

GROWTH WITHOUT CAPITALISM : AGRARIAN CHANGE IN THE
PEASANT ECONOMY OF SRI LANKA.

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The persistence of peasant form of production in agriculture throughout the world has posed a challenge to classical theories of the development of capitalism in agriculture which considered peasant production or Simple Commodity Production as a transitional phenomenon doomed to disappear. Recent interpretations of theories on Simple Commodity Production, however, argue that peasant forms of production can and are likely to survive even within capitalist social formations. Pursuing the latter view, this study examines agrarian change in the small peasant economy of Sri Lanka. The study identifies the role of the State, class structure, and the role of agro-ecological imperatives as key factors influencing agrarian change in Sri Lanka. While existing agrarian relations in the peasant sector of Sri Lanka have not become a barrier to the growth of productive forces in the peasant economy this growth has not necessarily led to the disintegration of the peasantry, despite a certain amount of differentiation among them. While a small stratum of rich peasants and rural entrepreneurs has emerged in some areas of the country, thus indicating the possibility of capitalist development, in these areas, the overall situation within the peasant economy indicates the possibility of paddy agriculture achieving high rates of growth within the form of peasant production itself.