Tamil Nadu is the Southern most State in the Indian sub-continent. In the Indian geographical area Tamil Nadu covers about 1,30,000 sq. kms, representing nearly four per cent of the total Indian geographical area. The topography of Tamil Nadu consists broadly of the coastal plains of the East, with uplands and hills as one proceeds Westward, with the plains accounting for a little more than half the area of the state. The Western and Eastern Ghats constitute hills, in the Western and Northern portions of the state respectively. The famous ranges of the Western Ghats (Sahyadri Hills) run Southwards along the whole length of the Western border of Tamil Nadu until these terminate at the Cape of Comer in which is the Southernmost tip of the state. The Eastern Ghats originate in Orissa passing through Andhra Pradesh State, enter Tamil Nadu and run across the districts of North Arcot, Salem and Coimbatore and finally join the Western Ghats to form the world famous the Nilgiris plateau.

3.1. History

The subject matter (census report, 1961-1994) of the present work becomes more intelligible only after the historical sketch of the Plateau is reviewed. The British acquired the Nilgiris in 1799 A.D. as a result of their
success in the prolonged Mysore wars (J.W.Breeks, 1873). This led to the discovery of salubrious climate, patches of evergreen forests, rolling downs, pastures and perennial sources of clear water flowing through the innumerable streams of the Nilgiri hills. The Europeans colonized the hills for nearly one and a half century. The Nilgiris of the twentieth century is quite different from that of the eighteenth century and before, as ocean of changes and quick developments in various fields in the hills took place (W.Francis, 1908) The Nilgiris was one of the Europeans’ best choices to stay for rest, recreation, and recuperation. They discovered to their surprise a small ‘Patch of England’ within the tropical region of South Asia. During their long sojourn in the Nilgiris from 1820 to 1947, the hills came under their direct influence.

The historians are of the opinion that the Plateau had no place in the ancient period of South Indian history. Their conclusion is that the first reference of the name ‘Nilgiri’ occurred in the record of (Vishnuvardhana 1104-1141 A.D), a Hoysala king. The name Neelagiri was mentioned in “Silappathigaram” which is a well known Tamil Epic of 3rd century A.D. Its author Elango describes that Chenkuttuvan, a Chera king of post-Sangam period, led an expedition through the Neelagiris and the tribes presented gifts to him at his camp.

Etymologically, the word ‘Nilgiris’ means Blue Mountains. The name ‘Neelagiri’ was doubtless suggested by those living in the plains below the Plateau by the blue haze that envelops the range as is common with most distant
hills of considerable evergreen vegetation. Attributing the violent blossom of strobian-theses to the blue haze leading to the name ‘Neelagiri’ may be discounted on the fact that the plants are not so prevalent now-a-days and they blossom at long intervals, i.e., once in 12 years. But the mountains are still looking bluish from the plains.

3.2. LOCATION

The Nilgiris is situated in the North Western corner of Tamil Nadu in Southern India. They are bounded in the North by the State of Karnataka and in the West and South West by Kerala.

The present administrative district, the Nilgiris, is a plateau of lofty mountains, roughly 55 kms long, 32 kms in width (exactly 2549.38 sq. kms) and 6,500 ft above the sea level. On the globe, the hills lie between 11º 8’ and 11º 37’ north latitudes, and 76º27’ and 77º4’ east longitudes. The district has a geographical area of 2,543 sq. kms, constituting above 1.95 per cent of the area of the State of Tamil Nadu.

The abrupt rise of the Nilgiris from the surrounding areas is very striking. Doddabetta (2637 mts) is the second highest peak in India, South of Himalayas. Udhagamandalam (Ootacamund), the most popular hill station in Southern India, is situated in broad undulating valley at the foot of Doddabetta.
3.2.1. Topography

The Nilgiris can be divided into four distinct regions. There are:

1. The Nilgiri plateau situated in the central part,

2. The Sigur plateau lying at the foot hills on the Northern side,

3. The Nilgiri-Wynad lying on the Western side of the above two plateau, and

4. The outer slopes facing the plains.

3.3. Administrative Set Up

For the purpose of administration, the Nilgiris district has been divided into six taluks namely, Udhagamandalam, Coonoor, Manjur, Kotagiri, Gudalur and Pandalur with the district headquarters at Udhagamandalam. For local administration, the district has two municipalities, four panchayat unions, and fifty-two revenue villages.

3.4. Temperature

During the Northeast monsoon period, the average temperature ranges between 20° and 28° on the plain and plateau surrounding the Nilgiris. During winter, i.e., November to middle February, the steep fall will bring the temperature to between 0°C and 7°C, and seldom it falls below 0°C and may run to
Hence, there is a vast fluctuation and variation in temperature due to extra tropical thermic season.

3.5. GEOLOGY, ROCK AND SOIL

Geologically, the Nilgiris belongs to the archaean continental land mass of the Indian Peninsula, composed of pre-cambian, mainly metamorphic rocks (gnessies, charnockites and crystalline schists). The soil types commonly found in these hills can roughly be classified into four categories:

i) The black soil which is rich loam,

ii) The brown soil which is clayey loam,

iii) The yellow soil which is a stiff clay, and

iv) The red soil.

The All India Soil and Land Use Survey, carried out by the Central Soil Conservation Board, include the Nilgiri District in the red and laterite soil regions II and classify the soil of the plateau as Ootacamund soil series (B.D.Sharma, 1977).

3.6. CLIMATE

The higher regions of the Nilgiris have a tropical montane climate (warm temperature), the low temperature being mainly due to the high altitude. The
effect of the monsoonic weather by both South West and North East monsoon is very heavy. The Nilgiri-Wynad plateau is warmer than the Nilgiri plateau is warmer than the Nilgiri plateau.

3.7. RAINFALL

From the meteorological point of view, considering upper-air dynamics and surface winds, weather patterns including rainfall from seasons can be distinguished as follows:

i) The North-East monsoon (from December to March),

ii) The first inter-monsoon (April and May),

iii) The South-West monsoon (from June to September), and

iv) The second inter-monsoon period (October and November).

3.8. RIVERS

The Nilgiri plateau is divided by several small perennial streams which join to form six major river systems, viz., Pykara river, Kundha river, Billithada halla, Coonoor river, Sigur river and Kedar halla. The Sigur Plateau is drained by the Moyar river, Benna halla, Bidar halla and Kukkam halla (K. Vivekananthan, P. Daniel and R.K. Premnath, 1997).
3.9. **GENERAL PATTERN OF THE VEGETATION**

The vegetation can be broadly divided into four principal groups corresponding to the topographic features.

i) The shoal-grassland vegetation of the high plateau of the Nilgiris,

ii) The moist deciduous and dry deciduous and dry tract forests of the Nilgiri-Wynad regions,

iii) The open sandal bearing scrub of Sigur Plateau, and

iv) The forests of the outer slopes showing marked altitudinal zonation from thorny scrub to evergreen forests.

3.10. **FORESTS**

The Nilgiri tract was the first choice of the constitution of a biosphere reserve in India in 1956. The total area of the bio-sphere reserve is around 5670 sq. kms of which 2,020 sq. kms is the core zone, 2290 sq. kms restoration zone which include substantial undisturbed areas of natural vegetation types, viz, dry scrub, dry and moist deciduous, semi-evergreen and wet evergreen forests, evergreen shoals, grassy downs, and swamps. The original climate formation of this hill tract known as ‘Sholas’ are some of the non-renewable natural resources that occur in this area. These have been developed in course of millions of years of evolution (Birch, De Bung, 1838).
3.11. LAND UTILISATION PATTERN

In Nilgiris District, there was a sweeping change in the cropping pattern after the Hill Area Development Programme (HADP) was introduced. The main emphasis of this programme was to increase the perennial crops to reduce the soil erosion problem and to increase the vegetation cover for the economic development. The Department of Horticulture is preparing viable schemes to introduce and encourage floriculture, fruit bearing perennial crops, mushroom cultivation, etc. Nearly 64.33 per cent and 35.72 per cent area were cultivated for food and non-food crops respectively.

3.11.1. Tea

Tea was grown extensively throughout the district. Of the total cultivated area, tea was grown in nearly 68.56 per cent of the area. As per the recent data available, tea was grown in over 47,923 hectares and the production was around 66,000 tones during the year 1996-97. The survey conducted during 1997 by the UPASI revealed that though the small tea growers number more than 20,000, their holdings was less 40 per cent and the big estates accounted for the balance.

3.11.2. Coffee

Of the total area, coffee was grown in nearly 7,452 hectares and occupied the second position next only to tea in the total area cultivated. 50 per cent of the coffee was grown in Gudalur block. Coffee Board is the sole pooling center and marketing agency for coffee. The climatic condition of the Gudalur area is
ideally suited for coffee cultivation. The Coffee Board was encouraging replanting and new planting to replace the unyielding old plantations. NABARD is actively engaged in developing coffee plantation. Introduced Water Augmentation Scheme in coffee plantation areas in 1999, which is very beneficial to registered small coffee growers.

3.1.1.3. Paddy

In Gudalur Taluk, paddy was grown in a modest scale. The total area covered by paddy was around 2,000 hectares. In Nilgiris District, paddy was grown only in Gudalur block. Other than this, ginger, cardamom, garlic, rubber, chinchona and pepper were also grown in a limited scale in Gudalur block. Eucalyptus and geranium were grown substantially in Udhagamandalam block.

3.1.1.4. Other Vegetable Crops

Potato occupies the third position next to tea and coffee in respect of the total area cultivated. Nearly three-fourths of the total production of potato was from Udhagamandalam Taluk. Though potato occupied the primary position among vegetable crops, the area cultivated was declining steadily due to various factors. Cabbage, carrot, beans, beetroot, radish, and cauliflower are the other vegetables grown largely in this district. Farmers cultivated these vegetables as alternative crops to potato. Fruits are also grown in this district on a limited scale. The area under fruit crops was 612 hectares (M.T. Male, Rev, 1863) as per the
recent survey. Oranges, jackfruit, plums, peaches, bananas, pean apples and mangoes were the fruits grown in a limited scale in Nilgiris district.

3.11.5. Mushroom Cultivation

Mushroom cultivation as an activity has been picking up in the Nilgiris in recent years. The climatic conditions of the Nilgiris were most congenial for cultivation of button mushrooms. Ponds India Ltd., has its export oriented mushroom unit in Yellanahalli. There are many small growers also, cultivating button mushroom in the Nilgiris.

3.12. DAIRYING

Dairy development gained much importance after the introduction of operation flood. Dairying was the main subsidiary activity to most of the small farmers to earn additional income. The activity also assumed importance in view of the fact that about 87 per cent of the farmers belong to the category of small and marginal farmers with a land holding of less than two hectares. The Nilgiris is suitable for maintaining high quality cow due to its cool climate.

3.13. FISHERIES

The cold climate of the Nilgiris district resulted in emergence of entirely different fisheries when compared to plains. The sources of water are mainly streams and lakes. The temperature of water ranges between 6°C and 20°C and is considered as cold. The present attraction of the Nilgiris district in fisheries
sector is 'Trout fishing'. The hatchery at Avalanche, which was constructed during 1907, is used for hatching eyed ova of trout every year to replace the stock of trout in the streams. The production of fish per annum was 1,644 tones during 1997-98.

3.14. DEMOGRAPHY

According to 1991 census, the total population of the Nilgiris district was 7,04,827 forming about 1.5 per cent of the total population of Tamil Nadu. Thirty-three per cent of the population consisted of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Average annual growth rate of population of this district was 1.89 per cent as against 2.01 per cent in India and 1.62 per cent in Tamil Nadu. Density of population of this district was 272, whereas it was 206 in India and 389 in Tamil Nadu. The number of females per thousand males in this district was 986 while it was 933 in India and 997 in Tamil Nadu (Gazetteer of India, 1995).

3.14.1. People

The Nilgiri hills are shared mainly by Badagas, the non-tribal community, Toda, Kota, Kurumba, Paniya and Irula the Scheduled Tribe. Among the natives, Badagas are the leading singular non-tribal community in number, contributing about 50 per cent to the existing population. They have quickly transformed themselves from semi-pastoral status into producers of commercial crops such as tea, potato and other vegetables introduced by the
Britishers. The Government of Tamil Nadu classifies them as Backward Class community. The Todas are believed to have enjoyed undisputed rights of the plateau from time immemorial. The Kotas are known as artisans and musicians who until recently were making wood and clay utensil and silver jewels. The Kurumbas were sorcerers and jungle dwellers, who lived here in good number at one time. Now they are progressive tribes (Hockings, Paul, Bibliography, 1996). They have joined the mainstream and are leading a civilized life. The Paniyas, who are very meager in number, have never shown interest in civilized life. The Irulas (or the dark ones) from the Tamil word Irul meaning ‘darkness’ live on the lowest slopes and forests extending from the base of the hills. They await recognition by the other tribes of the Nilgiris.

3.14.2. Education

The Europeans who settled in this district gave the natives the educational facilities. In the course of European interaction with the native communities, the Europeans made them literate communities (C.F.Ling, 1891). Hence, the level of literacy is 69 per cent, which is quiet higher than the Tamil Nadu’s average of 40 per cent and India’s 48 per cent. There are 412 schools in this district. It includes group tribal residential schools, elementary schools, secondary and higher secondary schools. About 833 teachers are working in this district. The teacher-student ratio in this district comes to 1:49. Nearly three-fourth of the primary and secondary school students are covered by the nutritious
meal scheme. There are eight libraries functioning in this district. Under the mass
communication programme nearly 328 hamlets are provided with radios and
television (Government of Tamilnadu G.O., 1998).

3.15. OCCUPATIONAL PATTERN

The total workforce of this district was 2.88 lakhs of which a majority is
engaged in plantation sector, forestry and other agriculture sectors. The main
workforce engaged in trading and commerce was from Coonoor and
Udhagamandalam with Coonoor having a lion's share with 60 per cent of the
activities. The Tamil Nadu Tea Plantation Corporation not only helped increase
production, but also gave employment to locals, on a large scale. Hence, both
male and female work forces were employed in the chain of co-operative tea
factories situated throughout the district. The workforce was engaged both in
agriculture and industry. During the monsoon season the labourers were engaged
in tea industry and the same labourers were engaged in tea plantations also
during other seasons.

3.16. INDUSTRY

The main industry of the Nilgiri district was processing of tea. There are
about 122 tea factories spread throughout the district. The coffee produced in the
district was cured either at Mettupalayam or Coimbatore. As a vast area was
under eucalyptus plantation, the manufacturing of the oil was pursued as a
cottage industry. The important factory in the public sector was Hindustan Photo
Films Manufacturing Company Ltd., located at Indunagar. Other are Food Specialities Ltd., Protein Products of India Ltd., Needle Industries (India) Pvt.Ltd., etc., (P.Gover, 1899).

3.17. TRANSPORT

The Nilgiris district has a good network of roads running in all directions connecting various centres of the district. Numerous ghat roads were opened for traffic. The Coonoor ghat road which connected Coonoor and Mettupalayam formed the main communication line from the plains to Udhagamandalam. The Siriyur Ghat road started from northern crest of the plateau and passed through Masinagudi, Theppakkadu and joined the Gudalur-Mysore road. Access to Kerala State on the west was from Gudalur by a State highway passing through Cherambadi. As per the data available, the total length of roads is 1,625 kms. Out of which 1,071 kms are surfaced and 554 kms are un-surfaced (Collector of Nilgiris, 1999)

3.18. TRADE, COMMERCE AND MARKETING

The chief articles of trade in the district are tea, coffee, potato, vegetables, fruits, timber, and eucalyptus oil, garlic and pepper. The products grown here are marketed both at Udhagamandalam and Mettupalayam. Under the governance of Municipalities and Panchayat Unions, a daily vegetable market
is functioning to cater to the requirements of the people. Recently, an 'Uzhavar Sandhai' (farmer's market) was started by the Government of Tamil Nadu in Udhagamandalam during the month of April 2000. In this market, the farmers themselves sell their agricultural produce to consumers directly. Because of this market facility, the farmers are getting a reasonable price for their product.

The tribals sold the minor forest products in the village LAMP (Large Agricultural Multi-purpose Society) and if the tribals have a heavy quantity of products, they have to go to the district marketing agency and the regulated market at Ooty and Gudalur, through regular bus services or other vehicles.

3.19. ELECTRIFICATION

It was gratifying to note that all village panchayats are electrified. People are critical about the maintenance of street lights even though a sum of Rs.1,42,458 was billed for this purpose during the year 2000 (Tamilnadu Electricity Board Record, 1999).

3.20. HOSPITAL

There are seven Government hospitals in this district and eighteen primary health centres located in various Panchyat Unions. Besides, there are eleven maternity centres and thirteen rural dispensaries under the direct control of Department of Health and Family Planning, Government of Tamil Nadu. The birth rate was 1.8 per cent in this district whereas the death rate was 1.7 per cent
in 1997. The health centre formulated an effective propaganda regarding family planning. Besides, their performance in the public health administration, especially preventive and protection care against major epidemic, was quite satisfactory (Report on Department 1997).

The first veterinary medical centre was inaugurated in 1961 and covered the entire district. The annual expenditure came to Rs.2,22,443. All the health centres are adequately staffed but there is a need for further improvement in the quality of services rendered to the villages.

The description of the features of the Nilgiris district shows that this district has unique features. By virtue of it being the residence of the Europeans, Indian princess and the Nilgiris possesses valuable research materials. These research materials helped for the multi-disciplinary research work in this district.
### Table: 3.1. Land Use Pattern of the Nilgiri Hills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Area (in acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Total geographical area</td>
<td>254380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Forest</td>
<td>143351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Barren and Uncultivable land</td>
<td>2915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Land put to non-agriculture use</td>
<td>8370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Cultivable waste</td>
<td>3054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Permanent pastures and other grazing land</td>
<td>4648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Land under miscellaneous (trees, crops and Groves)</td>
<td>2224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Current fallow lands</td>
<td>11665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Other fallow lands</td>
<td>6630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Net area sown</td>
<td>71525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Area sown</td>
<td>1730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Total Cropped area</td>
<td>71525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Cropping efficiency</td>
<td>100 per cent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Note:* 2.45 acres are equal to one hectare
Table: 3.2. Occupational Pattern (1991)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Cultivators</td>
<td>95,489</td>
<td>15,310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>38,657</td>
<td>34,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Livestock And Other Allied Activities</td>
<td>1,213,25</td>
<td>42,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Household Industries</td>
<td>48,418</td>
<td>32,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Other Than House Hold Industry</td>
<td>30,128</td>
<td>40,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>50,428</td>
<td>26,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Transport And Storage</td>
<td>9,428</td>
<td>3,728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Trade And Commerce</td>
<td>38,268</td>
<td>48,218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>68,428</td>
<td>28,262</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Profile of the Four Primitive Tribes Selected for Study

3.21. History and Origin of the Toda Tribe in Nilgiris

The Todas are purely pastoral tribe, who lives on the produce of their herds of buffaloes. For centuries the pastoral Toda have lived on the high Blue Mountains or the Nilgiri Hills in South India. Todas shared these mountains with other Scheduled Tribes like, Kota, Kurumba, Irula, Paniya and Kattu Nayakans.
3.21.1. The Origin

There are many stories about the origin of the Toda. The Todas believe that they are descendants of Pandavas. They have the concept of Panch (five) Pandavas in the form of hills. Themselves regard them by their neighbor, and also, as 'Toras'. The name Toda has possibly been derived from the word 'tur', the most sacred tree of Todas. The Badaga name for it is tode, and to them these are the Todas who worship tode tree.

3.21.2. Language

The Nilgiri Hills are situated at the point of junction of three of the chief linguistic districts of Southern India. In the country on the South and East, Tamil is spoken; on the West, the language is Malayalam, and the people of Mysore to the North speak chiefly Canaries. The Todas live at this meeting-place of three languages, but owing to their isolated position their language is not a blend of these, but has very definite and distinctive characters of its own, as might, indeed, be expected form the character of the people. The Todas borrowed many words from the Baduga language.

Previous writers have differed in their views on the special affinities of the Toda language. No one has now, I think, any doubt that the language is Dravidian. Bernhard Schmid (1837) who wrote in 1837, appears to me to have known more of the true Toda language than anyone who has written since, and he ascribed two-thirds of the Toda vocabulary to Tamil and was unable to trace
the remaining third to any other language. Caldwell (1875) believed the language of the Todas to be most closely allied to Tamil forms, but he has included in his vocabulary words which have probably been borrowed forms, but he has included in his vocabulary words which have probably been borrowed from the Badagas.

3.21.3. Dress and Ornaments

Distinct dress wearing and hairstyles are the hallmark of the Toda. Both sexes grow their hair long, women dress their hair in ringlets. The men grow busy beards, today it is more common for young and even middle aged men to have short hair and a clean shave face, but the older men and women are continuing the old traditional hairstyles. Women traditionally adorn themselves with bracelets of silver, copper they wear silver or rolled gold chain. The tattooing is another adornment for women, the chin, chest alone the breasts, back arms, backs of the hands, legs and feet were all tattooed in patterns of rings and dots. Toda men are not tattooed, but it used to be the practice for boys to receive a small burn on each wrist when they were about twelve years old.

3.21.4. Food Habits

The Todas are pure vegetarians; the staple food is rice and millets. They consume pulses, roots and tubers, and the vegetables that are available in the local markets and which are grown by them, same times they purchase the vegetables that are all available in the local market. They consume non-alcoholic
drinks such as coffee, tea and milk. Men smoke cigarettes and beedies they also consume wine, brandy, arrack and toddy, which are available from the nearby towns.

3.21.5. Economic Activities

Traditionally the Todas are pastoral community. Every family is having buffaloes. Toda sell milk to the Nilgiri Co-operative Milk Society or to the tea and coffee shops directly. The Todas who are living near to the town of Ooty are not having buffaloes. Economically the Toda depended on their hereditary Badaga friends, for the Badagas as chief cultivators and traders were pivotal in the economic life of the Nilgiri people. Cloth, salt, jaggery and other commodities from the plains apparently obtained from the Badaga traders (Hockings, Paul.E. 1965). The Badaga would give their buffaloes into the care of his Toda partner who would take the animals, along with his own, to the dry-season pastures in the west of the hills (Rivers 1906). Though the earliest writer on Todas estimated they had as many as 10,000 buffaloes in 1829, after 83 years (Yeatts, 1932) reported 1,619 buffaloes. Nambar (1965: 93) Todas owned a total of 2,186 buffaloes and in 1975 they owned 2,650 buffaloes DAH (1975) Department of Animal Husbandry.

Majority of the Toda changed their occupation from pastoralism to agriculture (Nambar, 1965) Due to the implementation of forest rules, majority of the Todas lost their cropping fields. The Government has given five acres of
land for each Toda family. The Toda welfare committee, Tribal welfare Department is also giving subsidies and encouragement to take agriculture as their main occupation. The data shows that almost all the families are having agricultural land. Few of them have given their land on lease to other communities for cultivation while majority of them are cultivating themselves. The Toda Welfare Committee planned to introduce agriculture to the Toda to supplement their pastoral economy (Nambiar, 1965), for this purpose the Collector in 1927 sanctioned Rs 5,000/- to enable Toda to purchase seed, farming implements, fertilizer etc, with the government and they grow vegetables such as cabbage, potato, radish, cauliflower, beans etc. They sell their produce in the market at Ooty. Some times if the produce is more the business people come and purchase the production in the field itself.

3.21.5.1 Occupational Change

The Toda Welfare Committee planned to introduce agriculture to the Toda to supplement their pastoral economy (Nambiar, 1965), for this purpose the government had sanctioned loans to purchase seed, farming implements, fertilizer etc. Toda remained mostly unenthusiastic about the cultivators calling (Nambiar 1965, 118) Many sidestepped the government’s plans for them by secretly leasing their lands and selling their implements, seeds and fertilizers (Emeneau, 1937). Yetts the author of 1931, 1938 Census report mentions that “It is an uphill task to get the Toda to take any occupation but that of his forefathers. The Toda does not like work in the sense of anything required long and already
The grazing of cattle permits many hours of sleep or meditation in sholas or on the banks of a pleasant stream. The Todas are pastoralists who know tradition of agriculture and the continuous back-breaking labour it demands and the attempt to make agriculturists of them while their own pastoral occupation was still in full working order could not with any confidence have been expected to succeed” (1938). Presently, few Toda tribes were working in the government sectors, and the have tie up with the government agencies through which they receive loans for shawl embroidery works and sell them through these agencies. They were also engaged in small-scale farming and produce vegetables and sell them in the near by markets (T S Naidu, 1991).

3.22. HISTORY AND ORIGIN OF IRULA TRIBES IN NILGIRIS

3.22.1. Origin and Life Style

Luiz (1962) says that the name Irular has originated from their own description about the skin colour that is darkness. Irulas are the darkest-skinned of the Nilgiri tribes. Thurston (1975) raises a doubt whether the name Irula refers to the darkness or blackness (irul) or whether in reference to the jungle in which they live. Luiz (1962) narrates that the Irular claim that they are descendants of a Rishi (holyman) who lived after the Yuga Pralayam (great deluge). Other being states that a goddess created the people out of her skate, to who could collect honey without bring study by bees. The Irula themselves
revealed that one male and one female came out of a tree which known as "Irul" and so they were called as Irulas.

3.22.2. Physical Features

The complexion of the Irula tribe of Nilgiri is invariably dark, they are generally medium in stature. They are thin and small in body build. They have prominent cheek bones and short noses. Generally, the Irulas look healthy.

3.22.3. Languages

According to (Thurston 1975) the language of the Irulas is a corrupt form of Tamil. Luiz (1962) mention that Irulas language is a dialect of Tamil with many carerese words and phrases. They don’t have any script for their language. Now a day few Irulas have their knowledge of English, because of they were educated up to High School level.

3.22.4. Housing

The Irula huts are mostly isolated and houses will be of few numbers, which constitute a village. Mostly, they construct the house in the interior forest, adjoin to their land or working spot. The villages was protected against nocturnal feline and other feral marauders by a rude fence, and consisted of rows of single storied huts, with verandah in front, made of split bamboo and thatched, detached huts, an aburdavee of fowl – houses, and cucurbitaceous plants twining up rough stages. Surrounding the villages were a dense grove of plantain trees, castor oil
bushes, and cattle pen: Now-a-days in, few villages the Government had constructed group house, with brick walls and roof (Thurston E. 1975).

3.22.5. Occupational Status

The Government had granted the Irula with free lands for cultivation; from these lands, they should rise any crop but they don’t have any right to sell the gifted land to others. In this land, they rise, Jack fruit, tea, coffee and other crops. Apart from this Irulas collect minor forest produce like honey, tree-wax, verbadan bark (Ventilago Modraspatana) avaram bark (Cassia antriculata) deer’s horns, tamarind, gum, soap nut etc. These products are sell in the market and earn money. Now a day both Irula men and women work as agricultural collies in hear by farms and estate.

3.22.6. Food Habits

The staple food of Irula is rice, which is supplemented by millets. The millet flour is looked with water form a sort of porridge. Along with the rice, they eat various types of wild edible, green leaves, fruits, especially Jackfruit, tubers. They will also eat sheep, goat, fowls, deer, wild boars and fishes, but they will not eat the flesh of buffaloes or cattle. Both men and women chew betel leaf and arcanuts with tobacco.
3.22.7. Religious Festival and Belief

Irulas have strong belief in the existence of soul and hence they observe death pollution and worship the spirits of their deceased ancestors. To appear the evil spirit of the deceased an doctors, they perform oblations. The Irulas worship the Kannimars, and offer animal scarifies to these goddess. They are worshippers of Vishnu under the name of Rangaswami, at their own rude shrines. The Irula of Nilgiris also worship the well-known goddess of smallpox, Mariamma at Kallampalla temple of thatched building, containing a stone for which they offer sheep as sacrifice. The faithfulness among the flocks and hands, a wild dance by the Irula.

3.23. History and Origin of Kota Tribes in Nilgiris

3.23.1. Origin and Life Style

Kota is a Dravidian tribe inhabiting in the mountainous district of the Nilgiris in Tamilnadu. The name Kota and its meaning have become controversial, according to (Thurston, 1975) feels that the derivation of the term “Kota” is as clearly indicated, from the Gauda-Dravidian word ‘Ko’(ku) mountain, and the Kotas belong to the Gaudia brach”.

3.23.2. Physical Features

According to Basu and Gupta, (1962) described that Kota as short to medium in stature, dolichocephalie head with leptoprosop to mesoprosop face,
mesorrhine nose, flat wavy to broad wavy hair, slight to imperceptible brown ridges, shallow to medium nasel depression and medium occipital protrusion.

3.23.3. Languages

The Kota language belongs to the South Dravidian family. The south Dravidian languages are Tamil, Malayalam, Kodagu, Kota, Toda, Kannada and Thelugu. According Cald well, (Director, 1998) the Kota language was "an old and very rude dialect of Kannada". The Kota language has only dialect but not script.

3.23.4. Housing

The houses of the Kotas have a unique linear pattern with two to three localities called "Keri" with two or three streets, which form the integral part of the village. A particular lineage or clan group but no specific names for the lineage occupy each ‘Keri’ but each ‘Keri’ had common names as “Kilker”, “Naduker”, “Pibberker”, “Aker”, “Koreker” or “Gager”.

The Kota houses called ‘pai’ was traditionally thatched huts, with mud and brick walls, but presently it was constructed as a modern pucca houses within the frame work, of the traditional physical settlement structure.

3.23.5. Occupational Structure

The main occupation of the Kota is agriculture, but now a days the Kotas depend for their maintenance on different occupations, many of their practice the
cultivation, a few are still continuing their traditional occupations such as blacksmith, pottery and carpentry. All the hill living people agree that the Kotas are excellent artisans, whose services as smiths, carpenters, and potters are indispensable to other hill tribes. As agriculturist the Kotas raise the crops like potatoes, carrot etc.

3.23.6. Food Habits

The Kotas are non-vegetarians and eats the carrion. They have been described as a very carnivorous race, who “have a great craving for flesh, and will devour animal food of every kind. Without any squeamish scruples as to how the animal cause by its death. The creases of bullock which has died of diseases, or the reurains of a deer half devoured by a tiger, are equally acceptable to him” (Thurston. E, 1975).

But presently they go for non-vegetarian food with their vegetable and pulses, which they cultivate from their field and purchase from nearby market. The main staple food is rice and millet. The also collect available roots and tubers from the forest. Mostly, they will not sell their forest collections, they themselves consume for their own.
3.23.7. Religious Functions and Beliefs

The Kota gathers together in an auspicious day with any single aim to celebration called the festival. The common festivals of Kota tribe are Nambi, Varshaw, Harvest, Sowingi Aynor Amonor Festivals etc.,

The Nambi festival is celebrated for the purification of the souls of the souls one partified they safe guard the society without any harm. In this festival they collect the bones of the deceased body in the preceding years, will be burnt and disposed in the river by offering prayer and poojas.

3.23.7.1. Showing Festival

The seed sowing festival is celebrated in the month of February to March. For which the poojari abstains from wheat and have vegetable food and observe fasting without pollution for worship the gods and sow the seeds of grains like ragi, samai etc.

3.24. History and Origin of Paniya Tribe in Nilgiris

3.24.1. Origin and Life Style

The Paniyas are dark skinned tribe, short in stature, with broad noses, and curly or wavy hair, inhabiting the Wynad of Kerala and Gudalur talks of Nilgiri district in Tamil Nadu. A common belief, based on their general appearance prevails among the European planting community that the Paniyas are of African origin, and descended from ancestors who were wrecked on the
Malabar Coast. (Thurston E, 1975). The Europeans communicated that the Kapiri (Africa or the cape) is also sometimes suggested as the Paniyas original habitat.

3.24.2. Physical Features

The Paniyas are dark-skinned, short in stature, round faced; with small, broad noses with good physique. Mostly their hair is short, curly wavy they won't groom their hair. The hair of female Paniyas will not grow more to their shoulder level. The men wear brass, steel and copper rings on their fingers and brass rings in their ears. The women, in life manner, wear finger rings and in addition, bangles on the wrist and have the lobes of the ears widely dilated, and plugged with cadjan (palm leaf) rolls. In some the nostril is pierced, and plugged with wood. The women wear Mundu, (white cloth) covering from the chest level to the knees and a red or black cloth of lower a breath of 6” x 3” inches were tied round their hip, while there go outside they cover a white cloth round the chest and shoulder. The women are naturally of a shy disposition, and they usually to run away and hide at the sight of any stangers. They will not speak much to the stangers. The men wear a white cloth in their ip upto above the above the knees. During the rainy season the hold the umbrella (like rain coat), which is made up of palm leaf.
3.24.3. Languages

The Paniya language is a debased Malayam patois spoken in a curious nasal sing song, difficult to imitate; but most of the Paniyas employed on estates can also converse in Kanarese. The Paniyas who live in Nilgiri also speak corrupt Tamil.

3.24.4. Housing

The Paniya settle down happily on estates, living in a settlement consisting of rows of huts and detached huts, single or double storred, built of bamboo and thatched. The walls are erected with bamboos, which is covered with mud and chalk-coal powder (or Battery). Mostly, the Paniya houses are mostly constructed nearer to their work spot ie., the space provided by the land lords in the farm. Presently, the Government of Tamilnadu had constructed and donated houses, under group houses scheme, which was constructed with cement concrete roof and the wall, erected with bricks. (The Paniya houses have a small room with a verandah in front).

3.24.5. Occupational Structure

The word Paniya means labourer, and they believe that their original occupation was agriculture. Most of the Paniyas in Nilgiri were engaged in working on coffee estates and also as agricultural labourers they cultivate only rice and ragi for their own cultivation. Since, their livelihood is depend upon the forest, the women and children go for digging up jungle roots, or gathering pot-
herbs for food, and also for firewood collections in the forest. In and around their settlement, the Paniyas of Nilgiri also grows the pepper creepers from which they earn a little during the season.

3.24.6. Food Habits

The main staple food of Paniyas is rice and ragi they use to take rice gruel and vegetables. They also eat the roots and tubers, tender stem of bamboos and mushrooms that are collected from the forest. They also eat non-vegetarian foods that are hunted in the forest. They use to catch fish by various methods in the land streams and ponds. They also eat land crabs and have the belief that prevents the boldness and gray hairs. Both the men and women use to chew betel leaf and arcanuts with tobacco. The men use to smoke cheroot (tobacco). Both men and women were addicted to alcohol consumption.

3.24.7. Religious Functions and beliefs

The Paniyas have very crude ideas of religion believing in devils of all sorts and sizes, and professing to worship the Hindu divinities, they reverence especially the god of the jungles, “Kad Bhagavadi”, or a deity called “Kuli” (a god of neither sex. Some Paniya are believed to be gifted with the power of changing themselves into animals. To carrying out the holistic ceremonies, they have a kind of priest called ‘Nolambukaran’ who takes the chief parts. During the month of “Magaram” (January – February) they celebrate the harvest festival.
No ceremony takes place in celebration of the birth of children or at the time of pregnancy. One of the old women of the village acts as midwife. The Paniya women breast-feed their children up to 4 years. They name their children after completing one year. They do not celebrate puberty ceremony. When a couple was betrothed the bridegroom has to take a bundle of firewood to the house of the finance every day for six months. The Paniya marriage ceremony is very simple and a Paniya 'Chemmi' conducts this. The tali (wed lock) made of beads is tied around the neck of the bride by the female relations of the bridegroom. Divorce, remarriage and widow remarriage is permitted.

The dead bodies are buried and the mourning ceremonies are celebrated seven days after the death. During the month of magaram the mourners have to cook and eat vegetarian food in a pandal set apart from the village, which brings the period of mourning to a close.