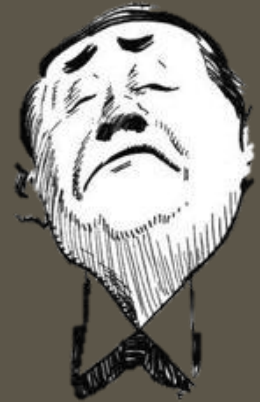# ELITISM

GEM COMM

Elitism -is feeling superior to most people because you went to Raffles or Stanford, or because you're born rich. In general, elitism—as we're defining it here, anyway—is inextricable from a sense of personal and class superiority. It's using tokens of lifestyle, education, wealth, and privilege to elevate your perceived value over other people.

Being elite, on the other hand, usually entails having those same tokens of status—education at fancy universities or colleges, high-prestige occupations, and so forth—but choosing to try to use them for good instead of for padding one's personal ego.

Edwin Chaw, 26, was featured in The Straits Times last year for coming forward about his experience as a student in Hwa Chong Institution.

He claims that being put in an environment of "elites", he was unable to cope with the stress and ended up dropping out. His feature sparked a debate among netizens about the necessity of our local education system's rigor.

Reasons why Elitism Exists in Our Society

1. **Flawed Meritocracy**
   The truth is, hard work alone does not guarantee you success. Often, family wealth and education background play a big part.

2. **Lack of Integration Among Citizens of Different Social Class**
   It all starts from PSLE. Our children are sorted at 12 years old by how well they do academically, and this is where the elitist mindset starts kicking in. Let us not forget parents impose this on their children too.

3. **Over-emphasis on Grades**
   What is said on our report cards has always been our be all and end all. Hence, failure to do well results in automatic inferiority in the eyes of the upper trenches of this society.

The fact is we can never truly get rid of elitism. However, we can not deny that our system produces quality individuals that lead our society today, and elitism is a by-product. It is also important not to discount that our's is still in essence a meritocratic society, and whatever the circumstance, every Singaporean can thrive and prosper in his or her own ways.