Chapter IV

POST-INDEPENDENCE SITUATION
1. NEW IRRIGATION POLICY

When the national movement assumed the character of a mass movement in the early decades of the 20th century, the Indian National Congress took a keen interest in understanding the problems of agriculture. The All India Congress Committee resolution of 1929 stressed the necessity of a “revolutionary change in the present economic and social order”. Resolution on Zamindary Abolition was passed in April 1935 at the UP Kissan Conference. It was suggested that the vast majority of tenant cultivators could be conferred proprietary rights over their tenancies on easy terms. This would wipeout the class of non-cultivating interests root and branch and would usher in small-scale peasant farming on a vast scale. It is important, however, to note that in the period before independence, the central task, which confronted the national movement, was the struggle for freedom. Until this task was accomplished the blue print for India’s economic development could not be drawn up in detail.

When India achieved freedom, people belonging to different sections of the Indian society hoped that free India would find suitable solutions to all the problems confronted by them in the colonial days. But finding solution to all problems was not that easy. India on the eve of freedom had to face a lot of crisis situations like poverty, illiteracy and unemployment. While population continued to increase, there was no corresponding increase in food production. There were two main factors responsible for shortage of food production —
application of out dated technologies in agricultural operations and immediate reduction of irrigated areas due to partition.

Partition of India involved not merely the physical division of the sub-continent but, the division of assets as well. India lost 31 per cent of the irrigated areas and 21 million acres of irrigated land of Indus system went to Pakistan. The Sutlaj Valley Project, the largest irrigation system in the world and the unique Sukkur Barrage across the Indus in Sindh fell to the share of Pakistan. The loss of these major irrigation systems made an immediate and disastrous impact on Indian food crisis. To manage the crisis, Nehru set up the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission recognised the crucial importance of developing irrigation to increase agricultural production. It assigned a very high priority for development of irrigation projects through Five Year Plans.

The programme under the First Five Year Plan was aimed at increasing agricultural production substantially. Extension of irrigation, intensive cultivation and improvement in agricultural practices were intended to produce serious, impact on agrarian society. In the Second Five Year Plan also high priority was given to agricultural scheme with the main objective of securing self-sufficiency in food production. To improve irrigation facilities the following programmes were devised:

1. Minor irrigation programme.
2. Desilting cum reclamation of irrigation tanks, scheme for sinking of tube wells, filter points scheme, river pumping scheme, well subsidy scheme, lift irrigation scheme and sinking of artesian wells.5

The new irrigation policy implies that an adequate and controlled water supply and efficient distribution of surplus to new areas. Paddy cultivation largely depends upon the availability of right quantity of water at the required time. Investigation in India reveals that the availability of irrigation facilities is responsible for 42 per cent variation in the yield of rice. Tanjore region is no exception to this general phenomenon. River water is the major source of supply and nearly 87.5 per cent of the total irrigated lands in the Tanjore region are fed by the Cauvery system.6

The Mysore-Madras Agreement on sharing of Cauvery water and the construction of Mettur Dam and subsequent extension works facilitated the expansion of irrigation facilities to more than 3 lakhs additional acres of land in the Cauvery Delta region. The Grand Anicut Canal System was improved with modern design, with provision for all cross drainages to pass independently. The actual development of the entire ayacut under this system finally totaled up to 2,56,000 acres.7 Still 45,000 acres were not converted into ayacut. In the new irrigated areas, most of the extension works were undertaken in the new delta areas, aimed at productive purposes, whereas in the old delta the modernizing scheme would help to prevent the intensity of floods. It would improve the command of the rivers and channel regimes, reduce seepage losses and take irrigation to, and drainage from, each field. It would also enable an
equitable and concurrent distribution of water from the head to the tail end of each channel for protecting irrigation.

Irrigation sources in the tracts outside the delta were mostly tanks and they were found almost entirely in the upland taluks of Tanjore, Pattukottai and Arantangi. The following statement shows the area under flow and lift irrigation for fasli 1366 (1946 – 47)

Table - 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Name of system (Productive works)</th>
<th>Area irrigated (Acres)</th>
<th>Estimated crop value in rupees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tanjore</td>
<td>Lower Coleroon Anicut system</td>
<td>27696</td>
<td>58,02,915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lower coleroon Total</td>
<td>1,20,872</td>
<td>1,95,65,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanjore</td>
<td>Cauvery delta system</td>
<td>9,55,958</td>
<td>16,84,07,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cauvery delta Total</td>
<td>10,32,847</td>
<td>17,99,09,606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanjore</td>
<td>Cauvery - Metter Project</td>
<td>1,95,093</td>
<td>1,42,17,418^a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While all the eleven taluks of Tanjore district were covered by major irrigation works, the three taluks of Tanjore, Pattukottai and Arantangi benefited the most by the minor irrigation works. These taluks got the benefit of irrigation due to the construction of Grand Anicut Canal. According to 1951 census, 194 minor irrigation works in Tanjore, 27 in Pattukottai and 130 in Arantangi were undertaken. The extent of new areas irrigated by these works was 10, 152.60, 2380.33 and 10555.93 acres respectively. Among the three taluks, Arantangi recorded the highest number of acres converted into wet.
The following table shows the details of major and minor irrigation works carried out in each taluk.

Table - 12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Taluk</th>
<th>Area irrigated by major irrigation works</th>
<th>Number of minor irrigation works</th>
<th>Area irrigated by minor irrigation works</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sirkali</td>
<td>74580</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Mayuram</td>
<td>137044</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Kumbakonam</td>
<td>76217</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Tanjore</td>
<td>93459</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>10,152.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Papanasam</td>
<td>146000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Nannilam</td>
<td>142270</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Mannargudi</td>
<td>130376</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Nagapattinam</td>
<td>96423</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Pattukottai</td>
<td>128531</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2381.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Thiruthuraipoondi</td>
<td>84276</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Arantangi</td>
<td>24756</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>10555.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11,33,932</strong></td>
<td><strong>351</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>23089.86</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India 1951, District census Hand Book Thanjavur, (Madras: Director of census operation, 1953), P.5.

The construction of Grand Anicut Canal accelerated the process of extensive and intensive cultivation. Canal – fed tanks activated further the process. For the protection of crops in Arantangi taluk Cauvery - Mettur Project supply was extended through Ammanjikki Peria Eri and five other tanks. The initial area of ayacut benefited by this scheme was 81 acres and 25 cents. Ryots coming under the Ammanjikki sources was favourably assessed.
and water cess was reduced to help for the second crop. This concession was the motivating force for extension of cultivation. A bigger scheme costing about Rs. 46,000 to provide irrigation for about 14 villages, including Ammanjikki was examined by the Government. In the meantime a minor scheme to give immediate supply to 458 acres was proposed.

During the British period, the supply from the Cauvery - Mettur Project (CMP) stopped with Narasinga Cauvery. There were large areas of lands lying waste in the Singavanam Zamindari village in Arantangi taluk. The Zamindar and mirasdars in the villages were prepared to convert all the dry lands into wet, provided the government was willing to dig a main channel from Tiruvapadi channel running within 3 to 4 miles north of Singavanam village. The Zamindars had promised to induce the mirasdars in all the villages to dig branch channels and field bothies at their own cost if the main channel was dug by government. It is reported that, there was greater scope for raising double crops in all the lands in these villages. It seems that there was scope for converting about 4000 to 5000 acres of dry wastelands into wetland in half a dozen villages lying within 4 miles of the main irrigation channel.

An extension scheme was proposed to provide supply to 24 tanks with ayacut of 2,838 acres. Out of these 24 tanks, six with an ayacut of 684 acres, were government tanks and the remaining were inam and Zamin tanks. Subsequently the superintending engineer forwarded to the collector a modified and temporary proposal to be taken up for immediate execution under ‘Grow More Food Scheme’. The proposal provided for extension of CMP water
supply to 458 acres of dry land at the cost of Rs. 8,000. The engineer had suggested to the collector that the project might be taken up provided the ayacutdars would give a written guarantee of taking CMP water and deposit water cess in advance. It was hoped that this would give an inducement to ryots to take up the bigger scheme by a practical demonstration of the advantages of CMP water supply. The supply was proposed for Ammanjikki and five other tanks below it, where the ryots were already keen.\(^{13}\)

The Ammanjikki scheme tanks and ayacut were contiguous to the area that would be benefited by the extension of CMP irrigation beyond Narasinga Cauvery. The area, which came under the scheme, was 15,000 acres. At first this Ammanjikki scheme was proposed as a temporary measure, pending decision on a bigger scheme. The ayacut under this scheme was not included in the Narasinga Cauvery Scheme.\(^{14}\) After experimenting for three years; the government was fully satisfied and consequently made the scheme a permanent one.

From the inception of Grow More Food Campaign and along with the extension of irrigation, the government introduced a scheme for free assignment of land. Landless agricultural labourers, petty landholders, political sufferers, ex-servicemen and others were covered under the scheme\(^{15}\). The scheme of free assignment of land was extended to the whole region of the district. Under the scheme a total of 3,92,958 acres of free assignment of land had been brought under wet cultivation.\(^{16}\)
Water management need to be virtually perfect in order to conserve water for improved irrigation. The basic aim of the water management practices in any irrigation system should be maximizing the productive aspect of water for unit volume. Since this involves improvement in agronomy, crop management, etc., which also to a certain extent contribute to the higher productivity, water management is best done if the crop-water requirements are fully met with and distribution is made with minimum transmission losses.\(^\text{17}\)

In the First and Second Five Year Plan periods many extension works had been undertaken in the Grand Anicut. During the First Five Year Plan Olavagal Canal Extension Scheme, Beemanodai Drainage Project and Araseri Drainage Project were completed. During the Second Five Year Plan period 232, extension works were undertaken by which 37856 acres of old wetlands were assured with irrigation facilities. Besides, 7820 acres of dry lands were provided with irrigation. Government spent nearly 39 lakhs of rupees for these extension and improvement works. As a result nearly 7,896 tonnes of additional food grains were produced.\(^\text{18}\)

In the Cauvery division of Mayuram, Shirkazhi, and Nannilam taluks a few minor irrigation projects were implemented. During the First Five Year Plan period 12 drainage projects were initiated by the government at a cost of rupees 34.81 lakhs. In the Second Five Year Plan many extension works were taken for execution. In the Vennar division alone 21 works were undertaken at the expense of 6.1 lakh of rupees. By these works not only 7, 165 acres of lands were stabilized with assured water supply but also 1,754 acres of new
lands were provided with irrigation. Moreover, 15 works were undertaken under special minor irrigation extension project at a cost of 8 lakh rupees. Under the scheme nearly 6111 acres of lands were insured with regular supply in addition to the 2424 acres of converted lands.\(^{19}\)

In the Mullaiyar Project area, irrigation extension works resulted in improving the existing irrigation system. It also made 1420 acres of new lands to receive irrigation facilities. In the south, in Rajan Vaikal of Bamaniyar, government created new sluices at the cost of Rs. 40903/- by which additional 320 acres of land got new irrigation facilities and 135 tonnes of food grains were produced. During the Second Plan, nearly 1500 acres of land was provided with irrigation supply in the Mullaiyar division at a cost of 1.9 lakhs. Further extension work in the Mullaiyar facilitated uninterrupted supply to 137 acres of land in the Thiruthuraipoondi division.

In 1960, the new Kattalai High Level Channel (NKHLC) was constructed on the right bank of the Cauvery at Mayanur in Trichirappalli district. The total length of the channel is 86 miles. By it nearly 20,622 acres of land got additional supply.\(^{20}\) Nearly 4500 acres of land in the South-Western part of upland region of Pudukkudi, part of Sengipatti and Vallam in Tanjore district received fresh irrigation.

In 1961, the total area commanded by the Cauvery and Vennar regulators and the CMP, was about 12,00,000 acres, which is accounted for 80 per cent of the net sown area in Tanjore. By 1961 almost all the lands under paddy cultivation received the benefits of irrigation. It was this extensive
irrigation system, together with the presence of a fine alluvial soil in large part of the Cauvery delta that helped to identify Tanjore as one of the districts for the execution of the Integrated Agricultural Development Programme (IADP), first introduced in 1960-61. The following table provides a detailed report on the extension of irrigation from the days of independence.

Table - 13

**Area Irrigated and its sources between 1924 and 1984**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Canal</th>
<th>Tank</th>
<th>Wells</th>
<th>Other Sources</th>
<th>Total Area Irrigated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1947-48</td>
<td>1,121,895</td>
<td>55,739</td>
<td>1,190</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>1,179,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>1,150,259</td>
<td>50,878</td>
<td>5,260</td>
<td>817</td>
<td>1,207,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>1,115,609</td>
<td>62,569</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>1,511</td>
<td>1,180,069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>1,151,956</td>
<td>55,582</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,207,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>1,115,867</td>
<td>89,622</td>
<td>21,402</td>
<td>5,260</td>
<td>1,232,151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>1,127,987</td>
<td>82,177</td>
<td>19,027</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,229,191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Apart from the government sources in the form of canals tanks and wells, minor irrigation schemes like tube wells and filter points, small surface water lift upto 10 HP, generally within the reach of individual are farmers are providing supplementary irrigation. The Table below illustrate this point.
Table – 14

Particulars of Tube Wells and Filter Points in Tanjore District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Taluk</th>
<th>Cauvery</th>
<th>Vennar</th>
<th>G.A. Canal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tube Well</td>
<td>Filter Point</td>
<td>Tube Well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Thanjavur</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Thiruvaiyaru</td>
<td>1440</td>
<td>1177</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Orathanadu</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kumbakonam</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>4596</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Tiruvidaimarudur</td>
<td>774</td>
<td>2046</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Papanasam</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>1042</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Valangaiman</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Maiyladuthurai</td>
<td>1125</td>
<td>2588</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Tharangambadi</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>1605</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sirkali</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>2060</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Nagapattinam</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Tiruvarur</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Nannilam</td>
<td>495</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Kudavasal</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Mannargudi</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Needamangalam</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Thiruthuraipoondi</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Vedaranyam</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Pattukkottai</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Peravurani</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Agriculture Data Bank, Thanjavur Dt. JDA, Thanjavur nd. p.34.
From the details provided in the table, it is clear that the highest number of tube wells and filter points were dug in the Thiruvaiyaru and Kumbakonam taluks to provide adequate irrigation facilities for multi-cropping and also to safeguard topes and gardens during summer season. The lowest numbers of tube-wells are recorded in Nagapattinam. The reason is salinity of subsoil water, which is unsuitable for crop growth.

The extensive irrigation works in the district favoured higher land utilisation. Tanjore covered 8.21 percentage of the total geographical area in the state. Out of which the net shown area is 5.33 per cent as compared to 44.5 per cent in the state. The area sown more than once is also higher here, accounting to 2.17 per cent, out of the state total of 10 per cent. Details on land utilisation in the state and the share of Tanjore to the state total is given in the following table:

Table -15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Utilisation</th>
<th>Tamilnadu (Hectares)</th>
<th>% of Total area</th>
<th>Tanjore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographical area</td>
<td>1,29,94,979</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>8.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forests</td>
<td>20,49,778</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barren and uncultivated waste</td>
<td>5,67,707</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land put to non-agricultural use</td>
<td>17,91,430</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivable waste</td>
<td>2,98,883</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parmanent pastures and other grazing lands</td>
<td>1,49,115</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lands under miscellaneous tree crops and groves</td>
<td>1,84,129</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Tamil Nadu Government Report on Input Survey of 1986-87, Tanjore was in the 8th position as far as the percentage of intensity of cultivation in irrigated areas was concerned. Its intensity of cultivation was 113.78 per cent. But a close look at the report suggests that Tanjore was on top in the sense that it was here that more waste lands were put under cultivation.  

Factors like insured irrigation to the lands already under cultivation and extension of supply to new areas were responsible for selecting Tanjore for the implementation of the Package Programme by the Government of India and Ford Foundation in 1960-61.

### 2. SCIENTIFIC CULTIVATION

The application of science and technology in Indian agriculture is an outcome of major policy shift to boost productivity for feeding millions of starving Indians. The initiative was taken by the Central Planning Commission and executed through the Five Year Plans. It was introduced as a package...
programme that includes the introduction of High Yielding Varieties (HYV), multi-cropping, the large scale application of fertilizer and compost manure, use of bio-fertilizers like blue green algae, azolla, etc., and optimum land utilisation. Intensive agriculture requires the utilisation of technological skill and improved farming methods. In order to achieve rapid increase in production, improvements have to be made in agricultural lands, which are most responsive to the application of technological input. In Indian agriculture, this development is popularly called “Green Revolution”.24

The Green Revolution was expected to raise the income of the farmers. As it would generate employment opportunities it was hoped that it would be beneficial to the labourers too. ‘Breaking the claim of rural poverty’ was the goal set by the scheme. Furthermore, HYVs required entirely new inputs and agronomic practices. Their widespread use, it was expected, would raise the demand for modern inputs like fertilizers and pesticides. In effect, the HYVs appear to be “engines of change” that would radically transform traditional agriculture. As one observer puts it, “the agrarian revolution of the poor countries is similar to what the steam engine did to the Industrial Revolution in Europe”.25

An offshoot of scientific agricultural programme was the Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP). It was introduced on a selective basis for creating revolutionary change necessary to bring about substantial growth in the agricultural front.26 The Ford Foundation of U.S.A. was the spirit behind
the entire programme and the support base for its implementation. The four fold objectives of the programmes are:

1. To increase national food production through co-operation;
2. To enhance the income of the villagers;
3. To increase the economic resources; and
4. To provide an adequate agricultural base for more rapid economic development.

The programme was aimed at making people adopt better methods of cultivation and improved implements to increase production and thereby bring about an all round economic development. Initially seven districts from seven states were chosen. Tanjore was one among them chosen by the Ford Foundation Organisation. The IADP started functioning in Tanjore from April 1960 and rice cultivation was carried on under this scheme in 5,74,000 hectares covering all the 36 blocks in the district. A significant change had been brought in the traditional cropping pattern by this programme. An increase of yield was also recorded since the installation of IADP. The table below shows the increase in yield per acre from 1960-61 to 1964 – 65.

Table – 16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yield Per acre (Lbs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959 – 60</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960 – 61</td>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961 – 62</td>
<td>2264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962 – 63</td>
<td>2024</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table shows that the total produce of paddy per acre in 1964-65 was 2385 lbs, whereas in the year 1959 - 60 it was only 2008 lbs. As a result of the implementation of the IADP scheme an increase of 377 lbs was achieved. Decrease in rice production for the years 1962 - 63 and 1963 - 64 as indicated in the table was due to monsoon failure.

Comparing with the achievements made in some of the more successful IADP districts, in Tanjore the production of rice increased from 27 to 42 per cent. The average rate of plant -food application increased more than three fold. The breakthrough in rice production came along with the introduction of a new high yielding rice variety, ADT – 27, developed as a short season first crop. The data available from each village and for each month of 1969 – 70, indicates that paddy was grown thrice in the year. In the kuruvai season, both ADT – 27 and local varieties were grown. Kuruvai season accounted for about 30 per cent of the rice area in the year, Samba season for another 38 per cent and Thaladi for the remaining 32 per cent. It is clear that paddy output flows were spread out evenly over different seasons in the year.

Gilbert Etienne has done research at Kila Ulur in Tanjore district. He noticed that the economic advancement of Kila Ulur and its surrounding area corresponded to the general trend in Tanjore district. For the three harvests, the combined average yield increased from 2,645 kg. per hec. in 1964 – 65 to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Yield Per acre (Lbs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963 – 64</td>
<td>2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964 – 65</td>
<td>2385</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3,225 k.g. per hec. in 1975 – 76. His estimation of paddy yields from 1975 – 76 to 1981 – 82 in the district of Tanjore is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Kuruvai</th>
<th>Samba</th>
<th>Thaladi</th>
<th>Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975 – 76</td>
<td>3637</td>
<td>3042</td>
<td>2715</td>
<td>3225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981 – 82</td>
<td>4390</td>
<td>3400</td>
<td>3267</td>
<td>3699</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As per the report, the per hectare paddy yield had increased from 3225 Kg. in 1975 – 76 to 3699 k.g. in 1981 – 82. This boost in production was determined by favourable seasonal conditions and experimentation of different HYVs. The Input Survey of Government of Tamilnadu states that in 1986 – 87 Tanjore topped the list of districts in experimenting the highest number of HYVs.

Scientific cultivation not only induced the formers to produce more per acre but also recommended the use of blue green algae. It is used in paddy fields in combination with chemical fertilizers in order to reduce the cost of manuring and to maintain the soil fertility. Up to the end of 1983, 870 tonnes of blue green algae had been multiplied and distributed to over 0.87 lakh hectares of lands under paddy crop. Nearly 75.14 lakh tonnes of manure was obtained and 3.28 lakh tonnes of night soil compost was also added to it.

During 1984 – 85, the consumption of fertilizers stood at 3.75 lakh tonnes of nitrogen, 1.5 lakh tonnes of phosphorous and 1.65 tonnes of potash. In addition, the intensive fertilizer promotion programme implemented in the six selected districts was allowed to continue. Enforcement of quality control measure was continued more rigorously. One lakh hectares of paddy crop was covered with the distribution of blue green algae. Another useful bio-fertiliser, azolla, which was being tried in select state seed farms was multiplied and
distributed to the farmers during 1984 – 85. Beyond that, the production of rural compost also received due attention.\textsuperscript{34} To increase the production of rice a project called “Operation 5 M.T. per Hectare\textsuperscript{35} was introduced in a massive scale. Through this project, proven techniques of increasing productivity was demonstrated extensively. Many approaches were made to transfer useful technologies quickly to the farming community.

Plant protection by means of weed and pest control was found to be the important requisite for getting high yield. Many weeds are the favourite hosts of insects. Overgrowth of weeds leads to reduction of crop yield. The initial infestation of many perennial weeds must eventually be eliminated. Mowing is a common practice for preventing seed production by weeds. Repeated spring tillage is often used to stimulate weed-seed germination and to kill young weeds. Timing of sawing seeds, timing of fertilizer application, crop rotation, etc., are the other methods of controlling weeds.\textsuperscript{36} During the time of normal season the farmers of Tanjore controlled weeds by using tillage methods. During water starving seasons weed growth recorded abnormal conditions. Under such situations manpower was extensively used to control weeds.

As far as pest control is concerned, broadly three methods are used. The biological control method involves the use of predators and parasites (mostly other insects) to control pest species. Mechanical control technique includes killing or trapping pests by mechanical means or the use of barriers to prevent pests from gaining access to plants, stored produce or other materials. Physical control is done by the utilisation of some physical properties as attractants (e.g.
light traps for night flying insects). Rotation of crops, timely sowing and irrigation substantially reduce pest attacks. Mass Ground Spraying for the control of paddy stem borer had been taken up. For the control of Brown Plant Hopper, Mass Ground spraying was taken up in an area of 23028 ha. upto 1983. Under the Integrated Pest Management Demonstration Schemes, need based plant protection measures were taken when the incidence of pest exceeded economic threshold level. A special scheme on Rodent Control was in operation in Tanjore district and an area of 24000 hectares had been covered under the scheme.

To create awareness among the farmers about intensive scientific cultivation, the government started farmers training programme. There are 13 Agricultural Schools in Tamilnadu, designed to educate the rural youth to develop the needed agricultural skill. Annually 260 students undergo this course. Establishment of private Agricultural Schools also encouraged by the state. To cite an example the government sanctioned alienation of 25.25 acres of land in the Venkalasamudram village of Thirukkattupalli in Tanjore district to be used for the establishment of a Vocational Agricultural School to be run by Sri Sivaswami Ayyar Educational Trust. The government gave occupancy right to the above land free of cost in the interest of agricultural education. The agricultural research station at Aduthurai and Pattukkottai have made their mark in the field of agricultural development in the district. They have helped to evolve improved strains of paddy suited to this district.
Besides paddy, coconut is the next important produce in the district. Cholam, Varagu and Cumbu are raised in the unirrigated tracts. Plantain and Sugarcane are also grown to a large extent in wet and padugai lands, having irrigation facilities. Pulses are grown as catch crops in wet lands. Cotton cultivation has been recently introduced in the district.41

New seed varieties are being developed and distributed among peasants at subsidized cost. Government seed farms are involved in developing new seed varieties. Agricultural implements are also distributed as part of the incentive package. Financial assistance through Agricultural Co-operative Credit Societies, Land Development Banks, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), etc. is also provided.

Green Revolution in India met with mixed response, both appreciation and condemnation. Gopalan finds fault with Green Revolution (GR) because according to him the advocates of G.R. failed to give any attention to augmenting the production of pulses, horticultural products and milk that are essential items from the point of nutrition.42 To Stephered, it was more political than agrarian. The Government succeeded in withholding land reforms, thereby maintaining inequality in the agrarian society. He felt that the G.R. was responsible for increased production of food grains in the short run but in the long run it led to increased poverty and environmental degradation.43

A careful analysis of the performance of the G.R. suggests that its capacity to transform the agricultural economy of the region was impeded by serious limitations. First of all the government would not achieve its target of
converting 6,00,000 acres of traditional single croplands into double cropland. During 1967 – 68 and 1968 – 69 only about 2,00,000 acres came under double crops. Thus by 1969 – 70 the target of 4,00,000 acres fixed by IADP officials remained still under singlecrop.\textsuperscript{44} A number of small farmers simply had no money to grow a second crop. In the case of tenant – cultivators, they often had no incentive as well. Loan facilities through co-operative Agricultural Credit Societies, Land Development Banks, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and free electricity were made available to the small farmers and tenants. Yet the benefits of these schemes were not all pervasive. Monetary help of these kind did not reach in time and there were large gaps between loans sanctioned and amounts actually disbursed to farmers.\textsuperscript{45} The farmers with a holding of 10 acres and more enjoyed decisive advantage in exploiting the full potentiality of modern methods. Most of the additional output generated by the application of advanced techniques of production representing a net surplus over consumption was disposed of on the market. With the price of food grains rising, the income of the big farmers increased, while the small and marginal farmers had to rest content with only the peripheral gains.

As for as eastern Tanjore is concerned, IADP was not in full operation. Since the region is situated in the coastal track, much of the area was subject to submersion during the northeast monsoon. Consequently these areas had proved difficult for conversion from single-crop to double crop.\textsuperscript{46} So the
beneficiaries of IADP were mostly peasants of central, western, and southern upland regions of Tanjore.

3. LAND REFORM ACTS

British rule reorganised the village administrative system of India. They did not take into account the village communities for collecting the annual state revenue from village land. Instead, the Company experimented with a system of auctioning rent collection and the highest bidders were made responsible for collecting the state revenue. Zamindars, who happened to be the collectors of rent used to lease the estates to rentiers or Izzardars at the highest rates. The latter fixed their own rates to “pillage the villagers” by squeezing their last drop of blood. In order to help the ryots the Rent Recovery Act of 1865 was enacted. However, there was no act prescribing the norms to be followed by the landlords in collecting rent from the ryots. Therefore the government drew up a bill in 1905. The bill sought to remove the defects in the 1865 Act and clearly define the role of landlords in the revenue administration. The bill was placed before the public for discussion and in 1908 it was passed under the title, The Madras Estate Land Act.

The Act of 1908 was the first of its kind in the presidency that brought on statue the relationship between the landholder and his ryots. The act was intended to safeguard the ryots. Within a year of the coming into force of the Act, some defects came to light and to rectify them an Amending Act (Madras Act IV of 1909) was passed. The Act of 1909 was further amended in 1913,
1914, 1922, 1928, 1934, 1935 & 1936. The aim was to remove the defects so that both the landholders and ryots would be rendered beneficiaries. Wartime requirements and food demands compelled the government to accelerate production. In response to the situation, in 1944, the government thought of a temporary amendment to the Madras Estate Land Act. The Act permitted the land holders to admit a person to have temporary possession of land in his estates for such a period not to be less than three or more than five years. It should be mutually agreed upon between him and the landholders. The greatest defect of the Madras Estate Land Act was its bargaining nature. The government’s revenue policy worsened day by day and there was growing agitation for the reduction of the then prevailing high rents. The government considered that some immediate relief should be given to the ryots. Therefore it introduced an Amendment to the Madras Estate Land Act in 1947, called Madras Estate Land (Reduction of Rent) Act.\(^{50}\)

On the eve of independence, India was facing two serious economic problems, viz. wide inequalities in income and mass poverty. Rajendra Prasad, the then acting president of the Indian National Congress, convened a meeting of the revenue ministers of the states at New Delhi in December 1947 to discuss the question of land reforms. With a view to studying this subject and making necessary recommendations, the revenue minister’s conference unanimously requested Rajendra Prasad to appoint a committee. The congress president accordingly appointed the Agrarian Reform Committee with J.C. Kumarappa as its chairman\(^{51}\). It recommended that the agrarian economy
should provide an opportunity for the development of the farmer’s personality as well as creating an atmosphere to maximise his efficiency of production. It also recommended that subletting of land should be prohibited, and all intermediaries between the state and the tillers should be eliminated. The main purpose of land reform proposals was to reduce concentration of land holding by big farmers and redistribute lands to small farmers\textsuperscript{52}.

Since land reform had the potential to change the base of economic and political power, the policy, content and implementation could not but be influenced by the class alignments in the power structure. The earliest of the programmes of land reforms implemented with some measures of success in India was the abolition of intermediaries\textsuperscript{53}. It was felt necessary to fix a ceiling on the agricultural land holding so as to acquire the surplus lands to be distributed to the landless. Land Ceiling Act, it was hoped, would not only increase agricultural production but also promote economic and social justice\textsuperscript{54}.

Land reform acts were enacted for four general objectives: (a) the elimination of exploitation, (b) increasing productive efficiency, (c) economic growth, equality in resource ownership and income-distribution, and (d) security and employment opportunities\textsuperscript{55}. To achieve these objectives the government came with a series of land reform acts. The first in the series was the Tanjore Tenants and Pannaiyal Protection Act of 1952. Then came The Madras Cultivating Tenants Protection Act. 1955; Madras Cultivating Tenant (payment of Fair Rent) Act of 1956; Madras Land Reforms (Fixation of ceiling
on land) Act 1962; etc. Subsequently many amendments were made to improve the condition of tenants, pannaiyals and labourers.

After the attainment of freedom, Communist Movement intensified its struggle against the exploitative agrarian structure. While the Congress was popular in urban centers, the Communists exercised influence in rural areas. They organised peasant protests demanding high wages. These protests created problems to the big farmers. Goaded by the heavy pressure applied by the upper agrarian hierarchy, the government in 1949 banned the Communist Party and many trade unions and peasant organisations supported by the Leftists. Force was also used in areas where the Left Movement was strong or influential, especially in the eastern part of Tanjore.56

In the district of Tanjore the relation between landowners and their agents on the one hand and tenants and farm labourers on the other became strained. The mirasdars tried to meet the danger, by such measures as evicting the tenants or dismissing their customary farm servants (Pannaiyals) or replacing both with casual labourers. As a result, agrarian crimes became common. It was followed by reactionary disturbances. The situation threatened the agricultural production of the district. Therefore, the Governor of Madras promulgated an ordinance in 1952, which was popularly called Tanjore Tenants and Pannaiyals Protection Ordinance.57

The main provisions of the ordinance were:

(1) The harvesting charges should be shared on the basis of 60-40 between the landlord and tenants,
(2) A tenant evicted after Dec. 1, 1951 was entitled to get reinstatement;

and

(3) Tenant was given security of tenure for a period of five years.

Pannaiyals were given the option to choose between the following:

(a) Compensation of two marakals\(^5\) of paddy per day per man; one
   for woman and three-fourths for those who were not adults or

(b) The old system of one marakal of paddy per day for male, three-fourths for woman, plus one-seventh of crop at harvest time.

When a landlord dismissed a pannaiyal, he could be reinstated if his action was deemed unjust by the conciliation officer, provided that the pannaiyal made an appeal within a week after the dismissal. The ordinance was treated applicable only to landholdings above 6.5 acres of wet 20 the acres of dry land.

There were many shortcomings in the ordinance. To begin with, the ordinance attempted to deal with arbitrary eviction and to give the tenants security of tenure. To that end, it laid down that all tenants, who were cultivating the land on Dec. 1, 1951, would have tenancy rights for five years and that those who have since been evicted must be restored to their rights. The ordinance did not apply to tenants evicted prior to Dec. 1, 1951. This was a significant omission, for most of the evictions had taken place in 1949-50, the years of active disturbance in Tanjore. Likewise, the pannaiyals dismissed prior to March 1, 1952, had no redressal under the ordinance. Those dismissed between March 1 and the enactment of the ordinance could apply for reinstatement, while those dismissed after the promulgation of the ordinance
were given one week within which they had to apply for reinstatement. The
time limitation was too short to do the pannaiyals much good.\textsuperscript{59}

With respect to the wage of pannaiyal, the ordinance gave him the
choice of the old or new schedule. If he accepted the new scheme, it meant
more wage, but he would get only for the days he worked. He was not entitled
to any bonus, which, under the old system, meant one-seventh of the harvested
crop. The landlords accepted this provision with practically no protests.\textsuperscript{60} The
pannaiyal, on the other hand did not quite know how it would all work out. It
would take at least a season or two to determine the effect of the measure. The
ordinance made no attempt to consider the casual labour problem.\textsuperscript{61} Therefore,
before the implementation of the Pannaiyal Protection Act, stability and
responsibility had to be maintained between the landlords and the pannaiyals.
But after the Act, landlords became tendered capitalists and the condition of the
labourers became worse. However, it made certain fundamental changes in the
agrarian structure of Tanjore region.

The First Five Year Plan proposed a time schedule, for carrying out far-
reaching land reforms. Due to fear of unfavourable consequences of such
reform measures, the landlords began to evict tenants on a large scale, which
threatened to create an explosive situation in the agricultural sector. So the
Government of Madras was compelled to introduce a Bill on 3\textsuperscript{rd} Aug., 1955. It
got passed under the name The Madras Cultivating Tenants Protection Act.
This Act protected the tenants from all kinds of arbitrary evictions and enabled
landowners, in deserving cases, to resume land for personal cultivation.
Conceived at the outset as an emergency measure and extended from year to year for several years it was made permanent in January 1965.\textsuperscript{62}

Tenants Protection Act of 1955 had provisions for dealing with problems arising from eviction; resumption, lease and restoration.\textsuperscript{63} The act achieved less during the first phase of its implementation. During the second phase in 1961, a quick survey was made by the Karnams. The survey indicated that there were 3,13,673 tenants, cultivating an aggregate area of 8,55,211 acres. Of these the number of tenants who applied for restoration of lease holdings were higher. The following Table shows the exact number of applications received from the landlords for eviction, resumption of land for personal cultivation and restoration cases from the tenants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Eviction Cases</th>
<th>Resumption Cases</th>
<th>Restoration Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total filed</td>
<td>Total evicted</td>
<td>Extent involved (acres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>16,434</td>
<td>3,165</td>
<td>6,691.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanjore</td>
<td>8,641</td>
<td>1,271</td>
<td>2,548.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: K.S. Sonachalam, Lanad Reforms in Tamil Nadu, pp 50 - 54

As the table indicates the government received highest number of applications from the landlords of Tanjore for eviction. Also it was the second highest district, which filed applications for resumption of land for personal cultivation next to Coimbatore. In the case of restoration the government
received 190 applications from Tanjore tenants, out of which 18 tenants got 59.64 acres of lands.

Tenancy legislations seemed to have had two effects, which were somewhat opposite in nature. Powerful and enterprising landowners had in some cases succeeded in evicting their tenants and then re-engaging them as wage labourers. This seems to have happened more extensively in the eastern part of the old delta than in the west. But, where tenants had resisted eviction, they had on the whole improved their economic and political position, although this did not mean that they were able to secure all the advantages, which the laws guaranteed. The passing of the Cultivating Tenants Protection Act necessitated the regulation of the rent payable by the tenant and settlement of disputes. Hence came the Madras Cultivating Tenants (Payment of Fair Rent) Act of 1956. By this Act, ceiling rates on fair rent were fixed for wetlands, wet lands supplemented by lift irrigation and other classes of lands. The owner of the land was eligible to get fair rent (grain) at 25 per cent of gross produce fixed under the Act 24/56. The landowner paid the land revenue and other dues on the land for which the tenant bears the expenses of cultivation. In Tanjore alone under this Act, 3,286 applications were filed by tenants. Rent court had

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64 Security of tenure to cultivating tenants was provided by the revenue courts. Due to the disbandment of the revenue courts with effect from 22nd March 1983, concerned Revenue Divisional Officer or Authorised Officers attended to all residuary cases.

65 The passing of the Cultivating Tenants Protection Act necessitated the regulation of the rent payable by the tenant and settlement of disputes. Hence came the Madras Cultivating Tenants (Payment of Fair Rent) Act of 1956. By this Act, ceiling rates on fair rent were fixed for wetlands, wet lands supplemented by lift irrigation and other classes of lands. The owner of the land was eligible to get fair rent (grain) at 25 per cent of gross produce fixed under the Act 24/56. The landowner paid the land revenue and other dues on the land for which the tenant bears the expenses of cultivation. In Tanjore alone under this Act, 3,286 applications were filed by tenants.
been established for deciding disputes. Dantwala has made a careful and cautious observation about the Rent Act:

"Both official and non-official opinion accepts the fact that a large number of tenants pay much higher rents than those prescribed by law. As for the security of tenure, there have been more evictions and changes of tenants during the years following the tenancy legislation than in the previous period in recent history."

The dramatic effect of tenancy legislations in the fifties was the gradual demise of the tenancy system. It is not true to say that tenancy legislations did not bring about structural changes. It did; but not in the direction of greater equity. Hence, the Government of Madras decided to introduce land ceiling act.

The scope of the Tamilnadu Land Reforms (Fixation of Ceiling on Land) Act of 1961 was to impose a ceiling on agricultural holdings and to acquire the surplus lands on payment of compensation. The ceiling area in the case of individuals and families of 5 members and less was 30 standard acres and for every additional member 5 standard acres were allowed. Female members of a family holding land in their own name on 6th April 1960 were entitled to have a stridhana of 10 standard acres, apart from the ceiling area. The overall ceiling area for a family irrespective of its size, was however, 60 standard acres. The ordinary acres were converted into standard acres in accordance with the ratio laid down in the Act itself. The Act contained suitable provisions for dealing with subsequent acquisitions and sales of lands, if these transactions affect the provisions of the Act. Certain categories of lands
such as lands held by government, local authorities, trusts, co-operative societies and orchards, gardens, plantations and fuel gardens were exempted from the provisions of the Act. Though the Act received the assent of the President of India on 13th April 1962, it came into force with retrospective effect from April, 1960.

For the implementation of the Ceiling Act, the state was divided into thirteen zones. Each zone was under the jurisdiction of a Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) on special duty, designated as Authorised Officer (Land Reforms). As the work of land reform administration became arduous, three additional Authorised Officers with their personal staff were appointed for six months from July 1965 to 1966 to assist the Authorised Officers at Mayuram, Tanjore and Nagapattinam. The Authorised Officers, rested with powers of granting exemptions as provided in the Act, held a key position and a heavy responsibility. In the process of administration, the Authorised Officers exercised judicial functions in deciding titles to land, eligibility of claim and validity of transactions in a summary fashion. The applicants have however, the right to appeal to Land Tribunals. The Authorised Officers were also empowered to fix the compensation for the lands taken over as surplus on the basis of net annual income. After scrutinizing the land, the Authorised Officers declared 7430 acres as surplus in Tanjore.

When the Ceiling Act was implemented, the original estimation of the surplus got sharply slashed due to the delay in the introduction of legislation. The maximum extent of 30 standard acres fixed for an individual holder was
said to have yielded poor results in terms of availability of surplus land for
distribution to the landless. In view of the scarcity of lands made available for
distribution, the State Government proposed to lower the ceiling and thereby
rendered large extent of surplus land available for assignment to the landless.
Accordingly the Revenue Minister of Tamil Nadu announced on 20th Feb. 1970
that the ceiling on lands would be reduced from 30 to 15 standard acres.³³

In the actual implementation the land reform legislations failed
miserably. The several loopholes in it were taken advantage of by vested
interests to perpetuate the existing inequalities. The land owning community
retained large tracts of land under their effective control in the guise of
resuming land for self-cultivation. It was permissible under the law and self-
cultivation for this purpose was deemed to include cultivation through hired
labourers. Then the law on ceiling on land holdings by individuals was
effectively circumvented by the partitioning of landed property among
members of the same family and dependent relatives. As a result no land
emerged as surplus for disposal outside the family domain.

The land reform measures so far spelt out and implemented did not have
the desired impact on the removal of inequalities and injustice on the agrarian
front. This was mainly because those administering the reforms had no interest
in doing so and were very much in favour of maintaining the status quo. The
reforms paid only lip service to an ideology, which had to be professed for
political purposes.³⁴ Though Land Ceiling Acts were implemented since
independence, it had failed to bring out the required change in the agrarian
structure. These acts provided legal security to the tenants and labourers from the landowning class to a certain extent. It induced the tenants and labourers to object the orders of landlords. Thus the Act initiated peasant unrests and labour unrests, demanding their legal share in the mode of production.

4. PEASANT STRUGGLE

Peasant struggle was an offshoot of uneven distribution of agricultural produce, meanness of labourers and perpetuation of structural imbalances. Customary economic order underwent only minor changes even after independence. The wages of labourers did not increase substantially. For example, a family earned 50 kalam of Paddy a year in 1885 and about 40 to 60 kalam in 1951-52. There is nothing novel in the existence of a wide gulf between the rich and the poor or in the phenomenon of rich becoming richer. However, such a non-egalitarian economic system was continuing for ages without much rebellion on the part of the deprived sections.

In the beginning of the 20th century, Marxian ideology spread throughout the world. The formation of proletariat government in Russia since 1917 signaled the birth of labour associations in all parts of the world. The entry of Communist Movement in Tanjore region was unique. It started with the strike of Railway Workers Union at Nagapattinam in 1919. Singaravelu, the founding father of Communist Party in Tamil Nadu, initiated the strike. It had its impact on agrarian sector also. The Communists made their forage into the countryside seeking to win friends and influence people among agricultural
labourers and poor peasants. The vicious circle of poverty and exploitation made conditions suitable for peasant rebellions in the Tanjore region.

The Communist Movement was started at Nagapattinam in Tanjore district against the exploitation of the peasantry by landlords. To put an end to landlords’ atrocities on labourers, Maniammal, who was the widowed daughter of a Brahmin landlord of Agarakadambanur village in Nagapattinam, organised kisan sabha at Manaloor and other neighbouring villages. Field labourers and tenants, mainly Adi - Dravidas and Padaiyachis, were involved in a struggle with local mirasiders of Pelayur village in the Nannilam Taluk in 1938. The reaction of the mirasidars was spontaneous. In addition to hiring of blacklegs to replace the protesting Adi- Dravida labourers, the mirasidars used hired toughs to intimidate them. They also sought the help of the police. On 28th April 1938, a police sub- inspector armed with revolver visited the Palayur Paracheri (untouchable’s quarters) with two constables to threaten the labourers. But they turned against the police, overwhelmed them; man handled and tied them up. Subsequently thirty-four labourers belonging to the Adi-Dravida community were tried for rioting. The sub- inspector was demoted for improper conduct. But the influence of the Palayur mirasidars was so overwhelming that no witnesses could be found to incriminate him.

Tenparai was the hotbed of agrarian unrest in Tanjore district, where the first labour organisation was formed in 1943. Labourers sought to strike at the weakest link, the jain-mutt lands. The mutt owned more than 2000 acres of land scattered over several villages. Rengasamy, Pandian, R.Amirthalingam
Pillai, Veerasamy and Thangavel were the chief organizers of Tenparai labour movement. Manali Kandasamy, Vaithianathan, Sundaesan, Pangal Swaminathan, K.P. Natarajan and M. Sadiyappan were the leading organizers of the movement in Tanjore district. The leaders extended the organisational base of the movement to Vadapathimangalam, Kalappal, Kunniyur and wherever landlordism was predominant in Tanjore region.\(^{80}\)

In Kalappal, agrarian unrest was more intense. The struggle was the outcome of tortures inflicted on Pannaiyals. "Do not force us to drink cow dung or urine and do not beat us with whip" were the slogans raised by the agitators. The landlords resorted to beat the Pannaiyals both men and women with the help of their musclemen. Even shopkeepers were not permitted to sell anything to them. They were denied employment and agricultural operation was done with imported labour.\(^{81}\) In these circumstances Mahadevan, Assistant Commissioner of Police, convened a meeting at Mannargudi in 1944 in which both landlords, tenants and labourers participated. It was the first ever meeting of landlords and labourers. V.S. Thiagaraja Mudaliar, the mirasidar of Vadapathimangalam, Karuvakkudi Naidu and saint of Tirukalar represented the landlords and K. Kuppusamy of Kalappal, R. Amirthalingam and T. Rajagopal of Serangulam represented the labourers. Both the parties signed an agreement, popularly known as the Mannargudi Agreement.\(^{82}\) This was a landmark agreement from the point of view of the pannaiyals, because it put an end to the punishment meted out by the labourers. It also provided for the regulation of
daily wages. Daily wage of the pannaiyal was fixed at two litre of paddy during the ordinary period and three litres during the harvest season.\textsuperscript{83}

The formation of Prakasam Ministry in 1946 changed the balance of forces in favour of landlords. As a result there was an increase in the cases of assault on the tenants and agricultural labourers. During the brief span of two years there were several arrests and one murder. Kuppusamy of Kalappall, falsely connected with Kunniyur murder case, was arrested and convicted.\textsuperscript{84} One Congress MLA once threatened the tenants and labourers of Kalappal saying that recalcitrance would mean death. The tenant and labourers got furious and attacked the M.L.A. To manage the situation police opened fire, killing another Harijan. Subsequently there was large-scale arrest of agricultural labourers and humiliation of women.\textsuperscript{85} It made the agrieved to turn violent. According to Fortnightly Reports, Communist activities had become increasingly violent in Tanjore district.\textsuperscript{86} The Mannargudi Agreement between the mirasidars and labourers, instead of establishing harmony led to fresh troubles of a serious nature. In a clash between labourers and mirasidars servants, two servants of the mirasidars were murdered and this led to the banning of all Kissan and Communist meetings in the Mannargudi division of the district.

To face the crisis, the Communists mobilized large number of tenants, share croppers, pannaiyals and agricultural labourers. They planned to wage relentless struggle against economic and social exploitation. The result was a progressive expansion and consolidation of the Vivasaiagal Sangam (Farmers
Association) under whose banner agricultural labourers, tenants and share-croppers were organised. An official report concedes that the Communists had a good grip over agricultural labourers in Mannargudi and Thiruthuraipoondi taluks.\textsuperscript{87}

Since independence the landlords induced Congress leaders to ban Communist activities. Accordingly Communist Party was banned in 1948 as a sequel to the Telengana struggle. During the span of two years several Communist leaders were shot dead in broad day-light. The repression was much more severe during the Congress regime. Eviction was reckless and leaders were either put behind bars or forced to go underground. The repression was so severe that even DK and DMK were forced to raise their voice against the Congress brutality.\textsuperscript{88}

To tackle the situation, Congress ministry introduced Tanjore Tenants and Pannaiyal Protection Act of 1952. The Act favourably regulated the payment of wages to pannaiyals. Landlords had to bear additional burden. By this Act, Pannaiyals became a new wage-earning class. However, loopholes in the Act safeguarded landlords instead of labourers\textsuperscript{89}. The labourers got only legal right but economically their conditions deteriorated. Yet it encouraged them to activate their protest against the landlords.

The participation of non-scheduled caste agricultural labourers and tenants in the movement was lower than that of the scheduled castes. The latter as such turned out to be the major beneficiary. With agrarian tension mounting on the issue of protection and promotion of tenant’s rights, the ruling class was
again compelled to enact new provisions for fair rent popularly called Fair Rent Act of 1956. It fixed the tenants share of the produce at 60 per cent and granted them security of tenure. This Act did not satisfy the landlords and some of them were not willing to lease out lands to the tenants.90

Landlords acquired an identity distinct from tenant’s movements. According to K.C Alexander, the landowners of Tanjore had to be constantly on the defensive against tenants movements organised by the Communists.91 They found that there was no political party to take up their cause openly. So they felt it necessary to organise themselves against the assertive moves of the weaker sections - first the tenants and then the agricultural labourers. The insurrection of the CPI in Tanjore in 1948 led the local landlords to organise themselves to defend their interests and carry on agricultural activities. The initiative for this was provided by the leading landlord, Rajagopala Naidu who formed the Tanjore District Farmers Association (IDFA) in 1949.92 It was organized, mainly for fighting Communist insurrectionary activities. The association gradually lost its importance after the suppression of CPI.

When the CPI again emerged as a labour movement, land lords also decided to counter attack the labour unions through organising farmers’ movements. According to Fortnightly Report, the first Madras State Land Owners; Conference was held at Kumbakonam.on 1st Dec; 1956. Sri P.T Rajan presided over the conference. A High Power Committee consisting of 87 members (of which 13 were elected as the office-bearers) was formed with power to co-opt, attend to organisational matters and to decide the candidates
for contesting the ensuing general elections. The conference in general expressed its opposition to and dissatisfaction with the Fair Rent Act. The President at the end of the conference announced that the mirasidars in collaboration with the merchants and others would form a party. They decided to contest the general elections and oppose the Congress. 93

The association was resurrected in 1964 under the title of Food Producers Association. Soon after, its name was changed into Paddy Producers Association. Gopalakrishna Naidu, a big landowner of Nagapattinam taluk was elected as its president. During this time he was also the secretary of Tanjore District Congress Committee. The main objectives of the association were: (1) to protect the rights of the landowners; (2) to get concessions from government for developing agriculture; (3) to oppose the activities of the Communists; (4) to achieve increased agricultural production; and (5) to work for the welfare of landowners. 94

Even though the list of objectives was rather wide; the main problem that the association had to tackle was the “strikes”, periodically conducted by agricultural labourers for obtaining higher wages. The association also organised local farmers in areas where labourers conducted strikes and sometimes sent volunteers to villages in which strikes were conducted. Usually such moves were opposed by the labourers, and the resulting action and reaction of the two groups led to the eruption of various kinds of unrest. 95 Because of the labour unrest in various places of Tanjore district, apart from the Mannargudi Agreement, many other agreements were signed among the
landlords, tenants and labourers. In this connection the following agreements may be cited: Arbitration of Tanjore District Judge (1946), Mayuram Agreement of 1948, Mannargudi Agreement of 1967 and Tiruvarur Agreement of 1968. The important purpose of these agreements was increasing the wage rates of men and women. However, these agreements too did not bring about any lasting settlement in east Tanjore. The labourers continued their agitations demanding still higher wages. This was attributed partly to the political competition between the CPI and the CPM for a hold among the labourers, and partly to the unwillingness of the cultivators in certain areas to pay the agreed wage rates.

The problem of wages led to Kilvenmani tragedy, in Dec., 1968. Kilvenmani is a village of Nagapattinam taluk in Tanjore District. The landlords along with the hirelings surrounded the village. The agricultural labourers consisting of men, women and children ran helter shelter. They entered into the house of Ramaiah and locked the door. Gopala Krishna Naidu, one of the landlords, along with hirelings sprinkled petrol and set fire to the house along with the occupants. The victims were not allowed to come out. As a result, 42 persons, all of them agricultural labourers, were burnt to death.

Following this tragedy, the District Collector sanctioned immediately a marginal increase in the wage rates and the government constituted a One-man Commission under S.Ganapathia Pillai, a retired High Court Judge, to enquire into the problems of agricultural labourers in east Tanjore and to recommend suitable measures to ameliorate their conditions. The Commission analysed the
problems of labourers and landowners by conducting interview. The Commission enquired 32 leading landowners and 18 labour leaders. Conferences were held at Mannargudi, Tiruvarur, Kumbakonam and Mayuram. The Commission enquired the different aspects of the problem and recommended for the fixation of fair wage rates and reduction of working hours to eight and seven respectively for men and women. The wages recommended by the Commission for different agricultural operations were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Rs</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ploughing without bullocks</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ploughing with bullocks</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Transplantation and weeding (women)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Levelling the land, trimming bun (men)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Plucking seedling (men)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Off-season maramathu work miscellaneous work (men)</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Off-season maramathu work miscellaneous work (women)</td>
<td>1.075</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Wages for all other works during cultivation season (men)</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Wages for all other works during cultivation season (women)</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The impact of Venmani incidents was that labourers got an immediate increase in their wages. As a secondary effect the agrastic labour movement in Tanjore got All India recognition.
The fair wages fixed after the Venmani incident were not raised periodically. On 17th Sept, 1987, Parliamentary Advisory Committee came to Madras to assess the condition of agricultural labourers. In a petition submitted to the Committee by the leaders of the Tamilnadu Agricultural Association and other similar unions, the awful condition of the labourers were highlighted and higher wages were demanded. After considering the demands of the labourers, the Central Government came with an announcement by which the minimum wage of the labourer was fixed at Rs.15 per day.

K.C Alexander, a pioneer in the study of agrarian situation in east Tanjore, opines that the agrarian unrest in east Tanjore had created tragedies like the Kilvenmani incident, and considerable difficulty for the labourers and farmers. However, it is also observed that through these struggles, the labourers were able to effect all-round improvement in their status. The manifold increase in wage rates that the labourers achieved in east Tanjore was a reflection of this change. Besides, the labourers were able to achieve fixation of the hours of work, restriction on the employment of immigrant labourers and abolition of many inhuman practices like whipping and being forced to drink cow dung solution. He concludes that eventhough agrarian protest may at first appears to be an unwelcome phenomenon, its consequences in the social structure has not been dysfunctional
End Notes:


3. Ibid., p.71.


11. Ammanjikki Vattam Olanoor Vattam
    Nirvalangulam Vattam Karakottai
    Nilaiyur Vattam Edapathimangalam (Inam)
    Piranavayal Vattam Perukasavayal (Chatram)
    Thinalayakadu Vattam Sellayan Kottai (Inam)
    Singavanam Zamin Sodavayal (Inam)

13. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

14. Ibid., p.3.


19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., pp. 18-19.


25. The Green Revolution – Problem and Philosophy of Development

Agricultural District Programme” V. Shanmugasundaram, ed., op. cit.,
p.20.

27. Ibid.


29. V. Shanmugasundarm, “The Theory and Practice of Intensive
Agricultural District Programme”, V. Shanmugasundaram, ed., op. cit.,
p.24.

An Analysis of the Impact of Producers Prices on Small Farmers”,
Devendra Thakur, ed., Technology Transfers for Rural Development,

31. Gilbert Etienne, Rural Development in Asia - Meeting with Peasant,

32. Ibid., pp. 125- 126.


34. Government of Tamilnadu, Policy Note on Agriculture 1984 – 85,

35. Ibid.


39. Ibid.


43. Ibid., p.11.

44. Francine R. Frankel, op. cit, p.92.

45. Ibid., p.96.

46. Ibid., p. 107.

47. Izzardars is a person who takes ryotwari land for torrent when there was ryots already on the whole or part of the holding.

49. Ibid., pp. III − VIII.

50. Ibid., pp. VII − XII.


58. A Marakal was equivalent to two Madras measures or 6.4 pounds.


60. Ibid., p.171.

61. Ibid.

63. Ibid., pp. 40-41.


66. Ibid., pp.461-462.


68. Dantwala as quoted by Parthasarathy in Amit Kumar Gupta, ed., op.cit., p.25.

69. Ibid.


71. K.S. Sonachalam, op. cit., p.73.

72. Ibid., p.82.

73. Ibid., p.82.


83. Ibid.

84. Vaimainthan, op.cit., p.159.


86. Fortnightly Report for the second half of Dec. 1946.p.2


88. Ibid., p.517.


92. Ibid.


95. Ibid., pp 122-123.


