

Forest Stations at Kambakkallu & Kadavari vide order GO(MS) No. 66/05/Forest dated 03.06.2005.

Kurinjimala Sanctuary was notified on 06<sup>th</sup> Oct, 2006 vide GO (MS) No. 36/06/F&WLD of Government of Kerala with the objective of conservation of plant species namely, Neelakurinji '*Strobilanthes kunthianus*'. The notified extent of the sanctuary is 32 sq kms. But according to Forest Dept., going by the area recorded in Revenue records and after overlaying of boundary description on the digitized revenue map, the extent of the sanctuary works out to approximately 24.03 sq kms. Since the hand-held GPS survey was not possible, even the approximate area of the Sanctuary cannot be estimated.

#### **5. ROLE OF SUB COLLECTOR / RDO AS SETTLEMENT OFFICER**

In order to complete the activities of declaring Kurinjimala Sanctuary, it is necessary that the Settlement Officer completes his work. It is the duty and responsibility of the Settlement Officer to find out any occupiers legal or illegal in that area, issue notices to the parties, hear the parties, examine all relevant documents and take a decision. The Sub Collector, Devikulam was nominated as the Settlement Officer. Different Sub Collectors/RDOs over the last seven years have come and gone, but this work remains incomplete. The reason cited is that the local residents "did not co-operate", or that there was a threat of a law and order situation, instigated by the local and other interested political leaders. But administratively and professionally the Settlement Officers repeatedly failed to perform their duties.

Not only did the Settlement Officers failed to complete the proceedings under Sec 19 to 25 of Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, the RDO went on abetting destruction of vegetation by issuing six cutting permissions for Kottakamboor village most recently on the following dates: 26.02.2013, 13.03.2013, 07.06.2013, 19.06.2013, 05.03.2014 & 05.03.2014. A stay