

ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the performance of the Windwards and Leewards (The East Caribbean Common Market Countries) within the Caribbean Common Market and Community. Within this scheme - through which members together seek to achieve development - the Windwards and Leewards (together with Belize) constitute the Less Developed Countries. The principle objectives of the study, then, are to determine firstly, whether these countries are achieving development within the integration scheme; and secondly, whether or not the economic disparities between participants are widening.

The analysis, which is both theoretical and empirical, draws on primary and secondary sources. Making comparisons of the pre-integration and integration intervals where possible, the study spans the period 1960 to the present. While it examines the response of the territories to the Caribbean Free Trade Area, it focuses primarily on the latter's successor, the Caribbean Common Market.

As a background to the evaluation, the study looks at the economic structure and problems of the Windwards and Leewards and finds that, because of factors relating to their historical experience and small size, these territories are poor, dependent and underdeveloped. It then recommends a path to development, based on the application of short-term and long-term solutions. Moreover, it posits that these countries' chances of developing should increase through economic integration.

The next step involves drawing on the body of integration theory, extending this to look specifically at factors affecting the relationship of the less developed sub-group within the wider scheme. Viewed within this theoretical frame, the Caribbean Common Market instruments appear to be generally sound. In practice, however, the Common Market has not performed as well as it might have. This is evidenced inter alia in the limited benefits which have accrued to the Windwards and Leewards, to date.