

Gadgil on Cooperative Movement

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The article brings to light the deep commitment, as well as, the extremely pragmatic approach of Dr. D. R. Gadgil towards the development of the cooperative movement in India. Cooperation appealed to him because it offered an opportunity for people to come together, assume leadership of an organization and promote public accountability. His practical approach becomes evident when he spoke against officialdom but was quick enough to point out the inevitability of government participation at the early stage of the cooperative movement. The cooperative movement he dreamt of could easily accommodate people with different political views. The only condition necessary was that they should act as cooperative members and not as representatives of different political parties.

If cooperation which had subsisted for 50 years, had done so little, we in India had to confess that cooperation had failed and yet cooperation was the only hope.

D.R.Gadgil

Gadgil was intimately associated with the cooperative institutions. He was a member of the Board of Directors of the Bombay State Cooperative Bank (1946-60). In 1948 he became the president of the Maharashtra Regional Cooperative Conference. He was the chairman of Pravanagar Cooperative Sugar Factory (1949-60), of Bombay State Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories (1956-59), Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank (1960-67) and National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories during the same period. In 1963 he became a member of the National Cooperative Development Corporation. He was President of the Federation of All-India State Cooperative Banks (1964-67). In 1964 he was honoured further when he was elected as the president of the National Cooperative Union of India and held that position for some more years. In 1963 the Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank set up Cooperative Industries Commission under the leadership of Gadgil to promote rural industrialisation in the state. Subsequently the Reserve Bank of India recommended this model for adoption by all state Cooperative Banks in the country.

Gadgil was an ardent supporter of cooperation. He asserted, "Planning in the ultimate analysis can be effective only through action of each individual unit of activity in the economy; so that, unless the plan target and the pattern of behaviour called forth by plan-requirements are communicated effectively to each individual dispersed unit, the success of the plan cannot be guaranteed"¹. He added, "Cooperative organisations could be relied not only to implement the plans more effectively but also to carry them out with greater scrupulousness, care and honesty"².

In view of this, it is worthwhile to make a study of Gadgil's views regarding cooperation. They reflect the state of the cooperative movement in India as it was during his lifetime.

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¹ D. R. Gadgil, *Towards a Cooperative Commonwealth*, Punjab University, Chandigarh, 1961, p. 67.

² *Ibid.*