



Newspaper Coverage of Environmental Issues in the Western Ghat

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Abstract

The Western Ghats are extraordinary rich source of plant and animal species. They have a huge diversity of natural, semi-natural and agro ecosystems with less than 6 percent of the land area of India and contain more than 30 percent of all plant, fish, fauna, bird, and mammal species found in India. At present, environmental issues pertaining to degradation aspect of Western Ghats are being debated in the country. Media play a pivotal role in shaping perception and awareness of environmental issues of Western Ghats. The study was based on the content analysis of news related to Western Ghats. The study examines the importance given to the major environmental issues of the Western Ghats in media. The study shows that environmental stories in newspapers constituted only a small percent (0.27) of all news reported. Among them 37.22 percent of the environmental stories were about issues in the Western Ghats. It should be noted that the issues in the Western Ghats received fairly good coverage in the selected dailies. The result illustrates that more environmental news of Western Ghats was published in Kannada newspapers compared to English newspapers.

Keywords: Western Ghats; Kannada newspapers; English newspapers; Content analysis

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Introduction

The Western Ghats- also known as the Sahyadri hills are one of the world's 25 hottest biodiversity hot-spots. They contain more than 30 percent of India's plant, fish, and birds, mammal species. The Western Ghats are richly credited with varied kind of vegetation and incredible topographical features (Western Ghats .org).

The Western Ghats are spread across the six states namely Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Goa and Tamil Nadu. It has a wide range of vegetation and topographical features.

There is a great variety of vegetation all along the Ghats: scrub jungles, grassland along the lower altitudes, dry and moist deciduous forests, and semi-evergreen and evergreen forests retain its diversity [1].

It is the home of many endangered plants and animals. Western Ghats host India's richest wilderness in 13 national parks and several sanctuaries. Recognized by UNESCO as one of the world's eight most important biodiversity hotspots, these forested hills are also sourcing to numerous rivers, including the Godavari, Krishna and Cauvery.

The rivers have been dammed for hydroelectric and irrigation purposes with major reservoirs spread across the states. Fast running rivers and steep slopes have provided sites for many large hydro-electric projects. There are about 50 major dams along the length of the Western Ghats with the earliest project up in 1900 near Khopoli in Maharashtra. Most notable of these projects are the Konya Hydroelectric Project in Maharashtra the Parambikulam Dam and Idykki dam in Kerala, and the Linganamakki Dam in Karnataka.

Western Ghats in Karnataka

Western Ghats are also known as Sahyadri mountain ranges in Karnataka. they runs North to South along the Western edge of Deccan Plateau, involving the districts of Kodagu, Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Hassan, Chikmagalur, Uttara Kannada and Shimoga districts and parts of Mysore, Chamarajanagar and Belgaum, 60 percent of Western Ghats are located in Karnataka. The average elevation is about 1200 meters MSL (Mean Sea Level) and receives rainfall between 3000 and 4000 mm. the average annual temperature is around 15°C.

The rice fields in valleys are irrigated with various perennial

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streams from forested hill-slopes the undulating landscape is used to great extent for growing cash crops, especially coffee, cardamom, coconut, arecanut, black pepper, cocoa, ginger, rubber, pineapple etc. Some of the higher altitudes are under cultivation of tea. From the point of productivity, revenue generation, employment potential and subsistence the central Western Ghats are extremely important.

The decline in the habitats reduce the long term population viability of extinction prone species such as tigers, elephants, lion tailed macaques, etc. Also the construction of roads related to projects makes the rich forests accessible to the outsiders leading to illegal logging of trees and poaching of animals. Shelter openings are also formed in the evergreen forests leading to introduction of alien species and further deterioration of the rich forests. The stagnation of water in the reservoirs created drastically affects the health of the rivers. Excavations, debris dumping and construction activities involved in such projects affect the overall forest environment [2].

Like other parts of the tropics, the Western Ghats are also one of the most highly human impacted mountainous tracts of the world. The human impacts include agriculture, extraction of forest products, horticulture, raising commercial plantation such as coffee, tea, rubber etc., monoculture of forest trees, hydroelectric projects, mining, township etc. These human activities and slash and burn cultivation practiced in the past have resulted in considerable forest fragmentation [3].

The government has taken some preventive measure for conservation of Western Ghats. The Government of India, through the Ministry of Environment and Forests, appointed what it called the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel, headed by well-known ecologist Madhava Gadgil. The Kasturirangan panel was set up to study the Gadgil committee report on the Western Ghats.

Kasturirangan committee had recommended prohibition on developmental activities in 37 percent of natural landscape it includes low population density and containing protected areas, world heritage sites and a tiger and elephant corridor has been identified as Ecologically Sensitive Area. According to the direction, activities including mining, quarrying, sand mining, thermal power plants, and building and construction project of 20,000sq.m and above will not be allowed in these areas. Committee also imposed a strict ban on all red category industries which are identified as heavily polluting by it.

The central government has accepted the Kasturirangan committee report and has directed the six states such as Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat, governments to immediately ban development activities including mining and quarrying in 60,000sq.km of the ecologically sensitive Western Ghats

Media and environmental issues

The environmental movement played a key role in the evolution of environmental journalism as a discipline. The publication of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* in 1962 was a milestone achievement that paved way for the mainstreaming of environmental journalism. The foundation was further strengthened in 1964

with the passage of the Wilderness Act in the United States. The decades of 1970s and 80s saw the proliferation of grassroots environmental organizations, strongly making their presence felt on the political front. This led the public to be more sensitized about a looming environmental crisis and also influenced the policy makers towards making more environmentally conscious policy decisions. The mass media have ever since been crucial agents of spreading environmental awareness.

The media shoulders the responsibility of informing and educating the public, by telling them not only the happenings of the present, but also the reasons behind them as well as their consequences in the future. This renders the task of the environmental journalists to be a challenging one, as they can not only impact the society, but also help in moulding the future. The information and language they work with has a vast range of possibilities. The environmental journalists have a difficult task of presenting facts to the public, without twisting or blowing things out of proportion [4].

The press is an important component of democracy. Media play a significant role in creating awareness and mass movement. A widespread recognition of the environment as an issue by the Western media was noticed in the early 1970s. By the time the UN conference on Human Environment was held in 1972 in Stockholm, there was a considerable rise in press coverage of the environmental issues in the West. Mass media coverage led to the rise in public awareness about the environment. In India very few Indian journalists attended the Stockholm conference. The attitude of the press was in line with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's defence of development over environment at the conference [5].

Environmental news coverage also suffers because it does not fit easily into the structure of regular news production. The Indian Press is by and large urban-oriented. Newspapers are mostly concentrated in metropolitan cities and cater to the urban population and only nominally to readers in rural areas [6].

Newspapers have also played agenda setting role with regard to the environmental issues. Agenda setting is concerned with the connection between the mass media, occurrences in the real world, and how people construct these events in their own minds. It is premised on the assumption that audiences, apart from learning about public issues through the media, also determines how much importance to attach to an issue or topic from the emphasis the media place upon it. It also implies that news and information from the mass media reflect the content and order of issue priority and that this representation of issues exerts an independent effect on the nature of issue content so that the public come to believe in their importance.

The media have been found to be a significant source of information to the public about environmental issues. Media coverage of the environment issues has a positive correlation with audiences' personal knowledge (Yao, 2008: 265). The media play an important role when a group or individual tries to trigger public concern and, finally, influences policies because the media shed light on certain issues and aspects among competitive alternatives [7], Media have a relatively strong ability to draw

'pictures in audiences' heads with regard to environmental issues [7].

Media are the prime sources of information for the public and they construct the public understanding of the environmental issues. This study aims to analyse newspaper coverage of environmental issues in the Western Ghats. An attempt has been made to recognize the diverse factors which influenced the environmental news coverage of Western Ghats. Studies have found agenda-setting effects in the relation between media coverage and public perceptions on environmental issues.

Theoretical Framework

The widely diversified content that the media places on the public's platter has been found to have influence on their attitudes and behaviour. "The entire study of mass communication," McQuail (1994) wrote, "is based on the premise that the media have significant effects".

The Agenda-setting theory is the most firmly established influence of news media in shaping public opinion. The issues which are given more salience in news broadcasts and publications by media receive more attention by the people and the policymakers alike. The theory of agenda-setting states that the salience of an issue in the media has an influence on the importance attached to that issue by the public. It says that maybe the media cannot tell people what to think, but can tell people what to think about [8].

According to Cohen "The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.

Although the effect of the mass media in changing existing attitudes is still unclear, the media can have a strong influence on opinions and attitudes concerning new issues which are not correlated with existing attitude clusters [9].

According to the agenda-setting concept, the press can play a crucial part in creating public awareness on environmental deterioration. The more the press increases its coverage of environmental stories, the more likely it is that readers who have been receiving the messages will increase their knowledge of environmental problems and will include the problems in their agendas. The belief of the public on the mass media causes at least an increase in environmental awareness of the public and perhaps leads to changing attitudes and behaviours. However, that is possible only if the public receives information about the environment through some mass communication channel.

Trumbo (1995) found that both newspapers and television news are key contributors in setting the agenda for environmental debate. Keeping in view the media's ability to set the public's agenda, and influence the public who can influence city, country, state and federal government, one places power in the media. The agenda-setting process entails the media agenda, the public agenda, the policy agenda, and the interrelationships among these three elements.

Review of Literature

Presently available literature related to environment and media is

mainly focused on deforestation, river pollution, public opinion, policy changes, awareness, education, and biodiversity and media coverage of specific environmental issues.

In his study on shift in environmental reporting from 1970 to 1982 Erick Howenstine (1987) analyzed the trends in environmental reporting in several of the nation's most influential media. A content analysis of 450 articles published in 1970 and in 1982 in The Washington Post, The New York Times, Time and Newsweek indicated a slow and general shift from mere reporting to more meaningful ways of presenting environmental news. An increased coverage was evident from the inclusion of economic and developmental coverage. While fewer articles were found on degradation and protection of the natural environment more articles were found on economic deregulation and economic development. The story bias shifted from pro-environmental to neutral during the same period.

Rabison (2014) studied how local newspapers covered the conflict between farming interests and fishing interests. The study was based on the content analysis of how the Herald and News and the Times-Standard newspapers covered the Klamath River Basin conflict over water allocation in 2001 and 2002. The study used the agenda-setting and media framing theories. The results suggested that there was a link between newspaper and frames, but it was most strongly seen in the Times-Standard, which used almost twice as many pro-salmon frames as pro-agriculture frames as did the Herald and News.

Eric Feedman (2013) examined relations between journalists and environmental non-governmental organisations in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. An analysis based principally on interviews with 32 print, online and broadcast journalists from state-owned and private media, environmental and civil society NGO leaders, media and environmental experts and policy analysts revealed that there was only a limited working relation between journalists and environmental NGO. The study observed that, the differences included an absence of trust between two sides, lack of media and public relations savvy among NGO leaders, and reluctance of some journalists to transmit on unofficial news sources.

Woo Hyun Won (1992) attempted to illustrate some of the problems faced by the news media in reporting on the environment in South Korea. A content analysis of newspaper reports of a recent environmental disaster showed positive relationship between news space and inaccuracy. Longer new stories were more prone to error than shorter stories. While only 1.1 percent of one column pieces had errors as many as 75 percent of the six-column articles had errors in them. Media attention to the particular incident decreased rapidly as time passed and space allotted was also much smaller than that in the initial period.

In their study compares how climate change was presented in English and French print media in Canada from 2007 to 2008. Young and Dugas (2012) analysed a total of 2,249 stories published in six English newspapers – The Calgary Herald, The Globe and Mail, The National Post, The New Brunswick Telegraph-Journal, The Toronto Star, The Vancouver Sun and two in French newspapers Devoir, La Presse. The study suggests that climate change was

indeed being narrated differently to English- and French-speaking audiences in Canada. The complexity and multidimensionality of the climate change problem poses a significant challenge to journalists and editors trying to responsibly report, interpret, and explain these issues to their readers. The study found that, The English newspapers present diverse coverage that was highly compartmentalized, while the French newspapers present a narrower range of coverage but with thematically richer articles that better link climate change issues to the realms of culture, politics, and economy.

A study on environment reporting in China by Sun Yu (2002) says that in 1984, when environmental reporting was in its infancy and people were unaware about environmental protection. The China Environment News brought national environmental policy, laws and regulation to the public attention. The study exposed the factories effluent and disseminated environmental knowledge to the general public. Environmental reporting mission was to promote environmental awareness and let people know of China's dedication to environmental protection.

In another study Lee et al (2013) evaluated whether Korean newspapers delivered exact information to the public after the implementation of the government's low carbon green growth policy. The study used the content analysis method to collect the data from daily newspapers of Korea. The study found that the majority of the Korean newspapers carried the climate change issues. A statistical difference was found based on ownership structure: the majority-owned newspapers addressed the cause of climate change, while the minority-owned newspapers referred more to climate change measurement.

Stoddert and Macdonald (2011) analyzed newspaper coverage and role of websites of environmental organizations over the Jumbo Glacier Ski Resort in British Columbia. News articles published in major national and provincial newspapers and websites produced by environmental organizations which were involved in Jumbo Pass conflict were analyzed. The study revealed that when compared to newspapers the internet provided greater space for claims. At the same time it was also found that newspapers reached larger and broader audience than the environmental websites. Protest tactics such as emails and letter writing campaign were promoted by the websites.

Bendix and Liebler (1999) examined the geographic variation of newspaper coverage of the conflict over northern spotted owls and old growth forest protection in the Pacific Northwest. A content analysis of news coverage in major dailies for the period 1990-1994 showed a significant tendency to present story themes that parallel the pro-cut side of the conflict. The results showed that the physical distance and economic connections both to be significant predictors of the number and length of the stories and number of sources, with explained variance ranging from 38 to 78 percent. Variation in the framing of the story was more difficult to predict, although there does appear to be some relationship to voter registration and environmental membership patterns.

Swaroop and Padhy (2015) examined media coverage of wildlife of Dedham National Park, Kisanpur of Uttar Pradesh. The study

found that, media played an essential role in communicating conservation issues such as human-wildlife conflict management, poaching and illegal trade activities etc. The media coverage was helpful in educating and enlightening people to manage human-wildlife conflict management.

The review of literature indicated that the concern for the environment varied according to the amount of press coverage devoted to it. There were regional disparities between North and South in the coverage of environmental reporting. That sources influence framing of environmental news was evident in some studies. Environmental groups were often quoted as sources. Newspapers and magazines made significant contribution towards setting the environmental agenda. Stories filed by environmental beat journalists were more favourable towards goals of environmental groups than the stories written by the journalists on other beats.

In the present study, the researcher has focused on the print media coverage of environmental issues in the Western Ghats. This study uses a content analysis method to analyses newspaper coverage of environmental issues and how the coverage is perceived by the readers.

Significance of the Study

The Western Ghats are extraordinary rich source of plant and animal species. They have a huge diversity of natural, semi-natural and agro ecosystems with less than 6 percent of the land area of India and contain more than 30 percent of all plant, fish, fauna, bird, and mammal species found in India. There is also home to various medicinal plants and important genetic resources such as the wild relatives of grains fruits and spices.

At present, environmental issues pertaining to degradation aspect of Western Ghats are being debated in the country. Media play a pivotal role in shaping perception and awareness of environmental issues of Western Ghats. Together with government officials, environmental activists and scientists, journalist, and broadcasters set the agenda for environmental discourse [10].

There is limited literature regarding media coverage of environmental issues in Western Ghats of India. There is a need to understand how media cover the environmental issues in Western Ghats. With the Western Gats facing several threats in the recent years because of mining, construction of big dams and deforestation there is a need to examine how media have been reporting issues related to these.

Objectives

The general objective of the study is to examine media coverage of environmental issues in the Western Ghats.

Specific Objectives

1. To examine the importance given to the major environmental issues of the Western Ghats in media
2. To study the agenda setting role of media with regard to environmental issues of Western Ghats

3. To analyse the media coverage of displacement issues in the Western Ghats

Research Method

Three English newspapers, Deccan Herald, The Hindu and The New Indian Express, and three Kannada newspapers, Prajavani, Vijaya Karnataka and Kannada Prabha were selected for the study. These newspapers have readership throughout Karnataka, the state in which a large part of the Western Ghats is located. They have been selected because of their circulation, geographical location and reach.

For analysing the content related to politics, crime, sports, economics a smaller sample would be adequate as the frequency of appearance of such news is very high [11]. But when the frequency of appearance of news of environmental issues in the Western Ghats is very low a census becomes necessary. All issues of the six newspapers published between July 2015 to June 2016 were selected. The content in the dailies was analyzed for a period of one year as that would net a broad spectrum of environmental issues in the Western Ghats. The content was measured in terms of space and frequency of occurrence and classified into different categories on the coding sheet.

All news items on environmental issues and environmental issues in the Western Ghats published between July 2015 and June 2016 were examined. The unit of analysis was a news story. Only those stories that appeared in the main section of the newspaper were considered for analysis as supplements were also considered by all newspapers for analysis. Environmental stories were first identified and then stories about the environmental issues in the Western Ghats were identified. Only those stories that referred to the Western Ghats issues like deforestation, threat to wildlife, displacement, dam, river pollution, soil erosion, air pollution, mining and general Western Ghats stories were considered. In order to operationalize frames the headlines of news stories and the lead paragraphs were considered. When the lead paragraph appeared unclear the second paragraph or paragraph that followed was considered.

Content categories were identified and the data were entered into a coding sheet. The number of news items that appeared in each of the selected issues was also counted for the purpose of analysis. This was done to find out the percentage of environmental news stories in the coverage of news. The data were analyzed using SPSS.

Analysis

The environmental content in six selected dailies The Hindu, Deccan Herald, The New Indian Express, Prajavani, Vijaya Karnataka and Kannada prabha. Newspaper issues published between July 2015 and June 2016 were selected for the study through census method. It was expected that the one- year period would produce useful data for analysis. Environmental contents found in these six newspapers have been analysed.

Environmental news

Political news dominated the newspapers pages throughout the year. As shown in Figure 1 political news accounted for 28.16 percent of the total news whereas sports news received the second highest (18.1%) coverage (Figure 1).

Financial news and crime news received 12.49 and 7.79 percent of the coverage respectively. It is clear that newspapers give more coverage to political, sports, financial and crime news. Of all the news stories 5.75 and 4.91 percent of the stories were about education and law respectively. Women, agriculture and science news stories received 3.75, 3.29 and 3.04 percent respectively. Entertainment, health, art, literature and religion received 2.5, 2.39, 2.49, 2.23 and 2.77 percent respectively.

Political, sports and crime stories were the most frequently appearing stories in the newspapers. The percent of other news stories was more than three times lesser than the percent of political stories in the newspapers. The influence of media is described by the way news media independently process and present political information, employing media logic as opposed to political logic, and how political actors adapt to this media environment (Falasca, 2014).

The coverage of environmental news was as low as 0.27 percent. Environmental news items dealt with environmental degradation and conservation, river pollution, industrial pollution, automobile pollution, preservation of forest, promotion of ecological awareness and court proceedings dealing with environmental issues.

The six national dailies selected for the study have not given sufficient coverage to environmental news. Inadequate coverage leads to insufficient information among the readers on the environmental issues. Generally most of the Indian newspapers carry sizeable amount of news during the natural calamities but environmental problems that have long-term consequences are hardly covered.

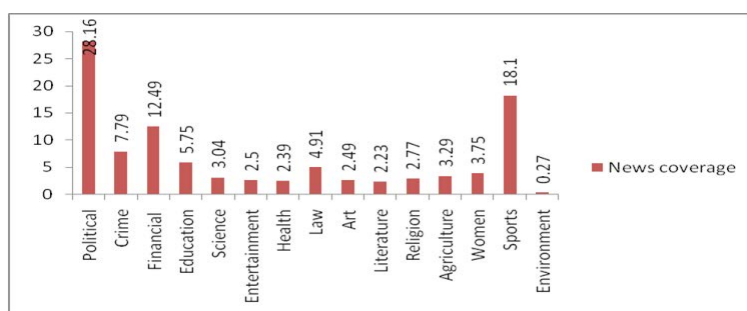


Figure 1 Coverage of news.

The percent of environmental issues in these six newspapers was negligible. Deccan Herald carried higher coverage of the environmental stories with 0.31 percent (Figure 2). The Hindu had 0.25 percent of its total number of stories on environmental issues. The New Indian Express had 0.17 percent of news related to environmental issues (Figure 2).

In order to understand the coverage given to the environmental news and to the issues in the Western Ghats stories environmental stories and Western Ghats stories published in the selected issues of six newspapers were counted. Table 3 show that only 0.27 percent of the all-news stories found in the newspapers were about issues related to the environment. Among them 37.22 percent of the environmental stories were about issues in the Western Ghats. It should be noted that the issues in the Western Ghats received fairly good coverage in the selected dailies (Table 1).

The Western Ghats, which covers about 60 percent of forest area of Karnataka, is recognized as one of the 25-mega bio-diversity hotspots of the world. Print media expressed their solidarity with the cause of forest conservation and protection against the destructive developmental activities.

The Deccan Herald had 0.31 percent of its total number of stories on environmental issues while 13.11 percent were related to the Western Ghats. The Hindu carried 0.25 percent environmental stories, and 48.62 percent stories on Western Ghats. The New Indian Express had 0.17 percent of new stories related to environmental issues and 39.21 percent of news related to the Western Ghats. Prajavani published 0.40 percent stories on environmental issues and among them 38.75 percent of the stories were on the Western Ghats. Vijaya Karnataka carried 0.22

percent of its total number of stories on environmental issues while 53.70 percent were related to Western Ghats. As many as 0.35 percent of the stories about the environmental issues appeared in Kannada Prabha of which 50 percent were about the Western Ghats.

The above analysis illustrates that more environmental news (0.31%) was published in the Deccan Herald compared to the other English newspapers. Among Kannada newspapers Prajavani carried the highest percent (0.40) of environmental stories compared to other Kannada newspapers.

With most of their circulations concentrated in Karnataka, the Deccan Herald and Prajavani newspapers have greater regional focus. Therefore, environmental issues are likely to be covered more often in both the newspapers. Vijaya Karnataka carried the most (53.70 percent) Western Ghats stories among the Kannada newspapers; among English newspapers The Hindu published the highest percent (48.62) of Western Ghats stories which suggests that the newspapers differed in giving coverage to the environmental issues generally and environmental issues in the Western Ghats.

The Hindu and Vijaya Karnataka newspapers gave wider coverage to environmental issues in The Western Ghats and the extensive coverage to the issue of forest conservation including the recent struggle against Nethravathi River diversion project. This indicates the wider impact of the role of media in building public awareness among common people (Tables 2, 3).

Spearman's rank order correlation coefficients were used to test if there was any significant correlation between the dailies in covering the environmental news in the Western Ghats (Table 3).

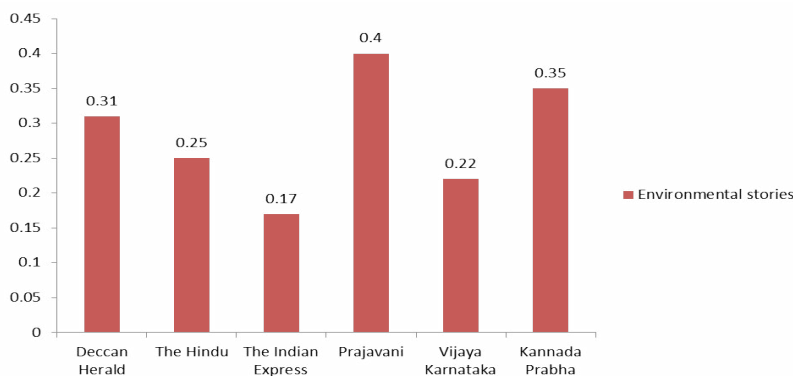


Figure 2 Coverage of environmental issues.

Table 1. Coverage of environmental news.

Newspapers	All stories	ironmental stories	Percent of Environmental stories	Stories on Western Ghats	Percent of stories on Western Ghats
Deccan Herald	39235	122	0.31	16	13.11
The Hindu	42053	109	0.25	53	48.62
The New Indian Express	29369	51	0.17	20	39.21
Prajavani	19693	80	0.4	31	38.75
Vijaya Karnataka	23697	54	0.22	29	53.7
Kannada Prabha	12884	46	0.35	23	50
Total	166931	462	0.27	172	37.22

Table 2. Correlation coefficients between the newspapers in covering environmental issues.

Newspapers	Deccan Herald	The Hindu	The New Indian Express	Prajavani	Vijaya Karnataka	Kannada Prabha
Deccan Herald	-	.655*	-0.199	0.433	0.307	0.558
The Hindu	-	-	0.317	.644*	0.376	0.194
The New Indian Express	-	-	-	0.023	0.177	-0.442
Prajavani	-	-	-	-	-0.058	-0.028
Vijaya Karnataka	-	-	-	-	-	0.112

* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 3. Correlation coefficients between the newspapers in covering environmental issues of the Western Ghats.

Newspapers	Deccan Herald	The Hindu	The New Indian Express	Prajavani	Vijaya Karnataka	Kannada Prabha
	-	-	-		Karnataka	-
Deccan Herald	-	0.33	-0.272	0.513	0.118	-0.095
The Hindu	-	-	0.267	.595*	-0.041	-0.182
The New Indian Express	-	-	-	0.129	-0.155	-0.413
Prajavani	-	-	-	-	-0.336	-0.12
Vijaya Karnataka	-	-	-	-	-	-0.255

* Significant at 0.05 level

A significant positive correlation was found between The Hindu and Prajavani. No significant correlation was found among the other newspapers which show that newspapers did not give the same amount of coverage to the stories on Western Ghats. They seem to have differed in terms of attaching importance to the environmental issues in the Western Ghats.

Prominence

Stories appearing on the front page of a newspaper indicate that issues being reported have been given prominence by the newspapers. As many as 92.9 percent of the environmental stories appeared on the inside pages against 7.1 percent stories that appeared on the front page (Table 4).

When compared to the Kannada newspapers (9.6%) the English newspapers gave lesser coverage (6%) to the news on environmental issues on the front page. The front pages of newspapers are usually dominated by sensational, dramatic and controversial news. The environmental issues rarely contain sensational or dramatic elements. Most of the stories on environmental issues are pushed in the inside pages (Table 4). Lesser coverage on the front page could be seen in Kannada as well as English newspapers. In terms of giving prominence to environmental issues there was no difference between the newspapers of both the languages [12].

Types of environmental news

As shown in the Table 5, straight reports accounted for nearly 61 percent of the environmental news content in newspapers. Straight news stories are the reports of current events, facts, issues, court judgments etc.

As much as 33.3 percent of the environmental content contained articles/features. It shows that the newspapers made attempts to give interpretation and analysis about environmental issues

beyond facts and events. Considering the ratio between straight news and articles/features in any newspaper the frequency of appearance of articles/features appears significant (Table 5).

Editorial constituted only 4.3 percent of the environmental items the newspapers carried. Writing an editorial on an issue is an indication that a newspaper has considered the issues as an important issue. It was evident that the priority given to environmental issues was very less as there were only a few editorials on them. Profiles and interviews featuring environmental activists, experts or project-affected persons accounted for only 1.3 percent of the items in the newspapers. More articles, interviews, and editorials would have meant greater depth to the coverage of environmental news [13].

When compared to Kannada newspapers English newspapers had higher percentage of straight reports. While straight reports accounted for 63.1 percent of the environmental content in English newspapers, Kannada newspapers carried straight reports that accounted for 57.8 percent of the environmental content (Table 6). As many as 4.3 percent of the editorials appeared in English newspapers while in Kannada newspapers it was 3.9 percent. Prominence given to environmental issues in the editorials was negligible in both Kannada and the English newspapers. Kannada newspapers carried more profile/interviews (2.8%) providing a broader variety of content as compared to English newspapers (0.4%).

The main sections of the newspapers carried 97.6 percent of the environmental issues (Table 6). A very small percent (2.4) of the news was carried in the supplements. It was evident that a majority of the stories were carried by the main section of the newspapers (Table 6).

As many as 96.1 percent of the stories about the environmental issues appeared on the main section of the English newspapers.

Table 4. Location of the environmental news.

Location of the news	English Newspapers	Kannada Newspapers	Total
Front page	17 (6)	16 (-9.6)	33 (-7.1)
Inside page	265 (-94)	164 (-90.4)	429 (-92.9)
Total	282 (-100)	180 (-100)	462 (-100)

Table 5. Type of environmental news content.

Newspapers	Straight Report	Article/feature	Editorial	Profile/Interview	Total
English Newspapers	178 (63.1)	90 (-31.9)	13(-4.3)	1 -0.4)	282(-100)
Kannada Newspapers	104 (-57.8)	64 (-35.6)	7 (-3.9)	5 (-2.8)	180 (-100)
Total	282 (-61)	154 (-33.3)	20 (-4.3)	6(-1.3)	462(-100)

Table 6. Environmental news in newspapers sections.

Newspapers	Main section	Supplement	Total
English Newspapers	271(-96.1)	11 (-3.9)	282 (-100)
Kannada Newspapers	180 (-100)	-	180 (-100)
Total	451 (-97.6)	11 (-2.4)	462 (-100)

It indicates the importance the newspaper gave to the issues. However 3.9 percent of the environmental stories appeared in the supplements of the English newspaper.

All stories on environmental issues appeared on the main section of the Kannada newspapers. It has been observed that environmental issues generally did not get a chance to appear in the supplements, unless they referred to major issues like nuclear treaty, protest against environmental activities, poaching activities, and deforestation and implementation of central or state government environmental policies. Some media scholars have argued that coverage in the main section is more important than in the supplements because supplements do not get as much attention as the main sections.

In the English newspapers supplements also carried environment-related stories. Considering the norm that only a small percent of all new stories are carried in the supplements, the importance given to the environmental news in the main section does not appear to be significant at all.

Sources of environmental news

Sources play a key role in creating the environmental agenda. They set the voice and frame of environmental discourse in the media. Contrary to the belief that official sources dominate the news content in newspapers it was found that scientist/experts accounted for 41.6 percent of the sources used in newspapers (Table 7). Interestingly the second most often used sources were non-affiliated persons (27.5%) which suggest that the newspapers looked beyond official sources for information on environmental problems. Only 18.6 percent of the news sources were government/official. There is a clear indication that environmental news was not dominated by the official sources. While a majority of the sources were officials, scientists/experts and non-affiliated persons the other sources were rarely used. Only 5.6 percent of the sources were politicians who usually dominate newspaper pages. Those who were affected by the projects or environmental degradation were also not used as sources often as they accounted for only 3.7 percent of the sources. Activists and pressure groups who often raise environmental issues and

Table 7. Sources in environmental news.

Sources of news	Number	Percent
Official	86	18.6
Scientists/experts	192	41.6
Legal /court	1	0.2
Pressure group/activists	13	2.8
Non-affiliated person	127	27.5
Affected persons	17	3.7
Politicians	26	5.6
Total	462	100

Table 8. Sources used in Kannada and English newspapers.

Sources	English newspapers	Kannada newspapers	Total
Official	57 (-20.2)	29 (-16.1)	86 (-18.6)
Scientist/expert	124(-44)	68 (-37.8)	192 (-41.6)
Legal/ court	-	1(-0.6)	1 (-0.2)
Pressure group/activists	6 (-2.1)	7 (-3.9)	13 (-2.8)
Non-affiliated person	85 (-30.1)	42 (-23.3)	127 (-27.5)
Affected person	2 (-0.7)	15 (-8.3)	17 (-3.7)
Politicians	8 (-2.8)	18 (-10)	26(-5.6)
Total	282(-100)	180 (-100)	462

take part in protests were also not frequently quoted as sources. Although many of the environmental issues are heard in courts only a negligible percent of the sources were legal/court sources (Table 7).

In English newspapers 44 percent of the sources were scientists while in Kannada newspapers they constituted 37.8 percent of the sources (Table 10). Non-affiliated persons were the second most used sources in both English and Kannada newspapers with 30.1 percent and 23.3 percent respectively (Table 8).

While in English newspapers 20.2 percent of the sources were official sources, in Kannada newspapers the percentage of official

sources was 16.1. Officials as sources occupied the third position in the environmental stories of both English and Kannada newspapers. Kannada newspapers quoted politicians (10%) more often than the English newspapers (2.8%). Kannada newspapers that carry a lot of local news tend to quote local politicians more often than English newspapers. In contrast to Kannada newspapers English newspapers had higher percent of officials, experts and non-affiliated persons quoted in the news stories.

While 0.7 and 8.3 percent of the sources were affected persons in English and Kannada newspapers respectively pressure group/activists were rarely mentioned in both categories of newspapers. The percent of legal/ court sources used in environmental news stories were very low.

Journalists have a multitude of sources helping them to cover environmental issues. However, access to environmental information is limited and requires cross verification and expert's opinion to substantiate (Table 10) which means more sources are needed [14].

News gathering

Who gathers news with regard to a particular issue is an indication of the importance a newspaper attaches to an issue. As shown in Table 11, 64.1 percent of the stories carried bylines of reporters/ correspondents. Publishing stories with bylines indicates that the newspapers have shown interest in presenting analysis of environmental news. Stories with byline are more analytical and provide greater depth to the issues in focus. Reporters were the main news gatherers as 28.1 percent of the news stories were written by them without their bylines. That the newspapers paid attention to covering environmental issues were indicated here. Only 7.8 percent of the stories came from news agencies making it amply clear that the newspapers were not dependent on news agencies for environmental news (Table 9).

As much as 72 percent of the stories in English newspapers had bylines but the percentage of stories with bylines in Kannada newspapers was only 51.7 percent. The English newspapers appeared to have given greater importance to analysis considering the environmental news stories that frequently carried bylines.

As many as 40 percent of the news stories in Kannada newspapers were written by newspapers' own reporters whereas English newspapers had 20.6 percent stories written by them. Only 8.3 percent of the environmental news in Kannada newspapers was from news agencies whereas in English newspapers the percent

of stories from news agencies was 7.4 percent.

Reach

A great majority of environmental news stories (82.5 percent) were national in terms of their impact as they were about larger issues going beyond the concerns of the states. While 6.7 and 6.5 percent of the environmental news stories were local and international in focus respectively only 4.3 percent of the environmental news had regional focus. It is interesting to note that national and international news coverage was higher than the local and regional news coverage (Table 10).

In English newspapers the coverage given to national and international news was 85.5 percent and 7.8 percent respectively. While local and regional news received 2.5 percent and 4.3 percent respectively. In Contrast to English newspapers (2.5%) Kannada newspapers carried more stories (13.3%) with local focus.

In Kannada newspapers the highest percentage of stories (77.8 percent) had national focus. Stories with international and regional focus accounted for 4.4 percent each of all stories in the environmental issues. The coverage in the English newspapers was greater than the coverage in Kannada newspapers. However, Kannada newspapers provided wider coverage to the local environmental issues than the English newspapers.

Coverage of environmental issues

The amount of coverage given to specific issues in newspapers indicates the importance the issues receive as news. News stories appearing on the front page of newspapers is an indication of the importance given to them. A great majority of the stories (92.8) about environmental issues appeared on the inside pages of the newspapers. Only 7.2 percent of the environmental issues appeared on the front pages of the newspapers (Table 11).

Water pollution was the only issue that was accorded space on the front page more often as compared to the other issues. No stories about displacement, soil erosion, ozone layer depilation issues appeared on the front page of any newspaper. The indication is that the news about these issues was not considered serious enough to be given space on the front page. Eighty percent of nuclear hazards news stories were carried on the inside page of newspapers and the remaining stories appeared on the front page.

Table 9. Environmental news gathering.

Newspapers	Stories without byline	Stories with byline	Stories from news agencies	Total
English newspapers	58 (-20.6)	203 (-72)	21 (-7.4)	282 (-100)
Kannada Newspapers	72 (-40)	93(-51.7)	15(-8.3)	180(-100)
Total	130 (-28.1)	296(-64.1)	36(-7.8)	462(-100)

Table 10. Reach of environmental news.

Newspapers	Local	Regional	National	International	Total
English newspapers	7(-2.5)	12(-4.3)	241(85.5)	22(-7.8)	282
Kannada Newspapers	24(-13.3)	8(-4.4)	140 (-77.8)	8 (-4.4)	180
Total	31(-6.7)	20(-4.3)	381(-82.5)	30(-6.5)	462(-100)

Table 11. Coverage of environmental issues.

Issues	Front page	Inside page	Total
River pollution	6(-46.2)	7(-53.8)	13(-100)
Deforestation	3(-4.4)	65 (-95.6)	68 (-100)
Threat to Wildlife	4(-5.7)	66(-94.3)	70(-100)
Displacement	-	2(-100)	2(-100)
Soil erosion	-	4(-100)	4(-100)
Nuclear hazards	1(-20)	4 (-80)	5(-100)
Air pollution	1(-4.8)	20(-95.2)	21(-100)
Global warming	3(-6)	47(-94)	50(-100)
Ozone layer	-	1(-100)	1(-100)
Mining	-	2(-100)	2(-100)
Dam	1(-5.6)	17(-94.4)	18(-100)
Environment in general	2(-5.6)	34(-94.4)	36(-100)
Total	21(-7.2)	269(-92.8)	290(-100)

Table 12. Coverage of environmental issues in the Western Ghats.

Issues	Front page	Inside page	Total
Loss of biodiversity	-	6(-100)	6(-100)
River pollution	-	7(-100)	7(-100)
Deforestation	2(-3.5)	55(-96.5)	57(-100)
Threat to wildlife	1(-2.6)	38(-97.4)	39(-100)
Displacement	1(-11.1)	8(-88.9)	9(-100)
Air Pollution	1(-25)	3(-75)	4(-100)
Mining	-	6(-100)	6(-100)
Dam	7(-15.9)	37(-84.1)	44(-100)
Total	12(-7)	160(-93)	172(-100)
Total	21(-7.2)	269(-92.8)	290(-100)

As much as 94 percent of the stories found on the inside page were about threat to wildlife, global warming, dam and environment in general, whereas in six percent of the stories found on the front page were about threat to wildlife, global warming, dam and environment in general respectively (Table 11).

Deforestation and air pollution accounted for 95.6 percent and 95.2 percent of the news respectively on the inside pages. The coverage of these issues on the front page was negligible. The conflict over natural resources including the forests led to the emergence of struggles like anti-dam, anti-mining movements in the country. They raised the basic questions on the model of development. These basic questions raised on the political economy of the use of natural resources were seen as anti-development. These popular perceptions seem to have had their influence on media coverage of those issues.

A great majority of the stories on the issues in the Western Ghats appeared on the inside pages of newspapers (Table 11). Loss of biodiversity, river pollution and mining did not make it to the front page of the newspapers. The issues of deforestation, threat to wildlife, displacement and dam appeared on the front pages of newspapers but rarely. Despite the fact that these are issues that are threatening the livelihood of millions of people they were not given adequate space on the front pages (Table 12).

Mobilizing information that helps readers take part in the

environmental movements and other environment-related activities in the Western Ghats were almost absent in newspapers

Prominence of environmental issues

As shown in the threat to wildlife received 24.1 percent of coverage in the newspapers compared to the other issues. Issues related to wildlife such as 'causing disappearance and damage to the wildlife population', 'habitant destruction', 'protection of endangered animals', 'man and animal conflict' and 'destruction of wildlife' were repeatedly highlighted in the newspapers.

As shown in the (Table 13) displacement, soil erosion and ozone layer depletion appeared as news only in the English newspapers but in Kannada newspapers they did not make news at all.

While English newspapers carried 76.5 percent and 72.9 percent of news about deforestation and threat to wildlife, Kannada newspapers gave priority to environmental news in general (69.4%). This analysis shows the difference in priority given to the environmental issues in newspapers of two languages.

News stories related to mining and nuclear hazards accounted for 50 and 40 percent of the environmental issues covered in Kannada newspapers. Global warming accounted for 78 percent of coverage in English newspapers.

The consequences of big dams received 66.7 percent coverage in the Kannada newspapers against 33.3 percent coverage in English dailies. That the English newspapers ignored the problem of dam is reflected in the lowest percentage coverage given to it.

Kannada newspapers provided 61.5 percent coverage to news related to river pollution as against 38.5 in English newspapers. The coverage of other environmental issues like nuclear hazards, river pollution, and environment in general issues were slightly ignored by the English newspapers.

News stories related to wildlife and deforestation accounted for 19.6 and 16.5 percent of the environmental issues covered in Kannada newspapers. Global warming accounted for 20.2

Table 13. Prominence given to issue related to environmental issues.

Issues	English News paper	Kannada newspapers	Total
River pollution	8(-61.5)	5(-38.5)	13(-100)
Deforestation	52(-76.5)	16(-23.5)	68(-100)
Wildlife	51(-72.9)	19(-27.1)	70(-27.1)
Displacement	2(-100)	-	2(-100)
Soil erosion	4(-100)	-	4(-100)
Nuclear hazards	3(-60)	2(-40)	5(-100)
Air pollution	15(-71.4)	6(-28.6)	21(-100)
Global warming	39(-78)	11(-78)	50(-100)
Ozone layer	1(-100)	-	1
	-100		-100
Mining	1	1	2
	-50	-50	-100
Dam	6	12	18(-100)
Environment in general	11(-30.6)	25(-30.6)	36(-100)
Total	193(-66.6)	97(-33.4)	294(-100)

percent of coverage in English newspapers.

Over the years monoculture of teak and eucalyptus plantations to meet the commercial revenue of the state have replaced the tropical forests in the Western Ghats. These large-scale monoculture plantations have had negative impact on the local agriculture economy. The reduction of biodiversity and the tree cover has caused drying up of the water resources and scarcity of biomass for agricultural inputs. As the agricultural yields started dwindling, the people became very concerned about the depletion of the forests [15].

Threat to wildlife was the most frequently appearing issue in the English newspapers, as it accounted for 79.5 percentages of Western Ghats news. In Kannada newspapers only 20.5 percent of wildlife news was covered. Displacement and river pollution received higher coverage in Kannada newspapers with 85.7 and 88.8 percent respectively whereas in English newspapers it was just 14.3 and 11.1 percent. It is important to note that a large number of developmental activities have led to displacement in the Western Ghats region.

The problem of big dam received higher coverage (70.5%) in Kannada newspapers, as compared to English newspapers (29.5%). It must be noted that that a large numbers of big dams are located in the Western Ghats region. Loss of biodiversity and mining issues received a wide coverage in English dailies (66.7%), whereas in Kannada newspapers the coverage for both the issues was 33.3 percent. As much as 75 percent news stories related to air pollution appeared in Kannada newspapers while the percent of coverage of the issue in English newspapers was only 25.

Due to developmental activities Western Ghats forests were degraded during the last few decades, deforestation received 59.6 percent in English dailies and 40.4 percent in Kannada dailies. There are noticeable differences between the English and Kannada newspapers in terms of covering issues in the Western Ghats.

Coverage of displacement

Thousands of people have been displaced by dams, ports and national parks. A great majority (83.30 percent) of the stories were about big dams that have inflicted enormous ecological damage upon the Western Ghats (Figure 3). The forests are extremely fragmented due to building of irrigation or hydroelectric projects.

Building of big dams has led to massive displacement of people and severe environmental destruction. In the Western Ghats most of the rivers have been dammed for power generation.

News related to Netravathi river diversion project was frequently found during the time when the issue was being hotly debated. According to experts, the project, if implemented, would be environmentally disastrous and lead to displacement of hundreds of families (Figure 3).

The catchment area of Netravati, which is a part of the Western Ghats, apart from being the lifeline of the Dakshina Kannada district, has several tributaries that keep alive the hydro-system of the Western Ghats by feeding excess water into the streams, small rivers and rivulets.

As much as 12.50 percent of the stories published in the newspapers were about issues related to national park. Resettlement of human populations from within areas notified for national park has been undertaken, as a means of reducing pressures on wildlife. Many tribal families which have been resisting displacement from the national park have refused to move out of the forest.

Only 4.20 percent of the stories were about displacement by ports. The port project was ostensibly planned to develop the economy of the state and to improve the lives of the people who are directly involved in fishing and related activities. But building of the port led to displacement of thousands of families causing loss of livelihood besides harming the ecosystem. Rehabilitation and resettlement have not been carried out as promised pushing people to the extremes of desperation. Resettlement in the Western Ghats has in turn led to increased pressure on the resources.

Coverage of issues in states and districts

Western Ghats of India stretch along 1,500 km in length from river Tapti in the north to Kanyakumari in south. The mean elevation of the Western Ghats is higher than 600 meters and exceeds 2,000 meters at some places. It covers parts of six states, including Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Newspapers gave prominence to the environmental issues of the Karnataka. The Western Ghats of Karnataka represents highest forest cover (37.4 per cent), followed by Maharashtra (25.9 per

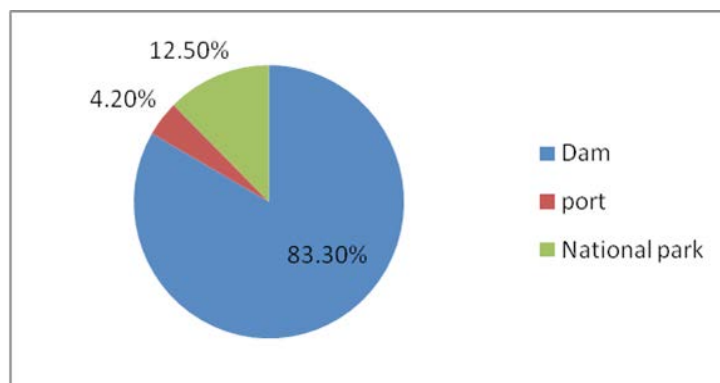


Figure 3 Coverage of displacement issues.

cent), Kerala (17 per cent), and Tamil Nadu (13.6 percent). Among the six states (192-2013), historical loss of forest area was very high in the Western Ghats of Kerala with forest cover loss of 62.7 percent of area, followed by 34.9 percent in Gujarat, 27.1 percent in Karnataka, 26.3 percent in Goa, 21.6 percent in Maharashtra and 15.2 percent in Tamil Nadu (Basu, Feb 18, 2016).). Since all the newspapers selected for the content analysis are published from Karnataka it is not surprising that only the issues in the Karnataka region of the Western Ghats are highlighted in the newspapers.

Within Karnataka the issues in the Shivamogga part of the Western Ghats accounted for a higher percent (28.8 percent) of the stories in the newspapers. The problems in the Dakshina Kannada part of the Western Ghats received the second highest coverage (20.5 percent). The selected newspapers have a greater regional focus, and these are the two districts where large scale displacement of people has taken place. The environmental movement has also been active in these districts.

As many as 14.4 percent of the stories referred to the problems in the Western Ghats in general without specifying a particular problem in a particular district. These were stories about deforestation and loss of biodiversity in the entire Western Ghats. Stories from Hassan and Mysore districts news constituted 8.9 percent of the news about issues in the Western Ghats.

Although newspapers covered issues in the Western Ghats running through different states a great majority of the stories (88.8percent) were about the issues in the Karnataka region of the Western Ghats. Only a small percent of the stories were about the issues in the Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Goa. The lowest coverage was given to the issues in the Goa region of the Western Ghats.

Stories from their districts like Chikkamagalure (6.2 percent), Uttara Kannada (5.5 percent), Kodagu (3.4 percent), Chamaraj Nagara (2.7 percent), Udipi (0.7 percent) received lower coverage.

A majority of the news stories in English newspapers (18.2%) were related to environmental issues in Shivamogga district and the Western Ghats in general whereas a majority of the stories in Kannada newspapers referred to environmental issues related to Shivamogga (37.5%) and Dakshina Kannada (27.5%) districts. Kannada newspapers gave prominence to the environmental issues of the districts whereas the English newspapers gave prominence to the issues outside the districts and the coverage in the English media attracted national and international attention towards the Western Ghats.

As many as 15.2 percent and 13.6 percent of Western Ghats news stories in English newspapers covered were from Hassan and Mysore districts. The percentage of news stories that referred to environmental issues in the Chikkamagalure district was 10.6. The percentage of news stories covered from the other districts in English newspapers were negligible. However, in Kannada newspapers 11.3 percent of the news stories were generally about the issues in the Western Ghats while the percent of stories from the other districts were negligible.

The above result illustrates that more environmental news

about the Western Ghats was published in Kannada newspapers compared to English newspapers during the study period. With most of their circulations concentrated in Karnataka, the Kannada newspapers have greater regional focus than English dailies. Therefore, The Western Ghats issues are likely to be covered more often in Kannada dailies than in English newspapers.

Environmental news accounted for only a small percent of the total news content in the newspapers between July 2015 to June 2016. A significant positive correlation was found between Deccan Herald and The Hindu and between The Hindu and Prajavani in terms of the coverage given to the environmental news during the study period. However, no significant correlation was found among the dailies in covering the environmental news in the Western Ghats. The coverage in the English newspapers was greater than the coverage in Kannada newspapers. But, Kannada newspapers provided wider coverage to the local environmental issues as compared to the English newspapers.

When compared to the Kannada newspapers the English newspapers gave lesser coverage to the news on environmental issues on the front page. Scientists/experts were the prime sources of environmental news throughout the year. Non-affiliated persons or independent persons as sources were the second most important sources. Threat to wildlife and deforestation were the most frequently appearing issues in the newspapers. The stories about big dams that have inflicted enormous ecological damage upon the Western Ghats came next in terms of importance given to them. Mobilizing information that helps readers take part in the environmental movements and other environment-related activities was almost absent in newspapers.

Conclusion

Environmental news accounted for only a small percent of the total news content in the newspapers. A positive correlation was found among the dailies in covering the environmental news in the Western Ghats. The coverage in the newspapers was different and diverse during the study period. The coverage of the English newspapers was greater than the coverage in the Kannada newspapers. But, the Kannada newspapers provided wider coverage to the local environmental issues as compared to the English newspapers. Unlike English newspapers the Kannada newspapers cater to the interests of the readers in small towns and villages where they have considerable readership. A majority of the stories were found to be favourable towards environmental causes.

Scientists/experts were the prime sources of environmental news throughout the year. Non-affiliated persons or independent persons as sources were the second most important sources. Only one category of sources dominating the news stories is an indication of lack of balance in coverage. Involvement of political leader in the environmental movement was evident as they were quoted more often than legal sources, organizations of affected persons.

The amount of coverage given to specific issues in the newspapers indicates the importance the issues receive as news. News stories appearing on the front page of newspapers was an

indication of the importance given to them. A majority of stories on environmental issues appeared on the inside pages of the newspapers. Only few of the environmental issues appeared on the front pages of the newspapers

Among the environmental problems, threat to wildlife and deforestation were the most frequently appearing issues in the newspapers? While the fast declining animal population and trees could be a reason for higher coverage there is also a view that newspapers do not pay adequate attention to all environmental issues. The stories that made general reference to protection of the environment without going into the specifics of any issues were the second most frequently reported stories.

Not all controversial projects whose effects on the environment were being debated drew the attention of the press. Only some of the controversies continued to get space in newspapers over a long period of time. The issues raised about the environmental consequences of the controversial Yathinahole river diversion received consistent coverage in the newspapers. But news related to wildlife and deforestation was found only during the time when issue was being hotly debated.

The newspapers did not show any consistent efforts in writing about any specific issue. Consistent coverage of an issue is necessary to ensure that pressure is brought on the government to act to resolve the issue. Mining that has caused large scale

destruction in the Western Ghats region accounted for only a small percent of the environmental news. River pollution caused by the improper drainage system was hardly covered in the newspapers.

In the recent past many hydropower projects have come up in the Western Ghats regions that have caused displacement of several thousand families. Hydropower projects have also affected the inhabitants, flora and fauna and mammal species of the Western Ghats region. The military base, dam, industry and tiger project issues are the other causes of displacement the newspapers have highlighted according to the respondents. Mobilizing information that helps readers take part in the environmental movements and other environment-related activities was almost absent in newspapers.

While a majority of the environmental stories in English newspapers were about issues outside the district a majority of the stories in Kannada newspapers were about the issues within the district. Of all the issues in the Western Ghats deforestation received the highest coverage.

Displacement was one of the issues that had been a subject of debate in the Western Ghats region. Going by what the newspapers had reported a majority of the respondents thought development projects in the region had displaced land less labourers and farmers.

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