STS-IN Activities Report – December 2023- December 2024

Inaugural Meet at IIT Hyderabad

The Science and Technology Studies India Network (STS-IN) was established in December 2023, at the Inaugural Session at the Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad, held on the 14th and 15th of December. The meeting organized different panel discussions attended by graduate students, researchers, and faculty members working on themes related to STS from across the country. An interim executive committee was formed to jumpstart the network's activities such as organizing a biannual conference, launching a mentorship program for students and early career academics, conducting online and offline seminars and workshops, and building a digital, institutional, and financial infrastructure for future activities. The network resolved to work on the tension between South Asia and India as the appropriate framing for the network's activities, without appropriating the scholarship from other parts of South Asia. The following four sub-themes were suggested to facilitate immediate academic collaboration and create indicative themes for the reading groups: Feminist STS, Digital STS, Climate/Energy/Environment STS, and History of Science and Technology. Lastly, city chapters of the network were established in five cities - Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai/Pondicherry. In this inaugural workshop, the STS India Network set the foundation for an academic community that can become the cornerstone of the STS research landscape in India.

Reading Groups:

The Feminist STS, Digital STS, Climate/Energy/Environment STS, and History of Science and Technology held multiple online reading sessions over the last year, engaging critically with several texts and authors. Read the reflections of the first meeting of the Feminist STS reading group and the Digital STS reading group here. To sign up for one or more reading groups, write to stsindianetwork@gmail.com with your name and affiliation.

STS-IN City Chapter:

City chapters of the network were established in five cities - Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai/Pondicherry. The STS-IN Delhi City Chapters met online to discuss possible venues and themes for lectures to be held in 2025.

The STS India Network Mumbai Chapter organized several impactful activities in 2024, with a focus on engaging early career researchers and fostering discussions around Science, Technology, and Society (STS) issues. The year began with a **kick-off meeting** on January 16, 2024, at IIT Bombay, where early career researchers from IIT Bombay and the Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE) gathered to discuss potential activities. It was decided to organize reading sessions, seminars, and discussions, aiming to include participants from other institutions like TISS, Mumbai University, and Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research. The first seminar, **"The Gendered Nature of Science and Technology"**, was held on January 16, 2024, with Aswathy Raveendran, a faculty member at HBCSE, as the speaker.

She explored the intersections of gender, science, and technology, examining how gender representation in these fields affects research and innovation. This session drew participants from IITB, TISS, and HBCSE. In November, Dr. **Tridibesh Dey** presented a seminar titled **"Let's Talk about the Rural Plastic Problem!"** at IIT Bombay. He discussed the challenges of plastic pollution in rural India and proposed sustainable, community-driven solutions by leveraging local knowledge. A **discussion session** on December 5, 2024, titled **"Deliberating Concepts and Methods for Transformation and Sustainability"**, was chaired by Dr. Saurabh Arora. Researchers from various disciplines shared their work on sustainability, and the session focused on transdisciplinary methods and concepts to support transformative change. The chapter plans to continue hosting such activities, with a goal of increasing participation and creating a robust network of early career researchers across Mumbai-based institutes.

The Bangalore City Chapters organized a reading group in Cubbon Park to plan future meetings and discuss their respective research questions

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STS-IN Anti-Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Committee

The STS-IN has established an Internal Complaints Committee after several meetings and discussions. The Committee has established guidelines in reference to sexual harassment, the code of conduct of all members, and anti-discrimination guidelines. It has also deliberated on structure, redressal mechanisms, and a confidential point of contact. The entire document will be uploaded on the website soon. All complaints/issues can be directed to stsinicc@gmail.com

Website and Blog Launch

The STS-IN launched its website in April 2024. The website serves as a means of communication to document the activities conducted by the STS-IN and also as a repository for academic literature on Science and Technology Studies. The repository is still under construction, and we hope to establish it in 2025.

The STS-IN also started its blog, NEXUS, which publishes short research articles, opinion posts, and report-backs from conferences and workshops that speak to the Indian context, in the field of science and Technology Studies/ Science Technology and Society. The blog will provide a platform for researchers to weave together the complex threads of the social, the scientific, and the technical, in short, and accessible pieces, to enhance and make richer the discipline of STS in India. This outlet aims to create a space that encourages scholarly discourse that is more conversational and easily accessible to the larger public, thereby bringing together the different categories of people that make the discipline of STS

Meetup and Roundtable at the annual EASST-4S Conference, 2024, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam

Members of the STS-IN organized a Meetup titled, "Pathways of STS in South Asia: Where We Came From and Where We Can Go" and a Roundtable discussion titled, "Building STS Networks: Motivations, Strategies and Challenges" at the annual EASST-4S (European Association for the Study of Science and Technology–Society for Social Studies of Science) Conference, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam July 2024. The meetup and roundtable aimed to bring together a diverse group of scholars working within the South Asian STS context to explore opportunities for future collaboration and networking. You can find a detailed report on both discussions here.

STS-IN Writing Workshop

The STS-IN Writing Workshop commenced in May 2024. The Fellowship aimed to assist individuals at various stages of writing texts related to the social studies of science and technology. STS-IN hosted a series of workshops and facilitated mentoring by experienced scholars in the field to support the completion of the Fellows' writing.

The Fellowship was designed to support several aspects of the writing process, including i) Clarification of conceptual framing; ii) Development of arguments and claims; and, iii) Finalization of a publishable manuscript.

A series of online workshops focused on common elements of producing academic work in STS, along with one-on-one mentorship from a senior scholar, were provided to support the Fellows

Roundtable at the 11th Creative Theory Colloquium

Faculty members of the STS-IN organized a roundtable titled, "Science, Technology, Society" at the 11th Creative Theory Colloquium – Technology and Society: Hierarchies & Contestations, held at the India International Centre, 5th-7th September 2024. Watch the full session here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UfnCFp8aS2Y

Call for Papers and Panels for the First STS-IN Conference

The first STS-IN annual conference is scheduled to be held from 15-17 December 2025, Delhi NCR. The Conference seeks to bring together scholars, educators, and practitioners from diverse disciplines to explore the intersections of science, technology, and society in India, as well as the evolution of STS research in the region. This conference is a foundational step towards building a cohesive network of STS scholars and practitioners in India as well as those located elsewhere with an active interest in the region. It is also an opportunity to bring focus on a contextually relevant set of questions that can draw on a longer tradition of knowledge creation and dissemination in the region.

Through the conference, we intend to delve into various themes, including the historical development of science and technology in India, the interplay of political and economic forces, cultural influences, and future directions in STS research. By examining these themes, we aim to highlight the significant role that science and technology play in shaping and being shaped by societal structures. The last date of submission for extended abstracts and panels is 10th March 2025.

You can find the detailed CfP here: https://stsin.org/stsinc25/

Plans are also afoot to organise a pre-conference workshop for graduate students and ECRs. Do watch out for further information on this on the network website!