

# POVERTY LEVELS HIGHLIGHTS IN SRI LANKA 2024-2025

Sri Lanka's poverty rate has surged in recent years due to economic crises, austerity measures, and global challenges.

## Overall Poverty Rate:

The World Bank reported that **24.5%** of Sri Lankans lived below the poverty line in 2024, defined as earning less than \$3.65 per day.

This marks a doubling of poverty since 2019

People below poverty Line  
24.5%



Population above PL  
75.5%

Defined as earning  
less than \$3.65 per  
day

People below poverty Line  
5635000



Total population  
22000000

No of people below  
poverty Line

Muslims below poverty Line  
465000



Total Muslim population  
1900000

Muslims poverty rate average

## Muslims and Poverty in Sri Lanka

While specific data on Muslim poverty rates is not directly available in the provided sources, contextual insights suggest significant challenges:

### 1. Demographics:

Muslims constitute 9.7% of Sri Lanka's population (2.2 million people), concentrated in Eastern, Northern, and Northwestern provinces.

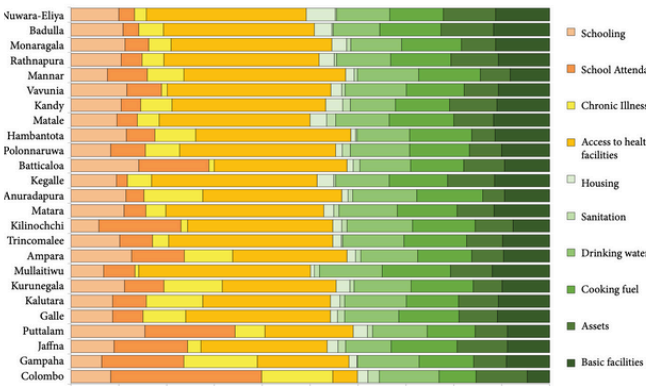
### 2. Economic Marginalization:

Post-2019 Easter attacks, Muslims faced increased scrutiny and discrimination, affecting livelihoods and access to resources.

### Regional Poverty Link:

Districts with large Muslim populations (e.g., Ampara, Batticaloa)

Figure 5: Percentage contribution by indicator to MPI by district (ordered by MPI)



Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka: Income and Expenditure Survey 2019

### Figure 5 shows

The percentage contributions of each of the weighted indicators to the MPI for each district. Districts are ranked from poorest to least poor. In the district with the lowest levels of multidimensional poverty, Colombo, school attendance has the largest contribution to the MPI. Years of Schooling also contributes most significantly in Puttalam, whereas access to health facilities contributes the most in all the other districts.

## Conclusion

Sri Lanka's poverty crisis remains severe, with nearly a quarter of the population below the \$3.65/day line. Muslims, while not explicitly quantified in poverty statistics, face systemic challenges linked to regional disparities, discrimination, and economic instability. Addressing these issues requires targeted reforms, equitable social spending, and inclusive growth strategies.

Muslims face a high dropout rate in schooling, which is undoubtedly one of the main causes of the high poverty rate among Muslims in Sri Lanka. This lack of higher education further exacerbates the situation. Islamic Arabic schools should include government school curriculums, such as the GCE O/L and AL examinations, to provide students with the necessary qualifications for higher education. This would enable them to pursue academic and professional qualifications and contribute to the transformation of society, enabling it to compete at all levels. A coordinated effort is necessary among multiple community organisations operating in various parts of Sri Lanka to build and address the most needy people and avoid duplication of activities. Most importantly, the programmes should concentrate on long-term economic development, such as skill development and livelihood development.