

# Season of Floods

The article is related to  
General Studies-Paper-III  
(Disaster Management)

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## Tamil Nadu's cities need long-term solutions to avoid the monsoon woes

The ongoing spell of heavy rain in Chennai has again exposed the vulnerability of the city, a coastal metropolis with a flat terrain, to floods, and raised more questions than answers about the Government's preparedness to deal with the northeast monsoon. The first spell of heavy rain of 21 cm, mostly in the early hours of Sunday (November 7), caught everyone by surprise. Despite storm water drains and waterways running to about 700 km being cleared in the last four months, no tangible improvement was seen in the problem of inundation. The nightmare of the 2015 December floods haunted Chennai in the backdrop of the authorities monitoring the release of surplus water from the reservoirs on the outskirts. Even as the city was struggling to get back to normality, there was a depression in the Bay of Bengal, which crossed the coast near Chennai on Thursday. This time, the city did not experience very heavy rainfall but several suburbs such as Tambaram and Red Hills recorded over 22 cm of rain. In the last four days, other parts of the State too were at the receiving end of the monsoon. Nagapattinam, one of the backward areas of the Cauvery delta, was battered after 31 cm fell in a day.

The crux of the problem is the issue of drainage, be it in Chennai or in Nagapattinam. In a large urban setting such as Chennai, shrinking open space, the gap between the coverage of the drains and that of sewer lines, ageing drains and sewer networks in core areas of the city, and encroachments or obstructions hampering the free flow of water are responsible for the mess. The city is blessed with a few rivers such as the Cooum and the Adyar, apart from a number of canals including the Buckingham Canal. All these waterbodies, if properly maintained, can be very effective flood carriers, sparing several residential localities from inundation. The State Government, which is executing a couple of integrated storm water drain projects, should look for durable solutions to the city's long-standing woes and executing them in a short span of time. The Government has been swift in providing relief and its seriousness in the matter can be seen from the fact that Chief Minister M.K. Stalin visited flood-hit areas continuously since Sunday for a first-hand account of the problems. Often in the past, the determination shown in finding a long-term solution to waterlogging waned

during the non-monsoon periods. Mr. Stalin, who was Chennai Mayor and Local Administration Minister earlier, is well-placed now to put his experience to use and pull the city out of the quagmire. The people too should be responsible enough in ensuring that the waterbodies and drains are not turned into dumps.

### Expected Question (Prelims Exams)

**Q. Which of the following city receives more rainfall from North-East Monsoon?**

- (a) Pune
- (b) Mahabaleshwar
- (c) Chennai
- (d) Thiruvananthapuram

### Expected Question (Mains Exams)

**Q. "Urban floods have become a combination of natural and human disaster in big metropolitan cities like Chennai." According to you, what steps need to be taken to solve it?**

**(250 Words)**

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**Note: - The question of the main examination given for practice is designed keeping in mind the upcoming UPSC main examination. Therefore, to get an answer to this question, you can take the help of this source as well as other sources related to this topic.**