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'Hottest hot spot' should be conserved, says IISc study

Hongadahalla (Hassan dist), Sept 16, DH News Service:

A study made by Energy and Wetland Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Sciences (IISc) on - 'Biodiversity, Ecology and Socio-Economic aspects of Gundia River Basin in the context of proposed mega hydro electric power project' re-affirms that Gundia Basin in central Western Ghats is 'hottest hot spot' with a repository of biological wealth of rare kind, both in its aquatic and terrestrial eco-systems.

Holistic eco-system

The study made by IISc scientists T V Ramachandra, M D Subash Chandran, Harish Bhat, G R Rao, Sumesh Dudmani, M Boominathan, Vishnu Mukri and S Bharath on the invitation of Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel Chairman Madhav Gadgil, indicates strongly the need for adoption of holistic eco-system management for conservation of particularly the rare and endemic fauna of the Western Ghats.

"The premium should be on conservation of the remaining evergreen and semi-evergreen forests, which are vital for the water security and food security," it states.

Short-sighted

Stating that the short-sighted development project poses a threat to the ecology and biodiversity of the area, it said the submergence of forest region and other associated activities will cause habitat fragmentation and shrinkage.

"This will ultimately enhance the human-animal conflicts in the region," it said.

Terming the project as ecologically unsound and economically unviable, the study mentioned in detail the species to be affected which includes birds, reptiles, mammals and butterflies, besides the elephant-reserve and elephant-corridor.

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