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The Southern side of the Chennai metropolitan city consists of numerous hills, lakes and tanks. The rapid development of settlements in this area has resulted in a huge demand for water. Due to urbanization, water bodies are converted for developmental activities such as roads, school, houses and commercial buildings. Because of this, the number of water bodies has been reduced day by day. In order to maintain the sustainability of water resources, it is necessary to study the impact of water bodies due to urbanization.

This paper attempts to study the historical and present ecological status and services of two tanks located near south Chennai. Further the role of urbanization on the ecological services of tanks and their impact on the socio-cultural aspects of the community has been studied. Based on the research results, suggestions are made to improve the tank performance in view of changed land use and socio-cultural settings. Methodology adopted in this study was to use remote sensing and GIS technique to assess the changes in land use pattern in the study area; water quality analysis was conducted for studying its impact due to pollution and a questionnaire survey was used to study the socio-economic impacts of the water bodies.

It found that the tank located in Peri-urban area will offer better service utility for the community people but the community involvement to maintain the tank is very less. While in urban tank the service is reduced but the people awareness was found to be positive and thereby the tank is maintained effectively as a ground water recharge source. It is high time that people in the peri-urban area be made aware of the necessity of maintaining the tank before the tank becomes completely dilapidated and defunct. Possible measures suggested by the community can be taken up to restore the tank in a sustainable manner.