Environment & Ecology · GS - III

Discuss the ecological and economic significance of paddy field conservation in Kerala. How can the state balance environmental protection with the livelihood concerns of farmers?

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 21/10/2026	GS - III	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wetland Act, 2008, food security, biodiversity, flood mitigation, groundwater recharge, farmer profitability, land-use regulation, compensation, sustainable agriculture.

Model Answer

Introduction

Paddy fields in Kerala are not merely agricultural land; they also perform important ecological functions. The Kerala Conservation of Paddy Land and Wetland Act, 2008, seeks to regulate their conversion and protect wetland ecosystems.

Ecological and economic significance

- **Food security:** Paddy cultivation supports domestic rice production and preserves agricultural traditions.
- **Flood management:** Paddy fields and associated wetlands absorb and temporarily store excess rainwater.
- **Biodiversity:** These habitats support aquatic organisms, birds and other wildlife.
- **Water security:** Wetlands contribute to groundwater recharge and local hydrological balance.
- **Rural livelihoods:** Paddy cultivation sustains farming households and related economic activities.

Challenges and way forward

Low agricultural profitability, rising cultivation costs and pressure for urban development can encourage land conversion. Strict enforcement should therefore be accompanied by practical support for farmers. Measures include better irrigation, affordable inputs, improved market access, crop diversification where ecologically appropriate, and incentives for maintaining paddy fields. Transparent land records and scientific assessment can improve regulatory decisions.

Conclusion

Paddy field conservation must combine ecological protection with viable rural livelihoods. A participatory approach can preserve Kerala’s wetlands while ensuring that farmers receive adequate economic support.

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