

Green Cover

4,000 trees could be axed for housing project in Bengaluru, but how many trees are left in the city? (/article/4000-trees-could-be-axed-housing-project-bengaluru-how-many-trees-are-left-city-53118)

The city could soon turn into a concrete jungle.

TNM Staff (<http://www.thenewsminute.com/author-articles/TNM-Staff>) | Saturday,
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One of the stories about the origins of Bengaluru’s name, has it that it derives from “benga”, a local term for pterocarpus marsupium, a species of dry and moist deciduous trees, and “ooru”, which translates to village. Ironically though, much of the modern city which boasts of its “Garden City” moniker, could soon turn into



Even as the strong protest against the proposed steel flyover in the city which could axe 812 trees is yet to die down, the Karnataka Housing Board plans to chop down 4,166 trees for a housing project in Rayasandra on Kanakpura Road (<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31806&articlexml=Over-4000-trees-on-Kanakpura-Road-likely-to-18112016003024>). Two private developers have also sought permission to cut 730 and 806 trees for separate projects in Jakkasandra and KR Puram.

The indiscriminate felling of trees to make way for "development work" comes at a huge cost - of losing the city's green cover and also its water bodies.

Of the many functions that urban vegetation serves, a few crucial ones include moderating micro climate, absorbing CO2, aiding percolation of water, acting as a barrier to noise pollution and even acting as "natural air-conditioners".

The number of trees cut between 2011-14 was equivalent to wiping out Lalbagh completely, and then some more, Bangalore Mirror reported in 2014. Lalbagh has over 8,000 trees and 9,281 trees were felled for Namma Metro and road extension projects in the city (<http://www.bangaloremirror.indiatimes.com/bangalore/others/More-than-a-Lalbagh-has-been-wiped-out-of-city-last-three-yrs/articleshow/39184472.cms>).



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A activist at the one day Satyagraha against the proposed Steel flyover in Bengaluru.

However, there's no official record of the exact number of trees in Bengaluru. Estimates range between 10 to 50 lakh (<http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/bangalore/how-many-trees-in-city-no-ones-sure/article8553272.ece>), the latter claimed by the BBMP.

A 2014 study titled "Trees of Bengaluru" (http://wgbis.ces.iisc.ernet.in/energy/water/paper/ETR75/CES_TVR_ETR75_TREES_24may2014.pdf), released by TV Ramachandra from Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, said that the city has seen an enormous growth in population in the last decade, i.e. 46.68%.

While population increased from 6,537,124 (in 2001) to 9,588,910 (in 2011), population density for the same period jumped from 10,732 to 13,392.

Land use analysis based on remote sensing data was used and the study found that Bengaluru had 14,78,412 trees



The NEWS Minute period.

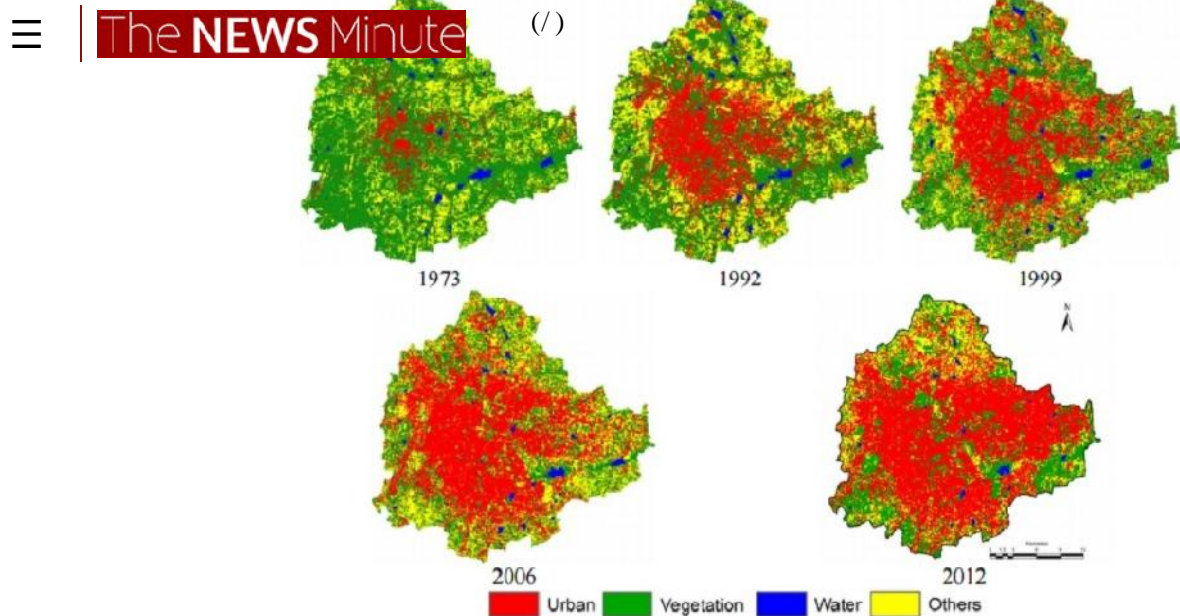
There has also been a 925% increase in concretisation in the past four decades.

“For every seven persons there is one tree. Every day one person exhales between 540-900 grams of carbon dioxide and one hectare of trees takes in close to 8 ton of carbon dioxide. So, based on that calculation every person needs 8 trees. So you can imagine how pathetic the situation is,” Ramachandra had earlier told **The News Minute (<http://www.thenewsminute.com/article/no-bengaluru-wont-be-dead-5-years-things-are-pretty-messed-city-42642>).**

The number of water bodies in the city have also seen a staggering decline. The city had 265 water bodies in 1962. By 2010, the figure dropped to 98.

In the last four decades, vegetation has decline by 66% and water bodies by 74%. The amount of vegetation has declined from 68.27% (in 1973) to less than 25% (in 2012).

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Land use dynamics; Source: Trees of Bengaluru

Another 2015 study (<https://www.researchgate.net/publication>

[/283008555_Spatial_Patterns_of_Urban_Growth_with_Globalisation_in_In](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283008555_Spatial_Patterns_of_Urban_Growth_with_Globalisation_in_In) that greater Bengaluru is experiencing unprecedented urban growth of 4.6% in recent times.

“Temporal assessment of urban growth in Bengaluru show an intense urbanisation with 125% increase in built-up area during last four years (2010 to 2014) with decrease of vegetation cover by 62% and water bodies by 85%. These results show that the city is gradually transforming to concrete jungle with compact urban areas and retreat of vegetation and water bodies. Landscape metrics are helpful in assessing the spatial patterns of urbanization. It is observed that the city outskirts are experiencing urban sprawl,” the study concluded.

Experts have also blamed authorities for planning the city in a haphazard manner, and not giving heed to scientific



Stating that the unregulated growth will come at the expense of green cover along with higher pollution by 2020, TV Ramachandra told Bangalore Mirror (<http://bangaloremirror.indiatimes.com/bangalore/others/Science-city-done-in-by-poor-science/articleshow/53068561.cms>), "This is bound to make the city greenhouse gas-rich, water-scarce, non-resilient and unliveable, depriving the city dwellers of the basic constitutional rights - the right to clean air, water and environment."

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