



SREE CHITRA TIRUNAL INSTITUTE FOR MEDICAL SCIENCES & TECHNOLOGY, TRIVANDRUM  
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## **Invitation to attend the Achutha Menon Centre Webinar Series**

We are pleased to invite you to attend the AMC webinar by:

**Dr Parvathi K. Iyer**

*Assistant Professor, Centre for Studies in Science, Technology and Innovation Policy*

*Central University of Gujarat*

on the topic:

“Pharmaceuticals as ‘Boundary Objects’ and The Discourse of Drug Quality:  
Moving Beyond the Biomedical Model”

**On 7<sup>th</sup> January 2021,**

**02.00 PM to 3.30 PM**

Meeting link:

<https://sctimst.my.webex.com/sctimst.my/j.php?MTID=mc8ce093d78adc875d5cb511be995a5f4>

Meeting number: 158 844 3918

Password:

12345

A short bio of the speaker and the topic is appended.

We look forward to your participation in this webinar.

Yours sincerely

Dr Sankara Sarma  
Professor and head  
AMCHSS, SCTIMST

For further information contact: Dr Ravi Prasad Varma P, Associate Professor, AMCHSS  
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## **About the speaker – Dr Parvathi K Iyer**

Dr. Parvathi K. Iyer joined the Centre for Studies in Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, Central University of Gujarat, as Assistant Professor in August 2010. Her doctoral degree, on the social construction of drug quality in the Indian pharmaceutical industry and her M.Phil. degree, in the domain of Gender and Science, was awarded from the Department of Sociology, University of Hyderabad. She has previously worked as Fellow (QHS) at NISTADS, a science policy institute of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and has also held research positions at IIT, Delhi and University of Hyderabad during her pre-doctoral years. Her area of specialization is Sociology of Science and Technology. Her research interests devolve around the areas of public engagement with S&T, gender and science in India and governance, risk and regulatory issues in S&T and her research publications have centered on these areas, besides the health sector in India. She teaches M.Phil. courses on Introduction to Science, Technology and Society Studies, Sectoral Science & Technology Policy, History of S&T in Modern India and Research Methodology.

## **Abstract of the webinar**

# Pharmaceuticals as 'Boundary Objects' and The Discourse of Drug Quality: Moving Beyond the Biomedical Model

***Parvathi K. Iyer***

*Assistant Professor*

*Centre for Studies in Science, Technology and Innovation Policy*

*Central University of Gujarat*

This presentation attempts to highlight the need to move beyond received biomedical notions about pharmaceuticals and underscore their nature as 'boundary objects'. In this context, pharmaceuticals may be understood as social and cultural phenomenon with their own unique biography or life cycle, encompassing different stages, ranging from their synthesis and development in a laboratory, commercial production, prescription and marketing, consumption and efficacy. The discourse of drug quality also needs to be articulated in the context of this life cycle that drugs undergo, the diverse interests, norms and values that they embody and the complex social worlds that they constitute. This 're-situating' of pharmaceuticals and the discourse on drug quality would also be done through a brief overview of sociological and anthropological perspectives on pharmaceuticals. Anthropological perspectives have predominantly focused on aspects such as unpacking the everyday realities in which pharmaceuticals are manufactured, marketed and consumed, the linkages between medicines and the processes of social transformation, the dynamics of evidence-based medicine and health care and the emphasis on a more 'critical' medical anthropology. Sociological perspectives on the other hand have predominantly dealt with the shift from medicalization to pharmaceuticalization, in addition to aspects relating to regulation, consumerism and favored a critical approach to the practices of pharmaceutical firms. Additionally, the presentation would also attempt to articulate the shifts in the discourse of drug quality, deployed by different actors involved in various stages of this life cycle of pharmaceuticals, a subject, which has seldom been the object of sociological or anthropological investigation, particularly in the Indian context.