

‘Child Safety and Cyber Space’:

Enhance parental controls, introduce legislations for safe online navigation: KU VC



Srinagar, December 12: To address the issues of child safety and to explore solutions to ensure a secure online environment for children by raising faculty and student awareness, the Department of Social Work, Kashmir University (KU) in collaboration with Reform Foundation Tuesday organised an awareness-cum-brainstorming workshop here.

Titled ‘Child Safety and Cyber Space: Challenges and Opportunities’, the event featured discussions on awareness and sensitisation regarding cyber issues, challenges and control mechanisms with special emphasis on making the digital space safe for children.

Students, academics, civil society, officials from police and civil administration, industry and children’s organisations attended the programme.

KU Vice Chancellor, Prof Nilofer Khan said having teacher participants and people joining in from various government departments, law enforcing agencies indicates that we are in the right direction as they are connected with the ground with the power to transform societies.”

“We need to enhance parental controls and introduce legislations for safe online navigation. We need to train ourselves first by understanding the good and bad of the cyber world while being within the fold,” Prof Khan added.

Inspector General of Police (IGP), Central Investigation Department (CID), Jammu and Kashmir, Nitish Kumar said the theme is not only relevant but “something that affects all of us including our children in multiple ways”.

“Cyber security is a wide topic as there are layers to it. Through education and awareness, we can keep our children safe and secure,” he said, adding that there is need to understand it through the children’s perspective.

Rakesh Maheshwari, Advisory Council, Cyber Peace and former Senior, Director, Cyber Laws and Data Governance, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology said there are “side channels” posing new challenges and dangers by collecting personal data compromising safety.

“The interaction on internet and social media is increasing posing a serious risk making our children more vulnerable,” he reiterated.

KU Registrar, Dr Nisar Ahmad Mir, said the varsity engages youth by collaborating with law enforcement and government agencies to sensitise and educate them about various societal problems.

“The upskilling of educators should be our priority vis-a-vis cyber threats, drug abuse, etc.,” Dr Mir said, adding that KU has a critical role to play by mobilising masses for social reforms.

Director, Reform Foundation, Sheikh Inayatullah said that children are the most vulnerable as they cannot differentiate between good or bad as it is a matter of excitement for them.

“Borders are becoming irrelevant today as cyberterrorists go untraceable trolling, spreading misinformation and fake news and that is the real challenge,” he added.

Head, Department of Social Work, KU, Dr Shazia Manzoor, said there is an immediate need to educate the youth and academia about the cyber-world and its challenges.

“Unfortunately, children are the worst victims of such threats and we need to provide them with the tools for safe navigation,” Dr Shazia said.