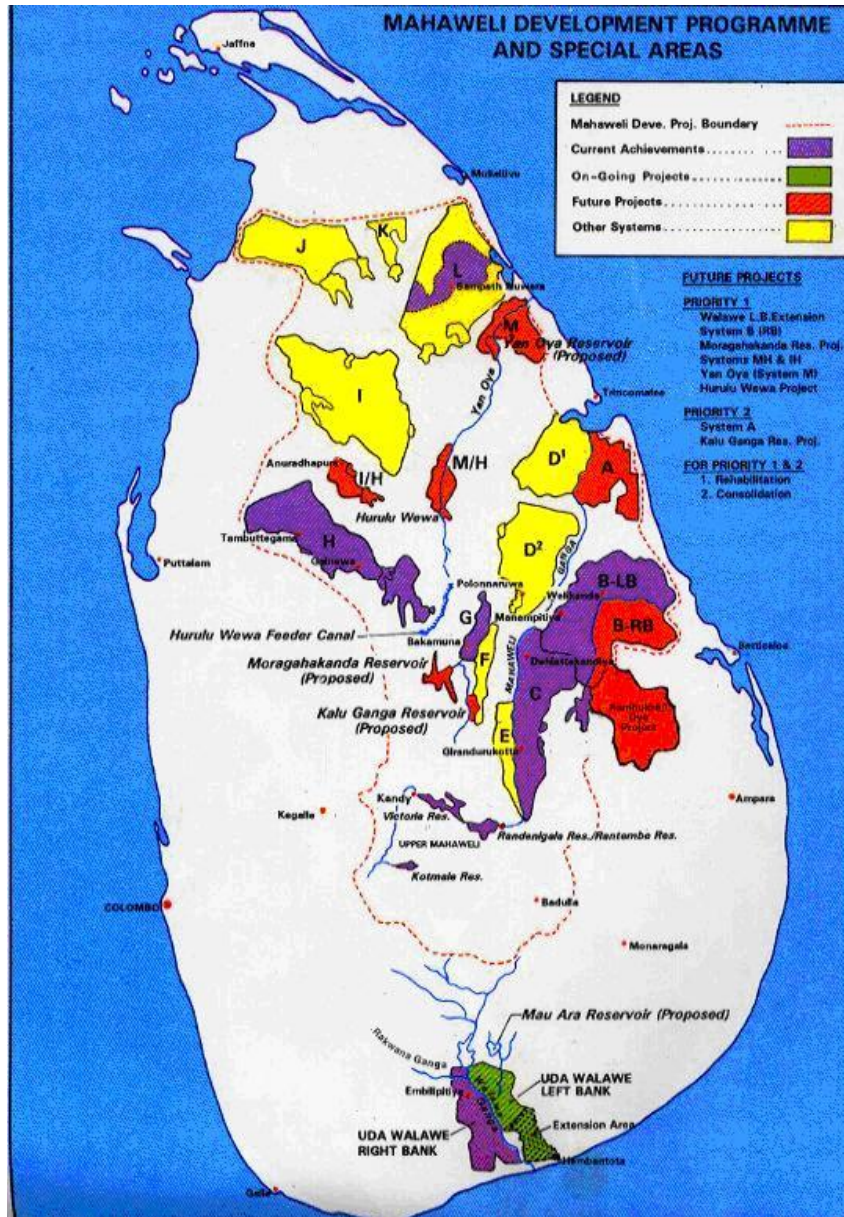


Mahaweli Multi Purpose Development Project



- Diversion of Mahaweli river (Sri Lanka's longest) for multipurpose uses
 - Irrigation of agricultural fields
 - Hydro-power generation
 - Development of inland fisheries
 - Tourism
 - Nature conservation

- Five large reservoirs were constructed (viz. Kotmale, Victoria, Randenigala, Rantambe and Maduruoya)



- Vast tracts of forested lands were cleared for creation of agricultural fields (mainly paddy fields) and for village relocation sites and new township establishment.
- Village relocation sites those lying in the catchments of new reservoirs were declared as wildlife protected areas (e.g. Victoria Randenigal Sancturay, Maduruoya National Park)
- Some of the most important natural wetland systems (Villus) were brought under the protection as protected areas (e.g. Somawathiya NP, Flood Plains NP)



Fig. Newly created paddy fields



Fig: Villus in Floodplains NP

Wetlands under the project:

- New wetlands were created
 - Reservoirs (fringing areas of reservoirs)
 - Canal systems
 - Canal backwaters
 - New paddy fields
- Continuous supply of water for village tank systems made available
- Due to increased area and the diversity of wetlands in the project command area biodiversity was increased
- Space for human activities such as fishing and recreation were made newly available
- At present, in the Mahaweli development area, wetlands play a major part of the economy
- Increased biodiversity plays a significant role in balancing the natural conditions in the Mahaweli command area