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Published on *Deccan Chronicle* (<http://www.deccanchronicle.com>)

Green cover, water bodies do vanishing act

It is well known that Bengaluru is one of the fastest-growing cities in the world, but even so, the actual figures are startling. In the last four years, between 2006 and 2010, Bengaluru has grown by 127%, and counting. The built-up area has increased so much – at the expense of water bodies and open spaces - that recent satellite pictures released by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) clearly indicate that there are hardly any open spaces left in the city. The report 'Modelling of Urbanisation and Urban Sprawl in Bangalore' prepared by Dr T. V. Ramachandra and Bharath H. Aithal of the Energy and Wetlands Research Group, IISc, shows the growth of Bengaluru since 1973 and how development has picked up pace in the last few years. Most of the construction and the vanishing of water bodies have happened after 2002. The report and temporal land use analysis used satellite pictures of Bengaluru since 1973 and the last picture, taken in 2010, shows that water bodies that existed as recently as 2006, have vanished. "There has been a 584% growth in built-up area in the last four decades. Consequent to this, vegetation has decreased by 66% and water bodies have reduced by 74%. Urban growth became almost constant in the south-east and north-west directions between 1992 and 2000 and then increased linearly. Urban growth is prominent in the north-west, south-west, and north-east from 2000 to 2010," pointed out Dr T. V. Ramachandra. Calculations of urban density indicate there has been a linear growth in almost all directions but it is heaviest in the north-west and south-west where it has reached alarming levels. Especially post the 1990s, industrialisation and increasing demand for housing in these areas has led to their complete urbanisation.

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