

Survey on Racial Discrimination Bill

Colours in Peace

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1. Introduction

Colours in Peace is a group of volunteers from various ethnic backgrounds aiming to work for racial equality in Hong Kong. Since the Race Discrimination Bill (RDB) was tabled to the Legislative Council in December 2006, it will be the fourth equal opportunity ordinance in Hong Kong. We are concerned about the Bill (RDB) and its impacts on the livelihood of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, particularly the clauses on language and exceptions. So, we conducted a survey to know the attitude of people in Hong Kong (mainly local Chinese and ethnic minorities) towards RDB, particularly on language, equal opportunities and perception of respondents' livelihood. We successfully interviewed 289 people (130 ethnic minorities, 159 local Chinese) from 15 to 26 April 2008.

2. Research Methodology

Respondents

- 2.1 As the survey seeks to compare the attitudes of ethnic minorities and local Chinese towards RDB, two groups of respondents were selected. One group is the ethnic minorities who consist of three major ethnicities in Hong Kong other than live-in foreign domestic helpers, namely Indian, Nepalese and Pakistani. The other group is the local Chinese who speak Cantonese.

Data Collection and Sampling Method

- 2.2 A structured questionnaire was designed in this research. The data was collected either by using face-to-face personal interview or a self-administrated questionnaire.

2.3 For the samples of ethnic minorities, as it is difficult to perform a random sampling within the group, or the cost to sample randomly is very high, for the sake of simplicity and the constraints of time and financial resources, *Convenience Sampling*, a non-probability sampling method was adopted. The samples were collected at Islamic Centre for Indian, Sikh Temple and streets of Kwun Tong and Cheung Sha Wan for Pakistani, and streets of Jordan and Tsuen Wan for Nepalese.

2.4 For the samples of local Chinese, also for the sake of simplicity and the constraints of time and financial resources, *Convenience Sampling* was adopted. The samples were collected at the streets of five districts in Hong Kong, Kowloon and New Territories.

Survey Details

2.5 The dates, venues and the total number of successful cases of the survey were as follows (Table 2.5):

Table 2.5: Dates, venues and the total number of successful cases of the survey

Respondent		Date	Venue	No. of successful cases
Ethnic Minorities	Nepalese	15/4	Jordan	11
		23/4	Jordan	13
	Pakistani	20/4	Tsuen Wan	24
		19/4	Kwai Chung	21
			Islamic Centre	
		26/4	Kwun Tong	10
	Indian	16/4	Cheung Sha Wan	6
		20/4	Sikh Temple	45
Sub-total			130	
Local Chinese	15/4	Shatin	30	
	16/4	Kwun Tong	36	
		20/4	Causeway Bay	30
	22/4	Tuen Mun	35	
	16/4-26/4	Cheung Sha Wan	28	
		Sub-total	159	
			Total no. of cases	289

3. Research Result

Introduction

3.1 In this session, findings from the survey will be outlined. The questionnaire is attached as *Appendix 1*. After a brief account on the profile of successful respondents for the survey, some major findings will be presented. For the sake of simplicity, the analysis was conducted by combining the samples of Indian, Nepalese and Pakistani into one single sample and simply called it “Ethnic Minorities”. That is, we would seek to understand the opinions of “Ethnic Minorities” on RDB, but not for individual ethnicity.

Profile of Respondents

(A) Gender

3.2 Of the 130 *Ethnic Minorities* respondents, 61.5% of the respondents were males while 38.5% were the females. But for the *Local Chinese* respondents, this proportion was reversed. Of the 159 *Local Chinese* respondents, 37.7% were males while 62.3% were the females (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Distribution of respondents by Gender

Gender	Ethnic Minorities		Local Chinese	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Male	80	61.5	60	37.7
Female	50	38.5	99	62.3
Total	130	100.0	159	100.0

(B) Age

3.3 For *Ethnic Minorities* respondents, relatively higher proportions (28.5%) of respondents fall into the age category of 31-40, followed by 18-30 (27.7%) while for *Local Chinese* respondents, a higher proportion (47.2%) of respondents fall into the age range of 18-30 (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Distribution of respondents by Age

Age	Ethnic Minorities		Local Chinese	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%

18 or under	20	15.4	19	11.9
18-30	36	27.7	75	47.2
31-40	37	28.5	22	13.8
41-50	23	17.7	26	16.4
51-64	11	8.5	14	8.8
65 or above	3	2.3	3	1.9
Total	130	100.0	159	100.0

(C) Monthly Household Income

3.4 For *Ethnic Minorities* respondents, relatively higher proportions (44.9%) of respondents fall into the category of \$5,000-\$9,999, followed by \$10,000-\$19,999 (31.4%) while for *Local Chinese* respondents, relatively higher proportions (37.9%) of respondents fall into the range of \$10,000-\$19,999 (37.9%), followed by \$20,000-\$29,999 (22.9%) (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Distribution of respondents by Monthly Household Income

Household Income	Ethnic Minorities		Local Chinese	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
\$5,000 below	13	11.0	12	7.8
\$5,000-\$9,999	53	44.9	20	13.1
\$10,000-\$19,999	37	31.4	58	37.9
\$20,000-\$29,999	10	8.5	35	22.9
\$30,000 or above	5	4.2	28	18.3
Total	118	100.0	153	100.0

Major Findings

(A) Understanding of RDB

3.5 More than half of *Ethnic Minorities* respondents (54.6%) expressed that they have heard the RDB while 61.6% of *Local Chinese* respondents expressed that they have heard the RDB (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5: "Have you heard about the Racial Discrimination Bill?"

	Ethnic Minorities		Local Chinese	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%

Have never heard	59	45.4	61	38.4
Have heard	71	54.6	98	61.6
Total	130	100.0	159	100.0

$\chi^2=15.62, p<0.05$

(B) Changing of Livelihood if RDB is Established

3.6 If the currently proposed RDB is established, will the livelihood of *Local Chinese* be improved or worsen? The survey reveals that 63.4% of *Ethnic Minorities* respondents expressed that the livelihood of *Local Chinese* will be improved; only 19.7% thought that it would be no change. But for *Local Chinese* respondents, majority of them (70.4%) expressed that their livelihood will be no change if the currently proposed RDB is established, only 22.4% thought that it would be improved (upper part of Table 3.6).

3.7 On the other hand, if the currently proposed RDB is established, will the livelihood of *Ethnic Minorities* be improved or worsen? The survey reveals that 35.2% of *Ethnic Minorities* respondents expressed that their livelihood will be worsen, but 32.4% of them expressed that their livelihood will be improved. For *Local Chinese* respondents, the result was one-sided, majority of *Local Chinese* (80.6%) expressed that the livelihood of *Ethnic Minorities* will be improved, and only 12.2% thought that it would be no change (lower part of Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: “If the currently proposed RDB is established, do you think the following groups’ livelihood will be improved or worsen?”

Livelihood		Ethnic Minorities		Local Chinese	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Local Chinese	Improved	45	63.4	22	22.4
	Worsen	1	1.4	2	2.0
	No Change	14	19.7	69	70.4
	No Idea	11	15.5	5	5.1
Total		71	100.0	98	100.0

$\chi^2=43.73, p<0.001$

Ethnic Minorities	Improved	23	32.4	79	80.6
	Worsen	25	35.2	2	2.0
	No Change	13	18.3	12	12.2
	No Idea	10	14.1	5	5.1

Total	71	100.0	98	100.0
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$\chi^2=48.98, p<0.001$

Remarks: The total number of respondents is fewer because these questions are only for those who “Have Heard” the RDB to answer.

(C) Translation Services in Public Sectors

3.8 **Hospitals:** When respondents were asked whether they agree or not that it is mandatory to provide interpretation or translation services in hospitals, majority of *Ethnic Minorities* respondents (93.8%) and *Local Chinese* respondents (89.9%) agreed or strongly agreed the statement (Table 3.8).

3.9 **Educational Sectors:** When respondents were asked whether they agree or not that it is mandatory to provide interpretation or translation services in educational sectors, majority of *Ethnic Minorities* respondents (92.3%) agreed or strongly agreed the statement. For *Local Chinese* respondents, 75.5% of them agreed or strongly agreed the statement while 13.8% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed the statement (Table 3.8).

3.10 **Labour Dept.:** When respondents were asked whether they agree or not that it is mandatory to provide interpretation or translation services in Labour Department, majority of *Ethnic Minorities* respondents (86.1%) and *Local Chinese* respondents (85.5%) agreed or strongly agreed the statement (Table 3.8).

3.11 **Immigration Dept.:** When respondents were asked whether they agree or not that it is mandatory to provide interpretation or translation services in Immigration Department, majority of *Ethnic Minorities* respondents (96.2%) and *Local Chinese* respondents (88.6%) agreed or strongly agreed the statement (Table 3.8).

3.12 **Police Dept.:** When respondents were asked whether they agree or not that it is mandatory to provide interpretation or translation services in Police Department, majority of *Ethnic Minorities* respondents (89.3%) and *Local Chinese* respondents (90.6%) agreed or strongly agreed the statement (Table 3.8).

3.13 **Housing Authority:** When respondents were asked whether they agree or not that it is mandatory to provide interpretation or translation services in Housing Authority, majority of *Ethnic Minorities* respondents (89.2%) agreed or strongly

agreed the statement. But for *Local Chinese* respondents, only 69.8% of them agreed or strongly agreed the statement while 18.3% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed the statement (Table 3.8).

Table 3.8: “Do you agree that it is mandatory to provide interpretation or translation services for ethnic minorities in public sectors such as. ”

		Ethnic Minorities		Local Chinese	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Hospitals	Strongly agree	94	72.3	42	26.4
	Agree	28	21.5	101	63.5
	Disagree	3	2.3	9	5.7
	Strongly disagree	1	0.8	0	0.0
	No Idea	4	3.1	7	4.4
Total		130	100.0	159	100.0

$\chi^2=63.74$, $p<0.001$

Educational Sectors	Strongly agree	81	62.3	31	19.5
	Agree	39	30.0	89	56.0
	Disagree	2	1.5	21	13.2
	Strongly disagree	2	1.5	1	0.6
	No Idea	6	4.6	17	10.7
Total		130	100.0	159	100.0

$\chi^2=60.85$, $p<0.001$

Labour Dept.	Strongly agree	68	52.3	35	22.0
	Agree	44	33.8	101	63.5
	Disagree	11	8.5	14	8.8
	Strongly disagree	1	0.8	1	0.6
	No Idea	6	4.6	8	5.0
Total		130	100.0	159	100.0

$\chi^2=31.03$, $p<0.001$

Immigration Dept.	Strongly agree	98	75.4	60	37.7
	Agree	27	20.8	81	50.9
	Disagree	2	1.5	10	6.3
	Strongly disagree	1	0.8	0	0.0
	No Idea	2	1.5	8	5.0

Total	130	100.0	159	100.0
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$\chi^2=43.60$, $p<0.001$

Police Dept.	Strongly agree	92	70.8	58	36.5
	Agree	24	18.5	86	54.1
	Disagree	5	3.8	10	6.3
	Strongly disagree	2	1.5	1	0.6
	No Idea	7	5.4	4	2.5
Total	130	100.0	159	100.0	

$\chi^2=42.99$, $p<0.001$

Housing Authority	Strongly agree	72	55.4	30	18.9
	Agree	44	33.8	81	50.9
	Disagree	7	5.4	26	16.4
	Strongly disagree	1	0.8	3	1.9
	No Idea	6	4.6	19	11.9
Total	130	100.0	159	100.0	

$\chi^2=44.48$, $p<0.001$

(D) Equal Protection as the Other Discrimination Ordinances

3.14 When respondents were asked whether they agree or not that the RDB should provide equal protection against racial discrimination as the other ordinances provide to discrimination against Sex, Disability and Family Status, majority of *Ethnic Minorities* respondents (93.1%) and *Local Chinese* respondents (80.5%) agreed or strongly agreed the statement (Table 3.14).

Table 3.14: “Do you agree that the RDB should provide equal protection against racial discrimination as the other ordinances provide to discrimination against Sex, Disability and Family Status?”

	Ethnic Minorities		Local Chinese	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	88	67.7	36	22.6
Agree	33	25.4	92	57.9
Disagree	3	2.3	15	9.4
Strongly disagree	2	1.5	0	0.0
No Idea	4	3.1	16	10.1
Total	130	100.0	159	100.0

$\chi^2=64.60$, $p<0.001$

(E) Exception for Nationality and Citizenship

3.15 When respondents were asked whether they agree or not that the bill should protect the nationality and citizenship, majority of *Ethnic Minorities* respondents (94.6%) agreed or strongly agreed the statement. But for *Local Chinese* respondents, only 68.6% of them agreed or strongly agreed the statement while 18.2% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed the statement (Table 3.15).

Table 3.15: “Do you agree the bill should protect the nationality and citizenship?”

	Ethnic Minorities		Local Chinese	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	92	70.8	30	18.9
Agree	31	23.8	79	49.7
Disagree	3	2.3	25	15.7
Strongly disagree	0	0.0	4	2.5
No Idea	4	3.1	21	13.2
Total	130	100.0	159	100.0

$\chi^2=83.23$, $p<0.001$

4. Observations and Discussion

1. From the survey, we found that around 38% of local Chinese and almost 45% of EM respondents have never heard about RDB. This result is related to the promotion of RDB by the government, the question is: Is the government satisfied with only more than half of the ethnic minorities and 60% of local Chinese “have heard” about the bill, let alone “knowing” it? Even those who have heard about the bill, they may not really know the details, as one of our EM respondents says, “I heard about it, but I don’t know what it’s about.”

2. For the impact of proposed RDB on the livelihood, for those who replied to “have heard” the bill, 63.4% of EM respondents think that local Chinese livelihood will be improved, whereas 80.6% of local Chinese thinks that EM’s livelihood will be

improved. Both groups think that the other group's livelihood will be improved. For the local Chinese, they may think that RDB is just for the protection of EM, it will not have any impact on their own livelihood (70.4% of local Chinese respondents think their livelihood will have no change). However, a significant percentage (35.2%) of EM respondents think that their livelihood will be worsen. If RDB is concerning an equal rights among different ethnic groups in Hong Kong, the discrepancies may tell the educational effect of RDB.

3. For translation service, very high percentage of both EM and local Chinese agree that it is mandatory to provide this service in hospitals (93.8% for EM, 89.9% for local Chinese), labour (86.1% for EM, 85.5% for local Chinese), immigration (96.2% for EM, 88.6% for local Chinese) and police (89.3% for EM, 90.6% for local Chinese) departments. But for the service in education sectors (92.3% for EM, 75.5% for local Chinese) and housing authorities (89.2% for EM, 69.8% for local Chinese), higher percentage of EM respondents agree that it is mandatory. The responses from the EM group show that all of these services are essential to them but the local Chinese have different opinions.

4. Most respondents (80.5% local Chinese, 93.1% EM) agree that RDB should provide same protection as existing equal opportunity ordinances. But for the issue of exception for nationality and citizenship, 94.6% EM respondents agree that RDB should protect people of different nationality and citizenship, whereas only 68.6% of local Chinese respondents do. Moreover, 18.2% local Chinese respondents disagree. The discrepancy in the attitude shows the conception of citizenship in Hong Kong. There is a concept that the bill should only protect Hong Kong citizens. This conception is contradictory to the highly acclaimed "world city" image of Hong

Kong.

5. Recommendations

The survey has revealed that over half of respondents have heard the bill, but the percentage of respondents who have not heard about the bill is significant. The government should put more efforts to inform the concerned groups about RDB. Besides legislation, public education should be addressed to both local Chinese and EM. The message of racial equality should reach to all walks of life. In the proposed RDB, language is a critical issue. The provision of interpretation or translation services is essential to the livelihood of EM. The bill should eliminate the language barriers in access to public services and their rights for social development.

As many of the respondents agree, RDB should provide the same level of protection that the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO), the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO) and the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO) granted. The Bill should provide equal protection against racial discrimination, as the other ordinances provided to discrimination against sex, disability and family status.

Other than the limited applies to the Government, the current Racial Discrimination Bill includes other exceptions. These exceptions may not stop the current discrimination acts against languages, nationalities or citizenship etc., on the contrary these may allow the unjustifiable discriminations to continue, or develop new form of discriminations. Exemptions of the Bill should be justifiable according to established standards. With weak supports these exemptions should not be allowed.

The Bill is not just a legal document but also an educational tool. The message that RDB is sending about the commitment to addressing racial discrimination should be considered. We have to ensure the bill does not send a wrong message that victims of racial discrimination deserve less protection than victims of other types of discrimination, that Hong Kong does not comply human rights obligations, that Hong Kong endures unjustifiable discriminations. These messages should not be promoted.

The education role of the bill should not be ignored. The exemptions of the bill will spread the message that discrimination in certain sectors and aspects are acceptable, certain policies and practices can be excluded to racial discrimination, thus insist the discriminatory policies to continue, discourage people to take action to stop all kinds of racial discrimination. Moreover, the limited application to Government spread a message that there is no need for the government to take the leading role to stop racial discrimination; the commitment of the government to human rights is limited.

RDB should be an effective tool to remedy and prevent racial discrimination. It should reflect the determination of the Government to stop racial discrimination in Hong Kong. Thus the Bill that provides weaker protection to ethnic minorities than to women and disabled.

If RDB cannot protect ethnic minorities from racial discriminations and improve their livelihood, it is a bad bill. As some of our group member says, “No bill is better than a bad bill.”