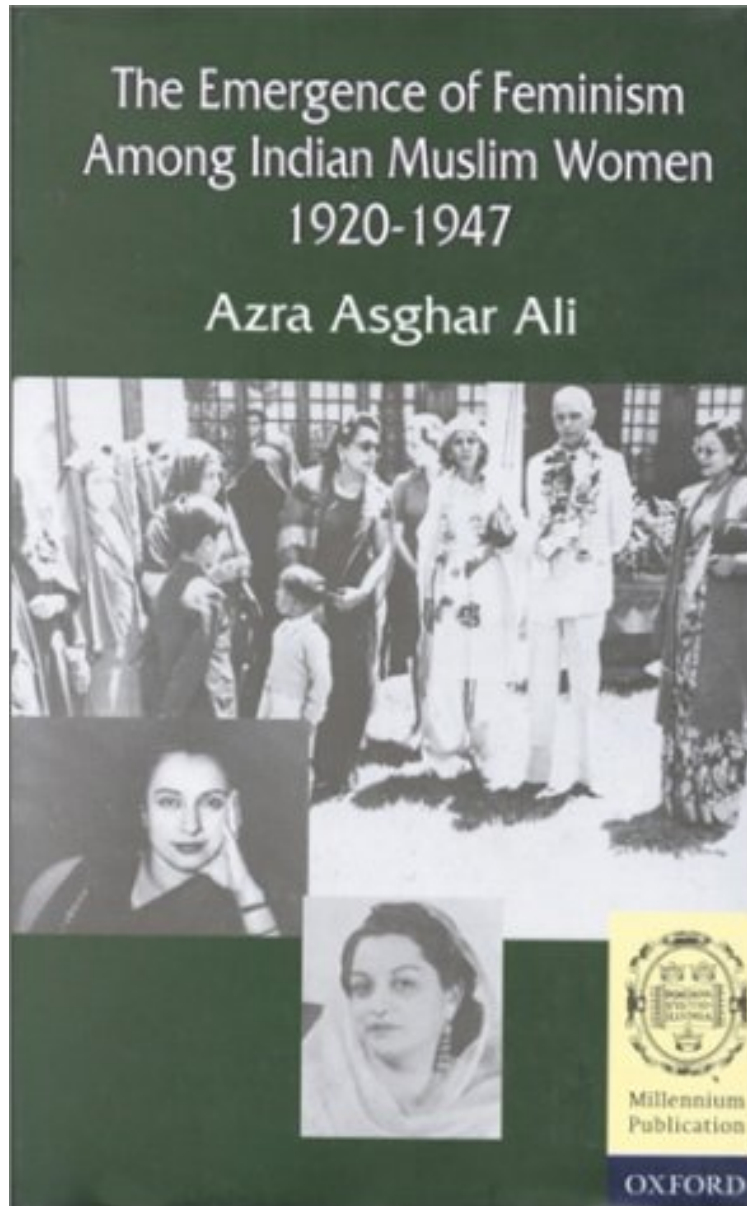


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# The Emergence of Feminism among Indian Muslim Women 1920-1947

*Azra Asghar Ali*

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**Azra Asghar Ali : The Emergence of Feminism among Indian Muslim Women 1920-1947** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Emergence of Feminism among Indian Muslim Women 1920-1947:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. First book ever written on this subject. By Dr. Anjum Jalal FRCS FCPS For an average western reader feminism and Islam are nearly antagonist concepts. A deeper look into the issue of feminism would reveal that women have been denied of their fundamental rights more often for political and social reasons than religious. In fact, the idea of equality of female sex could only emerge in societies which had reached a certain level of intellectual and social maturity. Perhaps for this very reason the emergence of feminism in Indian Muslims had essentially parallel course with the struggle for political freedom from British rule. In this book Azra Asghar Ali has very scholarly covered the most eventful part of the history of feminism amongst Muslim women in India. From 1920 to 1947, there was rapidly developing consciousness among enlightened Muslims of India that colonial rule is destined to end and it would lead to a never ending socio-economic dependence of minorities under politically more advanced Hindu community. To save their identity as a nation, the Muslim elite groups waged a so called 'holy war' on many fronts. Since this struggle involved active participation of women in political activities, it was considered rather unholy by the more regressive sections of Muslim community. The women thus had to fight on two different fronts simultaneously. Firstly, they had to support their men in struggle for freedom and secondly they had to make sure that their own role in defining the shape of society continues after the political freedom is achieved. As we are told by Dr. Ali, Muslim women safeguarded their position as individuals by identifying 'spaces' in public sphere where they can play an effective role. Majority of these pioneering women came from educated elite families and enjoyed the support and encouragement of their male family members in this uphill task. It, therefore transpires very clearly that the emergence of feminism amongst Muslim women was not a struggle between religious and secular groups. It was indeed a struggle between enlightened and the ignorant segments of a predominantly illiterate and misguided society. A society which was prematurely hustled to the cross-roads of western modernism and traditional conservatism. Although the style of this book is that of a research thesis, it provides very interesting overview for the readers of history in general and as stated by Prof. Francis Robinson, this book is indeed a pioneering work on this subject. It is most comprehensive, unbiased and highly scrupulous piece of research work. No one can develop a proper insight in the development of modern Muslim woman of subcontinent without reading this book. This book does not cover the period after 1947 when Pakistan was created as a separate Muslim country, which had a chequered record of weak democracy as well as poor human rights. However, one can imagine the impact of silent as well as overt feminist movements in this society by recognising just one paradoxical political fact that this country enjoys the honour of electing a female Prime Minister first time ever in the entire Muslim world. The post independence history of feminism in this country is therefore, equally interesting and eventful and we can duly request Dr. Azra Ali to oblige us with another scholarly and comprehensive discourse on this period as well as.

This book highlights the diverse efforts made by a wide range of groups--the government, Christian missionaries, social reformers, and the women themselves--to bring about the emancipation of Muslim women in India. It looks closely at changes in education and in medical care, particularly at government-sponsored programs to improve maternal health. It also details the struggle of women to win the right to vote. The book is based on primary archival research, making it an invaluable resource for students of women's history and of the history of British India.

About the Author Azra Asghar Ali is at Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan.