



Ladies and gentlemen, today I would like to draw your attention towards the problem of Poverty in the Ethnic Minorities.

As the survey of 2015 shows that the poverty line in Hong Kong stands at HK\$3,800. Which means a person who earns HK\$4,000 would not be considered poor, not in Hong Kong, one of the most expensive cities in the world! The 2011 census gave a grave state of affairs of poverty in Hong Kong, which indicated that around 20% of the population lived below the poverty line and the situation for ethnic minorities is worse, specifically for some groups living under the poverty line, because of the big families with more children and because of their culture ladies don't go out to work and men have to work day and night to run their families. Other groups are slightly better but there is still a big gap between the sub-groups.

While there are differences among the sub-groups, the South Asian group in HK appears particularly vulnerable. The low income of these EM groups has its roots at the start of their life in Hong Kong. This poor start continues in life with poor results in school (due to lack of Chinese proficiency) and then continues with discrimination in the job market. Even all the jobs or vacancies are advertised in Chinese, therefore, EM candidates can't look for jobs. Most companies in Hong Kong require Chinese proficiency. This despite the fact that many Westerners work here without knowing the Chinese language, and the Chinese without knowing English. Inability to get into a wide spectrum of jobs in HK could be due to the poorer education levels of the EM group, inherent bias or just plain old discrimination. It is ironic that some jobs where they have to deal with Ethnic minorities hire Chinese only where as they have to deal with many of the EM's cases and need some EM officers in the office. Job posters in Hong Kong need to take a harder look at language requirements and should consider loosening them if it makes sense. More needs to be done. At all levels. By both the government and the private sector who need to start embracing and including ALL communities in Hong Kong.

To the EM community Hong Kong is "home". Yet this marginalisation manifests itself in financial and social exclusion. EMs tend to work multiple jobs to try to keep their families afloat, working night shifts which further takes away from family time. Furthermore, due to language constraints they are unaware (at times unwilling to access) of the available benefits or facilities they can access.

The character of a city is known by its treatment of its most vulnerable group. To be truly called a 'World city', Hong Kong needs to do more to stem the marginalisation of its ethnic minority community. There is still no concerted action/legislation by the government to make a meaningful impact on improving the lives of EM in Hong Kong. This despite the

many studies and reports by concern groups that a lot still needs to be done. It's right time that government should take some steps to make improvements.

Access and opportunity is the key! There is no reason for EM to perform any less than the general population provided they have access to opportunity. There is a need for inspirational stories within the EM community, as EMs have capability and ability to show.

Recent survey did by DAB EMSC shows as below:

1. The major reasons of causing poverty are thought to be low income (63.6% of interviewees) and low education level (53% of interviewees)
2. 33.8% of interviewees satisfied, 55.6% feel average and 10.6% feel dissatisfied with the government's role to deal with poverty.
3. The major methods to deal with poverty on EMs are putting more resources on education and providing more job vacancies (both 55% of interviewees.)

Project Gemstone has shown that there is a way to increase productive participation of EM in civil society. Therefore, more government departments should step in to improve the lives of The EMs in Hong Kong.

I strongly recommend that now the government should seriously do something to improve the lives of the EMs in Hong Kong to set an example for the world that Hong Kong cares for the EMs. Thanks.

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