

# KU seminar puts spotlight on 'elderly abuse' in Kashmir

*Senior geriatrician quotes his study, says 50% of 26,237 senior citizens suffered 'some form of abuse'*



**Srinagar, June 15:** Vice-Chancellor University of Kashmir Prof Nilofer Khan Thursday chaired a seminar on 'Elderly Abuse', a first-of-its kind event organised by the Varsity to put a spotlight on the issue which experts described as "alarming in Kashmir".

The seminar was jointly organised by the Department of Social Work (DoSW), KU, in collaboration with Gauri Kaul Foundation, a non-profit organisation working for elderly care, to commemorate the World Elderly Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD)-2023.

Addressing academics and students at the inaugural session, Prof Nilofer underlined the need to spread awareness on elderly care beyond the four walls of the University to create a society that values its elders and treats them with all respect, dignity, compassion and empathy.

Saying that the University of Kashmir is always open to such discussions having great societal significance, the VC congratulated the DoSW and Gauri Kaul Foundation for joining hands to hold the present seminar.

In his keynote address, Dr Zubair Saleem, Senior Geriatric Consultant and Director, Gauri Kaul Foundation, highlighted his Kashmir-based study of nearly

27,000 elderly persons of which, he said, at least 50% reported to be facing elderly abuse in one or the other form.

“We saw these 26,237 patients in two different settings: those who were financially dependent and those who were financially independent. Besides various effects that we documented like cardiovascular diseases, preliminary disease etc., there was one drastic thing that we noticed which is the psychiatric and sleep disorders in these senior citizens,” Dr Saleem said.

“The study revealed 43% elderly abuse in one setting and 52.3% in the other, which means around 50%. It is not a joke. It means one out of two people. And I think this estimate is conservative because it is only after lots of effort that people narrate their plight.”

Describing the situation as “alarming”, Dr Saleem—also an Organising Secretary of the seminar—also spelt out various forms of elderly abuse and their far-reaching implications on the physical, emotional and psychological wellbeing of the victims.

Dean of Academic Affairs, Prof F A Masoodi and Dean Research Prof Irshad A Nawchoo also shared their views on the theme.

Registrar Dr Nisar A Mir, who also shared the dais, said the students of Social Work and Sociology departments can research into causes of elderly abuse and contribute to raising awareness on this important issue.

Dr Shazia Manzoor, Head DoSW KU and Organising Secretary of the seminar, said the event was held under the supervision of the Vice-Chancellor with the larger objective of creating awareness on elderly care on the occasion of WEAAD-2023.

Joint Registrar, Dr Ashfaq A Zarri, the Convener of the seminar, delivered the vote of thanks at the inaugural session, which was attended by a galaxy of former KU academics and officers, heads of various teaching departments, faculty members and students.

Dr Wakar Amin conducted proceedings of the inaugural session, while Dr Saima Farhad moderated a panel discussion, where the panelists included Prof Imtiyaz Ali, former Dean, SKIMS; Dr Zubair Saleem; Prof M Afzal Qadri, former Professor of Law and former DSW, KU and Dr Adil Bashir, DoSW. It was chaired by Prof F A Masoodi.