Education in the Asia-Pacific Region:
Issues, Concerns and Prospects 32

Miron Kumar Bhowmik
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'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong

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ASIA-PACIFIC EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
Springer

EDUCATION IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION: ISSUES, CONCERNS AND PROSPECTS

Volume 32

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ISSN 1573-5397 ISSN 2214-9791 (electronic)
Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects
ISBN 978-981-10-0325-7 ISBN 978-981-10-0327-1 (eBook)
DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-0327-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016931598

Printed on acid-free paper

This Springer imprint is published by SpringerNature
The registered company is Springer Science+Business Media Singapore Pte Ltd.

Series Editors' Introduction

This is an important, ground breaking book on a topic which is of central importance to those of us with a keen interest in the key issues, concerns and prospects concerning access and equity in education and schooling, and with identifying best ways to most effectively promote equity in education on an evidence based basis.

The research study reported on in this book seeks to ascertain the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong, to identify the reasons why ethnic minority young people are 'out of school', and to showcase the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority group young people in Hong Kong. In doing this the study fills in some important gaps in the existing literature. The authors provide a portrait of ethnic minority populations in Hong Kong, examine the issue of access and equity in education for such groups in Hong Kong, and assesses what can and is being done to protect the vulnerable against discrimination in education and elsewhere throughout Hong Kong society.

The research answers three main questions concerning Hong Kong: the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong; the reasons for ethnic minority young people being 'out of school'; and, what is the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong.

In terms of research methodology the authors adopt a well considered, comprehensive and sophisticated approach where they blend together both quantitative and qualitative data, including data from official government and schools records, in-depth interviews with young people, interviews with stakeholders related to ethnic minority education, and case studies of individual schools. Of special interest to us are the insights gained from the case study presented of a young girl who had never been to school.

This study demonstrates that although there are several instruments in Hong Kong aimed at protecting ethnic minorities from discrimination (such as the Racial Discrimination Ordinance), racism against ethnic minorities exists to varying degrees in all areas of the economy and society. In the words of the authors, the study shows that beneath the surface of what many consider to be a 'harmonious society', there are groups of young people for whom current educational

arrangements are not working. The study explores what can be done to remove the various forms of discrimination that exist against ethnic minorities.

Although the book focuses on Hong Kong the issues examined and conclusions drawn will resonate with those living in countries and communities throughout the region. The issues, concerns and prospects examined are relevant to the Education for All agenda which is concerned with providing a high quality, relevant and sustainable education for all individuals in society, based on notions of lifelong learning, regardless of their gender, age, socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, religion and geographical location.

Rupert Maclean (The Hong Kong Institute of Education)
Lorraine Symaco (University of Malaya)

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List of Abbreviations

CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CREATE	Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DDO	Disability Discrimination Ordinance
EC	Education Commission
EDB	Education Bureau
EFA	Education for All
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HAB	Home Affair Bureau
HK	Hong Kong
HKCEE	Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination
HKDSE	Hong Kong Diploma in Secondary Education
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MTR	Mass Transit Railway
NCS	Non-Chinese Speaking Students
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
RDO	Race Discrimination Ordinance
SDO	Sex Discrimination Ordinance
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Abstract This chapter introduces the research motivation, background aims and objectives, rationale, and outline of the book. For the first author, motivation for stemmed from past experience working for the British Council in Bangladesh and the realization that Bangladeshi and Pakistani students were underachieving compared to other students in British schools. First-hand experience of racism and an interest in South Asian ethnic minority students living in Hong Kong and how they can be supported, thus, provided the rationale for his PhD research and this book. For the second author, past research of ethnic minorities and their education provision in Hong Kong gave valuable insight for Miron's PhD and the previously unconsidered research of 'out of school' ethnic minorities with foci on school culture, the cultural contexts of students and their families and Hong Kong's broader social and political contexts. The three questions that guided the investigation were: (1). What is the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong? (2). What are the reasons for ethnic minority young people being 'out of school'? (3). What is the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?

This book provides an in-depth understanding of the 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong in the second decade of the twenty-first century. It reports on an inquiry that focused on the extent of the phenomenon, the reasons behind it, and in the process offers descriptions of 'out of school' life. Employing qualitative research methods and adopting a case study approach that involved fieldwork comprising 15 in-depth interviews and two observations with 11 'out of school' ethnic minority young people, we provide here a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. Fieldwork was augmented with an additional 22 in-depth interviews with 20 other stakeholders related to ethnic minority education. In order to understand the dynamics of the 'out of school' issue, time was spent in three schools to gain a sense of the specific contexts of the schools and the life of the ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong.

In addition to fieldwork, key documents, such as census reports, and national and international educational statistical reports related to school attendance and 'out of school' students, were identified. The schools in this inquiry made available documents related to school enrolment, attendance, and dropout records. Document analysis provided another perspective on the 'out of school' phenomena.

M.K. Bhowmik, K.J. Kennedy, *'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong*, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects 32, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-0327-1_1

In this chapter we begin with describing our motivation for researching the issue. Then we set the scene by providing an historical and legal context in which ethnic minority students' educational rights are protected in Hong Kong. Later in the chapter we define the problems; present the aims, objectives and guiding questions; provide a comprehensive rationale; highlight the important aspects of the book; and outline the structure of the book.

1.1 Our Motivation

The work we report in this book is based on Miron Bhowmik's PhD study of which Kerry Kennedy was the Principal Supervisor. What started as a formal relationship between student and supervisor ended as a shared commitment to social justice and an ongoing commitment to do something to further the cause of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. This book is dedicated to that cause.

As authors, we represent the diversity that characterizes Hong Kong but our histories are different. Below we have each traced these individual histories to try and show how they led us to this book and our shared commitment. Miron leads off:

> I was born, educated and worked in Bangladesh until the middle of 2011 when I decided to accept the offer for pursuing a PhD in Education at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. My last job was with British Council Bangladesh where I was leading their education programs. One of the common features of the programs was to do with strengthening intercultural dialogue between the students of Bangladeshi and British schools through supporting school partnership with a focus on the curriculum project that had an international dimension in it. For this I had to work with many British schools which have a large number of South Asian diaspora students. It was there that I first came to know the educational issues of South Asian ethnic minority students especially the under achievement of Bangladeshi and Pakistani students compared to other students in British schools. The projects we were supporting through the British Council work were part of wider educational support programs for ethnic minority students on the part of British schools for giving ethnic minority students exposure to their home country and culture, promoting community cohesion in British society, etc. I had also the opportunity to support the 'London Challenge', a big project that aimed at helping under achieving ethnic minority students in London. I provided them consultative support to understand the social, economic, cultural and educational contexts of Bangladesh by planning and organizing a study visit for a group of London based consultants working for the project in order to give them a first-hand experience of these contexts. This type of involvement helped me not only learn about the educational issues of ethnic minority students in London but also opened my eyes as to how students' back home culture is important to know in order to formulate effective support measures for them. For example, understanding how Bangladeshi parents consider their involvement in schooling activities in Bangladesh is very important to devise a support measure in London schools that aims to strengthen the involvement of Bangladeshi ethnic parents in schooling activities in order to enhance students' learning outcomes. I was doing this work in the British Council for nearly four years before I moved to Hong Kong. With this backdrop, it was natural that I had already grown interest to work on the educational issues of South Asian ethnic minority students especially to know more about the issue and to do something for them to support such students.

Another reason that led me to this study was the racism that I encountered before and after coming in Hong Kong. During my job at the British Council I had to travel to some countries for business purposes. Every time I passed through the immigration of other countries I was asked endless questions while I noticed the immigration officers hardly asked any questions to the fellow white passengers from the same flight. Also, I was never convinced by some policies and practices in British Council such as London appointed colleagues (mostly white) working at Bangladesh office in the same level as me getting at least five times higher than my benefits package and there was no progression route to overseas postings for in-country appointed staff. These are similar to the ways in which ethnic minorities in Hong Kong experienced forms of racial discrimination (Ku et al. 2010) and I have also experienced them.

It was my second month in Hong Kong when I first encountered racism. I went to China's Foreign Ministry in Hong Kong applying for a Chinese visa together with one of my Italian friends. We did enough research on their website for preparing our visa application. Unfortunately, they refused to accept my application due to the lack of supporting documents whereas my white Italian friend made it through visa hurdles with the same type of supporting documents. Because of my 'heavy weight Bangladeshi passport (!)' they asked for several other supporting documents which were not listed on their website. After preparing these documents I again approached the visa office, they again refused to accept my application and asked me for one more document which they did not mention in our previous encounter. I felt adamant to see the end of this and in my third approach the long awaited Chinese visa was stamped in my passport. Later I have also encountered some other racism in Hong Kong especially once a taxi driver refused me entry and many times in the shops including at my university campus the sales assistant did not bother to answer my questions or even if answered, I could feel their discontent. These direct experiences of racism in Hong Kong in a very short time made me think about the vulnerability of South Asian ethnic minority people who have been living here for longtime. When I started to explore the literature about Hong Kong's ethnic minorities I came to know that ethnic minority people are discriminated against in every sector including education and the educational failure of their young generation is one of the most pressing issues for them (e.g. EOC 2011; Ku et al. 2005, 2010; Kennedy 2011a; Loper 2004). I determined myself to fight against this.

Kerry's story follows:

I came to Hong Kong in 2001 to work at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. In general, I worked in the areas of curriculum studies and citizenship education always with a concern for social inclusion and social justice. According to the Hong Kong census I too was an ethnic minority – but a white, privileged ethnic minority. Coming from Australia, I was more than aware of racism that at one time was part of the national psyche and felt strongly by both ethnic minorities and indigenous people. I was equally aware that racism need not be a permanent feature of a society – legislation, political will and resources can all make a difference.

It did not take me long to find out about Hong Kong's ethnic minorities. especially as there was an ongoing debate about a proposed Racial Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) towards which there seemed to be some opposition in the community. Just prior to the RDO's being passed by the Legislative Council, some colleagues and I were awarded a Public Policy Research grant to examine the issue of educational provision for ethnic minority students and the extent to which it might be affected by the RDO. This work proceeded and a General Research Fund grant then enabled us to look for closely into classrooms to see how ethnic minority students were faring. All of this work was confined to schools and classrooms – then along came Miron!

As a new PhD student, I shared with him the work we had been doing on policy and classroom practice for ethnic minority students. After a very short time in Hong Kong he

> had become associated with local ethnic communities and he brought a new perspective both to the general topic and issues. I recall the day we started to sketch out different ways he might contribute to that work. But he had another idea – he wanted to look at 'out of school' ethnic minority students that up until then had not been considered in the Hong Kong context. Indeed, the statistical record indicated that there were very few such students in Hong Kong's education system. Nevertheless, armed with this idea he started his PhD journey to shine light on a new framing for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong, a framing that was to look more closely at the culture of schools, the cultural contexts of students and their families and the broader social and political contexts of Hong Kong. This was a context where the "multicultural" is not part of any government policy, where "diversity" does not figure in advice to schools about catering for the needs of all students and where "difference" was not part of any local discussions. Miron's objective was to disrupt these discourses and to show that beneath the surface of what was considered to be a "harmonious" society there were groups of young people for whom current educational arrangements were not working.

Now we have undertaken this important work to make it more publicly available. We believe that there first needs to be recognition of the problems in the education system and that policy solutions can then be applied to these problems. What follows sets out our specific objectives and what we hope to achieve in our shared commitment to Hong Kong's ethnic minority students.

1.2 Background, Aims and Objectives

Literature from a historic perspective affirms that educational provision for ethnic minority students was not mentioned during the colonial period in Hong Kong (e.g., Evans 2000; Luk 1991; So 1998; Sweeting and Vickers 2007). The official recognition of ethnic minorities as a subgroup of Hong Kong's population (Census and Statistics Department 2002) was only announced in 2001, even though such groups had been present since the beginning of the British colonial period (Plüss 2000, 2005; Vaid 1972). In 2004, a specific need for the legislative protection of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong was brought to the public's attention with the publication of a consultation document for legislating against racial discrimination (Home Affairs Bureau [HAB] 2004). The Racial Discrimination Bill was introduced to the Legislative Council in 2006 (HAB 2006), passed into the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) in 2008 (HAB 2008) and was enacted in 2009.

At the present time 2015, the RDO is not the only instrument that seeks to protect ethnic minorities, and indeed all Hong Kong people. International instruments and some domestic legislation are also in place to protect the rights of equal opportunities to education, such as Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO) and Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO) (EOC 2011, p. 1 and 2). The RDO is however, the most recent among these instruments, and its focus is exclusively on the removal of any form of discrimination against ethnic minorities.

While the RDO is broad in its concern to protect ethnic minorities from discrimination, growing literature indicates there is quite significant implications related to the current educational provision for the ethnic minority students in Hong Kong (Chong 2011; Connelly et al. 2012; Heung 2006; Hong Kong Unison Limited 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012a, b; Hue 2011; Kapai 2011; Kennedy 2011a, b; Kennedy and Hue 2011; Kennedy et al. 2008; Ku et al. 2005; Loper 2004; Novianti 2007; Phillion et al. 2011; Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service 2000, 2002). Many popular media articles also continuously feature these issues (e.g. Benitez 2011; Bhowmik 2012a, b; Cheng 2011; Deng 2011a, b; South China Morning Post 2006; Thapa 2012; Zhao 2011). In addition, in 2011 the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) formally notified the Education Bureau (EDB) of its concerns surrounding the education of ethnic minority students (Equal Opportunities Commission [EOC] 2011). While the focus of the related research has been on the provision of adequate education (Education Bureau [EDB] 2011a, b, 2012; Education Commission [EC] 2000) and the extent to which such provisions meet the requirements of the Racial Discrimination Ordinance (HAB 2008), however, little attention has been given to the status of ethnic minority students ('immigrants' or 'citizens'); the entitlements that such status provides them in the Hong Kong context; the extent to which there remains 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong (possibly as a result of their status); and the policy implications of all these issues (Bhowmik 2013, p. 35; Bhowmik and Kennedy 2012).

The framework in Table 1.1 reflects the areas of research relating to ethnic minority students in Hong Kong and the questions that remain unanswered.

Most existing literature focuses on ethnic minority students who are already in school. Yet careful analysis of the 2006 census data (Census and Statistics

Table 1.1 Framework for research on ethnic minority students in Hong Kong

In school	Out of school
1. Why there is a continuing dissatisfaction with the schooling provided for the ethnic minority students in Hong Kong?	1. Can the concept of 'out of school' be applied to ethnic minority students in Hong Kong?
2. How well-prepared are Hong Kong schools and teachers in meeting the needs of the ethnic minority students?	2. Do current government policies recognize 'out of school' ethnic minority students?
	3. What do 'out of school' ethnic minority students do in Hong Kong, especially those who should normally be in secondary schooling?
1. How does the discourse of 'integration' influence education policy agenda for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong?	1. What rights do ethnic minorities have in Hong Kong?
2. How would a policy agenda that focused on multiculturalism produce a different kind of education policy?	2. How have ethnic minorities or their representatives pushed for the rights relating to education?
	3. How has the rights agenda for ethnic minority students been received in Hong Kong?

Source: (Bhowmik 2013, p. 35) and Bhowmik and Kennedy (2012)

Department 2007) suggested that a good number of ethnic minority young people were not within the school system (Bhowmik 2013; Bhowmik and Kennedy 2012; Kennedy 2012). The EOC in Hong Kong (2011) recognized this issue with reference to the disproportionately low participation rates of ethnic minorities in upper secondary and post-secondary education compared to the majority of ethnic Chinese children.

Bhowmik (2013) focused on understanding the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority children in Hong Kong by employing two important frameworks, i.e., 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion' by UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2010) and 'Seven Zones of Exclusion' by the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE) (Lewin 2007), and analyzed the 2006 by-census data (Census and Statistics Department 2007). The findings suggested that a number of ethnic minority young people were 'out of school' including the pre-primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary age-groups.

Kennedy (2012) suggested similar kinds of phenomena and further work of Bhowmik and Kennedy (2013) explained how the 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority students raises new issues about access and equity in Hong Kong's education system and how this system and its policies fail to meet the requirements of one of the 'no-loser principle' that is meant to characterize Hong Kong's most recent education reform agenda (Education Commission [EC] 2000). It has also been suggested that available data in the public domain are not helpful in determining the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority students (Bhowmik 2013; Bhowmik and Kennedy 2013; Kennedy 2012) thus highlighting the urgent need for more consistent and better quality data in this area.

Clearly, very little attention has been paid to the 'out of school' phenomena relating to ethnic minority students. Even for the students who are in schools, not much is known about their 'meaningful participation' and the risk factors involved in dropping out of school. These issues are basic to understanding access to, transition through, and exclusion from education (Lewin 2007; UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2010). Understanding the full extent of the 'out of school' phenomenon among ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong should have a high priority particularly in respect to trying to understand the reasons for the existence of an 'out of school' phenomena and what's happening to them when they are out of school. In order to address this knowledge gap, this book explores the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong, why these young people are not in school, and what their life looks like out of school.

We seek to answer the following questions:

1. What is the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?
2. What are the reasons for the ethnic minority young people being 'out of school'?
3. What is the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?

In the following sections we set out to answer these questions by first delving into a study of literature that informs and impacts the phenomenon.

1.3 Rationale: Why Focus on Ethnic Minority Young People?

1.3.1 Gap in Literature

In relation to the context of developing countries (Hunt 2008; Lewin 2007; UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2010) and developed countries, such as the United States (Rumberger 2011), much has been written about those young people who are 'out of school' or who are 'dropouts'. Carol (2012) argued that although literature on dropouts is available globally, empirically sound and theoretically motivated research in this area is scant. The comprehensive review of Hunt (2008) on the academic and development agency literature on dropouts, especially in the development context, indicated fewer studies on dropping out than he expected. Hunt noted the lack of focus on ensuring sustained access, and recognized that the focus had always been on bringing children into school in the first instance. He pointed out that dropping out was not prominent enough in research, and thereby, identified a research gap on the processes of dropping out. He advocated more with young people who are at risk of dropping out. He also found a limited number of in-depth qualitative accounts of dropping out of school that are based on interviews with and life histories of dropout young people (p. 51). He further argued that although researchers know the 'what factors,' such as low socio-economic status, gender, geographical location, and socially disadvantaged groups, affect the access and dropouts, few qualitative stories seek to understand how these factors interact in specific contexts. Rumberger (2011) focused on an extensive review of statistical studies on dropping out in order to understand why students drop out of school in the United States (p. 159).

While a wide range of international literature is available on 'dropping out' or being 'out of school' in developing and developed countries, similar studies are rare in the context of Hong Kong. The dearth of literature in 'out of school' or 'dropping out' of students overall in Hong Kong, with its internationalised developed economy, represents almost negligible examination at the micro level, particularly in respect to ethnic minority students. There is however, existing literature, that has highlighted many issues and challenges that ethnic minority students face in their education in Hong Kong, and to some extent these studies shed light on the 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority students (Ku et al. 2005; Loper 2004). In 2011 the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) highlighted:

> In Hong Kong, all eligible local children, including non-Chinese speaking (NCS) children, who are mainly ethnic minorities (EM), are entitled to 12 years of free education, 9 of which is compulsory. Despite having equal right to education, the number of EM students attaining higher level of education is disproportionately low compared with the majority local ethnic Chinese. According to the latest statistics available (2006 Population By-census), EM students accounted for 3.2 % of the total student population at pre-primary level (5,452 out of 166,394 (excluding 1,325 White)). The proportion was commensurate with their population in Hong Kong. At the Upper Secondary level, the percentage of EM students was reduced to about 1.1 % (2,109 out of 189,380). At the Post-secondary level

> (including Diploma/Certificate, Sub-degree course and Degree course), the percentage dropped significantly to about 0.59 %. The phenomenon warrants serious attention and the reasons behind it are worth exploring. (EOC 2011, p. 2)

These findings provide the basis for a new research agenda (Bhowmik 2013; Bhowmik and Kennedy 2012, 2013; Kennedy 2011a, 2012) that constitutes the focus of this book and its reported inquiry.

1.3.2 Access and Equity in Education

The issue of ethnic minority education is very important from the following two perspectives, namely, social rights and equity. These two concepts are related, but will be treated separately below for the purpose of illustrating the phenomenon of ethnic minority students and their 'out of school' status.

1.3.2.1 Educational Rights

Lewin (2007), a British researcher, working in the field of international education and development, argues:

> ….Rights to education, and their realization through meaningful participation, are fundamental to any recent conception of development….Research on access has to be concerned whether efforts to expand participation contribute to improved equity in general and are themselves equitable. As with more general debates on development, growth and expansion of education systems which exacerbate existing inequality is unlikely to contribute much to inter-generational mobility out of poverty. Education systems are one arena in which States can seek to limit inherited advantages and promote greater equality of opportunity, albeit that greater equality in outcomes will always prove elusive. Access to education is very unevenly distributed in relation to household wealth in most poor countries. Discrepancies related to location, gender, cultural affiliation and many other signifiers of advantage may also be very conspicuous. And of course access narrowly defined as enrolment conceals vast differences in educational quality, resource inputs, and measurable outcomes (p. 36, 3).

Although Lewin's argument is based mainly on the context of South Asian and Sub-Saharan African countries, the concepts, such as 'meaningful participation' and 'equitable provision,' are universal. It is not enough simply to have students in schools – they must be meaningfully engaged. In a multicultural society, such as Hong Kong, issues of equitable access and engagement need to be prioritized if Hong Kong values its reputation as an 'international' city that bridges East and West. These issues raise questions about the nature of equity and ways it can be pursued.

1.3.2.2 Equity in Education

Equity is a broad term and has been interpreted in different ways. In an OECD review of equity in education of several OECD countries, participating countries agreed on the use of the following definition (Opheim 2004, p. 13):

> Educational equity refers to an educational and learning environment in which individuals can consider options and make choices throughout their lives based on their abilities and talents, not on the basis of stereotypes, biased expectations or discrimination. The achievement of educational equity enables females and males of all races and ethnic backgrounds to develop skills needed to be productive, empowered citizens. It opens economic and social opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity, race or social status. In summary, the activity will explore equity of opportunities in a broad sense. It will acknowledge existing inequities in access, participation, achievement and educational outcomes and the creation of a 'fair learning environment' for all regardless of socio-economic background, place of residence, ethnic background, and gender.

This definition shows that the discourse of educational equity goes beyond the scope of merely providing opportunities of access and participation: it should also translate into equity of educational achievement and outcomes. Worldwide focus on these outcomes is fundamental to ensuring that irrespective of gender, ethnicity and class, the goal posts and the expectations should be the same for everyone. Hong Kong's ethnic minority students, therefore, cannot simply be relegated to the 'low achieving' group. Expectations on and for them must be the same as that of Hong Kong's best and brightest students, and thus, the resources needed to achieve this equity must be provided. Equitable provision means provision that can bring out the best in all students. It therefore may not mean the same provision for all students but it does mean provision that will bring about valued outcomes for individuals and for society. This is the equity challenge for Hong Kong's policy makers in their endeavor to develop an equitable society that values its multicultural citizens.

1.3.3 Protection Against Discrimination

International instruments and some domestic legislation, such as CRC, ICESCR, ICERD, CRPD, SDO, DDO, and the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, protect the rights of equal opportunities to education for all children in Hong Kong. The most recently added legislation is the Racial Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) (HAB 2008). Its edicts claim protection of ethnic minority children against racial discrimination caused by any educational establishment. It states (HAB 2008, Section 26(1), p. 13):

It is unlawful for the responsible body for an educational establishment to discrimination against a person –

(a) in the terms on which it offers to admit that person to the establishment as a student;
(b) by refusing, or deliberately omitting to accept, an application for that person's admission to the establishment as a student; or –
(c) where the person is a student of the establishment –

    (I) in the way it affords the person access to any benefits, facilities or services, or by refusing or deliberately omitting to afford the person access to them; or

(II) by expelling the person from the establishment or subjecting him or her to any other detriment.

However, Section 26(2) of RDO fails to bind schools with any mandatory requirement to make any change or special arrangement for people of any race or ethnicity (HAB 2008). The development of this legal framework sets out to protect the adult ethnic minority population in Hong Kong from exploitation, mainly in the employment areas, whereas little thought has been given to schools and education (Kennedy 2011b).

While the existing policy and support measures of the government towards ethnic minority education do not contravene the requirement of RDO, yet a strong demand for more work around this issue has been voiced in an effort to remove the educational barriers and provide ethnic minority children more opportunities (EOC 2011; Hong Kong Organisations 2009; Hong Kong Unison Limited 2009; Kennedy and Hue 2011). One such 'voice' has been that of the EOC (2011) in Hong Kong who warrants that the participation of ethnic minority children in upper secondary and post-secondary education is disproportionately low compared to the majority ethnic Chinese children, despite the fact that Hong Kong has a policy of 12 years of free education, of which 9 years are compulsory. It recommends that this issue should be given serious attention and further exploration (EOC 2011). This book, therefore, puts forward a direct response to providing a better understanding of these complex issues that previous research has failed to address.

1.3.4 The 'No Loser' Principle of Hong Kong's Education Reform

Hong Kong underwent a significant educational reform process between the years 2001 and 2011. Much of this represented an educational response to the changing nature of world economic structures and the demand for a knowledge-based society (EC 2000). With a view to building an education system conducive to lifelong learning and all-round development, Hong Kong has been implementing this rigorous education reform plan by focusing on the admission and assessment system, curriculum and teaching methods, lifelong learning, resourcing strategies, teacher development and leadership development (EC 2000). Bringing new learning opportunities to every citizen has been its main guiding principle (EC 1999). These opportunities have been translated into the main reform document as one of the five principles of reform, which is the 'no-loser principle.

> The consistency in curricula, teaching methodology and personal development of students will provide students with coherent learning experiences in the true spirit of "no loser"…. There should not be, at any stage of education, dead-end screening that blocks further learning opportunities. One must grasp every opportunity throughout one's life to continue to learn and to seek self-advancement, and the efforts made should be duly recognized. "Teaching without any discrimination" has been a cherished concept since ancient times. We should not give up on any single student, but rather let all students have the chance to

> develop their potentials. The aim of the education reform is to remove the obstacles in our system that obstruct learning, to give more room to students to show their initiative and to develop their potential in various domains. In a diverse education system, students can find the appropriate learning opportunity at various stages in life according to their personal development needs or job requirements, and their efforts should be duly recognized. Such a system would induce all to pursue life-long learning and promote the emergence of a learning society. (EC 2000, p. 7, 36–37)

The Education Bureau (EDB) has periodically reported the updates of different reform initiatives that show progress (EC 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006). These initiatives include the 'through train' concept, reform of the primary and secondary admissions system, a full 6 years of secondary education for all students, support for students with special needs, a core curriculum for all students, and the reduction in public examinations. These initiatives all directly addressed the 'no-loser' principle. Despite these achievements, the 'no-loser' principle remains open to question when it comes to ethnic minority students in Hong Kong (Kennedy 2011a). Because the Education Commission has adopted a phased approach in the implementation of the total reform (Curriculum Development Council 2001), our work in this book is a plausible and timely evaluation of the 'no loser' principle in relation to ethnic minority students. This book, perhaps for the first time, explores the phenomenon of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong with the aim to inform interested parties concerned with the education of ethnic minority young people including the Education Bureau, NGOs, community organizations, and others, to rethink and redesign their policies and support measures for these young people.

1.3.5 New Theoretical Insights

Apart from the potential policy influence, the book has explored new theoretical frameworks to generate new understandings of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people. The framework of 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion' from education (UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2010) and CREATE's 'Seven Zones of Exclusion' (Lewin 2007) have been drawn upon in the exploration of the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. Rumberger's (2011) very useful and necessary conceptual framework constituted of both 'individual factors' and 'institutional factors,' is used as a broader framework to understand the reasons for Hong Kong's ethnic minority young people being 'out of school'. The complexities of citizenship and immigration status of ethnic minorities, and the extent of its contribution towards the benefits of social services especially education that ethnic minorities avail, have been explored through Bauböck's framework of temporary migrants, partial citizenship and hyper-migration (Bauböck 2011), and the discourse of Ethnic vs. Civic citizenship within the nation-state a framework devised by Bloemraad et al. (2008). Literature suggests that immigration status has a bearing on dropping out (Rumberger 2011). The uses of these kinds of

theoretical frameworks are new in Hong Kong literature. More on these frameworks and their usages in understanding 'out of school' phenomenon are provided in Chaps. 3 and 9.

1.3.6 Revisiting 'Education for All'

In this book we also seek to explore one aspect of the popular discourse of the 'Education for All' (EFA) agenda, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Dakar Goals (UN 2000; UNESCO 2000), both of which usually in development contexts. The issue here is whether the educational provision in Hong Kong is constructed for all students or just for selected students. Specifically, if the agenda is just for selected students, which students are these?

Finally, this book provides suggestions for future research and policy agenda in the area of educational provision for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

1.4 Outline of the Book

In this First Chapter we have described our motivations, defined the educational issues under study in this book, and set out the aims, objectives, guiding questions and rationale. In what follows we will review a wide range of related literature (Chap. 2); offer the theoretical frameworks, research methodology and methods of the inquiry undertaken to explore new understanding of this issue (Chap. 3); seek to identify the extent of 'out of school' young people in the jurisdiction of Hong Kong drawing on census data, as well as the data of three schools (Chap. 4); consolidate the accounts of dropout ethnic minority young people (Chap. 5); provide the narratives of young people who were at risk of dropping out (Chap. 6); tell the story of a young girl who has never been to school (Chap. 7); offer the accumulated views of other stakeholders in the education of ethnic minority young people concerning the 'out of school' issue (Chap. 8); illuminate the key findings from Chaps. 4 and 8, and provide discussion drawing on related literature (Chap. 9); offer a summary of the result, our reflection, significance, and suggestions for future research in the area of ethnic minority education in Hong Kong (Chap. 10).

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Chapter 2
Literature Review

Abstract The comprehensive literature review focuses on ethnic minority young people and issues for them 'in school' and 'out of school'. It is organized into five sections. The first, provides a general overview of international literature examining the issues of ethnic diversity, multiculturalism, immigration, and their interrelations with educational outcomes. The next section reviews Hong Kong census data and describes the demographic characteristics of ethnic minority people and social issues that were related to those characteristics. To ascertain the social context that characterizes the ethnic minority population in Hong Kong, the third section examines relevant literature to gain such understandings. Ethnic minority students face a number of educational issues and challenges within the school system in Hong Kong. These areas are highlighted in the fourth section of the review. The fifth and final section identifies research gaps that were found in the literature and revisit the three research questions initially proposed.

The previous chapter provided the background, purpose, rationale, and scope of the book. In this chapter we provide a comprehensive review of the literature with a focus on ethnic minority young people, and the 'in school' and the 'out of school' issues. We cover a broad range of literature that provides several contexts depicting the influences on ethnic minority students in Hong Kong which is the main focus of this book. There are five main sections in this chapter. Section 2.1 provides a general overview of international literature that examines the issues of ethnic diversity, multiculturalism, immigration, and their interrelations with educational outcomes. The review raises theoretical concerns that this book in turn seeks to answer in the process of researching those issues in a society where ethnic diversity is different from traditional multicultural societies. Section 2.2 reviews census data that describe the demographic characteristics of ethnic minority people in Hong Kong and social issues related to those characteristics. Section 2.3 examines selected literature and outlines the social context that characterizes the ethnic minority population in Hong Kong. Section 2.4 highlights the educational issues and challenges that ethnic minority students face within the school system. Finally, Sect. 2.5 identifies the research gaps in the literature and returns to the three research questions posed in the introduction.

M.K. Bhowmik, K.J. Kennedy, *'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong*, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects 32, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-0327-1_2

2.1 Ethnic Diversity, Multiculturalism, Immigration and Educational Outcomes: Some Theoretical Concerns

Globalization and international migration characterize the multicultural nature of many societies in different parts of the world. North America, the United Kingdom, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand have been at the forefront of these processes throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. According to the United Nations, in 2005, around 191 million people lived outside their country of birth, which has doubled since 1975 and has continued to rise (UN Popul. Div. 2006 cited in Bloemraad et al. 2008). OECD reported that at the dawn of the twenty-first century, about one out of four or five residents in countries, such as Australia (24 %), Switzerland (24 %), New Zealand (19 %), and Canada (18 %), and one out of eight in Germany (13 %), the United States (13 %), and Sweden (12 %) are foreign-born (OECD 2007 cited in Bloemraad et al. 2008).

Once migratory processes could have been explained through either 'the settler model' or 'temporary migration model.' The contexts for migration, however, have changed enormously under globalization conditions because of the outstanding advancement in communication technology and transportation that allows multidirectional flows of people, ideas, and culture (Castles 2002). The rapid growth of transnational communities is an obvious consequence that has an important implication for the nation state and its members – the way it wants to form its community, the place of migrants in its community formation process, the extent of rights accorded to the migrants and the challenges migration poses to maintain traditionally closed-off nation states with homogenous national communities. International migration is a growing and changing context, and the challenge is in understanding the dynamics of migratory process as it plays out in transnational communities (Castles 2002).

Multiculturalism can be seen as a political tool (although much challenged) adapted to respond to ethnic diversity in traditional migrant societies. Yet the meaning of multiculturalism varies by context and writer. Bloemraad et al. (2008, p. 159) commented:

> the term can be used as a demographic description of a society (e.g., the United States is a more multicultural society than Japan); it can refer to an ideology on the part of individuals or government that ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious diversity should be celebrated; it can refer to particular policies or programs undertaken by governments or institutions (e.g., multicultural curricula); or it can refer to a specific normative political theory that lays out principles for governing diverse societies.

While describing the western models of multiculturalism, Kymlica (2005) provided four trends and five conditions that characterized the responses to ethnic diversity in those societies. These trends are minority nationalism, a regionally concentrated group that conceives of itself as a nation within a larger state; the indigenous people; immigrants, which are groups formed by the decision of individuals and families to leave their original homeland and to emigrate to another society under an immigration policy that gives them the right to become citizens after a

relatively short period of time; and the metics, who are also migrants but are not admitted as permanent residents or citizens. The five conditions are demographics, right-consciousness, democracy, desecuritization, and liberal democratic consensus. Kymlica (2005, p. 36) argued that when these five conditions are in place, the trend towards greater accommodation of ethno-cultural diversity is likely to occur. Nonetheless, Kymlica's (2005) work is based on Western political ideas, such as liberalism. His work in relation to Asia has shown (He and Kymlica 2005) that this principle is not operative, and multiculturalism takes different forms. This observation is a key issue for the study of ethnic minorities in Asian contexts.

The importance of context cannot be overestimated. For example, in settler societies, such as Australia, the United States, and throughout Western Europe, a strong research tradition involving migrant and ethnic issues exists. Ethnic minority students have been the focus of research over the past four to five decades (e.g. Arora 2005; Atzaba-Poria et al. 2004; Caballero et al. 2007; Codjoe 2001; Cummins 1989; Dentler and Hafner 1997; Fuligni 1998; Haque 2000; He et al. 2008; Mansouri and Trembath 2005; Rassool 1999; Ruiz-de-Velasco et al. 2000; Rutter 1994). This literature is grounded in liberal democratic theory that embraces multiculturalism as a democratic process that values diversity, promotes equality and seeks equal opportunities for all citizens (Kennedy and Hue 2011). Kymlica (2005) described this condition as 'liberal multiculturalism.' Nevertheless, the question remains to be asked how ethnic diversity is conceptualized in a non-liberal democratic jurisdiction such as Hong Kong, a special administrative region of China. In trying to address this question we can look towards the work of Kymlica and He (2005) who investigated multiculturalism in a range of Asian societies, including China, and found that Asian societies have their own local traditions and policy responses to the issues of ethnic minorities. McCarthy (2009) coined multiculturalism in China as 'communist multiculturalism,' and argued that this concept is mainly for maintaining national harmony rather than any promotion, valuing, or celebrating of ethnic diversity. It is our contention that, the responses to ethnic diversity vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, and conceptualizing them by using any single theoretical lens is problematic (Kennedy and Hue 2011, p. 344). Furthermore, while most multicultural countries are traditionally recipients of a major influx of immigrants, and it is by these means that they become multicultural society in nature, the scenario in Hong Kong is somewhat different.

The proportion of Hong Kong's population that is non-Chinese ethnic population has been estimated to be just 6.4 % (Census and Statistics Department 2012) with many temporary workers, such as foreign domestic helpers making up this number, as well as ethnic minorities who were born in Hong Kong. In addition, there are ethnic minority people who are new arrivals. In one sense, this diversity in Hong Kong can be explained through 'immigrant' and 'metic' trends of diversity in liberal democratic societies (Kymlica 2005). Yet sharp differences prevail. For example, some of the ethnic minority population in Hong Kong are mainly the legacy of British colonialism that brought both voluntary and involuntary colonized migrants from other colonies for empire maintenance and expansion (Law and Lee 2012). A large number of foreign domestic helpers are continuously denied the right to obtain

permanent residences even after living in the territory for more than 7 years, which is otherwise a criterion of permanent settlement for other regular migrants and expatriates. Moreover, these workers are not allowed to bring any of their family members in Hong Kong. This situation is similar to the once guest worker schemes of Western European countries with the main difference being that eventually guest workers were attributed full citizenship rights later (Kymlica 2005). Another group is refugees who face extreme difficulties living in Hong Kong, because the territory has not yet signed onto the United Nations 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. According to Novianti (2007), the HKSAR does not take any responsibility or obligation towards asylum seekers or refugees except to adhere to the non-refoulement principle. They are not allowed to work and only approximately 20 % of all asylum seekers receive limited assistance in kind. Many asylum seekers and refugees, therefore, struggle hard in meeting their daily basic needs. This situation represents another difference in Hong Kong as in recent years several Western democracies adopted amnesty programs for illegal immigrants, and granted citizenship to long-settled refugees, guest workers, and children (Kymlica 2005). Considering all these divergences, a key issue is to position ethnic minority issues in Hong Kong in a theoretical framework that lies outside the scope of liberal multiculturalism but that nevertheless recognizes the diversity within Hong Kong society.

Several meta-analyses, re-analysis of previous research, large scale research combining qualitative and quantitative methods provide sophisticated models and findings on ethnic minorities and their education. In addition, cross-national comparative studies of educational experiences and outcomes for minority groups have been undertaken (Crul and Vermeulen 2003; Programme for International Student Assessment 2004, 2006; Thomson and Crul 2007). The latter provided a comparison of the same language and ethnic groups across national boundaries. One of the common findings across traditional multicultural jurisdictions is that students from particular ethnic and language minority groups often have unsatisfactory educational experiences and outcomes that continue up to the second and subsequent generations (Tsung et al. 2010). A pattern has been observed that characterizes a shift from 'deficit' theories in the 1960s to models highlighting home and school 'discontinuities', and issues of social and cultural capital to a focus on the ways in which institutional and government policies are played out in school contexts (Portes and Rumbaut 2001 cited in Tsung et al. 2010). These patterns are all grounded in multicultural educational policies that are based on liberal multiculturalism. Since Hong Kong is not a liberal democracy, the problem that remains is the positioning of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and its multicultural population.

In face of the multicultural mix of Hong Kong's population it is surprising as Kennedy (Kennedy 2011b) argues that the education policy in Hong Kong remains monocultural despite this diversity. He further argues that social justice itself is conceptualized differently in Chinese society such that the idea of 'fairness' is different. Any kind of affirmative action seems contrary to Chinese notions of social justice in the sense that all citizens must be treated equally to exhibit 'fairness' in any society. Thus diversity attracts a different response in Hong Kong's Chinese

society, which is a major issue that will be dealt in this book. The implications of this position can be better understood in the context of research from other jurisdictions; this will be reviewed below.

Koopmans et al. (2012) investigated the citizenship rights for immigrants in ten European countries within the period of 1980–2008, and found that rights tended to become more inclusive until 2002, and after which they stagnated. The main driving force was the growth of an immigrant electorate. Yet counter-mobilization by right wing parties slowed or reversed the trend. Bauböck (2011) classified migrants into five different types of temporary migrant categories based on the degree of freedom of movement and the extent of the equality that migrants enjoyed compared to citizens and permanent residents. He argued that all these temporary migrants are actually 'partial citizens' who enjoy different degrees of freedom of movement with regard to the right to enter or the right of stay, and different degrees of social and political rights.

In the context of Western Europe, Barbulescu's (2013) recent work on immigrant integration in Italy and Spain has found a negative correlation between immigrants' social class in the host society and their rights and integration requirements: the lower the socio-economic position of the immigrant group, the fewer its rights, and the more demanding the integration requirements. Thus, class seems to interact with ethnicity and migrant status in the European context, and in turn, can lead to denial of rights either explicitly or implicitly.

The way governments treat ethnic minorities becomes part of human rights discourse because it seems that a full range of rights is not always available. Governments may not always see the issues in these terms because of their perceived sovereignty claims, but there are few reasons why some citizens are entitled to rights while others are not. Nevertheless, the rights of ethnic minorities are the key issues of consideration in any research irrespective of location. These issues remain unexplored especially outside the liberal context. Chwaszcza (2008, p. 119) commented while considering transnational justice, "we lack a clear understanding of what the rights and duties of individuals are (or ought to be) outside the sociopolitical background institution of the liberal paradigm of the (national) legal state".

The above discussion raises theoretical concerns in relation to the wider international literature on developing transnational communities and the rights or otherwise of ethnic minorities within those communities. This background underscores the focus of this book, which is, the experience of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. The rest of the chapter deals mainly with literature specific to ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

2.2 The Ethnic Minority Population in Hong Kong

The general discourse encouraged by the HKSAR government on 'ethnic minorities' refers to them as to 'people from non-Chinese ethnicities' (Census and Statistics Department 2002, 2007, 2012, p. 2) [hereafter 2011 census referred to as The

Census]. According to the 2011 Census (2012, p. 18), about 6.4 % (exact figure is 451183) of the total population of HKSAR are ethnic minorities from a range of ethnic groups including – Indonesians, Filipinos, Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalese, White, Japanese, Thais, Pakistanis, Koreans etc. The 2006 by-census reported that about 5 % (exact figure is 342198) of the total population of HKSAR were ethnic minorities which means an increase in the total number of ethnic minority population by 31.8 % over 5 years.

Although Whites, Koreans and Japanese have been classified as ethnic minorities by the census reports in terms of their non-Chinese ethnic status they mostly belong to a higher socio-economic group than other ethnic minority groups (Census and Statistics Department 2007, p. 75, 2012, p. 86; Heung 2006). Filipinos and Indonesians usually have a temporary status as foreign domestic helpers (Bell and Piper 2005). Yet, the presence of 7.0 % young Filipinos (6.6 % in 2011, 7.6 % in 2006) under the age-group below 15 cannot be fully explained by their temporary status. Those left are mainly South Asians including Indian, Pakistani, and Nepalese. In 2011, South Asians collectively represented 14 % of the total ethnic minority population increasing by about 20,000 compared to the 2006 by-census (Census and Statistics Department 2012, p. 18).

The newly elected Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) delivered his first Policy Address in January 2013. Among other things he highlighted the needs of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong and committed further support:

> Many ethnic minorities in Hong Kong were born and brought up here. Some of them are less successful in integrating into the community because they are unable to read and write Chinese. To provide an opportunity for ethnic minority students to learn Chinese more effectively, we will enhance support measures in schools. We hope that it will help nurture a new generation of people who call Hong Kong their home regardless of origin, race and religion. (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2013, p. 45)

Why the Chief Executive focused on ethnic minorities who were born in Hong Kong and yet does not refer to the increasing number of new arrivals is unclear. The importance of the differentiation is that educational issues at the micro level will likely be diverse for these two groups of students. Despite the growing literature at the macro level, very little evidence is available that examines the magnitude of the educational issues facing ethnic minority students at different micro levels, those born here and those who come to join their parents. The complexities may not be as simple as depicted in the Policy Address since all ethnic minority students attending schools are not necessarily Hong Kong born. The 2011 Census (2012, p. 39) reported 13.3 % of the total ethnic minority population were born in Hong Kong, which is higher than the 11.1 % of Hong Kong born ethnic minority population reported in 2006 by-census (2007, p. 34) and the 10.3 % in the 2001 census (p. 31). Hence, 20.2 % (22,024 in number) of the increased ethnic minority population were born in Hong Kong between 2006 and 2011, and the rest (86,961 in number) of the increased ethnic minority population after 2006 were probably new arrivals.

Table 2.1 shows that 16.6 % (7,352) of ethnic minority population below the age of 15 resided in Hong Kong for less than 1 year, and another 28.2 % (12,515) resided

Table 2.1 Ethnic minorities by duration of residence in Hong Kong and age, 2011

Duration of residence in Hong Kong	<1 year	1 to <4 years	4 to <7 years	7 to <10 years	10 years and over	Total
Age						
Under 15	7,352	12,515	8,224	6,993	9,236	44,320
15–24	7,955	10,788	2,295	1,609	12,121	34,768
25–44	45,821	95,276	54,027	32,239	59,741	287,104
45–64	2,882	6,465	5,575	6,886	53,273	75,081
65 and over	139	326	194	403	8,848	9,910
Total	64,149	125,370	70,315	48,130	143,219	451,183

Table generated through the Census and Statistics Department Interactive Data Dissemination Service on 20/05/2013 12:33:45 PM, Source: Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. http://itable.censtatd.gov.hk/UI/Report/Report.aspx?lang=en-US

for about 1–4 years. This figure may potentially mean that about 45 % of the young people under 15 years of age, who are in the school attending age-group, were new arrivals from 2006. In addition, 22.9 % (7,955) and 31 % (10,788) of the age-group 15–24 resided in Hong Kong for less than 1 year and between 1 and 4 years, respectively.

Since there is no further breakdown of age specific information for the below 15 group, and no new arrival information is in the public domain, thus, the precise number of new arrivals is more difficult to determine compared to those born in Hong Kong. It is also difficult to determine the places from which they come or their specific ages. It could be conjectured that some ethnic minorities born in Hong Kong are included in the number of those residing for less than a year. Nevertheless, there is a strong possibility that Hong Kong will continue to see significant numbers of new school age arrivals, even though it is not possible to be more specific at this point. Clearly, the literature (e.g., Ku et al. 2005; Loper 2004) and our fieldwork indicated that many ethnic minority young people came to Hong Kong either in late primary or early secondary school ages to reunite with their family.

Another noteworthy statistic from the most recent census (2012, p. 49) is that only 42.4 % of the total ethnic minority population resided in Hong Kong for about 7 or more years, which indicates they are likely to have permanent residence status. At the same time, this finding means that over 50 % of the ethnic minority population does not have any permanent resident status in Hong Kong. Thus, ethnic minority children eligible for entry to Hong Kong's education system have a different status in relation to residency, especially citizenship. The question then is what is their status?

If they are considered to be temporary 'migrants,' then this raises two challenges for a host country from the discourse of nationality, citizenship, and politics; first, there is the question of whether territorial democracies can integrate temporary migrants as equal citizens; and second, the question of whether transnationally-mobile societies can be organized democratically as communities of equal citizens (Bauböck 2011). Significantly, the word 'migrants' is not used in HKSAR to describe the status of ethnic minority people. Rather, this word refers to the people

from Mainland China who move to Hong Kong via the One Way Permit system. In addition, the complexity around Chinese nationality law in creating racial barriers is well documented, as White (1987, p. 502) asserted "in respect of Chinese Nationality Law, it is evident that it is not well equipped to cope with the inclusion of those not of Chinese origin; indeed, it creates an effectively racial barrier". Therefore, the obvious questions are, is the 'right of abode,' 'permanent residence,' or 'Hong Kong identity card holder' enough for ethnic minority children in Hong Kong to have equal opportunities and rights to education? Can schools cater for them in an equitable way? A Hong Kong permanent resident enjoys the 'right of abode' in Hong Kong, which means he (sic) has the right (a) to land in Hong Kong, (b) not to have imposed upon him (sic) any condition of stay in Hong Kong, and any condition of stay that is imposed shall have no effect, (c) not to have a deportation order made against him (sic), and (d) not to have a removal order made against him (sic) (Hong Kong SAR 1997, p. 5). A 'permanent identity card' is an identity card that contains a statement that the holder has the 'right of abode' in Hong Kong (Hong Kong SAR 2003, p. 2). An 'identity card' is issued under the Registration of Persons Ordinance, and every person of or over the age of 11 years who is permitted to stay in Hong Kong for more than 180 days is required to register for an identity card within 30 days of arrival or upon acquiring such permission to stay (Hong Kong SAR 2003, p. 1). This frame of reference and level of complexity around Chinese nationality leads into the next section, which looks at different challenges ethnic minority people are facing in Hong Kong. Bauböck's (2011) work provides a theoretical frame for this discussion.

In summary, the ethnic minority population in Hong Kong is increasing but those born in Hong Kong appear to be in the minority, whereas the majority of ethnic minorities have been living in Hong Kong for less than 7 years. Significantly, there appears to be a number of ethnic minority young people who are new arrivals although their specific needs were not recognized in Chief Executive's Policy Address (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2013, p. 45), which highlighted only the needs of the Hong Kong born ethnic minority students.

2.3 Multicultural Hong Kong

In the previous section we discussed the distinctive multicultural nature of Hong Kong in quantitative terms. Greater awareness of the lives of ethnic minority population and their struggles in a multicultural Hong Kong society is important. Drawing on an ethnographic approach, Ku et al. (2010) conducted a year-long field study from October 2006 to October 2007 to understand the lives of the South Asian communities in Hong Kong. This research built on their previous work (Ku et al. 2003, 2005, 2006), where they employed a participatory research approach spending a good amount of time with participants in their homes, work places, parks, and playgrounds by interviewing and observing them. Ku et al. (2010) published eight

stories that portrayed very vividly the life of South Asians in Hong Kong ranging from the first generation of Nepalese in Hong Kong to new immigrants from Nepal, from a Pakistani successful businessman to disadvantaged Pakistani women, the role of an Islamic centre, and the power of a Nepalese Shop in the building of strong social networks.

In summary, all eight stories illustrated a broader picture of the lives of South Asians in Hong Kong. These stories showed how the migration process and immigration policy affected the life of South Asian people in Hong Kong, the difficulties and challenges these people faced in navigating social security services in their vulnerable conditions, and the discrimination they encountered in their daily lives including employment. The health services provided in the hospital were not user friendly and not culturally sensitive. Facilities for observing religious activities were less than sufficient. The education provision for ethnic minority children did not provide for success in Hong Kong schools. As a result, the South Asian parent groups had less confidence in the education system. Ku et al. (2010, pp. 4–5, 213) commented:

> These stories portray South Asians' experiences of racial discrimination in almost all arenas of life: employment (hiring, firing, and advancement), admission to facilities, purchasing of goods and services, access to government services, and acquiring a home. They also reveal the family and marital problems in their community. However, these stories also demonstrate that South Asians are not passive victims of an exclusive society. We were impressed by their strength, value system, family relationships, kinship ties, strong sense of ethnic identity and work ethic……Ethnic groups are often portrayed as lazy, welfare-dependent, avaricious, greedy, uncivilized, superstitious and backward-looking in order to rationalize their disadvantaged position in society. However, our research found that these stereotypes are misconceptions. Most of our interviewees were extremely hard working, both in the labor force and in their family life. In fact, many have shown great creativity in making full use of their skills and specialties to survive in a harsh environment. Of course, it is extremely difficult to meet these challenges, and our interviewees were not successful all the time. Some did face difficulties, but these were not due to their individual inadequacies or 'problematic' cultural background as generally believed. Their difficulties arose mostly because of the exclusionary social system and institutions that neglect the needs and problems of ethnic groups.

While Ku et al.'s (2010) research depicted multicultural Hong Kong, other literature discussed below reported the contexts in which ethnic minority people were living their lives in Hong Kong, how they were facing different challenges in their everyday life, and also developing their identity and its transformation.

Lee and Li (2011) in their study to identify the challenges encountered by young ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, found that the ethnic minority young people were full of annoyance and frustration about living in Hong Kong, claiming the society could not address their educational needs and career development. They also found that the ethnic minority young people faced internal struggles between two sets of values in their upbringing in Hong Kong: one being their home culture and the other the local Hong Kong culture. The authors argued that although many ethnic minorities possessed Hong Kong identity cards, and therefore were local residents in principle, they were still treated differently on certain issues.

O'Connor (2011) employed the concept of 'everyday hybridity' in exploring the multicultural nature of Hong Kong by engaging with Muslim youths. He looked at the hybridity of their lives across three themes, namely, identity, urban space, and fasting during Ramadan. In terms of identity, the study found that the participants managed their hybridity by attempting to control how others saw and perceived them. The space issue revealed that young Pakistani people were marginalized by not having provision for a public space to play one of their culturally preferred sports. Ramadan revealed their closer engagement with the religion by observing month-long fasting despite several challenges prevailing in Hong Kong's non-Muslim society. Finally, O'Connor (2011) challenged the ideas of Muslim as a problematic component perceived in many multicultural societies.

Lock and Detaramani (2006) observed how two Indian communities, namely, the Sikh and Sindhi, in Hong Kong talked about their identity and its interrelationship with culture and language. They found that participants showed a range of different cultural models of ethnicity, culture, and language while describing their identity, sometimes the same person identified herself with different models of ethnicity. Lock and Detaramani (2006) argued that while Sikh participants identified themselves within the essentialist model of ethnicity, Sindhi participants were more inclined to the flexible relationships among ethnicity, culture, and language.

Tam (2010) examined the three generations of Nepalese women in Hong Kong to gain understandings about their situations by looking at the interface of gender and ethnic minority identity. While Nepalese women have been assigned a passive mother-wife role, the author argued that they are important building blocks to maintain a transnational network, and are agents of change in the present day. By further examining the changes in relation to the RDO and by looking at how their social marginalization dealt at the government, family and personal level, the study (Tam 2010) called for an in-depth and gender-aware understanding of the lived experiences of ethnic minorities to formulate an efficient multicultural policy.

Plüss (2006) looked at the ethnic identity transformations of Muslims of Chinese, Indian, Pakistani, and mixed ethnic origins in Hong Kong. The process of their identity transformations refuted the general assumption that the differences and contradictions between the characteristics of ethnic identities and majority residents motivated the transformation of migrants' identity resulting in the reduction of differences between the two groups. Rather, Plüss (2006) found that adopting characteristics from the non-Muslim Chinese culture helped in establishing multi-ethnic Islamic practices, which ultimately highlighted their differences from the non-Muslim Chinese majorities.

In summary, the above literature highlighted how the living context of ethnic minority people in multicultural Hong Kong is in fact very challenging. Ethnic minorities face enormous difficulties in their daily lives. It also highlights the complexity of ethnic minority people's identity construction process and its transformation.

2.4 Educational Provision for Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong: Issues and Challenges

This section provides a detailed literature review of education provision for ethnic minority students, the issues, and challenges that they are facing in education, support measures undertaken by the government and their effectiveness and the promises of other support measures. Although there are many common issues reported in different literature, the methods adopted by the researchers are different. Therefore, in this section, we initially describe the issues and challenges in respect to some individual research or concerned groups' report by focusing on their methods and major findings. We then provide a critical review highlighting major issues and challenges.

2.4.1 Education for Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong

Loper (2004) was one of the earliest proponents of education for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. Her work focused on understanding the issues and challenges experienced by the ethnic minority students in Hong Kong schools, and examined the educational policies and practices for ethnic minorities in respect to local and international human rights and equal opportunities laws. She conducted 14 interviews with 10 students, and 6 parents or relatives of other 12 students. She also interviewed social workers, school leaders, and government officials responsible for ethnic minority education.

Five issues were identified in the study concerning ethnic minority education in Hong Kong – lack of school places for ethnic minority students; shortage of Chinese language teaching-learning opportunities; lower quality of available educational institutions for ethnic minority students; less access to the information of educational system especially school placement; and little or no interaction between Chinese and ethnic minority students. Many participants encountered serious difficulties in finding a school, and some waited for a longer time for school place allocation. Some of them found schools, but these places were not within close proximity from their houses. Chinese language teaching-learning was not offered in many schools, and even if some was offered, the content was very limited. Students believed that the lack of Chinese language learning opportunities limited their choices of primary and secondary schools and hindered their access to tertiary level education and jobs. Some participants were not happy with the quality of services they received from the schools. Many participants were having difficulties in receiving information about the education systems of Hong Kong, especially school placement information. This problem was mainly due to the lack of resources available in English. Some participants had few Chinese friends and had less opportunity to get along with Chinese students. The stories of the participants interviewed in the study portrayed the above issues vividly.

Finally, Loper's review of educational policies and practices for ethnic minority students based on local and international human rights and equal opportunities laws suggested the prevalence of direct and indirect discrimination. This situation required innovative thinking on the part of Hong Kong policy makers to come up with alternatives to discriminatory treatments, while formulating a new law on equal opportunities or racial discrimination.

2.4.2 Education of South Asian Ethnic Minority Groups in Hong Kong

While Loper's study reported educational issues and challenges for ethnic minority students as a whole, the majority of the participants were of South Asian origin. More precisely, Ku et al. (2005) captured similar issues and challenges specifically for South Asian ethnic minority students. They conducted a study to explore every day practices in school life, including relationships between teachers and students, parents and students, students themselves, and learning environments. The study employed a questionnaire survey with 200 students, and conducted in-depth interviews with 20 students. All students were between Form Four and Seven and included Filipinos, Indians, Pakistanis, and Nepalese.

The study reported more than half of the ethnic minority students concerned had fewer educational opportunities compared with Chinese students, mainly because they had fewer school choices. Moreover, they had limited educational opportunities in the post-secondary level. A quarter of the ethnic minority students agreed that their teachers did not equally treat students from different ethnicities. They also reported that teachers gave more attention to the Chinese students than ethnic minority students, and the latter experienced more severe punishment. Moreover, teachers held stereotypes of ethnic minority students, such that 'useless,' 'misbehaving,' and 'impolite' were prevalent. The study pointed out that about half of the ethnic minority students rarely communicated with their Chinese schoolmates. In addition, one-fifth of the ethnic minority students reported that Chinese students disliked them. They attributed this feeling to the lack of language ability and cultural differences that created barriers in communicating with Chinese students.

The study found that most of the ethnic minority students did not have the opportunity to interact with school social workers. Ethnic minority students reported that the learning environment of schools, such as a noisy classroom atmosphere, was not conducive for learning. Moreover, drug abuse and bullying were prevalent in schools. The study found that newly arrived ethnic minority students faced greater difficulties in adjusting to the local school curriculum because it was so different compared with the curriculum of their home countries.

Regarding cultural and religious values, more than half of the ethnic minority students reported that their schools respected those values, such as wearing scarves, growing beards, and so on. However, some students stated they were denied a place

to pray in the schools, and school canteens hardly served foods they were allowed to eat. The study found that majority of ethnic minority students had high aspirations for future working career upon completion of their education. They were, however, concerned with their lack of ability in Chinese language, especially in reading and writing. Further, a majority of ethnic minority students realized the importance of learning Chinese language in Hong Kong, especially for further education and future job opportunities, and therefore expressed interest in learning Chinese in school. About half of the ethnic minority students wished to learn their mother tongue in school.

With regard to the 'sense of belongingness', the study found that majority of ethnic minority students considered themselves both a person of their ethnic origin and of Hong Kong. Ethnic minority students were found to be ambivalent in terms of their attitudes towards local Chinese people, because many of them actually experienced racial discrimination in their life in Hong Kong. Less than 50 % of the ethnic minority students reported they had close Chinese friends. The majority of ethnic minority students had strong pride in their ethnic origin and many of them claimed that they had special qualities that local Chinese students do not possess.

2.4.3 Equal Opportunities Commission's 'Education for All' Report

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) is a statutory body in Hong Kong established in 1996 to protect people from discrimination based on sex, disability, race, and family status through monitoring legislation, related sex, disability, race, and family status. The ethnic minority community and its NGO supporters were quite vocal concerning the barriers to their children's education in Hong Kong, as indicated in the previous sections. This led to the EOC's setting up of a Working Group in 2010 that set out to review the challenges and issues related to the education of ethnic minority students. The 2011 EOC report entitled *Education for All* drew on three sharing sessions, with 12 teachers and principals of different schools who traditionally admitted a good number of ethnic minority students; with 11 NGO professionals working for the welfare of ethnic minority communities; and with 19 ethnic minority parents and students from seven different ethnicities (EOC 2011). The report indicated that the participation of ethnic minority students was disproportionately low in upper secondary and post-secondary level compared to the majority Chinese students. The study warned the issue called for serious attention, and the reasons behind such need should be explored. The report provided 'major concerns and views' of different stakeholders in accordance to the respective sharing session.

Educators reported various concerns, such as challenges in learning Chinese due to the lack of family support and limited school resources including funding, additional teachers, lack of teachers' skills in teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

There was a lack of assessment tools for identifying ethnic minority children with special education needs. Moreover, many ethnic minority students were not attending kindergarten, and the school allocation system could not guarantee all ethnic minority students could be offered a place in English medium secondary schools. Ethnic minority students faced greater difficulties when studying in Chinese medium secondary schools. The public examination system, especially the requirement for proficiency in Chinese, has prevented ethnic minority students from getting into universities. Although an alternative Chinese language examination was in place, this has not provided the needed access as many ethnic minority students dropped out before secondary completion. In addition, Chinese parents were not amenable to the idea that their children should have to study with ethnic minority students in the same school.

NGOs also expressed concerns. They regarded the view that ethnic minority parents' lack of aspiration for their children's education as a stereotype. Rather NGOs argued that these parents needed more information and support. They also viewed that education and language support should also be provided from the kindergarten level. In addition, NGOs felt teacher education lacked quality and needed to be enhanced by incorporating racial and cultural awareness. NGOs also stated that although universities are required to accept alternative Chinese language qualification as per admission policy, however, the actual practice is different. Thy also demanded for public education to promote racial harmony. Moreover, NGOs criticised that the government was found to be reluctant in publishing statistics in relation to education, employment, and social services ethnicity-wise. Furthermore, they stressed that the designated school[1] system reinforces segregation.

Ethnic minority parents and students identified concerns, such as the lack of Chinese language skill, which resulted in lower achievement in their Chinese language subject, and hampered their performance on other subjects. Consequently, poor performance in language resulted in low overall achievement in Chinese medium schools. The huge gap between local and GCSE Chinese curriculum, therefore, needs an alternative Chinese language curriculum aimed at reducing this gap.

[1] Designated schools pre-dominantly cater for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. While the number of designated school was 15 in 2006/2007, it has reached 31 in 2012/2013 (Education Bureau [EDB] 2012). Education Bureau (EDB) in Hong Kong has clearly mentioned the rationale of inviting schools to be designated schools mainly to develop expertise among a pool of schools in dealing with ethnic minority students and sharing their experience with other schools. Perhaps, this system was easier for the EDB to provide support and resources. However, this designated school concept has been highly criticized as a discriminatory approach itself mainly because it reinforces segregation rather than integration (EOC 2011, p. 7; Hong Kong Unison Limited 2011). The EDB is not any more using the word 'designated school' on their website, and recently changed the term to 'schools provided with recurrent funding and school-based professional support for non-Chinese speaking students' (EDB 2012). Yet, the very essence of segregating ethnic minority students in these schools, in whatever name it takes, is still in practice. We will keep using the word 'designated school' for easy reference and maintaining consistency with the previous literature.

This requires starting an immersion programme from the kindergarten level and providing early support for ethnic minority students with special education needs. Designated schools need to provide supportive learning environment as designated schools were seen to hinder integration.

Following these views and suggestions, EOC submitted their concerns in writing to the Education Bureau (EDB). Finally, the report provided a list of recommendations for improving the provision of education for ethnic minority students based on all three sharing sessions and the meeting with EDB. These were – providing support to help children in learning Chinese language starting from the pre-primary level; learning lessons from other countries who have traditionally large immigrant groups; intensive language training for new immigrants; providing school based immersion classes; strengthening quality assurance and central system on the part of EDB; EDB to provide expert support to schools in developing Chinese language curriculum and teaching materials; EDB to facilitate experience sharing among schools; adapting assessment tools for early identification of the ethnic minority children with special education needs; incorporating contents on racial and cultural awareness in special education teacher training; consideration for developing a Chinese proficiency programme and testing system; using 2011 census data for systematically capturing educational statistics for ethnic minority students; tracking ethnic minority students' academic and social development through longitudinal study; EDB to set up a one stop service for ethnic minority students to provide educational and career counseling; promoting public education on racial harmony and respect for diversity; EDB to examine their existing policies and practices in respect to anti-discrimination legislation and realize the policy of providing quality education for all school age children.

2.4.4 United Nation's Concerns About the Educational Provision for Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (2013) at United Nations considered the combined third and fourth periodic reports of China (including Hong Kong and Macau Special Administrative Regions), during its 1833rd, 1834th, and 1835th meetings. They expressed concerns about ethnic minority education issue in Hong Kong, and that they adopted their concluding observations at their 1845th meeting. They noted:

> In Hong Kong SAR, the Committee is concerned about:
>
> (b) The de facto discrimination of ethnic minority children and racial segregation in the public school system, due to availability of teaching only in Chinese and the system of so-called government-subsidized "designated schools" for these children; (Committee on the Rights of the Child 2013, section 76 (b), p. 18)

The committee also provided three recommendations to address these issues-

The Committee recommends that Hong Kong SAR:

(b) Urgently abolish the system of so-called "designated schools" for children of ethnic minorities and reallocate resources to promote their access to education into mainstream schools, including through scholarships or lower entry qualifications;
(c) Intensify its efforts to implement legislation and policies on bilingual education at all levels of education, ensuring high quality education in Chinese as a second language and
(d) Ensure access to local schools for all children living in Hong Kong SAR. (Committee on the Rights of the Child 2013, section 78 (b), (c), (d), p. 18)

2.4.5 Legal Implications of Education for Ethnic Minority Children in Hong Kong

Kapai (2011) in her submission to a meeting of the Hong Kong Legislative Council panel on education, examined the education provisions for ethnic minority children in Hong Kong in general and especially the Chinese language teaching-learning opportunities and support systems in schools in respect to Hong Kong's international and domestic legal obligations. These instruments included the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Hong Kong Basic Law (HKBL), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), and Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO). RDO is the latest legal tool that HKSAR enacted in 2009, which aimed to prevent ethnic minority population from any kind of racial discrimination. Kapai (2011) noted that the lack of adequate Chinese language learning provisions for ethnic minority students is the main reason for their continued marginalization in different key stages of life, such as restricted access to higher education and other training opportunities, and fewer employment opportunities available compared to majority Chinese people. In turn, this had implications for the ability of ethnic minority groups to participate fully in the wider Hong Kong society.

Kapai (2011) highlighted the key issues and ineffectiveness of different support measures for Chinese language learning, such as initiation programme, Chinese language curriculum, supplementary guide, summer bridging programme, recurrent grants to the school, alternative assessment of Chinese language, vocational training courses etc., and the legal implications of those issues and ineffectiveness. The study suggested that the support measures were inadequate and failed to provide equal educational opportunities, which resulted to various direct and indirect racial or ethnic and educational discriminations. She also argued that while the majority of ethnic minority students attended designated schools that this was not, as the government usually claimed the result of parental choice. It was actually a 'false' choice created by the system and it led to a de facto segregation. These practices indicated discriminatory and violations of sections 4(1) and 4(3) of RDO (Kapai 2011, p. 4).

2.4.6 South Asian Ethnic Minority Students' Educational Experiences and Identity Construction

Gu and Patkin (2013) explored the educational experiences of South Asian ethnic minority students in a Hong Kong-designated English medium secondary school. Their study aimed to understand language attitudes, language practices, and identity construction. They employed two focus group discussions with a group of five female students and another group of five male students. The study further conducted six individual interviews with three participants from each group. The research participants were studying in Form Five and Form Six, and were mainly of Pakistani, Indian, and Nepalese ethnic origins. The study identified students' ethnic and cultural backgrounds, lack of Chinese language skills, and Hong Kong people's stereotypes of them as the obstacles for their socialization into mainstream Chinese society. In terms of heritage identity, the South Asian ethnic minority students negotiated and contested it by utilizing their South Asian heritage, and gained experiences and knowledge in the host Hong Kong context.

Hong Kong society was seen not to recognize South Asian's heritage languages and cultures, or associated them with negative attributes. Ethnic minority students, however, continued to speak their heritage languages and maintained their heritage cultures. The authors argued that in utilizing their heritage, the ethnic minority students identified advantages, and thus, the students constructed a counter-discourse to resist the lower social status of their heritage languages and minority identity by (a) maintaining their heritage languages, (b) by promoting the dominant status of English, and (c) by devaluing the local language. Yet these steps also limited their linguistic choices and led to discrimination against other languages (Gu and Patkin 2013, p. 139). The authors further argued that ethnic minority parents imposed heritage languages and cultures on their children. Nevertheless, they lived and experienced their lives mainly in the host society, therefore, they were living in between by lacking a full sense of belongingness to either their heritage country or Hong Kong. Hence, they constructed a new negotiated in-between identity that reflected both their heritage and their experiences in the host context.

2.4.7 A Critical Review of the Issues and Challenges of Educational Provision for Ethnic Minority Students

While the previous sections reviewed different literature reporting several similar issues and challenges, this section provides a critical review of those challenges drawing on even wider literature. The following sub-sections describe the main issues and challenges centred on micro-views of the problem, admissions, Chinese language, assessment, curriculum, teaching, resource support, supervision and monitoring, overall policy towards multicultural education in Hong Kong, and the efficiency of overall support measures. Ethnic minority children are labelled as

'Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS)' children by the Education Bureau in Hong Kong, although the EOC calls them ethnic minority children (EOC 2011). This NCS labelling, however, has been questioned and in particular whether it is right to recognize them only by their lack of skill in a particular language (Kennedy 2011a).

2.4.7.1 Micro-views of the Problem

As discussed earlier, the Chief Executive of HKSAR in his first Policy Address in January 2013, highlighted the needs of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2013, p. 45). While the Policy Address focused only on Chinese language difficulties for ethnic minority students, the address largely ignored other issues and challenges that have been raised in the growing literature. It seems from the Policy Address that the government is only concerned with the Hong Kong born ethnic minority children, but many ethnic minority students join schools in Hong Kong during the late primary years or in secondary school as a form of reunification with their parents who have been ordinarily living in Hong Kong for some time. Obviously, these students are in a more vulnerable position than Hong Kong born ethnic minority students in coping with Hong Kong schooling and society.

Although there is growing literature at the macro level less attention has been paid to the magnitude of educational issues facing ethnic minority students at different micro levels, for those born in Hong Kong as well as the new arrivals. The complexities are mostly unexplored and may not be as simple as highlighted in the Policy Address. Therefore, it is reasonable to ask the question of whether an exclusive focus on Chinese language education at the top government level obscures the bigger picture of ethnic minority education in Hong Kong?

2.4.7.2 Admissions

Although the parents of ethnic minority students are free to choose any type of school for their children's enrolment at Primary One or Secondary One, there was a tendency for the number of schools receiving special support for ethnic minority students to increase. While the number of such schools was 15 in 2006–2007, it eventually reached 31 (Education Bureau [EDB] 2012). The EDB had previously invited schools to be 'designated' schools mainly to develop expertise among a pool of schools in dealing with ethnic minority students and sharing their experiences with other schools. It is possibly easier for the EDB to provide support and resources in this context. Yet this designated school concept has been highly criticized as a discriminatory approach itself mainly because it reinforces segregation rather than integration (EOC 2011, p. 7; Hong Kong Unison Limited 2011). Moreover, it has been argued that starting in a 'designated' primary school limits opportunities for the ethnic minority students to be admitted into a better mainstream secondary school in the later stage because of inadequate Chinese language proficiency (Hong

Kong Unison Limited 2009; Novianti 2007). EOC (2011) asserted that this practice of mainstream schools refusing the admission of ethnic minority students because of their language deficiency is indirect discrimination and violation of Race Discrimination Ordinance (Home Affairs Bureau [HAB] 2008). The optimistic side, however, is that the EDB no longer refers to 'designated schools' on their website and has changed it to 'schools provided with recurrent funding and school-based professional support for non Chinese speaking students' (EDB 2012).

2.4.7.3 Chinese Language

Learning Chinese language has always been an important issue for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong schools. In spite of repeated requests from all the concerned parties to introduce an alternative Chinese language curriculum for ethnic minority students or Chinese as a second language curriculum, the EDB has been always reluctant. Instead, EDB continuously emphasized that 'The Supplementary Guide to the Chinese Language Curriculum for NCS Students,' needs to be adopted by schools to meet the specific needs of the ethnic minority students. This approach has been criticized publicly since the Guide is only a framework and direction for teachers, has nothing to do with day to day teaching, and by adopting this approach, EDB has actually shifted their responsibility towards teachers (Hong Kong Unison Limited 2011). Nevertheless, the Chief Executive made a commitment in his latest policy address that from 2014 to 2015 academic year, the government will implement 'Chinese language curriculum second language learning framework' ("2014 Policy Address" 2014). In relation to this the commitment was also made to provide related learning and teaching materials, assessment tools as well as support for teachers through school-based professional support programme and in service professional development programme.

Ullah (2012), who was a victim of Chinese language education deprivation in a Hong Kong school, conducted PhD research that critically reviewed the Chinese language education provisions for non-Chinese speaking students (NCS). His study aimed to illustrate the problems encountered by the ethnic minority students while learning Chinese, especially after 2004 when Chinese language education was made available in Hong Kong schools. A literacy test was administered and a survey was conducted for the quantitative part of the study. The qualitative part included observations, documentary review, and in-depth interviews.

Although the NCS group was doing well in the international Chinese examination in sampled schools, such as GCSE from 2007 to 2010, the result of the literacy test administered in the study was not satisfactory and was far from societal expectations. In fact, the students had very poor performance. The author provided a number of reasons to explain the low performance. First, the students had a low self-rating for their proficiency of Chinese, especially in writing and speaking. The students rated themselves the most proficient in English, second in their home language and third in Chinese. Second, the Chinese language utilization pattern for ethnic minority students was very low in their daily life, which only accounted for

8 %, where the usage of English accounted for 68 %. Moreover, ethnic minority students usually did not use Chinese outside their lessons. The author coined this practice as 'pigeonization syndrome.' Third, most students were geared towards sitting for the GCSE Chinese examination in which they normally did well, and became satisfied; but the skills they achieved were below societal expectation. Therefore, ethnic minority students were given false hope about their Chinese literacy and did not feel the need for 'unpigeonizing' themselves beyond classroom lessons. Fourth, primary and secondary Chinese curriculum has poor linkage, and students are victimized because of frequent school-based curriculum evolution. Last, several unfavorable conditions are obstacles for effective learning of Chinese. Differences between their first language and Chinese cannot make cognitive transfer easy whilst targeting to acquire a higher level of Chinese. This cannot be aided by the practice of heavy reliance on English as the medium in Chinese language instruction. Moreover, the lack of authentic texts for enhancing their literacy level was noted.

Ullah (2012) identified several anomalies in the current implementation of school-based Chinese curriculum for ethnic minority students. First, there is a mismatch between different levels of curriculum planning in incorporating central Chinese curriculum framework (CCCF) in school-based Chinese curriculum. Second, teachers have inadequate language teaching competency and language teacher education competency to develop and implement a full school-based Chinese curriculum for second language speakers. Third, the contents and the role of the school curriculum guide (SCG) are inadequate and illusive. This guide only helped new designated schools in organizing their curriculum, and lacked important content such as teaching approaches or methodological perspectives to assist frontline teachers.

In yet another investigation into ethnic minority students' education, a survey was carried out by Hong Kong Unison Limited (2012) on kindergarten education. It recommended specific actions for the sake of early integration of ethnic minority students into the Hong Kong society through the acquisition of Chinese from the beginning of kindergarten. There was, however, no research evidence as to whether this approach was right for them. Ethnic minority children have the challenge of learning two foreign languages (Chinese and English) in Hong Kong kindergartens from the ages of 3 to 5. Is the policy to teach them two foreign languages right, when their home language is completely different? How difficult is learning two foreign languages for kindergarten students? Is there any risk factor associated with this practice that can result in losing their motivation in education? What are the policies of other countries like UK, USA, Australia, Canada, Singapore, and South Korea in this regard? These are just some of the important questions that need to be answered both theoretically and practically in order to formulate strong support measure for the ethnic minority kindergarten students in Hong Kong (Bhowmik 2012).

It is a positive development that the GCSE Chinese qualification for ethnic minority students (with some conditions) has now been recognized and facilitates

their gaining access into higher education or the job market. Yet there is still concern that individual higher education institutions and government departments require higher proficiency in the use of Chinese language thus limiting the choices of ethnic minority students. Because of the achievement level gap between GCSE Chinese curriculum and Hong Kong Chinese curriculum, some have proposed to develop an alternative Chinese examination. This would benefit ethnic minority students in that it would enable them to reach a certain level of Chinese language proficiency and provide a recognized qualification for better access to higher education institutions and the job market (Hong Kong Unison Limited 2011; Ullah 2012). Another potential support measure was suggested in the EOC's document (2011) that a Chinese Proficiency Programme and Testing System (CPPTS) can be developed so that it could be used as a benchmark for higher education institutes and workplace. Although this particular language issue has been argued for ages, no pragmatic solution has yet been seen.

2.4.7.4 Assessment

The EOC (2011, p. 8) report labelled as 'unfair' the need for ethnic minority students to reach the same level of Chinese proficiency as native speakers. The report also asserted that existing assessment tools for identifying children with special needs were developed mainly for Chinese students and did not consider cultural factors and language deficiencies of the ethnic minority students. This non-consideration resulted in ethnic minority students with special needs facing double challenges.

A General Research Fund project entitled 'Exploring Cultural Diversity in Chinese Classrooms: Can Assessment Environments Cater for the Needs of Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong', [GRF-HKIEd840809] was funded by the Hong Kong Research Grants Council. Results of the project suggested the need for a different assessment environment for ethnic minority students with 'more feedback' and 'praise for achievement' that are valued by the students (Kennedy 2011a). The study also looked at the factors affecting ethnic minority students' learning motivation. The results (Kennedy et al. 2015) indicated that there is agreement between Chinese and ethnic minority students that their main experience of assessment is the teacher dominated form. These forms of assessment experienced by students interact with student learning motivation that is characterized for both groups of students by a strong mastery orientation the main point of which is to develop academic competence. There is evidence of moderate support for social orientations to learning, somewhat stronger for ethnic minority students than Chinese students. For both groups of students, a performance orientation to learning that seeks high marks and pleasing others does not have strong support from either Chinese or ethnic minority students – in fact it is the least endorsed attitude to learning motivation by both groups of students.

2.4.7.5 Curriculum

The need for alternative or second language curriculum for Chinese language has been discussed in one of the previous sub-sections (2.4.7.3), and there we also referred to the recent commitment from the Chief Executive. In addition, a strong demand for development of teaching and learning materials focusing on Chinese language needs of ethnic minority students has been well argued (EOC 2011; Hong Kong Unison 2010, 2011). Moreover, whether the existing curriculum is culturally responsive towards ethnic minority students has not been well-researched. Nevertheless, Hue's (2011) work provided cross-curricular experiences of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong schools. Hue and Kennedy (2012) examined the teachers' views of ethnic minority students' cross-cultural experiences to understand teachers' conceptualization of a new rationale for cultural responsiveness and management of diversity in Hong Kong secondary schools in relation to the creation of culturally responsive school and classrooms. The study revealed that the teachers struggled to conceptualize a new rationale for responding to cultural diversity (Hue and Kennedy 2012).

2.4.7.6 Teaching

It is imperative that Hong Kong teachers feel capable to teach ethnic minority students as well as Chinese students and that both groups can equally be engaged (Kennedy et al. 2008). However, Hue (2011) reported that teachers in Hong Kong struggle in several areas related to ethnic minority students' education i.e. in fulfilling the diverse needs of students, developing partnerships with ethnic minority students' parents, broadening educational and career aspirations of ethnic minority students. Moreover, Kennedy (2011a) emphasized that Hong Kong teachers need to rethink their approaches to learning by creating the kind of learning environments and modifying them in order to meet the specific needs of ethnic minority students.

2.4.7.7 Resource Support

EDB (2011a, b) reported that they are providing grants to schools to support ethnic minority students mainly in improving their Chinese language. However, while some schools were given grants to run school-based support measures for the ethnic minority students, other schools were given grants only for running after-school Chinese learning programmes (Hong Kong Unison Limited 2011). Moreover, it has been reported that sometimes fund disbursement of EDB differed from school to school without justifiable and clear reasons (pp. 10–11).

2.4.7.8 Supervision and Monitoring

Clearly, resources have been put in place to support ethnic minority students in Hong Kong schools (EDB 2011a, b). Their appropriateness and adequacy, however, have been highly criticized by many interested parties. One of the reasons identified by EOC (2011) is the lack of quality assurance and central support from the EDB. Therefore, EOC (2011) has urged the EDB to establish a central quality assurance system so that the resources being deployed to schools can be effectively monitored.

2.4.7.9 Overall Policy Towards Multicultural Education in Hong Kong

It has been argued that the Confucian philosophy of social justice informing the educational policy in Hong Kong is at odds with the needs and expectation of the parents of the ethnic minority students as well as the views of some other stakeholders including community groups and researchers in this area (Kennedy 2011b). This has meant that existing Government policy is only moving towards mono-cultural education according to Skerrett and Hargreaves's (2008) framework of educational orientations to diversity (Kennedy 2011b), while multicultural education has been highly recommended for a multicultural society (Banks 2008; Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings 1994, 2007; Nieto 2008; Pajares 2007). Yet it is not necessary to adopt the western notion of multiculturalism (Kennedy 2011a) as it has been well argued that Asia has its own distinctive type of traditions related to the diversity and the importance is given to developing local approaches to multiculturalism (Kymlica 1995, 2007; Kymlicka and He 2005). One such approach has been argued 'social resilience' instead of 'multiculturalism' (Kennedy 2011a) following the suggestion made in the context of Singapore (Ramakrishna 2008).

2.4.7.10 The Efficiency of Overall Support Measures

Connelly et al. (2012) evaluated the HKSAR government's educational support measures for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong schools. The study specifically looked at identifying to what extent educational support measures for ethnic minority students, mainly in Chinese language, were fulfilling government objectives such as 'alleviating the obstacles of language and cultural barriers', 'facilitating smoother integration' into Hong Kong society, and 'positively impacting the educational opportunities' of ethnic minority students. They worked in four primary schools and two secondary schools. The study team used semi-structured interviews with the principals or representatives from each school, focus group discussions with the government officials and teachers, and conducted an online questionnaire survey with the teachers and students. A total of 31 teachers and 370 ethnic minority students participated in the evaluation.

The study found no hard evidence in relation to the effectiveness of support measures in Chinese language skill development of the ethnic minority students. Teachers, however, welcomed the support measures and called for more support in the areas of curriculum adaptations, resources and professional development. Whether support measures could remove cultural barriers between students and teachers could not be evaluated because all the support measures were centered on Chinese language alone. The authors argued that the designated school system created 'separatist' and 'impoverished' education, and streaming system within the designated school further separated ethnic minority students, which altogether made 'cultural diversity invisible' in Hong Kong schools. Therefore support measures could not facilitate any smoother integration of ethnic minority students into Hong Kong society. The study also found that support measures positively impacted educational opportunities of ethnic minority students in some schools, when those schools deployed resources differently such as hiring ethnic minority teaching assistants instead of spending funds for a Chinese language support programme. On the whole, however, support measures largely failed to impact positively in educational opportunities of ethnic minority students. As the authors argued, it could not help ethnic minority students reach the same Chinese level as Chinese students, and therefore limited the opportunities for them to access higher education and job markets. The authors claimed a unique finding of the study was that the barrier to ethnic minority students' educational achievement is not 'one dimensional' focusing on Chinese language, rather it is 'multidimensional'.

While Connelly et al. (2012) evaluation largely showed the inefficiency of the government's existing support measures, some promising efforts supporting ethnic minority students have been identified in individual schools.

2.4.8 Some Other Promising Support Measures

While most empirical research on ethnic minority education in Hong Kong centered in the so called "designated" schools, Gao and Shum (2010) investigated the role of bilingual teaching assistants for the education of South Asian ethnic minority students in the mainstream school where the medium of instruction is pre-dominantly Chinese. The qualitative study interviewed two bilingual teaching assistants with Pakistani background from a mainstream secondary school. The mainstream secondary school only had 30 South Asian background students out of a total of 800 students. The teaching assistants were third generation Pakistani who were born and educated in Hong Kong. They were both Form Five graduates from the same secondary school where they were working as teaching assistants. Both of them were proficient in Chinese'. The study also interviewed four Chinese language subject teachers and another nine teachers of non-Chinese subjects such as Mathematics, Chinese History, Liberal Studies, and English with whom the two bilingual teaching assistants worked.

The study reported two major roles of bilingual teaching assistants in Hong Kong mainstream secondary school. First, they were helping South Asian ethnic minority students in Chinese language acquisition. Secondly, they were also playing an important role as cultural mediators between the mainstream school culture and the culture of South Asian ethnic minority community in Hong Kong. An account of a teaching assistant clearly indicated why their role of cultural mediator was very important in addition to helping students learn Chinese language (Gao and Shum 2010, p. 452).

> Because of our face colour, our religion, and our culture, the local students will try to [dislike] us. They will try to [say] something bad to us, like 'acha'. I have [been] in Hong Kong [for] a long time. Even in the kindergarten, the local parents will talk 'Oh, 'acha' is here, 'acha' is studying in this kindergarten.' There is too much, too much. In my secondary schooling, I cried every single day. They were all Hong Kongese. You know, it's a big pressure. And even some of the teachers . . . they feel your culture is a trouble, your religion is a trouble and you don't know Chinese. I need to make the youngsters feel confident and be understood by the mainstream.

Ho (2008) suggested teaching Islam as a multiethnic and multicultural literacy on the argument that Islamic education is portrayed as a concern related to terrorism by the Western media in the post 9/11 era and there has also been considerable scholarly works growing in this area. He was concerned that public education about Islam as a world religion had only received limited attention. He explored the curriculum and pedagogical challenges of teaching Islam in Western universities, and then showed the promises of alternative pedagogies for teaching about Islam in East Asian universities. Finally, he urged the development of an alternative pedagogy of teaching Islam that will ultimately help young people enhance critical thinking which they can use to avoid being influenced by the Western media as well as to remove their misunderstanding and to realize their own potentials in order to be a future peacemaker in multiethnic and multicultural societies.

Up to this point, we have discussed the literature that reported the issues and challenges encountered by the ethnic minority students inside the school. The amount of literature documented inside school issues is substantial. In the following section, we will discuss another important issue: that is, how the concept of 'out of school' has been largely overlooked in the literature.

2.5 'Out of School' Issue for Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong

Hong Kong's Equal Opportunities Commission first recognized the disproportionately low participation rates of ethnic minority children in the upper secondary and post-secondary education compared with the majority ethnic Chinese children (EOC 2011). Earlier in 2009, a Hong Kong Legislative Council (LegCo) discussion paper raised concerns about the academic performance of ethnic minority students. Less than 50 % met the minimum requirements for the admission into Form Six in 2008–2009 with only 24 students sitting examinations in the final year, that is, Form

Seven of senior secondary (Hong Kong Legislative Council 2009). LegCo recommended that the government should consider conducting research on the academic performance of ethnic minority students. Furthermore, earlier literature highlighted several issues and challenges faced by ethnic minority students regarding their education in Hong Kong, which to some extent, also shed light about the 'out of school' issue (Ku et al. 2005; Loper 2004).

Recently, Bhowmik (2013) suggested that a good number of ethnic minority children were 'out of school,' including the pre-primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary age-group young people. Kennedy (2012) also highlighted similar kinds of phenomena. Moreover, Bhowmik and Kennedy (2013) raised this 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority children as a new issue about access and equity in Hong Kong's education system that failed to meet the requirements of one of 'no-loser principle' of Hong Kong's most recent education reform (Education Commission [EC] 2000).

Collectively this limited literature indicates that there exists a major educational access, participation and outcome issue that is related to the number of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. While this small literature sheds very little light on the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong, there is absolutely no literature found yet that focused on understanding the reasons behind ethnic minority students being 'out of school' and what their 'out of school' life looks like. In-depth understanding of all these are very important if Hong Kong is to realize the potential of its ethnic minority young people. Given the gap in the literature we aim to answer the following three questions in the remainder of this book:

1. What is the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?
2. What are the reasons for ethnic minority young people being 'out of school'?
3. What is the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?

By doing so we hope to complement the large literature on the in-school experiences of ethnic minority students while opening up a new and important area of investigation that has significant implications for access and equity in Hong Kong schools.

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Chapter 3
Theoretical Framework, Methodology and Methods

Abstract The theoretical framework drew upon existing broader frameworks and relevant literature to understand the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. Rumberger's (Dropping out: why students drop out of high school and what can be done about it. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 2011) conceptual framework that unpacked the school dropout issue in the United States and Hunt's (Dropping out from school: A cross country review of literature. CREATE pathways to access research monograph, no. 16. University of Sussex, Brighton, 2008) similar work in developing countries were consulted. This study was qualitative in design, employing a case study method (Stake, Case studies. In: Denzin NK, Lincoln YS (eds), Handbook of qualitative research, 2nd edn. Sage, Thousand Oaks, pp. 435–454, 2000) falling within the post-positivist paradigm, following Lather's (Getting lost: feminist efforts towards a double(d) science. SUNY Press, Albany, 2007) frame of reference. Seeking to understand the realities of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people from multiple perspectives, 11 such young people were interviewed, as well as 20 stakeholders including principals, teachers, government officials and NGO professionals. Some young people were also observed. Two secondary and one primary school participated. Census statistics and school enrolment data were analysed, providing broader understandings of circumstances and issues for Hong Kong's 'out of school' ethnic minority young people. Data analysis steps identified units of analysis, coding data, sorting and checking codes, and creating an explanatory schema (Foss and Waters, Destination dissertation: a traveler's guide to a done dissertation. Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, Lanham, 2007). Coding was informed by all theoretical frameworks including critical race theory. Limitations including time constraints to conduct an ethnographic study and no case study participant from the Indian community were noted.

The previous chapter provided a review of literature on issues related to ethnic minority young people, both 'in school' and 'out of school'. This chapter discusses the theoretical frameworks on which the book draws to understand the 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. It also provides a broad overview of the research methodology that underpins the study reported in this book and the methods used in researching the 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. Section 3.1 deals with theoretical frameworks and Sect. 3.2 describes methodology and methods.

M.K. Bhowmik, K.J. Kennedy, *'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong*, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects 32, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-0327-1_3

3.1 Theoretical Framework

We draw on a number of theoretical frameworks as well as the literature across developed and developing contexts in relation to the questions that we seek to answer in this book. The structure of this section is:

Section 3.1.1 focuses on the complexities of the citizenship status of ethnic minorities and its implications for educational provision for these groups is explored through the discourse of ethnic vs civic citizenship within the nation-state (Bloemraad et al. 2008), and Bauböck's (2011) work on 'temporary migrants, partial citizenship and hyper-migration'.

Section 3.1.2 provides insights from Bekerman and Geisen's (2012) work on critical discourse in understanding culture to explain the educational experiences of minority and migrants as a complex learning process. In addition, the politics of education are explored through critical race theory and methodology by following López (2003) and Solórzano and Yosso (2002). We provide a detailed discussion on their (López 2003; Solórzano and Yosso 2002) work in Sect. 3.2.2 given its relevance to the research paradigm and methodology.

After locating ethnic minority educational issues within the previously referred broader theoretical frameworks Sect. 3.1.3 defines the 'out of school' construct for this book and provides a rationale for drawing on frameworks to study the construct. It discusses two frameworks 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion' from the education (UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2010) and CREATE's 'Seven Zones of Exclusion' (Lewin 2007), and subsequently a summarized and extension form of it, that looks at understanding the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong.

Section 3.1.4 explores Rumberger's (2011) conceptual framework that unpacks the dropout issue in the context of the United States.

Section 3.1.5 highlights Hunt's (2008) work on school dropout in the context of developing countries.

3.1.1 Citizenship Discourse

Rumberger's (2011) work in the context of the United States identified 'immigration status' as a predictor of dropping out. Yet it said little about its relationship with citizenship and whether citizenship status itself has a bearing on dropping out. In the developing context, Hunt's work (2008), identified 'child migration' as a factor influencing dropping out, but it was limited to only in-country migration such as rural-urban. Issues of migration and citizenship are relevant to Hong Kong's ethnic minorities so that the relationship between citizenship status and school failure, an under researched area in the global literature, is important in the Hong Kong context. The next two sub-sections discuss two frameworks on which this book draws.

3.1.1.1 Citizenship and Immigration

Bloemraad et al. (2008) highlighted the challenges of citizenship and its different dimensions in conceptualizing changes within the nation state that is subject to increasing international migration. They drew on a comprehensive literature focusing on normative and empirical debates over citizenship in the context of the United States and Western European countries. The authors suggested that it is mainly globalization and therefore increasing international migration worldwide that challenges the traditional notion of citizenship as state-centered and state-controlled. Yet the state continues to hold substantive power that gives access to the citizenship status and its associated rights, participation and belonging, which has important consequences for immigrants' incorporation and equality.

The authors provided an important framework to conceptualize citizenship as 'ethnic citizenship' and 'civic citizenship' and their relationship with states' willingness to incorporate immigrants. They argued:

> Ethnic nationalism [citizenship] is associated with belonging to a nation rooted in descent, a view that usually excludes migrants, as in Germany (pre-2000). Civic nationalism [citizenship] ties belonging to rights and a universalist, voluntary political membership, and thus arguably offers immigrants a greater chance of inclusion, as in France……..Ethnic nationalism [citizenship] matches up with a *jus sanguinis* descent principle of citizenship and more difficult naturalization procedures. Well known countries in this category are Germany (pre-2000), Austria, Greece, and Switzerland. Civic understandings of nationhood coincide with greater access to formal membership for immigrants and their descendants through *jus soli* birthright citizenship and easier naturalization. Countries in this category include Australia, Canada, France, and the United States. (p. 158)

3.1.1.2 Temporary Migrants, Partial Citizenship and Hypermigration

Bauböck (2011) unpacked five different types of temporary migrants based on the degree of freedom of movement and the extent of the equality that migrants enjoy compared to citizens and permanent residents. They are 'irregular migrants', 'controlled admission with return conditionality', 'controlled admission with initial temporary status', 'controlled admission for permanent residence', and 'free admission for long term residence'.

Bauböck argued that all these temporary migrants are partial citizens who enjoy different degrees of freedom of movement with regard to right to enter or the right of stay and different degrees of social and political rights. They all have 'partial citizenship' status in relation to the three dimensions of citizenship. First, they are deprived of certain core rights of citizenship, second, they lack incentives and dispositions for civic participation and they are considered as partial insiders and partial outsiders. This is a dilemma and poses two challenges: whether these partial citizens should be granted equal citizenship and whether they can act as communities of regular citizens. Bauböck (2011, p. 665) argued:

> Temporary migration raises two different challenges. The first is whether territorial democracies can integrate temporary migrants as equal citizens; the second is whether transna-

> tionally mobile societies can be organized democratically as communities of equal citizens…..on the one hand, liberals have good reasons to promote the expansion of categories of free-moving citizens as the most effective and normatively attractive response to the problem of partial citizenship for temporary migrants; yet, on the other hand, if free movement rights were actually used by too many, this might fatally undermine the sustainability of intergenerational and territorial democratic polities.

3.1.2 Migration, Minorities and Education: Understanding Culture

In addition to 'socio-economic' factors, Rumberger (2011) offers 'socio-cultural' factors, that is, cultural differences in values, attitudes and behaviors in explaining racial and ethnic differences in dropping out. Thus it is also important to look at broader cultural discourses in understanding the educational experiences of ethnic minorities. Bekerman and Geisen (2012) discussed the issues of critical cultural discourses and their potential challenges in different socio-political contexts for the development of education of minority and migrant groups. They started with the long standing debate over the relevance of culture and its influence on education of minority and migrant groups. On the one hand culture is crucial in understanding migration and minority issues while on the other hand any focus on culture is seen as a hindrance which leads to the processes of 'culturalization' and 'ethnization' that makes social inequalities invisible. Bekerman and Geisen (2012, p. 2), however, argued:

> New theoretical approaches in migration/minority theory have shown 'culture' to be a highly relevant factor. These approaches – 'transnationalism', 'transmigration' and 'transculturality' consider not only the relevance of but also the transcending and dissolving capacities of (national) cultures. Moreover, the centrality of culture has been underlined when considering the demands of marginalized minority members for 'recognition' and 'respect'. Both have been posited in social theory and practices as highly relevant concepts which in turn are in need of critical approaches. All in all, 'culture' has become a predominant factor for the explanation and understanding of social dilemmas and conflicts.

3.1.3 'Out of School' Construct

While the above two sections located the educational issues of ethnic minority within the broader theoretical frameworks related to migrants' or ethnic minorities' citizenship issue and accorded rights and its relevance to the cultural discourses, the following section discusses educational frameworks that locate 'out of school' issues in the contexts of educational access, participation and outcomes of schooling. The underpinnings of these frameworks are directly related to the theoretical issues discussed above as equal rights to educational access and participation and

equality in educational outcomes irrespective of ethnicity, immigration status etc. are very much part of human rights discourse. The equity oriented view of exclusion from education is the key feature of these frameworks that highlight issues related to educational rights and opportunities for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong.

Conceptualizations of the 'out of school' issue largely stem from experiences in developing countries where the universalization of primary and secondary education remains a key policy objective. Therefore, in defining the 'out of school' construct for this book we have drawn on the frameworks such as 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion' and 'Seven Zones of Exclusion' used in the context of developing countries. Due to their equity oriented view of exclusion from education these two frameworks position themselves well to research ethnic minority young people's 'out of school' issues in Hong Kong. Subsequently, drawing on these, we provide an 'out of school' framework which is used in this book to understand the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong.

3.1.3.1 Five Dimensions of Exclusion

UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2010, p. 3) identified 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion' as a framework for better understanding 'out of school' students. According to the framework:

- Dimension 1 considers children of pre-primary school age who are not in pre-primary or primary school;
- Dimension 2 considers children of primary school age who are not in primary or secondary school;
- Dimension 3 considers children of lower-secondary school age who are not in primary or secondary school;
- Dimension 4 considers children who are in primary school but at risk of dropping out;
- Dimension 5 considers children who are in lower-secondary school but who are at risk of dropping out.

3.1.3.2 Seven Zones of Exclusion

A framework provided by the Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE), proposes 'Seven Zones of Exclusion' to understand 'out of school' children (Lewin 2007, p. 21–23).

- Zone 0 refers to the children who are out of pre-primary school;
- Zone 1 contains those children who are never enrolled in primary school;
- Zone 2 considers those primary children who dropped out at the early stage or before completing the cycle;

- Zone 3 includes those primary children who are in school but at risk of dropping out;
- Zone 4 includes those children who failed to transit to lower secondary school;
- Zone 5 considers those lower secondary children who dropped out before completing the cycle;
- Zone 6 contains lower secondary children who are in school but at risk of dropping out.

3.1.3.3 Adapted Extension of the Framework

It is now important to understand the construct 'out of school' especially as it applies in the context of a developed jurisdiction such as Hong Kong. The conceptual frameworks 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion' and 'Seven Zones of Exclusion' are useful for this purpose, as discussed in the previous two sub-sections. Together they can be summarized in three broad categories, firstly, the pre-primary, primary and lower secondary age-group children who have never been to any schools; secondly, the dropout students of primary and lower secondary level; and thirdly, the primary and lower secondary students who are in primary or lower secondary school but at risk of dropping out.

'Out of school' is not merely an educational access problem rather it can be conceptualized as educational participation and outcome issue too. It is not enough today simply to have students in schools – but there must be 'meaningful participation' (Lewin 2007) in a 'fair learning environment' which should ultimately result in 'equality in outcomes or achievement' (Opheim 2004). Universally, this understanding is central to 'educational rights', 'equitable opportunities' therein and 'social justice' as a whole. While rights to education can be realized through 'meaningful participation' (Lewin 2007), 'equitable opportunities' in education go beyond access and participation, and extend its horizon to outcomes (Opheim 2004). This focus on outcomes is now very important because irrespective of factors such as gender, ethnicity and class, the outcomes should be the same for everyone.

It appears that both frameworks 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion' and 'Seven Zones of Exclusion' consider 'out of school' construct for the students up to the end of lower secondary level. Perhaps their usage in the context of development might be one of the reasons. Yet dropout discourse in the context of the United States considers students until the achievement of a high school diploma (Rumberger 2011). While we see from the literature that there are two different upper limits we shall extend those limits to identify 'out of school' ethnic minority young people from pre-primary to post-secondary level of education in Hong Kong. In this book we shall use this summarized and extended adaptation as 'out of school' framework to investigate and better understand the extent of 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong.

3.1.4 School Failure in the Developed Context

Rumberger (2011, p. 155) in his comprehensive work identified the four dimensions of the dropout problem in the context of the United States. These are nature, consequences, causes and solutions of dropping out. He provided a very useful and necessary conceptual framework to understand the process of dropping out and the salient factors underlying the process. The framework assumes dropping out is an aspect of student performance in school and identifies two types of factors that influence the performance. While 'individual factors' are associated with students themselves, the 'institutional factors' focus on the contexts found in students' families, schools and communities.

Recognizing the fact from literature that it is difficult to establish causal connections, Rumberger (2011) refers to various factors as 'predictors' or 'influencers' of dropping out rather than 'causes'. A broad array of predictors contributes to the likelihood of dropping out. Individual factors constitute four domains – performance, behaviors, attitudes and background. Four aspects of educational performances such as 'failed courses', 'retentions', 'academic achievement', and 'student mobility' are the predictors of dropping out. There are five types of behaviors related factors such as 'engagement', 'course taking', 'deviance', 'peers', and 'employment' influence dropping out. Attitudes domain comprises psychological factors such as 'goals' and 'self-perceptions' that predict dropout. A number of background characteristics such as 'demographics (gender, immigration status)', 'health' are also linked to dropping out.

'Family structure', 'family resources' and 'family practices' are the three important aspects under the family contextual factor contribute to dropping out. The factors in school such as 'student composition', 'school structure', 'school resources' and 'school practices' exert powerful influences on dropping out. The characteristics of the community or neighborhood also predict dropping out.

Rumberger additionally offers conceptualizations of 'socio-economic' factors, that is differences in resources in the social contexts of family, school and community, and 'socio-cultural' factors, that is cultural differences in values, attitudes and behaviors in explaining racial and ethnic differences in dropping out.

3.1.5 School Failure in the Developing Context

While Rumberger's dropout work above focused only in the context of the United States it is also important to look at dropout work in the context of developing countries as issues such as being 'out of school' are actually much discussed in the developing context.

Hunt (2008) provided a comprehensive review of academic and development agencies' literature on dropping out especially in the development context with a focus on South Asia and Sub Saharan Africa. Yet the review included research from

places such as China and South American countries as well. The review identified a number of interrelated factors influencing dropout in relation to household, community and school.

There are four factors reported in the review under the household income and financial circumstances such as 'school fees and indirect costs of schooling', 'income shocks', 'child work' and 'migration' affect dropping out. Five factors under household contexts and motivations such as 'household contexts', 'bereavement and orphan hood', 'education of household members', 'household perceived benefits of schooling', and 'decision-making around dropping out' contribute to dropping out. Four health related factors such as 'health of children', 'health of relatives', 'pregnancy', and 'disability and special educational needs' have bearing on dropping out. There are five factors reported in the review under the social and political context such as 'gender', 'rural-urban locations', 'other socially disadvantaged groups' mainly ethnic, religious and ethno-linguistic groups, 'conflict, politically fragile and emergency situations' and 'age, marriage and notions of adulthood' affect dropping out.

Supply of schools has been identified as a factor influencing dropout. The other school factors identified such as 'schooling resources and facilities', 'teaching and learning', 'inclusions and exclusions in schooling practices and processes', 'school environment and safety issues', and 'quality, attainment and outcomes' are associated with dropping out.

Hunt's (2008, p. 53) review also identified four 'at risk' indicators. The four indicators are – students repeating grades, students with lower achievement, students at over-age enrolment and students remain regularly absent from the school or had temporary withdrawal previously.

With specific reference to the Chinese context, Carol (2012), in her PhD project examined dropout problems in rural China in terms of education quality inspired by a gap in the literature, which is, although there is a wide range of dropout literature worldwide, lacks empirically sound and theoretically motivated research to understand dropout issue from the education quality point of view. The research employed a critical ethnography that included four dropout cases. Each case comprised a common assumption associated with the cause of dropout or factor affecting school access. They are 'family poverty', 'illiterate parents', 'student attributes and their willingness to study', and 'the quality and distribution of school resources'. The study conducted interviews with 112 informants and observations which involved 3 months of fieldwork in Yunan and Guangdong provinces in China.

Carol (2012) provided a critical review of the theories used to conceptualize education quality and development drawing on the insights from the case studies. The insights also challenged the common assumptions made about dropout issues. The study also highlighted the attributes of the alienating nature of an educational system in an increasingly market oriented economy such as China's. The alienating school does not consider the students' individual interest, habit, socio-economic background, and aspiration while it is only concerned with the success or failure of the system or the effectiveness of a bureaucratic system. Therefore, the marginal-

ized students who have adjustment problems because of their socio-economic, cultural and geographical location are likely to be pushed out of school.

3.2 Methodology and Methods

This section addresses the research methodology and methods on which the book draws. There are nine sub-sections constitute this section. Section 3.2.1 outlines the research design according to the questions we seek to answer in this book. While Sect. 3.2.2 discusses the research paradigm, Sect. 3.2.3 details the research methods. Section 3.2.4 describes the participants who took part in the research and their selection process. The data collection and data analysis techniques are set out in Sects. 3.2.5 and 3.2.6 respectively. Section 3.2.7 describes the ethical issues. Sections 3.2.8 and 3.2.9 highlight the reflexivity and limitations respectively.

3.2.1 Design

This book sought to understand the contexts that both create and influence 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. This focus on understanding led to the adoption of a qualitative research methodology as outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 3):

> …qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Therefore, the book employed a qualitative design consisting of case studies based on 15 in-depth interviews and 2 observations with 11 'out of school' ethnic minority young people as well as 22 in-depth interviews with 20 stakeholders such as principals, teachers, school social worker, ethnic minority education support programme staff in school, parents, ethnic minority community leaders, government officials, NGO professionals. At the same time, the book also drew on a range of primary and secondary data such as census statistics, educational statistics from national and international reports, school enrolment data and documents to provide as full a picture of the circumstances related to Hong Kong's 'out of school' ethnic minority young people. While document analysis mainly helped understand the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong, the qualitative design explored the reasons behind this phenomenon and also sketched the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people. The qualitative design also contributed to the deeper understanding of the extent to which ethnic minority young people were 'out of school'. It is important to note that while document analysis sought to identify the extent to which there were 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong, it also provided a strong rationale for investigating and informed researching the reasons for being 'out of school', and their 'out of school'

life. Appropriate analytic techniques were used to make meaning from the data and attention was paid to ensure the data's reliability and validity. The details of the analytic techniques and the reliability and validity of data are discussed in the data analysis section. Conclusions for better understanding the conditions of ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong were drawn from these analyses and new theoretical insights about what creates 'out of school' phenomenon for the ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong have been highlighted. The book addressed three key questions as outlined below.

Question 1 What is the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?

This question was answered by analyzing available census and statistical reports from national and international sources to understand the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. In addition, field work was conducted in three schools in Hong Kong in order to collect school enrolment data and interview stakeholders in the school. This allowed for understanding the magnitude of the 'out of school' phenomenon specific to these schools. School enrolment data were analyzed to provide a clear picture of the extent of the 'out of school' phenomenon in the studied schools. It was also augmented by the interviews with various stakeholders including principals, teachers, school social worker, ethnic minority education support programme staff, and both dropout and at risk of dropping out students from the schools. We discuss the selection processes of schools and the characteristics of the studied schools in the research participants section.

Question 2 What are the reasons for ethnic minority young people being 'out of school'?

In addition to the literature review, in-depth interviews with all the stakeholders including young people of all 'out of school' categories such as never been to school, dropout and at risk of dropping out; teachers; principals; parents; Education Bureau official; Equal Opportunities Commission official; NGO professionals, ethnic minority community leaders; school social workers were carried out to answer this question. A total of 37 interviews was conducted in order to understand the reasons ethnic minority young people are 'out of school'. The in-depth interviews were unstructured in nature but there was an interview schedule as shown in Appendix 3.1. We discuss details on interviewees and their selection process in the research participants section.

Question 3 What is the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?

The life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people was explored through case studies in order to answer question number 3, and thus to portray their 'out of school' life. A total of 11 cases was developed with pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary age-group young people. These covered all types of 'out of school' young people such as those who have never been to school, those who have dropped out, or those considered to be at risk of dropping

Table 3.1 Research methods and participants (question wise)

Questions	Research methods	Participants
Q1: what is the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?	Census data, statistical document analysis; school enrolment data analysis	Two secondary and one primary schools for school enrolment data
Q1	In-depth interviews	Young people of all 'out of school' categories such as never been to school, dropout and at risk of dropping out; teachers; principals; parents; Education Bureau official; equal opportunities Commission official; NGO professionals, ethnic minority community leaders; school social workers
Q2: what are the reasons for ethnic minority young people being 'out of school'?		
Q3: what is the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?		
Q1, Q2 and Q3	Case study (based on in-depth interviews and limited observation)	Young people of all 'out of school' categories such as never been to school, dropout and at risk of dropping out

out. We discuss the participants and their selection process in the research participant section. In-depth interviews and limited observations were employed for case study in this research. Again, although the in-depth interview for each case study was unstructured in nature, please see Appendix 3.2 for the agenda of the case study schedule. In addition, the in-depth interviews with various stakeholders related to the education of ethnic minority students provided valuable insights about the 'out of school' life of ethnic minority young people.

Table 3.1 summarizes the research methods and participants according to the questions.

We first analyzed documents such as census data, educational statistics from national and international sources and school enrolment data from three studied schools to answer the Q1. The findings of the Q1 provided a strong rationale for investigating Q2 and Q3, and informed the identification of the methods for answering them. The methods adopted for answering Q2 and Q3 also offered good insights to the answer of Q1.

3.2.2 Paradigm

The research reported in this book falls within the post-positivist paradigm of research following Lather's (2007) frame of reference. The book's particular frame of reference is related to how reality is understood, the foundation of research data,

how knowledge is generated, the interests of the book, and the values of the researchers. These are all grounded in the post-positivist paradigm.

A post-positivist perspective assumes that there is a reality even though there may be multiple constructions of that reality from different perspectives. While the book seeks to understand the reality of the 'out of school' ethnic minority young people it does so from multiple perspectives. For example, we explored the perspectives of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people themselves as well as different stakeholders related to the education of ethnic minority young people such as principals, teachers, school social worker, etc. This helped generate knowledge from multiple perspectives, which was very important in order to understand the dynamics of the 'out of school' phenomenon. The inclusion of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people was particularly important in understanding their own views. This was significant in generating knowledge from the ethnic minority young people's perspective and also giving them a voice. This qualitative research intended to give voice to the people who have been historically silenced and marginalized (Brantlinger et al. 2005) such as ethnic minority people in Hong Kong. Also this qualitative inquiry under a post-positivist research paradigm aimed to improve the condition of marginalized (ethnic minority) people (in Hong Kong) by generating knowledge from their perspectives, thus empowering their voices and communicating their voices to others (Adair and Pastori 2011). We also adopted a number of frameworks that have been discussed previously. By employing case study based on in-depth interviews and limited observations, and other in-depth interviews, it is also informed by critical race theory and employs critical race methodology in its line of inquiry. The main reason for using critical race theory and methodology is itself grounded in the experiences and knowledge of people of the oppressed race such as the ethnic minority people in Hong Kong.

Critical race theory originated from the critical legal studies during the Civil Rights Movement era in the USA (Taylor 2009). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) were the first proponents who introduced critical race theory in education. The underlying principles of critical race theory are that racism is a normal fact of the daily life and the supremacy of the privileged race (white in the USA) is so much embedded in the political, legal and educational structure that it is difficult to recognize (Delgado 1995 cited in Taylor 2009, p. 4). Bell's (1980 cited in Taylor 2009, p. 5) 'theory of interest convergence', that is, the interest of the oppressed race (black in the USA) is accommodated only when it converges with the interest of the privileged race (white in the USA). The main reasons for using critical race theory in education is grounded in its strength that critical race theory helps deepen understandings of the educational barriers for people of oppressed races and it can also explore ways to resist and overcome these barriers (Taylor 2009, p. 9).

Recognizing the fact that critical race theory originated in the legal arena and its important role in both legal and educational areas, López (2003) argued that it has yet to make significant contribution to other key areas such as educational administration, politics of education, policy studies and political science. He also commented that the presence and effects of racism remain largely absent from the discussions in these particular areas. Although literature suggests that racism in

Hong Kong is a common feature in the lives of South Asian ethnic minority people including in school (Ku et al. 2005, 2010), critical race theory has not been used as an analytical tool. By studying the 'out of school' issue of ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong through critical race theory in part we aim to bring to the forefront how the issue of racism interacts with the school failure on the part of Hong Kong's ethnic minority.

In accordance with critical race theory's line of argument, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) called for a new research methodology in education which they coined 'critical race methodology' that can be informed by critical race theory. They argued that the social scientists tell stories under the guise of 'objective' research, actually these stories uphold deficit and racialized notions about people of oppressed race, and there are also full of 'majoritarian storytellings'. This deficit-informed research silences and distorts the epistemologies of people of oppressed race. This is also evident in Hong Kong, when literature suggests that teachers hold views about ethnic minority students such as 'useless', 'misbehaving' and 'impolite' (Ku et al. 2005). Also researchers such as Gu and Patkin (2013, p. 139) in their study of South Asian ethnic minority students' heritage identity in Hong Kong tell a story such as ethnic minority students resisting the lower social status of their heritage languages and minority identity by maintaining their heritage languages. They also did this by promoting the dominant status of English and by devaluing the local Chinese language. The authors argued this limited ethnic minority students' linguistic choices and led to discrimination against other languages. Therefore, a critical race methodology can provide a tool to 'counter' deficit storytelling. The critical race methodology not only considers race and racism at the centre of a critical race analysis but also views them at their intersection with other forms of discrimination through gender, class, or sexual orientation. The strength of the methodology is itself grounded in the experiences and knowledge of people of the oppressed race.

Although critical race theory and methodology originated in the multicultural context of the United States of America, it is important for this book to draw on it as a part of the framework and methodology in addition to others, which helped understand the phenomenon critically. And it is clear from the literature that the presence of racism was pervasive in all areas of life of ethnic minority population in Hong Kong such as employment (hiring, firing, and advancement), admission to facilities, purchasing of goods and services, access to government services, and acquiring a home (Ku et al. 2010). In addition, specific to the educational area, Ku and his colleagues (2005) conducted an earlier study with a view to understanding the educational problems that South Asian ethnic minority students were facing in Hong Kong schools. Employing a questionnaire survey with 200 students and in-depth interviews with 20 students, they found that ethnic minority students encountered racism in relation to the treatments they had received from the schools in Hong Kong. They also highlighted that a quarter of the ethnic minority students reported their teachers did not treat them equally, such as teachers gave more attention to the Chinese students than them, and teachers gave more severe punishment to them than the Chinese students. Therefore, a fixed agenda item of whether ethnic minority participants had 'any racial discrimination experience' or whether Chinese par-

ticipants were 'aware of any racial discrimination happened against ethnic minority young people' (see Appendixes 3.1 and 3.2) was discussed with every research participant reported in this book. Critical race theory also informed the selection of the participants and data coding and analysis. These are discussed in more detail later in the methods, participants and data analysis sections.

3.2.3 Methods

The qualitative research reported in this book employed the case study method (Stake 2000) based on 15 in-depth interviews and (2 observations) with 11 'out of school' ethnic minority young people. In addition, there were another 22 in-depth interviews carried out with 20 other stakeholders related to the education of ethnic minority young people. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the book began by drawing on the analysis of documents such as census, national and international educational statistical reports, school enrolment data etc.

The reason for choosing case study was to gain a better or more complex understanding about 'out of school' ethnic minority young people's life (Stake 1994, p. 237), and subsequently for theorizing about them (Stake 2000, p. 437). In describing the strength of even a single case study, Flyvbjerg (2006) emphasized the importance of context dependent knowledge in the social sciences and how case study method is crucial for constructing this type of knowledge. He argued that possessing deep context specific knowledge is the main requirement of being 'expert' in a certain discipline. All the in-depth interviews were unstructured in nature (Fontana and Frey 1994, p. 365). The in-depth interviews provided greater breadth to understand the phenomenon critically (Fontana and Frey 1994, p. 365). Critical race theory influenced the interviews that asked ethnic minority participants whether they have encountered racism in their lives in Hong Kong. Chinese participants were also asked whether they were aware of any racism happening against ethnic minority young people in different settings including school.

3.2.4 Participants

A total of 31 people including 'out of school' young people, principals, teachers, social workers, NGO professionals, government officials, ethnic minority community leaders, parents participated in the research. Three schools also took part in the research. Some of the above mentioned participants were from the three participating schools. All the participants were selected purposively as they were willing to be involved in the project. Selection was also informed by theoretical sampling, that is, sampling was guided by the 'theoretical sensitivity' which is necessary in qualitative work in general (Glaser 1978; Strauss and Corbin 1998). For example, the selection of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people for interview followed the

summarized and extended adaption of 'out of school' framework (please see Sect. 3.1.3.3 for details of this theoretical framework). In addition, all the participants also agreed to share freely (if) any racism they (ethnic minority participants) had encountered in Hong Kong or they (Chinese participants) were aware of. The accessibility to research participants was a major issue in the research reported in this book. We describe issues related to the accessibility in the reflexivity section. Table 3.2 shows the distribution of different categories of participants and schools in number.

While Table 3.2 shows the varieties of research participants, Table 3.3 includes more details about participants such as their category, whether they were from any of the studied schools, their pseudonyms, data collection strategies used, and the frequency of the interviews (and observation). The 'out of school' young people were categorized following the summarized and extended adaption of 'out of school' framework as discussed in the Sect. 3.1.3.3. The other participants were categorized according to their professional role in regard to the education of ethnic minority young people, or the family or community relationship with them.

3.2.4.1 Schools

Three schools participated in the research. Two of these were secondary schools and one was a primary school. One secondary and the primary school were so called 'designated' schools because they had been catering specifically for ethnic minority students. Designated schools cater for ethnic minority students by providing school based Chinese language support for non-Chinese speaking students. The other secondary school is not a designated school because it only admitted Chinese students until recently when it started accepting ethnic minority students. Table 3.4 outlines the general attributes of the three schools.

We approached almost 20 designated schools to take part in our research. Designated schools were targeted for the very obvious reason that they cater for most of the ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, many of these schools refused to accept our offer. The main reasons schools mentioned in favor of their refusal were either they were busy or they had already committed to some other research. Because of the schools' negative responses to being involved in the project we had to extend our offer to some non-designated school which traditionally catered for only Chinese students but had recently began accepting ethnic minority students as well. Finally, three schools positively responded to our invitation to participate in our study. Altogether 14 people from three schools including three principals, four teachers, one school social worker, one ethnic minority education support program staff, one dropout student and four at risk of dropping out students were interviewed. The selection of all interview participants in school was negotiated with the schools after we gained access. In addition, the enrolment data of the schools for ethnic minority students was explored in order to understand the magnitude of the 'out of school' phenomenon specific to the school.

Table 3.2 Number of participants

Schools	'Out of school' young people			Principals	Teachers and support staff	School social workers and NGO professionals	Government officials	Ethnic minority community leaders	Parents
	Never been to school	Dropout	At risk of dropping out						
3	1	6	4	3	6	3	2	3	3
	11								
	Total: 31								

Table 3.3 Details of participants and data collection techniques

Category	Participant (pseudonym)	Details	Ethnicity	Gender	Interview	Observation
Young child never been to school	Shormin Abbas	Never been to school	Bangladeshi	Female	1	
Young people dropped out of school	Maneesha Rai	Dropout	Nepali	Female	2	
	Aruna Thapa	Dropout	Nepali	Female	2	1
	Veem Pun	Dropout	Nepali	Male	2	1
	Tanvir Ahmed	Dropout	Bangladeshi	Male	1	
	Azad Rabbani	Dropout	Pakistani	Male	2	
School-based, pseudonym used for schools (English meaning of the name)						
Hei-mong School (hope school)	Mr. Tung Yuen	Principal	Chinese	Male	2	
	Ms. Wing Chow	Teacher (Chinese)	Chinese	Female	1	
	Mr. Matthew Chan	Teacher (science)	Chinese	Male	1	
Secondary non-designated school	Ms. Eva Kau	Ethnic minority education support program staff	Chinese	Female	1	
	Morshed Uddin	Dropout student	Pakistani	Male	1	
Mong-shuen School (dream school)	Ms. Susan Tang	Principal	Chinese	Female	1	
	Ms. Tami Hui	School social worker	Chinese	Female	1	
	Ms. Snow Ngai	Chinese teacher	Chinese	Female	1	
Primary designated school	Abdal Rashid	Student P6 (at risk of dropping out)	Pakistani	Male	1	
Woo-ping School (peace school)	Mr. Chris Leung	Principal	Chinese	Male	2	
	Nadia Bashir	Student S1 (at risk of dropping out)	Pakistani	Female	1	
	Sahid Afridi	Student S1 (at risk of dropping out)	Pakistani	Male	1	

(continued)

Table 3.3 (continued)

Category	Participant (pseudonym)	Details	Ethnicity	Gender	Interview	Observation
Secondary designated school	Mr. Tim Jordan	Liberal studies and geography teacher	Filipino	Male	1	
	Taufiq Iqbal	Student S3 (at risk of dropping out)	Pakistani	Male	1	
Ethnic minority community leaders	Mr. Sumit Baral	Community leader and ex school teacher	Nepali	Male	1	
	Mr. Tareque Rahman	Community leader	Bangladeshi	Male	1	
	Mr. Shahed Alam	Community leader and school teacher	Pakistani	Male	1	
Social workers and NGO professionals	Mr. Andy Xu	Social worker and Ex-NGO professional	Chinese	Male	1	
	Mr. Monu Pun	NGO professional	Indian	Male	1	
Government officials	Mr. Lee Cheng	EDB official	Chinese	Male	1	
	Mr. Albert Cheung	EOC official	Chinese	Male	1	
Other teachers	Martin Knowles	English teacher	British	Male	1	
Parents	Mr. Najrul Islam (Father of Tanvir Ahmed)	Father of an 'out of school' participant (dropout)	Bangladeshi	Male	1	
	Mr. Junaid Abbas (Father of Shormin Abbas)	Father of an 'out of school' participant (never been to school)	Bangladeshi	Male	1	
	Mrs. Parvin Abbas (Mother of Shormin Abbas)	Mother of an 'out of school' participant (never been to school)	Bangladeshi	Male	1	
Total					37	2

Table 3.4 Attributes of sample schools

Two designated schools and one non-designated school
One primary and one secondary school are designated, another secondary is not designated
All co-education schools
Ethnic composition is diverse with many south Asians
History of accepting ethnic minority students: one long, one medium and one recent
School location: two in Kowloon and one in New Territories
School band: 2 and 3

Table 3.5 Details of 'out of school' participants (gender, ethnicity, age-group and 'out of school' characteristics wise)

'Out of school' characteristics	Never been to school	At risk of dropping out			Dropout				Total
Age-group	Pre-primary	Primary	Lower secondary		Lower/upper/post-secondary				
Ethnicity	Bangladeshi	Pakistani	Pakistani		Nepalese		Pakistani	Bangladeshi	
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	M	M	
Number	1	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	
Total	1	4			6				11

3.2.4.2 'Out of school' Research Participants

A total of 11 'out of school' research participants were interviewed. Table 3.5 shows their details, including ethnicity, gender, age-group and 'out of school' categories. The participants were from a diverse South Asian background including Pakistani, Nepalese and Bangladeshi. Unfortunately, we were unable to find any Indian participant to interview.

Out of the 11 participants, 5 were negotiated through three participant schools. The remaining six were identified through a variety of networks. Different channels such as, the Hong Kong Nepalese Federation, the Bangladesh Association of Hong Kong, the *Ethnic Voice Weekly* (a weekly newspaper run by ethnic minority community in Hong Kong), and local NGOs working for the welfare of ethnic minority population in Hong Kong were used to identify participants. In selecting cases, 'opportunity to learn' was given the highest importance. This meant the participants to whom we gained access through different networks and those who also had shown their interest to participate in the research were selected. In addition, 'balance and variety' of cases was also considered important (Stake 2000, p. 447) when making these sampling decisions. Since the participants were diverse in terms of their experiences, age, language abilities, therefore, these were taken into account when considering interviews.

3.2.4.3 Other Participants

There were 11 other participants such as ethnic minority community leaders, government officials, NGO professionals, teachers from other schools, and parents participated in the study. Some of these participants were accessed through our networks within the ethnic minority community, while others were approached directly by us.

3.2.5 Data Collection

A total of 11 case studies mainly based on 15 in-depth interviews and 2 observations were carried out with 11 ethnic minority young people. Initially it was also planned to conduct observations with every participant, but due to their unwillingness only two observations with two participants were conducted in their workplaces. Participants were unwilling to participate because either their current employers would not have allowed us to observe them in their work-place or parents hesitated to allow us in the family. The main focus of both interviews and observations was to explore what their overall life looked like being 'out of school' young people. Both interviews and observations further sought to understand deeply what had made them 'out of school', what they had been doing since being 'out of school', and what were the family, social, economic and work context of their lives.

Additionally 22 other unstructured in-depth interviews were carried out with 20 different participants related to the education of ethnic minority to understand the issue of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people from a wider perspective. School enrolment data was also collected from three schools.

The interviews were conducted over an 8-month period, between October 2012 and May 2013. At least 5–7 days were spent in each school spread over the same period. Each interview with case study participants lasted for about 2 h and with other participants on average between an hour and 2 h. The family interview with a young girl and her parents lasted for 3 h. Each observation took on average an hour. The first author conducted all interviews and observations. The language of the interview was in English and is a second language for most of the participants and the first author. Some of the ethnic minority participants, however, opted to use their South Asian languages such as Urdu, Hindi and Bangla. Being a native Bangla speaker the first author is also conversant in Urdu and Hindi. The time and place of the interviews were negotiated and determined according to the participants' preferences.

Four of the 11 case study participants and 2 school principals were interviewed twice. The rest of the participants were interviewed once. In the case of two interviews, case study participants shared information about their background, family, previous life, school days in Hong Kong, and the issues they have faced in school and education in their first interview. The second interview focused more on things to be clarified, including more detailed information about pertinent areas previously

discussed and largely about their 'out of school' life in Hong Kong. The second interview with the two school principals was carried out mainly to have some clarification from the first interview, for more detailed information, and ultimately to enrich the interview.

In addition to the standard briefing about the research aims, interview protocols, participants' rights, and research ethics, some time was also taken at the beginning of each interview by sharing some personal background and motivation for conducting this research. A business card and identity card were shown to all participants as a strategy for gaining their trust. These two techniques helped to build rapport with the participants. All the interviews with participants focused on understanding their experiences, feelings and perceptions in a conversational manner giving them the lead by saying 'tell me something…' or asking questions like 'how was that…', 'what do you think…' and 'why do you think so…'. In addition, the role of ourselves as interviewer was not limited to only asking questions rather other actions such as saying 'hmm, mm', re-formulating questions, agreeing, remaining silent and assessing how these actions influenced what participants said (Silverman 2011, p. 204). With a view to capturing stories participants were encouraged to share freely their experiences of racism that they (ethnic minority participants) encountered or they (Chinese participants) were aware of. Drawing on critical race theory, it was important to find out about these stories in order to make some differences in the lives of ethnic minority young people as these stories need to be told to position ethnic minority young people not as problematic, but to offer different perspectives that would counter deficit story telling. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed except one because it was a second interview with a case study participant that was conducted over the phone. In addition to audio recording the interviews, extensive field notes were also taken. Some of the strategies presented by Lofland (1971, cited in Fontana and Frey 1994, p. 368) were used such as, 'taking notes promptly', 'writing everything down, no matter how unimportant it may seem', 'trying to be as inconspicuous as possible', and 'analyzing notes frequently'. Immediately after each interview, we took approximately 150 min to review the interview and would write a brief story about our discussion during the interview. These stories were based on the field notes and audio recordings. The story was validated against the written transcription of the audio file when it was available and notes, and before the second interview in case of two interviews. The story helped to identify areas that needed clarification and more detailed information in the second interview. This exercise also helped in preparing for the second interview. This process ultimately enriched the second interview, and provided opportunities to engage further with the participants. For example, in many cases during the second interview, participants seemed to be more spontaneous giving more information, even when questions were not asked as the answers came automatically from their longer and detailed responses. At times there appeared to be a shift in the power relationship between researcher and participant that resulted in participants taking charge by themselves to help the researcher understand their issues substantially. There were also instances where the second interview sparked a different kind of response from the first interview. In the case of two interviews, another story was

also written after the second interview and validated against transcription and notes. Overall, 37 interview stories and 2 observation stories were written totaling around 150 pages, each story having an average of about 2,000 words. The story writing technique helped to elicit information from the interviews. Two South Asian undergraduate students at the Hong Kong Institute of Education helped to transcribe the audio recordings. They also translated all of the conversations with some South Asian participants from South Asian languages to English.

Permission was sought to have contact again with the participants for any clarification after the interviews. In addition to new information, further explanations regarding some issues from the first interview were also sought from the two school principals and four case study participants during the second interview. In other cases, there was not much elucidation needed except some follow up was done through either e-mail or WhatsApp or phone. This was done in line with conducting ethical research by prioritizing participants' preferred way of further communication. Other ethical practices followed are discussed later in the research ethics section.

As mentioned earlier there were only two observations carried out with two 'out of school' ethnic minority participants in their workplaces. Each observation was conducted after completing two interviews with each respective participant. Two observations were held in November 2012 and February 2013 respectively over the period of an hour each. One observation took place in a private clinic and another in a club. During the observation, the focus was on what they were doing at work, how they were doing, and how they were dealing with their customers, bosses, and colleagues. Critical race theory influenced the observations since time was taken to have a close look whether participants were treated differently by either customers or their bosses and colleagues in the work. Later they were asked whether they had encountered any racism at work previously. It came as a surprise when the boss of a participant showed his anger towards one of the participants even in the researcher's presence.

Access for the purposes of observation was 'overt' (Silverman 2001) meaning that participants were well informed. During the observation participants were mainly followed. The researcher's role was both active and inactive, that is, when participants remained busy dealing with the customers or other people observations were made by standing or sitting away with a focus on how they were doing things. Some conversation took place at other times when participants were not attending any customer. Yet even at these times, observations continued while they did some other work and converse. Every attempt was made not to interrupt them too much in their busy working time.

Observations, in addition to in-depth interviews, had some advantages. First, observations of the work lives of 'out of school' ethnic minority participants helped understand them more deeply and differently. They were understood differently in the sense that by observing them in their original job settings their everyday experiences became obvious and exposed. Second, it provided an opportunity for generating data in multiple ways to make better sense of the other data which ultimately

strengthened the reliability of data. Finally, observations helped draw a full picture of these 'out of school' ethnic minority participants in Hong Kong.

3.2.6 Data Analysis

Question 1 What is the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?

Census statistics, other national and international educational statistics and enrolment data from three schools were analyzed to answer Q1. Descriptive statistics were used in this regard. A cohort study entailed the analysis of school enrolment data, therefore, an effort was also made to do a cohort study with the school enrolment data in order to identify dropout rate for any particular cohort of ethnic minority students in three schools. In addition, the interview data with the research participants was analyzed to enrich the answer of this question.

Question 2 What are the reasons for ethnic minority young people being 'out of school'?

Question 3 What is the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?

All interviews collected qualitative data in order to answer Qs 2 and 3. Since the data was ultimately in the form of texts from in-depth interviews and field-notes, therefore, data was analyzed following one of the techniques that are used to analyze free-flowing text. 'Schema analysis', a method of analyzing large blocks of text as suggested by Ryan and Bernard (2000), was adopted in this regard. In order for doing this, text was first coded, as coding is the heart and soul of whole text analysis (Ryan and Bernard 2000, p. 780).

Data analysis was continuous and done simultaneously whilst collecting data in order to keep the study focused, shaped and modified as it advanced (Glesne and Peshkin 1992). Data analysis was mainly based on the written stories that were developed, drawing from field notes and the transcribed audio recordings. After the stories were validated against transcriptions and notes, they were read several times from beginning to end for coding, writing a list of ideas and finally to identify the themes. In this process several readings were also done again among transcriptions and field notes. Case study participants' narratives were used to portray a vivid picture of their previous school life and current 'out of school' life, and schema analysis of their accounts as well as the accounts of other participants were done to identify the themes that help explain the reasons for them being 'out of school'. Cross-case analysis was conducted to help contrast and compare cases. This was important for knowledge mobilization as Khan and VanWynsberghe (2008) asserted the value of cross-case analysis is that it accumulates case knowledge, compares and contrasts cases, and thus produces new knowledge.

Data analysis steps included identifying unit of analysis, coding data, sorting code, checking code, and creating an explanatory schema (Foss and Waters 2007). The units of analysis were 'what influenced ethnic minority young people for being 'out of school' and 'what their 'out of school' life looks like' that were mainly guided by the questions that we seek to answer in this book (p. 187). Coding was informed by all theoretical frameworks including critical race theory that we adopted for this book. For example, an excerpt related to a participant's failure in a school subject was coded as 'lower academic achievement'. This code was drawn from the literature on dropping out (Hunt 2008; Rumberger 2011), and an excerpt related to a participant's encounter of racial discrimination was coded as 'racism', which was drawn from critical race theory (Bell 1980; Delgado 1995; Ladson-Billings and Tate 1995; López 2003; Taylor 2009). The 'highlight' option of the Microsoft Word programme with different colors was used for coding purpose. After coding all data, they were checked and sorted thoroughly to identify the categories or themes. The explanatory schema was created by establishing the relationship among different coding categories. For example, in answering question 2 'what are the reasons for ethnic minority being 'out of school', an explanatory schema in part placed 'school factors associated with school failure' at a higher level category under which the lower level categories were 'inadequate schooling provisions for ethnic minority students', 'segregation effect in designated school', 'issues in teaching', 'school policy and practices', 'teachers' low expectation', 'stereotypes'. The relationship in this schema between higher and lower level categories is what Foss and Waters (2007, p. 201) call, the 'cause and effect'. This means school failure is the 'effect' of the different school factors identified at the lower level categories of the schema, or in other words, different school factors identified at the lower level categories of the schema are the 'cause' of the school failure. Finally, salient themes were created from the coding categories to answer the questions (Strauss and Corbin 1998) raised in this book. For example, in answering question 3 'What is the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?', the salient themes were created – "out of school' life', 'job satisfaction' and 'future plan'.

We aimed to understand the extent of 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong, its reasons and to portray ethnic minority young people's 'out of school' life from the participants' perspective, using their own descriptions and explanations, and we sought to ensure the reliability and validity of the data and interpretations using a number of strategies suggested by Silverman (2001). During data collection, each in-depth interview with case study participants lasted for 2 h, and between an hour and 2 h with other participants. All face to face interview data were audio recorded, carefully transcribed, written stories were developed and validated against the transcriptions, and presented long excerpts in the findings chapter of the book. Data were collected from multiple sources which helped in generating knowledge from multiple perspectives and triangulating our findings. By triangulation is meant generating data in multiple ways to make better sense of the other data (Silverman 2001, p. 235). Two in-depth interviews were conducted with four case study participants and two school principals allowing a proper time gap between them which was utilized to write a story by

analyzing data from the first interview. This helped to make use of the second interview for clarification of some ideas and asking for more detailed information in areas felt necessary from the first interview which ultimately enriched the interview. Writing a story was particularly helpful in focusing the analysis centered on the data and comprehensive data treatment was ensured for analysis purpose. During data analysis, interpretations and conclusions were made through reading and analyzing stories, transcriptions and field notes seeking clarification and examples in support of them. Negative cases or data that contradicted interpretations and conclusions were also identified.

3.2.7 Ethics

This section discusses the practices followed to conduct the research reported in this book in an ethical manner. Since ethics and reflexivity are very much intertwined, some of the ethical practices are also presented in the reflexivity section. The ethical practice was started by making an application to the 'Human Research Ethics Committee' of the Hong Kong Institute of Education for ethical clearance. Accordingly prior approval was received from the committee before beginning field-work.

All participants were forwarded the briefing and consent documents beforehand. They were given detailed information about the nature of the research and their involvement written in English. Yet, they were briefed again and written consent was obtained before starting the interview. Verbal consent was sought before beginning of any conversation that seemed to be very personal and sensitive. This process of 'model or continuous informed consent' was followed throughout the interviews (Allmark et al. 2009; Sinding and Aronson 2003).

Due to the sensitivity of this research, especially issues related to school failure, it was necessary to keep research participants' data private and confidential by making data anonymous or using pseudonyms in public presentations. Participants' privacy and the confidentialities of their data were not threatened at any point of the research. Interviews were conducted in such a way as to avoid any conversation that might hurt participants mentally. Data collection involved interviewing one 5-years old girl. She was interviewed in the presence of her parents at her home on a weekend evening. Maximum care was taken so that she did not feel any stress. The transcriptions of interview data were provided to those participants who showed their interest during the interview so that they could verify them. The suggestions made on the provided transcriptions were incorporated in the revised version.

Having an ethnic origin the same as one of the ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong, the first author had the benefits of mastering two or three languages of the dominant ethnic minority groups. The challenges of being neutral during the interview and data interpretation and reporting process was well understood. Every effort was made not to influence any conversation or happening during the interview and the nature of the relationship with participants was as neutral as it could be. No

data was made available to anybody or any organization in order to protect 'out of school' ethnic minority young people who were under compulsory education age-group from any potential vulnerability that might arise in respect to the compulsory education law of Hong Kong.

3.2.8 Reflexivity

In qualitative inquiry the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, therefore, reflexivity is essential (Glesne 1999; Russell and Kelly 2002; Stake 1995). Russell and Kelly (2002 cited in Watt 2007) argued that through reflection researchers may become aware of what allows them to see, and what may hinder their seeing. This calls for a careful consideration of the phenomenon under study, and the ways our own values, assumptions and behavior might have impacted the study and the knowledge generated out of it. While in Chap. 1 (Sect. 1.3) we provided our background information that motivated us to step into this study, here we describe some of our reflections in relation to the methodological challenges that we encountered in conducting our research.

The dropout literature from other parts of the world shows the problems of accessibility in studying the dropout phenomenon (e.g. Hunt 2008; Rumberger 2011). Some of these include gaining access to dropout students, shortage of time for interviews due to their often very busy schedule in work, etc. Consistent with these findings, the accessibility to the research participants including schools was a major problem throughout the study. The field work was initially planned to last for 4–5 months, but due to the accessibility issue it extended up to 8 months. Although field work lasted for 8 months, some preparation work for accessing research participants and networking had started long before. In fact, initial networking with different ethnic minority community organizations such as Bangladesh Association of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Nepalese Federation, *Ethnic Voice Weekly* (a weekly newspaper run by ethnic minority community in Hong Kong) had already been completed before starting the data collection and some further relationship building activities were ongoing. First author intentionally started contributing voluntarily for the *Ethnic Voice Weekly* as a writer (e.g. Bhowmik 2012a, b) as well as providing editorial support as a way of better understanding the context. This strategic networking involvement actually helped in finishing field work despite major accessibility problems. There were many frustrating moments, however, when participants did not appear at all in the scheduled meeting without any notice. Long distances were often travelled for a meeting, time was spent waiting and the participants did not appear. Unfortunately, it happened several times with the same participants. In this context there was no alternative but to remain patient and continue communication in order to carry out our field work.

Being a Bangladeshi, the first author was hopeful that accessing the same ethnic origin students would have been much easier. This did not turn out to be true. Although one case study participant was known long before other research partici-

pants were identified for this study, access proved most difficult. Continuous calls were made to him but because of his extremely busy schedule for one of his new jobs at the airport it took more than 2 months to meet for the first interview after several previously fixed schedule postponements. Although the first author shared the same ethnic background with him and knew him personally yet when he was not able to make it, support had to be sought from one community leader to accelerate scheduling our interview time. Even with the intervention of that community leader the first scheduled interview actually ended up in postponement. Later again, with the help of that community leader, in one weekend a meeting was arranged at one of his friend's office. While every effort was made to reach him using all networks and access, there was the dilemma of whether it was right to do so. Nevertheless, when the interview eventually took place he expressed his gratitude for offering him the opportunity to be a research participant. Later his father was also interviewed.

It was a particular challenge to refrain when participants wanted some useful tips or information in relation to further education or education system in Hong Kong. For example, one dropout participant directly asked for help related to information about higher education. For the youngest participant, her parents asked for information about the education system and also information about NGOs that cater for ethnic minority children. These questions were followed up with as much information as could be accessed.

3.2.9 Limitations

There are certain limitations of the research reported in this book. Case study based on in-depth interviews was mainly employed to understand the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people. Other qualitative designs, such as ethnography, study a phenomena over an extended period of time, might have illuminated more on the issue under study. Due to the time constraint it was not possible to consider ethnography under the scope of this study.

Initially, both in-depth interviews and observations were planned with case study participants. But due to the disagreement on the participants' side the observation was conducted only with 2 participants out of 11. There was no case study participant included from the Indian community while they represent a big number within the South Asian ethnic minority community in Hong Kong. Existing networks and contacts certainly had limited access to them. Nevertheless, there is a common assumption within the South Asian community that Indians are better off than other South Asians in Hong Kong. The 2011 census data shows the median monthly incomes for the Indian population are among the highest of all South Asian ethnic minorities in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department 2012, p. 88).

We ourselves are outsider to the Hong Kong society but the first author has ethnic origin similar to one of the South Asian ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong. While being an outsider had certain limitations, especially not being able to speak the local language. The first author, however, did have the benefit of the mastering

two or three languages of the South Asian ethnic minority groups and this helped to provide in-depth access to research participants.

Although critical race theory partly informed the study reported in this book it is not the only theoretical perspective to do so. An exclusive emphasis on critical race theory might have resulted in a different study or at least different emphases. This remains a task for future research in the area.

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Chapter 4
'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People: Multiple Data Sources, Their Meaning, and Extent of the 'Out of School' Phenomenon

Abstract This chapter draws on census data, national and international educational statistics reports, and three schools enrolment figures to understand the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. Inconsistencies exist within reported statistics including census and Education Bureau (EDB) datasets. Employing the 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion' (UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, All children in school by 2015, global initiative on out-of-school children. UIS, Montreal, 2010) and CREATE's 'Seven Zones of Exclusion' (Lewin K, Improving access, equity and transitions in education: creating a research agenda. CREATE pathways to access research monograph, no. 1. University of Sussex, Brighton, 2007), Hong Kong education was analysed regarding 'out of school' ethnic minority young people. School attendance rate analyses indicated the issue could be 25 % at upper secondary and above 85 % by post-secondary. More consistent and better quality data are needed to ascertain the extent of the 'out of school' phenomenon for both Chinese and ethnic minority young people. School enrolment and relevant interview data provided rich insights confirming the phenomenon was very much prevalent. Ethnic minority students appeared to drop out throughout the primary and secondary levels, with the end of Form Three being the first critical point. New arrival ethnic minority students were considered to drop out more than Hong Kong born students. Finally, Pakistani and Nepalese young people dropped out more than other ethnic minorities and gender-wise ethnic minority boys more so than girls.

The previous chapter detailed the theoretical framework, research methodology and methods of the research reported in this book. This chapter will be concerned with identifying the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong – the answer to the first question referred to in the previous chapters. Various sources of data will be examined in this chapter and an attempt will be made to make some meaning from them.

This chapter draws on census data, national and international educational statistics reports, and enrolment data from three schools to understand the extent of the 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. This is also augmented by some interview data with the research participants. There are nine sections in this chapter. Section 4.1 examines international data sources that are relevant to this book. Section 4.2 provides an overview of the sources of data on

M.K. Bhowmik, K.J. Kennedy, *'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong*, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects 32, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-0327-1_4

ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. Section 4.3 examines census data from 2001 to 2011 in an attempt to provide a baseline analysis of the numbers of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong and the implications for school participation. Section 4.4 explores sources of data available from the local Education Bureau (EDB). Section 4.5 compares this two different data sources and identifies whether there is any inconsistencies in terms of the number of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. Section 4.6 provides an overall analysis of these multiple data sources, including an assessment of their reliability, and indicates what appears to be the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. Section 4.7 illustrates school enrolment data and interview data with the participants from three schools. Section 4.8 analyzes interview data with a participant outside the school to highlight an important insight about the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority students. Section 4.9 concludes the chapter by providing a summary.

4.1 'Out of School' Young People in Hong Kong: An Overall Picture

Before looking at the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people, it is important to have an understanding first of the overall 'out of school' rate of young people in Hong Kong. There is a dearth of research both nationally and internationally that has examined 'out of school' children in the context of Hong Kong. For example, Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Reports (e.g. UNESCO 2010, 2011) do not report on educational statistics of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, while these reports provide all the basic educational statistics for rest of the world. The Global Education Digest report by UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2011), however, provides some statistics on 'out of school' children not only in Hong Kong but also in other jurisdiction in the region. Tables 4.1 and 4.2 have been adopted from that report (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2011, p. 94, 134) in order to show the number of 'out of school' children not only in Hong Kong but also in other jurisdictions in the region.

Table 4.1 Entrance age, duration and net enrollment rate in pre-primary education (2009)

			Net Enrollment Rate (NER)		
	Entrance age	Duration	Total	Male	Female
Hong Kong	3	3	87	85	89
China	4	3	–	–	–
Korea	4	2	43	44	43
Singapore	3	3	–	–	–
Macao	3	3	77	78	75
Japan	3	3	89	–	–

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2011, p. 94)

Table 4.2 Out of school children (2009)

	Compulsory age	Out of school children of primary school age					Out of school children of lower secondary school age				
		Rate (%)			Number		Rate (%)			Number	
		Total	Male	Female	Total	%F	Total	Male	Female	Total	%F
Hong Kong	6–14	2	3	–	6000	6	9	10	8	24,000	43
China	6–14	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Korea	6–16	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Singapore	6–14	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Macao	5–14	13	12	13	3000	50	8	7	10	2000	60
Japan	6–15	–	–	–	2000	–	–	–	–	1000	

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2011, p. 134)

Table 4.3 Primary 'out of school' children in Hong Kong

2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
6383	9501	6871	8284	7888	7122	7343	4384		

Source: The World Bank (2012)

Global Education Digest reports that 13 % of the pre-primary age-group children in Hong Kong were not in school in the year 2009 (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2011, p. 94). Pre-primary education is not compulsory and free in Hong Kong that has a policy of 12 years free education of which 9 years are compulsory. The typical compulsory education age-group is 6–14 that normally covers grades from 1 to 9. Global Education Digest also reports on the percentage and number of 'out of school' children of primary and lower secondary age-groups in the year 2009. While the percentage of 'out of school' children for primary age-group was about 2 %, the percentage for lower secondary age-group was 9 % (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2011, p. 134).

The World Bank (2012) data centre also provides some useful statistics about 'out of school' children in primary level in Hong Kong (Table 4.3). It should be noted that there are inconsistencies in 2009 'out of school' children data between the two datasets. While Global Education Digest reports 'out of school' figure for Hong Kong primary age-group children 6000, the World Bank data centre reports primary 'out of school' children about 12,000.

There does not appear to be any local data sources on 'out of school' students in Hong Kong but 'dropout' data are available from government officials. A data source was identified incidentally during an interview with an Education Bureau official, Mr. Lee Cheng (pseudonym). Mr. Cheng was a member of the non-attendance cases team within the Education Bureau. The team was responsible for looking after non-attendance and dropout cases for the students of whole of Hong Kong. When he was asked about the overall dropout rate in Hong Kong, Mr. Cheng handed over one page of statistics that have been reproduced in Table 4.4. He mentioned that Hong Kong has 9 years free and universal basic education for children

Table 4.4 School dropout rate (%)

Year	1991	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
	0.43	0.25	0.28	0.22	0.19	0.18	0.17	0.16
Year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
	0.18	0.18	0.20	0.29	0.29	0.30	0.31	0.34

Source: The Hong Kong Council of Social Services (2012)

aged between 6 and 15. However, he further added that those students completed Form Three but still below 15 are not issued any attendance order according to the section 74 of the Education Ordinance, (Cap 279) (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 1997).

A careful examination of the data in Table 4.4 revealed that it was available in public domain (The Hong Kong Council of Social Services 2012) although it was acknowledged that the original source was the Education Bureau. The operational definition used for this dropout calculation was the number of students aged 6–15 who have left school without completing Secondary (Form) Three. It did not include students who left Hong Kong in between. The calculation formula is: $\text{no. of school dropouts / total no. of P1} - \text{S3 students} \times 100\%$. In real terms, Mr. Cheng commented, "In the round figure about 1800 students dropped out every year, out of them 400 are from primary level and 1400 are from junior secondary level". In terms of any specific pattern for dropouts he mentioned that, end of Form Three is one of the critical points for students dropping out and boys probably dropped out more than girls.

While this data shows the overall dropout scenario in Hong Kong schools it is limited to the primary and junior secondary level, and does not give us any indication about grade-wise dropout rate and the dropout rate beyond junior secondary level, and does not provide any information about pre-primary level. Essentially this data is calculated for the students who enrolled in schools but could not continue. It does not refer to students who have never been in school or who have been at risk of dropping out, which are very important components of the 'out of school' construct. If we compare 2009 dropout rate (.31 %) from this data (Table 4.4) with the Global Education Digest report (UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2011) that showed 'out of school' rates in primary and junior secondary are 2 % and 9 % respectively (Table 4.2), does it mean that most of the 'out of school' children actually fall within the categories of 'never been to school' or 'at risk of dropping out'? The existing data source failed to provide an answer to such question. Therefore, the data Mr. Cheng shared helps very little to have a clear picture of the 'out of school' scenario for the overall Hong Kong young people. Nevertheless, the international reports discussed above and the data collected from Mr. Lee make it very clear that the phenomenon of 'out of school' children does very much exist in Hong Kong context. But nothing is mentioned publicly about the existence of this phenomenon. It appears to be an area where there has been little attention and because it does not refer to upper secondary and post-secondary students it does not provide a complete picture. Given this context, identifying 'out of school' ethnic minority young people is problematic and will be the focus of the following section.

4.2 Data Sources

There are several data sources available on the number of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. Therefore, numerous were examined to draw upon the statistics related to ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. Table 4.5 lists the details of these different data sources.

4.3 Ethnic Minority Students: The Story from the Census Data

'Ethnic minorities' first appeared in official census data in 2001 and basic data were highlighted in a Thematic Report (Census and Statistics Department 2002). As a census sub-group, 'ethnic minorities' have been a component of successive census exercises in 2006 and 2011 (Census and Statistics Department 2007, 2012). What follows is divided into four sub sections:

1. Growth in ethnic minority population from 2001 to 2011;
2. Ethnic minority young people <15;
3. Ethnic minority young people 15–24.
4. Trend analysis: Ethnic minority students in Hong Kong in and out of education.

Table 4.5 Different data sources

Relevant data	Data source	Time reference
Ethnic minority population data by ethnicity; demographic data such as by age-groups; and	*Thematic Report*: *Ethnic Minorities* (Census and Statistics Department 2012)	2011
Educational data such as school attendance rates, number of ethnic minority students in full time education	*Thematic Report*: *Ethnic Minorities* (Census and Statistics Department 2007)	2006
	Thematic Report: *Ethnic Minorities* (Census and Statistics Department 2002)	2001
Number of ethnic minority students	Education Bureau [(Hong Kong SAR Government 2008);	2006/2007–2011/2012
	Mr. C. Yeung, School Development Officer, Education Commission, EDB, (personal communication, 1 June 2012);	
	Mrs. P. Y. Shek, Education Officer, Education Commission, EDB, (personal communication, 24 September 2010)]	

4.3.1 Growth in Ethnic Minority Population from 2001 to 2011

Table 4.6 shows the number and percentage of ethnic minority population in Hong Kong by ethnicity in three census years.

The main ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong are Indonesians, Filipinos, Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalese, White, Japanese, Thais, Pakistanis, and Koreans. In 2011 the total number of ethnic minority population was 451,183, which was about 6.4 % of the total population of HKSAR (Census and Statistics Department 2012, p. 18). The number of ethnic minority population in 2006 was 342,198, which was about 5 % the total population of HKSAR. It means the total number of ethnic minority population increased by 31.8 % over 5 years. In 2001 the number of ethnic minority population was 343,950, which was about 5.1 % of the total population of HKSAR. Interestingly the number of ethnic minority population remained almost same between 2001 and 2006.

Data on South Asian ethnic groups such as Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese are listed separately in Census Reports. In 2011, the combined number of these three South Asian ethnicities was 63,176, which was 14 % of the total ethnic minority population, increase

Table 4.6 Ethnic minorities by ethnicity

Ethnicity	Year					
	2011		2006		2001	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Asian (other than Chinese)						
Indonesian	133,377	29.6	87,840	25.7	50,494	14.7
Filipino	133,018	29.5	112,453	32.9	142,556	41.4
Indian	28,616	6.3	20,444	6.0	18,543	5.4
Pakistan	18,042	4	11,111	3.2	11,017	3.2
Nepalese	16,518	3.7	15,950	4.7	12,564	3.7
Japanese	12,580	2.8	13,189	3.9	14,180	4.1
Thai	11,213	2.5	11,900	3.5	14,342	4.2
Korean	5209	1.2	4812	1.4	5263	1.5
Other Asian	7038	1.6	7851	2.3	7572	2.2
Sub-total	365,611	81	285,550	83.4	276,531	80.4
White	55,236	12.2	36,384	10.6	46,584	13.5
Mixed						
With Chinese parent	24,649	5.5	14,932	4.4	16,587	4.8
Other mixed	4352	1	3160	0.9	2854	0.8
Sub-total	29,001	6.4	18,092	5.3	19,441	5.7
Others	1335	0.3	2172	0.6	1394	0.4
Total	451,183	100	342,198	100.0	343,950	100.0
Whole population	7,071,576		6,864,346		6,708,389	

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2012, p. 18)

of about 20,000 compared to the 2006 by-census (Census and Statistics Department 2012, p. 18). Yet, there are other South Asian ethnic groups such as Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan also living in Hong Kong, and they are not categorized separately perhaps due to their lower numbers, they are included in the 'other Asian' category.

4.3.2 Ethnic Minority Young People <15

Table 4.7 shows the breakdown of the age-group below 15 years in the ethnic minority population according to their ethnicities in three census years. In the year 2011 the number of ethnic minority young people in this age-group was 44,320 which was about 37.3 % higher than the corresponding figure for the year 2006 (Census and Statistics Department 2012, pp. 25–27). About 9.8 % of the total ethnic minority population belonged to the age-group below 15 in the year 2011. Of them 37.1 % were of South Asian ethnicities (Indian, Pakistani, and Nepalese together) and 6.9 % were from Japanese and Korean ethnicity (Census and Statistics Department 2012, pp. 25–27).

Table 4.7 Ethnic minorities by ethnicity and age-group <15

	Year					
	2011		2006		2001	
Ethnicity	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Asian (other than Chinese)						
Indonesian	302	0.7	226	0.7	165	0.4
Filipino	2918	6.6	2467	7.6	2680	7.0
Indian	5767	13.0	3695	11.4	3690	9.7
Pakistan	7148	16.1	3826	11.8	3131	8.2
Nepalese	3562	8.0	2892	9.0	1305	3.4
Japanese	2152	4.9	2867	8.9	3251	8.5
Thai	398	0.9	366	1.1	233	0.6
Korean	897	2.0	876	2.7	1423	3.7
Other Asian	840	1.9	721	2.2	736	1.9
Sub-total	23,984	54.1	17,936	55.5	16,614	43.7
White	9295	21.0	6002	18.6	9533	25.1
Mixed						
With Chinese parent	8429	19.0	6177	19.1	9573	25.2
Other mixed	2397	5.4	1887	5.8	2049	5.4
Sub-total	10,826	24.4	8064	25.0	11,622	30.5
Others	215	0.5	287	0.9	279	0.7
Total	44,320	100.0	32,289	100.0	38,048	100.0
Whole population	832,560		939,675		1,109,417	

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2012, pp. 25–27)

4.3.3 *Ethnic Minority Young People 15–24*

Table 4.8 shows the breakdown of 15–24 age-group ethnic minority population according to their ethnicities in three census years. In the year 2011 the number of ethnic minority young people in the 15–24 age-group was 34,768 which was about 17.1 % less than the corresponding figure for the year 2006 (Census and Statistics Department 2012, pp. 25–27). About 7.7 % of the ethnic minority population was in the 15–24 years of age in the year 2011. South Asian ethnic minority population (Indian, Pakistani, and Nepalese together) accounted for 21.9 % of these where Japanese and Korean were 1.9 %.

4.3.4 *Trend Analysis: Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong In and Out of Education*

All three censuses reported the number of ethnic minority students in full time education. Tables 4.9 and 4.10 show the number of ethnic minority students below 15, and 15 and over age-groups respectively who were at full time education in three census years.

Table 4.8 Ethnic minorities by ethnicity and age group 15–24

	Year					
	2011		2006		2001	
Ethnicity	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Asian (other than Chinese)						
Indonesian	12,405	35.7	21,656	51.6	21,098	42.3
Filipino	4016	11.6	7616	18.2	12,227	24.5
Indian	2965	8.5	1961	4.7	2580	5.2
Pakistan	2130	6.1	1378	3.3	2256	4.5
Nepalese	2521	7.3	1861	4.4	2781	5.6
Japanese	377	1.1	466	1.1	336	0.7
Thai	266	0.8	578	1.4	910	1.8
Korean	290	0.8	424	1.0	321	0.6
Other Asian	680	2.0	664	1.6	990	2.0
Sub-total	25,650	73.8	36,604	87.3	43,499	87.3
White	4031	11.6	2185	5.2	2581	5.2
Mixed with Chinese parent	4449	12.8	2536	6.0	3386	6.8
Other mixed	558	1.6	478	1.1	216	0.4
Sub-total	5007	14.4	3014	7.2	3602	7.2
Others	80	0.2	133	0.3	158	0.3
Total	34,768	100.0	41,936	100.0	49,840	100.0
Whole population	875,234		909,005		920,445	

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2012, pp. 25–27)

Table 4.9 Ethnic minority students (below 15) in full-time courses

	2011	2006	2001
Level			
Pre-primary	8517	6777	8577
Primary	17,467	12,819	13,317
Lower secondary	6232	3550	4116
Upper secondary/Sixth form	184	298	271
Total	32,400	23,444	26,281
Age-group total (ethnic minority)	44,320	32,289	38,048
Whole population	659,996	797,103	947,447
Age-group total (whole population)	823,560	939,675	1,109,417

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2002, p. 47,; 2007, p. 51, 2012, pp. 25–27, 59)

Table 4.10 Ethnic minority students (15 and over) in full-time courses

	2011	2006	2001
Level			
Primary		60	64
Lower secondary	1827	955	700
Upper secondary/Sixth form	5347	2970	3124
Post-secondary	2505	1293	981
Total	9679	5278	4869

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2002, p. 47, 2007, p. 51, 2012, p. 59)

In the year 2011 the number of ethnic minority students below 15 years of age at full time education increased by 38.2 % compared to the number in 2006 (Table 4.9). This is commensurate with the increased percentage of this age-group which was 37.3 % higher in 2011 compared to 2006. The number of ethnic minority students below 15 in full time education increased between 2006 and 2011 at levels of education: 25.7 % at pre-primary level, 36.3 % at primary level and 75.5 % at lower secondary level. Table 4.10 shows that the number of ethnic minority students 15 years and over in full time education increased by 80 % at upper secondary level in the year 2011 compared to 2006. And the number at post-secondary level increased by 93.7 % between 2006 and 2011. Perhaps the high number of new arrival ethnic minority young people during this period might have caused these increased numbers.

The data from Table 4.9 also reveal that a total of 32,400 ethnic minority young people in below 15 age-group were in full time education while the age-group total number was 44,320. It means that 11,920 ethnic minority students in the age-group below 15 were not recorded as being in any full time courses at school in the year 2011. This represents 27 % of this age-group ethnic minority population. Of course in this group there were some children who belonged to 1–3 age-group who were not supposed to be in the school. Due to the lack of that particular age-group ethnic minority population data in the census report it is not possible to estimate how many

of them were between 4 and below 15. Nevertheless, it clearly indicates that there seems to be a good number of ethnic minority young people in the below 15 age-group who were supposed to be in the school but in reality they were not in any full time education. The numbers of ethnic minority young people below 15 were not in any full time education were 8845 (27.4 %) and 11,767 (30.9 %) respectively in the years 2006 and 2001. For the whole population below 15, these numbers were 163,564 (19.9 %), 142,572 (15.2 %) and 161,970 (14.5 %) respectively in the years 2011, 2006, and 2001. In all three census years the percentage of population in the age-group below 15 who were not in full time education was higher in favor of ethnic minorities compared to the whole population. While these figures for ethnic minorities were more than one-fourth of their age-group total, it is important to note that the same figures for the whole population were also big. For example, in the year 2011, the figure for whole population in the below 15 age-group who were not in any full time education was 19.9 %. It means that a developed society such as Hong Kong's one-fifth of below 15 age-group population was not in any full time education where the compulsory education is until the age of 15. Given the indication of such high number of students not being in any full time education in the below 15 age-group, it might raise a question about the reliability of this data set. Nonetheless, census reports are the only source for this kind of data set in Hong Kong.

4.4 Education Bureau Data

The Education Bureau (EDB) is the main government department with policy responsibility for educational institutions and students from the early years through to universities in Hong Kong. Although there is a separate section for ethnic minority students available on the EDB website, there is no data on the number of ethnic minority students. Written enquiries to EDB officers, however, resulted in the data shown in Table 4.11. In addition, the table also includes a dataset found in a Legislative Council's (LegCo) document (Hong Kong SAR Government 2008, pp 6–7) that was jointly prepared by EDB and Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau.

Table 4.11 Number of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong

Level	2006–2007	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012
Pre-primary		9242[b]	10,214[b]	10,013[b]	11,192[a]	11,570[a]
Primary	4503[a]	5583[b]/5671[c]	6034[b]	6480[b]	7237[a]	7703[a]
Secondary	2633[a]	3272[b]/3097[c]	3842[b]	4406[b]	5236[a]	6373[a]

[a]Mr. C. Yeung, School Development Officer, Education Commission, EDB, (personal communication, 1 June 2012)
[b]Mrs. P. Y. Shek, Education Officer, Education Commission, EDB, (personal communication, 24 September 2010)
[c]Hong Kong SAR Government (2008, pp. 6–7)

Table 4.11, based on multiple sources of information, shows the number of ethnic minority students from pre-primary level to secondary level. No data was provided for the pre-primary level for 2006–2007. According to these figures there was 25.2 % pre-primary ethnic minority students increased between 2007–2008 and 2011–2012. The number of ethnic minority students at primary level and secondary level increased by 71.1 % and 142 % respectively between 2006–2007 and 2011–2012. Although both datasets are from EDB, it shows a slight difference between two datasets about the number of ethnic minority students in primary and secondary level in the year 2007–2008. There was no data provided about the number of ethnic minority students at post-secondary level because Hong Kong normally does not capture students' ethnic information; therefore, no statistics are available.

4.5 Inconsistency Between Census and EDB Datasets

Table 4.12 shows the inconsistencies in datasets about the number of ethnic minority students who are in school where there are different sources of information available.

(EDB) reported the number of pre-primary, primary and secondary ethnic minority students in 2011 was 11,570, 7703 and 6373 respectively (personal communication, 2012) whereas the 2011 Census reported these numbers 8517, 17,467 and 13,590 respectively (Census and Statistics Department 2012, p. 59). Similarly, it shows a significant difference about the reported number of ethnic minority students at primary and secondary levels between census and EDB datasets for the year 2006–2007. While the EDB dataset reported the number of ethnic minority students at primary and secondary level were 4503 and 2633 respectively (personal communication, 2012), the by-census dataset reported these figures 12,879 and 7036 respectively (Census and Statistics Department 2007).

The inconsistency is also found in datasets from the same source – the personal communication and a Legislative Council's document partly prepared by EDB. The number of ethnic minority children enrolled in primary and secondary schools in the year 2007–2008 were 5583 and 3272 respectively as indicated in a personal communication (2010), whereas Legislative Council's document (Hong Kong SAR Government 2008, pp. 6–7) reported these figures 5671 and 3097 respectively. The 2006 figure reported by by-census data in the previous year was just double the mentioned 2007–2008 dataset, 12,879 and 7036 respectively for primary and secondary level (Census and Statistics Department 2007).

While there are inconsistencies in ethnic minority students' data it is important to note that no further information is available either from EDB or other sources on a breakdown of those born in Hong Kong and those who maybe new arrivals. If data were disaggregated in this way, the inconsistent data sets may be better reconciled. For example, the census data reports the number of people in a household on a specific evening and this may include new arrivals who may not always impact on the school system. The lack of reference to new arrivals in the Chief Executive's 2013

Table 4.12 Data sources and ethnic minority students in Hong Kong

Level	2006–2007	2007–2008	2008–2009	2009–2010	2010–2011	2011–2012
Pre-primary	6777[a]	9242[c]	10,214[c]	10,013[c]	11,192[b]	1,1570[b]/8517[e]
Primary	12,879[a]/4503[b]	5583[c]/5671[d]	6034[c]	6480[c]	7237[b]	7703[b]/17,467[e]
Secondary	7036[a]/2633[b]	3272[c]/3097[d]	3842[c]	4406[c]	5236[b]	6373[b]/8059[e]
Upper secondary/Sixth form	737[a]					5531[e]
Post-secondary	1293[a]					2505[e]

[a]Census and Statistics Department (2007)
[b]Mr. C. Yeung, School Development Officer, Education Commission, EDB, (personal communication, 1 June 2012)
[c]Mrs. P. Y. Shek, Education Officer, Education Commission, EDB, (personal communication, 24 September 2010)
[d]Hong Kong SAR Government (2008, pp. 6–7)
[e]Census and Statistics Department (2012, p. 59)

Policy Address (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region 2013, p. 45) may reflect a systemic problem in recognizing the multiple sources of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong.

4.6 'Out of School' Phenomenon for Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong

The results of the above review on educational statistics on ethnic minority children showing inconsistencies are consistent with earlier (Bhowmik 2013; Kennedy 2011a) but is also reflected in areas other than education (Chung and Leung 2011). The Equal Opportunities Commission (2011) has also asserted the need for using the 2011 population census to capture the information for ethnic minority population in general, and school age children in particular in order to formulate appropriate education policies and support measures. Although there was an urgent call for more, consistent, disaggregated and better quality data in this are it seems that the 2011 census data collection framework was not modified to capture better data. The inconsistencies in datasets are still prevalent as shown in Sect. 4.5.

Nevertheless, in this section ethnic minority educational data from 2011 population Census is examined to try and understand the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people (Census and Statistics Department 2012). In Chap. 3 Sect. 3.1.3, we described 'out of school' construct in detail and this is used in the following analysis. Although there is a real need for more, consistent and better quality data in this area, however, The 2011 Census data for ethnic minority education seems again not to be very helpful.

The data source (Census and Statistics Department 2012, pp. 48–50) raises issues about the consistency of student attendance at school (Table 4.13). Here school attendance rate means the percentage of population attending full-time educational institutions in the respective age groups (Census and Statistics Department 2012, p. 50).

In the year 2011, about 13.1 % ethnic minority children were not attending to school in their pre-primary ages while this rate for whole population was 8.7 %. The

Table 4.13 School attendance rates of ethnic minorities

	Ethnic minority			Whole population		
Age-group	2011	2006	2001	2011	2006	2001
3–5	86.9	83.9	86	91.3	89.1	94.7
6–11	100	99.5	99.3	100	99.9	99.9
12–16	98	98	96	98.6	98.9	97.5
17–18	75.7	74.3	54.7	86	82.8	71
19–24	13.8	6.7	3.7	43.8	37.3	26.4
25	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.3
Aged 3 and over	10.2	9.5	9.7	17.8	20	21.4

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2012, pp. 48–50)

school attendance rates for ethnic minority students and whole population in the age-group 12–16 were 98 % and 98.6 % respectively. There is also considerable gap in the school attendance rates of ethnic minority students in the age-group 17–18 compared to the whole population, being 75.7 % is for the former and 86 % for the latter. The most important statistic is the school attendance rate for ethnic minority students at the ages 19–24 was only 13.8 % where the rate for whole population was 43.8 %. These age groups (17–18 and 19–24) are the time for potentially attending upper secondary and post-secondary education. It indicates that 24.3 % and 86.2 % of ethnic minority young people were out of full time education by the time they reached to upper secondary and post-secondary education respectively.

While in the previous Table 4.13 overall school attendance rates were given for ethnic minority groups, Table 4.14 further disaggregates school attendance rates according to different ethnicities based on the analysis of a 5 % sample dataset from the 2011 population census.

Table 4.14 reveals that in the year 2011 school attendance rate for Pakistani ethnic minority children in the 3–5 age-group was 79.5 % which was far below than that of Chinese (91.6 %), whole population (91.6 %) and even overall ethnic minority (87.3 %). This age-group is the time for attending pre-primary education and it shows more than 20 % of Pakistani children were not attending in any pre-primary education. In the 12–16 age-group there were 4.1 % Pakistani ethnic minority children were not attending any school where these rates for Chinese, whole population and overall ethnic minority were 1.4 %, 1.4 %, and 2.4 % respectively. This age-group is the time for potentially attending junior secondary education and this is to note again that Hong Kong has a policy of compulsory education until the age of 15. The percentages of Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese students in the age-group 17–18 attending full time education were 81.5 %, 72.7 % and 50.0 % respectively. These were far below than the rates for Chinese (86.4 %) and the whole population (86.2 %). This age-group 17–18 is the time for attending upper secondary education and it shows more than one-fourth of Pakistani and half of Nepalese young people were out of full time upper secondary education. In the age-group 19–24 the school attendance rates for Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese were 34.6 %, 21.4 % and 13.1 % respectively. These were considerably below than the percentages for Chinese and the whole population which were 45.6 % and 44.0 % respectively. This age-group is the time for attending post-secondary education and it shows over 65 % Indian,

Table 4.14 School attendance rates in 2011 by ethnicity

Age-group	Chinese (%)	Indian (%)	Pakistani (%)	Nepalese (%)	Overall ethnic minority (%)	Whole population (%)
3–5	91.6	96.7	79.5	88.6	87.3	91.4
6–11	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
12–16	98.6	100.0	95.9	98.0	97.6	98.6
17–18	86.4	81.5	72.7	50.0	74.6	86.2
19–24	45.6	34.6	21.4	13.1	12.9	44.0

Source: Census and Statistics Department (2012)

about 80 % Pakistani and about 87 % Nepalese young people were not attending any full time post-secondary education.

The proportions of ethnic minority students studying full time courses in Hong Kong were about 4.9 % for the age-group below 15 and 1.9 % for 15 and over in the year 2011 (Census and Statistics Department 2012, p. 59). Referring to the Table 4.9, the census dataset shows that a total of 11,920 students (27 %) in the age-group below 15 were not in any full time courses at school in the year 2011. And the analysis presented at Tables 4.13 and 4.14 clearly shows that the participation of ethnic minority and more specifically South Asian ethnic students at the pre-primary, junior secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary education were disproportionately low compared to the Chinese and whole population.

If we see these entire scenario through 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion' (UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2010) in the educational context of Hong Kong (Table 4.15) for ethnic minorities, Dimension 1 (children of pre-primary school age who are not in pre-primary or primary school) and Dimension 3 (children of lower-secondary school age who are not in primary or secondary school) prevail in the case of ethnic minority children based on the data and statistics available (please see Chap. 3 Sect. 3.1.3.1 for details of the framework). It means that there are some ethnic minority children who are not attending any pre-primary school, and also some ethnic minority students who are not attending lower secondary school or dropping out of school before completing their lower secondary forms or even all primary grades. It is not clear whether Dimension 2 (children of primary school age who are not in primary or secondary school) is prevalent, because the particular age-group (6–11) specific population data is not available in the census report, therefore, it is difficult to reach any conclusion. Since some transition issue from primary to lower secondary and lower secondary to upper secondary exists in the Hong Kong school system as analyzed above, it is likely that many ethnic minor-

Table 4.15 'Out of school' ethnic minority children in Hong Kong

'Out of School' children	UNICEF and UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2010) 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion'	CREATE's 'Zones of Exclusion' (Lewin 2007)	Ethnic minority children in Hong Kong
Not in pre-primary/primary school	Dimension 1	Zone 0	Prevails
Not in primary/secondary school, dropped out from primary, at risk of dropping out	Dimension 2	Zone 1	Not clear yet due to lack of data
		Zone 2	
	Dimension 4	Zone 3	Prevails
Not in primary/secondary school, no transition to lower Secondary, dropped out from lower secondary, at risk of dropping out	Dimension 3	Zone 4	Prevails
		Zone 5	Prevails
	Dimension 5	Zone 6	Prevails

ity students in primary and lower secondary level are not meaningfully participating in their school and learning activities which ultimately leads to the risk of their dropping out. Therefore, it is fair to say that Dimension 4 (children who are in primary school but at risk of dropping out) and Dimension 5 (children who are in lower-secondary school but who are at risk of dropping out) also prevail in the Hong Kong education system in the case of ethnic minority students.

If 'Seven Zones of Exclusion' (Lewin 2007) framework is now considered (Table 4.15), 'out of school' ethnic minority children can be seen to prevail in Zone 0 (children who are out of pre-primary school), Zone 4 (children who failed to transit to lower secondary school) and Zone 5 (lower secondary children who dropped out before completing the cycle) based on the data and statistics available (please see Chap. 3 Sect. 3.1.3.2 for details of the framework). It does mean that there are some ethnic minority children who are not attending any pre-primary school, and also some ethnic minority students who are not attending lower secondary school or dropping out of school before completing their lower secondary forms or even all primary grades. It is not clear whether 'out of school' ethnic minority children prevail in Zone 1 (children who are never enrolled in primary school) and Zone 2 (primary children who dropped out at the early stage or before completing the cycle), because the particular age-group (6–11) population data was not made available in the census report, therefore, no conclusion can be reached on whether there is any primary aged children not enrolled in school and the dropping out happens in early primary grades. Since some transition issue from primary to lower secondary and lower secondary to upper secondary exists in school, as analyzed above from the census data, it is likely that many ethnic minority students in primary and lower secondary level are not meaningfully participating in their school and learning activities, which ultimately leads to the risk of their dropping out. Therefore, it is fair to say that ethnic minority students also prevail in Zone 3 (primary children who are in school but at risk of dropping out) and Zone 6 (lower secondary children who are in school but at risk of dropping out).

Although both frameworks 'Five Dimensions of Exclusion' (UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute for Statistics 2010) and 'Seven Zones of Exclusion' (Lewin 2007) provide a good conceptual analysis to understand 'out of school' issues, they appear not to be good empirical tools to identify the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority students in the context of Hong Kong. The analysis above, however, indicates that it seems a good number of ethnic minority young people are 'out of school' in Hong Kong which includes pre-primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary age-group young people. This is similar to what Bhowmik (2013) and Bhowmik and Kennedy (2013) suggested in their previous analysis drawing on ethnic minority educational data from the 2006 by-census report. In addition, the analysis of the school attendance rates above also indicates that 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people could be as big as about 25 % and more than 85 % of ethnic minority young people were out of full time education by the time they reached to upper secondary and post-secondary education respectively.

This school used the word 'withdraw students' instead of 'dropout students' in their written communication to the researcher. There was, however, no further defi-

nition of what it meant by 'withdraw students' in the communication. During my meetings with the principal and teacher, they mentioned that they had to report back to the EDB if any student had left school or stopped to coming to school, or in other words, dropped out. This is school's recorded data of the number of dropout students from 2007 to 2012 (see Table 4.20). It is generally believed that schools always report less number of dropout students to EDB for varieties of reasons related to their reputation, funding consequences etc.

Unfortunately, despite all the optimism about 2011 census data, it is clear that there has not been enough data yet available in the public domain to identify the right number of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people. Even if data were available there are significant inconsistencies found in some cases. Therefore, it is further urged through this book for more, consistent and better quality data in this area and that data need to be disaggregated so that the extent of 'out of school' phenomenon for both Chinese and ethnic minority young people can be determined.

4.7 School Data Analysis

While the previous section identified the presence of overall 'out of school' young people in Hong Kong, this section deals with the enrolment data for ethnic minority students in three Hong Kong schools to understand the magnitude, and any pattern of the 'out of school' phenomenon for them. This has also been augmented by the relevant interview data with the research participants.

4.7.1 Hei-mong School

Mr. Tung Yuen, the Principal of Hei-mong kindly agreed to participate in the research and allowed the first author to spend 7 days in the school.

In Hei-mong school, interviews were conducted with Principal Mr. Tung Yuen, ethnic minority education support programme staff Ms. Eva Kau, Chinese language teacher Ms. Wing Chow, science teacher Mr. Matthew Chan, and a recent dropout Pakistani boy Morshed Uddin. Mr. Tung Yuen was working as principal at Hei-mong school for the last 2 years. Before that he was the principal for one decade of another school that had traditionally enrolled ethnic minority students. Mr. Yuen said that his previous school was a designated school and ethnic minority students represented 90 % of the total student population. Ms. Eva Kau joined Hei-mong School in 2011. Before that she worked for the Government for 2 years and 1 year for business. She was the leader of ethnic minority education support programme in the Hei-mong School. Ms. Kau said that their support programme actually focused on different areas including languages, learning and motivation, cross cultural attitudes etc. Ms. Kau, was also the coordinator who helped the conduct of the research in her school. Ms. Wing Chow joined the Hei-mong School in 2011 and she had

taught in five different schools in Hong Kong for more than the last 10 years. While she was mainly a Chinese language teacher for non-Chinese speakers, she was also teaching other subjects such as mathematics early in her career. She was teaching Chinese to ethnic minority students in both Forms One and Two at the Hei-mong School. Mr. Matthew Chan taught in Hei-mong School for the last 3 years. He started this job after graduating from a Hong Kong University. He was teaching biology in upper Forms and science in Form One and Two. Mr. Chan was also working very closely with Ms. Kau in the ethnic minority education support programme. In 2011, Morshed Uddin enrolled into Hei-mong School in Form One and dropped out of the school in the following year. A case study of Morshed is provided in the chapter on dropout students.

4.7.1.1 School Background

The Hei-mong school, a non-designated secondary school, was established in 1972, as a girls' school later becoming co-educational in 1995. The school started accepting ethnic minority students only from 2011 for Form One. In 2012 ethnic minority students were admitted in both Form One and Two. The plan of the school was to continue and expand accepting ethnic minority students to other forms as the first cohort of Form One progressed. While medium of instruction between Form Three to Form Six was only Chinese there was a separate arrangement for Form One and Two due to the presence of ethnic minority students. The school had three sections in Form One and Two. The first section had mainly Chinese students and the medium of instruction was Chinese. The second section had mainly ethnic minority students and the medium of instruction was English. And third section had both Chinese and ethnic minority students with some subjects taught in English and some in Chinese.

4.7.1.2 School Enrolment Data

Ms. Kau provided very comprehensive and detailed statistics of the number of students by month within the academic year and by section within the Form from 2008–2009 to 2012–2013. Table 4.16 summarizes this only by year and Form.

Table 4.16 Total number of students at Hei-mong school from 2008–2009 to 2012–2013 (Form wise)

	Forms							
Year	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	Total
2008–2009	97	149	177	128	125	29	26	731
2009–2010	74	117	157	115	132	35	29	659
2010–2011	39	103	123	123	134	25	33	580
2011–2012	69	56	108	113	115	133	25	619
2012–2013	69	80	67	97	108	110		531

The school faced a constant drop in student enrolment from 2008/2009 to 2012/2013. This is reflected in the S1 enrolments each year and the total enrolments for each year. The decline appears to have been arrested in 2011/2012 coinciding with the admission of ethnic minority students. The Principal Mr. Yuen expressed a concern about the constant drop and, as shared by Ms. Kau, regarded the constant drop of students as a 'survival' opportunity for the Hei-mong school to offer placement for ethnic minority students, starting from the 2011–2012 academic year. As the Principal, Mr. Yuen explained:

> …if local Chinese schools have a choice they would never admit ethnic minority students. For designated schools it actually varies. Some of them are admitting ethnic minority students since their establishment. It was profitable for them. They expanded and still continued their tradition. But mostly rest of the designated schools have become this type because they were losing the number of Chinese students and schools survived converting to designated schools by admitting ethnic minority students. At present 80 % of the designated schools didn't have choice but to convert them to designated school for their survival reason… (Mr. Tung Yuen, Principal, 2nd interview, 17 January 2013)

Although Hei-mong school was not a so called 'designated' school, nevertheless, it is clear that they had to offer admission for ethnic minority students for survival reasons.

4.7.1.3 Cohort Study

Table 4.17 shows the ethnic compositions of the ethnic minority students at Hei-mong school. Ethnic minority students represented 15.4 % of the total student population in the 2012–2013 academic year. In 2011–2012, the school had 33 ethnic minority students in Form One. The school had 47 ethnic minority students in Form One and 35 ethnic minority students in Form Two in the 2012–2013 academic year. 68.1 % of students in Form One were ethnic minority and 43.8 % in Form Two.

On a first look it may seem that there were two more students admitted in Form Two in addition to the progression of the original 33 Form One students. Yet this

Table 4.17 Ethnic minority students at Hei-mong school (ethnicity and Form-wise)

	2011–2012	2012–2013	
Ethnicity	Form 1	Form 1	Form 2
Pakistani	20	19	20
Nepalese	1	2	1
Indonesian	1		1
Indian	5	18	6
Thai	1	1	1
Srilankan	1		1
Filipino	4	6	5
Korean		1	
Total (Form total)	33 (69)	47 (69)	35 (80)

was not the case as explained by Ms Kau. Out of 33 Form One cohort 1 ethnic minority students, 27 students progressed to Form Two. Six ethnic minority students could not progress to Form Two in the previous academic year. There were two students repeating Form One and four students were deregistered by the school. The act of deregistration was commonly expressed with the word 'kick out'. It was usually applied for those students who had very poor academic performance, together with serious behavioral problems. The word 'kick out' signaled the power of the school and the powerlessness of students and parents who had little say in the negotiation of the deregistration process. For example, one of the students involved was 'kicked out' in the middle of the 2011–2012 academic year for his 'extreme behavioral problem'. It seems he was always using foul words to both teachers and students. Another three students including Morshed were 'kicked out' by the end of. Form One because of their poor academic performance and serious behavioral problems. Ms. Kau said that she was aware that three out of four 'kicked out' students actually went to another school but they were repeating Form One. It was only Morshed who completely dropped out when he was 'kicked out' of Hei-mong School. He didn't try for any school rather but started working instead. Ms. Kau also mentioned that the school had the policy to admit them again for repeating Form One but since no one came for re-admission they did not enroll them. She also admitted that school did not promote this policy with parents.

Ms. Kau identified several ethnic minority students in both Form One and Form Two who were at risk of dropping out. She mentioned one Pakistani girl in Form One who was having serious attendance problems. Another six students in Form Two were also identified as at risk of dropping out. Of them, two Pakistani girls were having behavioral problems; in addition they were involved with gangs. Sometimes they brought some friends from outside to threaten or beat other students. The other four students were having attendance problems. It seems attendance and behavioral problems appeared to be significant among the students at risk of dropping out. Ms. Kau mentioned the drop out or at risk of dropping out phenomenon was also common among the new immigrant Chinese students from mainland China in Hei-mong School. Nevertheless, the school was reluctant to provide their official dropout data for all students in spite of repeated requests to Ms. Kau.

4.7.1.4 The Extent of 'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Students

Having analyzed the issue of dropout through the school enrolment data, the participants' narratives provide insights about the magnitude of the issue and the patterns of dropout for ethnic minority students in general. Mr. Yuen, with his long experiences in a leadership role dealing with ethnic minority students, indicated in the first interview that the issues of 'out of school' and 'drop out' for ethnic minority students in secondary school was very high in Hong Kong. He remembered from his previous school that it was always the case that in every Form throughout secondary school they were losing students. But the numbers were the greatest after Form Three when the 9 year compulsory education was finished and after Form Five

when students had to sit for the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) in the old system. He stressed that this was very much still the case in those designated schools. He gave the example of Hei-mong School where it only started enrolling ethnic minority students from 2011 with 33 students in Form One and at the end of first year they had already lost four students. As a pattern, he said that Nepalese boys and Pakistani girls were dropping out more than any other ethnic groups. For both cases Principal Mr. Yuen referred to some cultural values such as Nepalese boys were less hard working compared to Nepalese girls, and Pakistani girls married earlier.

Ms. Chow, the Chinese language teacher, when asked to illustrate the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority students in Hong Kong school in terms of percentage she mentioned that out of 100 ethnic minority students 10–20 % dropped out between Form One and Form Four, then 60–70 % of the rest dropped out around Form Five and chose to work, 10–20 % went to vocational education and less than 10 % would continue Form Six and post-secondary education. She stressed that instead of any specific pattern in terms of any Form, when ethnic minority students turned 15 and were officially allowed to work they started dropping out more. That was typically around Form Five. It gives an indication that dropout might be associated with students' career and future educational aspiration. To explain more about the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people, Ms. Chow shared one of her experiences from one of her previous schools:

> One Hong Kong born Pakistani boy was about 14 years old, completed Primary Six from another school, but dropped out for some years in between and applied for a place at one of my previous schools. During the interview I identified that the boy has some tattoo on his neck that typically means he is a member of a gang. Although the boy's English was not good, he was fluent in spoken Cantonese. We finally gave him a place at Form One. The boy stayed at our school only for 2 weeks and then he stopped coming to school. Although the boy was determined to start again school he could not survive and chose not to continue school. (Ms. Wing Chow, Chinese language teacher, interview, 29 November 2012)

4.7.2 Mong-shuen School

Principal Ms. Susan Tang was one of the very few Principals who responded positively to our request to allow us to access to her school. She responded to the request within 4 weeks, and 6 days were spent in the school.

At Mong-shuen school, interviews were conducted with Principal Ms. Susan Tang, school social worker Ms. Tami Hui, Chinese language teacher Ms. Snow Ngai, and a student of Primary Six named Abdal Rashid who was at risk of dropping out. Principal Ms. Tang had been working at Mong-shuen primary school for the last 30 years. She joined this school back in 1982 as a teacher. She was teaching English. Before that she also taught English for about 9 years in other schools, she clearly remembered that she started her teaching career in 1973. She had been Principal since 1996 and this was about her 16th year as Principal in Mong-shuen school. School social worker Ms. Tami Hui had been working for the Mong-shuen

school since August 2012. This was her second job. After graduating from a local University in social work she started her first job at the middle of the June 2011 in a designated primary school in another district and there she worked for about 1 year before moving to this school. It was only the sixth month of her work at this school during the time of the interview. Chinese language teacher Ms. Snow Ngai had been working for Mong-shuen school since 2006; this was her seventh year at the job. After graduating from a teacher education institute she started this job. She was mainly a Chinese language teacher, teaching Chinese to non-Chinese students only. In the 2012–2013 academic year, she was the class teacher of Primary Six and she was also teaching in Primary Two. Abdal Rashid was a student at Primary Six identified by teacher Ms. Ngai at risk of dropping out. A case study of Abdalis is provided in the chapter on students at risk of dropping out.

4.7.2.1 School Background

Mong-shuen school, a designated primary school, was established in 1969. It was mainly for Chinese students and medium of instruction was Chinese until 2002. Since then it has been designated school accepting non-Chinese students. After becoming a designated school, at the beginning they had more Chinese students than non-Chinese students, but later 90 % of their total students were non-Chinese.

All non-Chinese students were taught in English, but they had one Chinese language subject. From Primary One to Primary Three, while Chinese language, mathematics and general studies lessons were provided in Chinese for Chinese students, PE, computer studies, arts and crafts were taught in English. From Primary Four to Primary Six, the school policy for Chinese students was to have a separate section, but due to the very little number of Chinese students they did not have any Chinese section in Primary Five and Primary Six. Principal Ms. Tang remembered that there were only one half students in both Primary Five and Six, mainly from Thai and Chinese mixed parents. Those parents wanted their children to be taught in English.

4.7.2.2 School Enrolment Data

Ms Ngai, the Chinese language teacher provided the numbers shown in Tables 4.18 and 4.19. She kindly organized this by coordinating with the school office staff.

Both tables show that the total number of students at Mong-shuen school has sharply dropped in the last 7 years. The decreasing number of Chinese students in the school mainly accounted for that. In 2006–2007 academic year the percentage of the Chinese students was 72 % which reduced to only 11 % in the academic year 2012–2013. It was not possible to run any cohort analysis with this data mainly due to the absence of the data of number of repeating or newly admitted students in each grade.

Table 4.18 Total number of students at Mong-shuen school from 2006–2007 to 2012–2013 (grade-wise)

Year	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	Total
2006–2007	74	82	70	136	136	97	595
2007–2008	61	61	71	65	147	129	534
2008–2009	47	65	49	88	77	148	474
2009–2010	57	50	68	61	101	82	419
2010–2011	52	64	54	72	56	96	394
2011–2012	36	58	68	62	68	50	342
2012–2013	56	41	58	77	62	70	364

Table 4.19 Total number of students at Mong-shuen school from 2006–2007 to 2012–2013 (ethnicity-wise)

	Ethnicity																
Year	P	I	F	N	C	T	B	Eg	J	A	NZ	V	Ind	Can	S	E	It	Total
2006–2007	53	50	30	30	430		2											595
2007–2008	133	94	45	35	210	5	4			3	2	1		1	1			534
2008–2009	151	100	41	40	128	7	7											474
2009–2010	143	107	46	42	66	5	4		2	1			1	1		1		419
2010–2011	160	100	41	40	42	2	7		2									394
2011–2012	159	88	36	26	33													342
2012–2013	170	86	31	26	41	3		2	1	1			2				1	364

P Pakistani, *I* Indian, *F* Filipino, *N* Nepalese, *C* Chinese, *T* Thai, *B* Bangladeshi, *Eg* Egyptian, *J* Japanese, *A* American, *NZ* New Zealander, *V* Vietnamese, *Ind* Indonesian, *Can* Canadian, *S* Srilankan, *E* English, *It* Italian

4.7.2.3 The Extent of 'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Students

Although enrolment data at Mong-shuen school could not give us sufficient information about the 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority students, nevertheless, the school provided us dropout statistics (Table 4.20).

This school used the word 'withdraw students' instead of 'dropout students' in their written communication to the researcher. There was, however, no further definition of what it meant by 'withdraw students' in the communication. During my meetings with the principal and teacher, they mentioned that they had to report back to the EDB if any student had left school or stopped to coming to school, or in other words, dropped out. This is school's recorded data of the number of dropout students from 2007 to 2012 (see Table 4.20). It is generally believed that schools always report less number of dropout students to EDB for varieties of reasons related to their reputation, funding consequences etc.

It looks like the number of dropout students (Table 4.20) was reduced over the period from 2007–2008 to 2011–2012, but at the same the total number of the stu-

Table 4.20 The number of dropout students at Mong-shuen school from 2007 to 2012

Year	Number
2007–2008	55
2008–2009	29
2009–2010	29
2010–2011	37
2011–2012	19

dents was also reduced. In percentage terms, the dropout rate was between 6 and 10 % in that period. However, during the interview Principal Ms. Tang mentioned that the dropout rate at her school was about 1 % which means about three or four cases every year and they were mainly ethnic minority students. She stressed that it was absolute or complete dropout meaning that there were also some other students who dropped out which she estimated again at another 1 % but they were probably joining other schools. The latter was mainly due to the long distance between school and their residences. She also said that there was not any special pattern of dropout in regards to the ethnicity, gender or grade. She observed that students dropped out from both early and late primary years.

Principal Ms. Tang identified absenteeism a big problem among the ethnic minority students. She commented:

> Absenteeism is a serious problem in our school. It's just very common missing school for them (ethnic minority students). The reasons many parents write to me are: "attended relatives' birthday party which went late and could not wake up in the morning", "mother was ill so could not make ready kids" etc. They always take more leave in addition to New Year, Christmas and Easter holidays. Many of them are absent for some days after examinations. Some of them even don't come during the exam. Most of the families go back to their home country in the middle of the academic year, and always ask for leave. I only refused one request once of someone who wanted to bring back her elder daughter to Pakistan. The mother had to bring back her younger child to Pakistan to look after her better and she wanted her elder daughter to accompany her as well while student's father was staying in HK…. Two or three years back I took several initiatives to address attendance problem. It then worked well in the following year. But from this year it seems parents got used to me and again numbers of absentees are going up. (Ms. Susan Tang, Principal, interview, 7 December 2012)

To try and explain make the extent of the number of absentees she showed records of the last 7 days. It was around 35 daily on average. She also said that because of some of her initiatives 2 years back the percentage of absentees went down to 10 % but again this year it went up to averagely 20 %. During the Eid festival or Diwali as more than 100 students may be absent.

In telling the dropout story of the students, Principal Ms. Tang and school social worker Ms. Hui shared a story of a Nepalese boy. The boy enrolled in Mong-shuen school at Primary Four 3 years back, but knew no Chinese at all. The boy's father was a watch man in a wet market. Since last year at Primary Five, the boy had been very irregular and not performing well at all in his study. In his Primary Six he did not turn up even for a single day in school within 4 months since the academic year started. Ms. Tang stressed that this boy completely dropped out. Asking her about

whether from the school side about any contact was made to his family regarding this situation, she mentioned that she had been too busy in the last couple of months to follow up with this boy's family. But she heard from the school social worker Ms. Hui that, the boy said he did not want to study anymore.

Right after her joining the school, Ms. Hui, was assigned with the case of this Nepalese boy who did not show up at all since the start of the new academic year 2012–2013. Ms. Hui spoke to the father of the boy and father told her that the boy would not continue study as he did not have any more interest. The father also told her that the boy was looking for work. When asked about the age of the boy, Ms. Hui replied that she could not fully remember but it was about 15 or 16. Ms. Hui concluded by saying that actually the boy was much older compared to the class; she checked his previous academic records which were not satisfactory at all. The father was happy that the boy could start work and earn money for the family. Ms. Hui also remembered from her previous designated primary school that a few cases of dropout happened during her short time there.

In explaining the dropout phenomenon in her class, Chinese language teacher Ms. Ngai remembered from her Primary Four and Primary Five classes in 2010 that two Nepalese students dropped out as they had gone back to Nepal. She also recalled one of her Filipino students also dropped out in 2011 and went back to Philippines. Moreover, she remembered some of her graduates who later dropped out in the early grades in secondary schools. One of them dropped out from Form 2 in a secondary school last year. She taught the boy from Primary Three to Primary Six during 2006–2009. The boy was a Hong Kong born Pakistani, his father committed suicide when the boy was in Primary Four, and his mother then married his uncle and started living separately. Since then the boy had been living with his grand-parents. He had serious behavioral problems in primary school i.e. using foul language, fighting with others, smoking etc. The boy was always being punished by teachers; and mostly staying in the discipline room. His academic results were very bad, although he was attending remedial classes but it did not help him. Ms. Ngai heard from one of the friends of the boy later that he had been member of a gang. When Ms. Ngai was asked why the boy stopped going to the secondary school, she replied that she heard from the boy's friend that he didn't want to continue study and wanted to work. The boy's younger sister was then a Primary Six student of Ms. Ngai. She (Ms. Ngai) mentioned that although the sister was mostly stable she had some behavioral problems. Ms. Ngai then shared another story of another of one of her graduates, a Pakistani boy from the same class during 2006–2009. The boy was 'kicked out' of the secondary school last year at Form Two. While he should have been in Form Three this year he had to start again from Form One in another secondary school. The boy also had serious behavioral problems in primary school. The boy's mother died when he was in Primary Four and after that he was living with his father.

Ms Ngai identified two of her Primary Six students, Abdal and Kiron of Pakistani ethnic background, as at risk of dropping out. They were also identified at risk of dropping out by both school social worker Ms. Hui and Principal Ms. Tang. Ms. Hui shared the story of Kiron:

> He is very irregular. There is confusion about his father's work place; some say Pakistan, some say UK. However, one thing is clear that his father does not live in Hong Kong with them. The boy has an elder brother who is studying in a secondary school; unfortunately, he is now in jail for a theft case. After my counseling with the boy a couple of times for his attendance problem he improved for 1 month in October 2012. After that it went down again. His mother brought him to the school the day before and told us that he leaves home every day to go to school; he even gets into the right public bus in front of his mother, but after one stop he gets off. He passes the whole day with friends probably from the secondary schools, who are not also going to school regularly. He also passes a lot of time at cyber playing video games; he only gets back to home when he is hungry. Sometimes it is midnight when he returns home. He has problems both inside and outside school. If he is in the classroom, he sleeps or makes disturbance for which he is punished. Most of the time he has to stay in the discipline room although he wants to be in the classroom but he cannot because of his disturbing activities. Even now he cannot get into classroom because of his hair style that has followed a certain gang's hair style. Although he was warned to change the hair style several times, he has not changed it yet and even continuously refuses to do it. As a result, he was not allowed to go into the classroom the day before even though he came to school with his mother. The boy also has problems outside the school. He is just roaming around with other boys without doing anything. Although he does not admit but I heard from others that he is involved with gangs. He also has his girlfriend problem. The boy works sometimes distributing leaflets on the street, the owner of those jobs are Pakistani men. With the money he gets from his mother and the money he earns from the work, he spends all for cyber and smoking, many people saw him smoking outside the school. I don't think that he would continue his study in this way, and he is at the huge risk of dropping out at any point soon. (Ms. Tami Hui, school social worker, interview, 11 January 2013)

Actually Kiron's case was first hand proof of his being at risk of dropping out and perhaps he has dropped out later. He didn't come to school for 2 months so there was no chance to interview him. Both Ms. Hui and Ms. Ngai tried to make contact with him or his mother several times but did not succeed. Abdal, the other at risk student, was interviewed, and his case study is reported in the chapter on students at risk of dropping out. Ms. Hui and Ms. Tang shared stories of other at risk students, at least one each of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Filipino origin.

4.7.3 Woo-ping School

Woo-ping school was the only other designated secondary school that responded positively to the request for access to conduct research. In the communication phase the Principal's office raised an issue that they have very low numbers of ethnic minority students in their school and whether it would serve the purpose. The reply was positive keeping in mind that recruiting schools to participate in the study was very difficult. The school allowed the first visit in the third week of January 2013. Altogether 5 days were spent in Woo-ping school.

In Woo-ping school, interviews were conducted with Principal Mr. Chris Leung, liberal studies and geography teacher Mr. Tim Jordan, two Form One students Nadia Bashir and Shahid Afridi, and one Form Three student Taufiq Iqbal. All three students were identified as at risk of dropping out by the teacher Mr. Jordan. Principal

Mr. Chris Leung had graduated from a University in Canada and lived there for many years. He moved to Hong Kong in 1995 and started teaching. He worked in different schools run by an educational organization including Woo-ping school. He was mainly teaching economics and liberal studies. Mr. Leung had been Principal in Woo-ping school since 2011. Mr. Tim Jordan started working in Woo-ping school in 2009. This was his first teaching job. Prior to joining the school he worked in sales for 2 years which he commented was very "messy" and thus changed to the teaching job. He mentioned that the school had a very good working environment and he was very happy with his job in the school. He was mainly teaching liberal studies and geography in upper secondary classes from Form Four to Form Six. He mentioned that he had only one or two ethnic minority students in Form Four and Form Five respectively. However, he had to work with all ethnic minority students of the school for his other responsibility. He was responsible for coordinating a university support programme and a student support programme with a Hong Kong University in order to improve the Chinese language skill of ethnic minority students of the school. Nadia and Shahid were Hong Kong born Pakistani. They had been in Woo-ping school at Form One since September 2012. Taufiq was a second generation Pakistani born in Hong Kong, a Form Three student at Woo-ping school. Case studies of Nadia, Shahid and Taufiq are reported in the chapter on students at risk of dropping out.

4.7.3.1 School Background

Woo-ping school, a designated secondary school, and also a direct subsidy scheme (DSS)[1] school, was established in 1954. It started admitting ethnic minority students for the first time in 2005 with 12 students. Although the school had only Chinese as medium of instruction, it opened an English medium of instruction section for the ethnic minority students to support them better. In 2006 the school had about 40–50 ethnic minority students. The school received designated school status in the year 2007. From the academic year 2008–2009 the school stopped its English medium of instruction class for the ethnic minority students. Although the school stopped English medium of instruction class it allowed the first three cohorts of ethnic minority students to continue their study in English until the completion of their schooling. The last cohort finished their school last year in 2012. Therefore, the school had only Chinese medium of instruction classes during the time of the interview and regardless of ethnicity everyone had to attend these classes.

Principal Mr. Leung mentioned that because of two types of classes previously they didn't see any integration between Chinese and ethnic minority students. Ethnic minority students were always using English to communicate with their

[1] The direct subsidy scheme (DSS) was introduced in September 1991 in Hong Kong, under which schools enjoy greater flexibility in areas such as resources deployment, curriculum design and student admission (EDB 2014). To provide additional support services and school facilities, DSS schools may collect school fees in addition to government subsidies.

peers. Local Chinese students could not use English to communicate with them. "It was an unintentional segregation", Mr. Leung commented. The school realized that if they continued only with Chinese medium of instruction class it would help ethnic minority students to be better integrated in the school as well as society. Mr. Leung also mentioned that he saw Chinese students were shy in communicating with ethnic minority students in English earlier, however, it was not an issue anymore because of the changes. All ethnic minority students could speak good Cantonese. He further added that he believed their ethnic minority students were doing better and feeling very good with this new arrangement. If it was needed the school provided remedial Chinese classes for the ethnic minority students. The school was participating in an after school Chinese lesson run by a Hong Kong university for the non-Chinese speaking students studying at Hong Kong schools. In terms of resources he mentioned that they had two Nepalese ethnic origin teachers when they had English medium of instruction classes. But later they had allocated these resources to hire more teachers for improving ethnic minority students' Chinese language. He stressed again that it was important for the ethnic minority students to be integrated into local schools and society if they wanted to be successful in Hong Kong.

4.7.3.2 School Enrolment Data

As requested, teacher Mr. Jordan handed us over the following statistics of Woo-ping school regarding the number of total students and the total number of ethnic minority students for the last 7 years, and the ethnic composition of ethnic minority students in the academic year 2012–2013 (Tables 4.21, 4.22, and 4.23 respectively). He provided incomplete statistics at the beginning because there was no student data for ethnic minority students for the year 2011–2012 and 2012–2013. After following up with him he was able to provide the additional information. The number of drop out students was also requested, but despite several requests this data was not provided.

Like the other two schools, Woo-ping school was also experiencing declining enrolments (Table 4.21). Both Chinese and ethnic minority students accounted for

Table 4.21 The total number of students at Woo-ping school by Form

	Form							
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
2006–2007	116	157	166	261	244	41	37	1022
2007–2008	170	123	172	225	300	71	39	1100
2008–2009	149	170	172	217	222	73	70	1073
2009–2010	105	156	175	171	223	90	73	993
2010–2011	78	125	173	180	180	90	90	916
2011–2012	114	84	149	178	173	174	90	962
2012–2013	137	114	111	173	165	178		878

Table 4.22 Total number of ethnic minority students at Woo-ping school (Form-wise)

	Form							
Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total
2006–2007	24	19	13					56
2007–2008	8	37	23	13				81
2008–2009	9	2	45	17	11			84
2009–2010	5	8	2	44	15			74
2010–2011	9	5	8	2	39			63
2011–2012	4	9	4	4	2	27		50
2012–2013	2	5	9	5	5	1		27

Table 4.23 Total number of ethnic minority students at Woo-ping school in 2012–2013 (ethnicity-wise)

	Ethnicity			
Year	Pakistani	Indian	Vietnamese	Total
2012–2013	24	2	1	27

this. The number of ethnic minority students has reduced significantly in recent years (Table 4.22). The reason Principal Mr. Leung mentioned was the school stopped their English medium of instruction class for the ethnic minority students from the academic year 2008–2009. He remembered that they had only two ethnic minority students admitted in Form One in the academic year 2012–2013.

There were only 27 ethnic minority students at Woo-ping school in 2012–2013 academic year which was only 3 % of the total student population. Ethnicity wise, they were from three ethnic minority groups with Pakistanis dominating (Table 4.23).

4.7.3.3 Cohort Study

It seems from Table 4.22 that ethnic minority students were dropping out throughout their secondary Forms. For instance, there were eight students in Form One in 2007–2008 which came down to only two in Form Two in the following year 2008–2009. Similarly 23 Form Three students in 2007–2008 came down to 17 Form Four students in 2008–2009. The most striking area is no one actually made it through beyond Form Five in the year 2009–2010 and 2010–2011. In later correspondence with teacher Mr. Jordan, this was confirmed. The entire cohort of Form Five ethnic minority students of the year 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 dropped out after Form Five. He mentioned that none of them did well in the Form Five examinations or HKCEE, therefore, none of them was promoted to Form Six and they all ultimately dropped out. He further added that many of them actually started working. It was also the case that the school did not receive any other application from ethnic minority students for a position in Form Six or Form Seven in these 2 years.

4.7.3.4 The Extent of 'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Students

While the above cohort study shows the dropout scenario at Woo-ping school there was also some important information revealed from the interviews with Principal Mr. Leung and teacher Mr. Jordan. Regarding the extent of dropout ethnic minority students at his school, Principal Mr. Leung mentioned that this was more or less similar to the dropout rate for local Chinese student which was about 5 %. He added, however, that the last cohort of ethnic minority students who was taught in English medium separate classroom, left school last year, were also experiencing a dropout problem. He remembered that there were about 40 students at the beginning but later only 30 students survived in Form Four to Six. This was also supported by teacher Mr. Jordan, as he also mentioned during the interview that in the last cohort of English medium instruction class who left school last year, there were about 45 ethnic minority students in the Form Four, out of them 15 students dropped out by the Form Six.

In terms of any specific pattern, ethnic minority students mainly started dropping out from Form Four, and boys dropped out more than girls, as commented by Mr. Leung:

> the dropout phenomenon mainly starts from Form Four, especially because curriculum gets tougher at this stage, and the curriculum does have a relationship for preparing students for the HKDSE which is also difficult. After first terminal examination at Form Four when students get to see less achievement academically, their dropout process starts and many of them drop out within one or two years' time. Therefore, Form Four is the starting point when many ethnic minority students fall into at risk of dropping out… in terms of the ethnic pattern of the dropout, I can remember, from the last cohort of the English medium group, two third of the Nepalese students and one third of Pakistani students dropped out from the total number of the students of respective ethnic groups in that class. (Mr. Chris Leung, Principal, 2nd interview, 18 February 2013)

When Mr. Jordan was asked about the dropout scenario for ethnic minority students in the school, he replied that he did not see any students dropping out between Form One and Form Three, but he observed some students dropped out starting from Form Four to Form Six. Like Mr. Leung, Mr. Jordan also mentioned that the ethnic minority students were more at risk of dropping out when they were at Form Four mainly because the curriculum became harder and the HKDSE curriculum started at this point. The difficulty level of the HKDSE curriculum was another reason for some students dropping out, he further added. The non-attendance problem started at this point for some students as well. In terms of any significant pattern of dropping out, Mr. Jordan did not notice any but he generally commented, "boys are the worst, girls are better".

Both Mr. Leung and Mr. Jordan mentioned that the number of dropout students became low after they stopped providing English medium separate class for ethnic minority students. Teacher Mr. Jordan also remembered that they had only one ethnic minority student drop out last year from Form Five mainly because he was not promoted to the next Form, and then he decided not to continue school and started working. This is to note here again that in the first meeting Principal Mr. Leung said

that they were not getting many ethnic minority students admitted in the school in recent years since they stopped English medium section and the school data also supported this fact.

Mr. Jordan identified two Form One students Nadia and Shahid, and one Form Three student Taufiq at risk of dropping out. He kindly organized the interviews with all of them. The case studies of these three students are given in the separate chapter on students at risk of dropping out.

In terms of dealing with dropout or at risk of dropping out students, Principal Mr. Leung mentioned that the school had its own strategy and mechanism for following up with the students if they were continuously absent for a certain time. Both teachers and school social workers in the school became involved in this process. When the school team did not succeed in bringing back students within a certain time, the school normally reported to the EDB if the student was below 14. Then the responsibility went to EDB to deal with the student and her or his family. If the student was over 14, however, the school did not make a report to EDB. The school did not take any further initiative if the student did not come back after an initial communication made from the school. The issue is that this process of dealing with dropout or at risk of dropping out students clearly shows that even though dropout students aged 14 or below could be traced from the school's reporting to EDB it was not possible to trace dropouts over the age of 14.

4.8 Other Stakeholder's Views on the Extent of 'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Students

While the previous section provided a comprehensive understanding of the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority students in three schools through analyzing school enrolment data and interview data, there were also other interview data with participants outside schools revealing some important insights that are worth mentioning in this section. One of them was an interview with social worker and ex-NGO professional, Mr. Andy Xu. His background details are reported here as well his encounters with dropout ethnic minority students in his work that provide very good background information about the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority students.

Hong Kong UNISON, an NGO working for the education of ethnic minority children in Hong Kong, was approached requesting an interview with one of their staff. They replied that they were not looking at any 'out of school' issue through their work; they were heavily focused on 'in school' Chinese language issue for ethnic minority students. They provided the contact details of Mr. Andy Xu suggesting that he would be able to help. Mr. Xu was contacted and agreed to an interview in the second week of February 2013.

Mr. Xu first came to know about the issues of ethnic minority people through working in an action research project in his third year at the university back in 2003.

The project was about 'labor rights of ethnic minority people in Hong Kong' where he had to speak to adults and students from the ethnic minority community. "Since then I have a passion to work for the ethnic minority community", he asserted. After graduating in social work Mr. Xu joined UNISON in 2004 and worked for about 2 years. The focus of his work was mainly advocacy in the area of the education of ethnic minority students, establishing a linkage with the Vocational Training Council (VTC). He then moved to Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service in 2006 and worked there for 1 year. His working hours were the night shift from 10 pm to 6 am mainly to look after cases and groups for counseling including both Chinese and ethnic minority people. He then went back to his University for an instructor job for 1 year mainly doing some administrative works, organizing summer courses etc. In late 2008 he joined VTC as a social worker and was continuing the same job.

Until 2012 he was working at Youth College under VTC for the 'ethnic minority project'. This was a project that provided opportunity to dropout ethnic minority students making a bridge to continue their education either in a regular school academic track or a vocational track. The vocational track in Hong Kong requires students to have completed Form Three before starting any diploma. Therefore, students coming to this 'ethnic minority project' course were mainly dropout ethnic minority students who had not completed Form Three. This bridging course was for about 3 months mainly teaching five subjects including Chinese, English, Computer, core subjects either business or food production, and whole person development. Upon successful completion of this bridging course, students might go to a secondary school again from Form Four or continue study in different diploma courses and later higher diploma courses run by 14 educational institutes under VTC.

At the time of our interview Mr. Xu was working for the Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) in diploma or higher diploma programmes for ethnic minority students. His main responsibility included organizing activities for students' recreation, their social development and also providing counseling. In all his work with VTC he had to collaborate very closely with schools that had ethnic minority students as well as NGOs who were working for the welfare of ethnic minority students.

Asking Mr. Xu about the number of students in 'ethnic minority project' he replied that they used to get many more students at the first 2–3 years but it reduced later. He mainly blamed many lower quality private schools that were established in the last few years admitting many ethnic minority students who dropped out of public or direct subsidy school. He sounded very unhappy with their quality mentioning that Form Five completers of these schools only have the skills of Form Two completers. In terms of number of students in 'ethnic minority projects' Mr. Xu said that they had over 100 students in three courses in each year for the first 2–3 years but later it came down to 50–80 students each year. Of these, 80–90 % student were high school dropouts while the rest were mainly new comers moving to Hong Kong in the middle of the academic year and waiting for a school for the following academic year. In terms of any significant pattern of the students, they were mainly Form Two or Form Three dropouts and age ranged from 13 to 17. The number of

boys was a little higher than girls. Mr. Xu mentioned that the number of Pakistani girls was less as he heard from many NGO colleagues that Pakistani parents did not want their daughters to continue any study after a certain time, rather they arranged for them to get married. Pakistanis were the largest ethnic group in the 'ethnic minority project' followed by Filipino, Indians, Nepalese, Thai etc. He further added, "Nepalese young people directly enter into jobs or become more free style after dropping out than other ethnic minority groups".

When Mr. Xu was asked what percentage of their 'ethnic minority project' graduates continued to any form of study either in regular school academic track or vocational track, he replied:

> about 10 % to 15 % students only continued to further study either in school or in vocational school or college. About 15 % to 20 % went to work right away. Some of the rest went back to their home country and some just stayed home and were roaming around. There were about 10 % to 15 % of students kicked out from our course as well due to their attendance and conduct problems. (Mr. Andy Xu, social worker and ex-NGO professional, interview, 14 February 2013)

Mr. Xu also made a point that the number of dropout ethnic minority students became higher after Form Five because of the introduction of HKDSE in 2012, and thereby students were scared to sit for the exam.

Mr. Xu shared two success stories of the students from the 'ethnic minority project'. One dropout student was continuing a diploma in an institute under VTC. The student did not even complete Form One at the time when he enrolled in the 'ethnic minority project' course. Another dropout student was studying at Open University; the student was a Form Seven dropout. Mr. Xu again stressed that only 10–15 % of dropout students who came to their course might have continued any form of education afterwards. He then shared another story of a Pakistani boy who was a Form Two dropout and came to their course. After completion he started his own business of selling old shoes but it did not work well for him. He went back to Pakistan, stayed there for years and then again came back to Hong Kong. He started working in construction and earning about 20,000 HKD per month. Mr. Xu at this very point questioned the interviewer (first author), "is this enough for them"? The first author did not answer anything apart from nodding his head.

Mr. Xu sounded frustrated for not having any night school for dropout ethnic minority young people. He mentioned that there were some night schools for dropout Chinese students but he never heard of any for ethnic minority students.

4.9 Summary

The chapter began with investigating the overall 'out of school' scenario in Hong Kong and found that 'out of school' children do very much exist in Hong Kong context. Through an examination of census data and EDB data sources regarding the number of ethnic minority students the problem of multiple data sources was raised and many inconsistencies were found in datasets. In order to identify the

extent of 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong it examined ethnic minority educational data from the census report. It found that a good number of ethnic minority young people seem to be 'out of school' which includes the pre-primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary age-group young people. They exist in all three broad 'out of school' categories such as 'never been to school', 'dropped out of school' and 'at risk of dropping out'. While the available statistics from the census data do not help much in identifying the exact number of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people they do indicate that the 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people could be as high as about 25 % and more than 85 % of ethnic minority young people were out of full time education by the time they reached to upper secondary and post-secondary education respectively.

The analysis of school enrolment data and interview data from three schools confirmed that the 'out of school' ethnic minority students prevailed in all three schools. The interview data with the participants both from three schools and outside school further provided a deeper understanding on the magnitude of the 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. In addition, the analysis of enrolment data from three schools and relevant interview data provided rich insights about the issue that confirms 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority young people is very much prevalent in Hong Kong schools although such knowledge is not available in the public domain. Although the analysis of ethnic minority educational data from the census report could not suggest the presence of 'out of school' ethnic minority children at primary level, however, field work data from the primary school showed that 'out of school' children very much prevail in the studied primary school. This clearly indicates the importance of data at individual school level to understand the dynamics of the 'out of school' phenomenon while the available statistics from census data do not help with this issue.

It was suggested that ethnic minority students dropped out throughout primary and secondary level, and end of Form Three was revealed as the first critical point when many ethnic minority students dropped out of school as it was typically the end of the compulsory education age and start of the working age 15. It also means that when ethnic minority students became eligible to enter the job market dropping out was more prevalent. Therefore, compulsory education age and employment interacted with school failure as was also found in both developing and developed countries' dropout literature (Hunt 2008; Rumberger 2011). Other critical points are at Form Five before or after Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) (according to previous system until 2011) and Form Four upon the introduction of the Hong Kong Diploma in Secondary Education (HKDSE) from 2012.

It was also suggested that new arrival ethnic minority students dropped out more than the ethnic minority students who were born in Hong Kong and had always studied in Hong Kong schools. In terms of ethnic pattern, Pakistani and Nepalese young people dropped out more than other ethnic minorities and gender-wise ethnic minority boys dropped out more than girls. Fieldwork at all three schools also revealed that they had a number of ethnic minority students who were identified at risk of dropping out by their teachers.

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Chapter 5
Dropout Ethnic Minority Young People

Abstract The case studies of six ethnic minority young people who had dropped out of their schooling are presented. Three were Nepalese, two were Pakistani and one was Bangladeshi. None of them were born in Hong Kong. Four moved to Hong Kong from their home country during their primary schooling and two when they were at secondary school. Four of the participants were interviewed twice and two were once to ascertain their background information and family, their schooling, and life experiences in Hong Kong. Two of the young people were also observed in their workplaces. Their interviews are presented under themes. Common themes presented are reasons for dropping out of school, job satisfaction and future plans. Reasons are related to learning Chinese, over-age, racism, poor academic achievement, behavioural problem, harassment, employment, illness, dropout history in the family, parental factors, school factors, and peer and community factors. The case studies are further explored in a cross case analysis in Chap. 9.

The previous chapter examined the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong as depicted in various statistical sources. This chapter will be concerned with identifying the reasons for six ethnic minority young people dropping out of Hong Kong schools and portraying their 'out of school' life thus answering in part the second and third questions posed for the research reported in this book.

This chapter draws on case studies with six ethnic minority young people who completely dropped out of Hong Kong schools. The purpose is to understand the reasons for their dropping out and what they were doing 'out of school'. There are seven sections in this chapter. Sections 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, and 5.6 present the experiences of Maneesha Rai, Morshed Uddin, Aruna Thapa, Veem Pun, Tanvir Ahmed, and Azad Rabbani respectively. In each case study we provide background information of participants, their family, schooling, and life experiences in Hong Kong. We also present in detail the reasons for their dropping out and portray their 'out of school' life since dropping out. While their case study provided a vivid picture of their previous school life as well as current 'out of school' life several themes were created from their accounts that explain why they dropped out. Most of the participants were interviewed twice except Tanvir and Morshed who were interviewed once only. Additionally, Aruna and Veem were observed once at their workplaces. For Tanvir and Morshed, the case study data are also augmented respec-

M.K. Bhowmik, K.J. Kennedy, *'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong*, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects 32, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-0327-1_5

tively by Tanvir's father's interview data and the interview data of teachers, Principal and ethnic minority education support programme staff of Morshed's last school, Hei-mong secondary school. We have identified key themes that are presented in the individual case studies. A brief summary of the identified key themes across the case studies is discussed at the Sect. 5.7. These case studies provide part of the data for the cross case analysis presented in Chap. 9.

5.1 Maneesha Rai

Maneesha, 21 years old, is a dropout student from a secondary school in Hong Kong. The first author of this book came to know Maneesha through one of the Nepalese community leaders whom he first met at his voluntary work place 'Ethnic Voice', a bi-lingual weekly newspaper run by ethnic minority community in Hong Kong. The research topic was shared with him and help was sought in order to gain access to students who had dropped out. Eventually this resulted in the meeting Maneesha and the conduct of the interview. As it turned out Maneesha was the niece of this Nepalese community leader and she was helping out her uncle and her father as an office assistant in their joint venture international phone card business. Two interviews were carried out with Maneesha, first one in October 2012 face to face and second one in January 2013 over the telephone. Each interview lasted for about 2 h.

5.1.1 Maneesha's Background, School and Life Experiences in Hong Kong

Maneesha is a Nepalese born girl living in Hong Kong for the last 10 years. At the first meeting she said how she was living with her grand-parents in Nepal before she moved to Hong Kong in the middle of 2002, but during the second interview she corrected that she was actually living in a private hostel in Nepal and only lived with grand-parents during the holiday. Her father was a Gurkha in the British Army transferred to Hong Kong in 1997. After retirement, he decided to stay in Hong Kong and started an international phone card business. Her mother also moved to Hong Kong with him at the same time. Academically, Maneesha's father was a secondary school graduate from Nepal and her mother had never been to any school. While Maneesha's father was also providing some sort of immigration consultancy service from the same office with her uncle in addition to their international phone card business, her mother had always been a housewife. In fact in the second meeting Maneesha shared that her mother was seriously ill, the right side of the body had been completely paralyzed for the last 14 years. After sharing this news, she kept silent for some time.

Although her parents were visiting her in Nepal at least once in a year between 1997 and 2002, Maneesha had been 'very happy' when she moved to Hong Kong in 2002 as she had reunited with her parents. Maneesha completed her Form Two at schools in Nepal. After coming to Hong Kong, she started again her school from Form Two at a designated secondary school in the 2002–2003 academic year. But she had only been able to continue until Form Five and then dropped out of school in 2006. Since then she had mainly worked for several restaurants and bars, both on a full time and part time basis.

5.1.1.1 Maneesha's Multicultural Secondary Class

Maneesha was apparently pleased with her schooling experiences in Hong Kong as she was continuously mentioning that it was loads of fun with her school friends. She was in the international section of the school where they had very few Chinese students. The school also had a 'Chinese only' section for Chinese students. There were about 50 students in her class mainly from different South Asian communities including Nepal, Pakistan, India along with four or five Chinese students. This is very much a common feature of the designated schools in Hong Kong, being multicultural but with very few local Chinese students. Although it was an international section she hardly made friendships with other ethnic students as they were always getting along with their same language speaking peers. She called her other classmates from other ethnicities 'hi/hello friends'. It shows that school's way of managing diversity was very important for her schooling experiences, as she commented:

> It was always great fun in the school. Although my close friends are all Nepalese, I also passed many good times with (my) 'hi/hello friends'. We used to sing Bollywood songs in chorus during the break time and lot of discussions around (Bollywood) movies. We talked in Hindi most of the times… (Maneesha Rai, dropout student, 1st Interview, 22 October 2012)

5.1.1.2 Learning Chinese Language

Maneesha was taught Chinese for only 1 year. She could not exactly remember what Form it was but was confused with Form Three or Form Four. She confessed that she didn't learn anything from her Chinese class. She mentioned the reasons were mainly their teacher who always wrote something on board and asked them to write down. She never had a chance of practicing speaking in her class. Even her Chinese classmates were always communicating with her in English. She chose French instead of Chinese for her Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). When asked how other ethnic minority classmates were doing in Chinese, she answered, "more or less same".

5.1.1.3 Academic Achievement

In the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE), until 2011 the first public examination for all Hong Kong students at the end of 5 years of secondary schooling, Maneesha failed in mathematics and science and then she did not sit for the examination again. She eventually dropped out. She also mentioned that she didn't do well in both subjects in her Form Three and Four. Even though she had failed in both subjects in consecutive 2 years she was promoted to the next Form as per Hong Kong schooling system, whilst it was a different system in Nepal where students are not normally promoted to next class until they pass all subjects in respective classes. Unfortunately, she was not given any extra or additional support for any of these subjects by any of her teachers in Hong Kong school. It clearly shows that her academic failure in two major subjects appeared long before her dropping out but it did not seem to be a matter of concern for the school.

5.1.1.4 Differences in Schooling Culture

Maneesha found her Hong Kong school completely different from the schools in Nepal. Here she was 'very free'; teachers did not bother much with what she was doing. The word 'very free' also meant to her not being scolded by teachers for not doing homework in time. Although she was enjoying these features of Hong Kong schools she also mentioned that it was one of the reasons for her not doing well in school and finally dropping out. She emphasized the point that she was originally from another type of schooling environment where she was always monitored by her teachers regarding her study and behaviors in school. If anything was going wrong teachers took notice of it and followed up. But in her Hong Kong school she did not feel that kind of attention from any of her teachers. She commented:

> I was very regular in school as I loved it. But I really never had any attention from any teacher; even if I couldn't complete my homework, I found (them) not to scold me. In Nepal, it was other way round. If I missed homework any day, I was scolded by teachers and sometimes they reported to my guardians. (Maneesha Rai, dropout student, 1st Interview, 22 October 2012)

Another area she mentioned was that in Hong Kong students do not obey teachers; this is completely different from her experience of schools in Nepal. In South Asian culture teachers are highly valued in the society and students generally show their highest level of respect for their teachers.

5.1.1.5 Peer and Community Factors

It seems the dropout phenomenon was very serious in Maneesha's class. She mentioned that about 20 % of her classmates had been able to pass Form Five and continued to Form Six. It does mean that about 40 out of 50 of her classmates dropped out after Form Five. She was still in contact with some of them who were mostly working in restaurants or bars.

Asking Maneesha about whether any of her family members or relatives encouraged her to go back to school after dropping out, she mentioned that her family always wanted her to be back in school again. In fact her parents had always been very supportive to her education both in Nepal and Hong Kong regardless of her mother's long disability. But she stopped going to school when she failed in Form Five. She rather chose to start working in restaurants and bars. This is a common scenario for many Nepalese young people when they dropped out of schools.

5.1.1.6 Racism Outside School

Maneesha encountered racism in her life in Hong Kong. One of her experiences:

> when we entered in the Chinese shops they never respond to us….although they say 'hello' to the Chinese customers they say nothing to us. Even I asked them about prices or other things many times, they just ignored me and then I came out. In many clothing shops I experienced this many many times… (Maneesha Rai, dropout student, 1st Interview, 22 October 2012)

5.1.1.7 Racism Inside School

Maneesha also mentioned some different behaviors of her teachers in school compared to their behaviors towards Chinese students:

> In detention rooms teachers were stricter on the international students. When Chinese students were arguing with the teachers in detention room they normally overlooked it or pretended they didn't hear it. But in case of other students like me arguing with teachers in detention room caused extended detention. And they were rude towards us. (Maneesha Rai, dropout student, 1st Interview, 22 October 2012)

5.1.1.8 Dropout History in the Family

Maneesha's elder brother who moved with her at the same time to Hong Kong is also a dropout from a Hong Kong school. He went to the same school as Maneesha. He started there from Secondary Four but stayed there for only 2 years. He dropped out at Secondary Five and did not continue his study. Maneesha mentioned that it was mainly because his result was not good. Finally he obtained a security service job.

5.1.2 Maneesha's 'Out of School' Life

Maneesha did not have any job at the time of our second interview because she was going to Nepal for a 3 month holiday. She had worked in an Indian restaurant for some days after we had our first interview. At the beginning it was a part-time job, so she was also continuing her other job at her father's office where we had the first

interview. But after doing it some days she took her restaurant job as full time. Eventually, she had to stop coming to her father's office.

She was a waitress at the restaurant. Her working time was from 11 am to 11 pm. In between she got 3 h break from 4 pm to 7 pm. Her typical day started from waking up at 9 am in the morning and then freshening up herself, taking breakfast and going to work. The restaurant was located in Tsim Tsa Shui, she arrived there before 11 am and continued work until 3 pm. Then she had her 3 h long break when she used to take lunch mostly from outside and passed time with some of the colleagues from the restaurant roaming here and there. She again started work from 7 pm to 11 pm. Then she went back home, took dinner and went to bed. At their home they distributed their cooking duty among all family members except her mother. So, she also had to cook on rotation. But because of the job she was not cooking so much in those days. She had 1 day off on Wednesday when she mainly passed time with her Nepali boyfriend and sometimes with other friends.

5.1.2.1 Job Satisfaction

Maneesha quite liked her job:

> Every job has its good and bad side. The two owners of the restaurant are Nepalese and Indian and other staff are all Nepalese. So it was fun working there as we were all speaking same languages. And it was also a good learning for me the waiter's job….sometimes it was very rush in the restaurant, it was really hard work then. Of course timing was another factor that it was taking so long time every day. (Maneesha Rai, dropout student, 2nd interview, 14 January 2013)

She was paid 8000 HKD per month. Overall, she mentioned that the job satisfaction was 'ok'. However, she left the job before going to Nepal for a relatively long time. She was going there mainly for holidays, and to see her friends and relatives. This was the second time she went back to Nepal since she had moved to Hong Kong.

5.1.2.2 Future Plan

As a future plan Maneesha said that she would not really want to continue any more with a restaurant job. When she was back from Nepal she would continue her fashion designing course (she said she had been doing a diploma since 2010) and would do a job in that area. However, she did not sound very optimistic as she mentioned it was really difficult to get a good job in Hong Kong now-a-days without knowing better Chinese.

5.2 Morshed Uddin

Support was sought from Ms. Eva Kau, the ethnic minority education support programme staff of Hei-mong secondary school to interview one ethnic minority student who dropped out of the school recently. She identified Morshed Uddin, aged

21. Ms. Kau deserves special gratitude for supporting us by bringing Morshed back into school for the interview. Although it was not easy for Ms. Kau but her continuous communication with him made it possible. Morshed is a Pakistani born Hong Kong boy. In 2011, Morshed enrolled at Hei-mong school in Form One and dropped out of the school in the following year after the completion of Form One.

One face to face interview was conducted with Morshed in January 2013 that lasted for about 2 h. In addition, interviews with Principal Mr. Tung Yuen, ethnic minority education support programme staff Ms. Eva Kau, Chinese language teacher Ms. Wing Chow, science teacher Mr. Matthew Chan at Hei-mong school were also carried out where part of the interviews focused on understanding Morshed's dropout case from their perspectives.

5.2.1 Morshed's Background, School and Life Experiences in Hong Kong

Morshed was born in 1990 in a small city in Pakistan and went to a school there up to Primary Two. His father came in Hong Kong in 1990 for a job but Morshed could not remember what job it was. His mother joined his father in Hong Kong after a couple of years leaving him and his one elder brother and sister to his uncle and aunty in Pakistan. Morshed with his elder brother and sister moved to Hong Kong in 1997. Morshed also had two younger brothers who were born in Hong Kong. Morshed's father completed Form Four in Pakistan but his mother had never been to any school. After doing his first job for 5 years, Morshed's father moved to a driving job in 1995. His mother was a house-wife. Morshed's elder brother went to a Hong Kong school from Primary Four until Form Two. His elder sister was studying at Form Four and his other two younger brothers were studying at Form Two and Primary Six. His elder sister and one younger brother topped in their classes.

5.2.1.1 Morshed's Low Education Aspiration

After moving to Hong Kong in early 1997, Morshed started going to a designated primary school at Primary Two. There were about 40 students in their class, they were all mainly from south Asian ethnic backgrounds i.e. Indian, Pakistani and Nepalese. He stayed in that school only for 6 months and moved to a Chinese medium primary school as he said he wanted to learn Chinese better and he was too lazy to learn English.

In his new school there were 37 students in his class, of them 4 were Pakistani and the rest were Chinese. He remembered that he did not have much contact with the Chinese classmates as many of them were scared of him because of his tall figure. He completed his Primary Six from the primary school. Then he got a place in Hei-mong school at Form One in 2011–2012 academic year. But he continued only for 1 year there. He appeared in the final examination of Form One and he said not

to ask about his result. Perhaps he was ashamed of his poor result. He was 'kicked out' of Hei-mong School. Finally, he dropped out as he did not apply to any new school or to Hei-mong School again. He commented:

> I would have to repeat Form One again. It would be boring in the same class again. My classmates will be all younger to me. I am also lazy to continue my study….I thought to start working where I can earn money. I did not look for any other school. I started to work. (Morshed Uddin, dropout student, interview, 16 January 2013)

5.2.1.2 Over-Age

Ms. Chow, the Chinese language teacher, made a point that many ethnic minority students were mainly over aged compared to their peers which was also the case for Morshed. Many of them actually came in Hong Kong at some point in late primary early secondary school. When schools interviewed them the students generally could not show the appropriate academic ability to admit them at the same grade corresponding to their age-groups. In most of the cases Ms. Chow saw even their English skill was not up to the mark. She stressed that the problem started with the un-matched peer age-groups in the classrooms. She also mentioned that Morshed was significantly over-age compared to his classmates.

Due to this, ethnic minority students faced problems in getting along with peers in their classrooms. It drove them to make friendships with either students from the senior classes of their same ages or other young people from outside schools. Many of them actually had friends from triad groups or gangs outside school, and they were more inclined to these friends outside of the school world.

In Morshed's case, the effect of over-age was so prominent that he was worrying that he would have to start from Form One with even younger students if he were to go back to school again.

5.2.1.3 His Poor Academic Result and Behavioral Problem

In asking Morshed about his results in primary school he replied that he was always passing in Chinese and English but he failed in the rest of the subjects. In Hei-mong school Morshed's academic result was very poor, he only scored 31.14 % at the final examination where the school's requirement for progressing to the next Form is more than or equal to 50 %. Morshed only passed in Chinese and English language subjects, the rest of the subjects he failed. Moreover, he had the lowest score grade E for his behavior.

There were three major things documented in his yellow book regarding his behavioral problems: smoking, missing studying materials, failure to hand over the homework. Ms. Kau, the ethnic minority education support programme leader, mentioned that there were many other conduct problems that they normally did not record onto the yellow book rather they notified his parents. Morshed also had 7 days unauthorized absences and 7 days delay in that one academic year. This means he was not very regular and punctual in attending classes.

According to his science teacher Mr. Chan, he was not catching up most of the things in his science classes. Morshed only scored 20–30 % in the quizzes or tests where average score was 40 % in the section. Regarding his behavioral problems, Mr. Chan mentioned that Morshed was not giving attention to his lecture at all. He was sleeping on his desk most of the times. Sometimes he discovered Morshed doing some of the punishment work given by other teachers, those typical punishment included writing something repeated times. Sometimes when Morshed's behavioral problem was out of control, such as talking a lot to other students or making noises, then Mr. Chan gave him some further punishment such as standing at the back of the classroom.

5.2.1.4 Morshed's Involvement with Gangs

The impression Principal Mr. Yuen had about Morshed is he was the tallest and strongest boy in the class. He was very active in the way he interacted with others. He was the 'big brother' in the class. Many students used to call him 'dai lou' (大佬), the colloquial Chinese term for 'big brother' that is more like a 'big guy' than a family relation. The term is also sometimes used for triad bosses. Mr. Yuen mentioned that Morshed's attitude was like the actual meaning of a '大佬' and Morshed enjoyed it very much.

It was clear from others' account as well as Morshed's own that he was instrumental in a gang. Morshed said that he had been involved in a gang for the last 3 years. This was the biggest gang in Hong Kong headed by a Chinese person. He remembered he fought for the gang more than 20 times. Every time he fought he was paid about HKD. He mentioned, however, that he stopped had fighting recently. Lately, he only went to meet the leader when Morshed needed him, maybe once in 2 or 3 months. When asked, Morshed refused to name the gang.

5.2.1.5 Dropout History in the Family

Morshed's elder brother went to Hong Kong school from Primary Four but dropped out after Form Two. Morshed said that his brother was 'kicked out' of the school because of academic results. Since then his brother had been working in a restaurant.

5.2.1.6 Racism

In terms of racist or different behavior, Morshed never faced any in his school. But he faced some while walking on the street. Chinese people passed many foul words to him several times without any reason. He shared one example, once when he went into a Chinese shop they started saying bad words to him. They did not think that he would understand Chinese. He became very angry with them and broke into

their shop during the night. When asked whether they reported to the police, he replied "perhaps, but they did not have any proof that I broke into the shop". He added proudly that he never left any proof of his work.

5.2.1.7 Morshed's Effort in Making Himself Being Accepted

Ms. Kau, the ethnic minority education support programme leader commented:

> Morshed was always first in helping other people, like if someone needed to make a move of the chair or table he always extended his hand if he was around there. He liked to help other people without any benefit like when he was in school he was doing some part time job helping his uncle but without any payment….he always likes to make friends, speaking to friends. Even now-a-days when he comes to school many students from different classes come to talk to him. (Ms. Eva Kau, the ethnic minority education support programme staff, interview, 29 November 2012)

Ms. Kau's account clearly shows that Morshed put some significant effort to be well adapted and accepted in the wider school life. In addition, both teachers Ms. Chow and Mr. Chan also highly appreciated Morshed's helping attitudes.

5.2.2 Morshed's 'Out of School' Life

After dropping out of the Hei-mong School in August 2012 Morshed started a full time job. In fact he was doing that job on part-time basis from the beginning of Form One. He coined the job 'following truck'. He explained that he was actually helping in a truck for delivering goods. He used to sit in the truck beside the driver. It would usually take 45 min to an hour to go from one place to another with goods. When the truck arrived at the destination place then his job began. He had to carry boxes of goods of mainly towels from the truck to warehouse. Each box weighted about 25–30 kg. He carried on average 200–300 boxes every day. His work went from 8 am to 6 pm, in between he had an hour's lunch break. He was working for 6 days in week, he did not have any fixed day off, he could take any day off he wanted in the week.

5.2.2.1 Job Satisfaction

Morshed was being paid for 11,000 HKD per month, with overtime he was also earning on average 1,000 HKD more. In addition, he was paid for his breakfast, lunch and sometime dinner by his company. His boss and the driver both were Chinese. Morshed was living in public housing with all seven family members together near to his work place. He usually walked in every morning from his home to work. He commented:

> The job is really good. I can earn so much money and I can contribute to the family…. sometimes I do not like the job because it is really hard work. Then I think about school,

study. But I think if I come to the school again I will do nothing but sleep. It is better to work and earn money. (Morshed Uddin, dropout student, interview, 16 January 2013)

Asked whether he was looking to change his job, he replied negatively.

5.2.2.2 Future Plan

In addition, when asking him what his plan after 5 years, he replied 'don't know'. Concerning the possibility of going back to any study again, he said that he was thinking about getting admitted into Integrated Vocational Development Centre (IVDC) for some technical courses. He was also thinking about coming back to Hei-mong school again. But he had not thought about the timeline yet, when he would go to IVDC or to Hei-mong school again. He mentioned that he would need to talk to his father first about this.

5.3 Aruna Thapa

Aruna Thapa, a 22 years old girl of Nepalese ethnicity, dropped out of Hong Kong school after Form Five. The first author of this book came to know her through one of her friends Shakira whom he met first time in a research forum at a university in Hong Kong. Shakira, a Pakistani girl, was working for a Hong Kong University in one of their ethnic minority education research projects. While we started looking for identifying participants for our research the first author wrote to Shakira seeking her help. Shakira then introduced him to Aruna through e-mail. The first author wrote to Aruna directly, talked over the phone and had the first meeting in October 2012.

Two interviews were conducted with Aruna. Each interview lasted for about 2 h. She was also observed once in her workplace for about an hour. The observation was conducted in late November 2012 after the two interviews. Aruna was one of two participants who were observed at work. Her boss, a doctor, deserves our special gratitude as he allowed the first author in to his clinic to conduct an observation session with Aruna.

5.3.1 Aruna's Background, School and Life Experiences in Hong Kong

Aruna Thapa moved to Hong Kong in 2000 when she was about 10 years old. She was born in Nepal and studied there until the middle of Primary Four. Her mother, being a daughter of an ex Gurkha Army person, came in Hong Kong in 1995. Her mother was actually born in Hong Kong when her grandfather was working in the Gurkha Army. Then her mother went back to Nepal when she was only 1 year old

and again came back to settle in Hong Kong in 1995. Her grandfather had retired by that time and chose to go back to his small village in Nepal. Aruna's mother was a Grade Eight completer in Nepal. Since she had been in Hong Kong she worked in different jobs including dish washing and elderly homes. Her mother was working for an elderly home during the time of our interview.

Aruna's father was a secondary school completer in Nepal who joined her mother in Hong Kong in 1996. Since then he had worked in construction services. He didn't work for 4–5 years in between because of his some physical illness. From 2011 he started working again in construction. Aruna had a younger brother doing 'A' level. They were all living together in a rented flat in a district mainly populated by south Asian ethnic minorities. Between 1995 and 2000, Aruna and her younger brother were living with their grandparents in Nepal. They visited Hong Kong several times before they fully moved in October 2000.

5.3.1.1 Aruna's Schooling

Although Aruna didn't complete her Primary Four in Nepal she started in a Hong Kong primary school straight from Primary Five. The school was run by Nepalese people having mainly Nepalese students. She said that about 95 % of the students were Nepalese. She was taught in English there. She mentioned that the school closed operation 2 or 3 years back due to the lack of financial resources.

After completing her primary she had a place in a designated secondary school in Form One. In her early years in secondary school she was in one of the international sections that she remembered as 'Section A' where all the students were from different ethnicities other than Chinese including Nepalese, Indian, Pakistani and Filipinos. There were also another three sections namely 'B', 'C' and 'D'. While 'Section B' was also an international section 'Section C' included both international and Chinese students and 'Section D' for Chinese students only.

Aruna got along very well with her friends in school. She mentioned that they were truly international in their friend circles having people from different ethnicities. Unfortunately, she did not have chance to make friendship with any Chinese student as she didn't find one in her early years in high school. As such she didn't have any Chinese students in her class until Form Three. In Form Four and Form Five, however. their section was joined by five Chinese students from other sections. At that time she was also meeting other Chinese students from other sections during some common courses lectures. Although she had some Chinese classmates in Form Four and Form Five it was too late to make close friendship with them.

It seemed Aruna really liked her school, especially passing time with friends in school. When asked her about any significant memories from her school life, she remembered happily:

> in our Form Four and Five we used to have after school class. Our school was finished at 3.30 pm then we had our after school class from 3.30 to 4.30 pm. After that we used to stay there until 8.00 pm almost every day. Sometimes we were working, drawing; sometimes we were just having fun with friends….You know getting along with parents in house was

> sometime very difficult. So, we loved that time to be in the school with friends. I can still remember those days… (Aruna Thapa, dropout student, 2nd Interview, 19 November 2012)

In 2006–2007 academic year, Aruna passed Form Five in school examination but was not successful in HKCEE. She failed in Biology and Chemistry. She was then very shocked after seeing her result as she never failed in any subject in school exams. She blamed no one but herself for not doing well in HKCEE. Although she passed all subjects in her Form Five school exam and never failed in high school in other Forms, she mentioned that she felt high pressure and a kind of anxiety over the HKCEE. She also added that the time-gap between Form Five school examination and HKCEE was very little.

5.3.1.2 Aruna's High Educational Aspiration and Continued Effort

While Aruna was trying to recover from the shock after failing at HKCEE she was also considering what she could do in this condition. She was thinking about three alternatives, i.e. retaking HKCEE from the same school, looking for another school in Hong Kong, going to the United Kingdom and starting again there from Form Five. But none of her considerations worked out as she went for a completely different option which was going to Nepal to do 'A' levels in the middle of 2008. She also managed an admission to a UK school. However, due to financial hardship that would have had on her parents she decided not to move there. One of the reasons she mentioned for choosing to move to Nepal was her cousin who was also her friend so that they would be able to study together. She also loved the idea of staying in Nepal and exploring it more.

In Nepal she started again from Form Five. She sat for 'A' level examination twice there, first time she succeeded in two subjects Environmental Management and general paper but second time she did not succeed with her attempt at passing in Biology, Chemistry and Physics because of her sickness. After living in Nepal for 2.5 years she again returned to Hong Kong in late 2011. Since then she has been working.

It seemed that Aruna had high educational aspirations and put some real effort accordingly to achieve it. Unfortunately, none of them worked out. She nevertheless was continuing her effort. She had a plan to attempt for 'A' level again for the rest of the subjects and then further pursuing her dream to be a nurse. She was well aware that she could not study in Hong Kong universities without having a qualification in Chinese.

5.3.1.3 Her Chinese and School's Language Policy

In primary level Aruna learnt Chinese for 2 years at Primary Five and Six. But she mentioned that it was very basic. She could communicate basics in Chinese but she did not learn it very well in school. She was taught Chinese from Form One to Three, and again she mentioned that it was very basic. During her Form Four and Form Five she was not taught Chinese, and she took French for Form Five. Her account:

> Chinese lessons both in primary and high schools were very basic, I didn't learn them well. At the same time, I was not also giving much attention to it. I thought like Chinese would not be very relevant for my future life, so, I was not much worried about it….lately I understood the importance of Chinese for our life in Hong Kong, but it was too late then. (Aruna Thapa, dropout student, 1st Interview, 27 October 2012)

She was asked again in the second interview about the reasons for not giving the HKCEE another try in Hong Kong and choosing to go to Nepal. She replied that she was not good at Chinese and even if she would have passed in HKCEE at the next try it would have been very difficult for her to get a place in Form Six because of Chinese language requirement.

In Aruna's case we can see her failure in HKCEE was a major problem but her lack of skill in Chinese was a major hindrance for pursuing any future academic or job career in Hong Kong. It was also the failure of the school policy in Chinese language education that did not offer her a better Chinese language experience. It had been 'very basic' from Primary Five to Form Three and there was no compulsory Chinese language course at Form Four and Five or a formal qualification in Chinese language that the next progression route required.

5.3.1.4 Peer Factors

Aruna mentioned that in her Form One section they were about 40 students and every year they were losing students. As a result, they ended up being only 22 students in Form Five. But she could not tell what happened to her all missing classmates whether they dropped out or moved to another school. She remembered several of them. They were not doing well in examinations and stopped coming to school. Either they had started working then or had gone back to their home countries. She was still in contact with some of them.

5.3.1.5 Dropout History in the Family

In our first interview Aruna said that her younger brother was doing 'A' level in Nepal. When asked during the second interview more about him, a surprise came out that her brother was also a dropout from the Hong Kong secondary school. He started his school in Hong Kong from Primary Two but continued until only Form Three. Aruna said that he was not doing well in school as well as he was troublesome, fighting with other students. After Form Three he completely stopped going to school. For 1 year he did not go to school. Her parents then decided to send him back to Nepal where he started going to school again and passed secondary school certificate. After that he was doing his 'A' level in Nepal. He usually came to visit them over the holidays.

5.3.1.6 Racism

Aruna encountered very little racial behavior in her life in Hong Kong. She asserted:

> I don't know, probably I look like a little bit Chinese, that is why I didn't experience much racial behavior in Hong Kong. But I heard many sad stories from my friends. I just can feel a different look of both known and unknown Chinese people when I wear our traditional dress…..But I can still remember one instance that we witnessed in our school. There was a volleyball match between our international section and Chinese section. We clearly noticed that Chinese referee was favoring unreasonably Chinese section in his decisions. As a result our section lost to Chinese section. At that time we were very upset about that. (Aruna Thapa, dropout student, 1st Interview, 27 October 2012)

5.3.2 Aruna's 'Out of School' Life

After returning to Hong Kong in late 2011 Aruna started working for some restaurants including a pasta house on full time and part time basis. Recently she changed to a new job in a private clinic as an assistant to the Doctor. She actually started this job from the middle of the September 2012. When patients came to see Doctor her work started by recording patients' particulars such as ID card information at the beginning and giving entry to a software system, measuring blood pressure, height, weight checking etc. Then she passed this information to the Doctor. She helped patients with the medicine, sometimes also with the injections. Receiving Doctor's fees from the patients and cleaning the place were also part of her job responsibility.

In a typical day, Aruna normally woke up early in the morning at 7.30 am and started to get ready for her work. Most of the times she cooked her breakfast and sometime her mother also helped her. She starts from her place for work between 8.00 and 8.15 am. She arrived in her office between 9.30 and 9.40 am. She continues at work until 1 pm. From 1.00 to 4.00 pm she had a big lunch break when she sometimes preferred to go to her Aunt's place at Wan Chai or sometime went to see some friends in Hung Hom or sometime just staying at office. Most of the times she brought her lunch from home and sometimes she had her lunch at her Aunt's place. Her work started again from 4.00 pm and continued until 8.00 pm or sometime a little bit later. She returned to her home by 9.30–10.00 pm. She took her dinner and went to bed by 11.00–11.30 pm. She had only Sunday off when she normally was up late, did some cleaning and laundry work, sometime went to see some of her young cousins in the afternoon who were living close to her place, came back to home at the evening, cooked for her family then took dinner and went to sleep.

5.3.2.1 Job Satisfaction

Aruna said that she was the only person working there as an assistant to help the doctor. Sometimes, when there were too many patients she really had a hard time. It was also apparent when she was observed at work. At one point she was dealing with three patients simultaneously. Aruna was pushing an injection on the right arm

of one man. Then she measured his blood pressure and temperature and reported to the doctor. Then Aruna did all these same things for another two ladies immediately. In the middle she went several times to the medicine areas to bring the right injections for them. It was really busy time for her. Aruna later said that sometimes it was so busy that she even could not enter the patients' information while they waited.

It was also the case that doctor told the first author that Aruna was the only person working there in the absence of his head nurse who recently gave birth to a baby boy, therefore, she was mainly on leave only coming 1/2 days to work in a week. Aruna also confirmed this information later and mentioned that even if head nurse was not coming every day she was providing a lot of support from home especially when they were running out of any medicine in calling to the medicine company.

In terms of benefits, Aruna said that she was still on 3 months kind of intern period, after that Doctor would be finalizing her benefits package. But during the time of the interview she was being paid for about HKD 6,500 per month and 1 day off per week. When asked about whether she was happy with her current job she replied:

> It is ok. Sometimes I don't like some bossy behaviors of the doctor and I am working their alone. But there are also some other good motivations like this experience will count for my dream to be a nurse. Thinking both positive and negative sides, I think I am alright. (Aruna Thapa, dropout student, 2nd Interview, 19 November 2012)

One of the things happened accidently that made Aruna's doctor boss unhappy and the first author witnessed this during the observation. While she was measuring blood pressure of a patient, the doctor cautioned her not to fix up the blood pressure machine at the centre of the arms as it was not giving good result in that position. After one or two tries Aruna could not position the machine in the right place. The doctor became angry and asked her in a loud voice why she was not following his instruction. Aruna looked at the first author immediately but he pretended that he did not hear anything and was busy with some other thing. After another couple of tries she finally did it correctly.

5.3.2.2 Future Plan

Aruna was again planning to sit for 'A' levels and continuing her dream to be a nurse. She was well aware, however, that she could not have a place in Hong Kong universities as she did not have a qualification in Chinese. She was also hoping that she would have a place in a UK University. Not surprisingly, she was worried about the cost of education in UK but also thought that it would be great if she could go there as her cousin was also planning to study there.

5.4 Veem Pun

Veem Pun, a 19 years old Nepalese boy, dropped out of a secondary school in Hong Kong after Form Four. The first author of this book came to know him through one of his Nepalese friends who was once Veem's secondary school teacher. At one

weekend of November 2012 first author's friend introduced Veem to him. Veem looked well-dressed with a very mild voice, perhaps the presence of his previous teacher made him a little bit more conscious. Veem, first author and his friend went to a Chinese restaurant to have lunch and kept talking on some general things about life in Hong Kong. At some point in the restaurant first author's friend shared the research topic with Veem and suggested he become a participant of the research. After some further explanation, Veem agreed to participate in the study.

Two interviews were conducted with Veem in November 2012. Each interview lasted for about 2 h. In addition, he was observed once at work in February 2013 for an hour. He was one of the two participants who agreed to allow us to observe him at work.

5.4.1 Veem's Background, School and Life Experiences in Hong Kong

Veem was born in Nepal and completed his grade nine from schools there before moving to Hong Kong fully in August 2007. Previously he came in Hong Kong once in December 2006 when he stayed for couple of weeks to apply for his ID card. His father had been living in Hong Kong for a long time. Veem could not remember clearly when his father first came in Hong Kong but he thought he was only 3 or 4 years old then. He could not even remember very much about his childhood with his father. During the second interview we jointly worked out that it was probably in the year 1995/1996 when his father first moved to Hong Kong as a migrant. Veem could also not also recall what his father's first job in Hong Kong was but he mentioned that since Veem came in Hong Kong in 2007 he knew that his father was working in security service which he later changed to work as a carpenter. His father was a grade ten completer in Nepal.

Veem's father was joined by his mother in Hong Kong during 2003 when Veem was 10 years old. Veem's mother only completed grade III in Nepal and since she came to Hong Kong she had been working in a catering service. Veem was living then with his elder brothers and sisters in Nepal after his mother moved to Hong Kong.

Veem had five brothers and three sisters including one step-brother and one step-sister. In our first interview Veem said that his two brothers and one sister moved to Hong Kong at the same time in 2007 with him but in our second interview he clarified that actually his sister moved with him in 2007 and his two brothers moved in around 2009/2010. One of the brothers, a college graduate from Nepal, was working as a bar supervisor in Hong Kong. Another brother, a secondary school graduate from Nepal, was working in construction. His sister, who was working in spa, was also a school graduate from Nepal. None of them studied in Hong Kong after moving here. His sister had done some course on spa before starting work. After living in Yuen Long for a long time, they were now all living together in a rented flat in Jordan.

Veem's step-mother, step-brother and step-sister all were living in Nepal. While his step-brother was living with Veem's own brothers and sister, his step mother and sister were living there separately. Veem mentioned that his own brother and sister often go and see his step-mother and step-sister and they also sometime come to see his own brother and sister.

5.4.1.1 Veem's Schooling

Although Veem finished grade IX in Nepal, he had to start from Form Three again in Hong Kong. He started his high school at a designated secondary school in the 2007–2008 academic year. He was placed in 'Section A' which was the international section. He remembered that there were 33 students in their section where about half of them were either Pakistani or Nepalese, along with one Thai, one Indian and one Chinese. But his only Chinese classmate left for another school in Form Four. The school had three other sections in their Form for Chinese students only whom Veem rarely met in either in playground or at different out of school activities.

Veem characterized himself 'a little bit naughty' during his school life in Hong Kong. He shared a story from his school life:

> It was my first month in Hong Kong school in Form Three. I had a fight with one of my Nepalese classmates, actually I punched him and the boy was bleeding. Then both of us were suspended for two days from school. The other boy called some of his community senior boys to take revenge against me. When I faced those hired senior boys, the leader of them declared that I am his cousin and if anyone wants to hit me he is going to hit them back. I didn't know that my cousin was kind of a school boys' gang leader but I felt so happy to see him there. I could still remember the other boy's face turning pale. Anyway, later he (other boy) became my very good friend. (Veem Pun, dropout student, 2nd Interview, 25 November 2012)

Veem laughed a lot after sharing this story, the first author also joined him.

5.4.1.2 His Academic Achievement

When asked about Veem's Form Three result he answered he did 'ok' and he further explained that he failed in Chinese, and Liberal Studies. He also did not pass in 'Chinese', 'business, accounting and financial studies' in Form Four. He was not much sure about the latter subject name as in another occasion he referred that subject as 'business and entrepreneurship'. After completing his final examination in Form Four he decided not to continue school anymore. He was not expecting good result. Therefore, he did not even go to school to pick up his results. He mentioned that his parents left it up to him at that time to make a decision about his school whether he should continue or not. He ultimately dropped out of school in the middle of 2009 and since then he had been working full time in a club.

Although he claimed at the first interview that he was doing very well in school while he was in Nepal, in the second interview he actually admitted that he was not good at science and failed in that subject twice in a row in grade VIII and grade IX. He explained that is why he took history instead of science in Form Three and Four in Hong Kong.

5.4.1.3 Veem's Struggle in Chinese

In school, Veem was mainly taught in English, and he also had a Chinese language subject. Not surprisingly like many other ethnic minority students he was also facing difficulties in Chinese. He commented:

> At first I was very curious to learn Chinese, but when I found it difficult to learn I lost all my interest. Then I was not paying much attention and sometimes sleeping in the class…. I found it always different Chinese writing and speaking and difficult. The written form of Chinese doesn't follow the speaking form and they are completely different. I was writing something but I was speaking something different. I found it very difficult to learn even after I tried several times. (Veem Pun, dropout student, 1st Interview, 18 November 2012)

He actually identified his struggle in Chinese as a reason for leaving school.

5.4.1.4 Issues in Teaching

In terms of Veem's failure in 'Business, Accounting and Financial Studies' Veem accused his teacher of not teaching well:

> Our teacher wasn't that good. He was not speaking good English and it was very difficult to follow him. He was speaking so fast, in spite of our repetitive request he never stopped speaking fast. Many of my classmates also faced same problems in understanding him. When he finished his teaching he kept sitting on his chair. And we were allowed to make fun with our friends. So, we were not bothering much later what he was teaching, just was waiting when he finishes. (Veem Pun, dropout student, 1st Interview, 18 November 2012)

It seemed teaching was a real issue in the school. Veem also mentioned that his Chinese language teacher was not easy to follow. When Veem went to him to share his difficulties, the teacher gave him only advice for concentrating more. Nevertheless, Veem appreciated his Chinese subject teacher's supportive nature especially for listening to him on several occasions.

5.4.1.5 Differences in Schooling Culture

One of the issues emerging repeatedly from the interview was the differences in schooling culture especially in teaching between Nepal and Hong Kong and how these impacted on Veem's school failure. He mentioned that the teaching was so different in Hong Kong from Nepal. Teachers were more focused on their teaching in Hong Kong and seemed to concentrate less on students. He also referred their

over-use of multimedia in classroom as 'very boring' that took away liveliness of the classroom. In contrast, he explained his Nepalese experience that teachers were so caring about him. If he was not doing well or concentrating, his teachers used to scold him or give punishment or beat him. But here in Hong Kong he found that teachers did not care at all whether he was doing well or not. He commented:

> In Nepal, although teachers punished me while I failed to submit homework or did not do well in examination, I could still remember their care for me. There were some teachers who always kept telling me the value of doing better in examination. They talked to me personally and helped me if I could not understand anything. I understand they did these so that I could do well in study…In Hong Kong school, no one cared for me in the school. I can't remember any of my teachers ever asked me anything related to how I am doing in school, and whether I face any difficulties in my study. In the class they were always busy showing us slides using multimedia projector, which was the only thing they cared for, but no care for us… (Veem Pun, dropout student, 2nd Interview, 25 November 2012)

In addition, Veem also mentioned that he was never contacted by his school to find out why he was not coming to the school. He had never received any letter from the school since he stopped going there. He was also never approached by any NGO or social welfare organization to support him continuing his study.

5.4.1.6 Employment

From the middle of 2008 Veem was working part-time in a club in Central District of Hong Kong. As soon as he dropped out of school in middle of 2009 he started working there full time. From Veem's perspective this was another reason for not going to school as he commented:

> I saw so many seniors around me, they were good at study but at some point they left school and joined in work like bar, construction, waiter etc…I was not good at study. If people like them are ended up doing this kind of job what can I do staying in school. If I can't do well in education there is no hope for me in school… three or four of my classmates also stopped going to school from my section at the same time after Form Four. They all have started working. (Veem Pun, dropout student, 1st Interview, 18 November 2012)

It was clear that Veem was not happy with his school life and found it boring and challenging. And he had the option of part time work where he could earn money and spend. Since he was working he could compare it with his school life. He considered his work life was much attractive and thought that if he would leave school he could work full time and earn more money. Finally, he took the decision not to continue school and started working full time.

5.4.1.7 Racism

Veem did not face any racist behavior in his life in Hong Kong. But he mentioned that he heard from many of his Nepalese friends that they had encountered racism. Most of it was the use of foul words by some Chinese people directed at Veem and his friends while walking on the street.

5.4.2 Veem's 'Out of School' Life

The club where Veem was working was located in Central where there are many clubs and bars. He was called bartender in his job. He worked there 6 days a week having only Sunday off. While the first author went to observe him at work during the Chinese New Year holiday in 2013 Veem introduced his two cousins who were also working in the club, one of them was bouncer supervisor and another was floor supervisor. Veem explained that the owner and all the people working in the club were Nepalese. This was one of the reasons why he was working there. Veem was very kind, treating the first author there to a beer. Although the first author wanted to pay the bill Veem said that since the first author went to see him in the club it must be Veem who should be paying. Veem also added it was private party time so drinks were half priced anyway.

His main responsibility was mixing drinks and serving it to the customers. During the observation he was seen doing this several times. Asking customers what drinks they wanted, he prepared drinks for them accordingly and served them. They paid him money, he moved to the cash point to keep it. He came back with the receipt and change. Sometimes he found customers waiting to receive changes, sometimes they already moved to another place. In that case, Veem was seen keeping the change in a box. When asked him whether it was common tips box, he replied positively. By the end of the club time it would be distributed evenly among all staff.

A typical day for Veem was somewhat different from other people as he was working in a club. The club normally had two shifts i.e. opening shift and closing shift. If he had to work in opening shift he normally woke up around 1.00 pm and the first thing he did after waking up was surf internet. Then he washed himself and took breakfast. Sometimes he cooked his own breakfast sometimes his sister cooked for him. He needed to arrive at the club by around 2.45 pm. From 3.00 pm the club opened and he had to work until 10.00 pm. He was back home by 11.00 pm and took dinner. Normally his mother cooked dinner for him. If he had to do a closing shift he started working from 5.00 pm and continued until 12.00 am or 1.00 am. Whatever shift he was working in he never went to bed before 4.00 am or 5.00 am early in the morning. Between his dinner and sleeping time he normally watched movie or surfed the internet. He had Sunday off when he typically went out for dinner or shopping sometimes with his brothers and sister, sometimes with his girlfriend or sometimes with some of his friends. Veem had been in a relationship for the last 2 years with a Nepalese girl studying in Form Six.

5.4.2.1 Job Satisfaction

Veem liked his club job very much and seemed he was happy. He asserted:

> It's fun. I got to see many pretty girls. Sometimes people behaving very wild with their girls, sometimes people get very wild after many drinks. I also see many people got angry.

> Sometimes I also got to meet many good people there and later we have become friends and hang out together. (Veem Pun, dropout student, 2nd Interview, 25 November 2012)

Veem was earning about 11,000 HKD per month, and he was also getting tips of about HKD 5,000 per month. He expressed his satisfaction with the amount he was being paid for. Apart from Sunday off he was entitled for 7 days annual leave.

The only thing Veem mentioned he did not like about his work was that sometimes there was a very big crowd and therefore a very busy time especially over the weekend and holidays. The first author also witnessed this during the observation. Although when the first author entered the club he did not notice many customers, by the end of his observation it was nearly mid-night and the bar was filling with customers. Veem was rarely getting time to come and talk to him. When the first author left the club he noticed that there was a long queue outside the main entrance and the bouncer was looking at people in the queue and letting people go in one by one.

5.4.2.2 Future Plan

Veem confessed that the decision he made 3 years back to stop going to school was not a good one. He realized later the value of completing school. He wished he could go back to school again. Since there was already a 3 year gap, therefore, he mentioned that it would be very difficult for him to start again.

Nevertheless, Veem had a dream of opening his own club in the next 10 years. He planned to work in his current club for another 2 or 3 years and he hoped that afterwards he would be promoted as a club supervisor. But he would not want to work in his current club as supervisor rather would be switching to a new club. He mentioned that he wanted to learn all the necessary things for running a club before opening his own club. He expressed his concerns, however, about the amount of money he would need to save in order to open a club in 10 years.

5.5 Tanvir Ahmed

Tanvir Ahmed, a Bangladeshi boy aged 22, dropped out of a Hong Kong school after Form Four. The first author of this book first saw Tanvir in his second day in Hong Kong in the middle of 2011. He had come all the way from Tai Po to see one of his friends in Chungking Mansion. As he was coming out from the Middle Road exit of East Tsim Sha Tsui MTR, his friend called and said to wait in front of the Sheraton where one of his staff will meet him and accompany him to his friend's office. That person was Tanvir whom the first author immediately came to know. In their short walk from Sheraton to Chungking Mansion the first author saw him speaking with people very fluently at least in four languages i.e. Bangla, Hindi, Chinese and English. Tanvir was working then in a China based mobile handset company as sales assistant. The first author had been coming to that office once a

month to see his friend and this is how he learnt that Tanvir was a dropout. Eventually Tanvir left that job in late 2011 and the interview took place in late 2012.

Although the first author knew Tanvir long before we started identifying the participants for this research he probably had the most difficulties accessing him. It was mainly due to Tanvir's extremely busy schedule for one of his jobs at the airport. With the help of a Bangladeshi community leader, however, the interview took place in late November 2012 for about 2 h. An interview was also conducted with his Father Mr. Najrul Islam in March 2013 lasting for about 1.5 h. Tanvir's mother was also present when his father was being interviewed. The interview data with Mr. Islam is also incorporated in this section to present Tanvir's case.

5.5.1 Tanvir's Background, School and Life Experiences in Hong Kong

Although Tanvir said that his father came to Hong Kong in 1992, his father Mr. Islam clarified that he actually moved to Hong Kong first in 1991 on a visitor's visa. He managed his Hong Kong identity card in 1992 and continued to live in Hong Kong for the last 22 years. In this long period he worked for different companies and different shops at many places in Hong Kong including Bangladesh Airlines office. Currently Mr. Islam was working in a factory as a worker but he did not mention the type of factory. In terms of Mr. Islam's academic qualification he had completed grade VI back in Bangladesh.

Tanvir was only 2 years old and living with his mother in Bangladesh when his father moved to Hong Kong in 1991. Tanvir and his mother first came in Hong Kong in 1995 and stayed for about 1 year. They went back to Bangladesh and finally moved to Hong Kong in 2000. Tanvir's mother finished several primary grades in Bangladesh. She had always been a housewife. Tanvir had a younger brother who moved to Hong Kong from Bangladesh 6–7 years after Tanvir and his mother.

5.5.1.1 His Schooling

Before Tanvir came to Hong Kong for the first time in 1995 he was going to a Kindergarten in Bangladesh, but in his 1 year stay in Hong Kong he did not attend any school. He was taught Chinese at home, however, by one of his father's Chinese friend. He was also taught other subjects by one of his uncle's Filipino girlfriends at home. When he went back to Bangladesh after 1 year he started going to school right from grade III in 1997 and continued until beginning of grade VI in 2000.

After finally moving to Hong Kong in 2000 he did not go to any school for the first year. Again at that time he was taught by his father's friend and Uncle's girl friend at home. From 2001 September he started going to a designated primary school at Primary Six. He said he had about 40 classmates in his class in an interna-

tional section. He took Urdu instead of Chinese as a second language subject in Primary Six.

After finishing primary, he had a place for Form One in a designated secondary school. The school usually had three international sections and one Chinese section in each Form. Tanvir was in an international section; the ethnic composition of his section was 10 Filipino, 18/19 Pakistani, 2/3 Nepalese, 8/9 Indian, 1 Bangladeshi, and 2 Chinese students. Tanvir used to meet other Chinese classmates from other sections in Chinese class only. In his secondary school he was taught French and Chinese where he took French as a second language subject and Chinese as an additional language subject.

When telling his dropout story Tanvir mentioned:

> I did well throughout my secondary schools until Form Five and including HKCEE. After passing HKCEE I applied for a Form Six place in some schools but I did not get any except one school. But tuition fee was about 60000 HKD per year which was beyond my parent's affordability, so, I could not make it. And that was the end of my school in Hong Kong. Then I started working from early 2009 and since then I have changed many jobs… (Tanvir Ahmed, dropout student, interview, 24 November 2012)

While the above excerpt clearly shows Tanvir's account of his dropout after Form Five, he actually dropped out after Form Four. Tanvir's father revealed this. When the first author shared with Mr. Islam what Tanvir said about his dropping out, he replied that perhaps Tanvir told a lie out of shame. Mr. Islam mentioned that everyone in the Bangladeshi community in Hong Kong knew him as a good and helpful person, so if he were facing some financial difficulty in supporting Tanvir's education they would have helped him and he would have also sought for financial support from them. Mr. Islam also shared the story of his nephew who he had been supporting back in Bangladesh by sending 2,000 HKD equivalent Bangladeshi Taka every month for more than 10 years. His nephew was successfully doing a good job in Bangladesh after his graduation. In response to our repeating query about Tanvir's dropout grade Mr. Islam again confirmed that Tanvir did not continue his school after Form Four in spite of his and his wife's repetitive requests.

5.5.1.2 Harassment

Tanvir's experiences in both primary and secondary schools were not good at all in Hong Kong. He was a little over weight in terms of his physical structure and still was during the interview and for that he was always teased by his classmates. The sad experience Tanvir mentioned:

> It was very painful experience. No one was mixing with me in the class; they were like always bullying me. I was sitting alone in last bench, no one sat with me throughout my school life. There were also different gangs of Pakistani boys and Filipino girls who many times physically assaulted me. And Chinese students in Chinese classes were passing me very bad words like: "mother fucker", "idiot" etc. I was really kind of lost in those days. (Tanvir Ahmed, dropout student, interview, 24 November 2012)

It seemed Tanvir was treated badly sometimes by his teachers as well. In one occasion, in Form One he was initially selected as class captain but later his teacher allowed one of the other classmates to perform that role informally but Tanvir was still the class captain on paper. His teacher told him 'you are good for nothing; the other student can do better than you', as Tanvir mentioned. Naturally, he became very shocked by this behavior of his teacher. Tanvir also mentioned that in later years in school he encountered many other differential behaviors by many of his teachers. Tanvir was also treated differently by the Principal of the school in one occasion. One Indian student once fought with Tanvir, and then Tanvir went to Principal with a complaint. Unfortunately, Tanvir was finally accused by the Principal and was warned that he would have to leave school if he were again found doing the same. Tanvir was so shocked with this unfair mediator role of his Principal that he directly challenged the Principal to check his previous conduct in school because he was bold that his conduct record was very clean. Tanvir was really dissatisfied with all these bad experiences in school. This had also impacted his family's not very strong opposition for his decision of not continuing school after Form Four, as he commented:

> It's true that my parents wanted me to continue school but they were also very much aware of my sufferings in schools by my classmates. I was also like so fed up with all my experiences that I was feeling relaxed thinking that I don't have to go to school anymore. (Tanvir Ahmed, dropout student, interview, 24 November 2012)

When Mr. Islam was asked whether Tanvir mentioned any problem that he was facing in school from his friends, Mr. Islam replied that in Form Three Tanvir told him several times that some of his classmates were disturbing him and sometimes they were making false complaints to teachers against him. Therefore, Tanvir wanted to change his school. But Mr. Islam gathered information from other students who knew Tanvir. He heard from them that in most of the cases Tanvir was the guilty one. Thus Mr. Islam did not consider Tanvir's request seriously. Rather Mr. Islam sought support from one of the Pakistani teachers who was their family friend; the teacher once came home and convinced Tanvir not to change the school.

5.5.1.3 Parental Factors

Mr. Islam claimed that he provided adequate support for Tanvir's education. In terms of supporting him with private tutors, in many occasions when Tanvir demanded he keep one Filipino teacher and two Bangladeshi teachers. When Tanvir stopped going to school Mr. Islam offered him again private tutors for the support to his study but Tanvir did not listen to him. Mr. Islam also mentioned that he actually should have been careful in buying Tanvir a computer as he shared one interesting observation about the study of Tanvir that had profound impact on Tanvir for not being successful in school, as Mr. Islam stated:

> I bought him a computer for his study in his early secondary school. It was not a good decision. Computer is not always good. I am not much educated so I never knew what he was

> always doing in computer. I always found him in front of computer. Sometimes he told me he was chatting with his friend for study. Later I came to know from other people that they could open many pages at the same time in computer and do many things. But when I asked him he was always showing me something related to his study either programs or many other things which I never understood. But now I understand that he lied, and was not doing anything related to study rather chatted with friends or played games or did some other unnecessary things. Computer was really problematic. (Mr. Najrul Islam, Tanvir's father, interview, 25 March 2013)

In terms of Mr. Islam's direct involvement with the school he said that school was always calling parents for participating in many programs and for 'other reasons' but because of his busy work attachment he had not been able to attend on most of the occasions. When asked further what sort of 'other reasons' the school called him, he replied that in secondary school there were sometimes complaints about Iqram for his naughty behavior or he was not attending classes etc. In the mediation with Mr. Islam and teachers those issues were often solved. Tanvir's teachers always told Mr. Islam that his result was not so bad in the school. Actually he had been doing well when he was in Bangladesh, but after coming in Hong Kong perhaps he could not cope up with the school, therefore, he could not finish his school. Since Tanvir was not coping well with school in Hong Kong school he was not satisfied with the school. Mr Islam added that this affected his decision since he was not finding anything rewarding for him in school and finally he stopped going to school.

Although it seems from Mr. Islam's account of the reasons for Tanvir's dropping out was his inability to adapt to Hong Kong's school system, however, parenting practices also seem to be an issue. In the case of Tanvir his father had little involvement in positive family practices or parenting styles for Tanvir's education such as supervision and monitoring or helping with school work, communicating with the school, participation in the school activities etc. This was due to either for Mr. Islam's very busy work or whenever he tried to be involved he lacked the skills to provide the right support and guidance to Tanvir. This was clear in the case of buying Tanvir a computer but not having the skills to supervise him well. Tanvir's mother also could not help him much for study as she was not well educated.

5.5.1.4 Intergenerational and Cultural Gap

Mr. Islam expressed his deep frustration about Tanvir. He commented:

> Whenever I told him anything, he said I do not understand things in Hong Kong. He said things are different in Hong Kong than Bangladesh. I really don't understand the differences; I don't understand why he had to spend a lot. I don't understand why he has to do something different that we Muslims are not allowed to do. He has to understand that we Bangladeshis are different. I don't have much education but I gave him a life in a developed country like Hong Kong. In return he is not doing anything. I am still working in a factory even at this age…(Mr. Najrul Islam, Tanvir's Father, interview, 25 March 2013)

The above excerpt clearly shows an intergenerational gap between father and son. This has also been heightened by the gap between two countries' culture. Thus tensions in values between father and son, finally impacted on father-son relationships.

The intergenerational gap was also obvious from Mr. Islam's reply when the first author suggested to Mr. Islam that he must be happy with Tanvir as he had been working since he had dropped out. His response seemed indifferent. He made the point that Tanvir had changed jobs six or seven times in the last 2 years. Mr. Islam channeled him into many jobs within the Bangladeshi community but Tanvir was never satisfied with any job. He stressed that his habit of changing jobs frequently was not good for his career. He continuously blamed Tanvir for not doing anything right in his entire life. Tanvir, however, associated his frequent changes of jobs as a way to grasp better opportunities in a competitive job market.

5.5.1.5 Peer Factors

It seemed the dropout rate was very high in Tanvir's class. There had been about 40 students in Form One, of whom about 50 % dropped out by Form Four and started working. Of the remaining 50 % only three or four of them continued after Form Five and HKCEE. Tanvir only remembered that two of his classmates had a chance in Hong Kong universities. When asked how he knew about his friends even after he left school and given that he was not happy with his classmates he told a strange story. After he had left school one day he invited some of his classmates in to a place where he showed his anger with them, even slapping two of his classmates who used to assault him physically a lot in school. After this incident his classmates changed their attitude and had been nice with him which ultimately meant he was still in contact with some of his classmates.

5.5.1.6 Dropout History in the Family

Although Tanvir did not mention his younger brother's dropout history, Mr. Islam revealed that about Tanvir's younger brother who was also a dropout from a Hong Kong school. After coming to Hong Kong in 2007, he went to a designated secondary school in 2007–2008 academic year and continued only the following one more academic year. Mr. Islam mentioned that he was not doing well in examinations, therefore the school kicked him out, and he ultimately dropped out. Since then he was mostly working mostly part-time.

5.5.1.7 Racism

Tanvir encountered a number of racist behaviors in his life in Hong Kong. He said that life in Hong Kong for people like him was very difficult not only in school but also in job life. One of the companies in airport that recruited people through an agency was asking for Chinese language requirements. Yet Tanvir's experience was that those jobs actually did not need any Chinese language. He commented that many ethnic minority people he knew working in Airport said to him that they were

less paid compared to Chinese people. Tanvir also mentioned that on the streets and in the MTR he found many Chinese people avoided him many times. One of his recent experiences was with a Chinese lady who fainted in the middle of the road. He helped her by calling an ambulance and accompanying her to the hospital instead of going to work. But when the lady had her sense back, she scolded him. On another occasion recently Tanvir tried to help one of his old aged colleagues with his weight loads but in return the old colleague punched Tanvir. Tanvir also said that in a recent district council election he saw one candidate circulating his election promises in Chinese full of racial hatred and that he would not be going to support providing resources for ethnic minority people's well-being if he was elected. When asked what the reasons were for all these, Tanvir replied, "Because we are South Asians, we are Muslims, we are brown color. The problem for me is I can understand and read Chinese, so, whatever they are talking about, I can understand them."

5.5.1.8 Tanvir's Illness

A sad aspect of this story relayed by Mr. Islam was that Tanvir became ill on the night of the interview with Mr. Islam. Mr. Islam called for an ambulance but Tanvir refused to go to hospital. Mr. Islam looked at his wife and blamed her for feeding him too much in childhood which resulted in Tanvir's being overweight. Mr. Islam was suggesting that Tanvir might have developed some blockages in his heart. Tanvir's mother's embarrassed face was obvious. Mr. Islam also said that he would buy Tanvir an air-ticket to go back to Bangladesh for treatment since Tanvir wished to go back to Bangladesh. Mr. Islam sounded very helpless that he could nothing but fulfil Tanvir's wish. Mr. Islam then requested the first author to help Tanvir understand more about Bangladeshi family values, bonds and cultures on the assumption that the first author had regular contact with Tanvir but Mr. Islam did not wish Tanvir to know anything about this. Yet despite repeated attempts it has not been possible to meet Tanvir again to follow up Mr Islam's request.

5.5.2 Tanvir's 'Out of School' Life

Tanvir started working from early 2009 and since then he had changed jobs many times. His first job was as a sales assistant in an import export company owned by a Bangladeshi person, in between he switched many jobs including garments, mobile phone shop, and general store. Recently he joined a new job as a trainee at the Hong Kong Aviation and Engineering Company in September 2012. He was attending the training courses during the time of the interview. He also mentioned that he was already working for the luggage and baggage handling department as overtime where he was also expecting his placement after finishing the training. His main job in the luggage and baggage handling department was to make sure luggage cabinets were uploaded successfully in the cargo.

Tanvir had been working very hard since he joined this new job. He was attending training all day long and after that he was working overtime in the luggage and baggage handling department. Typically on everyday he was waking up at 6.00 am, took breakfast, and arrived at work before 8.00 am. He continued attending training up to 5.00 pm with an hour lunch break. After that he was working overtime until 10.00 pm or 11.00 pm every night. He went back to home, had dinner and went to sleep. His mother mainly cooked food for all of them at home. Tanvir was also doing overtime almost every Sunday. He had hardly managed to take any day off since he joined this job. Tanvir mentioned that he wanted to learn work as fast as he could.

5.5.2.1 Job Satisfaction

Tanvir seemed happy so far he worked in his airport job. He commented:

> It is a good job. I liked the job. In the training I am performing very well, in recognition of this sometimes I was also invited by the trainer to help him. I think my Cantonese and English put me in better position in the job than many other co-workers, be it Chinese or non-Chinese. (Tanvir Ahmed, dropout student, interview, 24 November 2012)

In terms of benefits, since Tanvir was in the training period he did not know how much they were going to pay him finally. It would be settled after successful training. However, he was expecting not less than 10,000 HKD. And with the overtime he estimated that he would earn about 20,000 HKD per month.

5.5.2.2 Future Plan

Tanvir sounded pretty hopeful about staying longer in his airport job. He wished to continue the job and have a long-term career there. He also shared that one of his future plans was to do some charity works for refugee or asylum seekers in Hong Kong who are of Bangladeshi origin. Since they were living a very distasteful life in Hong Kong and he knew some of them closely he would plan to do something for their betterment.

5.6 Azad Rabbani

Azad Rabbani, a 22 year old Pakistani boy, dropped out of Hong Kong school before completing the Hong Kong Diploma in Secondary Education (HKDSE). The first author of this book came to know Azad through two student assistants who worked for several weeks especially for transcribing the interview data of this research. Both student assistants were freshman at the Hong Kong Institute of Education; they were of south Asian ethnic minority origin, among the rare successful ethnic

minority young people who made it to University in Hong Kong. It was for the first time in history of the Institute that they had a number of undergraduate students from the South Asian ethnic minority community. Azad and two student assistants had studied together in high school and they were friends. Azad happily agreed to be interviewed.

Two interviews were conducted with Azad, once in December 2012 and another in February 2013. Each interview lasted for about 2 h. In the first interview two student assistants were also present as Azad wanted them to be there. Although they mostly remained silent, one of them intervened once or twice in the conversation. In the second interview, however, it was only Azad and the first author.

5.6.1 Azad's Background, School and Life Experiences in Hong Kong

Azad's father migrated to Hong Kong from Pakistan in 1970s but Azad couldn't exactly remember the year. His father then worked in Chungking Mansions for a several years as a trolley-boy. After that he worked in a used car and car tools trading agency for about 12–15 years and finally he had been running his own car tools trading agency for the last 12–15 years. Azad's father stopped going to work from last year and since then he was living a kind of retired life in Hong Kong. Azad said that his father went back to Pakistan 1 week before our first interview date and was not sure whether his father would come back again to Hong Kong. Azad's father had completed only some primary grades from Pakistan but Azad was not so sure whether it was up to Primary Four or Primary Five.

Azad and his mother came in Hong Kong in 1997 when he was 7 years old. His mother had never attended any school. Azad's mother had always been a housewife, she never worked outside. During the time when Azad and his mother moved to Hong Kong he had one elder sister and two elder brothers living in Pakistan with his grandparents. His two elder brothers eventually joined them in Hong Kong in 2000 and 2005 respectively while his elder sister married in Pakistan and was living there. His eldest brother was looking after his father's business in Hong Kong. Azad's second older brother was a delivery van driver. Azad had also a younger sister who was studying in Form Two in a Chinese medium of instruction school. They were all living in a rented flat in Yuen Long.

5.6.1.1 His Schooling

Before moving to Hong Kong in 1997 Azad went to a primary school in Pakistan, but he could not fully remember how many grades he completed there, it was probably Primary One and Primary Two. He said that although he was admitted in school there he was a very irregular attendee at school. After coming to Hong Kong in

October 1997 he did not start going to school until September 1999. He was just staying at home and playing at that time and did not have any education even at home. In the academic year 1999–2000 Azad started his Primary One at a primary school in Yuen Long. He still could remember his first school in Hong Kong:

> We were about 16 to 17 students. Among them there were five Nepalese, five Pakistanis, two Indians, four Filipinos. We did not have any Chinese student in our class….I was taught everything in English, we did not have any Chinese language lesson there. I studied there until Primary Three. (Azad Rabbani, dropout student, 1st Interview, 1 December 2012)

Azad then moved to another primary school from Primary Four in 2002. He remembered that they had about 27 students in the class; ethnicity-wise they were 18/19 Pakistani, 3 of 4 Nepalese, 1 Bangladeshi and 1 Indian. In their section there was no Chinese student, but there was another section which was for only Chinese students. He had very little chance to speak to Chinese students in school because they did not have any common class. On a very rare occasion even if he met someone in playground he could not continue conversation with them because he was not able to speak Chinese then. He also said that they were taught Chinese language subject in this school, one lesson in every 2 days.

Then Azad went to a designated secondary school at Form One in 2005. They had about 32 students in their class with 16 Pakistani, 3 or 4 Nepalese 3 or 4, 3 or 4 Indian and 6 or 7 Filipinos. He didn't have any Chinese students in this class but he had Chinese lessons. Unfortunately, he continued in that school only for 1 year because he was 'kicked out' of the school after Form One. Azad said that it was mainly for his failure in three subjects i.e. Mathematics, French and Liberal Studies. He also remembered that there were another two students kicked out and then allowed to repeat Form One there. But in Azad's case the school did not allow him to repeat and he said that they did not give him any reason for that.

Although Azad was kicked out of his first secondary school, he had high aspirations to continue study, therefore, he applied to other schools and was given a place in another designated secondary school to start again from Form One in 2006. He said that it was the first year for that school to admit students from the ethnic minority community. Before that they were only admitting Chinese students. In Form One in his new school he remembered that they had about 10–12 students in their non-Chinese section, 2 or 3 students each from Pakistani, Nepalese, Indian and Filipinos ethnicity. He was taught in English but he also had two other language subjects, Chinese and French until Form Three. From Form Four to Form Six he continued to study Chinese and English.

5.6.1.2 Azad's Mathematics Fear

Azad was progressing from one Form to another Form without any repetition, but he said that he never did well in Mathematics. Sometimes he passed in some mid-term tests but he failed in every final Mathematics examination. Because of his average percentage marks in the final examination was within the required level to

progress to next form, he didn't face any problem in progressing although he was continuously failing in Mathematics. He was always scoring between 50 and 60 %.

Azad's cohort in the school was part of the first cohort for the Hong Kong Diploma in Secondary Examination (HKDSE) who sat for the examination in around March 2012. After sitting for just one exam, English, Azad did not appear for rest of the examination. He commented:

> I was damn sure that I am not going to pass in Mathematics. I knew if I don't pass Mathematics I can't do any further education, so I decided not to appear in other examinations… Although the exam fee 1500 HKD I paid was very high, and I faced difficulties to arrange that amount, yet, I decided not to continue HKDSE examination. (Azad Rabbani, dropout student, 1st Interview, 1 December 2012)

It sounded like he was frustrated with his mathematics. When asked whether he received any extra support from the school regarding Mathematics, he replied that there was some extra class always held on weekend, which he only attended once. It was not convenient for him to come to school over the weekend. Asked again whether he had received any personalized support from school for Mathematics since he had failing in this subject continuously for a long time, he could not remember any such support. Nevertheless, he mentioned that sometimes his eldest brother told him to go to a private tutor but he had not done this. Alternatively, indicating to one of the student assistants who was following our conversation, Azad said that sometimes he took help from him. At this point, that student assistant contributed to our conversation "Azad was really good at computer. He was the topper in the class in that subject. We were always competing with him but never won. But we never really fully got why he was not doing well in Mathematics".

During the second interview, the issue of Azad's problems in Mathematics was raised again. He commented:

> I really don't understand mathematics. I tried my best but it did not work for me. At the beginning of every Form, I was getting it right what teachers were saying in the class, but as it went further I was finding myself lost. I don't know but actually math was very difficult for me to understand, I tried a lot… (Azad Rabbani, dropout student, 2nd Interview, 4 February 2013)

Azad also mentioned that during Form Three or Form Four he was actually thinking of giving up study because of his mathematics failure but his eldest brother didn't allow him to leave school. During HKDSE, however, he dropped out finally. Since then he had been working after a small break of 2 months. When asked about his family's reaction when he stopped sitting for the HKDSE Azad replied that his eldest brother tried to force him to continue but Azad did not. He also mentioned his eldest brother still wanted him to have another try.

5.6.1.3 Over-Age and Repetition

Azad was significantly over aged compared to his classmates. He started primary school when he was 9 years old. And again he lost one more year when he was 'kicked out' of his first secondary school after Form One and repeated the same

Form in another secondary school. Altogether he was at least 5 years over-age compared to his peers in the secondary school.

5.6.1.4 School Changes

In Azad's case he studied in two primary schools and two secondary schools in Hong Kong and in one primary school in Pakistan. Altogether he studied in five schools before dropping out. While he voluntarily moved from one school to another in primary level, he was 'kicked out' of his first school in the secondary level.

5.6.1.5 Dropout History in the Family

Azad's eldest brother who came in 2000 after finishing his matriculation from Pakistan went to a Hong Kong school for 1 or 2 years. But he could not finish and did not sit for any public examination in Hong Kong. Azad remembered that his eldest brother joined his father's business after stopping school. Azad mentioned that he had never asked his eldest brother why he could not finish school but later he understood that it was difficult for his brother to continue study in Hong Kong at Form Five or Form Six at that time given that he just came from Pakistan, and also his father needed a supporting hand.

Azad's second older brother, who came in Hong Kong in 2005, was a Form Four completer in Pakistan. After arriving in Hong Kong he applied to two or three schools. While all schools told him that they would contact him about the admission he did not hear anything back from any school. After waiting for more than a year he started working. Since then he has been a delivery van driver. Literature (Loper 2004) suggests that waiting to have a school place for 1 or 2 years was not very uncommon for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. In the case of Azad's second elder brother he never heard back from any schools.

5.6.1.6 Peer Factors

It seemed the extent of dropout students from Azad's classes was 'many' as he mentioned but he could not provide any percentage or figure. He remembered about three of his classmates from his schools. They were all of Pakistani origin. Two of them dropped out of his first secondary school after Form Two. One of them had started working in a restaurant right away. Another was sent back to Pakistan by his parents as he was having drug addiction problem. The third one dropped out of his second secondary school after Form Four. He had been working in a mobile shop in Tsim Sha Tsui since then. The main reasons for all of them was they did not want to continue their study and they did not have interest in their education as well the drug addiction problem. He further added that he saw some of the ethnic minority students in his known circle were involved in some gang activities, drug trafficking

etc. He reasoned that it was mainly for showing off and sometimes they could earn some money; it ultimately had a negative impact on their education, he stressed.

5.6.1.7 Racism

When asked about any discriminating or racial behavior he faced in school or outside school throughout his life in Hong Kong Azad mentioned:

> We were the first batch of ethnic minority students in my last secondary school. There were big debates among teachers in the school at that time whether they should continue admitting ethnic minority students. Many times actually teachers were debating in front of us…. Many Chinese students in school were teasing us saying foul languages like: we are dirty, smelly etc….from my early high school years I can still remember many Chinese people teased me saying 'acha' while I was walking on the street, even if I wasn't talking to any of them they were always saying this word to me. Now-a-days I hardly see anyone teasing me saying that word. (Azad Rabbani, dropout student, 1st Interview, 1 December 2012)

Literature on ethnic minorities in Hong Kong suggests that 'Acha' is a word often Chinese people used to refer South Asian ethnic minority people in Hong Kong (Gao and Shum 2010; Ku et al. 2010). When asked Azad what the word 'Acha' means, he mentioned – "according to some people it means 'son of police', some people say 'bad smell', or some say 'dirty'". But it is a bad word for sure, he stressed. It was in Form Three when a Chinese man teased him last time using this word.

5.6.2 Azad's 'Out of School' Life

After dropping out in March–April 2012, Azad stayed in home for 2 months then started working for DHL from June 2012. The job was mainly to do packing. After 3 months he switched to another job in Hong Kong airport where he had to handle passengers' baggage. After doing that job for another 2 or 3 month he left. He went back to Pakistan after that and stayed there for couple of weeks. He had just returned from Pakistan about 3 weeks before the date of the interview. Within 3 or 4 days after coming back from Pakistan he started a new job in a construction company where his position was that of assistant surveyor.

During the second interview while taking a short walk to find a suitable place in Yuen Long, Azad pointed out one person who was using a telescope type instrument on a road side construction site trying to measure something with other people. Azad said that this is the kind of surveying job he was doing. The company where Azad worked was owned by an American and the main office was located in Lai Chi Kok. He got this job through one of his Pakistani friends who was also a member of staff. The company was looking for a person who could speak English, his friend took him there and Azad got the job. Azad was told by his employer that they would teach him everything about work when he was worrying that he knew nothing about

the work. The current project he was working was in a tunnel for a new MTR route. His main job was to assist the Principal Surveyor, his direct supervisor at work, in the surveying tasks such as measurement, identifying straight line, checking whether there were any bricks under the ground etc. His first supervisor was a Filipino from whom he learnt a lot as he mentioned. Recently his Filipino supervisor left and has a new Chinese supervisor, whose English was not so good. He still had a good relationship with his current supervisor and Azad could communicate with his boss in Cantonese. Azad was working 6 days in a week for 9–10 h each day. The work was on a shift basis meaning that he had to work 2 weeks in morning shift from 7.30 am to 5.30 pm and another 2 weeks in night shift from 7.30 pm to 5.30 am. He had Sunday off.

A typical day for Azad if he was on the morning shift was getting up at 6.30 am. He washed, took breakfast and went out to work by 7.00 am. Around 8.00 am they went to tunnel and worked there until 12.00 pm, then came back to base office and took lunch. Azad normally carried his own lunch from home. The lunch break was for an hour. Again he went back to the tunnel in the afternoon around 2.00 pm and continued work until 5.30 pm or sometimes until 7.30 pm if there was overtime. He went back to home and took his dinner. Azad's mother cooked all meals for him. After having dinner he watched TV and finally went to bed. If he had night shift work, he left home at 7.00 pm, went to the tunnel around 8.00 pm, and continued work there until 12.00 am. Then he had a break for an hour in the middle of the night when he took his late night dinner. His work finished around 5.30 am in the morning, and he came back home, took breakfast, went to bed and slept until 4.00–5.00 pm.

During the weekend, Azad normally played Cricket all the day. By 'all the day' he meant he started playing around 1.00 pm and continued until 8.00 pm. He had not been involved in any community work.

5.6.2.1 Job Satisfaction

Azad seemed happy with his current job. He asserted:

> The job is really good. I am learning technical stuff here. They pay me very well, it's about 16000 HKD per month, with overtime it comes up to 18000 HKD. I also have two weeks annual leave, medical benefits and MPF… (Azad Rabbani, dropout student, 2nd Interview, 4 February 2013)

His satisfaction with his current job was also evident when he said that he was not thinking to switch to any other job anytime soon.

5.6.2.2 Future Plan

In terms of future plan, Azad was planning to start his own business in 3 years time. He had not explored yet what kind of business he would like to start but he had saved money so that he had a good amount put aside. When asked if he had any plan

to sit for HKDSE again, Azad replied negatively. He said that he was instead thinking about doing some technical courses related to his work. But he did not know where to go and asked whether the interviewer he could give him any information. It was suggested that explore institute of vocational education (IVE) courses where he might find out some relevant courses that might be of his interest. Finally, when asked if he regretted anytime for his decision of not continuing HKDSE, he replied:

> Yes sometimes, when I see some of my friends are studying at Universities in Hong Kong. Although I have good income now but I am sure they are going to do much better work and have a better income as well in future. (Azad Rabbani, dropout student, 2nd Interview, 4 February 2013)

5.7 Summary

This chapter presented six case studies of dropout ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. Each case study focused on understanding the reasons for dropping out as well as depicting their 'out of school' life after dropping out. The experiences of Maneesha Rai, Morshed Uddin, Aruna Thapa, Veem Pun, Tanvir Ahmed, and Azad Rabbani provided a nuanced understanding of their background, their schooling life, the reasons for school failure, and their 'out of school' life.

Case studies with six participants revealed that none of them were born in Hong Kong. Four of them such as Morshed, Aruna, Tanvir and Azad moved to Hong Kong at some point in their primary education age while two of them, Maneesha and Veem moved in secondary level. Some participants had been living in their home country with their relatives such as uncle-aunty or grand-parents from an early age while their parents were living in Hong Kong. Later they reunited with their family in Hong Kong. All participants were living with their parents during the time of the interviews.

It was commonly found that Hong Kong schools did not admit most of the participants at their age specific grade and some participants had to repeat some of their grades later. Therefore, many of them actually were over-aged compared to their other classmates. All participants studied in designated schools except Morshed. They dropped out of high school at different Forms.

It emerged from the case studies that a number of factors contributed to their school failure and it is difficult to attribute any single factor. Rather, often several factors together actually influenced an individual's school failure. While there were many factors found at individual level such as low academic achievement, absenteeism, over-age, lower aspiration, behavioral issue, employment, involvement with gangs etc., there were factors also found at the level of family such as dropout history in the family, parental education, parental practices etc., at the level of school such as teaching issue, school policy and practices, segregation at their school, stereotypes etc., and at the level of community such as availability of dropout and working young people in the community etc. In addition, some factors related to cultural differences and racism were also noted. In terms of participants' 'out of

school' life, they all started working after (and sometimes before) dropping out of school. They were working in different sectors such as restaurants, clubs, construction, private clinic, carrying goods, and airport authority during the time of the interviews.

These case studies will be revisited in Chap. 9 as part of the cross case analysis.

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Chapter 6
Ethnic Minority Students at Risk of Dropping Out

Abstract Four students at risk of dropping out of their schooling are profiled. All were Pakistani with three born in Hong Kong, and one in Pakistan, who subsequently moved to Hong Kong in his late primary years. At the time of their interview, one student was studying in primary school and the others in secondary school. The primary school student was over-aged and not offered an age-specific grade level when he was admitted to the school. Their lives inside and outside of school are depicted. The case studies report information on their background, schooling, a typical day, and their future plan. Interview data from the teachers who considered them to potentially be at risk of dropping out of school are also included. Factors contributing to their risk of dropping out were at the individual, family and school levels. The individual level included attendance and low academic issues. The family level included poverty and at the school level, low expectations of the teachers towards them. Two factors similarly remarked on amongst the four students were their struggle in learning Chinese and most had experienced some form of racism. The case studies are further explored in a cross case analysis in Chap. 9.

The previous chapter presented case studies of six 'dropout' ethnic minority young people with a focus on identifying the reasons for their dropping out and portraying their 'out of school' life. This chapter will be concerned with four other ethnic minority students who were at risk of dropping out. The reasons why they were at risk of dropping out, and what their 'out of school' life are explored – partly the answers to questions 2 and 3 posed for the research reported in this book.

This chapter draws on the case study with four ethnic minority students who were identified by their teachers in schools that these students were at risk of dropping out. There are five sections in this chapter. Sections 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4 present the experiences of Abdal Rashid, Taufiq Iqbal, Nadia Bashir, and Sahid Afridi respectively. While Abdal Rashid was from a designated primary school, Mong-shuen school, the other three participants were from a designated secondary school, Woo-ping school. Abdal was identified by the Chinese language teacher Ms. Snow Ngai at Mong-shuen school, and Taufiq, Nadia and Sahid were identified by liberal studies and geography teacher Mr. Tim Jordan at Woo-ping school. Each case provides student background information, their family, schooling, and life experiences in Hong Kong. We also present in detail the reasons for their

M.K. Bhowmik, K.J. Kennedy, *'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong*, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects 32, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-0327-1_6

being at risk of dropping out and depict their life outside school. While their case studies provided a vivid picture of their life in both school and outside school, several themes were created from their accounts that explain why they were at risk of dropping out. Each of the four participants was interviewed once in their respective school for about 2 h each. The interview data with Ms. Snow Ngai and Mr. Tim Jordan are also incorporated in presenting Abdal's case as well as the cases of Taufiq, Nadia and Sahid respectively. Ms. Ngai allowed the first author of this book to interview Abdal alone but Mr. Jordan remained present during the interviews with Taufiq, Nadia and Sahid. However, Mr. Jordan did not intervene anything during the interviews with his three students. The chapter concludes by providing a summary in Sect. 6.5. These case studies provide part of the data for the cross case analysis presented in Chap. 9.

6.1 Abdal Rashid

Abdal, a 13 years old Pakistani boy, was a Primary Six student at Mong-shuen primary school. He was interviewed in early February 2013. Abdal had an impressive English language skill but the interview was mostly conducted in Urdu as he requested it. Abdal looked a bit older compared to other Primary Six students. Although his name was Abdal in school, everyone called him Shakil at home, and it was an honor for the first author that Abdal asked the interviewer to call him (Abdal) Shakil.

6.1.1 Abdal's Background

Abdal was born in Pakistan in 1999 and lived there until 2009. He could not tell when his father came in Hong Kong and what for but Abdal remembered that his mother and his other two siblings moved to Hong Kong in July 2009. He also could not tell what his father was doing in Hong Kong before they came; however, Abdal saw his father had not been doing any work since he came. Actually his family was receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA). Five or six months before our interview, his father had a heart attack which almost fully paralyzed him on one side. Therefore, his father had little movement and was using medication. Abdal could not recall anything about his parents' educational background. His mother was a housewife. Abdal's younger sister and youngest brother were studying at Primary Four and Primary Three at the same Mong-shuen primary school. The family was living together in a rented flat in Kwun Tong.

6.1.2 His Schooling

Abdal went to a Primary school in Pakistan until the middle of Primary Five before he moved to Hong Kong in July 2009. After coming to Hong Kong he was given a Primary Three place at Mong-shuen primary school in 2009 September. In his Primary Six class there were about 24–25 ethnic minority students, of whom 8 or 9 were Pakistanis, 5 or 6 Indians, 5 or 6 Nepalese, 5 Filipinos and 1 Bangladeshi.

The most interesting things for him in the school were sports, PE class, and his class friends. He liked running and throwing games. He disliked the strict rules of the school. He commented:

> even if for talking to other students I get punishment. I had to cut my hair four times in a row in couple of months back because school was not accepting my hair style. Every time I went for a hair-cut I had to pay 50 HKD. The other thing I do not like about the school is we are not allowed to speak in Urdu inside the school. The only languages we are allowed to speak are either English or Chinese…Teaching in this school is so so. I heard about a school in Wan Chai is really good. I will apply for a secondary place there soon.… (Abdal Rashid, at risk of dropping out student, interview, 5 February 2013)

6.1.3 Abdal's Attendance Issue

Abdal's attendance problem was raised by Ms. Ngai during the interview with her. Attendance data provided by the school office indicated that he was absent for about 15 days between September 2012 and January 2013. When asked why he had been absent for many days in the last couple of months, Abdal replied that he was actually ill for some days, sometimes school sent him home because of his unacceptable hair style, and sometimes he did not like some of his teachers, such as his mathematics teacher, and left school without attending his class. These all contributed to his higher absenteeism. When asked why he did not like his math teacher he mentioned that the teacher was very strict.

6.1.4 Teachers' Differential Behavior

It seemed Abdal received some differential behavior from his mathematics teacher that led to his disliking the teacher. Those differential behaviors were mainly concerned with giving Abdal more punishment compared to other students when he did not finish his homework. Abdal commented – "I don't like my math teacher, he is very strict. I don't find any interest in his class." Abdal shared another example of the differential behaviors that he received from not only his mathematics teacher but

also from other teachers in the past. When teachers were writing on blackboard some other students sitting near to him were talking, but teachers always gave him the punishment. Abdal also shared another example of his fighting with a south Indian student when he was in Primary Three. That boy said some foul words to him, Abdal could not control himself, and he pushed and kicked him. Unfortunately, the teacher only punished Abdal but did not say anything to the other student. These differential behaviors on the part of teachers impacted Abdal so much that he became very angry during the interview for the injustice that he had experienced.

6.1.5 Abdal's Health Problem

While interviewing Abdal it was noticed that he had some red spots on his face and was coughing every 3–5 min. When asked why he was coughing he replied that he caught cold a few days back, although he was taking medicine he was not fully cured. It was suggested that he go to see doctor, he moved his head showing a positive sign and said that he would wait for another 2–3 days, if he would not recover by then he would go to see a doctor. The red spot on his face was a kind of allergy that affected him on a regular basis. Every time he took medicine the spot disappeared but after some days it again came. Ms. Ngai, the Chinese language teacher who was also Abdal's class teacher at Primary Six confirmed later that Abdal had this allergic problem continuously.

6.1.6 His Result

Abdal was progressing well up to Primary Six. When asked about his result in the previous years, he commented:

> It was really good. I passed all subjects in Primary Five except only a component in Chinese. This year in Primary Six mid-term I failed in Mathematics. I don't know but I don't like mathematics this year. I like most Chinese, English and General Studies but I don't like Math now. Although in my previous years in Primary Four and Primary Five I was not studying Mathematics that much, but I was always passing. This year it is not working like that way… (Abdal Rashid, at risk of dropping out student, interview, 5 February 2013)

Upon request, Ms. Ngai, Abdal's class teacher, kindly sent his report cards for his final term of the Primary Five and mid-term of Primary Six. The report cards showed that Abdal's result had significantly dropped in Primary Six compared to Primary Five. In Primary Five, Chinese was the only subject in which he did not do well but Mathematics, English, and General Studies were added to the list in Primary Six. His average score 64.60 in Primary Five was reduced to 50.50 in Primary Six. Ms. Ngai associated this drop in his result suspecting that Abdal was not giving enough time to study because of his recent engagement in work. Abdal's grade in

conduct also came down to B⁻ in Primary Six from B in Primary Five. In just one quarter of Primary Six he was absent for 5.5 days. He had been given very positive comments such as 'responsible English leader', 'enthusiastic students', 'intelligent', 'polite and helpful', 'positive attitude' in the report card. He was also identified as 'talkative' and therefore recommended to improve his behavior, manner, and discipline in classroom.

6.1.7 Peer Factors

Abdal mentioned that most of his classmates were his good friends. When asked about one of his Pakistani classmates at Primary Six who was not longer coming to school coming and who was a candidate for interview in this study Abdal commented:

> we are studying together for three years. We were good friends earlier but not now. I even don't talk to him over phone… He has been changed a lot. He does not come to school. He smokes, he has bad friends. He is involved in gangs and fights for money. I don't know whether he is working now but earlier he was working in places like Shum Shui Po, Mong Kok etc. distributing leaflets. (Abdal Rashid, at risk of dropping out student, interview, 5 February 2013)

This former friend of Abdal's did not appear in school at all during the field work for this study. He had been identified as at risk of dropping out and he actually dropped out during the field work period. Abdal knew at least 20–30 other boys who were not going to any school. Most of them were kicked out of secondary school from either Form One or Two. There were about 20 of them, Pakistanis, Nepalese and Indians. Abdal knew them through other friends and met them in places such as Mei Foo and other Kowloon sites when he went out with those friends. Abdal heard that many of them were involved with gangs and he silently asked the interview whether he followed news about fights between different gangs in any local newspapers. The interviewer positively with a nod.

6.1.8 Racism

Abdal encountered some racist behavior in his life in Hong Kong. Once he and some of his Pakistani friends were playing basketball, the ball went out of the court and it hit one Chinese adult person who was passing by the field. The person started scolding them very badly. Although they said sorry to him and explained that it was not intentional the person continued to scold them for at least 20 min. Abdal also remembered that some Chinese people said bad words about him without any reason while he was walking on the street.

6.1.9 Abdal's Work

Abdal was identified by his Chinese language teacher Ms. Ngai at risk of dropping out mainly for his involvement in work. Ms. Ngai commented:

> Abdal has financial problem, so he has started working in a restaurant. Although he is not yet 16 but probably he works under the arrangement of pay in cash, so he does not face any obstacles because of his age. The main problem of the boy is he is always sleeping in the classroom because he probably works until middle of the night and sleeps late. Most of the time he now sleeps in class, missed school many days in the last couple of months and his performance is getting worse in the examination…The boy used to be in the group 1 at Primary Five but now he is in group 3 at Primary Six in my Chinese class where group 1 is the best group and group 4 is the weakest one. (Ms. Snow Ngai, Teacher, Interview, 11 January 2013)

When asked about his work, Abdal immediately responded that he left it already. He admitted that he only worked during the summer vacation and for some weeks in December for earning money mainly to buy electronics products like mobile, computer etc. which he needed. He also contributed some of his earnings to his family. He was working in a Pakistani restaurant in Chung King Mansions. His main job was taking orders from the customer, serving food etc. He used to work there 3 h maximum in a day with a payment of HKD 28 per hour. He was always paid in cash. He mentioned that he actually liked the job, especially because he was able to meet many people there from different countries and taking orders and serving food was actually fun. It sounded he was well aware of the fact that it is illegal to work in Hong Kong if someone is under 15. Therefore, he said that he left his job.

Coincidently however, on the same evening of the interview the interviewer went to see one of his friends at Chung King Mansions and decided to have some take-away. They randomly went to one Pakistani restaurant to buy chicken biryani. The interviewer was really surprised when he saw Abdal talking over his mobile just outside the restaurant. He was not sure whether Abdal noticed him then or not. After making the order to other waiter of the restaurant the interviewer accompanied his friend to another place for some minutes. When they came back to pick up their parcel and pay money, Abdal was inside the restaurant managing the cash area. They greeted each other. Abdal estimated HKD 120 but offered a discount and asked for that it would be alright if the first author would pay only HKD 100. However, Abdal was paid the amount in full. Abdal explained that this was his Uncle's restaurant; he was out of the restaurant for some other business, therefore, his uncle called him to be there to look after the restaurant in his absence. The interviewer smiled and tried his best to give the expression that he fully trusted him. Then they said bye to each other. It was noticed that Abdal was wearing the same dress as other waiters of the restaurant. Abdal continued to work at the restaurant as he was seen there on subsequent visits by the interviewer. Every time they saw each other they exchanged greeting in the normal way.

6.1.10 A Typical Day for Abdal

Abdal's typical day started at 7.00 am in the morning when he got up. He stayed at school from 8.00 am to 4.30 pm. After coming back home he helped his mother in household work, he sometimes went out for buying things if his mother asked. Then he played basketball or went to run with friends. After that he came back home, finished his homework, took dinner, and went to bed. He did not mention about his work when describing his typical day as he had already indicated that he had left the job, so his daily routine shown here might not be strictly accurate.

6.1.11 His Future Plan

Abdal's future plan was to continue study as much as he could. He was aiming for completing a first degree from a university. He mentioned that his father told him not to worry about money but to continue his study. He further added that he could start doing a part-time job again alongside his study when he would be 18. His long term ambition was to be a PE teacher in a school. The interviewer reminded him that he would need to achieve a University qualification if he would like to be a PE teacher and wished him good luck.

6.2 Taufiq Iqbal

Taufiq Iqbal, a 14 year old Hong Kong born Pakistani boy, was a student in Form Three at Woo-ping school. He was interviewed in February 2013. Taufiq looked very thin and had a mild voice. His English was good. The interview was conducted both in English and Urdu.

6.2.1 His Background

Taufiq was a second generation Pakistani born in Hong Kong in 1999. He could not remember when his father moved to Hong Kong but he mentioned that his father was brought to Hong Kong by his father's uncle when his father was only 16 years old. Since then his father was mainly working in Hong Kong. After many years working here his father went back to Pakistan, married Taufiq's mother and brought her to Hong Kong as well. Again Taufiq could not recall the year when his parents were married and his mother came in Hong Kong.

Taufiq's father was a primary school graduate from Pakistan. After working in different jobs for many years in Hong Kong, his father had been running his own business for the last several years where he mainly collected old electronics such as television, washing machine, refrigerator, and many old newspapers from individuals or homes, then stored it to his rented yard. He drove his own wagon for carrying those collected materials to his yard. After doing some sorting in the yard he sold and supplied most of the items to the recycling factory or to other factories. Taufiq's mother went to a primary school for 5 years in Pakistan. She had always been a housewife. Taufiq had two younger sisters and one younger brother. One younger sister was studying in Form Two at an English medium school, and his brother was studying at an English medium of school in Primary Four. His youngest sister was at a Chinese medium kindergarten in K1. The family was living in government housing in Tin Shui Wai.

6.2.2 Taufiq's Schooling

Taufiq started his school life from kindergarten. He went to a kindergarten in Yuen Long for 3 years. He was taught in the kindergarten in both Chinese and English. He then went to an English medium school for Primary One and Primary Two. In 2005 the whole family went back to Lahore in Pakistan and lived there for 3 years. Taufiq again started school in Pakistan from Primary One and continued up to Primary Three. The school in Pakistan had Urdu as a medium of instruction and English was taught as a separate language subject. The family came back to Hong Kong in 2008. In the same year Taufiq went back to his previous primary school from Primary Five and completed both Primary Five and Primary Six. He had to study a Chinese language subject in the primary school in Hong Kong.

Taufiq was allocated a Form One place at Woo-ping school in the 2010–2011 academic year. The school started admitting ethnic minority students in 2005 and received designated school status in 2007. Since 2005 the school had offered English medium of instruction classes for ethnic minority students but this was which the school later stopped offering from 2008 to 2009. Therefore, Taufiq had been taught in Chinese since his Form One at the Woo-ping school. During the time of the interview Taufiq was in Form Three. In his section 3C there were about 30 students including 26 Chinese students, 3 Pakistanis and 1 Indonesian.

In the secondary school Taufiq's favorite school subjects were English and Computer Studies and not surprisingly Chinese was the least favorite. He liked all activities in the school; actually there was nothing that he did not like about his school. Taufiq remembered, however, that at the beginning he was feeling bad when he was not allowed to speak in Urdu with other Pakistani students in school but later Taufiq knew that it was done for their Chinese language improvement and then he did not feel so bad for not being able to speak Urdu in school.

6.2.3 Taufiq's Academic Result

In the primary school Taufiq was always failing in half of the subjects. He could not remember any single term when he passed all subjects. The subjects he was failing in primary school were Chinese and General Studies. He passed in English and Mathematics. In the secondary school things had not changed much as he mentioned that he was failing most of the subjects. His worst subjects were Chinese, Mathematics and Liberal Studies and his best subjects were English and Computer Science. When his lower performance in Mathematics in secondary school compared to primary school was pointed out, he mentioned that everything was taught in Chinese for Mathematics in the secondary school and he did not understand what was being taught. Simple mathematics in Chinese at primary school was easier to understand but when difficult mathematics came it was really complicated to make sense, he further added.

Mr. Jordan, geography teacher at Woo-ping school, was asked to share Taufiq's school result. He kindly sent us Taufiq's Form One and Form Two annual examination results and the result of his first terminal examination in Form Three. It showed Taufiq's academic result was not good at all. His average marks in these 3 years were only 28.52, 28 and 29.42 respectively, Taufiq scored very low in major school subjects except English. His low performance ranked him at the bottom 10 % of the students in the respective Forms in all 3 years.

6.2.4 Taufiq's Struggle in Chinese

Taufiq developed some Chinese speaking skills but very little reading and writing in Primary Five and Six. In the secondary school the medium of instruction was Chinese. Therefore, Taufiq was being taught only in Chinese. When asked whether he was facing any problem being taught in Chinese in the secondary school, Taufiq commented:

> Here every subject is in Chinese. It is very difficult to understand many things. Then I ask help from teachers or some students in my class. With their help sometime I understand, sometime I do not understand anything. The situation was very bad in Form One, but now it is slowly getting better… (Taufiq Iqbal, at risk of dropping out student, interview, 18 February 2013)

Taufiq claimed that his speaking and listening in Chinese were good, but his reading and writing were not good. He did not have any private tutor to help him out with Chinese or Mathematics. He mentioned, however, that the after school Chinese language class that he was attending was very beneficial especially the worksheets and activities they used for the class were very useful for the improvement of his reading, writing and speaking skills in Chinese. He also added that speaking to

Chinese friends in the class helped him a lot for improving his Chinese. Of the other three non-Chinese students in his class, he recognized that one of them was also having problems in Chinese but the other two students did not have much problem as they went to a Chinese medium primary school. At Taufiq's home his father and sister could speak some Chinese but his mother and other two siblings could not speak Chinese at all.

6.2.5 Teacher's Low Expectation

Mr. Jordan identified that Taufiq was at risk of dropping out. Mr. Jordan had known Taufiq since Form One being the coordinator of the Chinese language support programme for ethnic minority students at the school. It seemed Mr. Jordan had low expectations about Taufiq's school success. When asked why he thought that Taufiq was at risk of dropping out, Mr Jordan commented:

> Taufiq's Chinese is bad. Although he speaks Chinese quite well, but his reading and writing are not good. Moreover, his academic result is very low throughout the last three Forms. He also has some bad peer influences like most of his friends in the school do not like study. He does not have yet any attendance problem though. Although he wants to finish his HKDSE, I fear that he would not get promoted to Form Four and will have to repeat Form Three mainly because of his academic result. Therefore, his target may change when he will have to repeat his Form. All in all, Taufiq has a strong possibility for dropping out… (Mr. Tim Jordan, teacher, interview, 18 February 2013)

6.2.6 Racism

Taufiq only faced racism once in his life in Hong Kong from a Chinese man. One weekend, Taufiq with some of his Pakistani friends went to a Chinese restaurant to have noodles after playing cricket. While they were eating noodles one old Chinese man started scolding them from another table without any reasons. Fortunately the Chinese restaurant owner went to the old man and stopped him.

6.2.7 A Typical Day for Taufiq

A typical day of Taufiq started getting up around 5.00 am. After freshening up the first thing he did was complete morning Prayer. Then he took breakfast and studied for some time before arriving at school around 8.00 am. He stayed at school until 4.00 pm. After returning home he usually had some afternoon snacks. Then he sometimes went out to play basketball with friends or sometimes just stayed at home watching television. He did his homework at the evening, had dinner at

9.00 pm and went to bed around 10.00 pm. He prayed at least one more time at the evening. During the weekend he played cricket with friends.

6.2.8 His Future Plan

Taufiq was asked what he would do if the school asked him to repeat any Form in the near future given he was failing continuously in four to five subjects and passing only in one to two subjects. He confidently replied that the school would not do so as he was scoring about 5 or 10 in those failed subjects in his early secondary Forms but later he was scoring about 25 or 30. Taufiq saw this as a good progress. Moreover, he also mentioned that he did not have attendance or any behavioral problem which were also considered in making decisions whether one student should be promoted to the next Form or not. He sounded very optimistic in saying that his problem in Chinese was slowly improving, the problems about Mathematics and Liberal Studies were mainly because of Chinese which he hoped would be alright as his Chinese would get better in the future.

In regard to the future plan Taufiq commented:

> If I can complete HKDSE and then can get chance in the university I will continue study there. If I do not get chance in University, I will start working if I find a better job. If I do not get a better job I will probably join my father at his business. My father has also told me to do so. (Taufiq Iqbal, at risk of dropping out student, interview, 18 February 2013)

In terms of any aim in life whether to be any specific professional Taufiq said that he did not have any particular aim, he just would like to do some good work. The interviewer wished him very good luck for his future life.

6.3 Nadia Bashir

Nadia Bashir, a 12 year old Hong Kong born Pakistani girl was a student at Form One in Woo-ping school. She was interviewed in late January 2013 in the presence of the teacher Mr. Tim Jordan. The interview was conducted in both English and Urdu.

6.3.1 Nadia's Background

Nadia was born in Hong Kong in 2001. She could not remember when her parents first came in Hong Kong. But she mentioned that it was long time ago when her father first moved to Hong Kong for work purposes, and then he went back to Pakistan, married Nadia's mother and also brought her to Hong Kong. Nadia's

father was working in a construction company; again Nadia could not tell what exactly he was doing in the company. Nadia's mother had always been a housewife. In terms of her parents' education Nadia only recalled that she once heard that both of them only completed some primary grades from schools in Pakistan. Nadia had two elder brothers, one elder sister and one younger sister. All the elder brothers and sister were studying in local secondary schools while the younger sister was going to a local primary school. Nadia mentioned that her father could speak a little Chinese but her mother spoke none. The whole family was living in a rented flat in Tuen Mun.

6.3.2 Her Schooling

Nadia had not been to any Kindergarten in Hong Kong. She started her schooling in a local primary school from Primary One where the medium of instruction was Chinese. In her Primary class there were about 30 students where she was 1 of the 3 ethnic minority students. The other two ethnic minority students were also of Pakistani origin. After finishing primary school Nadia was allocated a place at Form One in Woo-ping secondary school in the 2012–2013 academic year. Therefore, it was only the fifth month of her time at the Woo-ping school during the time of the interview.

In Nadia's Form One class there were 27 students where she was the only ethnic minority student. In the whole Form there was one more ethnic minority student who was also of Pakistani origin. The rest of the students were Chinese. Nadia mentioned that she had some friends in the Woo-ping school with whom she had studied previously in primary school and she had already made good friendships with some other classmates in her current school.

At her primary school Nadia most liked her English ambassador role where she was helping other students in improving their English. In the secondary school, Nadia mentioned that she liked all her teachers so far. She specially mentioned Mr. Jordan, who helped her in with the Chinese language programme, and her English teacher Mr. Alan David, an American.

6.3.3 Nadia's Academic Results

Although Nadia had been studying in the Woo-ping school only for 5 months at the time of our interview, teacher Mr. Jordan selected her at risk of dropping out mainly because of her lower academic results in primary school.

Nadia had not passed any subjects in her primary years. Nadia mentioned that her average score in the primary school was between 40 and 45. English was the only subject where Nadia consistently scored highly in the primary school whereas she

could never do well in Mathematics. Although Nadia was failing continuously she did not repeated any class in primary school and was promoted on a regular basis.

6.3.4 Her Problems in Mathematics and Chinese

It seemed Nadia was really worried about her Mathematics because of continuous under-achievement despite her hard effort. She commented:

> I was always doing the worst in Mathematics. I can't remember any single primary year that I passed in Mathematics. I don't know what happens, I always try hard to do well in Mathematics but it never works out. During the mathematics examination I just cannot solve problems, I forget everything. I really want to fix my problems in Mathematics… (Nadia Bashir, at risk of dropping out student, interview, 21 January 2013)

In addition, Nadia also had problems in Chinese just like many other ethnic minority students in Hong Kong schools. She was finding Chinese reading and writing difficult in the secondary school compared to primary. The main problem for her in Chinese was she struggled in remembering so many Chinese characters. As a result she could not always follow lessons.

6.3.5 The Spoken Language Policy of the School

In her short-time in the secondary school, Nadia was highly attracted by the English speaking week which the school had once since she came to the school. In this week there were many events organized with a view to enhancing students' English language skills. And students were allowed to speak in English for the whole week whereas they were only speaking in Chinese usually. Nadia commented:

> I don't speak much in English in school as I am not allowed to speak in English with my friends. All my Chinese friends prefer to speak in Chinese, and also the classes are all in Chinese. Although I understand Chinese but I am not much fluent in speaking. I am not allowed to speak Urdu at all even with other Pakistani students of other classes. Therefore, in the English speaking week I could speak more about myself. I shared many of my stories in that week to my Chinese friends. We have another two English speaking weeks in the rest of the year for which I am really looking forward to very much. (Nadia Bashir, at risk of dropping out student, interview, 21 January 2013)

When asked about the spoken language policy Mr Jordan mentioned that from the academic year 2008 to 2009 when the Woo-ping school stopped offering English medium of instruction classes they also formulated a spoken language policy in the school. Generally it was only Chinese throughout the school year. However, in the English language lesson it was always English. In addition, there were three English speaking weeks observed in an academic year when students were required to speak in English for the entire week. The home languages of ethnic minority students

were not allowed at all in anytime of the year. Mr. Jordan wanted to rationalize their policy by making the point that in this way ethnic minority student had the opportunity to enhance their Chinese language skills.

6.3.6 Racism

Nadia faced some differential behaviors from some of her Chinese classmates in primary school. She mentioned that some of them always avoided her whenever she went to talk to them and some of them never played with her. In the secondary school, however, she had not yet faced any such behaviors.

6.3.7 A Typical Day for Nadia

Nadia woke up around 6.00 am. She took breakfast and went to school staying until 4.00 pm and then coming back home. After taking some rest in the afternoon she finished her homework. Then it was her television watching time for an hour or so. Nadia took her dinner around 8.00 pm and finally went to bed before 10.00 pm. During the weekend Nadia with other family members went out to attend a get together kind of programme that usually happened at every weekend in any of the family's house among some of Pakistani families living in Hong Kong.

6.3.8 Her Future Plan

Nadia's aim in life was to be a Doctor. She hoped to overcome her problems in Mathematics soon and pass successfully in the HKDSE. She also expressed her strong will to get a chance in one of the universities in Hong Kong to study medical science. The interviewer passed his best wishes for her bright future.

6.4 Sahid Afridi

Sahid Afridi, a 13 years old second generation Pakistani boy in Hong Kong, was a Form One student at Woo-ping school. Sahid was the only other ethnic minority student at Form One in addition to Nadia. Sahid was interviewed in late January 2013 in presence of Mr. Jordan. While most of the interview was conducted in English, Urdu was also used.

6.4.1 Sahid's Background

Sahid was born in 2000 in Hong Kong. Although he could not remember exactly when his father first moved to Hong Kong, he mentioned that his father had been living in Hong Kong for more than 30 years. In the early days in Hong Kong Sahid's father was working in Chungking Mansions, later he started his own business in partnership with another Pakistani man where they were supplying some cheap electronics to Pakistan. Sahid's mother moved to Hong Kong right after her marriage back in 1990. She had always been a housewife. Sahid's parents were primary graduates from Pakistan. Shahid had one elder brother studying at Form Four, one elder sister studying at Form Two and one younger sister studying at Primary Three. All the brothers and sisters of Shahid were going to local schools that used Chinese medium of instruction. Sahid and all his siblings spoke Chinese while his father could speak a little and but his mother could not speak Chinese at all. The family was living in a rented flat in Tin Shui Wai.

6.4.2 His Schooling

Sahid went to an English medium kindergarten for 3 years. Then he went to a Chinese medium primary school from Primary One. In the primary class there were 25 students where he was the only ethnic minority student. After finishing primary school he was admitted into Woo-ping school at Form One in the 2012–2013 academic year. In his class there were 28 students where Sahid was the only ethnic minority student. In the whole Form there was only one more ethnic minority student – Nadia, whose case study was presented in the previous section. Like Nadia, Sahid also mentioned that he found some friends in his Form One class with whom he had studied in the same primary school.

In the primary school Shahid had most liked PE class as he mentioned that he could do many sports there. His favorite sport was Cricket, a very popular game in Pakistan. In his 5 months at the Woo-ping secondary school Sahid liked the English speaking week most. As with Nadia, Sahid also reasoned that he was allowed to speak in English for the entire week that enabled him to communicate better with his friends. He also won a prize in the story telling competition during the English speaking week.

6.4.3 Sahid's Academic Results

In terms of academic results in primary school, Shahid could remember that once in the Primary Two final examination he had passed all the subjects. But since then his results had been very mixed. Although Sahid was failing continuously, he was never

asked to repeat any class and he was promoted on a regular basis. His average score was between 30 and 40 throughout the primary school. The subjects he mostly passed were English, Mathematics and the subjects he mostly failed were General Studies and Chinese. Sahid commented:

> My Chinese result was not that bad, sometimes I passed, sometimes I did not. But 'General Studies' was very bad. I never passed in 'General Studies'. It was really difficult for me to remember 'General Studies. In the exam I could not answer most of the questions, which is why I could not pass. (Sahid Afridi, at risk of dropping out student, interview, 21 January 2013)

6.4.4 His Struggle in Chinese

Sahid claimed that his Chinese was not 'that bad' in primary school, however, he mentioned that he was finding Chinese writing and reading difficult in the secondary school compared to primary school. Mr. Jordan's comment was insightful in this regard when he explained why he selected Sahid as at risk of dropping out student:

> Sahid apparently speaks good Chinese; he is also a very good English speaker. But when it comes about writing and reading Chinese, he struggles a lot. I know he was not continuously failing in Chinese in primary school but the 'General Studies' where he was failing continuously I think it was mainly because of his poor Chinese language skills in reading and writing. In the secondary school he will suffer most in Liberal Studies and other subjects as well if he can't fix his problems in Chinese. Since the curriculum in secondary is tougher, so, I fear it will be difficult for him to survive with only basic Chinese skill. (Mr. Tim Jordan, teacher, interview, 18 February 2013)

6.4.5 Racism

Sahid encountered some differential behavior in the primary school from some of his classmates especially during the play time. His account:

> I liked always playing in school. I don't know why a group of my classmates never wanted to take me in their group. So, I was always playing against them. Whenever I was playing well they called me many foul words, including 'Ah-Cha'. They were only doing this with me not anyone else. At the beginning I felt very bad, but later I was avoiding their words by only focusing on play. (Sahid Afridi, at risk of dropping out student, interview, 21 January 2013)

6.4.6 A Typical Day of Sahid

Sahid's typical day started with getting up around 7.00 am and then taking breakfast and starting for school. Sahid stayed in school from 8.00 am to 4.00 pm. After coming back from school he ate some afternoon snacks at home and immediately went out to play cricket or football or basketball. Sahid completed his home work after

coming back from play and had dinner around 9.00 pm. He watched television if there was any cricket tournament going on, and if especially Pakistan was playing. Sahid went to sleep around 11.00 pm. During the weekend, he passed whole day mainly playing cricket with other Pakistani friends.

6.4.7 His Future Plan

Like many other Pakistani young people Sahid was also highly influenced by the sport cricket. It was apparent when he shared his plan that he would like to be a professional cricketer in the future. He recognized that cricket was not a popular sport in Hong Kong compared to Pakistan or India; however, he wished that it would be more popular in the future. In terms of education Sahid hoped to finish HKDSE successfully and then if he would get chance in the university he would continue study. The interviewer wished him good luck.

6.5 Summary

The chapter presented four case studies of Abdal Rashid, Taufiq Iqbal, Nadia Bashir, and Sahid Afridi who were at risk of dropping out. Their accounts as well as the accounts of the respective teachers in their schools provided a clear understanding of the reasons that led them to be seen as at risk of dropping out. Their lives outside of school were also depicted.

The case study with all four at risk of dropping out ethnic minority participants revealed that three of them Taufiq, Nadia and Sahid were born in Hong Kong while Abdal was born in Pakistan. Abdal moved to Hong Kong in his late primary school years with his mother in order to join his father. While Abdal was studying in a designated primary school the other three participants were studying in different forms at a designated secondary school during the time of the interviews. Only Abdal was found over-aged compared to his other classmates in school as he was not offered an age specific grade on admission.

All four participants were identified by their respective teachers in the schools that they were at risk of dropping out. A number of factors emerged from the case study that actually leaded them to be seen as at risk of dropping out. It was also found that often several factors together pushed individual student to be at risk of dropping out. While there were factors at the individual level such as lower academic achievement, attendance issue, overage, struggle in Chinese language, employment, health issue, peer factors etc. affected them, there were also factors at family level such as family poverty etc., and at school level such as teachers' low expectation, spoken language policy also influenced them to be at risk of dropping out. In addition, racism was experienced by most of the students.

Among all four participants, only Abdal was found working even though he was at below the local job market entry. Although he denied this during the time of interview, however, he was several times seen working in a restaurant later. The other three participants were passing their time beyond school-time mainly staying at home like other students.

These case studies will be revisited in Chap. 9 as part of the cross case analysis.

Chapter 7
A Young Girl Who Has Never Been to School

Abstract This chapter reflects on a 5 year old Bangladeshi girl and the reasons surrounding her not attending kindergarten in Hong Kong. Shormin was interviewed with her elder sister Romana and parents. Her father was studying for a PhD at a Hong Kong university and, therefore, because he was living on a student visa, not eligible to apply for the government's pre-primary education voucher scheme. Shormin's parents were unable to afford kindergarten fees, particularly as they were already paying for Romana's monthly transportation costs to and from school. Their only solution, therefore, was to home tutor Shormin. Romana also provided support to Shormin through worksheets she had prepared for her in English. An NGO additionally provided support to her three times a week, however, Shormin found communication with her peers difficult due to speaking a different home language of Bangla. Psychological issues and pressures are presented for Shormin and her parents, for example, her lack of exposure to socialization and communication skills with her peers. Hong Kong's immigration laws were considered racially discriminatory according to Shormin's father. This case study is further explored in the cross case analysis presented in Chap. 9.

The previous chapter presented case studies of four ethnic minority students who were at risk of dropping out with a focus on identifying the reasons for their being at risk and depicting their life outside school. This chapter will be concerned with one ethnic minority young girl who had never been to school. The reasons she could not attend any kindergarten and her life without school are explored. This chapter contributes to answering questions 2 and 3 posed for the research reported in this book.

This chapter draws on the case study with one ethnic minority young girl who had not attended any kindergarten. The young girl was Shormin Abbas, a 5 years old Bangladeshi born girl living in Hong Kong since 2011. The case study was based on a family interview with Shormin and her parents that lasted for 3 h in early May 2013. In order to ensure maximum care so that Shormin did not feel any stress she was interviewed in presence of her parents at her home in the evening at the weekend.

The case study provides background information of Shormin and her family including her parents Mr. Abbas and Mrs. Abbas and her elder sister Romana, and their family and life experiences in Hong Kong. The reasons Shormin could not

M.K. Bhowmik, K.J. Kennedy, *'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong*, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects 32, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-0327-1_7

attend any kindergarten are discussed and her life without school is portrayed. Shormin's and her parents' interviews provided a vivid picture of her life in Hong Kong in the absence of attending any Kindergarten and based on these several themes were created from their accounts to explain why Shormin had not been to any school. The chapter concludes by providing a summary.

7.1 The Interview Context

The first author of this book came to know Shormin's father Mr. Junaid Abbas in late 2011 at a program organized by the Bangladesh Students Association of Hong Kong, a student welfare organization for Bangladeshi students studying in various universities in Hong Kong. After that they met several times in different programs of the association mainly at outings during the holidays. In some of those events the first author also met his wife Mrs. Abbas and his two lovely daughters Romana and Shormin. During one such event in early April 2013 at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology there was a conversation with Mrs. Abbas about her two daughters. Although elder daughter Romana was going to a Hong Kong primary school the parents could not find any kindergarten or pre-primary school for their younger daughter Shormin mainly because they could not afford the school fee. Mrs. Abbas learnt about the pre-primary education voucher scheme (PEVS) that is a government scheme to support Hong Kong children financially to study in the kindergarten (Student Financial Assistance Agency 2013) as pre-primary education was not free and compulsory in Hong Kong. But Mrs. Abbas said that they were not eligible for getting support from the scheme. This made the case very relevant to the current research. Mr. Abbas was contacted a couple of weeks later and asked for a family interview. He responded very positively and suggested to wait for 1 week as he was busy in writing a paper for a journal. Several days later Mr Abbas called and arranged for the first author to visit Mr. Abbas's flat on one Sunday evening and also offered him to take dinner with them. Mr Abbas was sent research briefing documents over e-mail.

The first author arrived at the MTR station close to Mr. Abbas's flat 10 min before the scheduled interview time; he bought some fruit, chocolate and ice-cream for them. Mr. Abbas came to the station and together they returned to his tiny rented flat. It was a building without any lift, and their flat was on the seventh floor. While they were walking up staircases Mr. Abbas said that every time he had needed to take rest for few minutes in the middle when he carried heavier goods. Mrs. Abbas opened the gate that was the entrance to their flat and welcoming took place in Bangladeshi style. She said she was sorry about the need to walk up to seventh floor and in response the first author said he used to do same up to sixth floor everyday back in Bangladesh until he moved to Hong Kong for his study.

The flat had two very small bed rooms and one living room with an open cooking space in one corner and a tiny toilet with shower in another corner. It could not have been more than 250 ft^2 for which they were paying 3500 HKD per month. Mrs.

Abbas mentioned that they were lucky enough to have rented this flat 2 years ago at this price; otherwise, the recent rent would have been at least 5000 HKD. She also expressed her satisfaction that the flat was close to the road and they had adequate sunlight and air coming inside. This was what Mr. Abbas could manage for his family with his only 10,000 HKD total income from the PhD studentship that he was receiving from the university every month.

The interview took place in one of the bedrooms as the family literally did not have any sitting place in their living room. Romana, the older sister, was sitting in a corner watching a cartoon on a laptop. The younger daughter, Shormin, who was to be interviewed, had fallen asleep after a family outing so was not available. It was not really a problem as it allowed for some informal conversation in which Mr. Abbas talked about his life as a graduate students in Hong Kong. Mrs. Abbas joined in from time to time coming to the bedroom and then moving to the cooking place in the living room where she was arranging dinner.

Eventually (after about half an hour) Mrs. Abbas served a delicious Bangladeshi dinner full of different curries, nan-paratha and khichuri after which Shormin woke up and came to join the family. It took her a little while to adjust and in the meantime Mrs. Abbas served a very Bangladeshi type of hot milk tea. After finishing the tea, the interview was started by briefing Mr. and Mrs. Abbas about the research, confidentiality of data and the need for their consent. The interview process was also explained especially that it would involve not only Shormin but the parents as well. The interviews began after written consent was given.

7.2 Mr. Abbas and Mrs. Abbas

Mr. Abbas took his master's degree at one of the universities in Bangladesh and started an academic career in a public university. He was an assistant professor at the university and then in the summer of 2010 when he took study-leave and came to Hong Kong to do a PhD in plant biology in a Hong Kong university. Mrs. Abbas had her master's degree in English literature from a Bangladeshi university. They had been married since 2001. Their elder daughter Romana was born in 2004 and the younger daughter Shormin was born in 2008 in Bangladesh. Mrs. Abbas with two daughters joined Mr. Abbas in Hong Kong in October 2011. She had been a housewife in Bangladesh and continued being so in Hong Kong as she was not allowed to work since under Hong Kong immigration rules she was classified as a dependant of student visa holder.

7.3 Elder Daughter Romana's Education

Romana completed her pre-primary school and continued up to middle of Primary One in Bangladesh before moving to Hong Kong. Mrs. Abbas mentioned that Romana topped her class in Bangladesh. After moving to Hong Kong Romana was

allocated a place in a designated government primary school at Primary Two from November 2011. Mr. Abbas's PhD supervisor helped him in finding the school for Romana. During the time of the interview Romana was studying at Primary Three. Both Mr. Abbas and Mrs. Abbas were happy so far about Romana's education in the Hong Kong school. However, they mentioned that although the primary school was free they had to spend on average 2000 HKD per month for her transportation fees, buying books, notebooks, workbooks, dresses etc. "Hong Kong school books are very expensive", Mr. Abbas commented.

It was also evident that Romana loved her school in Hong Kong. In response to some informal questions in between watching television shows on her computer she stopped watching the show and fully concentrated on the questions related to her school, friends, and learning. She enthusiastically brought her school bag from another bedroom and showed some of her achievements such as her picture on a school brochure for being champion at a chorus speaking, her excellent handwriting for which her teacher congratulated her in writing, the poem for which she won first place in a reciting competition. Romana did a tremendous job in recalling all her 31 friends' names in her class. She also played a basic grammar of music on using some iPad music software and on a real flute. Overall, she seemed to be enjoying her primary school in Hong Kong.

Romana was also going to an NGO for Cantonese language class. She was attending there two evenings a week and Mrs. Abbas always accompanied her. While Romana was attending class Mrs. Abbas took Shormin to the nearby park. They all came home together after Romana's class had finished.

7.4 Searching for A Kindergarten for Shormin's Education

From early 2012 Mrs. Abbas and Mr. Abbas started planning to find out a kindergarten or a pre-primary school for Shormin. They first talked to one of the teachers of Romana's school who helped them in suggesting some kindergartens and in applying to the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA) of Hong Kong government for pre-primary education voucher scheme. They were told by the agency that they were not eligible to receive assistance for Shormin because Mr. Abbas was on a student visa and according to the scheme, student visa holders' child dependants were not eligible to be supported with the voucher scheme for pre-primary education. They visited at least five to six kindergartens and phoned several others both English and Chinese medium. The information they received was there was not any bar for Shormin to get a place in a kindergarten but the minimum monthly fee would be HKD 3000. For some private kindergartens the fee would be around HKD 7000–8000 per month. Then they estimated from their elder daughter Romana's experience that they would need at least another HKD 1000 for maintaining other costs such as transportation, dresses, buying books, notebooks etc. Altogether they would need at least HKD 4000 per month if they wanted to send Shormin to a Kindergarten in Hong Kong. They were simply helpless as they could not afford this

cost since they only received HKD 10,000 a month to lead a life in Hong Kong. Before the start of the school year in September 2012 they realized they would not be able to send Shormin to any pre-primary school in Hong Kong. They even talked to some NGOs running kindergartens but these would also charge the same amount of fees every month for Shormin.

7.5 Shormin's Home Education

Mr. Abbas and Mrs. Abbas both started to teach Shormin at home from September 2012 when they became sure that they would not be able to send her to any kindergarten. Mr. Abbas downloaded many free resources that were suitable for using on an iPad with preprimary students. Mrs. Abbas was also using one play group level book which she brought from Bangladesh. The teaching was mainly limited to recognizing the English alphabet and easy words and reading them aloud by spelling. Mrs. Abbas mentioned that Shormin could already write capital letters and started learning small letters. In addition, she could recognize and count up to 100 and do some simple addition and subtraction based on pictorials. Mr. Abbas tried to teach Shormin letters, words and numbers by showing her different signboards, vehicles' number plates on the street when he took her out for walk or other reasons. Sometimes, he also gave her some simple mathematical problems such as when they were in the middle of the stairs up or down by asking her how many more floors they would have to pass in order to get to their flat or to the street. Shormin could also recite some English rhymes. It seemed Mr. Abbas was happy with her advancement in learning. He commented:

> Allah forgives me, I am not saying this because she is my daughter. She has very good motivation for learning things. I am really impressed to see her ways of catching up so fast, be it numbers or letters or words. In case of the alphabet she was learning everything without much of our help just by playing on iPad based learning games and programs. She sometimes asks very intelligent questions at this age like why do 'cat' and 'kite' have the same sound 'k' at the start but spell differently starting with 'c' and 'k'. I am sure she will do really well in her future education life. (Mr. Junaid Abbas, Shormin's father, interview, 5 May 2013)

Shormin was listening to the conversation. Suddenly, she picked up some papers from the table and showed that Romana had written some words and drew some pictures for her. Shormin started reading those words aloud by spelling out. Her permission was sought to take pictures of those sheets which she gave happily. Photo 7.1 shows the samples of Shormin's learning materials that her elder sister Romana prepared. Shormin also said that she could count from 1 to 100. In fact she showed her skill by counting chocolates that were brought for her. She once counted them aloud from 1 to 17 but Mr. Abbas asked her to count again as there were actually 16 chocolates. In her re-count it was noticed that she left counting 'fifteen', that is why she landed into 17 again. Mr. Abbas corrected her and helped her to pronounce 'fifteen' several times.

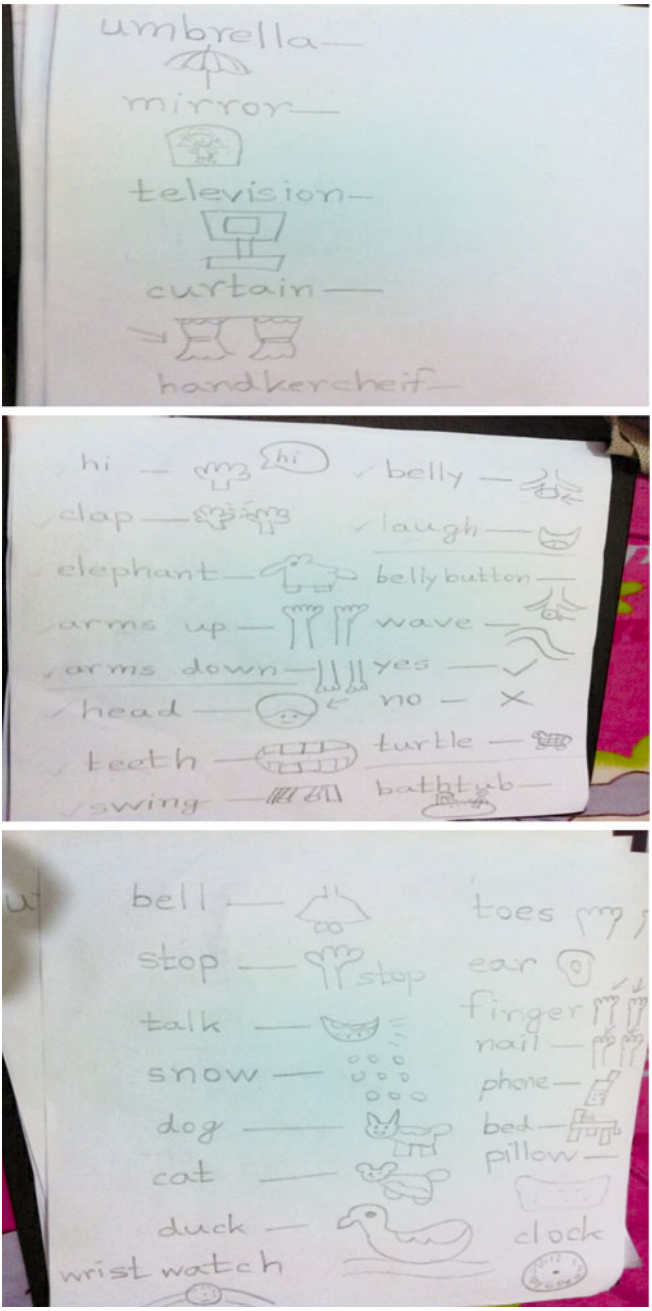

Photo 7.1 Shormin's learning materials (Prepared by her elder sister Romana; © Micron Bhowmik)

Shormin also mentioned that she liked drawing what she learnt from both Romana and an NGO. Mrs. Abbas was asked for more information about the NGO. She clarified that it was a nearby NGO that ran programs for ethnic minority young children. Shormin had been going there for the last couple of months. Mrs. Abbas took her to the NGO 3 days a week for 1.5 h each day where she could paint or draw and read books with other children. It was usually held in the evening. Mrs. Abbas said that Shormin learned to drink water by herself there and some communication skills communication skills mainly based on words but not using full sentences. Shormin, however, could not communicate well with other children because most of the children were from Pakistani or Nepalese community who spoke their home languages which were different than Shormin's home language Bangla.

When asked whether Shormin had any friends she replied that she had four friends and she told their names. She was asked again whether any of them were from the NGO. She was trying to remember something. Mrs. Abbas helped her saying that they were actually all her cousins, two of them were living in Bangladesh and two were in the United States.

7.6 Parents' Frustrations and Concerns

When asked whether Shormin anytime asked to go to school, Mrs. Abbas replied that Shormin always asked them when she would be starting to go to school. She would make reference to other young children when she saw them going to school wearing school dress and carrying bags. Mrs. Abbas sadly mentioned that Shormin sometimes 'emotionally attacked' them by asking why she could not go to school. Mrs. Abbas commented:

> We unknowingly encouraged about going to school as we did not assume that we would not be able to send her to school. She was always happy about wearing school dress and carrying school bags. Actually Shormin started going to school when she was only two months old when I used to take my elder daughter Romana to school every day back in Bangladesh. Now-a-days Shormin also goes with me when I go to Romana's school and goes out with me to pick up Romana from the school bus every day. Shormin mainly started asking to go to school from last year. Now we manage her by saying that she will be going soon in the coming year. (Mrs. Parvin Abbas, Shormin's mother, interview, 5 May 2013)

Mr. Abbas raised four issues that either they were suffering from or Shormin would suffer in the future because of not attending any school. First, as a father, the psychological feeling was worse for not being able to manage a school for Shormin. Second, Shormin might think her father was not capable of sending her to school. If she felt like that it would be tremendous psychological pressure for her at this very early age. Third, she could have developed some formal social behavior by attending school but due to the absence of the school she might develop some socially deviant behavior instead. Fourth, socialization was very important in this age in addition to basic learning. Although she was progressing well in basic learning her communication skill was not well developed probably due to the lack of schooling.

7.7 Family Poverty

Mr. Abbas was a research postgraduate student receiving a stipend of about 13,800 HKD every month. After paying his tuition fee he had only 10,000 HKD per month for living in Hong Kong with the whole family. Although he was allowed to work for maximum 20 h per week in the University Mr. Abbas mentioned that most of the part-time work required Chinese language skill that he was not equipped with being an international student. Expense-wise he had to pay rent of HKD 3500 for rent, the cost related to elder daughter Romana's education around 2000 HKD per-month. This left him only 4500 HKD per month for the whole family's food and other costs. It was really a tiny amount to manage food and other things in Hong Kong but Mr. Abbas said that somehow they were managing by eating at home.

Since Mr. Abbas was on study leave from a Bangladeshi university he continued to be paid during the study leave period. When Mr. Abbas was asked whether he was bringing money from Bangladesh he replied that it did not help him much since the amount he was being paid at his Bangladeshi job was less than HKD 3000 per month. He also mentioned other problems such as he would have to pay back the whole salary to the government that he was paid during the leave if he did not return to the Bangladeshi University after study leave. Therefore he needed to retain a large cash balance if he decided start his career in Hong Kong after graduation. He also had to look after his old parents who were living in Bangladesh by supporting them with some portion of that money since he was the only son of his parents. There was also a huge financial restriction from the Bangladesh government side in transferring money abroad from Bangladesh.

It was clear that Mr. Abbas was living in Hong Kong with an amount of only HKD 10,000 for a month for a family of four. The amount was far below what was considered the poverty line in Hong Kong. The poverty line amount for a household of four members in Hong Kong has been identified as HKD 14,300 (Ngo 2013). Thus it seems that poverty that played a role in preventing Shormin from attending kindergarten. Yet digging deeper it was found that Hong Kong's immigration policy not only kept the family poor and thereby restricted Shormin's access to school. This issue is taken up in the following section.

7.8 Immigration Policy Interplays with School Access

In the beginning, when the family joined Mr. Abbas he thought that he would be facing problem in finding a primary school place for Romana but it proved to be relatively easy and so far he was happy with Romana's schooling. Upon experiencing Romana's case Mr. Abbas thought that it would be easy to find a kindergarten for Shormin and he did understand that it was to be completely out of his reach. Mr. Abbas became aware that the Hong Kong government was working to make pre-primary education free and compulsory but this would not apply to Shormin. He

directly questioned Hong Kong government's 'right of abode'; 'immigration' rules that stopped their daughter Shormin from having access to a basic human right like education. He also questioned why a developed city like Hong Kong had not thought of this issue yet it wanted to attract more international students in the city and make the city more international in outlook. He commented:

> Education should be made free for all irrespective of origin, ethnicity, and immigration status. Basic human rights like education should be elevated over everything. My wife cannot work in Hong Kong since she is a student's spouse dependant but if it were otherwise Shormin could have gone to school. Spouses should be allowed to work…. Post-doctoral fellows are also doing research, just as doctoral students are, but they have a different job status and have access to facilities like the pre-primary education voucher scheme for their child dependants. The university has not put any age-bar for PhD students, and it is natural that many PhD students have their families and would like to bring their dependants. Ok, as a PhD student I am supported by Hong Kong government's money, I don't pay tax, still I pay tuition fee to the University. Then what about self-, financed international students, they are not also able to have any such facilities when they are spending money in Hong Kong by bringing it from their home country. (Mr. Junaid Abbas, Shormin's father, interview, 5 May 2013)

Mr. Abbas kept saying that if he were paying tax he would have filed a case against the Hong Kong government. He also remembered that he signed a declaration paper when he applied for his family's visa that he would be responsible for their expenses such as education, living, medical etc. The Immigration Department allowed the family visas on the basis of HKD 10,000 disposable monthly income with limited opportunity to increase the income, at least until end of his PhD. Mr. Abbas also mentioned that at the beginning he was not provided with any information by his university in Hong Kong related to the restrictions that student visa holders had such as spouse dependants not being allowed to work, or child dependants not being eligible for the pre-primary education voucher scheme.

The above clearly shows how immigration policy in Hong Kong had not only bound an ethnic minority family to poverty but also restricted their younger child's school access. Even parents' high academic qualification could not help. Actually it shows that well educated ethnic minority immigrant parents in the city are not free from discrimination. Being helpless enough, Mr. Abbas stressed that education must be considered as a medical emergency that must be provided free to people irrespective of origin, ethnicity and immigration status. He called for the Hong Kong government to look at this matter and make pre-primary education free for all including student visa holders' child dependants.

7.9 Racism

Mr. Abbas and Mrs. Abbas did not encounter any racist behavior in their lives in Hong Kong. They also mentioned that they had not heard anything concerning racism from their elder daughter, Romana. However, Mr. Abbas referred to the discrimination he was facing, not being able to send Shormin into school, due to his

immigration status. “Does it have a relation to racial discrimination as most of the international students are studying in Hong Kong are mainly from ethnicities other than Chinese” – he asked. Although it was tempting no answer was given by the interviewer to his question.

7.10 A Typical Day for Shormin

Shormin’s typical day started from waking up very early in the morning around 5.00–6.00 am. After freshening up she began playing with her iPad either using learning programs or watching cartoons for almost the whole day. Mrs. Abbas fed her four times in the day starting with breakfast at 8.00 am, one in the middle of the day, one at the afternoon and the final one at night. Shormin mentioned that she loved eating apple, guava and biryani. Mrs. Abbas taught her once or twice in a week around 11.00 am in the morning for up to 1–1.5 h, mainly alphabet, words and counting. Mrs. Abbas took Shormin out for several evenings a week for about 2 h either to attend the NGO activities or to accompany Romana to her Cantonese learning in another NGO. Often they would spend time later in a nearby park. After their evening activities they came back to flat at 8.30 or 9.00 and by 10.00 Shormin went to sleep.

7.11 Shormin’s Aim in Life

When asked what she would like to be in the future, Shormin replied that she would like to be a teacher. She was asked again why and while she was thinking of a reply Mr. Abbas answered for her that Shormin’s father, grandfather, uncles, aunties all were teachers. Mrs. Abbas added that when she was teaching Shormin letter ‘A’ and an associated word ‘artist’, Shormin’s aim of life was then to be an ‘artist’. Mrs. Abbas then rushed to teach her letter ‘S’ so that the associated word ‘scientist’ might make some influence on Shormin expecting that she would aim to be like Mr. Abbas a ‘scientist’.

7.12 Family’s Future Plan About Shormin’s Schooling

Mr. Abbas was due to finish his PhD degree in the middle of 2014. After that he planned to stay in Hong Kong if there were any post-doctoral work or positions available. By September 2014, Shormin would be nearly six which would allow her to apply for a free Primary One school place in Hong Kong. If there would not be any good offer either post-doctorate fellowship or other academic jobs in Hong

Kong after his degree Mr. Abbas would probably go back to his previous university job in Bangladesh. Mrs. Abbas mentioned, however, that she loved living in Hong Kong and she would like to continue living here.

7.13 Summary

The chapter presented the case study of Shormin who had never been to any kindergarten. Her account as well as her parents' accounts provided clear understanding of why Shormin could not attend any kindergarten. In addition, her life in the absence of a school was portrayed.

The case study with Shormin and her family revealed that immigration rules hindered her school access by preventing her from receiving support from the government's pre-primary education voucher scheme. Family poverty and high kindergarten fees also affected her lack of access to schooling. Since she was not able to attend kindergarten, Shormin received education at home from her parents and elder sister.

This case study will be revisited in Chap. 9 as part of the cross case analysis.

Chapter 8
Other Stakeholders' Views About the 'Out of School' Issue for Ethnic Minority Young People

Abstract Interview data with three ethnic minority community leaders from Nepalese, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities in Hong Kong; two government officials; one teacher who taught secondary level ethnic minority students; and one NGO professional, were drawn upon to understand perspectives on the magnitude of the 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority young people, reasons, and the 'out of school' life of ethnic minority young people. Issues included being caught in a vicious cycle with no upward social mobility due to not possessing a university degree and, therefore, being unemployable in Hong Kong. Similarly to factors discussed by students, parents and school teachers (Chaps. 4, 5, 6, and 7), these interviewees considered poor academic achievement; inadequate school provision; low educational aspirations; Chinese language concerns (including a gap existing between achieved Chinese qualification and that required for higher education and employment); behavioural problems; racism; and ethnic minority stereotypes to be reasons for students dropping 'out of school'. Some primary and secondary school dropouts younger than 15 usually return to school; some are placed in NGOs or vocational bridging courses to allow for an alternative vocational path. Alternatively, others would seek employment if over 15 or apply to study on vocational courses.

The previous chapter presented a case study of an ethnic minority child who had never been able to attend kindergarten. This chapter will be concerned with other stakeholders' views about the 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong – to explore from those stakeholders' perspectives, what is the magnitude of the 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people, what are the reasons for ethnic minority young people being 'out of school' and what their 'out school' life looks like. This chapter partly provides answers to questions 1, 2 and 3 posed for the research reported in this book.

This chapter draws on the interviews with other participants such as three ethnic minority community leaders, two government officials, one teacher (other than those in the three study schools), and one NGO professional, to understand their perspectives on the magnitude of 'out of school' phenomenon for ethnic minority young people, the reasons and the 'out of school' life of ethnic minority young people. There are five sections in this chapter. Section 8.1 provides some background

M.K. Bhowmik, K.J. Kennedy, *'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong*, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects 32, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-0327-1_8

information about the participants. Section 8.2 explores the magnitude of the 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people. Section 8.3 identifies the reasons for ethnic minority young people being 'out of school'. Section 8.4 portrays ethnic minority young people's 'out of school' life. While the participants' interviews provided a clear picture of the 'out of school' issue several themes were created from their accounts to explain what they saw as the reasons for young people's being 'out of school'. Section 8.5 concludes the chapter by providing a summary.

8.1 Background Information

This section provides some background information about the participants as well as the context in which they were identified and interviewed.

8.1.1 Ethnic Minority Community Leaders

There were three community leaders from Nepalese, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities in Hong Kong.

8.1.1.1 Mr. Sumit Baral

The first author of this book first met Mr. Baral in early 2012 in an educational researchers' forum for ethnic minority education organized at one of the universities in Hong Kong. Since then they had been in contact frequently mainly because of similar professional interests. Because of his strong involvement with one of the South Asian communities' affairs, his previous teaching background in Hong Kong schools and recent status of being a researcher looking at educational issues of South Asian students, Mr. Baral was asked to be one of the research participants and was asked for an interview which he kindly accepted.

Mr. Baral first came in Hong Kong in 1996 for work and migration purposes but he frequently travelled between Hong Kong and his home country until 2001. At that time he mainly worked for some insurance companies on an irregular basis. After moving to Hong Kong permanently in 2001 he started a teaching job in 2002 and continued until 2012. In this period he taught in two primary schools and one secondary school. His last teaching job was in a designated secondary school from 2007 to 2012 where he was teaching English. Later he was awarded a PhD scholarship by a university in Hong Kong in 2012; he left his school job and started pursuing his PhD.

In terms of the community engagement Mr. Baral was the founding secretary of one of the south Asian community organizations established in 1998. During the

time of his interview he was performing an advising role to the organization in activities such as cultural gatherings, community interactions, children's educational program etc. In addition, Mr. Baral was involved with a mainstream political party in Hong Kong where he advised in their ethnic minority working group. Mr. Baral had his wife and son living in Nepal; they also had Hong Kong permanent resident status.

8.1.1.2 Mr. Shahed Alam

The first author came to know about Mr. Alam from Azad Rabbani, a Pakistani dropout boy who participated in the research reported in this book (please see Sect. 5.6 of Chap. 5 for Azad Rabbani's case study). But Azad could not give any contact details of Mr. Alam apart from only saying Mr. Alam was very active in community work for one ethnic minority group and professionally he was a school teacher. Upon collecting his school's number using google he was contacted on his school phone and was asked for an interview to which he agreed.

Mr. Alam was a second generation South Asian born in Hong Kong in the early 1980s. His father migrated to Hong Kong in 1965 searching for a better future. Mr. Alam finished his schooling and university first degree in Hong Kong between 1988 and 2003. For the last 10 years he had been teaching in the same school where he had studied. The school was a designated secondary school which had a long history of admitting ethnic minority students going back to 1980. Mr. Alam was responsible for teaching English to ethnic minority students in three upper Forms. He was awarded a PhD degree last year from a Hong Kong university. His research focused on a critical review of the provision of Chinese language education for the non-Chinese speaking students in Hong Kong.

From 2009 Mr. Alam had been extensively involved in community work. He had held two positions in one of the South Asian community associations of Hong Kong for the last 4 years, one was on the editorial board of the yearly magazine publication and another was the member of education committee. Mr. Alam was also one of the founding members of one of the South Asian communities' students' association and there he had been an education adviser for the last few years. Since 2011 Mr. Alam had been appointed by the Secretary for Home Affairs of HKSAR government as a non-official member to the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony of Race Relations located in the Home Affairs Department. He was also a member of the vetting committee of the personalized vehicles registration mark in Hong Kong appointed by the Transport Department. Moreover, he was the school manager of one Muslim kindergarten in Hong Kong. Because of his unique portfolios of being student and then teacher in the same secondary school in Hong Kong, being a researcher in one of the major concerned areas for ethnic minority education and being a community leader, Mr. Alam had been a regular face in many forums working for the welfare of the ethnic minority population in Hong Kong.

8.1.1.3 Mr. Tareque Rahman

The first author first met Mr. Rahman in 2011 in a program organized by one of the south Asian community associations in Hong Kong observing their home country's national day. Since then they had met several times in several programs organized by that community association. Mr. Rahman was interviewed once before in 2012 for the first author's voluntary work at the *Ethnic Voice* weekly which published the interview story (Bhowmik 2012b). When asked for another interview later for the research, Mr. Rahman immediately accepted.

Like many other high skilled professionals, being a textile engineer, Mr. Rahman had been transferred to Hong Kong office in 1993. After working in the Hong Kong office for six and a half year he started his own business related to garments and textiles. Later he became a very successful businessman in Hong Kong. Mr. Rahman was one of the founding members of his community association that was formed in 2003. He had been the President of the association for two terms from 2008 to 2012. During the time of the interview he was a general member of the association.

In 2012 Mr. Rahman had been appointed as a non-official member to the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony of Race Relations by the Secretary for Home Affairs of HKSAR government. He was also a member of the ethnic minority working committee of a District Council where there was a high concentration of ethnic minorities for three terms starting from 2009 until 2014. Moreover, he was also an active member of a political party where he sat in their working group for ethnic minorities. Mr. Rahman was one of the few ethnic minority community leaders who had a comprehensive understanding and interest about the issues and challenges related to ethnic minority population in Hong Kong probably because of his strong involvement with the Home Affairs Department, District Council, political party as well as community groups.

8.1.2 Government Officials

There were two government officials interviewed in the study. Although the EDB official Mr. Cheng was introduced briefly in Chap. (4, Sect. 4.1) here we provide more details concerning him.

8.1.2.1 Mr. Lee Cheng

The second author of this book wrote to the Deputy Secretary of the Education Bureau requesting her support for an interview for the research. We received a reply from the Bureau within a few days providing us with Mr. Cheng's details and mentioning that he would be happy to be interviewed. The reason given was he was a member of the non-attendance cases team within the Education Bureau.

Mr. Cheng had been working for the Education Bureau for more than 30 years in different roles. For the first 12 years he was a Student Guidance Officer, then 10 years as a Supervisor of the Student Guidance Officers, then 8 years as a School Development Officer and the latest one for one and a half years in the non-attendance cases team. In the non-attendance cases team there were 13 Student Guidance Officers and one Assistant Inspector working. The team was responsible for looking after non-attendance and dropout cases for the junior secondary students typically age-group 11–15 for the whole of Hong Kong. In his previous roles Mr. Cheng mainly worked in Yuen Long, Tai Po and North districts but in the new role he had to work for all districts in Hong Kong.

8.1.2.2 Mr. Albert Cheung

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was contacted asking for two interviews, one with Chairman and another with one of the working group members of the 'Education for All' report (EOC 2011). The 'Education for All' report of the Equal Opportunities Commission in 2011 identified for the first time the issue that the participation of ethnic minority students in upper secondary and post-secondary level was disproportionately low compared to the mainstream Chinese students (EOC 2011). A quick reply came from Mr. Cheung that the EOC Chairman was not involved in the Working Group and the Working Group itself already expired. He indicated, however, he would be happy to be interviewed given his research portfolio in the organization and his involvement with the Working Group.

Mr. Cheung had been working for the EOC since its establishment, which was 17 years altogether. In the first 7 years he worked for the operational team for disability discrimination complaints. From 2003 he joined the policy and research team and held an important position in the team. The main role of the team was to work on public policy issues that might have an impact to change the livelihood of the disadvantaged groups of people, and also to conduct various research related to it. In addition to the policy and research area there were another three areas that EOC also worked on namely complaints, legal assistance and public education and promotion.

8.1.3 Teacher Other Than Studied Three Schools: Martin Knowles

The first author first came to know about Mr. Knowles from one of the Associate Supervisors of his PhD supervision panel. He was told that Mr. Knowles was teaching ethnic minority students in a secondary school and also doing some research on the dropout issue for his Master's thesis. When asked whether he would be interested to take part in an interview for the research, Mr. Knowles replied positively.

Mr. Knowles was British and had been living in Hong Kong since 2010. He had a teaching qualification from the United Kingdom and he taught there prior to moving to China in 2009. In his 1 year stay in China he was also teaching. Then he took a job in a Hong Kong secondary school as a native English teacher, commonly known as a NET, in 2010, and moved to Hong Kong at the beginning of the academic year 2010–2011 to start work. One of the other reasons for Mr. Knowles to move in Hong Kong was his girlfriend, a Hongkonger. Mr. Knowles was also doing a Master of Education degree part-time in a university of Hong Kong where he was pursuing a thesis on 'at risk of dropping out students' mainly looking at what factors push them out of schools or to stay in school. Mr. Knowles could speak both Putonghua and Cantonese.

The school in Hong Kong where Mr. Knowles was teaching was a secondary school, a so called band 3 school. It was a 25 year old mainstream school for Chinese students. The school started admitting ethnic minority students 5 years ago. Like many other schools in Hong Kong the numbers of the total students was declining which was why Mr. Knowles' school had opened their places for ethnic minority students.

8.1.4 NGO Professional: Mr. Monu Pun

Several NGOs were approached seeking support for the research to allow one of their staff to be interviewed. Some of them did reply while some of them declined the request saying that they did not have enough resources to support us. It was only International Social Service Hong Kong (ISSHK) that replied positively. Mr. Monu Pun, one of the Coordinators of Harnessing Opportunities and Potentials for Ethnic Minorities (HOPE) Centre of ISSHK replied and offered himself for interview.

Mr. Pun moved to Hong Kong from one of the South Asian countries in 2009 to join his wife who was a Hong Kong permanent resident. He started working for ISSHK from early 2010. In his last three and a half years he was mainly working for the HOPE program while the program itself had started 1 year earlier. The main objective of the HOPE Centre was to support the ethnic minority population to integrate well with the local Chinese communities so that everyone could live harmoniously with dignity. For this the Centre provided a wide range of services including English and Chinese language classes, computer classes, after school tutorial classes, financial management training, orientation training on Hong Kong laws and services, and access to Hong Kong public services, vocational assistance and training skills for enhancement of youth, counseling, organizing cultural events, volunteering and hotline services for any emergency. The programs were mainly funded by the Home Affairs Department (HAD) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). In addition, the Hope Centre charged a token 100 HKD for each 50 h language course. Each year Mr. Pun's HOPE Centre provided services to 6000–7000 ethnic minority people including adults, children and youth.

8.2 The Magnitude of 'Out of School' Issue for Ethnic Minority Young People

All participants viewed being 'out of school' or dropping out as a big issue for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. Community leader, Mr. Baral, commented:

> 'Out of school' is a serious issue for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong because it is related to their future. Ethnic minority students are Hong Kong residents. They have rights to have good education and after that find a good job. If they can't finish school successfully or do not have a good degree they cannot find a good job. They will not be able to have an upward social mobility. If it continues this way, the social prejudice or stereotypes against them such as they are not successful, or they cannot get a good job will continue to remain in the society. For a healthy living in Hong Kong society, they must be supported to overcome this issue. Otherwise, it may create a social and community problem in the long run. Therefore, the dropout issue needs to be seriously taken. (Mr. Sumit Baral, community leader, interview, 12 February 2013)

The same line of argument was also revealed by community leader, Mr. Alam, and NGO professional Mr. Pun. Mr. Pun raised one further point. How could ethnic minority young people be able to make their future generation successful in Hong Kong when they themselves could not be successful? He referred it as a vicious cycle that is difficult to break.

In noting the importance of the dropout problem for ethnic minority students and explaining its effect in the larger Hong Kong society and how Hong Kong government could actually use properly educated ethnic minority young people as a potential opportunity for addressing some of the emerging issues of mainstream Hong Kong society, EOC official Mr. Cheung commented:

> Dropout for ethnic minority young people is a big problem for our society. There are about 18 % Hong Kong school graduates can go to University but the percentage of ethnic minority students coming to the University is very low compared to the Chinese students. Not getting chance of education for upper secondary or higher education lessens the opportunity for finding a better job. Many of them get involved in crimes, drug trafficking etc. for earning their living which are ultimately creating many social problems. I heard this from many of my colleagues from the Police Department. If we can help them to be academically successful it would help many of them not to rely on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance. Ultimately, for better social stability this issue needs to get priority….Hong Kong is facing a major challenge of ageing population at the moment. The birth rate for local Chinese people is less than one, but ethnic minority population has traditionally bigger family. Hong Kong government must think to make these young people highly productive as they are belonging to Hong Kong. (Mr. Albert Cheung, EOC official, interview, 28 February 2013)

Community leader, Mr. Rahman, mentioned how Hong Kong was losing its talented ethnic minority young people by not enrolling them in the local university. He expressed his particular dissatisfaction for the very low participation or opportunities of ethnic minority students in higher education in HK. He stressed that their children wanted to contribute positively in Hong Kong society and for that they needed to be educated well in Hong Kong universities. But unfortunately they could not get places there; whereas some of them had actually secured places at very good universities abroad. Given that Hong Kong had some top-rated universities, they

really did not need to go abroad, if they could have access to the local universities they would love to stay in Hong Kong. "Government must think carefully how they can increase the enrolment of ethnic minority students at the local universities", Mr. Rahman further emphasized.

However, EDB official Mr. Cheng did not view that 'out of school' or dropout was a big issue reasoning that the numbers of ethnic minority students were not big in Hong Kong schools. He mentioned that the ethnic minority students who started schools from Primary One can continue up to Form Six but those ethnic minority students who came and started their education from late primary or secondary schools were having problems with academic results, especially Chinese language. He further added that children from the family of new immigrants from Mainland China and some Chinese children born outside Hong Kong such as in the United States or Canada and came back Hong Kong at some point later were also facing the same difficulties in Hong Kong schools. If the students were willing to work hard they could be successful in Hong Kong. Mr. Cheng's view is a long standing stereotype of ethnic minority students' learning in Hong Kong as suggested in the literature (Ku et al. 2005).

In terms of the extent of 'out of school' phenomenon, community leader, Mr. Baral, from his one decade long teaching experience in Hong Kong, roughly estimated that about 15 % ethnic minority students dropped out between Form Three and Form Five and only 5 % students could make it through to university. Dropping out typically started at Form Three and continued up to the end of secondary Form Four. In terms of any specific patterns of drop out Mr. Baral mentioned that he did not notice any gender-based or ethnic – based pattern. Another community leader and teacher, Mr. Alam, mentioned that some ethnic minority children in the pre-primary age-group were not attending any kindergarten. He was also aware of the dropout issue in the secondary school and he estimated the dropout percentage in his school was about 5 % every year. Generally the bottom 5 % of students in the class had to repeat their Form, and many of the dropout ethnic minority students came from this group. Most of the ethnic minority students dropped out in Form Three or Four. Mr. Alam noticed that more boys than girls were dropping out of but he did not observe any ethnic specific pattern across ethnic minority groups.

Mr. Knowles from his 3 years' work in a Hong Kong secondary school estimated that about two or three ethnic minority students from a class of 30 dropped out every year. Although in statistical term it meant about 10 %, he could not confirm that number. He referred to his current Form Four class that had 27 students in Form Three in the last year but five students had already dropped out. His current Form Five class, however, had only lost one student from the Form Four class last year. In terms of any specific dropout pattern, Mr. Knowles commented:

> There are mainly two types, firstly, the students who are told to repeat their Forms are most likely to be dropping out of school for a variety of reasons. Secondly, there are students who are looking for places in other schools and students who are working dropped out more. Dropping out happens throughout all forms in the same manner. I observed during my last three years in the school that boys dropped out more than girls. Since the school has more Pakistani students the dropout numbers for them are also the highest. There is a common

> view in the school that Indian and Filipino students are doing better and Pakistani students are not. Nevertheless, in my classes as well as in other non-Chinese classes in the school the highest achievers are Pakistani and Pakistani students are the majority in the list of the lowest achievers too. (Martin Knowles, teacher, interview, 9 March 2013)

EOC official Mr. Cheung linked the dropout issue to the compulsory education law of Hong Kong that requires all Hong Kong students to be in the school from age 6 to 15. He thought that many ethnic minority students started drop out after finishing the compulsory education level at Form Three meaning that dropping out mainly started from Form Four and continued until the end of secondary. He further added that the dropout phenomenon reached the highest level after Form Five because students had to sit for the HKCEE (this was before the new 3-3-4 schooling system Hong Kong that provided 6 years of compulsory education. Mr. Cheung had not noticed any specific pattern of dropout according to gender or ethnic group.

In terms of his direct encounter with 'out of school' students, NGO professional Mr. Pun had not come across any young person coming to the HOPE Centre to who had not been attending kindergarten or primary school. He mentioned, however, that sometimes he provided advisory support to some guardians who sought support for their children having serious school attendance problem. He remembered one case where the child was only in Primary Six but had not been going to school for more than 2 months when the student's father sought support from him. In such cases, Mr. Pun and his colleagues often helped parents by providing information on how to be connected with and get support from a social worker at the school or from the Integrated Family Service Centre (IFSC). Identifying the number of school dropout students in HOPE's skills enhancement program for youth seemed difficult for Mr. Pun. He thought the main reason was participants did not generally want to reveal their dropout status. There were four batches of skill enhancement programs organized every year with around 12 students in each batch. While many of the participating youths were regular Form Four or Five students some of them were school dropouts. Mr. Pun mentioned that he only found a few students who revealed their school dropout status, yet, he stressed that there must be more students in the group who also dropped out of school but did not reveal their status. Because of this Mr. Pun hesitated to estimate any percentage of school dropouts participating in their programs. He also observed some patterns of ethnic minority school dropouts from his experiences working with them:

> Most of them dropped out of school after Form Five or Six. Many ethnic minority dropout students had come to Hong Kong having completed their primary schooling from their home countries. There are also dropout students among the ethnic minorities who have always been in the Hong Kong education system since the beginning of their schooling. The number of dropout boys is always dominant while Pakistani and Nepalese dropouts are more than other ethnicities. Indians children drop out less; some families either sent them back to India or other countries to graduate. (Mr. Monu Pun, NGO professional, interview, 2 May 2013)

While EDB official Mr. Cheng indicated a rounded figure about 1,800 overall students dropping out every year in Hong Kong, 400 were from primary level and 1400 were from junior secondary level. Unfortunately, he could not provide any

specific dropout data for ethnic minority students. He reasoned that they normally did not summarize the separate statistics of non -attendance or dropout cases for ethnic minority students. Rather the office kept records only for the whole student group. Nonetheless, he agreed when the interviewer reminded him that the detail record file for individual cases, ethnicity was mentioned. In terms of any specific pattern for dropping out he indicated that, end of Form Three was one of the critical points for ethnic minority students dropping out as it was the end point of compulsory education and boys dropped out more than girls.

8.3 The Reasons for Ethnic Minority Young People Being 'Out of School'

All the stakeholders identified a range of factors to explain why ethnic minority students were 'out of school'. These are given below.

8.3.1 Academic Achievement

Poor academic achievement emerged to be one of the main reasons for ethnic minority students being 'out of school'. EDB official, Mr. Cheng, EOC official, Mr. Cheung, teacher, Mr. Knowles and community leader, Mr. Alam indicated that especially identified it because of the less academic achievement in supported this a reason for dropping out. Many ethnic minority students did not do well in subjects such as Mathematics, Chinese, Science, Liberal Studies, English. Mr. Knowles, however, mentioned that the decisive factors for ethnic minority students for promotion were their results in Mathematics, Chinese and English. Because of their lower scores they lacked the required marks to be promoted to the next class. Then they were either asked to repeat or were "kicked out" of school. Many of them eventually dropped out.

8.3.2 Inadequate Schooling Provision for Ethnic Minority Students

Pre-primary schooling was neither free nor compulsory in Hong Kong. Therefore, many ethnic minority students could not afford the cost of private kindergarten even after getting support from government's pre-primary education voucher scheme, as mentioned by both community leaders Mr. Rahman and Mr. Alam. Even access for ethnic minority students in primary and secondary schooling was somewhat inadequate as getting available school places for ethnic minority children remained problematic for some of the community members. Mr. Rahman commented:

> Not all the schools in Hong Kong admit ethnic minority children. Some of them teach in English where ethnic minority kids usually go. These schools are called designated schools but the numbers of places in these schools are not sufficient. Therefore, many of the students had to wait for one to two years in order to get a place in school. The standard of these schools is not good. These designated schools mostly have only ethnic minority children, so they miss the opportunity to make friends with majority Chinese students. English School Foundation (ESF) schools and international schools, who also teach in English, are just beyond most of the ethnic minority community people's affordability. (Mr. Tareque Rahman, community leader, interview, 12 March 2013)

EOC official, Mr. Cheung's account showed how school provisions for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong interacted with poor academic achievement and ultimately resulted in dropouts. Mr. Cheung asserted:

> The school allocation system for secondary is very competitive in Hong Kong mainly based on students' academic performance; parental choice is also considered. Ethnic minority students cannot get a place in a good English medium Band 1 secondary school because the academic requirement for getting in those schools are high which many ethnic minority students do not possess because of their lower achievement. Most of the ethnic minority students end up going to English medium Band 3 designated schools where Chinese language learning environment is completely missing because not many Chinese students are going to these schools. Some students get places in Band 2 or Band 3 schools where the medium of instruction is typically Chinese. Many students are not doing well in other subjects in these schools because of their weak Chinese. Because of their poor academic achievement they dropped out at some point of their later secondary years. (Mr. Albert Cheung, EOC official, interview, 28 February 2013)

8.3.3 Low Educational Aspiration

Community leader, Mr. Baral, indicated low education aspiration was a factor for school failure. Some ethnic minority students were highly motivated and had high expectation towards their study while some were not. He associated this with the difficulty level of curriculum in Hong Kong schools compared to the curriculum in ethnic minority students' home country. He stressed that he taught in schools in two countries which helped him to compare. Many newcomers from south Asian countries found the study really hard for them to continue in Hong Kong schools.

EOC official, Mr. Cheung, linked dropping out and lack of high aspiration for study with ethnic minority students' feeling of exclusion from the school. Ethnic minority students had fewer or no opportunities to mix with Chinese students in both designated schools and mainstream Chinese schools, therefore, they felt excluded from the school. He thought the feeling of exclusion from the school negatively affected ethnic minority students in their aspiration and motivation of continuing education in Hong Kong school. He mentioned, however, that this was nothing to do with skin color or racism but rather Chinese culture. He gave an interesting explanation:

> Generally higher academic achievement is highly valued in Chinese culture. Chinese students want to mix only with those students who are doing better academically so that they

> can be influenced positively. Family also encourages them to do this. This is a long tradition in Chinese culture. Since ethnic minority students are not generally doing well in the school, therefore, Chinese students don't want to mix with them. (Mr. Albert Cheung, EOC official, interview, 28 February 2013)

8.3.4 Chinese Language

Not surprisingly Chinese language emerged as one of the other main reasons for the school failure of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong as indicated by all the participants. Many ethnic minority parents did not want their children to attend mainstream Chinese school because the medium of instruction was Chinese. Rather, they preferred to send their children to designated schools where the medium of instruction was English. Yet they had to take Chinese language courses in designated schools. The level of Chinese taught in those designated schools was low compared to the Chinese taught to Chinese students. Many students found the Chinese language subject difficult to pass. Community leader, Mr. Khan, stressed that all children from his community regularly complained that they found Chinese very difficult to learn. He had not yet come across to any students from his community who was doing really well in Chinese. The level of achievement, however, actually varied from student to student as mentioned by community leader, Mr. Baral. He found the Chinese language ability of many students from his previous jobs in a designated school was 'outstanding', whereas some were having serious difficulties in learning Chinese. Especially those who joined Hong Kong school later at some point in late primary or early secondary school faced greater difficulty. Even students who had passed Chinese could not get through to universities or could not get a proper job because of the higher level of Chinese language requirements – a gap existed between their achieved Chinese qualification and required qualification for higher education and employment. To highlight the consequences of poor Chinese language skill NGO professional, Mr. Pun, mentioned that due to the lack of Chinese language skill there was only one Pakistani woman from the entire ethnic minority community who up until now had a civil service job.

A somewhat different opinion came from community leader, Mr. Alam. When asked hesitantly whether Chinese language skill had any bearing on dropping out of school, given that he had his PhD degree focusing on Chinese language learning of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong school, he immediately replied negatively. After a couple of seconds he mentioned that it could be a factor in mainstream Chinese medium schools and in some new designated schools that had recently admitted ethnic minority students. He further added that designated schools that were catering for ethnic minority students for a long time such as his school probably did not have any problems with students who were dropping out due to Chinese language issues.

8.3.5 Behavioral Problems

EDB official, Mr. Cheng, indicated that the behavioral problems of ethnic minority students were a major issue for their not succeeding in the school. Teacher, Mr. Knowles, agreed in the sense that students' behavioral scores were also considered for promotion in Hong Kong school in addition to academic results. He commented:

> Academic achievement and behavior are considered simultaneously for their promotion. A student who is very good at behavior but not doing well academically in the school can be promoted to the next Form. In the same way, one who is passing marginally in academic subjects but doing very badly in behavior can be told to repeat the Form. So, behavior is very important for the school making decisions to let students be promoted to the next form. (Martin Knowles, teacher, interview, 9 March 2013)

The main behavioral issues for ethnic minority students that Mr. Cheng mentioned were talking in the classrooms, not concentrating on lessons, chatting with friends during the lesson, not obeying teachers. Mr. Knowles, however, sounded somewhat critical of the way students' behavior was viewed as 'problematic' in Hong Kong schools and teachers' expectations towards students' behavior. He said that sleeping in the classroom was not viewed as a major behavioral problem in Hong Kong school and he saw many Chinese students sleeping and not concentrating on the study during the lesson. In contrast, some teachers did not expect students to talk before they started talking and if the students started talking then the behavior was viewed as problematic, even if the teachers probably did not explain their expectations to the students before and did not make an effort to manage their behavior. Mr. Knowles also mentioned that he found some ethnic minority students were more enthusiastic and active which he felt was far better than sleeping in the classroom. The behavioral problems of the students were nothing here compared to the behavioral problems in UK schools, he further added.

8.3.6 Stereotypes of Ethnic Minority Students

EOC official, Mr. Cheung, mentioned that many stereotypes of ethnic minority students' ability existed in Hong Kong schools such as they are not hard working, they are lazy, less motivated and the culture of their home countries does not regard education as important. He indicated that these types of stereotypes could negatively impact on their study and ultimately could contribute to school failure for ethnic minority students. He boldly commented, however, that: "this is nothing to do with less intellectual ability or anything like that rather these students are not getting effective support for their education which is actually hindering their success".

Teacher Mr. Knowles was also very much aware of many long standing stereotypes of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong schools. He said that people tended

to make generalizations from one or two instances. He shared one example that in his school few female students were hesitant to use a high commode toilet probably because they did not use it in Pakistan and in their house in Hong Kong they had flat commode. But later it had been generalized that all Pakistani girls did not use high commode. Mr. Knowles further stressed that it was really a problem to make generalizations from one or two instances because it created stereotypes and stereotypes could affect students' educational performance.

Interestingly, during the interview EDB official, Mr. Cheng, mentioned a handful of reasons for ethnic minority students' dropping but these were actually based on stereotypes. He indicated these under the guise of religious and cultural factors. His comment:

> There is some religious, gender and cultural reasons that many ethnic minority girls do not continue after primary education. They either stay back at home or go back to their home country. After a certain time they get married. Ethnic minority students who join schools in Hong Kong late cannot do well in education. Students have their sub-cultural groups like Pakistani group, Nepalese group, they always fight against each other. Ethnic minority students do not have any interest at all to learn Chinese. They have gross behavioral problems. (Mr. Lee Cheng, EDB official, interview, 26 February 2013)

8.3.7 Health Issues

EDB official, Mr. Cheng, indicated that the health issue of some ethnic minority students was one of the reasons that led to their being unsuccessful in school. He remembered some of them actually were not physically fit to continue school and some of them were suffering from illness for a long time. Eventually at some point they stopped coming to school. Mr. Cheng also mentioned that he found 'mental illnesses' in some dropout students and, in some cases, their parents. When asked to tell more about what type of 'mental illness', Mr. Cheng replied that it was not any serious mental disorder but some sort of disorder that one could easily perceive such as parents who did not show much concern when their children dropped out of school.

8.3.8 Special Educational Needs

Community leader, Mr. Alam, asserted that ethnic minority children with special education needs were more prone to school failure. He mentioned that some ethnic minority students had special education needs but they had not been identified earlier because either their parents were not aware of this or previous schools did not care much. Therefore, they did not have proper support right from the beginning of their schooling. Eventually many of them dropped out because they could not cope in the regular classroom.

8.3.9 Employment

Some participants felt that available employment was one of the other reasons for ethnic minority students' dropping out. Community leader, Mr. Baral, explained how it affected school failure:

> Many of the students get involved with part time work when they are 15 and in some cases even before. They then start liking their work, earning money. Slowly they lose their interest in education. Their motivation for continuing education also goes very low. As a result, they stop coming to school and continue work. This is a very clear reason for them to be dropping out that I noticed over my last many years in school and in the community. (Mr. Sumit Baral, community leader, interview, 12 February 2013)

Teacher, Mr. Knowles, echoed Mr. Baral regarding the relationship between employment and dropping out when he shared the story of one of his dropout students. The student dropped out of his class last year and then started working in a security job earning HKD 16 k per month. It significantly affected other students in the school because they were comparing University graduate salaries in Hong Kong that started with less than that amount, for instance, teaching assistants were paid only 10–12 k with a University qualification. He further added that when some of his students came in contact with their working friends outside the school they were influenced by their apparent success stories, and it impacted in a way that other students thought about leaving school and working to earn money as early as possible.

8.3.10 Family Factors

Most participants indicated that there were several factors related to ethnic minority students' families that affected their school failure. In terms of pre-primary 'out of school' ethnic minority children community leader, Mr. Rahman, mentioned that many of the ethnic minority children were not going to pre-primary schools mainly because of their parents' ignorance about this provision. This was also supported by community leader, Mr. Alam. In most of the South Asian countries pre-primary education was not offered or not compulsory, therefore, many parents were not aware of the pre-primary education provision in Hong Kong. Mr. Rahman asserted that although the Hong Kong government supported pre-primary education through the voucher scheme, making it free and compulsory would make pre-primary education more accessible to ethnic minority young children since the existing provision seemed costly for many of them. He also added that some ethnic minority parents just did not want to send their children to school so early but rather wanted to wait until primary age to start school.

The financial condition of the family was viewed as a major decisive factor for ethnic minority students' educational success by some participants. Teacher, Mr. Knowles, observed that the students, whose parents were well off, had good educational backgrounds and could communicate well with the school in English and Cantonese, were doing better in the school compared to other ethnic minority

students. Those families who could support their children continuously up to Form Six without asking for any return in between were staying in the schools more. Mr. Knowles also said that sometimes parents asked the students to help them in their own business or directly wanted some financial support if the family was poor and parents' income was not sufficient for their living. Those students were at more risk of dropping out. The poor economic condition of many ethnic minority parents meant they could not afford private tuition or extra support for their children who were failing in many school subjects such as Chinese and Mathematics.

Another family factor was ethnic minority parents' lower educational background that limited they extent to which they could support their children's education. Community leader, Mr. Rahman, mentioned that some parents did not have any education from their home country and they did not value education seriously for their children especially regarding completing school. Many ethnic minority students also attended some religious based education such as madrasah after schools. Children whose parents were more concerned about making the right balance between school academic work and after school religious work were often more successful in schools, he further added.

Community leader, Mr. Baral, felt some parents' lack of awareness about Hong Kong's school and curriculum, their low level of engagement in their children's education and their relatively poor support for the school activities were also contributing factors to their children's lack school success. He went on explaining that many South Asian parents were actually working hard in construction jobs because of their lower socio-economic condition. They did not have enough time to get involved with their children's education. In any case, they actually lacked skills to support their children in education.

Another parental factor was the poor relationship among between minority students and their parents. This impacted students' behavioral problems that led to adolescents' delinquency as observed by NGO professional Mr. Pun. There were some dropout students who had only single parent at home. Mr. Pun's account below showed how different family factors were interacting together and making school unsuccessful for ethnic minority students:

> In most cases both father and mother work, so they don't have enough time to give children. There was none to look after them or some of them are mainly looked after by domestic workers (if they could afford it). Therefore, this creates a gap between children and parents, a big gap. They don't know what their child is doing or don't have time to give academic support which children need from the parents. Or they even don't have skill to support academically. Parents' economic ability also causes some problem. If parents can't provide a good environment for studying at home because of crummy space, or can't support with adequate resources for education how will their children succeed in the school? (Mr. Monu Pun, NGO professional, interview, 2 May 2013)

8.3.11 School Factors

Some participants pointed to several school factors that affected ethnic minority students' school failure. These were mainly school policies and practices related to behavioral and academic requirements for progression in school, teaching-learning

practices, and the curriculum and assessment system in the school. For instance, when EDB official, Mr. Cheng, was asked whether there were any school factors that affected dropping out, he answered, "Should have". He continued that schools in Hong Kong made their own policy for acceptable student behaviors. It varied from school to school. Many ethnic minority students did not follow the standard and accepted outlook when they were coming to the school, such as, many students colored their hair which schools did not accept. Mr. Cheng remembered that many dropout ethnic minority students he came across had colored hair. He also mentioned that the acceptable academic achievement for progression varied from school to school. He stressed, however, that while the Education Bureau provided guidelines to schools not to be very strict about academic achievement requirement for progression, the accepted conduct of students largely rest with the individual school. NGO professional, Mr. Pun, also mentioned that there was too much pressure from the school side in terms of academic requirements that many ethnic minority students could not cope in the school and eventually dropped out.

Another school factor was the mismatch between teachers' teaching style and students' learning style as viewed by community leader and teacher, Mr. Alam. He commented:

> Students' preferred learning style does not match with many teachers' teaching style as students learn in different ways, for instance, some students are kinesthetic or musical but probably they could not have appropriate teaching in supporting their learning style and they do not have developed interests in other styles. At one point they drop out of school…. hidden curriculum in the school, that is, mainly environment of the school could also affect the dropout phenomenon. By environment I mean the teaching learning environment which is not supportive for the ethnic minority students. (Mr. Shahed Alam, community leader, interview, 19 March 2013)

Similarly community leader, Mr. Rahman, mentioned that ethnic minority children had different needs from majority Chinese children. Therefore, they had to be treated differently in school in terms of the way they were taught. This had also a relationship with the curriculum they experienced and the way they were assessed. He was concerned that these issues were not handled very well in schools. As a result, ethnic minority students did not show much interest about the schools and eventually dropped out.

8.3.12 Peer Factors

Some peer factors were indicated as affecting ethnic minority students' school failure by some participants. Community leader, Mr. Rahman, mentioned that since many ethnic minority students were not doing well in school, it had an effect on other ethnic minority students. Community leader and teacher Mr. Alam's, account below clearly showed how peers exerted influence on ethnic minority students' school failure:

> We try our best to make students successful in their study when they are in school. But we cannot control them when they are out of school. Many ethnic minority students mix with illegal refugees or asylum seekers from their same ethnic origin and roam around with them after school. They have many friends including refugees and asylum seekers who become members of gangs and triad societies and get involved in some illegal and unsocial activities. In Yuen Long many crimes were committed recently by refugees, asylum seekers, gangs and triads. There are some students may develop adolescent delinquency within themselves when they are getting along with them. One rotten fish is enough to spoil other fishes in the group…. Some students having their friends working for triad society or gang become highly influenced by them and at some point they leave school and join their friends in gang or triad society, the students become unsuccessful in school. (Mr. Shahed Alam, community leader, interview, 19 March 2013)

NGO official, Mr. Pun, also mentioned that there were many Pakistani or Nepalese boys involved with triad societies or gangs and they became engaged in many criminal activities including fighting with other gangs and drug trafficking.

8.3.13 Technology as 'Deviator' Instead of 'Mediator'

One interesting reason for dropping out asserted by EDB official, Mr. Cheng, was 'computer dependency' among young people. He commented:

> Computer dependency is a serious problem for the students. They mainly play games on computer as well as do some other things for the whole night; then go to bed around 6 o'clock in the morning. They cannot wake up in the morning and miss school. Even if they come they sleep in the classroom, they cannot concentrate in classes. It hampers their study; they cannot do well in the study and exam. At the end they fully stop coming to school. This computer dependency is harming many students now-a-days. (Mr. Lee Cheng, EDB official, interview, 26 February 2013)

Mr. Cheng further mentioned that this 'computer dependency' was not only a problem for ethnic minority students but also a problem for local Chinese students in Hong Kong schools.

8.3.14 Inadequate Educational Support and Lack of Quality Assurance

Some participants felt that the educational support for ethnic minority students was inadequate and inappropriate; therefore, it had an effect on ethnic minority students' school failure. Community leader, Mr. Baral, asserted that the support was limited to Chinese language improvement while there were many other issues related to ethnic minority education such as underachievement in Mathematics and the drop-out issue that needed to be attended to seriously. Even in the Chinese language support area EDB had not been yet able to introduce Chinese as a second language curriculum, he further added. Community leader, Mr. Rahman, sounded critical about too much after school support programs for Chinese language at school as

they were often inconvenient for the parents in picking up their children from school and also a long tiring day for students. Alternatively, he suggested deploying more funds to the local NGOs so that students could attend to extra Chinese language classes at NGOs in their locality during the night after taking rest at home after school.

It was clear from some participants' views that the government had spent a good amount of money for supporting ethnic minority students. Yet they expressed their disappointment at not seeing positive results. In terms of Chinese language support, EOC official, Mr. Cheung, admitted that although government was spending significantly to support ethnic minority students it was not going well. In addition, community leader, Mr. Rahman, revealed his dissatisfaction not seeing any success from the government's investment:

> I came to know from one meeting at the Home Affairs Department that the government spent HKD 70 million for Chinese language support of ethnic minority students last year, this is a very big amount for 6000 ethnic minority students, but the result is not satisfactory to anyone yet. (Mr. Tareque Rahman, community leader, interview, 12 March 2013)

EOC official, Mr. Cheung, identified absence of a strong quality assurance mechanism as the main reason for not achieving expected results from the funding for ethnic minority education support. He mentioned that it was part of the Hong Kong school culture that schools were independent and Principals enjoyed full autonomy. EDB was giving them money to support ethnic minority students for their Chinese language. Unfortunately, schools were sometimes not spending money in the right way. The monitoring and reporting systems were not very strong, the accountability system was not working well. Mr. Cheung further added that in one or two cases in the area of support for children with special education needs, he heard that Principals hired teaching assistants to support students but they used them for other unrelated duties.

Community leader, Mr. Alam, also a non-official member to the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony of Race Relations Unit of the Home Affairs Department of HKSAR, reasoned the same as Mr. Cheung. He further mentioned that money was not well spent and hesitated to tell more. Although it was tempting to pursue this issue, when he said that he could not tell more because of his affiliation with the government committee, the issue was left. Yet it did suggest for the first time that the issue of government expenditures one ethnic minority education needed to be further explored.

8.3.15 Racism

Community leader, Mr. Baral, indicated that racism existed in Hong Kong schools. He shared one story from his previous secondary school. Once a group of students were doing some activities in a hall room, the Chinese discipline teacher punished only ethnic minority students without any reason. The class teacher of that group of students was also Chinese, a very good colleague of Mr. Baral. She cried a lot for this injustice happening to her students. She became so shocked that she later quit the school.

Mr. Baral had also encountered some racist behavior in his own life too in Hong Kong. He commented:

> At my beginning days in Hong Kong, police were always checking my ID card wherever they saw me. It was a very odd feeling that they were only doing this with me, not with any other Chinese passing by us. I really did not like it….At my job in a Hong Kong school I did not get promotion in time because probably I could not speak Chinese. Although I passed a number of years teaching successfully in the school but I did not get my well-deserved promotion. (Mr. Sumit Baral, community leader, interview, 12 February 2013)

Another community leader, Mr. Rahman, asserted that the attitude of Hong Kong people towards ethnic minority population was not generally friendly. He had not over generalized it though, but mentioned that it was very much common among people who were less educated. Both community leaders, Mr. Baral and Mr. Rahman, stressed that racism in school and outside could have impacted ethnic minority students' school failure.

8.4 Ethnic Minority Young People's 'Out of School' Life

In terms of what ethnic minority young people do after dropping out all the participants provided more or less the same account. EDB official, Mr. Cheng, mentioned that all primary dropouts usually came back to school again. Some secondary dropouts who were below 15 came back to school. Some of them were placed in NGOs or vocational bridging courses in order to continue an alternative vocational path. Some stayed at home and waited until they were 15 so that they could start work. Some just could not be traceable. Many of the dropouts over 15 started working right away and some went for vocational courses. "Actually they are over 15, so they do not need to be followed up", Mr. Cheng commented. EOC official, Mr. Cheung, mentioned that many of them started working right away regardless of their age and also many of them were involved with criminal activities including gangs and drug trafficking.

Teacher, Mr. Knowles, shared the experience of observing dropout students from his school:

> Many of them start working right away. Many of them are not doing anything; they are just staying at home. The proportions of working students and students not doing anything are half and half. Most of the students who start working are mainly in the restaurant, bars and security. I heard a very few students get involved in some drug trafficking or with stealing groups. The overall gang involvement of the students of my school is low as one of the responsibilities of one Pakistani teaching assistant is to talk to the gangs for not engaging students of the school. Even one of my student's elder brothers who is a gang leader and does not want his younger brother getting involved with any gang, he actually scared the younger brother threatening that if he gets involved he would punish him. (Martin Knowles, teacher, interview, 9 March 2013)

NGO professional, Mr. Pun, mentioned that some of the dropout young people passed the whole day hanging out with friends as both parents were out for work, so

there were none at home to whom they would have to be accountable for staying outside. While Nepalese dropout young people seemed to be involved in security, construction, bar and restaurant jobs, Pakistani dropout young people were more inclined to set up their own business but also went into construction jobs, he further added.

8.5 Summary

This chapter presented selected participants' views on the 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong – its magnitude, reasons and what ethnic minority young people do being 'out of school'. The participants were three ethnic minority community leaders, two government officials, one teacher from other than three studied schools and one NGO professional. Their accounts provided a clear picture to understand the 'out of school' issue from their perspectives in relation to ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong.

The interviews with other stakeholders revealed that the 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people had been viewed by most of them as a significant issue. It also emerged from the interviews that there are an array of factors at the levels of students, their families and schools, and factor such as racism that potentially could affect ethnic minority young people's being 'out of school'. The 'out of school' life of ethnic minority young people appeared to be mainly working in different sectors such as restaurants, bars and clubs, construction and security services.

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Chapter 9
Understanding 'Out of School' Issues for Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong

Abstract The findings of Chaps. 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are summarized with comprehensive and critical discussion, referencing the theoretical frameworks and wider literature utilized in this research. For issues that could not be easily explained, broader frameworks and wider literature were drawn upon. Implications for Hong Kong education policy, practice and theory, and how these related to the findings are discussed. The chapter starts with the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong and implications. The reasons for ethnic minority young people being 'out of school' are organized and discussed according to factors identified with case study participants and interviews with other stakeholders. Factors are organized into 17 themes: low academic achievement; over-age and retention or repetition; low education aspiration; attendance issue; Chinese language; behavioral problems; employment; involvement with gangs; health issues; school changes or student mobility; peer factors; family factors; school factors; community factors; differences of culture in education; immigration and citizenship; and racism. Family factors and school factors are further sub-divided. For the other stakeholders, special educational needs and stereotypes were factors that also identified. Gender and school failure, and implications are discussed. Finally, the life of ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong and implications are reported.

While Chaps. 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 presented findings of the research reported in this book, the current chapter summarizes these findings, and provides a comprehensive and critical discussion drawing on different theoretical frameworks and wider literature. There are five sections in this chapter. Section 9.1 reiterates aims and objectives and highlights the questions to be addressed in this book. Sections 9.2, 9.3, and 9.4 present a summary of the findings according to these guided questions. These sections also critically discuss the findings in relation to theoretical frameworks and wider literature, and how these help to explain these findings. Issues that are not easily explained are also discussed by drawing on broader frameworks and wider literature. There is a focus on these discussions on implications for policy, practice and theory as these relate to the findings. Section 9.5 provides a summary of the chapter.

M.K. Bhowmik, K.J. Kennedy, *'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong*, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects 32, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-0327-1_9

9.1 Aims, Objectives and Questions

This book has sought to explore the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong, the reasons for these young people being 'out of school', and what their 'out of school' life looks like. The following three questions guided the investigation:

1. What is the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?
2. What are the reasons for ethnic minority young people being 'out of school'?
3. What is the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong?

9.2 What Is the Extent of 'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong?

Limited international data sources showed that there are 'out of school' students in Hong Kong. Yet there seems to be inconsistency found between government and international reporting of 'out of school' data. The discrepancy might be attributed to government data that reports only dropout rate and does not include other important components such as percentage of students never enrolled in a particular level of education and students at risk of dropping out, all of which would help to understand the 'out of school' issue more holistically. Importantly from the point of view of the issues raised in this book, the government data on non-attendance cases or dropouts does not include any breakdown in terms of the ethnic background of students so that the government data and international data reported cannot be used to understand the extent to which ethnic minority students are 'out of school'.

The census and other available data sources regarding the number of ethnic minority students raised the problem of multiple data sources and inconsistencies across datasets. The lack of data regarding ethnic minority education on the part of Education Bureau (EDB) led us to examine the census data to understand the extent of the 'out of school' issue. Unfortunately, the census data seemed to be a very blunt data source for estimating the number of 'out of school' ethnic minority students. If the pre-primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary age-group are taken into account, however, then at the upper levels (upper secondary and post-secondary) the figure may be as high as 25 % and 85 % respectively and at the lower levels (pre-primary and lower secondary) it could be as high as 13 % and 2 % respectively.

Since the available datasets were either contradictory or incapable of adding any real understanding to the issue of 'out of school' ethnic minority students, we moved to the individual school level to explore in depth in three schools whether the issue was recognized and to try and understand it in context. We found that 'out of school' ethnic minority students were a common feature of all three schools meaning that

there were examples in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary levels. Fieldwork at schools provided rich data to understand the dynamics of the 'out of school' issue seen from the point of view of schools, principals, teachers, school social worker, ethnic minority education support programme staff, and students. While the statistical analysis suggested that there was an 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority students, the fieldwork highlighted the nature of the issue and its meaning for individuals and the schools that were meant to support them.

9.2.1 Implications

The implications of the findings for question 1 are manifold. First, at policy level, there is simply not enough data available to judge adequately the nature of the 'out of school' problem for ethnic minority students. Therefore, it is hard to devise any appropriate support measures to address the issue for them. Internationally, the findings of the research reported in this book have implications in relation to one aspect of the popular discourse of 'Education for All' (EFA) agenda including Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Dakar Goals (UN 2000; UNESCO 2000). The issue is, those ideas are usually applied only in development contexts and do not concern societies such as Hong Kong's. Findings reported here, however, raise serious concerns about the 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people if Hong Kong to ensure 'Education for All' for all its children.

Second, at the practice level, schools face great difficulties making decisions that are any different from those made concerning Chinese students. That is, since the system does not see the 'out of school' issue as a priority to be addressed, schools do not see the retention of ethnic minority students as something to which they should be committed. For example, the lack of guidelines on reporting dropouts by ethnic group may send the message that it is not an important issue. In addition, recording only the dropout figure at school level or system level can only portray part of the scenario, and cannot provide a full picture of 'out of school' issue. Therefore, it is important on the part of EDB to produce 'out of school' data drawing on broader theoretical frameworks, and to disaggregate by ethnic group.

Third, from a theoretical perspective, the study has important implications in relation to understanding multiculturalism in Hong Kong. It is clear from the findings that Hong Kong is a multicultural society and it is reflected in its students' population. Available educational data, however, does not say much about ethnic minority students' access, participation and outcomes in education. Thus at the system level there is less recognition that a multicultural society requires any special policy measures. This means that policy makers and the education system as a whole are not aware of the different needs and challenges of ethnic minority students which, of course, are a prerequisite for addressing those needs and challenges. The goal of civic integration ("2014 Policy Address", 2014), an aspiration of the Hong Kong government, masks the diversity and difference within society. This issue is discussed in more detail below.

Despite the fact that there is legislation in place to protect the educational rights of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong, they continue to face a huge number of issues and challenges inside school, as shown in this book as well as the literature in general (please see Sect. 2.4.7 of Chap. 2 for a review of this). In addition, this book shows that a good number of ethnic minority young people seem to be also 'out of school' which adds a new dimension to ensuring equitable educational provision. There are some general support measures in place (although inadequate and inappropriate) but no one is actually giving attention to students who are receiving either no or limited education. This raises the question of Hong Kong's overall attitude towards its ethnic minority young people. Drawing on critical race theory, the mainstream attitude towards ethnic minorities in general can be understood by one of the findings of a survey carried out by Census and Statistics Department (2009). The report indicated that only 56–67 % Chinese parents were comfortable sending their children to schools where a majority of students were from other ethnic minority groups (Indonesian, Filipino, Malaysian, Indian, Pakistani, Nepalese, Bangladeshi) (Census and Statistics Department 2009, p. 3). The same kind of tone was also evident in a recent survey on racial acceptance by Hong Kong Unison Limited (2012). From a more optimistic view, the study commissioned by EOC and conducted by Centre for Civil Society and Governance and Policy 21 Limited (2012) reported that South Asians in Hong Kong had been accepted as full members of Hong Kong society, thus were entitled to the same rights and benefits as the local Chinese. The study also asserted, however, that there had not been a high degree of integration between local Chinese and South Asians and they lived in two separate communities without much interaction (Centre for Civil Society and Governance & Policy 21 Limited 2012).

The government's attitude towards ethnic minority education can be understood by drawing on Kennedy (2011) who has explained overall education policy towards diversity in Hong Kong. He argued that the education policy in Hong Kong has remained mono-cultural despite the diversity of its population. He also argued that the idea of "fairness" is different in Chinese society and any kind of affirmative action seems contrary to Chinese notions of social justice in the sense that all citizens must be treated equally for there to be "fairness" in any society. Therefore, social justice itself is conceptualized differently in Chinese societies. This explains well why there is not enough 'out of school' data available for ethnic minority students as the same data for Chinese students are also unavailable. It may also explain why there is some reluctance on the part of EDB to acknowledge that retention issues are of particular importance for ethnic minority students requiring special and targeted measures. In a monocultural view of the world, all students are treated the same irrespective of their unique needs and life contexts.

9.3 What Are the Reasons for Ethnic Minority Young People Being 'Out of School'?

All the case studies with 11 'out of school' ethnic minority young people and interviews with other stakeholders revealed an array of factors that contributed to ethnic minority young people for being 'out of school'. Table 9.1 lists these factors that appeared to affect individual 'out of school' ethnic minority participants as well as the list of factors from the views of other stakeholders. These factors, as themes, were created from both cross case and within case analyses.

The above table shows that there are some common factors affecting many of the participants' school failure. For example, low academic achievement partly contributed to school failures of Maneesha, Morshed, Aruna, Veem, Azad, Abdal,

Table 9.1 List of factors contributing to being 'out of school'

Participants	Factors contributing to being 'out of school'
Maneesha Rai (dropout)	Low academic achievement in mathematics and science, differences in schooling culture, peer and community factors, dropout history in family, racism
Morshed Uddin (dropout)	Low education aspiration, over-age, poor academic achievement and behavioral problem, involvement with gang, dropout history in family, racism
Aruna Thapa (dropout)	Failure in HKCEE, Chinese and school's language policy, peer factors, dropout history in the family, racism
Veem Pun (dropout)	Low academic achievement, struggle in Chinese, issues in teaching, differences in schooling culture, employment, racism
Tanvir Ahmed (dropout)	Harassment, parental factors, intergenerational and cultural gap, peer factors, dropout history in the family, illness, racism
Azad Rabbani (dropout)	Mathematics fear, over-age and repetition, school changes, dropout history in the family, peer factors, racism
Abdal Rashid (at risk of dropping out)	Attendance issue, teachers' differential behavior, over age, health problem, low academic achievement, peer factors, employment, racism
Taufiq Iqbal (at risk of dropping out)	Low academic achievement, struggle in Chinese, Teacher's low expectation, racism
Nadia Bashir (at risk of dropping out)	Low academic achievement, problems in mathematics and Chinese, spoken language policy of the school, racism
Sahid Afridi (at risk of dropping out)	Low academic achievement, struggle in Chinese, racism
Shormin Abbas (never been to school)	Family poverty, high kindergarten fee, immigration policy, racism
Other stakeholders' view	Academic achievement, inadequate schooling provisions for ethnic minority students, low education aspiration, Chinese language, behavioral problem, stereotypes of ethnic minority students, health issue, special education needs, employment, family factors, school factors, peer factors, technology when 'deviator' instead of 'mediator', inadequate educational support and lack of quality assurance, racism

Taufiq, Nadia and Sahid. There are also some factors affecting only specific individuals. For example, Morshed's involvement with a gang contributed to his school failure in part. The table also shows that ethnic minority young people's school failure was more than simply a consequence of academic failure, rather there were many other interrelated factors contributed to it. Rumberger (2011) in the context of the United States and Hunt (2008) in the context of developing countries also suggested this interaction of factors that affect dropping out.

While Chaps. 5, 6, 7, and 8 indicated how these identified factors affected individual's school failure, the following sub-sections provide a comprehensive and critical discussion regarding these factors by using the identified frameworks for this study. The focus is on international literature and how this helps explain the factors influencing ethnic minority students in Hong Kong.

There are two broad sections in what follows. The first will discuss factors identified from case studies with 'out of school' ethnic minority participants and the second will discuss factors identified from interviews with other stakeholders. Since there are many common factors found from both data sources, many of the factors identified from stakeholders' interviews will inevitably be covered in the discussion of the first section. Therefore, in the discussion of second section we will only focus on those factors not covered in the first section.

9.3.1 Factors Identified from the Case Studies with 'Out of School' Participants

This section discusses factors identified from case studies with 'out of school' ethnic minority participants. In doing so it will describe factors identified in common through cross cases analysis as well as factors located within cases analysis. In addition, there are many common factors identified both from case studies with 'out of school' participants and interviews with other stakeholders. In discussion of this section, therefore, appropriate reference will be given if a particular factor is also identified by other stakeholders.

9.3.1.1 Low Academic Achievement

The most common factor found across all dropout participants (except Tanvir) was low academic achievement. While the failing subjects list included almost all school subjects such as Mathematics, Liberal Studies, Chinese, Science, Biology, Chemistry, English, Business, Accounting and Financial Studies, the first three subjects in the list emerged to be the main subject areas where many ethnic minority participants had not done well academically. This is to note here that Chinese is the most significant publicly identified cause of school failures of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong (Centre for Civil Society and Governance, & Policy 21 Limited 2012;

Ku et al. 2005; Hong Kong Unison Limited 2011; Loper 2004; Ullah 2012). Yet this book shows how problems with Chinese flow into all other academic subjects. Tanvir's exception of not having low academic achievement might perhaps be partly attributed to the extra academic support he had received from his father's Chinese friend and his uncle's Filipino girl-friend. Nevertheless, Tanvir also dropped out of school at the end of Form Four owing to a number of other factors. Harassment in school, parental factor, peer factor, dropout history in the family, illness, and racism all contributed to his school failure.

Academic achievement has been identified as one of the powerful predictors of dropping out in the developed context such as the United States (Rumberger 2011). A majority of the studies that examined the effects of test scores and grades on school failure found that academic achievement had a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of dropping out, more powerful in the middle and high school, although the majority of the studies did not find a direct relationship between achievement in elementary grades and dropping out (Rumberger 2011, p. 166). Similarly, lower achievement has been identified as an 'at risk' indicator of dropping out in the developing context (Hunt 2008, p 48). Research suggested that students with lower achievement were more at risk of dropping out than those with higher achievement.

9.3.1.2 Over-Age and Retention or Repetition

It was common that many of the 'out of school' ethnic minority participants actually came to Hong Kong at the end of primary school age or early secondary school age after having spent the first years of schooling in their home country. At the entry point to Hong Kong schools they were not allocated to the respective grade level relevant to their ages. Some of them also had to repeat in the same class because they had not achieved the required marks academically for promotion. Therefore, many of the participants ended up being in the classroom where they were significantly over-age compared to their peers. In the cases of Morshed and Azad, the issue of over-age was very prominent.

Over-age has been identified as an indicator for at risk of dropping out students in the developing context (Hunt 2008) and a predictor of dropping out in the developed context such as the United States (Rumberger 2011). Hunt's review found a number of studies that suggested students who started schooling over age were more at risk of dropping out than those who began at the official age and were less likely to complete full education cycle (2008, p. 45). Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review identified that 31 studies out of 52 that examined the relationship between over-age and dropout showed older students were more likely to drop out than younger students at the high school level (cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 164).

Similarly grade retention has been found as a consistent predictor of dropping out in the United States (Rumberger 2011). Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review in this regard showed that 37 of the 50 studies found retention in primary or junior secondary level increased the likelihood of dropping out of high school (cited in

Rumberger 2011, p. 163). Retention in the name of repetition has also been identified as at risk indicator for dropping out in the developing context (Hunt 2008). Hunt's review found a number of studies that showed a link between repetition and dropout meaning that repeating students were more at risk of dropping out than non-repeaters (p. 44).

9.3.1.3 Low Education Aspiration

It was found from the case study with Morshed that he had a low expectation for his education. Dropout literature in the developed context such as the United States shows a direct link between educational expectations and school dropout (Rumberger 2011). Most of the studies found that at the high school and middle school level higher educational expectations reduced the odds of dropping out while no significant relationship was found between expectations at elementary level and dropping out at high school (Rumberger 2011, p. 180). The case study with Aruna, however, revealed that despite her high academic expectation and some real efforts she could not succeed in high school. The relationship between low education aspiration and dropout has not been examined in the dropout literature in the context of developing countries.

9.3.1.4 Attendance Issue

Abdal's case study suggested that he had attendance problems in the school which contributed to his being at risk of dropping out. School attendance, often perceived as the most direct and visible indicator of school engagement, has been identified as a powerful predictor of dropping out in the context of the United States (Rumberger 2011). Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review reported that 13 out of 19 studies found high absenteeism predicted dropping out (cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 169). Similarly, irregular attendance has been identified as an at risk indicator of dropping out in the context of developing countries (Hunt 2008, p. 46). Hunt's review suggested that irregular attendance led to students' falling behind and they found difficulties in adjusting to the school activities. Therefore, they were more at risk of dropping out.

9.3.1.5 Chinese Language

Case studies of students such as Taufiq, Nadia, Aruna and Sahid, who were at risk of dropping out, revealed that many of them were seriously struggling in Chinese language especially in Chinese medium of instruction schools. It was found from the case study with dropout participant Veem that his struggle in Chinese was one of the main reasons for his dropping out. In addition, Aruna's high academic expectation in Hong Kong was hindered by her poor Chinese skills. Moreover, Maneesha

felt that she would never do well in work and career in future due to her lack in Chinese skill. Chinese emerged as one of the main three subjects in the list that many participants failed academically in school.

Dropout research in the context of the United States identified immigration status has a bearing on dropping out (Rumberger 2011). In most cases this was related to their poor English language skills. Most of the studies found that immigrant students with less English language ability had higher dropout rates (p. 184). Dropout research in the context of developing countries referred to the role language might play in dropping out (Hunt 2008). It can be particularly exclusionary when students are taught in languages other than their native languages. The research in Burundi found that repetition rates increased for children by up from 28 to 40 % in the first 2 years of using French as the language of instruction (Jackson 2000, cited in Hunt 2008). Research from Paraguay suggested that language influenced school performance and was highly associated with poverty, leading to dropout and low earnings (Patrinos and Psacharopoulos 1995, cited in Hunt 2008, p. 40).

In Hong Kong literature it has been common to attribute school failure for ethnic minority students to problems with Chinese language as the language of instruction in most secondary schools and to lower achievement in the Chinese language school subject (Centre for Civil Society and Governance, & Policy 21 Limited 2012; Ku et al. 2005; Hong Kong Unison Limited 2011; Loper 2004; Ullah 2012). Yet we learned differently from some 'out of school' participants' stories in this book. Maneesha's story showed that her experience of failure in other subjects such as Mathematics and Science also contributed to her lack of successful schooling. Morshed's success was only in Chinese and English subjects but he failed his other school subjects. Azad's main failure was in Mathematics. Aruna failed HKCEE in Biology and Chemistry. Nadia's continuous failure in Mathematics pushed her to be at risk of dropping out.

9.3.1.6 Behavioral Problems

Behavioral problems affected one participant's school failure as found from the case study with Morshed as well as some of the stakeholders who also viewed behavior an issue for some ethnic minority young people accounting for their lack of success in school. In addition to meeting academic achievement targets, acceptable grades in behavior is a requirement for progressing into the next Form in Hong Kong schools. Misbehavior in school seen as a deviant behavior exerts a direct influence on dropping out irrespective of educational level, as identified in the context of the United States (Rumberger 2011). Misbehavior was found to be significantly associated with higher dropout rates (Rumberger 2011, p. 173). In the developing context the relationship between behavioral issues and school failure seems not have been explored.

The research reported in this book, however, identified some divergence on the issue of behavior. Mr. Knowles, a teacher, indicated that judgments on behavior and conduct were not always value free and often reflected cultural values. 'Talkative' ethnic minority students were often seen as having behavioral problems in the context of relatively quiet Chinese classrooms that remain mostly silent.

9.3.1.7 Employment

Employment emerged as one of the important factors that influenced some of the 'out of school' ethnic minority participants' school failure. One of them, Abdal, seemed to be working below the legal employment age in Hong Kong with pay in cash arrangement. It was also found that Veem actually had been involved in work on a part-time basis first and eventually dropped out of school and started full time work.

In the United States' dropout literature, the relationship between students' employment and dropout was widely examined and the finding was mixed (Rumberger 2011). Some studies suggested that students who worked more than 20 hours a week were more likely to drop out than those who worked less or not at all (e.g. Monahan et al. 2011; Warren and Lee 2003 cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 178). Other studies found that students who worked fewer than 20 h consistently throughout the high school were less likely to dropout than those who worked more or not at all (e.g. D'Amico 1984; Zimmer-Gembeck and Mortimer 2006 cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 178). Dropout literature in the developing context identified child labor as a factor affecting educational access (Hunt 2008). Hunt's review pointed out that due to such labor a number of factors interacted to influence whether children become vulnerable to dropping out or actually dropped out of school (p. 15). It further argued that child labor was often part of a household's risk management strategy, with access to credit or assets influencing whether a child could stay in school. Children were more vulnerable to dropping out without these assets.

9.3.1.8 Involvement with Gangs

Morshed's case study suggested that he was part of a gang. It was also revealed from the interviews with other stakeholders that some ethnic minority students were involved with gangs during their high school and some of them became more engaged after stopping school. The gang involvement can be seen as misbehavior outside school, a deviant behavior which is often referred to as delinquency in the educational literature. In general, most of the research in the United States that looked at the relationship between delinquency and school dropout found that delinquent youths were more likely to drop out than non-delinquent youths (Rumberger 2011, p. 174). Most of the studies, however, were based on students' self-reporting of delinquency. One study (Finn et al. 2008 cited in Rumberger 2011) considered gang involvement as a classroom and school misbehavior along with other seven misbehaviors such as fighting, alcohol and marijuana use and examined its relationship with school failure. The study found that students who displayed at least two or three misbehaviors were three times more likely to drop out than the students displayed none or one. Students who displayed four or more misbehaviors were five times more likely to drop out. In the context of developing countries, the relationship between gang involvement and school failure has not yet been explored.

9.3.1.9 Health Issues

Health issues appeared to affect Tanvir and Abdal's status for dropping out and being at risk of dropping out respectively. In addition, some of the other stakeholders also identified health issues as a reason contributing to some ethnic minority students' school failure. The research in the United States examined the relationship between poor physical and mental health and dropout revealed mixed findings (Rumberger 2011). While one study (Roebuck et al. 2004 cited in Rumberger 2011) reported that having good health reduced the odds of dropping out, another review (Breslau 2010 cited in Rumberger 2011) found a somewhat ambivalent relationship in showing a clear and direct connection. Yet Rumberger (2011, p. 185) argued that there was stronger evidence found that health issues such as psychiatric disorders and overweight diminished learning and thus contributed to dropping out. Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review of research literature found some research revealed that adolescents with depression symptoms such as feeling helpless, lonely, sad etc. were less likely to graduate and more likely to dropout even after controlling for factors such as academic achievement and family background (cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 185).

Hunt's (2008) review in the context of developing countries argued that health problems such as under-nutrition and stunting were related to late enrolment that, in turn, is often associated with high dropout rates. He also pointed to research that indicated school-aged children suffered from protein-energy malnutrition, hunger, or who lacked certain micronutrients in their diet did not have the same potential for learning as healthy and well-nourished children (Pridmore 2007 cited in Hunt 2008).

9.3.1.10 School Changes or Student Mobility

School changes were common phenomena among ethnic minority students especially for those who joined late in Hong Kong schools as they had their first years of schooling in their home country. Even after coming to Hong Kong some of them changed schools voluntarily or involuntarily. In Azad's case study it was found that he studied in five schools altogether before dropping out. Among these four were in Hong Kong and one in Pakistan. While in primary level Azad voluntarily moved from one school to another, in the secondary level it was involuntary. Because of his low academic achievement he was 'kicked out' of his first secondary school. Therefore, mobility was very often related to low academic achievement and in some cases misbehavior. That is, students didn't always choose to move, rather the choice was made for them.

Changing schools, often referred to as student mobility in the dropout literature, was identified as a predictor of dropping out in the context of the United States. In all levels of education including primary, middle and high school, research found that student mobility increased the odds of dropping out and decreased the school

graduation rate (Rumberger 2011, p. 168). In the developing context, Hunt's review (2008) identified that child movement especially from rural to urban areas within country both increased and decreased educational chances. The review pointed out that children might move into urban areas to access education, but also might migrate for paid employment, which might limit educational opportunities in turn; and children who were living in slum areas or without permanent residence might move frequently, as a result, they often dropped out of school (p. 15).

9.3.1.11 Peer Factors

It was common that many 'out of school' ethnic minority research participants had friends from their own community who also dropped out of school previously. It was also found that some of their ethnic minority classmates were working part-time and at some point they stopped coming to school and started full-time work. Some of their ethnic minority classmates were also involved with gang activities and as a result at some point they also dropped out of school.

Undoubtedly, peers have a strong influence on adolescents. In the United States dropout literature it was consistently found that having dropout friends increased the likelihood of dropping out, with such association appearing as early as seventh grade (Rumberger 2011, p. 176). Dropout literature in the context of the developing countries, however, has not yet explored the relationship between peer factors and dropout.

9.3.1.12 Family Factors

A number of factors related to family background seemed to be related to participants' school failure. Literature both in developing and developed contexts identified family factors powerfully influencing school failure. The following are the different family factors that affected 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong.

Family Poverty

Family poverty seemed to be a very strong factor for the 'out of school' participants such as Shormin and Abdal. In Shormin's case it was so pervasive that the whole family was living in Hong Kong with an amount of only 10,000 HKD for a month for a family of four members which was far below than the poverty line considered in Hong Kong. As a result the family could not afford to send Shormin to a kindergarten even at the age of 5. In general the census data shows that the median incomes for the South Asians are among the lowest of all major ethnic minorities in Hong Kong excluding foreign domestic helpers (Census and Statistics Department 2007, p. 75; Census and Statistics Department 2012, p. 86).

In the context of the developing countries Hunt's (2008) review identified research that indicated direct and indirect schooling costs were important factors in whether children enroll in, attend and continue school since schooling incurred a range of costs. While direct costs referred to school fees, the more hidden costs included uniforms, travel, equipment and the opportunity costs of sending children to school. Therefore, family poverty appeared to be an important factor in determining success in school. Hunt argued: "both statistical data and empirical research suggest that children from better off households are more likely to remain in school, whilst those who are poorer are more likely never to have attended, or to drop out once they have enrolled" (Hunt 2008, p. 7).

In the United States' context family poverty as a part of composite indicator of socioeconomic status (SES) has been widely examined in the dropout literature (Rumberger 2011). Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review of research revealed that students from High SES were less likely to drop out than their counterpart students from low SES (cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 191). The review also found that family income predicted school failure; therefore, childhood poverty is a powerful predictor of adolescent and adult outcomes. Rumberger also highlighted one US national study that found students from the lowest quartile of SES were five times more likely to drop out than the students of highest quartile of SES (Dalton et al. 2009 cited in Rumberger 2011).

Parental Education

It was common that most of the parents of 'out of school' ethnic minority participants in this research did not complete secondary schools, some of them even did not complete primary schools. In some cases mothers did not attend any school in their life time. In the dropout literature in the developing context parental education has been identified as very influential in determining whether and for how long children continue schooling (Hunt 2008). Hunt's review highlighted research that found parental education was the most consistent determinant of child education and employment decisions (Ersado 2005, cited in Hunt 2008). The review also identified other research that suggested higher parental or household head level of education was linked to increased access to education, higher attendance rates and lower dropout rates (e.g. Ainsworth et al. 2005; Ersado 2005; Chugh 2004; Connelly and Zheng 2003; Hunter and May 2003; cited in Hunt 2008). Similarly, Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review in the context of the United States found that parental education predicted dropout from high school (cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 191). In the context of Portugal, Chagas Lopes and Medeiros (2004) examined the impact of intergenerational school achievement upon school failure and found that mother's school achievement had a bearing on children's school success. They also found a relationship between parents' school outcomes and children's extra school qualification and training programmes, civic and associative participation, and hobbies and leisure activities.

Dropout History in the Family

Based on the cases of Maneesha, Aruna, Tanvir and Azad it was commonly found that their siblings dropped out of school. In all cases their siblings dropped out of Hong Kong schools. Research in the context of the United States found a relationship between dropout and the dropout history in the family (Rumberger 2011). Rumberger suggested that students having a dropout sibling were more likely to drop out of school (p. 193). Dropout research in the context of developing countries, however, has not yet explored this relationship.

Parental Practices

It appeared that parental support to education was an issue for some 'out of school' ethnic minority participants as revealed from the case study with them as well as from the interviews with other stakeholders. While some parents were busy with their work for managing a living in Hong Kong and hardly found time to help their children in education, there were also some parents who lacked the skills to support their children in school work. Some of them also could not maintain proper communication with the school.

Dropout literature in the context of the United States identified family practices influenced dropping out (Rumberger 2011). Practices such as supervision and monitoring or helping with school work, communicating with the school, participation in the school activities etc. were suggested as positive family practices or parenting styles. Yet, American dropout literature did not find any consistent relationship between parental practices and school dropout. Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review revealed that only about half of the studies found positive parental practices reduced the odds of dropping out (cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 192). The dropout literature in the developing context mostly focused on the family factors at family structure and family resource level in exploring their relationships with school failure, but not in relation to family practices level (Hunt 2008).

Intergenerational transfer of psychosocial risk has been a popular research area in psychology. Serbin and Karp (2004) reviewed conceptual models and findings in relation to intergenerational transfer of psychosocial risk. They found that parenting has mediational effects on the transfer of risk including school failure, adolescent risk-taking behavior, early and single parenthood, and family poverty.

9.3.1.13 School Factors

Several school factors emerged from the case studies with 'out of school' ethnic minority participants that affected their school failure. Literature both in the developing and developed context identified schools exerting powerful influences over students' school success. The following are the school factors that contributed to ethnic minority students for being 'out of school' in Hong Kong.

Inadequate Schooling Provisions for Ethnic Minority Students

The case studies revealed that all the dropout and at risk of dropping out ethnic minority participants, with the exception of Morshed, studied only in designated schools. In Hong Kong although ethnic minority students were free to choose to apply for any type of school the real scenario was most of them actually went to designated schools and the number of these schools was limited. It was revealed from the interviews with other stakeholders such as community leader, Mr. Rahman, that some of the ethnic minority students had to wait 1–2 years to get a place even in designated schools. In addition, access to the pre-primary school seemed to be expensive for some ethnic minority young children, such as Shormin, as this provision had not yet been free and compulsory in Hong Kong.

This particular issue does not feature in the dropout research in the United States reviewed by Rumberger (2011). Yet his classification of school resources as one of the four school factors affecting school failure can be insightful in this regard. In contrast, in the developing countries' context supply of schools has been identified as a factor influencing dropout in Hunt's (2008) review. The review highlighted research that suggested, in many countries educational access could be restricted by an inadequate supply of schools or enough school places (Colclough et al. 2000 cited in Hunt 2008).

Segregation Effect in Designated School

It was evident that most of the ethnic minority students in Hong Kong were attending designated schools where only very few local Chinese students attended. The literature has criticized designated school provisions for segregating ethnic minority students (EOC 2011, p. 7; Hong Kong Unison Limited 2011). Such schools were seen to hinder students from integrating with the mainstream society. It might also affect their school failure and thus being 'out of school'.

Student composition, often referred as a social composition of a school, has been identified as a factor influencing school failure in the United States (Rumberger 2011, p. 194). Rumberger argued that recent research revealed that social composition in school could have as much impact on student outcomes as individual background characteristics of students. He highlighted research that found racial or ethnic and social class composition was almost twice as important as student's own race, ethnicity and social class in explaining educational outcomes (Borman and Dowling 2010, cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 194). The negative effects of social composition of school on educational outcomes are also well documented in the social, educational and developmental psychology literature (Schofield et al. 2006) in the context of developed countries. Schofield et al. (2006) suggested there was considerable evidence that segregating immigrant students in lower ability groups in Germany's three-tiered system of secondary education often increased achievement gaps between them and others. The relationship between social composition of school and school failure, however, has largely been unexplored in the developing context.

Issues in Teaching

Issues in teaching skills in Chinese and other subjects, as revealed from the case studies with dropout ethnic minority participants such as Maneesha and Veem, affected their school failure. Lack of teachers' skills in teaching Chinese as a foreign language was identified as a barrier for ethnic minority students to learn Chinese in the EOC report (2011). A wider literature has also reported the Chinese language issue including teaching for the Hong Kong ethnic minority students (e.g. Centre for Civil Society and Governance, & Policy 21 Limited, 2012; Ku et al. 2005; Hong Kong Unison Limited 2011; Loper 2004; Ullah 2012).

In the developed context such as the United States, it was found that teacher quality as a part of school resources has a bearing on dropout or graduation rates (Rumberger 2011). Similarly, in the developing context teaching quality has been identified as a factor affecting dropping out. As Hunt (2008, p. 39) argued, the quality of the teaching in schools is linked to the learning outcomes of student, it can also influence students' experiences of schooling, their motivations and the move towards dropping out.

School Policy and Practices

Several school policies and practices affected the school failure of ethnic minority participants. The most common was varied requirements in academic achievements and conduct records for progression. Setting academic standards by individual schools is common in Hong Kong and schools are free to set their own academic standard. Although there were some guidelines from EDB for lowering the requirement for progression it seemed that many schools actually relied on their own standard of high requirements. Unfortunately, these were more in designated schools where many ethnic minority students usually attended. Principal Mr. Yuen's comment was a testimony in this regard "the requirements in local Chinese schools for progression are much flexible compared to the designated schools". It was also found from the interviews with teachers and principals that the schools did not care much when some of their ethnic minority students reached compulsory education age whether they continued or dropped out.

Another policy and practice was related to language in the Hong Kong school. For example, language policy in Aruna's school did not offer her a better Chinese language course other than a very basic course. In case of participants at risk of dropping out, while Abdal was not allowed to speak in his home language in the school Taufiq, Nadia and Sahid were not even allowed to speak in English in addition to their home languages in school. These had made the school and classroom climates challenging for them. It was also found from some of the case studies that some of the 'out of school' ethnic minority participants were treated badly by their teachers and sometimes it even included verbal harassment.

School policy and practices have been identified as important school factors that affected school failure in both developed country and developing country literature

(Rumberger 2011; Hunt 2008). Rumberger argued that school policies and practices affect students in two different ways, one way is through policies and practices that lead to students' disengagement and in effect voluntary withdrawal through either dropping out or transferring, and the other way is through policies and practices that lead to involuntary withdrawal from school due to lower graders, poor conduct, lower attendance etc. (2011, p. 197). In Hong Kong context, the latter can be characterized as being 'kicked out' that was observed in some participants' cases. This was a process which was actually initiated by schools due to their progression policy that resulted in involuntary withdrawal or dropping out on the part of students. Rumberger (2011) also highlighted one study that found in a New York City high school some students were allowed to leave school at the age of 17 because they had reached the compulsory education age (Fine 1991 cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 198). In regard to the policies and practices related to schools' academic and disciplinary climate, Rumberger noted that positive school climate reduced the odds of dropping out (2011, p. 199). In the context of the developing countries verbal abuse or harassment by teachers has been found to lead to dissatisfaction with schooling and affects dropping out (Liu 2004; PROBE 1999 cited in Hunt 2008).

Teachers' Low Expectation

Teachers' low expectation seemed to affect Taufiq, an at risk of dropping out student. Some other stakeholders also felt that teachers' low expectation about ethnic minority students' educational success influenced ethnic minority students in the Hong Kong schools.

While Rumberger's (2011) framework for dropping out failed to explain this factor, Hunt's (2008) work in the context of developing countries identified literature showing a relationship between teachers' low expectations and dropping out. He highlighted research from Peru that suggested teachers had very low expectations of girls, because they believed girls would drop out (Ames 2004, cited in Hunt 2008). Drawing on social, educational and developmental psychology literature in the context of developed countries Schofield et al. (2006) suggested that there is a significant amount of evidence supporting the conclusion that teachers' expectation regarding students' academic ability and achievement can impact students' academic outcomes. They also found that it is often case that teachers often have lower expectations for the academic performance of students from low socioeconomic status and/or immigrant and minority backgrounds.

9.3.1.14 Community Factors

The case studies with some 'out of school' ethnic minority participants revealed that it was a common scenario among their communities that young people stopped going to school after a certain point of time and then they largely started working. It seemed this practice in the community affected their school failure. It can be also mediated through peer factors in the ethnic minority community.

Community factors have been identified as predictors of dropping out in the developed context such as the United States (Rumberger 2011). One study highlighted that community factors could affect adolescents in three different ways such as access to institutional resources, parental relationships and social relationships (Leventhal and Brooks-Gun 2000, cited in Rumberger 2011). Although Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review of literature failed to find a statistically significant relationship between dropout and community factors (cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 201), in his later work Rumberger (2011, p. 200–201) argued that affluent neighborhoods or communities provide students more access to community resources and positive role models from affluent neighbors. In the developing context relationship between community factors and dropout has not yet been explored.

9.3.1.15 Differences of Culture in Education

Case studies with Maneesha and Veem revealed that differences in schooling culture between their previous education in Nepal and later education in Hong Kong had affected their school failure. It was also common that many ethnic minority students who joined late in Hong Kong schools had experienced two types of different cultures in schooling. Rumberger's (2011) dropout framework cannot explain this cultural difference in schooling as a factor that can affect dropout. Hunt's (2008) work in the context of developing countries does not identify the influence of culture. The relationship between cultural differences in schooling and dropout and the limitation of existing dropout frameworks in conceptualizing this is discussed below.

There is a common trend within the Nepalese community in Hong Kong that many of their children start their schooling in Nepal at early years and then move to Hong Kong in the middle of their school age (Ku et al. 2010). Therefore, they actually experience two different schooling systems. Sometimes, they might have some cultural shock due to differences in schooling features as happened to Maneesha when she saw students were not obeying teachers in the school. One cultural difference that impacted on her and Veem in Hong Kong was schools or teachers did not seem to care whether they were doing well or not. Although Maneesha and Veem loved the freedom at their school it came with a price – lack of attention to their academic development. Maneesha and Veem, like many of their ethnic minority friends, and as reported in the broader literature on ethnic minority experience in Hong Kong (O'Connor 2011), liked the freedom afforded them in Hong Kong, but it seemed such freedom also meant inadequate attention from their teachers. This clearly shows a wide gap in the knowledge of South Asian schooling culture and education systems in the part of Hong Kong schools and teachers. It might have a serious implication for the way South Asian students are viewed in Hong Kong schools. An example discussed below shows how cultural difference means different things to different people and lack of this understanding can lead to stereotypes and can ultimately affect educational outcomes.

As reported in the literature, teachers hold views about parents of ethnic minority students such as 'not supportive to education', 'don't cooperate with the school' are common among Hong Kong school (EOC 2011; Ku et al. 2005). These are merely stereotypes, however, as they lack a proper understanding of South Asian schooling culture. One common cultural value exists across the South Asian communities is that teachers are highly regarded in the society and their positions are considered as next to the parents. Parents do not bother much with the school activities after sending their children to the school believing that their children are looked after by their 'second parents', the teachers. Parents never challenge teachers as teachers are highly respected and parents trust that teachers would never do anything bad for their children. This is one of the long standing cultural traditions to which South Asians belong. It is really important to understand this schooling culture in order to make sense of their behaviors. Otherwise it runs the risk of creating stereotypes. That the negative effects of stereotypes threaten educational outcomes are well documented in the social, educational and developmental psychology literature (Schofield et al. 2006). Therefore, Hong Kong schools need to think very carefully about managing different aspects of schooling experiences for South Asian ethnic minority students. For example, processes for helping them to integrate into new school environment, managing their cultural shock, managing the expectations from the school and developing appropriate liaison with parents.

Rumberger's (2011) framework additionally offers conceptualizations of 'socio-economic' factors that are relevant to this point. These include differences in resources, in the social contexts of family, school and community, and 'socio-cultural' factors, such as cultural differences in values, attitudes and behaviors. These can all help to explain racial and ethnic differences in dropping out. While his framework locates 'socio-cultural' factors as cultural differences among individuals, it largely fails to recognize any cultural differences regarding schooling that may also affect school failure. We found such differences in the case of some 'out of school' ethnic minority participants such as Maneesha and Veem. Therefore, drawing on Bekerman and Geisen's (2012) work relating to 'Migration, minorities and education: understanding culture' it can be argued that culture is crucial in understanding issues such as educational outcomes and experiences of migrants and ethnic minorities.

9.3.1.16 Immigration and Citizenship

The case study with Shormin and her family revealed that her father's student immigration status in Hong Kong and therefore Shormin's status of being a dependant of a student stopped her from receiving financial support from Hong Kong government's pre-primary education voucher scheme in order to attend kindergarten. It was also heightened by family poverty and the high fees for kindergarten education in Hong Kong. Case studies with other 'out of school' participants found that they were either first or second generation immigrants in Hong Kong. While many of them were born in their home countries some of them were also born in Hong Kong.

All the participants except Shormin had permanent residency status in Hong Kong. None of them, however, actually had Chinese citizenship as naturalization processes for the non-Chinese ethnic population in Hong Kong is not easy.

Dropout research in the context of the United States identified immigration status as a predictor of dropping out (Rumberger 2011). Rumberger highlighted research that found foreign born students had 13 % higher dropout rates than native born students (Aud et al. 2010 cited in Rumberger 2011). Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review of research revealed mixed findings from the research that examined relationship between dropout and immigration status by comparing first generation, second generation and third generation immigrant students (cited in Rumberger 2011). While one study (White and Kaufman 1997 cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 183) found the second generation had fewer dropout rates than first or third generation, another study (Rumberger 1995, cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 183) found no differences in dropout rates by immigration status. Hunt's work (2008) in the developing context highlighted 'child migration' as a factor influencing dropping out; however, it was limited to only in-country migration such as rural-urban.

While dropout literature talked about the relationship between immigration status and dropout, the relationship between citizenship status and school failure is yet unexplored in international literature. This is particularly important for Hong Kong as the naturalization procedures to acquire Chinese citizenship are difficult for the non-Chinese ethnic population. Chinese citizenship is mainly based on ethnic citizenship that follows *jus sanguinis* or descent principle of citizenship. Therefore, most of the ethnic minority people in Hong Kong only can become permanent residents because acquiring Chinese citizenship is a difficult process. In order to be naturalized as a Chinese citizen immigrants have to renounce their home country's citizenship since Chinese citizenship does not allow holding dual citizenship. Drawing on Bloemraad et al.'s (2008) work of "ethnic citizenship' and 'civic citizenship' and a state's willingness to incorporate migrants and minorities', it can be argued that Chinese citizenship based on descent principle actually excludes non-Chinese ethnic immigrants or minorities in Hong Kong. Literature supports the complexity of Chinese nationality law, as well argued by White (1987, p. 502) quarter century ago that, Chinese nationality law is not well equipped to cope with the inclusion of people of non-Chinese origin which effectively creates a racial barrier for them. Therefore, drawing on Bauböck's (2011) work of 'temporary migrants, partial citizenship and hypermigration', it can also be argued that ethnic minorities in Hong Kong are actually temporary migrants who are only partial citizens who can never be accorded equal citizenship status as regular citizens with associated social and political rights. This conceptualization is very important to explain the interaction of citizenship status and 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. Since most of the ethnic minorities will always remain 'partial citizens' in Hong Kong, the government might not have thought about issues of ethnic minorities as seriously had they been considered citizens. This leaves ethnic minorities to accept the harsh fact that they may live in Hong Kong for a long time by taking it as their home but cannot enjoy full citizenship rights.

9.3.1.17 Racism

The case studies indicated that almost all 'out of school' ethnic minority participants experienced racism in their life in Hong Kong. Many of them also encountered racism in the schools. Even one community leader, Mr. Baral, had also faced racism in his life in Hong Kong as he revealed in his interview. He also mentioned that some ethnic minority students in his school experienced such while he was teaching in a Hong Kong school. Therefore, it appeared that racism was a common feature in the life of ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong including in their schools. Such experiences are not confined to this study but have also been in the literature. Using on ethnographic approach Ku et al. (2010) conducted a year-long field study to understand the lives of the South Asian community in Hong Kong. They published eight stories that portrayed vividly the life of this particular group of ethnic minorities. These stories depicted South Asians' experiences of racial discrimination in areas such as "employment (hiring, firing, and advancement), admission to facilities, purchasing of goods and services, access to government services, and acquiring a home" (p. 4–5). In the literature, it is not uncommon to find the differential behavior that ethnic minority students received at schools in Hong Kong. Ku et al. (2005) found a quarter of the ethnic minority students who participated in the research agreed that their teachers did not treat students of different ethnicities equally. They also reported that teachers gave more attention to the Chinese students than ethnic minority students, and teachers gave more severe punishment to the ethnic minority students than Chinese students.

Dropout literature in both developed and developing contexts did not identify racism as a separate factor for school failure. Critical race theorist López (2003) was right when he identified that the presence and effects of racism remain largely absent from the discussions in the areas such as educational administration, politics of education, policy studies and political science. Drawing on Rumberger's (2011) dropout framework, however, through factors such as social composition of school that segregates ethnic minority students, school policies and practices that treat ethnic minority students differentially and ultimately create negative school climate for them and stereotypes that characterize inferior academic ability of ethnic minority students can explain how racism affects ethnic minority students' lower academic achievement and finally school failure. Similarly, drawing on Hunt's work (2008), factor such as teachers' lower expectation towards ethnic minority students can also explain that because of racism teachers have lower expectations that contribute to lower academic achievement and ultimately affect school failure. Moreover, the work of Schofield et al. (2006), which was based on social, educational and developmental psychology literature in the context of developed countries, can be drawn on to explain how racism interacts with ethnic minorities' or immigrants' lower academic achievement through the effect of negative stereotypes, teachers' lower expectation and segregation at school.

It has been important in this book to draw on critical race theory to explore racism and its effect in the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority students rather than silencing it. It helped to understand the majoritarian stories that characterized the

deficiency of ethnic minority young peoples' in their ability and skills and taken for granted explanation of their lower academic performance and dropping out. Therefore, the insights of critical race theory in education and the adoption of critical race methodology as informed by Solórzano and Yosso (2002), as part of the methodology for this book enabled us to dig deeper beyond the majoritarian stories and helped to conceptualize how racism interacted with other factors that have a bearing on school failure. Following López (2003) we can see that critical race theory introduces the idea that politics and policy alone cannot make progress on racial issues and, in the Hong Kong case, it cannot be remedied without substantially recognizing and altering Chinese privilege.

9.3.2 Factors Identified from Interviews with Other Stakeholders

This section discusses factors identified from the interviews with other stakeholders. As stated earlier at the beginning of the previous section many of the factors identified from other stakeholders were in common with the factors identified from the case study with 'out of school' participants. The common factors were academic achievement, low education aspiration, Chinese language, behavioral problem, health issue, employment, family factors, school factors, inadequate schooling provisions for ethnic minority students, peer factors, racism. The following is a discussion of the factors identified exclusively from the interviews with other stakeholders and different from the factors identified from case study with 'out of school' participants.

9.3.2.1 Special Education Needs

Although none of the 'out of school' ethnic minority research participants reported any disability or special education needs some other stakeholders argued that there were some ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong schools with disabilities and needed special education support. They were seen to be more prone to school failure. In Hong Kong literature there have also been concerns identified in the area of ethnic minority children with special education needs. For example, in a LegCo paper a group expressed their different concerns regarding the education of ethnic minority children with special education needs, and asked EDB to supply detailed plan regarding specific curriculum programmes for them (Growing Together: Hong Kong's Special Education Needs Community for language and ethnic minorities 2008). The EOC also made a recommendation to EDB to adapt assessment tools for early identification of the ethnic minority children with special education needs (EOC 2011).

Research in the context of the United States found that students with disabilities were more likely to drop out than students without disability (Rumberger 2011). However, Rumberger's review further pointed out that the effects of disability fac-

tors were often mediated by factors such as test score and high school grades (p. 184). Hunt's (2008) review in the context of the developing countries noted a lack of empirical research around access to schooling for children with disabilities and the relationship between disability and dropouts. Yet he argued that the scale of educational exclusion for children with some form of disability or special education needs appeared to be vast, as he pointed out one study claiming that more than 90 % of children with disabilities in developing countries did not attend school (UNESCO n.d., cited in Hunt 2008, p. 28). Hunt's review also highlighted another study that strongly claimed disability might be the single most important factor which excluded children from schooling (Peters 2003, cited in Hunt 2008, p. 28).

9.3.2.2 Stereotypes

Stereotypes as a school factor can affect ethnic minority students' school failure. Interviews with some other stakeholders such as the Principal, Mr. Yuen and teacher, Mr. Knowles, revealed that stereotypes of ethnic minority students such as 'lazy', 'less motivated', 'not hard-working' were very pervasive among the teachers in Hong Kong schools. Literature also suggests that teachers hold stereotypes of ethnic minority students such as 'useless', 'misbehaving' and 'impolite' as shown by Ku et al. (2005). In addition teachers also hold stereotypical views about parents of ethnic minority students such as 'not supportive to education', 'don't cooperate with the school' (EOC 2011; Ku et al. 2005).

Rumberger's (2011) framework located stereotypes within socio cultural factors instead of school factors to explain racial and ethnic differences in dropout rates in the United States. He highlighted research that demonstrated social stigma or stereotypes related to intellectual inferiority among some cultural minority groups contributed to their lower academic achievement (Claude 1997 cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 204). In addition, social, educational and developmental psychology literature in the context of developed countries suggested that, for immigrant and minority students, negative stereotypes relating inferior intellectual skills to group membership can be a considerable obstacle to both short and long-term performance in a variety of academic domains (Schofield et al. 2006). Eventually it can lead to reduced interest in academic accomplishment and to behaviors that undermine achievement in the long term. Dropout literature in the context of developing countries, however, has not yet explored relationship between stereotypes and educational achievement.

9.3.3 Gender and School Failure

The gender aspect of dropping out is somewhat mixed in the context of the United States as reported in the literature (Rumberger 2011). Rumberger and Lim's (2008) review of 200 statistical analyses that examined the relationship between gender

and dropout found that 27 analyses reported females had higher dropout rates, 55 reported no significant relationships and 20 found females had lower dropout rates (cited in Rumberger 2011, p. 182). Rumberger (2011) illustrated from statistics, however, that dropout rates are higher for males than females in the United States. In the context of developing countries it was found that the emphasis in studies of gender and access tended to be around the education of girls with a particular emphasis on enabling the retention of girls in school (Hunt 2008). Hunt's review also found that boys were more likely to withdraw early in some contexts such as South Africa, Jamaica (2008, p. 30). The school failure literature in both developed and developing contexts, however acknowledged that gender interacts with other factors and influences dropout. Because of this ambivalent and indirect relationship between gender and dropout, as reported in the literature, and because of the way participants were identified in the current study, the effect of gender alone cannot be determined although the case studies of ethnic minority girl participants were very telling. Additional work is needed to purse this issue further, especially in the context of the cultural issues that also intersect with gender issues for ethnic minorities in Hong Kong.

9.3.4 Implications

The findings in relation to Question 2 have some important implications. First, at the policy level, it is very important to be aware of and understand different school failure factors such as low academic achievement, over-age and retention or repetition, low education aspiration, attendance issue, Chinese language, behavioral problems, employment, involvement with gangs, health issues, school changes or student mobility, peer factors, family poverty, parental education, dropout history in the family, parental practices, inadequate schooling provisions for ethnic minority students, segregation effect in designated school, issues in teaching, school policy and practices, teachers' low expectation, community factors, differences of culture in education, immigration and citizenship, racism, special education needs, stereotypes. Despite this long list of factors identified in this book affecting ethnic minority students' school failure, policy makers in Hong Kong have assumed that the only issue that needs to be addressed is the Chinese language skills of ethnic minority students. In light of the result of this study, this is a very limited response on the part of government. Without addressing the other issues it would be difficult to gain any success on the language issue.

It is also important to understand the interaction of different school failure factors at students' individual, family and school levels so that the support measures can be targeted at all levels. Without intervention at all levels it would be difficult to gain successful outcomes in fighting against school failure. Structural issue such as family poverty needs special attention as it has been identified as one of the most powerful predictors irrespective of developed or developing context. In a recent newspaper article, Kennedy (2013) has recommended five easy steps to supporting

ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. His fifth recommendation was to introduce a cash transfer scheme to the poor ethnic minority parents who have children in the age-groups of kindergarten and senior secondary levels. This book strongly supports this recommendation drawing on one of the findings that ethnic minority young people are more at risk of being 'out of school' at these two educational levels.

Kennedy's (2013) other four recommendations were developing a policy on multiculturalism, developing a school curriculum for non-Chinese speaking students acknowledging that they are second language learners of Chinese, providing professional development support to Chinese language teachers so that they can effectively teach Chinese as a second language and appointing bi-lingual teaching assistants to provide support in both teaching and learning of all school subjects. The findings of the book also strongly support these recommendations if the government genuinely wants to address issues like school failure for ethnic minority students. We would also like to add one more recommendation. Reforming pre-service teacher education program to focus on prejudice reduction or anti-racist education or culturally responsive education is essential. Some optimistic news was the Chief Executive's policy address making a commitment to introduce Chinese as a second language curriculum from 2014 to 2015 academic year, and providing necessary support for teachers' professional development ("2014 Policy Address" 2014). Yet there is a long way to go on the part of government to address comprehensively school failure for ethnic minority students.

Intervention in early childhood education has been consistently found to work in fighting against school failures in the later years (Rumberger 2011). Although the Chief Executive's 2014 policy address talked about enhancement of the school based support services for ethnic minority children in the kindergarten, policies such as making pre-primary education free and compulsory might be helpful for poor ethnic minority parents as well as for those parents who are not much aware of pre-primary education provision since they had not experienced it previously.

Second, at the level of practice, schools should take more responsibility to address all the school factors that have a bearing on ethnic minority students' school failure. At the same time schools also need to be aware of which school factors exert more powerful influence than others on school failure, and therefore, should be targeting to address those in the first instance. In addition, schools also might need to take prompt and active initiatives to work closely with students' families for a well-integrated intervention.

In terms of addressing school factors such as 'inadequate schooling provisions for ethnic minority students', mainstream Chinese schools should be welcoming of ethnic minority students and be willing to commit towards equitable opportunities for all children in Hong Kong. This is in contrast to accepting the admission of ethnic minorities for the schools' own survival because of the declining school population. A revised rationale for admitting ethnic minority students would provide a better start for schools to consider how they can best cater for these students' needs.

To address another school factor 'segregation effect in designated school', designated school should not further segregate their ethnic minority students by estab-

lishing separate classes for ethnic minorities and Chinese students. Such streaming practices limit opportunities for ethnic minority students to mix with Chinese students. Designated schools, that still exist in practice if not in policy, also need to think about how they can utilize the diversity in their student population as a source of motivation for students' learning. This can address under-achievement on the part of ethnic minority students. It is to note here again that EDB is no longer using the word 'designated school' on their website but has changed the description to 'schools provided with recurrent funding and school-based professional support for non-Chinese speaking students' (EDB 2012). Yet this surface change does nothing to address the issues of segregating ethnic minority students in specially 'designated' schools.

Another school factor 'school policy and practices' might be addressed by embracing policies and practices that are conducive to ethnic minority students. They must not be barred to speak their home language or English in the school. A policy such as the school's being a centre of community cohesion might bring all students' parents together from different communities and help integrate with the school as well as in the wider society. Making schools a more natural part of their communities can remove the barriers between school and families.

An ethos of school policy based on respect and celebration for diversity might be helpful for fighting against school factors such as 'teachers' low expectation', and 'stereotypes'. It is also a matter of teachers' inter-cultural sensitivity for which they might require ongoing professional development training. Perhaps maintaining the fullest commitment towards professional learning as a ground rule might help more than anything else. When a school's population changes to be more multicultural, teachers need to be supported to learn how to accept, manage and celebrate this new diversity.

Third, at the level of theory, a key issue that stands out is that the results of this book cannot be understood in the context of a single theoretical frame. This book has unearthed the relationship between school failure and macro factors such as poverty, citizenship status and racism. At the middle level are differences in schooling cultures, teacher expectations, school policies and practices and then there are family contexts and individual attitudes and behavior. All of this has been identified through case studies and interviews of 'out of school' ethnic minority participants and other stakeholders respectively. But how can these results be theoretically framed?

Here we borrow from the work of Kabeer (2011) regarding 'intersecting inequalities' that challenges the achievement of the MDGs in the context of development and the work of Duncan and Corner (2012) regarding 'severe and multiple disadvantages' in the context of public service policy and delivery in the United Kingdom. Kabeer (2011) argued that due to multiple inequalities such as cultural inequalities, spatial inequalities, economic inequalities, and political inequalities a particular group of people in every society and region face systematic social exclusion that limits their life chances. Duncan and Corner (2012) conceptualized severe and multiple disadvantages as social in nature that should not be understood as individual-

ized but rather as inhering in social relations and thus calling for social and political solutions.

In this light it can be argued that ethnic minorities, more specifically South Asians, are a group in Hong Kong who are living at the intersection of multiple inequalities and disadvantages. They are poor, with limited citizenship status and associated rights, and often subject to racial hatred. The disadvantage attached to the 'out of school' issue is not due to any reason at the individual level but rather reflects inherited social disadvantages that have been systematically perpetuating them at the edge of disadvantages and structural inequalities for a long time.

Drawing on critical race theory it can also be argued that associating school failure to factors at their individual level only will uphold deficit and racialized notions against them and will only add another story to the majoritarian storytelling. This will ultimately oppress them by silencing and distorting their epistemologies. Telling the 'out of school' story for ethnic minority young people from their epistemology strengthens their voices which have been historically silenced and marginalized.

Chinese culture places a great deal of stress on individual effort, so the Hong Kong education system needs to understand better the cultural values of its ethnic minority students if it is to support them and help them to become the kind of learners so much valued in Hong Kong. If the stories told in this book are in any way typical of what will happen to ethnic minority students in Hong Kong, what is the future of these bi-cultural students? They live in Hong Kong but remain connected to their country of origin. They do not succeed in school and pick up jobs where they can, but have few skills that will allow them to develop a career. Returning to education seems difficult for them but in any case can be interrupted by return home visits. Such students seem to be really 'caught between cultures' and the pathway to academic and social success seems elusive. The Hong Kong education system does not seem geared to help them and their future remains uncertain. Since, as pointed out in Chap. 4, groups like the South Asian ethnic minorities are growing in Hong Kong, a solution needs to be found that will address these problems and provide a more conducive environment for ethnic minority students.

9.4 What Is the Life of 'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong?

Case studies with all six dropout ethnic minority participants revealed that they were all working after dropping out of school. Maneesha was working in a restaurant as a waitress, Morshed as a follower in a van to carry goods, Aruna in a private clinic as doctor's assistant, Veem as a bar-tender in a club, Tanvir as a trainee in an aviation and engineering company, Azad as an assistant surveyor in a construction company. Many of them were also working previously in a range of other jobs and it appeared that job changes were common phenomenon among them. Some of

those jobs were labor intensive. While most of these young people were apparently satisfied with their jobs some of them just accepted their destiny about the kind of job they could get in Hong Kong without a school diploma. In terms of future plans, some of them had plans to continue the type of job they were doing or would switch to a better job in future while some of them had plans to start own business in future. Apart from Aruna, none was inclined to come back again to school or continue any other alternative education track.

Among at risk of dropping out ethnic minority participants Abdal was only found working in a restaurant even though he was below 15. Although he did not admit it during the interview, however, he was seen at least three times working in a restaurant when the first author of this book went to buy food there after the interview. The other three at risk of dropping out ethnic minority participants spent their life after school by staying home or playing like many other students. Shormin, not being able to attend any kindergarten, was receiving education at home from her parents and elder sister. In addition, she was going to a local NGO 3 days a week for one and half an hour each day to learn some drawing and to read books with other ethnic minority young children.

Interviews with other stakeholders revealed that in general many of the ethnic minority young people actually started working right away after dropping out mainly in restaurant, bar, construction and security service jobs, while some of them just did not do anything apart from staying at home or roaming around with friends for a significant period of time. Some of them went back to their home country. Some of the other stakeholders also indicated that some ethnic minority young people were involved with gangs and triad groups after dropping out, therefore, they became engaged in criminal activities such as drug trafficking, fighting and theft.

9.4.1 Implications

There are some significant implications in relation to findings for Question 3. First, at the policy level, government should be planning sensitively if they are to stop ethnic minority young people from going into low and labor intensive jobs who are supposed to be in education. The government could consider extending the compulsory education age that might have potential to stop ethnic minority young people from joining the job market early. Policies around devising more innovative and flexible alternative tracks of education might help to equip 'out of school' ethnic minority students with the necessary skills for upward social mobility.

Second, at the level of practice, schools might need to be more careful in handling those ethnic minority students who have already been exposed to the employment market legally or illegally. Support measures should be in place to make them aware of different consequences through appropriate career counseling about the early job market entry without having enough qualifications and skills. Such a move also means that attendance records need to be more detailed both in terms of identifying the ethnicity of non-attending students as well as the reasons for it.

Third, at the theory level, it is important to unearth whether the availability of low and labor intensive jobs are used to trap ethnic minority young people from upward social mobility. d'Addio (2007) examined the research in OECD countries on intergenerational mobility and found the evidence of intergenerational immobility implies to other outcomes, such as, occupations persist across generations and factors such as education, race or migrant status contribute to this persistence. She also found that education is a major factor for intergenerational income mobility and educational differences persist across generations. Therefore, without investing significantly on the retention of ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong schools it would be difficult to break their inherited persistence with lower and labor intensive jobs.

Hong Kong should have similar expectations about its ethnic minorities as it has for Chinese students. Equipping ethnic minority young people with higher employability skills through higher levels of education not only facilitate their upward social mobility but also will ultimately contribute to Hong Kong's economic development. This will also ensure the optimum uses of the city's entire human resources.

9.5 Summary

This chapter began with reiterating aims and objectives and highlighted the questions posed in this book. It then presented a summary of the findings according to these guided questions. It also critically discussed the findings drawing on the theoretical frameworks and wider literature, and sought to explain these findings. Issues that could not be explained by existing literature were also identified and discussed. Finally, discussions on the implications of these findings at the levels of policy, practice and theory were provided.

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Chapter 10
Conclusion

Abstract Hong Kong upper secondary and post-secondary education levels were first considered having a disproportionate participation of ethnic minority students by the Equal Opportunities Commission in 2011. Multiple data methods (case study based on in-depth interviews and observations, other in-depth interviews and document analysis) in the research reported in this book substantiated initial concerns at the aforementioned levels, in addition to pre-primary and lower secondary, not previously identified. Ethnic minority young people's school failure was not simply a consequence of academic failure. Instead, many interrelated factors were found to contribute. This book reported one factor not identified in earlier studies: the relationship between school failure and differences in schooling culture. This echoed Hunt (Dropping out from school: a cross country review of literature. CREATE pathways to access research monograph, no. 16. University of Sussex, Brighton, 2008) and Rumberger (Dropping out: why students drop out of high school and what can be done about it. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 2011) that "dropping out" is gradual and complex. It also contends the government focusing on Chinese proficiency is a limited response towards ethnic minority students failing in Hong Kong schools. A critical review of the literature uncovered many issues and challenges including admissions processes, overall policy towards multicultural education, and the efficiency of overall support measures ethnic minority students are facing within Hong Kong schools. This book, therefore, supports and strengthens the growing discourse recognizing the education system is failing ethnic minority young people and is also incapable of responding to diversity and ever growing multiculturalism.

This concluding chapter has six sections. Section 10.1 summarizes the results of the research reported in this book. Section 10.2 describes some of our reflections on researching ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. Section 10.3 discusses the significance of the research in relation to policy, practice, theory and methodology. Section 10.4 identifies some limitations of our research. Section 10.5 proposes some future research. Section 10.6 provides a final note.

M.K. Bhowmik, K.J. Kennedy, *'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong*, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects 32, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-0327-1_10

10.1 The 'Out of School' Issue for Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong

In the research reported in this book we have explored the extent of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong, the reasons for these young people being 'out of school', and what their 'out of school' life looks like. Although there is a lack of available data to estimate the exact number of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong, nevertheless, this book found that a good number of ethnic minority young people are 'out of school' which includes pre-primary, lower secondary, upper secondary and post-secondary age-groups. The Equal Opportunities Commission (2011) first indicated the issue of disproportionate participation of ethnic minority students in upper secondary and post-secondary levels. This book substantiates EOC's valid concern and also extends the same concern for ethnic minority students in pre-primary and lower secondary level where participation issues have not previously been identified.

In terms of reasons for being 'out of school', it was found that ethnic minority young people's school failure was more than simply a consequence of academic failure. Rather, there were many interrelated factors that contributed to school failure of ethnic minority young people. Similar to work on school failure in both developed and developing contexts, the key influences are multi-level – with individuals themselves, within families, within schools and within the community (Hunt 2008; Rumberger 2011). There were also additional factors found in this research that the wider literature cannot explain. The research reported here unearthed the relationship between school failure and differences in schooling culture, a factor not previously identified in the international literature. It also uncovered the relationship between school failure and factors such as citizenship status and racism in the context of Chinese privilege in Hong Kong.

The findings also revealed that some participants' academic failure was not sudden but had appeared long before they dropped out. This highlights again that dropping out is more a process (Hunt 2008) and as Rumberger (2011) argued, dropping out is a complex process which can begin as early as the first grade of school. Nevertheless, there appeared to be no extra care or additional support provided to ethnic minority students from their schools. The results of the research reported here strongly suggest that focusing only on Chinese proficiency is a limited response on the part of government towards the issue of ethnic minority students' school failure.

Regarding the 'out of school' life of ethnic minority young people, all the six dropout young people participated in the research were working after (and sometimes before) they dropped out of school. Of the four at risk of dropping out students, one student was working beyond school time, and the other three students were passing their time after school by staying home and playing. The young child, who never went to any school, was receiving education at home from her parents and elder sister.

In addition to above findings, this book provided a critical review of the literature that reported many issues and challenges that ethnic minority students are facing within schools. These included micro-views of the problem, admissions processes, Chinese language, assessment, curriculum, teaching, resource support, supervision and monitoring, overall policy towards multicultural education in Hong Kong, and the efficiency of overall support measures (please see Sect. 2.4.7 of Chap. 2 for details). When these issues are added to the central focus of this book, 'out of school' ethnic minority young people, the vulnerability of ethnic minority young people can be fully recognized. By focusing on 'out of school' ethnic minority young people as a new area of research, this book supports and strengthens the growing discourse that recognizes ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong are being let down by an education system incapable of responding to diversity and a growing multiculturalism.

10.2 Reflections on Researching Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong

In addition to methodological reflections provided in Sect. 3.2.8 of the Chap. 3 we also have some further reflections on researching ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. First, although we managed to conduct field studies in three Hong Kong schools, it was not so easy gaining access to these schools. We approached more than 20 schools and ended up with positive responses only from three schools. Even gaining access to these schools could not guarantee achieving our mission as we faced much difficulty in accessing dropout data in two sample schools. They were reluctant to provide such data. We had to rely on their enrolment data to try and understand the dropout scenario, a very limited technique. Interview data with the participants from all three schools, however, provided deep insights to understand the magnitude of the 'out of school' phenomena specific to the schools.

Second, being 'outsiders' in Hong Kong we reflect on our shortcomings of not speaking local language that might have limited us from gaining in-depth understanding of the Chinese participants. Yet the first author was also an 'insider' of South Asian ethnic origin and he capitalized on his language skills to understand South Asian participants. Although in the literature there is much debate regarding the superiority between 'insider' and 'outsider' accounts, we reflect on Katyal and King's (2011) work in the context of Confucian heritage culture research when they argued that both 'insider' and 'outsider' accounts are interesting and meaningful in their own right.

Third, in researching ethnic minority young people we often thought about one issue. There is a sizeable literature now available regarding different issues and challenges that ethnic minority students face in Hong Kong schools. We were also aware of ongoing research looking at the ethnic minority education issue. At the same time there is also much advocacy work undertaken by a number of NGOs. In

addition, hopefully the findings of our research reported in this book also might add to the knowledge base of ethnic minority education in Hong Kong. The issue that remains is whether enough has been done to help ethnic minority students and whether policy makers are being influenced by current research, including our own. Can research really influence policy makers? What can research really do in making differences in the lives of ethnic minority young people? Reflecting on Kennedy and Hue's (2011) work on ethnic minority students in Hong Kong, we can only be left with an unsatisfying conclusion that research might at best be able to identify and understand problem, but cannot solve the problem.

10.3 Significance for Policy, Practice, Theory and Methodology

The findings of the research reported in this book are significant in a number of ways. First, at the policy level, it seems Hong Kong has progressed in recognizing the 'no-loser' principle in its education reform (Kennedy 2012). The government has adopted the 'through train' concept, reform of the primary and secondary admissions system, a full 6 years of secondary education for all students, support for students with special needs, a core curriculum for all students and the reduction in public examinations. Yet, this book questions the 'no-loser' principle when it comes to ethnic minority students. The important question is how Hong Kong's education reform can promote the 'no-loser principle' when there remains a good number of ethnic minority students 'out of school'. Or does the 'no-loser' principle have a different meaning when it comes to the ethnic minority students? Policy makers need to pay attention to participation issues relating to ethnic minority students, to the quality of education provided for them and to ensuring that they are able to achieve the same educational outcomes as their Chinese peers.

The Racial Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) is meant to protect ethnic minorities in Hong Kong from any kind of discrimination, including in educational areas. It seems, however, that the RDO is not capable of ensuring equal educational opportunities and outcomes for the ethnic minority young people as the scenario of 'out of school' issue has shown. Kennedy (2011b) argued that in the development of the RDO little thought was given to schools and education and the main focus was to protect the ethnic minorities from employment exploitation. Therefore, the results of the research reported in this book strongly suggest that the RDO needs to be revisited so that the provision of equal educational opportunities and outcomes can be incorporated.

In regard to proper policy responses, it is important to have sufficient educational data concerning ethnic minority young people and also to understand critically the issues and challenges that they are facing in Hong Kong education. Without these it will be difficult to devise any appropriate support measures. Policies such as extending compulsory education age until the end of secondary education and intervention

in pre-primary education might be of interest to Hong Kong policy makers as these have proven to work in many parts of the world to gain success against school failure.

Second, at the practice level, this book provides a nuanced understanding of the 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people. Thus the findings of the research reported in this book might be useful for all concerned parties including schools, government, NGOs, international human rights organizations and supra national agencies in devising their strategies to address the issue. Hong Kong schools should seriously take into account all the school factors identified in this research. Addressing these on the part of schools will significantly advance the fight against school failure. In addition, cash support to poor ethnic minority parents, as referred to previously, has the strong potential of an all-round integrated response towards the 'out of school' issue and recognizes the significant effects of poverty on educational access and success.

Third, at the level of theory, this research is significant in conceptualizing multiculturalism in a Chinese context and its response towards diversity. Thus it highlights the need for a multicultural education policy in dealing with the multicultural student population in Hong Kong. In addition, this book emphasizes that the 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people should not be understood from the point of view of their so called 'deficits'. Rather, it should be conceptualized at the intersection of multiple inequalities and disadvantages that make ethnic minorities vulnerable to school failure. Moreover, racism in Hong Kong, that represents Chinese privilege and oppression in relation to ethnic minorities, should be properly acknowledged and considered at the centre of these critical understandings.

Fourth, at the methodological level, this research showed the value of researching at individual school level to understand the dynamics of 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority students since large scale data sources could not help much. In addition, adopting critical race theory and methodology as a part of theoretical framework and methodology helped understand the phenomenon critically in the privileged Chinese context. Perhaps most importantly the research reported here does not rely on a single theoretical perspective but on multiple perspectives that shed light on a complex personal, social, political and cultural issue.

10.4 Limitations

In addition to some methodological limitations referred to in Sect. 3.2.9 of the Chap. 3 the research reported in this book also has some other limitations. First, we have relied on literature relating to school failure that has been drawn from Western literature as well as literature relating to developing countries. Neither of these sources exactly reflects the Hong Kong context that is developed but deeply embedded in a Chinese value system. School failure in this distinctive context needs further investigation and this book has only begun to scratch the surface of a complex social issue.

Second, it was not possible to access family members for most of the 'out of school' participants. This obviously missed the opportunity to understand 'out of school' issues from their family members' perspectives. Since families play such important roles in the lives of their children it is unfortunate that their views are missing from this book.

Third, it is not a limitation as such, rather a caution for readers when understanding case studies in this research. For example, the case study of Shormin, the young girl who had never been to any pre-primary school was a dependent child of a student visa holder. Student visa holders in Hong Kong are not allowed to access public resources such as pre-primary education voucher scheme (PEVS) for their children. Therefore, Shormin's case study has to be understood in its own context. In fact, all case studies in this research can only be understood in their unique contexts. As Flyvbjerg (2006) has argued, case study generates context dependant knowledge.

10.5 Future Directions for Research

The findings of the research reported in this book can inform future studies. One study might aim at getting access to census and other educational base data sources for ethnic minority students in order to manipulate these data systematically so that the right number of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people can be estimated and it's magnitude can be determined Hong Kong wide. Perhaps a longitudinal study by tracking a cohort of primary ethnic minority students until their post-secondary level would also be very helpful.

Another study might involve ethnography with a group of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people over the period of a considerable time to have further nuanced understanding on why they are 'out of school'. The methodology should include spending enough time with them in their school, family and community settings to understand more how these institutional factors interact with their individual factors. The study should also be grounded in critical race theory to understand the phenomena critically. In addition, this book also calls for further investigations of factors such as cultural differences in schooling and their relationship with school failure of the ethnic minority students in Hong Kong and elsewhere.

One of the other important research areas might be to look at understanding the school success of the ethnic minority young people in Hong Kong. Especially to explore what factors make their school success unlike their 'out of school' counterparts. It would also be useful to compare between school success and school failure in relation to how much individual and institutional factors can explain both.

Finally, there might be one study that needs to be undertaken soon which will look critically at the effectiveness of different support measures to solve dropout or 'out of school' issue for ethnic minority young people in different jurisdictions. In this regard Connelly et al. (2012) work is very insightful as they identified that the

HKSAR government's ongoing educational support measures for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong schools largely failed to impact positively in achieving government's objectives such as 'alleviating the obstacles of language and cultural barriers', 'facilitating smoother integration' into Hong Kong society, and 'positively impacting the educational opportunities'. Since any of the government support measures has not exclusively focused on addressing the 'out of school' or school failure issue for ethnic minority young people it might be useful to look at policies and practices of other countries. Many parts of the world have large numbers of immigrants and there should be lesson about how the issues of school failure can best be handled. Hong Kong does not need to solve the problem without an understanding of how others have approached it.

10.6 Final Note

Ensuring access, meaningful participation and equal outcomes in education for ethnic minority young people will ultimately contribute to Hong Kong's future and its development. New policies are needed that recognize the need to deal with school issues such as curriculum, pedagogy and assessment as well as ensuring access and progression so that ethnic minority students remain in school and transfer eventually to university. These are significant challenges for the government and for the Hong Kong community, but most of all they are important for ethnic minorities if they are to be accorded the basic rights of all Hong Kong citizens.

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Appendices

Appendix 3.1

In-Depth Interview Schedule

'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong: Who, Why and How They Are?

Focus: to understand what are the reasons for being 'out of school' ethnic minority children

Identity of the participants:

students/teachers/Head teachers/guardians/Education Bureau officials/NGO officials/ethnic minority community leaders.
age, gender, ethnicity, citizenship

Interview Agenda:

1. Individual factors
2. Family, school, community and peer factors
3. Socio-economic factors
4. Socio-cultural factors
5. Citizenship/migration factors
6. Significant stories
7. Any racial discrimination experience/aware of any racial discrimination happened against ethnic minority young people

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Appendix 3.2

Case Study Schedule

'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong: Who, Why and How They Are?

Focus: to understand what is the life of 'out of school' ethnic minority young people.

Identity of the case study participants:

age, gender, ethnicity, citizenship

Case Study (Based on Interview and Observation) Agenda:

1. What has made them 'out of school' (Individual factors; Family, school, community and peer factors; Socio-economic factors; Socio-cultural factors; Citizenship/migration factors)
2. What they are doing since being 'out of school'
3. What is the family, social, economic and work (if any) context of their lives
4. Significant stories
5. Family history
6. Any racial discrimination experience

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M.K. Bhowmik, K.J. Kennedy, *'Out of School' Ethnic Minority Young People in Hong Kong*, Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns and Prospects 32, DOI 10.1007/978-981-10-0327-1