

MINUTES OF COOP-CONNECT MEETING HELD ON 18TH DECEMBER, 2009

The COOP-CONNECT FORUM of National Cooperative Union of India organized a meeting on "Popularizing Cooperative Model of development in schools of Delhi / NCR" on 18th December, 2009. NCUI (www.ncui.net) is the apex organization of the cooperative movement in the country. The objectives of the COOP-CONNECT meeting were to:

- ❖ Sensitize the schools management / teachers on the principles, values, achievements and the functioning of cooperative organisations.
- ❖ To establish synergies with the educational institutions / international organisations so as to connect them to the cooperative agenda by highlighting the importance of cooperative education in schools.
- ❖ To formulate strategies / action points for popularizing cooperative education in schools.

The meeting was attended by the school teachers of Delhi / NCR, cooperative sector representatives and participants from diverse organization like CBSE, NUEPA, UNESCO, UNICEF, ORSA, Delhi University etc. (list of participants enclosed). The panelists who spoke on the occasion were – Dr. G. C. Shrotiya, Consultant IFFCO Foundation, Dr. Daman Prakash, Consultant IFFCO Foundation, Shri Rajiv Mehta, Dy Regional Director, ICAROAP and Shri P. M. Sharma, Chief Executive Delhi State Cooperative Union.

In the beginning Smt. Anita Manchanda, Chief Executive NCUI in her initial presentation spoke on the history of Cooperative Legislation in India, share of cooperatives in national economy, role of NCUI, organizational structure / programmes of NCUI / NCCT etc. Her presentation was geared to generate awareness on the spread of cooperatives, their organizational base, etc.

amongst the participants who were not directly involved with the cooperative sector.

In his presentation Dr. Daman Prakash, Consultant, IFFCO Foundation spoke on "Cooperative Education in Schools: An International Perspective" in which he came up with the statistical figures regarding the growth of students' cooperatives in India. He said that there were 3948 student cooperatives with membership of 1935296. While the activities of students' cooperatives revolved around book stall, electronic stores, PCO, students' welfare services, there is no state / national level students' cooperative federation. At the international level, he presented contrast between the western and Asian scenario. While major activities of students cooperatives in US and Canada are providing housing to students, health care, students insurance, in Japan cooperatives are formed for campus student welfare and student support services. He noted that while some attempts are made to include Cooperation as a subject in school and college curricula, more efforts are needed to provide hands on experience to students to run students cooperation.

In his presentation on "Cooperative Membership" Dr. G.C. Shrotriya, Consultant, IFFCO Foundation elaborated on the seven cooperative principles which highlight the strong membership base of cooperatives which are run on democratic principles. He noted that the subject of cooperation is not sufficiently incorporated in the school syllabus of the country. He also felt that there is no sensitization in schools on what cooperatives are contributing to our daily life. He observed that cooperative leadership and professional management are important in the functioning of cooperative organizations. He opined that honesty in cooperatives can come if the subject of cooperation is taught in the schools. He suggested that as school children can be the potential members of cooperatives there is need for member education seminar on cooperatives for schools as an effective sensitization strategy.

In his presentation on "Registration of Cooperative Societies under Delhi State Cooperative Societies Act", Shri P.M. Sharma, Chief Executive Delhi State

Cooperative Union give a brief overview of the cooperative societies in Delhi including the students cooperative consumer stores. He further elaborated on the legal procedures required for registration of student cooperative consumer stores. Pointing out that there are huge potentialities of student cooperative consumer stores in Delhi, he said that the Education Directorate in this regard should issue directions for setting up cooperatives of such types.

Shri Rajiv Mehta, Dy. Regional Director, ICA-ROAP speaking on the occasion said that self-help is an important value which a co-operative member must uphold. He opined that cooperatives as value-based economic model have huge relevance for the schools. He emphasized that cooperatives are the only institutions which preach good values. He said that cooperatives must play a proactive role in the disseminating their strength and achievements to the masses so that proper awareness is generated at all levels of the society. He felt that this is important in the wake of the fact that UN has proclaimed 2012 as International year of Cooperatives.

In the open house discussion important views were expressed by the representatives from various organizations. Shri Uday Prakash Singh, Dy. Director (Spl. Programme), Nehru Yuva Kendra said that there are 2.5 lakh village-based youth clubs functioning in the country which can be converted into cooperatives. He further said that besides Delhi / NCR there is need to create awareness about cooperatives in the schools, in other parts of the country. Dr. Daman Prakash, Sr. Consultant, IFFCO Foundation, said that NCUI and Nehru Yuva Kendra should work in their mutual areas of strength so that effective action-points emerge regarding youth involvement in cooperatives.

Ms. Ambika Khurana, Sr. Manager, EDUCOMP commented that there is no awareness about cooperatives in the schools. She said that enhancing the skills of teachers through application of ICT is equally important. She felt that imparting of cooperative education amongst the school children will be very important for

developing their leadership capabilities. She also said that state governments have to be sensitized on popularizing cooperatives amongst the schools.

Dr. Mallika Kumar, Asstt. Professor, Shri Ram College of Commerce speaking on the occasion emphasized on the need for strong information awareness on cooperatives in the schools. She said that cooperatives need to market their advantages. She further said that Action Groups must be formed in various areas for initiating definite measures for popularizing cooperation as a subject in the schools. Shri A. K. Singh, Professor, NUEPA speaking on occasion emphasized on importance of research in cooperatives. Shri. Ravi Narayan, Secretary General, Indian Committee for Youth organizations said that based on his organizational experience it may be mentioned that youth organizations are discouraging formation of cooperatives while they are supporting formation of NGOs. He suggested that there may be simpler rules for formation of student cooperatives. Ashwani Kumar, a school teacher from Bhawan Sawan Public School, Chattar Pur said that school children can not take initiatives to influence the management to start a cooperative. He, however, opined that cooperatives can be started in an informal manner. In this respect he cited the example of starting eco clubs. He emphasized on the need for incorporating case studies on cooperatives in schools books in an interesting manner.

Shri Pundir Kumar, PGT, G Goenka Public School speaking on the occasion observed that instead of emphasis on merits there is more mention of demerits about cooperatives in the school books as the reporting is not good. He emphasized on the need for incorporating information on cooperatives which may have practical value in the school text books. He stressed on the need for implementing insurance schemes for under-privileged sections of the school children through some tie-up with cooperatives. He further felt that more intensive efforts must be undertaken to popularize cooperatives in government schools of under-privileged children. Shri G. C. Shrotiya, Consultant, IFFCO Foundation speaking on the occasion emphasized on the need for creating

cooperative brand. In this respect he cited the example of Japanese agricultural cooperatives which are the most strongest and which have developed brand JA on their products. He suggested that there is need for popularizing cooperatives to tie-up with the vocational schools so that entrepreneurship can be strengthened.

Ms. Jyoti Raghvan, Media Executive, NAFFAC speaking on the occasion said that NAFFAC can provide a platform of Cultural-Connect for the schools by organizing talent competition on an annual basis in collaboration with NCUI.

Ms. Sugandha Sharma, Education Officer, CBSE speaking on the occasion emphasized on the need for giving prominence to cooperatives in the school syllabus. She came up with an important suggestion that in 9th class project on cooperatives can be started in collaboration with NCUI. She further said that NCUI can collaborate with CBSE so that students can take up projects on cooperatives in business studies. She suggested that CBSE may consider developing illustrative school friendly publications emphasizing on ways to integrate cooperatives, the ways to convert clubs into cooperatives etc.

Shri Sudesh Kumar Verma, Chief Executive, Organization for Research, Survey and Analysis speaking on the occasion said that 80% of schools would like to have cooperatives but they fear government intervention. He said that the schools would want simpler rules in this regard. He said that instead of cooperatives the schools should promote cooperative spirit in which the teachers can play a meaningful role.

Shri Binay Pattanayak, Education Specialist, UNICEF speaking on the occasion emphasized on the importance of cooperatives in our economy. He said that his organization is trying to promote cooperative spirit amongst the school children in the educational projects.

Shri N. P. Velumani, Chief Director, NCDC said that NCDC is very serious for student cooperatives and it has financed various schemes / projects in this regard.

Shri L. D. Ahuja, OSD, NCUI speaking on the occasion said that in his study of 10 school books of NCERT on Sociology, Economics and Political Science from primary to senior secondary level cooperatives are mentioned in 25 pages, in few pages or lines. He said that in many sections of Indian economy only one line mention of cooperatives is present. He observed that very limited space given to cooperatives in the text books.

A teacher from APJ School said that the students need to inculcate values through cooperatives. He said that if this can materialize then this may emerge as a success story for cooperatives.

Major recommendations / action points which emerged during the meeting were :

- ❖ Need for initiatives / steps for full sensitization / awareness on cooperatives in schools.
- ❖ Need to propagate cooperatives as value-based economic model in schools.
- ❖ Need to convert youth clubs into cooperatives.
- ❖ Rules may be simplified for formation of student cooperatives.
- ❖ Cooperatives can be started in schools informal way. Cooperative spirit should be propagated effectively in this regard.
- ❖ Cooperatives should tie-up with vocational institutions so that youth entrepreneurship can be strengthened.
- ❖ Need to incorporate information on cooperatives in school text books which may have practical significance.
- ❖ NCUI & NAFFAC may collaborate for holding cultural talent competition in schools.

- ❖ NCUI & CBSE need to work together in various areas like project formulation on cooperatives, developing illustrative school publications emphasizing on cooperatives etc.
- ❖ If cooperatives succeed in propagating their values in schools they can then emerge as a big success story.
- ❖ The school text books should give prominence to cooperatives as limited space is given to their coverage.