

Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Mary Louisa S (Reg. No. 1144502), PhD scholar at CHRIST (Deemed to be University), will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Tuesday, 9 March 2021 at 10.30 am on the Webex Meeting platform.

- Title of the Thesis** : **Empowering Women Living with HIV/AIDS: A Study on Organisational Strategies and Challenges**
- Discipline** : **Sociology**
- External Examiner** (Outside Karnataka) : **Dr Jose Boban K**
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- External Examiner** (Within Karnataka) : **Dr B Prathibha**
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- Supervisor** : **Dr Maya M**
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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: 2 March 2021



Registrar

ABSTRACT

The acts of discrimination & exclusion meted out to the people living with HIV/AIDS, and the stigma attached to the condition deprives the afflicted, of their capacity to exercise their fundamental rights and to access basic necessities. Specifically, the suffering of the women stricken by this chronic, incurable malady, the majority of whom from economically weaker sections of our society is very poignant. From the time this pandemic broke out in 1984, world organisations, national and local organisations, both government and non-government have come to the aid of the PLWHA. Some of them cater singularly to the needs of the WLWHA, who are as such more vulnerable ever since the plight of the women living with the deadly disease was brought to light. But as the years went by, there has been a decline in the help extended to the WLWHA.

This study is undertaken to ascertain the current state of services and strategies used by the organisations to empower the WLWHA and the challenges faced by the organisations in their endeavours. Appropriate questionnaires were administered to analyse the situations and find the facts about the services, strategies and challenges from the perspective of the organisations' administrators and the WLWHA. A few case studies of the WLWHA were done to delve into the depths of their perceptions. From the study, it has been learned that the organisations have prioritized medical and rehabilitation services to empower the women. Medical care is given directly by the organisations and also through networking with government bodies and other services providers. Affected women and family members are counselled for acceptance of the condition and familial and societal integration. Occupational therapy and vocational training are other strategies for empowerment. Organisations provide nutritious food for the women and arrange for them to get the necessary provisions through Public Distribution System (PDS) or through donors. The main challenge for the organisation is raising funds to run the required services for the WLWHA. This challenge has cropped up due to the drastic reduction in government and other funding for women because the funds are diverted for the orphan vulnerable children (OVC) while sidelining the women according to the organisations. Another challenge is their inability to make policy changes, which favour WLWHA. The WLWHA, on the whole, acknowledge the organisations as their saviours. But their needs are not complete. They hope that the organisations would intervene in other spheres of their lives, such as giving legal assistance for property issues with the families. The staff of organisations that help to empower WLWHA have dwindled over the four decades, due to the declining funds. Awareness programs and activism have also reduced. The organisations do their best to empower WLWHA to rehabilitate their lives. But government and non-government aid and favourable policies, awareness and fuelled activism is required for reaching out to the entire community of WLWHA.

Keywords: Women empowerment, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, anti-retroviral therapy, health determinants, people living with HIV/AIDS