The Alumni Association of the Department of Christian Studies in association with Satya Nilaym Research Institute is organizing a two day national seminar on Knots and Ties: Marriage and Family through Changing Times, at University of Madras on 28th and 29th of January 2016. Those who wish to present papers may send your abstracts in English to Dr. James Ponniah and Dr. Lawrence S. Fernandes on or before 7th November 2015 to the email ids given below. The medium of language for this seminar is English. For more details kindly see the file attached along with this mail.

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Knots and Ties: Marriage and Family through Changing Times
Religio-Cultural, Gender and Ethical Explorations

We live in a globalised world wherein there is constant flow of peoples, ideas, values, practices and life-patterns across the regions. While nations, cultures and religions feel ‘recognized’ in the global context, they also find themselves in a situation of conflict in their pursuit of new ideas. Built into this situation is a struggle to strike a balance between the new and the old, modernity and tradition, change and continuity.

Against this background, the seminar looks at the new situations, challenges, promises and hopes offered by the globalized world to one of oldest institutions of human civilization, namely, marriage and family. The present institution of marriage is faced not only with such issues as break-down of the family system, marital rape, domestic violence and divorces but also with the new understanding of sexuality and relationship. Today we are experiencing new realities like inter-caste/religious/continent marriages, single-parent families, same-sex marriages, androgyny, gender fluidity, separated/divorced wives, legitimising of children outside of marriage, sex workers, surrogacy, etc. These emerging issues have confronted many fundamental questions about social structures and relations, inter-linkages between class, gender and sexuality, about socio, politico-moral ethics.

Therefore, this conference aims to elicit contemporary view-points, provoke academic debates and advance critical views on this theme, from an inter-disciplinary, multi-religious, multi-cultural, and gender perspectives. Following are some sub-themes the conference:

- Changing definitions of marriage and family (Single-mother family, Same-sex marriage)
- Marriage and family in Tamil / Indian traditions
- Break-down of joint family system
- The elderly, old age homes and traditional family values.
- Growing Divorces
- Marital rape and domestic violence
Child rights in same sex marriage

Changing trends in sexuality and sexual morality (Live-in-relationships, bi-sexual relationships, extra-marital relationships)

Trans-gender sexual agency

Individualism and disappearance of loyalty to marriage and family life

Building ties of marriage and family in the diasporic space

Inter-religious marriages and changing rituals and Practices

Religio-cultural Practices related to marriage and family

Notion of ‘agency’ in marriages—honor killings

Impact of caste, class, community on marriage as an institution

Impact of workplace/work pressure on marriage and family

Affirmative legislations; Landmark judgments

Impact of Medical Advancements on Marriage and Family (Artificial Insemination, Surrogacy, Harmon Replacement Therapy, Sex Determination Tests etc)

Integrating spirituality and sexuality

Time-line for the Conference

1. 7th November : Submission of abstracts (200-250 words)

2. 15th November: Announcement of selection of papers

3. 8th January: Submission of final draft.