

ABSTRACT

There have been economic and social analysis of southern eastern Trinidad prior to this study, but these were based on the region as a whole and rarely investigated the particular needs of individual villages. This study intends to fill the gap by examining the socio-economic conditions present in these villages and relating their development to the spatial relations that exist among the communities. It employs a Community Development Composite Index that identifies the type of villages through a profile approach and a Community Impact Assessment that examines the development potential of the villages and of the region.

This approach to examining the development problems is based on the premise that the villages have differing development needs based on their spatial positioning within the region. By extension, though some problems, as the shortage of water, are common to all of the rural villages, there are other problems that are peculiar to a particular village. Therefore the means of assessing their development requires a multi-faceted assessment instrument such as the Community Development Composite Index. Even the application of a solution to the problems of the region requires a comprehensive development plan that takes the varying characteristics of the region into consideration.

While the basic theme is the problem of measuring development in rural areas of developing countries, there are times when the economics, politics, history, geography and sociology must be combined to provide a detailed picture of the region. The composite profile is introduced, as advocated by Rondinelli, Ravillion, Baker and Grosh, Ijere and Smith. However there are adjustments to their methodology to maintain sensitivity with the type of data under consideration. The Community Development Composite Index (CDCI) produces a classification of the region according to the geographic relations among the villages. The results are then analyzed by the Community Impact Assessment (CIA), which determines the development potential of each village in the region. Both the CDCI and the CIA are flexible and can be adapted to suit the particular region that the researcher is investigating in terms of the input of the number and type of variables and of the output as to the types of villages identified and their development.