115 Convert to Islam in Malaysia's First Quarter
Category : October 1987
Published by Anonymous on Oct. 01, 1987

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## Hindu Boys Marrying Malay Girls Cited as Primary Factor

Pathmarajah, N. A total of 115 people embraced Islam here in the first quarter of the year, according to the Perkim headquarters. Perkim is the national Islamic organization for missionary activities. Its dakwah (missionary) division chief, Haji Jaafar Siddique Mohamed Yusuf, said that of the total, 64 were Chinese, 36 Indians, 2 Europeans and 13 others. The majority of the Chinese were Taoist/Buddhists, and the Indians mainly Hindus. He added that 657 people were converted last year and 524 in 1985.

Commenting on the problem of Hindus converting to Islam, a local Hindu leader said that the main reason is marriage to a Malay. Specifically, it is Hindu boys marrying Malay girls and converting to Islam as required by Muslim law. Then there is pressure on Hindus by Muslim peers and superiors who offer promotions, scholarships for advanced overseas training courses, etc., on condition that they convert. Suitable brides can be arranged almost immediately. Thirdly, there are the cases where Muslims are caught having an affair with non-Muslims. The non-Muslims are coerced into conversion and marriage to that partner by the Muslim priest and state Islamic officers.

Hindu leaders are realizing that they cannot altogether blame the Islamic will to dominate and seek socio-religious hegemony through their jurisprudence. They admit that it is the "rot" within Hindu society that manifests karmically as social problems and invites alien wedges into Hindu society.

Although the primary cause is lack of proper Hindu education and fellowship among Hindus, especially boys and girls, Hindu youths testify to a new angle. Malays, widely considered to be of the Polynesian stock, are easy-going folk, and their girls are charming, very feminine yet modern in outlook and "available." On the contrary Hindus hold conservative values. In short, in the game of the fittest shall survive, Hindu girls lose out to their Muslim counterparts in these conversion

cases. The same applies to cases of Hindu boys marrying Christian girls.

The facts of the situation are that roughly 300 Hindus convert to Islam annually and about four times that amount convert to Christianity solely because of Hindu men marrying a Muslim or Christian partner. Hindu girls marrying non-Hindus are negligible. Dowry, caste, etc. are also important factors. The men are also to blame for applying different standards to non-Hindu women.

Among the converts to Islam, a few do take the difficult step of renouncing their faith in Islam (declaring apostacy) and reverting to Hinduism. However, Perkim is taking steps to close off this avenue. According to the dakwah division Chief, Perkim has submitted a resolution to the government to draw up legislation to overcome the "problem" of apostacy. The majority of converts remain indifferent to their new faith and continue to secretly hold Hindu belief patterns and sometimes, in defense, express neo-Indian/Smarta postulations about God and paths, aiming for excuses, reconciliatory positions and justifications for their misadventure. Their children, however, are fully indoctrinated in Islam and brought up in Malay tradition by their Muslim mothers.

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