

# Causes of Floods in Chennai

The city of Chennai was flooded by 3 days of rain in November 2021. The corporation pumped out the stagnant water in about 750 places. And the ruling DMK and the opposition AIADMK, as usual temporarily provided food, clothing and shelter to the people. The DMK administration may have acted much faster than the previous AIADMK regime, but work has not been done to find the root causes. It seems that the relief work for the people was carried out like a ploy to cover this up.

In 2015 also, the city of Chennai was flooded like this.

During the floods in Chennai in 2015, about 15 lakh people were made homeless. More than 10 lakh houses were flooded. About 90 lakh people lost their jobs and normal lives for more than a month. These vulnerabilities were caused by the opening of the lake water in the Koovam and Adyar rivers without adequate precaution and the lack of proper drainage facilities. The city of Chennai is thus most affected during every monsoon season.

Chennai is one of the most important cities in India. It covers an area of 1186 square kilometers, comprising one corporation, 16 municipalities, 20 municipalities and 214 areas. It is also located in the districts of Chennai, Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram and Tiruvallur.

As far as Chennai is concerned, the Kosasthalai river flows in North Chennai, the Koovam river flows in Central Chennai and the Balaru river flows in the south reaching South Chennai. The Buckingham Canal is the waterway that connects all these rivers. According to Professor Janakaraj of the Chennai Development Research Group, there were 141 ponds in Chennai as of 1971. Apart from these there are currently 3,000 lakes.

How much drainage facility and how many ponds and lakes are necessary for storing water and the question of why Chennai is so vulnerable in times of flood calamity are not being studied scientifically and implemented.

## **Is Chennai a Planned City?**

Urban development is to be made through proper planning. It is planned taking into account the growing population, the increase in the number of job seekers due to industrial development, the conversion of agricultural lands into residential land, the need for public lands, the need for drainage facilities and the

need for water. We call it Master Plan. One such master plan was developed in 1976. Accordingly, it was planned that 36,510 hectares of agricultural land would be required for the Chennai metropolitan expansion. But urban development was developed on 61,120 hectares and so areas of public use have shrunk.

The second planning should have been done in 1995–96. But it was planned in 2008, 13 years late. Of this, 60% of the city's land area was reduced to 10%. In addition, public open spaces were reduced from 5% to 0.5%. Apart from this, with the permission of the Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA), 1129 hectares of farmland, 345 hectares of open space, 14 hectares of ponds and lakes were converted into buildings without any planning. No rules were followed. It was planned to expand the city to 330.58 acres during the same period. But the expansion took place to 450.26 hectares. I.e. 120 km long including Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram, Tiruvallur, expansion area with a population of 40 lakhs. Thus the city of Chennai was expanded without any planning.

All this is the result of the adoption of new economic policies of capitalists imported by the imperialist countries and followed by the present Modi government and the previous Congress government in the name of development. The DMK and AIADMK, which were in power in the state, did not oppose such new colonial policies and actively implemented them.

### **Aggression on Adyar**

During the period 1976–2016, the Miad Hospital, the Jain Technology Park, the flats near the Maraimalai Foot Bridge, and the Adyar Ground Bridge, which had to be removed by court order, were flooded from Saidapet to Kasimkhanpet. The Adyar Park Trust was formed in 2007 to restore the Adyar facade. Tens of thousands of families were evicted. Technology parks, star hotels and government offices occupied the area.

### **Velachery Vulnerability**

Tambaram, East Tambaram rainwater intake, Pallikaranai Swamp Drainage area shrunk causing flood plain depletion. This is due to the occupations of the Global Hospital and the Maritime University. Areas like Villivakkam and Korattur are affected. Roads to Madhavaram Lake, which used to be a drain for Korattur Lake, are being constructed by the Chennai Koyambedu–Madhavaram Highway and the area is being affected by the occupation by the National Highways Authority of the drainage canal which is to be constructed along the adjoining public road. Occupancy of the Buckingham Canal extends from Tiruvallikeni to Manthaveli and the Maduravayal Port Link Road.

Drainage is being blocked at the mouth of the Kosasthalai River by the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board and the Kamaraj Port Expansion. North Chennai is affected as the river water stagnates in the sea.

The plans to spend Rs 6,400 crores to improve drainage facilities in Chennai to repair the December 2015 floods have not been properly implemented.

Both the AIADMK, which has been in power for most of the 46 years from 1976, and the DMK, which has been in power for about a decade, are responsible for this situation.

The DMK and AIADMK are trying to cover up their crimes by not implementing the basic task of permanently protecting the people from the effects of the flood waters but by turning them into beggars and giving them freebies. The Union Government of BJP is also responsible for the plight of the people of Tamil Nadu by building toilets for the people of the state by exploiting the tax revenue of the states and leaving them at the mercy of the imperialist financial institutions.

**So we demand the following!**

- « Central Government is to provide complete relief to flood victims!
- « Use the tax on the assets of domestic and foreign big business and the acquisition of capital to provide full relief to flood victims!
- « Set up people's committees and carry out relief work!
- « We oppose the Hindutva Modi government which is making the country a new colony of America!
- « Do not neglect irrigation maintenance works.

We oppose globalization, privatization, liberalization policies, special economic zones, smart cities, imperial urbanization and abandon water source development and irrigation projects!

We will overturn the new colonial "development" policies.

**CPI (ML)**  
**Tamil Nadu State Committee**