

Chennai needs *integrated* (संकलित) flood management, especially the *revival*((noun) – improvement, betterment; restoration फिर से चालू करना, सुधार.) of lakes and water tanks

Chennai's date with a strong northeast monsoon *ought to*((modal verb) – must, should.) be a cause for all-round relief since the water *fortunes*((noun) – **circumstances, condition, position/status, तकदीर, परिस्थितियाँ**) of more than eight million residents of the metropolitan region depend on this weather system. Yet, the *torrential*((adjective) – (of rain) **heavy, severe, relentless, मूसलाधार**) rains in the meteorological sub-division, exceeding the normal by 93% in the period of four days from November 1, left tens of thousands of citizens in a state of despair((noun) – **distress, anguish, pain, परेशानी**). Flood waters *marooned*((verb) – **strand, leave isolated, abandon असहाय छोड़ना**.) them in the rapidly growing *suburban*(उपनगर का) housing clusters, with many having to *flee*(भाग जाना) to safer places fearing a repeat of the *deluge*((noun) – **severe flood, torrent; torrential rain, पानी की बाढ़**) of 2015. While there have been efforts to *alleviate*((verb) – **reduce, lessen, mitigate कम करना**) immediate misery through the distribution of relief material in some places, the larger issue of how the city deals with flood and *drought*((noun) – **dry spell/period, lack of rain, shortage of water, अकाल**) cycles remains *unaddressed*. Chennai is a lower elevation coastal city with global *aspirations*(अभिलाषा), and very high population density. Scientific management should have ensured the *preservation*((noun) – **conservation, protection, safeguarding, सुरक्षित रखना**) of the many traditional lakes and canals that existed in the city's core a century ago to absorb the intense *downpour*((noun) – **a heavy rainfall, मूसलाधार बारिश**) of about 1,300 mm of rain, most of it in an annual window((noun) – interval, (right) moment, (suitable) time, अंतर) of a few weeks. *Successive* (एक के बाद एक आने वाला) governments have allowed the mindless draining of wetlands and their conversion into expensive real estate, with *catastrophic*((adjective) – **destructive, ruinous, disastrous/calamitous, अनर्थकारी**) *consequences*(परिणाम). Regrettably, the great flood two years ago, which left many dead and families *impoverished*((adjective) – **weakened, exhausted, drained कंगाल, दरिद्र**), has not yielded a policy course correction. If the Tamil Nadu government is serious about putting Chennai on the global map of economically *viable*((adjective) – **feasible practical, realistic साध्य**.) cities, it must move beyond the creation of weak storm water drains to an integrated flood management system.

Chennai and its *sprawl*((noun) – **spread, stretch, straggle बेकायदा फैलाव**.) extending to two neighbouring districts should return to the traditional *wisdom*((noun) – **intelligence/knowledge, common sense, foresight**.) of creating tanks and lakes for water storage, and *rejuvenating*((verb) – **revive/renew, restore; reorganize नया करना**) old *silted*((adjective) – **filled with mud/sediment/silt, कीचड़**) ones, in order to *harvest*((verb) – **gather, bring in; collect/obtain फसल काटना**.) the floods and *replenish* ((verb) – **refill, restore, fill up (again भरपूर करना)**) *depleted* groundwater. The finding from one study in 2013 shows that 27 tanks have totally disappeared and another 400 have lost almost their entire capacity. This *underscores*((verb) – **call attention to, emphasize, highlight. जांचना देखना जोर देना, बल देना**) the need to revive such natural sponges. Inviting the community to monitor the health of the tanks and lakes can keep out *encroachers*((noun) – **trespasser, infiltrator, encroacher, violator दूसरे का अधिकार दबा बैठना**), who are often protected by *patron-politicians*((noun) – **politician who is inclined to do favoritism, nepotism, partiality सहायक**). Yet, such measures can work only when the *deficit*((noun) – **shortfall, deficiency, shortage कमी**) of good housing and civic infrastructure is actively addressed. Tamil Nadu, one of India's most urbanised States, has a poor record in this area, resulting in *fragile*((adjective) – **weak, risky, tenuous/vulnerable**.) slums. New housing has *mushroomed*((verb) – **grow/increase rapidly, burgeon तेजी से बढ़ना**) in Chennai's suburbs, where municipal bodies are *mired*((verb) – **entangle, mix up, involve (in a tough situation दलदल में फँसना)**.) in *incompetence*(अयोग्यता) and corruption. It is these localities with little infrastructure that have *borne the brunt*((phrase) **bear the burnt – to suffer/get the worst (bad) part of some action भुगतना, सहन करना**) this year. Looking ahead, the priority for the State should be to *integrate*(जोड़ना) flood management using expert opinion and public consultation. Remedial structures should be built for existing localities. Poor waste management is *exacerbating*((verb) – **aggravate, make worse/worsen बिगड़ी हुई को और बिगाड़ना**) the problem by blocking drains, canals and lakes, while ill-planned road projects are *cutting off* ((phrasal verb) – **stop/end; disconnect, interrupt अंत करना**) flood flows. These have to be immediately addressed. The tendency to treat floods and *drought*(अकाल) as events to *dole out*((phrasal verb) – **allocate, allot, distribute बांटना**) *patronage*((noun) – **help/aid, assistance, support संरक्षण** .) is preventing Chennai from *forging*(**build, construct, create बनाना**) *robust* (मजबूत) solutions