

**Factors Affecting Learning English as a Second Language in
Rural Areas of Sri Lanka
(in Negombo Rural Area)**

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Students in rural areas of Sri Lanka face many problems and difficulties in learning English as a second language (ESL). This study aims to sort out some factors which affect learning English as a second language in rural areas in Sri Lanka. The target group for this study would be students of Government Secondary schools in rural areas of Negombo Educational Zone. Sample of 300 students (male and female aging between 14-16 years), ten English teachers and 30 parents of students would be selected from grade nine, ten and eleven. These students were selected by using simple random sampling system. A survey would be conducted using a questionnaire and interviews for collecting data about factors affecting learning English as a second language. The data would be analyzed statistically to comprehend the problems. Data were analyzed by using tables and pie chart. In Negombo rural areas most of the people directly or indirectly related to fishing. 93.50% parents are directly concerned with fishing and 04.00 % are indirectly getting their income from fishing. More over 1.50% parents are unemployed and 1.00% are engaged with other occupations. 80.33% students responded that their parent have not sufficient income. 92.33% students responded that their family is not having an educated background. In the education of parent (father and mother), the 95% fathers and 90% mothers of students are uneducated. The 70% students responded that their parent do not help them in studies. Partially help ratio is 23.33% and 06.67% parents help thoroughly in studies of their children. 72.33% parents do not motivate children to learn ESL. The ratio of parent which do not understand the problems faced by their children during learning English language is 88.66%. In the same way 66.66% parents do not facilitate in learning English language and 93.33% parent do not give preference to English language. 83% students responded that their home atmosphere is not peaceful and not helpful for learning. 72.33% students do not have any supporting attitude from their family. 92.33% students responded that teachers are not teaching properly. According to data analysis of this research, rural background and unsupportive attitudes of parents greatly affect the ESL learning process in the students of rural areas. Other major factor is unfamiliar teaching method. The study would be helpful to English teachers, curriculum developers and education policy-makers of Sri Lanka to overcome these problems.

Key Words: English as a Second Language (ESL), Rural Areas, Secondary School Students