CHAPTER III
PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA AND THE TEA INDUSTRY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In the present chapter it is attempted to provide a brief review on the history of tea, the profile of the study area and the tea institutions that contribute to the performance of tea plantation. In Section I the historical evolution of tea is discussed. In Section II the profile of the study area namely, The Nilgiris district is discussed. In Section III, the various major institutions that support the plantation of tea and the tea industry are discussed.

SECTION I

3.1 HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF TEA

3.1.1 ORIGIN OF TEA

Tea, the broad-leaved tree crop, is believed to have originated from South-East Asia and the original home is an indefinite area. It may be the Tibetan Plateau including Sze-Chuan, Yu-nan, Sain, North-East India or China. Tea was known to China even before B.C. 2000 and was first used as a medicine during forth century, and later as a beverage by the end of the sixth century onwards. The Europeans came to know about tea in the sixteenth century.

a) Nomenclature of tea

The word 'tea' came from the Chinese local Amoy dialect word. The tea plant was first described as 'Thea sinensis' in the first volume of the 'Species Planlarum' by Linnaeus in the year 1773. In the second edition of the book Linnaeus abandoned the name 'Thea sinensis' and described two varieties: one with six petals as 'Thea bohea' and the other with nine petals as 'Thea viridis'. But later, these names also were abandoned and tea was named as 'Camellia thea' Link'. A uniformity in
nomenclature has now been accepted internationally and tea has been ultimately
named botanically as 'Camellia sinensis'.\textsuperscript{1,2,3} and \textsuperscript{4}

\subsection*{b) China}

Tea is believed to have originated in China. Tea was known to the Chinese as early as B.C. 2737. Tea was first used in China, as a medicine, during the fourth century A.D., and by the end of the sixth century onwards it began to be used as a beverage.\textsuperscript{5} Tea became widely known in China during the Tang dynasty (A.D. 618 - A.D. 906), an era that marked the highest point of Buddhism in that country. Buddhist priests were long reputed to be the large growers of tea, as distinct from small farmers in China. In the year A.D. 780, the first authentic account of tea was written. This famous book, Cha Ching (tea book) written by Lo-Yu, describes about the preparation of the leaf and manufacture. In that same year the Chinese government introduced a tax on the produce.\textsuperscript{6,7,8}

A regular trade in tea was permitted during the Sung dynasty (A.D. 960 - A.D. 1127) by the government across its border to Mongolia. Almost at the same

\begin{thebibliography}{8}
\bibitem{1} Chaudhuri, M.R., \textit{Tea Industry in India}, India, Economic and Geographic Studies, Oxford Book and Stationary Company, Calcutta, 1918.
\bibitem{2} Kirtikar, K.R., Basu, B.D and An., \textit{Indian Medicinal Plants}, Volume I, Published by Lalit Mohan Basu, Leader Road, Allahabad, India, 1981
\bibitem{6} Ibid.
\bibitem{8} Pandey, RP, \textit{Economic Botany}, S. Chand and Company (Private) Limited, Ram Nagar, New Delhi, 1988
\end{thebibliography}
time the first tea was exported to Tibet. Until 1887 China was the largest supplier of tea in the World.  

**c) Japan**

The Buddhist priests were also credited with the introduction of tea in Japan. Chanoyu, the tea cult of the country, was originally a monastic custom introduced by Japanese Buddhists who had gone to China for study, according to Yasunosuke Fukukita, author of a treatise on the subject. The earliest record of tea drinking in Japan goes back to A.D. 729, when the Emperor invited one hundred Buddhist monks to his palace to take tea.  

**d) Europe**

Tea was not known to the Europeans till the Sixteenth Century. With the end of the Sixteenth Century their trades with Eastern countries were flourished and so they became aware about tea. The British became familiar with tea in A.D. 1598 and Portuguese in A.D. 1600. It was the Dutch, who gave publicity to tea as a beverage in Europe. Dutch trade introduced tea to Europe in A.D. 1610. Russians by 1618 and French people in 1648. With the middle of the seventeenth century Americans also tasted tea. The East European countries, who mainly used coffee became aware about tea only after AD. 1650.  

**e) England**

In London tea was first served to the public in 1657, at a coffee house, Gangways Coffee House in Exchange Alley in the city. Tea was very expensive until

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10 Sarkar, Bidyut, *Tea in India*, Consultative Committee of Plantation Association, Netaji Subhash Road, Calcutta, 1984

the mid nineteenth century. All early teapots were very small and were sent from China with the tea. Teapots were not made in England until about 1790. As tea became cheaper, teapots became larger and tea became more a meal than a ritual12.

f) International Tea Trade

From 1689 onwards the English East India Company commenced importing tea directly from China. By the mid 1750s tea houses and tea gardens were appearing in and around London13. Until 1833, East India Company's ships monopolised the China tea trade. Company's ships, known as 'East India Men', took six months to make the long and often dangerous voyage from China to London. By 1860s a much faster type of sailing ship replaced the former strongly built merchantmen - the tea clipper. The tea clippers, on their outward passage to China, carried manufactured goods from Britain to ports such as Shanghai and Hongkong.14.

"With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the sailing ships, which still had to sail around the Cape of Good Hope, were doomed These were replaced by the new steamers which, by travelling through the canal, could do the passage in as little as 44 days - just half the time taken by the tea clippers. Another incident during this time is that American shippers competed for carrying the tea and built fast sailing ships (tea clippers) to deliver the goods more quickly".15

Until 1880's, China supplied most of the tea drunk in the world, but her share in the European market had been falling for fifty years and trade relations were

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disturbed. The discovery of a similar tea plant growing wild in the remote jungles of North-East India was to lead to a pioneering enterprise of great magnitude in the history of world crop cultivation - Empire grown tea. The year 1887 was the turning point, when for the first time, Britain imported more tea from India and Ceylon than she did from China. Since the methods of cultivation on small plots of land had remained unchanged for centuries in China, they could not compete with the new plantation way of growing tea that was to be started in British India. The table 3.1 shows the rise in imports of Indian and Ceylon tea and the progressive fall in the consumption of China tea.

**g) Sri Lanka**

Sri Lanka started its plantation industry in 1825. The expansion of tea planting industry in Sri Lanka did not start until the 1870's. Until then planters had been growing coffee, but leaf rust fungus (*Hemilia vastatrix*) for which there was no known cure, soon caused the industry to collapse. Individual planters then turned to tea. By 1895 they had planted more than 1, 20,000 hectares. In the early years of the present century large public companies were set up in the island for growing tea. 16.

**h) Other Countries**

In Java, tea planting was started slightly later than in India. Until 1860 it was government monopoly but was not profitable. Assam-type tea was introduced in 1878. They built a successful export industry, but it suffered a severe setback during and after the second world war. In East Africa, Malawi was the first country who started growing tea in 1891 and the others followed are, Kenya in 1921 to 1925, Tanzania and Uganda in the early 1930's. Russia also started growing tea but China

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continued the supply of brisk tea to Russia, which she started in early seventeenth
century. Tea drinkers worldwide found the new Indian and Ceylon teas much to their
liking with the result that by the year 1900 China's exports of tea had dropped
catastrophically\(^8\).

3.1.2 TEA AGREEMENT

3.1.2.1 INTERNATIONAL TEA AGREEMENT 1933

"The International Tea Agreement was signed in February 1933. This
agreement had been planned and worked out by British and Dutch tea producing
interests and was ratified and implemented by their respective governments. Binding
regulations were made not to extend cultivation areas and to regulate tea exports from
India and Ceylon and the Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia). The 1933 International
Tea Agreement was one of the first International Commodity Agreements in the
world and probably the only one that worked excellently\(^9\)

3.1.2.2 INTERNATIONAL TEA COMMITTEE

The International Tea Committee (ITC) was formed in 1933 to administer
die agreement and collect statistical data from producing and consuming countries
so as to make recommendations in respect of quotas. The ITC is an independent
organisation representing tea worldwide. Until 1978 ITC was funded by producing
countries and thereafter on an equal basis by most of the principal
producing/exporting and consuming/importing countries.

The Public Auction system of tea started in United Kingdom (UK) and the
first tea sale was held in Mincing Lane in 1834. Indian teas came under the hammer
for the first time in 1839 in London at India House with the East India Company as


the vendor. Thereafter, public auction of tea gained wider acceptance and more and more auction centres came into being. The following is the chronological order of the establishment of the principal tea auction centres of the world; Calcutta in 1861, Colombo in 1883, Chittagong in 1949, Mombasa in 1969, Limbe in 1970, Jakarta in 1972, Singapore in 1981. The Cochin auction centre was established in 1947, followed by Coonoor in 1963, Amritsar in 1964, Guahatti in 1970, Siliguri in 1976 and Coimbatore in 1980\(^{19}\) and \(^{20}\).

On 3\(^{rd}\) September 1939 when World War II broke out, all stocks of tea in the UK were taken over by the UK government including tea afloat and tea shipped to Holland or landed in the UK after Germany invaded Holland. The London tea auctions were cancelled on 5\(^{th}\) September 1939 and tea was rationed in the UK in July 1940 at the rate of two ounce per head per week. The first auction in London after the War was held in April 1951. The interruption due to the war had lasted twelve years\(^{21}\).

**3.1.2.3 DISCOVERY AND GROWTH OF TEA IN INDIA**

The event which marked the birth of the Indian tea industry was the discovery by Major Bruce in 1823, of the indigenous tea plants in Assam. Major Robert Bruce made friendship with a Singpho (a tribal community) Chief known as Bessagaum and obtained indigenous plants and seeds in 1823. The exact location was at a place near Sadiya in north east Assam, adjacent to Burma. In the following year Robert Bruce showed the wild tea plants to his brother Charles Alexander

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\(^{19}\) Tea Board and UPASI, *Souvenir*, International Tea Convention, Organised by Tea Board, India and UPASI, Southern India, Coonoor, 6th to 7th September, Cochin, India, 1999


Bruce. Some of these plants were sent down to the Botanical Gardens, Calcutta, where upon close examination they were pronounced to be of the same family, but not the same species from which the Chinese manufactured tea. But this discovery went unrecognised and no official action was taken at that time\textsuperscript{22} and \textsuperscript{23}.

Then in 1832, Lieutenant Chariton of the Assam Light Infantry at Sadiya, found similar tea plants growing in the jungle close to his garrison. He also sent some seeds and leaf samples of this \textit{Camellia} to the Botanical Gardens, Calcutta.

East India Company lost its monopoly of tea trade by the year 1833. When parliament abolished the company's monopoly with China in 1833 it was ready to take some positive action with regard to replacing that trade in some way. In January of 1834, Lord William Bentinck proposed to the Council of the East India Company, the setting up of a Tea Committee to investigate and make recommendations to the most suitable areas in which to grow tea. The Tea Committee decided to send their secretary G.J. Gordon to China in order to acquire tea seeds as well as tea makers and those familiar with the cultivation of the tea plant. Gordon left Calcutta in June 1834 on the sailing ship 'Water Witch'.\textsuperscript{24}

The Tea Committee also decided to prepare suitable sites at chosen places in India where the imported China plant would flourish. This is with the idea that, if successful, these experimental 'tea land' could later be handed over to private enterprise for future development. To this effect, the Government secured the services of Charles Bruce, and he was appointed as 'superintendent of tea culture' in 1835. The

\textsuperscript{22} Sarkar, Bidyut, \textit{Tea in India}, Consultative Committee of Plantation Association, Netaji Subash Road, Calcutta, 1984

\textsuperscript{23} Regi, D.V., \textit{Report on an enquiry into conditions of labour in plantation in India}, Labour Investigation Committee, Government of India. 1946.

cultivation of tea in China was centuries old and it was also a large and flourishing industry; its secrets had been jealously guarded by the Chinese people. For the Indian Government it was a bold undertaking to enter into competitions with that country\textsuperscript{25}.

The committee \textsuperscript{26} was able to inform the Government, that the so-called tea plant found near Sadiya was indigenous and was the true tea, \textit{Camellia} of commerce, only after Gordon left to China for procuring tea seeds. The seeds brought by Gordon in 1835, were sent to the Botanical Gardens, Culcutta for germination. From this original consignment of 80,000 China seeds, the resultant 42,000 young plants were allocated to three main areas: 20,000 seedlings to the hill districts in Kumaon in North India; 2,000 to the hill districts of South India and the remaining 20,000 to Upper Assam on the North East Frontier.

Among the seedlings of China tea planted in different hill districts of North India, only those planted at Ghurwal and Sirmoor were met with high degree of success. Places like Ranchi, Dehradun and Kangra valley never developed the tea plants on a large scale equivalent to the hills around Darjeeling. In South India, nearly all the plants sent to Nilgiri Hills died but those put out at experimental farm near Ootacamund fared best. Seedlings planted in Wayanad were also successfully established, but tea was commercially planted in this region only after 1853. It was planted alongside coffee and was only in the late 1890's large acreages of tea were opened in Wayanad\textsuperscript{27}.


Indigenous plants of Assam and the China plants were planted in North-East India on a trial basis. Dr. Wallich, assistant surgeon and botanist, Dr. McClelland, a geologist and Dr. William Griffith, a botanist were deputed by the tea committee for investigating the wild tea plants grew in the Upper Assam in the year 1835. They decided to plant China tea plants next to a plot of Assam indigenous tea plants, which were collected from the surrounding jungle by Charles Brace, the superintendent of tea culture.

It was found that the Assam indigenous plants thrived well than the sick China type. But the China plants were very prolific seed-bears and it caused rapid spreading of the plants. In the mean time Gordon did a second visit to China in the year 1836 to secure more tea makers.

Bruce was looking for tracts of wild tea plants, and many of the wild tea tracts were converted into cultivated tracts by cutting down the jungle. After three months drying out, it was fired. A year later, after the ordeal by fire, the tea burst forth with renewed vigour and the plants were pruned down to spring up to form a sturdy bush. Replanting was also done to fill all the gaps between existing plants, thus building up a bari of tea or a "tea clearing". The aim was to have the tea plants spaced at six feet by six feet. The process was repeated, if the plants were not in neat rows of bushes. During the early years of jungle clearance, only the richest tracts of indigenous tea were opened out to form tea clearings. Later, the small scattered baries of tea were extended to join up with each other by felling the intermediate jungle and in-filling as described above. This was the way, the first type tea gardens were turned in Assam.28

3.1.3 DEVELOPMENT OF TEA IN INDIA

In 1837, the first samples of tea were sent down to Calcutta, which were manufactured from the leaves of indigenous plants growing in tea tracts of Upper Assam. The first historical consignment of Indian tea samples were sent to London in 1838. The auction of eight chests of Indian tea was held at the London Commercial Sale rooms in Mincing Lane on the 10th January, 1839.

In 1840, two-thirds of the tea land of East India Company were handed over to Assam Tea Company - a private enterprise. Charles Bruce joined the company in 1840. During 1850's private partners took up land on their own account, and the most notable among the new comers was the Jorehaut Tea Company in 1859.

In 1848 East India Company again procured seeds from China for a trial planting in North India. The small-leafed, frost-resistant China plant was well suited to the Kangra valley and surrounding hill districts. At the same time original China plants were abandoned from Assam and Jaipur in 1935.

After the nineteenth century only, the number of large plantations had risen to almost 300. Before that there was only one large plantation near Dibrugarh. In 1854, the Assam Waste Land Rules were revised to enable Government leases of land up to 3000 acres to any planter who undertook to cultivate for export, perhaps, the first instance of statutory export obligation in the country. In the same year Indian exports of tea had risen to 250,000 pounds from the trickles of 1938 to 1939.29

In Manipur, which also border of Burma, the indigenous tea plant was found growing over a wide area particularly in the Surma Valley of Sylhet and Cachar. Hence again the Assam Company was one of the earliest on the scene. The first tea

baries were formed in the mid 1850s and the first tea garden was opened in 1857. In the foot-hills of Himalayas at elevation of between 2500 and 6000 feet also early operations were done. Tea cultivation was first started in Dargeeling district in the early 1950s with the China plants in an area below the town of Darjeeling. It proved that in colder and higher elevations, the China plant is suitable. After the first garden was opened in 1857, the tea growing area was extended down to the Terai, where the first garden was opened in 1862. In Dooars tea garden was opened in 1874. The tea growing area gradually spread eastwards until it ultimately reached the boundary of Assam. In South India, rapid growth took place in The Nilgiris, Travancore, Wayanad and the Annamalais within the last one-third of the century. During the period 1860 to 1866 about 20,000,000 pound tea per year was exported to England. Tea exports from Travancore increased from 3,577 pounds (1882 to 1883) to 678,363 pounds (1888 to 1889). 

Although the Chinese tea makers were of crucial importance in the starting of the tea industry in Assam they were found to be both troublesome and insubordinate and as the secrets of Chinese tea cultivation methods were revealed, they were replaced by local labour. The Chinese tea trade and industry are fundamentally different from the tea plantation industry founded by British and Dutch investors. Chinese tea was still a small holders industry and in the hands of local farmers. The plantation structure under which tea production was organised from the beginning in India, brought to the industry, the advantage of economies of scale. There was sustained increase in area, production, yield and export of Indian tea. The table 3.2 gives an idea about the development of the area, production, yield and export of

Indian tea, from the year 1885 to 1915. The export share of Indian tea was increasing. The export of Indian tea is more than the export of China tea at that time. Ninety eight per cent of the tea consumed in England in 1905 was exported from India. That was an important period in the development of Indian tea industry. It is visible that Indian share was increasing.

In India the major tea producing areas are Assam, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kamataka and Kerala. The history of the Indian tea industry up to the dawn of Independence can be briefly described as a case of expansion and consolidation. By 1950 tea had become an important agricultural crop of the country. By that year India became the largest producer and exporter of tea in the world.

3.1.3.1 HISTORY OF SOUTH INDIAN TEA

Dr. Christi was the pioneer, who experimented tea in The Nilgiris on 1832. But unfortunately on November of the same year he died, consequently his experiment also ended. In 1834, with the help of Calcutta Tea Committee, Lord William Bentinck recommended to cultivate 2000 tea seeds in The Nilgiris and Kudak. But it was flourished only at Nilgiri Hills along with coffee. Coffee was the major plantation crop in South India. Tea plantations were introduced in South India on commercial scale around the late 1840s. In the beginning of 1840 coffee plantations were affected by the disease 'Leaf Rust'. This paved the way for wide tea cultivation in south India31,

First tea plantation in South India was started by a European Mr.Man at Coonoor in The Nilgiris District. During 1859 and 1869, tea cultivation in these areas was largely expanded. In The Nilgiris, Britishers started tea production in Thaichola

estate and Dun Sandal estate. These cultivations were done with the help of Chinese Prisoners. By the year 1875, in Peerumedu area of Kerala, tea cultivation was started. A.H. Sharp from Europe, was the pioneer who started tea cultivation in Kannan Devan Hills during 1878. The James Finley Company started in 1897, helped very much in the growth of tea industry of South India. The cultivation started at Wayanad in 1889, and at Anamalais (in Coimbatore district) during 1897. By the year A.D.1900 tea cultivation in South India was established in 12670 hectares, the production of that year was 23000000 kg.32

Tea in South India is grown in areas which either receive only the South West Monsoon or only the North East Monsoon or both. In Kerala both the South West and the North East Monsoon rains are received in Idukki which contributes major portion of Kerala's tea production. It is observed that tea is suitable to grow in regions having moderate to high rain fall through out the greater part of the year. The climate and soil of the tea growing regions in India show great variations and its effect are reflected in difference in productivity (Sen and George, 1992).

To sum up, tea is believed to have originated from South-East Asia and more specifically from China or India. At first it was a medicine and later on it has become one of the important beverages in the world. Now-a-days tea is consumed in almost all countries in the world.

Tea industry played a major role in the colonial activities of the Western countries. It has become one of the powerful commodities having commercial trade value. Indeed, it was the prime objective of colonisation to cultivate tea. This was particularly so in the case of India under colonial period of the British. Until 1886

32 Ibid.
China had been the largest producer of tea in the world. Since then India became the largest producer till 2004.

SECTION II

3.2. PROFILE OF THE STUDY AREA

In the present section it is attempted to provide a brief profile of the various aspects related to the physical and agro-climatic conditions suited and the support available from various institutions for the production of tea.

a) Physical Features

Physical features of the study area control the production of tea, the major crop of the area. These features have a profound influence on the area, location, soil condition and the like which in turn would favour tea production.

b) Boundary

The Nilgiris mountain with an area of 2900 Sq. Kms has stretched from the Western Ghats of The Nilgiris Wyned to the connector of the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka. The District is bounded by Karnataka on the North, Kerala on the West and Coimbatore District of Tamil Nadu on the East and South33.

c) Location

The Nilgiris District lays between the latitude 11°30’00”12 and 19°30’00’’ 42 North and the longitude 76°29’52” 55 and 76°30’00” 21 East34. The hilly District is bifurcated naturally into two regions namely the high altitude The Nilgiris plateau and the Wyned Table Land. The plateau comprising of Udhagamandalm, Coonoor and Kothagiri Taluks is located at the junction of Eastern and Western Ghats. It is in turn


34 Profile of the Nilgiris District, Tamil Nadu, Officer of the Assistant Director of the Statistics, Udhagamandalam, 2006.
divided by a high mountain range running from the North to the South from Doddapettah peak into two equal parts. The Wyned Table Land is covering the Western part of the District.\textsuperscript{35}

d) Altitude

The Udhagamandalam region has an average elevation of 1900 meters above MSL. The altitude of Coonoor and Kothagiri regions is ranging from 400 to 1800 meters above MSL. The Gudalur region has a lower elevation below 900 meters above MSL.

e) Topography

The topography of the study area is uneven and undulating. Tea is grown in slopes exceeding 30 percent and other crops in slopes below 30 percent.

f) Soil

The sol of the study area was formed out of finely grained rocks. The depth of the surface soil varies between 0 to 2½’ on an average and the sub-soil form 10’ to 14’. A continuous vegetation on slopes causes an accumulation of organic matter largely which was deposited on the soil surface. The soils were much loose and porous and allowed percolation of greater portion of rainfall. In view of the sinking action, a good amount of precipitation was conserved in the soil. This in turn produced organic acids causing the maintenance of the same fertility of the soil which was well suited for tea and other cold crops.\textsuperscript{36} Also the soil responds to manorial and other cultural practices pertaining to tea cultivation.\textsuperscript{37}


\textsuperscript{37} *Planters Chronicle*, UPASI, 1984, P.63.
g) **Agro-Climatic Conditions**

Besides the physical features, the agro-climatic conditions prevailing in the study area are much congenial for tea production.

h) **Climate**

The tea plant grows well and yields best in tropical and sub-tropical regions with a warm and humid climate. The climatic conditions of the study area were classified as tropical and sub-tropical at lower altitude regions and sub-tropical and temperate at higher elevations. Winter followed by one or two months of dry and hot weather would occur prior to the commencement of monsoon\(^38\).

i) **Temperature**

Generally, the climatic condition is cool in the study area. The low temperature caused by the high altitude of the area was further lowered by the excessive moisture content of the atmosphere resulting from thick vegetation\(^39\). A hot and moist climate varying a temperature between 55°F and 95°F is best suited for growing tea\(^40\). In Kothagiri and Coonoor regions, the temperature rose upto 26°C during summer and falls to a low temperature during winter. The temperature of Ootacamund region attained a maximum of 24°C during summer months and a very low temperature during winter. In Gudalur region the maximum temperature never exceeded 32°C and the minimum noticed during winter was 14°C\(^41\). Although, the temperature falls below the low limit during winter months it never rise above the maximum in the study area as well as in other regions of the District.

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\(^{39}\) *Cultivation of Tea in South India*, UPASI, Coonoor.


j) **Humidity**

A humidity level not less than 15 percent suits for the cultivation of tea plants. The average humidity level of the study region was well above this limit\(^\text{42}\). Heavy dews have to occur and morning fogs are to be common and a hot wind would never be felt by the plant\(^\text{43}\).

k) **Rainfall**

The maximum limit of rainfall required for tea cultivation was ranging between 250 cm and 325 cm and it has to be distributed evenly without an occurrence of any long drought\(^\text{44}\). Light penetrating rain is preferred rather than heavy down pours\(^\text{45}\). The Western slopes of the mountain regions – Ooatacmund, Kundah and a part of Kothagiri regions – received the full impact of the rainfall from the South-West monsoon and the Eastern slopes – Coonoor and other parts of Kothagiri – the full impact of North-East monsoon. In between them are areas lying at an elevation between 1060m and 1676 m above MSL. They receive rain from both the monsoons\(^\text{46}\).

The average rainfall of the District was ranging between 90cms to 750 cms\(^\text{47}\). Besides, the area is experiencing an even distribution of rainfall. Thus the rainfall pattern of the study area is for raising tea crops and is conducive and amenable for timings of cultural operations such as pruning, manuring, control of pests, weeds and so on.

\(^{42}\) *Cultivation of Tea in South India*, UPASI, Coonoor.


\(^{44}\) R.J. Johnson, *Ibid*, P.8


\(^{46}\) *Planters Chronicle*, UPASI, Coonoor, 1984, P.63.

\(^{47}\) *Cultivation of Tea in South India*, UPASI, Coonoor.
Apart from the favourable agro-physical and climatic conditions prevailing in the study area, the land use and cropping pattern of the area too lend support for the development of tea plantations in The Nilgiris.

l) **Area**

The geographical area of the District is 2543 Sq. kms. The District is divided into six Taluks namely Udhagamandalam, Coonoor, Kothagiri, Gudalur, Kundah and Pandalur with an area of 88002 ha, 22883 ha, 39665 ha, 50638 ha, 31762 ha and 21534 ha respectively.

m) **Population**

The total population of Coonoor constituted 175067, Gudalur 98212, Kothagiri 113597. Udhagamandalam 205633, Kundah 52475, Pandalur 117157 and the District as a whole 378351. The talukwise figure of rural population was numbering at 89124 in Udhagamandalm, 30663 in Coonoor, 69728 in Kothagiri, 7159 in Gudalur, 35538 in Kundah, 75320 in Pandalur and for the District 307532.

n) **Land Use Pattern in The Nilgiris District**

The total geographical area of The Nilgiris District stood at 254485 Hect. of which 76992 Hect. (30.3 percent) were cropped, 3375 Hect. (1.3 percent) uncultivable, 2008 Hect. (0.8 percent) cultivable waste, 10717 Hect. (4.2 percent) fallows, 142576 Hect. (56.0 percent) forest land 18817 Hect. (7.4 percent) pastures and others.

o) **Cropping Pattern in The Nilgiris District**

The geographical features of the area studied influence the cropping pattern of the region. In the early Nineteenth century, the British commercial interests had

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48 Census of India, 2001

discovered that The Nilgiris soil and climate were well suited for raising cool whether crops and trees. The European fruits, strawberries, peaches and peers were introduced in the region. Vegetables such as potato and cabbage found a place in the cropping pattern. Tea and coffee and later cinchona and acacia and eucalyptus were also planted in the region.

The agrarian economy of The Nilgiris District greatly depends on tea plantation whose area of production stood at 56396 Hect., constituting 73.2 percent of the net cultivated area of 76992 Hect. in the District. Coffee is grown in an area of 7238 Hect. bearing 9.4 percent. The area under vegetables figured at 7084 Hect. (9.2 percent) holding the second place next to plantation crops. Paddy is grown in an area of 5080 Hect (0.7 percent), spices, condiments, fruits and other crops were grown in an area of 4766 Hect. (6.2 percent). The analysis reveals that tea crop accounts for a major portion of the cropped area of the District occupying a significant place.

SECTION III

3.3 SUPPORT FROM INSTITUTIONS

In the present section it is attempted to discuss the various institutions which both government and non government – that supports the activity of tea plantation and tea manufacturing.

3.3.1 TEA BOARD

3.3.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Tea Board of India was constituted by the Tea Act of 1953 of the Indian Parliament. The Board has been entrusted with the task of developing the tea industry with in the country and promoting the sale of tea in overseas markets. The Board has taken up programmes on Water and Human Resource Management, Research and
Development connected with better quality planting material, improved agronomic field practices, better tea processing and marketing techniques and so on. The Board coordinates its activities under a set up of having two Zonal Offices, one at Guahatti covering all the tea growing states of North India and another at Coonoor for the whole of South India and Regional Offices in all the tea growing states of the country.

3.3.1.2 SCHEMES OF THE BOARD

The Board has taken up certain schemes with a view to develop the tea industry. The Board has introduced Plantation Development Loan Scheme for the large and small sectors through subsidy assistance for replanting, replacement planting and rejuvenation pruning and infilling. Under the Tea Processing and Packaging Development Scheme, financial assistance is being provided to the needy tea estates and factories for packing, generation of power required in processing and purchase of transport vehicles such as tractor, trailors and light commercial vehicles. The scheme is also extending facilities for the setting up of new Cooperative Tea Factories.

New Area Development Scheme has been introduced with an aim to set up new plantations in areas suitable, but hitherto remain unexploited for tea cultivation in areas other than North Eastern states. Individual small growers too would become eligible for the scheme provided there is sufficient number of such units in close proximity so as to sustain a Central Tea Factory. Also, the Small Grower Development Scheme has been undertaken by the Board to provide a comprehensive development package to the overall development of the small grower sector. The programmes of the scheme would include imparting training on modern agronomic practices in tea cultivation and manufacture, supply of good quality planting material and other inputs at subsidized cost, organizing study tours, field advisory visits and so
on to growers. Apart from these schemes, the Board has introduced Market Development and Export Promotion Scheme, Human Resource Development Scheme, Research and Development Scheme and the like towards the development of tea industry in the country\textsuperscript{50}.

\textbf{3.3.1.3 OTHER MEASURES}

Apart from these schemes, the Board has undertaken certain measures to effect improvement over the industry especially to the small sector. By 2000 it has extended financial assistance to over 65,000 small growers of South India under Price Subsidy Scheme. A major Quality Upgradation Programme has been in operation since 2001 with a view to improve leaf standards and manufacturing practices in Bought Leaf and Cooperative Tea Factories. Also the Board has constituted Price Stabilisation Fund for the benefit of small growers. Further, organic tea production is being promoted by the Board. During 2002, it had launched ‘India Tea’ promotion campaign in Russia as an initiative to boost up exports. Thus the share of Tea Board on the development and growth of the tea industry in The Nilgiris including small sector is substantial\textsuperscript{51}.

\textbf{3.3.2 UNITED PLANTERS’ ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN INDIA}

\textbf{3.3.2.1 ORIGIN AND OBJECTIVES}

The United Planters’ Association of Southern India (UPASI) an apex body of the producers of tea, coffee, rubber and cardamom in South India was founded in 1893 at Coonoor for representing the interest of the planting community in the South and for tackling their common problems effectively\textsuperscript{52}.

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Tea Board Sources 2006.}


\textsuperscript{52} \textit{Planting Directory}, UPASI, Coonoor, 1979, Pp 808-809.
3.3.2.2 ROLE OF UPASI

The Association has engaged itself in scientific and economic research, transferring proven technologies to plantations, representing the interest of the planters in national and international forums, commodity affairs, arranging estate supplies and improving industrial relations\(^{53}\). Input supplies to plantations are also arranged by the Association\(^{54}\). The UPASI runs a Labour Department to look into the working conditions of labour\(^{55}\). Prime importance was placed on research and development by the Association with the establishment of a Tea Research Institute at Valparai. The Association attaches importance on rural development for the welfare of growers and the population in and around the region extending programmes on Comprehensive Labour Welfare, Cattle Development, Cardamom Marketing Services and Small Growers Development on Tea and Coffee Holdings\(^{56}\).

3.3.2.3 UPASI AND ADVISORY WING

The Advisory Wing of UPASI Scientific Department besides serving member estates had been extending free advisory service to small tea growers since 1972. Also the Association had been implementing Small Grower Development Scheme covered with Training Programmes, the setting up of Demonstration Plots and supply of improved clonal planting material to small growers from 1979.

3.3.2.4 UPASI – KVK

The extension services on small tea sector were further strengthened in the District with the emergence of Krishi Vigyan Kendra in 1984\(^{57}\).

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\(^{53}\) Small Growers Tea Advisory Service in South India: To increase Production, Productivity, as to improve quality, UPASI, 1996, P.3.

\(^{54}\) Bhutta Singh, A KVK for a District, Planters Chronicle, 1985, P.369.

\(^{55}\) UPASI Planting Directory, Ibid, P.808-809.

\(^{56}\) Bhutta Singh, A KVK for a District, Planters Chronicle, 1985, P.369.

3.3.3 INDUSTRIAL COOPERATIVE TEA FACTORIES

3.3.3.1 ORIGIN AND GROWTH

The Industrial Cooperative Tea Factories had been in existence since the early sixties of the last century\textsuperscript{58} with the object of improving the economic condition of small tea grower members and tea processing units under cooperative fold in The Nilgiris District\textsuperscript{59}. The first Industrial Cooperative Tea Factory ‘the Kundah Industrial Cooperative Tea Factory Limited’ registered in 1958, started production in 1962\textsuperscript{60}. The number of factories grew over years and by 2010, there were 15 such factories in the District\textsuperscript{61}.

3.3.3.2 FUNCTIONS

The main functions of these factories cover the purchase of green leaf from growers by providing reasonable price, extension services on tea cultivation to grower members and tea processing to cooperative factories. Besides, manure had been distributed on credit to the growers. The factories also arranged plant protection measures for control of pests in small gardens. A habit of thrift has also been inculcated among the grower members\textsuperscript{62}.

3.3.3.3 INDCOSERVE

The Tamil Nadu Small Tea Growers Industrial Cooperative Tea Factories Federation Limited (INDCOSERVE), an apex society of all Cooperative Tea

\textsuperscript{58} INDCOSERVE Sources, 2007.

\textsuperscript{59} By laws of INDCOSERVE.

\textsuperscript{60} Notes on the working of Industrial Cooperative Tea Factories and INDCOSERVE, 2007.

\textsuperscript{61} Study on the field aspects of ICTF Members, UPASI-KVK, Coonoor, 2006, P.13.

Factories in The Nilgiris functioning at Coonoor, coordinates the activities of the affiliated tea factories, besides providing various services noted hereunder.

### 3.3.3.3.1 ROLE OF INDCOSERVE

The INDCOSERVE has constructed tea warehouses at Coonoor, Coimbatore and Cochin to facilitate better storage for the tea produced from member factories. Besides, the Society has arranged the supply of machinery spares and Jute/Nylon bags for packing teas to them. Apart from these, it purchases tea manure mixtures in bulk with a view to distribute it to grower members through factories. Besides, it undertakes direct marketing of tea produced by the factories to their best advantage.

### 3.3.3.3.2 MARKETING BY THE INDCOSERVE

The society has concentrated tea business in areas such as the Department of Indian Defence, Tamil Nadu Civil Supplies Corporation, agency sales to various parts of India and supply to certain recognized export houses. The sale of ‘OOTY TEA’ to the general public through the Public Distribution System since 2001 in the state shows the involvement and commitment of the Government of Tamil Nadu in alleviating the sufferings of thousands of small growers.

### 3.3.4 BOUGHT LEAF FACTORIES

#### 3.3.4.1 EMERGENCE AND GROWTH

Bought Leaf Factories as the name goes are the factories which purchase green leaf from tea growers and Leaf agents, besides, the supply of leaf from their own tea holdings for tea processing. They are in the nature of Individual Proprietorship, Partnership or Public Limited Companies. The existence of these factories is considered to be a special feature in the tea growing areas of South India particularly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Although, the Bought Leaf Factories came into existence

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65 *INDCOSERVE Sources 2003.*
in 1935, they started growing since 1963-64 and by 2009 there were 133 factories in The Nilgiris.

3.3.4.2 COLLECTION OF LEAF

The green leaf supplied by tea growers constituted a major part in the tea manufacture of these units. They usually send transport vehicles like jeep and truck to the nearby places of tea gardens for the collection of leaf. Carrying of leaf by head load from the neighbourhood of factories were also common. The factories often make advance payments to growers against the future supply of green leaf. The growers usually avail this opportunity for the purchase of manure.

3.3.5 THE TAMIL NADU TEA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

3.3.5.1 ORIGIN

The Government Tea Project in The Nilgiris had its commencement as a scheme in 1968 with a view to rehabilitate the Sri Lankan Repatriates. The Project was brought under corporate management in the name of Tamil Nadu Tea Development Corporation under the administrative control of Environment and Forest Department of Government of Tamil Nadu in 1975.

3.3.5.2 PERFORMANCE

The Corporation has been raising clonal tea plants over an extensive area and is ranked among a few large clonal holdings in the world. It is the single largest holding in Tamil Nadu with an area of 4431.92 hect. under tea plantations. The made tea produced by the corporation stood at 10.63 m.kgs. and the average made tea per hectare at 2870 kgs. The number of factories owned by the corporation is eight with a total installed capacity of 12 m.kgs. It is providing employment to 6250 permanent

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workers of whom 5000 are repatriates from Sri Lanka. During rush season of cropping an addition of 3000 casual workers are employed.

3.3.5.3 LABOUR WELFARE

In addition to payment of salary to staff and wages to labour, rent free accommodation, free water supply, free medical aid, crèche, primary education, maternity benefit, family planning incentives and the like were provided. Industrial relation is also cordial in the corporation66.

3.3.5.4 PLACE OF TANTEA

The corporation has been a pioneer for the introduction of clonal planting in estates and small holdings in The Nilgiris and for the establishment of modern tea factories67.

66 Tantea Sources, 2007.