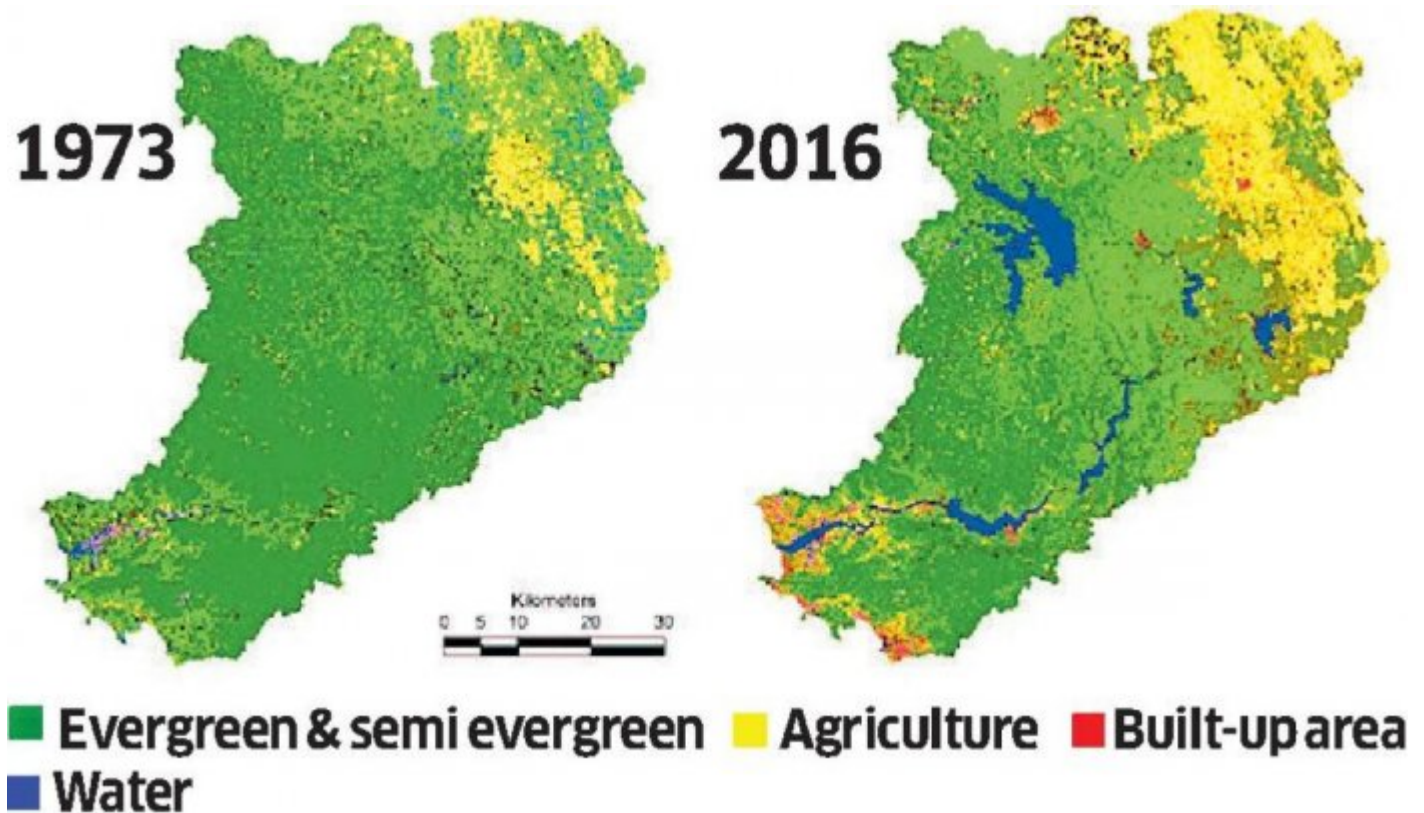


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Haphazard land use hits forests and rivers: IISc study



Bosky Khanna, DH News Service, Bengaluru, DEC 31 2018, 01:03AM IST | UPDATED: DEC 31 2018, 01:07AM IST



Land use in Kali River catchment

Infrastructure works affect not just forest patches but even water bodies. A study by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) on Kali Tiger Reserve and Kali river is a clear indication.

According to the report, there has been a reduction in overall forest cover from 84.69% to 54.94% in a span of about 40 years. The land use assessment was carried out by classifying the temporal remote sensing data into 10 categories. The report also revealed that the construction of a series of dams on the Kali River from 1980 to 2000 has resulted in large-scale land use. It has documented an increase in monoculture plantations of social forestry (*Acacia* sp) and horticulture (*Areca*) from 1.66% to 16.8%.

“Large-scale conversion of forests to monoculture plantation near the eastern plains is due to the industrial demand by Dandeli paper mill and other purposes. Agriculture has increased in the plains of Haliyal, Kalgatgi, Yellapur and Dharwad taluks, from 9.20% to 17.71%,” said T V Ramachandra, from Energy and Wetlands Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc. He is one of the authors of the report, along with S Vinay, S Bharath and A Shashishankar.

The increase in water bodies from 0.41% to 3.65% is due to construction of major reservoirs during this period, stretching their expanses in the forested landscape. Built-up areas have increased from 0.39% to 1.69%. A major increase can be observed at Yellapur, Dandeli, Kalgatgi, Kaiga, Karwar, Ankola, Haliyal, Ramanagar, Londa, Khanapura and Joida, he explained.

The report also highlighted inter annual water budgeting across sub basins which showed the Ghats and coastal areas are sustainable with perennial waters in the river as against the plains in the east which showed a deficit of resources, indicating water stress.