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A Journey from the Colonial Stigma of 'Nautch' To the Star-Status of Muslim Women of Hindustani Cinema

Ayesha Arfeen

Abstract

This paper tries to explore and indulge into the debate of how the yesteryears tawaifs were reduced to mere prostitutes and hence the stigma attached to them in the colonial period and how with the post-colonial period, the stigma is erased by the rising to fame of Muslim actresses of Hindustani film industry. This paper turns out to be a comparative study of the 'nautch' girls as portrayed by the British and their downfall on one hand; and the Muslim doyens of Hindustani cinema as stars on the other.

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