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Shimoga: Is forest cover in Shimoga district shrinking? The answer is yes according to a scientist of Indian Institute of Science(IISc) T.V. Ramachandra.

Speaking to this correspondent on Wednesday after participating in a two-day seminar on 'Bio-diversity of the Western Ghats' held at Kuvempu University campus Ramachandra said that destruction of forests had continued rampantly in the region in the name of development.

He said, "as per official records, 43 percent of the geographical area in Shimoga district is covered by forests. However, in reality, there is only 23 percent cover at present. The ecological balance in the region has been disturbed because of constant deforestation. He urged the state government and also appealed to people not to disturb the ecological balance.

On the Netravathi river diversion project, he said that the proposal to divert the west-flowing rivers (Netravathi, Sharavathi and Aghanashini) to meet the drinking water requirements of Bengaluru and parched districts like Tumkur, Kolar and Chikballapur was economically unviable.

“Moreover, such experiments will only result in ecological imbalance. Instead of trying to implement river diversion, the government should promote rain water harvesting to address the problem of scarcity of water in Bengaluru city,” Dr Ramachandra suggested.

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