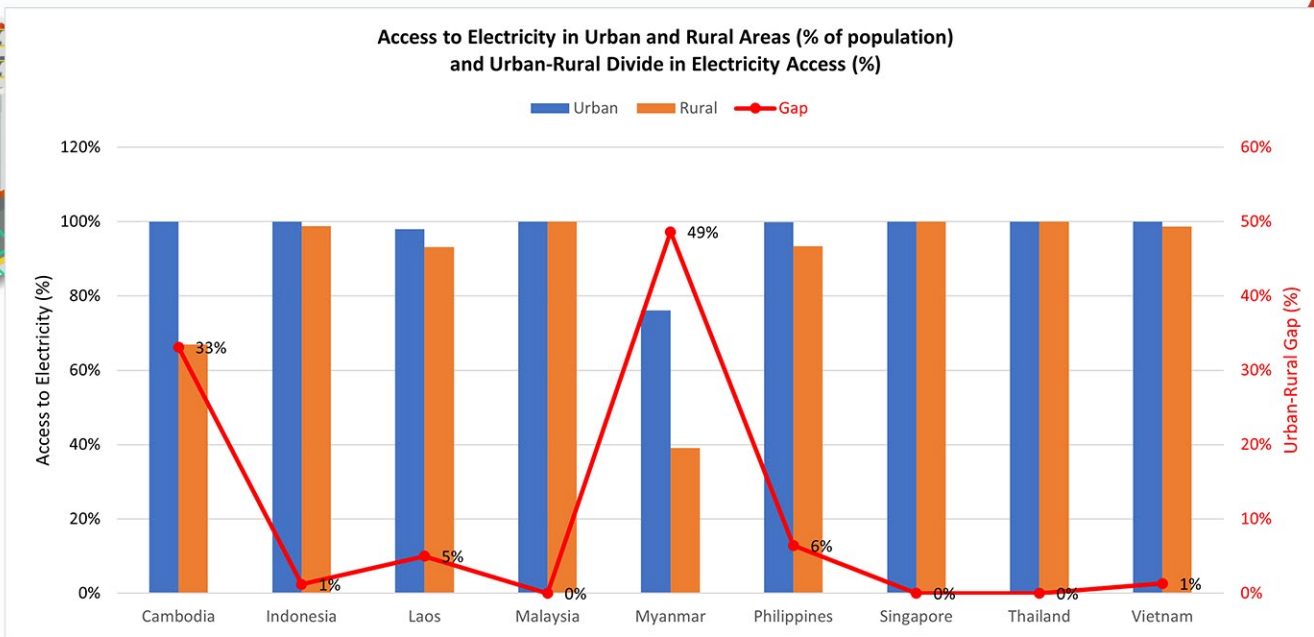


PITFALLS FOR DIGITISING FOOD DISTRIBUTION IN ASEAN

Compiled by Jose Ma. Luis Montesclaros

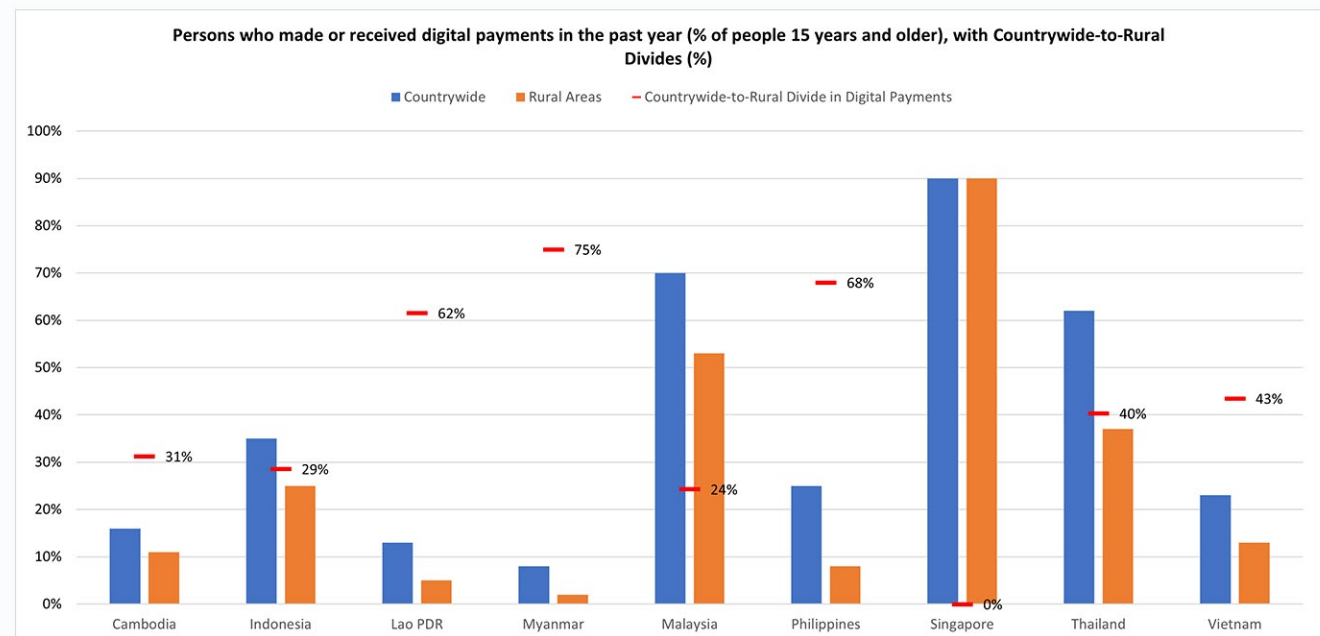
Movement controls amid the COVID-19 pandemic have given a strong rationale for digitising food distribution. Within India's push for digital ration cards, for instance, over 222 million ration cards have been given out, for obtaining grains such as rice and wheat for daily consumption.

Rural-Urban Gaps in Electricity Access: Not all ASEAN countries have sufficient access to electricity to enable digitised food distribution across all areas. Within ASEAN, Myanmar has the largest urban-rural gap of 49%, followed by Cambodia at 33%.



Source: Modified from The Economist Group (2021). Inclusive Internet Index 2021.
Note: Brunei data unavailable. The urban-rural gap is computed as the percentage difference between urban and rural access.

Differences in Abilities to Leverage Digital Payments: Further challenges lie in disparities in the abilities of individuals to either receive subsidies and other payments digitally, or to make such payments. Significant urban-rural disparities in digital payments can also be observed (favouring urban areas), even among countries like Malaysia and Thailand which have relatively higher income levels within ASEAN.



Source: Modified from World Bank (2017). World Bank Findex Database 2017. Note: Brunei data unavailable. The countrywide-rural gap is computed as the percentage difference between country and rural access; data on urban access was not available. Data points for ASEAN in the FINDEX have not been updated since 2017.