

# Blind People's Association

**Founded:** 1954

**Sector:** Disability Development, Rehabilitation, Inclusive Education, Assistive Technology

The Blind People's Association (BPA) was founded in 1954 by Mr. Jagdish K. Patel as a Recreation Club for the Blind in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Originally known as the Blind Men's Association, it began as a modest initiative to support visually impaired individuals. Over seven decades, BPA has grown into one of India's largest and most comprehensive disability development organisations, serving all categories of persons with disabilities through education, rehabilitation, and empowerment.

Under the transformative leadership of Dr. Bhushan Punani, who joined as Project Manager in 1979 after completing his PGP from IIM Ahmedabad, BPA evolved from a small blind school with 80-90 staff serving 250-300 beneficiaries into a multi-campus powerhouse. Dr. Punani pioneered a two-pronged growth strategy — expanding on-campus services while launching community outreach projects that took rehabilitation to people's doorsteps. By 2025, BPA operates 17 campuses across Gujarat and one in Rajasthan, plus 18 Vision Centres and 10 Day Care Centres for Persons with Multiple Disabilities and Deafblindness.

## Service Categories:

**Disability Rehabilitation:** Comprehensive services for visual, hearing, physical, and multiple disabilities including residential schools, vocational training, and community-based rehabilitation across 17 campuses.

**Healthcare & Assistive Technology:** Eye hospital at Bareja, orthopedic hospital, Vision Centres providing screening and treatment, manufacturing and distribution of tricycles, wheelchairs, and assistive devices.

**Education & Empowerment:** Primary to higher secondary residential schools for blind students, physiotherapy training, computer training with assistive technology, inclusive education programmes, and employment support.

## CORE PROGRAMMES:

### Residential Schools & Education:

Primary, Secondary and Higher Secondary residential schools for 250+ blind students (all free of cost); School for Physiotherapy Assistants running 3-year diploma; integrated education mainstreaming children with disabilities into regular schools; computer training centres with assistive technology.

### Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR):

Outreach programmes reaching remote communities across Gujarat and Rajasthan; early intervention services; parent training; professional development workshops for special educators and stakeholders; mobile medical units for underserved areas.

### Assistive Device Manufacturing:

Production and distribution of tricycles, wheelchairs, artificial limbs of international quality (free to consumers); braille devices; low-vision aids; hearing aids; mobility equipment benefitting 58,000+ persons with disabilities.

**Healthcare Services:** Porecha Eye Hospital at Bareja providing comprehensive eye care;



Gatorbhai Himmatlal Patel Orthopedic & General Hospital; 18 Vision Centres for screening and treatment; Day Care Centres for persons with multiple disabilities and deafblindness.

**Vision in the Dark:** A permanent exhibition spanning 7,000 sq. ft. of total darkness — the only one of its kind — where sighted people experience blindness through simulated environments including a village, park, zoo, and theatre. Designed to sensitise architects, engineers, and the public toward inclusive design.

### Vocational Training & Employment:

Industrial training and skill development courses; self-employment support for persons with disabilities; sheltered workshops; placement assistance; 400+ blind individuals trained as physiotherapists; computer literacy programmes enabling employability.

## BPA'S IMPACT

58,000+ Tricycles distributed to persons with disabilities

8,000+ Wheelchairs provided for indoor mobility

400+ Blind persons trained as physiotherapists

17 Campuses across Gujarat and Rajasthan

18 Vision Centres for eye care and screening

10 Day Care Centres for multiple disabilities

250+ Blind students in free residential education

7,000 sq.ft. Vision in the Dark experience centre

70+ Years Of service since founding in 1954