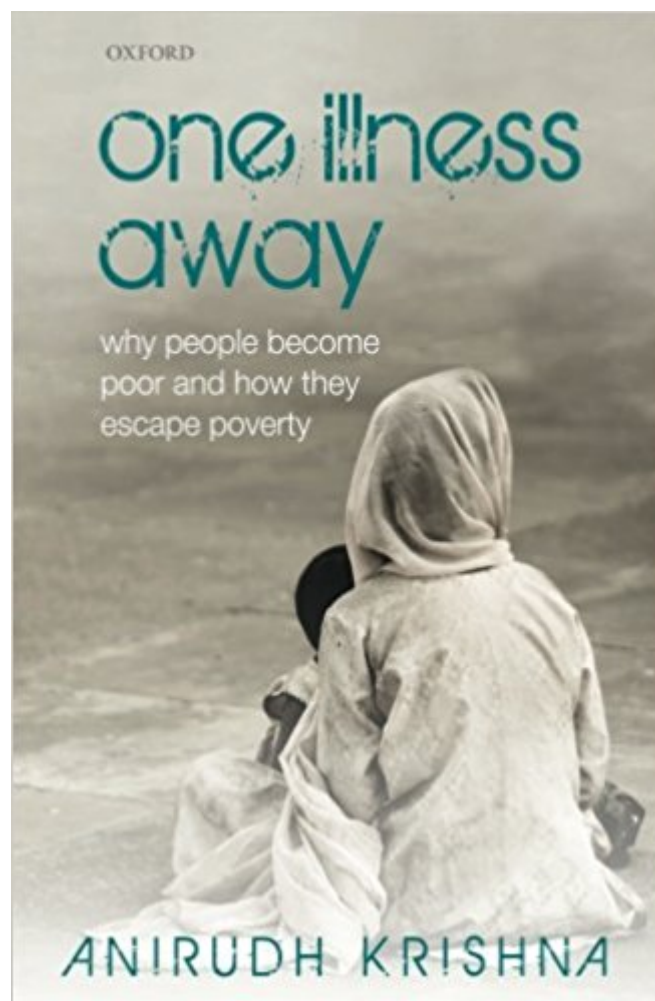




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# One Illness Away: Why People Become Poor And How They Escape Poverty



## Synopsis

Why does poverty persist? A critical, but so far ignored, part of the answer lies in the fact that poverty is regularly created. Large numbers of people are escaping poverty, but large numbers are concurrently falling into chronic poverty. This book presents the first large-scale examination of the reasons why people fall into poverty and how they escape it in diverse contexts. Drawing upon personal interviews with 35,000 households in different parts of India, Kenya, Uganda, Peru, and the United States, it takes you on an illustrative journey, filled with facts, analyses, and the life stories of people who fell into abject poverty and others who managed to escape their seemingly predetermined fates. Letting a farmhand's son or daughter remain a farmhand, even though he or she is potentially the next Einstein, is a tragedy that poor people witness time after time. Remedying this situation is crucial for making poverty history. This book addresses how equal opportunity can be promoted and how slum-born millionaires can arise in reality. Speaking to Barack Obama's message for more effective health care, *One Illness Away* feeds directly into current public debates. Learning from thousands of individual experiences, this book presents a clear agenda for action and provides more effective ways of keeping people out of micro poverty traps.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The outcome of a decade of work in five countries, and the result of conversations and surveys with more than 35,000 families, one of [the book's] chief goals--and accomplishments--is to flesh out our understanding of economic deprivation."--The New York Times"Many studies of poverty deal

with it as a statistical phenomenon, but this book is different. Krishna is a brilliant scholar who has spent considerable time in the field. He is aware that no panaceas or quick fixes exist, but he develops an ingenious approach to helping people out of poverty. This is a must-read for graduate students and policy makers alike."--Elinor Ostrom, Nobel Laureate in Economics 2009 and Co-director of the Workshop in Political Theory and Policy Analysis, Indiana University

"This lucid, readable, and convincing book is a landmark for development thinking and policy. Krishna's Stages of Progress research method reveals new realities about the dynamics of poverty. The findings in One Illness Away have radical implications for policy and practice. They shed new light on the priority and potentials of poverty prevention. The lesson for policy makers, lenders, donors, planners, and other development professionals is powerful: that it can cost less to prevent people falling into poverty than helping them escape. The message is stark and clear: sickness and accidents are the most common and most preventable cause of new poverty. No one who reads One Illness Away can fail to agree with the author on the priority of affordable, accessible and effective health services. After this book, things should never be the same again."--Robert Chambers, Professor and Research Associate, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex

"This book shows how poor people come to be poor and remain poor despite working hard. Krishna brings alive the everyday conditions of poor people, the struggles they wage constantly to lift themselves out of poverty, and the frequent yet preventable reversals that they suffer. The book also changes one's perspective on poverty reduction, arguing that while raising people out of poverty is essential, it is not enough. Additional measures are required to prevent the growth of future poverty. This book is a salutary guide to NGOs, governments, donor agencies, and interested publics, showing clearly what needs to be done now and in the future."--Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, KCMG, Founder and Chairperson BRAC

Anirudh Krishna holds a Ph.D. in Government (Cornell, 2000) and a Masters in Economics (Delhi, 1980). His research investigates how poor communities and individuals cope with the structural and personal constraints that result in poverty and powerlessness. Krishna is author or co-author of five books and more than 30 peer-reviewed articles. Before turning to academia in 1996, Krishna worked for 14 years in the Indian Administrative Service, where he managed diverse initiatives related to rural and urban development. His most recent research project, reported in this book and conducted over seven years between 2001 and 2008, examines household poverty dynamics in five countries. Krishna received the Dudley Seers Memorial Prize in 2005 for the initial work, which has also influenced future plans of diverse development organizations.

Scholarly observations and interviews in India, North Carolina and several other locales reveal reasons for changes in who is becoming poor and who is climbing out of poverty. By looking at individual experiences over time in several diverse locations it is possible to see both common factors and factors that vary with location. A descent into poverty is often a cascade of several events, that frequently includes a serious illness with associated medical expenses. The author, a professor at Duke University, makes the case that we can hope to reduce poverty by alleviating the causes of poverty. Prevent descents into poverty.

Good book, takes on more of a business mindset and looks at addressing poverty from this framework of understanding. Good book though and addresses an important issue.

Used in researching a presentation. Good as is but would have appreciated more specific suggestions for solutions. Nice start to research on a little covered topic.

Great book that gives you a new understanding of development.

This is a tremendous book and I would strongly recommend it to any academic or practitioner interested in poverty reduction. Too often, we focus on aggregate changes in poverty levels. Frequently, we also resign ourselves to assuming that raising GDP per capita will automatically create reductions in poverty. By contrast, the core insight Krishna presents in "One Illness Away" is simple but powerful: poverty levels observed at the aggregate level are actually the net result of households moving out of poverty and into it. Moreover, the reasons for escapes from poverty differ from the reasons for descent into it. Thus, the policies and interventions that would help to prevent descents into poverty are distinct from policies that promote escape from poverty. In "One Illness Away", Krishna develops innovative and practical tools for analyzing movements into and out of poverty. He then applies these tools to an impressive array of communities, collecting primary data on over 35,000 households in India, Kenya, Uganda, Peru and the United States. In so doing, Krishna finds both common themes and considerable local variation in the experiences of households and the reasons why they escape from poverty or decline into it over time. Krishna concludes the book with practical policy suggestions that neither parrot currently popular ideas for how to "solve" poverty, nor do they focus simply on overall economic growth in the hope it will unambiguously translate to poverty reduction. Rather, these recommendations are designed to work

at virtually any level of national wealth, and to be sensitive to the local mix of reasons why some households escape poverty while others fall into it. Plenty of work remains to be done to tease out and verify the pathways by which households enter and exit poverty over time in different locations, and to determine the effectiveness of policy interventions in facilitating net escapes from poverty. This book not only alerts us to the need for such a disaggregated approach to poverty analysis, but also provides the tools needed to implement it, offers ample evidence of what these pathways look like in several locations, and produces insights of immediate usefulness to practitioners. Chad Hazlett PhD student in Political Science

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