

Abstract

The forests provide us with various ecosystem services, namely supporting, provisioning, regulating and cultural services. This study is an attempt to map and value the cultural ecosystem services provided by Scrub Forest Hayat ul Mir and Thom Forest Harappa. For this purpose, a questionnaire based study was designed which used Willingness to Pay techniques to find out the non-monetary value which respondents pose towards the cultural ecosystem services which both the sites present. The questionnaire was divided into 4 parts i.e. Socioeconomic and demographic profile of the respondent, respondent's recreational behavior, use and nonuse values and willingness to pay for preservation of sites. The results revealed that recreational value, spiritual value, aesthetic value and archaeological value (only for Harappa) were deemed to be the most significant ones among the respondents. Travel cost method revealed that on average 9265 PKR were being spent on the site of Hayat ul Mir by a respondent on per visit and 4538 PKR were being spent on the site of Harappa. Inferential analysis revealed a significant relation of monthly income and household income, expenditure and distance travelled with WTP and highest one-time donation at $p < 0.001$. It was also seen that there was a significant relationship of expenditure and distance travelled with respondent's income. Respondents from both the sites were well aware with the importance of the forest and its cultural ecosystem services and agreed that these sites should be preserved and the forest area should be increased as well. They were also willing to make a donation towards a conservation fund for the sites if assured that their money would be well utilized. Those who couldn't afford to pay offered to volunteer in plantation and raising awareness about the preservation of the sites.