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From Adversity to Triumph: The Journey of Paralympian Sumit Antil - A Comprehensive Study of His Background, Achievements, and Impact on Indian Sports

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Abstract

The journey of Sumit Antil, an Indian Paralympian and javelin thrower, exemplifies a powerful narrative of resilience and triumph. Born on July 6, 1998, in Khewra, Sonipat, Haryana, Sumit aspired to join the Indian Army and excel in sports. However, a tragic accident in 2015 resulted in the amputation of his left leg, altering his life's course. Sumit's determination led him to para sports, where he began training under Nitin Jaiswal in 2017. His hard work culminated in a gold medal at the 2020 Summer Paralympics, setting a world record in the F64 javelin throw category. Sumit's story underscores the importance of robust support systems, such as the Go-Sports Foundation's Para Champions Programme, and the need for inclusive environments that nurture talent regardless of physical limitations. His achievements have significantly contributed to the recognition and support of para sports in India, inspiring a new generation of athletes to pursue excellence. Sumit Antil's legacy continues to influence and motivate, demonstrating that with resilience, support, and relentless pursuit, extraordinary accomplishments are possible.

Keywords: Sumit Antil, Paralympian, Javelin throw, Resilience, Para sports, 2020 Summer Paralympics, Go-Sports Foundation, Inclusive sports

1. Introduction

The journey of Sumit Antil, an Indian Paralympian and javelin thrower, is a compelling narrative of resilience and triumph. Born on July 6, 1998, in Khewra, Sonipat, Haryana, Sumit's early aspirations were centered around a career in the Indian Army and excelling in sports. However, a tragic accident in 2015 resulted in the amputation of his left leg, altering the course of his life. Despite this setback, Sumit's indomitable spirit and determination propelled him into the realm of para sports. He began training under the guidance of Nitin Jaiswal in 2017 and soon emerged as a formidable athlete in national and international competitions. Sumit's

18261



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perseverance and dedication to his sport culminated in a gold medal at the 2020 Summer Paralympics, where he set a world record in the F64 javelin throw category with a throw of 68.55 meters.

Sumit's achievements extend beyond his sporting prowess. His success story has been a source of inspiration for many, illustrating the transformative power of sports and the potential for overcoming adversity. Sumit's journey underscores the critical role of support systems, such as the Go-Sports Foundation's Para Champions Programme, in nurturing talent and providing necessary resources for athletes with disabilities. His educational background, including a B.Com degree from Ramjas College of Delhi University, coupled with his sporting achievements, exemplifies the holistic development of an athlete who excels both academically and athletically. Sumit's story is a testament to the importance of resilience, support, and the relentless pursuit of one's dreams, making him a role model for aspiring athletes and a beacon of hope for those facing similar challenges.

The broader implications of Sumit's success are significant for Indian sports. His accomplishments have contributed to the growing recognition and support for para sports in India. The initiatives taken by organizations and the government to support athletes like Sumit are crucial for the development of sports infrastructure and the elevation of standards in para athletics. Sumit's story also highlights the importance of creating an inclusive environment that fosters the talents of athletes with disabilities. As a sports motivator and administrator, Sumit has been instrumental in advocating for better facilities, recognition, and opportunities for para athletes. His efforts have not only raised awareness about para sports but have also inspired a new generation of athletes to pursue excellence, thereby contributing to the overall growth and development of sports in India.

2. Methodgoloy

This study employs a comprehensive qualitative approach to examine the journey of Sumit Antil, incorporating primary and secondary sources. Primary data includes interviews with Sumit Antil, his family members, and notable sports personalities. Secondary data is gathered from scholarly articles, biographies, sports journals, and credible online sources. The research focuses on analyzing biographical details, achievements, and the broader impact of Sumit's success on Indian sports. Data collection methods include document analysis, content analysis,



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and thematic analysis, ensuring a thorough exploration of Sumit's life and contributions to para sports.

3. Biographical Aspects of Sumit Antil



3.1 Indian Javelin Thrower - Sumit Antil's Background

Sumit Antil, an Indian Paralympian and javelin thrower, was born on July 6, 1998. In the men's F64 javelin throw category at the 2020 Summer Paralympics, he took home a gold medal. He now owns the record after throwing 68.55 metres at the 2020 Paralympics in Tokyo.

On July 6, 1998, Sumit Antil was born in Khewra, Sonipat, Haryana, Indiaborn into the Tomar Jats' Antil clan (subclan). The young Sumit aspired to enlist in the Indian Army and pursue a career in Javelin Throw.In 2015, when he was 17 years old and on his way home from training, a fast lorry struck his motorbike. His left leg was amputated as a result, and he was forced to give up his dream of becoming a wrestler. The Go-Sports Foundation provides Sumit with support as part of the Para Champions Programme. While pursuing his B.Com at Ramjas College of Delhi University after completing his secondary education at Dev Rishi Senior Secondary School in Sonipat, Antil was exposed to para sports by another para athlete, Rajkumar.



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Figure 3. Sumit Antil with Javelin

Antil began training with Nitin Jaiswal in Delhi in 2017 and competed on a variety of national and international stages. On the National Circuit, he started competing in the javelin, and in 2019, GoSports accepted him into the Para Champions Programme. He set a new record in the F64 division at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix in Italy in 2019 and went on to take home the Silver medal in the Combined Event. At the 2019 World Para Athletics Championships in Dubai, he went on to win the Silver medal and set a new world record in the F64 division.



Figure 4. World Para Athletics Championship Record

In the javelin throw F64 event at the 2020 Summer Paralympics, Antil set a world record throw on August 30, 2021, to win the gold medal. Antil broke his own record of 68.55 metres while competing in the Indian Open National Para Athletics Championships, rewriting the world record for the fourth time in a year with a throw of 68.62 metres. Amazingly, three of these records were set during the Tokyo Paralympics final on the way to a gold medal.



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3.2 Biography of Sumit Antil

Name	Sumit Antil
Father's Name	Late. Ram Kumar Antil
Mother's Name	Smt. Nirmala Devi
Wife's Name	Sheetal
Sister's Name	Kiran, Sushila & Renu
Coach's Name	Naval Singh
Date of Birth	7 June 1998
Permanent Address	VPO - khewda, District – Sonipat (Haryana)
Educational Qualification	B.com
Height	In centimeters- 189 cm in meters- 1.89 m in feet & inches- 6'
	2"
Weight	98kg
Affiliation	Indian Paralympic Javelin Thrower Gold Medalist

He set a new record in the F64 division at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix in Italy in 2019 and went on to take home the Silver medal in the Combined Event. At the 2019 World Para Athletics Championships in Dubai, he went on to win the Silver medal and set a new world record in the F64 division.



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

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On August 30, 2021, Antil won the gold medal in the F64 javelin throw event at the 2020 Summer Paralympics after setting a new world record. Antil threw 68.62 metres, shattering his previous record of 68.55 metres, in the Indian Open National Para Athletics Championships. This was his fourth attempt to rewrite the world mark in a year.



Figure 7. Tokyo Paralympic gold medal winner Sumit Antil after setting a new world record of 68.62 metres at the Indian Open National Para Athletics Championships in Bengaluru

Incredible as it may seem, three of these records were established in the finals of the Tokyo Paralympics, the route to a gold medal. At the Tokyo Paralympics, Sumit Antil broke the world record in the javelin (F64) and won gold. With a new world record of 68.55 metres, Sumit Antil of India won the men's javelin (F64) event at the Paralympics in Tokyo.



Figure 8. Sumit Antil with another Participants

Sumit Antil, winning the gold medal in men's javelin (F64). As a world record attempt, he set a distance of 68.55 metres. The fourth-place finisher was Sandeep Chaudhary, an Indian. At the



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Paralympics in Tokyo, Indian Sumit Antil won gold in the men's javelin (F64) event with a new world record throw of 68.55 metres. Sumit Antil set a new record three times during Monday's final in Tokyo. He threw 66.95 metres on his first try, but he managed to beat the old record on his second try. Then, on his fifth attempt, he threw 68.55 metres, breaking the record for the second time. Another Indian, Sandeep Chaudhary, finished in fourth place with a best throw of 62.20 metres.

With a best throw of 66.29 metres, Michal Burian of Australia took home the silver medal, while Dulan Kodithuwakku of Sri Lanka took home the bronze.With his first throw, Antil set the marker, placing himself in the lead and breaking the previous F64 world record, which he had previously set.The next attempt, he threw 68.08 metres, shattering the record for the second time.

Even though he seemed to have already won the gold medal with times of 65.27 and 66.71 on his third and fourth attempts, respectively, none of his competitors actually threatened him. His third world record-setting throw of the day, at 68.55 metres, secured India's second gold medal at the 2017 Tokyo Paralympics. This was followed by two more attempts that day. AvaniLekhara was the first Indian woman to ever win a Paralympic gold medal in the sport of shooting.

On Monday, India had a fantastic javelin throw day thanks to Devendra Jhajharia's silver and Sundar Singh Gurjar's bronze in the men's F46 final.With seven medals in the bag, India has set a new Paralympic record.

3.2.1 An aspiring Javelin Thrower

Antil is a Sonipat, based that was born on June 7, 1988. His father was a JWO (Junior Warrant Officer) in the Indian Air Force, and he comes from a middle-class family. He was interested in sports since a young age, and Javelin Throw was his favourite activity. He idolises Yogeshwar Dutt, a wrestler who earned a bronze medal at the London 2012 Olympics, and actually wanted to be a wrestler.

3.2.2 A mishap that altered his life

He had an accident on January 5, 2015, while riding his bike home from class. He was rushed right away to the Air Force Hospital, where the only available choice for the medical staff was to amputate his leg below the knee.





"A tractor rear-ended me. I stumbled on the pavement, and the tractor driver didn't use his brakes quickly enough to avoid running over my left leg, he told Times of India. He was transferred to an artificial limb centre in Pune after 53 days, where he received a prosthetic leg that allowed him to stand up again. His hopes of becoming a wrestler, however, were dashed too soon.

3.2.3 How well-suited was Sumit Antil to parasports?

He was determined to continue playing sports even after the injury. He learned about the Paralympics in July 2017 via Rajkumar, a fellow para-athlete from the same village. As a result of extreme corrosion and heat, his prosthetic liner would occasionally become filled with blood, making the voyage painful and patient. But he didn't give up.

Virender Dhankar, who won silver in the 2018 Asian Games, recommended him to javelin coach Naval Singh, who took Antil under his wing. At the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi, he began to train. He is a diligent soul. He frequently showed up with a javelin when I asked him to come to practise at 3 in the morning. Singh, a recipient of the Dronacharya award, said, "I have never seen a guy so dedicated.

3.2.4 Sumit Antil's qualification for the Paralympics was how?

After winning a silver medal at the 2019 World Para Athletics Championships, Antil secured a spot in the F64 division for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics.



Figure 9. Sumit Antil



Figure 10. Sumit Antil in Tokyo 2020 game

3.2.5 Achievements of Sumit Antil



18268

ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

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Sumit qualified for the Tokyo Paralympics in addition to winning the silver medal at the 2019 World Athletics Championships. Sumit broke the record in the F 44 division of the National Para-athletics Championship in March 2021 by throwing 66.90 metres. At the Tokyo Paralympics on August 30, 2021, Sumit smashed his own record in the F64 division and won the world title. By throwing 68.55 metres in the final, Sumit broke the previous record and gave India the gold.



Figure 11.Sumit Antil Achievements



Figure 12. Sumit Antil's Achievements Collage

3.2.6 Cash Prizes for Sumit Antil



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

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Sumit Antil, who won a gold medal and established a world record in the javelin throw at the Tokyo Paralympics, would receive a financial prize of Rs. 6 crore, According to Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, who made the announcement on Monday.



Figure 13. Sumit Antil with his mother after receiving prize

3.2.7 Life-Changing Event

Antil, who is now based in India's capital, New Delhi, proceeded to divulge hitherto undiscovered aspects of his life, such as how his mother and friend Mohit helped him get his life back on track after an accident that utterly wrecked it when he was sixteen years old.

My family was middle class, but our financial situation was always precarious, and I lost my father when I was only seven years old. But I could always count on my mum to make sure I got everything I needed. At the age of sixteen, I was engaged in a car accident that resulted in the amputation of a leg. Throughout my 53 days in the hospital, my mother stayed at my side. Sometimes she would motivate me. The challenges she endured are beyond my comprehension. This is a mother whose husband died while her kid was seven years old. The fact that he was 16 or 17 years old when he lost a leg in an accident doesn't help either. What she has gone through psychologically is beyond my comprehension, the 23-year-old recounted. Not only has the reaction from my loved ones been disheartening, but I've also found it hard to accept what has transpired.

You know, people began to look at me differently once I returned home. By the way, they were gesturing at my lower body and whispering, "His life is ruined." All harm had been done to my mother. I just informed my mom that I want to run a marathon someday. To put it plainly, I was careful not to throw her off. My only intention was to motivate myself and my loved ones.





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I feel a sense of pride now, however. What matters most to me is that I can see the sense of pride in my mother's eyes. If I could make her happy, Antil, who was a promising wrestler before his injury, would say.

The day after the accident, I learned that I had amputated my leg, and I simply cried all day. "I (have) lost my leg, and I can't be a wrestler." I think you can imagine what my initial thought was. I don't know what I would do if Javeling Throw weren't around. After getting the prosthetic leg, I only wanted to go back to the stadium and try Javeling Throw again. However, I was completely crippled by the time I attempted it because of the knee's restricted mobility. Antil said, "I only wanted to work a nine-to-five job." He gave credit for his current success to his buddy Mohit, who encouraged him.

3.2.8 Pillar of Fortitude

We went to the same elementary school together when Mohit and I were kids. My husband likewise resigned from his job as a merchant marine officer the moment he heard about my injury so that he could be by my side. "I'm here with you, so do anything you want," he said. For the last two years, he has not only supported me but also offered advice on how to improve my game. When I'm feeling tired, he acts as my physical therapist. He became my personal masseur. When he pushed my hands and legs, he never once felt bad about it. While training, he gives me the javelin back and tells me to throw it again with more precision, Antil said, adding that his success has not been only down to "me."

If you want to succeed, it's always "us" and never "me." That's what I learned. Whenever I run across Mohit, I feel grateful for the buddy he is. He has completely given up on his own professional path due to my influence. And now, I will ensure that he has a wonderful life since he lost his desire of helping me achieve my ambition. He had this picture of me taking home the paralympic and global titles.

Antil, who counts himself lucky because his friends protected him from prejudice since he is crippled, made a promise: he would just want to stabilise my life, and now I would do the same for him. To be honest, I consider it a blessing to have my friends. I can't believe how my few friends rallied around me; they're like brothers to me. My family was so incredible in their support; it still amazes me. Because she made sure I was financially and emotionally secure, my mother is a godsend to me.





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I have just been bestowed the highest sporting accolade, the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, by the Government of India. In her presence, my mother spoke with great satisfaction about the medal the Indian president presented me with. It made me happy. I got this gut sensation that my mum is very proud of me and all I've achieved.



Figure 14. Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award (Medal)

4. Views of Sumit Kumar Antil, his wife, his mother, Three sisters and Eminent Sports Personalities



Figure 15. Sumit Antil after winning Gold



4.1 Interview of Sumit Antil

Javelin throw champion Sumit Antil was interviewed by the author, and in this interview, his views were taken on the game of javelin throw in order to know what he thinks about the growth and future of the javelin throw game on a national and international level. According to Sumit, India has the most powerful team of javelin throw players not only in the country but even on international levels. Either in Asian Games or World Athletics Championships, India has won gold and silver medals as well, so it would be false to say that India is weak in terms of games. Not only the northern part but other parts of India are also contributing on huge levels to take the javelin throw game to its peak. He also mentioned the names of some players from other parts of the country, which are Devarakeshavi Prakasha Manu from Karnataka, Kishore Kumar Jena from Odisha, and there are many more who are very popular in this game.



Figure 16. Interview with Sumit Antil

Sumit was asked why the young athletes are less interested in playing the javelin throw game. He answered that before 2020, people were less aware of this game. Javelin throw isn't a very popular sport, and the main reason behind this is that the school systems do not encourage



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sports subjects as the main focus; instead, games are always considered extracurricular activities, so the young children do not know about most of the games.

The javelin throw game is a very ancient game that has been played for a long period of time. It is a very interesting game to watch, especially when the javelin is thrown during the tournament. It looks thrilling and awe-inspiring to the young athletes who aspire to play this game on a large scale. He also shares his views about how we can increase the performance of Indian athletes in the javelin throw at the international level. To encourage the players, they should be provided with better opportunities, facilities, food, and proper guidance by experienced coaches or instructors. Also, players should get deserving respect and recognition for their achievements. By making good policies and receiving support from the government, we can inspire the youth more to join and attract them towards sports to make winnings on national and international levels.

How he sees his achievements and records in this game. He has received gold medals in all Paralympic championships, and the current world record for the javelin throw is marked by his name as well. He also looks forward to seeking great achievements in the tournaments that are to be held in the coming future. He desires to set benchmarks for his success for the youth and the country and wishes to perform much better than before every single time he gets the opportunity.On the eve of Republic Day 2022, Sumit Antil was presented with the Padma Shri award as a token of appreciation. Earlier, in the year 2021, he was presented with the Khel Ratna award.



Figure 17. Padma Shri Award (Medal)



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Figure 18. Written statement by President of India to Sumit Antil for Padma Shri Award



Figure 19. Award

Sumit illustrates the javelin throw game, in which he mentions that it is quite similarly expensive as the other games, which are cricket, badminton, and shooting. A professional javelin stick itself costs around INR 1.5 lakhs, and the spike shoes cost around INR 17 lakhs, so it is not as cheap as people think this game is. He also points out that the track in this game plays a very vital role; without the proper track condition, it gets really hard for the players to play this game. This track should be well-lengthened so that the athlete can maintain proper momentum while running in a predetermined area for throwing the javelin.

According to him, the role of government is requisite in the javelin throw game. It is providing various schemes and support to the athletes; schemes like "Khelo India" invigorate the athletes to perform well and boost their confidence. All the expenses of an athlete are covered by the government, so this is very good for the players, and Sumit also appreciates the support of the government.



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Sumit tells about his memorable moment being when he won the gold medal in the Paralympic Championship for India in 2020, and he feels really overwhelmed for holding the current world record, having thrown 73.29 metres at the 2022 Asian Para Games in Hangzhou.

At last, while wrapping up the interview, Sumit expressed gratitude to his family and his coaches for supporting him and believing in him, which could lead him to gain this kind of procurement and be able to make himself and his surroundings proud for winning such great achievements. He also mentions his friends, who always stood by him and encouraged him to work hard. Sumit also gives the message to the youth generation to keep working hard with dedication and determination in order to succeed in the future, because every big thing takes time to happen and one should always be willing to achieve better and better than before. Success doesn't come by chance; one makes it happen to come into their lives. Patience is the key to success in life, so young athletes should keep practicing and working on themselves without losing their morale.

4.2 Presentation of Medals

Every Paralympic competition is followed by a medal ceremony. Winners, runners-up, and third-place teams all receive their medals from an IPC representative while atop a three-tiered rostrum. A gold medalist's national anthem is played while his or her flag is raised. The medal ceremonies also rely on the help of volunteer people of the host country who serve as hosts by carrying the national flag and assisting the officials who present the medals. The medal ceremony for each Paralympic competition takes place no later than the second day following the conclusion of the competition.



Figure 20. Medal ceremony during the 2010 Winter Paralympics



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4.3 Interview of Sumit Antil's wife Sheetal



Figure 21. Interview with Sumit Antil's wife Sheetal

Paralympics champion Sumit Antil's wife Sheetal was interviewed about his personal and professional life balance. She feels really proud of being a wife of such a victor ludorum, she is well aware of the game Javelin throw it is absolutely clear to her what her husband actually plays and how he manages to motivated for his game.

She narrates that Sumit is really very inspiring for their family, society and for the youth as well. She also told the author that her husband is very good at amaintaining a harmonious relationship between his work and personal life. He gives the same attention and care to his family as well to his sports; he is never out of subject when it comes to support his family, friends and his team. He spends a quality time with her and their family, he takes her to vacations and picnic spots as well, he is an admiring personality his charm attracts everyone around him. By the end of the interview she was asked what would she like to say to the female Javelin throw players, in answer she replied that women are nowadays way ahead in everything, there is nothing that could stop a women from achieving something they want so she mentioned good luck and prosperity for the players to gain wealth and win in the future.





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4.4 Interview of Sumit Antil's mother Smt. Nirmala Devi



Figure 22. Interview with Sumit Antil's mother Smt. Nirmala Devi

In the research of Sumit Antil's biography the author interviewed his mother about his contribution to the family and society.

She mentioned the person behind Sumit's success is his mentor. According to her Sumit is the shadow of his father including his wit and vast thinking of matter, she also explains the nature of Sumit that he is very impish sometimes he is like a child in an adult body he is very mischievous with his sisters he still likes to annoy them a lot but yet his sisters mean the world to him. Weaknesses and strengths of Sumit are as he is quite sentimental when it comes to his family and being polite, gentle or calm in every situation is one of his qualities. She also describes the daily routine of Sumit which is he wakes up early in the morning, he goes to the practice at 5 O'Clock and returns to home at 9 O'Clock in the morning, same goes in the evening 4:30 O'Clock in the evening and returns at 9:30 O'Clock, she mentioned that he is very fond of improving his skills in his sports and he also likes to spend his most of the time at stadiums for practicing and training other students to make elite progress in the field of sports.

By the end of her interview she gave a very special message to the female Javelin players to keep working hard and being consistent in their game to bring medal one day for India.



5. Conclusion

Sumit Antil's journey from adversity to triumph is a powerful testament to resilience, determination, and the transformative power of sports. His achievements in para athletics, particularly his gold medal at the 2020 Summer Paralympics, have set new benchmarks and inspired countless individuals facing similar challenges. Sumit's success underscores the importance of robust support systems, inclusive environments, and the role of dedicated mentors in nurturing talent. His story is a vivid illustration of how an indomitable spirit can overcome significant obstacles, turning personal tragedy into extraordinary success. By breaking world records and winning medals, Sumit has demonstrated that physical limitations are not barriers to achieving greatness. Moreover, Sumit's journey has broader implications for Indian sports, particularly para sports. His accomplishments have contributed to increasing recognition and support for para athletes in India. The initiatives taken by organizations such as the Go-Sports Foundation and governmental support programs have been crucial in providing the necessary resources and platforms for athletes with disabilities to excel. Sumit's success highlights the need for continued investment in sports infrastructure and the creation of an inclusive environment that fosters the talents of all athletes, regardless of physical ability. This shift towards inclusivity is essential for the elevation of standards in para athletics and the overall development of sports in India. Sumit Antil's impact extends beyond his sporting achievements; he has become a role model and a motivator for aspiring athletes and individuals facing adversity. His advocacy for better facilities, recognition, and opportunities for para athletes has raised awareness and inspired a new generation to pursue excellence in sports. Sumit's story is not just about his personal triumphs but also about the collective progress in creating a more inclusive and supportive sports culture in India. His legacy will continue to influence and inspire, demonstrating that with perseverance, support, and a relentless pursuit of one's dreams, extraordinary accomplishments are within reach for everyone.

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