

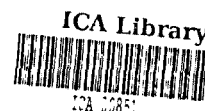
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RECENT TRENDS & DEVELOPMENT IN THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT OF SRI LANKA

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THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN SRI LANKA

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INTRODUCTION

The Co-operative Movement in Sri Lanka was started on the initiative of the government to relieve the rural farmer of his indebtedness and to provide credit facilities to farmers on easy terms. The first credit society was founded in 1911. During the Second World War the problem of shortage of food and the equitable distribution of what was available at reasonable prices was solved through the co-operatives. The Government realising the value of retail shops for the purpose, encouraged the setting up of Consumer Stores Societies throughout the country. After the War the Government organised the formation of Agricultural production and Sales Co-operatives Societies with the objective of increasing agricultural production in the country and at the same time to protect the farmer from exploitation by private trader.

Thus it can be seen that the Co-operative Movement in Sri Lanka was started by the Government as a useful source to implement activities involving the masses.

However, the concept of co-operation though introduced by the state as a media of contact with the common man, became very popular with the rural population.

The co-operative became the main contributor to the development process at rural level. With the development of social and educational standards in the country the societies began to develop independently.

Today, in Sri Lanka there are 17 major types of societies with 7 apex unions serving a membership of 340,000 from all walks of life.

RECENT TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS

- (1) The attention of the whole Co-operative Movement is focused on the outcome of the amendments to the existing Co-operative Law No. 5 of 1972 which is under discussion in the Parliament.

Details of recent developments in the Co-operative State sector in Sri Lanka will be explained to you by our State Representative present here today. Therefore, I will confine my report to the activities of the National Co-operative Council of Sri Lanka (NCC) and its member institutions. The NCC as the apex Co-operative Institution of the Movement has given priority to strengthen closer collaboration and links with the other member co-operative institutions. The business units of the Council assists in this task by maintaining close liaison with the members at apex and district levels in all their activities.

- (2) NATIONAL PLAN

A National plan and a medium term plan has been drawn up to stream line the activities of the Movement. The non-availability of which had resulted in isolated development of activities without any co-ordination, in repetition and overlapping of programmes. Steps are now being taken to prepare medium term plans for the District Co-operative Councils.

(3) EDUCATION AND TRAINING

3.1 The main objective of the NCC are the educational training of members and employees and the upliftment of the standards of policy makers as well as the managerial staff of the Apex co-operative unions. The Education and Training Unit of the NCC has conducted the following programmes during the period under consideration.

3.2 Educational panels of resource persons were formed, and their services are being recruited during the training and education programmes.

Management and administrative needs, basic needs in skills development assessing and of training and educational needs were identified in the early part of this year.

3.3 The Co-operative Employees' Certificate Examination (Ordinary Level) is being conducted by the NCC.

3.4 Leadership training programmes to strengthen staff and committee members of District Councils.

3.5 Inter co-ordinating activities in co-operative education/^{are} continued to over-come over-lapping and repetition of programmes by Apex Unions and Multi Purpose Co-operative Societies and Credit Societies.

3.6 Study Circles methods were introduced with assistance from Vuxenkolan in Sweden, with the intension of increasing member participation and development of effective management.

3.7 A test programme on co-operative member participatory methodology was held in three stages in the Mahaweli area and a hand book for the use of the staff of the newly formed co-operative societies in this area, was produced.

3.8 Special programmes have been conducted in the NCC Regional Co-operative Training Centres to introduce the co-operative concepts to the lower income group members of the "JANASAVIYA" programme (poverty elimination programme), and to enrol them as members.

(4) WOMEN AND YOUTH

4.1 Special attention is given to increase participation of women in the main stream of activities of the Movement. Co-operative Womens' Committees have been encouraged to participate in the mid-day-meal programme for the school children.

4.2 A National Level workshop in 'Women in Development' was conducted and a new plan, structure and objectives were drawn up to include women leaders from all sectors of the Movement in the National Womens' Committee.

4.3 District level active co-operative youth groups have been identified to organise programmes further at district level.

4.4 Special interest is being taken to develop the co-operative knowledge and participation of youth and school children in co-operative activities. The NCC in collaboration with the Ministry of Education is taking a special interest to train teachers to teach the subject of co-operatives in schools which is now included in the school curricula. Establishment of co-operative shops, canteens and stalls within the school premises is encouraged. All activities of these co-operative shops are handled by the students, under the supervision of teachers trained on the subject.

insurance coverage has been extended to other types of co-operatives too.

(6) TAX CONSULTANCY

This is a Service Unit commenced recently which is proving to be very popular. There are 15 societies registered with us, seeking advice on tax problems and procedures, and more societies inquiring for this service.

(7) ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES

This Unit of the NCC provides architectural services to not only the co-operative sector but, also to the People's Bank. The co-operative sector clientele includes the National Co-operative Council of Sri Lanka, the SANASA, the Apex Unions and the Co-operative School. Since June 1991 the total income from Consultancy Services is estimated at 1.2 million Rupees.

(8) INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

8.1 The Printing Press was re-organised recently, new staff recruited and new machinery installed, to serve the Movement better.

8.2 The monthly Co-op newspaper "Samupakaraya" has been upgraded to high light the achievements of the movement. Close liaison is being conducted with the Publicity Unit of the Ministry of Co-operatives to give news and views of both the state and the Movement.

8.3 The library and co-operative information unit is taking a keen interest to disseminate the knowledge and information received and organised by the National Co-operative Council.

(9) PROJECT PLANNING AND RESEARCH

Agriculture, Fisheries, Coop Trade, Sustainable Environmental Conservation, Small Farmer Development, Dairy Development, Use of chemical fertilizer, usage of appropriate technology for agricultural production and by-products, Waste re-cycling are some of the subjects currently engaged in by this Unit of the NCC.

There are two expatriate advisors attached to this Unit of the NCC.

Before, I conclude I wish to thank the organisers, the International Co-operative Alliance, the Co-operative Union of Indonesia and the government of Indonesia for convening this Meeting in Indonesia and providing us this opportunity to participate in this important event. I wish you all, success in your co-operative activities. Thank you.