

MAIN KUCH BHI KAR SAKTI HOON: SEASON 1 - CHANGING KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES & PRACTICE

“Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon - MKBKSH” was produced by the Population Foundation of India (PFI) with support from the Department of International Development, Government of the United Kingdom (DFID). This popular culture entertainment program in the form of a TV and radio serial challenged prevalent norms on social determinants of health and family planning. It sought to bring about positive behaviour change among couples, parents and other caregivers.

This policy brief summarizes the findings of an endline evaluation undertaken to assess the effectiveness of MKBKSH in bringing about change in the knowledge, attitudes and practices related to family planning issues, age at marriage for girls, delaying age at first birth, gender based discrimination and violence and sex selection.

The evaluation shows that while the program was definitely well received, it also had a significant impact on the level of knowledge and awareness of the population. It challenged existing norms in a manner that was appreciated by the viewers.

INTRODUCTION

Reducing maternal and child mortality especially in high fertility states like Bihar and Madhya Pradesh (MP) that account for nearly 15% of India’s population is crucial. Addressing widespread social customs on determinants of health and family planning is a key strategy in addressing not only the issue of population stabilisation but also of sustainable development with a gender-sensitive and rights-based approach.

PFI produced a popular culture entertainment education intervention (EEI), a TV and radio serial to increase knowledge and change perception and attitudes of women, men, service providers and other influences on the social determinants of health and family planning. This is a drama series titled **“Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon”** that challenged

the existing norms around early marriages, early pregnancy, closely spaced births, contraceptive use and sex selection.

The first 52 episodes of this serial were aired on the state run Doordarshan channel, to capitalize on its immense reach and target the maximum number of viewers. A radio version of the serial and an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) were also launched. These were supplemented by community outreach through NGOs and government community health workers (ASHAs, ANMs) to inform and engage target audiences.

While each episode represented a piece in the longer storyline, individual theme-based episodes could be separately used beyond the life of the serial. Broadcast of the TV and Radio serial was complemented by field activities promoting message recall and reinforcement to aid change in attitudes and perceptions on the issues surrounding family planning.

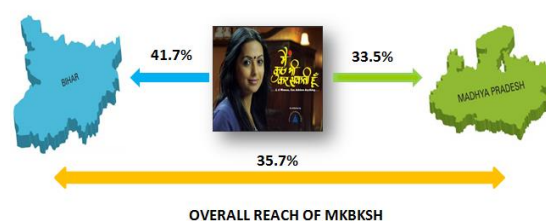
Methodology

The endline evaluation aimed at:

- Understanding the impact of the EEI on the knowledge, attitudes related to age at marriage among the community, awareness of family planning methods and usage, issues of women empowerment, gender discrimination and domestic violence
- Gauging the reach and recall of the EEI among the target audience

Geographical Reach & Coverage

MKBKSH: Season 1, was broadcast in the states of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, reaching 35.7 % of TV owning households overall, with Bihar at (41.7%) and MP at (33.5%).

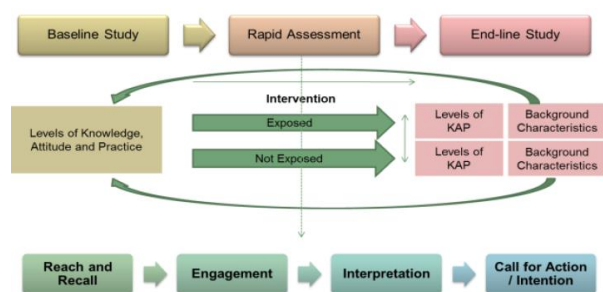


MKBKSH also reached 71.8% respondents

who owned radios. This study was conducted in 16 selected districts of Bihar (7) and Madhya Pradesh (9) covering married and unmarried males and females, mothers-in-law and front line health workers.

Study Design

The overall aim of the study was to assess the current levels of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices (KAP) on family planning, child marriage (especially for girls), son preference and sex selection. Baseline and post exposure assessment surveys were conducted amongst the respondents. The overall design for the study is shown below:



KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

I. Age at Marriage

The EEI intervention was done to create awareness among the community about rights of women to live their lives on their own terms, which included the age at which she should be married.

Ideal Time for Marriage

After exposure to the program, there was an increase of 19% in women who believed that a girl should get married on finding a suitable match and 6% decrease in women who believed that a girl should get married on attaining puberty. There was also a significant 9% decline in the number of mothers in law (MIL) who felt that if a girl is not studying she should get married.

Adverse Consequences of Early Marriage

Awareness regarding the adverse effects of getting married before the ideal age was found to have increased among all the target

groups. There was a significant increase in women (15%) and men (30%) who felt that loss of education is an adverse consequence of early marriage. Further there was also an increase in women (13%) and men (29%) who felt that early marriage causes risk to the life of the child and mother.

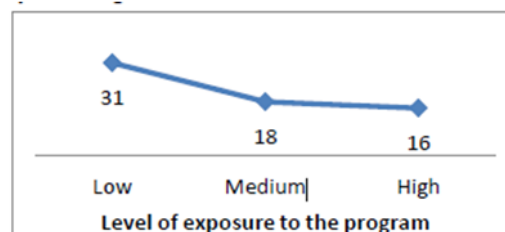
Knowledge about Child Marriage Act and Legal Age at Marriage

The level of awareness regarding the *Child Marriage Act* among respondents exposed to the program was found to have increased across all the target groups by a significant 13% for women, 7% for men and 21% for MILs. This increase was especially pertinent in illiterate people with a sharp increase of 18% for illiterate women and 36% for illiterate men.

Perception and Attitude towards Age at Marriage

Of the respondents who were exposed to the program, those with higher exposure were now less inclined to marry off girls before 18 years of age and a larger number had a say in decisions with regards to marriage age of children in the family.

% Decline in Women agreeing to Girls getting married before 18 years



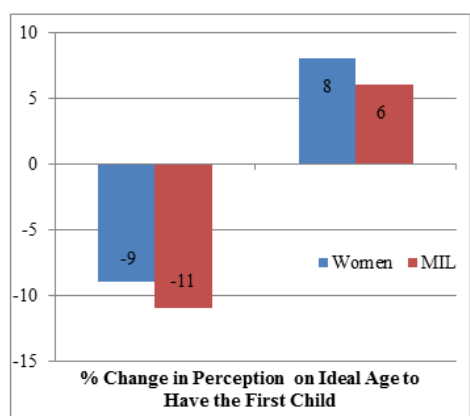
II. Family Planning

Family planning issues and the rights of women in deciding when to have children were key issues to be transferred through the TV serial and the radio programme.

Ideal age of the mother to have her first child

There was a significant increase in the proportion of women (8%) and mothers in law (6%) who considered 21-25 years to be the ideal age of mother to have her first child compared to a decrease in the number of

women (9%) and mothers in law (11%) who thought 18-20 years to be the ideal age.



Interval between two Pregnancies

There was a significant increase in the number of married women – from 57% in the baseline to 63% after the intervention - who thought that a 2-3 year gap between pregnancies was important and a tangible decrease of 8% women who now believed that a 1-2 year gap was enough. 86% of the MILs exposed to the program considered 2 to 3 years as an ideal age gap in comparison to 57% in the baseline – an increase of 29%.

Benefits of Family Planning

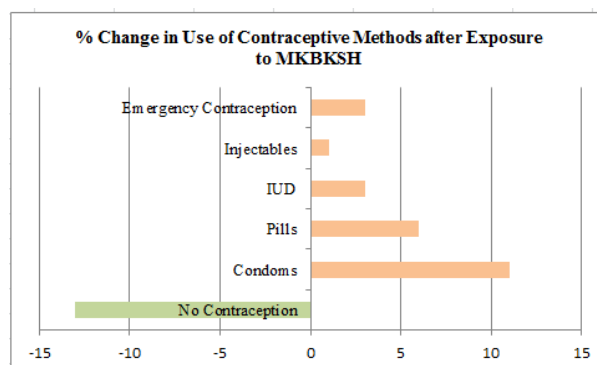
The program was found to have a significant impact on the awareness of men and women with regards to the benefits of family planning. There was an 8% increase in the number of men and 16% in MILs who thought that the next child would be healthier as a result, 7% increase in women who said that it promoted wellbeing of the family, and 8% increase in women who felt that they had better control over finances due to family planning.

Awareness of Family Planning Methods

There awareness of modern spacing methods among women increased more as compared to men. The awareness of male sterilization increased across all target groups sharply- 15% in men, 18% in women, and 16% in MILs. More women (4%) were now aware of modern methods such as IUDs, and more men (4%) were now aware of male condoms.

Contraceptives Usage

The program had a significant impact on the use of modern methods in the family planning behaviour of women. There was a 13% decrease of women who reported not using any method, 11% increase in use of condoms, 6% increase in use of pills, 3% increase in use of loop, 1% increase in use of injectables, and 3% increase in use of emergency contraception.

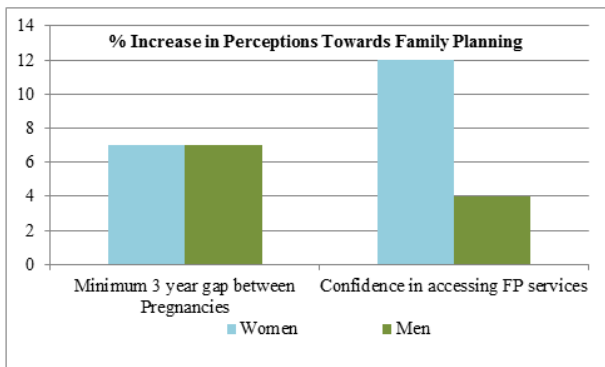


The overall proportion of women not using any of the family planning methods decreased by 10% after exposure to the serial while usage of modern methods increased by 4%.

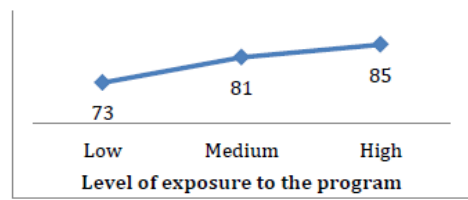
The program also had a strong impact on perceptions regarding modern methods – there was a 25% decline of women who cited fear of health impacts as a reason against using modern methods, a 22% decrease in women who said methods not preferred, and a 12% decrease in women who said that their husband/family does not approve.

Attitudes and Perception towards Family Planning

The program helped in changing attitudes towards family planning. There was a significant increase in women (7%) and men (7%) who believed that there should be a three years gap between successive pregnancies, an increase in women (12%) and men (4%) who were confident in accessing family planning services, a 14% increase in women who realized the importance of not keeping on having children till a son was born and a 8% increase in those who agreed that it was the right of a woman to decide when to have children.



% Change in women agreeing on the right to decide if she wants to continue with her pregnancy or not



III. Sex Determination

Information dissemination on the legal framework of sex determination and education on which parent is responsible for determining the gender of the child were key components of the serial.

Awareness of Law

There was a significant increase in men (17%), MILs (28%) and women (8%) whose awareness about the law to prevent sex determination grew. There was also an increase in the number of unmarried youth – both males and females who grew aware of the law after exposure to the program.

IV. Gender Discrimination

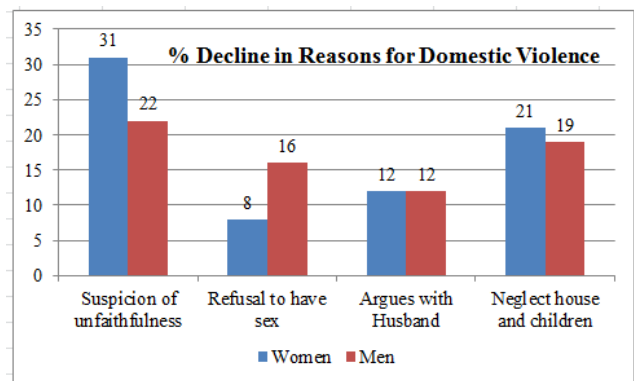
The EEI aimed at education on women empowerment, informing women about their rights, their role in household decision making and gender equality.

Perception and Attitudes towards Woman Empowerment

Less women (17% decrease) felt that once a girl is married she cannot return to her parent’s home, that a man should be more educated than his wife (6% decrease), that he should have a final say in all family matters (6% decrease) and that he should remarry if his wife does not give birth to a son (9% decrease). 13% more women now felt a woman has the right to decide whether she wants to continue with her pregnancy or not.

Domestic Violence

There was a significant decrease in women who believed that a woman deserved to be beaten if she wanted to delay her pregnancy (4%), refuses sex with her husband (8%) or argues with him (12%), if her husband suspects her to be unfaithful (31%) or she neglects the house and children (21%). There was a similar impact on the attitudes of men with an even greater decrease (31%) among men who believed that women should be beaten on suspicion of unfaithfulness.



CONCLUSIONS

Program Feedback

The overall reach of the program was be 36% in all the TV owning households across the states of Bihar and MP. Respondents enjoyed watching the program. There was a high recall of characters from the program, with Dr. Sneha – the main protagonist being extremely popular and inspiring. Respondents across all the target groups also said that they were able to relate to other characters in the program.

Age at Marriage

It made a marked difference in the attitudes of married men regarding the age of marriage. It also highlighted the adverse

consequences of early marriage. Awareness on the legal age at marriage went up among all target groups. .

Family Planning

All target groups also understood the importance of the ideal age for a woman to have her first delivery. They also now understood better the benefits of Family Planning and the choice of FP methods. The awareness about modern spacing methods improved significantly

Sex Determination

The exposed groups now know of the law against sex selection Married men and MILs now understand this better. This increase in knowledge was also observed among the married women

Gender Discrimination

It was found that most women still believe that a man should have the final say in all the family matters. However this proportion has significantly decreased among those who have watched the program. Among married men watching the program, there was a shift with a majority agreeing that women have an equal ability to hold leadership position in local government.

There was a remarkable shift in the attitude of married men, women and MILs from the exposed group with the number of respondents who were in favour of domestic violence declining appreciably.
