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Bollywood stars in BBC Aids show

BBC News - February 9, 2006

Bollywood stars have teamed up with the BBC to spread awareness about HIV-Aids in [India](#).

Shilpa Shetty and Viveik Oberoi are among the actors participating in a television show on the disease produced by BBC World Service Trust.

India's National Aids Control Organisation and state-run Doordarshan TV are BBC's partners in the project.

India has five million HIV-positive people - the highest in the world after [South Africa](#), official statistics show.

"I have participated to show my solidarity to people living with HIV-Aids. I will do anything for them to feel wanted and special," Shilpa Shetty said while launching the programme at a function in the Indian capital, Delhi.

The reality show called *Haath Se Haath Milaa* (Let's Join Hands), produced by the BBC World Service Trust in partnership with the National Aids Control Organisation and Doordarshan, begins on Thursday night.

'Entertain'

In each episode, a Bollywood star joins a young achiever whose work involves raising awareness about HIV-Aids.

Bollywood stars Shilpa Shetty, Viveik Oberoi, Dia Mirza and Raveena Tandon have filmed for the reality-style series.

Other stars like Tabu, Fardeen Khan, John Abraham, Bipasha Basu, Abhishek Bachchan and Sunil Shetty are some of the other stars who have expressed interest in the series, according to a release issued by the BBC World Service Trust.

"The Bollywood factor is there to entertain - to get us eyeballs, but also to be inspirational and aspirational for viewers," said creative director of the project Anu Malhotra.

The young achievers featured in the series include an woman with HIV and young social workers working in various HIV-Aids programmes.

The mass media project to help tackle HIV-Aids in India is funded by the British government's Department for International Development (DFID).

The BBC World Service Trust also makes a weekly detective serial, and produces television public service advertisements on HIV-Aids awareness and prevention.

The World Service Trust estimates that 250 million viewers in India have seen something of the Trust's television programmes since the project started in 2002.