

## A B S T R A C T

This study seeks to trace the genesis of the concept of Associated Statehood as exists or existed in the British West Indian Islands. It also seeks to ascertain whether this constitutional arrangement has hindered or enhanced the activities of these states in the area of external relations. This investigation is carried out through case studies of issue areas in three crucial fields of activity for these states (i.e., Entry into the Caribbean Common Market, Law of the Sea and Air Rights.).

At the time of writing this study, the Associated States comprised the islands of Antigua, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, St. Kitts - Nevis - Anguilla, Dominica and Grenada. The islands of Dominica, St. Lucia and Grenada have since become independent states and have taken their place among the family of nations.

The study therefore traces the roots of Associated States, by briefly looking into the history of attempts at federating the islands. Associated Statehood is a direct result of the failure of the 1958 - 1962 West Indies Federation, and the constitutional solution devised by the British Government for controlling these islands. Under Associated Statehood the islands exercise full internal self-government, with external affairs under the control of Britain. Although the islands have been given a certain leeway to act on their own in external affairs, the exercise of this authority must first receive the approval of the British Government. This circumscribed

or limited freedom has led to frequent clashes between Britain and the islands over what constitutes external as against internal affairs. In this respect the three case studies in the second part of the work have helped to focus on the conflict over varying interpretation.

The study has also revealed that constraints on the economic and political developments of these islands stem from both the constitutional strictures as well as structural, technical and educational limitations in these states. The shortage of skilled manpower, lack of natural resources and small size have also contributed to underdevelopment of the islands. Thus whereas the constitutional limitations has certainly contributed to underdevelopment of the island and the non use of limited exercise of authority in external affairs, non constitutional factors have also contributed to making Associated Statehood a less than desirable constitutional arrangement.

Although there are other entities in an analogous political situation, such as the Netherlands Antillies, the Cook Islands, Western Samoa and Puerto Rico, they are all at a higher level of constitutional development and have greater freedom in external affairs. The British West Indian Associated States therefore, stands as a unique and novel constitutional experiment in the political evolution of Colonial dependencies.

The study concludes with the recommendation that the route to political and economic salvation for the Associated States lie in either Federation, con Federation, Unitary Statehood or outright independence as in the case of the larger islands. This last option seems to be the most acceptable and, has been exercised by Grenada, St. Lucia and Dominica, with the prospect that Antigua and St. Vincent may soon follow the example set by the others.

As a result, the political landscape about which the study had researched and written on between 1974-1975 and, which formed the basis of the study, has changed considerably. The greatest change, however, took place in the political/legal sphere or in the constitutional status of the islands. This in turn affected their legal capacities when viewed from a constitutional standpoint. In this respect, therefore, the independence of St. Lucia and Dominica has affected the basic premise of the study in so far as the legal capacity or incapacity of the islands in the field of external affairs are concerned.

Of the three islands in the case study, only Antigua remains under the original premise of the study. This is because Antigua is still an Associated State. It is expected that Antigua would soon follow