

## **Sariah's Speech for 19/11/2018**

**I want to focus on Ethnic Minorities' equal Access to different Public Services and Government Departments because equal accessibility is essential for a decent society. Unfortunately the right to equal accessibility in this so called cosmopolitan society remains unreasonable in compare to other counterparts.**

**Language Barrier is the one of the biggest reason for inaccessibility.**

**Frontline Staffs should have proper training in dealing Ethnic Minorities who are also an important part of society. But unfortunately, guidelines are made only on papers and no one mind to go through it or follow it. Experiences showed that mostly staff is not aware of interpretation services or how to use it. I want to mention 2 cases here.**

- 1. 1 Nepali Pregnant lady tried to apply CSSA several times but she was rejected by Social Security Field Unit. She was unable to express herself in English and Chinese. No interpretation was offered to her despite her need. After delivery, she approached us and with our interference, she was offered interpretation service and then she successfully applied CSSA. This took her around 6 months to successfully applying CSSA.**
- 2. Another elderly Pakistani was not provided interpretation on case renewal even we insisted several times and we were told that applicant is pretending that he does not know Chinese and English but actually he knows. So in different occasion we helped the client for interpretation.**
- 3. Experience showed that many health information in Hospitals are not even available in English. So it is quite difficult of EM to benefit from those.**

**The government Departments should have no excuse to refuse interpretation requests. If it is found find that the frontline staff didn't proactively provide interpretation for those who have communication problem. Then the Government should take proactive action against**

**those departments and frontline staffs. There should be proper system to monitor the progress and implementation of administrative guidelines in order to promote Racial Harmony. All Government functions and powers should be brought within the scope of the Race Discrimination Ordinance"**

#### **Role of EOC:**

**Every Year HKCSS arrange meeting with EOC. I attended that meeting 3 to 4 times. Before meeting EOC will collect cases from different NGOs who are serving EM. But actually, there is no use to send cases to EOC because there is no follow up and we never know that what department will actually improve according to cases and difficulties. And on the other hand it is difficult to make complain in EOC.**

**No multilingual hotlines, written complaint or enquiry is must.**

**Many Ems do not know about complain Mechanism and even do not know about EOC at all.**

#### **Suggestions:**

- 1. EOC should be active enough to encourage people to make complain.**
- 2. EOC should have regular monthly Consultation stations at Support Service Centre for EM. So general Public from ethnic minority community can consult them for any kind of discrimination faced by them.**
- 3. EOC should have regular Outreach station in order to let general Public know about them.**
- 4. EOC should arrange cultural sensitivity trainings for all Government Departments frontline staffs.**