

CHAPTER II

The People

Man's distribution over the earth surface is an important ecological phenomenon. By his mere presence and the diffusion of his species as well as by his achievements and the changes he has brought on nature, man is a very powerful geographical factor (Perpillok : 1966). In the field of Human Geography the study of population—its growth, distribution, sex ratio etc., occupies an important place. In the present chapter we have tried to look into the demographic character of Gudalur Taluk by looking into the census records and other sources. The chapter has been divided into two : (a) the first section explains the growth of population, sex ratio and occupational structure and (b) deals with the ethnic character of the population.

POPULATION

The total population of Gudalur Taluk according to 1971 Census is 93,153 among which 47,956 is male population and 45,197 is female population. One of the most interesting feature of the demographic profile of Gudalur is this that it has more population under the head—urban 56,223 (60.26% of the total population). It may be noted

Table 2.1 : Population of Gudalar Taluk

Name of the taluk	Area in sq. km.	Occupied No. of residential houses	Person	Male	Female
Gudalur—Urban	308.82	11387	56223	28804	27429
Rural	413.43	695	36920	19152	17768
Total	722.25	18345	93153	47956	45197

Source : Census 1971, District Census Handbook, Nilgiris District, Tamilnadu.

here that the areas under urban is lesser than the area under rural. Rural has 36,920 (39.74%) person under its category. Due to various limitations we are unable to present here the growth trend of population as recorded in the various census decades. However, we have 1881 census figures on population obtained from the first Survey and Settlement Records: 1887 of Gudalur Taluk which forms Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 : Population Growth

Sl. No.	Name of the Villages	Population		Variation between 1881 & 1971	Variation in ratio in percentum
		1881 Census	1971 Census		
1.	Cherumulli	479	4520	+4041	843.63
2.	Devala	376	4540	+4164	1107.45
3.	Gudalur	694	15558	+14864	2141.79
4.	Mudumallai	230	916	+688	298.26
5.	Padantarai	496	4562	+4066	819.76
6.	Srimadurai	400	1839	+1439	359.75
7.	Nella Kotta	400	405	+5	1.25
8.	Munanad	2746	4707	+1961	71.41
9.	Nelliyalam	3146	23489	+20343	646.63
10.	Cherangode	4280	11612	+7332	171.31
11.	Erumad	4280	7223	+2943	68.76
12.	O'Valley	F.N.A	13785	—	—
Total		—	93153	—	—

Following consideration appear to emerge from the examination of Table 2.2.

a) The highest growth rate between 1881 and 1971 has been recorded for Gudalur (2141.79%) followed by Devala (1107.45%). Cherumulli and Padantarai have also experienced a rapid growth (Cherumulli 843.63%, Padantarai—819.76%). The development of Gudalur is very fast after 1961 when it developed as a main commercial centre. Of the whole taluk, Devala, Cherumulli and Padantarai have mainly developed due to the plantation agriculture wherein large number of migrant population came for work and had finally settled also. The same is the case for Nelliyalam also. 1981 Census for Nelliyalam will

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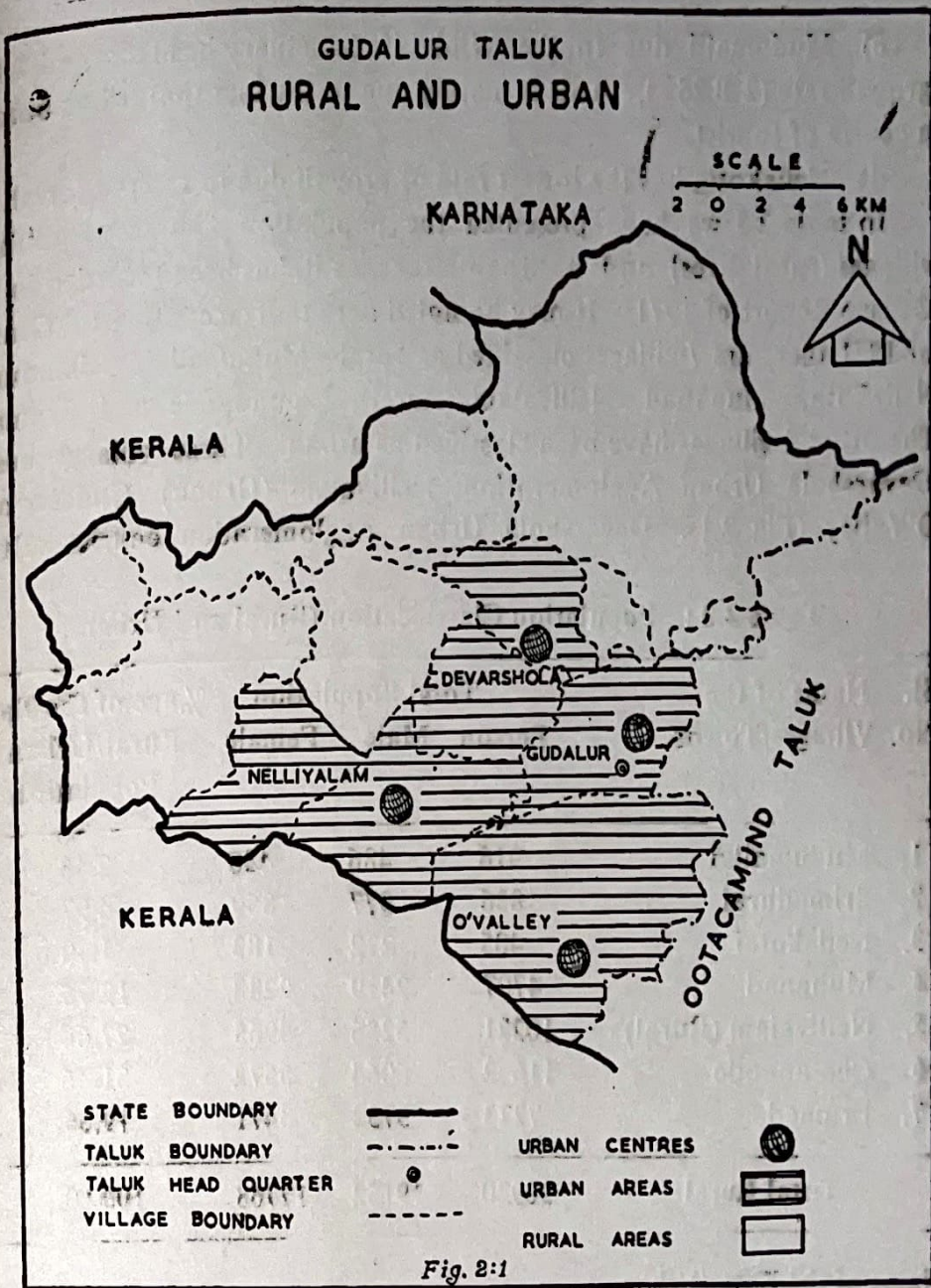


Fig. 2:1

show highest growth rate mainly due to the fact that considerable number of Ceylon Repatriate have been officially settled in Nelliyalam.

b) Srimadurai, Cherangode, Munanad and Erumad can be classified as traditional villages where plantation agriculture has not been taken on a large scale. It may be noted here that all these villages except Srimadurai are located on the western border of Gudalur taluk and to a great extent the physiography is flat in nature resulting in more areas coming under traditional agriculture. Thus the increase in population in these villages are natural to a greater extent.

c) Mudumalli due to the Wild Life Sanctuary has recorded a fair growth rate (298.26%). This is mainly due to the fact that it has become a centre of tourist.

d) Nellakotta has the lowest rate of growth due to reserve forest.

In table 2.3 we have presented the population figures of all the 7 villages (rural areas) and 4 urban areas as it has been recorded in the Census Report of 1971. It may be noted here that according to Census of 1971 there are 7 villages classified as rural—Mudumallai, Srimadurai, Nellakota, Munanad, Nellyalam (Rural), Cherangode and Erumad. The other 4 villages have been classified as urban. These villages are—Devarshola Urban Agglomeration, Nellyalam (Urban), Gudalur and O'Valley (Fig. 2.1). Devarshola Urban Agglomeration consist of two

Table 2.3 : Population Classification (Rural and Urban)

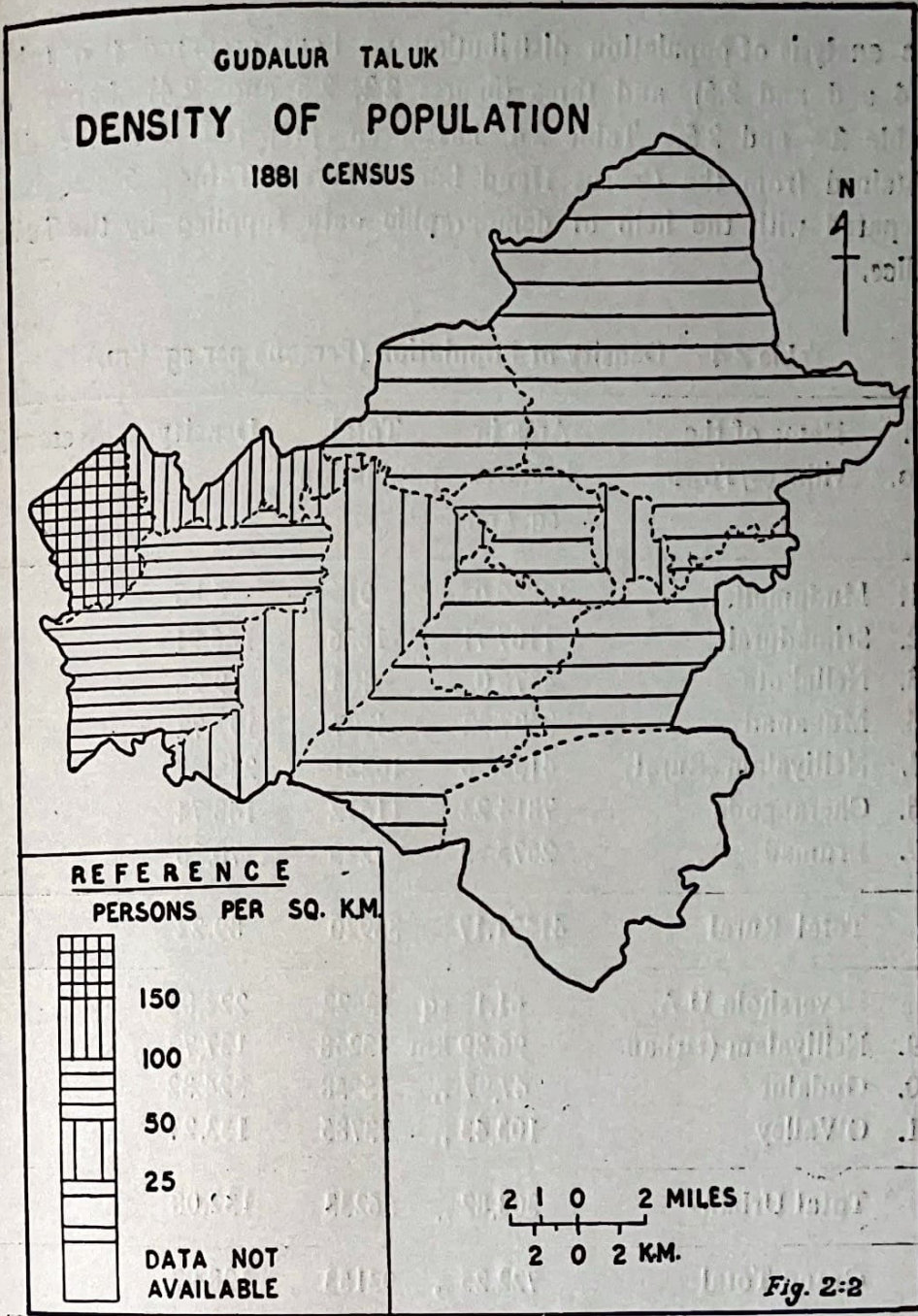
Sl. No.	Name of the Villages/Towns	Total Population			%age of the Total Rural/Urban Population
		Person	Male	Female	
1.	Mudumallai	916	486	430	2.48
2.	Srimadurai	1836	977	859	4.97
3.	Nellakotai	405	222	183	1.10
4.	Munanad	4707	2419	2288	12.75
5.	Nellyalam (Rural)	10221	5256	4965	27.68
6.	Cherangode	11612	6064	5572	31.46
7.	Erumad	7223	3752	3471	19.56
Total Rural		36920	19152	17768	100.00
Name of the Town/Urban					
8.	Devarshola U.A.	13622	6846	6776	24.22
9.	Nellyalam (Urban)	13268	6825	6443	23.59
10.	Gudalur	15558	8051	7507	27.67
11.	O'Valley	13785	7082	6703	24.52
Total Urban		56233	28804	27429	100.00
Grand Total		93153	47956	45197	—

Source : Census of India, 1971, Series 19, Tamilnadu, Part X-B District Census Handbook, Nilgiris.

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villages—Cherumulli and Padantarai whereas Nelliyalam urban consists of whole of Devala village and half of Nelliyalam village.

Population distribution : The density of population is as it were the synthesis of all the geographical phenomena ; it expresses eloquently the manner in which man has taken advantage of the land he occupies (Robert, J. 'La densite' de population des Alpes francaise d' apre's le de'nombrement de 1911', Rev. de Geographic Alpine 8, 1920, 124). For

the analysis of population distribution we have prepared two tables (2.4 and 2.5) and three (figures 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4) based on Table 2.4 and 2.5. Table 2.4 has been prepared from the data obtained from the Census Hand book whereas Table 2.5 has been prepared with the help of demographic data supplied by the Taluk Office.

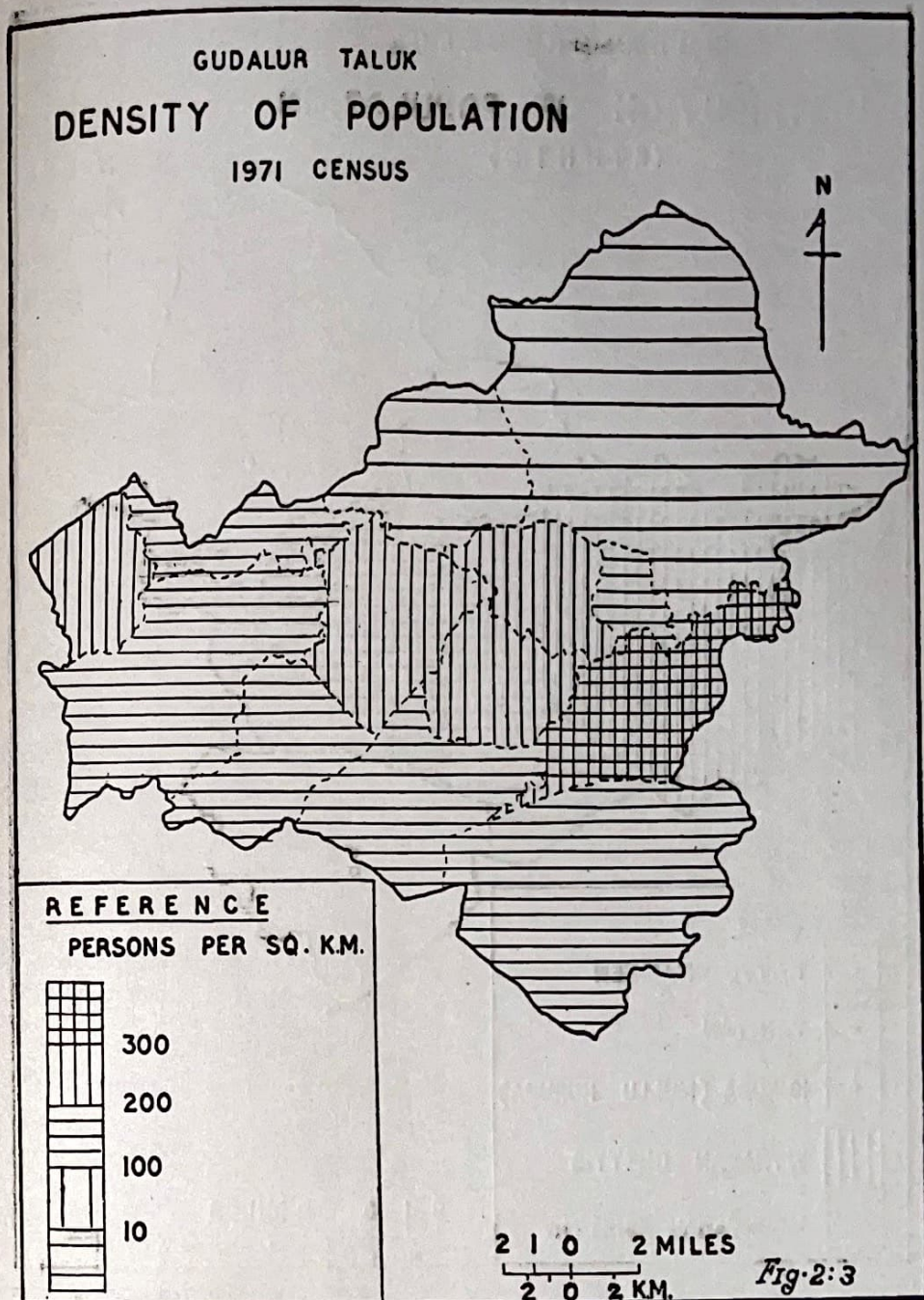
Table 2.4: Density of Population (Persons per sq. km.)

Sl. No.	Name of the villages/Towns	Area in hectares sq. km.	Total population	Density	Remarks
1.	Mudumallai	18889.04	916	4.85	
2.	Srimadurai	1107.71	1836	165.91	
3.	Nellakota	4376.08	405	9.26	
4.	Munanad	2407.32	4707	195.72	
5.	Nelliyalam (Rural)	4150.96	10221	246.47	
6.	Cherangode	7814.23	11612	148.74	
7.	Erumad	2675.23	7223	270.26	
Total Rural		41421.17	36920	89.22	
8.	Devarshola U.A.	61.13 sq	13622	222.83	
9.	Nelliyalam (Urban)	96.29 km	13268	137.79	
10.	Gudalur	47.97 ,,	15558	324.32	
11.	O'Valley	103.43 ,,	13785	133.27	
Total Urban		308.82 ,,	56233	132.08	
Grand Total		722.25 ,,	93153	128.97	

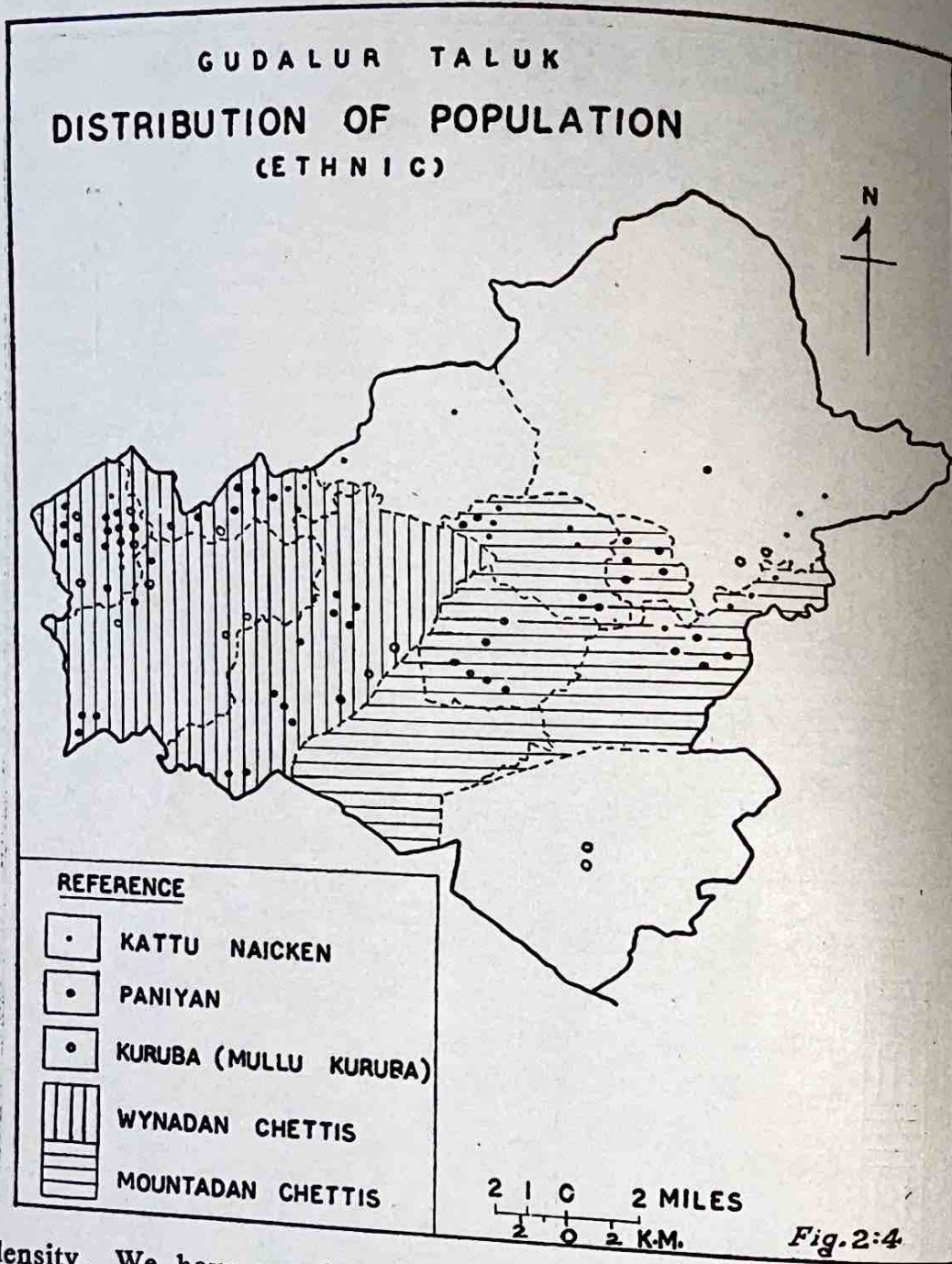
Source: Census 1971 Tamilnadu, Series-19, District Census Handbook; Nilgiris District.

Following considerations appear to emerge from the examination of Table 2.4 and Figure 2.2.

a) Gudalur has the highest density (324.32 person per sq. km.). This is mainly due to the fact that Gudalur has developed as an important urban centre of the taluk with considerable amount of population working in the various government offices, transport system and other service industries.



b) The second category is of 200-300 persons per sq. km. In this category Devershola Urban Agglomeration, Nelliylam (Rural) and Erumad village comes. Devershola Urban Agglomeration has two villages—Cherumulli and Padantari in its fold. Devarshola U.A. and Nelliylam (Rural) have vast areas under plantation agriculture resulting in high density per sq. km. Apart from this Devarshola has also become a small urban centre with the office of Town Panchayat etc. But Erumad is a typical case of traditional village with high



density. We have noted earlier that Erumad has more or less flat topography with more area under wet cultivation. Fertility of the land has supported high density of population. Apart from this it has attracted population from the neighbouring Kerala State.

c) The third category is of 100-200 persons per sq. km. This category has the largest number of villages/urban centres in its fold, such as Srimadurai (165.91), Nelliyalam (Urban) (137.79), Cherangode (148.74) and Munanad (195.72). Munanad has the heigest density in the group followed by Srimadurai. Munanad also a traditional village with

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broad areas of wet land and so is the case of Srimadurai. Munanad and Srimadurai both do not have much area under plantation agriculture. Nelliyalam (Urban) and Cherangode both have large areas under plantation agriculture resulting in high density in this category. We do feel that 1981 figures will tell us a different story because Cherangode has been the area where large number of Ceylon Repatrait have been settled with big tea plantation followed by Nelliyalam (Urban). Cherambadi in Cherangode village and Pandalur in Nelliyalam (Urban) have emerged as a growing town in their respective areas.

d) In the fourth category (10—100) persons per sq. km. we do not have any village under its fold.

e) The fifth category (0—10) persons per square kilometer can be regarded as the sparsely populated region of the taluk. Under this category only two villages fall—Mudumallai (4.85 persons per sq. km.) and Nellakota (9.26 persons per sq. km.). Both these villages have been demarcated as Mudumalai Wild Life Sanctuary and so settlement is not allowed.

We have noted above the trend of population density in the taluk. We have also observed that there are areas which can be classified as densely populated area such as Gudalur (Urban) and we have also sparsely populated region like Mudamallai and Nellakota villages. These observations lead us to look back in the old data to obtain a comparative picture under this head. This exercise will also reveal that Gudalur has changed rapidly. For this analysis we have taken the help of Table 2.5 and Figure 2.2 & 2.3.

Table 2.5 gives us a picture of density of population in the year 1881 and for 1971. In the case of 1971 we have slightly deviated from the population figures given in the Census for 1971. Figure 2.3 has been prepared on the basis of data obtained from the settlement records of 1886 and Figure 2.3 has been prepared with the help of data obtained from the Taluk Office. Following considerations appear to emerge from the examination of Table 2.5 and Figure 2.2 and 2.3.

a) In the case for 1881 we have five categories 0-25, 25-50, 50-100 and 100-150 and 150 and above persons per sq. km. It is interesting to note that under the first category (0-25 persons per sq. km.) we have 6 villages—Cherumulli (16.24), Padantarai (15.66), Gudalur (14.47), Nellakota (9.14), Devala (7.83) and Mudamallai (1.22). These are the villages with population of Mountadan Chettis who are and were mainly dependent on the wet land cultivation. No doubt plantation

Table 2.5 : Density of Population (Person per sq. km.)

Sl. No.	Name of the villages	Area in sq. km.	Population 1881	Density 1881	Population 1971	Density 1971
1.	Cherumulli	29.50	479	16.25	4520	153.22
2.	Devala	48.05	376	7.83	4540	94.48
3.	Gudalur	47.96	694	14.47	15558	324.40
4.	Mudumallai	188.86	230	1.22	916	4.85
5.	Padantarai	31.68	496	15.66	4562	144.00
6.	Srimadurai	11.07	400	36.13	1839	166.12
7.	Nellakota	43.75	400	9.14	405	9.26
8.	Munanad	24.07	2746	114.08	4707	195.55
9.	Nelliyalam	88.72	3146	35.46	23489	264.75
10.	Cherangode	78.13	4280	54.78	11612	148.62
11.	Erumad	26.76	4280	159.94	7223	269.92
12.	O' Valley	103.70	—	—	13785	133.30
Total		722.25	—	—	93153	—

Source: Office of the Tahasildar, Gudalur Taluk, Nilgiris, Tamilnadu.

has arrived by this time but ecology and economy of these villages were not affected because the forest and dry land only were occupied for plantation. The second category is of 25-50 persons per sq. km. This group is represented by two villages—Srimadurai (36.13) and Nelliyalam (35.46). Srimadurai and North Nelliyalam are occupied by the peasant caste but South Nelliyalam is covered by plantation and during that period (1881) plantation had arrived here. Under the third category (50-100 persons per sq. km.) only one village falls—Cherangode (54.78). Under the fourth category (100-150 persons per sq. km.) we have only one village Munanad (114.08) and so is the case with the last category (150 and above persons per sq. km.) where Erumad comes. We have noted elsewhere that these three villages—Erumad, Munanad and Cherangode have considerable area under wet land which support good harvest of paddy crop resulting in high density in the taluk during the period under consideration. To sum up it can be easily stated that Gudalur Taluk in the year 1881 was moderately populated area. For O'Valley we do not have the data for this period.

b) In the above section we have presented the picture of 1881. From 1881-1971 nearly a century has passed. Gudalur ecology and economy has changed from traditional paddy cultivation to plantation agriculture mainly tea and coffee. This has the effect on the density of population also. Column 7 of Table 2.5 presents an useful data to understand this change. On the basis of this data Figure 2.2 has been prepared. We have shown five classification of density of population in the figure. The first classification is of very high density area (300 persons per sq. km. and above). Under this category only Gudalur area comes. We have noted earlier that Gudalur has the maximum rate of growth since 1881. Being the administrative head-quarter and also due to break in commercial structure Gudalur has developed very fastly and we hope 1981 census will also uphold this trend. It may be mentioned here that in 1881 Gudalur was in the 0-25 persons per sq. km. category a sparsely populated area. The second category is of 200-300 persons per sq. km. Under this category two villages fall—Erumad (269.92) and Nelliyalam (264.75). Erumad developed as a traditional village supported by cash crop mainly coffee and pepper. But the case of Nelliyalam is different. Nelliyalam has greater area under plantation agriculture specially in the south whereas north Nelliyalam is dominated by paddy supported by plantation agriculture. Density is also high mainly due

to Pandalur which has developed as a small urban centre followed by Mangorange and Uppati. The third category (100-200 persons per sq. km.) can be termed as an area with moderate density. This category has the largest number of villages in its fold—Munanad (195.55), Srimadurai (166.12), Cherumulli (153.22), Cherangode (148.62), Padantarai (144.00) and O'Valley (133.30). Munanad with open and flat valley has greater area under wet cultivation. The density has increased due to migration from Kerala also. Srimadurai is a traditional village wholly dependent on wet cultivation supported with coffee and pepper and so is the case of Cherumulli and Cherangode. Padantarai has high density due to plantation agriculture supported with traditional agriculture. Apart from this Devarshola has become a small urban centre. The fourth category is of 10-100 per square km. Only one village—Devala (94.48) comes under this category. Lack of wet land and also plantation agriculture is the reason for low density. The thinly populated villages (0-10 persons per sq. km.) are Nellakota (9.26) and Mudumalai (4.85). The low density is mainly due to the fact that these villages fall under the Reserve Forest Boundary.

OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE

We have noticed above through our analysis that Gudalur Taluk has experienced a noticeable increase in population. Now we propose to examine how this population is absorbed in gainful occupation within the economic base of the Taluk. Hence an analysis of occupational structure of a region unfolds its diverse economic, demographic and cultural attributes and provides a background knowledge for formulating plans for its social and economic development (Chandana & Sindu : 1980). The size of working population its distribution in various economic activities provides an understanding of the physical resource base, the system of social organisation and the nature of economy prevailing in the region. For the analysis of occupational structure of the region (taluk) we have prepared 4 tables. In Table 2.6 we have presented the data on various occupations as it has been recorded in the census : 1971. This table has been placed in the appendix. On the basis of Table 2.6 we have prepared Table 2.7 giving the percentage of each occupational categories in ratio percentum of total population. In Table 2.8 we have calculated the percentage of each occupational classification taking total workers as 100. The villages/urban areas have been classified into the dominating occupational category (minimum 10%), arranged in order and have

Table 2.7 : Occupational Structure (Percentage to the total population)

Sl. No.	Occupation/Villages/ Urban areas	Mudu - Srimalai durai		Nella-kota		Munad		Nelliyalam		Cherangode		Devashola		Nelliyalam		Gudalur	O'Valley	Remark
		916	1836	405	4707	10221	11612	7223	13622	13268	15558	13785	93153					
1.	Total Population	33.52	30.66	47.90	37.50	40.95	40.19	34.74	42.23	45.78	34.48	46.76	40.61					
2.	Total Workers	7.31	14.16	13.58	12.58	4.37	6.90	13.51	5.76	2.80	3.84	0.88	5.45					
a.	Cultivators	17.65	10.68	33.83	20.95	7.05	8.87	15.01	7.94	6.23	7.57	2.13	8.26					
b.	Agricultural labourers																	
c.	Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting	5.68	3.65	0.49	0.74	23.93	18.21	1.04	22.22	25.42	4.41	39.91	18.66					
d.	Plantation work	—	—	—	—	0.14	0.75	0.17	—	—	—	—	0.12					
e.	Mining and Quarrying	0.11	0.71	—	0.74	0.56	0.35	0.66	0.23	0.23	0.20	0.12	0.23					
f.	Manufacturing — Household Industry	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—					
g.	Manufacturing — Other than Household industry	0.44	0.38	—	—	0.78	1.00	0.15	1.17	0.99	2.23	0.53	0.99					
h.	Construction	0.55	0.16	—	—	0.37	0.69	0.15	0.29	0.96	1.12	0.17	0.54					
i.	Trade and commerce	—	—	—	0.74	1.86	1.40	1.09	1.80	2.01	5.12	1.24	2.10					
j.	Transport, storage and communication	0.11	—	—	0.06	0.16	0.19	0.12	0.19	1.61	0.08	0.08	0.38					
3.	Other services	1.97	0.93	—	1.68	1.72	1.85	2.76	2.69	6.95	8.38	1.70	3.29					
	Non-workers	66.48	69.34	52.10	62.50	69.05	59.81	65.26	57.77	54.22	65.52	53.24	69.39					

Source : Census 1971, Tamilnadu; Nilgiris District.

been presented in Table 2.9. We will deal all the above tables separately.

Table 2.7 gives us the percentage of the population in each occupational category. It can be seen from this table that the percentage of non-workers (59.39%) is higher than the workers (40.61%) in the Taluk. Apart from these categories 18.66% of the population is engaged in the category Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantation, Orchards and allied activities. In Gudalur Taluk it is mainly plantation (tea and coffee). For better understanding let us look in the village level data on occupational structure. It may be noted here that Srimadurai (69.34%) has the highest percentage in non-workers group followed by Mudumallai (66.48%), Gudalur (65.52%), Erumad (65.26%), Munanad (65.50%), Cherangode (59.81%) and Nelliylam Rural (59.05%). The lowest percentage is found in Nellakotta (52.10%) followed by O'Valley (53.24%), Nelliylam Urban (54.22%) and Devarshola Urban Agglomeration (57.77%). It can be easily stated that the non-plantation villages have higher percentage of non-workers than the plantation villages. The third important category is of workers engaged in Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantations, Orchards and allied activities (mainly plantation in the case of Gudalur Taluk). In this category O'Valley emerges first with 39.19% of population engaged in this category, O'Valley is followed by Nelliylam Urban (25.42%), Nelliylam Rural (23.93%), Devashola Urban Agglomeration (22.22%) and Cherangode (18.21%). Nellakota (0.49%) has the lowest percentage in this category followed by Munanad (0.74%), Erumud (1.04%), Srimadurai (3.65%) and Gudalur (4.41%). In other categories the percentage are very low.

In Table 2.8 we have presented the percentage of the occupational categories in relation with the total workers. It may be noted here that Gudalur Taluk has 45.95% of the population in total workers category, who are workers in Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantations, Orchards and allied activities (mainly plantations in the case of Gudalur Taluk). This clearly reveals the fact that Gudalur economy is based on plantation agriculture. Agricultural labourers comes second with 25.34% of the total work force followed by workers in other services (9.33%) category. The picture is more interesting when we look at the village level data on the various categories on occupational structure. In the Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, Plantations, Orchards and allied activities category O'Valley ranks first with 85.36% followed by Nelliylam Rural (58.45%), Nelliylam Urban (55.33%).

Table 2.8 : Occupational Structure (Percentage to the total Workers)

Sl. No.	Occupation/Villages	Madu-mallai	Srimadurai	Nella-kota	Muna-nad	Nelli-yalam Rural	Cheran-gode	Erumad	Devars-hola UA	Nelli-yalam Urban	Gudalur	O'Valley	Total of Taluk
1.	Total Workers	307	563	194	1765	4185	4667	2509	5752	6074	5365	6446	37827
2.	Cultivators	21.82	46.18	28.35	33.54	10.68	17.16	38.90	13.65	6.11	11.15	1.88	13.41
3.	Agricultural Labourers	51.79	34.81	70.62	55.86	17.23	22.07	43.20	18.80	13.60	21.96	4.56	20.34
4.	Livestock, Fishing, Hunting, Forestry and plantation	16.94	11.90	1.03	1.98	58.45	45.32	2.99	56.63	55.53	12.79	85.36	45.95
5.	Mining and Quarrying	—	—	—	—	0.33	1.86	0.48	—	—	—	—	0.30
6.	Manufacturing— Household industry	0.33	2.30	—	1.98	1.36	0.88	1.91	0.54	0.57	0.58	0.25	0.80
7.	Manufacturing - Other than Household Industry	—	—	—	—	1.91	2.49	0.44	2.78	2.17	6.47	1.13	2.43
8.	Construction	1.31	1.24	—	—	0.91	1.71	0.44	0.68	2.19	3.24	0.37	1.34
9.	Trade and Commerce	1.62	0.53	—	1.98	4.54	3.49	3.15	4.26	4.14	14.86	2.65	5.17
10.	Transport, storage and communication	0.33	—	—	0.18	0.38	0.41	0.56	0.28	0.41	4.66	0.17	0.94
11.	Other services	5.86	3.02	—	4.48	4.21	4.61	7.93	6.38	15.28	24.29	3.63	9.32

Source : Census 1971, Tamilnadu, Nilgiris District.

Devarshola Urban Agglomeration (52.63%) and Cherangode (45.32%). Nellakota (1.03%) has the lowest percentage in this category followed by Munanad (1.98%), Erumad (2.99%), Srimadurai (11.90%) and Gudalur (12.79%). The second important category is of Agricultural Labourers. In this category Nellakota has the highest percentage (70.62%) followed by Munanad (55.86%), Mudumallai (51.79%), Erumad (43.20%) and Srimadurai (34.81%). In this category O'Valley (1.88%) has the lowest percentage followed by Nelliyalam Urban (6.11%), Nelliyalam Rural (10.68%) and Gudalur (11.15%). In other services category Gudalur ranks first (24.29%) followed by Nelliyalam Rural (15.18%) and Erumad (7.93%).

The conclusion therefore emerges that Srimadurai, Munanad, Erumad and to some extent Gudalur can be termed as a traditional agricultural villages, where higher percentages are in the primary occupation like Cultivators and Agricultural Labourers. O'Valley, Nelliyalam Urban and Rural both, Cherangode and Devarshola Urban Agglomeration can be treated as areas dominated by plantation agriculture due to high percentage in this category. For further understanding we are

Table 2.9 : Villages/Urban Areas—Their occupational classification

Si. No.	Villages/Urban Areas	Occupational Classification
1.	Mudumallai	AL, C, LFFHPOA
2.	Srimadurai	C, AL, LFFHPOA
3.	Nellakota	AL, C.
4.	Munanad	AL, C.
5.	Nelliyalam Rural	LFFHPOA, AL, C.
6.	Cherangode	LFFHPOA, AL, C.
7.	Erumad	AL, C,
8.	Devarshola Urban Agglomeration	LFFHPOA, AL, C.
9.	Nelliyalam Urban	LFFHPOA, OS, AL
10.	Gudalur	SO, AL, TC, C,
11.	O'Valley	LFFHPOA

AL=Agricultural Labourers, C=Cultivators

LFFHPOA=Livestock, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting. Plantations, Orchards & Allied Activities. (Mainly plantation in the case of Gudalur Taluk).

TC=Trade and Commerce OS=Other Services.

Source : Census 1971, Tamilnadu, Nilgiris Census Hand Book.

presenting here a table 29 which shows the dominating/order of the occupational structure for each village and urban area. While preparing this table we have taken only those occupational category which has 10% minimum population.

Table 2.11 : Distribution of Tribal Population

Sl. No.	Name of villages	Tribal Population (percentage of the total population of the taluk)		
		Paniyan	Kuruba (Mullukuruba)	Kattu Naicken
1.	Cherumulli	3.32	2.54	1.64
2.	Devala	3.59	1.70	1.41
3.	Gudalur	3.59	1.36	0.64
4.	Mudumallai	6.33	27.29	9.61
5.	Padantaral	9.89	4.82	2.24
6.	Srimadurai	10.88	1.63	2.45
7.	Nellakota	33.09	20.99	58.02
8.	Munanad	30.93	8.54	9.99
9.	Nelliyalam	4.16	2.79	1.13
10.	Cherangode	5.19	5.58	1.97
11.	Erumad	14.55	8.76	2.23
12.	O'Valley	0.73	—	—

Table 2.12 : Ethnic Population (Talukwise percentage)

	Total population	Paniyan		Kuruba		Kattu Naicken	
		Total	% of total	Total	% of total	Total	% of total
Gudalur Taluk	93153	5908	6.34	3505	3.76	1833	1.97

Source : Office of the Tahsildar, Gudalur Taluk, Nilgiris.

Ethnic Group : The people of Nilgiris Wynad can be divided into two groups—the tribal and non-tribal population. Again the tribal population can be divided into the following groups.

- a) The Paniyan
- b) The Kuruba (Mullu Kuruba)
- c) The Kattu Naicken

The non-tribal population can be divided into two—(a) local non-tribal population and (b) the immigrant who came here and settled after the arrival of plantation agriculture. The native non-tribal population can be divided again into two—(a) The Mountadan Chettis and (b) Wynadan Chettis. In the immigrant population considerable number of Malabar Muslims, Tiyas, Christian and other caste people have come here and settled. In brief we will present an account of the various important ethnic groups in Gudalur Taluk. We will not deal with the immigrant population.

In Table 2.10 we have presented the data on various ethnic categories—general, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe, which has been adopted by the Census of India. Census 1971 does not have the further break up of these ethnic groups. This table has been put in the Appendix. In the case of Scheduled Tribe we have collected the data from taluk office and is being presented in Table 2.11 and Table 2.12.

Table 2.11 and 2.12 reveal that Gudalur has 12.07 percentage of population under the head Scheduled Tribe among which Paniyan has the bigger share 6.34% followed by Kuruba (Mullu Kuruba) with 3.76% and Kattu Naicken with 1.97%.

The Paniyan: The Paniyan who are well distributed over the map of Nigiris Wynad (Figure 2.5) are the largest tribal group (Table 2.12). Until recently they were bonded labourers or rural serfs and still earlier, cattle slaves of the Chettis of Wynad (Aiyappan : 1980). According to Thurston : 1909 the Paniyans are dark skinned tribe, short in stature, with broad nose and curly or wavy hair. Socially they were and are considered to be the lowest (Misra : 1982). Before the abolition of 'Bonded Labour System' the Paniyan were mostly related with the Chetty's society. The Chettis offered them negligible amount of money in the form of advance on the occasion of a particular festival and in lieu of, the Paniyan had to serve their master Chettis for whole of the year. The word Paniyan means labourer and they believe that their original occupation was agriculture as it is, for the most part, even at the present day. Apart from this women collect variety of tuber and roots from the forest and subsist on them.

Monogamy appears to be a general rule among the Paniyan but it has been observed that a man can have more wives if he can afford. The Paniyan live in group and their settlements are found near the Chettis household. The houses are short in height and are made of mudwall thatched with hay.

The Kurrumba (Mullu Kuruba) : According to the project report on the Development of Kuruba or Kurubas prepared by the Harijan Welfare Department, 1980 there are five types of Kurubas—(a) Betta Kuruba (Hill Kurubr), (b) The Jen or Ten (Honey) Kuruba, (c) the Urali (Village) Kuruba, (d) Pal Kuruba and (e) the Mullu Kuruba (Bamboo). But again Misra : 1982 differs with this categorisation of the Kuruba. We do not have detailed ethnographic study on this tribe except Junu Kuruba (Misra, P.K. : 1969) and Mullu Kuruba (Misra, Rajalakshmi : 1971). The Jenu Kuruba are distributed mostly in Karnataka. We will take Mullu Kuruba for our account here because they are the dominating Kuruba of Nilgiris Wynad. The Mullu Kuruba are distributed on the western villages of Nilgiris Wynad such as Erumad, Cherangode, Munanad and Nelliyalam. Similarly Mullu Kuruba were shifting cultivators, food gatherers and hunters. Hence the whole economy was dependent on forest only. But arrival of plantation agriculture reduced the forest areas as well as the habitat of Mullu Kuruba. Whatever forest was left was encroached upon by the immigrant resulting in complete vanishing of shifting cultivation. Deforestation left no scope for hunting also. Today the Mullu Kuruba to a great extent are landless agricultural labourers. There is an exception in Erumad where Mullu Kuruba had responded to the new change and they have developed their dry land into small coffee gardens.

The Mullu Kuruba live in a group. The settlement of Mullu Kuruba consists of four to five houses which are in a row. The houses are built by mud and are thatched by hay. Monogamy is strictly followed but divorce is also practiced. They speak broken form of Malayalam language.

The Kattu Naicken : The Kattu Naicken are the worst hit tribal group of the Nilgiris Wynad due to the emerging new economic order. The Kattu Naicken were inhabiting in the interior forest and mainly depended on food gathering, hunting and trapping. The whole economic order revolved round food gathering which was supplemented by hunting and trapping of wild animals. But the arrival of plantation specially in Cherumuli, Gudalur and on the border of Nelliyalam and Munanad pushed the Kattu Naicken from their habitat (deep forest) to the periphery of the forest. Due to lack of knowledge in wet cultivation the peasantry caste did not employ them as agricultural labourers. Thus the Kattu Naicken are in the state of refuge in their own habitat.

Local non-tribal population : Mountadan Chettis and the Wynadan Chettis are the peasant caste of Nilgiris Wynad. It is not known when these groups arrived in Nilgiris Wynad. Hockings (1980) while tracing the migration history of Badagas in Nilgiris Hills has mentioned about Mountadan Chettis. The Badagas who have settled in Gudalur region had marriage relation in the past with the Mountadan Chettis. He has also pointed out that Mountadan Chettis might have migrated from the same place from where the Badaga have migrated to Nilgiri Hills mostly in the sixteenth century. The Mountadan Chettis are mainly agriculturists and their settlement lies near the wet lands. The settlement pattern is generally scattered with four to five houses of their own kin. The houses are located on the dry land so that they can keep watch on their wet lands. They speak broken form of Kannada but now they speak Tamil also.

The Wynadan Chettis have come from Kerala, as they speak Malayalam. Like the Mountadan Chettis the Wynadan Chettis are in control of the wet land—mainly in the four villages—Nelliyalam, Cherangode, Munanad and Erumad where they are well distributed. Economically the Wynadan Chettis are better placed than the Mountadan Chettis because they have gone for plantation agriculture mainly coffee, pepper, and cardamom.

Arrival of plantation agriculture in Nilgiris Wynad resulted in huge migration of population from the neighbouring Malabar District of Kerala to work in the plantation. Among the migrant, Muslim are the biggest population here followed by Christian and other caste Hindu population. The new arrival are the Ceylon Repatriate from Sri Lanka who have settled officially here by the Tamilnadu Government. It has been estimated that presently nearly 15,000 Ceylon Repatriate are living in Gudalur Taluk.

The Change

We have noted while discussing the physiography, population, traditional agricultural system and contemporary agricultural system that the ecosystem of Gudalur Taluk has been modified by various human activities which have resulted in change. Before going into the discussion for change it is worth mentioning has brought the change or say what are the forces responsible for the change. We will try to deal this situation keeping in view the result of change on the physical and cultural/social environment.

The indigenous source of change

Indigenous sources have influenced the agricultural land use in Gudalur Taluk. We have noted that both the Chettis, the peasant of Nilgiris Wynad, came and settled in this region from outside. Along with them came the technology of wet land cultivation which was not known to the local tribal population of the region. This knowledge was further enriched by various other cultural contact like marriage system etc. Apart from this it might have happened that the Chettis while visiting places of pilgrim would have learnt and known better know-how to cope with the risks and irregularities in their agricultural system. The Chettis as well as the tribal population has the knowledge of the environment handed over to them by the older generation. It may be the trial and error method by which the Chettis were able to understand that this particular type of rice suits this particular type of "Bailu Bhumi" (Wet land). Among the 14 varieties of rice which is generally grown by the Chettis two varieties of rice is most popular.

Presently, population pressure has also influenced the land use pattern of the taluk. Historically the Chettis are wet land cultivators with little cultivation of dry land. But presently they are going for plantation agriculture due to the population pressure and also due to the forces of modernization which have arrived in their society.

The alien sources

We have noted that Nilgiris in general and Gudalur in particular was opened for plantation agriculture as soon as the Britishers

established firm control on it. With the arrival of plantation agriculture there arrived modern technology and band of plantation workers from the neighbouring state specially Kerala. We have also noted that the native population were apathy towards plantation, they simply watched the situation with great curiosity. Slowly the tropical virgin forest were removed and plantation grew up. With plantation, coolie lines and small urban centres also grew up. We do not have a historical data to state when the first seedling of plantation (tea or coffee) was brought and put in the dry field by the local population. But looking at their coffee plants it can be easily assumed that this is a recent phenomenon for the Chettis. The Chettis learnt coffee plantation from the immigrant population who settled in their dry land after retiring from the Estates.

The Government

During the colonial rule the government was not interested in traditional agriculture here. The Britishers were more interested in plantation agriculture of mainly tea and coffee. This forced them to undertake a survey and settlement to know the land position in Gudalur. During this period there was no regulation to protect the forest. Table 5.1 clearly indicates how the forest was removed to accommodate plantation agriculture.

The policy changed after independence and government laws came under force to save the forest. Coffee Board and Tea Board came into being to help the plantation as well as the growers. Special incentives are being given to small growers. We do not have data on tea but Gudalur Liaison Officer, Coffee Board has informed that all the growers are registered by Coffee Board and help, in the form of loan and know-how are being given. This has resulted in considerable increase of small estates (holdings) in Gudalur Taluk (Table 5.8). Apart from these two Boards which are paying attention towards the development of tea and coffee, Government of Tamilnadu is also trying to develop traditional agriculture through SFDA (Small Farmers Development Agency), HADP (Hill Agriculture Development Project) etc. But it is the general complain of the people of the region that whatever fund is coming is being spent for otacamund, Coonoor and Kotagiri taluks. Gudalur Taluk is the most neglected taluk of the Nilgiris District.

We have dealt in brief the sources of change in Gudalur Taluk.

Now we will discuss in brief what result these changes have brought in the field of physical and cultural environment.

Change and Physical Environment

The Gudalur Taluk commonly known as Gudalur Nilgiris Wynad is a part of Wynad plateau which is located in between the Southern Maidan of Karnataka plateau in the north, the Eastern Ghat in the south and east and on the west it is separated from the Nilgiris plateau by the Paikara river. Apart from this the Gudalur Wynad differs from the Western Wynad. The Western Wynad is more flat and is dominated by the paddy followed by cardamom and pepper; whereas Gudalur Wynad is more undulating and is dominated by plantation agriculture of mainly tea and coffee followed by horticulture and paddy.

Gudalur taluk receives the highest rainfall (2000 milimeter and above) in the district. June, July and August are the rainy months when the Southwest monsoon used to blast the region with heavy downpour. The region also receives rainfall by Northeast monsoon which sets in during the month of October. With high rainfall and undulating topography the region is an important ecological unit in the Western Ghat. Apart from the vast evergreen forest this region also harbours a wide range of wild flora and fauna. But the picture differs today what it was two century before or say before James Ouchterlony first opened this virgin land and forest for plantation agriculture. The forest was widely cleared to accommodate the plantation agriculture. With the development of plantation agriculture a huge amount of migrant population came to work in the plantation agriculture. Wynad ecology started changing rapidly. Deforestation and land encroachment became a general problem. Thus Gudalur environment is in the state of transition. We do not have more data before the transition state. One of the earliest writing which we have, are the accounts of Captain Henery Harkness published in 1832 just before the area was occupied by plantation agriculture in the year 1847. He presents a vivid description of the landscape in the following words, "On entering Ootacamund from the northwest or by the main road leading from Mysore country, the opposite mountains, alluded to above, are in the highest degree beautiful and picturesque, forming a majestic and extended amphitheatre". He further writes, "Nor is the scene less beautiful on a nearer approach, for you then find the green bespangled with a variety of the most beautiful wild flowers,

of every diversity of colour ; the trees, among which appear the crimson rododendron and the white camelia, varying in shade and richness of foliage ; and some covered with moss, assuming all the hoary appearance of winter, while the banks of the rills and streamlets that meander at their base, are lined with dog-rose and jassemines ; and all around are seen the strawberry and numerous other wild fruits, flourishing in spontaneous luxuriance" (Harknees : 1832).

The main reason for presenting the above writing was to give an idea of the environment condition prevailing in those days. We can safely assume that Gudalur was little disturbed by the human activities before the coming of European followed by massive plantation agriculture. This assumption has been drawn by looking into some of the ethnographic reports on the tribal population of this area.

Change and social/cultural environment

We have noted above that there has been a considerable change in the physical milieu due to arrival of better technology in the form of plantation agriculture. Plantation agriculture on the one hand has cleared vast areas of virgin forest for new crops on the other hand it has allowed immigration of labourers from the neighbouring states to work in the plantation estates. It has been observed in other parts of the world also that the native population was not interested in the plantation work. Plantation agriculture demanded huge areas and huge labour forces. Obviously these two requirements could not as a general rule be met within the same place, and consequently land being fixed, labour had to be moved (Folke : 1968). With the change in the habitat what happened to the tribal and non-tribal society? We will now look into this problem taking the tribal society first followed by non-tribal local society.

The Nilgiris Wynad has been the home of three major tribal groups, the Paniyan, the Kurumba specially Mullu Kurumba and the Kattunaickens (Table 2.11). Each of these tribal groups made their livelihood separately leaving little scope for overlapping. As far as possible each and every tribal group remained confined to its own 'ecological niche'. 'Ecological niche' may be defined as a system in which a species utilizes the resources of its environment and its relation to the other species in the biological community in terms of symbiosis or competition, predation or parasitism. In a biological community no two co-existing species share the same niche (Gadgil & Malhotra : 1981). Hence no two co-existing group or society have the same

traditional niche. Their niches are so different that it has avoided any excessive competition for the same resources. Each and every group had developed its own economy which was very much keeping in view of the ecological constraints. In the case of Nilgiris Wynad also, the three above mentioned tribal societies have evolved different economic systems so that they can survive together in the same niche. But the so-called impetus of external change has modified their 'ecological niche' in such a way that it has threatened their very survival in their own habitat. The rapid degradation of the natural resource base—forest, for their food and shelter has disrupted the symbiotic relationship which these groups had developed with each other in the region in the past. Before going into discussion of the process of change it is worthwhile to note here that we are constrained by the non-availability of data for cross references. At the same time the area has been little studied by social scientists. Whatever study we have are generally confined to the Nilgiris region. However our analysis here are based primarily on field observation supported by topographical sheets, three Resurvey & Settlement Reports and study of Misra, R. (1971 & 1982) and Misra, P. K. (1982).

The Paniyan: The Paniyan who are well distributed over the map of Nilgiris Wynad (Figure 2.4) are the largest primitive group in the Nilgiris Wynad. Until recently they were bonded labourers of rural serfs and, still earlier, cattle slaves of the Chettis of Wynad (Aiyappan: 1980). Socially, they were and are considered to be lowest (Misra: 1982). Before abolition of the 'Bonded Labour System' the Paniyan were mostly related with the Chettis's society. The Chettis used to offer them negligible amount of money in the form of advance on the occasion of a particular festival and in lieu of, the Paniyan were to serve their master Chettis of whole of the year. Apart from this Paniyan society was supported by the forest from where the Paniyan women used to collect tuber etc., for day to day consumption. Due to the 'Bonded Labour System' the Paniyan society was fully dependent on the Chettis for their cloth, shelter and other ritual requirements. With the abolition of Bonded Labour System the Paniyan are put to a different situation. On the one hand the Chettis are not willing to accept the Paniyan labourer at the new terms and conditions due to the old value system prevailing among them at the same time Paniyan has to compete with the immigrant landless labourers of Tiyas and other caste. Hence their labour market is shrinking day by day. The

forest on which the Paniyan has depended through generations has been dwindling at an alarming rate making the future more bleak. It is painful to note that the Paniyan could not find regular employment in the plantation estates although at the initial stage their labour was utilized for clearing the forest. Government development programme has not rolled down from the hills of Nilgiris to the Wynad of Nilgiris. No doubt eight government Tribal Residential Schools are running in Gudalur Taluk with higher rate of dropout and poor infrastructure. The emerging socio-economic situation has pushed the Paniyan society in more and more isolation. As they were socially/culturally and economically dependent on the Chettis they could not develop any other skill also. With less occupational mobility the Paniyan society is at a stake.

The Kuruba : According to the Project Report on the Development of Kuruba or Kurubas, prepared by the Harijan Welfare Department 1980, there are five types of Kurubas—(a) Betta of Vetta Kuruba (Hill Kuruba), (b) the Jen or Ten (honey) Kuruba, (c) The Urali (Ur=village) Kuruba, (d) Pal Kurumba and (e) Mullu (bamboo, Kuruba. But again Misra, 1982 differs with this categorisation of the Kuruba. We do not have detailed ethnographic study on this tribal group except Jenu Kuruba (Misra, P. K : 1969) and Mullu Kuruba (Misra, R : 1971). The Jenu Kuruba are distributed mostly in Karnataka. We will take Mullu Kuruba for our study here because they are the dominating Kuruba of Nilgiris Wynad. The Mullu Kuruba are distributed on the western villages of Nilgiris Wynad such as Erumad, Cherankod, Munanad and Nelliyalam. Primarily Mullu Kuruba were shifting cultivators, food gatherers and hunters. Hence the whole economy was based on forest only. But arrival of plantation agriculture reduced the forest area as well as the habitat of Mullu Kuruba. Whatever forest was left was encroached upon by the immigrant resulting in complete vanishing of shifting cultivation. Deforestation left no scope for hunting. Today the Mullu Kurumba are landless agricultural labourers. Once they were at the top of the hierarchical level due to better food technology under their control but today their condition is not different from other tribal group. There is an exception in Erumad where Mullu Kuruba had responded to the new change and they have developed their dry land into small coffee gardens.

The Kattunaicken : The Kattunaicken are the worst hit tribal group of the Nilgiris Wynad due to the emerging new economic order. The Kattunaicken were inhabiting in the interior forest and were mainly food gatherers, hunters and trappers. The whole economic order revolved round food gathering which was supplemented by hunting and trapping wild animals. But arrival of tea plantation specially in Cherumulli, Gudular and on the border of Nellyalam and Munanad pushed the Kattunaicked from the habitat (deep forest) to the periphery of the forest. Finally the Kattunaicken were made to understand that the habitat which was a source of their survival does not remain 'theirs'. Due to lack of knowledge in wet cultivation the peasantry caste did not employ them as agricultural labourers. Thus the Kattunaicken are in the state of refugee in their on habitat. What ever help came from the government in the form of employment in the forest department does not help them to a great extent. They are badly exploited by the forest contractors and other immigrant population.

Thus the tribal society of Nilgiris Wynad is facing a difficult situation. The economic and political apparatus have been occupied by the immigrant population who are not interested in their welfare. The tribal land whatever it is, is fastly going into the hands of immigrant population. If we want to improve the present condition a legislation should be forced to save the encroachment of the tribal habitat.

The native non-tribal society (Mountadan and Wynadan Chettis)

Mountadan and Wynadan Chettis are the peasant caste of Nilgiris Wynad. It is not known when both these groups arrived in Nilgiris Wynad. Both the Chettis are different group culturally. The Mountadan Chettis who speak a broken form of Kannada are mainly inhabited in the eastern portion of Needle Rock in the five villages—Cherumulli, Srimadurai, Padantarai, Devala and Gudalur. Looking back in the history of Mountadan Chettis we find that the plantation agriculture has not made severe impact on the traditional economy because the Mountadan Chettis society is dominated by wet land agriculture and the wet land was not encroached by the plantation because it was unsuitable for it. However, the area was opened and slowly the immigrant population started entering in the Chettis society by cash economy. More and more land of Chettis went into the hands of immigrant population. Bonded Labour Abolition Act came as a

suicidal for the Chettis society which ruined them further economically. The Mountadan Chettis lost their economic superiority. It has been observed that the wet land cultivation is not economic and hence this traditional cultivation is not in a position to support the Chettis' society in the changed circumstance (Singh : 1982).

The Wynadan Chettis who inhabit the western portion of Nilgiris Wynad in the villages of Nelliyalam, Cherankod, Munanad and Erumad are in a slightly better position than the Mountadan Chettis. In the changed circumstances they have gone for plantation agriculture specially coffee and pepper. Even in the wet land they are growing High Yielding variety of paddy but the percentage is very low. But overall situation is not better and here also they have lost their economic and political power.

Above we have tried to document what had happened, to the tribal and the non-tribal native society of Nilgiris' Wynad after the arrival of plantation agriculture as an impetus of change. It is difficult to depict the future because the plantation economy is controlled by international market and regulation. But it can be well stated that the tribal and non-tribal native society is losing the race. One thing which bother us—whether is it possible to change this trend? Why not the forest can be protected from going further in the fold of plantation agriculture so that the ecosystem is saved? Why not the right of tribals are more guarded by powerful legislation so that the tribal land will not go out into the hands of other population? Why not major economic help is given to non-tribal native population so that they can sustain their survival? But again there are some powerful lobbies which are working against their interest.