



FOOD FOR  
THE HUNGRY

# 7 SURPRISING FACTS ABOUT WOMEN AND POVERTY



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**Three million children die from malnutrition every year. Children of literate mothers are 50% more likely to survive past the age of 5.**

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**– 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 are able to overcome through the prayers and support of friends like you.

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

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

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



## Meet Rava.

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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 and 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**

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**Women comprise 43% of the agricultural labor force in developing countries. Fewer than 20% of land owners are women.**

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**– 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 even married women from participating in the marketplace. This makes single women even more vulnerable.

**BUT A RAY OF HOPE EMERGED THE DAY A GROUP OF WOMEN HELPED RAVA BUY A COW.**

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. I feel proud to be able to buy things.”**

**– RAVA**

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## **NOW, THE COW MAKES IT POSSIBLE FOR RAVA TO PROVIDE FOR HER 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.



Rava's cow not only provides quality nourishment for her family. The extra milk now generates an income to pay for school, buy necessities, and even save for her children's future.

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

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**980 million women don't have an account  
at a financial institution.**

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**– SOURCE: WORLD BANK**

# 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 to keep the precious little money she did have. Like everyone else in her village, Rava's house was vulnerable to robbery.

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

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

The cash boxes have two or three locks. More than one key is required to open the box 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.

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**Of the 115 million illiterate young people  
between the ages of 15 and 24,  
women make up 59%.**

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**– SOURCE: UNICEF**

## Increasing Access to Education

The large percentage of girls who leave school early become enmeshed in a 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, that can be sold and the proceeds used to improve her children's lives even more.

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

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**Negative attitudes toward women make them vulnerable to such things as domestic violence, discrimination, inadequate income, poor healthcare, and lack of access to water and sanitation.**

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**– 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 create pressure on 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 excusable (or permissible) 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 climbing out of poverty.

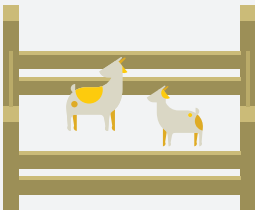
## **RAVA'S COMMUNITY IS HELPING TO CHANGE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES.**

When women can increase income, cook tasty and nutritious meals 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, better education, and more access to clean water and improved sanitation.

# FH PROGRAMS HELPING TO CHANGE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES



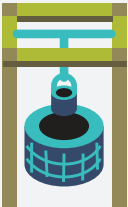
Income



Healthcare



Education



Clean Water



Sanitation

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

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**– SOURCE: UNESCO**

# Reducing Child Marriage

Rava loves each of her children. But there are precious few resources to care for them and her household.

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.

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**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.**

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**– SOURCE: UNESCO**

# Overcoming Poverty

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

Food for the Hungry commits to helping women and girls of all ages overcome poverty.

We do that through a variety of programs, and the savings and support group Rava belongs to is one example. Through these efforts, women are empowered to support one another, save money, and gain critical parenting skills.

We also accomplish this by caring for and empowering girls through child sponsorship.

We believe children are a barometer for a community's success and well-being. By providing life-changing resources such as clean water, medical aid, food, equal educational opportunities and vocational training, young girls are given the needed tools – and hope – to thrive as God intended.

## **DESPITE THE CRIPPLING ODDS, WOMEN AND GIRLS ARE A MAJOR KEY TO ENDING THE CYCLE OF 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
- 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**

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# It only takes a simple step.

**You can make an eternal difference in the lives of women like Rava.**

Join us today as we empower women and girls of all ages in some of the world's most vulnerable communities.

## **How?**

Through child sponsorship. When you sponsor a child, you help that child, their family, and a whole community overcome poverty. You'll provide life-changing resources such as food, a better education, clean water and medical treatment to break the generational cycle of poverty. Your support will make a life changing difference.

**Sponsor a child today by visiting:**

**[FH.ORG/GIVE/SPONSOR-A-CHILD/](https://www.fh.org/give/sponsor-a-child/)**

**FH.ORG**



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