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**ABSTRACT**

**Islamic Law in Modern India: Selection of Papers**

Edited by Tahir Mahamood, this book deals with the reformation of Muslim personal law in India. Unlike the laws of many Indian communities which have been gradually reformed, Muslim law has undergone no significant change. In fact, following the Independence, Indian legislatures have seldom touched Muslim law. This book is a selection of papers presented at a seminar on Islamic Law in Modern India held in New Delhi, 14–16 January 1972.

The papers are extremely helpful in explaining Muslim personal law as administered in the Indian context and why and how some reforms are to be implemented. The contributions vary in scale and scope, but particularly valuable are those by J. N. D. Anderson, T. Mahmood, F. R. Faridi, B. Ahmed and M. H. Beg. Anderson’s contribution, “Muslim personal law in India”, is an insightful overview of the state of Muslim personal law in the 1970s, as it was conflicted between those who supported the notion of a common civil code and those who opposed it. Faridi’s paper explores the methodological and theoretical issues related to the reform of Muslim personal law in India. B. Amhed writes about the status of women and the settlement of family disputes according to Muslim law; he provides some suggestions on how to enact the law in a way that benefits women. Beg’s contribution deals with the development and modification of norms regulating gift-giving, family *waqfs* (gifts of money, property, or other items to charity) and pre-emption.

The book presents a variety of views and approaches without attempting to synthesise such heterogeneous material. The book is valid for anyone who seeks to understand the administration of Muslim law in India and the problems that the enactment of ancient norms might create in a multicultural country trying to modernise its legal system.

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