

## **Intra-Jammu and Kashmir Cross-LoC Women's Dialogue**

**Muzaffarabad**

**6-8 November 2012**

<http://www.risingkashmir.in/news/we-crossed-the-line-36752.aspx>

### **‘We crossed the Line’**

Tuesday, 20 Nov 2012 at 08:57

**Women are moving forward, coming out of their passivity and transcending their state of helplessness**

**Rekha Chowdhary**

Coming back from Muzaffarabad after attending a cross-LoC women's conference, I was asked by someone: 'so what is the most important thing that you accomplished during your visit?' I answered without much thinking: 'we crossed the Line'. This was actually the spirit which dominated the visit as well as the conference. We had crossed the line literally and also metaphorically.

It was an overwhelming emotion that had overtaken each one of the ten of us who were standing at the Indian side of Kaman Bridge as well as a score of women who were on the other side of the bridge, waiting for the gates to be opened. They had travelled the same morning from Muzaffarabad to receive us.

On clue it seems, it started drizzling and we became doubly conscious of the boundaries and borders that we were going to cross. It was after sometime that gates were opened. Officials from both the sides moved and reached the middle of the bridge and held a sort of meeting for few minutes before we were allowed to walk on the bridge. We crossed the bridge and reached the other side of the LoC just into the arms of the women waiting there. 'We did it!' was the chorus everywhere.

It was crossing the Line per se – the Line which has divided the two sides of Jammu and Kashmir and which has restrained the people from meeting their closed ones (close standing here for blood relations – brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts, grandparents) even when they may be living a mountain, a river or a road across. The Line once drawn would not allow people to trace their roots and visit their villages and homes that they once lived in but were forced to leave. It was the idea of doing something that was 'impossible' till very recently. The line named as 'ceasefire line' initially and renamed as LoC in seventies, was opened for the movement of people in 2005 but as a general rule only those people were allowed to travel who

had relatives on the other side of LoC. Maybe in the beginning, it was the humanitarian consideration that worked in this direction as thousands of families were divided across the LoC and were to be given a priority over others to use the LoC route. However, soon it became a sort of rule and came to be followed so strictly that even the officials dealing with the paperwork were convinced that only relatives could travel through LoC, others needing to go across had to take the visa route of Wagah.

So one can understand the excitement that we were feeling! Though a few of us had some relatives on the other side of LoC, but many others did not have any relative and we were crossing the LoC merely because we were the residents of the state. It was a 'Permit' which we were carrying that was the basis of our visit. No passport was required and no visa was stamped. It was just a single page permission issued by the Government of the state of J&K. It was just like visiting another part of the state. The only reminder to us that we were crossing the Indian territory and entering the territory under the control of Pakistan were the immigration and custom offices on both the sides.

That we are among the first group to cross the LoC in this manner, is in itself a matter of significance. We were conscious that we were making history hoping that this small step of ours on the Kaman Bridge will open the route for many other groups – the professionals, the media persons, civil society activists, cultural troupes, students. We were setting the precedent.

Throughout our trip we were conscious that we were not standing alone, the governments on both the sides were very much supporting our trip. From the word 'go', we were given the VIP treatment. The 'delegates' was our designated name and the difficulties were eased and special arrangements were made in this name on both the sides. The immigration officials on the Indian side seemed to be as excited about our trip as we were. They were wishing us and our conference good luck. The officials on the other side were treating us like royal guests.

#### The Conference

It was around the theme of building bridges and bringing women's voice in peace-building that the Conference was organised. There were three sub-themes of the seminar: Gender and Peace-building: Understanding women's narrative on Kashmir conflict; Empowering women in peace-building; and lastly, Women, Inclusive Security and sustainable peace-building. The basic tenor of the seminar was built around probing the role of women in the peace processes and advocating for a bigger space for them in all the formal political processes and institutions. There was a general concern that despite being the major stakeholders in the political processes, women are generally marginalised in decision making processes. Despite the assertion of the agency of women in a variety of manners, neither are they represented in leadership positions nor are their gender concerns reflected in the conflict related discourse. In the overall patriarchal nature of conflict, their issues are raised in an instrumental manner without much concern for their gender interests.

Though like every other discourse on conflict situation, the suffering of women in the conflict situation was underlined, yet the basic mood of the participants was to emphasise the resilience and survival of women. Participant after participant emphasised the need to go beyond the discourse of victimhood and to focus on their survival strategies, their empowerment and their assertion of rights. A speaker clearly emphasised the point that too much of emphasis on victimhood leads to the perpetuation of discrimination. Reflecting at the ground reality which points towards the fact that women have come out of the mode of victimhood, many participants talked about the need to focus on the issues related to rehabilitation and reconciliation. Rather than the politics of despair that is generally reflected in the male-dominated discourse of conflict,

it was the politics of hope that was being stressed upon. Examples of prominent women were given who are involved in the process of rehabilitation of other women; who are engaging in the issues related to justice; who are playing active role in empowering women—educating them, building their skills, providing them resources. Countless nameless women, it was stated, are providing support to their families. On the whole, women are moving forward, coming out of their passivity and transcending their state of helplessness.

What could be further seen as path-breaking response during the conference, was the emphasis on woman being both as a ‘person’ in her own right as well as a ‘political person’. The language that was used was the language of ‘rights’, of ‘assertion’ and of ‘demands’. Though acknowledging the suffering of woman as a ‘mother’ or as a ‘wife’, the need to go beyond this discourse was emphasised. As a speaker stated that it is true that many women have suffered because they have lost their sons or their husbands, yet limiting them to their relationship with men leads to making their agency invisible. Till the time we continue to see women only in their relation to men, their gender subordination is reinforced.

Interestingly, mention was made, not only of social subordination of women but of their political subordination. Ranging from the issues of absence of women in leadership positions, formal political institutions, and peace processes to the issue of the absence of gender narratives of conflict – the patriarchal nature of all politics, both the mainstream as well as separatist, was pointed out. The fact that the political space is not being provided to women, was taken note of. Demand was therefore made not only for including women in the formal and informal processes of peace building but also in all other political processes and institutions. Extending the debate to other dimension of politics, the political use of religion to the disadvantage of women was also talked about.

Gender remained the central point of conference. Much of the debate revolved around the question of rights and empowerment of women. In the specific context of peace building, the gender concerns, gender representation and gender equality were considered the major pillars. Linking the relationship between gender equality and peace building, a participant noted the two-way relationship between the two. If there is gender equality, there would be better scope for peace building and if there is peace, there would be better possibilities of gender equality.

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<http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/conversations-across-the-loc/article4098789.ece?homepage=true>

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November 16, 2012

## **Conversations across the LoC**

Kalpana Sharma

The perception gap on the condition of women on both sides was evident at the latest intra-Kashmir dialogue

November 5, 2012. Women stood on both sides of the Line of Control on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad crossing in Kashmir. As they waited, it began to drizzle. Officials on both sides seemed to be waiting interminably for the other side to open the gates. Finally, the waiting ended and for the first time in the troubled history of Kashmir, 10 women from the Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Ladakh walked across the Kaman bridge to talk about peace with their counterparts on the other side of the LoC.

A journey that took them only a few hours was many months, almost a year in the making. Since 2007, women from both sides of the LoC had met in two Intra-Kashmir Cross-LoC Women's Dialogues facilitated by the New Delhi-based Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR). The first meeting was held in Srinagar, the second in Gulmarg in 2011. On both occasions, the women from across the LoC had to undertake a four-day journey across the Wagah border.

This year, the newly-formed AJK Women for Peace Organisation based in Muzaffarabad decided to hold the dialogue. The women they invited from Jammu and Kashmir insisted they would only attend if they were permitted to travel across the LoC.

### **Misconception**

What should have been a routine matter in fact took months of intense negotiation. There is a misconception on both sides of the LoC that the 2005 confidence-building measure (CBM) of opening the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar road was only to facilitate the meeting of divided families. In fact, there is no such specific reference in the agreement and it is open to Kashmir residents on either side. Yet, because of this assumption, only those wanting to visit family on the other side could seek permits.

On November 5, when the 10 women crossed over they set an important precedent that could open the way for many more intra-Kashmir dialogues.

The cynics would say, what of it if the larger political issue of Kashmir remains unsettled. Yet, a prerequisite for peace between countries and between regions must necessarily be a meeting of minds between the people. In the absence of routes of communication, how can there be any conversation that could presage peace?

This is what the three dialogues between women have been attempting. It is not as easy as it sounds. Apart from the logistical problems, there is a real perception gap.

If you say "Kashmir", "women" and "suffering" on the Pakistan side of the LoC, the only response is the suffering of women on the Indian side. There is an automatic assumption that just because there is no conflict of the kind seen on the Indian side, women across the LoC face no problems. Indeed, even during the three-day meeting in Muzaffarabad, which still bears the scars of the devastating 2005 earthquake, this perception gap was evident.

Some of it is inevitable as there have been campaigns, studies, books and reports in abundance about the many ways in which women in Jammu and Kashmir have suffered since the beginning of militancy in 1989. In contrast, there is little by way of similar studies about the impact of

conflict on women on the other side of the LoC. As a result, there is a tendency to focus entirely on women on the Indian side. And many of the demands in the consensus statement reflect this, such as a call for demilitarisation and setting up of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The delegation from Jammu and Kashmir, however, repeatedly asked that they be informed of the situation of women on the Pakistan side of the LoC. Some information did come through but not nearly enough.

For instance, there was practically no mention of the problems women face in the Neelum valley. When Indian and Pakistani troops exchange fire — despite the 2003 ceasefire agreement, violations continue — the families in the Neelum valley bear the brunt. On the Pakistan side, this is also a poor region. Many of the men have migrated to jobs in Pakistan's urban centres or the Gulf. The women left behind are displaced for varying periods, their isolation from the rest of the region denies them basic services such as health care, and their poverty increases their vulnerability.

There was also silence about the thousands of women who crossed over in the 1990s and live in camps or have merged with the local population. These displaced families are being given some relief according to a recent study but most of them, particularly the women, want to return to their homes in India. Only a small percentage living outside the camps did not want to go back.

Still, at the end of the three days, this difference in perception was set aside because the main issue was not comparative suffering but how to address the needs of women on both sides of the LoC.

The overwhelming demand was for easing travel and communication between the two sides, including a special appeal by the women from Baltistan, Gilgit and Ladakh for a crossing that would facilitate their travel. Almost all the women, from both sides of the LoC, had heart-rending stories to tell about the price their families have paid because of the impenetrable line dividing the region. And even as they talked of this, there was joy as two sets of cousins “discovered” each other from among the participants.

### **Happy experience**

The most remarkable experience was that of Effat Yasmin, an economics professor from Kashmir University. During a casual conversation during a coffee break with Sajda Behar, a section officer in the education department in Muzaffarabad, she discovered that their mothers were first cousins. In fact, Sajda had applied for a permit to travel to Baramulla in 2005 and only got it this year. She is yet to make the journey.

Like Sajda's long-pending journey, the journey to peace is complex. This might have been a women's dialogue. Some of the issues were specific to what women experienced. But you could not escape the politics underlying the Kashmir issue. The women who talked know this and do not deny it. But they believe that they too should have a role in formulating peace because they have carried the burden of conflict.

<http://www.kashmirtimes.com/newsdet.aspx?q=7830>

# KASHMIR TIMES

Editorial

## [The 'better half' of the CBMs](#)

### **Pioneering visit of the women's delegation across LoC marks a good beginning**

Significance of women's participation in peace building and resolution of post-conflict issues has been recognised world over. Yet in the South Asian region there is less than marginal evidence of any such awareness. Closer home, it is almost a negligible factor within the ambit of India-Pakistan relationship. Still closer, here in the conflict-ridden Jammu and Kashmir there are feeble attempts at putting together some sort of assembly of womenfolk comprising various segments of the society. However, it would be too early, if not presumptuous, to subject any such arrangement through the test of its representative character. There are numerous impediments, social, political, administrative and even attitudinal, in the way to fostering conducive culture for significant participation of women in the peace process. Keeping these inherent constraints in view, the just concluded maiden visit of a delegation of women from J&K to Pakistan Administered Kashmir on the other side of the Line of Control (LoC) deserves due appreciation.

The week-long visit sponsored jointly by the AJK-based Women For Peace Organisation (AJKWFPO) and India-based Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR) was aimed at forging a broad consensus towards strengthening the fragile process in and related to Jammu and Kashmir. Cross-LoC visit even by individuals and divided families are subjected to unduly harsh 'security and intelligence' verification on both sides. The visit of the women's delegation was no exception. At times these restrictions are so frustrating that the intending visitors prefer to stay back than pursue their objective. Having gone through the mill, as it were, the women's delegation from here to Muzaffarabad appeared to have succeeded in breaking some fresh ground towards promoting the desired objectives. There is no doubt, however, that if the so-called intelligence apparatus had not intervened in clearance of the visit the delegation would have benefited from the contribution of those who were left out from the list.

Notwithstanding that hitch, It is indeed significant that the delegation's first ever visit across the LoC has turned out to be a worthwhile exercise. The free and frank manner in which the women participants exchanged ideas over some of the crucial issues is likely to pave the way for greater interaction between them. The conference at Muzaffarabad has come out with a consensus statement over several issues having a direct bearing upon the course of peace process as well as on the human rights front. Issues like those relating to the victims of the conflict, families of the disappeared and the youth stranded on the other side of the LoC came to be discussed in detail with both sides formulating a common approach towards seeking early solution to these and other problems.

These small steps need to be viewed in the larger perspective of the peace process in general and the cross-LoC confidence building measures (CBMs) in particular. CBMs need to be

reinforced and consolidated. In fact it is high time to take the process forward and enlarge its scope so as to benefit maximum number of families and individuals. The recommendation of the women's conference held at Muzaffarabad in this regard lends force to the popular demand that while the basic dispute is being pursued at appropriate levels consolidation of CBMs should not be left in the limbo. The proposed visit of Hurriyat leaders to Pakistan later this month at the invitation of the Government of Pakistan is a positive development, especially as New Delhi does not seem to be unfavourably inclined towards the move, unlike in the past.

Over half a century long conflict, aggravated by the armed insurgency in 1990s, has inflicted deep wounds upon popular psyche in Kashmir. Victims of the conflict have been crying for justice. Dignity of life is still a dream even though everybody who is anybody is eager to claim credit for restoration of 'normalcy'. It is appreciable that these and other humanitarian issues figured prominently in the Muzaffarabad conference. In any case, it was just that proverbial first step in the right direction and needs to be appreciated in that spirit. However, its ultimate achievement would be judged by the follow up on this wish list.

<http://www.pressforpeace.org.uk/peace-programme/press-room/Press-Room>

#### [Women delegates from Indian Kashmir arrive in Muzaffarabad](#)

posted Nov 6, 2012 3:28 PM by PFP Admin [ updated Nov 6, 2012 4:49 PM ]

A ten-member delegation of women from Indian Jammu and Kashmir arrived in Muzaffarabad on Monday through a crossing point along the Line of Control (LoC). The delegates are attending a two-day intra-Kashmir cross LoC women's dialogue which commenced in Muzaffarabad on Tuesday.

The conference is being held under the arrangement of 'AJK Women for Peace Organisation' (AJKWPO) and Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF), a French organisation. As the delegation members, who represented Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Ladakh regions, walked into the Pakistan administered Kashmir (PaK) territory through the famous Kaman Bridge. They were enthusiastically greeted by their hosts with hugs, garlands and flower petals showering.

Kaman Bridge-located some 60 kilometres south of Muzaffarabad is one of the crossing points on Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. This crossing point was opened for divided Kashmiri families in 2005 as part of the 'confidence building measures' between the nuclear armed South Asian neighbours, India and Pakistan.

From the bridge, the women were brought to a girls college in border town of Chakothei where young schoolchildren had arranged a welcome reception.

The delegation includes Prof Dr Nusrat Andrabi, Nighat Shafi Pandit, Prof Tazdin Joldan, Qurrat-ul-Ain, Prof Dr Effat Yasmeen, Dr Ravinderjit Kour, Prof Dr Rekha Chowdhary, Prof Yasmin Ashai, Prof Ellora Puri and Ayesha Salim.



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Separately, three other women from India-Sushobha Barve, Aditi Bhaduri and Kalpana Subramania Sharma also arrived in Muzaffarabad on Monday to attend the conference.

Being Indian nationals, they had travelled through the international border between India and Pakistan, the other day.

On Monday evening, registration of around 70 participants was done at the venue of the conference, a 5-star hotel here, followed by an introductory session, chaired by eminent Kashmiri writer Begum Surraya Khurshid, who is widow of former PaK president K H Khurshid.

Rukhsana Muhammad, an active member of AJKWPO, told Greater Kashmir that the conference would hear the women's narratives on Kashmir, with reference to their experience in the conflict and the role they could play in peace building.

"It is aimed at building bridges and bringing women's voice into peace building in Kashmir," she said.

In September last year, a 16-member delegation from PaK and Gilgit-Baltistan had travelled to Srinagar to attend a 2-day intra-Kashmir women's conference on women's role in society, under the aegis of CDR in collaboration with the Srinagar-based Women for Peace (WFP).

The delegation will return on November 12.

<http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/2012/Nov/9/participants-call-for-easing-cross-loc-travel-trade-58.asp>

**Participants call for easing cross-LoC travel, trade**

## **Intra-Kashmir Dialogue Concludes**

### **TARIQ NAQASH**

Muzaffarabad, Nov 8: An intra-Kashmir dialogue of women concluded here on Wednesday, with more than a dozen recommendations regarding free and trouble free traveling between the divided parts of Jammu and Kashmir as well as empowerment of Kashmiri women for a tangible role in peace-building.

Held in a local hotel here the event saw participation by women from Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Ladakh, PaK and Gilgit-Baltistan on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC).

Organizers said six formal sessions were held during the two days of conference wherein three broad inter-linked themes came under discussion. These themes included 'gender and peace building: understanding women narratives,' 'empowering women in peace-building,' and 'women inclusive security and sustainable peace building in Kashmir.'

According to a consensus statement, released at the conclusion, the participants called for easing of cross-LoC travel regime by simplifying the administrative cum security clearance procedures, particularly hassle free travel for senior citizens and emergency travel.

In this regard, they reiterated introduction of a smart card for free movement of state-subjects across the LoC besides improvement of facilities along the travel route and at the crossing points, provision of gender sensitive public convenience system, such as better roads, better communication facilities and monetization of trade.

The travel facility should be extended to post-1990 refugees living in PaK as well, they said.

Calling for increased cross-LoC interactions between women entrepreneurs, educationalists, lawyers, journalists, students and conflict resolution experts, the stressed that women should form cross-LoC coalition for peace in Kashmir and act as an advocacy cum pressure group to make their voices heard.

Working group should develop shared vision of peace in Kashmir and pursue the agenda of repairing the fractured inter-community relations and bridging the perception gaps within and across the divided Jammu and Kashmir, they added.

Continuing, they called for a task force for women for both sides of the divide with the mandate to address human rights and humanitarian issues, including selected post-earthquake rehabilitation issues for women, girls and orphans on both sides of the divide.

An intra-Kashmir confidence building measure and common agenda regarding preservation of environment specifically forests and water management and natural disaster response was also recommended.

For sustenance of the ceasefire along the LoC, they suggested relocation of heavy artillery and removal of land-mines which obstructed free movement of people and caused civilian casualties.

They also demanded gradual demilitarization including that of the Siachen glacier and its conversion into a peace park

They called for engaging women in transitional justice processes, which connected peace, justice, and reconciliation and provision of justice to the victims of conflict, especially widows, half widows, disappeared persons, displaced persons and refugees and rehabilitation of youth.

Demanding end to abuse of human rights and scrapping of draconian laws and impunity, they suggested an independent “Truth & Reconciliation Commission” in Jammu and Kashmir to address grievances of victims of the conflict.

For data collection and sharing, a cross LoC working group should be formed.

The participants also demanded 33 per cent women representation/ participation in policy making positions and other government departments and commissions and asked the political organizations to do the needful in this regard.

Media was also asked to play a pro-active role in enhancing women’s participation and highlighting issues of women.

It may be recalled that it was for the first time that the participants of this conference were allowed to travel through a crossing point along the LoC. Appreciating it as a historic step, they expressed the hope that India and Pakistan would continue to facilitate LoC crossings for all activities of the Intra-Kashmiri women group.

<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/intrakashmir-crossloc-meet-seeks-relaxation-in-travel-regime/article4078483.ece>

ISLAMABAD, November 9, 2012

## **Intra-Kashmir cross-LoC meet seeks relaxation in travel regime**

**Anita Joshua**

Women activists to form a cross-LoC coalition for peace in Kashmir

Now that a group of women activists from Jammu & Kashmir were allowed to cross over the Line of Control into `Azad Jammu & Kashmir' (AJK) on Monday last for an intra-Kashmir cross-LoC dialogue in Muzaffarabad, the expectation is that such crossings will be facilitated by both countries to allow more such interactions.

At the end of the three-day meeting, the two sides sought a relaxation in the cross-LoC travel regime. In place of the current security clearance procedures involved in getting an entry permit, participants at the conference suggested a smart card to facilitate free movement of State subjects across the LoC. Also, they demanded that the travel facility be extended to post-1990 refugees living in `AJK' besides hassle-free travel for senior citizens and provision for emergency travel.

The women decided to form a cross-LoC coalition for peace in Kashmir and act as an advocacy-cum-pressure group to make their voice heard. There will be a working group to develop a shared vision of peace in Kashmir and pursue the agenda of repairing fractured inter-community relations and bridging the perception gaps within and across divided J&K.

Other recommendations included consolidating the ceasefire on the LoC by relocating heavy artillery/mortars and removing landmines that obstruct free movement of people and cause civilian casualties; gradual demilitarisation, including that of Siachen glacier and turning it into a peace park; and providing justice to the victims of the conflict, especially widows, `half widows,' disappeared persons, displaced/refugees and rehabilitation of youth.

They called for setting up an independent Truth & Reconciliation Commission in J&K to address grievances of victims of the conflict, ending human rights violations and scrapping draconian laws. This was the third such interaction between women peace activists on both sides of the divide; the earlier two were held in Srinagar and Gulmarg.

<http://www.risingkashmir.in/news/first-women-delegation-to-cross-loc-today-35864.aspx>

## **First women delegation to cross LoC today**

Monday, 05 Nov 2012 at 12:24

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Will stay in Muzaffarabad for a week

Rising Kashmir News

SRINAGAR, Nov 4: The first-ever delegation women social activists from Jammu and Kashmir will cross over the Line of Control (LoC) near Uri on Monday to attend a Cross-LoC Women's Meet in Muzaffarabad. The delegation will stay in PaK for a week and return on November 12.

The visit of the women activists has been facilitated by Delhi-based NGO, Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation (CDR). The 10-member delegation comprises of chairperson HOPE, Nighat Shafi Pandit, former principals of Government Women's College M A Road Srinagar, Prof Nusrat Andrabi and Prof T Joldan, Qurrat-ul-Ain, Prof Effat Yasmeen, Prof Ravinderjit Kour, Prof Rekha Chowdhary, Prof Yasmin Ashai, Ellora Puri and Ayesha Saleem.

Sources said the women's group would take part in two days Cross-LoC conference in Muzaffarabad in which women activists from different parts of Pakistan will participate.

The group will also meet people from various shades of opinion such as political leaders, social activists, academicians and journalists. CDR Executive Director Sushobha Barve has already reached Muzaffarabad to receive the delegation.

While this is the first visit of women activists from this side of state, the CDR has earlier organized two such conference in women from PaK have participated. One such conference was organized in Srinagar in November 2007 and the last was held in Gulmarg in September 2011.

The Gulmarg conference had deliberated on Women's Roles in Peace-building, Women's Roles in Policy-making, and, Socio-economic and Legal Issues in Women's Empowerment.

At the end of the conference the delegates had passed a resolution: "We, the women of entire Jammu and Kashmir, from both sides of the LoC desire peace, security, and economic stability to prevail throughout the region and an immediate end to the protracted conflict. We demand inclusion of women in all peace-building and peace negotiations/dialogue on Kashmir.

"As an outcome of these two days of deliberations we have resolved the following: The resolution on Kashmir must reflect the aspirations of all regions and communities of all parts of undivided Jammu and Kashmir, including Gilgit- Baltistan."

They had also urged their respective governments to simplify procedures in trade, communication and travel across the LOC and opening of other trade and travel routes, like Kargil-Skardu, Chamb-Bhimbar, and Leh-Khaplu.

The other demands made at the conference included: “The cease-fire be respected with immediate halt to violations and land mine issues be addressed. The immediate release and return of stray crossers. The immediate phased de-militarization in all civilian areas, and repeal of draconian acts like AFSPA and PSA. The government should review its policy towards the SPOs, SOGs, and VDCs. An end to human rights abuses and violations of all kinds – arbitrary arrests and detentions, enforced disappearances, sexual violence, crackdowns, searches, displacement of all kinds, rehabilitation of displaced communities without segregation – by all sides.”