

# THE HINDU

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## Lakes will constitute just 0.74 p.c. of Bengaluru by 2020, says study

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By the end of this decade, Bengaluru's dwindling water bodies could shrink to half their original number and expanse, says a new study by the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) at the Indian Institute of Science.

By 2020, lakes will constitute just 0.74 per cent of the city, which is around half their 1972 status when they made up 3.4 per cent of the geographical area. As many as 265 lakes dotted the city in 1972. By 2010, the number had come down to 93, although Bengaluru's area went up five-fold, encompassing many more lakes. Today, lakes constitute 0.9 per cent of Bengaluru's area.

The study, titled "Ecological Insights to Mitigate Urban Flood Risks", warns of a possible increase in the frequency and intensity of urban floods as lakes and their catchment are concretised. By the end of the decade, the city's total built-up area will increase from the present 48 per cent to 70.64 per cent. This dramatic decline in the city's water bodies is anticipated even though researchers added a projected 10-km buffer to the city's present radius, including several more lakes, for the study, said T.V. Ramachandra of CES and co-author.

Urbanisation has already made the city prone to floods, says the report. The interconnectivities between natural drainage channels are lost and the city's naturally undulating terrain altered, reducing water storage capacity and causing floods even during "normal rainfall". Even a 30 mm rainfall in a matter of 30 minutes can now lead to floods, it says.

While catchments are used as dump yards for municipal waste and building debris, lakebeds are now sites for multi-storey buildings that interfere with the natural catchment flow. An earlier survey by the team found that 54 per cent of the lakes were encroached upon.