

### **Can we justify the use of raw marks for admission to Sri Lankan Universities?**

Standardization of GCE AL marks to prepare the common order merit list for selection to universities was abandoned in 1977. The raw marks continue to be used. Hence the objective of the research was to find the validity of the use of raw marks for university entry.

Arts students have a wide choice to select all the AL subjects unlike science students. Commerce students have the option to select one subject. Hence the AL results in 1986-87 and ten years later in 1996 of Arts/Commerce applicants and students selected were analyzed. In addition the results of AL 1997 under two syllabuses were compared.

The most popular subjects in late 1980s and ten years later continue to be same. They were Sinhala, economics, Buddhist Civilization, Political Science and Geography.

At AL 96, the five subjects with the high chance of selection were Arabic (58.6%), Islamic Civilization (52.1%), Islam (45.7%), Logic (32.9%) and Economics (32.5%). Ten years earlier the five subjects were Pali (59.4%), Buddhism (58.7%), Islam (37.8%), Islam Civilization (36.8%) and Buddhist Civilization (27.0%).

Standardization of marks benefited the aggregate marks of science students who sat the new syllabus by 12-18 marks over those who sat old syllabus. Standardized marks in 1996 were higher than raw marks for Economics, History and Political Science while low for Pali, Arabic and Islam.

Raw marks had an advantage for one group or for different subjects. Hence the authorities should explore the standardization of AL marks since it is already used to prepare the merit list of medical graduates for their appointments.