

# What is Poverty?

Jo Goodwin Parker

Summary

## Brief Summary

An anonymous person named Jo Goodwin Parker from West Virginia, in the southern United States, wrote this personal essay titled "What is Poverty?" With a note from Jo Goodwin Parker, she mailed her essay to George Henderson, a professor at the University of Oklahoma. This essay was later published without any additional information about the author or source. This essay contains the writer's painful life experiences as well as the hardships she faced as a result of her poverty. She has detailed her dreadful childhood and adulthood experiences.

## Summary - I

This essay titled 'What is Poverty?' was written by an anonymous person named Jo Goodwin Parker from West Virginia in the United States South. With the signature of Jo Goodwin Parker, this essay was mailed to George Henderson, a professor at the University of Oklahoma. This essay was later published with no further information about its author or source. The essay was published with the facts of a woman's hardships as a result of poverty. In this essay, we learn about the writer's painful experiences in her life as a result of her poverty. She has described her miserable experiences ranging from childhood to adulthood, during which she has faced a variety of adversities. She has discussed various aspects of poverty in this essay.

The writer has provided a realistic and graphic account of what it is like to be poor on a daily basis. Poverty, she claims, is more heinous and cruel than depicted in the media. Poverty, according to her, is a state of living without hope, better food, medical care, proper sanitation, and proper education. It's like an acid that eats away at one's pride, honour, health, and future. Parker's main goal is to demonstrate how humiliating, and disgusting it is to be poor. She wishes to draw the attention of the readers to the plight of the poor. She wants her readers to understand poverty without feeling sorry for her. Poor people live restless life, fearing for their children's future. Poverty shatters relationships.

Parker was the mother of three children. Because of their financial situation, her husband abandoned her. He didn't have a steady job. Due to the burden of his family, he abandoned all of them without even saying goodbye. During that time, their condition deteriorated. They didn't even have enough money to buy contraception to avoid unwanted pregnancies. She was employed. She was only making \$22 per week at the time. She had anaemia as a result of her poor diet.

The doctor advised her to have surgery, but she did not have the funds. She struggled alone to care for her children and faced a variety of difficulties during the cold and summer seasons' days and nights.

She once left her children in the care of her mother. When she returned home, however, she discovered her children in a pitiful state. Her youngest son was covered in fly specks, and he hadn't had his diaper changed since the morning. Her next child was playing with broken glasses, and her oldest son was alone at the lake's edge. She didn't have enough money to enrol them in a nursery school. She had to pay \$20 per week for three children to be admitted. Her income, however, was only \$22. She decided to leave her job in order to care for the children.

## **Summary - II**

In this essay, Jo Goodwin Parker has described her life living in poverty and her daily struggles for the sake of her family. According to her poverty has many faces. For her poverty is living with dirt, living without hope, better foodstuff, medical care, proper sanitation, and proper education. It is like an acid that destroys one's pride, honour, health, and future. She describes herself as dirty, smelly, and living life without proper clothes. She also describes that due to the high cost of essential things she does not have luxuries in her life.

She could not even afford the necessary items because of her poverty. She could not even get any help and support from the government agencies because it never exists in her area. She wants to get help through various agencies but she has no means to travel to reach them. Her job even does not support her to get out of her situation because it does not pay enough for the expense of child care. So Parker writes that poverty is looking into a black future because running life on a daily basis itself is a great challenge. In this situation, no one can expect a good future.

Parker does not want sympathy but she wants an understanding of her readers about poverty. Because of poverty, she left school at a very early age, got married, became pregnant many times because birth control was expensive for her. Even her husband left her because of poverty. her economic status was too poor so health does not come as a priority and could not do her operation in time. She used to give cornbread without oil as a breakfast to her kids. She did not buy soap in order to buy her baby diapers. She visited various government and private agencies to ask for help but could not find the right person to help her. She felt shame and humiliation for the sake of her three children. She had to spread her hands in different places.