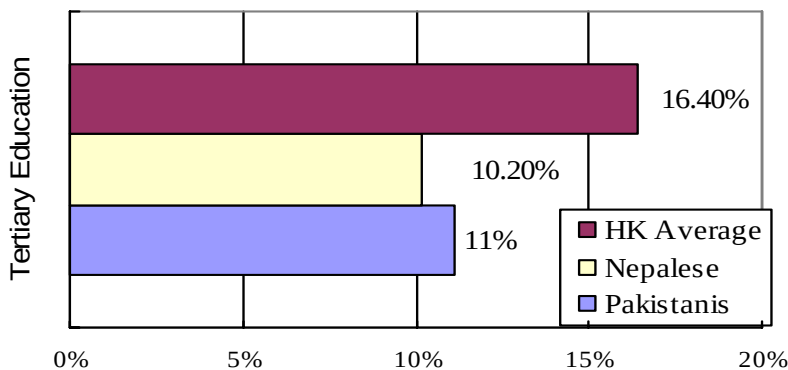


The Time for Action is *NOW*

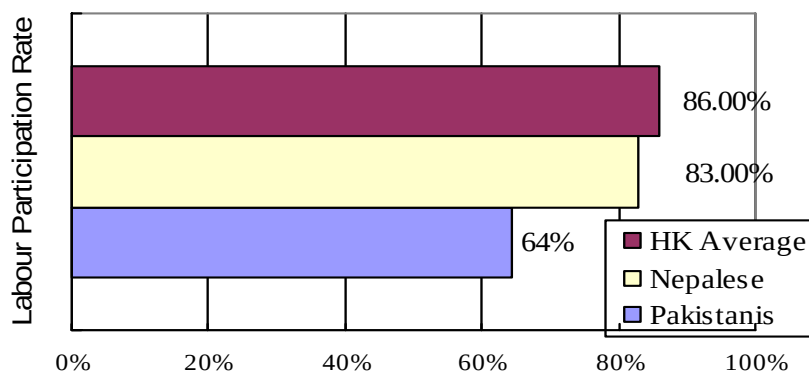
(1) South Asians Students are Lagging Far Behind

1.1 Low Level of Academic Attainment¹



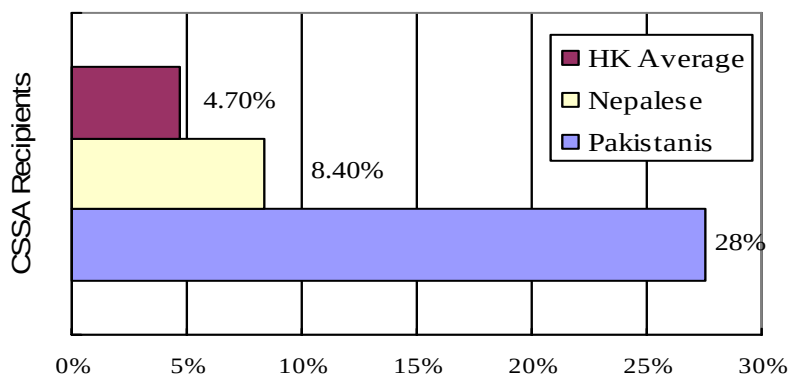
Under current system South Asians children and youths are lagging far behind their Chinese counterparts in terms academic attainment. And making matter worse is the fact that most of the tertiary pedigrees held by the South Asians might not be recognized by Government or private sectors.

1.2 Low Labour Force Participation Rate²



Low academic attainments in many instances meant low Labour Participation Rate among young adults (age 25-34) of South Asian ancestries when compared with HK average (86%). The figure is especially low for those of Pakistani ancestry (64%).

1.3 High CSSA Dependency Rate³



With low income / no viable jobs, many South Asians would likely apply for CSSA, making them trapped in the poverty-sustaining cycle. With lesser means to support their children, their children might repeat the social fate of their parents once again.

¹ Census & Statistics Dept. (2001), Thematic Report – Ethnic Minorities, 2001 Population Census, Table 5.2, P.42. HKSAR

² Census & Statistics Dept. (2001), Thematic Report – Ethnic Minorities, 2001 Population Census, Table 6.1, P.52. HKSAR

³ HK SKH Lady MacLehose Centre, (2006), Understanding South Asians' Needs in New Territories West, G&C unit. *A Submission Concerning Ethnic Minority Education By HK SKH Lady MacLehose Centre July 2007*

(2) For Their Academic Progress is Hamstrunged by Institutional Indifferences and Policy Barriers

2.1 Mainstream Schools – the Chinese Syndromes

- No Additional Financial Resources for Mainstream Schools to Support South Asian students in Mainstream Schools, which means:
- No massive aid for South Asians and their parents in learning Chinese; therefore;
- Most South Asians students *CANNOT* attain reading and writing proficiency comparable to their Chinese classmates;
- But every subject other than English is *TAUGHT & EXAMINED* in Chinese; thus
- Most South Asian students cannot attain good grades in their homework / examination;
- Bad word-of-mouth of mainstream schools among South Asian parents, which means:
- *LESS & LESS* students would go into mainstream Chinese primary schools, and virtually *NONE* would go to mainstream Chinese secondary school.

2.2 Schools for Ethnic Minorities – the English Dilemma

- Limited choices in schools → potentially limited academic outlook → exceedingly low rate of ascendance into tertiary education
- Fewer opportunities to learn Chinese and integrate with local students
- For Secondary school EM students: Have to learn a foreign language – either French or German, which many considered to have no obvious utility in Hong Kong – in order to fulfill the University entrance requirements
- Only a privileged few would be able to go to tertiary education (and virtually none to the local universities) or overseas studies.

(3) In the Mean Time, the Population of South Asians Children is Growing in an Unprecedented Pace

3.1 Most of the South Asians in Hong Kong are Married

Ancestry \ Marital Status	Marital Status		
	Married	Single	Separated/ Widowed
Nepalese	81.8%	16.9%	1.3%
Pakistani	73.8%	24%	2.2%
Hong Kong Average	59.4%	31.9%	8.7%

3.2 And They Tend to have More Children

As reflected their younger age composition

Ancestry \ Age Group	Age Group			
	<15	15-24	25-34	Median Age
Nepalese	10.4%	22.1%	40.8%	28
Pakistani	28.4%	20.5%	25.3%	25
Whole population	16.5%	13.7%	16.5%	36

(4) The Time for Action is NOW!!

4.1 Invest Massively for Assimilation – Preaching the Case of Learning Chinese

Chinese Resource Schools for South Asian Students

- Selected Strategically Located Mainstream Chinese Schools in Districts with the Highest Concentration of South Asians Populations; please refer to the following table

District	Pakistanis		Nepalese		Total
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	
1. Yau Tsim Mong	13.2%	1454	33.2%	4171	5625
2. Yuen Long	8.8%	969	33.9%	4259	5228
3. Tsuen Wan	4.5%	496	9%	1131	1627
4. Wanchai	5.5%	606	7.8%	980	1586
5. Shumshuipo	7.9%	870	4.6%	578	1448
6. Kwun Tong	11.6%	1278	0.2%	25	1303
7. Kwai Tsing	10.8%	1190	0.7%	88	1278
8. Kowloon City	6.5%	716	4.1%	515	1231
9. Central-Western	5.9%	650	2.1%	264	914
10. Tuen Mun	5.4%	595	1.1%	138	733

While for districts of Northern, Tai Po, Shatin, and Sai Kung a total 1180 Pakistanis and Nepalese can be found.

Table 1 Top 10 Districts with the Highest Pakistanis and Nepalese Population⁴

From this table, it is obvious that the proposed Chinese Resource Schools for South Asian Students should be established in Yuen Long/Tuen Mun, Kwai Tsing / Tsuen Wan, Shumshuipo / Yau Tsim Mong, Kwun Tong / Kowloon City, Shatin (as a focal point for Northern, Tai Po, Shatin, and Sai Kung Districts), and Wanchai / Central-Western (as a focal point for HK Island).

- By invitation and/or tendering, designate established mainstream Chinese primary school(s) as “Chinese Resource Schools for South Asians”
- *Massive Financial & Manpower Aids* for these schools, as well as consistent programs and inputs to help the South Asian students to essentially attain Chinese reading and writing level *Comparable to Their Chinese Classmates*
- Help should also be provided to help the South Asian parents to learn Chinese and communicate better with schools.
- Thus create good word-of-mouth among South Asian parents and the impetus for learning Chinese as a pathway to higher educational attainment

*Right now, EMB is doing sharing, workshops and talks to support mainstream schools in admitting South Asian students. But like the old Chinese saying of “Trying to put out a blazing cart of firewood with just a cup of water” (杯水車薪), the current measures alone can never change the impasse in any meaningful way.

⁴ Census & Statistics Dept. (2001), Thematic Report – Ethnic Minorities, 2001 Population Census, Table 8.1, P.88. HKSAR *A Submission Concerning Ethnic Minority Education* By HK SKH Lady MacLehose Centre July 2007

4.2 Create Accessibility for Integration – the Case for Alternative Chinese Syllabus

Even if the Government somehow miraculously agreed to do all of the above right now, it will still be years before the education situations of the South Asians can turn for the better. In addition, for South Asians youth who come to Hong Kong after primary school study in their native countries, it would be next to impossible for them to attain Chinese proficiency comparable to their Chinese counterparts no matter what we do. So it is imperative to create a second channel for this group of South Asians youth to ascend into the realm of tertiary education.

- EMB should create an Alternative Chinese Syllabus and the corresponding examination for ethnic minorities students studying Chinese as a second language,
- The tertiary education institutes (including universities) should accept this as an acceptable alternative to the current second language requirement for ethnic minorities students
- Before the successful implement of this alternative Chinese syllabus the tertiary education institutes should drop the secondary language requirement for ethnic minorities' students (i.e. requiring only English language)

Last but not least, EMB should also consider creating a limited number of affirmative quotas in existing programmes of tertiary education institutes for South Asian students to apply (but they still have to pass the necessary academic evaluations and examinations in order to graduate just like everybody else, akin to the US system). This measure will create a positive impetus of hope and opportunity could be created among the South Asian students and their parents.

These measures would require our Government to focus, invest, and then commit for the long haul: all of which is not happening right now. Failing to do so, the status quo would prevail, where South Asians might well become the “losers” eventually. They would have to find lowly-paid jobs after graduation, and repeat the social fate of their parents once again. Eventually, they would become more isolated linguistically and socially – a de facto state of ethnic separation would then emerge. As such, they would be trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty and social isolation.

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