

Survival of Cooperatives in the Technology-Driven World:

A case of Cooperatives in Kerala

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In India, the vast cooperative system helps the poor, illiterate, and unskilled people to come together to have a platform for mutual help and sharing (Mitra 2014). Kerala, the south Indian state of India, too initiated hundreds of cooperatives of various hues and colors down the history line. However, the prominent ones are consumer cooperatives (with 22.5 percent of total working cooperatives), dairy cooperatives (17 percent), Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (9 percent), and so on (NCDC 2020). Together, all these cooperatives provide Kerala with one of India's most substantial cooperative credit bases. The labor cooperatives benefited the toddy tappers and beedi workers (Kannan and Pillai 2007); Indian Coffee House, a restaurant chain (Ply 2017; Achuth 2016); Kerala Dinesh Beedi workers' Central Cooperative Society, an organization of those producing the country cigarettes (Gulati et al. 2001; Franke et al. 2018); Uralungal Labour Contract Cooperative Society in labor contract and Pinarayi Industrial Cooperative Society Ltd. in the industrial sector to name a few among the multitude of the cooperatives presence (Kuruvila 2020). SEWA has given an impetus to several service/worker's societies among women in Kerala (Nayak 2005). Marianad Cooperative organized the artisanal fisherfolk, as early as 1967 to market their fish landings so as the South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFFS) (Meynen 1989; Singh 1994). Though throngs of cooperatives are still working among the population and catering to their varied needs, they face a lot of issues in the technology-driven era. The paper tries to bring out the nuances of co-operatives along with their survival issues in the modern world. The study uses mixed methods -both qualitative and quantitative tools- used for analyzing the data. It is found out that those co-operatives who are keen in pace with the technology could survive, the others are on the verge to perish.

Keywords: Co-operatives, technology-driven, credit base, mixed methods, survival strategy