



drishti

Sahakar Mitra: Scheme on Internship Programme

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Why in News

Recently, the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare has launched a **Scheme on Internship Programme (SIP) i.e. Sahakar Mitra**.

- It is an initiative by the **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)** for young professionals. It is expected to be beneficial for both i.e. **cooperatives** as well as for the **young professionals**.
- Earlier, the government launched '**The Urban Learning Internship Program (TULIP) Portal**' to provide internship opportunities to thousands of fresh graduates and engineers of the country under the 'Smart City' projects.

Key Points

- **Objectives:**
 - The Sahakar Mitra scheme will help **cooperative institutions** access **new and innovative ideas of young professionals** while the interns will gain experience of working in the field to be self-reliant.
 - It **will provide the young professionals an opportunity of practical exposure and learning** from the working of NCDC and **cooperatives** as a paid intern.
 - It would also provide an opportunity to professionals from academic institutions to develop leadership and entrepreneurial roles through cooperatives as **Farmers Producers Organizations (FPO)**.
 - In line with the **AtmaNirbhar Bharat (Self Reliant India)**, it focuses on the importance of **Vocal for Local**.

- **Eligibility:**
 - Professional **graduates** in disciplines such as Agriculture and allied areas, IT, etc.
 - Professionals who are **pursuing or have completed their MBA degrees** in Agribusiness, Cooperation, Finance, International Trade, Forestry, Rural Development, Project Management, etc.
- **Financial Support:**

NCDC has designated funds for the **paid internship program** under which each intern will get **financial support** over a **4 months internship period**.

National Cooperative Development Corporation

- **Formation:** The National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) was established by an Act of Parliament in 1963 **as a statutory Corporation** under the **Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare**.
- **Headquarters:** NCDC functions through its **Head Office at New Delhi** and multiple Regional Offices.
- **Objectives:**
 - The objectives of NCDC are **planning and promoting programmes for production, processing, marketing, storage, export and import of agricultural produce, foodstuffs, industrial goods, livestock** and certain other notified commodities and services on cooperative principles.
 - The NCDC has the **unique distinction of being the sole statutory organisation** functioning as an **apex financial and developmental institution** exclusively devoted to the **cooperative sector**.
 - It is a major financial institution for cooperatives, and has **recently started Mission Sahakar 22**, which aims to **double farmers' income by 2022**.

About Cooperatives

- According to the **International Labour Organisation (ILO)**, a **cooperative** is an **autonomous association of persons united voluntarily** to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise. E.g. FPOs as cooperatives.
- **An FPO, formed by a group of farm producers, is a registered body with producers** as shareholders in the organisation.
 - It deals with **business activities related to the farm produce** and it works for the benefit of the member producers.

Provisions of Indian Constitution related to Cooperatives

- The Constitution (97th Amendment) Act, 2011 added a new Part IXB right after Part IXA (Municipals) regarding the cooperatives working in India.

- The word “cooperatives” was added after “unions and associations” in **Art. 19(1)(c) under Part III of the Constitution**. This enables all the **citizens to form cooperatives by giving it the status of fundamental right of citizens**.
- A new **Article 43B** was added in the **Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV)** regarding the “**promotion of cooperative societies**”.

Way Forward

- NCDC should develop some techniques to evaluate the performance of cooperatives and encourage them to perform better.
- The scheme will provide a boost to government-academia-industry-civil society linkages.
- Further, India needs to learn from **technical and vocational training/education models in China, Germany, Japan, Brazil, and Singapore**, and adopt a comprehensive model that can bridge the **skill gaps and ensure employability** of youths.

Source: PIB