

WAR OF WITS (1987). By N.M. Mulchandani. Daulat Publications, Nagpur. Pp. 878+90+86. Price Rs. 250.

A COMPLETE Law Digest which would help the practitioners, scholars, law teachers and laymen alike had been in need for quite a long time in India. The preparation and successful publication of several volumes of law digests like Halsbury's *Laws of England*, *Corpus Juris Secundum*, *American Jurisprudence*, among others, had rendered law finding to be a handy tool of law-men. Legal lexicography also had its own legitimate tradition. In this context, Mulchandani's product of twelve years painstaking labour¹ has made law-finding much more convenient and tempting. His new venture should not go unacclaimed and unnoticed; enrichment of legal knowledge itself deserves kudos and with his enterprise, it is hoped that many more works would blaze the trail.

In neatly compartmentalised three parts, the digest of words, phrases, *etc.*,² legal maxims and phrases,³ tables,⁴ list of common offences,⁵ tips on correct English,⁶ abbreviation,⁷ among others, are given. He desired to 'explore the pastures new'; but one should be permitted to state that the pastures green and vibrant today had their autumns too. This is the recurrent law of seasons.

Before pointing out 'Disadvantage Mulchandani', the reviewer is enticed to highlight some of the refreshing notes of 'Advantage—War of Wits'; in this brief encounter with legal knowledge, he is going to be outwitted by neither the emblem of 'war' nor the anthem of 'wits'.

The war starts for instance, with 'Comma'.⁸ The author observes: "Comma can convert a baby into a son, or a daughter, or either of the two, to suit the twisting of the tongue of the astrologer...." The brilliance of Oscar Wilde faded before a 'Comma': "I spent the entire morning considering whether to put in a comma in a line of a poem...the entire afternoon wondering whether to take it out."⁹ Here comes Mulchandani, with his 2,200 definitions, 4,500 distinctions, 3,800 Supreme Court citations, 2,900 maxims and many more in his fleet.

By adopting the technology of blending decisional law, statute law and lexicography, the digest has been produced. Comprehensive treatment has been given to the following terms and their legal implications:

1. N.M. Mulchandani, *War of Wits* (1987).

2. *Id.*, pt. I, pp. 1-755.

3. *Id.*, pt. II, pp 1-90.

4. *Id.*, pt. III, pp. 16-29.

5. *Id.* at 1-15.

6. *Id.* at 31-36.

7. *Id.* at 37-47.

8. *Id.*, pt. I, p. 795

9. *Ibid.*

justice (8 pages),¹⁰ doctrines,¹¹ caste vs. class,¹² *ratio decidendi*¹³ (7 pages each) and in length, to the terms charge,¹⁴ corrupt practices,¹⁵ appeal¹⁶ wealth computation,¹⁷ wages,¹⁸ unfair labour practices,¹⁹ tenancy,²⁰ sexual molestation accusation,²¹ rule of law,²² right,²³ review,²⁴ reasonable,²⁵ prosecution,²⁶ promissory note,²⁷ partition,²⁸ mandatory vs directory,²⁹ jurisdiction,³⁰ Hindu,³¹ among a host of others. Many a legal term, doctrine, principle, maxim, *etc.*, are packed in between the covers. Plentiful, thy name is Digest.

The recipe incorporates quite a good number of terms from other disciplines, *viz.*, Archimede's principle,³² art vs. science,³³ carbohydrate,³⁴ Gresham's Law,³⁵ intelligency quotient,³⁶ socialism.³⁷ The omnibus trip in the terrain of legal terminology would be rewarding. Without pointing out some lapses, the review appears to be a monochromatic vision. Here and there, despite the finest — of course, one of the finest jacketing and lay-out—the printers' devil strayed into a few pages; still, they are readable. Brevity—possibly due to the mandates of purse or otherwise—had saddened the soul, when we had read cursory statements on important themes like, due process of law,³⁸ public interest litigation,³⁹ tribunals,⁴⁰

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10. *Id.* at 402-409.
 11. *Id.* at 222-227.
 12. *Id.* at 102-107.
 13. *Id.* at 589-595.
 14. *Id.* at 113.
 15. *Id.* at 172.
 16. *Id.* at 46-49.
 17. *Id.* at 737-38.
 18. *Id.* at 732-34.
 19. *Id.* at 719-21.
 20. *Id.* at 688-92.
 21. *Id.* at 649-50.
 22. *Id.* at 631-33.
 23. *Id.* at 625-29.
 24. *Id.* at 621-24.
 25. *Id.* at 596-98.
 26. *Id.* at 572-74.
 27. *Id.* at 562-64.
 28. *Id.* at 515-17.
 29. *Id.* at 452-54.
 30. *Id.* at 395-401.
 31. *Id.* at 320-21.
 32. *Id.* at 57.
 33. *Id.* at 60.
 34. *Id.* at 99.
 35. *Id.* at 310.
 36. *Id.* at 358.
 37. *Id.* at 636.
 38. *Id.* at 233.
 39. *Id.* at 578.
 40. *Id.* at 712.

etc. Titles like, environmental law, morality, private international law, *Shah Bano* case in maintenance, *etc.*, are not found in the pages. The author of *War of Wits*, may defend these eclipses under his formula, dreams + reality + humour = wisdom.⁴¹

In this battle of wits, the reviewer would also state that in future editions of the digest, the following themes and terms may be given berths. They are (not in alphabetical nor in sacramental order): legal reasoning, jurimetrices, judicial process, ombudsman, *lokayukta*, *lokpai*, *renvoi*, procuracy, Act of State, alien, authority of law, blackmail, correction of young offender, Chief Justice, criminal liability, deterrence, Dharamshastra (but Dhramasala is included), Muslim law, optional clause, private bills, prisoners of war, speaker, rehearing, rules of the Supreme Court, toxicology and wrongful dismissal, just to cite a few.

The part on abbreviations⁴² is not free from omissions of current or important terms. Where ENLF, TULF, LTTE are included JVP is omitted; similarly where, JKLF, ADMK, *etc.*, find berths, IRA, PLA, NSCN, TNV, AIDMK and NAACP, *etc.*, do not. Another war of wits. In a law book, terms like BCI, ABA, *etc.*, are also eligible for inclusion. Further the work does not include a list of judges of the federal court, Supreme Court, state High Court (at least Chief Justices), Advocate Generals, whereas tips on pronunciation, correct English and many tables are included. A standard digest may look magnificent without the recipe of *time tablesque* details.

The reviewer feels that pointing out disadvantages and lapses—howsoever, the author had not intended—is not an uphill task; however, consideration may be given where it deserves when the improved edition (even in paperback too) would be brought to light. Mulchandani should be credited with his scholarship and his unique contribution to the legal knowledge in the medium of the digest, whose time has come.

*Naorem Sanajaoba**

41. *Id.* at 231.

42. *Id.*, pt. III, pp. 37-47.

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BOOKS RECEIVED FOR REVIEW

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B.D. NAG CHAUDHURI & S. BHATT, *The Global Environment Movement* (1987). Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., L-10, Green Park Extension, New Delhi-110 016, Pp. 69. Price Rs. 60.

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P. JEGATHEESAN, *Law and Order in Madras Presidency 1850-1880* (1987). B.R. Publishing Corporation, 29/9 Shakti Nagar, Nangia Park, Delhi-110 007. Pp. x+270. Price Rs. 125.

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YASH GHAI, ROBIN LUCKHAM & FRANCIS SNYDER (eds.), *The Political Economy of Law : A Third World Reader* (1987). Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi-110 001. Pp. xvi+821. Price Rs. 400.