

Building resilient and empowered Cooperatives

Role of VAMNICOM



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The covid 19 situation exacerbated by lockdowns displayed a people approach for managing the situation right from augmenting food supply, medicine supply, health care, availability of credit etc. The emerging socioeconomic situation, health care and environmental system, form a complex ecosystem which brought communities together to support and facilitate. The solutions came from local systems and governance implemented cooperatively.

On International Cooperative day celebrated on 3rd July, the spirit of Cooperative needs to be upheld as the nodal agency which protects, promotes the Principles of Cooperation laid by International Cooperative Alliance (ICA). Cooperatives enjoy the advantage of understanding of the needs of local community as being member -based organization.

As per ICAR the harvesting of around 10 to 17 per cent of vegetables, 0.80 per cent of rabi oilseed and 6 per cent of pulse crops are affected due to lockdown in the region. The supply chain of essential was disturbed leading to scarcity of food and losses incurred by farmers. The commercial broiler farmers have incurred more than 60 per cent loss, as the supply of feed for poultry sector is predominantly dependent on outside supply leading to spiralling prices in retail market.

During the lockdown the local governance, communities, Cooperatives and SHG worked out the solutions to mitigate the supplies of food, medicine and availability of credits. Self-governance, ownership at the village level, and cooperation- among different ethnic groups displayed a community approach. The emerging business models of direct linkages with consumers was mastered quickly by the cooperative members.

VAMNICOM in forefront - Enabling Cooperatives -The Institute has been shouldering the responsibility for organizing, directing, monitoring and evaluating the arrangements for cooperative training of the personnel working in the cooperative sector in the country. Despite severe restrictions imposed by COVID-19 situations, VAMNICOM was quick to customize its mandated activities –be it cooperative education, training, research or consultancy, keeping in view of the COVID protocol measures.

Every facet of the Institute's mandate was swept by the winds of change. VAMNICOM made significant efforts to comprehend the changed requirements and implemented improvements

within its operating framework in order to remain active during the challenging hours of COVID-19 through webinars, meetings and discussions.

VAMNICOM had organized need-based training programmes and facilitates the process of Human Resource Development of cooperatives and other related stakeholders in the country which is also the fundamental mandate of the institute. Through constant interaction with various sectors of cooperatives, the Institute has been able to fulfil various training requirements of the cooperatives throughout the country during a challenging economic climate.

True to its mandate, the Institute focused on organizing and conducting a variety of training programmes for the senior personnel of National and State level cooperative federations and other cooperative organizations. Emphasis was laid more on online programme delivery with a quality control mechanism. Number of online capacity building training & exchange programmes in collaboration with the national cooperatives as well as international organisations are organized. The Institute actively engaged in organising web-based training programmes in the field of agricultural and rural banking for professionals from SAARC countries through CICTAB . Further, the Institute conducted short term need-based webinars of three to five days duration for Credit and Banking Cooperatives, Dairy Cooperatives, Fisheries Cooperatives, Sugar Cooperatives, Housing Cooperatives, FPOs, Agriculture, etc. diligently engaging with its stakeholders, providing platforms to the voices of many cooperatives to discuss their work and challenges embed upon the community.

The Institute has made continued efforts towards research studies into cooperative management and providing solutions for better management of consumer cooperatives, credit societies. During the covid times, access to finance emerged as a challenge to the communities and cooperatives societies. In order to keep financial inclusion in place, the institute conducted a number of online programs in collaboration with District Cooperative Central Banks, Credit Cooperative Banks, and Urban Cooperative Banks on fintech.

During this sensitive time, the lack of a steady source of income and opportunities steered new challenges for women cooperatives, members of SHGs and FPO in reaching out to the customers. VAMNICOM through its Centre for Gender Studies provided information and pathways for better access to market and finance through webinars.

As a policy response, there was a number of reforms, which had a long-term impact on the banking sector including cooperative banks, this required building capacities of the managers and officers of banks to understand the policy framework and bring the understanding of the policies and devising suitable strategies to adopt the reforms.

Bringing in the mindset for the welfare of its own staff, the institute arranged for a vaccination drive for the VAMNICOM staff and their family members. The provision for masks, sanitizers and adherence to Covid guidelines ensured for the employees of the Institute. The resilient workforce of VAMNICOM has been steadfast in working for the beneficiaries.

The reforms in agriculture, finance and banking sector have implicates that Cooperative sector needs to adopt the reforms and revitalize the internal system to take a leap forward. For which, VAMNICOM as a leading institute will continue to empower cooperative sector and the community and outreach the beneficiaries far and wide with the collaborations and partnerships to “Rebuild better together”.
