, "Olympic Studies, Olympic Education, Organization and Management of Olympic Events" of the University of the Peloponnese

Sparta 2024

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Acknowledgements

It is my proud privilege to express my sentiments of everlasting gratitude and respect to my supervisor Dr. Maria Tolika for her keen interest, invaluable help, continuous supervision and constant inspiration to complete my Master's thesis. She was available throughout whenever I needed any advice or feedback. She always motivated me to complete my thesis and played a crucial role in achieving this feat.

I would also like to acknowledge my advisory committee members Professor Konstantinos Georgiadis and Professor Ian Brittain for their timely advice, support, and their willingness to share their bright ideas with me, which were very fruitful for sharing up my ideas and the study. I also extend my deep gratitude to Professor Dhananjoy Shaw for helping me throughout my thesis with his vast knowledge and guidance.

I am also thankful to my Director Professor Ajay Kumar Sharma at National Institute of Technology Delhi for supporting me to pursue this Master's course and encouraging me throughout. I feel highly indebted to my family for their moral support and blessings for the successful completion of this thesis.

I wish to also express my sincere thanks to all my batchmates from 2021- 2023 from beginning to end. I also want to thank my friends Dr. Tarun Routhan, Chloe Abu-Chabake, Divya Saini, Ashley, Marie Lou, Mateus and Rajeev for their timely support and motivation.

I would like to acknowledge with appreciation the support and love of the whole International Olympic Academy family, Professor Georgiadis, Vanda and Anastasia that kept me going throughout- thank you all for your unwavering support.

And most importantly I would like to thank God who have given me the power to believe in myself and pursue my dreams. I could never have done this without the faith I have in you, Almighty.

Last but not the least, I express my gratitude to all those people who have directly or indirectly helped me to complete my thesis.

Abstract

“A Phenomenal Rise of the Indian Paralympians in the 21st Century”

By Anidev Singh

Under the supervision of Dr. Maria Tolika

The study examined the rise in the Indian Paralympians in the 21st century. The performance of Indian Paralympians at Tokyo 2020 Paralympics games surpassed the joint performance of Indian Para-athletes in all previous Paralympics combined. The objectives of the study were to study the rise of Indian Paralympians and the factors responsible for the same. The study also listed down the challenges and future plans & suggestions for the growth and development of Indian Paralympians. The review of related literature highlighted the growth of Paralympics movement in India and around the world. It also suggested the role of Government policies and change in the perception of the society in regard to Para-athletes and Para-sports. The qualitative research method comprised of Semi structure interviews was employed on 6 samples for the data collection and the same was analysed using thematic analysis method. The results suggested a rise in the performance of the Indian Paralympians in the 21st century. The responses suggested the factors responsible for the rise in the performance of the Paralympians and para-sports in India. The role of social media was also emphasized in the promotion of para sports in India. The participants appreciated the efforts of Indian government in uplifting the status of Paralympians and Para-sports in India. They also stated that more support is required from the private organisations in term of funding, sponsorship and job opportunities. The participants also highlighted the challenges faced by the para-athletes and various suggestions & future plans to sustain the development of Indian Para sports at the grassroots and international level. The participants talked about the various societal issues and need of more awareness programs especially in the rural areas. In the end, the participants suggested future plans for the sustained development of the para sports in India.

Keywords: Disability, Paralympians, Para-sports, Paralympics, Performance

Abbreviations

WHO	World Health Organisation
ICIDH	International Classification of Impairments, Disability, and Handicaps
IOC	International Olympic Committee
ISMGF	International Stoke Mandeville Games Committee Foundation
CONI	Italian Olympic Committee
ISOD	International Sports Organisation for the Disabled
ICC	International Coordinating Committee
IBSA	International Blind Sports Federation
CP-ISRA	Cerebral Palsy International Sport and Recreation Association
CISS	International Committee of Sports for the Deaf
INAS	International Sports Federation for Persons with Mental Handicap - subsequently renamed Intellectual Disability
IPC	International Paralympic Committee
PCI	Paralympic Committee of India
INAS-FID	International Sports Federations for Persons with an Intellectual Disability
NDP	Non-Disabled Persons
PG	Paralympic Games
PWD	People with Disability
DP	Disabled Persons
NSF	National Sports Federation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
AGP	Awareness Generation and Publicity
FICCI	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry
SAI	Sport Authority of India
TOPS	Target Olympic Podium Scheme
NSDF	National Sports Development Fund
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility

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Chapter- I

INTRODUCTION

In India, the public and government are beginning to acknowledge para-athletes on a greater scale. It has led to increased resources, infrastructure, and assistance for training and participation in global events. The nation's parasports have seen efforts to improve their infrastructure. This includes improved coaching and training programmes, easily accessible amenities, and specialised training centres. A number of projects and activities have been started to find and develop para-athlete talent as a part of Athlete Development Programmes to provide training and exposure. The growing public knowledge of para-sports and media attention to them has contributed to a shift in public perceptions of disability and the advancement of inclusivity. Because of this, more and more individuals with disabilities are becoming involved in sports and trying to make it big. Indian para-athletes have inspired others and produced role models for aspiring athletes through their achievements in international contests, such as the Paralympic Games. It resulted into greater interest and participation in para-sports around the nation.

1.1 The Concept of Disability

Individuals with disabilities may be found all around the world. According to World Health Organisation (WHO) data forecasts, over 16% of the world population (1.3 billion) presently lives with some kind of disability (WHO, 2023). Disability is an intrinsic human condition that may affect anybody at any point of their lives. This phenomenon is dynamic and affects people not just personally, but also socially, economically, culturally, and politically throughout their lives (Noonan , et al., 2004). Disability's dynamic nature means that it has developed and endured terminological divergences. In antiquity, people with disabilities were subjected to physical and psychological torture and were seen as a source of difficulty for their families. They were evaluated based on their physical fitness and belief in superstitions. Conventional persons believed that people with impairments were incapable of thriving and flourishing in life, thus they were exposed to the terrible reality of powerlessness. Various superstitious rites were carried out in a hostile environment. When physically unfit people were brought to specialised institutions and treated compassionately, their conditions improved only somewhat (Singh, 2022). In the beginning of the 20th century, people with impairments were referred to as "crippled" and were treated with forbearance, compassion, and acts of kindness.

The perception of disability changed dramatically in the latter part of the twentieth century. This was due to individuals with disabilities organising themselves and disability being more widely recognised as a human rights issue. In 1980, the World Health Organisation made an important contribution to our knowledge of disability by developing the “International Classification of Impairments, Disability, and Handicaps”. This guidebook focused on the consequences of illnesses. The ICIDH examined three consequences of illnesses referred to as “Impairment, Disability, and DHndicap”. According to World Health Organisation (1980) “Impairment is any loss or deviation from normal psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function” (Barnes, 2003). Disability, on the other hand, refers to “A restriction or absence of ability to do an activity in a manner or extent that is considered typical for a human being, as a result of an impairment”. A handicap is defined as “A disadvantage that hinders or prohibits a person from performing a normal function due to an impairment or disability” (Singh, 2022).

1.2 Origin of Disability Sports in Global World

Disability advocates in the deaf community led the way in the late nineteenth century, which is when disability sport first emerged. In 1888, Berlin hosted the first Sports Club for the Deaf. By 1924, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Poland had established their own National Sports Federations specifically for the Deaf. With 140 athletes sent to the First International Silent Games in Paris in 1924, these six federations began a four-year "World Games for the Deaf" cycle (Séguillon, 2002). Once the International Olympic Committee (IOC) separated them into separate Summer and Winter events, they officially named them the Deaflympics, following the format of the Olympics.

The Deaflympics held importance as a forerunner to the Paralympics, although existing apart from the movement that would ultimately culminate in their creation. The Paralympics was the product of post-war treatment for spinal-injured troops, which was the brainchild of Ludwig Guttmann (MacAloon, 1981). Known for his expertise in neurosurgery, Guttmann emigrated from Germany to England in 1939. Guttmann held research roles in Wingfield-Morris Orthopaedic Hospital and the Neurosurgery Department in Oxford University before taking on the role of head in the National Spinal Injuries Centre, Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. There was poor morale among nurses and a lack of qualified physiotherapists due to paraplegia, Guttmann said, making it the most discouraging and unsolved medical issue of the period (Goodman S., 1986).

His method cast doubt on the pre-war doctrine that supported low survival rates and indefinite hospitalisation for those with severe paralysis. The institution implemented comprehensive treatment strategy, which included rotating patients every two hours around the clock to minimise pressure ulcers and enhancing bladder cleanliness standards to address issues of infection. Physiotherapy aids in improving limb flexibility and, in some cases, enhances mobility for patients. Apart from the prescribed medication schedule, a pre-vocational employment curriculum and an array of leisure pursuits like sporting events, concerts, and trips were introduced to include patients and create a sense of direction. Therefore, in this specific context, sports go beyond what is considered typical leisure time. In addition to being the best way to regain physical strength, coordination, speed, endurance, and the ability to overcome fatigue, this exercise had a profound psychological effect by bringing happiness back into life and assisting with social reintegration (Guttmann, *Sport for the Disabled*, 1976). Guttmann's core belief was that athletics may serve as a means for severely handicapped individuals to improve their physical and mental well-being, enhance their self-assurance and self-worth, and attain a certain level of autonomy (Gallagher, 1982).

Based on these considerations, Guttmann devised the concept of a disability sports festival to encourage interaction amongst patients and challenge preconceived notions about the skills of people with disabilities. A sixteen-archer archery event was held on the front grounds of the hospital on July 28, 1948, with teams representing Stoke Mandeville, Richmond's Star and the Garter Home. The competition was purposefully scheduled to showcase potential; it coincided with the London Olympics Opening Ceremony, symbolising progress; and archery was considered to have a "physiotherapeutic value for the paralysed" second only to swimming (James, 1948). Stoke Mandeville played host to a bigger tournament in 1949, with sixty athletes from five different hospitals taking part in what would later grow to be a diverse array of sports. Guttmann expressed his desire for the event to gain global recognition and become known as "the disabled men's and women's equivalent of the Olympic Games" during his remarks at the gathering (Goodman S. , 1986).

The Stoke Mandeville Games quickly gathered the global audience. The participation of many Dutch war veterans at the 1952 Summer Olympics was a precursor to the greater involvement of European nations. In 1953, the Games saw the addition of teams from France, Finland, Netherlands, Israel, as well as a Canadian team. In 1955, a team representing United States of America contested in the Stoke Mandeville Games. Two years later, in 1957, an Australian team also joined the competition. Around this time, the term "Paralympics" began

to be used more often to describe the Stoke Mandeville Games (Carisbroke, 1956). Stoke Mandeville had established worldwide linkages via training of the guest staff, mobility of the staff, and former patients who shared expertise and excitement in respect to caring for paraplegics and the use of sports in rehabilitation. Initially, the majority of participants were individuals who were receiving medical treatment, but the Games quickly began to draw a substantial number of former patients who were now leading independent lives. Following a slow but continuous trend away from utilising sport for therapeutic purposes, training and fitness programmes were devised with the intention of improving the health and well-being of handicapped persons via the ability to participate in sports. Consequently, the physically challenged athlete would see an increase in their fitness level, as well as benefit from sports as a motivating factor that inspires players to reach their full potential and cultivate qualities such as competitiveness, self-discipline, and self-respect (Steadward & Walsh, 1986). Significantly, the Games transitioned from being organised on a medical basis to the establishment of teams at the national level, which ultimately adopted squad arrangements similar to those used in traditional international sports.

1.3 The Rise of Disability Sports Globally

In response to the expanding scope of the Games, there was a need for more professionalism in terms of planning, organisation, financing, and conduction of international disability sports. As a result, International Stoke Mandeville Games Committee (ISMGF) was established in 1959. Up until 1972, Guttman oversaw the organisation of an equivalent quadrennial Olympic event and was in charge of the annual Stoke Mandeville Games. Nevertheless, having ambitions of achieving Olympian status, and all the implications it had for the perception and standing of disability sport, was one thing; establishing meaningful relationships was an entirely other matter.

Despite initially showing great promise, the journey of uniting the Paralympic and Olympic movements proved to be lengthy and difficult. During the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, Guttman was honoured with the Fearnley Cup by the IOC for his exceptional contributions to the Olympic principles. This acknowledgment was particularly noteworthy considering that the Stoke Mandeville Games had just been established less than ten years before (Goodman S. , 1986).

Following the decision of the Olympic host city to hold the Stoke Mandeville Games, the Olympic Games were subsequently staged in Rome (1960) and Tokyo (1964), additional convergence appeared probable. The success of such arrangements hinged upon the

benevolence of the host municipality, in addition to financial support from the public and sponsorship. The Rome Games, for instance, secured funding from Italian National Insurance Institute Against Accidents at Work (INAIL), received cooperation from Spinal Unit at Ostia, and received support from the Italian Olympic Committee. Olympic village and other facilities were utilized by the 400 disabled athletes; however, lift-equipped sections of the Village were rendered inaccessible due to last-minute adjustments. Furthermore, as a result of the cancellation of an opportunity to use nearby Olympic facilities, participants were had to go for forty minutes by bus to the Tre Fontane sports complex (Scruton, 1998). Subsequent to the Summer Olympics in Tokyo, the 1964 Games were conducted in a village where competitors shared facilities that had recently been utilised by the athletes. During the Opening Ceremony, there was a throng of five thousand people, and the Crown Prince and Princess were there as distinguished guests.

However, it was not until 1988 in Seoul that disabled athletes participated in an Olympic competition again, 24 years later. The International Olympic Committee (IOC), which oversaw the Olympic tendering process, was solely concerned with the capacity of candidate cities to accommodate exceptional athletes; it did not require any Olympic city to organise parallel competitions for athletes with disabilities. Due to the lack of an inclusive philosophy concerning athletes with disabilities, a number of cities essentially declined to host the Paralympics. The reason for this decision can be attributed to a combination of factors, such as the high cost of modifying inaccessible building designs, limited financial resources to invest in an event that was initially seen as having limited ability to generate revenue, and the continuous growth of the Paralympics, especially after including a wider range of disabilities in 1976.

In 1968, Mexico City turned down hosting the Olympics due to "technical difficulties," even though they had sent a team of observers in Tokyo. The events took place in the Ramat Gan sports complex, close to Tel Aviv, Israel, which is owned by the Israel Foundation for Handicapped Children. Due to the imminent sale of the Olympic Village to developers for private flat construction subsequent to the Closing Ceremony, the 1972 Summer Olympics were relocated from Munich to the University of Heidelberg, as part of the plans for the site's post-festival usage (Scruton, 1998). Successive gatherings were marred by an absence of adequate lodging. Despite Toronto's 1976 hosting of the Olympics instead of Montreal, the official lodgings at York and Toronto Universities were far from ideal due to the great distances between the various Olympic Village locations and the stadiums. Despite repeated requests, the Moscow Olympic organisers never even replied, therefore the 1980 event was moved to

Arnhem, Netherlands. The accessible lodging, an army barracks, was also situated inconveniently with respect to the accessibility of the sporting fields. In 1984, the United States decided to hold the Paralympic Games regardless of location, rather than in Los Angeles, which was the original site. However, this plan fell through when the latter withdrew four months before the Games due to financial issues. This led to a last-minute rescheduling of the wheelchair competitions at Stoke Mandeville. Surprisingly, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) first acknowledged these Games as the Paralympics (Gold & Gold, The rise of the Paralympic Games, 2007).

In 1976, the inaugural Winter Games were held in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden, instead of Innsbruck, Austria. In 1980, Geilo, Norway, held the Winter Games instead of Lake Placid. In 1984, Innsbruck hosted the Games instead of Sarajevo, however an exhibition match was conducted there. Innsbruck held the Games again instead of Calgary in 1988, which declined to hold the Paralympics.

The apparent reversal of the trajectory that had been established in the early 1960s was of immense disillusionment to the Paralympic movement. Guttman expressed strong disapproval of the reasoning that hindered Mexico City or Munich from hosting the Games, referring to "the lamentable lack of recognition for the status that tens of thousands of disabled athletes have achieved on the international stage" (Guttman, Textbook of sport for the disabled, 1976). A new complex of structures, including a 'Olympic' Village in 1981 and a Stadium for the para-athletes and other disabled athletes (which reopened in 1981 and was formerly known as the Ludwig Guttman Sports Stadium for the disabled), was constructed at Stoke Mandeville in part as consequence. As a consequence of these changes, the sporting facilities were finally separated from the medical centre and the idea of "illness," which reflected the fact that impaired athletes were achieving special status via their performance capabilities (Gold & Gold, The Paralympic Games, 2012).

A number of obstacles, including disagreements on the precise meaning of disability and the competing jurisdictions of relevant bodies, further slowed down the progress that was made. Initially restricting entrance to medically controlled paraplegics, the Stoke Mandeville Games were subsequently joined by other organisations advocating for inclusion in globally orchestrated sports competitions. ISOD, which stands for the International Sports Organisation for the Disabled, was founded in 1964 and is responsible for providing opportunities for those who have difficulties with their locomotor skills, including the blind and amputees (KP & Gavron , 2005). In 1976, ISOD and ISMGF worked in conjunction to expand the 1976 Toronto Olympics to encompass individuals with visual impairments, amputees, and 'Les Autres' (other

disabled groups). The Olympic Games were attended by athletes who suffered from cerebral palsy in the year 1980.

New international disability organisations emerged rapidly as disability sport expanded its reach. In order to streamline their operations and prevent unnecessary repetition of events, it became necessary to establish additional institutional structures. As a result, the International Coordinating Committee of the World Sports Organisations was established in 1982. This event brought together high-ranking delegates from four prominent International Sports Organisations: the International Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Sports Federation, International Sports Organisation for the Disabled, International Blind Sports Federation, and the Cerebral Palsy International Sport and Recreation Association. Later on, the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf and International Federation for Athletes with Intellectual Impairments were included in the organisation. In its current form, the ICC provided a unified platform for the disability sports movement, marking the first instance of a collective representation. Additionally, it facilitated improved communication and collaboration between the Olympic Games Organising Committees and International Olympic Committee which resulted in the effective consolidation of the Summer Olympic Games in Seoul (1988) and the Winter Games in Albertville (1992) (Gold & Gold, *The rise of the Paralympic Games*, 2007).

1.4 The Paralympic Games

With the exception of the 1988 Winter Games in Calgary, the International Coordinating Committee of the World Sports Organisations oversaw the Olympic Games held in Olympic cities in 1988 and 1992. The Olympics and Paralympics had distinct Organising Committees in the Seoul Olympics (1988), however they effectively coordinated to facilitate the utilisation of venues, equipment, and essential staff. Due to the unavailability of the Olympic Village post-Olympics, a specially designed village was constructed to provide lodging for the Paralympian's. They experienced the same splendid Opening and Closing Ceremonies that were seen by crowds at maximum capacity of 75,000, just as in the Summer Games (Gold & Gold, *The Paralympic Games*, 2012).

Barcelona led the way in integrating the two sets of Games by assigning COOB92, the Organising Committee of the Barcelona Games, with the general duty. They also established a distinct Division to specifically organise the Paralympics. This ensured that athletes with disabilities received dedicated attention to their specific needs and were treated fairly in compared to Olympians. The Paralympic Games now include specially created Opening and Closing ceremonies. The provision of free entry to Paralympic games resulted in a significant

influx of spectators, accompanied by extensive television broadcasting. Simultaneously, COOB92 enforced its own regulations, reducing the variety of sports to 15, and excluding individuals with mental impairments from competing in the Paralympic Games. INAS organised an officially sanctioned Paralympic Games in Madrid, with the participation of 1400 participants from 73 different nations. This occurred subsequent to the conclusion of the Barcelona Paralympic Games (Rognoni, 1996).

The emergence of the Paralympic Games has significantly disrupted conventional perspectives on sport and disability. The Paralympic Games are often regarded as the highest point or ultimate achievement in the realm of sports for those with disabilities. They had significant impact on changing attitudes by focusing on accomplishments rather than disabilities. They have advanced the cause of inclusivity and played a significant role in advocating for the concept of designing urban spaces and buildings that are accessible to everyone. The Paralympic Games have significantly influenced regions where disability was a controversial issue, leading to changes in government perspectives, mostly to align with global opinion and secure the hosting rights for the event. Primarily, they have elevated the standing of impaired sport to a level where individuals are regarded with respect as athletes in their own merit, thereby confronting conventional beliefs and misconceptions about 'disability'.

1.5 The International Paralympic Committee

The establishment of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) in September 22, 1989 marked as the last stage in the building of the institutional framework for the Games. With its Headquarter in Bonn, Germany, the IPC serves as the governing body for five regional organisations, 161 National Paralympic Committees, and four disability specific international sports federations devoted to certain impairments (IOC, 2024). International Paralympic Committee aim is to empower Paralympic athletes to attain exceptional athletic performance and to inspire and captivate the global audience. It has an 11-point objective, which encompasses the development of sports from the first stages to the highest level of competition. Since 1992, IPC has been the only governing body for Paralympic sports that is officially acknowledged by the IOC.

As the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) grew closer, they settled disagreements, notably over the use of the term 'Olympics' (which the IOC considers intellectual property) and the Paralympic Logo. The IPC Logo, was first introduced during the Seoul Games. It was made up of five traditional Korean

decorative patterns known as Tae-Geuks, which were portrayed in the Olympic colours of blue, black, red, yellow, and green. Because the IOC perceived that this design closely resembled their five-ring insignia, the IPC reduced the number of Tae-Geuks from five to three in 1994. Furthermore, as part of a rebranding initiative in 2003, the IPC totally changed the Tae-Geuks. The phrase "I move" is taken from the Latin word "agito," which is used in the logo that was established for the 2004 Athens Games. The logo consists of three "agitos" which was accompanied by new tagline 'Spirit in Motion' (IPC, International Paralympic Committee. Annual Report 2004, 2005).

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and International Olympic Committee (IOC) signed four agreements between 2000 and 2006 that provided financial support to the IPC, defined both the ideals that should be followed for continuing collaboration and the regulations that should be followed explicitly for their partnership. It is a consensus to improve cooperation between the two institutions which was made in October 2000. The IPC President was appointed to the IOC in order to accomplish this, and a representative of the IPC was included on 11 IOC commissions, including the Evaluation Commission, which assesses proposals from towns hoping to host Olympic Games. Furthermore, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has committed to provide a yearly subsidy of three million United States dollars for the administration of the International Olympic Committee (IPC). They also provided special support to athletes from underdeveloped countries so they may compete in the Winter Paralympics (Salt Lake City) and the Summer Paralympics (Athens). In June of 2001, a formal agreement was reached in order to establish the framework for the competition of the Paralympic Games. As a result of the signing of this agreement, it was guaranteed that the Paralympic Games would always be held in the same city as the Olympic Games, immediately after the end of the Olympic Games. In addition, both Games would share venues and facilities. In accordance with the terms of the agreement in August 2003, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has committed to provide the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) with a sum of nine million dollars for the 2008 Games and fourteen million dollars for the 2010 and 2012 Games for the broadcasting and marketing of the Paralympics. These arrangements were extended until 2014 and 2016 under the June 2006 agreement. A further benefit was that it raised funding for the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) and defined the responsibilities that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) play in the organisation, planning, and staging of the Paralympics. It also covered issues like the sports programme, the utilisation of technical

documents, and the quantity of people who were accredited (Gold & Gold, The Paralympic Games, 2012).

In the process of selecting Olympic host cities, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) took into account the implementation of a "One City, One Bid" strategy. Cities competing to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 had to show that their organisations were fully integrated. As part of this, their bid documents featured extensive information about the Paralympic Games. Considering that both Salt Lake City and Athens have established a single organising committee, the integration process has actually proceeded more quickly than anticipated under these agreements²⁰. Furthermore, the official Reports of the Olympic Games from Sydney 2000 contain information on the Paralympic Games (SOCOG, 2001).

1.6 Disability and Para Sports in India

During the census that was conducted in India in 2011, out of a total population of 1.21 billion, there were 26.8 million individuals who were classed as differently abled people. This represents 2.21% of the population. Out of the total impaired population, 56% (1.5 billion) are men and 44% (1.18 billion) are girls. 80% of the overall proportion of individuals with disabilities live in rural regions. Women, in particular, face significant challenges when trying to enter the sports industry. The Indian government has implemented several policies and programmes to address this problem. India has consistently shown excellence in both national and international handicap sports for a significant period of time, which may be considered a remarkable accomplishment. Diverse governmental and non-governmental entities are collaborating to include individuals with disabilities into sporting endeavours (OCCPD, 2021).

In India, the public and government are beginning to acknowledge para-athletes on a greater scale. It has led to increased resources, infrastructure, and assistance for training and participation in global events. The nation's para-sports have seen efforts to improve their infrastructure. This includes improved coaching and training programmes, easily accessible amenities, and specialised training centres. A number of projects and activities have been started to find and develop para-athlete talent as a part of Athlete Development Programmes. receive training and exposure. The growing public knowledge of para-sports and media attention to them has contributed to a shift in public perceptions of disability and the advancement of inclusivity. This has prompted an increasing number of individuals with impairments to participate in para-sports and strive for success. Indian para-athletes have inspired others and produced role models for aspiring athletes through their achievements in

international contests, such as the Paralympic Games. Because of this, there has been a rise in the number of people participating in para-sports throughout the country (Kaur, 2021).

1.7 The Paralympic Committee of India

The Physically Handicapped Sports Federation of India was the first organisation of its sort in India. It was founded in 1992 by Mr. M. Mahadeva, who was also a Paralympian and a recipient of the Arjuna Award, which is India's highest sports award. It was legally established with the Registrar of Co-operative Societies in Bangalore, Karnataka, in the year 1994, and Mr. Mahadeva served as the organization's inaugural General Secretary.

In the years that followed, the name was changed to the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), which is currently the governing organisation for all of the Paralympic sports that are played in India. In addition to being acknowledged by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), it is also acknowledged by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Government of India. In association with the National Sports Federations and the State Paralympic Associations that are affiliated with it, the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) works to promote and enhance Paralympic Sports. The headquarters of PCI is in New Delhi, although the registered office is in Sree Kanteerva Stadium, Bangalore. For a considerable amount of time prior to the establishment of the governing body in India in 1992, individual Indian Para Athletes had already been competing in international competitions on their own. The very first time that India competed in the Summer Paralympics was in 1968, when the Paralympic Games were held in Tel Aviv, Israel.

The primary goals of this organisation were to advocate for disabled sports in our country, to identify disabled athletes at a national level, to provide them with essential training, and to prepare them for participation in state, national, and international sports events. These activities constituted the main focus of the organisation.

Participation in international sports events was crucial to showcase the abilities of our impaired athletes. Therefore, this organisation established an affiliation with the International Paralympic Committee, which was the highest governing body for sports for disabled worldwide and is an independent organisation that functions independently from the International Olympic Committee. Additionally, the International Paralympic Committee obtained associations with the International Wheelchair and Amputee Sports Federation, which is based in the United Kingdom and spans wheelchair and amputee sports all over the world; the FESPIC Federation, which is based in Japan and covers nations in the Far East and South Pacific areas; and the Asian Paralympic Committee, which is headed by Malaysia (PCI, 2023).

1.8 Growth and Development of the Paralympic Games in India

In India, Paralympic Games are a developing sport and enterprise. In spite of this, the journey from the inaugural Paralympic Games in 1960 to the most recent edition, which took place in Tokyo in 2020, was not an easy one for a country like India, where sports are still not accorded the priority that they deserve. There were a few years in between them that India was not even able to participate. However, the present para-sports landscape is evolving, as seen by the most recent edition's medal total. This study aimed to track the advancement of Indian para-athletes in the Paralympics year after year.

Mr. Murlikant Petkar set a new world record in the 50-meter freestyle swimming event at the 1972 Summer Paralympics, which were held in Heidelberg, West Germany, from August 2nd to August 11th. This achievement earned India its very first gold medal in the history of the competition. India ranked 24th among the 42 countries that took part.

In the 1984 New York Paralympics, as a result of remarkable performance, Joginder Singh Bedi was awarded a silver medal in the men's shot put competition and was also awarded two bronze medals in the javelin throw and the discus throw competitions. Bhimrao Kesarkar, was victorious in the Javelin competition and took home the silver medal. Within the group of 54 countries that participated in the tournament, India came in at position 37th.

The Javelin Throw competition at the Summer Paralympics held in Athens in 2004 was won by Devendra Jhajharia, who took home the gold medal. When it came to the Powerlifting competition, Rajinder Singh competed in the 56kg weight group and ended up coming in third place, earning him a Bronze Medal. Among the 136 nations, India came up at position 53.

During the 2012 Paralympic Games, which were held in London, Mr. H. N. Girisha excelled in the men's High Jump competition and finished with the Silver Medal.

In the Rio Paralympics 2016, India sent its largest ever delegation, which consisted of 19 competitors participating in five different sports. At the conclusion of these games, India was awarded a total of four medals, which included two gold medals, one silver medal, and one bronze medal. Through his accomplishment of a distance of 63.37 metres, Devendra Jhajharia was able to exceed his own previous World Record of 62.15 metres, which ultimately led to his earning the Gold Medal. After achieving a height of 1.89 metres, Mariyappan Thangavelu was awarded the gold medal in the high jump competition. With an incredible performance of 4.61 metres in the women's shot put competition, Deepa Malik created history by being the first Indian woman and the oldest athlete to ever win a medal at the Paralympics. She was also the first athlete to ever earn a medal in the sport. The men's high jump competition

was won by Varun Singh Bhati, who set a new personal best by jumping 1.86 metres and earning the bronze medal. up the list of 83 nations, India came up at position 43.

The data revealed that India's medal tally at the Paralympics grew yearly, peaking in the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games. The Central Government of India, a number of NGOs, private groups, and the Paralympic Committee of India were the primary sources of support and money for this outstanding accomplishment. In addition, the encouragement they received from the public and media pushed these para-athletes to compete at the highest level.

In Tokyo 2020, India had its highest-ever performance at the Paralympic Games, earning a total of nineteen medals during the course of the competition. These medals comprised five gold, eight silver, and six bronze medals. Their previous highest medal totals, which were four each from the 1984 Stoke Mandeville and New York Games as well as the 2016 Rio Olympics, were considerably eclipsed by this haul, which was a significant improvement.

Additionally, there were other noteworthy firsts that were cause for celebration, such as the fact that Bhavina Patel became the first Indian woman to win a medal at the Paralympic Games in the sport of table tennis, and Harvinder Singh replicated the accomplishment in the sport of archery. One of the most prominent names, however, was the shooter Avani Lekhara, who made history by being the first Indian woman to win a gold medal at the Paralympic Festival (Writer, 2021).

India's unprecedented achievement at the 2021 Paralympics in Tokyo was a critical course changing feat in the nation's Paralympic history. The Indian team outperformed itself, breaking all prior records in terms of total accomplishments and medal count. The below are a few remarkable performances at Tokyo 2020 from Indian Paralympians: -

1. In the Tokyo Paralympics, India won 19 medals including 5 Gold, 8 Silver and 6 Bronze Medals. As a result, India now holds the record for the most medals it has ever won in a single Paralympic competition, surpassing the previous mark of four medals set at the 2016 Rio Paralympic Tournament.
2. The Indian athletes who won gold medals in a variety of sporting disciplines. It was the first time that an Indian woman had ever won the gold medal in the women's 10m air rifle standing SH1 competition. Avani Lekhara achieved history by accomplishing this feat. In the F64 men's javelin throw competition, Sumit Antil broke the previous record, so earning India's second gold medal since the competition began. Manish Narwal (shooting), Krishna Nagar (badminton), and Pramod Bhagat (badminton) were among the other gold medallists.

3. Indian para-athletes also turned forth outstanding performances to win silver and bronze in a variety of events. Among the notable medallists were Devendra Jhajharia (javelin throw), Nishad Kumar (high jump), Singhraj Adhana (shooting), and Bhavina Patel (table tennis).
4. Breakthrough Performances: A number of paralympic athletes from India made history at the Tokyo Games by setting personal records and placing third. The commitment, diligence, and skill of Indian para-athletes were showcased in these performances on the international arena.
5. Acknowledgment and Festivity: The remarkable feats of Indian para-athletes at the Tokyo Paralympics were greeted with national acclaim and gratitude. The public, government, and sports authorities were among the many parties who congratulated the players and praised them as heroes.

The Indian Para Athletes and their Coaches have amassed a multitude of accolades over the years, including several prestigious awards from the Government of India such as 03-Rajeev Gandhi Khel Ratna Award, 05-Padmashri Awards, 31-Arjuna Awards, 06-Dronacharya Awards, and 05-Dhyan Chand Awards (PCI, 2023).

Overall, India's Paralympic movement reached a watershed moment with its performance at the Tokyo Games, which demonstrated the country's para-athletes' growing potential and strength on the international stage. In addition to bringing pride and happiness to the country, the record-breaking medal haul also increased expectations for the future of para-sports in India.

Since Indian para-athletes' achievements were publicly applauded and acknowledged, the general public's awareness of the ability and potential of athletes with impairments has grown. The perseverance, skill, and resilience of Indian para-athletes were showcased by their remarkable performance at the Tokyo Paralympics. This event held great significance for Indian sports and demonstrated the athletes' dedication and support from the country's sports associations, government, and general public.

1.9 Determining the Problem

There were some interesting facts about Tokyo 2020 Paralympics which motivated the researcher to undertake the study “**A Phenomenal Rise of the Indian Paralympians in the 21st Century**”, which are as follows:

1. The aggregate count of medals acquired during the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics surpasses the cumulative count of medals gained in all previous editions of the event. India claimed 19 medals at the 2020 Paralympics in Tokyo and a total of 12 medals at all previous Games.
2. Since its inception in the year 1960, India has participated in 11 Paralympic Games and had won thirty-one medals, which included nine gold, twelve silver, ten bronze. Tokyo 2020 produced more than half of these i.e 19 medals.
3. India participated in nine sports at 2020 Tokyo Paralympics as compared to five in 2016 Rio Paralympics, four sports in 2012 London Paralympics and three sports in 2008 Beijing Paralympics. It shows the growth of Paralympics to different sports in the 21st century.
4. The total number of athletes participated at 2020 Tokyo Paralympics was 54 which is highest so far in the history of Paralympics in India. There were 19 athletes participated in 2016 Rio Paralympics, 10 in 2012 London Paralympics and mere five athletes at Beijing 2008. The significant rise in the number of participants shows the phenomenal rise of Paralympians in India in last 20 years.

The above facts encouraged the researcher to study the reasons for this phenomenal rise in the field of Paralympics and Paralympians in India in the 21st century and most particularly in last 10 years.

1.10 Statement of the Problem

The present study was undertaken to study “**A Phenomenal Rise of the Indian Paralympians in the 21st century**”.

1.11 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study includes to study the factors behind the success of Indian Paralympians in the 21st century especially since 2016 Rio Olympics Games onwards.

1.12 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To study the rise of the Indian Paralympians in the 21st century.
2. To study the factors determining the rise of Paralympics in India.
3. To study the challenges and future suggestions faced by the Para-athletes in India.

1.13 Hypothesis of the Study

It was hypothesised that:

1. There is a remarkable rise in the performance of Indian Para-Athletes in Paralympic Games.
2. The Indian Para-Athletes are provided with better training facilities and infrastructure which enable them to perform better at global events.

1.14 Relevance of the Study

The study will help to understand the rise of the Paralympians in India in the 21st century. It will also help the researcher to understand various factors responsible for the rise of the Paralympics in India. It will also help to identify challenges of the Para athletes in India. These factors can support Para athletes and can improve their performance in future.

1.15 Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

The study was delimited to the data collected from the para-athletes who participated in the Khelo India Para games scheduled from 10th-17th December 2023 in New Delhi. It was the first National level Para tournament ever in the country. The study was also delimited to the objectives of the study.

The limitation was that some athletes were not able to answer the Interview questions in english, so it was required to translate the questions in their local language and their responses in local language to English.

CHAPTER - II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Before starting any sort of significant fieldwork, it is imperative that researchers read relevant research publications in their field that are related to the topic of their study. These linked studies provide details on the extent of exploratory data collection, the conclusions reached from the findings, and the findings potential future ramifications. In this chapter, the researcher had synthesised and provided the literature that has been found to be significant to the current investigation

2.1 The Olympic Movement and the Paralympic Games

Two of the largest international sporting events are the Olympics and Paralympics. Because of this, it can frequently be challenging to distinguish between the two and emphasise their distinctions. The majority of competitors in the Olympics are able-bodied, whereas those competing in the Paralympics have some sort of physical or mental disability. This is the main distinction between the two competitions. Actually, the Paralympics were first created to aid World War II veterans who had sustained injuries. The original purpose of the games was to give veterans access to rehabilitative sports. Over time, this evolved into a recreational sport with friendly competition, and finally the Paralympics as we know them today. Apart from this, all other distinctions are negligible. For example, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is in charge of overseeing the Olympics, while the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is in charge of overseeing the Paralympics. There are also minor variations in the sports that are played during the games and the county residents that take part in the activity (<https://www.differencebetween.info/difference-between-olympics-and-paralympics>, n.d.).

Gold & Gold studied that by merging the words "paraplegic" and "Olympic", the term "Paralympics" (IPC, 2006a), successfully challenging Olympic traditions that celebrate excellence and the flawlessly formed body with the realities of disabilities. The fact that the Games welcomed competitors with disabilities other than paraplegia was a contributing factor in this. It also emerged from a process of convergence that linked the Olympic movement and the Paralympics intimately. The title was authorised with a clever etymology correction that claimed the first syllable of "Paralympics" came from the Greek preposition "para," meaning alongside or next to. If seen this way, the Paralympics are a festival that coexists with the

Olympic Games and runs concurrently with them, but maintains its unique identity (Gold & Gold, 2012).

2.2 The History and Development of the Paralympic Games

The words "Olympic" and "para," which mean "beside or alongside," are the roots of the word "Paralympic." It means that the Paralympics are the Olympics' parallel games and that they show how the two movements coexist (<https://www.paralympic.org>). The Paralympic Games are a major international multisport competition that attracts athletes with disabilities ranging from reduced muscle power to impaired passive range of motion, limb deficiency, leg length difference, short stature, hypertonia, ataxia, athetosis, vision impairment, and intellectual impairment.

The late nineteenth century saw the emergence of disability athletics, mostly as a result of the efforts of deaf community organisers. In 1888, Berlin saw the founding of the first Sports Club for the Deaf. By 1924, national sports federations for the deaf had developed in Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Great Britain, Holland, and Poland. The First International Silent Games, which took place in Paris in 1924 and inaugurated a four-year cycle of "World Games for the Deaf," brought together 140 athletes from these six federations (SÉGUILLON, 2002). These were subsequently recognised as the Deaflympics by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) after being split into Summer and Winter festivals in accordance with the Olympic format.

Although the Deaf community continued to operate independently as a disability group and did not take part in the process that led to the creation of the Paralympics, the Deaflympics were significant as a sign of potential. On the other hand, the latter resulted from the care given to seriously wounded soldiers at the close of World War II, especially Ludwig Guttmann's efforts, who played a similar role to Baron Pierre de Coubertin in bringing the modern Olympics back to life. In 1939, Guttmann, a well-known Jewish neurosurgeon, fled Nazi Germany and came to Britain. He first held a research position at the Department of Neurosurgery at Oxford University before moving on to the Wingfield-Morris Orthopaedic Hospital. Later, he was appointed director of Stoke Mandeville Hospital, which would eventually become the National Spinal Injuries Centre (Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire). Paraplegia was later described by Guttmann as the "most depressing and neglected subject in all medicine" at the time. It was marked by low patient survival rates, low staff morale among nurses, and difficulty finding specialised physiotherapists to hire. In order to prevent pressure

sores and address infection issues, his approach implemented a "total care" strategy that involved turning patients physically every two hours during the day and night. With physiotherapy support limb flexibility as well as enhanced movement in certain patients. To keep patients occupied and give them a feeling of purpose, a pre-vocational job schedule and different recreational activities, such as visits, concerts, and competitive sports, were added to the medicinal regimen. Thus, sport went beyond simple recreation in this setting. It was described as "the most natural form of remedial exercise" because it not only improved physical attributes like strength, endurance, speed, coordination, and ability to overcome exhaustion, but it also had psychological benefits including increasing life satisfaction and facilitating social reintegration (Guttmann, 1976).

Building on these notions, Guttmann devised the idea of a disability sports festival designed to foster interaction amongst patients and address perceptions regarding the talents of the disabled. A sixteen-person archery competition between two teams—one from Stoke Mandeville and the other from Richmond-on-Thames' Star and Garter Home for disabled ex-servicemen—was held on the hospital's front lawns on July 28, 1948. Archery is regarded as having the second-greatest "physiotherapeutic value... for the paralysed" after swimming (Special Correspondent, 1948). The event was purposefully chosen as a display of promise, symbolised by taking place on the same day as the London Olympics Opening Ceremony. A larger competition was held in Stoke Mandeville in 1949, with sixty contestants from five hospitals taking part in a growing list of sports. Guttmann spoke at the gathering, expressing the hope that it would spread around the world and become "the disabled men's and women's equivalent of the Olympic Games" (Goodman S. , 1986).

The Hospital quickly developed institutional ties that aided in the Stoke Mandeville Games' swift internationalisation through the training of visiting staff, staff members who moved to other hospitals and shared Stoke Mandeville's unique approach to sport, and former patients who pioneered paraplegic sport in their home nations. In 1952, another Olympic year, a number of Dutch war veterans participated, hinting at future European participation. In 1953 there were teams from Finland, France, Israel, the Netherlands, and Canada. The Stoke Mandeville Games became known as the "Paralympics" by the time the Australians participated in 1957, following the Americans' success in 1955 (Brittain, 2009).

Dr. Guttmann staged the inaugural wheelchair competition, which he termed the Stoke Mandeville Games, on July 29, 1948, the day of the Olympic Opening Ceremony in London.

This event marked a significant milestone in the history of the Paralympic Games. Sir Ludwig Guttmann organised a sporting tournament in 1948 for sixteen World War II veterans who had spinal cord injuries at Stoke Mandeville, England. Four years later, when competitors from Holland joined, the global movement that is now known as the Paralympic Movement was established. Rome hosted the first-ever impaired athlete competition in 1960, following the Olympic model. Shortly after the conclusion of the Olympic Games, 400 competitors from 23 countries competed in eight sports at the Olympic-style games for athletes with impairments. The Paralympic Games, which are held every four years in the same year as the Olympic Games and are currently among the biggest sporting events in the world, have a history of encouraging social inclusion (<https://olympics.com/en/sports/paralympic/>), n.d.).

The International Stoke Mandeville Games were established in 1952, and Dutch ex-servicemen joined the Movement (Paralympics History - Evolution of the Paralympic Movement, 2023). Later on, the Stoke Mandeville Games evolved into the Paralympic Games, which debuted in 1960 in Rome, Italy, with 400 competitors representing 23 nations. They have now happened every four years since then. In 1960, 400 competitors from 23 nations competed in the first Paralympic Games in Rome, Italy. They have since been held every four years. (Ghosh & Bhowmick, 2018)

Established in 1960 under the auspices of the World Federation of Ex-Servicemen, an International Working Group on Sport for the Disabled looked into the problems related to sport for those with impairments. In order to provide opportunities for athletes who were unable to compete in the International Stoke Mandeville Games, such as paraplegics, amputees, athletes with vision impairments, and those with cerebral palsy, the International Sport Organisation for the Disabled (ISOD) was founded in 1964.

At the beginning, ISOD had 16 member countries. The association worked very hard to get athletes with cerebral palsy and blindness into the 1980 Arnhem Paralympics as well as amputee and blind athletes into the 1976 Toronto Paralympics. Its objective was to serve as a Co-coordinating Committee and accept all impairments going forward. However, in 1978 and 1980, respectively, the Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association (CPISRA) and the International Blind Sports Federation (IBSA) were established as well as other international bodies focused on disability. The "International Co-coordinating Committee Sports for the Disabled in the World" (ICC) was established in 1982 by the four international

groups after they realised how important it was to coordinate the Games. The four presidents of CPISRA, IBSA, ISMGF, and ISOD, the general secretaries, and one more member (first the vice president, then the technical officer) made up the first ICC. The deaf continued to run their own organisation even after joining the International Committee of Sport for the Deaf (CISS) and International Sports Federations for Persons with an Intellectual Disability (INAS-FID) in 1986. Nonetheless, the member countries asked that the organisation include more national and regional participation (<https://www.paralympic.org/ipc/history>, n.d.).

The first-ever Winter Paralympics Games were held in Sweden in 1976. Similar to the Summer Games, the Winter Games are held every four years and feature both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies for the Paralympics. Due to an agreement between the IPC and IOC, the Games have also been held in the same cities and venues as the Olympics since the Summer Games in Seoul, Korea in 1988 and the Winter Games in Albertville, France in 1992 (Paralympics History - Evolution of the Paralympic Movement, 2023).

The Paralympic Games quickly expanded. Athletes from 40 countries competed in 13 different sports at the 1976 Summer Olympics in Toronto. It was in Sweden that year that the inaugural Winter Paralympic Games took place. Paralympics and Olympics shared venues by the time of the Seoul Paralympics in 1988. As "The World's Second Largest Sporting Event," the Atlanta games were advertised on television by 1996. A greater degree of inclusivity resulted from the event's expanded exposure. Vets with spinal injuries were the target audience for Guttman's games. The games were first only available to people with spinal injuries, but eventually they were offered to the general public. As late as 1976, competitors who were not limited to spinal cord injuries were invited to compete, including amputees and people with visual impairments (<https://www.paralympic.org/ipc/history>, n.d.).

The Summer Games, a Paralympic competition, were first held in the same city as the Olympics in 1988. For the first time, the Paralympic and Olympic organising committees collaborated closely. There were new categories for disabilities, and each of the 17 sports featured had a classification specific to the kind and severity of the condition. The facilities were well-designed and community groups received free admission at the same time. Finally, the participants received care "like athletes rather than patients," according to Dr. Steadward, a former International Paralympic Committee president, who made this statement in a 2003 CBC article. For all these reasons, the 1988 Seoul Paralympics were seen as highly advanced, marking the start of the contemporary Paralympic era. The International Paralympic

Committee was established a year later (<http://www.accessibleportugal.com/revista/2008/Setembro/capa1.html>, 2009).

2.3 International Disability Sports Competitions

At the 9th Annual International Stoke Mandeville Games in Rome, which took place for the first time in history, 5000 spectators welcomed 400 wheelchair athletes from 23 different countries. The lack of awareness regarding accessibility in 1960 caused certain challenges for the athletes' transportation. Twelve sporting events were held anyway, including fencing, snooker, men's basketball, swimming, javelin, shot put, Indian club throwing, table tennis, archery, dart archery, and pentathlon (which consists of swimming, javelin, shot put, archery, and club throwing). Four years later, in Tokyo, the success was duplicated under heavy media coverage from both the local and national press. The following games were scheduled to be hosted by Mexico, but due to reported technical issues, the event was moved to Tel Aviv, Israel, at the request of the Mexican government. Ten thousand spectators flocked to see 750 competitors break 20 records (<https://www.paralympic.org/ipc/history>, n.d.).

The international tournament was place outside of Munich, the host city of the Olympics, once more in 1972. Nonetheless, the handicapped groups demonstrated their abilities in Heidelberg by setting new swimming records. By the time subcommittees were established for each sport to enhance the regulations. Amputees and those with vision impairments participated in the 1976 Toronto tournament. Medal games replaced exhibitions in the previous competition. The first Paralympic Winter Games were held in Sweden that year.

The 1984 Paralympics were held in two locations: Stoke Mandeville and New York. The competitors with spinal cord injuries took part in the original disability sports, while the other three disability groups—visually impaired, cerebral palsy, and amputee—went to the second site. The games were seen by 80,000 spectators in person, and many more watched them on the major US television networks. The games were broadcast on television for the third time.

2.4 Disability and the Body

The Paralympic Games, which were first held formally in 1960, have grown to be the world's second-biggest multisport competition and the highest accolade for disabled athletes. Many individuals and events that resulted in profound organisational and structural change have contributed to the shift from a medical model that focused on elite athlete performance to one that focused on sport as a means of rehabilitation. The writers used their personal experiences with recommendations from several foreign experts to determine whether events qualified as significant change for the purposes of this essay. The instances are woven into the text in three different historical periods: transcendence, rising to prominence, and emerging awareness. The conclusion is that the Paralympic Games left a lasting legacy on sport, society, and people with disabilities, and that this trend will further intensify going forward (Legg & Steadward, 07 Dec 2011).

This research is a component of a broader qualitative and exploratory study that looked into the consequences of Brazil's Rio 2016 Paralympic Games (PG). Twenty-four disability rights activists and those holding executive roles in Paralympic sports participated in in-depth, open interviews. This essay aims to investigate inspiration, one of the primary alleged legacies. The participants felt that the PG were motivating for persons with disabilities (DP) because they demonstrated the skills of DP, opened their eyes to new possibilities, and encouraged them to start or continue playing sports. In addition, the athletes' inspirational stories of "overcoming" their disabilities and associated societal and environmental constraints inspired non-disabled persons (NDP) to reevaluate their own circumstances. While some participants critiqued the hero/superhero narratives, the majority contended that DP should not be treated any differently because these narratives are also prevalent with reference to NDP. These storylines still hold some promise for them (Souza & Brittain, 02 Feb 2021).

There are arguments that suggest the Paralympic Games (PG) could improve the lives of disabled individuals (PWD). On the other hand, some argue that the PG may actually be detrimental to the PWD rights movement because it may advance ableism and/or the medical model of disability. In light of this, we created a qualitative exploratory study to look into the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games' legacy from the viewpoint of disability rights activists and those working in managerial roles for Paralympic sports. One of the primary alleged legacies of the PG, which promoted PWD visibility and a shift in society's perspective of PWD, is covered in this article. After conducting 24 in-depth, open interviews, we discovered that the PG served

as a platform for PWD, who were not frequently seen in the public eye or in the media prior to the Games. In addition to potentially creating new opportunities for PWD, this visibility assisted in dispelling harmful stigmas and preconceptions about them. According to our interviews, we shouldn't count on the PG by itself to drastically alter public opinion and the status of PWDs. They are a component of a more extensive and intricate series of activities that are gradually advancing this process (Brittain & de Souza, *The Rio 2016 Paralympic Games: The Visibility of People With Disabilities in Brazil as a Possible Legacy*, July 29, 2020).

Tokyo, Japan made history by hosting the Paralympic Games twice in August 2021. Before the Games, Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike said that bettering the lives of disabled people in Tokyo and across Japan would depend more on the success of the Paralympic Games than on the Olympic Games. The statements made about the Paralympic legacy by the Japanese government and the organising committee of the Games are evaluated critically in this paper based on the opinions of the interviewees and my own experiences as a researcher in critical disability studies and mega event legacy research. It is based on interviews conducted in May 2019 with twenty-six Japanese citizens of the Tokyo Metropolitan area who are disabled and secondary data. We wonder if the attention on disability in light of Japan's ageing population and the continuous emphasis on a barrier-free environment would genuinely improve the lives of handicapped people in Japan, without significantly improving our knowledge of the influence of attitudes towards disability. Furthermore, I draw attention to some of the primary problems that Japan is currently dealing with, including language usage and laws pertaining to segregation, which could make it challenging to leave behind an incredibly impressive Paralympic legacy. (Brittain, *Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Legacy, Disability and Japan – Muzukashi desu ne?*, 6 Apr 2022).

Based on the theories of self-determination, social practice, and ableism, this article offers a framework to help explain why disabled persons (DP) have lower rates of access to and involvement in physical activity and sport (S&PA). We contend that ableism functions as a control mechanism for all of the components of Bourdieu's idea of social practice—habitus, capital, and field—as well as the many types of capital—social, cultural, economic, and symbolic. Furthermore, because of their perceived relatedness, competence, and autonomy, we contend that this regulation of social practice also affects DP's ability to self-determine their access to and involvement in S&PA. Additionally, we recognise that social practices within the context of S&PA may serve to further entrench ableist beliefs and that ableism itself can have a direct impact on self-determination (Brittain, Biscaia, & Gerard, *Ableism as a regulator of*

social practice and disabled people's self-determination to participate in sport and physical activity, 27 Nov 2019).

Kearney, Brittain and Kipnis stated that The largest minority group is made up of those with disabilities (PWD). Although there has been progress in the recognition and integration of this group in the market, it is still unclear how the discourse around the promotion of socially excluded customers' involvement in the marketplace has been impacted by the (mis)representation of PWD. By expanding the idea of ableism into the context of PWD representation and using it to analyse the We're the Super human advertisement made for the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, this study explores the relationship between (mis)representation and the inclusion/exclusion discourse. The finding that people with disabilities' misrepresentations can partially hide and/or address the root causes of the exclusion these individuals experience in their daily lives advances the field's understanding of how consumption cultures maintain negative, exclusionary social perceptions of marginalised groups rather than fostering inclusion (Kearney, Brittain, & Kipnis, 2 Nov 2019).

2.5 India at Paralympics

In 1968, India competed in their first Paralympic Games in Tel Aviv, Israel. The Indian delegation, consisting of two women and eight men, sent ten athletes to the Games. Though India's para-athletes did not come home with any medals from the Games, it was their first significant experience competing on a major international platform.

Four years later, in 1972, India won their first medal at the Paralympic Games in Heidelberg, Germany. The world record time of 37.331 seconds was established by para swimmer Murlikant Petkar, who took home the gold medal in the 50-meter freestyle swimming competition. However, that was the only medal India took home from the Games, and as a result, they finished the competition with 24 medals total, out of 42 competing nations. India made its Olympic debut in 1972 by winning their first gold medal. The nation did not compete in the 1976 or 1980 Games; their next appearance was in the 1984 Games. (Chakraborty, 2020).

2.5.1 Rich Medal Haul at the 1984 Paralympics

Two distinct locations hosted the Summer Paralympics in 1984. Wheelchair athletes suffering from spinal cord injuries competed in Stoke Mandeville, UK, while wheelchair and

ambulatory athletes with cerebral palsy, amputees, and les autres (others) used the Mitchell Athletic Complex and Hofstra University in Long Island, New York. Finishing in tied 37th place with South Korea, the Indian delegation brought home their greatest number of medals from the competition.

It should be noted that Joginder Singh Bedi's exceptional genius was a major contributor to the nation's success. Bedi won two bronze medals in the javelin and discus throws after winning a silver in the men's shot put. After winning a silver in the javelin, Bhimrao Kesarkar added a fourth medal for India (Ghosh & Chatterjee , 2022).

2.5.2 Medal Drought from 1988 to 2000

At the Paralympics, India's results differed from 1984, when they won the most medals. Between 1988 to 2000, the Indian contingents could not secure a podium position (Chakraborty, 2020).

2.5.3 India's Significant Growth in the 21st Century

At the 2004 Games in Athens, India won two medals (a gold and a silver) to finish at 53rd place, ending their medal drought. In 2004, Rajinder Singh took home the bronze in the 56-kg powerlifting division and Devendra Jhajharia took home the gold in the javelin throw ("Medal Standings Athens 2004 Paralympic Games". International Paralympic Committee. Retrieved 15 June 2011., 2011).

A delegation from India participated in the Beijing, People's Republic of China, 2008 Summer Paralympics. Five athletes—all male—competed in shooting, powerlifting, and athletics, according to official records. At these Games, India did not take home a medal ("Overall Medal Standings" , at the Wayback Machine, official website of the 2008 Paralympics, 2008). HN Girisha won a silver medal in the men's F42 high jump division at London in 2012, which helped India win a medal. That was the only medal India took home from that edition, though.

Nonetheless, India equaled their greatest medal total of four in the 2016 Rio Olympics with a fantastic performance. Interestingly, Athletics accounted for all four medals, as it is a forte of the Indian Paralympians. In the F42 and F46 high jump and javelin events, Mariyappan Thangavelu and Devendra Jhajharia took home gold medals, respectively, and Deepa Malik

won the silver in the shot put event. In the F42 high jump division, Varun Singh Bhati took home a bronze medal (Chakraborty, 2020).

2.5.4 Magnificent Performance at Tokyo 2020

In Tokyo 2020, India achieved its greatest-ever Paralympic performance, taking home 19 medals (six gold, eight silver, and six bronze). India's previous best medal totals from the 1984 Stoke Mandeville and New York Games and the 2016 Rio Olympics were greatly beaten by this haul. Shooting led all contributors with five medals, followed by badminton with four and high jump with five. Notable firsts to celebrate included Bhavina Patel becoming the first Indian to win a medal in table tennis at the Paralympic Games and Harvinder Singh repeating the feat in archery. The shooter Avani Lekhara, who became the first Indian woman to win a gold medal at the Paralympic Games, was the most well-known figure, though (Writer, 2021). The medal winners at Tokyo 2020 are tabulated below in table 2.1:

Table 2.1: Medal Winners at Tokyo 2020 Paralympics (Writer, 2021)

Athlete	Medal	Event
Bhavina Patel	Silver	Women's singles table tennis Class 4 category
Nishad Kumar	Silver	Men's high jump T47
Avani Lekhara	Gold	Women's 10m air rifle shooting standing SH1
Devendra Jhajharia	Silver	Men's javelin throw F46
Sundar Singh Gurjar	Bronze	Men's javelin throw F46
Yogesh Kathuniya	Silver	Men's discus throw F56
Sumit Antil	Gold	Men's javelin throw F64
Singhraj Adhana	Bronze	Men's 10m air pistol shooting SH1
Mariyappan Thangavelu	Silver	Men's high jump T42
Sharad Kumar	Bronze	Men's high jump T42
Praveen Kumar	Silver	Men's high jump T64
Avani Lekhara	Bronze	Women's 50m rifle 3 positions shooting SH1
Harvinder Singh	Bronze	Men's individual recurve - open archery
Manish Narwal	Gold	Men's 50m pistol SH1
Singhraj Adhana	Silver	Men's 50m pistol SH1
Pramod Bhagat	Gold	Men's singles badminton SL3
Manoj Sarkar	Bronze	Men's singles badminton SL3
Suhas Yathiraj	Silver	Men's singles badminton SL4
Krishna Nagar	Gold	Men's singles badminton SH6

Some of the outstanding achievement of Indian Para-athletes at Tokyo 2020 is as follows: -

- With a score of 249.6, Avani Lekhara set a new Paralympic record and won the gold medal in the women's 10m air rifle shooting standing SH1 class final. It also tied the world record score for the category. Following her initial success of earning Paralympic gold, Avani Lekhara became the first Indian woman to win two medals at the Paralympic Games when she won a bronze in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions SH1 category.
- **Devendra Jhajharia** became the most decorated para-athlete after winning the silver medal in the men's F46 javelin throw. It added to his tally of two gold medals at the Paralympic Games in Athens (2004) and Rio (2016).
- In the men's javelin throw F64 category, **Sumit Antil** won gold after breaking his own world record three times. With his opening throw of 66.95 metres, the 23-year-old Sumit broke his own world record of 62.88 metres. With a throw of 68.08 metres on his second try, Sumit Antil broke the previous record for the world. After five attempts in the final, Sumit Antil ultimately set a new world record of 68.55 metres, earning him the top spot on the podium.
- **Manish Narwal**, an Indian shooter, demonstrated a strong performance at the Asaka Shooting Range to win the gold medal in the men's 50m pistol SH1 event at the Tokyo Paralympics.
- **Pramod Bhagat** of India emerged victorious in the men's singles SL3 category, marking the first-ever title in badminton's Paralympic debut in Tokyo. The three-time world champion para shuttler finished the competition with just one loss in four matches, taking home the historic gold medal.
- **Krishna Nagar**, an Indian, concluded his Tokyo Paralympic campaign by winning the gold medal in men's singles SH6 badminton.
- **Mariyappan Thangavelu** secured a silver medal in the men's T42 high jump category, marking his second Paralympic victory. **Sharad Kumar**, who took home the bronze in the men's T42 high jump, joined fellow countryman Thangavelu on the podium.
- **Bhavina Patel** won the silver medal in the Class 4 women's singles table tennis competition.
- **Praveen Kumar** earned silver in the men's T64 high jump division, earning the eighth athletics medal and fourth in the high jump category.
- **Harvinder Singh** made history at Tokyo 2020 by winning the bronze medal in men's individual recurve open archery (Channel, 2021)

2.6 Government Policies and Private Support

The government gives grants and cash to the Paralympic committee of India (PCI) so that paralympic athletes can have all the amenities need to compete on an equal footing with other athletes. An extra Rs. 10.50 crore was spent on TOPS for the para-athletes during the most recent Paralympic cycle. The government has categorised parasports as a "Priority" category for financial support, and all necessary funding is given to para-athletes for training and competition exposure in accordance with the guidelines established for this reason. The official National Sports Federation (NSF) for para-athletes in India is the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI). Under the Scheme of Assistance to NSFs, the Government of India provides funds/grants to the PCI for the purpose of holding National Coaching Camps, Foreign Exposures, National Championships, Equipment Purchase, Coaches and Sports Staff Salary, etc. Aside from their specific needs, Paralympic athletes receive all necessary facilities on par with regular athletes. The particulars of the assistance provided to PCI under the National Sports Federation Assistance Programme is as follow in table 2.2:

Table 2.2: Details of Funding to PCI

Year	Budget Allocated	Fund Utilized
2017-18	6.00 Cr	3.30 Cr
2018-19	6.03 Cr	6.45 Cr
2019-20	10.00 Cr	5.88 Cr
2020-21 & 2021-22	10.30 Cr	3.81 Cr (Till November 2021)

In addition to the amount mentioned in the table 2.2, during the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic cycle, a total of Rs. 10.50 crore was spent on training, Out of Pocket Allowances (OPS), Foreign Exposures, Equipment Purchase, Sports Science Services, and other expenses for para-athletes who were medal hopefuls under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS). (Ghosh & Chatterjee, India's present stand point and future possibilities regarding paralympics, 2023).

Among the 19 competitors representing India in the 2016 Paralympic Games are Deepa Malik and Devender Jhajharia, who serve as examples of the transformation that is occurring throughout the nation. This small delegation is actually India's biggest-ever Paralympic delegation. (China had the largest delegation with 308 athletes; Brazil had the second-largest with 285; the United States had the third-largest with 279). Deepthi Bopaiah, executive director of GoSports Foundation, a charitable organisation that provides funding to Indian professional sportsmen, said, "It's fantastic." "This is undoubtedly a fantastic beginning for India. I predict that more people will step up to help these athletes." The majority of the competitors competing

in this summer's Paralympics are financed via a programme that the foundation exclusively introduced a year ago for para-athletes from India. India has won two gold, one silver, and one bronze medal thus far. That represents twice as much success as its Olympic equivalent from 2016, which had over 100 athletes (<https://www.paralympicindia.org.in/history>, 2023).

The Indian government recently enacted a novel corporate social responsibility rule mandating that specific corporations donate two percent of their revenues to social development initiatives such as those related to education, poverty alleviation, and sports, contingent on their earnings and revenue. Aparna Ravichandran, head of partnerships at GoSports Foundation, adds, "It's really changed the game for us." The foundation has been dependent on the donations of individuals and small organisations since its founding eight years ago, but this new mandate has led to funding from significant partners and multinational corporations. The government has introduced the "Target Olympic Podium Scheme," a programme for which it has budgeted slightly more than 300 million rupees, or over \$4 million. For athletes, many of whom come from incredibly low-income families, these financial incentives have meant the world to them. They also demonstrate to a society that values academics more than sports that sports can be respectable and successful careers. "They can see money," adds Bopaiah, who also notes that athletes can receive government prizes and sponsorships worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. For instance, high jumper Mariyappan Thangavelu has been guaranteed 20 million rupees, or about \$300,000, by the Tamil Nadu government in southern India, in exchange for winning a gold medal at this year's Paralympics. Reforms to policy have also improved media coverage and raised public understanding of the requirements of athletes with disabilities (Abhat, 2016).

The financing and support from a range of commercial enterprises, non-governmental organisations, numerous banks, businesses, and associations with ties to the public and commercial sectors support the athletes as well as the association. In addition to working to increase the popularity of sports in society and to support & develop para-athletes, they also raise money to promote sports. Among the companies are JSW, Indian Bank, Indian Oil, Vedanta, Khelo India, and Citibank. In addition, there are a number of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) headed by prominent Indian athletes abroad, such as Ozoki, founded by Olympic gold medallist Abhinav Bindra, and Go Sports, led by Indian cricket legend Rahul Dravid, which primarily provide personal sponsorship to the exceptional para-athletes who will compete for India at the Paralympic Games (Ghosh & Chatterjee, India's present stand point and future possibilities regarding paralympics, 2023).

For medal winners in the Rio Paralympics, the Indian government has announced monetary prizes of Rs 90 lakhs. The monetary awards are being distributed under the Awareness Generation and Publicity (AGP) plan, according to Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Thawar Chand Gehlot. Gehlot announced that a special felicitation programme will be held to honour medal winners. Silver medallist Deepa Malik will receive Rs 20 lakh, gold medal winners Mariyappan Thangavelu and Devendra Jhajharia Rs 30 lakh apiece, and bronze medallist Varun Singh Bhati Rs 10 lakh for his victory at the 2016 Rio Olympics. At the 2016 Rio Paralympics, Indian para-athletes created history by winning an incredible four medals. India is proud of the accomplishments of its para-athletes. Medal winners will receive a monetary prize from the department amounting Rs 90 lakh, according to Gehlot. The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has already praised the Indian Paralympians' greatest-ever performance in his monthly radio show, Mann Ki Baat. India made the best performance in the history of the Paralympics. Mariyappan Thangavelu won the gold medal with a jump of 1.89 metres, while Bhati placed third and took home the bronze with a jump of 1.86 metres, his personal best. To become the first Indian woman to earn a medal at the Paralympic Games, Devendra Jhajharia won gold in the javelin throw and Deepa Malik took home silver in the shot put. India sent 19 competitors, the most delegation it has ever had, to the 2016 Rio Paralympics. From September 7–September 18, more than 4400 competitors representing 160 nations competed in the Rio Games (ANI, 2016).

Following an injury, Mariyappan Thangavelu, the son of a fruit vendor in Salem, jumped to win gold in the Paralympics; Varun Bhati took home bronze. Mariyappan Thangavelu says he barely cries. However, he cried the day he departed for the Paralympics in Rio. He claims that his mother's tears and embrace were the reason for that. "I can't take it when her eyes are crying. I started crying because I felt that I couldn't leave her. For me, she has been everything," he declares. Speaking to The Sunday Express from Rio, 20-year-old Thangavelu claims that winning a medal at the Games would be the greatest present he could offer his mother Saroja, a fruit vendor in Periyadamgatti, around 60 miles from Salem, Tamil Nadu. "I needed to get a medal for all the suffering she had gone through to take care of us. I told her to pray for me at the village temple every day and that I would return with a medal," he adds (G Sandip, 2016).

J Jayalithaa, the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, declared Mariyappan Thangavelu, the gold medallist in the T-42 high-jump at the Rio Paralympics, will get an award of Rs 2 crore. "You have made history by leaping over a height of 1.89 metres, making the State of

Tamil Nadu and the Nation proud of you." In a statement, the chief minister stated, "Your accomplishment, overcoming numerous challenges and barriers, will inspire more and more children and youth to overcome adversities and to participate and strive for greater achievements." Varun Singh Bhati, in addition to Thangavelu, won a medal for India in the T-42 high jump, taking home a bronze. Bhati achieved the highest score of 1.86 metres. American Sam Grewe was awarded the silver medal. From all throughout the nation, congratulations flowed in, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi complimenting the pair for their accomplishments at the Rio Paralympics. India is overjoyed! PM Modi tweeted, "Congratulations to Mariyappan Thangavelu for winning a gold medal and Varun Singh Bhati for taking home a bronze at the #Paralympics." For their achievement, Mariyappan will receive Rs 75 lakh and Bhati Rs 30 lakh under the Sports Ministry's Cash Award Scheme. As declared by the Ministry before to the Games, the reward money is equivalent to that of the medal winners from the Olympic Games last month (Express Web Desk, 2016).

In December 2020, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) presented the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) with the 'Best National Sports Federation Award' at the Turf 2020 India Sports Awards. The award served as a memento of appreciation for the earnestness and perseverance of PCI's board members, under the leadership of President Deepa Malik, as well as for the work being done locally in collaboration with the Sports Ministry and SAI (Sports Authority of India). It was won during a period when the coronavirus pandemic presented a challenge for which no one was ready, which made it much more noteworthy. Deepa Malik told the Olympic Channel, "I think the federation has done a tremendous job even in the Covid times". We've hosted multiple webinars, attended to our athletes' mental health, advocated for at-home training, and perfected the use of social media for communication. As a federation, we also have the highest number of participants (38) in the TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme). Every athlete who qualified for Tokyo or was a candidate was enrolled in a financial aid programme. Bhavina Hasmukh bhai Patel, the girl who qualified for Tokyo, uses a wheelchair that is specially designed for table tennis. She is able to purchase her own international quality table thanks to funding from the government. She had received seven lakhs for the purchase of her equipment's. There are plenty additional athletes like her being supported by the government (Mukherjee, 2021).

The inaugural Khelo India Para Games 2023 took place in three distinct Delhi venues from December 10–17, 2023, and will feature seven different sports (Para Archery, Par Athletics, Para Badminton, Para Table Tennis, Para Powerlifting, CP Football, and Para

Shooting). There will be approximately 1500 competitors, 200 technical officials, 150 volunteers, 350 support personnel, 300 escorts, and 20 classifiers from 36 states and UTs.

Some of the highlights of these games is as follows:

- i. The nation hosted a multi-sport para-athlete competition at the national level for the first time. The event's technical conduct standards, athlete experience, and overall execution are anticipated to be comparable to those of other Khelo India events, such as the Khelo India Youth Games and University Games.
- ii. Highly skilled technical officials from PCI, NSFs, and CPSFI, some of whom have officiated in international championships, supervised the technical conduct of the competition.
- iii. A live score system was included in both the live TV broadcast and the live digital streaming. The Games were conducted using the greatest TSR system in the world. They will be broadcast live on television and over-the-top (OTT) platforms.
- iv. Only States and Union Territories were represented by participants, while, as in the past, nominations for participants used to come from a variety of stakeholders.
- v. The professionals from the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Sports Authority of India, National Sports Federation (NSF), Paralympic Committee of India (PCI), Cerebral Palsy Sports Federation of India (CPSFI), and organising committee had collaborated to manage the event.
- vi. The Single medal tally was maintained for the event (Bureau, 2023).

2.7 Challenges of Paralympians in India

India has competed in the Paralympic Games for more than thirty years, and with eighty-three Paralympians and twelve medalists, the nation's increasing performance in every Paralympic event is now unavoidable. The recognition of athletes with disabilities as citizens who may elevate India's standing in international sports is relatively recent, with the enactment of a new law in 2016. Paralympic sports research from India is non-existent, and media coverage of inspirational stories tends to dominate discourse. Investigations into the governance of sport within this ecosystem will raise questions about the governance structure that newly developing nations like India have inside the Paralympic realm. In addition to outlining the country's laws pertaining to the sporting rights of people with disabilities (PwD), the aim of this article is to give an overview of sport governance in India's Paralympic

movement and to draw attention to any potential gaps that may arise in the country's Paralympic system from future developments. The International Paralympic Committee and the Indian Government should work together more, there should be more emphasis on training technical officials in India, and state-level governance standards should be structured more carefully, according to the research's recommendations (Chennapragada & Jain , 2020).

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has removed the suspension of the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) in order to permit competitors to compete at Rio 2016 under their home country's flag. Since April 2015, the PCI has been suspended due to national disagreements between various groups and individuals that the IPC alleges are impeding the growth of the Paralympic Movement in India. Nevertheless, the suspension was lifted after fruitful discussions in Bonn, the German city where the IPC is located. Attending the sessions were representatives from the PCI, the Indian Ministry of Youth and Sport, and the Sport Authority of India (SAI). The SAI will retain its ability to manage athletes' and teams' entries for the Paralympics this year, as per the agreement with the PCI. To oversee the delegation during the Games, the PCI may designate team members, such as a Chef de Mission, after consulting with the SAI. Simultaneously, the IPC will acknowledge the recently elected PCI Board, enabling the prompt implementation of improvements to the PCI's governance and management structure. The Press Trust of India was informed by J Chandrasekhar, the secretary general of the PCI, that the IPC has explicitly said that the ban may be reinstated in the event that India fails to carry out the suggested changes.

"From what the IPC wrote to us, it is like temporary lifting of the suspension till the end of the Rio Paralympics," he stated. "They threatened to reinstate the suspension if we didn't carry out the changes they had stated by then. "We are on our toes to implement the reforms and hoping that we will be able to complete what IPC wants by then so that we return to the Paralympic fold permanently (Etchells, 2016)."

After being denied recognition by the Indian government, the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) was suspended by the International Paralympic Committee (IPC). However, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) may still be able to provide tickets for the nation's best athletes to attend the Paralympic Games in London in 2012. Earlier this year, the government denied recognition to the PCI for a variety of reasons, including financial problems and elections. IPC officials told "inside world parasport" that India was suspended as a result of this. "The reason for the suspension is that one of the conditions of IPC membership is that

they have to be recognised by the highest sporting authority in their country," the spokesperson said (Degun, 2011).

A court order to halt the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) caused the organisation to postpone its annual conference. A court in Bangalore reportedly informed PCI President Sultan Ahmed that there was an internal issue preventing the organisation from moving further, which reportedly sparked altercations. Late on the night before the meeting, Ahmed informed the group that he had received a notice from PCI general secretary Rathan Singh's solicitors along with a court order. "The House unanimously agreed that since the suit/case has been instituted and the members being unaware of the orders (if any) passed by the concerned court, they do not want to take any chances on the notice issued by the lawyer conveying the above referred matter," the PCI said in a press release. "Since the matter is sub-judice, the meeting should not be conducted and to be kept in abeyance till the actual facts are being ascertained." According to reports, Singh ceased performing his job and shut down his Bangalore office, which sparked a disagreement between the PCI and Singh. Although he was replaced, he has challenged the decision in court. The PCI was suspended by the International Paralympic Committee two years ago after the Government denied it recognition due to a variety of issues, including financial irregularities and elections (Mackay, 2013).

Within days of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) suspending the Indian national Paralympic committee for egregious mismanagement, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of India called on the IPC to provide help to the nation. The Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) has suspended the IPC three times since its founding in 1992. The Ministry said that there has been "widespread dissatisfaction" and that the organisation "has not been functioning in the best interest of Paraspport" after receiving several complaints during the National Para Athletics Championships in Ghaziabad last month. It asserted that the National Paralympic Committee is negatively affecting both the athletes and the growth of parasport in the country. There has been no indication of when the requirements must be fulfilled or when the body will be reinstated. The PCI has refuted every accusation of wrongdoing. "We will be meeting our athletes who are training in Delhi's Nehru Stadium, and ask them what should be our response to the Sports Ministry," a spokesperson for the PCI told NDTV. "There is not infighting, despite what the IPC has said. "Our pride in our nation and our athletes is something we are all concerned about." In a recent letter to IPC CEO Xavier Gonzalez, the government is requesting the creation of an ad hoc committee to take over the PCI's duties until the country has an IPC-recognized organisation. As an alternative, the IPC can permit the Sports Authority

of India, a separate entity under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, to submit national athletes' entries for competitions approved by the IPC. According to a government statement, "an early action is solicited in the best interest of development and promotion of Parasports in India and to protect the interests of Indian Para-athletes (Goddard, 2015)."

2.8 Paralympians Perception for their Achievements

Paralympic medallists, such as shuttler Suhas Yathiraj, believe the Tokyo Games marked a turning point for parasports in India because of the nation's incredible performance in the Japanese capital, which inspired more people to pursue careers in sports as seen by the rise in participation in domestic competitions. At the Tokyo Paralympics, the Indian team made history by winning 19 medals, including five gold ones. This enabled them finish 24th overall, which is a record. "The movement for badminton at Tokyo 2020 was revolutionary. At a virtual media conference on Tuesday, Suhas, the district magistrate for Gautam Buddh Nagar (Noida), stated, "We have a big tournament coming up and I'm sure more interest will auger well for the sport." "You can see that there was a significant rise in participation in the national championships conducted in Odisha. Because badminton is a relatively simple sport for beginners, there is a great deal of interest in the game. In light of this, badminton is flourishing both in India and beyond," he continued. The Paralympian shuttler Pramod Bhagat, who took home a gold medal in the Men's Singles SL3 competition, expressed his surprise at the higher turnout for the Odisha nationals. "This time more than 500 athletes had come for the nationals; we were completely amazed by the amount. There used to be between 300 and 350. After Tokyo, para-badminton is being improved. Suhas, though, thinks there's still a lot that can be done in para badminton and other sports. "In the wheelchair category, India had no participants. "The state level associations need to be run professionally, so we need to make sure that our wheelchair players are given an opportunity." They must collaborate for funding with other initiatives, such as CSR, find talent at the state and local levels, and then provide opportunities," he continued. The mania doubled at the Paralympics and grew during the Olympics. The fact that we were maintained on the same platform as Olympians was the most significant accomplishment we also made, according to Bhagat (PTI, 2022).

The first Indian to win a medal at the Paralympics in archery, Harvinder Singh, believes that more Indians will now participate in diverse parasports. It is still the case that India has not taken part in many events. "People who participate in other parasports will benefit from the recognition we receive after winning the medal. Cricket used to be the most popular sport, but

then medals started to appear in athletics, and now archery has its first. Thus, I believe that individuals will become more motivated in the near future to participate in parasports. The bronze medallist from Tokyo continued by saying that more players had registered for even the para-archery nationals, which had been postponed because of COVID-19. Our nationals were postponed but the number of entries was huge thanks to the recognition of the Paralympics (PTI, 2022).

Javelin thrower Devendra Jhajharia, a three-time Paralympian medallist, believes India can place among the top three in the world in the sport of athletics in Paris. "China and Iran are ahead of us in athletics, and at number three there are several countries like Japan and Korea," remarked the 40-year-old, who added a silver medal to his two gold medals in Tokyo. But given that the government is funding the facilities and the way the children are being trained, I believe that our goal will be to be among the top three. We can excel in sports, no doubt about that. The 18 medal winners from the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics who came together to recite the national anthem in a video that was published on Monday are part of an effort by the International Institute of Sports Management that includes the Paralympians mentioned above (PTI, 2022).

Chapter – III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the research method, Research design, theoretical framework, sampling technique with method used for data collection used for this study was provided including the ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Method

The Qualitative research method was used for the conducted study. Exploring and comprehending social phenomena, human behaviour, and subjective experiences in great detail is possible through the methodological approach of qualitative research. The emotions and meanings present in social interactions and human behaviour can be captured by researchers using qualitative research methodologies because of their adaptability and flexibility (Monique, Hutter, & Bailey, 2020).

The humanistic nature of qualitative research stems from its emphasis on the subjective, experiential, and individual foundations of knowledge and practice. This method is most appropriate as it will allow the real information from the stakeholders including their honest viewpoints and opinion's.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework offers the overall structure or lens that researchers use to conceptualise, interpret, and analyse the data in qualitative research. A theoretical framework aids in the contextualization of research findings within preexisting theoretical viewpoints, concepts, or models, even if qualitative research frequently focuses on examining the richness and depth of human experiences, behaviours, and social phenomena (G. Lederman & S. Lederman, 2015).

The theoretical framework serves as the dissertation inquiry's "blueprint." It provides the structure to outline your approach to the dissertation as a whole from an analytical, methodological, philosophical, and epistemological perspective. It also serves as a framework for creating and bolstering your research. A theoretical framework was defined by Eisenhart (1991, p. 205) as "a structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory...constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships".

The chosen theory (or theories) that support your understanding of and research strategy for your issue, along with the definitions and concepts from theory that are pertinent to the topic, make up the theoretical framework (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

After reviewing the related literature, the following variables (themes) were considered:

- 1) Paralympics Outreach**
- 2) Government Policies & Private support**
- 3) Paralympians Challenges**
- 4) Societal Acceptance & Education**
- 5) Future Plans/Suggestions**

The researcher conducted Semi structured interviews to study the above five themes. The above five themes reflected whether there was remarkable rise in the Indian Paralympics system and what are the challenges the Paralympians are facing. The above concept also highlighted the change in government policies, schemes, support system and funding resulting in higher medal tally and performance of Indian para-athletes.

3.3 Research Design

The present study investigates the phenomenal rise in the performance of Indian Paralympians in the 21st century. The exploratory research design will be used for this qualitative study. The exploratory research is also called as formulative research studies. Such investigations are primarily concerned with framing a problem for more focused inquiry or creating operationally-based working hypotheses (Swedberg, 2020).

Semi structured interviews were conducted with the selected participants. It enabled the researcher to find out useful insights, opinions, viewpoints, suggestions and perspectives from the relevant stakeholders to understand the reasons for the potential growth of Paralympics in India and the challenges faced by them (<https://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/9543/1/Unit-3.pdf>, n.d.).

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Selection of Samples

In research, sampling is the process of choosing a subset of people, instances, or other components from a larger population to represent that group in a study. Because it is frequently difficult or impossible to investigate a whole population due to issues like time, cost, and feasibility, sampling is crucial in research. Researchers can confidently extrapolate their

findings to the larger population by choosing a representative sample from the population of interest (Rapley, 2013).

For this study purposive sampling method was adopted and a total of six people were selected out of which four were para-athletes of National/International level, one is sports administrator and one is support staff (coach). The four para-athletes participated in the Khelo India Para games scheduled from 10th to 17th December 2023 in New Delhi.

Table 3.1: Details of the Samples of the Study

Interviewee's	Gender	Role	Level of participation	Remark
Participant 1	Male	Para-athlete	World Championship/Asian Championship	
Participant 2	Female	Para-athlete	World Championship	
Participant 3	Female	Para-athlete	National	
Participant 4	Male	Para-athlete	World Championship	
Participant 5	Male	Para- coach	State Coach Badminton (Tamil Nadu)	
Participant 6	Male	Sports Administrator	-	Deputy Director at Sports Authority of India

The four participants were National/International level athletes. One of the Interviewee was the National level Para Coach. One interview was also conducted with the Deputy Director of Sports Authority of India, Ministry of Youth affairs and Sports, Government of India. The selection was based on the experience of participants in para sports in different capacities. There were two female and four male participants in the interviews.

3.5 Data Collection

The data was collected from athletes participating in the Khelo India Para games scheduled from 10th to 17th December 2023 in New Delhi. It is the first National level multi sports Para tournament ever organised in the country. In this study, the data was collected through Semi-structured interviews (SSI) with key participants as mentioned above in Table-3.1.

The Semi-structured interviews (SSI) are a combination of open and closed ended questions, accompanied by the follow up questions arising from the discussion (Adams, 14 Oct 2015). Employing open-ended questions that offer a targeted yet adaptable approach pertinent to the primary issue, the interviews enable the building of a comprehensive database.

The following interview questions were formed with acceptable face validity keeping in view the aims of the conducted research: -

Table 3.2: Interview Questions

Question: 1	How do you perceive the role of social media & growing popularity of Paralympics in India?
Question: 2	How Government policies are supporting Indian Paralympians?
Question: 3	Does private sector promote development of Para sports in the country?
Question: 4	What challenges do Paralympic athletes face such as in terms of infrastructure, training facilities, and financial support?
Question: 5	How the perception of disability in society evolved with the increasing success of Indian Paralympians?
Question: 6	What steps can be taken to ensure sustained momentum in the rise of Paralympics in India?

The interviews were conducted from 10th to 17th December 2023 during the first Khelo India Para games at various locations in New Delhi, India. The study's ethical considerations, including informed consent, secrecy, anonymity, and voluntary participation, were explained to the participants and the informed consent was obtained prior to the interviews. The participants were informed about their right to agreeing or declining to participate, the participants are informed about the study's goals, advantages, risks, and results (Bhandari, 2023). The responses of the participants were recorded in writing and the record is maintained with the researcher.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data collected for this thesis was analysed using a thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is one of several potential methods for data analysis and can be useful for examining qualitative data. In order to examine the collected data, thematic analysis offers a versatile and practical research approach that may yield rich and comprehensive information (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a qualitative and descriptive method of data analysis that primarily consists of finding, examining, and summarising themes present in the data. In qualitative research, it is practically the most used approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.6.1 Selection of Themes and Related Questions

The interview transcripts were analyzed and coded using the thematic analysis approach. The following themes emerged from the analysis process and has been tabulated in the table 3.3 below: -

Table 3.3: Theme Identification with Related Questions

S. No.	Theme	Interview Question
1.	Paralympics Outreach	1. How do you perceive the role of social media & growing popularity of Paralympics in India?
2.	Government Policies & Private support	2. How Government policies are supporting Indian Paralympians? 3. Does private sector promote development of Para sports in the country?
3.	Paralympians Challenges	4. What challenges do Paralympic athletes face such as in terms of infrastructure, training facilities, and financial support?

4.	Societal Acceptance & Education	5. How the perception of disability in society evolved with the increasing success of Indian Paralympians?
5.	Future Plans/Suggestions	6. What steps can be taken to ensure sustained momentum in the rise of Paralympics in India?

The themes identified in table 3.3 are discussed in detail as follows:-

The **theme No. 1** is to enquire about the **paralympic outreach** in India. With greater outreach and promotion initiatives, the Paralympic movement in India has been progressively gaining popularity over time. Across the nation, a number of projects and organisations are trying to raise awareness and encourage acceptance of para-athletes. Social media and prominent para-athletes are playing an important role in spreading the popularity of Paralympics in the country. For example, the president of Paralympic Committee of India Ms. Deepa Malik herself is a paralympic medallist and now through her more people are connecting to Para Olympics.

The **theme No. 2** relates to the **Government & private** support. It includes various schemes such as talent Identification scheme, Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), training facilities, infrastructure and funding. It also includes support from the private organizations and funding of para-athletes through sponsorship or funding their training and competitions. This theme also covers the support system of the government in terms of athlete management, Dietician, Physiotherapist, administrative support etc.

The **theme no. 3** includes various forms of **challenges** faced by the para-athletes such as financial, emotional, social etc. It will also cover training facilities, lack of infrastructure, support system etc.

The **theme no. 4** deals with **social acceptance** of para-athletes at various levels including equal status, job opportunities, respect, value and social security. It also covers the awareness/educational programs and how other people think about para-athletes in the society.

The **theme no. 5** is related to the **ideas/suggestions and plans** for future for the rise of Indian Paralympics at the grassroot as well as international level. It will help us to understand the areas to work upon and various steps required for the same.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, the findings of the study have been explained. The findings related to various themes identified in the previous chapter of research methodology.

4.1 Findings of the Study

The findings explained below are to meet the first objective of the conducted study i.e to study the rise in the performance of the Indian Paralympians in the 21st century. The medal tally of the Summer Paralympic games from Rome 1960 to Tokyo 2020 is summarized in table 4.1: -








Table 4.1: Statistics of Summer Paralympics Games Medals

Games	Athletes	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total	Rank
 1960 Rome	<i>Did not participate</i>					
 1964 Tokyo						
 1968 Tel Aviv	10	0	0	0	0	-
 1972 Heidelberg	10	1	0	0	1	25
 1976 Toronto	<i>Did not participate</i>					
 1980 Arnhem						
 1984 Stoke Mandeville/New York	5	0	2	2	4	37
 1988 Seoul	2	0	0	0	0	-
 1992 Barcelona	9	0	0	0	0	-
 1996 Atlanta	9	0	0	0	0	-
 2000 Sydney	4	0	0	0	0	-
 2004 Athens	12	1	0	1	2	53
 2008 Beijing	5	0	0	0	0	-
 2012 London	10	0	1	0	1	67
 2016 Rio de Janeiro	19	2	1	1	4	43
 2020 Tokyo	54	5	8	6	19	24
 2024 Paris	<i>Future event</i>					
 2028 Los Angeles						
 2032 Brisbane						
Total		9	12	10	31	57

According to table 4.1, India started its paralympic journey in 1968 in Tel Aviv, Israel and couldn't win any medal. In 1972 Heidelberg Paralympic games, India secured its first medal. India didn't participate in 1976 and 1980 Paralympic games at Toronto & Arnhem respectively. In 1984 Stoke Mandeville/New York games, India scored four medals including two silver and two bronze medals. India did not manage to win any medal from 1988 to 2000. In 2004 Athens Paralympic games, India scored total two medals including one gold and one bronze. In 2008 Beijing Paralympic games, India returned empty handed. In 2012 London Paralympics, India secured just one silver medal. At Rio 2016 Paralympic games, India secured total four medals including two gold medals, one silver medal and one bronze medal. Tokyo 2020 Paralympic games turned out to be the most successful games so far for Indian in which Indian para-athletes claimed total 19 medals including five gold medals, eight silver medals and six bronze medals.

Table 4.2: Indian Paralympic Medalists

Medal	Name/Team	Games	Sport	Event
 Gold	Murlikant Petkar	 1972 Heidelberg	 Swimming	Men's 50m Freestyle 3
 Silver	Bhimrao Kesarkar	 1984 Stoke Mandeville/New York	 Athletics	Men's Javelin L6
 Silver	Joginder Singh Bedi		 Athletics	Men's Shot Put L6
 Bronze	Joginder Singh Bedi		 Athletics	Men's Javelin L6
 Bronze	Joginder Singh Bedi		 Athletics	Men's Discus Throw L6
 Gold	Devendra Jhajharia	 2004 Athens	 Athletics	Men's Javelin F44/46
 Bronze	Rajinder Singh Rahelu		 Powerlifting	Men's 56 kg
 Silver	Girisha Nagarajegowda	 2012 London	 Athletics	Men's High Jump F42
 Gold	Mariyappan Thangavelu	 2016 Rio de Janeiro	 Athletics	Men's High Jump F42
 Gold	Devendra Jhajharia		 Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw F46
 Silver	Deepa Malik		 Athletics	Women's Shot Put F53
 Bronze	Varun Singh Bhati		 Athletics	Men's High Jump F42

 Gold	Avani Lekhara	2020 Tokyo 	 Shooting	Women's 10m Air Rifle SH1
 Gold	Sumit Antil		 Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw F64
 Gold	Manish Narwal		 Shooting	Mixed 50m Pistol SH1
 Gold	Pramod Bhagat		 Badminton	Men's Singles SL3
 Gold	Krishna Nagar		 Badminton	Men's Singles SH6
 Silver	Bhavina Patel		 Table Tennis	Women's Singles C4
 Silver	Nishad Kumar		 Athletics	Men's High Jump T47
 Silver	Yogesh Kathuniya		 Athletics	Men's Discus Throw F56
 Silver	Devendra Jhajharia		 Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw F46
 Silver	Mariyappan Thangavelu		 Athletics	Men's High Jump T63
 Silver	Praveen Kumar		 Athletics	Men's High Jump T64
 Silver	Singhraj Adhana		 Shooting	Men's 50m Pistol SH1
 Silver	Suhas Lalinakere Yathiraj		 Badminton	Men's Singles SL4
 Bronze	Sundar Singh Gurjar		 Athletics	Men's Javelin Throw F46
 Bronze	Singhraj Adhana		 Shooting	Men's 10m Air Pistol SH1
 Bronze	Sharad Kumar		 Athletics	Men's High Jump T63
 Bronze	Avani Lekhara		 Shooting	Women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions SH1
 Bronze	Harvinder Singh		 Archery	Men's Individual Recurve Open
 Bronze	Manoj Sarkar		 Badminton	Men's Singles SL3

The table no. 4.2 enlists all the medalist in Paralympic games since 1972 when India secured its first Paralympic medal.

Table 4.3: Multiple Indian Paralympic Medallists

Athlete	Games	Sport	 Gold	 Silver	 Bronze	Total
Devendra Jhajharia	 2004 Athens  2016 Rio de Janeiro  2020 Tokyo	 Athletics	2	1	0	3
Mariyappan Thangavelu	 2016 Rio de Janeiro  2020 Tokyo	 Athletics	1	1	0	2
Avani Lekhara	 2020 Tokyo	 Shooting	1	0	1	2

Athlete	Games	Sport	 Gold	 Silver	 Bronze	Total
Joginder Singh Bedi	 /  1984 Stoke Mandeville/New York	 Athletics	0	1	2	3
Singhraj Adhana	 2020 Tokyo	 Shooting	0	1	1	2

The table 4.3 include the list of para-athletes who have won more than one medal across paralympic games for India.

The findings explained below are to second & third objective of the conducted study i.e “to study the factors determining the rise of Paralympics in India” and “to study the challenges faced by Para-athletes in India”.

4.1.1 Findings of Theme One “Paralympics Outreach”

The first theme was identified as Paralympics outreach and the question number one of the interview addresses the theme one as tabulated in table 4.4 below: -

Table 4.4: Theme 1 with Interview Question

Theme No.	Theme	Interview Question
1.	Paralympics Outreach	1. How do you perceive the role of social media & growing popularity of Paralympics in India?

The question number one covers the role of social media in the growing popularity of Paralympics in India. It comes under the first theme termed as **Paralympic Outreach**. The Participants were asked about the role of social media and other factors in the growing popularity of Paralympics in India and their responses have been tabulated below in Table 4.5:

Table 4.5: Thematic analyses of Paralympic outreach

Theme	Sub-themes	Frequency of Responses	Score (In Percentage)
Paralympics Outreach	Enhanced visibility (through social media)	6/6	100 %
	Storytelling and Awareness	6/6	100 %
	Engagement & Interaction	4/6	66.66 %
	Live Telecast & Coverage of the events	4/6	66.66 %

According to table 4.5, the sub theme “Enhanced visibility (through social media)” and “Storytelling and Awareness” scored 100 % response, the sub theme “Engagement & Interaction” and Live Telecast & Coverage of the events scored 66.66 % response.

4.1.2 Findings of Theme Two “Government Policies & Private Support”

The second theme was identified as Government & private support and the question number two and three of the interview addresses the theme two as tabulated in table 4.6 below:-

Table 4.6: Theme 2 with Interview Questions

Theme No.	Theme	Interview Question
2.	Government Policies & Private Support	2. How Government policies are supporting Indian Paralympians? 3. Is private sector promote development of Para sports in the country?

The question number two discuss about the government policies, schemes and support to Indian Paralympians. It will cover training facilities, expense, coaches etc. The question number three deals with the support and role of private organizations in the growth of Paralympics in India. The above questions are part of theme two “Government & Private support”. The detailed sub-themes have been documented in the table 4.7 below:

Table 4.7: Thematic Analyses of Government & Private Support

Theme	Sub-themes	Frequency of Responses	Score (In Percentage)
Government Policies	Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)	6/6	100 %
	National Sports Development Fund	6/6	100 %
	Khelo India Scheme	6/6	100 %
	Incentives and rewards	4/6	66.66 %
	Infrastructure Development	4/6	66.66 %
	Reservation In government Jobs	3/6	50 %
	Inclusion in sports awards	6/6	100 %
Private Support	Financial Support	2/6	33.33 %
	Corporate Social responsibility (CSR)	3/6	50%
	Employment & Opportunities	1/6	16.66 %

As per table 4.7, the sub-theme of Government policies namely “Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)”, “National Sports Development Fund”, “Khelo India Scheme” and “Inclusion in sports awards” scored 100% responses. The sub-themes “Incentives and rewards” and “Infrastructure Development” scored 66.66% response. The sub-theme of “Reservation In government Jobs” got a score of 50%.

The sub-theme of “Financial Support” scored 33.33%, “Corporate Social responsibility (CSR)” scored 50% and “Employment & Opportunities” scored 16.66% response in regard of private support.

4.1.3 Findings of Theme Three “Paralympics Challenges”

The third theme was identified as Paralympians Challenges and the question number 4 of the interview addresses the theme Three as tabulated in table 4.8 below: -

Table 4.8: Theme 3 with Interview Questions

Theme No.	Theme	Interview Question
3.	Paralympians Challenges	4. What challenges do Paralympic athletes face such as in terms of infrastructure, training facilities, and financial support?

The question number four discuss about the obstacles and challenges faced by the para-athletes in terms of infrastructure, training facilities, financial and emotional barrier, health care etc. The sub themes are tabulated in table 4.9 as follows:

Table 4.9: Thematic analysis of Paralympians challenges

Theme	Sub-themes	Frequency of Responses	Score (In Percentage)
Paralympians Challenges	Lack of Infrastructure and Equipment’s	6/6	100 %
	Financial Barriers	6/6	100 %
	Limited Training & Competitions Opportunities	3/6	50 %
	Social Acceptance and Discrimination	4/6	66.66 %
	Health Care & Medical Facilities	6/6	100 %

According to table 4.9, the sub-theme “Lack of Infrastructure and Equipment’s”, “Financial Barriers” and “Health Care & Medical facilities” scored 100% response. The sub-theme of “Social Acceptance and Discrimination” scored 66.66% and “Limited Training & Competitions opportunities” scored 50% response.

4.1.4 Findings of Theme Four “Societal Acceptance & Education”

The fourth theme was identified as Societal acceptance & education and the question number five of the interview addresses the theme four as tabulated in table 4.10 below: -

Table 4.10: Theme 4 with Interview questions

Theme No.	Theme	Interview Question
4.	Societal Acceptance & Education	5. How the perception of disability in society evolved with the increasing success of Indian Paralympians?

The question number five reflects the theme of Societal acceptance and education related to para-sports and athletes. The derived sub-themes have been tabulated below in table 4.11:

Table 4.11: Thematic Analysis of Societal Acceptance & Education

Theme	Sub-themes	Frequency of Responses	Score (In Percentage)
Societal Acceptance & Education	Empowerment and Inspiration	3/6	50 %
	Change in Approach and Narrative	5/6	83.33 %
	Policy Making & Inclusivity	2/6	33.33 %
	Awareness Programs in Community	4/6	66.66 %

According to table 4.11, the sub-theme “Change in Approach and Narrative” recorded 83.33% response, the sub-theme “Awareness Programs in Community” scored 66.66% response, the sub-theme “Empowerment and Inspiration” scored 50% response and the sub-theme “Policy Making & Inclusivity” scored 33.33% response.

4.1.5 Findings of Theme Five “Future Plans & Suggestions”

The fifth theme was identified as future plans and suggestion to maintain the growth of Indian Paralympians at grassroot as well as international level and the question number six of the interview addresses the theme five as tabulated in the table 4.12 below: -

Table 4.12: Theme 5 with Interview Questions

Theme No.	Theme	Interview Question
5.	Future Plans/Suggestions	6. What steps can be taken to ensure sustained momentum in the rise of Paralympics in India?

The sub-themes derived were tabulated below in table 4.13:

Table 4.13: Thematic analysis of Future Plans & Suggestions

Theme	Sub-themes	Frequency of Responses	Score (In Percentage)
Future Plans/Suggestions	Grassroot Level Initiatives	6/6	100 %
	Rural Development	6/6	100 %
	Enhanced Private Support	6/6	100 %
	Better Support System	6/6	100 %
	Integration in Education & Curriculum	6/6	100 %

As per table 4.13, the sub-themes “Grassroot Level Initiatives”, “Rural Development”, “Enhanced Private Support”, “Better Support System”, “Integration in Education & Curriculum” scored 100% response.

Chapter - V

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the results of the study will be discussed. The results of the interviews were utilized to draw conclusions of the study and form recommendations for the future.

5.1 Summary of the Results

The data presented in chapter IV showcased the rise of Paralympians performance in the 21st century. The data was also collected through interviews from the six participants to study the factors responsible for the rise of Paralympians and challenges faced by them. The thematic analysis method which is based on recurrence of responses is being employed. The semi structured interview with six questions were divided into five themes and further sub-themes were identified on the basis of the responses received from the participants during the interviews. The results suggested a rise in the performance of the Indian Paralympians in the 21st century. The responses suggested the factors responsible for the rise in the performance of the Paralympians and para-sports in India. The participants spoke about the rise in popularity and outreach programs responsible for the growing popularity in the country. They also emphasized on the role of social media in the promotion of para sports in India. The participants appreciated the efforts of government in uplifting the status of Paralympians and Para-sports in India. They also stated that more support is required from the private organisations in term of funding, sponsorship and job opportunities. The participants also highlighted the challenges faced by the para-athletes and various suggestions and future plans to sustain the development of Indian Para sports at the grassroot and international level. The participants talked about the various societal issues and need of more awareness programs especially in the rural areas. In the end, the participants suggested future plans for the sustained development of the para sports in India.

5.2 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study includes to study the factors behind the success of Indian Paralympians in the 21st century especially since 2016 Rio Olympics Games onwards.

5.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To study the rise in the performance of Indian Para-Athletes in Paralympic Games.
2. To study the factors determining the rise of Paralympics in India.
3. To study the challenges faced by Para-athletes in India.

To meet the above objectives, the data of the performance of Indian Paralympians was gathered and evaluated. To study the factors for the rise of Paralympians and Challenges faced by them, the interview questions were coded with different themes which are as follows:

Table 5.1: Table: Theme Identification with Relevant Questions

S.No.	Theme	Interview Question
1.	Paralympics Outreach	1. How do you perceive the role of social media & growing popularity of Paralympics in India?
2.	Government & private support	2. How Government policies are supporting Indian Paralympians? 3. Is private sector promote development of Para sports in the country?
3.	Paralympians Challenges	4. What challenges do Paralympic athletes face such as in terms of infrastructure, training facilities, and financial support?
4.	Societal Acceptance & Education	5. How the perception of disability in society evolved with the increasing success of Indian Paralympians?

5.	Future plans/Suggestions	6. What steps can be taken to ensure sustained momentum in the rise of Paralympics in India?
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5.4 Hypothesis of the study

It was hypothesised that there is a significant rise in the performance of Paralympians in India in the 21st century and the Indian Para-Athletes are provided with better training facilities and infrastructure which enable them to perform better at global events.

5.5 Discussions of the Study

The results suggested that there is a rise in the performance of the Indian Paralympians especially in the 21st century. The following facts justified the first objective of the study:

1. The total number of medals won at Tokyo 2020 is higher than the number of medals won in all editions of Paralympics all together. India won 19 medals at Tokyo 2020 Paralympics and 12 medals in all previous Games in total.
2. Since its inception in 1960, India has participated in 11 Paralympic Games and has secured 31 medals which includes nine gold, twelve silver, and ten bronze. Tokyo 2020 itself resulted into half of these medals i.e 19 medals.
3. India participated in 9 sports at 2020 Tokyo Paralympics as compared to 5 in 2016 Rio Paralympics, 4 sports in 2012 London Paralympics and 03 sports in 2008 Beijing Paralympics. It shows the growth of Paralympics to different sports in the 21st century.
4. The total number of athletes participated at 2020 Tokyo Paralympics was 54 which is highest so far in the history of Paralympics in India. There were 19 athletes participated in 2016 Rio Paralympics, 10 in 2012 London Paralympics and mere 5 athletes at Beijing 2008. The significant rise in the number of participants shows the phenomenal rise of Paralympians in India in last 20 years.
5. Except one, all the multiple medal winners are from the 21st century.

The above facts show there has been a notable increase in Indian Paralympian's performance in the twenty-first century and the first objective of the study is fulfilled.

5.5.1 Discussion on the Findings of Sub Themes of Paralympics Outreach

The discussion on the findings of sub-themes of Paralympics Outreach are as following:

5.5.1.1 Enhanced Visibility: All Six respondents agreed and resulted in 100 % that social media is playing a crucial role in the promotion of Paralympics popularity in the country. They said that social media networks serve an effective way of exhibiting the skills and accomplishments of para-athletes. Para-athletes can reach a wider audience and get recognition for their achievements by sharing their videos, pictures, and personal narratives on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

5.5.1.2 Storytelling and Awareness: All the participants believed and a score of 100% was generated in view of that the personal narratives and tales of overcoming hardship shared via social media increase the awareness and perception of Paralympians. By exposing the difficulties experienced by para-athletes and showcasing their tenacity, fortitude, and accomplishments, these narratives challenge prejudices and alter public attitudes on disabilities. The participants revealed that para-athletes such as Deepa Malik, Anavi Lekhara, Pramod Bhagat, SL Yathiraj inspire a lot of youth and differently able people in the country and are serving as role models.

5.5.1.3 Engagement and Interaction: Direct communication between para-athletes, supporters, and followers is made easier by social media. Supporting remarks, encouraging notes, and even inquiries concerning the preparation and experiences of the para-athletes are all ways that fans can interact with these athletes. Supporters of Paralympic sports benefit from this direct interaction, which strengthens their sense of belonging. Four out of six participants believed that the engagement and interaction is increasing and two participants stated that there is still scope to bridge the gap between society and para-athletes yielding a score of 66.66 %.

5.5.1.4 Live Telecast and Coverage of the Events: The participants said that the live coverage of the Para events was almost nil earlier and now with the organization of First Khelo India Para games, it is the first time that all events will be live telecasted and daily updates will be provided through print and social media. The events were covered by Television, Radio and regular updates such as schedule, results, medal tally was uploaded on social media. It helped the fans to stay updated on the most recent information, outcomes, and highlights. Even for those who are unable to attend in person, spectators can still feel the thrill of Paralympic competition through live streaming of events and behind-the-scenes footage. A total of four out of six participants believed that the coverage of para events and live telecast has started

taking place recently and the same need to be followed in future to maintain is increasing and two participants stated that there is still scope to bridge the gap between society/spectators and para-athletes yielding a score of 66.66 %.

5.5.2 Discussion on the Findings of Sub Themes of Government Policies and private Support

The discussion on the findings of sub-themes of Government policies and private support are as following:

5.5.2.1 Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS): The TOPS scheme was established by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, it offers elite athletes, including Paralympians, financial support for their coaching, training, and international competition participation. In order to help para-athletes get ready for big competitions like the Paralympic Games, TOPS provides financing for specialised coaching, gear, and international exposure. All the 6 participants acknowledged the support of the government and importance of TOPS scheme to top para-athletes. Mr. Sumit Antil, Para Gold medallist of Tokyo 2020 is currently training abroad for the upcoming Paris Paralympics 2024. It is only possible due to the TOPS scheme of the government. This sub theme scored 100 % result among the participants.

5.5.2.2 National Sports Development Fund (NSDF): The participants informed the researcher about the NSDF financial support for training and competition preparation to gifted athletes, including para-athletes. The fund provides financial assistance to para-athletes by paying for coaching, gear, travel, lodging, and competition participation costs. All the six participants agreed that government is providing excellent training facilities and support during travel for competitions.

5.5.2.3 Khelo India Scheme: The Khelo India scheme of the government is providing excellent opportunities to both para-athletes and athletes across different disciplines. This programme seeks to find youthful talent in a range of sports, including Paralympic sports, and to encourage the development of grassroots sports. The objective of this programme is to develop future champions by giving para-athletes financial support for training and national competition. The participants highlighted the role of Khelo India scheme as the First multi sports Para-Games were organized under this scheme only, where these interviews were also conducted for the present study.

5.5.2.4 Incentives and Rewards: The participants informed the researcher that in recognition of para-athletes' accomplishments in international events, such as the Paralympic Games, the

government provides monetary incentives and rewards. Paralympic gold, silver, and bronze medallists are rewarded with large financial prizes for their achievements and contributions to Indian sports. Four out of Six participants appreciated the government financial support and two participants said that only elite level para-athletes receive the financial supports and it should be extended to all the para-athletes to take care of their diet, health and training. This sub theme earned a score of 66.66 %.

5.5.2.5 Infrastructure Development: The 66.66 % of the participants agreed that Government is providing good infrastructure support to the athletes such as Sports Authority of India (SAI) centre at Gandhi Nagar, Bangalore, Gwalior, New Delhi etc. Athletes with impairments can access these specialised training centres, stadiums, and sports facilities with expert coaches and equipment's. Two out of six participants responded that training and infrastructure facilities are good only in Urban areas and lacks in rural areas.

5.5.2.6 Reservation for Government Jobs: The 50 % of the participants i.e three out of six told the researcher that under the sports quota, para-athletes who excel in their chosen sports and compete internationally, including in the Paralympic Games, may be eligible for reservation in government jobs. After their athletic careers, this strategy gives para-athletes financial security and professional options. The remaining 50 % stated that more job opportunities and reservation is required in government sector for a secure future.

5.5.2.7 Inclusion in Sports honours: All six participants said that the para athletes are now awarded with prominent sports honours like the Arjuna Award, Khel Ratna Award, and Dronacharya Award for their exceptional accomplishments and services to Indian sports. Para-athletes receive honours and national recognition for their accomplishments through these awards. They gave example of armless para-archer Sheetal Devi who was honoured with Arjuna Award from the president of the India. Such awards motivate and promote inclusivity of Differently abled athletes in the society.

While talking about the support from the private organisations, the participants said that a lot more is expected from the private organisations in terms of funding, sponsorship, infrastructure investment, job opportunities etc. The same is discussed under sub themes below:

5.5.2.8 Financial Support: Only two participants acknowledged the financial support from private organisations and remaining four participants said that private organisation should provide more financial support to the para-athletes, para organisation and para-events. Private sector organisations should help para-athletes reach their athletic objectives by funding their

training, gear, travel, and competition costs through grants, corporate sponsorships, and contributions.

5.5.2.9 Corporate Social responsibility (CSR): Many Business organisations include the development of parasports in their CSR endeavours, funding projects and programmes that encourage accessibility, inclusivity, and assistance for individuals with disabilities. But only three out of six participants believe that private organisations are seriously supporting Para-athletes through their CSR initiatives. The remaining three participants said that private organisations could involve planning sporting events for individuals with disabilities, providing funds for para-athlete training programmes, and advocating for disability rights. This sub theme had a score of 50 %.

5.5.2.10 Employment & Opportunities: Just one out of six participant said that there are job or employment opportunities in private sector for para-athletes. It is worth mentioning that participants said that the very few job opportunities have recently been introduced by the Government and same should be implemented in the private sector to motivate differently abled athletes to pursue their dreams in para sports.

The private organisations can provide better support to para-athletes through collaborations, job placements, and sponsorships. The companies should provide para-athletes with job options and financial stability beyond their athletic pursuits by designing employment opportunities expressly to meet their requirements and skills.

5.5.3 Discussion on the Findings of Sub Themes of Paralympians Challenges

The discussion on the findings of sub-themes of Paralympians Challenges are as following:

5.5.3.1 Lack of Infrastructure and Equipment's: All the six participants admitted that there is lack of infrastructure and training facilities except a few specialized centres in the country. They mentioned that athletes with disabilities are not well served by the infrastructure at many sports venues, which includes training facilities, stadiums, and lodging. Para-athletes find it challenging to enter and use training facilities efficiently when there are no ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, or other amenities.

The participants also highlighted lack of specialised equipment's for their training and other needs. They mentioned that due to their unique demands and disabilities, para-athletes frequently need assistive devices, equipment, and equipment specifically designed for them.

Para-athletes may have training and performance setbacks due to a lack of access to necessary equipment.

5.5.3.2 Financial Barriers: All the participants revealed during the interviews that except some of the top-level elite para-athlete, other para-athletes face financial constraints to fulfil their basic training needs. They frequently have insufficient financial support, which makes it difficult for them to pay for related costs such as equipment purchases, travel fees, and training expenses. It is worth mentioning that financial pressure and trouble pursuing sports careers are common outcomes for para-athletes who struggle to get government funds, sponsorships, or endorsements to support their sporting endeavours.

5.5.3.3 Limited training & competitions opportunities: The three participants out of six admitted that para-athletes may have difficulty accessing top-notch facilities, coaching, and training regimens due to financial or geographic limitations. It may be difficult for para-athletes to establish their talents and realise their full potential due to the lack of training facilities with adaptive sports equipment and trained coaches, especially in remote or rural locations.

It was also told that Para-athletes also have restricted options for participating in national and international events, which are crucial for obtaining exposure, experience, and ranking points. Athletes may struggle to advance and grow as well as have less opportunities to qualify for big contests such as the Paralympic Games if there aren't enough structured leagues, tournaments, and events for parasports.

5.5.3.4 Social acceptance and Discrimination: The four out of six participants spoke about misconceptions regarding disability and athletics, prejudice, and social stigma as a common challenge for para-athletes. These experiences can have a negative impact on their self-esteem, drive, and sense of camaraderie within the athletic community. The participants said that the pursuit of athletic goals and full participation in sports activities may be hindered for para-athletes by unfavourable attitudes and prejudices in the society.

5.5.3.5 Health Care & Medical facilities: All six participants admitted lack of medical and health care facilities for the para-athletes. The participants emphasized that in order to manage their disabilities, avoid injuries, and maintain their best physical and mental health, para-athletes need to have access to specialised medical care, rehabilitation programmes, and medical assistance. Disadvantages to para-athletes' general health and performance could arise from a lack of or difficulty accessing healthcare treatments that are suited to their needs. One more critical challenge faced by the para-athletes is getting their disability certification as it's

a time-consuming long process and many times the concerned officials ask for bribe for certification.

5.5.4 Discussion on the Findings of Sub Themes of Societal Acceptance & Education

The discussion on the findings of sub-themes of Societal acceptance & education are as following:

5.5.4.1 Empowerment and Inspiration: The three out of six participants said that people with disabilities and the general public find inspiration and empowerment in the success tales of Indian Paralympians. They also stated that regardless of their ability, others are inspired by their fortitude, tenacity, and victory over hardship to follow their goals, surmount obstacles, and break through barriers.

5.5.4.2 Change in Approach and Narrative: The success of Indian Paralympians has contributed to a change in the perception of disability, moving it from one of sympathy or pity to one of respect and adoration. Their accomplishments change people's ideas of what is possible for people with disabilities by showcasing their skills, talents, and contributions to society rather than only concentrating on their limitations. The 5 out of 6 (83.33%) participants believed that it is possible because of the role of Honourable Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi. He quoted during his Independence Day speech on 15th August 2023 that **“We are making our Divyangjans capable to hoist the tricolour of India in Paralympics also, for which special training is being given to the players”** He change the outlook of the society by referring the Disabled people as **“Divyang”** which means Divine body or specially abled. Only one out of six respondents said that these changes are limited to urban and semi urban region and more awareness is required in rural area or areas with less literacy rate.

5.5.4.3 Policy Making & Inclusivity: The participants laid emphasised that more initiatives are required in policy making and inclusivity for the development of para-sports in India. Only two out of the six participants said that the accomplishments of Indian Paralympians have shaped advocacy and policy initiatives that support accessibility, inclusivity, and the rights of individuals with disabilities. The remaining four participants said that it is crucial to develop policies that are disability-friendly, provide accessible infrastructure, and guarantee that everyone has equal chances, regardless of ability.

5.5.4.4 Awareness programs in community: The four out of six participants admitted that the public's attitude of disability has significantly changed as a result of increased media coverage of Indian Paralympians. Para-athletes are increasingly the subject of articles, interviews, and features in media outlets, offering positive representations and experiences of persons with disabilities in the media that support acceptance and help dispel misconceptions. The 2 participants mentioned the need of more awareness programs considering country's huge demographic area and resources. They suggested that to increase knowledge, inclusion, and involvement in parasports, communities should plan more events, workshops, and awareness programs. This will foster a more accepting and inclusive atmosphere for people with disabilities.

5.5.5 Discussion on the Findings of Sub Themes of Future Plans/Suggestions

The discussion on the findings of sub-themes of Future plans/suggestions are as following:

5.5.5.1 Grassroot Level initiatives: All the six participants stated that it's critical to create grassroots initiatives to find, develop, and assist talent at the local level. Programmes like talent scouting camps, interscholastic contests, and community sports leagues can foster the development of a para-athlete pipeline and encourage a broad interest in Paralympic sports.

5.5.5.2 Rural Development: All the six participants mentioned the need for development of infrastructure in rural areas to support para-athletes. They said that 70 % of India's population reside in rural area and by creating facilities India can produce more medals at international level as it will have more para-athletes and talent pool. It is difficult for para-athletes to establish their talents and realise their full potential due to the lack of training facilities with adaptive sports equipment and trained coaches in remote or rural locations.

5.5.5.3 Enhanced Private Support: All the six participants said that some private organisations are coming forward to help para-athletes by funding and investing in para-sports projects and athletes but it is required that more private organisation come forward and support para sports. It is also required that Job opportunities are secured in private organisations also for a secure future of para-athletes.

5.5.5.4 Better Support system: All the six participants said that it's critical to offer para-athletes specific coaching, training, and support services. They mentioned that by investing into professional coaching, support for sports science, and athlete development initiatives can

help Indian Paralympians become more proficient, competitive, and skilled worldwide. They also mentioned the support required in terms of Dieticians, Physiotherapist, Sports Bio mechanist, Psychologist etc.

5.5.5.5 Integration in Education & Curriculum: All the six participants suggested that Including disability awareness and Paralympic sports in curriculum and educational programmes can help create an inclusive school environment and encourage students with disabilities to participate in sports. Educational establishments have the potential to be extremely important in developing talent and advancing the ideals of inclusivity and diversity.

The above discussion fulfils the achievement of second and third objectives of the study. The discussion highlighted the factors responsible for the rise of Paralympians and Para-sports in India along with the challenges faced by the para-athletes. It has included plans and suggestions to sustain the ongoing growth in the Indian Paralympics.

5.6 Conclusions of the study

As per the findings & discussions of the study the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1) There is a remarkable rise in the performance of Indian Paralympians in the 21st century.
- 2) The Paralympics outreach has increased and social media is a major factor in the growing appeal of the Paralympics in India. The storytelling and awareness by para-athletes have resulted into wider visibility of parasports.
- 3) The Government policies are vital in helping Indian para-athletes to reach their goals in Paralympic sports by offering funding, facilities for training, incentives, and acknowledgment for their accomplishments. These programmes contribute to the development of an atmosphere that encourages para-athletes to follow their goals and compete internationally for India. Various government schemes like Target Olympic Podium scheme (TOPS), Khelo India scheme etc. are providing excellent training and exposure opportunities to the para-athletes.
- 4) The business sector's/private organisation role in developing para-sports in India is essential for establishing viable career paths for para-athletes, encouraging accessibility and inclusivity, and furthering the growth of Paralympic sports in the nation. For para-sports to reach its full potential and enable athletes with disabilities to compete globally, cooperation between the public, commercial, and governmental sectors is vital.
- 5) To overcome challenges/obstacles faced by the para-athletes in term of funding, training facilities, support system, the governments, sports organisations, business

partners, and civil society organisations must work together to upgrade facilities, increase access to training, strengthen financial aid programmes, fight prejudice and stigma, and encourage inclusion and accessibility for athletes with disabilities in sports. Para-athletes can grow and succeed in Paralympic sports by addressing these obstacles and providing them with the necessary assistance.

- 6) The social opinion about handicap in India have changed significantly as a result of the growing success of Indian Paralympians. The direct involvement of the Prime minister of India have influenced the public's perceptions of disability. He has referred the Disable people as “ Divyangjan” meaning “divine body or specially abled” which has given self-confidence and enhanced self-respect among the para-athletes. As a result of their successes on the global arena, Indian Paralympians have become more well-known and acknowledged. The mainstream sports world has come to recognise and recognise parasports more as a result of the success of Indian Paralympians. There are more chances, resources, and support available for para-athletes to train, compete, and succeed as more people accept para-sports as real and competitive sports. All things considered; the rising prominence of Indian Paralympians has played a part in a slow but profound change in the way society views disability. This has resulted in increased acceptance, empowerment, and chances for people with disabilities to fully engage in and thrive in all facets of life, including sports.
- 7) A number of actions can be made in a different area to that the Paralympic movement in India gains pace. These areas include:
 - i. Infrastructure investment
 - ii. Expansion of Grassroot program
 - iii. Rural outreach by establishing training and coaching facilities in rural areas
 - iv. Integration in education and curriculum
 - v. Increased support from private organisation
 - vi. Partnership and collaborations between different government and private organisations,

By putting these policies into place and cultivating an atmosphere that values equality, accessibility, and inclusivity, India can maintain the momentum behind the Paralympic Games' ascent and keep enabling para-athletes to reach their greatest potential on the international scene.

5.6 Recommendations of the Study

The present study was delimited to the study of the factors for the rise of Indian Paralympians in the 21st century, the following future work can be considered as recommendations: -

- 1) **Quantitative studies:** The present study is based on the qualitative research method; the same study can be conducted using quantitative method.
- 2) **Social factors:** The role of society and family support to para-athletes can be studied in relation to Indian culture.
- 3) **Government policies:** The government policies can be studied in a broader way.
- 4) **Paralympians Challenges:** A study can be undertaken to study the challenges faced by para-athletes in detail and possible solutions to such obstacles using quantitative method.
- 5) **Role of Social Media:** The role of social media can be studied as a medium to raise awareness and popularity of Para-sports in India.
- 6) **Political Interference:** The political interference and corruption can be taken as a study to find out the problems in Indian parasports structure.
- 7) The similar type of study can be conducted on a larger sample.
- 8) It is strongly recommended that the results of the study should be communicated to the authorities, coaches, teachers and athletes by ways of workshops, seminars, clinics and other interactive programs to enrich the process of education and research objectives.

Even though India has won the most medals from the past edition of the Paralympic Games to date, we still rank 24th overall. We can locate better para-athletes and have greater success if the association and government of India can set up a talent identification programme for the country's unique population. With coordinated efforts from multiple stakeholders focused at developing talent, providing infrastructure, and establishing an inclusive atmosphere for differently-abled athletes to flourish on the international stage, the future of the Indian Paralympics appears bright. Indian para-athletes have the potential to succeed much more in the future with sustained funding and support. In addition, greater media attention, improved nutrition, rural infrastructure, as well as of course restructuring and assistance from the many sectors of society can enhance India's performance in para-sports including greater participation and awareness in the society.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Interview question
Appendix 2	Informed Consent

Appendix 1
Semi- Structured Interview Questions

Question: 1	How do you perceive the role of social media & growing popularity of Paralympics in India?
Question: 2	How Government policies are supporting Indian Paralympians?
Question: 3	Does private sector promote development of Para sports in the country?
Question: 4	What challenges do Paralympic athletes face such as in terms of infrastructure, training facilities, and financial support?
Question: 5	How the perception of disability in society evolved with the increasing success of Indian Paralympians?
Question: 6	What steps can be taken to ensure sustained momentum in the rise of Paralympics in India?

Appendix 2

Informed Consent

Research Title: **“A Phenomenal Rise of the Indian Paralympians in the 21st century”**.

Researcher: Anidev Singh

Supervising Professor: Dr. Maria Tolika

Professor Members:

- Member1: Professor Konstantinos Georgiadis
- Member2: Dr. Ian Brittain

December, 10th, 2023

Dear Participants,

I kindly invite you to take part in my research study entitled **“A Phenomenal Rise of the Indian Paralympians in the 21st century”**. This study will be conducted as part of my Master’s thesis at the University of Peloponnese (UoP) with the support of the International Olympic Academy (IOA).

The information below intends to give you all the details which will help you decide on whether you accept to take part in the study or not. The purpose of this research is to study the rise of Indian Paralympians in the 21st century and factors responsible for the same.

Your involvement in this study would last between 30 to 45 minutes and will be a one-on-one recorded interview with me. The interview may be conducted in-person and we will cooperate to schedule the interview at a convenient time.

The interview would include 6 questions and you are free to share any other additional information related to the questions. The data gathered throughout the interview will help me answer the main research question of my master’s thesis: **“A Phenomenal Rise of the Indian Paralympians in the 21st century”**

Anonymity will be maintained throughout the whole process of the study using pseudonyms to protect your identity. In order to maintain confidentiality of your answers, the information gathered from the record will only be used for my academic research and will be stored on my laptop with a copy on my hard disk. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time.

For any inquiries regarding your participation, don't hesitate to contact me. You can also contact my thesis supervisor, Dr. Maria Tolika, for any additional information via email: tolikamaria@gmail.com.

If you are willing to be part of my research study, kindly fill out and sign the consent form below.

Thank you for your time, your cooperation will be crucial for me to attain my academic objectives and to complete my master's thesis.

Sincerely,

Anidev Singh

University: University of Peloponnese-International Olympic Academy

E-mail: anidev27@gmail.com, anidevsingh@nitdelhi.ac.in

Tel: +918010007400

Consent:

I acknowledge that I have read and understood all the detailed information provided in this form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research study and allow the usage of data collected through the interview as described.	
Participant's Full Name:	
Signature:	
Date:	