

Hindu Population Declining in Bangladesh

BANGLADESH, February 2011:

Pre-Partition, Hindus in Bangladesh constituted 28 per cent of the population. The Hindu population of Bangladesh has been slowly declining over the years since it got independence from Pakistan, but questions of how much it has declined and why it has happened generates heated debate.

According to the census website of Bangladesh, in 2001, Hindus were 9.6 per cent of the population. Most blogs and websites devoted to the status of the Hindu minority in Bangladesh contrast this with the 28 per cent that once existed there. Of course, soon after Partition in 1947, millions of Hindus fled to India.

In the census after the Partition exodus, in 1951, the Hindu population had already fallen to 22 per cent and this again fell to 18.5 per cent by the 1961 census. 'During the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, Hindus in particular bore the brunt of the Pakistan army's onslaught, leading to more migration,' a Bangladesh government official said. 'Though many returned after the formation of Bangladesh, the 1974 census showed that the population had fallen to 13.5 per cent, mostly because of steady emigration to Burma and India.'

Rabindranath Trivedi, president of the Human Rights Congress for Bangladesh Minorities, has a different take altogether. According to Trivedi,

the census was deliberately undercounting Hindus in Bangladesh, who, by his estimate, constitute about 15 per cent of the population even today. 'The government does this on purpose to deflect the charge of large scale Hindu migration due to state oppression,' he said.

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Bali Temples To Have Information Centers

BALI, INDONESIA, February 26, 2011:

The provincial government of Bali plans to equip its most sacred Hindu temples with information centers to assist visiting tourists. Chief among those temples targeted for information centers are the largest religious sites most frequented by visitors, such as Bali's Mother temple of Pura Besakih. Bali governor Made Mangku Pastika said on Wednesday that the establishment of information centers is badly needed because many guides are giving incorrect information to tourists. This is particularly the case for guides originating from outside Bali who do not fully understand the traditions and culture of Bali. Pastika said the planned information centers will be staffed by people drawn from surrounding areas who truly understand about history, and local rules and protocols. This is especially important in Bali where every temple has its own distinctive set of rules and regulations.

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40 Peters Road, Madras 600014. Ph. 28132790, 28131232