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— I, A Woman, Can Achieve Anything —



Shifting Deeply Rooted

Gender Norms Using An
Entertainment-Education
Transmedia Initiative

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About the **Population Foundation of India**

The **Population Foundation of India (PFI)** is a national Non-governmental Organisation (NGO), which promotes and advocates for the effective formulation and implementation of gender sensitive population, health and development strategies and policies. It addresses population issues within the larger discourse of empowering women and men, so that they are able to take informed decisions related to their fertility, health and well-being. It works closely with the national and state governments and diverse civil society organizations to advance people's reproductive rights within the women's empowerment and human rights framework.

About the **Population Foundation of India Case Studies**

This case study is part of a larger monograph by the author titled, **Negotiating the Population Question: An Institutional History of the Population Foundation of India, 1970-2015**. Dr. Radhika Ramasubban, who is a senior sociologist, social historian and researcher has prepared the monograph on 45 years of PFI's journey. The monograph comprises four case studies, including this case study on *Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon (MKBKSH)*.

Abstract

The **PFI** launched *Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon – I, A Woman, Can Achieve Anything* – in 2014. MKBKSH is an entertainment-education (EE) transmedia initiative that promotes gender equality, the empowerment of women and improved health-seeking behaviours within families, communities and the health system. The formative research for MKBKSH utilized a positive deviance (asset-based) approach to storytelling, focusing on what is working on the ground. Using a 360 degree communication strategy, the intervention has reached out to intended audiences across the country through TV, radio, Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS), social media and on-ground activities to enhance knowledge, change perceptions and shift attitudes in communities on these issues.

The fulcrum of the initiative is a soap opera series telecast on Doordarshan, the Indian National Television Channel and All India Radio (AIR). The first season of MKBKSH (52 episodes) was telecast on DD National between March and October 2014 and Season Two (79 episodes) was aired from April 2015 to January 2016. The initiative has a strong research base, using positive deviance studies to identify good practices and behaviours within a community, amplifying them through a drama series on television and radio. PFI has conducted the baseline and endline evaluations for Season One of the programme along with a rapid qualitative assessment. Positive results have emerged from these evaluations.

Abbreviations

ANM	.....	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
ASHA	.....	Accredited Social Health Activist
AWW	.....	<i>Aanganwadi Worker</i>
CAH	.....	Community Action for Health
DFID	.....	Department for International Development
DTH	.....	Direct To Home
E-E	.....	Entertainment Education
FM	.....	Frequency Modulation
IRS	.....	Indian Readership Survey
IVRS	.....	Interactive Voice Response System
MARD	.....	Men Against Rape and Discrimination
NGO	.....	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHM	.....	National Health Mission
PFI	.....	Population Foundation of India
RKSK	.....	<i>Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram</i>
TAM	.....	Television Audience Measurement
UNFPA	.....	United Nations Population Fund
VHSNC	.....	Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committee

Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon



Since its launch in March 2014, the TV and radio drama series *Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon (MKBKSH)* – I, A Woman, Can Achieve Anything – has become the most well-known intervention of the PFI. The core messages of this entertainment educational transmedia initiative (the Serial) relate to empowering women and men, expanding people's reproductive choices and enhancing their wellbeing. In line with PFI's vision, the Serial seeks to empower women and men, and promote reproductive health and rights as being integral to sustainable human development.

Shifting Deeply Rooted **Gender Norms** Using An **Entertainment-Education Transmedia** Initiative

MKBKSH has an ambitious objective – to influence people's perceptions and attitudes on the role of women and men in families and communities in India. The Serial raises awareness among women, youth and communities on vital gender issues and illustrates how the prevailing skewed gender norms, including social and familial roles result in negative health outcomes for girls and women, impacting the wellbeing of their families and on the progress of society at large. Further, it offers solutions to address such issues by suggesting ways of creating an enabling environment for people's actions that can bring about changes in societal norms. The Serial does all this through the dramatic portrayal of realistic situations and characters, and credible, powerful and positive role models of both women and men. This case study briefly presents how this initiative was conceived, planned and implemented, and explores the potential for making a sustainable dent in the way people think about gender issues.

The birth of an idea

PFI has a long tradition of producing short documentary films on topics of public interest relating to population issues that enhance awareness on family planning. Until recently, educational films on family planning were mostly commissioned by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and designed either to commemorate population-related annual 'events' (e.g., the World Population Day), or highlight new government policies in the population-health sector. For instance, among films, *Haule Haule* (Slowly, Slowly) supported by the MacArthur Foundation and launched on World Population Day in 2010, focused on the importance of women's health and the need for paying attention to the age at marriage as well as birth spacing. Another film, *Pag Pag Aagey* (Moving Forward One Step At A Time), supported by the Packard Foundation and released in 2013, sought to inform people about their entitlements to improved public health services under the National Health Mission (NHM).

While movies in the past had contributed to raising awareness about the social determinants of health and family planning, PFI believed that there was a need to (i) **monitor the direction of change in thinking after the audience was exposed to such audio-visual messages;** and (ii) **understand what was required to shift deeply rooted cultural norms. PFI therefore addressed as a priority, the need to find responses to persistent challenges, such as low awareness on family planning; the practice of getting girls married in adolescence, followed by family and social pressure on them to conceive soon after; and the bias towards a male child. It was equally important to highlight that female sterilization remains the most used family planning method in India, while non-terminal spacing methods often remain invisible.**

Given the high television penetration in urban and rural areas, and the enormous popularity of commercial soap operas, PFI felt that packaging education in an entertaining way could be a promising option. To amplify the reach, it decided to use adaptations of the Serial on radio and mobile phones as well.



Further, PFI identified the Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS)¹ technology as a complementary tool to receive questions and feedback on content and impact, along with instant entertainment. New media avenues, such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter were also considered fundamental to reach the youth. Finally, it was envisaged that at the ground level, access to some or all of these technologies could be supported, where possible, by NGO-facilitated face-to-face interactions in the form of viewers' clubs and discussion groups.



The planning and implementation phase

PFI's strong belief in the potential of the project motivated the organisation to bring together collaborators with diverse and complementary skills to transform its embryonic ideas into a flagship intervention. The backing of assured seed funding from the PFI's Board, and the expression of interest by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) in part-funding such an intervention, kick-started the work. The initiative received a further boost when the Government of India's TV channel, Doordarshan, offered free air time to assist the programme in reaching out to a large audience. All these, together, helped the project think big and focus on scaling up right from the start.

In January 2013, PFI brought together a set of professionals from the social sciences, mass media, theatre, policy analysis and related fields to brainstorm around six focus areas that it believed ought to be the kernel of the TV series. These areas, which are also the key priority areas of PFI's strategic plan for the five year period 2011-16 and valid until 2020, were:



Delaying Age At Marriage



Delaying The First Birth



Promoting Spacing Between Births



Improving Quality Of Care For Family Planning



Reproductive Health Services



Preventing Sex Selection



Promoting Non-coercive Family Planning Practices, Programmes And Policies

¹IVRS is a free telephone-based facility where the caller gives a 'missed' call on the advertised toll free number and receives a call back. It then allows the caller to listen to uploaded content and recordings by other callers, and share their own viewpoint, feedback and experiences. The navigation is extremely simple, which makes it accessible to all users. The IVRS offers an opportunity for callers to engage with the Serial as it includes contests on issue-based campaigns, offers synopses of the radio episodes in the discussion section, contains celebrity messages in the behind-the-scenes section, presents weekly quizzes, and provides for community feedback surveys. Outbound calls and promotional SMS messages can also be sent to callers, motivating them to participate.

Leading academic researchers in the field, notably Dr. Arvind Singhal, Marston Endowed Professor and Director, Social Justice Initiative, Department of Communication, the University of Texas at El Paso, provided key early inputs and seminal insights from past global experiences in the theory and practice of entertainment education (E-E). These perspectives helped frame the creative brief for the production team, which was led by noted film and theatre director-producer Feroz Abbas Khan. He brought to the TV series, a strong theatre background and scripting skills that specialized in dramatizing real life stories. The production team decided to highlight real life stories drawing on international research evidence from successful experiments – notably in Central and South American countries and in South Africa, where soap operas had been used to trigger major social changes in the health, family planning and education sectors.



Realistic and aspirational elements were combined while conceptualizing the main characters to make them credible and relatable to both urban and rural audiences, and especially the youth. E-E research also pointed to the value of using the “positive deviance” approach (identifying positive behaviours and practices in a community) so that they might be applied as a norm for all in the community. When this approach is used to model the behaviours of key actors, audiences are given the opportunity to look at them for clear clues on how they might act to change their own lives.

The opportunity to pilot a sustainable project that would go to scale in a planned manner (two principles that underlie PFI’s ongoing policy) came together in July 2013, when DFID gave a grant to PFI to support a Promoting Planned Families project. This grant made possible the planning of 52 episodes for Season One of the Serial. It helped to ground the episodes in the social contexts and needs prevailing in **Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha** – states with DFID-supported programming.



This geographical concentration was in keeping with the PFI’s own commitment to working in states that were relatively less-well performing on maternal and child health, and fertility indicators. Following the grant from DFID, PFI was able to leverage funding from UNFPA to adapt the Serial to radio, accompanied by an IVRS designed to obtain viewer feedback.

PFI designed and carried out formative field-based research to inform the content and the messages of the production over 12 months leading up to the launch of the Serial on Doordarshan-National in March 2014 and the launch of the radio series on All India Radio in May 2014.

PFI collected close to 90 positive deviance stories focusing on quality of care, birth spacing, counselling and contraceptive choices from the contiguous culture regions of Bihar, Delhi, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan to feed into the creative brief that was prepared for the film team.



Simultaneously, PFI reviewed and distilled research findings on the drivers and barriers to family planning that could inform the questions being posed in the Serial. Behaviour change communication strategies were tested in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh in order to refine the outreach strategy and approach. Both the proposed title of the TV series and the dramatic storyline and character perceptions were also pre-tested for respondents' reactions.

PFI commissioned a baseline survey of prevailing knowledge, attitudes and perceptions relating to women's health, gender relations and family planning in five districts each of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, where the transmedia intervention and the outreach activities done in concert with locally active NGOs were to be intensively deployed. These were also the districts where an endline survey was conducted at the end of Season One to assess the change in the indicators.

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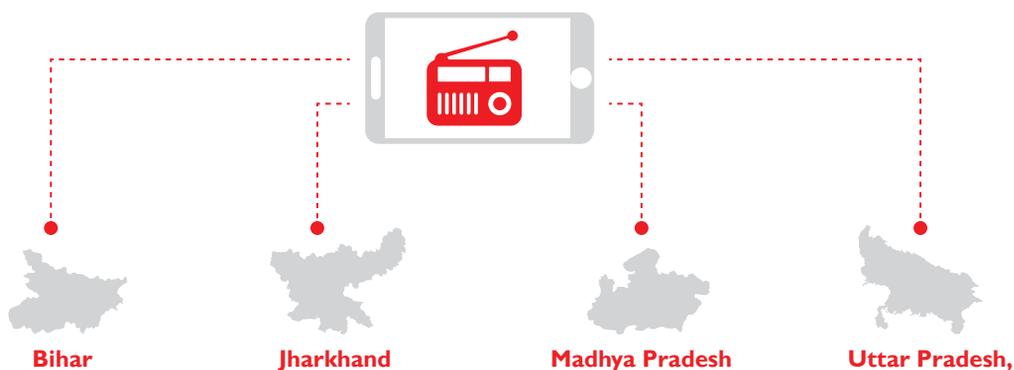
Between March and October 2014, the 52 episodes of Season One were broadcast in the Hindi language across India on Doordarshan-National and on Doordarshan-Bihar, on Saturdays and Sundays from 7:00 to 7:30 p.m. From May to December 2014, the broadcast in Hindi was extended to Doordarshan-India (serving audiences in West Asia, the Far East, Canada and Europe). Efforts were also made to further expand the outreach of the initiative along the lines defined in the preparatory phase of the project (see Box 1 on Page 6).

Multiple, distinct, yet complementary channels of communication have worked together to create a transmedia whole that has been greater than the sum of its individual parts. The storyline played itself out through TV, radio and social media channels such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter; a buzz was created through weekly audience contests on the IVRS; and mediated messages were reinforced through celebrity endorsements and celebrity epilogues. As people started to hear the same message from multiple sources, knowledge grew and was shared, negative attitudes began to be questioned, and social norms started to change.

Box 1: A “360 degree” approach to behaviour change communication



In the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh – or, rather, in their ‘media-dark’ sub-regions – narrowcasting of the radio adaptation in the local languages was simultaneously done over six Community Radio stations.



Few state-level private mobile radio platforms run by an organization partnering with PFI, aired the series in local languages and also ran discussions around the issues, which the initiative raised.



Co-terminus with telecasting of the Serial and radio broadcasts was the operationalisation of a dedicated national IVRS for viewers to simply call in and share their experiences and thoughts on the Serial and the issues that it raised. People also used this system to ask questions, seek and receive advice, answer weekly quiz questions related to the show, or simply listen to interesting bytes from celebrities and title songs.

This was managed by Gram Vaani, a social technology organization, which leveraged interactive voice response system (IVRS) to reverse the flow of information allowing to interact and learn the communities' feedback and interactions.



In addition to all of the above interventions, five districts each in the states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh were selected for an even more intensive outreach strategy. PFI partnered with local NGOs, which launched community activities around the Serial. For instance viewers clubs of women and youth groups – called Sneha Clubs (community groups named after MKBKSH's protagonist, Dr. Sneha Mathur) – were formed to enable people to gather to watch the Serial and engage in discussions around the issues that it raised. *Hum Kuch Bhi Kar Sakte Hain* (We Can Achieve Anything) events were organised as part of the dissemination and outreach strategy. Master trainers from these NGO partners were identified and trained in using the communication materials like games, comic books and illustrations to help facilitate discussion around the issues that the show raised. The master trainers in turn were charged with training the group leaders of the viewers' clubs in the use of these materials to facilitate discussions in the groups.

Assessing the impact of Season One



As Season One drew to a close, the Serial seemed to have been a significant success. Doordarshan on its part had already evinced interest in broadcasting the Serial in the original Hindi language in its Regional Kendras (stations) across north India, and in translating and dubbing it into regional languages for its Kendras across southern and eastern India.

Season Two with an even larger stable of 79 episodes was in the offing, with funding commitments in, and the original production teams in place. Clearly, the project was achieving scale, as originally planned. Three issues, however, needed clarity.

- What had been most relevant to the audiences of Season One's stories, characters and messaging? What were the key likes and dislikes? What did audiences want more of, and why? And what were the gross negatives that they had perceived in the stories, characters, and messages? Answers to these questions would highlight aspects that needed changing – strengthening, altering – in future programming, and suggest how the storyline for Season Two of the series might be developed.
- Who were the people actually watching and following up on the Serial? Did the programme reach all the target groups?
- What emerged unambiguously as the most relevant themes for Season Two?

To answer these questions, PFI sought to assess the efficacy of Season One in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Assessments were carried out in the two states – Bihar and Madhya Pradesh – where the baseline had been established before the initiative.** In this region, more than any other, there is an urgent need to increase the age at marriage and at first birth, as well as levels of knowledge and access to family planning services.***

The final assessment of the efficacy of the Serial, through the qualitative and quantitative methods used, highlighted that, overall, viewers saw the Serial as representing realistic situations and relatable characters and problems. They had learnt a great deal from it. Most importantly, they had enjoyed watching it. Over 94 per cent of viewers said that they would like to watch the programme again.

**These two states account for 15 per cent of the country's population, have high fertility rates, and high rates of unmet needs for family planning.

***Government of India 2011

Qualitative assessment:

PFI commissioned a qualitative Rapid Assessment between August and December 2014 to see how the Serial had actually fared among its target audiences. The assessment focused on young adults, married couples and frontline health workers in the intensive outreach districts of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. A combination of methods was used: in-depth interviews with front line workers, focus group discussions with women and men viewers of the Serial, in-depth telephone interviews with viewers who could be accessed through the IVRS caller's database, and interviews with married couples who had viewed the Serial. A story of resounding success emerges from this assessment.



Viewers were quick to perceive the positives that the Serial offered. In particular, the audience appreciated the realistic scenarios presented and the solution-centered approach used to address common issues which people face in their lives. High on the list was the character of Dr. Sneha Mathur, seen as a dedicated professional woman, confident and powerful even as she came across as compassionate, a loving and caring daughter, who unhesitatingly identified herself with the village of her birth. Older women were able to see her as a role model for their daughters, and young women felt inspired by the model of modernity and independence that she projected. Viewers were able to see the stark contrast between this portrayal of a strong woman, versus commercial soap operas where women are rarely seen as economically independent or as trained professionals, and where the focus is on manipulative and regressive daughter-in-law and mother-in-law bickering.

Equally reassuring was the positive affirmation of the story line, which viewers found to be realistic and authentic, faithfully portraying problematic and familiar situations of gender and age asymmetry in the family. Viewers also welcomed the focus on rural India and its transformation under the impact of modernizing influences. Coming in for particular appreciation was the Serial's demonstration of knotty issues being resolved over the space of just a few episodes.



Above all, women viewers appreciated that the Serial offered entertainment with gripping stories, and provided food for thought on issues that they knew little about or had not reflected upon in a clear and constructive manner. Many of them felt that the Serial had made them aware of many things relating to vital aspects of their lives including self-care during pregnancy and the post-natal period, and the importance of feeding colostrum to the newborn. They also learnt that family planning was more than just sterilization, and that other contraceptive methods could be considered for different needs. Another strong message they had imbibed was the importance of women finding a common voice to question and deal with widespread domestic violence.

Perceived negatives were fewer but constructive. These pertained to both programmatic content and the timing of the Serial. Viewers wanted to see more positive roles that focused on men, including showing men in supportive roles in relation to women. With regard to the timing of the programme, they felt that it was better to delay the telecast to after 7 p.m. when the men would be back from work and not miss out on viewing the Serial. For women too, a later time slot was regarded as being more convenient as, only by 7:30 pm do many of them usually finish cooking and other household chores before the family settled down to its leisure time in the evening. Viewers also felt that the Serial could have gained from better publicity efforts. Despite the promotional events launched by the PFI, significant sections of the population had remained unaware of it. Viewers contrasted this with the relentless advertising that one witnesses for commercial serials.

Notably, a significant target audience for the Serial, namely frontline workers consisting of Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANMs), Anganwadi workers (AWWs) and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) seemed to be missing out on watching the Serial as many of them were not aware of the Serial. These village level health workers are often the first port of call for rural communities. They were also visualized from the start as possible candidates for training as animators of the community level focus group discussions with adolescents and young couples, and at community events around issues raised by the Serial. All these front line workers are also members of the Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committees (VHSNC) wherever these have been established under the Community Action for Health (CAH) intervention process. The assessment exercise showed that the Serial, during Season One, had not been very successful in empowering them with knowledge, certainly not to the extent that it had set out to do.

Quantitative assessment:

In terms of sheer numbers, the Serial's performance during Season One was impressive.



An estimated

58 million

viewers watched Season One of the TV Serial (as estimated by using the Indian Readership Survey (IRS) and Television Audience Measurement (TAM) data. The Serial was also ranked between the third and fifth most popular programmes in its time slot of Saturday and Sunday at 7:00 p.m.

The Serial

(in Season One) generated

625,000 calls



through the IVRS from across the country, made by

135,000 callers

a majority of whom were women and youth (the Serial's primary target audience). This is a clear validation that PFI had reached out to the right demographic group via this initiative.

An end line evaluation covering married and unmarried men and women, mothers-in-law, unmarried youth and front line workers was conducted in February-March 2015 in seven districts of Bihar and nine districts of Madhya Pradesh, exactly one year after the baseline survey. It showed that overall 36 per cent of TV owning households had watched the Serial: 42 per cent in Bihar and 34 per cent in Madhya Pradesh. This was despite the fact that both these states have a high penetration (80 per cent on average) of both Direct-to-Home (DTH) and Cable networks that broadcast popular commercial serials. As with the IVRS callers, a sizeable proportion (40 per cent) who had watched the show were youth (in the 15-24 years age group). Half of the married women who watched the show were in the age group 18-24 years. The series had also reached 72 per cent households who owned radios: 82 per cent in Madhya Pradesh and 42 per cent in Bihar. The six Community Radio stations in Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh had reached out to 570,000 listeners and had received 31,244 calls from people who wanted to engage with the Serial.

The results of the survey reinforced the findings of the qualitative assessment. Across the board, exposure to the Serial had progressively increased viewers' knowledge on the issues of legal age at marriage, the risks posed by early marriage to the lives of the mother and child, the desirability of women having their first child between the ages of 21 and 25, the need for spacing out pregnancies, and awareness of the different methods of family planning and the desirability and benefits of family planning. The number of people who felt that women had the right to make their own reproductive choices and decisions, that domestic violence was unacceptable, that boys were in no way better than girls, and that there was no justification for gender discrimination, had also increased. In fact, the highest recall of any character in the Serial was that of Dr. Sneha Mathur, who was seen as a lovable and admirable character, followed by *Bua ji* - Sneha's aunt who was seen as familiar and endearing.

In terms of the impact on current and potential sponsors, too, the results have been encouraging. After the run of Season One on its national and international channels, Doordarshan has extended its broadcast of the Season One series to 15 of its regional channels. Telecast is already complete on one channel (North-east), eight are underway (in Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chennai, Jaipur, Lucknow, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram), while translation and dubbing in regional languages is in progress in the rest (Bengaluru, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jalandhar, Kolkata and Srinagar). It is noteworthy that the broadcast on these channels has taken note of the negative feedback during the Rapid Assessment Survey regarding the too-early evening timings; in fact, a variety of time slots are being experimented with. Viewers across the country, both men and women, now have the chance to watch the series at a more convenient hour. Technological mechanisms for outreach have been easier to put in place; the IVRS call back system is in place, and social media outreach has been stepped up. However, community level support systems are not yet in place to match the planned scale and outreach.

Season Two designed to attract a wider audience



The encouraging response to Season One has taken *Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon* into its second Season. Funded by the DFID and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, this Season consists of 79 episodes, and was launched on April 4, 2015. Considering that nearly half the viewers of Season One and over half the callers on the IVRS were youth, it was decided to cover youth related issues in Season Two. Dr. Sneha Mathur continues to be the main protagonist and here plays the lead role as doctor-cum-youth counsellor on health and reproduction issues. Building on the findings of the assessment for Season One, Season Two engages with men and boys in interesting ways, dealing with the priority areas of sexual and reproductive health, alcoholism, de-addiction, domestic and gender-based violence, mental health, and non-communicable diseases. It has on board the popular Bollywood star Farhan Akhtar as the Serial's anchor and narrator, who introduces and explains the twists and turns of every issue being addressed. He also represents his NGO, Men Against Rape and Discrimination (MARD), which is PFI's official collaborator for this Season.

Other members of the Bollywood fraternity have also lent their support for PFI's transmedia initiative. Brand ambassadors for Season One included eminent actor Sharmila Tagore and actor-cum-youth icon Soha Ali Khan, who gave away the *Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon* awards honouring members from the community in the Serial's target regions, who had actually challenged gender norms – offering yet new stories of 'positive deviance' – and thus validated some of the Serial's messages.

Season Two continued to be aired on Saturdays and Sundays till January 2016 but, in deference to public feedback, the timings had been pushed forward by half an hour. The Season is also aired in radio adaptation on All India Radio (101 stations) and the six Community Radio stations that had narrow-casted Season One. The radio programme is scheduled to continue till November 2016.



An estimated

60 million

viewers watched Season Two as per TAM data. The IVRS response from the public in Season Two has been extraordinary – nearly

815,000 calls



from **322,000 callers** (till June 21, 2016).

These widening concentric circles of association, collaboration and outreach, with youth at the centre, have given a new fillip to PFI's attempt to harness social media to promote the objectives of the transmedia project and, indeed, to complete its 360 degree linkages. Since March-April 2015, viewer engagement with the Serial's issues has grown significantly on Facebook and Twitter, while YouTube has become a growing resource for those wishing to access past and ongoing episodes. This could partly be an outcome of the collaborations which include joint social media campaigns and co-production of issue-based songs with Farhan Akhtar's NGO MARD during Season Two.

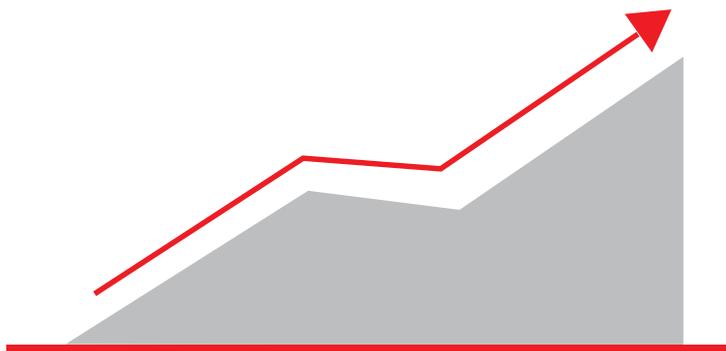
The years 2015 and 2016 also saw PFI achieve a more intensive engagement at the community level through the agency of local NGOs and community based organisations in the selected intensive engagement districts of Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. The process of facilitating this engagement – the preparation and dissemination of communication materials such as comic books, puzzles, facilitator manuals etc. – has gained momentum. Till early 2016, 429 Sneha Clubs (viewers clubs) have come into existence, and often the identification of the award winning women “heroes” – the women emerging as leaders in challenging gender norms referred to earlier – is through the agency of these clubs.

As part of the 360 degree communication strategy framework designed for MKBKSH, several initiatives were undertaken during Seasons One and Two, including an outreach programme in the states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. An interesting outcome has been the collaboration of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with PFI to rebrand their Peer Educator programme for adolescents under the National Health Mission's *Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram* (RKSK). The peer educators were renamed 'Saathiya,' which means a trusted friend. The programme was rebranded as 'Saathiya' and launched across India. Additionally, the Ministry has incorporated select issue-based episodes of the programme in its training modules for peer educators across India. These episodes will also be used by the peer educators in the field, whilst conducting community level meetings and interactions.



In addition to the radio adaptation currently being broadcast on All India Radio, efforts are underway to deliver this transmedia initiative to newer frontiers and expand the reach of the teleserial. Last but not the least, Season Three, which is planned to incorporate themes related to preventive and promotive health is also on the anvil.

MKBKSH: Scaling new heights



PFI has always believed in evidence-based scaling up of projects. Early experiences and endline assessments of MKBKSH suggest that this 360 degree behaviour change initiative could aspire for higher reach and greater impact.

Given the rapidly changing media landscape in the country, PFI is developing a strategy to scale up MKBKSH exponentially and in a sustainable manner. As an input into the process, it commissioned a study to discover the potential of MKBKSH in the current edutainment universe, define a new aspiration and recommend an appropriate strategy. The study was conducted by 9.9 Media, under the leadership of Dr Pramath Sinha, the Founding Dean of the Indian School of Business and the Co-Founder of the Ashoka University.

The study was carried out in two phases. In Phase I, a systematic option analysis was undertaken to identify the target audience and its media habits, landscape the edutainment universe, identify appropriate delivery channels – traditional, as well as new – and create an optimal media mix. In Phase II, the study focussed on defining a sustainability framework for MKBKSH, creating an action plan and exploring funding models for the required strategy.

The study's rigorous analysis has revealed valuable media consumption patterns and dispelled many myths. For instance, according to the study, around 70 per cent of the Indian population is exposed to at least one form of media, and 90 per cent of them have access to television.* It has also explored the new media consumption patterns and reviewed its potential in a country where internet penetration is growing at an annual rate of 30 per cent. The study concludes that a comprehensive strategy can enable MKBKSH to attain a potential reach of 350 million viewers over a period of three years. This is what PFI and its partners should strive to achieve.**

*Based on Indian Mobile Association of India and IMRB International. 2014.

**Computation by 9.9 Media.

Sources

This case study has relied on a combination of processual documents relating to the making of the teleserial, and interviews with key informants from the team responsible for the teleserial.

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