Chapter-1

Introduction and Research Proposal

1.1 Introduction

Archaeological research in Kerala has a long tradition since the first reporting of a Megalithic tomb from the northern part of Kerala. However, alike other region in the sub-continent this small strip of land has not received much attention so far. Perhaps the reason behind this is lack of trained researchers yet sporadic explorations and excavations undertaken yielded a wide range of cultural material varying from the prehistory to the late medieval period. Although antiquity of Palaeolithic culture in Kerala is still an unsettled issue, the microliths of the mesolithic period, and palaeoart discovered in different parts of the State unambiguously signify earlier occurrence of human in the region prior to the emergence of Megalithic tradition. A number of Neolithic celts were reported from Kerala as surface findings. Though some scholars assign a Neolithic phase in Kerala merely based upon this, the distinct features of the Neolithic culture are yet to be distinguished in this part of the land. It is obvious that the celt alone does not represent the Neolithic culture. The Iron-Age Megalithic culture is the widely talked subject in Kerala. The discussion began first reporting by Babington on the Pandoo coolies of Malabar. Since then hundreds of Megalithic monuments have been reported from various parts of Kerala. Consequently a number of published and unpublished works have dealt only with fundamentals of Megalithism, viz. location, typology, material culture and distribution of Megalithic graves. Quite a lot of burials were subjected to excavation and a couple of reports are published. Nevertheless, it was felt that archaeological research in Kerala surrounds mere typological classification of Megalithic burials more or less irrespective of socio-economic significance within the cultural system. More or less same picture can be seen in case of the Early Historic and Historic period of Kerala. Somehow new approaches in archaeology did not attract scholars to embark upon the archaeological data against the wide range of theoretical approaches. Kerala archaeology has not much regarding some features of New Archaeology such as chronology of a culture, sites
categories and functioning, formation processes, ethnoarchaeology and the reciprocal approach of physical and cultural environment, etc.

Against this backdrop, the present study of Archaeology of the Anjunad Valley has been selected for a systematic investigation. Anjunad Valley, located in the north-eastern fringes of Idukki district, South Central Kerala is an ideal location for any culture to flourish. The vast pastoral and agricultural land surrounded by forests, and the perennial water source must have attracted the earlier settlers. In addition, closeness to Coimbatore and Madurai region of Tamil Nadu suggests the possibility of early human adaptation. Occurrence of the rock art, Megalithic burials, historical sculpture, medieval temples, and inscriptions invariably are signifying the archaeological potentiality of the region. However, to date, no systematic documentation has been carried out. Hence cultural, chronological and ethnical context of the archaeological data remains unknown. Therefore, a systematic investigation of Anjunad Valley was planned. Concentration was mainly given to the Megalithic and rock art due to the cultural importance and increasing human land encroachment and vandalism.

1.2 Study Area

Anjunad Valley (10° 16’ 30.6” N: 77° 09’ 36.8” E) is located in the north-eastern parts of Devikulam Taluk in Idukki district, bordering Tamil Nadu (Fig.1.01). Anjunad is situated at a distance of 42 km north-east of Munnar and 40 km from the famous town of Udumalpet in Tamil Nadu. The interstate highway connecting Munnar- Udumalpet in Tamil Nadu passes through this valley. In the literary meaning Anjunad does not associate with any river valley. But due to its natural formation, the tunnel like region shaped in between Anaimalai and Palani hill tracts is generally known as Anjunad valley. This valley is bordered by Kodanthoor, Chinnar Hills in the north, Mannavananchola, Anamudi Shola National park in the south, Anaimalai hill tracts in the west and Palani hill tracts comprising Kottakamboor, Vattavada in the east. The main study area comprises villages of Marayoor, Kanthaloor and Karayoor amidst the Marayoor reserved forest and the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary is the centre.
1.3 Background of the Research

The archaeological wealth of Kerala has fascinated many of the colonial antiquarians and inspired them to explore and document these materials. The antiquarian research in Kerala begins with the publication of the first ever discovery of a Megalithic burial from the northern region of Kerala by John Babington (1823). It was a stimulus for other antiquarian researches to enquire and document scattered Megalithic evidence from different regions of Kerala. Some of the main works carried out before 1950 by various scholars were Logan (1879: 309-311), Ward and Conner (1863), Robert Sewell (1882: 238-259), Fred Fawcett (1901), Longhurst (1911-12: 159-60), L.A. Cammmiade (1930:183), Krishna Iyar (Iyer 1929-30: 118-119, 1938-39: 58-61), Plenderleith (1930:190), Aiyyappan (1933), Poduval (1938-39, 1939-40, 1947), Krishnaswami (1949) and Todd (1932). In the beginning, these works were focused on the site reporting. The discovery of Edakkal petroglyphs by F. Fawcett was crucial since this has thrown light on the first palaeoart in Kerala. In fact, it is highly appreciable that many of these researchers were not only interested in mere reporting of the site but also tried their best to interpret them (Darsana 2006: 37-44).

provided a good platform to understand the cultural route of bygone people of Kerala. Recent excavation at Pattanam of Musiris in Eranakulam district is significant in the context of Early Historic culture of Kerala (Cheria et al. 2011). This site has widely acquired the attentions of scholars in international level as the Early Historic trade relations with other countries are largely evidenced.

1.4 Previous Research in the Study Area; An overview

Idukki is one of the highly potential areas for archaeological research. A number of archaeological vestiges have been reported from the various parts of the District. This part of the chapter discusses some of the earlier works done in the District especially in the study area of Anjunad Valley for the better understanding of the cultural set up of the region.

1.4.1 Megalithic Culture

Ward and Conner were first to report the trace of antiquarian remains from the Idukki district (Ward and Conner 1863: 19). They unearthed an urn burial at Chokkanad yielded that few rice husks (Ward and Conner 1863: 19). Later on Krishna Iyer and Vasudeven Poduval conducted considerable amount of surveys in the 1930s and 1940s. Krishna Iyer wrote couple of articles on the Megalithic culture in Kerala with special reference to the Anjunad Valley. According to Krishna Iyer, Mr. M.S. Doraiswamy Iyengar was the first person to write about the Megalithic monuments of Anjunad Valley. Doraiswamy Iyengar described the distribution of dolmens along the banks of River Pambar in Marayoor of the Anjunad valley (Iyer 1929-30: 117, 1938-39: 58-61). In subsequent years, Vasudeven Poduval from the State Department of Travancore made discovery of a number of Megalithic sites and also opened a couple of dolmens at Marayoor, Vandiperiyar, Periakanal and Bison Valley (Poduval 1938-39, 1949: 2, Tampi 1983: 111-112). The trial digging conducted at Periakanal by Poduval yielded an urn burial containing pieces of a rusted iron dagger and broken pots (Tampi 1983: 111). Two dolmens opened at Marayoor in 1947 gave evidence of fragmentary bones, a trident and potsherds (Poduval 1947: 2, Menon 1975: 17-43). He also opened couple of dolmens at Bison Valley which is in the southern ridge of the Anjunad Valley. Apart from these,
Archaeological Survey of India has also made their contributions in exploration of a number of Megalithic sites, viz. Chakkimedu, Idamalayar Colony Koorkuzhi, Thudathur, Nellapara, Meppara, Mookanpara and Chinnakanal (IAR 1963-64:13, 1965-66:21, 1977-78:30, 1981-82:27, 1982-83:47). In 1974, S. Padmanabhan Tampi undertook a serious research on the “Archaeology of South Central Kerala with special reference to Anjunad Valley” that render the discovery of first ever rock shelter painting in Kerala (Tampi 1983). Although he has delineated the Megalithic monuments of the Anjunad Valley, paucity of appropriate information about the locations, typological classification, etc remains unclear. Later on Yashodhar Mathpal (1998) conducted a systematic documentation of Marayoor rock art, which helped to frame a tentative chronology of these paintings that range from the Mesolithic to the Historical period. However, after these works there has been no attention on the archaeology of Idukki district until recently. Recent explorations by the present researcher in the midland regions of Idukki too added a couple of more sites in the list of Iron Age cultures in the districts (Das and Joglekar 2010). In fact, so far many of the Iron Age sites in the Idukki district have been brought to light through the accidental discoveries by the local people. Thus huge amount of fragmentary data have appeared in media as mere site discoveries. The only satisfactory attempt recently is of the State department of Archaeology when it undertook an extensive programme of documenting the Megalithic monuments in Idukki district.

1.4.2 Rock Art

In 1974 Padmanabhan Tampi undertook a Ph.D. topic by focusing on Marayoor. He discovered three painted rock shelters from the Marayoor region of the Anjunad Valley. These shelters, known as Ezhuthala are situated near Marayoor town in Koodakkad area of Marayoor forest, Attala in the same forest division of Pallanad area and Pulachikummati Alai, near Chambakkad tribal settlement of Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary. He also noticed a painted dolmen at Dindikombur on the way to Kanthaloor (Tampi 1983:146). It is significant to note that about 14 years prior to Tampi’s discovery, Victor Rosner had noted paintings of knives and hooks inside a massive dolmen (Rosner 1959: 179).
At Ezhuthala (also known as Pathipara) paintings are seen mostly in red and white pigments although the other colors like grey, saffron and black were noticeable. Layers of superimposed paintings of horse, bull, bison, seated saint-like human with arm raised, elephants with and without riders, auspicious symbols, ritual dance scene and social ceremonies are the main subjects (Tampi 1976: 141). Tampi gave a tentative chronology of these painting on the basis of motifs ranging from the Mesolithic to Early Historic period. Other two sites have yielded paintings of white pigments which deal with the themes of humans, animals, different symbols and signs. These sites date back to the Early Historic to the Historic period on the basis of the thematic representation. Tampi’s discovery of microlithic assemblages from the basal deposit of Ezhuthala forced him to ascribe Mesolithic time for the shelter. Similarly, he has also reported microlithic evidence from the vicinity of Pambar in Chambakkad close to the Pulachiala (Tampi 1983:136-37).

The tools collected from Ezhuthala comprise of points, borers or awls, burins, flakes, blades, etc. These tools are found along with the core fragments and quartz crystal or nodules. However, he has not given any account of tools found from Chambakkad (Tampi1983:137-147). Tampi brought out a couple of research articles on Anjunad rock paintings soon after the discovery, which attracted some of the scholars to visit Marayoor in subsequent years (Tampi 1976, 1978). After Tampi’s work, there was a lull for rock art research of the Anjunad Valley until Mathpal (1998: 41-45) undertook systematic documentation. He classified the paintings on the basis of style and themes and he assigned the art to seven successive phases, viz. phase I-VII. These phases were:

Phase-I: Small-sized line drawings of animals executed in a dark crimson colour. Animals are depicted standing at different angles including vertical and upside-down poses.

Phase-II: Naturalistic depictions, animals like deer and Thar are shown in small-sized shadow graphic profiles. Body contours of animals are very soft and natural.
Phase-III: Animals in profile, both in silhouette and outline. Body contours are not realistic and have been reduced and simplified into blocks. Hind legs and forelegs are also grouped in two blocks.

Phase-IV: Sharp figures medium-sized images of oxen can be found overlapping the figures of phase-III. Images are very stiff and stylized and are repetitive in nature.

Phase-V: large-sized images of human figures drawn in white and red pigments.

Phase-VI: All the images are executed in white. Human and animal figures in natural silhouettes are seen in this phase.

Phase-VII: Stylized and crude outline are noticed at Attala.

Mathpal (1998) further classified the paintings into three chronological stages:

First stage- wild animals with no relation to humans.

Second stage- animal domestication

Third stage- domestication and enslaved animals for the purpose of transportation and fighting. On this basis the period differs from late Mesolithic to the medieval period (4000 B.C.-1000 A.D.).

In the subsequent years, the Anjunad Valley witnessed a number of individual explorations that render into the discovery of more than fifteen painted rock shelters from the region. The eco-tourism members working in this area took keen interest in exploring. In this regard Tampi played a great role. Though Tampi did not do anything practically for the rock art studies in Kerala, he kept on visiting his discovered shelters, and encouraged his accompanies while taking in inside forest for finding more shelters in the area. Thereafter, since 1990-2000 more than ten rock shelters were discovered by this eco-tourism member which was lead by Mr. Eswaran Alampetti and Dhanushkodi (The Hindu 2004, June 6). Although these sites were occasionally used to be appeared in news papers, regional magazines and channels, it did not attract any scholars. It was in 2008, Dr. Rajan Gurukkal Ex-Vice Chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, made a visit to this area. (Gurukkal 2011: 273-79). During this time another interested
personnel, who got interested in rock art during his nature studies brought out a list of rock art sites from the Anjunad Valley. He claimed that of discovering more than 15 sites from the eastern portion of Anaimalai Hills (Kurian 2011: 73-86). In recent years the State Department of Archaeology, conducted a systematic survey to document the rock art and megalithic remains of the region (Personal Communication, Director, State Department, Kerala 2010-11). Intensive explorations conducted by the present researcher under his supervisors, revisited all the known rock art sites and conducted a faithful documentation. Subsequently, this study leads to the excavation of a painted shelter at Muruganpara. This work revealed that although the painting might belong to the Mesolithic period, shelter was occasionally used by the Iron Age-Early Historic people who might have practiced agriculture and cattle rearing in the region (Joglekar et al. 2013 in press).

1.5 Nature of Megaliths and Rock Arts in Kerala

Megalithism has a wide spread in all over the world and it appears in different cultural context in its real sense. In Indian context, one can find its occurrence from the northern parts of the subcontinent such as Baluchistan, Kashmir, Ganga Plain and further in Vidarbha and southern India as its centers. In this realm, some of the monuments in Kerala possess distinctive features. Unlike other states, Kerala megaliths have not witnessed a much focused problem oriented research so far. Only a handful of sites are the only sources for any sort of interpretation. Thus, scholars working in Kerala mostly depend on the results of explorations for interpretations. However some of the works, e.g. Megalithic Culture of Kasargod by Dr. Jayashree Nair and the work by Rajan Chedambath on the Ponnani river bank could bring to light the megalithic culture of that region in more refined and interpretative manner. Until recently the investigations in different regions of Kerala have brought to light around twelve different types of megalithic monuments. As far as the studies of these monuments in Kerala are concerned, the investigators restricted themselves to typological classification, but a detailed typology is yet to be attempted. Here is an attempt to place and comment on existing typological classification as far as possible.
(a) **Rock Cut Chambers**

Rock cut chambers are unique to Kerala and especially to northern Kerala. They are extensively found in the lateritic bed. This type of monument is made by scooping out laterite bed vertically where a small rectangular entrance is noticed. This face is sealed with a rectangular capstone and it is difficult for one person to pass through. This cave has a hemispherical arched vault which is sealed with a capstone. In some cases steps leading into the chambers are found. The chambers are rectangular, circular or semi-circular in shape. Places like platform are noticed where pot shreds can be kept. The famous sites are Umachipoyil, Porkalam, Eyyal, Kattakambal, Chovannur have this type of monuments.

(b) **Umbrella Stones/ Kudakkal**

Umbrella stones are mushroom shaped lateritic structures which resemble to a palm leaf umbrella that is common in Kerala. This typical monument is located in the lateritic terrain and structurally it consists of a stem and head like umbrella (Jayashree 2005: 18). This pure lateritic monument type is known mostly in the region of Thrissur, Kozhikode and Kannur districts. Kantanassery, Kotakkal, Alattur, Vengara, Atholy and Kodually are the famous such sites.

(c) **Hat Stones/Cap-Stone/Toppikkal**

This type of monuments is a simple version of umbrella stone which rests directly on the ground without clinostats of the umbrella stones. It is a hemispherical capstone made of laterite usually entombing probably an urn burial. This monument is generally seen in different locations of Thrissur such as Ernad, Ottapalam, Talapilly, and Mannarkkad taluks.

(d) **Urns and Sarcophagi**

Urn burials are one of the major Iron Age monuments that have been found extensively in Kerala especially in the red soil region. Geographically this monument is mostly seen in the midland and low land regions of Kerala as compared to highland fringes. Urn burials are type of burials which sometimes contains human remains and other materials
which are found in pits and sometimes in cist burials. The local nomenclature, like any other monument, differs from region to region. However, urn burials in Kerala are popularly known as *Nanangadi* and Muthumakkal Thazi. Sarcophagi are terracotta coffins with an animal face and legs. Perunkulam and Kattakamabel are the two sites where this type is found.

(e) **Dolmens**

Dolmens are table-like stone structures made on the surface. It is locally known as *Muniyara*. Regionally a number of architectural variations of dolmens can be seen. Dolmens are usually seen in the granitic outcrops and the rocky platforms. These types of burial monuments are found on the eastern fringes of Idukki-Palakkad and Thrissur districts.

(f) **Cist**

Cists are nothing but a variant of dolmen which is completely buried inside soil. It has got the actual form of a dolmen-like four orthostats and covered with a capstone. Cist has different variety and multiple chambers mostly contain remains of human and associated materials. Perhaps cists are the only type which represent the primary secondary and symbolic mortuary aspects. This monument has been distributed in the high and mid land of Kerala mostly in the plains of Ponnani and Periyar river valleys.

(g) **Menhirs**

Menhirs are made of a single stones. They are erected sometimes over the relics of dead people, and are devoid of any grave goods placed beneath them. It is locally known as ‘*Nattukallu*’. These type monolithic monuments have been noticed from the northern, central and southern Kerala. At some places it is found in association with cists and urn burials.

(h) **Stone Circle**

Stone circles are nothing but boundary marker. This type has been extensively found from Tamil Nadu. In Kerala, stone circle surrounded by cist was noticed from Palakkad
which is adjacent to Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu. Huge undressed boulders are used for its construction surrounded by cists.

1.5.1 Rock Art in Kerala

Kerala posses a unique role in the rock art research of India. The first of this kind was discovered by Fred Fawcett in 1891 at Edakkal in Wayand with help of local people (Fawcett 1901, Darsana 2011). Since then a considerable number of rock art sites have been reported from Kerala.

Fawcett made painstaking efforts to document the entire motifs in the shelter with the help of sketches and photograph when photography was very much in its infant stage. This commendable effort is considered as the first photographic documentation of a rock art sites in the Indian context (Chandramouli 2002). Later on he published a detailed account of his discovery in the then journal Indian Antiquary in 1901 (Fawcett 1901). In his research account, Fawcett could successfully correlate the similarity of engraved motifs with one of the traditional ritual form in Northern Kerala, Theyyam. He also proposed parallel for the representations from the contemporary tribes like Kurumbas in the regions.

After Edakkal, there was a lull in Kerala rock art research until 1970. In 1974 Dr. S Padmanabhan Tampi discovered the famous rock shelter Ezhuthala at Marayoor in Idukki District (Tampi 1975, 1978, 1983). He also brought to light two more sites at Koodakkad (Attala) and Chambakkad (Pulachiala) from the same region. Tampi’s discovery brought to light the first painted shelters from Kerala. A detailed description of these assemblages is given in the subsequent part of this chapter. Another interesting discovery made by Tampi was a painted dolmen from the Dindikombur area during the survey (Tampi 1983: 146). Tampi also attempt to understand the engravings in the famous Ancode shelter and gave a detailed description of geometric designs and motifs (Tampi 1983).

These works basically influenced many of the researchers who were currently active in Kerala Archaeology at that time. Several scholars and even amateurs made visit to these sites, expressed their views and opinions in newspapers and vernacular
magazines, etc. Nonetheless, no one could ascribe a scientific date to the paintings. Meantime, in 1984 Dr. P. Rajendran discovered another engraved shelter at Tenmalai, in Kollam district of southern Kerala. This shelter has yielded couple of cross hatch patterns on its wall surface. Rajendran collected microlithic artefacts from the surface as well as within the habitation deposit in a stratified context. He found deposit of 35 cm thickness inside the shelter that consisted of quartz artefacts and wood charcoal scatter. This wood charcoal gave a $^{14}$C date of 5210 ± 110 B.P. (Rajendran 1984, 1987: 266). Thus Tenmalai rock shelter came to be known as first scientifically dated Mesolithic rock shelter site in Kerala. In the subsequent years Rajendran had also conducted trial excavations at Ancode shelter at Perunkadavila in Trivandrum district. This has yielded Mesolithic tool assemblages comprising of quartz materials.

In late 1980’s the State Department of Archaeology took initiative to explore the in and around area of Edakkal rock shelter. This caused the discovery of another petroglyph site known as Tovarimala, located about 3 km away from the Edakkal shelter. This small shelter consisted geometrical designs like triangles, squares and circles. Therefore, the department conducted trial diggings at Edakkal and Tovari shelters. However, no report on the same is out yet. In 1995 Prof. Rajan Gurukkal attempted a serious approach to understand the meaning behind the Edakkal engravings. He examined the study of morphology of the shelter and tried to interpret the meaning of the representations. He analyzed the motifs on the wall surface into six basic elements of productions such as canoe, cross, triangle, square, circle and volute. Hence, he proposed two explicit styles of representations; one is the style adopting solely the primary sign and the other adopting both primary secondary and mediating signs for the construction of figures. Thus, it helped him to draw a tentative chronology of Neolithic-Megalithic successive period of late millennium B.C. to the shelter (Gurukkal and Varior 1999).

In 1998, Mathpal brought out a monograph on documentation of rock arts in Kerala. He classified the paintings and engravings into different succeeding phases which chronologically vary from the Mesolithic to the late medieval times (Mathpal 1998). After Mathpal’s work, sporadic discoveries were made by the different scholars and individuals from various parts of Kerala. In these, one discovery of an engraving in the lateritic formations of Kannur regions in northern Kerala is impressive. This engraving
was of a humped bull on a lateritic surface at a place called Ettukudukka (Damodaran et al. 2006). This engraving shows a close similarity with the Goan geoglyphs (Darsana 2011). Another significant discovery was a series of rock shelter paintings from the Alampetti-Chinnar regions by S.P. Tampi in 2004 (The Hindu 2004, Dec 06). Tampi made this discovery 35 years later after his famous discovery of Ezhuthala from the same region. Although Tampi could not pursue any practical research on his own discovered sites, his occasional visit to Marayoor nurtured love on rock art in some of the villagers. This led to discovery of more than 15 rock shelter paintings from the Anjunad Valley. These recent discoveries of Tampi appeared only in newspaper and remain unpublished.

Later Gurukkal made a visit to these sites in 2008 and brought to light their archaeological significance (Gurukkal 2011). Subsequently, some amateurs also added a couple of sites into the list (Kurian 2011). Exploration conducted by the present researcher in the Anjunad Valley led to the excavation of one of the rock shelter sites (Joglekar et al. 2013). This work is dealt separately in the later part of this thesis. Darsana (2011) attempted a status report of Kerala rock art. Nonetheless, a serious approach to understand this earliest artistic expression is still lacking in Kerala rock art.

1.6 Research orientation

The present research is primarily oriented towards investigating the archaeological wealth of the Anjunad Valley. As a number of archaeological sites are spread in entire Kerala, a region-specific intensive exploration and documentation has been carried out. Thus, this research is intended to have a clear picture of the archaeological remains of the Anjunad Valley in a regional perspective.

1.7 Aims and objectives

The present research has the following objectives;

1. Reconstruction of the cultural sequence of the Anjunad Valley.
2. Investigations of human-land relationship during the Megalithic-Early Historic period in the Anjunad Valley by adopting a regional approach.
3. Documentation and interpretation of rock art culture of the Anjunad Valley.
1.8 Methodology

Methods including surface survey, trial digging and excavations, ethnographic data and folklore were adopted for identification of the characteristics of the archaeological records in the region.

1.8.1 Surface Survey

An intensive village-to-village survey was conducted to identify the nature of archaeological data spread across the landscape. In the recent years the idea of ‘site’ has shifted in the view of more refined methodology of identification of cultural record (Selvakumar 1996: 20). Therefore, the present researcher tried to view the archaeological data as a result of distribution of activities that occurred in a particular landscape. A regional approach was proposed and the data were collected with prime concern for the spatio-temporal relationship of the archaeological record. Different maps comprising the census maps, district resource maps, a topographic sheet have been used to identify the locations distribution of sites and resources available.

In the case of Megalithic site, each site has been visited and revisited for a clear-cut documentation. During the survey two newly discovered habitation sites were explored thoroughly and materials were collected by adopting a sampling method.

In the case of rock art, already reported sites were revisited and each shelter was documented on the basis of its geological formations and location. Geographic coordinates were obtained and plotted on different maps separately.

For a better understanding of subject matter, photographic documentation by using digital camera and clear-cut observations of paintings were done. Free hand drawings were made only in certain cases since it has its own limitations.

Anjunad Valley is known for painted rock shelters. But a number of unpainted shelters and seldom caves are noticed. Therefore, a systematic plotting of such a cave was conducted to identify spatial land use strategies.
Besides, other archaeological remains such as temples, sculptures, inscriptions etc were also documented during the survey.

1.8.2 Trial Digging and Excavations

Trial digging and scrapping was done in the habitation site at Nachivayal, dolmen site at Muruganpara to understand the nature of Megalithic monuments. Excavations of dolmens and rock shelter were conducted in the two localities of Muruganpara to identify the similarities and difference among the Megalithic and rock art in the region. It was also intended to collect the artefacts and ecofacts for the interpretation of the material culture.

1.8.3 Ethnographic data

A survey among the contemporary communities such as Muthuwans, Mala Pulayans, Karavazhi and the Ur Grama was undertaken to identify the subsistence and other living practices. These observations were incorporated with the archaeological data.

1.8.4 Folklore

Several stories and oral histories prevail in the Anjunad Valley regarding the ancient cultures. Many of them are invariably connected to the archaeological vestiges of the area. This oral history and legend helped into some extent to identify archaeological sites and that has been integrated for the better understanding of the region.

1.8.5 Textual evidence

The textual evidence such as inscriptions found in the study area and earlier literature regarding these were looked into to supplement the archaeological data of the region.

1.9 Limitations

The major problem during the survey faced by the researcher was, most of the Iron Age site in this region at present are located deep inside the forest of Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary and Marayoor Kanthaloor reserved forest. Thus, due to the wild animals and undulating topography it was difficult to access some of the sites even after spending
considerable time. However the present researcher has conducted a faithful documentation of all these monuments to maximum possible extent.

1.10 Plan of the Thesis

This thesis has been divided into seven chapters. The chapter-wise plan of the thesis is as follows:

**Chapter-1 Introduction and Research Questions**
This introductory chapter gives an overview of the study area and history of archaeological research in Kerala in general and study area in particular. This chapter also outlines the research orientations, objectives and methodology of the present research work.

**Chapter-2 Study area and Environment**
This chapter gives an account of the Anjunad Valley; it’s the geography, geology, climate, water sources, vegetations and animals. This chapter also discusses the contemporary tribal people in the region.

**Chapter-3 Documentation of Rock Art and Megalithic Sites**
This chapter presents the outcome of the field survey; intensive explorations and documentation of rock art and other cultural vestiges in the Anjunad Valley. It also describes the distribution pattern and locality-wise documentation of each shelter.

**Chapter-4 Explorations of Megalithic Sites**
This chapter delineates the detailed account Megalithic exploration undertaken in the Anjunad Valley. This chapter gives an idea of location, distribution pattern and types of megalithic monuments in the Anjunad Valley.

**Chapter-5 Excavation of Rock Art and Megalithic Sites**
This chapter provides a detailed account of the excavations of a Megalithic burial and rock shelter conducted as part of the present research. A detailed description of the discovery and trial trenching of habitation site is also delineated.
Chapter-6 Analysis of Rock Art

This chapter describes the detailed analysis of the rock art corpus of the study area. It delineates the rock art setting, regional history, motif analysis, and use of ethnographic analogies, relation of rock art and Megalithic culture and the approaches to rock art landscape.

Chapter-7 Analysis of Megalithic Remains

This chapter gives a detailed account of the present filed survey by the researcher to understand the Iron Age Megalithic culture in the Anjunad Valley. This chapter discusses the regional history, typological classification, nature and mode of construction of Megalithic burials. It also outlines the comparative study of these monuments in other regions.

Chapter-8 Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter highlights the results of the present research. It also outlines the existing research gap and the scope for the further research.