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Cultural Services of Urban Coastal Ecosystems: Assessing the Value of View to the Indigenous Community

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The study aimed to assess the value of cultural services of an urban coastal ecosystem. Admitting those inherent difficulties associated with defining the cultural services, which were slender down into few cultural values, namely: aesthetic, social relations, sense of place, and cultural heritage values. Negombo lagoon was selected as the study site, and the view of the site was justified to explain the cultural services of lagoon in concern. The lagoon area was geographically segregated into areas known as "Thotupola" where the fisherman used to launch their fishing boats. Contingent Valuation Method was applied to assess the community preferences for lagoon view to which the 'bid values' identified through the pilot survey) i.e. Rs. 25,000; Rs. 50,000; Rs. 75,000 and Rs. 100,000 (were used. Primary data were gathered through a face-to-face interview, supported by a structured questionnaire, with 300 respondents representing 15 'Thotupola' areas. The outcome of assessment highlights that nearly 75 percent of respondents answered "positively" to the particular bid values listed and 32 percent did not say "yes" to any of all the bid values offered by the payment principle questions) non-protest zeroes and less than minimum bid value. (Further, it has been revealed that the age, gender, level of education and income had significant impact on the mean willingness-to-pay) MWTP(, i.e. excess amount of money that they willing to pay for direct lagoon view, and the MWTP was Rs. 46,792 per perch.

Key words : *Cultural services, Contingent Valuation Methods, Negombo lagoon, Urban coastal ecosystem, Value of view*

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