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53

**Economics of Urban
Ecosystem Services:
A Case Study of Bangalore**

M Balasubramanian



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Foreword

I am pleased to pen the foreword for this monograph, *Economics of Urban Ecosystem Services: A Case Study of Bangalore*, authored by Dr M Balasubramanian, Assistant Professor, Centre for Ecological Economics and Natural Resources. Currently about 377 million people forming 31 percent of the population live in urban areas in India. Urban growth contributes to 60 percent of India's GDP. An increasing urban growth and industrialization imposed pressure on urban ecosystems. Urban ecosystem provides a number of benefits to human well-being such as public health, socio-economic and cultural development. The economics of urban ecosystem services is receiving increasing attention by urban planners achieving sustainable growth of cities.

Bangalore's urban parks are rich in flora. Bangalore metropolitan has been a favoured place to settle, to benefit from well-known educational institutions and IT sectors. Bangalore urban ecosystem provides a number of benefits to humans *interalia* climate regulation, water regulation, and carbon sequestration; reduced noise pollution and aesthetic health benefits. In this study the strollers to Lalbagh Botanical Garden were interviewed with a structured schedule in order to estimate the Willingness to Pay (WTP) for the improvement of the garden. The sample of 135 male and 15 foreign strollers were interviewed during 2015 for the purpose. This study used travel cost method for estimating consumer surplus, due to aesthetic pleasure of visiting Lalbagh. The research has indicated that the estimated consumer surplus per capita is ₹ 54, while for a foreigner it is ₹ 145. Currently, the Department of Horticulture is charging ₹ 10 per capita as entry fee and this forms 20 percent of the consumer surplus. This entry fee can be enhanced to about 50 percent of the consumer surplus to about ₹ 25 per person per day. Hence it is economically and socially relevant to enhance the entry fee from the current rate of ₹ 10 per day to at least ₹ 25 per day which meets both equity and efficiency concerns and the Government can maintain and sustain the current ecosystem services.

This monograph is a valuable addition to the literature on the value of urban ecosystem services in India. Dr M Balasubramanian deserves rich appreciation from the Institute.

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M G Chandrakanth
Director, ISEC