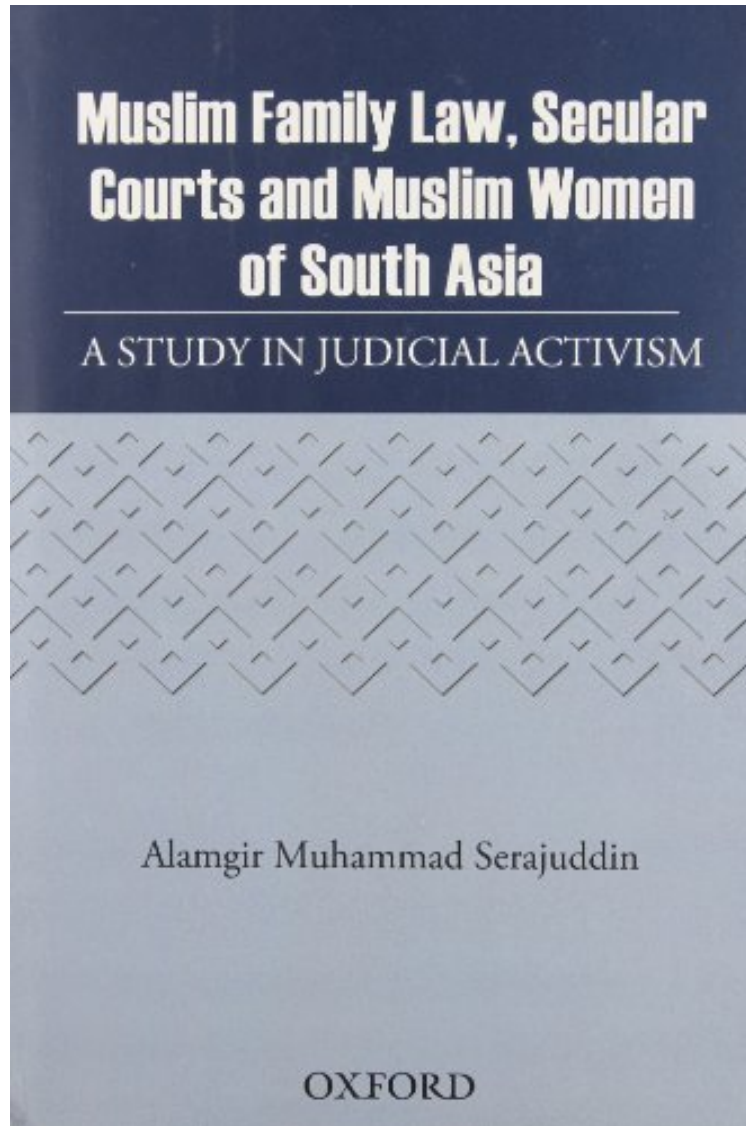


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# Muslim Family Law, Secular Courts and Muslim Women of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh

*Alamgir Muhammad Serajuddin*

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Muslim family law is based on patriarchal family organization and male privileges, leading to legal and social discrimination against women, which is incompatible with contemporary notions of gender equality and social justice. By giving a liberal and pro-active interpretation to this law within the Islamic framework, the South Asian judiciary has shown that it is possible to adapt it to the needs of a forward-looking Muslim society. The book examines the extent to which judicial interpretation has liberalized this law, enlarged the dimensions of Muslim women's rights and contributed to secure gender equality and social justice to them. The book also argues that in the absence of legislation reflecting the ijma or consensus of the Muslim community, judicial activism is the only alternative agent of social change.

The book is an outstanding contribution to the field of comparative Muslim family law in South Asia. It will be warmly welcomed by anyone interested in Islamic family law of South Asian societies or in the study of law and society generally. \* Dr. Ridwanul Hoque, South Asia Research 32:3 \*About the Author Professor Alamgir Serajuddin, formerly vice-chancellor of the University of Chittagong, Bangladesh, teaches in the department of history. A barrister-at-law from Lincoln's Inn, Serajuddin has a Ph.D. from London University. He is the author of Revenue Administration of the East India Company in Chittagong, 1761-1785, and has written several articles and research papers. He has also been visiting professor at Georgetown University, USA.