

Poverty in Iran: The truth of the matter

By Katie Williams



With many of Iran's citizens living below or just on the poverty line, and it's difficult to pinpoint a single cause for the country's worsening conditions. Instead, a combination of economic, political, and social factors has created a situation where poverty is rising at an alarming rate.

1. Poverty Prevalence

Official estimates suggest that a rate of [22-27%](#) of Iranians now live in poverty, alongside other state-affiliated reports marking this rate at around 30% by 2023. These estimates suggest that almost one in three Iranians lives in impoverished conditions. But if these official statistics are concerning, some unofficial estimates suggest that poverty could affect as many as 80% of Iranians.

2. Drivers of Rising Poverty

With inflation being a primary factor of the rise of expenses in Iran-- for example, food prices surged by 40-100% in early 2025, while the rial sharply depreciated. It's no surprise that most Iranians can't afford day-to-day expenses. Wages have progressively declined over the years, with minimum wage dropping from an equivalent of [\\$235](#) a decade ago to a current \$94-\$133. This has led to many workers struggling with multiple jobs, creating an unsatisfying lifestyle due to the fear of not being able to afford the next day's expenses.

If that isn't enough, the inequality and corruption spread throughout Iran are shown through the elite tier's wealth. According to [Iran News Update](#) approximately 45% of Iranian adults have less than \$10,000 in assets, while 48% have between \$10,000 and

\$100,000. These key figures highlight the 93% that hold assets less than 3.3 billion tomans (\$43,000). Simply put, this essentially means the top tier continues making more, while the remaining 93% struggle at the bottom, or just above the bottom.

3. Social & Nutritional Impacts

Many Iranians also suffer from malnutrition, with around 6.5% experiencing this severe issue. Up to 5.4% of children are stunted due to not being able to secure food, leading to these adverse effects. This malnutrition causes weakness, poor health, and emotional issues, such as hopelessness and depression. These effects contribute to unemployment and income loss. This explains why Iranians in this group are living in poverty throughout their daily lives. Contrastingly, many workers cannot meet the minimum 2,500-calorie daily intake, which affects their ability to work effectively.

Ultimately, poverty in Iran is more than just statistics. It's the daily struggle of millions. Empty plates, sleepless nights, and constant worry define life for many. Without major policy changes and fairer wealth distribution, this crisis will only deepen, trapping more Iranians in a seemingly unbreakable cycle.

-Katie Williams

Photo: [NCRI](#)

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