

**IMPROVING SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN MUMBAI:
UPGRADING PRIMARY EDUCATION THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE
PARTNERSHIP**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mumbai has several characteristics which, if developed, can turn Mumbai into a world class city. The Mumbai Vision Report prepared by Bombay First and McKinsey outlines an eight pronged program for developing Mumbai into a world class city. For initiating action based on the eight pronged program, the Government of Maharashtra, set up a Mumbai Task Force and Citizen's Action Group (CAG). The Task Force classified the eight pronged program into six thematic areas for improving the city. One thematic area pertains to the improvement of social infrastructure which covers the education and health services offered in the city.

The development of a skilled work force required for trade and business is directly linked with the education available in a city. In a world class city the quality of education imparted and easy access to it by a majority of the population becomes critical for developing a work force of world class standards. In Mumbai a majority of the population, particularly of the low socio-economic strata, only have access to education imparted by the government through the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM). This education, as imparted by the MCGM, requires to be upgraded to a world class level.

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and primary education are constitutional rights. The Government of India has launched the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in November 2000, for translating these rights into a practical reality. Remarkable progress has been made by the government through the SSA. The SSA is implemented in the state of Maharashtra and in Mumbai too. Hence to start with efforts have to be made to upgrade ECCE and primary education as imparted under the SSA. Before making suggestions for upgrading these areas a review is made of the current status of ECCE and primary education in Mumbai.

1. Early Childhood Care and Education

It is seen that in Mumbai 2,491 Balwadis are being conducted by the MCGM, private agencies and the ICDS covering 1,40,510 children in the age group of 3 to 6 years. Over 2 lakh children yet need to be enrolled in Balwadis and for them 5,000 Balwadis need to be opened. In the absence of an ECCE program children directly enrolling in Class One find it difficult to cope with the education being imparted. The MCGM needs to consider recasting its Education Policy so as to ensure that there is a Balwadi attached to each primary school conducted by it.

2. Schools, Buildings and Classrooms

In Mumbai there are several prestigious private primary schools to which children of the upper and middle socio-economic strata have access. However children of the low socio-economic strata have access only to the MCGM schools. Normally there should be one school available for every 2,500 population. However in Mumbai there is one school for every 5,000 population. For the rural areas the government has a policy that there should be a school within the walking distance of a child's home. However there is no such policy for the urban areas.

There are 1,236 schools conducted by the MCGM . Out of these 1,187 are primary and upper primary schools. It is seen that the enrolment of children in the city has decreased and several schools have closed down. Several buildings are lying vacant in the city. In the suburbs, the enrolment has increased and classrooms are overcrowded and in some places children remain out of school. Further the school buildings are very poorly maintained and most of the schools have neither a ramp for disabled children or drinking water facilities. Some schools do not have toilet blocks for girls The following action is suggested to be considered by the MCGM

- Vacant school buildings in the city be used for Balwadis, vocational training or other educational activities
- Porta cabins be installed in slums or schools on wheels be provided where there is no space to build a school building

- Ramps for disabled children, toilet blocks for girls and drinking water facilities be provided in all the schools
- Procedures for repairs and maintenance be simplified so that there is speedy utilization of funds and the schools are properly maintained

3. Teaching Staff

There are 12,625 teachers working in the MCGM schools. The Pupil-Teacher ratio is 1: 53 for classes 1 to 5 and it is 1: 21 for classes 6 to 8. Rationalization in the use of the available human resource is required.

The number of children enrolling in the Marathi and Gujarati mediums is gradually reducing. Teachers in these mediums are being rendered surplus. On the other hand the number of children enrolling in the Hindi and Urdu mediums is increasing. Since teachers in the reserved categories are difficult to obtain for the Hindi and Urdu mediums the positions remain vacant. There are, therefore, surplus teachers in the Gujarati and Marathi mediums and less teachers in the Hindi and Urdu mediums. The teachers exhibit a very low motivation level for improving their skills inspite of the training facilities being available. The MCGM may consider taking the following action immediately:

- A provision be made to appoint teachers on a contract basis from another category untill teachers from a particular reserved category are available so as to overcome the shortage of teachers in the Hindi and Urdu mediums
- A system of incentives be introduced so that teachers are motivated to improve their skills

4. Enrollment and Dropouts

Where the MCGM schools are concerned there is a slightly more enrolment at the primary level than at the upper primary level. This situation could be due to the fact that parents prefer to enrol their children in a private school which has a secondary school attached to it. Further parents perceive that the education in a private school is better than the education offered in a MCGM school. It is also seen that the drop out rate is the highest at the Class VII level. This does not necessarily mean that all the children have dropped out of school. It could be that the children have left the school to enroll in a private school.

The capacity of the private schools to absorb children after class 7 is much less than the number of children finishing class 7 in government schools. In addition the poor learning achievement in the government schools results either in denial of admission in the next stream or it is a guarantee of early dropping out as a result of failure in exams. Where out of school children are concerned, Ward M/E, which was the second largest slum in Mumbai after Dharavi, has the largest number of children (18,362) out of school. Ward P/N which has several new settlements has 7,908 children out of school. These “high incidence” areas in terms of out-of-school children are locations where there are multiple layers of disadvantage. In these areas there is the highest concentration of unauthorized and temporary constructions that are constantly being demolished. Many informal settlements do not get any facilities for sanitation, water and electricity. Newest and poorest migrants settle in these areas first. Violence, alcoholism and drug abuse are known to be common in the homes and in the neighborhood. The children in these areas are poor and insecure and education for them becomes a luxury. At the same time it poses a huge challenge to teachers to handle children from such a socio-economic background

The following steps are required to be considered by the MCGM

- The quality of teaching in the primary schools be improved so that enrollment is enhanced
- A special campaign be launched in Wards M/E, P/N, L, F/N, G/N and M/W so that out of school children are brought into schools
- MCGM encourage the private sector to build secondary schools so that all the children who pass class VII are assured of admission into a secondary school
- Remedial coaching be organized for the upper primary classes so that the Transition Rate particularly from Class VII to VIII improves
- Special programs be organized for street children, children living on railway platforms, working children, etc so as to bring them into the education stream

5. Financial Outlay

The MCGM has a budget of over 700 crores for primary education. In addition 25.65 crores are available from the SSA grants. A major part of the grants are spent on salaries. However hardly 2% to 3% of the balance is utilized specially for the repairs and maintenance of the school building and for the construction of classrooms. The MCGM could consider simplifying its administrative procedures so that there is a speedy utilization of the funds available.

The above mentioned areas are those that require to be considered for immediate action by the MCGM to tackle the current situation. The goal of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan was to ensure that all the children were in school and had finished 8 years of education by 2010. Considering that this target was to be achieved say by 2015 it is imperative for the MCGM to undertake action to provide for more schools and ensure quality education for an increasing population from the low socio economic strata in Mumbai.

6. The Public-Private Partnership approach

The immediate action recommended in the various areas would ensure improvement in ECCE and in primary education for the children of the low socio-economic strata. However for the development of ECCE and primary education to world class levels it is essential that the support of the private sector be taken through a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) approach. A PPP is a partnership between the public and private sector for the purpose of delivering a service which is traditionally provided by the public sector. Private sector innovation and technological, financial and management expertise can be gained through a PPP approach leading to modernization of the public service and ultimately the provision of a better quality of service. The SSA strongly recommends the use of the PPP approach specially for the maintenance of infrastructure and for improvement in the quality of education imparted through the government schools.

Considering the recommendation of the SSA guidelines the Times Foundation, a private sector organization, approached the Secretary, School Education of the Government of Maharashtra with a proposal for taking the lead in mobilising the support of the corporates in the city of Mumbai for improving primary education. At the same time the Mumbai

Transformation Support Unit also approached the Secretary, School Education for setting up projects to transform primary education in Mumbai city to a level that would be equivalent to the level of primary education imparted in a world class city. Several meetings were held with the Times Foundation, Corporates, NGOs, MCGM officers and education experts to chart a path for improving the primary education in the city.

As an outcome of all these efforts it was decided that a Steering Committee, with an equal number of representatives from the government and the private sector be set up by the government through the issue of a *Government Resolution*. Such a Resolution would define the powers, role and responsibilities of the Committee so as to enable it to bring change in the quality of primary education being imparted in Mumbai city.

There are 1,187 primary schools under the MCGM. As required by the SSA norms the schools have been grouped into 225 clusters according to the electoral ward area. In each cluster one school had been identified as a nodal school and it is being developed as **Cluster Resource Centre (CRC)**. It was decided that for the pilot PPP project, efforts would be made to develop the CRCs. Accordingly a survey of the 225 CRCs was conducted by the MCGM with the support of the MTSU. From the data obtained it was seen that

- there were 43 lower primary CRC schools of which 30 were of the Marathi medium
- there were 182 upper primary CRC schools of which the maximum number of schools were of the Marathi medium
- there were two CRC schools of the Gujarati medium, 16 of the Urdu medium, 1 of the Telgu medium, 3 of the Tamil medium and 2 of the English medium
- Wards K / E, P / N and L had the maximum number of CRC Schools

It was also seen that

- The average enrolment in a school is 379 children
- The average number of teachers in a school is 15
- The average number of classrooms is 10
- 7 schools have no toilet blocks for boys

- 20 schools have no toilet blocks for girls
- 71 schools have no ramp for disabled children
- 176 schools have no drinking water facility

In terms of infrastructure, repairs and painting of the school building, construction of toilets and ramps and provision of drinking water facilities had been requested for by the Head Masters. Where teaching facilities were concerned audio-visual equipment, computers and materials for a Balwadi had been requested for immediately.

The MCGM had developed a School Adoption Policy way back in 1999 and under this policy about 28 organisations were assisting 223 schools. In addition special computer education projects had been set up Reliance Infocomm and by Sterilite Industries. However none of the organisations had adopted a school in its totality. It was decided that in the PPP pilot project corporates would be requested to come forth to adopt a stand alone CRC or a cluster of schools in a single building.

To make the project operational it was felt that a School Level Committee (SLC) would be required to be set up (with equal representatives of the school and the adopting agency) and further that such a Committee would be required to be empowered to oversee the conduct of the day to day affairs of the school. The SLC would hold meetings at least once a month.

Further through the conduct of workshops with NGOs (who were already working in the MCGM schools) and officers of the MCGM the role of the public and private partners pertaining to the following areas in the PPP project were drawn up:

- Infrastructure
- Quality of teaching
- Computer training
- English Language skills
- Maths
- Communication Skills

- Balwadi
- Sensitization to social and cultural issues
- Music, Art and Craft
- Culture of Service
- Annual events
- Nutrition
- Staffing
- General administration
- Involvement of the Community

The defining of roles would give clarity in operations at the ground level.

7. Road Map for the PPP project

In anticipation of the establishment of the Steering Committee and in order to initiate action for the PPP Pilot project a road map for immediate action and for the decade is suggested here.

a) Immediate Action

1. Preparation of the proposal format / application form for the school adoption program by a corporate.
2. Preparation of an estimate of the minimum expenditures to be incurred in a year for a school adopted by a corporate
3. Organization of a meeting of the corporates for informing them about the PPP project and inviting them to come forth to adopt the CRCs
4. Preparation of a panel of NGOs who could be considered by the corporates for carrying out the work at the school level.
5. Approval of the proposals received from the corporates by the Steering Committee.
6. Commencement of work at the school level so that the improved teaching program is implemented from the academic year 2007-08

b) Plan for the Decade

2007-2008 - Adoption of 225 CRCs by the corporates covering 1,12,500 children

-Start one model school

2008-2011 -Adoption of 250 primary schools by the corporates covering 1,25,000 chn.

-Starting of 3 model schools

2011-2014 -Adoption of 500 primary schools by the corporates covering 2,50,000 children.

-Starting of 10 model schools

1014- 2016 -Efforts to develop all the schools into model schools

The development of “ model schools” is recommended so that they serve as an example for other schools to emulate. Such “ model schools “ should be conducted totally by an adopting corporate. This would include the appointment of the Head Master, teachers, etc. However the school would follow the state approved curriculum .It would also have additional academic inputs.

It is anticipated that with the upgrading of primary education more children will be attracted to the school and more children would be capable of securing admission in an existing secondary school. This would indirectly ensure that there are less dropouts.