

Cultivate a safe haven

Dr Neha Sharma On Preventing And Addressing All Kinds Of Child Abuse

Pic: Ravinder Gusain, GT Network

INTERVIEW

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In the realm of child safety advocacy, Dr Neha Sharma stands as a beacon of dedication. Currently working at a leading NGO, her work revolves around the integration of child safety messages into state and national curricula. With a PhD in mapping communitisation of Health Care Systems, she has held key roles in organisations like the Public Health Foundation of India and Population Foundation of India. Dr Sharma's work spans academia, advocacy, and training, making her a leading voice in preventing child sexual abuse. Serving as a jury member at the YP Finale 2022-23, she engaged with GT reporters for an insightful conversation.

Understanding the problem

Child abuse is a serious problem in India where over 90% of children experience some form of abuse before they reach the age of 18. Statistics reveal that every second a child in our country experiences sexual abuse, with both boys and girls being equally susceptible. Sadly, many cases, particularly involving boys, go unreported. Online sexual



GT reporter with Dr Neha Sharma



Dr Neha Sharma at Youth Power Grand Finale 2022-23

abuse worsens this. Once it occurs, the damage is irreversible. While therapy can help, a single incident can lead to long-term issues like depression, suicidal tendencies etc.

Setting right priorities

Our priority should be overall child safety, fostering awareness, and empowerment of the next generation. If their life skills are strengthened, children are made aware of how to be safe, what to do if they face any unsafe situation, and what steps to take once they are out of the situation - all of this will help ensure child safety. Schools should promote child safety lesson plans which should be integrated with main curricula. Additionally, achieving true gender equality requires empowering women and raising men who understand and support them. Lastly,

accessible healthcare is vital for ensuring a secure life for everyone.

Sharing life lessons

All the work I have done towards empowering diverse communities has taught me to be happy with whatever I have. I have lived in villages while doing my PhD and got a chance to talk to many women. Those conversations stayed with me for a long time and taught me to stay grounded. This work made me more versatile, and I was truly inspired by rural women who multitask all the time. I believe that women can do anything and everything, given the right guidance.

Showing the way

It is important to look at child safety from a holistic perspective. Everyone who is a part

of the child's support system needs to be made aware of various kinds of abuses and their forms. Parents, teachers, and caretakers should be made aware of the issue, how crucial it is to address, impact of abuse, and what actionable steps to take to prevent any kind of abuse. My message to parents is very simple: keep your child's life private. Teachers, look for unusual behaviour and intervene, ask students open questions, give them space to share, and don't judge.

Message for Amitians

Believe in yourself. There are a lot of creative people out there, so believe in your ideas. Execute them and don't be afraid of failure. Failures can even happen to the strongest and the most powerful people, but what is important is the will to try again. **GT**

Technicia '24 opens its doors...

...Ushering In Innovation And Creativity

AUM

Amity University Mumbai, proudly inaugurated 'Technicia 2024', marking the beginning of another annual celebration of innovation and talent. The three day event organised by Amity School of Engineering & Technology and Amity Institute of Technology commenced on April 3, 2024, and culminated on April 5, 2024. Drawing over 3000 attendees, the event witnessed nearly 500 participants from various universities across the country.

On April 3, the event began with a Banner Drop Ceremony featuring programmes like AI-assisted

presentations, a 3D laser show, a live-streamed Banner Drop, music & dance fusion performances, a drone show, and a dance face-off sponsored by RedBull. The ceremony was attended by vice chancellor professor (Dr) AW Santhosh Kumar, and other dignitaries, faculty, staff, and students, from the university.

The inauguration ceremony, held on April 4, was presided over by vice chancellor prof (Dr) AW Santhosh Kumar who presented a token of appreciation to Dr Gopal Rai, founder & CEO of Dhirendra Group of Companies (DGC). Dr Kumar highlighted the pivotal role engineers play in bridging the gap between knowledge and tech-

nology. Dr Rai also shared insights from his illustrious journey, underscoring value of events like this in empowering students.

The event provided a platform for students to showcase their talent in 24 different programmes, ranging from technical competitions such as Tech-Chronicles, Robo-Soccer, Drone Racing, Float-On, and AI Doodle War, to non-technical events like Shark Tank, Ad Mad Show, Junkyard, Chess, and Room of Dilemma etc. The highlight of the event was an immersive interview with Lt Cdr Bijay Nair (retd), a decorated naval officer and six-time TEDx speaker, who shared his expertise in Defence Technology with everyone.



A glimpse of Technicia 2024, Amity University Mumbai

The event concluded with a valedictory ceremony and a vote of thanks by the core committee members, followed by a concluding address and a presentation of a comprehensive event report, encapsulating the success and achievements of the event.

Technicia 2024's success reaffirmed Amity's commitment to excellence in education and research. The festival served as an ultimate launchpad for innovation, fostering a space where ideas could take flight, nurture talent, and boost innovation.