

Legal Information Systems and the Institutionalization of Tolerance: An Analytical Study of Legislative and Judicial Frameworks in Oman

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Abstract

Social cohesion and peaceful coexistence increasingly depend not only on comprehensive legal frameworks but also on effective legal information systems that facilitate the creation, governance, dissemination, and accessibility of legislative and judicial information. In the Sultanate of Oman, the promotion of tolerance is supported through an integrated institutional framework in which legislation, judicial decisions, administrative regulations, and governmental communication mechanisms function as interconnected legal information resources. This study examines how legal information systems, judicial information management, legislative information governance, and institutional communication frameworks collectively contribute to strengthening tolerance and peaceful coexistence in Oman. Using a qualitative doctrinal methodology supported by legislative document analysis and judicial case analysis, the study evaluates constitutional provisions, statutory legislation, ministerial regulations, judicial decisions, and international legal instruments as components of

the national legal information infrastructure. The findings indicate that the effectiveness of approach adopted by the Oman extends beyond substantive legal protections to include systematic dissemination of legal information, institutional coordination, public accessibility of legal rules, standardized judicial interpretation, and information governance practices that reinforce social cohesion and prevent discrimination, sectarianism, and social conflict. The study demonstrates that legislative information management and judicial information dissemination play a central role in institutionalizing tolerance by ensuring consistency, transparency, and accessibility across public institutions. By reframing tolerance through the perspective of legal information systems, this research contributes to Library and Information Science literature while offering an interdisciplinary model for understanding how information governance supports legal certainty, public trust, and peaceful coexistence within contemporary legal systems.

Keywords: Legal Information Systems, Information Governance, Judicial Information Management, Legislative Information, Public Access to Legal Information, Institutional Information Frameworks, Peaceful Coexistence.

Introduction

Legal information systems play a key role in the communication of public values (Bhardwaj and Margam, 2016), the regulation of institutional behavior and social cohesion in current societies. In

addition to legislation, effective public policies rely on the quality of the information generated (Ndaage and Ogechi, 2026), organized, disseminated, interpreted and accessed by government institutions, judicial bodies, education institutions, media agencies and the public. Legal information systems are therefore a vital part of information governance (Borden and Baron, 2014), since legal rules and judicial rulings become knowledge, usable, and impact on the practice of the institutions and the behavior of citizens. In this context, legal information is not only a container of statutory provisions (Šavelka and Ashley, 2022), but also a strategic tool that enhances transparency, accountability, public trust, and social stability by managing information and communicating it effectively.

The promotion of tolerance and peaceful coexistence is an important national goal (Al Jabouri and Al-Yasiri, 2022) which is supported by the national constitution, legislation, judicial practice and institutional policies within the Sultanate of Oman. Oman Vision 2040 put a great focus on the evolution of an inclusive society with justice, citizenship, social cohesion and good governance (Al-Shaabi, 2026; Al Sinani et al., 2021). These goals were met by the presence of well-defined legislative communication (Huber et al., 2022), judicial information dissemination, institutional coordination and access to authoritative legal information mechanisms. These goals could be achieved by well-defined legislative communication, judicial information dissemination, institutional coordination and access to authoritative legal information mechanisms. Together, government ministries, courts, education, religious communities and media produce, manage and communicate legal information that reinforces tolerance is countering discrimination and promoting cultural and religious diversity.

Library and information science also have a definition of legal information systems (Mbofung and Popoola, 2014), which is the collection of information systems used to gather, store, and share legislative and judicial documents. It also includes administrative regulations, communication channels, institutional publications, public information services, and information governance practices and processes within society. Such interrelated information infrastructure allows citizens, residents, policy makers, judges, educators and public administrators to have ready access to accurate legal information, to understand their rights and responsibilities,

and to apply well-established legal principles in a uniform way. Therefore, the effectiveness of tolerance policies were dependent on the quality, accessibility, transparency, and the governance of legal information in the institutional ecosystem.

Previous research efforts on the constitutional dimension, administrative law, human rights protection, and judicial enforcement of tolerance (de Sousa e Brito, 1999; Eskridge Jr, 2004; Loveland, 2018) in Oman have focused on the dimension of tolerance. However, much attention has not been paid to the information aspect of these legal regimes. In the past, scholarships tended to view legislation and judicial decisions as legal authorities (Knowlton, 1901) without examining how they are used as institutional sources of information for knowledge dissemination and policy implementation as well as for legal awareness and organizational learning. This gap is especially important as it widens the ability of public institutions to communicate anti-discrimination policies, coordinate administrative actions, promote public legal literacy and build confidence in governmental and judicial institutions to ensure effective legal information governance.

Therefore, the aim of this research is to investigate the role of legal information systems, judicial information management, legislative information governance and institutional communication mechanisms in fostering tolerance and peaceful co-existence in Sultanate of Oman. The study shows how the production, dissemination, accessibility, interpretation, and governance of legal information institutionalize tolerance within public administration and legal system of Oman. It also aims to highlight an analysis of the different elements of an integrated legal information framework, including constitutional provisions, statutory legislation, judicial decisions, ministerial regulations, educational information policies, media regulations and international legal instruments. As such, the study builds upon the current work and makes an interdisciplinary contribution to Library and Information Science and shows how the legal information governance is important in promoting social cohesion, institutional trust and peaceful coexistence.

The Sultanate of Oman has created a comprehensive legislative and judicial system (Al-Hammouri et al., 2025; Tamsah, 2025), which fosters tolerance, equality and peaceful coexistence. The current research, however, has mainly focused on

constitutional, administrative and human rights aspects, and has thus far been limited to the issues of how these frameworks can be implemented and what legal information systems can do to facilitate this process. Limited studies have considered production, management, dissemination and access to legislative information, judicial decisions, administrative regulations, educational information policies and institutional mechanisms of communication. In addition, the role of legal information governance in promoting transparency of judges, coordination of judicial institutions, promotion of judicial knowledge, and access to tolerance-related legal information, however not studied in previous studies. To fill this gap is necessary for grasping legal information systems as institutional infrastructures that can transfer legal norms into accessible legal knowledge that can strengthen tolerance and peaceful coexistence in current society. Hence, following research questions are proposed:

1. How do legal information systems contribute to promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the Sultanate of Oman?
2. What role do legislative information governance and judicial information management play in institutionalizing tolerance within public institutions?
3. How do judicial decisions function as mechanisms for disseminating tolerance-related legal knowledge and ensuring consistent legal interpretation?
4. How do educational institutions, media organizations, and religious authorities communicate and disseminate tolerance-related legal information to citizens and residents?
5. To what extent are legislative and judicial information resources accessible, transparent, and effectively governed to support public awareness, institutional coordination, and peaceful coexistence in Oman?

This study focuses on legislation and judicial decisions, educational regulation, media policies, and institutional practices as legal information resources. The study does not focus solely on the legal instruments as means of legal authority, but rather as part of an integrated legal information system by which legal knowledge is created, structured, communicated, explained and regulated. It assesses the role of these legal information resources in supporting the transparency of the institutions, public legal awareness,

social cohesion and development of tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the Sultanate of Oman.

Literature Review

Legal Information Systems and Social Governance

Legal information systems refer to formal structures which enable production, structuring, dissemination, preservation and retrieval of law, judicial rulings, administrative rules and regulations, and official legal texts by governments, lawyers and citizens (Boella et al., 2016). In Library and Information Science (LIS), these systems are seen as key tools to promote transparency in the legal field, support evidence-based governance, foster institutional accountability and build public confidence. Good legal information systems empower legal documents to become knowledge resources that can be used for more informed decision making, ensure compliance with regulations and enable predictable application of legal norms among government bodies.

The policies and standards, along with the organizational processes, required for accurate, reliable, secure, transparent and public access to legal information throughout its lifecycle is provided by information governance (Olsen et al., 2024). Good governance of legislative and judicial information enhances coordination among institutions, decreases information asymmetry, facilitates administrative efficiency and fosters public trust in judicial and legislative institutions. The current information governance frameworks highlight the importance of metadata, digital preservation, information quality, interoperability, records management and long-term accessibility, and all these aspects are important for the success of countries' legal information infrastructures.

Public information policy also serves these goals by providing equal access for access to official legal information for citizens (Weiss and Tschirhart, 1994). Availability of legislation, judicial decisions, administrative rules and government policy documents allow people to understand their rights and duties under the law and promote civic engagement and regulatory compliance. Policy initiatives and freedom of information policies have thus become part and parcel of democratic governance, enhancing transparency of institutions and strengthening accountability with proactive communication of authoritative legal information.

Besides, knowledge management has become a key aspect of legal governance (Buuren, 2009). Institutional knowledge is constantly created as a by-product of the interpretation of law, administrative actions, policy enforcement, and judicial decision making in the processes of courts, ministries, legislative bodies and regulatory agencies. Collecting, structuring, storing and sharing of this knowledge can support organizational learning, optimize the consistency of policies and help to evidence-based public administration. Judicial precedents, legislative histories, ministerial guidelines, and administrative interpretations all serve as an organizational knowledge asset that helps build institutional memory and contributes to uniformity in legal decisions.

Along with digital government's growth rate, legal information management has undergone significant changes. The e-government platforms offer a single point of entry to the legislation (Paskaleva-Shapira, 2006), judicial databases, ministerial publications and public services, which can be used to disseminate legal knowledge and increase administrative efficiency. Digital legal information systems enable fast access to authoritative legal texts, improve interoperability within the public sector and open legal information to the public through online publication of legislation, regulations and judicial decisions. These advancements have established digital legal information infrastructures as an integral part of today's public administration.

Social cohesion also benefits directly from information transparency (Yee, 2015) because it diminishes uncertainty about governmental acts, enhances the public knowledge of legal responsibilities, and strengthens the legitimacy of institutions. The spread of legal information in a transparent manner helps promote social inclusion by guaranteeing that legal norms are disseminated in a uniform way in all communities, avoiding misunderstandings, discrimination and institutional mistrust. Hence, legal information systems serve not just administrative purposes but also social purposes, such as enhancing public trust, promoting peaceful coexistence and promoting inclusive governance.

The Sultanate of Oman, in this context, is a valuable case to explore the working of collective legal information policies and practices of legislative information, judicial documentation, ministerial regulations, educational information policies, media governance, and religious administration.

Unlike conceptualizing legislation as a mere body of law, the focus of this study is on constitutional provisions, statutory laws, judicial rulings and institutional regulations as legal information resources communicating public values, influencing institutional action, disseminating legal knowledge, and fostering tolerance and peaceful co-existence in society.

Digital Legal Information and Access to Justice in Oman

The rapid digital transformation of public administration (Mountasser and Abdellatif, 2023) has profoundly affected the way in which legal information is made, processed, provided and used. In the modern legal information systems, digital technologies can be used to facilitate the timely access to legislative, judicial and administrative information, thereby promoting transparency, accountability, institutional efficiency and public participation. As a result, digital legal information systems are an integral part of information governance (Sharmin and Chowdhury, 2025), and they have enhanced access to justice and public trust in legal institutions.

Although digital government initiatives can offer a vital underpinning to ensure the accessibility of legal information (Balaji, 2025; Saputra et al., 2023), they are not a comprehensive solution to the issue. Digital government initiatives can also contribute to enhancing legal information access in the Sultanate of Oman; however, these initiatives cannot be considered the complete answer to the problems. Legislation, ministerial regulation, administrative procedures and public policy documents are increasingly issued by government Ministries via official electronic platforms. The digital publications lessen information imbalance between Government units and society, as they enable the citizens, residents, researchers, legal practitioners and public administrators to receive legal information from official sources. Digital publication also enhances uniformity and reliability in the legal communication process and promotes the spread of tolerance-enabling laws & administrative policies.

In addition to the judicial information systems are an important aspect of legal information infrastructure of Oman. Courts are continually creating legally authoritative information as they issue judgments, procedural rulings, and interpretations to help clarify statutory provisions and ensure uniformity in jurisprudence. Judicial decisions preserved and published electronically help to build

legal predictability because judges, lawyers, scholars, policy makers and citizens can refer to past decisions to better resolve legal disputes or clarify legal obligations. Judicial databases are therefore not just a repository of legal documents, but also a system of institutional knowledge management that keeps judicial knowledge and enables organization learning.

Having legislation accessible to the public is a key tenet of good legal information governance (Liebwald, 2015). Legal information is available to support individuals to understand the constitutional provisions and anti-discrimination policies, educational laws, media policies and administrative procedures that foster tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Digital legal repositories also contribute to equal access to legal knowledge, irrespective of geographic location and support inclusive governance and public institutions relationship.

Moving forward, e-government's ongoing evolution offers further scope to enhance the legal information governance in Oman. Greater interoperability of governmental information systems, integrated databases of legal information, online repositories of judicial materials, multilingual legal information services, digital programmes on legal literacy, and AI-based legal information retrieval systems could help a lot with public access to legal knowledge. These developments would further improve institutional transparency and efficiency of administration, build legal awareness and consolidate the institution supporting information infrastructure to foster tolerance, social cohesion and access to justice across the Sultanate.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive-analytical legal research design integrated with an institutional information analysis perspective. The primary sources of the legal information system in Oman are discussed, such as the constitutional provision, statutory legislation, ministerial regulation, judicial decisions and international legal instruments. The analysis is based on the interaction of the aforementioned information policies, which enable the creation, dissemination, access, interpretation, and management of legal information that supports tolerance and peaceful coexistence. Combining the analysis of the law with the concepts of Library and Information Science, the study examines how legal information systems can contribute to transparency

of institutions, public legal awareness, and social cohesion.

Legal Information Systems and Institutional Information Governance for Tolerance in Oman

This study is divided into two main sections. The first examines the legislative and institutional developments in enshrining the values of tolerance within the Omani legal system, while the second analyzes the contribution of Omani court jurisprudence to applying the values of tolerance to the disputes brought before them and assigning them binding legal weight.

- Section One: The Role of Omani National Legislation in Establishing the Values of Tolerance and Peaceful Coexistence
- Section Two: The contribution of Omani jurisprudence to entrenching the binding nature of the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Section One: The Role of Omani National Legislation in Establishing the Values of Tolerance and Peaceful Coexistence

The institutional structures of legal information systems are the means by which constitutional principles, statutory law and administrative procedures are structured, conveyed, and made authoritative public facts. In Library and Information Science (Lajeunesse and Sène, 2004), legislation is more and more being considered as an information resource, which enables governance, transparency of institutions, and social coordination. Therefore, the effectiveness of tolerance policies relies on the accessibility, coherence and dissemination of legal information in public institutions and in society. The national values on equality, peaceful coexistence and non-discrimination are enshrined in the Sultanate of Oman via the integrated legal information framework, which includes the constitution, penal law, media law, education law and ministerial decisions. A review of these legal documents within the context of a structured legal information system can help to broaden the understanding of the role of legislative information in supporting institutional governance, public legal awareness and sustainable social cohesion.

Muslim-majority countries constantly strive to balance two fundamental needs of the modern state: remaining faithful to Islam and committing to the full integration of ethnic and religious

minorities. Pluralism is a natural characteristic of the contemporary Islamic state, if defined correctly, and is essential for maintaining positive relations with all countries. It is noteworthy that the policies and practices of the Sultanate of Oman are open. In Oman, Christian choirs are permitted to perform group hymns in public spaces during the Christmas season. Hindus openly celebrate the festival of Lord Shiva, and Shiites observe mourning rituals on the Day of Ashura. Oman has succeeded in this regard, having achieved remarkable legal, constitutional, and practical protections, as well as widespread cultural acceptance, for the presence and participation of non-Islamic religions in public life.

The Omani approach to promoting peaceful coexistence among followers of different Islamic faiths and followers of other religions is simply a clear expression of religious freedom and peaceful coexistence. Over the past few decades, the Sultanate of Oman has witnessed legislative developments that have contributed to enshrining the values of tolerance, particularly through amendments to the Basic Law of the State and numerous legal policies that have supported the values of pluralism and mutual respect, which are reflected in national legislation. The Sultanate's legal system has contributed to protecting and providing care for religious minorities. The level of coexistence and tolerance in Oman with non-Islamic and even non-Abrahamic religions predates modern Oman by centuries. A prime example is the Shiva temple built in the old city of Muscat more than 200 years ago, which stands as evidence that Hindus and Omanis have coexisted peacefully and securely for generations (Leonard, 2015).

Based on the above, this section is divided into the following points:

First Requirement: The role of the Omani legal and legislative system in promoting the values of tolerance and rejecting sectarian and doctrinal prejudices. Second Requirement: The role of international conventions and agreements ratified by the Sultanate of Oman in promoting the values of tolerance and coexistence.

First Requirement: The role of the Omani legal and legislative system in promoting the values of tolerance and rejecting sectarian and doctrinal prejudices.

Among the foundations of the Omani State is that human resource is the most precious asset and

the greatest force of progress in the State of Oman. Therefore, the emphasis on the importance of Omani and non-Omani citizens and the respect for all their rights are clearly enshrined in Omani legislation. In this section, it should be noted that the laws and regulations in the Sultanate are mainly focused on establishing justice and equality, promoting the rule of law, the values of tolerance and fraternity, and maintaining the foundations of Omani society, which is rooted in Islam's teachings and culture. The Omani state has always strived to spread these values and principles amongst all segments of society and in all aspects of life – social, economic and political – to ensure that the rights of all people are not denied on the basis of discrimination in any of these dimensions.

All citizens are equal in front of the law, Article 17 of the Basic Law of the State says: All citizens are equal in public rights and duties, and there shall be no discrimination among them on account of sex, origin, color, language, religion, sect, domicile, or social status. Article 36 refers to the rights of foreigners living in the Sultanate, which states that "Every foreigner who is legally residing in the Sultanate shall be entitled to the protection of his person and property according to the law, and shall abide by the values, traditions and sentiments of the society. The citizens and residents of the Sultanate are also guaranteed the freedom to exercise their religious rights in accordance with prevailing customs, subject to the public order and morality principle as provided for in Article 28 of the Basic Law of the State.

The Omani legislature has established strict laws criminalizing anyone who attempts to sow the seeds of sedition and extremism. Article 108 of the Omani Penal Code No. 7/2018 stipulates prison sentences of no less than three years and no more than ten years for anyone who promotes religious or sectarian strife or discord, or incites hatred or animosity among the inhabitants of the country, or encourages such actions. The same penalty applies to anyone who holds a meeting, seminar, or conference related to the aforementioned purposes, or participates in any such event with knowledge thereof. It is considered an aggravating circumstance if the crime is committed in a place of worship, official facilities, public gatherings or places, by a public employee during or in connection with the performance of their duties, or by a person holding a religious position or entrusted with religious duties.

Here, we find that the Omani Penal Code

emphasizes the protection of all religions (not just Islam) by prohibiting extremism, partisanship, hatred, and the dissemination of sedition and discord, in order to preserve the cohesion of Omani society. Referring to the Press and Publications Law No. 49/1984, we find that the Omani legislator did not limit punishment to direct acts, but also included crimes of publication and incitement. Article 31 of this law prohibits the publication of anything that could incite hatred, spread obscenity, or sow discord. Regarding public education, Article 41 of Royal Decree No. 31/2023, promulgating the School Education Law, affirms the permissibility of admitting non-Omani students to public schools, as well as Omani students to schools attended by children of foreign residents.

A mere reading of the aforementioned text demonstrates that though the word “may” is used, in reality, public schools are doing everything possible to provide all the educational services without discrimination to foreign residents and citizens, even if it means that foreign students add new burdens to the State. This reflects rich experience of living together in the Sultanate. Another aspect of the values of ‘coexistence’ in the Sultanate is highlighted in Article 42, which states that the right to educational services is given to all students equally, with no discrimination based on gender, color, language, sect, social status, etc.

The word “students” was used to show the generality of the text and meant that it was not differentiated between Omani students and foreign students. Moreover, the term “for any other reason” highlights the legislator’s purpose of refraining from discriminating among students, not only in the specific terms listed in the legislation, but also in any others that are not listed. The legislator didn’t quit at what was said in the previous articles. Article 48 prohibits school students from promoting any beliefs or ideas that could affect the unity of society and its values.

It focuses on the need to maintain the principles of tolerance and coexistence not just those who govern educational institutions, but everyone receiving the educational service: citizen or foreigner. This affirms the Omani legislator’s commitment to ensuring everyone’s participation in upholding these tolerant values, even those in school. This helps to promote the internalization of these values, as well as their responsibility and initial understanding of their implications, although in some situations this does require measures to be taken where these values are not adhered to.

The Omani legislator understood this when he enacted Article 54, forbidding any belief or ideology that may impact the safety, security and values of the state in educational institutions, which has always been the role of a teacher and continues to be so. “Educational institutions” includes all who participate in the education sector directly or indirectly, including citizens or residents. This is because they are given a task to carry out with integrity and commitment in order to deliver high quality education free from any destructive beliefs or ideas that may adversely affect the social fabric, national unity and the good of those who live within its borders.

Out of the Omani legislator’s keenness to ensure that media outlets in the Sultanate are committed to highlighting Oman’s role in promoting tolerance and coexistence in this blessed land, Article 11 of Royal Decree No. 58/2024, promulgating the Media Law, explicitly prohibits the Ministry of Information from granting licenses for media activities whose purpose is to discriminate between citizens on sectarian, religious, ethnic, or class grounds. This provision places discrimination based on these latter grounds at the forefront, even preceding discrimination based on gender, origin, language, or nationality, etc.

Furthermore, the executive branch, in numerous ministerial decisions, has not neglected its role, which is no less important than that of the legislative branch, in upholding the values of tolerance and coexistence, given its greater contact and closer relationship with the legislative branch in daily interactions with individuals. Article 28 of Ministerial Decision No. 356/2017, issuing the Regulations for Religious Positions and Activities, prohibits contractors or volunteers from inciting discord or problems among members of society, or from addressing politically sensitive topics concerning state institutions or other countries, or matters of contention between different religious sects and denominations. The aforementioned text unequivocally affirms that all those undertaking religious positions and activities in the Sultanate are entrusted with this noble task.

This is further emphasized in other articles of Ministerial Decree No. 955/2010, concerning the regulations for mosques and prayer halls. Article 5 specifically stipulates that mosques, prayer halls, and prayer rooms may not be named with names that suggest sectarian or tribal connotations, or that are unbecoming of the status and sanctity of such places. To ensure compliance with the preceding text, the article further

stipulates that the adoption or change of a mosque's, prayer hall's, or prayer room's name must be by decision of the relevant minister or their designee. Article 5 above takes great care to ensure that the names of places of worship are chosen in accordance with the Sultanate's policies of tolerance, avoiding any names that suggest sectarianism. Article 36 of the aforementioned decision stipulates that religious activities planned for any mosque must be connected to its mission and contribute to deepening authentic religious values among individuals and the community. Ministerial Decision No. (4/2006) concerning the executive regulations for international schools emphasized amending the term "community schools" to "international schools." This reflects the Omani legislator's commitment to avoiding all forms of sectarianism and blind prejudice towards any group or school of thought, whether within or outside the Sultanate.

As we have seen in another part of this research, the legislator has once again emphasized in the aforementioned text the prohibition imposed on what the media presents regarding the concept of sectarianism and bigotry, prior to the discrimination imposed on the basis of sex, language, color, religion, or nationality.

Second Requirement: The role of international conventions and agreements ratified by the Sultanate of Oman in promoting the values of tolerance and coexistence.

In 2023, the Sultanate of Oman ratified the Arab Charter on Human Rights by Royal Decree No. 16/2023. By acceding to this Charter, the Sultanate affirmed its commitment to all provisions of the Charter⁽¹⁾, including the rejection of all forms of discrimination against anyone under its jurisdiction, whether based on race, color, religious belief, or origin⁽²⁾. It also affirmed the right of all minorities to use their language, practice their religious rites, and express their culture⁽³⁾.

Furthermore, Article 34 of the Basic Law of the

Sultanate affirms the provisions of Article 30⁽⁴⁾ of the Charter, guaranteeing the individual's freedom to adopt ideas and beliefs or to practice their religious rites, alone or with others, without any restrictions, provided that this does not violate public order or morality⁽⁵⁾.

Referring to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination⁽⁶⁾, we find that the Sultanate submitted its most recent periodic report in 2024, in accordance with Article 9 of the Convention, to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Recommendation No. (11) of the report, under the heading "Detailed Statistical Information on the Ethnic Composition of the Population," states: "The Sultanate affirms that there is no ethnic classification of the population. All citizens are considered Omani, and applying the term 'ethnicity' to a specific group within society constitutes racial discrimination. Furthermore, published population statistics in the Sultanate of Oman do not contain any ethnic references. Instead, the classification is between two groups: 'Omani' and 'non-Omani' (expatriate), to distinguish between Omani citizens and others who come to work and reside temporarily"⁽⁷⁾.

In Recommendation No. (12) of the report regarding the review of the definition contained in Article (17) concerning discrimination in the Basic Law of the State in accordance with paragraph one of Article (1) of the Convention, the report stated: "Upon reviewing paragraph one of Article (1) of the Convention and comparing it with the content of Article (17) of the Basic Law of the State, it becomes clear that Article (17) refers to non-discrimination on the basis of sex, origin, color, religion, sect, domicile, or social status. It is clear that what this article has stated gives a broader dimension to non-discrimination than what is stated in paragraph one of the Convention, as in addition to focusing on a set of elements of discrimination contained in the Convention, Article (17) also emphasized non-discrimination on the basis

(1): The Sultanate reserved its position on the provision in paragraph (2) of Article (19), which states: Every accused person whose innocence has been proven by a final judgment has the right to compensation for damages suffered.

(2): Article 3 of this Charter states: Each State Party to this Charter undertakes to ensure to everyone within its jurisdiction the right to enjoy the rights and freedoms set forth in this Charter, without discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religious belief, opinion, thought, national or social origin, property, birth, or physical or mental disability.

(3): Article 25 of the Charter states: Persons belonging to minorities shall not be denied the right to enjoy their cultures, use their languages, and practice their religions. The enjoyment of these rights shall be regulated by law.

(4): Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. No restrictions may be imposed on this right except as prescribed by applicable law.

(5): Article 34 of the Statute.

(6): The Sultanate of Oman acceded to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination in 2002 by Royal Decree No. 87/2002. tinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CERD%2FC%2FOMN%2F2-5&Lang=ar

(7): Mohammed Mahmoud Salim, Omani Administrative Law, University Book House, 2023; Ibrahim Al-Bartaji, Administrative Dispute Law, University Publishing Center, Tunis, 2nd edition, 2023, p. 25.

of social status, domicile, or sect, which were not mentioned in the Convention.”

Section Two: The Role of the Omani Judiciary in Enforcing and Implementing the Principles of Tolerance and Peaceful Coexistence

The institutional dimension of information governance is a key aspect of the production (Tallon et al., 2013), management, dissemination and application of legal information in governmental institutions. Public institutions are not only regulatory bodies, but they also provide information that serves as a communication channel to inform various groups about the requirements of legislation, administrative processes, and the policy goals for the public. In today's Library and Information Science, information governance is a tool that contributes to improving the coordination of institutions, transparency, accountability and organizational knowledge management. A government system that integrates the functions of ministries dealing with information (Garson, 2006), education, religious affairs and judicial administration has been established in Oman and is responsible for sharing legal-related information to promote tolerance and peaceful relations. Their communication methods, publications of policies, educational activities and administrative guidelines show how information management in institutions contributes to the legal security, public awareness and uniform application of national values within society.

The Omani judiciary has consistently adopted the values and principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence stipulated in legislation and royal decrees. This is evident in cases brought before courts at all levels and jurisdictions. The administrative judiciary has relied on these principles in several decisions and rulings to encourage administrative and other institutions to adhere to them, as stipulated in the Basic Law of the State. While the majority of judicial decisions issued in this area are based on written texts, some rulings have considered these values to be general principles of law, which the judiciary may apply even in cases where the written legislative text is not explicit on the matter. This is in line with the established practice in comparative law, given that these general principles and rules are considered common to various legal systems across different countries⁽⁸⁾.

(8): Voy. J. Habermas, “De la tolérance religieuse aux droits culturels”, *Cités*, 2013/1, no. 13, p. 151; Xavier Bioy, *Tolérance et Droit*, L.G.D.J., Université Toulouse Capitole, 2014, p. 46.

(9): Pursuant to Articles (1) and (7) of the Law on the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities issued by Royal Decree No. (63/2008) and Articles (5), (36), and (37) of the Child Law issued by Royal Decree No. (22/2014).

This is addressed in the following requirements:

First Requirement: Ensuring respect for the values of tolerance and coexistence among members of Omani society.

In matters related to real estate law and its requirement to respect the principle of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among various social groups and stakeholders involved in land division and urban planning, including relevant administrative bodies, the courts have adopted the principle of tolerance. This has demonstrated its necessity for administrative intervention in these areas, where the administration must act with the necessary flexibility in cases where individuals, tribes, and families dispute land division to ensure peaceful coexistence. The courts have clarified that this tolerance on the part of the administration should not lead to the granting of permanent and fixed rights to the parties involved. Rights granted in this manner are not final for the benefit of individuals but are granted in exceptional circumstances where the administration resorts to them for the immediate resolution of disputes. These circumstances may be subsequently amended or changed by the administration should grievances or disputes arise again⁽⁹⁾.

The Administrative Court issued several rulings in this regard, including Appeal No. 38 of 2008, session of March 17, 2008. The court held that the administrative recommendation concerning land allocation, issued by the Land Affairs Committee, is not a final administrative decision subject to appeal, but rather a preliminary and preparatory decision addressing an exceptional situation in which the administration may be lenient regarding certain legal requirements to resolve an urgent matter.

Various issues are relevant when the concerned administrative authorities resort to deporting a foreign expatriate from the Sultanate due to actions, they have committed that violate customs and laws. Despite the characteristic of tolerance that prevails in the legal system for foreigners in the Sultanate of Oman, this does not preclude the imposition of necessary penalties and the establishment of precise and well-defined limits regarding violations that may infringe upon the principle of tolerance. In the initial case No. 82 of 2004, session of May 3, 2004, the court held that the principle of tolerance enshrined in Omani law does

not preclude the application of exceptional measures and penalties within the framework of administrative control and the protection of public order in force in the Sultanate. These measures include the deportation of a foreigner from the Sultanate of Oman due to illegal acts committed by him that constitute a serious violation of legal principles, including the principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

The courts have established a number of procedural safeguards and substantive rights that cannot be violated when making a deportation decision. The decision to deport the plaintiff from the country must be based on the ruling issued by the competent primary court in the criminal matter. He was convicted in the present case of the crime of impersonating a lawyer and imprisoned for ten days. The deportation decision was also based on the plaintiff's violation of the public order in force in the Sultanate, in addition to the expiry of his residence documents, and thus his residence became illegal, especially since the plaintiff's sponsor also requested his deportation and that of his family from the Sultanate, and thus he no longer had a sufficient and legitimate means of living.

For these reasons, the court upheld the legality of the deportation decision and did not accept that it violated the principle of legality or the principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. The court held that foreigners should not exploit the principle of tolerance to circumvent the law, but rather have a duty to comply with the rules governing peaceful coexistence among the population in the Sultanate. Based on this, the court deemed the deportation decision legal and in accordance with the provisions of the Law on the Residence of Foreigners.

The ruling stated in this regard, "Regarding the decision's reliance on the plaintiff's violation of public order, it is established that various countries permit foreigners to reside within their borders as a matter of tolerance, without prejudice to their right, established by the principle of state sovereignty, to protect their security, economic, social, or legal integrity. The foreigner must observe all these matters during their stay in the country. The concept of public order or public morals varies from one country to another, according to what is ingrained in the conscience of its nation and the accumulated cultures, social norms, customs, traditions, and legislation that governs its structure—whether written or customary. Undoubtedly, the common denominator among countries is that

their laws, through which they impose their authority and sovereignty over their territory and all who reside within it, whether citizens or foreigners, constitute the core of their public order."

"The plaintiff violated the provisions of the Lawyers' Law issued by Royal Decree No. (108/96) by impersonating a lawyer. The plaintiff also violated the Omani Labor Law, which requires foreign workers..." Adherence to the work for which they were recruited, which constitutes a violation by the plaintiff of the laws of the Sultanate, which represent the core and essence of public order in the Sultanate.

In another case concerning children's rights, the judiciary addressed the extent to which the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence are respected in the education sector, particularly with regard to children with special needs. This was in accordance with Article (16) of the Basic Law of the State, which stipulates that: "Education is a right for every citizen, its aim being to build the Omani character, preserve national identity, instill the scientific method in thinking, develop talents, encourage innovation, consolidate cultural and spiritual values, and establish the concepts of citizenship, tolerance, and harmony."

The court relied on the objective of the Education Law, which aims to ensure the participation of children of all categories in the educational process without discrimination, and to encourage educational institutions to achieve their integration into the educational and school environment. It also emphasized the importance of not discriminating against children based on their special health conditions, and the possibility of establishing educational and paramedical centers that cater to children according to their degree of special needs, disability, or certain illnesses such as autism spectrum disorder. The court noted that the legislature "established a precise definition for both a child and a child with a disability, ensuring the state's obligation to provide them with the right to education and to remove all obstacles that might hinder the exercise of this right. Simultaneously, the law obligates the child's guardian to guarantee this right for their child by not withholding it. The law also defines the limits of the state's obligations in this regard, regardless of whether the child is considered able-bodied or disabled, by establishing a general principle: the state's obligations concerning the social and cultural rights of the child, wherever mentioned in the Child Law, are limited to the resources available to it—in

accordance with the child's right to education and the state's available resources."

The court further emphasized that, to facilitate coexistence among different groups of children, the legislature, in the Law on the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, sought to provide rehabilitation through specialized centers affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development. This aims to prepare them for integration into society, paving the way for the state to fulfill its obligation to provide them with educational services. "This must be preceded by the disabled person's readiness in all aspects to integrate with able-bodied individuals in all spheres of life, without any regression in their health".⁽¹⁰⁾ The result of placing them in an environment not yet prepared to receive them, or the negative impact on healthy children if they are not also educated and prepared, by explaining the mechanisms and tools for receiving and interacting with children with disabilities within educational institutions.

Given that the decision to accept or refuse to accommodate a child with autism spectrum disorder may affect both the child and other children in the school and educational environment, the competent administration has the right to assess the matter according to the actual circumstances and the public interest. It may sometimes prioritize considerations related to the public interest over the values of tolerance and coexistence if it becomes clear that there is a potential for harm that could result from integrating the child into a special educational institution.

The judiciary may not intervene to review the legality of the administrative decision in terms of its suitability to the circumstances, except in cases where it violates the principles of legality. Full inclusion programs for students with autism spectrum disorder aim to integrate them into regular classrooms full-time with regular students, unlike partial inclusion programs, which aim to allocate special classes for this group attached to basic education schools to provide opportunities. They are to be integrated with healthy students in some summer and non-summer activities, and in school facilities - "If the conditions for the student's admission to full integration classes are not met, and at the same time the partial integration system is not available, then it is impossible to accept him to join the school, and he must continue in the care center to receive the sessions scheduled to

rehabilitate him until his health condition improves," or the school's capabilities are available to implement the partial integration program - the reason for this is that accepting him with ordinary students in the full integration program, even though his condition does not allow for this, does not benefit him, as much as it negatively affects him and the rest of the healthy students.

Second Requirement: Rejecting all forms of discrimination based on sectarian and religious grounds to preserve the harmony of Omani society.

The Omani judiciary is committed to ensuring respect for all religions and sects and to rejecting all forms of discrimination based on sectarian affiliation, in accordance with the Basic Law of the State and other applicable laws. This commitment is evident in several rulings concerning the naming of mosques and prayer halls. The judiciary ensures that the names adopted by the administration do not violate laws and regulations and do not incite division among members of Omani society. Changing the name of a mosque or prayer hall could undermine the unity of the community and the harmony of citizens if the decision is not made with careful consideration and deliberation.

Article (4) of the regulations governing mosques and prayer halls stipulates that "the name of a mosque, prayer hall, or prayer room shall be chosen with the approval of the Ministry from a list prepared by it for this purpose, derived from the following: a) The Beautiful Names and Attributes of God. b) The names of the noble Companions and Followers. c) Virtues of deeds and morals. d) The names of prominent figures in the country, including rulers and scholars..." Article (5) stipulates that "a mosque, prayer hall, or prayer room may not be named with names that suggest sectarian or tribal connotations, or that are unbecoming of the status and sanctity of the mosque, prayer hall, or prayer room. The name of a mosque, prayer hall, or prayer room shall be approved or changed by a decision of the Minister or his designee."⁽¹¹⁾

In one of the cases brought before the Administrative Court in the Sultanate, the court clarified that the state, represented by the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, oversees mosques and prayer halls with the aim of supporting religious guidance, preserving national unity, and preventing manifestations of division and discrimination. "In this

(10): Regulations for Mosques and Congregational Mosques in the Sultanate of Oman issued by Ministerial Decision No. (955/2010).

(11): Appeal Case No. (49) of 17 Q.S., Session of 09/01/2017.

context, it is no wonder that His Majesty the Sultan – may God protect and preserve him – issued royal decrees to maintain the old names of mosques and prayer halls throughout the Sultanate without change. This is aimed at a higher interest worthy of attention: preserving public order and not disturbing the security and peace of citizens. This is to prevent pretexts for and to avoid inciting or fueling sedition and tribalism by changing the names of existing mosques, which have been known to the people since time immemorial. Maintaining the cohesion of the people, preventing division, and uniting citizens without discord and harmony among them necessitates preserving the old names of mosques as they are, without alteration”⁽¹²⁾.

In a similar case, the Administrative Court reiterated the same principles governing the organization and management of mosques in the Sultanate, emphasizing their role in religious guidance and the necessity for them to adhere to decisions issued by the relevant ministries. These ministries are responsible for making the necessary decisions for the proper functioning of mosques in a manner that benefits the country and its citizens. The Administrative Court therefore rejected an appeal filed by citizens regarding the formation of a mosque management and oversight committee due to their exclusion from membership. This rejection stemmed from the fact that the challenged decision was issued by the competent administrative authorities and falls within the discretionary power of the relevant ministry. Furthermore, the Administrative Court determined that jurisdiction over this dispute lies with the Sharia Court, in accordance with the law regulating mosques under the Ministry of Endowments. The court also emphasized that the legal framework for managing and administering mosques aims to protect them from sectarianism and division⁽¹³⁾.

This relevant ruling states, “It is established that the two contested decisions were issued by an administrative body (the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs) in accordance with the authority vested in it by laws and regulations, with the intention of organizing the management of mosques and community centers for non-Arabs by appointing a committee for this purpose, without the plaintiffs being among its members. This falls within the Ministry’s jurisdiction derived from Article (19) of the Mosques Regulations issued by Ministerial Decree

No. (360/2003), which authorizes the Ministry to supervise mosques, prayer halls, and other places of worship in the Sultanate, except for those exempted by law. The motivation behind this was to keep the houses of God and the interests of Muslims separate from sectarian disputes, with the aim of ensuring these mosques fulfill their religious role and the integrity of the conduct of those in charge of them.”

“And since the mosques were endowed and placed under the ownership of God Almighty, the Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, in his capacity as the general trustee over all endowments according to Article (19) of the Endowments Law issued by Royal Decree No. (65/2000),...” He exercised his legally mandated authority under this article when he assigned the management of the registered and the funeral councils in question to a committee formed for this purpose. Jurisdiction to review the decision made in this regard rests with the Sharia Court of the ordinary judiciary, pursuant to Article (4) of the same law, which stipulates that: “Sharia courts have jurisdiction to consider any dispute arising from the application of this law.”

In another case concerning the naming of mosques in ways that do not incite division or discrimination, the Administrative Court stated that “the administrative body cannot change the name of a mosque without an official decision from the competent minister or his designee, in accordance with the regulations specified in the Mosques and Congregational Mosques Bylaw. The court must verify the validity of the decision based on the available factual and legal evidence”⁽¹⁴⁾. Any error in the administrative documents regarding this name is not based on an explicit decision from the competent authority to change it. Rather, it falls under the category of material acts for which the right to rectify the error is ongoing, and the party concerned may renew their claim.”

Accordingly, the court did not overturn the decision to change the name, as long as it was issued in accordance with the required legal procedures. The court found, from the case file and the facts of the dispute, particularly the file of the mosque in question and the statements and testimonies of the residents, that its initial name was associated with the name of the eminent scholar Sheikh Jamil bin Khamis al-Saadi, as established in the appointment decree as the Mosque of the eminent scholar Sheikh Jamil bin

(12): First Instance Case No. (99) of 6 Q.S., Session of 19/12/2006.

(13): Appeal Case No. 255 of 13 Q.S. Session of April 16, 2013

(14): Appeal No. 81/2008, Sharia Supreme Court, Session of February 21, 2009

Khamis al-Saadi. Furthermore, there were testimonies from a number of sheikhs and prominent figures in the region confirming the mosque's previous name as the Mosque of the eminent scholar Sheikh Jamil bin Khamis al-Saadi, and the report submitted by the Ministry, which included testimonies from sheikhs and prominent figures of the region, corroborated this.

On the other hand, judicial rulings issued in personal status matters are not devoid of reliance on the principle of non-discrimination on sectarian and doctrinal grounds. This includes the ruling issued regarding a dispute over the division of inherited agricultural land. A dispute arose concerning the legal and doctrinal reference for the rules to be applied, and the appellants argued that Article (281/C) of the Personal Status Law obligates the judge to apply the most authoritative opinion within the school of thought. The deceased, and there is no room for interpretation given the clarity of this text. Therefore, the most authoritative opinion within the Ja'fari school of thought is the one that applies to this dispute. Article 251 must be read in conjunction with Article 253 of the aforementioned Personal Status Law⁽¹⁵⁾..

The respondent agreed to the division of the residential land and did not deny it. He referred to the details of the division, stating that the agricultural land that was sold should have been divided according to the Ja'fari school of thought. The opinion within this school rests with the scholars of their respective religious authorities, in accordance with the royal decree in a similar case, which stipulated that matters of inheritance are determined by the school of thought and belief.

The demands and arguments of both parties were considered, and following directives from His Excellency the Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, the names of the esteemed sheikhs were adopted as religious authorities for all Shi'a Muslims, "without assigning a specific authority to each sect, and leaving the Shi'a community free to refer to any authority they choose by mutual agreement, without discrimination or preference for one school of thought or authority over another." This confirms what is stated in Article (268) of the Personal Status Law, which is consistent with the fatwa of the school of thought. Al-Jaafari. However, in accordance with the provisions of Article (7) of the Administrative Court Law No. 29/1991,

(15): Appeal No. 782 of 14 Q.S., Session of November 18, 2014.

(16): See also the book "Legal Principles in Legal Affairs Fatwas for 2023" issued by the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, p. 15.

(17): On these general principles, see Reda Jneih, "Major Rulings in Administrative Judiciary," University Publishing Center, Tunis, Second Edition, 2022, p. 114.

(18): Appeal No. 138 of 12 Q.S., Session of May 28, 2012.

which stipulates that the courts lack jurisdiction to review royal decrees because they constitute special legislation that restricts general laws, the appeal was ultimately overturned, the case dismissed, and the judgment revoked and referred to a different panel.

In another decision issued by the Administrative Court, the court addressed issues related to avoiding sectarian and doctrinal strife in religious activities held in mosques. It ruled that the Friday sermon must maintain harmony and unity among the worshippers and adhere to the directives issued by the Ministry of Supervision regarding the sermon's content, refraining from addressing matters that could incite division and discrimination. This ruling was issued in connection with a case filed before the Administrative Court by a mosque imam who appealed the administrative decision transferring him from his position as imam to a ministry employee⁽¹⁶⁾.

Based on the fact that the plaintiff had been appointed as a mosque imam, a number of residents filed a complaint. He was penalized for failing to adhere to the sermons prepared by the Ministry during Friday prayers, for being absent from work and prayers without excuse for extended periods, and for inciting sectarian, racist, and takfiri (excommunication) sentiments. On September 11, 2012, he received a warning under Administrative Decision No. (2109/2012). As a result, he received a poor rating on his annual performance evaluation and was reassigned to the Ministry's headquarters for retraining and remediation.

In this regard, the Administrative Court reminded the court of the legal framework governing public service and the general legal⁽¹⁷⁾. principles under which this appeal falls. The relationship between a public employee and their employer, the relevant Ministry, is "organizational and hierarchical, governed by laws and regulations. The employee's legal status is subject to modification and change as required by the public interest and the proper functioning and management of the public service"⁽¹⁸⁾.. Accordingly, the administration may assign the employee to one position or transfer them from one location to another. "This employee does not have an acquired right to remain in a specific position or location; rather, the administrative authority has discretionary power in this matter." Assigning him to another position

or transferring him qualitatively or geographically, according to what it deems to be in the public interest and to ensure the proper functioning of the public facility and its regular and continuous operation.” The court adds that this power is not absolute, but rather “must be exercised within the limits of the law, with the aim of its use being to achieve the public interest and not another goal. If it deviates from this goal and targets another purpose, it is tainted by abuse and deviation from it and the procedures established for its use.” In that case, assignment or transfer turns into a disguised disciplinary penalty and becomes a tool for revenge and deterrence.

The Administrative Court upheld the legality of the administrative decision taken by the Ministry regarding the imam, the plaintiff, noting that it is established principle that “an employee may only be seconded temporarily to another position of the same grade or one immediately higher,” provided that the needs of the original position allow for such secondment and that the interests of the work necessitate filling the seconded position in this manner. The court further found that “the position to which the respondent was seconded is of the same grade as his original position, given that both positions belong to the same category (religious services), occupy the same third, fourth, fifth, or sixth grades, and are similar in the nature of the specialized tasks assigned to each. Furthermore, the occupant of each position is subject to the direct supervision of the head of the department in the relevant General Directorate.” Moreover, the respondent’s secondment was at his same grade and did not result in a demotion in his previous position.

On this basis, the court considered that the contested decision was issued with the aim of the public interest, since “the basis and objective of the administration in all the actions it takes and the decisions it issues always remain the pursuit of the public interest and the application of laws and regulations in response to the requirements of the public facility it is tasked with supervising.” Its goal in this is the public interest, both in purpose and subject matter. Therefore, the decisions it issues enjoy the presumption of validity and soundness until proven otherwise with certainty and with evidence and proof. This is a guarantee of the credibility of the administration and an elevation of its performance above suspicions.

Third Requirement: Avoiding manifestations of tribal, local, and regional bias to achieve peaceful coexistence in Omani society.

Omani courts have considered a number of cases that raised the issue of establishing public councils in accordance with the law and in a manner that does not affect the demographic and tribal balance in the relevant areas where multiple tribes are present. In this regard, the courts have focused on the obligation to prove manifestations of tribal bias resulting from construction and development. The courts do not accept mere claims lacking sufficient evidence of tribal or regional disputes and therefore accept the validity of administrative decisions as long as they meet the formal and substantive requirements recognized in jurisprudence and law, disregarding the unserious claims of the plaintiffs.

In this context, the Administrative Court ruled that real estate plans prepared by the Ministry of Housing and its affiliated departments are not subject to amendment or change except in cases where the public interest of citizens so requires. These plans are final upon their issuance and publication after following the necessary preparatory procedures, which take into account population distribution, demographics, and tribal affiliations. Therefore, it is impermissible to demand updates to urban plans for reasons related to tribal, local, or regional affiliations that do not fall within the objectives of the public interest of the concerned regions and areas.

As the court has clarified through established jurisprudence, the default assumption regarding data recorded in the land registry for each specific property unit is that it was accurate and that its owner acquired a specific legal status by virtue of the title deed issued to him. Therefore, “no change may be made to that data except by virtue of authenticated documents issued by the person authorized to dispose of the rights established in the registry, or by virtue of a final judgment or decision issued by an administrative authority with judicial jurisdiction. If it is proven that such a change was made to the title deed without a request from the owner supported by authentic documents, or without a final judgment or decision issued by the competent authority in this regard, then the decision to make the change was made in violation of the law.”

The appellants in this case submitted two memoranda explaining that the area’s plans include three officially recognized public councils bearing the same name, and that the land for their council

was granted to them according to legally established procedures. They argued that “the objection of some residents to this grant is unfounded, as it stems from tribal biases and not from a public interest.” They maintained that they do not need this council because they already have two others, and therefore their objection and the respondent ministry’s acceptance of it are contrary to the provisions of the law.

The respondent ministry replied to the appeal with a memorandum concluding with a request to dismiss the appeal and uphold the appealed judgment. The ministry asserted that the three councils mentioned by the appellants are located in three separate plans within the village, with one council in each plan. It further stated that “the purpose of changing the appellants’ council’s name was to prevent disputes and objections from residents who were concerned about the council’s name not being used for certain residents, but rather for the councils to bear the village’s name.”

In another similar case, it was stated that tribal tendencies should not affect the real estate division and equipping residential areas with public facilities and public councils for all tribes, despite their multiplicity in the regions and areas concerned with housing and equipping. If they exist, the plaintiffs must prove that a dispute has occurred on the basis of tribal fanaticism that actually affected the achievement of the public interest in a particular local region or area⁽¹⁹⁾.

Regarding the facts of the case, the plaintiffs’ lawyer stated that his clients reside in a town inhabited by more than forty tribes. When specialists from an electricity company were installing a transformer for the town, they were surprised to discover that the land designated for the transformer had become tribal property. They had already been issued a title deed for the land to establish a community council. Although the tribe in question is one of many residing in the village, the Ministry issued the title deed in the name of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman. Consequently, the defendant administrative body restricted construction and management to the members of the tribe in question, excluding the other residents of the town. This violates the Basic Law of the State, as the defendant disregarded the right of all town residents to consultation and participation, thus opening the door to tribalism by demanding that each tribe in the town have its own community council, similar to the council of the tribe in question.

This results in discrimination among the residents of the same town.

Furthermore, the residents of the town had already coordinated to establish a public council, as evidenced by official correspondence between officials at the Ministry of Housing. The plaintiffs proposed that the public council be overseen by a committee of town residents, which would foster “solidarity and compassion among citizens and strengthen national unity.”

The Administrative Court concluded, based on the laws applicable to the dispute, that “the legislature has approved the allocation of government land for public councils for the benefit of the residents of Al-Hillah and has entrusted the Ministry of Housing, as the body responsible for managing state-owned property, with the authority to verify the eligibility requirements for such allocation. These requirements primarily consist of a request submitted by the residents of Al-Hillah and approved by the governor of the province, and the absence of another council in that town.” Following this, a title deed is issued for the allocated land in the name of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman. Buildings and facilities erected on this land are to be owned by the residents of Al-Hillah, who bear the costs of their operation and maintenance. This is to be noted in the remarks section of the title deed.

However, in the present case, the court rejected the plaintiffs’ claims due to the lack of evidence regarding tribal prejudice and decided that what the lawyer of the respondents, who are residents of the area in question, claimed regarding the allocation of a public council for the benefit of the village causing inequality among citizens and discrimination among the people of the same area and fueling and exacerbating tribal prejudices “remained mere talk based on conjectures and expectations that have no basis in reality.” This is because every village has the right, if it meets the required conditions and the necessary land is available, to demand the allocation of a public council for its benefit, and that “the multiplicity of public councils is not necessarily a sign of division and separation among the people, but rather it is a way of providing them with more comfort, as it avoids crowding and traveling long distances. Moreover, the establishment of these councils is ultimately linked to the extent of the need for them,” regardless of whether it is unique to one village or multiple for a group of villages from the same area, as long as the aforementioned conditions are met, as is proven in the present case.

(19): Appeal No. 138 of 12 Q.S. Session of 28/05/2012

It can be concluded from the foregoing that the Omani judiciary, particularly the administrative judiciary⁽²⁰⁾, has established a comprehensive legal system that obligates administrative bodies to respect the principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence in order to preserve national unity against all forms and tendencies of division, discrimination, and tribalism, as stipulated in the Basic Law of the State and various other applicable laws. The courts require sufficient evidence and arguments demonstrating the actual occurrence of such incidents. They do not consider mere claims that may be presented by appellants under the pretext of acting in the public interest. The courts carefully examine the seriousness of the requests submitted in this regard before issuing their rulings, in accordance with the established practice in comparative jurisprudence and other legal systems that do not allow for the proliferation of phenomena that undermine the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Discussion

The effectiveness of Oman's tolerance framework is shown to be more than just constitutional guarantees and statutory laws. In terms of Library and Information Science (Olaisen, 1985), tolerance is manifested in the interconnection of legal information systems designed to facilitate the production, organization, dissemination, interpretation and governance of legal knowledge in legislative, judicial, educational, media and religious institutions. These information infrastructures make legal norms into institutional knowledge that influences the way that public administration and society works.

The Omani model is one of the main strengths in that the country has a comprehensive framework of laws and information. The combination of the constitutional provisions, the statutory laws, the ministerial regulations, the judicial decisions and the international legal commitments (Shetreet, 2009) allow for a coherent body of authoritative information that is constantly transmitting "rules of equality, non-discrimination and peaceful coexistence". The judicial system also contributes to this system by issuing precedent-setting information to clarify the uncertainty of the legislation and to ensure uniformity in interpretation. Likewise, ministries with education, media and religious responsibility act as institutional

information producers, for they spread information on legal matters via educational policies, regulatory communication and public awareness programs.

However, there are some challenges that need to be overcome. There is a limited amount of empirical evidence available to draw on to inform the public about awareness and use of legal information resources (Kusumawardani et al., 2021; Rossouw and Fourie, 2007; Togam and Jadhav, 2021). There are relatively few studies examining the effectiveness of citizens' and residents' access to legislative information, understanding of judicial decisions, and impact of institutional legal communication. Additionally, there is a lack of system in indicators related to information accessibility, legal transparency, digital legal literacy and inter-agency information sharing. Lack of comprehensive monitoring also hampers the assessment of the impact of the dissemination of legal information on public attitude towards tolerance and social cohesion.

The overall results of the study suggest that the legal information systems serve purposes much more comprehensively than mere document management. They represent strategic governance infrastructures to improve transparency, coordination of institutions, legal security and citizen trust. Digital legal information services, making information accessible, deepening public legal literacy and strengthening institutional information governance would also further boost the capacity of Oman to contribute to tolerance and peaceful co-existence through effective legal communication.

Conclusion

The findings reveal that the promotion of tolerance and peaceful co-existence in the Sultanate of Oman is not only guaranteed by the robust constitutional and legislative protections but also relies on the effectiveness of legal information systems. The interaction of legislative information, judicial decisions, ministerial regulations, educational policies, media governance, and religious administration forms an integrated legal information framework which facilitates transparency, public legal awareness and social cohesion. This study expands the discussion from constitutional law to the field of Library and Information Science, by viewing legislation and jurisprudence as legal information resources as

(20): Walid Farouk Juma, *Administrative Judiciary According to Omani Law*, University Book House, 2021; Issa Al-Rashidi, *Procedures for Implementing Administrative Judgments in the Sultanate of Oman and Their Practical Problems*, Al-Halabi Legal Publications, 2024.

opposed to legal authorities. The study shows how effective information governance improves institutional coordination, access to justice, public trust and promotes the translation of legal norms for tolerance to be communicated. Thus, the Omani experience shows that sustainable social cohesion can be achieved through the interplay of legal norms, judicial communication, information governance in institutions and ready access to legal information infrastructures. It offers an interdisciplinary approach to synergistic relationships between legal information management and inclusive governance and peaceful coexistence.

Implications

This study has both theoretical, practical and policy implications as it takes analysis of tolerance and peaceful co-existence beyond the traditional constitutional and administrative law, consistent with Library and Information Science. It is an idealized example that, in theory, shows that legal information systems, information governance and institutional communication are mechanisms which make it possible to turn legal norms into accessible information which could help in social cohesion. The study builds on previous research on legal information management and digital governance by conceptualizing legislation, judicial decisions, ministerial regulations and educational policies as legal information resources. Finally, the findings point to the need for strengthening institutional knowledge sharing, digital publication of legislation, judicial information systems and official legal databases to boost public legal awareness and access to justice in practice. Integrated legal information platforms may be used by government authorities, judicial bodies, educational bodies and media bodies to more effectively disseminate authoritative legal knowledge and foster a unified interpretation of the laws concerning tolerance. The study highlights the importance of policy investments in the development of digital legal infrastructure, transparency of information, interoperability between public institutions and legal literacy from an increase in public access to legal information. These measures can contribute to the improvement of institutional accountability, increase public confidence, enhance evidence-based decision making and support the function of legal information systems to foster tolerance, peaceful coexistence and sustainable social development in Oman.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study has limitations and opportunities for further research. First, analysis is largely qualitative, relying on an examination of legislation, judicial decisions and institutional documents and is not based on empirical evidence from citizens and public officials on how they use legal information resources. Future research should use survey or interview methods or mixed methods to measure public knowledge, accessibility, and use of digital legal information systems. Second, the study has limited its scope to the Sultanate of Oman and therefore might not be generalizable to other legal and institutional settings. Comparative studies among the gulf countries or other jurisdictions, to establish best practices in terms of digital access to justice and information governance, should be provided in future studies. Third, the study focuses on an evaluation of the institutional information frameworks in a conceptual sense and does not quantify the functioning of the digital legal platforms by means of measurable performance indicators. Future research should test measurable indicators of official legal databases, judicial information systems, legal information accessibility, digital legal literacy and institutional transparency, to offer more solid data on how to improve information governance and promote tolerance via legal information systems.

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1. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
2. Arab Charter on Human Rights

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Law on the Care and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities No. (63/2008)
Child Law No. (22/2014)
Omani Personal Status Law No. 32/1997
Media Law No. 58/2024
6. Publications and Publishing Law No. 49/1984
School Education Law of 2023
Omani Penal Code No. 7/2018
Endowments Law issued by Royal Decree No. (65/2000)
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