

## **Estimating the Recreational Demand of Diyatha Uyana Park in Sri Lanka**

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Diyatha Uyana Wetland Park has proven to be an important recreational site in the greater Colombo area in Sri Lanka. Availability of food stalls, meeting points, walking paths, daily fairs based on different items, boutiques and different shops for purchasing day to day needs and relaxation places are the major attractions. In addition, this is a place for the urban crowd to spend their leisure time moving away from the hustle of the city life. At present an entrance fee is not charged from visitors and municipal council has allocated a considerable amount of funds for maintaining a clean park for the visitors. This study estimated the recreation related welfare benefits that visitors derived from Diyatha Uyana Wetland Park. Under the Individual Travel Cost Method, Zero Truncated Poisson Regression Model was applied to estimate the welfare benefits of Diyatha Uyana Wetland Park. Further, there are few studies done in Sri Lanka applying ITCM. The welfare benefit per visitor per trip was LKR 555.55 (1USD = LKR 158.00). The study also evaluated the changes in welfare benefits if the Government of Sri Lanka would impose different entry fees (i.e. LKR 10.00, 20.00, 30.00, 40.00- and 50.00-) to the park. The total recreational value was LKR 1013.88 million per year and the present value of non-market benefit from preserving the park was LKR 10138.80 million (USD 60.42 million) per year. Therefore the findings of the present study could be applied in decision making to preserve the site and introduce an entrance fee in order to properly manage the park.

**Keywords:** welfare benefits, recreation, entry fee, Wetland Park, travel cost method