

**CHRIST**(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
BANGALORE • INDIA

Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Sinu James (Registration Number: 2070522), 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, 3 December 2024 at 2.30 pm in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R & D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029.

Title of the Thesis : **On the Way to Oneself: An Existential Study of the Select Plays of Sreeja K V and Sajitha Madathil**

Discipline : **English Studies**

External Examiner : **Dr Sathyaraj Venkatesan**
(Outside Karnataka)
Professor
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Lyceum Building
NIT, Tiruchirappalli
Tamil Nadu - 620015

External Examiner : **Dr N S Gundur**
(Within Karnataka)
Professor
Department of English
Vishwavidyanilaya Karyalaya
Venkatesh Rao Colony
Tumakuru, Karnataka - 572103

Supervisor : **Dr Bidyut Bhusan Jena**
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: 26 November 2024


Registrar

ABSTRACT

The perennial inquiries into human identity and the purpose of existence persist as enduring mysteries, often evoking a sense of introspection and existential angst. Amidst the quest for elucidation, individuals frequently find themselves entangled in the web of *maya* (appearance), wherein perceptions of reality become distorted, leading to emotional responses including jealousy, greed, guilt, and disappointment. However, amidst this labyrinth of existence, philosophical frameworks such as Existentialism and Advaita Vedanta offer invaluable lenses through which to perceive and engage with these existential inquiries. Existentialism prompts individuals to confront the subjective nature of their existence and assert autonomy in defining their identities and purpose. In contrast, Advaita Vedanta seeks to transcend the illusory veil of ego and perceive the ultimate reality of the Self (*atman*) as indistinguishable from the eternal consciousness (*Brahman*). Through the exploration of these philosophical paradigms, one can embark on a journey of Self-discovery, ultimately unveiling insights into the timeless questions of human existence.

It is possible to identify this kind of crisis in the lives of the characters in the selected plays of Sreeja K V and Sajitha Madathil. Therefore, this thesis examines the selected plays of twenty-first-century Malayalam playwrights Sreeja K V and Sajitha Madathil through the lens of Simone de Beauvoir's existentialism and the *pramana* of Advaita Vedanta. It aims to explore the concept of the Self and how certain circumstances and experiences contribute to its realisation. By analysing the protagonists of these plays, the thesis seeks to uncover the notion that the Self is not merely a product of causality but rather the observer and creator of existence itself. This investigation raises further questions regarding the manifestation of the Self in one's life and the potential for misconceptions about its nature. The plays provide insights into the interaction between worldly illusions and the true essence of the Self, prompting consideration of how individuals often conflate these realms and succumb to materialistic temptations. Additionally, the thesis explores whether negative experiences are transient and whether individuals ultimately learn to overcome them.

The selected plays open up the scope to understand the interplay of illusions of the world and the Self. This exploration leads to further questions like how does the Self appear in one's life? Is the Self mistaken? How often do people superimpose these two together and fall prey to the materialistic aspects? Is it true that the negative experiences are momentary, and often, one learns to survive from those experiences? Through the application of analytical frameworks of Existentialism and Advaita Vedanta into the select plays, this research endeavours to provide insights into these inquiries.

Keywords: perception, existentialism, Advaita Vedanta (non-duality), dilemma, Self, maya, Malayalam plays.

Publications:

1. **James, Sinu.** "Subversion of Casteism in Sajitha Madathil's Kali Natakam: A Dalit Feminist Study." *Contemporary Voice of Dalit*, vol. 15, no. 1_suppl, 2023, pp. 67-74.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2455328X231163713>.
2. **James, Sinu.** "The Muted Feelings of a Dalit Woman: A Dalit Feminist Study of Sreeja K. V.'s Labour Room." *Contemporary Voice of Dalit*, 2023.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2455328X231198719>