

Pakistan

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1. Contemporary Snapshot

Pakistan has finally emerged from an eight-year military dictatorship with a democratic government after elections were held in February 2008. The previous regime had heavily favoured the neoliberal agenda of developed countries, particularly the United States. Ordinances and policies adopted by the previous regime had widespread impact on the social conditions in Pakistan. In 2007, there had been a rise in political turmoil in the country, which escalated with the suspension of the Chief Justice Iftikhar Chaudhary in March 2007. On 3 November, under the Provisional Constitutional Ordinance the chief justice along with more than 50 other judges were removed and replaced by a puppet judiciary. The assassination of Benazir Bhutto, Chairperson of the Pakistan Peoples Party on 27 December 2007, further heightened the political as well economic chaos in the country. Although, there is now a democratically elected government in place, the country remains under turmoil, with foreign exchange reserves at low levels, as well as military operations in the northern areas of Pakistan in a continuation of the so-called US 'War on Terror'. Washington has provided nearly US\$10 billion to control the so-called terrorists operating in the northern regions. There have been air strikes by the US military as well inside Pakistan territory. As a result of continued military operations, more than 500,000 people have been displaced and are taking refuge in various parts of the country against military attacks of their own government.

Impact of Globalization

The political and military turmoil is a result of the many years of dictatorial rule of (retired) General Pervez Musharraf. The trade liberalization agenda of the Musharraf regime can be seen through the various anti-people, anti-labour ordinances passed in the past eight years. The Industrial Relations Ordinance of 2002, considered to be a draconian labour law, has not granted the agricultural labour force and the informal sector workforce the right of association, which means that 90% of the workforce is unprotected.

Another example is the Corporate Farming Ordinance passed in 2001, under which the government has allowed all stock exchange-listed companies to lease a minimum of 1,500 acres of agricultural land in Pakistan for 50 years, renewable for another 49 years. This ordinance in essence has bypassed land reform for a vast majority of landless peasants in Pakistan in favour of leasing land to the corporate sector. Earlier governments had already allowed the seed sector to be liberalized in Pakistan. With the seed sector declared an industry that could face liberalization, free imports of expensive seeds followed. Privatization in the agriculture sector has allowed inundation of expensive imported agriculture inputs from transnational corporations, as well as further mechanization of labour processes. Deregulation policies along with high fuel prices have resulted in astronomical price increases of agriculture inputs. For example, fertilizer cost in Pakistan has gone up from approximately US\$17 to US\$53, rise of more than 300% in a one-year period (2007 to 2008). This increase comes on top of a steady increase in the prices of all agricultural inputs in the past five years. Alongside, there has been a decrease in employment of

the agriculture labour force. This has had an immense impact on wages, especially for the female labour force. In Sindh province, daily wages can be as low as US\$0.50 a day, which is not enough for even a single meal for two persons, let alone a family.

The phasing out of the Multi-Fibre Arrangement (MFA) in 2004 has further impacted the labour force, especially in the textile and garment sector. According to trade statistics, the overall textile and garment sector exports account for 66.65% of total exports.¹ The US and EU are the major recipients of Pakistan's textile and clothing exports, amounting to US\$1,882 million and 946 million Euros in 2006. The textile industry is mainly based in non-mill (cottage industry) and small and medium-sized plants. Cottage industry accounts for 90% of cloth and 80% of apparels.² The term 'cottage industry' by itself defines the presence of informal labour.

A majority of the workers in the garment sector are women. The phasing out of the MFA has led to a decrease in jobs for them. No government statistics are available for the number of women employed in the sector, According to Rubina Jamil, Chief Executive Officer of the Working Women's Organization, a vast number of units have closed down in the past few years, which means fewer jobs available in the sector. Mechanization has further shrunk job availability.

A summary of the impact of trade liberalization, especially in textile and agriculture would be as follows: on the one hand the cost of production in all sectors has increased, with emphasis on the agricultural production sector, while on the other hand the downscaling of the textile industry has resulted in a decrease in available jobs. Both agriculture and textiles remain the major sectors in which a vast number of male and female labour are employed and both sectors have been unable to either increase employment opportunities or the quality of life of workers.

Similar liberalization has been seen in transport, education, recreation and health sectors. Foreign companies are now running long route services connecting various towns in the country. Trade liberalization has opened the country to a large number of international food chains including Pizza Hut, McDonald's and Subway.

The few job openings in the recreation and transport industry hardly provide a viable job opportunity or security for the vast number of unemployed in the country. The internationally-owned transport and recreation companies provide jobs for a very small number of workers. For example, Sammi Daewoo, a South Korean-owned transport company, was reported in 2006 to operate a fleet of 150, employing approximately 3,000 employees.³

In addition, the few jobs being opened up by the transport and recreation sector, are exploitative and oppressive for women, given the strong patriarchal feudal biases prevalent in the country. An example is that of locally owned and operated bus services vying to compete with international chains. They hired women to provide hostess services. Generally, these routes were run from Karachi, to smaller cities. It was observed that these women faced sexual innuendoes and molestation. Most of these women were being paid no more than US\$50 per month and had minimal education.⁴ Young women in fast food chains are required to wear trousers as part of their uniform, and do not wear a long scarf (called dupatta). They come from low-income households and their westernized uniforms would be unacceptable in their communities. This exacerbates social tensions.

In essence the increase in new jobs has taken place in a sector which does not really provide a large number of jobs. Given that fast food chains such as McDonalds and Pizza Hut have more than a 100-150 outlets in the entire country, and generally, not more than 10 waitresses/

waiters at each outlet, one can assume that there are no more than 5,000 to 7,000 staff in the sector. Hence, in essence they do not provide employment opportunities to a large workforce. The largest expansion in services has been in the financial sector which has opened avenues for just the educated professional classes. As was predicted, globalization has meted out harsh living conditions to the unskilled, semi-skilled and uneducated working class. Industrialization has failed to take root in Pakistan. The current year 2008 shows starkly that the much publicized growth in this decade was superficial. According to the Asian Development Bank,

The first half of fiscal year 2006 was marked by a slowdown in both industry and agriculture. Output of cotton declined by an estimated 10.9% from an all-time high of 14.6 million bales harvested in fiscal year 2005. Production of sugarcane, another major summer crop, is also estimated lower than last year. The growth of large-scale manufacturing slowed to 8.7% in the first quarter of fiscal year 2006 from 24.9% in the same period of last year, primarily due to capacity constraints.... Among individual industries in the first quarter, growth of textiles tumbled to 7.2% from 29.6% year on year. Automobile assembly and electronics, which has shown the fastest expansion among subsectors in the last two to three years, also decelerated.⁵

The impact of privatization and deregulation policies in Pakistan has led to steady increases in the prices of household goods and services, and this has forced labour to accept poor conditions of work in the formal as well as informal sectors. The year 2007 was marked not only by political turmoil, but some of the highest price increases on record for food items. In early 2007, under the trade liberalization-driven policies of (former) Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, 500,000 tonnes of wheat were exported. By late 2007 there was an acute shortage in the country of wheat, which is the staple for 160 million Pakistanis. Now the government has been importing wheat at double the price at which it had been exported. By mid-2008 the cost of flour has escalated to as high as Rs (Pakistan rupees) 30 to 40 per kilogramme (US\$0.4 to 0.5). Prices of basic items including onions, tomatoes and other vegetables, pulses and edible oil have all escalated. Red meat, poultry and fish range from Rs 150 to 300 per kg (US\$1.80-3.75), out of the reach of Pakistani workers. Similarly milk is selling at US\$0.50 per kg and eggs at US\$0.80 per dozen. Khaleeq Kiani, quoting World Bank data, has reported in the Pakistani newspaper, Daily Dawn, that 'average earnings for salaried employees in 2003-04 were Rs 4,088 per month (US\$68). This would place a typical family of six with one person employed, below the poverty line. (Statistics on) earnings (by the) self-employed are not available but are believed (to be) much lower'.⁶ The current high increase in prices has no doubt further impacted the life of the working class.

With the average earnings of labour in the informal urban sector estimated at no more than US\$60-70 per month and with rural workers barely making US\$37 per month, the rising cost of living means further deprivation, hunger and misery for a vast majority of the working force in Pakistan.

The State of Labour in Pakistan

According to the Pakistan Statistical Yearbook 2007, the country's population stands at 158.7 million, with the male and female distribution at 82.1 million and 76.1 million respectively. However, it should be noted that the last census was held in 1998 and the next census was due this year (2008). The Pakistan Economic Survey 2006-7 estimates the total population at 151.55 million, of whom 105.37 million are categorized in the working age (which is defined as 10 years or above). The labour force is estimated at 48.95 million and of this, 46.94 million are deemed to be employed. Of the employed workforce, 69.2% are in the rural areas and

30.8% are in urban areas. The total workforce in agriculture is 43.37%, of which 41.43% is rural-based.

The informal sector in Pakistan is the same as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO), and refers 'to modes of production and enterprises that range from small-scale production units, home-based work in production chains and self-run micro-enterprises to bare minimum economic survival activities such as street vending, rag-picking and domestic work.'⁷

The total informal sector workforce in non-agricultural work in urban and rural areas is 41.25%. The entire rural agricultural labour force is categorized as informal. Thus the non-agricultural informal workforce and the rural agriculture workforce together comprise 82.7% of the total labour force. The urban-based agriculture workforce is being reported at 1.95% but the Pakistan Economic Survey does not define this group. But if it is included, the strength of informal labour goes up to 84.6%. (See Table 1.)

Table 1: Pakistan Informal Workforce 2005-6

	Rural workforce (%)	Urban workforce (%)	
Employed Workforce	69.2	30.8	
Agriculture Workforce	41.43	1.95	43.38
Informal Workforce	20.77	20.48	41.25
Total Informal Workforce			84.6

Source: Pakistan Economic Survey, 2006-7.

Meanwhile, the Government of Pakistan admits the number of unpaid family helpers, especially women, is increasing.⁸ The figures are a stark indication of the impact of trade liberalization policies on the labour force in Pakistan. The past few years have seen a sharp escalation in imports. For instance, in 2005-06 Pakistan exported US\$16.5 million worth of goods and imported US\$28.6 million. This shows the high trade deficit the country is facing.

The Informal Sector

Rural Informal Sector: Non-Agriculture

A major part of the workforce is employed in agriculture, but considerable numbers are engaged in other occupations in rural areas. These include carpet-making, sports goods and surgical equipment. There are also cottage industries engaged in embroidery work, handicrafts, bangle-making and various ethnic handmade products including bed linen, rallies (quilted blankets) and women's wear. Each of these occupations contributes to not only the national income but to foreign exchange earnings, but the contribution of workers in the rural areas is ignored and their labour rights and human rights grossly violated.

A prime example is the carpet industry, which produces a high value product, aimed basically for export. Although the industry yields rich revenues, there is tremendous exploitation of the workforce in this sector. The carpet industry is comprised of the weaving sector and the stitching and washing sector. According to trade unionist Niaz Khan, it is possible to form trade unions in the stitching and washing sectors albeit with difficulty, but not in the weaving sector.⁹ Much

of the weaving sector is based in rural areas with the handlooms set up in people's homes. The labour in this sector includes men, women and children. According to a research report, there are approximately 1.2 million children under the age of 15 years working in this sector.¹⁰

The general practice is to either lease a handloom to a household, or women from that household or others from adjoining homes work on it. Two or three women work on a handloom. However, there could be more than nine workers engaged on one loom. Wages are paid on a daily basis with rates as low as Rs 80. The work is being shifted more and more to the rural sector as labour there is cheaper, willing to work at much lower rates than in urban areas.

Similar patterns are seen in football manufacture. Women and girls make footballs on a piece-rate basis. A large number of women and children are involved in this sector and the final product is exported. Kits for making footballs are supplied by sub-contractors, and women are paid per piece based on the quality of the football being made. Generally, there are three qualities: The highest quality of football is produced for international games, and then there are lower qualities for consumers. Women work on all qualities of balls, but there is a biased view that the best quality of football cannot be made by women. This keeps women from being paid the highest piece rate. Earnings from football can be as high as Rs 4,000 per month which is equivalent to the average Pakistani income for labour. One woman takes the responsibility of household chores and others work on the piece rate product. This pattern is also seen in the carpet industry.

A large number of workers in Sindh and Punjab provinces are employed in brick kilns. A whole family works in the kiln and working hours are not specified. People work all days of the week and are paid per brick delivered. A family of three or four members can produce about 1,000 bricks in a day and earn Rs 200 (US\$3.3) per day. However, payment system varies. In some areas workers are paid Rs 1,000 at the end of the week and the rest of the payment is withheld. This is a way of ensuring that they return to work. Brick kilns are known to employ bonded or slave labour. The low wages in this sector lead workers to take loans from the brick kiln management which ends in the whole family becoming indebted. They cannot leave the kilns without paying off the accumulated debts. In addition, as the workers are unable to read or write they do not know the full extent of their debts. Children as young as six years old are engaged in brick kilns. Families are not allowed to leave the premise. The ILO says Pakistan has 1.7 million bonded labourers.¹¹ No concrete figures are available as to the number of people working in brick kilns, but older studies show nearly one fourth of bonded labourers are in the sector. Women and children comprise a large share of the workforce.

Rural Informal Sector: Agriculture

The biggest number of workers is engaged in agriculture. In the two major agricultural provinces Sindh and Punjab, women work along side men in preparing the land, sowing, looking after the crops and finally picking or cutting the harvested grain. Animal husbandry remains largely informal, with a high participation of women in the caring and breeding of animals. However, the sale of animals in local markets is a task carried out entirely by men. Livestock work is shared by women in the provinces of Balochistan and North Western Frontier Province as well.

The situation of the agriculture workforce is among the worst in Pakistan. Growing trade liberalization has resulted in massive increase in the cost of production. For instance, the cost of diesel alone has gone up from Rs 10.8 in 1999 to Rs 24.76 in 2004. Diesel now sells at Rs 38. In other words from 2004 to 2008 the cost of diesel rose by 53.4%. Given the emphasis on green revolution technologies and use of tractors, seed drills and tube wells, the cost of diesel is critical

in determining the cost of agricultural production. Chemical fertilizers too have become dearer by almost 300% in a year. The cost of wheat seed has risen from Rs 600 per 40 kg to in 2006 to Rs 1,200 and then Rs 1,600 per 40 kg in 2008. In US\$ equivalent, the increase is from US\$10 to US\$13-20. However, the cost to the common people is reflected more accurately in rupees, as wages have more or less remained stagnant in rupees.

An important indicator with respect to labour is the decline of sharecropping patterns in Pakistan. According to renowned agriculture economist Mahmood Hasan Khan, the overall trend in Pakistan has been a decline in sharecropping. Land which had been cultivated by sharecroppers has now been taken over by owners themselves. At present, 90 per cent of owners cultivate their own land, whereas 30 years ago this number was 75 per cent. Of the two big agricultural provinces, in Sindh the tenant-operated area has gone down from 63% to 21%, and in Punjab from 48% to 23%. This data is indicative of the increasing number of landless peasants in the country. Those who were tenants have now become labourers working on daily wages or seek non-agriculture work.

The increase in the number of agricultural workers has been a direct result of the increased cost of production as detailed above. A case study on sunflower production documents the impact of liberalization in the seed sector. The cost of sunflower seed imported from transnational corporations such as ICI has risen to Rs 1,200 for one acre. In addition, the introduction of seed drills has wiped out the work for women who used to be largely responsible for sowing seed. Thus during the sunflower season (August to February) the only work available for women is in harvesting. For this work a family is paid Rs 250 per acre. The per person wage does not come to more than Rs 40 to 50 or US\$0.50 a day. In addition, the work is arduous: it entails cutting the sunflower head at the tip of the stalk. Women have to work with their hands raised above their heads. The result is muscular pain especially in their necks and shoulders. Moreover, the sunflower plant is thorny and leaves abrasions and cuts on their hands. All this for a mere Rs 40 which does not even get them a single full meal. Workers often say they had been sharecroppers but with mechanization as well as increasing cost of production land owners have reduced them from tenancy to mere casual labour.

Similar working conditions prevail in other crop operations, be it onion picking, cotton picking or sowing and harvesting wheat or rice. Wheat harvesting is the most revered work, although it means toiling under the terribly hot summer sun in Punjab and Sindh. For cutting one acre of land, workers are given 40 to 60 kg of wheat. Agricultural labour migrates from district to district seeking wheat harvest work. As workers are short of cash it is difficult for them to buy wheat from the market. Their food security is ensured only possible if they are able to store wheat while the harvest is going on. Constant migration in search of work is a strenuous activity for women as they take their children with them. A family sets up camp in the fields wherever they find work. They make temporary shelters around poles, covering it with quilts or sometimes grass. For nearly two months they go from one place to another. This can lead to friction between workers belonging to the area and those who have come as migrants, who are willing to work for even lower wages (in kind).

Urban Informal Sector

Although a vast number of people working in the informal economy is rural-based, many urban workers too are engaged in informal labour. Men, women and children are all represented in such work even in urban areas. Women can be home-based as well as working in small units in their neighborhoods. The home-based work includes bangle-making, garment work such as

cutting and sewing bulk orders, packaging of goods (such as candies), candle-making, embroidery work, aprons, key chains, home decorations, bead jewelry, integrated circuits processing, incense-making, cardboard boxes, paper and cloth bags. These are a few examples of the items made in informal work places in cities and small towns around Pakistan.

The payment is on piece rate basis and the range varies drastically based on the product. However, no matter what the product, wages are extremely low, and workers face great exploitation. For instance, intricate embroidery work on a women's shirt can fetch a mere US\$2 or \$3 a day. Tailoring charges (cutting and stitching) for ready-made men's wear (shalwar and kameez) are Rs 25 (US\$0.42) and for boys Rs 15 (US\$0.25). The labour chain is spread from big urban centres to small towns. Middlemen access shop keepers, taking orders for ready made garments and pass the work on to women in small towns, villages and squatter settlements, depending on their own links to particular communities. If the middlemen buy fabric themselves at wholesale prices from urban centres, they are able to get Rs 70 (US\$1.20) and Rs 150 (US\$2.50) for small and big suits.

Fisheries

A very different informal sector work which caters to global markets is the shrimp industry in Karachi. Once the shrimp has been caught (an operation monopolized by international trawlers working in Pakistani waters) it is brought to shanty sheds in squatter settlements close to the Karachi coastal belt or to fisher folk communities. Women and children are the main, if not only, workers in this sector. Their chore is to shell the shrimp. For one pail of shrimp (generally 10 kg of shrimp) women and children are paid Rs 10. The working conditions are abysmal. The shrimp peeling huts have huge blocks of ice to stop the shrimp from rotting. The hut is dank and cold and pervades with a fishy stench hard to put up with. Women and children are seated on low stools with rivulets of dirty water sloshing around, soiling their feet and clothes. The workers suffer many cuts and abrasions working with shrimp scales. Working hours stretch from early morning (as early as 3:00 a.m.) when the shrimp catch comes in. In most cases the work finishes by noon. However the work is seasonal and there are months when shrimp peeling continues in the afternoon as well.

Labour is drawn from the Sindhi fisher folk communities but in the squatter settlements there are many migrants from Bangladesh and Myanmar. They are undocumented migrants escaping the harsh economic and political conditions of their own countries.

All contracts are based on verbal negotiations. Delays in payment and paying less than agreed terms are common hazards. Women often work late into the night as they are forced to ensure some amount of the house work is done too after they have toiled on the shrimp.

Arbitrariness

A large number of factories, especially those in the garment and textile sectors have closed down in the past decade or more. Thus more and more formal units have taken to operating as informal ones, beneath the radar of state authorities and legal supervision, even though they are supposed to be governed by the labour laws of Pakistan.

A common problem is that workers are not given an appointment letter and thus are unable to have proof of employment based on which they can demand their rights. Such violations are common in both national and international companies. Another method of evading the law is to

terminate workers before the probationary period of 90 days ends and rehiring the same workers after a few days. It is also quite common for workers to be employed for long periods without being given confirmation letters or any other proof of employment.

The government has raised the minimum wage to Rs 6,000 (US\$75). However, this remains very much unenforced. Even if minimum wages are given to government employees, the vast labour force employed in the private sector both in the formal and informal sectors is unable to demand it.

2. Labour Laws for the Informal Sector

As has been pointed out above, more than 80% of the workforce is employed in the informal sector. The trend is for more and more work being created in the informal sector.

The World Bank has been advocating flexible labour policies which favour rules that would be beneficial to the business sector. According to Khaleeq Kiani:

The World Bank has advised the government to reduce regulations on labour market, cut down hiring and firing costs and allow redundancy as fair ground for dismissals as it believes the tight regulation is resulting in lack of investment in the workforce and reducing regular jobs....The Employment and Services Conditions Act 2006 is a consolidation of 11 separate laws governing conditions of employment and wages for a number of sectors into a new draft act. It focuses on consolidating existing laws, removing overlapping and inconsistencies and allows greater flexibility, particularly on the hiring and firing side and working hours tilting towards the capitalist and proposes restrictions on women's working hours. The nine-month limit on contract term is considered as one of the most inflexible hiring legislation in South Asia, the term 'temporary worker' has been abolished to increase labour market flexibility by eliminating the time limit on term contracts. The new laws would increase the maximum hours per week to 60 hours from 48 hours and maximum hours per day from 10 to 12, increasing the maximum number of overtime hours from two to four per day.¹²

The Employment and Service Conditions Act 2006 was passed in 2007 and is being criticized for protecting the business sector over the working class. One of the most contested amendments is the increase in working hours for women. In a strongly feudal and patriarchal culture increased working hours for women will result in extreme hardship on them, as they still have the burden of rearing and caring for their children as well as the entire household.

An international standard which can provide some safety net to some of the people engaged in the informal sector is the Home Based Work Convention 1996 (C-177), adopted by the International Labour Organization. The Home Work Convention calls for national policies promoting the equality of treatment between home workers and other wage earners, in areas including:

- the right to establish or join organizations of their own choosing
- protection against discrimination in employment or occupation;
- protection in the field of occupational safety and health;
- statutory social security protection;
- minimum age for admission to employment or work, thereby preventing the use of child labour in home work; and

- maternity protection.

However, Pakistan has not ratified this convention as yet, which means there is no legal protection available for a large section of informal workers, of whom a majority are women.

3. Strategies for Informal Labour

In the period 1990-2007, it has become amply clear that labour rights groups have had to find new and creative means to defend workers' interests. This process has started in Pakistan. A major thrust has come from women's rights groups, as the living conditions in communities has deteriorated drastically. It is the informal sector that employs most women.

In Pakistan, women workers' rights activists have sprung from among both the trade union movement as well as those working for people's rights in the informal sector. One such organization is the Women Working Organization (WVO), formed by trade union activists. The WVO works with 3,200-3,500 women in the informal as well as the (so-called) formal sector by focusing on the communities they come from. They engage with women working in government and semi-government sectors such as the Pakistan Telecommunication Corporation Limited, Water and Power Development Authority as well as women working in small enterprises such as beauty salons. WVO's work is spread in seven districts of Punjab. According to Rubina Jamil, Executive Director of WVO, it is difficult to access women at work places as company transport takes women from inside the factory and drops them in their localities. It offers a convenience to workers but also prevents women from being organized with outside help, as only people identified as company workers are allowed to enter those vehicles. As workplace organizing is difficult, it thus becomes most effective to organize women in the communities they come from. The WVO organizes town and district committees which interact with women in their homes. Women in the many units which mostly operate outside the purview of labour laws are advised to ask for appointment letters. It is now common practice in Pakistan not to provide workers with appointment letters, the most basic requirement for employees putting forward demands to their employers.

The WVO also approaches home-based working women such as those providing services to the carpet or football industries. The organization conducts awareness-raising strategies for these women jointly with trade unions working in a specific industry, such as the Itehad Workers Union Carpet Industries Pakistan.

Some other methods of organizing home-based women has been employed by many non-government organizations. A common tactic is for the NGO itself to provide work and then organize the workforce to recognize various rights. For instance, women rarely have a sense of the number of hours they work and do not compute their wages as per the time they have spent on the job. Patriarchal control prevents them from knowing the true worth of their work. Women themselves tend to judge their skills to be of little value.

One example of such an NGO initiative is that of Roots for Equity, which works with home-based workers in Sindh and peasant women in Sindh and Punjab Province. It interacts with more than 3,000 women, motivating them to reach the market themselves with their products. The members produce articles ranging from bead jewellery to handicrafts, which are sold by women who are willing to go to the market. As for those women who are not willing to go to the market themselves, they are taken to various markets and shown the value of their work. Women are taught to compute the cost of the raw materials they use, add in their own labour costs and be

able to set a sale price for their products. Apart from making women understand the market value of their skills, Roots for Equity also seeks to politicize the women, to help them understand the exploitative and oppressive strategies they are up against.

Similar strategies are being used by NGOs to politicize small farmers and landless peasants to be able to understand the impact of agriculture trade liberalization policies on their lives. Groups from different political orientations (radical to reformist) are forming farmer networks and associations. The strategy differs based on the NGOs' political orientation. Those believing that globalization will win the day are teaching workers, both men and women, to cope with the onslaught of capitalist policies as well as to teach them how to serve the business sector better. On the other hand, those that believe trade liberalization policies embedded in the WTO framework as well as the IMF World Bank policy framework need to be challenged and dismantled are concentrating on resistance tactics. For example, in the agriculture sector, where a majority of the informal workforce is to be found, the clarion call is for food sovereignty demanding total control and access over land, seed, water and other agricultural input. Land reform is now being demanded as a key policy intervention to halt the rising hunger and poverty.

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ENDNOTES

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