# APPLICATION OF GEOINFORMATICS IN THE STUDY OF TRACE ELEMENTS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION IN MINING TAILING PONDS TO IDENTIFY POTENTIAL MINERALIZATION AND TARGET ZONES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

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*College : Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevaraya University, PG Centre, Nandihalli – Sandur*
*Branch : Applied Geology*
*Guide(s) : Dr. Basavaraj Hatti*
*Student(s) : Ms. Geetha K S*
*Ms. Nandini B K*
*Ms. Karibasamma N*
*Ms. Muskan Ayisha M*

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**Introduction:**

The study of trace elements and their spatial distribution in mining tailing ponds is crucial for understanding environmental impacts and identifying potential mineralization zones. Geoinformatics, which integrates geographic information systems (GIS), remote sensing, and geospatial analytics, provides powerful tools for analyzing and visualizing geochemical data. Mining tailings often contain residual minerals that may indicate unexplored economic deposits or contamination risks. By leveraging geospatial techniques, researchers can map elemental dispersion patterns, assess enrichment levels, and delineate prospective zones for further exploration. This approach enhances traditional geochemical methods by enabling high-resolution spatial analysis and predictive modeling. Additionally, it supports sustainable mining practices by identifying recoverable resources from waste materials. The application of geoinformatics in this context not only aids in mineral exploration but also contributes to environmental monitoring and remediation strategies. This study focuses on utilizing geospatial technologies to evaluate trace element distribution in tailing ponds, aiming to uncover hidden mineralization potential while mitigating ecological hazards. The findings could guide future exploration efforts and optimize resource recovery from mining waste, promoting both economic and environmental benefits.

**Objectives:**

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze the concentration and spatial distribution of trace elements in mining tailing ponds using geochemical methods.
2. To make use of geoinformatics techniques for mapping the spatial distribution of trace elements in mining tailing ponds.
3. To assess the potential mineralization zones within the study area based on the trace element data.
4. To identify promising target zones for further exploration based on integrated geochemical and geospatial data analysis.

**Methodology:**

The study area Sandur Schist Belt is make use of an integrated geoinformatics approach to analyze trace elements and their spatial distribution in mining tailing ponds. Field sampling is conducted to collect representative tailing samples, ensuring coverage of different zones within the study area. Geochemical analysis using laboratoey techniques quantifies trace element concentrations. Remote sensing data (e.g., multispectral imagery) aids in identifying mineralogical signatures and alteration zones. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are used for spatial interpolation (e.g., kriging, inverse distance weighting) to map elemental dispersion patterns. Geostatistical methods, including principal component analysis and cluster analysis, help identify correlations and anomalies. Digital elevation models (DEMs) assist in understanding topography-related element mobility. Validation is performed through ground-truthing and comparison with existing geological data. The final output includes predictive maps highlighting high-potential zones for further exploration, ensuring a cost-effective and environmentally conscious approach to mineral resource assessment.

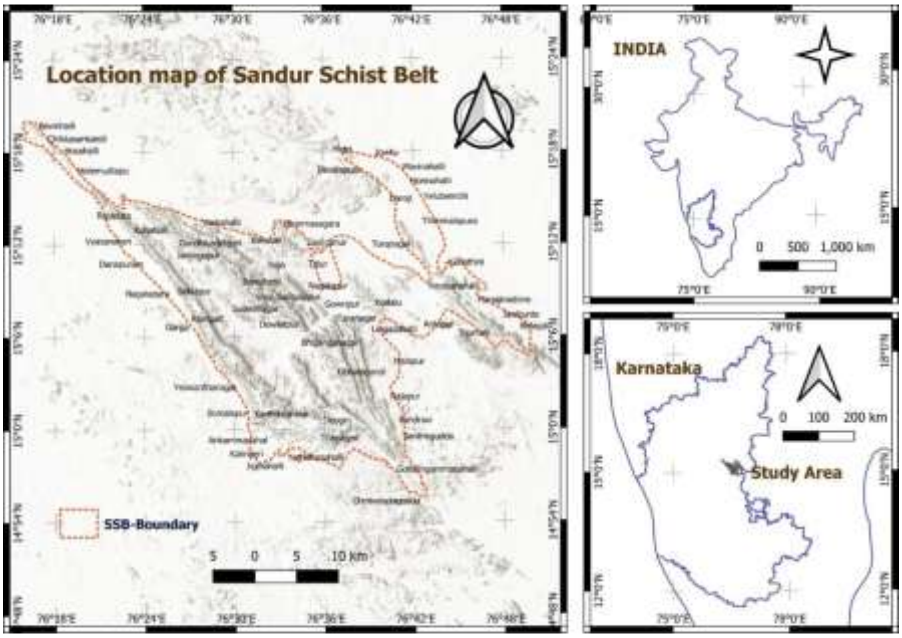


Fig. 1. Studya are location of Sandur Schist Belt

The spatial distribution of mining area, lithology, land use & land cover, water bodies, type of soil texture maps were generated using geoinformatics technology. The DEM was created using a combination of ground-based surveying data. The Google Earth remote sensing data, which included satellite imagery and aerial photographs, were used to identify and map the locations of mining waste piles and tailings ponds.

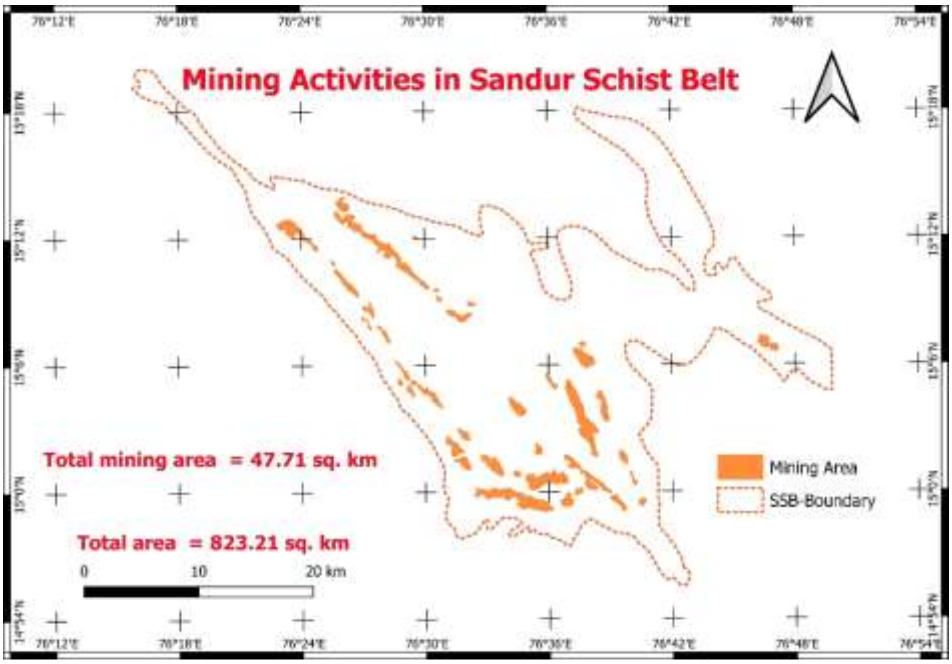


Fig. 2. Mining activities in Sandur Schist Belt area

**Result and Conclusion:**

The study is anticipated to reveal spatially variable concentrations of trace elements (e.g., Fe, Al, Au, As) within mining tailing ponds, highlighting zones of geochemical enrichment. Remote sensing and spectral analysis are expected to detect mineralogical signatures linked to sulfide oxidation or secondary mineralization. GIS-based spatial modeling will likely delineate high-anomaly areas, while statistical methods (PCA, cluster analysis) may uncover hidden relationships between elements. Validation through field assays should confirm the reliability of the geoinformatics approach.

The integration of geoinformatics is projected to prove highly effective in mapping residual mineralization within tailings, offering a low-cost alternative to conventional exploration. The study will likely demonstrate that tailing ponds can serve as secondary resource reservoirs, aligning with circular economy principles. Additionally, the methodology may aid in environmental risk assessment by tracking contaminant dispersal. Future applications could benefit from drone-based hyperspectral imaging and real-time geochemical sensors for dynamic monitoring. Overall, this approach is expected to enhance sustainable mining practices by optimizing exploration targeting and minimizing waste.

**Project Outcome & Industry Relevance:**

This study is expected to generate high-resolution geospatial maps identifying zones of trace element enrichment within mining tailings, providing actionable insights for resource recovery. By integrating geochemical data with remote sensing and GIS analytics, the project will likely produce predictive models that highlight high-potential mineralization targets. The results may reveal economically viable metal concentrations in waste materials, supporting the concept of "urban mining." Additionally, the methodology could establish a standardized framework for tailing pond assessment, combining cost-efficiency with environmental sustainability. The project may also contribute to a database of secondary mineral resources, aiding future exploration and remediation efforts.

**Project Outcomes and Learnings:**

This study is expected to provide valuable insights into the spatial distribution patterns of trace elements in mining tailing ponds, demonstrating how geoinformatics tools like GIS, remote sensing can effectively identify potential mineralization zones. Key learnings will include understanding the correlation between geochemical anomalies and mineral potential, validating the accuracy of predictive models against field data, and assessing the economic viability of recovering residual metals from tailings. The project will likely reveal optimal methodologies for integrating multi-source geospatial data, highlight limitations of current remote sensing techniques in tailings analysis, and establish best practices for environmental monitoring of contaminant dispersion. Additionally, it will contribute knowledge about the relationship between tailings' physical characteristics and metal distribution patterns, while evaluating cost-effective exploration approaches that reduce traditional drilling needs. The findings may lead to standardized protocols for tailings assessment, offering both mining companies and regulators improved tools for resource recovery and environmental management. Ultimately, the study will advance the application of geospatial technologies in sustainable mining practices, potentially transforming how the industry views and utilizes tailings ponds as secondary resource reservoirs rather than mere waste deposits.

**Future Scope:**

The future scope of this research encompasses several promising directions, including the integration of advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and deep learning for more accurate predictive modeling of mineralization patterns in tailings. Further studies could explore the application of hyperspectral and LiDAR remote sensing at higher resolutions to detect subtle geochemical variations, while drone-based surveys could enable real-time monitoring of tailing ponds. The methodology could be expanded to different geological settings and mining waste types, establishing universal protocols for tailings characterization. Future work may also investigate the coupling of geoinformatics with geophysical techniques to create multi-parameter exploration models, and the development of automated decision-support systems for mining companies. There's potential to incorporate blockchain technology for secure data sharing among stakeholders, and to explore the use of augmented reality for immersive visualization of tailings data. The research framework could be adapted for environmental risk assessment in abandoned mines, contributing to global mine rehabilitation efforts. Additionally, studies could focus on optimizing resource recovery processes based on geospatial findings, potentially revolutionizing the concept of circular economy in mining. The integration of climate change variables into predictive models may also emerge as a critical area, helping anticipate how weathering processes might affect metal mobility in tailings over time, making this research increasingly relevant for sustainable resource management in the coming decades.