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**An Investigation of Factors Affecting the Willingness to Pay for Conservation of Mangroves in Negombo Lagoon: A Case Study of North Pitipana in Negombo**

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**Abstract**

Sri Lanka has wide array of coastal wetland ecosystem that harbors significant mangroves diversity. Negombo is very rich of mangrove ecosystem within the lagoon. Mangroves in Negombo lagoon provide variety of eco system services to surrounding community. The overall aim of this research was to an investigation of factors affecting the willingness to pay for conservation of mangroves in Negombo lagoon. Specific objectives were identify the eco system services and service providers and beneficiaries, identify the threats of Negombo lagoon and analyse and evaluate the factors that affect for wiliness to pay for conservation of mangroves in Negombo lagoon. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, required data were collected both from primary sources through questionnaire survey, key informant interviews and field observations. Secondary data were collected from reports, books and research articles. The sample size was 30 households at North Pitipana in Negombo and selected through convenient sampling method. Data was analysed by using SPSS software. The large extent of mangrove ecosystems around the Negombo lagoon have been indiscriminately exploited. Changes and modification are highly affected to exploiting for area of Negombo lagoon. Negombo faces unbearable threats towards mangrove ecosystem by fishery activities and shrimp farming and also development activities make it an extremely vulnerable ecosystem. According to the multiple regression analysis the researcher identified awareness of mangroves (Sig: 0.039) and monthly income (Sig: 0.000) has a positive and significant impacts on willingness to pay for conservation of mangroves in Negombo lagoon. Willingness to pay value estimated through householder's monthly income. Most of householders have a monthly income of less than 40,000 rupees. Majority of among them are fishermen. Their daily income level is lower. According to the monthly income of householders, estimated that 150 rupees for the average value of willingness to pay. People who awareness about valuation of mangroves endeavor to protect mangroves in Negombo lagoon. This study will contribute to the society and decision makers to conserve mangroves in Negombo lagoon.

**Keywords:** Mangroves, Negombo Lagoon, Conservation, Payment for eco system services, Willingness to Pay