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sustainable solutions for ending hunger and poverty



Agricultural or Food System Transformation in Asia ?

Suresh Babu

ICABR Conference on Disruptive Innovations, Value Chains, and Rural Development

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The World Bank, Washington, DC



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Towards better metrics and policymaking for seed system development

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Outline

- **Significant progress in reducing hunger and malnutrition, but challenges remain**
- **Transformation of Asia's food system is crucial – what are the current challenges?**
- **What lessons Asian Countries offer?**
- **Evidence-based Policy research support, Data systems, Capacity for policy analysis**

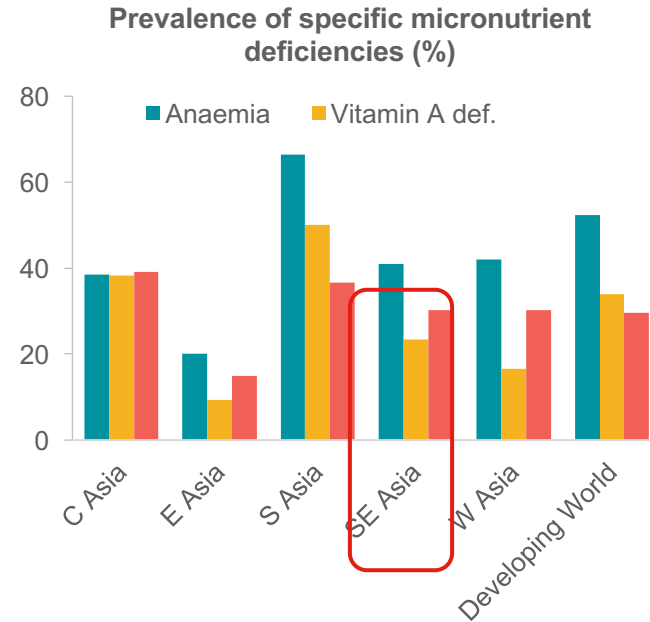
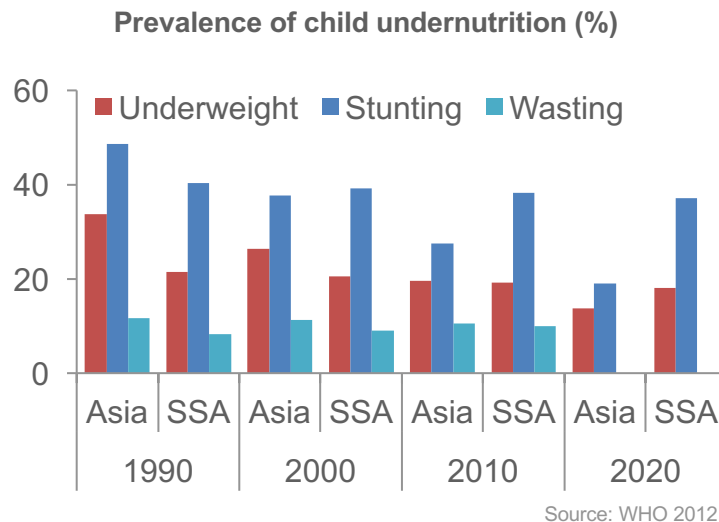




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Asia: Despite progress, child undernutrition remains high; overweight / obesity rising (Fan, 2016)



Prevalence adult overweight/obesity, Southeast Asia, 2014 (%)

Overweight	28%	21%
	Female	Male
Obese	8%	4%
	Female	Male

Source: WHO 2015

Economic cost of micronutrient deficiencies in Myanmar = 2.4% of GDP annually

Source: Win 2016



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Challenges to Food System Transformation in Asia

- Climate resilient food systems
- Technology and innovation systems
- Institutional bottlenecks
- Policy process challenges
- Cross-cutting issues



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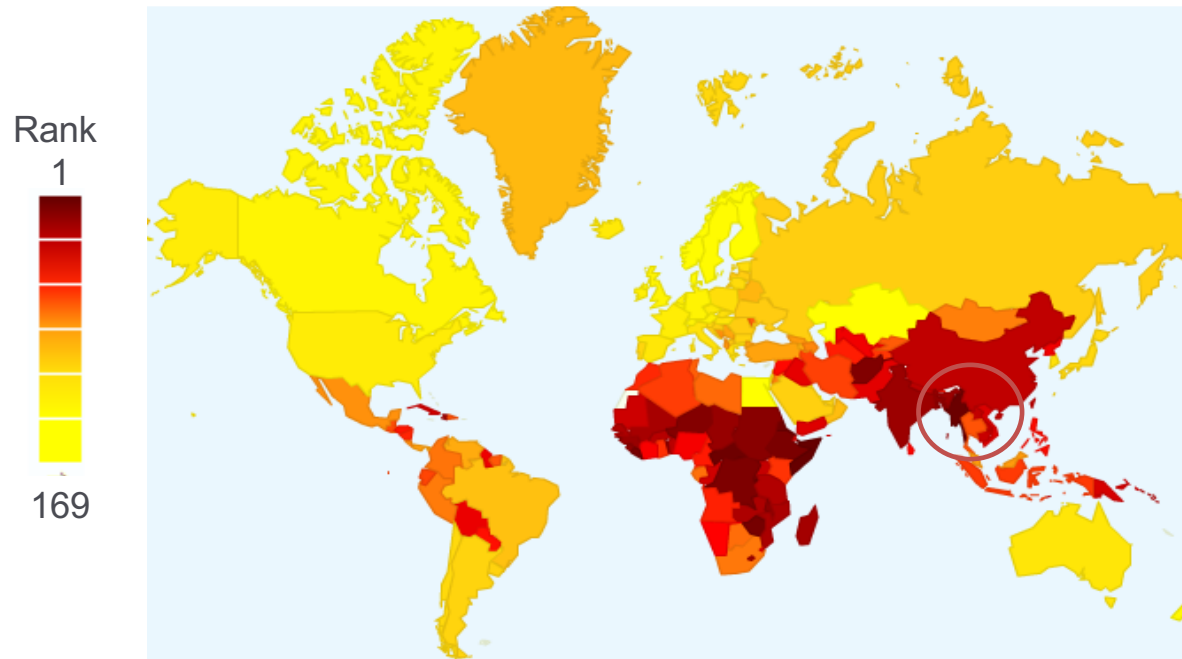


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Climate change and extreme weather events (Fan , 2016)

Overall vulnerability: Physical impacts adjusted for coping ability



Myanmar ranks 2nd out of 187 countries in the Global Climate Risk Index

Source: Wheeler 2011; OCHA 2016





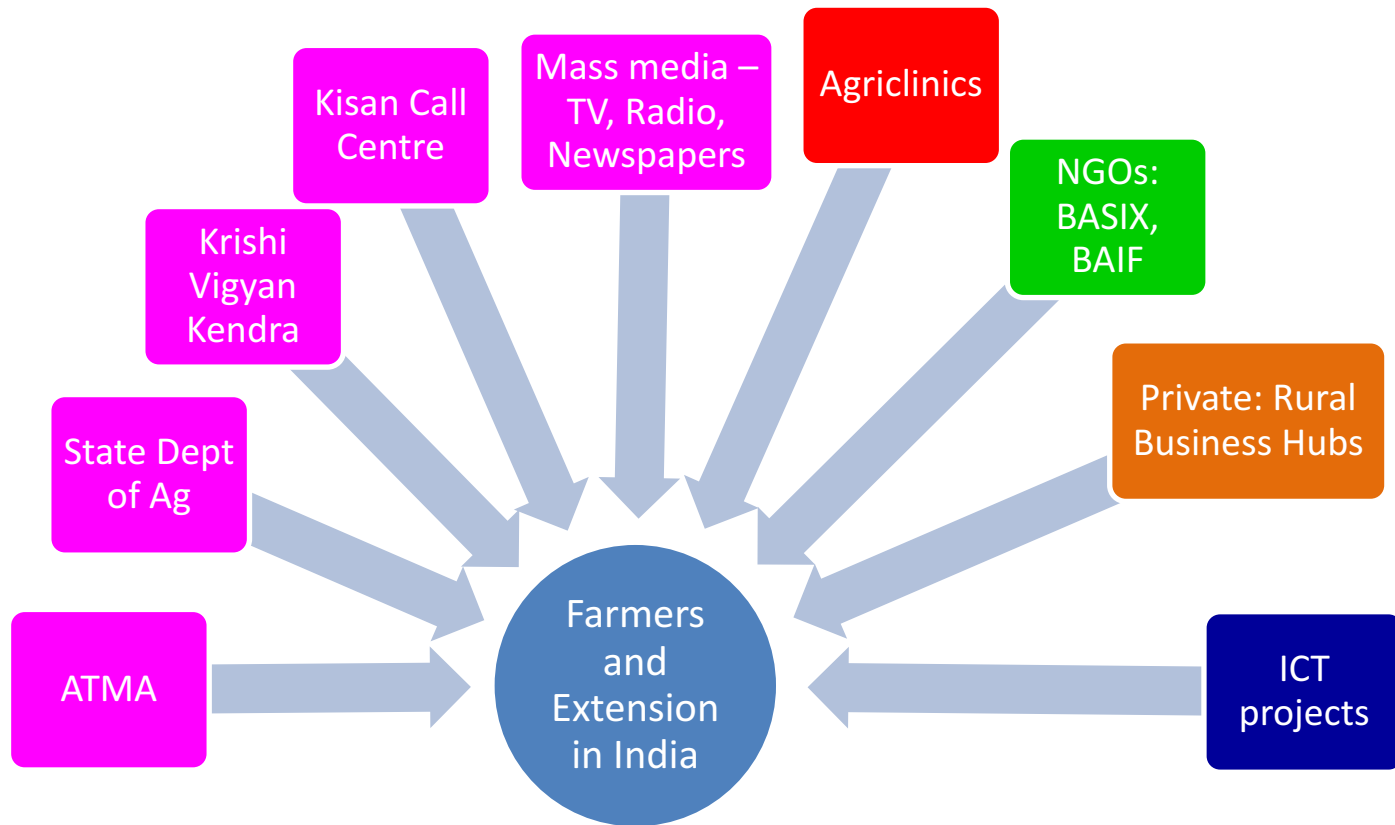
Technology Challenges

- Technology – labor saving?
- Getting out of agriculture?
- Rural non-farm employment?





Increasing productivity actors and players in rural landscape





Technology to Institutional Challenges

- Institutions to help the poor?
- Who are the poor?
- Where are they?
- Why are they?
- How to help?





Rural Institutions

- The Gram Panchayats – Village level governance
- Linkages to service delivery
- Linkages to government programs
- Linkages to NGOs
- Linkages to Private Sector
- Working with Women Self Help groups



Institutional challenges affect Myanmar's agriculture

(Thein and Babu, 2015, ADS, 2018, Fan, 2016)

Agriculture sector lacks structural competitiveness, e.g.

- Natural rubber production: 77% increase over one decade
- Sugarcane production: ~30% increase

Growing land constraints

- Competing use from other sectors; land speculation; land concession
- Smallholders who lack assets, credit find difficulty to purchase/lease land
- Land consolidation: Slow, limited process due to requirement of huge government budget
- Sound approach needed, e.g. Block farming in the Philippines



Food System to Health Transformation?

- Macronutrients to Micronutrients
- Iron – Anemia
- Vitamin A deficiency
- Child malnutrition remains high
- Obesity and overweight
- Food system approach to nutrition





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Policy Process Challenges

- What policies are in place?
- Who really makes the policy?
- What programs are in place?
- How they affect people?
- How to influence policy?
- What is our understanding of the policy process?
- How to monitor the impact?



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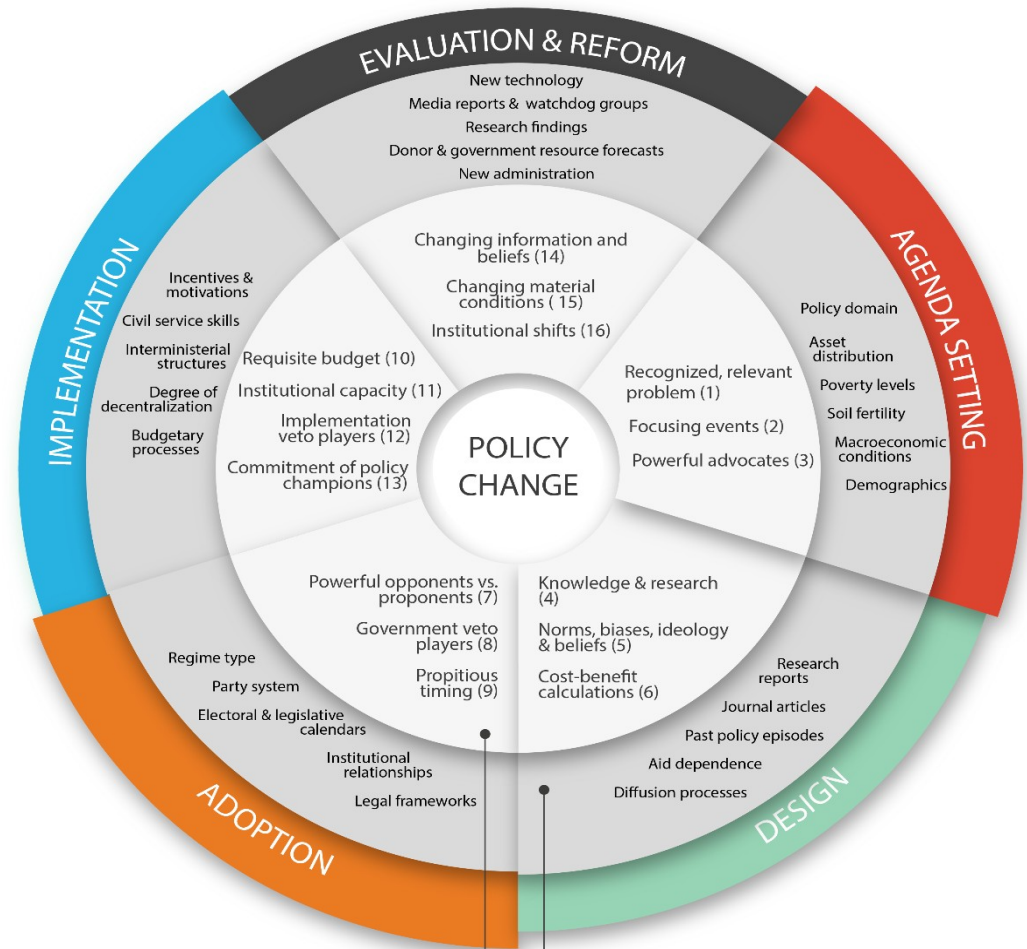
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Resnick, Danielle; Haggblade, Steven; Babu, Suresh; Hendriks, Sheryl L.; and Mather, David. 2018.

The kaleidoscope model of policy change: Applications to food security policy in Zambia.

World Development 109(September 2018): 101-120.



Illustrative Contextual Conditions

Key Determinants of Policy Change



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Policy and Program Interventions

- Cash transfers
- Food related programs
- Price and tax subsidies
- Fee waivers in health
- Public works – asset creation
- Microcredit and informal insurance





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Lessons from Selected Asian Countries

- Bangladesh
- China
- India
- Vietnam
- Thailand
- What about Cambodia, Nepal, Laos and Myanmar?



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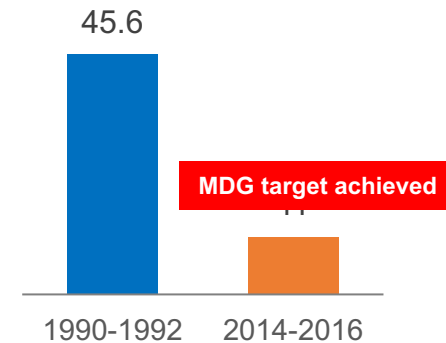
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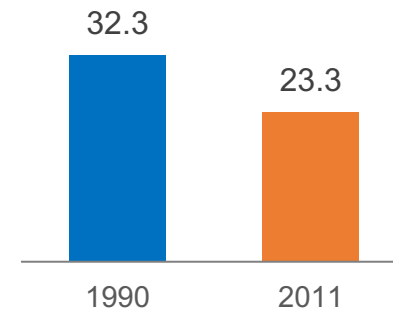
Lessons from Vietnam (Fan, 2016)

- **Doi Moi reforms**
 - Decollectivization of farmland, equitable land rights
 - Liberalization of agric. marketing, trade, FDI
- **Large public expenditure for nutrition and health**
 - Nationwide health coverage and subsidies to poor people
 - ~25% of national health programs on nutrition
 - Child-health and family-planning programs
- **Supporting human capital development and rural non-farm economic growth**
- **Large scale social programs for nutrition, health, and family planning**

Prevalence of undernourishment



Prevalence of child stunting



Source: FAO 2015; UNICEF/WHO/WB 2014

Source: Klump 2007; von Braun et al. 2008; Vandermoortele & Bird 2011





Lessons from China (Fan, 2016)

- **Decollectivization of agriculture**
 - Introduction of Household Responsibility System for securing land rights
- **Pro-market reforms and dismantling of state planning and monopolies**
- **Policies for human capital development and rural non-farm economic growth**
- **Large scale social programs incl. on nutrition, health, and family planning**
- **Complementary investments in education, clean water, and good sanitation**

Source: von Braun et al. 2008; Fan et al. 2007; Fan 2010





Lessons from Thailand (Fan, 2016)

- **Market-oriented agricultural growth**
 - Modernized marketing chains that connected smallholders to markets
 - Increased investments in agricultural research and extension
 - Product specialization and high diversification
- **Integrated and community-based nutrition interventions**
 - Nutrition programs integrated into national plan
 - Focus on underdeveloped areas and vulnerable populations
 - Clear linkages between agriculture and nutrition for sustainable impact
 - Involvement of community health volunteers for service delivery

Source: Kachondham 1992; FAO 2006; von Braun et al. 2008; Leturque and Wagginns 2011





Lessons from India (Jan, 2016)

Much effort made to improve food security and nutrition at national, household level

Production

- Food Security Mission
- Subsidy in fertilizer and irrigation
- MSP and assured procurement

Availability

- Food reserve and stocks (> 80 million ton)
- 500 thousand fair price shops

Access

- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Program
- Direct Cash Transfer

Affordability

- Subsidized food to people BPL
- Food Security Bill (Right to Food)

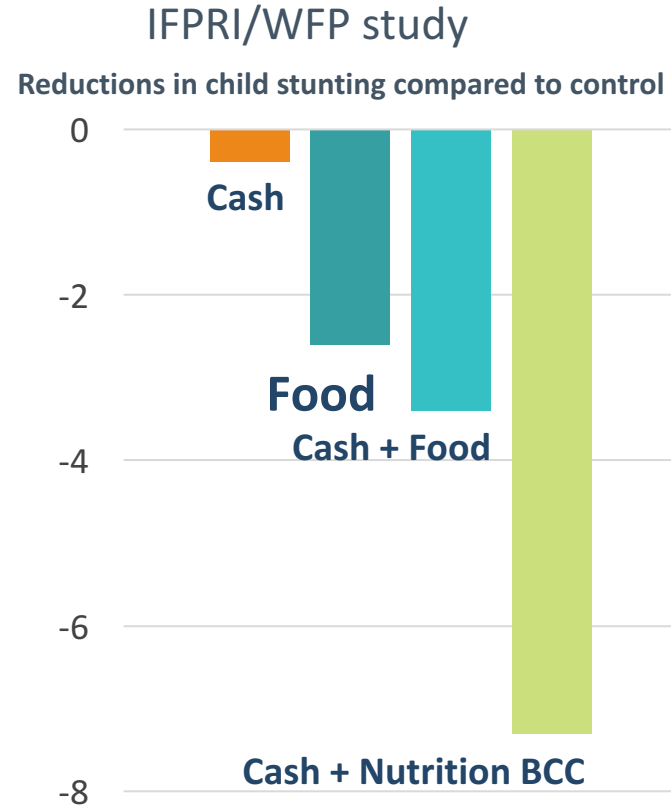
Source: Joshi 2013





Lessons from Bangladesh (Fan, 2016)

- **Integrating nutrition into social safety net improves nutritional outcomes**
- **~ 12% of government budget** (2.3% of GDP) allocated to social safety net programs for Fiscal Year 2015 in Bangladesh
- **Evidence from WFP program**
 - Safety nets reduce household poverty and improve food security and women's empowerment
 - BUT few improvements on child nutritional status



Source: Hoddinott, Ahmed, et al. 2015





What about Developing Asia? Key attention areas

- Investment in Research and Development
- Smallholders farming and transformation
- Value Chains – farm producer organizations
- Food systems approach
- Build resilience towards climate change
- Multisectoral strategies
- Local level transformation





Cross-cutting Issues

- State vs Private sector
- Institutional capacity
- Targeting the vulnerable
- Evaluation – impact vs process
- Political economy of rural development
- Gender mainstreaming
- Community based development
- Paradigm shifts – Food security – Farming Systems Research – Livelihood approaches – Food System Resilience





Capacity Development?

- Translate policies and programs into action
- Build capacity for local governance
- Empowering rural youth?
- Ride the new wave of High Value Agriculture
- Public-Private Partnerships





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