

## Govt to develop national database on cooperatives: Cooperation Secy D K Singh

### Synopsis

The Centre has decided to develop a national database of cooperatives that will help in better implementation of the proposed national policy on cooperatives, Cooperation Secretary D K Singh said. The current database is collated by the National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI) and the ministry does not have its own, he said.



To boost productivity, there is a need for cooperatives to focus on allied farm activities and work together with rural collectives like Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), he added. (Image used for representational purpose only)

The Centre has decided to develop a national database of [cooperatives](#) that will help in better implementation of the proposed national policy on cooperatives, Cooperation Secretary D K Singh said on Thursday. "Many people ask how many cooperatives are operating in the country and their sector-wise presence. We have some data but it is not scientific," the Secretary told PTI on the sidelines of an event organized by a digital platform Rural Voice here.

The current database is collated by the National Cooperative Union of [India \(NCUI\)](#) and the ministry does not have its own, he said.

As per the data published by the NCUI, there are about 8.6 lakh cooperatives in the country, out of which active primary [agricultural cooperatives](#) (PACs) are about 63,000, he added.

Stating that scientific data of cooperatives is required for better implementation of government programs, the Secretary said, "therefore, we have decided to create a national database after consultation with state governments, key federations and cooperative unions."

A national database is key for designing a better national policy on cooperatives. "The data needs to be streamlined and we hope this will be done in a year," he added.

Earlier addressing an event, the Secretary said people have high expectations from the newly carved out Ministry of Co-operation.

The ministry is focusing on three main areas: digitisation of PACs, a national policy and mainstreaming the schemes to improve cooperatives under different ministries, he said.

On the status of the proposed national policy on cooperatives, he said the consultation process is underway and the government has sought comments from various stakeholders.

The ministry has written to IIMs, IITs and IIITs to give their suggestions on how to make cooperatives business entities and address the prevailing technology gap in cooperatives, he said.

"We have received a positive response from IIT Jammu. We are awaiting comments from other institutions and stakeholders," he said and added that a national policy will take a little time.

The Secretary also mentioned that the government has found that some ministries are not in the cooperative sector and efforts will be made to rope them.

Speaking on the occasion, National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) Managing Director Sundeep Nayak said NCDC's focus is on rural credit and there has been a rise in credit flow to cooperatives in the last few years.

While credit flow stood at Rs 25,000 crore in the entire 2020-21 fiscal, it has already reached Rs 35,000 crore so far in the ongoing fiscal, he said.

Nayak stressed on the need to improve technology and productivity of cooperatives. For which, there is a need to connect cooperatives with start-ups which are innovating technologies.

To boost productivity, there is a need for cooperatives to focus on allied farm activities and work together with rural collectives like [Self Help Groups](#) (SHGs) and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), he added.

Observing that India has not taken full benefit of cooperatives, NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand said the growth in cooperative sector has been "lopsided" barring exceptions like Amul and IFFCO.

He said there could have been growth in the cooperative sector in Eastern and Northern India, had there been political efforts.

Asserting that there is a need to make farmers self-reliant in the agriculture sector, Chand said, "Farmers at present are dependent on the government for everything and this is not good. I believe cooperatives can help farmers to transform themselves to become self-dependent."

He also suggested that the government should look at cooperatives in a much broader way beyond credit cooperatives.

Leading fertilizer cooperative IFFCO Managing Director U S Awasthi said IFFCO has emerged as a major cooperative as it always looked with different perspectives to become self-reliant.

For instance, IFFCO began production of nano-urea as "it always thought that nanotechnology can be applied in other sectors like space then why it cannot be applied in fertilizers," he said.

About 2.5 crore bottles of nano urea are being produced in the country, saving the government subsidy of Rs 6,000 crore, he added.