

The Knowledge Society Debates

In India, as in Europe, visions of a 'knowledge society' have brought science, technology and innovation to the forefront of politics, democracy and public life. As India positions itself in global high-technology markets and European governments attempt to tame their sceptical public, 'knowledge society' and 'knowledge economy' have become buzzwords in public policy.

But...

What is a 'knowledge society'?

Whose knowledge counts?

What are the drivers of change?

What are the contending perspectives?

India and Europe present many parallels in how they engage with the 'knowledge society'. Following the work of the 'National Knowledge Commission' in India and the 'Taking the Knowledge Society Seriously' report in Europe, there is much that each can learn from the other. What is common between European and Indian visions of a 'knowledge society'? Can these form a basis for an alternative vision of the global future to that of a borderless market?

...Or is the underlying picture one of greater conflict and uncertainty?

These are just some of the questions to be discussed in a series of debates across India – in Hyderabad, Bangalore, and Delhi.

Three lead authors of the European report will discuss their findings with Indian academics, policymakers and activists.

Lead discussants

Brian Wynne *Professor of Science Studies and Associate Director of the UK ESRC, Centre for Economic and Social Aspects of Genomics, Lancaster University*

Sheila Jasanoff *Pforzheimer Professor of Science and Technology Studies at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University*

Andy Stirling *Professor and Director of Science at the Science and Technology Policy Research Unit and Co-Director of the STEPS Centre, University of Sussex*

At each debate the lead respondent will be **Shiv Visvanathan** *Professor of Sociology of Science and Technology at DA-IICT, Gandhinagar*

A number of academics, civil society members, policy commentators, and activists will join the debate to bring in India specific perspectives

This series is being coordinated by **Esha Shah**, *Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies and a member of the STEPS Centre, University of Sussex*

Events at the Knowledge Society Debates

Roundtable Discussions

In each city the first day of the debate will be an invitation-only workshop which will critically engage with the politics of 'knowledge society'. The workshop at each location will include three sessions:

Rethinking innovations: Who innovates for whom?
Democracy or technocracy? Civic engagement in knowledge society
Knowledge society or risk society? Uncertainty, regulation and precaution

Venues

Hyderabad, 5th Jan, Centre for Economic and Social Studies
Bangalore, 8th Jan, National Institute of Advanced Studies
New Delhi, 12th Jan, India Habitat Centre

Public Discussions

The roundtables will be followed by a public discussion on the next day, in each city and are open for all. Issues raised at the roundtables will be carried forward to these debates which will focus on the following:

Knowledge society and uncertain futures, Hyderabad, 6th Jan, Centre for Economic and Social Studies
Knowledge futures in the innovation city, Bangalore, 9th Jan, National Institute of Advanced Studies
Democratising Knowledge futures, New Delhi, 13th Jan, British Council Auditorium

Organising Committee

Esha Shah, STEPS Centre, University of Sussex
E. Haribabu, Department of Philosophy, University of Hyderabad
M. V. Sastry, Centre for World Solidarity, Hyderabad
Shambu Prasad, Knowledge in Civil Society, Hyderabad
Raghvendra Gadagkar, Centre for Contemporary Studies, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore
Ashish Rajyadhyaksha, Centre for Studies in Culture and Society, Bangalore
Rohan Desouza, Centre for Studies in Science and Policy, JNU, New Delhi
Irfan Habib, National Institute of Science, Technology and Development Studies, New Delhi
Suman Sahai, Gene Campaign, New Delhi

Contact

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www.steps-centre.org/ourresearch/knowledgesociety.html

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