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## How Devanahalli is losing sheen

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Bangalore seems to have paid dearly on the environment front due to the unplanned development and construction of Bangalore International Airport in Devanahalli .

This is revealed in a study by Mayur AK, a student of Gandhi Krishi Vignan Kendra and his guide from the Indian Institute of Science. The two-year-long study titled 'The impact of BIA on native biodiversity' said that besides the poor development strategies, the entire schema lacked foresight that led to a decline in biodiversity, ecology and displacement of locals.

Speaking on the sidelines of a symposium — Lake 2010: Wetlands, Biodiversity and Climate Change — on Thursday, Mayur said, "In the last three years, Devanahalli has seen a decline of 35% in butterfly species, 35% in bird species, 75% in mammal species, 20% in plant species and 15% in insect species."

In the last three years, the biodiversity of the region had declined. Due to movement of traffic and lights, nocturnal species have migrated to other regions, including Nandi Hills.

Mongoose and squirrels which were spotted till last year, are not visible anymore, he said. Up till 1980s, leopards were sighted in the region. However, this area is now behind the runway, he pointed out.

The rapid commercialisation has displaced the lives of many locals.

Of the 200 people from five areas who were displaced, 40 families shifted to Bangalore with the compensation amount, 15 still reside there, unemployed in luxury villas. They have stopped farming due to lack of water resources and drop in the ground water table.

The study said that Gangamuthaenahalli Lake, which was the primary source of water for locals and agriculture, was dried up partially for making room for the airport.

More areas are being dried up for the airport's second runway. Drying up of Bettakote and Yethaganahalli lakes has also affected the water table of the region.

While Mayur is planning to conduct further research, he and Chakravarthy will send the 117-page report to the government, forest department, town planning department, BBMP and social forestry department for conservation.

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