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ON A MULTISECTORAL APPROACH TO THE SOUTH-ASIAN ECONOMIES

The complexity of the economic structures in South Asia should in itself be a good reason to search for theories which are able to handle complex entities. The theory of multisectoral societies seems to fulfil this basic requirement.

The concept of a multisectoral economy and society is based on the general idea that in certain historical conditions which are rather common in today's developing countries one cannot absolutely define the economic systems simply as feudalistic, capitalistic or socialistic, but rather as a complex entity which contains elements of all of these and even some pre-feudal remnants.

Instinctively this appears to be a rather clear solution. One can see the superimposed western capitalistic production scheme in the modern urban sector, markets, communications, political structure etc. On the other hand, there is the feudal sharecropping production scheme in agriculture, the primitive quasi-democracy of rural political reality, not to mention the simple technology dominating the production process in rural areas. You can even find pre-feudal tribal cultures in isolated areas of the subcontinent at the same time as the central government is trying to apply ideas originated in modern socialist states.

So far all this is reasonable and the next question is why a multisectoral and not a mixed economy. It is true that in a very liberal sense one can compare these two concepts. Both of them are meant to cover "impure" economic systems, but already their historical backgrounds are different. The concept of mixed economy was developed to include the disturbing features of planning and state activities in the theory of the so called free market economy, which in spite of all these mixing features, is still a fully integrated capitalist economic entity. To understand the

developing economies, with their ill-fitted, almost separate, sectors, economies which usually are only partly independent, and very often only underdeveloped extensions of some industrially developed capitalist country, a different and more effective method of analysis is needed.

This becomes more evident when we examine the deeper significances of these two concepts. The mixed economy is supposed to include some coincidental features of socialism which have been adopted by the capitalistic system under the strict control of monopoly capital, as a natural stage in the development of capitalism. On the other hand the concept of a multisectoral economy and society is based on the systematic historical structure of different levels of modes of production and their respective social formations, which again can be divided systematically into their characteristic production technologies, production relations, class structures, political systems, ideologies etc. Even though this theory is clear, it is far more difficult to separate the respective empirical phenomena from the very diffuse and complex South Asian reality.

To be short I will only list some elements that in my opinion can be found in the socio-economic formations of the region:

1. level of production
 - modern industry and agriculture
 - small commodity production, handicrafts, subsistence agriculture
2. Types of ownership and tenancy
 - public ownership (state, cooperative)
 - private ownership
 - feudal tenancy relations
 - traditional communal ownership
3. Distribution of product
 - markets money based, free or semicontrolled, paid labour
 - barter usurer capital
 - sharecropping
 - subsistence economies
4. Class structures
 - capitalists, workers, bureaucracy, intelligentsia
 - landlord peasant tenant landless
 - cast system

5. Political power structures

- western democracy, political parties
- industrial organisations, trade unions
- cast, kinship, religious and feudal relations (factions)

6. Ideologies

- gandhism, populism
- religious
- class-based

This is my hypothetical classification which still has to be verified, modified or even rejected.