**Chapter 2:**

**Functions and roles of the government in working for the good of society.**

**FUNCTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT**

**Functions of the Singapore government:**

* To make and pass laws.
* To implement and enforce laws.
* To interpret and apply laws.

**These functions are carried out by 3 branches of the government.**

1. **The Legislature.**
   1. Makes and passes laws.
   2. Consists of President and Parliament.
   3. Passes a bill which is debated in Parliament and once the President agrees to it, it will be come law in Singapore.
2. **The Executive.**
   1. Implements and enforces laws.
   2. Consists of President and the Cabinet.
   3. Creates government policies for education, healthcare, transport, defence etc.
   4. Ensures the country is running smoothly.
   5. Has support from various ministries and statutory boards.
3. **The Judiciary**
   1. Interprets and applies laws.
   2. Consists of Supreme Court, State Courts and Family Justice courts.
   3. The Head of Judiciary is the Chief Justice.
   4. Makes formal judgements on disputes between individuals and on those between individuals and government.
   5. Ensures laws are interpreted and applied fairly.

**An example of when the three branches of the Singapore government worked together is during the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. Here's how each branch contributed to resolving the crisis:**

**1. The Legislature**

* The Legislature passed emergency laws, such as the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) Act, to address issues like social distancing, mask-wearing, and restrictions on public gatherings.
* Parliament debated the bill to ensure it was effective and appropriate before the President gave approval, turning it into law.

**2. The Executive**

* The Executive implemented and enforced the laws passed by the Legislature. For example:
  + The Ministry of Health (MOH) issued detailed regulations and guidelines for safe management measures.
  + Statutory boards, such as the Housing Development Board (HDB), enforced rules in public spaces.
* The Executive also created policies to support affected sectors, like financial aid schemes and healthcare initiatives to strengthen the country's response.

**3. The Judiciary**

* The Judiciary played a role by interpreting and applying the new laws to ensure fairness. For instance:
  + Courts handled cases where individuals or businesses were charged with violating COVID-19 regulations.
  + Legal disputes related to the pandemic, such as contract breaches due to lockdowns, were resolved in courts based on the new laws.

**This coordinated effort among the three branches ensured that laws were properly made, implemented, and enforced while maintaining fairness and justice during a challenging time. The government’s power is thus separated into the three branches. It ensures power does not concentrate in the hands of a small group of people.**

**The three branches also serve as a check on each other to ensure the other branches do not act illegally or irresponsibly. This ensures an efficient and effective government which would facilitate a harmonious society.**

**ROLES OF THE GOVERNMENT**

|  |
| --- |
| **MAINTAINING LAW AND ORDER** |

* Ensuring law and order -> **safeguards the safety and security of its citizens** from harm and injustice.
* **Singapore Police Force (SPF)** play an important role in crime prevention and deterrence.
  + They implement initiatives to prevent threats from escalating to harm anyone.
  + For instance, the SPF collaborates with various stakeholders, including students, to run campaigns aimed at combatting scams.
* **The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** in Singapore also contributes to maintaining law and order by promptly carrying out investigations under the Internal Security Act (ISA).
  + This rapid response led to the detainment of a self-radicalized individual who had intentions to carry out a violent act in the country.
* Regular and strict law enforcement helps to deter crime and creates thereby maintaining social order.
* **By keeping people safe from harm and injustice, society feels more secure, allowing everyone to live, work, and interact without fear. Campaigns like anti-scam initiatives help people stay aware and protect themselves, leading to less crime. This creates a safer, more peaceful community, supports economic growth, attracts investments, and improves everyone’s quality of life.**
* **Judiciary system** -> ensuring **justice**.
* They interpret and apply laws to cases of crime. Crimes are meticulously investigated by both law enforcement agencies and the courts, resulting in just and fair rulings.
* For example, the courts sentenced a couple to jail for scamming citizens of their money by selling fake designer products.
* **This process instills confidence in citizens about Singapore’s fair justice system. People will be appreciative of the fair government systems in place.**
* **Laws will then be respected and taken seriously. This will deter unlawful behaviors and ensure a harmonious society.**

|  |
| --- |
| **ENSURING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELL BEING OF CITIZENS** |

* Ensuring the economic and social well-being of citizens is another major responsibility of the government.
* **Providing basic needs** like food, water, and housing
* **Providing opportunities for citizens to improve themselves.**
* The government allocates substantial resources to ensure that goods and services are affordable for all citizens. These goods and services range from education, transport, healthcare to housing.
* Furthermore, the Central Provident Fund (CPF), helps citizens prepare for their retirement, and it can also be used for housing, medical, and healthcare needs.
* These goods and services are often heavily subsidized by the government to make them accessible to all citizens, thereby improving their overall quality of life and peace of mind.
* Example - the government has been working to expand the capacity of public transport systems. Under the Land Transport Masterplan 2013, MRT lines are set to expand to include TEL, CRL, and JRL by 2030.
* **The SkillsFuture programme** by the government -> offering courses, programmes, and subsidies for lifelong learning and career development.
  + The government gives credits for citizens to take up courses to expand their skills.
* By catering to both the basic needs and growth of all citizens, the government ensures a high quality of life and a sense of security for its people. This translates into a sense of belonging to the country.

|  |
| --- |
| **PROMOTES AND PROTECTS ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS.** |

* National interests refer to what is necessary to ensure its security and well-being.
* National interests can be protected by diplomacy and deterrence.

**DIPLOMACY**

Diplomacy is the practice of obtaining agreement between countries to cooperate to produce results that align with their interests.

* **Bilateral diplomacy**, involving only two countries, serves as a platform to nurture mutual interests, particularly in trade.
* Singapore has numerous bilateral relationships.
* E.g. -> The 1962 Water Agreement with Malaysia allows Singapore to secure raw water supply from the Johor River in exchange for treated water.
* Bilateral diplomacy benefits Singapore as it can protect and advance its interest.
* **Multilateral diplomacy** involves interactions within international or regional organizations.
  + For example -> Singapore, as an **ASEAN** founder member, participates in multilateral diplomacy at both regional and international levels.
  + Being a member of ASEAN has benefitted Singapore as its able to establish partnership with countries within and beyond ASEAN and thus protect and promotes its national interests.
  + E.g. the **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP**), including Singapore and 14 other countries. This agreement aims to stimulate economic cooperation, trade expansion, and the opening of opportunities within the Asia-Pacific.
  + Through the RCEP, local businesses gain an advantage by venturing into member countries with minimized tariff barriers, translating into cost savings. -> increases trade, business opportunities and provides jobs.
  + RCEP helps to deepen relationships between member countries.

**With strong diplomatic relations with other countries, small countries such as Singapore can protect its national interests. It can ensure its common interests are protected and resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner.**

**DETERRENCE**

Deterrence refers to the efforts taken by a country to discourage potential aggressors.

* **Deterrence** is another strategy employed by governments to protect their national interests, particularly in matters of national security.
* A country deters potential aggressors by building up its air, land and sea defenses.
* Singapore’s strong army, navy and Airforce deters potential aggressors from attacking Singapore by making it costly for them to attack.
  + MINDEF - > Oversees the SAF. -> SAF is a technologically advanced defence force.
  + For e.g. it has Unmanned Aerial Vehicles which allow the SAF to see the enemy first, which would allow commanders to make better decisions during war.
* Through deterrence, a nation's power and capabilities are enhanced, making any potential attack costly and detrimental to aggressors.
* Deterrence ensures a country's safety from external threats, thereby safeguarding national interests in defense.

**With a strong defence force, it makes aggressors think twice about attacking Singapore. This protects Singapore from external threats and keeps Singapore safe.**

**SRQ 7**

Do you think **maintaining law and order** is more important than **protecting national interests** for the good of society? Explain your answer.

Maintaining law and order is important for the good of society. Ensuring law and order is essential as it safeguards the safety and security of citizens from harm and injustice. In Singapore, the Singapore Police Force (SPF) plays a vital role in crime prevention and deterrence by implementing initiatives to prevent threats from escalating and causing harm. For example, the SPF collaborates with various stakeholders, including students, to run campaigns aimed at combating scams, thereby promoting awareness and reducing crime in society. **By keeping people safe from harm and injustice, society feels more secure, allowing everyone to live, work, and interact without fear. Campaigns like anti-scam initiatives help people stay aware and protect themselves, leading to less crime. This creates a safer, more peaceful community, supports economic growth, attracts investments, and improves everyone’s quality of life.**

Protecting national interests is also important for the good of society. National interests are essential for a country's security and well-being and can be protected through diplomacy and deterrence. Diplomacy involves agreements between countries to cooperate on shared interests. Bilateral diplomacy, which focuses on relationships between two countries, helps nurture mutual benefits, especially in areas like trade. For example, the 1962 Water Agreement with Malaysia ensures Singapore's access to raw water from the Johor River in exchange for treated water. **Strong diplomatic ties allow small countries like Singapore to protect their national interests, safeguard common goals, and resolve conflicts peacefully.**

**TURN TO THE NEXT PAGE TO STUDY A BREAKDOWN OF THE ABOVE ANSWER.**

**First Paragraph: Maintaining Law and Order**

|  | **The key details** | **What this means** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Point** | Maintaining law and order is important for the good of society. | *The main idea or claim that answers the question directly.* |
| **Evidence** | The Singapore Police Force (SPF) collaborates with stakeholders, such as students, to run anti-scam campaigns to prevent threats and raise awareness. | *Facts or examples that support the point made, showing its validity.* |
| **Explanation** | By keeping people safe from harm and injustice, society feels secure, people can live without fear, and it creates a peaceful community, boosts the economy, and improves quality of life. | *Explains the impact or significance of the point and evidence to society.* |

**Second Paragraph: Protecting National Interests**

|  | **The key details** | **What this means** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Point** | Protecting national interests is important for the good of society. | *The main idea or claim that answers the question directly.* |
| **Evidence** | The 1962 Water Agreement with Malaysia allows Singapore to access raw water from the Johor River in exchange for treated water, showcasing successful diplomacy. | *Facts or examples that support the point made, showing its validity.* |
| **Explanation** | Strong diplomatic ties allow Singapore to protect its interests, ensure common goals are met, and resolve conflicts peacefully, fostering security and cooperation. | *Explains the impact or significance of the point and evidence to society.* |

**Chapter 3: HOW DO WE DECIDE WHAT IS GOOD FOR SOCIETY?**

**Challenges in deciding what is good for society.**

1. **Different needs and interests.**

* People have different needs and interests; this makes deciding what is good for society difficult.
* It is challenging to decide how much support to be given to different groups of people as society is very diverse with different needs and interests.

Example

* The government wants to improve transportation by building more MRT lines such as the Thomson-East Coastline.
* However, this may mean the destruction of the environment to build tunnels – leading to unhappiness among environmentalists.
* People’s homes and businesses may have to be demolished to construct the tunnels leading to unhappiness.
* The destruction of the environment may cause certain groups of people who care for the environment very unhappy.

Explanation

* **They may feel their interests are not being taken into consideration when the government is making decisions.**
* **This makes it very challenging to meet everyone’s needs and interests.**
* **Not everyone’s needs and interests can be met due to limited resources, and this can lead to tensions in society.**
* **There is a need to establish a common understanding so that decisions made can benefit society.**

1. **Different priorities.**

* People have different priorities depending on which stage in their life they are at.

Example

* Families with young children may want the government to allocate more resources to early childcare services.
* The elderly may want the government to subsidise healthcare more since they require more medical attention.
* Challenging to decide which needs and interests are to be addressed, as there are differing priorities among people and limited resources.

Explanation

* **Limited resources, such as land, are a challenge for Singapore as the government must make good decisions on allocating its limited resources so that the citizen’s needs are met.**
* **Poor prioritising of resources may lead to some citizens’ needs not being met and this may lead to unhappiness and tensions and loss of faith in the government.**
* **There is a need to establish a common understanding so that decisions made can benefit society.**

1. **Unequal sharing of costs.**

* Some decisions by the government may lead to different impacts on different people.
* Some groups take on more of the costs than others.

Example.

* To house the large number of foreign construction workers, the government builds dormitories.
* Most agree that having foreign construction workers is necessary for Singapore’s economy to be sustained however residents do not wish the dormitories built near their homes.
* This leads to the ‘Not in my backyard’ (NIMBY) syndrome -> Residents are worried about their safety and the value of their homes will be affected if dormitories are built near them.

Explanation

* As Singapore is land-scarce, it is challenging to meet the needs of different groups of people.
* Some groups will inevitably have to bear higher costs than others and this might lead to tensions.
* There is a need to convince citizens on the benefits and challenges of the decisions so that citizens can be more accepting of the government’s decisions.

|  |
| --- |
| **Good to know**  **What is a ‘trade-off’?**   * A trade off means deciding between two or more things that cannot be obtained at the same time due to limited resources because having more of one thing will result in having less of another. * Before deciding, the government will discuss and understand all the trade-offs involved and the compromises that it must make to make the decision so that the needs and interest of most people can be met. * By having a complete picture, the government can weigh and decide what is most beneficial from all these considerations; despite having conflicting demands.   Example – Integrated Resorts in Singapore.   * Government wanted to build casinos to boost tourism and the economy. * Citizens were worried it could lead to a rise in gambling addicts and have a negative effect on families. * To ease their worries - the government implemented safeguards such as Gambling support hotlines to help those in danger of becoming addicted. |

**Principles of good governance.**

1. **Good leadership**

* Good leaders are necessary to make good decisions for the benefit of the country.
* Leaders need to be hardworking, honest and have integrity and be able to make the right decisions instead of popular decisions.
* Leaders must not be swayed by monetary benefits and instead work towards meeting the needs of the citizens.

Example

* For example, Lim Kim San, the first chairman of HDB and Minister of National Development worked for 4 years without salary to oversee the construction of 26,000 HDB flats from 1960.
* His efforts helped to provide affordable housing for Singaporeans during a period when there was a lack of quality houses.

Explanation

* Good leadership helps to win the confidence and trust of the people and build faith with the government. It can lead to a harmonious and successful society.

1. **Anticipate change and stay relevant**

* Good leaders will be able to foresee future challenges and plan ahead for it.
* They need to be able to predict what are the future changes that will affect the country and make decisions now to prepare for it.
* They need to be innovative and modern in their thinking so that they can help the country stay relevant.

Example

* The government has identified that due to climate changes, sea levels may rise in the future.
* Hence the Singapore government set aside 5 billion dollars for the Coastal and Flood Protection fund to help the country meet the significant risks of rising sea level over the next 50 to 100 years.

Explanation

* Anticipating change and staying relevant will prepare the country better for the future as its able to identify potential problems, tap on new opportunities and make decisions that benefit Singapore’s progress.
* This leads to good governance, and it wins the trust and faith of the people leading to a harmonious society.

1. **A stake for everyone, opportunities for all.**

* It is important for citizens to have a say in the decision making of the country.
* The government has created more opportunities for citizens to share their views with the government and with each other.

Example

* The Singapore Together movement was a government initiative launched in 2019 which encouraged citizens to partner with the government and with each other to share their feelings and work together on areas they cared about.
* Based on the responses collected, themes that matter to citizens include a racially harmonious society, cultivating national identity and contributing to national defence.
* During the Covid pandemic, almost 17,000 Singaporeans shared their views on how Singapore could navigate the challenges of the pandemic and emerge stronger.
* Some of the ideas that emerged from these conversations were adopted by the government.

Explanation

* By providing a stake for everyone in the country, people will feel a greater sense of responsibility towards the progress of the country.
* By allowing people to voice their views and acknowledging their concerns, it helps to **develop a sense of belonging** to the people in the country. They will be more willing to be involved in working towards the good of society.

1. **Meritocracy**

* Meritocracy refers to a system that rewards hard work and effort.
* People are rewarded according to the effort they put in regardless of race, religion and family background. This encourages them work harder.

Example

* Students are offered Edusave scholarships/Good Progress awards based on their learning attitudes, performance, conduct, leadership and character.

Explanation

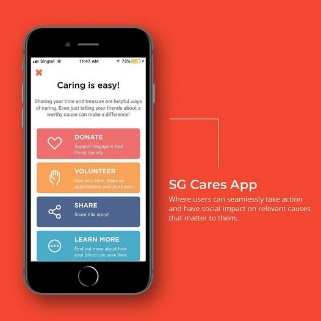
* This encourages everyone to do their best as everyone has an equal chance to succeed.
* This in turn benefits the country as citizens develop trust and faith in the government.
* The fair approach adopted by the government leads to people developing trust in the system which leads to a harmonious society.

**CHAPTER 4**

**How can citizens and the government work together for the good of society?**

|  |
| --- |
| **ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF SOCIETY** |

* **Individuals** can positively impact society by volunteering in areas they're passionate about, using their skills and knowledge to help others. For instance, one could entertain or teach skills to the elderly in nursing homes.
* A blue and yellow text

  Description automatically generatedCitizens can also form or **join community groups** like RSVP, a social service agency, where they can engage in volunteerism, especially beneficial for senior citizens.
* Such community groups can utilize their collective skills, experiences, and government-provided resources to address societal needs, like caring for the disabled, sick, or elderly.
* **Government agencies** collaborate with these community groups to enhance their capacities. An example is the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) developing tools like the Volunteer Management Toolkit 2.0, which provides a framework for effective volunteer management for the community groups.
* **The government** sets up structures, policies and national programmes in a targeted manner, creating opportunities for the community to show care to those around them.
  + E.g., the mobile app – SGCare connects volunteers with volunteering opportunities and charity organisations so that citizens can contribute to those who need support.
  + This app can be used by individuals and community groups to address the needs of those who need it.
* **The combined efforts of individuals, communities, and the government result in an efficient, unified approach towards addressing the needs of society, enhancing overall societal welfare, and creating a stronger, more resilient community.**

|  |
| --- |
| **INFLUENCING DECISION MAKING IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS** |

* Solving societal problems requires sound decisions, which can be made by the collaborative efforts of citizens and the government through platforms such as REACH and the Citizen’s Jury.
* REACH, under the Ministry of Communications and Information, involves citizens in decision-making by gathering their views on public policies through engagement sessions and social media, and sharing these insights with relevant government agencies.
* An example of such collaboration is the Citizen’s Jury for the War on Diabetes, where the **MOH**, after launching a nationwide diabetes prevention and management initiative, **organized a citizen jury** to develop community-based solutions.
* Over seven weeks, the selected citizen jury discussed diabetes management challenges and solutions, resulting in MOH implementing several of their recommendations, including a campaign to promote water drinking.
* **This collaboration demonstrates that citizens can actively work with the government in influencing decision making, with the government ensuring equal and fair participation.**
* **The partnership between citizens and the government in decision-making brings a positive impact by generating effective solutions which addresses the needs of the people hence building a stronger and more resilient community.**

|  |
| --- |
| **STRENGTHENING SENSE OF BELONGING** |

* Strengthening citizens' sense of belonging can be achieved through unity and collaborative actions between citizens and the government.
* Common experiences such as celebrating national day or participating in programmes like 'Remaking our Heartland' and HDB’s 'Build a Playground' can create this unity, where citizens contribute to the design of neighbourhood spaces.
* An example of collaborative efforts in preserving heritage is the Dakota Crescent case. The government, in response to relocation plans, preserved some buildings for community use.
* Informal community group 'Between Two Homes' played an active role here, documenting heritage and discussing redevelopment plans through workshops and a multimedia website.
* The government provided support through 'Our Singapore Fund' which funded such projects, with 'Between Two Homes' being one of the beneficiaries.
* Individual volunteers from 'Between Two Homes' interviewed residents, becoming aware of their needs and aiding relocation efforts, developing community engagement.
* **Such joint efforts by individuals, community groups, and government can enhance citizens' sense of belonging by connecting them to the country's history, people, and places.**
* **This collaboration leads to increased care and proactive actions from citizens towards fellow Singaporeans, and greater concern about shaping the country’s future, ultimately creating a more unified and resilient society.**

**Chapter 5: Diversity**

**Factors that shape identity and contribute to a diverse society.**

|  |
| --- |
| **RACE AND ETHNICITY** |

* **Race** is way to categorise people according to their physical characteristics, like skin colour.
* Examples of Races in Singapore include Chinese, Malay, Indians.
* **Ethnicity** refers to the culture of a group of people who share the same ancestry, customs and traditions. -> Each ethnic group has their own beliefs and practices which shape their identity.
* For example, in Singapore, within the Malay community there are different ethnic groups such as the Javanese and the Bugis
* Each ethnic group have their unique practices. For example, the Chinese in Singapore hand out hongbaos during Chinese New Year and auspicious phrases are shouted over the yusheng dish.
* The Indians in Singapore celebrate Pongal a harvest festival celebrated by the Tamil community where they boil a pot of rice and milk.
* **Race and ethnicity** can also refer to the same group of people.
* In Singapore the terms race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably as culture is seen to be closely related to race.
* The government in Singapore uses the race categorisations **CMIO** to make decisions regarding policies related to race and ethnicity.
* For E.g. the Ethnic Integration Policy was introduced to promote interaction and harmony between ethnic groups in Singapore -> the EIP policies ensures a mix of various ethnic groups in each HDB block which will allow opportunities to interact with each other.
* **Race and ethnicity can shape a person’s identity as it influences their beliefs, values and way of life.**
* **A variety of people with different identities, beliefs, values and practices makes a society diverse.**
* **Society becomes socio-culturally diverse when there’s a diverse group of people of different race, ethnicities, religions and nationalities.**

|  |
| --- |
| **RELIGION** |

* Religion refers to an organised collection of attitudes, beliefs, practices and world views which often involves the worship of a god or gods.
* Singapore has many religions and this influence people’s beliefs, values and practices. Hence it will shape their identities.
* A person’s race and ethnicity does not always determine his or her religion -> a person may follow a religion based on birth, by choice or by their race/ethnic group.
  + Examples include Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism, each with unique beliefs, traditions, and worship methods.
  + Each of these religions have their own beliefs and teachings and this will shape the identities of followers.
* **A variety of people with different identities and their own beliefs, values and practices makes a society diverse.**
* **Interactions between different religious communities creates an inclusive and harmonious society.**

|  |
| --- |
| **SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (SES)** |

* Socio-economic status (SES) is determined by factors such as education, income, occupation, and type of housing.
* SES shapes individual identities by influencing the availability of resources and opportunities, as well as one's social networks and future aspirations.
  + In Singapore, SES is often gauged by income to help the government identify those needing additional support.
    - For example, families with lower income may face challenges in providing resources to support their children’s development -> the government provides support with the KidSTART programme to support children aged six and below.

Social mobility

* A person’s SES status can change due to a variety of factors such as business failures.
* Movement across SES positions is known as social mobility. Mobility can be upwards or downwards.
* For e.g. Mr Lim Hock Chee, the founder of Sheng Siong supermarket used to sell chilled pork at a rented stall but now owns 65 supermarkets around Singapore.
* Singapore promotes upward social mobility through government initiatives. There are opportunities for individuals from lower SES backgrounds to move up to middle and upper SES.
  + - Schemes like GST Vouchers, MOE Financial Assistance Scheme, and Medifund support this upward mobility. This leads to a more inclusive society.
* **SES impacts individual life choices, social circles, leisure activities, and housing preferences, thereby shaping individual identities.**
* **When there are people of different SES this contributes to a socio-economic diverse society where people have different levels of education, income and wealth.**

|  |
| --- |
| **NATIONALITY** |

* Nationality refers to a group of people sharing the same history, traditions, and language, residing in a particular geographical region.
* Shared aspects like a common history, language, and experiences shape one's identity.
* For example, Singaporeans participate in the nation’s birthday celebrations, on 9th August every year as Singapore celebrates National Day to mark its independence and progress as a nation.
* This allows Singaporeans to identify strongly with the country and with other fellow Singaporeans
* People of the same nationality often feel more comfortable with each other due to these shared experiences and beliefs. -> may lead to a shared sense of identity and belonging to the country.
* In addition -> In Singapore, immigrants from around the world live and work here. They bring along their distinct identities and practices unique to their country of origin, contributing the diversity of Singapore.
  + For e.g. Mrs Helene Le Chatelier is a French national living in Singapore. She moved to Singapore as she appreciated the diversity in Singapore. She contributes to Singapore as an artist by painting murals on buildings and working on government projects for the Singapore Tourism board.
  + Immigrants are also attracted to Singapore for its safety, good education and job opportunities.
* **The existence of individuals of different nationalities contributes to the richness and diversity of society. It adds to our multicultural identity.**
* **Appreciation of these diverse beliefs would enable us to interact with diverse groups respectfully thus leading to a harmonious society.**