

International webinar on Literary Response to Pandemics begins at KU

Srinagar, Aug 24: A three-day international webinar on 'Literary Response to Pandemics' started at the University of Kashmir.

Dean Academic Affairs Prof Farooq A Masoodi inaugurated the webinar, organised by the Department of English.

In his presidential address, Prof Masoodi said that the Covid19 pandemic threw newer challenges to the world of academics, forcing realignment of their academic orientation in accordance with what's now generally called as the 'new normal'.

"At the University of Kashmir, we were very quick to respond to this fast-changing scenario and switch over to the online mode of education to ensure that our academic routine is not disrupted to the disadvantage of our students," he said, asserting that academic world will continue to face more challenges even in the post-pandemic world which our teachers and researchers will have to be ready to face.

In his keynote address title 'Power and Pandemics', renowned scholar Dr Tabish Khair from Aarhus University Denmark dwelt at length on different types of disruptions caused by the Covid19 pandemic across the world, especially the labour crisis, shutting down of industries and countless workers across the world being laid off from their workplaces.

Prof Khair is an author of several internationally acclaimed books.

In her welcome address, Seminar Director and Head Department of English Prof Nusrat Bazaz said the Covid19 pandemic has disrupted our lives in so many ways and completely transformed the way we work.

"The world of academics has had to readjust and reorient itself to online platforms and virtual spaces. We, at the department of English, have also adapted to this 'new normal' to keep academic conversations going despite the challenges of the times," she said.

Highlighting achievements of the Department of English, one of the oldest departments on the campus, Prof Bazaz said the department promotes interdisciplinarity and tries to integrate literary concerns with broader cultural debates.

"The department has an excellent placement record with most of our students absorbed in well reputed institutions. Recently nine of our passouts were selected as assistant professors in the J&K higher education department," she said.

She said the department has been able to organise an online lecture series this year and connect with distinguished academicians from within and outside the country once a month, thus providing its scholars and students an opportunity to interact with faculty from Georgetown University, Columbia University, Cambridge University to name a few.

Dean School of Arts, Languages and Literature Prof Adil Amin Kak, former HoDs of English Department, students and scholars from different parts of the country and abroad joined the inaugural and technical sessions.

Dr Iffat Maqbool conducted proceedings of the inaugural session.