

NGO takes up case of prodigy's schooling

Hong Kong Unison to complain about education department's inability to find suitable establishment for gifted Indian student, citing discrimination

A long-running wrangle over an ethnic Indian boy took a new turn yesterday when an NGO said it would file a complaint with the equal opportunity watchdog against the Education Bureau for failing to find a proper school for the pupil.

Hong Kong Unison said it would lodge its complaint with the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) on behalf of Arjun Singh. This comes after **Unison's** threat last month to take the government to court for failing to provide equal education opportunities for ethnic minorities.

Singh, 12, a member of the **Hong Kong** Academy for Gifted Education, has been schooled at home for the past two years because his parents said they could not find a school to satisfy his special learning needs. Singh has an IQ of 120 to 129 - which is near the benchmark of 130 for prodigies - according to a cognitive test he took using the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children.

Several schools refused his parents' demand to admit Singh into a more advanced class; he would have entered Secondary One in the new academic year.

Unison executive director Fermi Wong Wai-fun said she would submit a racial discrimination complaint to the EOC. She criticised the Education Bureau for failing to find a proper school for Singh and showing indifference to the pupil when he sought help. "This would not happen if he was not Indian," she said.

Unison is also collecting support from 100 families in its bid to sue the government for failing to offer ethnic minorities a chance to integrate into **Hong Kong** society through the education system. It says local schools have failed to provide quality Chinese-language education to ethnic minorities, hindering their chances to climb the social ladder.

Human rights lawyer Chong Yiu-kwong said it would be hard to prove Singh (pictured) had been the object of racial discrimination, because he sought a gifted education in English. Inequality arising from language barriers would be a form of indirect discrimination that was difficult to substantiate, he said.

EOC chairman Lam Woon-kwong said recently that Singh's parents had played a role in their son's predicament, deciding to withdraw him from school in 2009. "If they can afford it, there are many types of English schools in **Hong Kong**," he said.

But it was odd that the Education Bureau had failed to find a proper school for the boy in two years.

"It is strange that a 12-year-old could be staying at home without having to go to school," he said. "If the problem lay with the schools, the Education Bureau should have helped him find one."

An Education Bureau spokeswoman said it had tried to help Singh find a school since 2009, when they first learned of his case. The bureau would not say how many pupils are homeschooled in **Hong Kong**.

EDUCATION

NGO TAKES UP CASE OF PRODIGY'S SCHOOLING

Hong Kong Unison to complain about education department's inability to find suitable establishment for gifted Indian student, citing discrimination

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Local schools have failed to provide quality Chinese-language education to minorities

HONG KONG UNISON, NGO



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