

Unity within Diversity: Codification and Unification of Muslim Law of Personal Status in
East Africa

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Abstract

The paper examines the unification of law process in East Africa and its bearing on Muslim personal law. It further explores the status of Muslim personal law by posing the challenges facing Muslims in the post independent East Africa. The paper seeks to argue that post-independent East African countries have inherited the colonial legacy of regulating the legal process as far as Muslim personal law is concerned leading to legal lacunas that face Muslims in the region. Thesis of the paper lies on the premise that in order to get out of the current predicament related to Muslim personal law, East African countries need to review their position on the status and application of Muslim personal law and handle the matter in line with the current reforms undergoing in the world over. The African continent has a lot to share in terms of religious as well as cultural experiences. Experience has proved in various parts of the African continent that Muslim personal law could be unified and codified despite the inherent cultural diversities within the African societies. The process of unifying and codifying Muslim personal law in East Africa could serve as a base in laying strategy for having a unified stand in legal as well as religious issues.