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AN APPROACH



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REGIONAL OFFICE**

The Regional Office is an extension of the ICA Secretariat in London. Its over-all function is to aid in the implementation of ICA policy, especially as it relates to the promotion of Cooperation in South-East Asia. The goal of these activities is to help Cooperative Organizations to achieve such stability and strength that they will become increasingly able to perform their vital role as self-governing independent strongholds of democracy in their countries.

To help build strong National Cooperative Organizations, to provide guidance in matters of Technical Assistance, to maintain close contact with assistance projects in operation, and to represent the Alliance in its dealings with Governments and International Organizations, are some of the functions which grow from the general objectives of the Regional Office.

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## PREFACE

The present publication was originally prepared in the form of a memorandum on Cooperative Education for submission to the Study Team on Cooperative Training appointed by the Government of India. Our observations and suggestions deal exclusively with the education of the members, committee members and office-bearers of Co-operative societies. The basis of an effective member education programme has to be local and to this end, it is essential that the village cooperative society is involved in the organization of educational activities for its members. It is then for the higher tiers in the structure a question of developing efficient educational techniques, providing educational material and technical guidance, and arranging training for the education officers working at various levels.

Equally important is the question of developing a parliamentary framework for achieving member participation in and member control of the education programme. Unless this is done, the education programme is likely to become the sole concern of the employed education personnel with technical guidance and cooperative information flowing only one way from top to the primary level and there would be few possibilities for a flow-back of ideas and locally felt educational needs from the primary societies upto the top-level policy-making bodies.

South-East Asia is a vast region with considerable diversities and it is hazardous to suggest solutions on the basis of one country alone. But one is also struck by many similarities in regard to problems of cooperative development in various countries in the region and this applies to co-operative education as well. Most of the Movements in the region have initiated member education programmes and are trying to find ways of making them more effective. We have, therefore, brought out this publication after making a few editorial changes in the text of the memorandum, in the hope that the suggested approach to cooperative education, although originally formulated in the context of the Indian Movement will be found of some use by other Movements as well.

NEW DELHI  
May, 1962

B. MATHSSON,  
*Director*  
ICA Education Centre



## The Need For Cooperative Education

COOPERATIVE education is of paramount importance for the Cooperative Movement. First of all, the organisation and functioning of a Cooperative Society is a task that calls for a certain amount of technical knowledge. A basic grounding in cooperative theory, knowledge of parliamentary procedures and a clear understanding of the socio-economic environment within which a Cooperative Society operates are the necessary ingredients for the success of the Cooperative Movement. A Cooperative Society is an organisation of persons who join together voluntarily to achieve a desired social and economic goal which they cannot attain individually. In developing countries, the level of education of members is low and their awareness of affairs in general is limited, because they belong to a stratum whose poverty or social position has not allowed them to take advantage of the schooling facilities that exist. Although the specific approaches for the dissemination of cooperative education and the contents thereof would, obviously, be determined by the purposes for which a Cooperative Society is formed and by the particular audience towards which an educational scheme is directed, it must be emphasized that every measure of cooperative education confers a number of 'capital' benefits upon cooperators. It heightens their consciousness, enables them to articulate problems and provides them with the mental equipment with which to solve these problems; it makes them consider the social and economic issues that impinge upon their everyday lives and, in the process, lifts them out of their narrow environment and makes them increasingly responsive to the larger social and economic changes that take place within a country. A noted Swedish cooperator, H. Elldin, observes: "If we had occasion to start our Movement afresh and if we were given the choice between two possibilities—that of starting without capital but with enlightened membership and staff or, on the contrary, that of starting with a large amount of capital and ill-informed members—our experience would incline us to choose the first course."

But the Cooperative Movement, once it attains a certain stage of development, cannot confine itself only to educating its own ranks. It operates within an existing socio-economic framework and if it has to succeed in a dynamic sense, it must constantly enlarge the number of its sympathizers. In other words, the Movement must interpret its ideology and aspirations, its techniques and achievements to the public at large and thus create an environment in which it can take upon itself an ever increasing number of tasks that are socially and economically useful.<sup>1</sup>

Cooperative Movements in all parts of the world recognize the importance of education within the cooperative fold and have, therefore, included it as a principle. Although the Movement in India is now about sixty years old, systematic attempts at cooperative education and training were taken in hand only recently. A beginning in cooperative training facilities on a coordinated all-India basis was made as late as in 1953, when the Central Committee for Cooperative Training was constituted, and cooperative education work was started only six years ago. This lack of education and training for a long time has been one of the important factors responsible for the indifferent functioning and winding up of many Societies, and also for the failure of the Cooperative Movement as a whole to penetrate into the social and economic life of its members and to make any significant impact on the national economy. It may not be out of place here to draw attention to the fact that nearly 53 per cent of the Societies organised during 1904 to 1934 were either cancelled or were on their way to liquidation by 1934. Even today the bulk of the Societies are to be found in C, D and E audit classes which shows that the Movement is far from healthy.

Cooperative education may be envisaged for the following categories of personnel:—

- (i) staff of the Cooperative Departments;
- (ii) staff of various types of Cooperative Institutions at the primary, district, state and apex levels;
- (iii) members of various types of Cooperatives; and

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<sup>1</sup> This aspect has, however, not been considered in this publication.

(iv) elected managing committee members of Cooperatives.

This publication, however, deals with cooperative education of members and elected managing committee members, referred to as non-officials in India.

### **Existing Set-up**

At present the cooperative education programme is being implemented by the National Cooperative Union of India at the national level, the State Cooperative Unions at the state level and the District Unions, or, in their absence, the ad hoc committees at the district level. In districts covered by the education programme, a cooperative instructor organises and conducts courses for members, managing committee members and office-bearers. At each State Cooperative Union, a cooperative development officer coordinates, supervises and guides the work of instructors. At the national level, the National Cooperative Union of India runs a Cooperative Instructors' Training Centre and also maintains other staff separately to coordinate the education work done in different States and to supervise and guide the cooperative development officers.

There is thus already in existence an organisational framework which operates on three tiers and the problem consists in making this network effective by ensuring a smooth and rapid two-way flow of information and knowledge as between these levels. Although in such an arrangement it would be futile to rate the importance of various tiers, it may be emphasized that the effectiveness of the role of the State and the National Unions would depend upon the amount of factual information they are able to possess about the needs and problems of the Movement at the primary level. A democratic movement, like the Cooperative Movement, thrives if its base is sturdy and if it is able to radiate upwards the earthy vitality and the practical knowledge of the innumerable members who form Cooperative Societies to solve their common problems. As service organisations to their constituents, the State and the National Unions have, therefore, to be continually responsive to the new and complicated problems that arise at the primary level as the Movement progressively branches

out into new fields and faces issues for whose solution past experiences hold no pointers.

The work at the primary level may be considered first. Under the existing arrangement, a cooperative instructor organises and conducts three types of courses, *viz.*, (i) six-week courses for office bearers which includes the president, secretary and treasurer, (ii) one-week courses for other members of the managing committees, and (iii) three-day courses for members and potential members.<sup>1</sup> Normally the area for which an instructor works is one entire district and it would take ten years or even longer for an instructor to reach all the members. Mr. Heckman, T.C.M. Adviser on member education states in *Cooperative Educator* (August 1960), that the time required by an instructor, to train once all the members in a district, would vary from 10 to 80 years,<sup>2</sup> and even then he would not have covered new members. This indicates two things, that it may be necessary to have one instructor for each C.D. Block rather than a district. Secondly, even an instructor for a block in many cases would take a number of years to reach all the members in his area. Thus it would be only after a number of years that he would be in a position to turn his attention to a member who has been trained once. Such an arrangement of organising training courses once for all without continuity of education for the groups trained once is not conducive to results, as has been shown in the Report on an Evaluation Study of the Cooperative Education Programme in Bawana Area, Delhi. The staff will have to be raised to astronomical proportions, if a continuous programme of cooperative education were to be worked through the instructors alone.

It follows from the above that solutions will have to be found whereby the district instructor is able to maintain a continuous contact with the primary level through an intermediate agency. The following suggestions might help to achieve this aim.

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<sup>1</sup> We merely state these without commenting on their merits or demerits with respect to their (i) duration and (ii) separate organisation for the three categories. This is dealt with later.

<sup>2</sup> This range was found to obtain in respect of one batch of instructors trained at the National Union's Training Centre at Chandranagar.

*Firstly*, it is necessary to intensify the education programme, and to coordinate it increasingly with the community development programme. At present, the block organisation has the services of a cooperative extension officer who is expected to carry on propaganda work and who organises cooperative camps and teaches Cooperation at the Village 'Leaders' (Gram Sahayak) Courses. It would be a very great advantage if the cooperative extension officer were to be put in charge of cooperative education work in his block, and supervised and guided by a district cooperative instructor. The block cooperative extension officer would thus become the intermediate agency through whom the district instructor would carry on educational work for the primary societies.

*Secondly*, ways and means should be found by which the members could be helped to educate themselves in cooperative matters. As already pointed out, it is a physically impossible task to achieve satisfactory member education through organisation of courses by an outside instructor. It is, therefore, suggested that a member of the managing committee should be specifically charged with education, who may be called an education secretary. The cooperative extension officer would then function effectively by imparting instruction to these education secretaries, who would be responsible for the work of education in their respective Societies, and supervising their work. The tasks of the block cooperative extension officer vis-a-vis the education secretaries would be: (i) training education secretaries in general cooperative matters; (ii) helping them with planning the education activities and (iii) supplying the educational material needed by them.

### **Study Groups**

The study group is one of the techniques through which cooperative education has been successfully disseminated in some countries where the Cooperative Movement has now reached a high stage of development. This method of study groups is being widely used in the U.K., Sweden, and many other Western countries. The Antigonish Movement in Canada made use of this method to lay the foundation

of cooperative education even before organising Cooperatives. In essence, the study group method refers to a technique whereby, subject to proper guidance from the higher echelons and with the aid of specially prepared study material, members of a Cooperative Society meet at regular intervals to discuss problems that are of mutual interest. Its immediate advantages are two-fold. *First*, the creation of such groups enlarges the number of cooperators who can be approached for purposes of education. *Secondly*, the method of discussion employed is such that it fosters the cooperative spirit. The group leader raises a particular problem, invites comments and observations, sifts the relevant from the irrelevant, presents it back to the members and finally evolves a collective opinion on a particular issue to which, more or less, everybody has contributed and for the implementation of which, therefore, all feel morally bound. In course of time, there emerges a core of enlightened members which enlarges the ranks of potential leaders at the primary level.

### **Application in the Indian Context**

It is necessary at this stage to mention briefly some aspects which will have to be specially considered in applying the study group method in the Indian villages. The following are the most important ones.

#### *Selection of the Group Leader and the Secretary*

In a very real sense the success of a study group depends upon the selection of a proper leader and a secretary. The leader is the central figure who moves the whole group, canalizes discussion along proper lines and makes sure that members' interest does not dwindle with the passage of time. The secretary is responsible for a number of practical matters that are necessary to the organisation of the group. His duties further consist in taking down the proceedings of the meetings thus making for continuity in discussions. The selection of the right men for these two positions constitutes, therefore, the crucial problem. In the

initial stages, the group leader may perform the functions of the secretary as well, since it may not be possible to find two persons for these tasks. Subsequently the group leader may pass on the functions of the secretary to a person who has come up to the level and could discharge these tasks.

How are these two officers to be selected? There is already in existence a village level worker (V.L.W.) whose duties necessarily bring him into close association with the village people. He is thus in a position to pick out the people who, either because they have shown interest in cooperative matters or happen to be more informed than their fellow villagers, provide a somewhat obvious choice. It is necessary that the selection should generally fall on people who are slightly lettered. Although it is doubtful if any standardized methods of selection could be evolved for the country as a whole and much would depend upon the environmental context of each village, it is perhaps not entirely inaccurate to point to three individuals anyone of whom might be able to fill in the positions with usefulness.

First, if there is a school in the village, the teacher should generally provide the obvious choice. His comparatively greater knowledge, the prestige he enjoys in the village and his capacity to lead discussions in a coherent fashion would make it immensely useful for the group to take him on as the leader. A *second* agency is that of the village priest who invariably commands a certain amount of respect and whose advice is often sought for by the villagers.<sup>1</sup> *Finally*, there are in a number of villages young boys who commute daily to the neighbouring town for purposes of going to a school. Such a student would be very apt for the post of the secretary of the group. In a broader sense, he is the connection through whom the more progressive urban forces can be projected into the village and in addition the arrangement also provides an opportunity whereby the younger elements can be inducted into the Movement.

It may perhaps be added that in the context of a socialistic pattern of society which is the framework envisaged for the

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<sup>1</sup> In the Netherlands, for instance, the contribution of the village priest in the early development of rural Cooperation has been considerable.

country, it becomes necessary to ensure, so far as possible, that people are chosen not because of their superior economic might, but rather because of the greater awareness and capacity they possess for successfully running a study group.

### *Training of Group Leaders and Secretaries*

Once the leaders and secretaries of study groups have been selected, it would be necessary to make sure that they are properly trained. It must be realized that the very method of work of the study group is to be viewed as an educational process and that, therefore, it is indispensable to have group leaders who have been properly trained in educational techniques. This could be achieved by assigning to the block extension officer the task of organising, with the aid of the district instructor, three to four days' intensive courses for the group leaders and secretaries. This also brings up the problem of how to train the block extension officer himself in view of the specialised duties he would be called upon to discharge.

### *The Problem of Illiteracy*

It is stating the obvious that where literacy is the rule rather than the exception, the chances of the study group method succeeding are considerably greater than in countries where the opposite is the case. In the case of India, therefore, the high percentage of illiterate masses acts as an inhibiting factor. This emphasizes two things. Firstly, it increases the responsibility of the group leader and the secretary who, because they happen to be the only literate members, have to interpret the material that is received from the extension officer. Secondly, it also underscores the importance of audio-visual techniques in propagating cooperative ideology. The production of such material is a highly technical task which calls for substantial finances and can only be taken up at higher levels and, therefore, need not be gone into here. It is perhaps necessary to emphasize that although illiterate, the village farmers and artisans possess a fund of knowledge in their own fields and, approached properly, are likely to contribute substantially to the proceedings of the study groups.



### *Frequency of Group Meetings*

As in the foregoing, it is difficult to lay down any general rules regarding the periodicity of the group meetings. As a broad principle, it may be stated that group meeting activity should be intensified as the season of agricultural operations slackens and vice-versa. An optimum will have to be worked out in each case and although a greater frequency may be preferable to a lesser one, the meetings should not be made so frequent as to lose their attraction. Evenings should be preferable to day time and the group could either meet in a central place, say the *chaupal*, or at the homes of the members by turns.

To sum up: the existing organisation of cooperative education for non-officials could be intensified through the formation of study groups at the primary level, and at the block level the cooperative extension officer should act as overall incharge of education within the entire block, in addition to the present arrangement that obtain at the district, state and national levels. The diagram on page 21 shows the integrated scheme as discussed above.

Under the scheme, the education staff of the National Union could formulate their programmes around the cooperative development officer and should operate through and in close collaboration with this officer. The cooperative development officer, in turn, will not be in a position to reach out to all the block extension officers and should formulate his programmes around the district cooperative instructor. Similarly, the district cooperative instructor will operate through the block cooperative extension officer.

### **Functions of Education Officers**

The education officers<sup>1</sup> at each level may perform the following three functions: (i) organise and conduct refresher courses and seminars for the education personnel with whom

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<sup>1</sup> They are cooperative development officers at the state level, district cooperative instructor at the district level, cooperative extension officer at the block level (proposed) and education secretary at the primary society level (proposed).

they are to work, (ii) develop educational programmes every year which these personnel are to operate and (iii) organise and conduct courses for key personnel of the cooperative societies *viz.*, secretaries or managers of primaries and managing committee members of business federations.

### **Training of Office-Bearers and other Managing Committee Members**

The courses organised for honorary office-bearers and managing committee members without specific office functions last for five to six weeks for the former and about one week for the latter. It should be recognized that the distinction between honorary office-bearers and managing committee members is an artificial one<sup>1</sup> in the sense that the committee as a whole is charged with the responsibility of conducting the affairs of the Society and is answerable to the general body members. It follows that all managing committee members should receive training commensurate with this responsibility. If this is not done, the likelihood is that the office-bearers, who receive more thorough or more advanced training, in actual practice would tend to dictate their decisions to the rest of the managing committee members, who may then find themselves in the uncomfortable position of having to underwrite decisions the implications of which they do not fully comprehend. It should also be pointed out that a rigid distinction between the training given to the honorary office-bearers and the rest of the managing committee members may tend to perpetuate the office-bearers' tenure of office. The desirable thing in a dynamic organisation is to provide a framework within which an orderly change of leadership can take place when desired by the general body of members, without such change jeopardizing the normal functioning of the organisation. This constitutes

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<sup>1</sup> *The following pattern recommended by the Study Team on Cooperative Training has now been accepted by the Government of India. A combined course for ordinary members and managing committee members including office-bearers will be organised for three to four days in the village where the primary society is located. This class will be followed by another course of intensive training of about three days for managing committee members and office-bearers. In addition, selected office-bearers will be given training for 7 to 10 days at the Junior Cooperative Training Schools.*

in our opinion a strong argument in favour of evolving for the two categories a unified basic training which takes into account that a managing committee member of today is a potential office-bearer of tomorrow. This obviously does not exclude the need for providing, in addition, specialised training for those occupying honorary offices, making them better equipped to discharge their particular functions.

It might be added here that the network of study groups suggested above, if efficiently established, can provide an excellent method of preparing members for the duties associated with service on managing committees.

The duration of the course is another matter to be considered. The present set-up with 5 to 6 week courses at a stretch for honorary office-bearers may on occasion disrupt the regular functioning of the Societies, since it depends to a very high degree upon the regular presence of the office-bearers. In addition, they may not find it possible to stay away from their personal work for such a long time. In view of this it may be advisable to break the course down into several shorter ones. We would also like to emphasize that the training of managing committee members should be viewed as a continuous process. As already discussed, the study group method ensures continuity and it may, therefore, be advisable to consider the application of this method to the training of managing committee members as well.

## **Financing**

The question of finance for cooperative education and for the Cooperative Unions is very important. The I.C.A. Seminar on Cooperative Leadership held at New Delhi in 1960 recommended in this regard that probably the easiest way of financing cooperative education is the time-honoured method of allocating a definite percentage of net profits or surplus to this purpose. Another alternative is to contribute fixed per capita allocation. This income may be shared between the Primary Society, the State Cooperative Union and the NCUI.<sup>1</sup> Such a practice of contribution has been existing for

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<sup>1</sup> National Cooperative Union of India.

the former Bombay State, where the Bombay State Cooperative Societies Act, 1925,<sup>2</sup> provides for a compulsory contribution by societies for cooperative education out of their net profits. A recommendation to this effect was made by the Committee on Cooperative Law in 1957, and a provision was made in the Model Cooperative Societies Act and Rules drafted by this Committee. This recommendation, however, was not followed up by the National and State Unions in a positive manner and no concrete steps were taken to collect funds from the Movement. Activisation of the Unions in this regard and working out a machinery of collection and a system of sharing among the Unions deserve to be given the highest priority. For such a gigantic Movement as in India, raising at least part of the funds from the Movement should not be very difficult. Besides the contributions on the basis of 2 to 3 per cent of the net profits by the business federations which would yield a sizeable income, the possibilities of raising funds from primary societies, perhaps on the basis of the size of membership, should be examined. As an example, 10 naye paise per member per year would yield a total amount of nearly Rs. 25 lakhs. Cooperative education work will not become efficient or, to put it in other words, responsive to the needs of the Movement, unless the members help to pay for it. Obviously, the active participation of the members is likely to be greater in a programme which at least partly has been paid for by the members themselves.

Any well functioning system of member education must be based on an integration at each level of the appointed education personnel with representative organs of Cooperative Organisations themselves. Without such an arrangement neither the present educational needs nor the long-term objective of attaining greater self-dependence of the Movement are likely to be met.

In section II a system is outlined whereby, at each level of implementation, the education programme could be made the joint responsibility of the appointed government paid officer and an elected representative member body.

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<sup>2</sup> Since bifurcation of the State into Maharashtra and Gujerat, new Acts have been enacted which continue to provide for compulsory contributions described above.

## II

### INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE MEMBER EDUCATION

The problem of effective member education in the Indian Cooperative Movement needs for its solution the services of specially trained personnel. Such personnel exist in India at National, State, and District levels. In Section I various ways have been discussed whereby this arrangement could be made more effective in practice than it is now.

However it is necessary to design and integrate a scheme within which the trained personnel can function effectively at the different levels to which they are assigned, since no cooperative member education programme can be operated successfully solely through the employed education staff at the various levels. It is equally necessary to work out a system of active member participation, and to find ways by which responsibility for the execution of the education programme can be placed in the hands of elected representatives of the membership. There can be little doubt that the ultimate success or failure of a member education programme will depend upon the extent to which cooperative members are made aware of their responsibility to participate and exert their right of democratic control.

In order to achieve effective member participation and member control of the education programme, there must be set up, at the various levels, effectively functioning representative bodies of members. If this is not done, the education programme is likely to become the sole concern of the employed personnel and, moreover, a one-way traffic with few potentialities for a flow-back of ideas or expressions of locally felt educational needs from the primary societies upwards to the top level policy-making bodies.

The attainment of the desired active member participation in the education schemes is, at least partly, a question of efficient parliamentary organisation. If a workable system of member representation can be designed, the result will be seen

in functioning elected bodies which at all levels can aid in the planning of educational activities, work with the trained personnel assigned to the task and share the responsibility for seeing to it that the programmes are actually executed. It is of course true that in theory there is provision for a system of parliamentary representation in the set-up of the Indian Cooperative Movement. Representation to the Annual Meetings of State Unions and to State Level Cooperative Conferences and to the organs of the NCUI is granted in the usual democratic fashion to member organisations. As regards elected member bodies specially concerned with education, however, very little provision is made for a workable system of representation at the various levels. There is no effective link between the primary societies, the district level organisations, and State Unions. Nor is there any systematic coordination between the voluntary organisational set-up and the scheme for employed education personnel, especially at district and lower levels. This constitutes one of the most serious weaknesses of the present set-up. In the first place, member education inside the Cooperative Movement in India has been made the concern of the voluntary organisations, with the National Union bearing primary responsibility for the execution of the programme. This obviously necessitates an integrated representation system from the primary level all the way up to the National Cooperative Union of India, consisting of elected organs responsible for ensuring the functioning of the member education scheme. Furthermore, the long-term objective of ultimately creating a strong Movement, independent of State assistance and supervision, implies, during the transitory stage, systematic efforts to create a structure of responsible elected member organs which can gradually be entrusted with more far-reaching responsibilities. The chances of success of these efforts will depend, for quite some time to come, upon the existence of adequately trained education personnel working inside a framework which provides for continuous contact and consultation with representative elected organs. Naturally, the responsibility for developing necessary educational activities and for giving them adequate contents must remain primarily with persons who are employed for this task. However, pro-

vision must also be made for a structure of member control. The actual contribution of elected organs to the planning of educational activities may for some time to come remain fairly limited. Nevertheless, they themselves must be looked upon as fundamentally important in the entire education programme. They constitute a structure which provides for intensive member education in the sense that the elected members become increasingly involved in the whole field of educational work. Here it must be emphasized that to serve on such elected organs in close contact with trained personnel is in itself one of the most important ways of gaining increased knowledge of how to handle cooperative work effectively. Experiences gained in other Cooperative Movements show that the self-education gained in the process of serving on committees, boards and councils ultimately results in the creation of knowledgeable and responsible members who are capable of administering the affairs of their sometimes complicated and large enterprises without interference or supervision by external agencies.

Although there are a few examples in India of an organisation of the educational programme inside the voluntary Cooperative Movement as, for instance, in Maharashtra and Gujarat, the education schemes, as a rule, lack the support of internal organisational cohesion through a carefully worked out system of member representation at all levels of implementation.

Here attention is directed exclusively to the problem of giving a proper organisational shape to the member education programmes. The possibility of further organisational integration by incorporating into the structure other functions of District, State and National Cooperative Unions will not be dealt with. The role of any other personnel than that which is specifically engaged in implementing the education scheme at various levels is also not considered.

### **Outline of Integrated Organisation**

As pointed out already, the organisational framework within which the education personnel is to work must be so designed as to provide for adequate member participation and

ultimately efficient member control at all levels. It follows that the structure then starts at the primary level and is vertically integrated through the various intermediary levels all the way upto and including the level of the National Union.

As will be seen from the diagram on page 22, an integrated structure implies that there is a close collaboration between the employed personnel and elected organs at all levels. To achieve this it is necessary to add to the present system of member representation new features at the block and district levels and to place greater emphasis on the function of the Primary Societies themselves.

It may be pointed out that the suggested introduction of annual education conferences at the District, State and national levels would not duplicate the functions of cooperative conferences being organised at present to discuss general cooperative matters.

### **The Primary Level**

The Cooperative Societies at the primary level must be made to realise that in the last analysis they themselves carry the responsibility for the implementation of cooperative education amongst their members. This is not contradicted by the fact that the actual implementation in most cases will still be done by personnel who are not recruited by the Societies themselves. The ultimate object remains the same, namely, to attain a gradual transition during which the Societies become more and more able to handle their own affairs not only in the field of cooperative education but also as regards the sum total of their activities.

In the small Primary Societies it may or may not be possible to appoint special education committees. In the absence of education committees the responsibility for the education programme must rest directly with the managing committee, but each Society should at least be encouraged to appoint one of the committee members as education secretary.

### **The Block Level**

In the structure presented in our graph the Block Level emerges as the crucial one. This is the lowest level at which



provision is made for a specially trained person to deal with cooperative developmental problems. As suggested in Section I, it would be an improvement over the present set-up if the block extension officer could function more directly under the district cooperative instructor who should concern himself specifically with the implementation of education at the primary level.

At the block level it is suggested that an annual education conference should be introduced. Representation to this conference should be on the basis of one person from each local Society. If the suggestion to appoint one committee member in the Primary Society as education secretary is adopted the society should be encouraged to elect him its representative at the block level annual conference. The functions of the block level annual conference would be three-fold:—

- (i) To elect a small block level education committee to work with the extension officer and to represent the views of the Primary Societies at the block level.
- (ii) To elect representatives of the block to the annual district education conference.
- (iii) To review the work during the preceding year and discuss the policy for the following year.

The advantage of having a small elected education committee at the block level would be that the extension officer would be in much closer contact with the problems faced by the Primary Societies. We suggest that this committee should consist of not more than five members in order to be able to meet relatively frequently and without adding considerably to the cost of carrying out the education programme at the primary level.

It may be considered useful to achieve close contact between the block education committee and the Panchayat Samiti in order to duplicate at the block level the coordination obtaining between the Panchayat and the Cooperative Society at the primary level. Such coordination at the block level might be achieved by giving the block education committee the status of a "specialized agency" of the Panchayat Samiti. Even if this is not done, the fact that the extension officer, who is part of the community development organisation, would become the functioning secretary of the block education committee,

would in itself ensure the necessary coordination. To prepare the agenda for the block level education conference would, of course be the responsibility of the block level committee and the extension officer. For the work during the preceding year the block education committee would be answerable to the annual education conferences and, consequently, would become an organ with clearly delimited parliamentary rights and responsibilities.

### **District Level**

As pointed out already, it may or may not be possible to achieve the desirable district level coordination between the district level instructor and an elected member organ through an existing district organisation such as a district union. However, we are assuming here that no functioning district organisation exists, in which case, the proposed duplication at the district level of the block level organisation described above would be as shown in the diagram.

The broad features of the district level organisation should, of course, be similar to those already discussed for the block level. In all probability, the most efficient thing would be to have the district instructor serve as secretary of the district level education committee. In so far as possible, coordination with the community development organisation at the district level should be attempted. It should be realised that the same pattern of relationship between the cooperative education organisation and the community development programme ought to be duplicated from the primary level upwards through the different secondary levels.

To ensure that the views of the technical and most competent personnel is heard at the State level, it would be desirable to elect the district instructor as one of the representatives to the State level annual education conference.

### **State Level**

The proposed annual education conference at the State level would carry on for the State as a whole the functions already discussed in the district and block levels.

Broadly speaking the same pattern should obtain.

At the State level the education committee should become a permanent organ specifically made responsible for the implementation of educational activities in the State. Normally the cooperative development officer would become the secretary of the education committee and the committee as such would be directly answerable for its work to the executive of the State Cooperative Union. To be able to work efficiently, the State education committee should be given extensive powers by the general body meeting to work on behalf of the executive in between its meetings and the executive would reserve for itself primarily the right to approve the general policy of the education committee and to exert after-control over the committee's work in the usual democratic fashion.

At the annual general body meeting of the State Cooperative Union the education committee would be required to present an annual account of its work through the executive, and thus, once a year, there would be provision for a review by the highest authority of the Union of the education work carried out during the preceding year.

### **National Level**

As already mentioned, the last link in the suggested organisation would be a national education committee, elected by the National Annual Education Conference. The composition of the National Education Conference will be on the same pattern as described for education conferences at other levels. Representatives to the National Conference will be elected at the State Education Conferences and it would be desirable to include the Cooperative Development officer as one of the representatives. The national education committee would work at the national level in the same fashion as the State education committee at the State level and would have, broadly speaking, the same relationship to the executive and general body meeting of the National Cooperative Union. It follows that the National committee would have to be empowered by decision taken by the general body meeting to carry out the education work and be answerable for it to the executive and ultimately, to the general body meeting.

To be able to discharge its functions, the National education committee should also have the services of technically competent persons and its secretary would normally be the person in charge of education inside the National Cooperative Union.

### **Financing of the Cooperative Education Scheme**

Provision is of course made for the financing of the permanent staff assigned to implement the cooperative education programme. As regards the money required for the corollary parliamentary organisation discussed above, finances should be found from inside the Cooperative Movement, since the responsibility for maintaining the parliamentary set-up is obviously that of the Movement itself.

Diagram 1

Organization Of Member Education

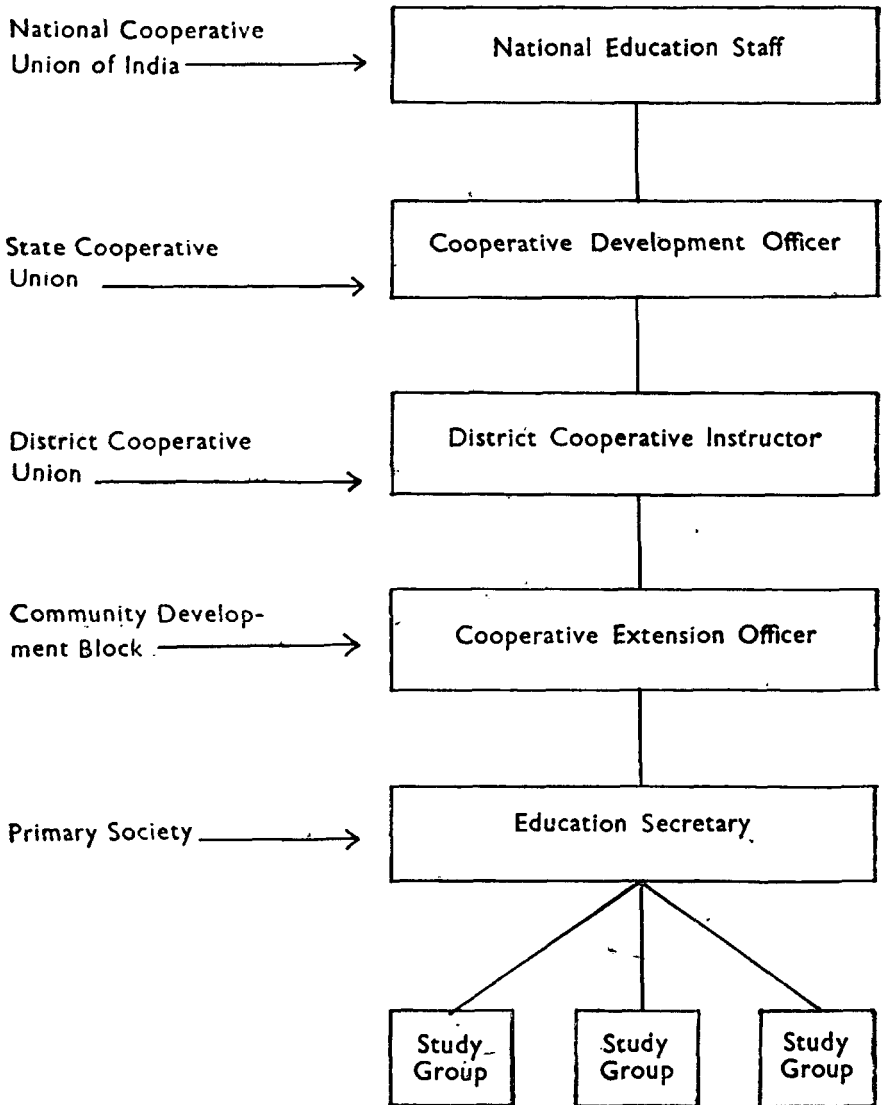
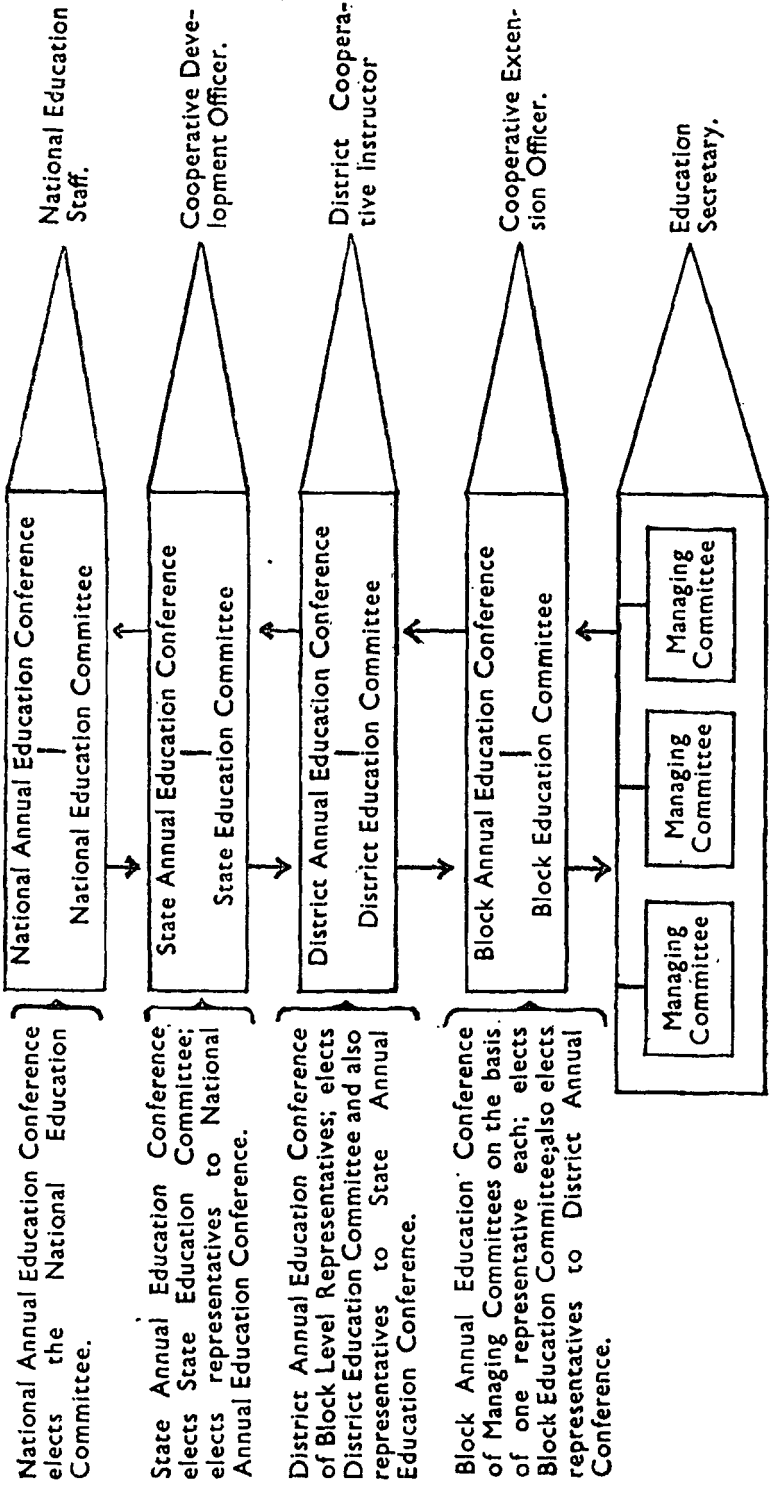


Diagram 11

Organization Of Member Education



## **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE EDUCATION CENTRE**

The Education Centre of the International Cooperative Alliance, which was established in New Delhi in November, 1960 functions for countries of the South-East Asian Region. Its main objective is to supplement the educational work of South-East Asian Cooperative Movements. Another important aspect of working of the Education Centre is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge, experience and techniques, with regard to working of Cooperative Organizations among countries of the Region and between Cooperative Movements of the Region and the well-established Movements in other parts of the world.

The Education Centre arranges courses, seminars and conferences in the countries of the Region, publishes cooperative literature, produces educational aids and undertakes research studies on various aspects of the Cooperative Organizations.

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