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## **Indigenous Peoples Plan / Strategy for Rathugala**



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## Abbreviations

ESDFP	- Education Sector Development Framework Project
FFPO	- Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance
Galsyambala	- Velvet Tamarin
GN	- Grama Niladhari
GNP	- Galoya National Park
GOSL	- Government of Sri Lanka
IGP	- Income Generating Project
IP	- Indigenous People
MOH	- Medical Officer of Health
NGO	- Non Governmental Organisation
NTFP	- Non Timber Forest Product
NWS&DB	- National Water Supply and Drainage Board
OFC	- Other Field Crops
SAC	- School Attendance Committee
TPDS	- Teacher-Parent Development Society
VTA	- Vocational Training Authority
WASH	- Water Sanitation and Health

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# Indigenous Peoples (IP) Plan / Strategy for Rathugala

## 1. Introduction:

It is believed that Indigenous (Vedda) people were the earliest inhabitants in Sri Lanka. They were in the country before the arrival of Vijaya and the crowd. Generally, Vedda communities were divided into three groups on the geographical locations namely Bintenne Vedda, Anuradhapura Vedda and the coastal Vedda. The Gal Oya Vedda comes under the Bintenne Veddas. The current population of Vedda has been estimated as 400,000. However, there is a confusion of recognizing of Vedda as most Veddas mix with other communities and migrated to villages from forest dwellings.

## 2. Purpose of the Report:

The Rathugala Indigenous People (IP) deprived from many cultural and socio-economic issues. A number of requests made by IPs to improve their livelihood and to improve access to the government services. The purpose of this report is to develop a strategy to address these issues face by IPs.

## 3. History of Rathugala:

The Rathugala Indigenous People (IP) were removed from Danigala Mountain region while constructing Senanayake Reservoir under Galoya low lying development project in 1940-1950. A Few IP families have arrived in Rathugala and started to live in a natural forest. Further, there was a possible reason to move them to Rathugala village may be due to heavy drought prior to 1940.

As the oldest member of IP explained, his grandfather, the leader of IP, Mahahina Wanniya has lived in Danigala mountain region which is situated in the western border of the Galoya National Park (GNP). After the death of the leader, Poramola became the leader of IP. He also lived in Danigala mountain with his generation. Handuna Vidane who was the leader after Poramola, had moved to Rathugala village and started a new life with his generation.

After end of three generations, they started to use modern techniques for their day to day activities. Instead of using traps. Chena is the main economic cultivation method which include chilly, pumpkin, corn, green-gram and cassava etc. Now they engage in day-labour work and running small businesses and road-side shops as well. Two younger IP have joined the Sri Lanka Army. A junior school is functioning within the village for IP kids and manage by the Education Ministry of Uva Province.



Figure 1 - The Junior School and the IP Chief

#### **4. Geographical Information:**

Rathulaga village is situated in No 104C Grama Niladari Division of Madulla District Secretariat in Monaragala District of Uva Province. It is surrounded with Galgamuwa Village from the North, Bulupiitya village from the South, green Viyanahela mountain from the West and Danigala mountain from the East. The village is also located by the side of Bibile – Ampara main road between Pitakumbura and Namal Oya.

There are savannah forests in the area and dry mix forests could be seen in mountains. The forest is covered with large trees including medicinal herbs. Reddish Brown soil is rich with nutrients. Many animals are found in the area. Wild elephants often walk from one forest to another by crossing the village. Elk, spotted deer, bear, wild pigs, porcupine and various birds can be observed in the area.

#### **5. State Policy and Legal Framework:**

At present, there is no specific national policy or a legal framework to safeguard the interests and the rights of IP (Vedda) population. Their issues and concerns are mostly addressed within the general policies and the legal framework in the country. However, at times when they raise their grievances, they receive State patronage to resolve such grievances. However, the Government of Sri Lanka's Fauna and Flora Protection Ordinance (FFPO) identifies the Veddah community as indigenous to the country and grants regulated access to PAs for the collection of non-timber products and to fish in tanks located within Sri Lanka's National Parks.

#### **6. Methodology used for the Strategy Development:**

A participatory planning (consultation) program with IPs was initiated with the assistance of Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) in the village on 30 October and 1 November 2019.

Information and Data was collected through group discussions, Individual interviews and brain storming sessions. In addition, some data and information were collected through Transect walks, Seasonal Charts and SWOT analysis as well. Proposals and suggestions initiated by IP were prioritized and compiled with the support of IPs. The socio-economic data collected previously also used for this study.

**Figure 2 - Up-coming Cultural Centre**



**Source - Field Survey 2019**

## 7. Link between Rathugala Community & Galoya National Park (GNP):

### 7.1- Impact from IP to GNP:

The GNP situated closer to the Rathugala Village and the community consider GNP as a wealth. They have strong link with GNP and take many efforts to safeguard from out-siders. Most activities are strongly link with GNP livelihood are noted below.

- Hunting (reducing).
- Timber and cane (NTFP).
- Clearing forest for Chena cultivation.
- Collecting fruits, medicinal herbs and products, firewood, honey, yams, etc. (NTFP).
- Use as a feeding ground for cattle.
- Collect birds' nests and egg.

### 7.2- Impact from GNP to IP:

The major impacts to IP community are:

- Rivers and water streams starting from the GNP catchment.
- Damages from animals (elephants and wild boar).
- Restrictions to enter in to the forest by DWC officials.
- Forest degradation mainly due to damages done by outsiders.

## 8. Climatic Issues:

Rathugala is also a victim of the climatic changes. The annual rainfall is between 1,250mm-1,500mm but rain is limited from mid-October to January. Heavy rains are experienced in November and December. Dry season is spans nearly eight months and drought prevails from March to beginning of September. In addition, heavy winds also occur during the drought season.

Climate issues in the area has affected IP economy as well. During the rainy season, they involve in paddy faming while doing Chena during the dry season. They do not have properly prepared wet paddy fields and rain-fed paddy is the general practice. Harvesting is done between February and March and low harvest is common for all crops.

The major issues face in the agriculture are the threat from wild animals for crops. It is also observed that many permanent crops are also destroyed by the drought. Damages from wild elephants tend to be high during the crop-growing seasons. During the drought season also, elephants migrate to villages for water and food.

**Table 1 - Natural and Physical Resources**

<b>Natural Resources</b>	<b>Physical Resources</b>
- Elephant / animal paths (Trails)	- Chena cultivations
- Forest (Fauna & Flora)	- Fertile lands
- Medicinal herbs	- Houses
- Rambaken Oya – River (Water)	- Home gardens
- Diya kadhuru (Water streams)	- A Government School
- Fertile soil	- A Temple
- North-east monsoon	- Up-coming cultural centre
- Grassland (for cattle feeding)	- A good quality carpeted road
- Fish and birds	- Valuable timber and NTFP

**Table 2 - Cultivation Pattern**

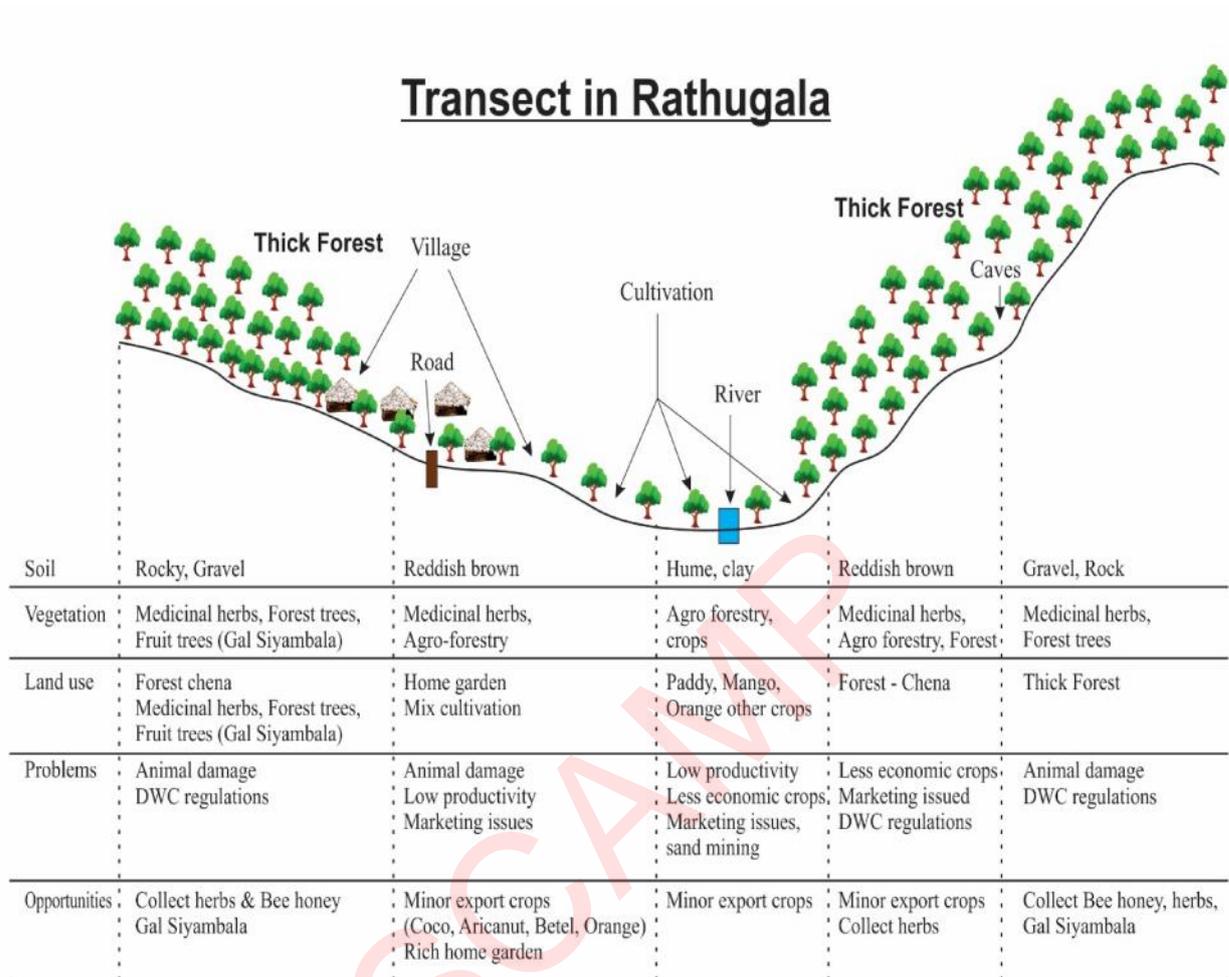
Month	Crops	Natural Disaster	Cultural/Religious Activities
January	Kawpi, Green-gram, Pumpkin, Peanut, Corn, Sesame, paddy	Destroy seeds & crops due to heavy rain and flood, Damage crops by elephants	-
February	Paddy, Corn, Millet	Damages by elephants	-
March	Paddy	Damage crops by elephants	Alms-giving for Gods
April	Kawpi, Green-grams, Pumpkin, Peanut, Corn, Sesame	Damage crops by elephants	'Kolamaduwa dance & Sinhala-Tamil New Year
May	Collect bee-honey	Dry spell starts	Vesak Festival
June	Collect bee-honey Chena	Damage houses and crops due to heavy winds Damage crops due to drought	Procession to celebrate Poson festival
July	Pumpkin, Corn Visit Kandy temple	Damage crops due to drought	Sicknesses
August	Visit Mahiyangala and kandy Temples. Chena clearance	Damage crops due to drought Minor damages from elephants	Collect bee-honey
September	Corn, Finger-Millet, Paddy, Chillies, Brinjal, Pumpkin,	Damages from elephants, Porcupine	Celebrate Indigenous day
October	Paddy, Finger Millet, Pumpkin, Corn	Damages from elephants, Porcupine, Rain starts	Collect bee-honey
November	Paddy, Corn	Heavy rains	Sicknesses
December	Paddy, Corn	Crops destroy due to fungi deceases	Christmas (few families)

Source – Field Survey 2019

## 9. Transect in Rathugala

This transect has been developed to understand the geo-technical and geo-sociological features of Rathugala village and the vicinity. Transect is an important observation method to study socio-economic and physical characteristics as well. As the Rathugala village and surrounding forest is a huge area, a specific section (nearly 1.5 km line) from the middle of the village was selected for the transect study. The team conducted a line transect along a selected belt. Indigenous community members also participated in this walk through a defined line and milestones were also earmarked. Transect is also faster than surveying the entire area and it is another way of sampling. Accordingly, a well-planned transect was conducted with the support of community members to recognize geo-technical, socio-economic and physical features in the area.

**Figure 3 - Transect in Rathugala**



**Source - Field Survey, November 2019**

The map shows that the area has reddish-brown to hum clay soil which are suitable for cultivation. Since there are water ways with a river (Rambakan Oya) and streams, sufficient water is also available for village cultivations. Accordingly, paddy and Other Field Crops (OFC) could be cultivated during the Maha season. Even now, communities cultivate Maize (corn) and paddy in the low elevation areas. Chena is mainly done in high elevation and as an agro-forestry in surrounding areas. But they never disturb the forest in upper locations as these are the catchment for the entire region. Farmers mainly use 'Uriya' as fertilizer for paddy and upland cultivation. The average selling price of Maize is Rs. 30 to 35 a kilo and nearly Rs. 60,000 could be obtained from a 1.5 acre plot. Farmers spend around Rs. 13,500 for fertilizer in such cultivations. The soil and the environment of the area is suitable for orange cultivation and it is being practiced by a few generations. The geo-technical features are suitable for following minor export crops which provide reasonable incomes.

- Coco
- Pepper
- Ginger, Turmeric
- Banana, Papaya
- Betel
- Areca-nut
- Budded-orange (new variety from Bibile farm) (Need to check suitability of this variety).

A good condition carpeted road is running through the village and it creates both positive and negative results. This provides an easy access to the village from Moneragala and Bibile as well as from Ampara. However, due to absence of speed limits, tourists do not stop at this interesting village. Some speed limits and awareness for tourist guide could address this issue up to some extent. Local fish species (Hungo, Pathiya etc.) are observed in the main river. The problem is that with all these resources why malnutrition prevails among adults and pregnant mothers? Youngsters of the village help outside business people for illegal sand mining in the river especially in the low-income periods.

**Figure 4 - Discussions with IP Women and a Sales Out-let**



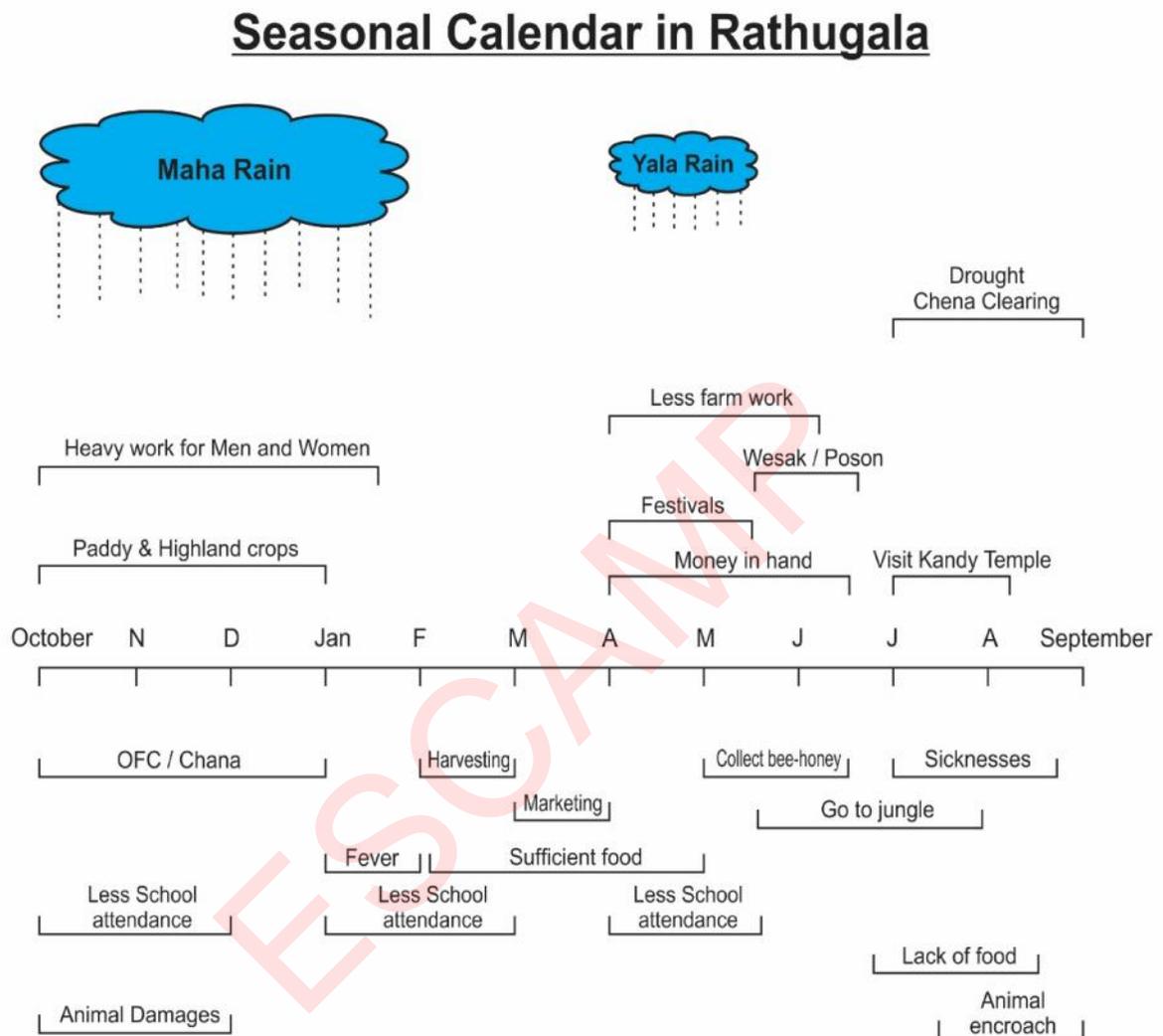
Source - Field Survey, 2019

#### **10. The Seasonal Chart or Calendar in Rathugala**

This is another participatory tool to study time-related changes and activities in Rathugala. This is used to learn changes in agricultural practices, water requirements and other social requirements like food, income, expenditure and village level savings and credit patterns etc.. This could be used effectively to study changes in livelihood patterns, crop losses, animal damages, festival seasons with less farm works and health out-breaks as well. Similarly, the pattern of their religious and socio-cultural

activities could be easily recognized through this exercise. Accordingly, this exercise is important for development workers to plan and launch participatory development work in Rathugala.

Figure 5 - The Seasonal Calendar in Rathugala



Source - Field Survey, November 2019

### 11. SWOT (TWOS) Analysis in Rathugala

Lack of income opportunities are the main issue face by IPs. The main reasons for this situation are poor harvest, animal damages, drought and weak extension services by officials. Even though there is a Junior School, the quality of education is weak for several reasons. Kids receive mid-day meal and vitamins from the government. PHI visits the school to provide this service and monitor the process. However, the student population has gone down from 54 to 19 and there is no School Attendance

Committee (SAC) to improve the attendance. Eight (8) teachers are serving in the school with three (3) graduates. School drop outs are high after grade 5. The nutrition levels of most mothers and pregnant mothers are below the average. Health and hygiene services are poor in the village and many families do not have toilets.

Anyway, the area is suitable for minor export crops like, Coco, areca-nut, ginger, pepper, turmeric, and Finger-millet. Vocational Training will be an effective solution for school drop outs after grade 8 or 11. Generally, communities receive low prices for their farm products and NTFPs. Improvement of road-side marketing could be a solution to reduce the marketing issue.

**Table 3 - SWOT Analysis of Rathugala**

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
Fertile soil (land) in the village.	A lack of access to Government Services (GN, AGA and Extension Officers).	Suitable (soil) land for perennial crops.	Lack of unity among IPs.
Land ownership by communities.	Poor quality of education in the school.	Availability of water for cultivation.	Without giving alternatives, enforced limitation to enter in to the forest.
Skills for chena cultivation.	Lack of awareness on IGP.	Can promote roadside marketing.	Migration of IP youth from the village.
Area is good for minor export crops (eg. cocoa, orange, ginger, turmeric, millet, areca-nut and beetle etc.	Lack of investment ((Inputs) for productive ventures.	Can promote minor export crops.	Diminishing IP cultural practices and language.
Village is situated by the main road from Bible to Ampara (easy access to the village).	Road is too good and high speed - no stopping.	Promotion of enterprises for women.	High school dropouts.
There is a permanent river (Rambakanoya) in the village.	Lack of vocational training for youth.	Vocational training for school dropouts.	Vocational training will be a reason for youth to go out of the village.
Seasonal water streams.	School drop-outs are high after Grade 5.	Improve quality of education through child friendly school concept.	Leadership issues in the society
Marketing can be promoted along the road.	Backward attitude of communities.	Involvement of local NGOs for IGPs.	
Junior school is available within the village.	Destructive methods on NTFP harvesting (Galsiyambala).	Added value for medicinal herbs.	School specifically for IP will have threats to inclusion.
Local NGOs are there with good records.	Low school attendance by kids.	Introduce speed limits through sign boards.	

Good quality drinking water scheme is there.	Poor supervision by IAs, teachers.	Awareness for Tourist Guides (on bird watching etc.).	
Earn money from medicinal herbs (NTFP).	Low prices for NTFP.		-
Sufficient teachers are in the school (8 teachers with 3 Graduates).	Lack of trained teachers. Malnutrition among adults in the village.		
The sufficient physical resources are in the school.	Unity issues among community members.		
Protein, Vitamin and Mid-Day Meals are given to students by the Government.	No musical instruments in the school.		

Source – Field Survey, 2019

## 12. Expected Benefits of IP Strategy:

Equal benefits are essential for both the State and IP communities to launch a sustainable development strategy. For communities to participate in the development, management and conservation of resources, they must receive a range benefits and services that are equal to or exceed their overall inputs.

The direct benefits of this strategy can be broadly put into three (3) categories that are social, economic and environmental.

- **Social Benefits** - Social Cohesion, Development of Social relations/inclusion, Empowerment, Labour opportunities, Institutional development, Skills and Capacity building.
- **Economic Benefits** - Forest and NTFP, Household benefits, Employment, Mixed crops, Better home gardens, Improved access to Agriculture, Livestock, Water, Eco-tourism and marketing.
- **Environmental Benefits** - Improved Biodiversity, Forest recovery, Conservation of forest and wildlife, Watershed benefits, Better land management.

## 13. Development Strategy for Rathugala:

This proposed strategy aims to introduce a number of interventions to uplift the living standards of IP families while minimizing the negative impacts to their livelihood pattern. Promotion of social inclusion to avoid marginalization of IPs from other communities is also a focus of this strategy.

The constraints / threats identified in Rathugala might react as barriers for the development strategy. The constraints include; traditional agricultural practices, usage of poor-quality seeds and farm inputs, lack of exposure to emerging markets, limited access to institutional credit and poor agricultural extension services. All development programs in Rathugala should focus on direct involvement of IPs in all activities through a participatory approach. This will enhance the confidence and decision-making capacities of IPs while working with government and non-government stakeholders.

**Table 4 - Proposed Development Strategy**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Proposed Strategies</b>	<b>Proposed activities</b>	<b>By Whom?</b>
Low income level of IPs.	Introduce new income sources based on village resources.	Promote minor export crops. Added value for NTFP Road-side marketing	IP Society, DWC, GOs, NGOs
Low nutrition levels of mothers and pregnant mothers	Conduct village level clinics and nutrition, WASH and hygiene programs.	Nutrition education programs, Nutritious food preparation with local vegetables and other raw materials.	MOH and Uva Wellessa Uni, IP Society, NGOs
Lack of quality education for kids	Introduce 'Child Friendly School' concept to this school with teacher training	Combine the school to GOSL ESDFP, Nearest School is the Best School and Child Friendly School programs.	Education Dept – (Uva), UNICEF, Plan Int. – Room to read
Lack of drinking water for some families	Drinking water for all families through pipe-borne water.	Study the availability of water in the source. Extension of pipe lines to connect other families	NWS&DB, Community water service Unit
Destructive method to collect NTFP (Galsiyambala, herbs)	Introduce new methods for Sustainable use of NTFP	New technology with agri-extension officers and use IPs traditional skills	Provincial Agri Dept, NGOs
Poor technical skills	Vocational training facilities for youth	Vocational Training centre in the village	VTA, GOSL, IP Society
High Speed in the road and lack of visitors	Speed control methods. Awareness programs for tourist guides.	Enforce speed limits Fix sign boards Awareness for tourist guides	Police, GOSL and private sector
Low level of participation and low capacity to accept ownership of programs	Introduce need based development and awareness programs.	Facilitate GOSL extension programs. Ensure agri-inputs reach the village on time. Training of identify youth as 'Change Agents' to introduce new knowledge and practices to the villagers.	Dept of Agri, NGOs
Poor or weak leadership for the community	Improve confidence of the leader.	Training for the leader/s. Awareness for youth on leadership and respect the leader of the society.	IP community, DWC, NGOs

	Reduce the competition from the second in command.		
Problem of social equity or social harmony in the area	Special programs for inclusion of IPs in all GOSL development programs in the region.	Conduct intra-social mobilization programs. Common cultural programs for all communities in the region. Awareness to ensure importance of IP culture especially on environmental protection and eco-system management.	AGA, DS, NGOs, IP Society.
Lack of follow-up on environmental issues due to development works	Monitoring and follow-up of development Plans	Engagement of Env officers and other officials from relevant Depts.	AGA, GN, DWC, PMU, ESCAMP
Illegal activities by out-siders in the forest.	Strong watch and monitoring system by FD and DWC.	Form watch groups with GOSL officers to monitor and enforce punishments.	IPs, GN and NGOs
Lack of interest on IPs grievances by others	Develop a monitoring system of addressing IP Grievances.	Work with DWC and NGOs to ensure IP grievances are adequately addressed.	DWC, AGA, GN, ESCAMP, PMU

#### 14. Conclusion:

It is unrealistic to assume that all IP issues could be addressed by ESCAMP and through this strategy. But the ESCAMP will develop required strategies to help implementing agencies and NGOs for clear direction. The GOSL should directly involve in mitigation of social inequalities in the area by providing sufficient recognition for Rathugala IPs. The provincial Ministry of Education should take remedial actions to improve the quality of education while increasing the children enrolment to the Junior School. There is a suggestion to encourage NGOs to work in this village to improve the livelihood pattern of IPs. It is also observed that required resources are available within the province to address the malnutrition issue among IP adults. The University of Uva Wellassa and Provincial Medical Officer of Health (MOH) could jointly work with UNICEF and WHO to address health and medical issues. The main requirement is that someone should take the leadership to plan and implement IP development programs based on this strategy. Finally, involvement of IP community is vital for a successful strategy to address their own issues.

#### ESCAMP

##### 14.11.19

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