

New Cooperative Policy 2023 - Recommendations

Submitted by - SEWA Cooperative Federation to New Cooperative Policy Committee

Date - 23rd November 2023

To add to the Objectives of the policy -

Establish pathways for promotion, incubation, and strengthening of cooperatives and collective enterprises in the informal sector that are creating economic and social value for vulnerable communities.

Incorporate women and informal sector workers throughout the policy as follows -

1. All task forces for the implementation of the new cooperative policy should have 50% reservation of women and especially women from the informal sector.
2. Constitute a special task force/department within the Ministry of Cooperation that would promote and strengthen cooperatives of women and informal workers.
3. Ensure 50% reservation for women in management of cooperatives.
4. Create decentralized grievance redressal mechanisms for ease of access to women and informal worker cooperatives.

Include women's and informal workers' lens throughout the policy document, as suggested in the chapter-wise recommendations given below -

Chapter 3

Key priority/emerging sectors should include those which are major sources of employment and livelihoods for **women informal workers, such as care sector, handicrafts, and catering.**

Implementation -

(i) Convergence with various ministries and departments for provision of social security services through cooperatives

Chapter 4

Create enabling conditions for the collective enterprises, **especially those owned by women and informal sector workers**, to compete with business enterprise counterparts

Facilitate market access and value chain integration, prioritizing representation and participation of women and informal workers' owned cooperatives.

Chapter 5

Set up a fund to assist women and worker-owned cooperatives and collectives and provide support for reviving, strengthening, and incubating cooperatives and for building infrastructure.

Implementation Pathway -

(i) NCDC should establish a unit dedicated to women's cooperatives and collective enterprises. Set up one multi-purpose PACS/LAMPS/Dairy in each gram panchayat and fisheries cooperatives in coastal panchayats, **providing 50% reservation for women workers.**

(ii) **invest in digitization of primary and small cooperatives, especially women and informal workers to enable operational efficiency, promote growth, and bridge the digital divide.**

(iii) Create national cooperative innovation and incubation fund to establish SEI programs that provide support mentorship and shared infrastructure to cooperative start-ups, **ensuring 50% of the fund is dedicated to developing and promoting women-led and worker-owned cooperative startups.**

Chapter 6

Create processes and procedures to enable women-led and worker-owned to access global trade corridors and special economic zones

Implementation Pathway -

Create a National Cooperative Database with supporting dashboards for all stakeholders, and the dashboard should **collect gender-disaggregated data, in consultation with experts in this field.**

Chapter 7

Encourage the spread of federations and especially for women and worker-owned cooperatives and collectives. These federations can provide support for business development services and handholding support to their member-cooperatives.

Ensuring welfare of members - plan, design, and implement, social security programs **(in addition to insurance and pension, include childcare which will enable women to join the workforce)** for members by periodically assessing their needs.

Implementation Pathway

Protection from **business cycle risk - calamity fund creation**

Convergence with relevant ministries/departments for social security provision to members through cooperatives.

Chapter 8

Establish National Cooperative University (NCU) - a higher educational Institution with pan-India network affiliating institutions that reach women and informal workers, to promote unified **and inclusive** education and capacity-building infrastructure and services with quality assurance and to create a stable supply of skilled, affordable, trained and aware members, office bearers in the sector. Pro-active efforts should be made to include women and informal workers in all training programmes.

Develop a cadre of master trainers and also grassroots researchers.

Develop curriculum and pedagogy such that it is appropriate for women and informal workers and includes innovative learning methods like exposure visits, on-the-job training, and peer-to-peer learning. Training programs should be decentralized for ease of access for women and informal workers.

Chapter 9

Implementation Pathway

Provide special attention **to socially and economically vulnerable populations such as informal workers, women, people with disabilities, tribal and dalits**

Chapter 10

Encourage participation of youth, gender, specially abled, **and socially and economically vulnerable workers** to be a part of the cooperative membership and governance.