

REPORT OF NATIONAL
SEMINAR ON COOPERATIVE
MEMBER EDUCATION

HELD AT
SCHOOL OF COOPERATION
POLGOLLA CEYLON
FROM
NOV. 21-NOV. 26 1964

I. C. A.
NEW DELHI

ICA Library
334:37(548.7)
ICA 00577

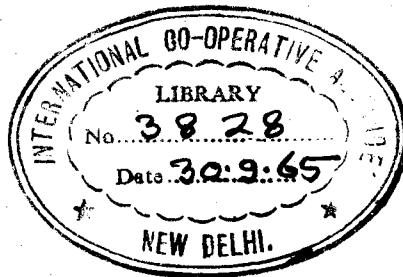
REPORT OF THE
NATIONAL SEMINAR ON COOPERATIVE MEMBER EDUCATION

held at

School of Cooperation, Polgolla, Ceylon

from

November 21 - November 26, 1964



33H:37(548.7)(063)
ICA

International Cooperative Alliance
11 Upper Grosvenor Street
London W.1.
England

International Cooperative Alliance
Regional Office & Education Centre
for South-East Asia
6 Canning Road, New Delhi-1, India

International Cooperative Alliance
Regional Office & Education Centre
for South-East Asia
6 Canning Road, New Delhi-1, India

May 31, 1965

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON COOPERATIVE MEMBER EDUCATION
POLGOLLA, CEYLON : November 21-26, 1964

1. Introduction

A National Seminar on Cooperative Member Education was organised in Ceylon by the I.C.A. Education Centre in collaboration with the Department of Cooperative Development, Government of Ceylon, and the Co-operative Federation of Ceylon. It was held at the School of Cooperation, Polgolla, between November 21-26, 1964. About 44 participants attended the seminar, including some Assistant Commissioners for Cooperative Development and selected Inspectors of Cooperative Societies in Ceylon. Some office-bearers of the Cooperative Federation of Ceylon also participated.

Mr. T.B. Ilangaratne, Minister for Internal and External Trade, Government of Ceylon, inaugurated the Seminar. Prof. D.G. Karve, Chairman and some members of the ICA Advisory Council, joined the inaugural function.

The Seminar discussed the effectiveness of the member education programme operating in Ceylon, and made suggestions with regard to future work in the field of cooperative education. Particular attention was given in the seminar to the study circle method.

A copy of the programme and a list of participants are appended hereto.

Before outlining the cooperative education arrangements in Ceylon, a summary of discussions on the aims and methods of member education is presented. This procedure will help to better assess the cooperative education activities and the problems encountered in Ceylon.

2. Aims of a Cooperative Member Education Programme

2.1 Objectives of Member Education

The main aims of a member education programme may be as follows :

- a) to broaden the outlook of members with regard to social and economic problems affecting them and to help them find solutions to such problems;
- b) to bring home to members that a number of their economic problems can be solved through the organisation of a cooperative society;

-
1. The ICA Advisory Council members were able to join the seminar since the organisation of the seminar followed the meeting of the Advisory Council held in Ceylon on 18th November 1964.

contd.....2

- c) to make the members realise that the success of their cooperative society depends mainly on themselves and not on external agencies; cooperative education, therefore, should aim at developing in members a sense of loyalty to their own society and to the cooperative movement as a whole;
- d) to train members to examine in an impartial manner facts and figures presented to them and to arrive at rational decisions; and
- e) to impart to members occupational education, e.g. educating farmer-members in developing farm plans for increasing agricultural production.

2.2 Audiences for Cooperative Education

In regard to audiences, the seminar suggested that the Movement should cast its net far and wide. It should aim to educate not only its own ranks of members, board directors and employees, but should also attempt to reach important social groups, such as school children, youth and women's groups.

3. Methods of Member Education

Cooperative Member Education is mainly directed towards adult people. Hence, education methods suited to adult people should be employed in member education work. Important educational techniques are outlined below. Education methods have to suit the following two categories of members: (i) general membership and (ii) 'elite' members. The 'elite' members may be broadly described as the active members who take considerable interest in the cooperative society, and who are keen to take an active part in the member education programme. In view of this, intensive educational methods can be used with advantage for the elite members. On the other hand, the education methods for the general membership should be such as do not demand much effort on the part of ordinary members.

It should be indicated that these two categories of education methods to be described below are not mutually exclusive. However, when intensive education methods are used for general membership, the results obtained are not likely to be commensurate with costs involved. An example is the use of the training course method for the ordinary members in several Centres of South-East Asia.

3.1 General Body Meeting

The general body meeting of the members provides an excellent opportunity for the members to learn about their cooperative society and the various aspects connected with it. At these meetings, the annual report is discussed and the broad policy of the society is defined. However, the general body meetings of the cooperative societies are usually not well attended and, hence, special efforts should be made to increase member

2. For our subsequent discussions, the term 'elite' members will be used to mean both active members and members of managing committee.

attendance. One of the discussion groups of the seminar suggested that frequent membership meetings should be organised, and that these meetings should be made attractive by arranging recreational and social programmes also.

The education secretary of the society could plan such programmes on an annual basis. He should attempt in these programmes to provide knowledge and entertainment through activities, such as exhibition of films, dramatic performances, etc.

3.2 Cooperative Press

Cooperative magazines are a valuable means of cooperative education, both for the public at large as also for the members. For instance, the Swedish Consumer Cooperative Movement (KF) and the Japanese Cooperative Movement, bring out family magazines called "Vi" and "Ie-No-Hikari" respectively. These periodicals include not only cooperative articles, but also features of literary and cultural value. The publishing house of the KF pays special attention to publishing books on Cooperation, social economy, and home economics, and, in addition, issues, novels and essays, travel books, children's books, etc.

3.3 Mass Media

Under these media may be included the radio, the film, as also the television. It is possible to reach a large number of people through these mass media. However, certain studies on the effectivity of mass media carried out in Great Britain, and the USA, indicate that the mass media "typically reinforce or activate existing values and attitudes, only very rarely alter them, and scarcely ever form or originate them".⁵ The mass media like the radio and the films are, therefore, useful mainly for purposes of providing accurate information to the members.

However, as will be described later, the mass media can be used for conducting study circles or group discussions. In that case, the effectivity of mass media is considerably increased.

3.4 Other Educational Methods

In addition to the education methods described above, the Seminar suggested that the following methods will be of use for the general membership.

- (i) Establishment of Libraries and Reading Rooms in Cooperative Societies.
- (ii) Cooperative Exhibitions.

3. C.A.R. Crosland : "The Mass Media"; Encounter, November 1962; pp.7.

3.5 Educational Methods for Elite Members

Particular attention should be given to the "elite" members in co-operative educational programmes for several reasons : Firstly, elite members are a potential source from which managing committee members will be elected. Secondly, they usually take the lead in discussions and help in arriving at decisions at general body meetings. Finally, knowledge imparted to the elite members is likely to be passed on to fellow members in informal meetings between the two, since the former take active part in community life.

The following is a brief outline of the various education methods suited for the 'elite' members.

3.6 Group Discussions

Members meet together in small groups of ten to fifteen persons to discuss subjects on cooperatives at regular intervals. In order to facilitate discussion, they may use discussion sheets prepared by the National Union or other material such as a newspaper article.

These groups are also called listening groups or film forums, depending upon whether they use a radio talk or a film for group discussions. These groups function in a democratic fashion under a self-imposed discipline. Hence, such group work leads to the training of members in parliamentary procedures, and to the formation of democratic attitudes in them, besides imparting increased knowledge on the subjects under discussion.

3.7 Project Method

Under this method, the group carries out a project of local significance, such as the construction of a road, or a ~~warehouse~~ required for the co-operative society. Members' participation in an activity of this kind under the aegis of the cooperative society increases the sense of member participation and also leads to pride of achievement among members.

3.8 Seminar

The Seminar is an educational technique based on the active participation of members in discussions on the subject under study. There are two ways in which seminars are generally conducted in South-East Asia. One way is to combine in the seminar programme lectures from specialists, group discussions on selected questions, and plenary meetings to discuss group reports and the report of the seminar as a whole. Documentation may include selected readings, and papers prepared by the lecturers, on the subject under study.

The other form is to divide the participants on the basis of their specialisation into two or three discussion groups, after a general introduction on the scope and methods of the seminar. The sponsoring organisation may prepare agenda notes on the topics included in the seminar programme, and

indicate, among other things, points for discussions in the agenda notes. The agenda is usually split into two or three parts and the different parts are assigned to different working groups for discussions. After the groups have prepared the reports of their discussions, a plenary session is organised to consider the group reports.

In both these forms, field visits may be included in the seminar programmes.

The first method of conducting the seminar is likely to give better educational results than the second, because of the use of expertise. This seminar technique can be used in the training centres for employees as well. The mechanics of the seminar in the second form approximate those of the conference. It calls for much greater knowledge and experience from the participants than the first method.

3.9 Study Tour

The Cooperative Movement has made extensive use of this technique for the education of its members, leaders, and its employees. Members in a particular locality may be taken to see the working of a successful cooperative society in a neighbouring area and to observe for themselves the methods and practices followed by it. Study tours are also arranged internationally for leading cooperators of one country to study the organisational structure and operational techniques of cooperative movements in other countries.

It is essential to plan properly the study tours, otherwise they are likely to degenerate into sight-seeing excursions.

3.10 Training Courses

Some Movements in South-East Asia organise two-to-three-day training courses for ordinary members and one or two-week courses for the managing committee members. Such courses are generally organised in the members' localities in the evenings when members have leisure time. The instructors go from place to place for organising these courses.

The experience of several countries of South-East Asia indicates that it is not possible to provide continuous education to the ordinary members through the training course method. Further, while the costs involved in conducting training courses are high, the effectivity of the method so far as ordinary members are concerned is not great. It would, therefore, appear that an intensive education method, such as the training course, should be used mainly for the office-bearers and managing committee members.

4. Study Circle Method in Sweden

An attempt has been made to develop study circle activity in Ceylon on the basis of the Swedish system. Hence, it may be useful to describe in brief the study circle method being used in Sweden.

The study circle activity in Sweden has helped to create an enlightened corps of active members, and to train board members and junior employees for their specific tasks in the Movement. The active members who participate in the study circle activity provide a source from which leaders for the societies generally emerge. Another important achievement of the study circles is the dissemination of consumer information and education on household economies. The knowledge has led to an intelligent choice of consumer articles and betterment of household economies of members.

In KF, there is a separate department of member education called 'Vi Skolan' (Our School), where about 10 full-time teachers work. The teachers develop study courses dealing with the problems of cooperative societies, or of the cooperative movement as a whole, and prepare study material for the courses. The study material is divided into several lessons, with points for discussions in each lesson.

The study material and answer books are supplied to the cooperative societies which decide to run courses for their members. Generally, the local societies pay for the study material which is moderately priced. The study material is distributed among those members who decide to attend the course.

About ten to fifteen members take part in one study circle. They elect their own leader and secretary. They also decide the time table for study circle meetings. KF arranges the training of study circle leaders.

Usually, the members read a lesson of the study material in advance of the meetings of study circle, where the concerned lesson will be discussed. According to the time schedule, they meet at a weekly or fortnightly interval, and discuss the lesson under the guidance of the leader. The group secretary takes down notes of the discussion and helps the group to prepare a common answer to be sent to the teacher at KF. The teacher returns the answer books to the study circle after checking the group answers, thus ensuring a two-way communication.

The experiences gained by the KF show that the study circle method is very effective in terms of results achieved. It is also an economic method through which it is possible to reach a large number of members with lower costs than through the training courses organised by peripatetic (travelling) instructors. The study circle method also provides a continuous education to members in their own environments. However, it should be emphasised that study circle activities require a well-organised system for production of study material, comments on group reports, and training of study circle leaders. Local work of organising study circles is also very important.

5. History of Cooperative Member Education in Ceylon

5.1 General Remarks

From the time the Cooperative Movement was introduced in Ceylon, i.e. 1912, up to the Second World War, there were few cooperative societies in Ceylon. Therefore, intensive education programmes for the members could be conducted

contd.....7

by the cooperative officers. During this period cooperative credit societies were not registered until the members were adequately instructed with regard to their duties and responsibilities, and the principles and practices of cooperative credit societies.

A phenomenal expansion of the Cooperative Movement took place from 1942 onwards. About 4,000 cooperatives were formed with a membership of over 1,000,000 as part of the programme for distribution of scarce commodities. Problems of war-time scarcity and distribution of these commodities naturally were urgent tasks. Hence, distribution of scarce commodities was given top priority, and no member education programme could be run during this period. Adequate attention could not be given to the education work for the members of credit societies either.

Between 1947 and 1957 Cooperative Agricultural Production and Sale Societies were organised in large numbers as a step towards making the country self-sufficient in Rice and other foodstuffs. Also between 1950 and 1957 there was a drive for the organisation of societies for Small-Scale and Cottage Industries and for Fisheries. As a matter of fact, there was high pressure development continuously from 1942 to 1957 when the drive for the organisation of Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies was launched.

From 1957 onwards, it was decided that the Cooperative Movement was to play an important role in the economy of Ceylon. It was felt that more concrete results could be achieved by coordinating the various types of cooperative activities. Some experimentation in a few areas had shown the usefulness of such coordination. From this thinking emerged the concept of the multi-purpose cooperative movement, whose ultimate objective was the organisation of rural life on a cooperative basis. The reorientation in the cooperative policy brought into existence a large number of multi-purpose cooperative societies (MPCS) both at the primary and regional levels. It was realised that considerable attention should be given to member education work in order to achieve rapid and stable cooperative development.

The member education methods used in the early period of Cooperative Movement were as follows :

- a) Instruction was imparted by Cooperative Inspectors to prospective members at held at regular intervals, until the latter were adequately instructed and they were ready for organising a cooperative society.
- b) After the registration of a society, general meetings were held frequently, at least once a month. Study of the cooperative bye-laws and discussions thereon was a regular feature at these meetings.
- c) While on inspection, cooperative officers contacted the members of the local cooperative societies and talked with them about cooperative matters.
- d) One-day training classes were organised for members of the managing committees. Generally, one or two committee members were invited from each of about 40 to 50 cooperative societies in a certain area. The training consisted of lectures and discussions on the bye-laws and management of cooperative societies. These classes were conducted by cooperative Inspectors and Assistant Commissioners of the area. The seminar felt that although the training classes were useful to some extent, they did not make an appreciable impact on the management of cooperative societies.

The following sections describe the various educational methods used in Ceylon from time to time.

5.2 Short Seminars

Later on, a system of seminars of two to three days' duration was evolved. This system was an improvement on the one-day training classes.

Under the system, the participants were drawn from a group of 50 - 100 societies at the rate of two from each. Various subjects, according to a pre-determined programme for the seminars, were first discussed in small groups under the leadership of Cooperative Inspectors. The participants later met in plenary sessions to discuss the group reports.

5.3 Study Circles³

In 1950, the Principal of the School of Cooperation, Mr. G.I.O.M. Fernando, undertook a study tour of Europe. In his report on the study tour, he recommended a scheme of cooperative member education through study circles. The recommendations were based on the information gathered by him regarding study circles in the Cooperative Movement in Sweden.

3. Study Circles in South-East Asia :

India : The study circle method as evolved in Sweden was discussed in several national and international seminars organised by the ICA on the subject of member education. The ICA Regional Conference on the study circle method organised at New Delhi in 1963 made a suggestion to organise study circles on a pilot basis in different countries of South-East Asia. Following the suggestion, an affiliate of the National Cooperative Union of India, the Delhi State Cooperative Union, came forward to organise a few study circles in the local consumer co-operative societies. Three study circles were started in different parts of Delhi in the year 1965 and they were conducted with considerable success. These study circles have completed two courses dealing with the principles of Cooperation, and practices of consumer cooperative societies. A report on the pilot project has been issued and it can be of some use to the organisations desirous of setting up pilot projects on the study circle method.

Other South-East Asian Countries : Efforts are being made to organise study circles in Pakistan, Malaysia and the Philippines. In East Pakistan, the East Pakistan Cooperative Union organised two national seminars on techniques of member education with special emphasis on the study circle method. The Union is conducting several study circles through its Peripatetic Units spread all over East Pakistan. In the Comilla Thana of East Pakistan, the group discussion approach, as used in Ohio State, USA, has been adapted to solve the problems of local cooperative societies. These discussion groups are run under the guidance of the Comilla Thana Cooperative Association, the Development Project, and the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development.

In Malaysia, the Government Department of Cooperative Development, organised a national seminar on the methods and techniques of cooperative member education in 1963 and decided to popularise the study circle method for member education work.

In the Philippines, the Central Cooperative Exchange, Inc., is trying to evolve a method similar to the study circle method for member education purposes.

The scheme of study circles approved by the Government included the following features :

- a) The School of Cooperation was to train 75 study circle leaders for a period of three weeks.
- b) On completion of training, each study circle leader was to conduct three study circles. Each leader was to be paid a small remuneration.
- c) The study course for each study circle was to extend for a period of nine months.
- d) Each study circle was to consist of about 10 to 15 persons. The participants in a study circle might be members or employees of cooperative societies or even the grown up children of members.
- e) The study circle was expected to meet under the chairmanship of a trained leader. The circles were to decide the place, time, and frequency of meetings.
- f) The School of Cooperation was to prepare study material. Actually the School prepared 12 lessons on each of the following subjects :
 - i) The World of Work and Wealth, and
 - ii) Cooperation.
- g) Copies of each lesson were to be given to the members of study circles at least a week before they would meet to discuss the lesson. There was no objection to devoting more than one meeting to a lesson.
- h) The question at the end of each lesson were to be discussed by the study circle and the answers were to be written by each member. These answers were to be sent by the study circle leaders to the School of Cooperation for comments. No marks were to be given, but instead, the School was to make comments and necessary suggestions for further discussions in the study circles.
- i) A detailed arrangement for organising study circles, preparation of time-tables, and checking up on the work of study circles, was entrusted to the Co-operative Inspectors. An inspector was required to pay at least one visit per month to a study circle while it was at work.
- j) The direction of studies, issue of lessons, and comments on the answer sheets, were to be handled by the School of Cooperation. For this work, it was decided to open an Extension Branch attached to the school; the Extension Branch was developed later on into a full-fledged Extension Division.

The study circle programme was put into effect only in 1952. 37 leaders for study circles were trained during this year.. The total number of study circles formed under the scheme was 28 and the participants were 408. In the scheme originally proposed, commenting on the answer sheets was to be done by the Principal and two lecturers at the School of Cooperation. But by the time the scheme was implemented, the Principal, who was the author of the scheme, was transferred. From 1953 onwards, this task was performed by a Cooperative Inspector who was a much more junior officer.

It was reported at the seminar that, on the completion of the first course for study circles, steps were not taken to start a second course. Some leaders, who were school teachers, had to abandon their study circles half-way when they were transferred. Also, at one stage for a whole period of seven months, there was no officer at the School of Cooperation for commenting on the answer-sheets. Under the circumstances, the interest of members in the study circles could not be sustained. Thus the scheme met with a number of serious problems, and hence the study circle activity was reduced to a small proportion. In 1956, there were only six active study circle leaders who conducted 15 study circles.

5.4 Fishermen's Study Circles

In May 1955, Mr. A.H. MacDonald came out to Ceylon from Canada as a Consultant in Fishery Cooperatives under the Colombo Plan. Mr. MacDonald was of the view that there could be no sound Cooperation among fishermen without adequate education of members, both before and after registration of societies. By education, he meant social education which would throw light on the problems of members, and would teach them to live and to work together for their common welfare. The practical problems of how to achieve better and more efficient methods of cooperative production, marketing, and distribution, were some other tasks of social education. Mr. MacDonald persuaded the Government of Ceylon to start a programme of education for fishermen. The method advocated by him was the study circles, based on the Antigonish System. Four Cinema vans were given as a gift by the Government of Canada for strengthening the study circle programme.

The Fishermen's Education Programme was carried out under the guidance of the Extension Division located at the School of Cooperation. Twelve cooperative inspectors were trained and each was assigned an area (a coastal district) to organise and conduct study circles. At the end of 1959, there were 184 fishermen's study circles.

The study circles were encouraged to engage in community projects. 91 circles promoted thrift with a total saving of Rs.34,700. Elsewhere, members of study circles constructed three meeting halls and three fish auction sheds; they also developed a fishermen's canteen, and two volley ball courts. Several successful cooperative societies were registered, and a number of defunct cooperative societies were revived, as a result of fishermen's study circles.

5.5 Work of the Extension Division

In 1955, when Mr. E.B. Loveridge came out to Ceylon as an ILO Expert in Cooperative Education, the Extension Division of the School of Cooperation was already functioning but its activities were mainly confined to the fishermen's education programme. On the recommendations of Mr. Loveridge, the Extension Division was further expanded in 1957 for carrying out all cooperative education work, except the training of departmental staff.

4

The educational work that came under the purview of the Extension Division

-
4. a. The education work mentioned in a, b, and f has already been described in previous pages.
 - b. Training of employees of cooperative societies was also conducted by the Extension Division.

was as follows :

- a) Member education, especially through study circles and seminars,
- b) Cooperative education for fishermen,
- c) Cooperative youth work and organisation of school cooperatives,
- d) Organisation of and education for, women's cooperative guilds,
- e) Film shows to members, and
- f) Publications and production of study material.

The seminar felt that the expansion of the Extension Division provided a satisfactory system of member education. Adequate staff and facilities were provided. The Division was headed by a senior officer, devoting his full time to the task. Funds were available for the publication of literature for extension work.

The extension staff working in the field were given initial training for carrying out member education work described above. The Assistant Commissioner for Cooperative Development (extension) followed it up with organisation of quarterly conferences of extension staff to discuss member education work. Training was also given to the study circle leaders in increasing numbers.

5.6 Dissolution of the Extension Division

The Extension Division functioned for a period of five years. After that, the new Commissioner for Cooperative Development decided to wind up the Extension Division with effect from 1st June 1961, and to decentralise education activities. It was decided that every cooperative inspector should conduct one study circle in six months for the members of Cooperative Multipurpose societies. Meetings for the study circles were to be organised every fortnight. It was expected that the organisation of 1500 study circles at a time by 1500 inspectors would make an impact on a large number of members within a short time.

This system of study circles did not work too well. Some reasons for this lack of success are described below.

With the closing up of the Extension Division, the system of short seminars was discontinued. The programme for fishermen's education, students' cooperatives, and youth clubs, also suffered for want of supervision and guidance.

6. Main Problems and Suggested Solutions

The seminar noted that the various methods of member education tried out in Ceylon have been, broadly speaking, on the right lines. However, a number of problems were experienced in the conduct of the member education programme. The main problems discussed and the suggested solutions at the seminar with regard to member education work in Ceylon are set out below.

6.1 Shifts in Government Policies

As has been described earlier in the report, the Government policy with regard to cooperative education activities in Ceylon was changed frequently. The study circle and the seminar programmes, which were very good schemes of member education, were not tried out for a sufficiently long period in the same forms in which they were introduced.

Some serious problems followed as a result of this basic difficulty.

6.2 Lack of a Central Organisation as well as Appropriate Organisations at different levels

The institutional set up for carrying out cooperative education programme has so far not been firmly established. Various shifts of government policy have taken place in this regard. Sometimes at the national level, the Extension Division, located at the School of Cooperation at Polgolla, was entrusted with the training of leaders of study circles, preparation of study material, and correspondence with study circles, and organisation of seminars. Local organisational work was carried out by the Cooperative Department's extension staff in the field. At other times, greater decentralisation was decided upon and responsibilities for the conduct of study circles were transferred to the Assistant Commissioners for Cooperative Development and their staff in the various localities. The seminar felt that it was essential to have a central **organisation responsible for carrying out effectively the member education activities in the country.** Details regarding this suggestion are discussed later. At the district and local levels also appropriate organisations should be developed.

6.3 Personnel Problems

Mr. G.I.O.M. Fernando, the author of the scheme of study circles in Ceylon, left the position of the Principal of the School of Cooperation soon after the programme was put into effect. It seems that due to the transfer of the Principal of the School, who had a key role to play in the study circle programme, the study circle activity did not gain momentum on systematic lines contemplated in the original scheme.

Just as the programme was about to come to a standstill, the arrival of two experts, one under the Colombo Plan for Fishery Cooperatives and the other under the ILO Programme for Cooperative Education, helped to revitalise the study circle programme. An Extension Division was created to supervise the study circle programme and good foundations were laid for sustaining the programme at various levels. However, the Extension Division was dissolved after a period of five years and the programme of study circles was decentralised. The Assistant Commissioners of Cooperative Development, who were supposed to guide the study circle work in their respective areas, had already a heavy work load and, therefore, they could not give the necessary attention to the specialised task of member education.

It was pointed out by the seminar participants that, on account of the shifts of policy with regard to the study circle programme, necessary specialisation could not be developed by the education personnel.

Training arrangements for the various persons involved in the programme were inadequate, after the programme was decentralised. The Cooperative Instructors who were to organise study circles were given only one-day's training. Similarly, training of study circle leaders, key functionaries in the study circles, was also not given enough attention both in terms of duration and the content of training.

6.4 Lack of Adequate Study Material for Study Circle Members

When the study circle programme was introduced, the Extension Division had prepared study material on two courses. However, further material was not produced on a continuous basis. As a result, members who had completed two study courses could not pursue further studies. It is necessary to produce study material successively at higher levels for members who have gone through basic study courses. Also, basic study material should be produced on a variety of subjects in order to induct new members into study circle activity.

6.5 Member Apathy

Usually members are fully occupied with their own work, and hence many members are not inclined to utilise their leisure time for education requiring considerable effort. Member apathy is thus a major problem in education work.

It is, therefore, necessary that members' interest should be aroused for their own education. Such interest may be created by concentrating education effort, to begin with, on such subjects as are of primary interest to the members. For instance, the educational programmes for farmers may begin with measures needed for increasing production on their farms rather than with cooperative matters. Also, it is essential to ensure that member education is not merely didactic. Recreational and educational facilities should be combined with education work. For example, when a study circle is to be organised for members, it may be useful to start by showing an interesting film. Members could then be led to a discussion of their problems, and the need and usefulness of education.

7. The Present Education Programme

Since the dissolution of the Extension Division and the subsequent collapse of the study circle activity, member education work of any significance was not carried out for about two and half years in Ceylon. A further effort was made in January 1964 with certain innovations. This education system, currently in force, has the following features.

- a) The scheme is being tried out in five divisions of the Assistant Commissioners for Cooperative Development on an intensive scale.
- b) In each of the selected divisions, 50 two-day seminars are conducted over a period of one year. The seminars aim at educating at least a nucleus of members of multi-purpose cooperative societies with regard to the significance and value of cooperative organisation, and duties and responsibilities of members, the committee members, and the office bearers in the cooperative society.

3828

30.9.65



33H:37(5487)(063) contd.....14

ICA

- c) The participants at a seminar consist of 30 members, 15 from each of two neighbouring societies.
- d) A place central for the two villages is selected as the venue which is generally an education centre or a cooperative society.
- e) The expenses of the seminar, which do not normally exceed Rs.300, are subscribed by the cooperative organisations concerned and the Government.
- f) The seminar consists of a series of short lectures followed by discussions. Discussions take place on the operations and problems of the two societies. During discussions, Instructors make suggestions for improving the working of these societies.
- g) Twelve selected inspectors from each of the five divisions were given a week's training in the methods of conducting, and the subjects of, the seminars. A booklet giving guidance to the Inspectors in conducting the seminars was prepared.
- h) The programme is supervised by the Principal of the School of Cooperation, who is assisted by a full-time Assistant Commissioner. The Assistant Commissioners of the respective divisions are responsible for organising the seminars and deploying the trained Inspectors for this purpose.

The reports received so far with regard to the extent of usefulness of and the enthusiasm of the members for, the seminars are encouraging. It is reported that the persons who participated in some seminars have taken prompt action to put their societies in order. It is, however, too early to indicate precisely the impact of this programme.

8. Study Circle Activity

Some important aspects in the study circle programme are discussed below.

8.1 Selection of Study Circle Leaders

The seminar felt that the study circle leaders ought to be selected from amongst the members of the cooperative societies. The leader should be literate. He should possess some knowledge about the topics to be studied by the group and about the local conditions. However, he need not have an expert knowledge of the subject to be discussed in the study circle meetings. What is important is that he has the ability to keep the study circle together and to guide the discussions.

It would be advantageous if two persons are selected from a society to function as a chairman and a secretary for each study circle respectively. The secretary can function as an Assistant group leader, if necessary.

The seminar suggested that the study circle leader should preferably have the following qualities :

- a) Tolerance and sympathy towards members,
- b) Patience and tact,

contd....15

- c) Humorous nature and politeness,
- d) Discipline and punctuality, and
- e) Freedom from superstitions and prejudices.

8.2 Training of Study Circle Leaders

The ICA Regional Office & Education Centre has prepared a model manual for the training of study circle leaders. The seminar suggested that the national organisation in charge of member education in Ceylon should adapt the manual in the context of local conditions.

The manual, and the study material to be used in the study circle meetings, can be used for the training of study circle leaders. Such training should preferably be given in small groups. The training may be organised in the form of group discussions on each chapter of the manual and of the study material.

The leader-trainees must be made aware of the democratic functioning of study circles. The training of leaders themselves should, therefore, be conducted in a democratic way. Thus, they could elect their own chairman and secretary for each session. In this way, each leader will act in turn as a chairman, secretary, and ordinary member, of the discussion group.

If possible, the teacher, who has been connected with the adaptation of the manual and preparation of study material, and who will later check group answers, should be associated with the training courses for the leaders.

The seminar made the following additional points regarding training of study circle leaders :

- a) The course should be of about two weeks' duration.
- b) The course should be a residential one.
- c) The leaders and the secretaries should be trained together. They should undergo training in the techniques of conducting group discussions, and in the techniques of group development.⁵
- d) Audio-visual aids should be adequately used in the training programme for study circle leaders. All the participants may be trained in the use of such aids.
- e) Refresher courses should be conducted periodically, particularly when new study courses are to be introduced.

5. There are some techniques of group development which need special mention here. These techniques are called "brain storming", "buzz groups", "role playing" etc. The main purpose of these techniques is to increase group morale, and encourage the members to be more active in group discussions, and in other group work. A demonstration of some techniques of group development was given at the seminar. See "Some Techniques of Group Development", a paper circulated in the Seminar (mimeo).

8.3 Preparation of Study Material and Audio-Visual Aids

The study material should be produced in simple language. It should be set out in relation to the people's needs and experiences to make it of direct interest to them. An important objective to be kept in view while preparing the study material is to so design the material as to arouse discussions. It is necessary that study material for each course should be divided into different sections; the number of sections in a course should roughly correspond with the number of times the study circle is expected to meet. Questions should be listed at the end of each section of the study material for facilitating discussions among members of the study circles.

It is also possible to use as study material some existing publications which discuss problems of the Cooperative Movement. In such cases, a study guide should be prepared with questions in different sections in order to ensure critical study of the publication.

As the preparation of the study material is a specialised task, it should be undertaken by specialised personnel employed for this purpose by the central organisation responsible for member education. This does not mean that the organisations at the lower levels⁶ will have no place in the preparation of study material. When study material is prepared by the central organisation, the views and suggestions of lower-tiered organisations concerned with member education should be obtained. The specialists in Cooperation working outside the member education programme, and the education personnel at the lower levels could also be requested to prepare study material. In such cases, for making it suitable for use in study circles, the study material may be edited and recast, if necessary, by teachers in the central organisation.

Audio-visual aids may be prepared at different levels. For example, the simple aids like wall papers and charts may be prepared at the village level and more expensive ones like film strips etc. may be prepared by the multi-purpose cooperative societies' unions or district unions. The production of specialised and very expensive aids like films may be undertaken by the central organisation.

9. A Suggested Pattern for Member Education in Ceylon

The Cooperative Federation of Ceylon should function as a central organisation responsible for member education work in the country. The Board of Directors of the Federation may set up a Standing Committee on Cooperative Member Education, to be called the National Standing Committee hereafter. The Standing Committee may consist of not more than seven persons. The actual composition of the National Standing Committee is a matter which should be worked out by the Federation in consultation with the Department of Cooperative Development. However, the seminar suggested that a majority of persons on the Standing Committee should be appointed from among persons who have a specialised

6. The various levels below the National level are the district level, the area of the multi-purpose cooperative societies' union, which is a division in a district, and the primary society.

knowledge and experience of education. The Standing Committee will be responsible to the Board of Directors of the Federation.

At the levels of the District Cooperative Unions, the Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies' Unions too, Standing Committees on Cooperative Education should be set up. These Committees may be constituted in the same manner as the Standing Committee at the national level.

At the level of the primary cooperative society, an education sub-committee may be constituted by the Executive Committee of the Society. The education sub-committee may appoint an education secretary.

10. The Role of Various Organisations in the Suggested Pattern

10.1 The National Standing Committee

The tentative suggestions made by the seminar regarding the division of functions among the various education bodies are given below.

The National Standing Committee will be responsible for the entire education programme in the country and will perform the following functions :

- a) Planning, coordinating and running of the entire member education programme in the country,
- b) Deciding upon division of responsibilities among the various education personnel at the national and lower levels,
- c) Preparation of study material for study circles and other adult education purposes,
- d) Preparation of expensive audio-visual aids, such as the films,
- e) Training of education personnel, viz. education staff working in the district unions and other education bodies at the lower levels (including training of teachers who would guide the study circle programmes),
- f) Organisation of educational conferences and seminars,
- g) Conduct of research and evaluation in the field of member education, and
- h) Financing of the programme of member education, particularly at the national level, and making suitable grants for education work at the lower levels.

The seminar suggested that there should be a two-way communication among the various education committees at different levels. For example, on the one hand, the district standing committees on cooperative education should supply to the National standing committee information on all important aspects concerning member education from time to time. On the other hand, the National standing committee will provide guidance to the education committees of the Unions.

10.2 District Standing Education Committee

The seminar suggested that, subject to final approval of the National Standing Committee, the tentative functions of the Education Committees of the District Unions and other educational bodies at the lower levels may be as detailed below.

- a) Implementation and coordination of the education programmes in the district,
- b) Preparation and supply of audio-visual aids,
- c) Training of study circle leaders, and
- d) Financing of member education programmes within the district .

10.3 Standing Education Committee of the Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies' Union

- a) Implementation and coordination of the educational programmes within the Unions' areas,
- b) Organisation of two-day seminars for active members and committee members as done at present,
- c) Preparation and supply of simple audio-visual aids to the primary societies,
- d) Organisation of special education programmes for weak primary societies, and
- e) Financing the educational work of the Union's Education Committee.

10.4 Education Sub-Committee of the Primary Society

- a) Organisation of member education programme in the society's area of operation,
- b) Organisation of study circles for members,
- c) Selection of persons to attend two-day seminars,
- d) Activities concerning youth work and women's associations,
- e) Financing : Part of the expenses may be met by the participants themselves, such as the cost of the study material. The primary society and the higher-tiered education bodies may provide rest of the expenses.

11. Role of the Department of Cooperative Development

In making nominations to the National Committee on Cooperative Education, the Board of Directors of the Federation may select suitable persons, not necessarily from its own ranks, but also from other institutions concerned with education work, such as the Ceylon University, the People's Bank, and the Government Department of Education. At the district level, among other persons, the Assistant Commissioners of Cooperative Development may preferably be nominated on the District Education Committees.

contd....19

The Cooperative Department should be prepared, where necessary, to release officers of the Department for full-time education work in the National Standing Committee and Standing Committees of the District Unions and Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies' Unions, on such terms and conditions as may be agreed upon mutually. The Commissioner of Cooperative Development may also grant accommodation to the National Standing Committee in the premises of the School of Cooperation, Polgolla.

A close liaison should be established between the School and the National Standing Committee on Cooperative Education. The teaching staff of the School may, for instance, help at the seminars and training courses for education personnel, in the preparation of study material, in planning field surveys, and in research and evaluation.

12. Coordination with other Organisations

The National Standing Committee should keep in touch with organisations engaged in adult education work in the country, and seek opportunities of collaborating with them.

The National Standing Committee should establish contacts with the national educational institutions of Cooperative Movements in other parts of the world. The study material prepared by such institutions and the methods of approach to member education developed by them may be of some use for member education activities in Cey

The National Standing Committee should keep in touch with international organisations such as the ICA, the ILO, the FAO, the UNESCO, and the Horace Plunkett Foundation, which are interested in promoting the Cooperative Movement.

13. Finances for Member Education

The following methods of raising funds were suggested :

The Commissioner should be persuaded to set apart **right** from now onwards at least 80% of the Cooperative Fund for member education.

The seminar recommended that after the National Standing Committee is established, the entire Cooperative Fund may be transferred by the Department to the Committee. Part of the cooperative fund money should be used to create a trust fund, so that the proceeds of investment of the fund may bring in a regular annual income to the Committee.

At the level of the multi-purpose cooperative societies' union, an annual estimate should be made of the funds required for educational activities in the areas concerned, and the funds required should be set apart out of the net profits of the Unions.

At the level of the primary societies, 10% of the annual net profits or annual contribution of Re. 1 per member should be set apart **for** educational activities. Provision may be made accordingly in the bye-laws of cooperative societies.

The seminar noted that many District Cooperative Unions have a bye-law requiring the affiliated societies to pay to the District Unions an annual subscription. The seminar recommended that the affiliated societies should pay to the District Unions an annual subscription equivalent to 5% of the societies' annual net profits.

Participants joining a programme of education should be charged at least some costs. The study material produced by the education bodies should not be distributed free but should be moderately priced.

The People's Bank and other organisations interested in the Movement may be invited to give financial support to the member education programme.

Foreign aid may be sought for specific projects e.g. preparation of study material and audio-visual aids, and conduct of research and surveys.

14. Conclusion

The seminar emphasised that there should be a permanent institutional structure for member education work in Ceylon. The creation at the national level of a National Standing Committee on Cooperative Education was stressed. The Cooperative Federation of Ceylon was urged to take initiative in forming the National Standing Committee. The National Committee may then take steps to establish education committees at various levels viz. the District, the Multi-purpose Cooperative Societies' Union, and the primary society.

The study circle method was accepted as one of the important means of conducting member education in Ceylon. It was proposed to set up immediately some pilot projects on the study circle method so that experience might be gained, before launching study circles' programme on a large scale. Suitable study material and audio-visual aids should be produced for the member education work.

Collaboration of national and international agencies concerned with Cooperative member education should be sought by the National Standing Committee for the member education programme in the country.

International Cooperative Alliance
Regional Office & Education Centre
for South-East Asia
6 Canning Road, New Delhi-1, India

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON COOPERATIVE MEMBER EDUCATION
School of Cooperation, Polgolla, Ceylon
(November 21 - 26, 1964)

P R O G R A M M E

Saturday, November 21

- 10.00 a.m. Inauguration
Welcome Address : by 1. Mr. H.S. Wanasinghe
Commissioner for Cooperative Development
Ceylon
2. Mr. D.A.P. Kahawita, President
Cooperative Federation of Ceylon
- Speeches : by 1. Professor D.G. Karve, Chairman
ICA Advisory Council
2. Mr. Riazuddin Ahmed, Member
ICA Advisory Council
3. Dr. S.K. Saxena
Regional Officer
ICA Regional Office & Education Centre
- 10.45 a.m. Speech by the Hon'ble Mr. T.B. Illangaratne, Minister,
Internal & External Trade, Government of Ceylon.
- 11.00 a.m. Tea
- 11.30 - 12.15 p.m. Progress and Problems of Cooperative Member Education in Ceylon -
Mr. T.D.L. Peiris, Deputy Commissioner for Coop. Development.
Chairman : Professor D.G. Karve
Questions & Observations
- 12.45 p.m. Lunch
- 2.30 - 3.15 p.m. Various Methods of Cooperative Member Education -
Mr. Marian Radetzki, Director, ICA Regional Office & Education
Centre.
Chairman : Mr. Riazuddin Ahmed
Questions & Observations
- 3.30 p.m. Tea

contd....

3.45 - 5.00 p.m. Study Circles in Different Countries of the East and the West.

Panel Discussion.

Chairman : Dr. S.K. Saxena
 Members : Mr. Marian Radetzki
 Mr. Riazuddin Ahmed
 Mr. D. Vir
 Mr. T.D. L. Pieris

Sunday, November 22

9.00 - 9.45 a.m. Role of various Cooperative Organisations in running Study Circles - Mr. S. Sangakkara, Asstt. Commissioner for Cooperative Development.

Chairman : Mr. Marian Radetzki

9.45 - 10.30 a.m. Questions & observations

10.30 - 10.45 a.m. Tea

10.45 - 11.30 a.m. Preparation of Study Material and Audio-visual Aids for Study Circles - Mr. D. Vir, Deputy Director, ICA Regional Office & Education Centre, New Delhi.

Chairman : Mr. Mohd. Hussein Ibrahim, Member
 ICA Advisory Council.

11.30 - 12.30 p.m. Questions and observations

2.30 - 4.30 p.m. Group Discussions

Monday, November 23

9.00 - 10.30 a.m. Selection and Training of Study Circle Leaders.

Panel Discussion.

Chairman : Mr. T.D.L. Pieris
 Members : Mr. P.B.W. Kinigama
 Mr. A.E. Perera
 Mr. Mathiwalsingham
 Mr. S. Sangakkara

10.30 - 10.45 a.m. Tea

10.45 - 11.30 a.m. Demonstration of Study Circle Meeting - by Mr. D. Vir

Questions and Observations

2.00 - 3.15 p.m. Organisation of the Mock Meeting of a study circle (participants).

3.15 - 3.30 p.m. Tea

3.30 - 4.45 p.m. Plenary session

Tuesday, November 24

- 9.00 - 10.00 a.m. Group Discussion Methods - Mr. D. Vir
Chairman : Mr. S. Sangakkara
- 10.00 - 10.30 a.m. Questions and Observations
- 10.30 - 10.45 a.m. Tea
- 10.45 - 11.45 a.m. Demonstration of Some Techniques of Group Development -
Mr. D. Vir
- Chairman : Mr. T.D.L. Pieris
- 11.45 - 12.30 a.m. Questions and Observations
- 2.30 - 4.30 p.m. Group Discussions

Wednesday, November 25

- 9.00 - 10.30 a.m. Coordination among various Adult Educational Agencies.
Panel Discussion
- 10.30 - 10.45 a.m. Tea
- 10.45 - 11.45 a.m. A Plan for Cooperative Education in Ceylon - Mr. S. Sangakkara
- 11.45 - 12.30 p.m. Questions and Observations
- 2.30 - 4.30 p.m. Group Discussions

Thursday, November 26

- 9.00 - 10.30 a.m. Final Plenary Session
Chairman : Mr. H.S. Wanasinghe
- 10.30 - 10.45 a.m. Tea
- 10.45 - 12.30 p.m. Evaluation and Follow-up.

.....

International Cooperative Alliance
Regional Office & Education Centre
for South-East Asia
6 Canning Road, New Delhi-1, India

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON COOPERATIVE MEMBER EDUCATION
School of Cooperation, Polgolla, Ceylon
(November 21 - 26 , 1964)

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

I. Ceylonese Participants

1. Mr. D.A.P. Kahawita
President, Cooperative Federation of Ceylon
455 Galle Road, Colombo - 3.
2. Mr. K.W. Devanayagam
c/o Cooperative Federation of Ceylon
3. Mr. S.R. Yapa
c/o Cooperative Federation of Ceylon
4. Mr. Ananda Pasqual
c/o Cooperative Federation of Ceylon
5. Mr. L.B.J. Gavarammana
c/o Cooperative Federation of Ceylon
6. Mr. T.B.M. Herath, M.P.
c/o Cooperative Federation of Ceylon
7. Mr. U.H. Wickramaarchchi
c/o Cooperative Federation of Ceylon
8. Mr. S.C. Rasa Ratnam
c/o Cooperative Federation of Ceylon
9. Mr. N.A.W. Sumanadasa
c/o Cooperative Federation of Ceylon
10. Mr. L.D. Jayasekara
Asstt. Commissioner, Cooperative Development
c/o Post Box 419, Echelon Square, Colombo - 1
11. Mr. A.P. Hapudeniya,
Asstt. Commissioner, Cooperative Development
Department of Cooperative Development
Post Box No.419, Echelon Square, Colombo-1.
12. Mr. J.M. Gunadasa
Asstt. Commissioner, Cooperative Development
Department of Cooperative Development

contd....v

13. Mr. S.J. Sumanasekara Banda
Asstt. Commissioner, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
14. Mr. T.D.J. Vitharana
Asstt. Commissioner, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
15. Mr. A.E. Perera
Asstt. Commissioner, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
16. Mr. S. Premachandara
Asstt. Commissioner, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
17. Mr. D.D. Herath
Asstt. Commissioner, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
18. Mr. R. Aberatna
Asstt. Commissioner, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
19. Mr. K.A.S. Wijewardane
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
20. Mr. W.J.P. Fernando
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
21. Mr. G.H.K. Gunawardane
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
22. Mr. C.S. Kurukulasuriya
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
23. Mr. G. Gunaratne
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
24. Mr. E.R. A. Ranasinghe
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
25. Mr. R.P. Herath
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
26. Mr. S.C.N. Silva
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development

27. Mr. P.B. Abeyratne
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
28. Mr. A.S. Weeraratne
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
29. Mr. B.R. Perera
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
30. Mr. N.S. Punchihewa
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
31. Mr. R.G. Jayatissa
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
32. Mr. B.H.F.A. Wickramasuriya
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
33. Mr. D.J. Kumarasinghe
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
34. Mr. M.D. Fernando
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
35. Mr. R. Dissanayake
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
36. Mr. L.B. Piyassena
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
37. Mr. V.J.P. Perera
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
38. Mr. C.E. Balapatabendi
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
39. Mr. P. Ratnawera
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
40. Mr. M.B. Dissanayake
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development

41. Mr. G.A. de Silva
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
42. Mr. P. Govindasamy
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
43. Mr. V.S. Pooniah
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
44. Mr. K. Muththaih
Inspector, Cooperative Development
c/o Department of Cooperative Development
45. Mr. H.S. Wanasinghe
Commissioner of Cooperative Development
Department of Cooperative Development
46. Mr. T.D.L. Pieris
Deputy Commissioner, Cooperative Development
Department of Cooperative Development
47. Mr. S. Sangakkara
Asstt. Commissioner, Cooperative Development
Department of Cooperative Development
48. Mr. M. Mathiwalsingham
Asstt. Commissioner, Cooperative Development
Department of Cooperative Development
49. Mr. P.B.W. Kinigama
Asstt. Commissioner, Cooperative Development
Department of Cooperative Development
- II. ICA Advisory Council Members
50. Professor D.G. Karve, Chairman
Suyog, 899 Shivaaji Nagar, Poona-4, India
51. Mr. D.E. Hettiarachchi, Member
Cooperative Federation of Ceylon
455 Galle Road, Colombo-3, Ceylon
52. Mr. Mohd. Hussein Ibrahim, Member
Federal Commissioner for Cooperative Development
Ministry of Agriculture & Cooperatives
Swettenham Road, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
53. Mr. Riazuddin Ahmed, Member
West Pakistan Cooperative Union
31 Lower Mall, Lahore - 1, West Pakistan

III. ICA Staff

- 54. Dr. S.K. Saxena, Regional Officer
- 55. Mr. Marian Radetzki, Director
- 56. Mr. D. Vir, Deputy Director
- 57. Mr. Daman Prakash, Secretary

.....