



# Digital Connectivity During the COVID-19 Pandemic



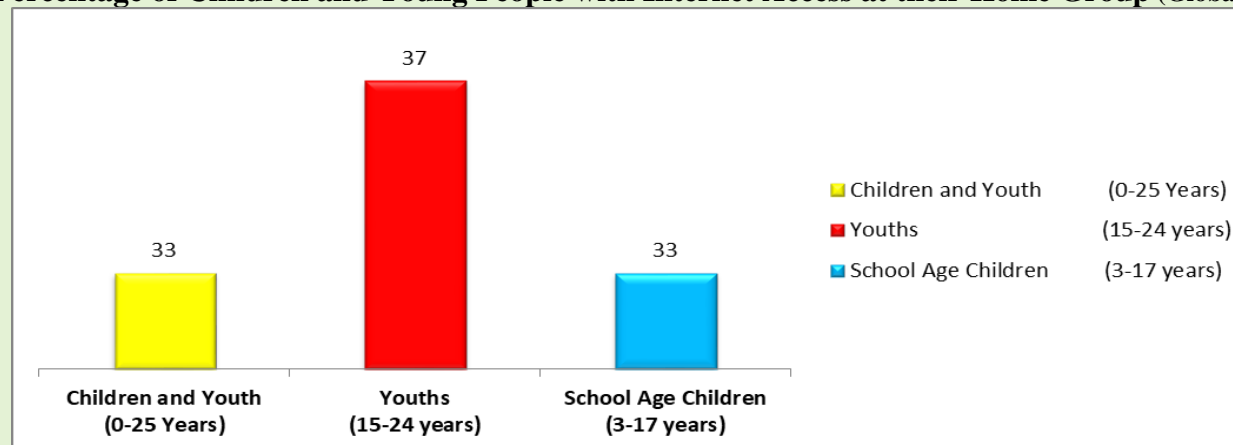
Department of Manpower and Employment  
Ministry of Youth and Sports

Around the world, digitalization of society has made importance to ICT skills and access to technology. But, the COVID-19 pandemic has turned these things into essential human rights in terms of the Educational, Social and Professional needs of children and young people.

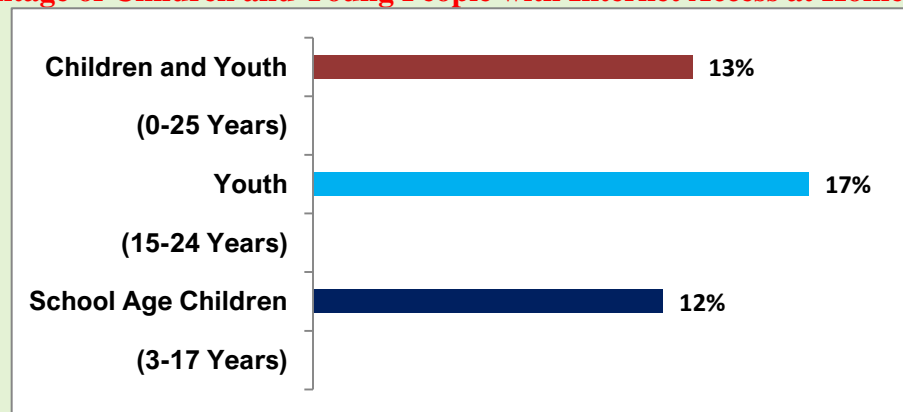
When classrooms closed their doors during the pandemic, nearly a quarter of a billion students were forced to rely on virtual and remote learning, causing the largest mass disruption of education in modern history.

For those without access to the internet, education can be out of reach. Yet globally, 2.2 billion children and young people aged 25 years or less – two-thirds of children and young people worldwide, still do not have an internet connection in their homes.

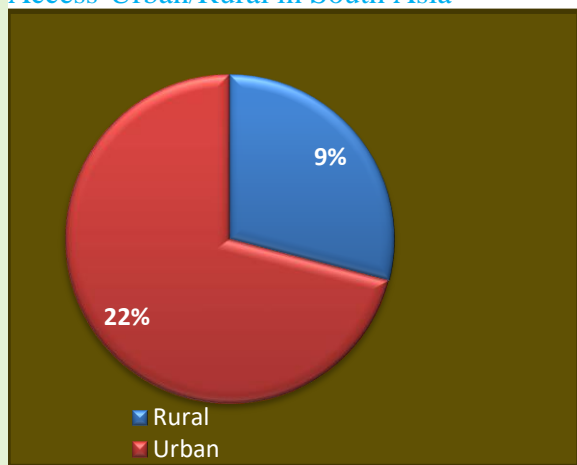
**Percentage of Children and Young People with Internet Access at their Home Group (Global)**



**Percentage of Children and Young People with Internet Access at Home, by Region (Asia)**



## Percentage of Children and Young People's Internet Access-Urban/Rural in South Asia



Source: UNICEF, 2020

How many children and young people have internet access to home?

The need for a more innovative and effective solution for teaching was necessary, and the concept of an interactive class was introduced to the education sector in Sri Lanka. Since the advent of Smart Education globally, it is imperative that our students and teachers are also up-to-date with new technology, more knowledge and better ICT skills, to keep up with the rapid progression in the rest of the world.

## Number of Children and Young People with and without Internet access at Home (In Millions)

	South Asia		
	Children and Youth (0-25 Years)	* Youth (15-24 years)	*School Age Children (3-17)
Access	117	57	59
No Access	768	282	449

\*Source: UNICEF Data and Analytics, 2020

## WHAT TECHNOLOGIES AND DIGITAL DATASETS ARE BEING USED?

Connectivity is critical in today's world, which has been working to reach every child and adolescent Worldwide with digital learning technologies. This work has been supported by the considerable data that are available on internet use among different age groups across the world's regions and countries. However, the disruption to education and other essential activities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic make it necessary to understand how many children and young people aged 25 years or less are able to access digital technology at home that can support their educational, professional, social and other needs.

The following are some of the key issues for moving towards a digital world

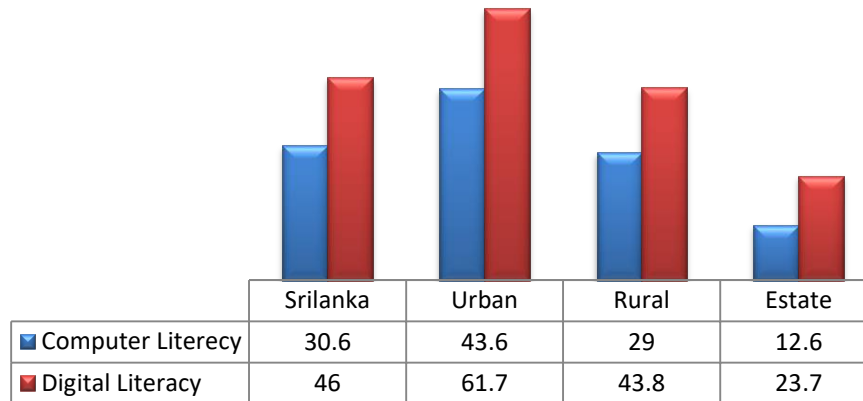
- Mobile phone tracking
- Biometric technologies

Source: (<https://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/WP2020-01.pdf>)

## Why is Digital Access Important?

Digital access is an important concept of digital citizenship. It allows for fair accessibility to technology as well as the ability to use it in order to enhance the learning process for all involved.

## Computer Literacy Rate and Digital Literacy Rate in Sri Lanka-2019 (by Sector Wise)



Source: Computer Literacy Statistics – 2019 (Annual Bulletin)  
Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka

**It is important that governments look at digital development more broadly than the ICT sector. Digital technologies bring about fundamental transformations in our economies and countries which affect all sectors of the economy such as agriculture, education, health, government and financial services. Reaping the benefits of digital transformation requires an ecosystem approach focusing on digital infrastructure, digital platforms, digital skills, and applications in vital use cases across the economy, while ensuring protection of personal data and aiming for a truly inclusive digital economy for all.**

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