

# **Incorporating Stakeholder Perceptions in Participatory Forest Management**

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MEDIA (PRINT) PERCEPTION, COVERAGE AND ITS AGENDA  
SETTING EFFECT IN RELATION TO JFM ISSUES, SPECIAL  
REFERENCE TO HARDA

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# **MEDIA (PRINT) PERCEPTION, COVERAGE AND ITS AGENDA SETTING EFFECT IN RELATION TO JFM ISSUES, SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HARDA**

## **1. Introduction**

The fact is that the print media, through information and gate keeping role, plays an important role in ensuring proper implementation of community development programs and equitable distribution of their benefits among the beneficiaries. Though the media does not have the direct role by way of sharing the responsibility in implementation of the development programs and deriving the benefits out of them, in the democratic society like India, it is considered as an important stake holder due to its above role.

### **1.1. Era of Participatory Development**

Since independence, as a welfare state, the governments, both at state as well as national levels have been implementing varieties of community welfare / development programs, either with its own funds or with external aids. However, over the years sea change has occurred in approach and methods of implementation of these programs. From the initial top-down approach, we have come a long way to enter into the era of participatory development, where in the involvement of each and every stakeholder is envisaged in all stages, right from the planning to implementation of the program. All the stakeholders have right to derive benefits from the program proportionate to their contribution. This can be ensured only when the program is administered in a transparent manner. Over the years, through our own experience and research within the country and through the study of successful cases of other developing countries, we have already evolved number of community based institutional mechanisms to ensure participation and transparency in the management of development programs. Many of them, spread over different states of the country, are successfully functioning in this respect.

Basically these participatory models of development can be classified into few major categories. There are examples of fully autonomous, self-sustainable people's institutions like Amul Milk Producers Cooperatives in Gujarat. The Panchayat Raj institutions are of course autonomous, but dependent on government of their sustenance. We also have government – community partnership models like Joint Forest Management (JFM) / Eco Development (ED) committees. There are many instances communities themselves have initiated own participatory institutional mechanisms and functioning well. Of course in many of these cases, in later stages, government has lent its support in terms of finance or technical / infrastructural assistance with out much interference in their day-to-day management and decision-making. Yet another mode of participatory mechanism is the range of community institutions functioning under the watershed projects supported by National Watershed Mission across the country. They are project-mode local institutions, created as a social-capital component of the watershed project, supported by the project funds, yet functionally autonomous.

The experience with respect to these local institutions is in fact mixed. We have both successful and failure cases of these institutions in promoting people's participation in community development. No body can dispute the fact that if the country to be truly democratic, it has to not only at political level but also at all social levels, right from bottom to top. The entire society has to be infested by democratic culture. For this, the community level institutions have to not only ensure adequate people's participation in development but also sustain the same on a long run. It is needless to emphasize that they need full support from the media which one the four pillars of democracy.

## **1.2. Participatory Forest Management**

With the conceptual shift in the country's forest management policies in late 80s, the foresters are no more just viewed as custodians of national forest resources. Apart from their traditional forest conservation role, the forest managers also take the responsibility of the development of the forest dependent communities. Due to this role modification, now days the Forest Department (FD) has also become one of the active partners in the community (rural) development process and this has been clearly manifested in the process of JFM through which both the FD and local community come together as partners, not only to protect forest resources, but also in planning and implementation poverty alleviation programs. So far the experience shows that wherever all the major stakeholders of JFM – Local community, Forest department, NGOs – are adequately participate in the process, the program has fairly succeeded. It is also increasingly realized that in order to sustain this participatory effort for a long run, strong local institutional base is essential and for this, apart from the direct stakeholders, the support of others like policy makers, planners, politicians, media etc., is required to be roped in.

## **1.3. Media Role in Participatory Development / Forest Management**

In this respect, the two traditional roles of media i.e creating 'awareness' and 'watch dog' role become important. The people, living in both rural as well as urban areas are to be motivated to actively participate in the development process. They should be made to realize that though the government is responsible for the implementation programs, in order to make them truly need satisfying, transparent and equitable in benefit distribution, their active involvement in all the stages of implementation is essential. Above all, people's participation in the development program creates a sense of ownership, necessary for monitoring the progress and sustaining its implementation. This is not mere assumption, but the realization based on many successful experiences with in the country, particularly in the areas of forest and watershed management. At the same time these experiences in the form of success stories of community participation, have to be spread all over through media so that people become habituated to voluntarily participate in the implementation of development / service oriented programs / schemes meant for their development. Media is also responsible to ensure that 'participation' should not merely remain a buzzword, but become the functional element of any development scheme in the country.

In the democratic society like ours, media's 'watch dog' is considered as an essential function in order to ensue various institutional systems to follow democratic traditions and function in a transparent manner so that all sections of the society is served

equitably and efficiently. The lacunas and mal-practices in the systems and their functions have to be brought out by the media to the notice of not only the concerned people for immediate rectification, but also the society at large so that it acts as pressure-group on these systems / institutions of their own. Particularly in Indian context where the participatory resource management process is in its initial stages, the 'watch dog' role of media, apart from ensuring transparency in the system, should also assume the additional dimension of 'providing guidance' to the local / community level executives in the participatory managerial process.

#### **1.4. Need for the Study & its Objectives**

The on going study on the 'Incorporation of stakeholders' perception with regard to JFM in Harda forest division', research effort is made to elucidate perceptions of important stakeholders like Forest department (FD), JFM Committees (JFMCs), NGOs, Mass Tribal Organizations (MTOs) etc., and incorporate the same the policy, planning and implementation levels during the extension and sustainability phase of JFM process. In the midst of this study, it is realized that the 'media', particularly the 'print media' is also one the important stakeholders as it possesses substantial influence in shaping the perception of other stakeholders, right from policy to grassroot levels. At the same time it is also the fact that the print media has its own perception with regard to JFM, which in turn determines its nature of 'salience' (news selection and prominence given). Number of media studies has reported that the 'media salience' plays a significant role in setting agenda for perception formation among different levels of audience.

Hence, it is being felt relevant to study the pattern of 'print media coverage', which includes its salience with regard to JFM in Harda as well as the entire 'media process' through which the media forms its own perception, determines salience and in turn sets agenda to influence its audience (other stakeholders of JFM) perception. Since this would only be a sub-study, intending just to analyze the media trend, it is proposed to analyze four selected dailies, having circulation at state as well as local levels and few important free/lance publications on JFM circulated in Harda district.

The major objectives of the study are as spelled out below:

- i. To assess the extent and nature of coverage of JFM issues in terms of salience, space and range by the state and local level print media.
- ii. To study the media process, its perception, and their effect on 'media salience & agenda setting' with special reference to JFM implementation in Harda

### **1.5. Expected Implications of the Study**

It is need less to repeatedly emphasize the significance of the role of print media in ensuring transparency, equity and democracy in any kind of participatory process, including JFM. Though every one accepts, in reality, so far, the role of print media has not been substantial in promoting JFM in the country. Harda has been one of the pioneer forest divisions in the country in adopting participatory forest management in the form of JFM and considered as a model to be followed by divisions. Even there, the print media involvement has been limited to highlighting the activities of MTOs and few negative aspects / incidents related to JFM. There seem to be communication gap between the main stakeholders of JFM and the print media because of which its role remains minimum in promoting this participatory process. The findings of this study in terms of print media perceptions, coverage of issues and agenda setting through media salience in relation to JFM would provide the scope for appropriately incorporating its role along with other stakeholders in promoting and sustaining proper participatory management regime in JFM.

## 2. Methodology

Basically this study is concerned with print-media salience, its process and nature of perception and media's agenda setting role with specific reference to JFM status in Harda district of Madhya Pradesh. As spelled out in the objectives, the study is divided into two distinct components, viz.,

- # Content Analysis - through which media-salience\* with respect to JFM issues in general and in specific context to Harda forest division was analyzed. The analysis also included the assessment of range of JFM issues covered by the selected print media.
- # Personal interaction with media personnel - involved interview of selected media personnel who were associated with the publication of media reports related to JFM. Through this personal interaction, the media process, overall perception of media on JFM issues, in turn effect of media-perception on determining its salience and print media's agenda setting\*\* role with respect to Harda specific JFM issues were studied.

Basically, this chapter constitutes the description of the above two study processes.

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### Concept clarifications

- Media Salience : Gumpert and Robert (1986) defined media salience as the salient messages which are selectively assembled, determined and communicated to the audience by the media.

According to Fedler (1978) media were most likely to report events that had just occurred and that were interesting, important and unusual. The decisions made by the reporters/editors inevitably would be influenced by their background, personality and values, environment, goals, education and style of writing.

Weaver and Elliott (1965) stressed the role of selective process and news judgement of journalists in shaping the agenda. According to them, it was possible that news values and selective processes had an even more important role to play in the specific reporting like agriculture and forestry and framing of each individual issue.

- \*\* Agenda setting : The agenda setting hypothesis says that the greater power of the media lies in their ability to transmit to the audience the issues that will be included in public debate. Agenda setting argues that the media not only inform us about what we should be informed; but also tell us as to what is important and what we should know and need. Cohen (1963) summarized the agenda-setting concept when he said that the mass media might not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but the media are stunningly successful in telling their audiences what to think about. Murphy (1977) called the agenda setting function as the ability of the media to determine what we talk about, just by deciding what information to print or air.
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## **2.1 Content analysis**

In journalism research, content analysis is one of the very important methods, enabling the researcher to analyse and understand the content trends of the media. It is a dynamic research method in the sense that the methodology varies widely with respect to the nature and functions of the medium on which research is being conducted. For instance, the methods and components of content analysis with respect to print media would be very much different as compared to that of used in case of electronic media like radio or TV. Even within print media, methods and tools would be different for analysing the contents of news dailies from those used for magazines/journals/books/other forms of print media. Like-wise, content analysis methods vary among electronic media - radio which is essentially appeals to audio sense of the receiver and TV which feeds audio as well as visual sense of the receiver simultaneously. Though, it is true that content analysis also deals with the content aspects like 'subject/issue/information coverage which is general to all types of media, by and large, the methods and tools adopted in the content analysis vary from medium to medium according to the treatment given to the contents or how the raw information is converted into the message for mass reception in a particular medium.

### **2.1.1 Focus of content analysis in current study**

As the current study was confined to the print media, that too selected news dailies, the methods adopted to analyse their content were also essentially those specially applicable to the selected print category. The content analysis of the selected English and language dailies focussed in two aspects :

- # Extent and nature of issue coverage related to JFM with particular reference to Harda forest division.
- # Media salience in terms of space provided to JFM news report and its positioning in the daily.

The basic assumption was that both these above aspects were largely determined by the types of perceptions media held in relation to JFM in general and Harda context in particular. In turn, the media salience and its issue coverage influence the perception of their readers.

### **2.1.2 Sampling/Selection of dailies for content analysis**

Series of circulars of Government of India on JFM subsequent to the national Forest Policy, 1988 to State Forest Departments had made JFM as a national strategy for participatory forest management. However, the national consensus to implement JFM had emerged out of some successful local level experiences like Harda in involving communities for protecting and managing forest resources. Needless to say that the nature of perceptions of the different stakeholders of JFM at national and local levels have implications on the implementation of this participatory strategy at both these levels. Considering this fact and realizing the agenda setting potential of print media at these levels, it was decided to include sample representative of print media from national level as well as local (Harda) levels for the content analysis.

In this respect following steps were followed :

- # This was location specific study largely focussing on print media perception, its salience and agenda setting role of JFM program implemented at Harda forest division. However, the media perception and coverage of news, that too by national level dailies do exert influence over policy making at national level. Hence, for the purpose of content analysis, it was decided to select both local as well as national level dailies.
- # Since most of the national dailies were printed in English, one of such dailies, having maximum circulation in Harda district was to be selected, whereas the selected local dailies were to be in Hindi.
- # Considering the time frame available for conducting the study, it was decided to restrict content analysis to three selected dailies - one national level daily in English and two local level dailies in Hindi.
- # Based on circulation details collected, the national as well as local level dailies having maximum circulation in Harda district were selected for content analysis.

The selected dailies and their circulation details within Harda district are as follows :

1. Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi) -
2. Nav Bharat (Hindi) -
3. Hindustan Times (English) -

Other than these newspapers, few other news coverage/stories on issues related to JFM in Harda published in dailies like 'The Hindu', 'Economic Times', 'Central Chronicle', 'Dainik Jagran' etc. were also included in the content analysis.

- # Again, considering the time frame available for the study, the content analysis of above selected dailies was restricted to three years. Content analysis of all the daily issues of these three newspapers was done backwards, beginning from December, 2003 to 2001.
- # For content analysis, the back volumes of the newspapers available in the libraries of Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Press Information Bureau, 'The Hindustan Time's' Office, Library - all at Bhopal. In addition, library sources at Winrock International, Center for Environmental Education - all located in New Delhi, were also used.



### 2.1.3. **Dimensions of content analysis.**

As described under subtitle 2.1.1. - Focus of Content analysis, the two major aspects on which content analysis was carried out were the news coverage of the selected dailies related to JFM in Harda and their positioning in the daily.

#### 2.1.3.1. **Classified Subject areas of JFM (issues of news coverage) for content analysis.**

- Policy
- Technical aspect
- Financial aspect
- Institutional aspect
- Social issue/Participation
- Women issue
- Conflicts
- Complaint regarding Forest department
- Panchayat - JFMCs
- Any other local issue
- MTOs
- Funding related - World Bank
- NGOs (local)
- Motivation, Awareness

#### 2.1.3.2. **Dimensions of salience given JFM news coverage.**

- # Space provided
  - No. of columns
  - Column length
  - Column width
  
- # Position in the daily
  - Page number in which JFM news published
  - Within the page whether positioned in upper half or lower half

## 2.2. **Personal Interaction with Media Personnel**

In order to analyze the media perception on JFM and with particular reference to Harda and agenda setting role of media in this respect, personal interaction with concerned media personnel was carried out.

### **2.2.1. Selection of media personnel for interaction**

As this study particularly focuses on media perception on JFM, media personnel who were concerned with the coverage/writing on JFM were purposively selected for interaction. There were two categories of respondents.

- media personnel who were associated with selected newspapers.
- Free lance journalists.

In all six media personnel could be interviewed within the time availability. Out of six, five personnel were associated with dailies like Dainik Bhaskar, Nav Bharat, Hindustan Times (all selected for content analysis) and others like Dainik Jagran, and the Hindu. One was the free lance journalist who wrote articles on JFM in Newspapers and other magazines.

### **2.2.2. Method and tools of personal interaction**

The perception of the media persons were essentially assessed through two methods :

- Personal interview by using the structured interview schedule.
- Q sort method by using Q sort statements.

### **2.2.3. Dimensions of media perceptions assessed.**

Following were the major dimensions or aspects on which the perceptions of the media personnel sought through the personal interview (interview schedule).

- JFM issues, in general as well as specific reference to Harda covered by them over the years.
- Sources of information and their credibility.
- Format of JFM news coverage.
- Salience (prominence) given to JFM news as perceived by the media personnel.
- Their assessment of JFM implementation, in general as well as in Harda district.
- Relationship between media personnel and important stakeholders of JFM
- Opinion of journalists (media persons) on World Bank sponsorship to JFM.
- Current role of media in JFM implementation.
- Expected role of media in promoting JFM.

### **2.3. Analysis of data**

As the outcome of the content analysis of three selected dailies over three years, 41 number of news coverage on JFM were identified. (This number also included few news stories on JFM from few other dailies like The Hindu, Economic Times and Free Press.

In case of personal interaction, six media personnel could be interviews and subjected to Q-sort within the available time for field study. Since, the sample size was small in both the cases, only simple percentage analysis was used to interpret the collected data and to cover meaningful conclusion.

### **2.4. Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited to small sample, mainly because of its short duration within which both content analysis and interaction with media personnel had to be completed. Since the journalists were quite busy, that too during the intervening national elections, it was difficult to personally interact with more number of them.

Another constraint faced by the researcher in carrying out content analysis was the availability of back volume of selected dailies for the study. The back volumes were only fragmentedly available at different places/libraries. Due to the time constraint, the content analysis was restricted to three years, though it was originally planned for five years.

### 3. Findings and Discussions

As elaborately discussed in the methodology chapter, the study was conducted on two major elements - i.e. print media salience through content analysis and assessment of media perception and agenda setting role through personal interview/interaction with media personnel. On the same line, in this chapter, the major findings along with researcher's interpretation has been furnished.

#### 3.1 Content analysis of selected dailies

Primarily, content analysis was carried out to make the comparative analysis of nature of media salience with respect to JFM (Harda) issues across the selected dailies. When the contents of the daily issues of the three selected newspapers were analysed, for three years, i.e. from 2001 to 2003, JFM related news stories numbering 41 were identified and selected for further analysis. Of course, this number also includes few news stories on JFM appeared in newspapers, other than selected for the study, viz. The Hindu, Economic Times and Free Press.

The break up details of news stories selected from news papers for content analysis are given below :

Total media reports identified for content analysis : 41

From selected dailies :

Dainik Bhaskar (DB)	: 23
Nav Bharat (NB)	: 06
Hindustan Times (HT)	: 06

From other dailies :

The Hindu	: 04
Economic Times	: 01
Free Press	: 01

All the above identified news stories were related to JFM, particularly to Harda context. Among them, some were concerned with JFM in general, but also related to the issues relevant to Harda.

### 3.1.1 Coverage of Content categories.

The extent of coverage of sub issues related to JFM in general as well as specific Harda context by the selected dailies are discussed under this head.

#### 3.1.1.1 Coverage of contents related to JFM in general

The following table gives an overall idea on extent of coverage of sub-issues within the broad subject of JFM. It also reflects the relative importance (salience) given by the print media to the sub-issues.

Table No. 1 Extent of coverage of sub-issues (topics) related to JFM in general by the print media.

Sl No.	Sub -issues	Number	Percent
1	Motivation and awareness	05	38.40
2	Social issues/ participation	03	23.00
3	Policy	02	15.30
4	MTOs related	01	07.60
5	Institutional aspects	01	07.60
6	Funding related (WB)	01	07.60

The results evidently showed that the print media was fulfilling its traditional role of creating awareness as far as JFM issues were concerned. Though, it was relatively low as compared to other news (political, economical, sports etc.) within JFM related issues, motivation and awareness related news coverage was more than anything else. This observation in content analysis was found to be in compatible with the perception of the media-personnel (journalists), as all those interacted with opined that one of the important roles by media in promoting JFM was to "create awareness among the people". Half of them also suggested that media should give publicity to good examples of JFM implementation, which also amounts to motivating the forest department and local communities who were involved in JFM implementation.

The above table also highlights importance given by print media in terms of coverage to social / participation ( 23.00%) and policy (15.30 %) issued related to JFM. The social issues involved conflicts that arose time to time between as well as within JFM committees and local communities and forest department. These conflicts, in many occasions, got compounded due to absence of adequate policy support or due to lack of proper understanding or perception of existing policies. In this sense, the media had been observed playing an appropriate role by highlighting those issues.

### 3.1.1.2 Coverage of contents related to JFM issues specific to Harda context.

The categorization of contents (sub-issues) covered by the print media with regard to JFM, specific to Harda forest division has been discussed below :

Table 2. Extent of coverage of sub-issues related to JFM in Harda context.

Sl No.	Sub -issues	Number	Percent
1	Social/ participation issues.	05	18.00
2	Jan sunwai (Public hearing of JFM implementation)	05	18.00
3	Conflicts	04	14.20
4	Complaints on Forest Department	03	10.70
5	Women issues	02	07.10
6	Technical aspects	02	07.10
7	Panchayat vs JFMCs	02	07.10
8	MTOs related	02	07.10
9	Motivation & awareness	01	03.50
10	NGOs related	01	03.50
11	Local issues	01	03.50

Interestingly, from the above table, it could be noted that the most emphasis given by the media on 'motivation and awareness' with regard to JFM in general had only got least importance in case of media coverage with respect to issues specific to Harda context. Where as more situational specific issues like 'jan sunwai' (public hearing organized by Mass Tribal Organizations like Ektha Parishad on World Bank aided JFM programme in Harda forest division) and 'social/ participation' issues got prominence in media coverage. This trend of coverage was particularly observed in case of local (state level) print media, published in Hindi. The local media, though their coverage of JFM issues was limited, predominantly observed to be playing the 'watchdog' role as far as JFM implementation in Harda was concerned.

Another reason for the trend of content coverage by print media with respect to JFM in Harda as depicted in the above table could be that JFM had been under implementation in Harda forest division since 1991, well over a decade and was also the pioneer case in the state of Madhya Pradesh. Lot of motivation and awareness campaigns on JFM were conducted by the Forest department during the initial phase of JFM implementation, that had resulted in fairly high level of awareness on JFM among the local community as well as others like NGOs, Mass Tribal Organizations (MTDs), other development agencies etc. Moreover, the MTO were quite active among tribal committees in Harda Forest division, particularly fighting for the right of the communities over forests. They had been contending that through the World Bank aided JFM project, the Forest

department was exploiting the innocent forest dependent tribal communities. In this process, they had also created good amount of awareness among the tribals through mass campaigns like Jan sunwai meeting held in 2001. The heightened awareness among the community could be the reason for the lower priority of the print media for creating awareness on JFM implementation in Harda forest division.

Jan sunwai, the public hearing on JFM, organized by MTOs including Ektha Parishad in 2001 got the maximum publicity in both local as well as national level newspapers. In fact, the media management by the MTOs was far better than that of Forest department. For instance, many articles written in favor of the MTO movement, written by their members and sympathizers like appears in local as well as national newspapers apart from the news coverage by the media correspondents. Where as, according to the perception of the media personnel, the tendency of the Forest department was generally 'avoidance of press', rather than inviting or involving.

The extent of news coverage on social/participation issues was equal to the extent of coverage of Jan sunwai and this was followed by conflicts, complaints on functioning of Forest department and so on. This ordering also reflected the prioritization of issues by media based on their potential in making news value. Interestingly, the grievances against the functioning of Forest department also got top priority in the media coverage. This could be partly due to the hesitation of the forest department in involving in covering JFM activities. Also to be noted was that there was not even response to the complaints by the forest department published through the print media. This alienation had led the media personnel to feel that that the forest department was shy of exposing their lacuna in functioning and to give priority to the news on complaints against the department rather than exposing its good work.

Usually 'conflicts', particularly social in nature have news value. Hence it was not unique that such issues attracted higher priority of the media. This conflicts reported by the print media were between the JFMCs and Forest department. Intra village and inter village conflicts etc. however other important issues like women participation in JFM, relationship between Gram Panchayat and JFMCs, technical aspects related to participatory management of forest resources etc got less priority in terms of coverage in the media. This could be due to the fact that the reporters of the print media by and large resorted to 'event reporting' with respect to JFM, rather than making a comprehensive study on JFM which was time consuming.

### **3.1.2 Positioning of JFM news in the daily.**

Following table indicates the proportion of JFM related news published in various positions within the daily editions of the selected news papers for the content analysis. Usually, in journalistic studies, the 'positioning' of news within the edition of a news paper or a journal is one of the important parameters, based on which the 'salience' or 'prominence' given to the news is measured. Normally, it is accepted that leaving classified news items like sports, regional news, etc. which are published in specified

pages, the other non-classified news items, if published in front pages, are considered to be enjoying higher level of salience than those published in back pages. (Front pages are those before the 'center page' and 'back pages' are those behind the 'center page'). Again, the positioning of news either in the 'upper half' or 'lower' half within a page also determines its relative salience, i.e. the news item positioned in 'upper half' is considered to have higher salience than the one positioned in 'lower half'.

Table No.3 Positioning of JFM news in terms of page number and position within the page.

Sl No	Position	No. of news items	Percentage
1	1 <sup>st</sup> page - lower half	08	19.50
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> page - upper half	3	07.30
	- lower half	3	07.30
	-		
3	3 <sup>rd</sup> page - upper half	6	14.60
	- lower half	3	07.30
4	4 <sup>th</sup> page - Lower half	1	02.40
5	5 <sup>th</sup> page - Upper half	3	07.30
	- lower half	7	17.00
6	7 <sup>th</sup> page - lower half	1	02.40
7	8 <sup>th</sup> page - upper half	1	02.40
8	10 <sup>th</sup> page upper half	1	02.40
	- lower half	1	02.40
9	11 <sup>th</sup> page - Lower half	1	02.40
10	14 <sup>th</sup> page - Upper half	1	02.40
11	16 <sup>th</sup> page - Upper half	1	02.40

The results mentioned in the above table clearly reflected the fact that the positioning of JFM news items were spread all over the daily editions i.e. from page No.1 to 16 of the news papers selected for the content analysis. However, most of the JFM news were observed to be positioned within first five pages, particularly in first, second, third and fifth pages. This observation also to some extent coincided with the perception of the media personnel who opined that the JFM news reported by them mostly published in the second page of the edition.



Significantly, it was observed that maximum number of JFM news items were positioned in the fifth page (upper and lower half put together) followed by lower half of the first page, upper and lower half of the third page and upper and lower half of the second page.

Except 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> pages, in all the rest of pages JFM news were positioned in lower half, but to a very limited extent. The results indicated that though the overall coverage of JFM news in the selected print media was not encouraging, but the salience attributed by the media to the JFM messages in terms of positioning within the edition was satisfactory.

### 3.1.3 Column details of JFM news published in the selected dailies.

As the case of relative positioning of news within the edition of a daily newspaper, the number of columns occupied by a particular type of news and column length and width i.e. the area are also considered as the measures of media salience in journalistic studies. In that respect, the content analysis of the selected dailies revealed the following results as depicted in the tables.

Table No. 4 Number of columns occupied by JFM news in the selected dailies.

N = 41

Sl No	Number of columns	No. of news items	Percent
1	One column reports	07	17.00
2	Two column reports	12	29.20
3	Three column reports	16	39.00
4	Four column reports	04	09.70
5	Five column reports	02	04.80

The maximum number of JFM news were observed to be published in three columns, followed by two columns, one column, four columns and five columns. This findings were also more or less coinciding the perception of the media personnel that their reports on JFM usually published in three to six columns.

However, number of columns alone would not give an idea on the level of median - salience. It has to be combined with column width and column length so as to get the idea on salience in terms of space provided to the particular type of news. In this case, it was observed from the content analysis of JFM news covered by the selected dailies that

- the average column length was 8.50 cm and
- the average column width was 4.75 cm.

Hence, the average area per column was worked out to be 41.30 sq. cm. This figure multiplied by the number of columns would give the total space provided to the JFM news by a particular daily in its editions.

Usually, in a particular news paper, the column width remain the same over its daily editions. Given the column width constant, the media personnel, during the personal interaction opined that their reporting on JFM was usually reported to the length of 10 - 15 column cm which was the higher estimate than what was observed in the content analysis of the selected dailies.

Even then, the average column area of 41.38 sq. cm combined with 2-3 columns of JFM news published in the selected dailies reflected the 'not bad' sort of salience. However, the frequency of publication of JFM news in those selected dailies (41 news items in the three selected dailies over a period of three years) was observed to be far less.

The realistic estimate of salience of JFM news coverage in terms of space could be made only when it is compared with the salience of other news. However, the analysis of media salience with respect to other news items was beyond the scope of this study.

### 3.1.4 Who writes JFM reports in print media?

The content analysis of the selected news dailies also threw some light on this question. The is given in the table below :

Table No.5. Writers/authors of JFM news reports

N =

41

S. No	Writers on JFM in print media	No.	Per cent
1	Local correspondents	18	43.90
2	State level correspondents based at Bhopal	14	34.00
3	Free lance writers	04	09.70
4	Bureau chiefs	03	07.30
5	Editors	02	04.80

The above results falls under expected lines. Since JFM in general as well as specific reference to Harda was a location specific issue, it was usual to be covered by the local correspondents. The maximum reporting of JFM news in the selected dailies was from the local level correspondents based at Harda, followed by state level correspondents based at Bhopal, free lance writers, Bureau chiefs and editors. This pattern of reporting was also found to be in accordance with the prevalent media's management hierarchy.

As per usual practice, the editors and Bureau chiefs were more involved in editing work and as such wrote less, particularly on local issues like JFM. The Bureau chiefs of certain national level dailies like Hindu, Times of India, which did not have local correspondents in Madhya Pradesh wrote on local issues like JFM, but with national or broad policy perspectives.

The results clearly reflected that local media correspondents were important source of information as far as local level issues like JFM were concerned. In case of national level dailies, the state level correspondents, stationed at Bhopal were the key source of information. While, the local level/state level correspondents were largely responsible for the contents of the media reports, the salience level while publishing those reports in the print media were determined by the Editors or Resident Editors (more so in case of local issues like JFM) of the news papers.

### **3.2 Media Process - How media develops perception on JFM Issues Creates Salience and sets agenda.**

In journalism research, the term 'media process' means the entire process, right from source of information, its collection, reporting, editing, prioritization, determining salience, final publication, agenda setting role of media and finally upto feed back system. It is also concerned with all the internal/external and direct/indirect factors which influence this process. However, this term has limited scope, restricted to perception of media personnel related JFM in general and specific to Harda situation, their perception on media salience and agenda setting role of media with respect to JFM. The primary mode adopted to assess their perception was the personal interaction with selected media personnel with the aid of structured questionnaire and Q-sort method.

#### **3.2.1 Profile of media personnel interacted.**

Due to time limitations, intervening national election and highly busy schedule of journalists, only six of them, who were particularly reporting/writing on JFM specific to Harda could be contacted. Apart from one free lance journalist who wrote on JFM issues in the news papers and magazines, rest five were the correspondents/Bureau chiefs belonging to Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi), Dainik Jagran (Hindi), Nav Bharat (Hindi), Hindustan Times (English) and the Hindu (English).

The brief career profile of these media personnel (journalists) was as follows :

- # The length of their journalism career ranges from 5 years to 20 years.
- # Some of them had been writing on JFM right from the beginning of the programme i.e. since 10 years. Their experience in writing on JFM varied from 4 to 10 years.
- # Except one free lance writer on JFM, rest five of the journalists interviewed were the staff of either local or national level dailies. The free lance journalist was also mostly writing in the newspaper only.

- # Among the newspaper staff, two were Bureau chiefs located at Harda. Rest were based at Bhopal.
- # Four of them (including the free lance writer) were reporting/writing in Hindi for Hindi dailies and two were reporting in English for Hindustan Times and the Hindu.
- # Among the journalists interviewed, three were covering news, including JFM from entire state of Madhya Pradesh and three were covering news exclusively from Harda District.
- # Two of the journalists belonging to Hindustan Times and the Hindu were Bhopal based. The three staff reporters, writing to Hindi dailies were based at Harda. The free lance writer was based at Hoshangabad.

### **3.2.2. Sample of JFM issues covered by the Journalists/media persons interviewed.**

The list of topics given below contains the major issues on JFM covered by the journalists who were interacted by the researcher along with the year of publication in the news paper. The list is not an exhaustive one as it only contained the issues which were recollected by the journalists during the interview. More over they are only exclusive coverage in the form of major news article written by these journalists. The list does not include several other 'news reports' made by these journalists.

- # Need for JFM (1995)
- # JFM Status report (1995)
- # People involvement in JFM (1996)
- # Lack of auditing of FPC accounts (2001)
- # World Bank's assessment on JFM in MP (2001)
- # Conflict between JFMCs and FD (2002)
- # Editorial on JFM (2002)
- # JFM Committees in MP (2003)

### **3.2.3. Sources of information and their credibility**

The media personnel (journalists) who were personally interviewed, were asked to identify their sources and rate their credibility of information based on their credibility from high to low with respect to JFM news particularly considering their experience in reporting/writing on JFM programme at Harda.

Table No. 6 Classification of information sources based on their credibility - journalist's perception

Sl No	Sources of Information	Credibility rating by journalists		
		High	moderate	Low
1	Fellow journalists	4	-	-
2	Local community	4	2	1
3	Forest department	3	2	-
4	Local key informants	3	-	-
5	Academicians/Researchers	3	-	-
6	Personal survey/study	2	-	-
7	School teachers	-	2	-
8	Research report	-	1	2

From the above table, it is clearly evident that the journalists or the media personnel relied maximum on their own colleagues or fellow journalists for the information on JFM and also rate them as highly credible. This was followed by local community or villagers and forest department, local key informants, academicians/researchers, personal study. It is interesting to note that the journalists relied more upon the secondary sources of information than their own personal study as far as gathering of information on JFM. This could be due to the fact that the journalists/media personnel like correspondents/reporters/ Bureau chiefs worked under extreme restrictions, particularly with respect to time. Unless, the story was complex and lengthy, the journalists would not feel the necessity to personally probe into the matter. However, from the trend of above results, it could also be inferred that journalists or the media personnel were not merely interested in the quantum of information, but were also concerned with their quality. Their dependence on academicians/researchers for information on JFM could also compensate their personal study. In this context, it is also to be noted that the content analysis of JFM reporting done over the period of three years in the selected dailies did not reveal extensive use of research reports by the journalists. Significantly, though the journalists who were interviewed had a comaplin that forest department did not involve media to the desired extent to promote JFM, except one among them, rest considered the department as a highly to moderately credible source of information.

### 3.2.4 How the journalists cross check information on JFM?

Cross checking of the information received or obtained by the journalists before its publication in the print media is an important journalism function. Such cross checking establishes credibility of not only the concerned journalists but also the dailies in which the news published. In this respect, the journalists interviewed in this study revealed following ways by which they cross checked the information.

# All the six journalists expressed that they used personal observation/verification as the means of cross checking the JFM information.

# Likewise all of them also cross checked the information with concerned government officials. In case of JFM news, it was with the officials of Forest department.

Four out of six journalists interviewed cross checked the information with fellow journalists.

# Just two of the journalists used the 'key informants' as their source of cross checking information.

Whatever be the means of cross checking, the above findings revealed that the journalists were definitely cross checking the information on JFM received by them in order to establish their own as well as media's credibility. In a way, it also reflected the importance given by the journalists to the JFM news reporting in an objective manner. The cross checking also helped the journalists determine the credibility of their sources of information and categorize them accordingly.

### **3.2.5 Format of JFM news coverage.**

According to the journalists interviewed, the JFM news, either reported by them or other journalists were mostly published as such without modification. They were published in the form of analytical article, news items, interviews and discussions and reports. These reports were also published in one or two days gap. They also opined that their reports on JFM were rarely published after three or more days, if only they were not so urgent in nature.

### **3.2.6 Journalists Perception on the salience given to JFM news reports by the Media.**

While the content analysis revealed the actual trend of media salience attributed to JFM reports in the selected news dailies, the personal interaction with the media personnel, who were the journalists writing to those selected as well as other dailies reflected their perception on media salience. Accordingly, the journalists perception with regard to JFM news reports is furnished below :

- The selected journalists opined that their reports on JFM were usually published in 3 to 6 columns with 10 to 15 cm column length depending upon the availability of space.
- Further according to them, their reports were mostly published in the second page of the newspaper. Only the journalists writing in the Hindu newspaper felt that the JFM news were published in the fourth or fifth page.
- They also agreed that the reports in JFM were also published with photographs, if supplied.

Though the results of content analysis with respect to above dimensions were more specific, they fell within the range perceived by the journalists. Both these findings confirmed that though the print media published the JFM news in less frequent, the salience or prominence given to the news reports was adequate.

### **3.2.7 Rating of JFM in general - Journalist's perception**

It is a known fact that the nature of media salience attributed to any particular news reports or story largely depends upon the nature of perception of the key media personnel on the subject of reporting. In this respect, the perception of the selected journalists on JFM in general as well as with particular reference to Harada context was also probed, through two ways. One was the direct method in the form of closed and open ended questions related to their perceptions included in the interview schedule. The second method was the 'Q sort' technique, which was the indirect way of assessing their perception.

#### **3.2.7.1. Perception on JFM (general) by direct probing.**

The direct questioning of selected journalists on their perception had led to following results.

Five out of six journalists interviewed opined that the on going JFM programme in the state had only moderately succeeded.

The reasons for such perception were :

- The benefit flow to the community was not uniform. Influential sections got benefited more unduly at the cost of unprivileged community groups.
- Many conflicts between the community and the forest department were not properly resolved. This resulted in discontent among the poor community members.

Though only one journalist opined that JFM in general was not successful, he had valid reasons like

- lack of awareness about provisions in JFM among the local community members.
- Lack of interest shown by forest department to educate and involve all sections of the community members in JFM implementation.

### **3.2.7.2. Perception on JFM (Harda) by direct probing.**

Half of the number of journalists had a perception that JFM in Harda was only moderately successful. The reasons for this perception were almost similar to those given for the general perception on JFM. One additional reason expressed by the journalists was that the forest department, still could not completely clear off the image of 'exploiter'. Despite of many developmental efforts initiated by the forest department through JFM, it could not completely shed this image. Perhaps, due to the active presence of "Mass Tribal Organisation MTO" in Harda district, who were very much against the World Bank aided JFM programme, this image about the forest department was spread out among certain sections of the local community/villages and other stake holders like media personnel with whom the MTOs had close rapport. Otherwise, the gap in communication between the forest department and the media also could be attributed this kind of perception.

It was also observed from the other studies on the 'perception of villagers and MTOs' on JFM, that the community's perception of forest department, in the villages where the MTOs were very active (they were termed as 'Sangatan villages', 'sangatan' referred to MTOs) was quite similar, i.e. the 'exploiter' image. It was noticed that the MTOs made sure that the local media personal frequently visited these villages, interacted with the villagers, and give better media coverage to MTO activities.

The MTOs were also successful in transferring their own perception of forest department to the media personnel at least in those villages where they operated actively. It was also true that forest department could not sufficiently take advantage of the presence of local media personnel.

The reasons given by the media personnel for their opinion that the JFM in Harda was not successful were

- lack of awareness about JFM among the local community.
- The JFM was successful only during the initial stage and later failed due to lack of interest shown by the forest department in implementing it.

Though the journalists opined that 'lack of awareness' as one of the causes of JFM failure, in case of Harda forest division, it could not be the 'total lack of awareness of JFM among the local community' as it had been generally observed by many researchers and consultants that there was sufficient awareness about JFM implementation. However, the journalists/media personnel's view could also be true with respect to different provisions/norms/benefits/legal and institutional aspects of JFM implementation. This kind of lack of awareness among the JFMC executive committee members was observed by the researcher when local level training or 'various provisions/ aspects of JFM' was imparted to these members.



The general observation of the researcher during frequent visits to Harda forest division in connection with other research projects/trainings was also somewhat on the line of the second reason attributed by the journalists for the failure of JFM. It was observed that though the forest department did not totally lack the interest in implementing JFM in later stages, its trend of progress fluctuated, depending upon the interest levels of the DFOs and their staff and availability of external funding assistance.

### 3.2.7.3 Rating of JFM stakeholders - Journalists Perception.

The journalists/media personnel interviewed were asked rate of role of major stakeholders - Forest department, JFMCs, NGOs and MTOs - in promoting JFM with particular reference to Harda. The results were as given below :

Stakeholders		Rating
i)	Forest department	- Poor (1) to Moderate (5)
ii)	JFMCs	- Poor (1) to moderate (5)
iii)	NGOs	- No major role in Harda context
		- Play a negative role as they oppose World Banks funding to JFNM.
iv)	MTOs	- Fair in highlighting lacuna in
	JFM	implementation (1)
		- Play a negative role as they oppose JFM and funding by WB (5)

The above results significantly reflected the better rating of role of Forest department and JFMCs in implementing JFM program than local NGOs and MTOs. The results also indirectly indicated that the media personal valued and supported the World Bank funding to JFM, unlike some NGOs and all MTOs.

This implies that if good relationship is maintained between the local as well as national level media personal and the Forest department and if the local media personnel are also increasingly involved in news coverage of JFM activities and allowed to function as 'watch dog' of JFMCs activities.

The results also revealed that though the media personnel gave extra coverage to MTO's activities as compared to those of Forest department, they did not exhibit any encouraging rating of MTO's role in JFM due to their negative attitude towards the program.

#### **3.2.7.4 Perception of Media personnel on World Bank aid to JFM.**

Many states were implementing JFM with the external funding assistance received from multi-national funding agencies like World Bank. Madhya Pradesh which had been receiving World Bank aid, was no exception. However, opinion widely differ across the different categories of JFM stake-holders with regard to World Bank aid to JFM. The MTOs who represented one end of this continuum, vehemently opposed the World Bank assistance, because they perceived it as exploitative. Whereas, the Forest department, who implemented JFM in partnership with local community had little alternative to accepting World Bank funding for the massive program like JFM in otherwise the fund starving state. The media personnel/journalists seemed to have taken a more cautious and rational view in this respect. Though the number was small, limited to six journalists (those interviewed for this study), their perceptions regarding the World Bank assistance to JFM were significant in terms of suggestive value. Put together, they were generally supportive to the funding, but with caution. They are listed below :

- # The World Bank assistance to JFM was moderately successful and should continue.
- # Funding by the World Bank was not a wrong strategy. But the funding should have been entirely used for community development and not for career development of officers of Forest department.
- # Nothing wrong in accepting the aid from the World Bank, but should have been on our terms; not on the terms imposed by the Bank.
- # Funding by the World Bank was not needed. We could manage to implement JFM in the country with our own internal sources.
- # No opinion. Neither supportive nor opposed.

#### **3.2.7.5 Personal relationship between media personnel/journalists and JFM Stakeholders.**

The local as rational level media personnel/journalists did maintain a personal relationship between different stakeholders of JFM. The researcher's assumption was that this kind of relationship was crucial for any journalists to access information for media reporting/story. The extent and level of relationship with the source of information also determined the depth of information obtained to make a good news story. Hence the relevance of the extent of personal relationship between the key stakeholders of JFM (in Harda context) and the media personnel in this study. The extent of such relationship, as perceived by the media personnel is as under:

	<u>Stakeholders</u>	<u>Extent of personal relationship.</u>	
i)	Forest department	Good (5)	Poor (1)
ii)	JFMCs	Good (1)	Poor (2) No relationship (3)
iii)	NGOs	Good (2)	Poor (2) No relationship (2)
iv)	MTOs	Good (2)	Poor (2) No relationship (2)

Interestingly, the Forest department, as compared to all other stake holders enjoyed better personal relationship with the media personnel. The journalists, despite of their complaint that the Forest department did not adequately involve them in promoting JFM, still enjoyed good personal relationship with the Forest department. This could be because though the department provided less information, but were authentic and the media personnel always needed cooperation from the officials and field staff of the department even for their independent reporting as JFM at local level. The result clearly implies that the Forest department, based on the existing personal goodwill between it and the media personnel, further strengthen the same by increasing the involvement of media in the JFM process. The media personal seemed to have similar kind of relationship equally ranging from good to no relationship with other identified stakeholders like JFMCs, NGOs, and MTOs.

### **3.2.8. Role of Print Media in promoting JFM - Journalists' perception.**

The media personnel with whom the researchers interacted largely dissatisfied with the current role of media in promoting JFM both at national level and local level, i.e. Harda forest division. Except one, rest all the journalists perceived that the main reason for such a dismal role of print media was the hesitation of Forest department to involve the print media in the process. They found Forest department to be more bureaucratic in its approach and did not want to get its lacuna exposed. Only one journalist perceived that print media was adequately involved by the Forest department to promote JFM because it wanted publicity for its work. Significantly, such kind of negative perception had emerged from the same print media personnel who perceived their personal relationship with the Forest department as 'good'. This indicates the existing communication and perceptual gap between the print media and the Forest department.

The journalists during the interaction also suggested following roles that print media could play to promote JFM and facilitate its implementation:

- The major role of print media in relation to JFM was perceived to be creating awareness among people.
- Building capacity of JFMC members by providing adequate information.
- Playing a proactive role in promoting forest protection and JFM even if not invited by the Forest department.
- Playing the traditional 'watch dog' role.
- Highlighting good work done by the forest department and JFMCs and at the same time exposing lacunas in their functioning.
- Publishing to give publicity to good examples/cases of people's participation in forest protection for others to follow/adopt.
- Playing active role in promoting people's participation in forest management and encouraging transparent functioning of JFMCs.

The above perception of media personnel evidently indicates that the media could also be considered as a stakeholder and constructively integrated in the JFM process to play the listed roles more constructively.

## **4. Summary and Conclusion**

### **4.1. Preamble**

The on going study on the ‘Incorporation of stakeholders’ perception with regard to JFM in Harda forest division’, research effort is made to elucidate perceptions of important stakeholders like Forest department (FD), JFM Committees (JFMCs), NGOs, Mass Tribal Organizations (MTOs) etc., and incorporate the same the policy, planning and implementation levels during the extension and sustainability phase of JFM process. In the midst of this study, it is realized that the ‘media’, particularly the ‘print media’ is also one the important stakeholders as it possesses substantial influence in shaping the perception of other stakeholders, right from policy to grassroots levels. At the same time it is also the fact that the print media has its own perception with regard to JFM, which in turn determines its nature of ‘salience’ (news selection and prominence given). Number of media studies has reported that the ‘media salience’ plays a significant role in setting agenda for perception formation among different levels of audience.

Hence, it is being felt relevant to study the pattern of ‘print media coverage’, which includes its salience with regard to JFM in Harda as well as the entire ‘media process’ through which the media forms its own perception, determines salience and in turn sets agenda to influence its audience (other stakeholders of JFM) perception. Since this would only be a sub-study, intending just to analyze the media trend, it is proposed to analyze four selected dailies, having circulation at state as well as local levels and few important free/lance publications on JFM circulated in Harda district.

#### **4.1.1. Objectives of the study**

- i. To assess the extent and nature of coverage of JFM issues in terms of salience, space and range by the state and local level print media.
- ii. To study the media process, its perception, and their effect on ‘media salience & agenda setting’ with special reference to JFM implementation in Harda

The findings of this study in terms of print media perceptions, coverage of issues and agenda setting through media salience in relation to JFM would provide the scope for appropriately incorporating its role along with other stakeholders in promoting and sustaining proper participatory management regime in JFM.

## **4.2. Methodology**

As spelled out in the objectives, the study is divided into two distinct components, viz., Content Analysis and Personal interaction with media personnel

### **4.2.1. Content analysis**

The content analysis of the selected English and language dailies focussed on two aspects

- # Extent and nature of issue coverage related to JFM with particular reference to Harda forest division.
- # Media salience in terms of space provided to JFM news report and its positioning in the daily.

Considering the time frame available for conducting the study, it was decided to restrict content analysis to three selected dailies - one national level daily in English and two local level dailies in Hindi. Based on circulation details collected, the national as well as local level dailies having maximum circulation in Harda district were selected for content analysis. The selected dailies are Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi) Nav Bharat (Hindi) and Hindustan Times (English). Other than these newspapers, few other news coverage/stories on issues related to JFM in Harda published in dailies like 'The Hindu', 'Economic Times', 'Central Chronicle', 'Dainik Jagran' etc. were also included in the content analysis. Content analysis of all the daily issues of these three newspapers was done backwards, beginning from December, 2003 to 2001.

The two major aspects on which content analysis was carried out were the news coverage of the selected dailies related to JFM in Harda and their positioning in the daily. As the outcome of the content analysis of three selected dailies over three years, 41 number of news coverage on JFM were identified.

### **4.2.2. Personal Interaction with Media Personnel**

The purpose of interaction with media personnel was to analyze the media perception on JFM. Hence the media personnel who were concerned with the coverage/writing on JFM were purposively selected for interaction. In all six media personnel could be interviewed within the time availability. Out of six, five personnel were associated with dailies like Dainik Bhaskar, Nav Bharat, Hindustan Times (all selected for content analysis) and others like Dainik Jagran, and the Hindu. One was the freelance journalist who wrote articles on JFM in Newspapers and other magazines. The perception of the media persons were essentially assessed through personal interview by using the structured interview schedule and Q sort method. Within the available time for the field study, six media personnel could be subjected to personal interaction.

### **4.3. Salient findings of the study**

#### **4.3.1. Content Analysis**

The content analysis of 41 identified news stories on JFM led to following findings. Among them most were related to Harda context and some were concerned with JFM in general, but also related to the issues relevant to Harda.

##### **4.3.1.1. Coverage of contents related to JFM in general**

The print media was found to be fulfilling its traditional role of creating awareness as far as JFM issues were concerned. This observation in content analysis was found to be in compatible with the perception of the media-personnel (journalists), as all those interacted with opined that one of the important roles by media in promoting JFM was to "create awareness among the people".

The above table also highlights importance given by print media in terms of coverage to social / participation (23.00 %) and policy (15.30 %) issued related to JFM.

##### **4.3.1.2. Coverage of contents related to JFM issues specific to Harda context**

With respect to issues specific to Harda context, more situational specific issues like 'jan sunwai' and 'social/ participation' issues got prominence in media coverage. The local media, though their coverage of JFM issues was limited, predominantly observed to be playing the 'watchdog' role as far as JFM implementation in Harda was concerned. Jan sunwai, the public hearing on JFM, organized by Mass Tribal Organizations (MTOs) like Ektha Parishad in 2001 got the maximum publicity in both local as well as national level newspapers. The extent of news coverage on social/participation issues was equal to the extent of coverage of Jan sunwai and this was followed by conflicts, complaints on functioning of Forest department. The grievances against the functioning of Forest department also got top priority in the media coverage. This could be partly due to the hesitation of the forest department in involving in covering JFM activities. However other important issues like women participation in JFM, relationship between Gram Panchayat and JFMCs, technical aspects related to participatory management of forest resources etc got less priority in terms of coverage in the media. This could be due to the fact that the reporters of the print media by and large resorted to 'event reporting' with respect to JFM, rather than making a comprehensive study on JFM which was time consuming.

##### **4.3.1.3. Positioning & Spacing of JFM news in the daily**

JFM news items were spread all over the daily editions i.e. from page No.1 to 16 of the news papers selected for the content analysis. Maximum number of JFM news items were positioned in the fifth page (upper and lower half put together) followed by lower half of the first page, upper and lower half of the third page and upper and lower half of the second page. The results indicated that though the overall coverage of JFM news in

the selected print media was not encouraging, but the salience attributed by the media to the JFM messages in terms of positioning within the edition was satisfactory.

The average column area of 41.38 sq. cm combined with 2-3 columns of JFM news published in the selected dailies reflected the 'not bad' or 'just adequate' sort of salience. However, the frequency of publication of JFM news in those selected dailies was observed to be far less.

#### **4.3.1.4. Who writes JFM reports in Print Media?**

The maximum reporting of JFM news in the selected dailies was from the local level correspondents based at Harda, followed by state level correspondents based at Bhopal, free lance writers, Bureau chiefs and editors. Local media correspondents were important source of information as far as local level issues like JFM were concerned.

#### **4.3.2. Media Process - Media Perception & Salience on JFM Issues**

The primary mode adopted to assess their perception was the personal interaction with selected media personnel.

##### **4.3.2.1. Sources of information and their credibility**

Media personnel were found to relay maximum on their own colleagues or fellow journalists for the information on JFM and also rate them as highly credible. This was followed by local community or villagers and forest department, local key informants, academicians/researchers, personal study. Journalists relied more upon the secondary sources of information than their own personal study as far as gathering of information on JFM due to the fact that the journalists/media personnel worked under extreme restrictions, particularly with respect to time. Journalists were also found to be definitely cross checking the information on JFM received by them in order to establish their own as well as media's credibility.

##### **4.3.2.2. Journalist's Perception on JFM in general & Harda in particular**

Five out of six journalists interviewed opined that the on going JFM program in the state had only moderately succeeded due to their perception that the benefit flow to the community was not uniform and many conflicts between the community and the forest department were not properly resolved.

Half of the number of journalists had a perception that JFM in Harda was only moderately successful. The reasons for this perception were almost similar to those given for the general perception on JFM. One additional reason expressed by the journalists was that the forest department, still could not completely clear off the image of



'exploiter', though it had initiated many developmental efforts through JFM. The MTOs were also successful in transferring their own perception of forest department i.e. the 'exploiter image' to the media personnel at least in those villages where they operated actively. The reasons given by rest of the media personnel for their opinion that the JFM in Harda was not successful were lack of awareness about JFM among the local community and lack of interest shown by the forest department in implementing it at later stages.

However, the local and state level media personnel seemed to maintain good relationship with the Forest department. They still regarded the role of Forest department and JFMCs in implementing JFM program as higher than local NGOs and MTOs. Though the media personnel gave extra coverage to MTO's activities as compared to those of Forest department, they did not exhibit any encouraging rating of MTO's role in JFM due to their negative attitude towards the program.

The journalists were generally supportive to the World Bank funding, but with caution that the funding should be entirely used for community development, that too on our terms but not on the terms imposed by the Bank.

#### **4.3.2.3. Role of Print Media in promoting JFM - Suggestions from the Journalists**

The major roles of print media in relation to JFM was perceived to be

- creating awareness among people,
- building capacity of JFMC members by providing adequate information,
- promoting forest protection and JFM ,
- playing the traditional 'watch dog' role, highlighting good work done by the forest department and JFMCs and at the same time exposing lacunas in their functioning,
- Publishing to give publicity to good examples/cases of people's participation in forest protection for others to follow/adopt,
- promoting people's participation in forest management and encouraging transparent functioning of JFMCs.

### 4.3.3. Recommendations

- i. Forest department should more involve media in promoting JFM, particularly utilizing their potential to give publicity to the good work going on under JFM and create awareness among all concerned.
- ii. Media should cover several dimensions of JFM such as women participation, Panchayat and JFMCs relationship, motivation aspects etc. In order to make the comprehensive coverage of JFM, media personnel have to conduct a thorough study of JFM instead of merely making a journalistic overview.
- iii. The local level/ state level correspondents and Bureau chiefs are to be properly and regularly oriented towards JFM and its functioning by the Forest department.
- iv. Since the media personnel, both at local and national level seemed to maintain good relationship with forest department, the department should utilize their services better to enhance its development image and facilitate implementation of JFM.
- v. Local media personnel can be very useful to play a 'watch dog' role over the JFMC activities and help in rectifying the lacunas whenever they come to light.
- vi. 'Print media' (local as well as at state level) should also be treated as one of the stakeholders of JFM along with NGOs.

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