

## **The COVID 19 Pandemic: Challenges Related Online Education on Students of Rural Areas in Sri Lanka**

D. M. C. Dissanayake<sup>1</sup>

---

The recent epidemic of COVID-19 is challenging for each sector like economy, education, health, industries and education. In the field of education sector of Sri Lanka have implemented the online teaching and learning programs for students to minimize the academic loss in distance education. This pandemic has imposed enormous challenges on traditional education process of Sri Lanka. As a consequence of the unprecedented global pandemic, online education has become a new concept and it has created a discrimination between rural and urban students in Sri Lanka. In this background this study examined the significant challenges related online education on students of rural areas in Sri Lanka during COVID-19. Specific objectives are to identify teachers' attitudes of online education on students of rural areas and the delivery service system and policies related online education in Sri Lanka. This research was used Partially mixed concurrent qualitative dominant status under the qualitative dominant mixed method approach and conducted in Kotavehera educational division, Kurunegala district. Data were collected from 50 students through stratify sampling method and 8 teachers, 5 parents and 2 principals used as key informants. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as primary data collection technic through telephone conversations. According to the findings of the study it has revealed that lack of availability of low-quality internet, lack of devices, shortage of devices, outdated devices were caused to decrease interest in the subject of students in study area, lack of physical and human resource, negative attitudes, lack of practical knowledge and experience were challenged for create fear and anxiety using of English language and technology in online education of students of rural areas, Parents' low socio-economic situation were prohibited online education of students and this situation have created troublesome and lot of pressure for students, parents' personal beliefs and misconceptions, lack of technological skills and teaching methodologies of teachers were directly highlighted as challenges for online education of students in rural areas, Overall, the current curriculum contents of education system in Sri Lanka mainly based on traditional system and it is show lack of flexibility and was not modern and innovative and online teaching methods and abilities are not familiar for students and teachers. There are need to revise the curriculum contents to eliminate the discrimination between the rural urban students and face the sudden situations and education policy makers should attention for revise and update the education curriculum according to the global changes in education. Further ministry of education in Sri Lanka should implement necessary training programs to engage in online education within the traditional system, must give a closer attention to eliminate the disparities in the human and physical resource between rural and urban schools and the government of Sri Lanka with the other non-government agencies should organize the project to supply technological devices for students of rural areas.

*Keywords:* Challenges, COVID-19, Online education, Rural Areas, Sri Lanka

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Special Needs Education, The Open University of Sri Lanka  
dissanayake9483@gmail.com