

## Vulnerability of Chennai

### What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- Since 2015, the northeast monsoon season descended as a cataclysm on Chennai.

\n

- The impending monsoon brings a measure of foreboding and anxiety to residents.

\n

\n\n

### What is the status of Chennai in 2015 monsoon?

\n\n

\n

- The unprecedented heavy rain between November 30 and December 2 in 2015 was due to active El Nino.

\n

- The quantum of rainfall was high, but it was not the rain alone that was responsible for the disaster that followed.

\n

- A key element that is still being pointed out was the reportedly tardy release of excess water from Chembarambakkam Lake.

\n

- Which flooded the entire city and led to the loss of many lives and property worth several crores.

\n

- Rampant encroachments that stood in the path of the water, giving residents insufficient warning to leave their homes, as the floodwaters raced to the city.

\n

- Water entered homes, over several floors, and washed out people and their possessions.

\n

\n\n

## What are the impacts of recent monsoon showers in Chennai?

\n\n

\n

- The monsoon of 2017 came, after a summer of drought, as the city struggled to find water from multiple sources to meet its drinking water needs.

\n

\n\n

\n

- Chennai district has so far registered 674.8 mm of rain this season, this is 70% more than the average of 397.9 mm for the season.

\n

- The city's four reservoirs that had dried out are still only over a third full.

\n

- The first showers were intense and left many parts in a shambles water logging on the roads and water entering homes in low-lying areas.

\n

- People had to move away, afraid that the next shower would lead to a repeat of the nightmare of 2015.

\n

- According to initial estimates by the Chennai Corporation, at least 15% of the 471 bus route roads were damaged.

\n

- 115 places were still waterlogged in the city and its suburbs and attributed it to the heavy downpour over five days.

\n

\n\n

## Why the city is so vulnerable?

\n\n

\n

- As the city grew and expanded beyond its core, it was built over water bodies that were cleared out to make space for human settlements.

\n

- As more and more people moved to urban areas, these settlements filled out and the resources soon grew inadequate for the burgeoning population dependent on them.

\n

- Natural draining paths were built over, In addition, years of rampant encroachment on water bodies and lake beds did not help.

\n

- Inadequate monsoon preparation, in terms of desilting tanks and deepening

water channels.

\n

- Storm water drains and removing encroachment, has not been adequately addressed across the city and suburbs.

\n

\n\n

## Way forward

\n\n

\n

- The city was scarcely prepared for the monsoon, Three years on, the level of preparedness leaves much to be desired.
- Environmental activists insist that drastic action to evict encroachers and those who sit on water bodies must be taken.
- Better preparedness of official machinery to face the floods across the city, is crucial.
- It is the only way a natural calamity is not exacerbated by man-made errors.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: The Hindu**

\n

