

Odisha's first cooperative policy to transform 55L agricultural families

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HEMANT KUMAR ROUT @Bhubaneswar

THE Odisha government has set an ambitious target of transforming the cooperative sector into an inclusive and sustainable people's movement by ensuring the presence of primary agricultural cooperative societies (PACS) in all 6,794 panchayats and central cooperative banks in all 30 districts by 2030.

As per the draft Cooperative Policy 2025 released on Wednesday, the state will have 30 model cooperative villages, one in every district, and sectoral cooperative clusters in millets, pulses, dairy, fisheries, coffee, handicrafts and spices by 2036, to achieve the Viksit Odisha vision.

Being introduced for the first time, the policy will promote Centres of Excellence (CoE) for cooperative management in leading universities, in partnership with top institutions like Pune-based Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management (VAMNICOM), Bankers Institute of Rural Development (BIRD) and ICAI to conduct academic programmes and research on cooperative management.

Odisha has around 8,000 co-

operatives spreading across different sectors having a membership base of about one crore. The state has 4,252 PACS and large-sized adivasi multi-purpose cooperative societies (LAMPCS), 17 District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs) and the Odisha State Cooperative Bank (OSCB) facilitating enrolment of 53.69 lakh agricultural families out of total 55 lakh in the state.

The draft policy promises to collaborate with the School and Mass Education department to integrate cooperative values and principles into school curricula and universities to introduce diploma, degree and master's programmes in cooperative management, rural business and social entrepreneurship, besides the certificate courses on cooperative law, governance and digital finance. A state cooperative revival and restructuring fund will be constituted to provide conditional financial assistance.

The government also plans to develop state-level cooperative marts in major cities and collaborate with e-commerce platforms like Flipkart, Amazon and ONDC to retail products prepared by cooperatives.

