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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Aswathi P R, Registration Number: 2190014, 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 Monday, 24 August 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	:	Intimate Partner Violence among Tribal Women in Wayanad: An Explanatory Sequential Study
Discipline	:	Psychology
External Examiner - I	:	Dr S Gayatridevi Professor and Head Department of Psychology Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women (Deemed to be University) Coimbatore – 641043 Tamil Nadu
External Examiner - II	:	Dr Meetu Khosla Professor Department of Psychology Daulat Ram College University of Delhi Patel Marg, Maurice Nagar Delhi - 110007
Supervisor	:	Dr Akanksha Rani Assistant Professor School of Psychological Sciences 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.

Registrar (Academics)

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 05 August 2026

ABSTRACT

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) continues to be a pervasive and critically under-addressed issue among tribal women in India. This vulnerability is shaped by systemic marginalization, entrenched patriarchal norms, historical neglect, and the absence of culturally appropriate mental health services. Although the prevalence of IPV remains high in tribal communities, limited research has examined it through the lens of tribal women's lived experiences, indigenous belief systems, and sociocultural realities. This study sought to explain the underlying dynamics of IPV in tribal contexts by exploring the cultural, social, and structural factors that shape its occurrence and persistence. Based on these insights, the study also proposes a culturally responsive intervention model to address the mental health needs of tribal women survivors of IPV.

A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed in Wayanad district, Kerala, involving three distinct phases. Phase I comprised a quantitative survey of 82 tribal women aged 18 to 50 years, using the Women Abuse Screening Tool (WAST) and Self-Reporting Questionnaire (SRQ) to assess the prevalence of IPV and psychological distress. In Phase II, qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions and key informant interviews with IPV survivors, Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs), and mental health professionals, focusing on lived experiences, cultural dynamics, and service delivery gaps. Phase III integrated quantitative and qualitative findings to co-develop a five-session culturally relevant mental health intervention.

Findings revealed that 73% of the women reported experiencing IPV, while 44% showed symptoms of common mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety, and somatic complaints. A strong positive correlation was observed between IPV exposure and psychological distress ($\rho = 0.764$, $p < .001$). Thematic analysis highlighted six key domains: (1) Violence as Everyday Life: The Normalization of Harm (2) Roots of Violence: Addictive Influences and Intergenerational Cycles (3) Living in Fear: The Body and Mind as Sites of Trauma (4) Culturally Embedded Survival: Collective Coping (5) Silence and Social Order: Patriarchy, Stigma, and Community Regulation (6) Seeking Help: Institutional Gaps and Cultural Mismatch. The developed cultural grounded intervention comprises of five therapeutic modules: (1)

Rapport Building, (2) Types Of Abuse, Its Impact, And Safety Planning (4) Coping Skills, (5) Awareness Session, and (6) My Journey: Sharing Who I Am Then & Now. Expert validation of the module demonstrated high content validity (CVI > 0.80; CVR = 0.90–0.94). Also the findings and the developed intervention were subjected to a member-checking process to ensure cultural validity. Feedback was sought from tribal women survivors of IPV, as well as from key stakeholders including hamlet-level ASHA workers, representatives of local NGOs working with tribal communities, and experts in the field of mental health, indicating the relevance, cultural appropriateness, and feasibility of the study.

This study offers a much-needed evidence-based and community-sensitive approach to addressing IPV-related trauma among tribal women in India and provides a foundation for culturally inclusive mental health care and future implementation research in marginalized settings.

Keywords: Intimate Partner Violence, Tribal Women, Mental Health Intervention, Culturally Grounded Programme, Indigenous Communities, Mixed- Methods Research

Publications:

1. **P R, A., & Rani, A.** (2025). Constructing healing narratives: a culturally grounded intervention for tribal women survivors of intimate partner violence in India. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09589236.2025.2607607>
2. **R. AP, Rani A** (2025;), "A culturally grounded mental health response to intimate partner violence among tribal women in Wayanad, Kerala: a case study". *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of- print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MHSI-06-2025-0166>
3. **R. AP, Rani A** (2025;), "Beyond trauma: a culturally grounded call for mindfulness and expressive arts in the mental health response to intimate partner violence among tribal women in India". *Mental Health and Social Inclusion*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MHSI-06-2025-0179>