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## Women's Day Amidst Oppression in IIOJK: The Suffering of Kashmiri Women Under Indian Occupation:



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MIRPUR (AJK): March 9: Speakers while addressing a mammoth congregation held to mark the world women's day, urged upon the international institutions to be consistently engaged to expose human rights violations in Indian Illegally occupied Jammu Kashmir state.

The Institute of Dialogue, Development, and Diplomatic Studies (IDDDs), in collaboration with Degree College Patika, University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K), hosted the grand seminar titled "Unyielding Struggle of Kashmiri Women and Children Caught Under Indian Occupation" in the state metropolis late Saturday.

The event aimed to highlight the plight of Kashmiri women suffering under illegal Indian occupation, while also bringing attention to their rights as enshrined in United Nations (UN) resolutions and international law. The seminar was attended by a large gathering of professors, scholars, teachers, political leaders, civil society members, and students. Dr. Sakeena – Principal, Degree College Patika inaugurated the seminar with a comprehensive and research-based speech, shedding light on the role of women at both national and international levels. She began by drawing historical inspiration from Hazrat Khadija (RA), the esteemed wife of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), highlighting her role in early Islamic history as a successful businesswoman and a pillar of support for the Prophet.

She then spoke about Hazrat Fatima (RA) and her efforts to ensure women's rights in Islam. She emphasized that empowering women is essential to raising the voice of Kashmiri women suffering under Indian occupation. The women of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJ&K) have a responsibility to advocate for their oppressed sisters across the Line of Control (LoC). She stressed that knowledge is the key to empowerment, and women must excel in various fields to effectively represent the cause of Kashmir at national and international forums.

Imtiaz Awan – Women's Development Coordinator Imtiaz Awan focused on the role of education in empowering women, stressing that educated women can serve as the strongest advocates for the Kashmiri cause. He stated that Azad Jammu & Kashmir has immense potential, and the educated women of this region can play a significant role in shaping narratives at both national and international levels. He noted that Kashmiri women are resilient and capable of representing the Kashmir conflict in international platforms.

He urged women to equip themselves with knowledge and media literacy, as these tools would enable them to become strong voices against Indian oppression. Miss Sakeena – Elected Councillor & Political Leader Miss Sakeena highlighted the multifaceted role of women in family, society, and state-building.

She emphasized that Kashmiri women are excelling in various fields despite challenges, proving their resilience and commitment. She urged women to step forward and actively participate in political, academic, and media sectors to shape the discourse on Kashmir. She noted that while women globally celebrate their achievements on International Women's Day, Kashmiri women remain trapped under severe oppression, with their fundamental rights brutally violated by Indian forces. Dr. Waleed Rasool – Director, IDDDs Dr. Waleed Rasool provided a detailed analysis of the disproportionate suffering faced by women in Indian-occupied Kashmir (IOJ&K).

He stated that women in IOJ&K have suffered more than men due to the use of rape, enforced disappearances, and illegal detentions as tools of occupation. He highlighted that currently, 13 Kashmiri women are unlawfully detained in India's Tihar Jail, including prominent activists like Asiya Andrabi, Naheeda Nasreen, and Fehmeeda Sofi. He mentioned that a 10,000-page dossier was presented against Asiya Andrabi by the Indian National Investigation Agency (NIA), showcasing the extent of repression faced by Kashmiri women activists. Dr. Rasool urged the educated women of Azad Kashmir to become the voice of their oppressed sisters in IOJ&K. He emphasized:

“Women in IOK are being silenced, but women in AJ&K are free—they must speak for those who cannot”, he said.

He urged that media and academia should be utilized to amplify the suffering of Kashmiri women globally.

Dr. Rasool demanded that international institutions must be consistently engaged to expose human rights violations in IIOJK.

He concluded by stating that the role of women is equal in all aspects of life, including resistance and advocacy. While the women of Azad Kashmir enjoy freedom, they must use their platform to echo the pain and agony of Kashmiri women suffering under Indian occupation.

The seminar ended with a collective resolution to continue advocating for the rights of Kashmiri women at all levels. Speakers urged international human rights organizations, media houses, and legal bodies to take notice of the grave injustices against Kashmiri women. The event served as a powerful reminder that women's rights are universal and that the struggle of Kashmiri women must not be forgotten on International Women's Day.