

Abu Road, September 16: Media experts and professionals today stressed the need for the mass media to promote values and show a new direction to society, noting that it was the only institution that could remove the negative tendencies prevalent in the country.

Noting the increasingly materialistic attitude of people, and the reports of crime, corruption and violence that dominate the daily news, they urged media persons to empower themselves spiritually in order to serve society better.

More than 1,300 delegates from the fields of advertising, media and public relations have gathered at the Shantivan campus of the Brahma Kumaris here for a four-day national conference on Spiritual Wisdom and Rajyoga for Peace and Happiness -- Role of Media, which began today.

Addressing the inaugural session, S. Narendra, former information advisor to the prime minister, said that while a communications revolution had put a mobile phone, a powerful media tool, in nearly everyone's pocket, we need to use the media effectively to influence youth, who are the future of the country.

Religious TV channels had a huge potential and could be used to show a new direction to youth, he said, adding that the content of those channels would have to be packaged differently to make it relevant to youth.

"Just as we are now only a 'click away' from many things, we are a click away from God", he remarked.

Dr. Ajit Pathak, National President, Public Relations Society of India, said that there was now no trust between the executive, the legislature, the judiciary and the media, and public relations could help restore trust.

Noting that the media had moved away from values and was now guided mainly by commercial interests, he said a positive attitude would enable the media to give a new direction to society.

Earlier, delivering the keynote address, Prof. Kamal Dixit, National Convener, Society of Media Initiative for Values, said that in spite of the material progress achieved in recent decades, people were searching for something more.

"Love, kindness and compassion are the values on the basis of which we can make the world better", he said, adding that media persons will have to change if the media is to help make the world better. He urged media professionals to introspect and empower themselves spiritually for this purpose.

B.K. Mruthyunjaya, Vice-chairperson of the Education Wing of the Brahma Kumaris, said the world was precariously poised on a pile of bombs, and it was the duty of the media to defuse this dangerous situation.

All humans want peace, happiness, health and wealth, he noted, and called on the media to help create a crime-free society, disease-free minds and bodies, and a pollution-free environment.

He highlighted the campaigns launched by the Brahma Kumaris to empower girls, promote cleanliness and road safety, and eradicate malnutrition, and appealed to the media to help make them successful.

B.K. Nirwair, Secretary General of the Brahma Kumaris, said spirituality was not just for the elderly, and it could be used by everyone to achieve goals higher than mere professional success. The media, he said, had a role to inform as well as reform people.

M. B. Jayaram, Chief Mentor, Public Relations Council of India, said the pen was mightier than weapons and, if used to whip up anger, could unleash wars. He therefore urged the media to advocate peace.

Dr Rajeev Tyagi, Pro-Chancellor, Motherhood University, Roorkee, said the immoral cut-throat competition we see in the world was the result of the absence of values in society.

Outlining the objectives of the conference, B.K. Karuna, Chairperson of the Media Wing of the Brahma Kumaris, said that politicians and the judiciary could not bring about all the change we want to see in the country, and the media should also contribute to this task.

He urged the delegates to realise their spiritual identity and help to bring India's value-based culture before the world.

B.K. Sheilu, a senior meditation teacher, conducted guided meditation to give the delegates an experience of inner peace.