



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

Young Lives 
An International Study of Childhood Poverty

Growing-Up with the Promise of the MDGs: Children's hopes for the future

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Inequality, Children's Development and post-2015
Debates
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OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION

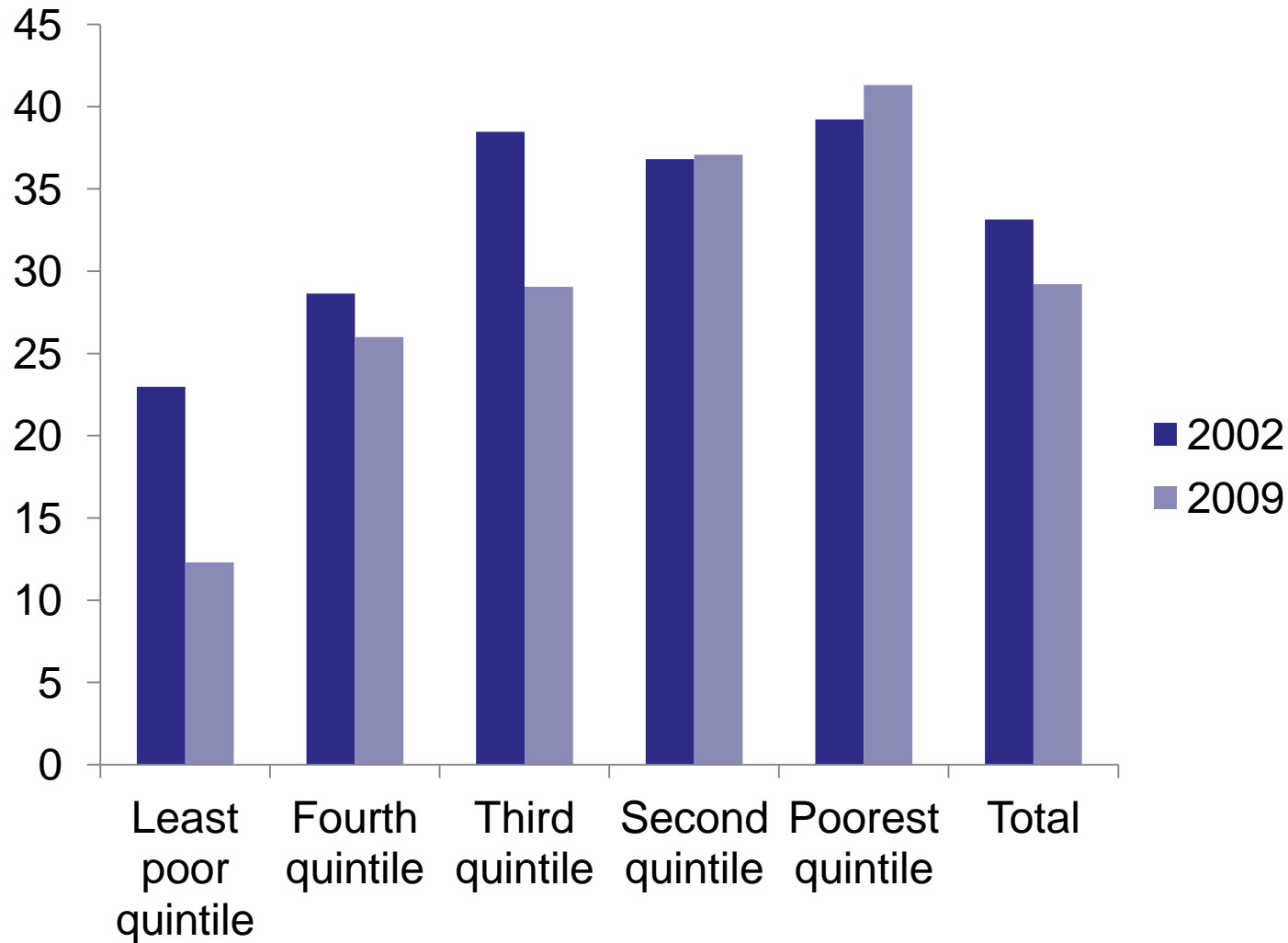
- The two faces of India:
Unequal progress towards the
MDGs
- Children's experiences of
growing up during the time
frame of the MDGs



THE TWO FACES OF INDIA

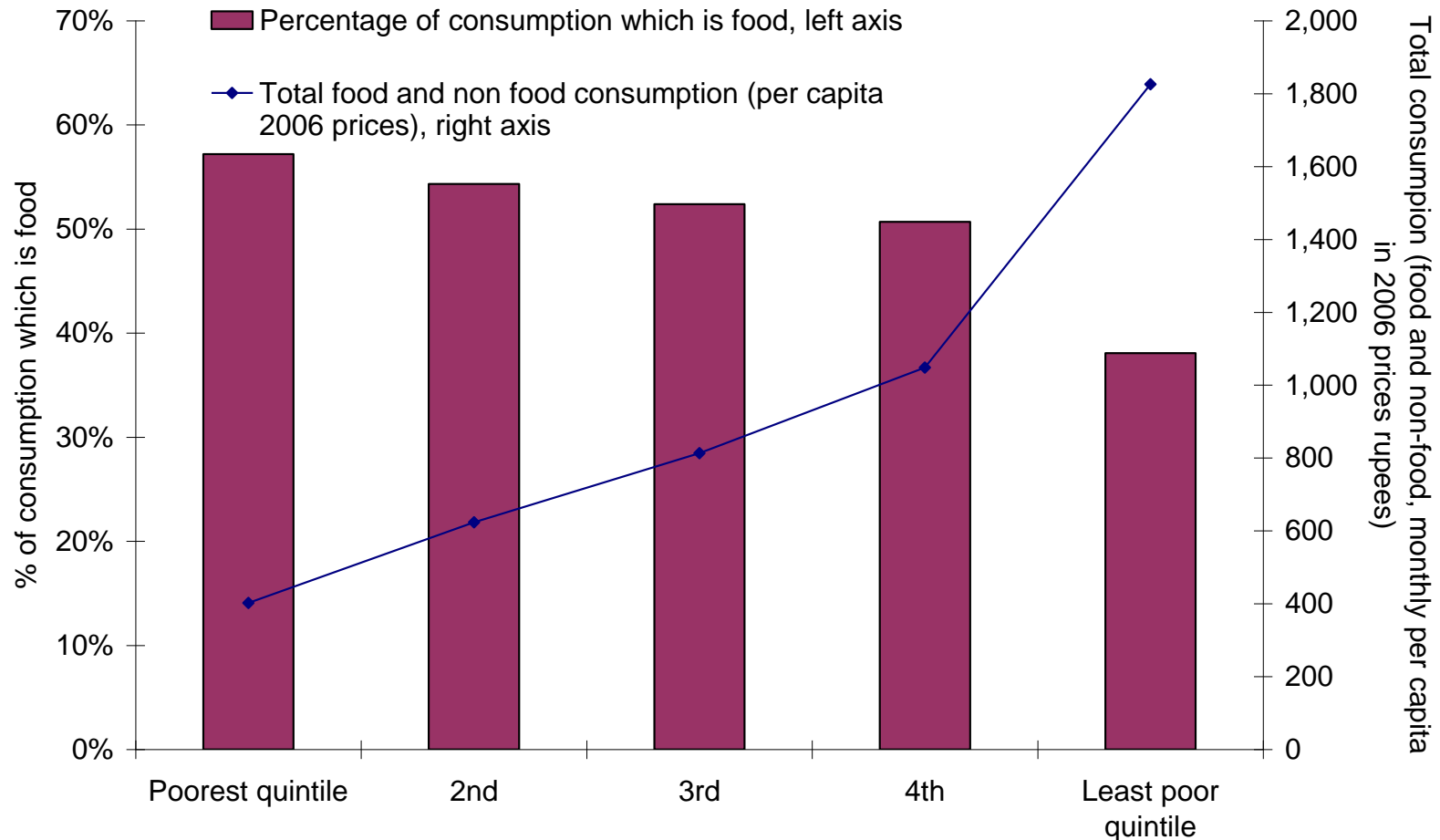
- Pay off of economic growth in human development:
“Have said earlier on a number of occasions and I repeat that the problem of malnutrition is a matter of national shame. Despite impressive growth in our GDP, the level of under-nutrition in the country is unacceptably high. We have also not succeeded in reducing this rate fast enough.” Dr. Manmohan Singh January 2012
- MDG data: 52.8% of Indian children under 5 moderately or severely stunted (1992) - 43.5% (2006) (9% reduction in 14 years)
- Same period World Bank data suggests average 6.5% GDP growth year on year

THEREFORE: PROGRESS BUT FOR WHOM?



Child stunting rate at age 8 (2002 and 2009) by wealth quintile: indicative of concentration of disadvantage

VULNERABILITY TO FOOD PRICE INFLATION



Spending on food in 2009: poorest households spending is less per person and this is a larger proportion of smaller budgets.

QUALITY OF SERVICES

- Pro-poor growth as a foundation: if economic policy increases inequality; social policy has to work much harder and may well be less effective. Policies like MGNREGA has a role to play in helping households manage risk. Important to get effective delivery as well as design.
- Early intervention: patchy pre-school access. Investments to set stage for later development but unequal access. Child nutrition and family health important policy issues.
- Education: problem has moved from getting children into school to ensuring they attend and learn effectively. Fast growing private sector school in India - how does that affect inequalities between groups? Risks that services for poorer people, become poor services?

CHANGING OPPORTUNITIES I: ‘WITH STUDIES I CAN BE SOMETHING’

- Children and caregivers stress the importance of education for children’s life chances:
“[if I left school] I wouldn’t be able to keep myself in the future. With studies I can be something and I know that I could be something.” (Susan, 16, Peru)
- High aspirations for the future with being able to support family and contribute to society important:
“The only way to repay their support is to study well and score good marks and achieve a good position in society about which my parents feel proud and be happy without any worries.” (Santhi, AP)
“I still want to return to Da Nang in the end...Da Nang is my homeland. I have to develop my homeland first.” (Phoc, 16, Vietnam)

CHANGING OPPORTUNITIES II: ‘I want her to marry when she has a job’

- Changing expectations for children’s future roles and responsibilities :

“Around here since they get married very early, they hate each other after they have children. I want to get married after I have a job when I am 30 years old.” (Fatuma, 15, Ethiopia)

“I want her to marry when she has a job and in her 25th year or so. [...] Their time is good because there is freedom. [...] In our time many things were hidden. For example, you did not tell someone about menstruation, but not they ask you what it is.” (Fatuma’s grandmother)

- But social risk creating new dilemmas for families:

“If girls live alone, gradually things will change and bad things begin to happen. Considering my case and brother’s, it is very advantageous that we are living together. Our life is decent.” (Biritu, 15, Ethiopia)

UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES I: ‘If the conditions in the household are difficult, it is difficult to study’

- Persisting inequalities preventing all children from benefitting in expansion of services and schooling with impacts on children’s development and well-being:
 - “Food shortage means I go to school hungry. I cannot properly attend class if I am hungry, so it affects my schooling.” (Kasseye, 14, Ethiopia)
 - “We were eating 50 kilos of any cereal for three weeks. Now we have reduced and we consume the same amount of cereal for one month.” (Kasseye’s Mother)
 - “We are not sure of getting a job... we have to take up studies and work at the same time...If we depend totally on education alone we will not be able to do any work in case we don’t get a job” (boy, AP)

UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES II: 'I don't like to feel inferior to them'

- Inequality affects children's subjective well-being:

[It is difficult] when the students come wearing better clothes, I don't like to feel inferior to them, so it is a must for me to work to change my situation. [...] I used to hope and think that education would change my life but now I am only hoping that having a business will change me. (Bereket, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

I'm getting near to the point where I wont go out, I wont go out and study outside as it makes me afraid....because they are saying that it is getting more insecure. (Susan, 16, Lima, Peru)

KEY CONCLUSIONS

- Fast growth, much gain on child indicators but human development slower than economic growth and gains unequal. How to direct attention towards where gains have been least?
- Policy matters and MDG framework associated with real gains. Shows up in families' attitudes and expectations
- Challenges around moving towards quality/outcomes. Recognition that problems are multi-dimensional, so need joined up solutions
- Post 2015 agenda:
 - (1) Human development remains central;
 - (2) Movement from quantity to outcomes?
 - (3) If inequality matters, how to reflect in framework?