



**SAVE THE WESTERN GHATS
CONCLAVE 2012
'PRACTITIONERS'
CONCLAVE'**

WESTERN GHATS IN THE MEDIA

SLOT- 3:30PM TO 5:30 PM DAY 2

FORMAT- OPEN FORUM

This session is an open forum to discuss the role the Media has been playing, in keeping the concerns and issues plaguing the Western Ghats in the public vision. In an increasingly impersonal and anonymous age, the media is our window to the world. The only way we can circulate information, disseminate ideas and generate interest in issues of the Environment is through the Media. But, the power of the media to create reality can often have dual repercussions. The media does not merely present facts but at times creates facts which can in turn change the way the issue is perceived and received. This session will see some heated discussions on the way media stories have revolved around the Western Ghats and the response they have received. It will be a critical discussion about the role of the media in generating awareness and sustaining interest in the environment, the ethics and the business involved in media interest and finally the way in which civil society can use the media in furthering the cause of conservation and sustainable development.

Scroll down for the *Session Brief*.

SESSION BRIEF



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From reporting the changing psyche of a nation to talking about the darkest corners of the world's largest democracy to making people stand up and take cognizance of the world around them, the media today can be deemed to be the most powerful tool ever created. It can make and break lives, stir up the passion of a nation and change the scale and dimension of every single story that gets its attention. But, the biggest power in the hands of the media is that it not only reports reality but creates reality. And at many crucial junctures of history there is a no relation between these two realities. The present space given to the Environment in the Media probably is part of such a critical juncture marking the disjunction between the reality at the ground and the reality voiced by the media.

The Environment is suddenly finding space everywhere. It is discussed, debated and deliberated upon. And definitely the Media has to be given due credit for bringing the cause of the Environment to the forefront. But along with this we also need to ponder upon the decreasing and often absent Environment Beats in leading Newspapers and News Channels. On one hand while the Environment and its concerns become more political, its reportage is increasing becoming less human centered. It takes a Rio Summit or a protracted peoples struggle for the Media to wake up to the concerns of Nature. And even then under many situations it has been observed that the debates, analyses, reporting are just attempts to create a new reality by taking into consideration just a part of the whole story. And usually the people who are left out are the ones who have the most to say as they are the ones who would face the direct brunt of the devastation to their Natural habitat and livelihoods. While the Media at many times is smartly using celebrities and diluting issues to make Environment more saleable, often such dilution results in a mere eyewash which is in no way indicative of the urgency of the situation on the ground.



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The dwindling interest of the general public in issues of the Environment, the changing strategies of the media in pitching Nature in the news and the unavoidable urgency and importance of discussing and safeguarding the Environment makes the need for informed, nuanced and critical Environmental Journalism more crucial than ever before. The media needs to wake up to the peril that Western Ghats is facing and help create news that reflects the reality and the urgency of the cause of conservation and sustainable development.

The aim of this session is to deliberate upon these key issues in the context of Western Ghats in the Media.

- Is Nature becoming a commodity for the Media which needs commercial strategies to sell to the audience?
- What is the status of Environmental Journalism in the present day and what could/should be the way ahead.
- Does the Media reflect the dwindling levels of public interest in the Environment or is the public bereft of informed and critical reportage.
- What is the Medias' role in Conservation of the Environment and is does the corporate nature of the media prove to be a roadblock.

The Speakers can speak for 20 minutes on any of the themes identified. The panel discussion will be followed by an audience interaction.