

(Revised)

Nimisha Vandan.

**Honourable Chairman and Leg Co members,**

Thank you for lending me your ears. I am a PhD candidate at The University of Hong Kong. My research topic is Experience of South Asian Ethnic minority patients with Hong Kong healthcare system. In the course of my research I have come across many stories of challenges in getting jobs for EM that I feel compelled to speak about this topic and bring to your attention because socioeconomic status (SES) affects individual's health outcomes and the health care they receive.

Sir, there is wide gap in the requirement of Chinese proficiency standard in education and in the employment sector. GCSE Chinese syllabus for EM students are only equivalent to primary level 2/3 of mainstream schools with more focus on Cantonese conversation and reading skill and less on writing. However, most of the office based jobs requires good writing skills. In absence of Chinese writing skill EM students are unable to get those jobs and end up doing low skill jobs in construction or Food and beverage industries. Since EM students don't expect to get better jobs due to their poor Chinese skills, they are not motivated enough to enrol for tertiary education at huge expense of time and money.

The labour force participation rates (LFPRs) of male EMs are generally higher than the overall male average. Recently, the proportions of elementary workers among Pakistanis, Nepalese, Thais and Indonesians all exceeded by 30%. It is also shocking that there are rarely any civil servants after 1997. According to Equal Opportunity Commission report 2012, EM are assigned to work 3D jobs i.e. Dangerous, Difficult and Dirty. Lower employment earnings due to lower educational attainment, lower skills and lower language proficiency are the major causes of working poverty and to unemployment among EM.

EM adults with professional degrees from their home countries find themselves at receiving end of strict accreditation process and bureaucracy. Service Sectors such as healthcare are struggling with huge shortage of manpower and these professionals are not able to contribute even though they live in Hong Kong. EM population are young and growing in number. Hence they can solve the manpower shortage in many sectors in Hong Kong only if they are given **good training and proper support**. They can become strength in supporting Hong Kong ageing population too.

A provision of **an intensive on-the-job targeted language skill training** can support EM worker to perform their duties well.

Many South Asian families have culture of women being homemaker, especially among Muslim community. However, these women want to utilize their time to make some money but they lack any opportunity. Simple **home-based work** such as food packaging, vegetable chopping etc. can be provided to them so that they can support their family income.

Thanks again for your time!