

### **Identifying Potential Areas as “Conservation Reserves” in Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve**

The main objectives of the project are (i) to develop criteria for identification of Conservation Reserves; (ii) to identify, delineate and map the biodiversity rich areas based on criteria which can be declared as Conservation Reserves; (iii) to assess the capacity and capability of existing community institutions (e.g. VSS) in managing the Conservation Reserves and suggest methods to improve the skills; and (iv) to develop and suggest strategies to manage the Conservation Reserves.

This is a research project outside the legally designated Protected Areas of Kerala part of Agasthyamalai Biosphere Reserve and doesn't introduce any involuntary restrictions to the local community. The members of the local community and local institutions are involved in collecting data with respect to resource species and the dependency. The project empowers the local communities change livelihood and natural resource use practices on a voluntary basis through skill development and capacity building.

The project doesn't intertwine with the social and cultural aspects of indigenous people. The project will not create new institutional structures in the area and will only strengthen the existing institutional structures at local level through training and capacity building. All activities of the project are carried out in a participatory way involving local communities.

Hence the Involuntary Resettlement and Indigenous Peoples safeguard policy document does not apply to this project.