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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Sociology IAS Mains Q & A revised and updated edition (2024) provides authentic topic-wise solution to previous years' papers.

Answer Writing Approach Adopted in this Book

The answers in this book have been written keeping in mind the specific demand of each question. We have adopted an elaborative approach while writing these answers to arm you with relevant knowledge related to all aspects of a particular topic. In most of the answers, we have provided additional information covering all dimensions, not necessarily adhering to the prescribed word limit while answering the questions. This will enrich your knowledge of the topics, enabling you to write better answers in future. The answers provided herein represent the ideal answer writing approach which aspirants should adopt while attempting the questions.

How to Use this Book?

This book will help you in answer writing practice in two ways: you may use this book as a source of reference for the topics and write answers in your own unique way, or alternatively, you may write answers to previous years' questions and compare them with the standard answers provided in this book.

Importance of Sociology as an Optional

Being a general subject, Sociology helps in many sections spanning all the four papers of General Studies. These include topics from society, social justice, social issues, and related case studies in Ethics (GS Paper-IV). Sociology is considered as a safer optional as it does not require any particular knowledge or academic background for its preparation.

In the current scheme of the UPSC Civil Services Examination, Optional subject has become the deciding factor in getting an interview call. Though UPSC has introduced four GS papers to provide a level playing field, the dynamic and unpredictable nature of questions of GS papers makes Optional subject the magic wand. The toppers' scores also make it amply clear that Optional subject plays a defining role in determining the selection of the candidates.

This book is your ideal companion for preparation for the CSE (Main) examination, helping you get acquainted with the pattern and trend of the exam and the ideal answer writing approach.

Best wishes for your preparation and the journey ahead, and simultaneously we invite your feedback/suggestions at editor@chronicleindia.in

– N.N. Ojha (Editor)

Syllabus-Paper I

Fundamentals of Sociology

Sociology - The Discipline

- Modernity and Social Changes in Europe and Emergence of Sociology
- Scope of the Subject and Comparison with Other Social Sciences
- Sociology and Common Sense

Sociology as Science

- Science, Scientific Method and Critique
- Major Theoretical Strands of Research Methodology
- Positivism and its Critique
- Fact, Value and Objectivity
- Non-Positivist Methodologies

Research Methods and Analysis

- Qualitative and Quantitative Methods
- Techniques of Data Collection
- Variables, Sampling, Hypothesis, Reliability and Validity

Sociological Thinkers

- **Karl Marx**- Historical Materialism, Mode of Production, Alienation, Class Struggle
- **Emile Durkheim**- Division of Labour, Social Fact, Suicide, Religion and Society
- **Max Weber**- Social Action, Ideal Types, Authority, Bureaucracy, Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.
- **Talcott Parsons**- Social System, Pattern Variables
- **Robert K. Merton**- Latent and Manifest Functions, Conformity and Deviance, Reference Groups
- **Mead** - Self and Identity

Stratification and Mobility

- **Concepts**- Equality, Inequality, Hierarchy, Exclusion, Poverty and Deprivation
- **Theories of Social Stratification**- Structural Functionalist Theory, Marxist Theory, Weberian Theory
- **Dimensions**- Social Stratification of Class, Status Groups, Gender, Ethnicity and Race
- **Social Mobility**- Open and Closed Systems, Types of Mobility, Sources and Causes of Mobility

Works and Economic Life

- Social Organization of Work in Different Types of Society- Slave Society, Feudal Society, Industrial /Capitalist Society
- Formal and Informal Organization of Work
- Labour and Society

Politics and Society

- Sociological Theories of Power
- Power Elite, Bureaucracy, Pressure Groups, and Political Parties
- Nation, State, Citizenship, Democracy, Civil Society, Ideology
- Protest, Agitation, Social Movements, Collective Action, Revolution
- Religion and Society
- Sociological Theories of Religion
- Types of Religious Practices: Animism, Monism, Pluralism, Sects, Cults
- Religion in Modern Society: Religion and Science, Secularization, Religious Revivalism, Fundamentalism.

Systems of Kinship

- Family, Household, Marriage

- Types and Forms of Family
- Lineage and Descent
- Patriarchy and Sexual Division of Labour
- Contemporary Trends

Social Change in Modern Society

- Sociological Theories of Social Change
- Development and Dependency
- Agents of Social Change
- Education and Social Change
- Science, Technology and Social Change

Syllabus-Paper II Indian Society: Structure and Change

A. Introducing Indian Society

(I) Perspectives on the Study of Indian Society

- Indology (GS. Ghurye)
- Structural Functionalism (M N Srinivas)
- Marxist Sociology (A R Desai)

(II) Impact of Colonial Rule on Indian Society

- Social Background of Indian Nationalism
- Modernization of Indian Tradition
- Protests and Movements During the Colonial Period
- Social Reforms

B. Social Structure

(I) Rural and Agrarian Social Structure

- The Idea of Indian Village and Village Studies
- Agrarian Social Structure - Evolution of Land Tenure System, Land Reforms

(II) Caste System

- Perspectives on the Study of Caste Systems: GS Ghurye, M N Srinivas, Louis Dumont, Andre Beteille
- Features of Caste System
- Untouchability - Forms and Perspectives

(III) Tribal Communities in India

- Definitional Problems
- Geographical Spread
- Colonial Policies and Tribes
- Issues of Integration and Autonomy

(IV) Social Classes in India

- Agrarian Class Structure
- Industrial Class Structure
- Middle Classes in India

(V) Systems of Kinship in India

- Lineage and Descent in India
- Types of Kinship Systems
- Family and Marriage in India
- Household Dimensions of the Family

(VI) Religion and Society

- Religious Communities in India
- Problems of Religious Minorities
- Patriarchy, Entitlements and Sexual Division of Labour

C. Social Changes in India

(I) Visions of Social Change in India

- Idea of development planning and mixed economy
- Constitution, law and social change
- Education and social change

(II) Rural and Agrarian transformation in India

- Programmes of rural development, Community Development Programme, cooperatives, poverty alleviation schemes
- Green revolution and social change
- Changing modes of production in Indian agriculture
- Problems of rural labour, bondage, migration

(III) Industrialization and Urbanisation in India

- Evolution of modern industry in India
- Growth of urban settlements in India
- Working class: structure, growth, class mobilization
- Informal sector, child labour
- Slums and deprivation in urban areas

(IV) Politics and Society

- Nation, democracy and citizenship
- Political parties, pressure groups, social and political elite
- Regionalism and decentralization of power
- Secularization

(V) Social Movements in Modern India

- Peasants and farmers movements
- Women's movement
- Backward classes & Dalit movement
- Environmental movements
- Ethnicity and Identity movements

(VI) Population Dynamics

- Population size, growth, composition and distribution
- Components of population growth: birth, death, migration
- Population policy and family planning
- Emerging issues: ageing, sex ratios, child and infant mortality, reproductive health

(VII) Challenges of Social Transformation

- Crisis of development: displacement, environmental problems and sustainability
- Poverty, deprivation and inequalities
- Violence against women
- Caste conflicts
- Ethnic conflicts, communalism, religious revivalism
- Illiteracy and disparities in education



SOCIOLOGY - THE DISCIPLINE

Q. Discuss the relationship between sociology and political science. (CSE 2023)

Ans: The two distinct disciplines of social science, sociology and political sciences do converge often as the subject matter is men and the convergence is on the increase.

- A beginning was made with the works of Marx. According to him political institutions and behaviour are closely linked with the economic system and social classes.
- Provoked by this thinking, some thinkers by the end of the 19th century, pursued the matter in more detail like studies of political parties, elite, voting behaviour, bureaucracy and political ideologies as in the political sociology of Michels, Marx, Weber and Pareto.

Differences in Sociology and Political Science

- Sociology has wider scope and is devoted to the study of all aspects of society. Conventional political science restricted itself mainly to the study of state and power.
- Sociology is more open ended in its approach. Subject matter of political science is more codified.
- Sociology stresses the interrelationships between sets of institutions including government. Political science tends to turn attention towards the processes 'within' the government.
- The forces at work and the changes that are taking place in peasant, tribal or caste societies belong more to the sphere of sociologists and anthropologists rather than to that of the political scientist.

Convergence in Sociology and Political Science

- Political science provides laws which affect welfare of masses, sociology provides data and basis of these laws and policies.

- Social considerations like caste, kinships, demography, etc. play an important role in political decisions and especially elections.
- Sociological studies have also been conducted in membership of political organisations, voting behaviour, casteism, process of decision making in organisations, sociological reasons for support of political parties, the role of gender in politics, etc which involves a blend of political science and sociological thinking.
- Social policies of the government often rely on sociological studies. Political system also affects social institutions.

Hence, sociology focuses on social relationships and the impact of social structures on individuals and political science deals with the study of power, governance, and political institutions.

Q. How does the dramaturgical perspective enable our understanding of everyday life? (CSE 2023)

Ans: Sociologist Erving Goffman developed the dramaturgical perspective, a sociological theory that draws parallels between daily life and a theatrical presentation.

- The dramaturgical perspective holds that people portray themselves to others in accordance with society conventions, cultural ideals, and audience expectations.
- Similar to distinct acts in a play, they play diverse roles in various scenarios.
- The dramaturgical perspective sees people as players on a stage, acting out parts in various acts (situations), which helps us understand ordinary life.
- It offers a framework for comprehending our self-presentation in many social settings and how we control the impressions we make on other people.

SOCIOLOGY AS SCIENCE

Q. What is the distinctiveness of the feminist method of social research? Comment.

(CSE 2023)

Ans: A method for doing social science research that emphasises the viewpoints, experiences, and interests of women is called feminist research methodology. It calls into question the conventional, male-centric research approaches and emphasises how crucial gender is to comprehending social processes.

- The focus of this method is on gender equality, power dynamics, and women's subjective experiences that make it distinctive. The emphasis of feminist research is on how power dynamics shape social realities. It critically looks at the distribution and use of power in society, especially as it relates to gender.
- Traditional research approaches frequently seek objectivity, whereas feminist research recognizes and welcomes subjectivity. Feminist researchers engage in reflexivity, which means they constantly reflect on their own participation in the research process. The researcher's personal experiences, biases, and opinions are valued and considered essential.
- Emancipatory objectives frequently motivate feminist study. This indicates that the goal of the research is to alter the world as well as to comprehend it. The goals of feminist research are frequently to draw attention to, combat, and contribute to societal change related to gender injustice.
- Feminist researchers frequently seek to identify and confront gender inequity in order to contribute to social change.

Therefore, feminist research methodology is a distinct approach that prioritises gender, power relations, subjectivity, intersectionality, and emancipation. It helps us comprehend gender inequality and provides a critical lens through which to view social phenomena. It questions conventional research methods and promotes social change by placing a distinctive emphasis on the experiences and viewpoints of women.

Q. What are the characteristics of scientific method? Do you think that scientific method in conducting sociological research is foolproof? Elaborate.

(CSE 2023)

Ans: Scientific Method, in general, refers to any systematic, rational and objective set of steps to explore the truth or new knowledge or for investigating phenomena or correcting and integrating previous knowledge. It is more generally associated with natural sciences and discovery of laws, which govern behavior of matter, is at the heart of scientific method.

The key characteristics of the scientific method include:

- **Empirical Observation:** The scientific method relies on objective observations of the natural world. Scientists use their senses or instruments to gather data about phenomena or events.
- **Formulation of a Hypothesis:** A hypothesis is a testable statement or prediction that proposes an explanation for a specific observation or phenomenon. It serves as the basis for conducting experiments or making observations.
- **Testing and Experimentation:** Scientists design experiments or observational studies to test the validity of their hypotheses. These experiments are structured to gather data and provide evidence for or against the proposed hypothesis.
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** During experimentation, scientists collect data, which may be qualitative or quantitative. Data is then analyzed using statistical methods or other analytical techniques to draw meaningful conclusions.
- **Reproducibility and Verification:** One of the hallmarks of the scientific method is that experiments and observations should be reproducible. Other researchers should be able to replicate the study and obtain similar results to validate the findings.
- **Peer Review:** Before research findings are published, they usually undergo a peer-review process, where other experts in the field evaluate the study's

RESEARCH METHODS & ANALYSIS

Q. What are variables? How do they facilitate research? (CSE 2023)

Ans: Variables are those parameters whose value varies as situation changes and they are key elements of an experiment.

- Generally, there are two kinds of variables. In any research method, there are always some 'dependent variables' and there are some 'independent or fixed variables'.
- Value of dependent variables depends upon value of independent variables and other dependent variables.
- Variables can also be further classified as - experimental variables, measured variables, discreet variables, continuous variables.
- In any study, generally measured variable is also a dependent variable. For example - in studying the educational level of an area, 'Education Level' is a dependent variable, which depend on other variables like - parental income, schools available, teachers quality, cultural values and so on.
- Dependent variable in one situation can be independent variable in another research. For example, in determining the causes of unemployment, education can be an independent variable with unemployment as an independent variable.
- In any social experiment, the researcher first needs to identify the variables and then establish which of them are dependent and which are independent. After that, inter-linkages between these variables have to be established.

Role of Variables in Facilitating Research

Variables help with study in a number of ways:

- They support the development of connections between various phenomena.
- Abstract concepts can be operationalized with the use of variables. An academic researching poverty, for instance, may operationalize it in terms of

variables like work status, income level, or access to essential services.

- Variables also make it possible to measure concepts. In order to test ideas or hypotheses, researchers might gather data and evaluate it by describing variables in terms that can be measured.

Variables are crucial research instruments in sociology. They allow for the comparison of various groups or categories, the operationalization and quantification of abstract notions, and the creation of links between various phenomena. Sociologists can learn more about the social world by precisely identifying and quantifying variables.

Q. What are the different dimensions of the qualitative method? Do you think that qualitative method helps to gain a deeper sociological insight? Give reasons for your answer. (CSE 2023)

Ans: Qualitative Methods refer to examination, analysis and interpretation of observations for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationship to gain better understanding of symbols, motives and meanings.

- Interpretativists and non-positivists favour such methods. Weber pioneered interpretivist approach and used Verstehen and Ideal Types, Mead pioneered Symbolic Interactionism.
- There can be various types of Qualitative Methods like - Observation Method, Unstructured Interview, Case Studies, Focus Group Discussion, etc. are some of the methods.

Dimensions of the Qualitative Method

- **Data Collection:** It covers a range of techniques like focus groups, interviews, and observation. For instance, in order to learn about rural women's experiences with domestic abuse in India, qualitative researchers may interview them.

SOCIOLOGICAL THINKERS

Q. Is reference group theory a universally applicable model? Elucidate. (CSE 2023)

Ans: Reference group as a concept first appeared in - 'Archives of Psychology' of Herbert Hayman, but it was Merton who added a functional dimension in his 'Contribution to the Theory of Reference Group Behavior, 1950'.

This theory was primarily inspired from Samuel Stouffer's - 'The American Soldier' which highlights the feeling of relative deprivation of a soldier despite no apparent deprivation in terms of actual hardship.

The reference group is defined as a group to which one always makes comparisons to in order to evaluate one's achievement, aspirations, role performance and ambition. They act as normative standards for the individual.

- The reference group theory aids in our comprehensive understanding of society's openness and closeness, allowing us to comprehend the extent of social mobility.
- Reference groups help in the socialisation and identity-shaping processes of individuals. People acquire proper behaviours, beliefs, and conventions as well as a sense of self by comparing themselves to their reference groups.

However, the Reference group theory is not universally applicable and its relevance is limited in its scope depending upon various contexts.

- Depending on an individual's personality, ideals, and life experiences, reference groups can have varying degrees of effect. The universality of reference group theory is called into question by this individual variability.
- The reference group idea is inapplicable to individuals who do not experience relative deprivation due to isolation.

For instance, because of little or no interaction, the remote tribes in many places are unaware of the non-membership groups.

Middle range theories were introduced by Merton, who rejected the universality of classical functionalism and changed the paradigm to support the restricted applicability of all ideas and theories. In the same way, Context affects reference groups' applicability and influence.

Therefore, the theory's applicability may vary based on the particular circumstance or choices under consideration.

Q. Is Weber's idea of bureaucracy a product of the historical experiences of Europe? Comment. (CSE 2023)

Ans: Bureaucracy is defined by Max Weber as 'the purest type of exercise of legal authority' with a hierarchy of paid, full time officials who formed a chain of command.

- According to him, 'From a purely technical point of view, a bureaucracy is capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency, and is in this sense formally the most rational known means of exercising authority over human beings'.
- Bureaucracy is superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline, and in its reliability'. Bureaucratic institutions are dominant form of institutions in industrial society which requires high degree of division of labor and high efficiency in rationally organized work environment.
- According to Weber, 'expansion of bureaucracy is inevitable' in modern societies as bureaucratic authority is the only way of coping with large scale administrative requirements in such societies.

Bureaucracy a Product of the Historical Experiences of Europe

- The backdrop of the Industrial Revolution and the subsequent rise of capitalism in Europe gave rise to Weber's conception of bureaucracy.

SYSTEM OF KINSHIP

Q. How do you assess the changing patterns in kinship relations in societies today?

(CSE 2023)

Ans: The kinship system refers to a set of persons recognized as relatives, either, by virtue of a blood relationship technically called consanguinity, or by virtue of a marriage relationship, that is through what is called affinal or conjugal relationship. Now a days, they also include – relationships based on adoption and places.

Kinship bonds are changing dramatically in the quickly evolving society of today. Sociologists have made significant contributions to our understanding of these shifting patterns by highlighting the necessity of modifying our conception of kinship to take into account the reality of modern living.

Changing Patterns in Kinship Relations

- The transition from joint to nuclear families has occurred with the rise of modernity and urbanization. Individual identification is now more important than kinship identity.
- Because people are more preoccupied with their immediate family than with wider kinship relations, this has resulted in a weakening of kinship relationships.
- Many societies have seen a change from arranged marriages to love marriages. Inter-caste and inter-religious marriages are more common now.
- People from various social backgrounds coming together through these marriages frequently results in the formation of new kinship ties.
- Men were traditionally the head of the family in the patriarchal kinship structure. But with the growth of feminism and women's emancipation, women are no longer restricted to the home.
- Kinship arrangements have changed as a result, with women increasingly regarded as equal partners in the family.
- Kinship relationships have also been impacted by laws pertaining to marriage, divorce, adoption, and inheritance.
- For instance, India's Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 significantly altered the country's long-standing patrilineal inheritance structure by granting daughters equal inheritance rights.
- Kinship relationships have also been altered by technological innovations such as assisted reproductive technologies (ART).
- New familial relationships like sperm donation and surrogate motherhood have been made possible via ART.
- Because they distinguish between social and biological parenting, these technologies upend long-standing kinship conventions.
- In structural terms, nuclear family, decline of patriarchal relations, weaning authority of parents over children, rise of alternative kinship institutions like live-ins are contemporary trends.
- Functional aspects of kinship relations are also changing. Various function of family and other descent groups are taken over by alternative institutions.
- Placement function is no longer performed by family and it is done by other economic organizations.
- Similarly, jural rights of kin groups are also taken away by formal judicial institutions. Education function is also performed by schools now.
- Cases of marital breakdown, divorce and separation are increasing in family. Incidences of domestic violence are also increasing.
- Community bonds and kinship bonds are weakening and there are lesser avenues to vent out pent up frustrations leading to distress in marital life.

WORKS & ECONOMIC LIFE

Q. What is Taylorism? Analyse its merits and demerits. (CSE 2023)

Ans: Taylorism, named after the American engineer Frederick Winslow Taylor, is a method of industrial management designed to increase efficiency and productivity. For this purpose, workflows and work processes are examined and optimised precisely and systematically in order to reduce costs and increase quality.

Merits

- **Increased Efficiency:** Work processes are optimized through the scientific analysis of work processes and the decomposition of complex tasks into simpler units. This systematization enables work processes to be executed quickly.
- **Cost Reduction:** By increasing productivity, manufacturing costs can also be reduced. This usually leads to an increase in the company's profit.
- **Easy Training:** Since tasks are broken down into simpler processes, it is easier to train new employees. This saves time and resources during training.
- **Specialisation:** Employees can focus on specific tasks and perform them more efficiently. As a result, they develop a high level of expertise in their respective field.
- **Control and Monitoring:** The precise definition of work processes facilitates control and monitoring. This minimises errors and improves the quality of the end product.

Demerits

- **Human Factors:** Taylorism tends to neglect the psychological and social aspects of work. This can lead to a deterioration of the working climate.
- **Monotony:** Breaking down work into simple, repetitive tasks can lead to monotony and thus employee dissatisfaction. This monotony can also have a negative impact on productivity in the long term.
- **Disenfranchisement of Workers:** The strict separation of thinking and acting can limit the creativity

and initiative of workers. Employees often feel less valued as a result.

- **Short-sightedness:** The focus on efficiency can lead to long-term goals and sustainable developments being neglected. There is a risk that quality and innovation will suffer.
- **Vulnerability to Errors:** Because the work is highly specialised, an error in a small task can affect the entire process. This specialisation increases the risk of a chain reaction when errors occur.

As Taylorism offers advantages in terms of improved productivity and cost savings, it also has drawbacks, including the dehumanisation of labourers and reluctance to change. Therefore, businesses adopting Taylorism must be aware of these possible drawbacks and take precautions against them. This could entail giving employees a wider variety of jobs, promoting innovation and creativity, and treating them with decency.

Q. What characterizes degradation of work in capitalist society according to Marx?

(CSE, 2022)

Ans: Work in simplest terms can be defined as the carrying out of tasks requiring the expenditure of mental and physical effort, which has as its objective the production of goods and services that cater to human needs. But in economic sociology, it is generally an activity which results in paid employment, reward or contract.

Concept of Work

- Concept of work is also associated with industrialization and growth of capitalism. Initially, the term 'worker' was used for those who worked in factories.
- Worker is a person who enters into employment out of his own will. He has contractual relations with the employer.

CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Q. Citing some case studies, expand the concept of 'Development-induced Displacement'. (CSE 2023)

Ans: Development refers to the change in the desired direction. According to Yogendra Singh, 'development refers to the strategy of planned social change which is considered desirable by the members of the society'. The notion of development may differ from society to society. It often leads to increase in scale, efficiency, mutuality and freedom.

Development-induced Displacement

- The term "development-induced displacement" describes the forcible relocation of individuals from their homes as a result of development initiatives such building highways, ports, airports, industrial complexes, urbanisation, dams, and so on.
- Millions of individuals are impacted by this worldwide pandemic each year. There are frequently negative cultural, social, and economic effects from relocation.

Case Studies

- The Narmada Valley Project in India is one of the most contentious instances of relocation brought on by development. Numerous indigenous people with strong cultural and spiritual links to the land were among the numerous people who were uprooted as a result of the construction of massive dams on the Narmada River. Many of the displaced individuals endured destitution, loss of means of subsistence, and cultural disruption despite assurances of restoration and compensation.
- According to Fernandes, in the past 50 years around 3 crore people were displaced and more than 42% of them were tribals. Displacement is direct as well as indirect. Direct displacement is often in the form of eviction due to various reasons and indirect displacement is often in the form of migration due to uneven developmental process, lack of livelihood

opportunities, discrimination, fragile ecosystem, socio-religious notions etc.

- Tribals and ethnic groups are often at the receiving end. Fernandes in his study of Maharashtra found that in case of displacements due to projects, majority of the affected were tribals and only 15.8% of tribal families were given land.

As economic progress and the improvement of living conditions frequently depend on development projects, it is essential to make sure that these initiatives do not result in the eviction of individuals without providing them with sufficient compensation and rehabilitation. The rights and interests of all stakeholders, especially the disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, must be taken into account in more inclusive and participatory methods to development planning.

Q. What role do co-operatives play in poverty alleviation in rural India? (CSE, 2022)

Ans: Cooperative is a voluntary group of people on equal basis with similar interests and activity who leverage their resources for collective as well as individual gains. In Indian rural context, the role of cooperatives was envisaged to extricate rural peasant from the grip of moneylenders, provide technical knowhow, promote economies of scale and uplift the standard of living. Intermediaries in the production chain are cut and its benefits accrue directly to the farmers, poor and rural community.

Role of Cooperatives in Poverty Alleviation

- The aim of the cooperative institutions include poverty reduction by providing essential agricultural inputs and credit to farmers, ensuring adequate return to the farmers for their produce, ensuring supply of essential commodities to villagers at reasonable rates and promoting harmonious relations and a sense of participation among rural people. Credit societies, service cooperatives, producers' cooperatives and labor cooperatives came into existence, as the cooperative movement grew.