**Chapter 6: Experiences and effects of living in a diverse society.**

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| **CULTURAL EXCHANGE AND APPRECIATION** |

* Cultural exchange takes place when ideas, customs and traditions are shared among people of different backgrounds.
* This leads to deeper understanding and appreciation of customs and traditions of Singapore’s diverse ethnic groups.
* Different ethnic groups have different customs and traditions:
  + For e.g. The Chinese have a tradition of the lion dance which is performed during Chinese celebrations and auspicious occasions and is believed to bring good luck.
* **A deeper understanding and appreciation of the diverse ethnic groups in Singapore can help people from different groups interact respectfully which contributes to harmony in Singapore’s diverse society.**
* Cultural exchange enables people to build meaningful relations with people of different backgrounds and learn from their ideas and cultures.
  + E.g., Through common spaces such as the ASEAN Youth Fellowship where young leaders from the region work together to implement positive change within communities in ASEAN.
* **Such common spaces promote interaction and build understanding among different groups of people.**
* Cultural exchange can also lead to fusion of cultures. It can lead to the creation of new designs and products seen in areas such as fashion and furnishing.
  + E.g., Mr Mike Tay is a Singaporean designer of furnishing products. He uses designs inspired by the various cultures found around Asia.

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| **Cultural exchange may also result in tensions.**  Cultural Appropriation: When another culture is used without permission or portrayed in an insensitive manner.   * E.g., In 2019, an Italian fashion company plagiarised the traditional designs of the Oma ethnic minority group in Laos. The colours, shapes and designs were identical to the traditional Oma design. * This was deemed as disrespectful to the Oma people who spend considerable effort to hand make these designs. * The Italian company did not acknowledge the Oma in their marketing, nor did they provide any compensation to the Oma. |

**Diverse societies have many opportunities to engage in meaningful exchange with others of different cultures. By being open and receptive to other cultures, we can enrich our experiences and build a harmonious society.**

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| **EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS** |

* Living in a diverse society allows people to learn new skills and develop new knowledge as people from diverse groups share information and ideas on various topics.
* E.g., Employees at the Multinational Company, Thermo Fisher Scientific, collaborate with colleagues of different cultures and experiences. The exchange of ideas and knowledge has resulted in the production of high-quality medical equipment.
* During COVID pandemic, Thermo Fisher collaborated with MOH to produce the PCR test kits.
* **Singapore’s attitude of openness to welcoming foreign talent and investment has created more opportunities for citizens to collaborate and exchange knowledge with people of different backgrounds respectfully. This leads to a harmonious society.**
* **This has benefitted Singapore through the discovery of scientific breakthroughs and innovations. It has also encouraged investment commitments in Singapore.**

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| **STEREOTYPE, PREJUDICE, DISCRIMINATION** |

* A diverse society can lead to tensions between different ethnic groups.
* Due to a lack of understanding and knowledge, people may form stereotypes about certain ethnic groups.
* It can lead to insensitive and hurtful remarks about certain ethnic groups.
* This may lead to xenophobia, which is directed against people of a particular country.
  + For example, some landlords in Singapore may not want to lease their homes to certain races due to stereotypes.
* Prejudice can lead to discrimination where a person behaves in a way that hurts another group. When someone discriminates based on someone’s race, it is known as racism.
  + Racist comments on social media leading to tensions and disharmony – In 2005 two men were jailed for making racist remarks against Muslims online.
* **Such attitudes and behaviours can lead to tensions, resentment and strained relationships between different groups in Singapore. It can cause hurt and unnecessary suffering for the targeted individuals and groups. This will lead to a disunited society.**

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| **COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES** |

**Employment**

* The large number of foreigners arriving in Singapore has put a strain on the job market.
* It has led to higher job competition for local Singaporeans.
* There are instances where foreigners with lesser qualifications are accepted into jobs -> this has led to growing unhappiness and resentment among Singaporeans.
* There is a common belief that this is happening as foreigners demand lesser wages than are more willing to work longer hours.
* The challenges to find a good career and jobs has reduced the standard of living for Singaporeans as they struggle to make ends meet.

**Infrastructure**

* Large number of foreigners can lead to high demand for houses which in turn drives the prices up as both locals and foreigners compete for limited housing.
* More foreigners have led to overcrowding on public transports. – May have led to the regular MRT breakdowns in the past ten years.
* Higher demand for healthcare services has led to overcrowding at hospitals.
* **The increased competition due to the presence of foreigners, may lead to xenophobia among locals which can lead to more tensions and unhappiness.**

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| **Government efforts to solve tensions**  Fair Consideration Framework   * Employers are required to advertise their job vacancies on Mycareersfuture that facilitates job searches for Singapore Citizens and PR. Only then can they hire foreigners. * Action is carried out against unfair practices by employers. * In addition, there are plans to improve amenities such as public transport system to better cope with the increase number of passengers. |