

**A travel cost approach to value Bopath Ella: A recreational site in the Ratnapura district of Sri Lanka**

The Bopathella waterfall is one of the exquisite beautiful recreational sites in Sri Lanka. This is one of the loveliest of all waterfalls in the island and is still known only to a few, hidden away on a wild and lonely detour from one of the island's trunk routes. Economic aspects of the program play an important role in conservation and management of the recreational site.

The study aims to value the Bopathella waterfall, which is located in Ratnapura District, off Kuruvita. A pre- tested structured questionnaire was administered to a sample of 150 visitors. Travel cost method was used to value the water fall and the weighted expenses for travelling to visit the waterfall was considered as a proxy for the price paid by the individual and the number of visits of a respondent was the proxy for the quantity demanded. The regression procedure was used to estimate the demand curve and the  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  estimates were used to draw the demand function for the Bopathella. Zonal travel cost method was applied with relevant to the following formula.  $V_1$  (number of visits made in a time period) =f TC (Travel Cost),  $X_1$  (factors determine individual visits). Since there was no entrance fee to the site, total area under the

demand curve was considered on the consumer surplus and the value for the society. According to the survey and analysis of travel cost results, recreation value of the Bopathella was estimated to 25 million rupees in 1988.

Positive relationship was observed between education level and visitation rate. This means more visits to Bopathella were made by educated. Results show the negative relationship between the female visitors well as married.