

Harnessing People Power

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TRIPATHY**

The Ministry of Cooperation (MoC) has kept its promise of introducing a comprehensive policy dedicated to the country's cooperative development by releasing an all — inclusive 'National Cooperation Policy 2025' (NCP-2025), following a prolonged wait of 23 years.

NCP-2025 — drafted by a 48-member committee under the chairmanship of former Union Minister Shri Suresh Prabhoo after extensive pan-India stakeholder consultations — is not merely a reform document. It is a strategy paper that envisages a developed India and outlines strategic actions to achieve the pre-defined targets.

NCP-2025 & Viksit Bharat @2047

NCP-2025 envisions contributing to India's collective ambition of Viksit Bharat @2047 by following the Hon'ble Prime Minister's mantra - *Sahkar se Samridhhi*. Realising this vision demands the promotion of an enabling environment for sustainable cooperative development by building an inclusive and equitable Bharat.

It proposes a targeted mission over the next 10 years to achieve 16 core policy objectives by strengthening the foundation of the cooperative movement, encouraging sectoral vibrancy, making cooperatives future-ready, promoting inclusivity, deepening the reach of cooperation, entering emerging sectors, and inspiring the youth to lead cooperative growth. Cooperatives can significantly contribute to realising the dream of Viksit Bharat@47, given their spread, outreach, and employment and wealth generation potential.

Community-driven and member — owned cooperatives and collective enterprises are ideally suited to create an inclusive, resilient, tech-enabled, and innovation — driven economy — transforming India into a global manufacturing and services hub while ensuring that no one is left behind, especially at the grassroots. Within the overall architecture of governance, and by adopting a whole-of — Government approach, cooperatives are poised to become profitable business ventures and bolster the initiative of making India self-reliant. The NCP-2025 is expected to aid in achieving the outlined goals for comprehensive cooperative development.

Actions Are the New Policy

NCP-2025 aims to ensure a level playing field for cooperatives so that they may operate on the same footing as corporate sectors. It promises action on access to finance, ease of

doing business, and prioritising member-driven governance capable of facing competition. Furthermore, cooperatives are encouraged to function independently. The policy includes provisions for establishing supportive infrastructure, enabling legal frameworks, and arranging adequate and timely finance. Many of these enabling provisions, as reflected in NCP-2025, have already been implemented by the MoC.

Over the last four years, one of the MoC's significant initiatives has been the adoption of model bye-laws for PACS by 32 States/UTs — enabling the creation of a vibrant, multi-purpose, and multi-dimensional cooperative culture at the grassroots. In addition, integrating PACS businesses with Common Service Centres for delivering nearly 300 e-services; empowering them to function as *Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras* and *Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samridhhi Kendras*; incentivising the production of pulses (tur, masur, and urad) to reduce import dependency; and raising maize production to support the Ethanol Blending Programme through the National Cooperative Consumer Federation and the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India are particularly noteworthy.

The strategic initiative to integrate Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Fishery Farmers' Producer Organisations within the cooperative framework marks a major leap in strengthening rural livelihoods and diversifying income sources.

Granting licences to PACS for petrol/diesel dealerships and LPG distributorships will support business diversification and employment generation. Similarly, handholding support for implementing renewable energy schemes of the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy will aid PACS — linked farmers in adopting solar water pumps and installing photovoltaic modules.

The establishment of *Tribhuvan National Cooperative University* marks a transformative step in strengthening the cooperative movement through structured education and training. By institutionalising cooperative learning, India is paving the way for a more informed, skilled, and sustainable cooperative ecosystem — ensuring that the spirit of cooperation is not only preserved but empowered for future generations.

While the MoC has already consolidated the short-term cooperative credit structure, it has also contemplated adequate measures to strengthen the long-term cooperative credit framework. Planned, quality, and comprehensive computerisation of both short-term and long-term credit structures is expected to resolve existing inadequacies and inefficiencies in their operation. NCP-2025 emphasises cooperation among coop-

eratives through suitable networking, aiming to position the cooperative network as a key driver of sustainable, inclusive, and progressive economic growth. It reaffirms the role of cooperatives in the country's holistic development — including equitable income and wealth distribution and the reduction of both local and global economic disparities. The policy advances the concept of *Sabka Cooperative* to contribute towards the national vision of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas, Sabka Vishwas*, and pays homage to India's philosophical ethos — *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (The world is one family) and *Ekam Eva Balam Yoge* (Unity is strength).

When States Align, Cooperatives Shine

States/UTs are crucial stakeholders and must play transformative roles in cooperative development. Since cooperation is a State subject, they need to adopt and implement the provisions of NCP-2025 in the right spirit. States/UTs must internalise these provisions while leveraging local demographic, physical, and financial opportunities, as well as relevant macro and micro-environmental factors.

Alongside infrastructure development and technological advancement, appropriate reforms in governance and leadership within the cooperative space are urgently needed. States/UTs should establish robust, sustainable, tech-enabled market infrastructure, logistics, and networks through clustering — supported by the cluster development fund; develop cooperative economic zones; promote youth-led start-ups through training, education, innovation, and incubation; facilitate ease of doing business and timely access to capital; and form cooperatives in emerging sectors.

The provisions of NCP-2025 are both revolutionary and progressive. They have the potential to transform community-based enterprises into sustainable and profitable ventures, fostering business hubs at the grassroots across India.

If adopted and implemented with the right intent, the policy would establish an Indian cooperative ecosystem where professionalism is encouraged — with guaranteed ease of doing business, comprehensive digitisation, and integration with national welfare programmes.

NCP-2025 is not merely a policy aspiration — it is a call to action for inclusive, people-centric economic transformation. By uniting efforts across all levels of governance, strengthening cooperative institutions, and empowering grassroots entrepreneurship, we can build a resilient and equitable cooperative ecosystem to realise the true Bharat by 2047.

The Pioneer
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GRANTING
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AND LPG
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