

Building on evidence to shift gender attitudes among youth in India

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Highlights

Evidence impact

- Following promising findings from the evaluation of Breakthrough's school-based gender attitude change program in Haryana, the model will be adapted in 4,500 schools in Punjab.
- Findings are being used to fine-tune the model and inform a manual for the expanded program.

Factors that contributed to impact

- The research organization JPAL's established relationship with the Government of Punjab's Department of Education positioned them to share evidence on the Haryana-based program in Punjab.
- The partners were able to mobilize external funding for adapting the model and delivering it through government schoolteachers.

Impact evaluation details

Title: [Impacts of Breakthrough's School-Based Gender Attitude Change Programme In Hary...](#)

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Status : Completed August 2018



Context

Regressive gender attitudes like son preference are prevalent across India and particularly entrenched in the state of Haryana. In 2011, the sex ratio for newborns and children up to 6 years of age in Haryana was 830 girls per 1,000 boys, reflecting sex-selective abortions. To change gender perceptions and behaviors that contribute to a preference for sons, Breakthrough, a human rights organization working to ensure dignity, equality and justice for girls and women, designed a school-based awareness and mobilization project targeted at secondary-school students and teachers in Haryana.

Implemented in 150 government schools across four districts in close partnership with the state education department, the project included training and capacity building of teachers, facilitation by staff, promotion of youth clubs called *Taaron Ki Toli* (cluster of stars in Hindi), media and communication campaigns and nurturing of ‘youth champions’ to further the cause of gender equality and girls’ empowerment.

Trained facilitators conducted 28 interactive classroom sessions of 45 minutes each based on the curriculum developed by Breakthrough. The curriculum covered modules on gender identity, values, aspirations, goals, roles and stereotypes, and recognition of and tolerance towards discrimination. It also included interpersonal skills, such as public speaking, communication and social interaction between the sexes, negotiation, presentation, assertiveness, leadership, self-efficacy and trust-building.

Researchers at Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (JPAL) South Asia, leveraging their partnership with the Haryana government’s Department of Education, worked closely with Breakthrough to assess the impact of the program on girls’ aspirations and adolescents’ gendered attitudes and behaviors.

Evidence

The mixed-methods study found that students, both adolescent boys and girls, in treatment schools were likely to have more progressive gender attitudes as measured by attitude towards girls' opportunity for education, women's employment outside the home, women's role in society and fertility behavior. These impacts were not affected by parental attitudes. Although findings suggest barriers for girls to act in accordance with changed attitudes, participating boys and girls reported some more gender-equitable behavior, such as increased interaction with the opposite sex. However, the program did not affect girls' aspirations.

Evidence impacts

Partners document learning to inform future programming

Breakthrough has used evaluation findings to fine-tune current programming, while also drawing on the research team's expertise to develop a manual to facilitate wider adoption of the model. The manual, produced by JPAL in collaboration with Breakthrough, documents and structures the facilitator-supported, school-based adolescents' mobilization and awareness model, presenting challenges faced and lessons learnt to inform subsequent programming.

Findings inform another government's sensitization program

Evaluation findings have also informed a new program in the neighboring state of Punjab. In 2021, Breakthrough, the Government of Punjab's education department and JPAL South Asia announced that they are adapting, expanding and evaluating the Taaron Ki Toli approach tested in Haryana. The approach will be part of the moral sciences, social studies and English curriculum for students in grades 6, 7 and 8 across over 4,500 government schools. Global Innovation Fund, which is funding Breakthrough for this program, [cites the findings](#) of the 3ie-supported evaluation as one of the reasons for supporting the program.

Seeding gender equal attitudes in Odisha, India

Following promising findings from the evaluation, the Odisha government [decided](#) to scale up the school-based gender sensitization program state-wide across 23,000 government schools and track implementation through process monitoring activities. J-PAL South Asia announced that they are "facilitating state-wide scale up" as part of the Veddis Foundation-supported ASPIRE initiative and building off an earlier 2019 partnership with the Government of Odisha.

Suggested citation

3ie, 2021. *Building on evidence to shift gender attitudes among youth in India* (online summary), Evidence Impact Summaries. New Delhi: International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie).

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Last updated on 25th January 2022