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Revival for ancient Tambaram tank

D Madhavan, TNN 25 August 2009, 05:28am IST

CHENNAI: Work on desilting and deepening the Old Tambaram Tank of the Bhimeswar temple on Mudichur Main Road began on Thursday. The work was supervised by Tambaram MLA S R Raja who contributed Rs 5 lakh from his local constituency fund and the municipality supplied the remaining Rs 1.6 lakh. The tank had been renovated last year but again fell into disuse.

Municipal workers began removing the sludge from all the corners. Municipal officials said toilets and water taps would be built and adequate illumination provided. The damaged walker's path around the tank would be repaired and Korean grass planted along the pathway. A play area with equipment for children would also be set up in the open space available. "The dredging and deepening work will be completed within a fortnight while the entire work will be finished in two months," Tambaram municipality chairman E Mani told TOI.

"It is hearting to see the centuries-old-tank being given a facelift again, suprevised by MLA Raja himself. Repeated representations to the local body have borne fruit," said S Shanmugam, a resident of West Tambaram.

Located a few yards away from the residence of Raja, "Pazhaya Tambaram Kulam" as it is popularly known, was displayed as a "model" of people-government cooperation when it was renovated in February 2008 after over four decades of neglect at a cost of Rs 26 lakh. The Chennai Metropolitan Development Agency (CMDA) contributed Rs 8 lakh under its community-based environment development programme, the Tambaram municipality spent Rs 4 lakh, an amount of Rs 10 lakh came from MP T R Baalu's local area development fund, S R Raja gave Rs 5 lakh and the residents of West Tambaram pooled in Rs 1 lakh.

Within a few months, however, the tank returned to its former decreipt state. Thick vegetation covered all the sides and people began dumping garbage there. Most of the lights around the tank were broken, the walker's path got damaged and the water level went down. The rainwater harvesting system was also not put to use effectively.

The tank, said to be the oldest in the area, was very popular with the residents of West Tambaram.