

Part I – TAJIKISTAN - Some aspects of the social policy

The collapse of the budget collection system for the period from 1992 to 1997 evoked the curtailments of big social expenses to all categories. Such key spheres as education, culture, art, science, healthcare, physical culture and social maintenance fell down to the lowest level in Central Asia.

Specific gravity of social expenses (domestic growth output in percentage)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
State budget for social sphere	19,9	21,3	20,1	8,3	5,2	3,9	4,0	3,4	2,2

Source: Ministry of Finance, Goscomstat

As it is seen for the last 9 years, the specific expenses gravity to the social sphere decreased more than 10 times. Taking into account that absolute value of domestic growth output for this period lessened more than 2 times, it can be seen how the expenses to the social sphere diminished for that period.

Social protection. The break up of traditional economic ties and transition period aggravated the difficult finance situation of some people from the category of “traditionally poor people”: pensioners, families with many children and one-parent families. At the same time there appeared a new category: “employed poor people”. Simultaneously, with the increasing number of people belonging to vulnerable population layers, governmental financial resources for the social protection of the population considerably decreased. In Tajikistan, there are two main types of allowance for the social protection of the people: a program of pecuniary compensation for poor people and a pension provision, the payment of social insurance to elderly people, invalids and needy people.

The annual state finance volumes of pecuniary compensation program in 2000 should be about 6 million somoni supposing that the number of people pretended to this aid is equal to 1 million people (less than 20% of the total population). But in practice the pecuniary compensation payments were considerably low; some people even did not try to get their money because its real value was extremely low. Only 5% of the population did receive this compensation. Recently two reforms on these programs were conducted to improve this allowance system. The aim was the reduction of operation costs, training on required documents and the transition from month’s to quarter compensation payment.

However, these reforms had no great effect. The other form of social protection in Tajikistan is the pension provision. The average pension sum compared to salaries decreased from 50% in 1995 to 35% in 2000. The system of pension provision is functioning a little bit better than the pecuniary compensation system but even here there are debt problems and problems of low pension level.

It is necessary to provide the effectiveness and timeliness of payments. Secondly, taking strict budget limits into account, the effectiveness of the pecuniary payments should be strictly addressed to the poorest parts of the population. This is a very important condition for work effectiveness and social provision system in a whole.

Employment. In the entire world, the employment growth is considered one of the factors solving poverty problems. In Tajikistan the employment reduction was evoked by transformation recession, i.e. special crisis. This recession was evoked through the transition from planned economy to market economy. And not only by this transition. The destructive level of transformation recession in Tajikistan was much higher than in Eastern European countries and in some CIS countries because of the high level of economic dependence of the country. Moreover, the destroying consequences of the Civil War did not coincide with the transformation recession. That is why it is impossible to expect a stable phase of economic development in Tajikistan, which may be started along with the rate of employment growth. For 10 years the incomplete employment is widely spread and this is shown in concealed unemployment.

Salary. Paid labor Salaries used to be the main source of income of the family, but this is not the case anymore today. In 1991 salary represented 70% of total average incomes. According to a budget investigation conducted by World Bank, the part of paid labor in total population incomes was 22-25%. In rural areas this index is much lower: 5-6%. In March 2001, the nominal average earning was 21,07 somoni, which is approximately 9\$ and in comparison with 2000 period increased by 37,3% but the real salary diminished by 10%. In 2002, the nominal average salary over the country was 32,55 somoni or about more than 10\$. The average salary in the republic is more than 3 times lower than the minimum consumers' basket. In the Republic, there is a abrupt salary differentiation in material production and in non-productive spheres. In March 2001, the workers of the agricultural and forestry sphere had the lowest labour payment of the material production sphere: 8,68 (3,7\$) and 6,06 somoni (2,6\$). By the year 2002, there appeared a slight growth in forestry sphere: 10,7 somoni (a bit more than 3\$). The highest salary were for the workers of the material production industry: 63,64 somoni (27\$) which exceeds the average republican level by 3 times. Among branches of the non-production sphere, the most highly paid are the workers of credit and finance. In march their average earning was 84,43 somoni (36\$). The lowest labour payment is in the healthcare sphere: 7,42somon (3,16\$). In spite of the low salary level the republic has big debts on salary payments. On 1 April 2001, the debt was 34,9% from the total salary payments amount.

As a result of this situation, the labour migration from the country to Russia and other CIS countries plays a great role in supporting the population. About 1 million citizens of Tajikistan are abroad and render financial support to their families living in Tajikistan. All this plays an important role in stability, preventing Tajikistan from starveling revolts and increase in crimes.

Also extortion and corruption play an important role in the life of people in Tajikistan. However we cannot say that corruption is filling up the consumers' basket, as joining to this phenomenon some population's categories make requisitions and extortion.

Education. Since the beginning of 90s there is a tendency in reduction of budget expenses for education.

There is a tendency in reduction of state budget expenses for the development of education which the government tries to overcome. Of course this is the result of the common crisis situation of the country. The results of this phenomenon suppress most citizens of the country. Today's education level of schools, vocational schools, technical schools and High Educational Establishments is much lower than in Soviet times. In fact, the out-of-school education system is paralyzed. Most pioneer camps or children camps as they are called now do not function and there are no means for their restoration in the nearest years.

For last years there is the teachers' flow-out to other economy brunches. The main reason is the low salary. This level is long since below the living wage level. This situation evoksed such negative phenomenon as requisitions at schools and corruption of High Educational Establishments.

The facts show that some teachers' families live in difficult circumstances. Some of them cannot stand such living and find work in other branches because in the industrial sphere and in some other spheres the salary level is higher than in educational sphere. In 1989, the monthly salary in the industrial sphere exceeded that of education 1,18 times; in 1991: 1,37 times; in 1995: 3,47 times; in 1998: 4,83 times; and in 1999 this was 5,76 times. That is why the number of teachers leaving school for higher earnings increased during the last years. In the meantime, their former students take their places but they have no proper practical and pedagogical education. Today in all secondary schools in Tajikistan, there is a lack of highly educated teachers.

The contingent of highly qualified teachers in a whole highly exceeds the number mentioned above working up in Russia, Kazakhstan and in far-abroad countries.

The number of undesirable excesses occurs with students, especially with students from poor families. The number of pupils who do not attend schools because of economics reasons increases. Most of them work at kolkhoz markets, at shops and restaurants, in public transport; building and agriculture sphere and take care of private farms. There are facts in every school when pupils do not attend schools because they have no clothes and shoes.

A similar situation takes place in vocational schools, secondary and in High Educational Establishments. The experienced teachers mark that in high school history of the country we never had so many illiterate and uneducated students. Here arises the question, should we acknowledge the diplomas of such students?

We have already marked that because of low teachers' salary at schools such phenomena as extortion and corruption are widely spread and may do huge harm to the education process.

Healthcare. Basic medical services together with education belong to social services that mostly influence the lives of the poor population stratum and the possibility to lead a healthy and productive life. The medical services system also suffered a heavy blow caused by the crises in state expenses.

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