'Modern Tools Can Help in Conservation'

Express News Service

Bengaluru: Western Ghats, a global biodiversity hotspot, is facing huge crisis due to developmental demands.

New and innovative methods using geospatial technology can help manage this challenge better, if stakeholders have access not only to the data but also to appropriate tools for informed decision making.

"If you learn spatial analysis, you can live anywhere as a spatial consultant and make a living," said Prof T V Ramachandra, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.

He inaugurated a one-day workshop on 'Biodiversity Awareness, using Open Source Geospatial (FOSS4G) Tools,' at the Centre for Continuing Education, IISc. The workshop was jointly organised by OSGeo-India, Hyderabad, APN, Indian Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad, and the Energy & Wetlands Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc.

Dr S N Prasad from OSGeo Foundation, India, mentioned that open source geospatial tools can give a bigger perspective and help in micro-level management of biodiversity. Prof M D Subhash Chandran, Centre of Ecological Sciences, IISc, spoke about Western Ghats and conservation issues related to them.

Dr R Prabhakar, director, Strand Life Sciences and Senior Fellow, Ashoka Trust for Research in Environment and Ecology, took the participants on a virtual tour of the India Biodiversity Portal (www.indiabiodiversity.org).

India Biodiversity Portal is a participatory system to aggregate and disseminate biodiversity information under open access for India.

Dr Rajasri Ray from the Centre of Ecological Sciences, IISc, who spoke about 'Sacred Groves', explained how religious and cultural values of a society affect the local biodiversity. She extensively used open source geospatial tools in her study for depicting biodiversity information on maps. According to her, sacred groves are important for conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem.

Dr R C Prasad and Gowtham Gollapalli from the Indian Institute of Information Technology, Hyderabad, spoke about 'Scope and potentiality of open source tools and technology in biodiversity conservation.'