INTRODUCTION
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Tamil Nadu has an important geo significant; it is the southernmost State of the Indian subcontinent. It lies in the shape of a rhomboid between the Deccan Plateau and the sea, stretching from latitude $8^\circ$ in the southwest at Kanyakumari, to the Pulicat lake in the northeast at $11^\circ$ N. the Western Ghats in the west, the Bay of Bengal in the east and the Gulf of Mannar, which separates India from Sri Lanka, in the south, constitute natural boundaries of the State on three sides. Tamil Nadu covers a little over 130,000 sq km, representing about 4 per cent of India’s geographical area. The topography of Tamil Nadu consists, broadly, of the coastal plains in the east, with uplands and hills as one proceeds westwards, with the plains accounting for a little more than half the area of the State. Hills in the Western and Eastern portions of the State are constituted respectively by the Western and Eastern Ghats. The latter follow a southwestward course from about the latitude of Madras, forming the Southern edge of the wider Deccan plateau, and meet the Western Ghats in the Nilgiris. Because of their low elevation and broken character, the Eastern Ghats have not been on obstacle to free movement form the Deccan into Tamil Nadu, a feature that has historically enabled successive incursions into the Tamil territory from kingdoms to its north.

The Western Ghats, which begin in Maharashtra, extend all the way along the Western border of Tamil Nadu right up to Kanyakumari. They reach a peak in the Niligiri plateau in Dodabetta, where the Eastern Ghats join. South of the plateau is the Palghat or Coimbatore gap, which is about 32 km (20 miles) wide, at an altitude of about 305 metres (1000 ft). The gap has provided access to the Tamil Nadu plains from Cochin and Calicut
on the west coast and has been trade route of much historical importance. South of the
gap, the Ghats rise to their highest point at Anaimudi (about 2700 m or 8841 ft) and
thereafter gradually taper down to meet the extremity of the peninsula at Kanyakumari.
The premier hill stations of Tamil Nadu Ootacamund in the Nilgiris and Kodaikanal in
the Palniranges, are in the Western Ghats. Apart from the Ghats, the Plains between the
Palar and the Cauvery are interspersed with isolated by fairly high hill masses, up to
altitudes of over 1500m, the most important of which are the Javadis (North Arcot),
Shevaroys (Salem), Kalrayans (South Arcot and Dharmapuri), and Pachamalai and
Kollimalai (Tiruchirapalli). The small tribal population of Tamil Nadu is to be found
mostly in Niligiris and in these hills.

The plateaus and plains of Tamil Nadu can be conveniently described in terms of
tour broad natural regions:

i) The northern Coromandel coastal plain (Cholamandalam)

ii) The western plateau around Coimbatore (Kangunad) and Salem (Baramahal)

iii) The Cauvery Delta; and

iv) The Southeastern plains.

The northern plains include Madras, Chengalpattu, eastern North Arcot, and the
northern parts of South Arcot and Tiruchirapalli. The plains are generally below 15m
(500 ft) in altitude, about 96 km (60 miles) wide, and gently slope towards the Bay of
Bengal to the east. The Palar and Pennaiyar (or South Pennar), with their tributaries and
branches (such as the Poini, Cheyyar and Gadilam), are the major rivers in this tract,
with numerous tanks, some linked to the Palar and others independently located,
providing supplementary sources of irrigation.
To the west and the south of the northern plains, between the Cauvery and the Palghat gap, lies on extensive low plateau stretching over Dharmapuri, Salem, Coimbatore and Periyar districts and reaching up to Dindigul. The plateau rises gradually from about 150 m along the river, to 450 m in the west; Parts of it are irrigated by the tributaries of the Cauvery in its upper reaches in Tamil Nadu, such as the Bhavani, Noyyal and Amaravathi, as well as by the Palar and Pennaiyar. Most of the region is, however, arid by for extensive irrigation from wells. There are very few tanks in this tract.

The Cauvery delta is the most fertile region of the State, and along with the northern plains were the home of its early settlements and civilization. The delta mainly consists of Thanjavur district with adjacent areas of Tiruchirapalli and South Arcot. The Cauvery, Coleroon (Kollidam) and Vennar are intensively irrigate this tract through their deltaic branches. Finally, the southeastern plains of Tamil Nadu comprise the districts of Madurai, Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli. Parts of these plains are irrigated by the Periyar-Vaigai and the Thamiraparani but, by and large, these arid districts are depending largely on rainfall impounded in extensive tanks along the coastal regions of Ramanathapuram and Tirunelveli and on the tank systems linked to the Periyar-Vaigai, supplemented to some extent by will irrigation in western Ramanathapuram. Kanyakumari, which is the southernmost district of Tamil Nadu, is however, favourably endowed with rains from both the southwest and northeast monsoons.

The Cauvery basin accounts for nearly two – thirds of surface irrigations in the State except for the Thamiraparani, the major important rivers for irrigation in Tamilnadu either rise in Karnataka (Cauvery, Pennaiyar) or have been dammed and diverted from
their westward flow to Kerala (Periyar, Parmbikulam-Aliyar). As far as irrigation is concerned, Tamil Nadu is thus vulnerable to fluctuations in rainfall as well as dependent on inter-State cooperation for its water flows, particularly in the Cauvery.

Water sources of Tamil Nadu rivers, tanks and wells are depends ultimately on rain for their recharge. The characteristics of rainfall quantum, seasonal pattern, spatial distribution, variability have vital bearings on the extents and reliability of irrigation, with a long term average (or ‘normal’) rainfall of 943 mm per annum, the State belongs to a zone of low-to-moderate rainfall in India, although a distinguishing feature is that Tamil Nadu benefits from two monsoons, namely the southwest (June-September) and the northeast (October-December). Together, these two monsoons account for 80 per cent of annual rainfall, with the northeast monsoon making the larger contribution (47.6 per cent as compared to 32.4 per cent from the southwest). The balance is accounted for by rain in the hot months of March to May (15 per cent) and in the so-called winter months of January and February.

The predominant soil category in Tamil Nadu is red loam, which is to be found in almost districts except Kanyakumari. Black soils suitable for cotton cultivation, are extensively found in western Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, Salem, Coimbatore and Thanjavur. Alluvial soils are a feature of the deltaic tracts in Thanjavur, Tiruchirapalli, South Arcot, and some parts of Tirunelveli. Sandy and saline soils are to be found in the coastal tracts.

Direct British rule over India was established in 1858, following by the 1857 mutiny. The British rules did not create a separate political unit for the Tamil territory but kept it within a multilingual Madras Presidency. In 1935, some areas of the Presidency
were transferred to the newly formed province of Orissa. The erstwhile princely State of Pudukottai was integrated with Madras State in 1948. On October 1, 1953, the Telugu-speaking districts of the Madras Presidency were constituted into the separate State of Andhra Pradesh. On November 1, 1956, the district of Malabar was transferred to the newly constituted state named as Kerala with Malayalam-speaking people. The new states were formed under the linguistic reorganization of states. Kollegal taluk, which had until then been a part of Coimbatore district was also incorporated with Mysore and named as Karnataka. On the other hand, the district of Kanyakumari and the taluk of Shencottah, which had both been until then a part of the princely State of Travancore-Cochin, were incorporated with the re-formed Madras State. The present State of Tamil Nadu was constituted as a linguistically homogeneous political unit only on November 1, 1956. Since, its some territory with 317 villages being transferred to Andhra Pradesh in 1959. The State of Madras was renamed on January 14, 1969 as Tamil Nadu.

It may be noted that the Tamil areas (except for Kanyakumari and Pudukottai) remained, throughout the British and post-British periods, under an administrative framework (in respect of land revenue, district administration, fiscal system, etc.) that faced very little disruption on account of States’ reorganization. Thus, in contrast to the position in many other States, Tamil Nadu did not have to overcome problems consequent to the integration of different systems of administration.

In 1956, when Madras State was formed on the basis of Linguistic States’ reorganization, there were 13 districts, viz., Madras, Chengalpattu, South Arcot, North Arcot, Salem, Coimbatore, Thanjavur, Tiruchirapalli, Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli, Nilgiris and Kanyakumari. Since, there have been several changes designed
towards the formation of smaller districts. The dharmapuri district was formed from out of four taluks included in the old Salem district. Pudukottai district was created by adding portions of Tiruchirapalli and Thanjavur districts to the area that formed the old princely State. Coimbatore was bifurcated to form the new Periyar district. Other changes made so far related to the bifurcation of Madurai district, with the new Anna district being carved out of it; the trifurcation of the old Ramanathapuram district into Ramanathapuram, Kamarajar and Pasumpon Muthuramalingam districts; and the bifurcation of Tirunelveli into Chidambaranar and Kattabommman. With the addition of seven new districts (Pudukottai, Periyar, Anna, Kamarajar, Pasumpon Muthuramalingam, Kattabomman and Chidambaranar) to the original thirteen, there are now 20 districts in Tamil Nadu. It has been proposed to increase the number to 24 by bifurcating four other large districts, viz., South Arcot, North Arcot, Thanjavur and Tiruchirapalli.

The impact of colonial rule on productive forces in agriculture was rather complex. To begin with, the considerable weakening of local authority engendered by British rule, the resultant confusion and the oppressive land revenue burden (especially with declining grain prices) meant, up to the 1850s, little expansion-and quite possibly some decline – in area cultivated, and also in the availability of other inputs, most importantly irrigation. Until towards the end of the nineteenth century, the British did not pay much attention to irrigation. This was followed by an expansionary second phase, roughly from 1880 to the end of World War I. During this period, major irrigation works were taken up in the Tamil districts, mostly on the Cauvery, but also on the Palar - Cheyyar, Ponnaiyar - Godilam and Vaigai (1890s). The Public Works Department was established in 1852 in the Madras Presidency for the development of irrigations as its
main concern, and the thousands of tanks in the Ryotwari areas of the presidency came under its authority. However, the work of the PWD was limited by resource constraints, and could not compensate for the decline in tank systems in Zamindari areas caused by the erosion in the political authority of Zamindars and their lack of interest in maintaining the tanks. With increase in irrigated area from the projects of the 1870s to 1890s, and relative political and economic stability, area cultivation increased by 26 per cent between 1880 and 1904, and the value of crop production increased by 35 per cent. Notably that the cropping pattern was changing. Between the 1880s and the 1920s, the proportion of area under commercial crops in the Tamil lands arose from 4 per cent to 12 per cent of total area, and from a little less than 10 per cent to about a quarter of gross sown area. Food grains such as rice and inferior cereals like cholam and cumbu continued to be important, but commercial crops, especially cotton and groundnut, were rapidly increasing in extent.

The trend of increase in cultivated area, under both food and no-food crops, did not, however, continue into the third phase beginning at the end of World War I. Between 1920 and Independence, while expansion in irrigation (contributed to mainly by the Cauvery - Mettur project of the 1930s and the Mullai Periyar system, and by a significant developments in well irrigation system in Coimbatore, Salem and North Arcot districts were led to increased the cultivation area of paddy and commercial cropping, area under millets and pulses declined.

There was not a great deal of change neither in other inputs such as livestock and implements nor in technique through the most of British rule. The Gazetteer (Government of Madras, 1908) had spoken of implements being few and simple in 1908.
Not much had changed by 1944, except for one thing. With the increasing importance of well irrigation, there was a demand for oil engines. Electric power being has utilized from Pykara, Mettur and Papanasam, and besides such thermal units, there was a ready demand for electric pump sets when they were introduced after the World War II. On the whole, it is quite clear that there had been little change in farm equipment (by implication and in technique) during the period of colonial rule.

The agrarian relations that prevailed in Tamil Nadu when the British came to dominate it were complex and varied. The pre-colonial agrarian economy contained clear class divisions, which varied from tract to tract. In the fertile irrigated tracts of Thanjavur, Chengalpattu and Tirunelveli also the land ownership was highly concentrated. Formally, in many of these villages, the landholders held shares of the village land, and were known as Mirasidars by virtue of their Mirasi. i.e., ‘inheritable’ rights to a share or Pangu in the sense that many of these Mirasi holders held shares of the village land, and were known as Mirasidars by virtue of the village. Not all Mirasidars were ‘landlords’ however, in the sense that many of these Mirasi holders worked their lands themselves. There was also considerable differentiation among them, with a substantial proportion of the lands being held by a small minority who would typically not participate in cultivation. They would mostly lease out their lands, and have the portion that they retained cultivated with labourers whose status resembled in many ways that of serfs.

In the dry tracts, there was a largely independent peasantry, cultivating their own land, and often operating systems of mutual labour exchange. Within this, there were again variations. Further, while inequalities were not as deep and sharp as in the wet tracts, peasant society here was by no means homogeneous. However, these tracts did not
see the emergence of a large landlord class ruling over a subordinate tenant and landless population as in the canal and reasonably assured tank irrigated tracts.

The British East India Company had gained control over practically all the territory now forming Tamil Nadu. The company set about the task of evolving a land revenue system which would maximize its revenue collection. In the process, it experimented with different modes of revenue settlement, involving differences in land tenure by eventually settled for the ‘Ryotwari’ system over more than three quarters of Tamil territory. In theory, the Ryotwari tenure recognized the Ryot as the indisputable proprietor of the soil and required him to pay a certain amount as land revenue directly to the state. The other element of this tenure was that the state should fix the assessment on the basis of some principles, and not arbitrarily. But the ‘Ryot’ recognized by the colonial state was, more often than not, an absentee owner. The nominally ‘Ryotwari’ system often concealed tenancy, especially in fertile, irrigated tracts such as the Cauvery delta in Thanjavur. Baker said that ‘The confusion that prevailed at the time of the original settlement, the owner or pattadar was he who could claim the title without fear of contradiction within the locality and could amass the revenue which the government demanded. In other words, it was the political elite of the village’ (Baker, 1984).

The British initially fixed the land revenue assessment at 50 per cent of gross value of output on wet lands and 35 per cent on dry lands, with the estimated output being based on a combination of field experiments and knowledge of village officers and local informants. This rate ruled from 1822 to 1855, a period of falling grain prices resulting in a heavy and increasing revenue burden on the peasantry, since the assessment had been fixed in money terms based on average prices of grain during the twenty years
prior to the settlements in the 1820s. After 1855, the assessment was fixed theoretically at 50 per cent of the net produce, a reduction necessitated by the fact that in 1855, thirty five years after the Ryotwari system was introduced, less than a fifth of the area of the province was cultivated while more than half the area recorded as arable remained waste (Krishnaswamy, 1947) that led to some easing of land revenue burdens, these still remained oppressive.

The other important system of land revenue in the Tamil districts was the ‘Zamindari’ under which the Zamindar agreed to pay a fixed sum known as Peishkash to the state, but was free to impose his own assessment on the Ryots cultivating the land in the Zamin estate. When the British gradually took over, the areas where the Poligar chieftains had held sway mostly became Zamindari estates. These tracts were usually dry and far less fertile than the wet areas, where Mirasi rights prevailed. With the confirmation of the Zamindars, status by the British, the cultivating peasantry was left exposed to the exploitation of the Zamindars, who now also regarded themselves as being freed from the communal obligations such as, maintenance and upkeep of common resources like tanks existed prior to British rule (The British also created new ‘little Zamins’, popularly known as Mittas, by parceling out ‘crown’ lands, but most of these did not survive). At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were 634 Zamin estates in the Tamil districts, covering nearly a fifth of the area. Of these, 112 estates were large ones, each commanding more than 5000 acres and 8000 people.

The third relatively minor form of land tenure has consisted of ‘Inams’ which were beneficial tenures which have had their origin in the assignments of land, revenue free or at low quit rent, to civil officers of government as rewards for public service, to
holy or learned men for their maintenance, to temples and charitable institutions for their support and to troops and military officers as payment for anticipated services. Around 1900, Inams in the entire Madras Presidency covered 7.75 million acres contained in about 444,000 holdings with 840,000 shares. Nature has given us enormous resources which include land, fertile soil, climate, water, vegetation and minerals. We use these natural resources for satisfying our basic needs through agricultural activities.

The term ‘agriculture’ is derived from two Latin words “Agar” and “Culture” which means land cultivation. Thus agriculture is the act of land cultivation, animal husbandry, horticulture, and etc for the use of mankind. In India, the science and Technology has developed rapidly, agriculture remains as the backbone of the country and that provides food for the entire population and it supplies raw materials to the agro based Industries. Also it contributes to the export trade. More than 69% of the total population is engaged in agriculture and its allied activities. Almost 50 percent of the Gross National Product is accounted for by agricultural production. The economic uplift of the country depends largely on a sound and stable agricultural base.

The British rule in India witnessed that the development of agriculture in new dimension because, they wanted to grow more commercial articles such as cotton and others. In order to enhance agriculture they introduced a number of irrigation systems such as tanks, wells and canals for the development of agriculture in the hope of extracting more land to revenue from the native people. Agriculture is the prime and traditional occupation for the people of Tamil Nadu. The practice of growing plants on a large scale for food and other purposes is known as agriculture. About 56% of the people in Tamilnadu are depends on the agricultural industry. This industry is supplies food and
fodder to the people and cattle, respectively and it is the main source of raw material for many of the industries. Of course, agriculture constitutes one of the earliest professions which man invented for his livelihood.

Before independence, agricultural systems in Tamil Nadu have followed many traditional methods of cultivation. After Independence, there has been a steady development in all aspects of agriculture. Irrigation facilities were improved with the proper implementation under the Five-Year Plans in the state. Green Revolution in terms of hybrid varieties and application of chemical fertilizers increased the production to a great extent. Abolition of Zamindari system, land tenuring, consolidation of farms introduction of the land ceiling act were the new agricultural reforms introduced for the agricultural production positively in Tamil Nadu.

The fundamental objective of planning is to accelerate economic development of the country by bringing about an optimum utilization of its resources, so that the masses can have a reasonably high standard economic well being. The first attempt at systematic planning in India was made by M.Visvesvarya, when he published in his book ‘Planned economy of India’. Three years later, the Indian National congress set up the National Planning committee under the chairmanship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, which submitted its report as late as 1948, since the Second World War and abnormal political development in this country supervened. The Government of India also realized that the need for planning and accordingly, a Department of Planning and Development was set up in 1944, which drew up both short term and long term plans, the former for the restoration of economic normally after the war and the later for the country’s economic reconstruction and development.
However, the real beginnings of the plannings in India were made when the planning Commission was set up in March 1950, with the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru as chairman and V.T.Krishnamachari as Deputy Chairman. By July, 1951 the Commission drew by the draft of the First Five Year Plan and it was finalized in December 1952. With the appointment of planning commission in 1950 and implementation of the Five Year Plan to the agricultural development was became the major objective of a consistent plan of action. Embarrassing all sectors of the National economy has supported by requisite policy measures and institutional frame work and the Five Year Plans were successfully implemented. In developing the economy of India, the state of Tamil Nadu had its own share, particularly in increasing agricultural production.

Agriculture in Tamil Nadu, as in the rest of the country, is the dominating sector of the State’s economy and contributes in several ways to the State’s economic progress. In the matter of agricultural development, the objectives all along have been to make this sector contribute its most to the general economic progress of the State. Steps taken to ensure a proper utilization of land, an increased use of chemical fertilizers, expansion of irrigation and high yielding variety seeds, etc. have resulted in a substantial increase in agricultural production in Tamil Nadu. Commenting on this development, the State Planning Commission’s Task Force on agriculture reported in 1972: agriculture in Tamil Nadu took big strides during the last two decades towards in definite transformation from a stage of chronic stagnancy to that of sustained growth.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study is to record the performance of the Five Year Plans with reference to its pre independence rhetoric. The hypotheses to be tested are:
• In terms of improved technology for agricultural purposes, there was a striking improvement in Tamil Nadu.

• Land reforms adopted by the Government for the development of Agriculture.

• Major and Minor irrigation works stated by the Government in Tamil Nadu and how did it develop the agricultural growth in Tamil Nadu.

• The Condition of the peasants in Tamil Nadu during the Five Year Plan period.

• Targets and achievements in Five Year Plans.
REVIEW OF LITERATURES

METHODOLOGY

In pursuing the study, archival sources have been used to a great extent. The Madras Government’s Annuals, Reviews, Reports, Files, Records, Gazettes and the proceedings of the Madras Legislative Assembly constitute the primary sources. Manuals and gazetteers, essays and articles in contemporary journals, and the books appended to the Bibliography form the secondary sources of the study. Apart from historical method, statistical analysis has also been attempted. Tables have been compiled wherever necessary to illustrate the points.

CHAPTERISATION

This thesis is structured in five chapters, excluding an introduction and conclusion.

Chapter I – It traces the history of agricultural policy. When India launched the era of Five-Year Plans, there was no clear cut policy with regard to the development of agriculture. The emphasis till the end of the Third Plan was to use traditional techniques and skills to meet the current needs of the economy. Productive capacity was sought to be increased through the extension of irrigation, agricultural extension, and community development programmes. The strategy for this was to extend to provide improved seeds, fertilizers and other inputs were the important measures adopted by the Madras State. Agricultural improvement schemes were introduced like, Intensive Agricultural Area Programe, Intensive Agricultural District Programe, Hybrid Verity Programes.
Chapter II – It dwells on the steps taken by the Madras Government for a planned agricultural development. The Five-Year Plans took up to speedy land reform measures to bring about increase in productivity by improving the economic conditions of the farmers and tenants, so that they may have interest and incentive to invest and improve agriculture, to ensure distributive justice and create an egalitarian pattern of society by eliminating all forms of exploitation and to transfer the incomes of the few to many so that the demand for consumer goods would be created. This will ultimately result in increased production of agricultural goods and consumer goods.

As for tenancy reforms, Thanjavur Tenants and Pannaiyals Protection Act, 1952, Madras Cultivating Tenants Protection Act, 1955 and the Madras Cultivating Tenants (Payments of Fair Rent) Act, 1956 were the path breaking laws passed during this period. The fact that nothing substantive reached the cultivating tenants and landless labourers is evidenced in class struggles that broke out in Thanjavur, Tiruchirappalli and Ramanathapuram districts.

Chapter III – It narrates the development of irrigation during the Five Year Plan period. The Madras State has been noted for many irrigation works from early times. During the Hindu period, the Cholas specially distinguished themselves by building irrigation works which converted many dry areas in to green fields. During the British period, despite the orthodox irrigation policy pursued, the State witnessed great strides in the matter of expanding irrigation facilities. The vital importance of irrigation works in an agricultural stage like Tamil Nadu has rightly brought forth by a number of records and reports. South
India has been a pioneer in utilizing water resources both for irrigation and power purposes and of all the states in south India, Tamil Nadu can claim today to have taken up most of the development projects in regard to irrigation. Compared to Kerala, the rainfall is low and calculated to be 33”. To overcome the shortages Tamil Nadu has contemplated and implemented major and minor irrigation works even in regard to west flowing rivers as well.

Minor irrigation schemes like the construction of dams, digging new wells and repairs to old ones, lifting appliances-channels, pumping installations and levels form one of the many aspects under minor irrigation. Wells are the chief sources of irrigation in Salem, Dharmapuri and Coimbatore district. Irrigation by tube wells is preferable to irrigation by canals. Tanks are one of the principal sources of irrigation in Tamil Nadu. River irrigation can be done by perennial and non-perennial rivers. Side by side with the minor irrigation projects, attention has been made in modern times to major irrigation works as well. The Five Year Plan, which gave emphasize to agriculture and irrigation.

Chapter IV - It explains about the condition of the peasants in Tamil Nadu. The Kisan or Uzhavar is the major India community. On his toil depended the country for food even, “the king himself was served by the field”. He is simple and unsophisticated. However with the advent of the British rule, he has borne a crushing and ever growing burden of rents, illegal exactions and or variety of cesses. He used to be beaten and ejected from his land and his mud-huts. The agricultural population may be classified into roughly 5 groups- the Landless, Petty Peasants, Small Peasants, Medium Peasants, and Big Peasants. The material condition of the life of agricultural labourers, such as they are,
crucial determinants of the persistence of different forms of socio-economic dependence of the agricultural labourers on the employer in the village. Agricultural labourers designated as such fall into two categories – hired labourers and farm servants. In terms of per capita household earnings about 70 percent of landless agricultural labour households were below the poverty line. The burden of debt on agricultural labourers household was very great.

Chapter V – It dealt with the highlights of the four Five Year Plans. The plan priorities, Congress Government’s rhetoric to adopt radical measures to redeem agriculture in Tamil Nadu are reviewed. The achievements and failures in areas such as irrigation, agrarian technology, credit facilities, prices and the production are analyzed in this chapter.

The last part of the study is the Conclusion part in which major finding are enumerated.