



TAJIKISTAN

COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT

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COUNTRY GENDER ASSESSMENT

2021



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“Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development, and building good governance.”

Kofi Annan

Executive Summary

Tajikistan has a lot to show in terms of creating an enabling policy framework for gender equity, yet large gendered challenges remain. The global COVID-19 outbreak is impacting economies around the world, including Tajikistan, in an unprecedented manner and aggravates existing gender challenges. This report is presenting achievements made and challenges still to be addressed in view of gender-equity in Tajikistan, based on a desk study covering using most recent material from Tajikistan national sources, the World Bank, development partners and others. It is oriented towards key strategic objectives of the World Bank Group (WBG) Gender Strategy for the period of FY17-FY23 with relevance for the Tajikistan context.

Human Endowments

Equal access to primary education and increasing access to secondary and tertiary education is supported by a favorable social and policy climate, for example, the raise of the legal marriage age from 17 to 18, the increase in numbers of schools in remote villages, and the establishment of a pathway to tertiary education for both women and men residing in remote districts. Overall, the literacy rate is high (95 percent) among both women and men in Tajikistan and recent trends demonstrate that access to education is becoming more equal. Yet, challenges remain: Female enrollment in preschool, secondary school, and tertiary education continues to lag behind male enrollment, and gender differences in fields of study contribute to occupational segregation and the persistent gender pay gap. Records show that economy-wide, women earned 60 percent of what men earned in 2017. Female-dominated sectors such as education tend to be lower-paying than male-dominated sectors such as economics, industry, construction, and transport.

Gender inequalities in accessing Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services lead to undesirable consequences for both education and health of girls and women: The frequent lack of proper sanitation facilities at schools for girls, specifically those who have entered puberty, has a negative impact on girls' school attendance. And the responsibility of collecting water from rivers, canals, and wells typically falls on women and children, who carry the bulk of the physical burden. Health risks can arise from carrying heavy buckets of water long distances.

While life expectancy for both men and women has increased over the past two decades, there is gender gap of almost 5 years in favor of women. At the same time, maternal and infant deaths are decreasing in Tajikistan with boys having a 97 percent chance and girls having a 96 percent chance of surviving until their fifth birthday. Maternal and infant deaths in Tajikistan are caused by a combination of factors, including poor quality health facilities that lack proper equipment and skilled staff; distances to health facilities with limited access to transportation (especially in rural Tajikistan); women's tendency to continue doing hard physical work while pregnant; and limited knowledge of irregular pregnancy symptoms coupled with a hesitancy to go to health facilities. This is often further reinforced by intra-household power dynamics preventing young women to seek medical help early on when a problem starts evolving.

More and Better Jobs – Economic Opportunities

In Tajikistan, estimated female earned income is 4.5 times lower than the estimated male earned income due to gender inequality. Based on Gross National Income measure, estimated male earned income per capita in 2019 was \$6,427 (in 2017 PPP terms) whereas the estimated female earned income per capita was only \$1,440 (in 2017 PPP terms). Female-to-male wage ratio of 60 percent and the share of economically active female population of 37 percent (versus 63 percent for male) contribute to such a considerable gap in earned income.

Women in Tajikistan face fewer legal constraints today than they did in 2010. Unlike in Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan, women in Tajikistan are a protected category under the law when it comes to access to credit, which provides more flexibility for those women who want to start and operate their own business. In addition, unlike other countries in the region, government in Tajikistan is fully responsible for administration of maternity leave benefits in the private sector, which allows to remove the financial burden from employers and reduce their disincentive to hire women of childbearing age. Further, lower retirement ages for women (with both full or partial pension benefits) reduce the amount of time women work and contribute to their pensions in comparison with men, thus exacerbating gender gaps in pension benefits, even more so given the above-mentioned longer life expectancy of women compared to men in Tajikistan and declining fertility rates, increasing dependency on public pension systems.

Labor force participation of women in Tajikistan is low: About 69 percent of Tajikistan's working-age female (and about half of the working-age male) population were not working for pay in 2016 and the share of employed female in the total number of employed has been declining steadily. One contributing factor is the country's Labor Code, prohibiting - well-intentioned, undoubtedly - women's employment in underground jobs, difficult jobs, jobs in harmful conditions, or jobs linked to manual lifting and moving of heavy loads. Increased male labor migration in the last two decades has been another factor for low female labor force participation: With their husbands abroad and sending remittances payments, women have been increasingly called upon to become full-time homemakers and not look for employment, given cultural preferences for mothers with children to not seek work for income outside of their homes. Agriculture and education are the largest employers in Tajikistan and employ the majority of the female and male full-time workforce. Agriculture and Education are also considered to be the most gender-equal sectors of economic activity. Yet, despite legislation

mandating equal pay for equal work, evidence suggests that women are not remunerated at the same rate as their male counterparts. Looking at public sector jobs, only about one-third of the jobs are occupied by women and the trend has not changed over the last decade.

An alarming gender gap of almost 42 percentage points has emerged between the rates of young men and women (7.2 versus 49.3 percent, respectively) not in education, employment or training (NEET), of overall one third of the youth in Tajikistan aged 15-24.

Women in Tajikistan have fewer opportunities than men to develop skills and abilities of managing a business, not to speak of any other support; this is reflected in the low and declining share of firms with a female top. Women are also underrepresented when it comes holding financial accounts in banks, using financial institutions for savings, and borrowing money to start, operate, or expand a farm or a business

About 23 percent of people in Tajikistan live in households headed by women. Female-headed households are smaller than those headed by men, and slightly more common among non-poor households than among poor households. They are also more common in urban as compared with rural areas (pointing to the assumption of higher social pressure in rural areas preventing women from residing there as household heads).

Voice and Agency

The Government of the Republic of Tajikistan has made considerable progress in mainstreaming gender into national development strategies and plans, including into the Poverty Reduction Strategies, the National Development Strategy for 2030, and Interim Development Strategy 2020. Yet, despite well-intended legislation, women continue to be inhibited by gender stereotypes combined with lack of financial resources, time, and family support. Evidence suggests that legal frameworks are not enough to increase women's representation in government.

Women in Tajikistan have very little decision-making power in their domestic lives. Evidence suggests that women are becoming less engaged in decision making as social norms persist and stronger gender stereotypes emerge. Wives of migrant workers often encounter the additional burden of household responsibilities typically assumed by their husbands (such as financial management, household maintenance, and farm labor), in addition to their own. These women have even less time for income generating activities outside of the home.

Domestic violence is prevalent in Tajikistan. Whereas policies to sanction domestic violence are in place, f.e., the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence in 2013 and the State Program for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for 2014-2023, the implementation of these policies has been challenging: Spousal abuse occurs in approximately one-third of all marriages in Tajikistan, with physical abuse being most common followed by emotional abuse. Economic violence women are exposed to includes prevention from financial decision-making and from agency around income generation.

The COVID-19 outbreak is impacting economies around the world in an unprecedented manner, and Tajikistan will not be an exception. However, not everyone, in every place, will be affected in the same way. Considering how the pandemic affects particular groups will help raise the effectiveness of containment efforts and minimize the potential negative impacts. The negative impact from COVID-19 on gender inequality can be assessed through the channels of education, health, economic conditions and agency.

Introduction

Gender equality is both a cornerstone of a just society and foundational to economic development. As a human right, equality entails expanding freedoms to all people, and is intrinsically valuable. It is also an officially endorsed objective of the government together with the other Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In this, Government aims to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic, and public life. Furthermore, the economic impacts of gender imbalances are also highly consequential for wellbeing – both globally and specifically in Tajikistan.

This report describes Tajikistan's performance in its pursuit of equality between genders, highlighting areas of both recent improvement and concern. Tajikistan has a lot to show in terms of creating an enabling policy framework for gender equity. Yet, large gender disparities remain, for example in tertiary education enrollment, labor force participation and labor pay, intra-household decision-making and control over assets. Men in Tajikistan outperform women on all human development index dimensions with the exception of health (women's life expectancy is four and a half years greater).¹ Other internationally comparable measures such as the gender inequality index from UNDP show that women are primarily not reaching their full human development potential due to three dimensions of wellbeing: i) reproductive health, ii) empowerment (measured by educational attainment and political participation), and iii) labor market participation. In particular, women's labor force participation persistently lags behind that of men.² However, gender inequalities in Tajikistan are resulting in a smaller loss to female human development than in 1995 thanks to a decrease in maternal deaths, more women in parliament, and a higher share of women with at least some secondary education.

Many of the impediments to achieving gender equality in Tajikistan are the result of discrimination. According to the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) women in Tajikistan experience the greatest discrimination due to family-related factors, followed by social institutions that provide access to productive and financial resources. The former is evidenced in the recognition of a Sharia law that allows men in registered religious and unregistered marriages to divorce their wives by saying “talaq” multiple times and the prevalence of child marriage (14 percent of girls under the age of 18 are married) despite laws that criminalize it. The latter is evidenced in unequal access to employment opportunities. Eighty-five percent of managers are male, and women are prevented from working in certain occupations that are considered too dangerous or physically demanding. Women also face additional restrictions for working night shifts and overtime.³ As a result of these challenges and others, women are often at a steep disadvantage with bargaining power and voice in society are particularly limited.

Women in Tajikistan face fewer legal constraints today than they did in 2010 according to World Bank's Women, Business and the Law Index, which has improved over the past several years. Tajikistan improved its WBL score thanks to the introduction of the new Labor Code in July 2016⁴ that allow women to work the same night hours as men and the introduction of domestic violence legislation on 19 March 2013.⁵ As measured by the WBL index (2020), women in Tajikistan today face less legal constraints than in the rest of Central Asia.⁶

¹ UNDP (2019).

² UNDP (2019).

³ OECD (2019).

⁴ Labor Code of 23 July 2016 available at: http://www.adlia.tj/show_doc.fwx?rgn=127423&conttype=2

⁵ Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence No. 954 of 19 March 2013 available at: http://base.mmk.tj/view_sanadhoview.php?showdetail=&sanadID=291&language=ru

⁶ Turkmenistan is not covered under the WBL index.

This assessment is based on a review of existing literature available from either World Bank Group (WBG), its development partners and other sources. It is aligned with the four main objectives of the WBG Strategy on Gender Equality (FY 16-23):

1. **Improving Gaps in Human Endowments (Health and Education).** The first objective of the WBG Gender Strategy FY16-23 aims at (a) addressing first generation gaps in health (maternal mortality) and education, and (b) working on emerging issues - ageing and non-communicable diseases.
2. **Removing Constraints for More and Better Jobs / Economic Opportunities.** The second objective of the strategy is to help increase women's labor force participation, boost access to higher quality jobs and reduce occupational segregation, provide care services and safe transport.
3. **Removing Barriers to Women's Ownership and Control of Assets.** Closing gaps between women and men in ownership and control over finance, land, housing, and ICT falls under the third objective. For the purpose of this assessment, the third objective under the WBG strategy has been integrated into the discussion of gender considerations of the second objective.
4. **Enhancing Women's Voice & Agency and Engaging Men and Boys.** And finally, the fourth objective is about addressing gender-based violence in relevant operations, and especially in conflict situations and promote women's leadership in local service delivery.

The Strategy places strong emphasis on (i) outcomes and results toward gender equity based on country-specific diagnostics, (ii) an enhanced evidence base on what works, and (iii) partnerships across a range of sectors. It proposes a stronger focus on the frontier areas for more and better jobs as well as women's ownership and control over key financial and physical assets, but it also recognizes that closing the remaining gender gaps in human endowments, together with enhancing voice and agency, and engaging men and boys are critical to achieving the WBG's corporate twin goals of eliminating poverty and boosting shared prosperity.

Both, the corporate strategy and the Tajikistan Country Gender Assessment build on the synergies and interconnectedness among these domains. For example, although human endowments such as health and education are important in their own right, they also contribute to women's ability to take advantage of economic opportunities, and their capacity to exercise voice and agency. Improvements in infrastructure (water and sanitation, transport, and energy) increase the time available for women to participate in paid employment and enable better access to markets and health and education services. Gender Based Violence is a constraint to women's voice and agency, but it also affects economic opportunity as a result of work absenteeism for both men and women, and mental and physical health, which in turn affects the next generation.

The structure of the report first follows the four focus areas of the WBG Strategy on Gender Equality and presents the analysis and discussion of gender issues around human endowments, economic opportunities, and voice and agency. A special section on the potential implications of COVID-19 pandemic on gender inequality and related recommendations is also presented. Secondly, the report describes the World Bank's efforts to promote gender equality in Tajikistan through portfolio lens in the Country Gender Action Plan. The note concludes with a Conclusion and recommendations section from the World Bank and its development partners.

Gender Considerations in Human Endowments

By the age of 18, a girl born today in Tajikistan will only achieve 52.9 percent (compared to 53.6 percent for a boy born today) of her full productive potential that could be achieved with full health and complete education. This section of the note covers issues around gender inequality in Education and Health.

Human Endowments: Education

Equal access to primary education and increasing access to secondary and tertiary education is supported by a favorable social and policy climate. Legally, Tajikistan mandates equal access to education through the constitution and provides free and compulsory basic education (Grades 1 to 9)⁷. The primary goal of the government's National Strategy for Education Development of the Republic of Tajikistan until 2020 has been to "[create] conditions to ensure functional and effective provision of educational services and access to appropriate quality education for everyone" with a sub-objective to keep female students in school beyond compulsory education.⁸ Overall, the literacy rate is high (95 percent) among both women and men in Tajikistan.

Recent trends demonstrate that access to education is becoming more equal. Although Tajikistan has achieved gender parity in gross basic education enrollment, female enrollment in preschool, secondary school, and tertiary education continues to lag behind male enrollment (Figure 1).⁹ In the 2018/2019 academic year, less than 40 percent of students in higher professional and postgraduate education and approximately 20 percent of students in PhD programs were women (Figure 1). Since 2008, the gender enrollment gap in secondary and tertiary education has decreased by 8.5 percentage points¹⁰ and 6.3 percentage points¹¹ respectively, while enrollment rates for both women and men have increased.

Trends also suggest overall rising educational levels in Tajikistan. Between 2012 and 2017, women's median number of years of schooling has risen from 8.6 to 8.9, while that of men rose from 9.3 to 9.5.¹² Completion rates were similar for female and male primary education students in 2017 while a gender gap of 4 percentage points existed between secondary and pre-vocational secondary school student completion rates in favor of men.¹³ These patterns lead to disparities in learning outcomes. For instance, more serious attention to foreign language courses usually is

⁷ Government of Tajikistan (2019).

⁸ Government of Tajikistan (2012).

⁹ TAJSTAT 2019a and World Bank Group (2019b). Gross enrollment/completion is the total number of students enrolled/completed in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the total student population of the given age group.

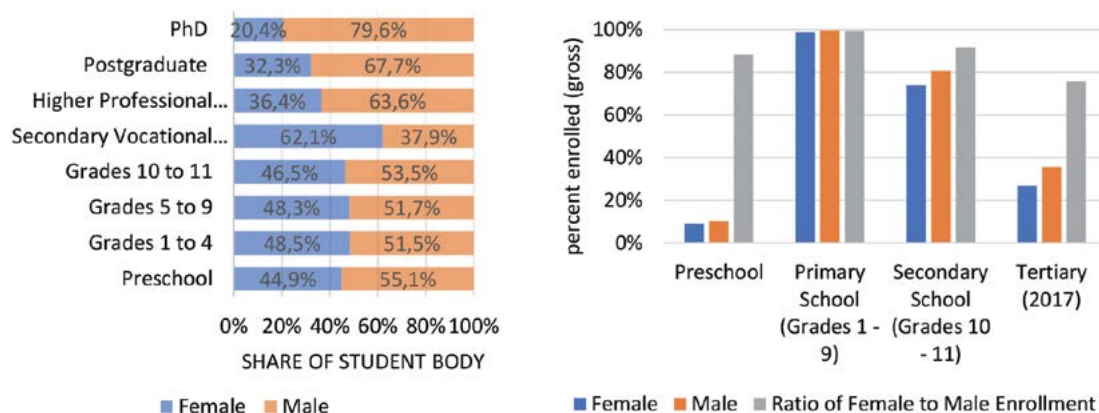
¹⁰ TAJSTAT (2019a).

¹¹ World Bank Group (2019b).

¹² TAJSTAT, et al. (2018).

¹³ World Bank Group (2019b). These indicators are mapped to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) and thus differ slightly from the classification used by the Tajikistan education system and TAJSTAT.

FIGURE 1. SHARE OF WOMEN IN EDUCATION (LEFT) AND SCHOOL ENROLLMENT BY GENDER (RIGHT), 2018/19 ACADEMIC YEAR



Source: 1) TAJSTAT (2019b). Note: Postgraduate = деятельность аспирантуры; higher professional education = высшего профессионального образования; secondary vocational education = среднего профессионального. Образования 2) TAJSTAT (2019a). The tertiary enrollment numbers are from the World Development Indicators (World Bank Group, 2019b) and are for 2017.

paid after the secondary school period, and those who do not continue education after secondary school do not usually continue learning of foreign languages. This fact especially puts female in a disadvantaged position when looking for well-paid jobs.

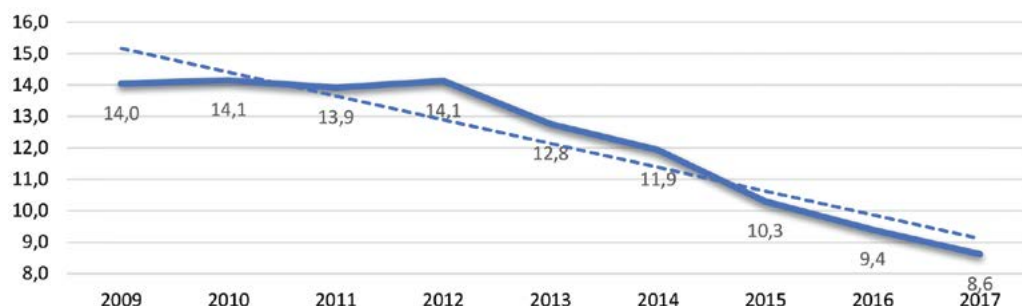
About 56 percent of women in Tajikistan have a secondary education or higher. There are also significant regional variations in educational attainment among women. 84 percent of women in GBAO have a secondary level or higher, which represents highest rate from among the regions of Tajikistan. GBAO is then followed by Sughd (69 percent), Dushanbe (63 percent), Khatlon (53 percent) and DRS (39 percent).

Between 2009 and 2017, share of female enrolled in tertiary education has increased at a faster rate than the one of male (16 to 27 percent vs. 30 to 35 percent), further narrowing the gender gap in tertiary education enrollment (Figure 2). According to the 2016 Life-in-Transition Survey (LiTS), 87 percent of respondents in Tajikistan reported that it was important for their daughter to achieve a university education. By far, the greatest gender inequality is in tertiary education. This is also reflected in the share of women who are not in education, employment, or training (49 percent vs. 7 percent for men). In a recent survey, more than 85 percent of female and male respondents claimed that they “believe it is important for their daughter to achieve a university education.”¹⁴

In the 2019 academic year, rural classrooms had greater gender balance than urban classrooms. In Grades 5 to 9, 49 percent of students in rural classrooms were female while 46 percent of students in urban classrooms were female. Likewise, 47 percent of students in rural classrooms Grades 10 to 11 were female compared to 45 percent in urban areas.¹⁵ Analysis from the Asian Development

¹⁴ 2016.

¹⁵ TAJSTAT (2019b).

FIGURE 2. GENDER GAP IN TERTIARY EDUCATION ENROLLMENT

Source: World Development Indicators.

Note: Gross male enrollment in tertiary education is compared with that of female.

Bank's (ADB) suggests that higher rates of female participation in rural areas could be a result of greater action from local authorities and women's non-governmental organizations in recent years to tackle the issue of out-of-school girls in rural areas.¹⁶

The Government of Tajikistan has taken several steps to increase female enrollment, including changing the legal marrying age from 17 to 18, expanding the number of basic and general education schools in remote villages, and establishing the Presidential Quota System, a pathway to tertiary education for both women and men residing in remote districts. In the 2016 academic year, 2,408 students (about half of whom were female) were admitted to higher education institutions under the Presidential Quota System.¹⁷ While the quota system has succeeded in attracting female students, development partners have raised concerns that women were primarily being selected for traditionally female-dominated areas of study such as education and nursing (which tend to lead to lower-paying professions) and that female participants have low completion rates due to poor academic preparation by their local school systems.¹⁸

The gender gap in secondary and tertiary education is a result of myriad factors. Focus group discussions facilitated by the ADB during its 2016 gender assessment revealed that girls were most frequently out of school because of the intersection of scarce financial resources (for uniforms, textbooks, etc.) and social norms that led families to prioritize education for sons at the expense of daughters. Traditionally, the returns to a son's education are greater than a daughter's as gender roles stipulate that sons will provide for their parents financially while daughters will contribute to their husbands' families. A 2007 qualitative study by UNICEF found that resource-scarce families were more willing to make financial sacrifices to pay for their sons' education than their daughters' and some families preferred to save for their daughters' wedding than for school fees.¹⁹ Long commuting distances and poor infrastructure are likely additional factors that contribute to lower enrolment rates in rural areas.²⁰ If schools are located far away, some girls may be prohibited from attending because they do not have appropriate shoes or jackets to walk to school in the winter, or due to norms regarding girls walking alone after puberty.²¹ In communities without schools, especially at secondary and tertiary levels, some families might refuse to allow their daughters to

¹⁶ ADB (2016).

¹⁷ Government of Tajikistan (2019).

¹⁸ ABD (2016).

¹⁹ ABD (2016).

²⁰ TAJSTAT, et al. (2018).

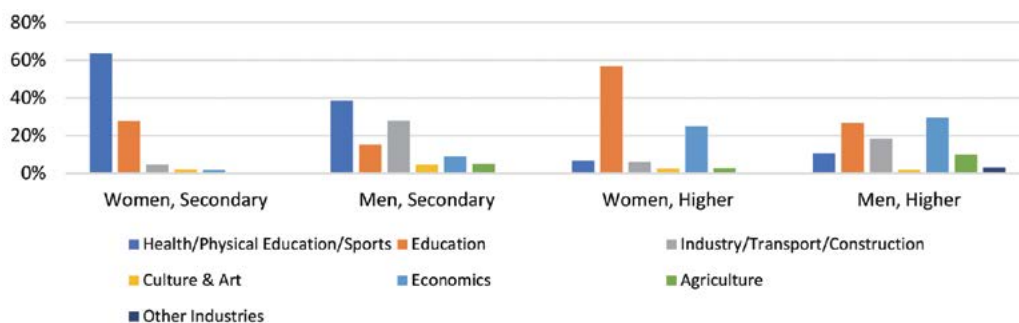
²¹ ADB (2016).

study in nearby cities out of fear that they might be exposed to negative influences.²² With respect to infrastructure, the poor quality of education facilities and lack of resources might cause parents to devalue education further reducing incentives for families to send their daughters to school.²³

The Gender gap in educational attainment is also linked to the welfare levels. Data from 2017 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) show that while 56 percent of women and 63 percent of men in the highest quintile had at least a secondary education, only 37 percent of women and 45 percent of men in the lowest quintile had at least a secondary education. The same applies to literacy rates – 89 percent of women in the lowest wealth quintile and 98 percent among women in the highest quintile.

Female secondary vocational education students almost exclusively study education, health care and culture, which are traditionally low-paid sectors of the economy. The strong tendency for female students in Tajikistan to enroll in education and health care programs extends beyond the Presidential Quota System. Gender differences in areas of study at secondary vocational (colleges) and higher professional education (institutes, universities and academia) institutions are acute. In the 2018/2019 academic school year, female secondary vocational education students almost exclusively studied health care (64 percent) and education (28 percent) while 47 percent of male students participated in other programs (Figure 3). At higher professional education institutions, 82 percent of female students studied one of two specializations (education or economics) while the same proportion of male students were spread over four specializations (economics; education; industry and transportation; or health, physical education, and sports).²⁴

FIGURE 3. DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE AND MALE SECONDARY AND HIGHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION STUDENTS BY INDUSTRIAL SPECIALIZATION (BEGINNING OF 2018/2019 ACADEMIC YEAR)



Source: TAJSTAT (2019b).

Gender differences in fields of study contribute to occupational segregation and the persistent gender pay gap. Records show that economy-wide, women earned 60 percent of what men earned in 2017. Female-dominated sectors such as education tend to be lower-paying than male-dominated sectors such as economics, industry, construction, and transport. However, there is a disconnect between the choice of the field of study and field of work after graduation. Despite the fact that share of female studying industry and agriculture is significantly smaller than the share of male

²² World Bank (2013).

²³ ADB (2016).

²⁴ TAJSTAT (2019b).

studying these fields, employment data suggest that a very small share of either men or women are employed in manufacturing or industry (3.4 percent and 6 percent, respectively) in comparison to the agricultural sector and (41 and 48 percent, respectively).

The Government is promoting gender education in school curricula and textbooks. The Government of Tajikistan is in the process of revising primary vocational education curricula and textbooks from a gender perspective. The Ministry of Education and Science, UNICEF, and team developed recommendations to remove gender stereotypes from the textbooks to aid in the elimination of prejudices against women and men based on these associations.²⁵

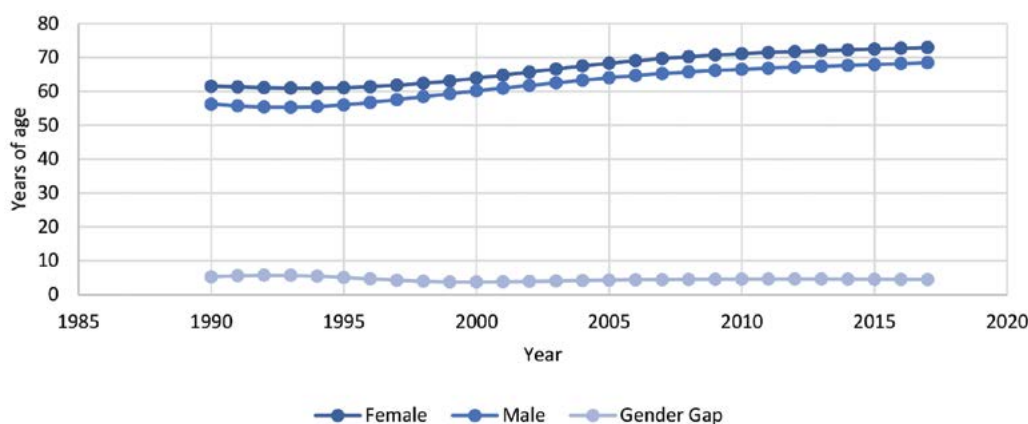
World Bank interventions in the education section address gender gaps in Higher Education (HE) in access to HE, and gendered choices for fields of study. To date, 42% of the project beneficiaries have been female. Further, a multisectoral Early Childhood Development Project to increase utilization of a basic package of health and preschool education services for 0 to 6 years old children will address gender gaps preventing women's economic opportunities by making childcare facilities available and assure preschool enrollment for girls in the same way as for boys.

Human Endowments: Health

Life expectancy

Life expectancy for both men and women has improved over the past two decades though there is gender gap of almost 5 years in favor of women. Female life expectancy at birth (73 years in 2017) is greater than male life expectancy (68.5 years) by 4.5 years (Figure 4).^{26,27} This gender gap in favor of women is slightly below the global average (6 to 8 years) and is caused by a combination

FIGURE 4. LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH (1990 - 2017)



Source: World Bank Group (2019b).

²⁵ Government of Tajikistan (2019).

²⁶ World Bank Group (2019b).

²⁷ Note that as per TAJSTAT data, life expectancy at birth for women and men were 76.9 years and 73.3 years in 2018, respectively.

of biological and behavioral differences between women and men.²⁸ Life expectancy has improved for both women and men since 1990 by 11.5 and 12.3 years, respectively, narrowing the gender gap by 0.8 years.²⁹

More than 50 percent of all deaths in Tajikistan are caused by non-communicable diseases (see Annex for a detailed chart). Women and men have similar disease profiles in Tajikistan with half of all deaths in 2017 attributed to ischemic heart disease (23 percent for women, 24 percent for men); stroke (11 percent for women, 10 percent for men); lower respiratory infections (10 percent); and neonatal disorders (7 percent for women, 8 percent for men). Gender differences in women and men's disease profiles include rate and direction of change in the proportion of deaths caused by diarrhea, congenital birth defects, and Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Between 2012 and 2017, the proportion of female deaths attributed to diarrhea and Alzheimer's decreased by 1.2 percentage points and 0.6 percentage points, respectively, while the proportion increased for men by 0.4 percentage points and 1.6 percentage points, respectively. The female population has seen a 1.9 percentage point increase in the proportion of deaths attributed to congenital birth defects while men have seen a reduction by 0.3 percentage points.³⁰

Cultural norms and information asymmetries constrain women from protecting themselves against HIV (and other sexually transmitted diseases). Among those aged 15 and older living with HIV, the share of women was 25.3 percent in 2008 and this share has increased to 28.2 percent in 2018 according to UNAIDS estimates.³¹ Likewise, Tajikistan's Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population reported that the number of new HIV infections reported each year has increased by 620 percent for women and 196 percent for men.³² The prevalence of HIV is comparatively low in Tajikistan with approximately 13,000 people living with HIV in 2018, less than 0.1 percent of the population. While the disease disproportionately affects men (71.8 percent of people 15 years of age and older living with HIV in 2018 were men), the female share of the population is increasing.

Access to water supply, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and gender

The responsibility of collecting water from rivers, canals, and wells typically falls on women and children, who carry the bulk of the physical burden. Health risks can arise from carrying heavy buckets of water long distances. In a 2016 household survey, 63 percent of respondents from households that collect water from sources outside their house stated that women are responsible for water collection. This was followed by young girls below age 15, which comprised 15 percent of the responses (figure 5).

Availability of proper sanitation facilities at schools for girls has a negative impact on girls' school attendance. A survey of sanitation and hygiene conditions in schools conducted in 2016 showed that schools in Tajikistan generally have sanitation facilities available on site, though there are differences between rural and urban areas in the coverage of improved facilities. In most schools, separate sanitation facilities exist for girls and boys, but only a few schools have special facilities for menstrual hygiene management. At the national level, girls and boys share sanitation facilities in only 17 percent of the schools, ranging from 10 percent in urban areas to 19 percent in rural areas.

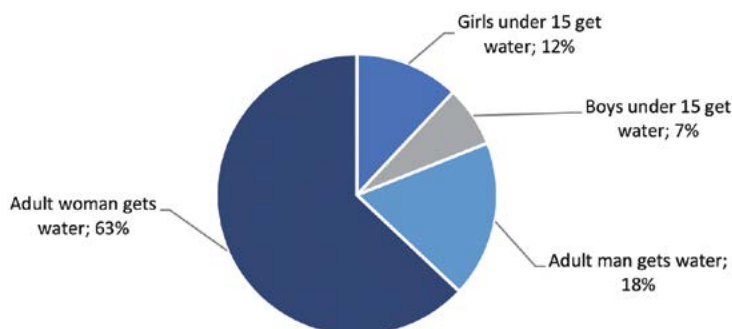
²⁸ WHO (2019).

²⁹ World Bank Group (2019b).

³⁰ IHME (2019).

³¹ UNAIDS (2019).

³² TAJSTAT (2019a): for women from 75 in 2008 to 540 in 2018, and for men from 298 in 2008 to 882 in 2018.

FIGURE 5. DIVISION OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR WATER COLLECTION WITHIN HOUSEHOLDS

Source: World Bank Group. 2017. *Glass Half Full* report.

However, very few schools have facilities for menstrual hygiene management: only 1 percent of schools had covered bins for disposal of menstrual hygiene waste, while only 2 percent of schools had water available in girls' cubicles for menstrual hygiene management.³³

Child and Maternal Health

Maternal and infant deaths are decreasing in Tajikistan with boys having a 97 percent chance and girls having a 96 percent chance of surviving until their fifth birthday. Maternal deaths decreased from 86 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2010 to 24.1 in 2018 and, according to DHS results, the under-five mortality rate decreased from 51 deaths per 1,000 live births for boys and 46 for girls in 2012 to 26 for boys and 40 for girls in 2017.³⁴ In other words. Between 2013 and 2017, 88 percent of births occurred in a health facility³⁵ and virtually all births (99 percent) were attended by skilled health personnel in 2018. In comparison, only 83 percent of births were attended by skilled health personnel in 2008.³⁶ The 2017 DHS found that 92 percent of women attended at least one antenatal care visit and 64 percent attended four or more visits, up 11 percentage points from 2012.³⁷

Maternal and infant deaths in Tajikistan are caused by a combination of factors, including poor quality health facilities that lack proper equipment and skilled staff; distances to health facilities with limited access to transportation (especially in rural Tajikistan); women's tendency to continue doing hard physical work while pregnant; and limited knowledge of irregular pregnancy symptoms coupled with a hesitancy to go to health facilities.³⁸ This is often further reinforced by intra-household power dynamics preventing young women to seek medical help early on when a problem starts evolving.

Overall, young people lack information on sexual reproductive health and do not receive this training at school. The median age at first birth nationwide was 21.9 for women aged 25 to 49 in 2017. Many factors prevent women from accessing modern contraception. Pre-marital sex is taboo for girls in many communities, disincentivizing teenagers from seeking family planning services which often require parental consent or lack confidentiality. Furthermore, rural communities do not always

³³ World Bank Group (2017).

³⁴ TAJSTAT (2019a).

³⁵ TAJSTAT (2019).

³⁶ TAJSTAT (2019a).

³⁷ TAJSTAT, et al. (2018).

³⁸ ADB (2016).

have family planning services and/or trained female medical professionals (with whom women feel more comfortable).³⁹ The DHS found that 23 percent of married women ages 15 to 49 who wanted to prevent or postpone pregnancy did not have access to family planning methods.⁴⁰

World Bank support to address gender gaps in health include the above-mentioned Early Childhood Development Project which will, through its support to the implementation of basic package of ECD services, address nutritional and health-related aspects of child and maternal health. In addition, a Health Services Improvement Project will address poor access to quality mother and child health services, specifically in rural areas, including postnatal and nutrition counselling for mothers and outreach activities to reach women directly in their respective households.

Further, the World Bank' strong support in the water sector contributes to increased access to clean water in Dushanbe, benefitting women and men in every possible way, and, with the Rural Water and Sanitation Project, addresses gender gaps related to the huge and disproportionate time and physical burden for women from traditional roles of water fetching, in addition to privacy and hygienic conditions of sanitary facilities for adolescent female students in schools.

³⁹ ADB (2016).

⁴⁰ TAJSTAT, et al. (2018).

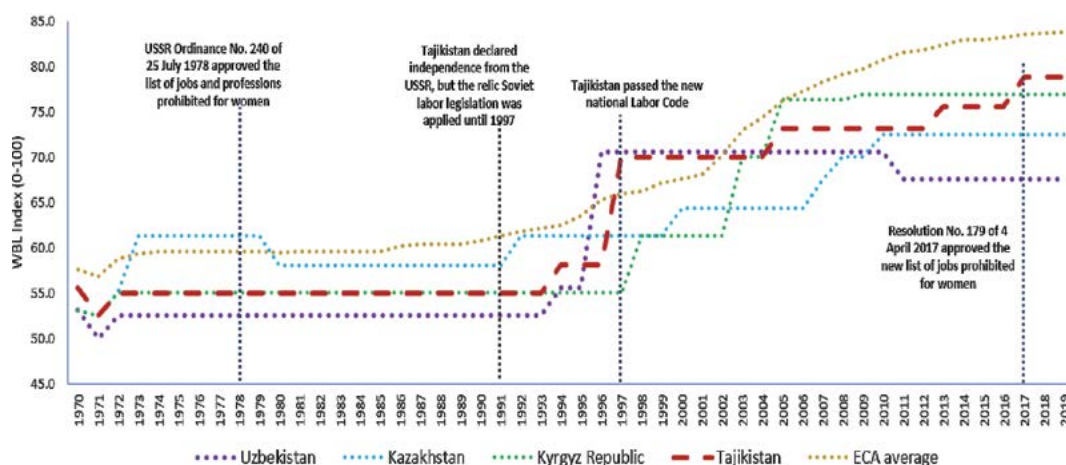
Gender Considerations for More and Better Jobs – Economic Opportunities

This section highlights the gender dimensions in the labor market of Tajikistan, including the legal environment for employment, labor force participations rates for men and women, labor pay gaps, and women's access to and control over assets.

Legal Environment in the Labor Market

Women in Tajikistan face fewer legal constraints today than they did in 2010. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the ensuing civil war in Tajikistan (1992–1997), industrial output declined, and labor was reallocated across sectors. Industries that had employed a high proportion of women (textiles, manufacturing, and agriculture) were severely affected. At the same time, some legal impediments for gender equality in labor force participation were eased in the national Labor Code in May 1997,⁴¹ Tajikistan decreased gender differences that women faced in the law (as measured by WBL index) by 11.9 points – the biggest progress made in the country's 50-year history. However, after 1997, the reform stalled for another 8 years (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6. WORLD BANK'S WBL INDEX IN CENTRAL ASIA, 1970-2019



Source: Women, Business and the Law historical database.

⁴¹ Labor Code of 15 May 1997 available at: http://www.adlia.tj/show_doc.fwx?rgn=398&conttype=2

Tajikistan improved its WBL score by almost six points thanks to the introduction of the new Labor Code in July 2016⁴² that allow women to work the same night hours as men and the introduction of domestic violence legislation on 19 March 2013.⁴³ However, Tajikistan does not have legislation on sexual harassment in employment along with the applicable remedies, inhibiting women's voice and agency in the workplace.

Many factors contribute to the observed low female labor force participation rates in Tajikistan, with one factor being its Labor Code. Tajikistan's Labor Code (Article 216) prohibits women's employment in: underground jobs, difficult jobs, jobs in harmful conditions, or jobs linked to manual lifting and moving of heavy loads. The list of specific sectors and professions where female employment was not allowed was originally established by the Ordinance No. 240 of 25 July 1978⁴⁴ that was inherited from the Soviet times and remained in force until the new restrictive list was established by the Government Resolution No. 179 of 4 April 2017⁴⁵ at the national level. The Resolution largely mimicked the Soviet Ordinance by preserving the archaic nature of job restrictions. According to the Resolution, women are excluded from numerous professions and tasks that are perceived to be harmful or difficult in around 27 sectors of the national economy (refer to Appendix 2 for more details).

Increased male labor migration in the last two decades has also been one of the factors for low female labor force participation. Men migrated mostly to the Russian Federation in large numbers starting in the 2000s for employment. Women, on the other hand, were increasingly called upon to become full-time homemakers. In general, focus group interviews reveal that when young women have children to take care of, or in some cases their families ban women from working outside the home, then women do not look for a job, despite having completed their education⁴⁶.

Crucially, women are not allowed to engage in “dangerous” professions or tasks within economic sectors important to Tajikistan, such as construction, mining, geological exploration and topography, railway transport and subways, and even agriculture. Not all restrictions are enforced, but their existence may mean that some women avoid these sectors for employment and training, while male employers may also avoid hiring women for these jobs. The original intention of the restrictions was to protect women and women's reproductive health, and more recently countries have been reforming their regulations to include gender neutral protection. In the case of “dangerous” jobs, governments, employers, and trade unions work together to establish safe working conditions that protect women and men. Removing restrictions on women's employment is not expected to create substantive costs for Tajikistan. On the contrary, restrictive labor laws tend to result in: considerable variation in employment opportunities for women compared to men, uneven distribution of jobs, and inflexibility in the labor market in terms of women's employability. Another negative implication of labor regulatory barrier is occupational segregation that may reduce women's earnings potential, since many restricted jobs are often in higher-paying sectors.⁴⁷

⁴² Labor Code of 23 July 2016 available at: http://www.adlia.tj/show_doc.fwx?rgn=127423&conttype=2

⁴³ Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence No. 954 of 19 March 2013 available at: http://base.mmkt.tj/view_sanadhoverview.php?showdetail=&sanadID=291&language=ru

⁴⁴ Ordinance No. 240 of 25 July 1978 available at: http://www.lawrussia.ru/texts/legal_346/doc346a728x688.htm

⁴⁵ Government Resolution No. 179 of 4 April 2017 could not be located online and is shared by the legal contributors in Tajikistan.

⁴⁶ World Bank Group (2016).

⁴⁷ Ogloblin, Constantin G. “The Gender Earnings Differential in the Russian Transition Economy.” *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, vol. 52, no. 4, 1999, pp. 602–627., doi:10.2307/2525066. Accessed 13 2020.

Lower ages for women at which they can retire with both full and partial pension benefits reduce the amount of time women work and contribute to their pensions in comparison with men, which exacerbates gender gap in pension benefits. In addition to labor market differences, women in Tajikistan reach statutory retirement age 5 years earlier than men.⁴⁸ Given a set of factors, such as longer life expectancy of women compared to men in Tajikistan (on average, 4 years)⁴⁹ and declining fertility rates, ensuring equality in retirement ages in the Tajik system where pension benefits are still administered by the state is essential for releasing the fiscal pressure on public finances.

Despite the remaining complexities and regulatory barriers, Tajikistan should be recognized for the progress it has made in the legal field in comparison with some of its regional peers. For example, unlike in Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan, women are a protected category under the law when it comes to access to credit, which provides more flexibility for those women who want to start and operate their own business. In addition, unlike other countries in the region, government in Tajikistan is fully responsible for administration of maternity leave benefits in the private sector, which allows to remove the financial burden from employers and reduce their disincentive to hire women of childbearing age. However, there is no paid paternity leave or paid parental leave available for fathers, which could allow men to share some of the childcaring responsibilities releasing women's ability to return to the labor market sooner.

Labor Force Participation

About 69 percent of Tajikistan's working-age female (and about half of the working-age male) population were not working for pay in 2016. The share of employed in the total number of working-age population is an additional relevant indicator. This indicator shows that only about 31 percent of working-age female population was employed, whereas for male this number was 49 percent. These numbers suggest significant lost opportunities and forgone economic outputs. Employment status varies widely by region. The current female employment rate is highest in Sughd (41.3 percent) and lowest in DRS (18.7 percent) and ranges from 20 percent to 33 percent in other regions of Tajikistan (Figure 7).⁵⁰

The trend for gender gap in labor force participation rate (LFPR) for the last decade has gone down by about 6 percentage points, from about 27 to 21 percent (Figure 8). This is primarily driven by decline in male LFPR (from 57 to 53 percent) and a marginal increase in female LFPR (from 30 to 31) between 2009 and 2019. In 2019, women (15 years of age and older) participated in the labor force at a rate of 31.3 percent and men at 52.8 percent yielding a gender gap of 21.5 percentage points (Figure 7). This gap is substantially higher than gender gaps in Europe and Central Asia (16.1), among low-income countries (15.3), and globally (27.1) (Figure 7).⁵¹

Furthermore, the share of employed female in the total number of employed has been declining steadily, e.g. of 100 employed in 2004 47 were female, and this number declined to 40 in 2016⁵². There are two factors for the reduction in female employment: first, inactivity rates increased, mostly driven by women exiting the labor force. This trend began following independence and during the civil war. Second, as adults increasingly began to seek out opportunities in the Russian Federation in the 2000s, this led to increases in the reservation wage (the minimum acceptable wage for a

⁴⁸ Law No. 796 of 25 June 1993 (Article 11) available at: https://nafaka.tj/ru/press-sluzhba/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=191&Itemid=791&lang=ru

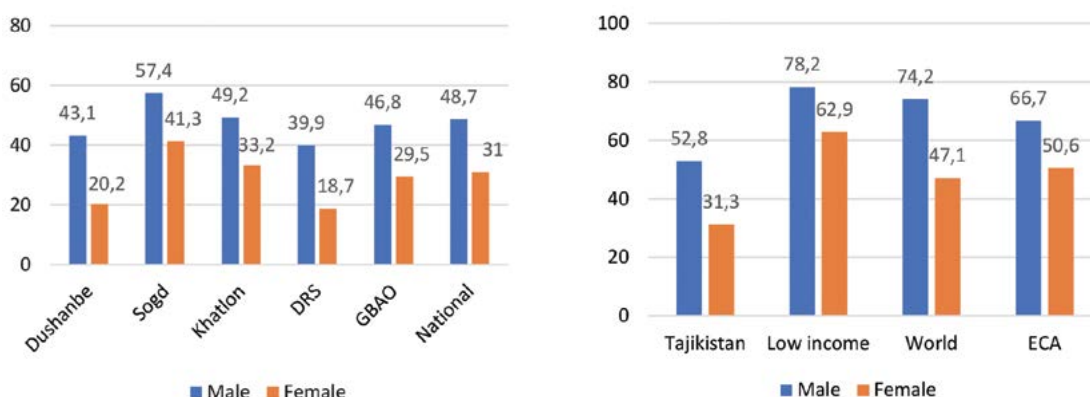
⁴⁹ WDI.

⁵⁰ TAJSTAT (2017).

⁵¹ World Bank Group (2019b).

⁵² TAJSTAT (2017).

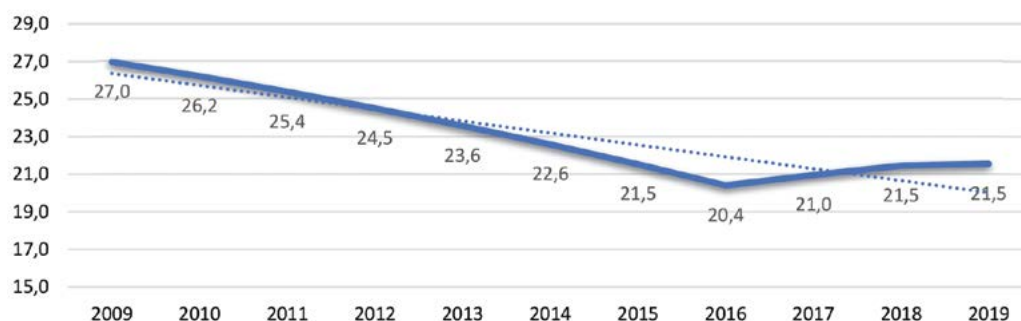
FIGURE 7. SHARE OF EMPLOYED POPULATION BY REGION (PERCENT), 2016 (LEFT) AND LFPR (PERCENT OF POPULATION AGES 15+) (MODELED ILO ESTIMATE), 2019 (RIGHT)



Sources: TAJSTAT (2017) (left) and World Development Indicators (right).

Note: Share of employed population in the total number of working-age (15-75) population.

FIGURE 8. GENDER GAP IN LFPR



Source: World Development Indicators.

Note: This series shows the difference between male and female LFPR (% of population ages 15+) (modeled ILO estimate).

worker to choose to enter the labor force) and family income also increased. Several studies have also found that the inflow of remittances in Tajikistan has led to reduced labor force participation among remaining family members. Workers exited the labor force either because domestic wages were too low or because household income was sufficiently buoyed by remittances. From sectoral employment point of view the share of agriculture which has been employing about 61 percent of employed female has been declining in the total employment volume. Finally, the construction sector has been growing in the recent years, employing almost exclusively men.

Gender determines both employment outcomes and the type of employment. Multinomial logit models of employment outcomes reveal that females are about 23 percentage points less likely to be employed than otherwise identical males, and that females are 12 percentage points less likely to be private sector wage employees than males⁵³.

⁵³ World Bank Group (2017c).

Tajikistan's legal framework does, to some extent, prevent women from participating equally in labor market. Women have equal physical mobility to men (such as obtaining a passport and foreign and domestic travel), mothers receive 140 days of maternity leave with full pay,⁵⁴ the law mandates equal remuneration for equal work, discrimination based on gender during hiring is illegal, and the legal procedures for registering a business are the same for women as they are for men, including the average duration of registration.⁵⁵ Tajikistan's labor law prohibits women from working in mines, in jobs associated with unhealthy work conditions and heavy lifting, at night (with some exceptions), and overtime (for pregnant women and mothers of children under three years old). Overtime includes weekends, holidays, and business trips.⁵⁶ Analysis by ADB found that these laws have been misused by some employers to close some positions to women.⁵⁷

Restrictions on sectors and occupations have led to gender-segregated areas of study. Most girls in Tajikistan remain in fields commonly associated with women's traditional roles in society, such as education, health, and social services, with only a few entering scientific or technical study. The original intention of the restrictions was to protect women and women's reproductive health, and more recently countries have been reforming their regulations to include gender neutral protection; countries are leaving employment decisions to the worker. In the case of "dangerous" jobs, governments, employers, and trade unions work together to establish safe working conditions that protect women and men. Removing restrictions on women's employment is not expected to create substantive costs for Tajikistan. On the contrary, restrictive labor laws tend to result in: considerable variation in employment opportunities for women compared to men; uneven distribution of jobs; and inflexibility in the labor market in terms of women's employability. Another negative implication of labor regulatory barriers is occupational segregation that may reduce women's earnings potential, since many restricted jobs are often in higher-paying sectors.

Gender disaggregated data indicate that roughly 22 percent of woman and 33 percent of men employed outside agriculture were informally employed. Informal employment can expose workers to various types of vulnerabilities (e.g. lack of social insurance and absence of annual leaves), including harassments (e.g. not paying salaries on time, withholding larger-than-required amounts as taxes, firing from job, etc.) on the part of the employer.⁵⁸

The share of male jobseekers is usually higher than the one of female, which has resulted in higher unemployment rate among male, because unemployment includes those who are looking for jobs. Female unemployment (ages 15 and older) has been consistently lower than male unemployment in Tajikistan since 1991 by an average of 1.7 percentage points (Figure 9). Experts argue that this is driven by the fact that the share of male jobseekers is usually higher than the one of female (Figure 9). Survey data suggest that share of male looking for job is larger than the share of female when the search lasts less than 1 month, between 3 and 6 months and when search lasts for more than a year. An interesting observation is that the share of female being offered job without search is almost 2.5 times larger (12.7 vs. 4.9) than the share of male that are offered job without search (Figure 9).

⁵⁴ Research suggests that maternity leave policies can depress female labor force participation. For example, in neighboring Uzbekistan, a World Bank study found that these types of policies may actually disincentivize employers from hiring women as they reinforce perceptions that female employees are more costly (Romanova et al., 2017). Designing policies that require all employers and/or employees to pay into a leave insurance program may alleviate the financial burden on employers. Policies incentivizing share spousal leave may also help.

⁵⁵ World Bank Group (2020).

⁵⁶ Republic of Tajikistan (1997).

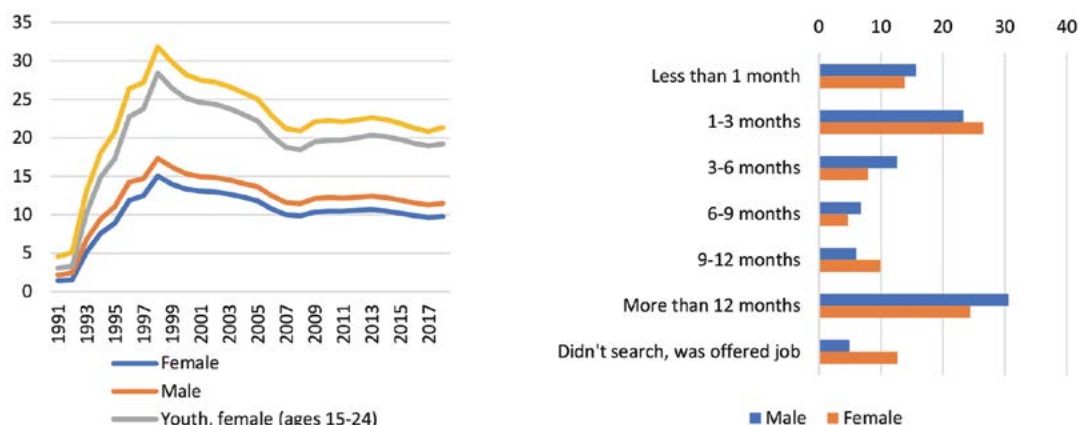
⁵⁷ ADB (2016).

⁵⁸ TAJSTAT (2017).

As in many countries, gender norms and attitudes that require women to assume responsibility for childcare and household chores create an uneven burden for women in Tajikistan. According to the 2007 Tajikistan Living Standards Survey, more than 90 percent of economically inactive women (ages 25 to 49) cited their role as a homemaker as their reason for inactivity while men in the same age group cited a handicap or that they had no intention of working.⁵⁹ Approximately 65 percent of men and almost 60 percent of women in Tajikistan believe that a woman should do household chores even if her husband is not working.⁶⁰ The role of early childhood education and care institutions becomes even more prominent in this context. If the wife has an opportunity to leave her children at a preschool institution during working days, she can realize her potential, improve her self-esteem and bring additional income to the family. However, pre-school enrollment rates are quite low (12.4 percent in 2016)⁶¹.

Agriculture and education are the largest employers in Tajikistan and employ the majority of the female (68.7 percent) and male (62.3 percent) full-time workforce (see Table 1, below). The proportion of women employed in agriculture has decreased by 8.4 percentage points between 2013 and 2017 while the share of men in agriculture has increased by 4.4 percentage points over the same time period. Similarly, the share of women in education and health and social services has increased since 2013 while men's participation in those same sectors is decreasing, although marginally. These trends have caused the female workforce to shift away from the extractive and manufacturing sectors (which employed 54.5 percent of the female workforce in 2013) to the service sector (which employed 53.9 percent of the female population in 2017).⁶²

FIGURE 9. UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN TAJIKISTAN, 1991 TO 2018 (LEFT) AND DURATION OF JOB SEARCH, 2016 (RIGHT)



Source: World Bank Group (2019b). Modeled ILO estimates, and TAJSTAT (2017).

Traditional stereotypes, including on religious grounds, still exist in many population groups with respect to the outcome of marriage on the current and future employment prospects of a woman. Marriage is negatively correlated with women's employment status as many husbands

⁵⁹ World Bank Group (2013).

⁶⁰ EBRD (2019).

⁶¹ World Bank Group (2019c).

⁶² TAJSTAT (2017).

TABLE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT, BY SECTOR (2013 & 2017) (PERCENT)

	Women		Men	
	2013	2017	2013	2017
EXTRACTIVE & MANUFACTURING SECTORS	54.5	46.1	59.4	62
Agriculture, hunting, & forestry	49.5	41.1	43.9	48.3
Fish farming	0	0	0	0
Mining & quarrying	0.3	0.3	1.8	1.5
Manufacturing & industry	3.7	3.4	7.2	5.9
Electricity, gas, & water supply	0.6	0.5	2.8	2.2
Construction	0.4	0.7	3.7	4.2
SERVICE SECTOR	45.5	53.9	40.6	38
Wholesale & retail trade & repair services	1.3	1.2	3.1	2.7
Hotels & restaurants	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.4
Transport, storage, & communications	1.3	1.3	3.4	2.6
Financial intermediation	1.2	1.2	2.4	2
Real estate operations, rental & commercial activities	1	1.5	2	3.1
Public administration & defense	2.4	2.9	3.7	4.6
Education	22.4	27.3	16.1	14
Health & social services	12.2	15.4	5.4	5.3
Other public, social, & personal services	3.1	2.8	3.7	3.2
Other services sector organizations	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.1

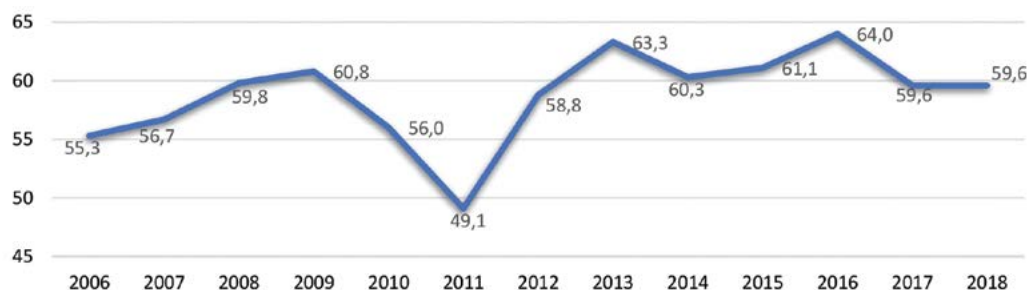
Source: TAJSTAT (2017).

restrict their wives from being employed or seeking employment. Only a quarter of married women and 19 percent of women that were never married are currently working, whereas about half (51 percent) of the women who are divorced, separated or widowed were currently working in 2017.⁶³

The Gender Wage Gap

Despite legislation mandating equal pay for equal work, evidence suggests that women are not remunerated at the same rate as their male counterparts. Records show that the average nominal monthly wage (irrespective of job type) has been consistently higher for men than for women across all sectors of the economy. Economy-wide, women earned 60 percent of what men earned in 2017 and 2018 (Figure 10).

⁶³ TAJSTAT (2018).

FIGURE 10. RATIO OF WOMEN'S TO MEN'S NOMINAL MONTHLY WAGE (PERCENT)

Source: TAJSTAT 2017.

A useful approach to understanding the magnitude of economic loss or earnings arising due to gender inequality is by contemplating the Gender Development Index (GDI) methodology. Estimation of GDI requires measurement of Gross National Income (GNI) per capita both for male and female. Following the methodology for GNI per capita measurement, estimates for female and male earned incomes can be calculated⁶⁴.

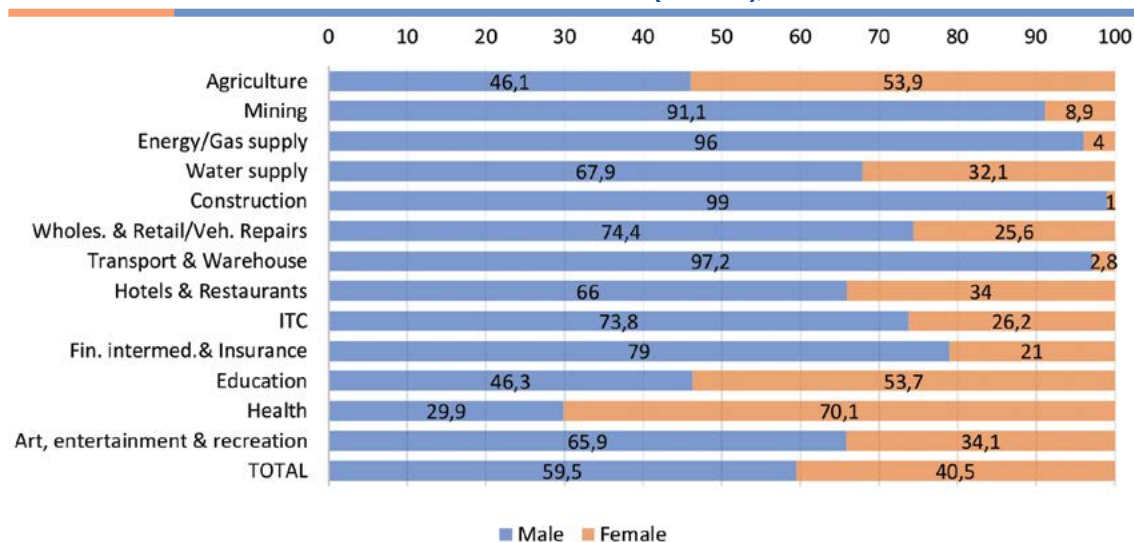
In Tajikistan, estimated female earned income is 4.5 times lower than the estimated male earned income due to gender inequality. Estimated male earned income per capita in 2019 was \$6,427 (in 2017 PPP terms) whereas the estimated female earned income per capita was only \$1,440 (in 2017 PPP terms). Female-to-male wage ratio of 60 percent and the share of economically active female population of 37 percent (versus 63 percent for male) contribute to such a considerable gap in earned income.

The most gender-equal sectors of economic activity are agriculture and education. In both agriculture and education, of all employed, male and female represent about 46 percent and 54 percent, respectively. On the other hand, the most gender-unequal sectors of economy are mining, energy and gas supply, transport, warehousing, and construction. In 2016, only 1 percent of all employed in the construction and only about 3 percent of all employed in the transport and warehousing sectors were female. The only sector with large gender gap in favor of female is the health, where 70 percent of all employed are female. Women are certainly underrepresented in the sectors with better-paid jobs (Figure 11).

Youth not in employment, education and training (NEET).

There is an alarming gender gap of almost 42 percentage points between youth male and female NEET rates (7.2 versus 49.3) (Figure 12). Given the young population and the importance of youth development in Tajikistan, particular attention should be given to youth who are not in employment, education or training (the NEET indicator). In the framework of Agenda 2030, NEET is an important indicator for achieving the SDG 8 on “Promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.” Idle youth who do not contribute their time and efforts in learning skills to increase their chances of finding jobs are particularly vulnerable to risks

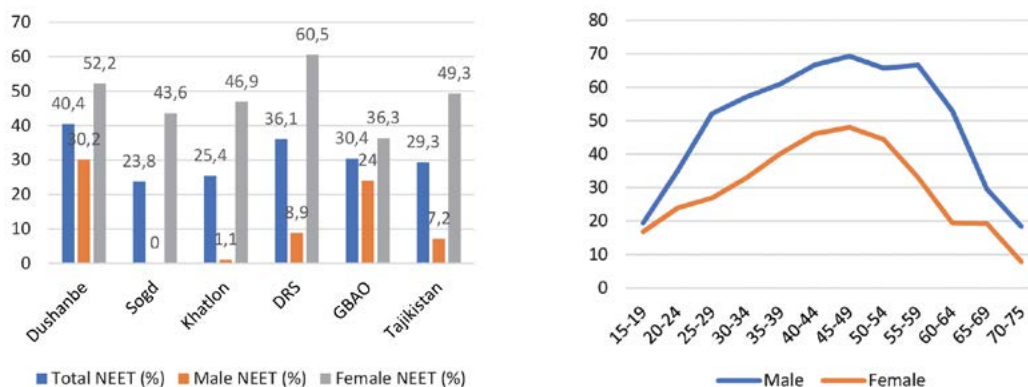
⁶⁴ UNDP (2020).

FIGURE 11. KEY ECONOMIC ACTIVITY EMPLOYMENT BY GENDER (PERCENT), 2016

Source: TAJSTAT (2017).

in the labor market and social exclusion. The 2017 DHS found that in Tajikistan, women with a higher education are three times more likely to be currently employed as women with no education or only a primary education (54 percent versus 18 percent). Data from 2016 suggest that about 29 percent of the youth aged 15-24 were not in employment, education and training in Tajikistan.

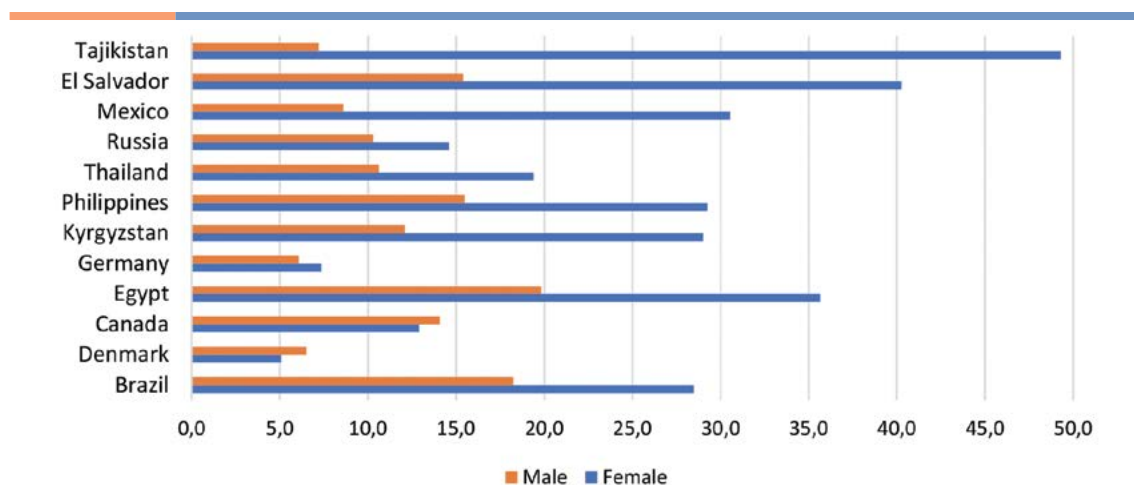
Regional breakdown of the youth in NEET group shows that youth female NEET rates are higher than youth male NEET rates across the entire country (Figure 12). With 40 percent youth NEET rate, Dushanbe has the highest rate and is above the national average, followed by DRS (36 percent) and GBAO (30 percent). Sogd on the other hand has the lowest NEET rate among youth and 0 rate among the youth male. Gender-disaggregated employment data show that a higher share of young men (i.e. compared to young women) tend to enter labor market after graduation, as can be seen from gender-disaggregated employment rates for different age bands (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12. NEET RATE AMONG YOUTH AGED 15-24: BY GENDER AND REGION (LEFT) EMPLOYMENT-TO-POPULATION AGE 15-75, 2016 (RIGHT)

Source: TAJSTAT (2017).

Tajikistan is a big outlier in terms of gender gap in NEET rate even when compared internationally (Figure 13). For example, in Egypt, 35.7 percent of young women belong to the NEET group (compared to 19.8 percent of young men). In Mexico, the young women have more than 3 times higher probability than young men to fall into the NEET group (30.5 percent and 8.6 percent, respectively). A substantial gender gap is also observed in El Salvador, Philippines, Kyrgyzstan and Brazil (in each country more than 10 percentage points). On the other hand, Canada and Denmark show youth NEET rates in favor of women, i.e. the share of men in the NEET group is greater than the share of women (the difference is less than 2 percentage points).

FIGURE 13. NEET RATE, AGED 15-24, INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON, 2016

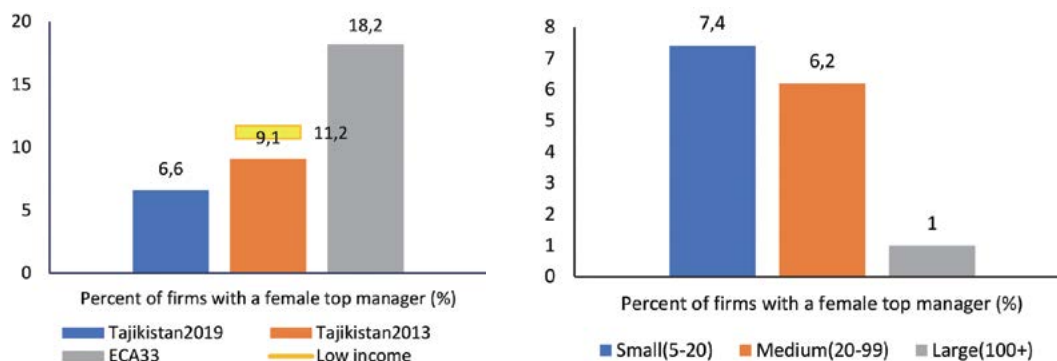


Source: TAJSTAT (2017) and WDI.

Women and Firms

There have been slight improvements in women's full-time employment in firms between 2013 and 2019. According to Enterprise Surveys data for 2019 the proportion of permanent full-time workers in firms that are women is limited 35.7 percent, having only slightly increased since 2013. This is also 4.8 percentage points lower than the average in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and 10.3 percentage points higher than the average among low income economies. Most of female full-time workers (around 37 percent) work for small and medium firms. When it comes to higher level and higher paid labor opportunities for women, the percentage of firms with women participation in ownership is 23 percent, which is 9.8 percentage points lower than the average in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and 1.1 percentage lower than the average in low income economies. The largest percentage of firms (23 percent) with female participation in ownership are small firms (5-20 employees), followed by large (22 percent) and medium (22 percent), respectively. Attitudes towards female business managers has also improved over the past years. In the 2016 round of Life in Transition Survey (LiTS), 80 percent of male and 87 percent of female respondents said that female business executives are as competent as male business executives.

Women in Tajikistan have fewer opportunities than men to develop skills and abilities of managing a business, not to speak of any other support. While there are many issues-such as access to markets and finance, understanding of legislation and taxation, and difficulties registering

FIGURE 14. WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN FIRMS

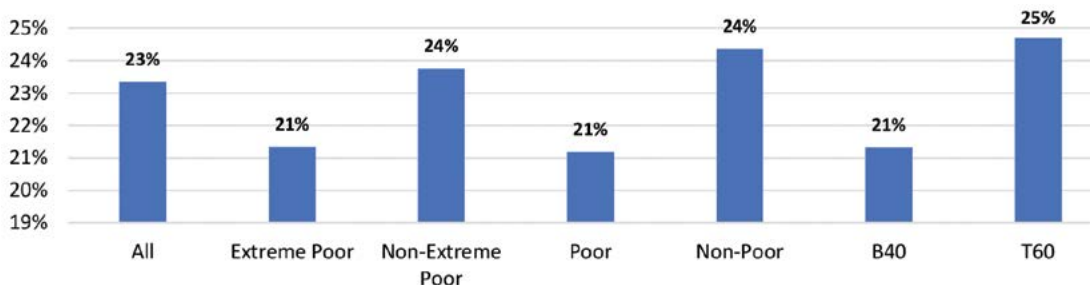
Source: World Bank's Enterprise Surveys (2019).

a business-that affect all entrepreneurs alike, there are also barriers that uniquely affect women. Data from a UNDP study on challenges faced by women in entrepreneurship hinge on norms and self-esteem. When asked what could have improved their situation the most, they talked about stronger skills, self-esteem and self-confidence more than external issues such as access to finance.⁶⁵

Between 2013 and 2019, the share of firms with a female top manager has consequently declined from 9.1 to 6.6 percent in Tajikistan. This is 11.6 percentage points lower than the average in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (Figure 14). The biggest percentage of firms having a female top manager is among small firms (7.4 percent) and the lowest - amongst large firms (1 percent).

Poverty and women's access to assets

About 23 percent of people in Tajikistan live in households headed by women. Female-headed households are slightly more common among non-poor households than among poor households (Figure 15)⁶⁶ pointing to the assumption that poor women are less able to afford leaving difficult

FIGURE 15. FEMALE HEADED HOUSEHOLDS

Source: Profile of Poverty and Prosperity in Tajikistan report, 2017.

⁶⁵ UNDP (2016).

⁶⁶ World Bank Group (2017a).

domestic situations, than non-poor women. Female-headed households are also more common in urban than rural areas: 38 percent of people living in urban areas live in female-headed households, while about 16 percent of people living in rural areas live in female-headed households – pointing to the assumption that higher social pressure in rural areas may prevent women from residing (or remaining) there as household heads. Female headed households are also smaller – on average, they have about one household member less than male-headed households (6.7 vs. 7.8 members). In 2014, a higher share of female headed households received either some pension income (41 percent vs. 37 percent), some employment income (80 percent vs. 76 percent) or both, though households headed by women were about equally likely to receive remittances. The average amount of income received for each source was higher for female-headed households as well (by 21 percent, 31 percent, and 19 percent, respectively).

The higher likelihood of poorer individuals joining other households on the death of a male household head likely plays a role in the higher prevalence of non-poor female-headed households. For women in a patriarchal society, there are fewer opportunities to overcome poverty. Although there are no data on the subject, experts have drawn connections between poverty and women agreeing to enter polygamous marriages as second or third wives as they see no other means to support themselves or their children. In fact, because religion is increasingly influential in Tajikistan, polygamy is “socially accepted, may be a good option, and may even be suggested by the relatives” of abandoned wives because it can offer them economic protection and stability⁶⁷.

Women’s ownership of and control over key resources is an important economic autonomy indicator. Sex-disaggregated data about ownership of real estate, moveable property, or household assets is limited, but national survey data show that only around half of women have some ownership rights to housing, and less than 1 percent of these are sole owners. At the same time, share of female-headed dehkan farms has been rising across the region, from 8 percent to 21 percent between 2012 and 2016⁶⁸. Households headed by females are less likely than male-headed households to have valuable goods such as cars, trucks, and computers. There are also clear gender differences in land and livestock possession. While urban and rural women are equally likely to own a house, only 16.5 percent of urban women, as compared to 33.7 percent of rural women, own land in some form (women usually own land jointly). Female-headed households that own land tend to have smaller plots than those headed by male⁶⁹.

Urban women are at least three times more likely than rural women to have used the internet in the past 12 months. With increased penetration of new technologies in the daily lives, internet penetration has also been rising. About 12 percent of women had Internet access according to DHS 2017 data. One key factor to this has been the rapid growth in computer ownership among households in Tajikistan over the last 5 years, from 12% in 2012 to 21% in 2017.

Gender gaps in access to finance suggest that this gap is in favor of men in Tajikistan. According to the World Bank’s Global Findex, 42 percent of female and 52 percent of male respondents (ages 15 and older) had financial accounts in 2017; 9 percent of women and 13 percent of men saved at a financial institution; and 10 percent of women and 16 percent of men borrowed money to start, operate, or expand a farm or a business.⁷⁰ However, it is important to note that in many instances bank accounts are opened by the household heads who are male in most cases but the accounts are opened to serve the interests of the entire household. This is also driven by the fact

⁶⁷ ADB (2016).

⁶⁸ TAJSTAT (2018b).

⁶⁹ ADB (2016).

⁷⁰ World Bank Group (2019a).

that there are significant costs to opening a bank account. Women's limited property ownership also has implications for their ability to access commercial loans because they can seldom meet collateral requirements.

The WBG programs in Tajikistan address gender gaps related to jobs and the creation of economic opportunities through IFC Advisory Services to increase access to finance for farmers, including women farmers, banking services for unbanked and underbanked population segments, and efforts to increase financial inclusion. The Agriculture Commercialization Project includes activities to promote and increase the capacities of women farmers (and help women transcend their roles as mere farm workers towards more responsibility). A new Rural Economy Development Project will help create jobs and income in agri-processing and community-based tourism, with a focus on reaching most vulnerable target groups, including female household heads, returning migrants with limited economic perspectives and young NEET, most of whom are female.

Gender Considerations on Voice and Agency

This section discusses the legislation and national mechanisms promoting women's rights, participation in public life, women's decision-making in households, role of labor migration in gender dynamics, and gender-based and domestic violence.

Legislation and National Mechanisms

The Constitution of the Republic of Tajikistan recognizes international law as a component of the national legal system, and Tajikistan is a State Party to the Convention on the elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Law of the Republic of Tajikistan «On State Guarantees of Equal Rights of Men and Women and Equal Opportunities for their Implementation» from March 1, 2005, Decree of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan of December 3, 1999 «On Measures to Enhance the Role of Women in Society», the State Program on «Main directions of the state policy to ensure equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2001 - 2010 », and the National Strategy “On Enhancing the Role of Women in the Republic of Tajikistan for 2011-2020” are the main documents regulating the role of women in society. For the latter, the Committee for Women's and Family Affairs has been assigned by the government as the coordinator on the implementation of the strategy, whereas the Agency for Statistics is assigned as the main governmental agency to collect and report data for the purposes of the monitoring and evaluation of the mentioned strategy.

The Committee for Women's and Family Affairs is the national authority for implementing state policy on protecting women's interests and rights. The committee provides services to women, conducts research, coordinates public gender equality activities, and monitors Tajikistan's compliance with international standards. The CEDAW committee and the international community have routinely noted human and financial resource constraints that have prevented the Committee for Women's and Family Affairs from executing its duties effectively.

The government has made considerable progress in mainstreaming gender into national development strategies and plans, including into the Poverty Reduction Strategies, the National Development Strategy for 2030, and Interim Development Strategy 2020. Each of these mentioned development strategies dedicate chapters to gender equality as an integral part of developing the country's human capital. The following main action areas for improving policies to ensure actual gender equality have been envisaged in the NDS⁷¹:

- Improvement of the legislation in order to implement state guarantees to create equal opportunities for women and men, including securing the principle of the mandatory gender expertise of the adopted acts;
- Development of a model for continuous monitoring and evaluation of policies to ensure effective gender equality based on the development of gender statistics;

⁷¹ UNDP (2018).

- Development of institutional mechanisms for introducing national and international commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment in sectoral policies;
- Enhancing mechanisms to ensure legal literacy and social inclusion of women, including rural women;
- Increasing the gender potential and gender sensitivity of employees of all branches of the government;
- Introduction of gender budgeting in the budget process.

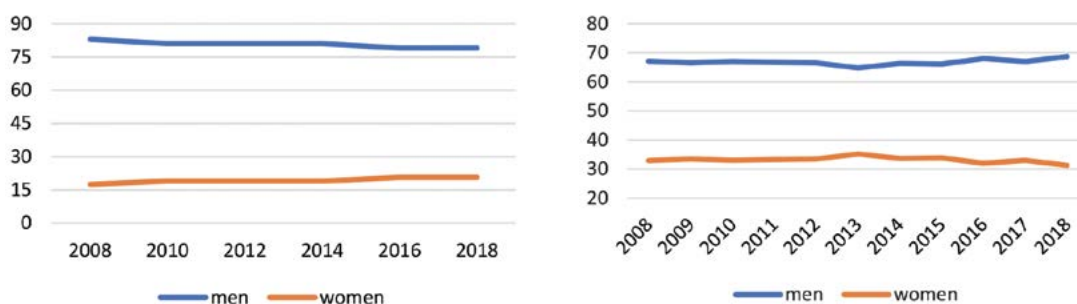
Furthermore, to ensure equal opportunities and reduce social inequality, the following priorities are noted in the interim development strategy (IDS) for 2016-2020:

- Development of a system to ensure inclusive development and reduce inequality;
- Reducing gender inequality through improved policies to ensure actual gender equality and prevent all forms of violence against women and girls;
- Ensuring the well-being of children.

Participation in Public Life

Progress towards reaching the goal of 30 percent representation by women in governing bodies has been slow. Women received the right to vote in Tajikistan in 1924 and have maintained this right since independence in 1991. The first woman was elected to parliament in 1990.⁷² While the government has not legislated quotas for women's election to public office, it has set a state goal of 30 percent representation by women in governing bodies of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches.⁷³ Progress towards this goal has been made but it has yet to be reached. In 2018, 20.6 percent of seats in parliament (the upper and lower chamber) were held by women, an increase from 17.5 percent in 2008 (Figure 16).

FIGURE 16. DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN PARLIAMENT (LEFT) AND DISTRIBUTION OF JOBS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR (RIGHT) BY GENDER (2008 TO 2018) (PERCENT)



Source: TAJSTAT (2019a).

⁷² IPU (2017).

⁷³ World Bank Group (2013).

Women continue to be inhibited by gender stereotypes combined with lack of financial resources, time, and family support. Evidence suggests that legal frameworks are not enough to increase women's representation in government.⁷⁴ When looked at public sector jobs, only about one-third of the jobs are occupied by women and the trend has not changed over the last decade (Figure 16). Data from 2016 Life in Transition Survey show that 84 and 89 percent of female and male respondents, respectively, think that men make better political leaders than women.

Tajikistan's legal provisions specify the number of seats that municipal council have – the councils have to have between 15 and 40 seats, depending primarily on the population size and number of settlements in the municipality (each village is entitled to, at least, one deputy seat).

TABLE 2. NUMBER OF DEPUTIES IN RURAL AND TOWNSHIP JAMOATS, 2016

Region	Population*	Number of jamoats	All jamoat deputies	Female deputies	Share of female deputies
GBAO	192,136	43	749	159	21.2 percent
DRS	1,842,453	115	2,868	380	13.2 percent
Khatlon	2,723,180	154	3,907	585	15 percent
Sughd	1,977,271	115	2,813	448	16 percent
Total	6,735,040	427	10,337	1,572	15.2 percent

Note: *Population of 427 rural and township jamoats, city population is not included.
Source: UNDP JAMBI dataset.

There were 10,337 local deputies elected in 427 jamoats in the last round of local elections. A total of 1,572 persons out of all deputies, or about 15.2 percent of the total deputy corps, were women. The largest number of deputies were elected in Khatlon, and the smallest number were elected in the least populous region of the country, GBAO (Table 2).

Decision Making in the Household

Women in Tajikistan have very little decision-making power in their domestic lives. Evidence suggests that women are becoming less engaged in decision making⁷⁵ as social norms persist and stronger gender stereotypes emerge.⁷⁶ In 2017, 49 percent of married women (aged 15 to 49) said that they did not make decisions either alone or jointly—a 15 percentage point increase from 2012—regarding their own health care, household purchases, and visits to family or friends. Likewise, the percentage of women who participate in all three of the aforementioned decisions dropped from 43 percent in 2012 to 33 percent in 2017 (Figure 17).⁷⁷

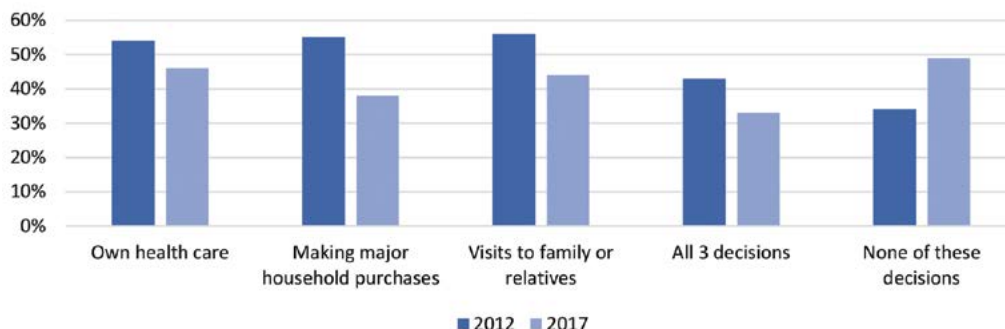
Furthermore, 2016 Life in Transition Survey (LiTS) also reports that two-thirds of female and two-thirds of male respondents say that a woman should take care of household chores, even if her husband is not working.

⁷⁴ World Bank Group (2013).

⁷⁵ TAJSTAT, et al. (2018) and World Bank Group (2019b).

⁷⁶ World Bank Group (2013).

⁷⁷ TAJSTAT, et al. (2018) and World Bank Group (2019b).

FIGURE 17. PARTICIPATION OF MARRIED WOMEN (AGED 15 - 49) IN HOUSEHOLD DECISION MAKING

Source: TAJSTAT et al. (2018) and World Bank Group (2019b). Note: The above graph compares results from Tajikistan's 2012 and 2017 Demographic Health Surveys. Participation in decision making is defined as having the final say either alone or jointly.

Women's decision-making power is associated with higher levels of education, location (GBAO has the largest proportion of women participating in all three decisions, 62 percent, while DRS and Khatlon have the smallest, 27 percent), and employment. In 2017, 71 percent of employed women (aged 15 to 49) who earned cash decided how to spend their earnings alone or jointly while 18 percent of women reported that their husbands primarily decided how it was spent.⁷⁸

Patriarchal family structures contribute to low levels of key decision making by married women. Households tend to be multi-generational with women living with their husbands' extended families. In this structure, newly married women are excluded from decision making as decisions are primarily taken by a father-in-law, husband, brother-in-law, or, at times, mother-in-law. In nuclear families, women may assume the second voice (after their husband) but their role is rarely significant.⁷⁹ As women age and have children, their social status in their households improve increasing their decision-making power.⁸⁰

Labor Migration Decisions and Gender Dynamics in households

Women accounted for 14 percent of total number of labor migrants in 2017⁸¹. By some estimates, one in four Tajik households have migrant members, with the total number reaching almost a million. The primary motivations for migration are high unemployment (especially among youth in rural areas), the large gap between domestic and foreign wages, and the collapse of former employment sectors due to structural changes. The Russian Federation is their primary destination (hosting more than 90% of migrants). The number of female migrants has been increasing since the 2008–2009 economic crisis. Migration has come to be perceived as “male” work, and inevitable for young men in Tajikistan. But gender stereotypes also play a role because, “maintenance of the family is almost exclusively the responsibility of males. Hence, households prefer to send men abroad to seek paid employment.” Decisions about migration are most often taken between the potential migrant and parents, but in some cases the parents make the decision independently. As a rule, wives typically are excluded from decision making as they occupy a subordinate role in the family.

⁷⁸ TAJSTAT, et al. (2018) and World Bank Group (2019b).

⁷⁹ World Bank Group (2013).

⁸⁰ ADB (2016).

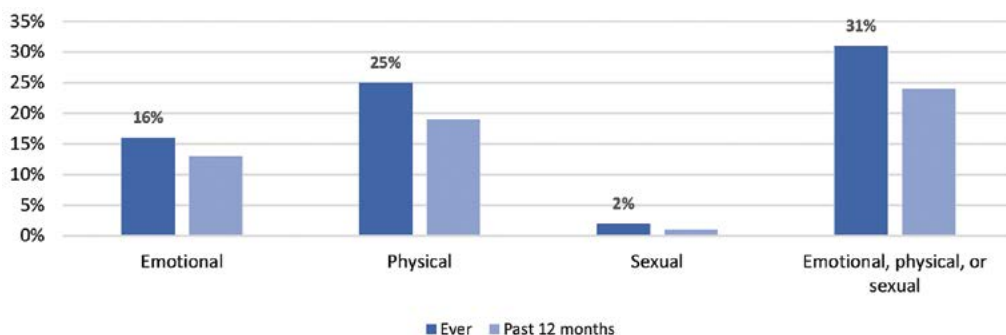
⁸¹ Based on data from Ministry of Labor, Employment and Migration.

Wives of migrant workers often encounter the additional burden of household responsibilities typically assumed by their husbands (such as financial management, household maintenance, and farm labor), in addition to their own.⁸² These women have even less time for income generating activities outside of the home. For a woman, labor migration can set up a contradictory situation: while she improves her economic status, she also faces stigma and is subjected to many more negative attitudes than men receive. Women, especially those who migrate alone, are often stigmatized and “accused of not fulfilling a ‘woman’s role’ and of leaving children in the care of their grandparents.”⁸³

Gender-based violence/Domestic violence

The Government of Tajikistan introduced the Law on the Prevention of Domestic Violence in 2013 and the State Program for the Prevention of Domestic Violence for 2014-2023 to reduce the incidence of domestic violence and encourage victims to seek support. While the policies are thought to have made a statement that domestic violence is a social issue that necessitates state intervention, the implementation of the policies has been challenging for the government.⁸⁴ Spousal abuse occurs in approximately one-third of all marriages in Tajikistan. In 2017, 31 percent of ever-married women experienced emotional, physical, and/or sexual violence at least once in their marriage and 24 percent experienced it within the past 12 months. Physical abuse is the most common type of spousal abuse followed by emotional (Figure 18). The proportion of women experiencing spousal abuse is highest in Khatlon (43 percent) followed by GBAO (28 percent), DRS (26 percent), Sughd (25 percent), and lastly Dushanbe (16 percent).⁸⁵ While husbands are the most common perpetrators of domestic violence experienced by married women, some women are abused by their mothers-in-law (typically in the form of humiliation, isolation from friends/family, controlling behaviors, and/or prompting their sons to use violence)⁸⁶ or other family members. Women who have never been married are most likely to experience domestic abuse from their mothers/stepmothers or siblings.⁸⁷

FIGURE 18. PREVALENCE OF SPOUSAL VIOLENCE BY TYPE (2017)



Source: Replicated from TAJSTAT et al (2018).

⁸² IOM (2009).

⁸³ ADB (2016).

⁸⁴ ADB (2016).

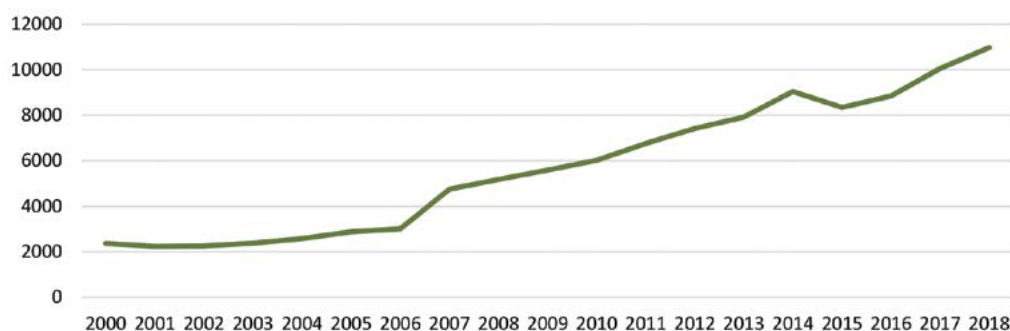
⁸⁵ TAJSTAT, et al. (2018).

⁸⁶ ADB (2016).

⁸⁷ TAJSTAT, et al. (2018).

Women experience economic violence slightly more frequently than physical violence, according to the ADB's gender assessment. This includes financial decision-making, agency around income generation, and management of financial resources. Crisis centers in Tajikistan have also reported incidents of men inciting women to suicide.⁸⁸ The Government of Tajikistan reported that 244 of these cases went to trial between 2014 and September 2018.⁸⁹ Most women who experience spousal abuse (75 percent) do not seek help or tell anyone. Fifteen percent tell someone, and only 10 percent seek help.⁹⁰ Attitudes and societal pressure may discourage women from speaking out. In 2017, more than 60 percent of women age 15 to 49 believed that a husband can be justified for beating his wife (for example if his wife argues with him).⁹¹ Additionally, most people view domestic violence as a “private matter” where outsiders shouldn't interfere.⁹² Women may also be reluctant to report domestic violence as they tend to be financially dependent on their husbands and may not be able to support themselves if separated.⁹³ Divorce statistics show a rising trend over the past 12-15 years, potentially suggesting about the increased incidence of domestic violence on the one hand and to some degree women's empowerment and intolerance towards domestic violence and abuse on the other hand (Figure 19).

FIGURE 19. NUMBER OF REGISTERED DIVORCES, 2000-2018



Source: TAJSTAT.

World Bank interventions to encourage voice and agency of women in Tajikistan include community-development approaches under the CASA-1000 Community Support and the Socio-Economic Resilience Strengthening projects. The latter also includes a component on youth empowerment, including technical and soft skills development, with a strong focus on young women.

⁸⁸ ADB (2016).

⁸⁹ Government of Tajikistan (2019).

⁹⁰ TAJSTAT, et al. (2018).

⁹¹ TAJSTAT, et al. (2018).

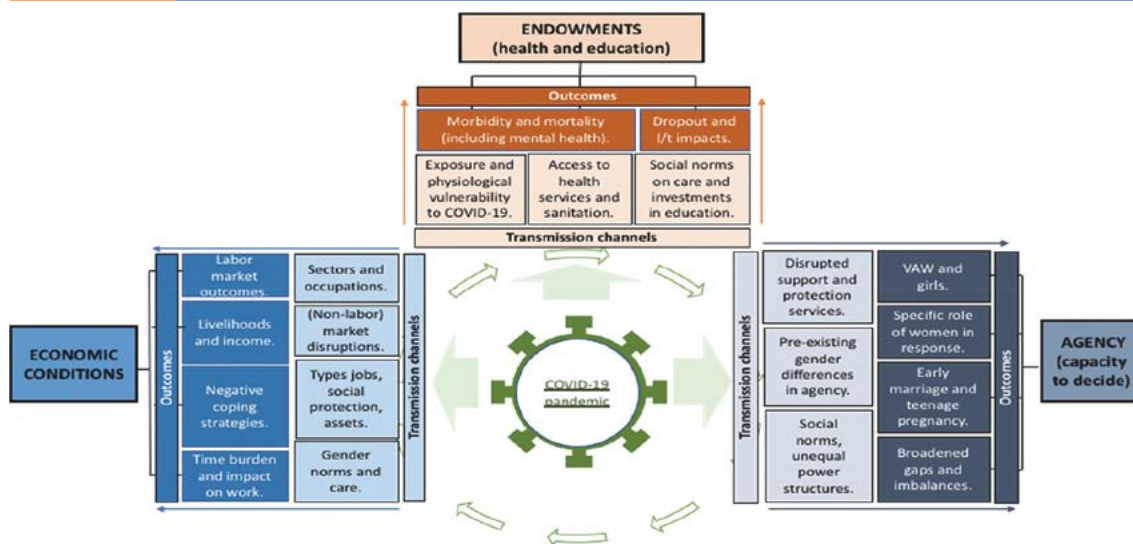
⁹² ADB (2016).

⁹³ ADB (2016).

Impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on gender inequality in Tajikistan

The COVID-19 outbreak is impacting societies around the world in an unprecedented manner, and Tajikistan will not be an exception. However, not everyone, in every place, will be affected in the same way. Considering how the pandemic affects particular groups will help raise the effectiveness of containment efforts and minimize the potential negative impacts. This section summarizes some of the implications and recommendations for health, education, economic conditions and agency in the context of COVID-19 pandemic⁹⁴. (WB Policy Note: Gender Dimensions of COVID-19 Pandemic). Further analysis on the specific situation in Tajikistan is under consideration for a later point in time.

FIGURE 20. THE FRAMEWORK: TRANSMISSION CHANNELS AND DIFFERENTIAL IMPACTS ON OUTCOMES AND ROLES OF WOMEN VIS-À-VIS MEN.



Source: World Bank Group (2020).

Gender implications and recommendations for health:

- Health vulnerabilities are especially related to disease exposure in the short-term. There is a larger share of women in the health sector, and as home and family caregivers, which makes them more exposed to contagion. Occupational sex-segregation might also bring different

⁹⁴ WBG (2020).

levels of exposure. As an example, women are more present in client-facing roles while men concentrate in logistics or security. Providing protective equipment and materials and COVID-19 testing to higher-risk populations will be key to prevent their contagion.

- However, and likely in connection with differences in the incidence of chronic conditions, risky and preventive behaviors or in immune systems, men seem to be over-represented among the fatalities of COVID-19. This trend may also have gendered implications, for instance as the women and girls left behind face further difficulties.
- The shift in resources towards addressing the public health emergency can entail disruptions to key health services for women and girls, such as reproductive and sexual health services. There is for instance evidence of increases in both teenage pregnancy among out-of-school girls and maternal mortality due to lack of critical resources in similar crises. Pregnant women can be particularly vulnerable in this context.

Gender implications for education:

- Social and gender norms will play a role in educational investment decisions. Intra-household allocation of resources for home schooling and/or at the community-level might be redirected to boys over girls. These dynamics need to be considered in efforts aimed at offering home-schooling, and in related social messaging. Targeted measures for the most vulnerable girls (i.e. with no access to ICTs) will also be necessary.
- The disruption of services with school closures can lead to an increase in the burden of care-related tasks - likely impacting girls more than boys in many contexts. This will affect their ability to stay engaged in education in the longer term. Among boys, pressure to contribute to the family income may also increase with the tightening economic conditions, leading to permanent school dropout. Financial incentive programs can help encourage families to send children back to school when the confinement phase is over. Adolescent empowerment programs have also shown to be effective in keeping girls in education.

Gender implications for economic conditions:

- Women will likely experience a significant burden on their time given their multiple care responsibilities as school closures and confinement measures are adopted, possibly leading to reductions in working time and permanent exit from the labor market. Social messaging as part of the emergency response can contribute to a more balanced distribution of household responsibilities and resources.
- Given the fact that women are largely engaged in informal work and other vulnerable forms of employment (e.g. self-employment in small subsistence businesses, domestic work), such condition often leaves them out of formal social protection measures targeted to workers. Female cross-border traders and small-holder farmers can particularly suffer the consequences of the declines in food and crop production, increases in food prices and closed borders.
- The effectiveness of social protection responses to the crisis will improve if these gender dimensions are considered. Cash transfer programs to the most vulnerable groups including women only households (e.g., single mothers with children, widows or female farmers) will be necessary both as part of the emergency response and in the longer term. Specific programs

to support women's return to economic activity will also play a central role (e.g., public works, access to training and credit, direct provision of productive inputs to female farmers). Ensuring access to care support when work outside of the house is resumed will also be necessary.

Gender implications for agency:

- An increase in gender-based violence (and its severity and frequency) due to confinement can be observed across countries. The stretched capacity of response services might reduce the protection and support available, contributing to a heightened perception of impunity among perpetrators.
- Protection and support services need to be in place and increases in the capacity may be required. Innovative solutions to provide reporting mechanisms for women victims and to accommodate them and their children will be necessary. Social awareness will be key, as well as engaging informal support networks and health workers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This section concludes and provides recommendations on gender equality in Tajikistan within the four priority areas described above: i) Improving human endowments, ii) removing constraints for more and better employment, iii) removing barriers to women's ownership and control of assets, and iv) enhancing women's agency and voice and engaging men. These recommendations are sourced from the World Bank and its development partners.

Improving Human Endowments

Tajikistan can learn from international experience in encouraging greater enrollment among under-represented groups. In particular, successful programs have:

- Provided preferential tuition rates and scholarships for under-represented groups, including women. For publicly financed programs, financial support is often provided for ancillary benefits, including the cost of textbooks, uniforms, and lodging where relevant.
- Encouraged mentoring programs that highlight women's potential in fields where they are under-represented.
- Providing flexible and cost-effective options for continuing distance education for non-traditional students.

With respect to health:

- Expand access to contraceptives
- Support improved maternity care, support for pregnant women

In the Government of Tajikistan's self-review of its implementation of the Beijing Declaration, the Government of Tajikistan presented recommendations to increase the inclusion of women in Tajikistan's education system. The government recommended that local public authorities execute the following activities:⁹⁵

- Develop punishments for parents who prevent their children from attending mandatory school;
- Enhanced cooperation between schools, families, and communities;
- Provide transport to students who live far from schools; and
- Provide financial support to low-income families to send their children to school.

⁹⁵ Government of Tajikistan (2019).

In the wake of the 2014 university entrance exam (UEE) reform, the WBG recommended the following actions to reduce barriers to access and complete higher education for women in Tajikistan:⁹⁶

- Leverage the government's collaboration with mass media around UEE communications to also highlight the value of girls' education. Effective messages can highlight the positive role educated women play both as mothers and in the economy. To impact long-held cultural beliefs, these campaigns must target female students and their parents throughout the entire pipeline to alter student aspirations and family expectations.
- Government and school administrators should encourage teachers to discuss female students' academic potential with their parents. These interactions can also be used to lessen fears about girls' safety at university.
- UEE preparation sessions should be held during times that will maximize female participation and ensure safe transportation to and from class.

Removing Constraints for More and Better Jobs – Employment Opportunities

The analysis above highlights several areas in which explicit policies or enforcement of existing regulations would benefit female employment.

- Fully enforce equal pay for equal work regulations
- Conduct hiring audits to identify and prosecute discriminatory practices
- Impose a ban on requesting details on a person's home life in employment applications and interviews (children, care responsibilities, marital status, etc.).
- Expanding access to child and eldercare services
- Phase out differences in retirement age between men and women
- Remove restrictions on the activities in which women are allowed to work
- Conduct a full review of family law with respect to encouraging female employment.
- Implement gender quotas in employment activities with significant underrepresentation

In addition, in the ADB's 2016 Gender Assessment, the ADB recommended:⁹⁷

- Ensure that activities directed at empowering women do not create additional burdens or increase women's workload. In addition to projects that target women, promote activities that equalize the distribution of domestic chores;
- Implement measures to ensure women benefit fully from investments in employment opportunities, for example, campaigns to address gender stereotypes and discrimination in a particular sector, workplace training, policies that help to balance work and family obligations, etc.;

⁹⁶ World Bank (2015).

⁹⁷ ADB (2016).

- Include measures to increase women's personal security within infrastructure projects, for example, through improved street lighting, bus shelters, public transportation, public toilets, and accessible safety features (public telephones, crisis centers, shelters);
- Develop and implement awareness campaigns and training aimed at increasing women's knowledge of their labor rights, especially for those engaged in agricultural work, and how to protect their rights;
- Engage with farm managers directly to encourage them to make gender-sensitive working condition improvements and to follow a practice of formal employment of women; and
- Identify key female business personnel in varied sectors and sponsor them to become mentors to other female entrepreneurs and support them in developing women-friendly workplaces.

Removing Barriers to Women's Ownership and Control of Assets

Several policy options include

- Default joint titling of housing and agricultural land for spouses.
- Conduct audits with respect potential discrimination in loan applications
- Providing low-cost HIV testing for high-risk groups (including migrants)

Previous Country Gender Assessments, including ADB 2016 Country Gender Assessment, recommended to:⁹⁸

- Design and implement activities that target men with messages about the role they can play in protecting women's rights (e.g., girls' rights to inheritance, property ownership, etc.); and
- Encourage banks and financial institutions to identify any gender differences in access to financial products and services and to take steps to address factors that create barriers for specific groups of women (i.e., rural women, women farmers, abandoned wives of labor migrants, etc.).

Enhancing Women's Agency and Voice and Engaging Men

Several policy options include:

- Ensure right and simplicity of divorce proceedings.
- Expand access to shelters
- Mandate quotas in positions of authority and in government

⁹⁸ ADB (2016).

The main obstacles on the way of expanding the participation of women in decision-making processes can be summarized as follows: (i) absence of effective mechanisms; (ii) weak implementation of state guarantees in sectorial legislation; (iii) absence of continuous monitoring and limited use of gender indicators; (iv) limited access to demanded education and trainings for women; and gender stereotypes and absence of communication strategy.

Other gender assessments, including ADB 2016 Country Gender Assessment, recommended to:⁹⁹

- Promote the meaningful participation of women in discussions, design, and implementation of development projects. This should not be limited to ad hoc consultative processes, but should include measures to institutionalize a system in which women are part of discussions about local planning and have a role in overseeing their implementation;
- Ensure that the Women's Committee engagement with the national machinery for the promotion of gender equality/women's empowerment is not limited to the central office during project design and implementation, but includes local Committee representatives and ministerial gender focal points;
- When undertaking consultations with women or women's groups, ensure diversity, with different socioeconomic groups, ages, and ethnicities being represented, as well as women with disabilities, single mothers, and women who head households;
- In meetings and negotiations with government bodies, reinforce Tajikistan's own commitments to increase the number of women in government positions by calling for diversity in the composition of teams.
- Consult with women's civil society organizations (CSOs) on project design, implementation, and monitoring, and include such NGOs in any inter-agency teams or meetings;
- Support capacity-building for women's CSOs regarding engaging with government representatives. In parallel, encourage local administrations to collaborate with women's nongovernment organizations (NGOs) in the community.

⁹⁹ ADB (2016).

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Appendix 1. Tajikistan's performance on international gender indices

Gender Development Index

Tajikistan is classified as having “medium human development” and “low equality” in human development achievements between men and women. By this measure, Tajikistan is less equal than its counterparts in Central Asia and medium human development countries as a whole (Table 3). Men in Tajikistan outperform women on all human development index (HDI) dimensions with the exception of health (women's life expectancy is four and a half years greater).¹⁰⁰

TABLE 3. TAJIKISTAN'S PERFORMANCE ON THE GENDER DEVELOPMENT INDEX, 2018

Score for 2018	Gender Development Index	Human Development Index - Male	Human Development Index - Female
Tajikistan	.799	.703	.561
Tajikistan 1995	.851	.560	.476
Kazakhstan	.999	0.815	0.814
Kyrgyz Republic	.959	.684	.656
Uzbekistan	.939	.730	.685
Europe & Central Asia	.953	.794	.757
Medium HDI countries	.845	.676	.571

Source: UNDP (2019). Note: The Gender Development Index is a ratio of the female HDI to the male HDI. чин.

Gender Inequality Index

Women in Tajikistan are not reaching their full human development potential due to gender inequalities across three dimensions: i) reproductive health, ii) empowerment (measured by educational attainment and political participation), and iii) labor market participation (Table 4). However, gender inequalities in Tajikistan are resulting in a smaller loss to female human development than in 1995 thanks to a decrease

¹⁰⁰ UNDP (2019).

in maternal deaths, more women in parliament, and a higher share of women with at least some secondary education. Women's labor force participation did not change significantly (1.7 percentage points) while men increased their participation by 4.3 percentage points during the same period.¹⁰¹

TABLE 4. TAJIKISTAN'S PERFORMANCE ON THE GENDER INEQUALITY INDEX, 2018

Score for 2018	Rank (of 160 countries)	Gender Inequality Index	Maternal Mortality Ratio	Adolescent Birth Rate	Female Seats in Parliament (%)	Pop with at least some Secondary Education (%)		Labor Force Participation (%)	
						Female	Male	Female	Male
Tajikistan	84	.377	32	57.1	20.0	98.8	87.0	27.8	59.7
Tajikistan 1995		.583	129	57.4	2.8*	82.3	90.5	29.5	55.4
Kazakhstan	46	.203	12	29.8	22.1	98.3	98.9	65.2	77.1
Kyrgyz Republic	87	.381	76	32.8	19.2	98.6	98.3	48.0	75.8
Uzbekistan	64	.303	36	23.8	16.4	99.9	99.9	53.4	78.0
Europe & Central Asia		.276	25	27.8	21.2	78.1	85.8	45.2	70.1
Medium HDI countries		.501	198	34.3	20.8	39.5	58.7	32.3	78.9

Source: UNDP (2019). Note: The maternal mortality ratio is the number of deaths per 100,000 live births and the adolescent birth rate is the number of births per 1,000 women ages 15-19. The GII is on a scale of 1-0. Zero means that men and women fare equally in human development.

* UNDP used 1997 data for this indicator when calculating the 1995 GII.

Global Gender Gap Index

The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index provides a similar assessment to the GII. Both scores are approximately the same distance from perfect equality (0.374 and 0.377, respectively). While the GII differs in its inclusion of maternal health, the Global Gender Gap Index has a more complex measure of women's empowerment and economic participation.

Tajikistan's global gender gap of 0.626 is the largest of participating countries in Central Asia¹⁰² and slightly wider than the average score for low-income countries (Table 5). Since Tajikistan began participating in the Index in 2007, Tajikistan's score has worsened by 0.032 points. The biggest change has been in economic participation and opportunity which saw a widening of the gender gap by 0.214 points. Tajikistan has maintained near perfect equality in health survival and high inequality in political empowerment.¹⁰³

Social Institutions and Gender Index

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) provides additional insight by measuring de jure and de facto discrimination against women in many facets of life to demonstrate the extent to which discriminatory social institutions impoverish and disempower women.

¹⁰¹ UNDP (2019).

¹⁰² Turkmenistan does not participate in the index and Uzbekistan hasn't participated since 2009.

¹⁰³ World Economic Forum (2019).

TABLE 5. TAJIKISTAN'S PERFORMANCE ON THE GLOBAL GENDER GAP INDEX, 2020

2020 Score	Rank (of 149 countries)	Gender Gap Score	Economic Participation & Opportunity	Educational Attainment	Health & Survival	Political Empower- ment
Tajikistan	137	.626	.496	.942	.976	.088
Tajikistan 2007	79 (of 128 countries)	0.6578	0.7103	0.8689	0.9785	0.0736
Kazakhstan	72	.710	.742	.995	.975	.130
Kyrgyz Republic	93	.689	.654	.990	.980	.130
Eastern Europe & Central Asia		.713				
Low-income countries (2018 score)		.660				

Source: World Economic Forum (2019). A score of 1 means perfect equality. Zero is perfect inequality. The 2020 report did not provide a weighted average for country income groups.

Tajikistan has a medium level of gender discrimination in its social institutions and performs worse than Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic by approximately 10 percentage points (Table 6). According to the SIGI, women in Tajikistan experience the greatest discrimination in the family followed by social institutions that provide access to productive and financial resources. The former is evidenced in the recognition of a Sharia law that allows men in registered religious and unregistered marriages to divorce their wives by saying “talaq” multiple times and the prevalence of child marriage (14% of girls under the age of 18 are married) despite laws that criminalize it. The latter is evidenced in unequal

TABLE 6. TAJIKISTAN'S PERFORMANCE ON THE SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS & GENDER INDEX, 2019*

2019 Score	Category	Social Institutions & Gender Index	Discrimina- tion in the Family	Restricted Physical Integrity	Restricted Access to Productive & Financial Resources	Restricted Civil Liberties
Tajikistan	Medium	32%	48%	20%	34%	25%
Kazakhstan	Low	22%	22%	14%	31%	22%
Kyrgyz Republic	Low	23%	29%	17%	29%	18%
Turkmenistan			30%			
Uzbekistan			42%			23%
OECD countries	Medium – very low	8% – 36%	0% – 60%	4% – 25%	2% – 65%	5% – 38%

Source: OECD (2019). Note: Scores range from 0% (no discrimination) to 100% (greatest possible discrimination). Countries are divided into five categories, depending on their score: very low levels of gender discrimination ($SIGI \leq 20\%$); low ($20\% < SIGI \leq 30\%$); medium ($30\% < SIGI \leq 40\%$); high ($40\% < SIGI \leq 50\%$); and very high ($SIGI > 50\%$). The OECD did not have enough data to provide complete scores for Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

* The 2019 SIGI uses a revised methodology, so comparing scores across years is not appropriate.

access to employment opportunities. Eighty-five percent of managers are male, and women are prevented from working in certain occupations that are considered too dangerous or physically demanding. Women also face additional restrictions for working night shifts and overtime.¹⁰⁴

Women, Business, and the Law

The World Bank's *Women, Business and the Law* (WBL) 50-year dataset provides unique information on the laws and regulations that restrict women's economic opportunities and empowerment across 190 economies, including Tajikistan. The WBL index ranges from 0 (no equality) to 100 (perfect equality). The index is structured around eight topics offering objective and measurable benchmarks for the assessment of the achieved progress and the remaining gaps divergent from the best practice legal frameworks. The eight topics measure the degree to which women face legal constraints at different stages of their lives and include *mobility, workplace, pay, marriage, parenthood, entrepreneurship, assets, and pension*.¹⁰⁵ WBL is more extensive at examining legal constraints than SIGI and covers topics across labor, family, and violence laws. However, unlike SIGI, WBL does not consider informal constraints on women's freedom or examine the extent to which laws are implemented. While there is a need for strong enforcement and monitoring mechanisms, fulfilling legal equality on the books is yet the first initial step for leveling the playing field in the economy between men and women.

Unlike SIGI index, WBL index offers a 50-year historical perspective on the pace of legal reform equalizing economic opportunities for men and women. Despite the common history, the pace of leveling the legal playing field between men and women in Central Asia has been uneven after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, with each economy pursuing their own independent legislative path. After the introduction of the national Labor Code in May 1997,¹⁰⁶ Tajikistan decreased gender differences that women faced in the law (as measured by WBL index) by 11.9 points – the biggest progress made in the country's 50-year history. However, after 1997, the reform stalled for another 8 years.

Tajikistan performs better on the WBL than the SIGI index by almost 11 points, deviating 21.2 and 32 points (of 100) respectively from a score of no discrimination, suggesting that Tajikistan's legal framework may not be fully effective at safeguarding women's rights. For example, WBL shows that women face no legal constraints under the "Marriage" component, including the ability for a woman to obtain a judgement of divorce in the same way as a man, while the SIGI reveals discrimination in this realm citing the use of Sharia practices that give men more power to divorce (described above).

Women in Tajikistan face fewer legal constraints today than they did in 2010 (Table 7). Tajikistan improved its WBL score by almost six points thanks to the introduction of the new Labor Code in July 2016¹⁰⁷ that allow women to work the same night hours as men and the introduction of domestic

¹⁰⁴ OECD (2019).

¹⁰⁵ *Mobility* – examines regulatory constraints on freedom of movement; *Workplace* – analyzes regulatory frameworks affecting women's decisions to enter and remain in the workforce; *Pay* – measures laws and regulations on job restrictions and the gender wage gap; *Marriage* – assesses regulatory constraints related to marriage; *Parenthood* – evaluates regulatory frameworks affecting women's work after having children; *Entrepreneurship* – examines constraints that women face when starting and running a business; *Assets* – analyzes gender differences in property and inheritance law; *Pension* – assesses provisions in the legal frameworks (including social security and pension laws) affecting the size of a woman's pension.

¹⁰⁶ Labor Code of 15 May 1997 available at: http://www.adlia.tj/show_doc.fwx?rgn=398&conttype=2

¹⁰⁷ Labor Code of 23 July 2016 available at: http://www.adlia.tj/show_doc.fwx?rgn=127423&conttype=2

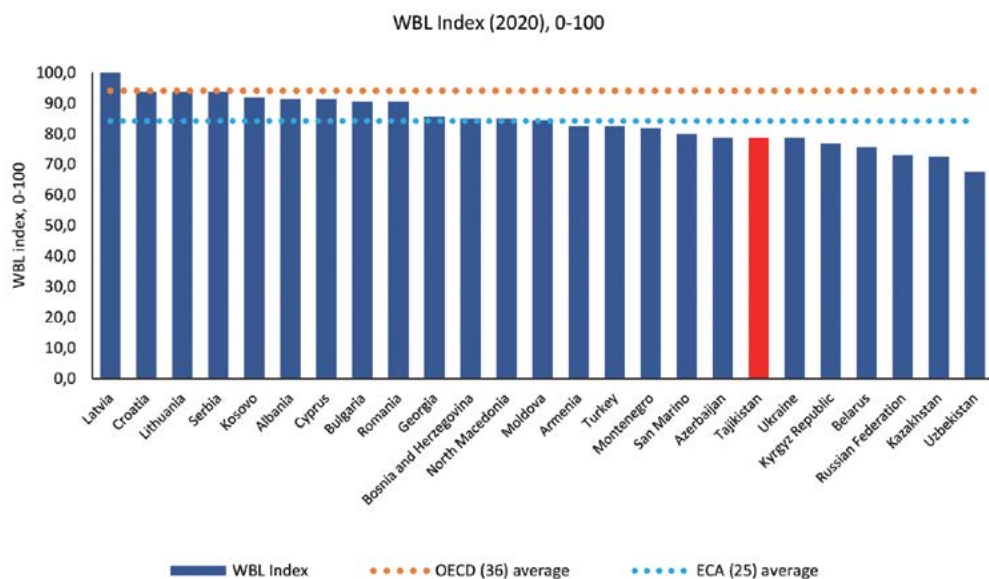
violence legislation on 19 March 2013.¹⁰⁸ As measured by the WBL index (2020), women in Tajikistan today face less legal constraints than in the rest of Central Asia.¹⁰⁹ Yet, room for improvement remains on the regulatory side when compared to the rest of Eastern and Central Europe (Figure 21).

TABLE 7. TAJIKISTAN'S PERFORMANCE ON THE WOMEN, BUSINESS, AND THE LAW INDEX, 2020

2020 Score	WBL Index	Mobility	Work-place	Pay	Marriage	Parent-hood	Entrepre-neurship	Assets	Pension
Tajikistan	78.8	100	50	50	100	80	100	100	50
Tajikistan 2010	73.1	100	50	25	80	80	100	100	50
Kazakhstan	72.5	100	50	50	100	80	75	100	25
Kyrgyz Republic	76.9	100	100	25	100	40	100	100	50
Uzbekistan	67.5	100	50	50	80	60	75	100	25
OECD countries	77.5–100	100	50-100	25-100	60-100	60-100	75-100	60-100	50-100

Source: World Bank (2020). Note: A score of 100 means that women do not face legal constraints. WBL 2020 index and indicator scores incorporate an update of laws and regulations from June 2, 2017 to September 1, 2019.

FIGURE 21. WORLD BANK'S WBL INDEX IN EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA, 2020



Source: World Bank (2020).

¹⁰⁸ Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence No. 954 of 19 March 2013 available at: http://base.mmk.tj/view_sanadhoview.php?showdetail=&sanadID=291&language=ru

¹⁰⁹ Turkmenistan is not covered under the WBL index.

Appendix 2. Types of jobs and professions prohibited for women in Tajikistan

List of jobs with adverse working conditions prohibited to women in the Republic of Tajikistan is established by the Government Resolution No. 179 of 4 April 2017. The below table lays out a fragmented sample of jobs and professions across various sectors of the economy prohibited for women.

SECTORS OF ECONOMY	EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF JOBS AND PROFESSIONS PROHIBITED FOR WOMEN
1. WORKS RELATED TO LIFTING AND MOVING OF HEAVY LOADS MANUALLY	Jobs associated with lifting and moving weights manually, in case of exceeding the established standards for maximum permissible loads for women when lifting and moving weights manually
2. UNDERGROUND WORKS	In underground work, mining and the construction of underground structures
3. METAL WORKS	Foundry; welding; forging and thermal works; work in boiler rooms; metal coating and painting; work with lead
4. CONSTRUCTION, INSTALLATION AND REPAIR WORKS	Hot repair of furnaces and boiler furnaces; excavator – drifter; steel-roofer; bulldozer driver; carpenter; locksmith
5. MINING	Construction of subways, tunnels and underground structures; mining of ores; processing of brown coal and ozokerite ores; rig operator; open cast mining; borehole driller; loader driver
6. GEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION AND TOPOGRAPHIC-GEODESIC WORKS	Fuser; the installer of geodetic signs; electrical fitter (locksmith)
7. DRILLING OF THE WELLS	Driller; rig operator; lock installer; borehole maintenance electrician; locksmith
8. MINING OF OIL AND GAS	Overhaul and offshore driller; mobile compressor engineer; elevator operator; flushing machine operator hydraulic fracturing operator; assistant driller locksmith for installation and repair of the bases of offshore drilling and flyovers

SECTORS OF ECONOMY	EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF JOBS AND PROFESSIONS PROHIBITED FOR WOMEN
9. FERROUS METALLURGY	Blast furnace production; rolling production; pipe production; ferroalloy production; steelmaking; electrical production; cable production; production of abrasives
10. NON-FERROUS METALLURGY	Production of non-ferrous and rare metals, processing of non-ferrous metals; processing of non-ferrous metals by pressure; alumina production
11. REPAIR OF EQUIPMENT FOR POWER PLANTS AND NETWORKS	Electrician repairing overhead power lines; electrician for repair and installation of cable lines
12. CHEMICAL PRODUCTION	Production of liquid chlorine and chlorine dioxide; sulfur production; production of technical iodine; paint and varnish production; production of medicines, medical, biological preparations and materials
13. REFINING OF OIL, GAS, SHALE AND COAL, PRODUCTION OF SYNTHETIC OIL PRODUCTS, OILS AND LUBRICANTS	Coke cleaner and unloader; works in gasoline leaching process plants; works in extraction workshops and aromatic hydrocarbon production departments; preparation of arsenic solutions in the purification of sulfur-containing petroleum gas
14. CEMENT PRODUCTION	Cleaning of sludge pools and mash rooms
15. STONE PROCESSING AND PRODUCTION OF STONE PRODUCTS	Mill operator engaged in breaking up diabase gravel into powder; stone processing equipment adjuster
16. PRODUCTION OF REINFORCED CONCRETE AND CONCRETE PRODUCTS AND STRUCTURES	Carver of concrete and reinforced concrete products
17. PRODUCTION OF HEAT-INSULATING MATERIALS	Remover
18. PRODUCTION OF SOFT ROOF AND WATERPROOF MATERIALS	Work performed by the loader of digesters
19. TEXTILE AND LIGHT INDUSTRY	Primary processing of cotton; wool production; felt production; leather production; production of leather shoes
20. FOOD INDUSTRY	Production of meat products; bakery production; tobacco and fermentation production; extraction and production of salt
21. RAILWAY TRANSPORT	Diesel train driver; driver working on broad gauge railway lines; steam engine driver; locomotive driver; electric train driver; wagon speed controller; contact electrician
22. AUTOMOBILE TRANSPORT	Car driver working on a bus with more than 14 seats (except for those employed in intra-plant, intra-city, suburban and rural transportation within one day shift, provided that they are not involved in maintenance and repair of the bus)

SECTORS OF ECONOMY	EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF JOBS AND PROFESSIONS PROHIBITED FOR WOMEN
23. CIVIL AVIATION	Aviation mechanic (technician) for glider and engines; aviation mechanic (technician) for instruments and electrical equipment; aviation mechanic (technician) for radio equipment; aeronautical technician (mechanic) for parachute and rescue equipment; aeronautical technician for fuel and lubricants; engineer directly engaged in the maintenance of aircraft (helicopters); airport baggage handler
24. COMMUNICATIONS	Operational - maintenance of radio and communication equipment at high-rise structures (towers, masts) with a height of over 10 m, not equipped with elevators.
25. POLYGRAPHIC PRODUCTION	Work related to the use of lead alloys; work on casting operations; printing equipment installer
26. PRODUCTION OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS	Grinding and trimming cast-iron frames of pianos and grand pianos on abrasive wheels
27. AGRICULTURE	Operations in crop production, animal husbandry, poultry farming and animal husbandry using pesticides, pesticides and disinfectants (under the age of 35 years); loading and unloading of animal corpses; work in wells, liquid tanks and tanks, silos and hay towers; tractor driving; truck driving; skinning cattle; loading and unloading of pesticides
28. OTHER WORKS PERFORMED ACROSS VARIOUS SECTORS OF ECONOMY	Installation, repair and maintenance of contact networks, as well as overhead power lines when working at heights above 10 m; direct fire extinguishing; open metal work with metallic mercury (except for workers employed in plants and semiautomatic devices whose jobs are provided with air purifiers); diver; gas rescuer; manual mercury dispenser; wood splitter; lead painter; pitch grinder

Источник: Всемирный экономический форум (2019 год). 1 балл означает абсолютное равенство. 0-абсолютное неравенство. В Отчете 2020 года не приводится средневзвешенный показатель по группам доходов стран.

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