

The Role of Husbands in Teaching Hinduism to *Sudhi Wadani* Wife in Interfaith Marriages

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Abstract

Interfaith marriage in Indonesia is a complex issue that involves legal, social, and religious dilemmas. Marriages must be legal under both religious and state law, which requires the bride and groom to be of the same faith to be recognized as religiously valid. This provision has caused controversy and injustice, especially regarding religious freedom and human rights in a multicultural society. The Study aims to focus on the role of husbands in providing an understanding of Hinduism to wives who have undergone Sudhi Wadani who previously adhered to other religions, especially in the context of interfaith marriages. This research uses a qualitative, phenomenological method, in-depth interview techniques, and participatory observation. was conducted in Palu City in 2024 with 13 informants husband. The results showed that the husband plays a central role in guiding his wife to understand the teachings of Hinduism, which is realized through direct teaching, accompanying in religious activities, and being a role model. The obstacles husbands face include limited religious knowledge, lack of time due to busy work, and wife's sensitivity. The strategies husbands apply to overcome these obstacles include inviting wives indirectly to engage in religious activities, patient communication, and utilization of religious communities to learn. This concludes that the husband's role in guiding his wife to understand the teachings of Hinduism in an interfaith marriage is vital and requires consistent, flexible, and practice-based efforts. Practical recommendations for interfaith couples and relevant institutions to strengthen support for Hindu husbands of wives who have undergone Sudhi Wadani in interfaith marriages.

Keywords: *Interfaith Marriage; Husband's Role; Religious Learning; Hinduism*

Abstrak

Pernikahan beda agama di Indonesia merupakan isu kompleks yang melibatkan dilema hukum, sosial, dan agama. Pernikahan harus sah secara agama dan hukum negara, yang mensyaratkan kedua mempelai seiman untuk dapat diakui sah secara agama. Ketentuan ini menimbulkan kontroversi dan ketidakadilan, terutama terkait kebebasan beragama dan hak asasi manusia dalam masyarakat multikultural. Tujuan penelitian ini berfokus pada peran suami dalam memberikan pemahaman ajaran agama Hindu kepada istri yang telah menjalani *Sudhi Wadani* yang sebelumnya menganut agama lain, khususnya dalam konteks pernikahan beda agama. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi, dengan teknik *indepth interview* dan observasi partisipatif. Penelitian ini dilakukan di Kota Palu pada tahun 2024 dengan 13 informan suami. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa suami memegang peran sentral dalam membimbing istri untuk memahami ajaran agama Hindu, yang diwujudkan melalui pengajaran langsung, mendampingi dalam aktivitas keagamaan, dan menjadi teladan. Kendala yang dihadapi suami meliputi keterbatasan pengetahuan agama, minimnya waktu akibat kesibukan pekerjaan, dan sensitivitas istri. Strategi yang diterapkan suami untuk mengatasi kendala ini meliputi mengajak istri secara tidak langsung untuk terlibat dalam kegiatan keagamaan, komunikasi yang sabar, dan pemanfaatan komunitas keagamaan sebagai sarana pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa peran

suami dalam membimbing istri memahami ajaran agama Hindu dalam pernikahan lintas agama sangat penting, dan memerlukan upaya yang konsisten, fleksibel, dan berbasis praktik nyata. Rekomendasi praktis bagi pasangan berbeda agama dan lembaga terkait untuk memperkuat dukungan terhadap suami Hindu dari istri yang telah menjalani *Sudhi Wadani* pada pernikahan lintas agama.

Kata Kunci: Pernikahan Hindu; Peran Suami; Pembelajaran Agama; Agama Hindu

Introduction

Interfaith marriage in Indonesia is a complex issue involving legal, social and religious dilemmas. Indonesia's Marriage Law requires marriage according to the religious laws of each party, effectively prohibiting interfaith marriages, unless one party converts. This provision has caused controversy and injustice, especially in relation to religious freedom and human rights in a multicultural society. (Mahathir, Syed, Shariffah, & Suyatno, 2022; Suyaman & Fitriah Alfiany, 2022). The implementation of this rule has also been inconsistent, with some courts accepting applications while others reject them (Lathifah, 2020). Marriages must be legal under both religious and state law, which requires the bride and groom to be of the same faith in order to be recognized as religiously valid (Rudy Harjanto et al., 2023; Yulita et al., 2022).

As interfaith marriages increase, there is a need to address these complexities while respecting Indonesia's diverse religious landscape (A'yunina & Bachri, 2023; Sidiqah, 2023; Syatar, Syarif, Alimuddin, Kurniati, & Rasna, 2023). For example, cases of interfaith marriage involving Hinduism often face additional challenges. Although in Hinduism, marriage is a spiritual and physical bond, Hindu men who marry interfaith face several challenges, particularly in maintaining their religious identity, which is more evident, especially in pluralistic societies (Mandara, Gelgel, & Dharmika, 2022).

Based on the results of a preliminary study through an interview approach conducted on March 10, 2024 in Palu City, with Mrs. M, a wife who has undergone *Sudhi Wadani* as a process of converting to Hinduism, revealed a number of obstacles in understanding and practicing the teachings of her new religion. She revealed that she rarely received guidance from her husband regarding Hindu teachings, especially in praying procedures, participating in mebanjar activities, and performing yadnya, such as making a series of ceremonies and *upakara*. The results of the preliminary study have shown the need for more attention to the husband's role in accompanying his wife in an interfaith marriage, especially in the aspect of religious learning. Lack of guidance can be a major factor hindering the wife's integration in her new religion and posing a threat to the sustainability of their marriage. This shift can decrease the transmission of Hindu values in the family (Mandara, Gelgel, & Dharmika, 2022). In this case, mental and spiritual readiness is very important in challenging situations to implement religious teachings (Bhagwandas, 2019). In the Hindu tradition, women are supposed to be the manifestation of power and creativity in the concept of Shakti (David, 2023). The husband must act as an educator in adapting the wife to a new environment full of Hindu spiritual and artistic values (Aziz & Mangestuti, 2021).

Social support and sound interactions, including the emotional and spiritual role of the husband, are important for the quality of interfaith marriages that face unique challenges (Rachmadhani & Herdiana, 2021; Ratna Sari, 2023). In Hinduism, the husband is responsible for protecting the family, providing spiritual guidance, and teaching religious values, in line with the concept of marriage that emphasizes equality and shared responsibility so that the husband's support in the wife's adaptation process to Hinduism can strengthen family ties (Ni Wayan Eka Sumartini, 2024; Wedanti, Windia, & Sudantra,

2023). Other studies have also shown that patriarchal structures in Hinduism often place men in a dominant position, which hinders communication and mutual understanding, especially in interfaith marriages. (Ghimire, Axinn, & Smith-Greenaway, 2015; Leavitt, Allsop, Price, Marks, & Dollahite, 2021). Marriage is a sacred act that should be managed wisely for harmony and quality of family life (Tirta, 2022).

Based on this description, research related to the husband's role in providing religious guidance to his wife in Hindu marriage is very important considering its impact on family stability which has the potential to create household conflicts to divorce, and can even damage the social and spiritual integration expected in marriage. The objectives of this study include (1) to know the husband's role in introducing Hinduism (*Parahyangan*, *Pawongan* and *palemahan*) to his wife, (2) to identify the obstacles faced by the husband in introducing Hinduism to his wife, and (3) to know the strategies used by the husband to introduce Hinduism to his wife. This approach is expected to provide practical recommendations for interfaith couples and become an additional reference for related institutions.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. This approach was chosen to deeply understand the social phenomenon that is the focus of the research, namely the role of the husband in providing an understanding of the teachings of Hinduism to his wife who has undergone *Sudhi Wadani* as a process of converting to Hinduism in the context of interfaith marriage. The techniques used were *indepth interview* and participatory observation. This research was conducted in Palu City in 2024. The informants in this study were husbands of wives in marital couples who previously had different beliefs; as many as 13 informants were determined based on purposive sampling techniques used to select informants who had relevant experience and knowledge according to the research focus. The data collection instruments in this study consisted of observation guidelines, interview guidelines, recording devices, and cameras. Observations were made by directly recording interactions and field phenomena. In-depth interviews were conducted flexibly to explore informants' experiences, views and practices related to the research focus. The data collected was analyzed descriptively through three main stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This analysis was chosen with the hope of providing a comprehensive picture of the husband's role in providing an understanding of Hinduism to wives who have undergone *Sudhi Wadani* in interfaith marriages in Palu City.

Results and Discussion

This research uses a pure qualitative approach to explore the husband's experience in guiding his wife to understand Hindu teachings, the obstacles faced, and the strategies used. The following are the research findings:

1. The Role of Husband in Guiding Wife to Understand the Teachings of Hinduism

Based on the results of interviews that have been conducted related to the husband's role in guiding his wife to understand Hindu teachings (*Parahyangan*, *Pawongan* and *palemahan*), information is obtained that:

a. Related to the Concept of *Parahyangan*

When I first got married, as a husband who was first close to my wife, I definitely taught her how to pray together like *Tri Sandya*, besides directly teaching her how to pray, I also bought books about Hinduism such as daily prayer books so that my wife could read, what's more in the book there are already ways and attitudes to sit in praying, so I as a husband was somewhat helped. Moreover, my wife is a

little stiff, I give in for good, waiting for her mut to be a little good so that there is no conflict, I as a husband must continue to guide patiently and diligently, especially since my wife's beliefs were initially different, she did not understand the beliefs that she adheres to now, so she is a little slow to understand (Nukoyasa, interview, 13 Juni, 2024).

Yes, after two years of marriage I just entered the banjar, until now. I even became a banjar administrator. My wife continues to invite me to *mesimakrama*, especially in routine *banjar* meetings. The reason for entering the *banjar* is because we live in Palu and work in Palu too, if there are joys and sorrows. It is this suffering that we think of bearing the burden (Suantika, interview, 13 Juni 2024).

When I first got married and entered Hinduism, she (my wife) had not memorized the *Tri Sandya*, but now she has memorized it. At first, I taught but not optimally, but slowly, my wife sought initiative by memorizing herself and reading from books, often hearing from YouTube, and diligently going to the temple to pray, even though I was not maximally able to teach directly only at the beginning of marriage, but with her determination then she learned by herself so that until now she (the wife is very active in praying both in the temple and at home even though it is not routine three times or three times a day (I Putu Gunayasa, interview, 13 Juni 2024).

When she just joined Hinduism she (wife) did not know, but now she has memorized. Usually, I pray in the afternoons at home with the children, usually she (wife) if she is not unable to come, sometimes not; if it is not mut, she / wife does not come, praying cannot be forced; I as, a husband must always motivate and remind always (Gusti Ketut Ari, interview, 13 Juni, 2024).

Yes, whether or not newly married people learn. Besides that, at home, there is a *Tri Sandhya* guidebook and a daily prayer book. I, as a husband, prepare everything for her (wife) to learn at home when I leave, especially since my wife is also a state servant, she must be smart in dividing her time. It seems like I want to give an example, just not often. So, I want to see how her intention is to practice that belief (Putu Satya Wicaksana, interview, 14 Juni, 2024).

b. Related to the Concept of *Pawongan*, this is Identified Through *Mebanjar*

Yes, after 2 (two) years of marriage I just entered the banjar, until now. I have even become a banjar administrator. My wife is invited to continue *mesimakrama*, especially in routine banjar meetings. The reason for entering the banjar is because we live in Palu and work in Palu too, if there are joys and sorrows. It is this suffering that we think of bearing the burden (Suantika, interview, 13 Juni, 2024). I have, until now, settled in Cempaka Sari banjar. The reason is because work and residence are also in Palu. As a religious and social community, it is appropriate to follow the customs that apply to the local area. Because there are *awig-awig* that apply that must be agreed upon together, where in Hinduism it is taught *Tri Hita Karana*. How to conduct a harmonious relationship between humans and God, the relationship between humans and humans, humans and nature. Yes, this human relationship with humans is said to be able to socialize between others in joy and sorrow (Satya Wicaksana, interview, 14 Juni, 2024).

Yes, but we did not enter the banjar immediately after marriage, for one reason, we are in the Ratna Sari area. Secondly, we feel a sense of responsibility also for the sense of togetherness between us. Yes, my wife is often invited to the banjar activities. We are both active, super active again, because I happen to be trusted by the people to develop the task as chairman of *Krama Kota Palu*, so inevitably we have to be active (Rupawan, interview, 16 Juni, 2024).

As for the reason, it is already required to enter the banjar. So we chose Cempaka Sari because according to the area of residence that has become a provision from the authorized party, namely the PHDI board, the domicile area is the neighborhood that determines. The activeness of the wife still suggests that she also participates in how arisan, monthly meetings, joys and sorrows are still there (Marlin, interview, 18 Juni, 2024).

c. Related to the concept of *Palemahan*

In fact, I myself am a shallow person in religion, especially about *Banten*, but she (my wife) learned by herself. I never taught her directly, I just asked her if she had done the saiban, but she did and knew it herself. When she first got married and had not yet become a serati member, she did not know anything about *Banten*, that after cooking she had to do *mebanten* saiban or perform yadnya sesa. Awam anyway...awam. She didn't know about *Banten* at all, she never even did it (Suantika, interview, 13 Juni, 2024).

Never, maybe I myself don't know much and haven't explored what *mebanten* means at home. And I was afraid to do it without knowing the meaning, purpose and objectives. I just follow what my parents used to do. I followed that without knowing the meaning, I calculated that it was my mistake, so I thought I didn't need to make it and teach it to the first wife to get married, I was afraid it would be wrong (Satya Wicaksana, interview, 14 Juni, 2024).

Based on the results of the interviews that have been conducted, it is known that in *Parahyangan*, the husband plays an active role in teaching his wife about worship, such as *Tri Sandya*, through direct methods, providing guidebooks, and accompanying his wife in learning, with proper guidance, his wife can understand and carry out worship rituals actively. In *Pawongan*, husbands encourage wives to join banjar activities and be active in social life. Through involvement in the banjar, wives increasingly understand the importance of social relations in Hinduism and can experience joys and sorrows with other believers. Some husbands even motivate their wives to continue to actively participate, both in regular meetings and other social activities, to strengthen the sense of togetherness and harmony. In the *Palemahan* aspect, although some husbands feel that they do not have sufficient knowledge about *Banten* or related rituals, they still provide space for their wives to teach and carry out these rituals with caution due to their lack of understanding of the meaning of these rituals, besides that husbands still provide support and space for their wives to develop in Hindu religious practices, although not always by direct teaching.

This role demonstrates the husband's efforts to consistently support his wife's spiritual transition the husband serves as the primary religious educator for his wife (Budiadnya, 2019). A husband can provide spiritual support by encouraging his wife to engage in religious practices, such as prayer and rituals, which are an integral part of Hinduism (Holt, 2024). Modeling spiritual practices is important, a husband can embody Hindu values and rituals, facilitating a deeper understanding for his wife (Bhagwandas, 2019). In his marriage, the husband is also responsible for always maintaining loyalty, realizing harmony, and happiness in the household in accordance with the teachings of Hinduism (Tirta, 2022).

Teaching that resembles a cooperative model is considered effective for husbands in providing Hindu religious instruction (Ariasa, 2022). To improve understanding in a complex way, it must be done consistently and with structured support (Somertini, 2022). Because a weak understanding of Hinduism can reduce the identity of Hindu identity (Mandara et al., 2022). Marriage and spirituality have a connection where the value of friendship is the main basis in Hindu society (Bhattacharyya, 2020).

2. Obstacles Faced by Husbands in Guiding Wives to Understand Hindu Religious Teachings

From the results of interviews that have been conducted, related to the obstacles faced in guiding wives to understand Hindu teachings, information is obtained that:

Because indeed she (wife) has the intention, indeed wants to convert to Hinduism, married to me. Then as for the weaknesses of her (wife), of course the source is from me. Because I (husband) may not provide much guidance, guidance, especially usually I am not at home much, going to the field or out of town Palu must carry out duties as a state servant, so I don't have enough time to guide and teach the teachings of the religion that she (wife) just believes in (Ws, 2024).

Yes, there are obstacles, in fact I am rather shallow about my knowledge of Hinduism, so it is rather difficult to practice it on my wife, especially how to make *Banten*. Moreover, I have doubts about teaching it to others. So that the wife felt disappointed with the situation that lacked attention and understanding of the teachings of Hinduism which she (wife) did not understand at all, even the wife had returned to her original religion. That's where I realized that I could not carry out the role of husband properly. As a husband, I should have fulfilled this obligation whether I wanted to or not, but I still tried to find a solution so that there would be no misunderstanding between husband and wife. Now, although the wife has returned to her original religion, she (the wife) is still in touch and tolerates Hindu activities, and is even more active in carrying out mutual cooperation with her Hindu friends (Sa, 2024).

As for the obstacles, I myself as a husband who does not know how to make *Banten*, I can only advise my wife to learn a lot by watching on YouTube in addition to asking neighbors. So she (wife) indirectly learns by herself, learns by looking at people making *Banten* in the temple, at home, in the village and on YouTube. This means that she can learn and wants to learn, because I myself do not know how to make it, even now she is smarter and more active for *mesimokrame* (Ns, 2024). The informant continued that; the obstacle is just about the time to do it because I am so busy that I don't have time to do prayers and *mebanten* every morning, so sometimes it is done sometimes because I am busy chasing time so I don't have time to do it (Ns, 2024).

This means that I don't really understand religious matters, yes for the benefits and functions for *mebanten saiban* I told my wife to just do our obligations as Hindus after finishing cooking, we have to do *Mesaiban*. But my wife said she didn't really believe in that, so sometimes she did the *mebanten saiban*, sometimes she didn't because she forgot. Maybe she doesn't know about it, it's hard for me to explain. Yes, what can be made because she (the wife) has been Muslim since she was a child, so it is difficult to forget her religion (Dy, 2024).

Based on the results of interviews, the obstacles faced by husbands in guiding their wives to understand Hindu teachings include limited time due to work demands that reduce direct assistance, lack of knowledge about teachings and ritual practices such as making *Banten* or *Mesaiban*, and difficulty explaining the meaning and purpose of religious rituals. Physical absence and the inability to provide a consistent example of religious practice were also significant barriers. Nevertheless, some wives showed strong initiative and intention to learn independently through sources such as books, the surrounding community or digital media. Husbands' reflections on their shortcomings in this role reflect the potential to improve approaches in the future, with more consistent efforts and more effective solutions to support wives' understanding of Hinduism.

Other studies have found that a significant challenge for husbands is that traditional gender roles often determine marital dynamics in Hindu culture, hindering the communication of religious practices when attempting to educate wives (Bentil, 2023; Gunada & Suastra, 2023). Additionally, the complexity of Hindu scriptures and teachings can be what leads to misinterpretation (DeNapoli, 2017; Sharma, 2013; Santipatni, 2021). In addition, husbands face resistance from wives who have different interpretations or levels of interest in religious teachings, complicating the education process (Bentil, 2023; Antoinette E. DeNapoli, 2023). Weak understanding and norms of the Hindu religion which has an impact on the decline in the number of Hindu Communities (Mandara et al., 2022). Family structure and beliefs can make it difficult for husbands to encourage wives to understand religion independently (Ali, McGarry, & Maqsood, 2022). Hierarchies in traditional Hindu societies often place women in subordinate roles, which can limit their engagement with religious teachings (Segara, 2021). Ease of access to Hindu religious education resources, thus posing a challenge and leading to unpreparedness to engage with the teachings (Kamble, Watson, Marigoudar, & Chen, 2014).

3. Husband's Strategy in Guiding Wife to Understand Hindu Religious Teachings

Based on the results of interviews that have been conducted, information is obtained regarding strategies in overcoming obstacles in guiding wives to understand Hindu teachings, among others:

If I teach her, she finds it difficult to pray, saying she's still busy. It's better if she comes to the temple or banjar meeting. When she is there, she sits and listens, it is faster for her mind to hear, rather than being taught directly. Now she is smart and even active in religious activities (Ka, 2024).

I have suggested it, but convincing my wife is a bit difficult, because she is still sensitive and easily discouraged, because I don't want to make a fuss, I just follow what she wants first, then I'll tell her when the situation is good. This means that because it is difficult for me to convince her, that's why I keep teaching her, but I don't force her to do it. But because there are parents who still do it, the wife will automatically process (Mn, 2024).

Directly, first of all, I got married regularly every night while telling stories while sitting relaxed, because from morning to afternoon I have to work at the office, even at night if I get the night picket ship I don't have time to teach my wife, so she (wife) sometimes learns more on her own by hearing and seeing from other people, and also often prays at the temple, so with that or praying at home, she (wife) began to hear about it until now she (wife) knows it herself (Kr, 2024).

The results of these interviews can be understood that the main strategies used by husbands in guiding their wives to understand the teachings of Hinduism include indirect, gradual approaches, supporting independent learning, and creating casual interactions. The indirect approach is carried out by inviting the wife to participate in religious activities at the temple or banjar meetings so that the wife can learn through observation and practical experience. Husbands also use a gradual strategy by waiting for the right moment to provide guidance, especially if the wife shows sensitivity or is easily discouraged. In addition, they encourage wives to learn independently, either through observation, hearing from others, or participating in regular religious activities while still providing initial directions as guidance. Husbands also create a relaxed atmosphere through light discussions or storytelling in their free time to make learning more comfortable and accepted without pressure. These strategies reflect the husbands' ability to customize their approach based on the wife's needs and family conditions. However, challenges such as time constraints and lack of mentoring structure remain serious obstacles.

Other research shows that a husband can guide his wife's understanding of Hinduism through educational, cultural, and ethical approaches, starting with introducing her to basic Hindu texts, such as the Bhagavad Gita (Gunada & Suastra, 2023; Minnema, 2023). Otonan ceremonies, too, can provide practical insights into cultural practices that embody Hindu teachings (Badra, Winaja, & Suasthi, 2023). Modern methods such as online learning platforms make it easier to access diverse sources and perspectives on Hinduism (Putu Sutirta, Suda, & Indiani, 2023; Suardana, Sukarlinawati, & Suwendra, 2023). In the context of inter-spouse support, harmony strategies can be carried out by strengthening religious foundations and collaborating with religious organizations. (Widana & Wirata, 2023). An effective approach is to emphasize the inclusiveness of Hinduism, such as the concept of '*ghar wapsi*' which invites individuals to return to their ancestral roots. (Krishnan, 2023; Sariaslan, 2023). Understanding the socio-political context of Hinduism aided the transition, with conversion often viewed as a restoration of marginalized heritage (Pulcini, 2020). By presenting Hinduism as a tapestry of beliefs and practices that promote social harmony and personal growth, it can encourage deeper exploration of its rituals (Locklin, 2015). Put, related to the Role, the obstacles faced by the husband and the husband's strategy in guiding his wife to understand the teachings of Hinduism can be seen in Table 1 below;

Table 1. Role of Husband in Teaching Hinduism to Wife

Aspects	Points
The Role of Husband in Guiding Wife to Understand the Teachings of Hinduism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In <i>Parahyangan</i>, the husband plays an active role in teaching the wife about worship, such as the <i>Tri Sandya</i>, through direct methods, providing guidebooks, and accompanying the wife in learning; with proper guidance, the wife can understand and actively perform worship rituals. 2. In <i>Pawongan</i>, the husband encourages the wife to join in Banjar activities and be active in social life. 3. In the <i>Palemahan</i> aspect, the husband provides space for the wife to teach and perform the ritual with care.
Obstacles faced by Husbands in Guiding Wives to Understand Hindu Religious Teachings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Limited time due to work demands 2. Lack of knowledge about teachings and ritual practices 3. Difficulty explaining the meaning and purpose of religious rituals 4. Physical absence and inability to provide consistent examples
Husband's Strategy in Guiding Wife to Understand Hindu Religious Teachings	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Indirect approach, 2. Gradual approach, 3. Supporting independent learning, and 4. Creating relaxed learning assistance interactions

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated the vital role of husbands in guiding wives to understand Hindu teachings after undergoing *Sudhi Wadani* rituals in interfaith marriages. The findings show that despite obstacles such as limited religious knowledge,

busy work, and wife's sensitivity, husbands can play an active role through direct teaching, assistance in religious activities, and being a role model. The strategies that husbands can use for couples who have practised Sudiyani include guiding their wives through indirect approaches, gradual guidance, support for independent learning and establishing a relaxed or non-burdensome mentoring atmosphere. This research opens up opportunities for further studies on wives' experiences, the role of related Institutions, and the impact of interfaith marriages on children.

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