

“Current Biodiversity Act is draconian”

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Q: What is your take on the Biodiversity Act which is being viewed as a hurdle for bioinnovation?

The law should be made enabling for the active use of biodiversity - rather than discourage the use of biodiversity. The best way to conserve biodiversity is to make it commercially an important thing. The more it is used, the better it is conserved. The current act is a sure way to slowly kill India's largest resource its biodiversity, slowly.

Q: How is it hampering the overall research?

The current Biodiversity act is draconian. From an academic sense too, this law is regressive. On the one side the Government of India is trying to attract the best talent in the world to come back to India to do science. The Biodiversity act dramatically restricts foreign nationals, including OCI card holders from doing research on Indian biodiversity. This is very poorly thought through and it does not look like that there is any active scientist or academic doing research in modern life sciences and using biodiversity in the panel.

Q: How can we rectify it?

The bill has been hijacked by a very narrow group of ideologists. What we need is an inclusive bill that is made with

representation from all. The bill has to be forward thinking and enabling.