

Abstract

This study on the Hindu-Christian relations in post-independent Kenya focused on factors that influence relations between Hindus and Christians as well as the nature and extent of inter-faith dialogue initiatives between these two religious systems. It sought to determine Hindu integration into the Kenyan society and was guided by four objectives: to examine the relationship between the social environment and the state of Hindu-Christian relationship in post-independent Kenya, evaluate the relationship between adherence to Hindu caste system and the nature and extent of Hindu integration into the Kenyan society, explore the inter-religious dialogue initiatives between the Hindu and Christian communities and to establish challenges currently facing Hindu-Christian relations in Kenya. The research was limited to Nairobi County and focused on Hindus of Indian ethnicity and Christians of African ethnicity. Various books, government documents and journals were reviewed and any other relevant information guided by various sub-themes. The research adopted a descriptive research design and data was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The target population for this research was estimated at 2, 023,000 (2 million Christians and 23 thousand Hindus). Out of this, a sample size of 2324 was selected using a combination of sampling techniques. Methods of data collection included: oral interviews, questionnaire, participant observation, focused group discussions and literary documents. Data was qualitatively analyzed disclosing that there exists close affinity between Indian and African cultures which could form a basis for stronger Hindu-Christian interfaith relations. The study revealed that, there are various factors that have taken place in the social, cultural, and political spheres that either positively or negatively impacted on Hindu-Christian relations as well the integration of Hindus into the Kenyan society. It further indicated that Hindu-Christian inter-faith dialogue initiatives affect and is affected by various aspects of the social environment in post-independent Kenya. The research also revealed that Hindu integration into the Kenyan society is necessary for the enhancement of national cohesion and for the realization of an allinclusive society as envisaged in the Kenya Vision 2030. The study then concluded by stating that the current social, economic, cultural and political conditions in Kenya present enormous opportunities for inter-faith dialogue initiatives which if well utilized could lead to the establishment and enhancement of mutually enriching relations between Hindus and Christians.