

BARGAD



# ALL PAKISTAN STUDENT LEADERS CONFERENCE ON PEACE-BUILDING IN CAMPUSES

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**CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF SESSIONS  
ON PEACEBUILDING & STUDENT REPRESENTATION**

LAHORE: 19-24 JULY 2009

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## 1- INTRODUCTION

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### Background:

Student politics has remained dormant because of a ban on student unions since 1984. Now that the government has principally declared to resume it, there is a need that all stakeholders of student politics should set a minimum agenda for future politics in campuses. This key agenda would call for ensuring pro-peace, student-centered and women-friendly politics in campuses. To that end, BARGAD organized an '*All Pakistan Student Leaders Conference on Peacebuilding in Campuses*' for six days (19-24 July) in Lahore. This was a rare occasion to build political support against youth violence and extremism that has been one of the main reasons to ban student

politics in Pakistan in 1984. It was also a historic event in which more than 80 student leaders belonging to all mainstream student organizations and existing student councils from every province and Azad Jammu and Kashmir participated.

Before this conference, it was deemed unthinkable that student organizations could get together under a single platform because many have known enmity with each other which also has caused the loss of deaths of student activists. However, BARGAD was successful to convince the student organizations ranging from Islami Jamiat Talaba, Peoples Students Federation to Jiye Sindh Student Mahaz to Pukhtun Students Federation and Baloch Student Organization and many others to publically talk to one another.

Given the historical hostilities and sensitivities among student organizations, two consultative meetings were held prior to the holding of '*All Pakistan Student Leaders Conference on Peacebuilding in Campuses*'. This made it possible that the young leaders deliberated for six days on compelling issues like peace, student politics and unions, peacebuilding, provincial autonomy, women leadership development and national youth policy.

In this unique conference, the young political leaders also chalked out concrete recommendations and code of conduct for student politics.

The aim of the conference was to promote student participation and women friendly policies for democratic and peaceful political process within educational campuses in Pakistan. This is necessary for grooming youth leadership. They also strengthen democracy in Pakistan and inculcate the values of transparency and accountability in youth right at their doorsteps – the campuses.

This conference was part of BARGAD's programme on Peacebuilding and Youth Cooperation. It provided a rare opportunity to organized student bodies to prepare for collective student action through peaceful resolution of disputes in campuses and to direct student potential for meaningful politics in Pakistan rather than pursuing the violent and extremist politics done in the past.

BARGAD has been working on similar youth development initiatives since 1997. On student politics, it devised a rigorous strategy and framework was with help from experts in May 2007 when no other group could anticipate a return of the student unions in Pakistan.

The conference was an avenue where the potential of student politics could be redirected for peacebuilding before it reverts to historical course of violence and extremism.

It was also part of a series of national consultative advocacy and research process by BARGAD on student politics and extremism in Pakistan; informed by students' perspective through a nationally representative survey (2008), deliberations of educationists through Vice Chancellors conference (2009), multi-stakeholder analysis through a qualitative study, Revisiting Student Politics in Pakistan (2009) and similar other actions to promote peacebuilding and women leadership in Pakistani campuses.

Goal and Objectives of the All Pakistan Student Leaders' Conference:

- ⇒ Overall goal of the proposed student leaders' conference was to promote student participation and women friendly policies for democratic and peaceful political process within educational campuses in Pakistan.
- ⇒ Objectives of the conference are:
  - § To contribute to the political support against radicalization of organized youth in Pakistan.
  - § To facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices in promoting youth cooperation, democratic opportunities and peaceful resolution of youth issues, and
  - § To infuse a gender friendly and discrimination-free approach to policies, programmes, and services in Pakistani campuses.

Opening

- ⇒ Objectives of the session: To review history and issues of student politics in Pakistan.

*All Pakistan Student Leaders Conference on Peacebuilding in Campuses* started with the launching of a book "Revisiting Student Politics in Pakistan", which has been published by BARGAD and sponsored by the *Heinrich Boll Stiftung*. Its author and lead researcher Iqbal Haider Butt has done extensive research work on youth issues in Pakistan and is a former fellow of the United Nations University (UNU), Tokyo – Japan.

The book argues that a fundamental transition in student politics of Pakistan is in the making due to changes in the academic environment, socio-political variations and shifts in resource building and motivational stimulus for students of the nation. It maintains that all stakeholders of student politics will have to readjust to new realities; including the need to reform governance structures of the higher education for multi-stakeholder participation in the system.

Jehangir Badr, Dr Kaiser Bengali, Abid Hassan Manto, Dr. Sajid Ali, Kashif Bukhari and the author spoke on the occasion of the launching ceremony held in Avari Hotel.

There were divergent views on student politics in campuses. However, while appreciating the past achievements of the student politics General Secretary of the PPP Jehangir Badr stressed the political parties to stop interfering in student politics. He said that there should be no link of the national political parties with student politics.

He asked the political parties to form their youth wings and training students outside the campuses.

### Introduction of the Conference and Participants – Norm Settings:

Before the start of the formal proceedings of the conference a presentation on background, objectives and contents of the conference was given by Mr. Khurram Shahzad from BARGAD.

Then the participant organisations were given seven minutes each to introduce their representatives starting with an exercise of multiple identities.

Later on a whole session was dedicated to norms settings; in which the student leaders devised rules of conversation for the conference. It was also decided that designated students will co-chair sessions of the conference.

### Profile of the Participants:

There were a total number of 88 participants belonging to different categories: (i) leaders of more than 22 student organizations, (ii) representatives of student councils.

Names of the organisations/councils/bodies, whose representatives attended the session, are given in Annexure 1.

## 2- SESSIONS PROCEEDINGS

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### Session 1: Peacebuilding and Student Politics – Revisiting the Past

⇒ Objective: To facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experiences in reviewing student politics with special emphasis upon youth cooperation, democratic opportunities and peaceful resolution of youth issues.

The session was moderated by Dr Dean Principal of Kinnaird College Lahore and the key discussions were done by Mr. Kashif Bukhari (Former Student Leader), Mr. Amir Riaz (Editor, Awami Jamhoori Forum) and Mr. Iqbal Haider Butt (Senior Partner, Development Pool – Lahore).

#### Kashif Bukhari:

Mr. Bukhari said that other than the vice chancellors of different institutions all around Pakistan, there are many other stakeholders; organisations and people of the society who do not want the student unions to operate, and the reason for this needs to be found out by all of us together. He said it is a crossroad where we need to tell all the stakeholders of the society that we intend to form responsible student unions amongst us. He said we need to do a proper analysis of what has happened to date as with such analysis we cannot chalk out any strategy for the future. According to him there are five different stakeholders who have direct or indirect influence on student politics. The five stakeholders which he pointed out were (i) administration; (ii) teacher unions who have their own politics and they are linked with different political ideas, so they play an equal role towards the success of their required

student parties or to create hurdles in their unwanted student parties; (iii) parents who have never favoured the idea of student politics and their affiliation with political parties; (iv) university contractors who have their own interests within the educational institutions and (v) the most important one the political parties themselves who by creating student wings of their parties have used students for their individual interests and damaged the very basic idea of peaceful student politics. Furthermore while discussing a brief history of how student politics evolved; he said that the students were forced out of the campuses. Therefore in the end he requested the students "let's go back to campuses" and stay there for the motive of study for which they have entered the campuses.

Amir Riaz:

Aamir Riaz traced the history of education policies in Pakistan and said that student organisations irrespective of their political and ideological affiliations have never contributed to any of these important policies as to a certain extent they have always been busy in consolidating their own party interests and political agendas. Interestingly education has never been on their agenda. Moreover very significantly except for one education policy in 1997, the government has always excluded student politics and such debate from the policy making processes.

Iqbal Haider Butt:

Mr. Butt shared his view that in weak democratic systems, the agenda of student politics is set by the political parties. However there is a fundamental change occurring with the expansion of higher education sector in Pakistan. The student organisations lack harmonization in 124 universities of Pakistan, whose number was a meagre 19 when the student politics was banned in 1984.

He also said that a majority of student politics is related to public universities. Therefore student leaders will have to reconsider their options to compete with private universities as these and their students are growing on an increasing rate leaving behind the students of public sector. Consequently the student politics should involve the ways in which the students could groom and enhance their capacity to compete with the students of private sector in all sorts.

Moreover, the women are next to equal in number on university campuses, but their participation in student organisations and their political system is almost negligible. The organisations will have to show commitment to education purpose, women participation and peace in campuses if they really want to represent aspirations of the ordinary students.

Open House Discussion:

During the open house discussion a majority of student organisations discussed that violence is a result of government intervention, patronage of certain political groups and intrusion of intelligence agencies on campuses.

Representatives of different student organisations said that student organisations have always behaved conscientiously. Violence has increased subsequent to the ban on student unions. Moreover these representatives of student organisations said that

student groups should always work in harmony with the university administration and teachers.

In addition student politics under the shadow of their parent party has created an environment of violence on campuses as these parties created their student wings and used them for their political movements and manifestation.

During the discussion Kabeer Afghan from Pashtunkhwa Students Organisation raised a point addressing Mr. Iqbal Butt that he has blamed only students for the violence within the campuses, where as some external factors are equally involve as a cause for this violence and one of these external factors is the religious fundamentalism which exists in the country. Mr. Butt agreed and said yes there is some violence through external factors but in the end it is us who allow them to take advantage of our weaknesses. He said why we always need to find an external factor for such issues and not do something about our own imperfections and self accountability.

Similarly a few other points which were raised during the discussion were that why the student unions are accountable for being politicised as politicisation is not at all a bad thing. Mr. Butt said that the first thing to do here is to differentiate between politicisation and de-politicisation. Knowing the difference we can only judge the right and wrong.

Some more points were related to redefining the process of student politics for which the following few ideas were discussed during the discussion:

- § Student unions are misused as the administrative support is not provided from the government.
- § Provisions have been created within the nation which leads to discrimination (in terms of class, ethnicity etc) and eventually this discrimination leads to violence.
- § There is a need for 'Rule of Law' which lacks within the entire nation and prop up issues of chaotic situation of student politics.
- § There should be a proper policy making process for the student unions if they need to operate, as recently without any policy the Prime Minister said that the unions will be resolved.
- § Activists should work as think tanks and researchers and student unions should work with them simultaneously.
- § There is a need to differentiate between student unions and student federation, precisely.
- § Set of rules for student politics are there but they need to be comprehended.
- § There are some policies which need to be revised as they are biased in nature, e.g. central Sindhi cannot take admission in Karachi.
- § Courts should be formed within campuses to resolve issues of students and student unions.

- § There should be a provision of equal opportunities for all, including women; only then the true leadership could be built up.

### Session 2: Linkages between Political Parties and Student Politics

- ⇒ To reflect on linkages between the student organizations with political parties.

The session was moderated by Ms. Salma Butt and chaired by Syed Waqas Jafri (General Secretary, Islami Jamiat Talaba). Key panellists of the session were two students; (i) Sajjad Shar from Jiye Sindh Students Federation and (ii) Sadaf Javaria from Gomalian Student Council, along with Mr. Amir Riaz and Mr. Hafiz Rashid.

The session on linkages between student organisations and political parties consisted of a heated debated; in which student organisations supported that their right of association with political parties is a fundamental right. Politics is a positive step and provides future leadership for the nation. Without this linkage, student politics cannot responsibly proceed.

First panellist from Jiye Sindh Student Federation, Mr. Sajjad Shar presented his view that student wings should have a strong link with their affiliated political parties. He gave an example of his own organisation that if it is not working as it should be then there would be a criticism from the people media and everyone and hence the mother wing of the organisation would take a serious action against its student wing. Otherwise as several groups, who operate in universities without being monitored by any political party, are most likely to create disorder on campuses. Therefore supervision by a parent party is very necessary for the student wings to nurture.

Secondly Ms. Javaria from Gomalian Student Council also viewed that student organisations should be connected with political parties and therefore when the government put a ban on student unions there should have been a defined constitution or rules and regulations for that. Furthermore she said restructuring of student unions is needed and the Vice Chancellors, Deans and Head of Departments in the universities should also have a linkage with student organisations. They should sit and interact more often with student organisations to understand and resolve their ongoing issues. Therefore she supported affiliations in a very peaceful manner for the development of student participation and women friendly policies for democratic and peaceful political process within educational campuses.

#### Open House Discussion:

Shortly after the two student panellists expressed their views on linkages between student organisations and political parties, the house was set open for other participants to share their views on the subject matter.

Ahmed Muaeze (ISF – Convener) said that as the student unions were banned it has created an environment of negative propaganda against them in the minds of parents, college administration and students. Therefore there is a need to educate



people about the values of student councils and student politics. So if we need to develop healthy linkages between the students and political parties then there is a need to trim down such communications gaps within our society.

Kabeer Afghan from Pashtunkhwa Students Organisation stated that if there would be no linkages between the two then leadership abilities amongst the students cannot be extended. Lack of leadership and confining student issues would lead towards violence and extremism within campuses. He said political parties are institutions themselves where the students learn to have leadership qualities. As well if the student unions are separated from political parties it will lead to a 'Mafia' building. Therefore a code of conduct is required to enhance the linkages between student unions and their parent parties.

On the other hand Amir Jalal from Punjab University and representing University Student Federation said that students do not need any backing of political parties as they are knowledgeable and have as much as necessary capacity/capability to perceive and resolve their own issues. He further said that we the students of this nation can design our own ideology and run this country with a much superior approach.

Another point raised during the discussion was that, as the educational policies are not devised within the campuses so the students are expected to chase their issues outside the campuses along with a linkage with their mainstream parties.

Fazeel Baloch (Baloch Council- Chairman) from Quid-e-Azam University Islamabad said that there are five councils (Punjab council, Pashtun council, Baluch council, Mehran council and Seraiki council) working within the university campus without having an affiliation with any political party. There has never been a case of any violence witnessed inside the campus. When it comes to issues related to students everyone put aside his/her ideology and only represents their respective councils. In this way we understand one another and promotes our cultures as well, which has enhanced the inter-provincial harmony amongst all.

Contrary to above Mr. Zohaib Butt (PSF- General Secretary Punjab) from Punjab University Lahore said that the given concept of student councils has no influence at national level and on national issues.

Hafiz Naseer Ahmad from Jamiat Talba-Islam said that it should be researched that who were the factors that used the student platforms to politicise for their own interests.

Syed Waqas Jafri:

Mr. Syed Waqas Jafri while speaking on the occasion said that there is an overall environment within our society that student unions and student politics is not considered as a prosperous thing. Therefore these days it is quite often to debate on de-politicisation of student bodies and educational system. It has become quite consistent for the people not to talk on political issues and affiliate themselves with any political party. Nevertheless, in reality we can criticise this political system but we cannot disprove it, since in any society the political process and political parties are integral parts.



He said, he admits that there are flaws in the system but this does not mean to throw away all the political parties and their affiliated workers. So we need to take the best out of our available resources along with making improvements within the system.

Additionally he argued that educational institutions cannot be well established in isolation as these institutions also have the same problems like Pakistan. So a worthy and democratic system can only be a solution for both the country and its educational institutions.

Therefore student politics should be allowed to run free but with fitting rules and regulations. Students must be given a chance so as they can discuss the future of nation for instance whether the system should be presidential or parliamentarian.

Rule of law should also be ensured, and in this case the greater sacrifices are needed from all the political parties and their leaders as they have to cut down on their luxuries.

#### Amir Riaz:

During the session as sharing his views on linkages between student organisations and political parties Mr. Amir Riaz said that no one is talking about the de-politicisation of the system. He said people have a very incorrect concept of de-politicisation and typically it is considered to be a felony if students have a linkage with a political party.

#### Hafiz Rashid:

Mr. Rashid said that such conferences are very important for students to make them tolerant enough for just not speak in one direction with a mindset but also to listen to what others have to say. Moreover conferences like these develop the capability of the participants to think and consider positive opinions.

He said the student politics during his era while he was studying and nowadays has changed a lot. An immense discrimination and a divide are fairly visible in today's society. In the past many spaces were available for the poor and rich to interact with each other, as an example at the college and university level all, rich and poor, used to study together and at the same level, whereas today the educational institutions have been separated from one another on the basis of class system. The public sector institutions are restricted to lower and lower-middle class and the elite have isolated the private sector institutions for themselves. Therefore very less spaces are available now for people to interact. With fewer spaces to interact causes anarchy and consequently many problems arise within the society.

As a result we talk about student politics we need to consider this particular scenario and see the matter in the context of this clear divide. For example when we talk about higher education, Punjab University and Government College University comes into the mind but we also need to consider institutions like Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute (GIKI), that what kind of student politics and student unions are operative in these institutions.

### Session 3: Alternative Models of Student Activism

⇒ To present and discuss models of alternative student activism.

Dr. Ghazala Irfan of LUMS moderated while Dr. Nizam-ud-Din, VC University of Gujrat, chaired this session on alternative models of student activism. The key panellists were Prof. Sajid Ali (Head, Philosophy Department, Punjab University Lahore) and Amir Jalal from Punjab University representing University Student Federation.

During the session a few alternative models of student activism were presented by Sadaf Javaria from Gomal University, D.I.Khan (General Secretary, Gomalian Students' Council), Maria Khan from Kinnaird College University (Head Girl) and Ali Salman who studied at the Hague Institute of Development Studies (Managing Partner, Development Pool – Lahore).

#### Gomalian Students' Council:

Gomal University is in Dera Ismail Khan (D.I Khan) and Sadaf Javaria being the General Secretary of female house (called the 'House of Ladies') presented the model of student activism in her university.

The main objective of Gomalian student council is to improve/develop person's personality beyond its normal limitations, so that she/he can live as a respectable person and acquire the strategies and skills which could be performed at both domestic and professional levels. According to her, only one percent of Pakistani women, at any level hold the key posts. D.I Khan is an area where the girls come from remote and underdeveloped areas having many restrictions upon them so the main objective of the 'House of Ladies' is to provide them with a sense of self confidence and enhance their performance at all levels.

All the members of the House are elected by female students and maximum for one year. The major activities include: Naat Competition; Qirut Competition; Debate Competition; Drama; Mushaira; Arts & Culture and Alumni.

#### Kinnaird College University:

Maria Khan (Head-Girl, KCU) gave a detailed presentation on KCU's student committee. She briefed about the election process in KCU for electing the student leader who then is responsible to deal with all issues related to students.

#### Hague Institute of Development Studies:

Mr. Ali Salman shared his experience at Institute of Social Studies, Hague Institute of Development Studies where he was elected as a president of the International Students Union. He said within the union there were four executive members and eight working committees, elected for one whole year and the union has the following basic objectives:

§ To share the multicultural attitude amongst the students.

§ Networking with other institutions and employment sector.

§ To produce student leaders.

The institute is not a very big one like Punjab University but offers both undergraduate and graduate programmes. The institute is commonly known as mini United Nations because of diverse nature of students from all over the world (approximately seventy nations are represented one batch each year). Mr. Salman said that where due to so much diversity there are some differences and clashes but to a larger extent cooperation is visible where students at every level assist their fellows and if some issue is beyond reach of then the International Students Union is there to provide assistance in all sorts.

Immediately after the presentation Kabeer Afghan from Pashtunkhwa Students Organisation asked a question from Mr. Salman that model which he has discussed is from a developed nation where all have equal opportunities and state does not discriminate or deprive it's people from any right so how could we as Pakistanis could adopt such a model where people are striving for basic needs and survival. Under such conditions no one has a time to take part in cultural and extra co curricular activities.

Mr. Salman responded that there are several similarities between the two models as like in Pakistan we have multiple ethnicities which were similar to the student backgrounds over there. Moreover he said we can reject any model at time but the key is to listen and think for once that how the others are dealing with similar issues like us.

Reflections by Prof. Sajid Ali:

Following are few reflections on alternative models of student activism by Prof. Sajid Ali:

- § He opposed to the idea of students joining the political parties. However he was in favour that students must seek political education.
- § He said our education system should be enhanced so that the students could have a proper know-how of changes occurring in national and international politics.
- § According to him the basic purpose of student unions/councils/wings should be the assurance and struggle for quality of education.
- § He raised the slogan of 'Equal Education for All', both in terms of quantity and quality.
- § He said in our political systems the ordinary students coming from student wings never get an opportunity to represent the parent at some higher level. Furthermore he said as our country faces a dilemma of family based political system so leaders of the major political parties will always be the children of current ruling class. Therefore the students must not waste their precious time in striving for such goals.
- § Instead learning should be the main focus and aim for the students.
- § Students should develop their own opinions rather speaking and putting their efforts for others.

- § Students are of capable of doing a lot on their own so they should never follow the obtuse teachings of political leaders.
- § Lastly he said all students think; research and dialogue to come up to solutions of their problems and stop getting dependent on violence to solve the problems.

Amir Jalal:

Amir Jalal from Punjab University representing University Student Federation, while talking on the topic said that we have divided Pakistan into several parts and consequently the student parties are based on varied and very different ideologies. However as he was representing the student side he gave a few examples where different student parties sat at one place and sorted out the situation by themselves. One such example he gave was of riots in Baluchistan where both Pashtun and Baluch students' parties resolved the conflict with a dialogue.

Concluding Remarks by Dr. Nizam-ud-Din:

In his speech Dr. Nizam-ud-Din said that students have always been exploited for issues which do not directly relate to them. They have been part of protests and demonstrations against the outside world with which does not have any direct impact on them. For example they were used to protest against the policies of Israel and once against three years Masters Programme. Now it is impossible for him to understand that how could students demonstrate against educational system, for which they are on campus.

He said as Pakistan's agenda itself is very murky and was never been designed through proper research, discussion and exchange of views so such trembling agendas are very simple for the political parties to take advantage of and bring out their own self-based interests, and then the students are used to execute such deeds. He called it a 'Mafia' where political parties take control over the students and use them for their motives.

Furthermore he said this hijacking even continues to higher levels. When a person becomes an Education Minister that is mostly not because of his capabilities but the line of thought (of some political party) he has been following since years. With a backing of a party in power he decides for the students who are a future of this nation.

Student unions and political parties have to face and realise the ground realities. They raise voices against foreign issues as they have political reasons behind it, but they do not raise voice on their own issues, for example the case of Dr. Afia in the United States in comparison to local women dying every day without any reason.

Furthermore he said it is impossible for someone to tell a single conduct of life, as this not at all democratic and also against the teachings of Islam. How can we dream of an open society where no one has enough space to talk, discuss and express freely? So instead to being drowning in small issues like nationalism and languages we have to get ourselves prepared to deal with much bigger issues our country is suffering with. He gave another example here of developed nations where the

people stood against a much higher issue of communism rather than getting involved in trivial issues of ethnicity.

He stressed that if the students have a rights based approach and their own thoughts only then they can develop the country but if they keep on following others commands they can not succeed nor they can bring a minute change.

Lastly he put forward his message to all of the student leaders and other participants by saying: "Open up and take a change for your society and for your nation" and "be more passionate but moderate, tolerant and discussion-ate".

#### Session 4: Women Leadership in Campuses

- ⇒ To infuse a gender friendly and discrimination-free approach to policies, programmes, and services in Pakistani campuses.

Session on women leadership in campuses was moderated by Ms. Nasira Habib (Executive Director KHOJ Peoples Society for Education Lahore), while – Dr. Bernadette Louise Dean (Principal, Kinnaird College Lahore) chaired the session. The panellists included Ms. Tehmina Doultana (PML-N), Ms. Maiza Hameed (MPA, PML-N), Ms. Ayesha Javed (MPA, PML-Q), and Ms Sabiha Shaheen (Executive Director, BARGAD). Also there were two female student leaders who were among the panellists; (i) Ms. Tuba Ishfaq from Kinnaird College University (representing Insaf Student Federation) and (ii) Ms. Sundas Hurain from LUMS (representing Student Action Committee).

They all spoke about inculcating confidence in women, discrimination against women and the need to uplift the status of women.

#### Tuba Ishfaq:

The first speaker was Tuba Ishfaq from Kinnaird College University who said that women leaderships is not to create a magnetic or flamboyant personality but infect to create a leader who is having a clear vision which energetic mind, great will power and able to lead the world with their decision making power. Moreover women must be given great representation to fill the political vacuum, as in policies if you want something to be said, ask a man and if you want something to be done, ask a woman.

#### Maiza Hameed (MPA, PML-N):

Maiza Hameed said that two years ago she herself was a student and therefore she can relate to the student issues. In order to prove ourselves, the struggle which women do in politics is much more than they go through during their educational era.

She said it was a revolutionary step from the previous government to bring the women in Parliament but now to prove them is greatly a big deal, as the process has just started. Moreover she said if the women at college or university level needs us, we the ones in government are always there for them as we can very easily relate to

their problems. According to here women have to work twice as hard to sustain their position because every time they have to listen whether they do not have the capacity to be there or they do not fit into that position.

She stressed upon the university students as realistically they are much more educated than the representatives within the assembly so if they support them in legislation process then it would be a big step. Similarly if women start taking initiatives during their education to develop as future leaders then this would be encouraging for the prosperous future of the country.

She encouraged the female students to step forward towards true politics however she warned that they have to strive a lot for that. Moreover there may not be any personal return in that but the motivation should be of helping the society and many voices of women in Pakistan which remain unheard since ever.

Lastly she said that there is a need to create an environment where students and specially the female students could sit with politicians and discuss and share the issues related to them.

#### Ms. Ayesha Javed (MPA, PML-Q)

Ms. Ayesha Javed from PML-Q while talking on women leadership in campuses discussed that very unfortunately due to military rule or some other rule the student unions have never been given a chance to flourish in our country. Practically students have been used for political reasons throughout the history. Adding to this she said that our politicians have misused our student much more than the military dictators. There has been hardly any constructive occasion where we, the politicians, brought forward the proper issues of students.

She said that many youth policies have been designed and many books have been written on the subject matter but no single government has sincerely done anything for students specially the women students. Nonetheless the students are equally blameable for this as they let others to make use of them. Also the founder of the nation Qauid-e-Azam put a great stress on students and their education. At the same time the founder never forbid anyone to be part of the future political process. So if we need to take a responsibility and actually want to do something for our nation we need to start working hard and actively since the school age.

She said very interestingly if we observe the history of our major political parties there has been a very minute number of representatives who came forward from the student unions.

There, two points came ahead from the participant students that they are not being used by the political parties, instead they feel it as their foremost responsibility to fight for their nation (*Quam*). Similarly one student from Sindh said that there are two different types of politics; (i) Practical and (ii) Ideal. Practical politics is for short time and for power strive (like PPP, PML-N, and PML-Q). Whereas ideal is a long term struggle for an ideology and the results could be expected in short run.

#### Ms. Tehmina Doultana (PML-N)

Ms. Tehmina Doultana started the discussion by telling a detailed history of her own struggle as a woman from Southern Punjab who reached the National Assembly. Then she said the most ideal thing for the students to do is to understand what a political process is actually. She said if we have self-based motives then there is no need to step into politics. Essence of a true politician is to bring a change as a true politician is responsible for a social change.

She suggested the female participants that they have to work with dedication and responsibility, but if the motive is power or money then no one can last long. All we need in politics is a whole hearted effort rather than money. Especially the women will have to fight their way, even more in order to succeed and once they are successful men will start respecting them.

Sundas Hurain:

Sundas also shared her difficulties with the participants which she had to face for being politically active at the university level. She said in the very core of our society is the segregation of women and men. When we first see someone we see her/him on the basis of gender and then decide how to deal with that person and that is the reason which mostly holds back the women not to come forward.

She argued that biologically there is no difference between men and women as they have the same capacity and ability to do anything equally. Then comes the social difference in which an ideal woman is considered to be a perfect house wife who is taking care of her family and husband and nothing beyond that this.

With these differences the women are discouraged throughout their upbringing to step ahead and face the challenges of the world side by side with men. This discouragement diminishes the self confidence within the women and makes them reluctant to do many things which they are capable of doing.

She stressed that the men in our society also need to think about such issues and should encourage the women to be part of the problem solving as half of our population comprises of women so if they remain discouraged better results will remain far to achieve.

Concluding Remarks by Dr. Bernadette Louise Dean:

At the end of the session Ms. Dean very shortly but precisely concluded the session by putting forth the following few points:

- § Women need to develop skills.
- § Women need to communication skills.
- § Women need logical reasoning.
- § Women need IT skills.
- § Women need Advocacy skills.
- § Women need to learn, how to be confident.
- § Women need to have a vision.



- § Women leaders need different ways of being leaders (Integrating and Honesty in politics).
- § Women need to be sensitive for their needs.

### Session 5: Manifestos of Student Organisation

⇒ Debate on manifestos to ensure pro-peace, student centred and women friendly politics in Campuses

Last session of *All Pakistan Student Leaders' Conference on Peacebuilding in Campuses* was a group work with student leaders to develop consensus on a viable mechanism for student politics.

Iqbal Haider Butt conducted this session and divided the participants into five thematic groups, which included:

- i. Public and Policy Advocacy for Lifting Ban on Student Unions
- ii. Linkages with Political Parties
- iii. Peacebuilding and Inter-Group Relations
- iv. Women in Student Politics, and
- v. Student Union Elections

The session was moderated by Khurram Shahzad and chaired by Dr. Ehsan Malik. The panellists included Ameer-ul-Azeem (Former Student Leader & now Amir, Jamaat-e-Islami Lahore), Mubasher Luqman (Journalist) and Prof. Nadeem Ashrafi (Former, ATI).

Key discussion during the session was about presentations on Manifestos of Student Organisation with Special reference to and proposals for peace building, student issues and women leadership in campuses. For that reason the moderator Khurram Shazad briefed about the session objective and said that student organisations have always been condemned by academia, government and parents that they should not exist as they give a picture of violence in campuses. Therefore to have a continued existence of the student unions and organisations a collective effort is necessary, in which peace should have a highest precedence along with a culture of dialogue. Later he called the panellists to come and share their views related to manifestos.

#### Ameer-ul-Azeem (Former Student Leader & now Amir, Jamaat-e-Islami Lahore)

According to Mr. Ameer-ul-Azeem there has been a lack of consistency among the student organisations, therefore they have not been able to perform to their fully and progressively. He also said that various governments and college administrators etc have always opposed the student unions and organisations which have hampered

their path of growth. Moreover he argued against a belief that due to the behaviour of Islamic Student Organisation many people are dejected towards Islam. He said many Islamic Student Organisations are effectively operating within the nation. However if any organisation while exhibiting Islam in its guiding principle and cause violence, in that case people are likely to get away from the true side of Islam. In the end he said that to develop the competence of students in politics it is very useful and important to flourish student organisations in Pakistan. This way the students could become a fulfilling future for the nation.

#### Mubasher Luqman

Next speaker was Mubashir Luqman who is a well known journalists/analyst. According to him a minor violence should be a part of student unions manifestos, because at times the rights of students are violated in such a manner that the only answer is a strong protest, because blocking everything is not a solution. Furthermore he said that there is a huge identity crisis to be observed within the student unions. He said we need to have a political party's backing and still there will be no violence, because the party's backing help to enhance students' insight about the real world politics. However he said we need to be very practical in our approach and should never feel shy to own our thinking and ideology.

While listening to different students' organisations manifestos he pointed out that, if the representatives of liberal or progressive manifesto claim that they are against the teachings of extremism (which is usually considered a religious factor in our country) and linguistics, then how could they be progressive if they stand against others and do not want them to build upon their beliefs. So according to him the key to student politics is tolerance and a progressive organisation has as much rights a democratic or a religious organisation has.

While listening to PSF's manifesto in which the representative, Zohaib Butt, who asserted that their union is promoting Nationalisation and they are a student body of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Mubashir Luqman said that now PPP is promoting privatisation, so there is a contradiction between the parent party and its student body. For that reason he concluded that there is a lack of communication and interaction between the two. So if a student organisation has a strong interaction with its parent party along with other parties then this will instinctively reduce the class system from politics.

#### Prof. Nadeem Ashrafi:

Prof. Nadeem Ashrafi forwarded his regards to BARGAD, fellow panellists and student participants. He then said manifestos of student organisations are results of a hard work and great effort by student leaders and workers. As he belonged to ATI, his organisation's manifesto is an Islamic manifesto. Similarly Islami Jamiat Talaba also has an Islamic manifesto. So if we congregate manifestos of various organisations then it would be definitely a bifurcation.

He said that manifestos of all organisations cannot be alike because the objective based organisations do not have common manifestos. They wish to work for their own aims and objectives.

He said with my own personal experience of teaching for the past 15 years, what I have observed is that, none of the student organisations give an orientation of its manifesto to its workers, except the religious organisations.

He also said student politics should always be done by the students, for the students and between the students. The provincial and national political parties should not get involved with student politics. As we have lack of tolerance amongst us, it leads to violence in the campuses.

Moreover he argues that students who are involved in student politics are well groomed and they learn the process of politics from grassroots level. However when they switch from student to practical politics they do not find enough space for them to progress, because our politicians never favour the new comers and always spotlight their own descendants.

Another point he raised was that we need to let go fear on the campuses and this can only be done from within us. We need to build our thoughts in a constructive manner.

Lastly he said if we need to witness a change we need to direct our youth on a proper route, because a revolution and change in the region we live, can only occur because of the students.

#### Concluding remarks by Chairperson, Dr. Ehsan Malik:

The highlights of chairperson's speech are as follow:

- § All student organisations should have a strong relation with the religion Islam.
- § All students should have strong sense of tolerance for one another along with concentrated interaction.
- § Discontinuity in student unions by the university management and government is a cause of today's class based education system.
- § We need to take advantage of the human talent around the world, as all the books and courses we are studying, written by foreign authors and scholars.
- § We should never ignore our identity and whole heartedly own the origins our ideology and political parties we belong to.
- § Student leaders who progressively and successfully took part in student politics during their studies should associate themselves with their respective organisation when they reach practical verve.
- § There is a need to seek direction from the leading and developed countries in the world that whether their democratic leaders have been associated to any student organisations and what kind of subjects those leaders have studied.
- § He gave an example of Japan, where the people developed by adopting their own and only language. So he asked the students that how much this debate on linguistics and nationalism is necessary and important for us.

§ Lastly he said that he believes that all the students participating in the conference are his students, also the growth and progress of every student present there is the product growth of Pakistan.

#### Session by Hamza Shahbaz Sharif (MNA PLM-N):

Later that day Mr. Hamza Shahbaz Sharif came to address all Pakistan student leaders. He showed his appreciation towards BARGAD's hard work to bring together such a diverse and multicultural student leaderships and have debate on sensitive issues Pakistan is currently facing.

On this occasion he asked the participants to contribute to the nation as future leaders in different sectors not only as student political leaders. He was of the view that regular imposition of military rule and abrogation of the constitution had created rifted in the units of Pakistani Federation. He said only democracy can provide the basis for a strong Pakistan.

#### GROUP WORK AND CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENT POLITICS:

Mr. Iqbal Haider Butt, who conducted this session, divided the participants on random basis into five thematic groups (names of the group members are annexed), which included:

- i. Public and Policy Advocacy for Lifting Ban on Student Unions
- ii. Linkages with Political Parties
- iii. Peacebuilding and Inter-Group Relations
- iv. Women in Student Politics, and
- v. Student Union Elections

The participants were also given indicative list of probing questions and themes that could be discussed and resolved. However it was said that it was not a conclusive list of issues to be discussed. The list would comprise of:

#### **1. PUBLIC AND POLICY ADVOCACY**

1. What advocacy measures have to be taken for enhancing will of the government, educationists, students and parents to support student unions?
  2. What are the limitations of student organizations in successfully campaigning for establishing unions?
  3. Recommendations on procedural issues, like
    - Uniform national system Vs. freedom to individual universities for devising their unions
    - What mechanism for private universities and how?
    - What legal instruments are required to be changed/ amended?
-

## **2. LINKAGES WITH POLITICAL PARTIES**

1. Pros and Cons of student politics' linkages with political parties [three points each]
2. Recommendations on issues, like
  - Policy on donation from any political party or a politician
  - Use of university resources i.e. equipment, staff, buses, etc
  - Non-students' participation in the electoral process
  - What measures in case of violation?

## **3. PEACEBUILDING AND INTER-GROUP RELATIONS**

1. Responsibilities of student organizations to curb violence done by them
2. Recommendations on issues, like
  - Possession and display of arms within campuses
  - Definition of criminal offence and where Pakistan Penal Code should apply in campuses
  - Framework for hateful material and speech
  - Suggestions for promoting peacebuilding and student-development activities
  - What guarantees are available to eliminate clashes of student organizations?

## **4. WOMEN IN STUDENT POLITICS**

1. Policy on women quota in student unions
2. Recommendations on issues, like
  - Internal party reforms on women participation to campus politics
  - Policy on Harassment Against Women in Campuses

## **5. STUDENT UNION ELECTIONS**

Recommendations on issues, like

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Direct/ indirectly elections through votes of department/ Institute</li> <li>– Campaign timing</li> <li>– Election Cost/ ceiling</li> <li>– No Printing material</li> <li>– Election Manifesto</li> <li>– Eligibility of Candidates</li> <li>○ Full-time/ part time students</li> <li>○ Age limit</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Readmitted Students</li> <li>○ Academic arrears</li> <li>○ Class attendance</li> <li>– Criminal history</li> <li>– Audited statement of expenditures</li> <li>– Procession outside campuses</li> <li>– Election observers</li> <li>– Grievance Redressal Mechanism</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

### Group Presentations and the Code of Conduct:

The groups chalked out code of conduct for the prospective student union elections. Highlights of group presentations for the above mentioned themes are as follows:

#### Group 1: Public and Policy Advocacy for Lifting Ban on Student Unions

- § Media Campaign & Political Act
- § Code of conduct to satisfy valid concerns of education
- § Literary Study Circle
- § Non Violence / Banned Arms
- § Noncriminal convicted persons
- § Fixed Campaign Budget given by the University

- § Uniform National Systems
- § Same Rules for private/public Universities

### Group 2: Linkages with Political Parties

#### Pros & Cones

- § Having backing of the political parties
- § Having a proper ideology
- § Guidance through experience

#### Recommendations on Issues

- § Policy on donation
  - Donation should be acceptable from political party, not from any particular process
- § Use of University resources
  - There should be no participation of a person having non-student position
- § Non Student Electoral Participation
- § Measures in Case of Violation
  - Show-cause notice
  - Punishment according to parent party constitution

### Group 3: Peacebuilding and Inter-Group Relations

- § Promote mutual respect, consciousness for all, constructive and regular interaction
- § Establish a "Students Advisory council"
  - Which should be consisted for all student organisation
  - Administration & the Ministry of Education
  - The Advisory council should have a student convener on rotational basis for all student organizations.
  - Meetings on regular basis for the councils should be held twice a month
- § Arms in Campuses
  - Some of the students organisation are provided with arms by intelligence agencies to disturb the peaceful environment and to find non-issues to cause an environment for conflicts
  - Violent text which provokes sentiments

#### Solutions

1. Arms should not only be banned but the violators should be legally prosecuted
2. Advisory council should be empowered and authorities to form and maintain a peaceful educational environment.

### Group 4: Women in Student Politics

- § Open Quota 80%
- § Reserve Quota 20%
- § Women should have complete freedom to join politics in Universities
- § Disciplinary Committee should be in one Union, it should have autonomy to take action against every violation.

#### Group 5: Student Union Elections

- § Direct Elections
- § Campaigning Time should be of 15 days
- § Election Cost 5000/- per panel
- § Printing Material : yes
- § Election Manifesto : yes
- § Eligibility of Candidates
- § Full Time with 2.75 CGPA
- § Age limit 29 years
- § Readmitted : not allowed
- § Class Attendance 70%
- § Audited statement of Expenditure
- § No Processions Outside
- § Election Observers ( media, admin, academics panel, members)
- § Grievance Redresser Mechanism

#### Overall Recommendation – All groups in General:

Key recommendations made by the student leaders were:

1. Linkage of student organizations with political parties should be allowed. However, no funds from politicians denied.
2. An Advisory Council should be established to oversee affairs of the campus. It would comprise of heads of the student organizations and representatives of the Vice Chancellor.
3. The council will meet twice in a month.
4. Possession or display of arms within campuses should be totally banned and made liable to criminal offence.
5. No classroom activity will be disrupted in any case. Only activists of a student organization will participate in case of agitation.



6. In case of violation, the VC would rusticate the perpetrators working against instructions of the Advisory Council.
7. Women should be allotted 20 percent quota in student unions, the rest (80%) of the seats will be competed on open seats. On this point representatives of Islami Jamiat Talaba (IJT) dissented and supported the holding of elections on open merit.
8. The rules for student union elections were set as:
  - Direct elections for the university union
  - 15 days for election campaign timing
  - Maximum election ceiling for one contesting panel would be PKR 50,000/-
  - Printed material allowed
  - Eligibility of Candidates who can contest union elections: Only full-time students. Age limit: 29 years. No readmitted students. Minimum of 70% class attendance and 60 percent marks. No criminal history. However it should be probed whether the cases were made on political reasons.

## Annexure 1

### GROUP MEMBERS – CODE OF CONDUCT FOR STUDENT POLITICS

#### Group 1: Public and Policy Advocacy for Lifting Ban on Student Unions

Zohaib Butt – PSF  
Sajjad Hussain – HSF  
Hafeez Pirzada – JSSF  
Toba Ashfaq – ISF  
Amir Jalal – USF  
Ahsan Ghorri – APMSO  
Muhammad Arfan – NStT  
Sundas Hurani – SAC

#### Group 2: Linkages with Political Parties

Raja Ghulam Mujtaba – JKSLF  
Tausif – APMSO  
Sajjad Shar – JSSF  
Hafiz Naser Ahmad – JTI  
Ahmed Muaaz – ISF  
Abdul Haleem – MSC  
Abid Hussain – HSF  
Ishrat Aziz – USF  
Habib Bhutto – JSSF  
Ayaz Sumro – JSSF

#### Group 3: Peacebuilding and Inter-Group Relations

Zakir Gulzari – HSF  
Kabir Afghan – PSO  
Sumaira – PSF  
Tariq Afghan – PKSf  
Haide Momand – PSO  
Tayab Sultan – Punjab Council  
Fazeel Baloch – Baluch Council  
Dawood Kakar – Pakhtun Council

#### Group 4: Women in Student Politics

Zubair Shah Aga – PSF  
Muyudin – BSO  
Manzoor Kakarr - PSF  
Raheel – JKLSF

#### Group 5: Student Union Elections

Sadaf Javaria – Gomalion  
Shahbaz Assar – Gomalion  
Shanawar – SAC  
Hafiz Shafiq – JTI  
Shafaq Nazar – OEU  
Haroon Niazi  
Naila Rafiq – ISF  
Salman Chaudhry – ATI  
Hassan Niazi – ISF