

PREFACE

Natural resource which forms our surrounding environment is the basis of our survival on this earth- supporting both the human as well as the wildlife. But, today due to the mounting desire to attain higher growth and development multiplied by the increasing growth rate of population, these resources are degrading at a very faster rate. One of the best possible ways to preserve these resources is through formation and conservation of National Parks and natural reserves. It is essential to take into account the aspects of environment and development at each step of decision making and action in an integrated manner and this necessitates proper economic evaluation of natural assets.

The Kaziranga National Park (KNP) of Assam is well known for its valuable biodiversity and beautiful natural sites with large number of tourist flow every year but the extent of benefit derived from the Park is unknown. This thesis undertakes the task of estimating the economic values of the KNP by eliciting the visitors Willingness to Pay, using the Contingent Valuation Method and their attitude towards environment and development issues.

It is seen that the visitors have a great concern about the usefulness of nature and they are willing to pay a significant amount for the protection of KNP. While, it is also true that more investment in the field of education, awareness programs and campaigning is mandatory to increase concern, awareness, positive attitude towards environment and active participation of the people in protecting the surrounding natural resources.