

‘Indian Philosopher’s Day-2024’:

Youth must inculcate appreciation for great thinkers, philosophers: KU VC

Our thinking at present legacy of centuries of consistent philosophical journey: Expert



Srinagar, June 26: To underscore Kashmir’s contributions to Indian knowledge systems (IKS) through philosophy and mystic thought, the Centre of Central Asian Studies (CCAS), University of Kashmir (KU), in collaboration with the Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR), New Delhi, organised a daylong national seminar here Wednesday.

Titled, ‘Philosophical Thought of Kashmir’, the seminar brought together scholars across disciplines in humanities and social sciences. Academics, scholars and students from various universities within the country besides a diverse range of audience also participated in the programme.

On the occasion, KU Vice Chancellor, Prof Nilofer Khan, highlighted the contributions of women Rishis (saints) from Kashmir to philosophical thought. She urged the youth to learn more about cultural legacies while inculcating in them an appreciation for great thinkers and philosophers.

“Saint-poetess Lal Ded revolutionised this tradition by disseminating liberated philosophical concepts in the vernacular Kashmiri language conveying her profound insights through her ‘Vaakhs’, thereby making complex philosophical ideas accessible to a broader audience in a medium deeply rooted in the local culture,” she said.

In his keynote, former Dean, Faculty of Arts and former Head, Department of Urdu, KU, Prof Zaman Azurdah, emphasised the pivotal role of Kashmiri philosophers while advocating for structured research into their contributions to Indian philosophy.

“Our thinking at present is the legacy of centuries of consistent philosophical journey and we need to strive to carry this traditional legacy forward,” he said while referring to great intellectuals Shankaracharya and Abhinavagupta.

Drawing parallels between figures such as Lal Ded and René Descartes, he juxtaposed Indian and Western philosophical frameworks.

KU Registrar, Prof Naseer Iqbal, explored the philosophical underpinnings of astronomical sciences, particularly in relation to archaeological data and the role philosophy plays in shaping cultures and civilisations.

“Philosophy teaches us discipline. Kashmir has made significant contributions to knowledge dissemination, but we often fail to acknowledge our legendary contributions towards philosophy, enlightenment, spirituality and mysticism,” he maintained.

Coordinator, Akashvani Kendra Srinagar, Dr Satish Vimal, delivered a special address focusing on the spiritual and humanistic ethos inherent in Kashmiri philosophical traditions.

He talked about universal brotherhood, spiritual journeys and that how spiritual philosophy encompasses devotion, literary mysticism and youth engagement.

“As civilizations across the region experienced advancements, Kashmir was not merely a passive recipient but actively engaged with and contributed to various realms of social and intellectual pursuits,” he said.

Director, CCAS, Prof Tabasum Firdous, said that philosophically, Kashmir has been a cauldron of philosophies spanning Buddhism, Trika/Kashmir Shaivism, and Kashmiri Sufism.

“Centered at the confluence of major religious systems, Kashmir emerged as a syncretic site for churnings in philosophical thought, poetry, aesthetics, architecture, music, etc.,” she added.

Seminar Coordinator, Dr Wahid Nasaru, underscored the significance of Kashmiri Shaivism, Sufism and the contributions of Amir-e-Kabir, Nund Reshi and Lala Aarifa.

Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, KU, Muneer Ahmad Baghat, conducted the proceedings of the inaugural session and also proposed the formal vote of thanks.