

FOREST PRODUCE-BASED COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES

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The Government is promoting cooperative institutions engaged in minor forest produce, handicrafts, organic products and other livelihood activities in tribal areas, including tribal districts of Jharkhand and Gujarat. The National Cooperation Policy, 2025 emphasizes strengthening cooperatives of weaker and marginalized sections, including tribal communities, and promoting value addition, processing and marketing of minor forest produce.

States/UTs are being encouraged to strengthen existing forest-produce societies and, where appropriate, develop them as multipurpose cooperative societies in accordance with the applicable State Cooperative Societies Acts and local economic potential. The National Cooperative Database is also being used to identify gaps in cooperative coverage and facilitate district-wise planning.

Further, Tribal Co-Operative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED) spearheads implementation of Van Dhan programme for collection and selling on Minor Forest Produce (MFP) in Districts which have predominantly forest dwelling tribal population. Under this programme, tribal community-owned Van Dhan Vikas Kendra Clusters (VDVKCs) are set up in the Tribal Districts. For this purpose, 100 % assistance is provided by the Government to the collectives in the form of SHGs/ Van Dhan Kendras.

Financial assistance may be availed by eligible cooperative societies under the schemes of the National Cooperative Development Corporation, concerned Central Ministries and State Governments, subject to the applicable scheme guidelines and approval of project proposals.

The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) provides financial assistance to cooperatives. Under its overall programmes across various cooperative sectors, NCDC disbursed ₹44.40 crore in Jharkhand and ₹2,302.22 crore in Gujarat during the said period.

Measures being taken to enhance the income of tribal households through cooperative institutions include:

- i. promotion of aggregation, processing, value addition, branding and marketing of minor forest produce and other locally available products;
- ii. enabling cooperative societies to undertake diversified activities under the Model Bye-laws, including Common Service Centres, input supply, storage, processing and other rural services;
- iii. facilitating market linkages through national-level cooperative societies such as the National Cooperative Organics Limited and the National Cooperative Exports Limited;
- iv. computerization and digitization of PACS to improve transparency, operational efficiency and access to services; and
- v. representation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the Boards of multi-State cooperative societies in accordance with the provisions of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002, as amended in 2023

vi. Measures being undertaken to enhance the income of tribal households through cooperative institutions include strengthening market linkages, promoting value addition and facilitating access to domestic and international markets. The National Cooperative Exports Limited (NCEL) provides an institutional platform for export of surplus produce of cooperatives, including those operating in tribal areas. The National Cooperative Organics Limited (NCOL) supports aggregation, organic certification, branding and marketing of organic products under the “Bharat Organics” brand.

This information was given by Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah in a written reply in Rajya Sabha.

AK/AP

(रिलीज़ आईडी: 2294921) आगंतुक पटल : 743

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