

CYBER SPACE AND THE LAW - ISSUES AND CHALLENGES. Editors Ranbir Singh and Ghanshyam Singh. Hyderabad: NALSAR University, 2004. Pp. 322, Rs. 350/-.

“Cyber space” has become a buzzword today. No activity in the present day world, be it communication, governance, trade or education, is possible without information technology. The use of Internet is increasing at an unprecedented pace. It has become very difficult for anyone to stay aloof from Internet which has spread its roots in towns and villages also.

The rapid development of information technology (IT) has revolutionized the world. The IT has provided enormous opportunities in the field of trade and communication. A common feature for the business success of Internet transactions is that they are fast and direct. However, transactions accomplished through electronic means have created new legal issues. This has raised questions concerning the recognition, authenticity and enforceability of electronic documents and digital signatures. Apart from this, everyday a large number of cyber crimes are being committed throughout the world, causing serious problems about jurisdictions to prosecute and punish criminals.

The book under review is a collection of 24 articles. These articles deal with various aspects of cyber law such as cyber crime, domain name, online privacy and human rights, e-commerce, e-governance, cyber regulatory authority etc.

Justice S.B. Sinha writes in his article on “Cyber Crime in the Information Age” that cyber crimes have virtually no boundaries and may affect every country in the world. Cyber crime may be defined as “any crime with the help of computer and telecommunication technology”, with the purpose of influencing the functioning of computer or the computer system. According to Justice Sinha, most cyber crimes do not involve violence but rather greed, pride, or play on some character weakness of the victims. They are considered as “white-collar crimes”. Justice Sinha puts criminals into three basic categories ranging hackers, information merchants and mercenaries, to terrorist, extremists and deviants. The article deals comprehensively with various aspects of cyber crime.

Aarti Dubey writes on terrorism in cyberspace. According to her, cyber spies, thieves, saboteurs, and thrill seekers break into computer systems,

steal personal data and trade secrets, vandalize web sites, disrupt service, sabotage data and systems, launch computer viruses and worms, conduct fraudulent transactions and harass individuals and companies. According to Amarendra K. Mishra, in addition to Information Technology Act 2000, communication convergence law is another step towards the regulation of cyber crimes in India.

Subhas P. Rathore and Bharat B. Das elaborately classify computer related crimes and discuss IT Act and international efforts to prevent these crimes. D.S. Prakasa Rao discusses cyber squatting. Tapan Purohit, Vageshwari, G. Rajasekhar and Rohan George, Chetna R.G. and Zafar Nomani have also contributed on cyber crimes. Vageshwari discusses jurisdictional challenges of cyber crimes and emphasize the need for a comprehensive international law to curb this menace. Chetna confines to the issue of obscenity on the Internet, whereas Zafar Nomani writes about the challenges of e-governance and cyber crimes. He discusses national and international law and suggests reformative strategy for enforcement of law.

The articles of Farooq Ahmed and C.J. Ravandale and Abhijeet Sinha discuss the domain name disputes. Both the articles are very good. Farooq has made a critical study of *Sampatti.com Ltd. v. Chetna Rana*. The articles are research based and comprehensively written. Subhash Gupta gives an overview of IT Act, 2000 and emphasizes the need to amend several statutes to make them suitable in the digital environment. Narahari Lenka has contributed on information technology law and policy. G. Aruna Kanthi has written a comprehensive paper on "Money in Electronic age" in which the author has discussed the concept of e-money. According to the author, the need for e-money is justified to indicate that traditional forms of money are unsuited for transactions on the net. The author has discussed the benefits and problems of digital cash. The article is very interesting.

A. Kranthi Kumar Reddy, G. Ramachandra Rao, Namrata Nair and Haritha Rao have written on online privacy and human rights in which they have discussed municipal law and international law to protect privacy. Dr. Vijendra Kumar interlinks matrimonial issues with Internet in a very interesting way. According to the author, there is a good scope for Internet matrimony. G. Ramachandra Rao has written about online dispute resolution. He has discussed international law on online arbitration in his article.

S.S. Sagar Priyatham, G. Ramachandra Rao and K. Prathima, and H. Rajesh Kumar and K. Prathima have written on e-commerce and taxation. The authors in both the articles have discussed the need to tax e-commerce and the challenges e-commerce is posing to direct and indirect tax systems. N.K. Acharya discusses the role of information technology in bringing transparency and efficiency in the administration. Dr. K. V.S. Sarma discusses the law relating to contracts through Internet. He is of the opinion that the principles of contract relating to instantaneous communication i.e. telephone, fax and telex are applicable to e-contracts. However, the communication of proposal is not complete unless the acknowledgement of receipt is received by the offeror.

Dr. Ghansyam Singh's article on Cyber Regulations Appellate Tribunal gives an insight of the provisions of IT Act dealing with the establishment of the Tribunal. The article of C. Suman and D. Pavan Kumar gives an overview of data protection laws in U.K. and India.

The book is a treasure of information on cyber law. It gives inputs on various aspects of cyber law and provides valuable information on national and international law. The editors have, however, failed to maintain uniformity in the end notes. The book, being valuable source of information is worth keeping in all the libraries.

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