**THE CHALLENGES FACED IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE IN SRI LANKA: A CASE STUDY IN KURUNEGALA DISTRICT**

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**Abstract**

Undoubtedly, Learning English as a Second language (ESL) is considered a challenging task. It is more difficult in undeveloped rural areas in any district when compared with the urban counterparts. Learners encounter many challenges when learning English in these urban areas. Thus this study is an analysis of the challenges faced by learners in learning English as the second language. It is no secret that English language education is hampered in Sri Lanka. The researcher based this study to find out the major educational challenges that students face in learning English in the Kurunegala district. Kurunegala is far away from the capital city Colombo and is densely populated too. In the year 2020, the university admission was 45.87% from the Kurunegala district (Statistics: Department of Examinations 2020).

In Sri Lanka, it is the secondary schools that produce candidates for the higher institutions. Therefore, any deficiency in teaching and learning in the secondary schools continues over to the higher institutions. Thus, it is of foremost importance that the teaching of English takes firm roots during the early part of the studies. The researcher strived to examine some of the likely challenges facing the teaching of English in secondary schools in Kurunegala with the aim of highlighting the areas that require attention.

The researcher based his study by interviewing several principals, parents and existing students of schools as well as the old boys to ascertain the true state of facts before deriving at the results. The use of primary date viz the exam performances, student’s participation, and exam performances aided in the conclusion of this research.