

**Social Exclusion and its Impact on Poverty;
A Case Study of Urban Poor Communities in Colombo**

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of 'poverty' has different interpretations from 'rural' to 'urban'. These two concepts have their own characteristics within their own contexts. In general, the people who are living illegally in shanties, slums or any other temporary built settlements in cities can be defined as the urban poor. The existence of extremely poor settlements in Colombo city and its urban area is a visible feature in the spatial development pattern of Colombo, which is a matter of concern to policy makers, politicians, officials, NGOs and other relevant authorities. The urban poor communities living in these settlements are not only deprived of their basic human needs but are also vulnerable to frequent natural hazards which make them poorer than what they were before.

HIGHLIGHTS

The major purpose of this research study was to see the impact of socio-economic and psycho-social issues, which create social exclusion, in relation to lack of infrastructure among the urban poor, low-income communities living in the city of Colombo.

METHODOLOGY

This research study attempts to emphasize the issues faced by the urban poor, low-income communities in relation to social exclusion in the city of Colombo. The study sample comprised one extremely poor settlement and one fully upgraded settlement located in the city of Colombo. The research problem related to the study is, "What are the issues and problems emerged as a result of the social exclusion of urban poor communities in Sri Lanka?"

The concept of 'dimensions of poverty' was used to understand the status of the urban poor while five major theories, namely Social Exclusion Theory, Social Learning Theory, Social Empowerment Theory, Culture of Poverty Theory and Labelling Theory were taken in to consideration for analysing the context of urban poverty. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of participatory approaches were used in the process of data collection and analysis.

RESULTS/ OUTCOMES

The result of this study revealed that settlement environment, available infrastructure facilities, family disputes, livelihood patterns of the community, social problems, legal rights to the properties, community perceptions etc. play a significant role in identifying the impact of psycho, socio-economic issues related to social exclusion. Further it explored some crucial factors by which the urban low income underserved settlers have been marginalized and kept away from the main stream of the society. The ethical implications and psychological consequences for the participants in the research were considered during each stages of the study.

THEME 7

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research study was able to investigate the present situation in relation to social exclusion among the urban poor communities to analyse the impact of psycho, socio-economic issues with special reference to two urban low income settlements in Colombo.