

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

Country Paper

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**ANALYTICAL REPORT:
TRENDS AND INDICATORS ON CHILD AND FAMILY
WELL-BEING IN ROMANIA**

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1. Indicators for monitoring child and family well-being since 1989

After the sharp degradation of life conditions during the last years of the communism regime, the '90s came with important changes in the family and child well being. Some of the changes are framed in the improvement of the living co-ordinates; the others are making the parameters of the living conditions to become worse. The diversity of orientations, tendencies and intensity of evolutions in this field – within a social, economic and political context marked with unsteadiness- requires the use of a rather rich range of statistical tools for analysis, in order to get a real overview of the phenomenon. In this sense, the selection of a short list of indicators to provide a synthetic image on the child and family welfare demonstrated to be a difficult task.

For the selection of indicators necessary to feature the **evolution** during the '90s of child and family welfare in Romania, **nine domains** have been taken into consideration, for which either progresses have been recorded or are faced with serious social problems. Firstly, there are three domains in relation with the material family welfare - **incomes, consumption and housing**. **Poverty**, the welfare's negative face, is another important domain. Secondly, to highlight the developments in the fields of **education, health, demography** was a necessity. **Social protection** and, in particular, the **social protection of children in difficulties** could not missing from the range of indicators on the family and child welfare.

Out of different indicators characteristics to each domain, the relevant ones have been selected to illustrate **the dynamics**, negative and positive evolutions, mainly the **relative** indicators as well as those expressed in **natural units**. The high inflation over the entire period made the value indicators less adequate for the dynamics analysis.

The indicator having the proper coverage to analyse the resources available for households to meet their consumption needs is the **disposable income** (net income). The adjustment of its dynamics in relation with the inflation rate allows illustrating the general living standards evolution. Likewise, indicators on the **share of the salary earnings**, of **consumption from own resources**¹, and of **expenditures with food consumption** are relevant from the point of view of family economy as well as the national economy structures are concerned.

Comparable and relevant information on incomes, expenditures and households consumption, allowing an in-depth analysis of the differences between categories of population, is available since 1995 - the first year of launching the Integrated Household Survey (IHS). Thus, there is a break of the data series on incomes, expenditures and households consumption, as until 1994 they were observed through a family budget survey. The sample used raised serious problems as concerns the representativity at the national level. Consequently, any comparison between the two sub-periods is to be done with caution when the accuracy and relevance of data is concerned.

The Integrated Households Survey (IHS) is a permanent multi- purpose survey, carried out by the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (NISES). The sample, representative at national level, is made up of about 36,000 dwellings located in 501 survey centres placed in urban and rural localities. Estimations are computed with a probability of 97% and a bias of 3%.

Until 1994, the family budget survey was carried out on a sample of 9000 households of employees, peasants (including agriculture pensioners) and social state insurance pensioners. Results have certain relevance for each of these categories. However, in accordance with the results of the 1992 population census, their share in the sample was different than the share in the total population.

¹ In accordance with national statistics, the item comprises food consumption from own agricultural production, from stocks and gifts from relatives, friends, etc.

This constraint of the indicators obtained from IHS can be compensated through comprising in the indicators set **of the index of real average salary earnings** and of the **per capita supply of some main food products (meat, milk and cereals)**, as well as of **per capita calorie supply**, for which data are available for 1989 – 1999.

To correctly evaluate the changes brought by the transition period towards the market economy upon the population consumption, the computation of another indicator would have been interesting- an indicator for expressing the diversity of the supply of goods and services for consumption. It is obvious that the commercial relation's liberalisation favoured the enriching and diversifying of the supply from the quality and assortment point of view. In comparison with the economy of sharp scarcity, which influenced the population consumption during the '80s, it meant a progress to be focussed.

The inclusion in the indicators set of some related to **housing** is required by this very difficult social problem. The lack of dwelling or the low degree of comfort are factors influencing upon the marriage rate and marriage lasting character, the birth rate and the children health. Among the most relevant indicators characterising the **housing** situation are: **number of finished dwellings, number of persons per room, share of dwellings endowed with water supply** (as main indicator for the comfort degree).

The poverty scope - a phenomenon prevalent within the social issues of transition in Romania- can be characterised by the **poverty rate**. The degree of its influence upon children is measured through **the number of poor children** and their weight in the total number of children (**child poverty rate**). The source of data necessary to estimate the poverty variables is the IHS, available since 1995. Data for 1989 and for the first transition years, when the degradation of life conditions and the increase of poverty incidence were dramatic, are not good enough for poverty measurement (and not comparable from methodological point of view with the 1995–1998 evaluations).

Among indicators on **education**, besides those frequently used such as **enrolment rate** and **the share of public expenditures for education in GDP**, within the short list of indicators, one have to include indicators on the boom of media, opening and enlarging population access towards information in the form of **radio and television broadcasting (number of programme-hours)**, of **magazines and periodical publications (number of titles)**. An indicator on the quality of education - computed through synthesis of results or following certain surveys on the training level - would be very useful to assess this very important component of welfare.

Indicators on health should include – besides **public expenditures for health** (the share in GDP) and **number of inhabitants per physician** - other two indicators on the children growth and health: **share of children under age of 5 who are under weight and under height** and the **number of children ill with tuberculosis as well as with AIDS virus**.

Out of the demographic indicators the most relevant due to the impact of the family life conditions upon the birth and child care are: **birth rate, infant mortality rate** and **share of population not expecting to survive to age of 15**.

The social protection evolution can be characterised by the **share of social benefits in GDP and in household incomes**. As concerns the child protection, it is **the purchasing power index of children allowances**.

As concerns the situation of children in difficulty is important to have information on **the number of institutionalised children, number of children protected through family type alternative systems**, and **number of “children in the streets”**. An alarm-indicator could be the **number of abandoned children**.

Generally, there is a rather rich database necessary to analyse the main components and trends of the population welfare and implicitly of the child welfare. During the '90s it has been essentially enriched following the NISES new statistical surveys, the development of statistics of public institutions and non-governmental organisations. The improvement of social statistics has benefited from the important studies and reports on social situation and other important aspects

carried out under the aegis of international institutions (World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, etc) and from the development of certain co-operation programmes with these institutions and EU bodies.

However, in case of certain welfare components statistics does not offer necessary information to estimate indicators on child well being and to distinctly analyse the population categories in order to clearly identify the target groups in the social protection schemes. The national strategy for reforming the system of protection of children rights /4/ is referring to monitoring the protection of children in difficulty. The studies and reports undertaken in this field /1,3, 5, 8, 9, 10/ used a diversity of data collected from different sources, but the problem of setting up a system of indicators on the child situation and their permanent monitoring continue to be an important objective of the state institutions (National Agency for Protection of Children Rights and NISES).

INDICATORS FOR MONITORING CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING	
<p>I. INCOME</p> <p>1. Indices of disposable (net) income of households</p> <p>2. Share in total incomes of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - salary incomes - consumption from own resources <p>3. Indices of real average salary incomes</p>	<p>VI. EDUCATION</p> <p>17. Enrolment rate</p> <p>18. Public expenditure for education as % of GDP</p> <p>19. Number of hours-programme of broadcasting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - radio - television <p>20. Number of titles of newspapers, magazines and other periodical publications</p>
<p>II. CONSUMPTION</p> <p>4. Food as % of total consumption expenditure</p> <p>5. Yearly per capita supply for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meat and meat products - milk and milk products - cereal products <p>6. Daily per capita calorie supply</p>	<p>VII. HEALTH</p> <p>21. Public expenditures for health as % of GDP</p> <p>22. Number of inhabitants per physician</p> <p>23. Share of children under age of 5 who are under weight and under height</p>
<p>III. HOUSING</p> <p>7. Number of finished dwellings</p> <p>8. Average number of persons per room</p> <p>9. Share of dwellings endowed with water supply</p>	<p>24. Number of children ill with</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tuberculosis - AIDS
<p>IV. POVERTY</p> <p>10. Poverty headcount rate</p> <p>11. Number of children living in poor households</p> <p>12. Child poverty rate</p>	<p>VIII. DEMOGRAPHY</p> <p>24. Birth rate</p> <p>26. Infant mortality rate</p> <p>27. Share of population not expecting to survive to age of 15</p>
<p>V. SOCIAL PROTECTION</p> <p>13. Social security expenditure as % of GDP</p> <p>14. Expenditure for child and family protection as % of GDP</p> <p>15. Social benefits as % of households total incomes</p> <p>16. Indices of family allowances for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one child - three children 	<p>IX. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN IN DIFFICULTY</p> <p>28. Number of institutionalised children</p> <p>29. Number of children protected in family-type alternative systems</p> <p>30. Number of “children in the streets”</p>
<p>MEMORANDUM ITEMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDP • Inflation rate • Unemployment rate • Economic dependency ratio 	

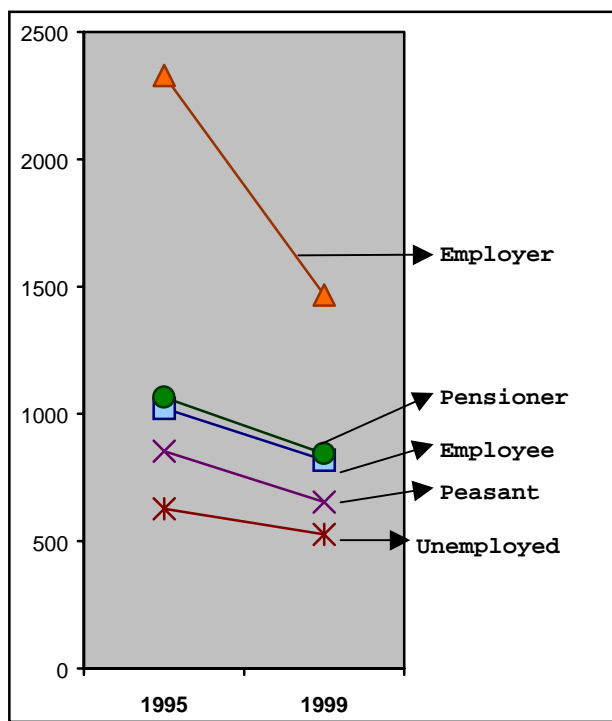
2. Trends of the child and family welfare

The economic crisis all over the transition period, the high inflation and unemployment caused the degradation of population general life conditions. This is valid for almost all components of living standards and affected all the population categories, with effects upon the family setting up and development and upon child growing and education.

2.1 Incomes, expenditures and consumption

The degradation of living standards followed mainly the **households' incomes diminishing**, caused both by the employment and, in particular, employees number reduction, by the restricting income policy (imposed by exigencies required by macro equilibrium) and by the effects of a persistent inflation. The share of employment in total population drop from 46.7% in 1990 to 39.2% in 1998 and the economic dependence ratio raised from 1139.6% to 1551.9%. During 1991–1999 the annual average inflation rate accounted for 109.2%. Consequently, the net incomes of households diminished by 33.1% in 1994 as against 1989 (by 47% compared to 1990) and by 27.5 % in 1999 as against 1995.

Fig. 1. Per capita net incomes of households, by occupational status of reference person (thousand lei, 1999 constant prices)



The decrease of the purchasing power of wages and social benefits contributed to the drop in the real incomes of households. Thus, the real salary earnings index was 58% in 1999 as against

1989. The real average pension of social state insurance pensioners reached the half of the 1989 level. (49.8%).

Table 1
Average real incomes indices

	- % -		
	Average salary earnings	Average social state insurance pension	Net incomes of households
1989	100.0	100.0	100.0
1990	103.4	104.6	126.1
1991	84.5	81.1	98.6
1992	73.8	66.6	80.8
1993	61.4	59.1	70.0
1994	61.5	57.8	66.9
1995	68.8	64.0	100.0
1996	75.2	65.7	105.6
1997	58.2	52.1	85.9
1998	60.3	51.1	81.3
1999	58.0	49.8	72.5

The restricted wage policy as well as the decrease of the employee's number (from 8049.4 thou in 1989 to 5368.7 thou in 1998) caused the reduction of salary earnings as source of household incomes. The salary share in the total incomes of households diminished from 62.8% in 1989 to 58.3% in 1994 and from 43.8% in 1995 to 38.5% in 1999. On the contrary, the contribution of consumption from own resources increased. On the total households, this source covered 31.7% of 1997 total incomes, lightly diminishing to 29% in 1998 and 1999. In 1999, they constituted 16.3% of incomes of the households headed by employees, 55.9% of peasant households' incomes, 33.4% and respectively 37.3% of the unemployed and pensioners households' incomes. In accordance with the family budget survey, in 1989, the same source of incomes accounted for 8.5% of employees households' incomes and 41.0% of peasants households' incomes; the share reached 13.6% and respectively 53.1% in 1994.

Table 2
Main components of households incomes

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total incomes,	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
of which:					
- salary incomes	43.8	41.7	37.9	39.6	38.5
- incomes from social benefits	15.9	15.6	17.8	18.7	20.6
- consumption from own resources	27.6	30.6	31.7	29.1	29.0

The drop of the physical volume of **consumption** and the worsening of its composition followed the decrease of real incomes. Thus, **the total consumption expenditures** spent in 1999 as an average by a household covered 74.3% only of the consumption level provided by 1995 expenditures. The index accounted for 87.3% in case of food consumption, 66.7% for non-food consumption and 64.3% for services.

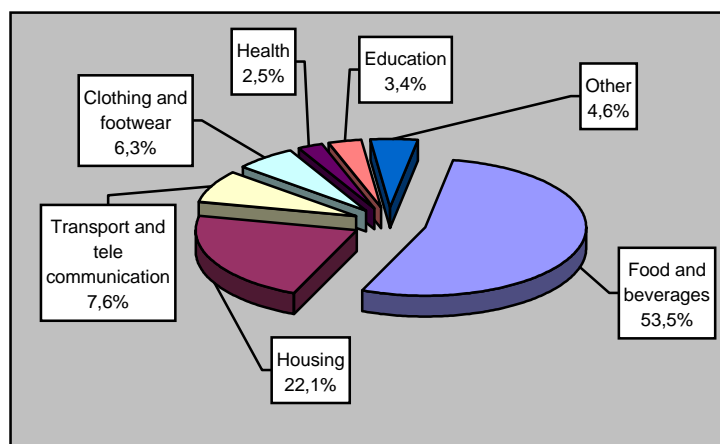
Households are spending as an average more than a half of the resources allocated to consumption for food consumption; the share of expenditures for services in the total consumption expenditures is very low. The 1998 and 1999 increase of the services weight followed the high rise

of tariffs for utilities which require compulsory spending for households. In fact, the volume of paid services decreased by 7.2% in 1998 and by 15.5% in 1999.

Table 4
Structure of household's consumption expenditures

	- % -				
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total expenses	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
of which for:					
- food consumption	57.2	57.6	58.8	57.2	53.5
- non-food consumption	31.2	31.2	29.0	28.2	29.3
- services	11.4	11.2	12.2	14.6	17.2

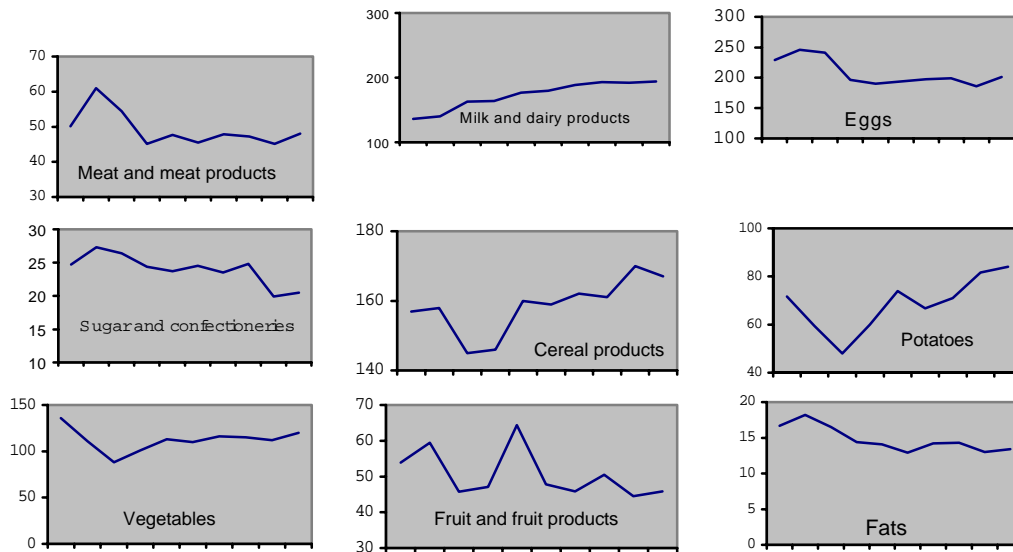
Fig. 2. Structure of household's total consumption expenditure, in 1999



The **average food consumption** (food supply) is normal - from the point of view of daily caloric supply per capita (2954 calories per capita daily, in 1998) and did not decreased as against 1989 (2949 calories). The same is with the protein supply, which in 1998 accounted for 97.5% grams per capita daily (93.7% grams in 1989)¹. But animal food share in total calories and proteins supply is low in comparison with the nutrition needs (under 25% for calories and under 50% for proteins). Consumption supply of some important food products diminished: meat and meat products (from 50.2 kg /inh./ year in 1989 to 48.0 kg in 1998); eggs (from 229 pcs./inh./year to 201 pcs.); sugar (from 24.7 to 20.5 kg); vegetables (from 135.6 to 120.5 kg) and fruits (from 53.9 to 45.8 kg). On the other side, the cereal consumption increased (from 157.3 to 166.7 kg) and also potatoes supply (from 71.1 to 84.1 kg). A significant phenomenon for children nutrition is the increase of milk and diary products supply (from 135.9 to 194.4 litres/year/inh.).

¹ The average daily food supply was in 1980 of 3295 calories and 102.2 grams of proteins.

Fig. 3. Yearly food supply per capita, 1989-1998



2.2 Housing

Following a comprehensive programme of building dwellings over several decades (during 1971 – 1990, 2.8 mill. dwellings have been built, meaning yearly 141 thou), Romania inherited from the old regime a good situation as concerns housing. At 1992 census, a stock of 7659 thou dwellings have been registered. A dwelling used to have an average of 2.5 rooms and a living area of 33.75 sq.m. occupied by an average of 2.98 persons, meaning 1.2 persons/room. The majority of dwellings, especially from rural area, were without installations for inside water and hot water consumption, for heating by thermal station and bathroom.

After 1990, the pace of building dwellings diminished a lot. During 1991-1994 276.7 thou dwellings only were finished, a yearly average of 30.7 thou dwellings (by 4 times less than during 1981 – 1990 and by 5.2 times less than during 1971 – 1980).

Under these conditions and due to the small number of dwellings built from public funds (2386 dwellings finished in 1999), the access to a dwelling became extremely difficult for young couples. To build a new dwelling or to buy one from the existent stock is very expensive; to rent a dwelling on the free market entails a very high payment in comparison with the incomes amount (in big cities, the rent is reaching the level of the average salary). This is a factor affecting the marriage number and rate (from 8.3‰ in 1999 to 6.2‰ in 1999) and the birth rate (from 16.0‰ in 1989 and 13.6‰ in 1990 to 10.4‰ in 1999).

The high share of dwellings without normal comfort is another problem of this very important domain of family welfare with effects upon the children health. In accordance with the IHS, in 1999, more than a quarter of households were placed in dwellings made of trellis work and other low resistant materials, without a toilet; more than a half occupied dwellings with wood, coal or petroleum stoves, without hot water and bathroom; about a half occupied dwellings supplied with water from outside the building. It is a big difference between the rural and urban living conditions.

Table 5
Dwellings by comfort, in 1999

	-%-		
	Total households	Urban households	Rural households
Total households,	100.0	100.0	100.0
of which occupying:			
Dwellings with electricity	99.1	99.8	98.5
Dwellings with thermal and own central heating	33.1	68.0	1.5
Dwellings with natural gas	10.7	14.3	7.5
Dwellings with wood, coal, oil stoves	56.2	17.6	91.0
Dwellings supplied with water from public network or own system	48.3	87.3	13.0
Dwellings supplied with water from outside the building	47.7	10.4	81.4
Dwellings with hot water	42.5	78.6	9.9
Dwellings with sewerage	48.4	87.1	13.5
Dwellings with bathroom	45.5	83.0	11.7
Dwellings with toilet	72.0	93.1	52.9

As concerns dwelling agglomeration degree, there are differences between the household categories as well as between urban and rural. The average number of persons per room was of 1.26 in employees' households, 1.37 in unemployed households and 0.82 in pensioner's households. On average the agglomeration is lower in rural areas (0.95 persons/room) in comparison with urban areas (1.14 persons/room).

IHS data illustrates a significant lack as concerns the households supply with durable goods, especially in rural area.

Table 6
Households endowment with durable goods, in 1999

	- pieces/ 100 households -		
	Total households	Urban	Rural
Refrigerators	72.4	91.0	55.6
Washing machines	40.5	59.8	23.0
Vacuum cleaners	26.6	48.1	7.2
TV sets			
- White/ black	38.8	27.0	49.5
- Coloured	50.9	73.8	30.2
Radio, radio tape recorder	54.4	57.2	51.8
Cars	19.2	27.4	11.8

An increasing tendency of expenditures for housing is to be noticed; the same for the share in the total consumption expenditures, from 18.1% in 1995 to 22.1 % in 1999. There is a rise of the dwelling costs, caused by increases of tariffs for services (electrical and thermal energy, natural gas, water, sewerage and sanitation).

2.3 Inequality and poverty

Whereas during the first years of transition the **inequality** sharpened, during 1996 – 1999, a tendency for reducing the inequality between the households incomes is to be noticed, in the frame of diminishing incomes, consumption expenditures and the volumes of goods and services consumed.

In keeping with the IHS data on household's distribution by incomes level, the ratio between per capita net incomes of the extreme deciles (D10 and D1) reduced from 8.0 in 1995 to 7.7 in 1996 to 7.6 in 1997, 7.2 in 1998 and 7.0 in 1999. The inequality of consumption expenditures is lower as the ratio between the average consumption expenditures per capita of the top and bottom deciles was 4.7 in 1998 as concerns the total consumption expenditures, 2.8 for food consumption expenditures and 9.4 for non- food and services expenditures. The ratio between the extreme deciles registered a diminishing trend as well for the consumption expenditures. Gini coefficient decreased from 0.308 in 1995 to 0.298 in 1996 and 0.284, raising again to 0.301 in 1998.

When measuring the inequity, one has to pay attention to the constraints of an IHS-type survey in relation with the coverage of both extremes, very poor and very rich. Under these circumstances, income disparities are moderate. Nevertheless, they are perceived as very sharp by the public opinion, illustrating signs of social polarisation.

Differences between total incomes of households grouped by the occupational status of the head of household are not so big and under decreasing. Employers households registered the highest incomes (by 119.9% higher than the 1999 total average) and the unemployed households the lowest (by 19.7% lower than the average). The peasant's households' incomes were in 1999 by 9.9% under the average, whereas the employee's households' incomes exceeded the average by 38.2%.

As concerns the incomes and consumption levels there are significant differences between the households with children under 18 years old and households without children. In 1999, the average income per capita achieved by households with children represented 68% of the average income achieved by households without children. The ratio was of 79% in case of households with one child, 66%, 60% and respectively 38% in the situation of households having 2,3 and 4 or more children.

Data are illustrating rather big differences as concerns the average quantity consumed per person between the households with and without children. Differences are only partially explained by the lower needs of food consumption of under-aged persons in comparison with the adults. The differences are important even for milk consumption, specific for children nutrition. For households with four and more children, it accounted (1999) for 150 ml per capita, daily, whereas for households without children (but with many aged people) the average daily milk consumption was more than 200 ml.

Out of consumption expenditures of households with 4 and more children, the food consumption accounted for two-thirds, clothing and footwear for 6.7%; housing for 15.4%; transport and telecommunication for 3.2%; education and leisure for 2.6%; medicines and medical care for 1.2%.

Table 7
Incomes and consumption of households,
by the number of children aged less than 18 years, in 1999

	Households without children	Households with children	of which households with			
			1 child	2 children	3 children	4 and more children
Net incomes thou lei/person/month	947.9	644.6	745.1	628.2	475.9	362.0
Food as % of total consumption expenditures	52.7	54.5	52.3	54.6	61.3	66.7
Monthly average expenditures for education and leisure, thou lei	23.7	23.3	29.0	22.2	13.1	8.4
Monthly consumption per capita						
- meat, kg	2.8	2.0	2.3	1.9	1.6	1.3
- milk, l	6.3	5.1	5.2	5.0	4.9	4.6
- eggs, pcs.	17.8	12.6	13.9	12.2	10.6	9.1
- bread and baking products, kg	10.4	9.4	9.6	9.6	9.1	8.4
Daily consumption per capita						
- calories	2992	2331	2458	2288	2164	2002
- proteins (grams)	95.1	73.8	77.8	72.4	68.8	63.6

Reduction of income purchasing power contributed to **poverty** enlargement, to the increase of the number and share of households/ persons whose resources are under the poverty threshold. Under the conditions when the inequality reduced, the poverty intensifying is the effect of the general living standards degradation.

In Romania, in 1998, the share of persons belonging to households whose income is under the poverty line established at 50% of the median of households distribution by income per capita was 14.27%. At the 60% cut-off, the poverty rate accounted for 22.0%. The children poverty rate, that is the share of children belonging to households under the poverty line in the total children, was of 23.64% at the 50% cut-off and 34.06% at 60% cut-off.

Up to date, in Romania does not exist an official poverty line to be used for poverty measurement or as a variable to sustain the social protection programmes. In August 2000, The National Commission for Indexation approved the composition of a minimum consumption basket whose value is to be used to determine the minimum wage as well as an absolute poverty line.

The NISES used many methods to evaluate the poverty size. The main method predominant in the studies is a **modified relative method** to evaluate the tendency for the poverty variables. That means a constant poverty threshold, namely **60% of the 1995 average consumption expenditures**. To adjust expenditures depending on the size and structure of households, the NISES equivalence scale has been used. The scale was based on the necessary of calorie consumption recommended by nutritionists.

Based on this method, the share of poor persons (poverty rate) was 25.27% in 1995. In 1996, the rate reduced to 19.85%. In 1997, due to the reform programmes (especially in relation with the subsidies cut off for consumer prices - generator of a rise of inflation), the poverty rate was 30.81%. In 1998, one third of population (33.82%) had a poverty status appreciated in relation with the threshold of 60% of 1995 average consumption expenditures.

The poverty rate by household categories illustrates the spread and the intensification over time of poverty for all population categories.

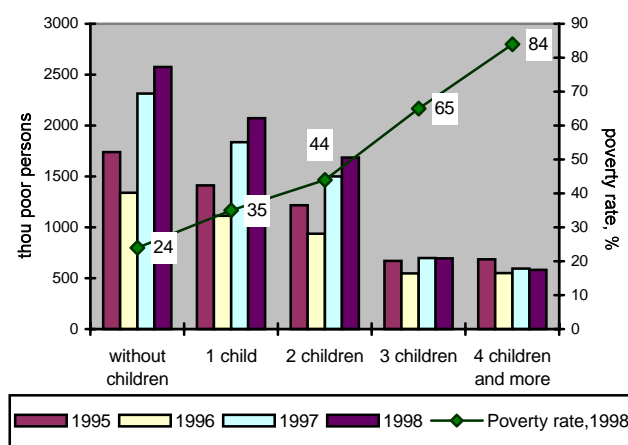
The highest poverty incidence is registered for:

- households living in rural area;
- households whose reference person is unemployed or peasant;
- households with more than four persons;
- households with three or more children.

Table 8
Poverty rate and poor population by household categories, in 1998

	Headcount poverty rate (%)	Number of poor persons (thou)	Share of poor persons in total (%)
Total households	33.82	7609.5	100.0
Households whose reference person is:			
- employee	29.65	2968.4	39.0
- peasant	57.36	1235.6	16.2
- unemployed	59.78	841.7	11.1
- pensioner	25.61	1971.1	25.9
Households in			
- urban area	28.21	3461.0	45.5
- rural area	40.53	4148.5	54.5
Households			
- without children	23.51	2574.6	33.8
- with children, of which with	43.59	5035.0	66.2
1 child	35.1	2071.0	27.2
2 children	43.64	1685.2	22.1
3 children	64.58	695.7	9.1
4 and more children	83.63	583.1	7.7

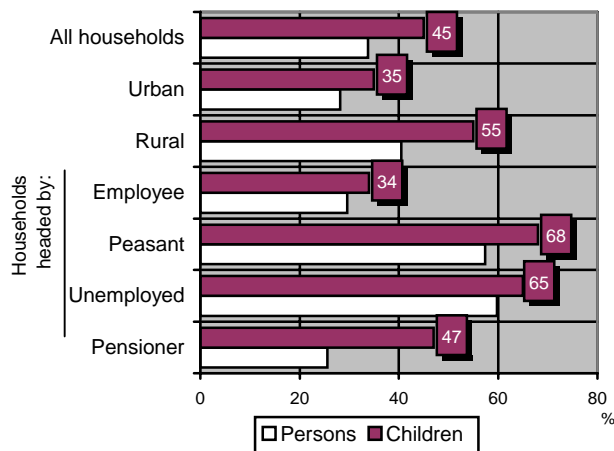
Fig. 4. Poverty, by number of children



Children represent a category strongly affected by poverty. Among households with children, the poverty rate accounts for 43.59%, that is more than 5 mill. poor persons (over two thirds of total poor persons). 1.9 million children living in poor households represent 44.64% out of

total children and a quarter of total poor persons. 33.79% of children living in employees households are poor. Poor children account for 47.45% of children living in pensioner's households, 65.20% and respectively 68.13% of children in unemployed and pensioners households. 55% of children in rural area are poor.

Fig. 5. Headcount poverty rate and child poverty rate, by household categories, in 1998



Social protection measures, explicitly or implicitly oriented towards the poverty alleviation, have been adopted. In 1998 the national strategy of poverty alleviation has been elaborated under the aegis of the National Commission of Poverty Alleviation, with assistance granted by UNDP.

2.4. Social protection

Romania has a complex system of social security with schemes and benefits corresponding to all risk categories covered by systems in place in developed countries. The system is made up of the social insurance for pensions and sick payments; schemes for unemployed protection; schemes of family allowances; social assistance and other schemes. Recently the social insurance scheme for health has been set up.

Social protection of child and family is in place

- implicitly, through social benefits which replace incomes from labour in case of persons at risks who take care of family and children (pensions, sick payments, unemployment benefits);
- explicitly, through benefits addressed to family in particular with children: universal child allowances, additional allowances for families with 2 and more children; birth indemnity; indemnity for maternity leave, for taking care of the ill child, for taking care of children up to 2 years old; benefits for wives of conscripts; social assistance benefits addressed to households with very low incomes; special benefits addressed to families taking care of handicapped children or of children in family placement;
- through social assistance services, in specialised institutions, for the children without families, rendered by public institutions and non-governmental organisations for child protection.

During the transition period, the system faced two-fold pressures. On one hand, the needs of social protection amplified due to new risks and sharpening of the old ones and to a bigger and bigger number of persons covered by its scope. On the other hand, the resources designed for social protection diminished following the GDP fall and the budgetary constraints. Under these conditions, the protection capacity of social security system restricted a lot, the level of social benefits registered for nominal increases lower than the price growth, so that the purchasing power of benefits continuously diminished.

Less than one third of the general budget and only the tenth part of a GDP with a diminishing tendency was designated to social security.

Table 9
Expenditures for social security

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Expenditures for social security as % of GDP	10.7	10.1	9.6	9.3	9.3	9.7	9.3	10.0	10.9	11.3
Expenditures for social security as % of consolidated general budget	27.2	25.6	23.2	27.2	26.9	27.6	27.2	29.0	30.2	27.7
of which for:										
- family allowances	9.8	4.7	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.3	2.1	3.6	4.0	2.8
- unemployment benefits	-	0.8	1.8	2.5	2.6	2.3	1.7	3.5	3.8	3.7
- pensions	16.9	15.3	15.5	18.9	18.8	19.8	20.3	18.4	19.7	18.8
- social assistance	0.1	1.2	0.5	0.5	0.3	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.5	0.4
Indices of family allowances (%) for:										
-1 child	100.0	90.7	48.1	44.8	27.4	31.0	29.8	38.8	30.6	27.3
-3 children	100.0	65.1	34.6	28.5	17.2	19.1	18.4	46.0	28.9	23.7

The family allowances were affected by the sharp drop of the capacity of protection, especially during the first transition years. Whereas it was thought that the family allowances ensured an ultra-protection¹, a policy to restrain the relative level of benefits has been promoted (through low-level indexation of child allowances and through freezing and, later on, cancellation of benefit addressed to mothers with 3 and more children). Consequently, the allowances for one child, in real terms, diminished to 27.4% in 1994 as against 1990, and the allowances for 3 children to 17.2%. The higher increases of allowances in 1995 and 1996 and moreover in 1997 (when allowance for one child raised from 12 to 50 thou lei and the additional allowance for families with 2 and more children was approved) did not succeeded to increase the purchasing power of allowances but to the half of the 1990 level. After that, it diminished again due to inflation. The share of family allowances in budgetary expenses drop from 9.8% in 1990 to 2.8% in 1999, and the share in GDP from 3.8% to 1.1%. In 1999, the real value of the family allowances paid from the public budget reached 23.7% of the 1990 level.

Social benefits contributed to create incomes with 20.6% in 1999; a share more significant than in 1995 and 1996. The highest weight is belonging to pensions (16.6%). Family allowances (child allowances, additional allowances for families with many children, maternity indemnities, other child related benefits) contributed with less than 2%, of which 1.7% revert to child allowances.

Child allowances represent 3.8% of households with children incomes; 2.0% in case of households with one child; 4.8%, 8.2% and respectively 12.1% in case of households with two, three, four and more children.

¹ In 1990, for a 4 children family the allowances registered an amount equivalent to the minimum salary and almost 60% of the net average salary.

Table 10
Share of social benefits in household incomes

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Total benefits	15.9	15.6	17.8	18.7	20.6
of which					
- family allowances	1.3	1.1	2.3	2.5	1.9
- pensions	12.5	13.1	13.7	14.5	16.6
- unemployment benefits	1.0	0.6	0.7	1.0	1.3

Data is illustrating also the small contribution of family allowances to support the poor households, among which many households with children are located. In 1999, the share of family allowances in the household incomes was of only 8.9% in the first decile and 4.5% in the second one. In 1997, the shares were 10.3% and respectively 5.3%.

In accordance with a study on the social transfers incidence on poverty /2/, in 1997,

- the weight of households benefited of child allowances in total poor households was of 57.72%;
- the share of beneficiaries of allowances for children in total persons belonging to poor households was of 28.01%;
- child allowances covered 7.6% of the consumption expenditures of poor households.

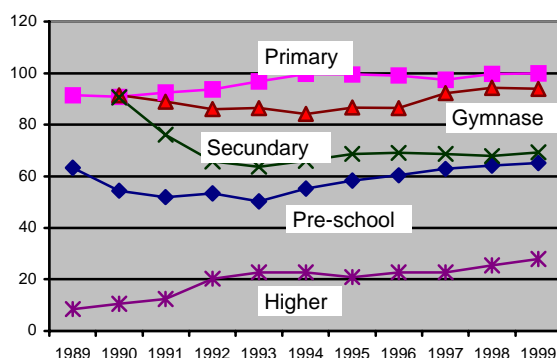
The analysis shows that in the same year the child allowances (at the increased level in 1997) contributed to keep out from poverty a share of 3.76% of the total population (share of persons from households placed under the poverty line if not benefited from child allowances). That means more than a half of share of persons kept out from poverty due to the contributions of all social transfers, excepting the pensions (6.06%). In case of households with children, the share of those over the poverty threshold due to the child allowances was of 4.95% (households with one child); 8.38% (two children); 10.71% (three children) and 7.2% (four and more children).

2.5 Education

With a label of an old European tradition, the Romanian educational system developed a lot, mainly extensively, during the communist regime, influencing the general level of population education as well as the training for achievement exquisite performances proved through the results obtained in the international contests. Nowadays, the national educational system is under reforming, aiming to improvement the quality and its performances, to the increase of efficiency of the educational process and of the resources management, to the adapting to the modern life exigencies and needs of integration into the European economic and social structures.

In the context of the reform, the national educational system developed specially towards amplifying the higher education, creation of alternatives education forms and enriching the content of education process. Thus, the number of students increased from 164507 in 1989 to 452621 in 1999. In 1999, the share of students (taking into consideration also the enrolment in the post high schools and foremen schools - 94700 persons) in population aged 19-23 years was 28%. In 1990, the gross enrolment rate in higher education was of 10.6% only. Out of total number of student, 28.8% were enrolled in private education.

Fig. 6. Gross enrolment rates in education, %



Evolution of educational system during transition, attendance to education, material conditions and quality of educational process, the reform achievements, all these have been strongly affected by economic crisis and continuously limitation, of resources allocated for education from public budget, both on national and local level, and households budget.

Public expenditures for education accounted for 3.0-3.6% of GDP, with the same diminishing trend as GDP. Lack of financial resources affected the normal gaining of earnings for the teaching staff. Excepting 1998, the average salary earnings of education staff registered yearly values under the average salary earnings on economy. In 1998, the earnings in real terms accounted 60.9% of 1990 level. The attractiveness in case of professional standing of teachers diminished, creating a deficit of teaching staff in rural and disadvantaged areas.

Table 11
Public expenditures, salaries and investments in education

- % -

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Public expenditures with education as % of GDP	3.0	3.6	3.6	3.2	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.3	3.3
Indices of net average salary earnings in education	100.0	84.1	68.7	55.8	57.4	63.5	64.7	49.8	60.9
Ratio between the net average salary earnings in education and their average value on economy	96.5	99.3	93.0	91.0	93.2	92.1	85.8	85.4	100.9
Indices of investment in education	100.0	124.1	55.0	90.0	160.6	179.6	317.0	350.9	258.8

During 1993 - 1995 investments in education raised, after a fall in 1992 at 55% of the 1990 level. Nevertheless, the volume is very low as against the need for the stock of schooling buildings to be renewed, for schools' endowment with labs, sport rooms and necessary infrastructure for providing certain social services. The education infrastructure is posing problems also due to the deficit as concerns the endowment with labs and sport rooms.

In accordance with the White Book of the education reform, the infrastructure of education raised major problems. Thus, is obvious the advanced getting out of order of many schools, in particular in rural areas; some of them are in function even if their solidity and safety is questionable. Out of 10 thou evaluated buildings from pre- university education, 1135 have the foundation seriously damaged. 12% of buildings have been built before 1900 (1% even before 1800), 27% before the 2nd World War and only 18% after 1970. Many schooling buildings are built of unsuitable material, 1157 schools have walls made of adobe and 1084 of wood (6.8% out of total), 27% are affected with dampness. In poor counties, especially in rural area, there are schools without minimum hygienic conditions (running water, electricity, and toilet). At the national level there are 373 schools without electric lighting. 76% of the total number of schools have not the indoors necessary installations. The overburden of classrooms, in urban area, has as consequence many schools running in more than two shifts.

White Book of Education Reform /5/

As concerns the **consumption of educational services**, there is a decrease of schooling numbers in pre-university education. Thus, the total number of children from pre-university education diminished by 16.8% from 4844 thou in 1990/1991 to 4031 thou in 1999/2000. In the same period, the number of children enrolled in kindergarten decrease by 18.1%, and the number of pupils enrolled in primary and gymnasium education by 8.5%. The decrease of schooling age population partially influenced the fall of the schooling numbers. Thus, population aged 3-18 years diminished in 1999 by 17.6% as against 1990. The gross enrolment rate in pre-university education increased from 82.4% in 1990 to 83.2% in 1999. In the 2nd cycle of the secondary education, the same indicator diminished from 90.7% in 1990 to 69.4% in 1999, mainly because the restriction of compulsory education length from 10 years to 8 years and due to less attractiveness of education offered by high and vocational schools. The family financial difficulties represent another factor that contributed to the decrease of the participation rates.

A relative low enrolment rate is maintained in pre-school education. However, the lately registered participation rate increased due to compulsory graduation of the preparing year.

Table 12
Schooling population and enrolment rate in education

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Schooling population, thou. persons	5066.0	4805.4	4664.9	4569.3	4594.5	4703.3	4688.3	4643.4	4631.2	4578.4
of which:										
- pre-university	4844.0	4535.2	4372.2	4268.5	4294.0	4312.5	4260.3	4196.5	4127.3	4031.1
- higher	222.0	270.1	292.7	300.8	300.5	330.8	428.0	446.9	503.9	547.3
Gross rate of enrolment (%) in:										
- Primary	90.8	92.4	93.8	96.9	99.7	99.5	99.1	97.5	99.8	100.0
- Gymnasium	91.4	88.9	86.1	86.5	84.3	86.7	86.4	92.3	94.3	93.9
- Secondary (2 nd cycle)	90.7	76.1	65.7	63.7	66.1	68.6	69.1	68.6	67.8	69.4
- Higher	10.6	12.5	20.2	22.7	22.7	20.9	22.2	22.7	25.4	28.0
Enrolment rate in pre-school education (%)	54.5	51.9	53.3	50.2	55.2	58.4	60.4	62.8	64.2	65.2
Share of children aged 7-14 not enrolled (%)	8.9	9.5	9.3	8.7	8.1	6.7	5.6	5.0	3.0	3.2
Rate of school abandon (%)	4.9	3.9	2.2	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.0	2.2	...

Enrolment rate in primary and gymnasium education increased, reaching, in 1999, 100% and respectively 93.9%. Likewise, the number of children not enrolled at this level diminished. Their weight in the number of children aged 7- 14 years reduced from 8.9% in 1990 to 3.2% in 1999.

The existence of children not enrolled in compulsory education is explained on one side by poverty status faces by some families and the shortage of interest of some parents as regards their children education and, on the other side, by the difficult conditions to attend schools in remote rural localities as in Danube Delta or in mountainous area.

In 1998, the share of children not enrolled was higher in rural area (3.5%) than in urban (2.8%), reaching relative high levels in counties from middle country: Braşov (6.5%), Covasna (7.1%), Harghita (10.8%), Mureş (6.4%) and Sibiu (5.1%), where the share of Roma population is higher and the remote human settlements are to be found, as well as in Tulcea (6.6%), Gorj (5.6%), Bistriţa- Năsăud (5.3%), Hunedoara (6.1%).

Poverty, besides other factors related to education and parents' attitude as against school, to schools capacity of integrating children with difficulties, contributes to the another negative phenomenon, namely scholar abandon. The scholar abandon rate was in 1990 of 4.9% and of 2.2% in 1998. In 1998/1999 the rate reached 0.9% for primary and gymnasium education, 4.3% - high school education, 5.6% - vocational schools, 6.6% - apprentice education, 7.6% - post- high school education and 4.1% - foremen education.

The difficulties in relation with material resources faced by households and local communities became in this way factors creating inequity as concerns the access to education and the quality of education.

Access to the education services is ensured through:

- free of charge attendance in all levels of state education;
- free of charge manuals for pre- school, primary and gymnasium education, and for pupils in vocational and high school education whose parents have incomes lower than the minimum salary;
- social, study or praiseworthy scholarships.

In 1997/1998, the number of pupils receiving scholarships accounted for 304 thou, out of which 50.6% in primary and gymnasium education, 16.6% in high schools, vocational and post high schools education and 32.8% in higher education.

Generally, schools do have neither the endowment nor the necessary resources to supply the extra- curricula services for pupils (hot meals, transport, etc.). Nevertheless, at least for some pupils and students having residences in other localities than the school locations, there is the possibility to accommodate them in hostels and supply the food in canteens. In 1997/1998, about 84.7 thou pupils and 129.3 thou students were accommodated in hostels and 93.2 thou pupils were registered at the canteens.

Among the important factors of performing the educational process is **access enlargement to information**. Following a period of restricted access for the big majority of population, after 1989 a genuine boom of information was taking place. The number of issued books, manuals and university textbooks, newspapers, magazines and other publications increased. The same with the radio and TV broadcastings.

Table 13
Evolution of indicators of informational and cultural services supply

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Printed books and brochures										
- titles	3867	2178	2914	3662	6130	4074	5517	7199	6471	6231
- thou copies	63378	52474	57272	66598	75907	50230	34914	38374	23712	14252
School manuals, titles	...	279	290	378	692	362	432	482	423	299
University courses, titles	...	353	514	474	960	660	697	858	588	489
Newspapers, magazines, other periodicals, titles	495	1444	1336	1205	1087	1194	1180	1313	1855	1550
Volumes of library, million	173.0	154.9	171.2	157.5	155.6	158.2	156.7	158.9	160.5	163.6
Film performance, thou	1738	1350	925	664	535	431	351	306	272	223
Theatre performance and concerts, thou	44.6	20.2	18.3	16.1	16.8	14.8	15.2	14.6	15.8	15.9
Radio broadcasts, thou hours-program										
- public channels	30.1	52.3	59.1	64.4	67.3	71.5	72.6	80.1	89.0	90.1
- private channels	...	...	...	...	170.0	569.1	657.6	883.6	972.8	1382.3
Television broadcasts, thou hours-program										
- public channels	1.8	8.5	9.3	9.5	10.0	12.1	12.9	13.1	14.5	14.7
- private channels	...	...	...	...	10.5	105.7	121.0	194.0	292.0	437.5
Television subscription, per 1000 inh	160	157	155	155	153	178	184	182	178	175

The **expenditure** households could spend for education and culture is very low. In 1999 the amount represented 3.4% of the total consumption expenditures for the total households, 4.9% in employees households, 1.6% in peasant households, 2.3% in pensioners households and 3.2% in unemployed households. As for households with children, the share of expenditures for education and culture is accounting for 4% (4.3% for 1 child households, 3.9% for two children households, 3.1% for three children households and 2.6% for four and more children households).

2.6. Health

The degradation over a long period of time of life conditions, including those related to environment and human settlements infrastructure, marked the population health status.

As concerns the **morbidity** structure, new cases of illness of respiratory system (46%) and digestive system (20%) are prominent. Among the patients in hospitals, the frequency of those cured for neoplasm, endocrine, nutrition and metabolic diseases, circulatory system diseases increased. The same with the mortality rate in case of circulatory system diseases (from 617.6 deaths per 100000 inhabitants in 1989 to 737.0 deaths in 1999) and neoplasm (from 141.6 in 1989 to 177.0 in 1999).

The incidence of illness with infectious and parasitic diseases increased (from 3183.3 cases per 100000 inhabitants in 1989 to 3403.6 cases in 1999), especially of those considered as poverty or childhood diseases. The incidence of tuberculosis doubled, and in case of children aged 0-14 years trebled. The number of new cases of tuberculosis per 100000 inhabitants increased from 58.3 in 1989 to 104.1 in 1999. In 1989, per 100000 children aged 0-14 years, 9.3 new cases of tuberculosis were registered and in 1998 the number increased to 27.8. The incidence of illness with sexual diseases increased; the number of illness cases with syphilis per 100000 inhabitants was of

34.5 in 1999 as against 19.8 in 1989. Likewise, the number of illness cases with influenza, rubella, measles, chicken pox increased. However, the diminishing tendency of illness incidence with cases of viral hepatitis -A and B type- (on the contrary the incidence of viral hepatitis non-A non-B increased), of diarrhoea and dysentery diseases is to be mentioned.

Table 14
Indicators of health status

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
New cases of infectious and parasitic diseases, per 100000 inh. of which:											
- Tuberculosis	58.3	64.6	61.6	73.4	82.5	87.3	95.0	98.6	95.8	101.2	104.1
- Syphilis	19.8	23.2	25.9	26.0	26.5	29.1	35.0	32.2	34.2	34.5	...
- Viral hepatitis	351.4	322.1	218.6	117.9	89.5	118.7	139.4	104.3	88.0	74.0	...
New cases of tuberculosis, per 100000 children (0-14 years)	9.3	12.7	13.3	16.1	20.7	19.8	21.0	26.4	26.3	27.8	...
AIDS cases, per 100000 inh. of which:	...	5.0	7.4	9.8	11.6	13.8	16.4	19.7	22.8	25.5	27.1
- children	...	4.7	6.9	9.2	10.8	12.8	15	17.7	20.4	22.4	23.5
Share of live births underweight (%)	7.3	7.1	7.9	8.2	10.9	8.6	8.8	8.9	9.2	9.0	8.7
Mortality rate, per 100000 inh. caused by:											
- Circulatory system diseases	617.6	627.0	658.2	707.7	712.3	709.9	736.1	786.0	761.5	738.6	737.0
- Neoplasm	141.6	141.2	144.7	153.0	158.9	162.2	165.5	170.3	173.6	174.6	176.7
General mortality rate,%	10.7	10.6	10.9	11.6	11.6	11.7	12.0	12.7	12.4	12.0	11.8
Infant mortality rate, per 1000 live births	26.9	26.9	22.7	23.3	23.3	23.9	21.2	22.3	22.0	20.5	18.6
Under 5 years mortality rate, per 1000 live births	34.9	35.7	30.8	30.5	30.3	29.7	26.2	27.5	26.4	24.6	22.6
Maternal mortality rate, per 100000 live births	169.4	83.6	66.5	60.3	53.2	60.4	47.8	41.1	41.4	40.5	41.8

An alarming increase is registered by AIDS cases, in principal among children: in 1999, there were 27.1 cases per 100000 inhabitants, out of which 87% there were children. Out of 5040 ill children, a half is nosocomial infested, 18% through transfusion, and for 27% the way of disease transmission is unknown.

The period 1990 - 1991 is characterised by an increase of the general **mortality** rate, more accentuated in case of population aged 35-54 years. The mortality rate for children in 0-4 age group decreased from 7.1‰ in 1989 to 4.6‰ in 1999. For the groups 5-9, 10-14 and respectively 15-19 years the value maintained between 0.5 and 0.9‰, 0.4 - 0.6‰ and 0.6 - 0.8‰.

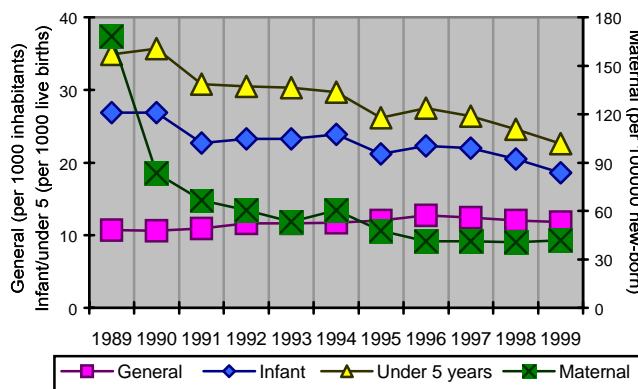
Infant, under5 and maternal mortality rates significantly diminished during this period firstly due to abandon of the compelled pro- birth oriented policy promoted by communist regime. They remained at relative high levels, following the difficulties faced by families when taking care of

children and because of minus as concerns sexual education, family planning in case of certain categories of population. The decreases registered in relation with mortality variables took place under the conditions of a birth rate decrease (from 16‰ in 1989 to 10.4‰ in 1999) and of high incidence (even with a diminishing tendency) of abortions: in 1999 there were 111 abortions per 100 live births (315 in 1990).

The infant mortality rate is higher in rural area (21.5‰) than in urban area. The rate is higher and the under 5 and maternal mortality are registering the highest values for counties located in poorer areas from East and South of the country.

Among medical causes of mortality of children under 5 years, the respiratory system diseases have the highest incidence (7.3‰ in 1999). Infectious and parasitic diseases cause a mortality rate of 1‰, whereas the congenital malformations account for a rate of 3.8‰ and poisoning, injuries and other external causes for 2.1‰.

Fig. 7. General and specific mortality rates



The share of over weight children in total live births increased from 7.3% in 1989 to 8.7% in 1999, being significantly higher (over 10%) in poor counties located in South (Călărași, Giurgiu, Ialomița, Teleorman, Mehedinți) and in Central region, less poor, but having a high share of Roma population (Brașov, Covasna, Harghita, Mureș and Hunedoara). In 1998, there were 13.3 cases of dystrophic children per 1000 children under 3 years, the incidence accounting for 22.2% in North-East counties (26.6% in Iași and 24% in Vaslui).

The current population health state, the positive trends performed with a lower intensity than envisaged, the amplified negative tendencies are influenced by the **state of the health care system**, by shortage of resources- feature valid for this activity sector also, by an insufficient coherence and preparation of the reform promoted in this field.

Only 2.6- 3.3% of GDP have been allocated to public system of health care, consequently affecting the capacity of paying the sanitary staff and, moreover, the infrastructure and supply with tools for diagnosis and curing, cure conditions of these institutions. The real average salary earnings of the health system staff diminished in 1998 at less than a half of 1990 level, and the ratio between these earnings and the average salary earnings on economy reached 81.6% in 1998 (71.5% in 1997). Investments achieved in this sector increased by 41.3% in 1998 as against 1990.

The re-organisation of health care sector led to a diminished number of beds in hospitals, of number of medical clinics and polyclinics from the public network and to the occurrence of many private surgeries and medical labs. In 1998, 416 hospitals run (of which 2 were private), 608 polyclinics (of which 130 private), 4945 medical clinics, 94 health centres, 13 TB sanatorium and 14 preventoria, 3637 surgeries and 2973 private dentist's, 256 medical labs and 1081 private labs for dental technique.

The number of physicians increased and the number of ancillary medical staff decreased. In 1999, there were as average 20.6 physicians per 10000 inhabitants (18.1 in 1989) and 52.9 ancillary

medical staff per 10000 inhabitants (58.6 in 1989). There are differences to be noticed as concerns the distribution in territory. Whereas in urban area there were 32.7 physicians as an average and 83.9 ancillary medical staff per 10000 inhabitants, in rural area there were 5.9 physicians and 15.4 ancillary medical staff only. Likewise, there are big differences between counties: there are counties, generally poor and with remote localities, with less than 10 physicians per 10000 inh. and others with 35-40 physicians per 10000 inhabitants (mainly, counties with medical universities, such as Bucharest, Cluj, Timiș). Among problems connected to the access of population to medical services, there is one stemming from the existence of remote localities, without physicians and at distance from the urban centres.

Table 15
Resources of the system of health taking care

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Public expenditures for health as % of GDP	2.6	2.9	3.3	3.3	2.7	3.1	2.9	2.8	2.6	3.1	3.9
Physicians per 10000 inh	18.1	18.0	18.1	18.7	17.7	7.6	17.7	18.1	18.3	18.9	20.6
Ancillary medical staff, per 10000 inh	58.5	56.8	54.3	53.8	53.7	57.2	56.6	56.0	54.1	54.6	52.9
Beds in hospitals, per 1000 inh	8.9	8.9	8.9	7.9	7.9	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.4	7.3	7.3
Number of											
- Hospitals	425	423	427	430	433	415	412	413	416	414	425
- Polyclinics	541	540	536	531	527	524	521	516	507	478	303
- Medical clinics	5246	5883	5948	5935	5956	6007	6016	6058	5835	4945	1234
Ratio between net salary earnings in health and the national average, %		99.4	107.0	98.1	92.2	88.9	76.3	71.5	73.3	81.6	...
Indices of net average salary earnings in health sector, %		100.0	90.6	72.5	56.6	54.7	52.6	53.9	42.8	49.2	...
Indices of investments in health sector, %		100.0	127.2	89.2	78.1	71.5	120.1	126.5	120.8	141.3	...

During the '90s the health services **consumption** diminished. The number consultations per inhabitant decreased from 5.4 in 1989 to 4.0 in 1998 and the number of medical treatments from 4.2 to 2.8. The number of ill persons in hospitals per 100 inhabitants diminished from 22.6 in 1989 to 20.3 in 1998 and the average length of staying in hospital decreased from 11.1 to 10 days. The number of X-ray examinations diminished also (from 4.2 to 3.4 million). There are other types of examinations, which registered increases: the number of lab medical analyses (from 124.4 to 151.3 million), radiography (from 6.7 to 7.2 million), roentgenerapia meetings (from 611.7 to 760.5 million) and blood transfusions (from 333.2 to 369.6 million). The number of vaccinations and re-vaccinations drop (from 6.0 to 4.2 million), due to the diminishing number of population subject to vaccination. The share of vaccinated children increased for all types of vaccine, reaching almost the total scope: from 79.3% in 1998 to 97.3% in 1998 in case of DPT vaccine; from 89.4% to 97.4% in case of polio vaccine and from 96.0% to 99.9% in case of tuberculosis vaccine.

In 1999, the system of social insurance for health was set up; in this frame, the access towards the medical services and compensated costs of medicines are dependent of the payment of social insurance contributions (by the insured person and the employer). In the current stage, the system creates difficulties for black market population to have access to the medical assistance.

Likewise, the difficulties with contribution's collection generate problems for the medical institutions running off and ensuring the compensated medicines, with consequences upon the patients.

The ill children benefit from medical assistance and medicines free of charge.

The rise of prices for medicines and medical articles and of tariffs for medical services caused the increase of **expenditures** spent for health by households. As an average, in 1995 - 1.6% and in 1999 - 2.5% of the consumption expenditures were spent for medicines and health care. In 1999, expenditures for medicines and health care spent as an average by a rural household were 42% less than by urban households and by 3.4 times higher in case of households placed in the top decile as against the bottom decile of the distribution by incomes per capita.

3. Children in public care

Romania got a sad fame in relation with situation of children placed in specialised institutions of social assistance. There were 40 thou children - orphans, abandoned or from separated couples or extremely poor families. The relative big number of institutionalised children and of children in difficulty resulted at a big extent because of the compulsory pro-birth policy promoted until 1989, This policy determined on one side the increase of not desired children and on the other side stimulated the birth in disadvantaged families, without resources necessary to take care of children. The consequences of the above mentioned policy are present now, even after 10 years from its abrogation.

In 1990, there were 47405 under-aged in social assistance institutions; of which 8558 in nurseries, 25870 in orphanages and 6919 in specialised units for under-aged with deficiencies (3354 in hospitals type hostels for under-aged with severe handicap, 594 in workshop type hostels for under-aged and 2971 in school type hostels for children with deficiencies).

The situation of institutionalised children was marked by the not adequate conditions for taking care and education: the personnel was not enough, the children not fed enough and without basic hygienic conditions. The most difficult problem was in case of children with deficiencies whose life conditions shocked when made known to everybody.

After 1990, measures have been taken in order to improve life conditions offered by institutions for children protection: the allowances for food increased, personnel for taking care and education increased, endowment with furniture, didactic stuff and equipment necessary to perform activities in normal conditions has been provided. To achieve all these both the international community has its important contribution (international institutions and organisations dedicated to child protection and humanitarian organisations from abroad), and the domestic non-governmental organisations.

The lack of **resources** marked in this field the stronger capacity of state involvement. Even if the share in general consolidated budget increased (from 0.12% in 1990 to 0.36% in 1999), the funds allocated for social assistance were insufficient for meeting the needs. The lack of resources in case of system of protection the children in difficulties amplified due to the increased number of this category of children and to the increased costs of protecting children in institutions. The number of children in difficulties is raising because of poverty amplification and spreading, and, of a demographic behaviour characterised by lack of education and responsibility in case of some population categories. There are factors which determine families to require their children institutionalisation or amplify the phenomenon of children abandon even from the maternity, as well as the "children in the streets" phenomenon.

In accordance with a survey carried out by the Observatory of Child Growing in Europe, the estimated abandon rate is of 1.7 abandoned children per 100 live births /10/. The phenomenon is to be amplified due to the increased number of children born by unmarried women (from 42753 in 1993 to 56886 in 1999). In this case the abandon incidence is higher than in case of children born by married women. A national study undertaken by the Organisation Save the Children during

1998 -1999 is illustrating a number of about 2000 “children in the streets”, of which two thirds proceed from families and the rest from institutions for public care. About 60% of them were entering into this category of children because of poverty, quarrel and violence in family or following the family unsettling /10/.

Under these conditions, the number of institutionalised children registered an increased trend until 1994 in all types of institutions. Since that date, the number slightly diminished and preserved about the same level the following years. Since 1998, the number diminished as consequence of promoting alternatives forms of family type protection. In 1998, the number of children in public placement centres decreased to 38597 and of those in units specialised for under-aged with deficiencies diminished to 6128. At the end of 1999, the number of children in public placement centres reached 33358 and of those in units specialised for under-aged with deficiencies 5473.

Table 16
Number of children in public care

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Total	47406	47002	42975	44875	52986	49529	51953	51763
Nurseries	8558	8028	7878	8245	10950	8715	8950	8810
Orphanages	25870	25500	22582	23859	30559	28955	30891	30478
Units specialised for under-aged with deficiencies	6919	8022	8125	8116	7627	7809	7349	7188
of which:								
- hospital type hostels for under-aged with severe handicap	3354	3617	4204	4349	3940	4586	4180	4331
- workshop type hostels for under-aged	594	1073	1020	960	678	360	449	-
- school type hostels for children with deficiencies	2971	3332	2901	2807	3009	2863	2720	2857

Protection measures adopted as alternatives to children taking care in placement centres have been oriented towards keeping from institutionalisation and abandon, and promotion of family system protection. Renouncement to institutionalisation and development of alternative forms of protection represent the main direction of reforming the system of protection of children in difficulties, promoted since 1998.

Table 17
Number of children for which measures of family type protection have been taken

	1998	1999
Total	24196	34332
Definitive protection,	7152	10601
of which	4295	6316
- through reintegration in natural family	2857	4285
- through adoption	840	1710
national	2017	2575
international		
Temporary protection	17044	23731
- at relatives	-	15532
- at other families/persons	-	4124
- custody in view of adoption	16565	1017
- at maternal assistant	479	3058
public services	-	2150
private organisations	479	908

28235 children in 1998 and 16346 children in 1999 benefited from preventive activities. For 24196 children in 1998 and 34332 in 1999 a measure of family type protection has been applied. The number of children who are taken care of in other families through placement at relatives or other families and custody in view of adoption increased from 7549 in 1992 to 20673 in 1999. In the past years, the maternal assistant form of taking care has been created in the frame both of specialised public services and within private organisations authorised in the field of children protection. In 1999, the number of children taken care by maternal assistants was 3058.

To prevent from abandon and children institutionalisation and to support children reintegration in families centres have been set up in order to render prevention and protection services: daily taking care centres, maternal centres, advising centres for parents, daily centres for children with handicap rehabilitation, support centres for integration/reintegration of children in families, crisis centres to support re-adaptation of children with psycho-social problems, services to support children rights, for abandon prevention in pre-conception period, for monitoring and assistance for pregnant women facing risk situations, for orientation, supervising and supporting the social re-adaptation of delinquent children.

A special category of children in difficulty is made up of children with deficiencies (physical, mental, visual or language hearing). In the 1998 files of the State Secretary for Persons with Handicap there were listed 61291 children with deficiencies, of which affected by mental deficiency – 29.6%, physical one - 22.1% and neuro-psyhic – 14.5%.

Family takes care of the majority of children with handicap. They receive the double of child allowance value, an indemnity for the person taken care of the child with severe handicap, and other social rights.

The special education for children with deficiencies significantly developed during the '90s. The total number of units increased from 231 in 1993/1994 to 305 in 1998/1999; the number of enrolled pupils increased in the same period from 48930 to 55237, and of teaching staff from 8687 to 10937. There are special units set up in the frame of pre-school, primary, gymnasium, high, vocational and apprentice education as well as in post-high school and foremen education. Pupils enrolled in primary and gymnasium education and in vocational and apprentice education have the highest share (68% and 25% respectively in 1998/1999).

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When analysing the developments registered by living standards, one concludes that negative effects of transition strongly affected child welfare. Generally they enjoy family protection, the efforts and sacrifice made by families to create the best possible conditions for children care and education, for keeping them clear of the consequences of degradation of life conditions and economic and social environment. A major problem occurs as families' possibilities are weakening as well as society capacity to interfere in their support.

The prerequisite for the improvement of child situation is the economy stabilisation and development capable to generate necessary resources to promote an active and efficient policy of protecting families with children and children in difficulties.

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