



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Experiential Learning through Field work

COVID-19 AND THE FUNCTIONING OF PANCHAYAT RAJ INSTITUTIONS:

A CASE STUDY ON KURUVATTOOR GRAMA PANCHAYAT

Introduction:

Ministry of Human Resource Management (MHRD) under Government of India has initiated Unnat Bharat Abhiyan in 2014 to enable Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to work with the rural people and identify the challenges they face and come up with solutions for their sustainable development. As part of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, on 05/08/2022, the second-year students of Department of Politics and International Relations have visited KURUVATTOOR GRAMA PANCHAYAT, in Kunnamangalam Block to understand the challenges faced by the Village during the Covid – 19 Pandemic and how it had affected the proper functioning of the Village Administration.

Objectives:

1. To understand the ill effects of Covid-19 in the day-to-day functioning of the Grama Panchayat Administration
2. To understand the role played by the Local Self-Government institutions during Covid-19 Pandemic
3. To help the Grama Panchayat in Rearranging the Files that got stuck during the Covid-19 Pandemic
4. To Analyse the awareness of officers in the Grama Panchayat about the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan scheme of Ministry of Human Resource Development

Methodology:

Students have used the Interview method and their Field experiments they gained from the Panchayat visits to reach the objectives of the Project. They have taken time to talk with the officers in the Grama Panchayat and analysed the working of the panchayat in detail especially during the 2019- 2021.

Working Pattern:

The data collection involved the recurrent visit to the Grama Panchayat office and the personal interaction with the officers and staff of the Panchayat. The students have helped in the rearrangement of files of the Grama Panchayat which have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Major Findings:

1. Covid-19 has disrupted the proper working of the Panchayath as the workers in the Gram Panchayat have been on the front lines throughout the pandemic, ensuring that residents of the Panchayat continue to receive essential services.
2. The file movement during the Covid-19 was limited. It has increased the workload of the Grama Panchayat and delayed the proper implementation of many welfare schemes such as MGNREGA
3. The officers and majority of the staff in Grama Panchayat are aware of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan and many such schemes related to PRIs.
4. As the village has women reservation, many local women of the Grama Panchayat feel free to reach out to the Grama Panchayat office with their concerned Issues.

Limitations:

1. The comparative analysis of the functioning of different panchayats were not possible as the visit was restricted to only one Grama Panchayat.
2. The staffs couldn't share their opinions freely as they are confined with their daily tasks and higher officers were not available to talk due to their busy schedule.

Conclusion:

The real-life experience in a government office has helped the students to gain knowledge on the File movements in the departments and the delays a disaster could bring in the working of a public office. The visit has helped bring a clarity on how the PRIs have been empowered during the time of crisis in the district so that the citizens in the villages can be assured of continuity and smooth functioning of their activities.



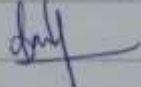
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Staff council meeting was conducted on 22 July 2022 at 1.30 pm. Ms. Ambili Thomas (HOD) and Ms. Nishana CM, Guest Faculty, attended the meeting. The meeting began with a silent prayer.

Minutes of the meeting:

- The minutes of the staff council meeting were discussed in the meeting.
- It was decided to conduct a field activity for the students of the department, which will be held under the Unnath Bharath Abhiyan.
- The Swatha Club will be inaugurated and a talk will be organized under its banner.
- A stress and anxiety management workshop will be conducted for the students of the department the coming week.
- A documentary and film club will be formed.
- The certificate course for this academic year was decided as - Introduction to Gender and Politics. The classes will commence this week.
- Students will be engaged in revision for the upcoming sem I exam.

Ambili Thomas 

Nishana CM 