

2018 – 2020

The Status of Ethnic Minority Women and Girls in Hong Kong & The Call Mira Helpline



Presented by



The Institute of Racial Equality in Hong Kong
an initiative of The Zubin Foundation



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

Including research findings from:

- **Dreams from Pakistani Children, 2017**
- **The CALL MIRA Helpline, 2018 to 2020**
- **Period Poverty, 2020**

September 2020



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#racialequalitymattershk



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Dedicated to
Mrs. Mira Mahtani



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THE ZUBIN FOUNDATION

The Zubin Foundation is a charity and think tank that improves the lives of Hong Kong's marginalised ethnic minorities by providing opportunities and reducing suffering.

As a registered charity in Hong Kong (IR 91/12344), we rely on donations from individuals, corporations and foundations for our work.

For more information, please visit: www.zubinfoundation.org

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Handi Restaurant, Mansarover Restaurant, Stone Oven Pizza Delivery, Jashan, Ebeneezers, Bombay Indian Restaurant, Vintuna Fast Food & Sekuwa Ghar, Bagaicha Restaurant and Party Palace, Albin Fast Food, Best Food International Company, Pakistan Club Hong Kong, Teeyan Hong Kong, Kowloon Bazaar, Glam Fest, A-DesiFlava Magazine, Hong Kong Resource Guide, Khoob Surat Beauty Parlour, Freedas Beauty Salon, 22 Hair & Beauty Salon, Manna Beauty & Hair Salon, Bhavika Grocery Store, Sanjog StoreFujifilm, Indian Grocery Store, Shuvankamana Store and Pashupati Store

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CONTENTS

Contents

FOREWORD.....	7
CHAPTER 1:.....	8
LANDSCAPE OF ETHNIC MINORITY WOMEN AND GIRLS IN HONG KONG	9
Background	9
What the data shows.....	9
CHAPTER 2:	16
DREAMS OF PAKISTANI GIRLS.....	17
Findings.....	17
CHAPTER 3:	22
CALL MIRA: Helpline for women and girls in Hindi, Urdu and English	23
Objectives:.....	23
Approach:	23
Demographics	26
Findings	28
CHAPTER 4:	34
PERIOD POVERTY	35
Research	35
Demographics	35
Findings	37
Observations	40
OVERALL THOUGHTS	41
NEXT STEPS FOR THE ZUBIN FOUNDATION	44
Appendix 1	45



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FOREWORD

Call Mira is an initiative of The Zubin Foundation and is named after my mother Mira Mahtani who passed away suddenly in 2016. My mum and I shared in our passion to help others. We worked on a couple of cases where women in our Indian community in Hong Kong had been abused, and together we agreed that this treatment was unacceptable and decided we must do all we can to help. It was great working with my mum and I learned a lot from her about the meaning of service and compassion.

A few weeks before my mum passed away, I asked my mum what work in the community she wished she would still like to do, and she said “Help women in our community”. After she passed away, I established Call Mira to honour my mum and to address the great unfulfilled need that existed. For at least a year before her death, we had been discussing, together with Sandy Chan, my COO, setting up a helpline for ethnic minority women and girls in crisis. We had put the idea on hold, scared that we would be perceived as troublemakers by men in the ethnic minority community; obviously this was not our goal.

My mother’s death gave me the courage to put my fears aside, and became the impetus to set up the helpline for those in crisis. When we decided to name the helpline, it was a no-brainer that it was to be named after my mum, Mira. Mira means “female leader” in Arabic and “light” in Hindi, and is also the name of a giant red star and a saintly woman.

Call Mira is a helpline for any women and girls in crisis in the ethnic minority community. We have positioned ‘Mira’ as a friend and therefore we accept calls on the helpline from anyone in the community and for any reason.

To all the Call Mira women who have bravely come forward and shared their stories, we thank you for having faith in us.

And in particular to all the call responders, the legal leads, the handholders, other volunteers and our wonderful sponsors, thank you for being part of the Call Mira team. Together we give every ethnic minority woman and girl in Hong Kong another chance at life.



Shalini Mahtani

Founder and CEO, The Zubin Foundation



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CHAPTER 1:

LANDSCAPE OF ETHNIC MINORITY WOMEN AND GIRLS IN HONG KONG



LANDSCAPE OF ETHNIC MINORITY WOMEN AND GIRLS IN HONG KONG

Background

Women and girls across the world have not been afforded the same opportunities as their male counterparts. There are many reasons for this, including systemic forms of discrimination and exclusion as well cultural and societal norms and pressures, some of which are not so subtle.

The status of Hong Kong's ethnic minority women is perhaps amongst the lowest in Hong Kong amongst women in general, as well as in the ethnic minority community. They are victims of barriers that result from both their ethnicity and their sex.

What the data shows

Ethnicity by Sex

Table 1 shows the breakdown of ethnic minority women by ethnicity and the composition of each ethnicity by sex. The largest five ethnic minority populations of women by ethnicity, in descending order of size are Others, White, Indian, Nepalese and Pakistani.

Table 1: Total Ethnic Minority Population (excluding FDHs) by Gender, in 2016¹

Population (excluding FDHs)					
Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total	Male (%)	Female (%)
White	37,016	21,193	58,209	63.6	36.4
Others (note 1)	32,270	32,267	64,537	50	50
Indian	17,501	15,434	32,925	53.1	46.9
Pakistani	10,388	7,706	18,094	57.4	42.6
Nepalese	13,102	11,942	25,044	52.3	47.7
Filipino	7,870	12,657	20,527	38.3	61.7

¹ Hong Kong Census, 2016 https://www.byccensus2016.gov.hk/en/bc-own_tbl.html



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Japanese	6,676	5,904	12,580	53.1	46.9
Other Asian (note 2)	7,743	10,417	18,160	42.6	57.4
Thai	1,312	7,156	8,468	15.5	84.5
Indonesian	725	2,537	3,262	22.2	77.8
Total (Ethnic Minorities)	134,540	127,213	261,753	51.4	48.6
Chinese	3,237,938	3,513,259	6,751,197	48	52

Note (1) “Others” is the summation of three categories presented in Table 2, namely, “Mixed with Chinese Parent”, “Mixed with other mixed” and “Others”.

Note (2) “Other Asian” is the summation of two categories presented in Table 2, namely, Korean and Other Asian. No further breakdown of this term is provided.

Sex Ratio

Table 2 shows the sex ratio by ethnicity. The ethnicities that have more men than women per 1000 of the population are in blue. In those populations where there are more females than males, those are shown in red.

Overall, the ethnic minority population in Hong Kong has more men than women (1058 males per 1000 females), whereas in the Hong Kong Chinese population there are more women than men (922 males per 1,000 females).

Table 2 Sex Ratio: Number of males per 1000 females by Ethnicity (excluding FDHs), 2016²

Ethnicity	Male	Female	Total	Males per 1000 Females
White	37,016	21,193	58,209	1747
Others (note 1)	32,270	32,267	64,537	998
Indian	17,501	15,434	32,925	1134
Pakistani	10,388	7,706	18,094	1348
Nepalese	13,102	11,942	25,044	1097
Filipino	7,870	12,657	20,527	622

² Hong Kong Census, 2016 https://www.byccensus2016.gov.hk/en/bc-own_tbl.html



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Japanese	6,676	5,904	12,580	1131
Other Asian (note 2)	7,743	10,417	18,160	743
Thai	1,312	7,156	8,468	183
Indonesian	725	2,537	3,262	286
Total (Ethnic Minorities)	134,540	127,213	261,753	1058
Chinese	3,237,938	3,513,259	6,751,197	922

Education Attainment by Sex

Table 3 shows the largest ethnic minority populations by education, excluding the Others and White populations, and further breaks this down by sex. These three populations are the Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese populations.

This table shows that the Indian population has achieved the highest educational attainment. Within this Indian population there is a significant difference between males and females in post-secondary education, with more males having achieved this.

Education attainment varies largely in the Pakistani households, with women being educated, in general, to a lower level than men. The data shows that a higher percentage (43%) of females have no schooling or have primary and below education attainment, compared to 35% of males. Also, more males (30%) completed upper secondary than females (21%).

In the Nepalese community, the education attainment is more balanced between males and females compared to the Indian and Pakistani households.

Between South Asian households, both Pakistani males and females have a much lower overall education attainment than their Indian and Nepalese counterparts.

Table 3: Education Attainment by Ethnicity and Sex of Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese Households³

Educational Attainment	Indian Households	Pakistani Households	Nepalese Households	All Hong Kong Households
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³ Hong Kong Census, 2016 Data from Census Interactive Data Dissemination Service



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Gender	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%
Post- secondary	50%	44%	14%	15%	12%	13%	31%	28%

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

Table 4 shows the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR). The ethnic minority population has a much higher percentage of men in the labour force (80.1%) compared to the Hong Kong general population (68.4%). The ethnic minority population of women in the labour force (49.6%) is lower than the Hong Kong general population (60.8%).

Table 4: Labour force participation rate of ethnic minorities and general population by gender ⁴

	Labour force participation rate (%)	
	Ethnic Minorities (excluding FDH)	Hong Kong General Population
Male	80.1	68.4
Female	49.6	54.5
Overall	65.2	60.8

As we look further to understand the breakdown of ethnic minorities LFPR we see a tremendous difference between ethnicities and sexes. There are a number of key differences that we can see in Graph 1 below:

- Across all ethnicities there is a higher LFPR of males than females

⁴ Hong Kong Census, 2016 https://www.byccensus2016.gov.hk/en/bc-own_tbl.html

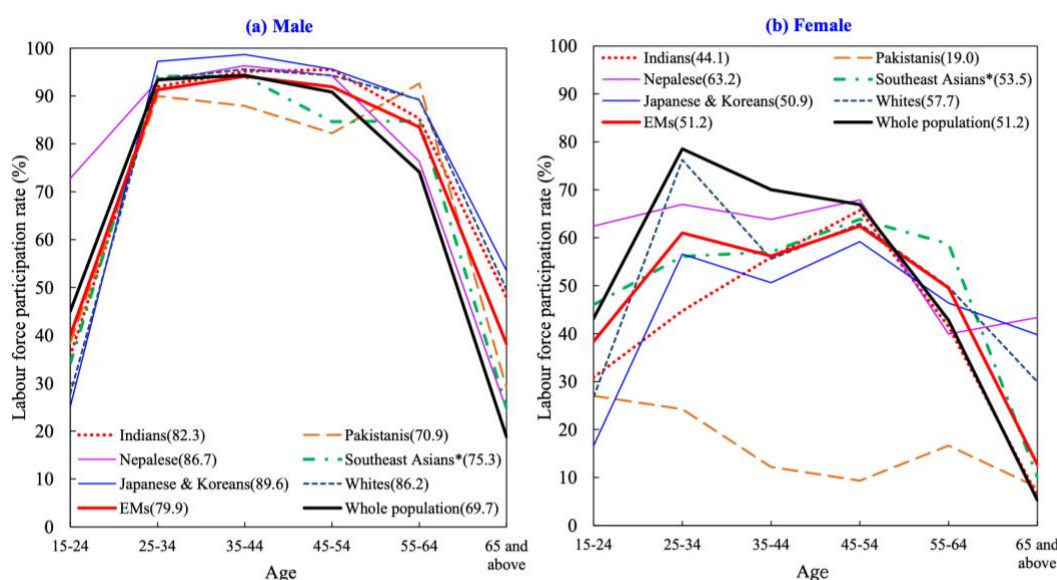


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- The LFPR is higher for the HK population and as a whole is higher than for the EM population in the earlier years than in the later years. This is true for both males and females but the difference is more stark for females.
- The Nepalese female LFPR is higher than or equal to the Indian female LFPR, both of which are far higher than the Pakistani LFPR.
- The Pakistani female LFPR is the lowest across almost all age brackets.

Graph 1: Labour Participation Rate by gender, age and selected ethnic groups, 2016 ⁵



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.

Employment

A look at the employment by gender in elementary occupations in Table 5 below, shows that in every single ethnic group in the Indian and Nepalese populations the percentage of females is far greater than men. The types of work in elementary occupations⁶ include street vendors; domestic helpers and cleaners; messengers; private security guards; watchmen; freight handlers; lift operators; construction labourers; hand packers; food preparation assistants; agricultural and fishery labourers.

Interestingly in the Indian and Nepalese populations, the percentage of women in the Managers and Administrators and Professionals/Associate Professionals is much less than that of men. It is the opposite in the Pakistani population. However, given the very low percentage of Pakistani women in the labour force (Graph 1) this percentage is not

⁵ Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Ethnic Minorities, 2016

⁶ Hong Kong Census 2011, under 'Concepts and Methods'.



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a reflection of the community as a whole but rather of a small number of working women.

Table 5: Proportion of working ethnic minorities by sex, ethnicity and occupation, 2016

Ethnicity	Sex	Managers and Administrators	Professionals /Associate professionals	Clerical support workers/ service and sales workers	Craft and related workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers	Elementary occupations	Skilled agricultural and fishery workers; and occupations not classifiable	Overall
Indian	M	34.6	33.9	20.6	4.2	6.7	-	100
	F	9.0	22.3	19.7	0.7	48.2	-	100
Nepalese	M	3.4	11.4	17.7	30.1	37.4	-	100
	F	2.6	5.2	55.7	5.0	31.2	0.3	100
Pakistani	M	9.6	13.5	23.8	15	37.9	0.2	100
	F	11.6	30.9	37.3	-	19.4	0.9	100
All ethnic minorities, excluding foreign domestic helpers	M	28.3	36.6	16.5	7.9	10.7	0.1	100
	F	12.1	30.4	40.1	1.8	15.5	0.1	100
Whole working population	M	13.2	30.8	23.8	18.3	13.8	0.2	100
	F	7.0	24.2	39.1	1.4	28.2	0.1	100

Source: Table 6.3, Thematic Report Ethnic Minorities 2016,
<https://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B11201002016XXXXB0100.pdf>

Socio-Economic Characteristics

Table 6 shows the socio-economic characteristics of the three largest ethnic minority populations, excluding White and Others, all of which have an impact on the lives of women, median monthly household, average household size and average number of children in a household. In the Pakistani population the median monthly household income is the lowest while the average household size and the average number of children in households with children is the highest. All these factors combined significantly impact on the lives of women.



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Table 6: Socio-Economic Characteristics by Selected Ethnic Household Groups, 2016⁷

	Indian households	Pakistani households	Nepalese households	All Hong Kong households
Median Monthly household income	HK\$37,000	HK\$17,300	HK\$21,700	HK\$24,900
Average household size	2.8	3.9	3.2	2.7
Average no. of children in households with children	1.5	2.5	1.4	1.4

⁷ Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Ethnic Minorities 2016



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CHAPTER 2:

DREAMS OF PAKISTANI GIRLS



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DREAMS OF PAKISTANI GIRLS

(Extracted from The Zubin Foundation's Dreams of Pakistani Children, available from The Zubin Foundation website.)

The plight of Hong Kong Pakistanis is particularly difficult given the lower levels of income and higher levels of poverty and household size. This ethnic population is also the fastest growing in Hong Kong because of the numbers of children Pakistani couples tend to have.

The Zubin Foundation conducted research to understand the issues faced by the Pakistani children of Hong Kong with a focus on girls. A total of 25 children between the ages of 14 to 22 were included in qualitative research conducted by both The Zubin Foundation and Puja Kapai at The University of Hong Kong. These children study at three government schools. The findings below highlight the concerns raised by Hong Kong Pakistani girls. Below are key themes and quotes that emerged from our research on the *Dreams of Pakistani Children*⁸.

Findings

Culture is Embedded into All Aspects of Life

While religion plays a significant role, based on this data pool, it appears to be practiced differently between Hong Kong-born Pakistanis and Pakistani-born Pakistanis. Cultural practices differ per family and place different constraints on Pakistani girls. For example, one participant said, “*Our culture is different, those born here in Hong Kong are different Muslims, they are not very religious, they don’t follow Islam.*” Another participant stated, “*Pakistani girls in Hong Kong are more modern, go to co-ed schools, [are] more educated, have a better life, [and] Hong Kong is their home*”, whereas Pakistani girls in Pakistan “*have a strict upbringing, go to single-sex schools, [are] less educated, less well off, [and] girls must wear a hijab.*”

*Parents Treat Boys and Girls Differently*⁹

⁸ Dreams of Pakistani Children, The Zubin Foundation and Centre for Comparative and Public Law, https://fec852e0-797f-4982-8bed-d091603e2956.filesusr.com/ugd/da2d17_63dd2923ca7f412b9e3a2c4a24baf58b.pdf

⁹ Dreams of Pakistani Children, The Zubin Foundation and Centre for Comparative and Public Law, https://fec852e0-797f-4982-8bed-d091603e2956.filesusr.com/ugd/da2d17_63dd2923ca7f412b9e3a2c4a24baf58b.pdf



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Participants described gender-based differences in terms of access to education beyond a certain age, expectations to help around the home with chores, household responsibilities, expectations of marriage when they reach a certain age, restrictions on clothing, socialisation as well as hobbies. For example, when daughters get married, the family must give a dowry. The males were expected to be the breadwinners while the females were expected to run the household and maintain a family life. One participant expressed, *"I'm the eldest sibling, [I] have to help with house chores and do my homework,"* while another participant shared, *"During exam time, I have to help my mother with house chores, [I] finish by 9pm and study until 12am. It's tough."* Other participants stated, *"Girls are forced to be married, [and] are not allowed to study further or work without [our] family's approval"*, while another reported, *"Boys have more freedom. I was engaged at an early age, my brother was not."*

In terms of social life and integration, another participant shared that, *"Girls have more restrictions, [we] cannot stay out late, cannot work in certain professions, [and have] restrictions on clothing and making friends."*

Girls also have barriers to engaging in any form of extra-curricular activities. One participant said that she was *"not allowed to go to camps / concerts or social events, because parents will think their daughters are talking to boys."*

Girls Have Dreams to Work But Face Barriers

All participants expressed their desire to work and pursue their dreams of becoming doctors, nurses, teachers, accountants, businessmen and businesswomen, air stewards, engineers, journalists, fashion designers, actors and law enforcement officers. However, all the girls knew that their dreams were simply that, and that they had to meet their parents' expectations.

Nearly a third of the female participants shared various reservations about their pursuits. For example, one said, *"I wish to become either an airhostess or work in a [beauty] parlour. My parents don't think it's good for girls to become an airhostess. [I] need family support to do things."* Another said, *"I wish to become a fashion designer, but [I am] not allowed; it does not suit our people's culture. Will have to showcase clothes that are not accepted by my culture and society."*

In the case of wanting to join the police force, participants shared it would, *"not be allowed, parents say it's too dangerous."*



Girls Get Engaged at a Young Age¹⁰

Several participants reported that it was common for Pakistani children to be engaged early in life, particularly girls. For many girls, marriage proposals had been coming in as early as age 10. Several participants identified the ages of 14 to 15 as the time when Pakistani girls would typically be engaged or “*encouraged into marriage*.” One participant shared, “*I know of girls in Hong Kong between the age[s] of 14 [to] 16 who are married to men ten years older to them and [are] pregnant, but don’t return to Hong Kong until they’re 18 or else they will be questioned about their pregnancy.*”

A few others stretched that timeline to suggest that the age between 25 and 30 is a “*decent age*” for marriage for girls, while for boys it could be up to 35 years of age. A number of participants mentioned childhood engagements. Among this sample, three of the female participants reported they had been engaged at varying ages, when they were too young to consent (between 2 and 8 years of age), or despite coming of age, they did not consent and felt pressured into getting engaged at age 15. The reported age of engagement varied for this sample, with 2 years old being the youngest age a participant in this sample had been engaged, and 15 was the oldest age of having been engaged. Engagement comes with the responsibility to uphold the honour and expectations of two families.

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.

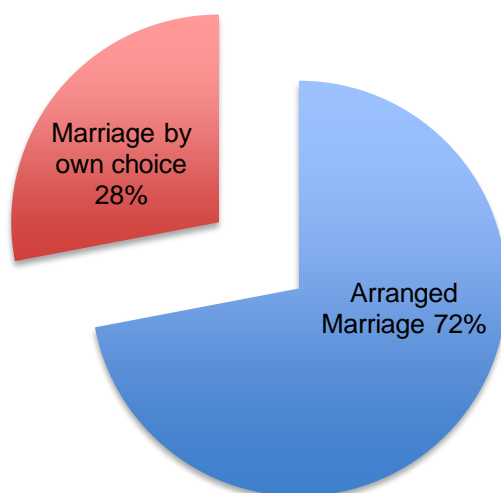
Graph 2 illustrates expectations around marriage and whether participants could choose their own marriage partners. The majority of the sample (72%) suggested a limited role for Pakistani children to choose their life partners. Others shared that while their parents would select a partner, they would be invited to approve or consent to the choice (28%).

Graph 2: Family Marriage Expectations.

¹⁰ Dreams of Pakistani Children, The Zubin Foundation and Centre for Comparative and Public Law, https://fec852e0-797f-4982-8bed-d091603e2956.filesusr.com/ugd/da2d17_63dd2923ca7f412b9e3a2c4a24baf58b.pdf



Family Marriage Expectations (n=25)



Forced Marriage Diminishes A Girl ¹¹

Forced marriage diminishes a girl, crushes her sense of self-worth, steals away her childhood, instills fears and insecurities, and burdens her with responsibilities. Forced marriage brings about shame, discouragement, and a lack of voice for a girl.

One participant stated, “*I [would] rather be called a brown girl than be asked, ‘Do you marry at a young age?’*” Another participant expressed, “*At first they had chosen someone for me, were pushing me [to] 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; [I] felt so demotivated, [and I] lost focus after my engagement.*”

If A Girl Could Choose

Most female participants expressed that they are looking for life partners who would support their dreams and aspirations for a career or, at the very least, permit them to work. Girls would choose partners who are financially stable, respectful, understanding

¹¹ Dreams of Pakistani Children, The Zubin Foundation and Centre for Comparative and Public Law, https://fec852e0-797f-4982-8bed-d091603e2956.filesusr.com/ugd/da2d17_63dd2923ca7f412b9e3a2c4a24baf58b.pdf



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and educated. One participant mentioned that her partner “*should like me for who I am, [and] take an interest in me.*”

Another participant said that she “*would complete her education and marry after the age of 24.*” Many participants said they would like to be employed to give their parents and families a healthier lifestyle, which, for some participants, meant living in private housing in Hong Kong.

If Her Dreams Do Not Come True¹²

A small number shared that life without a job would be difficult and others confessed that they would part with their dreams jobs to embrace motherhood. Other participants reported statements such as, “*living in poverty*”; “*I would feel stressed. If married, lots of arguments*”; “*[I] hope I have the freedom to work after marriage and wear clothes I like. I cannot imagine just being a practical housewife*”; “*Being useless and depend[ant] on other people*”; “*I would be home, crying, cooking food, doing housework or arguing*”; “*Having to return to Pakistan.*”

All Pakistani Children Face Discrimination

Despite considering Hong Kong home, many Pakistani girls shared experiences of exclusion and reported a number of instances of discrimination encountered personally or which other family members (parents and siblings) faced.

A majority of the participants reported being treated in a manner similar to the treatment of refugees, and isolated because of their religion, Islam, and their strict family upbringing. Participants expressed the following, “*I have to hide the hijab for fear of discrimination*”; “*Because we wear the hijab, most local people make faces at us. They think we are bad.*” Another participant shared, “*My mother and I have experienced discrimination publicly on public transport. We [were] travelling on the bus during the rains, [and] my mother accidentally pushed a local girl. She responded, ‘Retarded’.*” One participant shared, “*We have been in Hong Kong all my life. People still discriminate and disrespect by saying things such as you smell bad, go away from here.*”

¹² Dreams of Pakistani Children, The Zubin Foundation and Centre for Comparative and Public Law, https://fec852e0-797f-4982-8bed-d091603e2956.filesusr.com/ugd/da2d17_63dd2923ca7f412b9e3a2c4a24baf58b.pdf



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CHAPTER 3:

CALL MIRA - A HELPLINE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IN CRISIS IN HONG KONG



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CALL MIRA: Helpline for women and girls in Hindi, Urdu and English

The Zubin Foundation established Hong Kong's first support helpline for ethnic minority women and girls in crisis, called Call Mira, in 2018. This is the only helpline for this population and is operated in English, Hindi and Urdu. It operates 5 days a week, from 10am to 4pm. It is not a 24-hour hotline.

Call Mira aims to provide practical and emotional support to marginalised women and girls, understand the issues they face, provide them with a safe space, and direct them to appropriate resources – all in their language and with an understanding of their culture.

Mira is the name used by all the call responders that serve the helpline. Mira's main role is to be a friend, and not to provide any advice, but rather to create a safe space for women and girls in crisis to share their problems.

Objectives:

The specific objectives of Call Mira are:

- To set up a bilingual support helpline for women and girls in crisis.
- To create an online resource for women and girls in the ethnic minority community
- To work with Hong Kong immigration and other departments to develop a plan on how to best assist girls who are forced into marriage at a young age, and also how to engage with brides coming into Hong Kong from minority communities.
- To engage with social welfare departments and social welfare organisations to strengthen their existing services to these communities during crises.
- To engage with Girls Not Brides, a global partnership of more than 700 civil society organisations committed to ending child marriage and enabling girls to fulfill their potential.
- To learn and share information globally.

Approach:

Call Responders, called Mira, answer each call adhering to strict protocols developed by The Zubin Foundation with our External Advisor K. Bhuvaneshwari Bhagat, whose past experience includes helping to set up one of America's largest helplines for South Asian women in USA.



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The Call Responder notes specific details and seeks to understand the needs of the caller. Based on the nature of the issue, the Call Responder will assist the caller in any of the following ways:

- Refer the caller to a lawyer on our Pro Bono Legal Team (for legal-related concerns).
- Refer the caller to a counsellor from the Ethnic Minority Well-being Centre (for services related to mental health and counselling).
- Refer the caller to Opportunity Bank for employment opportunities (Opportunity Bank is a job-matching service by The Zubin Foundation).
- Seek assistance from the Pro Bono Counselling Team (for matters related to mental health and accessing referrals).
- Refer the caller to a social worker in another NGO (for example, to apply for government housing or in seeking Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) schemes).
- Refer the caller to a safe house for women or girls in need.
- Refer the caller to pro bono services (such as dental) - The Zubin Foundation has a log of service providers.
- Speak with The Zubin Foundation Project Manager for assistance or, in the case of urgent assistance, contact the CEO of The Zubin Foundation directly.

Diagram 1: The role of Mira, the call responder.

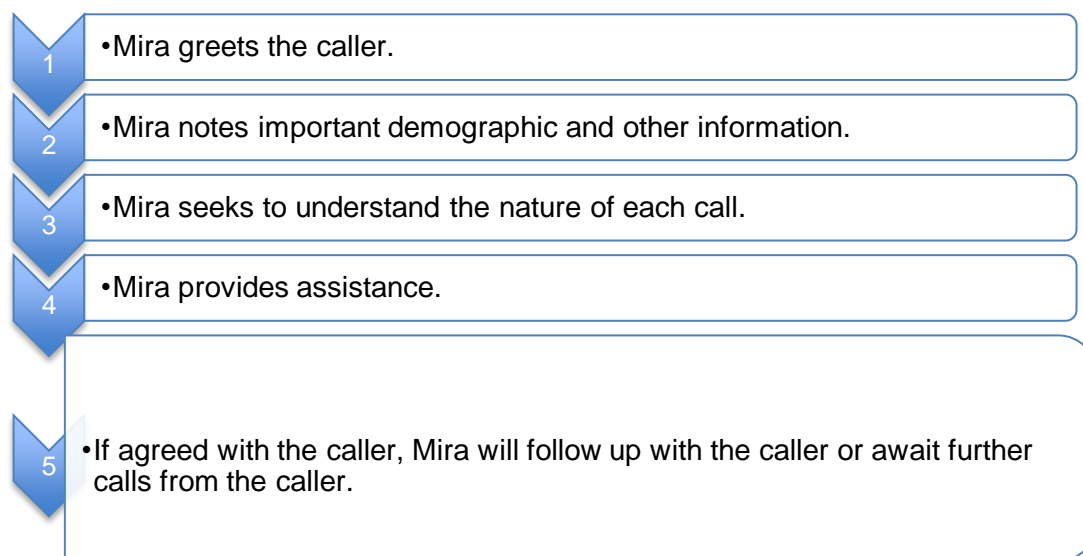
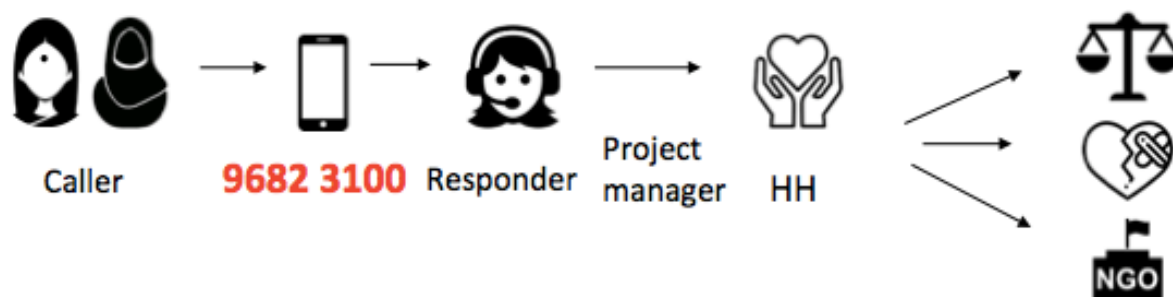


Diagram 2: Assistance provided to the Caller



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Marketing Call Mira

Call Mira callers come from a variety of sources. They come from word-of-mouth and also from direct marketing efforts through a network of beauty salons and grocery stores across all geographical districts in Hong Kong. In addition to displaying posters in various locations, partners in the network have given out free Call Mira cards and Call Mira reusable shopping bags to women shoppers.

Roles and Responsibilities

The success of Call Mira is largely due to the commitment of a wide range of individuals with very specific skills. They mostly include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responders: Answer calls from service users.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hand holders: Volunteers who have been specifically trained to physically go to a woman or girl in crisis and take them to a designated point, for example, a lawyer's office.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pro bono legal leads: These include two barristers, one academic and one human rights lawyer, all of whom have worked with ethnic minority service users. They have all assisted in the development of the Pro Bono Legal Lead Protocol. They have also assisted with providing CPD training to existing lawyers on the subject of Ethnic Minority Women in Hong Kong and the Law.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NGOs: Provide assistance in any number of ways, such as the provision of food through food banks or a safe home for a domestic violence victim.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Counselling Leads: These include two medical specialists and one clinical psychologist, all of whom have worked with ethnic minority service users. They are Call Mira's points-of-contact for medical emergencies and crisis situations.



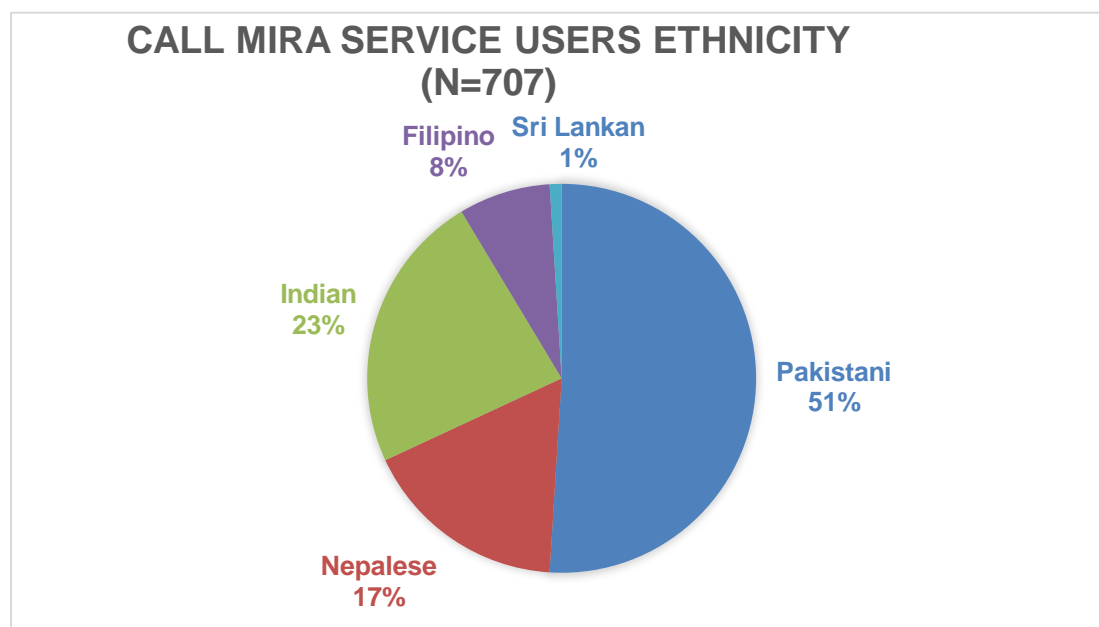
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Demographics

Graph 3 portrays ethnicities of 726 Call Mira service users who called the helpline between August 2018 and June 2020. 707 represents the number of service users who disclosed their ethnicity. The majority of the service users were Pakistani (51%), Indian (23%), Nepalese (17%), Filipino (8%) and Sri Lankan (1%).

Graph 3: Call Mira Service Users by Ethnicity



Graph 4 highlights Call Mira service users age groups. Of the 726 callers, 111 service users reported their age on the helpline. The other service users chose not to respond to the question, while some service users hesitated and gave us an age-range, e.g. 20–35, or, depending on the nature of the call, were not asked their age.

Based on the 111 age-related responses, the majority of Call Mira service users (40%) were between 30–40 years of age, 28% were 17–25 years of age, 12% were 25–30 years of age, and of the remaining 20% of service users, 10% were 40–50 years of age, and 10% were 50–70 years of age.

Graph 4: Call Mira Service Users Age Groups



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Call Mira service users age groups (N = 111)

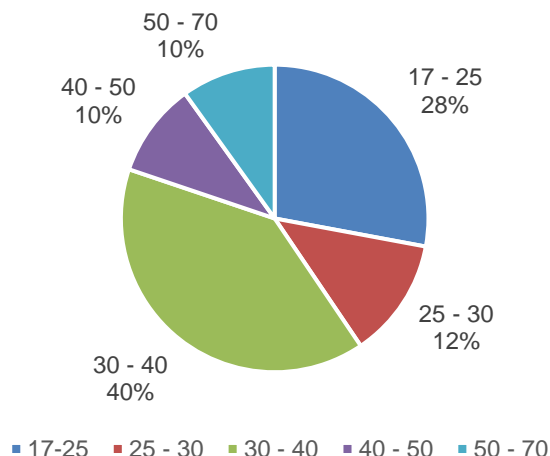


Figure 1 lists the locations of calls received on the helpline. Majority of calls attended to were from Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan, Sha Tin, Yau Tong, Yau Ma Tei, Wong Tai Sin, Ngau Tau Kok, Mong Kok, Lai Chi Kok, Kwai Chung, Jordan, Hung Hom, Shek Lei, Tsuen Kwan O, Tin Shui Wai and Tuen Mun.

Figure 1 depicts locations of incoming calls on the Call Mira helpline.
(N = 479 callers)





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Findings

The table below, Table 7, specifies key reasons for calls received in descending order.

There were a total of 1316 calls received from 726 callers with a mean number of 1.8 calls per caller. Of the total number of 1316 calls received, (504) were calls directly related to Covid-19 and Emergency Relief. The majority of other callers were for Employment (78) followed by Social Welfare Services (21).

Table 7: Reason for first call to Call Mira

No.	Reasons for first call	Number of calls received	Percentage of total calls
1	Covid Emergency Relief (requests for Food and Kids Care Masks, and money)	504	69%
2	Employment	78	11%
3	Social welfare services (housing, CSSA)	21	3%
4	Education-related (requests for tutoring, assistance, financial aid, laptops, SEN children service support)	16	2%
3	Legal support and status	24	3%
4	Mental health and emotional support	21	3%
5	Domestic violence	18	3%
8	Refugee support	9	1%
9	Translation support	7	1%
10	Forced marriage	6	1%
11	Medical Assistance (dental and optical)	7	1%
12	Miscellaneous	8	1%
13	Enquiries about the helpline	7	1%
	TOTAL	726 callers	100%



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Covid Emergency Relief

From the months of February 2020 to May 2020, Call Mira received over 500 calls from many EM families who were seeking employment and requesting masks. Many families had lost their sources of income and were struggling to meet day-to-day expenses or could not afford groceries which meant children and families were at risk of hunger. Although schools were closed, many EM children were commuting to mosques for Religious Studies, which remained open in February through to April.

The Zubin Foundation distributed Masks (ten masks per family member) and Care Boxes to Ethnic Minority families in need. Care boxes included masks, cooking oil, a bag of rice, a bag of flour (*atta*), bags of lentils, packets of milk, arts and crafts for children, children's books, and shoes for girls in primary school. For example, the helpline would receive messages and calls requesting the following, *"Hi, do you have masks for adults and children. Please let me know if your Centre has it, would really appreciate your help"*; *"Hi Mira, we need masks, it's so difficult to buy from outside"*; *"Do you give other help also, for families who have lost jobs, like money, or food"*; *"I am in need of resources, situation is very bad"*; *"My family receives CSSA but food is not enough, does your centre give coupons to buy food?"*

Employment

The helpline received 78 calls from service users who were in dire need of employment. Call Mira noticed that an increased number of women were calling the helpline requesting job opportunities for themselves and their husbands. Several service users called the helpline stating, *"I need a job, anything is fine, I speak some English. I can wash dishes"*; *"My husband has lost his job, I need to find work, otherwise we cannot pay rent"*; *"I have seen an opening for making masks, I want to apply, can you tell me how?"*; *"My friend told me you help with jobs, please can you help me"*; *"I want to work in a kitchen, I cook really good food. I can make lunch boxes too. Please help me find a job like this."* Many more female service users were actively calling the helpline to enquire about jobs even though children were at home. Some reported, *"No choice, but need to find work."* While other mothers asked Mira to help find a job where they could bring along their babies. One mother said, *"I can work in a factory but will need to bring my two children. I will make sure they sit in their stroller and not move."* Not only was the helpline receiving calls from women about employment, there were many male service users who had called the helpline for employment too. One male participant said, *"I am a very good cook, I used to work in Jordan in a Nepali restaurant. My boss asked me to leave because of COVID-19, I'm looking for a job in a restaurant. Please help. I need to pay rent. I don't have family here. I'm alone."*

Legal Support and Legal Status



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Women called seeking legal support for a number of reasons. Legal questions covered a range of topics such as family disputes, extension of dependant visas, separation from husband, need to apply for child maintenance, applications to request for children's legal documents (passports and birth certificates) from separated spouse, and process for filing for divorce. For instance, a woman in her 60s called the helpline to report that her *"Son is being verbally abusive, threatening to send me back to India by not extending my dependant visa. I work as a street cleaner and give him money. Still he does not respect me. Please Mira, can you call me."* Another Call Mira service user called stating, *"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."* Legal status was also a key concern for 24 (3%) of our callers who were unaware of, or confused about, their legal status. For example, one mother called and expressed, *"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 dependant 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 children's expenses but he does not give anything. I'm not sure who to talk to or how to return to Hong Kong."* Other scenarios related to legal status have been about questions initiating a divorce in a marriage registered in Pakistan. Call Mira service users have requested more information on laws in different countries, such as Pakistan and Hong Kong.

Domestic Violence is Rampant

Call Mira service users have called for a number of reasons. Although the table above shows that there were only 18 (2%) calls regarding domestic violence, the vast majority of callers cited - excluding the Covid Relief callers - were victims of domestic violence. The issues that the women raised were: husbands have an alcohol problem, or are drug addicts or are having extra-marital affairs. A few women have expressed frustration saying, *"Husbands are unemployed and have not gone to work for many days."* Another woman stated, *"As women, we are dependent on our husbands and don't have an income of our own."* One women reported, *"My husband drinks daily and beats me."* Another woman shared, *"My husband does not want to work, asks me to work, and when I bring home the money he uses it to buy alcohol."* Another woman disclosed, *"My husband wants to divorce me, and send me back to Pakistan because I can't have children. He wants to marry another woman."*

The table above shows that there were 18 calls specifically for domestic violence. The ages of the women were between 17 and 65. The issues that arose included parent-and-child conflict, not conforming to cultural norms, marital conflicts, addictions, and financial difficulties.



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The main concern for the women was not knowing their rights or what actions to take after an episode of abuse. Women mentioned not knowing when to call the police or what the process entails. One woman said, *"I thought about calling the police, but didn't because I was scared, didn't know what the police would do or whose side they would take."* Another woman said, *"I told my husband I would call the police, but never did. So when I often say it he does not take me seriously and continues to beat me. I never know when he is going to hurt me."* Several Call Mira victims have expressed concerns about their children's rights and documents (passports, birth certificates). Many women have related that after they are married, their in-laws keep their passports to which they are denied access. One woman called the helpline requesting Mira to call her husband for her children's passports. She said, *"Please can you go to my house to collect my children's passports. I don't know who else to ask."* Other women have reported, *"I'm unable to speak on the phone at home"; "My husband does not give me enough money for the house and I'm afraid to ask"; "If I need to buy groceries, he asks me what I need, or asks a family member to accompany me to the market."*

Mental Health and Emotional Support

Recently, Call Mira has noted a significant demand for counselling, from twenty-one service users (3%). For example, one woman articulated, *"I am very stressed these days, I have closed my business, [we] are in a financial crisis and [I] really need to talk to someone about my stresses."* While another woman reported, *"I would like to talk to a counsellor as I'm having difficulties in my marriage. I would like to improve myself."* Moreover, the helpline had identified an increase in youth female service users who had expressed, *"Feeling stressed and anxious"; "Need to talk to someone about my problems"; "I saw on a card that your organisation provides counselling"; "I can't understand what is wrong with me but I don't feel good."* Call Mira had also attended to a number of calls from male service users enquiring about counselling. One male mentioned, *"I have been feeling very angry lately and would like to speak to a counsellor."* Another male communicated *"I have too many thoughts in my mind, [am] unable to sleep and need help."* Apart from counselling, many Call Mira service users have become regular callers who enjoy calling the helpline to say *"Hello"* and to ask about *"how all the Call Mira didis (elder sisters) are doing?"* An example of one such service user is Caller # 6, who has called the helpline approximately 75 times. She refers to Call Mira as her *"family and support in Hong Kong."* Other service users call and say, *"Mira, I'm just calling to say hello, haven't spoken to you in a while and was thinking about you."*

Education-Related (requests for tutoring assistance financial aid, laptops, SEN children service support)

A number of Call Mira service users, 16 in number, (4%), had called to seek information about tutoring services in Chinese for their children. Questions about financial aid were



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also received in terms of assistance with scholarships or directing service users to schemes allocated to applications for financial aid. The Call Mira helpline received requests for laptops from primary school students. A young girl called and said, *"Miss Mira, I need help to find a laptop. I don't have one and need one to do my homework. I promise I will only use it for school work."* Other mothers have called the helpline to enquire about resources for children with special education needs. One mother reported, *"My son is 12 years old and I am looking for vocational training for him in English."* Another mother called the helpline for resources for her *"five-year-old daughter who is expressing symptoms of autism."*

Refugee Support

A few service users, 9 in number, (1%), with refugee status had also called Call Mira to request for services such as employment, milk powder, masks, and housing information. One caller called and stated, *"Hello, I'm a refugee and I need a job. I saw your number on a poster and called to know more about your organisation."* Housing was another request from Refugee service users who were looking for apartments with lower rents and who called the helpline for assistance in searching for an apartment. Another mother called and asked for *"names of other organisations distributing milk powder,"* as, according to her, the supplies she was *"currently receiving were not enough to feed her three children."*

Translation Support

There were several requests about translation support on the helpline from 7 users (1%). One father called the helpline and stated, *"Mira, I need your help to speak to my daughter's school as I'm unable to understand what they are saying. School keeps sending me letters to pay a fee."* Other service users have called Mira to speak to social workers on their behalf. One woman called and said, *"My social worker is really lazy, she does not give me information and I don't understand what she says. Please, Mira, can you speak to her."*

Forced Marriage

Over the span of two years, the helpline has responded to several calls from girls at risk of forced marriage, 6 in number, (1%). Girls have called in vulnerable states out of fear, worry and are afraid of never returning to Hong Kong. Mostly when girls at risk of forced marriage have called, it has been to ask about their rights, and whether they should leave home or not, and if the information shared will be kept confidential. One girl called the helpline and said, *"I have a situation, 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."* Another young girl had called the helpline to report that her parents were



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forcing her to marry in a few months. This young girl said, *“I would like to gather all my information before I make a decision, about where I may go if I leave home, [and] what will the lawyers do to help me? Will Call Mira keep all my information confidential?”*

Medical Practitioners (Dental and Optical)

Enquiries about dental services and medical practitioners were also received on the helpline. Service users, 7 in number, (1%), called the helpline seeking dental services for their children and themselves. Some mothers who called the helpline expressed that they are *“unable to afford private clinics.”* Such calls were mostly from families receiving CSSA and who live on a monthly budget. One mother called the helpline stating that her five-year-old son was experiencing *“severe pain and was unable to eat solid food.”* Another woman called the helpline reporting she was *“in pain and urgently needed to visit a dentist.”* Another male service user had called the helpline to ask for *“a referral to an eye specialist as he was not satisfied with the current service he was receiving.”*

Employment of Domestic Helpers

A small number of Call Mira service users had contacted the helpline about employment for domestic helpers, 3 in number, (1%), and wanted to know if *“Mira could help in referring employers to employment agencies.”* Another woman who was working as a domestic helper had lost her job and called the helpline in need of *“a part-time job as a domestic helper.”*

Enquiries about the Helpline

Some Call Mira service users, 7 in number, (1%), called the helpline to enquire about services offered and would ask questions such as, *“What does the helpline do?”*; *“What kind of help do you provide?”*; *“Is Mira Indian or Pakistani?”*; *“Is the information we share with you confidential?”*; *“What do you do with our information?”*; *“Can we come and meet you in your office?”* Other service users have called on behalf of friends to gather information about lawyers and their roles. One friend asked, *“If we cannot afford the lawyer’s fee, can we still meet with the lawyer?”*

Other Issues

Lastly, 5 Call Mira service users (1%) called the helpline, requesting for assistance with help for furniture, air-conditioning schemes, and information about Disneyland tickets.



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CHAPTER 4:

PERIOD POVERTY



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PERIOD POVERTY

Research

TZF's service users have been significantly impacted by Covid-19. We were keen to understand to what extent women and girls are impacted by period poverty especially during this time of global crisis.

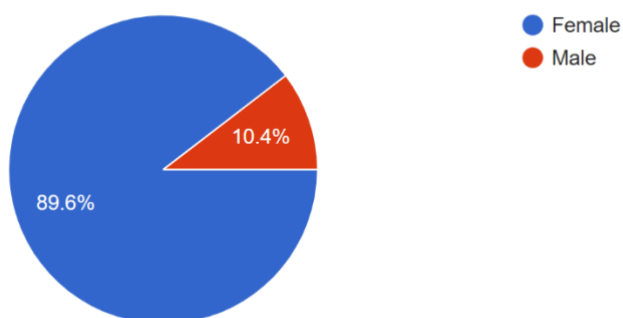
The survey (in Appendix 1) was posted on TZF Facebook page in July 2020. The survey was open for 4 weeks. A total of 288 respondents were received.

Demographics

Profile by Gender

As Graph 5 shows, 89.6% of respondents or 258 were female, 10.4% or 30, were male.

Graph 5: Percentage of respondents by gender



Profile by Ethnicity

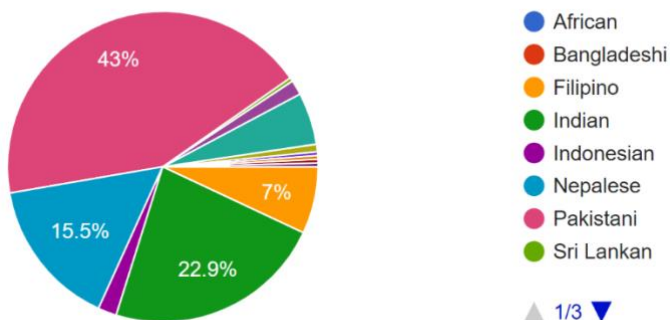
As Graph 6 shows, the largest percentage of respondents are Pakistani (43%), 22.9% are Indian, and 15.5% are Nepalese.



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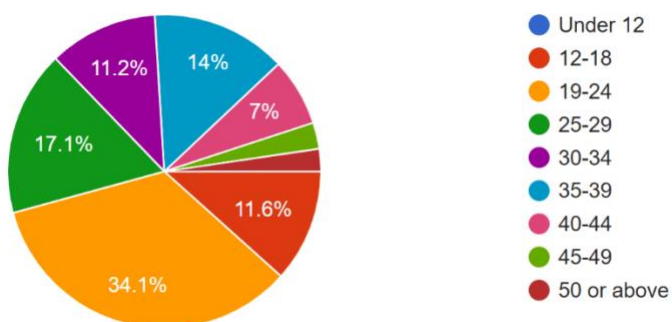
Graph 6: Profile by ethnicity



Profile by Age

As Graph 7 shows, the largest percentage of respondents were aged 19 to 24, (34.1%), followed by ages 25 to 29 at 17.1%, and ages 35 to 39, at 14%.

Graph 7: Profile by age



Profile by Occupation

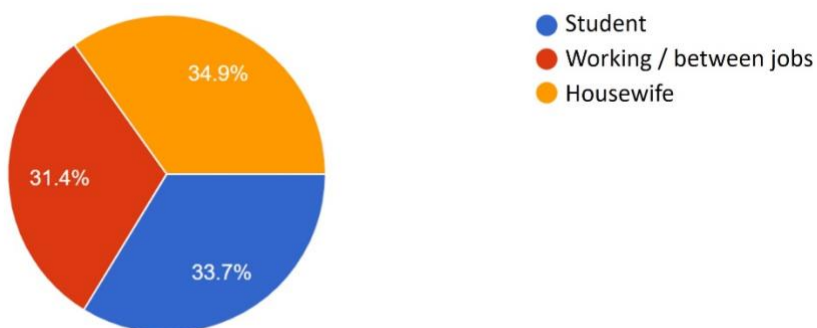
As Graph 8 shows, 34.9% were housewives, 33.7% were students, and 31.4% were working or were in-between jobs.



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Graph 8: Profile by occupation

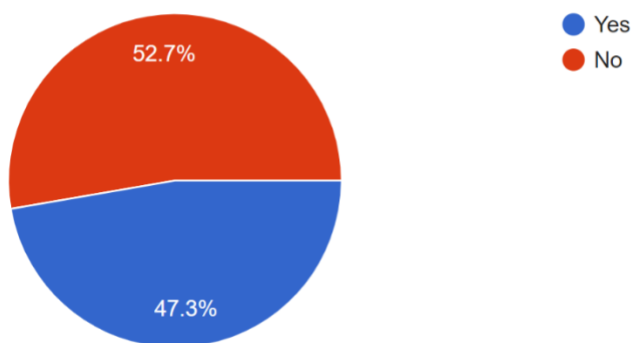


Findings

1. *Over 50% of ethnic minority women and girls feel that the cost of sanitary products is unaffordable.*

Graph 9 shows that 52.7% of respondents think sanitary products are unaffordable, while 47.3% feel they are affordable.

Graph 9: Do you feel like sanitary products are affordable?



2. *Close to one-third of ethnic minority women and girls have been unable to afford sanitary products because of financial difficulties.*

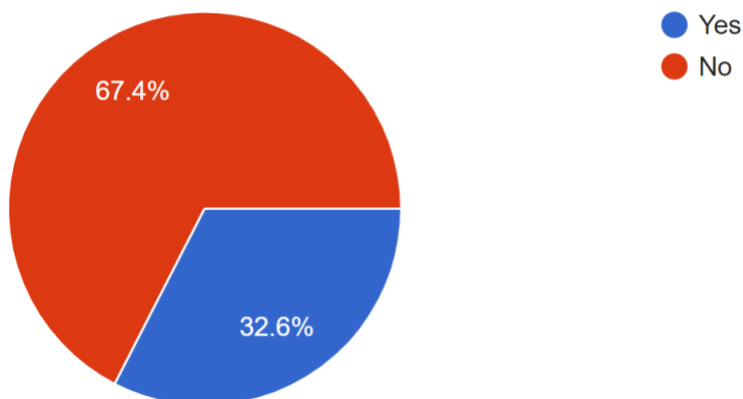
Graph 10 shows that 32.6% of respondents indicated that they have been unable to afford sanitary products because of financial difficulties, while 67.4% of respondents have never experienced that.



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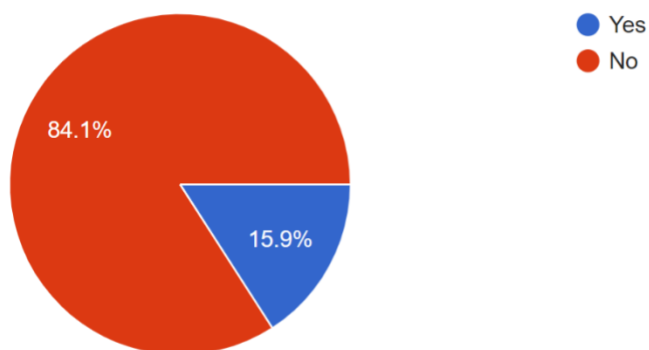
Graph 10: Have you ever been unable to afford sanitary products due to financial difficulties? For example: pads, tampons, menstrual cups.



3. *Almost 16% of women and girls have missed school or work because they have been unable to access sanitary products.*

Graph 11 shows that 15.9% of respondents have missed school/education/work due to not being able to access sanitary products; 84.1% stated that they have not experienced this.

Graph 11: Have you ever missed school/education/work, due to not being able to access sanitary products?





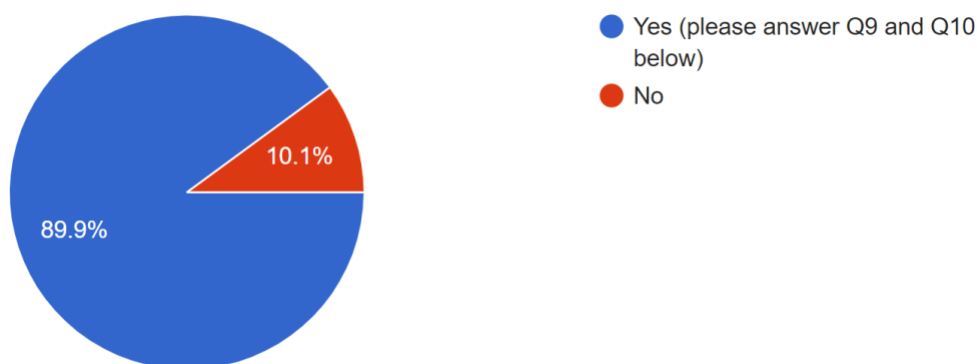
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4. Almost 90% of ethnic minority women and girls would benefit from free sanitary products.

Graph 12 shows that majority (89.9%) of respondents thought they would benefit from free sanitary products; 10.1% thought they would not.

Graph 12: Do you think you will benefit if you have access to free sanitary products?



5. If recipients received free sanitary products this would make women and girls happier, there would be less financial burden on their families and they would meet their friends and family more.

The survey asked how individuals would benefit from free (no cost) sanitary products. Respondents could choose more than one answer. The main answers included:

Table 8: Benefits from free-of-charge sanitary products

	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%)



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Observations

1. Ethnic minority women are clearly impacted by period poverty, with one-third of all ethnic minority women saying that they have been unable to afford sanitary products because of financial difficulties.
2. This period poverty is having a direct impact on the education of girls who are missing school as a result of their period.
3. This is also having an impact on the economic productivity of women who state that they have missed work as a result of period poverty.
4. With 65% of women saying that receiving sanitary products would relieve their financial burden, it is clear that many are impacted by financial hardship.
5. Hong Kong is one of the richest cities in the world and a woman's menstruation should not be a barrier to women's education, opportunities and freedom. This is an easy barrier to overcome, and steps must be taken to address this.



OVERALL THOUGHTS

Women Crave a Safe Place

Call Mira is seen as the only *safe space* among women and girls from the minority communities in Hong Kong who have limited access to resources or who find it challenging to speak to members outside of their community. As a caller stated, *“How can I speak to a Chinese social worker about my problems?”* The willingness of callers to open up and share their experiences and challenges was underestimated. Many women on the Call Mira helpline have expressed gratitude for the help they have received. One caller stated, *“It was good to talk to a stranger, but it also didn’t feel like it was an unknown voice. I told them about my problems. They helped me find solutions.”* Another woman on the helpline felt she was *“completely understood,”* and stated, *“They helped me a lot again and again and have really worked well with me.”* While another caller who regularly calls the helpline does so to check in and ask about *“All Mira didis,”* and related, *“I think of Call Mira as my family. I call you more than I call my own family.”*

Women are Dependent

Based on the 726 Call Mira service users, the majority of Call Mira service users are from low income backgrounds. Most families are dependent on one family member’s income or are recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA). Many women callers who have called requesting for resources struggle to give us complete financial information about their families, because many women have no information about what their husbands do for a living. They often need to verify facts with their husbands or children. For example, one mother asked her twelve-year-old son at home, *“Are we receiving CSSA?”*

Women are Lonely

Not only are Call Mira service users exposed to poverty but face many other issues as well. These include mental health, family conflicts, financial difficulties, and lack of information about legal rights. Several women have conveyed *“loneliness,”* and a need to speak to a human voice. Many Call Mira service users have shared the sense of lack of support at home and in the community. As a result, some women do not talk about it when they initially call the helpline. The nature of the first call is casual. It is more information-seeking and making enquiries about social welfare and children. It is only after calling the helpline three to four times do some women develop the trust and confidence in revealing more. Other times, the helpline has observed that women are vulnerable and sad and have decided to call the helpline, ready to take an action.



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Domestic Violence is Prevalent

Prevalence of abuse is high, even though abuse might not be the first reason for many women to call the Call Mira helpline. Women who are victims of abuse broach the topic on their own or simply cry on the phone when asked *“if they are safe or hurt.”* Some women have gathered the strength to disclose details of the abuse, while others say, *“Can I tell you what happened next time?”* or they say, *“I can’t speak about it now.”* Other women simply respond “Yes” when asked about abuse but discuss their children at risk.

Children are Victims too

We have heard and observed from the many calls received by mothers that most often the invisible victims are children. We have listened to mothers’ concerns about children *witnessing abuse, at risk of abuse or not wanting to stay alone at home with their fathers.* One mother stated, *“My daughter cries and yells when I tell her that her father will help her or be at home with her.”* Another mother communicated, *“My children are afraid of their father and don’t want to see him.”* While The Zubin Foundation is working with parents on their issues, we are also looking forward to counselling children and perhaps establishing a helpline for children.

Women Lack Legal Information

Call Mira has reinforced the importance of a woman knowing her legal rights, and feeling worthy of support in the community. Of the 24 women in need of legal support, all have articulated that they are unaware of where to seek legal advice and how to access the system. Those who have approached legal aid have not particularly been satisfied by the help provided, or have complained about being treated as a “minority.” Some Call Mira callers who were provided with pro bono legal advice were thankful to Call Mira and stated, *“I’m thankful for the information, and without the advice, I would have not known my right[s].”* Other Call Mira service users who have been referred to private law firms willing to take on pro bono Call Mira cases have not been happy with the lawyers assigned because of culture barriers. Thus, The Zubin Foundation is in the process of upskilling lawyers and increasing the pool of lawyers working with the ethnic minority community.

Women’s Mental Health

Call Mira has so far referred 16 service users to the Ethnic Minority Well Being Centre for counselling and there is a waitlist. Requests for counselling are multiplying. Women and girls have called expressing their preference to work with a counsellor from the same background as them, as it would be easier for them to relate to. Some service



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users have asked about counsellors' backgrounds and whether they speak their language (Hindi, Urdu or Nepali).

Forced Marriage Depletes a Girl

Forced Marriage is degrading for Hong Kong girls to admit to, even with their closest friends. We have seen a couple of cases where a young woman has reached out through her school or university for help and The Zubin Foundation has been contacted.

Forced Marriage Results in Internal Conflict

Many girls want to please their parents and have the marriage that their parents want for them, in order to make their parents happy. At the same time, these young women have their own dreams and aspirations and many wish to pursue education, have a career and find a way out of poverty.

All Our Young Women Love Their Religion of Islam

The young women we interviewed all identified very much with their religion and with the teaching of Islam. They added that they read and interpret the Qu'ran differently from the way their parents do. According to our girls, the Qu'ran is encouraging of women's education, and women and girls must not be forced into any marriage. Many of our girls sought solace in their religion.

Period Poverty is a Real Problem which Impacts Education and Economic Productivity

Period poverty affects the lives of Hong Kong ethnic minority women and girls with 32.6% saying that they are unable to afford to buy sanitary products because of their financial situation. This affects their education and it affects their ability to go to work. This is clearly a very fixable problem.

Supplying Women and Girls with Free Sanitary Products would Help in Many Ways

Perhaps most important in the work with South Asian women is to enhance their happiness and to change their perception that they are a burden on their families. 90% of them say that they would benefit from free sanitary products. 75% of this group said they would be happier and 65% of them said it would reduce the financial burden on their families.



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NEXT STEPS FOR THE ZUBIN FOUNDATION

There is clearly so much work that needs to be done. These are some recommendations:

- **Increasing Capacity of Counselling Centre**

The Zubin Foundation has been operating an Ethnic Minority Well-being Centre for individuals aged 16 years and above since September 2019. Because of the increase in mental health problems in the ethnic minority community we will be doubling our Ethnic Minority Well-being Centre counselling services starting January 2020.

- **Assisting Children with Trauma**

The Zubin Foundation will be extending our services to children who are in need of trauma counselling. The Zubin Foundation will be setting up a pilot Well-being Centre for children in January 2020. This is mostly to work with children who are victims of domestic violence and girls who are in forced-marriage predicaments. Our aim is also to provide public schools and their social workers and teachers with necessary handholding and support on culturally-sensitive mental health issues that require an ethnic minority cultural lens.

- **Enhancing Capacity of Lawyers to Work with Ethnic Minority Women**

Together with the Legal Leads of Call Mira, we are embarking on a process to enhance the awareness of family lawyers and barristers, initially, to the issues faced by ethnic minority women. We will be providing training for them and an opportunity to learn from the case-experiences of our legal leads on issues relating mainly to family and immigration law.

- **Reducing Period Poverty**

In November 2020, The Zubin Foundation will be starting a project to fund every financially-needy ethnic minority girl, who is studying, with sanitary supplies. We believe that every girl should have the opportunity to live her life to the fullest, and that menstruation should not be a barrier to achieving her dreams.



Appendix 1

Survey on Period Poverty

1. What is your gender?

- a. Female
- b. Male

2. Your ethnicity

- a. African
- b. Bangladeshi
- c. Filipino
- d. Indian
- e. Indonesian
- f. Nepalese
- g. Pakistani
- h. Sri Lankan
- i. Thai
- j. Turk
- k. White
- l. Mix ethnicity
- m. Other

3. How old are you?

- a. Under 12
- b. 12-18
- c. 19-24
- d. 25-29
- e. 30-34
- f. 35-39
- g. 40-44



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- h. 45-49
 - i. 50 or above
- 4. You are:
 - a. A student
 - b. Working / between jobs
 - c. A housewife
- 5. Do you feel like sanitary products are affordable?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 6. Have you ever been unable to afford sanitary products due to financial difficulties?
For example: pads, tampons, menstrual cups.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 7. Have you ever missed school / education / work, due to not being able to access sanitary products?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 8. Do you think you will benefit if you have access to free sanitary products?
 - a. Yes (please answer Q9 and Q10 below)
 - b. No
- 9. If you receive free (no cost) sanitary products, how will you benefit? (you can choose more than one answers)
 - a. I would be absent from school less
 - b. I would be absent from work less
 - c. I would be happier
 - d. I would meet my friends/families more
 - e. My family would have less financial burden
 - f. Other
- 10. Which sanitary and hygiene product(s) do you need the most?



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- a. Sanitary napkins / pads
- b. Tampons
- c. Menstrual cups
- d. Roll on deodorant