

## Chennai and Water Management

The city of Chennai this year is experiencing water crisis due to the depletion of water in the major lakes surrounding it that supply to the city. Yes this year water level in these lakes have been poorer than last few years.

But Chennai has always managed to find solutions to this problem which becomes acute once in 7 or 8 years after a season of poor monsoon.

But the water manages of the city, though heavily criticised, have been found to come with alternatives in these times. Despite such lower level of water in these reservoirs Chennai does not suffer as much as it did 15 or 20 years ago when it the lakes had similar low storage.

This is due to some new measures such as

- Two desalination plants that started operating 5 years ago.
- Use of abandoned stone quarries which have unintentionally acted as storage space for rain water.
- Sourcing water from Jolarpettai from mid July which is brought in train wagons.
- Water is being brought in tankers from bore wells in villages surrounding the city.

So the situation has improved from mid-July.

Also Chennai has an agreement with Andhra government to supply water through Telugu Ganga project.

As the Krishna river flowing through Andhra Pradesh has been in floods in August due to heavy rains, Andhra is in a position to supply more water than they usually give. [Here is a link to report of heavy rains in August 3, 2019.](#)

There has been incessant rains in Karnataka's western ghats from the start of August again causing flooding there. So the Kavery river is getting heavy supply some of which will find its way to Chennai through Mettur, Veernam and then the pipelines from Veeranam. So the problem of this summer has been minimised now.



(Picture courtesy The Hindu dated 7<sup>th</sup> August 2019)

Rain water harvesting which started 10 years ago has been revitalised now.

The WEEF conference takes place in November which is known to be the single month in calendar receiving heaviest downpour for Chennai city and many parts of Tamilnadu.

So water crisis that remains now will be non-existent in November. For example city has not banned watering of lawns.

Just like California has learned to live with periodic water crisis, Chennai too has devised ways to get through such years of poor rainfall.

In all restaurants for common people in this state it is a tradition that when a customer sits in a table the waiter first comes with a jug of water (free of cost) and then asks the customers what they want. This practice continues even now in the midst of water scarcity.

WEEF takes place in an internationally known hotel and they will be doing much better than street corner food outlets in meeting their customers' needs.