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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Joanna Priyadarshini Udaykumar, Registration Number: 1530084, PhD Scholar at the School of Psychological Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Thursday, 12 November 2026, at 10.00 am in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R & D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

Title of the Thesis	:	**Urban Indian Parents and Children's Perspectives on the Meaning, Nature, Significance and Quality of Parent-Child Play in Bengaluru**
Discipline	:	**Psychology**
External Examiner - I	:	**Dr Satyananda Panda** Professor Department of Psychology Sikkim University, 6th Mile, Samdur P.O. Tadong, Gangtok, Sikkim - 737102
External Examiner - II	:	**Dr Rajeev Kumar N** Professor School of Behavioral Sciences Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam Athirampuzha - 686560, Keralam
Supervisor	:	**Dr Varghese K J** Professor School of Psychological Sciences, Education and Social Work CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka
Co-Supervisor	:	**Dr Tony Sam Geroge** Professor (Former) School of Psychological Sciences, Education and Social Work 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: 02 November 2026

Registrar (Academics)

ABSTRACT

Over the past decade, the quintessential portrait of a child engaging in frivolous, nature-based outdoor activities with their peers is a sporadic occurrence in urban locales due to rapid urbanization and the thriving retail industry that has impacted career-oriented parents' purchasing power through employment opportunities that fulfil children's whims and fancies. While the permissibility of unsupervised, outdoor activities is thwarted by parents' safety concerns, dual-earner couples time constraints perpetrated by occupational obligations or domestic duties hinge on their attempts to maintain a healthy work-life balance, compelling children to spend most of their time cooped up at home. Moreover, the steady decline in outdoor play spaces and proliferation of technology concomitantly enhances children's proclivity towards gadgets and their propensity to seek solace in a digital landscape through media-centric activities that offer them a plethora of play opportunities that 'pushes them away from the outdoors and pull them indoors'. Consequently, the radical transition from 'biophilia' to passive entertainment afforded by the dominance of digital culture through 'videophilia' predisposes children to inertia, insomnia and sedentary, lifestyle diseases like screen dependency disorders (SDD) and gaming disorders, that are officially recognized by organizations like the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020). In addition to this, during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the global surge in children's discretionary screen time (DST) raised alarm bells for parents who employed 'mediation tactics' to implement 'digital detox' and role modeled healthy screen time habits to regulate their excessive screen time (EST). In the light of this apathetic situation, it is imperative for policy makers, health practitioners and researchers to work in tandem to provide children with safe, affordable spaces for active, outdoor play to initiate healthy movement behaviors that curtail their physical inactivity. Therefore, this qualitative study explores 13 Bengaluru-based family triads play experiences with respect to their existing and erstwhile play environment by identifying recurrent patterns across the data set to generate parents' unanimous gender-based stance and their heterogeneous vocational beliefs on children's play today. Moreover, by employing semi-structured and photo elicitation interviews (PEI) to comprehend the nature and quality of parent-child play, middle-school aged children articulated their views on the subjective meaning, key determinants and relevance of play in a globalized, digital era. By portraying parents and children's outlook on the structural and contextual factors that restrain and facilitate play globally and locally, the present study delineates propositions to create an equitable urban ecosystem that affords children safe, age-appropriate, heterogeneous play through the communal efforts of urban developers, civic bodies and non-governmental organizations whose collaborative transformation of everyday spaces to immersive 'PLAYces' entails remodeling of existing landscapes into child-friendly, smart cities (CFSC).

Keywords: urbanization, transition, digital, parents, children, play

Publication:

1. **Udaykumar, J. P.**, & George, T. S. (2025). Indian parents' vocational inferences of play and communal strategies to regulate the adverse effects of children's excessive screen time. Journal of Indian Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 22(1), 36-44. https://doi.org/10.1177/09731342251380990