

# RECONSTRUCTING, REDEFINING AND REVISITING ROLE AND RELEVANCE OF COOPERATIVE SOCIETY IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA: AN ANALYSIS

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## **Abstract**

*“Cooperation has been an integral part of India’s heritage.”*

*-Shri Narendra Modi, Hon’ble Prime Minister of India*

*It has been rightly articulated by our Prime Minister with regard to the culture and practice of cooperatives in India that the cooperation has always been a part and parcel of our diverse and prosperous Indian heritage. The concept of cooperative society is not at all new for the old generation Indians. As the cooperation phenomenon has been a living experience in our society since the inception and emergence of our society. The concept of cooperative is deeply implanted across diverse cultures and customs of Indian society. Thus, cooperation runs in the bloods of Indians. However, the advent of information and communication technology has adversely affected the culture and practice of cooperation across Indian society. Therefore, the concept of cooperation in our contemporary society is on the verge of extinction on account of ongoing and gradual shift of society from collective caring to nucleus nurturing. The change in the mindset of current generation determines problems and prospects on the way to growth and development in cooperative societies. The concept of cooperative is a humane, inclusive, multidimensional, and symbiotic phenomenon. This concept emerged across the globe as an effective mechanism to deal with rampant exploitations, injustices, and unfair and unethical dealings by economically and socially dominant sections of the society. Thus, it is an instrument of marginalized and weaker sections of the society to deal with exploitations and oppressions led by the capitalist class or rich section of the society. The concept of cooperative society is more than the concept of community owned enterprise. As cooperatives aim at inclusive and sustainable development by encouraging self-reliance, economic independence, and service motive via decentralization and democratic control. This article is an attempt to analyze the underlying objectives and elements of cooperatives to develop insights into the future prospects and problems of cooperatives in contemporary Indian society.*

**Keywords:** Cooperative, Capitalist, Exploitation, Inclusive, Marginalized, & Self-Reliance.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The principle of equality, inclusivity and sustainability are the driving forces of cooperative movement. Cooperative societies address widespread economic inequalities and empower marginalized communities across the society as their fundamental underlying objectives. Cooperative enterprises exist and operate across all the sectors of an economy, including agriculture, finance, health, housing, retail, etc. The size of cooperatives ranges from small rural units to multibillion dollar global enterprises. Cooperatives encourage and foster gender equality, employment generation, inclusive growth, women-empowerment and sustainable development. Indian cooperatives are facing multiple challenges like scarcity of capital, political intervention, lack of governance and professionalism, and complex regulatory framework. Cooperatives are the only solution to make our earth a place for sustainable survival for us and upcoming generations (Ray, 2025).

**Table 1**

**Top 5 Cooperative Sectors & Number of Cooperatives in India**

<b>Top 5 Cooperative Sectors</b>	<b>Number of Cooperatives</b>
Housing Cooperative Society	193613
Dairy Cooperatives	153246
Primary Agricultural Credit Society [PACS]	103686
Credit and Thrift Society	83513
Labour Cooperative	46600

**Source:** National Cooperative Database, Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India

Cooperatives have played a significant role in laying down foundation enabling inclusive growth in India. India has a deep rooted and long history of the development of cooperatives. The journey of cooperatives commenced in India with a small number that has reached to the network of over 8.40 lakh cooperatives across India. From Anand Milk Union Limited (AMUL) to Indian Farmers Fertilizers Cooperative Limited (IFFCO), Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited (KRIBHCO), and numerous smaller cooperative entities working on the ground and continuously empowering people across Indian society. Cooperatives connect around one-eighth population through the network of three million cooperatives across the globe. The cooperatives provide employment opportunity to the one-tenth employed population of the world. the National Cooperative Policy 2025 is underway that aligns with the 'Sahakar to Samriddhi (i.e., from Cooperation to Prosperity)' initiative and the 'Viksit Bharat (i.e., Developed India)' vision. Cooperatives are beyond institutions as they are the manifestation of people's commitment and dedication shaping India's prospects from the grassroots. Cooperatives empower and strengthen peasants, women and small entrepreneurs that lead to inclusivity, resilience and self-reliance across the society (Press Information Bureau, 2025).

Cooperatives have critical role in developing inclusive, resilient, and sustainable society. They have power to address socioeconomic disparities and encourage economic democracy. Cooperatives functions across wide spectrum of economy from agriculture to banking, health, housing, retail, etc. As per the report of the International Cooperatives Alliance (ICA), cooperatives have over 100 crore members worldwide. Cooperatives offer employment opportunities to more than 25 crore people which amounts to almost 10 percent employed population of the world. Cooperatives are relatively more resilient and impactful than the conventional enterprises. As per International Labour Organisation (ILO) and International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), cooperatives not only provide jobs but decent work with better work environment, stronger social security measures, and appropriate opportunities for the marginalized sections also. Cooperatives are not small-scale community organizations but significant contributor to the local and global economies. There has been a significant role of cooperatives in advancing and attaining the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals like SDG-1, SDG-2, SDG-3, SDG-8, SDG-10, SDG-11, SDG-12, and SDG-13. Cooperatives have been very instrumental in developing rural economies and ensuring inclusive growth in India (Sharma, 2025). The Self-Reliant India Mission (i.e., Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan) was launched by the Government of India in 2020 in response to socioeconomic disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic resilience, self-sufficiency, and inclusive growth are inherent objectives of this initiative which intends to transform India into a domestically empowered and globally competitive economy. It calls for reduction in import dependency while strengthening internal supply chains. Thus, it focuses on digital transformation, innovation, local manufacturing, and rural development. The cooperative is fundamentally concerned with the concept of self-reliance through its emphasis on local resource mobilization, democratic participation, and equitable distribution. Trust, norms, and networks are hallmark of cooperative system. The concept of village self-rule (i.e., Gram Swaraj) introduced by Mahatma Gandhi was closely linked with the ethos of cooperatives. Mahatma Gandhi was a staunch supporter of decentralized production, community ownership, and local governance, which are integral elements of cooperatives. Cooperatives play a significant role in the materialization of vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat i.e., self-reliant India (Mahesha & Naveen, 2025).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The cooperative society came into the existence in India during the pre-independence era, i.e. during the British rule in India. The idea of establishment of cooperative society in India was suggested by Mr. Fredric Nicholson. The cooperative movement became an integral part of Five-Year Plan in post-independence era in India. Mr. Jawahar Lal Nehru was a staunch supporter of the cooperative movement in India. The number of cooperative societies in India has been increased exponentially. However, the contribution of cooperatives in terms of poverty eradication and upliftment of marginalized sections is not up to the mark. The excessive political control, and outdated rules and regulations are major hurdles in realizing the potential of cooperatives in India (Dhanajaiah, 2015).

The Indian economy is primarily an agrarian economy, with over two-thirds of the total population living in rural areas. The seeds of cooperative movement in India were sown with the enactment of the first Cooperative Societies Act of 1904. The cooperative credit system of India has the largest network in the world. The cooperative credit societies in India have extended more agricultural credit than commercial banks. The agricultural credit cooperative societies in India functions at three levels-1. Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) at village level, 2. Central Cooperative Banks (CCBs) at district level, and 3. State Cooperative Banks (SCBs) at state level. State Cooperative Bank is at the top of the cooperative credit system that is also known as the Apex Bank. The National Cooperative Union is the apex organization encouraging and fostering cooperative movement in India. Slow progress in the cooperative movement in India can be attributed to excessive government and political interference, mismanagement and manipulation, lack of awareness and sensitivity, restricted coverage, and inadequate and untrained workforce. Indian cooperatives need to take immediate and urgent action to introduce essential reforms to enable cooperatives to give utmost contribution towards social and economic development of the country (Singh, 2016).

Cooperatives have played an important role as an agent of economic and social equality and welfare in India. The cooperative society is basically an economic organization designed with underlying objective of economic upliftment and all-round

development of the marginalized sections of the society (Naik, 2019)

**Table 2**

*Cooperatives Across India*

<b>Cooperatives</b>	<b>Number</b>
Primary Cooperatives	841326
Functional Cooperatives	657220
Non-Functional/Dormant Cooperatives	139670
Under Liquidation Cooperatives	48355
<b>All India Cooperatives</b>	<b>845245</b>

**Source:** National Cooperative Database, Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India

Cooperatives are people centered enterprise owned, controlled, and operated by and for their members to materialize their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations. The members of the cooperative society can be its staff members, consumers/customers/clients, suppliers, and residents of the area of operation or a combination of two or more of these stakeholders. Cooperatives provide an enterprise model with a humane perspective in the larger interest of the society. Equality, fairness, social justice, and transparency are at the core of the cooperative society. Cooperatives across the world are playing a significant role in the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) represents, serves, and unites cooperatives all over the world. National Cooperative Union of India is the apex body of cooperative movement in India (NCUI, 2022).

Cooperatives have been playing a substantial role in the elevation of the marginalized sections of the society for a long time. The cooperative movement evolved in Europe. Cooperatives emerged in India in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a measure of rescuing farmers from the clutches of local moneylenders. The concept of collaboration and cooperation was already in practice across India prior to the formal establishment of cooperative societies through the enactment of Cooperative Societies Act of 1904. The Cooperative Societies Act of 1912 enabled the establishment of non-credit cooperative societies in addition to credit cooperative societies in India. The Ministry of Cooperation was created by the Government of India in July 2021 in order to harness the underlying vast potential of cooperatives in India. The cooperative societies have immense potential to develop India as a self-reliant and a developed nation in days to come (Kadam, 2024).

**Table 3**

*Federations Across India*

<b>Federations</b>	<b>Number</b>
National Federations	19
State Federations	240
District Federations	555
Block Federations	386
Regional Federations	47

**Source:** National Cooperative Database, Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India

Indian economy is an agriculturally dominant and rich economy. India is a country where a substantial population lives in rural areas. Therefore, Indian economy is an agricultural and a rural economy. The soul of rural development lies in the development and expansion of cooperatives in India. The prominent purpose of cooperatives is to safeguard rural folk from the exploitation by affluent people of the society and corporate houses. The cooperatives that are functional in rural India are credit, consumer, housing, marketing and producer cooperative societies. The role of cooperatives in rural development is multidimensional, and it touches every aspect of rural life. It works towards the social and economic upliftment of its members. Cooperative societies offer credit at reasonable rate, consumer goods and house at affordable prices, employment opportunities to the marginalized people, required amenities for agricultural activities, etc. The cooperatives have played a significant role in the rural development by facilitating and promoting agricultural and allied activities in India. Cooperatives cover 90 percent villages in India. Thus, its role is very critical in the development of rural and overall economy of India (Siddaraju, 2024).

The cooperatives are driven by the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, transparency, and social responsibility. The fundamental underlying principles of cooperative are 1. Voluntary and open membership, 2. Democratic control, 3. Economic participation, 4. Autonomy and independence, 5. Education, training and information, 6. Cooperation, and 7. Concern for community. The culture of cooperation and practice of cooperative activities are deeply rooted in Indian ethos. The cooperative society is a state subject mentioned in the State List under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India. As per the Constitution (97<sup>th</sup> Amendment) Act, 2011, formation of cooperative society has become a fundamental right of citizen, and included as a directive under the Directive Principles of State Policy. Cooperative Banks are originally a cooperative society registered under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002. The highest number of cooperative societies are working in

housing sector followed by dairy sector in India. A large number of cooperative societies are functional in India. However, the distribution of cooperative movement is not uniform across Indian states. Maharashtra accommodates one-fourth of the total functional cooperatives in India. Approximately two-thirds of total Indian cooperatives exist in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka only (NABARD, 2024).

**Table 4**  
*Cooperative Banks Across India*

<b>Federations</b>	<b>Number</b>
State Cooperative Agricultural and Rural Development Banks [SCARDBs]	14
Primary Cooperative Agricultural and Rural Development Banks [PCARDBs]	526
State Cooperative Banks [SCBs]	32
District Central Cooperative Banks [DCCBs]	338

**Source:** National Cooperative Database, Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India

The fundamental reason behind the emergence of cooperatives in India was the excessive exploitation of farmers by Mahajans and Zamindars. Therefore, the inherent objective of cooperatives was to protect the interests of farmers and weaker sections in India. Cooperatives normally work on the theories of mutual assistance and welfare. The cooperative movement has made substantial contributions in the development of rural India. Cooperatives have potential to empower and liberate marginalized sections, especially youths and women (Dutta & Karmakar, 2025).

Cooperation has been rooted in the fabric of Indian society that leads to the spirit of collaboration to attain common socioeconomic goals. India accommodates over one-fourth of the cooperatives across the world. An independent Ministry of Cooperation was created in 2021 by the Government of India, with fundamental objectives of shaping rural economy of the country, strengthening cooperative movement, and making cooperative a universal phenomenon. The key objective of National Cooperation Policy 2025 is to materialize the vision of Prime Minister of India that is from Cooperation to Prosperity (i.e., Sahkar se Samriddhi). Under the policy, cooperative has been considered an effective means of economic growth. The underlying vision of National Cooperation Policy 2025 is to make India a developed nation by 2047 (Ministry of Cooperation, 2025).

Cooperatives have a long history of backing, facilitating and strengthening rural and overall economy in India. The conventional management style, limited access to technology, inefficient governance, and inadequate funding are major obstacles causing disruption in deriving benefits of cooperatives in India. Cooperative have been instrumental in ensuring social and economic growth in rural India. Cooperatives have made noteworthy contributions in different facets of economy, including agriculture, banking, consumer products, and housing. Cooperative has been deeply rooted in the economic framework of rural India. The cooperative movement in India has empowered and strengthened small scale producers and underprivileged sections by enabling them access to essential resources and desired opportunities. Weak infrastructure, inefficient management, and shortage of fund are major challenges being faced by cooperatives in India. The cooperative sector in India has a lot of potentials, prospects and possibilities that need to be harnessed in the best interest of its citizens and economy as well (Bhullar & Mohan, 2025).

A plan of the Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India to set up two lakh Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) within five years manifests government's allegiance to rejuvenate cooperative movement in India. The roots of India's cooperative movement exist in the early twentieth century. It was originally designed to democratize credit, strengthen rural folks, and to curb the exploitative practices by intermediaries. The top five challenges against the contemporary cooperatives in India are political interference, inefficient management, dependence on state funds, limited inclusivity, and fragmented approach and narrow vision. Avoiding political interference, capacity building and professional management, sustainable financial model, inclusivity, technological integration, fair and effective liquidation process, and regular monitoring and evaluation should be assured to ensure the free, fair, effective, efficient and orderly growth and functioning of cooperatives in India. The government plan to establish two lakh PACS may produce a long-lasting impact on India economy, if data driven decision, grassroot participation, collaboration with private sector, policy consistency, focus on value addition are given utmost priority (Jose and Chathukulam, 2025).

The primary purpose of cooperative societies in rural India is to ensure rural development through social and economic empowerment of communities. Approximately one-eighth population of the world is connected to cooperatives through a network of over three million cooperatives across the world. India has a world's leading network of over eight lakh cooperatives with over 120 million associated members. Voluntary and open membership, democratic controlled, limited liability, service orientation, self-help and mutual benefit, non-profit entity, imparting education and training, socioeconomic objective, and autonomy and independence are prominent features of cooperatives. The existing cooperative societies can be classified into agricultural cooperative society, consumer cooperative society, credit cooperative society, housing cooperative society, marketing cooperative society, multipurpose cooperative society, producer cooperative society, worker cooperative society, and service cooperative society on the basis of their inherent functions. Housing cooperative society and dairy cooperative society are two most popular cooperatives in Indian cooperative landscape (ICMAI, 2025).

## OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

This research article attempts to address the following objectives:

- To analyze the inherent integral elements, fundamental objectives, and underlying dimensions of cooperatives.
- To study the existential issues, opportunities, and relevance of cooperatives in contemporary Indian society.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research article is a descriptive study. Mixed method approach has been followed under the study whereby qualitative and quantitative aspects of cooperatives in contemporary India have been analyzed. This study is based on secondary facts and figures available in different published research journal articles, magazine articles, newspapers articles/editorials, and annual reports of different agencies having explicit and implicit association with cooperatives.

### Cooperatives: Conceptual and Current Overview

A cooperative is an autonomous association of people united voluntarily to fulfil their common economic, social, and cultural aspirations and needs via a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprises. Cooperatives are extremely versatile and exist in almost every sector of the economy, which can be classified into agricultural cooperatives, consumer cooperatives, worker cooperatives, housing cooperatives, credit union and financial cooperatives, and health cooperatives (Sharma, 2025).

**Table 5**

*Cooperatives Across Sectors of Indian Economy*

S.No.	Sector Wise Cooperatives	S.No.	Sector Wise Cooperatives	S.No.	Sector Wise Cooperatives
1	Agriculture & Allied Cooperatives	11	Handloom Textile & Weavers Cooperative	21	Multipurpose Cooperative
2	Agro Processing/Industrial Cooperatives	12	Housing Cooperative Society	22	Primary Agricultural Credit Society
3	Bee Farming Cooperative	13	Jute & Coir Cooperative	23	Sericulture Cooperative
4	Consumer Cooperative	14	Khadi Gramodyog	24	Social Welfare & Cultural Cooperative
5	Credit & Thrift Society	15	Labour Cooperative	25	Sugar Mills Cooperative
6	Dairy Cooperative	16	Large Area Multipurpose Society	26	Tourism Cooperative
7	Educational & Training Cooperatives	17	Live Stock & Poultry Cooperative	27	Transport Cooperative
8	Farmers Service Society	18	Marketing Cooperative Society	28	Tribal SC/ST Cooperative
9	Fishery Cooperative	19	Miscellaneous Credit Cooperative Society	29	Urban Cooperative Bank
10	Handicraft Cooperative	20	Miscellaneous Non-Credit	30	Women Welfare Cooperative Society

**Source:** National Cooperative Database, Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India

Cooperative society is an association of persons that is controlled and owned by its own members, and working in their common interests. It aims at protecting their members from social, cultural, and economic exploitations by profit-oriented intermediaries. Cooperative societies are democratically controlled and jointly owned economic organizations. The fundamental objective behind the operation of cooperative society has never been earning profits. The cooperatives may exist in the form of a society, company, trust, federation, or a multi-state cooperative society (ICMAI, 2025).

**Table 6**

*Registered and Functional Cooperatives in India*

Cooperatives	Number of Cooperatives Registered	Number of Cooperatives Functional
Primary Cooperatives	841326	653519
Block/Taluka/Mandal Federation	386	342
Regional Federation	47	43
District Federation	555	528
State Federation	240	213
National Federation	19	19
Multistate Cooperative	1780	1669
State Cooperative Banks	32	32
District Cooperative Banks	338	336

Primary Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks [PCARDBs]	526	523
State Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks [PCARDBs]	14	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>845244</b>	<b>657219</b>

Source: National Cooperative Database, Ministry of Cooperation, Government of India

## Cooperatives: Emergence and Evolution

The history of evolution of the concept of cooperatives in the world is over two centuries old. However, the story of the emergence of cooperatives in Indian landscape is over a century old. Mr. Nicholson, a British Officer in India recommended to implement the Raiffeisen Model, which refers to the German Agricultural Credit Cooperative Society model developed by Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first Cooperative Society Act of 1904 enabled the formation of Agricultural Credit Cooperatives in villages across India under government sponsorship. The Cooperative Societies Act of 1904 was replaced by the Cooperative Societies Act of 1912, which enabled the formation of Non-Credit Cooperative Societies (e.g., Consumer Cooperative Society, Producer Cooperative Society, Housing Cooperative Society, etc.) in addition to Credit Cooperative Societies in India (Singh, 2016) The history of evolution of cooperative society in India is associated with incidents happened in India during the British rule period. The agitations led by the farmers of Poona and Ahmednagar (Maharashtra) against the prevailing exploitations by the moneylenders laid down the foundation of the establishment of cooperatives in India. The idea of development of cooperatives as an instrument to deal with the then ongoing exploitations by the local moneylenders, emerged as a recommendation of Mr. Fredrick Nicholson. Mr. Nicholson strongly suggested the establishment of Cooperative Credit Societies in India, and his advice was based on his studies of cooperative societies of Europe. The enactment of Cooperative Credit Societies Act, 1904 was the result of his recommendation, and thus, cooperative society came into the existence in modern India. The first Prime Minister of India, Jawahar Lal Nehru had very strong faith in the cooperative movement (Naik, 2019).

Cooperative movement in the world commenced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers [Manchester, England] is considered as the first cooperative society and foundation of the modern cooperative movement in the world. The origin of cooperative movement in India is indebted to agriculture and allied sectors. The widespread issue of rural indebtedness and subsequent scenario of economic status of farmers in India led the conducive environment for the establishment of cooperative societies in India. The cooperative movement was recognized as an important mechanism of socioeconomic change and development after the independence of India. Mr. Vaikunth Mehta is considered as the father of cooperative movement in India (NCUI, 2022). Indian cooperative has completed 120 years of its legal recognition in India with enactment of Cooperative Credit Societies Act 1904. The Indian cooperative movement is one of the leading cooperative movements of the world with approximately eight lakh cooperative societies. The cooperative sector in India covers a wide range of activities like agriculture, credit and banking, consumer goods, dairy, fertilizer, fishery, handloom, handicraft, housing, marketing, etc. (NABARD, 2024).

The origin of cooperatives can be traced back to the nineteenth century. The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers was established in Rochdale, England. The principles developed by this society are still today relevant and serve as the building blocks of cooperative societies. Cooperation is the core element of cooperatives which is concerned with collective self-help and mutual benefits. Cooperative movement happened in India in the early twentieth century. The first Cooperative Societies Act was enacted in India in 1904 during the British period. The cooperatives emerged as an instrument of inclusive socioeconomic growth of the country in the early post-independence era. India's cooperative network is one of the emerging and leading cooperative networks of the world (Ray, 2025). The cooperative movement has a rich legacy in India. The footprint of its emergence in modern India was observed in the early twentieth century. At the outset, cooperatives in India aimed at emancipating rural folk from the exploitation of moneylenders through cooperative credit societies. The cooperatives expanded across diverse sectors of the economy over time, including agriculture, banking, consumer goods, dairy, fisheries, housing, etc. (Mahesha & Naveen, 2025). There are over 8 lakh cooperative societies in India, including 2 lakh credit cooperatives and 6 lakh non-credit cooperatives. Non-credit cooperatives mainly operate in consumer, dairy, fisheries, housing, marketing, medical, processing, service, sugar, and textile sectors (Ministry of Cooperation, 2025).

## CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

*“Cooperation has been the essence of India culture for decades. It is an idea that belongs to India.”*

-Shri Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs & Minister of Cooperation, Government of India

It has been manifested by our Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Government of India that the cooperation has always been an inevitable element of our rich and varied Indian culture since inception. This statement implies the commitment and concerns of our Minister of Cooperation to accelerate the pace and progress of cooperative movement in India so as to harness the inherent and underlying vast potential of cooperatives in the general interest of Indian citizens and overall Indian economy. When we focus on the statements given by our Prime Minister and Minister of Cooperation in context of age-old culture and practice of cooperatives in India then it can be easily inferred that our government is extremely concerned with the current

performance, position, and progress of the cooperative movement in India. Moreover, their insights into the potentials and prospects of cooperatives in Indian context are worth appreciating and impactful that is a good sign of prospective growth and development in the cooperative sector in India. The creation of Ministry of Cooperation by the Government of India reflects the deep concerns and commitment, and future plan of the government with regard to the growth and development in the cooperative sector.

Cooperatives have enormous potential to transform India into a self-reliant and developed nation. However, there are a lot hurdles on the way to utilize the inherent and underlying strengths in the interest of its citizens and economy as well. The proper planning and implementation of policy with regard to cooperatives can be a game changer in terms of positioning and progress of cooperatives and socioeconomic development in Indian landscape. The cooperatives would definitely benefit country and its citizens in multiple ways, provided executives and political leaders believe that the practice is always better than mere preaching and propagating. Just formation of Ministry of Cooperation would not fetch any substantial desired result until and unless our actions and priorities are aligning with the objectives of cooperative policy and commitments of government reflected through its diverse speeches and quotes given at different national and international forum. It is impossible to overlook Gandhian economic philosophies and thoughts when deliberation is focused on the role and relevance of cooperatives in India. As probably he was the first leader in the history of modern India, who ardently supported and encouraged cooperative movements in India through life style and practice. Therefore, we have to revisit Gandhian economic philosophy and make essential changes in the economic policy of the country in order to bring desired changes in the cooperatives and derive the most awaited outcome of cooperatives in India. It is grossly unethical and nonsensical to implement socialism while marching forward on the path of capitalism. As a matter of fact, promoting cooperatives is an explicit assault on the existence of prospering and flourishing capitalism in the contemporary India. Prioritizing and promoting cooperatives across different segments of economy mean adhering to socialism instead of capitalism. Sustainability and inclusivity would not happen in true sense when capitalism exists. As capitalism is the source of disparity, exploitation, and exclusivity. However, sustainability and inclusivity are integral elements of socialism that exists only in the culture and practice of cooperatives. The concept of cooperatives is deeply rooted across Gandhian economic philosophies and thoughts. Thus, underlying principles of cooperatives align with Gandhian economic philosophy and thoughts. The concept of cooperative is the only mechanism of achieving sustainability and inclusivity. It is an economic religious theory that has multiple inherent benefits; however, it demands discipline in consumption, practice and thinking to make sustainability and inclusivity a living experience, not just a subject of academic discourse.

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