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Kandyan Peasantry: The Reality and the Ideological Formation

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The Kandyan peasant community has been the field for several important landmark research works both in the areas of history and sociology. Professor Michael Roberts, Dr. Newton Gunasinghe and Dr. Kumari Jayawardena are pioneer researches in this area.

Kandyan peasantry, from the very inception of the formation of the Kandyan Kingdom acquired a uniqueness due to the geographical location and the social structure of the Kingdom. Kandyan peasantry was quite a separate entity when compared to that of the Maritime Provinces. This uniqueness is evident from the theoretical formation of the socio- economic structure of which the peasants were a vital part.

The aim of this paper is to look into the problem whether the theoretical formation of the Kandyan peasantry has corresponded with the actual existence of the peasant community of the Kandyan society.

It can be said that the theoretical formation of the Kandyan peasantry based on the caste, the land-tenure and the *rajakariya* systems sometimes complicates the identification of the real peasantry. This is because the peasantry in theoretical formation was not essentially the cultivators in practice.

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