CHAPTER V
SOCIAL TRANSITION
5.1 THE SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN MONGOLIA

Under the command economy before 1990, the social sectors i.e., health, education and social protection—in Mongolia were generously financed by the state. About 40% of Government expenditures were devoted to social development. Health, education and other social services were widespread and were accessible because these were provided by each government-owned enterprise. Access to employment was nearly universally guaranteed, and there was essentially no open unemployment. The social security system was based on a combination of consumer subsidies, universal benefits supported by the central budget, and uniform state wages. All sectors of society were covered by the pension system, and the state also provided a comprehensive range of benefits to families, children, and groups designated as “vulnerable”. The early years of Mongolia’s transition from a centrally planned to a market-oriented economy proved difficult. The economy contracted sharply with the withdrawal of Soviet Country Assistance Program. Unfortunately, the social costs of Mongolia’s rapid transition from a centrally command economy to a market-oriented one have been very high. Basic social and human development services once available either stopped functioning or became inaccessible to the majority of the population in its early phases and remain sketchy at best Mongolia’s transformation from a centrally planned to a market-based economic system has had adverse social impacts. The transition has been accompanied by a concomitant increase in poverty and unemployment levels, deterioration in the status of women and the disabled, and a surge in rural to urban
migration. As the developmentalists at UNDP tried to humanize pro-market voices from the Neo-Liberal camp, they did not go unchallenged. Campi (2006) criticized Griffin and other development thinkers for linking anti-poverty efforts to urbanism or, as she puts it, sedentarization. She argued that many of Mongolia’s cities are sited for political, military or industrial reasons and are not sustainable without subsidy. Only policies that consciously incorporate Mongolia’s nomadic traditions would be sustainable. When the collectives disbanded and privatized herds, many people moved to cities to escape rural poverty. “New herders” who lost state supported jobs moved to the country but may not have known how to raise livestock well. Since wealth is measured in livestock, and new herders did not have strict state imposed controls on sizes, it encouraged families to overgraze and placed additional burdens on women and children. Traditionally poverty is associated with laziness in current or previous lives. Poverty is the main reason for migration. “Free time” for women means making clothes, drying meat, curdling milk and other chores. Benwell cites employment data showing how women dominate hotels, restaurants, social services, health care, education, banks and retail, but are not as well represented in agriculture, military, journalism and heavy industry. In professions, such as law, they are well represented at low levels, but not at provincial or the supreme court. Although women are paid for 101 days of maternity leave and may take leave without pay for two years of child care, this only makes employers reluctant to hire them. Social assistance for child

345 This appendix is based on a review of project documents including the report and recommendation the President and back-to-office reports for the Social Security Sector Development Program; and other relevant studies prepared by ADB and other development agencies, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report for 2007, Mongolia Human Development Report 2007: “Employment Generation and Poverty in Mongolia.” Ulaanbaatar; and ADB. 2007. Key Indicators 2007: Inequality in Asia. Manila

346 A. F. Benwell, “Facing Gender Challenges in Post-Socialist Mongolia”. In O. Bruun & N. Li (Eds.), Mongols from Country to City: Floating boundaries, pastoralism and city life in the Mongols lands, Copenhagen, 2006 p. 112

347 Ibid p.113

348 Ibid , p.117
care, disability and pensions are too small to live on without family support.\textsuperscript{349}

Health

Mongolia’s transition to a market-oriented economy adversely affected the Government’s ability to finance and deliver health services. With the cessation of Soviet financial assistance, drastic cuts had to be made in the Government’s health expenditures and in subsidies for social welfare programs. In its 2003 Report, the Human Rights Commission of Mongolia notes hospitals are ill equipped with personnel often lacking in key skills and technical capacity, while patients experience long delays in being admitted for reasons of geography, skills, bureaucracy, and or infrastructure. There are complex pricing mechanisms for medical care and rising levels of maternal mortality, which tend to be higher in the rural areas.\textsuperscript{350} Fees are collected in both public and private hospitals for services such as opening medical records, undertaking analysis, giving injections, gaining appointments, visiting or nursing patients and using the toilet. There were 1,868 hospitals in 1990 and 1,434 in 2000. The number of hospital beds in the same period fell from 26,400 to 17,900. Medical services, medication and facilities are ‘insufficient and are of a poor quality’ for the poor, livestock breeders and rural people.\textsuperscript{351} Facilities are inadequate, ambulances reach livestock breeders only when they pay for fuel and patients are forced to pay for medication without reimbursement. In rural areas professional skills and facilities are poor, test equipment is inadequate and people are forced to travel to urban areas, which they can ill-afford. The Government initiated steps to change the social welfare system from provision of universal access to more targeted assistance. The transition created unique and specific challenges to the health sector including (i) improving

\textsuperscript{349} Ibid., p.118
\textsuperscript{351} Ibid, p. 300.
efficiency in the hospital system; (ii) providing adequate support for primary health care (PHC); (iii) strengthening governance, monitoring, and regulation; and (iv) addressing urban health service issues. Government considers improving the quality of the health care system, ensuring access to and quality of PHC, and reforming health care financing to be key instruments to reduce poverty; accelerate economic growth; and reduce disparities in the development process, particularly between rural and urban areas. However, there has only been “modest” progress in replacing a health system dominated by high-cost, urban-based hospitals with a system that relies more on PHC and preventive services. Key sector goals such as the rationalization of hospitals and personnel have also faced stiff political opposition, and have not yet been achieved. The Ministry of Health is currently focusing on reducing the health services gap between urban and rural populations. A large percentage of the Mongolian population is semi-nomadic, complicating equal distribution of health care services. Infant mortality is at 1.9% and child mortality is at 4.3%. Material health resources are limited, while only 2% of public expenditure is allocated towards health. Human resources, on the other hand, are abundant. There are approximately 307 doctors and 243 nurses per 100,000 people. Approximately 30% of the population has access to improved sanitation, while 60% has access to improved water. The Mongolian Ministry of Health reports that the proportion of underweight children remained constant between 1992 and 2000 at just over 12%, while it has decreased to 6.4% in 2004. The proportion of stunted children has declined from 26% in 1992 to 25% in 2000, to 19% in 2004. The main causes of morbidity are respiratory and digestive diseases, while leading causes of mortality are circulatory diseases and tumors.

EDUCATION

For the right to education, equitable access to schooling remains a problem with the introduction of private schooling, although there has been considerable progress in restructuring the public education system. According to data from 2000 for the Mongolian Government’s report to the Committee for the Rights of the Child, there were 683 secondary schools with a capacity for 280,000 pupils, teaching 494,500 pupils, which means there are between 40 and 50 pupils in each class who are taught across 3 shifts per day. Private schools have begun to ease the burden, but tuition fees at some schools are three times more than higher education facilities. The insufficient number of schools makes them enormously overcrowded, which has an impact on the quality of education and leisure activities. Boarding schools are essential in the rural areas. As of 1995, Mongolia allocated 15% of its public expenditure towards education. The proportion allocated towards education has declined slightly over the past several years. Denmark, UNICEF, and the Asian Development Bank are the primary international contributors to educational development in Mongolia. The central educational authority is the Ministry of Science, Technology, Education, and Culture (MOSEC). Post-general secondary students have the option of attending vocational school or upper secondary school, which prepares students for higher education. In 2000, 96% of females, and 92% of males attended primary school. Enrollment for secondary school is much lower at, 51% for females and 68% for males. Although literacy rates are high and continue to increase (99% for both males and females), enrollment for both primary and secondary school is dropping. The Committee on the Rights of the Child notes that despite the implementation of the revised Law on Education (1995), there are still a high number of primary school aged children that do not attend any school at all, growing illiteracy and a high

355 A.Gerelmaa, World Bank draft policy brief on the Mongolian drop out rate, Manuscript, 2005
356 Ibid
rate of drop-outs, especially in the rural areas. In addition, the Committee notes that fees, violence in schools, defective schooling facilities including insufficient classroom seats and low quality text books are areas of concern.\textsuperscript{357} The Mongolian Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science reports that completion rates in primary education have increased from 80.8\% in 2000-2001 to 88.4\% in 2003-2004, while completion rates for secondary education rose from 68.4\% to 80\% over the same period. Those who do not finish school come primarily from herder families in the rural areas.\textsuperscript{358}

Given the situation of financial austerity it faced, the government needed to seek for ways to share the higher education burden with individuals and the private sector. Tuition fees were introduced in 1992 and became the norm from 1993 in all public higher education institutions. They are a major revenue source for institutions. The first introductory amount of tuition equaled about four months’ salary of a university senior lecturer and it remains relatively the same. The setting of the tuition amount rests on the variable costs (teaching staff salary, social insurance, practice/internship supervision, purchase of books) of the institution. Unlike most other countries, tuition fees in Mongolia are expected to cover the full cost of teachers’ salaries, laboratory, facilities and other expenses. Even the building maintenance and upkeep has been left on the institutions’ shoulders since 1997. The World Bank reports that in only 20 countries fees cover more than 10 percent of recurrent expenditure for public higher education. In Hong Kong, for example, which is one of the most vigorous capitalist societies, student fees in the early 1990 represented only 18 percent of

\textsuperscript{357} Rossabi, opcit, P. 282
Nevertheless, Mongolian higher education institutions are expected to generate 60 to 80 percent of their annual budget from tuition. Despite the pattern of reductions in state allocations, public higher education institutions have limited autonomy in respect to finance. They have not been allowed to raise their fees to the levels necessary to cover increased costs. The introduction of tuition necessitated the government to initiate a student loan scheme. 

In 1992 the State Training Fund was established to operate government grant and loan programs under the coordination of MOSEC. Government assistance to students in Mongolia is implemented as national grants and loans. National grants are provided to students to cover their tuition fees mainly on basis of financial need. Categories of students who are eligible to receive tuition grants include: one child of civil servant parent family, students from families under poverty level, students from herdsmen families with less than 500 heads of small cattle, and students from families where more than three children are currently attending a higher education institution. There is one category that can be considered as merit-based among these categories: tuition grant for the rest of the remaining academic years for a distinguished student by a recommendation of the rector of the institutions. National loans are provided on the basis of a contract signed by the student in which they promise to work in a contracted placement for the government at the end of the study for a certain period. The loan is forgiven if the student returns the service to government by working in the placement for five to eight years depending on the remoteness of the placement, but turns into a loan with an annual interest rate of 3-5 percent if she/he decides otherwise. The loan should be repaid within ten years,

359 Ibid, P. 16
however, the interest starts charging from the seventh year of the loan allocation.\textsuperscript{363} The loan pool comes about 80 percent from government budget and rest from the repayment of past loans and interest. In 2000-2001 approximately 26 percent of students studying in public institutions received either loans or grants, while another 75 percent of students who did not satisfy grant and loan requirements got some amount of (11-22 percent of annual student expenditure) financial support. The first private higher education institution was established in Mongolia in 1991. The government does not put ceiling on private institution tuition fees in order to support private education and lets the market regulate the amount of tuition fees in private institutions.\textsuperscript{364} There are 136 higher education institutions and a third of all students attend private institutions. Government funds for student loans apply only to accredited private and public institutions.

The table given below illustrates an estimation of expenses for higher education borne by parents and/or students in Mongolia. The difference between public and private tuition rates in Mongolia is not significant, due to several reasons. First of all, there is not much difference in underlying costs that need to be covered by public and private tuitions, because all variable costs including teaching staff salary, laboratory and facilities in public institutions are expected to be covered by the tuition. The government only funds the fixed costs in public institution. In addition to that, private institutions are still relatively small in size, thus fixed costs in these institutions are lower.\textsuperscript{365} Furthermore, only a decade development of private higher education has not yet allowed the sub-sector to expand itself to science oriented research universities. Most private institutions are in the field of humanities. They deal with pure instruction, less research, and hire many part time faculty, which all contribute to a lower level of variable costs. During the last decade, Mongolia has received numerous loans and

\textsuperscript{363} A.Darii A., T.Suruga, “Economic returns to schooling in transition: A case of Mongolia”, GSICS working papers, 2006, September, 9, Kobe University., p. 112.

\textsuperscript{364} Ibid, p. 113.

\textsuperscript{365} E.Morris , O.Bruun, “Promoting employment opportunities in rural Mongolia”, ILO, 2005, Bangkok, p. 111
grants from international donor agencies to use in education sector-wide reform efforts. The unique aspect in this regard in comparison with the systems in the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union was Mongolia’s geographical location and political history which enabled it to draw assistance from both East (ADB, Japan) and West (the European Union, the USA). Currently the Ministry of Science, Education and Culture is implementing the second phase of the Education Sector Development program funded by a $34.3 million ADB loan in total. Higher education institutions benefit from international cooperation in infrastructure development, faculty development abroad, and research activities etc.\textsuperscript{366} In addition; individual institutions are expected to create about ten percent of their annual budgets from various income generation activities, fund raising and philanthropic sources. Besides the traditional auxiliary income source of cattle herding, the institutions are opening business centers for the purpose of full-cost recovery. Although private contribution to higher education institutions is increasing mainly due to enhanced international cooperation and collaboration, the scope of domestic private giving is not yet very significant because of the lack of tradition of making private gifts and inadequate pool of capital that has not yet been created in the still transitional economy of the country. Finally, finance-driven reform in Mongolian higher education is well underway. Higher education institutions already have a decade of experience in market economy, which forced them to make a dramatic switch from full appropriation from the government to almost the other end of the spectrum.\textsuperscript{367}

3 Poverty
According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Mongolia has


the highest level of under nourishment in Asia and is the most ‘food insecure’ country in the region apart from Cambodia. In his 2005 report, The Special Rapporteur notes that the daily per capita intake of calories falls well below international standards where more than 35% of the Mongolian population officially lives below the poverty line, while 20% of children are stunted, 6.4% are underweight, and a 13% die before reaching the age of five owing to

**Higher Education Expenses Borne by Parents and Students per year, First Degree, Academic Year 2002-2003**

[Approximate conversion of Mongolian currency Togrick (T) converted to $US by 2002 Purchasing Power Parity $1 = 266.5]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Public</th>
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<td></td>
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<td>Low Public</td>
<td>High private</td>
<td>Low private</td>
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<td>T 1500 (application fee)</td>
<td>T 4000 (application fee)</td>
<td>T 1200 (application fee)</td>
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<td>US$ 5.6</td>
<td>US$ 15</td>
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<td>T 650,000</td>
<td>T 250,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US$ 1688.5</td>
<td>US$ 1125.7</td>
<td>US$ 2439</td>
<td>US$ 938</td>
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<td>US$ 225</td>
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### Sub-total of Instructional Expenses

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<tr>
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<td>US$ 2000</td>
<td>US$ 1356.4</td>
<td>US$ 2754.2</td>
<td>US$ 1167.7</td>
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### Lodging

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<td>US$ 1350</td>
<td>US$ 2251.4</td>
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### Food

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US$ 1876</td>
<td>US$ 750.4</td>
<td>US$ 1876</td>
<td>US$ 750.4</td>
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</table>

### Transportation

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<th>Bus: T 50,000</th>
<th>Bus: T 50,000</th>
<th>Bus: T 50,000</th>
<th>Bus: T 50,000</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Home visit once a year:</td>
<td>T 60,000</td>
<td>T 60,000</td>
<td>T 120,000</td>
<td>T 120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US$ 225</td>
<td>US$ 225</td>
<td>US$ 1200</td>
<td>US$ 1200</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Other Personal Expenses

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>T 120,000</th>
<th>T 120,000</th>
<th>T 120,000</th>
<th>T 120,000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US$ 450</td>
<td>US$ 450</td>
<td>US$ 450</td>
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</tr>
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### Sub-total of Living Expenses

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<tr>
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<th>T 1,330,000</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US$ 4090</td>
<td>US$ 1388.3</td>
<td>US$ 4990.6</td>
<td>US$ 1388.3</td>
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### Total Cost to Parent and Student

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<th>T 1,623,000</th>
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<th>T 2,064,000</th>
<th>T 681,200</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US$ 6090</td>
<td>US$ 2744.8</td>
<td>US$ 7744.8</td>
<td>US$ 2556</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
High public: Highest tuition and living in dormitory or shared apartment
Low public: Lowest tuition and living with parents
High private: Highest tuition and living in dormitory or shared apartment
Low public: Lowest tuition and living with parents

malnutrition and related diseases. Poverty increased from 15% of the population in 1991 to 36.3% in 1995. Poverty was disproportionately urban, with 57.2% of the poor residing in urban compared with 42.8% in rural areas. 368

3. Three groups stand out among the poor: (i) subsistence, semi nomadic herder households with approximately 100 animals or less (ii) migrants in urban centers and on the periphery of Ulaanbaatar and (iii) the aged and disabled. Poor herder households have few income opportunities. They are vulnerable to weather shocks and often lack access to public services, particularly in health and education. Poor migrant households have often failed to make a sustainable living in herding. They lack basic urban services, cannot easily access health facilities and education, and mostly find only intermittent employment in the informal sector. 369 Along with the uneducated, older Mongolians have generally been unable to access opportunities provided by the market economy and were not able to accumulate financial savings during communism. The social security and welfare system consumes a large share of the national budget but is unable,

368 The most recent data indicate a drop in poverty incidence to 32.2% as of 2006. The magnitude of poverty in 2002-2003 was 43.4% in rural areas compared with 30.3% in urban areas a reversal of the findings of the 1995 and 1998. Living Standards Measurement Survey reports, both of which found that urban poverty was significantly higher than rural. The enormous loss of livestock from harsh winters of 2002 and 2003 accentuated rural poverty. At the same time, the gradual revival of the manufacturing and service sectors in urban areas made urban poverty less acute, thereby reversing the poverty rankings between rural and urban Mongolia. (UNDP, 2007. Mongolia Human Development Report 2007: Employment Generation and Poverty in Mongolia. Ulaanbaatar; and ADB. 2007. Key Indicators 2007: Inequality in Asia. Manila).

369 Morris Rossabi, Modern Mongolia From khans to Commisars To Capitalists, California, 2003. p. 208
partly due to poor targeting, to provide the aged and disabled with a reasonable standard of living.\(^{370}\)

No systematic data exist on differences in the poverty of women and men, but as seen in Table below the male-headed households are far more likely to be in poverty than households headed by men.\(^{371}\) A total of 43.8 percent of households Headed by women fell under the poverty line, while only 34.8 percent of male-headed households were poor. The gap between male- and female-headed households was particularly large in urban areas. Moreover, women work longer hours than men, given that families rely more on subsistence production and casual employment to meet household needs. Poverty elimination leading to economic security is a crucial and more immediate concern for Mongolia’s survival as a state. Before 1990, although Mongolians had limited political freedom and economic choices, the state provided for most people’s personal needs.\(^{372}\)

Table Inequality trends, 1998, 2002–2003 and 2006, GINI coefficient for consumption, Mongolia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>0.350</td>
<td>0.329</td>
<td>0.380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.331</td>
<td>0.386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>0.313</td>
<td>0.360</td>
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<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>0.306</td>
<td>0.342</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khangai</td>
<td>0.320</td>
<td>0.354</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>0.314</td>
<td>0.393</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{370}\)The informal sector in Mongolia consists of small-scale, mostly family-based economic activities unrecorded in official statistics, and usually not subject to the same set of regulations and taxation as the formal sector. Examples include taxicab drivers, newspaper vendors, small kiosk operators, individuals selling used tools, and boot repairmen.

\(^{371}\)The Millennium Development Goals Implementation, Second National Report – 2007, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, p. 70

Poverty elimination leading to economic security is a crucial and more immediate concern for Mongolia’s survival as a state. Before 1990, although Mongolians had limited political freedom and economic choices, the state provided for most people’s personal needs. Economic stress has contributed to increased family breakups and petty crime. Reported criminal offences have dramatically and steadily increased, from 8,000 in 1990 to 25,000 in 1997, with only a slight drop to 23,000 in 1998. Other offences—from physical abuse and violence against women, to corruption, illegal drug sales and immigration occur but are not recorded as crime statistics. Increased crime has paralleled market economy transition while threatening personal, psychological, physical and economic human security. Human security generally depends on sufficient income to overcome poverty, broadening access to basic services and new opportunities.

4. Unemployment
Under the command economy before 1990, access to employment was nearly universally guaranteed, and there was no recognized unemployment. The transition brought about a rise in unemployment—from 6.5% in 1991 to a high of 9% in 1994 due to retrenchment, privatization of state-owned enterprises, and bankruptcies. The official unemployment rate in 2001 was

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**POST SOVIET TRANSITION IN MONGOLIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>0.317</th>
<th>0.399</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ulaanbaatar</td>
<td>0.332</td>
<td>0.367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aimag centers</td>
<td>0.324</td>
<td>0.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soum centers</td>
<td>0.318</td>
<td>0.373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Countryside</td>
<td>0.309</td>
<td>0.346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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6.5% (39,000 people), but actual levels were considerably higher and are estimated (after adjusting for persons employed outside the formal sector) at 17%–23% of the population.\textsuperscript{374} The provinces in particular have suffered from massive layoffs of workers by private firms and the public service. Also, the incidence of young people unable to find work is increasing,\textsuperscript{375} with severe social, economic, and potential political consequences. The informal sector in Mongolia consists of small-scale, mostly family-based economic activities unrecorded in official statistics, and usually not subject to the same set of regulations and taxation as the formal sector. Examples include taxicab drivers, newspaper vendors, small kiosk operators, individuals selling used tools, and boot repairmen. According to official statistics, the unemployment rate in 2002-2003 stood at about 3.2% of the labor force. However, the actual level, after adjusting for persons employed outside the formal sectors, is estimated to be around 14%. Loss of employment is the most prevalent trigger of poverty in Mongolia. Nearly 49% of the unemployed are poor.

The process of transition to market relations is inevitably followed by a social class transformation, particularly in urban areas, where people to a higher extent than in rural areas and small towns have cut their links to livestock’s herding. Most dramatic changes have occurred for urban state employees in factories and offices who have either been laid off, face staff cuts in the coming years, or have experienced that the purchasing power of their salaries is diminishing year by year. Large number of urban dwellers is now unable to live off their monthly salaries but have to supplement them with income from various jobs such as taxi-driving, petty trade, barter, brokering and whatever else is possible in the modern city. Among the educated, physicists and mathematicians may be seen to run computer

\textsuperscript{374} According to official statistics, the unemployment rate in 2002-2003 stood at about 3.2\% of the labor force. However, the actual level, after adjusting for persons employed outside the formal sectors, is estimated to be around 14\%.

\textsuperscript{375} Every year the country needs to absorb 25,000 new workers into the labor market, making new job creation a major challenge for the country.
businesses, engineers work as consultants, doctors work as interpreters, and some people with higher education even subsist as livestock herders on the steeps.\textsuperscript{376} Additionally, a group of riches has emerged, deriving its wealth mainly from domestic and international trade and brokering, and engaging heavily in conspicuous consumption.\textsuperscript{377}

**Gender**

Women achieved a high degree of equality under the socialist system. During the transition, the economic and social independence of women was severely undermined. Women were disproportionately affected by the transition. Women accounted for 52.2\% of the unemployed. More women than men were retrenched when state factories closed, and women were the first to be laid off during restructuring of the processing, service, and trade industries, where women workers predominated. After Government-owned farms were closed and livestock and machinery were privatized, more than 20,000 trained women lost their jobs. Many kindergartens and maternity centers closed, and the reduction in social services placed new demands on women to care for the young, the sick, and the elderly. By 1998, the proportion of poor female-headed households in Ulaanbaatar (44\%) was more than twice the proportion of male-headed households (21\%).\textsuperscript{378}

**Impact on the Disabled**

According to a survey conducted in March 2001 by the National Center for Rehabilitation for the Disabled, Mongolia had 115,000 persons with disabilities (PwD). The unemployment rate of PwDs was extremely high at 86.9\%.\textsuperscript{379} Of an estimated 39,700 PwDs capable of working, only 5,200

\textsuperscript{376} Ole Bruun. Ole Odgaard, “A Society and Economy in Transition”, in Ole Bruun and Ole Odgaard ed. Mongolia In Transition, Britian ,1996,p.26
\textsuperscript{377} Ibid.p.28.
\textsuperscript{378} The Poverty Partnership Agreement between ADB and the Government identified unemployment as one of the leading causes of poverty.
\textsuperscript{379} According to the National Statistics Office, there were 82, 300 working age PwDs in 2006. The unemployment rate of PwDs is estimated to have remained at about 87\%. Only about 13\% of PwDs are employed, although the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor estimates that about 80\% are capable of working.
(13.1%) were employed. Due to the decline of social welfare and social insurance services for PwDs since 1991, 50% of PwDs live in poverty, 60% of them women.\textsuperscript{380} Despite legislation protecting and supporting PwDs, budgetary constraints limit assistance that can be provided by the state.

**Impact on Rural to Urban Migration**

The breakdown of rural collectives, the closure of industries in small provincial towns (in which employment was linked to a wide range of social services), and the privatization of the livestock sector led to the emergence of a new underclass of ultra poor families—herding families with small herds of livestock who have marginal subsistence livelihood. The many that lost their herds in severe storms in the winters of 1999–2000 and 2000–2001, and in the intervening drought in the summer of 2000, who were left without means of livelihood moved to semiurban and urban areas. Rural poverty and unemployment are the major causes of rural-to-urban migration. The provincial cities of Darkhan and Erdenet and the capital Ulaanbaatar have been the main destination of migrants. Between 1990 and 2005, Ulaanbaatar experienced a net gain of migrants, while all the provinces experienced net losses. Nearly 70% of the increase of 427,000 in the capital’s population since 1990 has been due to migration. Poor people moving from rural areas to aimag centers or the capital face great hardships due to lack of registration, which is a requirement to access to basic social services. Substantial rural-to-urban migration is continuing, placing enormous strain on urban social services.\textsuperscript{381} Throughout this century, particularly its later half, Mongolia first experienced an urbanization of unparalleled scale and speed – from a few percent living in towns in the 1920s to fifty-five to sixty percent in 1990.


\textsuperscript{381} As of 2006, some 61% of Mongolia’s population was classified as urban, most living in and around the capital city of Ulaanbaatar and other large cities such as Erdenet and Darkhan.
urbanization was ascribed to a superior economic system and a proof of successful modernization. Since then, however, the transition to a market economy has implied the reversal go semi nomadic pastoralism for a considerable part of the population.  

Today, it is a major challenge for the Mongolian government to keep both old and new lifestyles integrated into Mongolian society. Education, medical and veterinary services, communication, transportation and access to markets must be assured across vast territory. Taxes must be collected in order to maintain these services, again depending on the successful reconstruction of local government and administration. In the process of transition, there is a grave danger that capital and country will drift apart and Mongolia will be divided into increasingly cosmopolitan urban canters and a vast disconnected countryside slipping back into subsistence livestock herding for the major part of its inhabitants.

V.II REVIVAL OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Buddhism and the country's traditions are closely tied, and while 26, 5 percent of the population are atheists, 59.7 percent of religious Mongolians practice some form of Buddhism. Lamaist Buddhism and within it the Gelugpa school is the traditional and dominant religion. When socialist controls on religion and on the country's traditions ended in 1990, interest in the practice of Buddhism grew. Kazakhs, most of whom are Muslim, are the largest ethnic minority, constituting approximately 4 percent of the population nationwide and 85 percent in the western province, Bayan-Ölgii.

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382 In fact, the majority of those families who previously lived in towns but have since been compelled to return to herding livestock on the steeps had some livestock throughout the socialist eras a supplement to their former occupations. Old values that regarded livestock as the only reliable wealth of people have survived and through the transitional period they have again proved worthy: when the state driven economy collapsed after 1990, livestock again provided people their essential source of food, materials for clothing and shelter, and means of transport.

383 Whereas the extent of poverty and unemployment has been moderate in the capita, rural areas and small towns have faced a near collapse of employment opportunities in the formal, non herding sectors necessitating a massive reorganization of the labour force.


385 Ibid
Kazakhs operate Islamic schools for their children. They sometimes receive financial assistance from religious organizations in Kazakhstan and Turkey. There is a small number of Christians, including Roman Catholics, Russian Orthodox, but especially Protestants. In the capital, Ulaanbaatar, approximately 30,000 citizens, or 3 percent of the registered population of the city, practice Christianity. A few citizens practice shamanism, but usually are not open about it. The majority of these resides in the countryside.

As a result of decades of ‘socialist’ progress, most aspects of indigenous Mongolian culture and religion appeared to have been suppressed, and to have given way to the ideology of Soviet style communism. In 1990 Mongolia turned from a communist country highly dependent, economically as well as ideologically, on the Soviet Union, into a democratic country. The shaking off of communist rule brought about a resurgence of Mongolian religious traditions, Buddhism and the other Mongolian religion alike. The Buddhist monasteries, which had fallen from grace during the Stanlist era, are again gaining importance. When communist rule in Mongolia broke down, the country looked back at the ultimately fruitless attempt to erase all religion from the Mongolian landscape, the indigenous religion as well as Buddhism. During the 1930s nearly all the monasteries and temples were destroyed or secularized; the monks were either killed or forced to marry. Laymen and monks succeeded in hiding some of the religious books and cult objects from the government and its catchpole, but most of the Buddhist literature and objects were destroyed during the years of the communist purges. However Buddhism has not attained the status it had during the Qing dynasty’s occupation of the country. The Qing court had supported the Mongolian Buddhist hierarchy, attempting to use Buddhism as a mechanism of control. With such

support, by 1990, the monasteries controlled at least one-fifth of the country’s wealth. Although they often provided the only schools and healthcare and served as repositories for artworks and books, they exploited laborers who worked for them, assisted Mongolian nobles in oppressing the larger population, and generally secular learning. Thus the communist attack on the Buddhist establishment in the late 1920’s and 1930’s did not create massive secular opposition. The state expropriated much of the property, including land, artworks, and animals, from the Buddhist monasteries, ordered the destruction of most of the monasteries, and sanctioned the killing of recalcitrant monks. A flourishing religious establishment numbering over 100,000 monks dwindled to fewer than 1,000 by the late 1980’s. The avariciousness, obscurantism, and oppressiveness of the Buddhist hierarchy in its heyday had alienated many Mongolians and undermined potential support.\footnote{Bruun and Odgaardeds., ed Mongolia in Transition, ; Humphrey, “Rituals of Death”, London , p. 60-61.} The cessation of antireligious propaganda after 1990 has resulted in the reopening of some Buddhist monasteries, a slight increase in the number of young people assuming a religious vocation, and a rise in the total number of worshippers.\footnote{Udo, Barkmann. “Revival of Lamaism in Mongolia,” Central Asian Survey, 1997, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 69-79} However, no massive support for the Buddhist religious organization has developed. The 1992 Constitution did not label Buddhism the state religion, and a Buddhist political party founded in the early 1990’s gained few adherents.\footnote{Interview, Lama Dambajav, Khamba Lama, Ulaanbaatar Post, May 14, 1994.} Eight hundred people have enrolled at Gandan monastery.\footnote{UB Post, Mongolia, November 5, 1996} The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respected this right in practice; however, the law limits proselytizing, and some religious groups seeking registration face burdensome bureaucratic requirements and lengthy delays. The constitution explicitly recognizes the
separation of church and state. The Government contributed to the restoration of several Buddhist sites that are important religious, historical, and cultural centers. In 1991 Mongolian lamas requested the Dalai Lama's information regarding the Ninth Jebtsundampa Khutukhtu, and only then was he officially acknowledged as the ninth incarnation of this Buddhist lineage that goes back to the famous Taranatha, a Tibetan Buddhist historian of the sixteenth century. In the same year the Jebtsundampa Khutukhtu moved to Dharamsala where he was officially enthroned. In 1999 he visited Mongolia, where he was acknowledged as the head of Mongolian Buddhism. The visit, however, met with political obstacles due to the Jebtsundampa's strong ties to the Tibetan exile government and the Dalai Lama. The Chinese government was opposed to his visit, and therefore the ties between this most important Mongolian Buddhist incarnation and his spiritual homeland were not further strengthened by it. The demographic factor, however, causes problems concerning the education of the monks and nuns. Knowledge of the holy scriptures, the liturgy, and the offering of ceremonies and rituals in general, is scarce. The old generation of monks is rapidly dying out. Thus, well educated Buddhist teachers are rarely to be found among the Mongolian clergy. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that from the beginning of the period of religious freedom in Mongolia, the Tibetan exile community and the Dalai Lama took a keen interest in the renaissance of Mongolian Buddhism. Throughout the last seven centuries, Tibet and Mongolia have maintained strong cultural, political, and religious ties, and from the late sixteenth century onward,

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392 The Constitution of Mongolia, MongGol ulus-un undusun xauli, article 9: "1. The State shall respect the Church and the Church shall honor the State. 2. State institutions shall not engage in religious activities and the Church shall not pursue political activities. 3. The relationship between the State and the Church shall be regulated bylaw." (Mongolian text: 1. mongGol ulus-du toru ni shasin-yin kundudgezu, shasin ni toru-ben degedulen-e. 2. toru-yin bayiGululG-ashasin-u, sum-e keyid ulus toru-yin uile azillaG-a erkilen yabuGulzu bolxu ugei. 3. toru, sum-e keyid-um xoGurundu-yin xarilcaG-a-yi xaulibarzokicaGulun-a.) Interestingly, the Mongolian terms used for "religion" here are "shasin," which traditionally is used to denote "religion" in the broadest sense, and then "sum-e keyid."
lamas of the dGe-lugs-pa school of Tibetan Buddhism managed to convert the entire population of Mongolia (with the exception of the Buryat Mongols) to Buddhism in less than fifty years. Since the early seventeenth century, Tibet and Mongolia have shared a common religious identity within the broader religio-cultural context of the Asian countries dominated by Mahayana Buddhism. Thus, in the early 1990s Tibetan lamas started to come to Mongolia in order to instruct the Mongolian clergy and to develop a programme of higher education for them. The former Indian ambassador to Mongolia (from 1989 to 2000), Bakula Rinpoche, a native of Ladakh, played a central role in this influx of Tibetan Buddhist knowledge. He tried to reestablish Mongolian Buddhism on the basis of dGe-lugs-pa monasticism. This aim implied the enforcement of celibacy among Mongolian monks and nuns. Bakula Rinpoche himself ordained quite a number of young monks and nuns. Bakula Rinpoche’s modelling of Mongolian Buddhism on the dGe-lugs-pa tradition was, however, contested. Mongolians consider the fact that the majority of monks turn their backs on their monastery and live life as pastoral herdsmen to be a distinctively Mongolian Buddhist way of life. Today the pattern of leading a religious cum secular life in Mongolia is forming. Young people, after having performed their work and/or domestic duties, during the afternoon drop by the monastery with which they are affiliated and carry out their religious obligations, either by reciting texts or by performing religious ceremonies. Half of their day is thus spent in pursuit of a spiritual life although they are not properly ordained. Due to a lack of knowledge of the philosophical and ritual differences of the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism, the monks and nuns often cannot determine with certainty the order of Tibetan Buddhism to which they belong. Since the late sixteenth century the dGe-lugs-pa has been dominant, but schools like the bKa‘-brgyud-pa, the Sa-skya-pa, and the rNying-ma-pa have also been active in Mongolia.\textsuperscript{393}

\textsuperscript{393}Laetitia, Merli. “Shamanism in Transition”. Paper presented at an international workshop, “Mongolians from country to city,” held at the Nordic institute of Asian Studies.
A religious group must register with the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs, a decentralized and bureaucratic process, in order to legally function as an organization. Religious institutions must reregister annually. The law allows the Government to supervise and limit the number of places of worship and number of clergy. Throughout the country, there were 391 registered places of worship, including 217 Buddhist, 143 Christian, 5 Baha’i, 24 Muslim, and 2 shamanistic. During the period covered by this report, the Ministry registered 16 new Christian churches, 11 Buddhist temples, 19 Moslem mosques and 2 shaman temples. In Ulaanbaatar, the registration of one Buddhist and three Christian religious organizations which own a temple and three churches, respectively, remained under consideration. Religious instruction is not permitted in public schools. There is a school to train Buddhist lamas in Ulaanbaatar.

Today nearly 200 monasteries and temples have been restored throughout the country. More than 3000 monks are registered (the number of nuns is not ascertained), and there is ongoing teaching activity, mostly carried out by Tibetan teachers from the Tibetan exile community in India. The traditional Mongolian New Year Festival, Tsagaan Sar, which corresponds to the Chinese lunar new year and contains a similar focus on family gathering and honoring, was reintroduced as a public holiday after a thirty year interruption. 394 Also, the celebrations of Naadam- the traditional summer festival of horse riding, wrestling and archery- enjoyed renewed interest and were permeated with much symbolism relating to Chinggis Khan. 395 In addition, there was state support for a nationwide hierarchy of contests, from which the champions of lower levels continued at higher levels ending up in Ulaanbaatar, the winning wrestler becoming a national hero. Naadam is the one occasion where scattered pastoralists gather in large crowds to socialize and maintain friendships while observing age old rituals. As the Naadam celebrations have been given free reign, they have some

395 Ibid., P. 220
places been reconnected to their pre-Buddhist religious origin, according to which large stone piles are constructed for the worship of Heaven, while monks perform services and collect donations. Also, sporadic accounts of the activities of shamans and exorcizing lamas suggest that the indigenous religion has not completely died out. Many urban people worship and take part in rituals in reestablished Buddhist temples and shrines, and therefore is renewed ritual activity at ancient ‘sacred’ sites in the countryside. A few people have also sent their sons as novices to train at monastic centers, which they perceive as bringing great ‘honor’ to their families. Although this practice has not yet become very widespread monastic institutions are regarded once more as educational centers. Since education has become costly, and beyond the reach of many poorer families, the monasteries do offer certain opportunities for education, at least for young boys. Until the late 1980’s, the MPRP government claimed that religion had been replaced by industrialization and communism. When the government suddenly reversed its stance towards religion and replaced the conditioned freedom of religion of the 1960 constitution particularly foreign observers foresaw a massive religious revival. In the pre-modern era every Mongolian town was centered on a temple or monastery, which was usually the only fixed construction in a sea of felt tents. Today local governments across the country strive to rebuild these old gathering points, which have in many places been left in ruins for over a century, in an effort to attract tourists and visitors and to add local flavor to the dreary Russian-style urban environment.

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399 The Constitution of 1960 guaranteed both freedom of religion and freedom of anti-religious propaganda.
400 In 1994, the secretary of Mongolia’s national Security Council, j. Enhsayhan, noted at a conference, ‘We should bear in mind that Mongolia is situated between Russia and China, both of which represent settled civilizations which have their own cultures, religions and ways
functioning, earning their income from tourism and voluntary donations, while the level of liturgic activity is still moderate, primarily owing to the poor state of the Mongolian monk hood, with half of the country’s 2,000 monks being over 75 years of age.\[^{401}\] In addition, because physicians have begun to charge for their services, increasing number of poor have been unable to consult with them and have turned to Shamans for medical care.\[^{402}\]

Interestingly, however, a Mongolian nationalist revival began even before the step into fully independent nationhood- it may even been seen as having facilitated the ideological mobilization around this move. Already in early 1989, General Secretary Batmonh told reporters that the harmful errors of the 1930s included the destruction of monasteries and with them the priceless cultural heritage of the Mongolian people.\[^{403}\] Obliviously the MPRP was prepared to extend its leading role to the boosting of Mongolian identity in reaction to decades of Russian cultural and linguistic influence.

**Restrictions on religious freedom**

While the law does not prohibit proselytizing by registered religious groups, it limits such activity by forbidding spreading religious views to nonbelievers by "force, pressure, material incentives, deception, or means which harm health or morals or are psychologically damaging." There were no instances of prosecutions under this law during the reporting period. A Ministry of Education directive bans mixing foreign language or other training with religious teaching or instruction.\[^{404}\] Monitoring of the ban, particularly in the capital area, is strict. There were no reported violations of the ban in recent years. Religious groups that violate the law may not receive

\[^{401}\] The Mongolian state does not support Buddhist institutions directly other than providing funds for certain construction and restoration projects. In 1995, a monastery in Hovd province had to close down although opened only in 1990, because the monks had become too old. However, in other monasteries the numbers of applications to become a monk exceed the actual capacity by a large margin.


\[^{403}\] Worden and Savada, opcit, p. 98.

an extension of their registration. If individuals violate the law, the Government may ask their employers to terminate their employment. No such cases were reported during the reporting period. Registration and reregistration are burdensome for all religious groups. The length and documentation requirements of the process discourage some organizations from applying. Some Christian groups stated that local officials believed there were "too many" churches, or that there should at least be parity in the registration of new Buddhist temples and new Christian churches. No churches were known to have been refused registration in Ulaanbaatar during the reporting period; the applications of four religious organizations remained under consideration.405

Authorities in Tuv aimag (province), near Ulaanbaatar, routinely denied registration to churches. There are currently no churches registered in the aimag, and several churches were again denied registration during the reporting period. A nongovernmental organization (NGO) filed a formal complaint with the National Human Rights Commission in May 2007 concerning the refusal by Tuv aimag authorities to register Christian churches. In June 2007 the Commission wrote to the Tuv aimag legislative body stating that the body's actions were in violation of the Constitution. Until the past year, almost all mosques throughout the country were registered as branches of one central Islamic organization. However, during the reporting period the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs clarified that each mosque needed to seek additional approvals from local authorities in their areas. This separate registration generally proceeded smoothly. However, one mosque in Darkhan-Uul aimag was told that the aimag legislature had approved its application, but it did not receive documentation, leaving it unable to register with the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs. Unregistered religious institutions are often able to function in practice but potentially face difficulties with authorities and are unable to sponsor foreign clergy for visas. Visa problems especially affect Christian

405 Churchpuritymongolia.com
churches, many of which depend on foreign clergy. The Muslim community in Ulaanbaatar reported that authorities were helpful in assisting its efforts to construct a mosque, including donating a piece of land for the site. There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees in the country.

The sudden revival of Buddhism in Mongolia after 1990 is only astonishing at first glance. Religion never ceased to exist in Mongolia. Even in the communist era many Mongolians found a way to practice religion secretly. Today even former party leaders admit to having practiced Buddhist rites or to consulting astrologers during the time when the practice of religion was officially forbidden.\footnote{The Revival, MongoliaToday, Issue, No.6, October 10, 2002.} Since 1992 freedom of religion has been guaranteed in the constitution, and the separation of religious and secular institutions has been established. This new freedom of religion is observable everywhere in the country. People flock to the monasteries, making circumambulations, giving offering to the Buddha’s and Bodhisattvas whose statues are either being restored or built a new. The yearly Mayidari festival, first introduced in 1657 by the first Jebtsundampa Khutukhtu Zanabazar, was held again at Ulaanbaatar, in May of 2000 at the Gandangethergchinlin monastery. This monastery recently opened new colleges, structuring the monastic institution after the Tibetan dGe-lugs-pa model. In order to also make Buddhist teachings available for smaller monasteries in the countryside, lamas are sent to these establishments.\footnote{United States Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. Mongolia: International Religious Freedom Report 2007} In 1998 the number of monks at the Gandan monastery was over 300 and is still growing. The abbot of the monastery is considered by other clerics to be the head abbot of all of Mongolia’s monastic establishments. Many people, including those who claim to lead ‘sophisticated’ urban lives, regularly consult a lam before undertaking of importance such as journeys, marriage, change of employment, arranging funerals, naming the newborn, and to resolve other problems concerned with human relationship.\footnote{Ibid}
With the end of Mongolia's communist regime in 1990, numbers of Christian followers have started to steadily increase again. Foreign Christian missionary groups have also returned to Mongolia, including Roman Catholics, Lutherans Russian Orthodox Presbyterians Seventh-day Adventists, various evangelical Protestant groups, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and Jehovah's Witnesses. During the rise of the Mongol Empire the Great Khans though mostly Shamanists and Buddhist, were religiously tolerant towards the Nestorian Christians and Muslims. Nevertheless, Nestorian Christianity disappeared from the region after the break up of the Mongolian Empire. Christians in Mongolia are considered a growing minority group. Accounts of the exact number of Christians vary as no nationwide statistics have even been released. As of 2005, the United States Department of State reports that approximately 24,000 Christians live in Mongolia's capital, Ulaanbaatar, which is around 2.5 percent of the entire registered population of the city.

Societal abuses and discrimination

There were few reports of societal abuses or discrimination based on religious belief or practice in the period covered by this report. Citizens generally were tolerant of the beliefs of others; however, because in the past humanitarian assistance was accompanied by proselytizing activity, there was some friction between foreign Christian missionary groups and citizens. Some social conservatives have criticized foreign influences on youth and children, including foreign religions and the alleged use of material incentives to attract converts. The resurgence of religious ideas and practices could not have occurred without the existence of a substantial underlying foundation of knowledge, that has been maintained, surviving significantly,

religion/monrelhis.shtml
410 Gaby Bamana, ed., Christianity and Mongolia: Past and Present Ulaanbaatar: Antoon
Mostaert Center, 2006.
in the everyday consciousness of many Mongol people, and providing them with an ongoing patterns of a ‘right’ way to live^412

V.III WOMEN AND TRANSITION

Gender relations affect social and economic functioning at all levels. Analyzing gender issues involve examining women and men in terms of the roles they play in society,’ roles which change as societies change...Overall, transition to a market economy has resulted in a widening of gender differences in the spheres of politics, the economy and social life. Since the early 1990s, female participation in political life has declined and women are‘ practically invisible as partners in setting new “rules of the game”. The position of women in the labor market has deteriorated. In most of the countries reviewed, women have lost jobs faster than men, remained unemployed for longer periods of time, and had fewer job opportunities in the private sector. Women have had a higher unemployment rate than men (overall, 6 percent higher) and lower levels of wages (women received, on average, 75 percent of the wage paid to men for the same job). Reductions in employment and pay have resulted in greater dependence on government benefits though these have been eroding rapidly in all the countries. Women’s caring functions within the family have also increased substantially at the same time as their incomes and available social services have declined. Overall, there has been a deterioration of women’s status. The chapter tries to explore what was the situation and status of women in Mongolia before transition? Are similar changes to be found in Mongolia?

^412 Besides Mongolian Buddhism, Chinggis Khan plays the most important role for the reconstruction of Mongolian cultural and religious identity at the turn of the twenty-first century. In the wake of this Chinggis khan renaissance the indigenous religion of the Mongols will surely have its comeback, as is already obvious in Buryatia, where the indigenous religious beliefs now play a much more important role than Buddhism.
**Women in pre-transition Mongolia**

In the earliest history, sources indicate that women had considerably more equality with men than females in other East Asian societies. One of every four boys joined the Lamaist celibate monk hood, a practice that restrained Mongolia’s fertility rate. However by the early twentieth century, the status of women have eroded.

The dynamics of gender equality in Mongolia can be characterized as a sequence of historical periods. Equality was rapidly promoted after the 1921 Revolution; achieved impressive results in the 1920s and 1930s; underwent a period of regression in the 1940s; was then re-promoted, and since 1989, has experienced a period of retrenchment. The dynamics have not been linear, but the results have been dramatic in a region of the world where women have always been subordinated to men economically, socially and politically. In comparison to even developed countries, Mongolia’s achievements are notable. Following the 1921 revolution, women gradually achieved equal opportunity with men in education and employment. Women could and did dissolve marriages, confident in the knowledge that state-provided childcare services would ensure that their lives were not disrupted or their progress impeded. Large families were recommended since the socialist ideology included efforts to build a large workforce, and all Mongolians naturally wished a larger population to fill the vast territory of their country. Under socialism, women were rewarded for having four or more children. Traditionally families were large, but great health risks and limited availability of contraceptives played important roles. The socialist policy of education, encouragement of women to have large families, support for women to enter the industrial workforce and more political decision making power did not relieve women of their traditional tasks in the home, however, thus frequently giving women a double workload.

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413 Morris Rossabi, Modern Mongolia; From Khans to commissars to Capitalists, California, 2005, pp 150

Educational achievements for both boys and girls were impressive in 1923 Mongolia’s first secondary school had only five female students, but only five years later the number had risen to 558. Education of women was emphasized and their participation in politics and decision-making was encouraged. In 1931 about 40 percent of school enrolment were female and out of 600 people elected to local public bodies 30 percent were women, two of these as aimag governors. By 1969, 76 percent of all women were literate and by 1989 the literacy rate for the entire population, both male and female, had risen to 96 percent. (It is now reported to be 96 percent, but surveys show that this figure may be exaggerated) and forty three percent of university and technical college graduates were females.415

Educational achievements are also reflected in enrolments in higher education; women constitute 50 percent of mathematics students, 63 percent of trade and business students, 78 percent of foreign language students, 73 percent of medical students, and 76 percent of pedagogical students. At the entire college level, women constitute more than three-quarters of all enrolments. While women account for just under half of Mongolia’s workforce, they dominate in the banking, health and education sectors (60-80 percent). Women also predominate in several subsectors, notably communications, trade, technology, utility services, public canteens and insurance. Surprising it may be for foreigners in Mongolia to see that, for instance the vast majority of construction workers are women, as are painters and other occupational groups that in Western society are usually dominated by men.

These tendencies of education and occupation are not only prevalent in the cities (Ulaanbaatar, Darkhan, Erdenet), but also in aimag and sum centers. About 45.1 percent of the female population live in rural areas and roughly 225,000 women are herders. In rural areas women typically are

415 Barbara Skapa, “Mongolian Women and Poverty during the Transition,” in Griffin, ed., poverty, 93, gives the more plausible figure of 86 literacy rate by 1989. However, the latest study, United Nations development fund for Women, Women in Mongolia, 28, cites a figure of 95 percent literacy late at the end of the communist regime.
occupied within the public administration, for instance as doctors, veterinarians, teachers, drivers and shop assistants, while only a few run private businesses. Some rural parents valued education for their daughters because it offered the girls an avenue of escape from the demanding and difficult life led by women in a pastoral economy. Also among herders women are usually well educated; most have 8 to 10 years of schooling. Many have 3 to 4 years of higher education as teachers, veterinarians, engineers or nurses. Almost all women can therefore read and write—skills that have gained new importance after the privatization of livestock and the need to cope with the mechanisms of a market economy.

**Table 1. Literacy rates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>72.6</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>64.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>82.1</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>75.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>96.5</td>
<td>90.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>97.0</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>95.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: National Statistical Office, Literacy and Education of Mongolia’s Population, 1997*

**Health care**

In health care, medical services were provided by the state for men and women alike throughout the county at *sum* (local district) level. Improved health care during the socialist period resulted in a large increase in life-expectancy rates between the 1920s and 1990, rising by six years between 1960 and 1990. The different needs of males and females were

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reflected in the provision made for maternal and child health; pre-natal rest-homes were set up in all sum and maternity leave was generous. Over 90 percent of rural women gave birth in hospitals. This provision resulted in a decrease in maternal death rates from 170 per 100,000 live births in 1970 to 120 in 1990, and a decrease in infant mortality. The ratio of doctors to the general population increased dramatically, so that in 1990, there were more than 6000 physicians, three quarters of whom were women.\footnote{Mongolia, National statistical office, “Mongolian statistical yearbook, 1997, p.62.}

\textit{Decision-making and public life}

The socialist period saw an increase in female participation in decision-making and public life. In 1925, the first women were appointed to positions in local government and in 1929, one was appointed as a member of the People’s Supreme Court. In 1931, 30 percent of local government officials, including two aimag (provincial) governors, were women. Later on, quotas of female representation were legally guaranteed in parliament, in ministerial posts and at government and aimag levels, though there were proportionately fewer women than men to be found in the most senior posts.

\textit{Employment}

Employment was guaranteed by the state for both men and women (communist ideology held labor to be a duty of all citizens) and conditions were established to enable women to undertake work outside the home. These included the provision of kindergartens and day nurseries in both cities and rural communities, and state support for the care of the elderly and disabled (usually the responsibility of women rather than men). At the same time, an official list of jobs and standards for women (prepared in 1964 and 1985) drew a distinction between men’s and women’s work in the employment structure. Pay was similar for men and women and wage differences were small, characteristic of the compressed wage scales of socialist economies though difference operated through the allocation of
additional rewards, benefits and privileges. Wages were centrally controlled and remained little changed throughout the 1980s—monthly wages in the material sector rose only from an average of 526 tugriks in 1981 to 568 tugriks in 1989. By the late 1980s, women in Mongolia had achieved a measure of equality and education greater than many other Asian countries.

Female population in Mongolia 1998

1,198,217 females (50.4 percent of the total population of 2,179,576)

Age structure of the female population

11 percent (132,411) over the age of 50.
42 percent (504,879) aged between 20 and 49
47 percent (560,927) aged 19 or below
36 percent (430,997) aged 14 or below

Total urban population 1,252,300 (52.0 percent)
Total rural population 1,134,700 (47.5 percent)

Life expectancy: females 65.4 years, males 62.1 years.

Number of female-headed households (1997):
51,732 (14.7 percent of all households).  

THE EFFECT OF THE TRANSITION ON WOMEN

UNEMPLOYMENT

Females have a slightly higher but similar unemployment rate to males. It is higher for three out of the five years given but the difference in male-female unemployment rates is small (an average of 0.4 per cent compared to the average of 6.0 percent for other transitional countries referred to earlier). The rates of female unemployment are in fact similar to those in Western countries but those for male unemployment are higher. A worldwide trend is for female labour force participation rates to move closer to those of males although there are still significant differences between

\[418\] National Statistical Office of Mongolia, 1998; UNDP, 1997
male and female work by sector, occupation and type. Female labour force participation is strongly influenced by gender differences in the definition of work in different countries, particularly in the informal sector and in agriculture, where it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between women’s housework and unpaid work. In general, women tend to be in the minority in industry but occupy a high proportion of service jobs. The greater availability of part-time work in service jobs attracts more women who often have less opportunity to receive training for changing employment. Are these general trends to be found in Mongolia? As can be seen in Table below women in Mongolia predominate in some occupations (services, finance and trade) and men in others (industry, construction, telecommunications and transport). Women have also moved into new areas of employment such as finance and real estate.

(Female employment (2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Percentage of female Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotels and catering</td>
<td>79.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>66.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and social services</td>
<td>64.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial institutions</td>
<td>61.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade (wholesale and retail)</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public services</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and hunting</td>
<td>46.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real estate</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil service and armed forces</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Processing</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity and natural gas</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[420\] B. Robinson and A. Solongo. *The Gender Dimension of Economic Transition in Mongolia*, 1999, p. 72
While women predominate in numbers in some sectors, they are likely to be in the minority in senior positions or management roles. Where employment is within the state sector (such as education, healthcare and social services) retrenchment of staff, as sector budgets have been cut, has affected women more than men as a result of the composition of the labor force. Today there are indications that women who dominated in the banking, health and education sectors have lost jobs or that their positions have become less desirable. The public sector now has little capacity to pay reasonable wages, and jobs as teachers, doctors and public servants are losing prestige. In recent years women have experienced that urban positions formerly available have slipped out of their reach and that their work is more secretarial than executive in character. Young women seeking work find the search difficult. Also Young women can no longer count upon the material health care and childcare supports which their mothers took for granted. Managers of privatized firms are becoming increasingly reluctant to hire women of child-bearing age or with children. This trend is not easily reflected in statistics. Women make up 52 percent of all registered unemployed. And, although official unemployment was 8.7 percent in 1994, actual unemployment is twice as high. According to survey conducted in 1999 by the Sant Maral Foundation, the most respected polling organization in the country, the first cause of concern for women was unemployment, which was followed by poverty and education. Their own economic conditions were their most pressing problems. Unemployment often has devastating consequences; although gender unemployment breakdowns for the unregistered unemployed are difficult to obtain, collateral evidences

423 Ibid. p. 6.
suggests that joblessness had slightly more effects on women. A report commissioned by one of the leading women NGO’s noted that because of “privatization and selling off of governmental shares in pivotal enterprises, women in the labor force became far more vulnerable than before. The private sector industries that have sprouted in the 1990’s employed some women but often under unfavorable circumstances. They occasionally hired women as temporary workers, thus eliminating most, if not all, benefits, including insurance. Even when they employed women fulltime, they occasionally took advantage of them- for example, depriving them of overtime pay. Thus women working in the private sector employment preferred to return to state employment.

During the transition, the nation’s leadership elite has become conspicuously more male in composition; the political leadership is now entirely male to the extent that in 1995 there was not one woman of ministerial or vice-ministerial rank, and only three out of 76 members of the parliament were women- a fall from 24.9 percent under the previous system to 3.9 percent after the first democratic free election in 1992. (In the June 1996 elections, the number of women in parliament increased to 7). Women still wield less

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425 Liberal Women’s Brain Pool, Women’s Empowerment, p. 40.
426 Women’s Information and Research Centre, Economic Status: The Women’s Information and Research Centre Survey of areas in five representative aimags found that “women have ... been the first to be ousted from the labor market, most affected by the undermining of the universal social protection system and found themselves disempowered under the new rubrics of a democratic political model.” Focusing on private sector employment, the area touted by the international donor agencies and the Mongolian advocates of the market economy, the survey discovered that many women working in this sector were on temporary contracts and had “far fewer entitlements.” The private sector employees “often remove women rights to maternity benefit, specified leave and equitable pay and treatment in the workplace.” The minimal government championed by the market economy supporters could not enforce regulations about safety, health, and equityability, leaving many women workers vulnerable to the whims of their private sector employers. Women who were accustomed to job security and full contractual rights and obligations in the labor forces” found themselves without such social welfare guarantees in the marketplace. Another survey found that women faced “widespread sexually harassment at the workplace” and that “women do not complain through fear of loosing a job and later risk getting their marriage dissolved.” (United Nations Development Fund for Women, Women in Mongolia, 21.) A weak government offered scant assistance to women confronted with such harassment. Many sources contended that wealthy or well-connected women receive the bulk of the credit offered through governmental and international donor programmes. It is difficult to gauge the extent of such favoritism., Liberal Women’s Brain Pool, Women’s Empowerment, p. 40.
427 Ibid, p.43
policy-making power than 50 years ago; only 11.7 percent of the members of the Supreme Court are women, only 11 percent of those in the diplomatic service are women and no woman is a governor of an aimag. Only one out of 342 sums have a female governor.

**Women’s Health**

All health services deteriorated after 1990 and real per capita expenditure on health reduced by 42 per cent in the early 1990s. \(^{427}\) Mortality rates have increased for males and females, higher for males than female, even for males from age thirty onwards. Following transition there has been a decline in nutrition and dietary balance, availability of safe water and sanitary services, and an increase in sedentary life style. High maternal death rates are identified by the World Health Organization as an indicator of gender inequality. From 1990 onwards, there was a decline in maternal health care and facilities and an increase in maternal malnutrition, protein deficiency, and post-delivery toxemia, all leading in turn to an increase in birth complications, post-natal anemia, premature birth and infant malnutrition and morality. The maternal mortality rate doubled between 1990 and 1994; the rate for 1997 has returned to near pre-transition levels of 140 per 100,000 births in 1985.

**Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births, 1992-97.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Maternal mortality rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: National Statistical Office*

There is some regional variation in maternal mortality. It is twice as high in rural as in urban areas, partly due to the rise of home deliveries resulting from the decline in local services (the maternal mortality rate is

higher for home deliveries). By 1994, only 40 of the 392 rest homes in the soums were functioning. Some had reported by the late 1990’s but with poor building and services, and “women are not happy with them,” a UN study noted. By contrast, infant mortality rate has declined to 29.5 per 1,000 live births, but this apparent reduction is likely due to deaths, particularly in the countryside, where there are few doctors. Among older women with high risk pregnancies, and due to under reporting of the falling birthrates, particularly. Infant mortality rates vary throughout the country according to location (rural and urban) and social groups: ‘A child born in Ulaanbaatar, to a mother with tertiary education, aged between 24-34 years, living in an apartment with tap water has the best survival chances. In order to improve health services, a reform of the health service is in progress, switching priorities from highly specialized healthcare and large urban-based hospitals to more local, family-doctor based, primary healthcare services and health promotion rather than disease treatment.

**Family planning and birth control**

During socialist times, abortion or abstinence from sex were the main means of birth control. In 1943, abortion was made legal for women with serious health problems. During the centrally-planned economy, the government had encouraged large families as a matter of policy and the shortage of contraceptives caused women to have children at too early or too late an age (under eighteen or over forty) and to have inadequate spacing between births. Women considered pregnancies a civic duty rather than an individual family decision and thus had an inordinate number of births. The high fertility levels which failed to take into account

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428 Kojima, “Women in Development”, opcit, p.112
430 Fenger Benwell, opcit,p.141.
health of the individual women, often led to maternal mortality. There is a high rate of abortion (336 reported per 1,000 in 1995) and low use of preventative methods of family planning. The demand from women for contraceptives and information about them is high. Sex education is seldom, if ever; taught in schools and only to a very limited extent within families (it has been unusual for mothers and daughters to speak of such ‘taboo’ subjects, especially in rural areas). During the 1990s, there has been an increase in unmarried mothers (now 12-13 percent of mothers giving birth). Birth control within Mongolian society is most often seen as the female's responsibility and condom use is low. About 30 percent of reproductive-age women use contraceptives, and of these, 80 percent use Intra-Uterine Devices. During transition, sexually-transmitted diseases have increased and their incidence is probably under-recorded. The low level of condom use increases the vulnerability of the population to the HIV virus though the number of known cases so far is very small. The responsibility for family planning and sexual health tends to be seen as belonging to females rather than shared with males, and education and awareness-raising programmes for males have been few. Inequality in allocation of responsibility for sexual health is illustrated by an attempt in September 1997, by the city authorities in Ulaanbaatar, to impose compulsory HIV testing for all females in the city between the ages of 15 and 40, though not for males.

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Unemployment and poor health in a society without unemployment benefit, where medicine is expensive and where a healthy diet is difficult to obtain, have led to social deprivation and more than one in four people lives in poverty. Social problems that were not known to exist before have developed or increased. Alcoholism, the number of street children, prostitution and the crime rate has all increased. Moreover, as one study

433 Ibid. p.121
notes, “there is a low level of awareness among staff of enforcement agencies such as police officers to combat violence against women,” and “the issue of violence against women has not made much headway within the mainstream institutions and organizations, whose decision making instances are male dominated.”

Abortion was legalized in 1989 and increased dramatically, but after having peaked in 1991 with 31,217 abortions the number is now 17,257, which is less than prior to 1989. The same tendency is seen from the number of divorces: in 1986-92 the rate increased by one third, but is now back to the level of 1985; 731 in 1994. There were 2,243 cases in 1990, and about 6,000 in the first quarter of 1993; underreporting is widely suspected.

The previous system rewarded women with many children. Certain benefits are still granted to women with four or more children, mainly retirement at the age of 50 (as compared to 55 for others) and higher pensions. But today neither common salaries nor pensions are adequate to support a large family, let alone secure the children a good education. For instance, an apartment may no longer be a natural fringe benefit of a good job, but has to be bought at prices in the range of 2-2.5 million tugrik, compared to a common salary of 20,000 tugrik per month.

The statistical information given above should only be seen as indicative of tendencies in the Mongolian society. Statistics are not easily collected due to the poor infrastructure of the country and the nomadic lifestyle, and therefore are not necessarily reliable. For instance, figures on unemployment can hardly be trusted when there is no unemployment benefit and no prospect of getting a job by being registered. For women the numbers are even less credible, since women on maternity leave (two years) are

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436 Fenger Benwell, opcit, p.140.
forced to apply for jobs because the maternity pension is but a meager supplement to the husband’s salary. Pensions are generally low and cause bitterness among people who have worked all their lives only to end up in poverty. No pensions are given to single women, only the fathers are obliged to pay maintenance (in 1995, approximately 2,000 tg per child per month) until the child is 16. Widows may only receive a pension if their husbands died at work, not if they died in fights or accidents outside their place of work. Women who have four or more children may stop working and receive a pension of 6,900 tg (8,700 tg in the city), which is not nearly enough to support a family.437 To sustain themselves and their families in this era of economic distress, some girls and women living below the poverty line turned to prostitution. One survey conducted in 1996, found 3,000 prostitutes in Ulaanbaatar, a figure that has surely risen with the decline in living standards since then.438 Prostitutes serviced Mongolian men, but the influx of foreign consultants and experts provided new and often wealthier clients. It was no accident that a large number plied their trade within a block of the Ulaanbaatar hotel, where many foreigners stayed. Ironically, some female college students became sex workers to cover the cost of their education, which the communist government had earlier offered gratis. Others were vulnerable to confidence men who sold them into prostitution in foreign lands.439 Street children appeared in the 1990s. By 2000, in a country in which, according to one journalist, “no one was homeless ten years ago” (that is in 1990), there were perhaps 6,000 such children in Ulaanbaatar alone.440 “In a culture where children are traditionally treasured and to be childless is considered devastating, the

437 These figures change rapidly. Held against the cost of daily goods it is evident that the pension is low: one litre of milk is 250 tg and a loaf of bread is 150 tg. In daily talk it is estimated that a family must have 50,000 tg a month in the city to Survive in ‘reasonable comfort’, i.e. Have meat everyday and sufficiently warm clothes for winter.
439 A Korean national was deported from Mongolia after falsely tempting 400 women with arranged marriage to Japanese men and then selling them either into erotic dancing or prostitution in Japan. See MNA, February 2, 2004.
existence if street children is a source of anguish,” one foreign observer noted. By the late 1990’s Mongolian and foreign residents in Ulaanbaatar noticed “the voices of street children living underground among hot water pipes (that) echoed up in the manholes.” Save the children- UK and other foreign organizations, as well as domestic agencies, sought to help by providing shelters, teaching the children brick making and other skills, starting literary classes, and founding summer camps, which also offered a rudimentary education and training for potential employment. World vision, another philanthropic organization, has erected bathhouses and provided food for a few of the children. The Mongolian government was either bereft of resources often relied on private philanthropies or foreign aid organizations to cope with the street children.

Women and poverty

Poverty is a new phenomenon in post-1990 Mongolia. Loss of employment, high inflation and erosion of real earnings created new problems for households and caused many to fall below the poverty line. At the same time, the social safety-nets of socialist times fell away because of the lack of state funding. Taken together these circumstances resulted in the rise of poverty, a reduction in education and health care provision, a rise in malnutrition and social problems such as homeless children, alcoholism, family violence and prostitution. Groups vulnerable to poverty in Mongolia have been identified as orphans, female-headed households, the elderly without family, the physically handicapped, households with more than four children, the unemployed, and herders with small numbers of animals in

remote areas. It is estimated that around 36 percent of the population in Mongolia is living below the defined poverty line though in some areas this proportion may be higher. Single heads of households, particularly women, are identified as a vulnerable group, especially if they have children. This matches a global study which concluded that, throughout the world, ‘the strongest link between gender and poverty is found in female-headed households, which are a significant source of female poverty’. The number of female-headed households in Mongolia was 51,732 in 1997 (14.7 percent of the total), a large increase compared to 19,289 (4.5 percent of the total) in 1990 approximately 25 percent of those living below the poverty line. A quarter of them have six or more children and half belong to the poorest group in the population. The proportion of female heads of families with children under the aged of 16 is increasing among the poor. Female heads of poor families include a high proportion of widows: 65-80 percent of all deaths in the age group 20-29 are male. It is also the case that many more households function in practice as female-headed households in cases where the men are unemployed or are unable to work because of ill-health or alcoholism. One factor in female poverty is that women are more likely to lose their jobs when firms reduce employee numbers. With unemployment, alcoholism, crime, and domestic abuse all on the rise, some women opted for divorce or were abandoned by their spouses. A survey in 1998 found that only one half of the 180,000 people between the age of sixteen and forty nine were married. The Pensions Law (1990 amendment) legislated that women with four or more children could be pensioned off from work on the grounds of being occupied in ‘social care’. Although the law states that this is to be by agreement, it has made such women vulnerable to job-losses. In 1994, 55.8 percent of all ‘retired’ women of working age were those who

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444 UNDP, 1997, p. 13
were pensioned off because of the number of their children. Alongside this has been reduction in the social services which enabled women to work: state funded kindergartens, child-care and nurseries in urban and rural areas. Government allowances to the elderly and disabled have been eroded by inflation, increasing their dependence for care on their families, in practice mostly on women. Under pressure from international donors, the government reduced its budgets for health and education two sectors of economy that employed a significant number of women.447 The existing Maternal and Infant Law provides benefits for employed women who are pregnant: 101 days maternity leave with 400 tugriks a day, plus two years of child-care leave with no pay (but with social benefits allowance), during which time their jobs are retained for them. However, this entitlement is seen by employers as a hazard in employing them. Particularly in the private sector, employers are reluctant to comply with this and try to avoid employing young married women of child-bearing age or with children.448 Having scant support from any state safety net, some poor women survived via the informal sector. They set up stalls in food markets and sold clothing, jewelry, household goods, and fresh milk at Kiosks or on the black market. In this connection, the World Bank developed programmes in its own words, “to assist women in adjusting to the transition to a market economy” and to promote “private sector growth, economic efficiency, and development of small and medium scale industries.449” The need for cash exacerbated women’s travails. They had to pay for their childrens schooling, including food, lodging, and materials if they attended boarding schools. During the communist era, the government had not charged for any of these educational expenses, but since the early 1990’s, such subsidies have been discontinued, partly at the behest of international donors.450 The Constitution of Mongolia states equal rights for men and women. The law formally reflects the

447 United Nations development Fund For Women, *Women In Mongolia*, p. 23
449 Kojima, opcit pp. 33-34.
450 Cooper, opcit, pp. 8.
equality of women developed during socialist times and there are provisions for equal opportunity in education, employment and financial assistance for childbirth. However, women’s role and visibility in public affairs has significantly reduced since 1990. Following the national elections in 1992, the gender imbalance became more marked. Women’s representation in parliament dropped from 25 per cent to 4 percent, rising later to 8 percent after the 1996 elections. During socialist times, a quota system for female representation had operated but this ceased after 1990, and though some women now advocate its return, others oppose it. In all government departments there are numbers of women to be found but mainly in lower positions. Only 11.7 percent of the members of Supreme Court are women, only 11 percent of those in the diplomatic services are women and no women is a governor of an aimag. Only one out of 342 sums has a female governor.

Women and education

Every citizen has the right to free primary and secondary education, according to Mongolia’s constitution though the indirect and direct costs of education to households are rising. The education sector has been hard hit by the economic transition. The percentage of the state budget allocated to education fell from 22.9 in 1991 to 17.6 percent in 1999 and then climbed to about 19 percent in 2000, but the budget itself shrank because of the increased emphasis on limited government. Nonetheless, as of 2002, schools continued to close because of lack of funds. These reductions have clearly had an impact on teachers. Because the total number of teachers fell, while the absolute number of students increased, the teacher-student ratio has similarly increased from 1 to 21.4 in 1990 to 1 to 25.4 in 2001.

452 According to 2000 figures from the Women’s Information and Research centre in Ulaanbaatar.
454 EDN March 4, 2002.
(and in primary grades, the ratio was 1 to 31.8 in 2001).\textsuperscript{455} Reports accumulated throughout the 1990’s of teachers not being paid for long stretches. One newspaper reported on May 14, 1999, that teachers in the second largest city in the country had not received their salaries in over two months. As of November 11, they had still not been paid.\textsuperscript{456} As a result teachers were not uncommon with teachers complaining about poor salaries, lack of health insurance coverage and inadequate heating facilities in their schools. The strikes would persist, for, as one leader argued early in 1997, “despite nearly 60% inflation since January 1996 remuneration has not been increased.”\textsuperscript{457} Teachers begin to resign in the mid to late 1990’s, and strikes persisted, with a major one in Ulaanbaatar in 1999.\textsuperscript{458} Differences have emerged in participation rates of boys and girls and between rich and poor aimags, rich and poor families, and urban and rural children. The gender disparity in education has widened to the disadvantage of boys, particularly in rural areas where their labor is needed for herding.\textsuperscript{459} From 1989 to 1995, enrolment rates overall fell from 98 percent to 84 percent in primary schools, and from 65 percent to 54 percent in secondary schools. In 1996, net primary school enrolment rates were 93.8 female and 92.9 male. At secondary school level, net enrolment rates were 65.5 percent female and 49.1 percent male. Cohort survival rates at the end of the primary cycle have declined to 80 percent. Participation rates favor girls increasingly as they progress from Grade 1 to Grades 8 or 10. The net enrolment rate in secondary education (1996) for rural boys was 41.6 percent for boys and 58.3 percent for girls. In 1996, 48,435 school-age children were out of school; of these, 20,660 (42.6 percent) were girls and 27,835 (57.4 percent) boys. The school drop-out rate is high, reaching over 25 percent at its worst


\textsuperscript{456} Mongolia News Agency (MNA) March 30 and May 14, 1999.

\textsuperscript{457} E-mail Daily News, EDN, March 3, 1997.

\textsuperscript{458} Economic Intelligence Unit Mongolia (EIU) a, 3d quad. 1995, 43; EDN, April 4 and 7, 1996; EDN, March 30, 1999.

point but now reducing. About 80 percent of out-of-school children work in agricultural activities, usually herding animals. In terms of education staff, female teachers is in the majority (75 percent), though the majority of school principals and directors of aimag education administration are male (3 out of 22 education centre directors in 1998 are female). Teachers’ pay, like that of all government employees, is low (the equivalent of 25-45 USD per month). The trend for more females to take up educational opportunity increases at higher levels of education. Higher education has expanded since 1993-4 (by 1997, there were over 36,000 full-time students). The public sector has grown by 46 percent and the private sector has doubled despite the introduction of student fees in 1995 and the transfer of costs to students. Public universities now receive only 10 percent of their funding from government. In contrast to other Asian countries, female students far outnumber males in Mongolia: 68 percent of students at public universities and 71 percent at private universities are female. However, this picture reverses itself for university staff, especially at senior levels. University teachers are predominantly male, except for teacher education and business studies courses. The proportion of female students at post-graduate level is much lower than for first degree courses. The trend is for males to enter the labour market earlier than girls. In the future, if the present pattern continues, levels of literacy and educational qualifications are likely to be one factor affecting women’s ability to participate in the labor market is the availability of child-care. Places in nursery and kindergarten schools have reduced since 1990 and only 20 percent of children are provided with places. More schools are available through fee paying but many women and families cannot afford these. In 1990, 118,800 children enjoyed pre-school education facilities, but by 1996, the number had dropped to 68,000

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460 Fenger Benwell, opcit, p.145.
461 Ibid, p.147
462 J C Weidman, Reform of higher education under going the transition to a market economy: the case of Mongolia, Germany 1998, p.301.
463 Women in Modern Mongolia, Asia Society. htm.
and half the facilities had closed. This has implications for future labour markets and gender equity.\textsuperscript{464}

**Continuing education for adults**

Transition to a market economy has also created needs for new kinds of education and training, formal and non-formal, for adults. Transition requires policy-makers to re-think educational provision, priorities, delivery systems and use of limited finance in times of budget cuts. It provides an opportunity for innovation. One major initiative in non-formal education was the Gobi Women’s project, targeted at nomadic and rural women since they were identified as a particularly vulnerable group in the move to a market economy. This project was funded by Danish Government aid and implemented by UNESCO in partnership with the Government of Mongolia. The project provided non-formal education for 16,000 women in six Gobi aimags through a system of distance education using print, radio, local learning groups and traveling tutors for income-generation, handicraft production, food-processing, healthcare, animal care, family planning and doing business in a market economy. Learning was located in the family and community context and much activity took place at the local level, supported by local committees. Evaluation of the project showed that it was an effective way of disseminating information and of supporting local learning groups and individual women, reaching remote people dispersed over large distances and generating centers of activity in *sums*.\textsuperscript{465} Though one goal of the project was income-generation, it was more successful in achieving income-stretching than income-generation. However, some women did begin to trade and barter more, for example, making a camel saddle which could be traded for one camel or a few sheep.\textsuperscript{466} Educated women have bonded together to form non-governmental organizations to criminalize domestic abuse, to improve conditions for women in the labour force, to


\textsuperscript{466} *Liberal Women’s Brain Pool*, “Women’s Empowerment and Development” Ulaanbaatar”, 1998.
conduct research on employment, prostitution, child labour, and inequalities in wages for women. One such organization concluded that “there is a clear need for government policies and schemes to improve the position of women in the labour force.” Foreign agencies, such as the United Nations Development Program and the World Bank, have experimented with provision of micro-credit for women seeking to increase their incomes and have issued reports on gender gaps in employment and sexual harassment in the workplace. An important change in the government has been the first appointment of women to significant positions in the Cabinet. Since 1999, two women have filled the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs. Finally, education favors women in future. More than seventy per cent of students in higher education are women, offering hope for their rise to managerial positions in the economy, health, education, and government and to attempts to address the problems faced by Mongol women.467