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## Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Sanjukta Bhaumik, Registration Number: 2070609, PhD Scholar at the Department of Sociology, School of Social Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Friday, 20 February 2026 at 10.30 am in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

- Title of the Thesis** : **From Swinging Cradle to Switching Careers: A Feminist Exploration of Motherhood and Mothering among Employed Mothers in Kolkata**
- Discipline** : **Sociology**
- External Examiner - I** : **Dr Sawmya Ray**  
Professor  
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Guwahati – 781039, Assam
- External Examiner - II** : **Dr Angkayarkan Vinayakaselvi**  
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- Supervisor** : **Dr Sudhansubala Sahu**  
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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:** 13 February 2026



**Registrar**

## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the multifaceted experiences of working mothers in West Bengal, India, through a feminist lens, with a focus on the intersection of maternal ambivalence, empowerment, and societal expectations. Motherhood has long been a subject of feminist debate: some view it as a patriarchal trap for women, while others consider mothering an empowering practice despite the institution of motherhood being problematic. However, motherhood is socially constructed and culturally specific. This study centers on the everyday realities of working mothers in Kolkata, examining how regional cultural standards, patriarchal motherhood ideologies, and maternal support systems at workplaces shape their lived experiences. By employing a feminist perspective, this study explores the nuanced experiences of working mothers who balance their roles as employees and caregivers. The researcher explored the nuanced realities of working mothers in Kolkata through a qualitative study, focusing on women employed in various professions across the city. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with 50 urban, middle- and upper-middle-class mothers from diverse professional backgrounds, offering a range of narratives about their experiences and challenges. Despite several limitations and challenges in the study, the key findings provide detailed insights into the unique struggles and coping mechanisms of working mothers, as well as the evolving childcare practices they embrace. These practices are shown to be empowering for both the mothers and their children.

**Keywords:** *working mothers, motherhood, feminist perspective, lived experience, middle- class.*

### Publications:

1. **Sanjukta Bhaumik**, Sudhansubala Sahu (2021), My Motherhood, My Way: A Sociological Study of Contemporary Employed Mothers in Kolkata. *Journal of International Women's Studies*: Vol. 22: Iss. 6, Article 8. <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol22/iss6/8>.
2. **Sanjukta Bhaumik**, Sudhansubala Sahu (2025), A happy mother raises a happy child: insights from employed mothers in Bengali families in Kolkata. *Journal of Family Studies*, 1–23. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13229400.2024.2446990>
3. **Sanjukta Bhaumik**, Sudhansubala Sahu (2025), Lived experiences of urban working mothers during pandemic: A matricentric exploration in the Indian context. *Women's Studies International Forum*, Volume 109, March-April 2025, 103067; ISSN 0277-5395; <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2025.103067>.