A call for integrated flood management

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n
- Due to the onset of northeast monsoon, Chennai is seriously worried with flooding concerns.
\n
- It is clear that Chennai needs integrated flood management, especially the revival of lakes and water tanks.
\n

\n\n

What is the present scenario?

\n\n

\n
- Chennai is a lower elevation coastal city with a very high population density.
\n
- The torrential rains are exceeding the normal by 93% in the period of four days from November 1 leaving residents in a state of despair.
\n
- Flood waters stranded people in the rapidly growing suburban housing clusters, with many having to flee to safer places fearing a deluge as in 2015.
\n
- There have been efforts to alleviate immediate misery through the distribution of relief materials in some places.
\n
- The larger issue of how the city deals with flood and drought cycles remains unaddressed.
\n

\n\n

What are the shortfalls in planning?

\n\n

\n
- Many traditional lakes and canals that existed in the city’s core a century ago

to absorb the intense downpour are left unpreserved.
\n

\n\n

\n
- Successive governments have allowed the mindless draining of wetlands and their conversion into expensive real estate, with catastrophic consequences.
\n
- Regrettably, the great flood two years ago has not yielded a policy course correction.
\n
- Poor waste management is exacerbating the problem by blocking drains, canals and lakes.
\n
- At the same time it is also noted that ill-planned road projects are blocking smooth flow of excess water.
\n

\n\n

What should be done?

\n\n

\n
- The state government must move beyond the creation of weak storm water drains to an integrated flood management system.
\n
- Chennai should return to the traditional wisdom of creating tanks and lakes for water storage.
\n
- More importantly, old silted ones have to be rejuvenated, in order to harvest the floods and replenish the depleted groundwater.
\n
- Involving the community to monitor the health of the tanks and lakes can keep out encroachers, who are often protected by patron-politicians.
\n
- The deficit of good housing and civic infrastructure must actively be addressed and remedial structures should be built for existing localities.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering