

KU VC inaugurates symposium on 'Mental Health and Wellbeing'

Calls for action-oriented roadmap to boost advocacy, awareness campaigning



Srinagar, Oct 12: Vice-Chancellor University of Kashmir Prof Nilofer Khan on Wednesday inaugurated a symposium on 'Mental Health and Wellbeing' organised by the varsity's Department of Psychology.

Addressing the inaugural session as chief guest, Prof Nilofer said advocacy and awareness are two important causes to be championed to tackle the emerging mental health concerns and also to "de-stigmatise" mental health.

Underlining the significant role that the Department of Psychology could play in addressing the mental health concerns, Prof Nilofer called for an action-oriented roadmap from the department on initiatives which could be taken at the University-level to contribute in this societal endeavour.

Complimenting the department for organising the symposium in connection with the World Mental Health Day, Prof Nilofer stressed on greater visibility of the department's Counselling Cell for the benefit of the varsity's students, scholars and staff who desire to avail the counselling facility.

KU Registrar Dr Nisar A Mir emphasised on the importance of "individual counselling" of teenagers who, he said, are largely hesitant to speak about their mental health issues and concerns.

Dean Research Prof Irshad A Nawchoo called for "assessing" the causes of

“isolation stress among students and research scholars which is negatively impacting their profile and behaviours”.

Dean School of Behavioural Sciences Prof Showket A Shah called for adequate budgetary provisions for mental health awareness and the related infrastructure development across the country. He said this is necessitated by the fact that 20% of the country's population is said to be suffering from some kind of a mental health issue.

Head, Department of Psychology, Dr Humaira Shafi, delivered the welcome address and highlighted the research areas of the department, including mental health. She said the department is holding more events in coming days, including a marathon and pamphlet distribution, to raise awareness on mental health.

Prof Arshid Hussain from Department of Psychiatry, IMHANS Srinagar, talked about different coping strategies, including playing group sports to create a social connection, sleeping well, creating and maintaining friendships where friends enjoy each others' successes and support each other in their failures. “Pursue your careers, identify your strengths; don't copy-cat because no profession is superior or inferior,” he said in his presentation titled “Mental Illness: The Modern Scourge”.

Dr Mohammad Muzaffar, Director Youth Development and Rehabilitation Centre, talked about how the mental health scenario changed post-Covid19, even as he highlighted “our collective responsibilities as parents, institutional heads, religious leaders and law-enforcement agencies” to address different challenges related to mental health.

Dr Ijaz Ahmad Suhaf, Consultant Psychiatrist, JVC SKIMS, underscored the importance of mental health literacy.

Dr Asma Nabi conducted proceedings of the inaugural session, while Dr Mohammad Muzamil and Dr Yasir Hamid delivered the vote of thanks.