

**Site Inspection Report of Chief Conservator of Forests, High
Range Circle, Kottayam on 06.03.2021**

Inspected the site of proposal No.FP/KL/VELEC/24281/2017 Anganwady Kurisupally Electrification DDUGJY in Anchuruli – Thamarakkad area of Ayyappancoil Range, Kottayam Division.

The above project is for electrification of Thamarakkad area in Anchuruli by constructing 1KM 11 KV line from Vazhavara junction, one 100KVA transformer at Anganawadi and approximately 2 KM LT single phase line. 11KV line and transformer are proposed outside forest area. Thereafter 0.36 KM of LT single phase line is again outside forest area. Then the line enters forest area and crosses an existing forest bit for 0.56 Km before entering the occupied area where the beneficiaries are occupying land. The length of line inside occupation is two separate lines in 0.835 Km. 3m is the width of right of way requested by user agency for LT single phase line.

I had inspected the site on 06.03.2021 along with Range Forest Officer, Ayyappancoil and staff. The Thamarakkad area is an occupied forest area. The occupants have not got patta. Also no joint verification of the occupation was conducted. A visit to the occupied land showed that the encroachments are not very old. The area is fully covered by forest trees which are not allowed to be felled or lopped. Only gaps of fallen trees are available open areas. Cardamom is the main crop. Wherever sunlight is available arecanut, coffee, Pepper etc. are grown. The age of arecanut plants also shows that the occupation is not old enough to claim regularization as per 01/0/77 cut off date.

The forest land where the occupation is situated is part of Cardamom Hill Reserve Forest. While most of CHR area including the initial part of this project from Vazhavara to Anganawadi was transferred to Revenue Department. However the part of CHR on the slope leading to Idukki reservoir was retained as forest and termed permanent preservation plot where occupation will not be allowed on any basis. This is to avoid the erosion and silting of Idukki reservoir. Therefore the Thamarakkad occupation is not eligible for regularization on that count also.

Application mentions 43 families as beneficiaries. But actually there are not many houses in the area as claimed. Beneficiaries mentioned are only the number of units of occupants (not verified). The occupants are not staying in the area. There are only small sheds in each holding. They are meant to keep the equipments, fertilizers and agricultural products. Only the labourers, mostly migrant labourers stay in such sheds for short periods. It was informed that only 2 families stay there permanently. Otherwise all occupants have permanent homes outside.

Based on above facts it can be seen that allowing electrification to an unauthorized occupation inside forest will only lead to legalizing the occupation. Also because of absence of electricity and proper road, there are no houses in the area. By allowing electrification more permanent houses will come up in the area, more demands for facilities, roads, opening up of canopy, change in agricultural practices to food crops which will erode soil etc. will occur.

Legally also, can not recommend diversion of forest land to facilitate occupiers and make eviction of post 01/01/77 encroachment impossible. Already there is a common Judgment dated 04.09.2015 of Hon'ble High Court in OP. No. 18462/02 and OP. No.1947/03 to evict post 01/01/77 encroachments and report compliance.

The area of forest land to be diverted is calculated as 0.168 Ha (560m x 3m). However if government decides to allow the project, since the enclosure is legally forest and patta not given, the part inside enclosure also has to be considered as diversion. This will come to 0.2505 Ha (600m x 3m+235m x 3m). Thus the total area to be diverted is 0.4185 Ha. If diversion is allowed, since area is less than 1 Ha, compensatory afforestation is not required. No trees are to be felled except lopping of branches required.

Based on above reasons, the project is not recommended. The proposal may be rejected and returned to user agency.



Chief Conservator of Forests
High Range Circle, Kottayam