

The Right To Live And Die

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## PREFACE

'The Right to Live and Die' is a topic which is very controversial and sensitive in nature, as the core of the discussion centres around the question of life and death, particularly the rights of an individual over his own life and death.

The areas within the framework of this topic is extensive, and the writer therefore decided to limit the discussion to three important issues, that is, pertaining to Suicide, Euthanasia and Abortion, as discussed in Chapter 1, 2 and 3 respectively.

The law as it stands is that there is no legality or recognition to the practice of Suicide, Euthanasia and Abortion. However, a few excepted cases as for example in Karen Ann Quinlan's case in euthanasia and R v Bourne in Abortion, throws light into circumstances whereby the law in such situations appears to be too rigid, thus an exception to such laws being inevitable. The issues are highlighted on the fact that the exception which the statute provides, as in Abortion is too narrow and there are numerous cases of similar urgency and importance which does not fall within such ambit. The practice of such acts not covered within the exceptions is therefore illegal and those responsible will be guilty of a crime punishable under the various sections.

Karen Ann Quinlan's case is a classic case whereby the Court of Law gave recognition to the genuine need for an exception, whereby the Court extends the law to cater for humanity and compassion. Whether similar extensions should be given to the law pertaining to suicide is an opinion which the writer leaves entirely to the individual readers.

A similar exception of the law is also seen in the case of R v Bourne pertaining to abortion. In addition, the writer provides certain analogies which he thinks is relevant to the subject matter.

This is an academic discussion, and the writer therefore tries to bring forth the statutory law, Common Law, religious views and even the views of individuals relevant to the discussion.

A brief attempt to compare the law of various countries so as to give the position of the law to the subject matter in a wider perspective is made. This is to give the readers a bird's eye view of the situations.

The writer in his conclusion (Chapter 4), gives a summary of the discussions with a conclusion which he believes should be. But the reader is free to decide individually, based either on the law present, his religious conviction or his belief in human needs.

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