



RESEARCH PAPER

Role of members' participation and satisfaction in cooperative success

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Abstract : Member-owned business organizations, such as cooperatives (or co-ops), are engaged in various economic activities that touch our everyday lives. In developing countries like India, there are various advantages for small farmers in joining a cooperative, including lowering costs of marketing, purchasing inputs, bargaining, etc. Agricultural cooperatives are common in India but studies focusing on member commitment, participation, and satisfaction are not available to the best of our knowledge. Research has shown that cooperatives rely on their members' commitment, participation, and patronage for success (Bhuyan, 2007; Sexton and Iskow, 1988 and Fulton and Adamowicz, 1993). Therefore, successful managers and directors try to understand their members' characteristics, values, needs, satisfaction, and goals, among other factors to manage their cooperative business (Bhuyan and Leistritz, 2001). The principal goal of this pilot study, therefore, is to examine members' participation and satisfaction with their cooperatives in a large dairy cooperative from Assam, India (Sitajakhala Dairy Cooperative Society). This dairy cooperative currently has over 1,000 member-owners and it processes fluid milk as well as limited number of milk-based processed products for the retail markets. We use both parametric and non-parametric statistical analyses to fulfill our study objective. Results of the pilot study shows that a large majority of members were satisfied with how the Sitajakhala Co-op was being managed. Similarly, a large majority of members also participated in cooperative activities and exercised their rights (voting). We also find that member satisfaction and participation were uniform across members' demographic and economic characteristics.

Key Words : Dairy cooperative, Member participation, Satisfaction

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