

KU VC inaugurates lecture series on Sociology and Pandemic

Renowned sociologist Prof Anand Kumar delivers keynote address at inaugural session



Srinagar, Apr 7: Vice-Chancellor University of Kashmir Prof Talat Ahmad Wednesday inaugurated a lecture series on Sociology and Pandemic.

The online lecture series titled ‘re-configuring sociology in times of pandemic: a roadmap ahead’ has been organised by the Department of Sociology. In his presidential address, Prof Talat said the lecture series is a timely initiative to address some of the pressing social challenges thrown by the Covid19 pandemic.

“People from medical sciences are busy doing whatever they can to address this pandemic. But whatever the message of science is has to go to the people through social scientists, who can communicate with the society in a much better way,” he said, adding that social sciences and medical sciences will have to go together to serve the society.

Keynote speaker Prof Anand Kumar (retired) from JNU’s prestigious CSSS said the post-Covid situation is the time for Indian social scientists to come forward and make a sense of what’s going on around them.

“These are unusual times. There is no normality around. The pandemic has thrown every institution into a crisis—from colleges to universities to factories and fields, from shopping centers to entertainment centers, from traveling in local buses to international airplanes. While children are asking what is going on around us, the society is equally perplexed and expects sociologists to come forward and make sense of what’s going on around them.”

“We also need to look at the impact of pandemic which has drawn us to a ‘new normal.’ The old normal was ‘real’, the new normal is ‘virtual,’” he said, citing how conferences and seminars in the world today are held in virtual mode as against the physical mode.

“In one year, we have moved from fear and anxiety to a hope generated by the availability of vaccines. But as Covid cases continue to rise again today, with some new variants reported to have surfaced, we are moving back to hopelessness even though the country’s citizens are being vaccinated at a very rapid speed,” he said, urging sociologists to keep pace with the new changes and new challenges in the larger interest of the society.

In her welcome address, Prof Aneesa Shafi, Head Department of Sociology said that Covid19 has altered the social and world order completely.

“The pandemic has led to unprecedented changes, unsettling several facets of our existence. We are holding this lecture series to address some of the pressing questions that sociologists are facing, including how to safeguard livelihood of people, how to reorient social relationships amid social distancing norms, how to address vulnerabilities and how to reconfigure our institutions.”

The inaugural session was attended by more than 100 participants from all across the country.

Dr Farah Qayoom, Assistant Professor, delivered a vote of thanks.

