

**Low-Income Urban Dwellers’ Perception on Social Stigmatization during a Pandemic Situation: A Study Based on “Sayurupura” Multi-Storied Housing in Angulana**

H.L.S. De Zoysa

*Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,  
University of Ruhuna, Matara 81000, Sri Lanka  
lszoysa96@gmail.com*

The COVID-19 pandemic situation has impacted on humans’ social, economic, political and cultural behaviour. Low-income urban dwellers have also been affected by the COVID 19 pandemic. This community has faced several problems when they had to adhere to the new health care practices. Therefore, this study focused on identifying how low-income urban dwellers reflect upon their existing stigmatized identity corresponding to the pandemic. Phenomenology was used and data was collected from twenty in-depth interviews with community members in Sayurupura multi-storied housing in Angulana. Thematic analysis was used for the data analysis process. Experiences of stigmatization in the pre-COVID-19 period, experiences during the pandemic situation, socio-cultural issues during the pandemic and reflections of the community members were some identified themes of this research. The analysis indicates that the low-income urban dwellers were already a stigmatized community even before the pandemic situation since they belong to a sub-cultural group, however they were highly likely to encounter social stigmatization due to several experiences during the pandemic as well. Labelling as a “Corona spreading community” in the neighbourhood areas, diminishing the interpersonal relationships with familiar middle-income urban dwellers, being humiliated due to the higher number of family members in a family and the inability to adapt to the new healthcare practices were some identified types of stigmatization. Consequently, the inhabitants were likely to be discriminated in accessing social services and securing their day-to-day opportunities, for instance, getting disqualified from job interviews, being humiliated in the grocery shops and even in public transportation. These types of stigmatization led this community to be isolated and be hopeless during the pandemic. In conclusion, social stigmatization is identified to be an existing threatening issue for the urban low-income communities and during the pandemic, their social stigmatization has taken a turn for the worse.

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