

ESTIMATING BIODIVERSITY VALUE OF EAST KOLKATA WETLAND IN WEST BENGAL -A CONTINGENT VALUATION APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Wetland biodiversity in urban areas is an issue of primary concern, especially in developing nations where major portion of people obtain their livelihoods from such type of wetlands. This paper highlighted the significance of East Kolkata wetland-based biodiversity. One of the most important factors which heavily contributed to degradation of East Kolkata wetlands is the lack of understanding of their economic, ecological and socio-cultural values among all the stakeholders. The study attempted to achieve the objective of valuing wetland biodiversity conservation by eliciting respondent's willingness to Pay (WTP) using Contingent Valuation Method (CVM). The results showed that about more than half of the household respondents were WTP for wetland biodiversity conservation. The study explored that respondents with high education, income are found more likely to accept hypothetical CV scenario than households earning directly income from it and who shift from wetland. The average WTP was found Rs. 410 per year for wetland biodiversity conservation indicated that urban wetlands have high conservation value. The findings from the present study can be used as a policy instrument for management and conservation of wetland biodiversity and other ecosystems. There is need for designing area-specific policy tools which may also help for efficient and better management of wetlands.

KEYWORDS: Wetland Biodiversity, Contingent Valuation Method, Willingness to Pay