

Singaporeans Generally Satisfied With Rights Given To Religious Groups: Study

Majority Also Look To Authorities To Deal With Infringements On Religious Harmony Here, IPS Study Finds.

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SINGAPORE: People in Singapore are generally satisfied with the rights currently given to religious groups here, and look to the authorities to deal with infringements on religious harmony, according to a study by the Institute of Policy Studies.

The study, released on Tuesday (June 17), found that less than one-quarter of 3,128 respondents in a survey on race, language and religion conducted between December 2012 and April 2013 said religious groups should be given more rights, and nearly four in 10 felt that increasing religiosity could harm religious harmony.

More than six in 10 respondents said they would report to the authorities if someone poked fun at racial or religious groups on the Internet or when a religious leader put down another group in front of his followers.

Protestant Christians and Muslims were found to be more affected and disapproving when family members give up their religious beliefs, compared to Hindus, Buddhists and those of other faiths. Protestants and Muslims were also found to hold stronger moral beliefs on issues such as gambling and sex before marriage.

The study's lead author, Dr Mathew Mathews, noted that for many Muslims, Protestants and Catholics, the mark of a "good person" includes the teaching of one's morals, but that it is nevertheless important that they temper this with a respect for those who do not share such values. Dr Mathews also noted that a proportion of Buddhists, Hindus and Taoists also hold strong positions on faith-based matters.

Overall, Singapore residents agreed that there is religious harmony here.