



Impact of IMF Policies on Women's Lives in Pakistan

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IMF's Accountability to Human Rights Obligations and CEDAW

- IMF established as a specialized UN Agency like UNESCO, FAO, ILO, IOM
- Autonomous but working with the UN through the coordinating machinery of ECOSOC
- Incorporated into the United Nations System by ECOSOC under Articles 57 and 63 of the United Nations Charter
- Has to conform to all international human rights and women's rights obligations
- “Macroeconomic policies are crucial enablers of gender equality because they shape the overall economic environment for women's economic empowerment.” UN High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment, 2017
- CEDAW's recognition that “in situations of poverty, women have the least access to food, health, education, training, and opportunities for employment and other needs”, and particularly pursuant to CEDAW Articles 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14

IMF Loans and Pakistan

- 22 loans since 1958
- Attached to macroeconomic policy conditions
- Strong policy influence by IMF and other international finance institutions
- Loans (supported by World Bank loans) based on fiscal consolidation (government policies intended to reduce deficits and the accumulation of debt; austerity), privatization, deregulation of workers' protection
- Enhanced regressive taxation placing the heaviest burden on the poor - disproportionately impacting women
- Practically foreclosed the possibility of any significant reduction in poverty in Pakistan.

Current Situation and impact on women

- The latest IMF programme based on “decisive fiscal consolidation”
 - Conditions to cut subsidies and increase taxes
 - General Sales Tax (GST) increased on all household consumption items (e.g. toothpaste; poultry; edible oil by over 60%); negatively affecting purchasing power of consumption baskets, as women carry heavier burdens of domestic and care work
 - Over 8% increase in petrol prices impacting women’s ability to travel
 - Rising electricity tariffs due to subsidy cuts and privatisation
 - Devastating impacts on household costs; pushing many women into informal labour, poverty; increase in time spent on unpaid care work, such as fuel collection
- National poverty ratio projected to increase from 31.3% to 50% by June 2020, an increase of 19 million people living in poverty

Impact

- Severe cuts in development and social sector spending at the provincial level
- Negative impact on job creation in public sector
- Spending on social services reduced
- Targeting of social protection programmes leave many beneficiaries behind

- Declining union membership and ever-more limited collective bargaining mechanisms, the program entirely neglects worker's empowerment and the need to develop Decent Work agenda

Shirkat advocacy ASKs

- 1. The development world to replace the flawed and failed macroeconomic framework with a feminist macroeconomic framework**
- 2. Gender assessments of all loans**
- 3. State to explore alternatives to IMF and WB loans to find fiscal space**
- 4. Prevent illicit financial flows**
- 5. Renegotiate loan repayments**
- 6. Increase development financing and social spending**
- 7. Review and replace social protection mechanisms of targeting with women friendly mechanisms**

Shirkat's advocacy at the national level

- 1. Capacity building of national CSOs on IMF conditionalities and impact on women**
- 2. Continuous dialogue with IMF Pakistan**
- 3. Expert Group meetings**
- 4. National Consultation**
- 5. Dialogue with parliamentarians**
- 6. TV programme**

Continuous engagement with CSOs and IMF in Pakistan

Shirkat advocacy with CEDAW Committee during Pak Review

- 1. Submission to CEDAW Committee ahead of Pakistan Review**
- 2. Inclusion of ASKs in Oral Statement**
- 3. Reminders during Lunch Briefing**
- 4. Questions submitted to CEDAW Committee**
- 5. The Committee took the matter up with the State; did not make into COs**

Continuous engagement with cedaw committee needed