

# Interventions targeting to reduce inequities: Gaps in breastfeeding and complementary feeding by sub-population closed in Suaahara II areas in Nepal

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## Background:

- **Suaahara II:** multi-sectoral nutrition program covering 60% of Nepal's communities aiming to reduce maternal and child undernutrition and close related inequities via targeting.
- **Equity:** operationalized to include socio-economics, caste/ethnicity, gender, and geography.

## Rationale/objective:

- To track progress in infant and young child feeding indicators at the population level in Suaahara intervention areas
- To disaggregate progress in these same indicators by various measures of equity to assess whether baseline gaps were narrowing

## Methods:

### Data collection:

Externally collected annual monitoring surveys, multi-stage cluster sampling, households w/child 0-5y, (N=3648, each year)

### Data analyses:

Descriptive analyses (%) among households with child 0-2y (N=1850 in 2017 & 1395 in 2022)

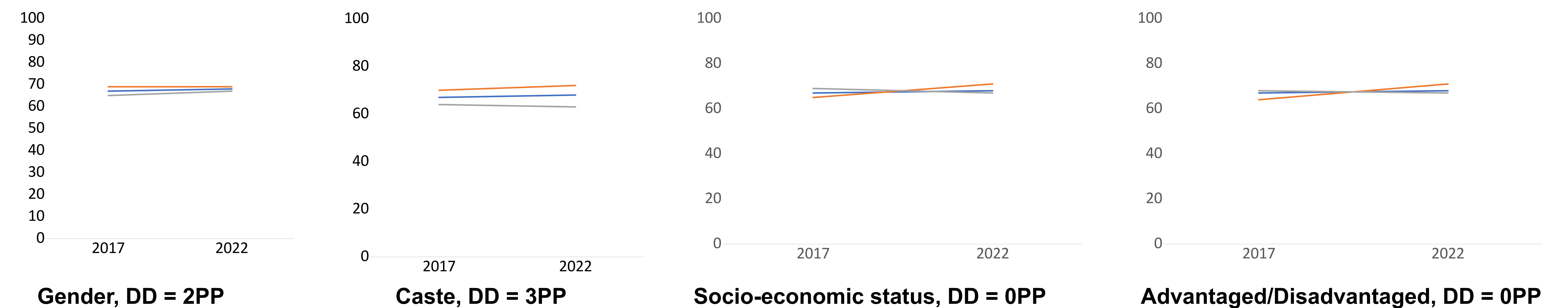
### Ethics:

Nepal Health Research Council approval

	Total
I) District	16
II) U/R municipality	16*2=32
III) Cluster	32*3=96
IV) Sub-cluster	96*2=192
V) Households with child 0-5y	192*19= 3648

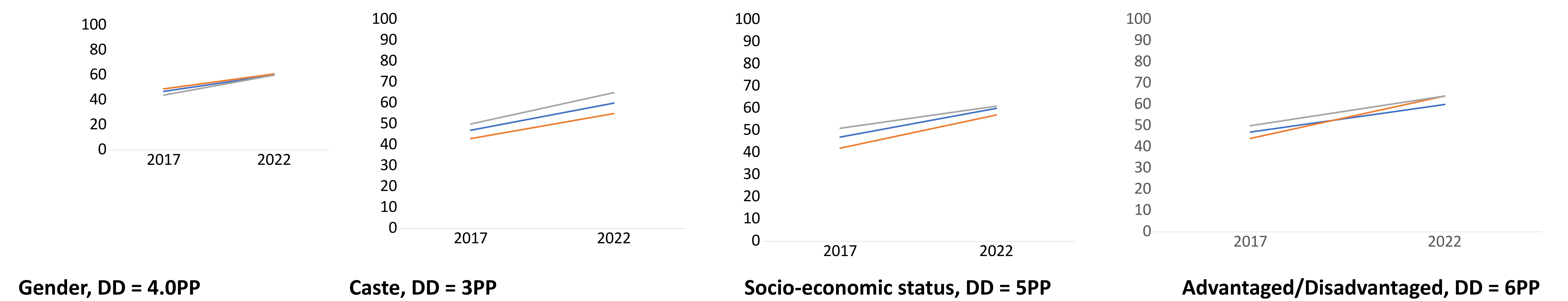
## Results:

- **Early initiation of breastfeeding in Suaahara II areas (2017: 67%; 2022: 68%; 1 percentage point increase)**



1. **Gender:** gaps closed as girls caught up and overtook prevalence among boys.
2. **Caste:** progress for all, more progress on socially excluded compared with not socially excluded.
3. **SES:** significant progress among lower compared with higher SES .
4. **Disadvantaged/Core+ areas:** disadvantaged caught up with non-disadvantaged.

- **Child min dietary diversity in Suaahara II areas (N: 2017=1385, 2022= 1403) (2017: 47%; 2022: 60%; 13 percentage point increase)**



1. **Gender:** no significant differences in changes over time by gender
2. **Caste:** no significant differences in changes over time by caste, but lower caste started and remains slightly worse off
3. **SES:** closed gap as bottom SES started lower but had more progress and caught up with higher SES households
4. **Disadvantaged/Core+ areas:** close gap, significant differences in changes over time between those in disadvantaged areas vs. non-disadvantaged areas

## Study implications:

- These analyses supported annual identification of gaps in key nutrition-related practices by sub-populations to inform semi-annual work-planning and coaching of thematic field-based staff for micro-targeting.
- These findings suggest that targeting is a vital component of reducing equity gaps.
- Implementers, researchers, donors and governments need to work together to continue to develop methods for improved targeting and measurement of its effects.

