

## **A Study on Coping Mechanisms of Students with Visual Impairments to Online Education in Public Universities in Sri Lanka.**

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Due to the Pandemic students with disabilities have been required to accept and follow online education since March 2020. This study therefore intended to identify coping mechanisms in the face of online education and their own experiences with their coping mechanism for minimizing the negative effects of online education.

This study employed a qualitative methodology to explore the challenges encountered by visually impaired higher education students in Sri Lankan public universities. A sample of 20 students selected and distributed a questionnaire to collect data. Additionally, in-depth interviews conducted with 5 students and three case studies selected to explore the basic realities of online teaching and learning.

Personal experience of students with disabilities has provided them an in-depth understanding of the problems they face and lead them to discover strategies to minimize problems. Changes in life experiences, additional costs of education, balancing mental states, explored as main themes students cope. Further technological barriers, and economic hardship has constrained students. These students' expressed their interest in adapting to online education, no matter how difficult it may be.

The study's findings will utilize to educate and advise university lecturers, student counsellors, and relevant authorities disabled-friendly online teaching and learning to promote equitable access to education. Further consideration should be given to the technical facilities required to better manage negative situations. The realities expected to derive from this deep exploration construct a better environment for students with disabilities to engage in social work interventions within the limitations of inclusive education.

**Key Words:** Coping Mechanisms, Pandemic, Students with Disabilities, Online Education, Challenges of inclusive education.