

# **IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING INTEREST IN SCIENCE: A CASE STUDY OF GRADE ELEVEN STUDENTS IN MATALE EDUCATIONAL ZONE**

**N.P. Rajapaksha**

Postgraduate Institute of Science, University of Peradeniya, Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

Science is a basic component of the general education needed by all individuals in today's world, where science plays a major role in influencing present societies and shaping the future as well. In Sri Lanka "Science" is a core subject at the Ordinary Level and it is taught in all schools having secondary grades. Students are exposed to science education during their school years from grade six to eleven. According to the annual performance report in the 2013 the number of students sitting in the science stream was 22.5 % . Thus, the Ministry of Education targets at increasing this number to 40 % by the year 2016. This study was aimed to find the possible factors that affecting the science interest of grade eleven students in matala educational zone. Data collection was done in two ways as Semi structured interviews and questionnaires. Two 1AB type schools, two 1C type schools and five type 2 schools in the Matala educational zone (150 students), University students (50) and Professionals (30) were used to collect the data. Data was analysed using Minitab 16 statistical software with qualitative data analysis methods. According to the results obtained in this research, both Gender and School type affect the student's interest on science. More male students like to select the science stream in the advanced-level than female students. When the school types are considered, students in 1AB and 1C type schools, which have facilities for science classes develop interest on science than students in type 2 schools.