



Impact of MKBKSH Season 1

In July 2013, the Department of International Development (DFID), UKAID made a grant to Population Foundation of India (PFI) for the *Promoting Planned Families Project*. This initiative aims to increase women's agency, enhance knowledge and change attitudes of youth to eventually contribute to improving demand, access and quality of family planning services in India with particular attention to Bihar, Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Odisha. The project combines advocacy, evidence generation, entertainment-education and capacity building in a 360-degree approach to shifting social norms.

The trans-media TV serial, *Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon – I*, a woman, can achieve anything (MKBKSH), is the focal point of the programme. Following the grant from DFID, PFI was able to leverage funding from UNFPA to adapt the serial to radio and for an Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS). This popular culture serial, launched on Doordarshan National on March 8, 2014 uses a positive deviance approach to model positive behaviours which can help change gender norms and practices within families, communities and the health system. To date, Season 1 comprising of 52 episodes has been broadcast. From May 20, 2014, Doordarshan has also launched the serial on DD India, its international channel that telecasts to West Asia, Far East, Canada and Europe. The radio adaptation of the serial was launched on All India Radio on 24th May. The programme is broadcast to over 94 primary channels/Local Radio Stations, 24 FM Stations and 37 Vividh Bharati Stations across the country. The serial has also begun telecast on DD Kendra (Bihar) from 10th July onwards, four times a week at 1:30pm.

In September 2014, PFI conducted a qualitative rapid assessment to understand the viewer perception of characters and the storyline with the aim of providing feedback to the production and scripting process. In addition, the midline evaluation is currently ongoing and the findings from the house listing of 10,000 households in MP and Bihar show encouraging results.

Reach of the program

The TV series "*Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon*" proved to be highly popular as it was consistently one of the top three serials on Doordarshan National during the course of its telecast. According to an estimate using Television Audience Measurement (TAM) and Indian Readership Survey (IRS) data the serial was watched by over 58 million viewers. The listing data also shows that 42 percent of households with TV have watched the serial in both Bihar and MP despite a high penetration of both Direct-To-Home (DTH) and Cable networks (80% and 93%) respectively. Listenership data of the radio adaptation broadcast on All India Radio (AIR) is even

more encouraging as 83% and 42% of households with radio were listening to the program in MP and Bihar respectively.

Data from the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system also highlighted that the serial is liked by both men and women as 48% men and 52% women watched the serial. In addition callers to the IVRS were spread across India.

State	% Callers
Bihar & Jharkhand	18
MP & Chattisgarh	15
Uttar Pradesh East	14
Delhi NCR	11
Maharashtra	8
Rajasthan	7
Others	27
Total	100

Engaging the viewers

IVRS data provided insights into viewer’s engagement and it clearly shows that 625,318 telephone calls were received until October 2014 from viewers and these calls were made by 138,120 unique callers. Therefore, on average each caller made an average of 4 calls.

Rapid Assessment Findings

Appreciation for entertaining and educative nature

It will not be an exaggeration to claim that MKBKSH has been universally appreciated, due to its content including the very name of the serial, Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon, which was found to be inspiring, particularly among the female viewers.

Audience members reported liking that the serial was “based on reality” while most soap operas are “based on fiction.” It was therefore, able to create a connection with realistic and relatable characters and situations to the show’s primary audience.

The viewers were of the opinion that while most of the contemporary serials were largely promoting traditional practices “*Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon*” questioned orthodox social-cultural customs and traditions.



The respondents found that most of the entertainment serials endlessly keep extending trivial matters without resolution, while “Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon” moved along at good pace by resolving any social issue in 3-4 episodes.

Messages and their relevance

The depiction of rural life in contemporary India was also found to be realistic. Its social messaging as against the frivolous entertainment of other serials worked in its favor. People identified with the social issues showcased in the serial and empathized with the characters and their trials and tribulations.

The central protagonist, Dr. Sneha, as a confident independent professional is believable. Whilst the younger women find her inspiring, the older women find her character aspirational. It may not be a part of their reality, yet they find her personality attractive and some hoped that their daughters would become like her.

The serial has successfully promoted Women’s Empowerment as a key agenda whereas most of the soap operas depict women in regressive roles (e.g. Daughter in law & Mother in law strife).

MKBKSH is full of examples of recommended behavior. Significant social problems that were taken up and settled in the first season of MKBKSH include:

- Child marriage
- Family planning
- Pre-natal sex determination
- Son preference and consequent abortion of female foetus
- Gender based violence
- Alcoholism

The timely resolution of issues gives people the confidence to question these practices. Subsequently, it encourages them to believe that if need be they will be in a position to raise their voice on these issues within their own communities. Callers on the IVRS frequently left feedback saying that they had been motivated to raise their voices on issues such as girls education and child marriage due to the serial.

The viewers appear to be motivated to act on the messages depicted in the serial. The purpose of the serial was not seen as simply raising awareness, but giving viewers the confidence to act. Examples include:

- Realization that there was more to family planning methods than sterilization
- Prenatal care to ensure healthy pregnancy
- Postnatal care of the mother and child
- Breast feeding for six months and the significance of feeding colostrums to the baby
- Finding the voice to protest against gender based violence and mobilize support

