

After 4 & 1/2 years ever since the discussion of equal opportunities on the ground of sexual orientation has been raised, this very moment is certainly an impending time to review the conditons in hong kong. I DO wish that this review will not just be a repetition of the old one in which legislation was turned down by the seemingly strong reason that the majority still could not accept it. Equal opportunities are the basic rights of each person, it cannot be undermined because of the number of rejecting voices. I perfectly understand the approach of the Government that you are not going against the basic principle of equal opportunities for sexual diversity, rather you emphasize that it was still not the RIGHT time to write them in laws. however, i wish this will not be an excuse again in the year 2000, and we still insist it is not a matter of proper TIMING of passing laws but the very discriminations and problems that bisexual/homosexual and other people practising various sexualities are facing. it is exactly like what the issues of gender have brought out on the table here. Women discriminations cannot be left alone and not written in laws because there are people going against it and said it is not the mature time.

EVEN IF, like 4 years ago, no laws were passed and the Government has promised to work on education (we DO appreciate that) so that the society will be "mature enough" "some time" later to work on the laws and the ECO can deal with the cases, THEN what has been done in the govt and its policies to presue these goals?

bisexuals are different from homosexuals. bisexual means people who have the potentials and actual experience of having relationships with both. treating bisexuals as homosexuals is in itself a discrimination (sadly it is how our society is running). however, it doesn't mean that bisexuals and homosexuals (both female and male) cannot stand together. it is becuase before we are discriminated against and our rights are deprived of, we will not be asked whether you are homosexual or bisexual. of course we DO have different requests and form of discriminations from the homosexuals, such as on the issues of homosexual marriage. as bisexual people with partners of the other sex, may not go for marriage. and yet, "family" formed by "marriage based" is the "NORMAL" practice of our society as the measurement of govt services, like taxation, housing policy, education, health servies etc... we would rather like to urge the govt to take a detailed look at "domestic partnership" instead of legalized homosexual marraige, in which people regardless of their gender, if form a domestic partnership can apply any govt services that go to marriage couples only here and now.

going back to the aspect on education that the govt has been doing after the "excuse" of the pre-mature time for legislation, we are concerned with the attitudes of people in educational levels: teachers, social workers, psychiatrists (educations to the educators) ; health levels: doctors and nurses; govt services level: police, immigration officers taxation dept workers, staffs in housing dept.

the guidelines for sex education has been out but what has actually been done in illuminating discrimination against bisexuals and other people practising various sexualities? Many of the educators and social workers are still taking the myths of bisexuals as "bad" homosexuals, not knowing the real self, as passing stage to homo and hetero, as AIDS virus carriers, as people who destroy families... and people need to be "cured." Has the government actively urged different schools (primary, secondary, and universities) pay more attention on the studies of different sexualities (not on the base of bias), and the sex education in general for the youth so that: 1)they know more about their sexual choices; 2) and are able to protect themselves; 3)understand more about themselves and the relations with people and the respects and love in it (isn't it the aim of education is not trained for examinations and career only)?

as bisexuals, we do face similar problems with homosexuals. and so, we agree very much to many of the requests on the problems of the existing sex education raised by tong zhi groups. and yet we do have different experiences of discriminations and this is what sex education AND education as a whole should figure out. just like female bi (homosexual) are experiencing very different discriminations with male bi (homosexual) because of the gender differences. the misunderstanding of bis, like those for homosexuals, have to be erased bit by bit by educations AND the reinforcement in legislation.

nothing can be done without the cooperation of both software and hardware -- education and legislation working together. i agree strongly that things cannot be done by laws only especially controversial issues in society challenging people's misconceptions that built up at the core in schools and families and other institutions. However, having the laws are important still as these are rules that people HAVE TO follow, no matter what. and it is vital because only if there is the law then EOC can deal with cases of discriminations against bisexuals and people practising various sexualities. A good example will be the Code of Practice against Discrimination in Employment on the Ground of Sexual Orientation drafted in 1996-97. we do appreciate

the effort of the government to do that. BUT without the laws, any employer can ignore the code and employees, although being discriminated against and lose their jobs because of it, they cannot make proper complaints that have actual power, and sadly neither the EOC. sometimes, this is precisely why many of us keep silent in work places as we are afraid of losing our jobs and this forms a great deal of inconvenience and pain not able to tell truth of oneself. do we expect a society of lies and misunderstanding, or of truth and respects?

recently, nearly all people are always speaking on the economic conditions and REAL lives of hong kongers. if this is the genuine care, then losing one's job SHOULD BE so much a problem, i mean a REAL issue for worker unions too. if losing jobs because of gender, family responsibility, physical and mental disabilities, and the MFP (a recent problem) are important and as the essential agenda for workers unions (AND POLITICAL PARTIES as well), then why not also include the issue of sexual orientations? as it is a matter of everyday lives living, of fairness, of equality, of social services and social respects that one has got when s/he is born.

regards,

anson mak hoi shan

author of the book: bisexuality (hong kong: Hong Kong Women Christian Council, 1999)  
co-founder of the Queer Sisters  
an educator in city university, a video maker and cultural critic