Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Nida Syeda, Registration Number: 1880501, PhD Scholar at the Department of English and Cultural Studies, School of Humanities and Performing Arts, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Friday, 19 December 2025 at 10.00 am in Room No. 628, 6th Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

Title of the Thesis	:	**Examining the Indian Digital Public Sphere: The Impact of State and Corporate Governance on Knowledge and Publics**
Discipline	:	**English Studies**
External Examiner - I	:	**Dr Shivaji Sargar** Professor and Head Department of English University of Mumbai Ranade Bhavan, Vidyanagari Santa Cruz (E), Mumbai Maharashtra - 410206
External Examiner - II	:	**Dr S Vijayarani** Associate Professor Lady Dock College Hakim Ajmal Khan Rd Tallakulam, Madurai Tamil Nadu - 625002
Supervisor	:	**Dr Kishore Selva Babu** Associate Professor Department of English and Cultural Studies School of Humanities and Performing Arts 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

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 11 December 2025

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the transformation of the internet as a public sphere in India and its impact on democratic identity, focusing on the roles of state governance and corporate networks. By using data-driven by multi-sited digital ethnography, it examines the power struggle between state and corporate apparatuses, revealing how these dynamics create an unreliable public sphere that weaponizes democracy for self-exploitation. The thesis highlights how digital technologies, particularly AI, manipulate the formation of publics, distort knowledge production, and alter identities and perceptions of truth. The conflict between government and corporations distorts life-world interactions, disrupting rational critical discourse and causing polarisation, confusion, and misinformation.

In the Indian context, diverse socio-political identities and the cultural and ideological distinctiveness of the populace make the digital public sphere especially susceptible to manipulation. The state's regulatory framework, ostensibly aimed at protecting the public, often collaborates with corporate interests, resulting in data colonialism, information manipulation, and commodified public identities. These distortions challenge democratic ideals, fragment public discourse, and erode the democratic potential of the internet by creating filter bubbles and echo chambers.

The thesis argues that this digital environment fosters a neo-colonial control over knowledge, impacting privacy, free speech, and public opinion. However, civil society plays a critical role in preserving India's democratic identity by offering alternative narratives, promoting critical discourse, and advocating for digital rights. Ultimately, this research underscores the precarious nature of the Indian digital public sphere, where state and corporate interests dominate, yet the potential for democratic engagement persists through civil society's interventions.

Keywords: *Public Sphere, Internet Democracy, Internet Governance, Digital ethnography, Artificial Intelligence, IT laws, Algorithms*

Publications:

1. **Syeda, N.,** & Selva Babu, K. (2024, June). *Gandhi, propaganda and fractured knowledge paradigms. History Research Journal.*

2. **Syeda, N.** (2023, November 30). *Algorithms and populism.* In *Encyclopaedia of New Populism.* Springer.

3. **Syeda, N.** (2023, August). *Inquiring new centralization in knowledge production: Clusters, networks or echo chambers.* In *Artificial Intelligence: Recent Trends, Impact and Scope.*

4. **Syeda, N.,** & Selva Babu, K. (2024, November). *Exploring the role of digital humanities in the centralization of knowledge production: Clusters, networks, or echo chambers. The Scientific Temper.*