INSIGHTS

HERD International

Growing up Unequal: Stunting Disparities among under-5 Children in Nepal

Stunting, based on a child's height-for-age, is a measure of chronic nutritional deficiency. Children with height-for-age are classified as moderately or severely stunted based on WHO Standard.

1 in 4 children under 5 years in Nepal faces stunting.

POOR NUTRITION
IRREVERSIBLE
RECURRENT INFECTIONS

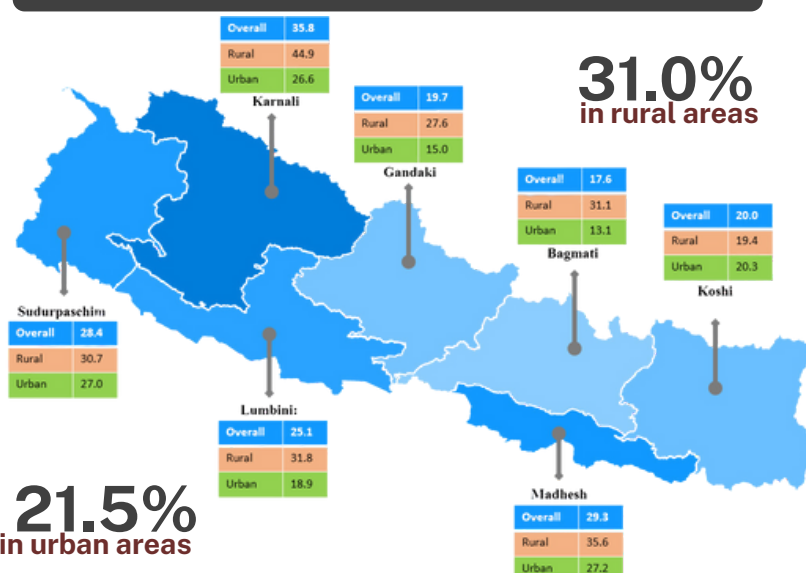**Affects physical and cognitive development**

Reduces future productivity

Obesity risk in later life

Poor health outcomes

Prevalence of Stunting in Nepal

31.0% in rural areas

21.5% in urban areas

Karnali	
Overall	35.8
Rural	44.9
Urban	26.6

Gandaki	
Overall	19.7
Rural	27.6
Urban	15.0

Bagmati	
Overall	17.6
Rural	31.1
Urban	13.1

Koshi	
Overall	20.0
Rural	19.4
Urban	20.3

Sudurpaschim	
Overall	28.4
Rural	30.7
Urban	27.0

Lumbini:	
Overall	25.1
Rural	31.8
Urban	18.9

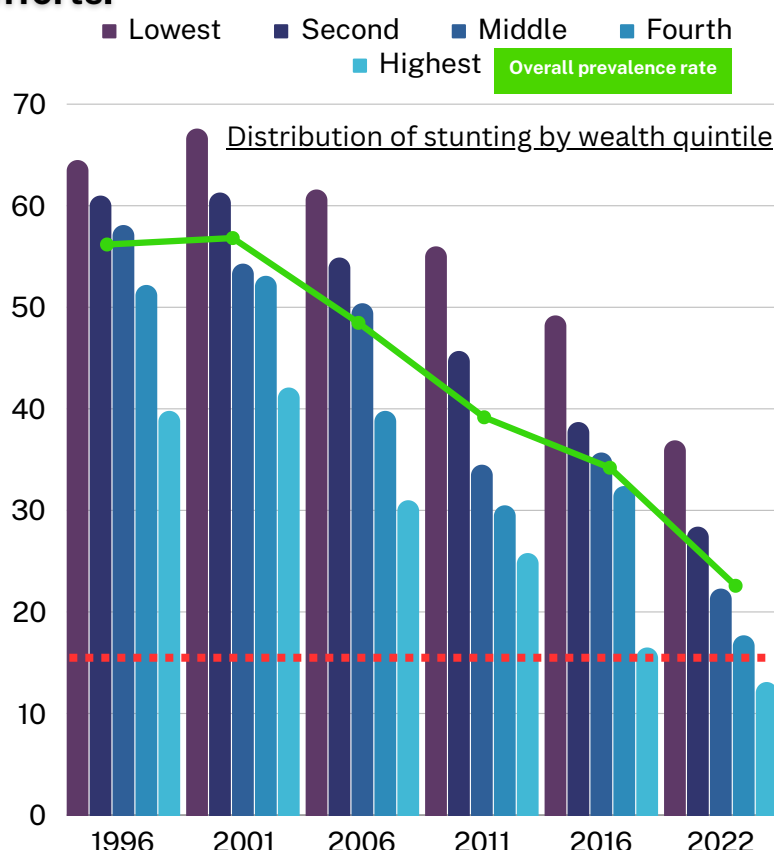| Madhesh	
Overall	29.3
Rural	35.6
Urban	27.2

Trend of Stunting by Wealth Quintile and Mother's Education (1996-2022)

Stunting significantly decreased over the last decades.

Disproportionately higher among the lowest wealth quintile.

**SDG target already achieved for highest wealth quintile .**

Persistent inequality demands sustained efforts.

Legend: ■ Lowest ■ Second ■ Middle ■ Fourth ■ Highest | **Overall prevalence rate**

Distribution of stunting by wealth quintile

(Chart: y-axis 0–70, x-axis 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2022)

Legend: ■ No education ■ Primary ■ Secondary ■ Higher | **Overall rate of stunting**

Distribution of stunting by Mothers education

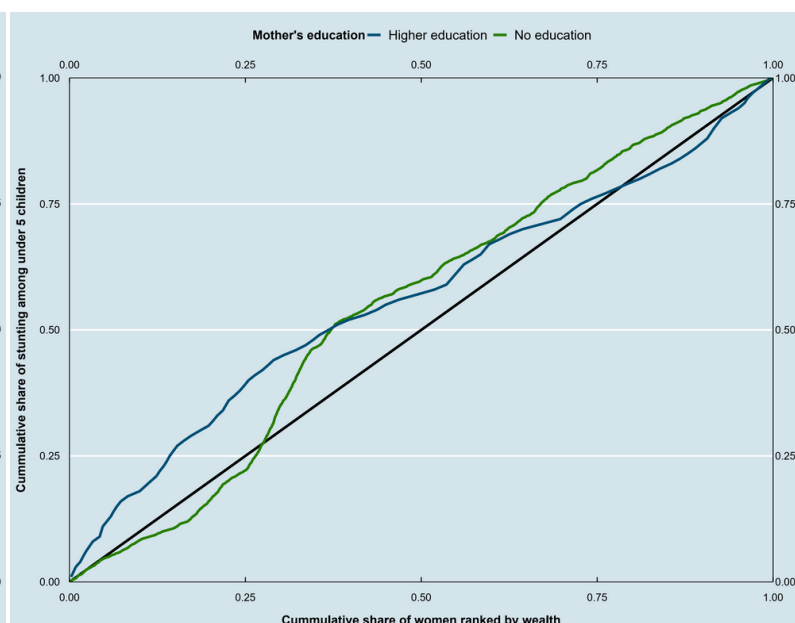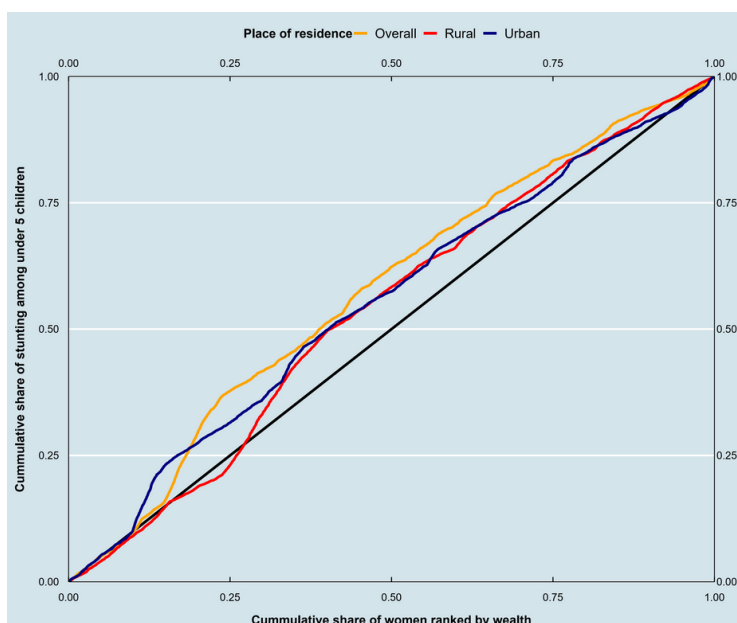(Chart: y-axis 0–70, x-axis 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016, 2022)
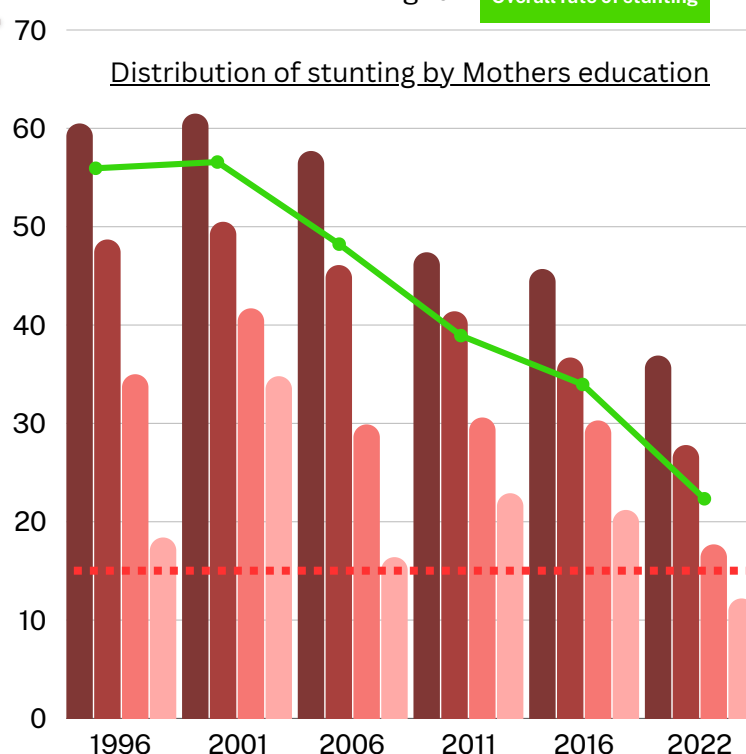
Stunting prevalence is highest among mothers with no education.

Stunting decreases with higher educational attainment of mother.

Despite evident progress, meeting SDG target remains a challenge.

Concentration Curve for Stunting Prevalence

We used concentration indices and curves to determine how stunting is spread across different wealth and education levels. The black line represents equality – deviations from this line show where inequalities exist.

Place of residence — Overall — Rural — Urban

(Chart: Cumulative share of stunting among under 5 children vs Cummulative share of women ranked by wealth)

Mother's education — Higher education — No education

(Chart: Cumulative share of stunting among under 5 children vs Cummulative share of women ranked by wealth)

Stunting is more common among under-5 children from poorer families in every group (overall, rural or urban).

Higher stunting rates persist among under-5 children from poorer families in both groups (mothers with higher or no education).