



An exploratory study on the impact of the current economic downturn on institutionalized children's education in Sri Lanka

Rev. R. Wanarathana^{1*}, H. Silva²

¹Pali and Buddhist University of Sri Lanka

² National Institute of Social Development

*Correspondence: revridigama@gmail.com

Abstract

The current socio-economic instability of the country has had a significant psychological impact on individuals, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups such as alternative care. Hence, this study was intended to examine the impacts of the current economic downturn on children in alternative care. The study used a qualitative methodology using a grounded theory approach, including interviews and focus group discussions. A total of 40, institutionalized children and 8 care givers were considered as the sample. Education, social relationships, public examinations, school dropouts, and emotional status were the highly affected components which could have adverse long-term effects on child development due to the current situation in the country. Although there is evidence that children become accustomed to a pattern of self-directed learning, gardening, and other creative activities, the study found that activities such as the lack of adequate facilities for online education and the need to stay close to loved ones inevitably affect their psychosocial development. The study recommends a smaller size of institutional care to fulfill the additional needs and systemic change are dire needs of policy practice in alternative care. The study proposed developing a systematic methodology in collaboration with institutions and schools to improve education, particularly the missing parts of the syllabus during online education.

Keywords: Economic downturn, Education, Emotional impact