

ECONOMIC REGIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT: SOME BASIC CONSIDERATIONS*

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ANY study of regional economics raises the question as to what is an economic region. At the very outset we are faced with the problem that there are no hard and fast rules for determining a region. Following McCrone,¹ we can however see that three district criteria have so far been used in evolving a regional scheme. These are: (1) the homogeneity criterion, (2) the city-region criterion and (3) the historical-cum-political or cultural awareness criterion.

Homogeneity Concept in the Indian Context

Varieties of the homogeneity concept have been tried by agricultural economists and geographers in marking out economic and/or agrarian regions in India. An attempt — tentative on their own admission — was made by Daniel and Alice Thorner to demarcate the agrarian regions of India in 1959.² Thorners in their study also referred to other attempts at regional demarcation of India made by the Rural Credit Survey (1951-52) of the R.B.I., the Census of India 1951 and Dr. Chen Han-seng in his monograph on the *Agrarian Regions of India and Pakistan*. In their study, the Thorners demarcated "twenty broad economic regions"³ in India of which West Bengal was one. These regions were further subdivided into divisions. In case of West Bengal the result obtained by the Thorners is given below :⁴

<i>West Bengal Region/Divisions</i>	<i>Districts in each Division</i>
Darjeeling-Duars	Darjeeling, Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri (Sikkim)
Lower Bengal	W. Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad, Birbhum, Purulia, Bankura, Nadia, Hooghly, Midnapore, 24-Parganas
Calcutta	Calcutta, Howrah, Chandernagore

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