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$$\pi_n = \left(\frac{y_n^k}{y_n} \right) \left(\frac{p_n^k}{p^k} \right)$$

k = 1

Monitoring MDG and WFS targets:

Asia and Pacific

SUMMARY

Worldwide developing countries have reduced hunger as measured by the food security statistics known as Millennium Development Goals (MDG) indicator 5 and the indicator of the World Food Summit (WFS) during the 1990's, but the reduction has slowed down during the most recent five-year period. Asia and the Pacific (AP) has contributed to the overall decrease in hunger in a similar pattern as the developing world; its pace has been fast enough up to now, but the efforts have to be intensified to reach the MDG target by 2015. In AP, hunger may not be a problem in two countries (less than 2.5% of the population are chronically hungry) but yet remains a concern for one country (more than 35% of the population are chronically hungry). All the other countries are very close to reach the MDG target, although most of the south Asian countries need to step up the pace occurred during the second half of the 1990's from now onto 2015.

At the country level, the monitoring of progress in hunger reduction can help to target food insecure population groups for policy design and implementation. Most, if not all of the countries, have been conducting household surveys such as Household Budget Surveys (HBS), Household Income and Expenditures Surveys (HIES), Living Standard Measurement Studies (LSMS) and other surveys which collect data on food consumption, income and expenditure. These data may be utilized for estimating reliable food security statistics such as the prevalence of food deprivation (under nourishment). Preliminary results from a Southeast Asian country depict progress in hunger reduction at sub-national levels and identify food insecure population groups utilizing data from LSMS surveys.

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I. Introduction

The understanding of the food deprivation trends in the context of the MDG and the WFS targets requires an analysis of changes over time in the **proportion** of food deprivation (**people** who suffer from hunger) and in the **number** of food deprived. The WFS target, adopted in

1996, set to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the **number** of people who suffer from hunger. The MDG which was adopted later in 2000 set a target to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the **proportion** of people who suffer from hunger. In this sense, a hunger reduction expressed as the MDG-5 indicator of “proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption” (proportion of food deprivation) reflects a reduction of the number of food deprived (FAO 2004). However, it might be the case that the population grows faster than the speed of reduction in the proportion of food deprivation and the latter is accompanied by an increase in the number of food deprived. For this reason the analysis is done using both, the proportion of food deprivation and the number of food deprived. The documentation on the FAO methodology for estimating food deprivation is available in the Web (FAO, 2005).

Most countries have conducted household surveys in which food consumption data are collected during the 1990’s so that trend analyses can be performed on food insecurity. In most technical reports based on these household survey data, the analysis of food consumption is limited to food consumption in monetary terms, in particular the share of food to total consumption. In this sense reports on food consumption are incomplete by covering only the economic viewpoint and ignoring the actual food consumption in terms of quantities and hence the nutrient consumption.

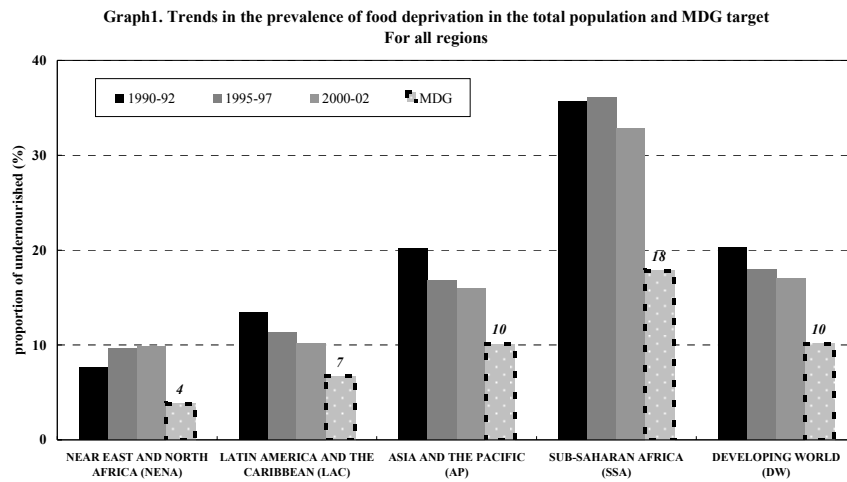
The FAO methodology for estimating food deprivation used for global monitoring can be used for estimating sub-national food deprivation utilizing quantity data of food consumed and income collected in household surveys such as household budget surveys (HBS), household income and expenditure surveys (HIES), living standard measurement studies (LSMS) and so forth. The procedures for estimating a battery of food security statistics at sub-national level derived from household surveys are described elsewhere (FAO 2002). Estimates using these procedures are applied to Vietnam LSMS 1992/93 and 1997/98 food consumption data.

II. Global trends in hunger reduction in Asia and the Pacific

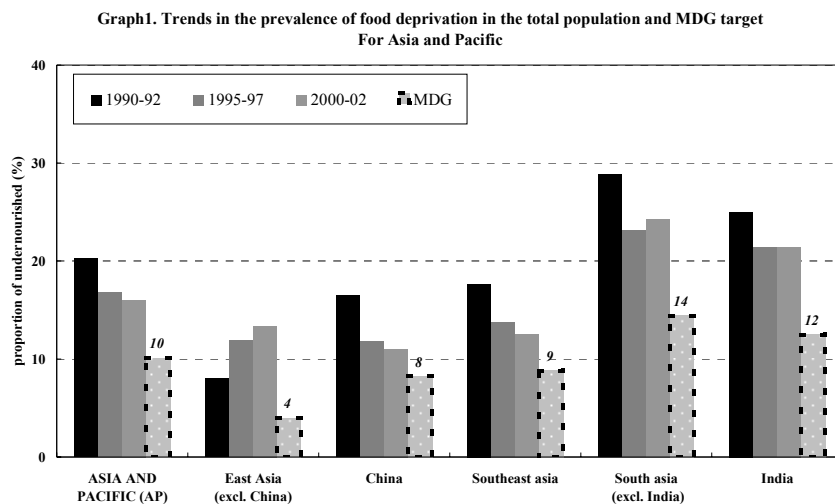
Progress towards the MDG target

Worldwide and regional long-term trends of the **proportion** of food deprivation during the last decade in the Developing World (DW) are shown in graphs 1 and 2. The regional trends are shown under the assumption that the MDG target applies to regional levels. Graph 1 depicts the proportion of food deprivation for the three-year average periods of 1990-92, 1995-97 and 2000-02 as well as the proportion of food deprivation that has been set by MDG to be reached by 2015. It shows that in the Developing World (DW) as a whole, the prevalence of food deprivation decreased during the 1990’s from a high¹ to a moderate level; however, the decrease observed during the second half on the decade was slower than that observed in the first half. The region of Asia and the Pacific (AP) started from a high level of food deprivation (20-34%) and experienced hunger reduction throughout all the decade even though the target of food deprivation of 10% is far from being reached.

¹ Prevalence	Category
35% & above	over very high
20-34%	high
10-19%	moderate
5-9%	low
2.5-4%	very low

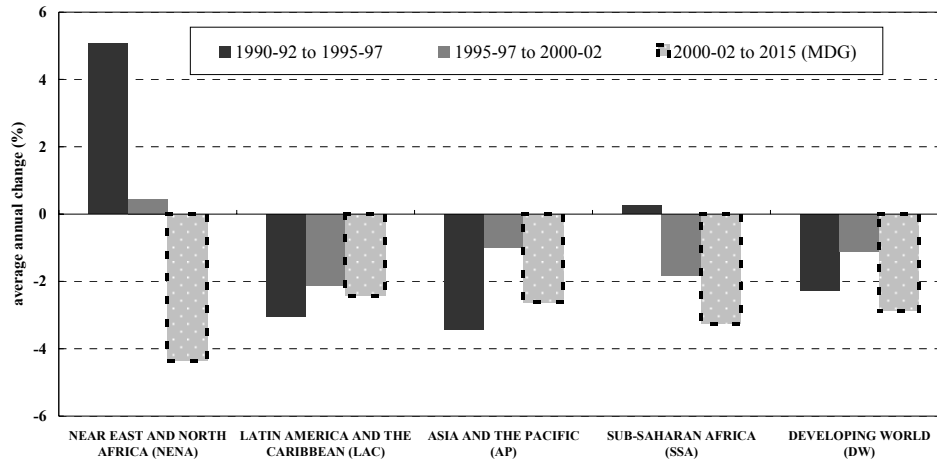


Disparities between sub regions in terms of level of food deprivation are quite high with China and India being the main driving countries due to the size of their population (these two countries represent together almost 50% of total population of the developing world and more than 70% of the population in the region of Asia and Pacific). Given that, a slight improvement in food deprivation in China or India can have an immediate impact on the overall situation of food deprivation in the region, these two countries have been excluded from the sub regions they belong to be analysed separately. From the graph below that presents the trends in the prevalence of food deprivation by sub regions of AP it appears that food deprivation in South Asian countries (including or excluding India) is the highest and is the lowest in East Asia (excluding China). At the same time East Asia is the only sub region that has performed the worst over the period. India and China are both showing declining trends in food deprivation with China very close to reach MDG target and India far behind. As Oceania weighs less than 0.2% in overall population of the region (and about 0.1% of undernourished in the region), data for this sub region are not shown in graphs nor commented in the context of this general analyse.



Graph 2, displays the progresses and setbacks in hunger reduction experienced in the 1990's and the progress required to reach the MDG target. In the second half of the 1990's, the progress was considerably slower than in the first half. The regions of Asia and the Pacific (AP) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) contributed significantly to the overall decrease in the prevalence of food deprivation with the major decrease occurring during the first half of the decade. AP as a whole decreased hunger from a high (20%) to a moderate level (17%). This reduction decelerated resulting in the very slow progress in the following years.

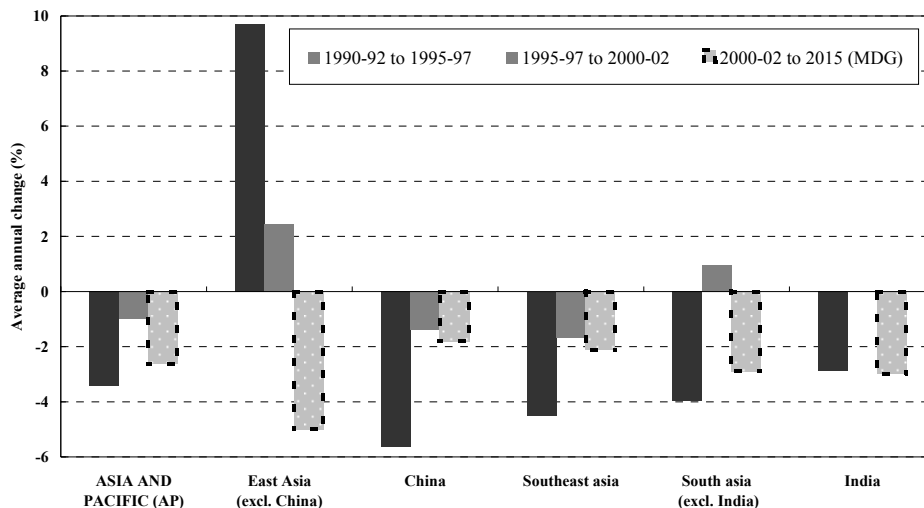
Graph2. Changes in the prevalence of food deprivation during last decade and change required for MDG target from 2000-02 to 2015 (%) - All Regions



In other two regions, namely Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and Near East and North Africa (NENA), there has been increase in the proportion of food deprivation during first half of the 1990's. SSA has managed to reverse the rising trend observed in the first half, while NENA is moving in the same direction but not yet stopped the rising trend. It is important to point out that, in one hand, SSA had a high level of hunger at the beginning of 1990's, however despite the progress in hunger reduction during the second half of the 1990's, the prevalence of food deprivation is still at high level. On the other hand, even though hunger increased in NENA during the decade, the prevalence of food deprivation is still at low level.

The MDGs adopted in 2000, set a target to halve, between 1990 and 2015, the **proportion** of people who suffer from hunger. Although significant progress has been made towards the MDG target in AP, the pace needs to be accelerated to make sure that the region will reach the goal by 2015, because the progress had been slowing down since 1995-97.

Graph2. Changes in the prevalence of food deprivation during last decade and change required for MDG target from 2000-02 to 2015 (%) - Asia and Pacific



At sub regional level, China and Southeast Asia have shown the fastest rate of decline of food deprivation and if the situation in China continues to improve at the same pace, this country could possibly reach the MDG target by 2015. Food deprivation in India continues to be of great concern as no improvement in hunger reduction has been noticed during the second half of the 1990's. East Asia when not benefiting from the considerable progress from China shows instead a worsening of the situation. This means countries as Mongolia and Democratic

People's republic of Korea need to take actions to reverse the increasing trend in food deprivation.

The target established by the WFS in 1996 was more ambitious than the one formulated by the MDGs in 2000. The WFS goal is to halve the **number** of undernourished over the same period. In fact, the WFS target, expressed in terms of the **proportion** of food deprivation, is stricter than the MDG target. That is because the world population is expected to grow by around two billion people between the baseline period of 1990-92 and 2015. So even if the proportion of that larger population who suffer from hunger is reduced by half, nearly 600 million people in the developing world will still suffer from chronic hunger. To reach the WFS target of 400 million, the proportion of food deprived people would need to be reduced further not by half but by two thirds.

Chart 1. WFS target in terms of prevalence of food deprivation at the regional level

	1990-1992		2000-2002		WFS (MDG) targets by 2015	
Near East and North Africa	8%	→	10%	→	<2.5%	(4%)
Latin America and the Caribbean	13%	→	10%	→	5%	(6.5%)
Asia and the Pacific	20%	→	16%	→	7%	(10%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	36%	→	33%	→	10%	(18%)

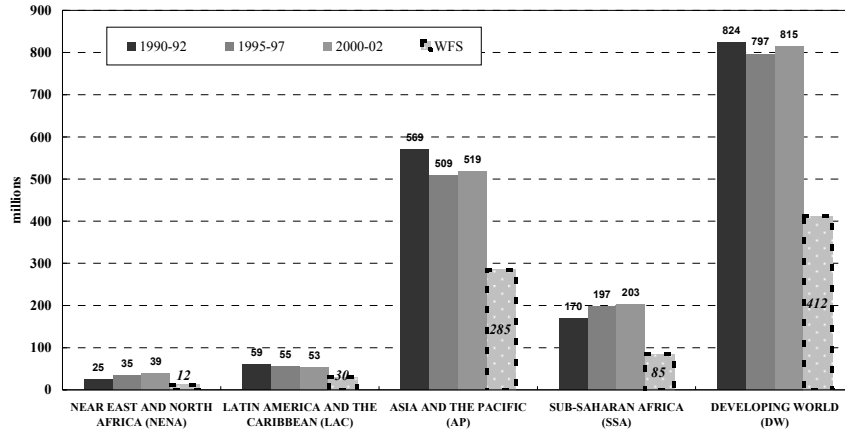
Chart 1 shows the comparison between the current situation and the target in 2015 expressed as a 50% reduction in the number of food deprived people. It can be seen that the WFS target is stricter. It calls for eliminating food deprivation in NENA. Drastic reduction would be required for SSA, but this region would still be facing a significant level of food deprivation. It requests AP and LAC a significant reduction but they would still experience intermediate prevalence of food deprivation. Therefore in all regions except NENA, further improvement would be still needed. In halving its proportion of food deprivation, AP would reach by far the MDG target but yet would still not meet the WFS target of 7% food deprivation by 2015.

Progress towards WFS target

The worldwide and regional long-term trends of food deprivation, expressed in terms of the number of food deprived people, are shown in Graph 3 below.

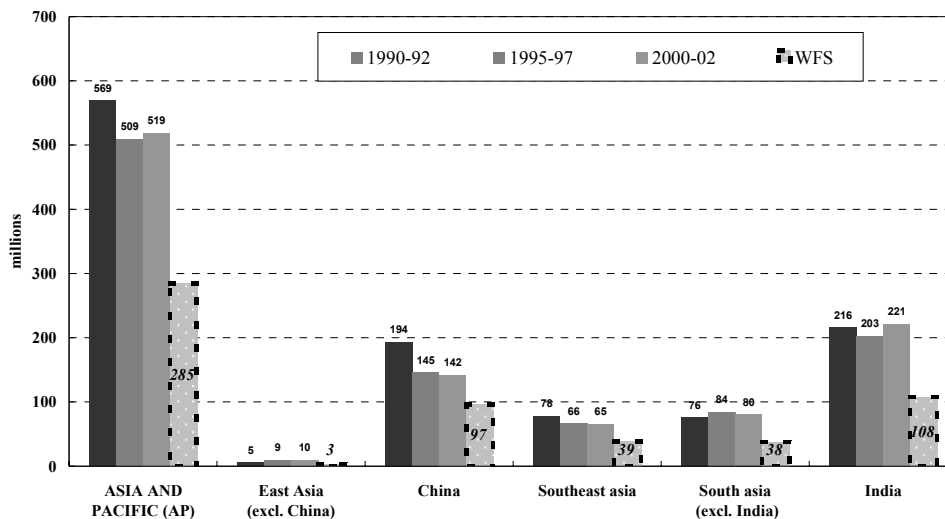
As in the prevalence of food deprivation trend, in the DW on average there was hunger reduction in developing countries as a whole. In contrast, in the first half of the decade hunger decreased significantly, but in the second half it actually increased. AP has contributed significantly to the overall progress in the first half of the 1990's but also to the increase observed in the second half. NENA and SSA increased the number of undernourished during whole decade. LAC is the only region that has managed to decrease the number of hungry people throughout the decade, but this decrease has been quite low.

Graph3. Trends in the number of food deprived people and the WFS target
All regions



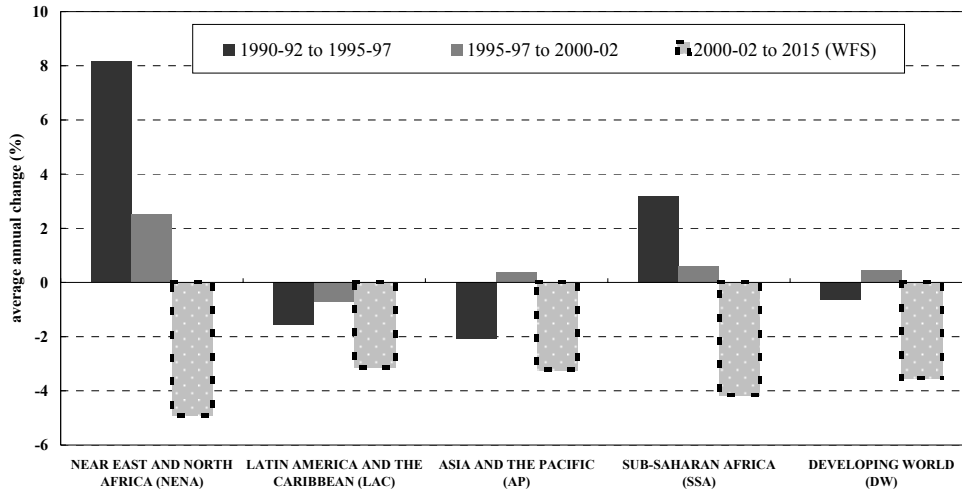
When looking at numbers of undernourished at sub regional level, it is obvious that the worsening of the situation for the region of AP is almost entirely due to the significant increase in people undernourished in India during the second half of the 1990's. On reverse, China has proved very successful in fighting hunger as number of undernourished has been decreasing constantly during the 1990's, even though the rate of decrease has slightly decelerated during the second half of the decade (see graph 4).

Graph 3. Trends in the number of food deprived people and the WFS target
Asia and Pacific



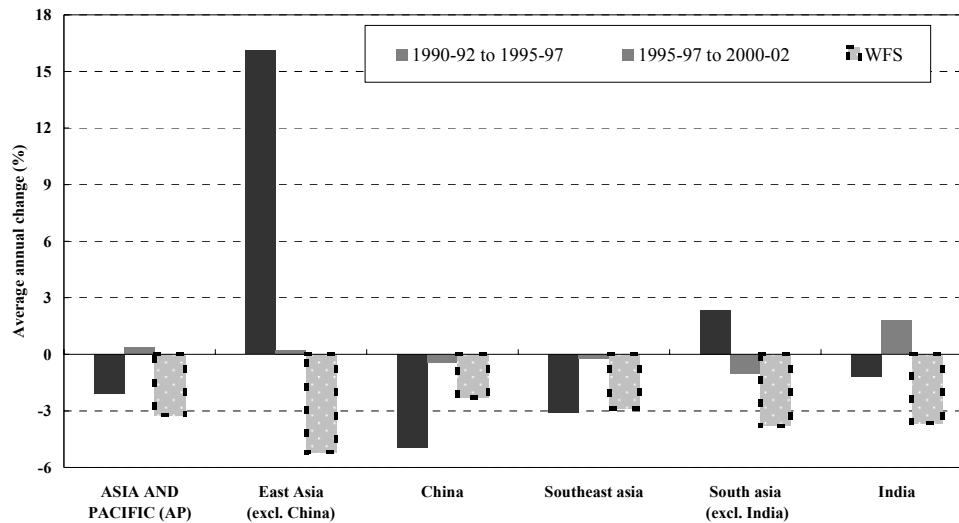
It can be seen that the picture of food deprivation trends portrayed by changes in **prevalence** is not necessarily the same as the one depicted by changes in the **number** (Graph 4). In LAC and NENA, changes in **prevalence** were in line with changes in **number**. However, in AP and SSA, the changes in prevalence (see Graph 2), **were not** the same as in the number; actually they were in opposite directions and the number of food-deprived people was actually increasing during the second half, while prevalence decreased. These differences in the trend of prevalence and number of food-deprived people in these regions are due to higher population growth than the reduction of the prevalence of food deprivation. Hence, it results in a higher number of food-deprived people, despite the reduction in prevalence.

**Graph 4. Changes in the number of food deprived people and the WFS target
All regions**



At sub regional level, it is clear that if the situation in India does not improve at all and number of undernourished continues to grow at the same rate, then the entire region is at risk of failing in reaching the WFS target by 2015 despite the progress experienced by China and the other countries of South Asia.

**Graph 4. Changes in the number of food deprived people and the WFS target
Asia and Pacific**



Finally, the trends shown above are obviously regional or sub regional averages (except in case of India and China) and they hide significant differences among individual country performances. Indeed, the bad results for the all region of AP is mainly driven by the worsening of the situation in India but also in Mongolia, People’s democratic republic of Korea, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Therefore, the differences among the countries and how far they are from the hunger reduction targets are examined in the next section.

III. Progress in hunger reduction at country level towards the MDG target

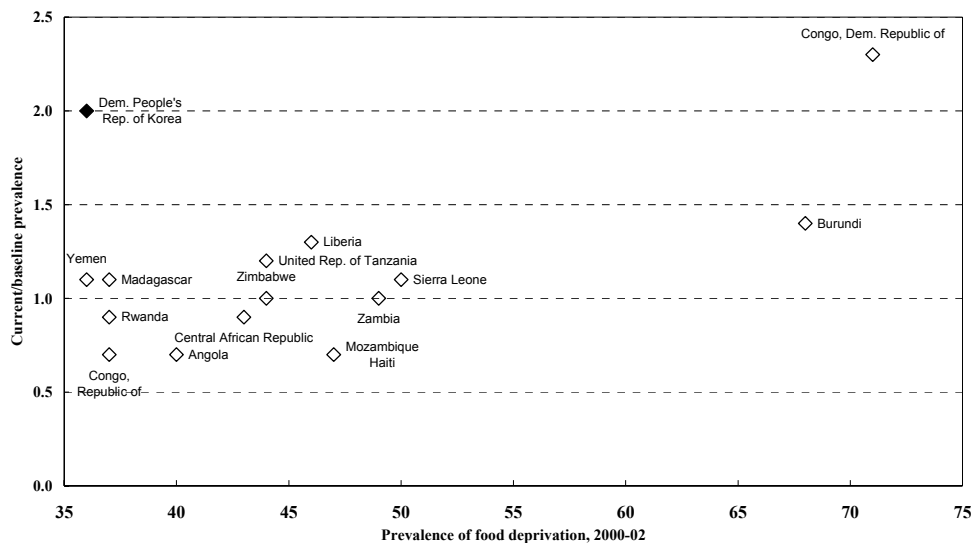
Assuming that the MDG target should be reached by each individual country, it is useful to have a look at each country distance to the target, measured by the ratio of current (2000-02) to baseline (1990-92) proportion of food deprived in a given country².

Graphs 5a-5e portray five different country groups: a) with current proportion of 35% and above (very high prevalence), b) from 20 to 34% (high prevalence), c) from 10 to 19% (moderate prevalence), d) from 5 to 9% (low prevalence), and e) from 2.5 to 4% (very low prevalence).

Figures for AP countries are shown as black diamonds for easy cross-country comparison with countries from other regions. Countries where hunger is not a nationwide problem, i.e. where prevalence of food deprivation is below 2.5%, are excluded. They are two such countries in AP (Malaysia and Republic of Korea) and four countries from other regions (Argentina, Libya, Tunisia and United Arab Emirates).

The first group shown in Graph 5a is facing very high levels of proportion of food deprivation (35% or more). It includes 16 countries, and only one is from AP (Korea, DPR) with a level of prevalence that still lies well behind the group of countries having more than 40% of food deprived.

Graph 5a. Towards MDGs: current situation and the MDG target

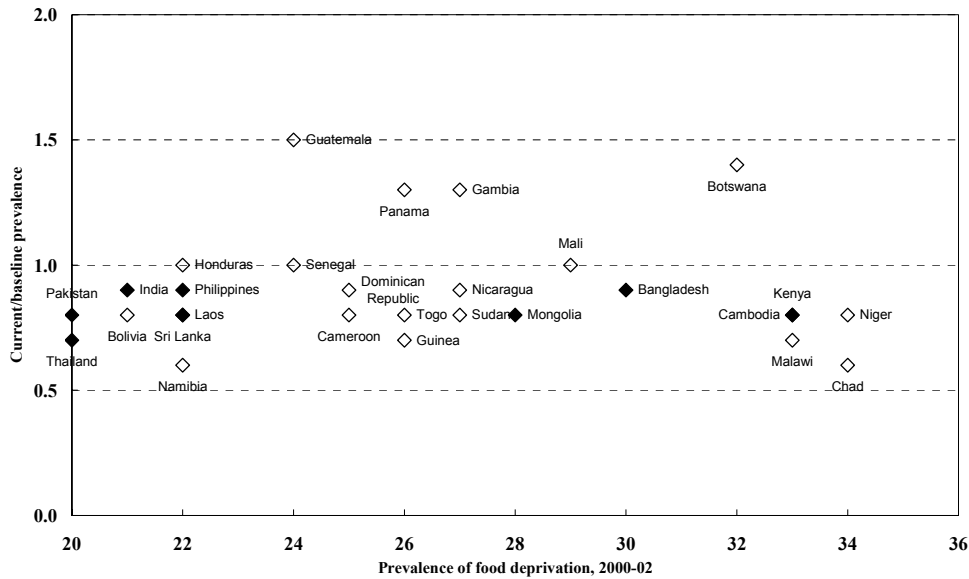


* Ethiopia and Eritrea showed a proportion of food deprived greater than 35% in 2000-02. These countries are excluded since they were not separate entities in 1990-92.

Twenty-eight countries in the second group of Graph 5b are facing high levels of food deprivation (from 20 to 34 percent). In this group there are 9 countries from AP. No country has reached a 50% reduction in the proportion of food deprivation. However, all of the AP countries are progressing towards a 50% reduction despite the relative high level of food deprived in some of them (Cambodia, Bangladesh and Mongolia). An additional effort should be required by those countries to decrease the hunger and reach the MDG target by 2015.

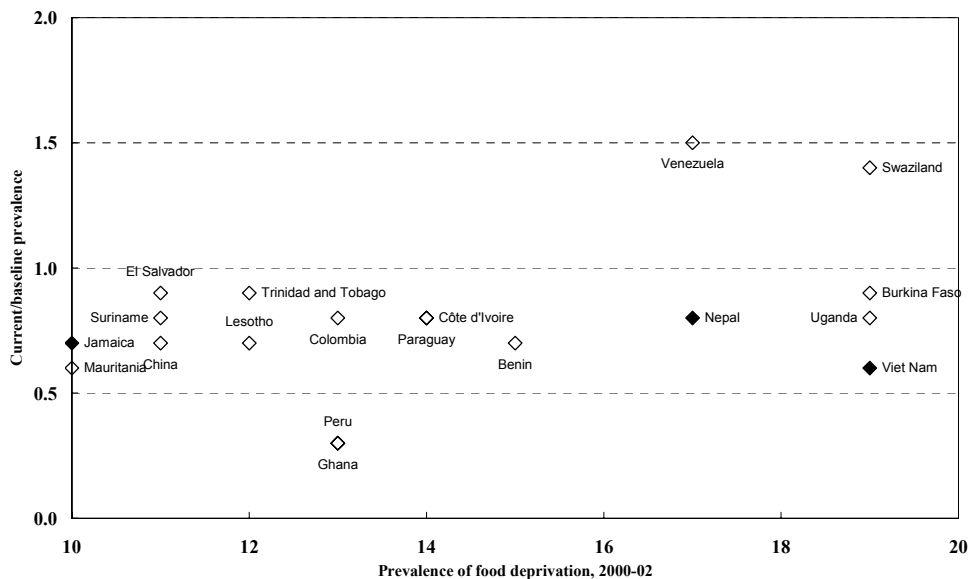
². Ethiopia and Eritrea were excluded since they were not separate entities at the baseline period of 1990-92.

Graph 5b. Towards MDGs: current situation and the MDG target (cont.).



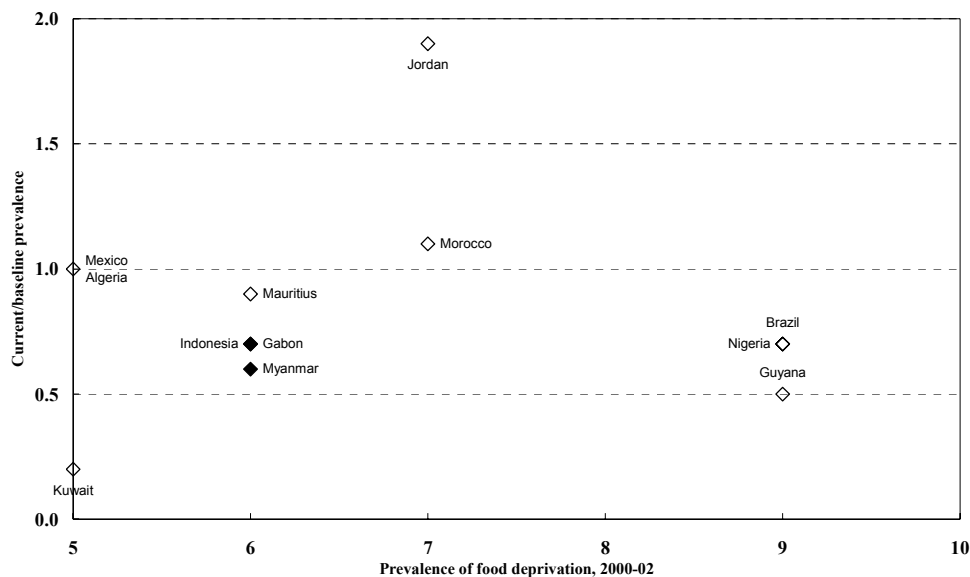
Three out of the 19 countries belonging to the third group (10-19 percent of food deprived), are from AP (see Graph 5c). All of the three are very close to reach the MDG target of halving its proportion of food deprivation, China presents the lowest food prevalence (11%) and Vietnam will have to make further progress to reach low level of food deprivation as percent of food deprived stands at almost 20%.

Graph 5c. Towards MDGs: current situation and the MDG target (cont.).



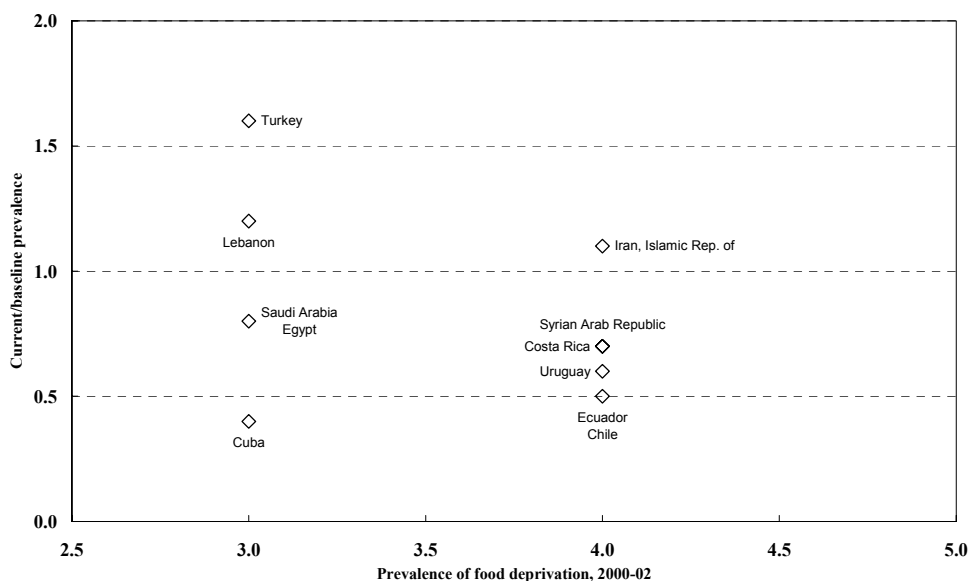
Two countries from AP (Myanmar and Indonesia) belong to the group of the 12 countries with a 5-9% prevalence levels (see Graph 5d). These two countries are also very close from reaching the MDG target.

Graph 5d. Towards MDGs: current situation and the MDG target (cont.)



They are 11 countries in which the prevalence varies from 2.5 to 4% of food deprivation in total population (see Graph 5e). All these countries have fairly low levels of proportion of food deprivation, thus even if they do not manage to halve the number of food deprived people by 2015, the problem of hunger, in this situation, will be of less concern than in the previous groups. None of these countries is from AP.

Graph 5e. Towards MDG: current situation and the MDG target (cont.)



IV. Progress in hunger reduction at sub-national levels: *Vietnam*

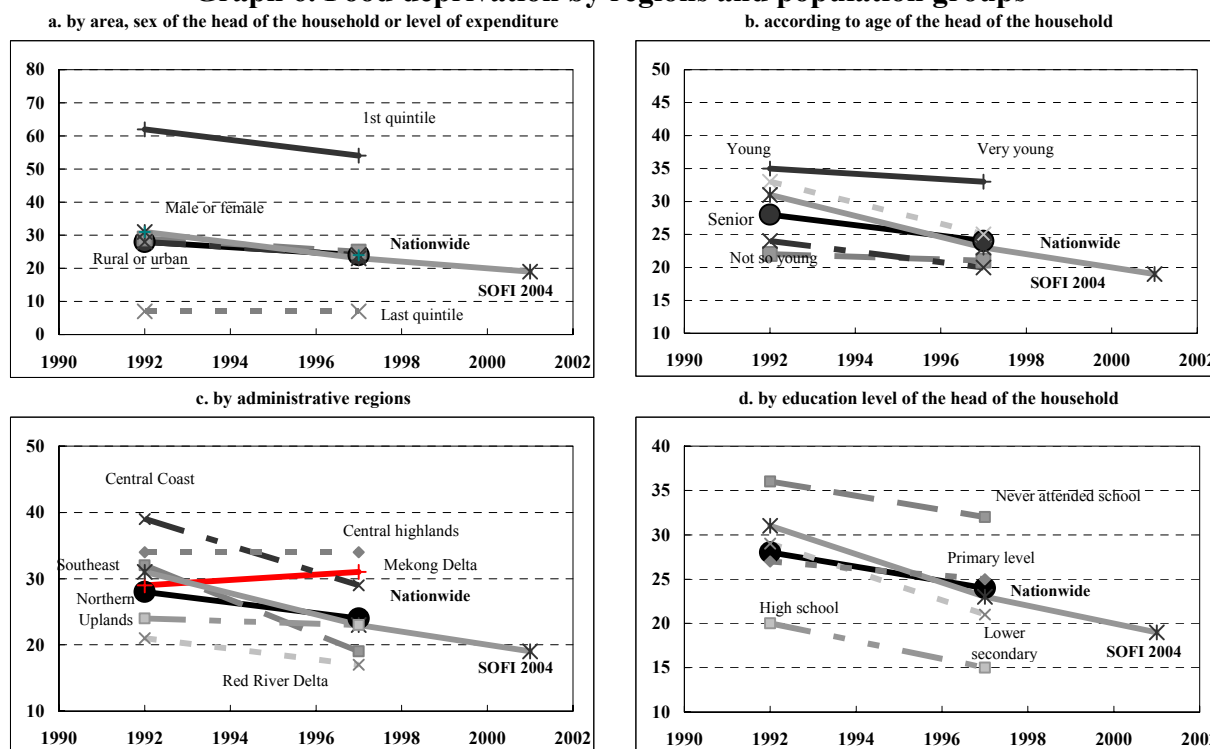
The trends shown for individual countries above are aggregates of sub-national population groups. These groups may be defined based on geographical or functional basis, for example, by ecological or development regions, or by main economic activity or by other social dimension of interest in planning actions. Countries performing well at national level may have population groups in which food deprivation is still a burden. The differences among sub-national population groups are illustrated below for Vietnam.

The trends shown for Vietnam are preliminary results (**not to be quoted**) based on 1992/93 and 1997/98 VLSS (Vietnam Living Standard Survey) surveys available in the LSMS World Bank database (World Bank 2005). Except for minor methodological differences these two surveys can be compared over time as they follow the same design. FAO has re-processed food consumption data collected in these surveys which are limited to private consumption during a short period of time during the year as compared to food consumption derived from food balance sheets (private and public for one full year). FAO has estimated preliminary food security statistics for documenting trends. These preliminary results show that sub-national population groups in Vietnam have experienced different trends in food security. The analysis allowed the identification of food insecure population groups through the different food security statistics trends and levels. Yet, the results have to be replaced in the regional economic context as data of the second survey (December 1997 and December 1998) were collected at the same time the Asian financial crisis was spreading over the region of Asia and Pacific.

A. Food deprivation

The food deprivation trend in Vietnam has decreased over the last decade based on both, global figures (SOFI 2004) and estimates derived from VLSS surveys (see Graphs 6a-6d).

Graph 6. Food deprivation by regions and population groups³



According to the results from 1992/93 and 1997/98 VLSS, the proportion of people undernourished fell from about one person over three to less than one person over four. Trends and levels in the proportion of undernourished are the same and close to the national average for households headed by male or woman and households from urban or rural area. Yet, food deprivation is much higher for the lowest expenditure quintile of the population (total expenditures are used as a proxy for income under the assumption that in developing countries and especially in the five first deciles of the population, level of savings is low if not inexistent), but the decrease is also more spectacular for this group of population compared to

³. Classes for ages are: age ≤ 35: very young ; 35-45: young; 45-55: not so young and >55: senior.

the highest quintile for which prevalence of food deprivation has remained the same over the period.

When analysing trend in prevalence in six administrative regions⁴ it appears that food deprivation has decreased in three regions (Southeast, Central coast and Red river delta), has remained the same in two regions (Central highlands and Northern Uplands), but has significantly increased in the region of the delta of Mekong. A careful attention should be devoted to this region as it represents almost 20% of the population. The region of the Red River Delta which concentrates more than 20% of the population is also the only region showing a level of prevalence lower than the national average with less than one person over five being undernourished.

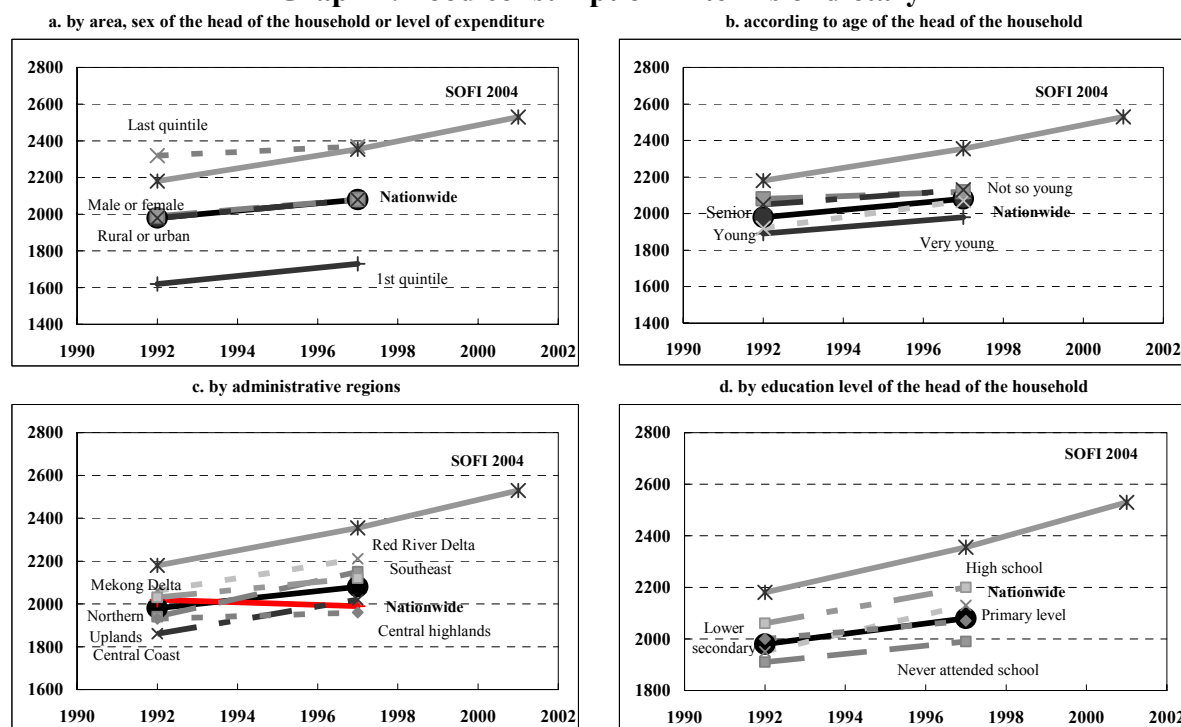
It also appears that levels of prevalence are well above the national average for households whose head never attended school or is less than 35 year old. Indeed, the older and the higher is the level of education of the head of the household the lower is the level of prevalence.

B. Food consumption

The prevalence of food deprivation described in the previous section depends on three components. First, the amount of dietary energy contained in the food consumed; second, the inequality in access to food mediated mainly by income; and three, the minimum dietary energy consumption for a low acceptable weight to be healthy enough and perform light physical activity. The last one differs from one country to the other but varies very little over time as the sex and age population structure remains stable in a short period of time.

The main sources for reducing food deprivation are: the amount of dietary energy contained in the food consumed and how food is distributed amongst households. Graphs 7a-7d address the food consumption levels by different sub-national population groups. These levels are in line with the levels of food deprivation (in reverse order) shown previously.

Graph 7. Food consumption in terms of dietary



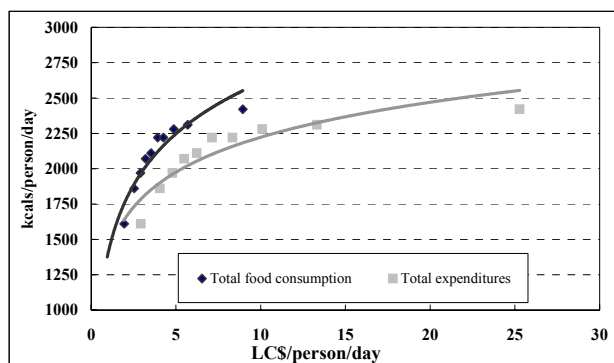
⁴. Data for the Regions of North Central Coast and South Central Coast were aggregated as only data referring to the Central coast were available in 1st VLSS.

Levels of dietary energy consumption in urban/rural areas or in male/female headed households do not differ from the national average. While the population group of the highest expenditure quintile has maintained its food consumption at almost the same level, the food consumption of the group of lowest expenditure has increased, but yet still remained slightly below the level of 1730 kcal required as the minimum energy to maintain a light activity in Vietnam. The food consumption in the other depicted population groups followed the nationwide trend over the years 1992/93 to 1997/98. It has increased in all administrative regions except for the region of Mekong Delta where it has slightly decreased and the Central Highlands where it has remained almost at the same level. Food consumption has also increased in all households disregarding the age of the head of the household or the level of education and the magnitude of change is almost the same for all the groups of population.

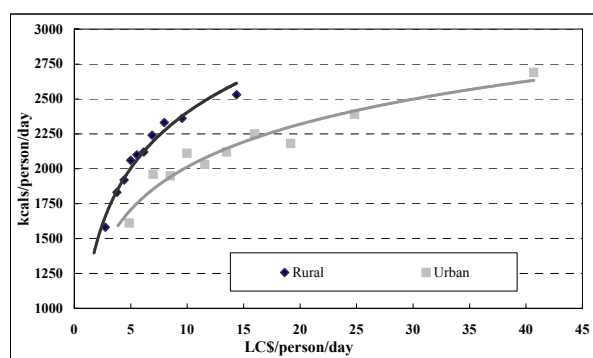
The food consumption behaviour in terms of dietary energy consumption (DEC) with respect to total spending is shown in Graph 7e at nationwide level for 1997/98.

Graph 7. Food consumption (DEC) by total consumption and expenditures in 1997/98

e. DEC vs total food consumption and expenditures at national level



f. DEC vs total expenditures in urban and rural areas



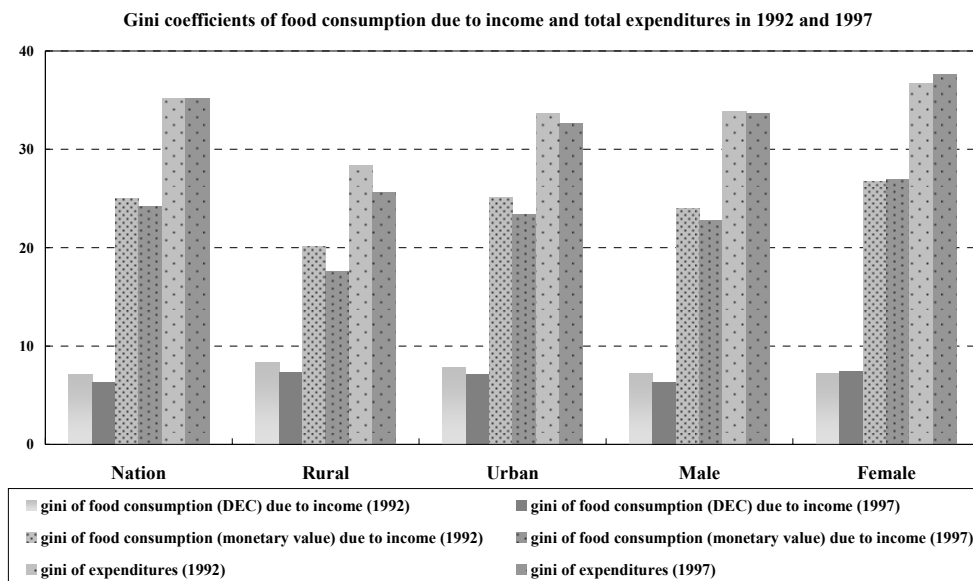
From the graph it is clear that DEC depends more on total food consumption than on total expenditure. Indeed, a one percent increase in total expenditure (or a one percent increase in income using one variable as proxy for the other) increases DEC food consumption by 0.17 while one percent more spent on buying food increases DEC by about 0.26 percent. The food consumption behaviour of DEC with respect to total consumption by expenditure deciles for urban and rural populations is shown in Graph 7f. DEC is more sensitive to a one percent decrease in expenditure in rural areas (elasticity of 0.29) than in urban areas (elasticity of 0.18).

C. Trends of inequality of food consumption due to income and of income (full)

Inequality in access to food measures both inequality in food consumption due to income and inequality in food consumption due to minimum energy requirement. The former corresponds to the distribution of food amongst households using income or expenditure as classification variable. Gini and coefficient of variation are the most widely used inequality indicators. Graph 8a shows Gini coefficients due to expenditure of food consumption as expressed in dietary energy consumption (DEC) or in monetary value and Gini coefficients of expenditure (full) for 1992/93 and 1997/98. Gini of food consumption expressed in monetary value are presented mainly to show the price effect on dietary energy consumption. From the graph it appears that income inequality has remained almost the same during these five years in Vietnam while inequality in access to food has slightly decreased except for households headed by women. Overall inequality is also higher in urban areas while food seems to be more equally distributed amongst households from urban areas than from rural areas. Inequality in access to food is also

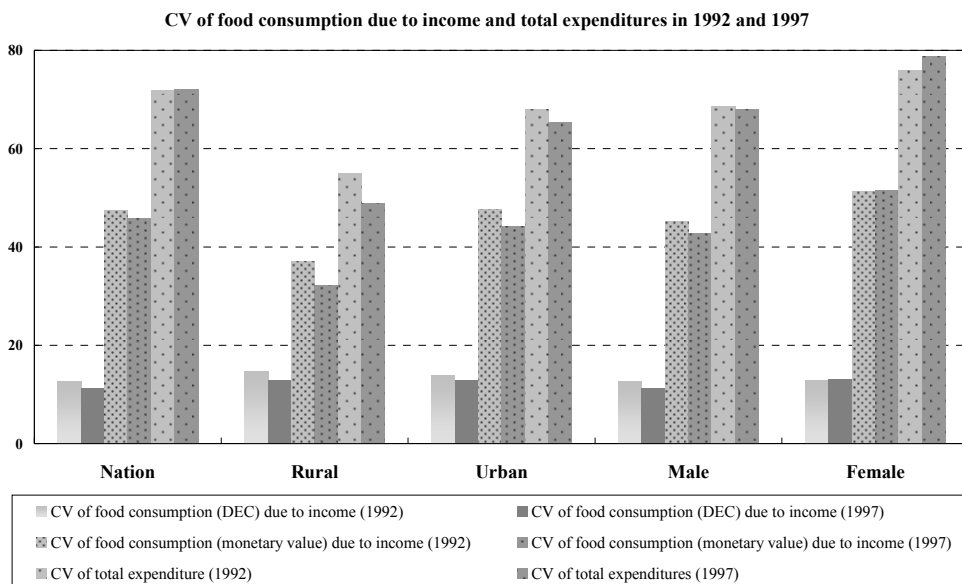
higher for household headed by women. Indeed, it's for this later group of population that total expenditures or food consumption expenditures are the most unequally distributed.

Graph 8a. Gini coefficients



Graph 8b depicts inequality in terms of the coefficient of variation (CV); the situation is similar to that shown using Gini coefficients. Even though income inequality has not changed much these last years, access to food has become however more equal within household at national level.

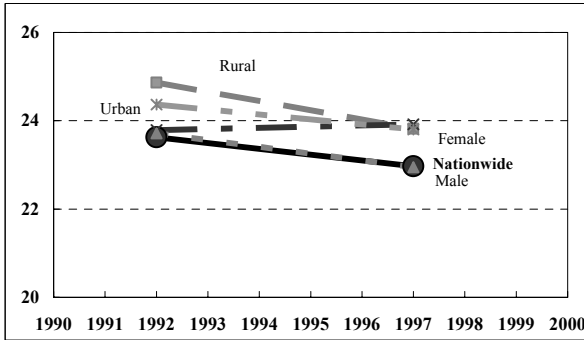
Graph 8b. Coefficient of variation



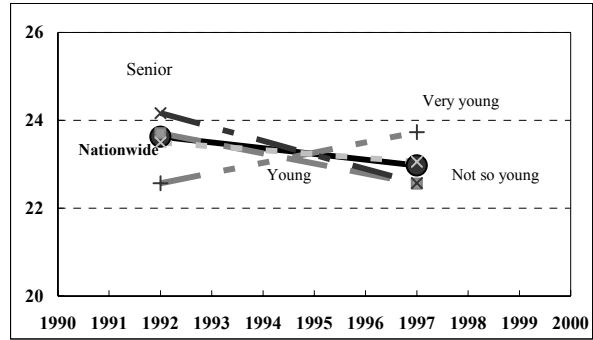
Surprisingly the region for which inequality in access to food has improved the most is the region of Mekong Delta which is also the one that shows the highest level of prevalence. It seems that the improvement in access to food has not been enough to compensate the loss of 30kcal (from 2020 in 1992/93 to 1990 in 1997/98) in food availability in this region.

Graph 8. Coefficient of variation of dietary energy consumption (DEC) due to income

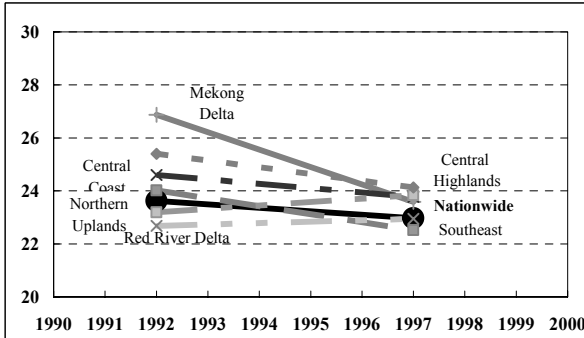
a. by area, sex of the head of the household or level of expenditure



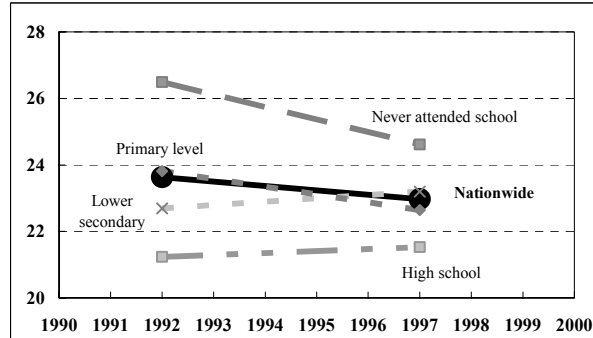
b. according to age of the head of the household



c. by administrative regions



d. by education level of the head of the household

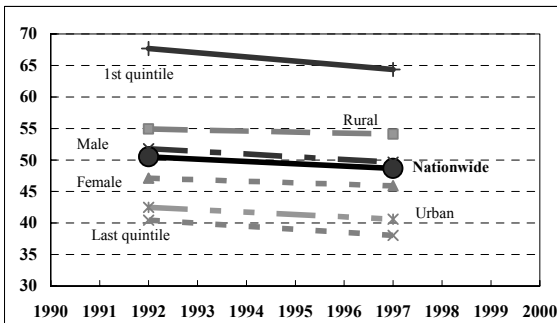


D. Share of food in total consumption

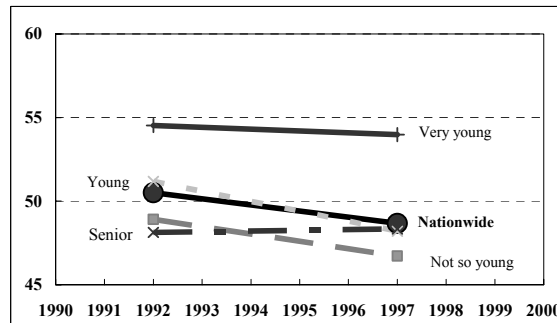
The trends of the share of the monetary value of food consumed with respect to the total consumption, also known as Engel ratio, have been relatively stable at reasonable level nationwide and for all population groups except for the population of the lowest expenditure quintile (See Graph 9a-9d).

Graph 9. Share of food in total consumption by population groups

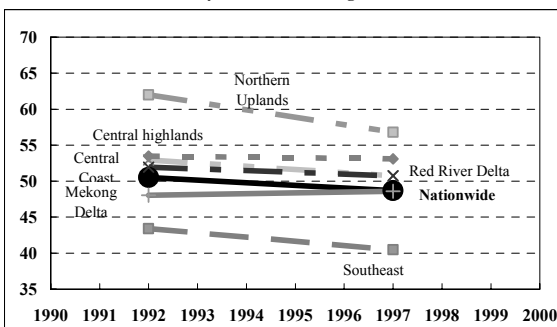
a. by area, sex of the head of the household or level of expenditure



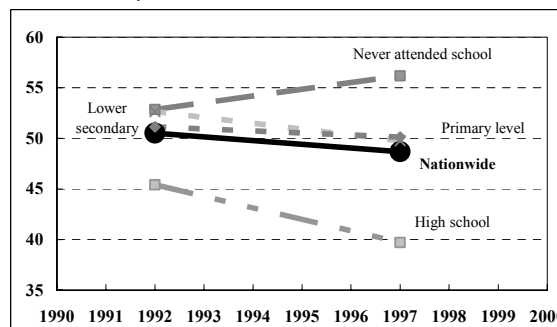
b. according to age of the head of the household



c. by administrative regions



d. by education level of the head of the household

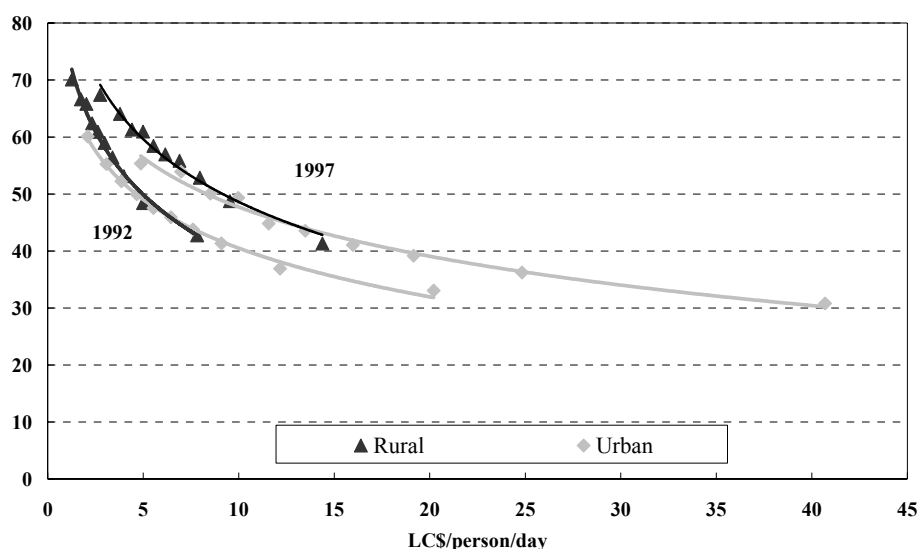


At national level, the amount of money spent on average on food consumption represents about half of the total consumption, share that slightly decreased over time. This share is lower and decreasing for urban households or population of the higher expenditure decile. For rural households or households whose head is very young or never attended school the share devoted to food represent more than half the value of total consumption. This share has even increased for households whose head never attended school. This trend is not surprising as amongst head of households who have never attended school, 23% are coming from the region of Mekong Delta (only administrative region showing an increasing share over the period) and 24% are headed by female.

In all assessed years, the lowest shares of food to total consumption were observed in the administrative region of the southeast while in the Northern Uplands the shares were high. The shares in other regions are very close to the national average. All of them are showing declining trend except the region of Mekond Delta.

As expenditures increase, the share of food in total consumption tends to decrease to represent less than a third for the 10th decile of expenditures. The trend pattern is the same in rural and urban areas even though the share is higher in rural areas. There is also a slight decrease of the share over time, the decrease being more pronounced for three first expenditure deciles than for higher deciles.

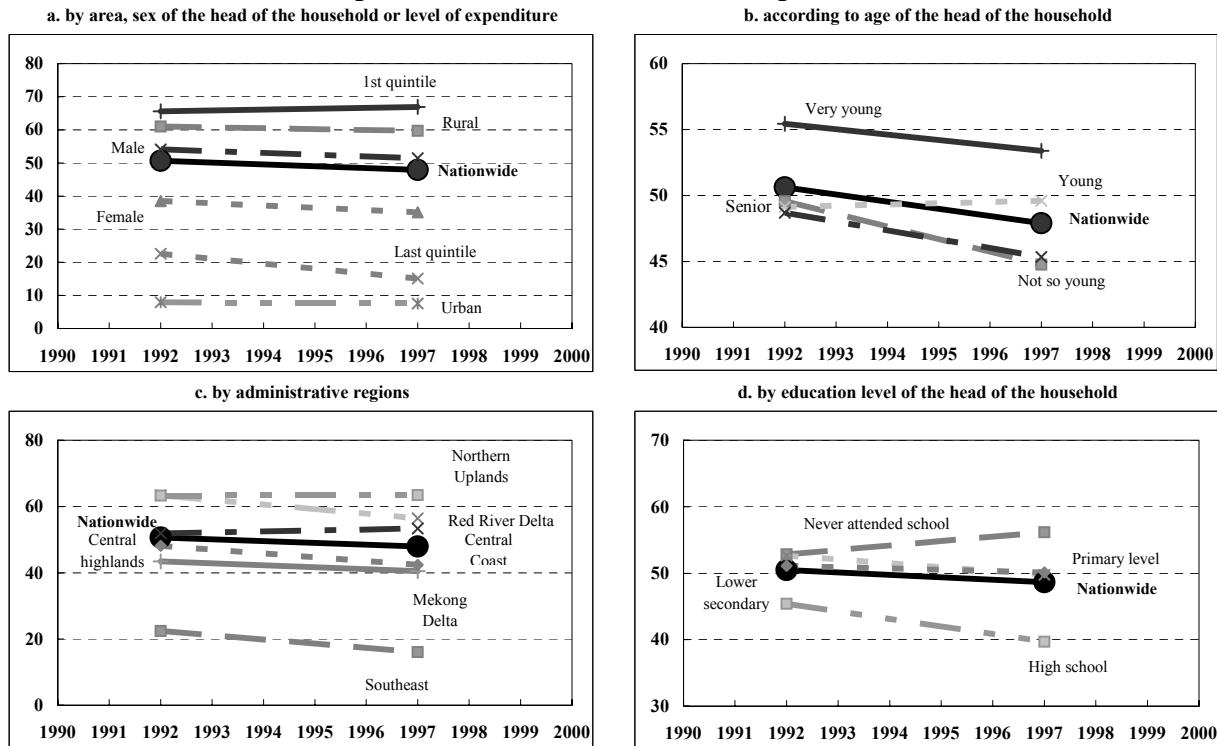
Graph 9e. Share of food in total consumption by area in 1997/98



E. Share of food from own production in total food

At national level, the trend of the share of food from own production (self-consumption) with respect to total food consumption in terms of dietary energy has remained almost the same during the assessed years and close to 50%. The largest share can be found for households of the first quintile of expenditure, or households from rural areas or households whose head never attended school. For those groups of population more than 60% of food consumption is coming from own production. Self-consumption represents also a major source of food consumption for very young households with a share averaging 55% (see Graphs 10a-10d).

Graph 10. Share of food from own production

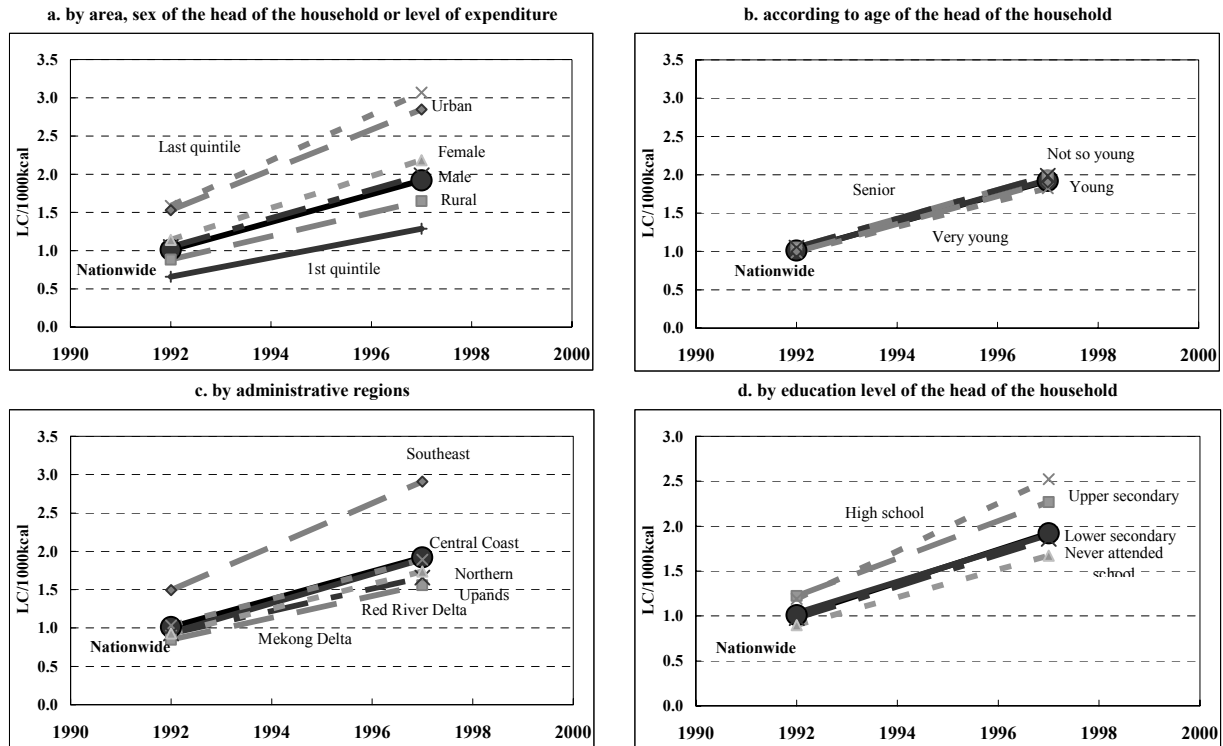


When looking at the shares at regional level, these later have decreased in all administrative regions except in Northern Uplands where it has almost remained stable and in Central Coast where it has significantly increased on line with the huge increase observed amongst households whose head never attended school. These two regions concentrated 37% of households whose head never attended school and also represented together about 45% of farm households in 1997/98 at the time of the Asian financial crisis, this can explain, to a certain extent, why households from these regions consumed more food from their own production.

F. Food cost

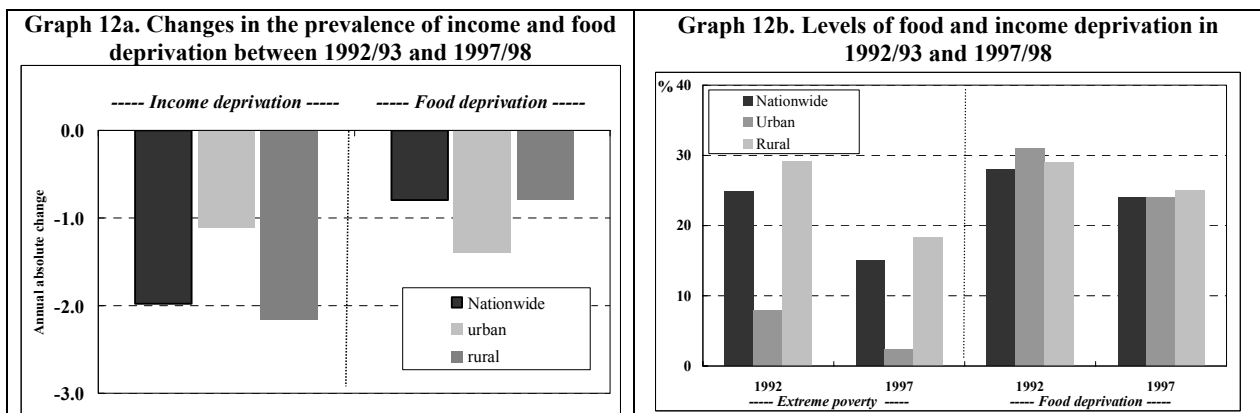
The trend of the dietary energy unit cost (LC/1000 kilocalories) has to be put in parallel with the start of the Asian financial crisis that translated into huge increases in domestic prices. The amount of money spent on one unit of calorie more than doubled between 1992/93 and 1997/98 for all groups of population and in all administrative regions. It has increased less among rural households or households of the lowest expenditure quintile (see Graphs 11a-11d). People from the region of the southeast have to spend more to buy one unit of calorie than national average. In this region half of the population is living in urban area and 67 percent of the food consumed has to be purchased and in average the level of total expenditures is higher in this region than in other regions (almost the double). This region also concentrates the wealthiest proportion of the population.

Graph 11. Food cost by population groups



g. Income deprivation versus food deprivation

From the graph 12a, that shows the average annual absolute change in food deprivation and extreme poverty⁵ between 1992/93 and 1997/98, it appears that if Vietnam made considerable progress in reducing proportion of food deprived, according to World Bank estimates, the progress in reducing extreme poverty at national level is more significant as the number of persons living under the food poverty line decreased from 1 persons over 4 in 1992/93 to 1 person over 7 in 1997/98. But at regional level, the results are more unexpected as hunger has not decreased in rural areas at the same remarkable pace than extreme poverty. Indeed, the pace at which food deprivation has declined was faster in urban areas than rural areas while the reverse was observed for extreme poverty.



⁵ Extreme poverty is based on the “food poverty line” that is defined as the per capita cost of purchasing a specific basket of food items, which in case of Vietnam corresponds to a benchmark of per capita calorie requirement of 2100 calories per day. Overall poverty as estimated by World Bank is based on a “final poverty line” that adds to the “food poverty line” an amount that is deemed necessary to cover non-food consumption requirements. Note that the benchmark adopted by World Bank differs from the 1730 kcal used by FAO as minimum energy requirement to estimate number of undernourished in Vietnam.

From graph 12b it appears that if food deprivation is almost the same in rural area than urban areas, people living under the poverty line are yet more concentrated in rural areas. World Bank estimates that about one person over five in rural areas does not have enough money to spend on a typical food basket to reach the benchmark of 2100 calories per person per day. When put in parallel with FAO estimates based on a benchmark of 1730 calories per person per day as minimum requirement to maintain a healthy life and light physical activity, this rate stands at one person over five suffering from hunger. This comparison is interesting as it raises the issue of the choice of the benchmarks used to estimate food deprivation or extreme poverty and the differences in methodology used to measure poverty or food deprivation. One is based on the cost of an average representative food basket and the other one on the actual distribution of food in dietary energy consumption amongst households. Note also that the pace at which prevalence of income and food deprivation is decreasing is not necessary the same for all countries. For instance, a study based on 1993, 1998 and 2001 LSMS found that Nicaragua has been more successful in fighting hunger than extreme poverty.

V. Conclusions and remarks

- Overall Asia and the Pacific (AP) is with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) one of the best-performing regions in the developing world. It decreased its hunger both, in terms of prevalence and number of undernourished during the first half of the 1990s. The decreasing trend observed in the number of undernourished during the beginning of the decade shifted to an increasing trend in the second half of 1990's.
- Even though significant progress in reducing hunger has been achieved so far, hunger reduction must be accelerated to reach by 2015 the MDG target and not to say the more ambitious WFS goal.
- Overall, in AP except for three countries (Korea DPR, Malaysia and Bangladesh) levels of prevalence of food deprivation are lower than 30 percent, all the countries being very close to reach the MDG target.
- Food consumption, inequality of accessing to food, share of food to total consumption, share of food from own production to total food consumption and food cost contribute to the different situations of food security in sub-national population groups as illustrated in the case of Vietnam.
- Based on preliminary results, progress in hunger reduction has been heterogeneous at sub-national levels in the case of Vietnam, and actions aiming to reduce hunger need to be reviewed in light of the various trends depicted by different food security statistics for different group of population with a special focus to the group of population of low income or from the region of Mekong Delta, the only region showing an increase in prevalence of food deprivation.

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