

Enriching Communities:

Libraries more than just custodians of books: KU VC

Says, AI-like emerging tech revolutionising how we interact with information



Srinagar, Sep 10: To explore the transformative role of libraries in encouraging societal development and providing a platform for exploring how libraries can leverage new technologies to drive societal progress and community development, the University of Kashmir (KU) Tuesday inaugurated a two-day national seminar here.

Titled 'Enriching Communities: The Role of Emerging Technologies & Techniques in Libraries Towards Societal Advancement & Upliftment', the event is being organised by the varsity's Department of Library and Information Science in collaboration with the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation (RRRLF), Ministry of Culture.

On the occasion, KU Vice Chancellor Prof Nilofer Khan, emphasised the pivotal role of libraries as "more than just custodians of books" and said that public libraries, in particular, play a critical role in community development.

"Libraries today are evolving into dynamic hubs of innovation and knowledge-sharing and emerging technologies like AI, IoT and chatbots are revolutionising how we interact with information," she said.

She underscored the importance of higher education institutions (HEIs) in enhancing the role of libraries that are providing not only access to knowledge but also encouraging digital literacy, bridging gaps and offering support to underprivileged sections of society.

KU Registrar Prof Naseer Iqbal, highlighted the growing job prospects in the field of Library and Information Science and stressed the need to equip library professionals with the skills to manage digital repositories.

He said, "The integration of emerging technologies into library systems is opening up new career opportunities for students and professionals alike and we need to utilise AI-driven systems and understand the evolving landscape and data management."

Dean, School of Social Sciences and Head, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Jammu, Prof Sangita Gupta, said: "Libraries are now at the forefront of societal upliftment. Whether it is through research data management, digital preservation or providing community access to technology-driven devices, libraries are becoming centres of innovation."

Prof Preeti Mahajan, professor at the Department of Library and Information Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh, said: "The use of chatbots and AI in libraries can make information more accessible to a larger audience, enabling even the technologically underserved populations to benefit from digital resources," reiterating that libraries must embrace these technologies to stay relevant in the digital age.

Outlining the objectives of the seminar, Head, Department of Library and Information Science, KU, Prof Sumeer Gul, said: "This seminar brings together diverse professionals from across the country and it provides a unique opportunity to exchange ideas, share experiences and push the boundaries of innovation in the field of library and information science."

During the inaugural session, two books, 'Impact of Migration on Psycho-Social and Economic Well-being of Elderly Pandit Migrants' and 'Youth Entrepreneurship and Education in Conflict Areas', were released.

Meanwhile, the Social Development Federation (SDF) conferred its highest prestigious 'Research Excellence Award-2024' to Prof Sumeer Gul to recognise his outstanding contributions to higher education. Dr. Rozy Jan proposed the vote of thanks.