

The working title for my dissertation which is advised by Prof. Muhammad Qasim Zaman is "Muslim associations in colonial Punjab and the creation of an Urdu public sphere". In my thesis, I plan to focus on so-called Anjumans, Muslim voluntary organizations that advocated social and educational reforms. Through their meetings and publications which were modeled on British patterns, these societies created a platform to discuss ideas of Muslim intellectuals such as Sayyid Ahmad Khan or Muhammad Iqbal in a local context. My research aims at establishing how these societies shaped political, social, and cultural discourses in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Punjab and in what way they contributed to the creation of an Urdu public sphere. I am interested to see how broader ideas discussed on an India-wide level played out in the particular context of the Punjab province. Modern means of communication such as the printing press, vernacular newspapers, and pamphlet literature played an important role in the creation of an audience for such debates. Accordingly, my research will mainly draw on the meeting minutes and annual reports published by the various Anjumans, but also on pamphlets, tracts, Urdu newspapers, posters, dime novels, and leaflets. This summer, I am planning to conduct research at the Punjab Public Library, Quaid-e Azam Library, Punjab University Library, Dyal Singh Trust Library, the Library at the Oriental College, Forman Christian College Library, all of which are in Lahore. Through initial visits, I want to gain an overview of the various archival collections and begin collecting relevant source material for my thesis. This will lay the groundwork for further archival research at the National Archives of India, the Nehru Memorial Library in Delhi, the British Library in London. During past visits to Lahore, I was able to establish contacts with the directors at some of the institutions, which will help me to facilitate access to their archival holdings. In the past four years, I have also studied Urdu up to an advanced level, and Persian at the beginner's level to prepare myself for the thesis research. My advisor, Prof. Qasim Zaman, supports my summer research plans.