



**Closed-Door Roundtable Discussion
on
Issues Impacting the Malay community in Singapore
Session Two: Nurturing Positive Malay Families**

Wednesday, 8 June 2022

Conference Room (Level 1)
Oei Tiong Ham Building
Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy
National University of Singapore (*Bukit Timah Campus*)

PROGRAMME

2.45 pm – 3.00 pm

Registration

3.00 pm – 3.05 pm

Welcome and Introduction

Dr Mohamad Shamsuri Bin Juhari
Research Fellow
Institute of Policy Studies

3.05 pm – 3.35 pm

Presentations

Speaker

Ms Attiya Ashraf Ali
Vice President
MENDAKI Club

Discussant

Mdm Azita Abdul Aziz
Senior Director
Social Services Division
Persatuan Pemuda Islam Singapura

3.35 pm – 5.15 pm

Discussion

- What are the challenges faced by the community in nurturing successful families?
- What are the factors that deter help-seeking behaviours?
- How can these challenges be mitigated?

5.15 pm – 5.30 pm

Summary Remarks

5.30 pm

End

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SYNOPSIS

Families form the bedrock of Singapore society. They provide the essential building blocks required to nurture resilient individuals. However, issues such as poverty, incarceration, marital dissolution, teenage births and unwed single mothers can threaten the Singaporean Malay family unit. Between 2016 and 2020, the top three causes of Malay divorces were found to be infidelity, financial hardship and desertion. A study by the Ministry of Social and Family Development found that children of divorced parents tend to fare worse than their peers from intact families. Growing up, these individuals are also more likely to perpetuate the negative cycle by ending up divorced themselves.

To ensure that family dysfunctions do not spill over into the next generation, the government has introduced various upstream interventions to ensure that families remain strong and intact. Unfortunately, obstacles such as the arduous processes associated with applications for government support, social stigma attached to “failed” families and even certain worldviews held by the Malay community, may deter families from seeking the help that they need.

This roundtable discussion will examine the challenges faced by the community in nurturing successful families. Issues to be discussed will include factors that deter help-seeking behaviours and how these factors can be mitigated.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

ATTIYA Ashraf Ali has a keen interest in using data-driven methods and direct engagement to understand community needs to drive meaningful solutions. In 2018, she was Research Assistant at the National University of Singapore for early childhood development among low-income households in Singapore. She also started volunteering with non-profit organisation, MENDAKI Club. This enabled her to develop youth programmes through close interactions with the Malay/Muslim community. Today, Ms Attiya is the organisation’s Vice President, and has overseen initiatives that cater to various segments of youth, including underserved students and women. Professionally, she works at Shopee, where she uses data strategically and creatively to influence decisions in the ever-evolving e-commerce space.

AZITA Abdul Aziz is currently the Senior Director of Social Services at Persatuan Pemudi Islam Singapura (PPIS). She started her journey as a social worker and in direct practice. Today, she oversees the management of the two family services centres (East and West) and four specialist centres; Centre for Remarriages and Stepfamilies (PPIS Vista Sakinah), Centre for Early Marriage Support for Minor and Young Muslim couples (INSPIRASI PPIS), Divorce Support Specialist Agency (PPIS As-Salaam) and Centre for Fostering (PPIS Oasis). Mdm Azita also manages Sym Academy. Together with her team, Mdm Azita provides remedial and developmental services for vulnerable families. With her experience of more than 30 years in PPIS, Mdm Azita is instrumental in leading the social services team to continue uplifting women and strengthening families.

MOHAMAD SHAMSURI Bin Juhari is Research Fellow in the Society and Culture Department at the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). Prior to his foray into the field of research, Dr Mohamad Shamsuri had acquired a wide range of work experiences in the education service, ranging from classroom teaching to senior management and leadership positions in various academic institutions. He has taught students across diverse backgrounds and abilities, from at-risk youths to those in the Gifted Education Programme. He has also designed and facilitated curriculum at the Secondary, International Baccalaureate Diploma, Undergraduate and Masters levels. Following a previous portfolio where he headed the Centre for Research on Islamic and Malay Affairs, Dr Mohamad Shamsuri's scope of research at IPS focuses on issues pertaining to the local Malay-Muslim community, specifically in relation to Identity, Family and Education. He received his PhD in education from the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. He also holds a bachelors and masters in sociology from National University of Singapore as well as a postgraduate diploma in education from National Institute of Education.

Last modified on 12 May 2022

