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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Swetha L, Registration Number: 2070316, PhD Scholar at the Department of Economics, School of Social Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Friday, 06 March 2026 at 11.00 am in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

- Title of the Thesis** : **Liberalisation and the Indian Edible Oil Sector: A Study of Welfare Impact and Policy Alternatives**
- Discipline** : **Economics**
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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: 24 February 2026

Registrar (Academics)

ABSTRACT

Neoclassical economic theory views agricultural trade liberalisation of developing nations as a means for economic growth. However, protectionist pressures in developed nations and domestic policy failures have contributed to increasing agrarian distress in India post-liberalisation. The case of the Indian oil sector, comprising of oilseeds and edible oils, presents a unique case of diametric policy reversal following liberalisation. Today, more than 50 percent of the domestic demand is met by imports. However, the welfare effects of such a policy change remain relatively unexplored. This study, therefore, seeks to undertake an ex-post welfare analysis of the change in oil sector trade policy. It uses a simultaneous equation model to integrate the domestic and international markets for sunflower oil to understand the effects of trade liberalisation. Further, it examines several domestic support measures and 'cost of cultivation' to understand the domestic policy environment. The trade policy alternatives are studied using the 'WITS-SMART Simulation Analysis'. The results of this analysis showed that the patterns of growth in the production of oilseeds were affected by the nature of policy interventions. Further the existence of 'policy induced market distortions' in agricultural markets has led to the emergence of a 'supply-demand' imbalance. Eventually, these factors contributed to the emergence of unsustainable levels of import dependence. Liberalisation of the edible oil sector has resulted in lowering of domestic prices and have led to a shift towards the consumption of imported edible oils such as soyabean, sunflower and palm oils. The examination of the policy environment suggests that the cultivation of oilseeds is net-taxed and consumer-centric. The examination of trade policy alternatives indicates the lack of 'tariff escalation' and that crude palm oil and refined palm and sunflower oils are majorly affected by the tariff rates. On the basis of the findings, a holistic approach to incentivise domestic production and rationalise tariff rates are recommended.

Keywords: *Agriculture Trade Liberalisation, Domestic Policy Support, Simultaneous Equation Models, Edible Oils, Tariffs*

Publications:

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2. **Swetha Loganathan**, Joshy Joseph Karakunnel, Vijay Victor – Analysis of India's Trade Patterns and Trade Possibilities with the European Union, *Forum Scientiae Oeconomia*, 2020. https://doi.org/10.23762/FSO_VOL8_NO4_1
3. Joshy Joseph Karakunnel, Vijay Victor, **Swetha Loganathan**, Maria Fekete-Farkas – COVID-19, Macroeconomic Policies, and Analysis of the Inflation-Unemployment Dynamics in India, *Finance India*, 2024.
4. Vijay Victor, Joshy Joseph Karakunnel, **Swetha Loganathan**, Daniel Francois Meyer – From a Recession to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Inflation–Unemployment Comparison Between the UK and India, *Economies*, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.3390/economies9020073>
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6. Nisa James, **Swetha Loganathan**, Robert Jeyakumar Nathan, Vijay Victor, Poh Kiat Ng– Integrated Fuzzy AHP and TOPSIS as Innovative Student Selection Methodology at Institutions of Higher Learning, *Human Systems Management*, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.3233/HSM-220046>
7. Elizabeth Dominic, Vijay Victor, Robert Jeyakumar Nathan, **Swetha Loganathan** – Procedural Justice, Perceived Organisational Support, and Organisational Citizenship Behaviour in Business School, *Organizacija*, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.2478/orga-2021-0013>