**Abstract**

**Topic –  ‘Current Developments in Air & Space Law’**

Socrates, one of the world’s greatest Greek philosopher had once remarked saying that - “Man must rise above the earth to the top of the atmosphere and beyond-for only thus will he fully understand the world in which he lives”. There are various views on about the definition and delimitation of air and outer space and it is but obvious that there is a practical and legal necessity to define the legal boundaries between them.

Space law is an area of the law that encompasses national and international law governing activities in outer space. International lawyers worldwide have been unable to see eye to eye on a uniform definition of the term "outer space´. Most lawyers agree that outer space generally begins at the lowest altitude above sea level at which objects can orbit the Earth, approximately100 km (62 mi).Outer space, the Moon, and other celestial bodies are not subject to appropriation by claim of sovereignty, use or occupation, or any other means. In 1976 eight equatorial countries claimed sovereignty over the geostationary orbital arc above their territory. Most other countries, including all major space powers, rejected the claim. Outer space is free for use by all countries. This principle is related to the non appropriation principle and is analogous to the right of innocent passage on the high seas. Outer space will be used for peaceful purposes only. Most Western nations, including the US, equate peaceful purposes with nonaggressive ones. Consequently, all nonaggressive military use of space is permitted, except for certain activities, noted elsewhere in this section, that are specifically prohibited. Objects launched into space must be registered with the UN.A country retains jurisdiction and control over its registered space objects. This rule applies regardless of the condition of the objects. A country is responsible for regulating, and is ultimately liable for, the outer space activities of its citizens.

While this field of the law is still in its infancy, it is in an era of rapid change and development. Arguably the resources of space are infinite, and limited only by our ability to use them in a manner that is fair and equitable to all nations and which is environmentally ethical. If commercial space transportation becomes widely available, with substantially lower launch costs, then all countries will be able to directly reap the benefits of space resources. In that situation, it seems likely that consensus will be much easier to achieve with respect to commercial development and human settlement of outer space. High costs are not the only factor preventing the economic exploitation of space: it is argued that space should be considered as a pristine environment worthy of protection and conservation, and that the legal regime for space should further protect it from being used as a resource for Earth's needs. Debate is also focused on whether space should continue to be legally defined as part of the “common heritage of man,” and therefore unavailable for national claims, or whether its legal definition should be changed to allow private property in space.

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