

Poverty in Fiji approaching 50%

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Speaking at the Devpolicy Pacific and PNG Update last week, Professor Biman Prasad of the University of the South Pacific presented new estimates suggesting that poverty in Fiji is now around 45%, up from 31% in 2008-09. No household surveys have been conducted over this period, but Professor Prasad presented a range of evidence to support his claim, including: very little growth in GDP; no growth in the formal sector workforce; and little increase in nominal wages and an estimated 30% decline in real incomes in the last six years. Professor Prasad argued that the incidence of poverty “is now more than 45% and approaching 50%”. Professor Prasad also stated that 33% of the labour force is underemployed, and that this figure is as high as 60% for 15-19 year olds, leading to involvement in crime.

Professor Prasad’s powerpoint is [here](#), and a podcast of his presentation [here](#). A video and a full write-up will be available shortly.