



**FOOD FOR
THE HUNGRY**

7 SURPRISING FACTS ABOUT WOMEN AND POVERTY



1

Three million children die from malnutrition every year. Children of literate mothers are 50 percent more likely to survive past the age of 5 and 26 percent less vulnerable to stunting.

– SOURCE: UNESCO



Extreme poverty isn't fair.

Women are especially vulnerable to extreme poverty.

In this special report, we want to reveal seven surprising facts around women and poverty. You'll see how women overcome through the prayers and support of friends like you.

The first fact about women and poverty shows the complexity of extreme poverty...

THE CHANCES OF CHILDREN SURVIVING IN EXTREME POVERTY GO UP WHEN THEIR MOTHER CAN READ.

Sadly, children suffer the most when women remain uneducated and illiterate. But there's even more to poverty than you might think.



Meet Rava.

Rava is a mother of three little ones from Bangladesh. Home is a village where the average person lives on less than \$1.25 a day.



Extreme poverty weighs on Rava. Her constant worry is for her children. Will they survive the dangers of their bleak situation?

ILLITERACY ADDS TO THE HOPELESSNESS OF WOMEN LIKE RAVA.

Reading helps women learn new skills and discover solutions to the problems families face. Being unable to read makes women vulnerable in all areas of their lives. They miss chances to gain access to services and aid for their families.

Worse, women like Rava have no hope that anything will ever get better. She believes that a generational cycle of extreme poverty binds her and her children.

But that began to change when Rava joined a local group of women where she could learn new skills.

Rava and the other women can now read and do basic math. They help each other in many other ways to overcome the obstacles to rising out of extreme poverty.



“I can read, and now I can work on my handwriting. I knew a little and now my literacy has improved. I can write and keep my own cash book and I feel proud of it.”

– RAVA

2

Women make up an average of 43 percent of the agricultural labor force in developing countries. Fewer than 20 percent of land owners are women.

– SOURCE: WORLD BANK

A Ray of Hope

The odds stack against women like Rava. They make up the majority of farmers but have little control over their assets or profits.

They plow, plant and gather the crops, but cultural norms keep women from participating in the marketplace. Imagine how much more vulnerable this makes single women.

BUT A RAY OF HOPE EMERGED FOR RAVA WHEN SHE BOUGHT A COW WITH A LOAN FROM HER FRIENDS IN THE WOMEN'S GROUP.

As a woman, Rava never had the land or money she needed to buy livestock or start her own farm. By saving with other women, she received a loan to buy a milk cow.

“The biggest thing for me is that I can take loans from the group instead of elsewhere. I feel proud to be able to buy things.”

– RAVA



NOW, RAVA CAN RECEIVE THE BENEFITS OF WHAT THE COW CAN PRODUCE FOR HER AND THE FAMILY.

Rava's children love the cow's milk that sustains them. Through nutrition programs, Rava learned to provide her children with protein and to vary their diet. Stronger bodies lead to healthier minds, helping Rava's little ones to achieve more in school.



And speaking of school, the money generated by selling the cow's milk helps to pay for the children's education. The income from the cow's milk also allows her to buy necessities and even save for her children's future.

Education and friendship empowered Rava and her friends to break the cycle of extreme poverty for their families.

3

**1.3 billion women don't have an account
at a financial institution.**

– SOURCE: UNITED NATIONS

Increasing Access to Financial Resources

At first, Rava feared she'd lose any money she earned. She didn't have a safe place to keep it. Even if there was a bank nearby, she couldn't scrape together the required minimum deposit.

Rava's house wasn't a good place for the precious little money she did have. Like everyone else in her village, Rava's house was vulnerable to robbery.

Another problem was accountability. Anyone in the household could take Rava's money and spend it without telling her.

BUT RAVA AND THE WOMEN IN HER COMMUNITY ARE NOW PUTTING THEIR MONEY INTO A LOCK BOX. IT TAKES A GROUP DECISION TO MOVE THE MONEY.

The cash boxes have two or three locks. Different group members each take possession of a key to maintain accountability and transparency.

This encourages a new attitude of trust. It also gives Rava's savings more protection from theft or misuse. She can now grow her savings to care for her family. She calls it a ray of hope in a dark world.

4

**Women make up 61 percent of the
123 million illiterate young people between
the ages of 15 and 24.**

– SOURCE: UNESCO

Increasing Access to Education

The large number of girls who are out of school cements them in a generational cycle of extreme poverty. They will grow up to be illiterate as adults – which lessens their children's chances of survival.

Rava knows her children will have more chances to live a fulfilling life free of hunger if they go to school. It broke her heart to know she couldn't afford to send them ...

Until now ...

Thanks to her group of supporting women, a savings plan and new life skills.

AND A COW.



Not only can Rava send her children to school, she knows how to keep them healthy. She and her friends now have kitchen gardens and have learned how to serve more nutritious meals.

Better yet, she can also breed her cow to produce a calf to sell and improve her children's lives even more.

ONE LOAN FROM HER WOMEN'S SAVINGS GROUP IS CHANGING RAVA'S FAMILY FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

5

Negative attitudes toward women make them vulnerable to domestic violence, discrimination and inadequate income, healthcare and access to water and sanitation.

– SOURCE: UNESCO

Changing Attitudes to End Poverty

Domestic violence is among the most common symptoms of extreme poverty. The intense hopelessness, pain and fears of everyday life pressure families. This often spills out in the form of violence toward women and children.

AT THE CORE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS THE UNBIBLICAL VIEW THAT WOMEN AND CHILDREN HAVE LESS VALUE THAN MEN.

Even the women in many cultures believe it's okay for men to beat them. And for parents to beat their children.

These negative attitudes perpetuate the violence in every generation. It blocks families from getting out of poverty.

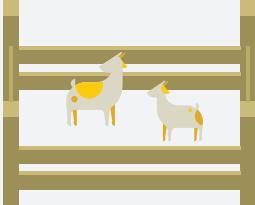
RAVA'S COMMUNITY IS HELPING TO CHANGE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES.

When women can increase income, cook better and keep children healthier, their perceived value skyrockets.

Programs like care groups and coaching provided by Food for the Hungry also help families with anger management, addiction and communication.

The result of programs that change negative attitudes toward women and children is greater access to income, improved healthcare, education and access to clean water and sanitation.

FH PROGRAMS HELPING TO CHANGE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES



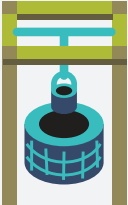
Income



Healthcare



Education



Clean Water



Sanitation

6

Girls living in poor households are twice as likely to marry as young teenagers. This limits their ability to move out of poverty.

– SOURCE: UNESCO

Reducing Child Marriage

Rava loves each of her children. But, there are so little resources to go around.

Many families resort to giving their young daughters away in marriage. They see it as a way to ease the economic burden and to provide for their daughter's future.

But child marriages make the problem of extreme poverty worse. They often mean the end of the girl's education and any hope for earning an income.

Rava and the women in her community are reducing the need for child marriages.

And the women have learned to look out for each other. They keep a social fund for major life events like weddings, medical expenses and funerals.

With a way to keep her family well fed and healthy, Rava's daughter won't marry until she's an adult.

7

Women in rural communities of developing countries travel long distances to fetch water, food and firewood. This puts them at risk for violence and robs time needed to move out of poverty and care for their children.

– SOURCE: UNESCO

Overcoming Poverty

Many of the world's women and girls face constant risk.

THAT'S NOT OKAY.

Food for the Hungry commits to helping women overcome poverty. Programs include savings and support groups like Rava's, along with much more.

Through it all, women learn to support each another, save money and change basic household behaviors. They discover how to keep children healthy and strong through things like:

- Health and nutrition training
- Clean water and sanitation programs
- Skills training
- Agricultural guidance
- Lessons in basic healthcare
- And the knowledge that they and their children have value

The result is children who thrive rather than face a daily struggle to survive.

DESPITE THE CRIPPLING ODDS, WOMEN ARE A MAJOR KEY TO ENDING THE CYCLE OF EXTREME POVERTY.

Research shows that economies grow as women learn to read, receive skills training and take part in the local market.

That's why Food for the Hungry helps women by ...

- Offering hope in hopeless situations
- Increasing access to education, income, clean water, sanitation and healthcare
- Improving attitudes toward girls and women and
- Delaying marriage and childbearing past the age of 18

Rava believes her women's group has added enormous value to her life.

“I want to keep the group strong and active. A big thing is that the group has made the women in the community united.”

– RAVA

Sources

➤ **USAID REPORT**

“Gender and extreme poverty.” Getting to Zero: A USAID discussion series. September 2015. https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1870/Gender_Extreme_Poverty_Discussion_Paper.pdf

➤ **KLASEN, S. & LAMANNA, F. (2009)**

The impact of gender inequality in education and employment on economic growth: New evidence for a panel of countries. *Feminist Economics*, 15(3), 91-132.

It only takes a simple step.

You can make a big difference in the lives of families like Rava's with even a small donation to Food for the Hungry.

Your gift today of \$10... \$25... or \$50 will make a tremendous difference to feed, clothe, shelter and educate desperate families.

GIVE SECURELY ONLINE AT [FH.ORG/GIVE](https://www.fh.org/give)

OR

SEND YOUR GIFT PAYABLE TO FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY TO OUR OFFICE AT:

FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY

1224 E. WASHINGTON STREET

PHOENIX, AZ 85034-1102

Join us today in meeting the basic needs of women and children who are facing unimaginable hardships.

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