

Role of Cooperatives in Assimilating Indigenous Communities: An Indian Experience

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Abstract: The idea of cooperatives ensures participants as beneficiaries as well as stakeholders. Take any closely held group, community or society, the same is also connected to its members and seldom to anyone outside. In various parts of the world there are always communities who are showing distinct cultures and are indigenous to the location. Such populations in many countries are exploited by others. These types of exploitation are generally socio-economic in nature or effect. Nation states that are having a welfare inclination are interested in ensuring the absence of such exploitation. Some organisational system is necessary to ensure the reach of welfare measures as well as avoidance of exploitation. Cooperatives being a self-help entity with members as beneficiaries are capable of reaching out to indigenous communities. India is a country which is having a substantial number of indigenous populations. Indigenous populations are referred to as 'Adivasis', which is a Sanskrit word meaning early settlers. India, based on suggestions by multiple committees, identified the potential of cooperatives in reaching out to indigenous communities. Thus, multi-purpose cooperatives were created exclusively for Adivasis, namely, "Large sized Adivasi Multi-purpose Society" (LAMPS). This paper is discussing the background of the formation of LAMPS as well as their performance.

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Acknowledgements: I express sincere gratitude to Dr. Peter Davis for being a useful critic who helped in improving this research work thoroughly. I also extend our gratitude to the reviewer of the paper whose name has not been communicated. Grateful thanks are also extended to Dr. Daphne Rixon for her kind and patient response to all queries and bearing with me for my faults. I would also like to extend thanks to the librarians of Kerala University and EMS Library for their help in offering me the resources.

Keywords: Indigenous community, Adivasi, cooperative, LAMPS, justice, India

Introduction

Nation states and international organisations have been trying to identify the populations as well as communities that are not enjoying the benefits and opportunities present in the mainstream. Among these the most vulnerable and least prioritised category of population has always been indigenous communities. The same situation is prevailing in India. Compared to many other countries, in India there are a substantial number of people belonging to indigenous communities (United Nations, 2009). Compared to other institutions, cooperatives are a type of institution with strong social values around democracy, education, the elimination of exploitation, voluntarism and accessibility and are better equipped for betterment of indigenous communities (UNDESA, 2012). Cooperation

stands for distributive justice and equal access to wealth creation. The paper is discussing the scope of cooperatives in assimilating indigenous communities in the Indian context.

Social Classes and Concept of Justice

Studies are plentiful with respect to evolution of the present position of humanity. By using the term humanity, the attempt is to bring in an inclusive concept so as to ensure within its ambit all types of existence of human life. One could have used the terms state, society, tribes, etc. instead of the term humanity; however, any such usage will not be an inclusive one. An anecdote is worth mentioning at this juncture. Two Latin American countries sharing the Amazon rainforest as borders developed a political issue between them. The mining and similar activities in the Amazon rain forest by one country were forcing the aboriginal inhabitants to cross over to the forest portion belonging to the other country. The second country took up the issue to the first country so as to avoid this crossing over. However, the first country was of the opinion that, since it was aborigines, it was not possible for them to control the said population. One who is analysing the situation can identify the basic issue. The aborigine population is unaware of the dividing lines between the countries and they are even ignorant about the concept of the nation state itself (Lubna, 2016).

The irony of the complex structure of the present system is easily identifiable from this anecdote. On the one end, there are the complex social and economic structures constructed by so called political ideologies and, on the other end, there is a populace who are unaware of all these aspects. It is debatable which has greater moral authority, but not which has the most coercive power. Nevertheless, nation states all over the world are champions of the former one. The belief is that the said structure is the better one and continuous efforts are always present to bring everyone and everything into that stream. In such a structure, the system is trying to ensure the prevalence of justice by ensuring equal access to things of value to everyone.

So, there is a need for a positive effort by the state and a caring attitude from the mainstream community. Theoretically speaking, the concept of protective discrimination is acting as a solution in the midst of the concept of equality (Dias, 1994). However, practically, the solution is to a great extent elusive. This is quite natural because a structure that is moulded on the idea that all the participants do what is beneficial for them is expecting itself as well as the mainstream populace to take care of or be concerned for the so-called marginalised category.

With respect to beneficial treatment extended to the under privileged by way of the concept of protective discrimination, the reasoning is that the category requires preferential treatment because they are unequal when pitched against the remaining. This is thus going against the tide of the concept of the survival of the fittest. That is, the inequality is attempted to be overcome by the positive action on part of the system whereby the limitations pervading the said category are not directing their aspirations. In certain circumstances another justification also comes into the picture. Many of these communities were subject to ill treatment in an earlier period of time by predecessors of the present mainstream population. That is the reason why the subsequent generation got marginalised. So, extending the preferential treatment is also a mode of correcting the injustice of an earlier time frame. Thus, one can even argue that, with respect to such preferential treatment, corrective as well as distributive justice are simultaneously being applied (Dias, 1994).

So, it can be summed up that, whatever the perspective, there is a justification for extending preferential treatment. This is nothing but the institutionalisation of the humane altruistic nature of showing concern to others. The system is by itself showing this concern as well as expecting a similar approach from the mainstream populace.

Indigenous Community as a Marginalised Class

The term indigenous has been used for identifying a culturally distinct group affected by various forms of colonisation. The word is of Latin origin from "*indigena*", meaning 'to be born from'. The definition accepted by the United Nations Working Group of Indigenous Populations in 1982 is an apt one for defining indigenous populations. The definition is as follows:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider

themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. (UN Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 1982)

According to the International Labour Organization Convention No. 169, indigenous and tribal people are those “whose social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community, and whose status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs, traditions, special laws or regulations.” (ILO, 1989)

An indigenous community is that section of the population composed of people living in a particular area from the very old times. They are the people with the historical continuity. They have strong links to territories and surrounding natural resources. These categories of people can be distinguished from others based on culture, custom and language. They maintain traditions or early cultures that are associated with the region. However, certain indigenous people have adapted substantially owing to an invading culture (University of Minnesota Human Rights Center, 2003).

Indigenous people may be settled in a given region or may show a nomadic style across a large region. Nevertheless, they are historically connected with a specific territory. Indigenous people have a special relationship with the land on which they have lived for generations, sometimes for tens of thousands of years. They possess crucial knowledge about how to manage natural resources sustainably and act as guardians or custodians of the land for the next generation. Losing their land means a loss of identity. The concept of indigenous community is not restricted to a specific area but is spread around the world in various forms and contributes to a substantial part of the world’s population (Sengupta, 2015). The only difference is that such communities are known with different names such as Primitive, Tribal, Aboriginal, Native, Indigenous and so on around the world (Chandra, 2015).

The United Nations’ *State of the World’s Indigenous People* report (2009) estimates that there are approximately 370 million indigenous people, representing 5 percent of the global population. The indigenous people of the world inhabit areas which are rich in natural resources. They are also responsible for the world’s linguistic and cultural diversity. They speak an overwhelming majority of the world’s estimated 7,000 languages. They are recognized for their unique relationship with the environment, traditional knowledge and spirituality. However, across the world, they continue to suffer discrimination, marginalization, extreme poverty and conflict. Although constituting 5 percent of the world’s population, they make up 15 percent of the world’s poor and about one-third of the world’s 900 million extremely poor (United Nations, 2009). The efforts of international organisations as well as the proliferation of human rights ideologies coupled with the conceptualisation of legal pluralism has brought into relevance the need for protecting indigenous population.

The International Labour Organization (2021) notes that Convention No. 169 takes a practical approach and provides objective and subjective criteria for identifying the peoples concerned. Indigenous people retain some or all of their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, irrespective of their legal status. Their social, cultural and economic conditions distinguish them from other sections of the national community. Their status is regulated wholly or partially by their own customs or traditions or by special laws or regulations. Indigenous and tribal peoples are often known by national terms such as native peoples, aboriginal peoples, first nations, adivasi, janajati, hunter-gatherers, or hill tribes. Given the diversity of peoples it aims at protecting, the Convention uses the inclusive terminology of “indigenous and tribal peoples” and ascribes the same set of rights to both groups.

In 1997, in the context of dam construction, the Japanese Court accepted the claims that Ainu people’s right to enjoyment of their own culture is protected and held that the same is coming within the ambit of Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as Article 13 of the Japanese Constitution. The court held that the interests of a minority group which is of unique culture, and tradition and is of antiquity need to be given preference over interests of people from a majority group that came to the same location (Levin, 1999).

This decision of the Japanese court is of import because many other jurisdictions were trying to protect the interest of indigenous people using the concept of protective discrimination. The differential treatment of indigenous

communities for the sake of protection is a more or less uniform interest of nation states. The only variance is with respect to the mode of attempting the same.

Indigenous Communities in the Indian Context

India has a tribal population of about 104 million (Census, 2011) and thus is about 23% of the world’s indigenous people. Article 342 of the Constitution of India confers on the President of India the power to declare tribes or tribal communities or parts of groups within tribes or tribal communities, as Scheduled Tribes. Under Article 342 of the Constitution of India, about 700 ethnic groups stand termed as Scheduled Tribes (National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, n.d.). Once declared so, they are having multiple beneficial treatments as per the Constitution and under various laws. Likewise, the Constitution has also created such a beneficial treatment to certain castes and they are referred to as Scheduled Castes. It may be noted that, in the Indian context, many of the beneficial schemes are simultaneously extended to the category of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe. Generally, such a classification is based on the criteria of primitive traits, distinctive culture, geographical isolation, shy nature and backwardness. They are bestowed with certain specific constitutional privileges, protection and benefits and receive preferential treatment. So, in short, the economic uplifting of these categories will certainly go a long way in ameliorating the variety of problems faced by these communities. In order to find a solution to the issues of these isolated sections of society, an organisation with specialised features was necessary. It should be an organisation which could bring about a radical change in the misfortune situations faced by indigenous communities. Even if they try to come up, they face circumstances like insufficient arrangements of credit, difficulty in marketing of their agricultural and forest produce, exploitation by money lenders, middlemen and traders (Hajela, 2010). An escape route from money lenders and middlemen will itself create a positive impact on their situation. By ensuring fair prices on their agricultural and forest produce, their socio-economic situations can also be improved. The below provided data tabulated from the Census of India 2001 and 2011 is indicative of tribal populations.

Table 1: Tribal Population

Demographic Characteristics of Tribal Populations				
Tribal Population: Census of 2011			Tribal Population – % of Total	
<i>Total</i>	<i>% in Rural Area</i>	<i>% in Urban Area</i>	<i>Census 2001</i>	<i>Census 2011</i>
104,281,034	90.00%	10.00%	8.20%	8.60%

Table 2: Literacy

Literacy Rate					
Census of 2001			Census of 2011		
<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Tribal Population</i>	<i>Difference</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Tribal Population</i>	<i>Difference</i>
64.80%	47.10%	17.70%	73.00%	59.00%	14.00%

Table 3: Infant Mortality

Infant Mortality Rate Among Tribal Populations (Per 1000 Live Births)					
Census of 2001			Census of 2011		
<i>Total</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>
84	85	61	74	76	60

(Census, 2001. Census, 2011)

Cooperative Associations

Cooperatives have certain special features as membership-based organisations that fit culturally with the idea of a community as another form of membership-based association having an independent existence and bringing in multiple persons as its stakeholders. The primary aim of cooperatives is always service to members and not generation of profits. Cooperatives provide an organisational form that is relevant culturally and also proven in terms of modern market-based money economies. Potentially, with the right leadership and management, cooperatives could provide a bridge between the ancient and the modern in mutually beneficial ways. The concept of cooperation and cooperative model institutions has been in existence in India for a very long time.

The modern history of cooperatives in India starts from the quest of then British Rulers of India to give a solution to problems faced by farmers (Bedi, 1971). The initial efforts were unsuccessful, and the Government decided to study what form of organisation or legal framework was prevailing around the world (Indian Institute of Banking & Finance, 2018). The government sent Sir Frederic Nicholson to Europe to study the cooperative movement in 1892. He analysed the situation and came to the conclusion that Raiffeisen model co-operatives had to be formed. In 1895 he submitted the enquiry report and, in that report, he strongly recommended the formation of a cooperative society at the earliest. The Famine Commission of 1901 also suggested starting credit cooperatives to solve the problems of the farmers (Ramkishen, 2009). In continuation of all these efforts the Cooperative Credit Societies Act was passed on March 25, 1904. The Act consisted of provisions with respect to the formation and running of the credit cooperatives (Tiwari, 2017). This Act was replaced by the Cooperative Societies Act of 1912 and the same was providing a legal structure for all types of cooperatives. However, by 1919 the power to make laws with respect to cooperatives was granted to provincial governments of British India and the relevance of the Cooperative Societies Act, 1912 was more that of a template used throughout the rest of the British Empire’s extensive application of cooperatives as mechanisms for improving the lot of the poor (Rhodes, 2012).

Post independence, the Indian Constitution itself has at its heart the aims of a Co-operative Commonwealth, namely, secularism to defend religious toleration and socialism to promote Equality, Fraternity and Justice which are at the heart of the cooperative movement’s historical purpose. The system of governance prevailing in India is a federal one and power to legislate is divided between the union and state governments. The union government is empowered to make laws that are of national relevance and for governance of the country at large. States are having legislative competence in subjects of state interest. The respective state governments are empowered to formulate legislation for cooperatives operating within the state. The union government has enacted the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002 for the cooperatives that operate in more than one state. Such cooperatives come under the administrative purview of the national Ministry for the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers’ Welfare and cooperatives that work within a state come under the Department of Cooperation at the concerned state level.

As throughout the world, in India also classification of cooperative structure is based on four parameters, that is, Geographical, Governance, Financial and Functional (United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, 2011). The concept of universality of cooperative principles does not explain its practical applicability, because every

country or state is having a different social and cultural background which has to be considered while creating and implementing rules and regulations. Since the power to make laws with respect to cooperatives operating within a state is with the state government, within the state all the parameters of the classification of structure are getting independent. It is to be noted that the classification is the touchstone for verifying whether the structure of a cooperative is in tune with the aims. The division of states in India is mainly based on language and states are having a large amount of cultural diversity. So, the vesting of legislative power with the states in the subject area of cooperatives is thus aiding the state government to prioritise the aims of its own cultural groups. Under the geographical parameter within a state, there is a three tier structure; one at state level, one at district levels and one at primary levels. In certain states there is only a two tier structure; one at state level and one at primary levels. This three tier as well as two tier structures within the state are ensuring that a stability is present even for the primary society. At the same time, each primary society is getting functional as well as governance autonomy. So, the accepted attributes of a proper structure are utilised in the most effective way so that it caters to the requirements of the local society (Cooperative Societies in India, n.d.).

A primary cooperative is made up of individual members who work together to achieve common goals. Many small family farms and other agriculturists pool their resources and share knowledge to form a primary cooperative. These primary cooperatives unite under the same offices, the group becomes a federated cooperative, with a central office overseeing the operations of each member cooperative. Members of a mixed cooperative can be either individual producers or member cooperative groups. These federated or mixed cooperatives are known as District Cooperatives. In the apex level there will be a state cooperative consisting of District cooperatives as its members.

Building Links to the Indigenous People

As discussed earlier, there is a clear demarcation between indigenous communities and others in many countries and the same is the position in India also. The way to reach out was always a perplexing question. A general feature of indigenous communities is that they are hesitant to allow access to anyone outside their own community. The degree of this hesitancy varies from community to community. People from within their own community are not having these accessibility problems. Thus, to reach out, local governance was the best option available. So, a model centring around people from their own community will be able to identify and resolve their concerns. Local governance has proven very effective over the years in the form of cooperatives since they are the kind of organisation which is completely people- or member-oriented (Mahalingam, 1992).

Considering the vulnerable position, there are high chances of indigenous communities being exploited. This precarious position stands identified and is duly considered in Part IV of the Indian Constitution that lays down Directive Principles of State Policy. In the said Part, Article 46 lays down the condition that the state shall promote with special care and protect vulnerable categories of people from all forms of social injustice and exploitation. Further it was understood that there was a necessity to bring into effect a radical change in the living condition of indigenous communities (Claudio, 2012). The Government of India appointed many commissions and committees to study revival of the situation of these communities.

In 1937, the committee headed by Mehta Bansali suggested the need for developing the indigenous community (All India Rural Survey Committee, 1937). Kaka Kalekar chaired a 1955 committee that recommended three main aspects on the development of tribal population and also to release them from the clutches of money-lenders and similar categories (First Backward Classes Commission, 1955). In 1959, the Renuka Ray Commission recommended the need for entrusting commercial exploitation of forests to be entrusted to cooperatives rather than to the contractors (Study Team on Social Welfare and Welfare of Backward Classes, 1959). In 1960, Verrier Elwin Committee made the following recommendations:

The tribal must have a direct share in the profits of the forest. For this, really remunerative coupons should be reserved for allotment to Tribal Cooperative Societies on a fixed price which should be calculated so as to allow a substantial margin of profit. The Cooperative Society should be confined to tribal and no outsider should be permitted to become a member. (The Committee on Special Multipurpose Tribal Blocks, Ministry of Home Affairs, 1960)

In the year 1961, the Dhebar Commission suggested that the sale and marketing of the produce and supply of the tribal people should receive special attention through cooperatives so that they get reasonable prices for their produce (The Scheduled Area and Scheduled Tribes Commission, 1961). Also in 1961, the Special Working Group on Cooperatives of Backward Classes attributed slow development of cooperatives in tribal areas to structural weaknesses, operational defects, management problems, faulty procedures and adoption of unsuitable business methods and practices. It observed that:

for the small man, be he a tribal or a member of the Scheduled Caste, who is unorganised and dispersed, cooperative form of organisation provides opportunities for getting the benefits of large scale operation and management without curtailing individual freedom. The pace of economic rehabilitation of backward classes can be made more rapid and sustained through cooperatives.

In 1967, a Committee headed by Hari Singh made the recommendation that cooperatives should be established for the collection and grading of Myrobalan in the raw form and for export to foreign countries (The Adhoc Committee on Export of Minor Forest Products, 1967). In 1969 it was suggested that "Forest Labour Cooperative Societies through which workers are trained and equipped to organise themselves should be encouraged and streamlined. In any case they should be kept away from the influence of contractors" (National Commission on Labour, 1969). During the years from 1971 to 1973, the committee headed by K. S. Bawa was tasked with the specific responsibility of suggesting ways and means for the development of tribal economies. It recommended to form large sized Adivasi multi-purpose cooperative societies in tribal areas to provide their tribal members production as well as consumption credit, to undertake marketing of agricultural and minor forest products and to distribute consumer goods as well as agricultural inputs so that the tribal could secure all facilities under one roof. It should be established covering one block with a requisite number of branches to provide all the services to the tribal population (Ministry of Agriculture, 1973).

So to conclude, various reports were agreeing in their views with respect to the relevance of cooperatives in reaching out to the local community. From the theoretical perspective also, it is considered that among the different kinds of economic system prevailing, cooperatives are considered to be the best instrument to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of the weaker section of society (Gowda, 2003).

In this context, another aspect also needs to be mentioned. After independence, India has been streamlining its developmental attempts by creating comprehensive plans known as Five Year Plans. The Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) had introduced the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) aiming at the improvement of tribal populations. The major aim of the Tribal Sub Plan was to provide assistance in the form of financial support from the Central Government for the balanced growth and economic development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, because they are far behind in the concept of development when compared to the mainstream (Concept Note on TSP, n.d.). Further, in 1975, the Government of India implemented a Twenty Point Programme and the 7th Point was Tribal Development. This converged with the aims of the Tribal Sub Plan. A development of tribal populations was required in a wholesome manner. Further, a cooperative form of institution was a better form for working among and for tribals. Thus, the Government implemented the idea of LAMPS, the short notation for "Large Sized Adivasi Multi-Purpose Society".

Large Sized Adivasi Multi-Purpose Society (LAMPS)

The concept of development is not merely the protection of the life and liberty of the tribals, but the preservation of their culture and traditions as well, because the tribals were not even equipped with the basic necessities like food, clothing and shelter. Without identifying needs, implementation of many programmes will go in vain. The upliftment of tribal categories of population can be made possible only with the combined efforts of the state government, central government and voluntary associations. In order to bridge the gap between the mainstream and the tribals, there was a need to develop an organisational structure which could completely take up the overall development of the tribals. So, the government decided to form the LAMPS, which are known as Large sized Agricultural Multi-Purpose Societies in some states or Large Area Multi-Purpose Societies in some areas and Large Sized Adivasi Multi-Purpose Societies in other states. LAMPS are based on service motive. LAMPS offer plentiful

opportunities to empower a tribal to face the challenges and problems. LAMPS provide a wholesome approach which is giving a wide functional range that is more conducive to the tribal to which the functions are extended. As the name indicates, they were trying to cater to all requirements. LAMPS were visualised as a prominent measure to redress the grievances of the tribal people and to bring about economic transformation in the whole community (Lele,1996). The formation of this type of organisation aims at bringing all the services including credit, production, marketing, etc., under one roof so that the possibilities and potential of development of these categories of the community will increase rapidly. Tribal development in India has heterogeneous functional areas. So, it is necessary to concentrate on the core developmental aspects such as agriculture, industry, education and living standards.

Performance of LAMPS

The success of Scheduled Tribes Cooperatives can be evaluated by analysing the social and economic benefits enjoyed by the members. This can be justified with so many examples from different states.

A study was conducted by a team of researchers based on analysis of empirical data among tribals of Mayurbhanj District, State of Odisha (Bhuyan et al., 2013). The tribals were deprived of even basic necessities and faced many challenges like poverty and illiteracy and were also heavily exploited. In spite of the implementation of many programmes and policies, the livelihoods of tribal people were not much better. However, LAMPS offered plentiful opportunities to empower tribal people which paved the way for their development. The study found that in the cases of Betnati Cooperative Sector, Baisinga Cooperative Sector and Cooperative Sector Bangiriposi, the LAMPS have utmost role for the development of tribals.

The evaluation of the functioning of LAMPS in the State of West Bengal also showed certain positive results (Arnold, 2014). In this context, the scheme of funding of government implemented through LAMPS benefited around 42,000 tribal families. The LAMPS here were initiated towards empowering the tribal women so that their economic independence, family upholds, and creation of social identity could be made possible. Through this initiative, the tribal women in West Bengal were empowered in their own traditional way and there was relatively less social judgment owing to gender in the tribal society. The economic activity which tribal women were involved in in traditional ways were house dairy, goatery, piggery, duckery, sheep rearing and traditional activities like Bubai Rope making, Sal Leaf Plates making, etc. The LAMPS were also successful in making financial inclusion by ensuring that the majority of the tribal women acquired bank accounts.

In a research work in the context of the State of Karnataka, the aim was to analyse the support provided to LAMPS by the new forest policies on collection and marketing of minor forest products (Shivaprasad, 2014). Forest products have a great contribution in the livelihood and main source of income of the rural poor and the tribals. In order to support the tribals, there is an enactment Recognition of Forest Rights Act, 2006 to recognize the tenure and occupational rights of forest dwellers. The study intended to understand the collection and marketing status of minor forest products and how new forest policies impacted the collection and marketing of minor forest products by LAMPS. It was identified that LAMPS were successful in providing support to the tribal population.

A performance analysis of LAMPS in Tamil Nadu was conducted (Mahalingam, 1990). It was concluded that the best means for the development of the tribal economy can be made possible through the cooperative societies. In 1990 the same author made another analysis on the performance of Tribal Cooperatives in the Salem District of the State of Tamil Nadu (Mahalingam, 1992). In the same, the researcher analysed the crucial role played by LAMPS towards rendering different kinds of services and the development of the tribal economy. The said study was based on 200 tribal households and it was concluded that the integrated services rendered by LAMPS were giving way for the tribal development.

In 1982, the Government of the State of Kerala decided to form cooperative societies in all rural areas so that tribal populations can be the members of these kinds of societies, and they can work for their own upliftment and development. An apex organisation, namely Kerala State Federation for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe Cooperatives (Federation) was formed in 1982. The Federation collects products from tribals through LAMPS. LAMPS were also to provide loans for the activities of their members. As per the data provided by the Federation, many LAMPS were running successfully in the State of Kerala (SCT Federation, n.d.).

These examples are indicative of the benefits of LAMPS and the same is in tune with experiences in other countries. Studies regarding the efficiency of cooperatives exclusively for indigenous people in reaching out to the indigenous community are continuously showing positive response (Novkovic, 2015).

Conclusion

Since tribal communities do not have the avenue for availing credit, or a place to store or sell their produce, a need for a multi-purpose entity was there. For the said purpose, formation of LAMPS was suggested by the Bawa Committee in 1973. In furtherance of the same, LAMPS were developed in almost all states. The majority of LAMPS were able to channel all kinds of necessary assistance to the tribal members and no other type of organisation were that effective in reaching out to indigenous peoples. Substantial assistance was provided through LAMPS by various schemes of both union and state governments as well as that of other agencies. Success stories of LAMPS are indicative of the need for maintaining as well as improving LAMPS which could lead to the sustainable development of communities.

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