

IS THERE AN INDIGENOUS CAPITALIST
DEVELOPMENT IN PEASANT AGRICULTURE?
THE CASE OF VEGETABLE FARMERS IN HIGHLAND SRI LANKA

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- Objectives (1) To assess the degree to which there is indigenous capitalist development in peasant agriculture in rural Sri Lanka.
- (2) To evaluate its significance for social and economic transformation in the countryside.

- Methods a) Village Study
b) Participant Observation
c) Household Survey

Findings and Conclusions

1. Cashcrop farming of vegetables on paddy land in one or both crop seasons in a year has emerged as an important economic activity in peasant villages in several parts of the hill country.
2. This development took place indigenously since 1950s or so purely in response to market forces and growing penetration of capital in rural society. This particular innovation has not resulted from any state policies or state-sponsored programmes of agricultural development.
3. This innovation is linked with the emergence of a stratum of commercial farmers in Kandyan villages.
4. Among the local factors contributing to this innovation are tenancy reforms, improved road transportation, improvement in irrigation facilities and dissolution of frozen social and economic arrangements in traditional Kandyan society.
5. There is an indigenous capitalist development in peasant agriculture in Sri Lanka. However, this development is of a limited scale and has not fully transformed production relations in agriculture.