

# Urban Planning and Spatial Transformation in Bengaluru City: An Historical Study

Dr.Lokesha

Associate Professor Department of History Government First Grade College Tumkur

**Abstract-** Karnataka's urban expansion is at a crossroads, as towns with populations of less than one lakh emerge as wealth creators. Urban planning and spatial transformation is an interdisciplinary discipline that investigates how cities and other human settlements evolve over time, with a focus on physical layout and its social, economic, and environmental implications. It entails studying the evolution of urban structures, land use, and public places in order to increase quality of life while also promoting sustainability, efficiency, and resilience. The research paper objectives are urban planning and spatial transformation in Bengaluru.

**Keywords:** Urban Planning, Spatial Transformation and Economic Growth of Bengaluru.

## I. INTRODUCTION

India's rapid urban planning and spatial transformation are driven by economic liberalization, leading to urban sprawl and infrastructural development. The government is developing new frameworks like the National Spatial Policy, integrating land use, transportation, and redevelopment, and enhancing governance.

Karnataka's urban growth is in inflection point as the number of towns with less than 1 lakhs is emerging as the generators of wealth. The very definition of "Urban" need to be re-visited, especially from the point of percentage of people engaged in agriculture and allied-agriculture activity and density of population. Both Urban and Rural areas are looking at having equal level of basic services. The coming decade between 2021-31 will witness the emergence of an additional 18 new Class I cities and 24 Class II cities.

New towns having both Urban and Rural Characteristics are emerging giving rise to "RURBAN" towns. Many emerging urban areas in coastal, hilly and eco-sensitive regions have been neglected due to low population density and these significant areas need to be identified and given urban status. A new "TOWN COMMISSIONERATE" for towns having less than 50,000 population need to be formed for better governance to achieve Sustainable Development. A "NEW TOWNSHIP ACT"

should be promulgated to facilitate large developments and Satellite towns.

Urban planning and spatial transformation is an interdisciplinary field that examines how cities and other human settlements change over time, focusing on the physical layout and its social, economic, and environmental impacts. It involves analyzing the transformation of urban structures, land use, and public spaces to improve quality of life and promote sustainability, efficiency, and resilience. This research is crucial for making informed decisions about a city's future development and for addressing challenges posed by urbanization and climate change. Bangalore's rapid urban planning and spatial transformation, driven by the IT sector, is causing issues like rising temperatures and infrastructural strain. Remote sensing and spatial analysis help model growth and understand complex interplays.

### Key aspects of the study

- **Urban morphology:** The study of the form of human settlements, including their street patterns, buildings, and open spaces. Bengaluru's urban morphology has evolved through distinct phases, from its native town origins to the current "hi-tech" phase, characterized by a historical dual structure of the native "Pete" and the colonial "Cantonment". This evolution has resulted in a multi-layered urban form, often described with a concentric structure of core, peri-central, and peripheral

areas, though it is heavily influenced by rapid, often unplanned, growth driven by industrialization and the IT boom. Key features include a historically planned core, sprawling unplanned extensions, and significant spatial inequalities.

- **Spatial structure:** The physical arrangement of a city's activities, land uses, and buildings, including the flow of people and transportation systems. Bengaluru's urban sprawl pattern is shaped by historical growth, topography, and economic liberalization, dividing the city into concentric zones through modern master plans.
- **Urban transformation:** The process of radical change in a city, often driven by social, economic, and environmental factors, which can either increase or decrease its vulnerability. Bengaluru's urban transformation, driven by job opportunities and migration, has led to economic growth but also infrastructure strain, environmental degradation, inequality, and population management challenges. Initiatives focus on transparent governance, simplified regulations, and sustainable solutions.
- **Spatial planning:** A set of governance practices and strategies for managing land use to ensure coordinated and sustainable development. Bengaluru's spatial planning, involving BMRDA and BDA, uses master plans and zoning to guide growth. Initiatives like KWIN City and Bengaluru Business Corridor manage future development and traffic congestion.
- **Interdisciplinary approach:** The study integrates perspectives from geography, sociology, public administration, and political science to understand how governance, markets, and communities interact to shape urban space.

### Importance of the Study

- **Improves efficiency:** By optimizing land use and providing services like water and transportation in a compact city, spatial planning can make a city more efficient and affordable.
- **Increases resilience:** Effective planning helps cities adapt to and recover from unforeseen shocks, such as climate-related disasters.
- **Promotes sustainability:** The field seeks to balance economic growth with environmental

protection and social equity, sometimes focusing on reconnecting cities with nature.

- **Ensures resilience:** Research on urban transformation aims to help cities better withstand and adapt to future challenges, such as climate change.

### Historical Background of Urban Planning and Spatial Transformation in Bengaluru

Historically, Bangalore's urban planning and spatial transformation were shaped by its founding in the 16th century and, significantly, by the British colonial era, which established a dual-city structure of the native "Pete" and the separate Bangalore Cantonment. Post-independence, this changed with the city's merger, rapid industrialization, and subsequent suburbanization, leading to sprawl and a focus on new planned neighborhoods like Jayanagar. Recent studies analyze this expansion through metrics like landscape patterns and urban heat islands, highlighting the environmental and spatial challenges of this continuous growth.

- **Colonial legacy:** Bangalore's planning has roots in colonial-era top-down approaches, which established a pattern of unelected expert bodies determining urban policy.
- **Bangalore Development Authority (BDA):** Established in 1976, the BDA inherited the role of the City of Bangalore Improvement Trust Board (CITB) and continues to be the principal planning authority, often operating without sufficient public input.
- **Land use evolution:** The city's topography, which once dictated land-use planning due to plague fears, now shapes planning in different ways, with previously avoided lowlands becoming densely populated due to the IT boom and new construction practices.

### Pre-colonial and colonial era

- **16th Century:** Kempegowda founded the city with a mud fort and a layout focused on commerce.
- **1807:** The British established a military cantonment near Ulsoor, creating a separate entity adjacent to the native town. This dual structure, with the "Pete" (native town) and the

Cantonment, was a key feature of colonial urbanism.

- **1809:** The military garrison was officially relocated to Bangalore, cementing the dual-city structure, which was physically and administratively separate.
- **Late 19th Century:** A plague epidemic led to significant urban reforms, with the British colonial administration and the princely state implementing new policies and changing the city's spatial composition.
- **1949:** Following India's independence, the separate city and cantonment areas were merged into a single urban center.

#### **Post-independence and rapid growth**

- **Post-1947:** The city became the capital of the new Indian state of Karnataka.
- **Mid-20th Century:** Rapid population growth due to industrialization and migration prompted structured urban planning interventions.
- **Later 20th and 21st Centuries:** The city experienced unprecedented expansion, marked by urban sprawl and the conversion of agricultural and rural areas into settlements.
- **Planned Neighborhoods:** Planned neighborhoods, such as Jayanagar, were developed to accommodate middle-income groups and provided a model for future urban development, but this was a government-led effort and different from the colonial-era expansion.

#### **Modern urban transformation**

- **Sprawl:** Recent studies using landscape metrics show the city's haphazard growth, particularly in the outskirts, and a conversion of many smaller patches into a larger, more compact urban patch.
- **Environmental Impact:** Urban expansion has led to a significant loss of vegetation and water bodies, with an increase in built-up areas and corresponding rise in urban heat island effects.
- **Planning Challenges:** The legacy of rapid expansion and land-use changes presents ongoing challenges for urban planners to manage land resources and achieve sustainable development.

#### **Urban Planning and Spatial Transformation in Bangalore**

- **Rapid urbanization and sprawl:** Bangalore has experienced exponential growth, particularly from 1993 to 2020, driven by the IT industry, population growth, and migration.
- **Spatial transformation:** This growth has led to a significant increase in built-up land, a decline in vegetation and water bodies, and an overall increase in land surface temperature due to the urban heat island effect.
- **Driving factors:** The expansion is driven by a combination of factors, including the development of the IT sector, the co-working industry, and government initiatives.
- **Planning and governance:** The urban planning landscape is shaped by the competing interests of public and private entities. Studies analyze this through the lens of zoning regulations, master plans, and the historical evolution of development approaches.
- Urban planning and spatial transformation have a substantial impact on human health and well-being, especially through increased access to nature. However, further research is needed to fully understand the causal link.
- Effective planning requires a holistic vision to develop sustainable, functioning, and vibrant cities, rather than relying solely on technological remedies.
- Prioritizing inclusion in urban planning is crucial for constructing cities that meet all inhabitants' demands and address spatial inequities caused by globalization and market-oriented policies.
- Achieving authentic, locally relevant environments requires a transition from top-down, technocratic planning to a participatory approach, where residents actively co-create their surroundings.

### **CONCLUSION**

Urban planning and spatial transformation significantly impact human health, prosperity, and quality of life. However, it often falls short due to market-driven policies, lack of long-term vision, and insufficient community involvement. Successful transformation requires inclusive, sustainable

practices. Bangalore faces challenges like environmental strain, housing shortages, and water scarcity in urban planning, but also opportunities for sustainable future through improved governance, integrated transportation, and innovation, requiring a balanced approach.

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