**Review of challenges towards Mangrove Conservation Vs Sustainable Tourism: Case of Udupi,**

**Coastal belt of Western Karnataka**

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**Abstract**

Mangrove ecosystems play a crucial role in promoting tourism in Udupi District on the western coast of Karnataka. Along with beach tourism, there has been an increase in the number of visitors to the mangroves forests predominantly seen in 8 regions of the district (Uppinakudru, Kodi, Jalady, Anagalli, Koderi, Paduveri, Sasthana and Udyavara) spread over an area of 600 hectares. In order to utilise the bio-diversity of mangroves to promote sustainable tourism and its conservation, the basic characteristics and role of mangroves in the biological ecosystems should be recognised. This enables mangrove tourism to be clearly established in these areas. It also supports programs for mangrove conservation, while creating a task plan for implementing the objectives of ecotourism in a comprehensive manner by involving and engaging local communities living in and around the mangroves. The value of local wisdom cannot be overlooked as a key element towards the conservation of these floating evergreen forests dotted along the coast that act as boundaries to filter sediments before being washed into the sea. Comprising of shrubs and trees known as Halophytes that thrive in a coastal environment, this vegetation grows in saline water and is salt tolerant with a complex root system that remains immersed in salty water. Forming a inter-tidal wetland ecosystem, mangrove forests usually occur at the interface of land and sea along Udupi district’s western coast. This ecosystem is a natural breeding ground for birds, fish and amphibians, where the natural habitats of mangrove forests need to be safeguarded as well. Their role in preserving the coastline against the ravages of climate change and global warming is also vital. The potential to promote responsible nature based eco-tourism in these destinations needs to be carefully considered. This paper looks into identifying the richness of these biological treasures, while formulating guidelines for eco-tourism of mangrove forests that boosts sustainable economy and conservation program.

**Keywords**:mangrove tourism, sustainable development goals, ecotourism, local wisdom, conservation, climate change