



Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Irani Machado Da Silva (Registration Number: 1850088), PhD scholar at the School of Social Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Tuesday, 28 March 2023 at 11.00 am in the Syndicate Room (Room No. 802), Ground Floor, Auditorium Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029.

Title of the Thesis : **Exploring Meaningfulness of Life among Survivors of Sex Trafficking in India**

Discipline : **Psychology**

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The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 20 March 2023

Registrar

ABSTRACT

Sex trafficking is a form of human trafficking which is considered a contemporary form of slavery. It is made up of victims (supply), buyers (demand), and traffickers (distributors). Sex trafficking is a billion dollars industry. It generates more profit than any other industry in the world, illicit or otherwise. It is estimated that one woman or child is commercialized to be a sex slave every hour. The present study aimed to explore the meaningfulness of life among survivors of sex trafficking in India. It is a two-phase research design where the researcher has collected quantitative data first, and qualitative data was collected during the second phase. The qualitative phase comprises data from 126 subjects. They were divided into two groups. Group 1, survivors rescued within two years (N=63), and group 2, survivors post two years after the rescue (N=63). Group 1 (M=15.58) scored lower on the meaningfulness of life compared to group 2 (M=23.15). Group 1 (M=16.80) is less satisfied with life compared to group 2 (M=22.65). Group 1 (M=61.09) has a lower quality of life compared to group 2 (M=77.49). Group 1 tends to have lesser positive emotions and more negative emotions compared to group 2. There was a moderate positive correlation between the current meaning in life and satisfaction with life, $r=.42$, $n=126$, $p<.001$. There was a negative moderate correlation between the current meaning in life and negative emotions $r=-.49$, $n=126$, $p<.001$, and there was a strong, positive correlation between current meaning in life and positive emotions, $r=.53$, $n=126$, $p<.001$. Results from the qualitative phase, which comprises data from 20 participants show that survivors' life in slavery was meaningless and marked by torture and rape.

The meaningfulness of life for participants in the current study depends on a new identity, acceptance, education, spirituality, and respect. Those who have children found the meaningfulness of life in motherhood. Participants reported not being fully satisfied with their life and they described what they need to increase their life satisfaction. First is livelihood, that is food and shelter over their heads, good health, and dreams/goals fulfilment that for most of them is to get an education and/or professional training. Survivors reported having more negative emotions than positive emotions. Physical health problems found among participants were headache, gastritis, cough, and fever. Psychological health symptoms found among them were depression, anxiety, isolation, crying spells, and fatigue. Survivors have a limited social life because they distrust almost all people. The environment was found to be unsafe for girls and women and they ask for protection for themselves and for all females in the country.

Keywords: Sex trafficking, meaningfulness of life, survivor, trauma

Publications:

1. **Da Silva, I. M.** & Sathiyaseelan, A. (2022). Meaningfulness of life between sex trafficking female survivors and females from the general public in India. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*. Vol. 6, No. 2, 3617–3622.
<https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/2376/1487>
2. **Da Silva, I. M.**, & Sathiyaseelan, A., | Luca Cerniglia (Reviewing editor) (2019). Emotional needs of women post-rescue from sex trafficking in India. *Cogent Psychology*, 6:1, DOI: 10.1080/23311908.2019.1631584
3. **Da Silva, I. M.**, & Sathiyaseelan, A., (2019). Emotional Experience of Women Post-Rescue From Sex Trafficking in India, *The Journal of Social Sciences Research, Academic Research Publishing Group*, vol. 5(12), pages 1681- 1690, 12-2019.