

*Much will depend on the spirit in which the institutions are run under the guidance of the elected committees of management. Those in charge will have to set high standards of integrity themselves in order that the staff subordinate to them aim at an equally high standard.*

*vaikunthbhai mehta*

**PROMINENT INDIAN COOPERATORS  
-Their Contributions and Legacies**

Compiled by

Daman Prakash, Director  
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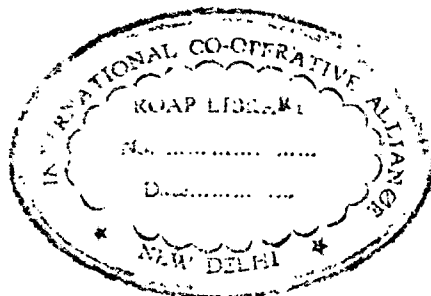
**Prominent Indian Cooperators  
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## Introduction

*This material is a faint attempt to list, with their brief biographic sketches, some of the prominent Indian cooperative leaders who, during their lifetime had made significant contributions to the development of the Indian Cooperative Movement. They did this through their deep and genuine involvement in the process of cooperative development, contributions to various committees, commissions and participation in the shaping up of various cooperative institutions, and through speeches and writings. They were also able to project the Indian cooperative thoughts and perceptions at a variety of national and international conferences.*

*They were able to influence the government in the propagation of cooperative ideology, formulation of cooperative policies and related cooperative legislation and led people to lay their faith in the values and ethics of the Principles of Cooperation. Their contributions have been too broad and wide-ranging to be mentioned adequately enough in this paper. They were great institution builders. There were the architects of the modern Indian Cooperative Movement. They were tall. They were broad-minded, freedom fighters, great professionals and very realistic. They were the men of substance and excellence. They valued the importance of cordial and good working relations between the elected management and professional managers. They strongly advocated the significance of cooperative education, extension and staff training. For them Cooperation was a passion. They understood the importance of cooperative 'way of life' in the context of Indian conditions and tried, in their own ways, to 'convulse' India with Cooperation.*

*Whatever is presented here in this material is too little for the larger work they had done in the promotion of the Indian Cooperative Movement. It is my small and humble tribute to them.*

**Daman Prakash**

*International Cooperative Alliance  
Bonow House, New Delhi, India*

*February 10 1999*

## A Basic Profile of India

### Basic National Statistics

Population of India by 2000AD	...	...	...	...	990.4 million
Population of India in 1996	...	...	...	...	920.0 million
Percent of Rural Workers	...	...	...	...	40.1%
Percent of Urban Workers	...	...	...	...	30.5%
Percent of Male Workers to the Total	...	...	...	...	51.6%
Percent of Female Workers to the Total	...	...	...	...	22.7%
Total Geographical Area	...	...	...	...	328.7 m ha
Cultivated Area	...	...	...	...	185.0 m ha
Of which Irrigated	...	...	...	...	78.9 m ha
Total Number of Villages in the Country	...	...	...	...	557,150
Literacy Rate [both Male and Female]	...	...	...	...	52.21 %
Total Production of Foodgrains [1996-97]	...	...	...	...	191.1 million Tons
[of which Rice]	...	...	...	...	79.63 million Tons
[of which Wheat]	...	...	...	...	64.50 million Tons
Total Number of Cooperative Institutions	...	...	...	...	452,657
Total Cooperative Membership	...	...	...	...	204.51 million
Cooperative coverage of Households...	...	...	...	...	67%
Villages covered by Cooperatives	...	...	...	...	99.5%
Number of National Level Cooperatives Federations	...	...	...	...	21
Number of State Level Cooperative Federations	...	...	...	...	361
Number of District Level Cooperative Federations	...	...	...	...	2,741
Main Crops of India: Rice, Wheat, Sugar, Tea, Oilseeds, Cotton					
Main Crops Exported: Sugar, Rice, Cotton, Tea, Jute, and Spices					

- Cooperation is a State subject. Multi-State cooperatives operate through federal system
- NABARD is the main agency for agricultural cooperative financing
- National Cooperative Union of India is the national apex of the Cooperative Movement
- First Cooperative Societies' Act was introduced in 1904

### Important Segments of the Indian Cooperative Movement

- Rural Credit through primary cooperatives and cooperative banks
- Dairy Cooperatives – World's largest milk producer through Operation Flood
- Fertiliser Cooperatives – World's largest urea producer
- Sugar Cooperatives – high level integrated cooperative development approach
- Oilseeds Cooperatives – moving fast towards self-sufficiency
- Cooperative Education, Training and Development – World's largest network

# Prominent Indian Cooperators

## -Their Contributions and Legacies

### The Background

The economic spectrum of India, under the British rule, was widespread economic gloom, unemployment, poverty, exploitation of peasantry, utter lack of infrastructural facilities, socio-economic backwardness etc. The dilemma was that in spite of being agriculture- dominated country India had faced worst of famines. Consequently, the vast farming population, though helpless, was becoming increasingly restless.

The Government of Madras was the first in India to be impressed by the reports of successful application of Cooperative Principles in combating the problem of indebtedness in European countries. With a view to exploring the possibilities of introduction in India, Madras Government deputed one of its officers Fredrick Nicholson to study the theory and practice of agricultural and other land banks in Europe and suggest means by which a similar movement may be introduced and popularised in India. His report was exhaustive, which, generally is summarised in two words "*Find Raiffeisen*" in India i.e., to organise cooperatives on the model and with the enthusiasm of Germany.

At the same time, the Government of United Provinces [UP] deputed one of its officers, Dupenex, to find out feasibility of establishing agricultural banks. He also recommended establishment of village cooperatives of Raiffeisen type. The ideas of Nicholson and Dupenex attracted wider attention and some enthusiastic district officers in Bengal, Punjab and UP organised a few pioneering societies.

The first Cooperative Societies' Act was enacted in 1904, which was amended in 1912. About 200 of cooperatives were already organised much before 1904. Cooperation was made, according to 1919 Administrative Reforms, a provincial subject. Each province enacted its own cooperative law. They were common in their basic framework, restrictive in nature and approach; with supervisory and controlling powers and authority vested in the Registrar of Cooperative

Societies and the Government. Thus started the formal story of the Cooperative Movement in India.

### **Eminent Cooperative Leaders**

With the provincialisation of Cooperation and the concept being new, people from various walks of life – educationists, legal and medical practitioners, social reformers, philanthropists, intellectuals etc. were attracted in the then various provinces and a galaxy of cooperative leaders emerged on the cooperative horizon of India. They were socially respected people. Several of them were recipients of State titles such as, Sir, Rai Bahadur, Rai Sahib, Khan Bahadur etc. etc. Several of them were freedom fighters and followed the Gandhian way of life.

The first name, which figures in the records of the International Cooperative Alliance [ICA], is that of Prof Ambikacharan Kuril. He was the only person not only from India, but also from the Asian countries, who participated, in the 4<sup>th</sup> ICA Cooperative Congress held in 1900 at Paris.

He may be regarded, like Robert Owen, as a forerunner among the cooperative leaders. He made a significant statement at that Congress about the Indian Cooperative Movement. He mentioned that he had organised, on cooperative basis, the 'Indian Publication Society' in August 1897 and the 'Indian Cooperative Journal Society' in July 1898. The basic objective of these societies was to propagate Cooperative Principles and prepare people to launch a Cooperative Movement. In 1895, he was also entrusted 'Bengal Press' which was a private institution in 1892 to transform that into a workers' cooperative. He had written to Rochdale Pioneers Society in 1883 to ask for a copy of its bylaws and rules of procedures, which he had received promptly. He had also attended the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> ICA Cooperative Congresses held at Manchester, Budapest and Cremona respectively.

Tallest among his contemporaries was a cooperative leader Mr V. Ramdas Pantulu. He was associated with Cooperation in various capacities, as President of South India Cooperative Insurance Society, all-India Cooperative Institutes' Association, Indian Provincial Banks' Association etc. He contributed through writings and at conferences held at various levels, as a friend, philosopher and guide to Cooperative Movement. Being the only Asian at the 14<sup>th</sup> ICA Congress held in 1934 at London, he conveyed nationalist feelings and projected the situation of the Cooperative Movement in India. At home, he set the direction of development of cooperatives. He raised strong voice against

the government control over cooperatives and demanded democratisation of cooperatives by removing restrictive provisions from cooperative laws.

Pre-Independence cooperative leaders were freedom fighters and projected various alternatives, including cooperative institutions, to bring strength among the people by organising them and providing them with various alternatives to earn and create employment. Subsequently, particularly after Independence of India in 1947, there had emerged a large number of cooperative leaders, many of them politicians, who found in the Cooperative Movement a new field for themselves. They combined in them political and cooperative leadership. Some were motivated by the ideals of early leaders, some others dedicated themselves to build individual institutions in different fields distinguishing themselves locally, while still other adopted cooperative leadership as a profession rather than a mission. A brief account of some of the more prominent cooperative leaders follows:

- 01 Mahatma Gandhi
- 02 Mr Jawahar Lal Nehru
- 03 Mr Vaikunthbhai Lallubhai Mehta
- 04 Professor D.G. Karve
- 05 Mr Tribhuvandas Kishibhai Patel
- 06 Dr Verghese Kurien
- 07 Padamshree Dr Vithalrao Vikhe Patil
- 08 Chaudhary Brahm Perkash
- 09 Dr Surendra Kumar Saxena
- 10 Mr Govind Kant Sharma

#### **[01] Mahatma Gandhi [Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi] [1869-1948]**

The 'Father of the Nation' who lead India to achieve Independence from the British. He was the leader of the masses and strongly advocated and believed in the management of economy of India through rural institutions. The following statements sum up his belief in working together and doing things the cooperative way...

*"The secret of successful cooperative effort is that the members must be honest and know the great merit of cooperation and it must have a definite progressive goal. Thus, holding a certain sum of money in Cooperation for the sake of making more money by charging exorbitant rates of interest is a bad goal. But cooperative farming, or dairying is undoubtedly a good goal promoting national interest. Such instances can be multiplied." –The Harijan, Nov 10 1946.*



*“My notion of Cooperation is that the land would be held in Cooperation by the owners and tilled and cultivated also in Cooperation. This would cause a saving in labour, capital, tools etc. The owners would work in cooperation and own capital, tools, animals, seeds etc. in cooperation. Cooperative farming of my conception would change the land and banish poverty and idleness from their midst. All this is only possible if people become friends of one another and as one family”.*

*–The Harijan, March 03 1947.*

*“Drops in separation could only fade away; drops in Cooperation made the ocean.” –  
The Harijan, Sept 07 1947*

*“A customer is the most important person on our premises. He is not dependent on us. We are dependent on him. He is not an interruption in our work. He is the very purpose of it. We are not doing a favour by serving him. He is doing us a favour by giving us an opportunity to do so.”*

## **[02] Mr Jawahar Lal Nehru [1889-1964]**

The first Prime Minister of Independent India. A strong advocate of parliamentary democracy, rule of law, social justice, industrialisation, promotion of agriculture, and cooperatives being an important [and balancing] third sector in the economic and social development of India. He called Cooperation to be a ‘way of life’. Nehru’s vision of cooperatives had made him a legendary cooperative leader in his lifetime itself. Cooperators regarded him and still more do so now as a ‘Prophet of Cooperation’, ‘Apostle of Cooperation’, a ‘great visionary’ and their real friend, philosopher and guide. Although not a cooperator himself in the strict practical sense of the term, yet his vision of cooperatives commanded international attention, recognition and acceptance.

Nehru had made most significant contribution towards the development of Indian cooperatives during the pre and post-Independence period by visualising in most clear, intelligible and distinct terms, all aspects pertaining to cooperatives. Preservation of social unity and national solidarity is most important task and responsibility of any leader and the government. Nehru saw in cooperatives an instrument to foster spirit of social unity in the people. Inaugurating the International Cooperative Day in November 1963 he had said:

*“Cooperation was useful not only from the economic but also from the social point of view. While it helped people fight poverty, it also instilled in them a spirit of unity and team work...It was the only way for eliminating poverty bringing about a complete*

*overhaul in the social set up of the country and assuring an equal distribution of wealth. Cooperation was the first step towards the goal of socialism”.*

He advocated that cooperative institutions and cooperative way of life could lead to the establishment of a Cooperative Commonwealth. Inaugurating the international seminar on Cooperative Leadership in South-East Asia organised by the International Cooperative Alliance Regional Office for South-East Asia to mark the starting of its functioning in New Delhi on November 14 1960, Nehru said:

*“But my outlook at present is not the outlook of spreading the Cooperative Movement, gradually, progressively, as it has done. My outlook is to convulse India with the Cooperative Movement, or rather with Cooperation: to make it, broadly speaking, the basic activity of India, in every village as well as elsewhere; and finally, indeed, to make the Cooperative approach the common thinking of India... Therefore, the whole future of India really depends on the success of this approach of ours to these vast numbers, hundreds of millions of people.”*

Nehru had visualised certain postulates on the basis of which cooperatives were to be organised and their functioning to be carried out. These may be identified as voluntariness, autonomy, social cohesion or mutuality, flexibility and financial self-reliance.

The cooperative personality of Nehru shines brightly in his following statement:

*“The whole idea behind the Cooperative Movement has appealed to me for a large number of years. I was attracted by the philosophy underlying it and the social purpose. For many years, we in India, were engaged in struggle for freedom. But even as it developed, it became obvious that the political freedom by itself was not enough. It had to have a social content. It had to aim for at economic freedom for masses through Cooperation.”*

[03] Mr Vaikunth Lallubhai Mehta [26.10.1891-28.10.1964]

Vaikunthbhai Mehta is the most outstanding Cooperator, India has produced in this century. Cooperation appealed to him because it symbolised a sense of equality and of partnership, which he felt was essential if weak were one day to inherit the Earth. His contribution to the Cooperative Movement will long be remembered both because of his dedication to the cause and even more on account of highly successful organisations he had built up in the former state of

Bombay including the Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank, Cooperative sugar factories and agricultural produce societies. It is very largely due to the labours of Mr Vaikunthbhai , 'the Father of the Indian Cooperative Movement' that Maharashtra is today in the forefront of the Cooperative Movement of the country.

Vaikunthbhai has to his credit many-sided activities and a great contribution to the Indian Cooperative Movement and to the development of decentralised economy. He has been described as an institution in himself, combining many roles such as that of a constructive worker, social reformer, Gandhian thinker and economist, cooperator, an expert in banking and fiscal policies and also an administrator of a high order. Vaikunthbhai served on Maclagan Committee [1915], which provided a report on the functioning of cooperatives, and provided valuable guidelines for the future course of cooperative development. He founded the Bombay Provincial Cooperative Institute mainly to provide arrangements for education on non-official cooperative workers. He pronounced that "cooperative training is not merely a pre-requisite, but is a permanent condition of cooperative activities". During his ministership he got the Cooperative Societies' Act amended to make it a statutory obligation on all cooperatives making profit to contribute to the education fund of the institute to manage the cooperative training colleges and schools which were established for the purpose.

He was an excellent mathematician and was one of the best Finance Ministers, Bombay ever had. He had also served on the Khadi & Village Industries' Commission and worked for developing income-generating and employment-generating programmes for rural India. His most important contribution to the Cooperative Movement was establishing the Cooperative College at Poona and regional schools in various parts of the State. In recognition of his most valuable contributions to the Cooperative Movement, the National Cooperative Union of India has named its national management training institute as 'Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management', Pune [VAMNICOM].

Born in a family proud of its traditions and achievements he became the very embodiment of humility, unassuming simplicity and saintliness that came naturally to him. His family was accustomed to power and was later at home with high finance. Vaikunthbhai was very uncomfortable while wielding power and devoted all his active years to providing employment opportunities to penniless. He was very well-versed in the management of modern commercial

banks and large units of industry. But he utilised his knowledge and talents in the organisation of small cooperative banks and small rural industrial units.

The following statement summarises his belief in the merits of the Cooperative Movement:

*“Much will depend on the spirit in which the institutions are run under the guidance of the elected committees of management. Those in charge will have to set high standards of integrity themselves in order that the staff subordinate to them aim at an equally high standard.”*

[04] Professor D.G. Karve [1898-1967]

Professor DG Karve had his schooling and college education in Pune in Maharashtra State of India. He served as principal of various important colleges and was instrumental in the establishment of the BM College of Commerce in Pune. He was later to be the Vice-Chancellor of the Poona University. During his active service with academic institutions, Prof Karve extended his sphere of activities to many state, national and international economic, educational and cooperative institutions e.g., Maharashtra State Cooperative Union and the Bank, the Indian Economic Association, the Indian Institute of Public Administration, the Reserve Bank of India, the Life Insurance Corporation of India and the All-India Radio. In a number of these institutions, he worked either as Chairman or as active member of the Executive and in the Reserve Bank of India he served as its Deputy Governor for a period of two years and later on, until his death, acted as its Honorary Advisor. He was also the Vice-Chairman of the State Bank of India.

He worked on several important committees, which have played a significant role in the formulation and shaping of cooperative policies in India. Some of these committees were: the Crop Loan Evaluation Committee, Madhya Bharat Cooperative Planning Committee, Fourth Finance Commission 1965, and Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Indian Planning Commission.

He was President of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, and Asian Secretary of the International Association of Agricultural Economists.

Prof Karve was the first Chairman of the Advisory Council of the ICA Regional Office for South-East Asia. He was appointed in 1961 and, with a break of two years – 1962-63 – when he was the Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, he continued to be the Chairman of the Advisory

Council until his demise in December 1967. His association with the International Cooperative Alliance in his later years gave him an opportunity of expressing his views on cooperative education on international platform. The World Cooperative Movement will remember him as the Chairman of the Principles Commission appointed by the ICA Congress in 1963 whose report was presented by him in a masterly fashion and adopted with acclaim by the subsequent ICA Congress of 1966 held in Vienna.

**[05] Mr Tribhuvandas Kishibhai Patel [22.10.1903-03.04.1994]**

Mr TK Patel, a devoted Gandhian, is known for his total dedication towards the improvement of social and economic conditions of dairy farmers of Kaira district in Gujarat State of India. In his early days he was the Chairman of the Anand Taluka Cooperative Purchase and Sales Union during which tenure he acquired skills and experience which helped him through bigger challenges. In 1952, Mr Patel was elected president of the Kaira District Congress Committee and in 1962 he became the President of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee.

Being a leader of the masses and appreciating his close linkages with the grassroots farmers he also served other institutions and guided them as their Chairman e.g., the Kaira District Tobacco Marketing Committee, the Anand Taluka Agricultural Products Market Committee, the Lokabandhu Sahakari Prakashan Limited, the Kaira District Cooperative Land Mortgage Bank Limited, the Anand-Borsad Shramjivi Sahakari Society, and the Gujarat State Cooperative Marketing Federation. He served also as the Vice-President of the National Cooperative Union of India. Mr TK Patel was also the Member of Indian Parliament during 1968-1974.

Mr TK Patel was the force behind the great success of AMUL [Kaira District Milk Producers' Cooperative Union/Anand Milk Union Limited] of which he remained the Chairman for over 27 years. The success of AMUL is also attributed to his unshaken belief in the principle that business venture should be conducted by the professional management while the communication with the basic members be nurtured and carried out by the leaders. Today AMUL is regarded to be world's most efficiently managed cooperative with a number of diversified byproducts to its credit. He was responsible for developing and promoting a joint purchasing and joint marketing concept of dairy products – through the Gujarat State Milk Marketing Federation.

Dr V. Kurien was born in Calicut, Kerala, South India. Dr Kurien studied engineering and technology abroad and received training in Dairy Science at the National Dairy Institute of Bangalore. He made dairy technology his field of activity. The spectacular success of AMUL Dairy of Anand is attributed to his tireless efforts and his knowledge of lifestyle of basic dairy farmers. He spread the message of white revolution through the dairy activity. He brought awareness especially among the farmers, which brought about new ways and means that contributed to enhanced production of milk, scientific animal husbandry, cattlefeed and different kinds of milk products. AMUL is a cooperative venture, which, in turn, inspired many other states to develop the dairy industry on cooperative basis.

Inspired by the success of AMUL [or the Anand Pattern of Dairy Development] and in recognition of the path-breaking work done by him in the area, the Government of India placed in his hands the charge of creating Anand Pattern dairy cooperatives throughout the country thereby increasing milk production. He was appointed Chairman of the National Dairy Development Board. Dr Kurien, taking advantage of his rich experience of being the Managing Director of AMUL for nearly 25 years, and his close association with Mr Tribhuvandas Patel, stressed on the principle of professional management of a cooperative enterprise.

Dr Kurien was a prime mover in the establishment of the Institute of Rural Management [IRMA] at Anand, of which he is currently the Chairman. Besides making India the world's largest producer of milk [1998] through Operation Flood programme has also initiated other programmes e.g., cattle-feed manufacture, oilseeds production, processing and its marketing, salt cooperatives, tree growers' cooperatives, utilising extra capacities of dairy plants in the production of mineral water, and establishing a market network for dairy products. He is currently also the Chairman of the National Federation of Milk Cooperatives. He has been able to put the country on world milk map thus creating international market for India's dairy technology.

Dr Kurien was honoured with Padma Vibhushana, the second highest civilian award given by the Government of India (1999). He was also the recipient of Magssaysay Award, and the prestigious Vishwagurjari Award. Michigan and Glasgow Universities conferred on him honorary doctorate.

**[07] Padamshree Dr Vithalrao Vikhe Patil [1887-1980]**

Dr Vithalrao Vikhe Patil is considered to be one of the great cooperators and founders of Sugar Cooperatives in Maharashtra State of India. If anyone has to study a real form of integrated cooperative development system anywhere, then one should visit and study the Sugar Cooperative established by him. Poor economic conditions of his family prevented him from receiving adequate school education. Being a son of a farmer and blessed with exceptionally good creative abilities, he did very well on his own farm. In that process he was able to understand the miserable plight of the small peasants and the pangs of rural poverty. Over a period of time and after having an intense interaction with his co-professionals he made up his mind to set up a small sugar cooperative with a view to provide better economic returns to sugar growers as well as generating employment for the people of the area. Though there were initial problems in getting the project started, he was able to earn the confidence of the farmers. He was able to collect the required initial capital and also succeeded in securing the required government licence.

The experiment of the sugar cooperative was so successful that 102 sugar cooperatives were started in the State of Maharashtra using the 'Pravara pattern' of rural development. The main theme of the experiment or the Pravara Pattern was 'providing security of economic returns to sugarcane growers, generating employment and, in turn, providing the farmers with opportunities of social progress through the instrument of education and guidance.'

The Pravara Sugar Cooperative was started in 1950 with 500 TPD sugar plant which now handles 5000 TPD, operates a 60,000 litres per day distillery, a 30 TPD bagasse-based paper plant, a chemical plant and a host of social institutions.

The Pravara is considered as a model for rural development and is an example how cooperative effort can transform the society. At present it has over 11,000 share-holding members [against the initial 900], 88% of the members are small and marginal farmers, and the crushing season now extends to 245 days in a year [against the initial 134 days]. The vision of Dr Vithalrao Vikhe Patil was to bring prosperity to the poor people of neglected and dry zone. The Sugar Cooperative has generated a lot of social and economic services. Some of them are: a teaching hospital of 700 beds, engineering colleges, technical schools for boys and girls, cooperative bank, public school, dental college, nursing college, institute of management, veterinary college, etc.

**[08] Chaudhary Brahm Perkash [16.6.1918-11.8.1993]**

Born at Nairobi in East Africa, Chaudhary Brahm Perkash came back to Delhi to be brought up and educated in India. He was a delegate to the Indian National Congress in 1938 and became the rural in-charge of the 'individual Satyagraha Movement' in 1940. He was imprisoned six times from 1941-1945 for his close and keen interest in Congress patriotic activities. Elected as General Secretary of the Delhi Pradesh Congress in 1946 and later as its President in 1951, as also in 1966-67. In 1952 he became the Chief Minister of Delhi State. He was elected to the Lok Sabha [Lower House of the Indian Parliament] 1957-1971 and 1977-1979. In 1979 he was the Union Cabinet Minister for Food, Agriculture, Irrigation and Cooperatives.

His most favoured field of interest remained the cooperatives, panchayats, rural development and welfare of weaker sections of the Indian society. From 1945 onwards, he worked to establish numerous cooperative institutions including the Delhi State Cooperative Union. As General Secretary of the National Cooperative Union of India and a member of the Central Committee of the International Cooperative Alliance 1963-1970, he worked for the development and progress of the Indian Cooperative Movement and attaining a respectable status for the country in the international Cooperative Movement.

He was the member of the ICA Advisory Council for South-East Asia during the period 1965-1970 and had played a significant role in the establishment of the ICA Regional Office in New Delhi. He was also instrumental in the establishment of the Indian Farmers' Fertiliser Cooperative Limited, now world's largest urea producer.

Recognising his zeal and capacity to work for cooperatives, the Planning Commission of India appointed him as Chairman of the Committee for Cooperative Laws in 1989, and later the Administrative Reforms Commission appointed him the Chairman of Committee on Cooperative Reforms. His report on reforms of cooperative laws and the Model Cooperative Law is regarded as a path-breaker in the history of cooperative legislation in India. The Report had suggested sweeping and wide-ranging improvements in cooperative legislation giving more freedom of action to cooperatives and reducing the tight administrative controls of the Registrars/government. The suggested Model Cooperative Societies' Law is, however, yet to be enacted by the Indian Parliament.



**[09] Dr Surendra Kumar Saxena [1925-1999]**

Dr SK Saxena has been instrumental in the establishment of ICA Regional Office in India. He was appointed ICA Regional Officer in 1961 and subsequently in 1963 as the ICA Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific. He was appointed Director-General of the International Cooperative Alliance in August 1968 in which capacity he served until his retirement in 1980. After his retirement he moved to live in Canada and established his consultancy organisation which had produced a number of technical reports on various aspects of the Cooperative Movement worldwide. Dr Saxena had studied at the Institute of Social Studies, The Hague. During his tenure with the ICA Regional Office he was able to create a regional platform for all Cooperative Movements and governments to discuss their achievements and problems.

**[10] Mr Govind Kant Sharma [b. 1931]**

Mr GK Sharma started his career in 1955 as Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Societies in Rajasthan State of India. Since then he has been associated with the cooperatives for more than four decades, from grass-roots to the national and international level. Until October 1996, Mr Sharma was the Regional Director of the International Cooperative Alliance Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, New Delhi for a decade. Before joining the ICA, he worked with the International Labour Organisation as its Regional Advisor (Cooperatives) for the Asia and Pacific Region during 1978-84. He served the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) as its Managing Director, as also of the Indian Tourism Cooperative Limited (COOPTOUR) for a decade of which he is currently the Chairman. He had also served the National Cooperative Development Corporation. Mr Sharma had served on the Boards of Directors of several cooperative organisations e.g., National Council for Cooperative Training, and ICA Committees on Agriculture, and has been responsible for promoting many of them.

Realising that there was a great need for harmonising the relationship between the Cooperative Movement and the Governments in the Asia-Pacific Region, while working with the ICA ROAP, Mr Sharma initiated a dialogue between the two through the medium of Asian Cooperative Ministers' Conferences, four of which were organised by him. Obviously the common theme of these conferences was review, reformation, and reformulation of cooperative legislation and cooperative policies.

## Conclusion

The above description of prominent Indian cooperative personalities is only a very minute attempt to highlight the work done by these great cooperators. There have been several more who also deserve a mention. Some of the other stalwarts include persons like: Mr Ramdas Pantulu, Dr P. Natesan, Tatya Sahib Kore of Warnanagar, Dr PS Panjabrao Deshmukh [who founded the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India-NAFED], Yuvaraj Udaibhansinhji [the founder of the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited-IFFCO], Mr B. Venkatappiah [former Member of the Indian Planning Commission, and Chairman of the All-India Rural Credit Review Committee and Chairman of the ICA Regional Council for South-East Asia], Professor D.R. Gadgil [former Deputy chairman of the Indian Planning Commission and President of the National Cooperative Union of India] and Mrs Indira Gandhi who remained the Honorary President of the ICA Regional Council for South-East Asia for a number of years [1961-65].

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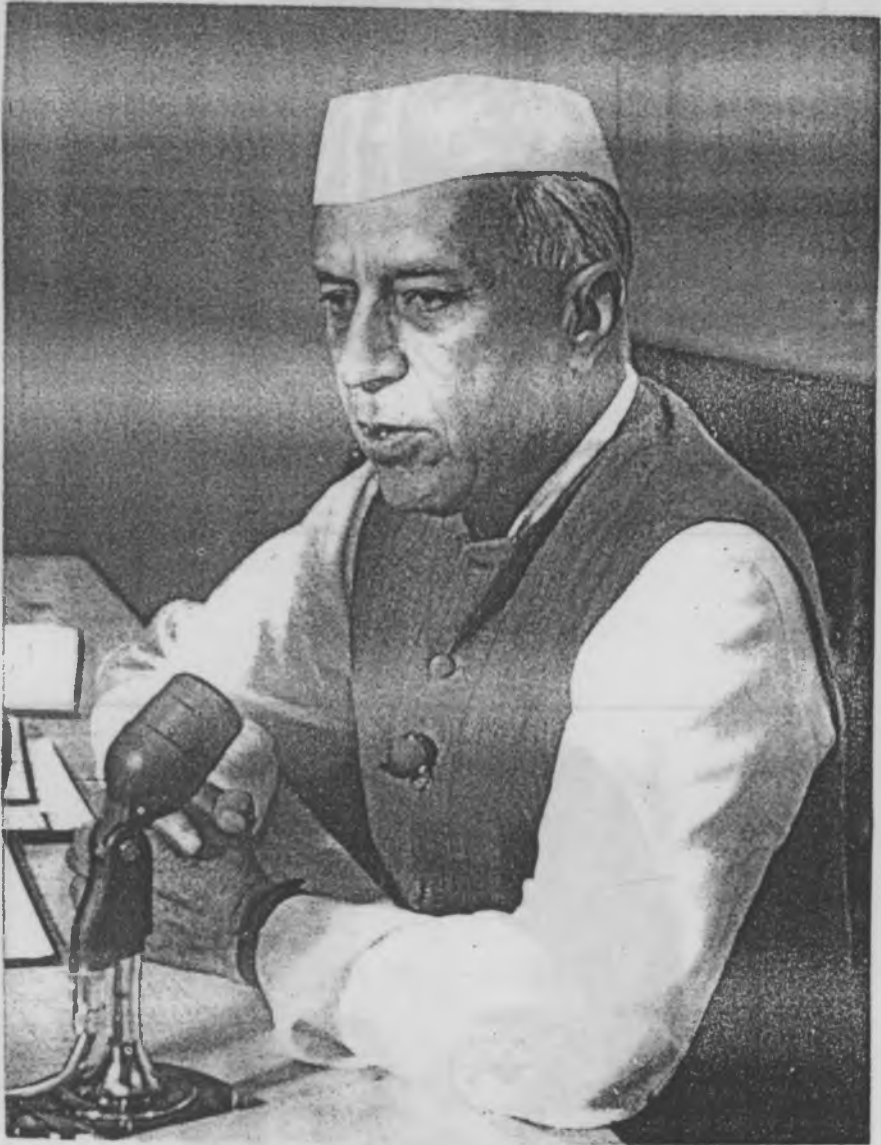
Shiva Nataraja, Lord of the Dance. Dravidian Bronze, 12th to 13th century.





Mahatma Gandhi  
(1869-1948)

Portrait of Mahatma Gandhi  
(1869-1948)



Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru  
(1889-1964)



Vaikunthbhai L. Mehta  
(1891-1964)



Prof D.G. Karve  
(1898-1967)



Tribhuvandas K. Patel  
(1903-1994)



Dr Verghese Kurien  
(born 1921)





Padmashree Dr Vithalrao Vikhe Patil  
(1887-1980)



**BRAHM PERKASH**  
(16.6.1918—11.8.1993)

Chaudhary Brahm Perkash  
(1918-1993)

