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Hon. Marget NG (Chairman) of the Bills Committee
Bill Committee on Race Discrimination Bill
Legislative Council
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China

Hong Kong Integrated Nepalese Society (HINS)'s views on "Vocational Training and Interpretation services at hospitals for ethnic minorities"

Nepalese Community Support Team (NCST) is a government funded project for providing support to most disadvantaged group of peoples, Nepalese in Hong Kong. The project executing organization is Hong Kong Integrated Nepalese Society (HINS). The project was established on April 2006 for two consecutive years and one more year funding to the project has been granted by Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau.

Nepalese Community Support Team (NCST) is providing various services free of charge to Ethnic Nepalese Minority. Interpretation service is one among them and taking most of our time. Many Nepalese member of the community have been benefited from our services. Their tendency is slightly leaning towards us in comparison with other service providing institution. Our service staffs are also Nepalese and could understand their need more precisely.

Interpretation service in Hospital is provided only in special cases only. It is why the service provided does not seem effective or outreaching. Many peoples need interpretation services in general cases. And, hospitals do not provide interpretation services for general conditions. But, NCST does. We are actually, fulfilling this need at this moment. We think hospitals which are mostly visited by Ethnic minorities can employ a full-time interpreter for the service targeted various ethnic groups. An interpreter having well skill in different languages (Cantonese, English, Nepalese, Urdu, Hindi etc) can be selected. How to use the service of this interpreter in most useful way is up to the hospitals management.

There are several cases in which hospitals applied wrong medication due to insufficient information about patient. This kind of situation due to complexity and unavailability of interpretation service may result in fatal ending. And, this happened because of no

interpretation service for general cases in hospitals provided. There are several cases happened of this type as below:

Case 1- RAM BAHADUR GHAMAL

CONTACT NO: 2384 5312/6747 1706

Hospital: Princess Margaret Hospital, Kwai Chung

This patient had visited the hospital for a minor sickness. However the doctor prescribed him with wrong medicine. Medicine did react adversely and paralyzed him. He has been suffering since last 7 years. Now, he can't talk properly, his body always shiver. No medication is curing him up to this moment. His wife needs to accompany him all the time because the patient can't even walk. This has thrown him in a wheelchair.

Case 2- GOVIND LIMBU

Hospital: Castle Peak Hospital, Ward E002

Contact: 24568502

In charge: MR. LAW or PAUL (23568502)

NCST staffs visited Mr. Lau at Castle Peak Hospital in Tuen Mun. He had a Nepalese patient who was staying in the hospital and could not speak English or Cantonese. Mr. Lau asked for our help. He sent us a fax written in English and requested to translate in Nepalese. NCST translated the content and sent back to Mr. Lau for his use. The patient name is Govind Limbu.

Case 3- MAYA LIMBU

Contact No: 2385 7792

Hospital: Queen Elizabeth Hospital

A patient Limbu Maya, visited Queen Elizabeth Hospital for treatment. She has got some work related injury. Due to her weak language ability, she couldn't explain the doctor accurately. Due to language gap, the doctor assessed her incorrectly. He observed that the patient had fractured bones only in half part of her hand. Therefore the doctor ignored the rest part of the troubled hand. However she sustained continues pain in her upper part of the hand. She asked for help with NCST. After NCST intervention into the matter, doctor understood and found that her upper part of the hand was also fractured.

Case 4- RAI, MEHARU NAZMUL (5 years old Girl)

Hospital: Kwong Wah Hospital

25th September, 2007

NCST was being called by Miss Lee Wai-ye, Social Welfare Office, Cheung Sha Wan. She had received a case of 5 years old girl, Rai, Meharu Nazmul. She was mixed race of Nepalese (mother) and Indian (Father). Her teachers reported to the Police and Social Welfare Office after noticing bruising arms and legs. NCST visited Meharu at the Kwong Wah Hospital

where she was staying with Miss Lee. We were being told that Mcharu wasn't very cooperative with a Nepalese interpreter who was being called in the early. NCST staffs eased her by asking her interests, like and dislikes ect. She was very chatty and lively child. We were able to provide Miss Lee with the enquiries.

The result of wrong perception due to language barrier can be likely fatal as mentioned in above paragraphs. NCST have truly been assisting peoples through various services. We can provide support to the hospitals if so required and arranged with due respect to the law and our limitations.

Thus, interpretation service should be must in Hospitals for needy Ethnic Minorities Members to prevent from repetition of same mistakes in future.

We really appreciated Vocational Training Council for offering wide range of vocational education and training courses for ethnic minorities.

So far as the vocational training is concerned, ethnic minorities have been involving in its classes for onhancing their ability and knowledge. This opportunity for ethnic minorities is admirable. However there are several concerns we want to draw your attention as below:

Case 1- GURUNG, ARUNA

Contact no: 6730 7445


Student of Vocational Training Centre

Gurung, Aruna is a current student of VTC where she is studying business. She has a complaint that her lecturer forwards all notes and worksheets in Chinese. She could not use this and does not help anymore. Even during tutorials, the lecturer uses mainly Chinese. This causes her difficulties in understanding her studies.

- More VTC courses need to open for Ethnic minority students. Cantonese language should not be barrier for those who want to be admitted and have self-studied. But, course materials and exam papers need to provide in English. And, all ethnic minority students if attended a class shall be permitted to ask question in English if they have one. Classes still can be conducted in Cantonese.

Lastly, hearty thanks for Employees Retraining Board (ERB) for offering many full-time and part-time training courses for ethnic minorities. Concerning the growing interest of Ethnic Minorities, training like Office Assistant and Kitchen Assistant in Western and Chinese Cuisine will help to integrate the ethnic minorities into the local community.

Yours sincerely,


Thapa Buddhi Bahadur
Chairman

