

## ABSTRACT

Increasing pressure on natural resources and changes in environment identifies the importance of in-depth analysis on valuation with respect to the different stakeholders who interact with the ecosystems in different scales. This is the major initiative of this study that addresses three main core problems within it; i.e. the ignorance of cultural ecosystem services in ecosystem valuation that being acknowledged the importance but inadequately measured, ignorance of urban coastal ecosystems those have significant levels of biodiversity that threatened from urbanization and ignorance of trade-off within different user groups that yields benefits of conservation for some people and exact costs to the inhabitants, who may either lose access to resources or livelihoods.

The main objective of the study was to develop an economic framework, which explicitly link to an ecological framework of cultural values and benefits in urban coastal ecosystems, with multiple stakeholders and multicriteria economic valuation methods that can clarify trade-offs and synergies involving in cultural ecosystem services. Further the study developed a definition for the urban coastal ecosystems, which is unsound in literature and provide an overview to the current status of methodological approaches and challenges in field of CES. This study introduces and justifies the descriptors to be used as insights in empirical studies and all-encompassing, provides monetary values for CES in Negombo lagoon to clarify the trade-offs and synergies that consequently will motivate and sustain public support for protection and conservation of lagoon through monetary signals.

The study was gone through a three step of methodological process i.e. identifying the cultural ecosystem services, descriptors and the beneficiaries. In order to translate the human-nature relationship from the ecological system to the social system, the perspectives of all the identified beneficiaries (i.e. local community, property developers, visitor for recreational activities, hotel managers and researchers) were conceptualized to case of coexistence and the suite of mechanisms shaping it.

Possessing a distinctive empirical process accompanied with descriptors as well as conceptualized cases offer some specific guidelines and insights to the revealed preference approaches that have not been used in assessing CES. Further different monetary values were derived through the conceptual cases as bridges in linking functional outcomes of ecosystem. Perceived values given by beneficiaries are the key understanding of prevalent human-ecosystem relationships for cultural services and should not be overlooked in future social-ecological assessments or policy interventions that may in future be a source of conflict or disconnection if not managed appropriately.