

Proselytization in Bhutan: Cases in Thimphu

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Abstract

The theme of religion is considered as an important driving force in almost every activity in the Bhutanese society. Although remarkable portions of the Bhutanese population profess Buddhism, some profess Hinduism and notably, Christianity is spreading in many parts of the country.

Religious conversion has become a rising concern in many places around the globe and the same is prevalent in Bhutan. People convert to Christians because of various reasons based upon the discussion with the converts. Some of the reasons highlighted by the respondents were healing power for illness, no caste system, motive of social service and social unity. These reasons are discussed in this paper as mentioned by the respondents.

Introduction

Religion is belief in supernatural power (God or Goddesses). It can also be argued that religion is a system of faith with great devotion. Conversely, religion is defined as a system of beliefs usually involving the worship of supernatural forces or beings which continues to have major influence upon the human society and especially to those individuals or communities who live a religious life (Joy, 2013).

There is a wide range of religions professed across the world such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. Amongst numerous religions in the world majority of people in Bhutan practice Buddhism. Nevertheless, remarkable portions of the population in Bhutan are Hindus. During the recent years, it is being observed that Christianity is spreading

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fast in Bhutan. According to 2015 GNH Survey Report, the percentage of people professing Christianity has increased from 1.16% in 2010 to 2.04% in 2015. However, this percentage of people is just among the sample of the survey and the number is expected to have gone much higher considering the total population of Bhutan.

Over the past few years, it is being understood that Christianity is spreading fast in Bhutan. There are no extensive researches and studies carried out in order to understand why proselytization is taking place particularly in many areas of Bhutan. It is difficult to understand why and how people are evangelized. Hence, this paper aims to study and bring out why Christianity is spreading in many parts of Bhutan, as it is being understood that people convert from one's own religion to Christianity.

Figure 1. % of people of different religion in Bhutan, 2010

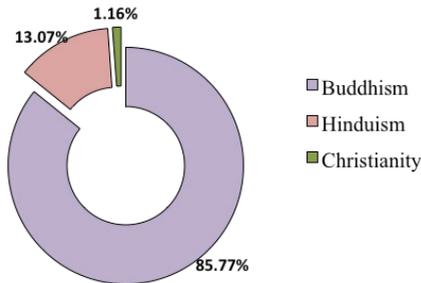
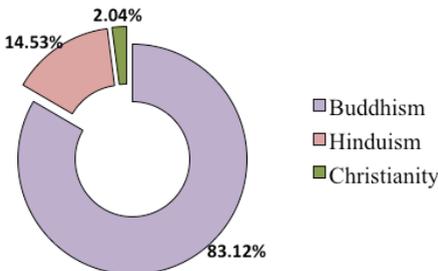


Figure 2. % of people of different religion in Bhutan, 2015



Researchers and scholars give various definitions for religious conversion. According to (Zinnbauer and I.Pargament, 1998) spiritual or religious conversion is defined as one type of religious conversion in which the self becomes identified with spiritual force and is characterized as a sudden or gradual process by which the self is radically transformed for the better.

Literature review

Researches and studies discuss that people opt for the conversion to Christianity because of various reasons. One of the reasons that lead people to convert to Christianity could be crisis. The convert receives some kind of crisis, usually a sickness, and he/she is seeking a way to dissolve this problem (Molk, 2012). Many people convert in order to achieve a better life, bodily healing and different kinds of social uplifts (Joshi, 2012) as cited in (Andersen-Eikeri, 2015).

Leadership Journal highlights that Muslims convert themselves to Christian because of these five reasons: 1. *The life style of Christians* – love that Christians exhibit in the relationship for all and the equal treatment of women in their communities. 2. *The power of God in answered prayers and healing*-experience of God's super natural power and blessing. 3. *Dissatisfaction with the type of Islam they had experienced*- dissatisfaction with Quran and its failure to build their society. 4. *The spiritual truth in the Bible* – Muslims say that the truth of God was found in Bible and thus they understood the God's character through the Bible. 5. *Biblical teachings about the love of God* - Muslims argue that God's love is conditional in Quran where as it is unconditional in Bible and therefore they opt for conversion to Christianity (Leadership Journal, 2008).

Through one of the studies done in Nepal, it is being learned that *Matwali* (middle class) converts lacked strong and structured religious bonds of their own and this promoted them to take up the new religion (Molk, 2012). According to (Zinnbauer & I.Pargament, 1998) predisposing psychological factors are often examined as precursors to the religious transformation.

The perspective of predisposing psychological factors is often observed as precursors to the religious transformation in studies like (Starbuck, 1899), (James, 1902) (Coe, 1917) as cited in (Zinnbauer and I.Pargament, 1998).

Method

This article is a result of interviews and discussion held with the Christian people living in Thimphu. The Researcher visited some Christian individuals. The information collected is primary fieldwork information.

The report is not and does not declare to be detailed or comprehensive survey of all Christian population or converts of Bhutan. The sources consulted were informed about the purpose of the discussion.

Problem statement

With the growing population and modernization it is being understood that people tend to change their faith and convert themselves to Christian. The trend of converting to Christianity is found to be increasing in many parts of the World and Bhutan is not an exception. It is often complex to understand why and how Christianity is spreading fast.

Thus this paper brings discussion with some of the converts, to understand how and why people are converting.

Narratives of the converts

The Researcher met with people who have converted themselves to Christian in order to have a better understanding on why more people are getting attracted towards Christianity. The narration is as presented below:

Respondent 1

The respondent is a male who is 42 years old and runs a small business in Thimphu. He narrates his story as to why he had to take up the decision of converting himself to Christian.

It was in June 2000 that his five years old son became ill.

The son was suffering from body ache. The son was taken to hospitals for numerous times. The doctors said that he had no serious problems and he would be alright soon. As the days passed by the condition of the son got worse. The son was rather getting worse. Day by day his appetite went down and his health deteriorated beyond expectation. Finally he decided to take his son to Kolkatta as suggested by his friends. After staying for a week in Kolkatta for treatment, the son showed improvement in his appetite and also reported to be feeling better. The doctor advised the son to take medicine (vitamins and calcium tablets) for the next 10 days because he has been severely weak as was not able to take food for many days. After this he came back home as the son showed some improvement.

After about a month he was then ill again. The same symptoms of body ache and joint pain troubled his son. This time he was worse as he could not sleep at night. He was again taken to Jigme Dorji wangchuk National Referral Hospital (JDWNRH), Thimphu. The doctors said that there is no definite disease and it must be because of his inability to adapt to the climatic conditions here in Thimphu. After hearing this, he decided to move to Samtse, his home town, the warmer place. Accordingly, he went and stayed there for about more than a month but there was no improvement in his son's health.

Days and months passed by but his son was not getting any better. Earlier he was neither serious nor well and this made everyone confused as of what to do and what not to. However, after they went to Samtse, he could not even walk properly. Rituals were performed for several times but the condition never improved. The conditioned never improved despite several other attempts. He came back to Thimphu, hopeless and helpless.

In around October 2000, he met one of his high school friends in JDWNRH as he was there to get his son's Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) report. The friend has come to see his relative who was sick and admitted in the hospital. As they met they talked about each other's family. This friend suggested him to approach Ap Namgay (name changed) who may help the patient

as he is keen in helping others.

Upon hearing this, the father approached Ap Namgay who was also in Thimphu for meeting his friends and families. The son was almost paralyzed by then. The father described the sickness to Ap Namgay. Upon hearing about the sickness, Ap Namgay agreed to help the patient through a healing centre in Siliguri. The father took the son to the healing centre in Siliguri. The son was made to meditate and was taken to church frequently. Every people present in the church were so helpful to each other. The father witnessed the people coming to the church talking about helping their community grow.

After witnessing and hearing people pray in the Church and their talks about helping patients and communities grow positively, some kind of thought bothered him. He was so touched by the hospitality among the people in the church. He also wanted to go and pray.

The son's appetite and health as a whole improved after a week. There was a ray of hope shining in his heart. His son was discharged from the hospital and he decided to come back to Thimphu.

After he came to Thimphu, his mind set was changed. He felt like he wanted to go back to Siliguri and spend time in the Church. Then he talked with his wife about these strange feelings. His wife told him that it is all because he has been there for many days that this feeling is in him and would go after sometime. However, this feeling continued to haunt him.

As the feeling continued he again talked to his wife. The son also showed a drastic improvement. The family then decided to go to Siliguri Church as a courtesy visit because the son was also fairly well.

After they returned to Thimphu from Siliguri, the wife also had a similar feeling like him. Hence both of them decided to convert themselves to Christian as they say they found improvements

in their lives from the day they started visiting the Church. Therefore, they decide to find out and join for praying sessions on Sunday. Many of their friends were also there in the group. They registered as Christians and stopped following Hindu customs and religions. Slowly, they found that Jesus was more influential than any other Gods as they could feel that they had spiritual connection with Jesus.

Respondent 2

She is a lady, a mother of two living in Thimphu. She works in a private firm with her husband. They have been married for the last nine years. They belong to the highest caste, Brahmin, commonly known as Sharma.

They were in love with each other for about three years before their marriage. They could not tell their parents about their relationship fearing the worst would happen because of the social stigma. Finally they had to decide to marry by eloping because they knew through one of their relatives that their parents would not allow them to marry but did not know the reason behind it.

They had eloped on February 23rd, 2007. They informed their parents after two days. To this they got astonished and threatened that they would not allow the newly married couple to come back home because they are relatives and should not have married. The lady's mother informed that they would be soon expelled from the village.

After the news was heard by the villagers, they decided to form a committee to discuss the issue as it was for the first time such issue came up. They called the couple and their parents and held a meeting. The committee told the couple to leave the village and change the caste to the lowest (*Damai*) because they are relatives and the marriage within relative is not acceptable in their society. The lowest caste (*Damai*) did not accept them saying that the couple have breached the rule and have not shown a good example and thus they cannot accept such people in their society. Hence the couple had no place to go. They had

no options. They were expelled from their village and finally they decided to come to Thimphu.

After reaching here, they realized that they should at least belong to one or the other group in a society. They were not allowed to attend any festival or gathering and were discriminated badly. Having committed the mistake of marrying within relatives and getting that harsh punishment of not allowing them to even go to the village, they tried finding the solution to this. Finally, as they were aware that Christianity has no caste system and that the social service is given the utmost importance within the community; they decided to convert themselves to Christians. They started reading bible and found logical ways to connect ourselves to Jesus. They started going to Sunday praying sessions and thus started following the culture and customs of Christianity after getting registered in the community.

Respondent 3

One of the respondents reported that her story about how she converted herself to Christianity is as follows. Her husband (who was a boyfriend then) was from a Christian family. His parents and relatives were all devoted Christians. She was only the Hindu member in the family. She felt uncomfortable in the family and as she realized she felt left out and was not well adapted psychologically.

One day she decided to go to Church and pray so that she may feel better. After being at the church, she felt comparatively better. As she started visiting the Church regularly, she developed a strong affinity with the Church and the people visiting the Church. The peaceful environment and hospitable *Pastor* in the Church inspired her. She felt like never before. She came back home and told her husband that she also wanted to follow Christianity and so converted herself. The conversion process did not involve many activities and processes. She had to register her name. She stopped praying to any other Gods, except to Jesus for she said she felt like Jesus was only the true God that would help bring solace in lives.

Respondent 4

One of the respondents is a taxi driver in Thimphu since 2013. Before that he used to live in Phuentsholing, working in a private company. He narrates that he had to convert to Christian following depressing incidences in his life.

He got married in 1989. He had his first child (boy) in 1991. The birth of the baby boy brought immense bliss in his life and family as a whole. The family lived a happy life. However, after two months the baby boy was ill. The baby had high fever at night. The parents rushed to the hospital in the middle of the night but in vain. The baby passed away just before reaching the hospital.

Thus, the parents and relatives felt like they have been awakened to totally undesired and disturbing dream. The unbounded happiness that they had before was suddenly shattered and replaced by the undesired sadness. However, they had to be strong enough to face the loss.

The parents tried to console each other and lived their lives believing firmly on “We need to move on with our lives, no matter how hard the situations may be.”

In 1994, they had a second child. The girl child once again helped rejuvenate the happiness in the family. She brought hopes in the eyes and heart of the parents. The family once again experienced profound joy. They believed that she truly was an angel for she revived the hopes and dreams of her parents.

One day, the baby girl acted unusual. She was then five months old. She suddenly started crying unusually. It was 10 pm and the parents were helpless as the baby did not stop crying. The mother tried breast feeding but the baby continued crying. They decided to take the baby to the hospital. Sadly, she passed away on the way.

It was an immeasurable loss for the parents and the relatives.

Their revived hope and dreams were all shattered again. It was hard for everyone in the family to bear the loss.

Yet the parents gathered the hope for they were left with no choice. They believed that the life has to go on. Although it was an unusual, depressing moment in their lives, they had to be strong to face the toughest of the situations.

With depressed and deserted heart they had to continue their lives. At some point, they thought that it would have been better for them if they (the parents) were dead instead of the babies. They could not understand why they were tortured that way. The parents were lost in the sadness. They did not know what to do next. The couple's parents and relatives suggested conducting rituals. Although he was not so devoted being, he decided to perform rituals as suggested because he thought being left with such disheartening incidences in his life, perhaps performing rituals can be a way to console himself and his wife.

One day, his wife being a strong woman, asked him about exploring the options that would stop such problems in the family. She said, for every problem, there exists a solution and it might also work in their case. The wife said that she had heard about people getting rid of the biggest of the problems by praying in the Hindu temple named Manakamana in Nepal. She said her grandmother used to narrate the stories about the temple, where people's prayer was answered immediately.

As suggested by the wife, the couple decided to visit the temple. They went via Phuentsholing by bus and by the time they reached Kathmandu, it was already dark. They stayed in a hotel.

The next day they had to visit the temple and asked the front desk management of the hotel for if they can have someone as a guide since they were new to the place. Luckily, the front desk employee said that they can take a guide along with them. They happily started the journey to the place they wished to visit. The guide was a gentleman with incredible attitudes. He was very helpful and down-to-earth fellow. They visited the temple

and felt peace in mind for the time being.

On the way, back from the temple the couple narrated the story to the guide, about why they came to visit the temple. The boy was surprised and sad to know the incidences. He consoled the couple that everything may turn out to be good henceforth as many people believe after visiting the temple.

However, he also narrated stories of people converting to Christians when they had similar problem as the couple had in the family life. When the tour guide talked about conversion, the husband thought that he would next opt for conversion if things do not improve. He did not tell his wife that he had such a thought in his mind.

The couple came back home but with a little hope this time. They lived their life remembering and talking about how happy they would have been if they had a baby. Sometimes, they used to feel that the God had no desire to bless them with baby and that's why the babies have been taken by the God abruptly. Therefore, they were always afraid to discuss on family planning. The moment they started discussing about having a baby, their disheartened hearts filled with fear and their weary eyes started to get wet. They only had the least of the little hopes that they would one day take their children to parks, play with them and have them as their old age companion.

However, abandoning all these thoughts, they held on to the fact that they visited Manakamana temple and the things would fall in place. They used to remember this every time they felt disheartened.

However, in 1999 the couple was once again blessed with a baby girl. The couple believed that she truly was a blessing from Goddess Manakamana. The baby was healthy and lively too. The couple was once again hoping for the some happiness in their lives. Slowly, they started dreaming about how she would grow up to a beautiful lady with responsibilities and selfless attributes. They believed she would grow up into a beautiful

human being.

Day by day the couple tried forgetting the bad incidences in their lives and carried smile for their daughter. They started to live a happy life after having renewed their hopes and aspirations.

However, when the baby girl was eight months he was ill and was admitted to the hospital. The baby was diagnosed with a heart disease. The couple was worried like never before. The death of their earlier child haunted them. Once again, the incidents were reflected upon their mind crystal clear. It has been three days that the baby was admitted to the hospital. Then the doctor said that the baby needs to be admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). No sooner did the nurses come along to take the baby to the unit, than the baby stopped breathing. They were all in utter silence.

Wearied with thoughts and hopelessness the parents could not control themselves and went unconscious. Their revived thoughts, hopes and aspirations were shattered all at once.

They went back home deserted. To see the empty cradle at home was the unbearable pain for the couple. However, their friends and family supported them immensely.

A month passed. The couple was tired of crying and being hopeless. They failed to have their dreams come true. They felt that happiness was never meant for them.

One evening as the husband laid down on a bed, he was asleep. He dreamt about the tour guide who guided them in Nepal. He was telling them that converting to Christians could take away sorrows and distress as he told on the way back from Manakamana temple.

The next morning, he shared the dream to his wife. His wife then suggested about converting. She said that she can do anything to cease such problem in the family. She also shared that if converting to Christian can bring good then she is ready

to do so and her husband must do so too.

Then they went to one of their friends who was already a Christian and shared the disturbing incidences in their lives. The husband also shared the dream that he had and so the friend also suggested them to try out converting.

Accordingly, they went to Sunday gathering of the Christians in one of the houses in the community and hence converted themselves. They rearranged their altar, by replacing the photographs of Hindu Gods with the photographs of Jesus and attended prayers in the morning and evening. After that in 2002, they were blessed with a baby boy. He is 14 years now and is healthy and happy. He is studying in one of the schools in Thimphu. The husband said, "Praying to Jesus makes us feel like we truly have some spiritual connection with Jesus." This, he said, he never felt before while praying to Hindu Gods.

Respondent 5

He is a 50 years old man. Although he used to run a small pan shop in his home town, currently he gave it on hire. He gave up his studies at the age of 15 years, when he was in grade seven. He said that he left his studies because of peer pressure. He had four other friends, who were alcohol addicts. The respondent had picked up the habit of drinking alcohol from his friends when he was in grade four. After that he got addicted to alcohol and felt that he could not live without it. All of his friends also left schools. Actually, his friends decided to quit the studies and start up a joint-business firm. He agreed to it and left the school with a dream of opening a business firm and settling in Thimphu. However, the dream could not come true as two of his other friends dropped the idea of the joint business and the others were not allowed by the parents as they could not afford. He used to live with his parents in his village. He could not keep himself from drinking alcohol. His parents tried numerous possible ways to stop him from his habit of drinking alcohol. He used to be drunk and involve in fights and quarrels. He used to create chaos in the family and society as a whole. His friends and family slowly started avoiding him. He was not invited in any of

the family gatherings and celebrations. He was badly neglected within his family and relatives. He found this depressing and drank more.

One day, when he was on the way back home from a shop where he used to drink usually, he met an old lady who greeted him with a smile. Although drunk, he was so happy when the lady smiled at him. He was drunk but can remember that incident vividly. Being neglected by friends and family he hardly got attention from anyone around and was truly touched by the smile of the young lady. He was so lost at the scene. However, the lady talked, "Where did you come from young man?" Almost losing his balance, he managed to answer to the question. Then the lady said, "Come to my place tomorrow, I have something important to tell you. I live in that house (pointing her finger at a small house with green colored roof, at a distance of about one kilometer)."

Accordingly, he decided to go and see the lady the next morning. He woke up, got freshened up and went to the house of the lady. As the previous day, she greeted him with a sweet smile. She offered him a chair to sit. She was all alone at home. She offered him tea and took seat on the chair next to him.

She started asking his whereabouts. She told that she had known and heard about him for many years now. She asked him about why and when he started drinking. He said that he picked up the habit from his friends and he became completely dependent after some years of consumption. He explained he turned out worse when his friends and family started neglecting him.

The lady was kind hearted and convincing as she conversed. She listened to all his stories and asked him whether he wanted to quit alcohol, recover, be a good human being and stand on his own. These four elements that she gave made him think hard. He pondered upon her saying and thought to change. After a sigh, he said "Yes, I want to." She promised to help him if he wanted to change but she said, "I am going to show you

the path, whether to follow or not is in your hand.” She said she had no personal experiences, but if he feels, her suggestion is helpful, she is ever ready to help others.

The old lady asked him whether he tried to quit alcohol before also. He honestly said he failed despite his trials for many a times. Then the compassionate lady shared a story of a man who could quit drugs after converting himself to Christian. However, she said it is just a suggestion and it is not mandatory for him to follow the suggestion. She told him that he can think about it.

He went back home, laid on the bed and started thinking about the suggestion. As he thought the innocent, compassionate face of the old lady reflected in his mind. He realized, if conversion could change his life and turns him to a good human being, then that is justifiable. Moreover, if some changes were not evident in the lady’s entire life, then why should she give an example to him out of nowhere?

After the thoughts haunted him for hours, he remembered he had a friend of him who was a Christian. He then started to search the contact details of the friend. Luckily, he managed to get his mobile number. He then asked for whether such incidences are apparent in the Christian communities. The friend said, “Listen to your heart and if it says conversion can change you, then yes. Otherwise, asking others cannot make any difference in your life. It is your life and you must be responsible, just follow your heart, that’s it buddy.” He realized, what his friend said must be true. So he called him up again and asked him what he should be doing in order to convert oneself to Christian.

His friend said there is nothing as such that people should be doing when they say they are converting. He said it is just that we need to have a strong faith in Jesus and his teachings. The friend suggested him to take part in one of the religious activities that the Christian community conducts every Sunday. He said the Christians gather in one of the houses for prayers and he might as well attend it. Likewise, he went to the gathering on

Sunday.

He felt different and he had his heart at peace. There were many people in the gathering who were friendly and supportive. They were hospitable and humble. He prayed with them and went back home in the evening. His friends told him to just concentrate and pray to Jesus. He was told to forget every pain he had and to believe and accept that Jesus would answer his prayers and keep him safe. Later on, his friend told him to meet the Pastor and he did accordingly. He talked with the Pastor who was very kind. He said to Pastor that he wanted too wanted to be Christian, for praying to Jesus has brought positive changes in him. The Pastor smiled and said, "Come and register your name." He did that and after that the Pastor told him to say some lines of prayers after him and that was how he was converted.

Although he was never a devoted follower of any religion before, from then on he started praying to Jesus every morning and evening at home. He went to the gathering every Sunday for praying. Eventually, he made up his mind to give up alcohol and live happily. He said "I don't know how, but I get peace by praying to Jesus and happiness comes from within. When I think of drinking alcohol, something from within stops me and I believe Jesus is doing that all because I never felt the way I feel by praying to Jesus."

After he converted to Christian, he is being looked after by the Social Service Unit of the Christian community. According to the respondent, they have a Unit that looks after financially disadvantaged people in the community. Likewise, they also look after physically challenged and disabled ones.

Findings and discussions

Upon discussion with some of the converts in Thimphu, it is being learnt that one of the reasons people convert to Christianity is because they have a powerful healing power. According to some of the respondents, when the bible presents stories and incidences where people could be raised from death, then there

is no doubt that sick people cannot be cured through healing. This idea is discussed in *(Faith Healing)*. In this book, it is discussed that there are three different types of healing as presented below:

1. Physical healing: Encourages people to have faith in Jesus Christ and his teachings to alleviate their sickness.
2. Mental healing: Healing people through emotional means.
3. Spiritual healing: The improvement in person's life after a belief of acceptance of Jesus Christ.

Their strategic healing process in the case of sickness and distress is found to be appealing by many people. The respondents mentioned that the healing procedure in Christianity is powerful and logical. The prayers and processes are easily available through literature online. The respondents also mentioned that compared to Hinduism and Buddhism, there are probably more reading materials on Christianity.

People are increasingly converting to Christian may be because the conversion process is not so hard. According to the converts, all they have to do is learn to concentrate on Jesus and have a strong belief to accept that Jesus would definitely answer their prayer and keep them safe, and register their names with the community. They also added that concentrating and believing all comes out automatically as we reach Church and start praying whole heartedly, But the question arises here, why is it not the same in other religions as Hindu and Buddhist? If people can have faith in Jesus, why cannot they have in Lord Krishna or the Buddha?

Hence, at some point it can also be argued that, as John Milton said in *Paradise Lost*, "The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven." Some of the converts also say that the most important thing to do before converting ourselves is to convert our minds.

The respondents also said that Christianity is spreading fast

because it gives utmost importance to social service and volunteerism. They justify that, although social services and volunteerism are centre of all religions, they find that there is no such association as of Christians when it comes to helping others. Some respondents also say that although they are not sure of the funding agents, the Pastor and few committee members look for donors to help orphans, financially disadvantaged and physically or mentally challenged people in their community.

A respondent also said that people in the contemporary times, look at where they can grasp more opportunities. As per the respondents, it was understood that Christian communities usually have a lot of money. They spend this money in helping the poor ones. They even provide scholarships and training opportunities to people. Hence, people get attracted towards Christianity because there is a collective co-operation in everything they do. Hence, they say that they never feel alone when they are in this religion.

While discussing with the respondents, it was also understood that Christianity has become more influential through paintings and photographs. There are instances where Jesus is painted imitating the postures of Hindu and Buddhist Gods and can be found over the internet as shown in the following figures.

Paintings and visual aids are considered as important influences in our minds. Respondents say that when Jesus is painted in Buddha's posture, some illiterate and innocent people in the society think that Buddha is also a Christian as he has turned to Jesus in the photograph. These people have no knowledge of technology and Photoshop, and thus this creates a misconception in them which makes them believe the false. On the other hand, Buddhists and Hindus never paint their Gods and Goddesses in the form of others and that may be on one of the reasons behind the influence of Christians. This may not be true in many cases, but it is also not false in case of illiterate and innocent minds.

Discussion with converts also makes us realize that when

people are in despair and stress and land up hopeless they go for a change that they believe may bring relief. One of the changes that people opt these days is converting to Christian. This may be because as narrated by some of the respondents that gathering in houses and trying to help out each other never fail to make them relaxed through prayers and healing.

Although every convert have their own story, as reported by the respondents, some of their friends convert mainly because of numerous culture and customs and social stigma attached to various beliefs in the society. The converts say, although Hinduism is spiritually strong religion, there are numerous cultures and customs which demand huge sum of money and some illogical activities are involved. Responds said that their friends who were Hindus initially narrate stories where they literally run out of money after conducting a simple ceremony of marriage. The worst thing about it is that no one from the same religious group bothers to help financially.

Figure 3. Jesus Paintings as Buddha



Source: www.google.com

As converts mention, Hinduism demands one to stay empty stomach in all most all the rituals. This causes difficulty in many people, especially the sick and the weaker ones. Thus, when they cannot fulfill the norms of Hinduism, they consider it as a sin. Therefore, they tend to follow Christianity as it allows praying and attending the rituals after taking food.

Similarly, there are other instances as funeral rites and marriage ceremonies that have numerous customs to be followed and people do not find it interesting in the contemporary times. Hence, when people lose interest in one thing, they tend to gain interest in another.

Caste system and marriages are also the reasons behind people's conversion. In one of the cases, the respondents said that they were drove out of the village because of their inter-related marriage. Hence, such social problem and stigma are also some of the reasons for people to get converted.

Conclusion

After discussing with the respondents regarding their reasons behind converting to Christian, one can clearly understand that Christianity is more influential than other religions in the contemporary times. It is indeed alarming to know that people are changing faith. Most of the respondents said that when they suffer beyond expectation because of financial problems, sickness and other social and personal problems, they try to find out solutions and one such solution people consider is conversion to Christianity.

Upon discussion with the converts, it was also understood that people have reasons for converting and professing Christianity. Although, Buddhists and Hindus emphasize on helping others, they do not have certain big association who have greater financial support than Christian's associations. Christianity has a strong connection with Western Countries and thus can avail funds from developed countries of the West.

Through discussion with the converts, it can also be observed that people find it easy to convert to Christians as they only have to go and join the gathering on one of the Sundays and register their names. Some studies mention that the procedure of conversion varies from place to place. However, the respondents said that in Bhutan, they do not have certain fixed rule or procedure to convert to Christianity. Hence, this must be one reason why Christianity is being professed by people easily.

Recommendation

As the present study shows, people get dissatisfied with their own religion, especially when they do not have a strong association or a group to help others in times of need. Although, helping others is the principle of every religion, many religions around the world do not have such strong association compared to Christianity. Therefore, the formation of association to help the needy ones in the society may help people from converting to Christians.

Since one of the reasons, people highlight, behind converting and following Christianity is because of the social stigma and customs that are usually hard to follow. Therefore, one recommendation in this case could be forming a committee of religious people who can carry out extensive researches and see the possibility of if they can reform the customs and make it not as rigid and firm as what exists. This is recommended, because there are certain hard core rules, especially in Hinduism. For example, in Hindu culture, when a person dies, his/ her children should live without salt and oil for 13 days. The children should not be wearing slippers for a month. They should not be taking onion, garlic, lentil and many other food items. They must not take more than one meal in a day for 45 days. They must not eat from the hands of others except husband/wife for a year. If possible, the children must not wear shoes or slippers for a year. Today, many of these are being discussed and reformed. Therefore, if such customs which are literally hard to follow are studied properly, then there might be some chances that people may not opt for converting to Christianity.

It is important to form a religious committee to regulate and approve the documents and photographs before posting it online. Some sort of rules need to be made in order to sort out which photographs can be posted on line because photographs and visual aids seem to create larger impact on illiterate and innocent sections of the societies.

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