

Multi-Media Edutainment Initiative ‘Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon’ – I, A Woman, Can Achieve Anything

Organisation

Population Foundation of India

Country

India

Length of programme

2014 – 2015

Supported by

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1. Project summary

Population Foundation of India has launched a multi-media edutainment initiative called Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon which translates to ‘I, A Woman, Can Achieve Anything’. Central to the initiative is a soap opera series which promotes gender equality, women’s empowerment and access to healthcare. The soap opera is complemented by a range of communication tools to reinforce key messages and increase its impact.

The media initiative works to:

- Enhance knowledge of social issues such as child marriage, family planning and pre-natal sex selection.
- Challenge discriminatory social norms affecting women and girls.
- As a result, the initiative hopes to:
 - Change gender norms and practices within families and communities towards girls and women.
 - Motivate people and give them the confidence to respond to issues within their own family and community such as challenging child marriage or seeking appropriate health care.
 - Increase beneficiaries’ knowledge of at least three negative consequences of child marriage.

2. What are the anticipated outcomes as identified in the *Girls Not Brides* Theory of Change?

- Families, communities and young people are increasingly aware of the harmful impact of child marriage and alternatives available.
 - Families, communities and young people value alternative options to child marriage.
 - Families and communities prefer not to marry girls as children.
 - Men prefer not to marry girls who are still children.
 - Increased use of media to inform and support norm change to end child marriage.
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3. What are the key activities of the project?

Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon

Central to the edutainment initiative is the soap opera called 'Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon' ('I, A Woman, Can Achieve Anything'). The entertaining and educational drama follows the inspiring journey of Sneha, a doctor working in Mumbai. Sneha represents the young Indian women of today, who are educated and have professional careers but are torn between family and society and their professional aspirations and personal commitments. When Sneha returns to her village she finds herself embroiled in a series of family dramas. Sneha becomes a role model for many Indian women and their families who face similar realities.

The first season of Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon had 52 episodes and was broadcast on national TV between March and October 2014. It was watched by an estimated 58 million viewers. Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon has been ranked as one of the most popular programmes in its primetime slot of National Channel (Doordarshan) on Saturday and Sunday night at 7pm.

Season Two which has 78 episodes was launched in April 2015 and focused on the issues faced by adolescents in India. Population Foundation of India and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have teamed up to help enhance the image of Peer Educators under the National Adolescent Health programme through the drama series and to reinforce the messaging coming out of this Season.

The use of multimedia

The soap opera series was developed using a positive deviance approach to model positive behaviors which can help change gender norms and practices within families, communities and the health system.

To influence as many people as possible, Population Foundation of India adopted a 360 degree behavior change communication approach to ensure that the series has the biggest possible impact on its audience. This approach assumes that attitudinal and behavior change is more likely if individuals hear mutually reinforcing messages from a variety of different channels.

To achieve this, the intervention has a variety of innovative communication tools:

- **TV and radio:** the series is broadcast widely on DD India, one of the largest TV networks in the world, on its international channel, which broadcasts to West Asia, the Far East, Canada and Europe, as well as its regional channels. The soap opera was also aired on national radio (All India Radio), 94 local radio stations, 24 FM stations and 37 Vividh Bharati stations.
- **Discussion groups:** the series is complemented by youth and women's group discussions and community activities through Hum Kuch Bhi Kar Sakte Hain – 'We Can Do Anything' events.
- **Social media and mobile applications:** having a strong social media presence engages people nationally and globally, as well as attracting more interest from donors as well as other organisations working on similar innovative programmes. Facebook, YouTube, Vimeo and Twitter are all used to

share messages about Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon. Population Foundation India collaborated with IBM to develop a long term social media strategy to build viewership and create a lasting buzz about the initiative.

- **Community media:** an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) and community radio is also being used to reach audiences in their local language and improve viewer engagement and message recall. IVRS provides viewers and listeners with options to share feedback about the issues raised in the series, enter quizzes and learn about behind the scenes information. For Season 1, by October 2014 over 625,000 phone calls were received from viewers – many of whom called repeatedly illustrating a deep level of engagement with the series. For Season 2, by November 2015, over 400,000 phone calls have been received from viewers.
- **Outreach with local NGO partners:** an intensive outreach programme through NGO partners in five districts each of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh was also developed. 429 viewers/listeners groups were formed in villages and urban slums which play an important role in enhancing knowledge and changing perceptions around the issues of child marriage and age at first pregnancy. Local facilitators use DVDs, comic books, games and mobile friendly audio visual clips to extend the life of the content in communities.

4. Has the project been evaluated?

Yes. Monitoring and evaluation are key to the success of this multimedia initiative.

Population Foundation of India carried out a baseline in February 2014 and an end-line survey in March 2015 in sample areas across the two states of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar to help measure the impact of Season One of Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon.

In the interim period, in September 2014, they also undertook a rapid qualitative assessment to gain feedback on characters and storyline to understand how viewers engaged with the series to shape the development of Season Two. Findings showed viewers had a positive connection with the characters.

The end-line survey evaluated changes in knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of target groups related to:

- Age at marriage
- Attitudes towards pre-natal sex selection
- Gender discrimination
- Domestic violence

Findings showed that the programme had a significant impact on the level of knowledge and awareness of those exposed to it. Key findings are highlighted below:

- In Madhya Pradesh, 88% of respondents from the exposed group and 85% from the non-exposed group were aware of the Child Marriage Act at end-line compared with 74% at baseline.
- In Bihar, 83% (exposed group) and 78% (non-exposed group) were aware of the Child Marriage Act compared to a baseline of 72%.
- 77% of people who watched the programme felt that girls should complete their education and be 18 before getting married compared to 68% of those who didn't watch the programme.
- When asked about family planning, the percentage of women who had never used any method dropped from 51% in the baseline to 37.6% for women who had watched the programme, compared to 41.2% of women who had not seen it.
- When asked if a woman should be beaten if she goes out without telling her husband, only 25.4% of women in the exposed group agreed, compared with 47.8% at baseline.

- Women's belief that they have an equal ability to hold leadership positions in local government also increased from 56.7% at baseline to 77.1% at end-line for those who have seen the series.
 - At the community level qualitative evidence of change is also filtering through. Population Foundation of India has heard stories of girls challenging their own families against early marriage and denial of education.
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5. What have been the challenges in implementing the project and how were they overcome?

- A key challenge for this mass media initiative was reaching 'media dark areas', i.e. places which have limited TV, radio or internet access. This was addressed at the outset of the initiative through an intensive strategy to reach such areas through different channels that worked for their unique context. Social media has been very important in this respect as internet access has grown rapidly and improved in many parts of the country. This has allowed key messages to be reinforced through a variety of social media applications.
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6. What factors were important in the success of the project?

- **Reinforcing key messages:** use of diverse channels of engagement to connect with a range of audiences is essential to reinforce key messages.
 - **Evidence based:** outcomes achieved through authentic evidence based work helped to build credibility and provide greater impact and wider reach.
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7. What pieces of advice would you give other civil society organisations considering implementing a similar project?

- **Develop authentic characters.** The use of a 'positive deviance approach' for the development of this edutainment series helped the audience connect with the characters and issues and gave them positive role models.
 - **Develop outreach activities.** The use of communications materials and audio visuals has helped to increase awareness of challenging social issues.
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Find out more about the work [Population Foundation of India](http://www.girlsnotbrides.org) are doing by visiting their website. To watch a clip of Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon [click here](#).