**Chapter 5: Diversity**

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

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| **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.**

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| **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.**

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| **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.**

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| **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.**