



IIMC CASE RESEARCH CENTER (IIMCCRC)

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THE INDIA BIODIVERSITY PORTAL: THE EVOLUTION AND GROWTH OF AN OPEN ACCESS, PARTICIPATORY BIODIVERSITY INFORMATION SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

The idea of creating an open data portal on India's biodiversity that started in 2008 had come a long way. There was still much to be realised and newer challenges to be faced. It is still an on-going process. A small group of committed, passionate biodiversity and open source enthusiasts have worked through the decade to provide a state-of-the-art, comprehensive, people-driven, and people-oriented resource on India's biodiversity in the form of India Biodiversity Portal (IBP, indiabiodiversity.org). India being home to four of the world's biodiversity hotspots, this initiative was expected to have significant impacts not only for the country but for global conservation efforts. In the decade long journey of India Biodiversity Portal, they now have much to celebrate. However, the portal consortium - an endeavour at alternate organizing - continued to face several unique challenges including resourcing issues, participation issues, authentication issues, and most importantly sustaining the commons philosophy while achieving growth.

BACKGROUND

In 2005, during the early years of internet revolution in India, the then prime minister Mr. Manmohan Singh conveyed, "*The time has come to create a second wave of institution building and of excellence in the field of education, research, and capability building so that we are better*

Nimruji Jammulamadaka of the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta, developed this case study as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate the effective or ineffective running of an organization.

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*prepared for the 21st century*¹. He constituted a National Knowledge Commission (NKC) headed by India's tech pioneer Sam Pitroda to focus on ease of access to knowledge creation, conservation, and dissemination of knowledge in the country by leveraging Internet as a powerful and democratic source of information and knowledge. The commission envisaged the creation of a series of web portals as dynamic repositories to support decentralization, transparency, and accountability in governance and decision making to empower citizen's right to information, decision making, and participation in popular movements². One of the many portals that were initiated at this time was the India Biodiversity Portal.

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<http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/Sam+Pitroda+to+launch+India+biodiversity+portal/1/22473.html>

2 NKC recommendations to Prime Minister