Salient characteristics of Thanjavur district
CHAPTER II

SALIENT CHARACTERISTICS OF THANJAVUR DISTRICT

2.1. Introduction

Thanjavur is agriculturally the most advanced coastal district of Tamil Nadu. It is bound by the Coleroon River on the North, Bay of Bengal on the East, the Palk Strait on the South and Tiruchirapalli district on the West. The district extends over an area of 9735 sq.kms. of which a major part consists mainly of undulating plain bisected by the valley of Cauvery. There are no hills of any prominent height in the district. The even topography of the land throughout the district renders sub-division into natural regions rather difficult. However, marshy areas in the South-East consisting mainly of Vedaranyam, Salt Swamp and the Vallum table land in the mid-west can be considered as separate natural regions. The Southern portion lies about 50 feet above sea level has light soils, comprises the whole of Pattukkottai and Arantangi Taluks, the Southern portions of Thanjavur and Papanasam and Western part of Mannargudi Taluks.

2.2. Climate and rainfall

The district has a high mean temperature and a low degree of humidity. Even though the district is not subject to extremes of climate, the summer months are
hot and the temperature is 26°C. The South-West monsoon sets in the month of June and lasts till September with about 28 cms of rainfall. The district gets most of its rainfall from the North-East monsoon, i.e. from October to December. The normal rainfall is 117 cms as against state's normal rainfall of 95 cms.\(^1\) Taluks on the coast of Bay of Bengal get more rainfall than the inland tracts.

2.3. Population

Thanjavur district with a population of 38.41 lakhs as per 1971 census ranks fourth in population, accounting for 9.30 per cent of the state population. The population is distributed over 43 urban settlements and 2,034 rural settlements. Thanjavur ranks second in the density of population among the districts of Tamil Nadu excluding Madras city (1971 census). The high overall density may be due to its historically being a district with more assured production. Only 20.52 per cent of the total population live in urban areas as against 29.9 per cent for the state as a whole.

According to 1971 census, 33.40 per cent of the total population of the district constitute the working force.

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Table 2.1

Sectorwise Distribution of Workers in Thanjavur - 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number of workers</th>
<th>Percentage to total workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cultivators</td>
<td>374,324</td>
<td>29.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Agricultural labourers</td>
<td>541,919</td>
<td>42.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>25,209</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>341,355</td>
<td>26.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Season and Crop Report of Tamil Nadu, 1974-75, Government of Tamil Nadu, 1977
Page 47-49

Table 2.1 shows the number of agricultural workers in different occupations in the district as a whole according to 1971 census. Of the total number of workers, 29.18 per cent were cultivators, whereas 42.25 per cent were agricultural labourers. Thus, out of the total workers, as high as 71.43 per cent of the workers were dependent on agriculture, indicating the predominance of agriculture in the economy of Thanjavur district.

2.4. Soil

There are 4 types of soil in the district viz.,
(i) alluvial, (ii) black, (iii) red ferruginious and (iv) sandy. Alluvial soil is in the old delta.

Black soil is in the new delta area, red soil in the Pattukottai and Arantangi Taluks and sandy soils are in the coastal district.

2.5. Land use pattern

The land use break-up is given in Table 2.2.

It could be seen that 67.7 per cent of the geographical area of the district is cultivated. The percentage of geographical area under non-agricultural use is 18.0, under current fallows is 2.1 and under forest is 1.4. As compared to other districts of the state, the percentage of net sown area to total area is the highest in this district. Considering the low proportion of geographical area under cultivable waste and fallows, it may be inferred that net sown area in Thanjavur district has reached to a saturation point. There has not been a noticeable change in the percentage of non-cultivable area (under forest, barren and uncultivable land, permanent pastures and other grazing lands and other fallow lands) over a period of 19 years (1950-51 to 1978-79). The area sown more than once has increased from 15.60 per cent in 1959-60 to 26.80 per cent in 1974-75 and to 41.30 per cent in 1979-80.²

² Data taken from Season and Crop Reports of Tamil Nadu.
Table 2.2

**Land use pattern**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification of areas (hectares)</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Percentage to the total area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Total Geographical Area:</td>
<td>973,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) By professional survey</td>
<td>973,500</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) By village papers</td>
<td>821,247</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Forests</td>
<td>11,288</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Barren and uncultivable land</td>
<td>34,935</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Land put on to non-agricultural use</td>
<td>147,856</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cultivable waste</td>
<td>19,679</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Permanent pastures and other grazing lands</td>
<td>3,561</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Land under miscellaneous free crops and groves not included in the net sown area</td>
<td>18,390</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Current fallows</td>
<td>17,398</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Other fallow lands</td>
<td>12,479</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Net area sown</td>
<td>555,661</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Area sown more than once</td>
<td>339,424</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Cropping Intensity</td>
<td></td>
<td>109.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From *Season and Crop Report of Tamil Nadu (1978-79)*
*Government of Tamil Nadu (1981)*
2.6. Irrigation

The average rainfall in the district is not sufficient to grow two crops of paddy. Irrigation is, therefore, necessary to compensate the deficit of water for successful cultivation. Thanjavur gets irrigation mainly from canal. The water in canal totally comes from Cauvery river whose catchment areas are largely in Karnataka. The Kuruvai crops mainly depend on the rains of the south-west monsoon. The Mettur Dam across Cauvery in Tamil Nadu is for storing the flood water from Karnataka and distributing it equitably throughout the irrigation season. Samba and Thaladi crops get major portion of its needed water from the local rains. The local rainfall is not always a blessing. It may actually be a threat at times for large areas because of inundation, and also it may cause premature lodging of rice crop. For decades because of the non-availability of drainage facilities, draining of North-east monsoon waters from the fields has been a difficult task.

The percentage of area irrigated has been the highest (70.8%) in this district among the districts of Tamil Nadu and it has remained more or less, constant over the period of 30 years. On the other hand, the gross irrigated area as percentage of gross cropped area
has declined constantly from 81.3 per cent in 1950-51 to 78.7 per cent in 1960-61 and to 74 per cent in 1974-75. Of the total area irrigated, about 92 per cent gets water from canals and about 6 per cent from tanks and about 2 per cent from wells. Canal irrigation is now supplemented by well irrigation in increasing proportions.

Agriculture in Thanjavur district has been mainly dependent on the supply of water from the river and its tributaries. River Cauvery is the main irrigation source in Tamil Nadu and Cauvery Delta system is one of the most ancient of all irrigation systems in Thanjavur. The delta can be broadly divided into (a) the old Delta system and (b) the Cauvery-Mettur Project Area, otherwise known as New Delta.

The Cauvery and Vennar divide and subdivide into innumerable branches which form a net work of distributaries all over the delta. A vast and well planned

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5 The Cauvery Delta Irrigation System comprising of Grand Anaicut, the Upper Anaicut and the Cauvery Kudamurti regulators are responsible for the irrigation in Thanjavur.
network of irrigation channels stretching to 1676 miles (2698 Kms) has brought over 60 per cent of the lands under plough. Besides river canals, certain drainage canals also serve as irrigation sources.

2.7. Cropping pattern

The dominant position which paddy occupies could be seen from the often-quoted epithet for the district as "rice bowl" or the "granary" of Tamil Nadu. The districtwise analysis reveals that this district ranks first in Tamil Nadu as regards percentage of area under paddy to total area sown and the area under food crops. The percentage of area under non-food crops to total area sown is relatively lower in the district as compared to all other districts of the state (Table 2.3).

However, over a period of time (Table 2.3), the percentage of area under paddy declined from 80.6 in 1949-50 to about 72.0 in 1974-75 and to 66.8 in 1978-79. This is an indication of the declining importance of paddy and diversification of cropping pattern. Similar trend is noticeable in the case of total cereals also. It is noteworthy

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Table 2.3
Area under principal crops in the district
(As percentage to total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Paddy</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>71.9</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Other cereals</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Total cereals</td>
<td>83.8</td>
<td>81.1</td>
<td>77.6</td>
<td>73.1</td>
<td>67.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Pulses</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Other food crops</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Total food crops</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>96.3</td>
<td>84.4</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Total non-food crops</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Grand Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Season and Crop Reports of Tamil Nadu (1949-50 to 1978-79), Government of Tamil Nadu, Table IV.D.
that the percentage of area under pulses showed a considerable increase after 1969-70. This, in fact, led to a rise in the percentage of area under food crops after 1969-70. On the other hand, the area under non-food crops increased up to 1969-70 but showed a decline afterwards. The change in area under food crops and non-food crops suggest that the changes in these are not mutually exclusive i.e., in fact the changes in two of them are mutually interdependent in recent years, due to relative profitability of pulses vis-a-vis other crops. Paddy is the important crop in all the size groups in all the seasons i.e., Kuruvai, Samba and Thaladi. But area under paddy is relatively more in case of small farmers.

Short-term crops of paddy like ADT-27, Karuna, Kannagi and Karikalan are sown in June/July and harvested during September/October in Kuruvai season. For Samba, the year starts from August/September and varieties like IR-20, IR-8, Ponni and CO-25 are raised. In Kuruvai land, the medium and long-term duration crops are raised and harvested in Thaladi season i.e., from October to January/February. Summer paddy is raised during the months of January-February in a small area where well irrigation facilities are available.

Pulses are grown to a large extent in paddy fallows and the next important crops are cholam
and groundnut grown in the dry and semidry tract of the district by all the size groups. Sugarcane and chilly are other important crops. Apart from Coconut, Narcotic crops - tobacco and betalvine - are also grown in this district. Green manures like Kolinchi, Pillipesana, Dancha and Sispania are sown in rice fallows.

In the case of Paddy, the area under Samba paddy declined from 49 per cent in 1962-65 to 36 per cent in 1968-71. This decline has taken place mainly because of late supply of canal water in certain areas. In the case of Thanjavur, increase in area under double cropping particularly under pulses had taken place mostly in the canal irrigated area of the old delta in the East and South of River Cauvery. Again, area under double cropping increased mostly in the medium and large size holdings.7

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7 P.N. Soni - "Cropping Pattern and Cropping Intensity in various size classes of farmers in some IADP districts", Agriculture Situation in India, 29(7): 483, October 1974. The study is based on the Data contained in the Assessment Surveys conducted in IADP Districts. In this study, the cultivators with 2 hectares, 2 to 4 hectares and above 4 hectares were classified as small, medium and big respectively.
Apart from soil and topography, the important variables which affect the cropping pattern are irrigation, rainfall and prices of agriculture commodities. The distribution of rainfall has been fairly normal except for the droughts in 1968-69 and 1974-75. With the implementation of Cauvery delta modernisation scheme changes have taken place in timeliness and availability of canal irrigation. Assuming contribution of price changes to be not very substantial, it appears that the changes in the cropping pattern observed were, by and large, attributable to better exploitation of irrigation and water resources.  

8 P.N. Soni, Ibid p.484
2.8. Cropping Intensity

Table 2.4

Intensity of Cropping in Different Size Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.78</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: P.N. Soni - "Cropping Pattern and Cropping Intensity in various size classes of farmers in some IADP Districts", Agricultural Situation in India, October 1974, P.485

* Farm Management Study Data
** Study Survey Data

From Table 2.4 it is clear that cropping intensity has increased by 18 percentage points in 10 years. This increase could be attributed to adoption of short duration paddy varieties and hence better use of canal water.

2.9. System of cultivation

Closely associated with the problem of
cropping is the system of cultivation. System of cultivation in Thanjavur as in other regions had been evolved over centuries to get the best out of the given factors like topography, soil, water logging, availability of irrigation water etc. Rice is the major crop in Thanjavur District. As elsewhere in the world, rice culture is a battle of wits with water. A kaleidoscopic view will bring out the following cultivating patterns in Thanjavur district.

I. Wherever water supply is nearly assured for about 8 months and there is no waterlogging, two crops of paddy are raised.

II. Wherever water supply is available for five to six months, single crop of paddy is raised.

III. Wherever the level of land is low but not deep enough and also there is no facility to raise another crop after the first harvest, a mixed crop of two paddy varieties is raised, known as "udu" crop cultivation. The udu cultivation is practised in the low lying areas of delta with a mixture of kuruval and ottadan strain in the ratio of 3:1. The kuruval is a 3 to 3½ months crop which is harvested first, while ottadan is of
7 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ months crop which is harvested in February. This system of cultivation of paddy is not only input saving, but has also an element of risk aversion. However, the area under udu pattern is slowly decreasing.

IV. Wherever the level of the land is very low and deep without facility to raise a second crop and to adopt udu pattern, the land is kept fallow and the next crop is raised in a Navarai season known as Kullankkar cultivation. In the low lying areas of sukali, after raising kuruvai in its season, the land is left fallow for a couple of months or more as it is fully submerged without any outlet to drain it off during the North-east monsoon season. Thereafter, a kullankkar variety is raised in the early Navarai season, i.e. from December onwards.

V. Wherever water supply is normal at the start but accumulates to drown the crop deep "water paddy" is raised. Thalainayar and Tiruthuraipoondi regions have a different problem of the same pattern. Here water is received late and with the outbreak of North-east monsoon, the area is flooded and water stagnates even upto 6 feet depth. In such areas, deep water varieties
like 'Tiruthuraipoondikal' and 'Kattuvanam' are raised and these grow tall in deep water with earheads floating over the water.

VI. Near the seashore, where the land is saline, saline resistant varieties are raised.

VII. In a portion of the district with only rainfed irrigation tanks, semidry cultivation is in vogue. In parts of Pattukkottai division, particularly Avudayarkoil and portion of Arantangi, there are rainfed tanks. Here direct seeded rice crop is raised and on receipt of water in tanks, the crop is converted into an irrigated crop.

VIII. In other areas with neither canals nor rainfed tanks, other crops like groundnut, pulses and millets are sown. Dry tracts with no irrigation facility depending entirely on rains, are mostly in Thanjavur and Pattukkottai divisions. Here and there wells are sunk and garden land pattern of cultivation is being pursued. But such tracts are not significant in this district.

IX. Normally for a period of four months no crop is cultivated as this is a period when Mettur Dam is closed. Some farmers have filter points or digout well with picotta to raise small patches of groundnut and vegetables.
2.10. Productive Organisation

In Thanjavur District, there are distinct modes of productive organisations. There has been consistent change in all of them. The traditional systems are: (1) Waram, (2) the Kuttahai and (3) the 'Pannaiyal' system. 'Waram' and 'Kuttahai' are types of lease. Under Waram the tenant pays a stipulated share of the produce to the owner and under 'Kuttahai', he pays a fixed amount to the owner. The Waram system seems to be on the decline whereas the Kuttahai system is still the most popular form of tenancy. Under the Pannaiyal system, the labourer, mostly with his wife, works for the landlord and in turn he is given food, clothing and shelter. Apart from this, he is also provided with 'manyam', that is, a small piece of land for personal cultivation and agricultural inputs like bullock power, manure, seed and plough etc. are provided at free of cost. With the passing and enforcement of the "Thanjavur Pannaiyal Act of 1952", which spelt in detail the wage rate, terms and conditions for

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the services of pannaiyals, he is reduced to the status of casual labourer. The system of pannaiyal is slowly on the decline.\textsuperscript{10} Besides this, there is one more system of production which is unique to this district known as "mattueru" in New Delta, i.e. the exchange of labour between families.\textsuperscript{11} All different modes are not separated into watertight compartments, they could be discriminated only in terms of broad differences of mix.

The examination of the different systems of productive organisation necessitates the study of consideration of 'social categories' such as landlords, owner-cultivators, tenants, share croppers and agricultural labourers. Most of the lands in Thanjavur come under 'Ryotwari' while there are a few under 'Inam' also. Temples and

\textsuperscript{10} C. Muthiah, "The Agricultural Labour Problem in Thanjavur and the new agricultural strategy", \textit{Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics}, 25(3) : 18, July-September 1970

\textsuperscript{11} Andre Beteile -"Studies in Agrarian Social Structure" - Delhi, Oxford University Press P.154 - 1974
mutts and some rich 'Mirasdars' own large extents of land.  

In the case of Thanjavur District, it is said that about one third of the cultivators are pure tenants. But Ladejinsky estimated that 50 per cent or more of the farmers are tenants either partially or fully and most of them operate on oral leases. To this, Government of Tamil Nadu gave an official reply that only 17 per cent of all cultivated land is under tenancy and even with the assumption that all leased-out lands, are wet lands, they form only 30 per cent of all registered wet lands; oral leases are not more than half the total area under tenancy and "the statement of Mr. Ladejinsky that most tenancies are held on oral leases is apparently impressionistic and not true facts".

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14 Wolf Ladejinsky, "A Study of Tenurial Conditions in package districts (Delhi, 1965), p.9, quoted in Ibid, p.151

15 Implementation of Land Reforms - A Review by the Land Reforms Implementation Committee of the National Development Council - Planning Commission, New Delhi, P.206 - August 1966
In 1970-71, only 12.39 per cent of all cultivated land was under tenancy. Out of the total holdings of 5.48 lakhs, 0.76 lakh holdings were tenanted holdings, of which a major portion of the holdings belong to 1-2 hectare size group. The area as well as number of holdings are more in the fixed produce category.16

Tanjore tenants and Pannaiyal Protection Act of 1952, the Madras Cultivating Tenants Protection Act of 1955, the Madras Cultivating Tenants (Payment of Fair Rent) Act of 1956 and the Madras Public Trust Act (Regulation of Administration of Agricultural lands) of 1961 and the Madras Land Reforms (Fixation of Ceiling on Land) Act of 1961 are the legislations that have been passed by the Government of Tamil Nadu for the protection of the tenants. The Madras Cultivating Tenants Protection Act of 1955 and Fair Rent Act of 1956 fixed the rent as between 40 per cent to 33 per cent of the normal gross produce. But rent in

16 Census of Land Holdings
certain cases is more than 40 per cent and the reason might be that "the landlord may be meeting the expenditure on "Kudimaramath".\footnote{Implementation of Land Reforms, op. cit. P.7}

Closely associated with the passing of the acts is the implementation and the after-effect of implementation. The farm workers' unions are of the view that "the ambiguities in the definition of cultivating tenant have, however, made possible the control of the land by people engaged in other professions and those who are living elsewhere and have no direct relationship with the land."\footnote{Implementation of Land Reforms, op. cit. P.207} In suggesting a remedy they "believe that a re-definition of this term would greatly help to eliminate these discrepancies and ensure that the land remains in the hands of the tiller."\footnote{"Tenancy : Record and Reality", Hindu, 27.1.1978, P.8.} Again they opine that the "Land Ceiling Act has been evaded by the creation of Public Trust Act......."\footnote{Ibid}
In the resumption cases and eviction, it is notable that 17 out of 36 applications of land holders have been granted eviction of 6.28 acres. As regards continuation of lease-holds, none of the 23 applications was allowed and there was no restoration of leasehold cases on the ground that owner is not cultivating. It implies that either the landlords were powerful and rich enough to silence them, or the tenants really had good relations with the landlord. The figures relating to tenants and labour uprising does not seem to lend support to good relations between landlord and tenants.

From 1964 to 1966, the number of applications filed by landlords for eviction of tenants in Thanjavur District reached a peak of 8641 and the number evicted was 127 and extent of acres involved was 2548.68 acres. Eviction by landlords has been more in the eastern parts of old delta than in the western parts. Regarding applications by landlords for resumption of land for personal cultivation,

22 K.S. Sonachalan, Ibid, p.41
23 Ibid, p.48
out of 420 applicants, 20 were allowed resumption of 166.66 acres. The tenants who were allowed to continue were 63 (52 in 1964, 8 in 1965 and 3 in 1966).

Applications for restoration of leased holds by tenants were maximum in Thanjavur District (1964-1966). Out of which, 18 tenants were allowed restoration involving 59.64 acres. It is exceptional that 3286 tenants were allowed to file applications for the payment of fair rent in Thanjavur District. Out of which, 49 per cent got favourable decree.

It is felt by many that extension of concessions regarding payment of rent and debt has thrown the farm economy out of gear and "the successive expropriatory measures only led to aggravating the already strained relationship between the farmer and the tenant". The impact and effect of land reforms measures in Thanjavur is described as: "High cost of cultivation, poor returns and 'unimaginative land reforms' had robbed agriculture of the charm it had. Nor had land reforms achieved the aim of social justice by increasing production and consolidating holdings."

\[24\text{ Ibid, p.52} \]
\[25\text{ Ibid, p.61} \]
\[26\text{ Hindu, op. cit. p.8} \]
\[27\text{ Ibid, p.8} \]
2.11. Agricultural labour

In any study of 'social categories', agricultural labour attracts attention. As a percentage of total workers, agricultural labourers form 42.25 per cent (1971 census). Out of which, male workers form 30.10 per cent and female workers constitute 12.15 per cent. Further, landless labour constitute 50 per cent of total agricultural labour whereas it is 30 per cent for the State. Despite this high percentage of agricultural labour, shortage is felt in the district. "For decades, labour was being imported from the adjoining districts to carry out the agricultural operations, notably harvesting and transplanting in time. This phenomenon of employing labourer from far off places is quite peculiar to the district."

For every 100 acres, the number of labourers are only 75 in Thanjavur whereas it is 134 in the adjoining district of Tiruchirappalli.

Lower participation rate of labour from the cultivating families is the noteworthy characteristic in the district. This naturally aggravates the shortage of labour during peak seasons. What is more striking is that this labour problem has both communal as well as political touch in the district."

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28 C. Muthiah, op.cit. pp.16-17
29 Communist Party, Congress Party and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam have been taking active interest in the problems of agricultural labour in the district.
As Andre Beteille observes, "the close relationship between caste and class is nowhere more evident than in Thanjavur District." Moreover, the agricultural labour movement in this district is no less stronger than the trade union movement in the industry. The uprisings have been so severe that they warranted separate legislation for this district. Agricultural labourers are very strongly organised in Thanjavur District and it has the most chequered history. The first organisation of agricultural labourers in this district dates back to 1939. Subsequently, Tenants' Associations (Vyavasaya Sangam) and Agricultural Labourers' Unions (Vyavasaya Thozilalar Sangam) were formed. It is also interesting to note that along with labourers' Associations, the organisation of land owners is also strong. The agitations of the agricultural labourers compelled the Government to pass the Pannaiyal Protection Act of 1952 to create security of work to Pannaiyals; Mannargudi agreement.

30 A. Beteille, op.cit., p.150
31 K.C. Alexander, Changing Labourer-Cultivator Relation in South India—Changing Agrarian relations in India, papers and proceedings of seminar held at the NICO, Hyderabad, April 5-6, p.27, 1974
of 1967 and Tiruvarur agreement of 1968 paved the way for increased wage rate. The Ganapati Pillai Commission's recommendations led to the passing of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Labourers' Fair Wages Act of 1969, and this act was enforced in 6 taluks of east Thanjavur. According to 1972 Thanjavur agreement, the wage rate was fixed at Rs.3.70 per day for men and Rs.2.25 per day for women labourer.  

According to the agreement arrived at the end of July 1974, the male workers will receive 6 litres of paddy and Rs.2.75 cash every day or Rs.6 per day and the female workers will receive 6 litres of paddy and Rs.1.50 per day or Rs.4 per day. It was also agreed that 6 litres paddy will be paid as wages for every 54 litres of paddy. In this way, agricultural labourers are protected from the decline in the value of real wages in the context of increasing prices. The practice of giving a

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32 Ibid
proportion of the produce harvested provides an opportunity to the labourers for a share in the fruits of improved technology.\textsuperscript{34}

With the understanding of the general agricultural background of the district, an attempt is made in the next chapter to analyse the performance of agriculture over a period of time.

\textsuperscript{34} C. Muthiah, op.cit. p.19