

**COUNTRY BRIEFING PAPER**

**WOMEN AND  
GENDER RELATIONS IN  
TAJIKISTAN**

By

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This publication is one of a series prepared by a consultant in conjunction with the Programs Department and Social Development Division (SOCD), Office of Environment and Social Development, Asian Development Bank (ADB). The purpose of the series is to provide information on the status and role of women to assist ADB staff in formulating country programming work and project design and implementation.

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## List of Abbreviations

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ACTED	— Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development
ADB	— Asian Development Bank
ADTA	— advisory technical assistance
AKF	— Aga Khan Foundation
CARs	— Central Asian republics
CBT	— community based targeting
CCP	— cash compensation program
EBRD	— European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EU	— European Union
FFW	— food-for-work
FHH	— female-headed household
FSU	— Former Soviet Union
GAA	— German Agro Action
GBAO	— Gorno-Badakhshan
GDI	— Gender-related Development Index
GDP	— gross domestic product
HDI	— Human Development Index
ILO	— International Labour Organisation
IOS	— interim operational strategy
ISCO	— international standard classification of occupation
MHH	— male-headed household
MSP	— Ministry of Social Protection
NGO	— nongovernment organization
NPAAW	— National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women
RRS	— Regions of Republican Subordination
SSA	— State Statistical Agency
STD	— sexually transmitted disease
TA	— technical assistance
TFR	— Total fertility rate
TJR <sub>s</sub>	— Tajikistan ruble
TLSS	— Tajikistan Living Standards Survey
UNDP	— United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	— United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	— United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	— United Nations High Commission on Refugees
UNICEF	— United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	— United States Agency for International Development
VAW	— violence against women
WHO	— World Health Organization
WID	— women in development

## Executive Summary

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At Independence in 1991, Tajikistan was the poorest of all the Soviet Republics, with a GDP per capita of just over \$2,000. Despite this, the country had relatively high human development indicators, reflecting the legacy of social development achieved during the Soviet period. Life expectancy at birth averaged 70 years and adult literacy was almost universal. Since Independence, Tajikistan has experienced a major reversal in both economic and social development. The economic upheaval accompanying transition from a planned to a market-led economy, and the disruption of traditional trading partnerships and the withdrawal subsidies from Moscow following the break-up of the former Soviet Union, has resulted in a dramatic drop in GDP and government expenditure. In addition, the country experienced a civil war in 1992-1993, followed by a long period of civil unrest.

Under the Soviet system, women enjoyed equal civic rights to men. The levels of labor force participation of Tajik women was high and political representation was higher than in most western European countries. However, they have been adversely affected by the lack of personal security following the war, and the economic impoverishment and declining participation accompanying both war and economic transition. The transition has severely affected industries that employ a high proportion of women (textiles, manufacturing, agriculture), causing them to be among the first to lose their jobs. Other sectors where women predominate, such as health and education, are those where wages have been least likely to have been paid. The collapse of the state social safety net has exacerbated the number of women and families living in poverty, while the loss of quotas guaranteeing equal representation in political and governmental bodies has increasingly kept them out of decision-making positions. Furthermore, women and girls are increasingly facing discrimination in access to education and health care services. There is a growing awareness of the gendered nature of transition within Tajikistan. However, urgent action needs to be taken to prevent losing all the advances gained by women under the Soviet system, and to ensure that both women and men have access to the opportunities afforded within the emerging economic and social systems.

### **A. Transition and changing gender roles in the private and public spheres**

The roles modern Tajik women occupy within society are influenced both by the recent Soviet experience, with its strong emphasis on gender equality in the public sphere, and traditional Tajik values where women played a central role in the private sphere of the family. Since Independence, traditional cultural and social values have enjoyed a renaissance. Although Tajikistan remains a secular state, there has been a revival of Islamic practices. It is too early to assess the impact of this on gender roles. However, there has been a marked withdrawal of women from political life. Economic transition has also resulted in the discontinuation of many of the state structures and benefits that supported women in combining their reproductive and productive roles, such as universal child allowances, and

extensive child care facilities. The balance between women's roles in the public and private spheres achieved during the Soviet period appears to be changing and many of the advances that were gained with regard to gender equality during the Soviet period are now at risk.

### *Changes in the family and household formation*

Tajikistan has a relatively young and rapidly growing population, with 48 percent of the population aged under 18 and a rate of natural population increase of just under 2 percent per annum. Traditionally, the Tajik family had many children. There is, however, clear evidence that women have adjusted their reproductive behavior in direct response to the economic hardships currently facing most families. Since 1991, the total fertility rate has fallen by nearly 1.5 births, to 3.6 in 1997. There has also been a decline in the marriage rate, related to increased uncertainty due to the renewal of conflict and to the lack of financial resources. Both of these trends in a traditional agrarian country like Tajikistan, which places a high value on marriage and children, highlight a population under economic and social stress.

### *Violence against women*

**Violence during the civil war.** Violence against all citizens within Tajikistan was intensified beyond all reason during the civil war in 1992-1993 and the subsequent period of civil unrest. While the vast majority of deaths during this period were to men, women were also subject to pernicious forms of violence, including rape, torture, and verbal abuse. There are an estimated 55,000 orphans and 20,000 widows as a direct result of the war. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of female-headed households. The increase in the number of young, often childless widows, has resulted in the revitalization of the tradition, banned during the Soviet period, of Tajik Muslim men taking a second wife. Although still illegal, officials have often turned a blind eye as this has been seen as one solution to the problem of a shortage of men of marriageable age. Many women's nongovernment organizations (NGOs) are increasingly concerned about the vulnerable position of second wives and their children who have no legal status and no rights to protection under the law.

The legacy of the civil war is still marked in certain regions of the country, and fear of harassment has restricted girls' access to school. There has been little recognition of the long-term physical and psychological impact of the war on the population. Tajikistan still lacks trained personnel in trauma counselling and there has been no large-scale effort as has been seen elsewhere in post-conflict situations.

**Violence within the home.** Violence against women (VAW) and girl children continues to be a problem within Tajikistan. A recent survey found that two thirds of Tajik women are regularly exposed to some form of violence (including physical, psychological, and economic violence) within the home. Increased economic stress and tension at the household level has placed greater pressure on the relations between women and men and manifested itself in increased violence. Recent qualitative research indicates that nearly half of women thought that economic stress had led to more arguments and tensions within the household

and 36 percent of women reported an increase in violence against women, mainly linked to the frustrations that men felt with unemployment and the lack of income.

The Government has recently recognized the problem of VAW and the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women includes the prevention of all forms of VAW as one of its six central themes. However, the majority of women reported that they would not report rape or assault to the militia or seek medical aid. Trust in the ability of the police and the judiciary to take such cases seriously is still very low.

### ***Women and the Public Domain***

One of the biggest transformations in gender roles in Tajikistan has been the withdrawal of women from public life. Political and economic transition has been accompanied by an increase in gender inequality in the political, economic, and social spheres.

**Political representation.** Strict quotas by gender ensured that women's representative participation during the Soviet period was high by international standards. However, since Independence, there has been a dramatic change in the gender balance within politics in Tajikistan. Women have all but disappeared from the national political map, contributing just 3 percent of parliamentary deputies and 7 percent of senior posts within government ministries. At the regional level of government the position is not much better. Only five women head the administrations of cities and regions (*hukumats*), although women hold positions as deputy chairs in 45 of the total 64 local administrations. Women also head 28 of the country's 342 village (*jamoat*) councils. On a positive note, it should be recognized that those women who are elected have now been elected in their own right and may therefore be more effective than the cosmetically high "quota" in the past.

**Civil society.** Women have also increasingly found an alternative voice in the political life of Tajikistan through their activity in new nongovernment organizations (NGOs). Women constitute 35 percent of the heads of all NGOs, compared with only 3 percent of Parliamentarians.

There is a small but growing network of women's NGOs, under the coordination of the governmental Women in Development Bureau, which is committed to the advancement of the status of women in Tajikistan. However, although there is a strong sense of dedication among women's NGOs to address gender issues, there remains a fundamental lack of capacity—both in terms of the skills that are necessary to design and implement projects and for effective advocacy, and a chronic shortage of financial resources.

### ***Gender and the labor market***

Under communism, the Constitution guaranteed the right to employment for every able-bodied individual of working age and the right to equal pay for equal work among men and work. There was no formal unemployment and, in common with other countries of the

former Soviet Union, women in Tajikistan were actively engaged in almost all sectors of the labor market. Women enjoyed generous formal and informal benefits related to child care responsibilities and many state-run enterprises had nurseries, kindergartens, and health facilities. In 1991, women made up 40 percent of the Tajik labor force.

The transition to a market economy has meant that many of the old certainties have now been removed. Jobs are no longer guaranteed. Secure state jobs are being eliminated and where they do continue, pay is often months in arrears. Child care facilities are being closed down, leaving women to bear the burden of both family and work.

**Women and the formal labor market.** In contrast to elsewhere in the former Soviet Union, women's formal labor market participation in Tajikistan has fallen less than men's, with the result that their share in the total labor force has actually risen over the last decade. However, women remain concentrated in the lowest paid sectors of agriculture, education and health where wages are now paid at a level insufficient to live on. In 1998, nearly 30 percent of women were employed in agriculture, with an average monthly wage of just \$6 a month. The social services, health and education, accounted for a further four out of every 10 women employees, and wages in these sectors averaged between \$5 and \$7 a month. Furthermore, even these low wages are often not being paid. Over one third of employees report suffering from significant wage arrears.

Women also experience higher levels of unemployment than men. A recent World Bank survey estimated that a third of the economically active population is unemployed (including hidden unemployment and involuntary and discouraged workers). Unemployment was highest among people aged 16-19, with over half of both young women and men unemployed. Active labor market policies to address youth unemployment are urgently needed if Tajikistan is not to lose a generation of workers.

**Women as economic leaders.** Prior to Independence, women were rarely found in key economic positions such as the director of large state enterprises, and this remains the case today. The low representation of women in senior economic positions is the result of discrimination, direct and indirect, combined with traditional views about the appropriate roles for men and women in society.

**Women as new "entrepreneurs"—Access to credit.** There has been little systematic study of the Tajik labor market and new forms of economic activity. Although there are some slight gender differentials, the available data do *not* indicate that women face significantly greater barriers in taking up self-employment as compared to men. However, the type of private sector activity does vary by gender, with the majority of women in the non-state sector working in family businesses based on trade. Many of these are engaged in the sale in local bazaars of food and other products produced by the household or in the resale of products purchased from local collective farms. In contrast, men are nearly twice as likely as women to be engaged in (more lucrative) private companies. Factors that limit women's ability to



engage in new private business initiatives include lack of relevant entrepreneurial skills, access to capital, and gender discrimination.

**The gendered division of unpaid labor.** Despite the advances of women in the public sphere during the Soviet period, women continue to bear most, if not all, of the burden of unpaid work within the household. Now, with the closure of state-run kindergartens, and the increasing reliance on the consumption of home-produced foodstuffs, unpaid work in the home has increased rather than diminished with the result that women are bearing the heaviest burden of economic transition. There has been an intensification of women's workload with increasing participation in both formal and informal labor markets alongside an unequal household division of labor.

## **B. Changes in the social sectors: The human cost of transition**

At Independence, Tajikistan inherited a well-established system of social services, including education, health, and social protection. Since 1992, however, the social sectors have suffered from severe financial constraints. Total spending on the social sectors in 1998 amounted to just over 7 percent of GDP, compared with 20 percent in 1992. The challenge now is to maintain the country's human development inheritance. This inheritance is under threat both from reduced supply and increasing barriers to access among the poor. Since women and children are the main beneficiaries of social spending, it is likely that this will have a gendered impact.

### *Declining Education*

**Basic Education.** Universal access to free basic education is a key element of children's rights. The guarantee of such universal access was a notable achievement of the Soviet system and at Independence, Tajikistan had almost universal literacy. Since Independence, there has been growing evidence of a reversal in educational attainment. School enrolments have dropped and there is evidence of a growing gender gap. A recent survey found that 89 percent of boys aged 12-16 in urban areas were enrolled compared with 75 percent of girls; and in rural areas the enrolment rate was 90 percent for boys compared with 80 percent of girls.

Furthermore, a third of children aged 7-15 reported that they had been absent from school for two or more weeks during the last academic year and there was a clear relationship with the household's financial well-being and ability to pay for textbooks, uniforms, etc. This raises a number of issues for policymakers. The deterioration in access to education has so far been mainly tackled from the supply-side factors and ADB is supporting school improvements and capacity building. However, it is also important to look at the demand side and the barriers and constraints facing the poor in accessing education, and the factors causing high absence rates. Guaranteeing continued access to basic education for all, including girls, must remain a priority of the Government of Tajikistan.

**Postcompulsory education.** The proportion of teenagers aged 15-18 in education has fallen from over 50 percent in 1990 to 36 percent in 1998 and there have been significant gender disparities within this decline. There are now just 63 girls per 100 boys in general secondary schools, whereas in 1990 there were 104 girls per 100 boys. There is also a clear pattern of subject segregation between the sexes, with girls much more likely to study subjects related to health care and education, while boys are more likely to study industry, agriculture, and business related subjects.

The gender gap in higher education has also widened, from 58 girls per 100 boys in 1990 to just 34 in 1998. Urgent action is needed to halt the widening chasm between the educational achievement of boys and girls. While the highest priority is rightly being given to basic education, it is also essential to focus on the technical and vocational training of both boys and girls.

### *Deteriorating health and health care*

At independence, Tajikistan inherited a complex but inefficient health care system characterized by substantial excess human and physical infrastructure. There has been a steady decrease in public spending on health during the transition period. Health expenditure as a percent of GDP has dropped from 6.4 percent in 1994 to 1.5 percent in 1999. These considerable reductions have eroded the capacity of the health system to provide effective and accessible medical care to the public. At the same time there has been a re-emergence and upsurge in the incidence of infectious diseases, notably malaria, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, and measles, as well as respiratory and intestinal infection, reflecting declining health status (and poor water/sanitation), particularly in young children who are most vulnerable to these conditions.

Children have been among those hit hardest by deteriorating living conditions. Several major nutrition/anthropometry surveys have been carried out since 1994, and the results indicate a steady deterioration in nutritional status. There is some evidence that girl children are more malnourished than boys. There is also evidence that mothers are cutting back on their own nutritional intake to ensure there is food for their children.

**Women's health status.** High birth rates, high rates of maternal and infant mortality, relatively large numbers of abortions, and rising prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) all contribute to low women's health status. This is compounded by the growing incidence of informal charges for health care services, which are predominantly used by women and children. There is evidence that poor women are increasingly giving birth at home without medical assistance as one way to reduce the costs associated with childbirth, a factor that may be contributing to high maternal morbidity and mortality.

### ***Inadequate Social Protection***

Prior to Independence, there was a comprehensive system of social welfare benefits. With a guarantee of full employment, unemployment was unknown. For those unable to work, there was an extensive system of invalidity and old age benefits, and for families with young children, there were generous child benefits. Coverage of benefits was universal and almost every household was eligible for at least one. In addition to cash benefits, there were numerous "benefits-in-kind" including free preschool and child care, free or heavily subsidized holiday camps, subsidized housing and utilities, free cultural and sport facilities, and generous maternity leaves.

Over the last decade, the ability of the Government to fund social protection has been severely curtailed. Today, there are just two main types of social protection benefit in Tajikistan: a means-tested cash compensation program (CCP) offering social assistance type benefits to poor families; and pensions providing social insurance type benefits to the elderly, disabled, and bereaved. Women and children have been particularly hard hit by the collapse of the inherited system of social security benefits as universal family benefits were often a significant part of the household resources controlled by women.

In May 1999, less than 1 percent of households in Tajikistan were actually receiving anything from the CCP—the main poverty alleviation benefit. This is despite the fact that 19 percent of the population were thought to be eligible. Furthermore, the benefits from the CCP were being paid at a level insufficient to lift families and older people out of poverty. Its nominal value has remained unchanged since March 1996 and in autumn 1999, the monthly payment of TJR500 barely covered the cost of two loaves of bread, or less than 2 percent of the minimum consumption basket of TJRs32,083. As a result, low-income households with children are offered little protection by the State against falling into poverty.

The pension system is functioning somewhat better than the cash compensation system, but significant problems remain with arrears and the average value of pensions is too low to maintain individuals without alternative forms of support. Family ties, traditional institutions, and local cultural identity remain crucial factors in providing social support. However, there is evidence that traditional social support networks are coming under strain as more and more pressure is put upon them. Tajikistan remains critically dependent upon the humanitarian support of the world community. It is estimated that in 1999 Tajikistan's food deficit amounted to 360,000 million tons out of an overall need of between 800,000 and 850,000 million tons. At the beginning of 1999, there were almost 1.4 million beneficiaries receiving food aid.

### **C. Gender and Poverty**

Both the causes and outcomes of poverty are heavily engendered and women and girls have borne a greater share of the cost of economic transition. Women often assume responsibility for "making ends meet" when real income falls. This has resulted in the intensification of

women's workloads with increasing participation in formal and, more importantly, informal labor markets alongside an unequal household division of labor. Efforts to care for and protect their children have diverted many women away from the political process with the result that their political representation is now virtually nonexistent. Large cuts in social service programs such as health care, family planning, child care, and education have also disproportionately affected women with long-term implications for their entitlements, capabilities, and rights.

### ***Material Poverty***

The first nationally representative survey of household living standards in Tajikistan, was carried out in May 1999. According to the results of this survey two thirds of the population live below the World Bank poverty line of purchasing power parity (PPP) \$2.15 a day and a third live below the "extreme" poverty line set by the Tajik State Statistical Agency at around 30 percent of the value of the minimum subsistence basket.

The results of the survey do not seem to show any significant difference in the poverty rates for men and women in Tajikistan. However, in common with traditional economic approaches, poverty is defined here by the expenditure of the *household* and as such involves the implicit assumption that resources are distributed equally within the household and all members share the same standard of living. Evidence suggests that this is rarely the case in reality and that statistics based on household measures may *underestimate* the true extent to which women are affected by poverty.

Female-headed households face particular problems. The civil war created approximately 25,000 female-headed households, predominately in Khatlon and Garm. Some women lost their husbands during the war. Others lost their husbands to emigration. 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.

### ***Household Coping Strategies***

Women and their families are using a range of different strategies to help them survive on limited resources. Worryingly over time, there appears to be *increasing* use of reductive, depleting, and maintaining strategies that are not sustainable in the longer term. Over a quarter of all households had sold assets in the last month, and a third had to borrow from relatives, friends, and neighbors. Furthermore, even among the most well-off households, nearly 30 percent reported having reduced the number of meals a day and a similar proportion reported eating smaller portions. This rose to over 60 percent among the poorest households.

Much of the burden of survival falls on women. Qualitative research found that women worry more than men about the everyday problems of managing food in the household, and are more prepared to ask others for help, and to consider trading and other activities that could generate income to buy food for the household. Poverty reduction strategies that are sensitive to the gendered nature of poverty and that empower women to maximize their existing entitlements, enhance their capabilities, and facilitate their participation in political, economic, and civil society are essential.

# Chapter 1. Tajikistan in Transition

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At Independence Tajikistan was the poorest of the republics of the former Soviet Union (FSU). Since then it has suffered not only from the impact of political, economic and social transition from a planned to market-led economy and the withdrawal subsidies from Moscow following the breakup of the FSU, but it has also experienced a civil war in 1992-93, followed by a long period of civil unrest. Women have been adversely affected by the lack of personal security following the war, and the economic impoverishment and declining political participation accompanying both war and transition. The transition has severely affected industries that employed a high proportion of women (textiles, manufacturing, agriculture), causing them to be among the first to lose their jobs. Other sectors where women predominate, such as health and education, are those where wages have been least likely to have been paid. The collapse of the state social safety net has exacerbated the number of women and families living in poverty, while the loss of quotas guaranteeing equal representation in political and governmental bodies has increasingly kept them out of decision-making positions. Furthermore, women and girls are increasingly facing discrimination in access to education and health care services.

The human costs of conflict and transition have been high for almost everyone in Tajikistan. However unless care is taken, it is likely that women and children will bear a disproportionate burden of these costs.

## 1.1 The Inheritance

Tajikistan was the poorest of all the Soviet Republics, with a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita half that in Kazakhstan and two thirds elsewhere in the region. Nevertheless, at independence Tajikistan, in common with its Central Asian neighbors, had relatively high human development indicators, reflecting the legacy of economic and social development achieved during the Soviet period.

Despite a low level of real GDP, the Human Development Index (HDI) for Tajikistan was 0.629, which is comparable to the 0.649 averaged by countries classified by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as "medium" income countries (Table 1.1). Life expectancy at birth averaged 70 years—significantly above that enjoyed in Pakistan and exceeding levels in the other Central Asian republics (CARs), Iran, and Turkey. Literacy was almost universal and well above other countries with comparable levels of per capita income.

**Table 1.1 Human Development Indicators in Central Asia and Other Selected Countries, 1991**

	Urban Pop. (%) in 1992	Pop. Growth (p.a.)	Life Expectancy at Birth (yrs)	Adult Literacy Rate (%)	Real GDP per Capita (PPP\$)	UNDP Human Development Index
Kazakhstan	58	1.8	69.0	97.5	4,490	0.774
Kyrgyz Republic	38	2.3	68.0	97.0	3,683	0.685
Tajikistan	31	3.1	70.0	96.7	2,180	0.629
Turkmenistan	45	2.8	66.0	97.7	3,540	0.697
Uzbekistan	40	2.9	69.0	97.2	2,790	0.664
Afghanistan	19	1.8	42.9	31.6	700	0.208
Iran	58	3.3	66.6	56.0	4,670	0.672
Pakistan	33	2.9	58.3	36.4	1,970	0.393
Medium HDI	-	-	68.0	80.4	3,420	0.649
Low HDI	-	-	55.8	47.4	1,170	0.355

Source: Table 1.1 Falkingham et al (1997).

GDP- gross domestic product, HDI - human development index, UNDP - United Nations Development Programme.

On the other hand Tajikistan at independence also shared some characteristics that are typically associated with a lower level of development. Levels of urbanization were low and similar to those in Pakistan. Over two thirds of the population continue to live in rural areas. Rates of population growth were also very high—the result of continuing high fertility combined with low mortality. Despite sharing some demographic features with its south Asian neighbors, the status of Tajik women was relatively good. Life expectancy at birth for women exceeded that for men by over five years, and women constituted 40 percent of the labour force and made up over a third of students in higher education (Table 1.2).

**Table 1.2 Gender Differentials in Key Indicators, 1991**

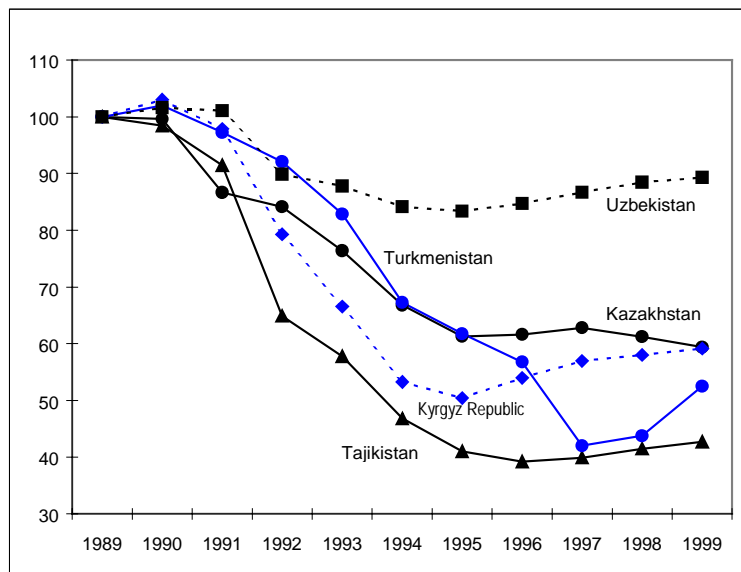
	Men	Women
Life expectancy	67.6	73.2
Age at first marriage	24.5	22.1
Share of economically active population (%)	60.0	40.0
Share of all students enrolled in tertiary education (%)	66.0	34.0

Source: UNDP 2000.

## 1.2 Trends Since 1991

Tajikistan inherited high levels of human capital. Education and health care were free and there were extensive social services and transfers. However, Tajikistan also inherited economic structures that were heavily dependent on Soviet supply and trade networks. Transport and other infrastructure was designed with the view to meeting the needs of the Union and not those of the local economy. For example, Tajikistan was home to one the largest aluminium smelters in the FSU. Russia was the main source of inputs and the main market for outputs. High social spending was also supported by large budgetary transfers from Moscow. It is estimated that in the late 1980s such transfers were worth as much as 40 percent of GDP. With the interruption of inter-republican trade and the cessation of transfers immediately following independence, GDP in Tajikistan declined precipitously and inflation soared (Figure 1.1).

**Figure 1.1 Trends in Real GDP in Central Asia**  
(1989=100)



Source: Falkingham, 1999.

The decline in output in Tajikistan has been much sharper and more sustained than elsewhere in the region. By 1996 it was estimated that real GDP was worth less than 40 percent of its value in 1989. Although there have been recent signs of a recovery, with positive growth for the second year running, GDP per capita continues to decline as the growth in the population outstrips economic growth. In 1998 GDP per capita was estimated to be just \$215.4 (UNDP 2000), which makes Tajikistan one of the poorest countries in the world.

The ability of the Government to respond to depressed economic activity by simply increasing public expenditure has been severely constrained by the loss of Union budget



transfers, the erosion of the tax base associated with declining output, the interruption of economic activity due to the war, and the growth in informal sector economic activity. In fact, the fall in GDP has been accompanied by a growing *incapacity* of governments throughout the region to mobilize resources. As a result, central government expenditures as a share of GDP have fallen sharply. Between 1991 and 1998 government expenditures as a share of GDP in Tajikistan fell by nearly two thirds, from 50 percent to under 16 percent (Table 1.3). This has reduced the Government's ability to protect vulnerable people and to provide basic services such as health and education. It is estimated that public expenditures on education and health are less than a *quarter* of pre-independence levels in real terms. As a percentage of GDP, spending on health (1 percent) and education (2.1 percent) in 1998 is lower than in any of the other CARs.

**Table 1.3 Selected Macroeconomic Indicators, Tajikistan 1991-1999**

Year	Percent Change in Real GDP	Annual Average % Change in CPI	Central Government Expenditure (% GDP)
1991	-7.1	112	49.6
1992	-29.0	1,157	65.7
1993	-11.0	2,195	60.7
1994	-18.9	350	61.4
1995	-12.5	609	29.4
1996	-4.4	418	17.9
1997	1.7	88	17.0
1998	5.3	43	15.8
1999	5.0 (est)	30 (est.)	na

Source: EBRD 1999.

### 1.3 The Human Costs of Transition in Tajikistan

The high human cost of economic transition, exacerbated by civil conflict and natural disasters, is reflected in the trends in Table 1.4. The HDI has slumped from 0.629 in 1991 to 0.540 in 1998, with the result that Tajikistan is now ranked 108<sup>th</sup> out of 174 countries. The decline in the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) between 1995 and 1998 also indicates that the *relative* position of women in Tajikistan has deteriorated. The following chapters examine how political, economic and social transition, and civil war, have affected women—both in the private and public spheres.

**Table 1.4 Recent Trends in Human Development**

	1995	1996	1997	1998
HDI	0.555	0.537	0.528	0.540
Life expectancy	0.721	0.707	0.688	0.723
Adult literacy ratio	na	0.651	0.651	0.651
Enrolment ratio	na	0.226	0.208	0.226
Knowledge index	0.911	0.877	0.859	0.877
Real GDP	0.013	0.036	0.025	0.025
GDI	0.571			0.534

Source: UNDP 2000.

GDI - Gender-related Development Index (GDI),

GDP - gross domestic product, HDI - Human Development

Index, na - not available.

Changes in women's productive and reproductive roles are intimately inter-related and the distinction between the public and private spheres is often ambiguous. However, for ease of exposition, Chapter 2 examines the impact of transition on the changing role of women within the family and the household, while Chapter 3 discusses recent changes in women's political and social representation and participation in the labor market. Violence against women is addressed under the private sphere in Chapter 2, although violence during the civil war is most obviously outside of the domestic sphere. Similarly the gender division of unpaid labor encompasses both private and public domains, but is discussed within the wider context of the intensification of women's workloads in Chapter 3. Gender roles are in part a function of the differential capabilities of men and women. Thus, Chapter 4 investigates the gender implications of recent trends in the social sectors of education and health. Chapter 5 then draws together the evidence from the previous chapters to examine recent trends in poverty and living standards in Tajikistan. Finally, Chapter 6 presents recommendations and suggestions on how the gender concerns raised in the preceding discussions can be addressed.

## Chapter 2. Transition, Gender Roles, and the Private Sphere

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### 2.1 Gender Roles in Tajik Society

Modern Tajik women are influenced both by the recent Soviet experience, with its strong emphasis on gender equality in the public sphere, and traditional Tajik values where women played a central role in the private sphere of the family.

#### 2.1.1 Historical Background

Information on pre-Soviet Tajik society is relatively sparse. The recorded history of Tajikistan dates back at least to the second millennium BC and differs from the other CARs, which are generally Turkic, in its Aryan heritage. Tajiks (ancestors of the Indo-Iranian or Aryan ethnic community) are the oldest settled nation in the Central Asia. Their first states of Bactria and Sogdiana were described by Herodotus (484-425 BC). In the fourth century BC the ancestors of today's Tajik people were governed by Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) and the Great Silk Road, which ran through Tajikistan, linked the civilizations of East and West. By the end of seventh century, Central Asia had been conquered by Arabs and its people were converted from Zoroastrianism to Islam. A revival of Tajik governance and culture was achieved in the Samanid Empire (874-1005 AD) during which time the process of formation of the Tajik nation was completed with the emergence of a common language, territory, and culture (UNDP 2000).

Unlike its neighbors in the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan, with their nomadic way of life, Tajikistan had an urban culture, and many of the cities were famous as centers of Muslim scholarship. The focal point of the social and religious life of the community was the mosque and traditional customs were inextricably intermingled with Islamic practices (Akiner 1997). Large extended families were the norm. Marriages were arranged by close relatives in accordance with the rules of Islamic law and often neither party had any say in the choice of their future spouse. Large differences in age between husband and wife were common as men had to wait to marry until they had accumulated sufficient wealth to afford the payment of the "bride price" (*kalym*). Girl children were considered as only temporary members of their own family and upon marriage women became members of their husband's family. The status within the family of newly married daughter-in-laws was very low; and the only way to raise this status was through childbearing, preferably bearing sons who would become permanent members of the household.

At the lower end of the social scale, women did not have much autonomy. However, it is clear that among the ruling elite women did enjoy a greater degree of freedom. By the early twentieth century, there were some educational facilities for girls, primarily religious schools

run by the wives of the local mullah. There is also evidence that in some regions women who were skilled artisans, such as the potters in the mountains of Tajikistan, could acquire a certain degree of autonomy (Akiner 1997). However prior to the twentieth century, the majority of women were illiterate and excluded from public life.

### **2.1.2 Changes Brought About by the Soviet System**

Most of modern-day practices in Tajikistan had been brought about under the Russian rule at the end of the nineteenth century. Under Soviet rule, Tajikistan underwent an intensive process of modernization. From the outset, the "emancipation" of women was a strategic priority. In part this was a response to the perceived "enslavement" of women, but perhaps more importantly it also acted to aid the war against religion, and to supplement the labour force by bringing women into socialized production (Akiner 1997).

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 central Asian women. Special privileges were given to women who discarded the veil, while the husbands of those who did not ran the risk of fines or imprisonment. By the mid-1930s it was increasingly rare to see a full-veiled woman, although women, especially in rural areas, continue until the present day to cover their heads with brightly colored headscarves.<sup>1</sup>

Another priority of the Soviet period was education, both for men and women. In the early 1920s literacy among the Tajiks was just over 2 percent, and for women it was scarcely above 1 per cent. Primary schooling was made compulsory for both boys and girls around 1930, and by independence in 1989 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.

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that although the veil was seen by the Russians to symbolize women's oppression and ignorance, for Central Asians themselves the veil had a very different set of associations. It provided a symbol of the distinct between public and private space and also indicated a woman's social status. Furthermore, it served to provide women with protection both against unwanted contact with strangers and against the physical grime of the environment (Akiner 1997).

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. The crude birth rate was already high in Central Asia. High fertility was then underwritten by the Soviet pro-natalist system of allowances and incentives. 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.

### *The Glorification of Motherhood*

The status of motherhood was institutionalized within the Soviet Union by the award of honors and privileges to women with large families. The highest rank of "Hero Mother" was awarded to those who had borne and raised 10 or more children. Those with 7-9 children were bestowed with the title of "Mother Glory", and the "Medal of Maternity" was given to those women with 5-6 children. As well as being symbolic, the awards were accompanied by enhanced family allowances and other benefits. Such women were also allowed to retire early and were entitled to special pensions.

### **2.1.3 The Changing Status of Women in Transition—The Shifting Balance Between Tradition and Modernity**

Since independence traditional cultural and social values have enjoyed a renaissance. Although Tajikistan remains a secular state, there has been a revival of Islamic practices. It is too early to assess the impact of this on gender roles. However, as we shall see there has been a marked withdrawal of women from political life and the balance between women's roles in the public and private spheres achieved during the Soviet period appears to be changing.

An increasing number of young women, particularly outside the main cities, have begun to wear the *hejab* (Muslim headscarf), although it is very rare to see women fully veiled. There is also a growing tendency for men to impose their view of Islamic norms on women. A number of young women in Dushanbe stated that they cover their heads due to fear of abuse from young men. Women are now more vulnerable, both because the protection offered by the State is now much weaker, and also because in most cases women do not know their rights in Islamic law and as such are unable to argue their case on these grounds (Akiner 1997). Another indication of the shift in values is a greater readiness to admit to the existence of polygamy. Although still illegal, there is a growing recognition of the practice and in some circles it is regarded as an acceptable informal coping strategy to deal with the increase in the number of young childless widows that resulted from the civil war.

Economic and political transition has also resulted in the discontinuation of many of the state structures and benefits that supported women in combining their reproductive and productive roles. Universal child allowances have been abolished, maternity benefits are often not paid, and many nurseries and kindergartens have been closed. Increasing charges for health and education mean that family finances are coming under even greater pressure, and there is evidence that a gender-gap is opening up in post-primary school education. As some of the old large state enterprises have closed and job losses and unemployment have risen, there has been a renewed emphasis on women's domestic responsibilities. As we shall see in subsequent sections, many of the advances that were made with regard to gender equality during the Soviet period are now at risk.

## 2.2 Changes in Family Formation

The economic and social transition in Tajikistan has been accompanied by changes in the patterns of family formation, marriage and childbirth, and family dissolution, which themselves amount to a transition within the family.

### 2.2.1 Population Change

Tajikistan has a relatively young and rapidly growing population, with 48 percent of the population aged under 18 and a rate of natural population increase of just under 2 percent per annum (Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1). This is the result of a high birth rate combined with relatively low infant and adult mortality rates.

**Table 2.1 Selected Demographic Statistics for Tajikistan, 1991-1998**

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total population (thousands)	5,358	5,571	5,572	5,704	5,786	5,884	5,970	6,067
Crude birth rate (per 1,000)	38.9	32.2	33.1	28.2	28.6	24.5	25.0	20.9
Crude death rate (per 1,000)	6.1	6.6	8.7	7.0	5.9	5.4	5.8	4.8
Natural rate of increase (%)	32.8	25.6	24.4	21.2	22.7	19.1	19.2	16.1
Net migration rate (per 1,000)	-5.2	-17.1	-13.3	-7.9	-6.5	-4.6	-2.7	-2.6
Annual population growth rate (%)	2.8	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.7	1.4
Infant mortality rate (%)	40.6	45.9	47.0	40.6	30.9	31.3	30.7	na
Maternal mortality rate (%)	na	na	na	87.6	93.7	87.6	65.5	na
Life expectancy (all)	70.5	68.3	66.1	66.1	68.3	69.6	68.3	na
Men	67.6	65.4	63.4	63.5	64.4	64.4	65.5	na
Women	73.2	71.1	68.7	69.1	70.4	70.4	71.2	na

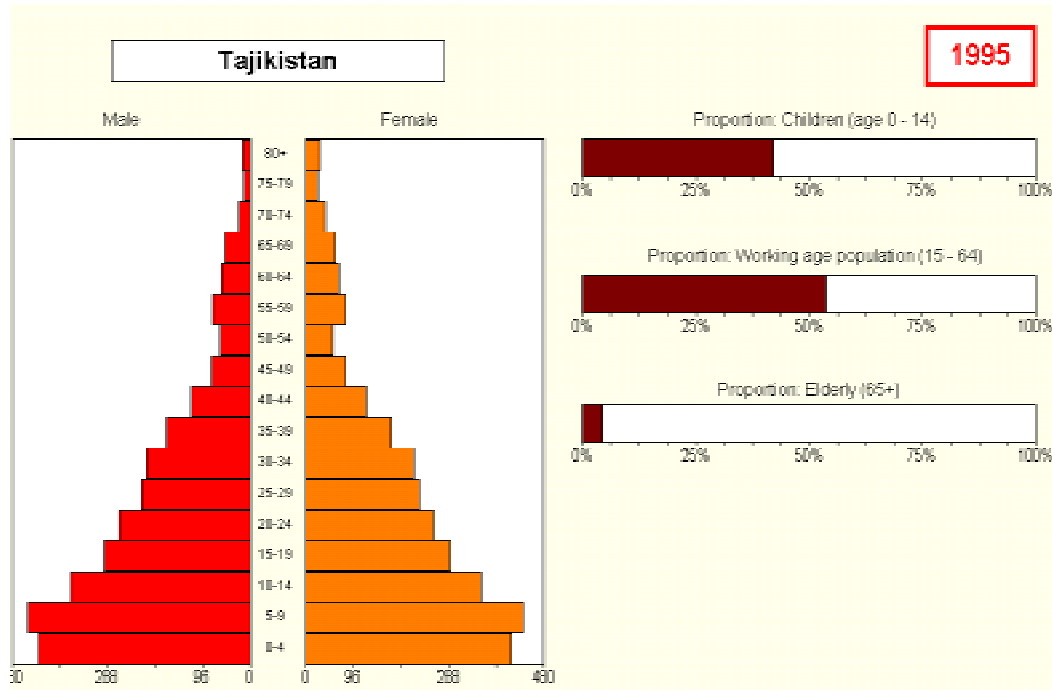
Source: SSA 1999.

na - not available.

Since Independence, the birth rate has fallen from 38.9/1,000 in 1991 to 25.0 in 1997. In 1998 alone, registered births and deaths declined by 16-17 percent. However, much of this recent decline, especially in infant mortality, may be a statistical artefact—the result of an

increase in under-coverage following the introduction of a fee for the registration of births and deaths. In 1998, the official population growth rate was 16.1 per 1,000, although informed estimates are that the real rate of annual population growth is 18-20 per 1,000. This is still high by international standards, even though it has fallen from 33 per 1,000 in 1991.

**Figure 2.1** Age and sex structure of Tajikistan, 1995

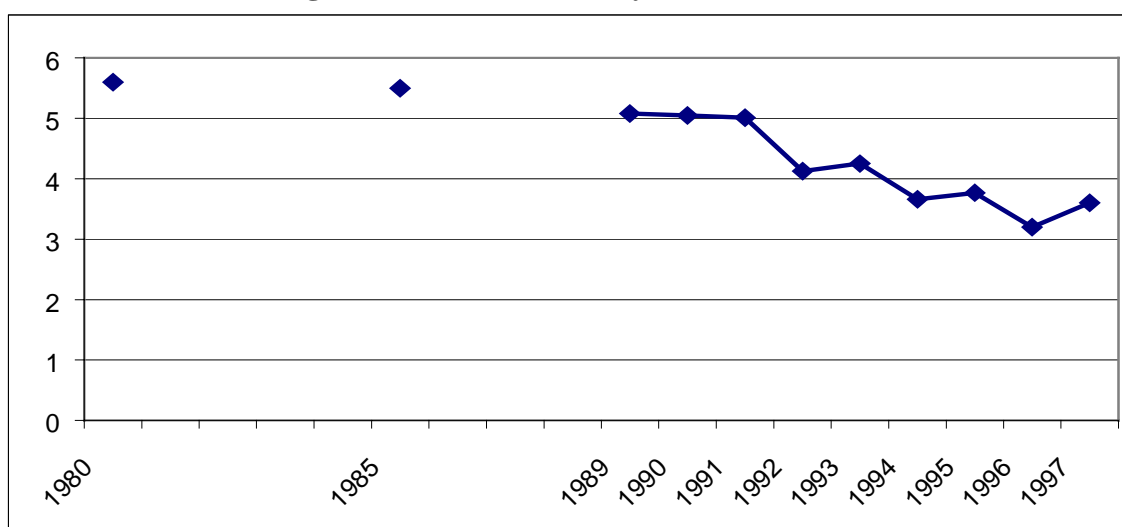


Population growth has been tempered by out net migration, with the result that the population grew at just over 1.4 percent per annum over the last decade. Although low relative to rates in Tajikistan's recent past, this is still equivalent to the population doubling in size every 50 years. Since 1991 an estimated 580,000 people have left the country, compared with 267,000 who have arrived. The majority have migrated to other countries of the FSU, and most were of non-Tajik ethnic origin. It is estimated that the ethnic Russian population in Tajikistan is now only one fifth of that prior to 1991. This migration does not include the mass movement of people during the civil war, when it is estimated that as many as 800,000 people were displaced.

### 2.2.2 Fertility in Transition

Traditionally the Tajik family had many children. One of the most dramatic recent demographic changes has been the decline in fertility. Although fertility was already declining in the decade prior to independence (from 5.6 in 1980 to 5.1 in 1989), since 1991 it has fallen by nearly 1.5 births, to 3.6 in 1997 (Figure 2.2).<sup>2</sup> A decline in fertility is usually to be welcomed, both in terms of reducing the rate of population growth and improving reproductive health. However, such a *rapid* decline in an agrarian country like Tajikistan, which places a high value on children, is a sign of a population under economic and social stress. There is clear evidence that women have adjusted their reproductive behavior in direct response to the economic hardships currently facing most families.

**Figure 2.2 Total Fertility Rate, 1980-1997**



Source: SSA 1999.

In a survey of women in 1,008 households conducted by the State Statistical Agency in conjunction with the Women in Development Bureau in 1998 (hereafter referred to as the SSA/WID survey), two in five women of childbearing age reported that economic factors had influenced the number of children they had had. Interestingly rural women were more likely to report economics being a factor (43%) than urban women (37%). The proportion also varied by age, with a much higher proportion of younger women reporting that they had adjusted their family formation. Only 26 percent of women aged 18-24 reported that they were *not* influenced by economic factors, compared with 67 percent of women aged 50-54.

<sup>2</sup> The total fertility rate (TFR) is a measure of the number of children a woman would have if she gave birth at the prevailing age-specific rates across her entire reproductive lifetime. Thus, it is a hypothetical measure as in reality women do not live their entire reproductive period in one year. Nevertheless, it provides a useful summary measure.



It is also clear, however, that younger women would prefer to have a smaller completed family than their mothers or grandmothers; and urban women want smaller families than rural women (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2 Desired Number of Children by Age of Woman**  
(%)

	1	2	3	4	5	6 and more	Total
Urban settlements							
17-24	4	46	11	26	12	2	100 (57)
25-29	2	15	15	29	11	29	100 (66)
30-39	4	19	24	29	15	9	100 (96)
40-49	5	21	21	28	12	13	100 (92)
50-54	2	16	29	18	20	16	100 (101)
Rural settlements							
17-24	-	15	15	35	11	25	100 (55)
25-29	1	4	13	38	18	25	100 (99)
30-39	-	6	13	25	30	27	100 (101)
40-49	-	3	5	29	15	50	100 (102)
50-54	-	-	12	27	22	39	100 (95)

Source: SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan 1999*.

### 2.2.3 Marriage and Divorce

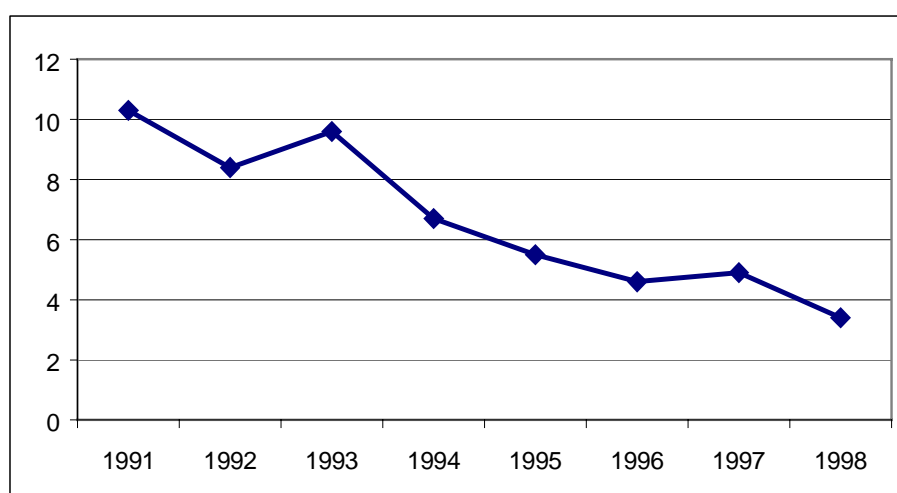
Another sign of a community under duress is the trend in the marriage rate. In Tajikistan traditionally marriage is almost universal and people marry young. The average age at first marriage in 1991 was 24.5 for boys and 21.6 for girls. In 1991 the annual number of marriages registered was 56,505, but by 1994 it had fallen to 38,820 and by 1997 was 28,836 (Figure 2.3). This does not include the couples who live without registration or only by religious blessing.

There was a sharp decline in marriages in 1992 during the civil war. The resurgence of marriages in 1993 may be accounted for by the desire of parents to settle the life of their children in the following peaceful period (the average age at marriage for girls fell to 20.8). Since then, however, the marriage rate has continued to decline, both as a result of increased uncertainty due to the renewal of conflict and the lack of financial resources.

Unlike elsewhere in the FSU, there has been no sign of increasing family instability and rising divorce. According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the crude divorce rate has been fairly constant at around 1.3 divorces per 1,000 population (UNICEF 1999) and according to the State Statistical Agency (SSA) it has actually fallen to less than one per thousand. Nevertheless there is some evidence that relations between women and men have become more strained over time. Qualitative research conducted in Gorno-

Badakhshan (GBAO) in 1999 found that nearly half (48 percent) of women questioned thought that economic stress had led to more arguments and tensions within the household, while only 7 percent felt that women and men were pulling together more now to make ends meet (Kanji and Gladwin 2000). Furthermore, 36 percent of women reported an increase in violence against women, mainly linked to the frustrations that men felt with unemployment and the lack of income. The link between increased economic stress and tension and violence at the household level has been found elsewhere (Chant 1994; Kanji 1995; Moser 1996) and is further discussed in section 2.3 below.

**Figure 2.3 Marriage per 1,000 Population**



Source: SSA 1999.

#### **2.2.4 Household Composition and Female-Headed Households**

The majority of Tajiks continue to live in large extended families (Table 2.3). According to the recent UNDP-World Bank Tajikistan Living Standards Survey (TLSS)<sup>3</sup>, two thirds of the population live in a household with three or more adults and children, and mean household size varies between 5.2 in Dushanbe to 8.3 in Regions of Republican Subordination (RRS), with households averaging 7.0 people in GBAO, 6.1 in Leninabad, and 7.7 in Khatlon.

It is estimated that over 50,000 people died during the Civil War, leaving many young women to look after their children without a male breadwinner. Although single parent households are relatively uncommon, constituting just three of all households, 18 percent of all households are headed by a woman, i.e., approximately 155,000 households.

<sup>3</sup> This is a nationally representative household survey of 2,000 households and 14,142 individuals carried out in May 1999. Respondents were asked about a range of socio-economic characteristics, including their income, expenditure patterns, economic activity, education, health and health service utilization.

**Table 2.3 Household Composition by Region**

	Dushanbe	GBAO	RRS	Leninabad	Khatlon	Urban	Rural	Tajikistan
1 adult, no kids	4	1	1	2	-	3	1	1
1 adult plus kids	4	3	2	3	3	5	2	3
2 adults	7	-	2	4	1	6	2	3
2 adults, 1-2 kids	18	9	2	9	5	11	5	7
2 adults, 3+ kids	26	16	17	18	26	20	22	21
3+ adults	9	4	3	7	3	8	4	5
3+ adults, 1-2 kids	17	31	19	29	15	23	20	21
3+ adults, 3+ kids	16	36	54	29	47	23	46	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Mean household size</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>7.1</b>
<b>Percentage female-headed households</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>22.5</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>15.0</b>	<b>17.6</b>

Source: Author's own analysis, TLSS 1999.

GBAO - Gorno-Badakhshan, RRS - Regions of Republican Subordination.

Table 2.4 presents some basic information on the characteristics of female-headed households (FHHs). Although the proportion of FHHs in Tajikistan is high in comparison with elsewhere in Central Asia, the majority contain at least 2 other adults as well as children. Thus the majority are living in extended families with other adults with whom to share the burden of childcare and the costs of daily living. However, 13 percent of FHHs are lone mother households. This is equivalent to over 20,100 households nationwide. About 35 percent of lone mother households live in Khatlon, where the fighting during the civil war was most intense. About 5 percent of FHHs are single-person households; this compares with less than 1 percent of male-headed households. Two-thirds of these 8,000 FHHs are aged over 65, and 80 percent of them live in urban areas, mainly in Dushanbe or Leninabad.

**Table 2.4 Characteristics of Households by Sex of Household Head**

	Female-headed Households	Male-headed Households
1 adult, no kids	5	<1
1 adult plus kids	13	-
2 adults	4	2
2 adults, 1-2 kids	5	7
2 adults, 3+ kids	7	25
3+ adults	6	5
3+ adults, 1-2 kids	22	20
3+ adults, 3+ kids	38	40
Head aged 16-64	67	84
Head aged 65+	33	16
Urban	38	25
Rural	62	75

Source: Author's own analysis, TLSS 1999.

Both of these groups may be particularly vulnerable as a result of the changes during economic adjustment. In the past pensioners occupied a privileged position within Soviet society. Pensioners were paid at a rate almost equal to wages and there were significant in-kind benefits such as free coal to heat the home during winter and free holidays in sanatorium in the summer. Since Independence pensions have failed to rise in line with prices; in 1998 the average pension was worth less than \$4 a month, well below the minimum subsistence basket of around \$26 a month. In addition many pensioners fail to get any regular payment at all. The average period of arrears for old age pensions was four months in 1999 (Falkingham 2000a). Without other adults of working age with whom to pool the risk of inadequate and intermittent income, lone female pensioners are more likely to be socially excluded, and in poverty, than other groups.

In the past a relatively generous system of cash benefits provided support for lone (usually widowed) mother households. Again the value of such benefits has been eroded by inflation and increasingly the benefits are not paid at all. With the closure of state nurseries and kindergartens, and a general growth in unemployment, lone mothers are less able to supplement what little cash benefits they receive with paid employment and may be at particular risk of poverty. In addition FHHs in general often face discrimination in securing access productive resources, such as credit or land, that have the potential to facilitate income generation. Many FHHs were excluded from receiving land during the recent privatization of the old collective farms (*kholkhoz*) on the grounds that they lacked the "manpower" with which to work the land. The gendered impact of changes in the labor market and alternative livelihood strategies are further explored in Chapter 3.

### **2.3 Violence Against Women**

The UN Declaration on Violence Against Women adopted in 1993 defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life."

Violence against women and threats against women is a major barrier to the empowerment of women and their equal participation in society. Gender-based violence of all forms is a serious violation of the human rights of women and girls and can have a lasting impact on mental and physical health. However, such violence often goes unrecognized and unreported and therefore unaddressed.

Despite the official rhetoric of gender equality during the Soviet period there was a notable silence concerning violence against women. Although undocumented, it is likely that violence was not unknown, if not commonplace. The changes triggered during transition can be expected to have increased the levels of stress, insecurity, and violence in society in general, and women's safety in the home, workplace and community is likely to have been seriously affected (UNICEF 1999).

Any discussion of violence and its impact upon women during transition in Tajikistan is complicated by the fact that, following Independence in 1992, the country experienced a brutal civil war and an extended period of civil unrest, which only ended with the signing of the peace agreement between the government and the United Tajik Opposition (UTO) in June 1997. The violence that took place during the civil war in 1992-93 must be distinguished both from the climate of fear and intimidation that pervaded Tajik society in the period following the war, and from gender-based violence within Tajik society more generally.

There are also real problems with data (or lack thereof) concerning violence both during the war and after and difficulties in defining what is meant by violence. Some forms of violence are clear, such as rape, however as we shall see other forms such as domestic violence and emotional abuse are more difficult to define and may be viewed differently by men and women.

### 2.3.1 Violence During the War

By definition, violence against all citizens within Tajikistan was intensified beyond all reason during the civil war in 1992-1993. While the vast majority of deaths were to men, women were also subject to pernicious forms of violence, including rape, torture, and verbal abuse.

In a number of conflicts around the world rape has changed from a side-effect of war to an offensive weapon employed to create an atmosphere of terror, destroying dignity and pride and undermining community bonds (UNICEF 1999). Although rape as a war crime was not as widespread in Tajikistan as has been the case in the former Yugoslavia, there were numerous reports of armed bands looking for women to rape in the *kishlaqs* (villages).<sup>4</sup> Tales of atrocities that focused on crimes against women were used by both sides to fuel the fighting and to exacerbate guilt on the opposing side (Tadjbakhsh 1994).

There are no estimates of the number of women raped during the 1992-93 conflict. However, the trauma of wartime rape does not end with the conflict. The consequences are both long-lasting and life-changing (Box 2.1). Women face immediate reproductive health risks associated with unwanted pregnancy, gynaecological problems and sexually transmitted diseases. Abortion may result in longer physical health problems, and there are also attendant risks to the woman's mental health associated with depression, fear, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Women who have been raped have difficulty in returning to normal life and are often rejected by their own community.

Rape during war also impacts upon the wider society. Families may be shunned within the community, and villages that have been unable to protect their women may lose their sense of community. The rape of unmarried women was a devastating blow to the *nomusi tojik* (the

<sup>4</sup> Among such reports were those of Raymond Bonner in *The New York Times* (26 November 1993) and *Human Rights Watch/Helsinki Watch Report* (December 1993).

chastity of the Tajiks) (Tadjbakhsh 1994). Reconciliation between neighbors on different sides of the conflict where rape occurred has been difficult and the scars may take years, if not decades, to heal.

**Box 2.1 Multi-dimensional Consequences of Violence**

Unit	Physical	Social	Economic
Individual	↓ Mental health ↓ Physical health ↓ Reproductive health	↑ Isolation ↑ Absence from school	↓ Qualifications and ↑ insecurity lead to lower wages/lifetime income
Family		↑ Withdrawal from society	↑ Loss of breadwinner ↑ Economic deprivation
Society	↑ Health expenditures	↓ Community bonds ↑ Anomie	↑ Loss of able-bodied males and decline in labor force; ↑ Disruption to economic activity

In addition to the direct threats of violence, women also faced an increased risk of violence and harassment as refugees. It is estimated that 40 percent of Tajikistan's 6 million inhabitants were directly affected by the war, with 600,000 displaced, 60,000 fleeing to other countries, and 500,000 emigrating. The experience of displacement alone involved a substantial trauma, reflected in letters published in the *Sadoi Mardum* newspaper from women in refugee camps in Afghanistan. In addition Tajik women, with their bright rainbow Atlas dresses and multi-colored headscarves, often stood out from Afghan women who wore a full veil and face lace and as such were open to verbal, and occasionally physical, abuse from Afghan men (Tadjbakhsh 1994).

The greatest cost of the violence of war was in the loss of human life. An estimated 50,000 men died as a result of the civil war. The death of their menfolk had a direct impact on women as mothers lost their sons, wives their husbands, children their father, and families their breadwinners. There are an estimated 55,000 orphans and 20,000 widows as a direct result of the war. This has resulted in a significant increase in the number of FHHs.

The increase in the number of young, often childless widows, has also resulted in the revitalization of the tradition, banned during the Soviet period, of Tajik Muslim men taking a second wife. Although still illegal, officials have often turned a blind eye as this has been seen as one solution to the problem of a shortage of men of marriageable age. Often women's status is still defined in terms of her traditional role of wife and mother and therefore it is

thought better for her to be a second wife than not a wife at all. However, many women's NGOs are increasingly concerned about the vulnerable position of second wives and their children who have no legal status and no rights to protection under the law. The problem however has received little, or no, recognition at the governmental level.

In general there has been little recognition of the long-term physical and psychological impact of the war on the population. The Government and the international community have concentrated on the rehabilitation of the physical infrastructure—rebuilding the roads, bridges, homes, hospitals, and schools damaged during the war. The damage to the human infrastructure is more intangible and harder to address. A Centre for Psychological Rehabilitation was established in Dushanbe by a local NGO in 1996 and since then crisis centers have been set up in Khojand and Khatlon. But Tajikistan still lacks trained personnel in trauma counselling and there has been no large-scale effort as has been seen elsewhere in post-conflict situations.

### **2.3.2 Insecurity, Harassment, and Corruption**

One of the legacies of the war and civil unrest has been the breakdown of law and order within Tajikistan and the subsequent growth in corruption and harassment. A social assessment carried out by the World Bank in June 1996 found that one of the main factors sustaining poverty was the unlawful harassment of poor people (World Bank 1996). One of the most common forms of harassment is being stopped at frequent and illegal checkpoints on the major trunk roads, particularly to Garm and GBAO. Often bribes are demanded and goods or money stolen. The situation with respect to travelling has improved significantly since the signing of the peace agreement in June 1997, but unofficial checkpoints remain. Harassment is also commonplace in the market. Market trading has become an important livelihood strategy for many households. However, many traders are subject to illicit demands for money and goods from police, criminals, and market authorities.

#### ***Increasing Burdens for Women***

A common coping mechanism has been to shift the burden of travel and marketing onto women, children, and the elderly who are perceived to be less vulnerable to physical abuse. This has been especially true for Garmi and Pamiri women whose menfolk are more afraid of harassment. The upshot of this has been to increase the burden of women's work in the fields, and at home, with travel to and work in the market. This represents a radical change of role for many, and is distressing for those from families where in the past it would have been shameful for women to take on such roles, giving rise to further physical and psychological stress.

### ***Restricted Access to School for Girls***

The legacy of the civil war is still marked in certain regions of the country, and fear of harassment has restricted girls' access to school. The number of girl students from rural areas has fallen over time as parents are afraid to send their daughters to the city. It is reported that in Garm town a large proportion of girls now finish school at grade 6. One of the main reasons is parents' fear that their daughters will be harassed or assaulted by soldiers at checkpoints in the town. Fear of physical violence, and of being beaten up by other children was cited as two of the main reasons why children of Garmi and Pamiri origins do not attend school in some areas of western Khatlon.

Another outcome of the general feeling of insecurity is the tendency towards the rejuvenation of marriage. Given the perception that society can no longer ensure the safety of young girls, some parents prefer to have their daughters married as, in their opinion, it guarantees their protection and safety.

There are considerable difficulties in tackling the problem of harassment in a country such as Tajikistan where many public officials now depend on bribery for their living. Tajikistan is rated as the most corrupt country in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and bribe-seeking is now an integral part of most police work. This situation is unlikely to improve until the pay of public servants is brought up to a level that is sufficient to allow an acceptable standard of living.

One of the main difficulties in improving law enforcement is that few people are aware of what laws currently apply and what they actually stipulate. Improved public knowledge of new legislation and the basic rights and obligations of citizens is another essential first step in combating corruption.

### **2.3.3 Violence in the Daily Lives of Women**

The transition period has been characterized by many factors that may influence the level of violence against women. Increasing unemployment, poverty, and income inequality and the resultant insecurity and uncertainty may be directly related in a rise in violence in society in general, including violence against women. Furthermore, these factors may also indirectly increase women's vulnerability by encouraging more risk-taking behavior such as alcohol and drug abuse, the breakdown of social support networks, and increased economic dependence of women on their partners (Box 2.2) (UNICEF 1999).

Gender-based violence is endemic within Tajikistan, but it is only recently that it has been recognized as a social problem, amenable to policy intervention. In 1998 the issue of violence against women was explicitly recognized by its inclusion in the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women.



**Box 2.2 The Health Consequences of Violence Against Women**

Mental health	Depression Fear Anxiety Low self-esteem Sexual dysfunction Eating disorders Sleep deprivation Post-traumatic stress disorder Suicide
Physical health	Death Disability Injury Headaches Asthma Alcohol or drug abuse Destructive health behaviors (smoking, unprotected sex)
Reproductive health	Unwanted pregnancy Gynaecological problems Sexually Transmitted Diseases Miscarriage Low birthweight Pelvic Inflammatory Disease Chronic pelvic pain Maternal mortality Maternal morbidity

Source: Adapted from Table 5.3 UNICEF 1999.

There is little data available on the extent of violence in Tajikistan. The World Health Organization (WHO) has recently conducted a nationwide survey, but the results are not yet publicly available. Some information can be gleaned from a study conducted by the Women of Science of Tajikistan. The study interviewed some 1,600 women in Dushanbe, and across the Republic in Kurgan-Tube, Kulyab, Kofarnihon, and Tusunzade, on their understanding and experience of violence.<sup>5</sup> A broad definition of violence was adopted, including physical, psychological, and economic violence. Overall the study found that two-thirds (67 percent) of Tajik women are regularly exposed to some form of violence within the home.

In Kofarnihon, 14 percent of women reported that they experienced some degree of psychological violence (ranging from verbal abuse and demeaning remarks to prohibition of communication with friends and relatives) every day, 26 percent reported that they had experience such violence within the last year, and 16 percent said that they had been "morally harassed" during civil war.

<sup>5</sup> The results of the surveys have been published in a series of booklets entitled "Community and Violence" with financial assistance from the WID Bureau.

There was a marked reluctance among women to report *physical violence*, and only 18 percent of women in Kofarnihon reported being victim to such violence. About 4 percent were beaten by their husbands, 6 percent by their father, and 6 percent by their mother-in-law. The latter figure is a stark reminder that a significant minority of violence against women is perpetrated by other women.

Sexual harassment is fairly widespread. Over half (52 percent) of women reported that they had been sexually harassed. About 26 percent had been physically harassed by men outside the home, 16 percent reported being harassed while using public transport, 8 percent in the market and other places, and only 2 percent in the work place. Most harassment and assault is likely to go unreported. When asked whether they would appeal to the militia or medical institution for aid, an overwhelming majority (70 percent) of women reported they would not. Trust in the ability of the police and the judiciary to take such cases seriously was found to be very low.

This mistrust in authority, along with the fear of revenge and bringing shame on the family, is reflected in official statistics on rape and sexual assault. In 1997 just 102 cases of rape were reported (up 15 percent on the 88 reported in 1996), of which 71 were registered and only 54 investigated and directed to court. The under-reporting of sexual assault is common throughout the world and it is estimated that the number of rapes is 5-10 times higher than the number reported.

#### **2.3.4 Men's Attitude to the Problem of Violence**

The same study referred to above also interviewed 200 men in order to shed light on men's attitudes towards violence. Two groups of questions were asked. The first group concerned general attitudes towards violence, including the forms of violence men thought existed (psychological, physical, economic, etc.) and how men understood the manifestations of these forms of violence (physical abuse, sexual harassment, discrimination, etc.). The second group of questions concerned the attitude of men towards women as individuals. In particular men were asked whether girls were considered to be temporary or permanent members of the family; whether they supported equality between the sexes; whether they allowed their wives to have hobbies; who in the family is responsible for birth control, etc. Although the sample size is too small to be statistically significant, the survey findings provide some useful insights into gender relations within Tajikistan.

The findings indicate that men generally adopt a very narrow approach to the definition of violence. Only a third of all men interviewed admitted the existence of any form of gender-based violence, and the vast majority of these cited only physical violence. Economic violence was identified by less than 1 percent and psychological violence by less than 10 percent. Opinions varied by age, marital status and educational level, with younger and more educated men being more likely to recognize violence in a multiplicity of forms.

The answer to the question "Do you think that wife beating is physical violence?" is particularly revealing of Tajik men's attitude towards violence. About 57 percent of bachelors under age 30, 64 percent of those married under 30 and 73 percent of men aged over 30 agreed with the statement. However a sizeable minority disagreed, and reported that beating one's wife is an acceptable form of behavior. The status of women within the Tajik family is still surprisingly low, despite half a century of Soviet influence. About 64 percent of bachelors under 30, 59 percent married under 30 and 20 percent of older men thought that girls and women were only temporary members of the family.

The low social status of young women means that women sometimes resort to violence against themselves, including suicide by self-immolation. On average about 30 women a month are admitted to hospital with severe burns. Suicides of young women have been increasing, mainly among recently married women. In Khujand alone 54 suicide attempts were registered between January 1996 and September 1997. No action was taken by the local authorities responsible for investigating suicides and attempted suicides.

### **2.3.5 Towards Prevention of Violence Against Women**

Until recently there has been little awareness of the problem of gender-based violence within Tajik society. Many forms of violence are accepted as part of everyday behavior. However there is now a growing awareness among both policymakers and NGOs that violence is a problem that needs to be addressed before progress towards equality can be achieved. A number of NGOs are active in this area and the National Plan for the Advancement of Women has the prevention of all forms of violence against women as one of its six central themes (see Appendix A). In February 2000 a new coalition of 14 NGOs working in the sphere of violence against women was formed, led by the Director of the association "Open Asia" Muborak Sharif. The main goal of the coalition is to raise the issue of violence against women at all levels of government and to establish a constructive dialogue with the mass media. The coalition is also committed to developing real approaches towards the prevention of violence against women in Tajikistan and a draft national plan for prevention of violence and support of victims of violence against women has been submitted to the Government for consideration.

A first step in achieving the prevention of violence is the recognition of its existence within society. The SOROS Foundation through the Tajik Branch of the Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation has recently conducted a number of training courses for key decision makers including judges, lawyers, and doctors. A mark of the success of this awareness raising exercise has been the establishment of a new NGO "The League of Women Lawyers," which continues to highlight the issue of violence within the judiciary.

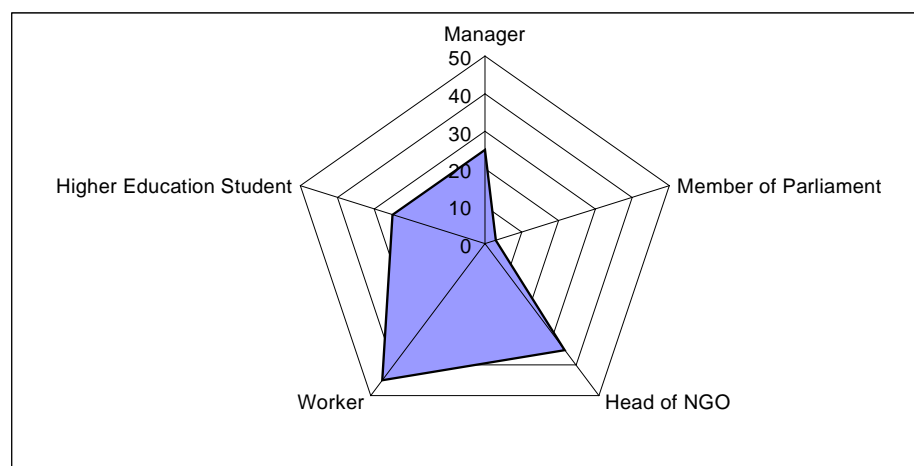
A local NGO "Women of Science of Tajikistan" has set up a telephone hot line for victims of violence in Dushanbe. This service has recently been extended to its branch offices in Kofarnihon and Aini. Crisis Centers offering counselling have also been established in Dushanbe, Khojand, and Khatlon. However, there is a long way to go. The reach of such

initiatives will necessarily be limited to those urban women with both access to the information about the services and the means to use them. Only one in 10 women in Tajikistan live in a household with a telephone. Thus other interventions will be necessary, especially for rural women and poorer groups in urban areas.

## Chapter 3. Gender Roles in the Public Sphere

One of the biggest transformations in gender roles in Tajikistan has been the withdrawal of women from public life. Political and economic transition has been accompanied by an increase in gender inequality in the political, economic, and social spheres.

**Figure 3.1 Participation of Women in the Public Sphere in Tajikistan (%)**



Source: SSA 1999 UNDP 2000, and TLSS 1999.

### 3.1 Women as Agents of Change

#### 3.1.1 Gender and Political Representation

During the Soviet period women's representative participation within central and local government was high by international standards. Quotas ensured "equal" representation between the genders in the machinery of government, the party, and state enterprises. However in reality men dominated the key decision making positions and, as representatives were appointed rather than elected, many of the bodies had little real political power. There was little opportunity for women, or indeed the majority of men, to participate in genuine decision making.

Since Independence there has been a dramatic change in the gender balance within politics in Tajikistan. As indicated by Figure 3.1, women have all but disappeared from the national political map. During the last Parliamentary (Majlisi Oli) election campaign, only 17 out of 365 registered candidates were women (i.e., 5 percent). A total of 181 deputies were elected, of whom just five were women (i.e., 3 percent) (Table 3.1). Following the abandonment of quotas for women, which ensured representation of women at all levels during the Soviet

period, within government today there are just two women Ministers. At the executive level today, women make up 21 percent of the membership of state committees, hold 7 percent of senior posts in the ministries, and 4 percent in other organs of government.

At the regional level of government the position is some, but not much, better. Table 3.1 presents the gender breakdown of membership of the main elected state bodies. The proportion of total elected members who are women is slightly higher within the local raion (district) administration, but overall membership remains highly gendered towards men, despite the fact that women constitute over half the electorate. Women comprise 4 percent of elected members at the oblast level, 7 percent at the district (*raion*) level, and 11 percent at the municipal level. Only five women head the administrations of cities and regions (*hukumats*), although women hold positions as deputy chairs in 45 of the total 64 local administrations. Women also head 28 of the country's 342 village (*jamoat*) councils.

**Table 3.1 Elected Representatives by Gender**

	Parliament	Oblast	District	Municipal
Number of administrations	1	3	45	26
Total number of elected members	181	205	1699	631
Of whom: Male	176	196	1582	564
Female	5	9	117	67
Percentage: Male	97	96	93	89
Female	3	4	7	11

Source: State Statistical Agency 1999.

Representation in political bodies varies across regions with women being best represented in Dushanbe, where over a fifth of district councillors and an eighth of municipal representatives are women (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2 Proportion of Elected Female Representatives**

Region	Oblast	District	Municipal
GBAO	4.3	6.0	6.7
Leninabad	5.7	11.0	13.4
Khatlon	3.1	5.2	10.1
RRS	-	4.0	7.8
Dushanbe	-	21.6	12.8

Source: SSA 1999.

GBAO - Gorno-Badakhshan, RRS - Regions of Republican Subordination.

In a recent survey of gender and livelihoods in GBAO carried out under the auspices of the Aga Khan Foundation, women were asked how they felt about the decline of women in leadership positions since the Soviet era. The most commonly expressed view was that women had been compelled to retreat into subsistence production, housework, and when possible, petty trading in order to cope with the very difficult situation. With their energies occupied elsewhere, women no longer had time to participate actively in "public" decision-making arenas, even at the local level. Many women felt that this lack of political representation had negatively affected women's status in society (Kanji and Gladwin 2000).

**Women's Views on the Decline in Political Representation**

"During Soviet times, women were leaders in government at all levels. Now we are all in the home". (Rushan, 59 years old).

"Conditions of life are too difficult for us now—we don't have the opportunities we had in Soviet times." (Rushan, 47 years old).

"Wherever you go now, you see men leading everything. Women are left with the problems of home and children. Women have been harmed by these changes." (Shugnan, 36 years).

"There used to be more opportunities for women to travel, learn about things and bring the information back to share with others." (Khitj Khorog, 58 years).

"Then, women worked alongside men much more in public organizations. Now we do so much less and this lowers our status in society." (Rushan, 49 years old).

Source: Kanji and Gladwin 2000.

The marked decline in political representation of women has recently been recognized as a matter of national concern (Burkhanova 2000). Several political parties have attempted to address the issue of gender imbalance by experimenting with a variety of issues to encourage more women to join their parties and become active participants in election campaigns. However, these measures have met with only limited success. In a meeting of women's nongovernment organizations (NGOs), Parliamentary leaders, and representatives of political parties in early 2000, discussion of these issues led to the recommendation that a quota system should be reintroduced to ensure at least some formal representation of women in state structures. Participants endorsed a political reform that no more than 70 percent of positions held in any structure should be held by men. This proposal has, however, yet to be formally adopted and in any case will be too late to affect the parliamentary elections scheduled to be held at the end of February 2000.

On a more optimistic note, although the representation of women within public political office has declined markedly, it should be recognized that those women who are elected have now been elected in their own right and may therefore be more effective than the cosmetically high number in the past. Women have also increasingly found an alternative voice in the political life of Tajikistan through their activity in new NGOs.

### 3.1.2 Gender and the Growth of Civil Society

Nongovernmental initiatives were banned during the Soviet period, as the party and state machinery exercised strict control and covered most domains of activity considered as necessary for the well-being of society, including leisure and culture. Over the last five years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of NGOs registered in Tajikistan, and in particular NGOs working on gender-related issues. According to the latest data from the Ministry of Justice, in 1999 there were about 600 registered NGOs (although not all were active) of which 60 were women's organizations, accounting for 10 percent of the total number. However, women's participation within the "third sector"<sup>6</sup> is not limited to NGOs which are gender-related, but rather women are active across the entire sector. Women constitute 35 percent of the heads of all NGOs, compared with only 3 percent of Parliamentarians.

#### *Women's NGOs*

At present 54 women and gender-related NGOs form a strong network, under the coordination of the Women in Development (WID) Bureau. These include NGOs such as the women's association "Simo", the Association of University Women, "Komila," Association

The women's NGO "Komila" was set up in 1995 by a group of female academics, including economists, sociologists, doctors, and demographers. In 1996 it established the Women Resource Center, sponsored by Counterpart Consortium, and in 1997 it set up a health center in the Bokhtar region with the objective of increasing the knowledge of rural women and men with regard to reproductive health.

The Association Women of Science of Tajikistan was set up in 1996 by scholars to promote gender issues. It has focused in particular on the issue of violence against women and the psychological support of women who have suffered abuse. It is supported by WID Bureau, USAID, and Counterpart Consortium.

of Business Women Association "Khujand," "Traditions and Modernity," "Bonuvon," (Kofarnihon), "Nilufar" (Varzob) and the Women of Science of Tajikistan. Many NGOs have been set up by academics and scholars and the majority of these NGOs have the advancement of the status of women in Tajik society as their main focus of activity. Together these NGOs have been relatively successful in influencing the political agenda and bringing gender issues to the forefront of government planning. A mark of this success is the

<sup>6</sup> The other two sectors being the public and private sectors.



National Plan for the Advancement of Women (NPAW) 1998-2005, which was approved by a government decree in September 1998 and builds upon the goals agreed at the 1995 Beijing Conference on Women.

However, although there is a strong sense of dedication among women's NGOs to address gender issues, there remains fairly limited capacity within the sector and few NGOs are active at the local level. The sector remains dominated by the urban middle classes. As Box 3.1 shows, the majority of NGOs are located in the capital city, Dushanbe, and in the second city of Khojand although attempts are increasingly being made to expand operations to rural areas. Many organizations lack the fundamental skills that are necessary in educating the public and assuming an advocacy role and there is a continuing need to empower Tajik women by providing them with the skills to organize and facilitate meetings and workshops as well as design and implement their own programs. To date, only a small number of NGOs have had experience in designing, implementing, and monitoring projects with funds received as grants from international organizations or other bodies. In order to increase the institutional capacity of NGOs the Government constituted the WID Bureau. With the assistance of UNDP, it has introduced a small grants program and in 1998 nine proposals from different NGOs were supported (see below). This situation should change as more donors become active within Tajikistan. However, it will be essential that any project grants are accompanied by technical assistance for capacity building within the implementing agency.

### *Women in Development Bureau, Tajikistan*

The WID Bureau was established in June 1995 as a quasi-governmental body to promote the interests of Tajik women during the transition to a market economy, to assist in promoting local NGOs and developing projects for women, and to act as a liaison between local and international organizations. Since its establishment, the WID Bureau has been pivotal in fostering the growth of civil society and in promoting gender equality within Tajikistan. As such, its operations deserve special attention.

The WID Project, with funding by UNDP, started in January 1996. Its overarching objective is:

"to empower the national government and members of civil society in order for them to develop sustainable mechanisms to achieve equality for women in political, social and economic development and to support the empowerment of women through focused interventions that involve women in a process to take responsibility and make key decisions concerning their own well-being through grassroots participation in a sustainable target-specific, multi-sectoral development programme".

The WID project presently addresses three distinct areas:

1. Economic empowerment through pilot projects involving credit schemes;
2. Training and social work, including education and dissemination of information concerning women's health and legal rights, and
3. Policy and advocacy for gender/women planning.

Figure 3.2 shows the operational unit within WID for each of the three strategic areas.

In many countries the development of micro-enterprises has been used as a successful livelihood strategy for women. Such enterprises allow women to combine work and family responsibilities. One of the biggest problems facing women in Tajikistan in establishing a micro-enterprise is access to credit. As part of the WID Project a credit scheme providing support to women for the development of small enterprises has been successfully established in Kofarnihon. Initiatives supported included potato plantation, poultry raising, cattle breeding, carpet weaving, a sewing enterprise and a bakery. In 1998 the pilot credit scheme was extended to the districts of Aini and Tursunzade.

Although from a legal point of view nondiscriminatory legislation for women is guaranteed by the Constitution, in reality violations of women's rights are an everyday occurrence. One of the factors sustaining these violations is a general lack of awareness of women's rights. A study carried out by UNESCO as part of a project on "women in higher education and development" found that of a sample women with higher education who were questioned, 94 percent could not name any international document or law on the rights of women. More worrying was that only 22 percent were familiar with the national laws on women's rights or the Constitution. The WID Bureau in conjunction with NGOs, most notably the Tajik Branch of the Open Society Institute (SOROS Foundation), has organized a number of training courses. These range from training in leadership geared specifically at women to help restore the position of women in public life, advocacy training in raising awareness of violence against women as an issue within the judiciary, practical skills training in accounting, marketing and business management, to training in reproductive health issues.

**Box 3.1 Selected Women's Organizations in Tajikistan**

(A full list of women's organizations together with contact details is available in Appendix 4)

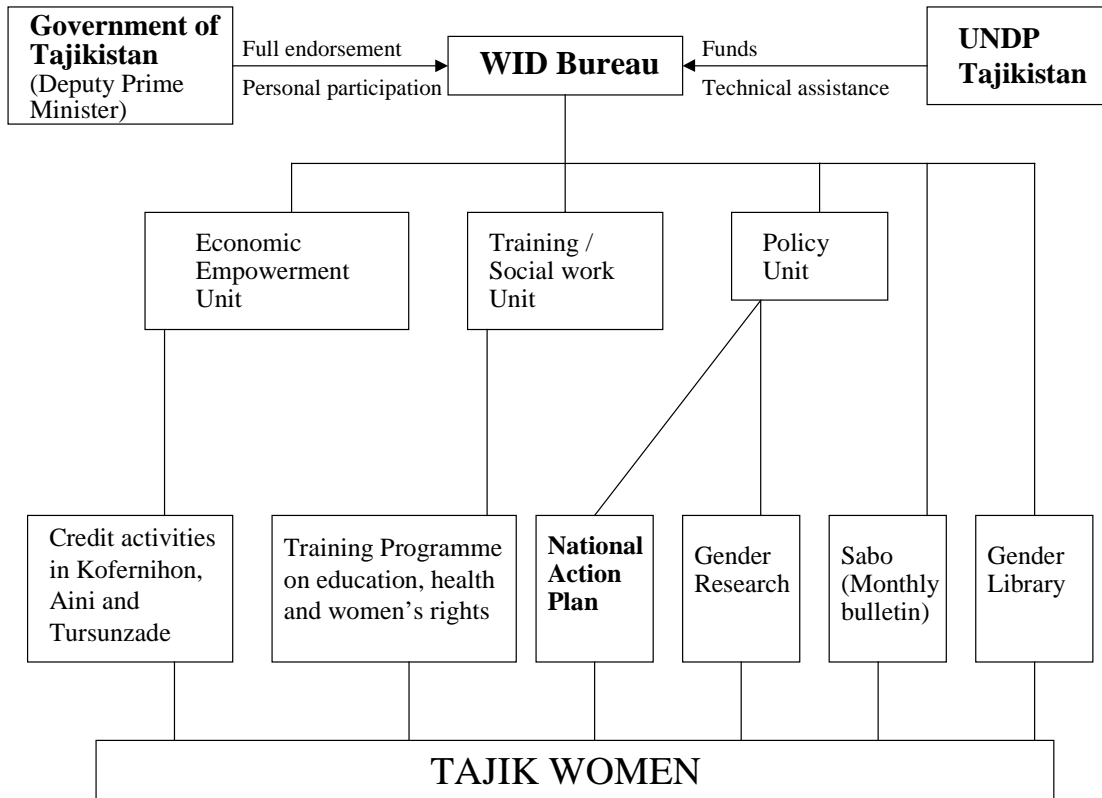
<b>Name of Association</b>	<b>Focus of Activity</b>	<b>Experience and Type of Projects Implemented</b>
<b><i>Dushanbe-based organizations</i></b>		
Union of Women of Tajikistan	Advocacy of women's rights; Coordinating role	Quasi-governmental. Deputy Prime Minister, Bozgul Dodkhudoeva, is the Chairperson. Key role in implementation of NPAW.
Simo	Education on issues of reproductive health and the environment; Promotion of women's employment	Has conducted a number of seminars for women on obtaining employment and has developed a database of employment opportunities.
Association of University Women	Advocacy of women's rights	Dissemination of information about women's rights through brochures.
Club "Women's Initiative"	Provision of support for female-headed families	Received small grant from WID Bureau to support craft making activities among widows and divorcees. Some experience of project design and implementation.
Komila	Advocacy of women's rights Education and reproductive health	Established the Women Resource Center, sponsored by Counterpart Consortium. Set up a health center in the Bokhtar region Good experience in project design and implementation.
Women of Science of Tajikistan	Advocacy of women's rights Violence against women	Conducted research into violence against women. Runs telephone hotline and counselling services. Only provider in Tajikistan. Good experience in project design and implementation.
Dignity and Charity	Legal rights	Works with families on welfare programs to inform them of their rights. Limited information available.
"Ona"	Advocacy of women's rights and encouragement of political participation	Received small grant from WID Bureau to support publication of gender bulletins. Some experience in project design and implementation.
"Traditions and Modernity"	Gender research and training Advocacy of women's rights	Received small grant from WID Bureau to support training seminars. Carried out sociological research on gender. Some experience in project design and implementation.
"Modar"	Human rights Encouragement of political participation	Received small grant from WID Bureau to support mock Parliament. Has carried out gender awareness seminars. Some experience in project design and implementation. Has branches in Khujand and Kurgan-Tjube cities and in Pyandge and Garm region.
"Open Asia"	Research on gender issues Violence against women	Carries out sociological research
<b><i>Regions of Republican Subordination</i></b>		
Women's Centre	Micro-credit	Established as a result of WID Project. Runs

"Bonuvon" (Kofarnihon)	Reproductive health	successful micro-credit program, which is being extended to other regions. Strong experience in project design and implementation.
"Maftuna" (Kofarnihon)	Employment Reproductive health	Limited information available.
<b>Gorno Badakshan</b>		
"Madad" (Khorog city)	Education Employment Reproductive health	Limited information available.
<b>Leninabad</b>		
Business Women Association "Khujand" (Khujand city)	Training for small businesses Violence against women	Provides counselling services to victims of violence against women. Received small grant from WID Bureau to publish results of research on VAW. Some experience in project design and implementation.
Women for Progress (Khujand city)	Small business development Training and promotion of women entrepreneurs	As well as working with business women, assists vulnerable women to develop home-based businesses and income-generating projects. Reasonable experience in project design and implementation.
'Women of the East' Penjikent city	Advocacy of women's rights; Legal advice	Provides social and legal advice to women. Limited information available.
<b>Khatlon</b>		
'Lady Leader' Business Women's Club Kurgan-Tube city	Advocacy of women's rights; Training for business women	Produces a radio program "For Women and Families." Offers informal management training and free business consultations to women. Limited information available.

The WID Bureau, in conjunction with the Union of Women (Box 3.2), of Tajikistan has also recently established a scholarship program and dormitory to allow 50 female students from remote areas to study at the university in Dushanbe. Preference is given to girls who have no parents, or who have only one of them. The girls live in the dormitory and are given \$20 as a monthly allowance. In addition to following courses at the national universities in Dushanbe, these girls also receive training in leadership skills. It is hoped that once their higher education is completed that these women will return to their homes and take a lead role in the Tajikistan of the future.

To increase the institutional capacity of NGOs in both writing grant proposals and implementing projects, the WID Bureau has introduced a small grants program. In 1998 out of 29 proposals, nine were supported.

**Figure 3.2 Operational Structure of Women in Development Bureau**



The WID Bureau has been one of the success stories in Tajikistan and much of this is due to the driving force of its Director. In actual size, the WID Bureau is relatively small, consisting of 10 core staff (see Figure 3.3). However, its long-term future is in doubt. It has funding from United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for four years for specific reproductive health projects and from ADB for three years for activities, but its core funding from UNDP will cease in 2001. Although theoretically located within governmental structures, it appears unlikely that the Government will step in to replace core funding. The Director and staff are therefore considering establishing an NGO, entitled "Gender in Development" to implement the projects already committed and to act as a resource, information, educational, and training centre for other gender-based NGOs in Tajikistan.

### Box 3.2 Small Projects Funded by the WID Bureau in 1998

Name of Project	Objective	Name of Association	Duration	Budget
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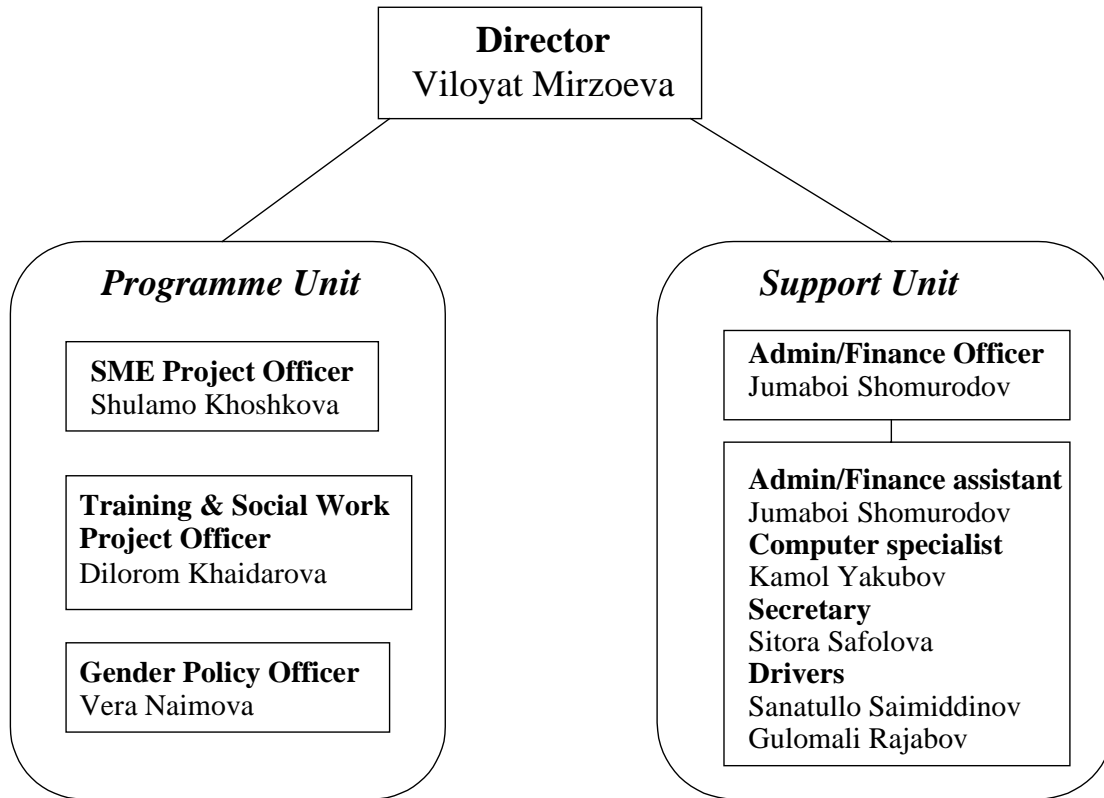
			(months)	(\$)
Women for survival	To support women's craft-making	Women's Initiative	12	1,365.50
Civic education formation of civic responsibilities of girls	To provide female students with a series of training seminars on gender issues	Union of Young Girls of the Slavonic University	6	1,200.00
Mini Parliament	To organize a model parliament among students	Modar	5	714.00
Community and violence	To publish a series of booklets about violence against women	Women of Science of Tajikistan	6	1,559.00
Languages and culture	To organize a seminar on languages and culture in Tajikistan	Women-Foreign Languages Textbook Authors	3	520.00
Youth Gender Centre	To provide necessary equipment to publish gender bulletins	Ona	12	1,890.00
Practical law guidelines for women	To publish law guidelines for rural women	Dignity and Charity	2	1,972.00
Increasing the role of women in politics	To organize a series of seminars on political and gender issues	Traditions and Modernity	3	1,800.00
The Centre for Gender Researchers	To print bulletins to publish the results of sociological research on gender	Business Women of Khojand	12	2,000.00

### *Committee on Women and the Family*

In parallel with the network of women-focused NGOs coordinated by the WID Bureau is the Committee on Women and the Family. This is a state committee inherited from the Soviet period with branches in all regions and districts. Their main aim is to execute official decrees and protect women's rights through governmental institutions. The Committee is expected to play a leading role in implementation of the National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women. However, like other governmental structures, the Committee lacks funding and as a result is limited in its scope of action.

In sum, there is a small but growing network of women's NGOs that is committed to the advancement of the status of women in Tajikistan. However, there remains a fundamental lack of capacity, both in terms of the skills that are necessary to design and implement projects and for effective advocacy, and a chronic shortage of financial resources.

**Figure 3.3 Organizational Structure of Women in Development Bureau**



### 3.1.3 Women and Economic Decision Making

A role in economic decision making is as important to women's participation in society as is equitable representation in political and non-governmental bodies. There is little data with which to analyze the relative representation of the different genders within economic decision making. Prior to Independence, women were rarely found in key economic positions such as the director of large state enterprises, and this remains the case today. There are no official statistics on the number of women engaged in business. However, of the 482 private enterprises and farms that were members of the Association of Small and Average Businesses, only 16 (i.e., 3 percent) are headed by women. According to a recent survey by the Business Women Association of Khudjand, women occupy 25 percent of "legal and senior management posts" (United Nations Children's Fund [UNICEF] 1999). Using the International Labour Organization's international standard classification of occupation categories (ILO-ISCO), the recent UNDP-World Bank TLSS found that 1.6 percent of men were "legislative, senior official and managers" compared with just 0.6 percent of women; and 8 percent of men were "professionals" compared with 5 percent of women.

The low representation of women in senior economic positions is the result of discrimination, direct and indirect, combined with traditional views about the appropriate roles for men and

women in society. However, it is not just the "establishment" that works against women. The views of women themselves may also act as a barrier to their own advancement.

**Table 3.3 Working Women's Desire to Work in a Higher Position**  
(percent)

	Total	Urban	Rural
Desired to work in a higher position	21	26	13
Did not desire to work in a higher position	53	54	52
Don't know	26	20	34
Of those that did not desire to work in a higher position, reasons why:			
Too great a responsibility	19	20	18
Insufficient experience for such a position	22	21	23
Uncertainty in self	12	10	15
Health condition	9	11	4
Salary too low	13	15	10
Family circumstances	14	12	16
Satisfied with present position	27	26	30

Source: SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan 1999*.

The 1998 SSA/WID survey of women's socioeconomic position asked women currently employed directly about their desire to work in a higher position. The majority of working women did not want a higher position (53 percent). However, over a quarter of urban women and an eighth of rural women did. Of those working women who did not express a desire for promotion, over a quarter reported that they were satisfied with their present jobs, nearly a quarter felt that they did not have sufficient experience and a further eighth lacked the confidence to do the job (Table 3.3). Another fifth felt that it was too great a responsibility. Thus, a major barrier to women's advancement in the work place is women's insecurity about their own ability to do the job. With few women in positions of leadership, it is not surprising that many feel senior jobs are beyond their reach and capability. Female role models and training and confidence building may all help to overcome such insecurity in the long run.

Finally, the same survey also asked women their opinion whether they felt that women do indeed have equal rights with men (Table 3.4). As stated earlier, such rights are legally enshrined in the Constitution. Less than a third of women felt that they did. A similar proportion felt that they had equality of some rights and a quarter felt that there was no equality between the genders.

**Table 3.4 Opinion of Women on whether Women have Rights Equal to Men**  
(percent)



	Total	Urban	Rural
Have equal rights	29	26	33
Have only some equality of rights	27	31	21
Unequal rights	24	21	27
Don't know	21	22	19
Total	100	100	100

Source: SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan 1999*.

Open discrimination against women is still rare. However the 1996 World Bank social assessment found that in some areas families headed by women were often arbitrarily excluded from the allocation of additional land under privatization by the presumption that they have no labor power to cultivate their own land. This is despite the fact that they are still expected to undertake the hard physical work of growing and picking cotton. In Bokhtar district the international NGO Save the Children (UK) has successfully helped female heads of household who were denied private plots to represent and enforce their claim to the local *kolkhoz*.

Thus, it appears that Tajikistan has a long way to go before full gender equality, real and perceived, is achieved in the political and economic spheres. The position of women in the labor market more generally is discussed below.

## 3.2 Gender and the Labor Market

Under communism the Constitution guaranteed the right to employment for every able-bodied individual of working age and the right to equal pay for equal work among men and work. There was no formal unemployment and, in common with other countries of the FSU, women in Tajikistan were actively engaged in almost all sectors of the labor market. Women enjoyed generous formal and informal benefits related to child care responsibilities and many state-run enterprises had nurseries, kindergartens, and health facilities. The transition to a market economy has meant that many of the old certainties have now been removed. Jobs are no longer guaranteed. Secure state jobs are being eliminated and where they do continue, pay is often months in arrears. Child care facilities are being closed down, leaving women to bear the burden of both family and work.

### 3.2.1 The Labor Market in Transition

Although high by international standards, women's labor force participation rates in Tajikistan were relatively low when compared to those elsewhere in the FSU (especially in

the western republics) and were significantly below those of men. In 1991 29 percent of all females were in the labor force compared with 44 percent of males.

**Table 3.5 Selected Statistics on Labor Market Activity by Gender, 1991-1998**

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997*	1998*
Labor force (thousands)	1,971	1,917	1,877	1,887	1,891	1,778	1,842	1,849
Male	1,183	1,134	1,047	1,075	1,059	951		
Female	788	783	830	812	832	827		
Crude labor force participation rate <sup>1</sup>	36	35	33	33	33	30	30	30
Male	44	41	37	38	37	32		
Female	29	28	29	28	28	28		
Total employed population (thousands)	1,970	1,908	1,854	1,854	1,853	1,731	1,790	1,795
Male	1,182	1,128	1,033	1,057	1,038	927		
%	(60)	(59)	(56)	(57)	(56)	(54)		
Female	788	780	821	797	815	804		
%	(40)	(41)	(44)	(43)	(44)	(46)		
Total registered unemployed (thousands)		6.8	21.6	32.1	37.5	45.7	51.1	54.1
Male unemployment rate (%)		4.4	12.4	17.5	20.2	22.8	24.3	25.3
Female unemployment rate (%)		2.6	9.2	14.6	17.3	22.9	26.8	28.8

\* Provisional, <sup>1</sup> The crude labor force participation rate is the economically active population as a percentage of total population.

Source: SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan* 1999.

Over the last decade both the size of the labor force and the number employed have fallen dramatically despite rapid rates of population growth.<sup>7</sup> This reflects in part the casualties of the civil war in 1992-93, during which an estimated 50,000 men lost their lives and a further 60,000 fled the country as refugees. In addition it is estimated that a further 500,000 people have left Tajikistan as economic migrants in the period since 1992.<sup>8</sup> The period has also witnessed a growing informalization of the labor market with more people working (unregistered) in the burgeoning private sector, engaged in family-based production, market trading, or other activities.

Elsewhere in the FSU it has been found that women have been disproportionately affected by the economic dislocation associated with transition—being more likely to lose their jobs than

<sup>7</sup> Note that in 1991 the economically active population was equivalent to the employed population as unemployment was non-existent.

<sup>8</sup> It is not clear whether and how such migration has been taken into account by the State Statistical Agency (SSA) when calculating the denominators for labor market participation rates. Given the gendered nature of such migration, involving significantly more males than females, it may be that the falls in male participation rates are overestimated. For example, the number of men in the labor force fell by 100,000 between 1995 and 1996 with a resultant drop in the participation rate from 37 percent to 32 percent.

men, and being concentrated in sectors where wages were least likely to have been paid (Bauer, Boschmann and Green 1997; Bauer, Green and Kuehnast 1997). In Tajikistan the picture is complex.

Fewer women than men were employed in Tajikistan in the pre-transition period. However, the gender-gap has *narrowed* over time, as the registered economic activity of men has fallen more than that of women. This is the converse of what has happened elsewhere in transition economies, with the exceptions of Poland, Hungary, and Belarus.

The number of employed men has fallen sharply, while the number of women has remained constant with the result that women's share of the employed population has increased. Out of an estimated 1,970,000 employed persons in 1991, women accounted for just 40 while men made up 60 percent. By 1996 women accounted for 46 percent of those employed and men 54 percent. However, women also constitute a

disproportionate share of those officially registered as unemployed. In 1998 there were 54,100 persons registered as unemployed of whom 28,800 (i.e., 53 percent) were women. Therefore, it seems that on the one hand women have been 'protected' in terms of their share of employment, but on the other hand they experience higher levels of official unemployment.

The fact that women have been relatively protected in terms of job losses may be explained in part by the segregation of women and men into different occupations. Looking at the distribution of male employees between sectors (Table 3.6) it is clear that the relative importance of manufacturing, transport, construction, and other sectors of "material production" and communal/municipal services has declined, while the relative importance of agriculture, health, and education has increased. This is due to the fact that the absolute employment figures in the latter sectors has remained largely unchanged whilst employment in the former has shrunk, rather than any growth in these sectors. A similar trend is observed for women. However, with the exception of industry, a smaller proportion of women were initially employed in declining sectors than men, with the result that labour shedding in these sectors has affected men more than women.

**Table 3.6 Employment Share by Sector, 1991-1998**  
(%)

Men	Women	Average Monthly Wage
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	1991	1993	1995	1998*	1991	1993	1995	1998*	1998
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	8,590
Industry	15.9	16.7	18.3	14.7	22.4	21.9	19.5	17.7	25,866
Agriculture, forestry, fishing	18.5	20.4	23.2	26.9	18.8	23.7	29.6	29.3	4,499
Transport	9.7	8.5	7.9	6.9	1.3	1.0	1.6	0.5	14,492
Communication	1.0	0.9	1.0	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.7	19,315
Construction	16.4	13.5	11.5	9.0	3.1	2.1	2.6	2.1	18,172
Trade & catering	8.5	8.3	6.2	7.4	7.9	5.9	7.6	3.7	7,879
Information	0.1	0.05	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	13,244
Geology & meteorology	0.8	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	18,766
Other material production	3.2	2.1	1.4	1.3	0.8	1.0	0.4	1.4	
Communal services	4.0	3.8	2.5	2.5	3.2	1.9	1.6	2.1	10,204
Health	4.4	5.3	3.5	5.4	14.6	16.3	14.6	16.2	3,735
Education	12.9	15.2	17.6	18.6	20.6	20.6	16.5	21.2	5,350
Culture	1.6	1.5	1.5	2.0	2.0	1.6	1.4	1.7	4,962
Science	0.7	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.9	0.5	0.6	0.1	9,627
Credit	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.7	21,095
Management body	1.8	2.3	3.6	3.2	1.8	1.3	2.2	2.4	14,666

\* Provisional.

Source: SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan 1999*.

Women are, however, more highly concentrated than men in the lowest paid sectors. According to provisional official statistics, in 1998 nearly 30 percent of women were employed in agriculture, with an average monthly wage of just \$6 a month (US\$1 = TJRs780 in 1998). The social services, health and education, accounted for a further four out of every 10 women employees (37 percent), and wages in these sectors averaged between \$5 and \$7 a month. Therefore although women may not have lost any many jobs in the manufacturing sector as have men, the jobs that they retain tend to be very poorly paid. Given that the minimum consumption basket in 1998 was estimated to be TJRs21,880 per adult per month (UNDP 1999), salaries in the social sector, where they are paid, are unlikely to provide sufficient means to live on.

Women in employment are concentrated in the lowest paid sectors of agriculture, education, and health where wages are insufficient to live on.

In addition to low salaries, many employees are working without receiving a wage at all. At January 1997, the total value of wage arrears in the Tajik economy was estimated to amount to TJRs4 billion, equivalent to 11 percent of the total wage bill. Data from the recent UNDP/World Bank TLSS in May 1999 found that more than 35 percent of those employed reported suffering from arrears.

While many continue to work without pay, others are still formally on the payroll but are "on holiday" i.e., on leave without pay. Table 3.7 summarizes the official information on

involuntary part-time workers and on people being on forced holidays in 1994 and 1996. In 1996 almost 21,000 employees were affected by involuntary part-time work and 123,300 persons were on vacation because of "administrative" reasons. The figures were even higher in 1994.

**Table 3.7 Involuntary Part-Time Workers and Forced Holidays, 1994-1996**  
(‘000)

Year	Involuntary part-time work In thousands	Forced holidays In thousands
1994	37.9	163.1
1996	20.9	123.3

Source: SSA 1999

The official statistics presented so far provide only a limited picture of the labor market. A more detailed analysis of the labor market in 1999 can be obtained by looking at data from the TLSS, carried out in May 1999.

### 3.2.2 The Labor Market in 1999

#### *Labor Force Participation*

The labor force participation rate for the country in 1999 was 56 percent, indicating that in 1999 more than half of the people aged 16 and above in Tajikistan were engaged in some form of economic activity. This is considerably higher than the crude participation rate presented in Table 3.8 above as the denominator excludes children under age 16. There are significant differences in the participation rates for men and women, with 69 percent of men of working age (16+) economically active compared with only 44 percent of women. Both of these rates are relatively low when compared to other republics of the FSU, indicating a significant proportion of the potentially economically active may be discouraged workers or may be working in the informal sector.

**Table 3.8 Labor Force Participation and Employment by Gender**  
(%)

	Total Population 16+	Men	Women
In labor force	56	69	44
Out of labor force	42	28	54
Missing data	2	3	2

Of those in labor force:			
Employed full-time	62	66	57
Employed part-time	22	19	25
Employed but temporarily absent	1	1	1
Unemployed	16	16	18

Source: TLSS 1999, De Nuebourg and Namazie, 1999.

Of those who are economically active, the majority are in full-time employment. However a quarter of women and a fifth of men report working part-time. Women are slightly more likely to be unemployed than men, with an unemployment rate of 18 percent compared to 16 percent of men. What is striking however, is that the unemployment rate from the survey, using the ILO definition of unemployed, is over *five times* higher than the registered unemployment rate of 3 percent (see Table 3.5). What is more, this does not include the hidden unemployed (i.e., those who are formally employed but who are effectively not working because they are on leave without pay, working part-time involuntary, or working short-time hours) or discouraged workers (those who are not looking for a job because they no longer believe that they will be able to find one). De Nuebourg and Namazie (1999) estimate that when these groups are taken into account the true unemployment rate is actually 33 percent.<sup>9</sup>

A third of the economically active population is unemployed. This implies a considerable excess supply of labor in Tajikistan

Labor force participation varies by age for both men and women (Table 3.9). The highest participation rates are among men aged between 30 and 54, with between 86 and 88 percent of the men in that age-group being in the labour force. Among women, participation rates are highest for women in their forties, when children are more likely to be

reaching adolescence or even leaving home. Participation rates decline at older ages for both sexes, reflecting that women retire at age 55 and men at age 60. However, even after age 60 a considerable minority remain economically active (30 percent of men and 15 percent of women), reflecting the low value of most state pensions and the necessity of continuing to work for survival.

**Table 3.9 Labor Force Participation Rate by Age Group and Gender**

	Total	Men	Women
All 16+	56.2	69.1	43.9
16-19	38.9	39.8	38.1
20-24	55.8	66.4	46.7

<sup>9</sup> When they add the hidden unemployed, the unemployment rate is 20 percent; adding the involuntary part-time workers raises it to 25 percent and adding the discouraged workers and other labour slack increases the unemployment rate to 33 percent.

25-29	66.4	84.0	48.0
30-39	70.1	88.1	54.0
40-49	72.4	88.6	58.2
50-54	64.3	86.3	40.0
55-59	49.6	69.7	24.7
60+	-	30.4	14.5

Source: TLSS 1999, adapted from De Neubourg and Namazie, 1999.

The very low participation rates among young adults are a cause for concern, with less than two in five 16-19 year olds, and only just over half of 20-24 year olds, reporting being employed or actively seeking work. Those respondents not economically active were asked the reason why they were not employed or seeking work and Table 3.10 presents the breakdown of these responses for the whole population aged over 16 and for young men and women.

**Table 3.10 Reasons for Non-participation for Younger Men and Women by Age Group (%)**

	Total population 16+			Men			Women		
	All	Men	Women	16-19	20-24	25-29	16-19	20-24	25-29
No specific job	2.2	4.3	1.2	1.9	6.2	18.9	1.1	2.8	3.8
No jobs	10.8	20.4	6.0	18.3	37.3	47.3	12.9	10.0	13.3
Study	13.8	26.0	7.5	63.1	24.3	1.4	38.7	4.6	6.1
Home care	37.1	6.0	52.4	5.7	12.4	8.1	39.7	73.4	64.8
Pensioners	19.6	22.4	18.2	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
Old+disabled	6.8	8.8	5.8	0.6	4.5	1.4	0.0	1.4	1.9
Not healthy	6.3	6.8	6.0	3.3	5.1	9.5	3.6	3.4	4.6
Not willing to work	3.7	5.2	3.0	5.7	10.2	10.8	4.7	4.3	5.7

Source: TLSS 1999, adapted from De Neubourg and Namazie, 1999.

Overall among all persons aged over 16, the majority of women (52.4 percent) are not in the labor force as they are engaged in home care activities. The reasons given by men are more mixed, with 26 percent citing that they are studying and 22 percent that they are retired. However, a significant minority are discouraged workers. About 20 percent of men and 6 percent of women are not in the labor force as they believe that there are no jobs at all, and 4 percent and 2 percent respectively, believe there is no job in their area. This problem is much more acute among young people than in the population in general. Over half of men in their 20s believe there is no work and one in six women. Some of the women who report that they are engaged in home care may also in fact be discouraged workers, i.e., they would work if they thought jobs were available.

The very low labor market participation rates among adolescents is a cause of concern. There is evidence that a significant number of young people are not entering the labor market because they no longer believe that they will find a job. Unless reversed, this will result in growing social exclusion among the young, especially among young males.

What is also striking from Table 3.10 is the marked gender difference in the proportion

of 16-19 who reported that they are not in the labor force as they are studying. Given that participation rates among 16-19 are very similar, one might expect that a similar proportion would not be economically active due to continuing education. However, nearly twice as many teenage boys than teenage girls gave this as a reason, indicating a potentially large gender gap in higher education. We will return to this point in Chapter 4.

### *Unemployment*

We have already seen that true unemployment rates are significantly higher than either registered unemployment or simple International Labour Organisation (ILO) defined unemployment. We have also seen that a significant number of young people are discouraged from entering the labor market due to perceived (or real) lack of jobs. Further detailed information on unemployment by age and gender is presented in Table 3.11. Several key features stand out. Firstly, unemployment is much higher among young people than older people. Secondly, the age gap is even greater when looking at levels of "true" unemployment, reflecting the discussion above concerning the high proportion of discouraged younger workers. Thirdly, there are distinct gender differentials, but these are not consistent across the life-cycle. Young men are at a greater risk of unemployment than young women. This may be due to the fact that young women have the option of alternative activity within the home and so do not come out in the figures as unemployed. However, at ages over 25, women experience higher levels of unemployment than men. From this detailed analysis, it appears that women are slightly more disadvantaged than men in the labor market, particularly at ages over 25. However, what is most shocking is the extremely high level of unemployment in general and youth unemployment in particular.

**Table 3.11 Unemployment Rates by Age Group and Gender**  
(%)

	ILO U1 Definition			ILO U5 Definition (incl. hidden, involuntary, and discouraged workers)		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
16-19	30.8	34.2	26.9	54.2	57.7	50.2
20-24	22.4	23.7	20.8	45.7	48.0	42.8
25-29	16.9	15.6	19.2	42.4	39.7	47.4
30-39	12.2	11.3	13.6	32.2	30.8	34.2
40-49	10.0	9.6	10.6	26.5	23.1	31.1
50-54	6.8	6.2	8.1	19.8	18.1	23.8
55-59	9.4	6.4	20.0	27.0	21.0	47.6

Source: TLSS 1999; Adapted from De Nuebourg and Namazie, 1999.



Active labor market policies to address youth unemployment are urgently needed if Tajikistan is not to lose a generation of workers. Active labor market policies also need to take into account the gendered nature of unemployment for workers aged over 25.

### *Employment*

Data from the TLSS on the composition of the employed labor force in Tajikistan in 1999 is presented by sector, occupation, employee status, and type of enterprise for both men and women (Tables 3.12-3.15). All classifications use the standard ILO definitions<sup>10</sup>.

Table 3.12 highlights the fact that Tajikistan remains an essentially agrarian economy, with agriculture accounting for just under half of all employment. This figure is much higher than that suggested by the official statistics in Table 3.6. The share of agriculture in total employment varies by region with Dushanbe lowest at less than 2 percent, GBAO 29 percent, RRS 37 percent, Leninabad 51 percent, and Khatlon 63 percent.

Table 3.12 also shows clear signs of gender-based segregation. Women are relatively over-represented in agriculture, education, health, and social work, while men are relatively over-represented in transport, manufacturing and construction. Surprisingly few men and women report being employed in the services sectors despite the fact that, as we saw in Chapter 1, the share of services in GDP increased from 19 percent in 1995 to 44 percent in 1998.

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<sup>10</sup> It should be noted that the TLSS is the first survey conducted within Tajikistan to use the ILO classifications. Many of the interviewers, and probably most of the respondents, were not familiar with these groupings, preferring to classify themselves in relation to the old Soviet standards. Although "conversion" tables were drawn up, there may be some errors and figures should be treated as indicative rather than absolute.

**Table 3.12 Employment by Sector**  
(%)

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Agriculture	49.3	46.2	54.1
Mining	0.3	0.4	0.3
Manufacturing	3.4	4.5	1.7
Utilities	1.6	2.3	0.6
Construction	2.5	3.9	0.4
Retail, hotel, restaurant	6.6	7.0	5.8
Transport	2.7	4.1	0.6
Finance, real estate	0.4	0.4	0.4
Insurance	0.1	0.1	0.0
Publ. admin, defence	3.7	4.6	2.4
Education	7.8	7.4	8.5
Health, social work	3.9	2.2	6.5
Other services	5.3	5.7	4.7
Other industries	8.2	7.6	9.2
Missing in sample	4.1	3.5	5.0

Source: TLSS 1999; Adapted from De Nuebourg and Namazie, 1999.

A similar picture of occupational segregation is found in Table 3.13. The majority of people (43 percent) are employed in elementary occupations. Most of these are related to agricultural activities. Skilled agricultural work accounts for the second largest group, followed by clerks and professionals. Men are over-represented among the higher grade (skill) occupations, while women are over-represented among the lower grade (skill) occupations.

**Table 3.13 Employment by Occupation**  
(%)

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Armed Forces	0.8	1.4	0.0
Legisl., senior officials, management	1.2	1.6	0.6
Professionals	5.9	8.0	5.0
Technicians, assoc. professionals	2.6	2.7	2.3
Clerks	9.3	9.2	9.4
Service worker, sales	5.9	6.6	4.7
Skilled agricultural work	11.0	11.3	10.6
Craft and related trade work	1.6	2.5	0.2
Plant, machine operators	3.2	4.9	0.6
Elementary occupation	42.8	37.9	50.3
Other	10.4	9.9	10.9
Missing in sample	4.5	4.0	5.0

Source: TLSS 1999; Adapted from De Nuebourg and Namazie, 1999.

Table 3.14 highlights some of the recent changes in the labor market. In the past workers were almost exclusively either employees of large state enterprises or worked on collective farms. These two categories still account for seven out of 10 workers. However, this means that three out of 10 are employed in new forms of work. Most importantly, 17 percent of men and 14 percent of women report working for themselves and 5-6 percent report working as part of a family business.

**Table 3.14 Employment by Status**  
(%)

	Total	Men	Women
Employee	63.0	63.2	62.6
Member, coop.	1.2	1.5	0.7
Own account worker	15.9	17.0	14.2
Employer	0.8	1.0	0.3
Family worker	5.2	4.7	6.1
Collective farmer	6.7	5.6	8.5
Not classif.	2.8	2.9	2.5
Missing in sample	4.4	4.0	5.1

Source: TLSS 1999; Adapted from De Nuebourg and Namazie, 1999.

Finally, Table 3.15 shows employment disaggregated according to the type of employer and ownership of the enterprises. The majority of people still work in the public sector, in state enterprises, or on collective farms. A significant minority (16 percent), however, work in a family business or informal trading. A further 7 percent work in a privately owned business. Twice as many men work in private enterprises than women, although the proportions for both men and women are low.

Although there are slight gender differentials, the data does *not* indicate that women face significantly greater barriers in taking up self-employment as compared to men.

Tajikistan remains an agricultural and state-dominated economy. The private sector is still in its infancy and the majority of private activities are concentrated in informal family business and street trading. There appear to be no significant gender differentials in the proportions participating in new forms of economic activity.

### ***Wage differentials***

Accurate data on wages is difficult to obtain due to reporting problems. Often wages are paid in kind, or are paid in arrears, or not at all. In the former Soviet Union, wages used to make up 80 percent of a household's budget. Today, although still the most important source of household income, data from the TLSS suggests that labor income constitutes between 32 percent (of the poorest) and 42 percent (of the richest)

household's income. The combined income from the sale of foodstuffs and household assets, on average, accounts for a similar share.

**Table 3.15 Employment by Type of Enterprises and Ownership**  
(%)

	Total	Men	Women
<b>Type</b>			
Government office	18.5	19.0	16.6
State enterprise	17.9	20.8	13.5
Co-operative	1.1	1.3	0.9
Collective farmer	34.1	29.9	40.6
Joint-stock company	0.1	0.2	0.0
Joint venture	0.3	0.2	0.3
Private enterprise	4.2	5.3	2.3
Private farm	2.3	2.2	2.4
Foreign comp. Org	0.3	0.3	0.1
Family business, informal trading	16.5	16.4	16.6
<b>Ownership</b>			
Budget sector state	36.4	39.8	31.2
State controlled	35.2	31.2	41.5
Semi-private	0.4	0.4	0.3
Private	6.7	7.8	4.9
Family business, informal trading	16.5	16.4	16.6

Source: TLSS 1999; Adapted from De Nuebourg and Namazie, 1999.

There are however, considerable differences in the labor income of men and women—despite legislation guaranteeing equal pay for equal work. Table 3.16 shows the average (non-zero) wages for men and women living in households arranged by their position in the distribution of total household consumption. Those in the bottom quintile are considered to be living in the poorest households, and those in the top quintile to be living in the richest households<sup>11</sup>.

Several related features stand out. First, average wages are higher for individuals living in rich households than those in poor households. This is not surprising as the two are causally related—people who earn more are generally richer than people who earn less, although wage income is not the only factor influencing well-being. Second, virtually the difference between the average labor income of rich and poor households is accounted for by differences in *male* wages. Women's wages are almost flat. Thirdly, women wages are significantly less than men's, averaging just TJRs2,491 a month compared with TJRs9,649 for men (note that TJRs1200=US\$1, so this means women's wages were just \$2 a month compared with \$8 for men). This is a function of women's occupational segregation into low paid occupations such as education and health and low skilled occupations such as agriculture.

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed discussion of this, see Falkingham, 2000a.

**Table 3.16 Average Monthly Wages within Quintiles of Total Household Consumption (TJR)**

	Total	Men	Women
Total	8,161	9,649	2,491
Bottom 20%	4,692	4,957	1,495
Q2	5,633	6,692	2,124
Q3	6,587	7,877	2,349
Q4	8,008	8,675	3,357
Top 20%	16,064	20,042	3,131

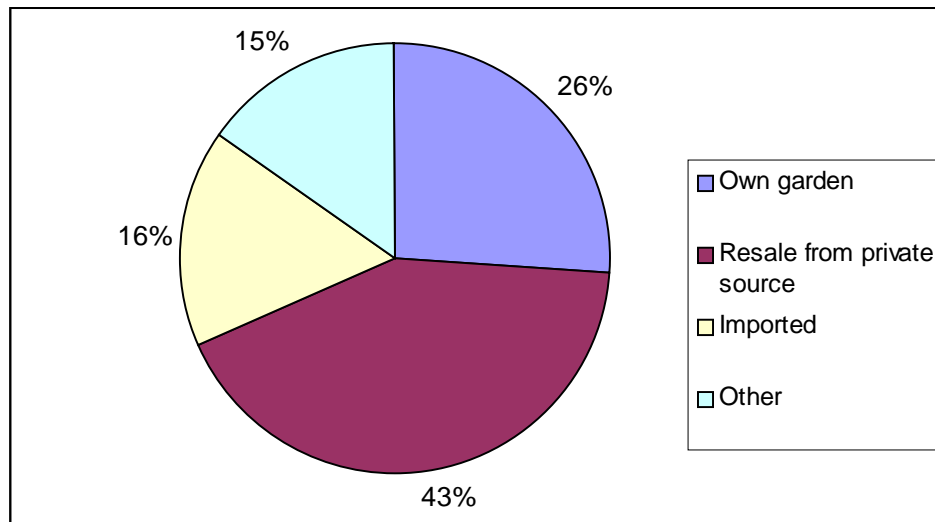
Source: Author's own analysis, TLSS 1999

### 3.2.3 Gender and New Forms of Economic Activity

There has been little systematic study of the Tajik labor market and new forms of economic activity. However, there are a number of ad hoc studies that give some insight into the non-state sector. From Table 3.14 it can be concluded that nearly a quarter of the labor force are now working in the private sector and the majority of these (70 percent) are working in family businesses based on trade. Many of these are engaged in the sale in local bazaars of food and other products produced by the household or in the resale of products purchased from local collective farms, although a minority are selling imported goods from abroad.

**Figure 3.4: Source of Goods for Sale in the Bazaar**

Source: Survey of the Household and Bazaar Economics of Tajikistan. Save the Children/US.



There are considerable regional differences in the role played by women in the new bazaar economy. Table 3.17 shows the results of survey of the composition of market traders carried out by the SSA in conjunction with the WID Bureau in 1998. Women made up 85 percent of all traders in GBAO compared with under one half in Dushanbe.

**Table 3.17 Market Traders by Region and Gender**

	All	Dushanbe	Leninabad	Khatlon	GBAO	RRS
No. of traders per day	30,444	11,443	8,209	7,827	607	2,295
No. and share of women	14,910 (49%)	5,149 (45%)	4,597 (56%)	3,569 (46%)	516 (85%)	1,079 (47%)
Of whom:						
Women over 55	1,174	360	138	511	46	119
Girls under legal age	1,228	412	322	356	41	97

Source: SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan 1999*.

Sharp variations were also noted within regions. This was particularly true in Khatlon, where in the northern part of the province (Kurgan-Tube, Sarband, Vakhsh and Gozimalik districts) women represented 58 percent of those engaged in retail trade. However, in the eastern part of Khatlon (Kuliab city, Vosey, Moskovsky, Parkharsky, and other districts) the proportion of women traders was considerably less at just under 22 percent. A gendered division of labor within the market place was also noted, with men largely doing work requiring physical strength such as trade in meat, animals, grain, flour, sugar, potatoes, onions, and carrots as well as cars, spare parts, petrol, and electrical goods. Women on the other hand primarily sold garden foodstuffs, fruit, milk and dairy products, bread, clothing, etc.

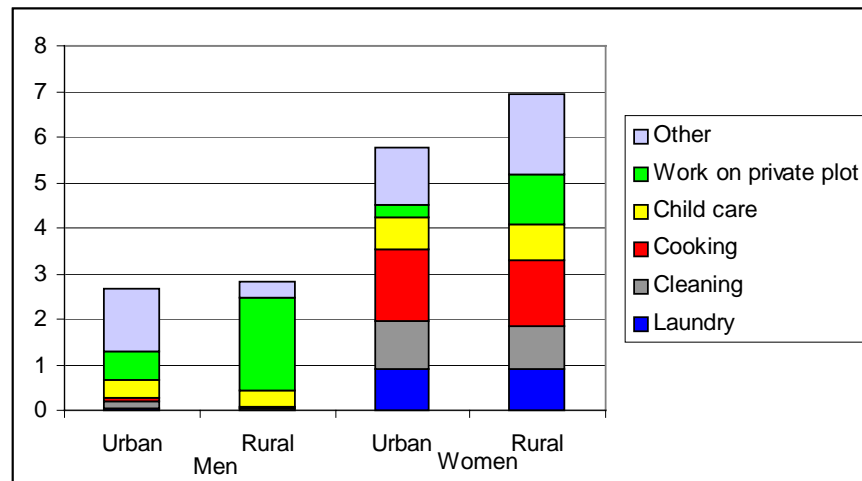
A number of factors limit women's ability to engage in new private business initiatives, including lack of relevant entrepreneurial skills, access to capital, and gender discrimination. Many women lack private savings and have no access to the capital market or to venture capital. There are a number of small-scale projects that provide micro-credits and micro-grants to private undertakings, including TASIF and the WID bureau, but their reach is limited. Encouragement of the development of a well-functioning labor market and the institutional conditions for private business activities are major elements in the proposed World Bank pro-poor employment strategy (World Bank 2000).

### 3.2.4 The Gendered Division of Unpaid Labor

Despite the advances of women in the public sphere during the Soviet period, women continue to bear most, if not all, of the burden of unpaid work within the household. With the closure of state-run kindergartens, and the increasing reliance on the consumption of home produced foodstuffs, the burden of unpaid work in the home has increased rather than diminished as a result of transition. The SSA/WID survey collected time use information

from both men and women. The time spent on unpaid work in the home is summarized below.

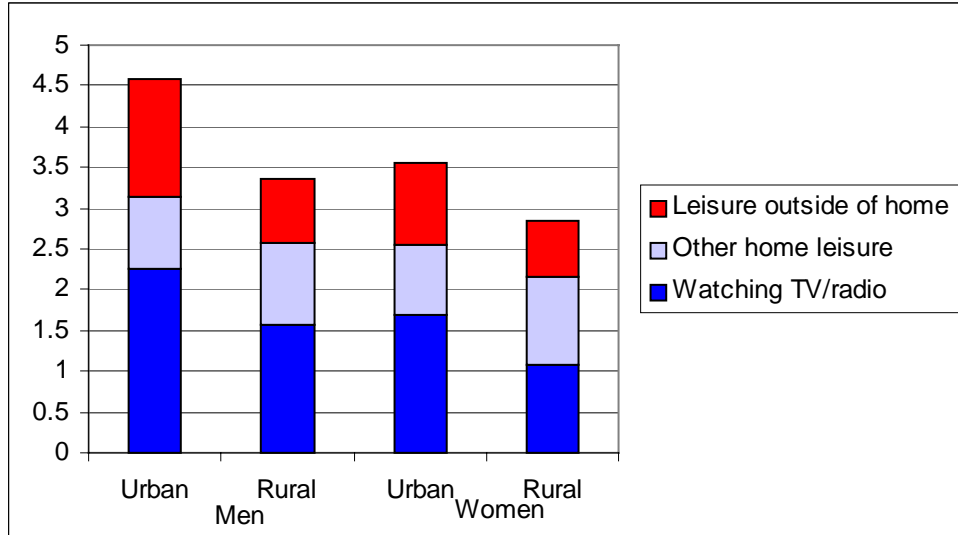
**Figure 3.5 Time Spent on Unpaid Work within the Home by Men and Women**



Source: SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan 1999*.

Women spend an average of 6.3 hours a day on unpaid work compared with just 3.3 hours by men. Rural women spend longer than urban women (7 hours versus 5.8 hours). Looking at how men and women spend their time, both urban and rural women spend more time on cooking, cleaning, and laundry combined than the entire unpaid labor of men. In rural areas the majority of men's time is spent on their private plot (2 hours) whereas in urban areas men spend time on "other tasks". Many women, particularly in rural areas, also lack access to domestic appliances that might ease the burden of domestic work. A fifth of women questioned in the SSA/WID survey did not have a washing machine.

As a result of greater reliance on subsistence production to make ends meet, both men and women have less leisure time than in the Soviet era. However, women have less free time than men. Urban men enjoy more leisure time than their female counterparts and rural women spend the least amount of time on leisure. The majority of leisure time is spent within the household, reflecting families' economic hardship. Only 8 percent of urban women, and only 2 percent of rural women, reported that they are now able to visit the theater or cinema. Lack of resources is also taking its toll on the Tajik tradition of hospitality, with a third of urban women and a fifth of rural women reporting that they were no longer able to entertain guests.

**Figure 3.6 Time Spent on Leisure by Men and Women**

Source: SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan*.

In sum, it appears that women are bearing the heaviest burden of economic transition. There has been an intensification of women's workload with increasing participation in both formal and informal labor markets alongside an unequal household division of labor. Efforts to care for and protect their children have diverted many women away from the political process with the result that their political representation is now virtually nonexistent. At the same time, a renewed emphasis on women's domestic role means that women are in danger of becoming isolated from society, with implications for their ability to participate fully in both civil society and the political life of the country.



## Chapter 4. Gender Implications of Changes in the Social Sectors

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At Independence Tajikistan inherited a well-established system of social services, including education, health and social protection. Since 1992, however, the social sectors have suffered from severe financial constraints. Although spending on the social sectors has increased in absolute terms it has failed to keep pace with either inflation or population growth (Table 4.1, section A). As a result real social expenditures per capita have fallen dramatically. Total spending on the social sectors in 1998 amounted to just over 7 percent of GDP compared with a fifth in 1992 (Table 4.1, section B).

One of the main reasons for the decline in social spending has been a fall in the Government's ability to mobilize resources. Between 1992 and 1998, government expenditures as a share of GDP in Tajikistan fell by two thirds from 58 percent to 17 percent. The collapse in GDP *combined* with lower government spending has meant that real allocations to the social sectors have declined precipitously. Although social spending as a share of all government spending has remained between 35 and 40 percent (with the exception of 1995), a stable share of a declining cake means less real spending. Spending on the health and education subsectors has declined sharply to between only a *quarter* and a *third* of pre-independence levels.

The challenge now is to maintain the country's human development inheritance. This inheritance is under threat both from reduced supply and increasing barriers to access among the poor. Since women and children are the main beneficiaries of social spending, it is likely that this will have a gendered impact.

### 4.1 Education

Universal access to free basic education is a key element of children's rights. The guarantee of such universal access was a notable achievement of the Soviet system and at independence, Tajikistan had almost universal literacy. School was compulsory from ages 7 to 15, and there was also an extensive system of kindergartens for preschool age children and technical and vocational schools for post-compulsory education. In addition, Tajikistan had a number of higher education institutions including what is now the Tajik State University.

**Table 4.1 Social Expenditures in Tajikistan, 1992-1998**

(Amounts in millions of Russian rubles before 10 May, and in millions of Tajik rubles thereafter)

<b>A. In absolute values</b>							
	1992	1993	1994	1995 <sup>a</sup>	1996	1997	1998 <sup>b</sup>
Total Gov. Spending	42,560	383,408	1,054,294	-	60,108	107,632	162,168
Total State Expenditure	37,453	329,056	945,245	12,132	51,854	94,711	113,991
Total Social Spending <sup>c</sup>	12,857	134,898	345,343	3,032	15,951	34,574	47,571
Education	7,207	55,653	149,007	1,521	6,516	13,166	15,425
Health	3,679	34,297	110,059	943	4,011	8,259	7,602
Social Security	1,971	9,086	9,310	71	299	1,354	1,344
Cash compensation	0	35,862	76,967	497	5,125	1,748	3,589
Social Protection Fund						10,047	19,611
<b>B. In percentage of GDP<sup>d</sup></b>							
Total State Expenditures	57.8	52.1	55.0	26.5	16.8	15.0	17.1
Total Social Spending <sup>c</sup>	19.9	21.3	20.1	6.6	5.2	5.5	7.2
Education	11.1	8.8	8.7	3.3	2.1	2.1	2.3
Health	5.7	5.4	6.4	2.1	1.3	1.3	1.1
Social Security	3.0	1.4	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
Cash compensation	0.0	5.7	4.5	1.1	1.7	0.3	0.5
Social Protection Fund						1.6	2.9
<b>C. In percentage of total state expenditures</b>							
Total Social Spending <sup>c</sup>	34.3	41.0	36.5	25.0	30.8	36.5	41.7
Education	19.2	16.9	15.8	12.5	12.6	13.9	13.5
Health	9.8	10.4	11.6	7.8	7.7	8.7	6.7
Social Security	5.3	2.8	1.0	0.6	0.6	1.4	1.2
Cash compensation	0.0	10.9	8.1	4.1	9.9	1.8	3.1
Social Protection Fund						10.6	17.2
<b>D. Real social expenditure per capita (1993 prices)</b>							
Total State expenditure	153,204.6	57,688.6	36,271.7	83.0	67.4	62.4	51.7
Total social spending (p.c.)	52,592.6	23,649.7	13,251.8	20.7	20.7	22.8	21.6
Education	29,480.8	9,756.8	5,717.8	10.4	8.5	8.7	7.0
Health	15,049.3	6,012.8	4,223.3	6.4	5.2	5.4	3.5
Social Security	8,062.5	1,592.9	357.3	0.5	0.4	0.9	0.6
Compensation payments	0.0	6,287.2	2,953.4	3.4	6.7	1.2	1.6
Social Protection Fund						6.6	8.9

Notes: <sup>a</sup> Data for 1995 are from May 1-December 31.<sup>b</sup> Data for 1998 are for January through September. Execution rates are at Republican level and refer to the planned budget.<sup>c</sup> Total social spending is the sum of the indicated items and may differ from official figures.<sup>d</sup> Due to the differential value of cash and non-cash rubles prior to the currency reform of May 1995, fiscal data as a percentage of GDP before and after the currency reform are not comparable.

Source: World Bank, 1999.

Since independence there is growing evidence of a reversal in educational attainment. The impact of transition on educational outcomes may be thought of as threefold.

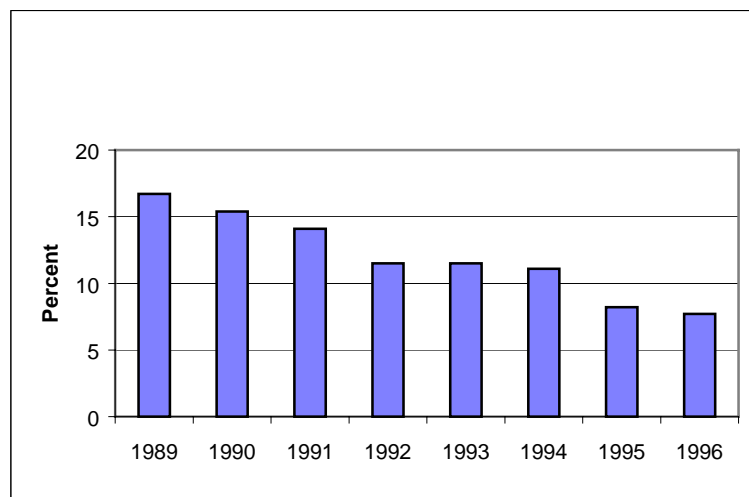
1. Firstly, there may be reduced **enrolment**. With transition the meaning of "free" education has changed. High inflation and reduced real government expenditure has given rise to an increasing number of self-financed educational establishments and the growth of informal charges in public institutions. Most schools have introduced charges for textbooks and meals and some have introduced fees to supplement (or replace) the wages (which are not paid) of the teachers. Parents who are unable to afford the cost of textbook, uniforms, or even shoes, may simply withdraw their children altogether.
2. Secondly, there may be reduced **attendance**. Children who are enrolled may not actually attend school regularly: either for the reasons given above or because the children are needed as family labor (working in the home looking after younger children, or working on family land or in the hired labor market to supplement household income).
3. Thirdly, there may be reduced **learning attainment**. Children may be enrolled and be attending school, but may not actually be learning anything. The teacher may be absent on a second job (that actually pays wages), or there may be no textbooks, it may be too cold to concentrate due to lack of heat, or the child may be anaemic and/or malnourished and too lethargic to learn.

There are, therefore, issues related both to the supply of education (in terms of buildings textbooks and teachers) and also the demand for education. Both sides of the equation need to be addressed. Below we look at the evidence for changes in educational outcomes, particularly by gender, and possible policy responses.

#### 4.1.1 Pre-School Education

The network of pre-schools was not as extensive in Tajikistan as elsewhere in the Soviet Union; even in 1989 it is estimated that only 17 percent of 3-6 year olds were enrolled in kindergarten, compared with 31 percent in the Kyrgyz Republic, 39 percent in Uzbekistan and 52 percent in Kazakhstan (UNICEF 1998). However, as Figure 4.1 shows, since then enrolment rates have halved to just under 8 percent in 1996.

**Figure 4.1 Kindergarten Net Enrolment Rate (3-6 year olds)**  
(%)



Source: UNICEF 1999.

The trends in enrolment rates reflect changes both in the supply of places and in demand (Table 4.2). Over the period 1990-1998 the number of kindergartens shrank by 40 percent, from 958 to 562. This was largely the result of the closure of enterprise-based (employer-provided) kindergartens, with most of the decline taking place in rural areas. However, over the same period the number of children enrolled in pre-schools fell by three-quarters, from 150,000 to 53,000 with the result that the number of children per 100 places fell from 129 (i.e., over demand) to 82 (i.e., over supply). Increasingly it appears that Tajik families prefer to take care of their children at home. Fewer girls than boys are enrolled, but as this has not changed significantly over time, there does not appear to be a gender dimension to falling pre-school enrolment. If anything the *share* of girls in the total number of children has risen rather than fallen.

The SSA/WID survey in 1998 included a question to mothers with children of pre-school age on whether their children attended kindergarten and if not why not. The results are shown in Table 4.3. Only 28 percent of women with pre-school children use nursery facilities (38 percent in urban areas and 19 percent in villages). Just over a tenth stated that children were not attending to rising costs and a further tenth due to worries over the standard of care. The majority however simply preferred to care for their children at home, although a number of these women also mentioned lack of heating and personnel and concerns over food safety. Fees were a greater issue for women living in urban areas, while physical access was cited by one in five rural women.

**Table 4.2 Selected Statistics on Pre-School Education, 1990-1998**

	1990	1992	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Number of establishments	958	822	790	555	601	562	562
Urban	556	551	545	406	461	406	442
Rural	402	271	245	149	140	156	120
Number of children (000s)	150	115	109	78	71	62	53
(% of which are girls)				(26)	(45)	(44)	(36)
Of which urban	115	92	87	65	57	49	42
(% of which are girls)				(23)	(45)	(43)	(35)
Rural	36	24	22	13	14	13	11
(% of which are girls)				(42)	(48)	(46)	(41)
Number of children per 100 places	129	105	100	90	93	90	82
Enrolment rate per 100 children	15.2	10.5	9.4	6.9	6.3	6.3	6.0

Source: SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan*.

**Table 4.3 Utilization of Nursery Facilities by Mothers of Pre-School Children (%)**

	Total	Urban	Rural
Using pre-school establishment	28	38	19
Not using:			
Very high fees	11	13	9
Poor standard of care	11	15	8
Too far to travel	16	8	21
Prefer to keep at home	43	41	44
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100

Source: SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan*.

The decline in enrolment in kindergartens is of particular concern given the part that they can play in raising child welfare, both in terms of freeing the parent to participate in other activities, specifically paid employment, and the developmental value of pre-school education, as well as their role in health interventions (Klugman et al. 1997).

#### 4.1.2 Compulsory Education

##### *Enrolment*

Schooling is compulsory in Tajikistan for children from age 7 to 15. It is divided into primary education (until age 10) followed by lower level of secondary education. Enrolment rates have historically been high, upwards of 94 percent (Table 4.4). Following Independence and the subsequent upheaval of economic transition and civil unrest, rates fell to a low of 85

percent in 1996 since when they have recovered somewhat. In the school year 1998-1999 it is estimated that 89 percent of 7 to 15 year olds were enrolled in school.

Fewer girls than boys attend school, particularly after primary school (Table 4.4). In 1998 there were 89 girls per 100 boys enrolled in lower secondary schools. Analysis of the TLSS found the gender gap in net enrolment rates for 12-16 year olds to be higher in urban areas than in rural areas; with 89 percent of boys enrolled compared with 75 percent of girls in urban areas and 90 percent of boys and 80 percent of girls in rural areas. This in part reflects parental fears for their daughters' safety as they mature, and this fear is greater in urban than rural areas. As we have already discussed in Section 2, in Garm town a large proportion of girls now finish school at grade 6 and one of the main reasons is parents' fear that their daughters will be harassed or assaulted by soldiers at checkpoints in the town.

**Table 4.4 Selected Statistics for Enrolment in Compulsory Education, 1990-1998**  
(%)

	1990	1992	1995	1996	1997	1998
Gross enrolment rate for basic education (7-15)	94.0	89.6	86.5	85.4	87.5	89.1
Ratio of enrolled girls per 100 boys						
Primary (ISCE level 1)	96	na	92	95	94	92
Lower secondary (ISCE Level 2)	97	na	96	92	90	89

Sources 1990 and 1992 from UNICEF 1998; 1995-1998, SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan*.  
na - not available.

Enrolment has also fallen due to the rising cost of education. With transition the meaning of "free" education has changed. High inflation and reduced real government expenditure has given rise to an increasing number of self-financed educational establishments and the growth of informal charges in public institutions. Most schools have introduced charges for textbooks and meals and some have introduced fees to supplement (or replace) the wages (which are not paid) of the teachers. Given the choice of educating a boy or a girl child, it seems that parents may be more willing to invest in a son's secondary education than a daughter's. Whatever the reason, a worrying gender gap in compulsory education is opening up.

### *Attendance*

Enrolment rates tell only part of the story. In reality some children who are enrolled cannot *attend* schools regularly as they do household work or trade in the streets. According to World Bank data, the number of dropouts from primary and secondary schools in 1997 was estimated to be as high as 37,900. As the costs associated with education increase, this number may be expected to rise. Many poor families are unable to purchase textbooks, school uniforms, and to cover transport expenditures, while conversely children are able to

supplement the family income by working in the home or in informal activities. Thus growing poverty and social stratification have effectively begun to result in the exclusion from education of children from poor families. This is confirmed by analysis of the TLSS.

Over a third (37 percent) of children aged between 7 and 15 reported that they had been absent from school for two or more weeks during the last academic year (Table 4.5). Furthermore there was a clear relationship with the household's financial well-being. A significantly greater proportion of children in the bottom quintile of the distribution of per capita equivalent household consumption have missed school for two weeks or more in the last academic year (44 percent) as compared with those in the top quintile (31 percent).

**Table 4.5 Absence from School and Household Poverty**  
(%)

	Poorest 20%	2	3	4	Richest 20%	All Taj	All Boys	All Girls
Missed school for 2 weeks or more in last academic year (N=3,471 children aged between 7 and 15)								
Yes	44	36	39	34	31	37	37	37
No	56	64	61	66	69	63	63	63
Reason for absence								
No clothes/shoes	44	30	35	21	24	32	34	31
Illness	8	13	14	20	25	15	135	18

Note: all chi-square significant at (p<0.001).  
Source: Falkingham 2000a.

When the reason for absence are examined, the two most common reasons (excluding bad weather) are no clothes/shoes and ill health. There is a striking difference between children in rich and poor households, with 44 percent of those in the bottom quintile reporting that they missed school due to lack of clothing compared to "just" 24 percent of those in the top. In contrast, a quarter of those children living in rich households missed school through ill health compared to just 8 percent of poor children.

This raises a number of issues for policymakers. The deterioration in access to education has so far been mainly tackled from the supply-side factors. Both the World Bank and ADB are supporting school improvements and capacity building. However, it is also important to look at the demand side and the barriers and constraints facing the poor in accessing education, and the factors causing high absence rates. Guaranteeing continued access to basic education for all must remain a priority of the Government of Tajikistan.

### ***Quality of Education***

Finally, attending school is also not sufficient in itself to ensure that they are learning anything. Both the environment in which education takes place and the content of the teaching are of vital importance.

During the civil war an estimated \$100 million of damage was done to schools. The fall in real government expenditure on education since then has meant that many schools have not been adequately repaired and there has been a considerable decline in the infrastructure. Many schools remain unheated during the winter, which makes concentration difficult. This may be exacerbated by the poor nutritional status of some children. Fatigue and cold make learning doubly difficult. Class size is often large and there is a shortage of teaching material. This means that the instruction is teacher-centered rather than child-centered and children with special needs, such as dyslexia, go unrecognized.

Learning is further hindered by a shortage of personnel. It is estimated that 4,000 qualified personnel from the education sector migrated to other countries during the civil conflict, and many others have left the profession in search of better paid jobs elsewhere in Tajikistan. Thus between 1991 and 1997 the number of teachers in general education schools fell from 99,122 to 91,285. Parents have had to pool reserves to support the ongoing educational process for their children. Over the last two years the Government has made a concerted effort to recruit and retain teachers. Students have been invited to teach at schools and the number of unfilled teaching positions has fallen from 11,500 to 8,500 in 1998. However, the expansion may have been at the expense of quality. Of the total number of teachers only 62 percent have higher education, 20 percent have special secondary education, and 18 percent have secondary or incomplete higher.

In the SSA/WID survey in 1998 women with school-age children were asked their opinion on the current quality of schooling (Table 4.6). Less than half of women living in rural areas, and a third of women in urban areas, were satisfied. Of those that were not satisfied, the two most common complaints were absence of teachers and lack of textbooks. The introduction of fees has also cause for concern, particularly among urban women. Many of these quality issues will be addressed in the forthcoming ADB social sector rehabilitation project, which will focus on basic education through the provision of basic textbooks for basic education across the country, school rehabilitation and refurbishment in pilot schools, and teacher and management retraining for new skills and methods..

#### **4.1.3 Post-Compulsory Schooling**

Post-compulsory schooling (often called upper secondary schooling) is from age 14 or 15 and is divided into three types of school:

- (i) *General secondary schools* offering a two-four year program of study, possibly leading onto higher education, with entry on a selective basis;



- (ii) *Technical schools* offering 3-5 year programs of technical study leading to a diploma and the opportunity to continue studies. These institutions provide medical and technical (e.g., engineering) education as well as in the field of the arts;
- (iii) *Vocational schools* providing vocational courses of 1-3 years or more. Students train for employment in a specialized occupation.

**Table 4.6 Opinion on the Current Quality of Schooling  
Among Women with School Age Children  
(%)**

	Total	Urban	Rural
Satisfied with schooling	44	35	48
Not satisfied	41	53	34
Don't know	15	12	17
Reason for dissatisfaction:			
Absence of teachers	62	63	59
Introduction of fees	35	45	20
Extended school day	9	11	5
Insufficient materials inc. textbooks	64	57	74

Source SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan*.

**Table 4.7 Selected Statistics on Enrolment in Post-Compulsory Education, 1990-1998**

	1990	1992	1995	1996	1997	1998
Enrolment rate General secondary education (15-18%)*	41.5	29.7	38.6	41.7	34.1	30.9
Enrolment rate Techn/vocational education (15-18%)*	9.8	8.6	8.8	6.6	6.2	5.4
Ratio of enrolled girls per 100 boys:						
General Secondary	104		71	68	63	63
Professional technical colleges	69		89	99	95	94
Vocational secondary	58		37	35	35	34

Sources \*1990 and 1992 from UNICEF 1998; 1995-98, SSA *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan*.

The number of students in post-compulsory education has fallen. The proportion of teenagers aged 15-18 in education has fallen from over 50 percent in 1990 to 36 percent in 1998. There have been significant gender disparities within this decline. In the past, there were almost as many girls as boys participating in continuing education. In 1990 there were 111,000 boys compared with 107,000 girls. Most girls attended general secondary schools, while a larger minority of boys went

Enrolment rates have declined sharply for post-compulsory education. Rates for girls have fallen by almost twice that for boys—indicating the risk of a significant gender gap opening up.

onto the professional and vocational institutions. However, over the period 1990-1998, the number of boys enrolled in post-compulsory education fell by 28 percent from 111,000 to 80,000, while the number of girls fell by 53 percent, from 107,000 to 50,000. Thus a significant gender gap has opened up. There are now just 63 girls per 100 boys in general secondary schools, whereas in 1990 there were 104 girls per 100 boys (Table 4.7).

**Table 4.8a** Number of Students Studying at Technical Secondary Schools and Distribution of Subjects by Gender

	1990		1998	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
No. of students	24,152	16,741	10,005	9,377
Studying (%):				
Industry	26	12	36	13
Building	12	2	9	<1
Agriculture	16	1	11	1
Economics	15	10	10	4
Health Care <sup>1</sup>	16	41	13	44
PE & Sport			3	-
Education	10	31	11	36
Art & Cinematography	4	3	7	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> in 1990 health care included PE and sport.

Source: derived from SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan*.

**Table 4.8b** Number of Students Studying at Vocational Institutions and Distribution of Subjects by Gender

	1990		1998	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
No. of students	43,585	25,175	56,412	19,134
Studying (%):				
Industry	15	4	11	6
Agriculture	13	2	9	2
Economics	1	<1	7	4
Health Care <sup>1</sup>	13	11	5	9
PE & Sport			4	<1
Education	56	80	50	68
Art & Cinematography	3	3	1	1
Protection of Public Security & Defence			3	<1
Law			10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>1</sup> in 1990 health care included PE and sport.

Source: derived from SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan*.

Tables 4.8a and 4.8b present information on the range of subjects studied by boys and girls and how these too have changed over time. There is a clear pattern of segregation between the sexes, with girls much more likely to study subjects related to health care and education, while boys are more likely to study industry, agriculture and business related subjects. This division of learning is then reflected in the division of labor examined in Table 3.6 in Chapter 3 above.

#### 4.1.4 Higher Education

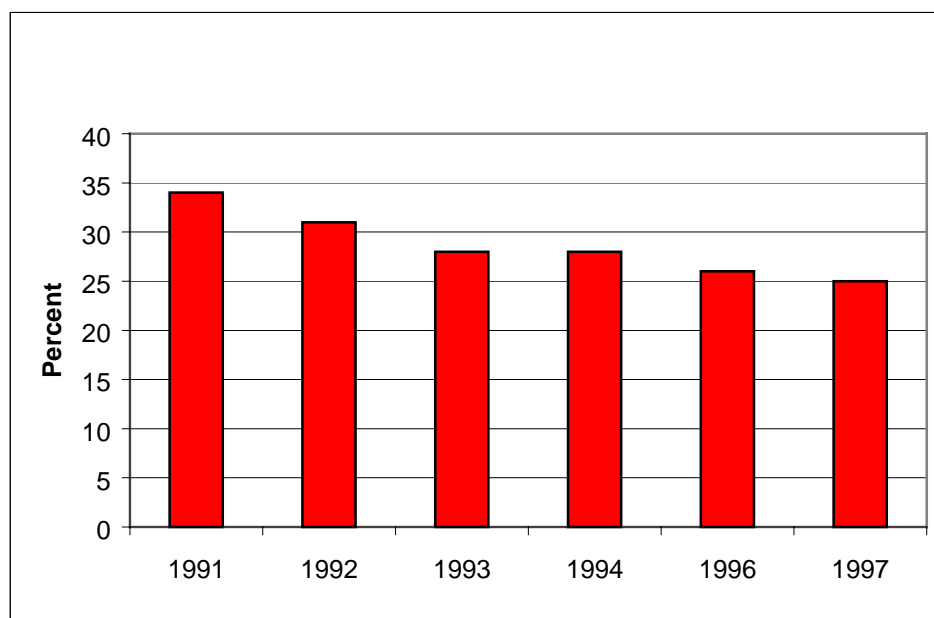
At present there are 24 higher education establishments in Tajikistan, offering training in 130 specialties. In contrast to other educational institutions, the numbers enrolled in higher education establishments has remained remarkably constant (Table 4.9). Competition for places to study subjects such as economics, management, business, foreign languages, trade, is fierce with up to 5 applicants for each place.

**Table 4.9 Selected Statistics for Enrolment in Tertiary Education, 1990-1998**

	1990	1992	1995	1996	1997	1998
Enrolment rate tertiary education (18-22)*	9.4	9.3	na	9.4	8.9	na
Ratio of enrolled girls per 100 boys:						
Higher education	58		37	35	35	34

Sources \*1990 and 1992 from UNICEF 1998; 1995-1998, SSA *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan*.  
na - not available

However, although general enrolment is buoyant, this masks a growing differential between young men and women. In fact the number of young men in higher education has actually increased between 1991 and 1998, from 43,600 to 57,100, whilst the number of young women has fallen from 25,200 to 19,400 (Figure 4.2). Women now constitute under a quarter of all those in tertiary education.

**Figure 4.2 Share of Women in Tertiary Education**

Source: UNICEF 1999.

In an attempt to reverse this trend, quotas have been introduced for some subjects. However there remain clear gender disparities between disciplines (Table 4.10).

**Table 4.10 Number of Students Studying at Higher Institutions by Subject and Gender**

Field of study	No. of students	% Female
Teaching	2,215	68
Humanities, religion & theology	14,342	43
Fine & applied arts	771	16
Law	6,910	23
Social sciences	18,893	26
Trade and enterprise management	4,045	39
Mass media	316	24
Natural sciences	6,670	14
Mathematics	2,124	24
Medical science & health care	4,832	36
Engineering	6,222	12
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	4,400	6
Others	3,706	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,546</b>	<b>25</b>

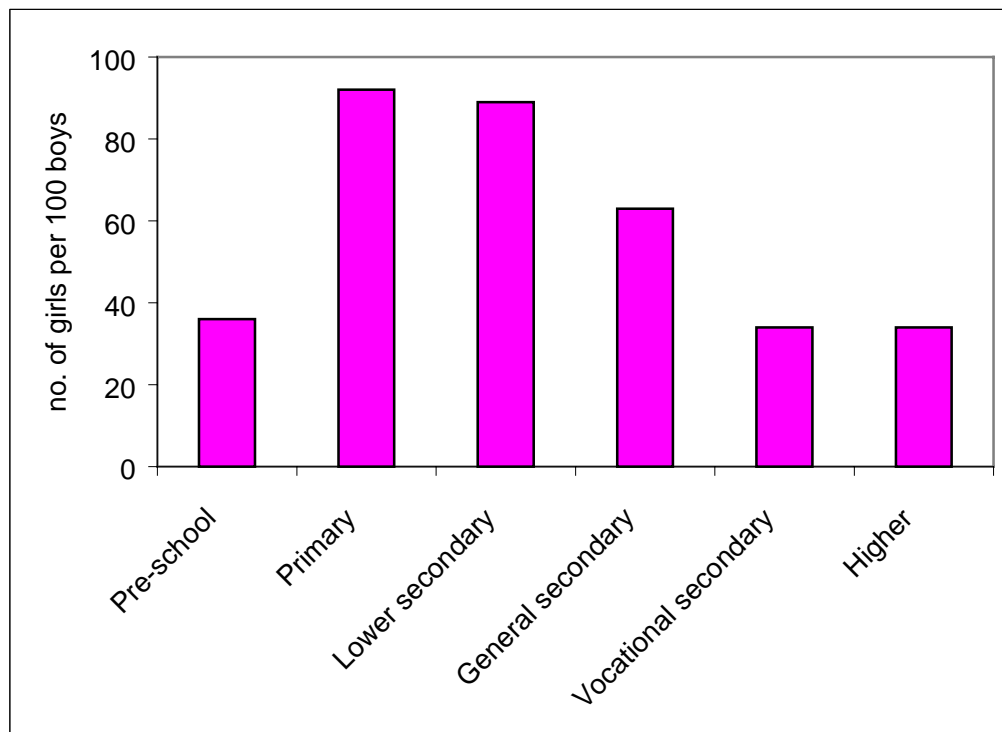
Source: Derived from SSA, *Gender Statistics in the Republic of Tajikistan*.

To summarize:

- (i) Although enrolment in pre-school institutions was not high historically, since 1990 enrolment rates have fallen from 15 percent of 3-6 year olds to just 6 percent. The fall has affected both boys and girls.
- (ii) Enrolment in compulsory education has fallen from 94 percent of 7-15 year olds in 1990, to 89 percent in 1998. The ratio of girls to boys has also fallen.
- (iii) Enrolment in compulsory education have fallen from 94 percent of 7-15 year olds in 1990, to 89 percent in 1998. The ratio of girls to boys has also fallen.
- (iv) Enrolment in post compulsory education have fallen from around 51 percent of 15-18 year olds in 1990, to 36 percent in 1998. The ratio of girls to boys has fallen dramatically. In 1990 there were 104 girls per 100 boys in general secondary school. In 1998 there were only 63 girls per 100 boys.
- (v) The gender gap in higher education has also widened, from 58 girls per 100 boys in 1990 to just 34 in 1998.

Urgent action is needed to halt the widening chasm between the educational achievement of boys and girls (Figure 4.3). Highest priority is rightly being given to basic education, but as highlighted in Chapter 3.2 it is also essential to focus on technical and vocational training of both boys and girls.

**Figure 4.3 The Gender Gap in Education**



## 4.2 Health and Health Care

Upon gaining independence Tajikistan inherited a complex but inefficient health care system characterized by substantial excess human and physical infrastructure. There has been a steady decrease in public spending on health during the transition period. Health expenditure as a percentage of GDP has dropped from 6.4 percent in 1994, to 1.5 percent in 1999. These considerable reductions have eroded the capacity of the health system to provide effective and accessible medical care to the public. At the same time there has been a re-emergence and upsurge in the incidence of infectious diseases, notably malaria, typhoid fever, tuberculosis, and measles as well as respiratory and intestinal infection, reflecting declining health status (and poor water/sanitation), particularly in young children who are most vulnerable to these conditions (Table 4.11).

**Table 4.11 Population Health Indicators, 1990-1997**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Female life expectancy at birth <sup>a</sup>	72.3	72.8	70.9	68.2	68.5	71.2		
Male life expectancy at birth <sup>a</sup>	67.1	67.4	65.2	56.5	63.2	65.5		
Tuberculosis incidence <sup>b</sup> (per 100,000 population)	47.0	39.6	30.1	11.7	15.7	35.2	28.1	35.5
Typhoid fever incidence <sup>b</sup> (per 100,000 population)	33.5	23.7	-	27.7	23.4	26.7	269	613
Malaria incidence <sup>b</sup> (per 100,000 population)	3.3	5.5	7.3	11.1	42.4	106	282	497
SDR ischaemic heart disease <sup>a</sup> (All ages per 10,000)	280	252	244	272	290	285		
SDR circulatory system diseases <sup>a</sup> (All ages per 10,000)	490	482	518	604	640	593		
SDR cerebrovascular disease <sup>a</sup> (All ages per 10,000)	134	151	155	152	139	115		
SDR malignant neoplasms <sup>a</sup> (All ages per 10,000)	114	111	146	97	82	66		
SDR external causes, injury <sup>a</sup> (All ages per 10,000)	57	54	78	271	76	58		

Source: <sup>a</sup> WHO Health for All Database; <sup>b</sup> WHO 1999.

### 4.2.1 Deteriorating Health Status

Although official government statistics report a decrease in birth and death rates, and a slight improvement in life expectancy (see Table 2.1), health status in Tajikistan remains insecure. Tajikistan struggles with a double burden of disease, with both chronic non-communicable diseases (in a profile similar to Western countries) and infectious diseases (where the profile is closer to developing countries). Cardiovascular and pulmonary diseases (strongly associated with unhealthy lifestyles, including excess alcohol and tobacco use and high fat diets) account for over 50 percent of mortality while infectious diseases disproportionately affect young children, contributing to the high under-5 mortality rates (120/1,000 in 1997).

Worryingly communicable diseases has returned as a major threat to the Tajik population. Table 4.11 shows large rises in the incidence of tuberculosis, typhoid fever and malaria. This is associated with the breakdown in the clean water supply and sewage infrastructure, as well as the collapse in public health measures such as mosquito control and immunisation. Waterborne diseases have increased as the water supply in many areas is not safe (WHO 2000). The TLSS found that less than half of all households have access to piped water, with nearly a quarter reliant on water from river/lake/ponds and a further eighth on spring water (probably actually the best source!). Of those who have piped water, a quarter reported that water was only available for five hours a day or less; and only 36 percent reported 24-hour availability (Falkingham 2000a).

#### *Child Health*

Children have been among those hit hardest by deteriorating living conditions. Seven major nutrition/anthropometry surveys have been carried since 1994, by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), CARE, German Agro Action (GAA), and Action Against Hunger (Table 4.12). Although the findings are not directly comparable because of important design and methodological differences, they do all clearly document a worsening trend. The surveys were conducted in different parts of Tajikistan on children between the ages of 6 and 59 months (children are the most physiologically vulnerable to food shortages and therefore this age group is the most sensitive indicator of the nutritional status of a given population group). The most useful surveys may be the series conducted by AKF in Gorno-Badakhshan (GBO), because they have been carried out biannually since 1994 in the same region of Tajikistan. They indicate a steady deterioration in nutritional status.

There does not appear to be any *systematic* bias in favor of male children, as has been found to be the case in studies in neighboring parts of South Asia. However, there is some evidence from some of the studies that girl children are more malnourished than boys. There is also evidence that mothers are cutting back on their own nutritional intake to ensure there is food for their children. A study by United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) and Relief International (1996) found that women are more likely to suffer from malnutrition because they eat last and less.

**Table 4.12 Prevalence of Acute and Chronic Malnutrition in Children Under 5 Years (%)**

NGO	Moderate Wasting	Moderate Stunting
CARE (1994)	3.6	30.0
GAA (1996)	10.0	40.7
GAA (1998)	11.0	46.0
AKF (1994)	2.9	40.4
AKF (1996)	5.8	44.6
AKF (1998)	6.1	53.8
Action Against Hunger (1999)	6.7	41.0

Note: Moderate wasting, or acute malnutrition, denotes current nutrition and health problems, and is defined as weight-for-height scores of below minus 2 standard deviations (-2SD) from the reference mean. Moderate stunting, or chronic malnutrition, denotes chronic exposure to insufficient food and ill health, and is defined as height-for-age scores of below minus 2 standard deviations from the reference population.

### *Women's Health Status*

High birth rates, high rates of maternal and infant mortality, relatively large numbers of abortions, and rising prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) all contribute to low women's health status. Maternal mortality appears to have peaked at 96.3 per 100,000 live births in 1995, although the figures presented in Table 4.13 below should be treated with caution.

**Table 4.13 Indicators of Women's Health Status**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Infant mortality rate <sup>a</sup>	40.4	40.4	48.1	46.5	42.4	30.6	na	na
Maternal mortality rate <sup>a, b</sup>	41.8	53.2	69.9	74.0	87.6	96.3	84.5	64.6
Abortions per 100 live births <sup>a</sup>	25.6	24.3	26.2	21.5	13.6	19.6	21.3	18.2
Prevalence of syphilis <sup>c</sup>	na	1.6	na	na	na	19.6	19.0	22.6
Prevalence of gonorrhoea <sup>c</sup>	na	na	na	na	na	19.1	11.4	12.1
Prevalence of trichomoniasis <sup>c</sup>	na	na	na	na	na	28.4	12.0	12.0

Source: <sup>a</sup> WHO Health for All Database; <sup>b</sup> WHO 1999; <sup>c</sup> UNFPA 1999.  
na - not available



Most maternal deaths are directly related to pregnancy: 38 percent haemorrhages, 27 percent toxemia, 11 percent sepsis and 8 percent unsafe abortion (UNFPA 1999). The high proportion due to haemorrhages could be related to especially high rates of anaemia. It is estimated that more than 40 percent of the adult population suffer from anaemia and that this rises to 60 percent in the case of women of child-bearing age (UNDP 2000). During the Soviet period comprehensive pre-natal care included at least 15 health facility visits, and 90 percent of all births were delivered in maternity wards. With the deterioration of health services since independence women, especially poor women, are increasingly giving birth at home without medical assistance (see Figure 4.5 and 4.6). Many maternal deaths could be prevented if women had ready access to trained birth attendants in a sterile environment.

Data concerning the incidence and prevalence of STDs within the population of Tajikistan are inconsistent. According to the dermatological-venereal disease center in Dushanbe, the prevalence of syphilis had increased 14-fold, from 1.6 per 100,000 population in 1991 to 22.6 in 1997 (UNFPA 1999). However, rates of gonorrhoea have declined, despite the fact that the prevalence of gonorrhoea is usually higher than syphilis. It is likely that all estimates are under-estimates as the collection of epidemiological data has suffered along with the deterioration of other services. In a 1995 study of female garment workers in a Dushanbe factory, 66 percent had at least one STD case and 62 percent had trichomoniasis, while a recent survey of 1,034 women in Khatlon oblast found one STD case in 75 percent of cases selected for a pelvic examination (UNFPA, 1999). Thus STD rates in Tajikistan are significant and a high priority needs to be given to both prevention and treatment.

Prior to the 1990s contraceptive use was very limited and estimates suggest that only three of sexually active individuals used any form of modern contraception (UNFPA 1999). As was the case elsewhere in the Soviet Union, the main form of "contraception" was abortion. Over the last nine years, the donor community has been active in providing both information concerning, and supplies of, modern contraceptives and in 1999 contraceptive prevalence was estimated at around 30 percent. The TLSS found that of married women of reproductive age who were not currently pregnant 43 percent reported that they were currently using contraceptives. Of these, just under 20 percent were using traditional methods (abstinence, withdrawal, rhythm method, water douche), 70 percent were using IUD, 5 percent other modern methods (including pill, condoms and injections) and 5 percent specified other methods including lactational amenorrhea. Despite the improvement in the availability of modern contraception, abortion rates remain high. In 1990 the number of abortions was 256 per 1,000 live births. Use of contraceptives among men appears to be extremely low (UNFPA 1999).

In summary, the general health status of women and children within Tajikistan is poor and deteriorating. Much of the recent decline in health is associated with the rise of infectious diseases which in turn is related to the degradation of the health care infrastructure since independence.

#### 4.2.2 Health Services

During the Soviet era, the health care system in Tajikistan was characterized by widespread access and high levels of service use. Health care provision was extensive and free at the point of delivery. However, since independence health services have deteriorated rapidly in the face of severe financial constraints, exacerbated by extensive damage to infrastructure during the civil war. Health care expenditure as a percentage of the declining state budget has dropped from 11.6 percent in 1994 to 8.1 percent in 1997, and real spending on health care is now less than a *tenth* of its pre-independence level (Table 4.14). The decline in government expenditure has been accompanied by a reduction in beds and personnel, and the number of hospital beds per 1,000 population is now around the average for the European Union (EU). However, although beds have been cut, few facilities have been closed and there has actually been an increase in the number of hospitals.

The precipitous decline in real government expenditures has eroded the capacity of the health system to provide effective and accessible medical care to the public. After salaries have been met, there are few resources left over for drugs and food, let alone maintenance. A facility survey in two raions (districts) in Spring 1999 found that half of all FAPs (physician assistant/midwife posts) and SVAs (rural physician clinics) did not have adequate functioning cold-chain equipment, two-thirds were unable to conduct growth monitoring, and over half had no oral rehydration salt in stock at the time of the survey (World Bank, 1999).

The widening gap between the health care budget and the actual costs of care has resulted in an increased burden on the household; both in terms of official charges and, more commonly, under-the-counter or informal payments. Although in principle drugs required as part of inpatient treatment remain free, the scarcity of drugs and supplies in medical facilities has led to an increasing number of patients having to purchase them. Furthermore, local budgetary constraints and petrol shortages have eroded the capacity of the ambulance service, and often patients have to provide their own transportation to medical facilities. Most importantly, informal user charges for consultations are frequently being imposed to help subsidize salaries. Health workers are among the lowest paid in Tajikistan. In 1998 the average monthly salary among employees in the health sector was \$4.80, compared to the workforce average of \$11 and \$33 for workers in key enterprises, such as state mining, electricity and manufacturing companies (WHO 2000). As well as being low, salaries in the public sector are often paid late, with arrears of several months being common. Given this, many physicians and nurses are increasingly reliant on informal payments and in-kind gifts from patients.

**Table 4.14 Selected Indicators of Health Care Resources in Tajikistan, 1990-1997.**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Health spending as % of GDP			5.7	5.4	6.4	2.1	1.3	1.3
Health as % of State Budget			9.8	10.4	11.6	7.8	7.7	8.1
Doctors per 10,000	25.8	24.6	22.6	21.8	22.2	21.0	20.4	19.4
Total doctors	13,526	13,144	12,544	12,132	12,638	12,104	11,964	11,771
Nurses per 10,000	82.0	79.4	72.9	72.3	67.7	62.4	54.6	52.4
Total nurses	42,888	42,425	40,473	40,181	38,484	35,911	31,988	31,680
Pharmacists per 10,000	1.2	1.3	1.2	0.4	0.4	0.7	1.4	1.3
Total pharmacists	626	690	639	230	200	440	802	758
Beds per 10,000	108.1	111.5	112.1	107.2	88.1	80.7	73.1	69.6
Total hospital beds	56,534	59,565	62,242	59,531	50,132	46,483	42,856	42,058
Hospitals per 100,000	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.2	7.2	7.1	6.8
Total hospitals	365	374	386	389	408	412	416	411

Source: WHO Regional Office for Europe, Health for All Database.

### 4.2.3 Growing Inequalities in Access to Health Care

With the contraction in government expenditure, informal, unofficial user charges are increasingly being used to both to pay wages and to help subsidize the high cost of operating and inefficient health care system. According to the TLSS, 48 percent of people had to pay something for their last medical consultation and 17 percent provided a gift. Hospitalization represents a major expenditure for most households, with the average amount spent on medicines (TJR\$37,000), representing more than the total income for most households in a month (Figure 4.4). There is evidence that rising out-of-pocket costs have restricted access to care for growing numbers of the population (Falkingham 2000b).

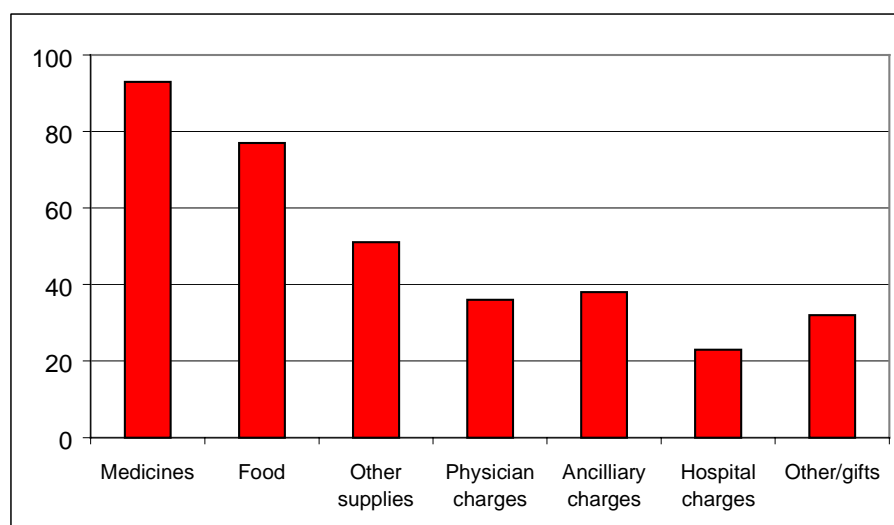
**Figure 4.4 Proportion Paying for Hospital Services (%)**

Table 4.15 presents data from the TLSS on both health status and health-seeking behavior. Health status varied by age and gender. The majority of people in Tajikistan reported that their health status over the last year was "good" or "very good". Not surprisingly prevalence of both chronic and acute morbidity increased with age, and women generally reported higher levels of morbidity than men in the same age group.

**Table 4.15 Self-reported Morbidity by Age and Gender (%)**

	Men			Women		
	0-15	16-64	65+	0-15	16-64	65+
Chronic illness lasting more than six months						
Yes	3.3	12.0	38.0	2.7	14.1	41.0
Acute illness in the last two weeks						
Yes	6.1	7.6	19.8	4.7	10.9	26.6
Sought medical assistance in last two weeks						
Yes	4.3	4.8	11.4	3.0	8.8	13.1
Needed, but did not seek	3.2	5.0	16.7	2.4	7.7	21.8
Hospitalized in the last year						
Yes	3.1	5.7	10.1	2.5	8.3	5.8

Source: Author's own analysis of the TLSS, May 1999.

Overall, a relatively low proportion of the overall population (6 percent) sought medical assistance in the two weeks prior to the survey or reported being hospitalized in the last year (5 percent). This compares with utilization rates in Britain of 16 percent, and 9 percent respectively (ONS, 1998). Again rates varied by age and gender, with women being more

likely to see a medical practitioner than men. However, after controlling for differential morbidity, there was no significant gender differential in health-seeking behavior. A higher proportion of those aged 65 and over sought medical assistance than younger groups, but after controlling for morbidity, utilization rates among elderly people were actually lower than for the population as a whole. In fact, a higher proportion of older people, especially women, reported that they needed medical assistance but did *not* seek such care than reported having a consultation.

Of those who reported that they needed medical assistance but that they did *not* seek such assistance, the majority of respondents (52 percent) self-medicated using traditional or over-the-counter medicines (Table 4.16). However, a third of all respondents in the TLSS who needed health care but did not seek medical assistance cited expense as the main reason for not doing so. Thus lack of financial resources is now a barrier to access to health care for a significant proportion of the population irrespective of age group.

**Table 4.16** Reasons Why Respondents Did Not Seek Medical Assistance (%)

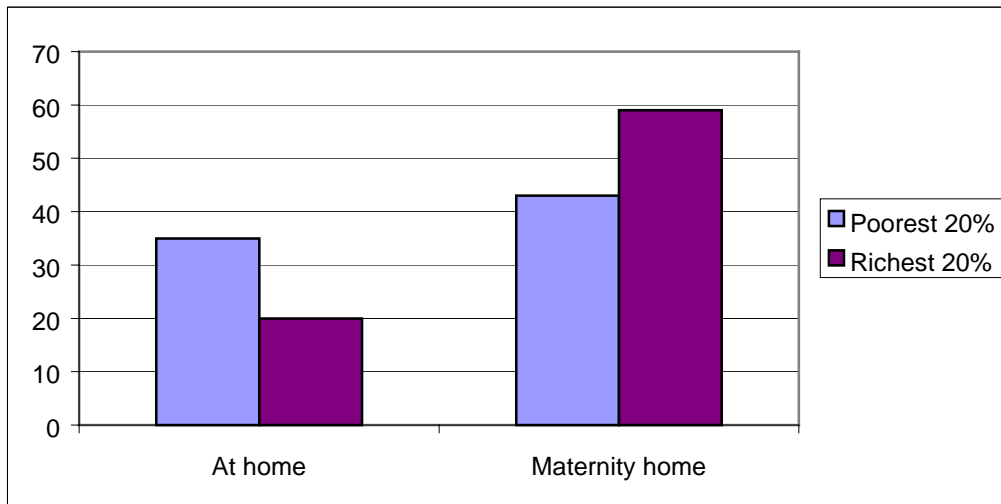
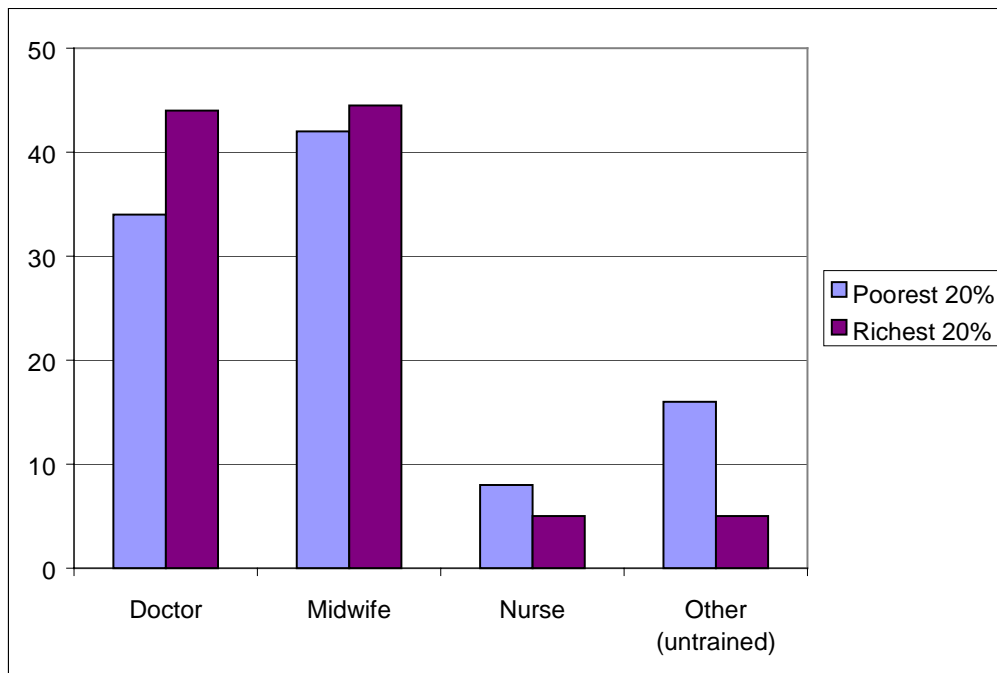
	Men			Women		
	0-15	16-64	65+	0-15	16-64	65+
Self-medicated	48	55	47	61	52	47
Believed problem would go away	9	8	6	15	8	5
Too far/facility closed/poor service	4	2	6	4	3	5
Could not afford	35	33	33	18	34	39
Other	4	2	8	3	4	5

Source: Author's own analysis of the TLSS, May 1999.

### ***Access to Reproductive Health Care***

As noted above women's health has been particularly impacted by changes in the health system and the erosion of access to adequate basic services. During the Soviet period there was comprehensive prenatal care. However, of respondents pregnant during the TLSS survey, 37 percent had had no consultations or prenatal care, with nearly half of these women (44 percent) citing inability to afford it as the main barrier to reproductive care. Moreover, cost was reported as the main reason for *not* using contraceptives by four out of five of the 57 percent of women of reproductive age who were not pregnant and not contracepting.

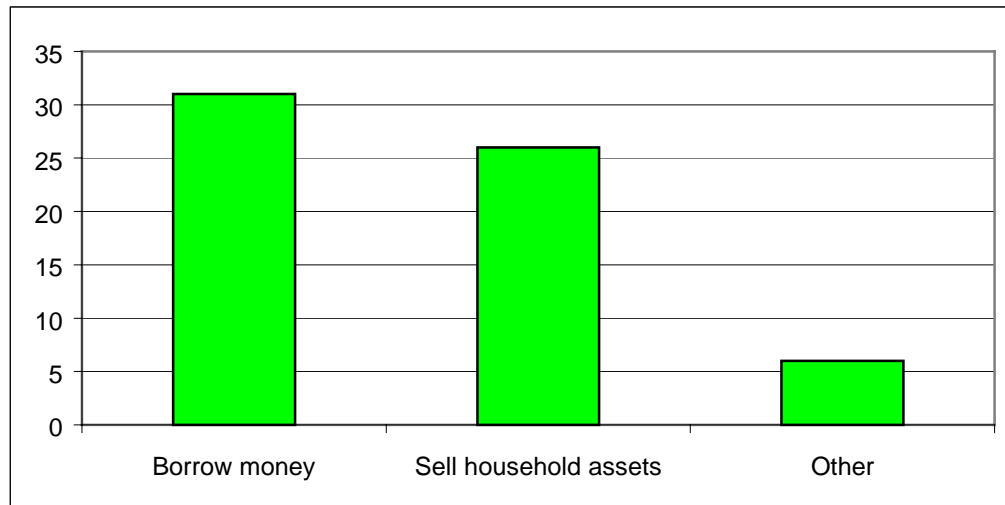
Almost one third of women surveyed delivered their last child at home (Figure 4.5). The poorest women are most affected, with 16 percent delivering without trained help, compared with only 5 percent of the top quintile suffering the same circumstance (Figure 4.6).

**Figure 4.5 Place of Delivery****Figure 4.6 Assistance at Delivery**

The majority of those that do seek health care, report difficulty in paying for it—41 percent said that they found it "very difficult" and a further 52 percent "difficult". Almost one third of households are going into debt in order to afford health care, and increasing numbers are reported having to resort to the sale of household assets. Ability to pay for health care is now a major problem among the poor and there is growing evidence that, despite informal

systems of targeting, access to health care is being affected (Figure 4.7). The challenge facing policymakers is how to take the issue of informal payments into account *and* to ensure that equity in access to health care is achieved. What is clear is that poor women in Tajikistan can no longer afford "free" health care.

**Figure 4.7 Coping Strategies to Pay for Health Care**



In summary:

- (i) Significant health risks are re-emerging within Tajikistan. There was been a rise in communicable and infectious diseases.
- (ii) There is evidence of a steady deterioration in child nutritional status.
- (iii) Women's reproductive health is poor. The prevalence of STDs is high and growing. Utilization of pre-natal care is falling and it is likely that maternal mortality is high and rising.
- (iv) Much of the decline in health status is related to the degradation of the health service infrastructure combined with the rising costs to the household of health care.
- (v) Access to health care has fallen and informal payments now constitute a significant barrier to access. Given that women and children are the primary consumers of health care services, this has worrying gender equity implications

### 4.3 Social Protection

Prior to independence there was a comprehensive system of social welfare benefits. With a guarantee of full employment, unemployment was unknown. For those unable to work there was an extensive system of invalidity and old age benefits, and for families with young children there were generous child benefits. Coverage of benefits was universal and almost every household was eligible for at least one. In addition to cash benefits there were numerous "benefits-in-kind" including free pre-school and child care, free or heavily subsidized holiday camps, subsidized housing and utilities, free cultural and sport facilities, and generous maternity leaves. Many of these social welfare benefits were delivered via the state-owned enterprise.<sup>12</sup> It is estimated that social transfers made up 14 percent of total gross income within the FSU (Atkinson and Micklewright 1992).

Over the last five years, civil conflict and the economic and social dislocation associated with transition has both exacerbated the disadvantage of the "old poor"—pensioners, families with large numbers of children and single parent families—and given rise to new groups of poor in need of social cash transfers. Most prominent among these are the "working". Today the earnings of many breadwinners are simply no longer sufficient to cover the costs of daily living and average per capita income is lower than minimal consumption budget.

At the same time, the ability of the Government to fund social protection has been severely curtailed. As Table 4.1 showed, the state budget has fallen in real terms. Existing systems of assistance to the most vulnerable have come under increasing pressure due to rising numbers of people in need coinciding with tightening fiscal constraints. The value of benefits has fallen in real terms and the number of recipients has been reduced rather than expanded. Thus in 1999, the formal safety net in terms of cash transfers contributed just 5 percent to total household income.

Women and children have been particularly hard hit by the collapse of the inherited system of social security benefits. In the past there was an extensive system of benefits for families with children, including one-off birth payment, payments for mothers on maternity or child-care leave, monthly allowances for children aged 0-18 months and 1.5-16 years additional benefits for single mothers and mothers of more than four children, payment for expenses related to the education of disabled children, and several others. The economic dislocation during transition weakened the ability to continue to provide a universal system of benefits to all families with children. With insufficient resources and a growing number of people in "need", targeting of family allowances was introduced. Today there are just two main types of social protection benefit in Tajikistan: the cash compensation program offering social assistance type benefits to the poor, and pensions providing social insurance type benefits to the elderly, disabled, and bereaved.

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<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of the operation of the social safety net in the Soviet Union prior to transition (see Barr, 1994 and Falkingham et al., 1997).



Vulnerable groups in Tajikistan are currently supported by a complex mix of both formal and informal safety nets, with benefits in cash and in-kind from government, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and the extended family and wider community. However, by far the most significant source of support to the poor is that provided by the *informal safety net*—by community groups, NGOs, and the family. Most important within this is the home production of vital foodstuffs, transfers of food and other goods between members of the extended family and wider community, and cash remittances from household members currently living outside the household either in another part of Tajikistan, elsewhere in the FSU, or further afield. According to analysis of the TLSS, remittances accounted for over 11 percent of total cash household income in 1999 and the imputed value of home production accounted for nearly a fifth of total expenditures. Below we examine the extent and effectiveness (or lack thereof) of the formal safety net, before turning to look at the informal safety net.

#### 4.3.1 The Cash Compensation Program

The cash compensation program (CCP) was introduced in March 1996 to replace the existing system of child allowances and a universal bread subsidy. The level of payment in 1999 was TJR500 per eligible person per month—sufficient to buy just two loaves of bread! Eligibility is determined by a commission, which includes both work place representatives and local staff of the Ministry of Social Protection (MSP) and is limited to membership of one of four target groups:

- Families with per capita income of less than two times the level of the minimum wage (TJR4,000 in 1999). The benefit is then payable for each child under the age of 8.
- Families with children under age 16 who have lost one or both parents and who are receiving a survivor's pension.
- Disabled (regardless of employment status) and non-working pensioners with pensions below the minimum pension level of TJR2,000.
- Students in vocational, specialized secondary and higher education regardless of any scholarships received.

In 1998 the Ministry of Finance estimated that 1,092,000 people were eligible to receive cash compensation payments (17 percent of the total population), of whom 64 percent were children, 8 percent students, and 28 percent pensioners and invalids. However, according to administrative data, in October 1998 only 160,000 people were in receipt of a CCP benefit, i.e., just 15 percent of those who were estimated to be eligible and just 3 percent of the population.

In 1998 it is estimated that the CCP was in arrears to the tune of TJR2.1 billion, and this was in addition to the TJR3 billion estimated to be outstanding from the previous year. In 1999, the picture was even worse, as only TJR0.5 billion was paid out during the first half of the year. In order to improve payment rates, in March 1999 two reforms were made to the program: the paperwork required for claiming the benefit was simplified and the duration for

the period of the claim was increased to three months to reduce transaction costs (for many families it cost more to travel to collect the benefit than the value of the benefit itself). However, there is little sign that these have been successful.

**Table 4.17 Eligible and Actual Beneficiaries of the Cash Compensation Program, April 1998**

Beneficiary	Number
<b>Total eligible beneficiaries (% of population)</b>	<b>1,092,000 (19%)</b>
Of whom:	
Children	708,000
Students	83,000
Pensioners and invalids	301,000
Actual beneficiaries	160,000
(% of eligible beneficiaries / population)	(15% / 3%)

Source: World Bank (2000).

Less than 1 percent of households in Tajikistan in May 1999 were actually receiving any cash compensation payments—the main poverty alleviation benefit.

Cash compensation payments are currently being given at a level insufficient to lift families and older people out of poverty. Its nominal value has remained unchanged since March 1996 and in autumn 1999 the monthly payment of TJR500 barely covered the cost of two loaves of bread, or less than 2 percent of the minimum consumption basket of TJR32,083. As a result low-income households with children are offered little protection by the state against falling into poverty.

Households in the TLSS were asked in May 1999 whether there was anyone in the household eligible for 15 different benefits. Despite the fact that, according to the TLSS, nearly half (47 percent) of households had incomes that would qualify them for a cash compensation payment for a child under eight, only 5 percent of households reported that they were eligible for such a payment; and of these only a fifth reported actually receiving a benefit (Falkingham 2000a). This points to both considerable confusion in the beneficiary population concerning eligibility for cash compensation payments (CCP) and worrying levels of nonpayment of benefit among claimants.

### 4.3.2 Pensions

In 1998, 557,000 people, or 9 percent of the population, were registered as receiving a pension or other social insurance type benefit (Table 4.18). Of these, the majority (65 percent) were registered as in receipt of an old age pension, but one in 10 pensioners were in receipt of a disability pension and just over a further one in 10 were receiving a survivor's pension. Around 59,000 elderly persons who had accumulated insufficient entitlement during

their working life for a minimum old age pension received a social pension.<sup>13</sup> Approximately two-fifths of pensioners are women.

Again data from the TLSS found that the majority of households (56 percent) who reported being eligible for a benefit did *not* actually receive any payment in the last month. Two thirds of households also reported being at least one month in arrears. The average period of arrears for old age pension payments was four months (Falkingham 2000a).

**Table 4.18 Pensioners in 1992-1998**  
(’000)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Total number of people	545	604	585	566	555	548	557
of whom % female	55	47	48	45	42	37	42
Old age pension	397	408	401	382	370	359	360
Disability	54	65	65	65	65	60	59
Survivors	91	84	66	69	73	71	63
Employment service	1.2	2.1	2.1	2.6	3.4	4.7	
Social	40	52	58	56	53	56	59
Working pensioners		52	47	42	35	37	36

Source: SSA.

Pensions are no longer paid at a level sufficient to ensure that old people do not fall into poverty. The value of pensions relative to salaries has declined from 50 percent in 1995 to 35 percent in 1998 (UNDP 1999). Given that the real value of salaries has also been falling over this period, pensions have become almost worthless. In 1998, the average pension was TJRs3,019 (US\$3.88) a month and the minimum pension was TJRs2,000 (Table 4.19). About 73,000, or 13 percent of all pensioners, receive the minimum pension. In addition, 300,000 pensioners received a pension below that of the minimum pension and are officially entitled to cash compensation.

The pensions system is functioning somewhat better than the cash compensation system, but there remain significant problems with arrears and the average value of pensions is too low to maintain individuals without alternative forms of support.

<sup>13</sup> In the budget for CY2000, it is planned to eliminate the overlap between the Social Protection Fund and the CCP, with all pensions below the minimum being brought up to TJRs2,000 monthly. This will effectively abolish social pensions.

### 4.3.3 The Informal Safety Net

In the absence of any meaningful system of state transfers, the informal, or non-governmental, safety net has assumed critical significance in providing support to the most vulnerable groups during transition. Here we include both humanitarian assistance from international donors and NGOs, as well as support from local NGOs, community groups, friends, and family.

**Table 4.19 Adequacy of Pension Payments, 1994-1998**

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Average salary	40,449	785	3,116	4,975	8,590
Average pension	18,032	392	876	1,062	3,019
Minimal pension	11,776	256	483	483	2,000
Ratio of average pension to salary %	45	50	28	21	351

Source: SSA, quoted in UNDP 1999. Note 1994 figures are in Russian roubles.

#### *Humanitarian Assistance*

Tajikistan remains critically dependent upon the humanitarian support of the world community. It is estimated that in 1999 Tajikistan's food deficit amounted to 360,000 million tons out of an overall need of between 800,000 and 850,000 million tons, and an economic study by the European Community in 1997 estimated that 16.4 percent of all households were food insecure (Freckleton 1997). At the beginning of 1999 there were almost 1.4 million beneficiaries receiving food aid (i.e., nearly a quarter of the population) through a variety of programs, including food-for-work (FFW), agricultural support, and institutional and vulnerable group feeding (UN 1998). Key organizations in delivering food assistance include The World Food Programme, CARE International, German Agro-Action, Save the Children UK, Save the Children US, Mercy Corp International, Aga Khan Foundation, the Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), and Mission Ost.

Criteria for receipt of food aid vary between the various organizations. However, virtually all use categorical targeting and common selection criteria include single old age pensioners, disabled pensioners, war widows, orphans, and families without breadwinners. These correspond to many of the beneficiary categories under the old Soviet system of welfare.

Humanitarian assistance forms an important part of total household resources for those that receive it. According to the TLSS, 23 percent of all households reported the receipt of food aid in the last seven days and the imputed value food aid made up 8 percent of the income of the poorest households, compared with 6 percent from social transfers (Table 4.20).

**Table 4.20 Structure of Total Household Income (%) by Quintile Group of Households Ranked by Per Capita Household Expenditure**

	Poorest 20%	2	3	4	Richest 20%
Labor income (incl. employer subsidies)	32	34	34	38	42
Sale of food & crops	16	18	17	14	10
Sale of private belongings & livestock	14	13	18	16	15
Sale of commercial goods	1	3	2	2	3
Rent	<1	-	-	<1	<1
Withdrawal of savings/repayment of debts	2	2	2	3	3
Inter-household transfer (gifts or loans)	14	12	9	10	12
Aid	8	7	7	6	4
Social Transfers (inc. pensions and child benefits)	6	6	5	5	5
Others	7	5	5	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Authors own analysis of the TLSS.

Table 4.16 also highlights the importance of remittances (both in cash and in kind) from relatives or friends outside the household.

### *Community and Inter-Household Support*

Family ties, traditional institutions, and local cultural identity are crucial factors in providing social support. Tajikistan is rich in this form of social capital. A well known example is “hashar,” when the whole neighborhood gathers on weekends to assist any person in the community to construct a house or help with other household activities for free. ECHO Survey found that 17.5 percent of all households had received cash or food gift from a relative or friend in Tajikistan and 5 percent remittance from relative outside Tajikistan. This is probably an underestimate of inter-household transfers as it likely that many people will not perceive foodstuffs “temporarily” borrowed from neighbors as a gift or transfer (Kandiyoti 1999).

However, there is evidence that traditional social support networks are coming under pressure. As discussed in Section 3.2.4, lack of resources has meant that people are no longer able to maintain traditional levels of Tajik hospitality. In the WID/SSA survey of 1,008 households in 1998, a third of urban women and a fifth of rural women reported that they were no longer able to entertain guests with the result that their social networks are considerably weakened. A recent study in GBAO also found that traditions of mutual help and sharing are becoming strained. Although neighbors still help each other out with small quantities of food and basic goods on a regular basis, many women pointed out that it was increasingly difficult to ask neighbors for help as so many people were experiencing difficulties with producing or acquiring sufficient food for their own households (Kanji and Gladwin 2000).

**In summary**

- (i) Formal systems of social protection have all but collapsed.
- (ii) Only an estimated 15 percent of people eligible for social assistance were receiving it, and the value of benefits is in any case insufficient to lift families out of poverty.
- (iii) The pensions system is somewhat better but there remain significant problems with arrears and benefit adequacy.
- (iv) Informal safety nets are coming under strain as more and more pressure is put upon them.
- (v) Tajikistan remains critically dependent upon humanitarian support. Food aid makes up a greater share of the income of poor households than social transfers.

## Chapter 5. Gender and Poverty

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This chapter explores the gender dimension of poverty within Tajikistan. Both the causes and outcomes of poverty are heavily engendered and women and girls have borne a greater share of the cost of economic transition. As previous chapters have shown, women often assume responsibility for "making ends meet" when real income falls. This has resulted in the intensification of women's workloads with increasing participation in formal and, more importantly, informal labor markets alongside an unequal household division of labor (Chapter 3). Efforts to care for and protect their children have diverted many women away from the political process with the result that their political representation is now virtually nonexistent (Chapter 3). Large cuts in social service programs such as health care, family planning, child care and education have also disproportionately affected women with long-term implications for entitlements, capabilities, and rights (Chapter 4).

### 5.1 Dimensions of Poverty in Tajikistan

Poverty is a multi-dimensional concept. Conventionally poverty has been defined in terms of income or expenditure based on the assumption that a person's material standard of living largely determines their well-being. Increasingly, however, it is being recognized that material resources, or rather lack thereof, reflect just one, albeit very important, dimension of poverty. Monetary measures fail to capture other important aspects of individual's well-being such as public goods, community resources, social relations, culture, security, and the natural environment. The work of Amartya Sen has focused attention away from material resources towards an individual's *capability* to live a healthy life, free of avoidable morbidity, having adequate nourishment, being informed and knowledgeable, being capable of reproduction, enjoying personal security, and being able to freely and actively participate in society.

A summary of recent trends within the different dimensions of poverty in Tajikistan is provided in Box 5.1. As is discussed in more depth in Section 5.2, there has been a rapid increase in material poverty as real household incomes and expenditures have fallen dramatically. In 1999 according to the TLSS around 95 percent of people lived in households where the total household expenditure was below the level of the official minimum consumption basket and female-headed households were at a greater risk of extreme poverty than others. There has also been a significant rise in capability poverty as the educational attainment and health status of the population has fallen. Enrolment rates have declined for all types of education, and rates have fallen more sharply for girls than boys, resulting in an increase in the gender-gap (see Chapter 4.1). In 1998 women made up just under a quarter of all those in tertiary education.

The health status of the entire population has worsened with the re-emergence of communicable and infectious diseases. The incidences of tuberculosis, typhoid fever, and malaria have all increased and diarrhoea among children under five is commonplace. There is

also evidence of rising child malnutrition. Women have been particularly hard hit as reproductive health services have collapsed. The majority of women now give birth at home and a growing number among the poor are unattended by trained personnel. Informal charges for health care consultations and services are widespread as doctors and nurses are forced to supplement their meager wages and patients pay for essential drugs and supplies. This has resulted in widening inequalities in access to health care services, which are disproportionately used by women and children (see Chapter 4.2).

### Box 5.1 Dimensions of Poverty and Recent Trends in Tajikistan

Dimension	Summary Trend
<b>Material poverty</b>	↑
<b>Capability poverty: education</b>	↑
Enrolment in compulsory education	↓
Gender gap	↑
Enrolment in higher education	↓
Gender gap	↑
<b>Capability poverty: health</b>	↑
General morbidity	↕
Child health status	↓
Reproductive health status	↓
<b>Participation</b>	↓
<i>Political</i>	
Representation of women	↓
<i>Economic</i>	
Labor force participation	↓
Gender gap	↓
Unemployment	↑
<b>Personal Security</b>	↓
At home	↓
In society	↓



Political and economic participation has also decreased and again women appear to have been affected disproportionately. Women have all but disappeared from political office, holding just 3 percent of parliamentary seats and constituting less than 10 percent of elected local government members (see Section 3.1). Labor force participation rates have fallen for both men and women as inefficient state enterprises close or streamline their work force. Male participation has fallen more than female, with the result that the share of women in the labor force has actually increased, with female workers now comprising 46 percent of the total. However, women suffer higher unemployment than men, with 29 percent of economically active women unemployed as opposed to 25 percent of men. Women are also concentrated in the lowest paid sectors of the economy—agriculture, education and health—where wages are insufficient to live on (see Section 3.2).

Finally, although personal security has improved significantly since the signing of the peace agreement in 1997, harassment and corruption remain widespread. Harassment of men on some major trunk roads has shifted the burden of travel and marketing onto women. In some areas fear for the physical safety of their teenage daughters has been cited by parents as a major reason for girls dropping out of school. But personal insecurity is not limited to the public sphere. Economic stress and the frustrations of lack of employment and income have spilt out into increased tension and violence at the household level (see Section 2.3). Uncertainty has also been cited as a major factor in limiting fertility—another indicator of a society under economic, social, and psychological stress.

How do these different dimensions of poverty relate to the individual Tajik's own perceptions of what is meant by poverty? Between November 1997 and October 1999, the Tajikistan Social Investment Fund conducted seminars and surveys in all major regions of the country, including urban and rural, mountainous and valley, and war-affected communities, to inform the targeting of its micro-projects. Local government officials, mahalla representatives, farm managers and laborers, women, and pensioners were asked to identify community-specific poverty criteria. From their perspective "poverty" includes lack of clothing, food shortages, inadequate salaries, and low pensions. Some respondents also included lack of land or livestock in the definition. In the war-affected areas, such as in Khatlon and the Karategin Valley, local

#### **Women's Impressions of Changes Since the Soviet Era**

"Life was fine in Soviet era but now it's getting worse. During the Soviet era we worked hard but we were earning, we knew we would get a salary; but now there is no work."

"Children had an easier life then, sending them to school was not a problem, and they did not have to work on the land the way they have to now."

"My children ask me why I can't buy them shoes to go to school. The older ones are getting angry; they say I want them to help me all the time, but I can't buy them shoes to go to school. What can I say to them?"

"Children used to know what sweets were in those times. There were even lunch shops at school. Now there is not even coal to heat the school in winter."

Source: Kanji and Gladwin (2000).

communities also cited shortages of construction material and insufficient shelter. In contrast, communities residing in valleys (in Leninabad, Khatlon and the Regions of Republican Subordination (RRS) mentioned inadequate drinking and irrigation water, and low crop yields. Mountainous/remote communities in areas such as Gorno-Badakhshan (GBO) included lack of physical infrastructure (transportation, communication, electricity), lack of social infrastructure (health, hygiene, education), unemployment, and underdeveloped production and distribution channels (World Bank 2000). Universally, participants reported that life was better in the Soviet period and that poverty had worsened over time. Many women voiced concerns about the impact on the lives of their children.

## 5.2 Material Poverty

Poverty within Tajikistan is not new. It was widely recognized as one of the poorest republics of the Soviet Union. In 1989, just prior to "transition", 51 percent of the population had a per capita monthly income below 75 rubles compared with 33 percent in Kyrgyz Republic, 16 percent in Kazakhstan, and 5 percent in Russia (Table 8.4, Atkinson and Micklewright 1992). After independence the country experienced an abrupt economic decline and several years of civil conflict, and today Tajikistan ranks among the poorest countries in the world with an estimated per capita GDP of only \$215 (UNDP 1999).

The first nationally representative survey of household living standards in Tajikistan was carried out in May 1999 and the results of this are presented in the recent World Bank *Poverty Assessment*. Table 5.1, drawn from that report, summarizes the results for a variety of different poverty standards.

The results of the TLSS confirm that the vast majority of the population of Tajikistan are poor. Two thirds live below the World Bank poverty line of purchasing power parity (PPP) \$2.15 a day and a third live below the "extreme" poverty line set by the Tajik State Statistical Agency at around 30 percent of the value of the minimum subsistence basket.

In general terms the TLSS results do not seem to show any significant difference in the poverty rates for men and women in Tajikistan. However, in common with traditional economic approaches, poverty is defined here by the expenditure of the *household* and as such involves the implicit assumption that resources are distributed equally within the household and all members share the same standard of living. Evidence suggests that this is rarely the case in reality, and that within the same household women and female children may be relatively poorer than other household members (Bruce and Dwyer 1988, Evans 1989, Moore 1992). As previous chapters have shown, there is also evidence that the circumstances of transition may 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.

**Table 5.1 Poverty Measures in Tajikistan**

Minimum consumption basket ,1998 (TJR\$32,083)	
% poor	95.7%
P1	56.4
P2	36.8
\$2.15 PPP a day ( poverty line = TJR\$15,111)	
% poor	65.4%
P1	22.9
P2	10.9
\$1.075 PPP a day ( poverty line = TJR\$7,557)	
% poor	16.9%
P1	4.4
P2	1.7
State Statistical Agency (poverty line = TJR\$20,000)	
% poor	82.6%
P1	35.8
P2	19.0
State Statistical Agency (extreme poverty line = TJR\$10,000)	
% poor	32.8%
P1	9.2
P2	3.9

Source: World Bank 2000.

Notes: Sample size 14,142 individuals, based on equivalent household expenditure with  $\theta = 0.75$ .

The head-count (% poor) measures the incidence of poverty; the poverty gap (P1) is a measure of the depth of poverty, and the Foster-Greer-Thorbecke index (P2) provides a measure of the severity of poverty.

Female-headed households (FHHs) are likely to face particular problems. The civil war created approximately 25,000 female-headed households, predominately in Khatlon and Garm. 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, the woman became the head of the household. According to the Save the Children 1998 Socio-Economic Survey of Households, Farms and Bazaars, FHHs 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.

Using data from the TLSS, Table 5.2a presents the percentage within each quintile of the distribution of per capita expenditure, with extreme poverty being defined as being in the bottom 20 percent of the distribution. It confirms that individuals living in female-headed households experience a greater risk of extreme poverty (29 percent) than those in male-headed households (21 percent). However, such households account for only a fifth of all "extremely poor" people.

Furthermore, as Table 2.4 previously illustrated, FHHs encompass a variety of different types of households, which face differential risks of poverty. Lone mother and other FHHs with

children experience the greatest risk, while households with no children are less likely to be extremely poor. Surprisingly, no elderly women living alone fall in the bottom quintile of household expenditure. The reasons for this may be twofold. Firstly, this may reflect that fact that the receipt of an old age pension, however small, may be sufficient to lift them out of extreme poverty. Those that have access to cash income, even if that access is intermittent, may be privileged over other groups. An indication of this is the statement by one respondent in the Buryat region in the east of the Russian Federation that "*It is [now] better to have two live grandparents than to have two cows*" (Humphrey 1998, pp.465). Additionally, this vulnerable group of lone elderly women may more likely to be in receipt of humanitarian aid and again the imputed value of food aid and other assistance may have moved them up the distribution. Secondly, the finding may be a statistical artefact, reflecting the use of per capita household expenditure as the welfare measure. Work by Lanjouw, Milanovic and Paternostro (1998) has shown that using a per capita welfare indicator can lead to a conclusion that larger households are poorer, while alternative equivalence scales will reverse this policy conclusion.

**Table 5.2a Poverty Incidence Among Individuals by Sex of the Head of Household, Using Per Capita Household Expenditure (%)**

	Poorest 20%	2	3	4	Richest 20%	All
Male-headed households	21	22	21	20	17	100
Female-headed households	29	20	20	16	15	100
Lone mother households	27	20	9	30	15	100
Other FHHs with children	30	21	21	15	12	100
Lone elderly woman	-	8	23	31	39	100
Other FHHs with no children	9	10	7	16	58	100

Source: Authors own analysis of the TLSS.

Work carried out as part of the World Bank *Poverty Assessment* suggests that the most appropriate equivalence scale for Tajikistan is to adjust total household expenditure by household size raised to the power of 0.75. This assumes that larger households enjoy some economies of scale, but is not as strong an assumption as that used by the European Community which uses the square root of household size (i.e.,  $\theta = 0.5$ ). Using this measure a different picture is obtained (Table 5.2b). Individuals living in FHHs households are over a third *more likely* to be in extreme poverty than those living in male-headed households. Individuals in lone mother households are most at risk of extreme poverty, being over *twice* as likely to be poor than male-headed households. Moreover, now lone elderly women are at a slightly higher risk of poverty than the population in general. Thus policymakers concerned with the targeting of resources to the most vulnerable groups need to be sensitized to the effects of different assumptions.

**Table 5.2b Poverty Incidence Among Individuals By Sex of the Head of Household, Using Equivalent Household Expenditure ( $\theta = 0.75$ ) (%)**

	Poorest 20%	2	3	4	Richest 20%	All
Male-headed households	19	21	21	21	19	100
Female-headed households	26	21	20	16	17	100
Lone mother households	39	14	19	21	8	100
Other FHHs with children	26	22	21	15	16	100
Lone elderly woman	23	23	23	23	8	100
Other FHHs with no children	15	12	14	6	54	100

Source: Authors own analysis of the TLSS.

## 5.3 Material Poverty and Other Dimensions of Well-Being

### 5.3.1 Poverty and Education

As Section 4.1.2 has shown, as the costs associated with education increase, children from poorer families are effectively excluded from participating in school life. Many poor families are forced to keep their children at home simply because they can no longer afford the costs of shoes and uniforms, let alone rising bus fares and fees for textbooks. About 37 percent of children have missed school for two or more weeks in the last academic year and a third of these children reported that the main reason for this was lack of shoes or clothes (Table 4.4). Absence rates for children from the poorest households rose to 44 percent, of whom four in 10 cited lack of suitable clothing. There were no significant gender differences in absenteeism rates, although of those absent a higher proportion of girls than boys reported poor health as the main reason for their absence (18 percent versus 13 percent).

### 5.3.2 Poverty and Health

The relationship between poverty and health in Tajikistan is not straightforward. Table 5.3 shows that poverty and health are positively correlated, with the poorest both reporting illness and seeking care at lower rates. This may reflect that fact that the very poor, lacking the resources to access medical care easily, define illness more narrowly than those who are able to afford treatment. The poorest may also be deferring care (and the recognition of illness) until their illness is severe.

**Table 5.3 Self-Reported Morbidity by Quintile of Per Capita Household Expenditure (%)**

	Poorest 20%	2	3	4	Richest 20%	All Taj
Chronic illness lasting more than six months						
Yes	8.3	8.2	8.7	10.5	14.0	9.7
No	91.7	91.8	91.3	89.5	86.0	90.3
Acute illness in the last two weeks						
Yes	6.7	7.9	7.2	8.3	11.5	8.1
No	93.3	92.1	92.8	91.7	88.5	91.9
Sought medical assistance in last two weeks						
Yes	3.9	5.3	5.2	5.9	8.8	5.7
No	96.1	94.7	94.8	94.1	91.2	94.3
Hospitalized in the last year						
Yes	3.5	4.7	5.0	6.0	7.3	5.2
No	96.5	95.3	95.0	94	92.7	94.8

Note: All chi-square significant at ( $p < 0.001$ ).

Section 4.2.3 above has detailed the growing inequalities in access to health care in Tajikistan. Although the poor report less illness, when they do require medical care it appears that the *cost* of that care is a barrier to access more frequently than for other groups (Table 5.4). Those in the poorest fifth of the population were nearly twice as likely as those in the richest fifth to report affordability as the main reason for not seeking health care. However, even among the richest fifth, lack of resources was cited by a quarter of respondents. This is perhaps not surprising, given that an estimated 95 percent of the population of Tajikistan are currently living below the official minimum subsistence basket. There is no significant gender difference with a third of both men and women who report needing health care citing affordability as the main barrier to health care. However, given that women and children are the main consumers of health care services, this does have worrying implications from a gender perspective.

**Table 5.4 Reasons Given for Why Respondents Did Not Seek Medical Assistance by Quintile (%)**

	Poorest 20%	2	3	4	Richest 20%	All Taj	Me n	Women
Self medicated	42	49	50	55	65	52	51	50
Believed problem would go away	11	3	16	5	6	8	8	10
Too far/facility closed/poor service	1	2	4	5	3	3	3	3
<b>Could not afford</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>
Other	5	5	2	5	2	4	5	4
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: All chi-square significant at ( $p < 0.001$ ).

Source: Author's own analysis of the TLSS, May 1999.

Material poverty is only one indicator of the quality of life in Tajikistan.

### Quality of Life in Tajikistan

- 7 percent of all households report that their home was damaged during the war (6 percent male-headed households; 9 percent female-headed household), of which a quarter experienced significant damage and a third almost completely destroyed.
- Less than half of all households have access to piped water. Nearly a quarter are reliant on water from river/lake/ponds and a further eighth on spring water (probably actually the best source!).
- Of those who have piped water, a quarter reported that water was only available for five hours a day or less; and only 36 percent reported 24-hour availability.
- Only a half of households reported that their water quality was good/excellent and a half reported fair/poor.
- About 75 percent of households reported no source of *hot* water.
- Only 14 percent of households have a flush toilet; 85 percent rely on an outside latrine.
- The most common source of fuel used by households for cooking was wood (43 percent), followed by manure (17.5 percent), and cotton stem (12.3 percent). Similarly, the most common usual source of heat was wood stove (45 percent), followed by manure/peat (23.6 percent). Burning solid fuels indoors has important implications for health as indoor air pollution is associated with numerous respiratory complaints.
- A third of households had only heated their home for 3 months or less in the last year; two thirds heated it for 4 months or less.
- About 14 percent of households have a phone inside the dwelling, 17 percent rely on neighbors, 54 percent stated that they had no access to a phone.

Table 5.5 shows household's satisfaction with life in general.<sup>14</sup> About 65 percent of respondents are either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with their life at present. These findings are disturbing as they indicate high levels of psychological stress and insecurity within the Tajik population. Taking a broad view of well-being, it is clear that not only are there high levels of economic (or material) poverty, but also growing social exclusion and alienation.

<sup>14</sup> The Spearman rank correlation between subjective poverty and life satisfaction was high at 0.45, and significant at  $p < 0.0001$ .

**Table 5.5 Satisfaction With Life at Present**

	Poorest 20%	2	3	4	Richest 20%	All Taj	MHH	FHH
Very satisfied	-	1	<1	<1	1	<1	1	-
Satisfied	19	30	38	38	45	34	34	29
Unsatisfied	63	58	54	54	49	55	54	62
Very unsatisfied	19	10	8	8	5	10	10	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: Chi-square significant at ( $p < 0.001$ ).

FHH - female-headed household, MHH - male-headed household.

## 5.4 Poverty and Household Coping Strategies

Women and their families report using a range of different strategies to help them survive on limited resources. Howell (1994) classified these strategies into four main groups:

- (a) Reductive strategies—including reduced consumption, not just of luxuries but also of basic items such as meat, sugar and coal;
- (b) Depleting strategies—through the sale of assets, particularly livestock in rural areas but also household goods;
- (c) Maintaining strategies—by borrowing from relatives or friends and raising credit from suppliers or producers; and
- (d) Regenerative strategies—including trade and home production of food and clothing for sale.

Evidence on how households in Tajikistan are actually living with poverty points to use of all of these, but worryingly over time there appears to be *increasing* use of reductive, depleting, and maintaining strategies, which are not sustainable in the longer term.

Table 5.6 provides information about a range of coping strategies households reported employing with regard to food consumption over the last six months. There is a clear relationship between poverty and the proportion of households reporting the use of a particular strategy. However, what is most striking is the *widespread* nature of behavior change within Tajikistan. Even among the most well-off households, nearly 30 percent reported having reduced the number of meals a day and a similar proportion reported eating smaller portions. This rose to over 60 percent among the poorest households.



**Table 5.6 Households Reporting Having Engaged in Selected Coping Strategies in the Last Six Months by Quintile of Per Capita Household Expenditure and by Gender of Head (%)**

	Poorest 20%	2	3	4	Richest 20%	All Taj	MHH	FHH
Reduce number of meals a day <sup>a</sup>	61	44	42	44	29	44	44	45
Eat smaller portions <sup>a</sup>	63	45	47	45	30	46	45	51
Find other work <sup>a</sup>	45	35	31	35	26	34	34	31
Sell household assets	29	25	28	29	27	28	27	30
Borrow	37	33	34	34	30	34	33	37
Beg <sup>a</sup>	7	3	1	1	<1	3	2	3
Send children to relatives <sup>a</sup>	9	6	3	2	3	5	4	7

Note: <sup>a</sup> chi-square significant at ( $p < 0.001$ ).

Source: Author's own analysis of the TLSS.

FHH - female-headed household; MHH - male-headed household.

An indication of the pervasive nature of financial insecurity for households across Tajikistan is the fact that over a quarter of all households had sold assets in the last month, and a third had had to borrow from relatives, friends, and neighbors. These proportions were roughly constant for households *across the entire distribution*.

There were no statistically significant differences between the coping strategies adopted by FHHs and MHHs, although more women than men reported eating smaller portions, selling household assets, and borrowing from friends and neighbors while more men reported finding other work.

In addition to the coping strategies already employed by households, respondents claimed that they would use a variety of coping strategies over the *next* six months. A higher proportion of households thought that they would have to modify their diet still further and/or find other work. A quarter thought that they would have to sell household assets and over a quarter would have to borrow to make ends meet. About 2 percent thought that they would have to resort to begging. Again there was no difference between MHHs and FHHs households.

Migration is often seen as a strategy of the last resort. About 2 percent of households reported that they had had to migrate within Tajikistan in last six months, and 3 percent reported that at least one member had migrated to outside the republic. The same proportions reported that they envisaged migrating either internally or externally in the next 6 months. More encouragingly, however, is also extensive use of regenerative livelihood strategies, including home production of food and trade. The most basic necessity within any household is food, and by far the most important coping strategy with regard to ensuring its supply is its

self-production. About 84 percent of all households reported having access to an individual garden plot and 72 percent of households reported consuming food grown by the household in the last seven days. Access to land is therefore a critical factor in many households' survival.

**Table 5.7 Households Reporting That They Are Likely to Engage In Selected Coping Strategies In The Next Six Months by Quintile of Per Capita Household Expenditure and by Gender of Head (%)**

	Poorest 20%	2	3	4	Richest 20%	All Taj	MHH	FHH
Reduce number of meals a day **	46%	43%	43%	41%	33%	41%	41%	41%
Eat smaller portions **	47%	41%	41%	40%	31%	40%	39%	42%
Find other work #	40%	37%	32%	35%	30%	35%	35%	35%
Sell household assets	25%	19%	25%	23%	21%	23%	23%	23%
Borrow #	33%	29%	31%	27%	23%	28%	28%	29%
Beg **	4%	2%	2%	3%	<1%	2%	2%	2%
Send children to relatives #	6%	5%	4%	2%	2%	4%	4%	2%

Note: \*\* chi-square significant at ( $p < 0.001$ ), \* chi-square significant at ( $p < 0.01$ ), # chi-square significant at ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Much of the burden of survival falls on women. Qualitative research conducted in GBAO in 1999 found that women worry more than men about the everyday problems of managing food in the household, and are more prepared to ask others for help, and to consider trading and other activities that could generate income to buy food for the household (Kanji and Gladwin 2000).

"Women suffer more because we have to think about what to give the children for breakfast"

"Men escape more from the problems we faced – they go out sometimes. Women are constantly with the problems of the home and children."

"Women worry about the home and children more than men. When I worry, my husband says 'why do you worry so much? We will eat what God gives us. I get very upset when he says this—he does not understand."

Source: Kanji and Gladwin 2000.

As Chapter 3 illustrates, there has been an intensification of women's workload with increasing participation in both formal and informal labor markets alongside an unequal household division of labor. Furthermore, efforts to care for and protect their families have meant that women have less time to devote to other activities. Poverty reduction strategies that are sensitive to the gendered nature of poverty and that both empower women to maximize their existing entitlements, enhance their capabilities, and facilitate

their participation in political, economic, and civil society are essential.

## 5.5 Towards Gender-Sensitive Poverty Reduction Strategies

Gender-sensitive poverty reduction strategies are desirable, from both an equity and efficiency perspective. It is increasingly recognized that to achieve sustainable development investments in both women and men are needed. Low levels of human capital and poor health status not only depress women's quality of life but they also limit economic productivity and growth. Failure to address the factors that limit women's participation will impede economic efficiency. Furthermore, since women tend to use a higher proportion of their income on children and household resources, poverty reduction strategies that increase women's income are more likely to have a positive effect on overall levels of well-being than if they are addressed to men. This is particularly the case in Tajikistan, where children under age 18 constitute 48 percent of the population.

When developing poverty reduction strategies, Beneria and Bisnath (1996) argue that it is imperative to focus on gender as a separate category from "women" and as such it is important to look not only at women in isolation, but at women in relation to men and the institutions and ideologies that govern women's rights, entitlements, and capabilities. It is not sufficient to improve women's capabilities, for example with training programs; it is also necessary to break down the barriers that prevent women from then deploying these capabilities in order to move out of poverty. There is a danger that, without doing this, poverty reduction policies may actually reinforce women's subordinate position within the household and community. For example, micro-enterprise projects that promote low-paid craft production for women without training them in marketing or other better paid skills, or without addressing institutional impediments and gender stereotypes that prevent them from full participation, may merely replace one low paid option with another.

Similarly in addition to focusing on women's entitlements, through increasing their access to land-ownership and use, credit and other productive resources that have the potential to facilitate income generation, there is also a need to provide women with *enabling* resources that will allow them to take greater control over their lives and maximize the returns to their entitlements. This will involve the removal of both legal obstacles and cultural constraints.

In common with other republics of the FSU, Tajikistan's legal and administrative systems do not explicitly discriminate against women. Gender equality is enshrined in the Tajik Constitution, and in a body of legislation including the Code of Labor Laws, the Code of Civil Laws, the Law on the Protection of the Health of the Population, and the Code of Laws relating to Marriage and the Family. A delegation attended the UN Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing in October 1995 and based on its recommendations the Tajik Government has developed a National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women 1998-2005.

However, although in principle women have equal legal rights to men, in reality there remain many barriers to their equal participation in Tajik society reflecting deeply entrenched prejudices regarding appropriate roles for women. Many women are excluded from the process of obtaining land rights to the new "dekhan" or "private" farms. Article 69 of the Land Code includes an explicit presumption that the applicant has "the necessary knowledge, qualifications and agricultural experience," and many *kolkoz* administrators are extremely dismissive of women's capabilities regarding farming. There have been several instances where FHHs have been denied land on the basis of their lack of "man" power, despite the fact that women employees are relied upon to pick the cotton and to perform other physically arduous tasks. Women are also effectively excluded from some forms of economic activity. As Chapter 3 shows there is strong gender-based occupational segregation, with women concentrated in low paid sectors such as agriculture, education, and health. This in part reflects the fact that girls have less access to technical and vocational education, and fewer are studying the subjects necessary for full participation in the new forms of economic activity that are part of a market economy. Over four times as many boys as girls are studying economics, and just one in five of those studying subjects related to industry are female.

## Chapter 6. Gender Issues and ADB's Country Strategy, Program, and Projects

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Gender issues cut across all policies and programs and are an integral part of sustainable human and economic development. ADB is committed to implementing the Platform for Action agreed in Beijing in 1995. Its recent policy paper emphasized the evolution from a narrow women-in-development (WID) approach to a more dynamic gender and development (GAD) approach "based on considerations of social justice and gender equity, as well as on substantial evidence that investments in women are vital to achieving economic efficiency and growth" (ADB, 1998). Since ADB has only recently begun operations in Tajikistan, ADB is well-placed to ensure that gender considerations are mainstreamed in all its operations, both in policy dialogue and program activities.

This chapter examines how ADB's program for Tajikistan can incorporate gender concerns into its operations and highlights other opportunities to strengthen the position of women and girls.

### **Key issues that need to be addressed include:**

- Renewed emphasis on women's domestic responsibilities and withdrawal of women from public life
- Continuing threat of harassment outside the home, and rising violence and abuse within the home
- Low political representation of women
- Low representation of women in senior economic positions
- Gender-based occupational segregation
- Rising adolescent unemployment and the detachment of young men and women from the formal labor market
- Low wages in general and a widening gender wage gap
- Falling school enrolment among girls
- Widening gender gap in further and higher education in general, and in business, scientific, and technical education in particular
- Deteriorating health status among women and children
- Growing inequalities in access to appropriate health care
- Pension arrears and adequacy of benefit payments
- Absence of effective system of social assistance for the most vulnerable
- High levels of material poverty
- An urgent need to shift households from depletive to regenerative coping strategies

### **6.1 Gender and ADB's Pipeline Projects in Tajikistan**

Tajikistan became a member of ADB on 20 April 1998 and attended ADB's 1998 annual meeting in Geneva. ADB participated in the Consultative Group Meeting for Tajikistan in Paris on 20 May 1998. In October 1998 ADB's Interim Operational Strategy (IOS) for Tajikistan was endorsed by the Board of Directors. The IOS has the objectives of (i) facilitating the country's transition to a market economy, (ii) assisting in post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction, and (iii) providing support for natural disaster rehabilitation. ADB operations aims include the promotion and development of small and medium-size enterprises; and the reduction of poverty, particularly for FHHs and communities in remote mountainous areas. The IOS focuses on three priority areas: (i) agriculture and agro-processing; (ii) infrastructure rehabilitation, especially roads and power; and (iii) education. In May-June 1999, ADB undertook a detailed social sector review. In response to the Government's request, and to assist in mitigating the continued deterioration in social indicators, support has been broadened to include health and social protection, as well as education.

In view of Tajikistan's urgent need for assistance, ADB approved the *Post-Conflict Infrastructure Program* loan (\$20 million) following the adoption of the IOS and country classification in December 1998. The Program focused on key policy, legal, and institutional issues in the power and roads sectors. The lending program for 2000-2002 includes project loans to meet the urgent rehabilitation needs of these two sectors.

As a result of the social sector review, in 1999 the first ADB Project in Tajikistan was approved. The *Social Sector Rehabilitation Project* will focus on restoring delivery of essential social services by rehabilitating war-damaged basic education and health facilities and by providing essential supplies; and strengthening the delivery of services and improving targeting and access to services by vulnerable groups at the local level by both retraining staff and strengthening local government and community-based organizations. The Project will center on Leninabad and Khatlon areas for the training and rehabilitation components, but will also bring nationwide benefits for the distribution of textbooks, medical equipment and supplies, public information campaigns, and management information systems for the Social Fund.

Tajikistan remains primarily an agrarian country. In order to assist the Government's reforms in this sector the *Community-Based Agricultural Rehabilitation Project* will (i) support land reform and farm restructuring to improve the incentive structure and farm management and strengthen small rural enterprise development, (ii) encourage competition in agricultural marketing, and (iii) help develop a framework for providing the necessary financial services. In addition to this, ADB also intends to provide technical assistance with improving water resource management in agriculture. In 1999 ADB provided a \$5 million *Emergency Flood Rehabilitation* loan. Further technical assistance (TA) is planned for 2000 to assist the Government to address disaster preparedness, management, and prevention issues.

According to the Country Assistance Plan, in view of the steep rise in the number of households headed by women living in poverty, “ADB’s efforts for women in development in the near term will concentrate on mitigating the poverty problems of these households.” Each of the pipeline projects will be evaluated from this perspective, as well as from a more general gender perspective.

### **6.1.1 Energy, Transport and Communications**

#### ***Power Distribution Rehabilitation***

During the Soviet era virtually all urban homes and a substantial proportion of rural homes were connected to gas and electricity supplies. Extensive damage/destruction during the war and lack of investment have resulted in rapid deterioration of the energy infrastructure. Today, according to the TLSS half of all households report that electricity is only available for eight hours or less a day and 20 percent report that it is only available for four hours or less. Over a third of households reported that their home had been heated for three months or less in the last year. Women are disproportionately affected by the frequent interruptions to power as they have primary responsibility for putting food on the table and for providing a dry and safe environment for their children. The rehabilitation of the damaged infrastructure will have a positive benefit for women and children.

The pipeline technical assistance program includes TA on strategic options for the power sector, a component of which is investigating alternatives for increasing funding for the energy sector by improving tariff collection and developing user charges. At present the majority of households either pay substantially less than the full cost price, or nothing at all. Removing subsidies may result in a more efficient use of gas and electricity but special consideration needs to be given to equity issues. The majority of households in Tajikistan are poor, and lone mother households and other FHHs with children are among the poorest. Those households most in need of energy for heat and cooking are those most likely to be unable to pay higher energy charges. One option may be to combine the removal of energy subsidies with a compensating increase in the value of social assistance payments. However, given that the cash compensation system is failing to deliver benefits to those in need, this option is not currently viable. Thought needs to be given to the development of a program of life-line tariffs that will allow the poor, including women, access to utility services. Such programs could provide a sliding scale payment schedule.

#### ***Road Rehabilitation***

Tajikistan remains an agrarian economy, with 72 percent of the population living in rural areas. Rehabilitation of rural roads is therefore essential for sustainable development. At present GBAO is cut off from the rest of the country for much of the year and travel between

Dushanbe and Leninabad is also precarious. As well as major trunk routes, travel between regional centers is also difficult. Improved transport infrastructure will facilitate the participation of women in new employment opportunities such as selling agricultural produce in district and regional markets.

### **6.1.2 Agriculture and Natural Resources**

#### ***Strategy for Improved Flood Management***

In the last five years Tajikistan has suffered from a number of natural disasters, including earthquakes, landslides, and major flooding. TA to assist the Government to address disaster preparedness, management, and prevention issues is planned for 2000. It is important that ADB ensure that women are represented on the emergency committees at both local and national level in order that the particular needs of women and children during emergency situations are given full consideration. During an evacuation, these may include reproductive health issues as well as food, shelter and education.

#### ***Community-Based Agricultural Rehabilitation***

The agriculture sector employs a third of all women. However, women make up less than 10 percent of those in agricultural training programs. Few women are represented at decision-making levels within the collective farms and there is evidence that women in general and FHHs in particular enjoy reduced access to privatized land. The Community-Based Agricultural Rehabilitation Project has facilitating land reform and farm restructuring as one of its central objectives. It is critical that the Project address issues of women's property rights, both in theory and *in reality*. The ADB must also ensure both women and men participate in agricultural training programs.

#### ***Rural Financial Systems Development***

Project preparation work for the Rural Financial Systems Development Project is scheduled for 2001. This presents the opportunity for the ADB to help the Government expand rural micro-finance services for Tajik women. It is recommended that the ADB include a gender component in the project, focusing on the specific needs of rural women, both women farmers and women engaged in other activities such as handicrafts. This should include TA to provide training for women both before borrowing and during the loan cycle.

#### ***Water Resource Management in Agriculture***

The TA program includes the provision of TA for water resource management in 2001. Agriculture in much of Tajikistan is dependent on irrigation and irrigation accounts for 90 percent of all freshwater withdrawals (World Bank 2000). Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, almost all pumping stations, and the main irrigation and drainage works have not been



maintained. As a result, irrigation volumes have been reduced by 40-50 percent. On average, only three out of five pumps may work in a typical pumping station. This has not resulted in a proportionate reduction in productivity due to past overuse of "free" water. However, if the infrastructure continues to deteriorate then yields will be endangered with a negative impact on rural livelihoods and poverty. In 1996 the Government introduced water charges to support central budget allocations for the operation and maintenance of irrigation and drainage systems. Charges are set according to crop, and may typically be about TJR\$80,000/ha (\$50) for rice, TRJ\$12,000/ha (\$7.50) for cotton, and TJR\$8,000/ha (\$5) for wheat (World Bank 2000). The Government is in the process of reforming the irrigation sector, and it has already passed the Water Code.

ADB's TA needs to address the gender dimension of both access to water and the impact of the likely introduction of user charges for water. It will be essential to ensure representation of women in the decision-making bodies of the proposed new water users' associations and in the organizations responsible for water distribution and management at the raion and oblast level.

### ***Agribusiness Development***

The TA program includes the provision of TA for agribusiness development in 2002. Although a higher proportion of women are employed in agriculture than men, the decision-making positions are dominated by men, particularly in the cotton sector, which accounts for more than 50 percent of irrigated land. Women are primarily responsible for small kitchen plots while men are more involved in managing larger plots, although women work closely with men in the field.

Businesses that empower women as well as men should be considered. As part of the TA, ADB should explore the potential for agricultural diversification and expanding small-scale food processing businesses as well as larger agribusinesses. Qualitative work in GBAO has suggested that there is huge potential for women to add value to agricultural production to increase their income (Kanji and Gladwin 2000). For example, women have the knowledge necessary for preserving and bottling fruits and vegetables but lack supplies and implements to do so on a commercial basis. Expanding small-scale agribusinesses will also positively impact upon the nutritional status of children and women generally.

## **6.1.3 Social Infrastructure**

### ***Active Labor Retraining***

Although the Soviet Union produced many qualified and highly trained workers, the specialities for which they were trained are now either redundant or over-supplied. Moreover,

there is a shortage of workers with the skills necessary for the efficient functioning of a market economy including business administration, marketing, insurance, corporate law, and information technology. *This mismatch of skills can be addressed through active labor retraining programs. Consideration must be given to gender equity when selecting participants for retraining. Male students currently outnumber female students in these areas by a factor of four to one.*

The closure of state kindergartens and other child care facilities has meant that many women have withdrawn from the labor market. These women are effectively excluded from retraining opportunities that focus only on those currently economically active. Special programs that focus on empowering women to re-enter the workforce after having children should be encouraged.

### ***The Social Sector Rehabilitation Project***

The Social Sector Rehabilitation Project includes technical assistance loans for capacity building in the education sector in 2001 and basic education in 2002, as well as the rehabilitation of education and health facilities. In addition TA to advise in the restructuring of the social safety net is also planned. The project was specifically framed with the objective of developing human resources and reducing poverty and was informed by a gender perspective throughout.

Chapter 4.1 details the recent decline in enrolment for both girls and boys and the widening gender-gap in educational attainment. The rehabilitation of educational infrastructure and the provision of textbooks and training for teachers will substantially improve access to education, the quality of the learning environment, and hence educational attainment. *ADB should ensure that girls benefit equally to boys from improved enrolment rates and updated curricular. This will only be possible from gender-sensitive project monitoring and evaluation.*

Although the project is primarily focusing on basic education, *there is a pressing need to widen women's access to higher education, especially in the business, scientific, and technical subjects. Gender segregation arising from gender stereotyping that influences student's choice of courses is still prevalent. Improving post-compulsory education continuation rates among girls and introducing "traditionally" male subjects at an earlier stage in the curriculum may help to close the gender gap.* ADB can also promote the development and use of non-sexist materials and curricula and the training and retraining of teachers on gender-sensitive instruction. The curricula should encourage girls and boys to think beyond the gender boundaries set by their culture and career counselling that will allow female and male students to explore courses that are not gender stereotyped should be considered.

Chapter 4.2 details the *deterioration of the health status of the population in general, and women and children in particular*. The rehabilitation of primary health care facilities will improve women's access to reproductive health care and should reduce maternal morbidity and mortality. The retraining of medical personnel in preventive medicine and public health campaigns will reduce the prevalence of both infectious and degenerative diseases. *One feature missing from the project specification is the issue of growing inequalities in access to health care associated with informal payments. The ADB must ensure that, at least in the pilot areas, women are not discouraged from seeking appropriate health care due to its inaffordability.*

Chapter 4.3 *details the inadequacies of the present system of social protection*. Reform of the social safety net is to be welcomed and will strengthen the capacity to target and assist the poorest and most vulnerable in the community, including FHHs. However, as Chapter 5 shows, the composition of the poor is very sensitive to the assumptions used in the measurement of household welfare, particularly with regard to the level of economies of scale assumed. It is essential that ADB ensure that whatever targeting mechanism is decided upon, it is pre-tested for sensitivity and a full evaluation is carried out from a gender perspective. Lone elderly women are at particular risk of falling through the net should a per capita household welfare measure be adopted.

### ***Decentralized Social Sector Development***

As part of the Social Sector Rehabilitation Project, *TA will be provided to strengthen local government and community based organizations*. Project preparatory TA is scheduled for decentralized social sector development in 2001. *The decentralization of decision making should allow local stakeholders, including women, more opportunities to participate*. However, although the representation of women is higher at district and local levels than at Republican level, women are still grossly under-represented, with women heading only 5 out of 64 *hukmats* (local councils) and 28 out of 342 *jamoats* (village councils). ADB should consider including strengthening women's participation in local government as part of the TA.

In principle, community based targeting (CBT) of social assistance is an attractive way of ensuring resources go to the most vulnerable in the community. Local leaders and community groups are aware of who is in need and can prioritize scarce resources accordingly. However, *there are real issues of equity and governance with CBT to be addressed in Tajikistan*. The EBRD has ranked Tajikistan as the most corrupt country among the republics of the FSU. Since CBT usually allows a degree of local discretion, eligibility for the social program may be influenced by local politics and community preferences, and some groups (such as an abused woman who had left a 'wronged' husband) may be excluded. It would *therefore be vital for external checks and balances to be put in place to ensure that errors of exclusion (and inclusion) were minimized. This should be taken into account by the Bank when designing the new targeting mechanism.*

### **6.1.4 Other Technical Assistance**

According to the pipeline TA program, TA is scheduled for capacity building in a number of areas outside of the three main sectors.

#### ***Improving Aid Coordination***

In 2000, TA is scheduled to assist the Government in improving aid coordination. As a result of the civil war and subsequent security risks, the number of donors operating within Tajikistan has been fairly limited in comparison with other Central Asian countries. However, since the signing of the peace agreement in 1997 and the return of democracy with the presidential election in November 1999 and parliamentary election in February-March 2000, the number of international NGOs and donor governments active in the country has grown considerably.

Communication and cooperation between the main donors, UN organizations (including WFP, WHO, UNICEF, and UNDP), the World Bank, IMF, USAID, and ADB has been high. UNDP has provided a coordinating role hosting a weekly security briefings that acted as an information exchange forum for NGOs within the country. However, the Government itself has been less active in aid coordination. As the number of organizations in the country increases, it will be vital to improve coordination to direct resources to those most in need and to ensure that one area or interest group does not benefit from aid disproportionately, to avoid duplication of effort and to ensure that projects learn from each other. *Coordination between groups working on gender issues is already high. However, consideration should be given to further strengthening the capacity of the WID Bureau to continue this role.*

#### ***Legal System Capacity Building***

The legal system in Tajikistan was inherited from the Soviet period and there are vast areas where there is no legal framework. For example, new laws need to be drafted to regulate the operation of a market economy. *The legal system also needs to be updated in areas concerning women's rights, particularly employment discrimination, access to land rights, and violence against women. It is also essential to ensure representation of women in the judiciary.*

#### ***Capacity Building in Corporate Governance***

As stated earlier, corruption is endemic throughout Tajikistan. Corruption takes many forms ranging from unofficial charges for state services to bribes and extortion. The system of "bribes and backhanders" is hindering the development of a market economy. Many women choose not to trade in the official market where they can earn higher income due to the payments demanded by the local officials. *Women may be particularly disadvantaged by the weak systems of governance in Tajikistan in that they may have few contacts in privileged*

*positions. Since women entrepreneurs tend to operate smaller businesses than men, it is important that the TA should not be limited to the governance of large corporations but should be extended to cover all forms of commercial organizations. Improvements in systems of corporate governance will have a positive benefit for all sections of Tajik society.*

## **6.2 Further Opportunities to Support Women**

### **6.2.1 Gender-Sensitive Equal Opportunities Recruitment in ADB Projects**

One of main retrograde steps since the break-up of the FSU has been the reduction in the number of women in responsible positions in the government administration. ADB could assist in reversing this trend by recruiting more women to senior positions within ADB-funded projects. Targets should be set for minimum gender participation in all projects and training interventions. There should be local recruitment for local positions and all recruitment should apply equal opportunities criteria—including the inadmissibility of taking into account a woman's age, marital status, and number of children. Special attention should be paid to providing adequate resources for transport (to neutralize fears concerning travel to work due to security issues) and flexibility in working hours.

### **6.2.2 Gender Awareness Training for Local ADB Project Staff**

Experience in other countries has shown that implementing gender-related activities often face difficulties due to the lack of understanding of gender issues, both by society in general and project staff in particular (Nepal CBP). ADB could take active steps to avoid this by including training in gender awareness for all levels of staff involved in ADB projects.

### **6.2.3 Technical Assistance for Gender Capacity Building within Government**

The State Committee on Women and the Family is charged with the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Advancement of Women. However, the Committee lacks both the staff and resources to effectively fulfil this mandate. More generally, all ministries lack the expertise to mainstream gender concerns within policy. ADB's gender strategy in Tajikistan should include several TAs for gender capacity building to strengthen the national machinery.

#### **◆ Mainstreaming Gender Issues in Government**

ADB should consider providing advisory TA to support the Committee on Women and the Family in mainstreaming gender issues across government and to widen the net from the "traditional gender concerned" Ministries of Education, Health and Social Protection, to other core ministries such as those of Finance, Justice, Agriculture, and Labor. [Note

that this could be combined with the recommendations concerning the provision of advisory TA and support for aspects of the National Plan for the Advancement of Women. That support may be to the Committee on Women or to executing NGOs].

#### **6.2.4 Strengthen the Capacity of NGOs Working on Gender**

As Section 3.1.3 discussed although there is a strong sense of dedication among women's NGOs to address gender issues there remain only limited capacity within the sector. A few strong NGOs have developed at the national level, but NGOs outside the capital of Dushanbe and the city of Khojand lack expertise and have little experience of project implementation or service delivery. A realistic assessment of NGO working on gender is necessary as the organizational sustainability and quality of service delivery vary greatly between them. ADB could consider providing ADTA to strengthen the capacity of rural NGOs through the WID Bureau.

#### **6.2.5 Strengthen Legal Literacy Among Women**

Women are often legally illiterate and unaware of their rights. As was discussed in Chapter 3, a recent study carried out by United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) found that of a sample women with higher education, 94 percent could not name any international document or law on the rights of women and only 22 percent were familiar with the national laws on women's rights or the Constitution. The WID/SSA survey of women in 1,008 households found that only 26 percent of urban women and 33 percent of rural women thought they had equal rights with men.

ADB should consider providing Advisory TA to strengthen legal literacy among women in Tajikistan. This would assist the Government in implementing one of the six key goals of the National Plan—that is "to provide and protect women's rights and to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women in all areas of political and economic life."

#### **6.2.6 Violence Against Women and the Judiciary**

Women do not report rape and assault to the police as the chances of conviction are slim and the judicial system often compounds the original assault.

Several NGOs are active in the area of violence against women and it is included as one of the six key themes in the National Plan for the Advancement of Women. ADB should consider providing advisory TA to develop legal education to women on violence against women (VAW) issues and to establish a system of support services to victims of VAW in Tajikistan. This would assist the Government in implementing one of the six key goals of the National Plan—that is, "to prevent all forms of violence against women; and to form public opinion and understanding about various forms of violence and to elaborate actions to decrease it."

### 6.2.7 Strengthen Adolescent Reproductive Health

Sex education within schools is virtually nonexistent despite the fact that STDs are increasing. A pilot project carried out by the Tajik Branch of the Open Society Institute with one class of 15-year-olds has demonstrated that it is feasible to introduce such issues into the school environment. Before preparing the project there was a survey of parental attitudes towards the project aims: 87 percent of the parents agreed, 3 percent did not know and 10 percent objected. ADB should consider providing advisory TA to develop curricula for family life education in schools. This would assist the Government in implementing one of the six key goals of the National Plan—that is ‘to improve women’s health and to decrease maternal and infant death rates.

## 6.3 Data Gaps and Future Research

The preparation of this report highlighted the unevenness of data concerning the lives of women and men in Tajikistan. The recent WID/SSA survey and the TLSS have filled part of the gap, but there remains little nationally representative data at the household level, and even less at the individual level. A second round of the TLSS, incorporating some of the attitudinal and time use questions pioneered in the WID/SSA survey, would assist in monitoring changes in poverty and household living standards over time.

Furthermore, virtually nothing is known about interactions *within* the household and the distribution and prioritization of resources between household members. It is likely that gender relations within the household differ across regions, ethnicities, and other social classifications. Yet the development of gender-sensitive policy, particularly in the area of poverty reduction and social assistance, requires such information. More qualitative research to complement that of the quantitative surveys is required.

Basic administrative data could also be improved from a gender perspective. For example, there is no information on the privatization of land or acquisition of land rights by gender. All economic participation and service utilisation data should be disaggregated by gender as well as ethnicity and region.

Finally, there is paucity of information on the monitoring and evaluation of interventions by different donors and government from a gender perspective (or indeed any perspective at all). Such information is essential if we are to learn what "works" and what does not, and who has benefited and who has been excluded. It is essential that lessons are learnt from the past to ensure success in the future.

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## The National Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women, 1998-2005

(Adopted on 10 September 1998)

Theme	Goal	Implementation Mechanism	Executors from Government Institutions	Executors from NGOs	Time Frame
Health Care	To improve women's health and to decrease maternal and infant mortality rates	Implementation of the program "Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on health care of the population until 2005"	Ministries of Health, Education, Land & Water Management, Committee of Women & Family, Committee of Youth, Corporation "Pisheprom"	Union of Women of Tajikistan	1998-2005
		Development of a program to monitor anaemia among women and children	Ministries of Health and Education, Committee of Radio & Television, Corporation "Galla", "Pisheprom"		1998-2005
		Development of a program to widen access to family planning services	Ministries of Health, Education, Culture, Labour, Academy of Science, Committee of Women & Family, Commission of Population	Union of Women of Tajikistan, University Women Association, Women Scientists of Tajikistan	1998-1999
		Elaboration of a program to encourage breast-feeding	Ministries of Health, Education, and Labor,		1998-1999
		Development of primary health care services, including pre- and ante-natal care	Ministries of Health and Finance		1998-2005
		Development of an educational program on family health	Ministries of Health and Education, Committee of Radio & Television		1998-2005
		Implementation of integrated studies in the area of women's health	Ministries of Health, Labour, Environment, Social Protection, Academy of Science		1998-2005
		Development of a program on breast cancer	Ministries of Health and Finance		1998-1999
		Implementation of national program on diseases of iodine deficit	Ministries of Health and Finance, State Committee of Industry, Corporation 'Pisheprom'		1998-2005
		Implementation of national program on tuberculosis	Ministries of Health and Finance, Local Hukumats, Committee of Radio & Television	Union of Women of Tajikistan, Republican Fund of Education	1998-1999
		Development of a mechanism to implement the state guarantees for free medical services, including contraceptive services to women	Ministry of Health, Local Hukumats		1998-1999

Appendix 1  
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Education, Science and Professional Training	To maintain equal access to education	Monitoring equal access of girls (women) to general secondary and professional education	Ministry of Education, State Statistical Agency, Local Hukumats, Committee of Women & Family	Union of Women of Tajikistan	1998, 2001, 2004, 2005
		Participation of women in reforming public education programs	Ministry of Education, Committee of Women & Family, WID Bureau	Union of Women of Tajikistan	1998-2005
		Establishment of a center to train women leaders from remote mountainous regions	Committee of Women & Family, WID Bureau	Union of Women of Tajikistan	1998-2005
	To increase vocational, economic, and legal literacy in the transition period	Establishment of training centers for families on child care, education, and preparing for labor activity	Ministries of Education, Health, Culture, Social Protection, Academy of Science, Committee of Women & Family	Association Women Scientists of Tajikistan	1998-2005
		Mobilization of international funds for adult education	Ministries of Labour, Education, Justice, WID Bureau	Union of Women of Tajikistan	1998-2005
		Regular organization of training seminars for heads of government organizations and women's NGOs	Committee of Women & Family, WID Bureau	Union of Women of Tajikistan, TASIF	1998-2005
Poverty and Economy	To raise the living standards of women	Job creation in the regions in proportion to the unemployment rates	Ministry of Labour, State Committee of Industry, Committee of Women & Family, Local Hukumats		1998-2000
		Development of, and support for, women's small and medium-sized enterprises	National Bank of Tajikistan, Agency of Development of Small and Medium sized Enterprises	NGOs, Savings Bank of Tajikistan	1998-2005
	To provide financial assistance	Allocation of targeted financial assistance to female-headed households, refugees, and poor families	Ministries of Labour and Social Protection, Local Hukumats		1998-2000
	To raise women's status	Preferential loan allocation to women to develop private businesses	National Bank of Tajikistan, Ministries of Agriculture and Labour, State Committee of Industry, Local Hukumats, State Committee of Property		1998-2005
Women's Rights	To provide and protect women's rights	Ratification of international laws concerning women's rights	Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice, Committee of Women & Family, Committee of Youth	Union of Women of Tajikistan	1998-2005
		Revision of existing legislation to reflect resolutions of international conventions	Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs, Committee of Women & Family	Union of Women of Tajikistan, Association Women Scientists of Tajikistan	1998-2005
		Review of legislation on gender	Ministry of Justice, Prosecutors Office, Committee of Women & Family, WID Bureau		1998-2005
		Improvement of the mechanism to control legal application to avoid violation of women's rights	Ministry of Justice, Committee of Women & Family,	Union of Women of Tajikistan	1998-2005

		Compilation of information and analytical materials on women's conditions in the labor market	Ministries of Labour and External Economic Relations, State Statistical Agency		Annual
	To ensure equal rights and opportunities for women in all areas of political and economic life	Complete implementation of the laws of the Republic of Tajikistan	Committee of Women & Family, Heads of Ministries and Governmental Institutions, WID Bureau, Local Hukumats	Union of Women of Tajikistan	1998-2005
Violence Against Women	To prevent all forms of violence against women	Social studies in the regions to identify the scale of, and reasons for, violence against women	Committee of Women & Family, Local Hukumats	Association Women Scientists of Tajikistan	1998-2005
		Establishment of crisis centers to provide psychological support and hotline service to women who experience various forms of violence	Committee of Women & Family, Ministries of Justice, Education, Interior, Academy of Science	Association Women Scientists of Tajikistan, Crisis centre of Association of Women Entrepreneurs in Khujand	1998-2005
		Creation of a system to provide legal education to women on the issue of violence	Ministry of Justice, Committee of Women & Family, WID Bureau	Union of Women of Tajikistan	1998-2005
		Establishment of a women's center at the Committee of Women & Family of the Government	Committee of Women & Family, Ministries of Justice, Education, State Committee of Property, Hukumats of Dushanbe		1998-2000
	To inform public opinion & increase public understanding about various forms of violence against women, and to elaborate actions to decrease such violence	Drafting of law on "prevention of violence against women"	Committee of Women & Family, Ministries of Justice and Education, Academy of Science	Association Women Scientists of Tajikistan	1998-1999
Environment	To establish ecologically stable society	Lobbying of the legislative body to allocate budget to environmental programs	Ministries of Environment and Finance	Environmental NGOs	1998-2000
	To decrease negative environmental impact on women's health	Establishment of environmental centers in the regions to increase public awareness and to conduct environmental training	Ministry of Environment, Committee of Women & Family, Local Hukumats	Association Women Scientists of Tajikistan, environmental NGOs	1998-2000
		Organization of training seminars on environmental problems and women's health	Ministries of Environment, Education and Health	"Eco Centre," Association Women Scientists of Tajikistan	1998-2005

## **Institutions Working on Gender Issues**

### **A. Government**

Academy of Sciences  
Ministry of Agriculture  
Ministry of Education  
Ministry of Health  
Ministry of Labour  
State Committee on the Family and Women  
State Committee on Radio and Television  
State Committee on Youth  
Tajik Social Investment Fund (TASIF)  
Women in Development (WID) Bureau

### **B. NGOs**

‘Ana’  
Association of Scientific-Technical Intelligence  
Association of Women Scientists of Tajikistan  
*Bonuvon* Women’s Center (Karasu Council of Villages, Kofarnihon)  
Business Women of Khujand  
Center for the Rehabilitation of Women  
‘Education Foundation’  
‘Huboni Porsigu’ Association  
‘Komilon’  
‘Modernity and Tradition’  
Open Asia  
‘Simo’  
Tajik Branch of Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation.  
Tajikistan Union of Women  
Women with University Education

### **C. External Assistance**

Action Against Hunger  
Aga Khan Foundation  
Asian Development Bank  
Counterpart Consortium  
Eurasia Foundation  
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development  
German Agro Action

International Labour Organization  
Mercy Corps International  
Save the Children (UK)  
Save the Children (USA)  
Soros Foundation (through the Tajik Branch of Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation).  
The World Bank  
WFP  
United Nations Development Programme  
United Nations Children's Fund  
United Nations Population Fund

## **List of Persons Consulted**

The following people were consulted during this research. Grateful acknowledgement is given to all of them for their invaluable time and assistance.

Abdushukurova, Tatiana. Coordinator, Tajik Branch of Open Society Institute Assistance Foundation.

Akmedova, Zuhra. National Programme Officer, United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA).

Bazarova, Gulchehra. Director of the Social Protection Fund, Republic of Tajikistan.

Bobodjonov, Rustam. TASIF.

Dodkhudoeva, Bozgul. Deputy Prime Minister, Republic of Tajikistan.

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Gaibullaev, Habibullo. Director of the State Statistical Agency, Republic of Tajikistan.

Gulin Gedik, World Health Organisation.

Grand, Jean-Marie, Director Action Against Hunger, Tajikistan.

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Mirzoeva, Viloyat. Director, Women in Development Bureau, Republic of Tajikistan.

Nezam, Taies. The World Bank.

Noda, Shoko. Programme Officer, United Nations Development Programme in Tajikistan.

Shonazirova, Dursilton. Deputy Minister of Social Protection of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Tadjbakhsh, Sharhbanou. Regional Programme Manager, Gender in Development. RBEC, UNDP.

Usmanov, Muzaffar. Mission Adviser, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Tajikistan.

Yakubova, Mukhiba. President, Association of Women Scientists of Tajikistan, and Director of the Center for the Rehabilitation of Women.

# **WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN TAJIKISTAN**

***DUSHANBE***

***UNION OF WOMEN OF TAJIKISTAN***

**Registered:**

**WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT BUREAU (governmental, funded by UNDP)**

**Created:** 1995  
**Contact address:** 71, Borbad street, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 31-73-76, 31-55-72, 31-55-73, 31-67-80,21-06-45  
**E-mail:** wid@tajnet.com  
**Contact person:** Ms. Viloyat Mirzoeva (Director)

**Fields of activities:**

- Strengthening local women's NGOs capacity and assisting them in developing projects for women;
- Establishing liaison between local women's and international organizations;
- Education issues;
- Collection and analysis of statistics data on gender;
- Provision of different kinds of training;
- SME support in Kofarnihon, Aini and Tursunzade regions;
- Scholarship program for girls from remote regions;
- Training on family planning issues & prevention of STD, AIDs.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

**“SIMO” (AWT)**

**Registered:** 1989  
**Contact address:** 33, Rudaki street, department of foreign languages in the Academy of Science, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 21-77-16, 21-44-50  
**Contact person:** Ms. Malohat Shakhobova (Head)

**Fields of activities:**

- Advancement of women's knowledge and social status;
- Promotion of network and collaboration among women's associations in Tajikistan and other countries;
- Promotion of employment for women;
- Participation in solution of global problems such as protection of environment, creation of nuclear-free zone in Asia;
- Family planning;
- Human rights and women's rights;
- Creation of social protection's women Center.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women

### **ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN**

**Registered:** 1991  
**Contact address:** 10/1, Bukhoro street, app. 17, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 21-17-50  
**Fax:** 7(3772) 21-05-55, 21-29-53  
**Contact person:** Ms. Guljahon Bobosadikova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Increase of professional knowledge of women;
- Consolidation of efforts in solving political, educational, moral, ecological and economic issues in the Tajik society;
- Lobbying of women's interests in the governmental and legislative structures;
- Charity activities;
- Protection of women's rights;
- Dissemination of information about women's rights through brochures.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

### **CLUB "WOMEN'S INITIATIVE"**

**Registered:** 1998  
**Contact address:** 30, Gafurova street, app. 40 (101<sup>st</sup> microregion), Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 21-76-26, 32-12-02  
**Contact person:** Ms. Safargul Davliyorova (Director)

**Fields of activities:**

Provision of social protection for widows and divorcees.

**Target groups:** Single women — heads of female headed families.

### **"KOMILA"**

**Registered:** 1996  
**Contact address:** 1, Mirzo Tursun-Zade street, app. 5, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 23-15-74  
**Contact person:** Ms. Safro Isaeva (Director)

**Fields of activities:**

- Advancement of women's status through raising public awareness;
- Other gender problems.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

**“WOMEN OF SCIENCE OF TAJIKISTAN”**

**Registered:** 1996  
**Contact address:** 17, Rudaki street, department of biochemistry of Tajik State National University, Dushanbe.  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 21-19-18  
**E-mail:** wstaj@wstaj.td.silk.glas.apc.org  
**Contact persons:** Ms. Mukhiba Yakubova (Chairperson)  
Ms. Irina Zaripova (Scientific Secretary)

**Field of activities:**

- Psychological Rehabilitation for victims of violence through hot line;
- Training on ecological issues;
- Health and medical issues;
- Social protection of women.

**Target groups:**

- Women-scientists;
- Women –victims of violence;
- Women-widows;
- Women-refugees;
- Single pensioners;
- Women-invalids;
- Girls-teenagers.

**“DIGNITY AND CHARITY”**

**Registered:** 1995  
**Contact address:** 30, Chapaeva street, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 21-76-67 (w), 21-08-40 (h)  
**Contact person:** Ms. Zarema Malsagova (head)

**Fields of activities:**

- Protection of women’s social, legal and economic rights.

**Target groups:** Women and families on welfare programme.

**ASSOCIATION OF CREATIVE WOMEN OF TAJIKISTAN “KHUBONI PORSIGU”**

**Registered:** 1996  
**Contact address:** 13, 50 let Tadjikistan, app. 18, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 34-83-59  
**Contact person:** Ms. Mekhriniso Bobobekova (head)

**Fields of activities:**

- Charitable activity;
- Public awareness for women-writers, poets, journalists;
- Development of women’s creative work.

**Target groups:** Creative women .

**THE TAJIK BRANCH OF THE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION OF  
HUMANITARIAN COOPERATION “ONA” (“MOTHER”)**

**Registered:** 1995  
**Contact address:** 89, Rudaki street, app. 11, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 21-32-45, 24-17-21  
**Contact persons:** Ms. Sanoat Usmanova (Chairperson)  
Ms. Lailo Mukhamadieva (CoChairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Improvement of women’s status;
- Participation in harmonization and humanization of the international, interethnic and interpersonal relations;
- Charitable activities;
- Protection of mother, children and other vulnerable women;
- Participation in activities of democratization process of the country.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women

**“TRADITIONS AND MODERNITY”**

**Registered:** 1996  
**Contact address:** 51, Fotekh Niyazi, app. 4, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 21-81-13, 24-49-15  
**Contact persons:** Ms. Alla Kuvatova (Chairperson of board)  
Ms. Margarita Khagai (Executive director)

**Fields of activities:**

- Improvement of women’s status through increasing public awareness;
- Support to the development of the civil society;

- Assistance in realization of the equal rights for women;
- Sociological researches of gender problems in Tajikistan;
- Research of cases of mental and physical violence in modern Tajik family;
- Consultation and rehabilitation of victims of violence;
- Civic Education Training for NGOs;
- Public awareness campaign for election issues.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

***NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN-FOREIGN LANGUAGES’  
TEXTBOOKS AUTHORS***

**Registered:** 1997

**Contact address:** 17, Rudaki street, Tajik State National University,  
Department of foreign languages, Dushanbe

**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 23-33-40, 21-82-78

**Contact person:** Ms. Ibaruri Rajabova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Organization of activities related to science, education and culture;
- Improvement of professional and technical skills;
- Publishing of foreign languages’ textbooks based on new methods and subjects;
- Strengthening of women’s knowledge and culture advocacy.

**Target groups:** Female teachers, students and schoolchildren.

***“MODAR”***

**Registered:** 1997

**Contact address:** 4, Shotemur street, Dushanbe

**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 21-37-41, 24-54-41

**Contact e-mail:** [mirzoeva@td.silk.org](mailto:mirzoeva@td.silk.org); [modar@td.silk.org](mailto:modar@td.silk.org)

NGO has its branches in Khudjand and Kurgan-Tjube cities, Pyandge and Garm regions.

**Contact persons:** Ms. Gulchekhira Mirzoeva (Chairperson)  
Mr. Ibragim Shukurov (Consultant)

**Fields of activities:**

- Uniting women to actively participate in supporting peace and consolidation in the society;
- Protection of family, motherhood and childhood;
- Protection of women’s rights and freedom guaranteed by the Constitution;

- Cooperation with international and regional organizations;
- Politics;
- Education;
- Participation in election campaigns;
- Employment issues;
- Mother's and child's health.

**Target groups:**

- Wives and children;
- Youth.

**“ORZU”**

**Registered:** 1998  
**Contact address:** 21, Rudaki street, apt. 6, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 27-42-45  
**Contact person:** Ms. Roziya Tabarova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Improvement of women's status;
- Uniting women to actively participate in supporting peace and consolidation in the society;
- Protection of family, motherhood and childhood;
- Protection of women's rights and freedom guaranteed by the Constitution.
- Education;
- Charitable activities.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

**“WOMAN AND EARTH”**

**Registered:** 1999  
**Contact address:** 22/1, Saadi Sherozi street, apt. 22, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 33-93-60  
**Contact person:** Ms. Mukhabbatkhon Mamadalieva (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Advancement of roles of women in the society ;
- Uniting women and girls to actively participate in supporting peace and consolidation in the society;
- Health protection;
- Training on ecological issues.



**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

**“JOMEA VA PESHRAFT”**

**Registered:** 1999  
**Contact address:** 71, Borbad street, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 31-22-84  
**Contact person:** Ms. Nargis Saidova (Chairperson)

**Field of activities:**

- Improvement of women’s status;
- Support of the civil initiatives;
- Education;
- Gender planning;
- Elections.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

**“EHSON”**

**Registered:** 1999  
**Contact address:** 6/1, Chekhov street, apt. 7, Dushanbe  
**Contact person:** Ms. Gulshirin Khamdamova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Assistance to vulnerable women;
- Charitable activities;
- Protection of motherhood and childhood;
- Improvement of women’s status;
- Education.

**Target groups:** Needy and vulnerable women.

**“WOMEN-ELECTORS”**

**Registered:** 1998  
**Contact address:** 2, Parvin street, apt. 17, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 24-76-22  
**Contact person:** Ms. Rano Akhunova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Education;
- Improvement of living conditions and status of women-electors;

- Promotion of women's participation in election campaign.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

***“PARASTOR”***

**Registered:** 1996

**Contact address:** 114, Rudaki street, Dushanbe

**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 24-02-40

**Contact person:** Ms. Rano Kasimova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Improvement of women's status;
- Protection of women's rights;
- Education;
- Charitable activities.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women

***REGIONS OF REPUBLICAN SUBORDINATION***

***WOMEN'S CENTER “BONUUVON”***

**Registered:** 1996

**Contact address:** Jamoat Karasu, kolkhoz “Guliston”,  
Karasu village, Kofarnihon

**Contact telephone:** 8(236) 2-22-09

**Contact persons:** Ms. Rano Tabarova (Director)  
Mr. Abdulo Nazirov (Accountant)

**Fields of activities:**

- Support of small & medium-scale enterprise development through credit schemes;
- Protection of political and economic rights of rural women;
- Employment issues;
- Protection of family, maternity, childhood;
- Women's health.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women in Kofarnihon region.

### **“MAFTUNA”**

**Registered:** 1999  
**Contact address:** 12, Tugdona street, Kofarnihon  
**Contact person:** Ms. Makhbuba Yusupova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Employment issues;
- Protection of family, maternity, childhood;
- Women’s health;
- Charitable activities;
- Assistance to vulnerable women.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

### **“MEKHRUBON” IN TURSUNZADE REGION**

**Registered:** 1997  
**Contact address:** 143, 2<sup>nd</sup> microraion, app.1, Tursun-zade city  
**Contact telephone:** 8(237) 2-36-64  
**Contact person:** Ms. Oishakhon Madgazieva

**Fields of activities:**

- Support of women’s initiative;
- Protection of women’s rights.

### **“OLIHA”**

**Registered:** 1999  
**Contact address:** Tursun-zade region, 11, Pushkin street  
**Contact telephone:** 8(337) 2-24-17  
**Contact person:** Ms. Zainab Ismailova (Chairperson)

- **Fields of activities:**
- Protection of family, maternity and childhood;
- Education;
- Employment issues;
- Elections;
- Charitable activities

**Target groups:** All social layers of women in Tursunzade region

### **WOMEN'S FUND "NILUFAR" IN VARZOB REGION**

**Registered:** 1998  
**Contact address:** Varzob region, Jamoat "Chorbog", Chigatai village  
**Contact person:** Ms. Tursunoi Yakhyaeva (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Protection of family, maternity and childhood;
- Education;
- Employment issues;
- Elections;
- Promotion of women's participation in the decision making process;
- International cooperation.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women in Varzob region

### **WOMEN'S SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL CENTER**

**Registered:** 1998  
**Contact address:** Jamoat "Garm", Kindergarten N 1, Garm region  
**Contact person:** Ms. Saodat Sharipova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Protection of civil, political, economic and social rights of women;
- Maternity and childhood protection;
- Women's education and studies;
- Support of civil and economic initiatives of women

**Target groups:** All social stratum of women in Garm region

### **"MOTHERS OF MANY CHILDREN FOR EQUALITY OF RIGHTS"**

**Registered:** 1999  
**Contact address:** 9, Khasanobod village, Leninsky region  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3137) 22-7-74; 21-5-56  
**Contact E-mail:** data@td.silk.org  
**Contact person:** Ms. Mavjuda Jamolova (Chairperson)  
Mr. Shavkat Daburov (Deputy Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Protection of family, maternity, childhood;
- Women's health;
- Assistance to vulnerable women.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

## ***GORNO BADAKHSAN DISTRICT***

### ***“MADAD”***

**Registered:** 1996  
**Contact address:** 2, Kholdorova street, app. 6, Khorog city  
**Contact person:** Ms. Sabzbakhor Bulbulshoeva (Chairperson)  
**Contact telephone:** 7(2910) 41-81

#### **Fields of activities:**

- Social protection of women;
- Family planning;
- Employment issues;
- Health protection;
- Environmental issues;
- Education;
- Improvement of vocational/professional skills of women and young girls;
- Development of women’s small enterprises;
- Credits.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women in Gorny Badakhshan.

## ***LENINABAD DISTRICT***

### ***“WOMAN AND COMMUNITY”***

**Registered:** 1992  
**Contact address:** 60, Michurin street, Khudjand city  
**Contact telephone:** 7(37922) 6-00-13  
**Fax:** (37922) 6-06-13  
**Contact persons:** Ms. Muyassar Babakhonova (Chairperson)  
Ms. Mansura Sultanova

#### **Fields of activities:**

- Protection of political, economic, social and cultural rights of women;
- Education;

- International cooperation;
- Unemployment issues.

**Target groups:** All social stratum of women.

**“MUNISI DIL”**

**Registered:** 1995  
**Contact address:** 16, 13 microdistrict, app. 46, Khujand city  
**Contact telephone:** 7(37922) 6-04-01, 2-47-20 (h)  
**Contact person:** Ms. Muniskhon Abdullaeva (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Protection of children and women’s rights;
- Charity activities;
- Reproductive health;
- Maternity and childhood protection.

**Target groups:**

- Women of reproductive health;
- Children.

**“WOMEN FOR PROGRESS”**

**Registered:** 1996  
**Contact address:** 45, Nabieva street, room 240, Khujand city  
**Contact telephone:** 7(37922) 6-67-15, 2-16-01 (h)  
**Fax:** 7(37922) 4-33-10  
**Contact person:** Ms. Dilbar Saidzoda (Chairperson)  
 Association has its Consultation and Rehabilitation Center  
**Contact address:** 9, Tanburi street, Khujand  
**Contact telephone:** 7(37922) 6-48-36

**Fields of activities:**

- Improvement of living conditions and status of women in Khujand;
- Promotion of creative activities and initiatives of women;
- Protection of women’s rights;
- Research on women’s issues;
- Provision of training on business for women;
- Promotion of women entrepreneurs;
- Cooperation with regional and international women’s organizations.

**Target groups:**

- Business women;
- The needy and vulnerable women;
- Women-artisans.

***BUSINESS WOMEN ASSOCIATION “KHUDJAND”***

**Registered:** 1996  
**Contact address:** 123-3, Firdavci street, app. 30, Khudjand city  
**Contact telephone:** 7(37922) 6-31-27, 6-58-46  
**Fax:** 7(37922) 6-58-46  
**Contact person:** Ms. Sanovbar Sharipova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Strengthening of women’s roles in the new democratic society;
- Dissemination of information on business and market economy;
- Business Consultation;
- Assistance to women -victims of violence.

**Target groups:**

- Business women;
- Women- victims of violence;
- Women- handicrafts makers.

***“PARASTOR”***

**Registered:** 1995  
**Contact address:** 17 block, Khudjand street, room 10, Khudjand city  
**Contact telephone:** 7(37922) 2-65-75  
**Contact person:** Ms. Matluba Nabieva (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Protection of motherhood and childhood;
- Protection of women’s and children’s rights.

**Target groups:**

- Women of various layers of the population;
- Children.

***FOUNDATION FOR THE SUPPORT OF RURAL WOMEN AND CHILDREN***

**Registered:** 1997

**Contact address:** 45, Nabieva street, room 553, Khudjand city  
**Contact telephone:** 7(37922) 6-50-44  
**Contact person:** Ms. Makhsuda Azizova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Protection of rural women's rights;
- Educational programmes for rural women.

**Target groups:** Rural women and their families

***“WOMEN OF EAST”***

**Registered:** 1997  
**Contact address:** 27, Rudaki street, 16, Penjikent city  
**Contact telephone:** 5-22-78  
**Contact person:** Ms. Fatima Sharipova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Protection of women's rights;
- Legal education for women.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

***WOMEN'S ATHLETIC CLUB “MALIKA”***

**Registered:** 1995  
**Contact address:** 5, Lenin street, Khudjand city

**Fields of activities:**

- Improvement of women's health through sports.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women

***“MOKHASTI SAIRAM”***

**Registered:** 1996  
**Contact address:** 2/28 Ivanetskogo street, Khudjand city  
**Contact person:** Ms. Sairam Isoeva (Chairperson)



**Fields of activities:**

- Civil initiatives of women;
- Development of women's enterprises.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women

***“WOMEN FOR ECOLOGY”***

**Registered:** 1998

**Contact address:** 6, Oplanchuk street, Chkalovsk

**Fields of activities:**

- Raising awareness of women and the society on ecological issues;
- Protection of environment.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

***“SAKHOVAT”***

**Registered:** 1998

**Contact address:** Leninabad region, Asht area, PGT Shaidan, 156, Lenin street.

**Contact telephone:** 7(37922) 2-14-30, 2-28-26 (h)

**Contact person:** Ms. Latofat Madolimova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Protection of women's rights;
- Promotion of women's participation in business;
- Family issues;
- Protection of motherhood and childhood;
- Demographic policy planning;
- Equal opportunities for women;
- Cooperation with regional and international organizations in implementation of the programs in Asht area.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

***“CHASHMAI HAYOT”***

**Registered:** 1998

**Contact address:** 45, Nabiev street, Khudjand city

**Contact telephone:** 7(37922) 6-50-44

**Contact person:** Ms. Bihodjal Rahimova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Support to women's movement.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

***FOUNDATION "ARTISANS"***

**Registered:** 1998

**Contact address:** 1, Lenin street, Khudjand city

**Contact person:** Ms. Abdulaeva (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Support to women artists;
- Development of national handicraft.

**Target groups:** Women of art.

***"YOVAR"***

**Registered:** 1999

**Contact address:** 78/17, Lenin street, Uratube city

**Contact telephone:** (37773) 23895

**Contact persons:** Ms. Mukhabbat Turdieva (Chairperson)

Ms. Gavhar Saidmuradova (Deputy Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Protection of civil, political, economic and social rights of women;
- Education;
- Charitable activities;
- Raising awareness of women and society to the ecological issues.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

***KHATLON AREA***

***"LADY LEADER" –BUSINESS WOMEN' S CLUB***

**Registered:** 1995

**Contact address:** 4, Huvaiduloev street, app. 23, Kurgan-Tube city

**Contact telephone:** 7(37722) 2-76-60

**Contact person:** Ms. Zukhra Azizova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Public awareness on gender issues;
- Identification of women leaders for the democratization process;
- Protection of women's rights and their families;
- Charity activities;
- Reproductive health.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

***“COMMUNITY OF WOMEN”***

**Registered:** 1998

**Contact address:** Gozimalik area, regional khukumat

**Contact person:** Ms. Mukhabbat Faizova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Increase of employment of women;
- Promotion of the peace;
- Protection of the rights of women;
- Protection of motherhood and childhood.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women in Gozimalik area.

***WOMEN'S CENTER***

**Registered:** 1998

**Contact address:** Khatlon region, Shaartuz area, village Shaartuz, 67, Kirov street.

**Contact person:** Ms. Sanovbar Imomnazarova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Protection and advancement of the civil, political, economic and social rights of women;
- Development of women's self activities;
- Protection of women's health;
- Ecology;
- Support of women's initiative;
- Increase of women's participation in education and cultural activities.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women of Shaartuz area.

### **“HAMDILON”**

**Registered:** 1999  
**Contact address:** Shaartuz area, village Shaartuz, 7 Pushkin street,  
**Contact person:** Ms. Khotamova T. (Chairperson)

#### **Fields of activities:**

- Social protection of women;
- Family planning;
- Employment issues;
- Health protection;
- Education;
- Improvement of professional skills of women.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

### **WOMEN’S CENTER**

**Registered:** 1998  
**Contact address:** 6, Shohin street, Khatlon area, Kulyab city  
**Contact persons:** Ms. Zulaikho Komilova (Chairperson)  
Ms. Dilbar Nurmatova – (Vice-chairperson)

#### **Fields of activities:**

Implementation and protection of civil, political, social and economic rights of women;  
Health of women and their family members;  
Ecology;  
Promotion of women’s public activities.

#### **Target groups:**

All social layers of women in Kulyab zone of Khatlon district

### **“NAJOTI KUDAKON”**

**Registered:** 1996  
**Contact address:** Borbad street, Kulyab city  
**Contact telephone:** (37713) 24830, 25109  
**Contact persons:** Ms. Kurbongul Kasimova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Support of small & medium-scale enterprise development through credit schemes;
- Protection of political and economic rights of rural women;
- Employment issues;
- Protection of family, maternity, childhood;
- Women’s health;

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

**“NISO”**

**Registered:** 1999

**Contact address:** 14/1 Borbad street, Kulyab city

**Contact telephone:** (37713) 2-32-38, 3-19-03

**Contact persons:** Ms. Rano Bobokhanova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Family planning;
- Health protection;
- Implementation and protection of civil, political, social and economic rights of women.

**Target groups:** All social layers of women.

**NGOS WORKING FOR WOMEN’S ISSUES**

They are:

**“JAHON”**

**Registered:** 1998

**Contact address:** 19A, Aini avenue, apt. 10, Dushanbe

**Contact person:** Ms. Mehrinisso Umarova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

Protection of human rights including women’s and children’s rights;  
Gender planning;  
Education.

**Target groups:** All social layers of population

**“OPEN ASIA”**

**Registered:** 1997  
**Contact address:** 1 proezd, 5, Kuibisheva, apt. 7, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 21-58-25; 21-89-60  
**E-mail:** muborak@openasia.td.silk.org  
**Contact person:** Ms. Muborak Sharif (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Sociological research on gender issues in Tajikistan;
- Research on mental and physical violence in modern Tajik family;
- Consultation and rehabilitation of victims of violence;
- Gender planning;
- Education.

**Target groups:** All social layers of population

**“RIGHT AND PROSPERITY”**

**Registered:** 1998  
**Contact address:** 39, Kakharov street, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 21-14-35, 23-38-34  
**Contact person:** Ms. Elena Shtratnikova (Director)  
**Fields of activities:**

- Education;
- Provision of social protection to widows of the civil war.

**Target groups:** All social layers of population

**“FIDOKOR”**

**Registered:** 1996  
**Contact address:** 55, Rudaki street, apt. 15, Dushanbe  
**Contact telephone:** 7(3772) 24-84-75  
**Contact person:** Ms. Dilbar Khalilova (Chairperson)

**Fields of activities:**

- Social, legal and economic protection of female refugees.

**Target groups:**

- Women-refugees;
- Needy and vulnerable women.