

## **Hindu By Culture and Christian by Faith – A Viable Missiological Paradigm to the Issue of Religious Conversion in India**

One of the major problems associated with the issue of conversion in India is that the generally proposed forms of being disciples of Jesus invariably led to cultural alienation, social and political ostracization and communal tensions. Consequently, conversion has been consistently opposed by various forces in India. In fact, in order to legally prevent conversion, Anti-conversion Act has been passed in several provinces of India and an attempt is made to enact it in the whole country.

Knowing the complexities involved in the process of religious conversion, Robert de Nobili (1577-1656) and Brahmabandhab Upadhyay (1861-1907), had proposed an ecclesial paradigm which does not result in socio-cultural alienation. These paradigms which are described as ***Hindu by culture and Christian by faith*** hold that Hinduism is essentially a cultural phenomenon and its followers can adopt the religion of their choice without giving up their social/cultural identity. Recently, two significant movements in different socio-cultural contexts, have emerged in India which also propose that it is possible to be Christian by faith and Hindu by culture/society. While the movement called ***the Devotees of Christ*** proposes discipleship in Jesus but without baptism, the movement of the ***Followers of the Way of Jesus*** advocates baptism but without cultural/social alienation. This paper investigates the missiological viability and the theological validity of these experiments and at the same time it explores the anthropological and missiological dilemmas involved in it.