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Garden City lost two-thirds of its vegetation in four decades

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The Hindu MAN AND MACHINE: Decades of growth in this case disappears in minutes. File photo: K. Gopinathan
Bangalore's built-up area grew by 584 p.c. between 1973 and 2010: study

A new study by the Indian Institute of Science on Bangalore's spiralling growth confirms what most residents probably already know: the city lost 66 per cent of its vegetation and 74 per cent of its water bodies in less than 40 years, even as its built-up area grew by 584 per cent.

Green cover lost

The city's famed tree cover, which once accounted for 72 per cent of its area (488 sq. km) in 1973, dropped to 21 per cent (145 sq. km) in 2010, reveals the research paper published in the latest edition of the *International Journal of Applied Earth Observation and Geoinformation*.

Haphazard growth

Urban growth, especially in the last five years, has been “haphazard”, particularly on the outskirts of the city, says the paper.

The findings illustrate “the extent of influence of the drivers of urbanisation... Bangalore was the most sought-after

destination for its climatic condition and the availability of various facilities (land availability, economy, political factors) compared to other cities”. Bangalore grew intensely in the northwest and southwest zones in 1992 due to industrialisation, and “this phenomenon intensified due to impetus to IT and BT sectors in SE and NE during post-2000”.

While the central core areas of Bangalore saw a compact growth, the outskirts have witnessed urban sprawl and are deprived of basic amenities, says the study.

Urban nightmare

“Unplanned concentrated growth in a region has telling influences on natural resources (disappearance of open spaces — parks and water bodies), traffic congestion, enhanced pollution levels and also changes in the local climate.”

The urban built-up area increased by 342.83 per cent during 1973-92, 129.56 per cent during 1992-99, 106.7 per cent during 1999–2002, 114.51 per cent during 2002–06 and 126.19 per cent from 2006 to 2010.

How it was done

The study used spatial techniques involving temporal remote sensing data and geographic information system with spatial metrics and is authored by Ramachandra T.V., Bharath H. Aithal and Durgappa D. Sanna of the Indian Institute of Science.

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