INTRODUCTION

The roots of cooperation can be traced as back as the beginning of human civilization. Cooperation as a subject has attracted the attention of social reformers, economists, sociologists, politicians, theologians and cooperators alike ever since its inception as a form of business organisation in the middle of the nineteenth century. The movement of cooperation came on the scene when the situation was full of contradictions; when freedom was a distinct goal; when democracy was a misnomer in the country and exploitation of all kinds was the order of the day. Beginning with as an association of individuals for "self-help through mutual aid" the cooperative method is now being increasingly applied to agricultural and industrial production as well as to social welfare and educational activities.

Cooperatives have been used during the last seventy years as an instrument of all round development of rural economy in India and also preparing a ground for the nourishment of Democratic Socialism. The cooperative method has been accepted as an
indispensable instrument of democratic planning and as an important medium for regeneration of the country's socio-economic life.

Although cooperative movement has taken strong roots in the state of Jammu and Kashmir since its inception but the achievements made so far in the various fields of cooperative sector have not been satisfactory.

In view of the above facts any study to identify and examine the failure of the cooperatives in the state would be worthwhile to undertake. Against the background the present study entitled "A Study of Cooperative Marketing in Kashmir with reference to Marketing of Apples", deals with an analytical and indepth investigation of the cooperative marketing in general and apple marketing in particular. Apple marketing is specially undertaken by the scholar, as the horticulture in Kashmir is one of the oldest industries and it constitutes an indispensible sector in the state economy. The fruit production which was just over 4.71 lakh tonnes in 1982-83 has increased to
7.24 lakh tonnes in 1988-89. At present about more than ten lakh people in the state of Jammu and Kashmir are directly or indirectly linked with horticulture sector. It is worthy to note that the state earns an annual revenue of about Rs. 200 crores from this sector which includes a foreign exchange worth about Rs. 10 crores to 12 crores annually. The facts and figures clearly reveal that there is a bright chance to utilise this sector for the overall economic development of the state. Because of this fact the state government has declared the horticulture sector of high priority. But its success largely depends on market structure. An efficient market structure has a stimulating as well as regulatory influence on production methods. It can eliminate misguided and unorganised production and distribution system. Contrary to this an inefficient marketing system can result in a waste of resources.

**Objectives of the Study:**

The study is designed to highlight the following specific objectives:

a. To study the cooperative movement in Kashmir.

b. To analyse broadly the cooperative marketing in Kashmir.
c. To examine the existing marketing mechanism of apple produce with special emphasis on cooperative system.

d. To analyse the costs, price spread and net return at different channel levels.

e. To ascertain the reasons from non-members for not joining the marketing societies in the apple produce of the state.

f. To find out the shortcomings and bottlenecks in the cooperative marketing in general and apple marketing in particular.

g. To suggest measures for improving the present system of cooperative marketing.

HYPOTHESIS

In the light of the above objectives, the study has been hypothesized:

i. That the existing cooperative marketing lacks professional outlook.

ii. That the cooperative system has not been properly developed and integrated with the marketing of apple produce.

iii. That marketing of apple produce is not remunerative for the basic growers through different channels.
iv. That the marketing costs of apple through different channels are more excepting cooperative.

v. That if the defects of cooperative marketing are removed in letter and spirit, it can prove to be the most remunerative for growers.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The data for the study has been collected from all the possible sources - primary and secondary. However, the data envisaged through personal interviews with the growers constitute the main source of information. Data relating to sale price, marketing cost, method of sale, agency selected for sale, commission charges paid, mode and charges for packing and transportation, price received by the growers, reasons for adoption of particular channel and such other related aspects were collected from the selected growers and marketing functionaries/institutions by canvassing a structured questionnaire (see Appendix 'A').

The selection of sample was done in four stages viz. selection of districts, selection of blocks, selection of villages and finally the selection of apple orchards.
Rafiabad and Sopore blocks from Baramulla district and Shopian block from Pulwama district of Kashmir were selected purposely for the present study as these are the main apple producing blocks in Kashmir. Ten villages having maximum area under apple cultivation were selected. From each village fifteen orchardists were randomly selected. Thus the study consists of a sample of 150 orchardists selected at random from 10 villages. Further, 10 pre-harvest contractors, 12 Forwarding agents, 08 Commission agents were randomly selected from the same agents blocks. In addition to this, 12 Commission/ 15 wholesalers and Retailers were selected on a random basis in the Azadpur Fruit Market at Delhi.

The selected growers were classified into three broad categories on the basis of the apple bearing plants of the orchard land. The categories are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Apple bearing plants of orchard land</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Small growers</td>
<td>1 - 200 trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Medium growers</td>
<td>200 - 400 trees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Large growers</td>
<td>400 and above trees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Further personal interviews and meetings with the management of Cooperative Department, Horticulture Department and Heads of the Fruit Associations of the State were conducted regarding various issues under study.

Over and above the primary source, the secondary source have also been utilised. The secondary data used for the study has been collected from the publications and official records of the following State Government Agencies:

7. Various State Horticulture Agencies and Departments engaged in various Horticulture Marketing activities.


**DESIGN OF THE STUDY:**

The entire study has been divided into six chapters:

Chapter 1st attempts to analyse the growth and development of cooperatives both in pre and post independence period. It also throws light on progress made by cooperatives during plan periods and depicts the overall working of primary agricultural credit societies (PACS), Primary non-agricultural Credit Societies (PNACS), Marketing Societies and other Cooperative Societies in Jammu and Kashmir.

The second chapter exhibits the overall cooperative marketing structure in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. In addition it seeks to demonstrate the various marketing activities of cooperative societies at apex level, district level and at block level and also portrays their working in different business activities.
The third chapter exhibits the present distribution mechanism of apple produce with relative merits and demerits of all existing marketing channels. In addition, it seeks to demonstrate the growers’ satisfaction with different channel levels and the factors responsible for the dominance of a particular channel.

The fourth chapter examines the marketing costs, the price spread under different channels and marketing efficiency by working out the ratio between producers’ net receipt and total marketing costs/along with different market functionaries under different channels. It has been pointed out that the Cooperative Marketing Channel is most remunerative for the growers.

The fifth chapter is devoted to the various cooperative marketing problems. Besides, some apple marketing problems which have marred the popularity of cooperative sector have also been discussed.

The sixth chapter includes the conclusions and suggestions.