

DEVELOPMENT OF GENERAL CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING SOCIETIES IN KERALA

Sini Raj.S

Research Scholar in Commerce, Kerala University Library Research Centre,
Palayam, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

ABSTRACT

Training and Research are the most significant elements of strong and self-reliant general co-operative marketing societies in Kerala. The purpose of training programmes and research is to make professionally competent managerial and other personnel with appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities. During the past decades large number of general co-operative marketing societies established but their output is not at desired level. It is largely due to inadequate and faulty applications of human effort in performing various operations involved in general co-operative marketing societies. Training and research are the two important ways for updating and upgrading the capability of all levels of personnel working in general co-operative marketing societies. Effective training, research and qualitative targets will automatically rebuild general co-operative marketing societies with strong foundation. Therefore, a comprehensive and flexible training and research must form an important strategy for the development of general co-operative marketing societies in Kerala. Through this we can impart fresh knowledge and skills, develops ability for analyzing and interpreting new situations that emerge in the day-to-day functioning of general co-operative marketing societies, develop an attitude to tackle problems with patience and cool mind and it make professionally competent personnel working in all levels.

Keywords: Co-operation, Co-operative Marketing, Research and Training

INTRODUCTION

Co-operative marketing has started in India as multi commodity, general purpose marketing agencies. They simultaneously handle more than one commodity and perform multi-purpose function of marketing of crops including commission agency, outright purchase, pooling, grading, processing etc. Most of the co-operative marketing societies in Kerala are this type. It has been organized in many parts of Kerala but year after year most of them became dormant. So

they are not in a good position to promote and protect the interests of weaker and vulnerable sections of the farming community. It is largely due to inadequate and faulty applications of human effort in performing various operations involved in general co-operative marketing societies. This necessitates sound training programmes and research to find a solution to the complications faced by the general co-operative marketing societies in Kerala.

The general co-operative marketing societies will be strong and effective only when the personnel working in general co-operative marketing societies are strong. Because of the weakness of the personnel in general co-operative marketing societies, they cannot come up to the expected level of performance. Human resources development programme is the first and foremost requirement for an orderly functioning of general co-operative marketing societies. In today's business scenario, competitiveness in the market can be met by building human capability. There is a need to gear up human resources for better performance of general co-operative marketing societies. Continuous training will update the capability of all levels of personnel working in general co-operative marketing societies as well as research facilities will provide the basis of a good extension services. Therefore, training and research are the basic ingredients for the development of general co-operative marketing societies and therefore serve as a means for rapid economic development.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the need of training and research on the development of general co-operative marketing societies in Kerala.
2. To identify issues in making training and research effective.
3. To identify the existing gaps in undertaking research and priority areas for undertaking training.
4. To suggest remedial measures for the development of general co-operative marketing societies through the practices of training and research.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study does not propose to discuss various theories of training and research. This study in a very simple way presents the development of general co-operative marketing societies in Kerala in the context of training to human resources and research.

DATA COLLECTION

The articles, official committee reports, research survey reports, books, pamphlets, seminar and conference reports are all based on secondary sources used in this study.

NEED OF TRAINING AND RESEARCH ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENERAL CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING SOCIETIES

Training and research is very essential for general co-operative marketing societies meant to develop it on sound lines. In the coming years, serious efforts have to take to build up a strong human resource base for general co-operative marketing societies. In this context training programmes will have to undergo a paradigm shift so as to assimilate latest management techniques, information technology and other related economic and social aspects. Professionally qualified managers and trained and motivated working force will alone produce results leading to the viability of general co-operative marketing societies. In order to identify problems that hindering the development of general co-operative marketing societies, research serves as an essential aid. The basic aim of training and research is to rebuild the general co-operative marketing societies with strong foundation.

TRAINING

Training makes human resources more experienced and attain proficiency in their activities. For the satisfactory functioning of general co-operative marketing societies as an association and as a business unit, training to members, to office bearers and staff, in all the functions of general co-operative marketing societies is absolutely necessary. Two sets of factors are very important for training to be relevant and effective, those concerning training to members (agriculturalists) and to officials of the society.

(a) Training to agriculturalists

The changes in the working environment affects not only the human beings working in general co-operative marketing societies but also those related to the development of general co-operative marketing societies. It is important to note that agricultural marketing covers the functions involved in moving an agricultural product from the farm to the customer. Numerous interconnected activities are involved in doing this, such as planning, production, growing and harvesting, grading, packing, transporting, storing agro and food processing and so on. Such activities cannot take place without the trained agriculturalists. Marketing systems are dynamic, they are competitive and involve continuous changes and improvements. Those that have failed to adopt changes in market demand and provide poorer quality are often forced out of business. In recent years, there are number of varieties of high yielding crops and plants are developed through research. But it is not easy to introduce these innovative changes among the illiterate or semi-illiterate agriculturalists. Training programmes have to be organized which must expose their limitations and help them to assimilate the innovative ideas.

(b) Training to officials.

Office bearers of general co-operative marketing societies may be either elected representatives or professionals employed by the society. There is a need to extent sufficient training to equip them for doing their jobs in a more efficient way. The training programmes for leadership development should concentrate on all business strategies. In this competitive business environment, it is being recognized that the general co-operative marketing societies have to develop their capacity to face competition from market forces. In this context, the co-operatives have to provide great emphasis on professionalization of management and members by improving the quality of human resources at all levels.

RESEARCH

Effective research alone facilitates theory building, overcomes duplications and enhancing credibility. Unlike other co-operative societies, general co-operative marketing societies as a subject has not made such significant contribution in the realm of research. Whatever the little doctoral work in Kerala State has been done is by and large restricted to co-operative marketing societies in general and special co-operative marketing societies in particular. No-one takes special effort to study problems regarding general co-operative marketing societies. Most of the co-operative marketing societies in Kerala are general co-operative marketing societies but year after year most of them become non viable. The perspective for general co-operative marketing societies is to jump several steps forward to bridge the gap of the past failures and meet the challenges of tomorrow. This calls for research.

EXISTING GAPS IN UNDERTAKING RESEARCH AND PRIORITY AREAS FOR UNDERTAKING TRAINING

During the past decades, number of literatures of co-operative marketing societies had been developed. The researchers reviewed the recommendations of various committees and individual studies related to co-operative marketing societies. In the light of research work already completed and recommendations made by the earlier surveys, the following areas has been identified which ought to receive proper attention. The existing gaps identified during the course of the survey are discussed under.

1. Comparative studies on successful and non-successful general co-operative marketing societies.
2. Dormancy, amalgamation and merger of general co-operative marketing societies.
3. Special co-operative marketing societies versus general co-operative marketing societies.
4. Maintenance of up-to-date information on important indicators such as marketable surplus, price levels and trends.

5. Study of the impact of various improvement programmes on the development of general co-operative marketing societies.

Areas for undertaking human recourses' training are discussed under.

I. TRAINING TO OFFICIALS

1. Technical skills in procuring, weighing, packing storing and delivering of goods to the customer.
2. Skills in maintaining relevant registers, billing, calculation and collection of cash from the customers.
3. Knowledge of methods of fumigation and preservation of goods.
4. Skills in understanding customer behavior, his habits, demands and preference.
5. Skills in conducting auction and outright purchases.
6. Technical knowledge of:
 - a. cropping pattern and agricultural practices,
 - b. banking principles and practice,
 - c. agricultural financing,
 - d. rural development strategies,
 - e. Co-operative Societies Act and By-Laws.

II. TRAINING TO AGRICULTURALIST

1. Seasonable crops production
2. Application of fertilizers and manures
3. Usage of innovative technology
4. Co-operative Societies Act and By-Laws.
5. Agricultural financing
6. Price trends on the basis of seasonal fluctuation

ISSUES IN MAKING TRAINING AND RESEARCH EFFECTIVE

1. Most of the employees (including agriculturalists) are not interested in attending training and conducting research. On the other hand, deputation is burden on the part of the officials if they send employees for training and research.
2. Problems related to inadequacy of physical facilities, training materials, academic support, guidance and paucity of funds have really deteriorated the quality of the training and development programmes.
3. There is a lack of proper appreciation of research and training programmes in State Federation to primary level societies.

4. Training and research is considered a one-time exercise and not a continuous process.
5. There is a failure on the part of federal organizations to provide assistance to make training and research more practical.

SUGGESTIONS

1. A perspective research plan and training program for the next year should be prepared in advance.
2. There are vast numbers of studies related to co-operative marketing societies in general. At present, there is no authoritative account of the type and number of studies that conducted in the country general and Kerala in particular. So the officials of the co-operative department should take appropriate effort to record all the studies related to co-operative marketing societies in a particular register or its website.
3. In a competitive business environment it is necessary to conduct research in each business operations of general co-operative marketing societies.
4. To enable the general co-operative marketing societies to undertake varied activities and extending services; steps need to be taken to professionalise their management by appointment of personnel with required qualifications and by providing the needed training.
5. Effective linkages among national institutions and international institutions should be established. This will helps to extending their marketing up to international level and also helps to understanding, adopt and apply their proper strategies in the field of training and research.
6. Duplication of training should be avoided and update it by considering changing innovative techniques of agricultural production, processing and marketing.
7. In the absence of a clear-cut plan, the training is wasted. So the organization should prepare plan for each category of its members, defining the nature of training and the stages at which this is to be provided.

CONCLUSIONS

Training and research play a vital role in the development of general co-operative marketing societies in Kerala. Lack of strong educational background, training and research is responsible for inefficient development of general co-operative marketing societies. Human resources development is the key factor in achieving its goals. Through training and retraining right approach, attitude and a professional style can be infused. Business environment has been changing, proportionately its pitfalls also increasing. In order to rectify such pitfalls and training personnel to adjust with such changing business environment research is only one solution.

Therefore, training and research are sine qua non for the development of general co-operative marketing societies in Kerala.

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