

ROLE OF CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN AGRICULTURE PRODUCT MARKETING IN MAHARASHTRA

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture is very important for Indian peoples. Nearly 70% of Indian population being dependent on agriculture. In the ancient days farmers sold their goods directly to the consumers against cash basis or barter exchange. But in this global scenario when there is modern changes in every field of activities. How can this field of agriculture escape. The topic of the research includes the words a co-operative society, agriculture and marketing. These three are different term which works for each other. And if there are development in one than it develops other also.

Keywords: Agriculture, Marketing, Co-operative Society, Agriculture Product, Maharashtra

INTRODUCTION

Co-operation means working together with another or others for a common purpose. in the present context for economic progress. To this extent the modern day co-operative institution is similar to the traditional community institution of the primitive post where group of people would till the land, sow seeds, guard it and then divide the reaped benefits.

Co-operation plays a pivotal role in safeguarding interests of the vulnerable and unorganized people engaged in various economic and social activities. The Co-operative movement has helped in preventing exploitation of people from money-lenders and in raising economic status specially of small farmers, village artisans, landless labourers, destitute women etc. It has created many centres in the rural areas creating new employment opportunities and enhancing productive capacity and competitive ability of people of the weaker sections of the society. However, in the post-liberalization era, the Co-operative movement has been facing new big challenges of severe competitions in keeping qualitative standards of products and services.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the social and economic aspect of Co-operative movement.
2. To understand the Co-operative marketing structure in Maharashtra.
3. To study the role of Co-operative societies agricultural marketing.

Agricultural Marketing in Maharashtra

For a long period of time Indian agriculture was mostly in the nature of “Subsidence farming” The farmer sold only a small part of his produce to pay all rents, debts and meet his other requirements. Such sale was usually done immediately after harvesting of crops since there were no strong facilities. A considerable part of total produce was sold by the farmers to the village traders and moneylenders often of prices considerably lower than the market prices. Therefore the government took some steps to improve the system of agricultural marketing.

The important steps are:

- Organisation of regulated markets.
- Grading and standardization.
- Use of standard weights.
- Godown and Storage facilities.
- Dissemination of market information.
- Marketing inspection.
- Government purchases and fixation of support prices.

Co-operative Movement in Maharashtra

Maharashtra is one of the major state of India. It is also the most urbanized and industrialized State. Co-operative movement is widespread and has a long history in Maharashtra and even today it plays an important role in economy of Maharashtra. The Co-operative movement in Maharashtra in the beginning was confined mainly to the field of agricultural credit. Later on it spread rapidly to other areas like non agricultural credit, housing, agro-processing and marketing industries, labour, transport, etc. This has resulted in development of growth centre across the state with adequate social infrastructure facilities.

Co-operative Marketing

Governments measures have improved the system of agricultural marketing to some extent a major part of the benefits has been denied by large farmers who have adequate ‘Marketable surplus’. Therefore it is essential to form Co-operatives of small and marginal farmers to enable them to obtain fair price for their produce. The Co-operative marketing gives the some advantages to small farmers for obtaining fair price for their produce.

Role of Co-operative societies

The Co-operative societies works on the co-operation basis. It offers facilities to improve agriculture product marketing such as establishment of regulated market, construction of warehouses, provision for grading and standardization of product, standardization of weight and measures, daily broadcasting of market prices of agricultural crops on ALL India Radio, improvement of transport facilities etc. the above mentioned facilities are provided by the co-operative societies so that the development in agriculture product marketing is very possible and the exploitation of farmers by the middle mans is minimized.

Progress of Co-operative Marketing in Maharashtra

Marketing Co-operatives are involved in marketing of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, agricultural machinery and equipments and agricultural commodities.

The working capital of the Maharashtra State Co-operative Marketing Federation was Rs.22.66 crore in the previous year. Its total paid-up share capital was Rs. 13 crore, of which share of the State Government was Rs. 12.35 crore (95%). Its total turnover was Rs. 257.88 crore, out of which agricultural requisites accounted for 53.5 percent.

The Maharashtra State Co-operative Cotton Growers Marketing Federation Ltd. had a working capital of Rs. 4.98 crore. The total turnover during the period was Rs. 3,040 crore.

The number of co-operative marketing societies including District / central Marketing Federation was 1380 with a membership of 10.92 lakh and working capital of Rs. 447 crore. The turnover of these societies was Rs. 1,570 crore.

SUGGESTIONS

- There is need to follow strictly the basic principle of co-operation i.e. “Each for all and all for each”
- It is imperative to make such changes in the co-operative marketing structure that small & marginal farmers are given more representation in these societies.
- There is a need for multipurpose societies which can look upon all requirements of the formers in an integrated way. Particular emphasis needs to be laid on the integration of agricultural processing credit and marketing activities.
- The activities of marketing co-operative societies should be further diversified. For this purpose necessary financial and technical assistance should be provided to them by the state government.
- There is need to setup central committee for education and training on every all India, regional and state levels.

CONCLUSION

The Co-operative marketing has conferred multifarious advantages on the farmers. Due to ignorance and illiteracy often farmers have to face well-organised mass of clever intermediaries. But since farmers join hands and form Co-operative societies, they are less prone to exploitation and malpractices. Now, instead of marketing their produce separately, they market it together through one agency. This has increase their bargaining vis-avis merchants and intermediaries. The Marketing Co-operative Societies in Maharashtra provide credit to the farmers to save them from the necessity of selling their produce immediately after harvesting. It ensures better returns to the farmers. The Co-operative marketing societies generally have storage facilities. Thus the farmers can wait for better prices and their products are out of the danger from rains, rodents and thefts. Bulk transport of agricultural produce by the societies is often easier and cheaper, which reduces cost and botheration of transporting produce to the market. A strong marketing co-operative have achieved, better prices for agricultural produce.

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