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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Dr. V.K. Ahuja, *Law of Copyright and Neighbouring Rights: National and International Perspectives* (Lexis Nexis Butterworths, New Delhi, 2007), pp. i-xxi and 1-468, Price: Rs. 595.**

Before the legal and economic restrictions came into existence extending a wide variety of rights and duties on the works of an author in the contemporary era, a brief glimpse in the ancient history amply divulges that the law of copyright has been in existence from the days of the Roman Empire. The annals of ancient of Indian history, especially, in the Arthashastra of Kautilya one can find the simple mechanism that were mentioned extending protection to the owners of the books who could dispose of their works to booksellers and the latter could be secure of some commercial control of property purchased.

The earliest dispute of copyright took place in 557A.D, between Abbot Finnian of Mowille and St. Columba over St. Columba's copying of a Psalter belonging to an Abbot. The dispute in turn led to the Battle of Cul Dreimhne (which is otherwise also known as the Battle of Cooldrumman) in which nearly 3, 000 men were killed.<sup>1</sup> There are many instances across the continents that several kingdoms were aware of the practice of recognizing the rights of the owners of a book. The Republic of Venice granted its first privilege for a particular book in 1486 and later started granting privileges of particular books regularly.<sup>2</sup> However, the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg led to the evolution of modern Law of Copyright through the cannons of the Legislature enactments recognizing both the economic and moral rights of other and imposing obligations on its perpetrators.

The era of Mercantilism, many countries across the West started granting right to the copy rights to the owners and to their agents. In fact, the English Civil War (1642-1651) was partly responsible for the Crown's abuse of monopolies. After the expiry of the Licensing Act in 1694, when the London booksellers faced an unregulated competition of the importing of cheap books in the absence of monopolies, basing on the years of lobbying of the merchants of the publishing world in 1710 the Parliament enacted an Act entitled as "An Act for the Encouragement of Learning, by vesting the Copies of Printed Books in the Authors or Purchasers of such Copies, during the Times therein mentioned" (popularly referred to as the Statute of Anne<sup>3</sup>). With the enactment of the Statute of Anne every State has brought in enactments protecting the rights of the owners of the various works. In the contemporary era of technological development, the international organizations also taken many

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1. Cited in *Millar v. Taylor*, 4 Burr, 2303, 98 Eng Rep 201 (K.B.1769).

2. For a detailed discussion see Joseph Lowenstein, *The Author's Due: Printing and Prehistory of Copyright* (University of Chicago Press 2002).

3. Lyman Ray Patterson, *Copyright in Historical Perspective* (Vanderbilt University Press, 1968).

steps and adopted a number of conventions and declarations in encouraging the authors to enrich the knowledge of the society on various aspects.

In the contemporary with the expanding horizons of technology, the law of Copyright has also expanded from its traditional realm of protecting literary works to that of cinematographic. Broadcasters, sound recordings, and, too neighbouring rights. At the same time, the rapid progress of science and technology is also causing threats not only to the rights of the copyright owners but also to the legislative patterns that need to be augmented at regular intervals. At this juncture, a number of books are need at regular intervals to fill the gaps and to cover the new developments in the most prominent area of Intellectual Property Rights.

The present book under review by Dr. Ahuja is certainly a welcome addition to the existing literature. In fact in this area, there are only quite a few standard books are available. Unlike majority of the authors who simply compose the provisions of the Copyright Act of India with section by section description with a minimal short note, Dr. Ahuja has taken pains in discussing the subject extensively in a simple and understandable language.

The Seventeen chapters in the book have been arranged in a chronological order bringing out the traditional rights and contemporary rights in a systematic fashion. The last chapter which deals with the impact of internet on the law of copyright and its rights holders is a welcome edition. Each chapter has been discussed in a crystal clear manner dealing with the national and international developments in each area with recent case laws easily understandable even to a lay man or to a first time reader. Among the various books that are available, the book is update and quite exhaustive and especially helps a student to quickly appreciate the nuances of the law of copyright.

This book with its updates and clear focus on the subject with a comparative perceptive, I strongly command that the book will serve the intellegencia with its academic output as a handy tool.

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