

JUSTIFICATION FOR PROJECT IN FOREST LAND

The concerned project road is a part of the existing NH 744 (Old NH 208) from Punalur to Kottavasal with a length of 36 km in the district of Kollam, Kerala. Thenmala Ecotourism & Palaruvi Waterfalls, lie along the project road and passes through Thenmala & Aryankavu forest ranges and Shendurney Wildlife Sanctuary. It passes through mountainous terrain varying from hilly to steep and exist along the Kollam-Schenkotta Railway line and the river. Land use along this stretch is of mixed nature consisting of Agricultural, Residential, Forest and Vacant land. The project involves widening of existing 2 lane to 2 lane with paved shoulder for capacity augmentation of NH.

NH 744 is a major National Highway connecting Kerala & Tamil Nadu through the Western Ghats containing Forest and Wildlife area and has heavy passenger and commercial vehicle traffic during all seasons. This vehicular traffic increases during the Sabarimala Pilgrimage season and Tourist season inviting pilgrims, travelers and other necessary commodities. Many private goods carriers and public transport vehicles ply on this project road and connect both the states carrying passengers and goods across the border. Hence the project road is a major lifeline for the local residents and commuters and is proposed to increase the capacity of the NH by upgrading it.