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Will Bengaluru kill itself by 2020? This study says so!

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This August 15, areas in Bengaluru, like Koramangala, saw floods like they never would have imagined. On Tuesday, Mumbai experienced the highest rainfall in over a decade, leaving the city crippled. This has led people to wonder what is going to happen to cities, with them not being able to cope with rains, yet needing the rain to ensure ground water — a vicious cycle of sorts. Professor TV Ramachandra of IISc predicts that Bengaluru could be dead by as early as 2020, if it isn't decongested on a priority basis. He reveals through his study that the city has degenerated over the four and a half decades. "We mapped satellite images since 1973 to see the extent of urbanization that the city has seen and how the green cover and vegetation has been lost. We have urbanized senselessly," he explains.

The study says, "Urbanization between 1973 to 2016 (100% concretization or increase of paved surface) has a telling influence on the natural resources such as decline in green spaces (88% decline in vegetation), wetlands (79% decline), higher air pollutants and sharp decline in groundwater table. Quantification of the number of trees in the region using remote sensing data with field census reveals that there are only 1.5 million trees to support Bengaluru's population of 9.5 million, indicating one tree for every seven persons in the city. This is insufficient even to sequester respiratory carbon. Geo-visualization of likely land uses in 2020 through multi-criteria decision making techniques reveals a calamitous picture of over 93% of Bengaluru landscape filled with paved surfaces (urban cover) and drastic reduction in open spaces and green cover. This would make the region greenhouse gas rich, water scarce, non-resilient and unlivable."

Ramachandra says that Bengaluru has it harder when compared to Mumbai. "Mumbai escaped a potential tragedy because of the sea adjacent to it, where the water could recede into. Bengaluru is land-locked. This is something that it needs to wake up to. The only way to ensure this is averted is through de-congestion of the city," he adds.