

Preface

The world has progressively moved from space race to space commerce, and Outer Space has opened myriads of opportunities for mankind. With advancement in technology, access to space is rapidly increasing. For economic opportunities, strategically many nations have entered into the exploration and use for Outer Space. There is already a substantial body of treaties and municipal laws governing space activities, but technology is placed much ahead. With advancement in technology and commercialization of space, legal issues have also gained popularity and throw a challenge as to how space can be used for the benefit of all.

Space activities have gained tremendous popularity over the last decade—from launching of space objects to satellite application and planetary explorations. Satellite navigation, remote sensing and telecommunication have become integral part of terrestrial modern infrastructure. The advent of private players in this field has not only given it a new impetus but has also raised umpteen legal issues for preponderance. How do space-faring nations shield their international liability against the increasing “public liability for private activities”? With booming space commerce, issue of space insurance and alike is inexorable. Is increasing dependence on space for military activity a threat to international peace and security? On a global forum where there are no boundaries in space, challenges are manyfold and opportunities infinite. The real estate business orbit—the geostationary orbit is increasingly getting populated. For posterity and benefit of all, it is necessary that these orbits be protected, knowing that space has a fragile environment and increasing debris is further escalating its vulnerability. In the light of this issue, whether space tourism is advisable? Humanity has witnessed two world wars. Can we afford a third space wars? ASATs (anti-satellite weapons) have raised yet another plethora of discourse. During the initial years of space exploration, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) set up by the General Assembly successfully came up with five major treaties. However, since the Moon Treaty no further Treaty has been created; rather an era of non-binding Resolution has started. With increasing space activities, lawmakers need to keep up with the times, and alternatives to conventional lawmaking process must be explored.

Recent space activities have generated much discourse within the international community. Realizing the sensitivity of above-mentioned issues, a one-day international conference on the theme “Recent Developments in Space Law—Opportunities & Challenges” was held at National Law School of India University (NLSIU), Bengaluru, in May 2015. As the theme conveys, the topics for discussions were to be focused on *Recent Developments in Space Law*. Hence, eminent speakers from different parts of the globe were requested to choose a topic of their choice under this purview. This approach gave excellent results, as the speakers responded with highly suitable topics, which are very relevant to the current scenario of international space activities.

This book is the intellectual progeny of this conference—a compendium of selected essays written by experts in the field of Space Law, reflecting upon the emerging legal issues in Outer Space. The views expressed are personal views of respective authors, written in their own style, sharing insightful ideas which, in their diversity, will live up to the expectations of the readers.

The book has comprehensively touched upon opportunities in space and the inevitable legal challenges that these space activities pose to mankind. Technology always has a much faster pace than law. But with regard to space activities it is high time the various legal issues are addressed. An unregulated technology could turn out to be an unruly horse that will lead the world to disaster.

We hope this publication would serve as a useful source for students, researchers and professionals to understand the contemporary issues and developments in Space Law. We would like to thank NLSIU, Indian Space Research Organization, and TMT Law Practice, New Delhi, for supporting the conference. Our sincere gratitude to the esteemed authors for their scholiastic contribution and profuse thanks to Springer for publishing the work.

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Opportunities & Challenges

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