

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RICE PRICING  
POLICIES IN ASIAN ECONOMIES

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More often than not, food policies in developing economies had been based on a multi-objective approach. Usually, conflicting requirements - such as the provision of producer incentives versus the protection of low income consumers - are placed on these objectives.

The objective of this paper is to analyse the relative emphasis that different countries had placed on different policy objectives (in regard to rice pricing) at different stages of the development process. The analysis distinguishes between the rice pricing policies followed by rice importing countries such as Indonesia, exporting countries such as Thailand, and more advanced economies such as Taiwan. Sri Lankan policies since independence are also considered in the comparative analysis.

This analysis shows that the overwhelming importance of rice, both in production and consumption, made the policy makers to consider, not only the economic criteria, but also the socio-political consequences of pricing policies. Depending on the stage of economic growth, specific socio-political situation and the limitations in administrative capacity, many countries had only a narrow range of policy choice.