

# **BEAUTY CONTESTS: LOOKING AT LAWS IN MALAYSIA**

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The students/authors confirm that the work submitted is their own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others



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**CONTENTS**

Acknowledgements	ii
CHAPTER 1 AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENTS	
1.3 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY	9
1.3.1 ANALYSING	
1.3.2 PROS AND CONS OF ENFORCEMENT OF LAW	
1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW	10
1.5 METHODOLOGY	13
1.6 LIMITATION	14
1.7 SIGNIFICANTS OF THE STUDY	14
CHAPTER 2 THE NATURE AND BASIS OF BEAUTY CONTESTS	16
2.1 INTRODUCTION	17
2.2 RULES AND REGULATIONS	21
2.3 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES	27
2.4 CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES	30
2.5 CONCLUSION	33
CHAPTER 3 CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES IN BEAUTY CONTESTS	35
3.1 INTRODUCTION	36
3.2 MORALITY	36
3.3 INDINCENCY IN BEAUTY CONTESTS	39
3.4 DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN RIGHTS	44
3.5 CONFLICTS BETWEEN SYARIAH LAW AND FEDERAL CONSTITUTION	48
3.6 CONCLUSION	52
CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS	53
4.1 PROCESS OF SURVEY	54
4.2 PRESENTATION OF THE DATA COLLECTED	56
4.2.1 GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS	56
4.2.2 RACE AND RELIGION OF THE RESPONDENTS	57
4.2.3 LEVEL OF AWARENESS ABOUT BEAUTY CONTESTS	58
4.2.4 APPROVAL OF WOMEN PARTICIPATING IN BEAUTY CONTESTS	59

HONOURS PROJECT PAPER

4.2.5 PARTICIPATION OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN BEAUTY CONTESTS	60
4.2.6 COTROVERSIAL ISSUES OF BEAUTY CONTESTS	62
4.2.7 AWARENESS AMONG THE RESPONDENTS ABOUT BODY BUILDING CONTESTS	64
4.2.8 EQUAL RIGHTS FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN PARTICIPATING IN SUCH CONTESTS	65
4.2.9 RESPONDENTS' BELIEFS OR RELIGION REGARDING BODY BUILDING AND BEAUTY CONTESTS	65
 CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	 67
5.1 INTRODUCTION	68
5.2 CONCLUSION	68
5.2.1 WHETHER STATES LAWS IS IN CONTRAVENTION WITH THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION IN GOVERNING THE ISSUE OF BEAUTY CONTESTS?	68
5.2.2 ARE THE EXISTING LAWS ADEQUATE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF BEAUTY CONTESTS?	70
5.2.3 THE ISSUES OF EQUAL RIGHTS BETWEEN THE MALE AND FEMALE CONTESTANTS?	71
5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	72
 APPENDICES	 75
APPENDIX I	76
APPENDIX II	85
APPENDIX III	91
APPENDIX IV	96
APPENDIX V	106
APPENDIX VI	109
APPENDIX VII	111
APPENDIX VIII	113
APPENDIX IX	114
APPENDIX X	118
APPENDIX XI	121
APPENDIX XII	122
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 125



# BEAUTY CONTESTS: LOOKING AT THE LAWS IN MALAYSIA

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The history of Beauty Contests is generally accepted from the first modern beauty contest attempted by P. T. Barnum as a publicity stunt to attract audiences to his show in 1854. When he found that "respectable" women would not participate, he changed the format to a photographic competition with so much success that the idea was widely taken over by newspapers around the United States. By the close of the century, many newspapers sponsored such photographic beauty contests. In the 1920s, these contests began to be given a wider, more national character, to be used to attract tourists to specific resorts, and to feature the appearance of women in person and indeed in what was considered to be a highly questionable state of dress or undress, namely the bathing suit.<sup>1</sup>

Beauty pageants represent and contest idealized notions of gender and sexuality as show by the male and female beauty contest in the British Virgin Islands that manifested very distinct gender "styles."<sup>2</sup> In the Mr. Personality and Ms. Glamorous contests all contestants competed in casual and evening wear; only women competed in

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<sup>1</sup>A. Holly Shissler, 'Beauty Is Nothing to Be Ashamed Of Beauty Contests As Tools of Women's Liberation in Early Republican Turkey .' 2004 <<http://cssaame.dukejournals.org>> 5 October 2007.

<sup>2</sup>Karen Tranberg Hansen, 'The World in Dress: Anthropological Perspectives on Clothing, Fashion, and Culture.' 11 June 2004 <<http://arjournals.annualreviews.org>> 5 October 2007.