



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

## Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Mr Joseph C G (Registration Number: 1730085), PhD Scholar at the School of Social Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore, will defend his PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Tuesday, 25 February 2025 at 10.00 am in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R & D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029.

**Title of the Thesis** : **Social Work Research: Exploring Knowledge Production in Indian Context**

**Discipline** : **Social Work**

**External Examiner** : **Dr Atul Pratap Singh**  
(Outside Karnataka)  
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**External Examiner** : **Dr Soyuz John**  
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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-voce examination.

**Place:** Bengaluru  
**Date:** 18 February 2025

  
**Registrar (Academics)**

## ABSTRACT

This study explores the landscape of knowledge production in the field of social work in India, endeavouring to understand the conceptualisation of social work knowledge, knowledge production methods, and its alignment with the profession's knowledge requirements. The study has conceptualized social work knowledge as the type of knowledge that social workers process and apply in their practice settings; acknowledging its multidisciplinary, elusive, fluid, and overlapping characteristics; whether produced by social workers or borrowed from other academic fields; independent of its methods of knowledge production, and paradigmatic differences. This knowledge enables social workers to comprehend issues, design and implement interventions, evaluate outcomes, and make informed decisions based on core social work values, principles, ethics, philosophy, history, etc. Conceptualization of social work knowledge carries methodological implications for knowledge production, and the study explores the methods used in social work knowledge production including incorporating indigenous epistemologies and perspectives. The study employs a qualitative content analysis employing matrices to delve into data from various sources, including four major Indian social work journals listed in the UGC Care List, Web of Science, or Scopus indices, covering articles published between 2016 and 2020. It also incorporates interviews and group discussions with social work academicians and practitioners drawn from different regions of India and observations from four social work conferences. The sample was selected using purposive and convenience sampling techniques. Data analysis was conducted both within each dataset and across multiple datasets to gain insights into social work knowledge production in India. Key findings suggest a predominant view among social work academics in India that conceptualizes social work knowledge as prescriptive knowledge aimed at solving practice-related problems, produced mainly through intervention studies. Despite the prevalent belief in intervention-centric research, the study highlights a significant gap between this conceptualization and actual research practices.

The emphasis on the practice dimension (operational knowledge) of the profession has, in some ways, has resulted in the neglect of its basic knowledge base that deals with the social work principles, history, philosophy, research, methods of social work practice, ethics, and theoretical frameworks that shape the profession. While there is evident methodological plurality and a noticeable shift towards qualitative research in high-standard journals indicating an increased focus on pragmatism, a predominant focus on quantitative descriptive methods persists in educational settings and conference presentations. However, there is a glaring lack of intervention studies and prescriptive knowledge creation. Yet challenges persist in integrating qualitative and mixed methods research, indigenous epistemologies, and addressing systemic issues. Furthermore, the absence of critical engagement with systemic and structural issues in research highlights the necessity of adopting methodologies that challenge dominant narratives and tackle the systemic and structural factors perpetuating social problems. The findings carry profound implications for both social work research education and research practice.

*Keywords: research education, indigenous epistemology, research methods, operational knowledge, prescriptive knowledge, epistemology, interventions, pragmatism*

### Publication:

1. Charuplakkal, J. & Kumaramkandath, R. (2021). The Use of Operational Definitions in Social Work PhD Theses in India. *Journal of Social Work Education and Practice*, 6(2), 31-43.  
[060203 use of operational definitions in social work.pdf \(jswep.in\)](#) (ISSN: 2456 2068)