

RACIAL EQUALITY IN HONG KONG: WHAT IS THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN THE ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITY?



The Zubin Foundation

Improving the lives of Hong Kong's marginalised ethnic minorities.

www.zubinfoundation.org | Registered Charity IR: 91/12344



The Institute of
Racial Equality
in Hong Kong

an initiative of The Zubin Foundation



Improving the lives of Hong Kong's marginalised ethnic minorities by providing opportunities and reducing suffering

We do this by:

1. Conducting **research**
2. Developing and implementing **impactful projects**
3. Influencing **public policy** to drive systemic change





'The Status of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong 1997-2014'

By Puja Kapai at HKU (commissioned by TZF)

» Major Needs in the Community Identified



1 Women & Girls



2 Opportunity
- Jobs
- Scholarships



3 Children
- Special Needs
- Pre K



4 Representation
- On Statutory and Advisory Bodies
- Policy Recommendations



5 Mental Health
- For adults
- For children



6 Changing Mindsets
- Of EM parents
- Of the majority population



7 COVID Emergency Relief



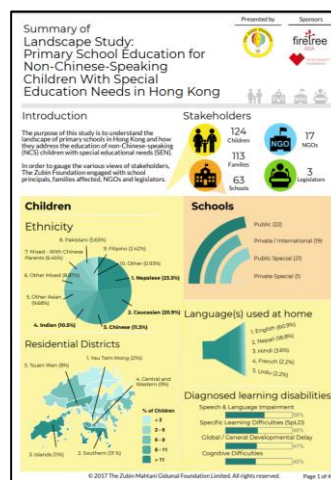
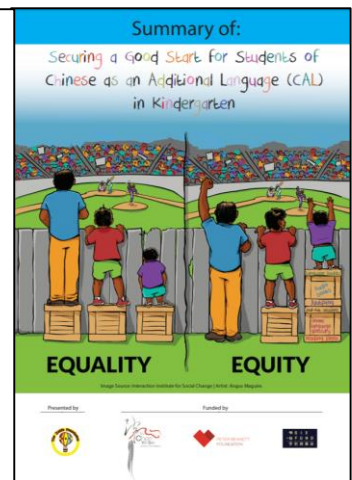
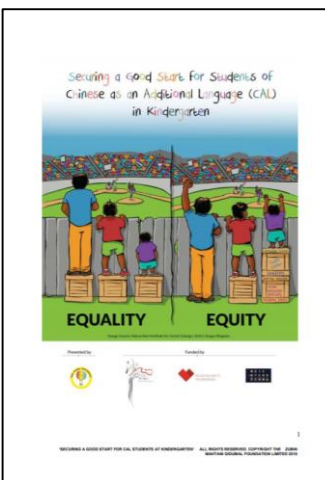
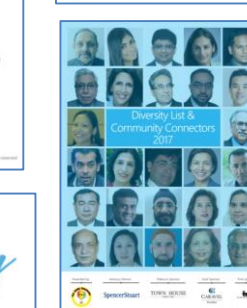
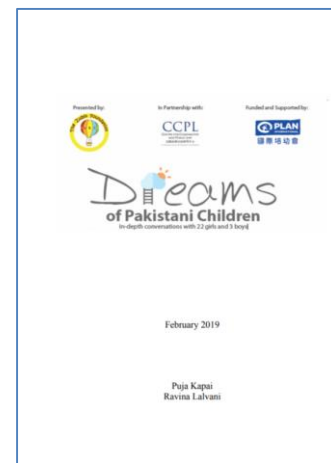
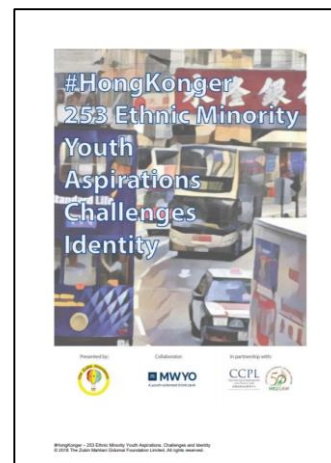
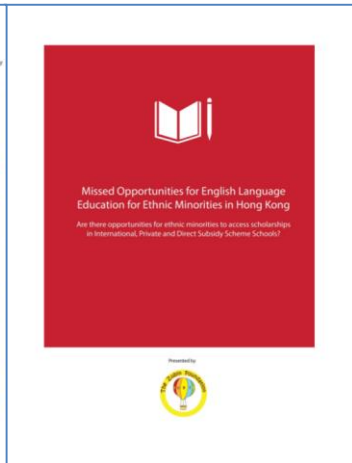
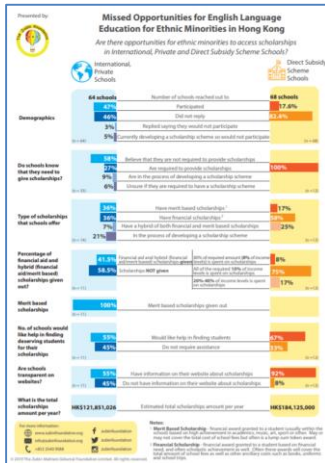
Services and Projects



Women & Girls <i>Providing women and girls with support and skills.</i>	Opportunities Providing opportunities so that EMs may meet their potential	Children Ensuring the most vulnerable children in HK are given a chance.	Representation Including ethnic minority voices in public policy .	Mental Health Ensuring EMs have access to mental health help.	Changing Mindsets Raising awareness of ethnic minorities and their issues in Hong Kong.	Covid -19
Call Mira (Helpline) Desi Girl Friendship Circle (Mentoring) Support Groups for women and girls in crisis	<p style="text-align: center;">Jobs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job matching • Internships • Networking Events • Training • CV writing <p style="text-align: center;">Scholarships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships • Tertiary Institute Scholarship Fair • International School Scholarship Fair 	<p style="text-align: center;">SEN Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart Parenting • Support Groups for parents <p style="text-align: center;">Pre-K children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little Dragon videos 	Diversity Lists Policy Recommendations	EM Well Being Centre (for those 16 years +) EM Well Being Centre for Kids (pending) Age 5 to 15	Let's Talk Mama Papa Institute for Racial Equality in Hong Kong	Care Boxes Period Poverty (Pending)



Research



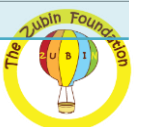
The Institute of Racial Equality Hong Kong

- Conducts research on racial equality in Hong Kong with a focus on ethnic minorities.
- Makes policy recommendations to government.
- Raises awareness through talks and webinars.
- Hosts webinars and talks to corporates, NGOs and others.
- Conducts training for leadership and management - for corporates, NGOs, educational institutes, foundations and academia.
- Assists in race-based issues with companies and other organisations on an advisory basis.



Schedule of Talks

Date	Topic
July 24, 2020 Friday	What you need to know about Hong Kong's ethnic minorities The topics covered will be the ethnic minority landscape, how ethnic minority youth feel about their treatment and ways forward to build an inclusive Hong Kong.
August 24, 2020 Monday	How is Covid-19 impacting ethnic minorities? The disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on poverty and joblessness in Hong Kong's ethnic minority community.
September 25, 2020 Friday	What is the Status of Women and Girls in the ethnic minority community? The Status of Ethnic Minority Women and Girls and CALL MIRA, the only helpline for women and girls in crisis
October 9, 2020	Launch of Diversity List: Women's Voices 24 Women to Watch and the Impact that ethnic minority women make across Hong Kong.
October 23, 2020	Marginalised children in the EM community including Special Education Needs (SEN) The issues faced by EM children and ethnic minorities parents of special needs children.



Agenda

The Status of Ethnic Minority Women and Girls in Hong Kong

- Background
- Dreams of Pakistani Children*
- Call Mira, helpline
- Period Poverty
- Q&A

* This research was launched in 2017 and was authored by Puja Kapai and Ravina Lalvani. Centre for Comparative and Public Law, The University of Hong Kong and The Zubin Foundation. Full report available at: https://fec852e0-797f-4982-8bed-d091603e2956.filesusr.com/ugd/da2d17_63dd2923ca7f412b9e3a2c4a24baf58b.pdf

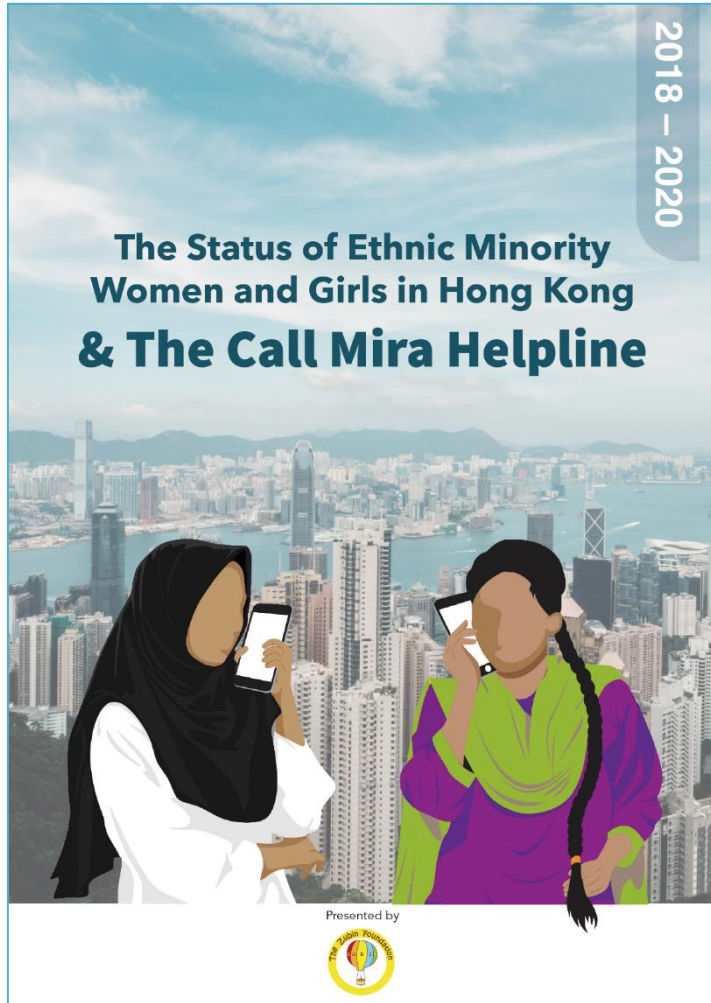


A Tribute to My Mother

Mrs. Mira Mahtani



The Status of Ethnic Minorities Women and Girls in Hong Kong, 2020

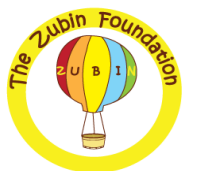


Written by Shalini Mahtani and Ravina Lalvani
September 2020

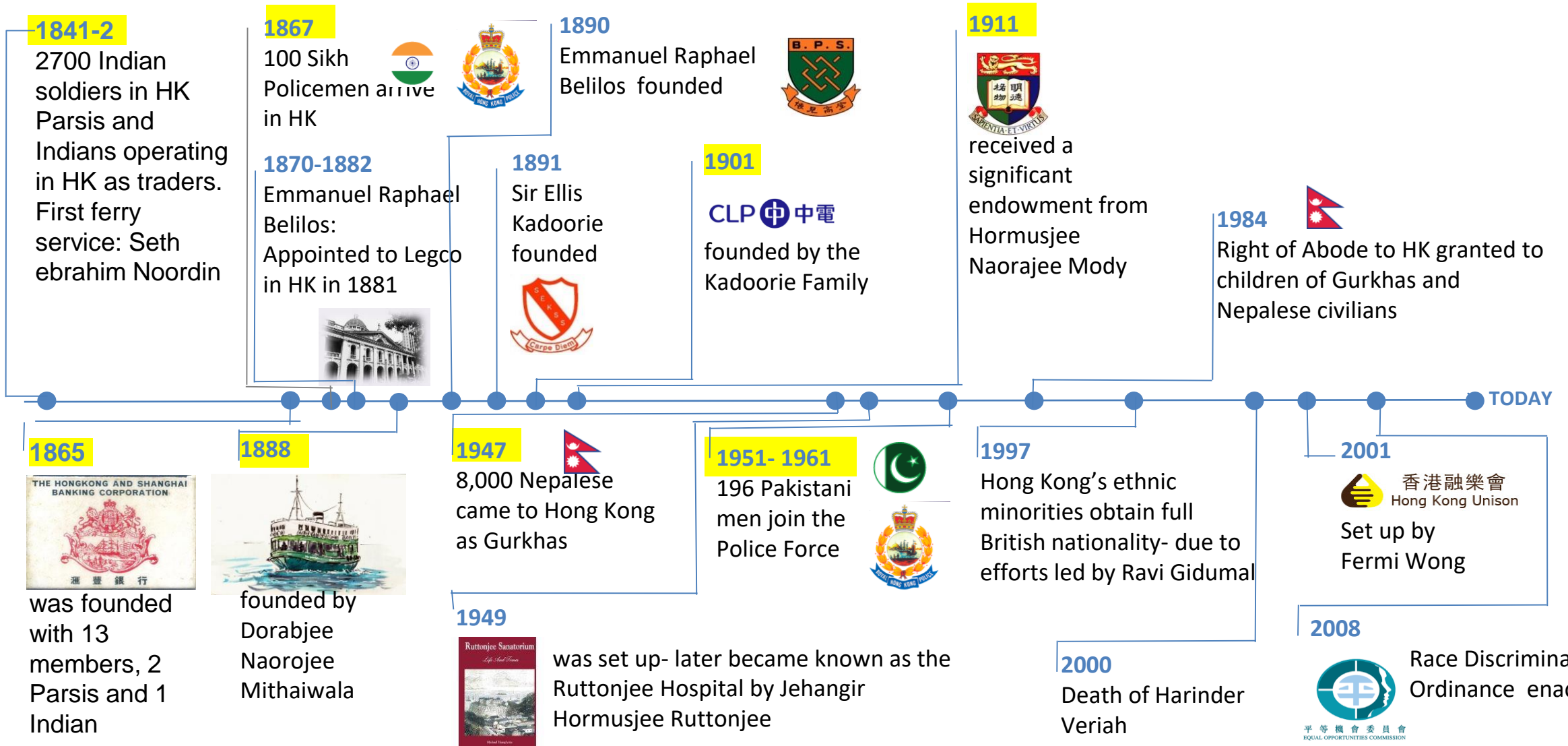
Full report available for free:
<https://www.zubinfoundation.org/research>



Background

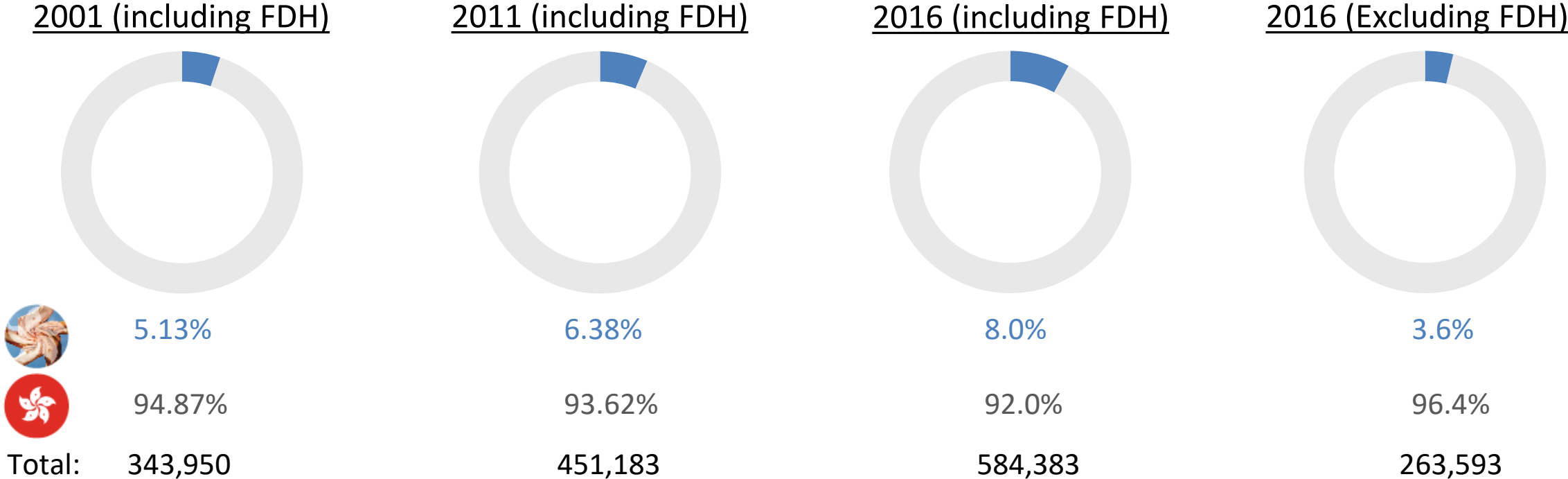


History



Size of Population

FDH: Foreign Domestic Helpers



Source: Hong Kong Census; Nationality and Ethnicity, 2016.

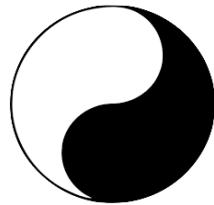


Breakdown of Population and Terminology

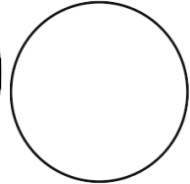
Excluding Foreign Domestic Helpers

Referred to by the general public as
" Ethnic Minorities "

Mixed/Other



Caucasian



Indian



Nepalese



Filipino



Pakistani



Japanese



Thai



Indonesian



Total	76,388	58,209	32,935	32,935	20,527	18,094	9,976	8,468	7,643	6,752,202
Female population	42,684	21,193	15,434	11,942	12,657	7,706	5,904	7,156	2,537	3,513,259
Percentage	55.8%	36.5%	46.9	47.5%	61.7%	42.6%	46.9%	84.5%	77.8%	52%

Total Female EM Population: 127,213

Total EM population: 263,593

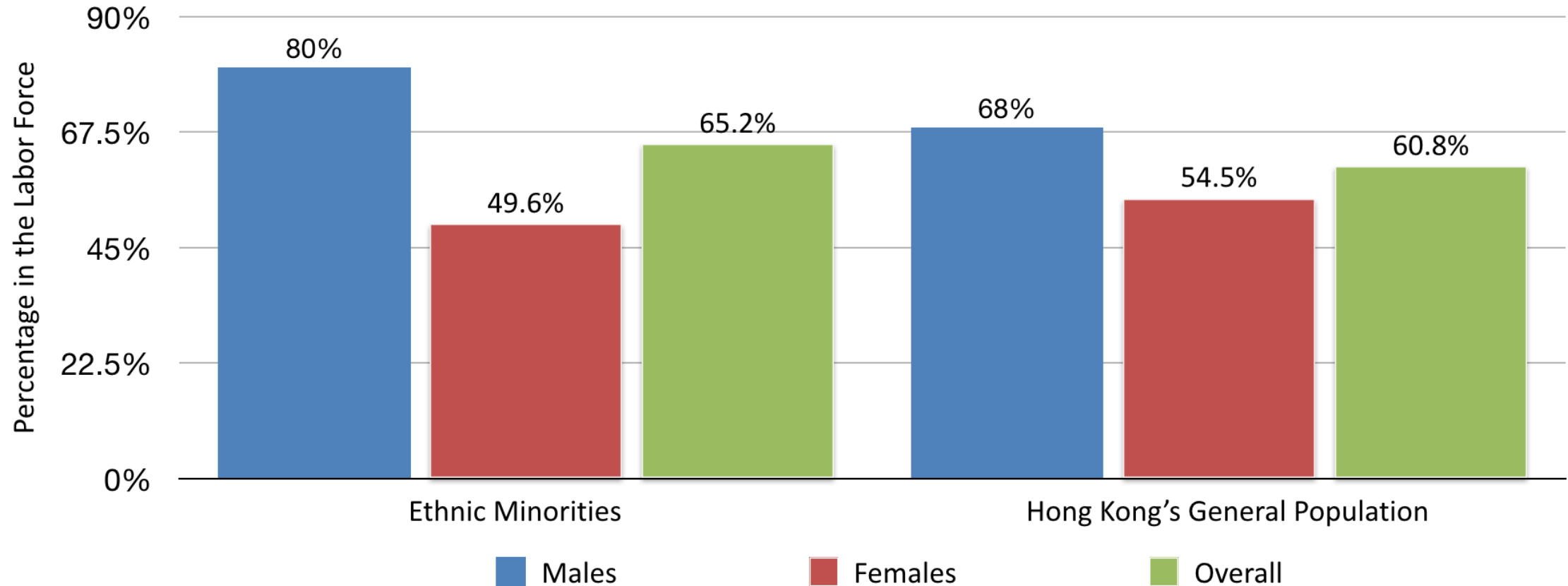
Source: Hong Kong Census; Nationality and Ethnicity, 2016.



Labor Force Participation Rate

Excluding Foreign Domestic Helpers

Labor Force Participation Rate (%)

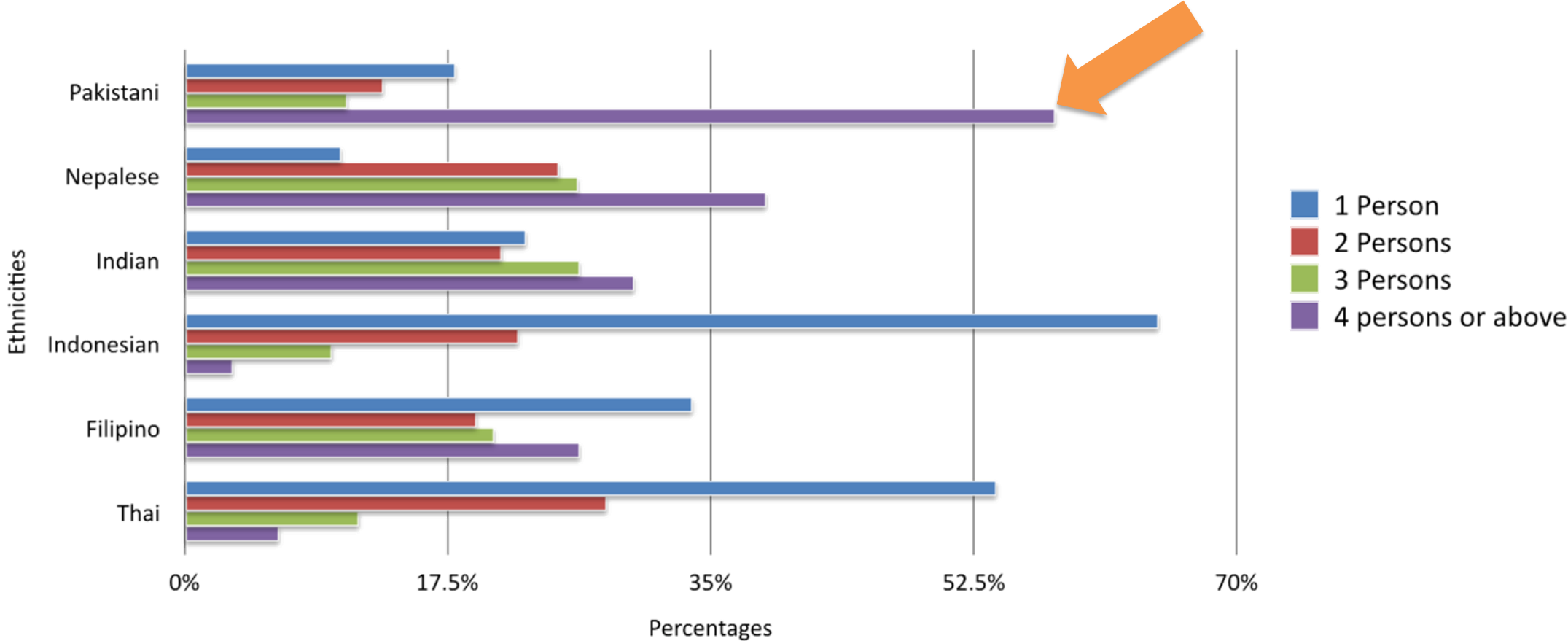


Source: Thematic Report: Ethnic Minorities 2016; Table 3.3



Size of Domestic Households

Total Number of Domestic Households Among 6 Ethnic Minority Groups, 2016

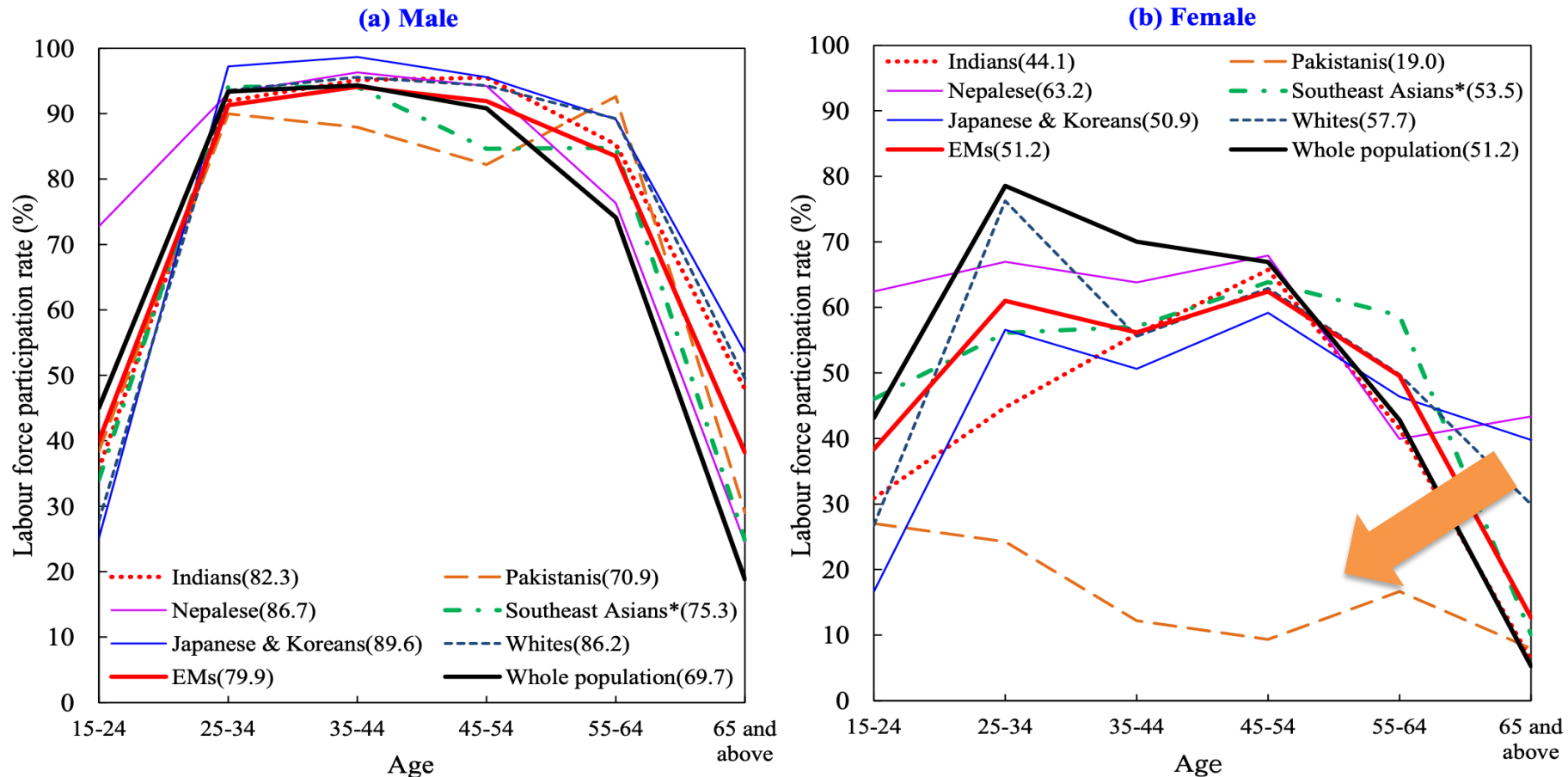


Education Levels

Educational Attainment	Indian Households		Pakistani Households		Nepalese Households		All Hong Kong Households	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
No schooling Pre-primary	9%	13%	14%	15%	10%	13%	8%	12%
Primary and below	8%	13%	21%	28%	11%	10%	17%	19%
Lower secondary	11%	8%	21%	21%	19%	15%	18%	15%
Upper secondary	22%	22%	30%	21%	48%	49%	26%	26%
Total Secondary or below	50%	56%	86%	85%	88%	87%	69%	72%
Post-secondary	50%	44%	14%	15%	12%	13%	31%	28%



Labour Force Participation Rate



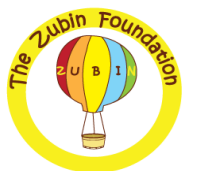
Notes: () Figures in parentheses denote the overall labour force participation rate of the corresponding gender and ethnic group.

(*) Southeast Asians include Thais, Filipinos, Indonesian and Vietnamese only.





Dreams of Pakistani Children, 2017



The Research

- Research conducted in 2017
- First piece of research in Hong Kong on this subject
- Children belong to three government schools
- Age between 14 to 22
- Number of girls: 22
- Number of boys: 3



1. Culture: Not All Girls are the Same



“Our culture is different, those born here in Hong Kong are different Muslims, they are not very religious, they don’t follow Islam.”

While religion plays a significant role, based on this data pool, it appears to be practiced differently between Hong Kong-born Pakistanis compared with Pakistani-born Pakistanis.



2. Parents Treat Boys and Girls Differently



“During exam time, I have to help my mother with house chores, finish by 9pm and study until 12am. It’s tough.”



“Boys have more freedom. I was engaged at an early age, my brother was not.”



“Girls have more restrictions, cannot stay out late, cannot work in certain professions, restrictions on clothing and making friends.”



3. Girls have Dreams to Work but Face Barriers



“I wish to become either an airhostess or work in a parlour. My parents don't think it's good for girls to become an airhostess need family support to do things.”



“I wish to become a fashion designer, but not allowed; it does not suit our people's culture. Will have to show case clothes that are not accepted by my culture and society.”



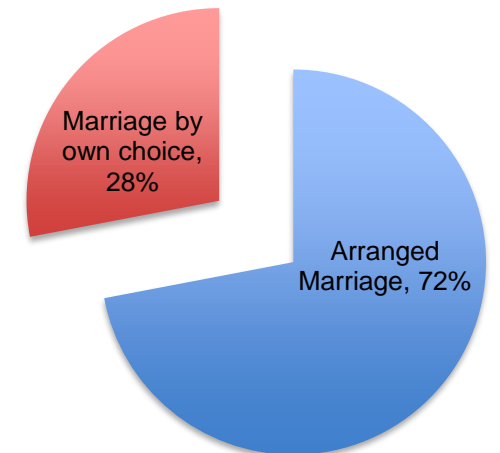
4. Girls Get Engaged and Married Young

Forced Marriage vs Arranged Marriage

In a Forced marriage, the girl has no choice. In an arranged marriage, parents make an introduction to a potential spouse and the girl has a choice.

For many Pakistani girls the typical age for engagement is 14-15 and the typical age for marriage is 18-22

Family Marriage Expectations (n=25)



5. Forced Marriage Diminishes a Girl

“

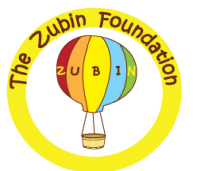
“I rather be called a brown girl than be asked, do you marry at a young age.”

“

“At first they had chosen someone for me, were pushing me say yes then scaring me if I said no. I felt useless after my engagement that I couldn't stop it or stand up for myself – felt so demotivated, lost focus after my engagement.”



CALL MIRA: Helpline for women and girls in Hindi, Urdu and English August 2018 to June 2020





Call Mira 9682 3100

Helpline with services offered in English, Hindi, and Urdu

10 AM to 4 PM from Monday to Friday except public holidays



Background

- Call Mira, only helpline for women and girls in crisis in the ethnic minority community. In Hindi, Urdu and English
- Operates 5 days a week from 10am to 4pm. Does not operate on weekends and on public holidays.
- Provides emotional support as a friend would. “Mira” is a name of your friend.
- Internal Infrastructure to support the callers: Call Responders, Ethnic Minority Well- Being Centre (counselling) and Opportunity Bank (jobs)
- External Infrastructure: Handholders, Legal Leads, NGOs.



The Research

- 726 callers have called Call Mira between August 2018 and June 2020.
- We have data on 707 of the 726 women.
- There have been 1316 calls in total.
- This is the only data on women in the ethnic minority in crisis in Hong Kong.



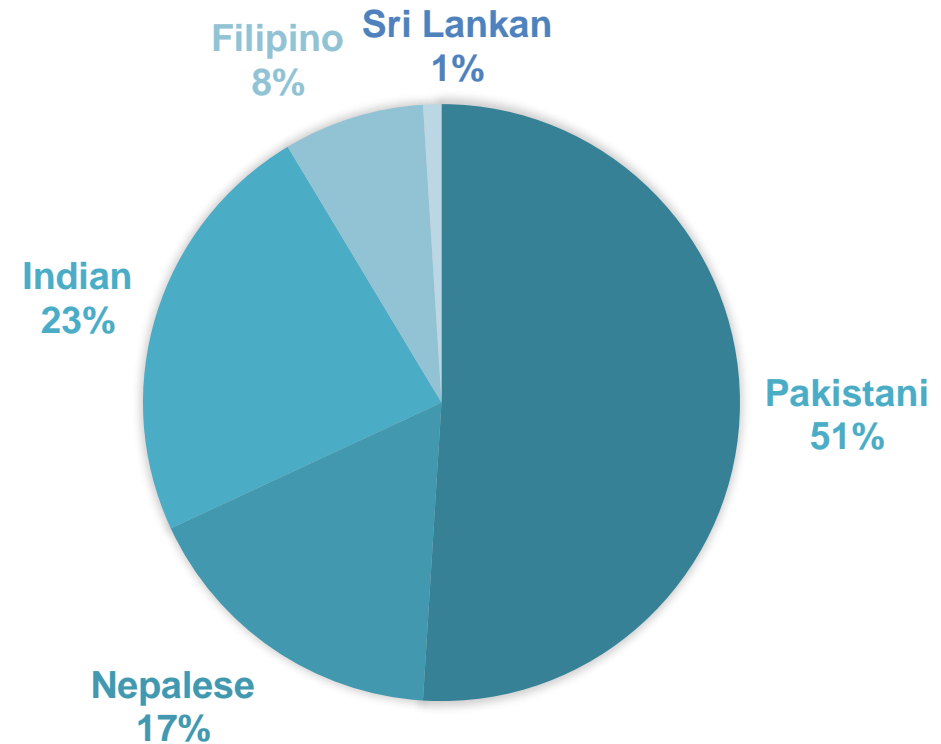
1. Women of All Ethnicities have Problems

Call Mira Service Users Ethnicities

From August 2018 - June 2020

N=707

CALL MIRA SERVICE USERS ETHNICITY (N=707)



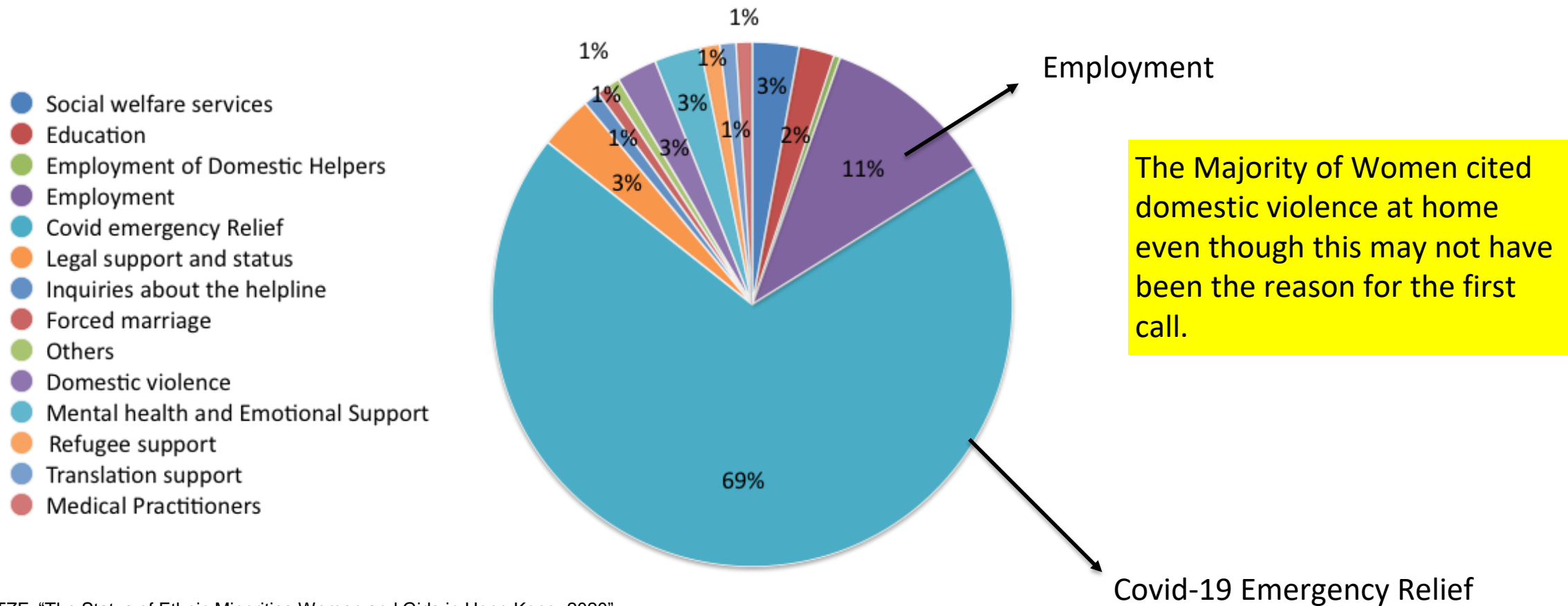
Source: TZF; "The Status of Ethnic Minorities Women and Girls in Hong Kong, 2020".



2. Domestic Violence, COVID and Unemployment: Top 3 Issues

Reason for the FIRST call

N=726 callers



Source: TZF; "The Status of Ethnic Minorities Women and Girls in Hong Kong, 2020".

3. Women Lack Legal Information



“Son is being verbally abusive, threatening to send me back to India by not extending my dependent visa. I work as a street cleaner and give him money. Still he does not respect me. Please Mira, can you call me.”



“I have left home, I’m at a shelter home, received your number from a friend. I would like support as I want to file for a divorce but don’t know of a lawyer.”



“My husband sent me back to Pakistan along with my children in June 2019. He has not spoken with me since. I’m on a dependent visa which has expired and want to return to Hong Kong so that my children will have a better future. I would like him to pay for my childrens’ expenses but he does not give anything. I’m not sure who to talk to or how to return to Hong Kong.”



4. Husbands are a Problem

- Domestic violence is a big problem with husbands emotionally and physically abusing the wife.
- Men sometimes have extra marital affairs and disappear with another woman. Sometimes (moreso), men have another family with someone from a different ethnicity.
- Alcohol is a problem with all ethnicities.



5. Women have No One Else to Speak to

- Many Call Mira service users have become regular callers
- One caller has called the helpline approximately 75 times. She refers to Call Mira as her, “family and support in Hong Kong.”



“Mira I’m just calling to say hello,
haven’t spoken to you in a while and
was thinking about you.”



6. Forced Marriage is More Common than We Think



“...my parents want me to marry a boy in Pakistan but I’m in a relationship with another Pakistani boy in Hong Kong. If I leave home, what are my options. Also, please don’t call me, I will call you. My parents check my phone.”

- The prevalence of forced marriage has increased because of Covid-19. Girls are increasingly being seen as a financial burden and parents are stopping their children from going into tertiary education.



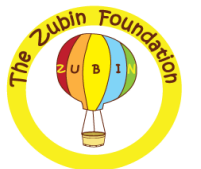
7. Children are Invisible Victims

- We have heard and observed from the many calls received by mothers that most often the invisible victims are children.
- Mothers have cited concerns about:
 - About children witnessing abuse
 - Children at risk of abuse
 - Children not wanting to stay alone at home with their fathers
 - Children being scared of their fathers





Period Poverty



Background

- Covid has had a big impact on ethnic minority women and we wanted to understand to what extent, if any, if period poverty is a problem in the community.



The Research

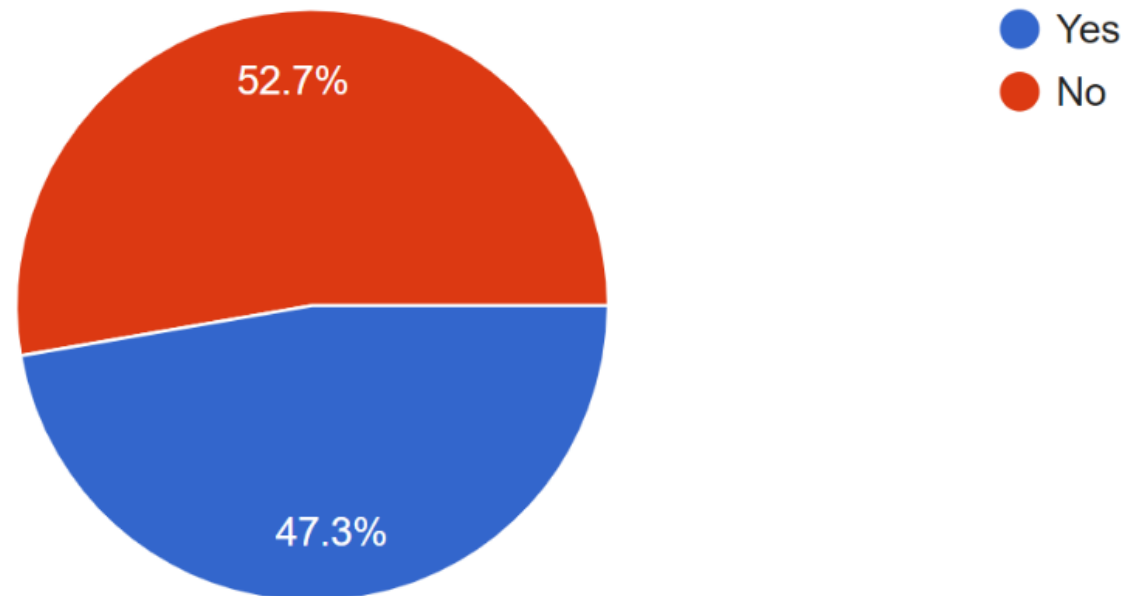
- Facebook to outreach to ethnic minority women and girls
- Survey was conducted in July 2020
- There were 288 respondents, 258 female and 30 male
- In terms of ethnicity, Pakistani (43%), Indian (22.9%), and Nepalese (15.5%)
- In terms of age, 19 to 24, (34.1%), followed by ages 25 to 29, (17.1%), and ages 35 to 39, (14%)
- In terms of occupation, 34.9% were housewives, 33.7% were students, and 31.4% were working or were in-between jobs
- We expect that the situation may be worse



1. Sanitary Products are Unaffordable

Do you feel like sanitary products are affordable?

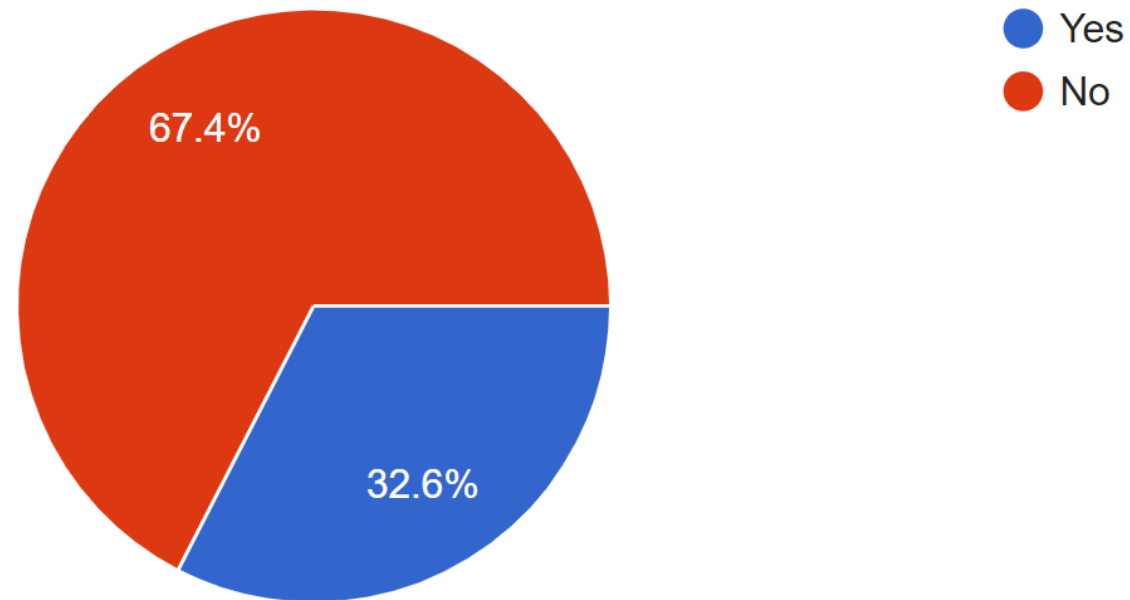
N=258



2. Financial Difficulties are a Barrier

Have you ever been unable to afford sanitary products due to financial difficulties?

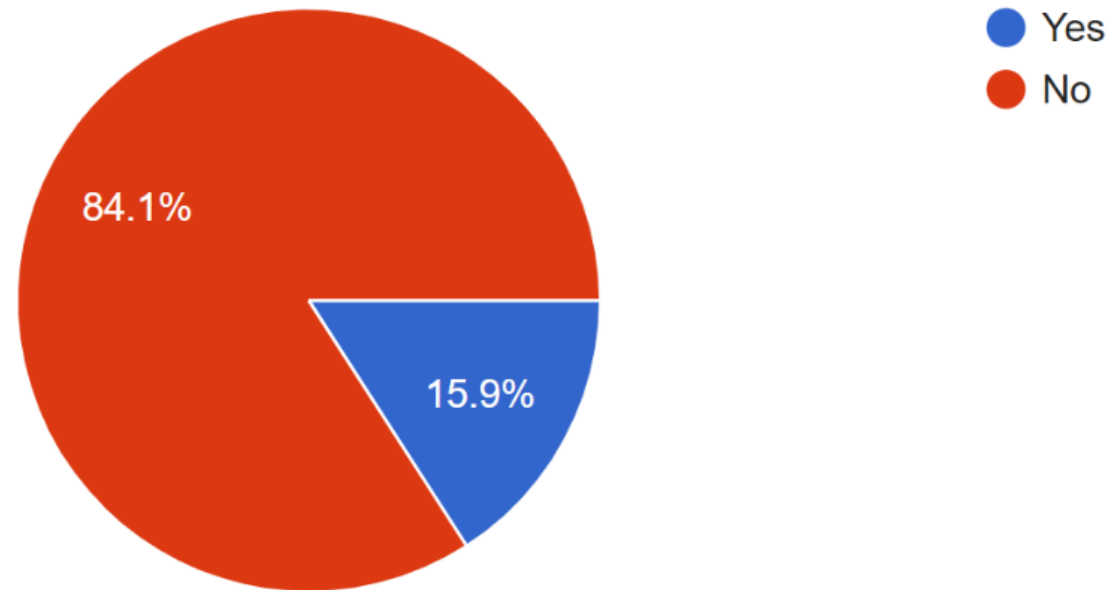
N=258



3. Absenteeism is a Problem

Have you ever missed school/education/work, due to not being able to access sanitary products?

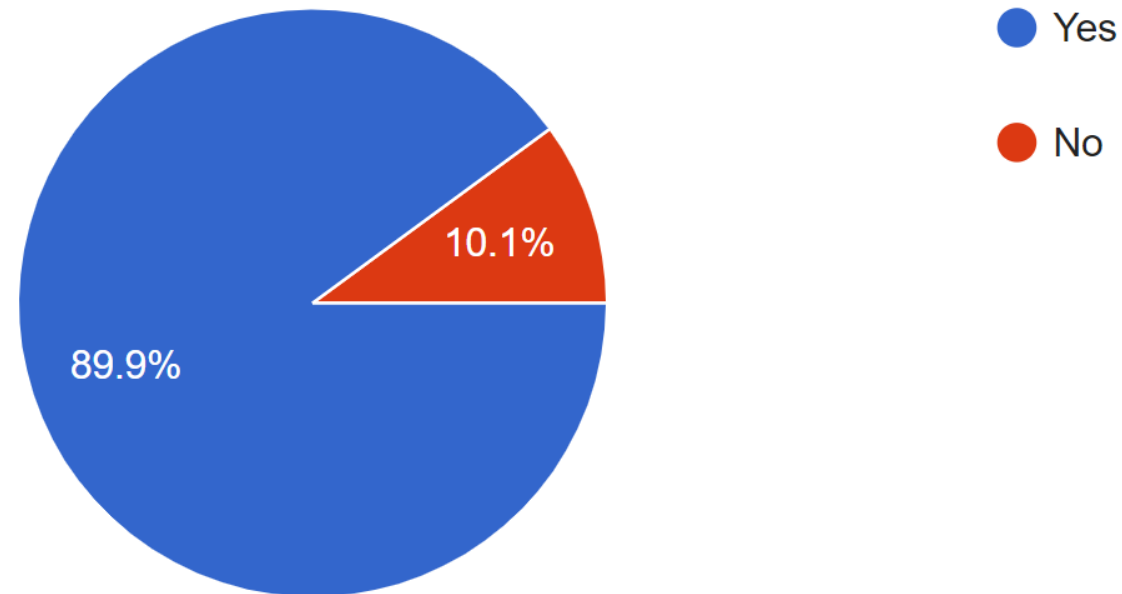
N=258



4. Women would Benefit from Free Sanitary Products

Do you think you will benefit if you have access to free sanitary products?

N=258



5. Free Products Would Relieve the Financial Burden

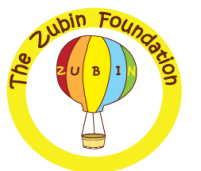
Benefits from free-of-charge sanitary products N=229

	Numbers of respondents (and percentage)
I would be happier	172 (75%)
My family would have less financial burden	148 (65%)
I would meet my family/friends more	24 (15%)
I would be absent from school less	7 (3%)
I would be absent from work less	4 (2%)





Final thoughts



Some Issues are Difficult to Address



Not all girls are the same



Parents treat boys and girls differently



Girls have dreams to work but face barriers



Girls get engaged and married young



Forced marriage diminishes a girl



Forced marriage is more common than we think



Women of All Ethnicities have Problems



Domestic Violence, Covid and Employment:
Top 3 issues



Women Lack Legal Information



Husbands are a Problem



Women have no one else to speak to



Sanitary Napkins are unaffordable



Absenteeism is a problem



Women would benefit from Free Sanitary Products



Free Products would Relieve the Financial Burden



**Financial
Dependency**



Attitudes



Education



You Can All Help

- The Period Care Box Project
 - The pads
 - The education – 3 sessions
 - Access to our emotional support through Call Mira
- Sponsor HK\$1,200 for a full-year (12 month) support
- Donate now:
 - <https://www.zubinfoundation.org/donate>



#We Help Because We Can

- Drop in Legal Centre
- Support Groups for Women in Crisis
- Scholarships
- Ethnic Minority Well-being Centre



See You on 9 October, 2020

Launch of Diversity List: Women's Voices

- Celebrating the 5-year impact of Diversity List
- 24 ethnic minority women to watch
- The impact of ethnic minority women make across Hong Kong



Mrs. Indra Banga
Director
Caravel Group
(Keynote Speaker)



Ms. Shalini Sujanani
Managing Director
ING Bank



Ms. Arfeen Bibi
Teacher and PhD
Candidate



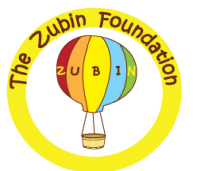
Dr. Theresa Cunanan
Senior Lecturer
Hong Kong Baptist
University

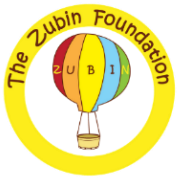


Ms. Lilly
Social Media Guru &
Youtuber



Q&A





The Institute of
Racial Equality
in Hong Kong

an initiative of The Zubin Foundation

Thank you!

With thanks to Sanaya Parekh, 2020 summer intern for assistance with the presentation slides.

For further information, please contact Shalini Mahtani at mummy@zubinfooundation.org

Disclaimer:

All information provided in this document is intended for discussion purposes only and is not in the nature of advice. The Zubin Mahtani Gidumal Foundation Limited reserves the right to make alterations to any of its documents without notice. All rights reserved. The Zubin Mahtani Gidumal Foundation Limited ©2020

