

**IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION:
LESSONS LEARNED FROM KARAVEDDY EDUCATION DIVISION,
JAFFNA, SRI LANKA**

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ABSTRACT

Sri Lanka's school education system shifted from classroom-based education to distance learning education during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown period. The current study scrutinized the impact of COVID-19 on senior secondary school education in Karaveddy Education Division (KED), Jaffna in Sri Lanka. Data were obtained through a questionnaire survey from 16 schools in KED, with teachers (105) and senior secondary students (171) selected as the survey sample. Positive and negative impacts were analyzed using SWOT metrics (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats). The findings revealed that students' average household income varied across a broader range. Respondents continued their distance education with their existing resources was considered a strength. Among weaknesses, a lack of devices (63.7%), financial issues accessing the internet (59.2%), and poor network connectivity (40%) were highly agreed upon by students. Similarly, lack of student engagement (65.7%), lack of teacher training to conduct online classes (51.9%), and students' irregular attendance in online classes (75.5%) were reported by teachers. A large number of the students stated that online learning provided opportunities to connect with teachers and peers from distant places on one platform (86.2%) and offered a good experience in facing future calamities (80.8%). However, digital device addiction and health issues were mentioned as major threats. In conclusion, while online learning can produce effective results to a certain extent, the vast majority of KED students were unable to obtain benefits from online education. It is suggested that hybrid learning can be adopted in the future to overcome the weaknesses and threats of distance learning.

KEYWORDS: Challenges, Covid-19, Education, Opportunities, School, Swot

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