

## Embracing Diversity

Understanding the Characteristics, Cultural Factors and Help Seeking Behavior of the Ethnic Groups



A Presentation Prepared by HKSJKH Lady MacLehose Centre

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## Understanding Diversities...

- Use your knowledge about their culture, religion and place of origin to better gauge their needs and tailor your approach accordingly



## But Focus on Our Similarities...

- Stressing the "we" feeling with them in a day-to-day basis to ferment trusts and bonding

**The Goal** -- to make your ethnic minority clients **NOT FEEL** like a minority in Hong Kong.

## (I) Knowing the Salient Facts

- Excerpts from 2006 By-Census

### 1). Who they are

Ethnicity	Number of Residents	Percentage
Indians	20444	6.0%
Nepalese	15950	4.7%
Pakistanis	11111	3.2%

### 2). Language Fluency – Indicator of Integration???

As Usual, Another Language or Dialect	Cantonese	English
Indians	35.3%	86.3%
Nepalese	40.3%	79.7%
Pakistanis	60.4%	73.2%

### 3). Education Attainment – the Indians Dominated

Ethnicity	Post-Secondary Education Attainment	Percentage
Indians	7,798	46.6%
Nepalese	2,069	15.8%
Pakistanis	1,424	19.5%
Hong Kong Total	1,361,473	23.0%

### 4). Labour Participation – the Pakistani Anomaly

Labour Participation Rate By Sex	Men	Women	Both Sex
Indians	81.7%	47.2%	64.7%
Nepalese	84.0%	65.1%	74.5%
Pakistanis	78.5%	16.7%	53.9%
Hong Kong Average	69.2%	52.4%	60.3%

### 5). Family Monthly Income – Read Between the Lines

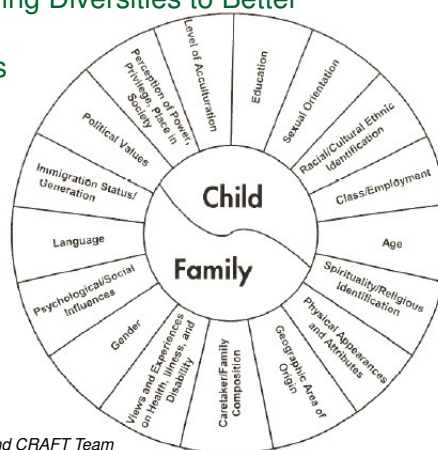
Ethnicity	Median Family Monthly Income
Indians	17,500
Nepalese	8,500
Pakistanis	9,000
Hong Kong Median	10,000

- The Indians led way ahead in median family income, leading HK average by a whopping 75%
- Pakistanis appeared not that far behind, but the hard facts: as their average family size is bigger than HK average, and there is wide disparity among them, so for many their per-capita income is actually lowest among all groups

## (II) Understanding Diversities to Better Gauge Their Needs

Their Needs

## The Diversity Wheel



Chela Rios Munoz, Oakland CRAFT Team

**1). The Pakistanis – An Example**

- 3rd largest South Asian Ethnic Group in Hong Kong
- Culture: Mainstream Arabic-Islamic culture with daily life influences from India
- Religion: Overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, with influence of Arabic Wahhabism and practice of Sharia legal code (during President Zia's time) -- religious interpretations..



- Imams hold a very respectable place and sometime even commanding position in settling social and even familial affairs.
- Interpretation of Islam influence women's role, opportunities, familial relations, birth control / number of siblings → economic status

**(i) Place of Origin: Punjab**

- The majority of Pakistani in HK originated from rural villages and towns in northern Punjab Province near to Islamabad and northeastern Punjab Province bordering western Kashmir – They are ethnically Punjabi, speaking the Punjabi language and many of them accustom to rural/town life.



- **Generally** elementary to high school educated (but women illiteracy an issue)
- Work in jobs requiring elementary skills
- **Generally** usable Cantonese (esp. men) fluency
- Larger number of children in family (3 to 6)
- Family-centric help-seeking behaviours
- Women mostly of homemakers with heightened domestic skills (knitting)
- CSSA dependency highest among all ethnic groups in HK

**(ii) Place of Origin: Karachi**

- A minority of Pakistani in Hong Kong are from the city of Faisalabad or even Karachi (ethnically Muhajirs) – Punjabi and Urdu speaking, accustom to city life.



- **Generally** better educated
- Work in businesses, as professionals and the like
- **Generally** better English fluency than Cantonese
- Lower number of children in family (1 to 3)
- Functional -centric help-seeking behaviours
- Women has wider range of roles

**2). The Nepalese – A Study in Contrast**

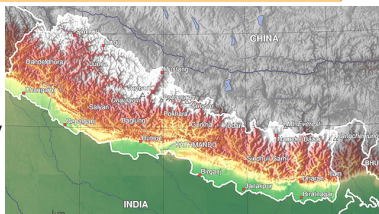
- 2nd largest South Asian Ethnic Group in Hong Kong
- Culture: A very diverse culture influence by China / Tibet and India
- Religion: Hinduism, Buddhism, and Protestant Christians, with a minority of Muslims, i.e. Absence of dominant religious belief



- A melting pot of racial diversities and religions implied ready acceptance of different cultures
- Absence of dominant religious belief implied less dogmatic doctrines in communal and familial lives

**(i) Place of Origin: Western and Eastern Nepal**

- A sizable majority of Nepalese in Hong Kong are Gurkhas and their offspring, who **generally** came from Western (ethnically Gurung and Magar (Sino-Tibetan)) and Eastern Nepal (ethnically Rai and Limbu (Mongolian-Tibetan))



- Hence the "Asian" looks
- Absence of monolithic faith implied religion a guiding, but not dominant, force
- **Generally** Elementary to high school educated
- Been mostly working as security guards, now in wider range of jobs
- **Generally** way better English fluency than Cantonese
- Women has nearly the same labour participation rate as men
- CSSA dependency rate just a bit higher than Hong Kong average
- Substance abuse prevalence an issue among youths

**(III) Focus on Our Similarities to Win Their Trusts**

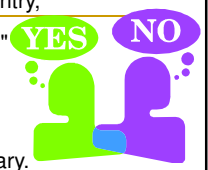
**Stressing the "we" feeling with our clients in a day-to-day basis to ferment trusts and bonding**

**(i) Stress Similarities, Not Differences**

When asking questions about their home country,

- Do Ask: "Do you have this in your country?"
- Do **NOT** Ask: "You don't have this in your country, do you?"

The best thing to do is never point out the differences at all unless absolutely necessary.



**(ii) Treat the South Asians as members of HK, Not as Foreigners**

- Do **NOT** Ask: "Where is your hometown?" or "When will you go back to Pakistan/Nepal (for good...)"
- But you can ask: "Where are you from?" or "When will you go to Pakistan/Nepal to visit your relatives?"



Never say things with the nuance that he/she is transitory or does not belong here.

**(iii) Treat the South Asians as an Individual, Not the Representative of His/Her Country**



- Promote friendship, **NOT** international friendship
- During first contacts, try to promote bonds between hearts and personalities.

You can save your questions for their countries later, out of curiosity or respects .

**(iv) AVOID Unsolicited Cultural Advice / Meddling**

- Never give advice about "things Chinese" unless the other person asks for it
- Never assume the other person knows nothing about Chinese or Hong Kong

It can be insulting to those who have worked hard to study it..

**(V) Avoid Stressing Assumed Cultural incompatibility**

- Avoid any "This is Hong Kong and We Chinese don't do this" arguments when responding to ideas, proposals, or suggestions .

For this way you would be erecting walls to deter them from future integration .



**(vi) Speak the Language the Other Person Wants**

- Don't assume that Cantonese is too difficult for them to speak (it's simply untrue, though written Chinese is entirely a different matter....)
- Use the language that most facilitates communication, but check with them (in English first, then Cantonese) in advance as to what language they want to use

**vii) Some Examples of Common Phrases to Avoid**

- "Ah-Cha"/"印巴藉" .
- "We Chinese" Like / Don't like something
- "I like your country Pakistan / India / Nepal, and that's why I want to meet you."
- "There's so many of you Pakistanis / Nepalese / Indians here, it doesn't feel like Hong Kong anymore."



**Putting things in Perspectives : Essential Concepts**

- IN CONCLUSION, the goal is to make your South Asian clients NOT FEEL like foreigners, and the best way to do that is to chat with them much the same way you would chat with a Chinese (only minding the cultural taboos in your heart, unless you know him/her well enough to see what he/she mind or don't mind). Get to know them as an individual, don't stress cultural differences, and be friendly and welcoming in the languages that are most conducive to open communication.



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Ethnic Minorities' Service

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