

COMMENT



THEMBA KHOZA

We can prevent water disasters

WE are currently receiving heavy rainfall in most parts of the country. This is a good thing to recharge our water resources mainly due to South Africa being a water scarce country.

As we have seen in recent weeks, the heavy downpours have been associated with flooding and infrastructure related disasters. Houses and towns have been flooded, and rivers and roads washed away. This has led to serious hardships for communities.

In as much as nothing much can be done to stop natural disasters, but we can play our part to mitigate the extent and impact of such disasters. We also play a part in these disasters due to our irresponsible behaviour and disregard for the environment.

We have turned our water resources into dumping sites, and this negatively affects the natural flow of water in the rivers and streams.

The waste we dump next to our water courses gets washed into the rivers and streams during rainfall affecting the flow of water leading to blockages in bridges and eventually leading to the collapse of the bridges.

This leads to serious socio-economic hardships too as communities are cut-off from economic hubs and have to spend much more to travel to meet their essential needs. This needs us to respect our water resources and promote their protection and keep them clean and free flowing.

Dumping waste in water resources is a deadly thing as it makes the water unfit for human use and also affects the normal flow of water in the rivers and streams.

The waste in the water resources blocks the flow of water and leads to flooding as the water looks for waterways to keep flowing. During the heavy rains, the waste in the systems form a barrier leading to the diversion of rivers and stream and eventually flooding.

Waste blocks the natural flow of water in the rivers and stream causing danger to people around the river systems. Let us refrain from using our rivers, streams and other watercourses as dumping sites and prevent disasters.

Our roads infrastructure is now a mess due to blocked drainage systems. Water can no longer go through the drains as we throw all kinds of waste leading to blockages and infrastructure degradation.

We can do better by simply being responsible citizens. Municipalities and agencies responsible for road maintenance must strengthen maintenance programmes and ensure that the road drains are always working properly.

In as much as the heavy downpours have brought some disasters and misery, it also provides us the opportunity to do an introspection and to start doing things differently.

It teaches us to respect and protect our water resources, and to ensure that they are always clean and that the water is flowing freely. It teaches us not to use our water resources as dumping sites.

The heavy rains and disaster also show we need to respect the flood lines and avoid building close to the watercourses. We do not need to see more people becoming victims of flooding and being washed away. Let us be responsible and prevent the unnecessary loss of lives and properties.

The recent disasters also challenge our municipalities and government to build quality infrastructure and ensure that bridges are high and strong enough to allow water to pass freely.

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31 January 2022