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**FORMS AND DISCOURSE OF NGO/GOVERNMENT
PARTNERSHIPS: THE CASE STUDY OF PRATHAM AND
CHILDLINE INDIA FOUNDATION**

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CIF	CHILDLINE India Foundation
CEDC	Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances
DPEP	District Primary Education Programme
L2R	Learning to Read
MCGM	Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai
MHRD	Ministry of Human Resources and Development
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSJ&E	Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NISD	National Institute of Social Defence
NICP	National Initiative for Child Protection
SSA	Sarva Shikshan Abhiyan
TISS	Tata Institute of Social Sciences
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USAID	US Agency for International Development

Chapter 1

1 INTRODUCTION

Partnership can be defined as “a working relationship that is characterised by a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect and the willingness to negotiate” (Lister, 2000:228). This definition is one of the many definitions of partnership, a concept, that escapes consensus in its understanding. The fuzziness around partnership is a result of the different ways in which partnership is understood to work in practice that in turn is an understanding derived from the range of potential benefits offered by partnerships. For example, the creation of partnerships can be seen as a way of making efficient use of scarce resources by combining skills and experience, increasing institutional sustainability by enhancing social responsibility, improving beneficiary participation and promoting equity amongst actors involved (Lewis, 2001:75; de Wit, 2001:3). It is little wonder that partnerships are popular amongst policy makers and practitioners. The World Bank advocates partnerships as a key mechanism for improving the delivery of basic services for the poor (World Development Report, 2004), the US Agency for International Development (USAID) has a separate policy on partnershipsⁱ, and the UK White paper on International Development, 1997 contains numerous references to building partnerships amongst developmental actors (Lewis, 2001: 158).

The popularity of partnerships can be viewed in terms of the possible advantages it offers. Partnerships are advocated for achieving goals of social welfare, sustainable development and in approaches of participatory development. Partnerships also have advantages to offer for the organisations involved such as capacity building through linkages, access to a combined pool of resources, and enhanced legitimacy for both actors involved in a partnership. This research focuses on the organisational goals that can be achieved by the inter-organisational relationship of partnership. It examines relations between Non-governmental Organisations (NGO)s and the government in particular and deals with the lesser known perspective of the NGOs. By illustrating two cases of NGO/government partnerships in India, this research links partnership with a form of an organisational strategy.

i The New Partnership Initiative of USAID is designed as an integrated approach to sustainable development.

1.1 Background

In India, NGO/government partnerships have gathered steam under various pressures of liberalisation, decentralisation, donor agendas and the pro market stance of the state. But the concept of NGOs and the government working together in development is not new for India.

Even before its independence, voluntary activities stemming from religious philosophies had supported the state in serving the poor and the needy. The British administration furthered these efforts by forming agencies of social welfare based on ideas of social reforms, social welfare and missionary led objectives. The Constitution of the Independent India enshrined the concept of social justice as opposed to social welfare through achievement of legislations and planned socio-economic development. The realisation of the development goals in India necessitated vast resource mobilisation including people's participation (Kurup, 1991).

As early as the period of the first five year plan, India set up a National Advisory Committee on Public Co-operation in 1952, where NGO representatives were invited to provide inputs to plans and projects of social welfare. It also set up the Central Social Welfare Board in 1953 to coordinate financial assistance to NGOs and set up NGOs where they did not exist (Kudwa, 2005). After a brief period of imposition of emergency rule in India, planning was resumed with a renewed focus on promoting NGOs under the Sixth Plan (1980-1985). In every subsequent plan, the state increased its allocations to NGOs through various Ministries at the central and state levels. This funding has continued to expand as the state attempts to withdraw and increasingly rely on market based mechanisms to promote development. The seventh five-year plan, for the first time, declared voluntary organisations to be partners in development providing them with a range of funding channels. The tenth five-year plan gave further impetus by increased funding allocations to the voluntary sector (Chandhoke, 2005).

With regards to children, the welfare ideology promoted a series of measures that brought NGOs and the government together to promote programmes for their physical, mental and social welfare rights (Bajpai, 2003).

1.2 Objective, Question and Scope of the Research

Given the current popularity of the idea of NGO/government partnerships, generally focused on the benefits partnerships would have for the government or the society, the objective of this research is to investigate what there is in a partnership that is beneficial to the NGO. The main research question therefore is: **Why do NGOs work in partnership with the government?**

The question is addressed by investigating two specific NGOs in India called CHILDLINE India Foundation (CIF) and Pratham. Both are rights based NGOs that work in the area of implementing child rights in India. Both are involved in, what they claim, successful partnerships with the government and are therefore interesting cases to study.

The choice of studying partnerships for the child-rights NGOs has to do with two reasons. One, the language of rights is associated with responsibilities and partnerships are seen to provide a means of sharing responsibilities. In addition, as Moleneux and Lazer point out, the implementation of rights based development necessitate collaborations, so that “rights move off the paper and become meaningful”(2003:56). In the emerging global scenario of child rights both the government and the NGOs are rethinking strategies of child welfare to reach out to children based on the idea of responsibility to provide for the rights of the child. Second, the choice of child rights NGOs was also to do with the ability of the researcher in getting access to information from the two child-rights NGOs.

1.3 Research Methodology

This research is a qualitative study based on primary and secondary sources of data. The primary data was gathered through interviews of the founder members and key leaders of CIF and Pratham. The interviews were based on a semi- structured questionnaire (enclosed in Appendix 2) and were recorded, and then processed according to the research questions. The methodology of discourse analysis was also used. The secondary data consisted of published studies about Pratham, annual reports of CIF, websites of both Pratham and CIF, and in-house documents that included programme reports and proposals to donors for the two NGOs.

This thesis has undergone an iterative process of research. Partnership turned out to be a difficult concept to apply in studying the two cases. To address this problem, we developed

a typology of the different types of claims under the concept of partnerships. The typology is presented in chapter 2. While the main research question guided this study, specific sub questions were developed based on the discussions related to the typology and a more detailed review of literature on partnerships. The sub questions along with the proposition are presented at the end of chapter 2 that seemed to be a more logical arrangement than placing them in chapter 1.

1.4 Limitations of the research

This research is based on claims, made by two NGOs, of successful partnerships with the government. This research has not considered cases of those NGOs that do not claim to work in partnership with the government or have not had a successful partnership. In that regard, the findings of this research cannot be generalised for all NGOs who work in partnership with the government.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The research is divided into five chapters. The present chapter 1 introduces the research, along with the main research question, the methodology, and the scope and limitation of the research. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature and provides the proposition and a set of related research questions that guide this research. Chapter 3 illustrates the NGO/government partnership for the two case studies in detail and. Chapter 4 analyses the two NGO/government partnerships according to the research questions. And finally, chapter 5 concludes the research by summing up the findings and suggesting some future lines of research.

Chapter 2

2 TYPOLOGY OF NGO/GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS: ITS MEANINGS AND PURPOSES

Although widely used, partnership is a difficult concept to define as it means many things to many people. It also is a 'feel-good' term because of the possible advantages it offers for the actors involved. The possible advantages that are very often assumed influence the purpose of initiating partnerships.

In this chapter, we introduce a typology of the different ways in which partnership is understood in literature, in an attempt to make the the claim of partnership more precise. We also examine the purpose of partnership from the perspective of NGOs and present a proposition and a set of research questions based on the literature review.

2.1 Situating the NGO/government partnership

A distinct trend towards NGO/government partnerships can be observed in the developmental activities of the past two decades. There is a growing realisation that neither the governments, nor the NGOs, independently, can deal with the enormous challenges posed by complex social issues that range from poverty alleviation, sustainable development, promoting women's equality to securing children's rights.

The trend of NGO/government partnerships can be situated within the larger context of the changing role of the state in development. The role of the state, as a direct provider of services and in developmental planning, suffered a setback with the growing inefficiencies associated with the public sector. In the 1980s and early 1990s, major international development organisations advocated the increased use of market mechanisms as a key instrument for economic growth and greater efficiency, and sought to reduce the role of the public sector (Todaro and Smith, 2003:696). But the failure of market based policies and their adverse effects on the poor compelled a come- back towards involving the state and emphasising its responsibilities in development. In the 1997 World Development Report, the World Bank advocated for an effective and not minimal state that would be vital for economic

development. An effective state was required for the development of the markets as well as to address social issues (World Development Report, 1997).

The enabling environment promoted by the effective state paradigm, has given rise to the concept of governance with space for non-state actors to work independently as well as in collaboration with the state (Salamon and Anheier, 1997). It has also promoted explicit demands for partnerships between state and non-state actors (Ayee and Crook, 2003). These demands for partnerships are providing an alternative to the traditional characterisations of competitive, adversarial or hierarchical relationships between the government and NGOs (Tomlinson, 2005). Brinkerhoff notes that within the context of public service delivery, partnerships are remoulding the privatisation model of contractual relations into a new form of inter-sectoral cooperation (2002:20). And increasingly NGOs are utilising these opportunities to work with the government as partners, in addressing developmental issues.

2.2 Defining the NGO/government partnership

In theory, partnerships relate to 'a collaborative venture between two or more organizations that pool resources in pursuit of common objectives' (Gill, 2003). Or 'a dynamic relationship among diverse actors, based on mutually agreed objectives, pursued through a shared understanding of the most rational division of labour based on the respective comparative advantages of each partner' (Brinkerhoff, 2002:21).

Much of how partnership is defined in literature stems from normative ideas about desirable values and expected roles. This has contributed to an *ideological* understanding of a partnership and led to its active promotion in diverse developmental settings and amongst different permutations of developmental actors such as NGO/donor, NGO/government, or donor/government. Partnership remains an ambiguous concept, despite the wide use of the term in varied contexts. Many use it to mean many different things, and many use different terms to mean the same thing.(v.d. Wel, 2005)ⁱ

The single label of partnership does not reveal the variety in practice. A few authors have addressed the problem of varied interpretations by developing distinct categories to describe differences in partnerships or presenting partnerships as a continuum based on key characteristics found in a partnership. For example, Lewis categorises partnerships in two

ⁱ Comment made by Paul v.d. Wel, discussant at the ISS State and Society Seminar, (October 11, 2005).

forms - active and dependent partnerships (Lewis, 1998). The categorisation helps to describe a partnership as either an active form that involves negotiations and adaptations in the light of practice or a passive form that gets imposed upon or used to gain easy access to external resources. Brinkerhoff, on the other hand, disengages partnerships from other forms of NGO/government relations by defining partnership along a two dimensional continuum of mutuality and organisation identity (2002). Thus, a partnership means an alliance where there is high level of mutual dependence with a recognition of distinct roles for the organisations involved. For Newman, partnership can be understood as a range based on the claim of cooperation. A strong partnership therefore requires a high level of cooperation amongst the actors involved (2000).

While the categorisation or continuum are useful in either describing a partnership or providing a more precise definition, they do not offer an understanding of the different types of partnerships that can exist under its label. We have attempted to do so, by developing a '6C' model, which is a typology of the different types of claims that are associated with NGO/government partnership from the perspective of the NGOs and the government. These six claims are listed as follows:

1. **Collaboration:** Often used to describe an ideal, genuine or authentic form of partnerships, collaboration involves shared decision-making power over planning and implementation of programmes. It is based on mutual respect, acceptance of autonomy, independence and pluralism of NGO opinions and positions. (Tandon, 1991). Used interchangeably with the term partnership, collaboration is a more of a value-based claim than an actual form of practice.
2. **Cooperation:** Cooperation between partners is another type of value based claim that is used interchangeably with partnerships. As partners, NGOs and government cooperate to pursue similar goals through similar strategies, thus working towards a convergence akin to collaboration (Najam, 2000). However, as discussed by Coston in her model of eight forms of NGO/government relations, cooperation is a less ambitious form of collaboration that does not require an equal sharing of power (1998). The power is assumed and not derived based on expertise or contribution in a non-hierarchical set-up (Robinson et al., 2000).
3. **Complimentary relations:** Based on the notion of comparative advantages, NGOs and governments work together in a complimentary partnership to pursue similar goals but

with a recognition of different abilities (Najam, 2000).

4. **Consultation:** This kind of partnership, involves constructive dialogues between NGOs and the government in the area of programme design. It need not always lead to direct financing of the NGOs by the government(Newman, 2000).
5. **Contractual relations:** A relation where the government provides NGOs a well defined package of services to be implemented under conditions largely established by the government. Government may provide funds and training to NGOs to encourage them to operate in priority areas. Contractual relations carry a negative connotation about risks to an NGO's autonomy and are often contrasted with partnerships. Though, as Fowler notes (cited in Robinson et al., 2000:10), they do characterise a growing trend within the label of partnerships.
6. **Coordination:** This type of partnership involves hierarchy that is constructed voluntarily where one actor is given the task of leading (Robinson et al., 2000). In practice, it could involve setting up of formal or informal units of NGOs in relevant government departments to enable the government to plan its programmes in full knowledge of others' activities.

The 6C model helps in identifying the different types of claims made by the government and the NGOs, within the broad claim of a partnership. While the first three claims of collaboration, cooperation and complimentary relations can be seen as claims of the NGO; the last three claims, of contractual relations, consultation and coordination, are claims that are often made from the partnerships of the government. In practice, these claims may not be mutually exclusive and may co-exist within a single partnership relation between the NGO and the government.

2.3 The purpose of partnerships for NGOs

There are many reasons why NGOs may want to partner with the government. Borrowing the terminology from Penrose, who examines partnerships between international NGOs and local NGOs, the reasons of NGOs to partner with the government can be divided into ideological reasons and pragmatic reasons (2000:246).

Ideological reasons of partnerships for NGOs relate to the convergence of developmental objectives and expected roles based on the notion of comparative advantages

of both NGOs and the government (Arya, 1999;). By virtue of seeming closer to people, more flexible and thereby more responsive, and with an ability to innovate, NGOs seek partnerships with the government for efficient and effective service delivery. By virtue of the government seeming bureaucratic and removed from the people but possessing the power and capacity to design and implement national policies, NGOs seek partnerships with the government for effective , responsive and accountable policy making.

On the other hand, the pragmatic reasons of partnerships for NGOs, relate to the practical needs of NGOs to gain access to resources, acquire legitimacy or recognition and promote greater accountability and transparency(Arya, 1999; Sanyal, 1991). They can also serve as a means for NGOs to scale up their operations(Edwards and Hulme, 2002:55-58).

2.4 The discourse of partnerships and its use for NGOs

As outlined in the previous sections, the label of partnership hides several types of claims between the NGO and the government. Any of these specific claims have the potential to provide NGOs the ideological and pragmatic benefits they seek. Yet NGOs choose a generic label of partnerships over a specific form such as of cooperation or consultation, to describe their relations with the government. What then, is the power of the partnership discourse that leads to its active employment by NGOs? Robinson et al., examine the language of partnerships across a range of contexts to conclude that the discourse of partnership provides a sense of intimacy, understanding and equality and is used to express apparent consensus (2000:11).

It is possible that the egalitarian notion provided by the discourse of partnership gives NGOs an opportunity to move beyond preset roles and crave new spaces for themselves in order to gain legitimacy and credibility. Applying the view of Berger and Luckmann (1984:13-30), who identify discourse as a creative force for new interpretations and new 'lifeworlds', partnerships with the government can also provide NGOs with a new scope of action based on their own interpretations of their roles and responsibilities or their lifeworld.

But all is not well with this egalitarian label. Fowler points out that the normative overload of partnership can give rise to mistrust, discontent and frustrations regarding the roles and responsibilities of the partners involved (Fowler, 2000). In this regard, we will examine the effects of government partnerships in terms of its opportunities as well as its

constraints for the partner NGOs.

2.5 Proposition and research questions

The proposition investigated in this paper is that, for NGOs, partnership with the government is a strategy to achieve their organisational goals. This is so for two reasons. First, the actual form of partnership between the NGO and the government provides NGOs with opportunities to gain access to resources and enhance their status as legitimate and credible organisations. Second, the discourse of partnership provides NGOs with a claim that it collaborates with the government and lends its expertise to jointly address complex developmental issues. It is hypothesised that the claim of partnership, by itself, is important, as it may help in establishing or enhancing legitimacy, and credibility and thereby the status of the NGOs.

2.5.1 Operationalisation of concepts

1. **Strategy:** It is about how NGOs go about achieving a set purpose (Thaw, 2002:161). The indicators used to determine the strategy are the strategic vision of the partnership, the form of the partnership and the extent to which the vision is achieved by the NGOs.
2. **Organisational goals:** is defined as the growth of the organisation in terms of:
 - i. **Scaling up:** increase in the number of programmes and the size of the organisation. It also includes the influence of the NGO in related policies.
 - ii. **Status:** claims of legitimacy and credibility made by the NGO.
 - iii. **Sustainability:** Continuity of programmes and the operations of the NGO

2.5.2 Research Questions:

We investigate the proposition by studying the NGO/government partnership of two NGOs that are described in chapter 3. The following research questions will be answered while analysing the case studies:

Q.1 In terms of the 6C model, what are the specific characteristics of the partnership that the NGO is involved in?

Q.2 What is the effect of these forms of partnership on the organisation, in terms of opportunities and in terms of constraints?

Q3. What is the strategic vision of the NGO for entering and maintaining the NGO/
government partnership?

- i. Was there an alternative to the partnership?
- ii. What did the NGO want to achieve from the partnership?
- iii. In which form of the 6C model did it want to partner?
- iv. To what extent was it successful in pursuing its strategic vision?

Q4. How have the NGOs employed the partnership discourse?



Chapter 3

3 PRATHAM AND CHILDLINE INDIA FOUNDATION

This chapter is divided into two sections, each providing a detailed overview of the nature of partnerships with the government for the two child-rights NGOs, Pratham and CHILDLINE India Foundation. For each NGO, the overview situates its functioning in a broader context, provides an understanding of its organisational structure and programmes and traces the evolution of its partnerships with the government since its inception.

3.1 Pratham

Prathamⁱ works with a rights- based approach in the area of providing Universal Primary Education (UPE) to children in India. Pratham was established as a public charitable trust in Mumbai, in 1994, by the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) and UNICEF Maharashtra, to assist the government in achieving its goal of UPE in Mumbai by 2000 (Tatke, 2000). Pratham's role was to involve the community by enlisting support from concerned citizens, corporate houses, parents and community leaders to ensure that every child is in school and learning well. Towards this end, Pratham implemented several programmes in Mumbai, aimed at bringing children in school and providing joyful education. By 2000, Pratham had started to replicate its programmes beyond Mumbai. It established separate city level trusts that are coordinated nationally by Pratham India Education Initiative. Pratham Mumbai evolved into a resource centre for designing new programmes and training field level staff. By October 2004, Pratham had established its presence in 12 states by implementing its programmes in 39 cities and 12 rural districts of India¹.

The emergence of the Pratham/government partnership can be situated within a broader context of NGO/government relations in the area of primary education in India.

3.1.1 The context of primary education in India

In 1986, the Government of India adopted the National Policy on Education under which it

i Information about Pratham has been gathered from two interviews with the Pratham staff, in-house documents, two monographs written by Madhav Chavan in 2000 and 2004, and a published thesis of Institute of Development Studies authored by Vinita Tatke in 2000.

implemented several pilot projects on a large scale. These projects were implemented through the state and local governments since the responsibility towards provision of primary education lies with these levels and not with the centre. One such programme was the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), supported by the World Bank, that was instrumental in creating partnerships between the government and civil society organisations to achieve the goal of UPE. The priority given to providing free and compulsory education for children up to the age of fourteen was further reinforced by the Jomtien Conference (1990) on Education for All. India ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992 and in 2002, amended its constitution to make primary education a fundamental right for every child in India.

Building from the experience of the DPEP programme and the global pledges concerning universalisation of primary education, the Department of Education, under the Ministry of Human Resources and Development (MHRD), launched a national scheme in 2001, called the Sarva Shikshan Abhiyan (SSA) or Education For All. The scheme aims to achieve the goal of providing free primary education for all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010. It promotes involvement of NGOs and community-based organisations and has been designed for decentralised implementation through the state and district governments. State governments are therefore initiating various projects in partnership with NGOs to achieve the goal of UPE in India².

3.1.2 Origin of Pratham

In the city of Mumbai, the responsibility of providing free and compulsory primary education lies with the local government called the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM). In order to achieve its goal of UPE in Mumbai, the MCGM with support from UNICEF Maharashtra had explored alternatives such as the Urban Primary Education for All (UPEFA), implemented in 1991 in Mumbai, in collaboration with the Government of Maharashtra. However, the programme did not prove sustainable. The failures associated with this programme highlighted the need for an independent organisation that would focus on the design and implementation of different programmes and strategies to provide primary education to all children in Mumbai (Chavan, 2000).

The decision to form Pratham as an independent organisation to coordinate this initiative was taken in 1993 in a meeting with UNICEF representatives, senior bureaucrats of

MCGM and Government of Maharashtra, corporate representatives and prominent social workers and educationists of Mumbai. In this meeting, it was decided that two prominent individuals, known in the field of education and literacy, Dr. Madhav Chavan and Mrs. Farida Lambay, would establish Pratham. Dr. Chavan was appointed as the Executive Secretary of the organisation. The Commissioner, MCGM and the Education Secretary, Government of Maharashtra would represent the government on the governing board of Pratham (Tatke, 2000).

In its initial phase, Pratham was financially supported by UNICEF Maharashtra. Thereafter Pratham mobilised resources from ICICI bank, a private sector bank in India and other corporate houses of India. The support from the MCGM was non-financial in nature but it provided access to its schools for implementation of Pratham's programmes (ibid.).

3.1.3 Structure of the organisation

Pratham is a network of organisations established as trusts or branches across 12 states in India. Pratham has replicated its operations by: ³

1. **Establishing independent Pratham trusts:** Each trust follows the Pratham Mumbai model of a 'tripartite partnership' between Pratham, the local government and the corporate sector. The trusts may or may not adopt the name of Pratham. For example, the trust is called Akshara Foundation in Karnataka and the Pratham Delhi Education Initiative in Delhi. The trusts function as independent bodies, mobilising their own funds and networking amongst each other for implementing Pratham's programmes. Although the trusts are encouraged to generate local funds, they can also seek financial support from Pratham India Education Initiative.
2. **Establishing Pratham branches:** Pratham Mumbai has established its branches in some cities that receive operational guidance and financial support from Pratham Mumbai and Pratham India Education Initiative.
3. **Linking with other NGOs:** Pratham Mumbai has collaborated with other NGOs to run Pratham programmes in their cities. For example some NGOs have adopted Pratham's programmes in Tamil Nadu. The NGOs and cities are selected according to a criterion developed by Pratham.

In order to centrally coordinate Pratham activities and provide financial and

operational support to the independent trusts, the core group of Pratham set up a not-for-profit company called Pratham India Education Initiative (PIEI), in 2002 with financial and managerial support from the leaders of corporate India. Pratham derives its funding from mainly non government sources like international donors like, its international chapters and Indian corporate houses. Its key donors include NOVIB (Oxfam Netherlands), Johnson and Johnson Private Limited, American Indian Foundation, US Agency for International Development(USAID), Dell Foundation and, IBM India amongst others⁴. Pratham has international chapters in six different countries that mobilise resources for Pratham activities in India.

3.1.4 Activities and Programmes of Pratham

Pratham implements various programmes with the government in order to provide all children access to primary education in its city of operation.⁴ The first few programmes implemented by Pratham were the *balwadis*, bridge courses and *balsakhi* programme. *Balwadis* are pre-school classes for children in the 3-5 year age group. Bridge courses are meant for street and working children who are prepared for enrolment in schools. This programme has now developed into an outreach programme, where Pratham runs classes at work places for such children. Pratham is also working with the International Labour Organization and the Indian government to set up alternative schools, residential camps, and other facilities to impart education to these children and eventually withdraw them from child labour. “*This year, (May 2005), Pratham was involved in the rescue of over 18,000 child labourers from factories in Mumbai*” (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary). The third programme that Pratham initiated in Mumbai was that of *Balsakhis* where para-teachers, trained by Pratham, conducted remedial classes for academically weak children within the school campus. This programme was closed down in Mumbai in 2003, following protests by school teachers who did not want the para-teachers to teach in their classes.

Some of the current programmes undertaken by Pratham and implemented across its trusts include the 'Read India' programme where within a 8–10 week period, children are taught to read in their own mother tongue. The classes are meant for both for in-school and out-of-school children. The programme is implemented by training school teachers and NGO workers in the 'learning to Read' technique developed by Pratham. The out of school children are then enrolled in the government schools in the area. And, the 'Computer Assisted

Learning' in which Pratham has set up Computer Assisted Learning centres in municipal schools of Mumbai.

3.1.5 Pratham and its relations with the government

“Pratham was registered as a trust as a result of the facilitation of UNICEF and with initiative from MCGM. Apart from helping MCGM to achieve UPE, Pratham was also given the mandate to raise the necessary financial resources to support MCGM and to provide support from improving its infrastructure” (Tatke, 2000:20). “There was no formal MOU signed between Pratham and the government” (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary).

Tatke notes in her analysis that the initial support given to Pratham by the MCGM staff was a result of its association with UNICEF and the fact that two of its senior officials were on the governing board of Pratham (ibid.:22). The first activity undertaken by Pratham along with the Education Department was towards conducting the *Vasantik Vargha* (school-preparatory classes held in summer) for the MCGM schools. *“Pratham recruited and trained teachers to conduct these classes. In the process, it came to know about the programme of community development officers who organised pre-schooling for children. It was at this time that the idea of universalisation of pre-schooling came forward and Pratham developed its own model of preschool education or balwadis” (Chavan, 2000:19).*

In the period of 1994-2000, Pratham, along with the Education Department of the MCGM, designed and implemented several programmes towards the goal of UPE. However, in 2000, the school teachers began to protest against the activities of Pratham especially regarding its *balsakhi* programme. In 2003, Pratham withdrew all its activities from the municipal schools of Mumbai⁵. Tatke analyses the friction in the Pratham/MCGM relationship as a result of a top-down approach in the relations between the Pratham staff and the school teachers. *“All activities to be carried out by Pratham are communicated to the school staff through an official circular. There is another area where the MCGM staff feels justified in defending its position against Pratham. The MCGM teachers are highly trained and well qualified to teach children, but the Pratham staff is not. The introduction of the Balsakhi, who according to the them, is only an unqualified, not so highly educated volunteer, but yet is expected to teach academically weak children and conduct classes in the absence of the school teacher was highly disliked by the staff. As a result, there is a*

perception of threat to their job"(2000:23-24).

Following the showdown with the school teachers and the staff of the Education Department, in 2003, Pratham withdrew its programmes and operations from the schools of Mumbai. Currently Pratham is working in the slum communities but since the past two years has not undertaken any activity within the municipal schools.

Apart from working with individual state governments, Pratham is also involved with the central government. The co-founder and director Pratham, Dr Madhav Chavan, serves as a member on the National Advisory Councilⁱⁱ, and has provided recommendations to the Government of India on the issues of universalisation of elementary education through Sarva Shikshan Abhiyan (SSA).⁶ Pratham's co-founder and executive secretary, Ms. Farida Lambay serves on the Grant- in-Aid Committee for Innovation and Educational Projects, constituted by Ministry, MHRD.⁷ Pratham is a resource person for planning programmes under the Sarva Shikshan Abhiyan, in Gujarat and Assam.⁸ *"We also signed a Rs. 35 lakh MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) with the Madhya Pradesh State Government in 2004 to train its teachers"* (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary).

3.2 CHILDLINE India Foundation

CHILDLINE India Foundation (CIF) is a national level NGO working in the area of child protection in India. CIF considers itself as a unique partnership in which CIF works closely with the Government of India.⁹ It establishes and facilitates the CHILDLINE programme, which is a national 24- hour free phone emergency helpline for children in distress in India. At present, CHILDLINE is operational in 66 cities of India.⁹ By September 2004, CHILDLINE had responded to over 5.5 million calls from children on its free phone number 1098, seeking medical or shelter assistance, rescue from abuse or neglect and emotional support.¹⁰

This section about CIF/government partnership starts by providing a context of NGO/government relations in the child protection services in India in which the emerged. It proceeds by describing the origin of the organisation, and finally outlines the evolution of the CIF/government partnership.

ii The National Advisory Council (NAC) has been set up as an interface with civil society in regard to the implementation of the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) of the Government of India, Source: <http://nac.nic.in>. <website, accessed on October 12, 2005>.

3.2.1 The context of child protection in India

In the 1980s, UNICEF coined and employed the term, Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances (CEDC) to categorise children who live in extreme or difficult conditions globally. This category includes child labourers, street children, children displaced by conflict and war, children affected by natural calamities, child soldiers, children affected by AIDS, children with disabilities, and abused or exploited children (Ansell, 2003:192-3). The categorisation helped to focus international and national attention with interventions based on the specific needs of these children.

In India, services for the CEDC category come under the aegis of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJ&E). The Department for Women and Child, Ministry of Human Resource and Development and the Ministry of Labour supplement these services within the CEDC category by implementing programmes for specific target groups such as girl child and child labour.

Until the 1990s, the policy framework towards care and protection for these children stemmed from the directives in the Indian Constitution, the National Policy for Children, 1974 and specific legislations such as the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation Act), 1986 and the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986. But with the changing global attitudes towards empowerment and agency of children in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the child protection sector in India was also recast in the mould of child rights. India was a signatory to various global conventions like the World Summit for Children, 1990, the SAARC Summit on Children and the World Declaration and its Plan of Action for Children, 1990. It ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992, and committed itself in securing the right to protection against neglect, maltreatment, injury, trafficking, sexual and physical abuse, exploitation and degrading treatment, of every child (Bajpai, 2003). In pursuance of its globally committed goals, the central government through its ministries formulated and redesigned its policies in a more child friendly and rights based approach. These included plans and programmes such as the National Plan of Action for Children in 1992, the Integrated Programme for Street Children Scheme, 1998, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 and the recently introduced National Charter for Children, 2003.

With the redesign of child care interventions, partnership approaches with the

voluntary sector came to be seen as best practices in securing child rights. The 1997 Government of India Country Report on the Convention of the Rights of the Child, mentions partnerships with the voluntary sector as a means to implement the convention, translate policies and programmes into action and promote collective responsibility especially in favour of the vulnerable child (CRC India Country Report, 1997). The role of NGOs is being recognised beyond programme implementation to involve catalysing social change, organising communities, training, communications, area specific planning and management of services, to monitoring and evaluation (ibid.)

3.2.2 Origin of CHILDLINE India Foundationⁱⁱⁱ

CHILDLINE was inaugurated in June 1996 as an experimental project of the Department of Family and Child Welfare at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS). Its founder, Ms. Jeroo Billimoria, a faculty member at TISS, lobbied with the government telephone department, Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited, to reserve a toll free number 1098 for children. The phone helpline service was implemented through a network of children's NGOs in Mumbai. CHILDLINE acted as a link between street children who required assistance and existing governmental and non-governmental services for these children. In its first year of operations, CHILDLINE Mumbai, received 848 calls for assistance from children and concerned adults¹¹. The key donors for this phase were national donor organisations such as Concern India Foundation and Sir Ratan Tata Trust, and individual donors.

In 1998, CHILDLINE Mumbai initiated a dialogue with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MSJ&E) to replicate CHILDLINE in other cities of India. With the support from the MSJ&E and TISS, a national level consultation was organised, in which the MSJ&E, agreed to adopt CHILDLINE as its project under the Integrated Programme for Street Children. It also agreed to set up a separate organisation for replicating and monitoring the CHILDLINE programme in India. This organisation was registered in 1999 as CHILDLINE India Foundation.¹² Although no formal MOU was signed between the MSJ&E and CIF, the Ministry and CIF have worked together since 1999 for implementing the CHILDLINE programme. In its first year of operation, CIF received over Rs. 12,00,000 from the Ministry to cover the costs towards establishing and monitoring the CHILDLINE service in 14 cities.¹¹ The Ministry also facilitated funding to CIF from one of its affiliated

ⁱⁱⁱ The information produced here for this section, is gathered from interviews with the founder members and the team members associated with CIF in its initial phase.

organisation called the National Institute of Social Defence (NISD), to develop a national level child rights trainings programme called the National Initiative for Child protection. According to its founder, CIF was able to mobilise resources from other major donors such as UNICEF and The Community Fund (formerly known as the National Lotteries Charities Board, UK) after it established itself as a separate organisation.¹³

At present, CIF implements its CHILDLINE programme through a network of 150 children's organisations in India. It aims to establish CHILDLINE in every city and district of India by 2010.⁹ CIF has won international recognition from awards^{iv} and fellowships³⁴ by international developmental organisations.

3.2.3 Activities and programmes of CIF

- 1. Coordinating CHILDLINE in India:** CIF implements its CHILDLINE programme through city level children's organisations. While the Ministry funds the implementing NGOs, CIF selects and recommends the NGOs to the Ministry. In order to establish the phone helpline at city level, CIF conducts an assessment study, initiates a network of implementing city level NGOs and trains the helpline staff employed by the NGO. CIF also initiates the setting up of an informal CHILDLINE Advisory Board (CAB) that includes officials from the local administration who meet at regular intervals for reviewing the service at the city level. CIF monitors the CHILDLINE programme through regular visits and monthly reports. The national network of CHILDLINE NGOs is coordinated by CIF through regular meetings of NGO directors, CHILDLINE coordinators and team members.
- 1. Documentation and awareness of child protection issues:** Based on its call statistics compiled nationally for its CHILDLINE centres, CIF identifies emerging issues of child protection and publishes reports and training manuals to address these issues. CIF also conducts national level campaigns to promote awareness about CHILDLINE amongst the general public and children.
- 2. National Initiative of Child Protection (NICP):** CIF, in collaboration with NISD, designed and launched a national campaign in 2000 for sensitising government functionaries on the issues of child rights. NISD funds the trainings that are conducted

iv CIF won the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) award in 2003, under the category of 'Protection of child against abuse and negligence'. It also won the award for the 'Most Innovative Project' category from the Global Development Network in 2004.

by CHILDLINE NGOs and CIF coordinates the disbursement of funds and monitors the implementation of the trainings through periodic reports.¹⁴

3. **Evaluation of the Integrated Programme for Street Children:** CIF undertook the inspection of 118 organisations receiving grant-in-aid and implementing programmes under the Integrated programme for Street Children Scheme on behalf of the MSJ&E, in the period September 2002-February 2003.¹⁵
4. **Special Unit for Investigation of Institutional Child Abuse (SUIICA):** In 2003, CIF initiated an experimental programme with the support from the state government of Maharashtra to investigate incidents of institutional abuse of children in the government run and sponsored shelter homes of Maharashtra.
5. **Credibility Alliance:** CIF was involved in initiating the setting up of 'Credibility Alliance', a network of voluntary organisations that promote good practices towards accountability within the Indian voluntary sector. CIF performed the role of the secretariat in the year 2002-2003.
6. **Replication of CHILDLINE model in South and South East Asia:** CIF hosted an international workshop in 2001 to explore the possibilities of replicating the CHILDLINE partnership model in other developing countries.¹⁶ Based on the discussions at this workshop, CIF facilitated the setting up of child helplines in South Asian and South East Asian countries. After initiating this process the founder of CIF, Ms. Jeroo Billimoria established, a Netherlands based global network of child helplines called Child Helpline International in 2004.

3.2.4 CIF and its relations with the government

CIF's relationship with the the central government, MSJ&E began with its inception as an organisation in 1999. "*CIF works in close collaborations with the ministry to implement CHILDLINE*" (interview with Executive Director). CHILDLINE was adopted as a project of the Ministry in 1999 and CIF was constituted to "*be its arm to implement CHILDLINE*" (interview with Member, Trustee). The MSJ&E funds the operational costs of CHILDLINE at the city level and 52 percent of the operational costs of CIF.⁹ Currently the Ministry funds 65 CHILDLINE centres in India.¹⁷ CIF is also responsible for coordinating the NICP trainings in the CHILDLINE cities of India, that are financially supported by NISD.¹⁸

According to its leaders, CIF provided significant inputs related to issues of child

protection in government schemes such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2000, the National Plan of Action for Children drafted under the Tenth Plan(2002-07) and in the recently drafted Integrated Scheme for Child Care and Protection. “*CIF has also been asked to evaluate the implementation of its Integrated Street Children Programme and CIF has suggested various recommendations to the Ministry in designing the evaluation.*” (interview with Former Deputy Director). CIF also provided inputs in designing a Missing Children Website for the MSJ&E in collaboration with UNICEF.¹² In 2004, CIF organised a national consultation of phone helplines for marginalised groups and established a network of telephone helplines in India. It is currently exploring options with the Ministry to expand in areas where there is limited telephone infrastructure using alternative technologies like the community radios.¹⁹

CIF aims to establish CHILDLINE in every city and district of India by 2010.⁹ Towards this aim, it is lobbying for a separate scheme for the CHILDLINE project under the MSJ&E. CIF is also lobbying for financial support from the individual state governments. CIF has also mobilised resources for this purpose from international organisations such as Plan International and UNICEF in India.²⁰ “*The Ministry has its limitations, it has other projects to prioritise, we cannot keep on expanding based on the Ministry money*” (interview with team member).

This chapter has provided an overview of the partnership with the government for both CIF and Pratham and has traced the growth of the two organisations in relation to the partnership. The information provided in this chapter is analysed in chapter 4 according to the research questions of this research.

Chapter 4

4 WHAT IS IN A PARTNERSHIP?

Pratham defines its organisational model as a tripartite partnership between people, government and the corporate sector. CIF defines its organisational model as a partnership between the children, NGOs, the academic sector, the corporate sector, concerned adults and the government. This chapter focuses on the partnership of the two NGOs with the government and compares them according to the research questions listed in chapter 2 with an aim to analyse the reasons why the two NGOs work in partnership with the government. The analysis is divided into four parts:

- a) the specific claims within the partnership based on the 6C model,
- b) the strategic vision behind partnering with the government
- c) opportunities and constraints in realising the strategic vision and
- d) the partnership discourse employed by the two NGOs.

4.1 The 6Cs in a partnership

Both the NGOs have claimed to work in a partnership with the government. For CIF, the partner government agency is the central government ministry, MSJ&E, while for Pratham, the partner government agencies are the state and city level education departments and the central government ministry, MHRD. Using the 6C model developed in chapter 2, this section elaborates on the various claims that can be made about the partnership in order to better understand the types of partnerships that both CIF and Pratham are engaged in.

CIF describes its partnership with the government as a collaborative arrangementⁱ. But other types of claims can also be made about the partnership. It functions as a consultant to the MSJ&E, in providing inputs regarding issues of child protection in India. Similarly, a contractual arrangement can be considered to exist, for programmes where the role of the ministry is limited to funding while CIF is involved in programme design and implementation. For example, the ministry used the services of CIF to evaluate the implementation of its Integrated Programme for Street Children. In addition, the claim of

i *"We work in close collaboration with the government"* (interview with Executive Director).

coordination can also be made along with collaboration in analysing the role played by CIF for the CHILDLINE and NICP programmes. Thus it is difficult to classify the CIF/government partnership in any one single claim of the 6C model.

This is also true in the case of the Pratham/government partnership. For Pratham, partnership with the government meant working in collaboration with the local government in a city (Chavan, 2000:21). Initially, the Pratham Mumbai and the MCGM staff jointly identified problems and designed and implemented programmes towards the goal of UPE (Tatke, 2000). This kind of partnership exhibited elements of a collaborative claim. However, there are other claims that can be made regarding the Pratham/government partnership. For example, regarding its Learning to Read (L2R) programme, Pratham acts as a consultant that trains the government schools in the L2R technique. Similarly, by its involvement in the National Advisory Committee, Pratham/government partnership can be claimed as consultative. On the other hand, contractual relations can be identified in the task of conducting literacy surveys on behalf of the government. And, the claim of cooperation can be made in the implementation of its child labour education programme.

Therefore, the extent up to which these 6C claims apply in a partnership is based on the programmes that are implemented by the NGO and its partner government, as can be seen from CIF and Pratham. Thus, the 6C model has been useful to deconstruct the broad claim of partnership and in understanding that the different claims are programme specific.

4.2 Strategic vision of the partnership

4.2.1 Pratham

In determining the strategic vision behind partnering with the government it is useful to consider that Pratham might not have had a choice of starting without the government. It derived its initial mandate to work as an independent organisation from assisting the MCGM to achieve its goal of universalising primary education in Mumbai. However, as it grew into a national level organisation, Pratham initiated partnerships with other local governments based on the similar tripartite partnership model that had emerged in Mumbai. The reason behind initiating partnerships with the government in all its cities can be analysed based on three factors linked to the organisation.

First, the government partnership provided Pratham an entry into the existing education system of the government. This involved access to the government schools, its school teachers and support from the administration in the form of policies. Gaining access to the government system was important for the success of most of the Pratham programmes as they depended on the government education system for their service delivery. This in turn has helped Pratham in scaling up its programmes across cities or districts of its operation. Interestingly, Pratham's programme dependence on the government is counterbalanced by its financial independence from the government. Since its inception, Pratham has largely been supported by non-governmental funds; its funding sources include corporates in India, international organisations and associations of Indians living abroad. In the financial year 2004-2005, Pratham was able to mobilise Rs.22.16 million against a target of Rs.18.16 million. Yet it sought to work within the government scheme, SSA to introduce its L2R programme. "*Pratham has now applied for grant-in-aid under the SSA scheme in four states*" (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary).

This helps to identify the second strategic reason behind Pratham's efforts to work in partnership with the government. Through partnerships, Pratham aims to mainstream its programmes in government policies. "*Funds come. That's not a problem. But for anything to be proved successful on a large scale, you need the government to take it over*" (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary). In describing the Read India Campaign initiated by Pratham, Chavan writes: "*It appeared that if all governments could be persuaded to adopt the method, we could have all Indian children reading. This seemed especially possible since the Government of India has launched the "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan" (EFA Mission/ Movement) to ensure universal elementary education by 2010*" (2004:17)²¹. The partnership for Pratham, is therefore, a means to get its programmes included into government schemes

The strategic vision of mainstreaming its programmes is connected to its stated ideology of partnership with the government that can be considered as the third factor behind the Pratham/government partnership. "*Pratham worked closely with the government, because we wanted to understand the system and only by knowing it can you pressurize the system. Our goal was to make the government efficient, was to make the system work; the goal was to impact policy. (there is a)Long time to go with (regards to) policy*" (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary).

The strategic vision of gaining access to government resources and mainstreaming its programmes has influenced the form of Pratham/government partnership. The primary education system in India is decentralised and in order to scale up its operations nationally, Pratham has had to establish separate partnerships with local governments of each individual state.

4.2.2 CHILDLINE India Foundation

In the case of CIF as well, three factors can be identified in analysing the strategic vision behind the CIF/ government partnership. First, is the scaling up of its programme. *“From the very beginning, I had thought of taking CHILDLINE national. It was always about making a large scale impact”* (interview with Founder, Secretary). Towards this goal, the partnership provided CIF an access to the financial resources of the government. *“No large donor was ready to provide me with this kind of funds. It was a risk but... ministry was the only one who agreed to take it on . Only when the government came along, did major donors like UNICEF, Plan international etc. supported CHILDLINE”* (interview with Founder, Secretary).

Second, the access to the government services. The partnership was a means to gain support from the local administration for the CHILDLINE programme at the city level. As a service that linked children to existing support systems, the CHILDLINE programme depended largely on the government resources available for the care and protection of children such as the government hospitals, police system, the railway department, or the government shelter homes. As a helpline, CHILDLINE was also dependent on the government telephone department for its free phone service.

Third, the requirement of sustaining the programme as well as the organisation. Towards this aim, CIF successfully lobbied with the MSJ&E, to include CHILDLINE as a part of the government scheme.

Thus for both Pratham and CIF, the government partnership is linked to the growth of the organisation in terms of scalability and sustainability of their programmes. While, for CIF, the sustainability depends largely on government funds, for Pratham sustainability is linked to policy level recognition for its programmes.

4.3 Effect of the partnership: opportunities and constraints

As presented before, each programme within the partnership contributes towards forming a claim about the partnership. These claims in turn present opportunities to NGOs towards the realisation of their strategic vision and constraints regarding their operations.

4.3.1 Pratham/government partnership

The claim of collaborative partnership between Pratham and the MCGM has helped Pratham to establish itself as an organisation working in the area of primary education. By being embedded into the government system, Pratham made effective use of existing government policies, government schools and the administration framework in developing its programmes (Its programmes of *balsakhi* and *balwadi* were based from existing government schemes). By partnering with the government to achieve the UPE goal, it derived its legitimacy and the credibility to work with the communities and schools. It also gained visibility amongst the government circles, donors and within the community.

However the collaboration could not sustain itself in Mumbai. Pratham itself identified two types of constraints while analysing why the collaboration failed. One, Pratham collaborated only with the high levels of the government bureaucracy and not with the lower levels in the school administration. *“In Mumbai, we worked with circulars issued from Municipal Corporation, education officer, but the authorities and teachers felt pressurised. They were not with us”* (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary). And two, the power relations between Pratham and the MCGM authorities were perceived as unequal by the government. *“The relations became a bit bitter... also the way they (education department) were looking at us (that) Pratham had become larger than state and Municipal Corporation. there was a little insecurity”* (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary). However, it is also possible that the failure of the collaborative relationship was to do with the kind of programmes implemented by Pratham, such as the Balsakhi programme, *“It was a bad period 3 years back, not working with schools, had a fight with them, the teacher’s union was terribly against it (Balsakhi programme) accusing them (Balsakhis) of back-door entry, taking away their jobs. Teachers in the school sometimes were not using the Balsakhi for the purpose they were introduced, misusing them as substitute teachers...”* (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary). The subsequent closure of all of the Pratham’s operations in Mumbai, in 2003, has impacted its operations in Mumbai and in Maharashtra. *“In Mumbai,*

the work is going on, but in a parallel way. There is not much collaboration in the way Pratham seems to be guided. Even the education officer, though part of the governing board, does not attend the meetings” (interview with Member, Governing Board).

On the other hand, the opportunities realised in the consultative relationship with the government has helped Pratham to gain in status as a credible organisation and be considered an expert in the area of primary education. Pratham has representation at the National Advisory Committee. It was also invited to the planning meeting hosted by the Union Education Secretaryⁱⁱ and at the discussion of the development strategy on achieving primary education in Bihar.²² The consultative nature of partnerships has helped Pratham to gain visibility amongst the government system thereby gaining support from the government in scaling up its operations. *“Under the SSA scheme, secretaries come together and discuss initiatives like Pratham in their states, other governments then invite us. This year (2005), the government has approved our grant in aid applications for four states under the SSA scheme.”* (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary). In Madhya Pradesh, the state government has signed an agreement for annual trainings of its teachers by Pratham.²³

Similarly, Pratham has realised the opportunities of legitimacy within the contractual relationship forged over programmes like the government literacy surveys. Its website reports *“Under the SSA, Pratham was chosen by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) as a resource agency to conduct a survey of over 3 million households in the city of Mumbai. The findings would form the basis of a citywide plan to implement Universalisation of Primary Education”*²⁴ and its Governing Board member states *“...they(the state government) realised this NGO had the expertise to conduct such a survey. That way the partnership is good, it is not for Pratham nor with Pratham but for the government's need for Pratham”* (interview with the Member, Governing Board).

In terms of the claim of cooperation, the opportunities presented to Pratham have been in the form of local government support for implementing its programmes. For example, according to the executive secretary, the support received from the police, the minister and the education department was instrumental in the rescue and rehabilitation of bonded child labour. *“Pratham also lobbied with the Bihar state government to start preventive programme*

ii Pratham was the only NGO to be invited at the meeting of all state level education secretaries.
Source: Annual report of the union department of secondary education and higher education: 1999-2000, available online at http://www.education.nic.in/htmlweb/ar_99-00/arhrplan.htm

of education in 4 districts identified by Pratham...In terms of child labour , there was a huge support from the government. I don't think we could have managed to rescue 18,000 children and send them back home, without the government's help" (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary).

Amongst the varied claims within its partnership with the government, the constraints as identified by the Pratham leaders relate to the inefficiencies of the government system. *"Pratham faces cynicism, frustration and impatience while working with the bureaucracy but each (Pratham) trust, has learnt to deal with in its own way"* (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary). Chavan in detailing his experience with the government partnership writes, *"Working with the government means constant turnovers and frequent transfers in the bureaucracy that halts processes, work gets done in slow motion and quick action is not taken"* (2000:24). Pratham also points to the lack of expertise within the government systems, *"Working with the government is no fairy tale. The main problem is of convincing the government that they need to change the methodology of teaching.... The problem that the policy makers have is that they have no educationist background. They are generalist administrators... No idea of priorities or types of methodologies. It is an uphill task"* (interview with Member, Governing Board).

4.3.2 CIF/government partnership

For CHILDLINE India Foundation, the claim of a collaborative type of partnership with the central government ministry, MSJ&E was aimed at achieving the adoption of its CHILDLINE programme as a part of a government scheme. The website of the MSJ&E reads, *" CHILDLINE is envisaged by the ministry as a National Service in each city. The service is being standardized to meet common norms and objects. CHILDLINE India Foundation (CIF) has been established as an umbrella organization to identify, provide support services and to monitor efficient service delivery of the centres at various locations. CIF serves as a link between the ministry and the NGOs in the field. Secretary of the ministry is the Chairperson of the Governing Board of the Foundation."*²⁵

The coordination required in being the link between the ministry and the NGOs has presented CIF with opportunities of access to resources, *"the partnership helped to achieve sustained long term funding"* (interview with Founder, Secretary). Also, by virtue of being a government partner, CIF was able to elicit support from the local administration in

implementing CHILDLINE at the city level. For example, the CHILDLINE number, being listed as a priority number with the telecommunication department or free publicity on government transport for CHILDLINE²⁶. In addition, CIF got an opportunity to design and implement a national campaign for child rights training along with NISD. By being involved with NISD has given CIF the opportunity to utilise other sources of funds under the NISD budget. Around thirty percent of the government budget for CIF consists of financial support from NISD. The support is towards periodic meetings of the CIF network and for conducting trainings within the CHILDLINE network²⁷.

However, CIF feels the constraints in the coordination of the NICP programmes. *“Handling NICP has not been easy. CIF does not have the competency required in monitoring the programme especially when it relates to the financial aspects, no wherewithal to evaluate the impact also. We just dole out money, no accounting system of whether the money is used or not...whether it is a value add or not, there is no mechanism to find out”* (interview with Former Deputy Director). Since a significant amount of coordination for these programmes is linked to government funds the constraints, expressed by CIF leaders, of working within the partnership with the government, are also related to government funds *“The government has control of funds, delay in funds, then there are limited funds and then the ministry questions at a later stage, which means that even those funds get stopped. Besides, scaling up cannot happen beyond a point; they (ministry) have to prioritise their other programmes”* (interview with Member, Trustee). *“There are a lot of heartaches...the kind of funding we get, the delay in funding are all constraints (of working with the government)”* (interview with Executive Director).

In case of a consultative partnership, CIF has gained in status as an organisation that is considered to have an expertise in the area of child protection. The inputs by CIF in the Juvenile Justice Act and the National Plan of Action for Children, 2000, have led to a gain in the status of its programme, CHILDLINE as well. For example, in the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act, 2000 CHILDLINE has received special recognition as a government service.²⁸ And CHILDLINE is considered a new and “the most important initiative” under the social welfare schemes of the Ninth Five year Plan of the Government of India.²⁹

The CIF/government partnership has helped CIF to increase its scope of operations including the evaluation of the Integrated Street Children Scheme, designing a missing

children website or setting up a sexual abuse unit.³⁰ With the support of the government, CIF has become “a nodal organisation of child protection in India”.³¹ It has gained recognition in the form of international awards and fellowships.³² According to its leaders, it has even evolved in capacity. “*The accountability measures of the government actually helped CIF to function as a more transparent organisation*” (interview with Executive Director). The credibility associated with the status of being a government partner has enabled CIF to facilitate the setting up of child helplines in other countries and initiate a global network of child helplines.

The constraints of the CIF/government partnership are expressed as a result of the problems associated with the government. “*There are areas of disadvantages that nobody can discount... where there is excessive intervention that can turn to interference depending on their(government) clout or people they (government officials) want to keep happy. A case in point was Ujjainⁱⁱⁱ, where the minister pressured us into choosing an NGO that he was patronising. Earlier we thought we won't tow the line at all, which would have had consequences for the organisation and the network, which would have been foolish*” (interview with Former Deputy Director). The constraints are also felt due to the nature of bureaucracy as expressed by its leaders, “*one major constraint felt by CIF in the partnership has to do with the bureaucracy. The constant change of staff... with the result you are always starting again, communicating the objectives, the strategies, to new secretaries, new policy makers, they come with their own vision. So (we are) unable to consolidate efforts*” (interview with Member, Trustee).

4.4 The discourse of partnerships

From the discourse employed by both Pratham and CIF, it is possible to identify how the NGOs have constructed their self image through the partnership. This self image are based on their claims of legitimacy, credibility and influence derived from the government.

Two types of discourses have been examined in this section. One, is the representation of partnerships, in their written documentation that includes both documents in print and Internet sites of their organisations aimed for the general audience, and two, their oral

iii In 2003, the Minister, MSJ&E, wanted CHILDLINE to be operational in his constituency of Ujjain city and directed CIF to choose a certain NGO for its implementation. CIF initially showed reluctance in complying with this demand. This resulted in recalling all the files of CHILDLINE from the finance section that led to a one-year delay in disbursement of funds to NGOs. Eventually CIF had to concede to the Minister's demands.

representation presented in their interviews given to the researcher, specific to this research.

1. Creating an image through partnerships : Both the NGOs describe partnerships as being a part of their organisational strategy. Pratham describes partnership as its model of functioning as well as its organisational objective^{iv}:

Pratham is based on a triangular partnership: the government, the corporate sector and the citizens. In each city, the corporate leaders have taken the lead, the government has responded by opening its school and sharing its facilities, and the community volunteers, mostly young enthusiastic women from slums, implement the Pratham programmes .

Objective of Pratham: Partnership with government: working in collaboration with the local self-government, on a citywide scale with a view to changing its current practices.

CIF also associates partnership as part of its identity as well as defines creating partnership as one of its objectives:

CHILDLINE is a partnership platform bringing together the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, the UNICEF, the Department of Telecommunications, street and community youth, non-profit organisations, academic institutions, the corporate sector and concerned individuals.

Objective of CIF: To work together with the Allied Systems (Police, Health Care, Juvenile Justice, Transport, Legal, Education, Communication, Media, Political and the Community) to create child friendly systems

The discourse presented here implies that for both the NGOs the partnership with the government is a crucial feature of their existence in terms of their self image and a method as well of achieving this self image.

2. Gaining identity through partnerships: For Pratham, the claim of partnerships is made based on the way Pratham relates in its functions with the government:

"... all of the Pratham efforts are linked to existing school structures" (interview with Co-founder, Executive Secretary)

Pratham takes a total geographical approach, be it a city, a rural block or a taluka. The "complete coverage" approach, coupled with close links and co-operation with the government, distinguishes it from other non-governmental organizations.²³

^{iv} Source: <http://www.pratham.org>

But for CIF, partnership is a structural feature that can be identified based on how the government situates itself within the organisational structure of CIF:

“CIF is a partnership. The very fact that the Secretary, (Ministry SJ&E) chairs the governing board, means we have a special status” (interview with Founder, Secretary).

“CIF is a declared partner, it is constituted by the government to be its arm to carry out CHILDLINE activities...” (interview with Member, Trustee).

“... It is a partnership because the government is on the board, part of the strategising group, which is thinking of the organisation, not as a government project but as a project by itself” (interview with Executive Director).

Thus, the claim of partnership for both NGOs is linked to their status which is considered distinct, or special and distinguishes them from any other NGO, thereby projecting that partnership is a superior form of relationship with the government.

3. Gaining credibility through partnerships : The two NGOs use the justification for entering into a partnership as a way of creating perceptions about their comparative advantages over the government:

Pratham started in the slums of Mumbai in 1994, as a result of the vision of a couple of committed individuals. They could see only one way of correcting this problem and that was to involve the people of Mumbai to help the government in its quest of universalizing primary education.²¹

Pratham activities have spread to 12 states; assistance has come from the local governments, leading corporate houses and the local citizens.²¹

For Pratham, the function of partnership is to give or gain assistance. In describing its origin, Pratham sees its role as giving assistance projecting its expertise (a part of the correct solution), which was being sought by the government. On the other hand, when Pratham describes its growth, the partnership is still based on assistance but coming from the government. Thus implying that as Pratham grows in its operations, it has the power to negotiate its role vis a vis the government.

The expression of having advantages over the government and thereby having a credible status can be seen, in the case of CIF as well:

“..., we were instrumental in drafting the JJ 2000 act. So it was really, that the government and at that time, was proactive enough to realise that though there was a role, that it had a whole lot of reach, but necessarily it never fulfilled the

function, because neither did it have expertise, nor the drive and energy which an organisation in which it was rooted, in this case child rights, would have.”
(interview with Executive Director)

And, similar to Pratham, partnership provides CIF, the scope to negotiate its role vis a vis the government.

“... though the way in which it was structured, there is always a little apprehension on part of the government, whether it is really theirs or we are a NGO for us to do our own thing. On the part of the government there is not enough clarity as to what's their specific responsibility. The MoA (Memorandum of Association) does not spell it all out. It doesn't even say that the chairperson will be the secretary. It doesn't say that at all. It has been by convention” ...
(interview with Member, Trustee)

4. Gaining legitimacy through partnerships: For both the NGOs, partnership is used as a means to justify their legitimate existence as an organisation working in their respective areas. In the area of primary education, Pratham invokes its legitimacy through its relations with the government and justifies its choice of partnership with the government with the discourse of roles:

A Public Charitable Trust was accordingly formed by the Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai together with the association of several prominent citizens of the city

*ASER is not a negative idea, it is linked with a constructive 'satyagraha' to insist on the right of the citizens to participate in the functioning of the government*²¹.

CIF also uses the status of partnership with the government as a means to justify its existence. It also justifies its choice of partnership with the government with the discourse of roles and responsibilities:

In May 1999 a partnership with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, to replicate the CHILDLINE service nationally, resulted in the formation of the CHILDLINE India Foundation^v.

“it was their (government) responsibility to provide protection and care for the child, they signed the CRC” (interview with Founder, Secretary)

5. Projecting partnerships positively: Both the NGOs identify partnerships with terms like collaboration or cooperation but feel the need to separate their partnerships from the claim of

^v Source: CHILDLINE India Foundation, Annual Report, 2002-2003.

contractual relations. In the case of Pratham, the interviewed leader denied any form of contracting out by implying that there has always been a negotiation for roles and responsibilities in the partnership:

“(contracting out). There are NGOs that are told to take this school, take that school. It was never so for Pratham. Because Pratham was never given anything, Pratham has not taken anything. We have been firm on our goals and principles” (interview with Founder Secretary).

Interestingly for CIF, The interviewee does consider that funds from the government may be seen in a negative light and portrays partnership as one where the NGO has an autonomy over the entire programme and the flexibility of choosing its mandate:

“The Government may be funding the project, but it does not get into design, implementation and identification, government has not done any of that and I don't see it taking it on...it recognises the role CIF can play....It is still a partnership because it does not fall under the category of a donor-donee relationship or a project of the ministry relationship although that is how the government legally, I think puts us, under the bracket. Because, I think beyond just funding CHILDLINE India, I think we in CHILDLINE have also started taking on a lot of other government mandates, say for instance the evaluation of the street children scheme or catalysing the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act per se” (interview with Executive Director).

For both CIF and Pratham the achievement of their organisational goals is linked to the actual opportunities realised in reality such as resources, funding, and influence in related policies. Achievement of their organisational goals is also linked to the way the two NGOs use the discourse of partnership for creating the image of a legitimate and credible organisation. NGOs project a distinct identity that is related to the partner status and consider this as being superior to other NGOs who do not work in partnership. The NGOs are also wary of projecting their partnership in the claim of contractual relations and prefer claims that provide them with the scope of negotiating their roles in a partnership.

Chapter 5

5 THE STRATEGY CALLED PARTNERSHIPS

5.1 Concluding remarks

This research has tried to unpack the concept of NGO/government partnership by developing a 6C model that presents a typology of six claims namely collaboration, cooperation, complementary relations, coordination, contractual relations and consultation. This has helped to make the broad claim of partnership more precise. The 6C model was applied to the NGO/government partnerships of the two case studies in this research. It was found that there were indeed a variety of claims that could be made to understand the type of the NGO/government partnership initiated and maintained by each NGO. The variety in claims was a result of the different programmes undertaken by the NGO with the government. This means that partnership is based not only on the type of NGOs or the type of government agency but also on the type of programme that is implemented jointly by the two organisations. Thus a partnership between a NGO and a government agency is actually a partnership for a specific programme of the NGO in question.

This leads us to an interesting implication of the use of the 6C model. If there are a variety of claims that can be understood and accepted within a partnership then the 6C model is useful to discuss those claims that are often considered taboos in the NGO/government relations. For example, contractual relations or coordination are often claims that are not presented in a positive light by the NGOs while describing their relationship with the government. On the other hand, NGOs in their discourse have shown a preference to claims of collaboration or cooperation.

The proposition guiding this research was related to partnerships being used as a strategy for organisational growth. The analysis of the two case studies has shown that partnerships have indeed helped the NGOs to realise their strategic vision. NGOs avail of a number of opportunities by working with the government. Most of these opportunities relate to gaining access to resources and increasing their influence in related development policies.

However, describing themselves as partners with the government has helped the NGOs in claiming gains of legitimacy, credibility and a profile liked to an influential status. This has been possible due to the term of partnerships that offers multiple meanings and therefore multiple realities. The discourse of partnerships have allowed the two NGOs to negotiate their roles vis a vis the government and legitimise their activities.

In conclusion, it can be stated that though the concept of partnerships offers a confusing picture of reality which may be deconstructed through typologies such as the 6C model; it is the very fuzziness of the value laden term with multiple meanings that helps the NGOs in realising their organisational goals linked of status and sustainability. Therefore the 6C model is useful in analysing the claims that are apparent taboos within the partnership but separating the partnership into the various types of claims is not of much use when it comes to the real practice of partnerships. NGOs prefer to employ the discourse of partnerships that gives them leverage in negotiating for roles as well as enhancing their status as partners. The perceptions created around their partner status in turn helps in the realisation of their organisational goals.

5.2 Future line of research

This research is based on case studies of two NGOs that have emerged from a partnership with the government and have subsequently claimed to work in a successful partnership. To strengthen the findings of this research, the future work could be to validate the claim of these two NGOs by taking into account the perspective of the government as well as the communities they serve through the partnership. Another extension of this research could be to compare these findings with other NGOs within the child rights sector of India who do not claim a successful partnership with the government or have both kinds of experiences of working with and without the government.

APPENDIX-1: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

CHILDLINE India Foundation

1. Personal interview with Ms. Jeroo Billimoria, Founder and Honorary Secretary on August 07, 2005
2. Telephonic Interview with Ms. Kajol Menon, Executive Director on September 05, 2005
3. Telephonic Interview with Mr. John Menachery, Former Deputy Director on September 16, 2005
4. Telephonic Interview with Ms. Nicole Menezes, CIF Team Member on September 21, 2005
5. Telephonic Interview with Dr.(Ms.) Armaity Desai, Member, Governing Board and Trustee, CIF on September 16, 2005
6. Email Interview with Ms. Meghana Sawant, Former Team Member on August 05, 2005

Note: Three different directors have led the organisation in the period 1999-2005. The founder director is currently the honorary secretary of the organisation.

Pratham

1. Telephonic Interview with Ms. Farida Lambay, Co-founder and Executive -Secretary on September 07, 2005
2. Telephonic Interview with Dr.(Ms.) Armaity Desai, Member, Governing Board on September 16,2005
3. Email Interview with Ms. Shalini Sachdeva, Pratham Team Member

Note: The founder member currently holds the position of the executive secretary.

APPENDIX-2: QUESTIONNAIRE

NGO/government partnership

Section 1: Regarding form of relationship

1. What type of relationship does your NGO have with the government?
2. In your opinion, how does the government define its relationship with your NGO (say in legal terms, written documents etc.)?
3. At what stage of the organisation was the government involved (e.g.: program identification, design, implementation, expansion or appraisal)?
4. Did your NGO start out as a partner or as a project of the government?
5. Who initiated the partnership (Government/NGO/International agency/any other)?
6. If initiated by the NGO, why did it choose to partner with the government?
7. Have these objectives changed since the initiation of partnership? What is it now?
8. What strategies did the NGO use to involve the government?
9. Why did you decide to work with the government? Was there any other option?

Section 2: Organisational aspect of the partnership

1. What is the form of government control over your organisation (government represented in the board or in advisory capacity)? Has it undergone any changes?
2. Did the NGO have a say in defining the form of relationship and the level of government participation?
3. What are the advantages of working with the government? What are the advantages towards your NGO? And what are the advantages towards your programmes?
4. Did the partnership help in initiating new projects?
5. What percentage of your funding is dependent on the government? What are your other sources of funds?
6. What according to you are the limitations of working with the government?
7. What strategies do you employ to maintain government relations (example: resources utilized in paperwork, in terms of person hours)?

Section 3: Service related aspects of the partnership

1. Were you required to initiate or/and abandon new projects because of the government involvement?
2. What are the various activities of the NGO? Which activities require a working relationship with the government?
3. Has the NGO been able to influence any related national/state policies? Can you give an example?
4. Has the NGO influenced changes within the government structures (for example, greater participation, sharing information)?
5. What were the reasons for the government to work with your organisation?
6. Have you advocated for the replication of the partnership model outside Mumbai?

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