



THE RELEVANCE OF SPECIAL AGRICULTURAL ZONES IN KERALA WITH REFERENCE TO PADDY CULTIVATION

ABSTRACT

The term special agricultural zone has been propounded by the prominent agricultural scientist Dr. M S Swaminathan for countering the food deficit in India. A Special Agricultural Zone (SAZ) is where an agricultural land is exclusively reserved for agriculture with all the basic facilities like water, electricity for the farmers. In short, it's a region-centric development of agriculture taking into consideration of the ecological, economic and environmental sustainability aspects of the farmland. The SAZ was first set up at Uttarakhand in 2011. The government of Kerala has introduced this concept in the recent economic survey 2017 owing to the rising import of rice, dwindling area under cultivation and farmer distress. Many foreign countries like Srilanka are in the initial state of setting up of SAZ. The growing food deficit, exponentially increasing population, import of food grains and environmental issues have called for an important status for agriculture. Thus SAZ is the solution of "twin-balance challenge" that Kerala economy faces – the increased consumption of food crops by the growing population and reduction in its production. The self-sufficiency in the rice production is important for the food security and thus enabling the inclusive growth.

KEYWORDS

Population, SAZ, Region-Centric, Food-security, Inclusive growth.