



LEGAL GARLICS FOR LAY MAN (1995). By G. Radhakrishna Rao. St. Hicks Publications, Hyderabad. Pp. viii+ 390. Price Rs. 150.

LEGAL SCHOLARS, judges and jurists often indulge in legal writing to cater to the needs of students, judges, lawyers and other professionals. Some public spirited judges like, among others, Justice Krishna Iyer have made significant contribution to socio-legal literature which analyse legal concepts and positions so as to meet the needs of non-legal enlightened people. Few lawpersons and judges have, however, thought of creating such legal literature which satisfies the inquisitiveness of the common person, who is educated but does not know how to come out of the legal labyrinths envisaged by the legal system, especially the enactments. Some organisations like the Indian Social Institute have, however, played a useful role to meet the legal needs of this section of society. This institute has published leaflets on legal rights of people under various Acts and Codes.

The author of the book under review¹ thought of a novel way to help “the public”² in meeting the challenges of the principle, *ignorantia juris non excusat*, so that citizens can know their legal duties and rights under common statutes concerning their day to day problems. The author has selected 48 such statutes. He has conceived 501 short stories concerning various rights and procedures under these statutes, which he refers to as “Legal Garlics”.³ It has been clarified that the stories written are not real. Nor are they based, it appears, on any judicial decisions. The author chooses the word ‘garlic’ to denote its usefulness for the health of a man (*sic*).

Though not explicitly stated, the author seems to aim at spreading legal education to English knowing masses to create awareness in them about rudimentary legal principles and questions. The strategy of reaching the law to the common people is a well-thought one and will supplement the efforts of social workers, non-governmental organisations and others engaged in similar exercises.

The book has been divided into two parts. part I consists of 463 stories concerning 39 Central Acts, and part II states 38 stories based on nine statutes enacted by the state legislature in Andhra Pradesh. Each story is followed by a brief analysis of the answer to the legal question involved. No reference is made to any decided cases. Perhaps, the author thought that doing so would not justify the title of the book and might develop an aversion in the reader. Each of these 48 central and state statutes finds place in a separate chapter. Some of the important central Acts included, among others, are : the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908; the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; the Hindu Succession Act, 1956; the Indian Contract Act, 1872; the Indian Evidence Act; the Indian Penal Code, 1860; the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955; and the

1. G. Radhakrishna Rao, *Legal Garlics for Lay Man* (1995).

2. *Id.* at vii.

3. *Ibid.*



Transfer of Property Act, 1882. To give an added meaning to “the garlic” many cartoons are presented to illustrate the legal questions involved. This will help attracting the attention of the lay readers and will enhance their interest in the learning process.

The efforts of Justice Rao are praiseworthy in his selection of important statutes. The language is simple and the style lucid. But it is difficult to say whether a book of this type fully or considerably serves the purpose it is meant to achieve. Not that stories on the case law ought to have been included. But the stories included are not too many so as to explain a good number of legal positions and nuances envisaged in a statute, the legal complexities under each law being numerous. The strength of this book is good coherence in sentences constituting the stories and the precise answers of them. But many stories are not interesting enough. There are a good number of laser-setting mistakes. Shorter and simpler names of characters should have been used. For example, the use of names like, Vijayavardhana Rao, Mohd. Abdul Saleem, Aniruthavalli would lessen the reader's interest. Further, a greater amount of imagination could have gone into the styling of the stories and their positioning. Index at the end would have added to the value of the book.

Despite these, the book should interest the lay reader. It is reasonably priced as well. The jacket is imaginatively designed and is a very interesting illustration of the title.

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