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Urban march apace in Kozhikode

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More and more places outside the city are taking on an urban character.

It is an inexorable march. Urbanisation is sweeping through more and more places, and Kozhikode is no exception to the global trend. A detailed chart prepared by the Town Planning Office shows that urbanisation is expected to spread rapidly to the north-eastern parts of the district by 2021.

Visuals prepared by the department reveal that urban growth will increasingly graduate from the coastal parts, covering the Kozhikode Corporation area, to places such as Chathamangalam, Mukkam and Mavoor in the decade that started in 2011.

The areas marked as “Expected Local Bodies 2021” in a chart prepared by Town Planner G. Sasikumar show urbanisation spreading through Ramanattukara, Cheruvannur, Perambra, Koothali, Balussery, Chelanoor, Kizhakothe, Koduvally,

Chemancheri, Azhiyam, Eramala, Omassery, Payyoli, Onchiyam and Koyilandy.

The statistics show that the percentage of the urban population has increased from 38.25 per cent to 67.15 per cent in the past decade. The chart says that while only 19 areas have shown urban characteristics in 2001, the number rose to 52 in the 2011 Census. But the “total population” has increased only to 30.9 lakh from 28.8 lakh in the decade, it shows.

Job scene

Mr. Sasikumar says a reason for the rapid pace of urbanisation is the shifting employment scene, with more and more people opting for professions other than agriculture.

Mr. Sasikumar says his statistics have been largely based on the attitude of the population towards gaining a “metropolitan character.” “More and more people have been engaged in non-agriculture pursuits such as industry and administrative and information-technology-based jobs,” he says.

It is time Kozhikode embraced its identity as an “emerging” metro and planned for urbanisation, he says. “Otherwise, panchayats will have to face the problems of urbanisation, such as a scarcity of drinking water and power, without any external aid,” he says.

The city’s outskirts such as Kunnamangalam offer a natural option for academic institutions for its quietude and pollution-free environment with minimal traffic. Kunnamangalam has a special place on the country’s education map as it hosts two of the premier professional institutes of the country — the Indian Institute of Management and the National Institute of Technology. Both have sprawling campuses with residential facilities for faculty and students.

Many elite English-medium schools have come up in the vicinity to cater for the needs of those employed at the two institutes, a good section from other States.

Professionals with property in the city are showing interest in buying large tracts of land in the suburbs to build houses and live there as they do not mind commuting to the central business district and back on National Highway no. 212, which passes through Kunnamangalam. “I prefer to stay somewhere

on the outskirts as buying land within the city limits of Kozhikode is outside my budget. I don't like living in a flat as a house gives me my own individuality," Arun Kumar, who teaches Botany at Zamorin's Guruvayurappan College, says.