

ONE-DAY RURAL EXPOSURE VISIT BY II YEAR PG STUDENTS (2021-22)

A one-day rural exposure visit to Thandalam in Chengalpattu district for the 2nd year M.Com. and 2nd year M.Voc. Digital Journalism students was organised on the 6th of May, 2022 by the Department of Service Learning as a part of the PG curriculum. It is a mandatory requirement for the students to attend this program.

The students were accompanied by Dr. E. Anand, senior faculty from the Department of Service Learning and Dr. J. Arul Suresh of the Commerce Department. The vehicle carrying the team started from the college campus and reached Thandalam at around 9.45 am. Rev. Fr. Velanganni, the local point of contact welcomed the students and the faculty members and enlightened them on the living conditions of the villagers and other aspects of village life as a part of the orientation.

The headmistress of the Thandalam school shared some information about the school children, how education was managed during the pandemic and the present scenario there. She made a special mention of two Rev. Sisters who were rendering yeomen service to the village children by providing necessary health care, as there was no other health care facility available in the vicinity. The PG students understood the situation prevailing there and felt emphatic about the health status of the children and of the villagers.

The Village Administrative Officer shared his experiences from his perspective followed by other villagers who expressed the academic concerns of their wards and their survival in the village, over the years. The inputs given by the villagers gave students a different dimension to the rural life and of their mode of living. Dr. Anand coordinated the session.

The students of M. Com. and M. Voc. were then divided into groups and were sent to two different places to visit the houses and to understand the actual living conditions of the people. The students eagerly visited the houses and listened to the stories, challenges and needs of the people. The major concern reported by the villagers was paucity of water and the deteriorating conditions of the crops by animals and pests. It was amazing to realize that the village has brought forth an artist, a high court judge, and a good number of policemen - some of them in high ranks.

One of the major concerns was that many of the students failing in their plus two examinations are not encouraged to re-try and pursue their studies. Such students get employed as unskilled labourers in companies located nearby and thus they seem to be satisfied with the salary they get thereby and that is how their academic journey ends, so pathetically.

During the valedictory held at 3.30 pm, Dr. J. Arul Suresh asked the students to share what they had learned and gained from the one-day rural exposure. Students shared that the one-day rural exposure was very useful and they were able to witness and understand the struggles faced by the villagers to meet their necessities. The students assured that they would render full support to help the deserving segments of the society at every future opportunity. The students finally thanked the college management for providing such an opportunity to them, for the excellent coordination by the Department of Service Learning and for the valuable guidance and accompaniment extended by the faculty members of the Departments of Commerce and KAUSHAL Kendra. Indeed, the rural exposure has made an indelible print in the minds and hearts of the students of Gandhiji's quote, **"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."**

