

**It is time for everyone to accept Islam because it is never late to accept truth.**

**In UK alone, 50,000 enter the fold of Islam every year.**

July 20: In a recent interview with the BBC, British Home Secretary Jackoi Smith made some interesting observations about the rapid spread of Islam in Europe.

According to Smith, around 50,000 Britishers are converting to Islam each year and since 2001, four lakh Britishers have converted to Islam. He said the Muslim population in Britain has reached 20 lakh and followers of Islam are now the second biggest population in Britain after Christians. He even suggested setting up an Islamic University in Britain given the overwhelming population of the Muslims in that country.

The momentum and intensity with which Islam is spreading in the West has puzzled the policy makers, religious scholars, researchers and media there. The conversions have especially gained unimaginable momentum after 9/11. Most of the researchers believe that the fast erosion of the religious and cultural values in the Western societies is pushing its people towards Islam that offers a more comprehensive, well-knit and value-oriented cultural, social and family structure.

According to a recent report in the prestigious Time magazine, hundreds of new mosques are coming up in the West and most of the European cities now get to hear Azan (call for prayer) five times a day. In Rome a grand mosque is coming up at a whopping cost of \$3 crore for which the land has been donated by the local government.

According to Dr Mehmood Siddiqi Saidi, Director, European Muslim Minority Board, while as per a recent UN report the Muslim population in Europe is 21 million, in actual it could be around 50 million. As per the data available at islamicpopulation.com, in 2006 the Muslim population in Europe, including Russia, was around 50.70 million.

With the increase in Muslim population in Europe, the number of mosques and Islamic centers is also growing speedily. While in Britain there were only 13 mosques in 1963, at present there are 600 mosques and 1400 Islamic organizations in the country.

France, with a population of 60 lakh Muslims, has 1300 mosques and Islamic centers in addition to around 600 Islamic organizations. The Muslims in France have a 24-hour radio channel. The estimated population of Muslims in France would reach around 80 lakh during the next 15 years.

Italy has a population of 10 lakh Muslims with 450 mosques and Islamic centers. According to reputed Italian magazine The Journal, in next 200 years the European society would almost entirely accept Islam as the only religion.

Germany has a Muslim population of 40 lakh with 1400 mosques and Islamic centers. The Muslim population ration in Germany is around 4 per cent. In Canada the conversion rate to Islam has been almost 130 percent between 1991 and 2001. In Switzerland around 6000 Christians converted to Islam after 9/11.

According to San Diego University researcher Jan Wax, by 2020, out of every four persons in Europe, one would be a Muslim. The ratio of Muslim youth (between 45 and 50% of the Muslims) to EU youth is between 16 and 20%. In other words, in a few years Muslims will constitute 16 to 20% of the European workforce, and could therefore influence policies and decision-making.

Albania has proportionally the largest Muslim population in all of Europe, with the exception of Turkey, which is situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. According to the most recent census results, Albania's Muslim population is estimated at 2.2 million, or 70% of the country's total population. Although Albania was officially an atheist society during the Communist period, and all public expression of religious beliefs was banned, today most Albanians are practicing Muslims.

Following Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina has proportionally the second largest Muslim population in Europe, with 40% of Bosnians, or 1.5 million people, who practice Islam.

In Western Europe, France is followed by the Netherlands, which has over 945,000 Muslims, making up 5% of the population.