

(Revised)

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Tung Chung, Lantau

Date: 6th December 2017

STATEMENT FOR: "SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING ON RIGHTS OF ETHNIC MINORITIES TO DISCUSS THE PROVISION OF VENUES IN DISTRICTS FOR ETHNIC MINORITIES TO CONDUCT RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES"

Respected members of the LEGCO,

To begin with I would like to convey my thanks to the LEGCO for giving me this opportunity to represent the Tung Chung Indian Community in voicing out our request for venues.

In addition I would like to take this opportunity to second the request placed by Rotary Lantau Community Service Corps and share the difficulties that I and members of my community have faced in the past and are facing now in finding venues to celebrate our festivals and have our prayers.

I have been living in Hong Kong for the past 21 years and specifically in Tung Chung for 10 years. The Indian population in Tung Chung has exponentially increased considerably in recent years. We are now more than 1000 households living in the Lantau region. Every year we organise many festivals like Diwali, Holi, Janmastami, Ganesha Pooja, Navarathri, Maha Shivarathri, Sankaranthi, Indian New years to name a few and yearly events like Youth Festival, Birthday Celebrations of renowned scholars of India and we also have many guest lectures given by renowned speakers from India in addition to sports activities competitions that we conduct in the LCSD community hall and various Club house function rooms. As Indian festivals involve worshipping of our gods and distribution of food, clubhouses are the only venues available to us.

Furthermore, we have many regular classes teaching not only kids but also adults classical dance, music, arts and crafts, yoga, cultural values, Indian languages like - Hindi, Tamil, Telugu in this area catering to more than 300-400 residents. Kindly note that most of these classes are conducted on non-profit basis.

All classes and events are now conducted in activity rooms in LCSD venue or clubhouses of private estates which have been unfortunately restricted to cater for just a small group of participants due to space constraint.

While our community groups actively perform dances and songs in various cultural events organized by LCSD, RTHK, Ethnic Minority centers, Consulate office and other Indian associations, these practice sessions also take place once again in the above stated venues.

Sadly, those who organize such events, classes and practice sessions face lot of problems in getting the venue as there are not enough venues to meet the requirements of all communities living in Tung Chung. Not to mention the hassle, those who attend these festive events and classes face in entering the venue due to security restrictions in private venues.

Dr. Chitra Sivakumar

Tung Chung, Lantau

I represent all the members of the Indian Community in Tung Chung and in particular the group of people who have contacted Government officials in getting a place to conduct religious and cultural activities for Hindus for more than 7 years. We request the authorities to look into the matter and provide us with a suitable place where we can worship, conduct rituals extensively, conduct events and run various classes catering for the needs of the members of our community.

As rightly pointed by Mr. Andrew in his letter under point 2 & 3, if we can get a new school, potentially managed by Indians catering to the needs of the South Asians, all these problems can be solved and we can organize our cultural activities, classes and sports activities in the school premises without any inconvenience.

We, the Indian parents, work in Hong Kong to make it smarter and comfortable to live in. Our children, most of whom are third culture kids, would get lost amidst variety of nationalities, religions and culture if not for the culture classes that help them to remember their identity, know the right path to follow in their lives and safeguard them from the invasion of bad elements in their lives and become responsible citizens and contribute to the Hong Kong community.

Graduating in 2017 with a Ph.D thesis on Intercultural transformation caused by stress and adaptation, I feel that children can be shaped to contribute to Hong Kong's development with proper support and motivation. With Government support definitely, non-Chinese minorities can adapt to the host culture while still not giving away their home culture.

Once again thank you for giving us this opportunity and listening to our plea. We look forward to getting a Community center or a school premises for Indians in Tung Chung.

Yours Sincerely

Chitra Sivakumar