



Securing land rights for the world's poorest



Building a Safety Net for Women in India . . . Anjaya's Story

When Anjaya's husband died suddenly, she found herself left with three children to support and no education or skills to make a living. But Anjaya was lucky; she had secure land rights.

Anjaya became the owner of a micro-plot of land in her rural village in Karnataka. She used her micro-plot to build a small house, plant vegetables, fruit trees and medicinal herbs to feed her children, and to raise poultry to generate income.

Most women in India are not as lucky as Anjaya. Without secure rights to assets like a plot of land, women must depend on men for their physical well-being, economic stability, and social status. When a woman's relationships with the men in her life terminate, she has no safety net. Unlike her brothers, she will not inherit a portion of the family land when her father dies. She will not be given a share of land when she marries. She will have no place in her husband's village and is not welcomed back in her natal home if her husband abandons or divorces her. She may be separated from her children, deprived of food and shelter and left destitute.

It is an impossible choice: security of shelter and basic welfare often carries the price of domestic abuse, while leaving usually means abandoning children and migrating to cities to join thousands of other women who must beg in the streets or turn to prostitution to survive.

Land provided Anjaya the safety net she needed – physical and emotional security – and created options for the entire family. RDI's "micro-land ownership" program in India is providing thousands of women like Anjaya with the same opportunities.

"Without this land, we all surely would have died," says Anjaya.

With the vegetables and fruit she grew to provide vital micro-nutrients for her children, and an excess to sell in the market, Anjaya was able to afford to send her children to school and give them a bright future filled with opportunities. Now, her children help care for the land so she can focus on her growing poultry business.

For Anjaya, a little land truly went a long way.