

FOREWORD

Reform of family law being an important aspect of restructuring the Indian society, the Indian Law Institute has been taking a keen interest in it. In 1965 the issue of uniform civil code was discussed at a seminar on *Secularism : Its Implications for Law and Life in India* organised by the Institute. A wider coverage to the issue was given at the 1970 seminar on *Minorities and the Law*. Two years later *Islamic Law in Modern India* formed the subject of a full-length seminar. In 1974 another seminar was held to consider issues concerning the amendments in the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 and the Special Marriage Act, 1954. Selected papers presented at each of these seminars have been published by the Institute. In 1972 the Institute published *Family Law Reform in the Muslim World* containing a survey of the developments in Muslim family law in as many as twenty countries. Further, the *Journal* of the Institute has, during the past about fifteen years or so, carried articles and notes on several important aspects of family law.

The present monograph is yet another publication in the area of family law. It contains a specialised study of the law relating to civil marriages found in the Special Marriage Act, 1954 as modified by the Marriage Laws (Amendment) Act, 1976. The study critically examines the Special Marriage Act of 1954 in its historical perspective and compares its provisions with those of other matrimonial laws of India. It includes some empirical data collected from Uttar Pradesh and Delhi.

The monograph was prepared by Tahir Mahmood when he was Associate Research Professor at the Institute. He has later revised and updated it.

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