

NEGOTIATION BETWEEN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC IN WOMEN'S PERIODICAL PRESS IN EARLY-20TH CENTURY PUNJAB

Arti Minocha

Associate Professor, Department of English, Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi University, Delhi, India

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ABSTRACT

The essay undertakes a study of the nascent print and public spheres in late-19th and early-20th century Punjab and examines women's claims to subjectivity and their negotiation with colonial and reform discourses through the periodical press of the times. In Punjab, discursive battles for affirmation of religious identities at this time were also fought over women's bodies, their practices, and their relationship to the public sphere. Women are assumed to have been contained within these reform discourses that defined appropriate modernity for them. As a counter to this assumption, this essay examines the participation of women in the burgeoning print and public spheres of late-colonial Punjab and the ways in which the periodical press mediated their understanding of the self as part of the public. The essay questions the rather stable idea of the public/private divide through an examination of women's responses in the periodical press of the times, specifically through the study of two periodicals – Punjabi Bhain in Punjabi and Bharat Bhagini in Hindi

KEYWORDS: *Print Sphere, Women's Periodicals, Colonial Punjab, Private/Public, Reform Movements in Colonial Punjab*