

Urban densities and climatic aberrations: a case study of Hyderabad, India

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Hyderabad is the fifth largest and one of the fastest growing cities in the country. In fact it overcame competition from Ahmedabad and Bangalore to reclaim its fifth rank in the ranked array of the cities of India in 1991. In 1981 it had retrogressed to the seventh position. The Municipal Corporation of Hyderabad, which lies at the center of the Hyderabad Urban Agglomeration area is spread over 172 square kilometers and has a population of 3.61 million according to the 2001 census. The urban agglomeration area has increased stupendously in size, from 245 sq.kms in 1971 to 1865 sq.kms in 2001. During the same period, its population increased from 1.8 million to 6.14 million.

The fallout of rapid urbanization and industrial growth has been changes in land use, burgeoning rural-urban migration, increasing pressure on infrastructure and environmental degradation. Environmental Degradation manifests itself in varying hues and tints and one aspect, which is of increasing importance to the world, is the heat island aspect. This index of urban degradation is immeasurably linked with increasing densities, back to back and side to side packing of residential structures and various other urban activities that increase temperature like industrial furnaces, transports emissions etc. Hyderabad has a sizeable presence of these heat islands which stand out in the cityscape. Some of them are close to the old industrial areas of Hyderabad in Azamabad – Mushirabad Industrial complex, others are in the relatively new industrial estates like Sanatnagar, yet others are in the dense residential colonies of the old city of Hyderabad, along major transport routes like the Bangalore highway and the Vijayawada highway and along rock outcrops where anthropogenetic weathering manifests itself in the form of rock blasting to make place for new residential colonies. The number and intensity of these heat islands is on the upswing and arresting or containing their presence is the need of the hour in most cities of the developing countries. The present study on Hyderabad will provide pointers in this direction which can be adopted and adapted by other cities in the developing world.

Key words: Land use, Urbanization, Heat islands, Population, Environmental degradation, Demography

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