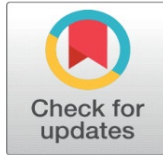


# HISTORICAL NARRATIVES IN MOHAMMAD UD DIN FAUQ TAREEKH-E-AQWAM-E-POONCH: A CRITICAL STUDY

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## ABSTRACT

Munshi Mohammaduddin Fauq, born in February 1877 in Kotli Har Narain, Sialkot district, emerged as a key figure in Kashmiri journalism and literature. He passed away in Lahore on September 14, 1935. His father, Ladha Khan, was a government employee in Poonch, Kashmir, who determined Fauq's early connection to the region. Initially adopting the pen name "Shook" for his poetry, he faced a crucial moment when the Lucknow based magazine *Intakhab* rejected his submissions due to the popularity of another poet named Shook Azim Abadi, prompting him to adopt the surname "Fauq." His educational journey began in Jagdish, Sialkot district. He then studied middle school from AD.1891 to 1894, after which he left formal education to pursue government service. In 1894, he moved to Sialkot under his uncle Fatehuddin guidance to learn the Patwar profession, a family tradition. He simultaneously engaged with literary figures like Munshi Rahim Baksh, Ramz Marhum, and Munshi Mohammad Ismail, who nurtured his poetic aspirations.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Munshi Mohammaduddin Fauq, born in February 1877 in *Kotli Har Narain*, Sialkot district, emerged as a key figure in Kashmiri journalism and literature. He passed away in Lahore on September 14, 1935.<sup>1</sup> His father, Ladha Khan, was a government employee in *Poonch*, Kashmir, who determined Fauq's early connection to the region.<sup>2</sup> Initially adopting the pen name "*Shook*" for his poetry, he faced a crucial moment when the *Lucknow* based magazine *Intakhab* rejected his submissions due to the popularity of another poet named Shook Azim Abadi, prompting him to adopt the surname "*Fauq*."<sup>3</sup> His educational journey began in *Jagdish*, Sialkot district. He then studied middle school from AD.1891 to 1894, after which he left formal education to pursue government service.<sup>4</sup> In 1894, he moved to Sialkot under his uncle

<sup>1</sup> Abdullah Qureshi, *Sargozasht-e-Fauq*, (Unpublished Document), National Archives of India, Delhi, p.7

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 11

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.14

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, pp. 17-18

Fatehuddin guidance to learn the *Patwar* profession, a family tradition. He simultaneously engaged with literary figures like Munshi Rahim Baksh, Ramz Marhum, and Munshi Mohammad Ismail, who nurtured his poetic aspirations.<sup>5</sup>

After a brief period in Jammu working for Sardar Hari Singh and forming a mentorship with poet Qazi Fakir Ali, Fauq moved to Lahore in 1896, joining the *Paisa* newspaper and laying the groundwork for his journalistic career.<sup>6</sup> In 1901, he started *Panja-e-Faulad*, Kashmir's first newspaper focusing on regional issues, though it stopped in 1906.<sup>7</sup> Concurrently, he edited the *Kashmiri Gazette* until 1905 and contributed to *Kashmiri Makhzan*, a publication by Khawaja Kamaluddin.<sup>8</sup> In 1906, the launch of *Kashmiri Magazine* marked a turning point in his life, achieving a circulation of 2,800 in a few days and resonating across Kashmir, Jammu, *Ladakh*, and *Poonch* regions before evolving into *Akhbar-e-Kashmiri* in 1913, which operated until 1933 and addressed historical, political, and social subjects.<sup>9</sup> Fauq's publishing ventures expanded with *Tarikat* (1914), *Nizam* (February 1919), and *Rahnuma-e-Kashmir*, while Allama Brij Mohan Dataria recognized him as the final editor of *Akhbar-e-Kohinoor*.<sup>10</sup>

A devoted advocate for press freedom, Fauq's 1905 petition to Raja Amar Singh to establish a Kashmiri newspaper was rejected. This rejection reflected the Dogra regime's restrictive Press Regulations Act, which barred local newspapers until 1924.<sup>11</sup> Despite these challenges, he mentored generations of journalists, including Chowdhary Rehmat Ali, Nazish Baduani, Dr. Ashiq Hussain Batalvi, and Mohammad Hanif, who founded influential publications like *Siyasat*, *Adbi Duniya*, and *Khyal*. His office became a hub for knowledge exchange, nurturing figures such as Master Mohammad Bakash and Babu Mohammad Din Rasheed, whose contributions to journals like *Cooperation* and *Ahmed Sehrai* highlighted Fauq's enduring impact on Kashmiri media.<sup>12</sup>

Munshi Mohammaddin Fauq's literary and historical contributions demonstrate his extraordinary intellect and self-driven scholarship despite his lack of formal academic training. Fauq authored over 100 books in Urdu and Persian and approximately 400 articles published in newspapers, covering subjects as diverse as the history of Jammu and Kashmir, biographical accounts of historical figures, Islamic culture, and comic works.<sup>13</sup> His lack of formal education beyond middle school, which he discontinued in 1894 to pursue government employment, did not obstruct his intellectual curiosity. Instead, he became an insatiable reader of historical manuscripts and books, transforming himself into a self-taught scholar whose works remain crucial for understanding the region's history. As Ratan Lal Hangloo notes, "Fauq wrote 112 books on different subjects," an overwhelming output that emphasizes his dedication to documenting Kashmir's culture and history.<sup>14</sup>

Fauq's approach to writing uniquely blended history and biography, a methodology he employed to elevate his subjects into legendary figures. He worked "as a historian in the guise of a biographer and, conversely, as a biographer in the guise of a historian," often emphasizing achievements while omitting flaws to craft narratives of heroic stature.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, pp. 22-24

<sup>6</sup> Khalid Bashir, *Aftab aur Srinagar Times, Kashmir Mai Urdu Sahafat Kay Sange Meal*, Qasmi Qutub Khana, Jammu, 2013, p. 42

<sup>7</sup> Muhiuddin Sofi, *Jammu Kashmir Mai Urdu Sahafat*, Gulshan Books, Srinagar, 1973, pp. 33-32

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 39

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pp. 45-46

<sup>10</sup> Muhiuddin Sofi, *Jammu Kashmir Mai Urdu Sahafat*, p. 50

<sup>11</sup> Khalid Bashir, *Aftab aur Srinagar Times, Kashmir Mai Urdu Sahafat Kay Sange Meal*, p. 53

<sup>12</sup> Muhiuddin Sofi, *Jammu Kashmir Mai Urdu Sahafat*, p. 22

<sup>13</sup> Mohammad Ajmal Niyazi, *Mohammad Ud Din Fauq*, Muqtadra Qaumi Zaban, Islamabad, 1987, p.12

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 14

<sup>15</sup> \* In most of his works, particularly in *Tareekh-e-Aqwaam Poonch*, the author adopts a biographical approach, selecting a central personality and discussing all aspects connected to that individual; for example, if the person held an administrative role, the author not only explores the individual's life but also examines the broader administrative conditions of the region. Thus, his writing style is notably centered around personalities,

This technique aligns with Thomas Carlyle's assertion that "the history of the world is but the biography of great men."<sup>16</sup> For instance, in works like *Tarikh-i-Badshahi*, a detailed account of Sultan Zain ul Abidin's reign, Fauq precisely chronicled the ruler's contributions to Kashmir's economic, social, and cultural zenith, earning a monetary award of 1,000 rupees from the Royal Book Society of Lahore for its scholarly rigor.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, his *Geography of Poonch* intertwined historical monuments with regional folklore, ensuring that "historical memories" remained central to understanding the landscape.

Another work of Fauq *Tarikh-i-Shalimar* detailed the Shalimar Gardens' historical significance and earned him 500 rupees, reflecting his dual focus on regional and urban histories.<sup>18</sup> His biographical writings followed a structured research approach: they began with a subject's background, analysed their works through personal observations, and concluded with an assessment of their literary or political impact.

## 2. TAREEKH-E-AQWAM POONCH

The book *Tareekh-e-Aqwam Poonch* was authored by Mohammaduddin Fauq and published by Zaffar Brothers, *Tajiran Kutab*, Lahore, in the year 1936,<sup>19</sup> Following the earlier publication of *Tareekh-e-Kashmir*. In 1931, Fauq announced plans to publish both *Tareekh-e-Kashmir* and *Tareekh-e-Aqwam Poonch* together.<sup>20</sup> However, the release of the two volumes was delayed for several reasons. Fauq's work on the history of *Poonch* aims to fill a significant gap in the historical literature, as no comprehensive account of the region's history had been published before. While previous historical works such as *Rajtarangini*, *Gulabnama*, *Tabaqat-e-Akbari*, *Tareekh-e-Farishta*, *Tareekh Tazkara-e-Be Masal*, and *Tazkara Rajghana-e-Rajouri* offer glimpses of Poonch's past, they do not provide a complete and thorough account.

## 3. METHODOLOGY AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOURCES:

Fauq draws from Persian and Urdu sources in his work, though he often refers to them without providing specific names. For instance, while he quotes *Tareekh-e-Rajghana-e-Rajouri*, he does not mention the author of this text. Fauq references his sources in his writing using general terms, such as "historians say,"<sup>21</sup> or "it is written in history,"<sup>22</sup> rather than offering detailed citations. Additionally, he mentions a person named Iqbal<sup>23</sup>. However, it remains unclear whether he is referring to the renowned poet and philosopher Allama Iqbal or another individual, possibly Mirza Iqbal, a historian from Lahore. Of the other indigenous sources, he relates to *Rajtarangini*.<sup>24</sup> He also refers to studying coins, temples, inscriptions, and other related materials, including verbal information. He claims he wrote based on the facts and was not concerned with anybody's faith and belief. He believes that history and religious beliefs are two different fields of study and should not be mixed up.<sup>25</sup>

Fauq has adopted a straightforward style in his writing, intentionally keeping the language modest and avoiding any unnecessary accompaniments. In the preface of his *Tareekh-e-Aqwam Poonch* book, he describes his primary purpose: writing about *Poonch*'s history. He declares his acceptance of the difficulties he encountered finding authentic historical sources. Throughout his account, the author consistently defines specific words to enable readers with different levels of education to understand his content easily. The author uses straightforward language that makes his work simple to

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Carlyle, *Heroes, Hero-worship and Hero*, London, (1965). P.27

<sup>17</sup> Mohammad Ajmal Niyazi, *Mohammad Ud Din Fauq*, p. 19

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 20

<sup>19</sup> Mohammaduddin Fauq, *Tareekh-e-Aqwam-e-Poonch*, Zaffar Brothers, Lahore, 1936, p.3

<sup>20</sup> Abdullah Qureshi, *Sargozasht-e-Fauq*, p. 41

<sup>21</sup> Mohammaduddin Fauq, *Tareekh-e-Aqwam-e-Poonch*, p. 91

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 141

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 231

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 22

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 34

comprehend but maintains the complexity of historical research. Through his method, the text satisfies readers who want a simple connection to history alongside scholars looking for in-depth academic insights.

#### 4. CONTENTS

Fauq's book presents a chapterised account spanning 778 pages and is divided into 10 distinct chapters. Each chapter is subdivided into sections, focusing on a particular topic, allowing for a clear and organized structure. While Fauq does not use footnotes, he consciously includes specific dates for the events he describes. He provides engaging sections throughout his text, using phrases such as "as described in the earlier chapter."<sup>26</sup> along with "as mentioned above."<sup>27</sup> Moreover, "it is not necessary to write in detail."<sup>28</sup> to establish connections between text sections. Throughout the text, Fauq refrains from providing personal evaluations or interpretations. The author focuses exclusively on showing sets of facts through exact details about when rulers assumed power and when they died, together with other noteworthy political occurrences.

Despite the thoroughness of these details, Fauq's approach tends to present a generalized picture of historical events. The informational arrangement of the story provides basic information but fails to establish comprehensive relationships between significant historical events. The narrative fails to provide an extensive analytic structure that explains the historical relationships between numerous events. The author selects specific events he prefers while maintaining a bias toward incidents fitting his argument. Although the book delivers important historical insights on some selected events, it does not follow a method that supports complete historical research examination. Organized without adequate relationships between historical occurrences leads to restricted capabilities in presenting an extensive regional historical comprehension in the book.

The book begins with a preface. It then probes into the high-ranking officials of the Poonch government during that time. The district court session judge Chowdhary Nayaz Ahmed takes the initial place.<sup>29</sup> The following section focuses on Raja Mohammad Sardar Khan and analyses his important work in revenue policy development. Under his control, Poonch received enduring institutional improvements.<sup>30</sup> The discussion concludes by examining Khan Bahadur Sardar Mohammad Ashraf because he is recognized as a prominent, influential personality who made significant development contributions in Poonch.<sup>31</sup>

The first chapter provides a detailed account of the rulers of *Poonch*, tracing their family lineage that governed the region for many generations. It offers insightful political information, covering various affairs such as court intrigues, diplomacy, political moves, military expeditions, wars and battles, and the transfers and postings of administrative officials within *Poonch*. The author's explanations of court behavior and ceremonial customs deepen the political narrative while presenting a living view of regional traditions.<sup>32</sup> The historical overview of *Poonch* provides insights into its land's geography, as well as information about the habits of local communities, their religious beliefs, and the religious approaches of each successive ruler.<sup>33</sup> The author combines political records with cultural understanding to establish a foundation for readers to understand Poonch's diverse historical story better.

The second chapter provides a detailed account of the *Saadat*, beginning with a comprehensive definition and explanation of the term '*Saadat*' itself. It extensively covers the diverse branches of *Saadat*, including the *Saadat Qadria Gilaniya Khankah*, *Saadat Jafaria Naqvi-ul-Najari*, *Saadat* of the Saharan region, and the *Saadat Qadria-e-Qadirabadi*. The author highlights their activities; the *Saadat* promoted religious responsibilities and moral duties to their followers and

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 211

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 356

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 397

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, pp. 6-7

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, pp. 13-14

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, pp. 21-22

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 41

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, pp. 51-52

community members. Their strong religious commitment merged with academic dedication, bringing people from Muslim and non-Muslim families to join their order, which reshaped the region's social and cultural environment. The *Saadat* produced distinguished scholars who were excellent at reading and writing Persian Punjabi and Urdu. To this legacy, future generations accord appreciation because the *Saadat* used their spiritual guidance to promote intellectual growth, harmony and intercultural dialogue within the region.

The third chapter delivers important data concerning the *Quraysh*, though it highlights their historical supremacy and social stature. A general appreciation of the *Quraysh* opens the section by praising this important social group. The chapter then discusses several distinguished families within the *Quraysh* community, such as the *Khokar Qutab Shahi*, *Danyial Alvi Quraysh*, *Quraysh Siddique*, and *Quraysh Hashmi* families.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, the author explores the lineage of the family of *Qazi Faqir Mohammad Qureshi* and the *Quraysh* families of the *Kalali* and *Chowdhary* regions. Fauq delivers in-depth details about the service and support given by *Quraysh* families in *Poonch* during administration.<sup>35</sup>

He praises the *Quraysh* members who played key roles in governance, recognizing their influence and respect within the community. Fauq also emphasizes ordinary people's deep respect for the *Quraysh*, particularly during religious programs and ceremonies. According to Fauq, the common population deeply respected and admired the *Quraysh* during religious festivals, sacred programs, and ceremonies.<sup>36</sup> People regularly invited *Quraysh* members to such gatherings because they wanted their blessings and prayers, which demonstrated their high status in their religious and social lives.

The book's fourth and fifth chapters analyze the dominating roles of Afghans and Rajputs in *Poonch*'s administrative system. The author presents a complete record of distinguished Rajput and Afghan families that functioned as state administrators and possessed noble ranks within the administrative framework.<sup>37</sup> The *author's historical account includes the Afridi Afghans* and the *Bhatti Rajputs*, along with other clans, and their part in the movement of *Poonch* through the processes of social and political development. Throughout this chapter, the author examines the genealogical history and function of these families in society and utilizes genealogical tables to show different Rajput tribes living in the area by tracing them through their lineage.<sup>38</sup> According to the account, some *Zamindar Bhar Rajputs* from *Poonch* converted to Islam and became *Bhatti* families.<sup>39</sup> These cultural and religious changes across the region demonstrate how these families are becoming part of *Poonch*'s social structures.

In the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters, the author provides the historical background of different areas in the district through their cultural development. He highlights the region's significant presence of groups such as the *Khans*, *Sheikhs*, and *Mughals*. The author describes the castes and their sub-castes, often commenting on their customs, especially their marriage practices.<sup>40</sup> He also discusses the characteristics of the people, such as whether they were hardworking and laborious.<sup>41</sup> Fauq analysis provides detailed information regarding each caste, including marriage regulations concerning inter-caste couples. Here, he investigates the regional Muslim society through an extended review of *Khan's* identity.<sup>42</sup> Fauq provides an incomplete analysis of this society and multiple confusing points about its subject matter.

Chapter Nine details numerous well-known families through their descriptions, including the Sayed Ahmed Khan family and the Fateh Ali Khan family.<sup>43</sup> In the tenth chapter, the focus shifts to the administrative arrangements and the rights of various *Jagirdars* and *Zamindars*. Revenue collection begins with an examination of sources and methods and successive presentations of collection timing along with village classification. The chapter explains both the inheritance

<sup>34</sup>Ibid, pp. 67-68

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 78

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 84

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, pp. 86-87

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, pp. 104-105

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, pp. 130- 131

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 251

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 301

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, pp. 358-359

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 451



rights of *Zamindars* and the landlord and resident rights of the peasantry. Fauq investigates *the zamindar-peasant* relation through a salary structure. The rights of *Zamindars* regarding orchards, *jungles*, and pasture areas are clearly explained to demonstrate their dominance over agricultural resources.<sup>44</sup> He also addresses agricultural labor wages by discussing wage rates that pertain to land preparation and plowing activities.

The extensive examination provides comprehensive knowledge about the regional financial organization and the social-economic interactions between regional landowner classes and farming communities. As an important resource, the chapter includes vital information about the complex land ownership system and administrative and legal frameworks that formed the basis of elite and working-class life in *Poonch*.<sup>45</sup> Fauq presents a complete visual depiction of land management approaches, along with the rights and responsibilities of owners and workers, while showing their influence on ordinary peasants and laborers.

In the book's final section, the author includes portraits and brief descriptions of important personalities who made significant contributions to *Poonch*. The community members significantly influenced *Poonch's* historical development and growth process. The author shows how these individuals achieved greatness in different areas, including governance work, social change programs, and cultural accomplishments. These descriptions provide deeper insight into the important personalities who created lasting marks on the heritage and traditions of the *Poonch* region. The section exists to honor diverse individuals who substantially developed *Poonch* throughout history.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Fauq's historical account of *Poonch* significantly contributes to regional historiography, though it exhibits notable methodological limitations. The author uses a straightforward writing style that makes complex historical information accessible to diverse readers, deliberately using modest language and defining terms to enhance comprehension. However, his approach to source citation remains problematic, as he frequently refers to Persian and Urdu sources without providing specific names, instead using general phrases like "historians say" or "it is written in history." While the book's organizational structure, which spans 778 pages across ten systematically arranged, demonstrates thoroughness, Fauq's historical methodology lacks analytical depth, presenting facts without establishing comprehensive relationships between significant events. This tendency to offer a generalized picture of history, combined with an apparent selection bias favoring incidents that support his arguments, ultimately limits the work's capacity to deliver a complete analytical framework for understanding Poonch's compound past.

The book's content provides valuable insights into Poonch's political, social, and cultural landscape, documenting the roles of various communities, including the *Saadat*, *Quraysh*, *Afghans*, and *Rajputs*, in shaping the region's development. Fauq meticulously details the genealogies of prominent families, administrative systems, revenue collection methods, and land rights, offering a window into the socioeconomic relationships between regional elites and working classes. Particularly noteworthy is his documentation of religious and cultural transformations, such as the conversion of Zamindar Bhar Rajputs to Islam and their evolution into Bhatti families, which illustrates the region's dynamic social fabric. The concluding section's portraits of influential personalities who contributed significantly to Poonch's development add a human dimension to the historical narrative, honoring individuals who left lasting impressions on the region's heritage and traditions. Despite its methodological shortcomings, Fauq's work remains an important historical document that preserves valuable information about Poonch's past that might otherwise have been lost to time.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 562

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 601