

Representation of Ethnic Minorities in Legislative Council/Government positions

As an ethnic minority, I would love to see ethnic minority representation in places such as legislative council. However, look around you! Do you see any EMs in any of the government sectors? NO! I have yet to see any. In fact, the Chief Executive is chosen by a 1,200-member body, but not by a single delegate from the ethnic minority group, which makes up 3.6 percent of the population. There is no committee to discuss ethnic minority community concerns directly. I believe the problem is that we, ethnic minorities, still haven't been accepted as citizens of Hong Kong or as part of Hong Kong society by the local government and members of the majority Chinese community, if they had done so, they would not blame our 'lack of Chinese ability' as the cause of our failure to integrate. If they had accepted us as a part of the Hong Kong community, they would respect our history as well as our ethnic language. Even the government, Hong Kong's biggest employer, which plays a leading role in removing discrimination, is now pursuing an employment policy against the interests of ethnic minorities. Some government posts, for instance, require applicants to have spent more than seven years in Hong Kong. (Racial Equality Alliance (CORE), Hong Kong Commission on Human Rights, July 30, 2001). This leads to the exclusion of non permanent residents from such posts. We can therefore see that ethnic minorities are barely able to integrate into our culture.

Actually, an ethnic minority who lacks the Chinese speaking ability but is perfectly fluent in English should still be seen as a representative in the legislative council as there are methods which can aid this situation. Here is the thing, there are translations available, in fact, many Chinese representatives also make use of the translating devices so why can't this be applied to the ethnic minorities? The lack of language support and education makes the EMs do not have that language ability to participate in public affairs.

We need to have a common duty to create a harmonious community. As racial minorities, we are branded. Alternatively, let us recognize ourselves as Hong Kongers of Nepali, Indian or Pakistani descent. Let us build a culture with ideals that are multicultural. I think what the government should do is NOT to just focus on whether the EMs has Chinese competency rather they should focus on the fact the EM has other capabilities such as a driving force to help the community as a whole. The government should hire more members of the ethnic minority for civil service positions and disciplinary services. Moreover, by relaxing the Chinese language requirement in some disciplines in civil service recruitment, the government can take the lead in hiring ethnic minorities to demonstrate its recognition of ethnic diversity in jobs.

The point I am making is that the government should not disregard EMs based on their language ability rather the government should use this as a plus-point and actually make Hong Kong a diverse and multicultural place where there is EMs representation in places such as legislative council.

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