References

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Annexure 1: Geology of Kerala

Geology of Kerala

Physiography

Physiographically the state can be divided into four domains from east to west, viz., the Western Ghats, the foothills, the midland and the coastal low-land.

Western Ghats

The hill ranges of the Western Ghats rise to an altitude of over 2500m above the MSL and the crest of the ranges marks the inter-state boundary in most of the places. A breach in the continuity of the ranges marks the Palghat Gap with a sinistral shift of 50 km between the shifted crests. The Wynad plateau and the Munnar (10°57'00": 77°31'00") upland fall within this zone.

Foothills

The foothills of the Western Ghats comprise the rocky area from 200 to 600m. above MSL. It is a transitional zone between the high-ranges and midland.

Midland region

This forms an area of gently undulating topography with hillocks and mounds. Laterite capping is commonly noticeable on the top of these hillocks. The low, flat-topped hillocks forming the laterite plateau range in altitude from 30-200m and are observed between coastal low-land and the foothills.

Coastal low-land

Coastal low-land is identified with alluvial plains, sandy stretches, abraded platforms, beach ridges, raised beaches, lagoons and estuaries. The low-land and the plains are generally less than 10m above MSL.

Rivers

Kerala is drained by 44 rivers, many of which originate from the Western Ghats. Except Kabini, Bhavani and Pambar which are east-flowing, the rest of rivers are west-flowing and join the Arabian Sea. A few of them drain into the backwaters. Most important rivers (with their length in km in paranthesis) of the state, are Chandragiri (105), Valapatnam (110), Achankovil (120) Kallada (121), Muvattupuzha (121), Chalakudy (130), Kadalundi(130), Chaliyar (169), Pampa (176),Bharathapuzha (209) and Periyar (244).
Geology

Geologically, Kerala is occupied by Precambrian crystallines, acid to ultra basic intrusives of Archaean to Proterozoic age, Tertiary (Mio-Pliocene) sedimentary rocks and Quaternary sediments of fluvial and marine origin (Fig.I). Both the crystallines and the Tertiary sediments have been extensively lateritised.

Based on the detailed studies by GSI during the last three decades, the following stratigraphic sequence has been suggested.
<table>
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Base not recognised
The Archaean Era encompass a wide spectrum of litho-assemblages ranging from khondalite, charnockite, gneiss and meta-sedimentary rocks occupying the Western Ghats including the foothill region. The Khondalite and Charnockite Group are correlated with the Eastern Ghat Supergroup based on the overall similarity in lithology and geochronology.

Wynad Supracrustals

The meta-sedimentary and ultramafic rocks occurring in the Wynad District generated keen interest among the GSI geologists in 1970s. The high-grade Wynad supracrustal rocks are correlated with the Sargur Schist Complex of the Karnataka (Nair, et al, 1975; Adiga, 1980). The schistose rocks are characterised by intense deformation, medium to high-grade metamorphism, migmatisation and lack of sedimentary structures. The schist complex consists of meta-ultramafites, schist, meta-pelites, meta-pyroxenite, serpentinite, tale-tremolite rock and amphibolite.

The meta-sedimentaries occur as thin linear bodies within the migmatites. These consist of pelites, psammopelites and quartzites. The predominant rock types are corundum- mica schist, kyanite schist, quartz- mica schist and iron stone.(Anil Kumar et al,1993).

These rocks occur as narrow arcuate belts, lenses, and other forms of enclaves within Peninsular gneisses and charnockite. The group can be divided into medium-to low- grade metasedimentary rocks and meta-mafic and meta-ultramafic rocks. The lithology of the high-grade schists consists of quartz-mica schist with kyanite, quartz-sericite schists, quartzites, magnetite quartzite, fuchsite quartzite and meta-ultramafites. Their contact with the surrounding gneisses is concordant due to later co-folding. Several linear belts of such high-grade schists and ultramafite enclaves occur as isolated bands within the granulite and gneissic terrain of Kasaragod and Kannur districts.

Layered ultrabasic- basic complex

Remnants of layered basic- ultabasic complex are reported from Attappadi area(Nambiar 1982). The ultramafics are represented by meta-pyroxenite, meta-dolerite, peridotite with chromite and meta-gabbro (Lahiri et al, 1975). The anorthosite of Attappadi is only a few metre thick. Occurrences are around Narsimukku, Pudur and Melmulli areas. An east-west trending narrow lenticular body of serpentinised dunite is reported from Punalur mica mine belt.
A minor body (200 m long and 10-15m wide) of anorthosite was reported within pyroxene-granulite-charnockite terrain from Katanjari parambu of Kasaragod district (Adiga, 1979). Another dismembered layered igneous complex consisting of alternate layers of peridotite and pyroxenite within charnockite was traced around Panathadi area of Kannur District (Adiga, 1980).

**Peninsular Gneissic Complex- I (PGC-I)**

The rocks of Peninsular Gneissic Complex (PGC) are exposed in the northern parts of Kerala adjoining Karnataka. This consists of a heterogeneous mixture of granitoid materials. The equivalent rocks of PGC in Kerala include hornblende-biotite gneiss (sheared), biotite-hornblende gneiss, foliated granite and pink granite gneiss. Granite gneiss is exposed along the intra-State boundary of Palakkad District as well as in Idukki District. Pink granite gneiss, though widespread, is best developed in Devikolam (10°04'00":77°06'30") and Udumbanchola (10°00'00":77°15'00") areas of Idukki District.

This consists of gneisses showing preponderance of either hornblende or biotite. The percentage of hornblende and biotite varies from place to place. This can be traced from Manantoddy to further northwest upto the west coast. West of Manantoddy, the rock is hornblende gneiss. It shows coarse granulitic to gneissic texture and is composed of hornblende, feldspar, quartz, pyroxene, biotite and garnet. Alkali feldspar shows alteration to clay and sericite. Biotite is mainly secondary after hornblende.

Around Mahe and Thalasseri, the biotite gneiss (Nair et al., 1974) is medium-grained and gneissose rock consisting of alternate layers of mafics and felsics.

**Khondalite Group**

The Khondalite Group of rocks include calc-granulites, quartzite and para-gneisses of pelitic parentage. Para-gneisses are ubiquitous and are well-developed in the southern part of the state, particularly, in Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts. Calc-granulite and quartzite occur as bands within the para-gneisses and amidst the Charnockite Group and migmatitic gneisses.

**Calc-granulite**

Calc-granulite occurs as linear bands mainly in the eastern part of Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram District, northeast and east of Munnar in Idukki district and in parts of Palakkad District. The rock is generally medium to coarse-grained, inequigranular and granoblastic in texture. It consists of diopside and plagioclase. Minerals like wollastonite,
scapolite, calcite, garnet, spinel, sphene, quartz and apatite are also present in different proportions.

**Quartzite**

Quartzite occurs as linear bands amidst the khondalitic gneiss, charnockite and migmatitic gneisses. These bands are exposed between Pathanamthitta (9°15'45": 76°47'00"), and Muvattupuzha (9°59'00": 76°35'00") in Ernakulam District. The rock is coarse-grained and generally white in color with a brownish coating on the weathered surface. It consists of granular quartz with subordinate feldspar, garnet and iron oxide.

**Garnetiferous biotite-sillimanite gneiss**

Garnetiferous biotite- sillimanite gneiss is well-developed in the southern part of the state. It occurs in close association with the migmatitic gneisses, charnockite and charnockite gneisses, mostly as weathered outcrops. Sillimanite- rich bands occur alternating with garnet - rich portions or with quartzo-feldspathic layers. Rutile and iron oxides are the common accessory minerals.

**Charnockite Group**

Charnockite Group shows great diversity in lithology comprising pyroxene granulite, hornblende pyroxenite, magnetite quartzite, charnockite and hypersthene-diopside gneisses and cordierite gneiss. Charnockite and charnockitic gneiss have preponderance over all other crystalline rocks covering 40 -50% of the total area of the State. The charnockites are well-exposed in the central and northern parts of Kerala including the high–hills of the Western Ghats. Charnockite has lesser predominance in Thiruvananthapuram and Kollam districts. In Attappady, the Bhavani Shear Zone is limited by the charnockite massif of the Nilgiri plateau on the north. Though the interrelationship of the Charnockite and the Khondalite is not clear, in many places there are intercalations rather than interlayering of one with the other. In Palakkad District, the Khondalite Group of rocks structurally overlie the charnockite. The occurrence of pyroxene granulite as fine and linear bodies within the charnockite of Tirur, suggests that charnockite is a product of migmatisation of pyroxene granulite (Vidyadharan and Sukumaran, 1978). Charnockite and charnockitic gneiss consist of quartz, feldspar and biotite. Garnet-bearing variants are also observed. The basic charnockite is more granulitic and contains clino- and ortho- pyroxenes, feldspar, biotite and garnet whereas the acid variety (alaskite/ enderbite) is greenish black, coarse-grained, massive to poorly foliated rock consisting of quartz, feldspar and pyroxenes. Basic charnockite has low- potash feldspar and
more clinopyroxene. This is devoid of garnet and graphite, but shows a little amount of biotite (Chacko, 1922). Due to the polygenetic nature of the rock, geochemical and mineralogical variations do exist between charnockites reported from Kerala. In the Periyar valley region, in Idukki and Kottayam districts, pyroxenite and alaskite constitute the Charnockite Group (Nair, and Selvan, 1976).

The available age data indicate that the massive charnockites are older and their ages range between 2155 and 2930 ± 50 Ma (Soman, 1997).

Also charnockite has been subjected to retrogression and migmatisation.

**Archaean to Palaeo-Proterozoic**

**Vengad Group**

A succession of schistose rocks in parts of Tellicherry taluk in Kannur district is described as Vengad Group of rocks (Nair, 1976). The Vengad Group comprises of basal conglomerate, quartzite and quartz-mica schist. The contacts are highly gradational. The conglomerate shows graded bedding and quartzite shows current-bedding.

An angular unconformity marked by conglomerate horizon extending from Kuthuparamba (11°49’30’’:75°34’00”) to Vengad (11°53’30”:75°32’00”) in Kannur district, separates the younger quartz-mica schist and quartzite from the older schistose and gneissic rocks. The lithology consists of basal oligomictic conglomerate, quartzite, quartz-biotite-muscovite schist and biotite quartzite. The schists are exposed over an area of 300 sq km having a lensoidal shape with its longer axis trending in NW-SE direction. The basement rock is gneissic or migmatitic with relicts of high-grade schists, ultramafites and quartzites of the Wynad Schist Complex. Four major occurrences of conglomerate are noticed in a NW-SE direction over a length of 10 km.

Lack of migmatisation, presence of primary structures and low-grade metamorphic minerals characterize these rocks.

**Migmatite\ Gneiss\ Granitoid (PGC-II)**

**Quartzo-feldspathic gneiss**

Migmatite includes variety of gneissic rocks which are next in importance to charnockite as a dominant litho-assemblage. Quartzo-feldspathic gneiss occurring along the contact zone between garnet-biotite gneiss and garnet-sillimanite gneiss of Thiruvananthapuram area represents an original intrusive phase. It is a feebly foliated, fine-grained, leucocratic granulitic
rock occurring in close association with garnet-sillimanite gneiss and garnet-biotite gneiss with gradational contact relationship in the southern parts of Kerala. The origin of this rock is attributed to stress-induced injection of acid materials into the host rocks (Nageswara Rao and Raju, 1970).

**Garnet- biotite gneiss**

Garnet-biotite gneiss is well-developed in the northeastern parts of Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram districts. This carries inclusions of pyroxene granulite and disseminations of graphite at many places (Jacob, 1965). It consists of quartz, microperthite, biotite, plagioclase and graphite. This rock also occurs in the northern parts of Palakkad District in close association with khondalite, charnockite and hornblende gneiss. These rocks are subsequently formed by retrogression and migmatisation of the Khondalite Group.

East of Kottayam and Idukki districts, light grey, pink garnet-bearing biotite gneiss is widely seen. It is a gneissic granulite. The presence of biotite and concentration of garnet in layers give the rock a banded appearance (GSI, 1995).

**Hornblende gneiss, hornblende-biotite gneiss, quartz- mica gneiss**

These rock types occur within the migmatites and associated retrograded charnockite. The naming is purely based on the preponderance of the minerals and these rocks occur in the Periyar valley area east of Thodupuzha (Nair and Selvan, 1976). These medium-grained, foliated, banded rocks consist of alternate layers rich in hornblende or biotite. Bands of coarse to medium-grained light grey to pink granite traverse these rocks. Hornblende-biotite gneiss showing lit par lit relationship with the granite gneisses is the dominant rock type in the Periyar valley. This is admixed with contorted bands and enclaves of pyroxene granulite, calc-gneiss and hornblende-biotite granulite. These are highly deformed.

In the Palakkad gap area, these gneisses occur over a large area, showing migmatitic structures such as agmatites, nebulites, schlierens, ptygmatic folds, quartzo-feldspathic neosomes and ferromagnesian palaeosomes (Muraleedharan and Raman, 1989).

**Proterozoic**

**Basic intrusives**

Basic dyke emplacements within the Archaean crystalline rocks of Kerala are spread throughout the entire length and breadth of the state. Of these, dolerite dyke occurring north of the Palakkad gap had given Proterozoic age whereas in the south this dyke is of Phanerozoic
The older basic dykes are metamorphosed along with the country rocks and are now recognised as epidiorite and amphibolite. Another set of dykes, apparently post-dating the regional metamorphic event are subjected to thermal metamorphism. Clouding and sericitisation of feldspars and uralitisation of pyroxenes are common in such dykes. In the absence of chronological data such dykes are considered to be of Proterozoic age. Most of the dykes are vertical in disposition and are traced as linear features. En-echelon pattern of some dyke swarms suggests that magmatic intrusion was controlled by shearing of the host rock.

Mineralogically, the dykes are made up mostly of plagioclase feldspar and pyroxene(augite and aegirine-augite) with magnetite, apatite and olivine as accessories. The ENE-WSW dolerite dyke swarm of Agali- Anakkati area in Palakkad District within the Bhavani Shear zone showed in isotopic age from 1900 to 2000 Ma (Radhakrishna and Mathew Joseph, 1993). The rock is highly jointed and altered (Jacob, 1965). Similar basic intrusive bodies are traced in the Achankovil shear zone in Vazhamuttam (9°14'00":76°46'40"), Kulasekhara pettah (9°16'00":76°47'45") (Thomas Mathai et al, 1984). Sheet-like bodies of fine to medium-grained, dark coloured meta-gabbro occurs in Periyamuli (11°13'00":76°43'00") for about 20 km in ENE-WSW direction, Karuvarai (11°04'00":76°32'30") and few gabbro bodies south of Thuvapattu (11°06'30":76°44'45") in Attapady valley, Palakkad district. Meta-gabbro forms small hillocks east of Payyanam (10°31'00":76°21'00"), southwest of Kainur (10°36'00":76°09'00") and Chemmannur (10°41'00":76°01'00"), Vaga (10°35'00":76°06'00") and Arthat (10°37'00":76°03'00") in Trichur District (Mahadevan, 1962).

Dykes in north Kerala show, NW-SE, NE-SW and NNW-SSE trends. Host rocks are charnockite, gneisses and supracrustals (Radhakrishna et al 1991). Dykes are mainly dolerite but occasional meta-gabbro or meta-norite are also traced. In Agali- Anaikatti area of the Attapadi- Bhavani shear zone, dykes are confined within a 20-25km wide zone and extend from west of Agali to eastward for about 100km following a ENE-WSW direction.(Radhakrishna, et al, 1999).

The rock consists of 95% calcic plagioclase, 5% clinopyroxenes and subordinate amounts of magnetite. There are a number of concordant and discordant basic intrusive of dolerite and gabbro,meta-gabbro, meta-norite, meta-pyroxenite and anorthositic gabbro. These are not mappable and are seen in Pappinpra (11°06'20":76°05'56") Velli (11°04'00":76°07'45"), Kalpetta (11°04'12":76°05'32). An extensive basic diorite has been mapped over an area of 25 sq km at Panavalli (11°53'30", 76° 2'30"; Nair, et al 1976).
The rock is composed predominantly of calcic plagioclase (95%) rest clinopyroxene with subordinate amount of magnetite. Another relatively small body of anorthosite is around Kalivalli (11°51'30"; 76°12'30") in south Wynad taluk, Wynad District.

**Ultrabasic/ basic intrusive (younger)**

**Perinthatta Anorthosite**

A major elliptical body of anorthosite spread over an area of more than 50 sq.km is reported from Perinthatta (12°10'00";75°17'30"; Vidyadharan *et al*, 1977). The anorthosite is with a very irregular border and a tongue-like projection into the country rock of charnockite and pyroxene granulite of Kannur District. The anorthosite is coarse to very coarse-grained, and shows variations from pure anorthosite to gabbroic anorthosite and gabbro from the centre to the periphery suggestive of zoning. The modal composition corresponds to nearly 95% plagioclase (An 58-72) and <10% clinopyroxene, apatite, calcite and magnetite. The gabbroic variants have more of mafics.

The structural configuration suggests that the anorthosite was emplaced in synformal structure as a phacolithe. The flow-banding in anorthosite indicates its syntectonic emplacement. The Perinthatta anorthosite is assigned a Proterozoic age.

**Ezhimala gabbro-granophyre complex**

The major high-relief feature proximal to the Perinthatta anorthosite is constituted by the gabbro-granophyre Complex (Nair and Vidyadharan, 1982). The granophyre massif is fringed by the gabbro to the east and south. The Bavali fault running north of the complex is presumed to have dismembered the body from the Perinthatta anorthosite. Locally, the gabbro has anorthositic differentiates within it. Veins of granophyre traverse the gabbro at places give rise to breccia-like structures. The granophyre shows a sharp contact with the gabbro into which it intrudes. Rapakivi structure is observed within the granophyre. According to Nair and Vidyadharan (1982) rocks of Ezhimala complex display bimodal character with conspicuous basic and silicic components.

**Kartikulam and Karraug Gabbro**

Two gabbro bodies namely Kartikulam gabbro and Karraug gabbro are located northeast of Manantoddy bordering the Karnataka (Nair *et al*, 1975). The gabbro body at Kartikulam occupies an area of about 45 sq.km. with an elliptical shape within the gneissic terrain. The
actual contact with the gneiss is concealed but it is believed to be sharp. At many places, the gabbro is agmatised by coarse quartzo-feldspathic material.

The gabbro is coarse-grained and of uneven texture consisting essentially of plagioclase and pyroxene. Variation to anorthositic composition is noticed. The plagioclase is of labrodorite composition and shows alteration to sericite at places (Rema Warrier and Venkataraman, 1986). The pyroxenes are uralitised to varying degrees.

The Karraug gabbro body is located east of it and south of the Kabini River. It shows similar features as that of the Kartikulam gabbro. The rock shows phenocrysts of feldspar set in a fine matrix of flaky minerals.

**Adakkathodu gabbro**

At Adakkathodu (12°31’35”; 75°10’25”), northwest of Manantoddy, a 8 km long meta-gabbro, is intrusive into the basement gneisses on three sides and the Wynad schists in the east. It occurs proximal to the Bavali fault/lineament. It encloses patches of quartz-sericite schists and biotite gneiss (Nair et al, 1975). The rock is mesocratic to melanocratic, medium to coarse grained consisting mainly of pyroxene and plagioclase. The rock shows sub-ophitic texture and consists of enstatite and intermediate plagioclase of andesine-labrodorite composition (Nair et al, 1976). While the gabbro bodies of Kartikulam and Karraug to the east are olivine-bearing, the Adakkathodu gabbro is enstatite-bearing. Olivine, augite and zoned feldspars are recorded from the eastern body while the western body is enstatite-bearing, without the zoning in feldspar.

**Begur diorite**

An extensive basic diorite body (25 sq.km.) has been traced north of Manantoddy in the Begur Reserve Forest (Nair, et al, 1976). It extends from Thirunelli to the Karnataka State border. The southern contact is with augen gneisses indicating emplacement along shear zones while the northern one with sillimanite gneisses. Aplite and dolerite veins are seen traversing the rock mostly parallel to the regional foliation. The rock is mesocratic to melanocratic, coarse-grained and consists of pink to grey feldspar, hornblende and biotite.

The rock is feebly gneissic and at places porphyritic (Rema Warrier and Venkataramana, 1986). The phenocrysts are mostly plagioclase. Mafics at times swerve round the phenocrysts giving rise to augen structure. Hornblende is altered to biotite and chlorite. Accessories include epidote, apatite, zoisite and opaques.
The diorite shows tholeiitic characteristics. The diorite is considered as a transitional rock from the gabbro with which it is spatially associated in the nearby area with the plagioclase become more sodic.

**Charnockites [younger]**

The area south of Palakkad exposes charnockite over large areas. The charnockites are represented by acid microperthitic charnockite and intermediate gneissic charnockite occurring in association with garnetiferous biotite gneiss and khondalite (Narayanaswamy and Purna Lakshmi, 1967). Massive charnockites are developed on a regional scale and occur as mappable litho-units (Raju and Gopalakrishnan, 1972), around Nedumangad. The massive charnockites in majority of the cases are acid and intermediate in composition. The rock is medium to coarse-grained and shows xenoblastic texture. It is composed of quartz, feldspar, pyroxenes, garnet and graphite with accessories like biotite, zircon, apatite and monazite.

Small patches, lenses or veins of charnockite occur in the gneisses of amphibolite facies in the Thiruvananthapuram area (Nageswara Rao and Raju, 1970). Here, the incipient charnockites are thought to have formed by transformation of paragneisses. (Hansen et al, 1987; Santosh et al, 1990). A few dominant varieties of incipient charnockites have been categorized by Ravindra Kumar and Chacko (1986) on the basis of their mode of occurrence, association and chemical processes involved in their development. At Kottavattom, north of Thiruvananthapuram, the charnockite consisting of quartz, K-feldspar, plagioclase, biotite, garnet and orthopyroxene as essential minerals and graphite, zircon, ilmenite, monazite, apatite, rutile and magnetite as accessory minerals are products of transformation of gneisses into coarse-grained charnockites along a system of conjugate fractures and foliation planes. (Saritha and Santosh, 1996).

**Cordierite or Charnockite Gneiss**

Cordierite bearing large linear zones of charnockites was reported around Pathanamthitta (Nageswara Rao and Jacob, 1967) area. Cordierite charnockites or orthopyroxene-garnet-cordierite bearing gneisses (Sinha Roy et al, 1984; Santosh, 1987) occur as discontinuous bodies in the northern parts of Thiruvananthapuram and in selected stretches further south around Koliakode. The rock is composed of cordierite, orthopyroxene, plagioclase, K-feldspar, spinel and quartz and a little garnet and biotite.
The growth of cordierite and orthopyroxene took place concomitantly during the conversion of gneisses to charnockites. At Nellikala in Pathanamthitta, the cordierite occurs as anhedral grains of variable sizes in the charnockites (Nandakumar, 1996).

**Younger granites**

The granites and its variants occur around Chengannur in Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta districts, Munnar in Idukki District, Peralimala in Kannur district and Kalpetta and Ambalavayal in Wynad District. Many of these granites occur as later emplacements along crustal fractures and faults. The Achenkovil–Tamraparni tectonic zone, the Attapadi shear zone, Bavali shear zone and the Moyar shear zone are all marked by granitic emplacements.

**Ambalavayal granite**

The Ambalavayal (11°37’15’’; 76°03’30’’) granite having an oval shape covers an area of 50 sq.km. The granite is light pink in color and is composed of quartz, pink feldspar, hornblende and biotite. The pegmatites traversing the granite show occasional flakes of molybdenite. The Ambalavayal granite occurring in the proximity of the Bavali lineament is thought to be emplaced during its reactivation. The granite is intrusive into the hornblende-biotite gneiss (migmatite) and the Wynad Supracrustals (Anilkumar et al., 1993). Four types of granites are recorded, viz. foliated granite, pink granite, grey granite and aplitic granite.

The foliated granite consists of quartz, microcline, orthoclase, plagioclase, biotite, hornblende, chlorite, calcite and zircon. The pink granite is a medium-grained consisting of quartz, microcline, plagioclase, sericite, chlorite, apatite, rutile, zircon and biotite. The grey granite is a medium-to fine-grained rock consisting of quartz, microcline, sericite, biotite, chlorite, and calcite. The aplitic granite is a very fine-grained massive rock consisting of quartz, microcline, orthoclase, plagioclase, sericite, biotite, calcite, chlorite, apatite and opaques.

K-Ar age of Ambalavayal granite (560±30 Ma, Nair, et al., 1985) is lower than Rb-Sr age (595 ± 20 m.a Santhosh et al., 1986), but is higher than that of U-Pb-age(505±20ma, Odom,1982). The reason for this variation in the date may be attributed to the different techniques adopted and also to the presence of biotite of multiple generation.

**Munnar granite**

The Munnar (10°05’00’’;77°05’00’’) granite with an areal extent of 50 sq km is an E-W trending irregular body emplaced within the migmatite and apophyses extend into the surrounding gneisses. The granite dated to be 740 ± 30 m.y (Odom, 1982) is traversed by pegmatite, aplite
and quartz veins. Three types of granite are recorded. Foliated granite, Coarse pink granite and medium grey granite. The foliated granite consists of stringers and streaks of mafics consisting of biotite, hornblende, chlorite and magnetite alternating with felsics consisting of quartz and potash feldspar. Potash feldspar is predominantly orthoclase. The closely spaced foliations are persistent but discontinuous. This granite forms a domal structure south of Munnar. It has a sharp contact with the migmatite. Coarse pink granite consists of pink feldspar, quartz and a little amount of mafics. Mafics are biotite, sphene and hornblende. Medium grained grey granite, consists of quartz, feldspar, biotite, chlorite, zircon, sphene, epidote, calcite and sericite.

Major element data of Munnar granites do not show any significant variation amongst the three granites. Content of iron is more in medium grey granite and foliated granite. Different variation diagrams reveal a slight tendency towards alkali granite. The foliated granite shows more percentage of orthoclase than the other two granites. (Nair and Anil Kumar, 1990)

**Ezhimala granophyre – granite complex**

A prominent granophyre body forms the hill known as Ezhimala, covering an area of 20 sq km in Kannur District. The granophyre is associated with gabbro and granite and is traversed by dolerite dykes. Two types of granophyres have been deciphered; coarse-grained leucocratic one and medium - grained one with more mafics. Drusy type, confined to higher elevation contains numerous vug lines with secondary minerals like quartz and calcite. Rocks of Ezhimala Complex display bimodal character with conspicuous basic and silicic components and total lack of rocks of intermediate composition typical of anorogenic suites (Nair and Vidyadharan, 1982). The granophyre is pink to ash grey coloured, massive, fine to coarse-grained, holocrystalline with equigranular texture. The granites are of two types. The major light pink granite with less of mafics show gradational relationships with the more greyish porphyritic variant (Varadan and Venkataraman, 1976).

Granophyre shows a typical granophyric intergrowth of quartz and feldspar forming the ground mass with phenocrysts of potash feldspar and some zoned plagioclase. The groundmass is totally of orthoclase. Augite is the chief ferro-magnesium mineral. Accessories include apatite, sphene, epidote, calcite and magnetite. Texturally the rock shows variation from coarse-grained leucocratic types with less mafics in the southern portion of the hill and medium to coarse grained type towards northern parts.
Minor outcrops of rapakivi granites are recorded within the granophyres of Ezhimala Complex. Anorthosites of Perinthatta and Kadannappally and granite, granophyre of Ezhimala together form the Ezhimala Complex. The light pink granite with less mafics is the major variety showing a gradational relationship with the more greyish porphyritic variety. The porphyritic variety, at places, shows rapakivi structure. The porphyritic granite shows mantled feldspar megacrysts. This variety grades into porphyritic granites without mantled feldspar and at higher levels grades into granophyre. The granite contains 60% of orthoclase feldspar, 5-10% of plagioclase, 20-25% of quartz with 4% of biotite, epidote, magnetite and fluorite. The low initial Sr $^{87}/Sr^{86}$ ratio indicate that the rocks have a relatively minor amount of older sialic material. The Rb-Sr age of the granophyre is estimated to be 678 m.y. (Nair and Vidyadharan, 1982). The Ezhimala Complex lies in close proximity to the Bavali lineament suggesting reactivation along the lineament and intrusion of the body.

**Kalpattra granite**

The Kalpattra ((11º36′15″; 76º05′15″) granite is an oval- shaped intrusive into the Wynad schist and covers an area of 44 sq km (Rao and Varadan, 1967). The rock is grey coloured, medium-grained, homogenous biotite granite and has sharp contact with the country rock. A feeble foliation is imparted to the granite at places by biotite flakes. Xenoliths of amphibolite / hornblende gneiss are visible near the periphery. Irregular veins of pegmatite / aplite traverse the granite and also the enclaves. The K-Ar age of the biotite from the Kalpattra granite is dated as 512 ± 30 m.a. (Nair et al, 1985) and 527 m.a (GSI). Presence of enclaves and absence of significant replacement textures along with the geochemical characteristics assign a magmatic parentage for the granite. The proximity of the pluton to the Bavali lineament probably suggests intrusion along this fracture.

Three types of granites such as coarse grained biotite-granite, fine grained biotite granite, and porphyritic granite are mapped on the basis of texture, colour and mode of occurrence. Coarse-grained granite is a massive bluish grey rock with large xenoblasts of quartz and feldspars. The accessories include biotite, zircon, apatite and sphene. Blastesis of feldspar and sphene are common. Microcline, orthoclase, and plagioclase are seen as the major feldspar. Plagioclase composition varies from albite to oligoclase. This rock is exposed in Trikaippetta (11º35′04″;76º08′41″), Manikkunnu (11º35′41″;76º07′09″), Kuttamangalam (11º30′08″;76º07′11″) (Anilkumar et al, 1993).
Fine biotite-granite is a fine grained massive rock exposed around Muttilmala (76°06'38":11°37'06") It consists of orthoclase, quartz, microcline, biotite, sericite, zircon, sphene, apatite and opaques. Myrmekitic quartz is recorded. Pophyritic granite consists of myrmekitic quartz, microcline, sericite and biotite. Very coarse grained biotite with included crystals of orthoclase, microcline and albite are common. Except for the texture, all the three granites show similar characters. (Anilkumar, et al 1993). Based on Rb-Sr dating, Kalpatta granite is dated 765 Ma. (Odom 1982).

**Chengannur granite**

The Chengannur (9°18'45": 76°31'00") granite in Pathanamthitta District is an oval shaped body with the long axis trending in east-west direction covering an area of 15 sq.km in and around Chengannur. The granite is intrusive into the charnockite gneisses. The body is emplaced close to the Achankovil shear zone. K-Ar date of the hornblende indicates an age of 550 m.a. (Soman et al, 1983). The Chengannur granite is inferred to be a post kinematic granite of magmatic parentage.

Two types of granites are recorded. One is medium-grained pink granite and the other is coarse-grained grey granite. The former consists of quartz, perthitic feldspar, plagioclase, biotite, hornblende, apatite and zircon. The composition of plagioclase varies from albite to oligoclase. Microcline perthite is also seen. The coarse grained grey granite consists of perthite, plagioclase, hornblende, biotite, quartz with occasional occurrence of hypersthene,apatite and zircon. Hornblende and biotite are less common by occurred minerals than hypersthene. Relicts of hypersthene are also seen. This granite may be a product of granitisation of charnockite. K₂O content always exceeds that of Na₂O. The high SiO₂, high alkali, high Fe/Mg ratio, high values of Gallium indicate that the granite belongs to alkali type. It might have an origin from recycled and rehydrated continental crust. (Nair and Anil Kumar, 1990).

**Peralimala granite**

The Peralimala (11°09'19":75°38'46") alkali granite is a linear intrusive body emplaced along the axial trace of a mega fold in EW direction. Peralimala intrusive body occurs as a diatreme of alkali composition with a maximum linear extension of 15 km and a width of 3 km. Based on colour, texture, composition and mode of occurrence four types of granites are identified. These are pink gneissic granite, porphyritic granite, grey granite and pink granite. Pink alkali granite is a coarse-grained rock consisting of microcline, orthoclase, plagioclase, quartz,
hornblende, epidote, aegirine, sphene, calcite, perthite and apatite. Quartz is present in only subordinate amounts. Feldspar content is very high. The preferred orientation of feldspar gives a crude alignment. At Perumpunna, (75°44'00";11°55'28") pink gneissic granite shows preferred orientation of biotite and pyroxene. The porphyritic granite occurs as a lensoidal body containing quartz, feldspar, pyroxene and hornblende. Feldspar forms the phenocrysts in a matrix of quartz-feldspar and mafics. Grey granite is a coarse- to medium- grained rock with microcline, orthoclase, perthite, hornblende and zoisite. Light grey granite is a medium-grained rock consisting of microcline, orthoclase, plagioclase (albite to oligoclase), epidote, aegirine, hornblende and rutile. The major element chemistry of the granite do not show much variation. The pink granite shows high content of potash. A negative correlation for K$_2$O content with respect to SiO$_2$ is very pronounced for pink granite owing to its alkaline nature. Barium and strontium show very high values for Peralimala granite. (Anilkumar et al,1993).

**Sholayur granite**

The Sholayur (11°04'15";76°42'00") granite, is exposed around Kuttiyadikal Mala (11°01'52";76°42'00") and Vachchapathi (11°04'15";76°44'00"). It is a homophanous medium-grained, pink coloured granite, consisting of quartz, orthoclase, microcline, oligoclase, perthite, aegirine augite, biotite, hornblende and sphene. In some places, calcite, apatite, sericite are also observed. The schlierens mark the contact zone of the granites with the host rock. This granite is emplaced within the Wynad supracrustals. SiO$_2$ varies from 58.76 to 73%, Al$_2$O$_3$ 14% to 17%, Na$_2$O 1.8% to 2.4% and K$_2$O 0.8 to 1.5%. The distribution of SiO$_2$ is highly non-uniform within the same type of granite. The pink granite is becoming alkali granite at places.(Anil Kumar and Nair,1992).

**Intermediate intrusives**

The syenite body at Mannapra (10°30'00";76°32'00") is exposed as an elongated NW-SE trending body covering an area of 8 sq km in Thrissur District. The syenite intrusive makes sharp contact with the charnockite near the charnockite-migmatite contact. The rock is medium to coarse-grained at its peripheries and tends to be coarse-grained towards the centre. Mineralogically, the rock is composed of alkali feldspar, orthopyroxene, clinopyroxene and amphibole with minor amounts of plagioclase, biotite and opaques. A small syenite (Angadimugar syenite) body is located in Kumbala village (12°35'15"; 76°07'00") and about 20 km east of Kumbla in Kasaragod District. The intrusive body has an elliptical outline and covers an area of 5 sq km. The body is intrusive into the Khondalite Group and encloses
enclaves of amphibolite in the peripheral parts. The rock is medium to coarse grained, light grey and massive.

**Mesozoic intrusives**

**Basic intrusives**

Basic intrusives in Kerala, mainly represented by dyke swarms in NNW-SSE to NW-SE trend, cut across all the metamorphic rocks and the earlier structural trends. Their unmetamorphosed nature and stratigraphic relation with the country rocks prompted their correlation to the Deccan Trap volcanism.

The basic dykes have been emplaced into the migmatites and charnockite in NNW-SSE to NW-SE and ENE-WSW directions along distensive and shear fractures respectively. Dolerite dykes of Kerala are mostly quartz tholeiites rarely clinotholeiite. The basic dykes of Pathanamthitta (9°15'45".76°45'30") are genetically unrelated types. These dykes have not undergone any internal differentiation during intrusion.

The variation in the chemistry of individual dykes may be due to the cogenetic differential sequence. Dolerite dykes intrude the country rocks at an angle greater than 80°. The dolerite dykes of Kuttuparamba (11°49'30".75°34'00") in Kannur District shows cross cutting relationship with all the formations. The basic dykes of Vamanapuram (8°43'00".76°54'00") are either gabbroic or doleritic intruding the gneissic rocks. These are trending NNE to SSW and NNW to SSE directions and are unmetamorphosed. Mineralogically all these dykes show more or less same composition except the meta-dolerites. Variation in the trace elements like Ti, Zr can be attributed to the differential degree of partial melting of the mantle material. (Nair and Gopala Rao, 1989).

The unmetamorphosed Idamalayar gabbroic dyke with a NNW-SSE trend is traced for over 80 km in the central part of Kerala. The rock is mesocratic, medium-grained, porphyritic and is composed of plagioclase (andesine to labradorite), hornblende and opaques. The reported age of 75 m.y. for the Idamalayar dyke (Subramaniam, 1976) links it in time-relationship with Deccan Trap volcanism.

The NNW-SSE trending leucogabbro dykes in central Kerala dated by whole rock K-Ar method gave an age of 81 ± 2 m.y and the NW-SE trending dolerite dyke 69 ± 1 m.y. The dolerite dykes are thought to have represented the feeder system for Deccan Trap volcanic sequences (Radhakrishna et al., 1994).
Basic dykes of Pathanamthitta area yielded ages of 99 Ma to 117 Ma and there are dykes which have yielded ages 104 ± 5 Ma, 127 ± Ma and 476 ± Ma. These wide variations may be due to a protracted history of emplacement and the effect of Eocambrian to palaeozoic tectonothermal events affecting this region (Sinha Roy and Ramakrishnan, 1983.)

In Thiruvananthapuram District, Anakudi and Nedumannur dolerite dykes are dated by K-Ar method and the whole rock ages are 104 ± 5 Ma and 127 ± 2 Ma respectively (Sinha Roy and Ramakrishnan, 1983).

**Tertiary Sedimentary rocks**

Mio-Pliocene sedimentary rocks are fairly widespread in the southern coastal belt, their remnants being noticeable in the central and northern coastal areas. These sedimentary rocks consist of a series of variegated clay and sandstones with lenticular seams of lignite, known as Warkalli Formation, underlain by more compact marly sands with shell fragments and thin horizons of limestone (Quilon Formation).

The Tertiary sediments have a gentle dip towards west. The Warkalli Formation extends in a narrow belt from Thiruvananthapuram (8°28'30": 76°57'20") to Kasaragod (12°30'00": 74°59'00") between coastal and midland regions with intervening promontories of the crystalline rocks. The Quilon Formation is mainly seen at Paravur (08°48'00": 76°40'00") Padappakkara (08°58'30": 76°38'00") and some other places around Kollam and Alappuzha districts.

**Quilon Formation**

The Quilon Formation consisting of fossiliferous shell limestone alternating with thick beds of sandy clays and calcareous clays have been reported from Padappakkara (type locality), Nedumgolam, Edavai (8°45'20":76°42'00") and Varkala (8°44'00": 76°43'00") and Cherthala (9°41'00":76°20'00") along the west coast of Kerala. The Quilon limestone contains numerous fossils of foraminifera, corals, echinoids and molluscs. The Lower Miocene age for lower stratigraphic horizons and the Upper Miocene age for the topmost beds of the Quilon Formation indicate the lower and upper age limits of these marine sediments. The predominance of black clays, sandstone, bluish grey brackish water shell limestone and nodular limestone clearly indicate deposition in a lagoonal condition.

**Warkalli Formation**
The Warkalli Formation of Mio-Pliocene age extends all along the Kerala coast. The type section of the Warkalli Formation described by King (1882) is from the sea cliff at Varkala. The exposed section at Varkala cliff is 28-30 m thick consisting of unconsolidated sands of variegated clays, white plastic clays, and carbonaceous sandy clays enclosing impersistent seams and lenses of lignite. The carbonaceous clays and lignite are often impregnated with nodules of marcasite.

Fairly thick beds of carbonaceous clays with lignite seams occur around Nadayara kayal, Tamarakulam (9°08': 76°37"), Puliyur (9°18'00": 76°35'00"), Payangadi (12°00'20": 75°15'40"), Nileswaran (12°15'00": 75°07'00"), Kanhangad (12°17'40": 75°05'00") and in the cliff sections near Cheruvathur (12°13'00": 75°09'50"). The most characteristic feature of the Warkalli Formation is the impersistent nature of the constituent beds, suggestive of shallow basin margin deposits.

**Laterite**

Kerala is the home of the laterite as it was first named by the Dutch traveller, Buchanan 1807. Laterite is widespread in its distribution in the midland region of Malappuram, Kannur and Kasaragod districts where it forms well-defined mesas. The Archaean crystalline rocks and the Tertiary sedimentary rocks are extensively lateritised. The laterite has wide areal distribution in the State and occurs at all levels upto 2000 m, height though mostly restricted to an altitude of 50-150 m above MSL. in the coastal and midland region. A few bauxitic patches also occur within the laterites. The thickness of laterite cappings varies from a few metres to 50 metre at places. At Chovvara (8°21'30"; 77°01'30") in Thiruvananthapuram District and Chattannur (8°50'30"; 76°46'30") and Kundara (8°57'00": 76°40'30") in Kollam District, a zone of about 2 m thick bauxite is recognised at the contact between the crystallines and the overlying sedimentary rocks. The overlying sedimentary column is also blanketed by laterite of varying thickness. The bauxite at the base of the sedimentaries indicates an earlier pre-Warkalli spell of laterisation. Further, the erosional features on the top part of the bauxite horizon corroborate the antiquity of the earlier spell of lateritisation (Mallikarjuna and Kapali, 1980).

Generally, the laterite after the crystalline rocks is compact and the top crust moderately indurated. The dark brown crust passes downward to pink and buff coloured soft laterite. Quartz veins, joints and fractures can be traced from the top to the bottom of the laterite profile. The laterite profile over pyroxene granulites, meta-ultramafites and gneisses are characterised by relict foliation that conforms to those of the subjacent rocks which indicate the *insitu* nature...
of the laterite. Porous and spongy texture is discernible in laterites, after meta-ultramafites. Laterite after the Tertiary sedimentaries is well indurated at the top for about 2 to 5 m. Downwards, the profile grades into soft laterite with remnants of gritstone and culminates into a zone of variegated clay.

**Quaternary sediments**

Recent to sub-Recent sediments of coastal sands, sticky black clay with carbonized wood, silty alluvium and lagoonal deposits are observed mostly in the low-lying areas from Kollam (11°27'00": 75°40'30") to Ponnani and between Kannur (11°51'30":75°21'45") and Nileswaram (12°15'30":75°08'16"). Alluvium is observed along the major river valleys. At places, along coastal tracts, there are raised sandy beaches composed of fine grained reddish sandy loam known as “terri” sands. Palaeo-beach ridges alternate with marshy lagoonal clay in the coastal area.

The sandy stretches are widest between Alappuzha (9°30': 76°20') and Kottayam (9°35': 76°31'), upto 25 km inland from the shoreline. The Quaternaries of the coastal plain have been classified into (i) the Guruvayur Formation representing the earlier strandline deposits with an elevation of 5-10 m; (ii) the Viyyam Formation of tidal plain deposits; (iii) Periyar Formation being mainly of fluvial deposits and (iv) the Kadappuram Formation representing the beach deposits (Krishnan Nair, 1989).

A pebble bed is traced in Valapattanam and Taliparamba river banks in Kannur district. It is exposed south of Valapattanam (11°55'30": 75°21'30"), Kambil maloth (11°58':75°24"), Morazha (11°58'30": 75°20'30") and Arathiparamba (12°06'00": 75°15'30"). The size of the pebbles ranges in dimension from 4.5 cm x 3 cm to 7 cm x 3 cm with occasional cobbles of size 13 cm x 12 cm. The base of the pebble bed is generally 20 to 40 m above MSL and at places, the pebble bed directly rests over the basement rocks. The pebbles are mostly of quartz and rarely of granite and pyroxene granulite. The distribution of the pebble bed along the major river banks demonstrates it to be flood plain deposits, probably of early Quaternary period (Nair et al., 1976). In Malappuram and Kozhikode districts, the pebble bed is traced in the riverine terraces at Mavur (11°17'45":75°59'00" ), Cheruvannur (11°12'8": 75°49'35") and Chellepparambu (11°14'30":75°59'00"). In Thiruvananthapuram District, the Quaternary pebble bed occurs at an elevation of 45 to 50 m above MSL at Pothenkode (8°37'00": 76°48'56"), Idaikode (8°40'11":76°50'49"), Attingal (8°41'49": 76°48'56") and Andoorkonam (8°36'00": 76°52'30").
Submerged upright tree trunks have been reported from a number of places in the coastal area of Kottayam and Alappuzha districts, indicating neotectonic reactivation in the area. Carbon dating of a sample from the submerged forest at Iravimangalam indicates an age of 7050 ± 130 B.P (Pawar et al, 1983).

**Structure**

The structural grain of the southern Peninsula is controlled mainly by the NNW-SSE trending near longitudinal Dharwarian trend which had folded all earlier structures. Since Kerala State falls in the western limb of the mega-structure almost all the rock distribution is aligned in NW-SE direction. However, detailed structural studies carried out in selected parts of the Kerala (Nair and Nair, 2001) had shown that (a) the earliest folds (F₁) which are represented both on mesoscopic and megascopic scale are tight appressed folds of asymmetrical nature which had given rise to axial plane foliations with characteristic platy mineral alignments (b) the F₂ folds on these foliations (post-folial) are open symmetrical and have developed mainly on megascopic scale and control the disposition of the major lithologies. (c) Subsequent folds (F₃) which deform F₁ and F₂ axial plane traces are broad folds on mega-scale identified with the longitudinal Dharwarian trends and (d) a broad swerve on these Dharwarian trends in ENE-WSW is also decipherable (Fig.2).

Detailed analysis of the remote sensing data had revealed the presence of a number of significant lineament patterns in WNW-ESE, NW-SE, NNW-SSE, NNE-SSW and ENE-WSW directions (Nair, 1990). Mega and intermediate lineaments in WNW-ESE were originally crustal fractures and shears which got sealed or obliterated by a number of igneous emplacements of alkali granite, syenite, gabbro, anorthosite, granophyre etc. The emplacements along the Bavali lineament and those along the Achenkovil lineament both of which trending in this direction had given ages ranging from 500 – 678 Ma. Hence they are identified to be the oldest lineament. The Bavali lineament forms the western termination of the Moyar shear. The NW-SE trending lineaments constitute mega lineaments and coincide with the basic dykes occurring throughout the length and breadth of the state. These dykes have given ages ranging from 61 to 144 Ma. The NNW-SSE trending lineaments are generally intermediate lineaments and are attributed to fractures, faults and major joint patterns in the area. It is recognized that the NNW-SSE trending lineaments define a weak zone along which the west coast evolved by faulting. The eastern limit of the Tertiary basin is found restricted along this lineament direction. These lineaments occurring along the west coast are be active as suggested by the progradation of the coast west of these lineaments (Nair, 1987).
lineaments in NNE-SSW are prominent and are identified with major fractures and this together with those in NNW-SSE are taken to constitute a conjugate system of faults in a N-S compressive regime due to the collision of the Indian plate. The ENE-WSW trending lineaments are intermediate lineaments and are well-developed in the northern parts of the Kerala. Since these lineaments truncate other lineaments as evidenced especially in the coastal stretches it is considered the youngest. Many a recent tremors reported are aligned in this direction and hence considered neotectonically active.

**Metamorphism**

The Precambrian crystalline rocks of Kerala are chiefly metapelites, charnockites with associated gneisses and granulites, schistose rocks with distinct metapelitic and metamafic / ultramafic affinity and granitic derivatives which include the Peninsular gneisses and migmatites. Except the Wynad schists and the Vengad group, the bulk of the crystalline rocks show granulite to upper amphibolite facies of metamorphism. Wynad schist displays a prograde amphibolite facies metamorphism and the retrogression of these rocks leads to lower amphibolite facies metamorphism. The vast charnockite belt occurring on either side of the Wynad schist belt, in north Kerala, shows petrographic evidences of prograde and retrograde reactions (Nambiar, 1996). The rocks of the Vengad Group show greenschist to lower amphibolite facies of prograde metamorphism. The older intrusive bodies show effects of incipient metamorphism, marked by clouding of feldspar and bending of twin lamellae.

Recent investigations on the pressure – temperature range for the formation of characteristic mineral suits within the metamorphic rocks provide a fair idea on the poly-metamorphic history of the rock suits. Rocks of the Khondalite belt of south Kerala indicate a temperature range of 650 to 850°C and pressures 5 to 6 kb (Srikantappa et al, 1985). In the Thiruvanathapuram area, the temperature at the peak of metamorphism indicated by the mineral assemblages of the calc-silicate rocks is about 830°C at 5 K bar considering the vapour absent garnet forming equilibria (Satish Kumar and Santosh, 1996). The scapolite equilibria indicates a peak metamorphic temperature of above 800°C. Stable isotopes in the marble bands suggest that there was no pervasive infiltration of external fluids. Local infiltration of external carbonic fluid took place during decomposition. Synthesis of such data from different lineament/shear bound segments in Kerala indicates varying metamorphic conditions and uplift history. It is also summerised that there is a progressive decline in the uplift of different segments from north to south (Soman, 1997).