

Plant phenology and climate change:

Need to monitor climate change, engage with society for impact mitigation: KU VC



Srinagar, March 5: To educate and empower young faculty and researchers to become active agents of change in addressing the challenges posed by climate change to plant life and ecosystems, the Department of Botany, Kashmir University (KU) Monday inaugurated a two-day training workshop here.

Titled 'Monitoring plant phenology in an era of climate change', the workshop is part of the 'Social Scientific Responsibility' component of the project 'Functional diversity, phenology and frost resistance in plants under extreme Himalayan environments', is sponsored by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), Government of India.

KU Vice Chancellor, Prof Nilofer Khan, said that it is high time young faculty and researchers are equipped with practical skills and techniques for observing, recording and analysing plant phenological events, thereby enhancing their capacity to conduct high-quality research in the field.

"It is imperative to actively monitor climate change and engage with society to mitigate its impacts," Prof Khan said.

She also unveiled a field guide for monitoring phenology, specially designed for the workshop participants, along with two other publications -- 'Botany Bulletin' and 'Field Manual for Alien Flora', an official release read.

KU Dean Research, Prof M Sultan Bhat, emphasised various aspects of climate change in the Himalayas and presented his vision for addressing it through quality research.

"There is need for long-term data generation to inform policy decisions and successfully implement management models," Prof Bhat said while pledging administrative support to the project team.

Prof Rajesh Tandon from Delhi delivered the keynote address, with contributions from Dean School of Biological Sciences, Prof A H Wani and Head, Department of Botany, Prof Zahoor Ahmad Kaloo, read the statement.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Convener of the workshop, Prof Manzoor A Shah, highlighted the workshop's rationale and the significant outcomes of the project in terms of research publications and international collaborations.

"We have to contribute to the body of knowledge on plant phenology and climate change through research publications and dissemination of findings to wider academic and public audiences," Prof Manzoor reiterated.

During the event, the KU Vice Chancellor also honoured three retired professors of the Department -- Prof Zafar A Reshi, Prof Irshad A Nawchoo and Prof Inayatullah Tahir, for their outstanding contributions to the department and the university.

Dr Solveig Franziska Bucher from the University of Jena, Germany; Dr Geetha Ramaswamy from Nature Conservation Foundation (NCF), Bangalore; Dr C P Singh from ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation) Ahmedabad, and Prof Zafar A Reshi also spoke on the occasion, the release read further.

Associate Professor, Dr Anzar A Khuroo, delivered the vote of thanks, and Ishrat Shaheen conducted the proceedings of the inaugural session, the release added.