Lucky is the individual whose life is devoted to learning. In a broader perspective, dedicating oneself for knowledge is nothing but 'Life Divine.'

The Mother Earth, the known abode of the existing Man has attracted the attention of scholars of different disciplines and nationalities for centuries together. Naturally, the study, therefore, of the old, viz. **ARCHAEOLOGY** warrants the attention of modern man.

Judging from this angle, the Indian sub-continent, with its diversified peninsular features, too, has got a vital role to play in the sage of human progress and civilization. The same role was more effectively played by Kerala, in no small measure in enriching India's cultural heritage and antiquity.

This land of coconuts, stretching amid mountains and rivers from South Kanara to Cape Comorin at the tip of India, figures in recorded history from very early times, but the importance of this state to pre-historic archaeology is not widely recognised. In fact it may bring the date of man's earliest artistic expression in South India to times as early as 7000 B.C.

Recent work in Kerala phase of Indian prehistoric horizon, has rightly proved, beyond doubt, that this tiny foot
of India has yielded in fact, more revolutionary evidence than the rest of the country. This thesis the record of the exploration and resultant observation, made by me during the course of my doctoral study from 1974 both as a full time Research Scholar of Deccan College, Poona, for some time and then as a part-time Research Scholar, for, by that time I entered the Kerala State Department of Archaeology, Trivandrum, where I am continuing as the Superintending Archaeologist even today.

This part of the land small in area, with a higher density of population, standing in need of systematic explorations, received attention only lately. Attempts made were quite recent. This thesis is also one such attempt, probably the first of its kind, wherein fresh clues have been brought to light, for future scholars to work in solving the riddles of Kerala prehistory.

Kerala, with its naturally-blessed topographical setup, differs greatly from the rest of India in geography, land system, climate rainfall, crops, customs and manners and antiquity which cannot be compared with any other part of India. This narrow 'cornucopia' between the Arabian sea and the Western Ghats with a population of about 25 million in an area of about 3900 sq. kms. is probably one of the most interesting and fascinating part of our country (remember the internationally famous beach of Kovalam, Trivandrum). The present state now comprise most parts of the erstwhile Travancore and Cochin States and the Malabar District of
the former Presidency of Madras.

Geographically protected and culturally unified by the presence of the Arabian Sea in the West and the Western Ghats in the east, this part of India, stretching about 300 miles from North to South with an equally lengthy coastal line was able to preserve a United Culture despite the fact that the country—the land and the people were subjected to many internal and external impediments due to the political invasions, maritime activities, cultural exchange programmes and other causes.

Even then the enigmatic past of Kerala is mainly lost in obscurity, the reasons being many and variant. The blessing of having an extensive and continuous coastal line coupled with the "come hither" attitude of the people towards trade and commerce through the sea, definitely, make Kerala a flourishing centre of 'International Relations' and commerce-cum-communication activities even from the days of King Solomon the wise. Still this has got very little to contribute towards the bygone past and prehistory of Kerala. Schools differ in their opinion as to the paucity of research, was due to the absence of technically trained workers with a diversity of knowledge varying from Anthropology to Zoology combined with a sense of respect for the antiquarian wealth of Kerala. Thus, as mentioned earlier the land exhibiting the concept of cultural unity within geographical diversity has always projected a distinct cultural continuity and significantly
isolates as well as projects a primal picture of antiquarian individuality. It is from this standpoint that Kerala's prehistoric will have to be viewed and recorded in its total scientific perspectives. At the same time except in North Kerala (the former Malabar District of Madras Presidency) where limited work was done, Kerala has practically remained unexplored.

When I started my research observations, the problem before me was that why the present Kerala State sites have not yielded stone age evidences and equally why the erstwhile Travancore area has not yielded more megalithic sites. Providence, as it may, both my puzzles have been rightly answered along with the later explorations by recent works of scholars which have yielded fruitful and meritorious results.

At the outset every thing found to be bleak especially at the time of my preliminary exploration. Still I pursued my work; thanks to the optimistic indications of my guide and the good will of the local people of my field-area of research to whom I own very much, my problems were answered one by one.

Thus the views expressed by me here are strictly and solely mine and naturally so, I hold myself responsible for the commissions and omissions. That way this project would not have materialised but for the whole-hearted co-operation of many persons and officials drawn from different walks of life, to most of whom I was a stranger when I started the work. All such -- my notes of acknowledgements and gratitude
to all those noble souls, I will be expressing it separately with adequate reverence.

Equally without meaning offence, I must record the reverse side of my research-coin. When I was pondering over the preliminary data I don't claim that to be above controversy among pioneers of Kerala prehistory literally, Kerala prehistory was taken to be a total vacuum. Whatever little was done, by even modern scholars also pertained to megalithic i.e. the last phase of prehistory or only historic periods.

Naturally, so the first task, ahead of me was to locate my first exploratory area.

Generally like any other exploration, in the archaeological exploration also, we travel from known sites to unknown ones. For pointing the former, the officials of Directorate of Archaeology, Government of Kerala, were of immense help of which the name of Shri K. Maheswaran Nair, the present Director (then Epigraphist) needs definite worthy attention. In the same way, as mentioned, earlier, in this introductory part, though no scope for personal commitments exist, still my devotion for my Father and my affectionate pulse for my 'VELU' (Shri M. Velayudhan Nair, Conservation Officer, Regional Conservation Laboratory, Government of Kerala) should again definitely be mentioned.
Again, the problem for my doctoral thesis, prehistoric archaeological Investigations of South Kerala, the following also had to be added "with special reference to the Valley of AWINAD" for the latter mentioned areas proved to be nerve centre of activity. Thus practically the whole of the Kerala portion of the former Travancore while till recently remained 'a virgin field of research' from the archaeological point of view. Geographically Kerala being a small area, we have got only two divisions viz. South Kerala and North Kerala and physiographically and geo-morphologically the state can be divided into three viz., the Lowland and Midland and the High land.

Antiquarian researches, regarding Kerala’s past, have been going on for little less than a century now. With the result literary evidences are also of very little use to prehistoric archaeologist engaged in this study. By that way the problems and the solutions discussed in this dissertation may be taken only as a key to the Prehistoric Studies of Kerala, for future, scholars who in the years to come will be able to unearth hidden treasures of Kerala’s prehistoric antiquities.

Repeatedly, I hereby claim only one thing, that the so called myth concerning "the Early Man of Kerala with stone-age cultures never existed," is exposed and quite recent explorations and trial diggings conducted by the State
Department of Archaeology, have proved beyond doubt that we have got evidence, i.e., sites have yielded megalithic findings in busy-living-habitations sites also. The long continuity of coastline smoothened naval and maritime activities, while the presence of hills, cliffs, and hillocks, mountains and river-terraces too prepared the natural abode and worthy cultural arena for the Marainur Man, the typical Kerala Prehistoric specimen, evidences of which are found in the eastern foothills of the Western Ghats. Thus by way of this NOTE I am requesting young research scholars to turn their Archaeologist's eye to the part of the land.

The thesis is divided into two groups with two chapters each, apart from 'Antique Personality of Kerala - Conclusion', of which the first deals with the 'Work Done' and the latter half with 'the Problems'. Guidelines for the above same are arranged in the pattern mentioned in the contents.