



ST ANTHONY'S CANOSSIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL

HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT: SOCIAL STUDIES  
SOURCE-BASED PRACTICE: ISSUE 2 (T3P1)

NAME:

CLASS:

Study the Background Information and the sources carefully, and then answer **all** the questions.

You may use any of the sources to help you answer the questions, in addition to those sources which you are told to use. In answering the questions you should use your knowledge of the topic to help you interpret and evaluate the sources.

- (a) Study Source A.  
What can you tell from Source A about how racism is dealt with in Singapore? Explain your answer using details of source. [5]
- (b) Study Source B.  
Why did the Prime Minister publish the post? Explain your answer. [6]
- (c) Study Source C.  
How far does Source C prove that racial diversity is managed effectively in Singapore? Explain your answer. [7]
- (d) 'More needs to be done to manage racial diversity in Singapore.'  
Using sources in the case study, explain how far you will agree with this statement. [10]

## To what extent has racial diversity been managed effectively in Singapore?

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Read this carefully. It may help you answer some of the questions.

Singapore is a diverse society with individuals of different races, religions, nationalities and socio-economic status. The inability to manage racial diversity effectively has the potential to threaten the peace and security of the country. Today, issues such as race continue to be a possible cause of conflict among the different groups. Some have argued that Singapore is a fine example of how a country with people of different races can co-exist peacefully in harmony. In contrast, critiques have argued that the harmony in Singapore is only superficial. The recent case of the Preeti's 'brownface' saga is said to reveal racial fault lines beneath the harmonious surface when a comedian Preeti Nair, known as Preeti, and her brother, rapper Subhas

Nair, released a rap video on 29 July 2019 criticizing an advertisement where an ethnic Chinese actor had his skin darkened to portray an Indian character and donned a head scarf to impersonate a Muslim Malay woman. In the vulgarity-laden video, they criticised some individuals from the majority Chinese race of casual racism and being insensitive to minority races. Subsequently, a police report was made and they were made take down the video and apologise. On 30 July, Law and Home Affairs Minister K Shanmugam and a few other ministers condemned the video, stating that it has crossed the line and can upset racial harmony in Singapore.

Read the following sources carefully to determine if Singapore has effectively managed racial diversity.

**Source A:** A series of cartoon published by Singaporean cartoonist to express her views on racism in Singapore.

#### A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE CARTOONIST AND THE MAJORITY RACE...



**Source B:** A post by the Prime Minister of Singapore published on social media on Racial Harmony Day.

Happy Racial Harmony Day! Our schools have been commemorating the occasion by dressing in ethnic costumes, putting up skits, and recalling our shared history of interracial relations. Such scenes are unique to Singapore - we embrace our diversity and celebrate each other's customs and cultures, but also remember the times when tensions between the ethnic and racial groups boiled over into conflict and violence. Race and religion are potential divisive fault lines and this can be seen in many countries. We must never let that happen here. We worked long and hard to arrive here, and we must work even harder to preserve this peace for future generations.

**Source C:** A report based on survey findings from a study of race, religion and language carried out by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), an independent research centre that aims to generate new ideas on policies in Singapore, July 2019.

Results in 2018 showed there continued to be very low proportions of minorities who perceived discrimination in using public services such as hospitals or social service agencies (nine in 10 said they did not feel they were treated differently because of their race in such instances). About 90 per cent of Singaporeans also reported that they were comfortable with someone of another race being their colleague or neighbour. However, one area of concern is the marginal rise in perception of work related discrimination (such as in applying for jobs) among Malays and Indians, where some individuals indicated that they are treated unfairly due to their race.

**Source D:** An online article in response to the government's reaction to the Preeti's rap video published on a political blog that is known for its anti-government stance, 2 August 2019.

When comedian Preeti Nair, known as Preeti's, and her brother, rapper Subhas Nair, released a rap video criticizing the e-pay advertisement, they were judged by the Law Minister to have crossed a line in attacking the dominant Chinese majority in Singapore and the artistes were subjected to a police investigation. The state's action is not only excessive but also unfair, because it is clear from the video that the duo are not attacking Chinese Singaporeans per se, but Chinese racists for their racism. Preeti's even provides a disclaimer, spoken clearly in the song itself, that "Not all Chinese people are racists. Only the racist ones ah." Watching the video, I am struck not by the swear words, but by the softening of the criticism through musicality, wit, humor, and caveats. I wonder what justifiable rage lies below the video. And what exhaustion lies below the rage. For it must be enraging, and exhausting, to have to explain again and again why brownface is not just a joke, but an insult.

**Source E:** A Facebook post by a Minister from a minority race in Singapore on 30 July 2019.

I saw Preeti's rap video. Disturbing, bad taste, unacceptable. It's one thing to be upset over the 'brownface' e-pay advertisement for e-pay - yes, it is an insensitive advertisement. But it's totally another, in fact, very wrong to rub salt and respond with such disgrace and spite. If we don't stand up and condemn this offensive act now, if we keep silent, or worse, laugh and sing along, remember it could be us next time! I won't keep quiet when rap is used to attach derogatory labels, hurl vulgar words and gestures at Chinese Singaporeans. It is damaging to insult, denigrate, mock, denounce along race or religious lines. Not here in our home Singapore. I call for stern action.