**Gender Equality: GP Learning Studio – Issue Discussion**

**Does discrimination still exist in our modern society?**

**1. About Today’s Discussion**

**1.1 Definition of discrimination**

Unfair treatment directed at individuals based on their membership in a marginalised group.

**1.2 Examples**

* Gender
* Age
* Social status
* Nationality

**1.3 Scope of discussion**

* Social
* Economic
* Political
* Culture

**2. Whether discrimination exists from a social aspect**

**2.1 Yes, discrimination exists.**

* Existing cultural and religious values which prevents people from accepting those who have alternative views.
* Shape their character and identity through cultural and religious values they hold onto
* Threaten their upbringing 🡪 Lack of willingness to understand others

**2.1.1 Example I**

* In 2018, about 4000 Singaporeans signed the petition to repeal 377A.
* Petition to keep the penal code received at least 71,000 signatures.
* Disapproval of the existence of this sub-section of society 🡪 traditional mindset of what constitutes a family unit.

**2.2.2 Example II**

* AWARE, a gender equality advocacy group in Singapore, has seen an increase in the number of reported cases of sexual harassment in the recent years.
* Cases used to be underreported.
* “#MeToo” movement that started in the western countries where many celebrities spoke out against sexual harassment and assaults.
* Significance of having access to the media as the exposure to different mindsets and views

**2.2 No, discrimination does not exist.**

* Rise of modern values
* Increased social media usage
* Access to content from other countries, exposure to alternative views
* More accepting towards others, speak out against discrimination

**3. Whether discrimination exists from the economic and political aspect**

**3.1 Yes, it exists.**

* Government place a strong emphasis on economic viability
* Economic situation of the citizens at a disadvantage
* immigration policy to recruit foreign labour 🡪 increased competition for jobs in the country 🡪 xenophobia

**3.1.1 Examples**

* 2013, a few thousand Singaporeans gathered at the Speakers’ Corner in Hong Lim Park to protest against the “White Paper” 🡪 target population of 6.9 million in 2030 and the increase in the intake of foreigners)
* intake of foreigners was responsible for the increased competition in the job market and inflation of prices in areas such as the property market.

**3.2 No, it does not exist.**

* Education as a tool to minimise the differences
  + Mindsets passed down from the older generation 🡪 Lack of understanding
  + Education to close the gender gap 🡪 high levels of qualifications which boosts their employment opportunities.
* Implemented anti-discriminatory measures and laws that attain equality between men and women.

**3.2.1 Examples**

* CCAs (Co-Curricular Activities) 🡪 exposure to students from different educational streams, races and countries.
  + reduce prejudices through increased interaction and development of mutual understanding
  + Building trust and eradicating prejudices when people are still young and have more malleable mindsets.
* In 1989, Ethnic Integration Project (quota on the number of races living in a HDB block)
  + close proximity 🡪 enhanced opportunities for interaction, learning how to live harmoniously with one another.
* Ministry of Manpower (MOM) 🡪 pregnant working women are eligible for 16 weeks of paid maternity leave upon meeting simple requirements by the government
  + Ensures economic viability and protects them from being treated unfairly because of their pregnancy

**4. Conclusion**

* Discrimination is prevalent as long as social hierarchy exists
  + Root cause of discrimination would be the mindset and values which people hold.