

KU inaugurates two-day national level conference on peace education

'The absence of peace makes us realise the importance of peace education'



Srinagar, July 18: To highlight the importance of introducing peace education in government and private schools of J&K and Ladakh, the University of Kashmir inaugurated a two-day national level conference on 'Peace Education'. The conference is aimed at orienting students, teachers and teacher-trainers towards curbing child abuse, ensuring child safety and promoting juvenile justice.

The conference is being organized by the university's Department of Social Work in collaboration with the Directorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) and international NGO Save the Children. The conference is supported by HCL Foundation.

Honourable Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir Prof. Nilofer Khan presided over the inaugural function. She underscored the need for peace education in the curriculum and stressed on sensitising masses especially students, teachers, teacher-trainers for nation building.

Congratulating the Department of Social Work, DSEK, Save the Children for teaming up and organizing the conference, she offered all possible support for such events in future as well.

Highlighting the importance of peace education as prescribed by the New Education Policy, she said the initiative was taken by the university and Save the Children organization long ago.

She appreciated the selection of themes scheduled for the technical sessions and termed them very relevant and highly important.

She said, "It's our duty to look towards the overall development of our children and to create a peaceful environment in schools."

Underlining the critical aspects of peace education in India while referring to the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), Director, Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, Prof. Kaushikee in her keynote address said, "In order to train the child we need to train the teachers first."

She said integrating peace concerns with pedagogy was very important as "the absence of peace makes us realise the importance of peace education, and we must see alternatives to break the stereotypes."

In his remarks, Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Farooq A Masoodi said it is important to adapt to changing circumstances as that is the key to happiness and tolerance and in turn for lasting peace.

Highlighting the importance of child safety especially of the girl child, Registrar University of Kashmir, Dr. Nisar Ahmad Mir said, "We have to redefine the agencies of socialization as creches become the first points of socialization."

He further said we all trust our teachers and leave our wards to their mercy and that sensitising and training teachers first should be our primary objective.

Terming peace relative, Director, Directorate of School Education Kashmir (DSEK), Dr. Tassaduq Hussain Mir said peace changes from time to time and that peace education is a much needed intervention in schooling.

"In around 300 government schools, DSEK has already introduced peace education as part of the curriculum," he said.

Referring to the trend of suicides and highlighting the role of media in publishing content related to suicides, he said, "Media have to be very responsible as stories related to suicides have a tendency to trigger more suicides."

Sharing his experience as a child, CEO Save the children India, Sudharshan Suchi said, "Peace education is not an antidote to violence rather it helps in chasing the idea of happiness."

Terming parenting without violence a big challenge, Head, Save the Children, J&K and Ladakh, M Sharif Bhat said, "We must inculcate values and skills in children and there should be a healthy teacher-student relationship and peace education is one way to keep a check in that direction."

Earlier, briefing about organising the conference and the importance of peace education, Head, Department of Social Work, Dr. Shazia Manzoor said, "World peace begins with self-peace and to harvest peace capabilities we must mainstream peace education and school safety."

Experts from different fields are holding technical sessions on peace education, school safety and security, and child safeguarding policy.

During the inaugural session, Honourable Vice Chancellor University of Kashmir, Prof. Nilofer Khan felicitated the child champions associated with various peace projects and also distributed certificates of appreciation among them.

Save the Children Legacy Film “Kal Aaj Aur Kal”, short film “Child Champion” were also screened during the inaugural session. A Module and SOP on Comprehensive School Safety was also released during the event.

Child Champion Misbah Aslam also shared her experience being part of the peace endeavours. Dr. Sarfaraz Ahmad from the Department of Social Work University of Kashmir proposed the formal vote of thanks while Dr. Aadil Bashir conducted the proceedings.