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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT ON PAN INDIA STUDY OF FISHERIES COOPERATIVES FOR EXPANSION OF BUSINESS GROWTH IN 'AMRIT KAAL' AND COMPLIANCE OF SECTION 24 OF MSCS ACT 2002

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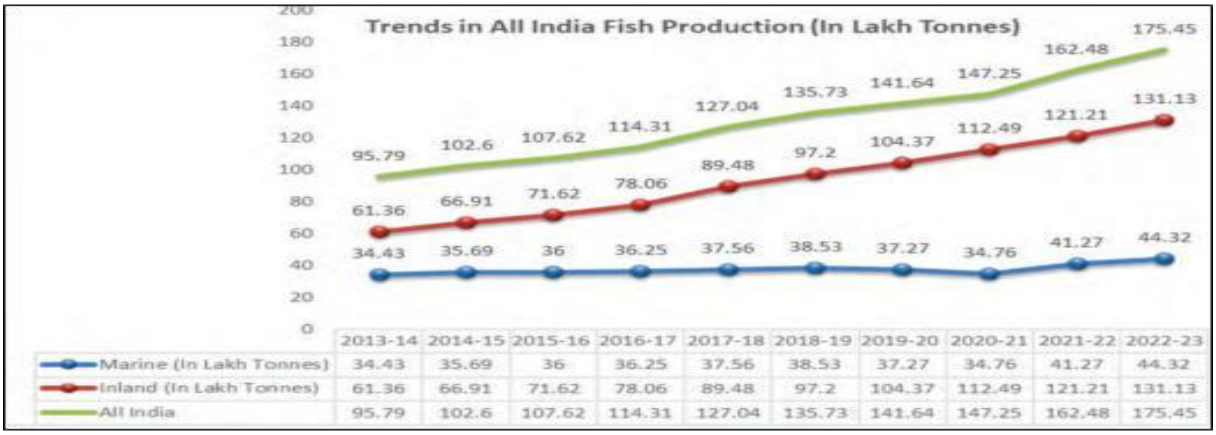
Background

As the 3rd largest fish producer, 2nd largest aquaculture nation in the world and the largest producer of shrimp, India contributes significantly to both domestic food security and the global seafood market.

The Indian fisheries sector not only supports the livelihoods of around 30 million people, especially in coastal and rural communities, but it also holds immense potential for growth, job creation, and rural development. India is endowed with 8,129 km of coastline and about 68.79 lakh hectares of inland water area, providing immense scope for fish production. Apart from making its contribution towards foreign exchange earnings, increased fish production has also contributed to enhancing availability of protein-rich food, increasing employment opportunities and raising incomes of fishermen who belong to the disadvantaged section of the society. The World Fisheries Day 2024 theme was India's Blue Transformation: Strengthening Small-Scale and Sustainable Fisheries.

Figure -1: Trends in All India Fish Production[1]



In addition to shrimp, India produces a wide range of fish, including carps, catfish, and tilapia, which are vital to the global food supply chain.

Growth in Fish Production - Initially dominated by marine fish production, the sector has seen a significant shift towards inland fisheries, which now contributes around 70% of the country's total fish production. This transformation has been driven by the adoption of science-based fisheries management practices and the holistic approach under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), which focuses on optimal utilization of resources, technology infusion, and capacity building. A key contributor to this growth is the culture-based fishery in India's vast network of tanks and ponds, which cover approximately 2.36 million hectares. The PMMSY has sanctioned numerous projects, to further boost production and improve productivity from 3 tonnes per hectare to 5 tonnes per hectare.

[1] https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2075160

Brackish and saline aquaculture has also seen significant growth, particularly in shrimp farming, which has become a major contributor to India's seafood export earnings. India has around 1.42 million hectares of brackish/saline areas, though only about 13% is currently utilized. Cold water fisheries, particularly in the Himalayan states, offer another promising avenue for growth and employment opportunities.

Growing Investment in the Fisheries Sector- The Department of Fisheries received a historic Rs.2,584.50 crore allocation for FY 2024-25, marking a 15% increase in the annual budget. This funding is supporting the implementation of the PMMSY, FIDF, and other developmental schemes aimed at promoting sustainable and responsible fisheries practices. Over the last nine years, the targeted investment in the sector has exceeded Rs.38,572 crores, marking the highest-ever investment in this growing sector.

Government Initiatives and Schemes to Promote Sustainable Fisheries - Blue Revolution Integrated Development and Management Fisheries Scheme or Blue Revolution Scheme was launched in FY 2015-16. The scheme primarily focused on increasing fish production and productivity.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) - The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY), launched in May 2020, is a flagship initiative aimed at transforming India's fisheries sector. The PMMSY is an umbrella scheme with two separate Components namely (a) Central Sector Scheme (CS) and (b) Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS). PMMSY has been approved at a total estimated investment of Rs. 20,050 crores comprising of Central share of Rs. 9407 crore, State share of Rs.4880 crores and Beneficiaries contribution of Rs.5763 crores.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)- To address the critical infrastructure requirements in the fisheries sector, the Department of Fisheries under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying established the Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF) during the financial year 2018–19. With a total fund size of Rs. 7,522.48 crore, FIDF aims to provide concessional finance and loans to Eligible Entities (EEs), including State Governments, Union Territory Administrations, and State-level entities, for the development of identified fisheries infrastructure facilities. FIDF-NCDC cumulative lending to the Eligible Entities (EEs) till 31st March 2023 has been 2741.08.

Kisan Credit Card (KCC) - The Government of India announced Rs. 2 lakh crore concessional credit boost to 2.5 crore farmers including fishers and fish farmers under Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme as a part of Atmanirbhar Bharat Package.

ICAR Institutes – Fisheries Sector - The Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE), Mumbai established in 1961, is India's leading institution for higher education and research in fisheries. By providing technical expertise and scientific knowledge, CIFE has helped improve fish production methods, reduce waste, and develop innovative solutions for sustainable aquaculture. ICAR has several fisheries other institutes located in different states of India such as ICAR-Central Institute of Fisheries Technology (CIFT) in Cochin, ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) in Kochi, and the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture in Bhubaneswar. ICAR- CIFE has regional centers in Haryana, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Bihar. ICAR is also having a National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources, Lucknow.

Promoting Sustainable Fishing in India: Safeguarding Marine Resources for the Future - India's commitment to sustainable fisheries management is reflected in its comprehensive approach to regulating and conserving marine resources, particularly within its territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The subject of fisheries within the 12 nautical miles from the coast falls under the 'State list' of the Constitution, with the coastal states and Union Territories (UTs) enacting the Marine Fishing Regulation Act (MFRA) to manage and regulate fishing activities.

Key highlights of policy efforts

National Policy on Marine Fisheries (NPMF, 2017): The Government of India has introduced the NPMF, which places a strong emphasis on sustainability as the core principle for all marine fisheries actions. This policy guides the conservation and management of India's marine fishery resources.

Regulation and Conservation Measures: To ensure the long-term sustainability of marine fish stocks, the Government has implemented several conservation measures, including: Uniform Fishing Ban (A 61-day uniform fishing ban) during the monsoon season; Prohibition of Destructive Fishing Methods; Promotion of Sustainable Practices (Encouraging sea ranching, the installation of artificial reefs, and mariculture activities); Forming an Expert Committee; Discouraging juvenile fishing.

Fisheries Regulations by States/UTs: Coastal States/UTs have also implemented gear-mesh size and engine power regulations, minimum legal size (MLS) of fish, and zonation of fishing areas for different types of vessels, contributing to sustainable fishing.

Historical Background and Present Status of Fisheries Cooperatives in India

As early as in 1913, the fishery co-operative movement in India began when the first fishermen's society was organized under the name of 'Karla Machhimar Cooperative Society' in Maharashtra. Sir Frederic Nicholson, the then Director of Fisheries in the former Madras Province, was perhaps the first person who initiated the formation of Fishery Cooperatives in India. In 1944, 'fish sub-committee' on Agricultural policy committee recommended that both direct and indirect assistance should be given to the fishing industry.

By 1944, there were hardly 200 fishery cooperatives in India. In 1946, the cooperative planning committee recommended that state aid for the development of fishing industry should be given largely through cooperative societies.

Present Status of Fisheries Cooperatives in India

As per the National federation of Fishers Cooperatives in India Ltd. (FISHCOPFED), there are 22 state level federations, 9 Regional level federations, 147 district level federations and 28144 primary societies with memberships of 3966572**.**

Structure of Fisheries Cooperatives in India

Predominantly, there is a three-tier structure of Fisheries cooperatives in different states of India. This structure incorporates primary Fisheries societies, district level federations and State level federations. This scenario is not uniform in all the states. Selected states are having state level federations of Fisheries cooperatives. There is a national level federation of the Fishers cooperatives - FISHCOPFED.

There are State Federations of Marine, Inland and Brackish Water Fisheries (22). Some are combined federations incorporating all types of societies whereas some are exclusively for particular type i.e. Marine or Inland. There are Regional Fisheries Cooperative Federations in selected states of India (9) and District Fisheries Cooperative Federations (138). At the primary level, Primary Fisheries Cooperatives (28144/ FFPOs registered under Cooperative Act) are existing. (Source: FISHCOPFED)

International Importance of Fisheries Cooperatives and FISHCOPFED

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has recently passed a resolution on promoting the social and solidarity economy for sustainable development. It recognizes that the social and solidarity economy can contribute to the achievement and localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The promotion of social and solidarity economy incorporated weaker section cooperatives like Fisheries. FISHCOPFED is the member of the International Cooperative Fisheries Organization (ICFO), South Korea and also Network for the development of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia and pacific (NEDAC).

Role of NCDC in Promoting Fisheries

NCDC has been assisting fisheries cooperatives since 1974-75 for various activities like Purchase of operational inputs such as fishing boats, deep sea vessels, nets and engines; Creation of infrastructure facilities for marketing, transport vehicles, ice plants, cold storages, retail outlets, processing units, etc.; Development of inland fisheries, seed farms, hatcheries, etc.; Preparation of feasibility reports and Integrated Fisheries Projects (Marine, Inland and Brackish Water). Financial assistance is provided through the State Govt. or directly to the eligible cooperatives. Detailed Pattern of Assistance is available at https://ncdc.in/documents/other/4522131219Activities-Assisted-and-Pattern-of- Assistance.pdf

NCDC is also having LINAC-NCDC Fisheries Business Incubation Centre (LIFIC), Gurgaon which is India's first dedicated business incubator for the fisheries sector. Laxmanrao Inamdar Academy of Cooperative Research and Development (LINAC), the training and consultancy wing of NCDC aims to support fisheries entrepreneurs with training, business model development, and financial assistance, all under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY).

Cumulatively, as on 31.03.2023, a total of seven programmes have already been conducted by LINAC. Cumulatively these programmes have benefitted 82 Young Professionals/ Entrepreneurs/ Progressive Fish Farmers. The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) is the implementing agency for LIFIC. https://lific.ncdc.in/PDFs/LIFIC_Brochure_E.pdf

CSISAC Evaluation results - During 12th five-year plan period, NCDC provided loans to the tune of Rs.9505.61 lakh and subsidy of Rs.137.30 Lakh to the fisheries cooperatives. As per the CSISAC report fisheries federations in West Bengal and Kerala (Sample States) are supporting primary fisheries cooperatives in a big way due to support received from NCDC.

Promotion of savings and giving Incentive/Bonus to the fishermen: In case of Matsyafed, 1.50% (1% of the Catch value provided by fishermen as contribution at the time of auction which is a saving of fishermen + 0.5% share) is given as production bonus to the fishermen. This has helped members to a very large extent in stabilizing their financial conditions. (Source: CSISAC Report 2017)

Capacity Building of Fisheries Cooperatives - Training of fisheries cooperatives are available from various avenues. At the national level VAMNICOM conducts programmes of senior personnel of fisheries cooperatives and RICMs/ICMs conduct programmes of middle level officers. NCUI also conducts programmes for leaders of fisheries through its national centre for cooperative education (NCCE). State cooperative Unions/District Cooperative Unions also takes up programmes of primary fisheries cooperatives and district unions.

About the Study

Need for the Assessment of Fisheries Cooperatives

Ministry of Cooperation expected every National Federation of sectoral cooperative including FISHCOPFED to do an in-depth study of their sector and based on the results of the study prepare an Action Plan for 'Amrit Kaal' (2022-2047) along with target increase in Turnover/ Activities with Milestones for every 5 years. Ministry has also expected all the federations to ensure compliance of Section 24 of the MSCS Act and therefore also desired coverage of the same in the study.

Objectives of the Study and Scope of Work

The overall objective of the study was to assess the present status of different types of fisheries cooperatives in India in terms of their present Business Strategy, Management and Governance Systems, Operational/Managerial and Financial Efficiency etc. The study results are expected to contribute in identifying the potential activities for business diversification and development of strategic road map for achieving 25% growth during 'Amrit Kaal' (2022-2047).

Approach and Methodology of the Study

The whole scenario of Fisheries cooperatives is quite heterogeneous. Different states have different ecosystem in the context of the existence and functioning of Fisheries cooperatives. Therefore, the study was taken up as 'Qualitative study' so that study can capture the context of each sample state. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected from the institutions. **A case study methodology** was applied in the study.

A participatory, consultative, and mixed method approach was adopted to develop strategic road map and implementation plan for Fisheries cooperatives for achieving 25% growth rate during Amrut Kaal (2022-2047). The study was done in three steps: **"As Is" analysis** of Fisheries Cooperatives across India; **"To be"** analysis and envisioning and Preparation of Strategic Road Map and implementation plan.

Under the study, all the relevant documents of cooperatives were collected and analyzed such as Annual reports/Business reports, process and mandates, financial, operational and organizational performance etc. A complete analysis of structure, management, process & operations, technologies, current human resource, skills and knowledge was conducted to understand the present status of Cooperatives/Federations. An **operational analysis** of Fisheries Cooperatives to understand their feasibility and identify areas of improving operational efficiencies was also conducted. In addition, the study also assessed the feasibility of diversification of business. The study covered training and skill gaps of cooperative staff and also current level of **knowledge and skills** of the members. An analysis of the **policy context** was vital to the establishment of an effective advocacy strategy. Therefore, study also analyzed policy, schemes, provisions provided by state and central governments; and the policy system concerning Fisheries cooperatives.

Once the "to be analysis is done, transitional strategies and plans were developed to fill the difference identified in the "As Is" (Current status of Fisheries cooperatives) and "To be" (Desired status of Fisheries cooperatives) analysis. Strategic road map was included the following but not limited to: Strategies for optimization and expansion- Growth Plan in Amrit Kaal; Proposed Organization Structure and Human Resource and Diversification opportunities.

Data Collection Methods and Tools

A mixed-method approach was adopted for data collection, utilizing both **primary and secondary sources**. Primary data was gathered through various qualitative methods, including **direct observation, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and in-depth interviews** with stakeholders at different levels. Secondary data was sourced from progress reports, annual reports, assessment studies, and documented records of relevant events. The information obtained from multiple sources was **triangulated** to validate and establish the core facts of each case.

The methodology adopted - **reliance on "multiple sources of evidence".** The study relied on the integration of data from a variety of methods and sources of information applying a general principle known as **Triangulation** (Denzin, 1978). The study also covered various Government Schemes for the betterment of Fisheries Cooperatives. It also covered the financing part of the fisheries sector as well as training, insurance etc.

Tool for data collection/ conduct of FGDs/ in-depth interviews

Various tools were developed and used for conducting the study. These tools include - Questionnaire of National Federation – FISHCOPFED; Schedule for State Cooperatives Fisheries Federation; Questionnaire/Schedule of District fisheries federation (Inland Fisheries);Questionnaire/Schedule of District fisheries federation (Marine and Brackish water Fisheries);Schedule for Studying Primary Fisheries cooperatives Societies – (English and Hindi) (Inland Fisheries);Schedule for Studying Primary Fisheries cooperatives Societies – (English and Hindi) (Marine and Brackish water Fisheries) and Schedule/Checklist for conducting the FGDs with the members

Coverage of level and Variety of Fisheries Cooperatives

As far as variety of Cooperatives is concerned, the study covered all the three variety of cooperatives – Marine, Inland and Brackish water fisheries. The study covered fisheries cooperatives functioning at various levels – National level Federation (FISHCOPFED); State federations; Regional Federations and Primary Fisheries Cooperative Societies.

Sampling Method, Plan, Sample Frame and Sample selection

Both purposive sampling and stratified random sampling was applied for the selection of the sample for the study. A **multi- stage sampling method** was applied for the study. States were selected for the study, then districts and thereafter primary cooperative societies of fisheries. Purposive sampling was applied based on the data available at the national level and also information available at the state level. District level federations were also be selected using purposive sampling. In all, 6 States/UTs were taken up under the study. National Federation of Fishers cooperative Ltd. (FISHCOPFED) was studied in detail in terms of its present role and possible role in future. State, Regional Federation, district federations, and primary societies were studied in each of the sample state as per the availability.

Sample Selection of the Primary Fisheries Cooperatives

Once the State Federation and District Federation was selected applying the purposive sampling method, then primary cooperatives were selected based on **Stratified Random Sampling.** Stratification was based on the business volume and variety of functions and activities of the societies.

States covered in the Study include – Rajasthan (Northern Region); Assam (North Eastern Region); Odisha (Eastern Region); Chhattisgarh (Central Region) Maharashtra (Western Region); and Kerala (Southern Region.

Types and level of Societies Covered: In all 7 State Federations, 2 Regional /Central Federations (Odisha), 5 District societies/District Office (Kerala);5 Marine Primary Societies; 16 Inland primary fisheries Cooperatives; and 3 Brackish water primary fisheries cooperatives and one innovative pearl primary fisheries cooperative (Assam).

Models used in the study and also Analysis and Projections; SWOT Analysis Model; Value Chain Model – Michael Porter Model; and Ansoff Model – For suggesting diversification and projections in Fisheries Cooperatives

Key Findings & Recommendations on Fisheries Cooperatives from Sample States

Overall Impression of the study

"Cooperatives in the six sample states found to be different in terms of structure and level of functioning, volume of Business, Membership as well as use of technology. The study covered all the three varieties – Marine, Brackish water and Inland fisheries.

There are states like Kerala and Odisha that have all the three variety of fisheries. States like Kerala is in advance stage in terms of management of fisheries, technology and innovative experiments. In Assam, innovative cooperatives of Aquaculture (Pearl farming) are studied.

It involves cultivating pearls within freshwater or saltwater oysters in controlled environments. The common factor in all the states is that fisheries is an important livelihood for the members of the primary societies. It is a source of Nutritious food and therefore it helps in maintaining the food security of the people and members of the societies.

Fisheries is one sector that can be promoted well through cooperatives. In terms of weaker section development, Fisheries seems to be one of the most important sectors for the livelihoods of Scheduled Caste, Schedules Tribes, Minority and Other backward class people"

Findings of the Study

Administrative Arrangement / Affiliation

Fisheries cooperatives and their members receive institutional support primarily from the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAHD). FISHCOPFED also functions under the administrative purview of MoFAHD as its nodal ministry. At the State level, the Department of Fisheries is responsible for the promotion and implementation of fisheries-related schemes. In most States, the Director of Fisheries concurrently serves as the Registrar for fisheries cooperatives, as mandated under the respective State Acts and Rules. Registration of fisheries societies is thus administered by the Fisheries Department within its established hierarchy.

The Cooperative Department, while playing a more limited role, undertakes important functions such as conducting statutory audits and supporting training and capacity-building. These activities are facilitated through specialized institutions, including the Institutes of Cooperative Management, State and District Cooperative Unions, and Junior Cooperative Training Centres (JCTCs). In most States, the Cooperative Department retains the statutory responsibility for **conducting audits** of fisheries cooperatives.

MIS and Data Base

The study observed that even at the state level, there is no uniform system for compiling data on fisheries cooperatives. A comprehensive and updated database of these societies is largely absent. Previously, the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying had tasked FISHCOPFED for collecting detailed information on primary fisheries cooperatives — including their operational status, membership, and available facilities. FISHCOPFED developed a standardized format and prepared a computerized data report based on state-level inputs. Currently, the Ministry of Cooperation is responsible for maintaining cooperative sector databases. However, FISHCOPFED no longer has a mechanism to regularly update data on fisheries cooperatives. In some cases, such as Kerala, the state federation maintains records—but only for the 700 societies affiliated with the federation, excluding many others. IN Maharashtra there are 2 State Federations, whereas database of FISHCOPFED gives details of one federation only.

Human Resource in Federations

Human resource deployment within fisheries cooperatives federations varies across states. In most cases, government officials are appointed as Managing Directors or CEOs at the state federation level. In certain states, such as Chhattisgarh, the Director of Fisheries also holds the position of Managing Director of the State Federation.

Generally, state federations have the capacity to engage the required staff at both head office and field levels. Federation employees frequently work in close coordination with officials from the Department of Fisheries, ensuring alignment in operations and implementation.

Infrastructure at State Federations level

Most state federations of fisheries cooperatives possess their office buildings and supporting infrastructure. This is largely attributed to the significant involvement and investment by the respective state governments.

Structures of Fisheries Cooperatives in Different states

Structural arrangements of fisheries cooperatives vary across the sample states. At the national level, FISHCOPFED serves as the apex body for fisheries cooperatives. However, since cooperatives are a state subject, the nature of support and the relationship between the state government and different tiers—State Federations, Central/District Federations, and Primary Fisheries Cooperatives—differs significantly from state to state.

Structure Model -1: Two Tier Structure model – State level federation and Primary Societies (Chhattisgarh and various other States) However, it is observed that primary societies do not function directly as agencies of the State Federations.

Structure Model-2: Three-Tier Structure Model – State federation, regional /District federations and Primary Cooperatives (Odisha, Assam, Maharashtra, and other States)

Structure Model -3 (Rajasthan Model): Two Tier structure but state federation is not exclusively for Fisheries but it is Tribal Area Development Cooperative Federation.

Structure Model – 4 (Kerala Model): Two Tier structure - the State Federation (MATSYAFED) functions as the apex with Primary Fisheries Cooperatives directly affiliated to it. This model does not have district-level federations. MATSYAFED operates through its district offices and Cluster offices. In terms of governance and sustainability, the Kerala model demonstrates greater administrative efficiency and structural viability.

Special Privileges for Fisheries Cooperatives in Different States

In different states, fisheries cooperatives have some special privileges compared to private players. Majority of the states have some or the other privileges for cooperatives.

Key Observations on State Fisheries Federations

- The membership strength of State federations varies significantly, ranging from approximately 300 to 700 members.
- Federations exist across all three categories of fisheries—Inland, Marine, and Brackish water (e.g., Odisha, Kerala). Most State federations have their own elected management committees. In the majority of State fisheries federations, government **shareholding is very high, often exceeding 90% and in some cases approaching 100%.**
- In the present context, some federations are having only primary societies as its members i.e., Kerala, Chhattisgarh etc. however other federations are having primary, district and even regional/central fisheries cooperatives as members. (Example - Odisha, Assam, Maharashtra).
- In some states like **Rajasthan, exclusive state federation for fisheries does not exist**.
- With respect to business volume and the range of activities, there are considerable variations across the sample States. The federation in Kerala is

significantly ahead in terms of scale and diversification of activities, whereas federations in other States lag behind.

- All the federations are promoting government schemes like Prime Minister Matsya Sampada Yojna (PMMSY), Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojna (PMMKSSY), Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF), Integrated Fisheries Development Projects (IFDP) of NCDC etc.
- In some states, district federations are not formed and therefore state federations are having their **own district office and even cluster offices** to manage and support fishermen through cooperatives and also directly (Example – Kerala). Some other states are having districts or even regional federations as management units for providing support to fisheries cooperatives and Fishermen/Fish Farmers.

Fig-2: Example of an innovative Cooperative of Aquaculture Assam Pearl Development Cooperative Society Ltd.

- The Assam Pearl Development Cooperative Society Ltd. (APDCS) is a state-level cooperative society registered in February 2023, headquartered at Besamari village of Dhing revenue circle in Nagaon district, Assam. The society is currently operating with entrepreneurs from 70 villages in 32 developmental blocks of 14 districts across Assam.
- APDCS aims to promote sustainable rural livelihoods through integrated freshwater pearl and fish farming. The society focuses on empowering women, enhancing rural incomes, and fostering environmentally friendly aquaculture practices. By leveraging Assam's abundant water resources, APDCS seeks to transform the state into a hub for freshwater pearl cultivation.

Key Issues from the States and Recommendations

Key Issues	Recommendations
Overall (Common to all types of fisheries Cooperatives)	
MIS and Data Base - In sample states, at the state level, compilation of information about fisheries societies in a common format is not happening. Database of the fisheries cooperatives found to be missing. In the present context, the Ministry of Cooperation is maintaining the database of each sector of cooperatives. At present, FISHCOPFED has no system of regularly updating the database of Fisheries cooperatives at the national level. In some cases, like Kerala, the state federation do undertake data of primary societies but only those 700 societies that are members of the federation.	Information about the primary societies, District societies, and State federations on some specific parameters, needs to be made available. This is required to be a regular process to be done after the end of every financial year and also some general information monthly or Quarterly. For MIS, a common format with well-defined indicators for primary societies, District federations/ District offices/Regional federations and state federations are required to have a consolidation at the national level. A one-time census of the Fisheries societies will be required so that updating the same may be continued.There is a need to Develop a real-time Monitoring Information System (MIS) for tracking cooperative health, schemes performance, and fisher welfare.
Structures of Fisheries Cooperatives in Different States- Structural arrangements of fisheries cooperatives vary across different states. At the national level, FISHCOPFED functions as the apex body for fisheries cooperatives. In some states, there exists a three-tier structure comprising the State Fisheries Federations, Central/District Federations, and Primary Fisheries Cooperatives. In others, only the State Federations and Primary Cooperatives are operational. For instance, in Kerala, the State Federation (MATSYAFED) directly has Primary Cooperatives as its members, with district and cluster-level offices managed by the Federation. In contrast, Rajasthan does not have a dedicated Fisheries Federation.	Structures in the states required to be strengthened. There is a need to create district-level federations or opt for district- level offices of state federations (Like Kerala) to aggregate production, coordinate logistics, and facilitate bulk sales. Successful implementation of MATSYAFED shows that the creation of district offices of the state federation and support to primary societies through district and cluster offices of the state federation is a better option.

INLAND FISHERIES	
Weak Financial Position of Primary Fisheries Cooperative Societies: Many Primary Fisheries Cooperative Societies (PFCS) have small share capital and lack working capital, making them dependent on government grants or the support of the Federation. Further, Irregular fish production and poor accounting practices weaken their financial sustainability. PFCSs suffer from limited trained staff, especially in areas like cooperative management, marketing, digital operations, and scientific aquaculture. This reduces efficiency, delays project implementation, and weakens field-level coordination.	Primary Fisheries Cooperatives could be provided with share capital grant by the Central/State Government so that on the basis of the share capital, societies can take working capital loans to do business. Support PFCSs to diversify into value-added fish products, ornamental fishery, fish seed production, etc. Primary societies may be supported for Engaging trained human resources so that their business is expanded and financial position is strengthened. State federations should function as a Business Incubator for PFCS - Use its apex status to mentor and incubate Primary Fisheries Cooperative Societies (PFCS) into high- performing business units. This can be done in collaboration with FISHCOPFED and LINAC (NCDC)
No or Poor Infrastructure in the District or Primary Societies - Inadequate Infrastructure, Storage, and Transportation Facilities: Many districts and primary societies still lack adequate cold chains, transport, fish drying facilities, and storage infrastructure. Rural fishers are unable to access quality inputs like seed, feed, and healthcare. These cooperatives do not receive government support to construct offices or godowns, nor to purchase vehicles. (Assam, Odisha, Chhattisgarh)	Through a special mission, the infrastructure at the primary society level needs to be promoted. Societies do not have the financial capacity to create infrastructure. The schemes should be made more conducive in terms of basic requirements for getting the finance.
Market Access and Price Fluctuations - PFCSs often lack direct market linkages and bargaining power and therefore relying on middlemen; Seasonal oversupply during peak harvests leads to price crashes, impacting fisher incomes. Limited exposure to market dynamics has rendered members incapable of effectively negotiating fish prices, resulting in a reliance on local intermediaries and local markets. Consequently, members often find	Improved exposure to market dynamics will make members capable of effectively negotiating fish prices and not relying on local intermediaries and local markets. Awareness and Branding - Conduct statewide Fisheries Fairs, PFCS Showcases, and Fishery Awards to encourage innovation and recognize excellence. Set up a fish processing and training hub under PMMSY/PM-FME

themselves selling their products at prices considerably below standard market rates.	Include solar drying, smoking, freezing, and packaging units at the primary society level.
Regulatory and Policy Gaps – Issues of leasing - Inconsistent implementation of fishing bans and problems of leasing of water bodies create local disputes. **Short-Term Leasing Structure:** In some states, it is short tenure (Five years in Maharashtra / seven years Assam) of lease duration. This is disincentivizing cooperative societies from committing to long-term investments necessary for sustainable fishing practices and infrastructure improvement.	At the federation level, there can be a special legal cell supporting small primary fisheries cooperatives. It is recommended to consider extending the lease duration. This modification would incentivize primary fishery cooperative societies (PFCS) to invest more substantially in both sustainable practices and infrastructural developments. The lease term should be at least 10 Years, like Chhattisgarh.
Skills Development – For new entrants in the field of fisheries and also old fisheries entrepreneurs' Skills gaps are identified.	Federations establish itself as a center for fisheries entrepreneurship and cooperative governance training; Set up a dedicated training wing in collaboration with ICAR institutes; Design skilling programmes: FishPreneur, FishCoop Leaders, Women in Aquaculture Provide certification, incubation support, and market exposure visits; Tie-up with NSDC, Skill India; Exposure visits to successful experiments and hands-on practice will be highly useful.
Export through federations involving primary societies – In several states, state federations and primaries are not equipped to export yet.	Forge Export Linkages and Global Certifications – There is a possibility to position cooperative fishery products for export to Southeast Asia, Gulf, and European markets as unique indigenous fish varieties. Several states have Institutional aggregation capacities but need guidance. It is recommended to:Support PFCS in attaining FSSAI, HACCP, and EU-compliance certifications; Partner with APEDA, and MPEDA for export facilitation; Open liaison offices or MoUs with NE cargo export hubs; Run export-potential exposure visits and trade fairs.

Problems in Getting Credit – Credit support to the primary societies and members of the Fisheries Societies is not readily available. Banks are reluctant to disburse loans/credit cards to society members and demand collateral guarantees. As a lot of paperwork is required for the application filling members are unable to take advantage of Central/State Schemes. (Rajasthan)	**Leverage Financial Convergence & Cooperative Banking –** State federations can act as an intermediary to channel credit, subsidies, and insurance to PFCS, enhancing their financial viability. Linkage of Primary fisheries societies with PACS for credit support is also required. Moreover, NGO-MFIs like Sanghamithra and others can be associated with providing savings and credit support with federations as intermediaries. Govt agencies should facilitate less literate tribal fishers in filing online applications and project report preparation.
No Websites in some state federations- Some state federations do not have their websites (Chhattisgarh).	FISHCOPFED may ensure and support the website development of each and every state federation of the country. Interlinkages may be developed with the website of the national federation. This is also important for knowledge sharing.
Information and Knowledge gaps - Gaps in the knowledge of the members related to cooperative functioning as well as schemes are seen in several states. In some societies, no training had been conducted including the Awareness Programme for the Board of Directors of the Society as well as members. (Primary societies in Akola, Maharashtra)	Specific training on various topics is to be organized for the members of the fisheries such as coverage of schemes of fisheries, MSME, NCDC, and other corporations like The National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) and National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC). It is also important that in collaboration with the Fisheries Department and National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), FISHCOPFED and State federations also organize programmes for the awareness Schemes especially on the insurance scheme under PMMSY. Exposure visits of the active fishermen of the state from different societies can be organized within and outside the state to good working fisheries societies.

Knowledge Sharing - A regular and structured knowledge-sharing system between the State Federations and Primary Fisheries Cooperative Societies is lacking in most states. This gap hinders the effective dissemination of best practices, technical know-how, and policy updates to the grassroots level.	Knowledge Sharing in the states is important using various mediums – Websites, WhatsApp, emails etc. Important documents like Fisheries Policies, Model Byelaws, and similar other important information including technical information can be regularly Circulated.
Promotion of Principles of Cooperative: At the grassroots level, members of fisheries cooperative societies are generally found to have limited awareness about the core principles of cooperatives.	In order to propagate the principles of cooperatives, the State federations, in collaboration with the FISHCOPFED can undertake some promotional activities like conducting some events like debates, posters, and competitions on seven principles of cooperation. Since 2025 is an international year of cooperatives, therefore it becomes more important to publicize the importance of ICA – seven principles of Cooperatives.
Records and Books of Account: There is no standard system of keeping books of record and accounts in primary fisheries societies. It was observed that societies are often not keeping records of production ponds/water bodies wise. In that case it is difficult to analyze which pond is giving better production. Similarly, the books of accounts maintained are different in different societies. Limited awareness of basic accounting, financial documentation, and budgeting results in irregular record-keeping and transparency issues. Many members rely on traditional methods instead of formal bookkeeping. (Example – Chhattisgarh, Assam)	A uniform system of record-keeping can be introduced across societies in all states to streamline data management. Additionally, well-functioning societies may be designated as Nodal Societies to maintain computerized records of fish production and fish seed production, especially where they are actively engaged in seed production activities. Computerized recording of fish and fish seed production will bring more transparency.

Promotion of FFPOs – In some states (i.e. Chhattisgarh), NCDC has given the work of promoting FFPOs to some private /NGO and not to Fisheries federation, however Federation is fit to function as CBBO (Cluster Based Business Organization).	In the states, fisheries federations are more appropriate agencies to promote FFPOs. Hence, preference needs to be given to state fisheries federations to promote fisheries FPOs.

Lack of Grant or Share Capital Support from the Government - In some states, the Government is not providing any grant or subsidy to strengthen the financial position of the Federations. The government has not contributed any share capital in the state federation in some states. (Maharashtra)	The State Governments (i.e. Maharashtra) may consider providing some grant or subsidy to the State Federation to enable the Federation to take up some work for the District or Primary Societies. Moreover, the State government can provide share capital to the federation to strengthen its financial position.
Specific/ No dedicated State Federation for Fisheries - In states like Rajasthan, a dedicated State Federation for Fisheries does not exist. This limits the scope for organized support, coordination, and scaling of fisheries activities through cooperative structures.	State governments should proactively promote dedicated State Federations for Fisheries by contributing substantially to their share capital. In several states, the government has contributed over 95% of the total share capital, ensuring strong institutional support and enabling the federations to operate effectively and sustainably.
Ban Imposed by Forest and other Departments: The Forest Department and other Departments have imposed ban on catching the fish nearer to the Reserve Forest area. The District Federation (Akola, Maharashtra) had been fighting for the cause of Primary Societies to remove the ban order. some of the Primary Societies have been closed because of this ban order. (Akola, Maharashtra)	Central and state Government may come out with clear norms on utilization of water bodies in forest areas for fisheries.
Marine and Brackish Water Fisheries	
Illegal and Unregulated Fishing: Some illegal and unregulated fishing in the sea vitiates the whole environment. Ban period of fishing is often violated.	For the protection of small fish and an increase in fish production, a fishing ban period of 90 days should be maintained in the entire western sea areas every year and it should be strictly implemented. For the protection and conservation of small fish and for the fish to be available indefinitely, proper management of fishing in the marine area should be done under the guidance of fisheries scientists and researchers.

Compensation Due to Natural Calamities: Fishermen often face damage to their fishing gear and related equipment due to frequent storms, unseasonal rains, and changing weather conditions. Additionally, activities such as geological surveys conducted in the sea by the Central Government and other agencies also contribute to such damages.	It is necessary to evaluate the damage and implement appropriate criteria government should consider fishermen like farmers and provide compensation.
Dam Projects Problems: Because of Versova Sea Dam Project, there is a disturbance for fish catch. The State Government provide compensation to the fisherman of all the societies, However, some of the societies are not getting the benefit. Similarly, Another Vadhavan and Jindal Project construction may affect the fishermen community badly. Maharashtra Fishermen Action Committee, Thane District Fishermen Central Cooperative Union and Thane District Fishermen Society filed a petition in the Supreme Court. (Maharashtra)	State government should see the after-effects of the big projects on fishermen community and their livelihoods at the time of planning of such projects.
Reduced Monsoon fishing ban period - The Government has enforced a monsoon fishing ban in the State's marine sector from June 1st to July 31st. However, the current 60-day ban period is considered inadequate, raising concerns over the sustainability of marine resources. Continued overfishing during non-ban periods, along with the emergence of destructive practices such as fishing with LED lights and methods observed in the Persian Gulf, poses a significant threat to marine biodiversity and long-term fishery livelihoods. (Maharashtra)	It is recommended that the Government extend the monsoon fishing ban to a full 90- day period, from May 15th to August 15th, covering both territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). This measure is essential for sustainable fishery practices. Additionally, the existing ban under the Maharashtra Marine Fisheries Regulation 1981 (Government Decision No. Fisheries 1118) on destructive fishing practices—particularly the use of LED lights and other modern technologies—must be strictly enforced by the Fisheries Department to protect marine biodiversity.

Strategies for Business Expansion and Diversification of FISHCOPFED and Fisheries Cooperatives during 'Amrit Kaal'- Projection of the Future

Understanding of 'Amrit Kaal': The term **Amrit Kaal**, originating from Vedic astrology, denotes a period of immense auspiciousness—often regarded as an ideal time for initiating new ventures. Traditionally, it signifies a phase of prosperity, progress, and transformation in both celestial and earthly domains. **Amrit Kaal is** not merely as a symbolic concept, but as a **national mission** aimed at achieving **inclusive, sustainable, and technology-driven growth** by the time India commemorates its 100th year of independence.

Vision for 'Amrit Kaal' – an empowered and inclusive economy

Union Finance Minister highlighted that "Our vision for the Amrit Kaal includes technology-driven and knowledge-based economy with strong public finances, and a robust financial sector". The economic agenda for achieving this vision would focus on three priorities: Facilitating ample opportunities for citizens, especially the youth, to fulfil their aspirations; Providing strong impetus to growth and job creation; Strengthening macro-economic stability.

Recent Developments in Fisheries Sector

Fisheries Secretaries Conference & National Workshop on Innovation in Aquaculture – 23 May 2025, New Delhi (Department of Fisheries, MoFAH&D) - Key outcomes included: **Collaborative Growth:** Scaling up fisheries through innovation, institutional synergy, and satellite technology for fisher safety, resource mapping, and biometric/facial recognition; **Smart Infrastructure:** Priority on developing integrated, eco-friendly fishing harbors and modern fish markets aligned with green/blue sustainability; **Drone Pilot:** Initiation of a drone-based live fish transport pilot (70 kg payload); **Technology & Clusters:** Promotion of advanced aquaculture technologies via ICAR, cluster-based development, and startup support in processing, packaging, and marketing; **Resource Utilization:** States encouraged to leverage **Amrit Sarovars** for fisheries and promote **ornamental fisheries**, **seaweed farming**, and **artificial reefs** with private sector involvement; **Inland Fisheries:** Inland states/UTs to accelerate NFDP registration for enhanced access to Central schemes; **Marine Fisheries:** Coastal states to advance mariculture zoning, vessel monitoring via **ReALCraft**, and smart harbour projects under FAO's Blue Port framework; **Credit Access:** Financial institutions to be sensitized on modern fisheries models to improve inclusive lending; **Post-Harvest Needs:** Enhance post-harvest infrastructure—fish kiosks, cold chains, and hygienic markets—to strengthen the value chain; **Market Linkages:** Strengthening physical and digital market linkages is essential to ensure fair pricing and income stability for fishers. (Source: PIB)

Growth Strategies of Fisheries cooperatives in 'Amrit Kaal'- Focus on Primary Stakeholders

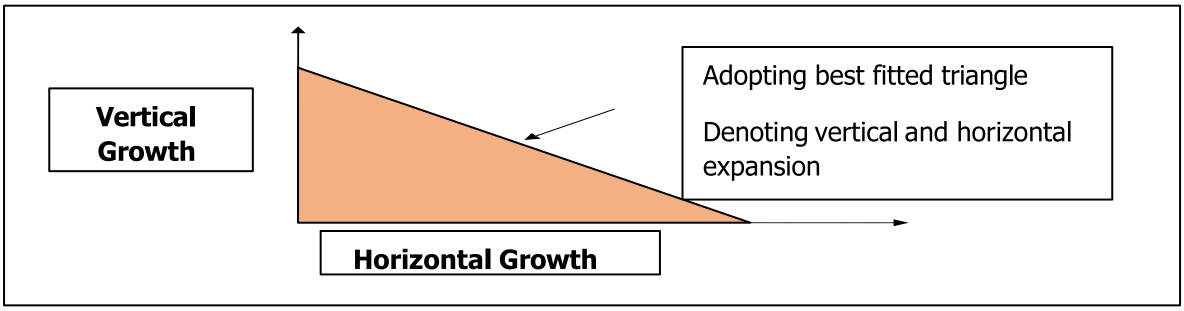
In the 'Amrit Kaal' phase, the growth strategy for fisheries cooperatives must place primary stakeholders at the core of development planning. These stakeholders include: **Fishers** (Marine and Brackish Water); **Fish Farmers** (Inland Fisheries); **Potential Members** of existing and emerging cooperatives; and **Fisheries-Linked Entrepreneurs** (involved in marketing, transportation, boat/net making, etc.)

The strategy must equally prioritize both **supply-side stakeholders** (fishers, farmers, entrepreneurs) and **demand-side stakeholders** (customers and consumers). Understanding and responding to consumer preferences is essential for long-term viability and market relevance. In essence, a people-centric, market-responsive, and system-aligned approach is vital for driving sustainable growth of fisheries cooperatives

Two-Way Strategy of Growth in 'Amrit Kaal'

A two-way strategy is proposed for fisheries cooperatives to maximize benefits for stakeholders and members during 'Amrit Kaal'.

Figure: Best Fitted Triangle



Horizontal Growth

Horizontal growth focuses on expanding outreach and inclusivity through:

New Members and New Cooperatives - Bringing more unemployed youth and stakeholders to the cooperative fold in fisheries sector

New Geographical areas and New clients - Expanding the functioning of fisheries cooperatives; identifying emerging fisheries clusters and setting up cooperatives accordingly.

Vertical Growth

Vertical growth focuses on deepening the scope, efficiency, and sustainability of fisheries cooperatives by:

- **New Products and Services in fisheries Sector –** Introducing new products like ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat fish-based products, as well as various value - added by-products.

- **Enhancement of Volume of Business -** Scaling up the existing operations through supportive government policies—such as business reservations for cooperatives, share capital grants, and collateral-free working capital.
- **Diversification of Business –** Exploring related livelihood sectors aligned with member skills, such as pearl farming (as seen in Assam), seaweed farming, fish manure production, and ornamental fisheries.

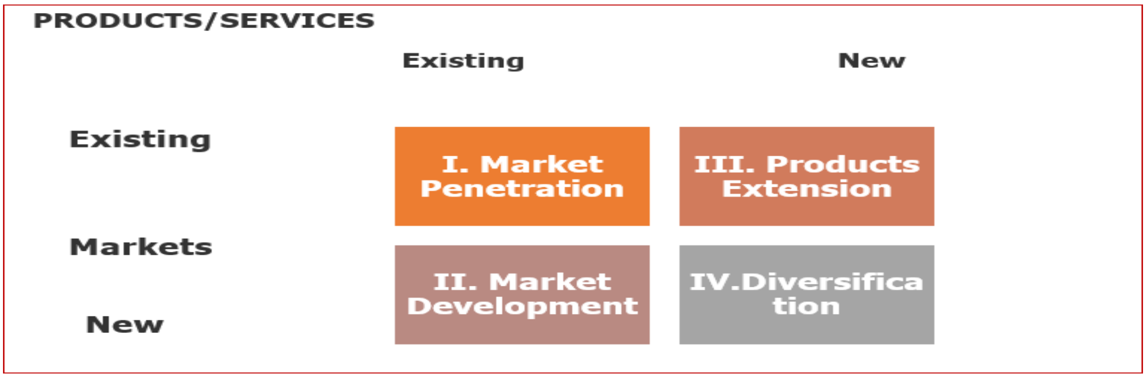
- **New Partnerships / Networking / Linkages – Collaborating with key ministries**—Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying; Cooperation; MSME; Rural & Urban Development; Health; Agriculture & Farmers Welfare—for integrated development. Networking with **private sector players** for sub-contracting, franchising, and market linkages can also offer new business prospects.

  In states with weak cooperative structures, emphasis must be placed on creating and strengthening second- and third-tier federations to support primary cooperatives. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) and intra-cooperative collaborations should be proactively explored for sustainable sectoral growth.

Model for Business Diversification of Fisheries Cooperatives - Ansoff Matrix

The Ansoff Matrix serves as a strategic planning tool to guide enterprise growth by mapping out four distinct pathways: market penetration, market development, product development, and diversification.

Figure: The Ansoff Matrix



The key dimensions are defined as follows:

- **Existing Products/Services**: Refers to the current portfolio of fish and fishery-related products and services offered by fisheries cooperatives, such as fresh fish, fish seeds, ice, diesel, or value-added fish products.
- **New Products/Services**: Represents innovative or diversified offerings that cooperatives intend to introduce, such as ready-to-eat/cook fish items, ornamental fish, fish manure, and processed seafood products.
- **Existing Markets**: Constitutes the current clientele and geographic areas where the cooperatives are already operating—this includes retail buyers, wholesale buyers, local consumers, and institutional partners.

- **New Markets**: Encompasses untapped regions, customer segments, or distribution channels that cooperatives plan to explore—such as online marketplaces, export opportunities, or new institutional buyers (schools, hospitals, corporate catering services).

Four Growth Strategies in fisheries cooperatives possible as per Ansoff Matrix

1. Market Penetration: Maximizing Existing Markets

In the context of fisheries cooperatives, market penetration refers to deepening the cooperative's presence in existing geographic areas by offering the same products and services to a larger share of the local population or existing client base.

2. Market Development: Expanding into New Territories

This strategy applies to all levels of fisheries cooperatives—primary, district/central, and state federations. For FISHCOPFED, this includes identifying and developing new geographies where the fisheries cooperative movement is currently underdeveloped but holds potential. Strengthening institutional structures in such regions should be a key focus.

3. Product Development: Innovating for Existing Markets

This strategy is relevant across inland, brackish water, and marine cooperatives. Innovation may include ready-to-eat or ready-to-cook fish-based products, value-added by-products such as fish pickles, fish oil, or fish-based snacks. **Pearl production** and other by-product innovations can also be explored as part of this strategy.

4. Diversification: Pioneering New Markets and Products

In Fisheries cooperatives, in order to keep risk factors low, diversification is proposed in the related areas only which may be called **'Linked Diversification'.** Diversification of activities is required from National federation level to state federations, District federations and Primary societies as per the relevance.

The four strategic directions of the Ansoff Matrix—**Market Penetration**, **Market Development**, **Product Development**, and **Diversification**—are highly applicable across all tiers of fisheries cooperatives. Each offers a pathway for sustainable growth, income generation, and enhanced market engagement during the 'Amrit Kaal' period.

Strategies for National Federation of Fishers Cooperatives Ltd. (FISHCOPFED)

1. Repositioning FISHCOPFED as a 'Business Entity'

The past income-generating activities indicate that FISHCOPFED has the potential to operate as a business entity. Going forward, FISHCOPFED should balance its promotional mandate with sustainable business ventures.

2. National Agency for Fisheries Equipment and Transport

FISHCOPFED can act as a nodal agency for procurement and distribution of essential fisheries equipment—nets, boats, motorboats, life jackets, cold boxes, and solar storage systems. It can develop a supply chain model with minimal investment and low risk by directly partnering with manufacturers and distributors. It can cater to the growing demand in the ecotourism sector by supplying fishing equipment for recreational and sporting use. FISHCOPFED can also serve as a national distributor for fish nets produced by MATSYFED, creating mutual benefit.

3. Online Fish Marketing Support

FISHCOPFED can assist state federations in developing **online fish marketing systems**, leveraging primary societies and independent vendors. This would improve market access and price realization.

4. Support for Research on Innovative Technologies

FISHCOPFED can facilitate research on technologies applicable across marine, brackish water, and inland fisheries.

5. Implementation of Government Schemes

FISHCOPFED previously implemented the Government's insurance scheme, which was discontinued in 2019–20. It can be re-engaged by NFDB and MoFAH&D as an implementing partner for relevant schemes, particularly those requiring coordination with state-level structures.

6. Promotion and Strengthening of Fisheries Cooperatives

FISHCOPFED should actively participate in the promotion and formation of cooperatives across states, in partnership with NCDC and state departments.

As per NCDC's Annual Reports 2022–23 and 2023–24, FISHCOPFED has received cumulative support of Rs. 1.13 crore, indicating ongoing trust and collaboration.

7. Development of MIS and M&E Systems

FISHCOPFED can support the development of MIS and M&E systems for state federations with support from the Ministry of Cooperation and MoFAH&D. A standardized national format can be designed with scope for state-wise customization. Key indicators may include membership, share capital, working capital, net profit/loss, and annual revenue.

Support should also include: Digitization of federation offices; and Capacity building of staff through computer training

8. Promotion of Digital Monitoring & Reporting Tools

FISHCOPFED can introduce digital tools for catch monitoring, cooperative reporting, and compliance tracking. Collaborations with tech partners can help pilot these tools across zones to improve transparency, data accuracy, and decision-making.

9. Capacity building Target Groups

To reverse the decline in training programme assignments, FISHCOPFED should engage fisheries and cooperative experts to deliver capacity-building initiatives in collaboration with NCUI, RICMs/ICMs, and technical institutes. The programmes can cover MDs/CEOs, Managers, Secretaries, Accountants of cooperatives; Officials from cooperative and audit departments; Non-official leaders and members of fisheries cooperatives; Trainers and educators in cooperative training; Project staff and promoters of cooperatives; and Youth, students, and potential fishery entrepreneurs

10. Establishing a Certification & Capacity-Building Hub

FISHCOPFED can evolve into a national center for training, certification, and knowledge exchange. It may develop and offer structured programs on: Sustainable fishing practices; Co-management and governance; and Legal and regulatory compliance

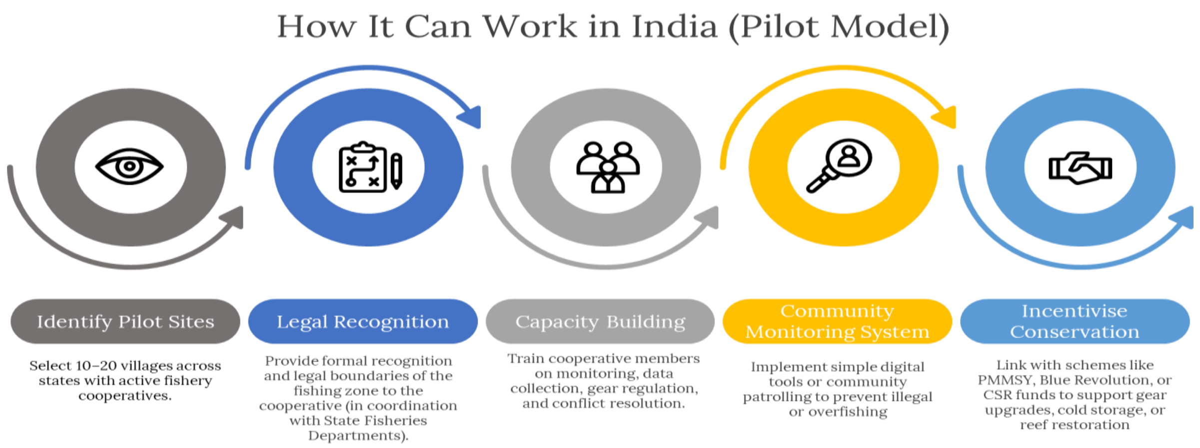
11. Exposure Visits for Capacity Building

FISHCOPFED is well positioned to organize inter-state exposure visits for officials, cooperative leaders, and members to successful fisheries projects. These visits, based on the principle of **"seeing is believing",** can enhance learning and replication of best practices. An annual training and exposure calendar should be developed in coordination with state federations. Financial support may be sought from the **Cooperative Education Fund (Ministry of Cooperation)** and ministries such as **Fisheries**, and **Skill Development & Entrepreneurship**.

Two focus groups are suggested: Existing members (fishers/fish farmers): Potential members (unemployed youth/women with cooperative potential). FISHCOPFED may function as a nodal agency for coordinating these programmes, in collaboration with institutions like NCUI/NCCT and state fisheries departments.

12. Advocate for Community-Based Resource Rights

FISHCOPFED can promote **Territorial Use Rights in Fisheries (TURFs)**—a globally proven model where cooperatives manage defined water bodies. This promotes sustainable fishing, reduces conflict, and strengthens accountability. International models (e.g., Chile and Japan) show that fishers empowered with defined rights act as stewards rather than competitors. India can adopt similar frameworks through cooperatives.



13. Position FISHCOPFED as a National Advocate for Resource Rights

FISHCOPFED should engage with central and state governments to advocate legal reforms that allow cooperatives to co-manage marine and inland fisheries. This would position FISHCOPFED as a national-level voice in sustainable fisheries governance.

14. Anchor Pilot Projects on Community Fisheries Rights

FISHCOPFED should lead and coordinate pilot projects across selected coastal and inland states where fishery cooperatives are granted exclusive or preferential rights to manage and harvest within specific zones.

15. Strengthen Value Chain Integration

FISHCOPFED can link the fishery rights-based pilots to value chain improvements by supporting cooperatives in accessing cold storage, ice plants, hygienic landing centers, processing units, and direct marketing platforms. It can also facilitate branding, packaging, and retailing under cooperative-owned labels.

16. Promote Fisheries Ecotourism

Several federations in states like Kerala, Chhattisgarh etc. are doing some ecotourism activities utilizing the water bodies they are having. FISHCOPFED in collaboration with some experienced tourism company, can come out with some standardized model of fisheries Ecotourism at a national level. In states, state federations can manage the value chain.

17. Build A National Cooperative-Based Sustainability Certification

To further strengthen its institutional brand, FISHCOPFED can develop and promote a sustainability certification model specifically for fisheries managed by cooperatives practicing responsible harvesting and community resource stewardship. Such an initiative would also reinforce FISHCOPFED'S commitment to environmental sustainability and ethical value chains, boosting its profile in both government and private sector platforms.

18. Promote Organic Fisheries

FISHCOPFED can lead the promotion of **organic fisheries**, developing training modules and guidelines to build awareness and certify practices at national and state levels.

19. Tap into Carbon Credit Markets

FISHCOPFED can potentially tap into carbon markets and make carbon credits a viable source of income by promoting climate-positive initiatives across fisheries cooperatives. Although fisheries are not traditionally associated with carbon finance like forestry or renewable energy sectors, several emerging activities within the blue economy offer substantial carbon sequestration and emission reduction potential. For instance, **seaweed and seagrass cultivation** are gaining global recognition for their ability to absorb large quantities of atmospheric carbon dioxide.

20. Scale Seaweed Farming

FISHCOPFED can facilitate the adoption of **seaweed farming** in coastal states such as Tamil Nadu and Gujarat, and integrate these projects with **voluntary carbon markets** and the broader blue economy framework.

21. Mangrove Restoration

FISHCOPFED can facilitate community-led mangrove restoration projects by mobilizing fisheries cooperatives in collaboration with State Forest Departments and NGOs. These initiatives can generate **Verified Carbon Units (VCUs)** while improving coastal resilience. Carbon credits from restored mangroves may be sold to offset corporate emissions, creating a sustainable revenue stream.

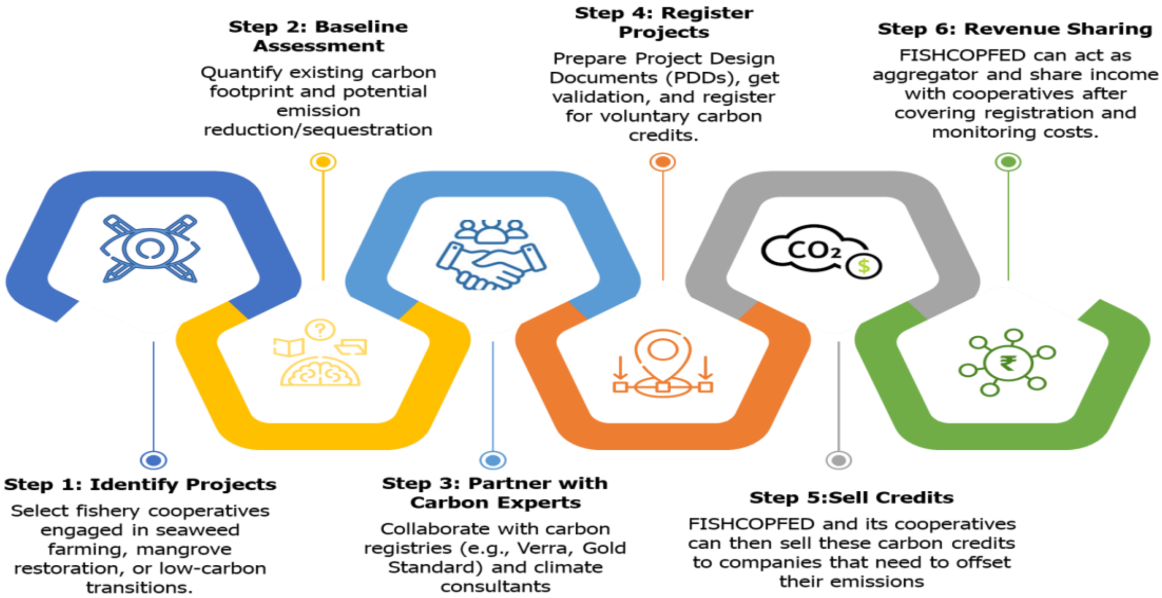
22. Promotion of Low-Carbon Fishing Practices

FISHCOPFED can pilot the transition from traditional diesel-powered boats to hybrid, solar, or electric alternatives. These efforts will reduce emissions and operational costs while qualifying for carbon credits. Emission reductions can be tracked and monetized, supporting both environmental and economic objectives.

23. Circular Economy Initiatives

Fishery cooperatives could engage in **circular economy initiatives like fish waste composting or low-energy drying methods, which reduce methane emissions and energy use, further qualifying for emission reduction credits**.

To make this economically viable, FISHCOPFED can play a pivotal role as an aggregator and facilitator—identifying potential projects, conducting baseline assessments, and coordinating with climate finance experts and certification agencies such as Verra or Gold Standard. It can guide cooperatives through project documentation, validation, and carbon credit registration. once issued, these credits can be sold to corporations seeking to offset their emissions under ESG mandates, creating a new and sustainable revenue stream. A portion of the credit income can be retained by FISHCOPFED to fund future initiatives, while the rest is distributed to participating cooperatives.



24. Promotion of Non-Conventional Energy in Fish Infrastructure

FISHCOPFED can guide states in adopting renewable energy for ice plants and storage facilities at landing centers. It can collaborate with agencies offering green energy solutions and support pilot projects on solar or hybrid systems.

25. Facilitation of Microfinancing

FISHCOPFED can serve as a national facilitator for microfinance by collaborating with NGO-MFIs such as Sanghamithra and routing credit through State Federations. Drawing from models like MATSYAFED in Kerala, fisheries cooperatives can access funding from institutions such as NCDC, NMDFC, and NBCFDC for microfinance, term loans, and self-employment schemes. FISHCOPFED can coordinate between these national agencies and State Federations to scale up credit access in underserved states, promoting financial inclusion and enterprise development among fishers.

26. FISHCOPFED as a 'National Knowledge-Sharing Platform'

FISHCOPFED can establish a dedicated national platform for knowledge exchange in the fisheries cooperative sector. This can be implemented in collaboration with institutions like NCUI or Tribhuvan University and modeled on the UN's Solution Exchange initiative. A Community of Practice (CoP) on Fisheries Cooperatives can be created, with State Federations acting as knowledge hubs at the state level.

27. Activities under Knowledge Services

Key activities under the knowledge platform may include: E-discussions & Query Resolution on value chains, policies, training materials, and sectoral challenges;Action Research Groups focusing on Inland, Marine, and Brackish Water Fisheries; Development of Hybrid Knowledge Products, such as compendiums, ready reckoners, and policy briefs; Face to Face Knowledge Events – Roundtables/Thematic Workshops (regional/national level); Annual Forums for stakeholder interaction, collaboration, and feedback; and **Knowledge Melas** to showcase innovations, technologies, and success stories in fisheries cooperatives

28. Special Drive to Strengthen Cooperative Movement

In line with its mandate, FISHCOPFED should actively engage with State Governments to promote and strengthen fisheries cooperatives from the grassroots to the national level.

29. Enhancing Digital Presence and Information Updates

While FISHCOPFED has a website and social media presence, regular content updates are lacking. A dedicated digital communication strategy should be developed. Additionally, FISHCOPFED can assist State Federations (e.g., Chhattisgarh) in establishing and maintaining their websites.

Institutional and Policy Enablers for Sustainable Growth

30. Promoting Cooperative Principles

To improve awareness of the seven cooperative principles, FISHCOPFED should:

- Publish multilingual posters for distribution to all cooperative levels
- Encourage federations to organize events (quizzes, painting competitions, cooperative runs) during Cooperative Week and beyond
- Seek funding support from ICA and relevant Ministries for publicity initiatives

31. Development of Model Bye-Laws

FISHCOPFED can compile and analyze state-level bye-laws to create model bye-laws for various types of fisheries cooperatives. These can guide states in revising and harmonizing their legal frameworks.

32. Strengthening Institutional Relationships

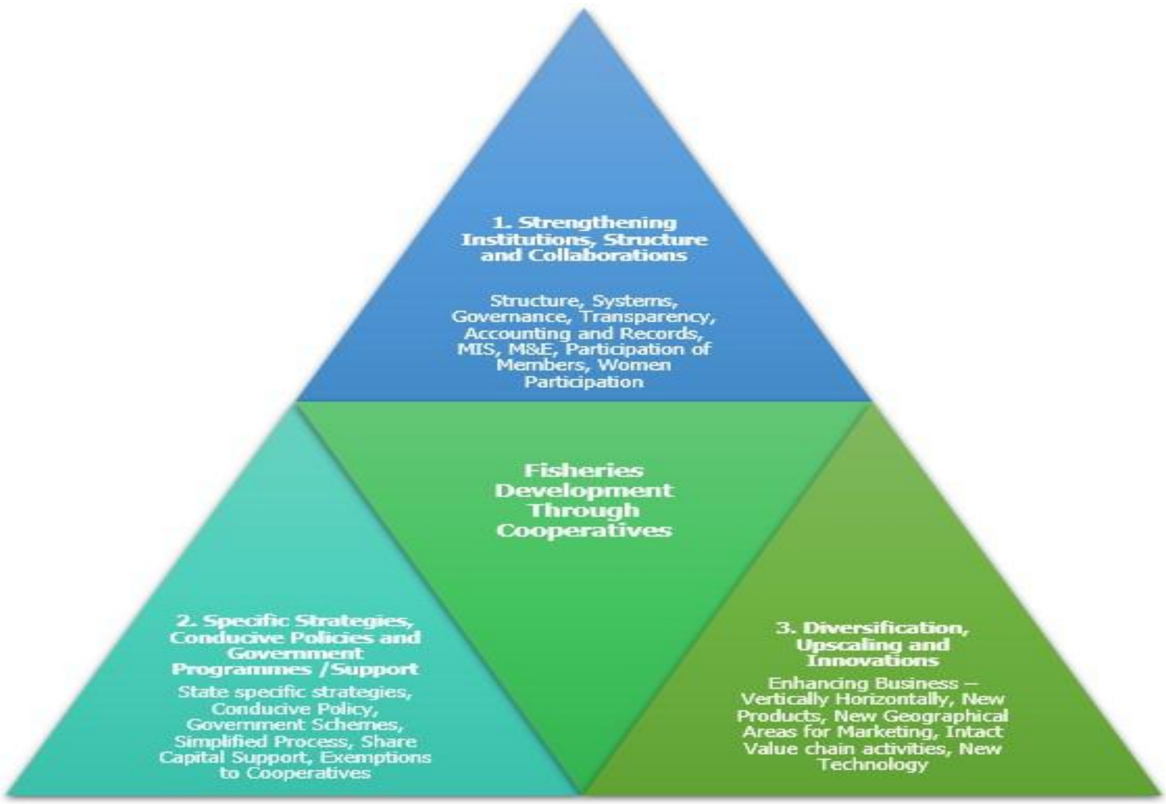
To foster better coordination, FISHCOPFED must maintain strong, supportive relationships with State, District, and Primary Cooperatives. It should regularly pursue state-specific issues at the central level and facilitate dialogue across tiers.

33. Contribution to Fisheries Policy Development

As a national apex body, FISHCOPFED should play a strategic role in shaping fisheries policy. It can assist the Ministry in disseminating the National Fisheries Policy 2020 and support states in drafting or updating their fisheries policies to align with cooperative principles and sustainability goals.

Overall Strategies for Development of Fisheries Cooperatives Sector in 'Amrit Kaal'

Figure: Development Triad for Fisheries Cooperatives



1. Strengthening Institutions, Structure and Collaborations

A key strategy for enhancing the fisheries cooperatives sector involves fortifying institutional linkages, promoting business incubation, leveraging information systems, and expanding outreach through digital tools.

Collaboration with CIFE and FISHCOPFED

The Central Institute of Fisheries Education (CIFE), CIFE plays a pivotal role in capacity building by disseminating scientific knowledge, improving fish production techniques, minimizing post-harvest losses, and advancing innovations in fish health and nutrition. Strengthening collaboration with CIFE will further reinforce technical capacity among cooperatives and fisheries entrepreneurs.

1. Expansion of LIFIC through State Federations

State Federations, in collaboration with FISHCOPFED, should replicate LINAC-NCDC Fisheries Business Incubation Centre (LIFIC) model to establish incubation centres across states. It supports entrepreneurial development, access to finance, and business planning. These centres will assist in developing new fisheries entrepreneurs, forming and strengthening Fish Farmer Producer Organisations (FFPOs), and upgrading Primary Fisheries Cooperative Societies (PFCS) into commercially viable business entities. Dedicated training wings should be set up with ICAR institutions, and tailored skilling programmes should be designed—such as FishPreneur, FishCoop Leaders, and Women in Aquaculture. Integration with NSDC, Skill India, and local colleges is also recommended.

2. MIS based Monitoring and Data Base Management

A unified Management Information System (MIS) is essential to ensure accountability and informed decision-making across all tiers—from primary societies to national-level federations. Standardized formats and indicators should be adopted. A one-time comprehensive census of fisheries cooperatives must be conducted and periodically updated, jointly by State Federations and respective Fisheries Departments. This will help map affiliated and unaffiliated societies, as seen in Kerala where only 700 societies are formally affiliated.

3. Digital Outreach through Websites and Social Media

FISHCOPFED should support federations in IT enablement, including website development and social media utilization. For instance, federations like Chhattisgarh currently lack their own digital platforms. A central initiative may facilitate the creation of websites, online presence, and digital marketing strategies for all federations.

4. Promotion of Fish Farmers Producer Organisation (FFPOs)

National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) has empaneled MATSYAFED to act as Cluster Based Business Organisation (CBBO) for promoting FFPOs under PMMSY. However, in some states such as Chhattisgarh, the opportunity to engage State Fisheries Federations as CBBOs remains untapped. Efforts should be made to empower these federations to act as CBBOs. FISHCOPFED may also take a leading role in scaling up FFPO formation and capacity building.

2. Specific Strategies, Policy Support, and Government Programmes

Tailored Strategy for Himalayan States

Cold water fisheries in Himalayan states hold significant potential. High-value species like trout offer employment opportunities and export value. Cooperatives should be actively promoted in this region with support from institutions such as the Directorate of Coldwater Fisheries Research (DCFR), Bhimtal.

Policy Development Support via FISHCOPFED

FISHCOPFED can support states in developing or strengthening fisheries cooperative policies. It should conduct analytical reviews of best-performing states to provide policy recommendations to others, facilitating knowledge exchange and policy harmonization.

3. Diversification, Upscaling and Innovations

1. Saline Water Aquaculture

Conversion of saline-affected lands in Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh into productive aquaculture zones offers a transformative growth avenue. Policy and infrastructure support should focus on expanding this practice.

2. Pearl Farming Assam and Other Feasible States

In Assam, **innovative cooperatives of Aquaculture - Pearl farming** is becoming a successful model if supported further and expanded. It involves cultivating pearls within freshwater or saltwater oysters in controlled environments. The technology promotion and training needs are to be supported by state and central government.

3. Ornamental Fisheries – Linking Rural to Urban Markets

Ornamental fisheries are gaining traction in urban areas. MATSYAFED's public aquarium and integrated ornamental unit in Thenmala, Kerala, serve as replicable models. FISHCOPFED can utilize retail spaces such as the Hauz Khas shop in Delhi to promote ornamental fish and awareness campaigns.

4. Promoting Fisheries Ecotourism through Cooperatives

Fisheries-based ecotourism holds strong potential for income diversification and community engagement. In Chhattisgarh, sites like Dudhwa, Dhamtari, and Hasdeo Bango are being developed alongside cage fisheries for tourism activities. Kerala's MATSYAFED has successfully implemented eco-aqua tourism at Njarakkal, Malippuram, and Palaikkari, offering boating, angling, eco-huts, and local cuisine through SHG-run canteens. State federations can replicate such models by engaging primary societies and district federations in ecotourism initiatives, strengthening their role in the fisheries value chain.

5. Drone Technology for Fish Transport

A pilot initiative has been launched to develop drones with a 70 kg payload capacity for transporting live fish across difficult terrains, connecting aggregators to distribution points. To scale this innovation, there is a need to establish standard operating procedures (SOPs) and introduce a supportive subsidy framework.

Drone-based transportation is also being explored in conjunction with the development of smart harbors and markets. State federations, with support from district federations and capable primary societies, can adopt this technology—creating new income streams and improving supply chain efficiency.

6. Chitin and Chitosan Production

Fish waste management offers a high-value opportunity through the production of chitin, chitosan, fish meal, and manure—transforming waste into wealth. MATSYAFED in Kerala has demonstrated success in this domain.There is significant potential for cooperatives in other coastal states to adopt chitosan production. Exposure visits to Kerala can be facilitated to understand the extraction and processing techniques, enabling replication and scale-up through the cooperative network.

7. Replication of Fish Net production Model of Kerala (MATSYAFED)

MATSYAFED operates three fish net manufacturing units in Trivandrum, Cochin, and Kannur with a combined annual capacity of 1,250 tons. These units produce a range of products including fish nets, sports nets, safety nets, hapas, and aquaculture cages. Other states can replicate this model to meet local demand and reduce reliance on private suppliers. State federations may either act as distributors of MATSYAFED nets or establish their own factories where demand justifies investment.

8. Statewide Fisheries Input Stores

Inspired by MATSYAFED Vyasa Stores, federations can open dedicated outlets supplying essential inputs like nets, ropes, floats, and engine parts, creating a steady revenue stream and supporting traditional fisherfolk.

9. Fish Manure Production Plants

Fish waste-based manure production presents a viable business opportunity for fisheries cooperatives. MATSYAFED operates two such plants in Azheekode (Thrissur) and West Hill (Kozhikode), with a combined annual capacity of 10,000 tons. Other states can replicate similar initiatives FISHCOPFED can facilitate exposure visits to these plants.

10. Franchisee-Based Fish Marts

Franchisee fish retail models—such as those operated by Service Cooperative Banks under MATSYAFED—should be adopted by other states to improve market access

Online Fish Marketing Platforms

Digital platforms such as www.matsyafedfreshmeen in Kerala allow consumers to order fish online. FISHCOPFED should support other states in setting up similar e-commerce platforms and logistics systems.

11. Frozen Dressed Fish Market

MATSYAFED has introduced a range of ready-to-eat (RTE) and ready-to-cook (RTC) value-added products under the brands MATSYAFED Fresh, Eats, and Treats. These include frozen dressed fish, prawn pickles, fish cutlets, curry mixes, and masalas. Similar product lines can be promoted by other state federations to meet evolving consumer preferences and enhance market outreach.

12. Promotion of Organic Fisheries

India's first organic fisheries cluster was launched in Soreng, Sikkim, promoting eco-friendly, chemical-free aquaculture. Organic fisheries can be expanded in other states, particularly in controlled inland systems. FISHCOPFED can guide primary societies on best practices and compliance through awareness campaigns and technical support.

13. Export Linkages and Global Certifications

To position cooperative fishery products in international markets—including Southeast Asia, the Gulf, and Europe—PFCS should be supported in obtaining FSSAI, HACCP, and EU certifications. Partnerships with APEDA and MPEDA can facilitate exports. Liaison offices or MoUs with cargo hubs in the Northeast and trade exposure visits will further enhance export readiness.

14. Establishment of Sea Food parks

Seafood parks can serve as integrated facilities for processing and value addition of fish for both domestic and export markets. These parks should offer shared infrastructure such as cold storage, freezing units, retail outlets, and seafood cafés, supporting cooperatives, startups, and small enterprises under one umbrella.

15. Financial Convergence & Cooperative Banking

Federations can act as intermediaries to deliver credit, subsidies, and insurance to PFCS, improving their financial sustainability. FISHCOPFED, in collaboration with microfinance institutions like Sanghamithra and government agencies such as NBCFDC and NMDFC, can expand access to microfinance and term loans. States should actively leverage these schemes, with FISHCOPFED playing a catalytic role in coordination and implementation.

Financial Outlook for Fisheries Cooperatives During 'Amrit Kaal'

Macro-economic context to 2047

India's Amrit Kaal vision—articulated in the national "Vision @ 2047" framework—targets a USD 30 trillion economy with per-capita income of USD 18,000–20,000 and a robust, tech-driven financial sector.

Assumptions and data gaps

Cooperative typology: marine, inland, and brackish-water societies (as defined under Section 24 of the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act).

Baseline data (FY 2022–23): 28,144 societies and 3.97 million members, sourced from FISHCOPFED.

Business-volume gap: national statistics do not separately record cooperative turnover. For projections, it is **assumed that 70 per cent of India's fisheries output flows through cooperatives**. Using the sector's 2021–22 GVA (Rs. 2,32,620 crore), the cooperative share is estimated at **Rs. 1,62,834 crores**.

Growth parameters (Assumptions)

Number of Societies and Membership: Estimated to grow by approximately 10% every 10 years, based on trends from the baseline year 2022–23.

Business Turnover: Assumed to increase by about 25% every five years, in line with sectoral targets under national fisheries development programs.

Fiscal support: Department of Fisheries budget for FY 2024–25 is Rs. 2,584.5 crore (15 per cent higher year-on-year). PMMSY targets doubling aquaculture exports to Rs. 1 lakh crore and generating 5.5 million jobs.

Projected cooperative trajectory to 2047

Table: Projections of Fisheries Cooperatives from 2021-22 to 2047

Particulars	Baseline year	Year of 'Amrit Kaal" Period		
	2021-22/ 2022-23	2030-2031	2040-41	2047
Number of Societies (Growth 10%)	28,144	30,958	34,054	37,459
Membership (Growth 10%)	39,66,572	43,63,229	47,99,552	52,79,507
Estimated Business Turnover* (Growth 25%) (In crores) **Quantity 162.48 Lakh Tonnes**	1,62,834.00	2,03,542.50	2,54,428.12	3,18,035.15

Source of baseline data on number of societies and Membership of 2022-23: FISHCOPFED

*Turnover assumes 70 % cooperative share of national fisheries output and 25 % growth for each planning block.

Interpretation

Scale expansion: roughly 9,300 additional societies and 13 Lakhs new cooperative members by 2047.

Value expansion: cooperative turnover expected to double in real terms, outpacing population growth and reflecting a shift toward high-value, value-added products.

Job creation & inclusivity: alignment with PMMSY employment targets and rural income diversification.