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Press Release

AJK Political Parties Resolve To De-Politicise Education System

MIRPUR (AJK) March 31: Around 200 young leaders of Mirpur division, along with the political representatives from the ruling People's Party, Pakistan Muslim League-N and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf resolved to jointly work to depoliticise education system and introduction of strict meritocracy in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.



Representatives of the major political parties, civil society, students, journalists and lawyer attended a daylong policy dialogue titled 'Reviving Public Education System in AJK – A Citizens' Perspective' organized by Centre for Peace, Development and Reforms (CPDR), a research and training organization in Mirpur.

Addressing the seminar, key speakers including AJK Minister for Higher Education, Matloob Inqilabi, Deputy Leader of Opposition AJK Legislative Assembly and PML-N AJK leader Ch. Tariq Farooq, Vice Chancellor MUST Prof. Habib-ur-Rehman, Vice President Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) AJK Zulfiqar Abbasi, Executive Director CPDR Ershad Mahmud, Dr. Waqas Ali, Ms. Fiza Anayat and senior journalist Altaf Hamid Rao underscored the necessity of

collective efforts by the government, political parties and civil society to revive the public sector education system to provide equal opportunities to the citizens of the region.

While addressing the seminar, Minister for Higher Education Muhammad Matloob Inqilabi said that the interim constitution act of AJK itself is a hurdle in decision-making process. PPP-led AJK government has proposed amendments in the interim constitution and ball is in the court of Federal Ministry of Kashmir Affairs which according to him is creating hurdles in constitutional reforms that empower the AJK Government. We have introduced several reforms in education sector but unless the government of AJK has more constitutional and financial autonomy, none of elected governments can bring any significant change in any sector including the education, he stated.



Deputy Opposition Leader AJK Assembly and Senior Vice President PMLN-AJK Ch. Tariq Farooq stated that during previous years, every government has focused on increasing the number of educational institutions in the state without equipping them with the needs of modern era. The situation, ultimately led to the downfall in quality of education. He said the curriculum being taught in the state is not harmonious with contemporary needs. All government, political parties and civil society need to join hands to make public and private educational system accountable and transparent, he added.

Vice President PTI-AJK Zulfiqar Abbasi said that education is among the top priorities of PTI and if we get elected in upcoming election, our party has strong resolve to introduce massive reforms in education sector including improving quality of education in government sector and regulating private sector at the same time. He said that PTI has an affirmed policy to introduce efficient monitoring evaluation and regulatory system to judge teachers' performance besides recruitment and promotions.

While introducing the theme of the seminar Dr. Waqas Ali, young academicians stated that there is strong imprint of politicization on education sector, which is used as instruments for distribution of political patronage and the malaise is systematically destroying the potential of young generation. This undermined the selection criteria for the teachers, which largely impacted on quality output. Likewise, students getting degrees from universities and colleges in AJK are unable to find jobs locally and with this education they are also unable to create small businesses or local level employment. They prefer to go abroad to earn livelihood for their families, which result in brain drain.

A consensus statement was also issued which demands the enforcement of uniformed syllabus and educational system in the country including AJK to benefit the off-springs of all classes of the society equally. It also says that the teachers in all educational institutions in AJK must be inducted on the basis of set criteria and educational institutions should be up and above to any political interference. Some of the participants demanded to their leadership that they should

prefer to send their children to government run educational intuitions to create their ownership in the educational system.

Besides, the seminar emphasized the need to introduce comprehensive professional development program to the newly inducted teachers at all levels to enhance their capacity for effective teaching. One of the key points was the demand of reconstruction of the earthquake affected schools which despite having elapsed 11 years after earthquake still are to be constructed.

The seminar participants also called for conducting baseline survey of education statistics for inking a comprehensive education policy so that a well-informed policy could be designed to cater needs of young people in AJK.

Educationists and civil society activists also stressed the need to revive and update public sector education curriculum that impart education help in linking academia with industry and empower them to be effective students.

The seminar also suggested for managing regular international scholarships for the students of AJK under the spirit of producing the quality future architects of the nation.

The event emphasized the need of regular introduction of career counselling in the education institutions, both in public and private sectors to help them expressing their respective future career lines. Ershad Mahmud, CPDR's Executive Director said that the aim of the dialogue is to generate the voice and agency of concerned citizens to hold the education service delivery structures, including the bureaucracy and political representatives to account. This will also enable citizens to initiate an informed discourse on the state of education, engaging decision makers in the dialogue so that education department must deliver.

Media Links:

Daily Times: [Kashmiri parties resolve to de-politicise education system](#)

Rising Kashmir: [PaK politicians pitch for 'depoliticizing' educational system](#)