

# KU VC inaugurates 2-day workshop on 'Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace'



**Srinagar, Oct 31:** Vice-Chancellor University of Kashmir Prof Nilofer Khan on Monday inaugurated a two-day capacity building workshop on 'Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace'.

The workshop has been organised by the University's Internal Complaints Committee (ICC).

In her presidential address, Prof Nilofer said the University administration is fully determined to create a congenial workplace atmosphere for its students, faculty and staff across its campuses.

Urging greater sensitisation of university stakeholders about prevention of sexual harassment at workplace, Prof Nilofer underlined the key role that the ICC can play to make a difference in this endeavour.

Complimenting the ICC for holding the two-day workshop, the Vice-Chancellor urged the Committee to formulate a roadmap on holding more such awareness programmes in future, including those at the community level involving other varsity departments like the Law, Sociology, Social Work, Home Science etc.

Prof Pam Rajput, Professor Emeritus, Punjab University Chandigarh and Former VP, National Alliance for Women Organisations, delivered the keynote address, highlighting the "interventionist role" that the University can play to share knowledge and sensitise the society at large against harassment of women.

"This (harassment of women) is not a localised issue," Prof Pam said, asserting that it is happening beyond workplaces and impacts the psyche, work opportunities,

physical and mental health of the victims.

She said the lofty goals like “women-led development” and “women as nation builders” cannot be achieved if “spaces” are not conducive for women to work.

Prof Yasmeen Ashai, Director Colleges J&K, who was a guest of honour, said sexual harassment of women “pervades all spaces” and continues to threaten the safety and dignity of women.

Referring to a report that flags 27% increase in harassment of women in the country following reopening of office spaces post-Covid19, Prof Ashai called for doing away with “red-tapeism in cases of sexual harassment of women where legal procedure is feared to turn into punishment for the victims.”

In his special remarks, KU Registrar Dr Nisar A Mir called for full accountability in cases of sexual harassment at workplaces and assured that the University administration is ever-determined to make the varsity completely secure for all its stakeholders. Dr Mir, at the same time, called for handling of complaints related to alleged sexual harassment of women with “utmost caution and care” so that any complaints based on misinformation or misreporting are appropriately dealt with.

Prof Aneesa Shafi, Dean Students' Welfare and Presiding Officer ICC KU, delivered the welcome address and highlighted objectives of the event which has brought together members from teaching and non-teaching fraternity in the University and its affiliated colleges on a common platform to discuss different aspects of POSH.

Dr Aneeda Jan, ICC member delivered the vote of thanks.