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English Fake News

Nehru's parents are Muslims? No, M.O. Mathai made no such comments in his books 2

BY AKHIL REDDY ON AUGUST 9, 2019

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A [post](#) is being shared widely on social media with a claim that the statements in the post were taken from M.O. Mathai's (Jawaharlal Nehru's Special Assistant between 1946 and 1959) autobiography. Let's try to check whether Mathai made the statements given in the post.



The archived version of the post can be found [here](#).

Claim: M.O. Mathai made comments in his autobiography that Nehru's family has Islamic lineage.

Fact: No, M.O. Mathai made no such statements as claimed in the post in his books. Hence the claim made in the post is **FALSE**.

When searched about the autobiography of Mathai on Google, it was found that he wrote two books: one is 'Reminiscences of the Nehru Age' (published in 1978) and the other is 'My Days with Nehru' (published in 1979). The archived text versions of the books can be read [here](#) and [here](#). Let us check whether the claims made in the post are taken from these books. The claims in the posts can be broadly grouped into three categories:

1. Nehru and Islamic Lineage:

In the post, it was mentioned that Nehru's actual parents are Mubarak Ali and Thusso Rahman Bai. But when looked for those names in the books written by Mathai, no such names were found. Mathai did not write anything about them in his books. On the Indian National Congress [website](#), it can be found that Jawaharlal Nehru was born to Motilal and Swarup Rani Thusso in 1889. Also, in the autobiography of Nehru (Toward Freedom) (archived text version of the book can be read [here](#)), the parents' names were given as 'Pandit Motilal Nehru' and 'Swarup Rani Nehru'.

<https://www.inc.in/en/leadership/past-party-president/motilal-nehru>

In 1889, his wife Swarup Rani gave birth to a son, who was named Jawaharlal. Two daughters, Sarup (later Vijayalakshmi Pandit) and Krishna (later Krishna Hutheesing) were born in 1900 and 1907 respectively. In 1900, he purchased a house at Allahabad, rebuilt it, and named it Anand Bhawan (the abode of happiness).

Mathai also did not write anything about Nehru's forefathers being followers of Islam. In the post, it is written that Motilal's father's original name was Ghiyasuddin and he later changed his name to Gangadhar Nehru. But, it can be read in Jawaharlal Nehru's autobiography that it was his ancestor Raj Kaul who got the name 'Nehru' (from nahar, a canal) added to his family line, not his grandfather. It should be noted that Raj Kaul was also not Muslim and Jawaharlal Nehru's grandparents also had 'Pandit' and 'Nehru' in their names. Jawaharlal Nehru's grandfather name was 'Pandit Ganga Dhar Nehru'.

We were Kashmiris. Over two hundred years ago, early in the eighteenth century, our ancestor came down from that mountain valley to seek fame and fortune in the rich plains below. Those were the days of the decline of the Moghal Empire. Raj Kaul was the name of that ancestor of ours, and he had gained eminence as a Sanskrit and Persian scholar. He attracted the notice of the Emperor and, probably at his instance, the family migrated to Delhi, the imperial capital, about the year 1716. A jagir with a house situated on the banks of a canal had been granted to Raj Kaul, and, from the fact of this residence, "Nehru" (from nahar, a canal) came to be attached to his name. Kaul had been the family name; in later years, this dropped out and we became simply Nehrus.

The family experienced many vicissitudes of fortune during the unsettled times that followed, and the jagir dwindled and vanished away. My great-grandfather became the first vakil of the "Sarkar Company" at the shadow court of the Emperor of Delhi. My grandfather was

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In the post, it is written that Nehru's family migrated to Kashmir after 1857. Mathai did not write anything on this migration. In Nehru's autobiography, it can be read that his family migrated to Agra, not Kashmir, after the revolt of 1857.

The Revolt of 1857 put an end to our family's connection with Delhi, and all our old family papers and documents were destroyed in the course of it. The family, having lost nearly all it possessed, joined the numerous fugitives who were leaving the old imperial city and went to Agra. My father was not born then, but my two uncles were already young men and possessed some knowledge of English. This knowledge saved the younger of the two uncles, as well as some other members

2. Feroze Gandhi was a Muslim:

In Chapter 17 of 'Reminiscences of the Nehru Age' book, Mathai describes Feroze Gandhi as *'son of a Parsi liquor and provision merchant of Allahabad'*. Nowhere else in his books he describes Feroze Gandhi as a Muslim. Mathai, also, did not write anything about the Muslim names of Indira Gandhi's children.

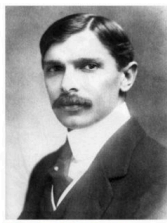
1 7 Feroze Gandhi

Son of a Parsi liquor and provision merchant of Allahabad. Feroze Gandhi in his early days attached himself to Kamala Nehru as a Congress volunteer. He used to accompany her as a helper wherever she went on Congress work in the Allahabad area. He could not be accused of possessing any eagerness for studies. Throughout his life he retained the handwriting of a child.

3. Mohd. Ali Jinnah and Sheikh Abdullah are sons of Motilal Nehru:

In the post, it is claimed that Mohd. Ali Jinnah is born to Motilal's 4th wife and Sheikh Abdullah is born to Motilal's 5th wife. None of the claims was mentioned in Mathai's books. If you look at the date-of-births of Motilal and Jinnah, it can be found that Motilal was just 15 years in 1876 (when Jinnah born) but the post claims that Jinnah was born to Motilal's 4th wife. This itself sounds absurd. When looked for the details of Jinnah's father, it can be found on the Pakistan Government's official website that Jinnah's father is Jinnahbhai Poonja. So, these claims are also not true.

EARLY LIFE



QUAID-I-AZAM MOHAMMAD ALI JINNAH

BIRTH AND SCHOOLING

Jinnah's father Jinnahbhai Poonja (born 1850) was the youngest of three sons. He married a girl Mithibai with the consent of his parents and moved to the growing port of Karachi. There, the young couple rented an apartment on the second floor of a three-storey house, Wazir Mansion. The Wazir Mansion has since been rebuilt and made into a national monument and museum owing to the fact that the founder of the nation, and one of the greatest leaders of all times was born within its walls.

On December 25, 1876, Mithibai gave birth to a son, the first of seven children. The fragile infant who appeared so weak that it weighed a few pounds less than normal. But Mithibai was unusually fond of her little boy, insisting he would grow up to be an achiever.

Officially named Mahomedali Jinnahbhai, his father enrolled him in school when he was six—the Sindh Madrasah-ul-Islam; Jinnah was indifferent to his studies and loathed arithmetic, preferring to play outdoors with his friends. His father was especially keen towards his studying arithmetic as it was vital in his business. By the early 1890s Jinnahbhai Poonja's trade business had prospered greatly. He handled all sorts of goods: cotton, wool, hides, oil-seeds, and grain for export and Manchester manufactured piece of goods, metals, refined sugar imports into the busy port. Business was good and profits were soaring high.¹


In 1887, Jinnahbhai's only sister Man Bai came to visit from Bombay. Jinnah was very fond of his Aunt and vice versa. She offered to take her nephew with her in order to give him a chance of better education at the metropolitan city, Bombay, that was much to his mother's dismay who could not bear the thought of being separated from her undisputedly favorite child. Jinnah joined Gokal Das Tej Primary School in Bombay.² His spirited brain rebelled inside the typical Indian primary school which relied mostly on the method of learning by rote. He remained in Bombay for only six months, returned to Karachi upon his mother's insistence and joined the Sind Madrassa. But his name was struck off as he frequently

While it is true that Mathai had made some controversial statements in his books, none of the claims in the post can be found in his books. Also, none of the reviews of the book mention the claims made in the post (reviews on the books can be read [here](#) and [here](#)).

To sum it up, M. O. Mathai made no such comments on Nehru family in his books.


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