Whose Public Action?
Analysing Inter-sectoral Collaboration for Service Delivery

Door Step School and Bombay Municipal Corporation: a Mutually Convenient Relationship

Padmaja Nair

Lucknow, India

CONTENTS

Acronyms

AO	Administrative Officer
AMC	Additional Municipal Commissioner
BMC	Bombay Municipal Corporation (also known as Mumbai Municipal Corporation/MCGM)
CCVC	Coordination Committee for Vulnerable Children
CDO	Community Development Officer
DMC	Deputy Municipal Commissioner
DRU	District Resource Unit
DSS	Door Step School
EO	Education Officer
HM	Head Master
MCGM	Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai
NFE	Non Formal Education
PMC	Pune Municipal Corporation
PPC	Public-Private Participation Cell
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All)
ULB	Urban Local Body

DOOR STEP SCHOOL AND BOMBAY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION: A MUTUALLY CONVENEINT RELATIONSHIP

Summary

This case study looks at the evolution of the dynamics of the relationship between Door Step School and the Education Department of the Bombay Municipal Corporation over a period of almost two decades. It attempts to understand the relationship in terms of the organizational commitments and profile of the individual organizations, which over the years have been shaped by certain external factors as well as internal dynamics. This in turn has had an impact on the organizational agenda as well as the relationship itself.

DSS manages two projects – one in Mumbai and the other in the neighbouring city of Pune. While the research looked at both the Mumbai and Pune projects, the report primarily focuses on DSS's project in Mumbai and its relationship with the state in general and the BMC in particular. While it focuses on DSS's NFE Programme, other interventions like the School Support Programme have been brought into the analysis because of they are inter-related.

1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 RESEARCH AGENDA[1]

This case study is part of a larger study on non-government public action and the relationship between the state and non-state providers (NSPs). The core argument of the research is that the government and NSPs involved in the delivery of specific services are conditioned by their respective organizational and institutional structure and policies. This in turn may lead to tensions over the very purpose and process of 'public action.' Further, the research hypothesizes that they manner in which the relationship is formally and informally organized also affects the capacity of partners to influence and control the service delivery agenda and process. Three service delivery sectors were identified for the research: sanitation, education and health sectors.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

The whole research project was undertaken in stages over a period of two and a half years and included (i) a scoping study to trace the evolution of the sector and identify the key policies and programmes; (ii) selection of a specific programme within each sector through which the core research issues were to be studied; and (iii) finally identifying cases to analyse relationships in more depth. In the education sector, Non-Formal Education (NFE) was identified as the programme which offered most scope to examine the dynamics of the state-NGO relationship. Within this, Door Step School was specifically selected for the case study because of its relatively long existence in the sector and because it was representative of NGOs working in the area of NFE.

This case study itself was undertaken over a period of 10 months and involved three rounds of visits to the project sites in Bombay and Pune, and discussions with a range of

---

[1] Details of the research agenda, research framework and outputs of the initial stages of the study are available on the project web-site.

stakeholders, at various levels in government, in the NGO and beyond. Visits were also made to the municipal schools where DSS works in partnership with the Bombay Municipal Corporation and to selected NFE centres being run within slums. Visits were also made to the Pune project sites in order to gain greater understanding of the evolution of DSS as an organization and its response to working within different situations and different agencies of the government.

2. ORGANIZATIONS IN THE RELATIONSHIP

2.1 DOOR STEP SCHOOL

2.1.1. Origin of the school
Door Step School (DSS) was founded in 1988 by a teacher-student team[2] of a well know college of Social Work in Mumbai to provide literacy to the children living in the slums and pavements in the city. DSS started its operations on a pilot basis in a single slum, largely populated by marginalized *dalit* communities, and opened its first two Non-Formal Education centres (NFE) with a total of 50 children. In early 1989 a third centre was opened on a pavement for a small group of migrant children who worked as rag pickers and, by July of the same year two more centres were started at the instance of the slum dwellers themselves. During the next few years the number of slums covered in Mumbai grew rapidly and subsequently, in 1993 DSS expanded its area of operations to the neighbouring city of Pune. A shift to Pune was probably partly prompted by the relocation of one of the founder members. Although the overall philosophy, framework, components and inputs in Pune were similar to the Mumbai project, the former took a shape of its own and emerged as a separate entity, in response to the local circumstances and specific profile of the city. The geographical spread of the Pune project is however, larger than that of the project in Mumbai, perhaps because of its focus on construction sites spread across the city, while the number of beneficiaries and the range of activities are relatively limited.

A process of need based and proactive expansion continued and by 2006 a clear strategy had been established and DSS was running a total of 85 *Balwadis* (pre-school), NFEs and Study Classes in Mumbai and 94 in Pune. By then the learning centres were together annually catering to over 5000 children from the pre-school stage to the primary level and over the years had reportedly impacted the lives of 25, 000 children, many of whom had moved out into the formal school system[3]. However, a smaller but still disturbing percentage of children continued to drop out at some stage, without completing even the primary school cycle, while new ones joined the list of 'never been' to school children.[4]

2.1.2. Mission and motive: To put all children in school
a. Alternatives for out of school children: DSS's stated mission is to '…bridge the divide…' between the right of all children to be in school and the reality that keeps a large number of poor children in urban areas '…without an opportunity to receive formal education.' (DSS brochure). The mission was conceptualized when, in the mid 1980s, the founders of DSS, as part of the activities of the College of Social Work, were

---

2 Rajini Paranjpe and Beena Seth Lashkari
.
3 Reportedly 300 children On an average join the municipal school system every year

4 Data consolidated from Annual Reports of DSS dating from the year 1988-89 to 2005-06

engaged in a pilot community development project with the Education Department of the Bombay Municipal Corporation (BMC) in few selected slums. The evolution of DSS was thus, an unintended outfall of an early partnership between the college and the municipal corporation and a concern that the children living in slums did not attend school or chose to drop out primarily because of poverty that forced them to contribute in one way or the other to the family income. Situated near the busy docks of Mumbai, most of the young children worked with their parents in the docks, leaving little time for school or education. The founders therefore, believed that the conventional type of one-off interventions were not the answer and instead sustained involvement was required to address the deep-rooted economic and social causes of children being kept out of school. Their aim was '…not to stop child labour but to bring all out of school children into education.' (Interview with Director of the Mumbai project). They concluded that an alternative, organized, non-formal system of quality education was needed and decided to experiment with a concept of taking education to the doorstep of the families, especially those who were compelled to send out their young children to work. At the same time they were clear that they did not want to run parallel schools. DSS was thus established as an NGO to fulfill the vision of ensuring that every child went to school.

b. Localised and indepth As the NGO's primary mission was to get out-of-school children into formal schools, initially the projects focused only on a range of inputs to run an effective NFE Programme, although *Balwadis* or pre-school classes were an integral part of the design right from the inception of the Programme. Most of the activities were located within the community, as this was most conducive to encourage parents to allow their children to take time off from work. Perhaps its intense focus on the numerous children who were out of school in a particular area was also the reason why DSS's physical spread too appears to have been limited in the early years and for a long period of time it worked exclusively around the catchment area of a single school (Colaba Municipal School)[5]. It was thus, running two major types of learning centres within the community: *Balwadis* or pre-schools for children below the age of six years and NFE classes for older children who had never been to school or had dropped out in the middle.

c. Engagement with the State systems: However, almost two decades into its work, while the commitment is still to those children who 'do not get an opportunity for formal education', the vision, and consequently the approach, has expanded. Now DSS looks at two comprehensive strategies: community based interventions as well as school support activities to reach its goal. The interactions with the Colaba Municipal School (CMS) brought in the realisation that on one hand while the formal processes within a municipal school was a deterrent to children getting into the school itself, on the other hand the systems, structures and overall quality of education was also not conducive to sustaining them within this institution. Continuous support had to be provided to ensure that the children remained in mainstream education long enough to complete the full course. Therefore, for DSS, from community based interventions to school support activities seemed a logical progression. This change in perception regarding its own role appears to have occurred as the NGO's interaction with the municipal school system began to increase over the years.

---

5 In recent years however, a second school has been brought within the scope of their intensive work and the geographical scope of DSS's work has also increased to presently cover five wards.

The range of activities has also expanded to include, Study Classes, Library Classes and a formal School Adoption Programme. Besides, with a clearer understanding of the State school system, DSS is now also attempting to tentatively test the areas of model development. For the first time in 2005-06 the NGO opted to access government funds as an integral part of its organizational principle. Increasing contact with the formal municipal school system, even in an informal way, has thus, resulted in the expansion of the NGOs vision and consequently brought about changes in the range of activities, the levels of interaction within the state school system and also in the nature of activities, which, in a marginal way, was also looking at model development for advocacy.

d. Direct inputs vs. advocacy: Interviews with both the chief functionaries however, indicate that DSS does not profess to be in anyway seriously targeting government policies by way of advocacy. Nor does it want to open up a parallel system of schools for they believe that the '…NGOs' job is to demonstrate efficient strategies and methods and not to take over from the state' (interview with Paranjpe). They strongly feel that the work of the NGO and the state is complementary and should be designed as such. The NGOs need to work with the system and the NFE centres, '…and attempt to reduce illiteracy even if it is only a drop in the ocean' (interview with Paranjpe). Besides, they feel that NGOs can also pressurize the state to deliver results. However, there appears to be a difference in the way that the two co-founders view their engagement with the state.

Lashkari, who manages the Mumbai project as its Director, was more open to establishing a defined line of communication with the state and participating in collective negotiations up to a point. She clearly does not see DSS as a charitable organization, but one which is aiming to ensure that the '…system works properly'. On the other hand Paranjpe, who manages the Pune project, was more emphatic about DSS's non role in advocacy. Her argument against advocacy was that it meant a large time lag during which period a large number of children would have been deprived of their right to be literate. Her preference therefore was to continue to be involved in direct provisioning of facilities and generate grassroots and evidenced based activities, which in itself may perhaps bring about policy and system level changes. However, she was not averse to DSS extending support to any NGO for whom the core function was that of advocacy, although DSS itself did not undertake advocacy as a planned and conscious strategy. The impact of this subtle difference is reflected in the different ways in which the projects have developed in Pune and Mumbai. However, both the co-founders appear to believe that engagements with the state were not so much as to change the state itself but to utilise its resources and leverage its strength to get more children into school.

e. Criticality of community involvement: Finally the participation of the community, especially the parents, is central to DSS's strategy and it has adopted all kinds of methods, including an intensive and extensive physical presence within the community, to ensure that parents are not only motivated to send their children to school but also retain them through higher classes. Hence, while on one hand several kinds of outreach activities are carried out within the communities, on the other, parents are encouraged to actively participate in monitoring the progress of their wards within the school. At times the community has also been used as a pressure group to mobilize the schools to deliver better services.

Thus, the need to bring all children into school and into the formal school system and subsequently, helping to retain them within the system appears to be the core motive that drives all DSS projects. Quality of education is an inherent aspect of this motive and has encouraged DSS to undertake focused interventions within the municipal school systems.

2.1.3. Agenda and activities

As stated earlier DSS has two independent projects- but within a similar ideological and conceptual framework- running in Mumbai and Pune.

a. Mumbai Project: In Mumbai DSS's focus is the primary level of education. Initially the target was children between the age group of 7 to 15 and the objectives were to evolve a system of non-formal education for out of school, street and working children, develop a suitable curriculum and teaching learning material, besides organizing training Programme for teachers, encouraging the participation of the community in planning and organizing and supervising the NFE Programme. (DSS Annual Report, 1989-90) The approach adopted was centred on '…functional literacy and awareness which help children acquire and develop concepts.' (Annual Report, 1988-89). This was the beginning of the Educational Programme in Mumbai.

Over the years the Educational Programme evolved further and DSS priorities came to focus on three critical areas: getting more children into the formal school system by opening *Balwadis* in communities which did not have them and imparting literacy to out of school children through its NFE classes; providing support to sustain already enrolled children within the formal educational system; and inculcating good reading habits. In order to achieve this DSS widened the scope of the target group to cover children in the 5-18 years age group and by 1990 it had added three new components to its Educational Programme- Pre- school centres or *Balwadis*, Study Classes and the Library Project, besides the original Literacy Project (NFE). It also began to increase its interactions with the municipal schools in a more planned way.

Thus, currently the activities in Mumbai include:
- *Pre-school or Balwadi* **Centres** targeting children between the 3-6 years age group and launched in 1990 as a preventive pre- primary Programme to ensure that children went to school. All the children from the *Balwadis* who are over 4 years of age and have completed at least one year of study become eligible for admission into the formal system in the next academic year and are encouraged to subsequently enroll in Class 1 in the municipal schools.

- *NFE centres* are DSS's flagship programme and focuses on those children who are unable to attend regular schools. Emphasis is on reading and writing, with the children being taught languages, math, science and personal hygiene. The curriculum followed is adapted from the formal school system, i.e. class 1 to 4 of the municipal schools in Mumbai and telescoped to be completed in 2 years. Only about 10 percent of the children from these NFE centres join class 1 or 2 in the formal schools after a minimum of 2 years of study and within 7 years appear for class 5 or 6 examinations. Flexibility in timing of classes as well as locations close to the children's homes has been a key strategy. Based on the same principles DSS is also running two mobile vans as part of its School-on-Wheels

Programme.[6] NFE classes are also being undertaken with support under the Government of Maharashtra's Mahatma Phule Hami Yojana, an education guarantee scheme launched in 2001. Thus, over the years several types of NFE classes evolved[7] catering to the needs of different groups of children, of which classes for child domestic workers and the school on wheels for street children have sustained.

· **Study Classes** were started *i*n 1992 when DSS decided to work with the Municipal schools themselves. Study Classes, focusing on children from class 1-4, provide a point of contact between the NGO and children attending BMC schools and in a way preventing them from dropping out of schools. It aims to provide additional support to children who are already in school, especially the first generation of school goers. In 2005 the concept was extended further and DSS set up Community Learning Centres, where children are given exposure to what is outside the text book.

· **Library Project** is a critical part of DSS's efforts to improve the reading and learning abilities of the children and ensuring that those who had learnt to read and write did not lapse into illiteracy. The Library project, initially an informal activity conducted with the help of volunteers and donated books, has evolved to be more organized over the years and has become an integral part of DSS's community based activities.

· **School Support Activity** was initiated in 1999 in the Colaba Municipal School (CMS) where most of DSS's children were being enrolled. The purpose was to 'complement the services offered by the school and create an interesting atmosphere, where children would be sustained once enrolled.'(Annual Report 1999-2000). Initially the activities focused on children in class 1 and 2 of the Hindi and Marathi medium sections located in CMS covering around 2000 children. Over the years while the range of activities and responsibilities have increased, the support has been extended to other municipal schools. It also now includes providing support to the English medium section of Colaba Municipal School and deputing teachers to support the gap, especially in the primary section.

Thus, over the years the Programme developed to firstly, address the needs of those children who were <u>not </u>in school and secondly, to help retain those who <u>were</u> in school and to enable them to complete the full cycle of elementary education. Responding to the needs of the children, a clear two pronged strategy of Community Based Interventions and School Support Activities have thus evolved**.**

---

[6] Caters to those children who cannot go to school or other centres for several reasons(young, disabled, etc.). The NFE pattern of education is followed and children are eventually encouraged and facilitated to join Municipal school, with considerable success so far.

[7]Community based classes for 7-12 year age group and the 13-16 year age group of children, evening classes for adolescent girls also held in the community, night school for working children, classes for children working in the dock yard,; classes for child domestic workers, and the school on wheels for street children.

b. Pune Project: also a focus on out of school children …but with a difference: Pune too launched its activities in 1993 with *Balwadis* and NFE classes in selected slums. However, in 1997 there were some changes in emphasis: the number of community level *Balwadis* were increased because a number of children who were around 5 years of age did not attend school; the NFE classes were terminated as most older children were enrolled in schools; and instead Study Classes within selected municipal schools as well as the community were introduced and subsequently became the focus of the Programme. Similarly a library was run within the school, besides libraries in the community, was introduced. In fact over the years the Library Programme grew to become a prominent component and widened its scope to include mobile libraries, community based libraries, reference libraries and even libraries or reading classes for students of class 1 to 4 in PMC schools.

1999 was another significant year for the Pune project as an NFE centre was started for the children of construction workers. Over the years the number of NFEs increased and this has now become the major focus in Pune and in 2004 DSS launched an exclusive Project Foundation for children from the construction sites. Before this Pune also launched a School-On-Wheels project, which is extensively used by children again from construction sites.

By 2002 there were more changes with all the Study Classes as well as the *Balwadis* coming to be located almost exclusively in the slum communities and all the NFE classes on construction sites. In 2001-2002 four of DSS's centres in Pune were approved for support under Mahatma Phule Shikshan Hami Yojana and was expanded to cover 10 centres in 2004. The children under this Programme appeared for examinations of class 1 conducted by the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan or Education For All Programme of the Government of India.

Thus, the Pune project is now consolidated into the following components, similar to the Bombay project but with a different approach:
- *Balwadis* or pre- primary education centres in the community;

- *NFE* classes of various types including classes under Mahatma Phule Programme, classes with attached crèches particularly at construction sites, earn and learn schemes for adolescent girls, especially from the Lamani tribes and School-On-Wheels where there is a problem of space - mainly for children of pavement dwellers and construction workers ;

- *Study Classes* in the community and Special Study Classes or Remedial Classes in PMC schools; and

- *Libraries and reading facilities* of various types including community based libraries, school libraries and mobile libraries.

- Besides it also engages in several **community outreach** activities similar to the Mumbai Project.

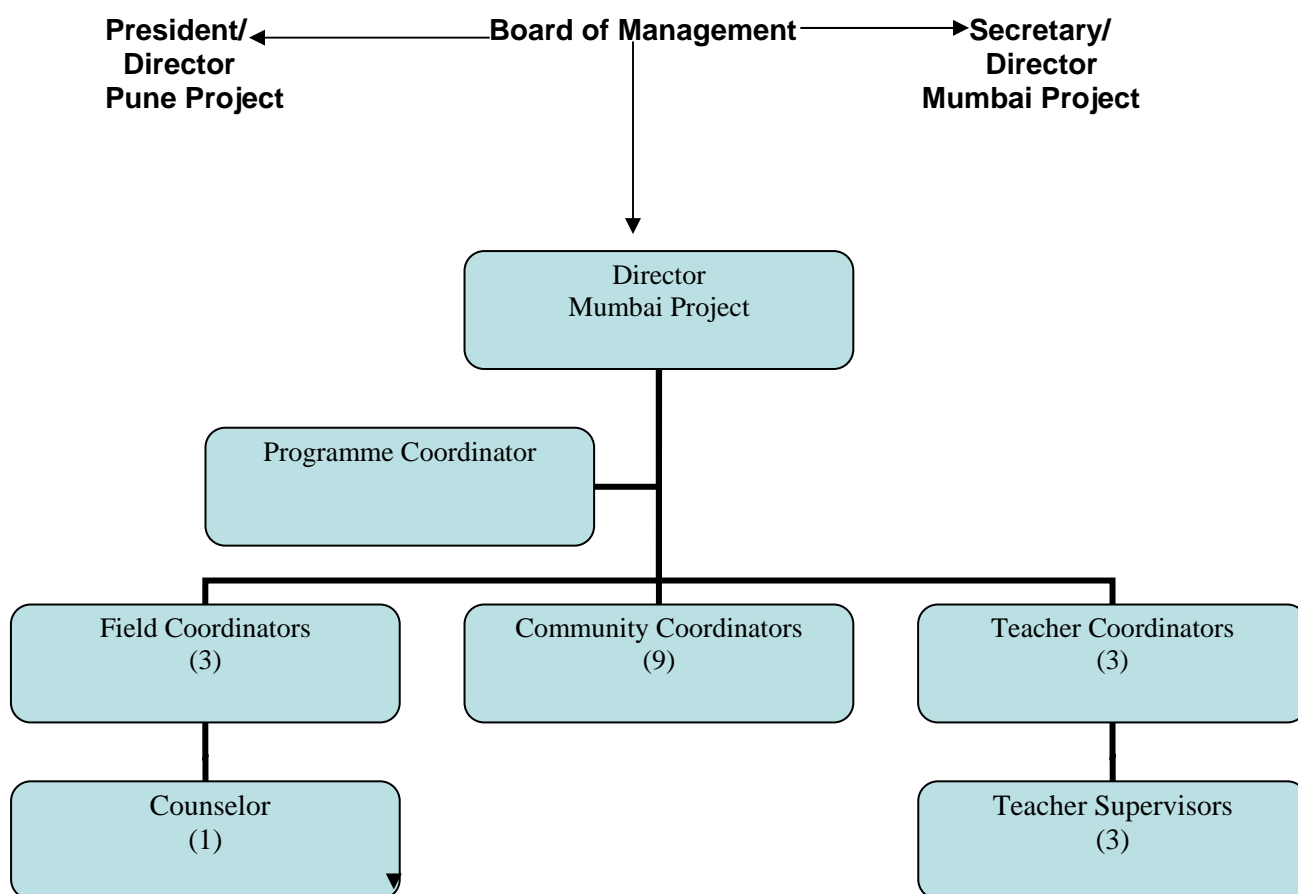## 2.1.4. Organizational structure: Layered and field oriented
DSS is registered as a non-profit making society under the Society's Registration Act in Maharashtra and is entitled to income tax relief. It also has the requisite FCRA clearance from the government of India, enabling it to access external donor funds.

a. Management Board and oversight: A Management Board, consisting of seven professionals from relevant fields and headed by a President, is responsible for overall policy direction and oversight. DSS, as the Director claimed, prefers to have on its Board members who have functional strengths and grassroots knowledge rather than those who are big names in the sector, for the latter they feel would only bring in 'fancy ideas' instead of workable solutions. While the two projects in Mumbai and Pune are run as separate entities, technically both are under the same Management Board, which reportedly has not seen any major changes in its composition since inceptions. However, recently the Programme Co-ordinator of DSS, Mumbai has been co-opted into the Board.

While the Pune project is under the direct management of Paranjpe who is also the President of DSS, the responsibility for the Mumbai project has been delegated to Lashkari, who is the secretary of the organization. While both the President and the Secretary have freedom to implement the two projects in their own way without any apparent clash of interest or major differences of opinion, the President provides the oversight and, together with the Secretary, is also primarily responsible for sourcing of funds and negotiating for larger projects. In the early days, Paranjpe was involved in the day to day running of the Mumbai project, but now her role is limited to taking major decisions. Both of them also frequently consult with each other over phone, besides meeting as and when required. Thus, unlike many other NGOs, DSS is not dependent on one individual (Pauline's note). And in the words of the Director-Secretary, 'It is a small organization but we do not have major problems related to its functioning or funding.

b. Staff structure, motivation and incentives: Both the projects have separate dedicated teams of professionals. The Mumbai project has a total of 90 staff and over the years, with the expansion of the programme, the layers of co-ordination has increased to multiple levels and includes the Director, Programme Coordinator, Project/ Field Coordinators and Centre teachers. There is also a Child Counsellor who is primarily responsible for the Colaba Municipal school, but at times also provides her services to other centres. While the core team consists of the Programme, Project and Field Coordinators as well as the Administrative staff, the facilitators and teachers for the various centres are recruited on a project to project basis and consequently their numbers are fluid. About 80 percent of this staff is located in various community and school based centres while the remaining are the supervisory and administration staff.

The level of education of the staff varies from Higher Secondary to Post Graduate and professional degrees, primarily in Education. Training and capacity building workshops for the centre staff have become increasingly frequent and an integral part of the planning process. In fact, DSS invests considerable time and money on the training of its staff and on collectively developing child friendly teaching methodologies and tools.

```
                    President/  ◄───── Board of Management ─────► Secretary/
                    Director                                       Director
                    Pune Project                                   Mumbai Project
                                             │
                                             ▼
                                    ┌──────────────────┐
                                    │     Director     │
                                    │  Mumbai Project  │
                                    └──────────────────┘
                    ┌────────────────────┐
                    │ Programme Coordinator │
                    └────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐  ┌──────────────────┐
        │ Field Coordinators │  │Community Coordinators│ │ Teacher Coordinators │
        │       (3)        │  │       (9)        │  │       (3)        │
        └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘  └──────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────┐                        ┌──────────────────┐
        │    Counselor     │                        │ Teacher Supervisors │
        │       (1)        │                        │       (3)        │
        └──────────────────┘                        └──────────────────┘
```

Many of the staff, especially at the coordination level, has been with DSS for long years (10-14), perhaps indicating all the benefits of a low turnover as well as long term interests in the programme. Besides, they have grown with the programme and have assumed increasing responsibilities. However, at the level of the teachers in the schools and the centres the tenure is of a considerably lesser duration, on an average of 3-4 years; yet this too appears to be relatively long for the sector. For the teachers under the Adopt a School Programme, DSS is a stepping stone or an option in lieu of a regular job with the municipal or private schools. Besides, the learning process and the proximity to the municipal school system sustain them with DSS, despite low salaries and uncertain yearly contracts[8]. For many others, perhaps there is no other option. The staff under the School Adoption Programme is separate and is recruited for a period of ten months resulting in regular breaks and periods of uncertainty in appointments. But, according to the Director of DSS they come back when they are called. The Director also reported that they found it really difficult to get middle level staff as well as staff for the English Medium schools.

Both the founders themselves have professional qualifications in Social Work, something which they attach great importance to. While the President of DSS was also a teacher of Social Work by profession and had completed her tenure from a well know and

─────────────────────────────

[8] They have a ten months contract and this year specially there is greater uncertainty because of the change in policy and the delays in obtaining formal approval for the School Support Programme

established College of Social Work in Mumbai, for the Secretary-Director, younger in years, DSS has been the focus from the start of her career. The College itself has had a long standing relationship with the BMC and has helped shape its community development policy and strategy in the early years. Interestingly, while both the President and the Secretary-Director are clearly committed to the social and educational needs of the children in the slums and the streets of the city, the President, senior in age and experience appears to be quietly thoughtful in her approach in a way that exudes confidence in her knowledge. The Secretary-Director, on the other hand, who also happens to have been a student of the President, has the air of being very dynamic and spends considerable time within the community and sees this as an important part of her role. At the same time she is also actively engaged in interacting with government officials in different offices to access new initiatives for the project (Pauline Rose's note). She herself claims to be 'pushy' but not obviously confrontational and backs off when necessary: 'People tell me in my field I am a tortoise' (Kelly Teamey's note).

c. Decision making and delegation of authority: The Secretary- Director is fully involved in the programme, has hands on approach and spends a significant amount of time in the field as was obvious with her familiarity with the staff and community in the slums. However, with the expanding scope of the programme, her time in interacting with the higher levels of the government within the BMC and networking with other agencies appears to be increasing. As she claims to be 'pushy' as a team leader, she herself undertakes to engage with the State and other agencies in the initial or difficult part of any dialogue or negotiations, thereafter leaving further processes to the programme coordinator, whom she terms as being 'articulate' and other junior members of her team. Hence, there is recognition of strengths and capacities of the staff and a delegation of responsibilities accordingly.

Much of the operations at the school and community level have been delegated to the respective Coordinators, for whom this responsibility appears to be an incentive to perform. Besides, the Director stated that she generally interact with the AMC or the DMC, but meets the AMC only if he appears to be a 'good' official.

> 'I generally follow protocol and prefer to get my work done through official procedures. Hence I tend to follow the root of the HM, CDO, and EO or now through the HM and EO to the PPC. I will only go as a last resort to the Commissioner.' (Director, DSS in an interview with the Researcher)

d. Planning and management: Planning and coordination of DSS's work is fairly meticulous and efficient and annual reports have been maintained right from the inception of the programme. Monthly meetings are held by the Director while all Coordinators submit regular reports. Weekly meetings are also held and the teachers are required to prepare weekly lesson plans. Besides, the Director too is constantly in the field interacting with the staff, students and the community.

e. Resource generation: DSS reports that it does not have major problems for funds, although currently it is looking for long term core funding in order to enable it to reach its goals without interruption. DSS reported that while earlier they had to seek for funds, now, as their work has become known, donors tend to seek them out. Most of the funding relations have been of relatively long durations of over three years. DSS's donor list largely consists of individuals and family Trusts, Corporate and NGO donors like CRY and CONCERN India and also UNICEF for an initial period of three years. While CRY provided long term support for ten years, ICICI Securities, one of the largest private

banking institutions, is currently a major source of funds, especially for its School Support Programme. DSS has also received support from time to time from international agencies like UNICEF. Corporate funding usually is free of any programmatic conditionality, and provides sufficient freedom for DSS to implement the projects in line with its own vision and mission.

Incidentally, DSS's office in Mumbai is housed in one of the Municipal Schools while even some of the centres in the slums are run out of government building hired on a nominal rent. The office is spacious and functional, with adequate space for both its administrative work as well as meetings and trainings. The setup of the office indicates the relatively low expenditure on overheads. This was observed to be a common practice amongst NGOs, because the BMC rented out free space in order to shore up its income. However, at the time of the study, a change in policy of the BMC, was threatening to dislodge DSS and similar organizations from the school premises and DSS was in the process of negotiation with the concerned department as well as talks with the Municipal Commissioner. Besides, DSS also rented space within the community to run the various NFE centres and study classes. At times it also held the classes in a conveniently located park or open space, sometimes at the cost of being harassed by the local police. Thus, 'focused and functional' sums up the profile of DSS.

2.2 BOMBAY MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

2.2.1. About Bombay Municipal Corporation
The Bombay Municipal Corporation, now known as the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, was originally created in 1865 and established in its current form under the Bombay Municipal Corporation Act 1888. It is credited to be the largest and richest municipal bodies in the country, administering an area of over 440 square kilometres. For administrative purpose it is sub-divided into 6 Zones and several wards with each ward having its own office and dedicated staff. A multi- cultural, multi- linguistic city with a population of almost 13 million, it also has the dubious distinction of having some of the largest slums in the world. In fact almost 50 percent of its population is reported to be living in slums, due to the twin cause of poverty as well as an enormous crunch on land.

2.2.2. Features of public action: constitutional mandate and civil society engagement
The nature of BMC's public action vis-à-vis education is influenced by two historical factors: an early devolution of responsibility for primary education from the State to BMC and a long standing engagement with the civil society - an engagement that dates back to a period much before 'public-private partnership' or 'civil society engagement' became fashionable development jargons. Underlying these factors is a commitment to providing opportunities for education, with a focus on the poor and the marginalized. The BMC recognises the right of every child for education and hence its principal goal is '…to encourage underprivileged children through various programmes and projects to enrol in a school for education at least up to primary level.' (www. Karmayog.com)

a. State mandate for free education at primary level: Like all Urban Local Bodies in the country, the fundamental nature of BMC's public agenda and action is enshrined in legislations, in this case the Bombay Municipal Corporation Act (1888) by which it was formed. While, on one hand the BMC claims to have internalised the principles of democracy of 'governance of the people, by the people and for the people,' (website of MCGM), on the other by virtue of the Act (Section 61), it is mandated to provide free

primary education and has been doing so since 1907. The BMC also has its very own Act on education, the Bombay Primary Education Act 1947, which allows it to make primary education free and compulsory at the primary level. Although, this Act has apparently been lying dormant since several years, some of the basic ethos and principles in respect of access and enrolment appear to have been adopted by BMC.

In India, the responsibility for primary education is shared by the State and the Central government in terms of legislative powers. In Maharashtra, however, the State government had devolved much of the responsibilities in education to the urban local bodies, as way back as in 1884. The responsibilities were further consolidated after the 74th Amendment to the Constitution decentralised development activities at the ULB level across the country. The BMC therefore now finds itself solely responsible for the provision of primary education in a large city like Mumbai and is currently running 1179 schools. However, its role is limited to '…effective management and efficient administration of the schools and teachers and the curriculum transaction process' (Juneja, 2001). The State, on its part is responsible for deciding and developing the curriculum and provides grants, which however, is only a small part of the total spend on education in the city.

b. Need to put all children in school: The BMC is committed to put all children in school. Therefore, to facilitate access, primary education is free of tuition fee and regular enrolment camps are held just prior to the beginning of the new session; and to ensure retention, free text books are provided to children up to class VII. Besides, mid- day meals, health check ups and extra curricular activities are the other incentives.

The BMC also appears to be addressing issues of inclusion. It is committed towards the slow learners and the differently-abled amongst the poor in the city as several of its interventions down the years indicate. Some of the more notable ones are special schools for mentally challenged children; education in 8 regional languages to cater to the multiplicity of migrant social and regional groups from across the country; additional classes for slow learners; non- formal education for out of school children and also short term school readiness programmes just prior to admissions, in lieu of *Balwadis* (Juneja, 2001).

c. Co-option of civil society for effective development: The other distinctive feature of public action in the context of the BMC is its history of civic activism and engagement with civil society organizations, including NGOs, especially in the area of public health and amenities, education and culture.

BMC is perhaps one of the few Urban Local Bodies in the country to have a MoU with an NGO Council for institutionalising partnership with the civil society to promote governance. Created in 2005, the NGO Council is a representative body of civil society organizations and NGOs across sectors and causes. It has been designed as a platform for mutual interaction between the NGOs and the State and to enable greater participation of the former in policy and programme

e planning, evaluation, implementation and delivery of services by the Government. It also aims to facilitate networking amongst NGOs and providing transparency and credibility to the sector. In a short span of two years the Council claims of having achieved significant results including the framing of the BMC Municipal Solid Waste Rules 2006, drafted through a collaborative process between the BMC and Civil Society

Organizations; framing of a Charter for the BMC - Local Area Citizen Group Partnership 2006; preparation of a draft Public Health Policy for Mumbai ; and advancing the cause of transparency by facilitating sharing of information by BMC via the NGO Council (website of Karamyog).

Although, education per se does not appear to be within the ambit of this partnership and the MoU[9], slums and the marginalised communities are covered in terms of basic service delivery. But what is of more relevance is the existence of a process of institutionalization of partnership between the civil society, NGOs, and the BMC.

In education the relationship with NGOs dates back to the early 1970s when the college of Social Work initiated a project in Colaba Municipal School followed by another in a school in Danda, wherein a Social Worker was appointed with the support of NGO funding agencies. Later, in 1979, on the request of the Corporation and with budgetary support from it, the College opened 15 more such centres and finally in 1985 the BMC itself took over the complete responsibility for the project. The collaboration had resulted in structural and institutional changes like the creation of the post of Community Development Officers and school committees and the introduction of programmes like NFE and the School Readiness Programmes, which subsequently became an integral part of BMC' education department. Thus, the BMC '…crossed a threshold in its relations with supporting non- governmental organizations' (Juneja, 2001).

The early 1990s saw another collaborative output when BMC and UNICEF together launched the Bombay Education Initiative to universalize primary education in the city. This led to several innovative experiments which also brought together the corporate sector and other citizens. Eventually in 1994 a tripartite partnership was effected between the BMC, UNICEF and corporate citizens and a Public Charity Trust-the Pratham Mumbai Educational Initiative- was set up and within a period of 10 years evolved into a full fledged NGO, with its activities spread across several states in the country. Meanwhile, the BMC has continued with partnership with NGOs, especially in the NFE and School Support Programme.

In 2006, the partnership format took another turn when the Education Department of the BMC set up a one window Public Private Partnership cell, apparently to streamline NGO and corporate sector interventions. According to the present Deputy Municipal Commissioner (DMC) in charge of education, although, the NGOs have been involved in the BMC education programme for a considerable amount of years, the BMC is not legally required to partner with NGOs. However, this involvement has not been 'systematic' and hence the PPC is an attempt towards improving the situation. Although, the new structure has met with criticism and is looked at suspiciously by some sections of the NGO sector, the cell itself has been operational since August 2006 and is coming to grips with its roles and responsibilities. (also refer to Section 2, para 2.1)

2.2.3. Activities
The BMC's primary role is to administer and provide basic infrastructure to the city, including the development of slum areas. More specifically it covers such areas like building and maintenance of roads, streets and flyovers; street lighting; maintenance of parks and open spaces; sewage treatment and disposal; garbage disposal and street

---

9 The MoU covers only the areas listed in the 12th Schedule of the Constitution.

cleanliness; water purification and supply; managing hospitals; maintaining cemeteries and crematoriums; registration of births and deaths; and managing municipal schools.

The Education Department itself focuses on primary and secondary education and runs a total of 1179 municipal schools in Mumbai with a staff of 20, 000 out of which 13, 000 are teachers. It caters to over .5million children. As stated elsewhere in the report, BMC conducted schools in eight languages of instruction and it is usual to find more then one school being run out of the same premises in multiple shifts. Although the focus is primary education services have been extended upto the level of class 7. It also supports 1046 private schools some of which are being given grant – in- aid. Several allied activities are also simultaneously implemented to support mainstream primary education:

- Through its Community Development Programmes and Community Development Centres BMC caters to the most deprived of the children through both non-formal academic activities and extra curricular activities. Running NFE centres and Study Classes with the help of NGOs is one of the critical activities under this component. A School Feeding Programme supplies cooked food, with the prescribed level of having nutrition, for minimum 200 days in an academic year to all the students. Although the BMC itself does not have any programme for under-6 age group of children, it had space through the Community Development Officers to network with other non- government agencies to run Balwadis or pre-school centres. The CDOs could also utilise the municipal school premises for the purpose.

- Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan the BMC is implementing various interventions including teacher's training, distribution of free text books, to all girl students and children belonging to the marginalised communities. Under the same programme BMC is also implementing the Integrated Education for Disabled (IED) scheme, the NFE based Mahatma Phule Education Guarantee Scheme and setting up computer laboratories in schools.

- Besides, it manages an In-service Training Centre for primary teachers, an Art and Music Training Academy and several Teacher Libraries. While the training centre organizes workshops and seminars, the Arts Academy arranges camps, music weeks and competitions in dance, drama, singing, etc., providing opportunities for both students and teachers to improve and show case their talents. Training and scholarships are also provided.

- A Language Development Project is being run since 1976 with support from the Ford Foundation to develop the linguistic abilities of teachers and students. It also includes workshops, competitions, and programmes in literature.

- Finally, the Department runs an exclusive Research and Statistical Unit that carries out evidence based analytical studies on its own and In collaboration with academic institutes. The aim is to continuously improve planning and implementation. Such collaborations have apparently led to programmatic and institutional changes like the initiation of the NFE centres, Parallel Classes, Study Classes, setting up of Community Development Centres, etc.

2.2.4. Organizational structure: Hierarchical and layered

The BMC, like all ULBs in the country has a deliberative and an administrative wing, with the former responsible for policy making and the latter for policy implementation.

The head of the Corporation is the Mayor, but the executive powers are vested in the hands of the Municipal Commissioner, who is from the Indian Administrative Service and appointed by the State government. The Mayor, whose tenure is of two and a half year duration heads a team of ward councillors representing the various wards in the city. At present there are 227 ward councillors in BMC, all of whom have been directly elected at ward elections and have affiliations to political parties. There is also a provision for nominating a few councillors who have special knowledge or experience in municipal administration. Various committees including the Standing Committee, Statutory Committees and Sub- Committees, including the Education Committee, are responsible for specific activities. The current Education Committee consists of 26 members. Budgetary control, approval of plans, proposals, contracts and funds are the roles and responsibilities of the deliberative wing and also the way in which they exercise their powers.
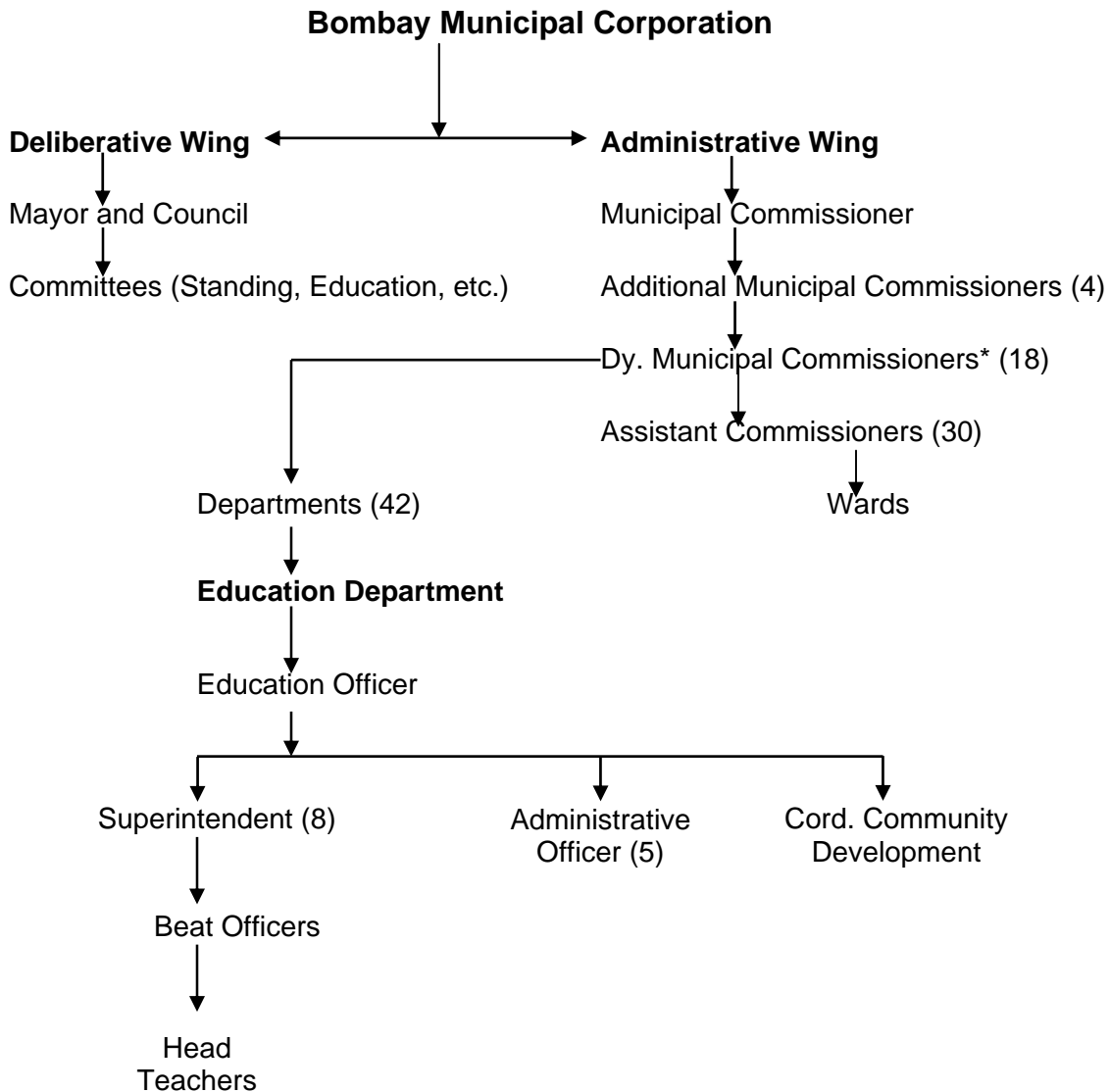
The administrative functions are discharged by the Education Department, which is hierarchical with multiple units, including a separate unit in-charge of the SSA Programme, and several levels of functionaries. The Department is under a Deputy Municipal Commissioner, who also holds other portfolios like that of the Women and Child Welfare unit, etc. The functional head is the Education Officer who is assisted by Superintendents in charge of each of the 8 languages on the academic side, Administrative Officers for administration and Community Development Officers responsible for the 23 Community Development Centres (GoM, 2005). The Superintendents in turn are assisted by Beat Officers (around 90), who are responsible for a number of schools in a given area. Under the Beat Officers, at the level of the schools, are the Head Teachers and the subject teachers. The Administrative Officers were initially responsible only for the physical and infrastructural requirements of the schools but for some years now have also been given the responsibility to monitor academic activities. Besides there is a large contingent of Head Clerks, Accountants and other administrative staff under the AOs for administrative purpose. This complicated structure means that each of the school, is under the supervision of a Superintendent/ Beat Officer as well as the AO, apart from regular visits from the CDO who is responsible for organizing free text and notebooks, uniforms, stationary etc., through funds leveraged from various individual donors, charitable trusts and NGOs; and organizing other activities such as NFE centres, vacation classes and libraries etc. This large infrastructure is expected to support the 1179 schools under BMC.

In 2006-07, however, some changes were effected in this structure, with administration being decentralised ward-wise(23 wards) and the Beat Officers jurisdictions being rationalized to cover one entire ward instead of being spread across several wards; the CDO no longer being responsible for leveraging support from various sources as well as being the via media for NGO participation; and most importantly the setting up of the PP Cell within the department for NGO and private sector participation and in away centralizing the participatory process. The changes are expected to have implications on NGOs and are being looked at with some amount of apprehension.

The Education Department has its own budget, with the budget for the year 2007--08 being over 77 million rupees (Interview with DMC). There are two sources of income,

namely resources raised locally by BMC through taxes like octroi, property and vehicles, fees and user charges for water and electricity and other fines and fees; the second source is the grant- in aid as the ULBs share of the State funds. However, the latter is only a small percentage of the total budget in the case of BMC (Rs. 25 million from SSA).

Fig. 2: Structure of the Education Department* of BMC

Bombay Municipal Corporation

Deliberative Wing	Administrative Wing
Mayor and Council	Municipal Commissioner
Committees (Standing, Education, etc.)	Additional Municipal Commissioners (4)
	Dy. Municipal Commissioners* (18)
	Assistant Commissioners (30)
Departments (42)	Wards

Education Department

Education Officer

Superintendent (8)   Administrative Officer (5)   Cord. Community Development

Beat Officers

Head Teachers

Note: *Structure just prior to the decentralisation process and setting up of PPC
**One DMC is in-charge of the Education Department, together with other portfolios, and reports to an AMC.

2.3 RELATIVE POSITIONING OF DSS AND BMC IN PRIMARY EDUCATION IN MUMBAI

DSS and BMC are interestingly positioned within the education sector in Mumbai, with some amount of commonality in their goals and yet with some differences in the way they function.

Both are focused on the poor and both are especially interested in the enrollment and retention of out of school children. However, while DSS is driven by the need to provide quality education, BMC is obviously more target-oriented and driven by the need to cover a large number of fluid populations. At the same time DSS is but one of several NGOs in education and working within BMC's partnership framework. It has therefore not been able to significantly influence policies but has had to work innovatively within a given framework. However, it is only fair to point out that advocacy was never a stated agenda of DSS. However, since DSS has autonomy of funds from other than government sources it could choose either not to work formally with BMC or to supplement the BMC funds and mould the NFE as well as the School Support Programme on its own terms.

3. CONDITIONING FACTORS

The primary education agenda of BMC and DSS have been conditioned by certain external factors, many of which are common to both the agencies.

3.1. NETWORK OF MULTILINGUAL SCHOOLS AS AN OUTCOME OF MIGRANT MULTILINGUAL POPULATION:

The BMC runs a fairly large network of formal schools and NFE centres in the city besides, supporting a number of private primary schools. While by virtue of the responsibilities vested on it by the Act of 1888, the BMC has to provide educational facilities at the primary level for all the children. At the same time the large migrant, multi- lingual, poor and often illiterate population, is a major challenge and in order to understand the influence of the clientele that the BMC caters to, it is necessary to draw a quick profile of the community against the background of Mumbai as a major centre for employment and economic opportunity.

The port and the textile industry were the main attraction that brought crowds of unskilled and semi-skilled workers from States like Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh in the South and Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in the North to Mumbai in the second half of the last century. Thereafter, as Mumbai began to grow as the commercial capital of India the flow of migrants increased. While the population grew in leaps and bounds, the varied groups of migrants brought with them their own culture and language, different from the one spoken in Mumbai. It also led to a fast growing crunch on land and housing, and consequently to the growth of large and crowded slums, especially around the ports and the areas where the textile mills were located.

The BMC was thus, not only compelled to open a large number of schools in locations as close to the slums as possible but also several mediums of instruction, initially to cover about 12 languages largely spoken in the slums. However over the years some of the language mediums were phased out as the number of children speaking them began

to dwindle. Further, in the 1980s when the textile mills, located in the southern end of the city, began to close down one by one and the population began a northward drift in search of alternative jobs, the BMC was faced with a piquant situation. It was forced to open new schools in the northern and western wards, while a large number of schools in the southern wards began to lose their students.

Another visible change in the BMC agenda over the last few years, conditioned by the socio-cultural environment, has been the increasing demand for education in English medium schools, with some of the poor parents even enrolling their children in fee paying private English medium schools. Reacting to this situation and also in response to severe criticism from the tax paying citizens and media on the poor conditions of education in the city, the BMC has taken steps to bring about structural and programmatic changes. Thus, it s in the process of finalizing partnership with NGOs and private Trusts to run and manage English medium classes from pre-primary to class X as apart of its school renewal plan. 84 such schools of 'excellence' are proposed to be opened in currently vacant municipal school buildings and NGOs have been short-listed to launch the venture. The scheme has been delayed due to paucity of English teachers and other technical reasons, but is expected to be launched soon.

DSS's response, on the other hand, to the large migrant population, especially near the ports was to focus all its interventions in slums along the ports. In response to the multiplicity of mother tongues, DSS did initially attempt to run NFE classes in Tamil, but had to soon abandon this strategy because of its own admitted lack of capacity. It finally focused on Marathi and Hindi as the most spoken language and as a necessary functional skill. DSS also went a step further by starting schools on pavements and parks, either in the open or in the two vehicles, especially designed to function as mobile classes (School on Wheels).

3.2 LARGE PERCENTAGE OF DROP-OUTS LEADS TO ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY BASED APPROACHES AND ENGAGEMENT WITH NGOS

Drop outs and poor enrolment have always plagued the BMC, compelling it to undertake innovative approaches from time to time in response to the existing situation. For instance, many parents were reluctant or unable to send their children to school because either the child needed to work or take care of the home while the mother went out to earn a living; at times the reluctance was also due to the fact that the school was located either at a distance or required the child to navigate busy roads. There was also the universal reason of the school being unattractive to the child in terms of the environment as well as the curriculum. The BMC's task was made harder by the fact that most of the children were first generation learners and could not expect support from their parents. In a search for solutions, BMC tied up with NGOs and academic institutions and in the process evolved and established the concept of Community Development as an integral part of its agenda. This also included setting up NFE centres, short duration summer camps, extra curricular activities and other incentives to make school attractive for both the child and its parent. Besides, yearly enrolment drives, again with NGO support, have also become an integral part of BMC's agenda.

Another reason for establishing a relationship with NGOs was the fact that although the BMC is relatively better off than most other ULBs in the country in terms of its own resources as well as grants from the State, most of its budget apparently goes towards teachers' salaries and other overheads. Hence, it resorted to other means to raise funds,

including encouraging NGOs and the private sector to participate in its School Adoption Program, wherein the non- state agencies supplement the BMC's efforts in providing for physical and material requirements like books and stationary, uniforms and also for extra curricular activities, apart from programmatic inputs. BMC also encourages NGOs to provide additional teachers to support its existing staff, especially when new initiatives are introduced into the curriculum.

DSS, on its part, also responded with mostly community based centres and a range of support that stretched from the home to the school and from facilitating admissions to extra curricular activities and special coaching.

3.3 PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP CELL AND POLICY: AN ATTEMPT TO STREAMLINE NON-STATE SUPPORT AND RESPONSE OF NGOS

While BMC acknowledges that that the partnership with NGOs has improved the status of primary education in India, it also observes that:
> '…much more can be accomplished if the adoption program is widened and effective partnership and support programme is implemented so that Municipal Schools can have the facilities which an ideal school should have.' (Covering letter from BMC of Proposal for PP Policy for MCGM Schools, 2007)

Hence, in order to facilitate a more efficient partnership, as stated earlier in the report, the Education Department, under the guidance of the Deputy Municipal Commissioner (DMC), a Public- Private Participation Cell was established in November 2006. The Education Department was re-organized as a 'single line structure with a unity of command with a single window system' facilitating an interface with NGOs and the corporate bodies desirous of participating in the programme. The PPC is expected to manage all non-government initiatives, including coordination with NGOs, corporate and individuals and function as the public information and dissemination wing of the Education Department.

As part of the new strategy, the BMC also decided to re- structure its School Adoption Program, the objective of which was to '…ensure that all actions taken by the BMC, its staff and private agencies are in the best interest of the beneficiaries of the school that is its students.' The following three types of programme were initially visualized:
- The School Adoption Program required the concerned non government agency to take up the complete responsibility for all operational and academic activities for a period of 5-10 years. The BMC was to continue its existing pattern and level of financial allocation, while the non- government agency was to contribute additional resources as and when necessary. A school Management Committee was to be responsible for oversight of activities and budget.

- The School Partnership Program was aimed at managing contribution from trusts or corporations for joint upgrading of primary schools. This could range from infrastructure provision to establishment of Balwadis and provision for extra curricular activities. Again while the agreement was to be for a period of 5-10 years the activities were to be managed by the school management committee. The BMC would continue to maintain the current levels of expenditure while the non- government agency would make expenses as and when required.

- The School Support Programme was to support one time requirements and activities from a given list and was also open to individuals besides Trusts, NGO and the corporate sector.

True to its practice of involving the NGOs, the DMC called for a 'consultative meeting' of a large number of NGOs, in which he formally announced the setting up of the PPC and its proposed role. The immediate reaction of the NGOs was mixed. While some saw potential merit in the proposed approach others were concerned about the tangible hint of centralization in the process. They also felt that the cell would not be in touch with the realities of the field situations. Until now the CDO appears to have been a critical link and the human face of the project and a dilution of the CDO's role, they apprehended, would not be conducive to the programme. One of the NGOs also pointed out that with about 1200 schools, more than 0.5 million children and almost 200 NGOs in the loop, it may be difficult for the BMC to manage this large data base and relationship through a single cell. Some of these NGOs hence came together and formed a Forum to dialogue with the BMC on the proposal. The NGOs concern was that with the proposed changes, while decisions would be centralized, the list of activities planned for partnership would end up being a 'shopping list' for the schools. Further, as the BMC itself had taken a decision to set up 84 English medium schools and was itself supplying a long list of items, a partnership with the NGOs for similar outputs appeared to be redundant.

The NGO Forum itself however, faced problems because of a difference of opinion amongst its members. While some of the NGOs gave conditional support, others rejected it outright because they thought that the BMC-NGO partnership should be as stakeholders in the process of providing quality education and not as providers of items and human resource as dictated by the BMC. Some of the NGOs were also apprehensive that this could provide an opportunity for the big corporate players or large NGOs to hijack municipal resources and would also lead to exclusion of the poor and the marginalized. There were also several concerns related to legality of clauses in the policy and potential issues of accountability. Subsequently, after the sudden death of the person who had assumed leadership in the Forum, its activities almost came to a standstill.

Besides the proposed policy was leaked out to the media and there was a clash between some of the Corporators and the DMC with the former accusing the BMC of introducing the concept of privatization through the full Adoption Model. Some of the NGOs interviewed were of the opinion that while the DMC apparently appeared to be promoting a decentralized structure, in realty it has become more centralized. In the process the DMC had managed to annoy both the Corporators as well as the teachers Union. Beside, the team that he has constituted to implement the structure, they felt, did not have adequate capacity and was also steeped in 'red tapism'. The staff of the municipal schools themselves also appear to be somewhat apprehensive of the new set up on the grounds that the NGOs selected to support the school may not be always interested, especially if it was a material support and the NGO itself was located at a distance from the school.

However, the long discussions and dialogues as well media debate had some impact on the BMC and some of the controversial clause of total adoption was dropped. The final proposal submitted to the Municipal Commissioner for approval in March 2007 was restructured and a new programme titled as the 'Public Partnership Policy' was drafted, still largely based on the earlier Adoption Policy. The policy document defines the

objectives and functions of the PPP Cell and the two types of partnership programme proposed, ie. the (i) Educational Partnership Program which includes two sub- projects :(a) Partnership with BMC and (b) Partnership with BMC and the Community; and the (ii) Educational Support Program , which again is subdivided into (a) Support to BMC schools and (b)Support from BMC Education. The new proposal however, is yet to be approved and implemented, pending which the old projects have so far only been given verbal approval, on the basis of the credibility of the NGO. Hence, at the time of this research, there was a general air of uncertainty and confusion prevailing amongst both the NGOs as well as the BMC.

4. SHAPING OF THE RELATIONSHIP

4.1 SHAPING OF THE RELATIONSHIP: FROM INFORMAL TO FORMAL

DSS is not only one of several NGOs working in the education sector in Mumbai but is also one of many working in partnership with the BMC. As such, its relationship has evolved within the framework of BMC's overall policy and programme support, and to some extent, in relation to the NGO sector as a whole.

4.1.1 Launch of DSS and informal relationship with the Colaba Municipal School

DSS has been interacting with the BMC from the time that it was established in 1988-89 when it took a conscious decision to support out- of- school children to access the government school network rather than running parallel institutions of its own. This in turn meant understanding the dynamics of the education system within the municipal corporation on one hand and building a relationship with the local municipal schools on the other. When DSS launched its activities it observed that the NFE classes being run by the municipal corporation had no literacy component as they were using the 'play-way' method of teaching. DSS therefore, designed its own curriculum based on literacy and adapted from the syllabus of class I to IV of the municipal schools in Mumbai but telescoped to be completed in 2 years. The emphasis was on reading and writing, with the children being taught languages, math, science and personal hygiene. DSS also used the prescribed text books of the municipal schools. Thus, aiming at the next generation of learners, DSS set up NFE centres within slum communities adapting the curriculum of the municipal school and entirely funded by individual and private institutional donors. Hence, while full fledged interactions with the municipal system as a whole happened only a few years later, an alignment with the overall teaching environment as well as more focused contact with the Colaba Municipal School (CMS) was initiated around 1990 itself when the first batch of students from the NFE centres were ready to enter into mainstream schools.

DSS's interaction with the school at that point of time was thus, informal and limited to the role of an active facilitator between the school and the parents, primarily assisting the latter in admissions and subsequently, following up on the performance of the children and tracking them in case of frequent or prolonged absence from school. By 1992 DSS had sufficiently established its credibility with CMS to engage in quarterly meetings with all the language medium principals and teachers to '…crosscheck the regularity and performance of the children in the school.' (Annual Report, 1992-93). Interestingly, its activities however, were confined to a single school and continued to be so till about 2005. Activities were also limited to the level of the CDO and the Head Teacher of the school, rather that the BMC as an organization *per se.*

Subsequently, a critical point of negotiations with the BMC was to persuade the latter to do away with the mandatory requirement of a birth certificate for admission to municipal schools. Most of the children in the NFEs were born at home or had migrated from other States and hence did not posses valid birth certificates. After prolonged and intense negotiations, the BMC apparently passed an order allowing admissions without birth certificates. But DSS does not claim exclusive credit for this success as :

> '…we do not know if this was due to our influence alone and if we can claim the credit. Actually we were often part of joint meetings with other NGOs and the BMC where these issues were discussed, so we may have contributed in some way.' (Director, DSS in an interview with the researcher)

By 1994 DSS had thus, begun to ensure that about 400 children on an average were admitted into CMS and had established an informal relationship with the school. There was also no apparent conflict between the NGO and the school, because while the school benefited from the additional enrolments, the NGO was moving a tentative step closer to its goal of ensuring that all the children went to school.

4.1.2 Building inroads into the municipal school system through school support activities and networking

Within the first few years of its establishment DSS observed that the drop out rates were continuing to grow and by 1992 realised that facilitating children to enter mainstream schooling vis-à-vis municipal school was not adequate by itself. In fact, the process had to be closely supported with other interventions and incentives that would allow the child to sustain in school. It was thus, compelled to intensify its activities with both the children and the school and over the next few years evolved a mix of teaching and extra curricular activities to sustain the interest of the children.

Although still informal in nature, by virtue of the rapport that DSS had by then build with the Head Teacher and staff of BMC as well as the concerned CDO, DSS started Study Classes in 1993 for children who were already in school but were finding it difficult to follow the course of the study because most of them were first generation learners. While a number of these classes came to be again located within the slum communities, by then the relationship with CMS had strengthened sufficiently for the school to allow DSS to run some of its NFE and Study Classes within the school premises after the regular school hours. Permission to do so was given by the CDO and dittoed by the Head Teacher.

Art and craft, educational excursions, libraries, collective celebrations of festivals and days of national importance were the other activities introduced for both an overall development of the children as well as to ensure their continuous interest in the classes and school. Although almost all these activities were undertaken outside CMS, the impact on the children who were enrolled into the school was visible enough for the school to provide informal and low level support to DSS's activities.

Interestingly, DSS's did not restrict its interactions to the Education Department within the BMC but mobilized the Health Department to organize periodic immunization camps in slums where it worked. While this provided an added input for the communities, for BMC itself, perhaps the incentive was the support it received in fulfilling its annual immunisation targets. At the same time DSS graduated to interacting with the

concerned Administrative Officer, primarily through NGO collectives and forums, working in the same area as DSS.

The Coordination Committee for Vulnerable Children (CCVC) was one such forum. And since as early as 1990 DSS had become a member of CCVC for ward 'A' of the city, where its own activities were focused at that time. The CCVC was a coalition of NGOs formed with the objective of improving coordination amongst the NGOs working with street and working children and negotiate with the government agencies, primarily the BMC and the law enforcing agencies, for various facilities and services. Supported by UNICEF, initially meetings were held regularly to discuss common problems and strategies, including issuing identity cards to street children and access to a mobile medical van. The CCVC is also reported to have interacted with the Minister for Education, Education Secretary and Chairperson of the BMC Education Committee to negotiate for various facilities and resolve issues related to the care and education of the children in the slums and the streets. Within the CCVC, DSS took on the responsibility for developing the syllabus for non- formal education for the organizations within the Committee. Thus, within a span of ten years by 1999-2000, DSS had firmly established itself within the framework of the activities of CMS and had become known to the BMC as a credible organization working with slum and street children.

While, as reported by the Director and other staff, DSS did face delays and procedural difficulties in obtaining sanctions for activities within the school, overall the grassroots functionaries and the Head teacher were supportive of its work. The Director of DSS observed that at the time when DSS had initiated the school support activities both the Education Officer and the concerned Beat Officer were all very co-operative.

> 'They even visited our project site and I was fortunate that the EO recognized the work. The person in-charge of the SAP, the Chief Community Development Officer, was also very supportive. And so was the DMC. But the EO played the most critical role.'

The Director added that at that time the EO had been '…given sufficient powers by the DMC unlike now.' The fact that the relationship at that period did not have any funding implication for the BMC and on the other hand was bringing in resources, may have been a determining factor for the acceptance of DSS.

4.1.3 Recognition of DSS NFE course
Simultaneously, during the same period DSS began to build up the credibility of its students with the municipal schools. In 1993-94 the NGO had initiated a process of evaluating the performance of the children form its centres by the District Resource Unit of the Pune based State Resource Unit - Indian Institute of Education. In the initial years DRU awarded certificates grading the level of literacy and thus, formally acknowledging the students as literate. Subsequently, in 1997 after much dialogues and discussions with the BMC, the latter itself began to evaluate the students who completed the NFE course administered by DSS on the basis of an examination. The BMC conducts exams for the DSS children in three subjects – Maths, Hindi and General Knowledge - over a period of three days and an assessment mark-sheet is issued similar to the one issued to the regular children. This provides '…credibility to the certificate awarded to the children after the final evaluation' (Annual Report 1996-97).

A second batch of students were evaluated the next year and this time DSS pursued BMC to award mark sheets to the children to enable them to not only see their level of performance, but also continue their education at a later stage anywhere in Maharashtra

and join vocational training. Thus, children are now enrolled at the primary section of BMC schools on the basis of DSS evaluation and recommendation. At the secondary level they are allowed to sit for entrance examinations at the appropriate level to gain admissions into the BMC schools. Besides, children referred to by DSS do not need to produce documents like birth certificates, etc. This was a first in the history of the BMC-NGO relationship and the process continued for quite a number of years.

Right from the inception of the NFE Programme, the children from all NFE centres were encouraged to sit for the appropriate level of exam conducted by the BMC and every year DSS has reportedly notched up a relatively good record of admissions and also supported the children to sustain in the formal system at least for a few years (Annual Reports 1989-2006). Thus, not only did the DSS-BMC relationship move a step higher to the level of the EO and the AO, but it was also successful in bringing about a small but strategic change in the policy, again without any cost implications for the BMC.

4.1.4 From informal school support activities to a formal School Support Project
1999-2000 was a watershed in the relationship between DSS and the BMC for after years of working closely with CMS it saw the NGO becoming a formal part of the school, albeit in '…a small way', vis-à-vis the launch of the School Support Activity Project (Annual Report 1999-2000). Although the NGO had been closely associated with CMS since the time that its first batch of NFE students were enrolled in the school, it was largely in an 'external capacity'. However, DSS was convinced that to bring about a lasting change in terms of reducing the number of children staying out of school, supportive services from within the school was necessary. Hence, DSS's aim was to clearly complement the inputs of the school in order to make it more attractive to the students.

> 'The aim of working so closely with the school, where DSS enrols maximum number of children every year, was to complement the service offered by the school and create an interesting atmosphere, where children would be sustained once enrolled.' (DSS, 1999-2000)

In the initial years support was provided to children from class I and II of the Hindi and Marathi medium schools located within CMS and covered around 2000 children. Support itself was of various kinds, focusing on activities for the students, facilitating interface between the parents and the school as well as recognizing the efforts of the teachers of CMS itself. While, activities included organizing recreation groups and competitions for the smaller children and also library classes for students of class III and IV, on the other the children were also organized to manage the activities themselves. At the same time it encouraged and supported the parents to attend meetings in school by not only providing them with information but also facilitated in the formation of parents committees to liaise between the community and the school. In all this, DSS worked closely with the staff of CMS and oriented them to the proposed Support Programme and DSS's own role therein. The NGO also organized a felicitating function for teachers. Apparently, all this led to the establishment of a 'good rapport' with the school (DSS, 1999-2000).

In subsequent years the support expanded in terms of coverage as well as number and types of activities. DSS opened a *Balwadi* within the premises of CMS in 2001, in a room provided free of rent and rightly envisaging that the children who came here as well as their parents would over a period of one year become familiar with the school environment and hence would be encouraged to join the formal school in the next year.

The *Balwadis* run in three batches and continue to this day and has given some leverage to DSS within CMS. Besides, DSS ran an innovative pre- school campaign known as *Vasantika Varg*. Organized for a period of two months it helped in enrolling children into the municipal school as well as DSS's own *Balwadis*.

Other activities centred on art competitions and outings for the students, together with the CMS school teachers. Language, Maths, Science, Value Education workshops are also organized from time to time. In 2001 DSS appointed an Art teacher in CMS to give special inputs to some of the talented children and painted the classrooms with attractive murals. An added service offered was to track the children who are absent for a prolonged stretch of time and bring them back to the school. In 2001[10] DSS introduced a school bus service - on payment of a nominal amount - to ensure that children from relatively distant communities could regularly attend CMS.

In 2002-03, DSS started activities in the primary section of the English Medium school when it was observed that an increasing number of children were seeking admission in the English medium classes. In fact the Principal of CMS approached DSS for support and as a first activity DSS appointed 6 teachers to teach class I-III as it was agreed that the primary classes– especially class I, II and III -should be the priority. The curriculum was planned with the Head Teacher of the school and this is a major exercise which has become a regular feature at the beginning of each new year. Subsequently, the facilities of Study Classes and Library facilities were extended to the English Medium School similar to the Hindi and Marathi mediums. It is interesting to note, that by 2003-04 DSS had managed to motivate the CMS teachers to conduct the Library classes on their own, instead of depending on Children under DSS supervision. However, in some classes like in class IV where the teachers were still reluctant, DSS continued with the earlier arrangement. Thus, DSS is now single handedly running the entire primary section of the English Medium school and has 8 full time teachers taking classes in two sessions.

In early 2006 DSS initiated similar support activities with another school - Janabai and Madhavrao Rokade Municipal School, located in Ward 'B', thus finally breaking its one (unintended) school policy. A similar programme and intervention is being followed in the new school.

DSS has a dedicated team that is deputed to implement and monitor all activities within the two schools under the School Support Scheme (which is also now called the School Adoption Programme). Besides, as stated earlier DSS also sends full time teachers on the request of the school authorities wherever there is a gap, as also full time counselors. At times DSS has also been instrumental in negotiating and mobilizing the Education Department of the BMC to provide teachers to the said schools. DSS works closely with the CMS staff and has established a good rapport through initial orientations and regular meetings.

Thus, DSS runs Balwadis; Remedial Classes; Library; Recreational Activities; Workshops for Joyful Learning; Competitions; Elementary Classes; Scholarship classes; Nani Kali[11] (a sponsored programme for 200 children) within the BMC school premises.

---

10 The School Bus service was actually launched in 1998 and for children from communities where DSS had a presence and for the initial 3 years the response was good.

11 Nani Kali is a sponsorship Programme started in 1996 jointly by the K.C. Mahindra Education Trust and Naandi Foundation. It focuses on the education of the under-privileged girl child in India

DSS has also provided full time teachers as well as a *Hamal (*cleaner cum water carrier), to run the English medium classes in CMS. BMC in turn started similar classes for the education of the girl child and provided space for the *Balwadi*.

All this is however, expected to change when the proposed the proposed Public Partnership Policy comes into effect.

4.1.5 NFE centres under the Mahatma Phule Programme: Establishment of a funding relationship
In 2001 the Government of Maharashtra launched the Mahatma Phule Hami Yojana, an education guarantee scheme and DSS for the first time decided to access government funds by joining the programme. Until, the engagement with the Mahatma Phule Programme DSS had only had a working relationship with the BMC and received no funds from them. After discussions with the concerned Community Development Officer of the BMC's Education Department (Ward A, B C and D) DSS commenced work and opened 32 NFE centres. The BMC provided a 10 day initial training for all concerned teachers and DSS also attended several meetings called by BMC to discuss the funding and implementation modalities. However, although the NGO had received verbal approval of its project, the funds were finally received only 2 years later in 2003.

The Mahatma Phule project is the Education Guarantee Scheme of Maharashtra and contracts are awarded to NGOs for periods of two years. It is expected that in these two years the NGO completes the syllabus of classes I-IV and the children are facilitated to appear for the annual exams and mainstreamed into regular schools. Mahatma Phule is now part of the SSA Programme. This is the third year in running and every year a fresh contract is drawn with DSS. As reported by the Director, DSS, was reluctant to enter into a third year contract but BMC forced them to do so as there were no NFE centres in some of the Wards in the city (A, B, C, and E Wards). With this DSS's geographical coverage has expanded to cover more wards.

These centres are run on the same pattern as DSS's other centres, the only difference being that part of the funds for the centres came from BMC and DSS had to send in periodic monitoring reports to the BMC. DSS reported that while procedural requirements and compliances were different and difficult as compared to the NFEs run through other donors, there was no other difference between the two differently funded categories of NFEs and all the centres were located in the community. The funds were however inadequate to implement the project the way that DSS wanted and hence it had to cover the gap with funds from its own resources. The fund itself was routed from the Government of India through the State government and the BMC.

4.1.6 Graduation to a higher level of relationship: SSA and the Government of India
In June 2007 DSS opened a new chapter in its relationship with the State's approval of its establishing and running NFE centres under the SSA Programme and to be funded by the Government of India, instead of the Government of the State of Maharashtra. Although the proposal was submitted in early 2005, it took more than two years to sign the contract.

The move to shift from the State to the central government for funds under SSA was a studiously planned one and the reason was clearly the higher funding norms. The State was committed to providing a uniform amount of Rs. 1500 per child to all the NGOs,

whereas the Government of India had agreed to a higher amount (Rs. 2266), although this was far less than the amount that DSS had requested. Since now they had greater SSA funds from the Central government '…we have opted out of the Mahatma Phule Programme as that has less money and more headaches!' (Director DSS in an interview with the Researcher). However, at the time of the interviews the programme was yet to take off and as yet there was no clarity on the part of the NGO about the funding and reporting channels.

The relationship between DSS and BMC evolved through a process that appears to have been strategically planned by the former and facilitated to some extent by policy decisions of the latter. In the initial years of DSS activities, and to some extent, even after it launched the School Support Activities, most of the onus of building up the relationship appears to have been on the NGO. While there was a close interaction with individual schools and teachers any kind of formal collaborations or interventions meant long negotiations on the part of the NGO. Besides, most of the resources also came from the NGO, with the State contribution only being in terms of the time and space in the school.

Fig 3: DSS and BMC: Evolution of relationship

Characteristics of the relationship

Informal alignment with teaching environment of municipal school

Informal interactions with Head Teacher of Colaba School/Concerned CDO

Informal: meeting between teachers/parents

Requests from schools to support teaching in primary sect

NGO trusted as credible organisation by BMC management

| Informal: Study Class within premises of Colaba Municipal School | Established relations with higher level off. (AO/EO) through NGO forums | Formal/non-funded School Support Activities | Formal /funded NFE prog with state gov. | Formal/ funded SSA with Govt. of India |

1988 ⟶ 2007

NGO Outputs

| NFE children mainstreamed into municipal schools | Waiver of birth certificates./ formal ass. by BMC of NFE students | Increase in % enrollment of children into municipal schools | Decrease in dropout rates | 25,000children mainstreamed into formal schools |

4.2 PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE PURPOSE OF THE RELATIONSHIP

4.2.1 DSS – an opportunity to further its goal
DSS has a two-fold purpose for entering into a relationship with the State and BMC: The informal interactions were primarily to get access to the municipal school system and subsequently, to facilitate in creating a better environment to sustain the children within the system; while the formal engagement was to strengthen the issue of access and quality on one hand while at the same time putting available government resources to effective and efficient use. It was this principle which also often prompted DSS to respond positively to BMC request for specific support, for instance to organize study classes for weak students or to fill up in case of shortage of staff.

While both the chief functionaries of DSS were convinced that DSS had to engage with the State at some level their response to this necessary relationship was marginally different, perhaps coloured by their own personalities, individual experiences and the difference in the profile of the Pune and Mumbai project - one catering to a extremely migrant population and the other to relatively more stable communities. Thus, the President of DSS was of the view that NGOs need to be with schools in order to facilitate them as well as pressurize them to show results.

DSS however, admitted that there were problems at this level because at times teachers are often against NGO intervention for they feel that this is an unnecessary interference. They also feel that NGOs use influence to intervene in the schools. Besides, not only are the State policies not always explicit about the nature of support from NGOs, but often the government officials are reluctant to seek or take NGO support and hence do not take pains to understand the NGOs' role. Besides, problems also arise because the differences in the perception and attitude of the State. The Project Coordinators of DSS were of the opinion that although the State was also focusing on the goal of making every child go to school, they were not making the same efforts as the NGOs.

> 'They do not have the kind of commitment, attachment, and attitude like us; nor do they undertake such meticulous planning to implement the programme like we do. We go to the dirtiest slums and work with the dirtiest children. But the government officials are not so particular.' (Project, Coordinators, DSS)

The President of DSS was, however, convinced that while at the individual level the government staff understood the ethos of NGO interventions it is at the system level that gaps exist. In fact, she was of the opinion that individuals, rather than institutions, appear to matter in the government. So although there are frustrations in the relationship '…if we have to institutionalize an approach we need to involve the State.' And the fact that the system does not work always is not frustrating '…because at least our work benefits the children.' (Interview with the President, DSS). The Director on the other hand was more firm in her belief that the NGOs and the BMC have a mutual need for support, hence there should not be much of a problem to interact. This view point is perhaps fuelled by the understanding that DSS did not want to set up parallel school system. At the same time, she like the President of the organization also believed that in the present scenario whether it is the BMC, the State or the Centre, good relationships at the individual level appeared to matter rather than at the system level.

4.2.2. BMC: not a legal requirement but a convenient arrangement

For BMC a partnership with NGOs is not a legal requirement. However, since the NGOs themselves have been traditionally interested in working with the municipal school system, '…we have been interacting with them' (DMC, BMC). The relationship hence appears to have continued more as a matter of convenience than a necessity on the part of the BMC. Hence, over the years the BMC has been engaging NGOs in various interventions like managing NFE centres under the Mahatma Phule project, running special programme for the physically challenged as well as the girl child, the School Adoption Programme, etc., although the NGOs contribution in monetary terms has been relatively less. However, the DMC observed that the BMC-NGO partnership so far has not been very 'systematic' and there were complaints from both the NGOs as well as the schools. According to the DMC, while the schools complained of undue interference from NGOs impacting on their work time and the style of functioning, many of the NGOs on their part had problems with the CDOs and also levelled charges of corruption against them.

This feeling of a partnership based on convenience rather than a necessity was also implied by other officials at the management level, and it was clear that they felt that the BMC had both resources as well as had adequately qualified teachers to run the show on their own. In fact an official in the newly set up PPP Cell stated emphatically that the BMC teachers were more qualified and therefore the NGOs cannot claim superiority over the former in terms of quality. On the other hand the NGO could provide value addition by using their own funds (generated from elsewhere) to connect and communicate with the community. 'This will be complimentary to our work and could mobilize to get the children together' (PPC). Similarly, a Research Officer in the SAA cell of BMC stated that even before the SSA project was initiated the BMC used to run NFE centres with the help of CDOs and apparently about 2000 such centres were run without NGO support. At the same time she acknowledged that working with the NGOs had an advantage because they could build a rapport with the community. The Research Officer added that '… our office (BMC) cannot go to the slums in Dharavi and work well with the community, but the NGOs can'.

At the level of the school the purpose of the relationship appeared to be more for practical reasons, wherein all the teachers and Head Teachers interviewed were unanimous in their opinion that there were several advantages in working with DSS: they manage the shortfall in teachers, organize Study Classes for the poor performers, undertake the complete responsibility for educational visits and picnics in terms of organizing, accompanying the children and also organizing funds and also responds to specific requirements like providing cleaners for the part of the school where the English medium classes are run by DSS. Although DSS has been allowed by the BMC to not undertake any administrative work, one of the Head Teachers' of the BMC admitted that:

> '…they (DSS) do help us informally when we need some assistance.. We (the BMC teachers) are under pressure to complete the syllabus and in addition we also have a lot of administrative work. Therefore we are unable to focus on slow learners. DSS also helps us out with enrolments.'

The teacher summed up the importance of the DSS-municipal school relationship by stating that if DSS was not there they (the teachers) themselves would have been in trouble, because in away DSS was running the entire English medium classes for them as well as also taking the extra Study Classes

4.3 FORMAL RULES THAT GOVERN THE RELATIONSHIP

DSS has formal contracts with the BMC for the School Adoption and the Mahatma Phule Education Guarantee Programme. It was also in the process of signing a formal contract with the Government of India at the time of the research.

4.3.1 Informal and based on interpersonal relationships
When DSS first established contact with BMC and its schools the relationship was informal and limited to facilitating admissions in school. This status continued even when DSS started to provide support services to the children outside the school premises and outside school hours. It was only when DSS actually started to intervene within the school in terms of organizing competitions and excursions that it had to obtain permissions from the school authorities. The process of obtaining permission required an application indicating the nature of the activity proposed as well as the fact that the expenses would be met by the NGO. Thereafter the application was forwarded by the Head Teacher to the CDO who obtained a formal approval from the AO. While the AO was the final authority, the success of the process was largely dependent on the NGOs relationship with the CDO, who could pressurize the Head Teachers as well as influence the AO.

4.3.2 School Adoption Programme and a standardized 'agreement'
Subsequently, since the time that the school support activities were formalized under the School Adoption Programme, DSS has had to follow a simple and standardized and format based process designed by the BMC. The process includes an application on an annual basis, requesting permission to 'adopt' a specific school or schools and indicating the nature of activities and an approximate budget. The application format is obtained from the office of the BMC and includes a brief note recommending that the NGOs should refer to a booklet prepared by the Education Department of the BMC for details about the Programme, its objectives, the activities covered and the related rules and regulations.

The NGO also has to indicate its legal status in terms of registration with the Commissioner of Charities, although such a registration itself is not compulsory for obtaining approval under the Programme. Besides, the NGO has to give details of its own constitution in terms of the number and names of its office bearers and include any relevant annexure. DSS indicated that they were meticulous in including as much information and as many annexures as possible, in order to ensure that approval was granted quickly:

> 'When we are submitting applications for School Adoption Programme or
> permission to let the children sit for exams we always attach the last
> year's permission, because this sets a precedent and make it easier for
> the Government to approve our application.'(Director DSS).

The Director indicated that the process of obtaining permission for the exams has become smoother over the years only because they have now become familiar with the requirements. But, she observed that there was no ownership on the part of the school and there were many gaps between what the government says and does:

> 'I want the government to take up the ownership. It is not our job to run
> the schools. The current DMC said that the BMC should be responsible
> for the education of the children and I tend to agree with him. However I

am really upset with his attitude towards the NGOs. He seems to believe
that the NGOs are dispensable and are only creating a nuisance.'

Interestingly the application itself has a clause wherein the NGO undertook to '…abide by the rules and regulations…' of the education departments of the BMC and to carry out the project '…under the supervision of officers of the BMC.' The application is signed by the nodal officer of the NGO.

The approval letter from BMC is a simple one page ore- printed format filling in the number and name of the schools that have been approved for 'adoption' by the NGO and the period fro which the approval has been granted and signed by the Project Co-ordinator, Community Development Project..

When the proposed Public Partnership Policy comes into effect, instead of an agreement the BMC will sign a MoU with the concerned NGO. The MoU, while defining the limits of the NGO intervention from a pre-determined list of activities, also indicates that to perform the stated activities the NGO is expected to constitute a School Management Committee which will be authorized to take decisions regarding the NGO's activities and also in monitoring it. It also clearly indicates that the NGO will not be allowed to '…claim total adoption status', but could display its sign board in the school. Interestingly, the proposed MOU does not define the roles and responsibilities of the BMC.

4.3.4 Agreement under the Mahatma Phule Programme

Under the Mahatma Phule Programme DSS, as one of the 116 NGOs currently implementing the porgramme, had to execute a more elaborate and formal agreement on a government 'Stamp paper'. A vertical contract, it largely defines the nature of centres to be opened and the funding norms and rules to be followed by the NGO. The agreement was formally signed by the Director of DSS and the AO of the concerned ward on behalf of the Assistant Commissioner, BMC.

The agreement sets down the activities to be undertaken and the rules and regulations to be followed by both the contacting parties in several clauses. The first part of the agreement indicates the criteria for locating the centres, the minimum and maximum size of the centre, the prescribed hours of teaching per day and the number days per month to be allocated for classes and counselling as well as the profile of the volunteer to be hired for the centre. Significantly, the agreement recommends that priority should be given to a female teacher-volunteer and that preferably to a local candidate. The volunteer is to be appointed on a contract basis and to be paid a prescribed amount as an honorarium. The payment of honorarium is however to be made on the basis of the number of students per centre, a cumbersome clause as the number of students is very flexible in the slums centres. In fact, DSS reported that the calculation of payments is so tedious, that while some NGOs are forced to fudge the accounts, others like them are reluctant to even enter into such a contractual arrangement.

Another set of critical clauses concern the management of funds. While separate accounts for the project are to be maintained, DSS has to submit regular physical and financial statements and money is to be released on the basis of these statements. An amount of Rs. 16000 is fixed for each centre with a class size of 20 students and varies as the number of students increase or decrease. The responsibilities of the BMC have been defined as the regular release of funds and the stopping the funding arrangements in case of a breach of contract. DSS on the on the other hand is expected to run the

centres as indicated and complete the curriculum in the stipulated time of two years. DSS is also expected to '…receive and follow the instructions/orders suggestions given by the supervisory staff of Education Department and give information about the progress of the educational programme from time to time.' (agreement document).

Thus, currently DSS is engaged with the government at different levels in Mumbai and Pune and this range from the use of space in municipal schools to School Support and Adoption Programme and running NFE centres under the Mahatma Phule Programme and SSA. DSS's strategy has to gain access to the school appears to have been to build on a relationship with selected number of schools, located in the vicinity of the community they work with. Constant interactions with the Head teachers and staff and one-time – support of various kinds for extra curricular events improved the rapport. The relationship in the early years hence, appears to have been informal and based on the goodwill of the Principal. While the onus of building the relationship was largely on DSS, the primary negotiator on the NGO's side was the head of the organization herself.

5. THE RELATIONSHIP IN PRACTICE

DSS's interacts with BMC at three levels: mostly at the level of the schools where interventions are focused; and to a lesser extent at the levels of the CDOs/ Beat Officer and the AOs who constitute the supervisory wing of the BMC and at the management level, i.e the EO and the DMC, where policy issues are addressed. The intensity and frequency of interactions are in turn different under various programme. While under the Mahatma Phule and the SSA programme, wherein DSS runs NFE centres, the interactions are minimum and limited to the approval of applications, submission of periodic reports on standardised formats and the dispersal of funds. There are also a few trainings and workshops which provide an opportunity for an interface between the NGO and the municipal corporation. Physical monitoring is almost non- existent, and tensions, if any, are primarily related to the release of funds. On the other hand more intense and frequent interface between BMC and DSS is affected through the School Support/Adoption Programme.

5.1 OPERATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP IN PRACTICE

5.1.1.Intense relationship at the school level
As indicated elsewhere in the report, DSS's first contact with the BMC was with the schools, which subsequently intensified in frequency and number of activities, targeting both the students and the teacher. While interviews with the staff and field visits to the two municipal schools where DSS runs its support programme indicate a cordial relationship, they also revealed the actual dynamics within the relationship at various stages of planning, implementation and monitoring of interventions. They revealed the emergence of a process of acceptance of DSS, built through need based support and a strong physical presence in the school.

Specific support activities are identified by DSS through discussions with the Head Teacher and the other staff and through its own observations of the performance of the children. Close interactions with the teachers in the municipal schools is maintained by the concerned Project Coordinator and his team of teachers and supervisors which helps in identifying the specific needs in the school. In the initial year of DSS's activities there was some resistance from the teachers as they were not convinced about the

usefulness of the NGO and its work. Subsequently however, when the teachers saw the results, specially, with the slow learners, they were more agreeable to DSS's presence. They realised that on their own they could not provide special attention to a group of eight to ten slow learners in a class of fifty to sixty students, but with DSS support these children could be helped to improve their performance and their own work then became easier. DSS also organizes face to face meeting between the parents and teachers are apparently willing to give time because a number of children in their class belong to this difficult group and would drop out of school if they are not constantly motivated.

Once the needs have been identified, with the consent of the Head Teacher, DSS submits a proposal and application to the AO through the CDO. A good inter- personal relationships with each of the concerned officials is a facilitating factor and DSS believes that it is more necessary to keep in touch with the grassroots functionaries, rather than the officials at higher levels, for whom DSS is one of a large number of NGOs. The strategy that DSS adopts is to allow the CDO to take credit for its activities and in the process obtain quick permission for interventions. Besides, the fact that DSS provides all necessary documents including additional documents like a report of the previous years work, duly signed by the Head Teacher also speeds up the process of approval of the Support /Adoption Programme. However, under the newly set up PPC, the application has to be submitted directly to the PPC. The implications of the new procedures are still to be tested, however currently the processing of applications has been delayed and DSS has started its support activities, on the bases of a verbal approval by the DMC.

Planning the activities is in reality the responsibility of DSS and monthly Programme are prepared by the concerned Project Coordinator and approved by the Head Teacher. Daily plans are also discussed with the teachers and apparently there is no interference from either the Head Teacher or the rest of the staff, and DSS has adequate space to plan and implement its agenda. However, most of the interchange and sharing of information is verbal. Administrative problems are discussed directly with the Head teacher and usually resolved at that level.

While interference is minimum, interactions too are limited, with both DSS and the municipal school teachers discharging their responsibilities without disturbing the others agenda. DSS stands in when a regular teacher is absent and also at times adjusts its own class timings at the request of the class teachers. Then again although DSS is not required to undertake any administrative responsibilities in the school, they do provide help when asked for by the Head Teacher. Interactions between the DSS and municipal school staff are however limited and need based with necessary information from the Education Department about changes in procedures and curriculum being channelled through the office of the Head Teacher. Some informal interactions take place in the staff rooms and during the breaks, when discussions are apparently around the major issue of enrolment and at time around methodologies. Any transfer of knowledge between the DSS and municipal school teachers is informal.

Monitoring, by the Head Teacher is minimum because of pressure of work on one hand and because of the level of confidence and trust that appears to have been established between the school and DSS on the other. In fact, the Head Teacher of one of the schools reported that the Director of DSS, visits them about twice a year and discusses the requirements of the school as well as the consequent plan of DSS orally, but does not give anything in writing. DSS also apparently does not submit any regular reports to the school. The school provides a list of students who need to be coached and the

apparently their responsibility ends there, although during the course of the interview one of the Head Teachers did voice the need to take regular stock of the progress of the NGO's work.

Monitoring by the Beat Officers, CDOs and AOs is also minimum and carried out as part of the regular monthly visits to the school. The previous Chief Community Development Officer of BMC stated that earlier the inputs form the BMC were '…basically cooperation and permission....' The BMC used the network of the CDOs to supervise the NGOs and interactions were informal. Apparently no supervision was required and the BMC used to only provide guidance from time to time. Individual NGOs would work with the respective CDOs at the ward level and every six months the CCDO held a meeting of all the NGOs and progress reports were submitted on a yearly basis. The CCDO concluded that they had no major problems with the NGOs.

> 'I took a different approach - focused on education and social issues and managed to bring about some change gradually. The biggest achievement was a decrease in the drop out rates.' (Ex CCDO, BMC)

The AOs on the other hand are more concerned with the work of the school as they feel this is their priority and what the NGO is doing is falls outside their own 'municipal' role. Besides, they also feel that the NGO may not like any interference from them. In fact they '…accept whatever they are doing as good - because of the NGOs at least the children are coming to school'. (AO, BMC). The AO's discussions with DSS have been limited to operational issues and the processing of approval applications. With the new policy even this limited interaction will apparently cease.

The Head Teacher or the class teacher is generally present during these visits and handles any awkward questions fielded by the Beat Officer, reflecting the supportive relationship between DSS and the school and also the fact that the school values the NGOs support. One of the Head Teachers stated that 'We have a good rapport and help each other but do not interfere.'[12]

Thus, DSS appears to have integrated well into the school system and is able to implement its supportive agenda. One of the Project Coordinator summed up the relationship by stating that a rapport with the school was in fact established long before they started to work with the School Adoption Programme. He believes that DSS gets tremendous cooperation from the school and BMC, primarily because '…we help them to enrol about 500-600 children on an average in a year. The schools need children and we 'supply' them.' He also observed that although DSS had to inform and take permission from the school head, they were '…like a family.'

5.1.2 Close relations with the BMC supervisory and management level
DSS prefers to engage with the BMC along the line of official protocol and follows the hierarchical line of the Head Master (HM) Community Development Officer (CDO), and Education Officer (EO) or now through the HM and EO to the PPC to get their work done. It approaches the Municipal Commissioner only as a last resort.[13] The Director,

---

12 One of the Head Teacher stated that in many instances they are not consulted about the involvement of NGOs in our school and often the NGOs would have obtained permission from the BMC to initiate work without the knowledge of the school.

13 DSS, along with a few other NGOs located in the premises of one of the Municipal School was planning to meet the Municipal Commissioner to negotiate to be allowed to retain their offices in the school.

DSS also believes that whether it is BMC, State or Centre, the NGO need to have good relationships with individuals. Citing evidence of the impact of such a relationship the Director stated:

> 'I do not have a written permission from PPC for the School, Support Programme for this year as yet. But I was told that since I was doing good work that I should continue with my Support activities. The official in charge of the PPC himself has seen our work and it should not be difficult to get approval. Besides the Colaba school has given us a good recommendation stating that they wanted DSS to continue work.'

Discussions with the Director and staff of DSS emphasised the importance of striking a relationship especially with the EO and the Chief Community Development Officer. The fact that the Chief Community Development Officer at that time was professionally trained from the same College of Social Work as the Director of DSS (and a contemporary), was an advantage in cementing the relationship with the BMC. However, with the setting up of the PPC not only has the role of the CDOs apparently been diluted, but the post of the CCDO also has been abolished or merged with the PPC.

DSS also stated that they generally had a cordial relationship with the EO and in the early years of the relationship the EOs played a critical role as they had been given sufficient powers by the DMC unlike now, when power has been centralized at the level of the DMC and through the PPC. However, building the relationship itself appears to have taken considerable time and strategy on the part of DSS and with every change in the EO they had to invest more time in establishing rapport (there have been five changes of EOs and four of DMCs, since DSS started its operations). However, if the new EO or DMC is an official promoted from the education department itself, then the task is easier. Moreover, it appears that the onus of establishing rapport was completely on the NGO. However, as DSS was conscious of the need for a good rapport at this level it consciously adopted a collaborative style of functioning and took efforts to build a relationship and avoided adopting a confronting style, unless circumstances forced them to do so.

The strategy appears to have yielded results. For instance DSS was allowed to run *Balwadis* within the premises of the municipal school soon after it started its formal Support Programme. DSS was able to get space after two years of working with the school and was able to convince the CDO who managed to get the approval. This rapport and understanding also helped DSS in firmly opting out of being involved in implementing the mid-day meal scheme and also undertaking administrative work in the school. Then again a one is to one relationship with the CDO and the AO also helps in speeding up permission for support activities. For instance DSS organizes educational visits for students, for which they have to take permission from the BMC. This takes time because of the procedures involved. But DSS stated that '…we have a few people in the BMC who are more helpful and hence we always take their help.' (Coordinator, DSS)

DSS however, anticipates some difficulties and delays now as the structure and systems have changed and they have to approach the PPC for permissions and approval. With the changes in the BMC such decisions are now in the hands of the EO and getting permission has become more difficult. For instance, in the current year DSS, like all other NGOs, is yet to receive approval for the School Adoption Programme. Whereas earlier they used to submit the applications in April every year and approval was given by June, in the current year no approval was received even by the middle of June.

However, DSS's credibility and rapport with the DMC has resulted in an oral permission, on the basis of which classes were initiated as scheduled.

5.1.3 Areas of tension

There are several operational difficulties typically encountered in any engagement with the State wherein rigidity of norms and procedures are major obstacles. For instance, DSS has to get permission on an annual basis for the School Adoption Programme. While this means a lot of time consuming procedures, it also means some amount of uncertainty in obtaining approvals and even though, DSS has funds from other sources, it cannot run programme until it obtains a formal approval from BMC. The process is tedious and includes the submission of an application in a prescribed format along with the proposal, budget and recommendation from the School Principal. Earlier, on its own initiative, DSS used to submit a recommendation letter from the Principal of the concerned school. However, this has now become a mandatory requirement. And until recently the application was routed through the CDO to the AO, and finally to the BMC. Now it goes directly from the NGO to the PP Cell. In the case of the NFE centres under SSA the application format is procured from the Urban Resource Centre (URC) or Zonal office of the BMC and submitted back to the URC. The URC then verifies and gives its approval on the basis of certain pre-determined criteria including the capacity of the NGO to sustain in case of delays in the release of funds. Site visits are also made to review facilities like building, etc. The application is then forwarded to the Ward Education Committee consisting of the local Corporator who is the President of the Committee, the Head Teacher, a representative of the parents, a woman representative, an ST/SC member and a retired teacher. The Committee in turn gives its recommendation and sends it to the District level office of the SSA, situated within the BMC and the final approval is then given by the EO in the BMC. Funds are however, directly disbursed by the head office to the NGO on a quarterly basis.[14]

Besides organizing the children to appear for exams every year required a lot of effort with one staff from DSS being exclusively assigned to this task. DSS had obtained permission from the BMC to allow the children to appear for the BMC school exams at relevant levels. In fact, they had also suggested that all children studying in the SSA funded NFE centres should be made to appear for the municipal school exams as this would provide them with standardized mark sheets which could be useful for admissions even elsewhere. However, DSS reported that the NGOs generally face problems because there is a shortage in the supply of mark-sheets or at times even the teachers refuse to sign on the mark sheets since the child is not from that school or has not been taught by the concerned teacher.

Besides, while permission to allow the children to appear for exams has to be taken every year in December, the children, who were often from migrant families, were not available during the scheduled time for the exams. DSS has been trying to negotiate for more flexibility in the exam schedule and trying to convince the BMC to allow the children to ideally appear for the exam in February every year so that they start attending the mainstream school immediately after in March. This minimizes the risk of the children disappearing in the interim period if the exams are taken much earlier as is currently being done. However, the BMC has not so far yielded to this request and DSS

---

14 The EO is the sanctioning authority fro funds under Rs. 1 lakh, the DMC for funds upto Rs. 10 lakhs (1 million), and the AMC for above 10 lakhs.

observed that many NGOs have withdrawn from the SSA because of rigidities and difficulties in running the programme.

But DSS has persevered and the school cooperates because '… we do all the work including fetching the writing paper and sealed question papers from the ward or appropriate office of the BMC' (director, DSS). DSS reported that the process of obtaining permission for the exams has become relatively smoother over the years only because they themselves have become familiar with it. But apparently there is no ownership on the part of the school and there are gaps between what the government says and does. Besides, some in the BMC also believe that the NGOs are dispensable and are only creating a nuisance.

> 'I want the government to take up the ownership. It is not our job to run the schools. The current DMC said that the BMC should be responsible for the education of the children and I tend to agree with him.' (Director DSS in interview with Researcher)

DSS also indicated that it finds it difficult to keep pace with the procedural and reporting requirements under Mahatma Pule and SSA. For one the BMC, as per general government rules wants DSS to focus on the Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe category of children, which is '…totally against our principles and beliefs'(Director DSS). On the other hand while reporting is lengthy and time consuming, funds are not only a problem in terms of delays but are also inadequate. Out of a total of an amazingly low amount of Rs, 800 per child per year, only Rs. 600 actually comes to the organization as the rest is deducted for books, teaching material and training which the BMC is supposed to provide. The reality however is that this part of the contract is never adequately fulfilled by the municipal corporation and the money too comes in after long delays.

Besides, the system is not always conducive to smooth functioning. For instance, the Principal of one of the schools in which DSS operates had retired some months back and has not been replaced as yet. DSS observed that often the teachers are promoted to the level of a Principal when they are on the verge of retirement and hence do not have much interest in improving the system. In fact, DSS observed that over the years there has been no positive change in the system and it was often quite 'frustrating', but as DSS is currently accepted and has established a comfortable working relationship with the BMC, they do not feel the '…need to rock the boat by getting into issues with the system.' (Programme Coordinator, DSS)

The President of DSS stated that the funding support given by the state was 'unreasonable', rigid and cumbersome. A little less than Rs. 14000 was given to each centre annually out of which on an average Rs. 1000 a month went as salary to the teacher! Besides, as the NFE centres witness a great amount of fluctuations in the number of children, it becomes tiresome for the NGO to keep track of the amount to be requisitioned from the corporation on the basis of number of children per month. Under Mahatma Phule the teacher is given Rs. 100 per child - again a calculation which is difficult to maintain given the fluctuating size of the centres. Though, it appeared (from discussions with the President, DSS) that the municipal corporation did not want the NGO to return the unspent money and in fact was not concerned about the NGO fudging the accounts to address this problem, DSS was morally bound not to adopt this practice. DSS itself has been able to overcome the low funding issues because it has other sources of funds and is able to give higher salaries to the teachers from its own

resources. Besides, it also runs several centres, thus, taking the benefit of the economy of scale. Hence, the reason that DSS accesses State funds in spite of their unattractiveness is the strong conviction that it is the right of the NGOs and the children for whom they work to access available government funds.

5.2 EMERGENCE OF NEW FORMS OF RELATIONSHIP

There have been two significant turning points in DSS's relationship with the BMC so far: the first was when it entered into a formal relationship to implement the School Adoption Programme and manage the NFE centres under the Mahatma Phule Programme and the second, and more recent one, when it opted to access SSA funds from the Government of India rather than the State.

The formal approval of its School Support/Adoption Programme was in away a continuation of its already existing activities and interactions with the school. While, it brought about a relative sense of certainty and continuity, the other major changes in the functioning of DSS and in its relationship with BMC were related to the procedural requirements of annual approvals and reporting against activities and budget. It also meant streamlining and strategizing its own work on a more long term basis and the recruitment of additional staff. Since the formalisation of the relationship was initially with the same school where DSS had already established its credibility, the change in status did not lead to any significant tensions at the level of the school.

The more significant change is DSS's recent and successful conclusion of its negotiation with the Government of India for support under the SSA programme. The reason why DSS chose to switch partnership was the better funding support provided by the Government of India. The State Government, besides being compelled to sanction only Rs. 1500 per child, similar to what was being allowed for all NGOs, was also not regular in dispersing the funds. On being advised by one of the Government of India official's at an informal meeting, the Director submitted a proposal to the GOI for opening up centres catering to a total of 1500 children and at the rate of Rs. 3500 per child for a period of three years. Intense groundwork carried out by the Director herself and meticulous documentation together with contacts with specific officials in the Government of India, apparently helped in processing the documents, although it still took almost two and a half years to get the project sanctioned. The process was channelled through the State '…but I used to copy all correspondence to the Central government also in this way keeping them informed.' (Director, DSS). Though approval was given for a lesser amount that requested for (Rs. 2266 per child against a request of Rs. 3500), DSS hopes to cover the gap through other resources. While, at the time of the interview DSS was not certain of the modalities related to channelling of the funds and reporting lines, the concerned staff in BMC, although informed and aware of the project did not seem disturbed of the new relationship. The NGO on the other hand is now in the processing of phasing out of the Mahatma Phule project, which has '…less money and more headaches.' (Director, DSS)

6. EFFECTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP

6.1 EFFECT ON PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

The DSS-BMC partnership itself has been influenced by two factors: one is the fact that it is part of a wider arrangement involving several other NGOs in the city; and the other is DSS's own focus on increasing enrolment and retention of children, rather than directly advocating for changes in government policies. Being part of a larger network has meant that DSS had to conform to common and standardized norms and procedures as prescribed by BMC, most of which, typical of a government project, were rigid in requirement. However, DSS did not have more than the usual share of problems and appears to have managed with meticulous documentation as well as following the accepted bureaucratic process of approvals and reporting. As such, the NGO obviously had to align its systems to the reporting requirements of the BMC. As the Director of DSS stated: 'I generally follow protocol and prefer to get my work done through official procedures. Hence I tend to follow the route of the HM, CDO, and EO or now through the HM and EO to the PPC.'

On the other hand the relationship conforms with DSS's goal of bringing and retaining more and more children into mainstream schools as reflected in the increasing number of children from DSS managed NFE centres that join the municipal schools every year: an impressive total of 25, 000 children since its inception, as reported by DSS. In fact, it was this contribution of DSS, which was a major reason for its acceptance by the municipal schools. Moreover, although there was rigidity in administrative norms, there was also considerable scope to innovate in terms of pedagogy. Hence, both within the NFE Programme as well as the School Adoption Programme DSS appears to have been able to operationalize its goal of quality education. At the same time DSS was also able to negotiate its own terms to some extent, for instance obtaining sanction to exclude the mid day meal component in its partnership programme as this was against its own principles. More significantly, DSS has been able to effect a smooth change from the State to the Central government under the SSA Programme, without so far apparently compromising its ongoing relationship with the BMC.

However, DSS's partnership with BMC to manage the primary section of the English medium school in CMS appears to have been more opportunistic and born out of a need to accommodate the BMC rather than as another means of fulfilling its basic goals and objectives. DSS justifies this engagement by stating that the increasing demand for English amongst the children from its own NFE centres prompted it to support the BMC in running these classes. The partnership itself has brought about an expansion in the structure of DSS in terms of number of staff, the level of qualification and experience as well as overall activities. At the time of the research it was obvious that DSS was facing some difficulty in engaging adequate number of teachers.

The BMC on the other hand, has seen greater changes than the NGO in its agenda as well as organizational structure because of its engagement with the NGO sector in Mumbai. Although, the changes cannot be exclusively attributed to DSS, the fact that it is part of the larger collective is of importance. The major programmatic impact has been on the introduction of community development as a core component and the critical positioning of NGOs to support the implementation of the component. Besides, from time to time the BMC has also been attempting to institutionalize the process of

consultations with NGOs on larger policy issues. This, in a way, contributed to the inclusion of Community Development Officers within the BMC organizational structure.

On the other hand, over the years, the engagement with the NGO sector appears to have reached to such proportions and levels that it seems to have become a point of tension at various levels. The PPC, though stated otherwise in policy documents, is a response to these tensions and an attempt to regulate the activities of the NGOs. It would appear that the BMC, is currently in a position where it cannot dispense with the NGOs, nor can it accept the sector in its current form and hence has brought about a significant change in its structure to exercise greater control.

6.2 EFFECT ON THE NGPA AGENDA

DSS's partnership with BMC has helped it in furthering its agenda of placing all out of school children in school. While, even the informal relationship in the early years of its activities had enabled it to facilitate the children to enter municipal schools, the formal contracts under SSA and Mahatma Phule Programme enabled DSS to widen its coverage. Moreover, the School Support Programme helped it to ensure better quality of education and consequently improved rates of retention. The DSS staff observes that there have been changes since the time they started their operations '…the most important being that the parents and children have become more aware of the need to be educated. This will have an effect on the next generation.' (Project Coordinators, DSS)

Until now, the partnership was designed to support DSS's agenda of mainstreaming out of school children into schools. Currently however, the agenda of all NGOs working with the Education Department of BMC, including DSS, is somewhat uncertain in terms of partnership, because of the dynamics generated by the concept of PPC vis à vis the partnership programme. While some NGOs stand firmly with the BMC and the new policy, another group is completely against it on the grounds that the proposed policy assigns a procurement role to the NGOs- providing human resource and material items-rather than the role of stakeholders in '…the process of ensuring Quality Education to students in Municipal School.' This group firmly believes that the primary responsibility for providing quality education is that of the BMC and this responsibility cannot be delegated or assumed by a private body.

DSS on the other hand, though initially sceptical about the proposed partnership policy, has chosen to take a neutral stand, as the Director does not want to upset the existing conducive relationship with BMC and instead would like to use the structure to further DSS's goal. Besides, after prolonged discussions over the past few months she feels that the DMC means well, is flexible and would support any NGO that is 'genuine'. According to DSS, the DMC perhaps wanted to weed out those NGOs who did not perform. However, at the time of the interviews the system related to the partnership programme appears to have almost come to a standstill.

The nature and quality of DSS's work as well as its attitude of avoiding confrontation as far as possible, is perhaps what has led the officials in BMC to term it as a 'good organization', like many others that the BMC works with. Some of the contemporaries of DSS however, were not in favour of DSS engagement in the School Support Programme because it is '...not sustainable, especially in terms of payment of salaries....' (Lambey, Co-founder Pratham and member of DSS Board). Besides, apparently, the teachers

union is also strong and is against the programme. Lambey, in principle, is opposed to the support activities because she feels that 'When the BMC has money as well as the best teachers in India why should the NGO run their schools?'

7. CONCLUSIONS

The relationship between DSS and BMC has been established as part of a larger programme and a wider network of NGOs and the corporate sector. As such there is limited one is to one interaction or influence on the overall agenda that can be attributed to the DSS-BMC relationship in particular. On the other hand the autonomy of DSS, to a large extent made possible by its funding from other sources, has enabled the NGO to take its own agenda forward, without significant interference from BMC. At the same time, the BMC itself, although it has opted to work in partnership with the NGOs, has more or less been able to implement the educational interventions according to its own vision and mission. The fact, that both DSS and BMC have a common goal of bringing all out of school children into the State system - albeit with differing perceptions, levels of commitment and approach - has helped both the agencies to take its agenda forward.

It is clear that the approach and strategy adopted by both the BMC and DSS have been influenced by the socio-economic profile of the large number of multi- lingual children living in the slums. In the initial years, and even thereafter, the onus of forming and sustaining the relationship appears to have been largely on the NGO. Although BMC, until recently, has never tried to curb the activities of DSS, it has also not made any spectacular efforts to sustain it. For the BMC, the value of the NGOs would appear to be the additional manpower and resources that it provides and the critical role it plays in increasing enrolment and retention. In fact it would not be wrong to say, that in spite of the fact that the BMC has a tradition of working with the NGOs, over the years the relationship appears to have become more of a habit rather than a felt need for BMC.

It can however, be concluded that the relationship between DSS and BMC reflects elements of both a horizontal co-production and a vertical contract, depending on the type of activity. While the School Support Programme is a horizontal co-production, the contract for running NFE centres under both the Mahatma Phule Programme as well as SSA is a vertical contract. However, even the latter relationship has elements of co-production, because DSS also contributes from its own resources to enable it to provide education of a quality that is in line with its own vision.

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

1. Bina Seth Lashkari, Secretary of DSS Board and Director, Door Step School, Mumbai
2. Rajini Paranjpe, President of DSS Board and Director, Door Step School Pune
3. Baban Vinayak Gadwe, Project Coordinator, DSS
4. Surekha Namdev Pathare, Project Coordinator, DSS
5. Esen Paul D'souza, Project Coordinator, DSS
6. Arnawaz Kharaz, Programme Coordinator
7. Puja Kuble, Teacher Coordinator, DSS
8. Sophy Bose, Sahkant Jadev, G. Mudassier, Rukhaya, all DSS teachers supporting Colaba Municipal School
9. Sneha, Counsellor, DSS
10. Leena Awalegaonkar, English Teacher, Colaba Municipal School, Mumbai
11. Anju Choube, Head Teacher, Hindi Medium, Colaba Municipal School
12. Principal, Janabai and Madhav Rao Rokde Municipal School
13. Santoshi, Library teacher appointed by DSS in Janabai school
14. Marina, Ex-incharge, English Medium, Colaba Municipal School
15. Sahiba, Current In-Charge, English Medium, Colaba Municipal School
16. S.S. Shinde, DMC, Birhan Mumbai Municipal Corporation
17. Bharat Pandey, Administrative Officer, Education Department, Bombay Municipal Corporation
18. Geeta More, Ex-Coordinator CDO, Bombay Municipal Corporation
19. Kelusekhar, In-Charge, PPC, Bombay municipal Corporation
20. Bhanushalai, Deputy, PPC, Bombay Municipal Corporation,
21. Sunanda Lal, Researxch Officer, SSA, Bombay Municipal Corporation
22. Simantini Dhuru, Avehi Abacus, Bombay
23. Sriram, Programme Cordinator, Akhansha, Bombay
24. Sushila Shastri, Programme Coordinator, Save the Children, India
25. Farida Lambey, co-founder, Pratham

REFERENCES

Door Step School Annual Reports from 1998-2006

Government of Maharashtra (2005), Mumbai City Development Plan: 2005-2025

Juneja, Nalini (2001), Primary education for all in the City of Mumbai, India - the challenge set by local actors, Working document in the series: Social mapping and local level planning; International Institute for educational Planning, UNESCO, 2001

Progressive Research Aids Pvt. Ltd. (1998), A Report on Educational Activities of Door Step School, Mumbai,

Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, Education Department (2007), Draft of Public Partnership Policy for MCGM Schools.