
The Study Of Religious Soul In Adolescence For The Hindu Generation To Anticipate Religious Conversion

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ABSTRACT

The social reality of interfaith relationships among teenagers and adults is often encountered in the community and frequently occurs among celebrities or public figures. The phenomenon of religious conversion from Hinduism to non-Hindu religions is not only experienced by the Hindu generation from the Balinese ethnic group but also from various ethnic groups across Indonesia. The phenomenon of religious conversion occurring among Hindu teenagers is an interesting subject to study and analyse. Therefore, this paper attempts to conceptually discuss the study of religious soul in adolescence for the Hindu generation to anticipate religious conversion by using a psychological approach. Religious conversion is generally caused by many factors such as marriage, environment, career, economy, and others. However, psychologists believe that the driving factor behind religious conversion is psychological in nature. Psychologically, the factors driving religious conversion can be grouped into two main categories: internal factors (personality and disposition) and external factors (family, environment, changes in status and roles, and poverty). The psychological state of a person who converts to another religion depends on the personality of the individual. However, in Hindu teachings, abandoning the teachings of the Vedas (religious conversion) will not lead to perfection, happiness, and the highest goal, which is moksa, in accordance with the Bhagavad Gita, XVI. 23. Efforts to anticipate religious conversion among Hindu teenagers (the Hindu generation) can be carried out in two ways. The first is through parental participation in the moral and personality education of Hinduism within the family. Parents should fulfill their duties towards their children according to the guidance of the Sarasamuccaya, 242. The second way is through non-formal education (pasraman).

Keywords : Religious Conversion, Religious Spirit, Hindu'Generation

I. Introduction

The social reality of interfaith relationships carried out by teenagers and adults is often found in the community and often occurs among celebrities or public figures. An example that has been widely discussed on social media in May 2024 is the interfaith marriage between Rizky Febian and Mahalini Raharja. Their

marriage has attracted attention because they come from different religious backgrounds. Rizky embraces Islam, while Mahalini, originally a pure Balinese Hindu, has converted to Islam. Such relationships based on different religions or beliefs are often rooted in deep love between the individuals involved. However, it is undeniable that there are both pros and cons when it comes to religious conversion in such cases.

According to the source from www.suara.com accessed on May 20, 2024, at 22:30 WIB, Hindu religious figure I Gede Pasek Suardika shared his perspective on Mahalini's conversion for Rizky Febian. Suardika stated that changing one's beliefs is merely a personal decision, and ancestral relationships remain bound. He emphasized that only individuals who have damaged their spiritual structure would intentionally sever ties with their ancestors. He cited the case of Desak Darmawati, who converted religions and then criticized and denigrated the cultural and religious heritage of her ancestors. Suardika warned that forgetting one's ancestors would inevitably lead to destruction, as once the roots are severed, no matter how tall and mighty the embraced tree of life may seem, it will collapse at the slightest gust of wind.

The phenomenon of religious conversion from Hinduism to non-Hindu religions is experienced not only by the Hindu generation from the Balinese ethnic group but also by various ethnic groups in Indonesia such as the Javanese, Toraja, Kaharingan, and others. Given that Indonesia is a country with a diverse religious identity, religious conversion is considered a consequence of the reality of diversity. This is reflected in Susi's (2024) research on the attitudes of individuals who converted from Hindu Kaharingan to Christianity following marriage.

Religious conversion is a term describing a process that leads to the acceptance or change in an individual's religious attitudes. It encompasses two meanings. First, it refers to switching or entering into another religion; for example, someone who previously practiced Islam now moves or converts to Hinduism or vice versa. Second, it involves a change in religious attitude within one's own religion. In this context, religious conversion indicates a change in someone's attitude towards their own religion, motivated by issues within their religion. This demonstrates an increase in understanding or practice of one's

religion's teachings, but after religious conversion, they practice their new religion and may leave behind religious traditions that existed in their previous religion.

Thus, the phenomenon of religious conversion occurring among Hindu teenagers is something intriguing to study and examine. Therefore, this paper attempts to conceptually discuss the study of religious soul during adolescence for the Hindu generation, aiming to anticipate religious conversion using a psychological approach.

II. Discussion

According to Walter Houston in his book "The Psychology of Religion," the definition of religious conversion is described as a kind of spiritual growth or development that involves a significant change in direction in one's attitude towards religion and religious actions (Daradjat, 1991). Therefore, religious conversion is an action where an individual or a group expresses a stance that contradicts their previous beliefs. In other words, religious conversion is a statement by someone who moves from their old religion to enter or switch to a new religion, accompanied by a change in their attitudes towards religious issues within their religion, thereby opposing their previous beliefs and actions.

Sudarsana (2018) suggests that individuals often declare their conversion primarily due to factors such as marriage, environment, career, economics, and others. From the perspective of marriage, this decision is typically motivated by love for a partner without considering their religious beliefs, and sometimes religion is sacrificed for the sake of the marriage by abandoning one's previous religion. This often occurs due to a lack of strong *sraddha bhakti* (sincere faith and devotion) and being enslaved by that very love itself. However, to achieve a successful household, it is essential to meet many requirements, including having *sraddha* (sincere faith) and *dharma* (religious duties). In Hindu view, as mentioned in the *Manava Dharmasastra*, III. 6-7, when choosing a life partner, one should carefully avoid all ten types of families for marriage, even those that are highly reputed and wealthy. Among the families referred to are those that neglect sacred ceremonies and those that do not study the Vedas (Widana, 1997). In this regard, it is explicitly stated in the sacred texts of the Vedas that the act of religious

conversion hinders the attainment of the highest goal of Hinduism, which is moksha. As stated in the Bhagavadgita, XVI. 23:

*Yah sastra-vidhim utsrjya vartate kama-karatah,
na sa siddhim avapnoti na sukham na param gatim.*

Translation:

He who abandons the teachings of the sacred scriptures, influenced by desires and cravings, will not attain perfection, happiness, and the highest goal (Pudja, 2010).

The diversity of cultures, religions, ethnicities, and races in Indonesia within the framework of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity) and tolerance is often used as an argument that fundamentally all religions teach goodness. Religion is a matter of personal choice, although generally people inherit their religion. Tolerance indeed has its limits and does not justify everything, not accepting everything. Hinduism teaches respect for all religions but does not practice all religions (Madrasuta, 1999). For Hindu generations outside of Bali, being in a minority and heterogeneous environment means spending more time with people of different religions. In the social interactions of teenagers, love slowly emerges in the heart, as the Javanese saying goes, "witteng tresno jalaran soko kulino," meaning love arises from habit. This is what someone experiences when they convert religions. It is deeply regrettable if Hindus convert to another religion, considering Hinduism as a universal religion full of teachings of love and compassion. Moreover, the Vedic scriptures themselves are the source of all religious knowledge, and what exists in Hinduism may not necessarily be found in other religions, whereas what exists in other religions can often be found within Hinduism if one delves into Vedic concepts. Psychologically, the occurrence of religious conversion in an individual, according to Ramayulis (2002), is caused by a spiritual force that dominates and changes the habits of the individual. As evidenced by William James in his research on religious experiences of various figures who converted religions, the conclusions are as follows:

1. Religious conversion occurs due to a spiritual force that dominates the center of a person's habits, leading to the emergence of new perceptions in a firm and ideological form.

2. Religious conversion can occur due to a crisis or suddenly (without a process).

Poespito (1998) concludes that among psychologists, the driving factors behind religious conversion are psychological factors. When individuals face frightening situations and inner pressures that cannot be overcome, they may overcome previous motives or life views that they have adhered to. Psychologically, the factors driving religious conversion can be grouped into two main categories: internal and external factors.

1. Internal Factors

- a. Personality, according to W. James, finds that melancholic types with deeper emotional vulnerabilities may experience religious conversion within themselves.
- b. Birth order, according to Guy E. Swanson's research, shows that birth order tendencies can influence religious conversion. Firstborn and lastborn children usually do not experience inner pressure, while children born in between often experience psychological stress, which can also influence religious conversion.

2. External Factors

- a. Family: Discord, family breakdown, interfaith marriages, loneliness, sexual difficulties, family disharmony, and lack of recognition from family members can lead someone to experience inner turmoil, thus resulting in religious conversion as they seek new avenues to relieve their inner pressures.
- b. Environment: A person living in a place and feeling estranged from life there may feel lonely. At such times, they yearn for inner peace and a place to depend on to alleviate their inner restlessness.
- c. Change in Status and Roles: Changes within a person can lead to religious conversion, especially sudden changes like divorce or marriage to someone of a different religion.
- d. Poverty: Ordinary people tend to embrace religions that promise a better worldly life, and education experts argue that education conditions influence religious conversion.

Susi (2024) explains in her research that religious attitudes involve beliefs, values, emotions, and behaviors related to religion. These attitudes reflect how individuals understand, feel, and practice religious teachings in their daily lives. For many individuals, religious conversion brings psychological well-being, including feelings of peace, purpose, and meaning. Individuals begin to adopt beliefs and practices of a new religion and may face internal and external conflicts, but also find support from their new community. However, after conversion, individuals strive to integrate their new identity with other aspects of their lives. Saving Hindu teenagers from the behavior of religious conversion is an urgent challenge in safeguarding Hinduism in the future. Efforts need to be made to anticipate religious conversion among Hindu teenagers from an early age.

1. Parental Participation in Family Education

Education is a conscious human effort to mature learners and humanize humanity. Education is essentially a process of humanization that can only be carried out by humans themselves. Humans learn from childhood and continue throughout their lives (life-long education) in an effort to discover the essence of their own selves. Education is an endeavor to prepare students to face an environment that is rapidly changing, advancing, and constantly evolving over time. Education, in general, aligns with Hindu religious education, as the purpose of religious education and general education, as stated by Swami Sathya Narayana, is character building (Titib, 2006). This is what is meant by the very important or even the most important goal of education, because it is closely related to the output of students or children who are expected by parents, teachers, society, the nation, and the state.

The philosophical background of education according to the Vedas is to transform human beings (*manava*) into higher beings (*madhava*), which means humans who possess gentleness, compassion, and great wisdom, rather than letting "*manava*" fall into becoming "*danava-danava*," or humans with the character of demons—greedy, envious, and possessing various other negative traits. The role of parents in family education is extremely important because the mental education of a child is first formed within the family environment. Hence, the family, particularly the parents, has a very dominant influence on the

psychological development of their children. In this context, it is crucial for parents to provide optimal education by instilling noble values and striving to offer the best education for their sons and daughters.

The purpose of being born into the world as a human is to eliminate physical and spiritual suffering. For children to grow into adults with the awareness and skills to sustain their lives, it is the duty of parents to provide education to their children with love and sincerity. This reciprocal obligation creates a strong moral bond to serve each other based on deep faith. According to Hinduism, parents are motivated by the belief that the education they provide to their children is also a form of devotion to their ancestors. Hindus believe that their children are the reincarnation of their ancestors. In the Sarasamuscaya scripture, 242, three duties of a father/parent are described as follows:

- a. *Sarirakrta*, the duty of parents to nurture their child's physical well-being.
- b. *Pranadatta*, meaning parents are obliged to provide spiritual education to their child.
- c. *Annadatta*, the duty of parents to provide sustenance for their child to obtain food (Anna), one of the most essential needs in life (Kajeng, 2010).

In Hindu religious education, instilling the values of *sraddha* is essential so that the Hindu community can strengthen their faith and devotion to the Almighty God (Sang Hyang Widhi/Ranying Hattala Langit), thus achieving the educational goals effectively. *Panca Sraddha* is a philosophical concept in Hinduism regarding a set of beliefs that should be deeply internalized. *Panca Sraddha* consists of five beliefs held by Hindus: 1) Belief in the existence of God/Ida Sang Hyang Widhi Wasa/Ranying Hattala Langit, 2) Belief in the existence of Atman (soul) that lives within and is in the hearts of all beings, 3) Belief in the existence of Karma Phala (the results of actions), 4) Belief in the existence of Punarbhawa (reincarnation), and 5) Belief in the existence of Moksa (ultimate bliss) (Subagiasta, 2008). By deeply understanding and practicing the teachings of *Panca Sraddha* diligently and rigorously, humans can detach themselves from various worldly attachments. This means that the concept of *Panca Sraddha*, once internalized, should be applied in life and practiced with discipline to guide humans towards the realization of Atman-Brahman, thereby enabling them to detach from the physical body and the

material world. Ultimately, this can lead humans to achieve the goal of life, Moksa, which is the union of Atman and Brahman, the microcosm with the macrocosm, both in the current life and after leaving the body. In simple terms, if the Hindu generation understands, believes in, internalizes, and practices the teachings of Panca Sraddha, it will result in a sense of satisfaction, happiness, and peace in their hearts.

2. Non-Formal Education (Education in *Pasraman*)

According to the Editorial Team (2005), the word "pasraman" originates from the word "ashram," which in Old Javanese and Balinese means a place where education takes place. The concept of pasraman that has developed today is adopted from the ancient Hindu educational system in India as outlined in the Vedic scriptures and is still preserved today. The ashram system illustrates the close relationship between teachers and their disciples. Therefore, this system is better known as the "*gurukula*" system.

Titib (2003) states that in Hindu religious teachings, both the Vedic scriptures and other literature recognize three environments or centers of education: the family, school, and community. Schools in the Vedic era were called sakha or patasala, and today they are also known as ashram (now called *pasraman*). The educators in these settings are known as "tri kang sinangguh guru," meaning the three who are called teachers. The three teachers are: 1) *Guru Rupaka*, the teacher within the household, namely our parents; 2) *Guru Pengajian*, the teacher who provides formal education in schools; 3) *Guru Wisesa*, those in authority, such as the government, religious leaders, or community figures.

The current existence of pasraman has received serious attention from the government. As cited on the website Bimas Hindu, accessed on June 30, 2024, at 22:35, the Director-General of Hindu Community Guidance mentioned the Minister of Religious Affairs Regulation (PMA) Widyalaya, which pertains to general schools with a Hindu religious characteristic. Given this reality, pasraman is expected to conduct Hindu religious education that aims to educate students towards positive changes in behavior, personality, and noble morals, ensuring a continuous learning process that prevents religious conversion among the Hindu generation. The

essence of Hinduism is "*Satyam Eva Jayate*," meaning "truth prevails," glorifying the truth. The best souvenir in religion is "*satyam sanatana uvacha*," the immortal words of truth, which are expressions of eternal truth as the inheritance of the religious spirit to the younger generation (Pendit, 1995).

In conclusion, the *pasraman* in Hinduism is genuinely aligned with Hindu religious teachings, as evidenced by the educational goals found in the Vedic scriptures, which aim to effect comprehensive, complete, and integral behavioral changes encompassing all aspects (potentials) within humans, since humans are the most perfect living beings among God's creations.

III. Closing

Religious conversion is the declaration of an individual moving from their old religion to a new one, along with changes in the individual's attitudes towards religious matters within their new faith, resulting in attitudes and actions that are contrary to their previous beliefs and practices. Religious conversion generally occurs due to factors such as marriage, environment, career, economy, and others. Psychologists believe that psychological factors are the driving forces behind religious conversion.

The psychological state of a person who converts religions depends on the personality of the individual. However, in Hindu teachings, abandoning the teachings of the Vedic scriptures will not lead to perfection, happiness, and the ultimate goal, which is *moksha*. Efforts that can be made to anticipate religious conversion among Hindu teenagers (the younger generation) include parental participation in moral and personality education within the family and non-formal education (*pasraman*).

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