

LAW RELIGION AND SOCIETY – ACROSS THE GLOBE, (2013). By Tahir Mahmood, Universal Law Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd. Pp. xi + 518. Price Rs. 895/-

This book by the author gives insight on the extent of impact that religion plays in law and society of a country. The book has been divided in to two parts i.e. musings in academia and musings in media both of which have been further divided into three sections namely; Religion State & Law; Socio-Legal Miscellany, and Islam, Muslims, & Muslim Law. The book is collection of chapters which have been drawn from the addresses delivered by the author in various national and international conferences held in India or abroad and the columns written by him in leading English daily mails of the country.

Section A of part 1 throws light on the religion state relations in different countries. Here the author has discussed as to what place has been given to religion in the legal arena by different countries. The author has further discussed the role of various global treaties and conventions such as UDHR, UN declaration on the rights of minorities; UN declaration on elimination of all kind of discrimination based on religion and belief and has tried to advocate for an individual's religious freedom as an essential attribute of socio-legal culture of the modern man binding on all societies and all states of our times so as to minimize the religious intolerance and growing religious violence. The last few chapters of Part 1 have been devoted entirely to discuss India and its constant vigilance in keeping the state secular.

In Section B of Part 1, the author has discussed the Domino effect of terrorism and its coherence with the religion. Further he has discussed the Palestine tragedy; Kashmir imbroglio and human rights and religious humanities and devastating trends of degenerating religion. In other chapters the author has discussed the global social and legal measures adopted at national and international level. Author has also given some references to religious excerpts from Holy Quran, law and judiciary in Ghalib's poetry.

Section C of Part 1 has been devoted in its entirety by the author to discuss the global status of Islamic laws. Under different chapters he has discussed the history of Islam, interfaith harmony between Christianity, Islam & Judaism, and Quoranic penal laws. Author has also compared rulings from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh regarding gender justice and in other chapters appreciated the stand taken by Indian judiciary on the sensitive issues like maintenance and triple talq. Highlighting the role of Indian courts in handling the Islamic law, author has reiterated faith in judiciary with a hope for possible reforms.

Second part of the book deals with the writings by author published in media, which are sharp and to the point as of the situation from time to time. Section A of the second part of the book covers Religion, State & Law, in this section author has discussed various issues pertaining to constitutional safeguards and religious faith. Author has opined on acts claiming religious shield like cow slaughter, carrying of trishul etc. with appropriate cases. One of the piece in this section comments on the famous Ayodhya case. Author has sharply commented on various issues in all

dimensions that are related to religion and society and are intertwined by application of law it includes matters of secularism, social harmony, minority reservations, conversions, status of minority educational institutions particularly Islamic. In terms of reforms the author has expressed his disguise while briefing the various commissions, surveys and their reports which are till date have remained just documented. Author has also cited instances of inadequate minority representation to Muslim community while commenting on Article 30. He has also expressed his concern on apathy towards fundamental duties under Constitution by state as well as people at large.

In Section B, author has discussed socio legal issues like Marriage and its causes, Inheritance rights of women under prominent religions and their respective laws while urging the need for Unifrom Civil Code . He has also focused on detrimental issues like bigamy under Muslim law, child marriage, registration of marriages with consequences. Author has critically discussed social practices like parda practice, keeping mustache and beard as being shielded as religious faiths curtailing ones liberty, in the same section author has further discussed SAARC as an unfulfilled mission. Lastly the section has detailed discussion on India Pakistan Partition issue and how it has lamented the growth of law order and peace in the subcontinent.

The last section i.e. Section C of the second part author has extensively discussed almost everything about Muslim law that is matter of concern ranging from Prophets teachings and their true Impeachment, the undignified practice of Halala for Women and its actual connotation in Quran. Author has further discusses The Muslim Law Boards and fate of Fatwa's. Further author has prolong discussed the eccentric issue of Triple Talaq and consequently Dower and Maintenance under Islamic law with the landmark Indian cases. Lastly the author has concluded with a suggestion for codification of Muslim personal Law in a probable form of Indian Muslim Law Act.

Overall the book offers insights into a variety of intricate and inter-connected issues of constitutional and socio-legal significance, the author is an eminent scholar, and his command on the subject is commendable which reflects from the writings and his sharp comments on the various issues. The book has touched dynamically to maximum number of socio, legal and religious issues with their consequences. The author has done a great work by giving a compiled edition of his writings and oratories which has turned out to be a master piece. The book is a must read and is really an asset worthy addition to the libraries of social sciences and law.

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