

An Assessment of the 'PKK' and its Sustainability as a Rural Entrepreneur of Health and Sanitation Products

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The aim of my TISES internship project was to assess the impact and sustainability of an initiative providing family planning services to the communities around the Tata chemical plant in Babrala, and to propose a set of recommendations for its improvement and future sustainability. This was of particular importance in Uttar Pradesh, the state in which I was based, because it has the second highest fertility and maternal mortality rates in the country. A major factor in these figures is poor access to contraceptives and quality healthcare.

The topic itself was unfamiliar to me and so I initially spent some time researching relevant studies in the area. After doing so I was able to carry out questionnaires, focus groups and 'participatory rural appraisal' exercises with over 35 people, ranging from illiterate villagers to the Chief Medical Officer at a local government hospital.

I was able to overcome the language barrier and sensitivity of sexual health issues by working closely with the health team, and my ability to focus solely on one of the numerous projects they oversee, by gathering feedback from all of the stakeholders, was of great benefit.

While broader education about reproductive health had been effective, awareness of the specific initiative was limited. I therefore proposed a modified training programme targeting a greater number from the communities, with an emphasis on expanding the advisory role of the local health workers. The main thrust of my recommendations built on the success of the shop-based providers by increasing training on market linkages in order to achieve a sustainable business model.