

KARNATAKA: UNDERVALUING FOREST GOODS AND SERVICES

By Deepthi Sanjiv, Bangalore Mirror Bureau | Updated: Oct 3, 2017, 04:00 AM IST



A research paper titled 'Appraisal of Forest Ecosystems Goods and Services: Challenges and Opportunities for Conservation' has highlighted the undervaluation of forest goods and services that is evident when the estimated total economic value of forest and the value of forest resources calculated in national income accounting framework are compared.

A paper authored by TV Ramachandra, Divya Soman, Ashwath D Naik and MD Subash Chandran from the Energy & Wetlands Research Group, Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru) stated that valuation of ecosystem goods and services is essential to formulate sustainable development policies oriented towards the protection or restoration of ecosystems. The present study estimates the value of forest ecosystem of Uttara Kannada district by market price method. The total value of provisioning goods and services from the forests of Uttara Kannada district was estimated at Rs 15,171 crore p er year, which amounts to about Rs 2 lakh per hectare per year.

Main objective of the study is to value the forest ecosystems in Uttara Kannada forest. This involved computation of total economic value (TEV) of forest ecosystem considering provisioning, regulating, supporting and information services provided by the ecosystem. The district with a spatial extent of 10,291sq.km extends from north to south to a maximum of 180 km, and from West to East a maximum width of 110 km. It is bounded by Belgaum district and Goa state in the north, Dharwad and Haveri districts in the East, Shivamogga and Udupi districts in the South and the Arabian Sea to the west. It has the coastline of 120 km. in the Western part.

The coast stretches in a long nearly straight line to the south except the shallow Karwar and Belekeri bays. The topography of the region can be divided into three distinct zones. The coastal zone, comprising of a narrow strip of the coastline is relatively flat and starts sloping gently upwards towards the East. The ridge zone abruptly rises from the coastal strip, is much more rugged and is a part of the main range of the Western Ghats. Compared to other parts of the Western Ghats, the altitude of the ridge is much lesser and rises to about 600msl. The third zone is the flatter, geographically more homogenous zone that joins the Deccan plateau. The four major rivers of the district are Kalinadi, Gangavali, Aghanashini and Sharavathi.

Apart from these river systems, large number of other wetlands such as lakes, reservoirs, ponds, puddles, lateritic bogs, wet grasslands, marshes, swamps is present in the district that comprises of 11 taluks.

The study concludes that forest resources in the Uttara Kannada district has undergone tremendous change and degradation because the value of it is being poorly understood and not considered in the policy making process. Valuation of these services in income accounting of a region/ nation is essential to make the plans and policies more sustainable.

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