

Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities

9 July, 2018

Chairperson and honorable members,

I would like to brief the committee today on the obstacles faced by our ethnic minority, non-Chinese speaking students with a focus on South Asian students, including but not limited to Indian, Nepalese, and Pakistani children. According to 2016 statistics, approximately 20%- 30% of the Pakistani, Nepalese and Indian population are able to read or write Chinese. Which in turn causing employment discrimination, intergenerational poverty and working poor. We proposed that, in order to solve the problems fundamentally, our government should make a wise use of the extra 500 million budget on NCS students Chinese learning.

First, tuition fees are high and most of the parents of EM students are not able to **afford, teach, and guide their children**. Therefore, for early stage language development purpose, the Government may implement **compulsory 2 hours professional tutorial class after school or Weekend class for all ethnic minorities students** according to their class to support doing homework or revision of dictation or other related Chinese language improvement courses in the school. Secondly, School teachers from Kindergarten, Primary, and Secondary schools should be provided a professional **specialized training to teach EM students as a second language**. Without professional teaching knowledge of the teacher to teach EM, it may create the students and teacher's **communication gap**. Next, it should develop a Chinese curriculum specially designed for non-Chinese speaking students with the help of online or offline multimedia. So that, the students & parents may get help or use multimedia information whenever necessary.

Taking Universities entrance as an example, only 224 out of 1046, that is, 21.4% of F.6 NCS students have successfully enrolled through JUPAS in 2016, which has an overall successful applicant rate of 34.9%. On the other hand, 30.6% of the NCS students has passed the university requirement, while the overall passing rate is 36.7%. It is obvious that the NCS students are facing some disadvantages during the selecting process. We suspect that the option for submitting other Chinese exam results as a substitution for applications of universities without an open, standard scale has actually put the NCS students in disadvantage. In fact, none of the tertiary institutions has released a grade conversion, and about 70% of the NCS students, instead of taking the DSE Chinese, has taken the GCSE, which is equivalent to primary school level Chinese. Hence, the substitution policy has inadvertently created an illusion of a lower but achievable university entry requirement while omitting the real needs of Chinese teaching for the ethnic minority.

Chinese as Second Language curriculum (CSL) is much appreciated and encouraging but has a similar problem as above but creating a fantasy of passing the DSE Chinese. Without actual increment of supports and resources, the syllabus simply regrouped the course aims and objectives, then aimed at DSE, a test specifically fitted into the traditional curriculum. Not surprisingly, only 10% of NCS student has taken DSE Chinese last year. Therefore, the curriculum could be constructed with a main focus of learning conversational, business, and academic Chinese along with a more professional and CSL-oriented training for the teachers, the proposed curriculum can eventually function at its full capacity, benefitting the EM students and our society.

Education is the key for eliminating intergeneration poverty. For the ethnic minority, a suitable education is the key for eliminating all the social stereotypes. In order to achieve the ultimate goal, we work together and call for a brighter future for our children. Thank you.

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