

## Exploring the Prevailing Unfairness in Muslim Marriage and Divorce Laws in Singapore's Dual Court System

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**Abstract :** In seeking to manage a multiracial and multi-religious society, Singapore provides a unique solution - a dual court system whereby a common law system co-exists with a Syariah law system that administers Syariah law for the Muslim population. In this respect, Singapore seems to provide a feasible example of legal pluralism to countries grappling with a burgeoning Muslim population. However, problems have arisen regarding this peaceful coexistence of secular and religious laws that seek to balance the rights of women and religious freedom. Singapore's interpretation of Syariah law in the context of marriage and divorce has resulted in certain inequalities for Muslim women, which are exemplified in light of the Women's Charter, a landmark piece of legislation which provides the legal basis for equity between husband and wife, but excludes Muslims from its ambit. The success of Singapore's dual court system has largely been at the expense of Muslim women's rights, and, as a result, the Muslim community as a whole has begun trailing behind the progressive society it forms a part of. This paper explores the prevailing unfairness of rules governing Muslim marriage and divorce in Singapore, and puts forth bold reforms.

**Keywords :** legal pluralism, Singapore, Syariah law, women's rights

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