POVERTY AND WELFARE TRENDS IN TAJIKISTAN

OVER THE 1990s

Country Paper

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The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF.
2001 is a special year for Tajikistan, for it marks the 10th anniversary of the Republic’s independence.

The Constitution of September 9, 1991 proclaimed the Republic of Tajikistan an independent democratic unitary law-governed and secular state. During the past ten years, Tajikistan has been steadily following the chosen path.

The government’s strategy today is to accelerate economic reform. A new monetary system has been built, featuring a national currency—the somoni, which was introduced in October 2000,—a symbol of Tajikistan’s independence and sovereignty. At present, the government is taking practical steps to strengthen and stabilize the currency.

The process of democratization and market relationships development has been gaining momentum since 1995, bringing lots of positive innovations. One is the development of entrepreneurship, with practical impacts on all the fields of the economy. Certain results have been achieved in deepening and expanding privatization processes, shaping the foundations of a multi-sectoral economy, and developing a business-friendly environment. Production is beginning to take off.

Economic reform has gained sufficient pace. Today, it is possible to state that the republic has created a sound foundation for macroeconomic stabilization. The GDP is expected to grow by more than 5% a year, on average.

One of the government’s highest priorities is social policy. A program for long-term policy action in handling socio-economic priorities is contained in President Rakhmonov’s address to the Parliament of Tajikistan on the “Republic’s Home and Foreign Policy Guidelines”. The nation is working to improve living standards through economic growth. A special Poverty-Reduction Strategy is being developed, its motto: “prosperity for the people”, its main objectives: ensure full employment and find ways of increasing wages substantially.

Most importantly, people now appreciate the significance and efficiency of market economics, so parasitical attitudes are giving way to enterprise and business mentality. It should be pointed out that all those positive developments, combined with socio-political stability, civil peace and national accord, have been achieved thanks to enormous efforts made by President Rakhmonov.

Economic development over the past few years confirms the correct choice of policy. Whereas in 1997 the GDP grew by 1.7%, in 2000, by 8.3%, the figure was 10.3% in the first half of 2001. In-
Industrial growth rates are high: 13.0%. During the five years from 1996 to 2000, the GDP increased by about 20%, with industrial production growing by 23%, and agricultural production, by 12.5%. Other macroeconomic indicators have been growing at moderate rates. Inflation has slowed down, with monthly rates averaging 1.35% in the first half of 2001.

The development of market relations sets serious requirements for specialists and personnel. One of the priorities today is to build an efficient system of training and retraining skilled personnel. Resolving those problems will speed up economic growth and help improve living standards in Tajikistan.

POPULATION

The political and socio-economic processes of the past decade have impacted population development in general and the population situation, as well as related population processes and population quality characteristics, in particular. All that brought on new population development trends and problems.

Tajikistan is a region with a rapidly growing population. Prior to 1989, average growth rate of its population was 3-4% per annum. During the past ten years, political and socio-economic changes in the republic have produced direct and indirect impacts, lowering birthrates and intensifying migration processes. All those factors have lowered annual average population growth rates to 1.7% in 1989-2000. As of January 1, 2001, the population of Tajikistan totaled 6,250,000.

Most of the population is rural, with only 27%, or 1,660,100 living in urban communities. In view of the overall population outflow, urban population tends to decrease (according to the 1989 census, urban population accounted for 33% of the total).

The age-sex structure of the population, imbalanced by the long-term consequences of the 1941-1945 war, gradually continues to balance out. The prevalence of females, which existed until the mid-1990s, is now giving way to male prevalence. As of January 1, 2001, there were 3,119,000 women and 3,131,000 men in Tajikistan. The portion of females in the total population has decreased by 0.3% since 1989, going down to 49.9% of the total. Overall, there are 996 women per 1,000 men (in 1989, the ratio was 1,000 men to 1,006 women). The greatest sex disproportions remain in the older age groups (1,620 women per 1,000 men in the 75+ age group).
Tajikistan’s Population Age-Sex Structure, as of January 1, 2001

The high population growth primarily stems from high birthrates and relatively low mortality rates. Tajik families, especially rural families, maintain the tradition of having many children—five or more. About 20% of total births are babies born to families that already have four or more children; in rural areas, the percentage is even higher—23. According to the 2000 census, Tajik families averaged 5.8 persons (as compared with 6.1 persons in 1989).

At present, Tajikistan is moving from the traditional population reproduction pattern, with high birthrates and low death rates to the modern one, with low birthrates and low death rates.

A stable birthrate downward trend took shape in the mid-1970s. In 1975, the birthrate index (average births per woman) was 6.3. Transition period problems and the population policy pursued in Tajikistan, with family planning measures implemented, provided impetus to the process. One clear trend of the past ten years is an intensive lowering of birthrates. The birthrate index is estimated to have dropped from 5.079 in 1989 to 3.682 in 2000, with annual births going down from 200,000 to 180,000-170,000.

The lower birthrates also have to do with changes in the population’s age structure. The fertile age group was recently joined by a small population group—the children of the generation born during and immediately after World War II (in the 1940-1950 decade). That factor also contributes to the lower birthrates.

However, birthrates remain quite high, providing for expanded reproduction and impacting the overall age structure of the population, which can be generally described as young. The portion of
children in the total population is quite high: there are over 2.6 million children of the 0-14 age group, which accounts for 42% of the total population; 0.9 million of them are under five (14.4% of the total population, as compared with 42.9% in 1989). Working-age population (men aged 15 to 59 and women aged 15 to 54) totals 3.2 million (52% of the total, as compared with 49.5% in 1989). People beyond working age total 392,000, or 6.3% of the total (as compared with 7.6% in 1989). The average age of Tajikistan’s population is 23.

Given the current level of the republic’s socio-economic development, this age structure creates certain problems, putting the working-age population under too much stress. Certain changes in population reproduction processes have caused the work loads on working-age population to change. The load parameters remain high, but tend to go lower. The load on able-bodied population averaged 925 persons per 1,000 working-age population in 2000, of which 804 were children under 15 and 121 were people older than working age, as compared with 1,021, 868, and 153, respectively in 1989.

The lower birthrates stem, in no small part, from the Family Planning Program. More and more women come to use contraceptives. There are statistics showing that the number of women using contraceptives increased by more than 50% in the four years between 1997 and 2000, reaching 467,000 in 1999 and 408,000 in 2000, which made 32.0% and 27.4% of the total female population aged 15 to 49, respectively. At the same time, many medical contraindications to female contraception were identified (some birth control methods may be harmful to women’s health), which restrict further use of contraceptives. A multi-indicator cluster survey (MICS-2), conducted in Tajikistan in July 2000 in conjunction with UNICEF, showed that 33.9% of surveyed women aged 15 to 49 used various birth control methods; in the 25-49 age group, the percentage was about 40.

The increasing number of women using various contraceptives has reduced not only birthrates, but also the total number of abortions. In 2000, a total of 22,100 abortions were performed, or 14.8 per 1,000 women of fertile age (15 to 49), or 132 per 1,000 live births. Although the number of abortions somewhat increased in 2000 over 1999 (by 4.2%), it was still less than half the 1991 figure. However, abortion remains the most common method of terminating unwanted pregnancies. Mini-abortions account for 48.2% of the total number.

Despite these positive changes in birthrates, a lot of problems remain. The most significant of them is the growing number of out-of-hospital childbirths. In 2000, they accounted for 40.6% of total births. The rise in home childbirths has brought on various post-natal complications and reduced registration of births and deaths of babies under one year old, which greatly complicates registration of births and deaths, population data analysis, changes, and trends. According to various sources (the 2000 census and the MICS-2 survey), more than 30% of babies newly born every year do not get registered at local registry offices and have no birth certificates issued.

Another factor pulling down birthrates is a reduction in the number of marriages, especially men getting married. The number of registered marriages has decreased, too. According to the 2000 census, 644 per 1,000 women aged 15 or older were married (as compared with 645 per 1,000 in 1989), the figure for men aged 15 or older was 641 per 1,000 (as compared with 665 per 1,000 in 1989). The number of marriages registered annually decreased nearly by half, going down to 26,300, or 4.2 per 1,000 population in 2000 (as compared with 10.4 per 1,000 population in 1989). At the same time, the number of unregistered marriages has been growing. According to the 2000 census, over 6% of married persons (6.2% of married men and 6.6% of married women) have not registered their marriages. The average first-marriage age of men and women is rising. In 1999, the first-marriage age of men averaged 24.7 (as compared with 24.3 in 1989). During the ten years, the first-marriage age dropped to 23.7 (in 1993-1994). At the same time, the number of women and men getting married very early is increasing. According to the censuses, the rate of married men aged 15 to 17 increased from 4 to 5 per 1,000 between 1989 and 2000 and that of married men aged 18-19, from 25...
to 48 per 1,000; while the rate of married women aged 15 to 17 increased from 10 to 42 per 1,000. On average, the first-marriage age of men is about three years older than that of women. That age difference tends to grow, increasing by about 0.4 year over the ten years (from 2.8 in 1989 to 3.2 in 1999).

Population migration was a significant issue for Tajikistan in the last decade of the 20th century. In 1989-2000, about half a million people left the republic. The population outflow not only affects the total size of the population, but, more than birthrates, its quality parameters. More than 200,000 specialists with a higher or specialized secondary education left Tajikistan during the above period. Also, in view of the sharp reduction of the number of students of specialized secondary schools (nearly by half) in recent years, the republic is suffering from an acute shortage of skilled personnel, and that shortage slows down socio-economic development.

Migration trends and processes have changed: as overall migration has intensified, migration involving a permanent change of residence decreased by about five times (from more than 200,000 in 1990 to about 45,000 in 2000). The numbers of people moving out of and into the republic are both decreasing (with inflows decreasing by six times and outflows, by more than three times).

The nature of migration processes has changed. New forms of migration have evolved, such as leaving the republic for a period of up to eighteen months to earn some money. Over 200,000 persons, mainly men, leave the republic every year in search of employment on a temporary basis.

INCOMES AND EMPLOYMENT

Incomes and employment are major drivers of prosperity.

The rapid population growth and the high percentage of children in the total population create problems in both the economic and the social field, specifically, as regards labor market development and the need to ensure effective employment of able-bodied population.

Early in the transition period, Tajikistan, formerly a central-planned economy, had relatively full employment and even a shortage of skilled personnel in some sectors and trades, and overt unemployment was just about non-existent. Transition problems did not immediately affect the employment situation: organizations were reluctant at first to dismiss redundant employees, expecting economic reform to be short-lived. But that situation changed after a while. The financial resources of companies and local authorities shrank, it became increasingly difficult to pay wages, and major companies found it harder to maintain employment. The labor market situation changed radically. The overall employment rate in the national economy decreased by 11.5% in ten years, the total number of jobs estimated at 1,745,400 in 2000.

The most radical change in the employment structure caused by the transition to new economic management conditions is the movement of manpower from the state sector to the private sector. The informal sector has become a major source of employment. State sector employment decreased by more than half from 1991 to 2000, down to 558,500, while private-sector employment nearly doubled, reaching 751,700. As a result, public-sector employment decreased from 59.7 to 32.0% of the total, while private-sector employment grew from 19.0 to 43.1%.

The transition to a market economy altered employment structure by industry and by trade and profession. Employment is decreasing in all the sectors of the economy, but its reduction rates have been especially high in production sectors. Employment in industry and construction decreased from 21% of the total employment in 1991 to 9.1% in 2000, while the figures in education went down from 10 to 9.6% and in health care, from 5 to 4.7%. New professions evolved: bank employees, company executives, managers, etc. Those professions have been brought on by a rapid growth
of jobs in lending, finance, and insurance—sectors that are critical for the functioning of a market economy. Formerly existing professions have acquired new content, as new technologies and computer-assisted management processes develop.

There have been important changes in employee breakdown by employment status, with the number and portion of persons actually employed (working for wages or salaries) decreasing and the number of self-employed persons and small business owners increasing. Changes have been especially rapid in the employment breakdown by sector. The number of wage-earners decreased by 24.3% of the total employment in 1995-1999, while the reduction in the production sector was 30.8% and in non-production sectors, 9.3%. This is altering the overall employment breakdown by sector, with the portion of wage-earners employed in production going down and of those in non-production sectors going up.

Changes in the republic’s economy have also affected the position of women. During a transition period, women often play a critical role in ensuring survival of families. That keeps women’s employment rates high. Even though the number of hired females decreased by 18.3% between 1995 and 2000, the portion of women in total employment increased from 40.7 to 46.0% of total wage-earners. At the same time, there exists a gender segregation by trade/profession, with some jobs (typically, with lower pay) dominated by women and others by men. In 2000, women accounted for 61.9% of all health care employees and for 52.3% of total employment in agriculture. Those two sectors account for 64.4% of women with jobs.

As for the small business sector, the largest number of women are employed in retail trade. According to a survey of food and non-food marketplaces (conducted in May 2000), more than 20,000 women are engaged in trade on a daily basis.
Gender differences tend to take shape in labor demand and supply. Women find it harder to withstand competition in the labor market. Men are more active in seeking jobs, applying to employment agencies about 10% more frequently than women do. It is also easier for men to find jobs than it is for women: the rate of job seekers getting employment from employment bureaus is about 30% higher for men than women.

On the average, according to the employment service, companies need four times more employees of men’s trades and professions than women’s. In recent years, demand for and supply of female labor has been growing. From 1996 to 2000, factories’ and agencies’ demand for female employees, as recorded in requests filed with employment agencies, increased by 44.8%, while the number of women getting jobs from those agencies grew by 16%.

The development of market relationships brought a new problem, that of unemployment and part-time employment to Tajikistan. One special feature of the development of a labor market in the republic has been a relatively slow growth of officially registered unemployment as work activity has slumped sharply. In 1992-2000, the number of registered jobless persons increased by 6.4 times reaching 43,200 by the end of 2000. In the past two years, the number of people holding a jobless person’s status has been decreasing. Since the start of the economic reform, the official employment rate (officially recognized jobless persons to able-bodied population) has gone no higher than 3.5% (in October 1998) and stood at 3.0% in 2000.

Illegal migration of Tajik citizens to neighboring states in search of earnings can be seen as a restraint on recorded unemployment growth. Over 100,000 are estimated to go to other states in search of employment every year.

A large portion of jobless persons are those who have not received any skill training or lost their skills after staying out of work for a long time (54.6% of the total unemployed).

Analysis of recorded unemployment breakdown data reveals a rise in the numbers of jobless young people and women. At the end of 1995, young people aged 15 to 29 (23,900 persons) accounted for 63.7% of the total unemployed, by the end of 2000 the percentage grew to 65.1 (28,200). More than 50% of jobless young people are graduates of educational establishments. Transition period problems have made it hard for them to find jobs. Unemployment is especially high among graduates of general education schools: 16,800 (more than 50% of the total number) were officially unemployed at the end of 2000. For graduates of specialized secondary schools, the percentage was about 35, for graduates of vocational training schools, 12, and for higher school graduates, 8.

At the end of 2000, there were 22,800 registered jobless women, up 31.6% from 1995. Women accounted for 52.7% of the total number of the unemployed (as compared with 46.1% in 1995). More than 60% of jobless women have no skills.

Girls graduating schools find it especially hard to find jobs. About 20% of girls fresh from a vocational training school or a higher school were registered as jobless at the end of the year, as compared with 5-8% for male graduates of such schools. As for general-school graduates, about half of the girls and one-fifth of the boys are officially jobless by the end of the year.

Even greater concern is caused by latent or partial unemployment (part-time employment). In view of factory downtime problems, involuntary part-time employment has become quite common, which also creates certain pressure on the labor market. Throughout the transition period, part-time employment remains widespread, causing latent (partial) unemployment to grow.
In 2000, an average 8% of staff on the payroll had to work part-time or accept administrative leave. It should be pointed out that many of the part-time employees or those on mandatory leave (42,700, or 59.8% of those who had to go on mandatory leave during 2000) received no pay compensation.

Part-time employment is the worst in production sectors—in industry, transport, and agriculture. But the causes vary with the sector. In agriculture, the problem has to do with seasonal work patterns, in industry, transport, and construction, with recession and idle periods. Employees sent by management on mandatory leave without pay account for 37.4% of the total industrial work force; the percentages for construction and transport are 29.5 and 10.3, respectively.

This means that recorded unemployment figures are no basis for a comprehensive analysis of the actual labor market/employment situation. Recorded unemployment data should be supplemented with part-time employment data.

For industry, construction, and transport, employees accounting for “latent unemployment” were estimated at 50,000 in 2000. About 160,000 are employed part-time in agriculture. So, with due regard for involuntary part-time employment, unemployment stood at some 15% in 2000.

Analysis of employment and unemployment rates in 1994-2001 identifies this as an extremely acute social problem of present-day Tajikistan.

Over the past few years, there has been a decline in sick-leave lost time, specifically in sick leave time resulting from industrial injuries. Causes vary: long idle times, employment reduction, especially in production sectors, fewer sick people seeking health care from clinics.

Work time losses due to sick leave (maternity leaves not included) totaled 598 days a year per 100 employees in 1991, as compared with 168 days in 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Sick leave man-days</th>
<th>Sick leave woman-days</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thousand Days per 100 employees</td>
<td>Thousand Days per 100 employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>8,692.1 598</td>
<td>3,853.3 650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>4,723.4 505</td>
<td>1,917.3 492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>5,022.0 555</td>
<td>1,957.6 543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>4,015.2 446</td>
<td>1,622.3 452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>2,287.2 313</td>
<td>936.1 316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2,480.0 337</td>
<td>773.2 262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>2,385.2 350</td>
<td>684.2 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>1,954.1 280</td>
<td>764.7 263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1,646.6 251</td>
<td>772.6 283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1,114.2 168</td>
<td>387.2 131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the transition period in Tajikistan, women’s sick leave days have been declining at an especially rapid rate. In 1991-2000, women’s sick leave days decreased by five times (the figure for men decreased by a factor of 2.8), to 131 days per 100 female employees (as compared with 198 days
per 100 male employees), and this also can be attributed to poverty. Women prefer to go to work and keep their jobs even to the detriment of their own and their children’s health.

Industrial injury rates are relatively low in Tajikistan. In 1991, the number of persons who were disabled for one or more work days or died as a result of industrial injury totaled 2,211 (including 147 dead), which makes 15.2 persons per 10,000 employees; the figures for 2000: 90 persons disabled (including 17 dead), or 1.4 per 10,000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Persons who suffered industrial injuries, including fatal, persons</th>
<th>Per 10,000 employees</th>
<th>Of which: died, persons</th>
<th>Per 10,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2,211</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>1,244</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>669</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>351</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main causes of industrial injuries are failure to comply with regulatory authorities’ safety directives, poor labor and industrial discipline, disregard for safety regulations, which often come to be considered of minor importance, lack or inefficiency of industrial safety management systems, and inadequate personnel training.

Due to scarce funding and outflow of skilled specialists, industrial medical care, work safety supervision, labor protection, or health and hygiene systems are just about non-existent. Lists of benefits for employees with hazardous working conditions have largely been abolished and not been incorporated in labor contracts in recent years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Work safety expenditures, somoni per employee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Work safety at factories is organized and supervised by safety engineers. Their functions include preparation and testing of safety equipment and training and certification of personnel. The overall outflow of skilled specialists and reduction of employment in production sectors have reduced the number of safety engineers, too.

Employment problems are closely interlinked with living standards problems. Another major transition-period problem is income differentiation and declining living standards. Poverty reduction is one of the topical problems confronting the Government and the population. The Government has set up a working group involving representatives of ministries and agencies, which is developing a poverty reduction strategy, with support from the Asian Development Bank.

At present, the Republic of Tajikistan has no official government-approved subsistence minimum, because of the tight budget constraints. The State Committee for Statistics estimates the consumer goods basket of basic foodstuffs at 20.57 somoni (US$8.54) per person a month (based on actual consumption figures of households surveyed in late August 2001 prices). The 2000 per capita gross domestic product was US$156.90.

According to a World Bank 1999 living standards survey, 19.2% of families had budgets above the minimum consumption budget.

In order to confirm or update that figure, it is now necessary to conduct such surveys regularly in various seasons. Sectoral statistics indicate that production output volumes vary with the season. So average family incomes depend on per capita income figures and on the development levels of various sectors.

The World Bank survey indicates that a large portion of the population does not get enough food. Families spend most of their incomes on food. Households take various measures to help themselves; according to the survey, 72% of households grow food produce for their own consumption. It is not just the lowest-income households that are affected by financial difficulties. About 30% of relatively well-to-do families said that their daily ration was reducing, that is they ate less food and had fewer meals a day than before.

Living standards data for various population groups come, inter alia, from household sample surveys conducted by the republic’s State Committee for Statistics on a monthly basis.

The main driver of the per capita incomes of various socio-economic population categories is family size and, primarily, the correlation between income-earners and dependents.

For households surveyed, family sizes averaged 5.8 persons, with 4.4 for urban communities and 6.6 for rural families, which average 1.7 income-earners and 3.3 dependents.

The surveys put the 2000 average per capita monthly income at 16.90 somoni (US$9.23): 15.70 somoni (US$8.57) in urban areas and 17.50 somoni (US$9.56) in rural areas.
Average per capita income breakdown (according to 2000 household sample surveys) (per cent per family member)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>All population</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earnings</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensions, benefits, student allowances</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indemnification, including charitable aid</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property income</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate sales</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private farm holding income</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personal incomes largely consist of incomes from private farm holdings (50.2%) and earnings, including self-employment income (33.7%). It should be pointed out that business and self-employment income tends to increase, while social transfers tend to go down.

A summary living standards index used internationally is the portion of family income spent on food: the lower the index, the higher the living standards.

Food is a basic need and the top priority. The portion of spending on food is an adequate indicator of life quality.

Spending on food is the largest single item of household consumer spending—it accounts for 86.5% of the total spending.

As for the 2000 household food spending breakdown, the leading item was bread and bread-stuffs (39.9% of the total spending on food), followed by vegetable oil (14.7%); sugar (with confectionery—10%), meat products (8.1%), melons (7.5%); potato (4.0%); tea (3.6%); fruit, berries, milk, and dairy products (2.2%); eggs and salt (0.7-0.5%).

The share of wages and salaries in overall family incomes went down to 22% (according to the household survey). The government has taken repeated measures to increase wages and pensions. On the whole, nominal wages increased 17-fold in the past 5 years alone, reaching 15.57 somoni (US$8.5) in 2000. Real wages have been growing since mid-1997. As compared with 1995, wages increased, in real terms, by 9.8% in 1998, by 10.1% in 1999, and by 19.0% in 2000. As of January 1, 2001, the minimum wage was set at 3 somoni, the minimum pension being 2 somoni (since July 1, 1998).

Due to existing differences in women’s and men’s employment by occupation, women’s average earnings are lower than those of men. Women mainly hold low paid jobs at social-sphere organizations and in agriculture, where earnings are one quarter to one-eighth of wages in industry and construction. In 2000, men’s average wages were 30% higher than women’s.
Despite certain improvements, delays in the payment of wages remain a problem. As of September 1, 2001, wage arrears totaled 22,360,000 somoni.

As mentioned before, the portion of low income population is high. Life is especially hard for vulnerable groups: pensioners, large families, and unmarried women with children. Existing social benefits are small.

The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan on State Social Insurance, passed on December 13, 1997, establishes the following types of social insurance benefits and allowances: pensions, sick-leave allowances, maternity allowances, family allowances, unemployment allowances, funeral (burial ritual) allowances, health resort allowances for employees and their family members, and allowances for other measures to improve work safety and health of working people and their families.

The republic is improving its social safety net. A Social Security Reform Concept Implementation Program for 1999-2015 is in place.

Making the social safety net more effective and better targeted requires a gradual transition to providing most types of social aid pro rata per capita income levels.

At the start of 2001, Tajikistan had 559,000 pensioners (9% of the total population).

During 1998, the minimum old-age pension was increased twice, which improved the well-being of pensioners. Since then, however, the minimum pension has not been increased and is paid today to about one third of all pensioners.

In 2000, pensions averaged 4.06 somoni, or 26% of the average pay.

At the start of 2001, there were 106,400 disabled persons in Tajikistan, including 2,300 persons disabled by employment injury or occupational disease, 63,500 persons disabled by common diseases, and 4,300 disabled military servicemen. There were 31,700 common disease handicapped persons on welfare, including 17,400 children under 16.

In 2000, common-disease disability pensions averaged 4.86 somoni (US$2.66) a month, 19.7% above the average old-age pension. Employment injury or occupational disease disability pensions averaged 4.71 somoni (US$2.57) a month; i.e., the average disability pension was slightly above the average old-age pension.
Welfare benefits for handicapped children are among the smallest; in 2000, they were paid 2.01 somoni, or US$1.1 (in 2000 prices).

Maternity allowances equal full pay for the entire maternity leave, regardless of the pre-natal/post-natal split thereof.

Family allowances include a first-child allowance of three minimum wages (US$1.64 in 2000 prices); a second-child allowance of two minimum wages; for the birth of a third and every subsequent child, families are paid one minimum wage. At the same time, one child birth registration costs US$3.00.

Monthly childcare benefits of one minimum wage (3 somoni as of January 1, 2001) are paid to mothers until the child is 18 months of age. No allowances are paid if the mother remains on childcare leave when the child is 18 months to 3 years of age. In 2000, there were 14,100 women on childcare leave with pay (until the child is 18 months of age) and 14,000 on childcare leave without pay (until the age of 3), which corresponds to about 16.5% of total births and 6.3% of the total staff on payroll.

The table below shows the amounts paid from the Tajikistan’s Social Protection Fund since 1997, broken down by benefit type:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit Type</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>1998</th>
<th>1999</th>
<th>2000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child birth lump sum benefits, somoni</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>79,300.0</td>
<td>111,600.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare allowances (payable until the child is 18 months of age), somoni</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>58.8</td>
<td>103,100.0</td>
<td>105,300.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s summer resort allowances, somoni</td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>150.0</td>
<td>90,000.0</td>
<td>95,000.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The portion of children born out of wedlock was 6.2% in 1995 and tended to increase until this year. Unmarried women who have children are not entitled to any benefits or allowances, so they have to earn a living for their children themselves.

PUBLIC HEALTH

In the difficult transition environment, the republic’s health care system is being reformed. Scarce budget funding leads to shortages of financial resources for providing competent hospital and outpatient medical care. Low pay for medical personnel, wear and tear of medical facilities and equipment, fewer people applying for medical care because they now have to pay for it, etc.—these are only some of the challenges confronting the health care authorities today.

The table below shows government health spending as percentages of the total budget expenditures by year:

<table>
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<tr>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health spending as % of total government budget expenditures</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the future, it is planned to allocate more financial resources for health care and to spend them on primary medical care.

Recently the emphasis has been on developing a family medical care service. The key component of that system is the training of family doctors and family nurses. A total of 200 family doctors and 120 family nurses have been trained to date.

Significant staffing problems exist, especially at the regional level.

In 2000, there were 13,500 doctors in Tajikistan, 2,600 of them (20% of the total) working in rural areas. 39.8% of the doctors are women. There are 21.6 doctors per 10,000 population (as compared with 25.5 in 1991). There is a stable trend towards a reduction of skilled mid-level medical personnel. Skilled medical personnel shortages are especially bad in rural areas. The number of mid-level medical personnel per 10,000 population decreased from 77.1 in 1991 to 51.5 in 2000. The reduction is due primarily to scarce logistics resources of rural medical facilities and low pay of medical personnel. The average pay in the sector of “health care, physical training, and social security” (of which medical personnel forms an overwhelming majority) was 6.73 somoni (US$3.70) in 2000, or only 36.9% of the republic’s average.

Public health parameters in Tajikistan are largely dependent on the socio-economic situation. This is illustrated by disease incidence and death rate breakdown by sex, age, and cause.

Age-specific common-disease incidence rates per 100,000 population tend to increase. The current rates are: 35,548.3 for all population; 41,452.3 for children and teenagers aged 0 to 14; and 34,560.7 for teenagers aged 15 to 17.

Incidence rates have increased for many types of diseases. Overall common morbidity causes are led by endocrine diseases, nutritional and metabolic disorders, blood and blood-making organ diseases, digestive system disorders, etc.

Among infectious diseases, the rates are high of acute intestinal infections, acute respiratory infections, viral hepatitis, malaria (diagnosed for the first time ever), and some other diseases. Flu and other acute respiratory viral infections remain a major challenge, causing huge damage to public health and the national economy. They account for as much as 76.5% of overall infectious morbidity.

The overall mortality rate is relatively low and has tended to go down in recent years. This primarily has to do with incomplete registration of deaths, especially infant deaths. In 2000, the overall mortality rate was 4.7 per 1,000 population, and the infant mortality rate (deaths of babies under one year of age) was 15.0 per 10,000 live births. According to the MICS-2 survey, however, about 70% of babies who died before reaching one year of age had not been registered at registry offices. According to recorded data, 2,568 babies under one year of age died in 2000, as compared with 8,579 in 1991. The MICS survey data puts infant mortality at 37.4 per 10,000 live births, which is a very high rate.

There has been a major reduction of deaths (both in absolute and relative terms) caused by external factors (infectious diseases, respiratory diseases, injuries, and poisoning), from 48.8% of total deaths in 1991 to 25.1% in 2000. This also has to do, primarily, with incomplete registration of deaths, especially infant deaths. About half of the deaths of babies under one year of age are caused by infectious and respiratory diseases.

Cardio-vascular diseases are the number one killer, causing 38.8% of all deaths, or 184.4 deaths per 100,000 population in 2000 (as compared with 185.9 deaths per 100,000 population in 1991).
Life expectancy figures have greatly been influenced by changes in mortality breakdown and the 1992-1993 civil war. A certain rise in life expectancy early in the transition period changed to fall. Predictably, men’s life expectancy decreased more significantly than women’s (it decreased by 10 years for men and by 3.7 years for women). In 1999, life expectancy was estimated, with adjustments for incomplete registration of deaths, at 68.4 years (66.1 years for men and 70.8 years for women), down by 1.7 years (1.2 years for men and 2.1 years for women) as compared with 1991. The relatively small difference between the life expectancy figures for men and women in Tajikistan (4.7 years) is due to relatively high women’s mortality, both overall and maternal.

The maternal mortality rate has varied widely over the past few years, but remains high: 44.6 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2000. The main cause of maternal mortality is bleeding, which causes over 30% of all maternal deaths.

The government and health authorities of Tajikistan are giving much attention to reproductive health of women. Since 1994, the republic has been closely cooperating with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) under programs for supplying contraceptives and medical equipment to Tajikistan, training reproductive health and family planning specialists, and supporting scientific research.

A Reproductive Health and Reproductive Law National Program for the period until 2003 has been adopted to be implemented on a broad interagency basis.

A statistical data gathering and reporting procedure for reproductive health organizations has been developed in cooperation with the WHO. Data for 2001 will be gathered and analyzed to identify emerging problems and develop solutions in that field.

About half of Tajikistan’s population (49.9%) are women. It is mainly women who suffer from reproductive health problems. They are exposed to risks of developing complications in pregnancy and childbirth, as well as risks involved in preventing pregnancy, infections, and sexually transmitted diseases. Reproductive health policy consists of motherhood and childhood protection and family planning.

Medical care is provided to women at outpatient clinics and hospitals, medical advice, diagnostic, and specialized medical care centers, general purpose clinics, and specialized women’s health medical facilities, including 13 maternity homes, 79 women’s dispensaries, and the Obstetric and Gynecologic Research Institute clinic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother and Child Health Care Medical Personnel</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstetricians and Gynecologists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- total number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- per 10,000 women aged 15 to 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwives, total number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pediatricians (including neonatologists)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- total number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- per 10,000 children (aged 0 to 14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The health care system reform provides for reducing the total number of hospital beds through more efficient management of hospital bed space. The total number of beds in obstetric-gynecological clinics was reduced from 1,584 in 1996 to 1,366 in 2000 (a reduction of 13.8%), while the total number of maternity hospital beds was reduced by 7.5%, from 5,314 to 4,913.

It should be pointed out that women’s reproductive health is not improving in Tajikistan. Along with high maternity mortality, there is a rise in the number of pregnancies and childbirth cases with complications, especially complications resulting from genital diseases, late toxicoses, anemia, etc.

Abortions are extremely harmful to women’s reproductive health. The Family Planning program promotes distribution of various contraceptives for preventing unwanted pregnancy. In 2000, 27.4% of fertile age women used various birth control methods: 73.2% used intrauterine devices (IUDs), 10.2% had men use condoms, 5.9% used contraceptive injections, 5.1% used oral contraceptives, etc. As a result, abortions to total pregnancies decreased from 15% in 1991 to 11% in 2000.

Childbirths to total pregnancies increased from 79% to 84% during that period. The miscarriage rate remains at about 5%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pregnancy outcomes in 2000</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>live births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>miscarriages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>abortions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stillborns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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Over the past few years, fewer and fewer women seek birth assistance, with more and more women delivering children at home. In 2000, home childbirths accounted for 40.6% of total births. First of all, this has to do with family incomes. According to a 1999 World Bank poverty survey, medical assistance at childbirth costs a considerable amount of money and cannot be afforded by a certain portion of the population. Nearly 50% of home childbirths are assisted by skilled birth attendants. But more than 50% of home childbirths involve no skilled personnel, only assistance from relatives, neighbors, friends, and traditional midwives. Of the total number of newborn babies delivered at home, over 96% were not hospitalized; 97.6% of them were inoculated against TB and polio.

Childbirth at home creates certain problems. For example, it is impossible to obtain full statistics about underweight newborns (weighing less than 2.5 kg), because only maternity hospitals keep such data. During the 1990s, underweight newborns varied between 6.9% and 8.3% of the total number of infants born at medical facilities.

The 1990s featured an abrupt rise in sexually transmitted infections. In 1998, there were 21.7 cases per 100,000 population. In 1999, recorded syphilis incidence rates began to decline. The rates are the worst in the capital and the most urbanized regions. The main factors causing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases are as follows:
What is really alarming in this situation is the lack of safe sex skills. About 10% of Tajikistan’s population are teenagers 14 to 17 years of age, who will become sexually active within the next few years, therefore the spread of the HIV-infection and AIDS is a danger causing special concern.

The MICS-2 survey, conducted by the State Committee for Statistics in conjunction with UNICEF in July 2000, revealed an extremely low HIV-AIDS awareness in women aged 15 to 49: 40.8% of urban women and 13.3% of rural women were aware of the problem. Only 19.7% of those surveyed had heard about AIDS; 4.2% knew three methods of protection (including having one sex partner, uninfected, using a condom, and refraining from sex);[the figure is missing in the Russian original—editors] correctly identified three misconceptions about the infection; 0.9% knew enough about the problem.

EDUCATION

Schools in Tajikistan are funded through a system of centralized planning. General education secondary schools are mainly funded from the government budget. But in view of budget constraints, a lot of education expenditures are funded from other sources: funds provided by government-owned enterprises and private businesses under contracts. According to a survey of household spending on services, conducted by the State Committee for Statistics in 1999 and 2000, a considerable amount is paid by households in tuition fees.

During the 1990s, Tajikistan ran a huge budget deficit, so the portion of education spending kept shrinking with every year, while the number of general education school students increased.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total government budget spending on education, thousand somoni</td>
<td>6,639.5</td>
<td>13,105.1</td>
<td>22,373.9</td>
<td>27,929.2</td>
<td>41,606.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total government budget expenditures</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Political stabilization, economic reform, and the introduction of the national currency in 1995 increased the portion of education expenditures. Schools and pre-school educational institutions are budget-funded and, as a rule, have no independent sources of income, so all funds to cover their expenditures are provided by local government budgets. In 2000, 15.5% of total education expenditures was covered by the national budget, and 84.5%, by local budgets.

Government spending on education in 2000 totaled 56.5% of its social and cultural spending and 2.3% of the GDP.

Education sector reform is impaired by tight budget constraints. The situation in the education system is affected, both positively and negatively, by the development of market relationships.

The transition to a National Education Concept has revealed a number of problems that Tajikistan cannot resolve single-handed, without support from international organizations and investment into its education system. With financial support from the UNICEF office in Tajikistan, schoolbooks in Tajik have been published and those books have been distributed chiefly among city and town, regional and so-called pilot general education schools. Pilot schools are used as testing grounds for various surveys and studies, such as pupils testing and surveys of teachers and parents. Tajik schools in rural areas and remote regions do not have enough new schoolbooks yet.
Providing schoolbooks for Russian language and Kirghiz language general education schools remains a huge problem. In early years, schools had sufficient library stocks of schoolbooks. But schoolbook stocks have not been renewed for ten years now. Besides, school curricula have not been updated. Some schoolbooks have not been adapted for local conditions (such as books in nature study, history, or foreign languages). In many remote dekhots (villages), schoolbooks have to be shared by two or three students.

The teacher refresher training system requires considerable renovation, since the republic’s teacher refresher training network is now unable to address all the problems and challenges posed by the essentially new nature of Tajik school education by making adequate adjustments of teaching content.

Every year, teacher-training schools and colleges fail to fill their admission quotas. The quality of teaching at those schools has deteriorated. This is mainly due to an outflow of skilled instructors, the lack of adequate curricula and teaching methodologies, and the low prestige of the profession among students, most of whom are girls, since teaching is low paid and time-consuming.

Most schools have no singing masters, pre-vocational work skills instructors, physical training instructors, or draftsmanship teachers, no musical instruments or stereo systems. Most pre-vocational training classrooms have no sewing-machines, no carpenter’s or fitter’s benches, or even saws or hammers or any materials for teaching elementary manual skills.

A National Plan of Action is being developed to coordinate the efforts of various organizations contributing to and interested in implementing the Education for All project.

A National Report has been drawn up as part of the Education for All project, with a base-level education assessment for the past ten years and an Outlook for the future.

Access to and practical opportunities to get a primary education are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Law on Education, which underlie the National School Education Concept approved by the Government on June 13, 1994. Primary schools are supposed to fulfill the following five objectives:

1. protect and strengthen children’s health;
2. develop children’s intellectual endowments by using individualized approaches;
3. combine teaching with moral education of children and teenagers;
4. cultivate humane relationships, civic-minded attitudes and patriotism;
5. enhance the role of school education in children’s development with due regard for their psychological capabilities.

In the past, schools in Tajikistan mainly used Option I and Option II curricula. Gymnasiums, lyceums, and schools for gifted children now have permission to use original curricula and programs, in addition to the official curriculum options.

A lot of work has been accomplished to develop government-approved education standards. Based on Russia’s experience, Tajikistan has developed education standards of its own, with due regard for its ethnic and regional features. The Constitution (Article 4) and the Education Law of Tajikistan (Article 12) stipulate that a base-level nine-year education is compulsory for all.

From the 1998-1999 school year on, primary school enrollment has been steadily decreasing, so the number of first-year primary school students went down by 10.2% in three years. In the 1989-1990 school year, girls made up 48.9% of students at that school level, but later their percentage decreased, reaching 47.4 in the 2000-2001 school year. 92% of students enrolled in the first year in the 1996-1997 school year completed the five-year primary education.
Falling total numbers of primary school students have affected the overall primary education coverage ratio, which was 73.7% in 2000, five percentage points down from 1999.

According to the 2000 MICS-2 survey, the reasons why some children failed to enroll in primary school was that their parents could not afford to buy clothes, shoes, books, and stationery for them. This means that not all seven-year-olds had the opportunity to enroll or pursue their schooling.

The same trend is observed at the second school level (years 5 to 9), with the portion of girl students going down from over 49% at the start of the 1990s to 46.3% by the end of the decade. The student cohort that enrolled in the fifth grade in the 1995-1996 school year and continued through the ninth grade decreased by 14.4%, so only 85.6% of those enrolled in the fifth grade completed a basic secondary education. After completing the base-level education, as many as 47.9% of that cohort continued their schooling.

Among the 10th- and 11th-grade students, the portion of girls decreased with every year, from 51% in the 1990-1991 school year to 38.7% in 2000-2001.

Low attendance remains a big problem confronting secondary schools. Annual enrolment and graduation statistics do not reflect the real scale of the problem. Some children of low income families work to help their parents earn a living, to the detriment of their education. In rural areas, school attendance decreases during harvest seasons.

Repeater ratios are low: 0.4% to 0.7% of total students. Although the number of repeaters increased every year during the 1990s, peaking in 1996-1998, after that the number of repeaters slumped to 8,918. In 2000-2001, it increased by 22%. The quality of education greatly deteriorated. As part of the school education reform project, some pilot schools are appraising the US-type knowledge testing system.

Young people’s increasing reluctance to pursue vocational training is primarily caused by the shrinkage of the labor market. Between the 1990-1991 and 1998-1999 school year, the number of students of specialized secondary schools decreased by more than half. In 1999-2000, specialized secondary school enrolment increased, and, notably, the portion of female students in the total enrolment has been quite high: it rose from 40% in 1993-1994 to 50% in 1999-2000. Female students mainly enroll in teacher training and medical schools.

In accordance with Article 24 of Tajikistan’s Education Law and in line with the education system reform, specialized secondary schools are being restructured and reorganized. Many have been converted to technical colleges and now provide an education of better quality.

Vocational schools, providing primary vocational training, do not have adequate equipment or qualified instructors to train skilled workers. Enrolment at vocational schools decreases with every year. It has shrunk by 42% since 1991, to 24,500 as of the start of 2001. Vocational schools train blue-collar workers. The portion of female students is growing (according to statistics available): there were 8,400 female students in 2000, or 34.4% of the total number (as compared with 27.6% in 1997). Large portions of vocational school graduates get jobs in industry (33.7%), agriculture and forestry (29.4%), and in the consumer services sector (10%).

In 2000, over 26% of vocational school graduates got no job assignments at all. As many as 74.2% of them had to seek jobs on their own, 14.5% enrolled in other schools, and about 10% were conscripted for military service.

*Higher Education.* Higher education system development parameters are shown in the diagram in Figure 1. During the 1990s, there was a buildup of the higher education system, as colleges and universities grew in number. Leading specialized government institutes were converted into univer-
Universities or academies; and in addition to classical-type universities, technical, humanities, and other universities were organized. Major universities opened branches in various regions of Tajikistan. A new education pattern evolved, with stages from lyceum to technical college and to university.

Characteristically, university enrollment increased during that period. Today, 87% of those enrolled are secondary-school, gymnasium, and lyceum graduates; 6.3% are graduates of specialized secondary schools, and about 3% go to university after vocational school.

Enrolment of part-time students decreased, so part-time courses have not been used in recent years. At the same time, the number of students taking correspondence courses (remote study courses) tends to grow annually. Analysis of student data by form of studies shows that part-time courses have not survived due to the overall instability in the post-war years and, importantly, to the fact that correspondence and external studies are preferred by young people today, because those forms enable them to take jobs and earn a living. In the 2000-2001 school year, overall enrolment into government universities totaled 16,300, including 5,400 enrolled as correspondence students. Tajikistan has 127 university students per 10,000 population.

In the 1991-1992 school year, female students made up 34% of total university students, then the percentage gradually decreased to 24% in 2000-2001. First, this has been due to the fact that many universities are located in major cities and regional centers, so girls living in remote areas find it very difficult to go to university away from home if they cannot afford to rent an apartment, since university dormitories have dilapidated in the past few years; second, families tend to spend their scarce funds on education for the boys; and, third, the stereotypes still persist that secondary school education is enough for girls, and this creates gender inequality in terms of access to higher education and higher education coverage.

Education (tuition) contracts with companies, organizations, and individuals have been developing, especially in the higher education sector. The number of students enrolled under such contracts grows every year, increasing from about 34% of the total number of university students in 1999 to 41% in 2000.
A government higher professional education standard has been approved, introducing a multi-level higher education system, with three degrees: junior specialist, bachelor, and master. Sectoral universities have been established, in which most students pay tuition. There have been changes in the work of universities over a number of years: like admitting students in excess of enrolment targets, paying fees to instructors for exams, tests, term and graduation papers, which is not consistent with existing regulations. At the same time, delays in the payment of student allowances have created major problems for students and impaired their interest in studies.

Some universities train students in overlapping professions without any regard for students’ subsequent employment in the republic’s economy. Ministry of Education specialists are now working on the problem. To enhance the quality of specialist training at universities and specialized secondary schools in coordination with the republic’s demand for specialists, the Government of Tajikistan issued Decree No. 342 on Regularizing the Structure of Higher Education and Specialized Secondary Schools of the Republic of Tajikistan, dated July 11, 2001. The Decree stipulates that schools that do not have adequate logistics potential or research facilities, or professional instructors to provide teaching in the relevant specialization areas shall be closed down.

In order to train female specialists with a higher education for remote regions and to regularize enrolment into universities under the presidential quota for 2001-2005, the Government of Tajikistan has passed a resolution instructing every region to develop a screening procedure for selecting gifted girls for university.

According to the 2000 census, there were 981 persons with any education per 1,000 population aged 15 or older, so the overall education level has risen since 1989 (933 educated persons per 1,000 population). However, according to the 1989 census, there were, per 1,000 population, 75 people with a higher education, as compared with 77 in 2000; the figures for people with an incomplete higher education were: 14 per 1,000 in 1989 and 13 per 1,000 in 2000; people with a specialized secondary education: 110 per 1,000 in 1989 and 66 per 1,000 in 2000; people with a general secondary education: 427 per 1,000 in 1989 and 575 per 1,000 in 2000; people with an incomplete secondary education: 211 per 1,000 in 1989 and 191 per 1,000 in 2000; and people with a primary education: 96 per 1,000 in 1989 and 59 per 1,000 in 2000. The figures show that the overall level of education has risen, but, as noted before, there are certain restrictions of access to primary and specialized secondary education.

*Pre-School Education.* The 1990s saw a sharp shrinkage of pre-school education coverage of children one to six years of age. And that on top of the fact that in previous years the coverage was not sufficient, since most women, especially in rural areas, were housewives. Practice shows, however, that most housewives, having secondary or lower level education, are unable to prepare their chil-
dren for school. So children enrolling in primary school have no basic group behavior training, nor writing, reckoning, or reading skills. All that hinders teaching in the early grades, since primary school curricula assume that first-grade students should have certain reading, reckoning, and writing skills.

In view of emerging pre-school education problems, the Education Ministry, in conjunction with other agencies concerned, is cooperating with the international community in handling human rights issues under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A National Plan of Action for Children has been elaborated, with provisions for developing alternative forms of pre-school education. Early childhood indicators are being developed, government data systems available are to be improved, and it is planned to cover a broader range of pre-school organizations.

There has been a rise in the activity of various esthetic education schools and centers for children of pre-school and school age. They admit children of three years of age or older. The curricula include drawing, music, dancing, rhythmic, foreign languages, computer skills, etc., depending on availability of teachers. These centers mainly provide courses for a tuition. Such centers are mainly established in the capital and major towns and sponsored by prominent cultural figures and artists.

RISK CHILDREN

The growth of crime in Tajikistan, as indicated by numerous observations and experience, is promoted by an interaction of positive and negative factors affecting the lives of families and communities, as well as social values and employment.

The civil war in the republic, low living standards, the slump in employment, disintegration of families, people's low self-assessment resulting from low levels of education, and other factors have especially affected young people, who have come into conflict with the law.

Statistical analysis by the Ministry of Internal Affairs shows that the overall crime rate in 2000 was the same as in 1999 (14,455 registered cases). One should note a reduction in the total numbers of some grave crimes: crimes intended to cause grievous bodily harm went down by 30.8%; murders and attempted murders, down by 20.7%; assault and robbery, down by 14.6%; kidnappings, down by 25.9%; thefts, down by 7.6%, etc.

In 2000, a total of 8,900 offenders were detected, of which 66% were employable persons who had no job and were not students; 11.3% were women, and 5.4% were minors (under 16).

Taking proper care of children and teenagers requires the attention not only of parents, but also of government organizations in which children spend their time, such as a school, lyceum, or disco. Organizing events for children at any level involves certain financial costs.

The impoverishment of the population during the transition period causes school attendance rates to decline. A certain portion of children have been neglected by schools and joined the ranks of “problem” children engaged in illegal activities. Children of low income families are forced to do what they can to help their families. So they often enter the law-of-the-jungle criminal environment. It is especially alarming that teenagers 14 to 17 years old who have committed crimes find it hard to re-adapt to normal life.

In a period of transition, when previously established rules of conduct have vanished and public organizations that used to unite young people have fallen apart, communications with young people in other countries have been weakened as television and radio broadcasts have decreased in volume.
and scope, Internet access is limited, most young people seek their own ways to make headway in life.

The number of school students involved in extracurricular activities has sharply decreased. In 1990, there were 113 extracurricular organizations in Tajikistan, with 8.2% of all school students involved in common-interest circles alone. In 1995, the percentage went down to 1.5. In 2000, only 66 extracurricular activity organizations remained in Tajikistan. They mainly teach various martial arts to boys and dancing or rhythmic to girls. The lack of meaningful leisure activities and entertainment events makes teenagers susceptible to alcohol or drug abuse, which often lead them into conflict situations.

Many teenagers violate rules of social behavior in an effort to establish and prove themselves to society, but not all get arrested by juvenile officers. But teenagers who are in conflict with the law may get severe punishment and long prison terms to be served in tough conditions, due to inadequate laws addressing juvenile offences.

![Graph: Criminal Offenders by Age Group](image)

In 1991, 59% of juvenile offenders aged 14 to 17 were prosecuted; in later years, the number of juvenile offenders tended to decrease, while the percentage of teenagers prosecuted went up, reaching 90 in 2000.

As seen from the crime statistics for the 14-17 age group, teenagers mainly commit theft, although drug crimes tend to increase in recent years. There has been a rise in the number of teenagers abusing drugs and committing drug crimes. It is alarming that teenagers commit violent crimes, acts of hooliganism, and murders.

**ANNEX**

The Government of Tajikistan has organized a Conference for the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Child, as part of the project to promote and implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Conference was attended by government officials, journalists, public activists, representatives of international organizations, NGOs, and teenagers representing schools of Tajikistan’s capital Dushanbe.
The Government in conjunction with several NGOs has been working hard to build mechanisms to protect children’s rights in Tajikistan, in implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. A round-table conference has been held at which government, non-governmental, and international organizations working to promote children’s interests discussed the Government’s Convention Implementation Report. The Conference noted the Government’s honest and open attitude and commitment to resolving the numerous problems affecting children’s rights in Tajikistan.

With support from international organizations, children’s rights NGOs have intensified their work in the republic. The Open Asia NGO has conducted a survey of violence against children in Tajikistan—one of the gravest and least-discussed problems of our society. The survey was intended to obtain estimated data about the real scale of the problem and various social groups’ perception thereof, in order to develop protection mechanisms to prevent violence against children.

Juvenile crime data are mainly handled and analyzed by specialized agencies and not published in the press.

Work to establish a juvenile justice system in Tajikistan involves the participation of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Psychology Department of the Tajik National University, the Psychology Department of the Linguistics Institute, local NGOs, international organizations (the OSCE and ORA International). A plan has been prepared for an early introduction of elements of juvenile justice.

The Government of Tajikistan has issued an order to all ministries and agencies to render aid to children in shelters, orphanages and other such institutions. The State Committee for Statistics provides regular assistance to an orphanage in Yavan, sending food, drugs, books, and computers.

Along with local agencies, there are international organizations working in the republic that provide medical and educational aid to homeless children. There are rehabilitation centers for children and teenagers, providing children with hot meals and teaching them some basic skills like sewing and even conducting music lessons for them. At a recent presentation, children from one such center performed an amateur artistic show and displayed handmade artifacts and clothes, and drawings.

Under programs jointly implemented by the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, humanitarian food aid has been provided to large families (those with four or more children under 16) since 1999. In 1999-2000, aid was rendered to about 19,000 families with four children under 16 on average. Food was also supplied to large families in drought-stricken areas in 2000.

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