CHAPTER IX

CO OPERATIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education sharpens the intellect, broadens the vision and builds up the character of man, while ignorance gives birth to conservatism, thereby narrowing down his outlook. Education is, thus, a primary requisite of progress and, no progress is possible without it. Training is the method for furtherance of the process of education and aims at specialisation in a particular field. The process of education cannot be separated from training. The two are inter-related, and are essential in building up a civilised and cultured society. 'Cooperative Education' refers to all the programmes which seek to increase the knowledge and understanding of the members and office bearers of the cooperative institutions. 'Cooperative Training' refers to the programmes for the training of paid employees of the cooperative departments and institutions. 1

There is a great need for education and training in cooperation, because the two tend to improve man's knowledge, his skills, ability, sensibility, sensitivity

as well as creativity. Education and training would enable a man to adjust himself to any socio-economic and socio-political environment, led by a rational economic and social thought. What cooperation seeks out of the two is the production of required doses of qualified and experienced manpower for successful working of the cooperatives. The two will enable the ordinary human mind to get improved and socialized than it were before. Cooperation assumes that better system of society demands better men and women, more enlightened mentally and morally than they were before in the old system. The well informed and enlightened membership is the pre-requisite for the success of the Cooperative Movement.

The idea of education in cooperation found its way through a long series of thought, beginning with that of Robert Owen who is called the Father of Modern Cooperative Movement. The series of thought was streamlined, next to Owen, by the English Cooperator, Dr. William King, the author of "Cooperator", the Germans - Schultze and Delitzsch, the French economist, Charles Gide and the Finnish Professor Hannes Gebhardt and many other cooperators of the present century. In fact, the Cooperative Movement began to take its shape in the second half of the 19th century when movements associated with the
education of citizens exercised their influence on it. For example, in Denmark Bishop Gruntvig and Kristen Kold began to propagate adult education as part of the national revival after the disaster of 1849. The example of Denmark served as a strong influence on adult education in the neighbouring Scandinavian countries.

The importance of social education in cooperation was quite succinctly put by the cultured cooperative journalist, C.M. Waddington in the following words, "...... The aim of social education is, then, to convince men and women that administration through elected persons can be extended from the many fields in which today it is unquestioningly accepted into the field of industry and commerce .... We cannot afford to regard the aim of education as simply to train and equip the individual. It must be to train and equip the member of a community. If children absorb at school the idea of man as a cooperative animal in the general sense, then acceptance of the idea of cooperation in the practical sense will be easy for them as adults". ²

The Modern Cooperative Movement owes its educational tradition to the Rochdale Pioneers of England.

The example of these pioneers was followed by many a country in the rest of the World.

In India, the importance of education in the Cooperative Movement was felt long back by those who pioneered in thinking about the planning and development of the Movement. The Maclagan Committee on Cooperation (1915), the Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928) and the Cooperative Planning Committee (1945) — all emphasised the importance of education and training in the Cooperative Movement in India. The Central Committee for Cooperative Training (1953), the Study Team on Cooperative Training (1960) and, more recently, the Informal Expert Group on Cooperative Education, Training and Research (1974) also made far reaching recommendations for widespread education and training programmes in the country.

In India the mass literacy is at a low level and, therefore, the Cooperative Movement has not succeeded much. The Maclagan Committee on Cooperation and the Royal Commission on Agriculture came to the conclusion that lack of training and understanding of the principles of cooperation was one of the important factors that handicapped the progress of the Cooperative Movement in this country. Following this plea and on the recommendation
of Sir Malcolm Darling, the Government of India introduced in 1935 the scheme for providing training facilities to the official and non-official staff and members of cooperative societies in the different provinces in the country. The Cooperative Planning Committee (1945), however, found the progress of such a scheme quite uneven and unsatisfactory. In the words of the Committee, "If the cooperative movement is to develop on a sound basis and expand in diverse directions, it is necessary, that those who comprise its vast membership are made conversant with the principles and practice of cooperation. It is only then that they and their representatives will be able to conduct its affairs on well ordered lines." The Committee recommended the dissemination of general cooperative knowledge amongst the villagers, training of ordinary members, members of Managing Committees, Secretaries of village cooperative societies, staff of cooperative institutions and cooperative departments. It also suggested the introduction of the subject of cooperation in schools, colleges and universities.

After independence some arrangements for training intermediate grade personnel were made in a few States.

like old Bombay, composite Madras and Travancore-Cochin. A Cooperative Training College was established at Poona in 1947 on the recommendation of the Madan Committee. Another Cooperative Training College was established in Travancore State. Excepting these two, few States were in a position to organise and run a training scheme of their own, particularly for cooperative personnel above the subordinate level.

In 1949 the Indian Cooperative Union was formed under the Presidentship of Late H.L. Kaji. The First Indian Cooperative Congress was held at Bombay in 1952 under the auspices of the Indian Cooperative Union. The Union aimed at undertaking propaganda work, advisory services and representation of cooperative interests in national and public affairs. The objects of the Union were, thus, to promote the Cooperative Movement in India and propagate the principles of cooperation.

In 1953 the Central Committee for Cooperative Training was formed. The Committee consisted of non-official cooperators, representatives of the Government of India, the R.B.I. and the State Governments and functioned as a high powered agency to ensure non-official participation in the scheme of cooperative training.
The Committee was entrusted with the task of formulating plans and organising and directing the arrangements in regard to the training of the personnel employed or to be employed in the cooperative departments and institutions in several States. While the Committee undertook the responsibility for the training of higher and intermediate personnel on behalf of the R.B.I., it also functioned on behalf of the Government of India for training of the subordinate personnel. The Committee formulated an Integrated Scheme of Cooperative Training for employees of the cooperative institutions and cooperative departments and for education of cooperators. This Integrated Scheme of training aimed at covering all levels of participation in the Movement.

In 1954 the All India Rural Credit Survey Committee submitted its report. Besides recommending an Integrated Scheme of Rural Credit the Committee emphasised the importance of cooperative education and training. But till then the programme of cooperative education and training in India was not improved much. In October, 1956 Prof. Alexander F. Laidlow observed, "The complete cooperative philosophy includes a vast area of educational, social, moral and cultural values, which are apt to disappear entirely if a movement is simply fitted into an
economic framework, ignoring all other legitimate consideration. Extension workers who go out to organise cooperatives must realise that their work has to do first of all with men's attitude and mental outlook, not with cold organisational structures. Indeed, extension workers should not look upon themselves merely as officers whose duty is to organise cooperatives. They should regard themselves much more as educators, and work among the people. Through education they are to make people cooperators, and cooperators will naturally become cooperatives themselves.⁴

In 1960 the Study Team on Cooperative Training was appointed by the Government of India. The Study Team which submitted its report in 1961 recommended that the cooperative movement should eventually take over the principal responsibility for conducting the programmes of cooperative education and training. On the basis of the recommendations of the Study Team the work of the Central Committee for Cooperative Training was handed over to the National and State Cooperative Unions. The Central Committee for Cooperative Training ceased to exist from 1st July,

1962 and the training centres were handed over to the Committee for Cooperative Training of the National Cooperative Union of India (N.C.U.I.). The All India Seminar on Cooperative Education held at New Delhi from 25th to 27th March, 1961 also recommended that 'building up of a federal pattern in the Movement being the ultimate objective, there should be a three-tier structure with All India Cooperative Union at the national level, State Cooperative Unions at the State level and the District Cooperative Unions at the district level for ensuring effective implementation of the Member Education Programme'.

The National Cooperative Union of India (N.C.U.I.) being the federal organisation of apex cooperative institutions in the country, both at the state and inter-state level, was assigned the task of implementing the Member Education Programme (M.E.P.). The implementation of the Member Education Programme of the N.C.U.I. was entrusted to the State Cooperative Unions which modified the programme in their respective States to suit the local conditions. However, the Committee for Cooperative Training constituted by the N.C.U.I. is still in over-all charge

of the three-tier structure of cooperative training in the country, and is, thus, responsible for the training of cooperative personnel at all levels - the higher, the intermediate, and the junior. Since the very inception this Committee has been continuing to impart training to such cooperative personnel through the institutions - the Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management, Poona, 17 Cooperative Training Colleges for intermediate officers training course, 86 Cooperative Training Centres for junior basic course.6

Member Education Programme:

The Member Education Programme which is the programme for education of members, secretaries, members of Managing Committees of cooperative societies in the principles and practice of cooperation and ideals of the Movement, continued to be implemented through the State Cooperative Unions under the over-all coordination and guidance of the N.C.U.I. To-day, educational classes through peripatetic instruction units and special short-courses, conferences and study circles, etc. are being conducted by the State and District Cooperative Unions in all the States of India.

All the efforts towards cooperative education and training since 1956 have, however, failed to create complete cooperative consciousness among the worker-members, employees of the cooperatives. The N.C.U.I., therefore, introduced a Revised Scheme for Member Education and Leadership Training in 1964. According to this scheme, the instructors of the State/District Cooperative Unions took classes for training the Secretaries and Managers of cooperative societies at the subordinate training centres or at the block headquarters.

In 1973 the Government of India set up the Informal Expert Group on Cooperative Education, Training and Research with a view to examining the adequacy of the existing cooperative training structure in the country and to meet the challenge of the training requirements during the Fifth Five Year Plan. The Expert Group held the view that "the training programmes, to yield the desired practical results, has to be closely related to the emerging needs of the fast developing movement. In other words, the training programme has to be conceived as an integral part of the overall programme of cooperative development. This implies a proper rapport between the management of the cooperative institutions on the one hand, and the
organisation for training arrangements on the other. This is an aspect with which we are directly concerned. The Expert Group also pointed out that there was no representation, or inadequate representation on the Committee for Cooperative Training from professional executives/managers of cooperative institutions/federations, from financing institutes, from teaching faculties at the National Institute and Cooperative Colleges; and from other experts in educational techniques, management, training, education and research; and from other technical experts in agriculture and allied fields including experts from agricultural universities. The main findings of the Expert Group are noted below:

(i) no organic link was there between the National Institute of Cooperative Management and Cooperative Training Colleges run by the Committee for Cooperative Training and the training centres in the different States. The entire arrangements for training of professional managers in this country at different levels, thus, need to be developed as an inter-related and integrated system with a central objective and direction;


8. Ibid., p.27.
(ii) another major weakness of the existing system was lack of proper co-relation between the cooperative development and the cooperative training programmes. The training given then by the institutions was not adequately user-oriented, and the existing arrangements did not provide for a continuous evaluation of the utility of training programmes. Nor was there any arrangement at Central level for periodic assessment of man-power requirements of cooperatives and for determining the short-term and long-term needs of training arrangements.

The Expert Group observed, "We are constrained to observe that most of the training colleges have no proper campus, and are ill-equipped. Provision of scholarships, and fellowships for encouraging trainees towards better performance has been inadequate. Constraints on resources of the Committee for Cooperative Training have affected proper arrangements for training. At present the only source of funds is grants from the Central Government". 

The Group further observed, "Our attention has also been drawn to the fact that the Committee for Cooperative Training does not charge any tuition fees and also meets the entire cost of stipends and travelling allowances of

9. Ibid., p.28.
the trainees in respect of tours forming part of the training programmes. Thus there is no motivation to send the most suitable persons for specific training courses or to employ the trained persons in positions where their training can be best utilised. There is also inadequate follow-up action on the utilisation or performance of the trained personnel. 10

The Informal Expert Group suggested, among other things, the formation of a Central Agency for Cooperative Training and Education in the name of 'The Council for Cooperative Education, Research and Training (CCERT), to be entrusted with the responsibility for formulation, coordination and implementation of cooperative training programmes in the country.

The National Council for Cooperative Training evolved a scheme for accelerating the programme of cooperative personnel training in respect of the cooperatively underdeveloped States. The main objectives of this scheme were removal of regional imbalances in cooperative development by introducing necessary measures for professionalisation of management of cooperatives.

10. Ibid., p.28.
including restructure and reorganisation of the cooperatives. The scheme, thus, provided for more intensive training of the cooperative personnel in cooperatively underdeveloped States during the Fifth Five Year Plan. The scheme was also especially intended for the cooperatively underdeveloped States in the North Eastern Region.

Problems:

Though various measures as mentioned above have been adopted for the education and training of personnel, both cooperative and non-cooperative, in the methods and practices of cooperative enterprise, remarkable progress cannot so far be made in imbibing the people in the basic philosophy of cooperation as a way of life. A large number of cooperative personnel cannot be attracted in the various cooperative training centres and institutes in both the rural and urban areas. There are many factors responsible for this low level of achievement. Ignorance of the people, general apathy and cold response from the existing cooperative societies and, above all, the uncomprehensive education programme are some of the important factors. Besides, lack of standardisation in the methods and techniques of teaching, adherence to a limited aim of cooperative education and training, dearth of teaching personnel, lack of
financial resources, less emphasis on need-based training, lack of modern teaching aids and facilities for Research and Development, and neglect of Cooperation as a subject in academic institutions are also important causes of the unsatisfactory achievement made in the programme of cooperative education and training in our country.

The State of Manipur like most of the States in the North Eastern Region of the country is characterised by many unfavourable features such as difficult terrains, inadequate transport and communication, lack of development of proper infrastructures, many organisational weaknesses and largely tribal population. The State, as depicted in the earlier chapters, is cooperatively underdeveloped. Considering the need for expanding and activating the Cooperative Movement in this State there arises further the need for strengthening the cooperative education programme in this State. The various problems confronting the Movement in this State have to be explored and new avenues for rapid cooperative development have to be created by giving priority to a massive cooperative education programme in the State.

It is against the background of the above considerations that we have to study the problems of cooperative education and training in Manipur.
Cooperative Education Programme of the Manipur State Cooperative Union:

The small primary units in the cooperative sector cannot obtain certain facilities which are quite essential for their efficient working unless they make efforts to form some common association of their own. Thus there arises the need for organisation of cooperative supervising unions both at the State and district level. The primary object of forming these unions lies in ameliorating the problems of the primary cooperative societies for education, training and supervision. The cooperative unions existing in the different States and Union Territories today have been established with the main objective of achieving such a goal. These unions have represented the non-official organisations of the Cooperative Movements in the different States and Union Territories. Their main function is to adopt corrective measures for the problems of the primary cooperative societies affiliated to them. They are to act as advisory bodies upon the Department of Cooperation and the Government in all matters relating to the development of the Movement.

With this object in view, the Manipur State Federal Cooperative Union was formed in 1952-53. The primary objective of this Union was to undertake Member Education
Programme of the cooperative societies affiliated to it. The area of operation of this Union extended to the whole of Manipur.

For some years the membership of the Federal Union remained confined to the District Cooperative Supervising Unions and the apex level cooperative institutions. This is because of the fact that the bye-laws of the Union did not provide for the direct membership of the primary cooperative societies. The membership of the Union was, thus, very small in the initial years of its working. As the Union had only a small number of societies as its members, the paid-up shares subscribed from the affiliated societies were also very small. The Union also could not make funds out of its owned resources. It, thus, met with financial stringencies and could hardly meet its expenses on general administration and Member-Education Programme it contemplated to carry out in a big way. For its financial requirements to implement the scheme of Member-Education Programme it always depended on the small amounts of grants received from the State Government. The Union could, therefore, extend the benefits of Member-Education Programme to the members of only a few societies. The implementation of the Member-Education Programme by the Union was, thus, quite nominal during the Sixties when
the Union was working as a weak non-official organisation of the Cooperative Movement in the State.

The primary cooperative societies could directly become members of the Manipur State Federal Cooperative Union from the year 1967 when the bye-laws of the Union were amended for the first time.¹¹

With the amendment of the bye-laws of the Union, its membership also increased gradually. In 1967-68, the year when the Union's bye-laws were amended, the membership increased to 134 which consisted of district supervising unions, apex level institutions, primary cooperative societies and the Government. Even then, the Federal Union could attract only a few of the large number of cooperative societies existing in the State. A large number of primary cooperative societies were still out of the membership of the Union.

The Manipur State Federal Cooperative Union was converted into the Manipur State Cooperative Union as per the amendment of bye-laws of the Federal Union in 1967-68. Since the amalgamation of the Manipur State

¹¹ The bye-laws of the Manipur State Federal Cooperative Union were first amended on the 17th February,1967.
Federal Cooperative Union into the Manipur State Cooperative Union, some progress could be made in the Member Education Programme of the cooperative societies in the State. 

**Progress of the Member-Education Programme:**

Since the very inception of its working, the Manipur State Cooperative Union has been undertaking Member-Education Programme of the members, Managing Committee members, office bearers and employees of the cooperative societies and other prospective members. The programme followed the All India pattern of Member-Education Programme. The scheme of educating the office bearers, managing committee members, and members and prospective members of cooperative societies/institutions which was launched in India in the year 1957 under the auspices of the National Cooperative Union of India (then the All India Cooperative Union) was also adopted by the Manipur State Federal Cooperative Union (now the Manipur State Cooperative Union) in the same year. The progress of the education programme undertaken by the Manipur State Cooperative Union during the years 1957-58 to 1984-85 can be seen from the following table.
Table No. 9.1: Progress of the Member-Education Programme of the Manipur State Cooperative Union (1957-58 to 1984-85).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. of Instructors</th>
<th>No. of Office Bearers/employees trained</th>
<th>No. of M.C. members trained</th>
<th>No. of ordinary members trained</th>
<th>No. of students/youths trained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>2037</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>3101</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>3432</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>2890</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>2449</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>700</td>
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<td>1060</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976-77</td>
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<td>1515</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>2756</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>1133</td>
<td>331</td>
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<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>1547</td>
<td>30</td>
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Source: Annual Administration Reports of the Manipur State Cooperative Union.
It will be seen from Table No. 9.1 above that the number of office bearers/employees of cooperative societies trained increased gradually from the year 1957-58 to 1964-65, though there were certain shortfalls in the number of such personnel during the years 1962-63 and 1963-64. The number of Managing Committee members trained also increased gradually from 1957-58 to 1964-65. Similarly, the number of ordinary members trained in the Member Education Programme increased considerably from a mere figure of 60 in 1958-59 to 3412 in 1964-65. It will also be seen from the table that from the year 1965-66 to 1976-77, no training/education was given to the ordinary members and potential members of cooperative societies. This was due to certain policy changes effected in the implementation of the Member Education Programme of the Manipur State Cooperative Union. Instead of giving education to the ordinary members and prospective members directly, emphasis was given on the training of Managing Committee members. It was expected that the trained Managing Committee members would organise study circles for giving cooperative education to their ordinary members and other prospective members in their respective areas of operation as a part of the fulfilment of their responsibilities as non-official cooperative leaders.
But, due to certain difficulties which cropped up in the organisation of study circles, much could not be achieved in this regard. The policy of giving emphasis to the education of the Managing Committee members continued up to the end of the year 1976-77. There was a scheme for giving financial assistance to the trainees by way of contingent expenses but, very often, the Union failed to give even the nominal assistance due to late sanction of funds by the State Government.

The education programme conducted by the Union, in respect of the ordinary members and potential members, which was suspended from 1965-66 was resumed from the year 1977-78. During this year, 1515 persons were educated in the ordinary members' class, 649 persons in the Managing Committee members' class and 139 persons in the Secretary/Manager's class. The number of persons trained in the M.C. members' class was, however, declining from the year 1978-79. This was primarily due to the insufficiency of the number of Cooperative Education Instructor (C.E.I.) in charge of the education programme. Up to the end of the year 1977-78 the Union had only 5 C.E.I.s, including 1 Instructor-in-charge of the Women's Wing of Cooperative Education. The Union, therefore, found it very difficult to manage to conduct the classes of the three categories.
of personnel, as shown in the table, with the few instructors at hand.

The Union, however, continued to implement its Member-Education Programme with the 5 peripatetic units, each unit being under the charge of 1 instructor. Each unit covered the area of two blocks, one from the valley and the other from the hills, while the Unit for Women's Wing remained confined to the areas where women's cooperatives were operating. The Union could no longer cope with the problem of educating a large number of personnel in different categories with only 6 instructors existing in 1978-79, and, therefore, dropped the programme of educating office-bearers/employees of cooperative societies from the beginning of the Sixth Five Year Plan. This category of cooperative personnel is now trained by the Manipur Cooperative Training Institute. Instead of giving education to such cooperative personnel, the Union shifted its emphasis on the education of the local youths and students. The programme of giving education to the youths and students, thus, started from the year 1978-79 and since then, it has been continuing until now.

During the year 1984-85, the Manipur State Cooperative Union trained 316 persons in the M.C. members' class, 1547 persons in the ordinary members' class, and 30 students
and youths. From the year 1957-58 when the Union started its Member Education Programme up to the end of the year 1984-85, the Union had so far trained 2,767 persons in the Secretary/Manager's class; 21,275 in the M.C. members' class; 33,523 persons in the ordinary members' class and 1832 youths and students.

From the above figures it is clear that the Manipur State Cooperative Union has made some progress in the line of giving cooperative education to the members of cooperative societies including office bearers such as Secretaries and Managers. The number of youths and students so far educated by the Union is few. This is due to the fact that the Union took up this programme only from the year 1978-79. But, from the point of view of coverage of the cooperative societies by such programmes, the progress made by the Union cannot be said to be satisfactory. Out of the 3,279 cooperative societies of all types existing in this State in 1984-85, only 1,044 cooperative societies became members of the Manipur State Cooperative Union. The Union's coverage of cooperative societies as members is, thus, quite low. Many cooperative societies did not seek voluntary affiliation to the Union as they did not recognise the importance of cooperative education. And even the affiliated societies failed to make regular contribution