

## Population Foundation of India (PFI)

### 1. Year of Establishment: 1970

### 2. Mission Statement:

Advance gender sensitive, rights-based population and family planning policies and actions for a just, and equitable society.

### 3. Key Achievements:

PFI's work over 52 years has ensured the due prominence and prioritisation of family planning and sexual and reproductive health and rights within public health policies and actions. This has resulted in: raising the level of discourse within the policymaking corridors; increasing the accountability for family planning; making the media a more informed and responsive partner; and impacting key policy measures in significant ways, at both national and subnational levels.

PFI has been at the leading edge of creating innovations for social and behaviour change at scale. From entertain-educate TV dramas, IVR-based interactive platforms, India's first AI enabled chatbot on Facebook and WhatsApp to nurse training modules and family planning counselling aids using virtual reality, our programs stay ahead of the technology curve and provide real world impact across millions of users.

The three seasons of Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon (MKBKSH) were viewed on Doordarshan by 150 million viewers. Around 2.2 million calls from 400,000 unique numbers across 29 states were received over Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) over three seasons. External evaluations conducted after each of the three seasons showed that MKBKSH has been able to initiate a shift in knowledge and attitudes on key issues around women's rights and family planning.

As an extension to MKBKSH, PFI introduced an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered chatbot, SnehAI. Available on Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp, the chatbot integrates content on adolescent sexual and productive health and safe online behaviours. With over 10.2 million messages exchanged with over 1,86,000 users, the chatbot provides a secure, personalised and non-judgemental space for young people to learn about issues related to their health and wellbeing.

#### **4. Challenges Faced:**

It has been challenging for us to work on the issues of family planning and population issues. Family planning was not considered as an important issues. We brought it on social political agenda of the country by providing evidence, media interaction and strategic engagement with policy makers, NGOs and many other stakeholders. There have been many myths and misconceptions on population issues. We have been able to give an evidence based narrative to the country that coercive measures do not work. This we did by creating awareness, strategic engagement and intensively working with and responding to media queries. Also strategic engagement or advocacy has elements that are difficult to measure. We have documented the key processes and achievements to meet the measurement requirements.

#### **5. Strategies for Success:**

Population Foundation of India (PFI) has a proven track record of delivering sustainable impact at scale through comprehensive, sector-defining strategies in the areas of reproductive and sexual health and women's rights. PFI has identified five pathways to delivering the results – strategic engagement with key actors and stakeholders; social and behavior change communication (SBCC); capacity building and technical support; knowledge generation and amplification; and grant making. Along with its experience of combining research with advocacy skills, PFI works closely with the government, both at the national and state levels, communities, NGOs and research organisations in the areas of community action for health, behaviour change communication to influence regressive social norms and scaling up of programme innovations into large public programmes.

#### **6. Lessons Learned:**

PFI has collaborated and worked with governments, civil society organizations, coalitions, media and other stakeholders in its pursuit to achieving its mission and objectives. Collaboration is important. PFI has hosted the secretariat of Advisory Group on Community Action (AGCA) and worked with MoHFW and 25 state governments to provide technical support and guidance on roll out of community action for health processes. We also hosted the secretariat of ARC - 115 member CSO coalitions and were instrumental in expanding the basket of contraceptive choices in the country through strategic engagement and evidence generation. Generating knowledge and evidence informs our programming, advocacy and scaling up decisions and also in institutional learning. Working closely with media, responding to their queries, and providing data

and evidence has helped us to create a positive narrative on population issues in the country.

## **7. Impact Assessment:**

The projects are evaluated based on donor requirements. For instance independent evaluations of MKBKSH have shown that MKBKSH has been able to initiate a shift in knowledge and attitudes on key issues around women's rights and family planning. Similarly, PFI, through its celebrity-endorsed digital campaign Bas Ab Bahut Ho Gaya – Enough is Enough Campaign partnered with MARD (Men Against Rape and

Discrimination) to mobilize the youth to address issues around gender-based violence (GBV), particularly violence against women and girls (VAWG). An external evaluation conducted showed that exposure to the campaign was associated with both increased knowledge on what constituted GBV & VAWG (statistically significant), and supportive beliefs and attitudes related to the forms of GBV addressed in the film.

## **8. The Ultimate Strong Point of Success:**

Credibility, collaboration and evidence based work

## **9. Future Ready:**

Population Foundation of India's work with young people has highlighted the need to create an enabling environment for health and wellbeing education in India, which in turn would facilitate moulding attitudes and behaviours of children for several generations. Population Foundation of India has also developed an online learning portal – Educately.org - a digital and open-access portal to reach out directly to adolescents, educators and communities working with adolescents. PFI aims to reach adolescents and all those who play a critical role in their lives, such as parents, educators, counsellors, etc. with the objective of providing accurate, age-appropriate and verified information on adolescent health and wellbeing. The organization aims to empower women, girls, and young people and works towards improving their sexual and reproductive health (SRH) outcomes.

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