

Cooperatives in Development

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- We are very well aware that the world of work is changing posing significant implications esp for women who have anyway been disadvantaged not only in terms of percentages coming out for work but also in terms of being largely crowded at the bottom of the labour hierarchy.
- The most significant reason ofcourse is the disproportionate time girls/women spend on household and care work since that is perceived as their major role. Even if the woman does paid work outside the home like a man, the household responsibility is hers extending to child and elderly care, all of which needless to state is unpaid. Straightaway this puts the woman not only in a dependent position but also one in which her commitment to outside work would be considered less obligatory given her responsibilities within the household.

- This shapes the norms of relative disadvantage for women vis a vis men in terms of where they are positioned in the economy, what they are skilled to do and where and on what conditions they work. Only 50 percent of working age women are represented in the labour force globally compared to 72 percent for men.
- Women are over represented in the informal economy and are found significantly at the base of the pyramid. Even though employment has been becoming increasingly informal for men too, their status is better and are at the top or near the top of the pyramid.

- In India, female work participation rates have not only been very low but also declining
- Situation of Kerala- the paradox
- Cooperatives proved their resilience –social and community commitment a perspective which has to be brought back in the bleak work situation which exists now, denying workers a decent wage and their rights to organize.
- In the emerging work situation at least cooperatives would ensure some semblance of decent work

- My concern how to draw more women into the workforce and through modes of organization that would ensure them a decent wage.
- If we examine the areas in which women tend to be concentrated it is agriculture, petty production , a large proportion of which is in traditional industries.

- Most Governments in the developing world have actively promoted cooperatives in traditional industries with a view to overcoming the diseconomies of small scale. Characterised as these sectors are by numerous small producers at the mercy of traders both in the input and output markets a cooperative form of organisation appears to hold tremendous potential for increased production by overcoming the technical and managerial problems of horizontal integration. However, this does not always work, esp for state initiated coops.
- A major causal factor appears to be the tendency towards imposition of a state type bureaucratic structure with possible political interference distancing them from their members which affects their functioning both in terms of motivation as also soaring overhead costs.

- If coops have to work in this changing world of work and increasing competitiveness some lessons learnt are very essential esp the type of support mechanisms set up by the Mondragon and ULCCS model- educational/ training system and finance ; the ratio between the workers and supervisors. How about the broad association of parents, teachers, students and supporters from the community. Altho not transferable to other settings Eg So if Kerala sets up the bank, then feasibility studies, appraisals are part of the bank's responsibility not only to fund new ventures but handhold in terms of entrepreneurial assistance in terms of social, economic and technical assistance and help in their expansion. like it was done by Caja laboral popular.
- A lot must have been discussed about alternatives and innovations, but given the structure of women's employment in Kerala my focus is on what innovations can be evolved in the traditional cooperative sectors as also modern manufacturing enterprises and secondly how do we ensure that women cooperatives can leverage opportunities emerging in sunrise sectors like IT and ICT

- Worker cooperatives have not remained untouched by the phenomenon of internationalization: they, too, face its challenges head-on. If they want to remain competitive in a globalizing market, worker cooperatives are forced to expand domestically and internationally.
- However, worker cooperatives are also expected to maintain cooperative values and not to negatively affect employment conditions in their newly created subsidiaries; consequently, they are urged to explore alternative forms of organization that can respond to society's economic, social, and democratic needs. Amid this dilemma, worker cooperatives have been forced to search for the most suitable path to address the tensions that emerge from balancing competitiveness with cooperative values, such as economic democracy and solidarity.

- The Mondragon case and the ULCCS are illustrative of how to tackle the emerging contradictions by renewing its organization of managerial structures. The evidence collected shows that the Mondragon group has remained devoted to cooperative values while following global economic trends to stay competitive in the international market. For eg the Mondragon cooperatives have not offshored their business but rather they have followed a multi-location strategy. Thus, they have pursued some strategies implemented by capitalist companies while simultaneously maintaining and creating employment in the local community as well as in foreign locations, where they have tried to recreate some of their cooperative values . Similarly in ULCCS, how thry handled migrant workers anf their diversification into IT

- One or two issues to be
- discussed - is it easier to form SHG

- How to make such social coops in social sectors viable
- How to provide the supporty services
- Role of the Kerala Coop Bamk and ULCSS

- Extant research has already addressed several aspects of this contradiction. that the international expansion of Mondragon's cooperatives follows capitalist strategies by generating, for instance, an increase in non-cooperative employment, which is contrary to cooperative values. However, while recognizing this contradiction, others have also analyzed Mondragon efforts to overcome it. They emphasized that, despite the legal, financial, and cultural difficulties of opening membership to subsidiary companies, both participatory mechanisms and the possibility of shared ownership developed in non-cooperative subsidiaries are real steps forward.
- Similarly as has been noted in the case of ULCCS, the diversification and diversity of workforce (by employing migrant non-member workers) it was done very strategically without abandoning the cooperative values.

- How do we bring about mutually supporting organisations from education, to training, to finance and for women to reduce their burden of household and care work. And hence one of the areas of work one could think of is the care economy, esp , for the elderly and intellectually disabled or for migrant workers.
- These would help other cooperatives of women doing other activities

- One big surprise I find that ULCCS does not have any cooperative for women. That is one possibility SO how do we handle this: I have been thinking in terms of social innovation and Later, in 2003, during the Eighth Congress, Mondragon's workers approved a 'social expansion' strategy (Irizar, 2005) through which they aimed to combine their cooperative values with the expansion necessary to continue to be competitive at an economic level. Their goal of social expansion refers to gradually spreading cooperative values across all of their subsidiaries by developing participation mechanisms similar to those available to their cooperatives' members.

