MEDIUM IRRIGATION PROJECTS

The irrigation projects that have the capacity to bring 2000 to 10,000 hectares of land under cultivation are classified as medium irrigation projects. The execution of medium irrigation projects brought significant development in Tamil Nadu\(^1\). The government of Tamil Nadu, in addition to major irrigation projects gave much priority for the development of medium irrigation projects. The Kamaraj era, the period between 1954 and 1963, has been described as ‘Golden Age’ in the history of Tamil Nadu. During this period not only major irrigation but also medium and minor irrigation projects attained due priority among the developmental schemes\(^2\). With the intention of increasing food production the medium projects were given priority during the first three Five Year plan period. From 1947 to 1967 various medium projects were undertaken and opened for irrigation. With the help of the medium irrigation projects dry lands were brought under wet cultivation. One among them is the Kannanar River Project.

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3.1. Kannanar River Project

The government sanctioned a scheme for the construction of flood banks on the right side of the Kannanar river in the limits of Periakottai and Kanniakurichi villages in Pattukottai taluk of Thanjavur district. The scheme was sanctioned in January 1949. The river Kannanar is so shallow that a slight flow of water inundates the adjoining paddy fields in the two villages. So the scheme was sanctioned to prevent inundation from the river and to safeguard the two villages. With the help of this scheme an extent of 154.86 acres in Kanniakurichi village and 600 acres in Periyakottai village were safeguarded.

3.2. New Kattalai High Level Canal Scheme

The uplands of Tiruchirapalli and Thanjavur districts lying south of Cauvery river had no irrigation facilities. So the people of this area exerted pressure on the government to provide irrigation facilities from the Cauvery river. In response to their demand and request New Kattalai High Level Canal Scheme was sanctioned by the government in

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4 Ibid.
the Second Plan period\textsuperscript{6}. It was inaugurated on August 17, 1957 by the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Shri. K. Kamaraj. The scheme excavated a canal above Kattalai bed regulator across Cauvery\textsuperscript{7}. The Cauvery waters hither to wasted into the sea now came to be utilized for irrigation\textsuperscript{8}.

The canal scheme irrigates 20,622 acres. Out of which 12,000 acres will be under tanks and 8,622 acres under direct irrigation in Tiruchirapalli and Tanjore districts\textsuperscript{9}. The estimated cost of the scheme was 172.29 lakhs and the additional yield of rice was 7,468 tons\textsuperscript{10}. The canal scheme was completed in 1960. After completion, water was released for irrigation through a canal\textsuperscript{11}. Because of this canal scheme, dry lands directly received irrigation facilities and thereby increased the food production\textsuperscript{12}. Another scheme which came to the benefit of the South Arcot district is the Vaidur Reservoir Project.

\textsuperscript{7} Second Five Year Plan Programme for 1959-1960, p.32.
\textsuperscript{8} Madras Information, Vol. XI, September 1957, p.11.
\textsuperscript{9} Report of the Madras State Administration, 1957, p.86.
\textsuperscript{10} Second Five Year Plan Programme for 1959-1960, p.32.
\textsuperscript{11} Madras Information, Vol. XX, December 1966, p.35.
\textsuperscript{12} Report of the Triennial review for Irrigation in India, 1953-1956, p.62.
3.3. Vaidur Reservoir Project

The Vaidur Reservoir Project was constructed across the river Varahanadhi half a mile to the west of Vaidur Village in the Tindivanam Taluk of South Arcot District\textsuperscript{13}. The project was launched for the joint benefit of both Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry States\textsuperscript{14}. It was inaugurated on March 21, 1958 by the Honourable Chief Minister of Madras, Shri. K. Kamaraj. The cost of the scheme was Rs.67.49 lakh to be shared by the Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry States\textsuperscript{15}. The project was completed in 1959\textsuperscript{16}.

This is a lengthy dam of 19,540 ft. with a reservoir of 550 m.cu. ft. to the benefit of 4,200 acres\textsuperscript{17}. Out of this 3,200 acres belong to the Madras State and the remaining 1,000 acres to the Pondicherry State. An annual production of 1420 tons of rice was expected out of the scheme to augment the food production of the State. This amount of additional

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{13} Madras Information, Vol. XX, December 1966, p.36.
  \item \textsuperscript{14} Madras Information, Vol. XIII, February 1959, p.73.
  \item \textsuperscript{15} Administration Report of the Public Works Department, Madras State, 1957-1958, p.13.
  \item \textsuperscript{17} Second Five Year Plan Programme for 1959-1960, p.33.
\end{itemize}
food grains produced through this scheme undoubtedly improved the living condition of the people of Tindivanam taluk in the South Arcot district\textsuperscript{18}.

3.4. Neyyar Second Stage Irrigation Project

Kanyakumari district, being the ‘Land’s End of India’ is by nature, a gifted area. It was the ‘Granary’ of the erstwhile Travancore State, before the re-organization of the States in 1956\textsuperscript{19}. Under the States Re-organisation Act of 1956, Vilavancode, Thovala, Kalkulam and Agastheswaram jointly formed the Kanyakumari District\textsuperscript{20}.

The Neyyar Second stage irrigation scheme was inaugurated in July 1958\textsuperscript{21}. The Neyyar irrigation project envisages construction of a solid gravity masonry dam across the river Neyyar in Kerala State at a place called Chempilambad about 19 miles south-east of Trivandrum\textsuperscript{22}.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{18} Report of the Triennial Review for Irrigation in India, 1953-1956, p.63.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Madras Information, Vol.XVII, January 1963, p.36.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Administration Report of the Public Works Department, Madras State, 1961-1962, p.3.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Madras Information, Vol.XIII, June 1959, p.4.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Tamil Nadu Public Works Department Notes on Irrigation Systems Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari Districts, 1974, p.4.
\end{itemize}
The Neyyar project was a joint venture of both Kerala and Tamil Nadu governments. The water discharged from the Neyyar dam is utilized by means of two channels one on right side and the other on left side. The right side channel with a length of 21 miles irrigates 15,000 acres stretched over the entire Neyyatinkara taluk of the Kerala state. The left side channel of 24 miles long irrigates 19,100 acres partly in Kerala and partly in Tamil Nadu State limits.

The Neyyar Second Stage irrigation scheme was worked out as a substitute to the Pechipparai Dam. The Pechipparai dam was designed during the time of Shri. Moolam Tirunal Maharaja of Travancore State to meet the irrigational needs of Neyyatinkara, Vilavancode, Kalkulam, Agasteswaram and Thovala taluks. But on completion of the construction of Pechipparai dam it was found sufficient for the last three taluks and first two were left without the benefit. Hence, to their benefit the Neyyar dam was constructed with a right wing canal for the Neyyatinkara taluk and the left wing canal for the Vilavancode taluk. When the dam was under construction the linguistic State Re-organisation of 1956 took place. By this arrangement Vilavancode, taluk went out of the territorial limits of the newly formed Kerala State and came under the Madras State. At once the newly formed Kerala government gave up the idea of the left wing canal and concentrated upon the right wing canal meant for the southern most Neyyatinkara taluk of the Kerala State. At once at the instigation of the father of the Kanyakumari District Marshall A. Nesamony, the Veteran Madras Chief Minister Shri. K. Kamaraj made an agreement with the Kerala government. On the strength of the agreement the Madras State undertook the construction of the Left Wing Canal of the Neyyar dam, for the partial use of the people of Neyyatinkara taluk and for the major use of the people of Vilavancode taluk.

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23 The Neyyar Second Stage irrigation scheme was worked out as a substitute to the Pechipparai Dam. The Pechipparai dam was designed during the time of Shri. Moolam Tirunal Maharaja of Travancore State to meet the irrigational needs of Neyyatinkara, Vilavancode, Kalkulam, Agasteswaram and Thovala taluks. But on completion of the construction of Pechipparai dam it was found sufficient for the last three taluks and first two were left without the benefit. Hence, to their benefit the Neyyar dam was constructed with a right wing canal for the Neyyatinkara taluk and the left wing canal for the Vilavancode taluk. When the dam was under construction the linguistic State Re-organisation of 1956 took place. By this arrangement Vilavancode, taluk went out of the territorial limits of the newly formed Kerala State and came under the Madras State. At once the newly formed Kerala government gave up the idea of the left wing canal and concentrated upon the right wing canal meant for the southern most Neyyatinkara taluk of the Kerala State. At once at the instigation of the father of the Kanyakumari District Marshall A. Nesamony, the Veteran Madras Chief Minister Shri. K. Kamaraj made an agreement with the Kerala government. On the strength of the agreement the Madras State undertook the construction of the Left Wing Canal of the Neyyar dam, for the partial use of the people of Neyyatinkara taluk and for the major use of the people of Vilavancode taluk.

The project could provide irrigation facilities to 7,200 acres of dry land in the Vilavancode taluk of the Kanyakumari District, besides assuring supply to 2,000 acres already under cultivation in the district. The additional food production expected is 7,700 tons per annum\textsuperscript{25}.

The first stage of the Neyyar irrigation project, i.e., the Right Wing Canal has been completed by the Kerala State during the First Five Year Plan\textsuperscript{26}. The second stage comprising the construction of the left Bank canal was taken up as a second stage during the Second Five Year Plan by the government of Tamil Nadu\textsuperscript{27}. The estimated cost of the project was Rs.105 lakhs\textsuperscript{28}.

The left Bank canal which enters into the Madras State is known as the “Kanyakumari Canal”. The Kerala State agreed to maintain a supply of 150 cusecs of water in this canal. The left Bank canal which was common for both Madras and Kerala States touches the State’s border at Kaliyakkavilai. From Kaliyakkavilai the Kanyakumari canal was taken up by the Tamil Nadu State\textsuperscript{29}.

\textsuperscript{25} Madras Information, Vol.XVII, January 1963, p.36.
\textsuperscript{26} Madras Information, Vol.VIII, June 1959, p.6.
\textsuperscript{27} Report of Irrigation systems, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari Districts, 1974, p.4.
\textsuperscript{28} Madras Information, Vol.VIII, June 1959, p.6.
\textsuperscript{29} Madras Information, Vol.XVII, November 1963, p.25.
The Kanyakumari canal is a peculiar one. Unlike the canals in the plains, it passes through undulating and uneven country. It had to be laid in deep cuttings, at ridges and in embankments of Valleys. The depth of the cuttings in some places go upto 96 feet. Besides, roads intervened in the deep cuttings\textsuperscript{30}. Six branches take off from the Kanyakumari canal. The most important and largest of them is the Mullayar branch. The other branches are Pakode, Mangad, Methukummal, Kollemcode and Venganchi\textsuperscript{31}. The Neyyar second stage was completed in 1963\textsuperscript{32}.

The Kanyakumari canal was opened by the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Shri. K. Kamaraj on April 25, 1963. The construction of this canal symbolized the co-operation and joint endeavour of both Tamil Nadu and Kerala States for the combined benefits of the people\textsuperscript{33}. In the meantime it should be kept in mind that the Neyyar irrigation project is the only medium size irrigation project in Kanyakumari district to be a boon to the people of Vilavancode taluk\textsuperscript{34}.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{32} Madras Information, Vol.XX, December 1966, p.35.
\textsuperscript{33} Madras Information, Vol.XVIII, January 1964, p.36.
\textsuperscript{34} Kanyakumari Agricultural Economy performance and Issues, Post Graduate Research Department of Economics, (U.C.G. Project) Scott Christian College, Nagercoil, October 1990 - March 1992, p.36.
3.5. Gomukhi Reservoir Project

Gomukhi Reservoir Project was constructed across the river Gomukhi. The project was undertaken during the Third Five Year Plan. Gomukhi Nadhi is a Sanskrit name which in English is known as ‘Cow’s Mouth River’. This river is a tributary of the Manimukthanadhi. It originates from the southern portion of the Kalrayan hills situated at an elevation of about 304.8 metres above the sea level. It joins the Vellar river in the South Arcot district. The river receives copious supplies both from the South West and North East monsoons and often flooded during the North-East monsoon. The State Government formed a division of the Public Works Department at Kallakurichi in the South Arcot district for the execution of the scheme Gomukhi Reservoir Project. The work was taken up for execution in 1963 and the project was completed in 1965.

The project comprises a reservoir of 560 m.cu. feet lying across the river.

35 Administration Report of the Public Works Department, Madras State, 1963-1964, p.3.
40 Madras State Administration Report, 1964, p.149.
Gomukhi in Kallakurichi taluk of South Arcot district\textsuperscript{42}. The dam will be partly of masonry and partly of earth\textsuperscript{43}. A masonry dam was built entirely in cement mortar and excepting for the mixing of mortar by machines, entire work was done by manual labour\textsuperscript{44}.

The total length of the dam is about 7,500 ft. and the height of the dam is 65 ft. above riverbed\textsuperscript{45}. The estimated cost of the scheme is Rs.87 lakhs\textsuperscript{46}. It irrigates an extent of 5000 acres in South Arcot district\textsuperscript{47}. The extra food production expected out of this scheme is about 2,222 tons\textsuperscript{48}. The Gomukhi Reservoir project protected the South Arcot district from flood and famine and paved the way for the prosperity of the district. Above all the project stands as a boon to South Arcot District by bringing 5,000 acres of barren land under cultivation\textsuperscript{49}.

\textsuperscript{43} Report of the Triennial Review for Irrigation in India, 1953-1956, p.60.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p.53.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p.60.
\textsuperscript{46} Report of the Madras State Administration, 1964, p.149.
\textsuperscript{48} Administration Report of the Public Works Department, Madras State, 1963-1964, p.3.
\textsuperscript{49} Madras Information, Vol.XXI, December 1966, p.33.
3.6. Manimukthanadhi Reservoir Project

Manimukthanadhi is a tributary of the river Vellar\(^{50}\). A reservoir project was constructed across the river Manimukthanadhi in Kallakurichi taluk of South Arcot district\(^{51}\). Even during the British period there was a proposal to construct a reservoir across Manimukthanadhi. However, the matter could be materialized only after independence. This scheme was included in the Third Five Year Plan and a dam with a capacity of 730 m.cu. feet was constructed at an estimated cost of Rs.88 lakhs\(^{52}\). The government accorded sanction to the Manimukthanadhi scheme on May 31, 1966\(^{53}\) and the work was started in June 1966\(^{54}\). The Project work was completed in 1970\(^{55}\).

The project could irrigate 4,000 acres of new lands in South Arcot district. In addition to that, irrigational facilities were extended to 240 acres of existing rainfed wet lands also\(^{56}\). This dam with a total


\(^{51}\) Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, p.49.

\(^{52}\) G.O.M.S. No.1426, P.W.D., June 14, 1966.


The capacity of 730 m.cu. ft. has the length of 18,250 ft. and height of 46 ft. over the deep riverbed. An additional food production of 1,878 tons was anticipated through this project. The long felt dream of the people of South Arcot district could be fulfilled only after the completion of the scheme. In short it brought a new hope to the people of Kallakurichi taluk of South Arcot district. While the Manimukhtanadhi Reservoir Project benefitted the people of South Arcot District, the Gatna Reservoir scheme came to the rescue of the people of Tirunelveli district.

3.7. Gatna Reservoir Project

Gatna Reservoir Project was constructed across the river Gatna in the Tamiraparani basin near Ambasamudram. The Gatna scheme was sanctioned by the government on January 1, 1967 at an estimated cost of Rs.173.8 lakhs. The project was inaugurated on January 10, 1967 to irrigate nearly 404.69 hectares in Ambasamudram taluk and

57 Ibid.,
was completed in 1974. The total capacity of the reservoir is 350 million cubic feet. It is located in Sambankulam village of Tirunelveli District\(^\text{62}\).

### 3.8. Ramanadhi Reservoir Project

Ramanadhi Reservoir scheme is a medium irrigation scheme in Tirunelveli district. Ramanadhi river is a tributary of the Gatna river. The project was constructed across the river Ramanadh\(^\text{63}\). This reservoir consists of a masonry and earth dam to store the surplus waters of Ramanadhi and irrigates 202.35 hectares in Ambasamudram taluk of Tirunelveli district\(^\text{64}\). The reservoir had a capacity of 150 million cubic feet and irrigates 4179 acres of existing ayacut and a new area of 500 acres in Ambasamudram taluk of Tirunelveli District. The Ramanadhi scheme was sanctioned by the government on November 15, 1966 and the scheme was inaugurated on January 10, 1967\(^\text{65}\) to be completed in 1974 at an estimated cost of Rs.181 lakhs\(^\text{66}\). The project work was completed in 1976\(^\text{67}\). And it should be noted that the scheme assured an additional food

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\(^{62}\) Gazetteer of India, Tamil Nadu State, Dharmapuri District, Madras, 1995, p.475.

\(^{63}\) Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, p.50.

\(^{64}\) Gazetteer of India, Tamil Nadu State, Dharmapuri District, Madras, 1995, p.476.


\(^{66}\) Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, p.50.

production of 1,500 tons, which in turn brought new strength and vitality to
the taluk of Ambasamudram in Tirunelveli District\textsuperscript{68}. Along with the
construction of the Reservoirs modernising schemes also undertaken side
by side.

\subsection*{3.9. Modernising old Channels in Thanjavur District}

Thanjavur district is proudly called as the “rice bowl” of
South India\textsuperscript{69}. In this district lands are mainly irrigated from the
Channels. Several Channels take off water from the river Cauvery and
irrigated more acres of land\textsuperscript{70}. Based on the recommendation of the riots
several works were undertaken. Accordingly many of the sources of
irrigation in the district were remodeled and provisions were made for
direct sources of supply. Secondly bunds were strengthened and thirdly
channels were remodeled to provide direct sources of water supply for
irrigation\textsuperscript{71}. In continuation of these efforts, during the Third Five year
plan period Rs.100 lakhs was spent for the modernization of old channel
to bring several acres of additional land under cultivation\textsuperscript{72}.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{68} Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, p.50.
\textsuperscript{69} Madras Information, Vol.XIX, October 1965, p.30.
\textsuperscript{70} Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, p.46.
\textsuperscript{71} Madras Information, Vol.XIX, October 1965, p.30.
\textsuperscript{72} Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, p.46.
\end{flushleft}
3.10. Cauvery Delta Drainage Improvement Scheme

Thanjavur district is mainly irrigated by the Cauvery Delta system. In the Cauvery delta successful irrigation could not be done in many places due to drainage difficulties. The improvements contemplated under Cauvery Delta Drainage Improvement Scheme ensured better yield by relieving submersion of the areas under several drains. This scheme was contemplated during the First Five Year Plan. The improvements were intended to ensure better yield from area and to increase the food production to the value of Rs.4 lakhs per year.

3.11. Cheyyar Anicut Scheme

The river Cheyyar is a tributary of Palar. River Palar originates in the Mysore State is the main source of supply to North Arcot District. The scheme contemplated the construction of an anicut across the river which was sanctioned during the Third Five Year Plan for the benefit...

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of North Arcot district\textsuperscript{76}. With the help of this anicut 5,500 acres of lands were irrigated and the district got an additional store of food grains\textsuperscript{77}.

3.12. Marudayar Scheme

In the Tiruchirapalli district the Marudayar Scheme was started during the Third Five Year Plan period\textsuperscript{78}. This scheme was mainly intended to utilize the flow of the river Marudayar. It was also aimed at utilizing the surplus water of the Coleroon going waste below the Lower Coleroon and connecting it with Marudayar by a nine mile channel. An area of 30,000 acres of land was immediately benefitted out of this scheme. The estimated cost was Rs.188 lakhs\textsuperscript{79}. The scheme was completed in 1979\textsuperscript{80}. Similarly the Noyyil Reservoir scheme stood novel in the developmental history of the district.

3.13. Noyyil Reservoir Scheme

Noyyil Reservoir was constructed across the river Noyyil in Tiruchirapalli district. The work of this reservoir was started during the Third Five Year Plan. The construction of the reservoir at the cost of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{76} Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, p.47.
\item \textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{78} Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, p.47.
\item \textsuperscript{79} Report of the Madras State Administration, 1962, P.162.
\item \textsuperscript{80} Statistical Report of the Public Works Department, Chennai, 2010, p.2.
\end{itemize}
Rs.124 lakhs\textsuperscript{81} had a capacity of 2,000 m.cu. ft. Before the construction of Noyyil reservoir the flood waters were wasted. But, the construction of the reservoir enabled to store flood flows of the river Noyyil\textsuperscript{82}. The entire work of the scheme was completed in 1972\textsuperscript{83}. Unlike the Noyyil Reservoir scheme, Vellar Reservoir could cater to the needs of a lesser area of 10,000 acres.

3.14. Vellar Reservoir

Vellar Reservoir was constructed across the river Vellar. In order to store surplus water of the Vellar the reservoir was constructed during the Third Five Year Plan. As a result 10,000 acres of lands were additionally brought under cultivation, besides the lands already under cultivation\textsuperscript{84}. During the Third Five Year Plan Rs.100 lakhs was spent for this scheme, which would benefit Tiruchirapalli district\textsuperscript{85}. Another scheme which benefitted the same district is a Reservoir across the Ayyar in the Kolli Hills.

\textsuperscript{81} Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, P.47.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p.51.
\textsuperscript{84} Madras Information, Vol. XV, May 1961, P.12.
3.15. Ayyar Reservoir

The Ayyar river originates from the Cauvery basin. For a long time water in Ayyar river was wasted without any storage facilities. At the same time in Tiruchirapalli district more acres of lands remained dry and uncultivable. Already there was an idea on the part of the government to bring the dry areas under cultivation through an irrigation scheme. Therefore during the Third Five Year Plan, a proposal was made for the construction of a reservoir across the river Ayyar. The outcome was the construction of a reservoir across the Ayyar in the Kolli Hills. This scheme benefitted 4,500 acres of waste lands and 9,768 acres of established lands. The total expense of Rs.442 lakhs incurred on the scheme could bring an additional increase of 3462 tons of the total food production of the State. Under the same Five Year Plan the Chinnar Reservoir scheme came to the benefit of Salem district.

3.16. Chinnar Reservoir Scheme

Chinnar Reservoir Scheme was started during the Third Five Year Plan in Salem district. Chinnar is a tributary of the Cauvery river, across which a reservoir was constructed at a total expense of Rs.40.5 lakhs. This scheme was impounded to store the surplus waters of

86 Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, P.50.
Chinnar\textsuperscript{88}. The total capacity of the reservoir was 35 m.cu. ft. Chinnar scheme helped to bring more dry lands under cultivation in the Salem district\textsuperscript{89}. The scheme was completed in 1977\textsuperscript{90}. Thoppiar Reservoir Scheme is another scheme that came to the benefit of the same district.

### 3.17. Thoppiar Reservoir Scheme

The Thoppiar Reservoir that came under the Third Five Year plan was constructed across the river Thoppiar\textsuperscript{91}. River Thoppiar is a tributary of Cauvery. Total capacity of the reservoir was 500 m.cu. ft. The total length of the dam is 2,230 ft. The project is affording irrigation facilities to the dry lands of Omalur and Dharmapuri taluks of Salem district. The total area irrigated by this project is 2,335 acres of which 930 acres spread over the Omalur taluk and 1,405 acres in Dharmapuri taluk\textsuperscript{92}. It is true that the Omalur and Dharmapuri taluks remained barren before the implementation of this project. Thus the scheme brought fresh enthusiasm to the people of these taluks\textsuperscript{93}. The scheme was started during the Third Five Year Plan, and the entire work was completed in 1986\textsuperscript{94}.

\textsuperscript{88} Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, P.50.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{91} Report of the Madras State Administration, 1962, P.159.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., p.61.
Thoppiar Reservoir Scheme launched at the expense of Rs.85 lakhs helped to produce additional 1300 tons of food grains\textsuperscript{95}.

\textbf{3.18. Upper Kalingarayan Channel Scheme}

Upper Kalingarayan Channel Scheme was a medium irrigation scheme started during the Third Five Year Plan for the benefit of Coimbatore district. The Kalingarayan Channel starting from the Kalingarayan anicut runs parallel for a distance of sixty miles. The total estimated cost incurred on this scheme was Rs.262 lakhs\textsuperscript{96}. It is helpful to irrigate lands in Coimbatore district. About 16,000 acres of new ayacut area and 12,500 acres of stabilized ayacuts could be benefitted by the scheme. An additional food production of 10,000 tons was the immediate outcome of this project\textsuperscript{97}.

\textbf{3.19. Palar-Porandalar Scheme}

The Palar-Porandalar Scheme that came under the Third Five Year Plan for the benefit of Madurai district was undertaken at a huge cost of Rs.178 lakhs\textsuperscript{98}. It contemplates a reservoir across Palar and Porandalar rivers. From the rivers of Palar and Porandalar surplus waters were wasted

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{95} Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, p.50.
\item \textsuperscript{96} Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, p.46.
\item \textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{98} Madras Information, Vol. XV, May 1961, P.12.
\end{itemize}
for a long time without storage facilities. So inorder to use surplus water for irrigation the Palar-Porandalar scheme was started. Through this reservoir a vast area of land stretching about 10,900 acres was irrigated. The benefit of the scheme was extended to both wet crops and dry crops\textsuperscript{99}. The entire work of the project was completed in 1978\textsuperscript{100}. Manjalar Reservoir Scheme was another one undertaken for the benefit of Madurai district.

\section*{3.20. Manjalar Reservoir Scheme}

The Manjalar Reservoir Scheme is one of the Medium irrigation projects in Tamil Nadu undertaken for the benefit of the Madurai district under the Third Five Year Plan\textsuperscript{101} and the project work was completed 1968\textsuperscript{102}. Manjalar is a tributary of river Vaigai which takes its origin in the southern slopes of the Palani hills. Having broken into a number of small streams like Mulliar, Varattar, Iruuttar and Marudhanadhi, Manjalar joins Vaigai at Peranai regulator. It receives copious water during the North East monsoon than the South-West monsoon. Hence the reservoir was constructed to store the excess water during the North-East

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{99} Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, p.48.
\textsuperscript{100} Statistical Report of the Public Works Department, Chennai, 2010, p.2.
\end{flushleft}
monsoon. Without it the excess water received during the north-east monsoon would be wasted deliberately.

The project consists of a reservoir of 476 m.cu. ft. capacity across the Manjalar river at 3.5 miles of north of Devadanapatti village in Periyakulam taluk of Madurai district. The estimated cost of the project was about 109 lakhs. It irrigates new ayacuts of 2000 acres and 3,249 acres of existing ayacut and increased production of rice to 1,018.5 tons per year. This scheme helped to bring dry areas of Periyakulam taluk in Madurai district under wet cultivation. Southernmost districts of Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari were also endowed with medium irrigation schemes. One among them is the Ramanadhi Reservoir Project.

3.21. Modernising Vaigai Channels

During the Third Five Year Plan the scheme of Modernising Vaigai Channels was taken up. Most of the Channels from the Vaigai had no head sluices. An uncontrolled flow into the Channels as permitted by the open head often caused breeches. There was no regulation of

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104 Ibid.
108 Third Five Year Plan, Madras State, 1960, p.46.
supplies according to the area irrigated by the Channels or according to the
demand. The tanks which were in old zamindari areas were not kept up to
standards. There were no sluices or surplus works for them. Consequently
the irrigation in the over reaches of the river suffered badly and there was a
gap of about 20,000 acres in cultivation. Under the proposed scheme, the
channels were to be modernised and tanks restored to standard level\textsuperscript{109}.

Construction of two anicuts at Tiruppuvanam and another at
Paramagudi and a regulator at Parthipanur were proposed under the
scheme. Channels were excavated on eitherside of the anicuts and the
regulator and the several existing Channels were served through new head
sluices\textsuperscript{110}. This scheme not only assured equitable and adequate supply to
all existing channels and tanks but also helped to save large transmission
losses through the wide sandy bed of the Vaigai river. The water so saved
would be very useful for the ayacut in the lower reaches. By the proposed
scheme a gap of 20,000 acres found in cultivation could be bridged and
supply was made to the existing ayacut. These measures helped for the
increased food production in the region:\textsuperscript{111}

The regulator at Parthibanur and Virahanallur added irrigation
facilities in Ramanathapuram district. With the help of these regulators

\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{110} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., p.48.
13,900 acres of new area and stabilize irrigation facilities to the existing areas. This added new strength to the people of Ramanathapuram district\textsuperscript{112}.

### 3.22. Improvements to Palar Anicut and Channels

The Palar Anicut Scheme was undertaken during the Third Five Year plan. The river Palar is the most important river in North Arcot district across which the Palar Anicut was constructed. There were a number of irrigation channels that take off from the course of the Palar. But direct irrigation was neglected and so the district largely depended on tanks\textsuperscript{113}.

The scheme of improving Palar Anicut and channels was undertaken to bring more acres under cultivation. The government sanctioned an amount of Rs.48.10 lakhs during the Third Plan period. The scheme improved anicut and remodelled the Channel to carry out required supply to the tanks. The improvement of anicut and channels benefitted an area of about 3,285 acres\textsuperscript{114}. Improvement made to Palar Anicut and supply channels brought tremendous changes in the irrigated agriculture of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{112} G.O.Ms.No.4162, P.W.D., November 26, 1954.
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Gazetteer unit, Notes on Irrigation, North Arcot District, p.6.
  \item \textsuperscript{114} Administration Report of the Public Works Department, Madras State, 1961-1962, p.9.
\end{itemize}
North Arcot District and thereby the standard of life of the people also improved\textsuperscript{115}.

3.23. Remodeling of Channel Schemes in Kanyakumari District

Under this scheme, remodeling of the Channels taking off from the Kodayar dam namely left Bank Channel, Thovala Channel, Anandanar Channel and Padmanabapuram-Puthanar channel at a cost of about Rs.13 lakhs could be taken up during the Second Plan period\textsuperscript{116}. With the help of this remodeling scheme more acres were brought under cultivation and food production also increased\textsuperscript{117}.

Medium sized irrigation projects which were implemented in Tamil Nadu from 1947 to 1967 harnessed almost all small water bodies. With the help of these projects thousands of acres additionally came under cultivation and increased food production in Tamil Nadu. This increase enabled to attain self-sufficiency in food production and made the State as a pioneer for the Green Revolution in India.

Medium irrigation schemes are meant both for agricultural and regional developments. Some of them are launched for the joint

\textsuperscript{115} Report of the Madras State Administration, 1964, p.150.
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid.
benefit of Tamil Nadu and its nearby States. Almost all the medium irrigation schemes were undertaken during the Third Five Year Plan period. In Tamil Nadu during this period Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli, Madurai, Salem, North Arcot, South Arcot, Trichy and Tanjore districts were mainly benefitted by the schemes. It is a rare information that all these schemes were undertaken in Tamil Nadu during the Congress administration under the remarkable leadership of Shri. K. Kamaraj. With the launching of these schemes more acres of fresh land and already cultivated lands could be benefitted. Modernizing, improving and remodeling of some of the schemes launched under the first two Five Year Plans were also found in the agenda. These constructive works helped the people of Tamil Nadu in many ways to solve the age old problems related to this gift of nature.