

AIPS Short Term Grant Final Report 2019, Ghazal Asif

I used the AIPS Short Term Grant in summer 2019 to conduct archival research pertaining to the twentieth century history of the Dalit movement in Sindh. I was interested in examining the record of the Sindh Scheduled Caste Federation and understanding the role it played during the 1940s when Sindhi leaders joined the Pakistan Movement, as well as in the debates around caste immediately after the creation of Pakistan. My primary goal was establishing connections between this Federation and the Pakistan Scheduled Caste Federation that was led by Jogendranath Mandal until 1950. I conducted most of my research in the Pakistan Movement and Sindh collections of the University of Karachi's extensive archives, under the auspices of the Pakistan Study Center, as well as other unofficial sources in Karachi and Hyderabad. My research established that although the Sindh Scheduled Caste Federation was active in this period, it was not a prominent organization and as such does not feature heavily in the archives of Pakistan Movement leaders. On the basis of available archives and interviews accessed during my time in Pakistan under the grant, I further hypothesize that in comparison to East Bengal and its caste hierarchy and many peasant movements at that time, the caste structure of Sindhi society did not lend itself to identical widespread caste politics although significant strains were present. I am grateful to the AIPS committee for enabling the development of my dissertation through this follow-up research.