

Office of the Chief Public Relations Officer
Jamia Millia Islamia

Press Release

Jamia Millia Islamia Hosts National Symposium on Women's Contributions to Urdu-Hindi Literature

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The Sarojini Naidu Centre for Women's Studies (SNCWS), Jamia Millia Islamia, in collaboration with the Delhi Urdu Academy, organized a two-day National Symposium on "*Urdu-Hindi Adab Main Khawateen ki Hissedari*" (The Contribution of Women in Urdu and Hindi Literature) last week.

The symposium opened on May 5 with inaugural session. Dr. Firdaus Azmat Siddiqui, the Convener of the symposium, delivered the welcome address emphasizing the critical need to recognize women's contributions to Urdu and Hindi literary traditions. Prof. Nishat Zaidi, Honorary Director of SNCWS, welcomed attendees and lucidly explained the intricate interplay of language, gender, and literature. Acclaimed novelist Rahman Abbas was the keynote speaker who captivated the audience, stating, "Women are no longer mere characters; they have become symbols of thought and resistance." Mr. Mohammad Ahsan Abid, Secretary of the Delhi Urdu Academy, underscored the value of collaborative academic initiatives in advancing literary scholarship. The session concluded with a vote of thanks, setting an engaging tone for the event.

In addition to the inaugural and valedictory sessions, the symposium featured nine plenary sessions over two days, exploring women's roles in Urdu and Hindi poetry, prose, journalism, cinema besides other social discourses. On May 5, distinguished scholars including Prof. Ahmad Mahfooz, Prof. Savita Singh, Play writer Mr Aslam Parvez (Mumbai), Urdu Magazine Editor Mr. Shadab Rashid (Mumbai), Dr. Haider Ali, Poet and story writer Mr Khurshid Akram, Noted fiction writer Dr Rizwan-ul Haque (NCERT), Dr Anab Nayyar delivered thought-provoking lectures. A highlight was a thorough discussion among noted poets and scholars examining the contemporary fiction through a feminist lens, which sparked a vibrant debate.

On May 6, the day began with a special address by Prof. Azra Abdi presided over by Prof. Nishad Zaidi. Professor Abidi spoke on the literary legacy of Prof. Sughra Mehdi followed by the addresses of eminent poets and scholars. An insightful paper on Qurratul Ain Haider's seminal novel '*Aag Ka Darya*' presented by Dr Sanobar Hussaini, analyzed society, politics, and national identity from a woman's perspective. Other plenary sessions on "Women and Media" and "Women and Cinema" featured insights

and experiences from media professionals such as Sadaf Khan, Ms. Sultanat (DD Urdu), Ms Ratna Shukla (Sr Journalist), and Artist Shah Abul Faiz who teaches in the department of Painting at Faculty of Fine Arts. Shah Abul Faiz delivered an interesting talk on the golden period of Hindi Cinema and talked about the legacy of Mina Kumari and Madhubala. The symposium also addressed feminist discourse in Dalit literature, with Prof. Hemlata Maheshwar and Prof. Kahkasha amplifying the voices of marginalized women. The final plenary session on "Women in Literature" included Dr. Surayya Tabassum, Dr Mohammad Afzal, Dr. Hina Khan, and Dr. Naushad, who explored themes of identity, resistance, and agency in women's literary contributions.

The symposium concluded with a vibrant Kavya Path (Poetry Reading) session, chaired by Prof. Rahman Musavir, with Prof Sanjeev Kaushal (DU) as the chief guest. Well known Poets including Prof. Savita Singh, Renu Husain, Taruna Mishra, Dr Wala Jamal Al-Asili (Egypt), Shariqa Malik, Prof. Dilip Shakya, and Dr Aparna Dixit mesmerized the audience with their evocative works, celebrating the creative power of women's voices in poetry. The valedictory ceremony was graced by Dr. Rashmi Singh (IAS), Principal Resident Commissioner & Commissioner, Hospitality & Protocol, Jammu & Kashmir, who in her profound valedictory address advocated for integrating feminine perspectives to build a more equitable society. Prof. Asif Mazhar, Vice Chancellor of Jamia Millia Islamia, delivered a profound presidential lecture, urging the audience to recognize the dignity and invaluable contributions of women while passionately advocating for equality between men and women as a cornerstone of societal progress. Prof. Muslim Khan, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, praised the symposium for fostering meaningful dialogue and advancing academic discourse.

Prof. Nishat Zaidi, reflecting on the symposium's significance, stated, "This symposium has illuminated the indomitable spirit of women in Urdu-Hindi literature, weaving their voices into the fabric of our shared cultural heritage. It has not only enriched academic discourse but also reaffirmed the power of women's creative and intellectual contributions to shape a more inclusive and equitable society." Dr. Firdaus Azmat Siddiqui expressed heartfelt gratitude to participants, noting that their enthusiastic engagement elevated the discourse and advanced SNCWS's mission to promote critical discussions on gender and literature. She argued that this symposium aimed to serve as a dynamic platform to celebrate and explore the transformative roles of women in Urdu-Hindi literature, media, cinema, and societal discourse, fostering profound academic dialogue and cultural exchange.

In a special gesture, Dr. Firdaus Azmat Siddiqui's recently released novel '*Rind*' was presented as a gift to the Chief Guest, Dr. Rashmi Singh, and the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Asif Mazhar, symbolizing the symposium's celebration of women's literary achievements. The National Symposium underscored the transformative power of women's voices, offering a robust platform for scholarly engagement with their evolving roles in

literature, media, and social discourse. The event reinforced the shared legacy of Urdu-Hindi literature and its relevance in shaping a more inclusive society.

The event was a success and was attended by poets, critics, journalist, noted scholars of Urdu and Hindi besides students and faculties across the faculties of Jamia Millia Islamia.

Prof. Saima Saeed

Chief Public Relations Officer

Jamia Millia Islamia









