



# 'Bengaluru will be an unliveable, dead city in 5 years'



Bengaluru has become a big concrete jungle, with few open spaces and little tree cover. DH PHOTO

## Experts present a grim picture as real estate boom grips the city

Naveen Menezes

**BENGALURU: Exponential and unbridled growth in real estate in Bengaluru has a direct bearing on environment and human health. Buildings have come up in places where there were once trees or open spaces. What if this continues to happen even on the periphery of Namma Bengaluru? What are its long-term implications on the ecosystem?**

A study conducted by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) presents an alarming picture. It shows 525% growth in built-

up area in the last four decades, 78% decline in vegetation 79% decline in water bodies. These are not just figures, but the lakes and trees that surrounded you have quietly disappeared as a result of the urban sprawl.

### 'Senseless growth'

Prof T V Ramachandra of the Centre for Ecological Sciences at the IISc calls it 'senseless growth.'

What's the point earning better when the food that you eat is adulterated? As a result of unplanned urbanisation, Bengaluru is going to be an unliveable and dead city in the next five years, he said.

It was not the same case before. Bengaluru was the most sought-after among big cities given its pleasant climate and the easy availability of land, a decent economy and low-key politics.

Urban expert Ashwin Mahesh blames the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) for not coming out with a sectoral plan.

"The BDA has become an agency which facilitates land deals for the benefit of corrupt politicians. People feel it should be closed down," he said.

Environmentalist Yellappa Reddy said, "The government is not competent enough to

foresee the future implications of the present growth. There is no proper policy on land use and water. Land is being exploited on the whims and fancies of the politicians."

He urged the government to use 40,000 acres of evicted land for community benefits such as creating lung space, water bodies and playgrounds.

### How to decongest

Prof Ramachandra said the government must take necessary steps to decongest Bengaluru. Besides banning new industries in the city, the government should make sure other districts get these eco-

nomical benefits, he added.

### 'Government must act'

"It's disturbing to see private developers dominate government decisions. The norm to keep at least 15-20 % of the city as open space is ignored, stormwater drains and water bodies have been narrowed. At least now, the government should wake up and get its priorities right to make Bengaluru a sustainable city," he said.

Architect Najeeb Khan is of the opinion that the government should create enough facilities in villages to minimise migration.

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