**Family& Ageing**

*“Age is an issue of mind over matter.*

*If you don’t mind, it doesn’t matter.”*

*– Mark Twain*

1. **Overview**

* The main development of ageing issues
* Demographic patterns. By 2030, one-third of Singapore’s population will be aged 65 years and older.
* Economic, social and political impacts
* Conflicting views about this social development
* According to **Singapore Home Nursing**, the percentile of elderly persons aged 65 years and above is estimated to increase from 7.0% of the population in 1997 to 18.4% by 2030.
* Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong are some of the countries facing this social development of a graying society. Singapore is one of the fastest ageing populations in the world.

1. **Impacts of Ageing**

Economic

* Health cost – negated by **medishield, medi-save, medi-fund, elder-shield**
* Undermine productive labour force – aging population, older workers – technological deprivation – less efficient
* Smaller affluent consumers have, seen in terms of lower expenditures – silver dollar
* Manpower shortage – overcome by robotic and automation, foreign workers
* Greater burden on working class (e.g. higher taxes) – lesser tax-payers, adjust tax structure – GST is needed to replace direct income tax
* Greater health expenditure costs incurred (e.g. hospital visits) -

Social

* Challenging to maintain social status quo – role of the seniors – discrimination against elderly
* Shape social values – Knowledge-based economy 🡪 New ideas – experiences – cultural heritage

**transit traditional values and norms – cultural identity – a sense of belongings**

* Challenge to traditional social values (modern culture versus traditional cultures)

(efficiency developed from technology : rituals and norms influenced by religion)

Political

* More younger voters who are concerned of political impact on the ageing population
* Elderly are more conservatives – vote for conservative political platform – against globalization and integration – Brexit and US Presidential election – deprivation of education and knowledge will undermine their capabilities to survive in the modern and globalized world – technological skills to survive. - issue of perception – continue their old way of life
* Conflicting interests between the youths and elderly -way of life – different way of communications – social media form of communication neglects the traditional face-to-face communication – create diverse opinions and views – contrasting and conflicting – sense of equality, freedom of speech (Amos Yee), views about the authority

1. **Problems of the Ageing Issue in Singapore**

* Rising cost of expenditure on healthcare
* Ageing population will contribute to increasing dependency ratio – ratio of caregivers to the elderly, tax burden,
* Greater stress on the allocation of resources between the youths and the elderly
* education like tertiary education , hospital expenditure, -( hospital insurance premiuns)
* social divide – Asian family values may overcomethis social divide
* Decline in the health of the workers due to aging will contribute to a fall in productivity
* slow and matured economy
* Undermining social cohesion due to shift in the norms and values
* notion of marriage, care-giving issue
* Greater family and social tension as family members are facing more care-giving issues in a more demanding modern society
* modern society creates the impact on the care-giving issue – acceptance of nursing home, the mount of allowance for parents, communication, time spent with parents
* Complex political development as governmental institutions struggle to cater to the interests of both the youth and the elderly
* social interaction and connectedness

1. **How do countries cope with the ageing issue?**

Economic Policies

* Ensuring elderly workers stay employed by extending age of retirement for example in Singapore till the age of 67.
* Financial planning programmes instituted by government. *E.g. CPF Scheme*
* Grants ( monetary or otherwise) meant to help the ageing population cope with the loss of income following retirement**. Pioneer Package**

Institutional & Infrastructural Policies

* Senior citizens corner for recreational activities
* More elderly-friendly infrastructures and facilities to facilitate social interaction
* Provide more healthcare support with the set of community hospitals and clinics

Social Policies

* Raise the status and identity of senior citizens through campaigns which recognize the contributions of the elderly – **Senior Citizens Award / Senior Citizens Week by MCYS**
* More support programmes developed by senior community group to help frail elderly – Singapore Programme for the **Integrated Care for the Elderly (SPICE) by AIC (Agency for Integrated Care)**
* Integrated programmes to help elderly to upgrade their skills to adapt to an IT-inclined and fast-paced modern society **(Silver IT programmes)**

Model Essays/Outlines

**Essay Question**

**'Raising children in tomorrow's world will be more challenging than ever before.’ Discuss.**

‘Tomorrow's world' - students have to make some predictions about the future and suggest what the world would be like then. As the question assumes a comparison to the current world conditions, students are required to address this point as well - what raising children is like in this day and age.

'Raising children’ - to bring children up in a stable family environment, to teach them right from wrong, moral values, to be principled and upright human beings, civic -conscious citizens of this globalised world.

What are some characteristics of tomorrow's world?

**A bleak outlook**

**Rising cost of living** - raising children is an expensive matter, having to pay for necessities increases the burden of providing for them; a good education, material goods, clothing, toys etc. Children are more demanding now as well, and expecting the best Parents will have to keep up with these demands and may find it increasingly difficult to fulfil them if they have to cope with other expenditure and financial obligations. Global recession and inflation could worsen In the future, adding to the increasing cost of raising children (e.g. rising cost of education and health care).

**Technological advances that seem 'out of this world'** - so advanced that in so many possible ways, almost everything can be resolved at a touch of a button. Children may take things for granted, that tasks can be done easily, quickly and efficiently. Parents may sometimes find gadgets and technology complicated and thus, this may result in a Jack of understanding between parent and child — a generation gap could be further widened in the future.

**A more tumultuous world** - the constant threat of terrorism and instability caused by poverty and war. Children in war-torn countries already have a cruel childhood as many young boys are recruited to fight and are forced to learn how to wield a weapon. Parents of such children do not have the choice to provide them with the love and warmth of a good upbringing. Instead they have to contend with issues of endurance and survival. What more in the future? If threats of war and hostilities wage on in the future, children will definitely not have the chance to lead care-free, happy lives.

**Moral decay** - young people are more exposed / desensitised to bad manners, boorish behaviour, violence, sex and crime. Parents often find it hard to counter, these issues or teach children the proper conduct of honour and respect as we are bombarded from all sides with these issues via the mass media- magazines, television, movies, the Internet etc.

**Depletion of earth's natural resources and the degradation of the environment -** what will happen to our children as global warming becomes worse and the eco-system is increasingly threatened? Currently, people are doing more to raise awareness aha save the planet, but are these efforts enough to sustain life for future generations? Parents in developing countries will find it increasingly difficult to raise children in the midst of more powerful cyclones (e.g. Cyclone Nargis in Myanmar), hurricanes (e.g. Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, USA) and more severe conditions of floods (China) and droughts (Australia), arguably worsened by global warming.

**Ageing population** - population growth has somewhat slowed down and reproduction is at a new low. How will we replace ourselves with the increasing reluctance of young parents to have children? Parents are deterred from having children due to the prospect of difficulties they will face in the future.

**Gender discrimination**- Women may be increasingly marginalised at work when they become pregnant, viewed as liabilities to companies; maternity leave and baby bonuses may not be given so freely by governments in view of the bleak economy. Fathers may not be willing to play a larger role in nurturing the child in spite of the mounting pressures on women.

**A more positive outlook**

**Rising affluence -** increased investments from foreigners, GDP will rise and therefore beneficial to the overall economy. Parents could have more income/resources to provide for the child's needs.

Increasingly cosmopolitan society— more diversity, learning new cultures, opening up to different countries, more open-mindedness - enhances creativity in children,

**Society becomes more efficient due to advancements in technology**. For example, a decade ago, we had snail mail, now email, sms, blogs, online forums etc. - what more in the future? Access to more knowledge and information is beneficial to the child's development and education.

**Governments are offering more financial and social assistance (e.g. childcare facilities, monetary benefits) to married couples to have children**, in view of declining birth rates in many developed countries (e.g. Japan, South Korea). More incentives could be offered to parents in the future to encourage them to have more children.

**Essay Question 6**

**To what extent is a stable family vital for a country’s progress?**

**Thinking Aspect**

**Question type:** Extent of agreement – state the contribution of a stable family to the state and assess the possible limitations of the contribution.

**Key terms**

**Stable family:** Functional family that provides a stable and secure support structure

**Country’s progress:** Consider a nation’s social and economic advancement

**Requirement of the question**

There is a need to consider how far a functional family contributes to the advancement of a nation. There is a need to analyse the contributions of the family to the state from a wide perspective.

**Points for consideration**

**Agree**

* **Social progress** 
  + Parents educate and socialise the young imparting values, morals and social norms ensuring social stability and cohesion
    - Parental neglect often cited as reason for juvenile delinquency
    - With growing influence of new media, parents need to educate the young to be aware of the dangers on the Net (pornography, etc), and be discerning towards the information / misinformation and ideas spreading hatred and extremism

limitations –

* + Parents transmit culture, traditions and customs to the young
    - Helps to nurture a sense of rootedness and belonging to country amidst globalisation and westernisation

limitations –

* + Belief in the importance of stable family maintains population growth
    - Many developed countries like Singapore and Germany face low birth rates due to changing perceptions and attitudes towards importance of family

limitations –

* **Economic progress**
  + Social progress will ensure the young able to contribute effectively to the society for economic growth
    - Families are the building blocks of the society
  + Stable family provides care for the young, aged and handicapped, easing burden on the state to focus on other policies to boost economy
    - Countries facing ageing population see strong family ties as a solution to providing care for the aged

Limitations –

**Balance**

* Besides the family, the society also plays a role in ensuring progress in country
  + Changing social landscape (dual-income family) demands greater support from the **employers** and **government**
    - Baby bonuses and child-care/aged support
    - Family-friendly work environment
  + **Schools** play a role in equipping skills and knowledge, as well as moral and national education

**List of Questions – Family**

1. “Modern life is not conducive to the survival of the family.” Discuss.
2. “A social institution is under siege.” Is this a fair description of the family today?
3. Consider the dilemmas parents in your society face.
4. “In trying to provide for the best for their children, today’s parents have deprived them of what is really important in life.” To what extent do you agree?
5. Parents are more important than teachers to a child’s education. Do you agree?
6. Is modern culture destabilizing the family?
7. Do you agree that a return to basic family values is the answer to social ills?
8. Many of a country’s social problems can be solved by discipline at home. Do you agree?
9. Having children is increasingly seen as a chore and not blessing. What impact would this have on the institution of a family?
10. “Having children makes you no more a parent than having a piano makes you a pianist. Discuss.
11. Is modern culture destabilizing the family?

Nature of question - Do you agree?

Introduction – observation, perspectives (thesis / anti-thesis), stand

Main body –

Opposing view – (1 para) – for those who embrace modern culture, they will agree to the view that modern culture does not destabilize but enrich the family entity as they feel that there is greater emphasis on education which will promote and raise the effectiveness of the education function in a family

Rebuttal – (1 para) – prove why the opposing view is wrong

However, this is not happening in reality where the proliferation of education in modern society has not helped every family, education institution may not perform their educational roles as they are more moriented towards the functional purpose of the development of a productive labour force.

Supporting View (3 paras)

A close examination of the features of modern culture will lead to one to see that it does destabilize the family as ……

Another supporting point that the modern culture does destabilize the family is that……..

Conclusion – a retrospective summary, opinionated conclusion

category – Economics, social values and norms, way of life, education, globalization

Topic sentence

supporting sentence – elaborate the impact,

exemplary sentence – examples

concluding sentence

Linking sentence – however such a view is myopic -

1. “Having children makes you no more a parent than having a piano makes you a pianist. Discuss.

Thinking Perspective:

Rephrase the meaning of this quote

**Having children does not make you become a good parent.**

( the parents cannot perform the functions of parenthood)

**Having children can make you become a good parent**

(biological nature of parenthood)

list out the requirements of the question

the development of parenting skills – are parenting skills nurtured or inherited? are parenting skills innate and natural? main responsibilities of parenthood – functions of the family – education, emotional support, financial support, moral development

set the structure of question – DYA question

Category of discussion: biological development, personal development, economic aspect, cultural heritage

Reasons for perspective 1:

1. natural instinctive behaviours for higher order animals like mammals – biological and instinctive mindsets – ensure the survival of species
2. part of the adulthood that we will assume the responsibilities – life cycle as a human being

Reasons for perspective 2:

Economic factor: the economic challenges and issues that will affect the family and good parenthood must be nurtured and developed – parents need to be educated about the economic knowledge – financial and wealth accumulation to develop their capacity to give the children a decent standard of living – to financially support the family and the upbringing of the child

Social factor: complexity of social norms and values – constantly changing difficult to adjust – parenting skills must be nurtured to understand on how to nurture the children to adapt to society – social norms are based on modern society – parenting skills may be unable to adapt to these modern culture – eg like peer acceptance – how to make friends (example – children needs are not matched

Social Media; the negative aspect of social media – propagating undesirable and immoral values and behaviours – need to help children understand the moral and social decay – complexity in the process of moral inculcation – wide spread of negativity and immoral behaviours that will intoxicated the children

7. ‘Parents have no right to impose their own values and beliefs on their children.’ Discuss.

1. , Parents are more important than teachers to a child’s education. Do you agree?
2. Is modern culture destabilizing the family?