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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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S. K. Dey



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MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CO-OPERATION  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SAHAKARI SAMAJ

### Community Development

The geographical sub-continent of India won its freedom from foreign rule on August 15, 1947. With it came the partition of India. A sub-continent which had been one for centuries got vivisected into two sovereign States—India and Pakistan. It is the character of colonial rule to disrupt the culture and economy of the conquered people and to enforce a new level of reactionary equilibrium wherein the people can willingly subserve the interests of colonial rulers. Colonial rulers cannot exploit a people only by superior physical might. Exploitation demands conquest by the exploiters of the spirit of the exploited. This calls for a closely worked out network of junior native partners for the smooth flow of the new one way traffic. Colonial rule left the shores of India on August 15, 1947. But the spirit of colonialism which had distorted the soul of India—in the government agency, the feudal rulers and their satellites, landlords, traders, merchants, contractors and money-lenders, had still to be exorcized before freedom could be realised by the people.

Freedom from colonial rule would have no meaning unless it brought in freedom for every living man or woman regardless of their religion, profession or other affiliations. The rural community had become isolated from even traffic with life. A new level of reciprocity between life and the community and as between the members of the community themselves had to be established. In the very nature of things as existed then, the countrywide programme of planned social change had to be attempted from above. It had to be worked out through the government agency



to start with. Leaders of the people who led India in its march to freedom from colonial captivity gave the new marching orders. After independence came rehabilitation of displaced persons, then the Five Year Plan. Five Year Plan had to be worked by the people. This called for a dynamic administration of the people themselves. Community Projects Administration came into existence under the overall guidance of a Central Committee headed by the Prime Minister as the Chairman with members of the Planning Commission and some members of the Council of Ministers as members.

### **National Extension Service**

Human body except when it suffers from an abnormal malady like cancer is an integrated organism. No one part in the body can be activated in isolation from others. The feature applies to a community with equal relevance. It applies even more so to the rural community in India which encompasses more than 82 per cent of the people of this sub-continent. Development of this community horizontally and vertically demanded simultaneous development in all features of village life. Agencies of Government which had functioned heretofore at best as feudal ornaments within the well-ordered galaxy of a colonial administration had to be given a new orientation. Thinking, approach and the content, all had to undergo a radical change. The National Extension Service which came in the wake of the establishment of Community Projects Administration was designed to answer the new requirements. The National Extension Service meant coordinated administration for all programmes of development in rural India. This had to be administered at the ground level through the Gram Sevak, the last multipurpose functionary in the chain of the new development agency. The Gram Sevak was to be serviced by Extension Officers in different fields from the Block, coordinated by the Block Develop-



ment Officer. The Block was to be the new administrative unit for planning and development with an area of approximately 200 sq. miles and a population of 60,000 to 80,000 in normal areas and 20,000 to 25,000 in tribal territories. The District Development Officers and the State Heads of Departments were to be intimately and directly linked up with the Extension Officers for the extension of their speciality. At the State headquarters the Development Commissioner, a new functionary, was expected to look after the planning and coordination of the entire rural development programme through the technical hierarchies about him. As it was a people's programme, people had to be brought into the picture. So came the village production committees and the Block Advisory Committees consisting of the representatives of people to advise the administration in day-to-day implementation of the programme.

### **Panchayati Raj**

Once the Community Development programme got astride, it became clear that the demands from people were growing much faster than the optimum capacity of the Government apparatus. What was worse, people were growing more dependent on the Government organisation for relief and assistance. They were getting farther from being self-reliant and self-propelling organisms. Panchayati Raj, a new system of local government came in as the logical answer to the new situation that emerged. Panchayati Raj meant the creation of the Gram Sabha as the crucial base of our growing democracy. The Gram Sabha consisted of the entire adult village population both men and women. Gram Sabha was to elect its executive, the Village Panchayat, to look after the day-to-day administration of the village. The Village Panchayat cannot go far in matters of inter-village development. Thus came the Block Panchayat Samiti at the Block consisting of representatives of the Panchayats. The Panchayat Samiti was to take over the



administration of all programmes of development at the Block using the Block administration as its instrument of action. Subjects which went beyond the scope of the Block Panchayat Samiti and matters connected with the coordination of the activities of the Blocks were vested in the Zilla Parishad. Above the Zilla Parishad stood the State Government. The State Government received its support and guidance from the Centre. Thus the Gram Sabha got linked with Lok Sabha in a single chain. The individual village could thus have the touch of the nation as a whole in every facet of its life and the nation could receive the echo back of the achievements, hopes and frustrations of the people in the process of development. Panchayati Raj by now is under implementation in a major number of the States in India. The rest of the States have either enacted their legislation or are in the process of doing so. By end of 1962, the country as a whole should come under the orbit of Panchayati Raj the new concept of inter-connected democracy from the Gram Sabha to the Lok Sabha.

### **Sahakari Samaj**

Panchayati Raj in the very nature of things can and should look primarily after the planning of village resources and implementation of social programmes. Planning and the implementation of merely social programmes do not carry a community very far. Maintenance of welfare, not to speak of its rapid growth, calls for emphasis predominantly on the economic sector of life. Economy can grow through private effort following the law of the jungle—the strong trying to get stronger and the weak remaining at best where they are. It can also be attempted from the public sector, namely, the State attempting to take control of the activities for economic growth. The public sector by itself is not an unmixed blessing either. While it does not indulge in sly exploitation of the people, it has a tendency of steam-rollering. It can grow in certain context



into an even worse tyranny than the private sector. The growth of democracy is identical with the growth of democratic leadership. Leadership at lower levels in particular, has more or less to be of a voluntary character. It can hardly be subsidized much less paid for fully by the community. Leadership to man democratic institutions at the base must of necessity be economically independent. A democracy based on adult franchise and an economy based on a chosen few directing the rest for economic progress, be it in the private or the public sectors, are contradictions which preclude each other. While public sector will have its place and so also the private, the predominant activity if the community is democratic, will have to be based on cooperation. The cooperative form of organisation has the merit of combining individual initiative with the advantages of large-scale enterprise and is the most effective tool for economic decentralisation. Cooperative enterprise grows thus to be the sheet-anchor on which democracy can grow and endure. The Sahakari Samaj logically grows thus to be an ally of Panchayati Raj, if people are to grow into a free social and economic community.

### **Service Cooperative**

More than 82 per cent of India's population continues to live in her far-flung villages. It is obvious that what happens to the villages will determine the shape and direction that democracy follows in India. Agriculture still continues to be the basic and primary means of production accounting for more than 50 per cent of the national income. The village cooperative, therefore, must necessarily grow to be the mother institution in the pattern of Sahakari Samaj visualised for the future. The village cooperative heretofore has been engaged primarily in catering to the needs of credit for an influential few based on substantial assistance from government and the Reserve Bank of India. Healthy cooperation cannot grow on this pattern nor can



there be even the modicum of Sahakari Samaj. The bulk of the cultivators, if not all, must become the members of the village cooperative. The bulk of their needs must be met through this village institution be it credit, supplies, marketing or other services. The village cooperative thus got a new charter. It was to be a Service Cooperative providing all the services referred to above. It was also to ensure that every cultivator in the village can become a member in this institution by right and be entitled to the assistance which this institution can offer out of its collective resources both internal and external. After taking a comprehensive view of the whole subject two years ago the Vaikunthbhai Mehta Committee came to the conclusion that a Service Cooperative must not be too small nor must it be too big. The criteria should be the potential economic viability, social cohesion, mutual obligation and close contact between members. The upper limit of population in a service cooperative was fixed approximately at 3,000, except where an individual village happens to be of a bigger size. The societies cannot have their own resources of share capital to start with. It was suggested that the government should come into the picture as a partner and offer financial assistance upto Rs. 5,000 and Rs. 10,000 in exceptional circumstances to a village cooperative, to be returned within a maximum period of 15 years. The poorer sections of the village community needed financial accommodation. The risk involved had to be made up. An outright grant to special bad debt reserve fund to be constituted at central bank and primary society level was recommended to make up the additional risk involved in expanding credit to the marginal and weaker sections of the community. Vaikunthbhai Mehta Committee's recommendations have since been accepted by government with some minor adjustments. The revised national policy is already under implementation on a countrywide scale.



## Cooperative Banking

The service cooperatives are affiliated to central co-operative banks at the district level. These central banks in turn are federated into apex cooperative banks in each State. The higher tiers of the cooperative credit structure act as balancing centres and help in tapping urban deposits for the rural sector. These institutions are being partnered by the States in the expectation that they will attract larger deposits and become ultimately self-financing. At present they depend on the Reserve Bank of India for a major portion of their advances for agricultural production and marketing. The Reserve Bank of India has functioned not only as a banker but has taken a great deal of promotional interest in strengthening the structure. For purposes of giving long-term credit, central land mortgage banks have now been set up in all the States. They operate through primary land mortgage banks at the district or lower levels or through branches. The central land mortgage banks float debentures against mortgages. Here again the Reserve Bank helps by purchasing part of the debentures. The banking structure is weak in a number of States but by and large it is organisationally sound. Efforts are being made to build up inherent strength in the system.

## Marketing

Credit is basic to improved agriculture. But substantial increase in the quantum of credit or its extension to the marginal section of cultivators in a village depend on a number of factors. A sustained credit programme can only be built up if loans are repaid in time. The best built-in safeguard for this purpose is to ensure cooperative marketing of surplus produce and to link credit with marketing. Nearly 20 per cent, if not more of the food produced by the nation is marketed through Mandis for urban consumption. The bulk of the cash crops has to go through the market



for consumption at home or for export. Marketing in the private sector till now has grown round the petty traders and the money-lenders. No wonder the consumer is loud with complaints of exorbitant prices. The producer is by no means better off. He can hardly afford to adopt practices involving heavier investments let alone improve his standard of living. The trader-cum-money-lenders and their ramifications continue thriving with their artificially earned affluence. Middleman's profit multiplies manifold. His mansions in the extended towns and the cities continue sky-scraping. The mud huts in the villages remain at best where they are. The parched fields refuse to change colours overfast. If agriculture is to progress substantially, the producer must get his due share of the product of his labour and investment. A dominant private sector in marketing and progressive agriculture in the bulk of holdings which are marginal, again are contradictions. The contradiction can be resolved only through the creation of a substantial sector of cooperative marketing such as can help promote healthy marketing practices besides giving direct assistance to the marginal cultivators who have no bargaining or sustaining power of their own. Hardly 3 per cent of the marketable surplus of food is handled under cooperative marketing today. In cash crops such as sugarcane, cotton and groundnut the record is better but certainly nowhere near what it should be. Even where there has been some tiny progress in cooperative marketing of a commodity, it has been confined to one or two States. It has hardly struck roots as a country-wide movement, even though it is well recognised that marketing is fundamental to expansion even of credit beyond a certain minimum limit.

### **Processing**

Marketing in the agriculture sector is closely related to processing. Agricultural produce gravitates towards pro-



cessing units. If such units are all in the private sector, cooperative marketing can hardly grow. Processing whether of sugar, rice, oil or cotton must be offered near the Mandis. The only field of agriculture in which cooperative processing has made some mark is the field of sugar, cotton and oil. About 15 per cent of the sugar produced in India is accounted for by the cooperative sugar mills by now. About 11 per cent cotton ginning and 0.12 per cent oil crushing is done in the cooperative sector. Inadequate though these are in other commodities cooperative processing is conspicuous by its virtual absence. The National Cooperative Development and Warehousing Board had appointed a working group to look into the question of processing. Their report is out. The report has only brought out the utter inadequacy of cooperative processing in our agricultural economy. This matter has to be pursued as a special priority till a programme can be launched to bring about radical change in the position whereby a significant share of processing can be accounted for in the cooperative sector.

### **Cooperative Joint Farming**

We have accepted in India the pattern of mixed economy. It means so far as agriculture is concerned, there will be State farming, private farming and cooperative joint farming operations. The State farms will be there to act as a ballast to production. It will offer ready opportunities for the first trial of the results of research from the agricultural laboratories. The State farms will also produce nucleus seeds, fruit saplings, etc. They can also take up fruit and vegetable processing for the products of the State farm as also of the surrounding areas. Private farming will be there to look after individual production based on individual techniques and resources. The individual private farmers can secure assistance for improved methods in agriculture from the collective resources of the Service



Cooperative in the village to which they will deposit their individual savings for common pooling. The private and the State farming apart, there will still be a vast number of small and marginal cultivators and the landless who have to be provided for on land. Improved pattern of agriculture is feasible only on certain basic economic holdings. The latter class of cultivators are the least qualified individually to adopt any modern practices. Is it any wonder that the bulk of the countryside continues pursuing the stagnant patterns of agriculture? The Government of India appointed a special committee headed by Shri Nijalingappa of Mysore to examine this particular question and make recommendations. The Nijalingappa Committee recommended joint cooperative farming as the pattern of agriculture to be pursued by this category of cultivators in the village. To start with, they recommended a certain number of pilot farming projects in every State as centres for demonstration. It is hoped that once these pilot projects make a successful start, it will be followed by spontaneous extension of the process all over the countryside. Joint cooperative farming will be based on land and labour voluntarily pooled by the relatively weaker sections of agriculturists in the village combining with such of the progressive farmers and big holders of land as would wish to help their weaker brethren in the village to come up to higher levels of life with their assistance.

### **Consumers' Cooperatives**

The day-to-day consumer needs of life in society can normally be taken care of by private trade. There will however be fields of consumer needs in which the supplies will be shorter than the demand and thus subject to underweighting, adulteration or other malpractices. There will also be an intimate connection between progress in certain sectors of agriculture with the availability of certain basic commodities like iron and steel, cement, kerosene, diesel,



etc. Consumers stores provide the only way out of these difficulties. The consumer cooperative movement in India till now, is conspicuous by its absence. If a beginning is to be made, it should be initiated on the one hand with commodities produced by agriculture for the needs of people in urban areas and on the other by agricultural prerequisites such as iron and steel, cement, insecticides and commodities essential but in short supply such as salt, sugar, kerosene, diesel oil, etc. for the rural areas. The apex marketing society in a State can act the out-agency for these products and distribute them through the marketing societies which in turn can offer these services through the service cooperative in the village. It should not be necessary to have separate consumers' stores in rural areas. In urban areas consumers stores can grow where there is a natural sense of community as in commercial or industrial establishments. It is one of the essential welfare activities serving organised labour in our cities.

### **Industrial Cooperatives**

Improvement in the standard of living in a country depends on the growth of national production. Production from agriculture and industry should normally constitute the preponderant economic activity in a developing community. Cooperation as a tool of economic progress cannot go very far if it is confined to the field of agriculture and does not penetrate into other fields of activities particularly industries. The Industrial Policy Resolution by the Government of India visualises a large strategic sector in industry to be vested in the State known as the public sector. Other activities have been left to the initiative of the private sector and that of cooperatives. We have mentioned earlier that the private sector left to itself can tend to build up monopoly, malpractices and pressure on the State. The co-operative sector in industry must come in as a counter-vailing influence. Where the pattern of production is such



as not to demand wide difference in intellectual and other attainments between the workers and their managers or supervisors, a simple and straight cooperative of artisans is the clear answer. The artisans elect members out of themselves to act as their supervisors and managers, just as the Gram Sabha elects its panchayat as its executive organ. Wherever the patterns and the means of production are such as to call for a high degree of technical and managerial skill in the supervisory staff as compared to the common run of workers, the straight pattern of cooperatives will not avail. Here the industry can be managed by either of two patterns. If there is a higher apex body of the primary producers' cooperatives, that body can set up a large-scale mechanised industrial unit such as a cooperative sugar factory, a cooperative processing and finishing unit in textiles. An alternative pattern can be a cooperative of small entrepreneurs where each entrepreneur will have 10 to 25 workers working with him as more or less members of his own family producing under his guidance and control. The financial, administrative and technical burden of the enterprise is vested fully in the entrepreneur himself. A cooperative of such entrepreneurs can offer to such enterprises the facilities for higher specialised guidance, techniques and services which they cannot command individually. They can compete with large-scale entrepreneurs when they function collectively under the umbrella of the cooperative organisation. In other words a cooperative of entrepreneurs will work more or less as a service cooperative functions *vis-a-vis* progressive and relatively large and the medium scale farmers in the village. Both these patterns of industrial cooperatives can provide facilities and services for the benefit of their constituents. Industrial cooperatives can also grow at the behest of the consumers who combine to create special industries catering to their specialised requirements. While the cooperative sector in industries does not preclude the co-existence of



either the public sector or the private sector, it does call for a significant share of participation in the economy of the country based on industrial cooperation.

### **Transport and Labour**

Transport and labour constitute substantial sources of contribution to the net national product. They are also vitally incidental to the growth of cooperation in other sectors, be it in the transport of men and commodities or of the use of labour in agriculture, irrigation, soil conservation or of buildings and roads called for by the community. Experience till now has been meagre in these fields but wherever tried with honesty of purpose, both transport and labour cooperatives have offered substantial help not merely to the constituents of these societies, but also to the consumers of their products. What is more, these have contributed to the creation of a suitable environment for cooperation in its onward march. These two features in cooperation have hardly yet begun. A major effort is called for, if these sectors are to secure their share in the economy. Labour construction societies will not only give increased benefits to labourers but reduce construction costs in the long run. Similar organisation among forest labourers have been attempted in some areas with success and are suitable for wider adoption.

### **Miscellaneous Cooperatives**

There are then the miscellaneous sectors. The cooperatives—dairy, fishery, poultry, sheep breeding, piggery in the field of agriculture, printing presses, cycle rickshaws and taxi cooperatives, house building cooperatives, educational cooperatives, health cooperatives are all features which call for special initiative on the part of Government and cooperative leadership.



## **Training and Education**

The cooperative sign-board and the registration of a cooperative in the record of the Registrar are no substitute for administrative and technical efficiency in a cooperative institution. A cooperative in the final analysis has to survive in open competition with the public sector on the one hand and the private sector on the other. It has to contend with the built-in privileges of both these sectors. While the technical and managerial features will more or less be common between all these sectors of the economy, the cooperative sector will involve an additional feature of democratic leadership in the management of its enterprises. Democratic management will call for even more rigorous training in leadership on the part of its leaders and the understanding of democratic processes on the part of the constituent members of the cooperative organisation. As is the case in Panchayati Raj, training and education in Cooperation acquires an importance of a supreme character, if the cooperative sector is to survive and forge ahead in the face of the overwhelming odds against it. Cooperation is intended to be the free economic movement of a free people. A people's movement and a government-controlled training and educational system again mix ill together. If cooperation is to thrive, cooperators must have self-propelled organs of their own, to offer them the facilities for self and mutual training and for self and mutual education in the philosophy and physics of cooperation. The cooperative movement must have unions of their own at the District, State and National levels to look after the requirements of training and education in their respective field of specialisation apart from the general philosophy and practices of cooperation and cooperative principles.

## **National Development Council Resolution**

Cooperation was introduced in India by the old British Government nearly 50 years ago. It came as a new fashion.



The Government of India could not keep away from it. Every State had a cooperative registrar and its proliferation trying to reach up to the people. But the concept of cooperation is a free economic movement of a free people. It could hardly strike roots in a colonial economy. When independence came, with the exception of a couple of States where leadership of the people happened to be of sterling character in spite of the government, cooperation was reflected more by the sign-boards in government offices and outside than by the reality of cooperation from within.

### **New Ministry of Cooperation**

The National Development Council in the year 1958 got exercised over this issue. It realised that whether it is for bringing about a higher level of agriculture and industry or to realise the socialist pattern, cooperation had to play a major role in the new dispensation. The National Development Council passed a resolution calling for a new look and a new soul for the cooperative movement. Strictly in pursuance of this decision a new Department of Cooperation was created in January, 1959. The Community Development Ministry had already been seized of the programme of extending Panchayati Raj all over the country. Panchayati Raj was decentralisation of administration consistent with democracy. This could not work without corresponding decentralisation in the economy. For such an economy alone could offer balance and reciprocity in life below and the continual flow of democratic leadership growing from the grass-roots. The Department of Cooperation necessarily was yoked to the Department of Community Development.

### **De-officialisation**

The new Department of Cooperation had to exert itself first to determine the bearings of the cooperative movement in the midst of an ocean of *laissez faire*. Study Teams



and Working Groups referred to in the earlier part of this pamphlet were created by the Ministry one after the other to discover where cooperation stands and what needs be done. It was soon discovered to the dismay of the Government of India that in a major number of States cooperators functioned either as private limited companies with a co-operative sign-board or as shops and counters run and dominated by functionaries and office bearers in government. A countrywide drive over a period of two years has brought about virtual de-officialisation of the movement so far as Ministers and Deputy Ministers in government are concerned. Steps for relieving the movement from government officials are in rapid progress. It is expected that in the not too distant future, the movement will be vested in the people exclusively, government offering financial, technical and administrative assistance.

### **Cooperative Law**

Simplification of Cooperative Law and procedures has been engaging the attention of the Government and the cooperators for some time. The National Development Council in November 1958 emphasised that the restrictive features of the existing cooperative legislation should be removed and the cooperative laws so amended as not to impede the development of Cooperation as a popular movement. The States of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab and Madras have already enacted new cooperative laws. The other States are in the process of bringing up new legislation. Legislation, however, is no panacea for the problems of people. Legislation certainly can help when there is a public opinion which is enlightened, organised and determined enough to exert in favour of good behaviour by the people and their representatives on the one hand and the Government agency on the other.



## **Federalisation of Cooperative Unions**

A people's movement such as Cooperation, cannot be brought about just by removing government functionaries from holding offices in the cooperative movement or by easing through legislation the restrictive laws and procedures. If the highly risky vacuum is to be averted, the place of the Government and government functionaries has to be occupied simultaneously by trained leaders of the people to man the offices at the various tiers of the cooperative movement. An external discipline can only be withdrawn if there is a discipline from within for self-regulation. Federalisation of the cooperative unions from the root upto the national level grew thus to be an inevitable accessory to efficiency and corollary to de-officialisation in the cooperative movement. Every effort is being made to build up cooperative unions. There already are central banks and State apex banks to provide necessary credit to service cooperatives. Cooperative marketing societies and state marketing unions have also grown all over the country. There is a national cooperative sugar syndicate. There are also various other federal organisations of cooperatives. There are the State cooperative unions and the national cooperative union for looking after training and education. According to a recent decision taken by government, the entire field of training and education is to be vested in non-official unions of the cooperative organisations themselves.

## **Mutual Aid—Soul of Cooperation**

Cooperative and private sectors stand at opposite poles. The private sector connotes more control through more shares held by individuals or groups. Cooperation means complete equality between members regardless of the shares held by individual members. In the private sector the strong is expected to gather more strength to strengthen itself. Cooperation by its very definition means mutual aid



between members of a cooperative society on the basis of equality. It means that the chain of individuals in the community will tend through the growth of cooperation to approximate the strength of the strongest link as against its reverse process working in a society based on *laissez faire*.

### **The Picture to Emerge**

We may attempt here to visualise the picture that we expect ultimately to emerge. All the villages of India would be covered by service cooperatives. In addition, there will be functional cooperatives catering to the needs of specialised groups. Every family in the village would by right be a member of one or the other of these cooperatives. There would be a network of marketing cooperatives throughout the country and recovery of cooperative dues will be effected largely through marketing. A major portion of agricultural produce will be processed through cooperatives. The process of self-help and thrift will build the internal resources of the movement so as to be independent of external help. There will be a strong federal structure in each sector of cooperation. The regulatory powers over cooperatives will vest in the higher tiers of the organisation. Each sector of the cooperative movement will lend support to the other sectors. A self-regulating and self-financing cooperative movement of this nature will play a significant role in the economy of the country. Through their higher federal organisations the cooperatives will echo the voice of the primary producers and consumers and play an important part in the formulation of national economic policies.

### **Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Samaj**

Panchayati Raj as has been indicated earlier is the organisation of the people for planning the economic and social needs of a community. The implementation of the pro-



grammes has of necessity to devolve on the "associate" organisations of people. The social programmes under Panchayati Raj can be handled by the chain of social organisations that can be set up such as Yuvak Mandals, Mahila Mandals, Bal Mandals and other functional groups of people. Economic activity has necessarily to be conducted as part of Sahakari Samaj through different specialised co-operatives inter-acting and cross fertilizing mutually. Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Samaj are twin instruments for a common consummation. They can play their part only if they blossom in freedom and achieve mutual inter-dependence. A working group was appointed by the Ministry a short while ago which has recommended how coordination should be achieved between these two vital institutions so as to avoid conflicts and overlapping in effort. These recommendations will soon be put in operation. But ultimately their implementation will depend on the wisdom of the people themselves whose organs these are, whether they function as inter-dependent institutions for promoting the larger interests of the people or as feudal organs to battle against each other at the expense of the people.

### **Tests of Health in Sahakari Samaj**

Sahakari Samaj must progress in sound health if it is to discharge the role assigned to it in the economy of New India. This calls for clear criteria. For the present these may consist broadly of whether or not there is:

- (1) Broad-based membership in the village;
- (2) Linking of credit, supplies and services with concrete production plans;
- (3) Development of marketing and processing services;
- (4) Spontaneous spread of the movement in the direction of the other sectors of the economy, more particularly industries;



- (5) Pooling of savings by the community in cooperative institutions;
- (6) Evolution of the federal organisation of cooperatives to guide and regulate institutions below;
- (7) Help offered by the strong in the cooperative sector to the weaker members
- (8) Inter-relationship and cross fertilisation between different sectors of the cooperative movement;
- (9) Progressive growth of competence in non-official leadership in the movement;
- (10) Cohesion, mutual aid and cooperative self-help in the community and participation by members in formulation of policies and review of action.

### **Sahakari Samaj and Samohik Vikas**

The socialist pattern in India visualises a strong public sector controlling the basic means of production. There will also be a strong private sector whether or not government wills it; for the private sector depends on private initiative. In a democracy growing from a feudal and colonial base, the private sector cannot but have a major pressure of its own to exert for its own survival and promotion. The public sector as has already been mentioned earlier, can tend in certain context to foster totalitarian trends of the extreme left. The private sector left to itself cannot but have feudal trends to the extreme right. The two sectors vital as they are for national existence in the context of the fast advancing sputnik age, cannot be left free to become a menace to freedom and initiative. A growing cooperative sector as an active balancing force between the two grows thus to be an inevitable must. To play this strategic role, the cooperative sector must develop the requisite organisational strength and technical competence to provide services at economic cost. It should not grow



into a monopoly at the cost of the community. Cooperation between members of a community can act like magic. The word cooperation however is no Talisman.

The socialist pattern demands reduction in inequality between citizens. It calls for an egalitarian economy. It demands reduction in the wide disparities that now rule. Cooperation which literally means operation by equals, grows thus to be the yardstick for the growth of our people in the democracy we have set as our goal. The essence of Community Development is the extension of the concept of the joint family till it encompasses the nation as a whole. Joint family means co-existence of the genius and the moron, the artist and the buffoon with all the ramifications in between. Joint family cannot permit starvation, physical or spiritual for any member of the family however weak or unfit. Sahakari Samaj means mutual aid between members of the joint family. It means aid by the strong to the weak so that the latter can rise to the level of the strong as equal members of the community. Sahakari Samaj and Panchayati Raj are but the means to the building of the joint family—the community. The development of the community will demand the development in freedom of Sahakari Samaj and Panchayati Raj as the twin instruments as the beck and call of a people free-born and free-acting.



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