

RUKSHANA: INDIA; S GIRL RISING STORY

Girl Rising is a star powered documentary film by Academy Award nominated Director Richard E Robbins comprising the inspiring profiles of nine extraordinary girls from nine developing countries whose stories have been written for the screen by famous writer and narrated by some of the most renowned actors in the world such as Meryl Streep Ann Hathway,Cate Blanche Salma Hayek, Priyanka Chopra .

The nine countries and their inspiring heroines are:

Suma-Nepal, Sokha -Cambodia, Wadley- Haiti, Yasmin -Egypt, Azmera – Ethiopia, Rukhsana –India, Seen –Peru, Mariama –Sierra Leone, Amena –Afghanistan.

The film is made by Venture Production Company, and its DVD's are available on line for private and institutional viewing. The Girl Rising ENGAGE (Empowering Next Generation to Advance Girl's Education) in collaboration with USAID and supported by public private partnerships is a global campaign for education for girls and aims to change the way girls are valued ,help people to understand her worth and share the benefits of educating her and empowering her .

The heartwarming India Story is about eight year old Rukhsana and is written by Sooni Taraporewala the award winning screen writer of movies such as Salam Bombay and Mississippi Masala and narrated

by the glamorous Priyanaka Chopra .Rukhsana's family are pavement dwellers on the streets of Kolkata where her parents came to eke a living , leaving their village behind – a village which according to her mother, who yearns to go back to it, had green mango trees studded with mangoes and fluttering green parrots . Rukhsana denied such delightful sights on the filthy and shoddy pavement shanties ,is able to escape the constraints of pavement life with her vivid imagination that runs riot ,imagining a world of flowers and monkeys and by drawing these delightful images on paper .Once she is caught not paying attention to the teacher and doodling in class and punished .But her father instead of scolding her decides to buy her crayons and drawing book from his meager earnings to enable her to give vent to her imagination and fill the book with her colorful and vivid images of flowers , butterflies ,parrots and monkeys .This episode , where her father decides to support her rather than punish her is the defining moment of the story for it is his affirmative action which empowers Rukhsana by giving her confidence ..

When some days later they are evicted from the pavement and their shanty is destroyed by the slum clearance squad, the female members shift to a women community center for some time. Rukhsana and her sister's are miserable: they are a close knit family and hate to be split. But they again manage to come together and relocate to another community center and Rukhsana overjoyed starts drawing her colorful pictures again.

Rukhsana and her sisters again start attending school where Rukhsana excels especially in maths and geography and has now added dancing and drawing to her extracurricular activities. Her parents have decided to stay on in the city and her father, a hardworking man who is a daily waged painter of buildings is now involved in community work and is fully committed to educate his daughters.

World Vision, one of the partners of Girl rising supports Rukhsana and her sisters with school stationary, tuition support and medical assistance.

Rukhana's story is inspiring not only for her courageous spirit but also because her family especially her father is so supportive .For a girl to be educated, to be empowered is a father's support crucial. I hope there are many more such fathers so that many more Rukhsana's will realize their dreams.

You can learn more about Girl Rising by visiting their website [www. Girlrising .com](http://www.Girlrising.com) and send any such inspiring story to them