**Modern Society: GP Learning Studio – Issue Discussion**

**Is Singapore ready for future challenges?**

**1. Focus of Discussion**

**1.1. Progress of Singapore**

- One of the four ‘Asian Tigers’

- One of the highest Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita in the world

**1.2 Recent examples**

- Singapore hosted the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2019 for defence ministers and security chiefs

- 2018 North Korea–United States Summit in Singapore

**1.3 Scope of discussion**

**1.3.1 Categorisation**

- Economic

- Social

- Education

**2A. Is Singapore ready for the economic challenges?**

**2A.1 Challenges**

- Technological disruptions

- Government initiatives to prepare the country for technological advancements

**2A.2 Example 1**

* Budget 2018
  + Minister Heng Swee Keat identified emergence of new technologies as one of the three major shifts from 2020 onwards
  + Emphasis on Industry 4.0, e-commerce and the sharing economy
* i4.0 strategy
  + Investment in R&D projects
  + Digitization and automation of manufacturing processes
  + Maintenance of economic competitiveness

**2A.3 Example 2**

* Smart Nation Initiative
  + Began in 2014
  + Made almost all public services accessible online
* Singapore chaired ASEAN in 2018
  + Technological innovation was the central focus
  + Established ASEAN Smart Cities Network (ASCN)
    - Collaborative platform
    - Promote sustainable urban development in Southeast Asia
    - Increased usage of technology

**2B. Why Singapore may not be ready for the economic challenges?**

**2B.1 Challenges**

- Outbreak of geopolitical conflicts and tensions

🡪 results in volatile economic shocks

- Clash of economic giants

🡪 Singapore’s small geographical size

🡪 Heavily dependent on external markets for growth

🡪 Vulnerable to changing political climate

🡪 Greater economic stability

**2B.2 Example 1**

* Sino-American trade war
  + Began in 2018
  + Report by ICAEW – published in June 2019
    - Projected Singapore’s economic performance to decline
    - May enter recession by 2020 should trade war persist
  + Tariff hikes by USA and China
    - Fall in Singapore’s export growth
    - Given both countries are the Republic’s largest trading partners

**3A. Is Singapore ready for the social challenges?**

**3A.1 Challenges**

- Threat of social division

- Government initiatives to maintain social harmony and stability

🡪 Cultural preservation

🡪 Maintenance of social harmony

**3A.2 Example 1**

* National Heritage Board (NHB)
  + To preserve and celebrate shared cultural heritage of Singapore
  + Organise heritage programmes and exhibitions

**3A.3 Example 2**

* Racial Harmony Day
  + Annual celebration – importance of inter-ethnic cohesion
* Character and Citizenship Education (CCE) classes in school
  + Inclusion of important messages

**3B. Why Singapore may not be ready for the social challenges?**

**3B.1 Challenges**

- Clash of alternative modern values with traditional family values

🡪 Creation of a disenfranchised society

- Gradual acceptance of modern values

🡪 Rise of social frictions

🡪 Clash with individuals who uphold traditional values

**3B.2 Example 1**

* Pink Dot movement
  + Began in 2009
* Survey by Institute of Policy Studies (IPS)
  + Published in May 2019
  + Shift in liberal values towards gay rights
  + Younger respondents were more liberal in their views
* ‘Wear White’ event in 2014
  + Defence of traditional Islamic values

**3B.3 Example 2**

* Penal Code 377A
  + Petition in Singapore to repeal the Penal Code 377A
  + Counter-petition was created in response
* National Council of Churches of Singapore (NCCS)
  + Rejected the repeal as alternative lifestyles would harm families and societies