



I N T R O D U C T I O N

In Focus: Perspectives on Rural Kerala

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The *In Focus* section in this issue is on aspects of Kerala's changing agricultural and rural economy.

K. N. Harilal and K. K. Eswaran explore the factors underlying low investment in agriculture, particularly with respect to mechanisation. In a State with relatively high wages and reported labour shortages, mechanisation should have taken place rapidly, but has not. The authors argue that the reason for this is the lack of investment surplus among the mass of small holders, and of the opportunity cost of using land for agriculture.

Deepak Johnson constructs, for the first time, a district-level database on changes in land use, and the area, production, and yield of 15 crops (10 food crops and five non-food crops) for the period since 1957, that is, since the formation of the State. R. Ramakumar explores the features of the category of "village" in Kerala. He delineates the specific features of the village in Kerala, comparing them to villages elsewhere, and discusses the consequent problems of identifying villages in Kerala for village studies. Michael Tharakan's brief note discusses the influence of the teachings of Sree Narayana Guru on improved health practices in Travancore.