

## Webinar Series: KU hosts 2<sup>nd</sup> lecture on 'Covid-19 and Mental Health'

*Top administrators, academics call for regular counseling of students, teachers to combat adverse fallouts*

**Srinagar, Dec 10:** Top experts, administrators and academics Thursday jointly underscored the need to go for regular counseling of both students and teachers to help them combat the adverse fallouts of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Addressing as chief guest a webinar organised by Kashmir University's UGC-HRDC in collaboration with Government Degree College Bijbehara, Mr Talat Pervez Rohella, Commissioner-Secretary of J&K's Higher Education Department, outlined the department's comprehensive plan for mental wellbeing of students and teachers across the UT.

"Under this plan, the psychological counseling-cum-career planning cells have been established and activated in many degree colleges wherein psychological counseling and career-cum-placement related guidance is offered to students alongside orienting and training teachers to extend help to students in coping with all types of stress during the Covid-19 pandemic," he said. Mr Rohella said students need to be provided with opportunities to combat stress through sports, community outreach and extra-curricular activities. He lauded KU's UGC-HRDC for organising a series of national and international-level webinars during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This is the second lecture in the ongoing webinar series 'Covid-19 and Mental Health', inaugurated by Vice-Chancellor Prof Talat Ahmad on November 28.

KU Registrar Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir, who was the Guest of Honour, referred to varied coping strategies against stress from the social science perspective, including inculcating healthy behavioural, emotional and social skills.

"We need to undertake a realistic appraisal of our emotions and reactions, control impulsive behaviour, foster self-esteem and harness a positive mental attitude to overcome adversities and lead a happy life," he said, underlining the importance of organising programmes like these to counter day-to-day stress and deal with hardships in a sagacious manner.

Dr Mir offered services rendered by KU's Clinical Psychology Laboratory to the higher education and health departments of J&K to undertake counseling of students and teachers working in colleges.

Director UGC-HRDC Prof Shabir Ahmad Bhat called upon academics and students to transcend adversity through balanced emotional responses and effective counter strategies.

"No university or college can thrive in isolation. Therefore in matters of societal importance like mental health and hygiene, there is a need for a collaborative approach to address challenges and concerns thereof," he said.

Principal GDC Bijbehara Dr Nighat Fatima highlighted measures taken by the college in countering the challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic vis-à-vis mental health of students and teachers.

In his lecture, Dr Arshad Hussain, Professor, Department of Psychiatry, GMC Srinagar, discussed at length ways and means to overcome mental stress, use of technology for socialising and raising awareness, and role of artificial intelligence and psychotherapies in dealing with mental health problems.

Dr Showkat A Malik, Assistant Professor, GDC Bijbehara conducted proceedings of the webinar, while Dr Geer M Ishaq, Coordinator UGC-HRDC, proposed a vote of thanks.