

Manpower Management and Cooperative Development

REPORT

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Report of Regional Seminar
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
27th March - 9th April 1983

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334:65(5)
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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE
Regional Office & Education Centre for South-East Asia
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"Bonow House", 43 Friends Colony (East),
New Delhi-110 065 India.

January 1984 (500)
Price : Indian Rs. 30.00 US \$ 1.00

Printed in India
at the Model Press P. Ltd., Jhandewalan,
New Delhi-110 055.

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Foreword

Of the many factors that affect the performance of co-operatives, the aspect of Manpower, takes a predominant place. It is the Manpower that is in daily contact with the membership and the general public. It is the manpower which can give a good or bad image to the cooperative. It is to the extent that the cooperative and its Manpower accept their individual and corporate responsibilities, and discharge their respective obligations well that a cooperative can work smoothly and in harmony and can effectively serve the needs of its membership.

Unfortunately, in many an approach to cooperative organisation and activity, an aspect that is given scant attention is that of Manpower. Perhaps this stems from the historical antecedents of cooperative development in the region, where small size cooperatives concerned mostly with rural and later urban thrift and credit were started, with the elected members of the committee themselves performing the day to day transactions and book-keeping on an honorary basis. Even when cooperative activity began to diversify and enter specialised and more competitive fields of activity, the elected members continued to believe that the various functions devolving on the cooperative could be managed by themselves, with some assistance from a paid employee. In the circumstances, approach to recruitment and staffing of cooperatives were generally attended to in a perfunctory manner, without a proper realisation of both the present needs of the organisation and its possible needs, in a more expanded situation in the future. Furthermore, societies generally being small and serving local interests, and with the local elite in control, appointments were more a disbursement of patronage rather than one dependent on an understanding of requirements and competencies. Perhaps the same approaches and similar attitudes prevail over a generality of small sized cooperatives.

A further aspect of historical development which has direct relation to Manpower Management, is the aspect of amalgamation that many cooperative societies went through, either voluntarily or by government fiat—the amalgamation process, as was intended, made the societies larger with larger resources, larger business turnover, and with a larger area and a larger membership to service. But in general, many of the large sized cooperatives had to carry the already existing employees of the amalgamating societies, whether they were competent to play an effective role in the new situation, or not.

Most often recruitment of staff was on the basis of individual society autonomy. Though many a society was federated into a vertical structure, often culminating in a National Federal Structure, and though the Federal Structure, was meant to safeguard, strengthen and work in the interests of its affiliates, the aspect of Manpower, was rarely conceded to the Federal organisations. Each society tended to meet this need on an ad hoc basis. Though one generally talks of a cooperative movement in each country, in fact there was only a loose organisation, with each individual society tending to work in isolation the links both lateral and horizontal, being at best more formal than those which would have helped the emergence of strong sectoral organisations, working on a basis of understanding, support and mutual help.

The Federal Structures, the larger business cooperatives at the various levels, the cooperative banks etc. have over time developed their own staffing policies, and have been generally able to make the work environment for their employees comfortable and attractive, with prospects for career development within their own organisations.

However, another factor that generally tends to affect the aspect of Manpower in Cooperatives is the very complicated management and power structure within the cooperative organisation. Perhaps this difficulty arises from the historical antecedents mentioned earlier, perhaps it stems from the diverse interpretations given to the concept of democratic control in cooperatives, with the elected leaders at the level of the Board of Directors or the Committee of

Management, as the case may be, often assuming responsibility to carry out day to day functions of the cooperative. There tends to be a misunderstanding, which often can be frustrating to the executive and other staff, where each member of a Board sometimes feels that he has a duty to give orders on day to day matters and has a right to expect it to be carried out by the staff. One of the significant deleterious effects of this kind of situation is the overloading of cooperative with inadequately qualified staff far in excess of need and financial capacity to carry—but of course it satisfies a patronage need to provide employment.

There is, therefore, in many a cooperative system an ongoing debate and dialogue, on Board-Manager relationship, and this gray area of cooperative management at times tends to be the determining factor in regard to motivation and committed service by the staff.

The overall picture therefore in regard to Manpower is one of ad hoc approaches, with recruitment being made at times of persons inadequately qualified on a multiplicity of salary scales, with little or no career prospects within the organisation to make the employee secure and contented.

The ad hoc approaches have necessarily affected the training programmes provided by governmental organisations or by the National or State level Cooperative Training Institutes. Over the past many decades, staff training tended to be rather routinised, based mainly on academic and theoretical approaches. It is only in very recent times that job related, or on the job, more practical oriented training programmes have been launched in many a country. Even here, there is as yet no systematic approach to assessment of manpower needs for the cooperative system and a conscious policy of training and recruitment to satisfy such needs. The conscious feeling of a “movement” that needs to function effectively is yet to be experienced.

A further factor that has complicated matters in regard to cooperative manpower is the increasingly expanding practice in many a cooperative system to encourage the appointment of government officers on deputation to the higher echelons of cooperative posts. The practice unfor-

tunately started as a stop gap measure seems to have settled down as an accepted practice in some countries in the Region. Needless to say, that situations where the more attractive executive posts are blocked to those serving in the system, can lead to nothing but disappointment, if not frustration.

The position, therefore, in regard to Manpower within the cooperative system was not one that one could be satisfied with. The problems were many and there have always been complaints from the membership and others dealing with cooperatives of inefficient and indifferent service. Many a cooperative movement backed by the governments in many of the countries have tried to find suitable solutions which will improve the Manpower situation in cooperatives. How does one ensure proper recruitment? How does one provide for security of service and can the system provide a promotion prospect so that young persons joining the cooperatives could aim at a career within the cooperative system itself? The approaches to finding solutions in this sector have been many, sometimes operated with government assistance and sometimes operated through federal structures of the cooperatives. The Cooperative Management System in the Philippines, the Cadre Systems operating in Nepal through its Agricultural Bank, the many Cadre Commissions, Cadre Systems in the various States in India, are all attempts made to provide the cooperative with better staff and the cooperative employee with a satisfactory working environment which included aspects of promotional prospects and career development. In Sri Lanka, the Cooperative Employees Commission which was set up as a government body sought to regulate the aspects of cooperative recruitment, their service conditions, determine the qualifications for various levels of recruitment and appropriate wage scales and also sought to determine the cadre of each cooperative so that a cooperative was not burdened with excess staff dependent on patronage recruitment.

The problems therefore in regard to Manpower in Cooperatives seem to be fairly common over most of the cooperative systems in the Region. The experiences they have in looking for solutions were wide and varied—but no single

experience had been able to find generally accepted solutions which could be replicated or adapted elsewhere. The level of cooperative performance was being critically examined in many situations, especially as, many a government, in their national development plans sought to use the cooperatives as essential instruments in implementing development policy. The volume of work, the areas of activity to be performed, were ever increasing and to the cooperatives, this was a challenge to be met. Much would depend on the capacity of the organisation to face up to the responsibilities devolving on it. Much would depend on the willingness and the capacity of the manpower within the system to perform the tasks at a level of acceptable competence and efficiency.

This then was the problem and the challenge and this was the background which had surfaced at many a discussion. This then was the background against which we at the ICA ROEC decided to arrange a Seminar on this vital aspect which affected cooperative performance.

We are indeed most happy and deeply grateful to AN-KGASA, the National Cooperative Union of Malaysia for so willingly agreeing at the Regional Council Meeting held in Manila, Philippines, to host this very important Seminar. We are deeply grateful to them for all the arrangements made and for the supporting services provided. We are indeed most grateful to the Hon'ble Y.B. Dato Sanusi Junid, Minister of National and Rural Development, Government of Malaysia, for inaugurating the Seminar.

A seminar necessarily hopes to provide the forum to exchange experiences and to work out guidelines as will help the movements represented at the seminar. In this very important area of need, we thought it would be most useful to go beyond the experiences available within the Region, so that the guidelines could reflect other experiences. To achieve this end, we are indeed most happy that we had the generous support of several cooperative movements in the developed world. Through the kind intervention of the Cooperative Union of Canada and the Cooperative Development Fund we had the services of Mr. Peter Hlushko, Vice President (Personnel), Cooperative Insurance Group, Ottawa,

made available to us, at no cost on our budget. The Swedish Cooperative Centre, through their intervention made the services of Mr. Hans Ardelius, Senior Administrative Director, KF in Sweden available to us. He is one who has had considerable experience in the field of personnel and staff development.

Our Japanese Cooperative Friends from the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives made available the services of Mr. Morimasa Kunii, who has been working with the Japanese Cooperatives in many fields, over a considerable length of time. From India, we had the benefit of Mr. V.B.L. Mathur, one time Registrar of Cooperative Societies in Himachal Pradesh and at that time the Managing Director of the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) of India. His long and varied experience was certainly an asset to us. We had also the services of Mr. W.U. Herath, the Director of the SCC/ICA/NCC sponsored Teachers Training Project in Sri Lanka, which project was primarily concerned with improving the efficiency of cooperative performance through a properly motivated, well adjusted, skilled and committed cooperative work force. To all of these, our Resource Persons, and their sponsoring organisations we express our sincere thanks. Their contributions and their sustained efforts throughout the seminar were of great benefit in evolving workable guidelines and action programmes.

We were lucky that we had as participants to the seminar persons with considerable experience in the field of cooperatives and especially in the management of cooperatives. Their background papers and their contributions were of a high level and contributed effectively to the decision making process.

We had the willing support of ANGKASA and the Cooperative Union of Malaysia in the many activities we undertook during the seminar—we say thank you to both these organisations and to their devoted staff who spared no pains in making the seminar a success.

The responsibility of conducting the seminar was shared by me and my colleague, Mr. J.M. Rana, Director (Education). In fact, Mr. Rana had to share the major burden and

work through the final phases of the seminar alone by himself, as I had to attend to other urgent matters in New Delhi. I express my sincere thanks to Mr. Rana for successfully concluding an important seminar, so vital for the future performance of cooperatives.

We have had a seminar on a very important area affecting cooperative activity. The text of the Report contains the many deliberations, the conclusions and recommendations and the action programmes decided on. It is our hope that the concerned movements will take off from here and provide the necessary initiatives as will help in establishing a well motivated, well adjusted, well trained and deeply committed cooperative work force, and that the ROEC will be able to assist if assistance becomes necessary.

New Delhi
22 September, 1983.

R.B. RAJAGURU
Regional Director

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Report

Objectives

The main purpose of the Seminar was to study the complex problems in the field of Cooperative Manpower Management in the context of the development of cooperatives in the Region.

The situation in regard to manpower differs from country to country and often from one type of cooperative to another within the same country.

In most countries in the Region, the cooperative movements were set up to meet certain national situations without any long-term considerations. Although social and economic conditions in the Region had changed fast during the past few years, the cooperative movement as a whole had not been able to keep pace with such changes, particularly because no serious consideration had been given to manpower planning and development. In the coming years, progress and speed of development in the countries in the Region were bound to be faster and it was opportune that the cooperators of the Region should consider this aspect and take immediate and long-term measures to meet this challenging situation. It was with this objective that cooperators from the South-East Asian Region met to deliberate, discuss and find solutions to this aspect of cooperative development.

Main Issues

The Seminar discussed in depth the following issues as it considered them as very important for cooperative manpower development:

- (i) Examining the present situation regarding cooperative employees and identifying the strengths, weaknesses and constraints which had direct influence on cooperative employee attitudes and performance;

- (ii) Changes needed at the various levels of the cooperative system to ensure a better working environment for cooperative employees and identifying the roles and responsibilities of individual societies, their federations, the National Cooperative Unions and the governments in effecting the needed changes;
- (iii) Examining the need for proper Manpower Development in the Cooperative System and recommending short-term and long-term strategies to ensure more efficient and effective service through cooperatives.

Method Adopted

The method adopted at the Seminar for purpose of analysing the above problems was first, for various delegates from the different countries to present and explain their own situations and current problems. Having understood the problems at country levels, the delegates studied the questions in two groups whose reports were subjected to analytical discussion at the main session. The following report, comprising conclusions and recommendations of the seminar, is based on the results of such deliberations.

1. Strengths, Weaknesses and Constraints

(i) Strengths

The cooperative movements in the Region have developed in the past on basis of ideological strength. In almost all the countries in the Region, the membership that believed in the cooperative concept had been large and had continued to increase in numbers. The governments have given recognition to the cooperative movement as a national, social and economic development agency by legislative action and other indirect support. This, the Seminar felt, was a great strength for the development of cooperative activities.

It had been observed that where cooperative ventures were concerned, the system had strength in mobilising capital by member subscriptions and in securing other

financial support. The movements also had dedicated personnel. There was also in the Region some training facilities and funds for the development of cooperation. The above factors clearly showed that the cooperative system in the various countries of the Region had great strength for its present existence, further development and for meeting any challenging situations.

(ii) *Weaknesses*

While recognising the above strengths of the movement, the Seminar was aware of the weaknesses as well. The most significant weakness was the inadequate consideration paid to manpower planning and development. Most cooperatives in the Region had not paid sufficient attention to formulating manpower policies and providing the personnel with career opportunities as well as sufficiently competitive salaries and attractive fringe benefits. The cooperatives also had not planned for security of service and motivation of personnel. The above factors had resulted in the cooperatives not being able to attract talented and skilled personnel into their services. This invariably caused inefficiencies in the services as compared with other competitive sectors. In regard to training of personnel, the cooperatives had not paid sufficient attention. Although some training facilities were available in almost all countries of the Region, they were most inadequate compared to the multiple services and the number of personnel employed in the cooperative sector. In modern management, motivation and training of personnel must receive highest priority for the purpose of development of human efficiencies and resources of institutions.

Another weakness that was identified was the existence of external influences. Those were sometimes political and personal interests. Sometimes, they were beyond the control of societies or membership. The Seminar felt that whatever way an external influence might come, it hampered the concept and management of the societies and weakened their progress.

In the cooperative sector, there existed a large enlightened

membership as aforementioned. However, a great many of the members were less enlightened about the cooperative concept and society-activities. There was a further group of members who were quite apathetic towards their societies. Both these groups were a drag on the system and if they were enlightened and motivated, societies would have greater advantage. In the cooperative sector, one most important weakness which had been ignored was the lack of communication between boards of directors and staff members. A successful organisation depended largely on the provision of its services to the satisfaction of the consumer and member population. The Boards of Directors as elected representatives of members have a great responsibility in this regard. For this purpose, the relationship between the boards and the staff members should be such as would promote the attainment of the objectives of the cooperative society and rendering of efficient services to the members and the community at large. It was felt by the Seminar that there was a great deal of mismanagement in the societies. Much of it was due to the above mentioned reasons. However, some mismanagement was due to reasons such as lack of supervision, ignorance and weakness in the management systems.

(iii) *Constraints*

The Seminar considered the main constraints that were prevalent in the cooperative sector having regard to various situations in different countries.

In certain countries some societies were too small to enable proper manpower development. Also too large societies created some other problems. In this respect, the seminar was of the opinion that it should be possible to work out certain minimum requirements for a viable and economically sound society by considering social and economic factors including consumer service demands and the density of population. An ideal society would be one that had a sufficient number of members and a consumer population, as well as sufficient economic activities generating profitable turnover and a contented service personnel.

Another serious constraint was inadequate cooperation

and coordination within the movement. It should be possible for various types of societies, from grassroots level to regional and national levels, to coordinate their activities so as to develop not only their financial resources but also to develop careers for personnel in their service. It should be possible for a person entering a service in a small society to reach higher capacities and positions if his performance merited such promotion. The coordination should be so worked out so as to attract the best talents and to give them the deserved positions in the career-ladder.

The development of the cooperative sector and its services and personnel depended largely on the strength of the apex organisations. The apex organisations at all levels should have sound financial resources and service personnel so as to enable career development in their own areas of operations. If apex organisations developed efficiencies and performance, naturally it would also help primary societies in developing their own personnel.

Cooperative development requires clear and definite policies from government and other allied agencies. Any frequent changes in their policies affect the operations of cooperative societies thereby causing serious manpower problems.

The object of the cooperative sector should be to develop itself with the expanding population, catering to their needs and aspirations with a view to building a socially and economically sound community. Therefore, expansion had to be planned along with financial resources so as to meet these demands. This would impart dynamism to the movement and confidence to the community and personnel in the service. In most countries of the Region, expansion and additional financial resources were not planned, as it should be for a developing situation.

The cooperatives in every country played vital roles in multiple fields of national development. As societies organised on a legal framework and accepted concepts, they contributed vastly towards building the national economy. Considering these aspects the Government should provide special protective measures to enable the cooperatives to have a harmonious, steady and effective growth.

Role of Societies, Federations, the National Organisation, and the Government

The seminar felt that all societies, federations and National level unions should pay greater attention to manpower development. The seminar was of the view that the question of manpower management and development should be thought of as a career progression in the cooperative societies at all levels. It had to be realised that the cooperative sector in the Region faced severe competition not only in trade, commerce and business but also in manpower recruitment. Therefore the seminar felt that attractions for careers, skills in service and efficiency in performance were very vital for successful cooperative activity. With that end in view, the seminar considered the roles and responsibilities of individual societies, federations, national cooperative unions and the governments in regard to the creation of a better working environment for employees in the cooperative sector and made the following suggestions.

Role of the Individual Society

1. to identify objectives of the society, its present and future activities and to develop Corporate plans;
2. to outline its own organisational structure and identify manpower needs;
3. to develop job descriptions and specifications;
4. to define recruitment/selection procedures;
5. to formulate competitive and attractive salary structures and to review them periodically;
6. to develop policies to give better opportunities for promotion and fringe benefits;
7. In case of societies that were unable to pay competitive salaries, a minimum salary should be paid and incentive schemes based on performance devised;
8. to formulate effective communication systems amongst Board of Directors, Staff and Members. Some suggestions made for improving communications were appointment of extension workers with responsibility for member communication, holding of social functions,

issue of publications, and multi-level education/training programmes, with some overlaps;

9. to evaluate and monitor staff performance;
10. to develop a systematic and logical training programme for the staff at different levels and education programmes for members and Board of Directors;
11. to establish and develop training units of their own;
12. to make budgetary provisions for staff training;
13. to contribute to a centralised training fund;
14. to plan and implement career progression schemes for employees;

Role of the Federations

1. to coordinate, assist and advise societies on manpower policies;
2. to make representation to national organisation and to government on manpower policies and development;
3. to organise and conduct education and training programmes;
4. to provide opportunities for career progression of cooperative employees in their respective sectors;
5. to negotiate master contracts regarding fringe benefits on behalf of member societies;
6. to advise and assist societies on mergers for economic viability; and
7. to evaluate and monitor performance of member societies.

Role of the National Organisations

1. to make representation to government regarding legislation on manpower;
2. to assist societies in the formulation, interpretation and implementation of manpower policies;
3. to establish a data bank of cooperative manpower;
4. to organise a scheme of career progression with the assistance of the cooperative department so as to provide opportunities for employees to climb to higher rungs in the cooperative ladder;

5. to formulate a standard salary scheme and other uniform fringe benefit schemes so as to attract the best talents to the cooperative sector;
6. to organise training and education programmes for manpower development;
7. to organise institutional links with local and international agencies with a view to developing manpower efficiencies suitable to national development;
8. to provide consultancy services in specialised fields and to conduct research;
9. to develop a fund with contributions from member organisations and other allied agencies through which a permanent and continuous programmes of training and education could be carried out as an on-going activity.

Role of the Government

1. to provide the assistance of properly trained officials to advise, guide and serve societies;
2. to establish institutional facilities to train government officials in various aspects of cooperative development;
3. to consult and keep constant contact with the national, regional and district level organisations to build up their efficiencies;
4. to consult and discuss any proposed legislation affecting the cooperative sector with the national level organisation;
5. to specify minimum number of employees a cooperative should have at the time of registration;
6. to make legal provision to facilitate mergers; and
7. to allow paid leave and other facilities for government and cooperative sector personnel for participation in education programmes.

Strategy

The Seminar focussed attention specially on the aspect of manpower management in the cooperative movements in the South-East Asian Region considering the subject as an

integral component of the total management process. The recommendations given above were based on the deliberations that had taken place at the Seminar.

The Seminar felt that it was somewhat difficult to set priorities for implementation of the above recommendations on short-term and long-term basis as the different movements were functioning at different stages of development. However, it suggested that the following factors be taken into consideration for devising implementation strategy.

Short-term Strategy

The cooperative societies, federations and the national organisation should review their manpower policies immediately in order to take stock of the stage of development in manpower management.

Steps should be taken to develop a proper manpower policy and formulate a plan of action to provide basic facilities for the staff to work. Necessary action should be taken by the cooperative organisations at various levels and the government to formulate a training system on the basis of the needs of staff, leaders and the members in order to improve the efficiency of working the cooperative organisations.

The problem of communication among the staff, board of directors and the members should be dealt with by evolving systems as detailed in the recommendations to provide better understanding of corporate objectives and targets set for performance.

Long-term Strategy

The formulation of systematic career progression scheme is a matter for long-term implementation by all the organisations at different levels with the active support of government. Specially the national organisations should take action to establish a specialised unit for manpower information in order to help the cooperative organisations to draw information on the available competencies within the cooperative sector and the open labour market and also

on the changes in the labour market that were taking place.

The large cooperative societies should take necessary steps on long-term basis to establish training units in their organisations for internal training purposes. The national organisations and Federations could help the societies by undertaking specialised training and training of trainers. Centralised production of training material was a part of this process.

The national organisations should urge and make it possible for establishing legal and administrative procedures for labour welfare in the cooperative sector. The cooperative societies should eventually formulate schemes for labour compensation and security.

Conclusion

The ideology of Cooperation strongly believes in the primacy of human resources over capital in cooperative enterprises. Therefore the cooperative societies should be so developed as to become organisations where the manpower management systems provide better productivity and better work environment for the labour. The recommendations as detailed above are presented to the cooperative organisations and the governments for implementation and follow-up evaluation with the belief that the efforts made at the Seminar would ultimately contribute towards the improvement in management efficiency in cooperative movements in the Region.

Observations, Comments and Suggestions on Issues Pertaining to Manpower Development in Cooperative Sector

REPORT OF GROUP-I

Participants

Mr. C.M.B. Bogollagama, Sri Lanka—*Chairman*
Mr. Narendra K. Basnyat, Nepal
Mr. Francisco D. Caballero Jr., Philippines
Mr. Ok Sun Ho, Korea
Mr. V.K. Khedkar, India
Mr. Zaard Keokeas, Thailand
Datin Halimah bte. Rasul, Malaysia
Mrs. Noriah bte. Zakaria, Malaysia —*Secretary*

Resource Persons

Mr. Hans Ardelius
Mr. Fazim bin Othman
Mr. J.M. Rana.

Task of the Group

The group was assigned the task to make recommendations on the following issues:

- (i) Examine the present situation re-cooperative employees and identify the strengths, weaknesses and constraints which have direct influence on cooperative employee attitudes and performance.
- (ii) What changes would you recommend at the various levels of the cooperative system to ensure a better working environment for cooperative employees? Identify the roles and responsibilities of individual societies, their federation, the National Cooperative

Union and the government, in this regard.

- (iii) Examine the need for proper Manpower Development in the Cooperative System and recommend short-term and long-term strategies to ensure more efficient and effective service through coops.

Method Adopted

The group discussed the general set-up prevailing in various countries of the Region and matters that came up in the country papers in order to come to an understanding of the situations. The group considered the issues thereafter in respect of the entire Region as the situations in all the countries appeared to be similar.

Manpower Needs and Development

It was learnt that no in-depth scientific analysis of manpower needs and development had been done in the Region excepting in Sri Lanka and in Thailand. In most countries of the Region the cooperative movements were set up in an ad hoc manner to meet certain national situations without any long-term considerations. In most countries the movements were sponsored during the colonial period by the colonial governments. The manpower skills were generally poor. No serious thought had been given to this aspect of cooperative development in most countries of the Region. As social and economic conditions in almost all countries of the Region had changed in the recent past and they would continue to change faster in the coming years, the manpower needs should be considered to meet the changing situation. Against the background of the high degree of manpower development and planning in the private and public sectors the group felt that the cooperatives were ill-equipped to meet the challenge from those organisations. It was also observed that although this challenge had been present for several years in the recent past, no country in the Region had given serious attention to it. The group analysed the present manpower situations in the cooperative sector under the headings in the following schedule:—

<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>	<i>Constraints</i>
—Ideological basis	—Low capacity to pay competitive salaries and fringe benefits	—Size of societies
—Government support	—Low staff motivations	—Lack of integration within the movement
—Membership	—Lack of career opportunities	—Lack of strength and resources of apex organisations
—Capital formation	—Inadequate training facilities	—Unclear responsibilities among government agencies
—Financial institutions' support	—Less enlightened membership	—Lack of additional financial resources for expansion
—Employee legal protection	—Apathetic members	—Legal constraints
—External agency support	—Less enlightened/apathetic Board of Directors	
—A small nucleus of enlightened membership	—Political intervention	
—Supportive cultural and religious values	—Low mobility of skilled personnel	
	—Undesired attitude of personnel	
	—Job insecurity	
	—Nepotism	
	—Absence of written and declared policies	
	—Mismanagement.	

(i) Strengths

It was observed that the cooperative movements in the Region had the strength of the ideological concept and the support of the governments in the Region. When one considered the strength of membership in each country, it was observed that most countries had strong membership compared to their populations e.g. in Sri Lanka 30% are members, in Thailand 15% and in Korea 70% of the population in the agricultural sector. It was also felt that the capital formation required for the initiation activities was also available. In certain countries, legal protection and external support were available to the cooperative movement. Each of the movements also had small nucleus of enlightened membership. The religious and cultural values in the Region

were also an indirect support and strength to the promotion and development of the cooperative concept.

(ii) **Weaknesses**

The group paid special attention to the question of development of the movement as a whole for making a substantive and effective impact on the economic and social development of the people. From this standpoint, the most glaring weakness appeared to be the performance of manpower at various levels of execution which primarily was a result of low capacity of the movement to pay competitive salaries and to offer attractive fringe benefits in relation to the private and public sectors. In addition to these, insecurity of service in the cooperative movement prevented best talents from being attracted to its service. This had further resulted in the cooperative sector absorbing generally only 'leftover' personnel whose attitudes to and performance in cooperative service left much to be desired; thereby the societies were suffering in an open and competitive trade. In some countries, to some extent, political intervention was also responsible for the weakness of the cooperative organisations.

(iii) **Constraints**

The main constraints were detailed out in the schedule above. The working group considered the main constraints and in this regard suggested the following measures:-

(a) *Size of Societies*

Generally the size of societies at the primary level in rural areas in certain countries was too small to allow a proper manpower plan to be developed. However, in some countries, some societies were too large. In this respect, the group was of the opinion that a minimum number of members should be decided upon to fix the viable size of the society. This minimum requirement should be determined according to the economic and social conditions and the density of

population in the countries concerned. The group was of the view that the National Cooperative Union and the Government Cooperative Department in each country of the Region should study this question. In the opinion of the group an ideal society was one which had a reasonable number of members with sufficient economic activities which would give satisfactory turnover to enable the society to afford efficient and contented service personnel.

(b) *Lack of Integration*

The working group was of the view that an integration of various types of societies from the grassroot level to the regional and the national levels was important for career development. It could then be possible for a person entering the service of a smaller society to reach higher capacities and positions in his career if his performance so merited. This would provide a larger field for personnel operation and career development, the absence of which was one of the main problems for the movement not being able to attract best talents. In this respect, the working group was of the view that the constitution of a unified service, grading of societies and the integration of the cooperative structure would help in the formulation of such a scheme. It was also felt that the National Apex Organisations should formulate and develop a system to provide for this opportunity in their own sectors.

A further advantage of an unified service is that the National Apex Organisation would be in a better position to render advisory services and other training facilities in a more meaningful manner. The Apex Organisation should impress upon the primary and secondary societies on the advantages of integration and a unified service. The National Cooperative Organisation should also play an important role in this regard and the following were suggested as possible tasks.

1. Set up minimum standards for various grades of recruitment;
2. Organise and arrange competent personnel to train

- and guide the less efficient personnel;
3. Advise on recruitment;
 4. Organise pools of different categories of employees; and
 5. Carry out constant dialogue with societies, employees and government officers on matters relating to staff management and career problems.

(c) *Lack of Strength and Financial Resources of Apex Organisation*

The strength of primary societies depended to a large extent on the strength of the Apex Organisation, and the role it played in developing the primary societies. Therefore, the working group was of the opinion that the Apex Organisations need to be strengthened so that they could play the needed role in helping the primary societies and in developing career prospects and efficiency in performance.

(d) *Frequent Changes of Government Policies*

Frequent changes of government policies had affected the performance and economics of the societies in many countries. It should be the responsibility of the national organisation of each country to have close liaison with the government to avoid these situations.

(e) *Unclear Responsibilities Among Government Agencies*

The working group felt that there should be a clear understanding among various government departments and agencies in order to maintain harmonious relationships for effective performance of the societies. If frequent changes in their working methods are made, it is bound to affect the manpower strength and position of individual societies. Therefore, it was felt that the National Organisation at the National and the district and regional organisations at their own levels should maintain constant dialogues and necessary linkages with government departments so as to main-

tain better and clearer understanding..

(f) *Lack of Additional Financial Resources for Expansion*

Expansion and growth of cooperative institutions are necessary for expanding and improving the services to members. The personnel would also grow in fast growing institutions. As financial resources were very vital for the expansion of services and maintaining stability of institutions and personnel, the individual societies should attempt to harness all possible financial assistance from the lending and banking agencies.

(g) *Legal Constraints*

The group was of the view that in countries where no special legal protection is given to cooperative activities, it should be sought for as cooperatives are a sector of the national development on established ideology. In view of the fact that cooperatives make an important contribution to national development, they should be helped by the government and some protective measures should be made available to them.

The working group also considered the role and responsibilities of individual societies, National Cooperative Unions and the Government in regard to better working environment for cooperative employees. In this respect, the following changes were suggested at the various levels:—

(i) **Society Level**

- (a) Promote motivation among the staff by the adoption of suitable conditions of service;
- (b) develop service schemes within societies to give better opportunities for promotion and fringe benefits;
- (c) avoid interference by boards of directors in specialised fields where skills of trained personnel are involved;
- (d) avoid personnel attachments and preferential treatment to individual employees;

- (c) develop an education programme so as to build up an enlightened membership;
- (f) create opportunities to improve attitudes of members towards activities of their societies and prepare grounds for more participation of members;
- (g) in recruiting staff, select the best, giving priority to merit and efficiency and avoid personal considerations;
- (h) develop clear policies of the society periodically for implementation within given targets;
- (i) provide financial allocation for training and staff development in the annual budget of expenditure of the society.

(ii) Federation Level

It was the view of the group that the district and regional federations should play a more positive role with a view to assisting and developing manpower of primary societies by :-

- (a) increasing staff motivation, developing career opportunities, providing training facilities both for employees and members and assisting societies to recruit skilled and efficient personnel;
- (b) organise special training programmes for selected categories of employees;
- (c) evaluate and monitor performance of societies at reasonable intervals;
- (d) organise district and regional level coordination of activities of various societies so as to harness the experience of efficient personnel for the benefit of less efficient staff members; and
- (e) coordinte and streamline policies of Boards on a regional basis so as to promote a uniform pattern of activities thereby utilising available manpower resources for the maximum benefit of the societies and the personnel involved.

(iii) National Cooperative Union Level

The role of National Organisations in manpower development was identified as follows:

- (a) establish a personnel section which would help member societies to select the best available personnel according to their needs and periodically evaluate personnel performances;
- (b) organise a scheme of grading with the assistance of the Cooperative Department so as to provide opportunities for employees from the bottom grades to reach the highest position in their cooperative career;
- (c) formulate unified salary schemes and other fringe benefit schemes so as to attract the best talents to the cooperative sector;
- (d) organise district, regional and national level training centres for various categories of employees and members of the Boards of Management;
- (e) organise training of trainers so as to improve the efficiencies of the training institutions;
- (f) make arrangements for experienced and competent personnel at the actual operations level to give their knowledge and skills to less efficient personnel with a view to building up their efficiencies;
- (g) prepare teaching materials for use at various levels of training;
- (h) organise in successful societies practical in-service training for managerial staff;
- (i) provide consultancy services in specialised fields;
- (j) advise and guide societies to prepare policies of development in their respective areas of operation;
- (k) organise institutional links with national and international agencies with a view to developing manpower efficiencies suitable to national development;
- (l) organise international exchange of personnel with the assistance of ICA and other agencies to improve local personnel efficiencies;
- (m) maintain a data bank and research unit so as to keep in constant touch with various conditions affecting

- the cooperative sector;
- (n) develop a fund with contributions from member organisations and other allied agencies through which a permanent and continuous programme of training and education could be carried out as on going activity of the National Organisation;
 - (o) publish periodicals and newspapers for public and member information, giving stress on current co-operative activities;
 - (p) prepare and publish study books on various topics for the benefit of employees, members of the movement and the public;
 - (q) establish a division to carry out propaganda through mass media channels highlighting achievements of successful cooperatives and stressing the role and efficiency of personnel in such achievements;
 - (r) prepare documentary films as mass media publicity, stressing the achievements and highlighting staff efficiencies;
 - (s) provide facilities for staff training in foreign institutions through agencies such as ICA; and
 - (t) maintain constant cordial relations with the Government Cooperative Department and the Ministry in charge of cooperative development.

(iv) Government Level

As in most countries in the Region, the department of cooperatives development was closely associated with the development of cooperative institutions, the working group was of the opinion that the department should assist in the manpower development schemes in the following manner:

- (a) provide the assistance of properly trained and dedicated officials to advise and guide the societies;
- (b) establish institutional facilities to train government officials in various aspects of cooperative development;
- (c) consult and keep constant contact with the national,

- regional and district level organisations to build up their efficiencies;
- (d) consult and discuss any proposed legislation affecting the cooperative sector with the national level organisations; and
 - (e) assist and advise national level organisations in carrying out their aforesaid functions.

Conclusion

The working group felt that the above comments, observations and suggestions were of vital importance for the development of manpower at that time as well as for the future development programmes. Most of the deficiencies experienced today are due to the lack of adequate attention to this field. Therefore, most of the suggestions mentioned above must be implemented soon, while developing a long-term programme keeping in view the underlying principles in the recommendations of the group. It is not possible to identify specific proposals on a short or long-term basis as it was felt that conditions differed from country to country in the Region. Some countries might consider a particular proposal as a short-term strategy while others might consider it as long-term. The National Organisations and other institutions concerned with the development programmes should decide on the priorities and the strategies for implementing the recommendations made by the group.

Observations, Comments and Suggestions on Issues Pertaining to Manpower Development In Cooperative Sector

REPORT OF GROUP-II

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Resource persons:

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Question I

The group analysed the manpower situation in each country as explained by the delegates of the various countries and then classified the strengths, weaknesses and constraints.

The Malaysian delegates put forth a view that there was no proper manpower planning in cooperatives. Recruitment of personnel was done on an ad hoc basis without any advertisements and that there was lack of identification of needs. Salary scales in the cooperative sector were lower than in other sectors and that turnover was high. Training for staff was also not properly planned. It was however said that there was dedication and hard work on the part of cooperative employees and government legislation made

for some uniformity of manpower policies. It was also stated that government direction could be excessive and that there was a tendency for cooperatives to venture into new fields without proper planning and that some of them were too small in size.

The delegate from the Philippines stated that there was great willingness on the part of staff of cooperatives to work well and expose themselves to training but that there was lack of sufficient education and training facilities and not enough money with cooperatives to offer higher incentives and openings to the staff. There was some hesitation on the part of Government to give wholehearted support. He said that there was difficulty in organisation because of distances and the numerous islands that constituted the country.

The Thai delegate said that the cooperative movement in the country was guided and aided by government and that funds and training institutions were available. He stated that the marketing problems related to cooperative products hindered growth of societies and that due to this reason the societies were unable to employ professionals or pay the staff adequately. There was lack of confidence in cooperatives and lack of security for employees working in them.

Sri Lanka delegate stated that Government legislation ensured uniform policies of manpower development and that training facilities were available to employees of cooperative. However, there appeared to be too much government direction and cooperatives were not developed to an extent that they could offer employment to professionals on attractive salaries and fringe benefits and also security of service. Also not much respectability was attached to service in cooperatives.

In India the position was that there was intense govt. direction, and that government legislation ensured uniformity of manpower development policies. There were training facilities and some cooperatives were able to attract professionals on favourable terms of service.

The resource person from Japan stated that there was uniform legislation for cooperatives and that demand for

employment in cooperatives was high because of good conditions of work, that there were regular meetings of staff, members and Board that ensured good rapport and successful functioning without dependence on government assistance. This position was attained after thirty years during which period government assisted and supported cooperative ventures.

There was general consensus on the items of strengths, weaknesses and constraints that are listed below.

Strengths

The group found that government generally had labour enactments and some had specific regulations for the cooperative sector.

It was also noted that practically all countries had some training facilities and provision of financial resources for support of such facilities.

The group found that there was willingness on the part of cooperatives to pay competitive salaries and benefits to their staff and that most cooperatives have achieved what they have by a band of dedicated staff and workers.

Points of "Strengths" were as follows:

1. Government enactments;
2. Availability of training facilities;
3. Availability of some funds for training;
4. Willingness of cooperative to pay competitive salaries; and
5. Dedication of a small nucleus of members, board members and staff.

Weaknesses

The group noted that there were seldom any responsive manpower policies adopted by societies and in most cases there was lack of proper work organisation. Much of the short-comings even where there were regulations of government was due to an uneven implementation by the different authorities in charge of different types of cooperatives. It

was found that most cooperatives did not venture to advertise for good personnel. This was probably because of low pay and fringe benefits and limited promotional prospects that the cooperatives had to offer. Not many cooperatives had realised the need for proper and adequate training for their staff. And generally the methods adopted for training were not such as would develop skills. There was also a gap in volunteer leadership education. Moreover there was inadequate communication amongst staff/Board of Directors/Members. Most societies appeared to be under the impression that government could do everything for them.

Items of Weaknesses were:

1. Lack of responsive manpower policies;
2. Lack of clear work organisation;
3. Varying degrees of application of cooperative concept by Departments of Government;
4. Limited promotional prospects;
5. Lack of advertisement of staff vacancies;
6. Too low pay and fringe benefits—unattractive to professionals;
7. Inadequate training facilities;
8. Lack of adequate communication amongst staff/Board of Directors, members;
9. Lack of knowledge and skills regarding proper adult training methods and development of related skills;
10. Lack of adequate volunteer-leader education; and
11. Overdependence on government.

Constraints

Regarding “constraints”, the group noted that the extent of government direction of cooperatives was rather large. Consequent on low salaries and benefits that cooperatives had to offer because of too small size and business, there was not a favourable image of cooperative enterprises in general and respectability attached to employment in them in particular. The small size and business of societies did not offer possibilities of change of work by way of trans-

fers and upgrading that would be desirable in a developing situation. The preference of government to sectors other than the cooperative sector for performance of public services sometimes hindered development of manpower. The group particularly noted that there was great opportunity for adjustment between cooperatives vertically and horizontally and that there should be greater cooperation amongst various cooperatives themselves. The group was convinced that regulations preventing employees to become members of the cooperative, they worked in, was a great constraint to motivation.

Constraints would therefore be:

1. Too much government direction and lack of adequate government support;
2. Too small size of societies;
3. Lack of upward mobility;
4. Negative social image attached to cooperative service;
5. Lack of co-ordination among the coops; and
6. Not allowing staff to become members of the coops.

Question 2

What changes would you recommend at the various levels of the cooperative system to ensure a better working environment for cooperative employees? Identify the roles and responsibilities of individual societies, their federations, the National Cooperative Union and the Government in this regard.

The group had identified earlier the strengths, weaknesses and constraints which influenced cooperative employee attitudes and performance. A better working-environment could be achieved if these weaknesses and constraints could be overcome or removed.

The group felt that for a better (or even ideal) working environment the following factors should be present in the work environment. These factors have been categorised into internal (within the cooperatives) and external (outside of the cooperatives) as follows:

Internal factors

1. Employees should be able to achieve job satisfaction.
2. Employees should be able to have some mobility in the organisation.
3. There should be proper physical facilities.
4. There should be opportunity for training and education.
5. Plan for equitable compensation for employees.
6. Team meetings, staff meetings should be held regularly to discuss important topics or plans for the day/week etc.
7. Staff should be allowed and encouraged to be members of the society.
8. There should be possibilities for the staff to take initiatives.
9. Flexibility of work scheduling should be possible.
10. Family welfare and security must be considered.

External

1. Favourable government regulations/legislation;
2. Relationship with staff Associations/labour unions;
3. Reconciliation between coops and religious standards; and
4. Proper social values (regarding women and children in the work force).

The group identified some factors as the minimum essentials in any working environment and some as not immediately essential but as 'nice to have' in the long term and for the development of the manpower. Factors Nos. 1-7 of the Internal Factors and No. 1 of the External Factors are essentials. That is to say, a good working environment must at least:

- provide employee job satisfaction;
- provide employees promotional prospects within the organisation or in-between cooperatives;
- have proper physical facilities conducive to the emp-

ACTION BY

<i>Weaknesses</i>	<i>Individual Societies</i>	<i>Federation</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>Government</i>
1. Non-Manpower polices (Weaknesses of general nature).	i. Identify the objectives of society and the present as well as future activities they are going to undertake; ii. Identify manpower needs; iii. Define qualifications desired; iv. Develop job descriptions; v. Define recruitment/selection procedures; vi. Allow and encourage employees to be members.	i. Coordinate efforts of societies within different sectors.	i. Advise Govt. on legislation affecting manpower; ii. Assist societies in formulating and interpreting policies; iii. Collect data on manpower which would help in the mobility of manpower.	i. Define minimum staff requirement of a society at the time of registration (Standardization of requirements).
2. Lack of work organisation.	i. Develop corporate plans for society; ii. Develop clear job specifications; iii. Outline the organisational structure and reporting/communication system;	i. Act as an advisory body to the societies; ii. Coordinate efforts of societies.	i. Serve as buffer between Govt. & societies on relationship with employees.	i. Regulate functions of societies.

- iv. Hold staff meetings regularly to plan work.
 - i. Bring to the notice of organisations at the higher tiers viz. secondary or national bodies.
3. Varying application of coop. concept by various departments of government.
- i. Make representations to the Govt.
 - ii. Listen and act as appropriate/be responsive.
4. Lack of advertisement for staff vacancies.
- i. Define how advertisement should be done:
 - a) what levels?
 - b) how?
 - c) when?
 - ii. Advertise locally.
 - iii. Coordinate openings and publicize.
 - iv. Advise on approach to advertising (quality of advertisement).
5. Too low pay and fringe benefits-unattractive to professionals
- i. Formulate salary structure on par with other competitive sectors;
 - ii. Formulate equitable salaries to the employees within the society;
 - iii. Review the salaries and benefits periodically;
 - iv. For societies that are unable to pay competitive salaries, a minimum salary should be paid and then an incentive scheme
- i. To negotiate master contracts on behalf of societies;
 - ii. Facilitate mergers for financial viability.
5. Too low pay and fringe benefits-unattractive to professionals
- i. Specify minimum benefits and wage levels;
 - ii. Make legal provisions to facilitate mergers;
 - iii. Make available scholarships and international collaboration as a form of incentive.

<i>Weaknesses</i>	<i>Individual Societies</i>	<i>Federation</i>	<i>National</i>	<i>Government</i>
	should be introduced to motivate employees to perform well (as was done in Japan).			
6. Lack of training facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Plan out a systematic training programme for the staff based on the needs; ii. Contribute to a national training fund; iii. Develop training units in large societies; iv. Make budgetary provisions for training purposes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Help to organise/ conduct training programmes in related and required fields; ii. Liaise with training institutions to help identify training requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Influence public education systems to provide training facilities in the coop. sector; ii. Provide consultancy in formulating training system, curriculum and materials; iii. Provide training facilities for advanced studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide training facilities and funds; ii. Stipulate coop. as a subject in school curriculum; iii. Education through mass media should be carried out.
7. Inadequate communication among staff/ Board of Directors/ Members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Arrange for periodic staff meetings; ii. Publish in-house magazines, circulars, bulletins etc. iii. Organise social/informal functions to get to know each other; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Organise programmes for training for trainers in adult education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> --- 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Provide facilities in adult education.

- iv. Appointment of extension officer who will help to improve member relations;
 - v. Circulate minutes of staff meetings;
 - vi. Provide staff counselling.
8. Lack of volunteer leaders education.
- i. Large societies could formulate a training policy of their own for Board of Directors;
 - ii. Formulate a policy which stipulates training for new boards on leadership and coop. philosophy.
9. Over dependence on government.
- i. Take action to ensure that the society is able to work independently;
 - ii. Make plans to ensure that the time frame given for government assistance is adhered to and achieve the goals within the time frame.
- i. Organise leadership education programme.
 - i. Organise courses to enlighten the Boards on their duties, roles and responsibilities and impart leadership skills.
- i. Assist societies to become self-supporting.
 - i. Assist societies to become self-supporting.
 - i. Fix definite time frame for Govt assistance.

- loyee working and performing well;
- provide opportunity for training and education so that the employee can perform his work satisfactorily;
- provide equitable compensation for employees;
- provide for the possibility of regular staff, team meetings for participative management;
- request staff to be members of the society or wherever possible, recruit staff from members of the society; and
- have favourable government regulations and legislation.

Bearing in mind that the above factors were the minimum essentials for any working environment, the group suggested the roles that the four different organisations could play to ensure a better working environment for cooperative employees are given in the table on Pages 28-31.

Question 3

Examine the need for proper manpower development system and recommend short-term and long-term strategies to ensure more efficient and effective service through cooperatives.

The group was of the opinion that all available manpower resources should be utilised in such a way as to achieve the cooperative objectives with maximum efficiency in terms of minimum time and cost. In order to achieve this result the group recommended that cooperatives at various tiers and government should implement the following:

- (i) **Short Term** (1-3 years period)—Items identified earlier as essential are listed below:-
 - (1) Create working conditions so that employees are able to achieve job satisfaction
 - (2) Provide opportunities for employees to maintain some mobility in the organisation;
 - (3) There should be proper physical facilities;
 - (4) Provide opportunity for training and education;
 - (5) Plan for equitable compensation for employees;

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- (6) Team meetings/staff meetings should be held regularly to discuss important topics or plans for the day week etc.;
 - (7) Staff should be encouraged to be members of the society; and
 - (8) Government resolutions/legislation/regulations should be such that they eliminate exploitation of labour and provide facilities to encourage people to work in cooperatives.
- (ii) **Long Term** (3-5 years)—Items identified as ‘nice’ earlier:
- (1) There should be possibilities for the staff to take initiatives;
 - (2) Flexibility of work scheduling should be possible;
 - (3) Family welfare and security must be considered;
 - (4) Relationship with staff associations/labour unions to evolve a harmonious work environment conducive to both the cooperatives and the employees;
 - (5) Religious standards—a reconciliation of religious practice with cooperative activities;
 - (6) Social security systems—pension plans, social insurance and workmen compensation to be introduced; and
 - (7) Social values (regarding women and children in the work force) to be fostered.

The group felt that all societies, federations and national level unions should pay greater attention to manpower development. The group was of the view that the question of manpower development should be thought of as a career development programme in the cooperative societies at all levels. It should be realised that the cooperative sector in the Region faced severe competition not only in trade, commerce and business but also in manpower recruitment. Therefore it was essential that appropriate salary and benefits structure was developed in order to recruit persons of

requisite standards and to provide them with opportunities for career development. The group further identified the following as matters of immediate priority:

Training of staff, establishment of training institutions, recruitment of good trainers and provision of sufficient funds for establishing and developing training facilities.

Programme

- March 27, 1983 Arrival of Participants
- March 28 AM Inauguration
by Y.B. Dato Sanusi Junid,
Minister of National and Rural
Development.
PM Briefing on the methodology of the
Seminar.
Country background Papers
- March 29 Country background papers (contd.)
- March 30 AM Country background papers (contd.)
PM Cooperative Manpower Management
and Cooperative Development in Ma-
laysia
by Mr. Fazim Fadzim bin Othman
Faculty of Economics and Ad-
ministration, University of Ma-
laya, Kuala Lumpur
Manpower Management and Coope-
rative Development
by Mr. V.B.L. Mathur,
Managing Director,
National Cooperative Develop-
ment Corporation,
New Delhi.
- March 31 AM Manpower Management in the Co-
operatives in Sri Lanka
by Mr. W.U. Herath,
Director, Cooperative Teachers
Training Project, Colombo,
Sri Lanka.

- PM Manpower Management in the Swedish Cooperative Movement
by Mr. Hans Ardelius,
Sr Administrative Director, KF,
Stockholm., Sweden.
- April 1, 1983 AM Cooperative Manpower Planning
and Development: A Canadian Perspective
by Mr. Peter Hlushko, Vice President,
Human Resources, the
Cooperators, Regina, Canada.
PM Study Visits
- April 2 Study Visits
- April 3 Free
- April 4 AM Personnel Management in Multi-
purpose Agricultural Cooperatives in
Japan
by Mr. Morimasa Kunii, President,
Research Institute of Agricultural
Cooperative and Labour
Management, Tokyo, Japan.
PM Group Work—I
- April 5 Plenary I—Group Work II
- April 6 Plenary II—Group Work III
- April 7 Plenary III—
Drafting Committee Sitings
- April 8 Final Plenary
- April 9 Close of Seminar/Departure of
Participants.

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THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATIVE ALLIANCE

is one of the oldest of non-governmental international organisations. It is a world-wide confederation of cooperative organisations of all types. Founded by the International Cooperative Congress held in London in 1895, it now has affiliates in 66 countries, serving over 365 million members at the primary level. It is the only international organisation entirely and exclusively dedicated to the promotion of cooperation in all parts of the world.

Besides the Head Office of the ICA, which is in Geneva, there are three regional offices, viz., the Regional Office & Education Centre for South-East Asia, New Delhi, India started in 1960, the Regional Office for East and Central Africa, Moshi, Tanzania started in 1968 and the Regional Office for West Africa, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, started in 1979.

The main tasks of the Regional Office & Education Centre are to develop the general activities of the Alliance in the Region, to act as a link between the ICA and its affiliated national movements, to represent the Alliance in its consultative relations with the regional establishments of the United Nations and other international organisations, to promote economic relations amongst member-movements, including trading across national boundaries, to organise and conduct technical assistance, to conduct courses, seminars and conferences, surveys and research, to bring out publications on cooperative and allied subjects and to support and supplement the educational activities of national cooperative movements. The Regional Office and Education Centre now operates on behalf of 15 countries, i.e. Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

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