



Bhushan Punani
Nandini Rawal

Visual impairment handbook

Blind People's Association (India)

Vashopur

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Dedicated to



**Shri Jagdish K. Patel
1928-1999**

(Founder General Secretary: Blind People's Association)

**Your Footprints will inspire posterity,
your work and deeds will be ingrained in time....**

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Bhushan Punani is the Executive Director of the Blind People's Association, Ahmedabad and the Rehabilitation Consultant of the Sight Savers International (India). He is also a Member of the Rehabilitation Council of India Committee of Professionals in the Field of Visual Impairment, General Council of the National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, Dehradun, General Council of the Institute for the Physically Handicapped, New Delhi, Member of the Advisory Committee of the Sense International India and Member of the World Council of the Deafblind International.

He has been awarded Ph.D. by the Gujarat University during 1995. He completed an Advanced Vocational Rehabilitation Course from Haifa University, Israel during 1984.

Nandini Rawal is the Project Director of the Blind People's Association and Secretary of the Rural Activities Committee, National Association for the Blind. She is also Secretary of the International Council for the Education of the People with Visually Impairment. She is also Member of the CBR Forum.

Both the authors are Master in Business Administration and have been working in the field of development of innovations and administration of disability development programmes for the last 20 years. Their goal is to professionalize services for persons with disabilities and to promote comprehensive, need based and low cost services for persons with all categories of disabilities.

They have participated and presented papers in large number of seminars at the state, national and international on administration of services for persons with disabilities. They have published articles on employment, integrated education, community based rehabilitation, administration of disability strategies etc. in various Indian and foreign Journals and other publications.

They have coauthored the following books :

1. Manual : Social and Economic Rehabilitation of the Rural Blind
2. W. Stein and Integrated Education
3. Manual : Community Based Rehabilitation
4. Handbook : Visually Handicapped
5. Jagdish Patel - A Visionary

FOREWORD

I feel most privileged, happy for the opportunity to commend this precious publication. I have been closely associated with Bhushan and Nandini and the Blind Men's Association for the past 20 years. I have seen the changes in the BMA and have witnessed the effects of infusion of professional inputs in a traditional "*Blind School*". The change of name from Blind Men's Association to Blind People's Association is in itself very significant. It reflects BPA's dynamism and egalitarianism in the services offered to persons with disabilities. BPA has served as a laboratory for testing a wide range of innovative ideas by my two young friends. It is also their temple to worship God in various forms. They have tried to adapt traditional approaches to education and rehabilitation of persons with visual impairment. They have successfully introduced managerial aspects of commercial viability, accountability and overall performance in this field. This Handbook is a detailed outcome of the experience and expertise they have garnered over the past two decades.

I compliment the authors for making this document available at very reasonable price. Their selfless endeavour is to professionalise the field and raise its quality by enriching it with information which is crisp, concise, accurate and contemporary. The publication starts with the demographic details of visual impairment and goes on to give the legal and correct definitions of visual impairment. These two chapters should be useful not only for rehabilitational practitioners but also for medical professionals. The handbook deals with alternative systems of educating persons with visual impairment like special and integrated education as well as with different approaches to rehabilitation, including vocational counselling, assessment, vocational training, employment and income generating activities. The book documents of the various schemes and concessions available to persons with visual impairment and

a detailed note on the Persons with Disabilities Act. The publication presents information on braille, educational equipments and other rehabilitation tools.

I am sure that rehabilitation workers and/or special educators will find this Handbook eminently useful because of the simplicity of its language and production. It will also be useful to persons who require specific bits of information on various aspects of visual impairment at one place. The authors do not claim to provide solutions to all problems of rehabilitation and education but are confident that judicious application and understanding of concepts would yield tangible results.

I have no doubt that this Publication will serve for a long time as a valuable companion for all those who are concerned with health care and rehabilitation of the visually impaired.

Ahmedabad

N.R. Sheth

1 January, 2000

PREFACE

India has witnessed unprecedented changes in the field of rehabilitation in the past three decades. What began as a welfare activity is now considered a developmental activity. The concept of charity has been replaced by opportunity. The entire field has been presented with numerous challenges in the nature of politically correct language to be used in working with persons with disabilities; changes in the funding pattern by Governments and funding agencies, the changing face of the disabled population and most importantly their need to be involved in their own rehabilitation.

1995 saw the passing and enactment of the “*Persons with Disabilities [Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation] Act, 1995*” and for the first time rehabilitation planners and persons with disabilities felt that they had a right to services rather than being passive recipients. The entire field is a different ball game altogether today. Rehabilitation workers, educators, teachers who began their work two decades ago will find that they need to rethink and replan their strategies.

My associates in the Blind People’s Association (formerly known as Blind Men’s Association), Dr. Bhushan Punani and Nandini Rawal started their careers after completing their Masters’ in Business Management approximately 20 years ago. They have seen the ups and downs in the field, have seen the emerging of new concepts, new and unheard of disabilities, changing demographic patterns of disabilities amongst other things. They have been instrumental in planning all kinds of programmes - institutional and non-institutional and have helped in the setting up of self help groups of persons with disabilities and helped to professionalise the field and other organisations by conducting Human Resource Development Programmes.

The Handbook which is presented here is a complete analogy and spans all aspects of comprehensive rehabilitation including

prevention, education, demographic details self help skills. The Handbook is titled "HANDBOOK ON VISUAL IMPAIRMENT". The new definition of blindness and the new terms of visual impairment and low vision in place of partially blind, partially sighted, visually handicapped have been carefully explained and dealt with. There is also mention of visual impairment with additional disabilities, persons with deafblindness and persons with low vision.

If ever, one publication was to act as a sort of general guideline to a new entrant to the field of visual impairment, I would definitely vote for this publication.

Ahmedabad

1 January, 2000

Arvind N. Lalbhai

President

**National Association for
the Blind (India)**

**Blind People's Association
Ahmedabad**

Chairman

Arvind Mills Ltd.,

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

The second edition of Handbook has really published on the demand of a large number of professionals, workers, parents of the visually impaired and visually impaired persons themselves. To bring out this publication at affordable cost, the Blind People's Association decided to publish it on its own and provide to the readers on no-profit basis. Late Mr. Jagdish K. Patel, founder General Secretary of the BPA always motivated and encouraged his colleagues to bring out such publications. This publication is being dedicated to his loving and everlasting memory as a token of gratitude and respect for him.

The Handbook has been possible largely due to the patient support, understanding and encouragement of the various marvellous persons of the Blind People's Association. Mr. Arvind N. Lalbhai, President; Mr. Natwarbhai Kinariwala and Mr. Jahangir Cama, both Vice-Presidents; Mrs. Bhadraben Satia, General Secretary; Mrs. Nandiniben Munshaw and Mr. Praful Vyas, both Secretaries; and Mr. Nanalal Kanabar, Treasurers and other trustees of the organization deserve our overwhelming gratitude for their cooperation.

We are grateful to the following renowned professional workers for their expert comments and contributions to various chapters of the Handbook:

Dr. Vandana Nath, Ophthalmologist for her comments on "Physiology of the eye and causes of visual impairment".

Dr. S. R. Shukla, Director, National Institute for the Visually Handicapped, Dehradun for his comments on "Demographic details of the Visually Impaired"

Mr. B. K. Panchal, Occupational Therapist of the Adult Training Centre for the Blind for his comments on Chapters on "Orientation and Mobility" and "Daily Living Skills".

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Mrs. Brahada Shankar, Coordinator, NAB RAC for her comments on “Community Based Rehabilitation”

Mr. Akhil Paul, Director, Sense International India for contributing a chapter on “Deafblindness”

Ms. Karin Van Dijk, a renowned Consultant for Low Vision for contributing chapter on “Low Vision”

Mrs. Vimal Thawani, Project Coordinator, Blind People’s Association for contribution chapter on “Visually Impaired with Multiple Disabilities”

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Last but not the least, we are indebted to our family members, particularly our spouses Mrs. Hansa Punani and Mr. Sanjiv Rawal respectively without whose support this Handbook would never have been possible.

Ahmedabad
24 January, 2000

Bhushan Punani
Nandini Rawal

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This National Award is given to
Blind Men's Association,
Ahmedabad (Gujarat).....
in public recognition of its outstanding
performance in the field of handicapped
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New Delhi
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Secretary
to Government of India