

# Explorations and Excavations in the Anjunad Valley, Idukki District, Kerala

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## Introduction

Anjunad Valley (10° 16' 30.6" N 77° 09' 36.8" E) is located in the north-eastern parts of Devikulam Taluk of Idukki district, bordering Tamil Nadu (Fig. 1). Anjunad valley is not associated with any river, but due to its natural tunnel like formation it is known as Anjunad Valley. This land situated at a distance of 45 km north-east of Munnar and 40 km from the famous town Udumelpet in Tamil Nadu. Anjunad is well known for its prehistoric painting and Megalithic monuments (Iyer 1929-30: 115, Rosner 1959, Menon 1975, Tampi 1983). The probable origin of word Anjunad is *five village lands*. In the local language *Anju* means five and *Nadu* is village or land. Thus Anjunad is believed to be the land where five villages are located.

## Physiography

The Anjunad Valley lies in the empty space between the Anaimalai ranges and Palani Hill tract (Fig. 2). This valley consists of three table lands viz. Manupetti, Chinnar and Marayoor. These table lands are surrounded with mountains and hillocks which are thickly forested. Charnockite-Gneiss of Archaean formation is the major rock. The soil is sandy to sandy loam in texture. The soil reaction varies from slightly alkaline to strongly acidic depending on the vegetation type (Soman 2002). The Pambar is the main river which flows through the Anjunad Valley. A number of small streams and rivulets are noticeable on the different locations of the Valley. At present, the people are engaged in the cultivating sugarcane and various types of vegetables.

## Background to the Study

Earlier researchers like Iyer (1929) and Poduval (1938-39) have provided scarce picture of archaeological vestiges of the Anjunad Valley. According to Krishna Iyer (1929-30: 119), Mr. M.S. Doraiswamy Iyengar was the first person to write about the Megalithic monuments of this region. Iyengar (cited in Iyer 1929-30: 119) described that a number of dolmens could be noticeable along the banks of river Pambar in Marayoor. In the subsequent years Iyer made couple of study on the Megalithic monuments of the Anjunad Valley and brought to light its significance to the archaeological world (Iyer 1938-39, 1967). Later on Vasudeva Poduval of State department of Travancore brought to light a number of Megalithic sites from Marayoor, Chokkanad, Bison Valley, Vandiperiyar (Poduval 1934-35, 1938-39, 1949). He also conducted excavations at some of these sites which yielded ashes, bones and a trident (Poduval 1947: 2). In 1959, Victor Rosner conducted a thorough study on

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