

A HANDBOOK OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC OFFENCES (1985). By Jaspal Singh. Pioneer Publications, Delhi. Pp. 625. Price Rs. 70.

SINCE INDEPENDENCE the scope and significance of socio-economic offences in our society has become so large that it is not easy to define them in a few words and describe them in a single volume. Nevertheless, any attempt to collect legislative measures on such of the said offences as matter a lot in daily life, particularly of the common folk, and put them in a single but small volume for the convenience of the readers, merits applause.

As the very title of the book under review suggests, the main concern of the author appears to collect and compile at one place the bare provisions of various laws concerning socio-economic offences, and thus make them known to the common man. Amongst the Acts are included the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940, Arms Act 1959, Prevention of Corruption Act 1947, Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954, Foreign Exchange Regulation Act 1973, Conservation of Foreign Exchange and Prevention of Smuggling Activities Act 1974, Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, Suppression of Immoral Traffic in Women and Girls Act 1956 (retitled as the Prevention of Immoral Traffic Act in 1986) and Essential Commodities Act 1955.

The pattern adopted by the experienced and renowned author is first to reproduce the whole text of legal provisions and then to write commentary sectionwise. This is largely based on the pronouncements of various High Courts and the Supreme Court. Sub-headings at appropriate places and citations to locate cases are also given.

Although the author in his mini preface has expressed hope about the utility of the handbook for lawyers, teachers and students of law, the absence of relevant rules passed under these Acts puts a big question mark on it. Again, the commentary part makes it as mere "handnotes" or a little more. Above all, the publication lacks planning of properly arranging the Acts and presenting commentary thereon. The latter could have been precise and efficacious. For instance, the very first chapter on crime and punishment appears to be misfit in the fabric of the title of the book. Instead, a discussion on the possible definitions and short descriptions of socio-economic offences, tracing their past and visualising their future, would have had an added appeal and attraction to readers of different fields. Also, while an average or below average reader might feel enriched to an extent in knowledge in respect of legislative measures and their implications, the enlightened class, especially the lawyer class, may feel frustrated in their expectation to know the personal views of the author on controversial or debatable points. which are not being taken note of in this review.

*Pawan Chaudhary**

*Advocate, Tishazari Court, Delhi.