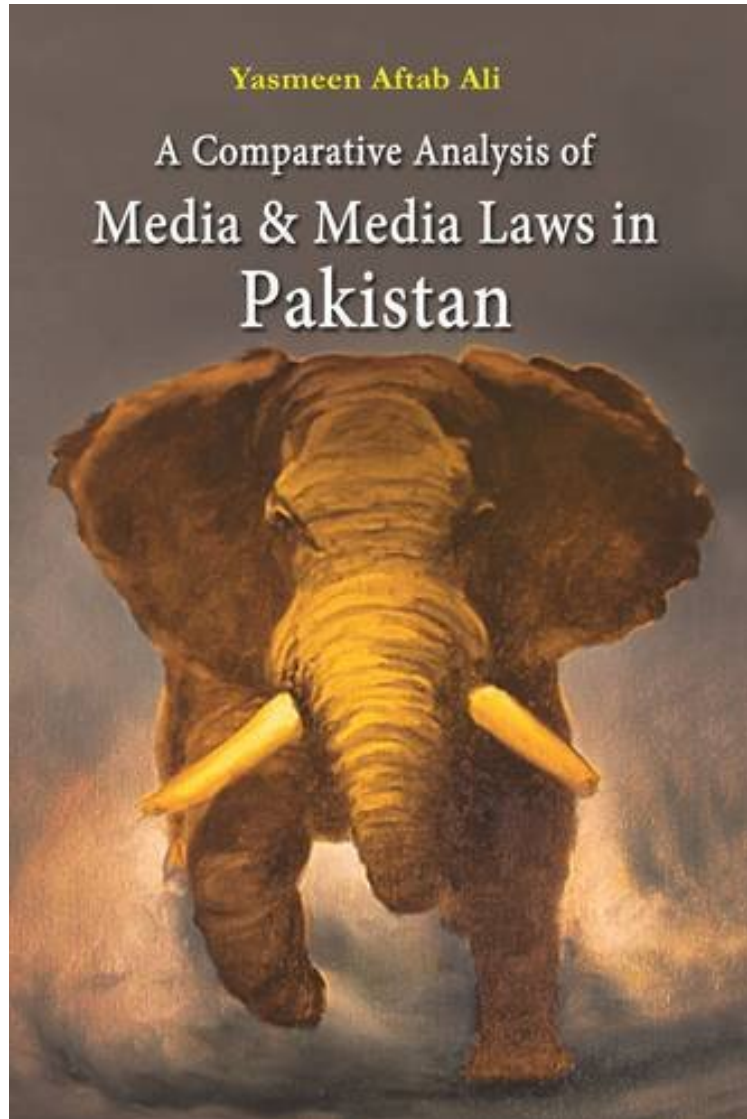


[FREE] A Comparative Analysis of Media Media Laws in Pakistan

A Comparative Analysis of Media Media Laws in Pakistan

Yasmeen Aftab Ali

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Yasmeen Aftab Ali : A Comparative Analysis of Media Media Laws in Pakistan before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Comparative Analysis of Media Media Laws in Pakistan:

his book is about clarifying concepts. It is about defining the role of the institution of Media that should be playing a pivotal role in the evolving society of our country-- but somehow, there is a slip between the cup the lip! The concept

of Freedom of Expression Freedom of Speech for example is little understood. The theories, limitations, cases. All aspects have been discussed to give the bigger picture. Defamation, Contempt of Court, Cyber Law, Electronic Media, Social Responsibility of Media; discussed threadbare with comparative laws existing in other countries. This book tries to address questions raised in every sphere. It is not another "theory book" expounding concepts. It moves beyond discussing concepts to what issues exist in the world of communications in Pakistan. What are the questions that need to be addressed by relevant authorities in different mediums of communication and their possible solutions too, are offered. More often than not, the issues are pin-pointed but no steps to redress a situation are chartered out. Here, the reader, the media practitioner and any one else interested, finds; practical, workable steps to develop media into a vibrant institution that is ready to play a positive role in knitting together the Pakistani Society building bridges where needed--not creating further disenchantment chaos!

Should an anchorperson be an expert in diverse subjects ranging from politics, to law, to economics? If not, would he or she be able to ask pertinent and precise questions? What should the ultimate goal of the media be: building a well-informed public opinion or making it a financially viable business? These are some of the questions that Yasmeen Aftab Ali asks, and attempts to answer, in her book *Comparative Analysis of Media and Media Laws in Pakistan*. The fruition of years of research in the subject, it comes across as a handbook of sorts for Mass communication students to help them better understand media concepts and laws. Its overarching theme also deliberates upon the exercise of social responsibility by the Pakistani media and suggests steps to improve it. The book runs through the basic concepts and legislation pertaining to media in Pakistan before evaluating their effectiveness in practice. Ali lays her groundwork by first defining the concept of freedom of information, and then demonstrating the rights and limitations of this under Pakistani law. For better contextualisation, the author also gives a comparison with other countries media laws. In Pakistan, the author argues, a media organisation's editorial policy is decided by the media owner, which very often gets overridden by concerns for increased ratings amid cut-throat competition. Ideally, this should be based on impartiality, fairness, accuracy and editorial integrity, with the objective of educating the masses and raising standards of information. She blames the electronic media in particular for this ratings syndrome and deplores the trend of TV talk show hosts instigating petty bickering among interviewees rather than grilling them on policy matters. She calls on the electronic media to rise above the me first mentality in breaking news, which often results in sensational, or sometimes less-than-accurate, reporting. The book is not just a critique of the state of Pakistani media; it suggests ways to improve their functioning. Her eleven proposals for Pemra and six questions for PFUJ seem logical and merit serious consideration by the stakeholders. She even suggests that the BBC's revised editorial guidelines are a fitting model for Pakistani media organisations to adopt. It would have been interesting for the readers had the book contained some analysis of the implications of the recently formed Press Council of Pakistan, an autonomous apex body that would stipulate and monitor good media practices in the country. Where the author takes the media persons to task for their shortfalls, she also gives credit where it's due. Ali pays tribute to journalists who report from increasingly hostile environments in Pakistan. But where the book falls short is in open-heartedly acknowledging the role of media in supporting the rule of law, democracy and good governance in the country. It was the media that, in the absence of robust state structures, exposed mega corruption scams in state-owned enterprises like Steel Mills, PIA, NICL and Pakistan Railways, and gave a voice to the common man. Though beyond the scope of the syllabus for which this handbook is intended, an analysis of journalists rights including their protection and welfare would have added to the variety of issues touched upon here. Nevertheless, Yasmeen Aftab Ali compellingly drives home her point that We need an independent press, without pre-censorship, but we need rules that make a socially irresponsible journalist pay. Literally. Without the media realising its first and last responsibility lies to the society, it defeats the purpose of its very creation. This book is a bold attempt to state the truth regarding Pakistani media in a candid and forthright manner, duly backed by authentic references. --Published in *The Express Tribune*, *Sunday Magazine*, November 25th, 2012.