

THOUGHTS ON COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

By CA (Dr.) Adukia Rajkumar Satyanarayan

Mob: 98200 61049

Email: rajkumar@cadrrajkumaradukia.com

INTRODUCTION

71st All India Cooperative Week is being celebrated from 14th to 20th November, 2024 to recognize the efforts and contributions of cooperative societies in India. This year the theme for the event is “Role of Cooperatives in Building Viksit Bharat”. We Chartered Accountants must advise maximum Cooperatives for country’s growth.

Universally accepted as people-centric organizations and voluntary association of people, whose motive is the welfare of the contributors, the cooperative sector plays a significant role in any economy through community business sense and collective efforts. According to the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), Cooperatives are people-centred enterprises owned, controlled and run by and for their members to realise their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations. Thus, cooperatives are businesses operated for the benefit of its members rather than for investors who have invested in the business. Members share equal voting rights regardless of the amount of capital they put into the business.

Even before formal cooperative structures came into being through the passing of a law, the practice of the concept of cooperation and cooperative activities were prevalent in several parts of India e.g. village communities collectively creating permanent assets like village tanks or village forests, instances of pooling of resources like foodgrains after harvest to lend to needy members of the group before the next harvest, collecting small contributions in cash at regular intervals to lend to members of the group, harvesting and transporting of produce of members to the market etc. Being a democratic arrangement, cooperatives as community-owned entities are adept at providing timely credit, representing needs of members, improving bargaining power,

reducing costs, expanding new and existing market opportunities etc. Both central government and state governments offer many forms of assistance to cooperatives as they have immense potential to deliver goods and services at the grass-root level. As per the Ministry of Cooperation's Annual Report 2022-23, there are 8.5lakh co-operative units in India out of which 1.77lakh units (20%) are credit co-operatives & remaining are non-credit co-operatives carrying out various activities e.g. producer, processing, consumer, industrial, marketing, farming, service, multi-purpose cooperatives etc. All the 8 Lakh plus cooperatives have been categorized among 29 Sectors.

MEANING OF COOPERATIVES & THEIR STRUCTURE

The term co-operation is derived from the Latin word co-operari, where the word 'co' means 'with' and 'operari' means 'to work'. The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) defines cooperatives as enterprises owned, controlled, and run by and for their members, emphasizing their role in meeting common economic, social, and cultural needs. Cooperatives, prioritizing people over capital, play a crucial role in fostering community business sense, enhancing social bonds, and contributing to inclusive economic growth.

In 1995, International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), adopted the Revised Statement on Cooperative Identity which contains the definition of a Cooperative, the values of Cooperatives and the Seven Cooperative Principles. These Principles have been accepted universally.

The 7 Cooperative Principles are:

1. Voluntary and Open Membership
2. Democratic Member Control
3. Member's Economic Participation
4. Autonomy and Independence
5. Education, Training and Information
6. Cooperation among Cooperatives
7. Concern for Community

Rooted in the principles of democratic governance and democratic decision-making, equitable distribution of benefits, and voluntary associations, these societies play an essential role in

addressing the needs of their members and play an important role in the overall socio-economic development of the country. These entities span across a range of diverse sectors like rural and agriculture credit, consumer welfare, agriculture and small industry marketing, processing, distribution and supplies etc.

Followings are some types of co-operative societies:

1. Consumers' Co-operative Society: These societies are formed to protect the interest of general consumers by making consumer goods available at a reasonable price. They buy goods directly from the producers or manufacturers and thereby eliminate the middlemen in the process of distribution.

2. Producers' and Processing Co-operative Society: These societies are formed to protect the interest of small producers by producing and processing the goods and services of their members. They aim to realize economies of scale by making available items of their need for production like raw materials, tools and equipment, machinery, etc. and supplying value-added products and services.

3. Co-operative Marketing Society: These societies are formed by small producers and manufacturers who find it difficult to sell their products individually. The society collects the products from the individual members and takes the responsibility of selling and marketing those products in the market.

4. Co-operative Credit Society: These societies are formed to provide financial support to the members. The society provide loans at a reasonable rate of interest and flexible repayment tenure to its members in times of need and protect them against high rates of interest that are charged by private money lenders.

5. Co-operative Farming Society: These societies are formed by small farmers to work jointly and thereby enjoy the benefits of large-scale farming.

6. Housing Co-operative Society: These societies are formed to provide housing facilities to members. They purchase land, develop it and construct houses or flats and allot the same to members. Some societies also provide loans at low rate of interest to members to construct their own houses.

ADMINISTRATIVE & REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATIVES IN INDIA

The Constitution (Ninety-seventh Amendment) Act, 2011 amended the Constitution of India and granted constitutional status to cooperative societies in India and made the following provisions:

- (i) Right to form cooperative societies was included as a Fundamental Right by insertion of the words “cooperative societies” in Article 19(1)(c) in Part III (Fundamental Rights) of the Constitution of India.
- (ii) Article 43B was inserted in Part IV (Directive Principles of State Policy) of the Constitution of India for promotion of cooperative societies which states “The State shall endeavor to promote voluntary formation, autonomous functioning, democratic control and professional management of co-operative societies”.
- (iii) Part IX B titled ‘The Cooperative Societies’, was inserted in the Constitution of India, containing provisions for incorporation, regulation and winding up of co-operative societies.

The Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India lays down the distribution of powers between the Union and State governments with respect to certain matters. Cooperative societies with objects confined to a single State fall under Entry 32 of List II (State list) of Seventh schedule of the Constitution of India for which states are competent to legislate. Accordingly, such societies are governed by respective State Cooperative Acts. Cooperative Societies with objects not confined to one State fall under entry 44 of List I (Union list) of Seventh schedule of the Constitution of India, for which the Parliament is empowered to make laws and accordingly Parliament has enacted Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.

Background and History of Cooperative Sector

Development of the Cooperative Movement of India, led to formation of various committees and framing of legislations. A brief chronology of the background and history of cooperative sector is as under:

- Cooperative Credit Societies Act, 1904
- Cooperative Societies Act, 1912
- Maclagen Committee on Cooperation (1914)
- Government of India Act, 1919 - In 1919, with the passing of the Reforms Act, Cooperation as a subject was transferred to the provinces.
- Multi-Unit Cooperative Societies Act, 1942
- Cooperative Planning Committee (1945)
- All India Rural Credit Survey Committee (1951)
- Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984 (The earlier Multi-Unit Cooperative Societies Act of 1942 was repealed)
- Model Cooperatives Act, 1990
- Some States namely AP (1995), MP (1999), Bihar (1996), J&K (1999), Orissa (2001), Karnataka (1997), Jharkhand (1996), Chhattisgarh (1999) and Uttaranchal (2003), enacted Parallel Cooperative Acts which were enabling and were meant to ensure autonomous and democratic functioning of cooperatives
- Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 - The Multi-State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) Act, enacted in 1984, was modified in 2002, in keeping with the spirit of the Model Cooperatives Act. Unlike the State Laws, which remained as a parallel legislation to co-exist with the earlier laws, the MSCS Act, 2002 replaced the earlier Act of 1984.
- National Cooperative Policy (2002)
- Task Force on Revival of Cooperative Credit Institutions (August 2004)
- The Conference of State Cooperative Ministers held on 7th December, 2004 at New Delhi, resolved that the Government of India may constitute a High Powered Committee to review the achievements of cooperative movement during the last one hundred years and to prepare a road map recommending steps to be taken to address challenges being faced by the movement in the changing socio-economic environment.
- Accordingly, a High Powered Committee on Cooperatives (HPC) was constituted by the Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture vide Resolution No. L-11012/4/2004-L&M dated 10th May, 2005. The Committee gave its Report in May 2009.

- The Constitution (Ninety-seventh Amendment) Act, 2011 amended the Constitution of India and granted constitutional status to cooperative societies in India
- The MSCS Amendment Act 2023 and MSCS Amendment rules were created to match the current laws with the Constitution (Ninety-seventh Amendment) Act, 2011 (insertion of part IX(B) in Constitution of India).

Administrative Framework

Cooperative Societies are administered through Ministry of Cooperation of the Government of India. The subject of Cooperation was earlier administered through the Cooperation Division of the erstwhile Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. A separate Ministry of Cooperation was created vide Cabinet Secretariat's Gazette Notification No. 2516 dated 6th July 2021.

The Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies is the statutory body responsible for registration and other processes of the Multi State Cooperative Societies (MSCS). The Office of the Registrar of Cooperative Societies of various States are responsible for registration and other processes of the cooperative societies having objects confined to a single State.

The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), under the Ministry of Cooperation, promotes new cooperatives and provides financial assistance to cooperative societies. The NCDC and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) (which is under the Ministry of Finance and is administered by the Department of Financial Services (DFS)), play a major role in the flow of credit to cooperatives.

The National Council for Cooperative Training (NCCT), an autonomous institute under the Ministry of Cooperation, organizes cooperative education and training programs for personnel, members and board members of Cooperative Societies across the country, including personnel from Cooperative Departments of States/UTs.

The Ministry of Cooperation works with other organizations to promote cooperatives in India, including the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), which are not under the Ministry of Cooperatives, but are instead under the administrative control of the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

Formulation of a new National Cooperative Policy is in process. A 49-member National Level Committee was constituted, consisting of experts of the cooperative sector, representatives from National/State/District/Primary level cooperative societies, Secretaries (Cooperation) and Registrar of Cooperative Societies from States/UTs, officers from Central Ministries /Departments to formulate the New National Cooperation Policy. Draft report on New National Cooperation Policy, has been prepared by the expert committee and is under consideration.

COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES IN INDIA

In India, cooperative societies span across diverse sectors, including agriculture, credit and banking, housing, women's welfare etc. and contribute significantly to rural development by empowering local communities and mitigating socio-economic disparities.

Cooperative Sector in India is broadly classified into two types:

1. Credit Cooperatives

The Credit cooperatives ensure credit at affordable interest rates for agriculture, consumption and marketing in rural area. The Consumer cooperatives meet the farmers' consumption demand at concessional rates. Marketing cooperatives ensure remunerative prices for the products by eliminating the middlemen in transaction of goods and services.

In the Rural areas - Credit Cooperatives have a 3-tier structure for distribution of rural credit –

- Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) at Village level
- District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCB) at District level
- State Cooperative Banks (StCB) at State level

The Urban areas – are served by urban credit cooperatives and Urban Cooperative Banks (UCB)

2. Non-Credit Cooperatives

The Non Credit sector includes cooperative societies engaged in agriculture, fishery, horticulture, dairy, housing, tribal, labour, weaver, consumer, industrial, marketing, processing, health, transport etc.

Presently, India has 29 primary cooperatives, namely:

1. Agriculture & Allied Cooperative
2. Agro-Processing/Industrial Cooperatives,
3. Bee Farming Cooperatives,
4. Consumer Cooperatives,
5. Credit and Thrift Society
6. Dairy Cooperative
7. Educational and Training Cooperatives
8. Farmer Service Societies (FSS)
9. Fishery Cooperatives
10. Handicraft Cooperatives
11. Handloom Textile and Weavers Cooperatives
12. Housing Cooperative Society
13. Jute and Coir Cooperative
14. Labour Cooperatives
15. Large Area Multi-Purpose Society (LAMPS)
16. Livestock & Poultry Cooperatives
17. Marketing Cooperatives,
18. Miscellaneous Credit Cooperatives
19. Miscellaneous Non-Credit Cooperatives,
20. Multipurpose Cooperatives
21. Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS)
22. Sericulture Cooperatives
23. Social Welfare & Cultural Cooperatives
24. Sugar Mills Cooperatives

25. Tourism Cooperatives
26. Transport Cooperatives
27. Tribal-SC/ST Cooperatives
28. Urban Cooperative Banks (UCB)
29. Women's Welfare Cooperatives

Short-Term Cooperative Credit Structure

Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS) constitute the lowest tier of the Short-Term Cooperative Credit Structure (STCCS) in the country, primarily providing short-term and medium-term credit facility and other input services, like seed, fertilizer, pesticide distribution, etc. to member farmers. PACS are refinanced by NABARD through District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs) and State Cooperative Banks (StCBs). Being the grassroots level cooperative institutions, PACS play a crucial role in sustaining the rural economy of the country by purveying institutional credit to small and marginal farmers. PACS are governed by the Cooperative Acts of their respective states and guided by State Bye-laws. They engage directly with rural (agricultural) borrowers, extending loans, overseeing loan repayments, and managing marketing and distribution functions. Recently, the Ministry of Cooperation framed the Model Bye-Laws for PACS, which would enable PACS to undertake more than 25 business activities, which inter-alia include dairy, fishing, setting-up of godowns, procurement of foodgrains, fertilizers, seeds, LPG/CNG/Petrol/Diesel distributorship etc.

District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs) stand at the second tier in the Short-Term Cooperative Credit Structure (STCCS) and come under the regulatory purview of RBI through Banking Regulation, Act, 1949. State Cooperative Banks (StCBs) are the Apex level of the Short-Term Cooperative Credit Structure

Long-Term Cooperative Credit Structure

Long-term rural credit cooperatives consists of State Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (SCARDBs) operating at the state level and Primary Cooperative

Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (PCARDBs) operating at the district/ block level. The business model of SCARDBs and PCARDBs depends heavily on borrowings; the former borrow from institutions such as NABARD for direct lending as well as lending through PCARDBs.

Urban Cooperative Credit Structure

Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) are primarily localized financial service providers. They refer to primary cooperative banks located in urban and semi-urban areas. UCBs are classified as scheduled and non-scheduled, based on their inclusion or otherwise in the Second Schedule of the Reserve Bank of India Act of 1934, and their geographical outreach (single-state or multi-state).

Urban credit and thrift societies also play a very significant role in meeting credit needs by offering customized loan products and repayment schedules based on members' needs and income levels and foster a sense of community and social responsibility among members.

MULTI-STATE COOPERATIVES

The Multi-State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) are those cooperative societies whose objects and operations are not confined to one State and they serve the interests of their members in more than one State and function in accordance with the cooperative principles. In India, The MSCS are involved in diverse economic activities in various sectors of economy such as fishery, dairy, housing, farming, credit, producer and processing, consumer etc.

These societies are registered under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.

Multi-State Cooperative Societies Amendment Act 2023:

The Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Act, 2023 was passed and came into force on 3rd August, 2023 with the aim to amend Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002 to incorporate the provisions of the 97th Constitutional Amendment and to strengthen governance, increase transparency, increase accountability, improve election process, etc. in Multi-State

Cooperative Societies. The MSCS Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 7, 2022, and was referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee of both the Houses on December 20, 2022. The Bill was passed by the Lok Sabha on July 25, 2023 and by the Rajya Sabha on August 01, 2023. The Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Act, 2023 came into force from 3rd August, 2023.

The amended provisions inserted in the MSCS Act 2002 vide the Multi-State Co-operative Societies (Amendment) Act, 2023, facilitate the establishment of a Cooperative Election Authority, creation of a Cooperative Rehabilitation Reconstruction and Development Fund, appointment of Cooperative Ombudsman and Information Officers, and representation of women and SC/ST members on cooperative societies boards.

NATIONAL LEVEL COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES/ FEDERATIONS

National Cooperative Societies are defined under the Section 3(r) of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies (MSCS) Act, 2002 and are listed in the Second Schedule of the MSCS Act, 2002. Currently, 19 Multi-State Cooperative Societies are listed in the Second Schedule of the MSCS Act and these Multi-State Cooperative Societies are apex level societies which represent their respective Sectors at the National Level. Similarly, there are State Federations at State level and District Federations at District level in their respective fields. The functions of these National Cooperative Societies/Federations are defined under Section-24 of the MSCS Act, which majorly includes to provide specialized training, education, make model bye-laws and policies for consideration of its member cooperatives, undertake business services on behalf of its member cooperatives, develop market information system, logo brand promotion, quality control and technology upgradation etc.

According to Second Schedule to the MSCS Act 2002 (read with section 3(r) and section 116 of the Act), the following are the National Cooperative Societies in India:

1. National Co-operative Agriculture & Rural Development Banks' Federation Ltd.,
Mumbai
2. National Federation of State Cooperative Bank Limited, Mumbai

3. National Cooperative Union of India Limited, New Delhi
4. National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited, New Delhi
5. National Cooperative Consumer's Federation of India Limited, New Delhi
6. National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Limited, New Delhi
7. National Cooperative Housing Federation Limited, New Delhi
8. Indian Farmer's Fertilizer Cooperative Limited, New Delhi
9. All India Federation of Cooperative Spinning Mills Limited, Mumbai
10. National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Limited, Anand
11. All India Handloom Fabrics Marketing Cooperative Society Limited, New Delhi
12. National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and Credit Societies Limited, New Delhi
13. Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited, New Delhi
14. National Federation of Fishermen's Cooperative Limited, New Delhi
15. National Labour Cooperatives Federation of Limited, New Delhi
16. Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited, New Delhi
17. National Cooperative Organics Limited, Anand, Gujarat
18. Bhartiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited, New Delhi
19. National Cooperative Exports Limited, New Delhi

INITIATIVES FOR STRENGTHENING COOPERATIVE SECTOR

Some Initiatives undertaken by the Government with respect to Cooperative Societies include:

1. Model Bye-Laws for Primary Agriculture Credit Societies (PACS) for making them Multipurpose, multi-dimensional and transparent. So far, 32 States/Union Territories have adopted the Model Bye-Laws or their existing Bye-Laws are in-line with the Model Bye-Laws.
2. Strengthening of PACS through Computerization which entails bringing all functional PACS in the Country onto a common Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) based national

software, linking them with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) through State Cooperative Banks (StCBs), District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs).

3. Establishing new Multi-purpose PACS/Dairy/Fisheries Cooperative Societies in the Panchayats/Villages not covered so far.
4. Providing e-services through PACS and establishing them as Common Service Centres (CSCs) for better access to e-Services
5. Three new Multi-State Cooperative Societies for Exports, Certified Seeds and Organic Products constituted at the National Level Viz. National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL), Bhartiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL) and The National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL).
6. Computerization of Central Registrar's Office, office of Registrar of Cooperative Societies in States/Union Territories and Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (ARDBs).
7. New schemes for Cooperative Societies started by National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) Viz. 'Swayamshakti Sahakar' for self-help groups; 'Dirghavadhi Krishak Sahakar' for long term agricultural credit; 'Dairy Sahakar' for dairy and 'Nandini Sahakar' for women's cooperative institutions etc.
8. Inclusion of Cooperative Societies as 'Buyer' on Government e-Marketplace (GeM Portal). as buyers on the GeM portal. Further, Cooperative Societies are also being motivated to register as sellers on GeM.
9. New National Cooperation Policy is being formulated and is under consideration
10. New National Cooperative Database has been developed which is being updated in a phased manner
11. Umbrella Organization for Urban Cooperative Banks - RBI has accorded approval to the National Federation of Urban Co-operative Banks and Credit Societies Ltd. (NAFCUB) for the formation of an Umbrella Organization (UO) named as National Urban Cooperative Finance and Development Corporation Limited (NUCFDC) for the UCB sector, which will provide necessary IT infrastructure and operation support to around 1,500 UCBs RBI vide letter 08.02.2024 has issued Certificate of Registration (CoR) to

the Umbrella Organization, allowing the organization to conduct business as a consensus NBFC.

12. Urban Co-operative Banks (UCBs) will now be able to open new branches to expand their business.
13. Cooperative Banks will also be able to make one-time settlement of outstanding loans, like Commercial Banks.
14. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has permitted UCBs to provide door-step banking services to their customers.
15. Rural Co-operative Banks will now be able to lend to commercial real estate - residential housing sector, thereby diversifying their business.
16. Cooperative sector enterprises will now be able to get collateral free loans from Co-operative Banks.
17. Reduction in Goods and Services Tax (GST) on Molasses from 28% to 5% to help Cooperative Sugar Mills

Relief in Income Tax Law for Co-operative Societies

- Reduction in surcharge on Income Tax for Cooperative Societies – The surcharge on Income Tax for Cooperative Societies with income from Rs 1 Crore to Rs 10 Crore has been reduced from 12% to 7% at par with Companies.
- Reduction in Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) on Cooperative Societies - The Minimum Alternate Tax rate for Cooperative Societies has been reduced from 18.5% to 15%. With this provision, now there is parity between Cooperative Societies and Companies in this regard.
- The limit for Cash Deposits and Cash Loans by PACS and Primary Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (PCARDBs) has been increased from Rs 20,000 to Rs 2 lakh per member.
- Tax cut for new manufacturing Cooperative Societies - New manufacturing cooperative societies commencing manufacturing operations by March 31, 2024, will be taxed at a flat rate of 15% as against the existing tax rate of up to 30% with surcharge. With this provision, now there is parity between Cooperative Societies and Companies in this regard.

- Increase in the limit of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) in Cash Withdrawal - Government through the Budget 2023-24, has increased the cash withdrawal limit of cooperative societies without deduction of tax at source from Rs.1 crore to Rs.3 crore per year.
- Relief in cash transactions under section 269ST of the Income Tax Act - Section 269ST of IT Act prohibits any person to receive an amount of Rs. 2 lakh and above in cash; in aggregate from a person in a day, or in a single transaction, or in respect of transactions relating to one event or occasion from a person. The Income Tax Department earlier treated the 'Contract' between a milk cooperative and its distributor as 'one event' and if the cumulative cash receipt, in all the transactions with that distributor, in the entire year was more than Rs. 2 lakh income tax penalty was imposed on such cooperatives. The Income Tax Department has issued a Circular making it clear that now the 'Contract' made by cooperative societies with their distributors will not be considered as 'One event'. With this clarification, cash transaction less than 2 lakhs done by a cooperative society with its distributor in a day will be considered separately, and they will not be charged with income tax penalty. With this, State and District milk unions will now be able to receive payment less than Rs. 2 lakh per day in cash from their distributors and do payment in cash to member milk producers during Bank holidays.
- Relief from Income Tax to Cooperative Sugar Mills - Cooperative Sugar Mills will not have to pay additional income tax on payment of higher sugarcane prices to farmers up to the fair and remunerative price or the state advised price. With this provision, Cooperative Sugar Mills will now be able to give higher price of sugarcane to their members and they will get income tax deduction on this higher expenditure. According to the clarification issued on 25.10.2021, this provision is applicable from 01.04.2016 and since then, farmer members are getting this benefit through cooperative sugar mills.
- New provision has been made through the Union Budget 2023-24 whereby payments made by Cooperative Sugar Mills to sugarcane farmers before the assessment year 2016-17 will be allowed to be claimed as expenditure. For this, a new sub-section 19(1) has been included in Section 155 of Income Tax. CBDT has also issued Standard Operating Procedure in this regard on 27.07.2023.

INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO

The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) was founded in London, England on 19 August 1895 during the 1st Cooperative Congress. In attendance were delegates from cooperatives from Argentina, Australia, Belgium, England, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, India, Italy, Switzerland, Serbia, and the USA. Representatives established the International Cooperative Alliance's aims to provide information, define and defend the Cooperative Principles and develop international trade.

The ICA members are international and national cooperative organizations from all sectors of the economy. Operating from a global office in Brussels, Belgium, the ICA is organised with four Regional Offices: Europe (in Brussels), Africa (in Nairobi), Americas (in San José) & Asia-Pacific (in New Delhi). The ICA is also organised with eight Sectoral organisations in agriculture, banking, retail, fisheries, health, housing, insurance, and industry & services.

USEFUL WEBSITES

- International Cooperative Alliance <https://ica.coop/en>
- Ministry of Cooperation – <https://www.cooperation.gov.in/>
- National Cooperative Union of India (<https://ncui.coop/>)
- The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) (<https://www.ncdc.in/>)
- National Council for Cooperative Training – <https://www.ncct.ac.in/>
- Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies - <https://crs.gov.in/>
- National Cooperative Database - <https://cooperatives.gov.in/en>
- National Cooperative Societies:
 1. National Co-operative Agriculture & Rural Development Banks' Federation Ltd., Mumbai (<https://www.nafcard.org/#>)
 2. National Federation of State Cooperative Bank Limited, Mumbai (<https://nafscob.org>)
 3. National Cooperative Union of India Limited, New Delhi (<https://ncui.coop>)

4. National Agriculture Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited, New Delhi (<https://www.nafed-india.com>)
 5. National Cooperative Consumer's Federation of India Limited, New Delhi (<https://www.nccf-india.com>)
 6. National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Limited, New Delhi (<https://coopsugar.org>)
 7. National Cooperative Housing Federation Limited, New Delhi (<https://www.nchfindia.net>)
 8. Indian Farmer's Fertilizer Cooperative Limited, New Delhi (<https://www.iffco.in>)
 9. All India Federation of Cooperative Spinning Mills Limited, Mumbai
 10. National Cooperative Dairy Federation of India Limited, Anand (<https://ncdfi.coop>)
 11. All India Handloom Fabrics Marketing Cooperative Society Limited, New Delhi
 12. National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and Credit Societies Limited, New Delhi (<https://www.nafcub.org>)
 13. Krishak Bharati Cooperative Limited, New Delhi (<https://kribhco.net>)
 14. National Federation of Fishermen's Cooperative Limited, New Delhi (<http://fishcofed.in>)
 15. National Labour Cooperatives Federation of Limited, New Delhi (<http://labcofed.org>)
 16. Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited, New Delhi (<https://trifed.tribal.gov.in>)
 17. National Cooperative Organics Limited, Anand, Gujarat (<https://ncol.coop>)
 18. Bhartiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited, New Delhi (<https://sahakarbeej.in>)
 19. National Cooperative Exports Limited, New Delhi (<https://ncel.coop>)
- State Registrar of Cooperative Societies - <https://www.cooperation.gov.in/other-states-website-details>
 - State Cooperative Acts - <https://www.cooperation.gov.in/state-act>
 - Urban Cooperative Banks
 - Total Registered Cooperative Banks under MSCS Act,2002: 67.
 - List of Banks registered under MSCS Act, 2002 (<https://cres.gov.in/bankList>)

- National Dairy Development Board - <https://www.nddb.coop/>
- National Fisheries Development Board - <https://nfdb.gov.in/>
- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) - <https://www.nabard.org/>