

SPECIAL RELEASE

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**SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES (SEZS): UNTOLD
AGONIES** Experiences from Asian Countries

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Special Economic Zones or SEZs are taking centre-stage in the debate concerning development in Asia today. The rapid expansion of SEZs in various Asian countries have initiated a widespread debate on the impact of such zones on the economic growth and development of the concerned nations.

These SEZs in Asia and elsewhere serve international as well as domestic markets with a focus on exports. Other economic zones with a similar nature include Export Processing Zones (EPZs), Free Trade Zones (FTZs), Special Industrial Belts, etc. Despite the existence of different types of economic zones, the SEZ is emerging as the most dominant model in Asia in the 21st century.

This paper aims to highlight the impact of SEZs and similar zones on the livelihoods of common people in Asia, an aspect which has received little attention in SEZ-related literature so far. Economic growth, as demonstrated in rising Gross Domestic Product (GDP), is not necessarily the same as economic development nor does it always mean an improvement in the well being of the majority of the people in a country. Moreover, a nation's development path should be defined by the people's aspirations and priorities rather than corporate interests; and the development process should respect human rights standards.

Growth devoid of the above attributes is destruction in disguise.

This Special Release on “**Special Economic Zones: Untold Agonies**” is researched and written by Ujjaini Halim. Ms. Halim is associated with human rights movements in Eastern India and a member of IMSE (Institute for Motivating Self-Employment), a noted civil society organization of India. She is also a member of International Executive Committee of Food-first Information and Action Network (FIAN). Ms. Halim did her post graduation in Geography from Kolkata and later on obtained her Ph.D from the South Asia Institute of Heidelberg University Germany, for her research work and case studies based on political ecology analysis.

PCFS is a growing network of various grassroots groups of small food producers particularly of peasant-farmer organisations and their support NGOs, working towards a People's Convention on Food Sovereignty.

Pesticide Action Network (PAN) is a global network working to eliminate the human and environmental harm caused by pesticides and to promote biodiversity based ecological agriculture. PAN Asia and the Pacific is committed to the empowerment of people especially women, agricultural workers, peasants and indigenous farmers.



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