

CAN SILENCE BE A SOURCE IN HISTORY?

A MIZĀJ PURSI OF THE FORGOTTEN LIVES OF SIX INDIAN MUSLIM HISTORICAL FEMALE FIGURINES

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ABSTRACT

This chapter aims to document and critically engage with the political contributions of Indian Muslim women, who have frequently been overlooked in conventional historiography. There is extremely little evidence-based research on the lives of women and absolutely no autoethnographic evidence. The chapter chronicles the lives and legacies of figures such as Anees Fatima, Nishatunnisa Mohani, Abadi Bano Begum (Bi Amma), Begum Hazrat Mahal, Anis Kidwai, and Zubaida Daoodi from the 1857 First War of Independence to the aftermath of Partition. The chapter examines the absence of structured archives and provides an interpretive historiographical intervention utilizing oral histories, legislative records, and feminist reinterpretations of nationalist myths.

Keywords: Feminist Historiography, Muslim Women, Archival Research, Feminist Research, Indian National Movement

HOW TO NAVIGATE THE CHAPTER?

The chapter begins by examining the historiographical silence surrounding Indian Muslim women's participation in the anti-colonial movement. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of gender, religion, and resistance within the larger context of Indian nationalist movements. The lack of extensive archives has resulted in the erasure of these women from mainstream historical narratives; therefore, the chapter suggests a reconstructive feminist historiography based on oral histories, parliamentary documents, and reinterpretations of nationalist speeches.

The chapter's first historical anchor is the 1857 Rebellion, which features Begum Hazrat Mahal as a major player. As Awadh's regent, she spearheaded military resistance against the British, recognised her son as the true monarch, and defended Lucknow until her flight. Her leadership represents the start of a lineage of Muslim women who have taken up weapons or spoken out against imperialism. The chapter discusses the lives of 6 Indian Muslim historical female figures and examines their contribution to creating Bloom's taxonomy. With the advent of mass politics in the early twentieth century, the chapter investigates the political and rhetorical contributions of women such as Abadi Bano Begum (Bi Amma), who broke purdah to support the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation Movements publicly. Along with her, personalities like Nishatunnisa Mohani participated in the Swadeshi movement and advocated for political education among Muslim women. Zubaida

THIS IS A LIMITED PREVIEW OF THE CHAPTER.

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