

CHALLENGING GENDERED REALITIES WITH TRANSMEDIA FOR INDIAN ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

From December 2015 to October 2017, BBC Media Action and UNICEF partnered in India to create a transmedia initiative targeting adolescent girls and boys to address gender discrimination and stereotyping. This paper details the steps that were taken by a multi-disciplinary team to combine academic research with experiential learning and technical expertise to develop the content strategy and design outputs.

Introduction

India is home to the largest population of adolescents in the world, with 253 million individuals aged 10-19 years, approximately one-fifth of the country's population. They represent a huge demographic dividend with the potential to contribute to India's economic growth and development.

In spite of modernisation and development, patriarchy and deep-rooted gender discrimination have created vulnerabilities. Challenges for adolescents range from early marriage, early childbearing, unwanted pregnancies, a very high dropout rate after completing elementary education, high prevalence of anaemia, and physical and sexual abuse.

Largely invisible as citizens despite their significant numbers, adolescents are for the most part not consulted on decisions affecting them. They have limited opportunities to acquire and share knowledge. Recognising the huge potential of media and its power to influence minds, shape perceptions, and help generate much-needed intergenerational dialogue on issues most relevant to adolescents, UNICEF partnered with BBC Media Action in India to develop a transmedia communication initiative comprising television, radio, a game, social media and an interpersonal communication toolkit with the potential to link with government and civil society programmes. According to Alka Malhotra, Communication for Development Specialist, UNICEF India, by doing so, UNICEF's aim has been "to place adolescent issues in the public agenda – creating an environment for open discourse".

UNICEF's Communication for Development (C4D) mandate clearly was not to create demand for service delivery but build the confidence and competence of adolescents.

Formative Research: What are the Lives of Adolescents Like?

“Audiences are at the heart of everything we do”. In keeping with this core BBC value, BBC Media Action used a range of methods to understand adolescents and the communities they live in. Firstly, desk research and consultation through media and audience landscaping, analyzing UNICEF's programme data and research on adolescents, conducting consultations with technical experts, and going on ‘immersive’ field trips, interacting with UNICEF's technical experts and the Communication for Development (C4D) team built a foundational understanding of adolescent issues.

The team comprising creative and production, ICT, project and research personnel then immersed itself in the lives of the audience. The best route to gaining that understanding was to talk to them in person, see where they lived, studied and led their lives. To this end, the team spent time with a cross-section of adolescent girls, boys, parents and teachers at a school in peri-urban Siwal Khas, just outside Meerut, a town in Uttar Pradesh in northern India. A snapshot of the interactions:

Vishal Chauhan, 16 years, Class XI

- Sees himself as a judge, settled in Meerut.
- Very aware of the Internet, a regular user of WhatsApp and Hike messenger as well as Facebook and online shopping portals.
- Owns a mobile phone and a computer. Wants to acquire objects that attract him – Apple products as well as a Ferrari. On being told that a ‘Ferrari’ may not be viable on a judge's salary, he says, “I'll get a BMW then”.
- Wants his wife to do *seva* (look after his parents) – she should be pretty, smart and educated.
- Will not take dowry from her.

Laxmi Thakur, 15 years, Class XII

- Dislikes cooking and being a girl.
- Wears jeans at home after her mother got them for her; aunt and uncle did not object.
- Watches films and songs on DVD provided by married brother.
- Does not talk to boys in school/neighbourhood because does not think much of them, but talks to boys from Ghaziabad, where she is originally from.
- Knows about Facebook and Internet but does not use them because her brother thinks she is too young, she says with a smile.
- Plays badminton and runs, wants to join the army.

Overall, the interactions identified anxieties and aspirations, tradition versus modernity, parental authority and individuality, early marriage or continuing education as the paradoxes that defined the lives of Indian adolescents.

Home and hormones dominate everyday life. Home is where limits and boundaries are set that determine mobility, access to information, relationships with friends, participation in social events, schooling and access to higher education, career choices, and eventually marriage. However, adolescence is typically when young people want to break free from boundaries imposed by parents and society. They want new experiences, and furtively experiment with all things ‘taboo’, such as alcohol, cigarettes, drugs and sex. Boys also walk the tightrope between peer and parental pressure, between their own dreams and parent-mandated expectations of their education and employment choices.

The other core aspect of an adolescent’s life is longing and belonging. The need to be part of a social group be accepted by their peers, have a best friend, boyfriend or girlfriend – all manifestations of a deep desire to belong. This need emerges from the biological and psychological changes that occur during adolescence and the lack of social and psychological support available during that time.

Finally, the above two factors lead to a fundamental conflict between parents and adolescents – the conflict between values and appearances. While parents want children to imbibe traditional values in line with societal norms, young people want and are expected to appear modern, be considered cool (wear modern clothes, carry mobile phones, go to movies and parties) and be accepted by their peers. Paradoxically, they must also walk the thin line between not violating traditional values of obeying elders, doing nothing that can attract criticism (as that would bring disgrace to the family) and not taking too many chances. This creates tension, confusion and conflict – a sense of unclear self-identity and a lack of balance between what is expected of them by society on the one hand and by peers on the other.

In sum the immersion trips yielded valuable insights that fed into the content, characters and narratives developed for various outputs:

- Adolescent girls had the least connection with older brothers, who were seen as bossy and enforcers of rules, at times more than the other older male members of the family.
- They admired cousins living in mini-metros and big cities.
- Teachers and neighbours were the least liked as they interfered with their lives and reinforced regressive gender norms.
- None of the girls had mobile phones, as use of mobile phones by young girls was considered licentious behaviour.
- Teachers felt that the enrolment of girls in schools had increased over the past five years, attributing it to a change in mind-set. They saw their role in school as that of guardians – so they consciously keep girls and boys separate, not allowing them to play together during recess.

Media Analysis: What are Audiences Watching and Doing?

Teenagers living in fast-changing, peri-urban or urban India, access multiple sources of entertainment and information, including television, radio, mobile phones and the Internet. However, penetration and consumption patterns for these media platforms vary by demographics, socio-economic background, age and location.

Television Viewership

Indian Readership Survey (IRS)¹ data (for Quarter 4, 2012) shows television is the highest consumed form of media among adolescents (10-19 years) as well as parents, family members and neighbours (25-45 years) across the Hindi-speaking states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand in India. A large percentage of those who report access to television also report access to satellite television. Though family dramas and reality shows on television have captured the imagination of audiences across India, thrillers emerged as the new chart toppers.

Based on this analysis, BBC Media Action strongly recommended that in addition to Doordarshan (DD), the state broadcaster in India, UNICEF consider cable and satellite networks, namely the free to air General Entertainment Channels (GEC) in the media mix. In the end, UNICEF decided to air the television series on DD National.

Radio Listenership

The relevance of radio over time has undergone a dramatic shift, particularly among young listeners. Radio consumption ranged from 19% in Bihar to 18% in Uttar Pradesh and 14% in Jharkhand. FM radio stations were far more popular among young listeners. Listenership is divided between All India Radio, private FM channels and community radio stations.

BBC Media Action recommended the use of both private and All India Radio (AIR) FM stations in addition to All India Radio (AIR) Medium Wave to reach the maximum number of young listeners and their parents.

A review of existing radio formats for popular shows in India and abroad that could appeal to the target audience included talk shows, panel discussions, interviews, music shows, phone-in shows, radio drama, features and documentaries. Programming for FM channels was dominated by Radio Jockeys (RJ) presenting

¹ The **Indian Readership Survey** (IRS) conducted by MRUC (Media Research Users Council) and RSCI (Readership Studies Council of India) was launched in 1995 with the objective of setting an industry standard for readership & other media measurement, and to provide insights on media & product consumption as well as consumer behaviour patterns. A software programme was developed to not just enable the optimum use of raw data but to also carry out multi media planning, which provided a common basis of media evaluation. It had an annual sample size exceeding 256,000 respondents covered nearly 70 cities, 1178 towns and 2894 villages. The universe for IRS has been defined as the total resident urban and rural population of India aged 12 years and over.

songs interspersed with chats.

Mobile and Internet Ownership and Usage

Mobile telephony ranks high on the media consumption landscape and is very popular across all audiences. Mobile penetration across all age groups in the three focus states (2013) showed approximately 80-90% of the population in urban, and 25-30% in rural areas uses mobile phones. According to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), as of June 2013, India had 873 million mobile connections. Of these, 522 million were in urban areas, with the remaining 351 million in rural areas.

Young people use mobile phones for a variety of reasons – staying in touch with friends, storing personal content such as files and photos, and using social media and messaging applications such as WhatsApp. Internet penetration is on the rise, with over 46 million active Internet users in rural and 137 million in urban India (i-Cube report). Though the current Internet consumption percentage does not rank very high, applications like Facebook and WhatsApp have become popular among young people. Facebook has close to 9.5 million users (13-17 years) and WhatsApp has 43.29 million users (18-24 years) across India.

Target Audience

The formative and desk research helped to define the primary and secondary audiences for this project as detailed below.

Primary - Adolescents (10-19 years) and their parents are the primary audience for this communication initiative to ensure an improved understanding of gender stereotyping, encourage intergenerational communication and appreciation of roles, rights and expectations.

Secondary - Targeting elders such as grandparents and key influencers such as teachers and community leaders was crucial since they are the gatekeepers of traditions and norms.

Having identified the primary audience category, it was critical to plot the outputs of this transmedia initiative across the age and rural-urban axes, in order to ensure optimal media targeting, efficient use of available funds and appeal across the widest band of audiences.

Theory of Change

The theory of change used by BBC Media Action combines the integrative model of behavioural prediction (Fishbein and Capella, 2000) and the sociological theory on changing social norms (Ensminger and Knight, 1997). According to Fishbein and Capella, if one has made a strong commitment (or formed a strong intention)

to perform a given behaviour, has the necessary skills and ability to perform it, and there are no environmental or other constraints to prevent the performance of such behaviour, there is a very high probability that the behaviour will be performed. The model identifies three primary determinants of intention:

- Attitude towards performing the behaviour.
- Perceived norms concerning the performance of the behaviour.
- Self-efficacy with respect to performing the behaviour.

The model also recognises that the more one believes that performing the behaviour in question will lead to ‘good’ outcomes or prevent ‘bad’ outcomes; the more favourable would be one’s attitude towards performing it. Applying this model also involves identifying specific beliefs (attitudinal, normative or control beliefs) that discriminate between those who do and do not (intend to) perform the behaviour. It is these discriminating beliefs that need to be addressed.

BBC Media Action applied this model to the proposed theory of change and based it on an examination of strategic decision-making within the constraints presented by the social contexts that can produce change.

Based on Coleman’s (1990) perspective that people comply with norms when it is in their self-interest to do so, and Bourdieu (1997) who says that people comply with norms because such rules define the appropriate form of behaviour in a specific context, the hypothesis is that social actors seek to achieve their most preferred outcome in the least costly manner. Bargaining is the primary mechanism for the emergence and change of social norms, i.e., who gets what from social interactions. Thus, as adolescents seek to determine which norms are best for them, they are motivated by ideological values and beliefs that affect how people assess the relative merits of various forms of behaviour – the costs and benefits of the different alternatives.

What is the Current Cost-benefit Analysis for a Vast Majority of Adolescents in India?

The cost of silence, concealment, shame and discrimination has to be paid to get the benefits of familial support, economic security and social sanction. This seemingly works in the adolescent’s self-interest, especially for those who are unexposed to agency, self-determination, confidence, competence, opportunity and power. What appears to work is then a culture of compromise. Compromising their sense of personhood is the price they pay to not upset the balance of power and stay within the sheltered confines of family and social structures.

The pressure on Indian adolescents to appear modern presents the opportunity to extend the boundaries to modern living and thinking. The transmedia communication intervention therefore can become the tipping point – through exposure to ideology and modelling – that will bring the powerless (adolescents) and the powerful (parents) together to negotiate necessary change.

Breaking the Force-field

The central insight from the desk research and immersion was that a force-field of social expectations inhibits the lives of Indian adolescents. It shapes how they think, feel and act and reflects the attitudes and social norms with which they struggle. The expectations of parents, family, friends, teachers, neighbours and society influence their personality, self-worth and ability to negotiate for their rights and aspirations.

Gender is so deeply entrenched that no one questions it. The challenge is to create recognition of the force-field and gender inequity in an audience that has been socialised to accept it. Therefore, the initiative needed to generate conversation and provoke debate not just among adolescents and their parents but in a larger social circle.

The analogy of the 'force-field' is drawn from the term *Lakshman Rekha*, and refers to the Indian epic, Ramayana or the story of Ram. In the story, Prince Ram along with his brother, Lakshman, and wife Sita, lives in a forest in exile for 14 years. One day, Sita sees a golden deer wandering in the forest and insists that Ram catch it for her. Ram goes to hunt the deer, leaving Lakshman to protect Sita. When Lakshman hears Ram calling out in distress, he is torn between obeying his brother's command to look after Sita and going to his brother's rescue. Sita prevails on the reluctant Lakshman to go to his brother's aid. He agrees to go but on condition that Sita stays within a line he draws around the hut. As long as she stays within that boundary, no harm can befall her. But Ravan, a demon king, comes disguised as a sage, and tricks Sita to cross the line and abducts her, leading to an epic battle. The *Lakshman Rekha* protects but limits as does the gender force-field (See Figure 1).

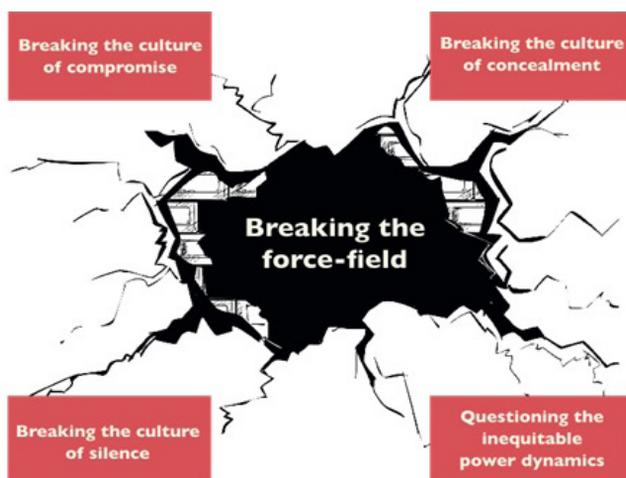


Figure 1: Breaking the Force-field

Objectives

Building on this insight and the theory of change, through its project activities BBC Media Action aimed to build:

- Recognition among adolescents and their parents of gender stereotyping and discrimination.
- Confidence in adolescents to discuss gender stereotyping and discrimination with peers and parents.
- The efficacy of adolescents to negotiate with peers and families and build support systems.
- A supportive environment for change by influencing parents.

Transmedia for Effective Targeting

Transmedia has been defined by Helen Hua Wang and Arvind Singhal (Wang and Singhal, 2016) as an approach in which “instead of telling the story in a single medium, narrative elements are creatively coordinated across different media platforms (hence ‘transmedia’) to build a story world, engage a broader spectrum of audience, and provide them an enriching experience beyond pure entertainment”.

Given the diversity of age bands within the adolescent category, urban and rural locations and disparate socio-economic categories, UNICEF had determined that a transmedia approach was necessary to create different entry points for different audience segments, using emotion, engagement, universal themes (ranging from bullying, normative masculinities and femininities to early marriage and nutrition), personal connection and relevance. By doing so, the UNICEF-BBC Media Action partnership experimented with creating ‘collective intelligence’ on gender inequality.

The Theory of Change informed the creative strategy, which harnessed media’s power to craft parallel new realities, by modelling solutions that have the power to be transformative. While using TV drama to create compelling and convincing narratives, rooted in a cultural context with which the primary audience easily identified, issues were amplified through the different outputs – the radio show, the mobile game and IPC toolkit - to create ‘surround sound’, and thereby build and strengthen a culture of change.

Using the transmedia approach and conforming to UNICEF’s brief, BBC Media Action plotted various outputs across different platforms. Each platform was independent, catering to different audiences, and yet delivering complementary messages. The aim was to target early adopters who have high media exposure to the TV drama and radio show, to create recognition of the force-field and leapfrog them into more well-rounded gender roles. The smart phone game and social media strategy were pitched higher, to a more urban/mini-metro and peri-urban audience rather than rural, as well as the older band (15-19 years) of adolescents. The IPC toolkit was pitched for a younger age group (10-14 years) along with their parents in a rural context (see Figure 2).

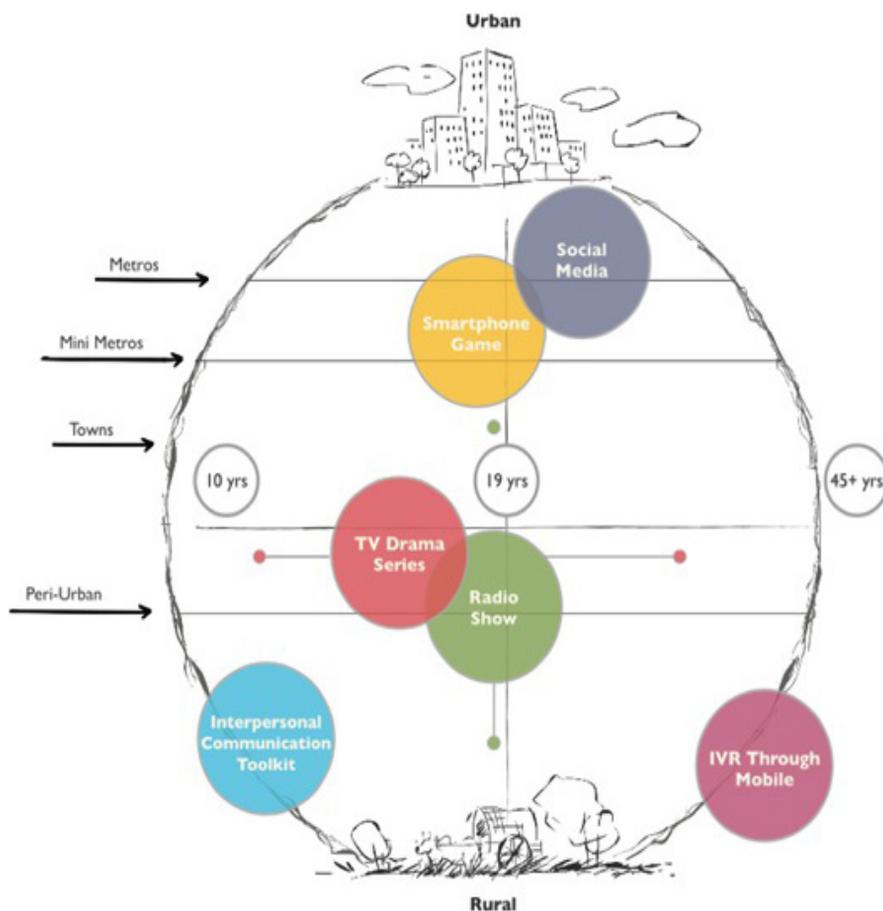


Figure 2: Transmedia Axes – Rural-urban and Age

Archetypes to Counter Stereotypes

Based on Jung’s study of archetypes as characters that appeal to all human beings, the intervention’s creative strategy uses archetypes to counter stereotypes. Superheroes are a perfect example of archetypes. To break gender norms and to create new ones, the intervention needed to create a new breed of superheroes – superheroes who are girls and boys, who are aspirational, one can fall in love with, who feel so real that one can reach out and hope to be them, and superheroes who live ordinary lives but do extraordinary things.

These superheroes are found throughout the transmedia communication initiative – as characters in the TV drama, voices on the radio show, as active participants in social media, as members of clubs, as peer educators.

Strategic Communication Framework

The need for a detailed communication framework led to a process innovation – the creation of an insight-based ‘Dashboard’. The rationale for the Dashboard was to have a one-stop document that synchronised research, content development, programme management, monitoring and evaluation.

The dashboard has colour-coded themes to indicate the priority they would be accorded in content. Based on UNICEF’s programmatic priorities charted in conjunction with Rashtriya Kishore Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK - the National Adolescent Health Program) focus areas, it features four super themes (further divided into sub-themes):

- Adolescent health and child marriage: Body image issues, menarche and menstrual hygiene, child marriage, age at first pregnancy, birth spacing, RTIs/STIs, safe abortion.
- Education: Irregular attendance, dropping out of school, and related issues.
- Nutrition: Undernutrition and anaemia, and related topics.
- Gender: Gender segregation, gender socialisation, verbal, mental, physical and sexual abuse and trafficking.

The audience segments are as follows:

- Boys: 10-14 and 15-19 years
- Girls: 10-14 and 15-19 years
- Parents

The Dashboard lists behavioural barriers per sub-theme identified through research as well as triggers and insights and key takeaways. The Dashboard has multiple uses but was primarily intended to guide content development based on a well-researched understanding of issues impacting adolescents in India. Collaboratively developed with inputs from UNICEF’s C4D experts, technical divisions and thematic experts, the design of the Dashboard allowed the creative and production teams to pick and choose, mix and match, and revisit sub-themes that are integrally interlinked. A secondary purpose was monitoring coverage of topics across both television and radio.

An example is the issue of menstruation. So deep is the silence on this subject that girls across India report being completely unprepared for it and feeling scared that they are going to die. No one – not their mothers, older sisters or teachers – prepares them for it. In the TV drama, this is shown, but the twist in the tale is a mother and daughter sharing their experience of menarche, while the mother and brother acknowledge the girl’s need for emotional support. Schoolmates are shown rallying around and normalising menstruation so that it is no longer traumatic. On radio, real voices spoke about their experience of menstruation and the myths around it while experts spoke of menstrual management. By breaking the silence, menstruation is no longer a taboo.

All the outputs of the intervention used the Dashboard as the lodestar. The design and production of the intervention began in December 2015 and ended in October 2017.

TV Drama

Media landscaping had shown thrillers to be the preferred format for the target audience. The 78-episode TV drama called *AdhaFULL* (half-full) is a whodunit thriller with three teen detectives representing different age bands within adolescence.

The show's sticky Hinglish name *AdhaFULL* reflects the hybrid nature of a society in transition as well as the transition from childhood to adulthood that characterises adolescence.



Figure 3: AdhaFULL Visual

Conceived as a social thriller, *AdhaFULL*'s superheroes are Kitty (16-year-old girl), Tara (11-year-old girl) and Adrak (15-year-old boy) coming together to form the eponymous whodunit gang (see Figure 3). Every week, the *AdhaFULL* gang cracks a new case that unfolds over three half-hour episodes or a 'case story'. In doing so, they encounter issues such as early marriage, under-nutrition, gender stereotyping, socialisation and segregation, gender-based violence, discrimination between girls and boys, fair skin and beauty myths, menstruation, higher education for girls, school dropouts, peer pressure and life/career choices (all issues featured on the Dashboard). The broad story arc together with the 26 case stories portray the pains and pressures of 'coming of age' in India, a country that lives in many centuries.

AdhaFULL is a creative magnifier – dealing with serious issues through teen protagonists, relatable characters and hyper-real contexts to entertain and engage, but model alternative solutions that can break gender norms.

The main narrative and case stories play out the force-field, the very real paradoxes thrown up by existing attitudes and social norms and attempt to provide possible solutions. The idea of AdhaFULL itself is disruptive because it has the hyper-real layer of dramatic license coming from teenagers solving crimes in this small town of Badlipur. Conscious effort was made to reverse gender roles with regard to careers and aspirations, with positive messaging around platonic friendships and healthy relationships between girls and boys, intergenerational dialogue and modelling solutions through characters and situations.

Each week's case is woven into the broad story arc and the character arcs. It was both interesting and challenging to build up the familiar and then start diverging from it. So there is the familiar – small town India, tussles between parents and children. For example, there is nothing wrong in parents looking forward to young people getting married and having kids. But this in itself is the force-field that limits, coercive to the point where the family becomes the oppressor, where the kids want to run away or stage their own murder. It is that moment in the story when the audience sits up and re-examines the rights and wrongs of a situation. This divergence is the start of a new normal.

The series has an ensemble cast of families, friends, teachers and guardians of the Badlipur community. Of the 14 long-running characters, some are designed as enablers and positive deviants; others act as barriers to any kind of change, striving to maintain the status quo. All play a critical role in the lives of the AdhaFULL gang and the other adolescent characters as gatekeepers, decision makers, facilitators and collaborators. For the most part, the characters are neither black nor white, but have shades of grey. Through the course of the series, all characters undergo change, in varying degrees.

Since teenagers in India typically connect with film and television content through music, AdhaFULL has six original songs that not only entertained but also conveyed messages. Some of the songs have been very popular on Facebook with multiple requests coming in for downloads.

When the show was launched, Priyanka Chopra, UNICEF's Global Goodwill Ambassador, recorded a special promotional video to send her best wishes for the show from New York. She said, "I want all of you to watch AdhaFULL. I know if this show was done when I was 16, only I could have played Kitty!" Madhuri Dixit, another UNICEF Ambassador, also did a promotion for AdhaFULL. Both promotions helped create a lot of buzz for the show.

Radio Show

While designing a radio show, the show flow within a format is critical because it allows for uniformity of content and helps build recall value among listeners.

Since the broadcast plan had not been finalised, creating a show format that could fit into any radio platform in terms of duration and style was crucial. This proved to be a challenge. It meant an episode could not be more than 12 to 13 minutes. Topical issues could not be discussed to avoid the risk of becoming dated. These problems posed an opportunity to do some fresh thinking on formats. The result was a modular, slightly unpredictable ‘mosaic’ like show flow that is held together by the fictional RJ Nikki (see Figure 4). Since a mosaic is essentially a random collection of ‘tiles’ (elements), the show flow was flexible, allowing the ‘tiles’ – RJ links, real voices from the field, expert views, celebrities and music – to be moved around to create interesting patterns. At a practical level, it could fit into almost any platform and even be used in a modular fashion, if required. The unpredictable element would also evoke interest among teenagers and keep them hooked with the intrigue–involve model.

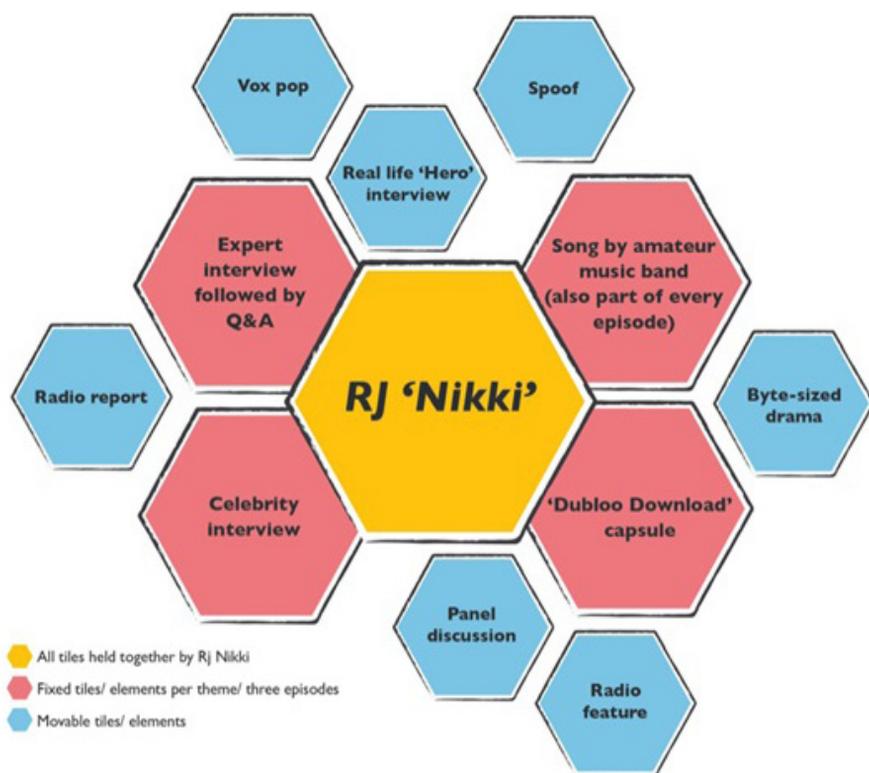


Figure 4: Full On Nikki's 'Mosaic' Format

The aim was to create a link between fiction and reality and build on the various themes from AdhaFULL, expanding them through a wide range of voices, which in turn explain and expand the discussion in order to:

- Provide new information and refresh existing knowledge.
- Create recognition of long accepted attitudes and norms that create the force-field.
- Trigger conversations both among teenagers as well as between them and their parents and other influencers/gatekeepers.

The show is called Full On Nikki (FON) – a peppy and easy to remember name with a refreshingly informal ring to it. Adding the name of the RJ makes it relatable. The prefix “Full On” to Nikki symbolises a link to AdhaFULL and a vigour, exuberance and confidence – aspirational values for youngsters.

Besides, thematic synergy, RJ Nikki is the transmedia link between the TV drama and the radio show, as Roshni, the key role model and schoolteacher from AdhaFULL is RJ Nikki. The radio show has a presence in the television series - there are references to this show and characters are shown listening to it. The fact that Roshni and Nikki are the same person is not known by the television audience till the very end.

Being Roshni’s doppelganger, RJ Nikki’s character is somewhat pre-determined. Yet the radio team developed a Character Bible for RJ Nikki to understand her core and to help writers find her voice. As the fictional protagonist and star of the show, Nikki’s personality – witty, warm, analytical, incisive, yet empathetic – defines the show. This vivacious young woman challenges status quo, questions traditions, myths and misconceptions, provokes responses, and breaks the silence around taboos. Rather than force her opinions on people, her aim is to catalyse conversations. Created as a role model for teenagers, her words, thoughts and ideas suggest she has been through many of the challenges faced by her listeners. RJ Nikki has a strong link to culture, quoting poetry, drama and popular film dialogues. Her chat show features rock bands, celebrities, experts and real voices.

The mosaic format contains a comic interlude. A character called Dubloo Download was created, modelled on a typical peri-urban persona – the owner of a cybercafé that also doubles up as a one-stop shop for the diverse needs of a small town, as the immersion had revealed.

Dubloo Download is digitally savvy, therefore aspirational. His capsule is designed as an interstitial at strategic junctures across all 26 themes of the radio show. He appears once a week, unpacking very serious topics with sarcasm, wit and irreverence. It became easier for writers to handle difficult subjects with Dubloo.

The show’s signature track is designed to be disruptive – in its lyrics as well as its musical composition. The lyrics explore the notions of agency, autonomy and identity. The song is sung by a raspy, full-throated female voice.

The first three pilot episodes of Full On Nikki were pre-tested in two states for comprehension, likeability and engagement, as well as for relatability of the following elements – the mosaic format, message content, language and style, music, tonality and entertainment quotient.

The results were reflected in editorial and creative decisions on the need for more gender balance in scripting, more male voices, structuring the Q&A section better and slowing down Nikki's speaking style, which was otherwise liked.

In a span of seven months, the radio team captured voices from 13 states across 26 themes in 78 episodes. These included 368 vox pops, 35 experts, 45 real life champions, 33 celebrities, seven music bands. The production of the show created voice for hitherto unheard adolescents and generated dialogue and debate on gender stereotyping and discrimination.

Mobile Gaming App

UNICEF included a mobile game app in this transmedia initiative because:

- Games play an important role in developing concentration, resilience and socialisation skills.
 - Adolescents are 'digital natives' with a natural affinity for technology.
- BBC Media Action used a human centred design process to develop the game.

The immersion visits for the game revealed:

- Not only do 15-19-year-olds invite friends to play and compete against one another, games are a conversation starter, both online and offline.
- Games on mobile phones are played when between other activities, while commuting, in between tuition classes or before going to bed.
- Short, quick game loops are preferred.
- Levels are motivators, even a casual gamer feels a sense of achievement and pride in being a high scorer among their peers.
- Global trends or games that are being played by their immediate peer group are most popular.
- They learn about new games primarily through word of mouth.
- No one is willing to pay for games.
- The game cannot be too heavy because of download issues and memory space on the device.
- While boys prefer strategy and/or action games, and girls prefer puzzle games, everyone likes 'infinite running' games.
- Many adolescents would be playing the game on shared handsets. Therefore, the content would have to be appropriate and not cause parental or elder sibling disapproval (the latter especially in case of girls).

Clearly, the game design had to be for inexpensive smart phone handsets with low specifications, no 3D graphics or high-end formats. It had to be built on an Android platform (version 4.1.2+). The game was to be designed for 15 to 19-year olds, living in urban and peri-urban India.

But how could we gamify the force-field?

Nugget, the protagonist of the game is androgynous so that players, irrespective of gender, can identify with it. Nugget has six antagonists who represent the force-field that circumscribes the lives of adolescents. These familiar pressure points in

an Indian adolescent's life have been gamified as Ungly Aunty (Aunty Needle), Tank-Jhank Padosi (Nosy Neighbour), Fenku Uncle (Uncle Hyperbole), Show Off Dost (Show Off Pal) and Chugalkhor Chacha (Uncle Snitch). Each character is presented as a stylised arm – one that could crush Nugget – unless the player can help Nugget escape the pressure by swiping left or right (one lane at a time) to avoid the arms. The game consists of six progressive levels, each with a stipulated score target, and a seventh endless level. All the arms are a gamified version of characters one sees in AdhaFULL, building on the transmedia storytelling (see Figure 5).

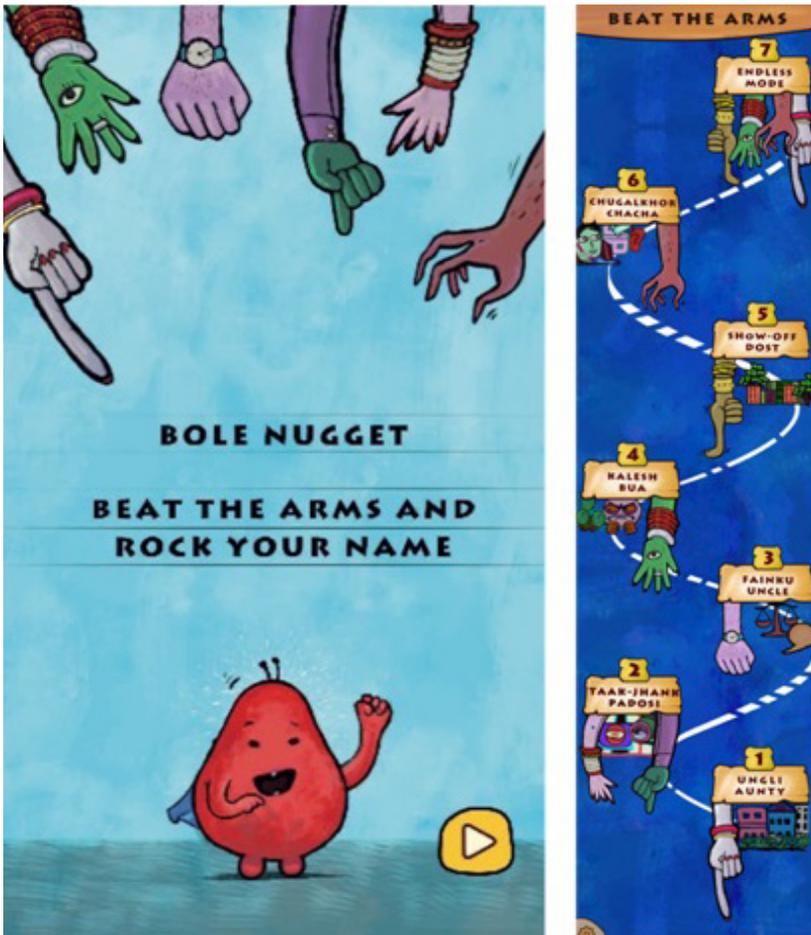


Figure 5: Nugget

Four rounds of user tests were conducted, journeying from paper-based prototypes to a beta version testing and refining the concept, game mechanics, game

play, messaging, look or aesthetics. During game play, motor skills take precedence over cognitive skills, hence a need for overt (not subtle) messaging before and after core game play was necessary. Therefore, text boxes at every level and an accompanying voice-over were added. The content in the game – both text and audio – is in a conversational blend of Hindi and English that is characteristic of most urban teens. Much of the language and a few of the names came from the adolescents themselves during user-testing. The AdhaFULL signature track was also embedded in the game as a transmedia link.

The arms that judge and circumscribe are what the game intends adolescent players to recognise and escape, to chart new territory, where the options are, literally, endless. The game makes a mockery of the arms. It is not an exercise in cognition. More than deliberation and reflection, instinctive flight is what matters.

Interpersonal Communication (IPC) Toolkit

Having modelled agency to define one's identity through AdhaFULL and discussed the ideas in-depth through Full On Nikki, the intervention focuses on the ten core life skills in the interpersonal toolkit to equip adolescents to negotiate change in their own lives. The toolkit has three components:

1. An Omnibus version of the TV drama meant for use with viewer clubs. After screening each case story, facilitators can refer to the specific questions in the Discussion Guide for boys, girls and parents to conduct a short 15-minute discussion that allows the group to reflect on what they have seen, and form opinions based on discussion and debate.
2. An Activity Book featuring 12 games based on the ten life skills. Each activity takes approximately 30-45 minutes. The activities meant for use in low resource settings range from colouring, quizzing, role-playing, storytelling, debating, physical games and treasure hunts, from individual exercises to group and team activities.
3. Ten Graphic Novels featuring AdhaFULL characters, with illustrated, engaging stories that are easy to read. Each graphic novel focuses on one of the ten life skills.

The IPC toolkit (see Figure 6) is primarily targeted at adolescents in the 10–14 age groups from rural and semi-rural areas in India, both in and out of school. Their needs and understanding are very different from older adolescents. Learnings from similar projects addressing gender have shown that the earlier the communication starts, better is the likelihood of the messages being accepted. In addition, the 10–14 age groups is more likely to engage with structured activities that can be facilitated; older adolescents preparing for major public examinations may have less time for extra-curricular activities. Moreover, older adolescent girls who drop out of school may be married and older adolescent boys may have jobs or may have migrated for work.



Figure 6: IPC Toolkit

All three components of the IPC Toolkit are to be used/read/watched and their content discussed in groups – in schools and hostels, youth centres or community spaces managed by NGOs and within the UNICEF programme.

Social Media

The social media campaign of this transmedia initiative was created for 15-24 year olds in urban India. It turns the ‘force-field’ on its head by celebrating those who have stepped out of it. #BHL stands for #BigdiHuiLadki (girl gone bad) and #BigdaHuaLadka (boy gone bad). This is a common moniker earned by and reserved for adolescents and young adults with a mind of their own, who will not live their lives circumscribed by social expectations. The campaign with its six audio-visual outputs turns the ‘bad’ label into a badge. It features among others the six symptoms of #BHL, the AdhaFULL trio, a young cult author and a social experiment and aims at sparking conversation and generating content.

Results and Significance

As per the BARC² TV rating report for January 2017 average viewership was over a million unique viewers for each episode of AdhaFULL. The show almost

² Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) India is a joint-industry not-for-profit body that publishes weekly TV viewership data for India. With the viewership habits of over 183 million TV households (accounting for 780 million TV viewing individuals) being analysed by BARC India, it is the world's largest television audience measurement service. Its measurement system is based on a sample of 30,000 “panel homes”. It launched its TV viewership measurement service in April 2015, with coverage of C&S TV homes in towns with a population of 1 lakh and above. In October 2015, it started measuring All India TV homes (TV viewers in urban and rural India).

doubled its viewership in less than a month – from an opening of 660,000 viewers on October 21, 2016 to 1240,000 on November 18, 2016. In less than two months of going on air, AdhaFULL became the #1 show on DD National, attracting more than a million viewers per episode. A testimony to AdhaFULL's successful first season was its re-broadcast on DD National immediately after the first run got over.

The radio show has been aired on 24 community radio stations, 11 private FM stations, and is currently being heard in over 13,000 government schools and 20 private schools across Hindi-speaking states in India.

In the 17th week (November 10-16, 2017) since it was launched, Nugget was featured as the #1 new game (new and updated games section) on Google Play Store. The game has clocked over 116,000 downloads with significantly high ratings.

The #BHL campaign videos got views ranging from 81,000 to 2.24 million and has sparked user-generated content.

Separate to this reach and engagement, BBC Media Action sought to understand the impact of AdhaFULL, the TV drama. To do this, a randomised control trial was conducted to determine whether people who viewed three hours of the drama (two stories) showed higher levels of self-efficacy and more positive gender norms compared to those who had watched a control. The results of this study will be published shortly. UNICEF has also conducted an evaluation of the project which will be published shortly.

Discussion

For a transmedia initiative what factors can determine whether the glass is half empty or full? In conclusion, here is a short list:

- Depending on the medium and its intended audience, the content has to be calibrated to create the desired synergy and amplification.
- The innovation in designing the linkages have to range from themes to narrative, characters to tonality.
- Synergistic implementation across all platforms for optimum impact.
- Plan for resources and method of evaluation.
- If norm change is the goal, plan for sustained engagement.

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