

Training, Education, Knowledge sharing and awareness building including mainstreaming cooperatives, linking Training with Entrepreneurship, inclusion of women, Youth & Weaker sections

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Cooperative Movement in India is one of the largest movements in the world. It has made tremendous progress in every aspects of the Indian Economy and it occupies a major place in the sphere of the Indian Economy. The cooperative movement has entered in all fields of economic activity with social essence. The cooperative movement has covered approx 100 per cent villages and 75 per cent rural households. About 8 lakhs cooperative societies with membership of more than 25 crores at all levels are functioning at different levels. Cooperatives has been playing a significant role in disbursing agricultural credit, distribution of agricultural inputs, providing market support and in the other fields such as fisheries, dairy, processing, consumer, marketing, housing, sugar, transport, labour etc.

Cooperatives are one of the strong pillars of Indian economy and it is expected to be sound, healthy and competitive. They need to emphasize on excellent quality management, technology up-gradation, and cost minimization measures which enhance professionalization, increase profitability, and have strong financial resources. In order to develop and equip the personnel, members, elected leaders of the cooperatives, the cooperative education and training is of paramount importance.

The training system in cooperative sector needs to relook to formulate strategy to make it more effective for the development of human resources. Education and Training is one of the 7 core principles of cooperation and continuous education and training is the key to the long term success of cooperatives.

Objective

The main objective of this article is to understand the importance of Cooperative Training, Education and Knowledge sharing in making the cooperatives more successful and vibrant. And also to discuss the linkage of Training with Entrepreneurship with the inclusion of women, youth and weaker sections of the society for the successful cooperative model in the country.

Background

Co-operative education and training are essential in promoting strong and better Society. It is important to train and educate co-operative members to enhance their capacity to bring optimum

results and promote sustainability of their organizations. Co-operative education and training has been among the main areas of intervention by supporting institutions in countries where the cooperative movements exist. Generally, the success of co-operative movement depends on cooperative education and training of members as well as the application of the principles, practice and methods of cooperation as a way of conducting business. Co-operative education is described to be a set of practices and means used to make members aware of the co-operative principles and advantage. Therefore, both education and training are essential for the suitable development of any co-operative organization. The Government is among the most important stakeholder in providing education and training to co-operatives. The Governments should concentrate building strong member controlled co-operatives, promoting good leadership, promoting strong and effective co-operative development support and improving co-operative education and training. The Governments are putting various efforts to promote provision of education and training to the Co-operative sector.

Presently 3 tier structure is functional for cooperative education & training. The Training needs of the higher officials are being taken care by VAMNICOM at national level. The regional Institute of Cooperative Management/ Institute of Cooperative Management (RICM/ ICM) are catering the training requirement of the middle level officials at the state level. Junior Cooperative Training Centers (JTCs) are functioning at the District head quarter level and providing training to members of the cooperatives. These JTCs are financed by the State Cooperative Unions/ State Governments of the respective states.

Apart from the above NCCE, BIRD, LINAC of NCDC, ACSTI, and RBI-CAB and other cooperative training institutions promoted by different cooperatives are also catering to the education & training needs of the cooperatives. These Institutions have required infrastructure to train and educate cooperative personnel.

Steps for improving delivery of Training and Education:

- 1 Co-operative training institutions should formulate the programmes in consultation with co-operative societies, in order to have a good education and training programmes that reflect the need of all actors i.e. Leaders, staff and members. This will also help in establishing standardized training for all co-operatives.
- 2 Co-operative education and training should be based much on the education of members who are leaders-awaiting, instead of focusing only on staff and leaders. This will ensure continuity and expanding the cooperative skills and knowledge to the larger community rather than only co-operative management.
- 3 Cooperatives should prepare good programmes and policies to guide their provision of education and training.
- 4 Cooperatives need to adhere to the Co-operative policy and the by-laws which require provision of education and training to members. They should set aside funds for education and training purpose and avoid diverting such funds to other uses.
- 5 Screening of the trainers needs to be done (by regulatory authorities, co-operative officers and/or Board).

Linking training with entrepreneurship

Skills imparted by Cooperatives must keep pace with the technological demands of the Industry and the expanding universe of knowledge to produce world class workforce. Centers for entrepreneurship should be created and upgraded. These Centers will cater to the skill requirements of the cluster of cooperative enterprises Industries in the particular areas by ,

- Introduction of multi-skilling courses (Broad Based Basic Training) for cooperatives., ,
- Adoption of new training technology with close involvement of industry and other stake holders in planning and implementation of training programs. ,
- Empowering these centres by providing sufficient autonomy in academic, administrative, financial and management matters.
- Up gradation of training delivery related infrastructure
- Periodic training of trainers (ToT) through offline and online modules.
- Development, standardization and periodic review of training course curriculum/modules.

Entrepreneurship skill and development Programmes (ESDP) are being organized regularly by the MSME to nurture the talent of youth by enlightening them on various aspects of industrial/business activity required for setting up MSEs. These Programmes are conducted for youth and other people interested to set up their own industrial/self-employment venture. Such activities are also organized in ITIs, Polytechnics and other technical institutions/business schools, where skill/talent is available to motivate them towards self-employment. The ESDP should also be extended to Cooperatives to motivate youth and other people interested to set up their own cooperative enterprise.

Apart from the above Sector skills Councils of the NSDC play a vital role in bridging the gap between what the industry demands and what the skilling requirements ought to be. The thirty six SSCs related to different skills are national partnership organizations that bring together all the stakeholders - industry, labour and the academia. On the same lines, there is a great scope of establishing sector skill council exclusively for cooperatives to enhance the professional efficiency and the employment prospects in the Cooperatives.

The newly created Ministry of Cooperation has set a target to establish around 3 lakh PACS as well as transforming the whole cooperative system to make it more transparent and professional. In light of this the major responsibility to train and educate the members, staff & officials of cooperatives the system of cooperative training is to be made more vibrant. Creating awareness among the youth to take up cooperatives as career option assumes great importance. However, it should be fully supported by the ample job opportunities in the cooperative sector.

Although, the training Institutions are catering the training requirements of the cooperative sector up to some extent but no sincere effort has been made to bring the youth under the cooperative fold by providing them an opportunity for education and training. The students studying at school & college level are quite ignorant and don't have much idea about cooperatives. The cooperatives must be made attractive to the younger generations as a field for

self-expression, leadership and as a career option. It is necessary that cooperation, as a separate subject must be introduced at the secondary and higher secondary school levels. Similarly, graduate and post-graduate degree and diploma courses are needed to be introduced at the university level to create a professional and educated breed of youth, who wants to make their career in cooperatives and these qualifications, may have a forward linkage with the cooperative enterprises to provide good job/ career opportunities in the field of cooperation. Such type of efforts will certainly take the cooperative movement to the masses.

Following are some of the suggestions for popularizing cooperative education in schools and colleges:

1. A separate subject on cooperatives should be incorporated in the school levels.
2. The Training programme for Principals/ Teachers may be organized at the school level to create awareness about cooperatives.
3. Cooperative experts must deliver sessions on opportunities in cooperatives as a career option for the students.
4. The teachers may be encouraged to take up project work on cooperatives.
5. Sensitization programme on cooperatives may be organized for the students, parents, teachers and staff of the schools.

Inclusion of women and weaker section

The status of women constituting half of the population reflects the progress of the society. The women in rural areas have been most disadvantaged because of male dominated society. In spite of their active participation in different cooperative activities the role of women in co-operative is not considered very significant compared to the men.

As far as training and education is concerned for different cooperative sectors, it has been observed that there is always more focus on the credit and banking sector, where the role of women and weaker section is limited up to some extent. But, the co-operatives, where women and weaker section plays an significant role in the fields such as dairy, poultry, fishery, sheep rearing, pig rearing, handicraft, handloom, Khadi village industries, papad industries, consumer and industrial production etc. badly require training and educational intervention to make these sectors more successful and vibrant. Inclusion of women and weaker section of the society in cooperatives and bringing them under the ambit of relevant education and training programmes will go a long way in India's inclusive development which elevates the socio-economic status of women and weaker sections.