



CHRIST
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
BANGALORE · INDIA

Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Briji Jose (Registration Number: 2090064), PhD scholar at the School of Arts and Humanities, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Tuesday, 8 October 2024 at 10.30 am in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R & D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029.

- Title of the Thesis** : **The Transnational Influence of Energy on Cultural Practices: A Study on Kuttanad Wetland Systems**
- Discipline** : **English Studies**
- External Examiner (Outside Karnataka)** : **Dr T Marx**
Professor
Department of English
School of Humanities
Pondicherry University
Kalapet, Pondicherry – 605014
Tamil Nadu
- External Examiner (Within Karnataka)** : **Dr Etienne Rassendren**
Professor
Department of English
St Joseph University
Lalbagh Road
Bengaluru
Karnataka - 560027
- Supervisor** : **Dr Mithilesh Kumar**
Assistant Professor
Department of English and Cultural Studies
School of Arts and Humanities
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
Bengaluru – 560029
Karnataka

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-voce examination.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 27 September 2024


Registrar

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of the extensive Kerala-Gulf migrations has exerted a significant influence on the socio-economic development and local cultures of the state. This study investigates the evolving cultural perceptions and practices in the region with the rapid migrations, employing the conceptual framework of energy as a guiding lens. Energy is viewed as the fundamental and material fuel communities engage with to shape and organise their cultures. By situating the research in the field of Energy Humanities, it interrogates the role of shifting energy regimes and transnational energy systems in specifically shaping the local community's relation with the land and environment. The study focuses on Kuttanad, a wetland-based region in Kerala, historically known for its intense paddy cultivation and rice production. Wetland environments play a significant role in environmental sustainability by sustaining the carbon cycle and exist as complex biodiverse ecosystems.

The study employs a mixed-method qualitative approach by combining ethnography and textual analysis that form the primary data for analysis. The selected novel *Moustache* (2020) by S. Hareesh translated by Jayashree Kalathil serves as the primary text. In ethnography, methods like semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and focus-group discussions were utilised to directly obtain insights from the participants perspective. The collected data was systematically coded and analysed to explore an underlying energy unconscious within the culture. The findings present early agrarian Kuttanad as an organic-based energy regime with flow and animate forms as primary sources of energy that act as agency and effect in shaping local cultures. It highlights the overlooked aspect of energy's influence on the social dynamics, power structures, and everyday values and practices of local cultures. The Gulf migrations are viewed as a form of energy exchange and the transnational inflow of petroenergy in its various forms is traced to the shifting cultural practices and understandings of the land. The research maps out ways of being and belonging to a land that is largely interconnected with changing energy relations. It further analyses the impacts of these shifting energy-culture dynamics as a form of slow violence affecting Kuttanad's wetlands and the community. This interdisciplinary study enriches the expanding domain of Energy Humanities and Cultural Studies by contextualising the research within the Global South which offers scope for further exploration.

Keywords: Gulf Migrations, petrocultures, Energy Humanities, Kerala, environmental sustainability

Publications:

1. **Jose, Briji.** "Taming Wetlands of Kuttanad: Probing the Complexity of Human-Nature Relations in Hareesh's *Moustache*," *Literary Voice* (Web of Science Indexed), vol.1, no. 21, September 2023, pp. 267-274.
2. **Jose, Briji.** "Language and identity formations of second-generation migrants in Deepak Unnikrishnan's *Temporary People*," IGI Global (SCOPUS Indexed), July 2023, pp.69-85. DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-4839-7.ch004.
3. **Jose, Briji.** "The Champions Boat League: A Race to Commercialise Festival Cultures," *Economic & Political Weekly*, vol LVIII, nos 45 & 46, November 2023, pp.70-71.
4. **Jose, Briji** and Renuka Shyamsundar Belamkar. "Art of Vandalism: A Response by Environmental Populists." *Encyclopedia of New Populism and Responses in the 21st Century*, Springer, 2024, pp. 1-3.