



THE NEW
INDIAN EXPRESS

IISc tree survey of Bengaluru sets alarm bells ringing

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Published: 25th July 2019 06:29 AM | Last Updated: 25th July 2019 06:29 AM | A+A A-

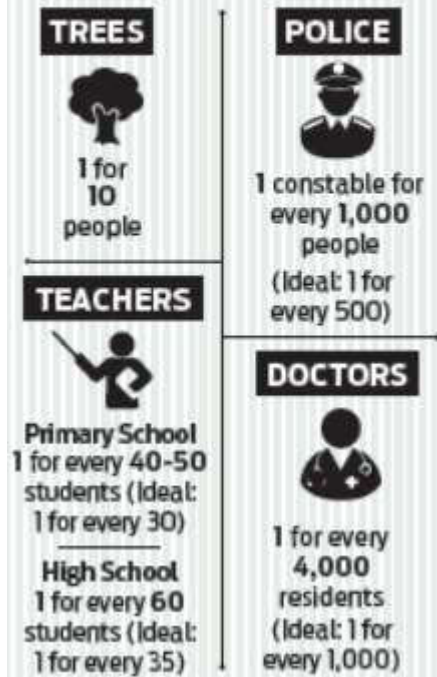
By [Bosky Khanna](#)
Express News Service

BENGALURU: In a perfect world, each person living in a city would have seven trees all to themselves. In Bengaluru, even back in 2013, there was one tree for seven people. Now the number of dependents has increased.

Fresh air in Bengaluru has become a prized possession, as the city's tree cover rapidly declines. While the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is yet to conduct a tree census, a tree survey report by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) paints a horrifying picture. According to the study - Declining Tree Cover in the City - prepared by the Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc, there is just one tree for every ten people in the city. In just seven years, the number of dependents per tree has increased.

A city of shortages

It is not just trees that are few, there is a shortage of police, teachers and doctors as well.



The research paper has been shared with the state government to help them in better planning. It comes at a time when the Bangalore Development Authority is finalising a comprehensive development plan of the city for the next 10 years. “There is a need to make the city liveable. But the state government does not think so...,” said T V Ramachandra, IISc, co- author of the study.

IISc’s T V Ramachandra, co-author of the study, said, “There is a need to make the city liveable. But the state government does not think so. Population and concretisation is increasing, leaving no room for tree cover. The Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) vision document has ignored green cover.”

He explained that ideally, one person needs seven-eight trees because on an average, 540- 980 gm of carbon dioxide per person per day is released. Also, one hectare of trees can absorb six to eight tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. But the high counting remote sensing data assessment shows otherwise.

Researchers found that the green cover in Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Coimbatore is also sparse. However, Bengaluru is ahead of other cities in urbanisation and loss of natural resources.

The study shows an increase in urban area in Bengaluru — from 7.79% in 1973 to 81.05% in 2019. A decline in green cover from 68.27% to 3.98% and in water bodies from 3.4% to 1.75% have

also been recorded. Population growth in Bengaluru has been at the rate of 47.5% per decade. Some of the wards which have less than 500 trees are Banashankari, Chickpete, Padarayanapura and Shivajinagar.