

Submission to Bills Committee on Race Discrimination Bill
By
Dr Keezhangatte James Joseph
(Dept. of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong)
On
10th January 2008

Honourable Chairperson, Members of the Bills Committee on Race Discrimination Bill and Persons Concerned about the Race Discrimination Bill,

Firstly, I would like to thank you for the invitation and this opportunity to make this submission to the Bills Committee.

It was a privilege for me to be an active listener at most of the Bills Committee meetings held in 2007. Having listened to the discussions, I am tempted to make several submissions, but I shall refrain from doing that by focusing on one important issue for the sake of clarity and focus.

Asian societies are renowned for their strong bond among members of their joint families or clans. The locus of power, whether these are vested on matriarchal, patriarchal or other key figures in these families or clans, exercised their power to ensure harmonious relationships.

In the recent past, in Hong Kong, concepts such as family values, promotion of social harmony, social enterprises to create more opportunities have gained currency in the official discourse. It is in this context that I am stretching my analogy of the family to Hong Kong as a whole.

The Hong Kong SAR Government is the head of this large family called “Hong Kong Asia’s World City”. This is not only our brand name but is also our “Family Name”. In this one large family, every member has the right to be treated as an equal family member irrespective of their differences.

It is also the responsibility of the head of the family to ensure that all members receive equal treatment. The Head of the family cannot absolve himself or herself from this sacred duty of ensuring that all these family members are treated equally.

The point that I am trying to make here is simple. This Bill when enacted into a law should bind the Hong Kong Government. There should be nothing in this Bill that should absolve the Hong Kong Government from not doing its duty to ensure equal treatment in all matters to all persons who call Hong Kong their home.

Thank you.
8/01/08