

**TRENDS AND INDICATORS ON CHILD AND FAMILY
WELL-BEING IN BULGARIA**

Country Paper

**Co-ordinator: Jaklina Tzvetkova- Anguelova
National Statistical Institute, Sofia**

**Background paper prepared for the Regional Monitoring
Report No. 8: *A Decade of Transition* (2001)**

**The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the
policies or views of UNICEF.**

During the past ten years Bulgaria has undergone a profound socioeconomic transformation. Aiming to carry out the transition from central planning to a market economy, and ensure macro-economic stability, the state had to remove its excessive control that could hinder the spontaneous performance of markets. After the years of economic crisis, since 1998 Bulgaria started to feel the results of the decisive steps taken by state authorities to stabilize the economy and speed up structural reform. According to the assessment of UNDP Human Development Report' 1999 "the economic crisis in Bulgaria seems to have subsided".

The stabilization and normalization of economic conditions switched the efforts' focus to the new dimensions of social development emphasizing employment, educational, and well-being aspects. But the opportunities for improving quality of population life (connected with higher income's receiving, higher level of employment, lower price levels, better access to the educational and health systems, social benefits, and social security etc.) are mainly determined by the existing economic potential. So, improving the quality of population life is a result of continuous growth, macro-economic stabilization and efficient distribution. At the same time the opportunities for improving population's economic and social status are being searched in the frame of limited financial resources, under the conditions of hard budget constraints (the currency board introduced in 1997 restricts the government's ability to borrow from the Central Bank). Under these conditions the policies should encourage growth based mainly on encouragement the opportunities for private business development and self-employment, which are expected to create new job places and higher income and to provide the necessary preconditions for social investment; establishing frameworks to protect consumers and taking care of the more vulnerable population groups (women, children, individuals etc.), which condition had deteriorated as a result of the transformation process.

Trying to analyze of how Bulgaria's social and economic problems during the transition period have impacted the different dimensions of child and family well-being, this report puts the spotlight on a number of issues, such as: income levels and income inequality, unemployment, demographic development's problems, transition problems in the fields of education and health, problems of high risk children and public care, children and youth's crimes, etc. It also tries to highlight some strategies, policies and actions to cope with the problems in these spheres.

The values of Human Development Index, compiled by the UNDP to reflect the economic and social progress calculated for separate years from the last 25 years' period give a clear picture of country's human development (see Human Development Report, 1999).

Years	1975	1980	1985	1990	1998
Human Development Index (HDI)	...	0.760	0.781	0.782	0.772

At the same time so-called "The Gender Development Index"(GDI) - a widely used measure of social differences by sex, for our country is almost equal for men and women. Women are well-educated and qualified, and in some age groups they

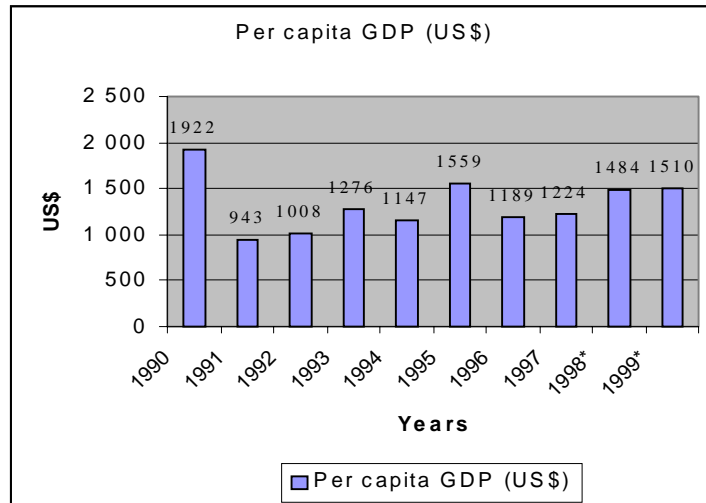
dominate in terms of these indicators compared to men. The surveys of Bulgarian women's problems do not confirm the conventional theoretical concepts that women have limited access to education or that they are subject to discrimination in society (see Women in Poverty, 1997).

Indicators for monitoring of child and family well-being

During the last decade the National Statistical Institute continues its tradition to collect information about the basic features of the country's demographic, social and economic development and to analyze the tendencies of development in the context of transition process. For the purposes of its statistical analyses of the main trends that have emerged during the 1990s, NSI continues monitoring of the traditional and expands the number of new statistical indicators regarding various aspects of child and family well-being. The most important among them are:

- number of the population and other demographic indicators, such as: birth, mortality and fertility rates, natural increase of the population, marriage and divorce rates, infant mortality and mother mortality rates, live expectancy etc.;
- social characteristics, such as:
 - labour force, employment and unemployment rates, income, expenditure and consumption of the households average nominal wages and salaries;
 - indicators, characterizing health network and health condition of the population (health establishments, hospital and sanatorial beds, number of health specialists, cases of social significant diseases -malignant neoplasms, syphilis, tuberculosis and psychiatric diseases, etc.; immunization and morbidity rates; financial indicators concerning health and social services (share of public expenditures on health and social insurance in GDP and in State budget, social benefits etc.);
 - indicators, characterizing education services (teachers-pupils ratio, wages and salaries in education sector; financial indicators concerning education services (share of public expenditures on education in GDP and in state budget, social benefits etc.); number of pupils and students in pre-primary, primary and secondary level of education; net coefficients of enrolled pupils and students etc.;
 - public care institutions; placement of children by different types of children institutions; number of registered crimes by type of crimes; convicted persons; underage convicted persons etc.
- indicators referring to main economic characteristics of the country: Gross Domestic Product; investments; inflation rate, privatization, etc.

Never-the-less one of the main economic axioms reads there is not a direct correlation between the economic growth/drop and population welfare, the sharp economic drop registered in 1996 and 1997 has impacted processes having direct negative influence on population consumption and level of social protection. The figure below shows the values of G D P per capita in USD (calculated from current prices) during the years of transition (data for 1998 and 1999 is still preliminary):



Note: *) Preliminary data.

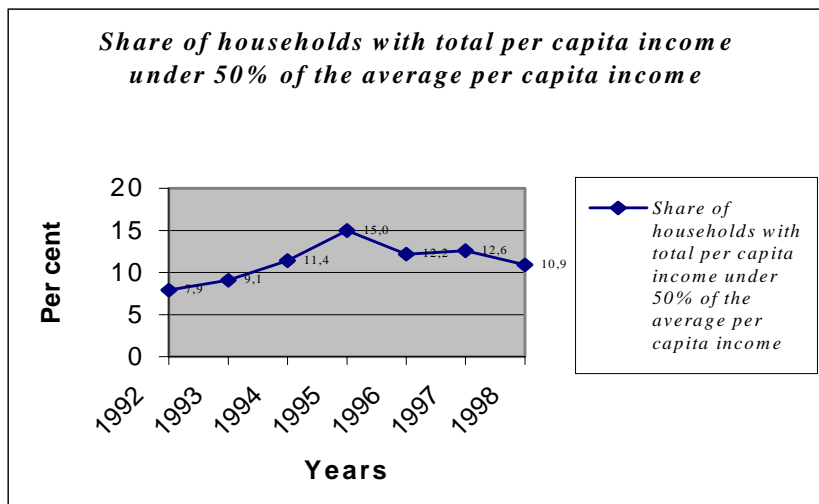
At the same time, the changes in domestic demand during the years of transformation found expression in the share of household final consumption expenditure of GDP, which constituted 53.9% of GDP in 1991, respectively 65.3% in 1992, 73.2% in 1993, 73.8% in 1994, 70.3% in 1995, 76.3% in 1996, 69.9% in 1997 and 72.4% in 1998 (data about 1997 and 1999 are obtained from the publication “Bulgaria’1999 – socioeconomic development”). The visible drop in production contributed for the reduction of population purchase power and created prerequisites for an import of basic goods.

Under the conditions of prolonged and hard process of economy transformation, the social price of this conversion continues to be high for thousands households. Despite the macro-economic stabilization, achieved by the implementation of the currency board in 1997 began to change the situation, the prolonged financial instability and decrease of the gross domestic product in previous years and especially in 1997, continue to have an unfavorable reflection on living standard of the population and low income social groups.

The inflation in 1999 (based on December 1998) is 6.2%. This is one of the lowest inflation values during the period 1991-1999, but it is greater than inflation in 1998 (1.0% only - taking December of the preceding year as a base). Figures in “Statistical Reference Book of the Republic of Bulgaria’2000” reveal that the average annual consumer price index (accepted as inflation measurer) for 1999 amounts to 123095.3 based on 1990 (1990 = 100). This high value in a great extent is due to the hyperinflation shock in the beginning of 1997. With the stabilization of the economy after crisis 1997 a step-by-step restoration of the nominal and real incomes is observed. With comparison to 1996 the average annual per capita nominal income in 1999 has increased approximately 17 times. The real average annual per capita income has increased by 19.1% compared to 1996 and by 37% compared to 1997, but it is still by 17.9% under the level of 1995. At the same time the real total household income per capita in 1997 presented hardly about 45 % of 1992 level (by calculations of Agency of social analyses and projections).

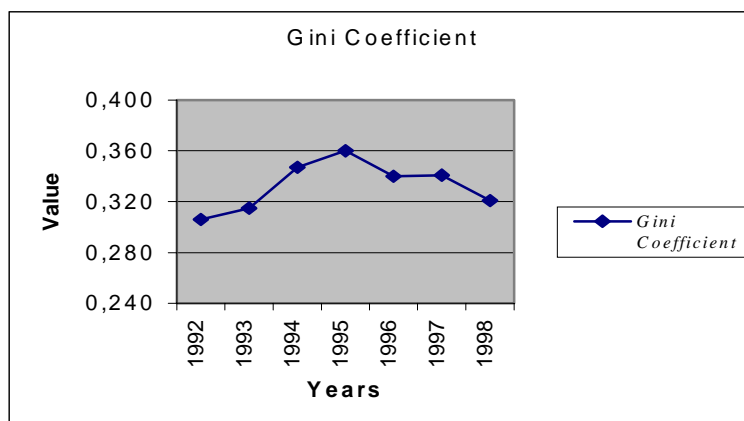
At the same time, share of households which total per capita income has been under 50% of the average per capita income increases up to 1995 after which slightly

declines.



During the period 1995-1999 the relative share of the income from wages and salaries and paid social transfers (compensations, pensions, family allowances and scholarships) increases for wages and salaries – from 38.0% to 41.9%, and for paid social transfers – from 17.2% to 20.7%. At the same time a relatively decrease of income from household plot (in kind and in value) is observed (see Bulgaria’99).

While for the period 1992-1995 a tendency of increase of the households’ differentiation by income was observed, for the period 1995-1999 households’ differentiation by income is characterized by decreasing tendency. The values of the **Gini coefficient**, measuring the degree of income differentiation, show the highest level of income differentiation 0.360 in 1995 (for comparison 0.306 for 1992; 0.315 (1993); 0.347 (1994); 0.340 (1996); 0.341 (1997); 0.321(1998); 0.311 (1999) (see “Social Trends’1999”). The chart below gives a picture changes in Gini coefficient’s values by years from 1992 to 1998.



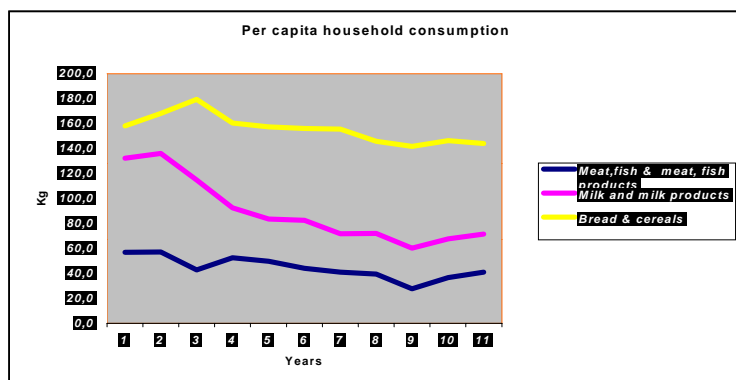
Data from the regular sample households budgets’ surveys also indicate that presence of the persons under 18 years of age within the household is in inverse proportion to the total average per capita income. In the most favorable position are the households without children and in most unfavorable - those of three or more children. For instance, while the total average per capita income in households with three and more children in 1990 presented 63.6% of the total per capita income calculated as average

for all types of households, in 1993 it declined to 56.5%, in 1994 to 54.6% and in 1995 reached hardly 51.7% of the total average per capita income for all types of households. For 1996 this share is 59.3%. After the crisis 1997 in 1998 it increases again to 54.6% and in 1999 presents 55.4% of the total per capita income in households calculated as average for all types of households (see Household budgets' 1990, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998, 1999).

The official NSI statistical data also show the lowest total average per capita households' expenditure regarding the households having three or more children. In 1990 the total average per capita households' expenditure regarding the households having three or more children presented 65.8% of the total average per capita households' expenditure calculated for all types of households, in 1993 this share is already 56.6%, in 1994 - 56.0%. In 1995 it reaches its lowest value for all transition period - 52.2%. For 1996 this share amounts to 61.2% and in 1997 - to 54.4% of the total average per capita household expenditure calculated for all types of households. In 1998 it increases to 63.3% of the total average per capita households' expenditure of all types of households and the value for 1999 is correspondingly 55.6%.

More optimistic are figures for households having two children at the age under 18 - in 1998 their average per capita household expenditure constitutes 86.0% of the total average per capita household expenditure for all types of households. The share for 1999 is 85.6%. Here one must have in mind a methodological difference - while for 1990 data about total average per capita household income and expenditure for households with three and more children concerned households with children up to 16 years of age, in later years they refer to households with three and more children up to 18 years of age.

Data from the regular household budgets' surveys also indicates the foods take the most considerable share of the total household expenditure - from 43.3% in 1992 (respectively - 42.8% in 1993), it increases to 46.2% in 1995, reaches 54.3% in the crisis 1997, after which in 1998 begins to decline reaching 47.8%, and in 1999 drops to 44.0% of the total household expenditure. Simultaneously with the relative decrease of foods expenditure in 1999, there is an increase of consumption of main foods in kind compared to the preceding year and even could be said the level of consumption "returns" in certain degree to the level before the crisis 1997.



Years: 1) 1989; 2) 1990; 3) 1991; 4) 1992; 5) 1993; 6) 1994; 7) 1995; 8) 1996; 9) 1997; 10) 1998; 11) 1999.

Never-the-less registered in 1998 and 1999 increase in households' consumption of main foods compared to the previous crisis 1997, data on average consumption of main foods by the households with two, three or more children under 18 years of age

evidence about some limitation in the consumption of some valuable for children's and youth development products, such as: meat, eggs, meat and milk products, sugar, fresh fruit, fresh vegetables etc. The NSI experts (see Bulgaria'98, 1999) make a conclusion that in order to satisfy their needs in food the families of many children choose goods with lower prices (bread and bakery products, potatoes etc.) and some products of a lower quality. The experts within the field of social care see the exit from the situation in development of a differentiated social policy aiming to provide the biological and intellectual survival of the families with more children during the period of economy transformation.

Average per capita consumption of some foods in the households by number of children under the age 18 years

House-Holds	Year	Bread and bakery	Meat	Meat products	Eggs-pieces	Sugar	Fresh fruit	Fresh vegetables	Potatoes
With 1 child	1990	138.9	33.7	18.4	147	9.2	33.2	59.0	27.9
	1992	133.8	28.4	17.6	135	9.8	40.8	56.5	25.6
	1993	135.3	28.0	16.0	132	8.3	44.4	56.1	23.0
	1994	134.4	23.9	15.3	129	7.3	44.1	55.2	23.1
	1995	132.1	23.9	13.3	124	7.1	41.3	52.2	23.2
	1996	126.6	24.0	12.0	116	7.4	35.7	48.7	24.4
	1997	122.1	16.5	8.1	98	7.0	25.7	40.8	22.1
	1998	125.3	21.4	10.8	111	7.9	31.1	51.7	24.8
With 2 children	1990	130.1	26.9	15.8	132	7.8	25.7	46.7	24.5
	1992	130.8	26.3	6.9	121	8.6	35.2	50.8	23.7
	1993	124.6	24.4	14.8	116	7.4	39.5	50.4	21.7
	1994	125.7	21.2	13.7	118	6.5	37.6	48.8	21.0
	1995	129.0	20.7	11.7	113	6.6	36.4	44.7	21.3
	1996	122.4	20.7	10.4	99	6.7	30.6	42.7	22.2
	1997	118.9	14.2	7.2	86	6.3	21.1	35.2	19.7
	1998	126.0	18.6	9.5	98	7.0	27.2	44.9	21.9
With 3 and more children	1990	181.5	28.4	13.6	98	7.5	20.1	39.2	23.8
	1992	150.1	25.8	12.0	103	7.1	28.9	43.2	21.1
	1993	155.5	18.5	10.0	88	6.5	25.3	41.1	19.5
	1994	149.5	15.4	8.4	78	5.7	27.4	41.7	18.1
	1995	152.5	14.5	6.7	79	5.2	21.7	36.1	18.7
	1996	130.7	15.3	7.2	73	5.6	19.0	32.4	20.0
	1997	136.0	7.5	3.7	52	4.8	11.6	22.9	15.4
	1998	131.1	12.0	7.0	68	6.1	17.2	32.4	17.5
Without Children	1990	212.1	46.4	21.8	219	11.3	43.2	81.0	35.3
	1992	195.2	36.9	19.5	188	12.7	60.1	82.4	34.1
	1993	189.3	36.1	17.0	181	11.1	62.8	80.3	30.8
	1994	186.5	30.5	16.1	179	9.9	62.1	76.8	30.4
	1995	185.3	30.1	14.2	174	9.9	60.1	74.0	31.0
	1996	172.4	28.9	13.2	150	9.8	49.8	69.4	30.7
	1997	164.8	20.1	8.9	133	9.1	35.0	57.7	28.9
	1998	165.9	25.5	11.6	151	10.3	42.6	72.4	31.1
	1999	161.8	29.1	13.8	164	10.5	52.7	74.1	31.5

Notes: 1) Data for 1990 concern households with children up to 16 years of age; data for latest years – up to 18 years of age. 2) 1990 – fresh and dried fruits; 3) 1990 – fresh and dried vegetables.

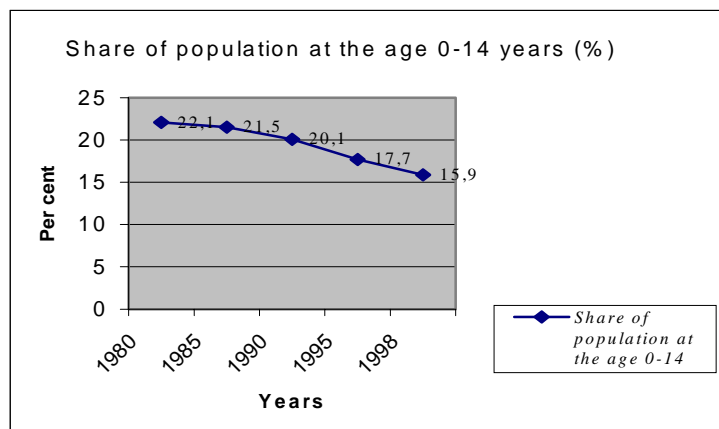
Since 1995 till 1999 the average nominal wages and salaries (total per country)

increase nominally near 28 times. The annual rates (based on previous year) indicate that after the drop in 1996 and 1997, there is an increase of the real wages and salaries by 20.7% in 1998 and by 9.1% in 1999. In 1999 the average wages and salaries in almost all branches of the private sector are lower than those in public sector. The lowest are the average wages and salaries in the budget financed units (see Bulgaria, 1999).

The relative share of expenditure on grants and benefits in the total expenditures of the Consolidated state budget increases from 5.9% in 1995 to 6.4% in 1998, and 6.7% in 1999. The expenditure on social transfers in real expression in 1999 increases by 19.9% compared to preceding year, but constitutes 97.7% of the expenditure on social transfers in 1995 (at 1995 prices =100).

Demographic trends

The demographic situation in Bulgaria in the last decade deteriorated continuously, and the projections for the population dynamics are rather pessimistic. In 1989-1999 the country was affected by a serious demographic crisis, beginning since previous decade. The estimated permanent population at the end of 1999 amounts to 8.191 millions, compared to 8.669 millions by 31 December 1990. The decrease at the end of 1999 amounts to 478.4 thousands or 5.5% compared to 1990, and respectively to 193.8 thousands (2.3%), compared to 1995, and 39.5 thousands (0.5%) compared to 1998. At the same time the negative process of demographic aging of the population continues to expand. According to last statistical analyses the population aging is not connected with an increase of the number and relative share of the aged population, but with the decrease of the population in youngest ages. As an evidence for the decrease of the population in the youngest ages and unfavorable changes in the age structure of the population the following statistical data could be cited: while the share of children and young persons at the age under 20 in 1995 constitutes 25.1% of the population of Bulgaria, in 1998 it drops down to 23.3%, and respectively to 22.8% in 1999 (see Bulgaria'99). Even more disturbing is the decline of share of the population under 14 years, which is presented on the chart below.

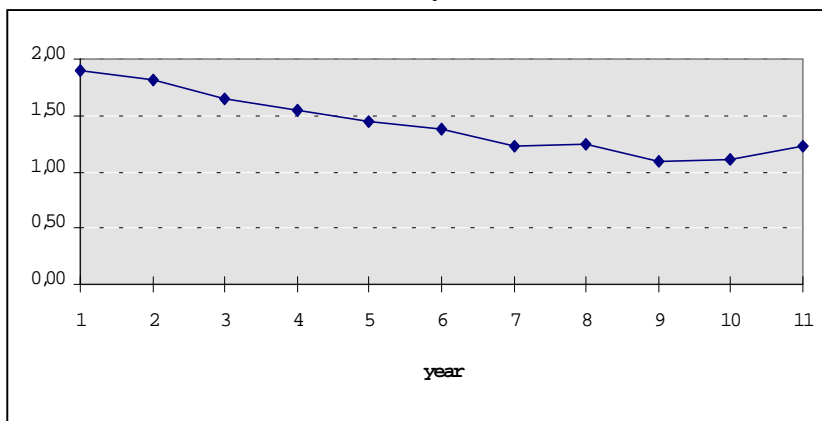


Statistical data also shows a rising average age of the population, which from 37.5 years in 1990, reaches 38.9 years in 1995 and correspondingly 39.6 years in 1999.

The economic and social instability during the period 1989-1997 is often connected with the significant births' reduction. The crude birth rate (per 1000 of population)

continuously falls down: from 12.5 in 1989 (12.1 –1990) to 7.7 in 1997 (the lowest registered level). For 1998 it rises to 7.9, and in 1999 – to 8,8 per 1000 of population (72.8 thousands children born; 99.3% of them were live-born). The crude birth rate value for 1999 is near to the level of 1995. The increase in the absolute number of births registered during the latest two years cannot be treated as evidence the country exits the lasting demographic depression. As a positive could be accessed the fact that 85% of the live-born children in 1999 were born by mothers at the age below 29 years. At the same time there are a continuous decline in fertility, as measured by the total fertility rate. The values of the total fertility rate fell down from 1.90 children per a woman in fertility age for 1989 to 1.09 children (the lowest level) for 1997. A slight increase (1.11) is calculated for 1998. The total fertility rate for 1999 is 1.23 children, and it is a bit higher compared to the total fertility rate’s levels for above-indicated preceding years. But this value is still far from the theoretical minimum for assurance the generation reproduction – 2.1 live-born children per woman

Total fertility rate



Years: 1) 1989; 2) 1990; 3) 1991; 4) 1992; 5) 1993; 6) 1994; 7) 1995; 8) 1996; 9) 1997; 10) 1998; 11) 1999.

Studying the fertility rates by age for the period 1985-1996 some authors (see Kaloyanov T., 1999) establish the most significant negative changes in females’ fertility among the age groups having the greatest contribution to the reproduction of the population - age intervals 20-24, 15-19 and 25-29 years.

The biggest decrease in the absolute number of live births is surveyed among women from the age group 20 - 24 years. While in 1989 the number of live births of the women from this age group amounted to 49802, in 1997 it reached the lowest value – 26242 live births and slightly increased in 1998 and 1999 reaching respectively 26391 and 27992 live births.

The decrease trend is also characteristic for the other age intervals including the age group of youngest mothers (below the age of 20). But, on the other standpoint, the fact of decline in relative share of live-births of mothers at the age below 20 in total number of births in the latest two-three years, could be accessed as a positive.

Statistical data also shows the similar trends in number of the live births of the mothers from the age interval 25-29 years.

The decrease in the total and age fertility rates is connected not only with the decline in number of females in a fertility age but also with the postponement in birth of the first child. While in 1990 the average mother’s age at birth of a first child was 22.0

years, in 1997 it reached 22.7 years, respectively 22.9 years for 1998, and 23.0 years for 1999. This trend is more disturbing if one takes into consideration the traditionally low for our country average mother's age at first child's birth.

The decline in birth and fertility rates for our country during the period 1990-1997 is explained by some authors with worsening economic circumstances, like family's income loss or drop, high level of unemployment and unfavorable prospects for professional realization for a great part of the young people, increasing expenditures for upbringing children, difficulties in solving of housing and social problems, social protection system's problems in family's assistance as regards to children's upbringing and education (see Belcheva M., 1996).

The significant decrease in number of births up to 1997 is also explained by the gradual decrease in marriages' number. While in 1989 63263 marriages have been contracted in 1997 their number has felt to 34772, which constitutes 54.96 % compared to the level of 1989. In comparison with 1997 certain increase is observed in 1998 (35582 marriages) and 1999 (35540 marriages). The number of marriages is still far below the level of 1989 presenting in 1998 respectively 56.2% and in 1999 - 55.8% of 1989 level. It may be assumed that the avoidance of marriage is actually an escape from the responsibility for support and bringing up of children.

The development in the field of marriages is illustrated in a best way by the values of the indicator **Crude marriage rate**, significantly falling compared to 1989:

Crude marriage rate
(Number of marriages per thousand of mid-year population)

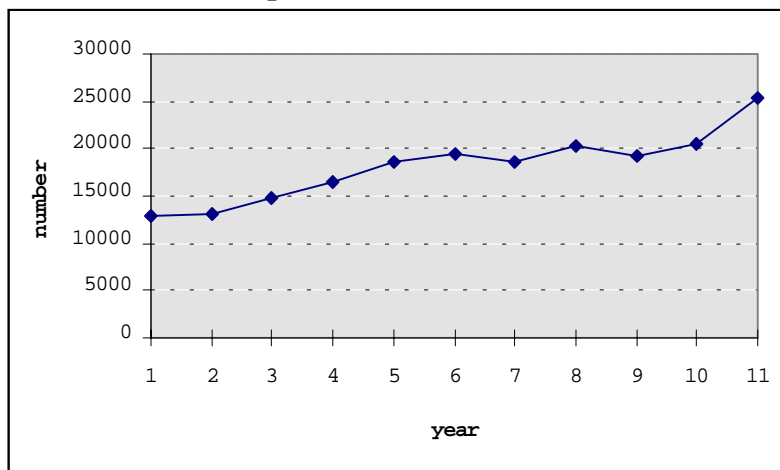
	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Crude marriage rate	7.1	6.9	5.7	5.2	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3

The relatively stable values of crude marriage rate during the latest few years could be considered as an indicator about the role of the family for improvement of the possibilities for an individual adaptation and successful overcoming of economic difficulties.

Data from the regular statistical surveys also indicate quite significant increase of the average age at first marriage. While in 1989 the average females' age at first marriage was 21.5 years, in 1997 it reaches 23.4 years and in 1999 it is already 23.8 years. Even more visible is the increase of the average males' age at first marriage - while in 1989 it was 24.7 years, in 1997 it is 26.5 years and continue to increase in the latest two years, 26.6 years in 1998 and 27.1 years - in 1999. In other words taking a decision for first marriage in 1999 for females is postponed by about two years, and for males – by almost three years compared to 1989.

At the same time in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 the average females' age at first childbirth is quite lower compared to the average females' age of getting first marriage. This could be explained by the significant rise in relative share of the non-marital births in the total number of live births.

Number of non-marital live births in total number of live births during the period 1989 -1999



Years: 1) 1989; 2) 1990; 3) 1991; 4) 1992; 5) 1993; 6) 1994; 7) 1995; 8) 1996; 9) 1997; 10) 1998; 11) 1999.

Bulgaria is at one of the first places among the other European countries concerning the relative share of non-marital births. While in 1989 the relative share of non-marital births was 11.4 % of the total number of live births during the period under consideration it permanently continued to increase and in 1998 it reached 31.5%, and in 1999 – more than one third (35.1 %) of the total number of live births.

Relative share of the non-marital live births in the total number of live births during the period 1989 –1999 (%)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Relative Share	11.4	12.4	15.5	18.5	22.1	24.5	25.7	28.1	30.0	31.5	35.1

Having in mind the increasing share of non-marital live births and the fact the average age of females at first birth is less than their average age at first marriage during the latest years, one could explain that by appearance of a new, not typical for Bulgarian tradition, family pattern of “consensus marriage” (couples not having official marriage). In many cases these couples need a special social protection, which the society in period of economic hardship is not in a position to provide to them. This, on its turn leads to instability of such unions.

Especially urgent is the necessity of special social protection as regards to young single mothers who have taken the heavy decision for lonely parenthood. Child birth and upbringing outside marriage is considered as an important factor for poverty among women (see ‘Women in poverty’, 1997). Since no special statistics are kept for single mothers, it is difficult to analyze the structure and the profile of this group. Before 1990 single mothers had the guaranteed right of labour and the most essential problem at that time was the psychological barrier created by the negative public opinion,. During the last ten years, the state withdraws of their special protection and they can only rely on themselves and eventual help of relatives. Especially serious for this group is the problem of finding a job. Half of single mothers interviewed for the purposes of above cited survey have been unemployed, and 60% of the rest have been

unemployed at least once. Some of them have never worked. In their opinion there are no appropriate jobs available which took into account their family obligations. The health status of almost 80% of them has been deteriorated, only 25% have had a few days of rest in the past 5 years. 60% of interviewed single mothers declared, they have been forced to reduce consumption continuously, including consumption of food. The survey establishes, more than half of the interviewed single mothers have pointed out that expenses for food exceed 70% of their income.

Another very serious problem of the most of single mothers is lack of alimony for their children from the father. The procedure for proving fatherhood is heavy, alimony must be determined by the court.

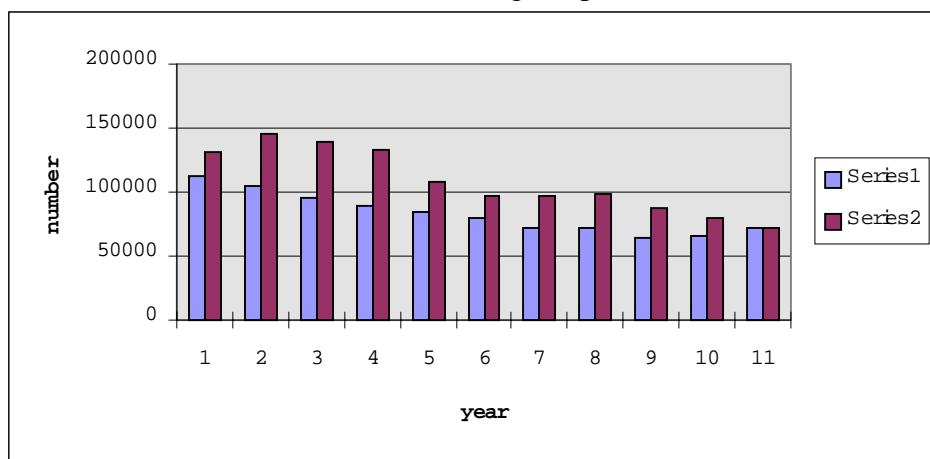
An important factor connected with the family and child well-being is the divorce. Until 1990 the number and the relative share of divorces (per 1000 persons of the population) was constantly growing. This fact has always been interpreted in the context of the improving level of education, an improved standard of living which allows a single parent to bring up his/her children alone, urbanization and influence of the cities, etc. After 1990 the number of divorces decreased and the values of divorce rate since the beginning of 1990s fluctuate about 1.3 per thousand of population yearly. As a main reason for this usually is accepted the substantial drop in the number of marriages.

The abortion still is a main instrument for interruption of non-expected pregnancy in our country. It is the cheapest way to reject children. The high rate of abortions is also an alarming factor for deterioration of the health status of women. From 1989 till 1997 the number of abortions seriously exceeds the number of live births. After serious prevailing of abortions above live births, registered for all the period 1989 – 1997, certain optimism arouses in connection with the latest value of the **abortion rate** (abortions per 100 live births), which at last in 1999 decreased to 100.1 which is even far below 1989 level.

Abortion rate
(per 100 live births)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Abortions	117.6	137.5	144.3	149.1	127.3	122.8	134.9	136.5	137.1	122.2	100.1

Live births and abortions during the period, 1989-1999



Years: 1) 1989; 2) 1990; 3) 1991; 4) 1992; 5) 1993; 6) 1994; 7) 1995; 8) 1996; 9) 1997; 10) 1998; 11) 1999.

From 1989 to 1997 share of abortions of young women under 20 years of age in the total number of abortions with some fluctuations increased from 9.1 % in 1989 to 12.1 % in 1997. The fact was explained most frequently with insufficient sexual culture of the young generation of our country. The fact its values in 1998 and 1999 are lower the 1997 level could be accessed as a positive.

Relative share of abortions of young women under 20 years in the total number of abortions for 1989-1998 by years

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Share	9.1	9.9	9.2	10.6	11.6	11.2	11.4	11.6	12.1	11.2	10.0

During the period under consideration significant unfavourable changes in mortality have been registered too. While in 1990 the crude mortality rate was 12.5 per 1000 of population, it reached its highest level in 1997 (14.7 per 1000 of population). In 1999 it fell down to 13.6 per 1000 of population, which means it has “returned” to the level of 1995. Despite the causes of mortality’s increase have been much discussed The latest world ‘Human Development Report’ contains a joyless estimate about our country in the respect of the indicator ‘**people not expected to survive the age off 60 years**’, which for the period 1995-2000 is calculated to 18.3%. Some researchers directly relate it with the changes in the economic situation, while others - with the influence of the population aging (see Bulgaria’99).

Among the main causes for death are pointed out cardio-vascular diseases, followed by malignant neoplasms, traumas and poisonings and diseases of respiratory system. 891 per 100000 of population are dead due to diseases of blood-circulatory system. (65.4% of the total number of deaths in 1999). As a cause for death they are followed by neoplasms (neoplasms’ mortality rate in 1999 reaches 194 per 100000 of population).

The mortality caused by traumas and poisoning reaches 56 per 100000 of population in 1999 and it is 3 times higher among males compared to females. The death of every forth person due to this reason in 1999 is caused by road accidents. Suicides are caused the death of 1306 persons in 1999.

After the drop in the indicator **Life expectancy at birth** registered during the period 1985-1995 (see the table below):

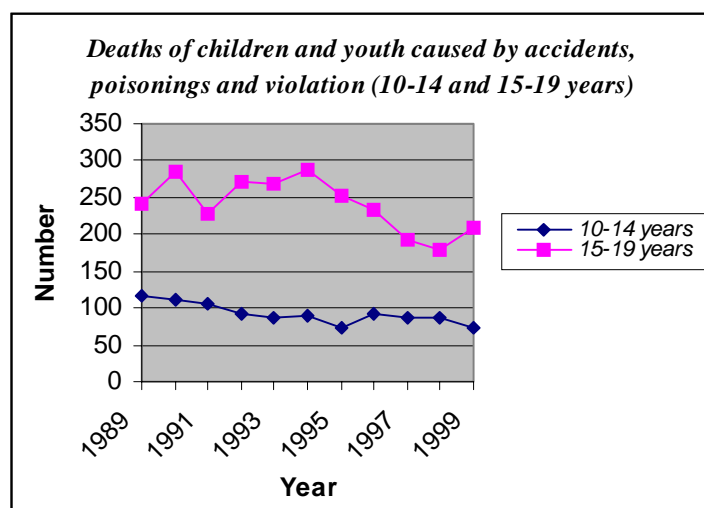
Life expectancy at birth by period

	(Period)				
	1989-1991	1993-1995	1994-1996	1995-1997	1998-1999
Total	71.22	70.64	70.58	70.48	70.98
Males	68.02	67.11	67.11	67.07	67.89
Females	74.66	74.85	74.62	74.31	74.79

Note: Calculations of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. 1998-99 data source 'Bulgaria'1999 – socioeconomic development'

As seen from the above table in 1998-1999 the life expectancy at birth values slightly increase compared to the period 1995-1997. For 1998-1999 the value of the indicator “life expectancy at birth” is 70.98 years (for comparison, in the period 1995-1997 - 70.48 years). An increase is registered in values both for males and females, and the increase for males is greater than for females, respectively for males - 0.82 years; females - 0.48 years). Never-the-less, in 1999 life expectancy at birth for males continues to be lower than females.

One of the main causes for death in the age intervals 10-14 and 15-19 years are the accidents, poisonings and violation. Some idea about the changes in the number deaths of children and youth from the above-mentioned age intervals caused totally by these risk factors could be obtained from the following chart:

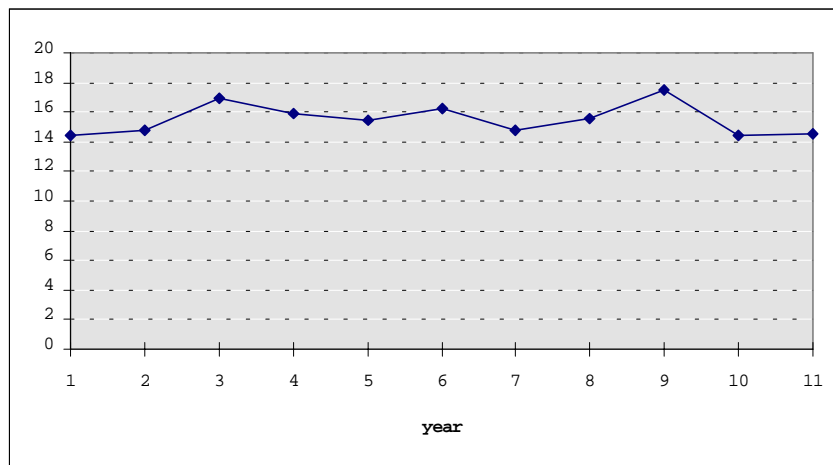


The children and youth deaths as a result of suicide or self-injury fluctuates between 10 and 21 cases yearly at the age interval 10-14 years and between 33 and 65 cases yearly for the age interval 15-19 years. The absolute peak for the age group 10-14 years has been registered in 1989 – 21 cases and for the age interval 15-19 years in 1993 (65 cases).

The latest decade is also characterized by fluctuations in the level of infant mortality.

From 16.9 per thousand live-births, registered in 1991, the IMR falls to 14.8 per thousand live-births in 1995, reaches its highest value 17.5 per thousand in 1997, and again drops down to 14.4 per thousand in 1998; IMR's value for 1999 (14.6 per thousand live births) is approximately at the level of the preceding year.

Infant mortality rate (‰)



Years: 1) 1989; 2) 1990; 3) 1991; 4) 1992; 5) 1993; 6) 1994; 7) 1995; 8) 1996; 9) 1997; 10) 1998; 11) 1999.

Among the main causes for death of children below 1 year of age are the **complications during the prenatal period**, caused 32% of the total number of children below 1 year, who died in 1999. At the second place are **congenital malformations**, caused 25% of the death cases of infants under 1 year. At the third place are **diseases of respiratory system** (21% of the death cases of infants under 1 year in 1999). Pneumonia and influenza are the most spread causes for infants' death among the diseases of respiratory system – in 1999 they have caused more than 80% of the all infants' deaths caused by diseases of respiratory system.

Another very important indicator characterizing population welfare is the **Maternal mortality ratio**, which provides insights about women's health more broadly: their access to health care, the adequacy of health care system in meeting their needs, and even their social status and economic standing. In relation to this indicator despite fluctuations during the period Bulgaria is still belonging to countries having comparatively low ratio of maternal deaths per 100000 live births, but at the same time MMR for Bulgaria is still one of the highest compared to the rest of European countries, especially West European.

Maternal mortality ratio (MMR)

(Maternal deaths per 100000 live births)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
MMR	18.7	20.9	10.4	21.3	14.2	12.6	19.5	19.4	18.7	15.3

Since 1990 till 1997, as a result of the birth rate and death rate changes, the natural growth rate has increasingly negative values (respectively from -0.4 per thousand for

1990 to -5.0 per thousand for 1995, and -5.4 per thousand for 1996). Its lowest negative value (-7.0 per thousand) was calculated for 1997. It is positive, that in the past two years there is some decline of the absolute values of the natural growth rate (-6.4 per thousand for 1998 and -4.8 per thousand for 1999), but it still continues to be negative.

The unfavorable tendencies in demographic development of our country have its negative impact on social risks in two main directions:

- the reduction of the share of young people in total country's population makes troubles and will continue hamper the balance between different generations in the field of social protection;
- the births' decrease is accompanied by such unfavorable structural changes as significant relative share of non-marital births and sufficient share of children born in problematic families being under the conditions of potential risk.

Despite the tendency of demographic aging of the population surveyed during the latest decade, the young generations continue to be a significant part of Bulgarian population facing to specific problems and risks. Over the past ten years, efforts have been made by the Bulgarian governments to bring child, youth and family welfare and protection services in concordance with international standards of the UN Children's Rights Chart and the obligations of Member States of the Council of Europe, but the existing demographic trends increase the burden on the state budget and limit the opportunities for comprehensive support. This situation demands special attention by decision makers and developing comprehensive strategies for demographic and anti-poverty policy, which need to have both economic and cultural dimensions and to take in consideration the specific nature and the different status of the various groups of the population.

Child and family well-being

Surveys concerning material condition of the households and opportunities to satisfy main life needs

One of the most significant contradictions in the assessment of family well-being in our country is the relatively high property status on the one hand, and the low incomes on the other hand. The accumulated property is due above all to the savings from the past and to the fact that the housing fund in this country has been distributed as property of the people using it. According to results of the last population census (as of 4.12.1992) more than 85% of the population live in their own homes. According to the results of "Women in poverty" survey (1997) female households have less property, in terms of both quantity and quality. In respect of most home acquisitions female households lag behind male households by some 50%. The largest variance occurs in respect of the most expensive items. Motor vehicles are owned by 61.8% of the male households and only 24.5% of the female households; automatic washing machines - 58.2% of the male households and 28.7% of the female households, respectively. At the same time, the proportion of owners of real estate is almost equal for men and women. Households headed by women are, in general, much poorer than households headed by men.

The dynamics of social and economic changes in our country during the last decade reflected on viewpoint of the separate individuals. On the base of the results of the latest sociological survey about standard of life of Bulgarian population carried out in

the summer of 2000 less than 1% of the inquired persons (according to their subjective perceptions) include themselves into the group of rich people. 43.1% of the respondents determine themselves “not richly, but not poorly”. More than half of the inquired persons refer themselves to the group of “people living in poverty”, and 14.9 - to the group “people living miserably”.

Large groups of people (56%) are pessimistically assessed about their material status. Less than 1% of the Bulgarian citizens images themselves as “very rich”. The analysis shows the more optimistic viewpoint concerning material status among young people and among those, having tertiary education, as well as among members of households with higher number of employed. Pessimism increases with the increase in age, it is characteristic for people having education lower than secondary, among incomplete families, families of many children as well as among member of households with higher number of unemployed. The table below gives an idea about the households’ responses concerning difficulties in satisfying some basic necessities:

Necessities	No	Yes, rarely	Yes, often	Almost always
Food	25.7	27.7	29.9	16.7
Clothing and footwear	7.7	16.1	30.7	45.5
Heating	14.7	18.1	28.9	38.3
Health services	16.4	20.8	31.5	31.3
Education	64.7	9.8	10.7	14.8
Dwelling	9.9	14.1	28.7	47.3
Furniture	11.0	8.9	18.3	61.8
Recreation	5.9	5.7	13.5	74.9

Very impressive is the high relative share of the Bulgarian citizens who can not afford the most needed goods and services. The discrepancy between the income received and existing price levels create difficulties “often” and “almost always” for 88.4% of households with reference to realization of their recreation; 80.1 % referring to purchase of dwelling equipment and furniture; 76.7% at purchase of clothing and footwear; 67.2% referring to dwelling’s heating; 62.8% referring to health services, and 46.6% referring to nutrition.

At the same time “often” and “almost always” difficulties also have the households determining themselves as living “not poor, not rich”. Every fifth of them has difficulties as regards to their nutrition, every second – at purchase of clothing and footwear and at dwelling’s maintenance and heating, 68.2 % at purchase of household equipment and furniture, and 80.5% at realization of their recreation.

Above results could be compared with the 1999 similar survey’s results, when only 0.2% of the respondents have been on opinion their household lives ‘richly’, 43.5% have responded “live not rich, but not poor”, 43.5% - “live in poverty”, 12.9% have determined their condition as “miserable”.

But at the same time the comparison between results of the both indicated surveys gives some grounds to consider 2000 self-assessments as a little more optimistic. For instance, while in 1999 survey only 13.3% of the inquired persons could afford purchase of foods ‘without difficulties’, the share of respondents giving the same respond in 2000 has increased to 25.7%.

Also in 1999 for almost one third of the respondents (31.5%) purchase of foods has

been connected with 'big difficulties', while in 2000 similar response is given by only 16.7% of the inquired.

A little bit optimistic are also the responses about purchase of new clothing and footwear – while in 1999 it has been connected 'with big difficulties' for 72.4% of the respondents, in 2000 45.5% of the inquired persons respond "purchase of clothing and footwear" is connected with difficulties "almost always".

The same could be said about purchase of new furniture – in 1999 it has been connected with the "big difficulties" for 90.5% of the inquired, in 2000 similar response is given by 61.8% of the inquired.

The parents' material condition is a decisive factor in respect to satisfying children's needs. During the past decade a sufficient part of children live in a socially weak families that puts them in a unequal social situation. Households face serious problems in satisfaction the needs of their children. During the years of transition families with children appear to be in the heaviest social situation. They constitute 32% of the sample used for year 2000 survey. Having in mind, 77.6% of the households with three children, 53.1% of those with two children and even 46.0% of the households with one child, define their life as "miserable", it could be assumed that a lot of children live and are brought up under unfavorable socio-economic conditions.

In comparison with the similar sociological survey "Quantitative and qualitative aspects of the consumption", carried out by NSI in 1992, in 2000 is observed a significant decline in the relative share of the households considering they fully satisfy needs of their children. Their share is less compared to 1992 as follows: of food – by 14.1 percentage points; of clothing and footwear – by 12.2 points; health service – by 18.0 points; education – 21.1 points; recreation – by 5.1 points; entertainment – by 5.9 points. At the same time increases the share of those households that can not satisfy even the most urgent needs of their children as follows: of food – by 7.5 points; of clothing and footwear – by 11.5 points; health service – by 6.2 points; education – by 5.4 points; recreation – by 16.5 points; entertainment – by 18.5 points.

The savings of the population during the period 1995-1999 increase nominally 6.5 times reaching at the end of 1999 2903.4 millions BGN (denominated national currency), but in real expression it amounts 26.2% only of the real amount of savings from the end of 1995. With comparison to the end of 1998 the real value of savings increases by 12.2%.

Taking into consideration the results from the previous sociological survey carried out by NSI in 1999, based on population self-assessments, the tendency of reduction and liquidation of savings is still continuing. While in 1999 57.5% of the inquired have declared they had no savings, during the 2000 survey their share reaches 59.7% of the inquired. At the same time another 13.4% of the respondents in the year 2000 survey have declared they had spent all their savings, which is even more than their share in 1999 (9.6%).

The results from the survey "Women in poverty (1997)" reveal female households have less savings, and this makes them more vulnerable to shocks generated by the unstable financial and economic situation in this country. Some 61.7% of the female - heads of households, have no savings.

Despite the conditions of economic stagnation the relative share of financial funds intended for social insurance and social care in consolidated state budget during the period 1995-1998 after the fall in 1996 continues to increase. Their relative share in total budget expenditures reached correspondingly 24.6% in 1995, 20.7% in 1996; 24.6% in 1997 and 29.1% in 1998 (see 'Social trends', 1999).

During the same 1998 the relative share of monthly children's allowances within the expenditures on allowances and benefits is 23.6% which is by 8.9 points less than in 1995, but by 1.5 points more than in previous 1997. The benefits for up-bringing a child to the age of 2 years in 1998 constitute 12.8 % of the total budget expenditures for allowances and benefits. Unfortunately in real expression (at 1995 prices as a base) funds laid out for monthly children's allowances constitute only 58.3 % of those, spent for the same purpose in 1995 (see Bulgaria '98; '99). But despite these high nominal values the real values of the monthly child benefits gradually lost their importance to assist families in upbringing children.

Self-assessments of the inquired in the course of the above-named sociological surveys reveal the most serious among the problems facing Bulgarian households, is the problem of **"unemployment"**. It has been pointed out as a **"very and extremely serious"** by 69.0% of the respondents in 1992 and by 81.7% in 2000. For instance, on the base of data from the first labor force survey, carried out in September 1993, was calculated unemployment rate of 21.4%, which gradually decreased and in November 1996 was 13.7%. But in connection with 1996 hyperinflation, during the following years the unemployment rate again began to increase and in March 2000 it reached the level of 18.5%.

More than half of the respondents - namely 61.2% in 1992 and 76.0% in 2000 are seriously disturbed by the problems connected with the **"health service's value"**.

Another disturbing problem for the majority of respondents is the **"full-value nutrition"**, pointed out as a "very and extremely serious" respectively by 55.8% in 1992 and 64.9% in 2000.

"Inflation" is considered as a "very and extremely serious" problem by 62.6% of the respondents in 1992 and respectively by 70.7% in 2000. It is obviously, people cannot forget the level of 1997 inflation when the average annual consumer price index reached 1182.3 (previous year = 100).

Labour market

During the last years governments have recognized the need of **active policies** aiming to overcome poverty and unemployment. While during the first years of transition anti-poverty efforts have been focused on passive measures, mainly direct financial aid to the poor, at present they are emphasized on encouraging population to participate in different programmes for intensive employment. At the same time it was realized that restructuring and development of the system for social services is needed, as well as employment and education systems.

Structural changes in the economy caused changes in the structure of employment and had a clear influence on level of unemployment. Statistical data from the sample labor force surveys carried out by the National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria evidence about the following:

1. In June 2000 the labour force presents 49.8 % of the population, 15 years old and over (for comparison in September 1993 it was 51.6 %, and in November 1997 - 55.4% of the population, 15 years and over). At the same time it is higher compared to

the previous survey (November 1999) when labour force constituted 49.2% of the population, 15 years and over.

Data from regular labour force surveys carried out since 1995 do not show any stable tendency of change in population economic activity. The values of average annual economic activity rate, calculated from the labour force surveys' results fluctuates about 50% (for comparison 51.5% (1995); 51.8% (1996); 51.6% (1997) and 50.4% (1998). Although, the economic activity of women in Bulgaria is traditionally high, and the female labour force is well educated and qualified, males' economic activity rate is about 10 points higher compared to that of females.

The age is a dominant factor about the economic activity both of men and women.

Economic activity rates by gender for the age interval 15-24 years

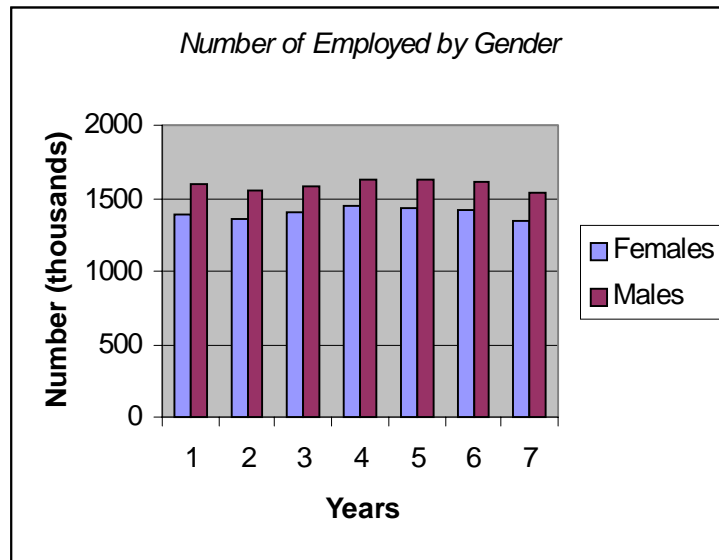
(%)

	Males	Females
June 1997	31.9	29.2
November 1997	33.2	30.0
June 1998	33.8	29.3
November 1998	32.4	30.9
March 1999	31.4	29.3
June 1999	33.0	28.3
November 1999	33.9	27.9
March 2000	33.4	27.0
June 2000	32.6	25.7

2. The number and the relative share of the employed in the economy has been falling since 1991. At the same time, the average annual employment rate (calculated on the base of labour force surveys results) for 1995-1998 shows a slight decrease (for comparison: 43.9% (1995); 44.7% (1996); 43.9 % (1997) and 42.4% (1998)). The decrease is more significant in 1998, which usually is connected with the significant economy's structural reforms and liquidation of losing enterprises.

The employment rate measured in June 2000 is 41.7% (for comparison it was 43.1% in June 1999). Since September 1993 when this survey is carried out for the first time the lowest employment rate's value is registered in March 2000 - 39.7%. The higher employment rate in June 2000 compared to March 2000 is explained by the seasonal factors' influence – the increase in employment in agriculture, construction and tourism.

Statistical data confirm the hypothesis of the unequal position of women in the labour market. The figure below illustrates the changes in the number of employed by gender based on annual averages (arithmetical means) of data obtained from the sample labour force surveys carried out during the relevant year.



Years: 1) 1993; 2) 1994; 3) 1995; 4) 1996; 5) 1997; 6) 1998; 7) 1999.

Although Bulgarian women have a relatively high education level, due both to tradition and the education system, many are not able to take advantage of their educational and professional qualifications. The discrepancy between employment level of men and women (measured on the base of average annual males and females' employment rates calculated from the results of labour force surveys) is kept – the women's employment rate was lower compared to men's employment rate as follows: by 8.1 points in 1995, by 8.3 points – in 1996; by 8.7 points in 1997 and by 8.2 points (1998). The results from the latest labour force surveys also confirm the above indicated disproportion.

Employment rates by gender
(Results from latest Labour Force Surveys)

	(%)	
	Males	Females
March 1999	45.4	37.5
June 1999	47.6	39.0
November 1999	45.1	36.8
March 2000	43.7	35.9
June 2000	46.1	37.6

Economic Activity Rate, Employment rate and Unemployment rate
by residence and gender in June 2000

Residence/ Gender	Economic activity rate %	Employment rate %	Unemploymen t rate %
Total	49,8	41,7	16,3
Males	55,3	46,1	16,7
Females	44,7	37,6	15,9
In towns	54,0	45,8	15,3
Males	58,9	49,6	15,8
Females	49,5	42,2	14,8
In villages	40,9	33,1	19,0
Males	47,8	38,8	18,8
Females	34,2	27,7	19,2

As one can see from the above table, the last survey results (June 2000) also confirm the registered during previous labour force surveys dependence, despite the overall employment rate of men is systematically much higher than employment rate of women, the employment rate of women in towns is higher than employment rate of men in villages.

The results from different labour force surveys also indicate the **employment rate** for the age interval 15-24 years fluctuates a little over twenty per cent (see the table below). Data from all labor force surveys also show a visible superiority in the employment rate of males from the age group 15-24 years compared to females at the same age group. The lower employment of women from the age interval **15-24** years is commonly explained by typical for this age interval women's moving aside the labor market which is mainly due to childbirth and further children's upbringing (see Employment, 1999). In the same way is explained the more significant discrepancies between males' and females employment rates in case of the age group **25-34** years. It could be connected with the general opinion, that employers are not disposed to employ women with children young women to whom they are likely to have to pay maternity leave. But it also appears that even older women who are unlikely to have responsibilities for child care, have less chances of getting employment. This is also related to the fact that women find it hard to spare time for retraining, and quite often this is necessary after raising the children.

Employment rates by gender for the age interval 15-24 years

(%)

	Males	Females
June 1997	20.9	19.7
November 1997	21.2	19.3
June 1998	23.6	21.6
November 1998	21.4	20.1
March 1999	20.5	19.8
June 1999	22.7	19.4
November 1999	21.1	18.0
March 2000	19.4	17.3
June 2000	20.8	18.0

The results about status in employment also indicate the education as one of the main factors determining level of employment. They could be treated as an evidence about a tendency (as the same has been registered during all other labour force surveys) of a significantly lower level of employment both of men and women having basic and lower education (respectively 60.1 % of men and 50.1 of women employees).

At the same time, the additional parents' expenditures on children's up-bringing and the necessity of more incomes within the family is a strong stimulus to young people and to leave the school and to seek for a job at an earlier age than before last decade. Unfortunately, the available statistical data that do not afford to see the links between the minors' labor and higher percentage of the pupils dropped out of the school.

The employment level is highest for the persons with higher level of education – according to results of June 2000, 89.7% of them are employees, 3.3% - employers and 15.0% - self-employed persons.

Simultaneously with the economy's restructuring a decline of employees in public sector (54.9% of the total number of employed) and an increase in the number of employed in private sector (45.1% of the total number of employed) continues to be observed. In June 2000 85.3% of the employees work under labour contract, in private enterprises their share is 70.1%.

As a negative could be assessed the fact that only 70.2% of the age interval 15-24 years work under labour contract; 14.3% of them still works under civil contract and other 13.2% without any contract. Figures about private enterprises are even more disturbing: 61.2% of the young people at the age 15-24 years work under labour contract; 18.7% under civil contract and 17.5% without any contract in private enterprises.

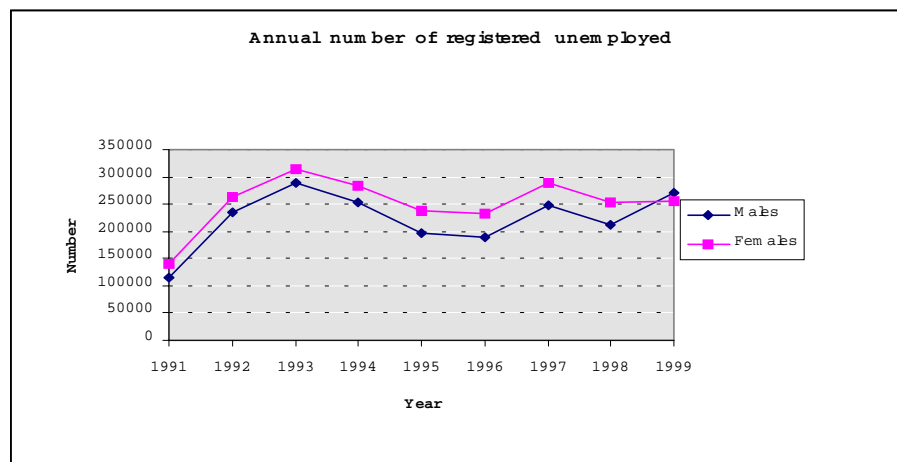
Another serious problem, related to employment, is women employment as unpaid family workers. Women as unpaid workers exist since the start of reforms. Nevertheless, the number and share of women, working as unpaid family workers according to the results of latest labour force surveys (carried out in the period March 1999 – June 2000) fluctuated between 1.5% and 2.4% of the total number of employed women, the absolute number of unpaid female family workers is approximately twice the number of unpaid male family workers men. It is more disturbing that this form of women employment is still accepted as something normal. Women themselves believe that in this way they support the family budget. But as a consequence, they are deprived of social security and the accumulation of length of service for retirement. In the cases where female family workers are covered by the social security scheme at the level of the minimum wage, they receive minimum pension (see *Women in Poverty*, 1997).

In 1990 women comprised 32.2% of the management staff in the national economy and 85.6% of the service staff, 63% of the specialists with key functions, 75.6% of the teachers and the pedagogical staff. Women are rather scarcely represented among entrepreneurs. They have also a relatively small share in the number of the self-employed. Women-entrepreneurs face specific restrictions in their work that have a specific impact on their life cycle, and family status and number of children. According to the results of a survey of women in entrepreneurship carried out by the Institute of Demography in 1996 (see *Human Development Report, Bulgaria 1996*) the link between family and business create problems for 80 per cent of interviewed women. They believe that work in both spheres is hard to combine. This is among the

major reasons for women’s abstaining from entrepreneurship. Asked to the question “Would you like to start your own business?” only 18.8 per cent of interviewed women answer “Yes”, 27.1 per cent - “It depends” and 54.1 per cent “No”. The same survey results also evidence the group of women-entrepreneurs is not homogeneous concerning the motives of starting up the private business. The first group of women-entrepreneurs seek in self-employment and entrepreneurship a means of adding up to the family incomes and a flexible combination of work and family. The second group comprising mostly from highly qualified women is motivated by a desire to achieve an economic success. Making efforts to adapt themselves to the new realities through private entrepreneurship and self-employment the women need an establishment of favourable legal conditions and institutionalized support.

3. The **unemployment** was an unknown problem for Bulgarian society during the pre-transition period. That is why the loss of working place both for men and women presents not only a loss of income for them and their families but also a loss of possibility for professional realization. In the course of carried out labour force surveys since November 1996 a tendency of growth of unemployed persons and the unemployment rate was observed (in November 1999 the unemployed reached 576.8 thousands or 17% of economically active population). In June 2000 the number of unemployed (according to the criteria, adopted for the purposes of labour force surveys) amounts to 559 thousands, which is by 63,4 thousands less compared to March of the same year, but in comparison with June 1999 increases by 72,3 thousands. In June 2000 the unemployed constitute 16,3% of economically active population (for comparison the peak (18.5%) was registered in March 2000 and correspondingly 14,1% in June 1999).

The dynamics of values of the average annual number of unemployed persons by gender, calculated on a base of the number of unemployed persons, registered at Labour offices at Ministry of Labour and Social Policy by months (as a rule lower than the results of NSI labour force surveys) for 1991-1999 is illustrated in a best way by the chart given below:



Statistical data about average annual unemployment rates by gender (calculated on **the base of labour force surveys’ results**) from the latest few years also evidence there is

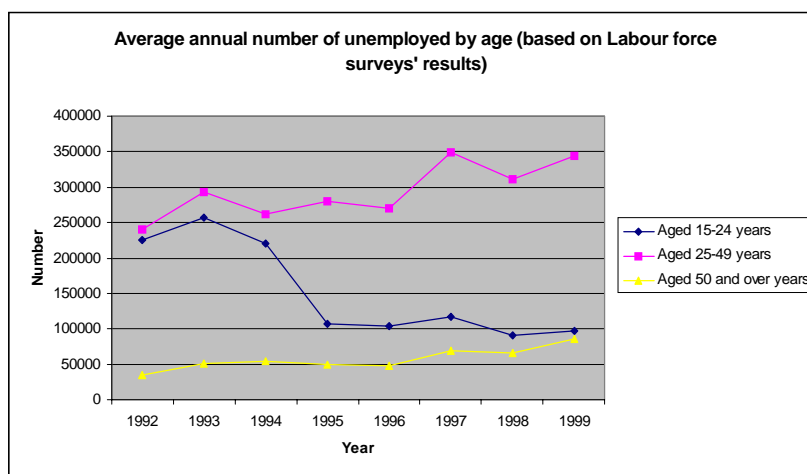
not significant differences between men and women's unemployment level (see the table below).

Average annual unemployment rate
(calculated on the base of Labour Force Surveys results)

	%			
	1995	1996	1997	1998
Unemployment rate	14.7	13.7	15.0	16.0
Males' unemployment rate	14.4	13.6	14.7	16.1
Females' unemployment rate	15.0	13.8	15.3	15.9

The results from latest five labour force surveys even show the women's unemployment rate (except June 1999) is lower compared to that of men (females unemployment rate: 15.5% (March 1999), 14.1% (June 1999), 16.8% (November 1999), 18.3% (March 2000), 15.9% (June 2000); (correspondingly men's unemployment rate: 16.2% (March 1999), 14.0% (June 1999), 17.3%, (November 1999), 18.8% (March 2000) and 16.7% (June 2000)).

Structural changes in the economy caused changes not only in the level but also in the structure of unemployment. The age again is considered as one of the main factors determining the level of unemployment.



Generally speaking, the period under consideration could be characterized as a period of high levels of youth's unemployment (up to 24 years). During the latest years the share of unemployed young people (at the age 15-24 years) is more than one third of the economically active persons from the same age group. At the same time, statistics show there is not sufficient discrepancies between males' and females average annual unemployment rates of the age interval 15-24 years (see the table below).

Average annual unemployment rate of young people at the age 15-24 years

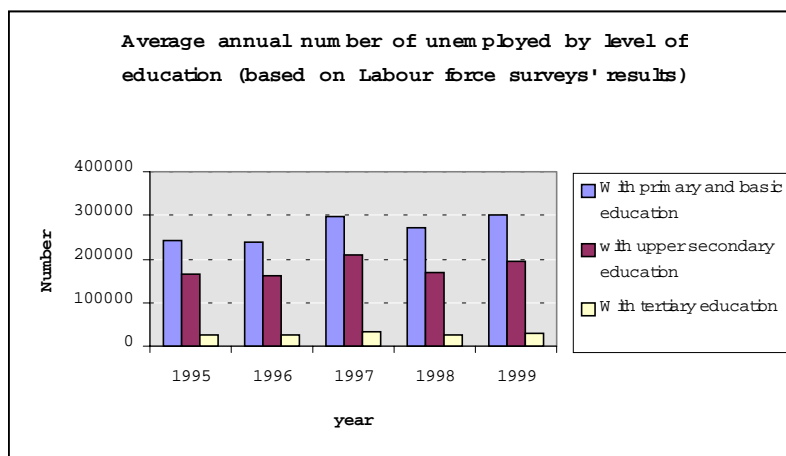
(Calculated on the base of Labour Force Surveys results)

	%			
	1995	1996	1997	1998
Unemployment rate	37.7	33.5	36.0	36.0
Males' unemployment rate	37.0	33.9	36.1	36.8
Females' unemployment rate	38.4	33.0	35.8	35.0

According to the results of the latest Labour force survey 33.4% of the young people up to 24 years of age have been unemployed in June 2000.

A great part of the unemployed young people have not any working or professional experience or it this working experience is extremely insufficient. That is why the employers do not prefer them and in the majority of cases young people can find temporary or seasonal job only (usually not corresponding to their qualification).

The statistics also indicate the education as one of the main factors determining level of unemployment - the education structure of the unemployed persons could be considered as a reflector of structural changes in the economy and increasing requirements of entrepreneurs towards the labour force. The figures about average annual number of unemployed by educational level (based on the results of workforce surveys, carried out during 1995-1999) evidence for a significantly higher level of unemployment of persons having basic and lower education. Also high is the number of unemployed persons with upper secondary education compared to the number of those with tertiary education. Possibly these inequalities in a great extend are due to close-down of the great number of small enterprises, developed during the pre-transition period in small settlements in order to provide livelihood of the population with low educational level. The liquidation of cooperative farms and the restructuring of some industries employing a labour force without education or having low educational level (i.e. canning and tobacco industries) also influenced the process. These trends could be illustrated by the diagram below:



Unemployment has a strong negative effect on the economic and social status of the people that belong to this population stratum. The task of working out an accurate assessment of the degree of their impoverishment is very complicated, as some of the unemployed receives incomes from the “shadow” economy.

Characterizing feature for the latest years is so-called structural unemployment caused by the re-structuring of economy. This process cannot be separated of the liquidation of non-effective state enterprises and speedy privatization process, which also led to a growth of regional unemployment. 343,4 thousand people or 61,4% of the unemployed in June 2000 have been dismissed from their working places due to staff’s redundancy. The most highest level of unemployment in June 2000 is registered in the districts of Vidin – 38.4%, Targovishte and Smolyan – 35.9%, Montana - 29% and Shumen - 27,7%.

Data about unemployment arouse a disturbance as regard to the structure of the unemployed persons from the viewpoint of the duration of the period of job's seeking. It is commonly known that how more durable is that period, so more passive are the adjustments of the unemployed persons as regard to the offered social re-integration programs. The share of long-term unemployed in the total number of unemployed persons is still comparatively high (64.8% (1995); 58.6% (1996); 56.5% (1997) and 53.3% (1998). As seen from the above figures there is a gradual decline in the share of long-term unemployed during the last years, and this decline for the period 1995-1998 is 11.5 points. Data from surveys of the labour force also indicate, the family status substantially affects unemployment and method of looking for job. The share of divorced (both men and women) in groups of long-term search for jobs is lower, and they are most active in all methods used for the job search (see Women in Poverty, 1997).

Under conditions of stabilizing economic policy leading to a closing down and restructuring of the non-effective state enterprises, the expected increase of the unemployment is the price that has to be paid for the economic recovery. Unfortunately the protection measures envisaged in the new Act on protection against unemployment and employment encouragement are not fully known both by the employers and unemployed yet.

According to the researchers' opinion the employment is the key instrument for struggle against poverty. Since 1991 a wide range of programmes have been developed and implemented in Bulgaria for protection against unemployment and for encouraging employment. But a wider access to programmes would be necessary because the number of persons, included in the them is still insufficient and it does not affect the labour market.

One of the most effective policy areas to solve unemployment's problems and promote sustainable employment is public-private partnership. At the same time, the majority of authors assess that conditions enabling public-private partnership still need to be consolidated. For example, Bulgaria's current public sector reform has been hampered by, among other factors, the lack of investment in public infrastructure. According to the data published in 'Human Development Report, Bulgaria, 1999', while in 1992 public investment in infrastructure was almost 2.5% of GDP, adding maintenance, by 1996 public investment in infrastructure dropped to 1 % of GDP. In 1998, a budget surplus allowed for some investment of about 1 % of GDP, which was used mainly for infrastructure work in the education and healthcare sectors. At the same time, the domestic private sector does not have the capacity yet to compliment public investment projects (See Human Development Report, Bulgaria, 1999)

On the other part, efforts should be directed to develop programs envisaging flexible forms of employment, which could offer opportunities for reduced (extended) working time for the some target groups of people, depending on their needs.

Another feature characterizing the transition period is the continuous disproportion between both genders concerning their wages. In 1990 the average female wages were lower than those of males by about 26 %. Statistics for 1993 about employees under labour contract also show that average monthly female wages in **public** sector (state and cooperative ownership) constituted 74.2 % of those received by males. According to later labour and wages statistics for 1994 the female average monthly wages in

public sector constitute 72.2% of those received by males and for 1995 - 72.8 %. Data since 1996 refer to public and private sector totally. According to figures in 1996 women's wages present 68.9% only of the wages received by males. Despite the registered improvement in latest years, the discrepancy between female/male wages is still significant: the average monthly wages of women (public and private sector totally) in 1997 are respectively 70.8%, and in 1998 - 72.8% of those received by men. Despite the educational and professional advancement of the Bulgarian women the above cited disproportion in average wages by gender evidences patterns of labour segregation are reproduced in the society - the women rarely hold chief job positions with higher payment and very often occupy low-qualified and respectively low-paid working places. Similar reflections arouse also the fact of comparatively low level of the average wages in such "feminized" branches as education and health care in spite of the high level of staff's qualification in them.

According to the conclusions of the above-cited survey "Women in poverty", there are certain specific features of Bulgarian women as regard as their preferences to job market. They prefer permanent jobs, and are less involved with occasional jobs, both because of their family obligations and because of the tradition in the environment of full employment. An important factor for women's poverty are the low wages in such feminized activities like education, health care, etc. Another important reason for poverty among women is their traditional view that a woman is the second person generating income for the family, and therefore she may get lower income.

Health Services and health condition

The changes in the healthcare's system in 1999 were connected with the carried out health reform, which included a conversion of the health establishments and a start of the health insurance system. Taking into consideration comparatively low possibilities of the population to cover expenditures on health care insurance, the practical implementation of the health insurance system is connected with limitation of the access to health care of some social groups (for instance persons, working without labour contract; long-term unemployed not registered in Employment offices, etc, - all those, who are not in a position to pay personally health insurance contributions).

Despite the limitation of the resources intended on health care under the conditions of financial restriction, the implementation of the currency board and the overall financial stabilization beginning since the middle of 1997 allow an overcoming of the tendency of decrease in the share of public expenditures on health in Gross Domestic Product and the gradual increase of this share. Also increasing is the share of the expenditures on health in the consolidated state budget - the public expenditures on health care in Consolidated state budget from 8.4% (1995) increase to 9.3% in 1999. Also positive is the tendency of increasing share of capital expenditures in the total public expenditures on healthcare – from 3.4% in 1995 to 12.3% for 1999.

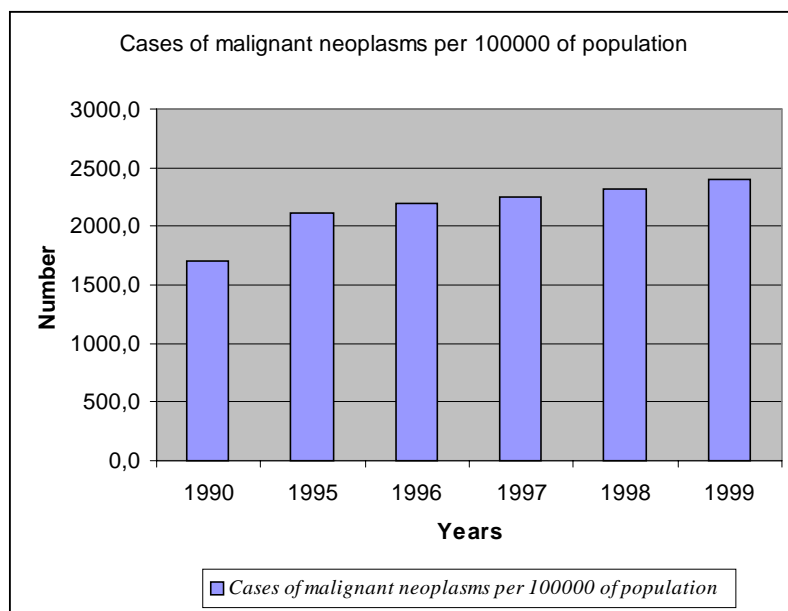
For the period 1990-1999 a visible decrease in the number of hospital and sanatorial beds is observed (in 1998 the number of hospital beds is by about 21% less, and number of sanatorial beds – by about 55% less than in 1990). The health establishments' accreditation and transformation in accordance with the Act on medical institutions led to further diminution of the number of hospital beds. But at the same time, it must be taken into consideration that the population's assurance with hospital, sanatorial beds (respectively 86 hospital beds and 12 sanatorial beds per

10000 of population (1998) and medical staff (34.6 physicians and 5.9 dentists per 10000 of population – 1998) in our country is higher than in more of the high developed countries. Simultaneously the role of the private sector in satisfying the population’s health needs is still insufficient.

Very indicative about the population health status and its connection with the unfavorable changes in living conditions of the population as a whole, and children and youth in particular, are data on registered cases of different socially significant diseases. The latest published statistical data show both a rise in the total morbidity of the population during the period and an increase in some socially significant diseases, such as malignant neoplasms, active tuberculosis, syphilis, mental disorders etc. that are strongly influenced by stress factors, inadequate nutrition, impoverishment etc.

The registered cases of malignant neoplasms have increased from 1709 (1990) to 2401(1999) per 100000 of population (an increase by 40.5%); and newly registered – from 245 to 324 per 100000 of population (by 32.2%). The highest frequency among malignant neoplasms have: cancer of woman’s breast and genito-urinary organs, cancer of stomach; cancer of respiratory organs and skin.

The most frequent among persons up to 17 years of age are the neoplasms of the lymph and blood organs.



A distress signal is the clear upward trend in tuberculosis’ morbidity after the long period of decrease - while in 1989 tuberculosis morbidity was calculated to 108 cases of active tuberculosis per 100000 of population, in 1999 it has already increased to 187 per 100000 of population; respectively for newly diagnosed cases: from 26 per 100000 of population in 1989 against 45 per 100000 of population in 1999. The main reason for this increase the majority of researchers connect with the weakening of the population’s immunity under the influence of deterioration in quality of life. A tendency of permanent increase in morbidity of active tuberculosis is registered both among adults, and children and minors.

The number of registered and newly registered cases of syphilis continues to increase. The syphilis morbidity increases from 31.2 (1990) per 100000 of population, to 54.2

(1995) and reaches 127 per 100000 of population in 1999. Newly registered cases per 100000 of population also increase from 4.4 (1990) to 20.2 in 1995 and respectively 32 per 100000 of population in 1999.

From 9205 total registered cases and correspondingly 2694 newly registered cases of syphilis in 1998, 536 are registered in the age interval up to 17 years and correspondingly 273 of them are newly registered (see Bulgaria'98).

The crisis phenomena also influenced the psychological status of population. The number of people registered in psychiatric establishments at the end of 1990 was 230304 (respectively 2656.7 per 100000 of population), and at the end of 1999 it amounts to 234089 persons, which already constitutes 2851 per 100000 of population. This is by about 194 persons per 100000 of population more compared to the end of 1990.

The deteriorated health status reduces the physical capacity for work and additional income. It also leads to restricting other expenses for the needs of the household. By data from the sample survey about population health condition, carried out by NSI in 1996 (based on self-assessments), as deteriorated define their health condition 38.8% of the interviewed women and 27.8% of men. The surveys' results also reveal a high morbidity rate of chronic diseases - 57.5% of the population is suffered from chronic diseases. The most spread among chronic diseases is the high blood pressure - 22.8% of the population.

Smoking, alcohol usage and drug dependency.

Risk behavior among children and young people in Bulgaria is connected at a first place with the alcohol abuse and high levels of smoking, which in turn create additional health and social risks. Drunk and narcotized children and young people very often become victims of criminal acts or offenders of such acts. There is a visible interweaving both of impacts of social background and psychological reasons: feeling of loneliness, personal dissatisfaction, lack of understanding within the family, school and background, troubles in adaptation etc.

Due to the sensitivity of data about the scope of alcohol dependency, currently the researchers can obtain such data as results of some sample surveys only (on a base of self-assessments). Such results were received in course of the sociological survey about population health condition, carried out by NSI in 1996. The survey's results show high level of smoking and alcohol abuse. 49.2% of interviewed men and 23.8% of inquired women (at the age 15 and over) declare themselves as smokers and respectively 81.5% of men and 49.9% of women as using alcohol. They also reveal the alcohol abuse is mostly widespread in the youngest age interval (15-24 years). The highest share of alcohol users is registered in the youngest age interval (15-24 years). 76.7% of the inquired at the age 15-24 years declare regular alcohol use. The smokers' distribution by age again reveals the highest share of smokers in the age interval 15-24 years (56.6% of the respondents).

Also indicative in this respect are the results of the carried out by NSI in 1995 sociological survey about the youth, its religiousness and religious sects in our country (see Social price, 1996). A survey object was a representative sample of 2.8 thousand secondary school students (VIII-XII grade) at the territory of the whole country. All types of secondary schools in the country were covered by the survey (see Belcheva M., 1996).

The results indicate the alcohol abuse is also widespread among the secondary school

students - 8.0 % of the inquired answer they use spirits frequently, 56.8 % - rarely and 35.2 % declare they do not use spirits. At the same time the results from the survey show almost equal incidence of the alcohol use by the students from both sexes as well as by place of residence - capital city, big city and little town (see Social Price, 1996).

By other data from the same survey 26.3% of the inquired students smoke regularly and 17.3 % - occasionally. There are not sufficient differences by sex or by type of the place of residence.

The distribution of answers to the question about drug use indicates that 0.5% of the inquired students declare they use drugs regularly, 1.2% - 'sometimes', 4.8 % have experimented with drugs and 93.5 % deny use of drugs. But these data is very sensitive, as it is hard to admit use of drugs in public. That is why the survey's authors are on the opinion that a lot of the inquired students have tried to belittle the seriousness of the problem and have not been absolutely outspoken in their answers about the frequency of the drugs' use. (see Social price, 1996).

Education and educational system reform

Education is considered as an essential factor of the transition to a market economy. It is commonly considered the education has potential capacity to overcome poverty. The achievement of economic growth and development is unthinkable without the efforts of well-educated specialists and workers capable to adapt to changing conditions. Better labour market status, capabilities for rapid adaptation, readiness for retraining, flexibility regarding jobs change, higher earning potential are commonly related to the high education level. The young people who drop out from the education system will find it difficult, or even impossible, to make up the lost ground in future years. In this relation, the new conditions of free enterprise environment and civil society require new patterns of training and diversification of educational contents, that, on its turn will provide a broader access to the labour market and better realization of the individual.

The ongoing reform of educational system is aimed to respond to these challenges. Under the conditions of transition it cannot be separated from the diversification of all forms and structures of the rest society systems, changing demographic situation and social necessities, as well as complication of the links and interrelations of the education both inside it and outside the educational system.

The reform in educational system has led to significant changes allowing more diversity and innovation curricula, educational materials and teaching styles. Changes in labour market's demands have influenced the educational system to expand access and free student choice of different courses and degree programs. At the same time the efforts for democratic reforms in Bulgarian education were accompanied by a lot of difficulties, which were mainly caused by shortage of financial resources or inefficiency of resource allocation. Financial status of a part of municipalities hampers the payments for school heating, and electricity, equipment and furniture, and even causes temporary delays in payment teachers' remuneration in some settlements. There is not pupils' transport to school and pupils from distant regions have to cover transport expenditures from home to school by themselves. A number of qualified teachers leave the public schools and pass to work at private schools (see UNDP, 1997).

According to the data published in the edition 'Bulgaria'1999 – socio-economic development' while in 1995 public expenditures on education have presented 3.8% of GDP and even fall down to 3.3% in the crisis 1997, for 1998 (by preliminary data) they achieve the level of 4.0%. This reveals that although comparatively less financial resources, aiming to overcome financial handicaps the responsible authorities have increased the relative share of expenditure on education in GDP in 1998 by 0.7 points more compared to previous year and by 0.2 points more than in 1995.

An important event from September 2000 is that The World Bank approved a EURO 15.30 million (US\$14.39 million equivalent) loan for Bulgaria to help support the implementation of the Education Modernization. This project is aimed to benefit primary and secondary school students by improving the quality of teaching and enhancing learning opportunities.

As a result of the exceptionally low birth rate during the period under consideration, **the tendency of decrease in number of pupils in pre-primary, basic and secondary education level continues.**

According to the projections of the National Statistical Institute (NSI) for the period 1999-2005 it is expected that in 2005 the population in the age intervals 5-14 and 15-24 years will decline correspondingly by 237 thousands (24.7%) and by 127 thousands (10.7%) compared to 1999. This means that during the next seven years the number of children in the age interval 5-14 years will reduce by 39.5 thousands average annually. On the other part, it is envisaged that in comparison with the 29 countries-members of OECD in 2005 Bulgaria will have the lowest relative share of the population at the age 5-14 years (9.2% only).

These demographic projections undoubtedly will influence the future assessment of the resources, necessary by the educational system, as despite decline in the number of pupils, due to higher requirements to the quality education, it is expected the an increase of total public expenditures on education and educational system development.

The comparison of the educational structures of the Bulgarian population with these of other countries (EU members and OECD countries) leads to a conclusion the level of "human capital" of our country as a whole is higher than the average for these groups of countries. The relative share of the labour force having secondary and higher level of education for Bulgaria reaches 73% of the labour force (for comparison - 69% average for OECD countries) (1996).

The educational system is called to submit our children and youth with such education that will develop their abilities accordingly to the ratified by our country UN Convention on Children's Rights.

The ratio 'Number of pupils per one teacher' is also indicative for the situation of the educational system. In 1999 this ratio for pre-primary education is 10.6, for primary school - 16.5, in basic school - 11.3, for secondary school - 11.0, for college education – 8.7 and for university education – 9.6 (see Bulgaria, 1999). These values are a bit lower compared to 1998 in case of pre-primary, primary, and college and university education but higher for basic educational levels.

Another indicator characterizing the situation of educational system is the net coefficient of the enrolled pupils and students. While the net enrollment rate for the

age interval 7-14 years for the school 1995/1996 was 97.9%, during the period 1995-1999 it steadily decreases reaching 97.1% for the school year 1999/2000. The net enrollment rate for the age contingent 5-14 years in pre-primary and basic school for 1999 amounts to 93.8%, which is mainly caused by the lower enrollment rate of the children at 5-6 years age in different forms of pre-primary education, which cannot be separated from the diminishing both in the number of pre-primary establishments for children and places in them especially in rural areas. For comparison during the last ten years the net enrollment rate in pre-primary education fluctuates between 56.9% (1990) and 66.2% (1996). For 1998 it is 65.2%. Its values during the latest years are much higher for urban areas in comparison with the rural areas. While in 1990 the net enrollment rate in pre-primary education has near values for urban (66.1%) and rural areas (64.1%), in 1997 in rural areas it reaches its lowest value - 50.0% (compared to 67.8% for urban areas) and 54.4% in 1998(compared to 70.3% for urban areas).

The net enrollment rate as regard to the age contingent 15-19 years is 62.6% for 1999 (for comparison 60.5% for 1996). The lowest values of enrollment rate for the secondary level of education (calculated on a gross basis) are registered for the districts of Kardjali (50.3%), Targovishte (54.3%) and Silistra (58.9%). It is commonly considered that the reasons for such regional disproportion must be searched in higher poverty level in parts of some regions, as well as in young people efforts to work in order to supplement the family income. At the same time education costs in upper secondary education rise, including cost of textbooks and allowances of young people studying away from home. Aiming to overcome this unfavorable disproportion and to achieve the average European level, it would be necessary to make efforts for raising coverage in the upper secondary level of education (9-12 grade), as well as in the post-secondary (non-tertiary) level. These efforts must also be connected with solving the problem of pupils dropped out from the school. During the period 1994-1998 the relative share of pupils dropped out from basic & secondary education varies between 3.6%(1996/97 school year) and 3.1% (1998/1999 school year) with a tendency to decline. During the last two years about 22-23 thousand pupils are dropped out from the basic school. The yearly school drop-out rates at basic education are presented in the following table:

Drop out rates at basic school level (%)

Year	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Drop-out rate	3,0	3,0	2,9	3,5	3,3	3,3	3,5	3,4	3,3	3,2	3,1

In comparison with the 1995/1996 school year in 1999/2000 school year the number of children in kindergartens decreased by 42 thousands (16.6%); number of pupils in basic school (1-8 grade) - by 62 thousand (7.5%) and in secondary school (9-12 grade) - by 33 thousand or by 8.9 %.

At the same time the intensive increase of the number of students in all educational institutions of higher education observed up to 1998/1999 school year appears to calm down. While in 1990-1992 the number of students in higher education amounted to about 130-140 thousand, in 1995/1996 school year it reached 250 thousand, respectively 260 thousand in 1997/1998 school year and the absolute peak (270 thousand) has been registered in 1998/1999 school year. In 1999/2000 school year the number of students in higher education is by 11 thousand more than in 1995/1996

(4.4%), but by 9.0 thousand (3.2%) less compared to previous 1998/1999 school year. As it was already indicated the realization of the necessary connections between the education and market economy is accepted as one of the most important aspects of the reforms carried out within the system of Bulgarian education (see Zahariev Z., 1998). The labor market's needs in qualified labor force are in a close connection with the current and expected future development of the economy. The speedy science and technical evolution requires higher level of professional and general training of the young people. The most fasting increase is registered in so-called 'specialties in demand', mainly in the sphere of information and communication technologies as well as in the service sectors. But the analysis can not claim to fullness if we do not consider the increase in number of students and graduates in the field of business (Management, Economics) and some humanitarian specialties (Law).

According to available data while in 1996 29% of the university degree graduates, had taken university degree in Law and Business, their number in 1998 reached 36%, and in 1999 a little less – 35%. The share of those graduated by taking university degree in the field of humanitarian sciences increases from 39% (1996) to 40% (1998) and 42% (1999). At the same time, in some of the other fields of higher education, especially in higher technical education (Engineering and Architecture) there is a significant decline compared to the situation characteristic for the period up to 1990. While the share of graduates by taking university degree in these subjects in 1996 was 18%, in 1998 it declines to 12% and in 1999 slightly increases to 13% of the total number of university graduates.

The net employment rate for the population at the age interval 17-34 years in higher education has increased during the period 1995-1998 from 11.5% (1995) to 12.3 % (1998) and 1998 values were even higher compared to the average values for the countries – member of EU. The value of net higher education enrollment rate for the population from the age interval 17-34 years for 1999 is a little lower – 11.9%. Future development of this indicator is expected to be in a direct consequence from the state policy in different fields of higher education and influenced by future parameters of country's economic development during the pre-accession period. At the same time, the higher education policy's makers must have in mind that the output of a large number of specialists with university degree in some domains of the science could cause an overcrowding of labor market and to create serious problems connected with their further realization.

During 1999 86.0 thousand pupils have finished basic education (for comparison 91.6 thousand pupils (1998); 34.2 thousand - general secondary education (37.6 thousand in 1998); 18.7 thousand - vocational secondary education (21.6 thousand in 1998) and 28.6 thousand pupils have finished technical colleges (28.7 thousand in 1998). Eight thousand persons have graduated by taking 'specialist' degree (college degree) - for comparison in 1998 their number was 6.5 thousand; and 36.5 thousand persons– by taking 'bachelor' and 'master' degrees (34.0 thousand in 1998).

In official NSI analyses for the period 1995-1998 is also established a negative trend of reduction in the ratio between the average annual salary in the system of education and the country's average annual salary. This ratio declines from 74.4% (1995) to 71.3% (1998). Since 1999 this tendency of decrease changes into increasing and the ratio between the average annual salary in the system of education and the country's

average annual salary reaches 76.3% (1999, preliminary data), see “Bulgaria, 1999”. The average annual salary in education for 1999 amounts to 2027.37 BGN (denominated national currency, 1BGN=1000BGL) compared to 2655.36 BGN average annual salary totally per country. Despite the relative improvement, it could be said that the salaries (and especially teachers’ salaries) in the system of education are still low and lead to some demotivation, which changes for the worse the quality of teaching process.

As it was already pointed out the promoting access to education expands job opportunities, which helps people to expand their expectations. Having in mind education statistics about years of interest, Bulgarian women have higher general education level than men. For instance, according to the latest data published in the “Human Development Report’2000” **the combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrollment ratio** for Bulgaria amounts to 75% for females compared to 69% for males. At the same women more rarely utilize their potential. Women graduate more often from secondary schools, which do not provide professional orientation. Their insufficient vocational education is an important factor for an unequal position at the labour market. At the same time women are prevalent in the groups of higher education presuming humanitarian professions, professions in the administration. The low demand for labour force with such training obliges the provision of additional training, retraining and relatively frequent change of professions. But after completion of a certain degree of education women have less opportunities for additional training or attending courses and schools. They find difficult to spare time for additional education and training courses, especially if they are inapplicable to their family obligations. In this respect, the system of training should be more flexible and adapted to the free time of women. The specific programmes must be developed and implemented to encourage their participation in formal and informal forms of vocational training. At the same time, the state need not take entirely on itself the organization and financing of such training and retraining. The vocational training systems should increasingly include non-governmental organizations.

High risk children and children in public care.

The institution placement is still the mainstay of child protective services in Bulgaria. In the beginning of the year 2000, the Bulgarian Government set the improvement of child welfare in Bulgaria as a top political priority, together with unemployment and poverty. Special attention in this direction is paid to children at risk; reducing the number of institutionalized children through the development of alternative care models and prevention activities among problem families as well as improving the living conditions in public care institutions and the quality of service.

The efforts of the Bulgarian Government and Parliament connected with the adoption of the new comprehensive Child Protection legislation (new Family Code and Child Protection Act) are welcomed by the broad publicity. They express the political will of the Bulgarian Government to bring national legislation in line with best international practice, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Bulgaria in 1991.

The newly adopted Child Protection Act envisages the creation of a State Agency for Child Protection, and municipal structures for child protection and community involvement. It also introduces fostering as a child protection measure, specifies

measures for child protection and considers the participation of NGOs in child protection activities. The adoption of the Child Protection Act is a very positive indication that our government is taking seriously the need to develop new services as an alternative to institutional care for children. The Child Protection Act recognizes the right of children to be cared in a family environment as much as possible, as well as the need to limit residential care to a measure of last resort. Child Protection Act is based on the guiding principles of recognition and respect for the child's personality. It also contains different provisions aiming at the monitoring of the situation of children that could allow Bulgarian Government and Parliament to be informed about the possible impact of the new legislation on the level of children's institutionalization and on the effectiveness of social policy, social support and assistance for families and children. The systematic investigation of the social processes and factors will be expressed in developing programs for researches and policy analysis; promoting public debate and discussion on policy options; identifying needs in social policy analysis; enhancing institutional capacity to carry out research, training, documentation, and information activities in support of governments' decision-making and impact assessments of social policy reforms. The Act appears to have four main aims:

1. To protect children and define their rights
2. To establish a national child care framework
3. To direct the activities of the state and municipal bodies
4. To enable NGOs involving as a service-providers.

Child protection shall also be carried out by the Municipal Committees on Child Protection shall be established as part of municipal administration. The Municipal Committees on Child Protection shall comprise of municipality representatives competent on issues of social assistance, education, healthcare, culture. They shall also have representatives from labour offices, the police force, the court, the prosecution and local NGOs, whose subject of activities is child protection.

The main child protection measures the Act envisages are assistance and services in the child's family environment; placement of the child with relatives or close families; placement of the child with a foster family; placement of the child in a specialized institution and placement of the child under police force protection.

The departments on child protection at the municipal social assistance services shall search for children in need of protection and provide such to them; compile and maintain data registers about children placed at specialized institutions, children placed with foster parents, street children, talented children, families approved for foster status, children liable to adoption, and other children in need of protection.

Assistance and services in a family environment shall take place in the form of providing pedagogic, psychological and legal help to parents or persons entrusted with parental functions, in solving problems of rearing, upbringing and education of children as well as in finding appropriate jobs for children above the age of 16, in compliance with the conditions of labour legislation.

Over the past decade, efforts have been made by central and local authorities to cooperate with NGOs and other donors to develop community-based services as alternatives to institutionalization. Other strategic objectives of this multilateral cooperation were connected with evaluation the reforms' social impact; enhancing policy dialogue between decision-makers and stakeholders (i.e. donors, NGOs and beneficiaries); ensuring stakeholder participation and special attention to the ethnic

dimensions of the child welfare reform process. Aiming to enlarge and deepen this cooperation the Child Protection Act's provisions also envisage setting up of a National Council on Child Protection at the State Agency for Child Protection, which will perform functions of a consulting body. It shall comprise representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education and Sciences, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Culture, the Committee on youth, physical education and sports, as well as representatives of NGOs, aiming at child protection.

In December 1998, a joint World Bank, UNDP and UNICEF Child Welfare Reform Mission visited Bulgaria. The Mission had the objectives to assess and make recommendations on reforms in the following directions: (i) the system for institutionalized children; (ii) street children; and (iii) the legal rights and framework for children. The primary outcome of the mission was a USD 500,000 World Bank PHRD Grant to assist the Bulgarian Government in reforming the child-care and the child protection system, through reducing the flow of children into institutions, improving the quality of care for institutionalized children, developing alternative care systems, and assisting older institutionalized children adapt to the community as productive citizens, providing for street children and the strengthening the legal rights of children. In November 1999, the joint World Bank, UNDP and UNICEF Child Welfare Reform team developed a Draft Outline Strategy on Child Rights Protection, which was presented to the relevant Governmental and Parliamentary bodies, responsible for child welfare reform policies.

The system of state-supported (institutional) childcare, functioning in Bulgaria, was established during the years of totalitarian rule. Protection of children at risk is provided through public care institutions - of a boarding school type. The existing system lacks the necessary mechanisms to effectively address the problems, generated by the social changes of recent years. Changed political and social conditions had a serious impact on the system – on one part, social and economic hardships caused by the transition to a market economy, have had directly influenced the Bulgarian family. The economic crisis and unemployment led to a widespread impoverishment of population, increased the cases of alcohol abuse and domestic violence, caused family breakdowns. Often the only way out for the majority of families in economic distress is to place one or more of their children in a public care institution. These are actually the primary reasons for placing children in institutions.

This ten years period also is characterized by the emergence of the previously unknown phenomenon of street children. A progressively growing number of children live or work in the streets is really a very disturbing fact. According to Children Pedagogical Rooms' statistics in 1999 669 children are registered as homeless, which is by about 19.8% less compared to preceding year (834 children). About 49% of all registered by homeless children are those at the age 8-13 years. At the same time the number of registered abused children increases by 14% compared to 1998. The number of abused girls at the age 14-17 years increases from 105 cases in 1998 to 127 cases in 1999. But this figures could be considered as the peak of iceberg, because it is hardly to establish all cases of abuse within the family. According to NGOs data currently between 3000 and 5000 are estimated to be living or working in the streets. Also according to NGOs observations the majority of disadvantaged, and

institutionalized, vulnerable and street children come from the Roma ethnic minority, which is largely affected by the large-scale impoverishment (connected with the high unemployment, low incomes, poor housing and poor education of Roma group).

Work is going on in the direction of finding and developing new patterns of care, which would provide these children with an alternative to institutional care. The issue of street children has been openly raised. Some organizational structures have been already created to work with these children. Despite these efforts, improvement in the overall situation of child welfare has been minimal.

The table below gives some illustration about the number of children placed in different types of children's institutions in Bulgaria (it does not contains data about the number of children in boarding schools of general education).

Children by type of institutions

Number of children	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Infant's homes	3771	3578	3756	3711	3593	3448
Children's homes	8699	8890	9078	8811	8424	8424
Homes for physically and mentally disabled children (excluding daily)	2495	2275	2276	2131	2300	2428
Educational boarding schools	836	885	864	754	733	645
Socio-pedagogical boarding schools	2239	2277	2507	2573	2316	2282

As these children are in conditions of limited social contacts there is a potential risk for their future development. The greatest part of children and minors placed in children's institutions are orphans and semi-orphans, children of problematic families, criminal acts' offenders, children and minors with physical and mental disabilities. More of them live in an atmosphere of a huge social deficit, without contacts with the family and relatives, abandoned and in the majority of cases absolutely forgotten by their parents.

On the base of the results from inquiry survey, conducted by NSI during the period 1.02.1999-30.04.1999 (within the project "Child Care Forum") about children entering and leaving children's institutions during the above-cited period was established that the greatest part (39.1%) of the newly-placed in children's institutions infants and children directly come from the new-born wards and 7.4% - from wards for prematurely born. Other 15.8% come from other hospital establishment – more often they are children with heavy physical and mental disabilities, who could be considered as a social establishments' contingent for the all life long. 26.0% come from the families, 8.4% from another children's institution and 3.3% - from other place (more often homeless children coming from Homes for temporary placement and Children pedagogical rooms). (see Beltcheva M., 1999).

The open replies about the reasons, motives and conditions for placement could be distributed in the following groups: 17.7% of the children have been placed in children's institution in connection with the poor financial and housing condition of the family; 15.8% due to health problems; 14.0% as a result of mother's' refusal of parental rights (children of lone mothers); 13.0% by social indicators on the base of prosecutor's order; 6.5% left for adoption; other 6.5% - abandoned children; 6.0% due

to parents' refusal of parental rights; 7.9% from other specialized children hospital establishment; 7.0% coming from other children's institution related to age and 5.6% coming from Homes for temporary placement of children and juveniles etc.

As seen from the figures above, more than one fourth (26.5%) of the children are placed in children's institution by parental initiative: 14.0% - mother's refusal of parental rights, 6.0% - both parents' refusal and 6.5% - left for adoption. Survey's data about health condition of the children reveal that about one fifth (21.4%) are suffered on some disability. The most among them (34.8%) are with heavy degree of mental retardation; other 15.2% are with a light degree of mental retardation. According to the results of the same survey 41.9% of newly placed children are of Roma origin.

Results also show that 48.1% of the children leaving institutions have been adopted, 39.1% - have come back to their families, 6.3% - have been moved to another children's institution, 3.1% have died and about 3.1% has indicated "other". This positive that the prevailing part of the children after different periods of placement in children's institutions continues its development in a family background.

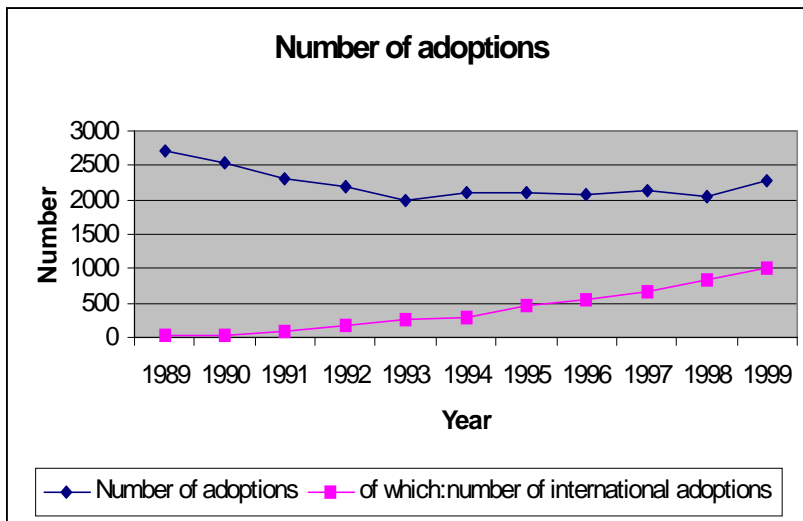
Another 9028 children and minors in 1998 have been educated in special schools by specialized educational programs for children with light degree of mental retardation. Their absolute number is decreases in comparison to 1989 (11586 children) and 1990 (respectively 10949 children). Unfortunately, the insufficient possibilities and programs for integrated education of these children and minors is a prerequisite for their future social isolation.

Despite some support services for families encountering difficulties in the bringing up of their children, including forms of temporary support exist, and a lot of work is being done to prevent institutionalization of children at risk, systematic attempts in that field are still insufficient. The alternatives to institutional care do not reach the larger part of people in need. Foster family care has not become popular in Bulgaria yet, although it has already regulated by law. Day care centers for children with disabilities, family counseling and other forms of care and prevention have not yet become widely accessible.

At the same time the procedure of child adoption according to the Family Code operating till 1999 was quite complicated. It was allowed on a base of adoption claim considered by the Court. **Full adoption** was possible in case the adopted is a child of unknown parents or it has been left for up-bringing in a social establishment with parent's agreement for adoption; or if it has been left for upbringing in a social institution without parent's agreement for adoption. As an exception Family Code allows **adoption without parent's agreement** - in case of parent's disagreement, if he/she permanently does not look after the child, does not grant support, or brings up the child in a way which is harmful for its development. This kind of adoption is also allowed **when the parent has left the child in a children's institution and has not asked and taken it in one-year period since the day when he had to take it from that institution.** At this moment a new Family Code envisaging significant changes in the regime of adoption (aiming to simplify the procedures) is passing by the Parliament.

The following chart gives some idea about the number of adoptions and international adoptions during the years under consideration. Number of adoptions during the last decade fluctuates between 2715 cases (1989) and 1994 (1993), respectively 2056 (1998) and 2288 (1999). At the same period the number of international adoptions has

increased enormously (for comparison: 28 cases (1989), 22(1990) to 1010 (1999). While their share in the total number of adoptions in 1989 presented approximately 1.0% only and even 0.9% in 1990, in 1998 it increased to 40.1%, and in 1999 to 44.2% of the total number of adoptions for the correspondent year.



There are no efficient standards for assessment of the offered by different institutions services. Conditions in the institutions for infants and for older children vary, ranging from the reasonably good to the simply appalling. A direct link exists between budget, number of children, number of staff and the total capacity of the institution, which however is not based on the quality of service. The professional structure, training and skills of staff working in children’s institutions as a whole do not respond to the specific needs of children in care and to the modern child care requirements.

Public care institutions as usual are located in remote settlements, which makes difficult the access and control on the quality of care.

At the same time there is a high financial and social cost of sustaining the existing child care institutions. Children brought up in poor conditions in institutions without preparation for independent living are vulnerable to be involved in crime, prostitution, drugs and exploitation, underdevelopment, mental disabilities, unemployment, homelessness and suicide. It also can be considered that children, who grew up in public care are facing social marginalization.

For the time being, the responsibility for child welfare issues is divided between too many ministries and authorities (Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Health, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Culture, Committee on youth, physical education and sports, Municipal social assistance services etc.), which makes intervention and coordination extremely difficult. During their lifetime children in public care go from one institution governed by a certain ministry to another, which is subordinated to a different ministry of a different area of specialization and providing different quality of services.

Recognizing the social and economic costs, as well as the general negative impact of the current public care system on children, the Bulgarian Government is showing increasing interest to this sphere. It also takes into account the necessity of serious

measures for improvement the financial and living conditions of some categories of families and provision of enough means for restoring children with health problems within family background. The establishment of the new State Agency for Child Protection is connected with the developing national strategies, bringing into effect and monitoring the implementation of programs, aiming at an overall improvement of child welfare in Bulgaria as well with the coordination of the efforts of ministries involved in child well-being problems. As concerns children, for whom the specialized children's institutions are the only possibility, it will take care to create conditions and atmosphere closer as much as possible to these in family.

The most important activities in this respect are connected with the working out of Draft for Outline Strategy for Child Protection, which fully subscribes to the principles laid out in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and those derived from the obligations of Member States of the Council of Europe. Among them it could be pointed out the principle of non-discrimination of children as regards to the equality of the provided services; the principle of child-centered approach (full respect for child rights and their primary consideration in every intervention, also in the context of child protection); the priority of child development in a broad sense (not only physical, but also mental, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development); decentralization of child and family service provision; importance of family environment for child up-bringing; full respect of each child within the legal procedures leading to an intervention as well as while being under a child protection measure etc.

The main aims of this Outline Strategy for Child Protection are defined as establishing of a child-focused, coordinated, cost effective and sustainable child welfare system; improving institutional practice and development of alternative care models and community-based support services for child protection and child welfare to reduce the number of institutionalized children, street children and children at risk; developing and upgrading human resources within the child welfare system; increase the role of civil society and community involvement in child protection and child welfare services as well as increase public awareness of children's rights and child welfare issues. It is envisaged that achieving these aims could be realized by working out of an adequate financial mechanism and introducing of a consultative and monitoring mechanism to review and assess the situation of children at risk, those in need of protection, as well as the existing child welfare protection system (in sense of needs, barriers and opportunities). It also envisaged developing of a National Action Plan that will include provisions for decentralized structures concerning child welfare and protective matters and devising a set of quality standards for best practice policies in social work and standard requirements for child welfare and child protective services.

The main aspects of such decentralized organization of child protection are considered to be connected with: establishing administrative and public bodies for child protection and social assistance at the municipal level, which shall make decisions and deal with individual cases as well as setting up specialized services for child protection and child welfare at the municipal level within the municipal social assistance services (identifying and assisting families and children at risk, potential adoptive and foster families; provision of emergency intervention; preparation of adequate information and proposals to the municipal decision-making bodies for child protective or support measures for each individual case; monitoring and review of

protective/welfare measures). The municipal specialised services should aim at but not be limited to prevention of child abandonment and institutionalization, family alternative care (extended family, adoption, foster care), residential care, abuse and neglect, juvenile delinquency, legal counseling, deinstitutionalization, resource coordination, public awareness and fund raising.

Establishment of a comprehensive database on children, families, resources, service providers, NGO activities in the field of child welfare, work methodologies, policies, training materials and options, existing laws and regulations, financial management is envisaged to be under the responsibility of the Central Agency for Child Protection. Inputs and access to the database should be open to the municipal specialized services for child protection, the community and NGOs (with proper protection of confidentiality).

At the same time the Strategy envisaged building the capacity at central and municipal levels to improve management (budget and staff) and quality of child welfare services through technical assistance, management training, targeted specialized training including on the job training, carrying out specific training programmes for the new alternative care models (training for foster care, adoption, small group home management, community based child welfare services and public awareness and fund raising campaigns), as well as restructuring and training staff in existing institutions and child welfare services according to the changes.

In order to encourage the participation of NGOs and private service providers in the development of alternative care models and community-based support services, it is also envisaged that central and municipal authorities responsible for child welfare and protection shall coordinate their activities to implement the set of rules regulating national and international adoption, accreditation, functioning and contracting of NGOs and private service providers.

Another direction of efforts for achievement of Strategy's objectives is raising public awareness in the field of child welfare in order to increase active support especially for the development of alternative family care solutions and prevention of institutionalization. A leading role in this respect will have public information campaigns, improving relations between child welfare system and media, informing and educating public on children's rights, stimulating monitoring, fund raising campaigns etc.

Social risks and antisocial offenses

One of the striking features of the period was the growth of crimes. After the high criminalization of the society registered during the first years of transformation period and reaching its peak in the crisis 1997, the latest two years are characterized by a sufficient decline in the number of registered crimes. For instance, while in 1997 were registered 240716 crimes, their number in 1998 fell down to 164518, and in 1999 – to 152308. This presents 92.6% of the registered crimes 1998, and correspondingly 63.3% of 1997 level. The number of the registered crime offenses decreases by 26.1% compared to 1995 but is higher by 155.2% higher compared to 1989. 89.8% of the registered in 1999 offenses are criminal (violent crimes) and the rest - 10.2% are economic (property crimes). The discovery rate (60.0%) reaches its highest values compared to the previous years.

The above cited decrease leads to a decline of the indicator “**registered crimes per 100000 of population**”, which from 2452 (1994) reaches its highest values in 1997 - 2896 and in 1999 decreases to 1855 per 100000 of population.

Statistics also reveal a considerable fall in the number of registered crimes committed with the participation of children and juveniles (up to the age of 18 years) compared to the previous few years. After the great peak in the number of crimes committed with the participation of children and minors registered in 1997 (18019 cases) in comparison to 1989 (6022 cases) of 199.2% in 1999 the number of these crimes decreased to 13755 cases, so the decrease in comparison to the previous year is by 27.4%, but still much more compared to 1989.

In 1999 there is a significant decline in the number of registered crimes against children and minors. The figure is less by 30.6% in comparison with the previous 1998 level and even less by 6.5% compared to 1989.

Registered crimes against children and minors

(number)

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Registered crimes against children and minors	1708	1426	2277	2643	2497	2335	2040	2119	2449	2300	1597

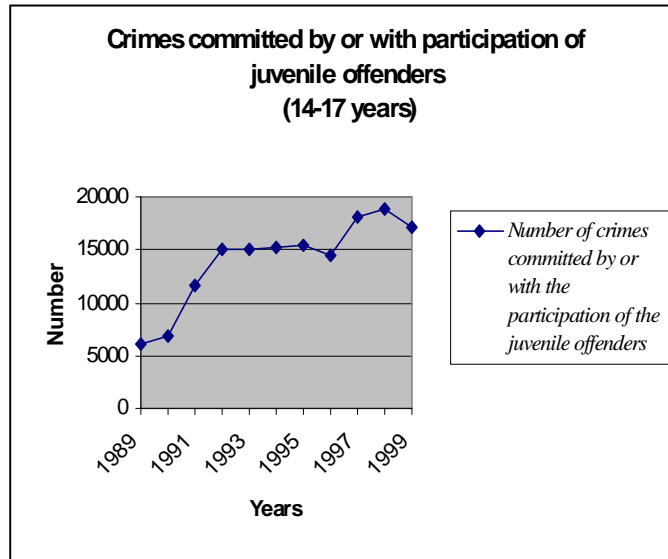
According to the statistical data included in the MONEE statistical file the number of crimes committed with the participation of juvenile offenders in 1999 amounts to 17231. This is by 9.04% less than the peak in the number of crimes committed with the participation of juvenile offenders, registered in previous year, but simultaneously by 186.1 % more compared to 1989. At the same time the number of registered violent crimes committed by or with the participation of juveniles in 1999 is increasing by 108.3% compared to 1998 and more than five times compared to 1989.

In 1999 is also registered a decline in the number of property crimes committed by or with participation of juveniles compared to 1998, but their level is quite higher than in 1989. Figures are presented in the table below:

Total number of registered crimes committed by or with the participation of juvenile offenders by years

Number

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total number of registered crimes committed by or with the participation of juvenile offenders, of which:	6022	6873	11662	15064	15078	15303	15348	14534	18019	18943	17231
Violent crimes	114	77	142	188	183	179	259	318	382	348	725
Property crimes	4597	5460	10381	13540	13531	13790	13358	13237	16590	16704	15257
Other crimes	1244	1308	1066	1280	1292	1287	1661	979	1047	1891	1249



According to the 'Bulgaria'99' statistics in 1999 2631 juveniles (14-17 years) have been convicted (for comparison -1637 in 1989, 717 in 1995, 2646 in 1998). This presents an increase by 57.3% in comparison to 1989, and by 266.9% compared to 1995. At the same time there is an insufficient decline with comparison to the previous year (0.6%). The share of underage persons (14-17 years) in the total number of convicted persons in 1999 constitutes 10.%, compared to 6.1% (1995) and 9.4% (1998). In 1999 juveniles are mostly convicted for theft - 57.2% and robbery - 7.7%. The latest available statistical data for 1999 also indicate a decline in the absolute number of the incarcerated juveniles, both compared to 1989 and to the previous two years (see 400 persons in 1989; respectively 210 in 1997 and 1998 and to 194 in 1999). Statistics for all the years under consideration reveal the majority of incarcerated juveniles (14-17 years) are boys (for comparison they presented 92.8% of incarcerated juveniles in 1989 and 95.9% in 1999).

After the sufficient drop in the number of the young people at the age of 18-29 years, sentenced for commitment of criminal acts in 1992, 1993 and 1994 (which by common opinion due to the great delays in the Court procedure in these years) since 1995 their number permanently increases up to 1998 when 14880 persons from this age interval have been sentenced. In 1999 the number of young people at the age 18-29 sentenced for commitment criminal acts declines to 12501, which is by 15.9 % less compared to 1998, but by 111.3% compared to 1995 (figures are from Civil and Military Courts). During all years of the period the number of males sentenced for commitment of crimes prevails over that of females. While in 1995 their relative share in the total number of convicted persons reaches 59.3%, during the following years it gradually declines and in 1999 presents 50.6% of the total number of convicted persons.

By data for 1999 the most frequent criminal act is the theft. More than half (58%) of the 25091 persons, suspected as theft's offenders are from the age interval 14-30 years. At the same time more than 2/3 of the persons convicted for theft in 1999 are at the age 14-29 years. The rate of convicted young people from the age interval 18-29 years (per 100000 of the same age interval) amounts to 504, and for the juveniles (14-

17 years) - to 480 persons per 100000 of the same age interval.

Young robbery's offenders (14-30 years) amount to 1603 persons (or 77.6% of the total number of suspected for robbery in 1999. This is by 39% less compared to 1998. 79% of the persons convicted for robbery in 1999 are also youngsters from the age interval 14-29 years (for comparison 84% in 1998).

The young people (14-30 years) are the most active age group in commitment of homicides - they present 38% of all persons suspected in commitment this heaviest crime homicides in 1999.

At the same time in 1999 is observed considerable increase in the share of young people (14-29 years) convicted for rape -their share reaches 82% of the total number of persons convicted for rape.

There is also an increase in number of children and minors placed in Homes for temporary placement by different causes (wandering,beggary, runaway from home, runaway from education boarding school, anti-social deliquesces, etc.) while in 1998 their number was 3858 in 1999 it reached 3978.

One of most typical for the youth age crimes is the misappropriation of motor vehicles. The share of persons from the age group 14 - 29 years sentenced for this crime presents 85% of the total number of persons, sentenced for commitment of this criminal act (84.1 % in 1998).

Summary

In the 1990s our country experienced a difficult and prolonged economic crisis that had heavy social price. The transition from a centralized planning to market-oriented economy based on privatization and economy's restructuring caused a fundamental change in employment conditions, massive loss of jobs, record numbers of people seeking employment and a growing number of people who became dependent on public welfare. Despite the central and local authorities increasingly try to resolve the difficult questions of social protection of disadvantaged segments of the population, budgets for welfare measures are still insufficient.

The economic and social problems which families are faced to, make on its turn the up bringing and education of children more difficult and problematic. The new processes and phenomena, taking place in our society, changed the system of values and lead to the feeling of inability to adapt themselves to the new social reality among large part of families. Young families and children have mostly being affected by the poverty. A lot of social problems had long gone unrecognized or remained relatively insignificant. That is why, the need of better guarantees of material security for young families, child raising and care should be taken into account in all forms of social insurance.

Particularly striking, especially till 1997 was the situation on the context of women, both in respect to the difficulties in reconciling the demands of career and family and continuing wage disparities. One of the major problems identified is the inadequate utilization of women's' potential, although their activity at the labour market and high level of education and professional qualification.

Most the newly created jobs are in the **private** sector and more often in the informal sector where there are problems connected with lack of job security. Part-time work and various forms of work in demand and temporary jobs are increasing.

Since 1997 there are more and more evidences that the responsible authorities deal effectively with reducing hidden employment and promoting economic and social integration, but these tasks need to be understood as a national responsibilities.

The school enrollment rates decline systematically, which causes these children and young people fall at labour market without necessary educational minimum and professional qualification. The payment of the personal within the sphere of education does not motivate it enough and, in the long run leads to a deterioration of the quality of the training. In this connection, special importance acquire educational policies aiming to provide equal opportunities and access to training and education.

There are serious increase in the number of young people exposed to specific social risks, such as alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, commitment of crimes. This makes necessary the developing special strategies and programs aiming to achieve coordination and purposefulness in the efforts of the state, family and society for effective solution of the problems of young people.

The emergence and strengthening of independent civil society organizations and groups facilitate and regulate the process of articulating society's demands to the state. The NGOs should be considered as instruments of social stability, solidarity and influence on the responsible state authorities. At the same time NGOs are main actors dealing with the solution of problems connected with the integration of different marginalized groups into society.

Access to employment, information and technologies, to productive assets, such as land and credit; access to qualitative education and health services and the ability of individuals and groups to participate in the political and civil process are the most important among the majority of opportunities for promoting human development.

Bibliography (in alphabetic order)

(Baev St.,1998) - Stoyan Baev, 'Victims of Crimes in Our Country in 1996 and 1997', 'Statistical Barometer', 30 April 1998, NSI, Sofia.

(Beltcheva M, 1996) Maria Beltcheva "Non-marital births in Bulgaria, NSI journal 'Statistics' issue 3, 1996.

(Beltcheva M, 1999) Maria Beltcheva "Children in the social child's institutions (UNICEF Project Questionnaire Survey)", journal 'Statistics' issue 4, 1999.

(Bulgaria'98), 'Bulgaria' 98 -Socio-Economic Development', NSI, Sofia,1999.

(Bulgaria 99), 'Bulgaria' 99 -Socio-Economic Development', NSI, Sofia,2000.

Child Protection Act.

(Crimes,1998) , 'Crimes and Convicted Persons', NSI, Sofia, 1998.

Draft Outline Strategy for Child Protection

(Employment'1999 etc) , ' Employment and Unemployment', No.No. 1,2 1999; No.No.1,2, 2000, NSI, Sofia.

(Household budgets) – 'Household Budgets in the Republic of Bulgaria'- editions 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996 , 1997, 1998, 1999, NSI, Sofia.

(Kaloyanov T.,1999) Todor Kaloyanov, ' Age Female Fertility in Bulgaria during the Period 1985-1996', journal 'Statistics', No.1,1999, NSI, Sofia.

Joint World Bank/UNDP/UNICEF Child Welfare Reform Mission, Findings and Recommendations, December 1998, Sofia, Bulgaria.

(Living Standard, 1999) – 'Living standard of the population – sociological survey' 1999', Analysis, NSI, Sofia 1999.

(Living Standard, 2000) - 'Living standard of the population – sociological survey 2000', Analysis, NSI, Sofia 2000.

(Main Indicators,1999) , 'Main Indicators of Education during the Period 1995-1997', Analysis, NSI, 1999.

Human Development Report, Bulgaria 1999 – UNDP

(UNDP,1997), 'Human Development Report, Bulgaria 1997', UNDP,1998

(Social Price, 1996), "Social Price of the Transition from Centralized to a Market Economy", Analysis, NSI, Sofia, December 1996.

(Social Trends'2000) - Social Trends', NSI, Sofia 2000

(Women in Poverty, 1997) - "Women in Poverty", Joint World Bank/UNDP/ Ministry of Labour and Social policy survey, 1997.

(Zahariev Z.,1998) Zahary Zahariev, 'Right on Education and Diversity of Educational Activities: Development of the Education in Central and Eastern Europe', journal 'Strategies in Educational and Science Policy', No. 2,1998.