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Kerala Floods and Mitigation Methods

[Abstract]

Humans have invariably settled along the flood plains of rivers. The first great civilizations, such as those in Indus Valley, Mesopotamia and Egypt, all grew up in river valleys. Various historic cities have developed by the river fronts. The regular flooding provides soil full of nutrients and plenty of water for agriculture and basic needs. But there is a trade-off between living by the river side and unforeseen severity of flood hazards. Traditionally, in flood prone areas, people lived in elevated houses or elevated lands to safeguard them from water. In Kerala, with the construction of dams and decreased seasonal flooding, people started moving further or nearer to the river. This changed their construction patterns as well. But the distance from the river does not matter, it is the elevation which is critical. Global Warming, climate change and sea level rise are real. In the event of frequent floods in Kerala, the preparation of the flood plain maps to understand the real situation and the dangers ahead are among the first steps to be taken. The solution is definitely not going to be an engineering one alone. The thrust shall be to avoid a future disaster. Enforcing a ban on the construction of new buildings in the area is not a solution.



To fight the impact of it, the following steps are very important:

1. Avoid improper and haphazard landfilling.
2. Avoid construction in flood plain areas.
3. Follow proper planning and design methods.
4. Good quality workmanship in building to be followed by regular maintenance