

Nil giri Hills

- Vanya Orr





Introduction

- Two slide shows: first concerning the Nilgiris: their importance to the South and the breakdown of the eco-system.
- How I became involved and the work being done to involve the communities in their regeneration.



The Land and Its People

- In this slide show we will be looking at the Nilgiri Hills: the land and its people.
- The breakdown of this unique bio system.
- The impact of that on the South India States.

Geographical

- Nilgiri Hills lie in the Southwest of India.
- They are roughly 1,500 square kilometres.
- Most of the water for South India rises here.
- This water is seriously threatened by the breakdown of the eco system.







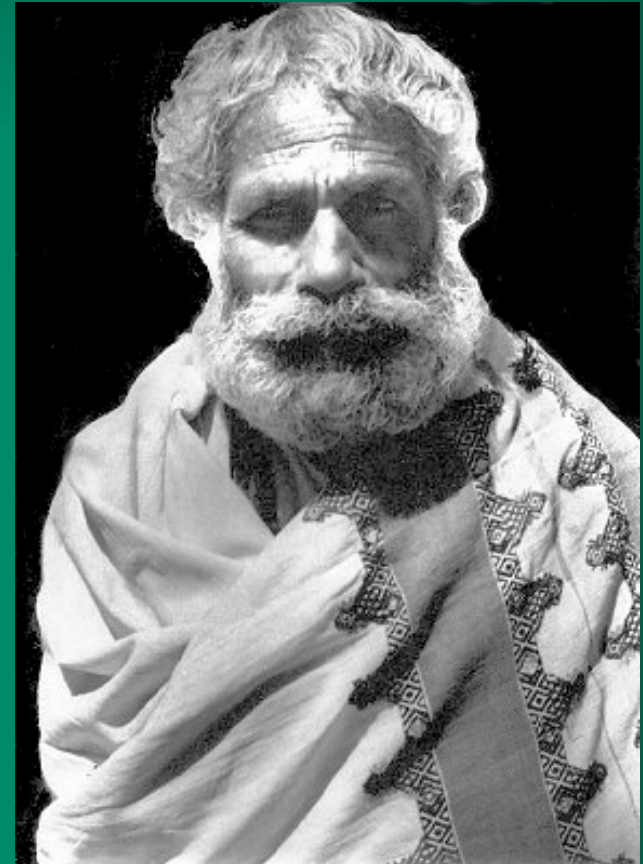


Indigenous People

- ◆ Four symbiotic groups before the Europeans arrived in 1820:
- ◆ Todas, the buffalo people,
- ◆ Badagas, the cultivators,
- ◆ Irulas, the musicians,
- ◆ Kurumbas, the magicians.

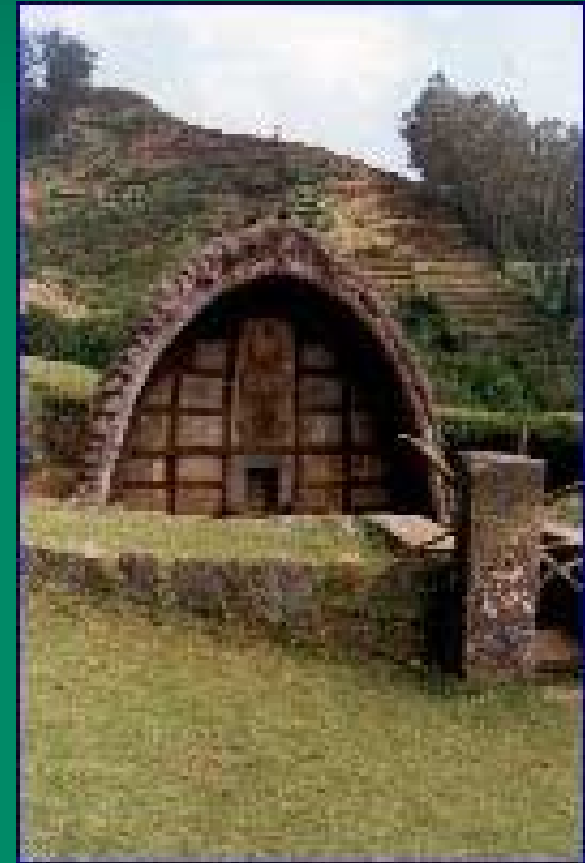
The Todas

- ◆ The oldest tribe of the Nilgiris
- ◆ There are many theories of where they came from.

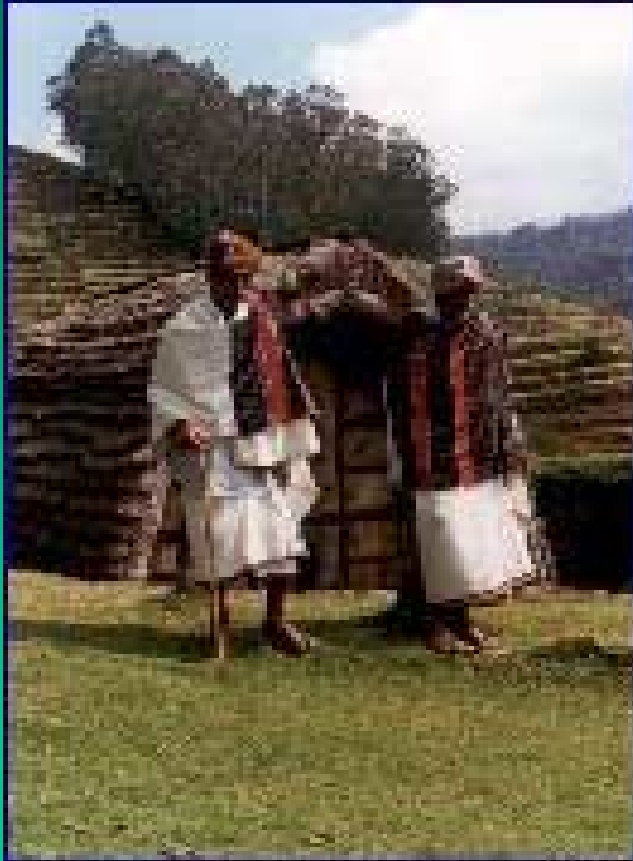


Toda Temples

- ◆ One of the central rituals is the building of the temple with sacred materials.
- ◆ The temple is the ritual dairy for the buffalo.
- ◆ Only men can enter and they must bathe ritually before doing so..



Toda Women



- ◆ This is a Patriarchal society..
- ◆ The women have a tradition of embroidering red and black threads on homespun cotton.
- ◆ They wear their hair in long ringlets.

Spirit Paths

A landscape photograph showing rolling hills in the foreground and a range of mountains in the background under a hazy sky. The hills are covered in dry, brownish vegetation. The mountains in the distance are layered, with the closest ones appearing in shades of blue and purple, suggesting a misty or overcast atmosphere. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

The leap into AMNOR over the horizon

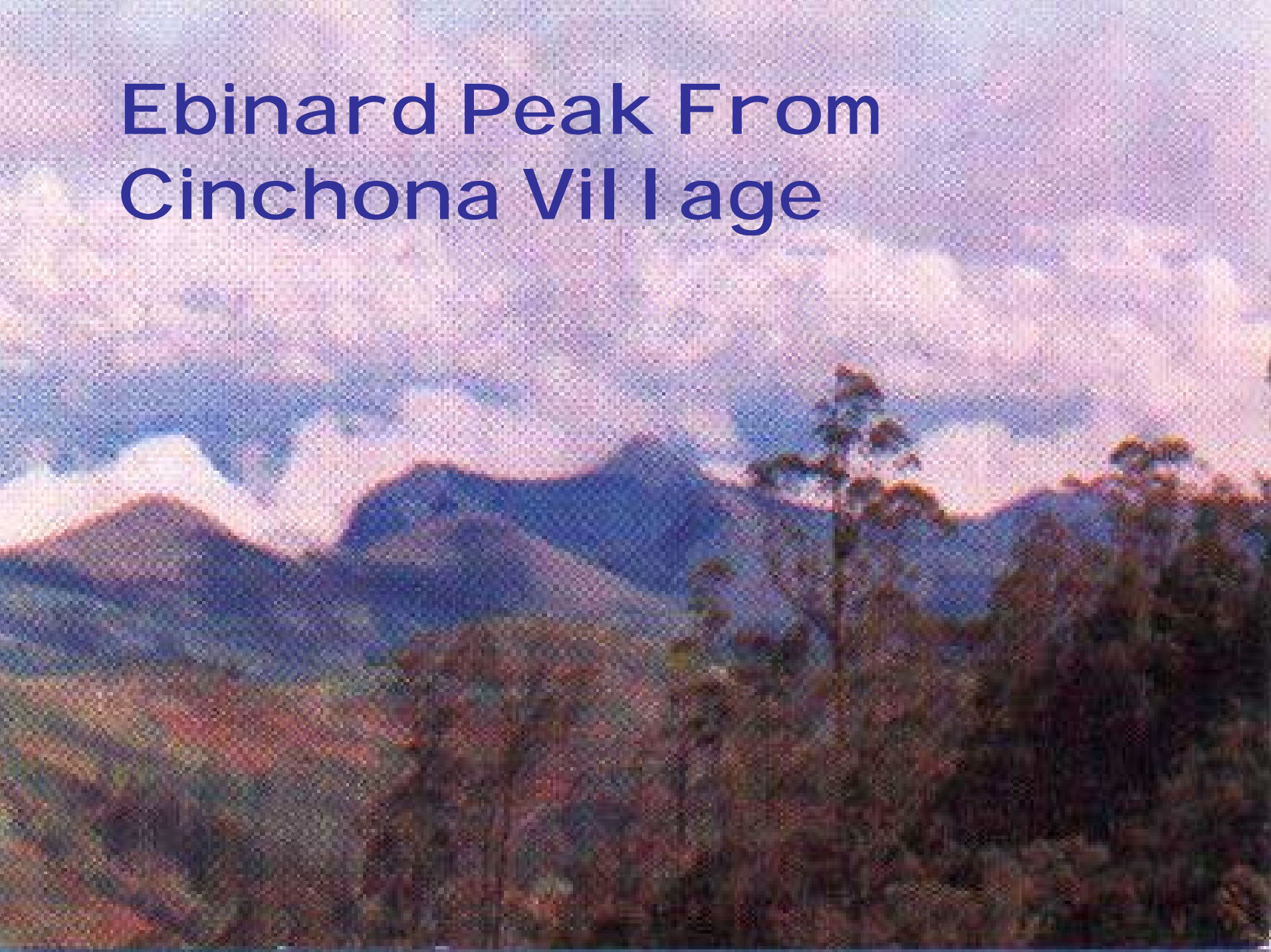


Badagas

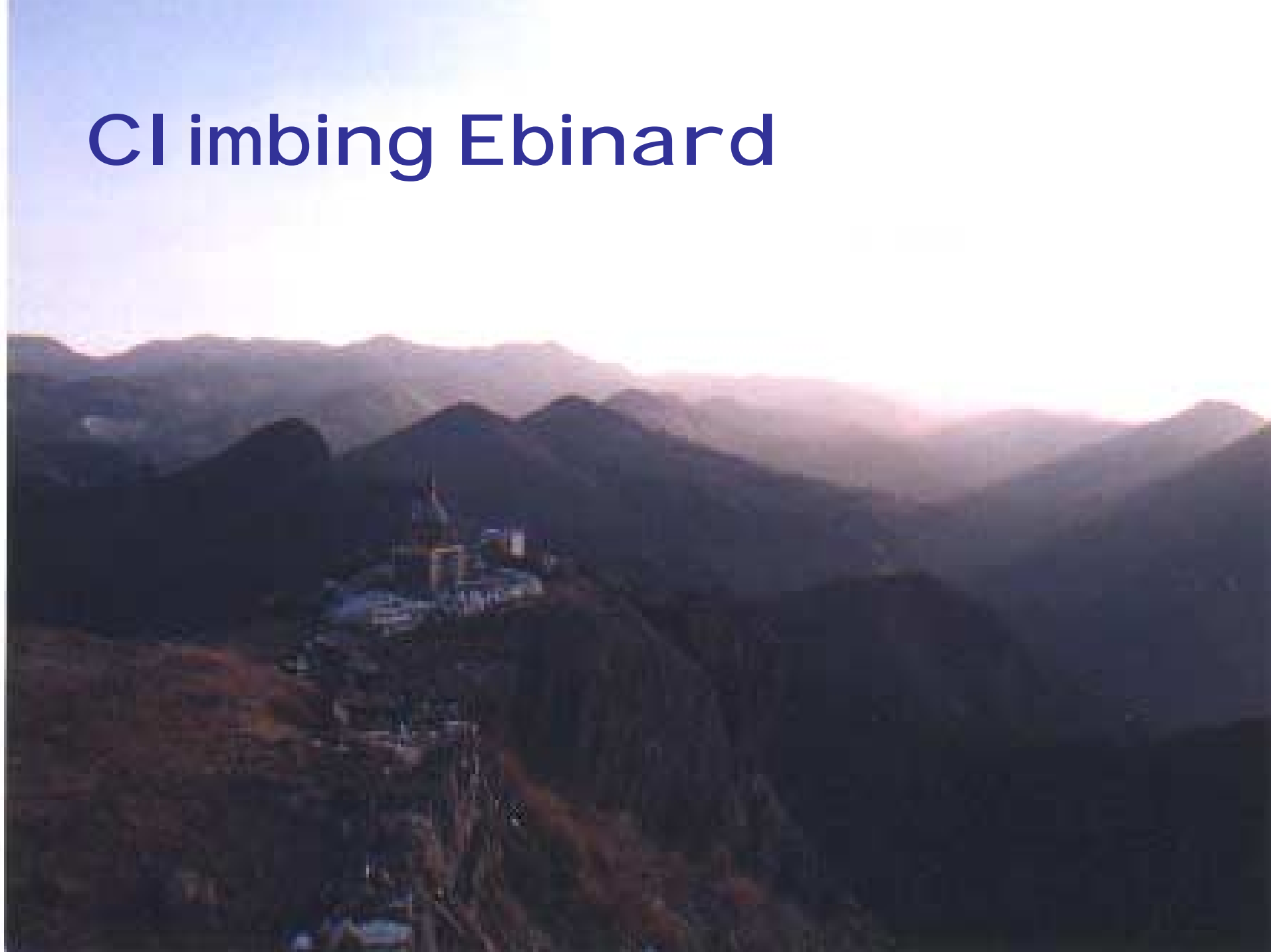
- Most of the large villages in Nilgiris belong to Badagas..
- They call themselves "The Sons of the Soil."
- They have many tea gardens and vegetable growing areas.



Ebinard Peak From Cinchona Village



Climbing Ebinard

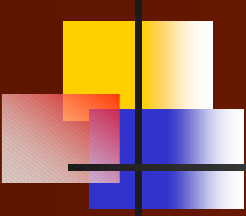


The Murugan Temple at Ebinard

- Murugan, a son of Shiva, is the equivalent of our St Michael,
- The spiritual warrior against evil.
- His temples on the hilltops between earth and heaven.
- This is a rare north facing temple.



Human Pressures on Biosphere

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- Population increase
 - Easy entry – as water flows
 - Settlement of Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka
 - Development of extensive tea plantations for them
 - Unplanned development
 - Farm encroachments

The Breakdown of the Eco-system



- Unlimited grazing by cattle
- Traditions

The Breakdown of the Eco-system

- Unplanned development
- Exotic tree planting





Graph of Land Use

Shol a Forest and Eucalyptus Plantation



Forest Fires

In exotic
plantations
fires rage
widely in the
dry season

Shola forests
are naturally
resistant to
fire



Dying Forests



Land Degradation and Loss of Topsoil



Tea Plantations

- Green deserts
- Massive topsoil loss
- Mono dependency for farmers
- High chemical use, insecticides and herbicides
- Diversion of water





What This Means

- The health of the hills is the wealth of the plains.
- The distress of the land and the rivers and the people is creating a new way forward.
- There are economic benefits in organic and bio diverse systems of farming now.



What This Means

- As well as working in the villages we can set up a College, practically based for the farmers and women's groups.
- This can empower them not to be elitist but to give them value where they are.