

Understanding Stakeholder Perceptions in Forest Management

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Two studies were commissioned under this project as detailed below:

(a) Legislators' Perception about the Participatory Forest Management and their Role: A Case Study of Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly

- **Singh, R.K. & Sinha, V.K.**

This qualitative study examined legislators' perceptions on Participatory Forest Management (PFM) -related issues as well as their participation in the process of policy formulation and policy implementation in Madhya Pradesh. The study was primarily based on open-ended interviews and responses to a set of 48 statements concerning issues related to PFM. It was found that most of the legislators admit that they are not doing justice with their primary role of making policy and rules. The major constraints for the same include expectations of the constituency and political parties, personal competence, lack of resources and structural constraints. Most of the MLAs view question hour as an opportunity to address the concerns of their constituency related implementation. The legislators prioritise questions based on seriousness of the issue, number of people affected or likely to be benefited and problems that cannot be solved locally. The assessment of satisfaction by the members varied between 5 to 60 percent. Ineffective use of question hour is attributed to quality of the questions, attitude of the ministers and rules for the questions. Most of the legislators feel that their representative role has acquired importance over the other roles because of their constituents becoming more demanding. Direct meeting has greater influence, and people from the tribal areas rarely visit legislators leading to lesser attention to the problems. The time spaces of the legislators are similar to open access resource, and its use depends to a large extent, on the capacity of the users.

(b) Sub- Study on Media (Print) Perception, Coverage and its Agenda Setting Effect in Relation to JFM Issues, Special Reference to Harda

- Krishna Kumar, K.N.

The content analysis of 41 identified news stories on JFM led to number of findings. The print media was found to be fulfilling its traditional role of creating awareness as far as JFM issues

were concerned. The selected dailies were found to cover more of social / participation (23.00%) and policy (15.30%) issues related to JFM. 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. JFM news items were spread all over the daily editions i.e. from page No.1 to 16 of the newspapers selected for the content analysis. Maximum number of JFM news items was positioned in the fifth page. 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. The journalists interviewed opined that the on going JFM programme in the state as well as in Harda forest division had only moderately succeeded as the benefit flow to the community was not uniform and many conflicts between the community and the forest department were not properly resolved.