

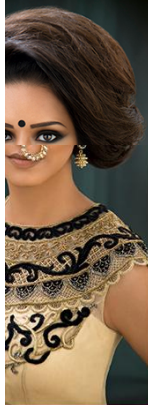


ASIANA WEDDING DIRECTORY – FIND YOUR WEDDING SUPPLIER NOW!

BRIDAL BEAUTY PREMIUM £££ YOUR POSTAL CODE Find

S WORLD AMERICA'S TOP MODEL

ISTER OW



MISS ASIANA
 www.missasia.co.uk

'MISS WORLD MEETS AMERICA'S NEXT TOP MODEL

REGIS NOW



MISS ASIANA
 www.missasia

HEALTH

Dental Diet & Fitness **Medical** Spa

'I'm blind but I run a salon'

Seema Flower explains how losing her sight hasn't stopped her fulfilling her ambitions

Posted: 02.04.14



I was registered as partially blind when I was three years old. Up until then I was an ordinary little girl. I went to a normal school, had friends and enjoyed life, with the exception that my eyesight was beginning to deteriorate. I tried to ignore it but eventually I was diagnosed with a condition called Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP), which meant my vision was deteriorating. I was born with the recessive gene for the condition, but it wasn't inherited from anyone; just my own bad luck.

As a teenager living with RP was especially hard as I was in denial of my diagnosis. Back then when I was growing up I suffered a lot of discrimination, unlike today when people are aware of equality issues, any one with a disability had a tough time. I couldn't apply

for jobs or acquire an interview if I didn't disclose the fact that I had RP but having a disability discriminated against me so consequently I experienced a lot of rejection.

Fortunately, progress has been made in the past 25 years, and it is currently my passion to raise awareness of my disability. I am an Ambassador for a national charity called the Retinitis Pigmentosa Fighting Blindness (RPFb). My aim is to raise funds for the charity and, more specifically, raise awareness within the Asian community, especially as it is still seen as a taboo subject. Many individuals within the Asian community are not aware of the term RP and I have met people who have been shunned by their own families because they have a 'disability'.

Anyone who suffers from RP will be faced with limitations on their life but I haven't let it hold me back. I'm married and I have a wonderful six-year-old daughter who thankfully is healthy and happy and doesn't have any signs of RP. Even though she's aware of my condition (she's been helping to guide me around since she was two) I try and give a normal life as possible like taking her to playgroup with other mums; sometimes they wonder why I'm there, and not at home, but that's not the life I want.



That's one of the reasons my salon Colour Nation came about. I wanted to work for myself. After coming back from my honeymoon where I met so many people I decided I wanted to go into the service sector. I have always had an interest in hair and I love helping people and making them feel confident about themselves. I chose to name it Colour Nation in order to promote equality and non-discrimination.

I may be registered blind but that hasn't stopped me from becoming a businesswoman and running a successful salon. I have days when negativity strikes, where I don't feel like getting out of bed and going to work and one week I have sight of something but the following week I may not be able to see that object again but I focus on my goals to ensure other sufferers of RP receive the support they deserve.



Currently, only 30% of RP sufferers are in employment, which leaves a remaining 70% who are not. I recently participated in a six mile Carrot's Night-walk in order to raise awareness in September 2013 for the National Eye Health week and this is something I look forward to doing again. I have come to a point in my life where I have accepted who I am and what I can still give the world. Although society has changed how it views disability, improvements can still be made and while that's the case I will keep fighting for equality.

Find out more about Seema's salon at www.colournation.com

Interview by Simi Gupta

Recommended

You May Like

- My Publishing Journey Part 2**
 My publishing journey had...
 Musical
 Fourteen years later, and...
- Day Spas: One Aldwych**
 Right about now is the...
- Hammasa Kohistani**
 How did you get into...
- Girl From Sindhustan**
 Making people laugh is not...