NATION AGAINST EARLY MARRIAGE
Breakthrough's Early Marriage Campaign:

Summary of baseline report

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Summary

Breakthrough's NATION AGAINST EARLY MARRIAGE campaign aims to reduce early marriage by using mass- and multimedia interventions and community engagement to challenge prevailing gender norms; change attitudes and practices; and promote the rights and value of girls.

The programme is being implemented on the ground in three districts in Bihar and Jharkhand and consists of: (1) mass media intervention; (2) training at block level with NGOs, CBOs, self-help groups (SHGs), and youth groups; and (3) community mobilizations.

The purpose of the baseline report is to establish the current status of the impact and outcome indicators so that comparisons can be drawn in the future to access the impact of the programme.

While the programme is being implemented in Ranchi, Hazaribagh, and Gaya, the study also includes Bokara, Lokardaga and Nawada as control districts, which were selected using a matching exercise based on secondary district-level data. A cluster randomized control trial (RCT) was designed to evaluate impact.

- The baseline results suggest that there is scope for addressing the issue of early marriage since in this region it is still practiced by a large proportion of the population.

- The regression model suggests that addressing gender norms can be one of the means of reducing early marriage.

- The outcome indicators related to gender norms show that there are disparities between the two genders in terms of division of household responsibility and access to education and inheritance.
    - Women and girls were primarily responsible for household chores and men and boys were seen as responsible for financial sustainability.
    - Parents wished for their male children to be more educated than their girl children.
    - The largest disparity existed in the case of inheritance where in 95% of the households only sons inherit familial property.

- 95% of respondents are aware of the negative consequences of early marriage. Awareness of these consequences has not served to reduce the practice.
    - 85% of the households report being aware of negative consequences on health.
    - There is also awareness of domestic violence and disruption in education as negative consequences.

- The majority of the households report that women generally get married between the age of 18-21 years, with the most frequent response 15- 17 years. The actual incidence of early marriage was much higher. This indicates that people underestimate the prevalence of early marriage.

1. Socio-demograzphic profile

a. Profile of sample households and Gram Panchayat

- In a randomized control trial (RCT) the households and Gram Panchayat (local self-governments) were assigned to one of the 4 treatment groups.
- A more similar group at baseline would indicate that the difference between the groups at the end line can be readily attributed to the programme and that the randomization mechanism followed by the study has generated a truly random sample.

b. Comparison of treatment groups

- Treatment 1 refers to GPs and households that receive community mobilization, training, and mass media interventions.
- Treatment 2 receives training and mass media interventions.
- Treatment 3 receives mass media and community mobilization.
- Treatment 4 receives only mass media interventions.
- The control group consists of 80 GPs that receive no interventions.
- The predominant caste group is OBC, which constitutes 40-50% of the sample. This is

followed by scheduled caste households that constitute roughly 20% of the population in all 5 groups. In treatments 3, 4, and control households, the proportion of scheduled tribe households is slightly less than those in treatment 1 and 2.

- Close to 80% of the households across the 5 groups are Hindu households. About 10-15% of them are Muslim households. Others constitute the next largest group with 5-10% of the sample households.

c. Profile of Gram Panchayat in the sample

- Gaya and Nawada in Bihar have a much higher percentage of schedule caste than households, the proportion of schedule caste tribe households is highest in Ranchi and in Lohardaga.
- The distribution of social groups in Hazaribagh and Bokaro are similar to O.B.C households, which are the largest group caste households. The social group distribution is very similar between the districts that were matched for the purpose of comparison using district as matched controls.
- A majority of the population in the sample area identifies as Hindu. The percentage is highest in Gaya and Nawada (at about 91%) and the lowest in Ranchi and Lohardaga (at about 72% and 73%, respectively).
- In 51% of the Gram Panchayat group, the maximum educational level achieved by girls is up to 12th standard. In 25%, the maximum attainment for girls is up to 8th standard. In

contrast, in 41% of the GPs boys have a maximum education level of up to 12th standard, and in another of the GPS the maximum level of education attained is graduation.

- 41-43% of the GPs members in the general caste have a maximum educational level of graduation.
- 53% of the sample GPs in OBC households have a maximum educational attainment of up to 12th standard.
- In about 46% of the GPs the maximum educational attainment for scheduled tribe groups is no formal education at all.
- In the majority of the GPs the average literacy level for boys and men is literate with formal schooling.
- For women and girls the average level is predominantly illiterate.
- In 7.5% of the GPs the average literacy level for boys is illiterate.
- In 52% of the GPs the average literacy level for schedule tribe households is illiterate. Out of all caste groups this is highest.
- In 71.7% of the GPs the general caste groups have an average literacy level of literate with formal schooling.

2. Baseline status of impact indicators

Impact indicators include incidence of early marriage and age at first marriage.

a. Age at marriage

- The average age at marriage for women is about 15 to 16 years in all treatment groups.
- This age is slightly higher in the areas that will receive treatment 1 (community mobilization, training and mass media).
- In the rest of the treatment areas age at marriage is about 15.
- The average age at marriage for men is between 20 to 21 years across all treatment groups.

b. Linear regression with age at marriage

- When gender norms are more equal age at marriage is higher for men, up to 30 years of age.
- Scheduled caste groups have a lower age at marriage compared to other social groups.
- Hindu households also have a lower age at marriage compared to the rest of the population.
- Distance from town has a positive effect on age at marriage.
- In the case of age at marriage for women gender norms are significant and have a positive effect on age at marriage. This means that the more equal the gender norms in the family the higher the age at marriage is.

- Scheduled tribes have a higher age at marriage among women; the difference, all else being equal, is 0.85 years.

c. Incidence of early marriage

- 67% of every married women in households married before the current legal age of 18 years.
- The over incidence of early marriage was 54%.
- The incidence of early marriage is higher among women, and at 60-70% among men.
- About 50-60% of all married individuals were married early in the sample households.
- The majority of the households report that women generally get married between the age of 18-21 years. The most frequent response is 15- 17 years. The actual incidence of early marriage was much higher. This indicates that people underestimate the prevalence of early marriage.

d. Years of schooling

- The highest schooling levels are in the 19-25 years and 26-35 age ranges for men (at about 10 years).
- For women the highest is in the 19-25 age range which is also at 10 years. Women between 26- 35 years of age and older tend to have attended school for fewer years compared to men in the same ranges.

3. Baseline status of outcome indicators

Outcome indicators include knowledge and attitude.

a. Gender norms

- The goal of the Breakthrough programme is to use pop culture, mass media, and community mobilization to effect changes in prevailing gender norms
- The current status of gender norms is examined in the programme area, particularly focusing on three factors: division of household responsibilities, mobility outside the home, and access to education and inheritance.

b. Gender – wise distribution of household responsibilities

- 96% of the respondents in each group say that women hold these responsibilities in their households. Women are also responsible for taking care of children or younger siblings.
- 65-70% of household reporting shows that men hold the responsibility of providing for the household financially.

c. Norms on mobility for women/girls in the household

- Girls primarily go to school accompanied by their friends in 55-63% of the households.
- In 18-25% of the cases they also go to school alone.

- In only 1% of the cases do girls not go to school at all.
- While visiting health clinics girls are usually accompanied by female relatives. In about 12-1 % cases girls are accompanied by male relatives.

d. Access to education and inheritance

- For male children in 40-46% of the households the results show that they can study as much or for as long as they like.
- On the other hand for female children the most common response was up to 8th standard. This indicates that education for male children receives a higher priority than that for girl children.
- 94-95% of the households reported that sons alone inherit the property.
- Inheritance is one of the major areas in which disparity between the gender exists.

e. Norms regarding age at marriage

- Girls were said to be ready for marriage by the following determinants: 18 years of age, puberty or menstruation, physical appearance.
- For men the most common response was physical appearance.
- Across treatment groups "at age 18 years of age" and "puberty/menstruation" were the most common responses.

f. Awareness regarding negative consequences of early marriage

- 88.47% believe that there are negative consequence to early marriage, 9.76% said that there are no negative consequences to early marriage, and 1.76% responded they do not know about the negative consequence to early marriage. Apart from the disruption in education and depression, mental health issues are most commonly cited as negative consequence of early marriage.
- 95% of all respondents said early marriage has negative health consequences.

g. Awareness of incentive schemes

- The awareness of Mukhya Mantri Kanya Dan Yojana is higher.
- More respondents were aware of Ladli Yojana and Mukhya Mantri Vivah Yojana compared to Dhan Lakshmi and mukhya Mantri Knaya Suraksha Yojna.

h. Media habits

- The important aspect of this is the use of media to dissemination of messages.
- Data shows that television is the most common media in the sample area with nearly 58% of the households having access to television.
- Two main sources of media access are radio and newspaper with 36% and 34.69% respectively of the households reporting that they don't have access to these sources. Television is the frequently available source.

- DD National is the most popular channel and is watched by 64% of the respondents that have access to television. This is followed by general entertainment channels like Sony, Zee, and Star with about 22-29% of the respondents wathcing. Regional channels are not popular.
- Time slots for viewing are 6 am to 12 pm to 6 pm with 40% of the respondents reporting each.