

Digital database on Indian flora launched at Bengaluru's IISc.

Updated - April 09, 2024 03:41 pm IST - Bengaluru

THE HINDU BUREAU



The database is the country's most comprehensive attempt to document its plant wealth. | Photo Credit: file photo

Sankara Rao, Visiting Professor and Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES), Indian Institute of Science (IISc.), launched "India Flora Online", a digital database of the flora of India on Monday at the IISc.

The database, which is the country's most comprehensive attempt to document its plant wealth, "fulfils the country's need of bringing the country's plant or floral wealth into one searchable source," said Professor Rao, in an earlier interview with *The Hindu*.

"It is the culmination of many years of hard work," said Usha Vijayaraghavan, Dean, Biological Sciences, IISc., at the launch event. She added that the initiative builds on

the individual collection of Father Cecil Saldanha, who worked at CES in the eighties. “Individuals matter and individuals who care about plant diversity, plant ecosystems, and cataloguing what is present now, preserve for research tools of the future.”

Professor Rao at the event | Photo Credit: Abhirami M. Jayakumar and Aaryan Dhawan

In his presentation, Prof. Rao took the audience through the database. “Access to information on plants creates a sense of connection with nature which is necessary,” said Prof. Rao. “We do not know as much as we think we know about the floral diversity in our country.”

Evolutionary ecologist and conservation biologist Kamal Bawa, founder of Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE), who was also present at the event, commended Prof. Rao's work and remarked: "I think this effort is very worthwhile and going to result in a resurgence of interest in plant biology in India."

Published - April 09, 2024 01:40 am IST