

KU VC inaugurates awareness programme on drug de-addiction



Srinagar, Feb10: Kashmir University's Department of Students Welfare (DSW) on Thursday started its drug de-addiction awareness programme under 'Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan' initiative.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Talat Ahmad, who was the chief guest on the occasion, inaugurated the programme which is aimed to raise awareness on drug abuse in 10 districts of Kashmir.

In his presidential address, Prof Talat said it is a very significant initiative being led by the DSW and its office-bearers and student volunteers.

"It (drug abuse) is an alarming situation that we are seeing in J&K and other parts of the country. We have done something about it at the institutional, societal and personal levels to curb the menace for the wellbeing of people, especially youth," he said.

He said young lives are getting impacted by this menace and it is important for everyone to put their heads together and frame robust policies and strategies on both awareness and mitigation fronts to usher in a significant change at grassroots.

Prof Talat said academic institutions, especially universities, cannot stay away from taking a lead in holding such vital awareness programmes.

Prof Abdul Majid, Head Department of Psychiatry, SKIMS Medical College Bemina, delivered the keynote address.

Quoting year 2019 figures, Prof Majid said 3.5% population in J&K uses alcohol while 1.3% uses cannabis. He also said 4.91% population uses opioids in J&K which is a huge cause of concern.

He said since drug addiction is a multi-dimensional issue, it requires a multi-pronged strategy to curb it for young lives to be able to live their lives normally. He urged involvement of all stakeholders including government departments and civil society members to raise awareness on drug abuse and its ill effects on people's health, economy and families.

Registrar Dr Nisar A Mir, who was a guest of honour, said: "Our DSW has done some remarkable outreach programmes on important social and environmental issues.

"Drug addiction eats into the vitals of our society and takes away most productive youth, apart from draining our economy," he said, urging the DSW to carry out awareness at the community level on the deleterious fallouts of drug addiction among youth.

He said under the leadership of VC Prof Talat Ahmad, the University has been extending its all out support to such pro-society initiatives.

In his welcome address, Dean Students Welfare Prof Raies A Qadri said some figures suggest that 6 lakh people are involved in drug abuse in J&K, including 70000 girls.

"This is an alarming situation that we need to discuss and debate," he said, asserting that Prof Talat has left no stone unturned to help the DSW in reaching out to different districts of Kashmir with awareness programmes on issues like mental health, drug abuse and suicide prevention.

Zahid Jeelani, Junior Coordinator DSW conducted proceedings of the inaugural session and also delivered a vote of thanks.

The inaugural session was, among others, attended by a galaxy of academics including Dean School of Behavioural Sciences Prof Showket A Shah, Head Department of Social Work Dr Shazia Manzoor, research scholars and students.