

Experts pitch for 'Centre of Excellence in Natural Hazard Mitigation' at KU



Srinagar, June 1: Renowned experts and academics have raised a strong pitch for establishing a 'Centre of Excellence in Natural Hazard Mitigation' at the University of Kashmir in view of its vast importance for the region of Jammu and Kashmir which is vulnerable to natural disasters.

In the wake of successful culmination of a three-day national symposium on 'Earthquake, Landslide and Glacial Hazards' which was attended by globally-acclaimed scientists in the University recently, eminent experts and academics held detailed deliberations during a special meeting chaired by Vice-Chancellor, Prof Nilofer Khan.

The meeting endorsed the idea to have a Centre of Excellence in Natural Hazard Mitigation established in the University, with the Vice-Chancellor assuring full support from the University side, including necessary interventions at different levels, to realise the goal.

The meeting was attended by Padma Shri Prof Harsh K Gupta, Prof B K Rastogi, Prof O P Mishra, Prof M Sultan Bhat, Registrar Dr Nisar A Mir and Prof Pervez Ahmed, Head, Department of Geography and Disaster Management, KU.

The members unanimously agreed that given the region's vulnerability to different natural hazards like earthquakes, floods, landslides, avalanches and GLOFS, a specialised centre focussing on understanding and mitigating the adverse impacts of these hazards is the need of the hour in the University.

The Centre of Excellence in Natural Hazard Mitigation was therefore proposed by the committee to promote sharing of knowledge, expertise and services in the field of disaster management.

It was also emphasised that given the expertise available at the University of Kashmir, especially in the Department of Geography and Disaster Management, the proposed Centre would become a pioneering institution for pursuing advanced research in the areas of natural hazards mitigation, disaster risk reduction, climate crises, sustainability and environmental change.

The establishment of the proposed centre would make a huge difference at the ground level in mitigation practices, research, education and awareness, the members opined, adding that the Centre will also help enhance capacities for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) at various levels.

The members said that such a Centre would go a long way in tackling the disaster impacts in the region and play a great role in creating mass awareness and culture of disaster resilience among the people living in northern part of the country in general and Kashmir Himalayan region in particular.

The research and development activities at the Centre would help in development of disaster mitigation strategies and creation of new knowledge base with global impacts, they said.

The CoE will play a pivotal role in guiding the planners and policymakers in effectively pursuing the objectives of the global DRR and sustainability initiatives such as Sendai Framework for Action and Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030).

Notably, the recent symposium was organised jointly by the Indian Society of Earthquake Sciences (ISES) and the Department of Geography and Disaster Management, University of Kashmir.