

Consider poor pay, age of cleaners too

WHILE Mr Murali Sharma may be right ("Focus on hygiene process", last Friday) to criticise cleaners for the lack of hygiene in foodcourts, we must also empathise with the cleaners who are mainly elderly and frail.

Mr Sharma forgets that cleaners are poorly paid. A cleaner is paid an average of \$1,000 a month, for a shift that may last 10 hours.

Cleaners have no time to sit. They must move from table to table and usually, they also have a trolley to push. During peak-hour periods, they try their best to clear as many tables as possible

amid an endless stream of diners. All my sympathies go to them.

While Singaporeans should expect quality service, we should also remember that a foodcourt is not a destination for fine dining.

It is heartlander territory where the fare is simple and cheap. We do not necessarily require super-efficient cleaners to do the job.

Cleaning is also one of the few jobs that can be done by an uneducated elderly Singaporean with little or no prospect of employment.

Francis Cheng