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Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Smitha A M, Registration Number: 2070203, PhD Scholar at the Department of Tourism Management, School of Business and Management, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Wednesday, 17 December 2025 at 10.30 am in the Seminar Hall, 1st Floor, Academic Block, Bannerghatta Road Campus, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560076. Karnataka, India.

- Title of the Thesis** : **Tribal Women Empowerment Through Community Based Ecotourism in Vazhachal Forest Division**
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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: 10 December 2025


Registrar (Academics)

ABSTRACT

Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) is widely recognized as a strategic approach to achieving both community development and environmental conservation. While women's empowerment is known to significantly enhance the well-being of families, societies, and communities, empowering women through CBET has the potential to catalyse the broader empowerment of Indigenous communities. With their traditional knowledge, sustainable practices, and deep connection to nature, Indigenous cultures play a critical role in balancing tourism development with environmental preservation. This study addresses the research gap concerning the impact of CBET on Indigenous women in India, specifically focusing on the Kadar community, one of Kerala's Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). Employing a quantitative methodology, surveys were conducted with Kadar women involved in CBET activities in the Vazhachal Forest Division (VFD). The study identifies key dimensions of women's empowerment through confirmatory analysis, including economic, social, political, and psychological empowerment. It examines the mediating role of tourism involvement in linking women's empowerment to sustainable tourism development. Using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and hypothesis testing, the findings confirm significant relationships among the empowerment dimensions, tourism involvement, and sustainable tourism outcomes. The study proposes a model demonstrating how CBET empowers Indigenous women while fostering sustainable tourism development. The implications highlight the importance of government interventions, such as allocating homestays, encouraging skill development, and promoting handicraft stalls, to enhance the socio-economic impact of CBET initiatives on Indigenous communities.

Keywords: *Community Based Ecotourism, Sustainable Tourism Development, Tourism Involvement, Women empowerment*

Publications:

1. **Mohanan, S. A., & John, S. (2025).** Empowering Indigenous Women Through Community-Based Tourism. In *Greener Future: Building Sustainable Tourism Communities* (pp. 125–138). Emerald Publishing Limited. <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83608-988-920251009>
2. **Mohanan, S. A., & John, S. (2024).** Surveying the Role of Bamboo in Tourism Industry: A Conceptual Analysis for Mitigating Climate Change Issues. In *Impact of Climate Change on Mental Health and Well-Being* (pp. 135–155). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-2177-5.ch010>
3. Patent: A model for Assessing Tribal Women's Empowerment: A Model Tailored for Community-Based Ecotourism.