

GITAM (DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY) VISAKHAPATNAM

FOLDSCOPE WILL HELP STUDENTS TO STUDY NATURE

Undergraduate students in all parts of the country will soon be able to take a peek at the world of microscopic organisms with a microscope that they can take anywhere, following an initiative by the Department of Biotechnology to reach a PrakashLab's low cost paper folding-microscope, informed by GITAM Deemed to be University Institute of Science Principal Prof.K.Arunalakshmi here on Saturday.

She inaugurated the workshop on "Foldscope-Its Application in Cancer" at GITAM Institute of Science. She said that the origami paper microscope costing 50 cents developed by Stanford University based Prakash Lab, popularly called Foldscope can be used as an educational and training tool to help students understand physics, chemistry, biology and instrumentation and to excite them in the subjects.

She briefed that the Foldscope, a cheaper alternative to microscope besides being waterproof comes with a 2000x magnification lens with one sub-micron resolution which enables the visualisation of the tiniest organisms like bacteria. Foldscopes which can be used to test water samples to detect infectious agents and also diagnose some common disorders can also be fitted with LED light source for better resolution, she added. She hoped that the fast gaining popularity this innovation is likely to prove to be of much help in scientific training and research in the coming years.

The workshop Convenor Dr.K.Vijaya Rachel informed that Department of Biotechnology(DBT), Government of India has sanctioned a project to GITAM Institute of Science to screen less privileged tribal women for Cervical Cancer. So far we conducted the tests (pap smear test) in Visakhapatnam agency mandals particularly Mumbriguda, Hukumpet and ananthagiri using foldscope to identify the cervical cancer among tribal women, she added.

Assam Downtown University DBT Foldscope Project Principal Investigator Dr.Jyotchna Gogoi briefed about how to use the foldscope to detect the plant diseases.

GITAM Institute of Science Biochemistry Department Head Prof.M.Rama Rao briefed about the cancer research activities and informed that the department is actively engaged with several research activities in bioinformatics and biochemistry.

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Press Relations Officer,
GITAM DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY.