Problems Faced by Indians in Singapore

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ABSTRACT

Singapore is an economic giant. It is considered to be one of the least corrupted countries in the world. The Singaporean government is very effective and efficient, their countries prosperity says it all. Indians are one of the key contributors to the Singaporean economy. But there have been several reports of Indians and other nationalities getting discriminated racially. Indians are considered as 'second class citizens' in Singapore and are still mistreated even though the Singaporean government has taken several actions to prevent this.

Keywords: *Prosperity, Discriminated, Mistreated, Effective, and Efficient.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Singapore, officially the Republic of Singapore, is a sovereign city-state and island country located in Southeast Asia. Singapore is one of the most prosperous countries in the world. Its per capita GDP equalizes with most of the leading European countries. Singapore is a global commerce, finance, and transport hub. Its standings include the most "technology-ready" nation (WEF), top International-meetings city (UIA), a city with "best investment potential" (BERI), third-most competitive country, third-largest foreign exchange market, third-largest financial centre, third-largest oil refining and trading centre and the second-busiest container port. The country has also been identified as a tax haven. Singapore is said to be an urbanized country with dense population found in the central areas. Its population is said to be around 5,888,926 million. Singapore consists of residents from different ethnic groups mostly from China, Malaysia, and India.

Singapore is a diverse country due to the presence of various ethnic groups from different countries. The different ethnic groups present in Singapore are Chinese (74.3%), Malay (13.4%), Indian (9.1% including Sri Lankans) and individuals from other countries (3.2%). They speak different languages like Mandarin, English, Malay, Hokkien, Cantonese, Tamil, Teochew, other Indian languages and other Chinese dialects. According to the 2010 estimates by the CIA's World factbook, Singapore consists of Buddhists, Muslims, Taoists, Christians (Catholic), Hindus, Other Christians, and finally, there are a few who do not follow any religion.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Indian population in Singapore is massive. They play an important role in the Singaporean economy. This research is conducted so that we can understand and learn how the migrated Indian population thrive in Singapore along with the various problems faced by them.

3. OBJECTIVES

- Identifying and analyzing the problems faced by Indians in Singapore.
- To inform the Indian tourists about the problems they should be aware of once they reach the land of Singapore.
- To understand the stereotyping found in Singapore against Indians.
- This research paper can be a good source of reference for those investors who are willing to invest in Singapore mainly targeting the Indian population.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

Even in weak market, racial bias trumps profit for many Singapore landlords

According to this article, racism is not a new concept in the land of Singapore. It has been there for decades. Various riots occurred in the past decades in the name of ethnic groups. This article has mainly focused on the racial discrimination found in the public housing industry.

It talks about the various housing portals that do not want specific people belonging to Indian, Chinese or Malay ethnicity to buy or rent properties. They say that house owner tends to leave it unoccupied if individual or group didn't meet their requirements.

This article claims that there are comparatively very fewer house owners who are concern about the profile margin and earns but most of the house owners want to know the profile of the tenants and their ethnicity.

This island country is famous for being a global market and cultural diversity (74.3 percent Chinese, 13.4 percent Malay and 9.1 percent Indian) but it's really bitter that these minority groups get ill-treated. It talks about individual incidents where house owner rejected applicants due to the reason that they had Indian origins. The government has taken action to prevent or to eradicate these racist practices, despite all these efforts there has not been much of a change in the multi cultured and diverse landscape of Singapore. Racist practices and advertising still continue in Singapore. House owners in Singapore have stereotyped the entire population of other ethnicities due to a few problematic tenants. (Chandran & Loh, 2017)

The racist reality of house-hunting in Singapore: "Sorry, your wife is Indian"

This article begins with the story of a Singaporean man Darius Cheung, Co-founder of a property search portal. He needs a home but many real estate agents closed the doors at him for his wife is an Indian. Indians who live in this city for a few months will understand the fact that they aren't the first choice of preference. Racism in the housing industry is worse for the people belonging to the Chinese ethnicity, in fact, they are the least preferred.

One of the main reasons for this is because of the cooking and hygiene habits of these nationalities. There were claims that Chinese family damaged the property that was only rented to them and an Indian family who left cooking stains in the kitchen and other rooms as well. These damages cost a huge sum to be repaired. Hence, the house owners or real estate agents refuse to give it to Indian or Chinese nationalities. This article can be concluded that the reason for this racial discrimination is the habits of this individual nationality. (Mazumdar & Scroll.in, 2016)

Growing up Indian in Singapore

This website called "www.young.sg", talks about the experience of a different young Indian individual. They talk about instances where they encountered racism in their schools and colleges. One of the girls talks about a memory of hers when her friends turn off the light to find her because she was apparently hard to find.
There are more people talking about instances where they were insulted and made fun of due to their physical features or the skin color. This website claim that 65.2% of Indians have faced racism in Singapore. It is 3 times more than the Chinese people.

There was also an Indian who enjoyed being a minority in Singapore. She talks about her experience when she would give away authentic Indian sweets during the festivals. Basically, talks about the different experience of Indian youth living in Singapore. (Farha, 2017)

Cultural differences: Within Singapore's Indian community, a clash between the old and the new

This article throws light on the issue of "Foreigners vs Locals" in Singapore, specifically Indians. India and Singapore share a close economic relationship, in part crafted by former Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong through bilateral treaties that allowed Indian companies and people easy access to Singapore through the 2000s. With the rising number of Indian expatriates in Singapore, the Singaporean localites are trying very hard to maintain their Singaporean core. Many localites felt discomfort due to the increasing number of foreigners coming into the country as a result of challenges created due to social cohesion in a country that prides itself on its pluralistic and multicultural nature. (Puri, 2016)

Racism in Singapore? What it feels like to be an Indian girl in NUS Business School

In this article, an Indian girl shares her experience of alleged racism in the Business School in National University of Singapore (NUS) through her blog. There she mentions all her unpleasant experiences that she went through during her childhood; and also, how one of her professors told her that Indians are a minority in Singapore and that Indians have to put in more effort to succeed. Furthermore, she points out how she was mocked for not knowing the Mandarin language. Throughout her childhood, she had been on the receiving end of Apunehneh (the Racist term for an Indian man) jokes and other jokes about the colour of her skin. Hence, she concludes by mentioning how difficult it was to be raised as in Indian girl in Singapore and about how hard it was for her to be the only Indian girl in her course. (Soezean, 2017)

Singaporeans Take Back Mandarin Gardens from Indian Expatriates

In April, a news blog in Singapore posted an article which talked about how the agitated Singaporeans reclaimed ownership of a private condominium called Mandarin Gardens because of the vast number of Indians living there. East Singapore is a hub for the Indian Expatriate community, many of whom who have rented or bought homes in the area. The post stated that the Singaporean localites had fought to reclaim control of the condominium during the Annual General Meeting because of problems with the management that was dominated by Indians. On the other hand, the Indians attempted to kick out the Thai Pan Restaurant and replace it with an Indian restaurant. (Puri, 2016)

No Indians No PRC's

This article talks about how Indians and Chinese (PRC's) are neglected/rejected residential rights by the landlords in Singapore. The reason being that the Singaporeans consider the Indians and the Chinese to lack 'Cleanliness & Culture'. One Indian expat said his agent told him that many landlords would refuse to rent the house to him because "Indians always cook smelly curries". Another

Briton of South Asian descent did not experience any direct discrimination but was warned by his agent that some landlords could be difficult. The UN has noted that the article 12(2) of the Singaporean constitution does not extend its protection to non-citizens of Singapore.

Charlene, an estate agent, said that landlords usually prefer not to rent to tenants from India or China because such tenants "are not people who are house proud". She also added by saying "Many don't clean weekly, and they do the heavy cooking, so dust and oil collect over the months. They may use a lot of spices that release smells people don't like." There are also fears that those tenants will illegally sublet to others, she said, adding: "Cleanliness and culture is a very strong factor. Another estate agent made similar points, saying that landlords were less willing to rent to Indian and mainland Chinese tenants as they believed they would not maintain the property well. (Cheung, 2014)

Indian IT professionals face new challenges as Singapore shuts door

This article discusses how the Singaporean government has slowed down on issuing new visas to Indian professionals as an attempt to foster the hiring of local talent. This enforces new challenges to major software firms including Infosys, TCS, and Wipro, in India, who have offices in Singapore. Additionally, the Singaporean authorities have imposed several conditions and policies which make it difficult for companies to hire individuals from India. (Singh, 2017)

5. CURRENT SITUATION

Singapore is one of the richest nations in the world. It is an economic powerhouse that is backed by immigrants from aboard. But it is hard for immigrants to find new homes in Singapore. The real estate agents and the house owner have stereotyped the immigrants as a disturbance to the society instead of considering them as a boom.

The Singaporean Government has recently denied a visa for Indian Information technology professionals. This was during the year of 2017. This has caused a lot of confusion for the Indian IT giants like TCS, Infosys, and Wipro to Cognizant who have their offices in Singapore. If the government does not give the authority to renew their visas, then this will create a huge irregularity in the employment patterns. The Indian population in Singapore find it difficult to look for houses in the Singaporean land. Indians in Singapore, are without a doubt treated as second class citizens. In a country that bans any sort of racist discrimination, we might still come cross several advertisements in Singapore that mentions "No Indians" or "No PRC". The disappointing part is that this can be found on popular public housing portals or housing websites.

House owners in Singapore tend to reject Indians because of the food they eat, the way they live and the way they cook. Nowadays, property agents advise the Indians and Chinese nationalities to find immigrant owners instead of the locals. Though the Singaporean government speaks a story stating that people must not discriminate and must follow the state's advertising policy, the reality speaks a different story.

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