



Crystallising Marginalisation of Urban Waththa Dwellers: A Study Based on Matiwatta in “Angulana”

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic situation affected every social, political, economic and cultural sphere in the world. It was not merely a healthcare crisis, but its complications were multidimensional. In the Sri Lankan context, the urban waththa (slum) dwellers were also severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a marginalised community, they encountered several complications when adhering to new healthcare practices. Therefore, "how urban slum/waththa dwellers were marginalised while crystallising their social exclusion during the COVID-19 pandemic in Sri Lanka" was the identified research problem of this study. The main objective of this research was to identify influential factors of crystallising marginalisation and social exclusion of urban waththa dwellers during the COVID-19 pandemic in Sri Lanka. This research was conducted as qualitative research, and a Case Study research design was used. Matiwatta Slum in Angulana South Grama Niladhari Division was the selected research area, and data was collected by snowball sampling method through purposive sampling method. Twenty respondents were chosen for the data collection, and in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted for primary data collection. Data analysis was conducted by using the thematic analysis method. The research findings described that urban waththa dwellers were a marginalised community even before the COVID-19 lockdown period. The influence of new lockdown experiences, encountered social, economic and cultural issues, the role of non-slum dwellers and role of political agencies, issues of adhering to new healthcare practices and re-shaping social identity were some identified influential factors that determined the social exclusion and marginalisation of urban waththa dwellers during lockdown period. In conclusion, these factors influenced to make the social exclusion and marginalisation to a worse level, and therefore, it was identified, as a marginalised community, waththa dwellers' marginalisation and social exclusion were crystallised during the COVID-19 period.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Crystallising, Marginalization, Social Exclusion, Urban, Waththa Dwellers*