

Social & Economic Security of Urban Poor (A Case Study of Colombo District)

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Urban areas are the engines of productivity and growth in the country. This urbanization has resulted in the radical socio-economic changes the new strata of population named “urban poor. Thus, it can be concluded that the urban poor is more vulnerable than the rural poverty due to the multidimensional phenomenon. Poverty is a problem because urban poor live with many deprivations. Their challenges include: limited or no access to the employment opportunities and income, inadequate housing & infrastructure, unhealthy living environments, limited social protection mechanisms and inadequate health and educational opportunities. This paper aims to explore factors affecting social and economic security of the urban poor. The study is based on both qualitative and quantitative data which gathered from selected urban settlement communities in Colombo district. Descriptive and multivariate analyses are applied for the quantitative data while content analysis is made for the qualitative data. The findings reveal that more than 90% per cent of the urban settlement community people had low level of education (below G.C.E. Ordinary level) which significantly impact on their occupations and attitudes towards higher education of their children. In addition, majority of people who were in lived in these communities responded that they had lower intention to continue their children’s education and health security due to their lower economic background. Most of them had gone to take medicines to the government hospitals. Elder people and child of the communities were suffered from various types of diseases. Furthermore, results evident that people’s income also negatively affected on their health security. The qualitative findings also discovered that several community and environmental factors such as poverty, lack of awareness and encouragement, lack of resources and facilities, and drug addition, largely contributing to their life and having less intention towards their social and economic security. These findings suggest that policy makers should pay their attention on making appropriate policies and programmes to overcome socio-economic problems of these settlement communities. Especially, such programmes should address the ways of strengthening communities in providing awareness and developing Positive attitudes towards their life and future generation.

key words. * **Economic**, Poor, Security, Social, Urbanization