

**THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT OF SINGAPORE**

**WRITTEN ANSWER**

**MONDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2017**

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**Ms Foo Mee Har:**

To ask the Prime Minister (a) what studies or research have been conducted to understand the impact of various pro-family measures such as baby bonus and faster access to HDB flats, on raising fertility rates; and (b) how will the findings guide implementation of future Government interventions.

**Mr Teo Chee Hean (for the Prime Minister):**

1. The Government regularly reviews the Marriage & Parenthood (M&P) Package to see how we can better provide a supportive and family-friendly environment in Singapore. We conduct surveys and studies to better understand the impact and take-up of our measures. For example, we carry out the M&P Survey every three to five years to better understand Singaporeans' attitude towards marriage and parenthood, including their views on relevant support measures. We also draw on studies by academics and other groups, such as the survey by The Straits Times and Employer Alliance on Work-Life Integration in 2014. Relevant studies of M&P trends in other countries are similarly referenced for insights.

2. In addition, we hold consultations with diverse groups of Singaporeans, including married couples with and without children, singles, students in tertiary education institutes, caregivers of young children, and people sector representatives. Through these consultations, we have received positive feedback that measures such as the Baby Bonus Scheme have helped parents defray child-raising costs, while others such as housing measures have facilitated young couples' plans to settle down and build their families.

3. The learning points from these studies and consultations have been important in helping us to refine the M&P Package, which has been enhanced progressively and significantly since it was first introduced in 2001. For instance, last year, we announced further enhancements to Paternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave to better support shared parental responsibility between mothers and fathers.

4. Even as we continue to refine policy measures, we are cognisant that birth rates do not depend only on government initiatives. Social norms shape M&P decisions and these are in turn a result of multiple factors. Fortunately, aspirations for marriage and parenthood among Singaporeans remain strong. To get ready for Millennial families, we will need the support of the whole of society - employers, co-workers, community organisations, businesses and Government - to promote a more family-friendly environment where marriage and parenthood are achievable, enjoyable and celebrated.