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Chennai fears in Bengaluru

By Ashwini M Sripad | Published: 30th July 2016 06:50 AM Last Updated: 30th July 2016 07:01 AM



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BENGALURU: Following incessant rain on Thursday night, the city woke up on Friday to a flood-like situation. Now, the question on everyone's mind is "Will the city be submerged like Chennai last year?" Experts believe Bengaluru may face such a situation if heavy rainfall continues for five to eight days.

Encroachment of lakes and storm water drains, indiscriminate cutting of trees, and lack of proper urban planning are some of the main reasons for the flooding.



Children wading through floodwaters in a residential area in Bengaluru. (Left) A person wading through floodwaters in a residential area in Bengaluru. (Right) A person wading through floodwaters in a residential area in Bengaluru.

Noted environment A N Yellappa Reddy said state government officials, public and other stakeholders are

committing serious offences. About 30 years back, the width of storm water drains were reduced from 70 feet to five feet. "How will the water flow?" he asks.

Reddy said Bengaluru was a wetland and large areas were used for agriculture. "Now 90 per cent of land is used for roads, pavements and buildings. There is no space for water to flow and the number of lakes have reduced. Naturally, this would lead to flooding," he said.

"If the city records heavy rainfall for another week, Bengaluru will face a situation like Chennai. We won't have to wait for another year to witness a flood. There are more chances of it happening this monsoon," he said. "To make the situation worse, in the recent cabinet meeting, land earmarked for parks in each layout has been reduced to 15 per cent. This is a poor decision by the government," he said.

Prof T V Ramachandra, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, said, "It's pure mismanagement by civic authority. Storm water drains, lakes — everything is encroached upon. If lakes are properly inter-connected, there will be no flooding. Even the storm water drains are choked." He added, "Chennai too faced a similar situation last year. Lakes were not inter-connected and land around water bodies were encroached upon in Chennai which led to the floods."

Bengaluru gets 15 tmcft water from rainfall in a year and lakes in the city have a capacity to hold 35 tmcft. "With mismanagement of lakes, it can't hold water and water is going waste. The city has a water requirement of 18tmcft. If we are able to harvest rainwater, there will be no drinking water problem in Bengaluru," he

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said. The city at present has 193 lakes, including 31 in core Bengaluru. "There were 265 lak... in core Bengaluru. Now it is just 31," Ramachandra said.

He added "If rainfall exceeds 100mm to 120mm in Bengaluru, it could lead to a flood. It is a disaster waiting to happen."

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