

SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE ~~CHANGING~~ PATTERNS OF
FAMILY SIZE AND SEX PREFERENCE AMONG THREE GENERATIONS OF
PEOPLE, BASED ON DATA DERIVED FROM UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES

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Studies on family size sex preference have received much attention in recent demographic research, but few such studies have been done in Sri Lanka. The objective of the present study was to inquire into family size and sex preferences among three generations of people - the present generation consisting of a randomly selected sample of undergraduates in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Ruhuna, the older generation consisting of the parents of the selected undergraduates, and the future generation as reflected in the stated preferences of the undergraduates regarding their own desired families.

Data was collected by means of a questionnaire administered to the randomly selected sample of undergraduates. Information was gathered on the size and sex composition of the 1) families of the parents 2) families of the undergraduates and 3) ideal and desired family size of the respondents and their sex preference. In addition, data was collected on several important socio-economic variables that influence family size such as education, employment, and income of the respondent's parents. The results emerged are: the average family size of the present generation was slightly higher than that of the older generation, while the desired family size of the respondents was lower. There was, however, a clear preference for sons.