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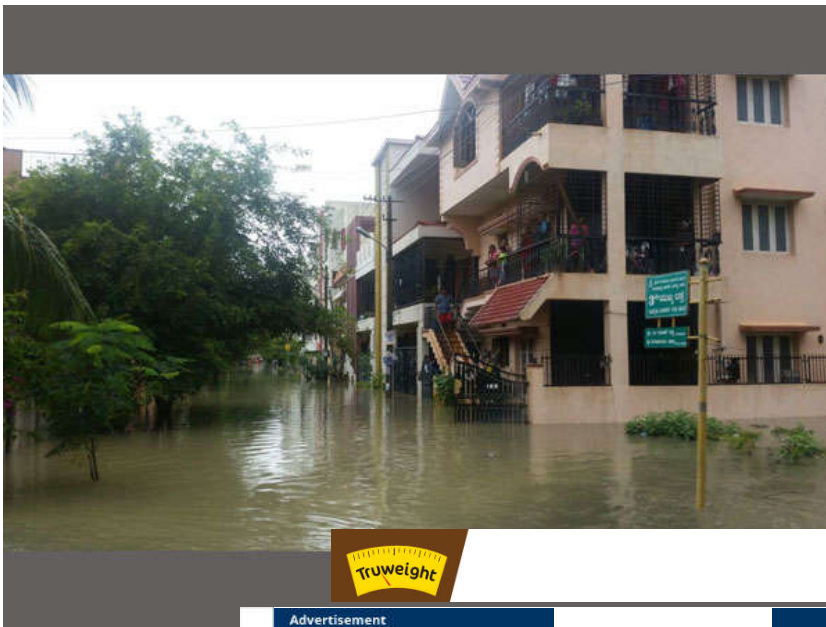
# Bengaluru floods: Lakes are dying, civic administration is collapsing

By: [Vicky Nanjappa](#) Updated: Saturday, July 30, 2016, 16:37 [IST]

Had Bengaluru seen more rains than what it received on Wednesday and Thursday, it could have well been a Chennai like situation. It was a wake up call and unless and until the civic bodies wake up and pull up their socks immediately, the situation can only go from bad to worse. Chennai was submerged under water last year following the rains and this was blamed on bad planning.

Frothing lakes, flooded areas and complete chaos is what several parts of the city witnessed on Thursday and Friday. It was quite a sight to see boats in the middle of the city ferrying people across. There are a couple of points to ponder over here. Let us begin by blaming the civic administration and at the end of it let us not forget to blame ourselves as well.

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## Let us take the blame too

Going by the situation today and the lack of any action, it appears as though the civic mess is here to stay. The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or the BBMP somehow fail to clean up the stormwater drains before the rains set in.

While this is one part of the problem, the other clearly is the number of encroachments that take place.


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Buildings have come up over stormwater drains and this means that there is no way for the water to flow out. The BBMP without batting an eyelid, has given permission to builders to construct buildings over stormwater drains and this has led to havoc. If action is not taken immediately then in the future the city will witness worse situations.

A report by the Namma Bengaluru Foundation states that during the middle of the last century Bangalore city had as many as 262 lakes, ponds and marshy wetlands, which ensured a high level of groundwater table and also used to maintain local climate in the city.

But in recent years many lakes of Bangalore have been lost in the process of various anthropogenic activities and population pressures leading to unplanned urbanization and expansion.

Rest of the surviving lakes is reduced to cesspools due to direct discharge of industrial effluents domestic sewage and unregulated dumping of solid wastes. Many lakes have been encroached due to their valuation resulting in drastic shrinkage of water bodies in the city.

In fact, in the name of development many lakes have been already put to alternative use such as bus stands, stadiums, layouts etc. In fact due to rapid industrialization and urbanization, the number of lakes in and around Bangalore has gone down from 262 to 127 out of which only 81 are said to be live.

The 262 wetlands that existed in Bangalore in 1962 had declined by a whopping 58 per cent by 2007, according to a study by the Energy and Wetland research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science.

While the city's built up area shot up by 466 percent between 1973- 2007, the 51 active wetlands in 1973 dipped to 17 by 2007. During the same period, the number of lakes in Greater Bangalore came down from 159 to only 93.

The study found that the condition of Northern part of greater Bangalore was poorer than the Southern region, where the city is growing faster.

The foundation points out that managing rainwater through interlinked lakes was key to survival. The role of lakes have been ignored over the past four decades and this has led to the mess.

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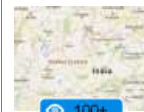
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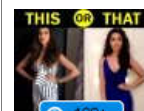
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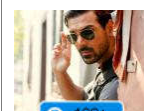
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