



CHRIST
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
BANGALORE | DELHI NCR | PUNE

Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Suja V J, Registration Number: 2090082, PhD Scholar at the Department of International Studies, Political Science and History, School of Social Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Wednesday, 23 September 2026, at 10.30 am in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R & D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

Title of the Thesis	:	St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and the 19th Century Modernity of Kerala
Discipline	:	History
External Examiner - I	:	Dr Joshy Matthew Associate Professor Department of History Pazhassiraja College, Pulpally Wayanad - 673579 Kerala
External Examiner - II	:	Dr Nagendra Rao Professor Department of History Goa University Taleigao Plateau Goa – 403206
Supervisor	:	Dr Sebastian Mathai Associate Professor (Former) Department of International Studies, Political Science and History School of Social 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: 09 September 2026

ABSTRACT

Kerala in the nineteenth century marked a period of transition. In the first half, society was dominated by caste stratification and limited access to education for women and marginalized sections. The second half of the century witnessed transformative changes under the influence of colonial interventions, missionary influences and indigenous reform movements. These collective interventions changed the traditional social structures that had long been established in Kerala. In this context, St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara (1805-1871) stands as a pioneering agent of transformation. His extensive scholarly works and social interventions brought about change in Kerala society of his time. The dimensions of his distinctive initiatives for transformation and contribution to the broader discourse of modernity remain insufficiently explored. This research explores how his perspectives and activities contributed to the development of modernity within the socio-cultural framework of 19th century Kerala. This study further examines three dimensions of modernity: educational, socio-cultural, and humanitarian, and explores how these interventions, as reflected in his writings and initiatives, reshaped the concept of modernity.

The study adopts qualitative historical analysis and content analysis methods. It primarily relies on close examination of primary and secondary sources. Data were collected from various archival centers, museums, and libraries relevant to the study. Major repositories included State Central Library, Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam Public Library, St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara Archives and Research Centre, Mannanam, and Vimala Archives and Library of CMC Province, Ernakulam. The study employed document analysis and source criticism, ensuring reliability and validity of sources through internal and external criticism. The sources were analyzed systematically, and contextualized with contemporary social situations and notions of modernity. The findings reveal that St. Chavara's educational, socio-cultural, and humanitarian initiatives, as reflected in his writings and actions, exemplify key dimensions of modernity. The three initiatives are understood as transformative tools that facilitate social inclusion, collective progress, and the development of a humane and equitable society. The study concludes that St. Chavara's reform activities represent a model of indigenous modernity rooted in educational, socio-cultural, and humanitarian initiatives which continue to impact Kerala's educational and cultural fabric. His initiatives continue to have a lasting impact on Kerala society and extend beyond it through the sustained contributions of the CMI and CMC congregations.

Keywords: St. Chavara, 19th century Kerala, modernity, education, socio-cultural development, humanitarianism.

Publications:

1. **Suja, V. J., Mathai, S., & Prakasha, G. S. (2025).** Vocational training for women empowerment: Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara's vision. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, 19(3), 1317–1329. <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v19i3.22092>
2. **Suja, V. J., Mathai, S., & Pulikkottil, N. M. (2025).** Legacy of St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara and CMI and CMC congregations: Educational modernity in Kerala. *International Studies in Catholic Education*. 10(2), 123-145. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19422539.2025.2561000>