



BOOK REVIEW

Erica Howard, *Freedom of Expression and Religious Hate Speech in Europe*, London, Routledge, 2017, Pages 191

Tehreem Farrukh*

This book deals with the worrisome challenges confronted by Europe pertaining to Freedom of Expression. In the first part focused on the author's argument that over the years, it has been witnessed that the freedom of expression has been facing serious challenges across the globe. This is owing to the fact that the people who are inclined towards extremist mindset and have strict and their own brand of religion and religious views tend to have less-tolerant mindset that in turn, leads to the religious hate speech propagated in the diverse parts of the continent of Europe. This has become the serious threat for the world community as different segments of demographics holding diverse views about other religions has been inciting fight, conflict and inter-religious disharmony and confusions. While in the second part author viewed that the Europe has remained one of those continents that is home to the diverse and distinctive religious beliefs which has allowed people belonging to the different religion to speak against others religion in the worst possible manner. The whole scenario has been discussed in a highly effective manner in a book named as *freedom of expression and religious hate speech in Europe*.

Moreover, the under review book extensively death with the contemporary challenges regarding freedom of expression with the help of thoughts references of law, political science. In the recent years, it has been witnessed that the Danish cartoons controversy together with the attacks in the various parts of the Europe has spread panic and most importantly, fueled the emergence of the concept of the Islamophobia. The attack in Paris, Brussels

* Ms. Tehreem Farrukh is an Assistant Professor at the School of Law, University of Karachi.
Email: tehreemfarrukh@uok.edu.pk.

and murder Charlie Hebdo and identical cases have the potential to influence people to hold certain mindset, outlook and views towards the other religion that would in turn leads to the dangerous and implications. One of the important things that is the point of concern is the fact that these attacked have inflicted the anti-Islamic speeches being delivered in the different member states of Europe is aimed at disrespecting the religion of Islam at a whole instead of targeting the limited or minute range of Muslims who have been surrounded by the disturbing extremist views and consider other religion as threat to the spread and propagation of Islam. These speeches have been delivered on the part of the politicians belonging to different countries but underline message is the same: to target the Muslim ideology and blame Islam as a religion. This has resulted in the emergence of the many questions pertaining to the freedom of expression and it is believed that whether this sort of freedom is exercisable without touching the religious sensitivities of the other religious especially Islam. Or this must be restricted to the level where the protection of the religious sensitivities can be ensured in the best possible manner.

It is worth mentioning that this book have ensured the using of the case of the law of the European Court of Human Rights in order to make sure that it can offer the detailed and in-depth analysis of the questions mentioned above. These questions remains highly important and at the same time offered a insight that whether legal restrictions or limitation of the religious hate speech has the capacity or the potential to violate the right of freedom of expression that has remained the basic and fundamental right of the people. On the other hand, another questions remains that whether these types of the laws must be used as the instrument to be able to ensure the prosecution of the legislatives and the politicians and the most importantly public opinion who ended up contributing to the contemporary debates while using the anti-Islam rhetoric. As the matter of fact, the book is good collection of thought process in order to explain the problems that are involved in drawing the distinctive line between the religious hate speech and the freedom of expression in the highly effective manner. The author is of the view that the freedom of expression belonging to the politicians and pubic opinion. Those who are dealing with the public debate must not be bound except for the twin confined scenarios. One is when they are inciting violence and hate speech there is the significant chances that the violence would be the ultimate result.

On the other hand, the second is when it restricts people from depicting and showing their religion affinity in any way to the public. Relied on the above-mentioned discussion or argument, it was concluded that the European Court of Human Rights must be to decide that wilders conviction for the hate speech has had the potential to violate the freedom of expression.