

# Tajikistan Country Gender Profile



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## Executive Summary

After the breakup of the Soviet system many former Soviet republics went through painful transformation from a socialist system of governing to the hostile previously capitalistic system. Tajikistan was not an exception. Its transformation was even more dramatic due to the civil war, which broke in the country in 1992 and lasted until 1997, claiming lives of thousands people and displacing many others. Despite some hard-won accomplishments in social and economic reform during the last decade, the majority of population remains poor. Therefore Tajikistan's main priority is poverty reduction. The socio-economic development depends from such factors like good governance, macroeconomic stability, education, healthcare and the rule of law. However these factors are the biggest challenge for the country to address.

The changes of the social and economic context affected both men and women, as both of these sexes are hit by the biggest scale of the poverty. Nevertheless, women found themselves in the greater difficulty than man due to extortion of traditional values towards more patriarchal attitudes, rapid rise of religion, making them together with the collapse of the economic security vulnerable to different negative trends in the country.

In the result of the collapse of the economy, working women were forced to leave better paid jobs for the sectors and positions with lesser wages. In addition, the financial crisis scaled down the social security programs, depriving women and their children from the numerous kinds of benefits they enjoyed during the Soviet times. Hence the poverty is taking more and more a female shape.

The education system, which was in the past a guarantee for the women's well off future, is facing the same challenges like other sectors. This is not helping to change for better the situation regarding girls attendance. Overall poverty and flourishing traditional believes about the place of women, resulted in the considerable drop out of girls from the secondary and higher education institutions, which put in jeopardy the very future of majority of women.

Health status of women is challenged by the poverty and numerous problems connected with decline of the health services in Tajikistan. Today Tajikistan struggles with high infant- under five and maternal mortality rates, anemia, chronic malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. High level of malaria cases, increasing prevalence of tuberculosis, measles, increasing numbers of sexually transmitted diseases, spread of HIV/AIDs are also of a big concern.

There is a significant decrease in numbers of women participating in decision making and in politics. Male dominated sphere is hardly willing to support women to be part of it. The legacy of the recent civil war and a heavy workload at home do not encourage women to advance at this direction. This is a challenge for the civil society organizations to exercise their skills and experience in. The other challenging issue is an increasing numbers of women subjected to violence within their families.

The recent researches show the violence against women becoming a common phenomenon for Tajikistan. Problems that turned into burning issues in the transition period, such as unemployment, poverty, and social inequality contributed to the increase of psychological, sexual and physical violence against women in Tajikistan.

Nevertheless, in spite of poor budget and capacities in the country, the government is making efforts to address all the problems, including those in connection with women issues through reforms in the sectors, legislative system, targeted gender policies and programs. The relevant institutions of the government are supported by the international financial and technical aid.

## 1. Basic Profile

### (1) Socio-Economic Profile

#### Growth and Production Structure of GDP

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
GDP at market prices (S bn)	3.4	4.8	6.2	7.2	9.3
GDP (US\$ bn)	1.2	1.6	2.1	2.3	2.8
Real GDP growth (%)	9.1	10.2	10.6	6.7	7.0
Consumer price inflation (av; %)	12.2	16.3	7.1	7.8	11.9
Population (m)	6.5	6.6	6.8	6.9b	7.0b
Exports of goods fob (US\$ m)	699	906	1,0971	1,108	1,315b
Imports of goods fob (US\$ m)	-823	-1,026	11,232	-1,431	-1,666b
Current-account balance (US\$ m)	-17	-5	-57	-19	29b
Foreign-exchange reserves excl gold (US\$ m)	89.5	111.9	157.5	168.2	175.1
Exchange rate (av) S:US\$	2.76	3.06	2.97	3.12	3.30

Source: a Actual. b Economist Intelligence Unit estimates

#### Proportion of Women and Men in urban and rural areas as of January 1, 2007

	Men	Women
<b>Total Population</b> 7.063800	3.544200/ 50.2%	3.519600/ 49.8 %
<b>Total of Urban population</b> 1.857700	932 700/ 50.2%	925 000/ 49.8 %
<b>Total of Rural Population</b> 5.206100	2.611500/ 50.2%	2.594600/ 49.8 %

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

#### Percentage of women out of total employed people as of 2004

	Men (%)	Women (%)
<b>Employed in economy – total</b>	58.8	41.2
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	44.3	55.7
Mining	87.6	12.4
Manufacturing industry	70.00	30.00
Hydropower production, gas and water	92.1	7.9
Construction	96.3	3.7
Wholesale trade of motor vehicles and commodities	76.1	23.9
Hotels and restaurants	51.1	48.9
Transport and communication	92.6	7.4
Financial activity	77.6	22.4
Operations with fixed property, renting and provision of services	87.1	12.9
Public administration and security	83.8	16.2
Healthcare and provision of social services	33.7	66.3
Education	48.0	52.0
Provision of other communal social services	81.9	18.1
Provision of Housework services	70.07	29.3
Gathering/Collecting	51.6	48.4

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

### Representation of men and women in the Parliament as of January 1, 2007

	Number		%	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Majlisi Milli	30	4	88.2	11.8
Majlisi Namoyandagon	52	11	82.5	17.5
Majlises of Peoples Deputies-regional	156	34	82.1	17.9
Majlises of Peoples Deputies-city	563	93	85.8	14.2
Majlises of Peoples Deputies-districts	1578	291	84.4	15.6

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

### Division of the population by age groups

Age	2000			2007		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
Total population	6127.5	3069.1	3058.4	7063.8	3544.2	3519.6
By age:						
0-4	882.0	448.6	433.4	865.1	444.3	420.8
5-9	881.7	448.6	433.1	841.8	429.4	412.4
10-14	853.0	431.1	421.9	865.9	439.5	426.4
15-19	669.9	338.2	331.7	870.8	441.4	429.4
20-24	533.9	266.0	267.9	736.6	371.1	365.5
25-29	468.3	231.2	237.1	563.8	283.1	280.7
30-34	414.7	204.3	210.4	469.3	230.5	238.8
35-39	385.8	190.7	195.1	419.9	206.2	213.7
40-44	287.4	142.3	145.1	380.8	186.8	194.0
45-49	195.6	96.6	99.0	327.5	161.9	165.6
50-54	119.1	59.8	59.3	213.	105.0	108.4
55-59	98.7	52.4	46.3	140.	68.9	71.2
60-64	113.6	56.6	57.0	70.6	37.8	32.8
65-69	94.0	45.2	48.8	99.9	50.	49.9
70-74	67.7	33.7	34.0	82.8	39.1	43.7
75-79	36.2	14.5	21.7	64.4	31.2	33.2
80-84	14.1	5.2	8.9	33.5	14.0	19.5
85-89	7.2	2.7	4.5	11.9	3.2	8.7
90-94	2.6	0.9	1.7	3.6	0.6	3.0
95-99	1.5	0.4	1.1	1.3	0.2	1.1
100 and older	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.8	0	0.8
Of the total:						
Under working age	2616.8	1328.4	1288.4	2572.8	1313.2	1259.6
Working age	3184.2	1616.4	1567.8	4121.3	2077.0	2044.3
Above working age	326.5	124.3	202.2	369.7	154.0	215.7
Average population age	22.9	22.7	23.2	24.7	24.4	25.1

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

### Number of marriages and divorces

Year	Marriage	Divorce
2000	26 597	2 373
2001	28 950	2 239
2002	32 299	2 257
2003	39 102	2 383
2004	47 320	2 587
2005	52 352	2 885
2006	57 278	3 018

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

## (2) Health Profile

### Healthcare allocations from the state budget (in million Somoni)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
State budget allocations-total	261.8	379.7	543.0	772.3	1090.6	1402.7	1778.8
Healthcare allocations	16.9	24.3	30.6	43.3	58.2	82.4	105.4
In % of total state budget allocations	6.5	6.4	5.6	5.6	5.3	5.8	5.6
In % of GDP	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.2	1.1
Per capita, Somoni	2.73	3.86	4.76	6.59	8.68	11.9	14.9

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

### Main causes of death in 2005 (in persons)

Cause of death	Total		At employment age	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Total deaths	17587	14403	4816	2481
Including from:				
Blood circulation diseases	7678	7064	1667	799
Respiratory diseases	1390	1356	262	233
Cancers/tumors	1203	998	539	474
Accidents, intoxication, trauma	1280	449	958	244
Digestive diseases	834	585	458	237
Infectious and parasitic dis.	790	549	437	245
Tuberculosis	380	242	308	185
Suicides	139	48	127	40

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

### Medical and preventive care facilities and medical personnel (as of end of year)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
# of health facilities-units	441	439	449	452	453	454	449
# of hospital beds:	41154	40447	40408	40240	40555	40552	40334
Total units per 10 000 population:	65.8	63.4	62.1	60.6	59.8	58.6	57.1
Of the total #, beds for: pregnant women and women in labor	3867	3753	3657	3624	3655	3720	3730
total units per 10 000 women aged 15-49	25.6	23.9	22.5	21.5	21.0	20.6	20.0
Gynecological patients	1366	1382	1376	1438	1390	1402	1445
total units per 10 000 women	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.1	4.1
Capacity of out-patient polyclinics:	59.5	63.0	63.4	67.7	67.4	67.5	67.6
Thousands visits per shift per 10 000 patients	95.2	100.0	97.5	102.0	94.4	97.5	95.7
# of medical houses	1676	1691	1709	1714	1710	1712	1712
# of doctors of all specialties (excluding dentists)	13507	13404	13103	12697	12987	13268	13267
Total units per 10 000 population	21.6	21.0	20.1	19.1	19.2	19.2	18.8
Of them:	2225	2217	2128	2004	1948	1958	1964
Pediatricians	8.5	8.5	8.2	7.7	7.5	7.6	7.6
Total units per 10 000 children	1274	1295	1212	1256	1265	1228	1243
Obstetricians-gynecologists	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.6
total units per 10 000 women	32220	30660	30272	28586	28739	28877	29437
# of nurses	51.5	48.1	46.5	43.1	42.4	42.2	41.7
total units per 10 000 population of them midwives	3889	3932	3857	3780	3636	3754	3828
total units per 10 000 women	12.6	12.5	12.0	11.5	10.9	11.0	11.0

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

**Cumulative birth ratio (the average number of children born by the same woman in her reproductive period)**

Years	of total population	Urban population	Rural population
2000	3.493	3.092	3.669
2001	3.487	3.274	3.584
2002	3.471	3.036	3.652
2003	3.420	3.147	3.538
2004	3.354	3.027	3.490
2005	3.274	2.847	3.445
2006	3.266	2.893	3.415

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

**Life expectancy at birth (years)**

Years	Total population			Urban population			Rural population		
	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female	Both	Male	Female
2000	68.2	66.1	70.3	68.0	65.0	71.1	68.5	66.8	70.2
2001	69.1	67.0	71.2	69.0	65.7	72.3	69.3	67.7	70.9
2002	69.1	67.1	71.1	69.4	66.7	72.1	69.1	67.4	70.9
2003	70.1	67.9	72.3	69.6	66.4	73.0	70.4	68.6	72.2
2004	71.0	68.6	73.4	70.0	66.6	73.4	71.5	69.5	73.4
2005	70.6	68.1	73.2	70.2	66.9	73.5	70.8	68.6	73.1

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

**Number of registered HIV positive people by region as of July 1, 2007**

Total in Tajikistan	Breakdown by sexes		In %	
	Men	Women	Men	women
	623	133	82.4	17.6
GBAO (Badakhshan)	60	1	98.4	1.6
Khatlon Region	109	22	83.2	16.8
Sogd Region	183	57	76.3	23.8
Dushanbe	229	42	84.5	15.6
RRS	42	11	79.2	20.8

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

**Mother and Child Health Child mortality by sexes (under 5 years old)**

Years	Persons			Per 1000 births		
	Both sexes	boys	girls	Both sexes	boys	girls
1990	12545	6884	5661	61.0	65.2	56.5
1996	7344	4085	3259	42.6	55.9	47.9
2000	3369	1853	1516	20.1	21.7	18.5
2001	3442	1900	1542	20.1	21.5	18.5
2002	3430	1891	1539	19.5	20.9	18.1
2003	3033	1705	1328	17.0	18.6	15.4
2004	2965	1723	1242	16.5	18.6	14.3
2005	2957	1669	1288	16.4	17.9	14.7

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

**Infant mortality by sexes (under 1 year old)**

Years	Persons			Per 1000 births		
	Both sexes	girls	boys	Both sexes	girls	boys
1990	8316	4620	3696	40.4	43.8	36.9
1996	4415	2517	1898	25.6	34.4	27.9
2000	2102	1188	914	12.6	13.9	11.2
2001	2221	1276	945	12.9	14.4	11.4
2002	2162	1252	910	12.3	13.8	10.7
2003	1944	1120	824	10.9	12.2	9.5
2004	2071	1235	836	11.5	13.4	9.6
2005	2129	1223	906	11.8	13.1	10.4

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

**Maternal mortality of abnormal pregnancy, during and after child delivery**

Years	Persons			Per 100 000 live births		
	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural
1990	86	23	63	41.8	47.9	39.9
1996	60	23	37	34.8	54.7	28.4
2000	58	15	43	34.7	35.4	34.4
2001	43	12	31	25.1	26.4	24.6
2002	57	13	44	32.5	30.4	33.1
2003	36	11	25	20.2	24.3	18.8
2004	37	11	26	20.6	24.8	19.2
2005	29	9	20	16.0	21.1	14.5

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics



### (3) Education Profile

#### Allocations to education from the state budget

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Education funding from the state budget (in thousands Somoni)	41 606.6	60 931.1	86 869.0	112082.1	164252.0	253105.5	317723.8
In % of GDP	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.4	2.7	3.5	3.4
state budget allocations	15.9	16.9	16	14.5	15.1	18	17.8

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

#### Child coverage by pre-school institutions

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Child coverage (age 1-6) by pre-school facilities, total	5.1	5.6	6.9	6.3	6.2	6.2	6.1
Boys	4.6	5.2	8.1	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.4
girls	5.5	5.9	5.8	6.0	5.9	5.8	5.8

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

#### Graduates of general education schools (in thousands)

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
# of students awarded certificate of basic second education	117.4	105.8	105.0	144.0	144.5	149.8	158.3
boys	....	.....	59.0	79.9	80.7	81.6	88.7
girls	...	.....	47.0	64.1	63.8	68.2	69.6
# of students awarded certificate of (full) secondary education	36.8	65.2	70.3	63.3	64.9	79.6	79.2
boys	.....	.....	44.7	40.2	39.7	48.9	48.6
girls	.....	.....	25.6	23.1	25.2	30.7	30.6

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

#### Graduates of the secondary and higher professional education institutions

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total graduates of 2ndly professional education institutes	6885	7704	6488	5037	7630	8003	7457
Men		3764	2845	2679	2771	3227	2774
Women		2845	3643	2358	4859	4776	4683
Total graduates of higher professional education institutes	13.6	12.0	11.6	13.4	14.4	15.1	17.1
Men		8.7	8.8	10.7	11.0	11.1	12.6
Women		3.3	2.8	2.7	3.3	4.0	4.5

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

## 2. The Development Context in Tajikistan and General Situation of Women

### (1) General Situation of Women in Tajikistan

#### Key points

- a. 26 000 women were widowed in the result of the civil war 1992-1997
- b. In 2006 birth rate officially was 26.7 per 1000 population
- c. There is sharp decrease of employment in all sectors, women affected most
- d. Increased numbers of migration, according to some estimations, from 450 000 to 1.2 mln. people. Women constitute 6 %

Tajikistan is a landlocked Central Asian country. More than 90% of its territory is mountainous with only about 10% suitable for cultivation. Although the mountainous terrain complicates transport and communication, it also endows the country with rich hydropower potential, as well as coal, gold, silver tungsten, uranium (according to some estimations: approximately 14 to 60 % of the world reserves), and other resources.

According to official statistics, by January 1, 2007 population of Tajikistan was estimated at approximately 7 063 800 million people, of which 3 519 600 were women and 3 544 200- men. 1 857,7 of this number (49.8%- women) live in urban areas and 5206, 1 (49.8) – in rural areas. Women constitute 49.8% and men 50.2% of the population. On average the population is increasing by 2.1 each year. The most populated area is Khatlon Region having 35.7% of the total population-101.6 persons/sq.km, then come Sogd Region with 29.7%- 82.5 persons/sq.km, Districts of Republican Subordination – 22.2%; 54.8 persons/sq.km , Gorno-Badakhshan, though biggest in territory (44.9 % of the country's total area) – 3.1%; 3.4 persons/sq.km.

By January 1, 2007 36.4% of population was 14 years old or younger and 4.2 % was aged 65 and older. In 2006 birth rate was 26.7 per 1000 population and the death rate was 4.6 per 1000 population. Infant mortality rate in 2005, according to Multi Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) was 65.1% per 1000 live births. Overall life expectancy the same year was 70.6 years: 68.1 for boys and 73.2 for girls. However the Human Development Report for Tajikistan in 2006 provides for 2004 the following indicator: 66.4 for women and 61.2 for men.

Tajikistan gained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. During the soviet era, what is now Tajikistan was a state-controlled command economy dominated by the cotton and aluminum industries and heavily subsidized by transfers from the rest of the Soviet Union. Much of the production structure was very rigid and ill suited to the demands of the market economy. However, Tajikistan inherited by that time a relatively well developed economic and social structure including social protection, health and education systems.

Independency brought though to Tajikistan conflicts and economic collapse, which was a result of the disruption to integrate trade and production systems within what had been the Soviet Union, the ending of subsidies from the Soviet Union and a civil war which had place from 1992 to 1997. The civil war resulted in the death of more than 60,000 people, and an estimated 26,000 women were widowed, 55,000 children orphaned and 600, 000 people were displaced. It caused some USD 7 billion in damage. Real GDP fell by more than 70 % before it began to recover at the end of the 1999s. The recovery was largely the result of a rebound in aggregate demand, facilitated by the gradual stabilization of the economy, inflows of remittances, and donor aid, which enabled under-utilized production capacity to be brought back into production. Nevertheless the living standards of the Tajik population suffered from the fall in real GDP, the ending of subsidies from the Soviet Union and consequences of the civil war. Tajikistan now has the status of a low income country with a per capita GDP of around USD 360 per annum. With employment opportunities severely limited in Tajikistan, approximately one third of the working age population or (there is no accurate statistics, but according to some estimations) from 350,000 to 1,000,000Tajik citizens currently work abroad, mostly in Russia. The incidence of income poverty was estimated at 64 percent in 2004 and remains high, especially in rural areas, and a large segment of the population subsists mainly on remittances sent by family members working abroad.

The restoration of peace and security throughout the country combined with the bringing back into production of underutilized capacity allowed for a rapid recovery of output, with real GDP growth averaging just under 10% per annum during 2000-2005. Nevertheless aggregated real output is still about 30% lower than its level in 1990. In 2006 real GDP growth was 7%, with nearly all of the leading sectors performing well. Industrial production expanded by 4.9% year on year to S4.56bn, primarily owing to increased aluminum output (Aluminum continues to dominate Tajikistan's foreign trade, its importance increased in 2006, when it accounted for 75%, up from 62% in 2005); consumer goods production rose by 6.1% to S1.19bn; agriculture increased by 5.4% to S3.66bn and retail trade turnover grew by 11.6% to S2.73bn. Inflation had accelerated to 12.5% year on year by end 2006, owing to increases in remittance inflows and imported energy prices. The International Organization for Migration estimates Tajikistan's annual income from remittances at USD 400m, and the IMF puts the figure at between USD 400m and USD1bn.

The country's economy largely depends on the agricultural sector, which provided 22 % of GDP in 2003 and 24.2% in 2004. The sector covers 66% of all employment, 26% of export and 39% of tax revenues. Agricultural growth in 1998-2004 constituted approximately one third of the total economic growth. In that period the volume of agricultural production increased by 65% and has now returned to the 1990 level. Its share in GDP fell by 15 percentage points in over 1991-2005 period.

The agricultural sector in general, and the cotton sector in particular, face significant challenges: accumulating debt, old machinery, emigration of much of the labor force, poor irrigation and drainage systems, lack of secure land ownership, corruption, and conflicts between cotton and food production. Exports of cotton, Tajikistan's second-largest source of export revenue, which in 2004, according to the World Bank, made up 25% of the cumulative volume of agricultural production, continue to perform poorly. Production in Tajikistan is suffering from stagnant yields and a large debt burden, which has been accumulating since the late 1990s, after worsening terms of trade prevented farmers from repaying the cost of agricultural inputs lent to them, often at extortionate rates, by intermediary

companies. Exports of cotton fibre fell by 11% in 2006 and accounted for just 9.2% of total export earnings, the lowest share since independence. According to some estimates the debt now exceeds US\$350m.

Agriculture is the main source of income for many rural families. According to estimations in 2003, one third of rural households, including 86% of rural women are engaged in agriculture. Women make 60% of agricultural workers. Within agriculture, they work as a seasonal labor that does not require special skills and receive very small and irregular payments. Women in rural areas have problems with accessing lands and its privatization, which should have been resolved by the adopted by the government Law on Equal rights and Opportunities for Men and Women. Since it is not happening, some of international and local civil society organizations made a priority to help the government to address it. In spite of some economic upheaval after the civil war, the state of the economy is still very poor getting the country into big loans and as a consequence into debts, which exceed its capacities to pay them back. The country's large external debt complicates fiscal and economic management. Almost the entire government investment budget is financed by official development assistance. The Ministry of Finance estimates Tajikistan's external debt to have been US\$866m, or about 31% of GDP, at the end of 2006.

The private business in Tajikistan, also, faces number of challenges. In the shift to a market economy bureaucratic obstacles, complex tax codes, lack of capital and strong vested interests hinder the development of legitimate private businesses, above all small and medium enterprises. Commerce is negatively affected by Tajikistan's difficult geographical and geopolitical context. Tajikistan's progression to a market economy is impeded by corruption. Bribes are often a key part of the income of government employees. The wages of most workers have declined in the past five years, and only a small number of government employees can rely completely on wages. In 2003, the average wage of a public sector employee was \$10 per month, well below a sustainable wage. A UN financed study by the presidential Strategic Research Centre concluded in January 2007 that corruption is widespread in Tajikistan, and is worsening. The most prevalent types of corruption are bribery and extortion. Requests for illegal payments are common, especially from civil servants, traffic police, tax officials, and even teachers, professors, doctors, prosecutors and judges.

The economical hardships had their toll on other sectors of the country. Healthcare system of Tajikistan after fall of the Soviet system has dramatically deteriorated. Expenditure on health care has been reduced to almost a fifth of what was spent in the Soviet period- from 4.8 in 1990 to 1.0% of the GDP in 1999-2003. The state healthcare per capita expenses in 2003 constituted only \$2.2. This is the lowest rate in all Central Asian republics and falls behind the 5% rate recommended by WHO for developing countries. Patients' main needs in medical supply (up to 90%) in some regions are satisfied through private payments. According to the World Bank assessment, over 80% of expenses on medical supplies are paid from patients' pockets. On the whole, the population's expenses on healthcare absorb 30% of family budgets. Poverty become a reason of decrease in use of medical services among the population, which has brought also to increase of home deliveries from 40% to 80% as oppose to Soviet period when hospital deliveries were as high as 90%. Today, the country struggles with high infant- under five and maternal mortality rates, anemia, chronic malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies. High level of malaria cases, increasing prevalence of tuberculosis, measles etc. are also of a big concern

One of the main causes of death in the country is malignant tumor. In 2000 breast cancer among women was a second dominating cancer disease. Tumor death indicators are lagging behind of only cardiovascular pathologies and respiratory diseases. The growing number of drug users, labor migrants, commercial sex workers, low awareness level and poor system of epidemiological control, registration and monitoring contribute to spread of HIV/AIDS. The total number of infected people, according to UNAIDS experts and Republican Center of HIV/AIDS is estimated at 6-10,000 people. According to the official statistics it reached only 628 people in September, 2006. Ministry of Health reports that in 2005 85.2% of infected people were men and 14.8 were women.

The country's education system did not also escape from the challenges put forward by the breakup of the Soviet system and the civil war. During the Soviet period, Tajikistan achieved a great increase in the level of people's literacy, which was estimated officially as high as 99% and had a developed system of general basic education (11 grades), as well as quite educated labor resources. However, most of these achievements have been lost since independence. According to the IMF and the WB, about 20% (or 126 schools) of all schools were destroyed during the civil war; over 130 school buildings are in need of repair and complete refurbishment (about \$27.7 million will be required to address this). According to various estimates, today Tajikistan is short of about 10,000 teachers at all school levels. They have either migrated from Tajikistan or changed their occupation or place of work due to earning extremely low wages. Alongside with this the quality of teaching dropped considerably. The great concern is attendance of schools by children, especially girls. According to the Education Reform Support Center "Pulse", in 2006 only 87% of children (as oppose to 95 %-by the Ministry of Education) attended schools, 13%-mainly teenagers-did not. Only 39% of girls graduate from the secondary school at grade 11, against 47% - until grade 7. The proportion of girls in secondary special education in 2003-2004 was 54% (compared to 44% in 1991-1992, increased, but still low). As for universities, here the share of girls reduced from 34% in 1991-1992 to 25% in 2003-2004.

The general secondary education from grades 1 to 9 is compulsory and together with higher secondary education, professional and higher university education is mainly paid for by the state budget. Exceptions are some private schools and commercial groups in the universities. The level of state expenditures on education in 1991 was 11% of the GDP; by 1999 it decreased to 2.1% and in 2005 reached 3.5% of the GDP, which proves the government's commitment to address education. However this figure is still very low – even in comparison with other low-income countries and it is far too low to address the problems in the sector. Many factors contributed to decline in numbers of girls at schools and consequently their lack in higher education. This is mainly due to increasing poverty, informal payments for education (in spite of it being officially free), children entering labor market at the age 5-15 to help families to survive and local traditional stereotypes towards women, which are, also, a major obstacle for women to be active in any sphere of life in Tajikistan.

Economic collapse and consequent poverty affected to a great extend employment in Tajikistan. The following tendencies are characteristic for the country of the post-soviet period: rapid growth of unemployment in public sector, as well as generally overall sharp decline of the employment in the economy ranging from 2,4% according to the official data and 30-40% according to the World Bank estimates; sharp decline of average real salary (by 6-8 times) during 1991-2001, and related growing unattractiveness of the domestic labor market; labor force outflow, mostly highly qualified specialists; decline of the employment level in manufacturing from 21 to 8,2% (State Statistics Committee, 2003),

and parallel rise of employment in private sector and agriculture; the collapse of social protection system and spontaneous rapid growth of labor migration from Tajikistan.

As it is evident, unemployment hit both sexes, but women are more at risk of poverty than men. According to the data provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, it was identified that the registered women's employment in lower paid, non-qualified primary agriculture sectors has grown in more than two times, as a result of collapse of manufacturing industry. There are 6 times more men working in different branches of the economy than women. Women are occupying jobs mainly in the budget branches of the economy, with relatively low salaries. Women make up about half of the employees of such branches as education and healthcare and the salary in these branches is correspondingly 1.3 and 2.3 times (according to some estimations 4-7 times) lower than in industry. Without adjusting for differences in education, in 2003 women's wages were less than half (46 %) of those of men. According to the official statistics, in 2005, there were 47.5% of female hired laborers. More than 60% of women are engaged in housework. The level of unemployment in Tajikistan, according to the official statistics, is one of the lowest in the whole post-soviet region -2.4%-29%. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, by January, 2003, of the total number of registered unemployed, women make 55%. However it does not reflect a real scale of unemployment of men and women in Tajikistan. Majority of people do not know they could register themselves with labor exchange if unemployed, above all, people leave for informal sector, join shadow economy, and migrate in search of jobs. Labor migration has mostly a "male" face. Women constitute only 6% of external migration. Prevalent majority of the migrants are illegally employed in the countries of destination and consequently deprived of social security benefits.

When it comes to social security system, it was formed in Soviet times, therefore the system is similar to those of the Commonwealth Independent States (CIS) countries. On the whole, in the Soviet Union, social payments constituted 14% of gross income. Demolishing of the social security system after independence seriously affected especially women, who relied on vast system of benefits for families and children. The reformation of the institutional base of social insurance (1999) resulted in the elimination of different categories of women from their eligibility for state support connected with child bearing and upbringing. Monetary compensations are diverted by the reform to 20% of the children from the poorest families, since the state budget is powerless to keep with the previous system of coverage due to complicated economical situation. However the compensations are not often claimed by this category of families due to lack of awareness on their rights for such benefits. The reform increased the age of retirement to three years and now it is 63 years for men and 58 for women. Since size of pension payments depend on previous earning, women receive less than men in all economy sectors due to gap in sizes of their salaries. Taking into account the level of the poverty, many live without receiving pensions.

The fall of the Soviet system and the civil war together with poverty revoked religious and traditional patriarchic attitudes among the predominantly Muslim population. The main targets of such attitudes are usually women. Violence against women has become all the more common phenomenon in Tajik society during and after the civil conflict in Tajikistan in 1990's. Unemployment, poverty, and social inequality contributed to the increase of psychological, sexual and physical violence against women in Tajikistan. Patriarchal moods have confined majority of Tajik women to homes and if not addressed will waste governments affords to stimulate active participation of women

in public and economic life by means of specially targeted programs. These attitudes alongside with other stated problems are also, a reason for the fall of numbers of women in decision making and their political participation.

The Government of Tajikistan, understanding importance of addressing women's problems, has undertaken considerable measures to address them. In 1991 was established a National Committee on Women and Family Affairs for it to coordinate implementation of the National Plan of Action of the Republic of Tajikistan for Enhancing the Status and Role of Women for the Period 1998–2005, which was adopted in 1998 and the State Program on “ Main Directions of the State Policy aimed at Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women for 2001-10”. Tajikistan has also ratified many international conventions, including Convention on Elimination of all Forms of Violence Against Women. It adopted a Law on “State Guarantees of Equality between Women and Men and Opportunities for Their Realization”, brought changes to Family Code; made an effort to gender mainstream its Poverty Reduction Strategy etc. However most of this has a declarative character. There are very little capacities within the governmental institutions and political will to actually implement this policy and laws. Big hope is laid with the women's NGO movement in the country. Some of them manage successfully to help the government to address women's problems. Many of these NGOs are led by the committed and capable women, however, these NGOs as the civil society in general are still very weak and are donor driven, lacking ownership to be really effective in addressing problems with the state authorities.

## (2) Government’s Gender Policy

### Key points

- a. Tajikistan has ratified many of the international human rights treaties
- b. The implementation of women directed programs in the country depend heavily on international aid

As a member of the United Nations, Tajikistan is obligated to protect the human rights of every person living within its borders. Tajikistan is a party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Tajikistan has also ratified the Convention against Torture, and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Convention on Political Rights of Women etc. Tajikistan also has additional commitments to protect women’s human rights under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW).

Article 10 establishes the Constitution as the supreme law of the land and declares any contrary laws or legal acts to be without force. It further provides that international legal instruments, to which Tajikistan is a party, are part of the legal system of the republic and that in cases of conflict, the international law supersedes domestic law. This means that CEDAW and other human rights treaties officially are part of the legal system of Tajikistan and judges can directly apply them when needed. However this is not a case in practice, the government of Tajikistan is not in compliance with its obligations under the ICCPR, CEDAW and CAT. It has not developed mechanisms of complaints to the courts in order to protect women’s rights. Majority of people, whom these treaties address are not aware of them due to lack of informational/media campaigns and legal education of the population.

Alongside with international norms, Article 17 of the Constitution of Tajikistan guarantees equal rights for men and women. However in practice, inequality between men and women are observed almost in all the spheres of life in the country.

Since gaining independence, Tajikistan has vastly reformed and restructured its legal and enforcement structures. Between 1990-2000, 300 and in 2000-2001 –more than 150 laws were adopted. The equality issues, based on Constitutional guarantees, to some extent were addressed by the new legal system, particularly by the Family Code. The code establishes that men and women have equal personal and property rights in marriage, and there can be no discrimination on the basis of gender, race, nationality, language, religion or social origin.

The first document to address gender inequality was the National Plan of Action of the Republic of Tajikistan for Enhancing the Status and Role of Women for the Period 1998–2005, which was adopted in 1998. The main concern of the document to a greater extend was, however, to raise the status of women, not to address inequality problems. In 1999, the President issued the Decree on Raising the Status of Women in the Society, which was to assist in implementation of the National



Action Plan. The equality issues were in the focus of the State Program on “Main Directions of the State Policy aimed at Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women for 2001-10”. This document facilitated the development and in 2004, adoption of the Law on “State Guarantees of Equality between Women and Men and Opportunities for Their Realization”. The other important documents were the Law on Reproductive Health and Rights and a Poverty Reduction Strategy (2002).

The State Program was amended in 2003, bringing into it paragraph on “Access of Rural Women to Land”. This happened in the result of a survey on access of women to privatized lands, which pointed at the issue being overlooked by the State Program in 1999. The State Program and its amendment acknowledge that in spite of the constitutional and legal base available to provide for equality in Tajikistan, opportunities for women to realize their rights are by far lesser than those of men.

While these actions represent positive action towards protecting the human rights of women, most exist mainly on paper, either lacking implementation mechanisms or not widely enforced. The other biggest challenges these documents face are absence of capacities to implement them, absence of gender sensitivity within the governmental structures concerned, as well as scarce state funding for their implementation. For example, to implement the National Program for 2001-10 the budget considers only 483,5 thousands Somoni, which is about \$200,000 as of 2000.

As for the institutional mechanisms, to implement the state gender policy, in 1991 the Government of Tajikistan established the Committee on Women and Family Affairs. Its objectives include promoting and implementing policies aimed at improving women’s status in all spheres of public life. Similar structures exist in regional, city, district, and local government bodies. The women’s issues are observed also by the Committee on the issues of family, health protection, social security and the environment in the Lower Chamber of the Tajik Parliament. This Committee is engaged in legislative activities, preliminary reviewing and developing the issues, which fall under the authority of the supreme legislative body as well as developing the strategic areas of the social spheres and their implementation, promotion of laws, and control over the activity of the government bodies and organizations falling under Committee jurisdiction.

Additionally female-related issues are supervised by the deputy Prime Minister, who is also a Chairperson of the Coordinating Council on Prevention of Violence against Women. The Coordination Council was established on April 18, 2006 and endorsed by the Prime Minister of the RT. The Coordination Council consists of representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Labor and Social Security, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, the Committee on Women and Family Affairs, court officials, representatives of the General Prosecutor’s Office and NGOs

However these institutions are far too weak and understaffed lacking resources and skills to implement the relatively ambitious for this reason state gender policy. The implementation of women directed programs in the country depend heavily on international aid.

### **(3) National Machinery**

The State Program on “Main Directions of the State Policy aimed at Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women for 2001-10”

#### **National Coordinator of the Program;**

National Committee on Women and Family Affairs at the Government of Tajikistan

#### **The main aims of the Program;**

- Identification of the long-term state policy on provision of equal rights and opportunities for men and women in Tajikistan
- Widening of understanding of actuality and importance of social relationships between men and women, first of all among the employee of the state governance system, who take decisions at all levels
- Establishment and development of the system of social-economical, political, organizational and legal conditions, which guarantee positive input of women in development of the whole society

#### **The main objectives of the Program;**

- Provision of rights and guarantees for women, equal participation of men and women in decision making, their direct participation in management of the country, guarantee of citizen's right's protection
- Provision of conditions for up-grading professional knowledge, development of skills and experience, raising family commitment in upbringing of children, moral upbringing and fostering patriotism and love to motherland
- Development and strengthening of moral values among girls and young women, improving work with families and raising responsibility of families in children's upbringing
- Support and social protection of rural women, especially those engaged in agriculture
- Strengthening the scientific-theoretical, methodical and informational analytical base of the state policy on achieving actual equality between men and women
- Provision of cadres to implement the state policy

#### **Final outcomes;**

- Strengthened policy of the President and the State among women; Women becoming active in the transition period and broadening of the contribution to building of democratic, civil, legal state
- Development of partnership mechanism between the state with NGOs and support of women NGOs
- Development of the mechanism of support to women entrepreneurs, young families, reduction of unemployment level and reduction of poverty among women
- Improving labor and recreation (resting) conditions of women
- Strengthening friendship and cooperation among women of the all regions of the country
- Development of infrastructure and social managements
- Strengthening the scientific-theoretical, methodical and informational analytical base of the state policy, concerning women problems
- Formation of the mechanisms of identification, training and placing cadres in various spheres of economy in the country

**Program implementers/responsible for implementation bodies;**

National Committee on Women and Family Affairs at the Government of Tajikistan, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Economy and Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Youth Committee, State Committee on Statistics, State Committee on Religion, Drugs Control State Agency at the President of Tajikistan, Federation of the Independent Trade Unions, Academy of Science, non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

**Program Budget;**

483,5 thousands Somoni (about \$200,000 as of 2,000)

Sources of financing is,

The state budget, ministries' budget, local hukumats budgets, sources beyond state budget

Control over finances and implementation of the Program is,

National Committee on Women and Family Affairs at the Government of Tajikistan and Ministry of Finances

**Priority areas;****Women and politics:**

Development and implementation of the project on training and promotion of women-leaders.

The main focus of the activities will be at:

- assistance and conduction of scientific researches on the problems of women's participation in the process and structure of decision making
- provision of equal access to all the levels of education
- development and constant updating of the data base on potential women-leaders in all regions
- establishment and functioning of the schools of political leadership
- overcoming of the public stereotypes and promotion of women-leaders through mass media
- strengthening of women solidarity through development of strong women networks, NGOs.

**Women and Economics:**

Provision of social guarantees on rights to labor:

- taking measures on provision of women's employment by creating jobs for women in the related branches of national economy, first of all in agricultural product processing, public and municipal services, production of consumer goods, intellectual labor.

Improving competitiveness of women in the labor market:

- improving level of women's general education
- training girls in the highly demanded professions in: agriculture, construction works and creative specialties, natural sciences, light industry, informational technologies and electronics, transport, economy and finances, legal sphere
- economical support to women's entrepreneurship

Improving labor conditions:

- improving conditions and amenity of labor with the aim to protect mother and future child's health

**Women and Education:**

- The state has to acknowledge education as a priority sector of the economy and increase investments for its development
- Special attention should be given to the problem of illumination of inequality in education system; to develop a program in support of women's education
- To stimulate women's education to practice additional stipends and payments to the female students of different level of education
- By means of attracting non-governmental resources, to enlarge projects like the project of Tajikistan's Women's Union on establishment of Education Centers for women
- For governmental and non-governmental organizations to initiate in the local media discussions of the problems on overcoming public and gender stereotypes in the sphere of education

**Family and Women's Health:**

- To develop a gender policy in the political, social and economical spheres
- To provide access to education, employment, information, other social services the most vulnerable group of teenagers, women and children
- To raise social-economical status of women
- To increase access to complex services of reproductive health services, especially in rural areas and among social-economical groups of risk of the population
- To increase access to quality medical-sanitary aid, which is oriented on providing services locally
- To decrease numbers of abortions
- To decrease maternal and infant mortality

**Prevention of Violence Against Women:**

- To improve social policy and legislation
- To research the reasons of violence
- To provide education for the population
- To humanize public mentality (consciousness)
- To prevent actions of violence
- To activate and strengthen influence of public forces
- To facilitate cooperation between the state structures, NGO and international organizations

**So the priority areas are:**

- Improvement of legislation basis to toughen punishment measures against all forms of violence against women
- Improvement of work of enforcement bodies on prevention and registration of cases of violence against women
- Mobilizing public and public opinion against cases of violence against women
- Elimination of consequences of violence against women by providing physical and psychological rehabilitation measures
- Taking complex and multi-sectoral approach to addressing the problem

As it is seen from the program, the different ministries should be responsible for its implementation. Possibilities of the Committee on Women and Family Affairs to assist in and control gender mainstreaming within these ministries are limited by set of factors. One of them is unclear mandate of the Committee as a national coordinator of the program. Many of the governmental officials assume that the implementation of the programs aimed at tackling women problems and reduction of gender gaps are responsibility of the Committee. Lack of financing and poor technical capacity does not allow the Committee on Women and Family Affairs to provide the other ministries with consultations on gender policy and programs' analysis. These shortages are obstacle in implementation of gender programs or monitoring of implementation of the State Program itself.

### 3. Current Situation of Women by Sector

#### (1) Education

##### Key points

- a. The education system of Tajikistan has been going through reforms since 1991 until 2015
- b. Alongside with state schools 11 private schools, 25 Gymnasium & 18 Lyceum operate in Tajikistan
- c. Numbers of pre-school facilities dropped by 59% in urban areas and 73% in rural areas
- d. Education system lacks 10 000 teachers in all its level
- e. 20% of schools were destroyed during the civil war
- f. No gender gap in primary education, practically no until the age group 15, but at age group 18-21

In 90-es the government of Tajikistan paid considerable attention to preventing decline of the education system of the country and restoration of the old system. Stepping into independency allowed Tajikistan to implement reforms in education. The first phase of the reform started in 1991 and despite the civil war was finished in 2000. The second phase of the education system reform started in 2005 and will last until 2015. Policy, aims and objectives of the reform are reflected in the Law on Education, which was adopted in 1993. Then followed a Concept of National School (1992), State Education Standards (1997), National education Concept (2002), Education Sector in the Document on Poverty Reduction Strategy of Tajikistan (2002), Tajikistan Secondary Schools Computerization Program for 2003-2007 (2002), where education reform had its logical continuation.

After the referendum of 2003, amendments were brought to the Article 41 of the Constitution on Education: "Everyone has a right to education. General basic education is compulsory. The state guarantees basic, compulsory and free education in the state education institutions. Within the frames identified by the Law, everyone can receive free general secondary, primary professional, secondary professional and higher professional education in the state education institutions. Other forms of receiving education are identified by the Law"

In overall, the process of education reform is aimed at tackling such issues like:

- Access to education for all, especially for people living in remote rural areas and girls
- Quality of education including its compliance with modern standards
- Financing of education, system of financial flow and its management
- Human resources - teachers' salaries, volume of teaching, quality and training
- Governance and management of education system to make it more effective

Financing of education sector, given obligations of the government to reform the system, have increased from 44% in 1992 to 75% in 2003.

The following levels of education are established in Tajikistan: pre-school education, general secondary, primary, secondary special and higher professional education, postgraduate and in-service training and retraining. General secondary education is of 3 stages: primary education from grade 1 to 4, basic compulsory from 5 to 9 and general secondary education from 10 to 11.

In 1991 Tajikistan had 944 pre-school education facilities, which covered 14 500 children. However, in 2000 their number reduced down to 496 and according to official statistics, in 2006, their numbers declined further by 17 units in comparison to 2000. At the same time, number of children attending them dropped by 59% in 1991-2001, and in rural places decreased by 73%. In 2006, only 6.1% of total children attended these facilities. The reason, like with many other state funded institutions, is in lack of funding by the state and incapability of the parents to pay for such services, even though the demand for pre-school services is currently growing. As for the secondary schools, by 2005, 3745 schools were functioning in the country. Compared with 1991-1992, the number of schools has increased by 466 units, and the number of schoolchildren increased by 315,000.

In addition, the number of pupils in the international and private schools has also increased. They appeared on the tall of demands for quality education and as means for many teachers to escape from low wages in the state financed schools. New types of schools like gymnasiums, lyceums, non-governmental general education schools and students receiving paid education have been increasing during the last years. During 2005, 47287 schoolchildren were trained in 64 gymnasiums and 56 lyceums. In addition, 14129 pupils received a private education in 11 private schools, 25 gymnasiums and 18 lyceums. In the background of worsening quality of teaching in the state secondary schools, the international schools set example of the high educational standards.

#### **Box. 1 We strengthen the reform of education**

The new joint Tajik-Turkish high schools have promoted high educational standards for the new generation of Tajik and international pupils. For the past two years, pupils from these educational institutions have won international competitions in mathematical Olympiads and on the topic of "Russia and the Russian language in my life". Timur Ergashev, who represented Tajikistan, was one of 96 pupils from 12 participating countries that competed in the city of Yerevan. Timur's proficiency in the Russian language placed him among the top three places in the competition. He won the privilege of enrolling in the Faculty of Journalism at the University of the People's Friendship in Moscow without taking the entrance examination. Firuz Bobiev and Igor Kogai, two other pupils from Tajik-Turkish lyceums, took second place in a mathematical competition where 14 countries were represented in Almaty. From the 275 pupils who graduated from Tajik-Turkish lyceums in Tajikistan, 222 of them (98.2%) have entered higher educational institutions in the Republic and in foreign countries.

*Source: Tajikistan Development Gateway Team*

The Presidential reform aims also at equipping the secondary schools with modern technologies and communication means, installing for this computers in primary and secondary schools. By 2005, 781 computer classes have been equipped with 11351 computers in comprehensive schools, 4573 are the most modern and up-to-day. Today, in some Dushanbe schools, 100% of the required computers have been installed. In Sugd oblast, 37% of the required computers have been installed

and in GBAO 90% of the required computers have been installed. In the regions surrounding the capital, 17% of the required computers have been installed. Currently, use of these computers in rural areas is questionable due to lack of electricity and absence of teachers with required skills to teach computing.

As for higher education, numbers of the students receiving higher education have also been growing. If in 1996 in 25 higher education institutions studied 76 thousands students, in 2003 in 33 such institutions studied 96583 people, out of them 56% were covered by the state budget and 44% by other sources. Assessment eligibility of the higher education institutions in 2003 cut down numbers of the institutions from 30 to 22.

When it comes to the professional-technical education system, it is very much similar to that of the Soviet times in 50-es. Its current weak material and technical base, lack of professional teaching staff, old methods of teaching, absence of flexibility to current needs of labor market calls immediately for reforms in this system. According to the official statistics, there were 70 professional-technical institutions by the end of 2006, having totally 23 284 students, out of whom 6 300 or 27.1 were girls. Despite the efforts of the government, civil war outcomes, overall economical state and rapid growth of population in the country imposes numerous problems for education. First of all, the level of state expenditures on education in 1991 was 11% of the GDP; by 1999 it decreased to 2.1% and in 2005 reached 3.5% of the GDP, which is still very low – even in comparison with other low-income countries and it is far too low to address the problems in the sector.

Secondly, the problems of the education sector mainly concern reduction of level of school attendance; growing gender gap in coverage and attendance indicators; growing barriers to receiving general basic education for children from socially vulnerable population groups; curricula and plans failing to meet modern requirements; low salary of teachers that makes many good teachers leave schools; poor capacity for sector policy assessment; inadequate and deteriorating conditions of school physical infrastructure. According to the IMF and the WB, about 20% (or 126 schools) of all schools were destroyed during the civil war; over 130 school buildings are in need of repair and complete refurbishment which require about \$27.7 million to address this

According to many experts, there is a growing uncertainty about the demographic situation in Tajikistan, especially with regard to children. In 1990 the birth-rate was 5.0 but by 2000 had decreased to 3.7. This is still the highest in Central Asia and the population will probably double every 20 years. Official statistics says that the number of school children may decrease in the mid-term because the size of this population group has already decreased over the last decade. However, this view does not correspond to demographic predictions. According to the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted by UNICEF, 25% of 5 year-old children have not been officially registered. The low level of registration, alongside with other factors, was also influenced by the fact that the government introduced a birth registration fee and women from poor families quite often deliver at home. By the time they are ready to start school, most children are already registered and issued birth certificates; however, according to most experts, there are many more children under 5 than are officially registered. According to the State Statistics Committee of the RT, by January 1, 2003, the number of school children was 1.8 million. Around 40% of the country population consists of children of school age. By 2015, the proportion of school children may increase as high as 59%. . According to



the estimate of the MDG Needs Assessment Team, by 2015 the number of secondary school children may increase by 40%, that is, from 1.8 million to 2.3 million. Demographic predictions presented in the Asian Development Bank estimate the increase in the number of children in primary and secondary schools to be 850,000. Thus, the current education system of Tajikistan may face very serious problems quite soon. This is also one of the factors why Tajikistan assumes it to be too early for the system to move to 12 years secondary education.

The great concern is attendance of schools by children, especially girls. According to the Education Reform Support Center "Pulse", in 2006 only 87% of children (as oppose to 95 % by the Ministry of Education) attended schools, 13%-mainly teenagers-did not. Only 39% of girls graduate from the secondary school at grade 11, against 47% - until grade 7.

According to the Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey there is practically no gender gap in primary school attendance and there is practically no gender gap in age groups under 15; this situation is similar in both urban and rural areas. The 16-17 age group shows an obvious gender gap; but the scale of the gap is practically the same for urban and rural residents. Only the 18-21 age group – that is, actually at the age of getting higher education – does the gender gap in rural areas rise sharply above that in urban areas.

According to the researches, first, the level of attendance in primary and secondary schools very much depends on the level of the mother's education. In another words the low level of mother's education is reproduced in the next generation – by creating a low probability of their daughters receiving education. Secondly, the level of secondary school attendance very much depends on the level of household income. According to MICS, within the poorest quintile, secondary school is attended by 86% of boys and only 68.7% of girls. There is increase in numbers of girls dropping from schools because of also early marriages.

The proportion of girls in secondary special education in 2003-2004 was 54% (compared to 44% in 1991-1992, increased, but still low). As for universities, here the share of girls reduced from 34% in 1991-1992 to 25% in 2003-2004. Since 1991-1992, girls' distribution with regard to specialties has not changed much. As before, most of them prefer traditional specialties in the sphere of education and health care and less in economy and management. Majority of girls prefer to study in secondary professional institutions, where specialists are trained in "women's occupations" like seamstress, weaver, nurse, primary school teachers etc. What is interesting is that there are very few girls in agricultural institutions despite the fact that the proportion of women in agriculture is very high.

The prevalence of traditional gender stereotypes makes a negative impact on the actual availability of higher education for girls compared even to secondary education. There is a belief among the people, that education reduces chances of girls to get married. Since marriage traditionally is a priority for girls, they are influenced by such attitudes, not in favor of education. Low involvement of girls in the higher education system results in the fact that many young women are poorly prepared for employment, and are barely educated at all in basic skills and therefore remain dependent on their parents or husbands.

Another factor explaining the reasons behind an early interruption of girls' education are the prevalent traditional gender stereotypes on the role and destiny of genders that have greatly increased in the last decade. One of the direct consequences of traditional gender stereotypes is the fact that girls and boys of school age are more actively involved in the non-paid labor market (housework, small trade and farming). According to a UNDP assessment, in 2003 non-paid labor activity involved around 25% of children aged 5-15. At the same time, ideas on the social role of girls are often limited to household and family duties.

To reduce problems in gender gap within higher education system, alongside with equality program and the law, the President of Tajikistan in 1997 introduced the so-called Presidential quotas, making it possible for girls from remote mountain areas to enter higher education institutions.

According to the data provided by the Ministry of Education, from 1997 to 2002, the total number of girls that used the quotas was 2,728 (for 3,666 vacancies). In the academic year 2003-2004, 606 (instead of the planned 619) students were admitted under the Presidential quotas; in 2004-2005 this figure was 577 (instead of the planned 582). On the average, since the introduction of Presidential quotas, 75-80% of the planned places were utilized. During their process of education some students (approximately 7-10%) quit studies – mostly due to getting married or because of poor performance caused by the poor level of knowledge received in rural schools.

The education sector includes 6% of Tajikistan's labor forces. The flow of the professional teachers from, especially, secondary education institutions is rather high. Currently, among the key problems of education is the lack of pedagogical staff in primary and secondary schools, especially of qualified staff. According to various estimates, today Tajikistan is short of about 10,000 teachers at all school levels. They have either migrated from Tajikistan or changed their occupation or place of work due to earning extremely low wages. In the 2003-2004 academic year, there were 103,174 teachers in general secondary schools; of them 61.9% had higher education, 4.6% - incomplete higher education, 22.1% - secondary special education, and 9.5% - secondary education only. In primary school the situation is even worse. According to different estimates, over 30% of primary school teachers had only secondary special and general secondary education.

There is data available on the share of women among pedagogical staff, professors and senior researchers, which is interesting to explore. Although women are widely represented in the education sector, their share is gradually decreasing when it comes to higher hierarchical positions. In 2003, 17% of women occupied responsible positions in universities (85 in 1991), 22% occupied positions of senior professors (13% in 1991), and 34% of women worked as teachers (22% in 1991).

According to statistical data, the proportion of women among pedagogical staff has been increasing in the last few years despite the absolute reduction of this professional group. At the same time, the share of women in executive positions in secondary schools is considerably lower than among the total number of pedagogical staff. In 2004, of the total number of secondary school headmasters (3,695), 576 were women (15.6%); of 6,134 deputy school headmasters, there were 1,698 women (27.7%); of 30 rectors of higher education institutions, there was only one female. Among the pedagogical cadre of universities and research institutions, the percentage of women is even lower than in the sphere of higher education.

Finally, there are too many challenges in the education sector and considering poor state of the budget and lack of internal expertise, much external aid is needed for the government to address these challenges. At present, the key sources of support in the education sector are the World Bank, ADB, OPEC, Islamic Bank of Reconstruction and Development, the Governments of Germany, the USA, Netherlands, and Great Britain, Soros Foundation, and Aga Khan Foundation. Substantial funds have been allocated by UNICEF, UNESCO and World Food Program.

Preliminary data obtained from the UN backed Tajikistan's Needs Assessment on achieving Millennium Development Goals shows that provision of full primary and secondary general education in 2005-2015 will cost \$20 per person. The assessment notes also on necessity of additional specific investments to assist in improving people's understanding of gender equality issues, e.g. conducting trainings, mass awareness campaigns and providing systematic support to the National Committee on Women and Family Affairs to strengthen its base for it to be able to provide technical support to the ministries to mainstream gender into their policies, programs and their implementation.

## (2) Health

### Key points

- a. The state healthcare per capita expenses in 2004 were less than 1.8USD per person per year
- b. The health care system lacks 3000 doctors and nurses
- c. In 2002-2003, according to official data, in some regions of the country the level of maternal mortality rate varied from 157.1 to 1075.3 per 100 000 live births
- d. HIV/AIDS has been rapidly spreading in Tajikistan
- e. Children's mortality rate is lower when mothers education level is high

Due to overall decline of the state economy, expenditure on health care in Tajikistan has been reduced to almost a fifth of what was spent in the Soviet period- from 4.8 in 1990 to 1.0% of the GDP in 1999-2003. The state healthcare per capita expenses in 2003 constituted only \$2.2 and according to the European Commission, in 2004, it was less than 1.8 US Dollars per person. This is the lowest rate in all Central Asian republics and falls behind the 5% rate recommended by the World Health Organization for developing countries. Therefore the Tajik health sector continues to be a major recipient of the foreign aid.

Economical hardships posed numerous considerable challenges for the country health care system. Health care institutions lack qualified personnel and administrators with advanced educational preparation. Prevalent numbers of hospitals and specialized clinics are of the Soviet-legacy. Tajikistan has a medical university in its capital city - Dushanbe and several medical colleges throughout the regions of the country. They are struggling to address the gap caused by outflow of highly qualified medical personnel from the country. The health care institutions need nearly 3,000 medical doctors and the same number of nurses. Particularly, there is an urgent need in doctors – specialists in infectious diseases, paleontologists, toxicologists, and laboratory worker-physicians. The \$15 salary per month for the young physicians encourages far too few to enter medicine. Currently only one third of the graduates of medical schools go to work in a specialty area.

Patients' main needs in medical supply (up to 90%) in some regions are satisfied through private payments. According to the World Bank assessment, over 80% of expenses on medical supplies are paid from patients' pockets. On the whole, the population's expenses on healthcare absorb 30% of family budgets. Informal payments for health services, which are still officially free of charges, have become too common, cutting of these services big numbers of potential patients, considering high poverty rate in the country.

The government in its attempts to influence the situation, plugged into reforming the system. Following the amendments to Article 38 of the Constitution of Tajikistan adopted in 2003, which cancelled the state guarantee of free health care, and in recognition of the need to revise the legal

framework for health financing, the Government established an inter-sectoral Health Financing Working Group, comprising representatives from different ministries. The Working Group prepared the "Strategy of Health Care Financing in the Republic of Tajikistan for the period 2005-2015", which comprehensively defines the Government policies on health care financing and clarifies the role of the state in its use of public resources through a state guaranteed package of services.

Now approximately 80 % of budgetary funds go to cover hospital services and 20 % to Primary Health Care. The primary goal of the Strategy is to define measures, which will lead to changes in the given parity and achieve the following parameters: increase in budgetary expenditures up to 80 % for Primary Health Care and accordingly decrease expenditure for hospital sector to 20 % in the long-term perspective.

The overall decline of the health care system has its devastating impact on the health of population in general, and women and children in particular. The reduction in life expectancy, which is calculated on the basis of current mortality rate, indicates that Tajikistan has substantial problems in promotion of women's health. From 1999 to 2004 life expectancy indicator fell dramatically, moreover for women it reduced more than for men (4.4% for men and 4.9 for women) and according to Human Development Report estimations, which are more probable, for 2004 it was 66.4% for women and 61.2%.

### **Maternal Mortality;**

To estimate a real scale of maternal mortality is complicated due to contradictory data from different sources. Any official data provided is one third of what provided by international organizations. For example, according to the 1999 survey by the World Health Organization, the level of maternal mortality was 123 per 100 000 live births, while according to the official data in 1995 it was 96.3 per 1000 live births. After 1995 the maternal mortality rate started to decrease and according to the Ministry of Health it was 50.6 per 100000 live births in 2002. Maternal mortality rate varies through in different regions of Tajikistan. For example, in 2002-2003, according to official data, in some regions of the country the level of maternal mortality rate varied from 157.1 to 1075.3. In Gorno-Badakhshan Region it 2.8% higher than the average country indicators, even though this region is best equipped with medical staff.

Among the main causes of maternal mortality in the country is obstetric hemorrhage, severe form of gestosis and other complications of pregnancy.

#### **Structure of maternal mortality causes in %**

Cause of death	2000	2001	2002	2003
All causes per 100 000 births (people)	81	79	79	65
Including percentage:				
-extra uterine pregnancy	-	-	1.3	1.5
-medical artificial delivery	11.6	1.3	1.3	1.5
-pregnancy and delivery hemorrhage	37.9	21.5	30.4	27.7
-pregnancy toxemia	25.4	21.5	30.4	29.2
-delivery sepsis	12.6	6.3	10.1	6.2
-other pregnancy and deliver complications	12.5	49.4	26.5	33.9

Source: Ministry of Health of Tajikistan

In 2005 the offices of civil registration registered 20 cases of maternal mortality associated with pregnancy, delivery and postpartum period, which constituted 16 cases per 100,000 live births. Around 70% of maternal mortality cases are registered in rural areas. According to Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey of 2005, the ratio of maternal mortality constituted 97 cases per 100,000 live births.

Data's by different sources of statistics are different, but it could be said that the main causes of maternal mortality remain obstetric hemorrhages, which count for 45.5% of deaths in the Districts of Republican Subordination (DRS), obstetric infection, including sepsis for 33% in Dushanbe, uterine laceration was a cause of the death of every fifth women in Sogd Region and every tenth women in DRS. Pre-eclampsia and eclampsia in Khatlon and Sogd Regions, in 2002 claimed lives of 25 and 24 women respectively.

Among the main factors impeding effective reduction on maternal mortality are high proportions of deliveries (from 40% to 80% as oppose to Soviet period when hospital deliveries were as high as 90%.); low access to reproductive and prenatal services for a substantial proportion of the population due to financial problems and other; high prevalence of reproductive health diseases among women, including anemia, which affects about 50.3% of registered pregnant women; short interval between deliveries; lack of reproductive care in remote villages, absence of transport, communication and infrastructure and lack of qualified obstetricians and gynecologists due to low wages causing in their outflow from the system. One of the main causes of death among women in the country is also malignant tumor. In 2000 breast cancer among women was a second dominating cancer disease. Tumor death indicators are lagging behind of only cardiovascular pathologies and respiratory diseases. High level of malaria cases, increasing prevalence of tuberculosis, measles etc. are also of a big concern.

Risk of maternal mortality becomes high also due to high level of chronic diseases among the women of reproductive age. Every third women of reproductive age, for example, suffers from sexually transmitted diseases. However to prevent sexually transmitted diseases in the traditional Muslim culture is extremely difficult. The frequent child deliveries, that does not allow mothers to regain their health between the deliveries are due to poor use of contraceptive means. In 1990, only 3% of sexually active population used one of the modern contraceptive means. According to Multi Indicator Cluster Survey in 2005 in Tajikistan 60% of women of reproductive age- married or with a partner- did not use contraception at all. The highest proportion of women, who refuse to use contraception is in the Districts of Republican Subordination (71.1%) and lowest – in Sogd Region (53.7%). This could explain, also, a growing numbers of HIV/AIDS infected people in the country.

#### **HIV/AIDS;**

The total number of infected people, according to UNAIDS experts and Republican Center of HIV/AIDS is estimated at 6-10,000 people. According to the official statistics it reached only 628 people in September, 2006. Ministry of Health reports that in 2005 85.2% of infected people were men and 14.8 were women. The first HIV/AIDS case was registered in Tajikistan in 1991.

The rapid spread of HIV/AIDS is due to such factors like mass labor migration of men (especially from rural areas) associated with the potential risk of sexually transmitted diseases (high prevalence among the population) or HIV/AIDS; negative attitude to the use of condoms (by both men and women); strictly the patriarchal structure regulating the sexual sphere where men's interests are of

absolute priority (especially in rural areas), growing numbers of injection drug users; low awareness of the population on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases and poor system of epidemiological control, registration and monitoring of HIV infection, lack of anti virus drugs.

Like in other post-soviet country, in Tajikistan spread of HIV/AIDS was rapid among injection drug users, which proves a statement that its spread in Central Asia coincides with drug trafficking routes. As it is clear from the data above, currently HIV/AIDS “falls” under purely men’s health related problems. The most common HIV transmission route is a use of used needles by drug users – 357 cases, followed by sexual transmission- 70 cases, 5 people were transmitted a diseases through blood transfusion, 74 cases of transmission are not known and 26 infected people had already died. Each year the numbers of infected women are growing. In 1991 there was one case, in 2001-14 cases, in 2005 – 75 cases. As a result in 2004 HIV infected women were already registered in delivery wards.

### **Child Mortality;**

The data on the child mortality rate is also contradictory. Therefore, to trace the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the Government Working Group on Healthcare in regard with infant mortality adopted as a base indicator 89.0 per 1000 live births and for the children before 5 – 118 per 1000 live births. 65.1% per 1000 live births

Infant mortality rate in 2005, according to Multi Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) was 65.1% per 1000 live births. In Tajikistan infant mortality rate is higher among boys that among girls – 75 as opposed to 54. The situation with children under 5 is similar – 92 compared to 66. The highest infant and child mortality rate was registered in Khatlon Region (respectively 81 and 102 per 1000) and the lowest in the Districts of Republican Subordination, Gorno-Badakhshan Region and Dushanbe (infant mortality below 50, child mortality less than 60 per 1000).

The findings connect the level of child mortality, alongside with other socio-demographic indicators, to the educational level of mother. The infant mortality rate is five times higher among children born by the mothers with no secondary education or those having incomplete secondary education compared with mothers with higher education. The gap is even bigger with regard to children under 5 – 6.5 -7 times higher compared to women with higher education. It is important to point that no other factors make such an impact on infants and child’s mortality indicators that mother’s education.

The main health risk factors for children include poor quality and low access to reproductive risk of vaccination-preventable diseases, especially measles.

The main cause of neonatal mortality is a premature birth, which is responsible for 28% of all fatalities. Premature births are result high prevalence of anemia and high numbers of women, who deliver with interval less than two years. This also affects immunity of the new born. As for the children under 5, a special attention should be paid to nutritional problems. In Tajikistan the low weight is characteristic for 17.6% of boys and 17.1% of girls. Around 4% of the children of this category suffer from acute weight deficit. Gender differences are more obvious here- 4.2% boys and 3%-girls. Almost 27% (mostly boys) are short for their age and 9% of children are seriously short for their age (10.4%-boys and 7.7% of girls). 7% suffer from malnutrition. Proportion of boys with acute weight deficit is twice as high as among girls (2% boys compared to 1.1.% girls).

Here is seen a clear link with household incomes level and mother's level of education. Again, children, whose mothers have higher education less suffer from height and weight deficits, than those whose mothers have no education, or primary or incomplete secondary education.

The findings underline the importance of taking series of measures, including social policy measures aimed at supporting families with small children. It could be restoration of the child care system for low-income families, which could insure targeted social assistance; increase of educational level of women, which could be an even more effective tool for reducing infant and child mortality.



### **(3) Agriculture**

#### **Key points**

- a. 65% of rural population living in poverty and 18% of its total number living in an extreme poverty.
- b. Women make 60% of agricultural workers becoming predominant labor force due to migration of men.
- c. Accumulating debt, old machinery, emigration of much of the labor force, poor irrigation and drainage systems, lack of secure land ownership, corruption, and conflicts between cotton and food production are challenges of the agricultural sector
- d. During independency the Government has undertaken numbers of reforms aimed at transformation of the agriculture

#### **General situation**

Tajikistan is an agrarian country and its economy largely depends on the agricultural sector, which provided 22 % of GDP in 2003 and 24.2% in 2004. The sector covers 66% of all employment, 26% of export and 39% of tax revenues. Agricultural growth in 1998-2004 constituted approximately one third of the total economic growth. In that period the volume of agricultural production increased by 65% and has now returned to the 1990 level. Its share in GDP fell by 15 percentage points in over 1991-2005 period.

Reduction of poverty in the country depends on the reduction of poverty in its rural areas. This is due to 65% of rural population living in poverty and 18% of its total number living in an extreme poverty. Tajikistan's land resources are limited and make 720 thousands hectares of agrarian lands, out of which 520,8 thousands hectares are irrigated lands. The main products cultivated in Tajikistan are grain (mainly wheat), vegetables and fruits, for which 60% of arable lands are spared. Remaining 40% are allocated to grow cotton, the main commercial crop.

The agricultural sector in general, and the cotton sector in particular, face significant challenges: accumulating debt, old machinery, emigration of much of the labor force, poor irrigation and drainage systems, lack of secure land ownership, corruption, and conflicts between cotton and food production. Exports of cotton, Tajikistan's second-largest source of export revenue, which in 2004, according to the World Bank, made up 25% of the cumulative volume of agricultural production, continue to perform poorly. Production in Tajikistan is suffering from stagnant yields and a large debt burden, which has been accumulating since the late 1990s, after worsening terms of trade prevented farmers from repaying the cost of agricultural inputs lent to them, often at extortionate rates, by intermediary companies. Exports of cotton fibre fell by 11% in 2006 and accounted for just 9.2% of total export earnings, the lowest share since independence. According to some estimates the debt now exceeds US\$350m.

## Box. 2 Tajikistan's cotton sector: a train-wreck waiting to happen

5/31/06

In general, Tajikistan's cotton sector is a financial mess – a rapidly rising sea of red ink. According to the figures compiled by the National Bank of Tajikistan, the total amount of cotton farmers' debts in 2005 amounted to \$224.4 million, a whopping amount considering the annual national budget is around \$400 million.

Several factors are contributing to the rapid demise of Tajikistan's cotton sector. Perhaps the most serious is Tajikistan's labor drain. More than 1 million of the country's 6.5 million population can be classified as migrant workers, obtaining seasonal employment in foreign countries, mainly Russia and Kazakhstan, where earn higher wages. Tajikistan's most-skilled agricultural workers are among the migrants earning money abroad, and who remit approximately \$800 million annually to relatives back home. Forced to rely on second-rate workers, cotton farms and processing plants in Tajikistan are plagued by inefficiency.

Compounding the problem, land reform has failed to foster private enterprise. Under a program launched a decade ago, the government provided land-tenure certificates, retaining title to the land, while supposedly granting farmers the freedom to plant any crop that they deemed profitable. In reality, old Soviet habits have proven hard to shed. Local representatives of the presidential administration still tend to meddle in farm operations, dictating to farmers what they should plant and what prices they can charge for their crops. According to the Tajik legislation, land-tenure certificates should be given to farmers for free. However, many farmers say they were forced to pay "tribute" to local bureaucrats in order to obtain access to a private plot.

In granting land-tenure certificates, authorities also stuck farmers with a proportional share of debts incurred by former collective farms, which during the late Soviet era came to be synonymous with inefficiency. The state also provided no credit or financing programs, leaving the overwhelming number of private farmers without any way to repair the crumbling infrastructure of their farms or obtain new equipment.

Some cotton-sector observers say that up to 90 percent of private farms in Tajikistan have developed a dependency on entities dubbed "futures companies," which effectively function as loan-sharking operations. The companies offer farmers credits and bridge loans, charging exorbitant rates for what sometimes turns out to be low-quality seeds, stale fertilizer and poor equipment.

*Source: eurasianet, posted october 16, 2007*

Agriculture is the main source of income for many rural families. According to estimations in 2003, one third of rural households, including 86% of rural women were engaged in agriculture. Women make 60% of agricultural workers. Within agriculture, they work as a seasonal labor that does not require special skills and receive very small and irregular payments. Women in rural areas have problems with accessing lands and its privatization, which should have been resolved by the adopted by the government Law on Equal rights and Opportunities for Men and Women (2003).

Female-headed households are likely to face particular problems. The civil war created approximately 25,000 female-headed households, predominately in Khatlon and Rasht regions. Some women lost their husbands during the war. Others lost their husbands to emigration. A few of the latter group abandoned their families and created new families. In all of these cases, women became heads of the households. Female-headed households have less access to land, irrigation and livestock. They are also less food secure, but receive more humanitarian assistance. Even with this assistance, their monthly income is less than male headed households. Owing to increase of numbers of men migrating abroad from year to year, women becoming dominating labor force in agricultural sector facing at the same time all the burden of challenges put forward to the sector and women in general.

Looking back at the history of the country, women in Tajikistan had already experienced transformation of their status, which was a positive one, during the Soviet era. Considering that Tajikistan was purely an agrarian country, changes greatly influenced rural women. Under the Soviet rule, Tajikistan underwent an intensive process of modernization. The "emancipation" of women was a strategic priority. Following the October Revolution and subsequent civil war, Tajik society was secularized. Islamic legal and educational institutions were closed and traditional culture was pushed underground and confined to the private sphere. Between 1921 and 1923 laws were passed banning traditional Islamic practices such as polygamy, the payment of *kalym*, and marriage without the consent of the bride. The minimum age for marriage was set at 16 for girls and 18 for boys. In 1927 the emancipation campaign intensified with the mass unveiling of women. By the mid-1930s it was increasingly rare to see a full-veiled woman. Another priority of the Soviet period was education, both for men and women. Primary schooling was made compulsory for both boys and girls around 1930, and by independence in 1991 literacy was 93 percent, with the majority of the illiterate aged over 60.

Efforts were also made to involve women in the political and administrative process. Women's unions were set up and female delegates were elected (appointed) to represent their communities at all levels. This process was accelerated by a quota system, under which women were allocated approximately a third of the posts in government. However, they were rarely appointed to senior positions. Women were also increasingly involved in all spheres of economic life, but most notably in the agriculture and social sectors.

However, although the Soviet period resulted in a dramatic improvement in the participation of women in public life, in the private sphere traditional patterns of behavior continued to dominate gender relations. Some aspects of Soviet culture actually served to *reinforce* traditional norms, most notably the focus on women's reproductive role. There were one-off payments on the birth of each child, generous child allowances that rose disproportionately with each additional child, statutory maternity benefits, and entitlement to unpaid maternity leave for up to three years. In addition, the state provided a wide range of other supports, including nurseries, kindergartens, and after-school programs, which allowed women to combine their productive and reproductive roles.

While enjoying all the benefits, rural women were involved heavily in the field works within kolkhozes (soviet collective farms) and sovkhozs (soviet farms) forming dominant labor force throughout the farming seasons.

In spite of the loss of soviet time achievements and return of patriarchal attitudes, this legacy has left a relatively blissful ground for the government to reflect and build on in order to improve the status of both rural and urban women in the country, which to some extent it attempts to address through its programs and policies.

### **The state policy and programs**

During independency the Government has undertaken numbers of reforms aimed at transformation of the agriculture into competitive market oriented sector. Priority programs aimed at assistance in the process of land reform and various forms of privatization in the sector. Government's approach is oriented at importance of strengthening independency of farmers in decision making. As for rural women, number of measures taken by the government to improve their status does not address the scale of the problem. These measures include provision of quotas for rural women to have free admission to the local universities, amendment made in 2004 to the State Program on Access of Rural Women to Land, gender mainstreaming into monitoring of the land reform and establishment of the group at the State Committee on Land supported by UNIFEM, introduction in 2005 of the gender disaggregated data to the statistical report on agriculture etc. Following the amendment made into the State Program on the Access of Rural Women to Land, the government established a coordination council on issues of land reform chaired by the Committee on Women and Family Affairs. Representatives of the ministries and structures involved in the implementation of the land reform policy with the support of UNIFEM looked at specific measures to exclude discrimination of women in regard with their rights to land.

There are numbers of problems hindering full and successful implementation of the policy of the government. One of them is a low level of professionalism of the concerned governmental employees as well as necessity for the sector to absorb work of the other sectors. For the sector is vital to coordinate with other strategic directions like programs on water management, protection of environment and improvement of infrastructure.

In spite of the measures by the government of Tajikistan to address problems of rural women their situation remains to be difficult one.

The main factors influencing rural women rights are:

- underdeveloped infrastructure in rural areas
- domination of patriarchal relations and gender stereotypes
- low literacy level
- lack of knowledge of own rights, lack of information on land reform and procedures of establishing Dekhkan Farms

The Civil war and transformation of the society most of all affected the infrastructure of the rural areas. If number of the preschool facilities in urban areas from 1991 to 2004 reduced 1,5 times, the rural areas have seen reduction of three times. There is also significant disproportion in numbers of doctors and nurses in the cities and rural areas. For example, in 2004 mid level health professionals per 10000 people in Dushanbe made 56,9 and in the districts of the republican subordination made 30,4; doctors respectively – 66,5 and 11.1 (State Statistics Committee, 2005). Health of rural women

is also challenged by the deteriorating living conditions, poor environment and stresses owned by hardships.

Education level of the rural women influences their economic activities and their further promotion in employment. Only 3% of the engaged in labor rural women have higher education, 6.2% - have primary education, 1.2% do not have any kind of education.

Participation of rural women in social life, education and economy is limited by their heavy involvement in housework and work in their kitchen plots. Approximately 86% of the engaged in labor rural women work in the agricultural sector, out of them 53% in their private plots.

Poverty forces women manually produce many goods they could purchase before (linen, cloths, pickles, jams etc.), which adds to the heavy workload they have at home and takes them away from the social life and paid labor.

In the rural areas only 20% of population is provided with centralized drinking water, the rest of the population uses water from different sources (springs, wells with manual pumps, channels, irrigation ditches etc.), which are not safe for drinking. Different surveys show that it is women, who mainly get and preserve water. However women are practically excluded from the local planning processes and water resources management.

### **Access to land**

Access to land is a major factor in survival of the many poor people in Tajikistan. The land in Tajikistan is exclusively a property of the state and it guarantees its effective use in the people's interest through the provision of the Article 1 of the Land Code. Within the framework of the land reform by the Government of Tajikistan, state agricultural enterprises of the soviet period are being reorganized into dekhkan farms of various forms such as individual, family or collective dekhkan associations (in the form of joint cooperative structures with shareholders). By January 2006 there were 18,300 individual and family dekhkan farms in the country and 8, 740 collective dekhkan farms. Lands are distributed to the dekhkan farms by the local land committees and the Certificates on the right to use plots are given by the State Committee on Land Utilization. The other parts of lands remain for households and for gardening purposes. They are distributed on the basis of provisions of the President Decree on Land.

### **Box. 3 Land Privatization**

"Land privatization" began in 1992 with the break-up of state and collective farms into collective dekhkqan farms, and the transfer of life-long, inheritable land use rights to the members of these collective dekhkqans. Farm members are often poorly informed of this process, however, and it is not always performed correctly. Many farm members thus remain unaware that they are now farm owners rather than farm laborers, and continue to work for "wages" as before.

*Source: Cotton Sector Recovery Project by World Bank, 2006*

Access to land is a key factor for providing equal rights for men and women in rural areas. According to the Rural Women's Needs Assessment on their right to land, which was supported by UNIFEM in 2002, women despite the guaranteed equality by the laws do not have equal access as man to the economical resources including to the land. In the case when women have an access to the land, as a rule the land is of a low quality and situated far from the irrigation facilities. Women are often denied right to a land after divorcing husband or in the case of his death. Besides, being formal members of the collective farms, do not actually participate in decision making and only carry out the hard manual labor for very low wages.

In spite of the egalitarian structure of the Land Code, discrimination against women (and other vulnerable people) can remain through the relevant articles of the Code. For example, through the provision, where was stated that only professionally trained people could be entitled to land, which was used to exclude women from the process by the members of the district commissions and chairpersons of the *hukumats* influenced by the stereotypes on gender roles.

Despite the positive tendency regarding increase in the numbers of the female headed *dekhkan* farms, their numbers are still very low. According to the State Committee on Statistics by July 1, 2006, only 13% of the total number of registered *dekhkan* farms were headed by women (among larger farms this indicator is even lower- 3.7%). It is, however worth mentioning that this figure is constantly increasing. In registered *dekhkan* farms 53% of shares belong to women, however women heads of the farms make only 6,8%. In Badakshan Region it makes 5.2%, Sogd Region – 5.4%, Khatlon- 5.8%, Districts of Republican Subordination – 8.1%. According to the data from The State Statistics Committee numbers of women heading farms constitute 13% as of July 1, 2006.

Female headed *dekhkan* farms have following peculiarities:

- women predominantly head family and individual *dekhkan* farms. Exceeding half of the registered women heads of farms lead family households, 40%- individual ones.
- Average size of households headed by women is smaller than those of men. Women as a rule head small *dekhkan* farms, where numbers of shareholders do not exceed 10 people (approximately 71% of female headed *dekhkan* farms). As for the male headed *dekhkan* farms only every second of them have 10 people as shareholders. Considerably bigger *dekhkan* farms, which have 20 and more shareholders mainly, are lead by men (approximately 70% of farms, which have 20 and more shareholders).
- Female headed *dekhkan* farms have as shareholders more women than men
- Usually female headed farms have smaller size plots distributed to them. This is also a case within one farm, where women shareholders have smaller plots than men. For example, if average size of the land in the men headed farms is 5,8 hectares, women's is 4,1 hectares.

Female headed farms as oppose to male headed farms experience more difficulties in regard to receiving loans, as well as agricultural equipments, its maintenance, availability of specialists and support from different relevant structures. The low capacity of financial sector explains the fact that loans in the agricultural sphere today are much less then the sector needs. The commercial banking sector is not capable of meeting the loan demands. On top of it, their interests are far too high for the farmers to pay back. The rural household survey conducted in 2005 by Food and Agriculture Organization showed that only less than 40% of interviewed households had access to loans.

## **Migration influences**

Most people live in rural areas and agriculture is the only real source of employment. Low returns for cotton have increased poverty during the last 5 years and many people have left the rural areas to seek work abroad. Labor shortages are thus becoming a problem during peak work periods.

Majority of migrants are men and only small proportion constitute women. Women constitute only 6 % of external migrants. However migration has a direct impact both on the income level of Tajik families and women. According to some estimation 25 % of all household incomes are formed by remittances. The living level of the families, which have migrants, is above an average. Most of it is spent on food, clothing and other needs of households. Despite the fact that remittances increase possibilities of families to purchase goods, these means do not help to gain wealth for the families.

High toll of men's migration has its contradictory influence on social and gender relations:

- *Change of women's role:* When husbands are away, wives have to work and bring home salaries. According to the survey by NGO "Panorama" in 2004, one third of women do not see their husbands for years and do not receive from them any money. Women are forced to take upon themselves non-traditional responsibilities despite their limited access to the resources (especially to land) or absence of experience on selling agricultural products.
- *Change in structure of households:* when men leave for labour migration, families try to live together in one household. This is reinforced by the fact that during the civil war many men were killed. It is not easy for different generations to live together in one household. This is even more difficult for women, who for months or years remain without voices in the family while husbands are away.
- *Change in sexual behaviour:* this influences the society in general and means, particularly, spread of sexual relations out of marriage, which has a negative impact for wives, who risk to get sexually transmitted diseases and suffer from psychological stress. Many women agree to have out of marriage affairs, due to only few men remaining in some areas. Besides there many young men, who need "temporary wives", since they return to their places for only short period. Such unofficial relations make women vulnerable in the event when men stop supporting them and their children. However the society blames such affairs less than if a woman became a commercial sex worker.

## **International Aid**

International agencies to some extent help the government of Tajikistan to resolve challenges facing its agricultural sector by providing grants, loans and expertise in the field. These organizations, including the World Bank (WB) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), are working with the Tajik government in an attempt to bring the cotton sector out of its downward spiral. They also assist in land and water management issues, protection of environment, growing of crops and livelihoods, establishing community based organizations, fostering good governance principles, tackling gender issues etc. These organizations mainly are Swiss Cooperation Office in Tajikistan, Care International, Oxfam UK, US based Winrock International, UNDP, UNIFEM, UNICEF, World Food Organization, OSCE, IOM, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) etc.

## **(4) Economic Activities**

### **Employment;**

#### **Key points**

- a. In 1991-2001 job opportunities decreased, but labor age population increased from 47 to 55%
- b. 50% decline in employment level in public sector
- c. Two times growth of women's registered employment in agriculture
- d. Decline in real average wage level by 6-7 times, with women receiving almost half of that of men
- e. Over 60% of economically inactive women are involved in housework
- f. Outflow of qualified labor force abroad – more than 1 mln. migrants abroad
- g. 6% of women constituted migrants

As a result of painful socio-economic transition, domestic labor market was affected by the series of negative factors. The major of them was the collapse of labor demanding real industrial sector along with 70% contraction in GDP level during 1990s. Most of large manufactures became non-competitive and had to cut the majority of their staffing. In opposite, the total share of labor age population during 1991-2004, according to the official statistics, has enlarged from 47 to 55,6% . For the period from 1989 to 2000, the total country population has increased by 1 m., while the absolute increase in labor age population was 640 thousands.

The most typical change in the employment structure during the transition is the outflow of labor forces from public to private sector. The share of hired workers is progressively decreasing, while self-employment level is rising. Also, the secondary employment is growing, esp. in informal sector. Another feature is that large part of economically active population is not employed, and mostly absorbed by the labor migration and/or shadow economy..

The situation in the labor market in Tajikistan during the transition can be characterized with the following tendencies:

- 50% decline in the employment level in the public sector;
- Overall decline in the employment level in economic sectors ranging from 2,4% (State Committee on Statistics 2003) to 1/3 (The World Bank, 2000)
- Sharp contraction in real average wage level (by 6-8 times) for 1991-2001, and the related



decreased attractiveness of the domestic labor market opportunities. This is also proven by the fact, that only 98,299 individuals (133,297 p. in 1994), were registered by the employment centers of Tajikistan (State Committee on Statistics, 2003).

- The outflow of high qualified labor power (mostly not native Russian speaking population) from the different sectors, amounted to some 200,000, during 1990 to 1996-98.
- The employment share of industrial sector is decreased from 21 to 8,2% (State Committee on Statistics, 2003). The volume of industrial production in 2002 consisted of 52% from the corresponding level in 1991. Total absolute employment in industrial sector was 86.9 thousand in 2002, or 40,4% to the level of 1991.
- Growth of employment in private sector and agriculture from 41 to 67,6%, also lead to loss of qualifications by those parts of population, which had to change their profile from more qualified to non-qualified type of job.
- Significant shifts in sectoral employment structure, characterized by the decline of the employment level in material production, and growing employment in the sectors of services.
- The collapse of social protection system of the socially vulnerable parts of population. This was also a result of almost tenfold decrease in the level of salaries during 1990s, as a result of sharp decline in state fiscal revenues from \$1,5 bln. to \$300 mln., for the period from 1990 to 2003 (The World Bank, IMF country reports)
- Spontaneous rapid growth in labor migration from Tajikistan, especially Illegal, seasonal and commercial, estimated from 350,000 (official sources) to 1,000,000 (IOM), or about 20-50% from total labor resources of Tajikistan

An extreme lack of attractiveness in the domestic labor market complicated with the difficult transport conditions, and undermined business environment lead to the massive labor migration phenomenon. The country is losing therefore the most capable, educated and dynamic parts of its labor force, what may seriously undermine future sustainable development potential. In the medium to long run this may also negatively affect the perspectives for the development of labor consuming and modern economic sectors.

#### **Gender and Employment Sector;**

During the Soviet times, the female's labor force participation was quite high -70% of women and 78 of men-, but still was lower than both among males and other former Soviet countries. In 1991, only 29% of women were involved in labor resources, compare to 44% of the related ratio among males. According to the State Statistics Committee in 2005, there were 47.5% of hired female laborers as oppose to 44.2% labor. This indicator has gone up. However, almost 47.1 % of women do not receive salary for their work.

### Employment share by sectors (in %)

	1991		1995		1998		2003	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Overall	100	100	100	100	100	100	-	100
Industry and construction	32,3%	25,5%	29,8%	22,1%	23,7%	19,8%	-	11,6%
Agriculture	18,5%	18,8%	23,2%	29,6%	26,9%	29,3%	-	38,6%
Transport and communication	10,8%	2,8%	9%	2,5%	7,8%	1,3%	-	1,8%
Other manufacturing	12,5%	9,2%	7,9%	8,1%	8,9%	5,2%	-	2,2%
Services	4%	3,2%	2,5%	1,6%	2,5%	2,1%	-	2,3%
Health care and social protection	4,4%	14,6%	3,5%	14,6%	5,4%	16,6%	-	12,8%
Education	12,9%	20,6%	17,6%	16,5%	18,6%	21,2%	-	24,9%
Culture and science	2,3%	2,9%	2,1%	2%	2,2%	1,8%	-	1,7%
Public administration and banking	2,2%	2,5%	4,1%	3,1%	4%	3,1%	-	2,9%

Source: State Committee on Statistics, 2004

From the table above, one could mention the dramatic more than two times growth of women's registered employment in agriculture. In parallel, the share of women's employment in manufacturing is reducing. Among other factors, this can be explained by the collapse of giant manufactures in textile and food processing, and following re-flow of female labor force into the lower skilled and lower paid activities in primary agriculture. **According to the Review of Gender Issues in 2003, 75% (60% in some estimations) of working women were employed in agriculture.** The accumulation of women in agriculture raises concerns not only because this sphere provides the lowest incomes. Provision of a stable income is closely related to the right to land. Most agricultural lands belong to men. Women head less than 10% of dekhkan farms and many rural women- heads of the households have no lands at all.

According to Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the tendency of labor force participation among men and women during 1999-2003 was as following: men 69,1- 64,2%; women 43.9-45.2%. As seen the men's involvement into the work force exceeds the related women's ratio by more than 20%. At present, over 64% employed population works in the private sector. Enterprises and organizations of the private sector provide jobs for less than 30% of employed women and 40 % of employed men. Considering that employment in this economy sector is traditionally better protected and employees have guarantees stipulated by labor legislation, women find themselves in a less favorable situation than men

**In 2003**, the highest rate of the employed male population was recorded on the age group - 30-54 years, about 80% - less by 6-8% compare to 1999. The female employment rate in the related age group was much lower, ranging from 58.3 and 48.2 %. The employment among males was concentrated in such sectors as manufacturing, transport, constructions. Female's employment increased in less paid public municipal services, agriculture, health care and education.

The gender gap in labor participation begins at the age 20-29 when women leave the labor market to give birth to children. The most difficult situation formed by the need to combine productive and reproductive activities is faced by young urban women: the level of economic activity in this group is the lowest – around 25% of women aged 20-29. According to the data received by Labor Survey in

2004, the level of economic activity of women aged 20-29 is even lower than that of 15-19 years old.

Women also have a higher level of participation in housework. Over 60%, who are not part of the economically active population are involved in housework, while for men figure is only 20.3%. For the total population above 15, it means every third women and only 6% of men.

Lack of job opportunities and formal income has formed a broad sector of “informal” economy in Tajikistan. Informal employment is not registered by the official labor market. Therefore it is very difficult to assess the scale of women’s participation in the informal sector of the economy as well as overall scale of this sector. Experts talk of the substantial role of informal employment in the lives of Tajik women. This activity includes work connected with their livelihoods, as well as small business and hired labor at officially unregistered enterprises. Increased participation of women in informal sector is explained by many factors like low income level provided to families by men; the reduced educational level of women; high level of competition in the labor market; loss of bread-winners during the civil war or as a result of labor migration to other countries.

Tajik economy has a considerable reserve of labor, equivalent to 12-20 percent of the total labor force in 2003. Labor force participation in 2003 was low – falling from an already low 56.2 percent in 1999, to 54.6 percent in 2003. This implies that about 45 percent of the population older than 15 years was not participating in the formal labor market. The participation rates were particularly low for women and in urban areas.

### **Wages;**

Overall, according to UNDP, the share of employed men (only material production) exceeds the women’s share by six times. Women are mostly employed in public budgetary institutions, where the salaries level is low. For example, the women make up to half of the employed in such sectors as education and health care, where the salaries level is relatively lower by 1.3 and 2.3 times than those in material production.

Women in formal sector employment (including agricultural labor) earned considerably less than men. Without adjusting for differences in education, in 2003 women’s wages were less than half (46 percent) of those of men. This was driven by large gender differences in wages in the agriculture and service sectors. The differences in wages of survey respondents working in education, health and social work were much lower. Women face inequality in payment in all economy sectors, including the most traditional spheres of female employment – health care and education. Of most concern is that, men (34.67 Somoni) earn almost the double wages than women (17.47 Somoni) in agriculture – the main sphere of women’s employment. A considerable gap is also observed in some other sectors, only that women’s employment is not so prevalent there.

In 2006, according to the State Committee on Statistics, average monthly women’s wages compared to that of men made 55,3% (compared to 46% in 2003).

There is an elevated risk of poverty for female-headed households in Tajikistan. It must be borne in mind that poverty here is defined by the expenditure of the household and as such assumes that all household resources are shared equally among their members. However, in reality this is rarely the

case. There is some evidence that the circumstances of transition may have tended to increase gender-based disparities within the household rather than reduce them. Therefore statistics based on household measures may underestimate the true extent to which women are affected by poverty. The women's less competitiveness in labor market as well as greater decline in the relative value of women's wages may mean that the proportion of household resources 'enjoyed' by women and children is declining.

### **Labor migration;**

Labor migration outside of Tajikistan has a "male" face. Women constitute only 6 % of external migrants. However migration has a direct impact both on the income level of Tajik families and women. According to some estimations 25 % of all household incomes are formed by remittances. . The level of official remittances in 2005 constituted 17% of Tajikistan's GDP.

Often men send the remittances not to their wives, but to their parents or older relatives and women with their children either get a small share of it or nothing at all. Therefore, women have to meet the burden of being a main bread-winner, but their capacity to earn higher incomes is limited due to existing gender inequality in access to land and financial resources, low salaries in traditionally "female" labor and the problems to find jobs in the formal economy sector.

According to some analysis, 85% of those who left the country to look for a job in 2002 were male and 15% female. About 44% of women from migrant households left Tajikistan as family members and were episodically involved in the work of male family members. Recently, however, there has been a considerable increase in the number of hired female migrant workers and those employed in the Russian trade infrastructure. Women are highly represented in the shuttle trade, accounting for 39% of Tajik shuttles. 74.5% of all female Tajik labour migrants work as shuttles.

16% of all Tajik migrants engaged in agriculture are women. 5.5% of all female migrants are working in agriculture, usually in seasonal jobs and harvesting. Entire families leave home to work as farmhands. Women usually obtain jobs in retailing, the catering trade or services, and sometimes work as medical personnel. 10% of all hired workers and 14.5% of all female migrants work in these areas. The fewest number of women are employed in construction (1.4% of all migrants and 3.6% of female labour migrants)

### **Gender and Unemployment;**

In 1990s, the number of unemployed grew from 8 to 50 thousands, and the level of official unemployment reached 3.0%. According to the World Bank in 2003 only 4.3 percent of the total population above 16 was unemployed, which is one of the lowest unemployment level in the whole post-soviet. However, this ratio is not providing the full picture, as big number of people is in the hidden zone of unemployment being formally employed, but either temporarily laid off and not paid or paid at highly insufficient level. Accordingly, by the inclusions of these categories the level of real unemployment could reach 30-40%, what is also proven by the first "Poverty Assessment Survey" (the World Bank ), prepared in 1999.

The unemployment in Tajikistan is cyclical and systematic, i.e. having long-term character. Massive economic restructuring in real sector lead to the stagnation, segmentation and collapse of labor absorptive productions, and the related sharp cut in personnel. The remaining employed workers are

often in hidden unemployed being sent to the forced leave (non-paid temporarily unemployed). According to UNDP, during 1991-2000, total labor resources of Tajikistan has increased by 1.2 times, while the employment decreased by 1.13 times, including by 1.8 times among women.. The most remarkable is absolute decrease in women employment in the sectors of public catering - 5.6 times, industry and construction - 2.4 times, agriculture - 1.8 times. Women even lose their positions in such traditional sectors as banking and insurance, where the reduction of women employment is recorded by 1.8 times.

**Official unemployment among women (in thousands)**

	1998	2000	2004
Overall registered unemployment	54,1	49,7	42,9
Registered unemployment among women, including:	28,8	26,3	23,2
- Dushanbe	0,5	0,5	0,4
- GBAO	5,7	6,4	6,7
- Khatlon	4,8	4,2	3,6
- Sughd	9,6	7,9	8,6
- Republican subordination	8,2	7,3	4,2

*State Statistics Committee, 2004*

The table shows the gender structure of official unemployment, those of officially registered and obtained the related status. As mentioned above, the official unemployment rate in 2,4 – 2,9% is not at all reflecting the real picture of unemployment both explicit and hidden. Nevertheless, the women are more keen to obtain the official status of unemployed, reflecting their predominant desire to stay in the country and less private business opportunities. According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, By January 2003 of the total number of registered unemployed, women made up 55%. The categories of temporarily laid off (forced leave) in the big manufactures is obviously dominating among the registered unemployed women. Another part of women official unemployed made up by those groups of former staff in public social institutions.

According to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection in 2003, in the overall number of employed; the share of officially unemployed is reducing, both among women and men. The decrease among women unemployment is by 6 times, and among men by 3 times. Accordingly, the employment level among women is increasing. According to some findings, sometimes employers are reluctant to employ women and give preference to male candidate, fearing additional expenses women might cost them due to her reproductive functions and rights as employee.

**Social security;**

As with other sectors, the crisis with social security system had a considerably negative impact with the situation of women, who until recently relied on an intensive network of allowances and services provided to families and children(monetary allowances, maternity leave, free social services, including child care institutions, as well as support in getting education and medical assistance). In the last few years Tajikistan has begun to reform the institutional social security system. To date Tajikistan has adopted about 20 laws in accordance with international legal standards regulating the social development of the country. The current social security system is represented by three functions: social insurance, social assistance (monetary compensations to poor children and financial assistance) and social care (housing allowances and social services). State social insurance funds are used to pay pensions, provide maternity benefits, unemployment benefits and other social

allowances for various of categories of population (temporary disability, pregnancy and delivery, funerals, family allowances etc.). The Social Security Funds provide pensions, medical benefits, unemployment benefits and allowances to families with children. In accordance with Poverty Reduction Strategy, reform of the social security system in Tajikistan will make it possible to implement a set of socio-economic measures aimed at protecting the population against unemployment, inflation and devaluation of labor incomes. So far the sizes of the benefits and compensations are too small to make difference in the families.

### **Gender policies in the employment sector;**

The Constitution of Tajikistan (1994) consolidates the equality of men and women in all spheres of life. The right to equal labor and equal payment is stipulated in the Article 25 of the Constitution: Every person has the right to labor, the choice of the occupation, employment, labor protection and social security against employment...All restrictions in labor relations are prohibited. Equal labor is equally compensated.

Article 7 of the Labor Code prohibits any differentiations, inadmissibility or preferences, as well as refusal to recruit based on gender. There are additional guarantees for women with children or expectant mothers in the Chapter 12 of the Code. Article 46 of the Labor Code stipulated the legal standard according to which maternity leave can be partially or fully used by the child's father. Article 155 of the Criminal Code foresees criminal proceedings against employer, who refuses unjustifiably to recruit or without grounds dismisses from work a woman with a child under 3.

In 2005 was adopted a Law on State Guarantees of Equality between Men and Women and Equal Opportunities of their implementation, Article 3 of which contains a direct prohibition of discrimination against men and women's rights. According to Article 13 of the Law, each employer irrespective of the form of property or legal form of enterprise must provide men and women with:

- equal opportunities stipulated by their labor agreements
- equal access to vacancies (positions)
- equal salary (remuneration) for equal work or work of an equal value
- equal opportunities of advanced training, re-training or job promotion
- safe labor conditions ensuring life and health security.

Article 5 of the Law guarantees equal representation of men and women in the legislative, executive and judicial branches of state power. According to Article 15, in the event of mass dismissal of employees, the number of dismissed people of one gender should be in proportion to the personnel of the same gender at the enterprise. Article 17 of the Law envisages a permanent monitoring of equal opportunities of men and women in the socio-economic sphere aimed at the analysis of the current situation, forecasting probable changes, development of preventive measures and elimination of discrimination.

**Poverty Reduction Strategy I** proposes measures to address unemployment issues, which should result in an increased proportion of women within the total number of economically active population by 25%, a decrease in gender imbalance by 6%, an increased proportion of women at all levels of legislative and executive powers.

According to the regulation (charter), approved by the Government of Tajikistan (07.03.2001), Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, is the state regulation body, responsible for the development and implementation of unified state policy in the areas of labor, employment and social protection of population. The Ministry do not specify gender-sensitive indicators and policy measures. Although, some articles under social protection of the population point out the declarative principles in the development of proposals to formulate state policies in social protection of family, women and children, as well as coordination, control, development and implementation of the related policies.

When analyzing the related sector policy documents, one observes that gender approach is somehow mixed with the notion of vulnerable strata's of population, where women are classified as those having unequal job opportunities. On the policy level, there is yet a poor understanding of the gender balanced approaches. As all over of public administration units, esp. among the social units, the employment sector institutions are suffering from the poor institutional and staffing potential, poor qualification of personnel, lack of analytical and policy oriented vision and approaches, including strengthened pro-gender policies. Along with the poor staffing, the problem of technical and office equipment is one of the most acute

In general the government currently does not have the strong policy instruments to pursue a pro-active and efficient policy of job creation. The related capacities of the Tajik Government are constrained with the weak macroeconomic policies, undermined investment climate, poor financial infrastructure and fiscal inabilities to make any serious capital investments into the labor creating sectors, both manufacturing and social.

**(5) Violence Against Women**

**Key points**

- a. Tajikistan has ratified CEDAW in 1993
- b. Between 2001 and 2004, 344 women committed suicide and 433 were reported to have been murdered by their husbands/partners in Tajikistan
- c. The Tajik government is not in compliance with CEDAW;
- d. Tajikistan has not met its obligation to develop comprehensive legal, political, administrative and cultural programs to prevent violence against women.

Violence against women has become all the more common phenomenon in Tajik society during and after the civil conflict in Tajikistan in 1990's. Problems that turned into burning issues in the transition period, such as unemployment, poverty, and social inequality contributed to the increase of psychological, sexual and physical violence against women in Tajikistan.

Though domestic violence existed long before independence of Tajikistan, the Soviet system provided some social and legal mechanisms- functioning system of rule of law, equal access to education for girls and women, an enabling economic environment- to mitigate the problem. The violent war of 1992-1997 resulted in the death of 60 000 people, 26 000 of women were widowed, 55000 children- orphaned and 600 000- displaced. During the war violence against women significantly increased and many women and girls were subject to rapes, torture, verbal abuse and forced marriage. They also faced abuse and harassment when were displaced. These years are marked by peace and stability, however revival of traditional patriarchic culture and social values as well as Islamic practices together with hardships of economy have contributed to a wide scale increase in the levels of violence against women and girls within families and communities in Tajikistan.

Phenomenon of violence against women in the, families has deep cultural roots. Most Tajiks both men and women do not consider hitting, beating and humiliating behaviors (like constant belittling, calling names, ridicule, non-physical forms of hostility) between the family members to be violence, they view it as a normal part of the family life. Traditionally and culturally wife abuse has been held to be a normal part of married and a family life, and an expression of a man's right to 'chastise' his wife and children, who are considered to be his property, as well as a mother-in-law's right to humiliate and dominate her daughter-in-law. Wife abuse is typically referred to as a family "dispute", "conflict" or "quarrel" and is considered a family private matter.

In August 2005, a social scientist conducted a survey on domestic violence in the Khatlon Oblast of Tajikistan. The report documented interviews with six hundred people, both women and men. In this survey, (the "Khatlon survey"), over one-third of the women responded that their husbands had beaten them. The survey noted that married women can experience "a layering of multiple forms of violence." Seventy-five percent of the women who reported that their mothers-in-law beat them also



reported that their husbands had beaten them as well. Finally, the study concluded that there were “no significant differences across districts, age groups, levels of education or work status in regards to whether a woman had ever been hit/beat[en] by her husband or mother-in-law.”

Some evidence suggests that domestic violence is more prevalent in rural areas. The World Health Organization’s 1999 study reported a disparity in rates of violence between the geographic regions. The study found that women in Khatlon experience more physical, sexual and psychological violence than women in the other regions. This was reinforced by the fact that the civil war started in this region.

Women, who speaks about her family problems in public or complaints about being beaten is considered to be a “bad wife”. Because the problem family violence is not openly discussed, acknowledged or addressed in Tajik society, women and children typically suffer in silence. One of tragic outcomes of violence against women in Tajikistan is the number females who attempt and commit suicide each year by means of self-immolation, poisoning or drowning. Female suicide is seldom spoken about, which makes difficult it to record by local authorities and obtain actual it figures on the number of cases of female suicide each year. According to United Nations’ Interregional Information Network between 2001 and 2004, 344 women committed suicide and 433 were reported to have been murdered by their husbands/partners in Tajikistan.

**Box 4. Husband kills his wife**

A woman had four children. She lived in a nearby village. She did not cook dinner on time when the husband went to the field to work so the husband beat her...when she was baking bread he stabbed her with a sickle eight times. He came from the back while she was baking and stabbed her...there was blood all over the bread and the oven. She fell to the ground and he was kicking her and trying to get the sickle out...the children went to an orphanage and the villagers paid for the funeral...there were earlier cases where he had beat her.

*From interview by Minnesota Advocates for the report on Domestic Violence, 2006*

In many cases girls and women view suicide as the only way to escape the violence they are experiencing in their lives. Having attained the age of majority (after 15), women have to regularly face violence and abuse. For example, almost 50% of women were reported to have suffered from some forms of physical, sexual and/or psychological violence from family members (e.g. husband or his relatives), and 47% of married women had had forced sexual relations with their spouses.

Many girls and women, however, do not succeed in their suicide attempts and remain emotionally and physically scared and disabled, which places them at increased risk of repeated suicide attempts, as well as discrimination, oppression, poverty and gender-based violence for years to come.

Analysis of the causes of suicide showed that over 45% of self-immolations were committed as a result of a domestic conflict with the mother-in-law and husband’s relatives, and over 10% as a result of conflicts with the husband. An important role here is played by the increased religious factors, which worsen existing trends. Quite often, the so-called religious behavior is a guise for stereotypes and traditional society customs discriminating against women and having no religious justification. Thus, bigamy is argued for by Islamic domestic law, which, in accordance with the provisions of

Koran, approves of polygamy. However, only in rare occasions are all the required conditions observed in the second and sometimes in the first marriage. In other words, most conditions, (such as the consent of a woman to get married) are neglected, despite the fact that “marriage is considered invalid if a bride was not previously consulted and her consent to marriage was not received”. A woman has the right to administer her property at her own convenience (without her husband’s consent). Her husband and other men of the family have no right to consider themselves as co-owners and administer her property. However, before the revolution, land in mountainous Tajikistan was scarce and women were often denied it, which contradicted **Islamic standards** (Minnesota Advocates. Domestic Violence in Tajikistan). This situation, alongside a number of other reasons, such as poor legal knowledge, strong stereotypes existing in society and criticizing women who discuss their domestic problems “in public”, has led to domestic violence in Tajikistan

Results of the survey conducted by the Forensic Pathology Chair of the Abuali Ibn Sino Tajik Medical University devoted to various aspects of violence against women showed that during 1998-2003, forensic and medical institutions of Dushanbe and RRS received 400 people requesting the assessment of bodily injuries and the evidence of sexual crimes (rape and sexual abuse); of them 357 (89.3%) were women and 43 (10.7%) men. To determine the level of violence, specialists analyzed results of women’s attendance at medical facilities after violent actions (bodily injuries, beatings, and torments). Thus, in 1998-2002, Emergency Station #1 in Dushanbe administered help to 89 women. Most of them were aged 21-40 (66.3%); girls under 20 constituted 19.1% of the total number. In 68.8% of cases, the acts of violence had been committed by their relatives (father, brother, husband, sexual partner) and only in 31.2% of cases – by strangers. Similar data was received during the analysis of attendance provided by Kulob regional Hospital #2’s emergency station. Thus, during 1994-1998, 250 women applied for medical assistance after bodily injuries. 72% of women had signs of domestic incidents: maimings, beatings, multiple bodily injuries, and limb fractures.

Interviews for the research on Domestic Violence in Tajikistan, revealed that many government officials denied the existence of a problem that others felt was overwhelmingly present in Tajik society. One interviewee working on the issue of domestic violence explained:  
...they called me into the mayor’s office...They said, “Why are you speaking of violence? There is no violence! Change that word. What man killed his wife? There is no problem here...Why are you teaching our wives these things?

### **Legal Response**

Despite the high prevalence of violence against women in Tajikistan and its corresponding negative impacts on families, communities and society, the government of Tajikistan has only begun to address the issue and allocate resources to combat the social problem. As a member of the United Nations, Tajikistan has an obligation to adhere to internationally recognized human rights norms. **Tajikistan has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, ratified in 1993) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR, ratified in 1998).**

**Tajikistan has also adopted in 2001 the “State Program on Main Directions of the State Policy Regarding Provision of Equal Rights and Possibilities for Both Men and Women in Tajikistan for the years 2001-2010”** with an addendum: “Access of Rural Women to Land.” In March 2005, a

“Law On the State Guarantees towards Equal Rights for Men and Women and Equal Possibilities to Implement Them” was adopted. In 1991, the National Committee on Women and the Family was created. A deputy prime minister oversees issues related to women’s rights and gender discrimination on the national level. Similar structures are in place in oblast, city, and local representative bodies of authority. Social sector ministries and departments have subdivisions specifically focused on the needs of women, the family and children. Despite these acknowledgements, the Tajik government has yet to pass a law specifically targeting domestic violence and the laws currently in place do not provide an adequate response to the crime. In absence of a specific law on domestic violence, the Ministry of Internal Affairs issued a decree in May 2006, compelling state bodies to react to the information provided by the crisis centers. Virtually no government funding of programs assisting victims of domestic violence exists.

Tajikistan’s Constitution guarantees citizens many basic rights and freedoms and sets forth a commitment to follow international legal norms. Tajikistan does not have a specific statute on domestic violence, but its Criminal Code provides criminal penalties for various levels of assault. The Tajik family law provides theoretical equality between men and women in marriage and divorce. In application, however, despite the neutral laws, the legal system creates significant barriers for women seeking legal recourse for domestic violence. The Constitution requires the government to protect its citizens from harm. Article 5 provides that “life, honor, dignity, and other natural human rights are inviolable. The rights and liberties of the person and citizen are recognized, observed, and protected by the state.” Article 18, further provides that “the inviolability of the individual is guaranteed by the government.” Article 10 establishes the Constitution as the supreme law of the land and declares any contrary laws or legal acts to be without force. It further provides that international legal instruments, to which Tajikistan is a party, are part of the legal system of the republic and that in cases of conflict, the international law supersedes domestic law. Chapter Two of the Constitution, The Rights, Freedoms and Basic Obligations of the Person and the Citizen, consists of chapters dealing with distinct categories of human rights. Article 18 guarantees the right to life. Article 17 provides that “all persons are equal before the law and the courts,” and that “men and women have equal rights.” Finally, Article 21 protects the rights of victims: “The government guarantees the victim judicial protection and compensation for harms suffered by him or her.” Family rights and obligations are also addressed. Article 33 declares families to be the foundation of society, forbids polygamy and provides for equal rights within the marriage. Article 34 provides for special governmental protection and patronage of mothers and children.

Acts of violence are expressly prohibited under Tajikistan’s Criminal Code. Despite the clear legal prohibition against physical violence, domestic assaults are not effectively addressed by the criminal justice system. In 2005, the Tajik government reported to the Committee on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women that “criminal charges have been brought against very few men who used violence against their wives.” Government officials treat domestic violence as a family matter. At every step of the legal system domestic violence victims are shamed or encouraged to reconcile. Criminal justice system professionals routinely prioritize the preservation of the family over a woman’s safety and accountability for violent offenders.

### **Justice System (by Minnesota Advocates)**

Criminal justice officials disregard the seriousness of domestic violence unless it results in major injuries or death. Interviewees who have regular contact with victims of domestic violence reported that “throughout the Tajik system, no one – doctors, militia, prosecutors, is interested in minor injuries. There must be a major injury or near death for the situation to be taken seriously.” Lawyers and advocates reported that it is difficult to successfully prosecute domestic violence cases. “Either there is a significant injury and the penalty is very high, or it seems like nothing happens,” an advocate said. “It is almost impossible to work with victims under the current criminal code,” agreed another advocate.

Criminal justice officials prioritize family preservation over women’s safety. A lawyer for a non-governmental organization described the situation when women pursue low-level violence cases without prosecutor involvement: “In ninety percent of the cases the courts try to make the people make up and not start a criminal case...at the first or second hearing the judge asks if they will make up and usually she forgives him, they hug, and then go home.” Prosecutors also encourage reconciliation. One prosecutor reported that if he sees that the husband is “a good and straight man,” even though he has been violent more than once, the prosecutor will try to preserve the family. He estimated that ninety percent of the cases brought to him settle. If they do go to trial, he said, “the family starts degrading, and the consequences are a child without parents...It will ruin the family, and therefore we try to preserve them, and many people come to thank us for preserving the family.”

Sources reported that corruption also is a major barrier to an effective response from the criminal justice system. Corruption is reported to be widespread throughout the government. For government employees, “salaries are symbolic; you can not afford to live on these salaries.” Referring to the legal system, one attorney reported, “I can not say there is any judge who would refuse a bribe, the monthly salary of a judge is ten US dollars and it is a simple calculation, with ten US dollars there is not enough to support a family, but all the judges have luxury cars.” Interviewees reported that militia officers have taken bribes to not file a report of domestic violence and have delayed filing an official report of domestic violence to allow time for the victim or the perpetrator to bribe them. Interviewees also reported that a woman may be expected to pay a bribe to get a forensic certificate.

### **Law**

Tajikistan has a code-based civil law system. Separate codes address the roles and responsibilities of each main government agency. Domestic violence is addressed by the criminal and administrative codes under the general assault statutes. No specific laws exist on domestic violence.

The majority of domestic assaults fall under the Criminal Code Article 116, Assault, Article 112, Intentional Bodily Injury of a Lesser Degree, may also be applicable. For assaults resulting in more serious levels of injuries the criminal code includes Article 111, Intentional Minor Bodily Injury and Article 110, Intentional Major Bodily Injury. Torture, Article 117, is used to prosecute domestic assault when there are at least three documented assaults that do not rise to the level of a violation of Article 111 or 110.

Criminal justice officials reported that hooliganism can be pursued either as a criminal violation or an administrative violation. Hooliganism, Article 237, applies to conduct that disturbs the public order,

including some instances of minor bodily injury. The Hooliganism statute can be used in domestic violence cases when the neighbors are disturbed or public order is somehow affected. The Criminal Code addresses emotional abuse and psychological violence. Torture, Article 117, acknowledges the mental suffering caused by the sustained systematic assault that often characterizes domestic violence cases. Article 109, Driving to Suicide, addresses the systematic degradation of the dignity of a victim. Driving to Suicide can be applicable in domestic violence cases. One judge explained, “often, the result of domestic violence is self-burning or suicide.” The article can be used to prosecute the abuser for his moral culpability for the suicide. Interviewees explained that “driving to suicide” cases are very difficult to prove as there are usually few witnesses other than the husband’s family, who are reluctant to participate.

Several provisions in the Criminal Procedure Code greatly affect the legal system’s response to domestic violence. Article 122 dictates which governmental body is responsible for prosecuting each type of crime. Article 5 governs circumstances not subject to criminal prosecution, including cases of reconciliation between the parties. Article 5.1 permits terminating criminal prosecution due to change in circumstance, including cases where the individual will no longer be considered dangerous to society. Articles 5.2 and 5.3 provide for eliminating criminal punishment due to remorse of the accused or reconciliation of the parties. These provisions can be used to repeatedly pressure domestic violence victims into terminating legal proceedings against their batterers. The willingness of a batterer to express remorse when facing criminal sanctions does little to protect the victim from ongoing or future abuse.

### **The Family Code**

A woman’s marital status is extremely important in Tajikistan. The common view that equates a woman’s worth with her marital status and values preservation of the marriage above all else contributes to the difficulty women face in securing their safety. Other factors, such as economic dependency and a lack of property rights, also complicate women’s ability to leave abusive marriages.

The Family Code of the Republic of Tajikistan, adopted in 1998, sets forth regulations on marriage, divorce and child custody. The code establishes that men and women have equal personal and property rights in marriage, and there can be no discrimination on the basis of gender, race, nationality, language, religion or social origin. Marriages are only legally recognized if registered at state registry offices. Religious marriages are not recognized by the state. Although there are clear benefits to having a registered marriage subject to the laws outlined in the Family Code of Tajikistan, many Tajik men and women forego the civil registration and marry solely through religious ceremonies. Two main reasons explain why civil registration is not pursued. The first is to avoid the marital age requirements. Many girls are married at age fifteen or sixteen. The second is due to the legal prohibition on polygamy.

Economic dependency, a complicating factor in domestic violence cases, is exacerbated for women who do not have a registered marriage. Property rights and paternity are both tied to official registration of the marriage. One judge explained that it is very difficult for a religiously married woman to prove her interest in a property. A religiously married couple is also unable to register their children with the father’s name on the birth certificate (due to not being officially registered in the state

marriage registration office). The mother is obliged to register the child as a single parent. If the relationship dissolves, the lack of established paternity becomes a major obstacle to seeking child support.

The legal system most often addresses domestic violence in the context of divorce. Interviewees reported that divorce cases involve domestic violence thirty percent to one hundred percent of the time. One attorney reported that of the four to five clients seeking a divorce he sees per day, “they are all victims.” Although they acknowledge the abuse during the divorce proceedings, most women do not seek criminal charges or other remedies for the violence. One judge told Minnesota Advocates: “What is interesting is when we have divorce cases, we see violence. Women during the marriage and after the divorce don’t file for violence even though they have the report. They are just happy to leave. ... [G]et them divorced and let this be in the past.”

The Family Code provides that “a marriage may be dissolved by divorce at the request of one or both spouses.” When there are minor children involved, the court has the power to order the noncustodial parent to pay child support. If one of the parties objects to the divorce, the court shall require the spouses to complete a three-month reconciliation term before granting the divorce. Lawyers practicing regularly in family court reported that the reconciliation term does not apply in cases where the court finds there has been domestic violence. For the court to find domestic violence in a divorce proceeding, the victim must state that physical violence is the reason for the divorce and provide a forensic certificate. Despite the potential waiver of the reconciliation period, many victims of domestic violence do not report the violence when filing for divorce.

Interviewees reported that the threat of divorce is used to keep women from seeking help from domestic violence, particularly in cases of unregistered marriages. An unregistered marriage can be dissolved when a spouse says, “I divorce you” or *Taloq* (Arabic, meaning “divorce”), three times in front of two witnesses. One interviewee described how some men use this option to divorce their wives when they have called the militia. By the time the militia arrive, the divorce is complete. Dissolutions of unregistered marriages are not subject to judicial review. To secure support for herself and the children of the marriage, a woman in an unregistered marriage overcome several burdens. First, she must establish the paternity of the children. Second, she must prove that she lived in the family home. If she has a residence permit, she will have a legal right to remain there. Finally, she must have a legal basis to seek support, because an unregistered wife is not eligible for property rights under the Family Code. Advocates have sued for support on behalf of their clients under other theories, such as construing the second wife as a housekeeper who is entitled to back pay.

### **Other institutional mechanisms to address the violence**

Beside the Committee on Women and Family Affairs, within the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, female-related issues are supervised by a deputy Prime Minister who is also the Chairperson of the Coordinating Council on the Prevention of Violence against Women. The Coordination Council was established on April 18, 2006 and endorsed by the Prime Minister of the RT. The Coordination Council consists of representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Committee on Women and Domestic Issues, court officials and representatives of the General Prosecutor’s Office, as well as the “League of Female Lawyers” NGO, and the “Panorama” Public Association. The terms

of reference of the Coordination Council are as follows:

- development of strategies and action plans aimed at the prevention and elimination of violence against women (multi-sector approach);
- development of recommendations and proposals to improve the legislative base, promotion of the law “On Socio-Legal Protection against Domestic Violence”;
- coordinating activities of national and international organizations aimed at the prevention of violence and its effects;
- ensuring constant monitoring and situation assessment in the sphere of violence against women; implementation of adopted government strategies and enforcement measures;
- promoting the improvement of gender statistics, development of new forms and lists of violence indicators by gender and age in accordance with international standards and requirements;
- facilitating the establishment of a National Analytical Center on violence against women under the MOI and the creation of a unified database;
- development of recommendations by local executive bodies; hearing reports made by local executive bodies on the implementation of adopted government strategies and enforcement measures;
- supporting initiatives aimed at humanizing public opinion, activating and increasing the influence of civil society, including public associations and mass media.

The Lower Chamber of Parliament includes a Committee on the issues of family, health protection, social security and the environment which is engaged in legislative activities, preliminary review and development of issues falling under the authority of the supreme legislative body, development of strategic areas of the above social spheres and their implementation, promotion of laws, and control over the activity of government bodies and organizations falling under Committee jurisdiction.

Women also, tend to refer their problems, bearing in mind soviet past, to local hukumats of different territorial level, local community councils of elder people, official women committees at national, regional, district and jamoat levels

### **Services by NGOs**

Many Women NGOs in Tajikistan work towards tackling the issues of violence. According to some estimations more than 152 women non-governmental NGOs work in Tajikistan. There is a network of 5 NGOs – 3 community based NGOs and two crisis centers in Dushanbe and Khatlon, who implement a complex project on reducing violence against women, funded by Swiss Development Cooperation. Another network supported by UNIFEM to work on Domestic Violence Law is an Association of NGOs on Gender Equality and Prevention of Violence against Women, which also has 5 NGOs as members. Only one shelter for women victims of violence operates in Khujand, Sogd Region. There are other crisis centers working in different regions of Tajikistan, but they work only

when funding available.

Nevertheless, in December 2006, the Ministry of Justice registered the Association of Crisis Centers of Tajikistan that united 8 organizations with crisis centers or shelters. The Association sees its mission as the improvement and coordination of social services to violence victims. To achieve this goal, the Association proposes to create a platform for experience exchange, strengthening and expanding access to methodological resources, improving the technical base as well as lobbying for the expansion and integration of social services and social security issues in government bodies.

As proved by statistical data presented in the CEDAW Alternative Report, more and more women use crisis centers, hot lines and other services provided by various NGOs to get legal advice. If in 2001, the number of requests was 438, by 2005 this figure had increased by more than 6 times: 2,762 women turned to these services for advice. The reasons making women turn to crisis centers and other relevant structures include (in order of priority):

- housing problems (1,423 requests of 8,001);
- alimony (929);
- division of property (859);
- divorce (806);
- light, medium and severe bodily injuries and beatings (691).

Among the reasons making women turn to crisis centers, the lead is taken by psychological violence followed by physical and economic violence. However, the women NGOs movement as the civil society in general is very weak and lack drive commitment and ownership to influence better results. The women NGOs are mainly donor driven organizations. Many of them work when grants are available.

Recently, the Domestic Violence Law was discussed in the round table, where all the concerned governmental structures and women organizations participated. None of the women organizations, which worked on violence and women issues in general, including crisis centers could object to the Ministry of Justice's when it rejected the law due to its not being relevant for Tajikistan and proposing instead to address the problem by only making some changes/amendment to the existed criminal law and other relevant documents.

The passiveness of the civil society in Tajikistan was criticized also widely by local newspapers and some politicians, when a new Law on Public Association, which was not in favor of the associations, passed in the parliament.

Finally, the research on legal response to domestic violence by Minnesota Advocates (Minnesota Advocates. Domestic Violence in Tajikistan) concludes:

- Tajik victims of domestic violence have been denied their right to an effective and adequate remedy. By failing to provide effective prosecution for crimes of domestic violence and failing to adequately enforce criminal laws on behalf of domestic violence victims, Tajikistan is violating the right to a remedy guaranteed under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the ICCPR;



- The Tajik government is not in compliance with CEDAW, including General Recommendations 12 and 19 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. These violations include the following:
  - Tajikistan has not met its obligation to protect women from violence;
  - Tajikistan has not met its obligation to ensure that women who are victims of violence are provided with health and social services, facilities and programs and other support structures to promote their safety and rehabilitation; and ]
  - Tajikistan has not met its obligation to develop comprehensive legal, political, administrative and cultural programs to prevent violence against women.

## **(6) Women in Politics and Decision Making**

### **Key points**

- a. The Government of Tajikistan adopted number of documents to facilitate participation of women in decision making, but with little effect
- b. Tajikistan has a typical gender power pyramid, when women have a broad representation at the lower and middle levels of power hierarchy, but particularly absent at higher levels
- c. Women are better represented in lower local government bodies than at national level<sup>4</sup>.

Former Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) experienced greater equality of women in the sphere of political representation by means of quotas within the government at the national and local levels. Tajik women were also represented in the higher political institutions in Moscow through the same quotas. In accordance with these quotas, women constituted 33% of in the Supreme Soviet of the Tajik (SSR) This mechanism insured women's representation as deputy heads at administrative positions, leaders of party committees or deputy heads of executive councils (26% in 1989).

The transition to independence caused withdrawal of these quotas, affecting negatively representation of women in politics and decision making. Among the reasons behind this situation are the absence of political skills, the heavy workload at work together with that of in the family, the prevailing traditional stereotype of the social role of women as well as general unwillingness to get into politics due to distrust in political activities due to the recent civil war.

However the government addressed the situation by coming up with numbers of documents aimed at improving the socio-economic, spiritual and cultural status of families, increasing the role of women in the society and their active participation in the government of the state:

The Decree # 5 of the President of Tajikistan (1999) On Measures Aimed at Increasing the Role of Women in Society facilitated the development and adoption of the Law on State Guarantees of Equality between Men and Women and Opportunities for their Implementation. On 1997 was issued the Governments Resolution # 383 On Selected Measures Aimed at the Improved Legal Education Citizens and Legal Work in the Republic, the State Program on the Main Directions of the State Policy Aimed at Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women for 2001-2010; Resolution # 196 (2004) On the Introduction of Amendments into the State Policy Aimed at Promotion of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women for 2001-20010; Resolution # 421 (2005) On the State Program for Patriotic Youth Education in Tajikistan for 2006-10; Resolution # 94 (2006) On the Adoption of the National Education Concept in Tajikistan; Tajikistan, also ratified the CEDAW (1993) and Convention On the Political Rights of Women in 1999 etc.

By July 2006, out of 15718 civil servants, 24 % or 3767 constituted women. Women, however usually occupy leading positions at the lower and middle levels, as heads of the departments and units within the ministries and state committees or at individual state level. Indicators of women

participation at the political level very much depends on the level of power structure. Women have a lower representation in the Upper Chamber (Majlisi Milli) of the Parliament. Their representation is higher in Lower Chamber (Majlisi Namoyandagon) and the level of regional parliaments of people's deputies.

Among the members of the Parliament one woman is a deputy chairperson of the Majlisi Namoyandagon, and two heads of the committees of the Majlisi Namoyandagon of the Majlisi Oli (Lower Chamber of the Parliament). 4 women are members of the Majlisi Milli of the Majlisi Oli. There is only one woman in the Government of Tajikistan and 5 women are courts chairpersons.

**Composition of the deputies of the two chambers of the Parliament and regional parliaments as of April 2005**

Name of Unit	Total	Consisting of		%	
		Men	Women	Men	Women
Majlisi Milli	34	30	4	88.2	11.8
Majlisi Namoyandagon	63	52	11	82.5	17.5
Majlises of People's Deputies-regional	190	156	34	82.1	17.9
MPD-city	656	563	93	85.8	14.2
MPD-districts	1869	1578	291	84.4	15.6

Source: State Committee of Tajikistan on Statistics

Women are better represented in local government bodies than at national level. Statistics show that women are more often represented in subordinate managerial positions (as deputies) and there are very few women in leading positions.

The biggest gender gap between the first and second –in-line executive officials is found at the regional level, where there is not a single female Chairperson, although women make up more than 26% of deputies. As for political parties, there are 9 political parties registered in Tajikistan. They are not always willing to include women in their lists of candidates. There is some improvement in the situation currently though. In 2000, according to party lists, women constituted 14.8% of all the candidates for the Majlisi Namoyandagon. In 2005, their proportion increased to 27.8%.

**Proportion of female candidates to the Majlisi Namoyandagon nominated through the party lists**

Parties	2000 elections	2005 elections
People's Democratic party of Tajikistan (President's)	28.6	38
Islamic Revival Party of Tajikistan	26.7	13.3
Communist Party of Tajikistan	10	30
Socialist Party of Tajikistan	11.1	20
Democratic Party of Tajikistan	5.3	25
Adolatkoh	6.7	...
		42.8
Total:	14.8	27.8

Source: Association of Women with University Degree, 2005

The sphere of executive power also suffers from gender inequality. Tajikistan is characterized by a typical gender power pyramid, when women have a broad representation at the lower and middle levels of power hierarchy, but particularly absent at higher levels. Women are most poorly represented within the ministerial and state committee boards and management of the Presidential Office. There is a negative trend of reduced representation of women in the highest executive positions. There were two women heading ministries at the beginning of 1999 – 7.4% of the total number of the ministries, by the middle of 2002 there was only one women minister (6.8%) and by the autumn 2004 there was none.

According to 2005 data, women constituted 8.1% of the ministerial and state committee boards and 13.8 % of the Executive Office of the President.

As for the legislative power, women are mostly employed at the lower and middle levels, although the Presidential Decree issued in 1999 facilitated increase in their proportion among deputy executives at all levels. The share of women increases as we go down from higher executive positions to local government bodies. Among the local executives the proportion of women as high as 23%.

The gender structure of judicial power is significantly different from the general background. Share of women that occupy executive positions is higher here than in other branches of power: women represent 20% of all judges. Their proportion is even higher among prosecutor staff, exceeding 40%. However even here share of women substantially decreases at the higher levels of hierarchy and varies according region of the country.

#### **Representation of men and women in the courts of Tajikistan in 2004**

Position	Total	Men	Women	%Women
Total Judges	274	223	51	18.6
Constitutional Court	6	5	1	12.7
Supreme Court	40	33	7	17.5
Supreme Economic Court	11	7	4	36
Courts of Gorno-Badakshan Region	20	19	1	5
Courts of Khatlon Region	76	67	9	12
Courts of Sogd Region	81	62	19	23.5
Courts of the Dushanbe city	66	50	16	24.3

*Source: Data by the Constitutional Court, Supreme Cour, Supreme Economic Court and the Justice Council of Tajikistan*

Women's numbers are low even in the traditional for women positions like directors of the schools (Headmaster), chief doctors of the hospitals and polyclinics (15.6% and 26.3%). The lowest numbers represent women heads of dekhkan farmers – 16%, administrations of the cities and districts Meyer offices – 4.4%, and industrial enterprises – 4.6%, even though among employed women constitute from 30 to 70%.

The main factors that influence representation of women in politics are indicated in Tajikistan Alternative Report to CEDAW as:

- Domination of men in the political structures and hidden discrimination in distribution of men and women' roles on the level of decision making and implementation of decisions
- Low level of public gender sensitivity
- Absence of political will and lack of support of political parties, state officials and mass media to introducing quotas for women in legislation on elections and other legal documents used as temporary measure to increase women representation in elective and other power bodies
- Absence of contacts between the various public organizations
- Absence of a particular women cadre training system
- Self-discrimination of women

Some see potential to fill the gap in representatives of **women's NGOs**, which numbers have also been increasing. Women's NGOs in Tajikistan are the main force in the struggle for equality of women and men and very often their initiatives pass ahead of Government's activities. The government's support of women's NGOs stimulated growth of their numbers. In 1995 there were only 3 women NGOs in the country, at the end of 1999 they increased to 54, 73 in 2000 and at present their numbers are over 152, 76 of them are situated in Dushanbe. According to the materials of the international conference on "Participation of women in politics: problems and perspectives" taken place in Dushanbe in May 2007, there were more than 3000 NGOs in Tajikistan from 1991 to 2006, out of which 58% were women's NGOs. 341 NGOs are registered in Khatlon region, 30% of which are working on women's problems. These NGOs make a considerable contribution to such spheres as social protection, education and health of women. However, competitive environment, absence of networking, coordination and poor quality services provided by these NGOs make them weak members of the civil society in the country. This was proved also by the fact that the Law on Public Associations passed in 2007 went almost unnoticed by the civil society and as a consequence without comments and recommendations for the government to improve it.

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