

## Community Outreach

A major component of Pitchandikulam Forest's work involves working with communities to empower them towards self-sustainability and involve them in the process of eco-restoration. Currently we work in 25 villages throughout the Kaliveli Bio-Region primarily by means of:

- Environmental education
  - Establishment of womens' Self Help Groups and student eco-clubs
  - Planting TDEF
  - Baseline, community and bio-resource surveys
  - Sustainable agriculture workshops
  - Health camps
  - Awareness programmes (addressing topics such as health, hygiene, water, sanitation and HIV/AIDS)
  - Income generation initiatives
- We also involved in the protection and development of local traditional health medicine through the use of indigenous medicinal plants. To ensure that the knowledge, skills and plants are not lost, a number of activities within local communities are undertaken. They include:
- Setting up of indigenous plant health dispensaries and household Kitchen Herbal Gardens
  - Facilitating Traditional Healers to pass on their knowledge to others through meetings and visits to remnant forest areas
  - Training women's groups, school children, teachers, youth clubs, other NGOs and government departments in many aspects of eco restoration work - with an emphasis on the Revitalising of Local Health Traditions
  - Workshops on the preparation of herbal remedies to cure common ailments using plant material from the Pitchandikulam nurseries and gardens; and exposure visits to the established medicinal gardens
- We help the local communities to develop their infrastructure and knowledge of the region. Collaborating with village leaders, healers, Self Help Groups, youth groups, other NGOs, government departments and students, Pitchandikulam is essentially focused on environmental issues which impact local populations.