

**A Sociological Analysis on the Perception of Undergraduates towards Gap Year
between Advanced Level Examination and University Entrance: A Study with
Reference to Arts Faculty Undergraduates in University of Peradeniya**

Wickramage P D

Department of Sociology, University of Peradeniya
paviwick15@gmail.com

Higher education plays a major role in the life of present generation. In Sri Lanka, the students entering national universities experience a gap year which they should wait around a year or take a gap year after A/L's before the university entrance. The objective of this study is to identify the perception of undergraduates towards the gap year between A/L's and the university entrance and to identify how these undergraduates have spent their gap year. A qualitative study was conducted in the Faculty of Arts in University of Peradeniya. Forty questionnaires were employed as a pre-test and 10 respondents were selected from that through purposive sampling. Data collection was done through 10 in-depth interviews and data was analysed thematically. According to the study findings, the undergraduates think that the gap year was important in preparing them for their undergraduate education. They experienced stress due to the hard work in order to gain sufficient results at G.C.E. A/L examination. According to the undergraduates, the gap year gives them the opportunity to get some rest as well as to get prepared for their next step in education. This study also found that the undergraduates have spent their gap year on educational activities, leisure activities, employment, religious activities, social work, and also some had stayed at home. Many have spent their gap year acquiring the knowledge necessary for their future education. Educational activities are identified as a significant factor which affected respondents to think positively about their gap year. This study also depicts the fact that the respondents' choices of the different type of activities has affected their perception towards the gap year too. In addition to these findings, this study identified the role of gender, ethnicity, religion, nature of living and family income and undergraduates' perception towards the gap year.

Key words: *Gap year, Perception, Undergraduates*