

Bhushan Punani

Dr. Bhushan Punani (born in Hansi, Haryana) is the Executive Secretary/General Secretary of Blind People's Association, Ahmedabad.

Education

- PGP - Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad IIMA, (1979).

Career

Born in Hansi, Haryana, Dr. Punani completed his management degree from IIM Ahmedabad in 1979. During placements, he opted for the 'unconventional job' column — joining the Blind Men's Association (now BPA) on 14th September 1979 as Project Manager. The IIM Director considered it a 'leap in the dark' and tried to dissuade him, but Punani was resolute about applying management knowledge for the development of marginalised communities.

He pioneered the concept of 'portfolio management for NGOs' and introduced a two-pronged growth strategy: expanding institutional services while launching community outreach projects. Under his leadership, BPA expanded from serving one disability to all categories and from one campus to 17 across Gujarat and Rajasthan. He also serves as Vice President of ICEVI (Global), Additional Director of Wagh Bakri Tea, and Independent Director at Harsha Engineers International and Torchlt Pvt. Ltd.

Awards and Recognition

- Helen Keller Award for outstanding contribution to disability sector.
- Distinguished Alumnus Award, IIM Ahmedabad.
- National Leadership IIM Lucknow Singhania Award (presented by former President Ram Nath Kovind).

Leadership at BPA

As Executive Secretary/General Secretary, Dr. Punani has overseen BPA's transformation from a single blind school into India's most comprehensive disability development organisation. He introduced professional management practices, transparency, and accountability — qualities that earned BPA recognition from the Rehabilitation Council of India, Sightsavers International (UK), and the International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment (ICEVI).



Key innovations include: expanding services beyond visual impairment to all disability categories; establishing the Assistive Technology Museum; creating 'Vision in the Dark' (designed by an Italian architect) to sensitise the public; helping Union Bank of India launch India's first accessible ATM (2012); and developing the concept of portfolio management for NGOs — a framework now studied in management education.

He has been instrumental in drafting India's disability legislation, developing disability policy for Gujarat, and serving on national advisory bodies including the Central Advisory Board under the RPwD Act 2016 and the Election Commission's committee on accessible elections. BPA's model of empowerment — enabling persons with disabilities to handle their affairs independently — has been documented by the World Bank and replicated across the country.

Under his stewardship, BPA operates residential schools, eye and orthopedic hospitals, vocational training centres, sheltered workshops, and community rehabilitation programmes — all while maintaining that 80% of beneficiaries belong to socially and economically disadvantaged communities. His philosophy: disability is not inability; invest in people and they will prove their capabilities.