The history of the Indian independence is a very long and interesting saga. But unfortunately, it hardly includes any chapters to admonish that Indian Muslims have ever taken part in the anti-colonial struggle as a group. Whatever, Muslim participation happened was on individual basis. Is this really true? Did the Muslims really shy away from anti-colonial struggle? Were they never interested in the liberation of the country? These mind-provoking questions forced me to undertake the research along with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad as a case study.

The topic refers to anti-colonial movement and participation of Muslims in which I have to put forth all those organizations which came together under one umbrella to fight against the British imperialism. The roles which were played by Fakirs and Sannyasis, Wahabi and Faraizis, Indian National Congress, the All India Muslim League, the Ahrar League, the Khaksar, the Red Shirt, the Ghadar Party, INA, the Krishak Praja Party, the National Unity Conference, the Unionist Party etc. and the different personalities such as Mohammed Ali, Shaukat Ali, Maulana Hasrat Mohani, M. A. Ansari, Rafi Ahmed Qidwai, Fazl-i-Husain, Fazl-ul Haq, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Shah Nawaz, Asaf Ali, Abul Kalam Azad, etc. at different levels who individually and collectively fought against the British colonialism.

In this research work, the Muslim leaders are not being idolised but a critical and analytical study of their roles is made. Instead of showing the weaknesses of the Muslim leaders in their personal lives, my work will deal with the progressive and active involvement of these leaders in the anti-colonial movement based on the principle of unity. The emphasis will be on the participation of the Muslims and not the separatist tendencies which led to the partition of the country.

Some of the important books that I have gone through are as under:
This book is believed to be an autobiography of the author, dictated to Humayun Kabir in Urdu. Mr. Kabir, who had already served him as his secretary and was a renowned writer of English and Bengali, translated his dictations to English and published it after his death. This book illustrates the events of the colonial period revolving around the life history of Abul Kalam Azad.

In this book, the author had dealt with the topic impartially, showing even the faults of the leaders. She also illustrates the reasons of disparity between the leaders, which eventually led to the creation of two new nations out of this subcontinent.

This national leader’s autobiography was written in Urdu – *Hindustani Muslim Siyasat Par Ek Nazar*, Bombay, 1959. Jawed Ashraf later translated it in 2001 into English. This leader being a communist has presented a socialistic history of the colonial period. The leader himself has accompanied Jawaharlal Nehru in many of latter’s election campaigns.

Mushir-ul-Hasan has struck my imagination by his numerous works on the Muslim politics in the colonial period. In this book, he has penned about six chapters on various issues ranging from the Khilafat Movement to the communal division. This book contains valuable informations on the Khilafat Movement, the partition of Bengal and communalism by as many as fifteen authors – all of whom are by themselves renowned Readers and Professors in their respective Universities.

This book gives valuable information on the role of Muslims in the freedom movement. The author also speaks liberally the causes and need of the Muslim
separatism in the anti-colonial movement. Covering from the Revolt of 1857, the author deals with the spirit of nationalism among the Muslims which led them to wage anti-colonial movement facing all the brutalities and atrocities of the British government.


This work comprises of the socio-economic conditions prevalent in the colonial era and in the post-colonial India for a Muslim. Only the first three chapters of the book are useful and relevant for my research work. These three chapters deal with the history of anti-colonial movement. He has elaborated the social impulsions, which led to the formation of the All India Muslim League. The details of the course of the anti-colonial movement given by this author are very precious as he points out the socio-economic conditions along with the political framework.

Till now only a few handful works have been done so far as the participation and the contribution of the Muslims to the anti-colonial movement are concerned. The Muslims participating in the anti-colonial movement and giving leaderships to both violent and non-violent movements with the other communities are rarely available. In this research an effort is made to dig out the names of the Muslims who actively participated in both revolutionary and non-violent movements. And how these movements helped to unify all the communities in India and abroad to fight against the British imperialism. As a whole, through this research I wish to strengthen the concept of nationalism, secularism and democracy.

I have divided the thesis into six chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the historical background. It discusses briefly about the causes of decline of the Mughal Empire. The establishment of the British Empire in India and the revolts of Fakirs, Wahabis and Faraizis against the British colonialism which later on culminated into the revolt of 1857. It also deals with the appeasing policy of British with the Muslim community and the emergence of Sir
Syed Ahmed Khan and the Aligarh Movement. Thereafter, the participation of Muslims in the mainstream of the national movement has been dealt.

Chapter 2 gives an account of Khilafat Movement and the emergence of Gandhi with his joint scheme of non-Cooperation and Khilafat movements to give a common blow to the British government.

Chapter 3 deals with the efforts of bringing unity between the two major communities of India. After withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement and the abolition of the Khilafat a spirit of frustration developed leading to disastrous Hindu-Muslim riots. It was against this background that the question of the future constitutional framework of India was made.

Chapter 4 discusses about the Provincial Elections of 1937 and its effects. This chapter cover the period up to the Quit India Movement. It also narrates the participation of Muslims in this movement.

Chapter 5 gives an account of all those talks, proposals, pacts, plans and incidents which ultimately led to the transfer of power from the colonial rulers to the Indian hands.

Chapter 6 is fully devoted to the life and role of Maulana Azad during the freedom struggle against colonial power and thereafter.

During my research I have consulted the primary and secondary sources from the following libraries: National Archives of India, New Delhi; Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi; JNU Library, New Delhi; Zakir Husain Library, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi; Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Library, AMU, Aligarh.