

A note on Common Minimum Programme- K Sriram
NEO
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Current Situation

1. Dropping numbers in enrollment, schools run by the MCGM. Still they serve the largest numbers of children.
2. Perception of MCGM schools among the general public is adverse. Even the Honourable High court of Mumbai has ordered the MCGM to revamp the current situation.
3. The most marginalised sections of the community populate MCGM schools.
4. Alarming drop out rates of around 54% between standards 3 and 7.
5. Large portions of school going children are not learning.
6. Teachers faced with large classrooms, burden of administrative work preventing effective teaching.
7. School infrastructure in several schools are in a pitiable condition.
8. A growing demand for English education.

The school adoption program

1. Has been around for several years.
2. Several voluntary organisations have partnered with the MCGM in this scheme.
3. But in reality, other than some marginal successes, the overall situation still is declining.
4. Expectations from the MCGM officers and staff is only donations in cash/kind. Any effort to impact learning is met with huge resistance.
5. There is an urgent need to re-formulate this program to address these issues.

Belief

1. The MCGM teachers are among the best trained.
2. The systems and processes in place are adequate if implemented effectively.
3. Overall number of teachers is adequate to make a 1:40 teacher student ratio possible.

Goal: Every child in school, every school beautiful and every child learning.

Mechanism

Under the aegis of the BCPT, several NGOs working with the MCGM schools have come together to address the above issues with a single voice. We could formulate a program under the SSA umbrella or approach from the side of the Mumbai High Court advised committees.

The Common Minimum Program

1. We wish to impact the actual learning of the child. Some methods are as below:
 - Improve the pedagogy/teaching methodology to supplement existing teaching abilities. Promote activity based learning as against learning by rote. This could be achieved by teacher training, in-class demonstrations, teacher mentoring, etc.
 - Provide teachers in case of severe imbalance in ratios.
 - Introducing relevant curriculum like Life-skills, Extra-Curricular, vocational training, etc through the existing system.
2. Build the PTA to be an important part of the school functioning. The school is an important part of the community, and the community needs to build and support this institution.
3. Tie up with other organisations (corporate, governmental, non-governmental, etc) to help in improving the infrastructure of the schools.
4. Provision of counselling support for children.

We are not here to replace the system, we just wish to help optimise it.

Expectations from the MCGM

1. Improvement in response time.
2. Support above interventions.
3. Communicate with all stakeholders.
4. Build accountability mechanisms for the above interventions.