



POVERTY

CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS

Abbas Alaghebandian

Book Review



***Poverty: Causes and Solutions* by Abbas Alaghebadian**

Review by: Morteza Anvari

Dr. Abbas Alaghebadian's *Poverty: Causes and Solutions* is not merely another contribution to the vast literature on global poverty; it is a profoundly human, multidimensional, and ethically grounded examination of one of the most enduring challenges facing societies across the world. In a time when poverty is often reduced to numbers, charts, and GDP ratios, Alaghebadian restores the topic to its rightful place: at the center of human experience, social justice, and moral responsibility. His work stands apart for its combination of moral clarity, analytical depth, and unusual willingness to confront the cultural, psychological, political, and environmental roots of poverty—areas many authors treat only lightly, or ignore entirely.

From the opening pages, it becomes clear that this book is not written only for economists or policymakers. It is written for citizens—people who live within communities shaped by inequality, and who often fail to realize how deeply poverty reshapes the moral and social fabric around them. Alaghebadian argues persuasively that poverty is not simply a shortage of money but a shortage of opportunity, dignity, education, justice, trust, and hope. In his view, poverty is simultaneously a **cause** and an **effect** of broader societal failures: failed governance, weakened ethics, environmental degradation, political corruption, and erosion of family and community bonds. This approach creates a panoramic yet intimate understanding of poverty—one that situates economic deprivation within the larger context of human life.

A Holistic Definition of Poverty

A central strength of the book is its refusal to accept narrow definitions of poverty. The author outlines multiple types—financial poverty, political poverty, educational poverty, environmental poverty, spiritual poverty, emotional poverty, and even “poverty of hope.” Each is explained through real-world examples and logical analysis, showing how a society may appear prosperous on the surface while suffering hidden forms of deprivation that inevitably lead to decline.



Alaghebandian's distinction between **absolute poverty** and **relative poverty** is expected, but his discussion of **capability poverty**, **emotional poverty**, and **ethical poverty** pushes the reader beyond conventional frameworks. His analysis echoes, but also extends, the work of Amartya Sen, who emphasized that human freedom and capability matter as much as income. What Alaghebandian adds is a powerful cultural and ethical dimension: when a society loses its moral compass—truthfulness, respect, responsibility, compassion—it becomes vulnerable to multiple forms of impoverishment, even if its economy grows.

This argument becomes especially striking in the chapters discussing how dishonesty, corruption, opportunism, and disregard for the rights of others feed cycles of poverty. The author insists that without ethical reform, no economic policy will succeed. Poverty, he argues, is as much a **moral crisis** as it is a material one. Economic interventions alone may stabilize households temporarily, but they cannot cure what is fundamentally a structural and ethical illness rooted in unjust distribution, weak governance, and social dysfunction.

Governance, Injustice, and the Machinery of Poverty

Another key contribution of the book is its analysis of how political systems—particularly those marked by corruption, favoritism, and lack of transparency—create and perpetuate poverty. Dr. Alaghebandian describes the ways in which unjust distributions of resources, “insider access,” lack of accountability, and weak rule of law produce a predictable outcome: concentration of wealth among the powerful and marginalization of the rest. When governments fail to distribute opportunity fairly, poverty becomes not an accident but an expected outcome.

He draws examples from countries rich in natural resources that have nonetheless suffered widespread poverty, arguing that the root cause lies in the failure of governance rather than in nature or fate. Oil-rich or mineral-rich nations that funnel national wealth into the hands of political elites inevitably generate poverty at the bottom and stagnation in the middle. This aligns with global research on the “resource curse,” but Alaghebandian weaves this concept into a moral argument: when leaders treat public resources as private property, they violate not only economic principles but the ethical covenant between state and citizen.



His framing of “internal colonialism”—those in power exploiting their own populations—offers an important counterpoint to the common tendency to blame foreign actors alone. He acknowledges external exploitation but insists that internal mismanagement, moral decay, and political corruption are equally, if not more, destructive.

Cultural and Psychological Dimensions

The book distinguishes itself further through its exploration of the psychological roots of poverty. Alaghebandian analyzes how fatalism, passivity, learned helplessness, and blind obedience to authority can trap individuals and communities in cycles of deprivation. He argues that when societies encourage imitation rather than inquiry, or fear rather than freedom, they weaken the very faculties—creativity, initiative, self-confidence—that individuals need to overcome poverty.

His critique of cultural fatalism is bold: poverty is not destiny, and those who preach resignation in the face of adversity unwittingly reinforce the conditions that keep people poor. This is especially compelling when he discusses how young people in impoverished environments internalize shame, inferiority, hopelessness, and eventually disengage from the social and economic systems that might otherwise uplift them.

The Environmental Lens: Water Poverty as a Structural Threat

One of the book’s most original insights is its treatment of **water poverty**—a topic rarely given serious attention in mainstream poverty studies. Alaghebandian argues that water scarcity is not simply an environmental concern but a direct and urgent driver of economic, social, and moral decline. He shows how mismanagement of water resources leads to agricultural collapse, forced migration, unemployment, social unrest, health crises, and eventually political instability. The analysis resonates strongly with contemporary global challenges, from the Middle East to Africa and parts of Asia.

This environmental dimension makes the book especially timely. As climate change accelerates, water scarcity is emerging as one of the defining issues of the twenty-first century. By bringing this ecological perspective into the poverty debate, Alaghebandian pushes readers to think beyond



traditional boundaries and consider the existential threats that environmental degradation poses to human welfare.

A Framework for Solutions

Despite the gravity of the problems discussed, the book is ultimately hopeful. Alaghebandian presents a comprehensive set of solutions rooted in education, ethical reform, transparent governance, economic opportunity, environmental stewardship, and community empowerment.

His recommendations include:

- universal access to education
- training programs for entrepreneurship and skilled labor
- strengthening the rule of law
- eliminating corruption and favoritism
- protecting water resources and ecosystems
- investing national wealth into productive infrastructure
- promoting truthful public discourse and ethical leadership
- empowering families as the core unit of society
- fostering a culture of personal responsibility and social cooperation

These solutions are not abstract. They are grounded in the practical realities of societies struggling with poverty, and they emphasize the interdependence of policy, culture, and morality.

Alaghebandian avoids the trap of offering “quick fixes” and instead calls for a long-term, multi-layered transformation of institutions and mindsets.

Overall Evaluation

Poverty: Causes and Solutions is an ambitious and deeply insightful contribution to the literature on poverty. It successfully integrates economic theory, sociology, psychology, ethics, political



science, and environmental analysis into a coherent whole. Its greatest achievement may be its insistence that poverty is not merely a material condition but a **holistic human condition**—one shaped by the values, structures, and choices of society.

The book's language is accessible yet profound. Its arguments are supported by history, observation, and moral reasoning. Above all, it is written with empathy; the author does not analyze poverty from a distance but from a place of sincere human concern.

This is a book that policymakers should study, educators should teach, scholars should reference, and citizens should reflect upon. It invites the reader not only to understand poverty, but to confront the injustices—both visible and invisible—that allow it to endure.

In an era where inequality threatens global stability, Alaghebandian's work could not be more timely. It reminds us that poverty is not a natural law but a human failure; not an inevitability but a challenge that can be overcome with courage, ethics, and collective will.

Publisher Summary

Poverty: Causes and Solutions

By Dr. Abbas Alaghebandian

Poverty: Causes and Solutions is a sweeping and human-centered examination of one of the most urgent challenges of our time. Drawing on decades of observation, research, and social analysis, Abbas Alaghebandian offers a multidimensional framework that moves far beyond conventional economic interpretations of poverty. Instead of treating poverty as a technical or statistical issue, he exposes it as a complex social, ethical, political, and environmental condition—one that reflects the deeper health of a society.

At the core of the book is a powerful argument: **poverty is never just a lack of income; it is a deficit of opportunity, dignity, justice, and ethical governance.** Alaghebandian dissects the cultural norms, institutional failures, and systemic inequalities that create and perpetuate



deprivation. His analysis spans economic structures, political corruption, educational barriers, environmental degradation, social psychology, and moral decline, demonstrating how these forces interact to shape the lived reality of millions.

One of the book's most distinctive contributions is its treatment of **water poverty** as an emerging global threat. Alaghebandian connects water scarcity to migration, unemployment, food insecurity, social fragmentation, and long-term national instability, offering a timely perspective that aligns with current global environmental concerns.

Despite the depth of the problem, the book remains hopeful. It presents a comprehensive set of practical and ethical solutions—ranging from universal education and entrepreneurial development to transparent governance, anti-corruption reforms, and sustainable resource management. Above all, it emphasizes that genuine poverty reduction requires **ethical leadership and a cultural commitment to justice and responsibility**, not merely economic adjustments.

Written in clear and accessible language, *Poverty: Causes and Solutions* bridges academic insight and real-world application. It appeals to readers across disciplines—economics, sociology, public policy, political science, development studies, education, and environmental science—while remaining deeply relevant to general readers concerned about human welfare and the future of their communities.

This book positions itself as both a rigorous study and a moral call to action. In an era of rising inequality and global uncertainty, Alaghebandian offers a compelling roadmap for understanding the roots of poverty and for building societies where opportunity, fairness, and human dignity can flourish.

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