



## RETRIEVING THE SILENT VOICES: A STUDY OF MUHAMMADI BEGUM'S WRITINGS

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### Abstract

Muhammadi Begum, the doyen of Urdu women print culture, ironically has not found a deserving place in the existing gender literature on South Asia. A possible reason given in mainstream narratives would make us believe the animated domination of male reformists (especially of the Ashraf class) in existing gender history, which privileged them to lay absolute claim to the growth and development of feminist consciousness. Thus, they left nothing for women to celebrate of their own success and hijacked their agency as well. This paper is a humble attempt to retrieve the silence and invisibility of the assertive Muslim women of colonial times, by focusing on the writings of Muhammadi Begum. Her assertion and consciousness, and at the same time 'compromises' with existing social structures, are the focus of this paper.

### Keywords

Women's journals, Urdu print literature, social reforms, Indian Muslim women, under-age marriages