CONCLUSION

A study of the subject, Agrarian Transformation, would reveal that agricultural improvement with the introduction of modern techniques in the art of agriculture is not an isolated problem but it is intertwined with many phases of the socio-economic change for which the planners of this country are trying to formulate new schemes. In fact, agriculture improvements are basic to all socio-economic changes.

In the region of Cauvery Basin, the average annual food production loss was estimated to be around 7.85 lakh tonnes of rice, mainly on account of area reduction after 1974. The colossal annual loss suffered by the region of Cauvery Basin in Tamil Nadu can well be understood. The reduction in the irrigated cropped area will be having its multiplier effect on the employment opportunities of agricultural labourers and their wages. Hence the urgency to settle the upper and lower riparian rights of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu at the earliest through a fresh agreement after the pattern of 1924 agreement. The Delta area of Thanjavur depends upon Cauvery which originates in Karnataka but Karnataka is not prepared to concede the riparian rights of the Thanjavur delta.

In short, there is positive correlation between agricultural transformation in the study area and settlement of dispute between the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu over the distribution of cauvery waters. Thus the first hypothesis is sustained by the findings of the study.

All the legislations on reform were proved to be ineffective because of the loopholes deliberately built into them or because of the unwillingness of the state executive and bureaucracy to implement them properly. However they gave enormous discretionary powers to the implementing authorities which they used in favour of the landlords. It introduced binami transactions in place of transparent transactions.
The relationship between the landlords and tenants was traditionally structured on the basis of certain accepted customs and practices. The landlord was obliged to protect the interests of tenants and the tenants were obliged to work for the landlords. In other words, there were reciprocal obligations between the landlords and tenants under the traditional social arrangements. But the spate of land legislations instead of putting this relationship on a modern footing of a contract society, triggered social tension in different villages, especially in the study area.

With the introduction of technology, the agricultural sector did achieve increased agricultural production. But this increase in agriculture production benefited landlords more than farm workers. This unequal distribution of the technology-induced advantages disturbed the agricultural labourers and the left parties exploited the emerging social tension. When the Pannaiyal Protection Act was passed, the landlords evicted the tenants just to escape the consequences of the above Act. Thus the positive action of the government did not have the desired effect on the agricultural population. In other words, the second hypothesis that “proposes to find out whether the peaceful relationship between the landlords and tenants was damaged by the spate of legislations on land reforms” is affirmed by the study.

The upper castes had better leadership, more influence and more resources. Court battles followed, which ended mainly in favour of the upper castes. One of the immediate results was that the minority landlords of the forward castes, mostly Brahmin landlords in Thanjavur district, began to sell their lands. They were afraid that they could not continue as absentee landlords or even as supervisory landlords. Many of them had their families in urban centres. Numerous marginal and small landholders from the Non Brahmin castes purchased their lands. A large amount of land transfer from Brahmin to Non Brahmin tenants and labouring classes, mostly the Kallars and Vanniars, thus took place and paved the way for social changes in rural settlements.
In 1960, changed circumstances favored the introduction of HYV seeds, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, mechanization, and replacement of wages in kind by wages in cash. Hybrid crops were introduced in the study area. The duration of the crops was shorter. The input requirements were higher (i.e) more fertilizers, more water, more pesticides and insecticides were required.

Agricultural operations, such as preparation of land, sowing and harvesting had to be completed within a very short time and the next crop immediately had to follow. Mechanisation was an inevitable byproduct of this changing crop mix. The time criticality increased with the introduction of second paddy crop and tractors came in a big way. They substituted animals both for ploughing and transporting. There was resistance to the introduction of machines in some parts of Thanjavur district since they reduced the demand for (male) labourers. But labourers soon realized that a second crop could not be raised unless the time critical operations were completed in a very short time. So they reconciled themselves to the introduction of tractors since the employment provided by the raising of the second crop was longer than what was replaced by mechanization. The tractors were used exclusively by big landlords in the beginning. Once the system of ‘hiring by the hour’ or ‘charging per acre’ was introduced, it became possible for small and marginal landowners also to use tractors. Motor pumps and submersible pumps or compressor pumps came with deep open wells and deep bore wells.

The benefits of the Green Revolution were concentrated in the hands of relatively a few cultivators and there was appreciable discontent among the agricultural labourers in most of the villages in India. Particularly in the study area, a survey was conducted by the Home Ministry, Government of India and it identified the widening economic disparity caused by the Green Revolution as one of the reasons for the Kizhvenmani tragedy in Thanjavur. The third hypothesis proposes to find out whether high yielding varieties and technology – aided improvements in agriculture improved the living conditions of the agricultural labourers. But this is not supported by the study.
The Government intervened regularly by fixing wage rates but the real income of rural labourers in many parts of the Delta changed little after Independence. The proposed research on Thanjavur district would like to establish the correlation between the social changes, technological advances and collective efforts to unionize agricultural labourers. The intervention of the government through Green Revolution is treated as the independent variable and the status of the farm labourers as the dependent variable.

In all the villages, the tasks performed by men and women labourers are kept different by cultural practices. Everywhere women received less payment as wages than men. Even when contracted wages were paid to a ‘pair’, the share of women viz-a-viz man was lower. Even militant trade unionism in East Thanjavur is not able to break this gender discrimination.

The CPI continued its struggles for the enhancement of wage rates and improvement of the conditions of the labourers and tenants. Eruption of violence, police firing, mass arrests of labourers and their leaders, were common phenomena during this period. It was under such circumstances that Mannargudi Agreement in 1944, Mayavaram Agreement in 1948, were forged between the representatives of the labourers and the farmers. Under this agreement, the labourers received a further increase in wage. In 1952 Pannaiyal Protection Act was passed by Madras Government to regulate the relationship between the labourers and the cultivators.

In 1961, Thanjavur witnessed a number of agitations organized by the CPI, demanding fixation of ceiling on landholding at 15 standard acres. Again in 1965-66, there was unrest in Thanjavur district when the labourers demanded higher wage rates. During the course of this agitation, about 4,000 persons were arrested. It was in the course of one such agitation at Kizhvenmani in the Nagapattinam taluk in December 1968 that 44 persons belonging to agricultural labourers were burnt to death. Following this incident, the Government constituted a one-man commission under Ganapatia Pillai (a retired High Court
Judge), to recommend suitable measures to ameliorate their conditions. Through these struggles the labourers were also able to effect all-round improvement in their status. Besides, the labourers were able to achieve fixation of the hours of work, restriction in the employment of immigrant labourers, abolition of many inhuman practices like whipping and making them drink cow-dung solution. The improvement in the status of the underdog has brought about significant changes in the social structure of the region. In short the hypothesis four, “The study proposes to find out whether the wage accords between mirasdars and tenants improved the relationship between cultivators, tenants and agricultural labourers.”is sustained and the hypothesis five “It also proposes to find out whether the formation of agricultural labour union benefited the farmers of the study area.” is also supported by the study.

A careful analysis of the estimation on irrigated area coverage in the Cauvery Basin by the CFFC (Cauvery Fact Finding Committee), the Irrigation Commission (1972) and by Dr. K.L. Rao Central Irrigation Minister, regardless of the magnitude of the absolute area coverage, clearly reveals that about 75-77% of the gross irrigated cropped area of the basin falls within the Cauvery basin in Tamil Nadu from 1947 to 1968, thus establishing the fact that Tamil Nadu Cauvery Basin has been the principal beneficiary of Cauvery waters from time immemorial.

As early as 1834, Arthur Cotton also suggested linking of state rivers. He even proposed linking of Ganga with Cauvery. But the British Government was not prepared to consider his proposal.

Mr. K.L. Rao, Central Minister for Irrigation, proposed the linking of Ganga with Cauvery as early as 1972. The proposal to link major rivers in India was based on the construction of canals to divert the flood waters from Brahmaputra to Ganga to southern rivers. There was only one stumbling block for the realization of this massive plan and that was the presence of Vindhya Mountains between the northern rivers and southern rivers. It was proposed to
overcome this hurdle by pumping water from northern rivers 1800 ft up in the Vindhyas and bringing them down at the southern side. The Central Government was dragging its feet over these proposals on the grounds that the electricity required for this project would be too high for execution.

Finally in 1982, National Irrigation Commission was created to examine various proposals for the past twenty-five years to link major rivers of India. Since this massive project required financial aid from foreign countries, it has been suggested that the rivers south of Vindhyas would be linked in the first phase before the all India project could be taken up.

The Supreme Court of India ordered the Central Government to execute the proposal suggested by the National Irrigation commission to link the major rivers of India. The central government also responded positively and assured the Supreme Court of India that action would be initiated. But even the limited idea of linking the southern rivers has not been executed thanks to the hurdles posed by states with perennial rivers. These river rich states are unwilling because they are afraid this project might adversely affect their own water resources. It is worth noting here that Kerala has limited arable land but it has water resources, richer than what Tamil Nadu is credited with. In fact, 1100 TMC of water drains into Arabian sea, without being used for agriculture every year. Inspite of this wastage, Kerala is not willing to accept the proposals to divert the west-flowing rivers east ward.

The study recommends that an efficient water management and the release of water for agriculture as per the tribunal will sustain the agricultural productivity of Thanjavur district. If rivers are interlinked in India, that would ensure the prosperity of India and solve the irrigation problems of South India including Cauvery Delta and also find solution for drinking water problem, electricity-scarcity etc. This not only enriches the agriculture sector but also holistic progress of mother India. The sustainability of our water supply into the new millennium can be achieved by finding solutions to the various problems.
traced above from the available manpower and knowledge. It will not be a difficult proposition to achieve the goal with people’s participation in planning, development, operation and management in the Cauvery delta.

The present study indicates that despite its violent nature, agrarian unrest has contributed to the enhancement of the status of the underdog and the emergence of egalitarian social relations. As such, there is need on the part of those in authority to view the activities of the agricultural labourers with understanding and sympathy, rather than treat them as challenges to the law and order machinery. It is further suggested that the distribution of waste lands and temple lands to the landless would further ease the social tension. Similarly more liberal distribution of loans by co-operative banks also would help easing the social tension in the study area.