

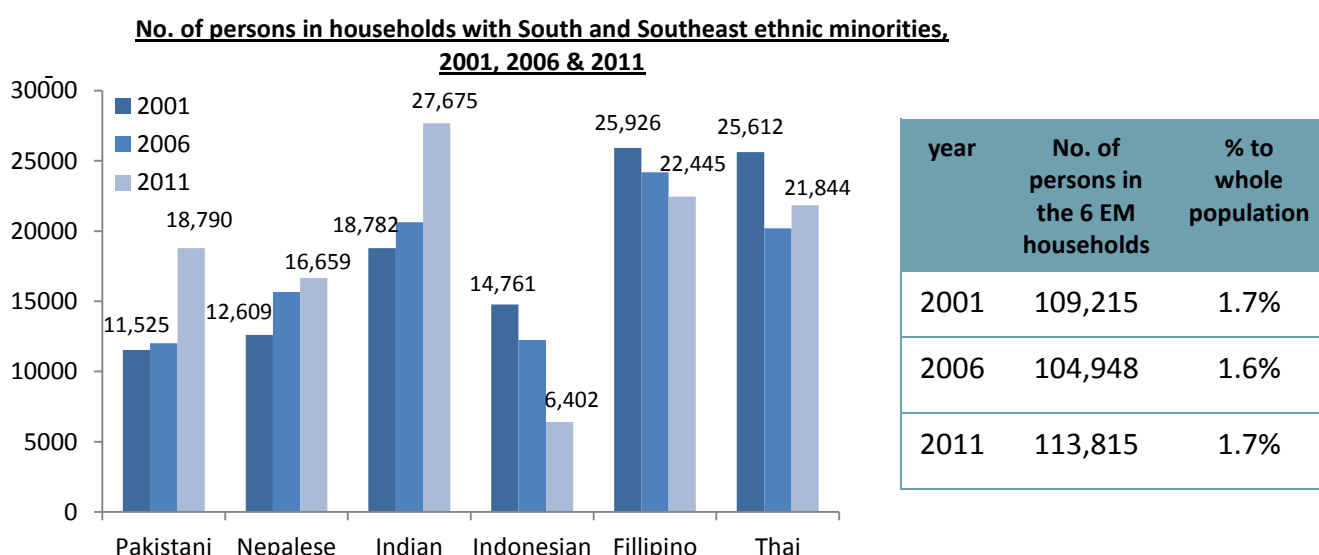
**The Hong Kong Council of Social Service
Poverty Situation of South and Southeast Asian
Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong**

1. Background

- There is increasing concern on how to enhance the social inclusion and allow the ethnic minorities (EM) to realize their potentials in order to participate fully in the society.
- All these years, there were cases showing EM groups face difficulties in livelihood, education and employment.
- The “Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2012” recently released by government did not include statistics and analyses on the poverty situation of EM groups, and hence cannot give reference for the public and the government to work on related policies and measures for improvement.
- Based on data from 2001, 2006 and 2011 Population Census, HKCSS adopted poverty line (50% of median domestic household income) to analyze the poverty situation of 6 EM groups in Hong Kong, and to suggest policy recommendations.

2. Number of persons and household size in South and Southeast Asian households in Hong Kong

- There was 113,815 persons in 36,298 South and Southeast Asians households¹, in 2011. It consisted of 1.7% of the total population in Hong Kong².
- There was an increase in number of persons in South and South East Asian households from 2001 to 2011 (from 109,215 increased to 133,815); there was an increase in the number of Pakistanis, Nepalese and Indians in these households, while there was a decrease in number of Indonesian, Filipinos and Thai people.



¹ Six South and Southeast Asians ethnic minority groups in this study refer to Pakistani, Nepalese, Indian, Indonesian, Filipino and Thai. Households of South and Southeast Asians include households with at least 1 member of South or Southeast Asian ethnic minorities.

² Figures in this study do not include foreign domestic helpers.

- In 2011, except for the Indonesian, a large proportion of South and Southeast Asian EM households were with 4 persons or above.

Number of domestic households by ethnicities and by household size, 2011					
	1-person	2-person	3-person	4-person or above	Total
Pakistani	576(12.5%)	618(13.4%)	570(12.4%)	2,840(61.7%)	4,604(100%)
Nepalese	546(10.9%)	952(19.0%)	1,277(25.5%)	2,227(44.5%)	5,002(100%)
Indian	1,657(17.7%)	2,146(23.0%)	2,274(24.3%)	3,262(34.9%)	9,339(100%)
Indonesian	485(20.0%)	889(36.6%)	455(18.8%)	597(24.6%)	2,426(100%)
Filipino	1,535(19.6%)	2,120(27.1%)	1,713(21.9%)	2,452(31.4%)	7,820(100%)
Thai	800(11.3%)	1,911(26.9%)	1,791(25.2%)	2,605(36.7%)	7,107(100%)
Whole Population	422,676(17.9%)	615,762(26.0%)	613,468(25.9%)	715,296(30.2%)	2,367,202(100%)

- In 2011, the median monthly income from main employment of the South and Southeast Asian groups, except Indian, was lower than that (\$12,000) of the whole population.

Median monthly income from main employment by ethnicity and by sex, 2011		
Ethnicities	Sex	Median monthly income from main employment(HK\$) (excluding foreign domestic helpers)
Pakistani	Male	10,000
	Female	10,000
	Both sexes	10,000
Nepalese	Male	12,000
	Female	8,000
	Both sexes	10,000
Indian	Male	25,500
	Female	15,000
	Both sexes	22,500
Indonesian	Male	15,000
	Female	7,000
	Both sexes	8,000
Filipino	Male	13,000
	Female	9,000
	Both sexes	10,000
Thai	Male	12,500
	Female	7,800
	Both sexes	8,500
Whole working Population	Male	13,000
	Female	10,900
	Both sexes	12,000

- Among the Pakistanis, the household income did not rise significantly when the household size increased; and the median monthly household income of large households was lower than the figure of the whole population in Hong Kong. The

Pakistanis' median monthly income from main employment was \$10,000 - probably reflecting that there was/were only 1 or 2 breadwinner(s) in the families.

- We note that the median monthly household income of Indians was higher than that of the whole population. It showed that a proportion of Indians had higher income³. We noted that the income difference was large between the high income and the low income group of Indian households. However, the analysis that followed shows there were also Indian households living in poverty.

Median monthly household income by household size of EM groups, 2011				
	1-person	2-person	3-person	4-person or above
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Pakistani	9,000	11,020	12,000	13,000
Nepalese	11,500	19,000	21,000	25,700
Indian	38,750	38,000	52,000	40,000
Indonesian	5,000	10,000	18,600	30,000
Filipino	10,000	19,500	32,750	30,000
Thai	9,000	13,000	18,000	20,600
Whole population	8,500	16,040	23,000	28,000

3. The poverty population and poverty rate of the 6 EM groups⁴

- The below table shows the poverty rate and the poverty population in households of the 6 EM groups in 2011. The poverty rate of Pakistanis (51.1%), Indonesian (29.4%) and Thai (27.4%) was higher than that (20.4%) in the whole population, while that of Nepalese (16.4%), Indian (11.4%) and Filipino (17.1%) was lower than the figure of the whole population.
- The Pakistani group was with highest poverty rate of 51.1%, with 9,607 people living in low income households. Indian was the group with lowest poverty rate of 11.4%. It was noted that the income disparity among high income and low income group of Indians was high. The figure showed there were still 3,162 Indians living in low income families.

³ In 2011, there was 34.9% of Indian had median monthly income from main employment higher than HK\$30,000, which was higher than the whole population of 15.2%. Source: 2011 Population Census Thematic Report: Ethnic Minorities

⁴ Low-income households refer to those domestic households with monthly household income less than or equal to half of the median monthly domestic household income of the corresponding household sizes. The poverty line in 2011: 1-person household - \$4,250; 2-person household - \$8,020; 3-person household - \$11,500; 4-person household - \$14,000.

	No. of low income households (household poverty rate)	No. of persons in low income households (poverty rate)
Pakistani	2,207 (47.9%)	9,607(51.1%)
Nepalese	731 (14.6%)	2,728 (16.4%)
Indian	940 (10.1%)	3,162 (11.4%)
Indonesian	885 (36.5%)	1,880 (29.4%)
Filipino	1,416 (18.1%)	3,834 (17.1%)
Thai	1,921 (27.0%)	5,989 (27.4%)
Overall of South and Southeast Asian groups	8,100 (22.3%)	27,200 (23.9%)
Whole population of HK	547,215 (23.1%)	1,356,593 (20.4%)

- Comparing the figures of 2011 to 2001, the poverty rate of EM groups deteriorated, it rose from 17.3% in 2001 to 23.9% in 2011, higher than the figure of Hong Kong as whole. For Pakistanis, the poverty rate even rose from 27.4% in 2001 to 51.1% in 2011.

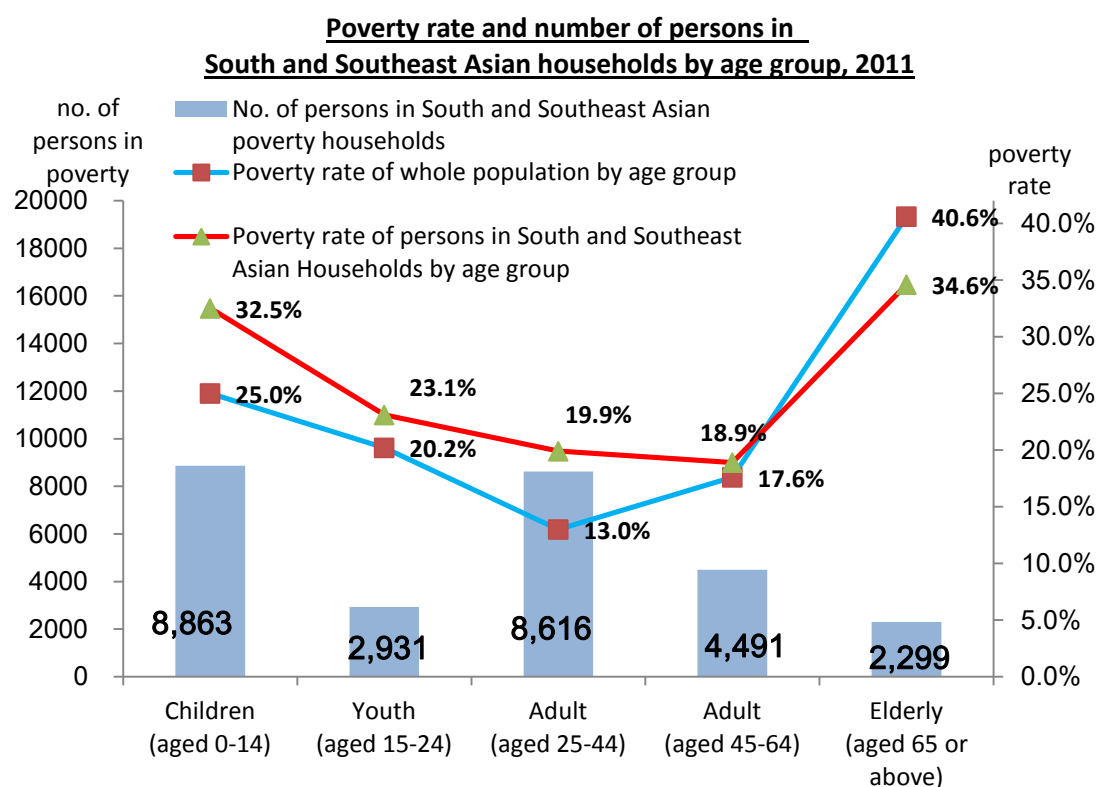
	2001	2006	2011	Comparing 2011 with 2001
Pakistani	27.4%	35.4%	51.1%	↑
Nepalese	3.7%	17.0%	16.4%	↑
Indian	7.9%	13.3%	11.4%	↑
Indonesian	31.9%	26.0%	29.4%	↓
Filipino	11.6%	16.8%	17.1%	↑
Thai	23.6%	22.8%	27.4%	↑
Overall of South and Southeast Asian groups	17.3%	20.5%	23.9%	↑
Whole population of HK	19.1%	20.5%	20.4%	↑

4. Poverty rate by age

- **Children is the group with largest poverty population.** In 2011, there were 8,863 children aged below 15 living in low income families (the poverty rate was 32.5%), which means around one out of 3 EM children was living in low income households.
- **Elderly is the group with highest poverty rate (34.6%),** with 2,299 elderly lived in

low income households. Youth poverty rate was 23.1%, with 2,931 youth in poverty; Poverty rate of Adults aged 25- 44 is 19.9%, with 8,616 of them living in poverty; and adults aged 45-64 were with the lowest poverty rate of 18.9%, with 4,491 persons living in poverty households.

- Except the elderly group (aged 65 or above), the poverty rate of all other age groups was higher than that of the whole population; and the overall poverty rate by age groups of in 2011 was worse than that of 2001.



<u>Poverty rate and number of persons in South and Southeast Asian households by age group, 2001, 2006 & 2011</u>			
	2001	2006	2011
Children (aged 0-14)	5,706 (23.7%)	6,613 (27.6%)	8,863 (32.5%)
Youth (aged 15-24)	2,124 (14.0%)	1,934 (18.2%)	2,931 (23.1%)
Adult (aged 25-44)	6,574 (14.1%)	7,011 (16.0%)	8,616 (19.9%)
Adult (aged 45-64)	3,255 (17.5%)	4,039 (19.2%)	4,491 (18.9%)
Elderly (aged 65 or above)	1,209 (26.1%)	1,921 (34.7%)	2,299 (34.6%)
Overall of the 6 South and Southeast Asian groups	18,868 (17.3%)	21,518 (20.5%)	27,200 (23.9%)

5. Working Poor Households

In 2011, 5,099 South and Southeast Asian households in poverty have at least 1 working member

- In 2011, the working poor situation of the EM groups was more serious than that of HK as a whole.
- Among 8,100 low income households, there were 5,099 households with at least 1 employed member. The working poor rate among low income households was 63%, which was higher than the figure (41%) as a whole in Hong Kong. The figures reflect the working poverty problem is serious among the EM groups.

	Pakistani	Nepalese	Indian	Indonesian	Filipino	Thai	Overall of South and Southeast Asian groups	Whole population of HK
(a) No. of low income households with at least 1 employed member	1,513	514	555	504	817	1,196	5,099	224,324
(b) No. of low income households	2,207	731	940	885	1,416	1,921	8,100	547,215
Percentage of low income households with at least 1 working member ((a) / (b))	68.6%	70.3%	59.0%	56.9%	57.7%	62.3%	63.0%	41.0%

6. Number of persons from low income South and Southeast Asian households by district

- The below table shows the number of persons in low income households by districts. Districts with more than 1,000 poverty population includes: Eastern, Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon City, Wong Tai Sin, Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Island.
- Different ethnic minority groups stay in different districts. For example, more Pakistanis are living in Kwai Tsing & Yuen Long, etc and Nepalese are living in Yau Tsim Mong.

Number of persons from low income EM households in 18 districts, 2011							
	Pakistani	Nepalese	Indian	Indonesian	Filipino	Thai	Overall
Central and Western	349	-	88	30	345	20	832
Wanchai	46	242	40	6	23	103	460
Eastern	1,128	18	186	123	299	139	1,893
Southern	349	-	136	37	131	249	902
Yau Tsim Mong	1,098	1,186	246	225	359	332	3,446
Sham Shui Po	564	-	72	307	110	292	1,345
Kowloon City	425	-	459	270	203	504	1,861
Wong Tai Sin	570	-	65	55	90	569	1,349
Kwun Tong	412	40	445	112	400	898	2,307
Kwai Tsing	1,345	48	331	28	199	482	2,433
Tseun Wan	163	117	144	34	16	80	554
Tuen Mun	609	44	344	112	185	265	1,559
Yuen Long	1,388	878	161	212	514	595	3,748
Northern	121	-	-	26	18	198	363
Tai Po	10	-	78	68	50	581	787
Shatin	315	-	123	10	15	290	753
Sai Kung	441	-	116	79	69	196	901
Island	274	155	68	146	808	196	1,647
Total	9,607	2,728	3,162	1,880	3,834	5,989	27,200*

*The column does not add up to the total of the rows due to statistical reason.

7. Summary of Findings

- ◆ The poverty situation of South and Southeast Asian households was more serious than that of the whole population. Comparing the figures of the past decade (2011 from 2001), there was increase in the number and the poverty rate of low income South and Southeast Asian ethnic minority groups.
- ◆ Children was the group with largest poverty population. In 2011, there were 8,863 children below 15 living in low income families (the poverty rate is 32.5%), which means around one out of 3 EM children were living in poverty households. The poverty rate by age group in 2011 was worse than that in 2001.
- ◆ The working poor situation among low income South and Southeast Asians is serious. Working families with more dependent children and engaging in low income jobs may make it difficult for these families to move out of poverty.
- ◆ Different ethnic groups stay in different districts. Districts with more than 1,000 poverty population include: Eastern, Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po, Kowloon City, Wong Tai Sin, Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Island.

8. Recommendations

EM groups face difficulties in livelihood, education and employment. Language barrier is the key factor affecting their education, employment and upward mobility.

8.1 Increase language and vocational training and job opportunities for EMs

- Recommend Employees Retraining Board and the Construction Industry Council, etc, to improve or to increase training and retraining for the EM; support them to increase language capacity and achieve higher professional standard; and for instance, to provide translation in existing courses; also to encourage employers to allow EM employees to join part-time day release courses on Chinese language (e.g. to provide subsidies for employers to do so).
- Labour Department and NGOs to provide in-depth employment assistance for EM groups including vocational counseling, job-matching, referral of jobs and follow up.
- Employers can review the job requirement of Chinese language in existing posts, consider to adjust the job requirement of Chinese language if it is set at too high level, so as to increase job opportunities for EM groups.

8.2 Support EM students

Ensure support for learning Chinese language starting from pre-primary education

- The learning of language for children should start early at the pre-primary stage. It is recommended to develop an encouraging environment and offer effective assistance in Chinese language learning for EM students and their parents. Also, workshops should be conducted to assist parents of EM students to help them understand the culture and education system in Hong Kong.

Encourage the inclusion of EM students in mainstream schools; strengthen support to schools with EM Students

- The Education Bureau can strengthen support to schools with non-Chinese speaking students, including provide resources to employ teaching assistants; developing Chinese curriculum that suits the learning need of NCS students, with teaching materials and assessment tools; also offer support to non-Chinese speaking students and their parents.
- Decrease the number of designated schools in long term; some of the designated schools can be served as transition for newly arrived EM students.

Develop “Chinese as a Second Language ” curriculum in order to enhance the Chinese learning capability of EM students and to meet the requirement for future study and employment

- The Education Bureau should develop “Chinese as a Second Language ” curriculum with required teaching materials and assessment tools, provide

learning ladder for EM students to achieve satisfactory level of Chinese language with recognized qualifications for future studies and employment.

Strengthen support to teachers for non-Chinese speaking students

- The "Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for Non-Chinese Speaking Students" by the Education Bureau only provides basic guideline for teachers of NCS students. There is lack of teaching materials in the market. The teachers can only produce their own teaching materials, with the standard and level varies from schools to schools. The Education Bureau is recommended to provide curriculum, teaching materials and also training for the teachers.
- Education Bureau to increase support to teachers, including the language and cultural sensitivity training, curriculum development, so as to equip them for helping the EM students effectively.

Strengthen support to parents of EM students to minimize blockage in information due to language barrier or lack of social network

According to the study "Parent Involvement for Children's Education Advancement: A Comparison between Local Chinese and Ethnic Minority Parents" conducted by HKCSS in 2009, There is an obvious knowledge gap between EM parents and local parents; about 70% of EM students' parents found difficulty to get related information because of language barrier.

- Education Bureau should increase the conducting of workshops to assist parents of EM students to ensure that they have adequate understanding of the culture and education system in Hong Kong so as to facilitate their planning with children on children's future studies and career path. There could also be Chinese courses at community level for EM parents, these will increase their connections to the community.

8.3 Increase the capacity of public services and social services to serve EM groups

EM groups may not be able to get necessary public and social services due to language barriers.

Ensure accessibility to necessary public service

- Increase the translation services and the promotion so as to ensure their accessibility to necessary public service like services of Hospital Authority, Department of Health, Social Welfare Department, Labour Department and Housing Department etc.

Ensure accessibility to necessary social service

- Strengthen the capacity of social service units in community, including set up additional Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities in districts with more than 1,000 persons in poverty, apart from the existing service centres (including Eastern, Kowloon City, Wong Tai Sin & Kwai Tsing); provide

resources for the NGOs to employ EM employees to serve the community in districts.

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