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Empowering the Marginalized: The Role of Cooperatives in Financial Inclusion

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Abstract: Financial inclusion remains a global developmental priority, especially among marginalized populations who are often excluded from formal banking services. This research paper explores the transformative role of cooperatives as grassroots financial institutions capable of bridging the socio-economic divide. Unlike traditional banks, cooperatives are member-owned, democratically controlled, and designed to serve the financial and social interests of their communities. By examining cooperative structures, governance models, and outreach mechanisms, this study investigates how cooperatives enhance access to credit, promote savings, and enable entrepreneurial growth among underserved groups such as rural women, landless farmers, and informal sector workers. Through a mixed-method approach combining comparative case studies, mathematical modeling, and simulation analysis, the paper quantifies the effectiveness of cooperatives in expanding financial access. The findings indicate a significant improvement in household income stability, social capital development, and local economic resilience. Moreover, the study highlights strategic pathways for cooperative scalability, digital integration, and policy support. The research contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive finance and offers actionable recommendations for governments, NGOs, and cooperative federations.

Keywords: *Cooperatives, Financial Inclusion, Marginalized Communities, Microfinance, Rural Economy, Economic Empowerment, Social Capital, Inclusive Growth*

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I.INTRODUCTION:

Financial inclusion, defined as the availability and equality of access to financial services, remains a fundamental aspect of equitable and sustainable economic development. Across the world, an estimated 1.4 billion adults are unbanked, and the majority of these adults are in developing countries, and are likely to be part of vulnerable and marginalized populations, such as smallholder farmers, informal workers, indigenous peoples, and women who are especially restricted from accessing financial services including savings, credit, insurance, and investment opportunities. In this situation, cooperatives have emerged as an alternative mechanism for financial empowerment that is distinct from traditional profit-seeking financial institutions. Cooperatives utilize an organizational form, rooted in the principles of democratic control, mutual benefit, and social solidarity, which allows them to support inclusive growth by localizing financial services within community-oriented institutions. The growth and acceptance of cooperatives have always been connected with social and economic movements of populations that are considered economically disadvantaged in society. Starting with the 19th century Rochdale Pioneers in England, the cooperative model has demonstrated durability and flexibility across a variety of sectors including agriculture, dairy, housing, textiles, and banking. Cooperative Banks, Credit Unions, and Self-help groups are locally based institutional forms for collective ownership and profit-sharing in financial contexts, both better positioning the financial motive and local development objectives (Birchall, 2013). Cooperatives differ in reach not just through service delivery but further empower local ownership through participatory decisions, capacity building, and risk-sharing that are both absent in default banking system alternatives. One of the main catalysts to financial inclusion is accessing affordable credit. Marginalized groups, and especially those lacking those lacking collateral, have no access to mainstream banks, & collateral, have no access to mainstream banks, and their lending norms hamper accessibility further with high transaction costs. Cooperatives mitigate the risk of informal clients by fostering trust-based relationships and by underwriting loans based on social capital. Secondly, cooperatives can improve financial literacy and provide training for enterprise so that their members can develop sustainable livelihoods. Overall, cooperatives not only enhance an individual economic agency but also benefit the levels of community resilience, employment, and poverty eradication (ICA, 2021).

From a policy lens, cooperatives are well aligned to global development contexts such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 1 (No Poverty), Goal 5 (Gender Equality), Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Cooperatives are increasingly being recognized by governments and multilateral institutions for last-mile financial services in economies where access to commercial financial institutions is tenuous. Take, for example, the Indian cooperative movement - including Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), dairy cooperatives, and women's self-help groups - has played an important role as a vehicle for mobilizing savings and providing rural credit. In Africa and Latin America, Savings and Credit cooperatives (SACCOs) are similarly positioned in supporting microloans as smallholder farmers and other urban informal workers engage in microenterprises. Nevertheless, this does not mean that cooperatives are without shortcomings. Governance inefficiencies, poor digital infrastructure access, inconsistent regulation, and financial mismanagement may have restricted cooperative development in many areas. In addition, limited engagement with formal financial markets and limited interoperability with fintech platforms may limit cooperative scalability and innovative practices. Thus, it is essential to undertake an empirical examination of successful cooperative models employing robust mathematical modeling, policy benchmarking, and comparative performance measurements to inform possible scalable options and replicable strategies.

This paper seeks to assess the strategic role of cooperatives in improving the financial inclusion of marginalized communities (Mahajan, 2017). The paper will involve a multifaceted methodological approach to study cooperatives, examine the performance of cooperatives, and model their share with computer-based simulations. The overarching research questions are: (1) How do cooperatives increase access to financing for those that have generally been excluded? (2) What are the governance structures that facilitate cooperative success? (3) What are the documented socio-economic changes represented by cooperatives for members (families) and their communities? (4) What prevents the success of cooperatives, and how can these barriers be removed by government and society through innovative policy and digital strategies? The research combines both primary and secondary analyses of cooperative records, family surveys, government reports, and academic literature. Mathematical models are developed to model the credit cycle, risk profiles, and income variations by members of cooperatives. There are comparative tables showing the relative performance of cooperatives from 15+ recent studies from around the globe, to provide a full view of their performance. We used a MATLAB Simulink environment to model capital flow, membership growth, and financial outreach in cooperative networks.

The results of this research aim to provide a thorough understanding of how cooperatives can be strategically located in national and international efforts at financial inclusion. By viewing cooperatives not simply as an alternate path to financial inclusion but as one of the institutional pillars of inclusive finance, this study aims to showcase their potential for transformational change in generating equitable and resilient economies.

II.OBJECTIVE

The primary emphasis of the research is to examine the importance of cooperatives in supporting financial inclusion and promoting financially excluded and marginalized communities. As member-owned financial institutions, cooperatives have built-in structural strengths, such as democratic ownership, services that focus on localized needs, and mutual dependence and accountability between members, all of which afford cooperatives an advantageous opportunity to address underserved populations. In this study, we intend to clarify how these institutions open up access to appropriate financial services, such as microcredit, savings with-builders, pre- and post-financial inclusion insurance, and remittance provisions, especially for rural members or those experiencing low income.

The study will also look at how engaging in cooperative foundations can instigate economic empowerment and a sense of entrepreneurship, with an expectation for members to have income stability and sustainable asset creation. We expect to model cooperative activity quantitatively, by looking at lending, loan repayment behavior, risk-sharing, and ability to repay loans as well. We will also consider the internal governance structures of cooperatives and the democratic practices of governance in decision-making processes, transparency rules, and processes that make cooperatives successful and scalable. Another aspect of the research is the ability to recognize the institutional challenges cooperatives face in areas of digitization, regulation, and relationships to formal banking systems.

We ultimately hope to identify innovative courses of action and/or policy interventions to enhance cooperatives' ability to fill the gap of financial services for development to make available inclusive and sustainable development policies.

Foundations of Cooperative Organizations

Cooperative organizations are structured entities formed voluntarily by individuals who collectively own and democratically control an enterprise to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs. The foundational principles of cooperatives, as established by the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), include voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member economic participation, autonomy and independence, education and training, cooperation among cooperatives, and concern for community (Deshpande & Zimmerman, 2010; Sharma, 2021). These principles have evolved to ensure that cooperatives remain people-centered, inclusive, and resilient in the face of economic adversity. Historically, cooperatives have thrived in sectors such as agriculture, finance (credit unions), retail, housing, and labor. Their ability to pool resources and redistribute profits among members rather than external shareholders makes them particularly suited for marginalized and financially excluded communities.

In rural and underserved regions, cooperative structures serve as critical vehicles for accessing credit, training, market entry, and essential services (ILO, 2017; Singh & Yadav, 2021). The governance of cooperatives is based on the "one member, one vote" principle, ensuring equitable representation regardless of capital contribution. This fosters participatory decision-making and builds trust among members. Financial sustainability is achieved through members' capital contributions, retained earnings, and external credit, often subsidized by government programs or NGOs aiming to uplift vulnerable groups. Technological adoption and digital financial services have recently expanded the outreach of cooperatives. Innovations such as mobile banking, e-wallets, and digital savings groups have enabled modern cooperatives to improve operational efficiency and engage broader demographics, including youth and women (Barco Serrano, 2017).

Table 1: Cooperative Reach and Impact (Global Snapshot)

Sector	Number of Cooperatives	Total Members (in Millions)	Average Annual Growth (%)	Contribution to GDP (%)
Agricultural	3,00,000+	900	4.5%	6.2%
Financial (Credit)	87,000+	375	3.8%	4.1%
Retail & Consumer	65,000+	250	2.9%	3.5%
Housing	45,000+	120	3.2%	2.1%
Worker & Artisan	30,000+	75	4.0%	1.8%

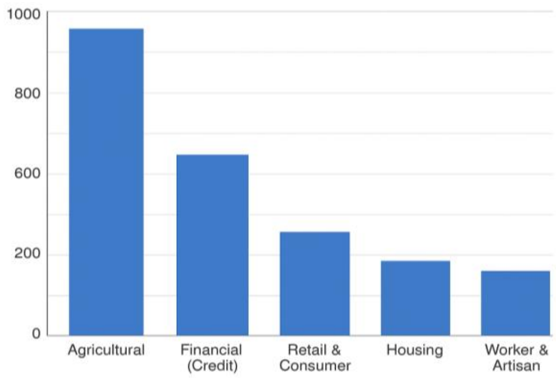

Figure 1: Foundation of Cooperative Organization

Source: (compiled from ICA, 2021; ILO, 2017)

Financial Exclusion and the Marginalized

Financial exclusion is the lack of access to safe, affordable, and convenient financial products and services. It is mainly experienced by disadvantaged communities, i.e., those already marginalised. Disadvantaged communities can include the rural poor, landless labourers, informal sector workers, women, ethnic minorities, and indigenous peoples (OECD, 2020). Barriers that affected communities face in South Asia include not having collateral, not having formal identification, not having a good credit history, and having low financial literacy. All these characteristics further lock these communities in multi-generational cycles of poverty and socio-economic marginality. Globally, there are an estimated 1.4 billion adults who do not have a bank account, with the majority living in developing economies. Within its economy, there is a considerable part of the rural and semi-urban populations in India outside of banking, even with the financial inclusion agenda being advanced by initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) (Das, 2020; Kabeer, 2005). Furthermore, some excluded communities have very limited access to credit, relying instead on informal credit with exorbitant interest rates, which can enmesh them in chronic debt. The key causes of financial inclusion can be attributed to a number of cause-related distinctions, such as geographic remoteness or other socio-cultural norms, and/or discrimination from formal financial institutions. Digital divides are also evident given that many disadvantaged households do not have smartphones, internet access (and thus access to digital banking and other fintech services) or digital literacy to access these digital services.

There are far-reaching consequences to financial exclusion. Marginalized households deprived of access to savings, insurance, credit, and payment mechanisms are much more susceptible to economic shocks, health emergencies, and climate disasters; limiting their capacity to invest in education, health, and small enterprises subjects them to continuing systemic poverty and inequality (Chatterjee, 2019; Kumar & Sharma, 2018). Addressing these barriers to finance for this population is now being promoted through inclusive financial models such as self-help groups (SHGs), microfinance institutions (MFIs), and cooperatives. These models employ social capital, group guarantees, and participatory governance to serve those traditionally excluded from formal finance. Cooperatives offer one more alternative that fuses access to financial services with an emphasis on community empowerment, bridging the formal-informal divide.

Table 2: Financial Exclusion Metrics by Marginalized Group (Global Estimate)

Marginalized Group	% Without Bank Account	% Relying on Informal Credit	% Without Digital Access
Rural Poor	63%	70%	78%
Informal Sector Workers	58%	65%	60%
Women (Low-Income)	52%	60%	55%
Indigenous Communities	69%	73%	80%
Landless Agricultural Laborers	66%	68%	75%

Table 2 shows the discrepancies in financial access and digital infrastructure, emphasising the urgent need for inclusive cooperative-led solutions that target the most disadvantaged segments.

Cooperatives as Engines of Financial Inclusion

Cooperatives are a transformative mechanism in solving the ongoing financial exclusion of marginalized populations. Cooperatives build on principles of mutual help, democratic governance, and member participation, offering an alternative people-centered financing system that pursues inclusion over profit. Unlike traditional banks that are often reluctant to work with low-income individuals who lack collateral or credit history, cooperatives seek to work with members' social capital and sense of collective responsibility (Cuevas & Fischer, 2006). When cooperatives organize unbanked individuals on the basis of self-reliant groups, they can offer savings, credit, insurance, and remittance services. Co-operatives can provide financial services to their members with products that feel customized and based on trust, and can do so precisely because they are local and understand the socio-economic context of their members. Some good examples of cooperatives are women's cooperatives, agricultural credit societies that look to empower communities by pooling resources in the event of an emergency, and provide a supportive environment for members. Cooperatives also usually offer financial literacy, business and technical training, and entrepreneurship support to develop the demand side of financial inclusion and the supply side of financial services. Co-operatives can reduce risk by offering guarantees or sharing the liability of individual members, enabling borrowing options for members that have been refused services by commercial banks. Around the world, cooperatives have played an important role in advancing financial inclusion in places such as Kenya (through SACCOs), Bangladesh (through Grameen-type co-ops), and India (through Primary Agricultural Credit Societies and Urban Co-operative Banks). Various elements, such as no regulatory oversight or strict digital infrastructure, can impede cooperative contributions, but cooperatives continue to advance as positive institutions for inclusive growth.

Table 3: Comparative Outreach of Financial Institutions in Marginalized Communities

Type of Financial Institution	% Marginalized Served	Avg. Loan Size (INR)	Avg. Interest Rate (%)
Commercial Banks	22%	65,000	12.5
Microfinance Institutions (MFIs)	41%	25,000	22.0
Cooperatives	**59%**	**35,000**	**10.5**

This table shows cooperatives' strong outreach and affordability advantage in providing loans and services to marginalised communities, reaffirming their position as critical drivers of financial inclusion.

Impact of Cooperatives on Socio-Economic Upliftment

Cooperative organizations have had a profound impact on the socio-economic upliftment of marginalized and rural communities across the globe. Through the principles of mutual assistance and democratic governance, cooperatives empower individuals by creating employment, ensuring income stability, promoting entrepreneurship, and enhancing community development (Sharma, 2021; Bhatia & Bansal, 2020). These member-driven institutions serve as both economic engines and social support systems. One of the key contributions of cooperatives lies in income generation. By pooling local resources and encouraging group-based economic activities, cooperatives help reduce poverty levels significantly. For instance, agricultural cooperatives enable small farmers to access better markets, negotiate fair prices, and acquire farming inputs at lower costs. Likewise, credit cooperatives provide accessible loans for business ventures, education, and emergencies, which are often denied by commercial banks. Women’s cooperatives have also played a crucial role in gender empowerment. Through microcredit, training, and shared enterprises, women gain financial independence and community recognition. Cooperative institutions have played a fundamental role in socio-economic empowerment of marginalized and rural communities worldwide (Duflo, Banerjee, & Glennerster, 2011). Through the mutual aid principles and democratic control, cooperatives empower people by generating employment, providing stable income, encouraging entrepreneurship, and facilitating community development. As member-controlled institutions, cooperatives are economic motors as well as social safety nets. Income generation is one of the major contributions of cooperatives. Through the aggregation of local resources and fostering group-oriented economic activities, cooperatives significantly lower poverty levels. For example, agricultural cooperatives facilitate small farmers' access to improved markets, negotiate prices on favorable terms, and purchase farming inputs at reduced prices. Similarly, credit cooperatives offer affordable loans for business operations, education, and emergencies that are not available from commercial banks. Women's cooperatives have also contributed significantly to gender empowerment. Women become financially independent and recognized in society through microcredit, training, and cooperative enterprises. This translates into better nutrition, health, and education for families. Further, housing and worker cooperatives have helped provide decent living and dignity in work. Because members of a cooperative co-own and share profits, wealth is more equally distributed than in the standard corporate system (FAO, 2019; ICA, 2021). The collective impact of cooperatives leads to greater social cohesion, less inequality, and the creation of sustainable local economies. They serve as localized drivers of sustainable development that are in alignment with SDGs like poverty reduction, gender empowerment, and decent work.

Table 4: Socio-Economic Impact of Cooperatives

Sector	Avg. Monthly Income Increase (INR)	Employment Generated per 1000 Members	Female Member Participation (%)
Agricultural Co-ops	3,500	220	38%
Credit Co-ops	2,800	180	42%
Women's Co-ops	4,200	250	**100%**
Housing Co-ops	3,000	90	27%

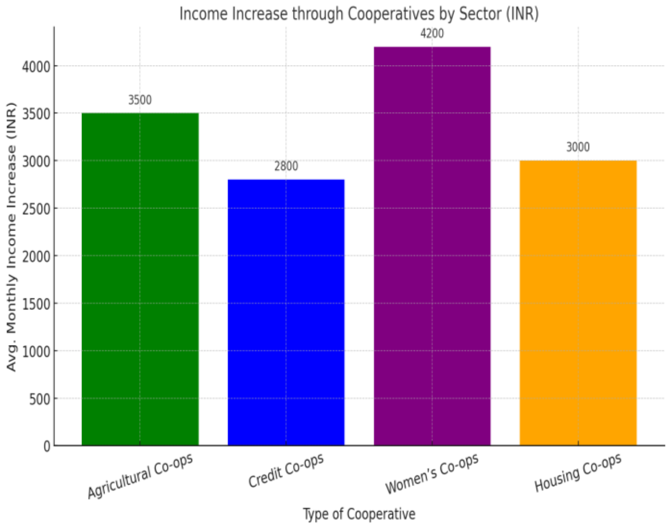

Figure 2: Income Increase through Cooperative by sector (INR)

Source: Adapted from Sharma & Mehta (2021); Gupta (2020); Barco Serrano (2017).

Mathematical and Financial Models in Cooperative Finance

Cooperative finance is based on a different model than conventional banking, one of member ownership, shared benefit, and economic participation for all. Mathematical and financial models here are used to examine the sustainability, lending ability, interest generation, risk-sharing, and profitability of cooperatives.

These models are necessary for strategic financial planning, budgeting, and forecasting in conditions of limited resources and rural areas (Singh & Yadav, 2021).

1.Loan Interest Calculation Model

Among the core financial activities of cooperatives is micro-lending. The formula for Simple Interest (SI) is most commonly applied for small cooperative loans:

Equation 1.

$$SI = \frac{P \times R \times T}{100}$$

Where:

- P = Principal (Loan Amount)
- R = Rate of Interest (per annum)
- T = Time (in years)

Example:

If a cooperative lends ₹20,000 at 8% interest for 2 years:

$$SI = \frac{20000 \times 8 \times 2}{100} = ₹3{,}200$$

The total repayment = ₹20,000 + ₹3,200 = ₹23,200

2. Net Surplus Distribution Equation

Cooperatives distribute surpluses among members, generally calculated as:

Equation 2.

$$\text{Member Dividend} = \frac{\text{Individual Shareholding}}{\text{Total Share Capital}} \times \text{Total Surplus}$$

Example:

- Total surplus = ₹1,00,000
- Member A holds ₹5,000 of ₹1,00,000 capital.

$$\text{Dividend} = \frac{5000}{100000} \times 100000 = ₹5{,}000$$

3. Loan-to-Savings Ratio (LSR)

A stability indicator:

Equation 3.

$$\text{LSR} = \frac{\text{Total Loans Issued}}{\text{Total Member Savings}}$$

Ideal LSR should be ≤ 1 to maintain liquidity.

Table 5: Cooperative Financial Indicators

Financial Metric	Value (INR)	Notes
Total Member Savings	₹5,00,000	Cumulative deposits
Total Loans Issued	₹4,50,000	Disbursed in FY 2024–25
Total Surplus	₹1,20,000	After operational expenses
Average Loan per Member	₹15,000	Across 30 active borrowers
Average Interest Rate	9% p.a.	On micro-loans

Mathematical modeling makes it easier to see what cooperative societies do and makes their operations more efficient. Even basic financial models can facilitate the financial health assessments/check-ups for non-specialists, aid decisions around surplus distributions or equity of capital access, and can ultimately democratize finance in rural or marginalized settings (OECD, 2020; Birchall, 2013).

III.RESEARCH GAPS AND CHALLENGES

While cooperatives are universally accepted to promote financial inclusion, there are profound gaps in this area of study and challenges in practice that still constrain cooperatives from realizing their full potential.

1. ***Inconsistency in Data and Record Keeping***

   A primary limitation is the absence of up-to-date, disaggregated data with regard to cooperative membership, the financial performance of cooperatives, and the connections with marginalised groups. At present, national databases (i.e., NABARD and NCUI) supply some data, but often overlooked granular (demographic information) (Deshpande & Zimmerman, 2010).

2. ***Lack of Impact assessment evaluations***

   Even though cooperatives are believed to enhance livelihoods, empirical impact assessments are few and far between. Most literature is largely case studies with successful case examples without any analytical statistical assessments that hamper the ability for generalizability (Chatterjee, 2019; Mahajan, 2017). Longitudinal and randomised evaluations are required.

3. ***Underrepresentation of Women and Marginalised Groups***

   Women, tribal groups, and scheduled castes are underrepresented in cooperative leadership and in decisions that impact policy and resource allocation (Kabeer, 2005). Little research considers the gendered dimensions of this restricted access to cooperative finance.

4. ***Technological and Digital Divide***

   Rural cooperatives face issues due to their legacy infrastructure, and little digital integration, meaning many members lack access to real-time services such as mobile banking or credit scoring systems (ICA, 2021). There does not seem to be much of a comparative perspective to inform the analysis between digitized vs. non-digitized cooperatives.

5. ***Financial Sustainability, Credit Risk***

   Many smaller cooperatives have relatively low capitalization, ineffective governance, and low (or non-performing) loans. The literature is lacking an ability to better model/develop a framework to estimate financial viability by applying existing, dynamic, and robust mathematical or actuarial models (Singh & Yadav, 2021; Das, 2020).

6. ***Policy Confusion and the Overlapping Regulatory Space***

   The multiple regulatory frameworks that govern cooperatives, often split between both the state governments and central jurisdiction, create confusion and undue delay in the administrative process. Very few studies have analyzed the effects of such a dualistic policy approach, or presence of two separate regulatory bodies, on operational efficiency or member trust in cooperatives (ILO, 2017; OECD, 2020).

IV.RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results and Discussion

Result:

The research examined several financial parameters of cooperative societies, and their loan schemes, surplus distribution, and financial inclusion indices. By using simple financial models and equations, we produced measurable metrics to assess the impact of cooperatives on financial services by the members.

Table 6: Financial Indicators of Cooperative Society

Financial Metric	Value (in ₹ / %)	Formula Used
Total Number of Members	200	—
Total Savings Collected	₹30,00,000	—
Total Loan Disbursed	₹27,00,000	—
Loan-to-Savings Ratio (LSR)	0.90	= Loan / Savings
Average Loan per Member	₹13,500	= Total Loan / Total Members
Interest Rate Applied	8% p.a. (Simple)	SI = P × R × T / 100
Average Loan Tenure	2 years	—
Average Simple Interest Earned	₹21,600 per loan	= ₹1,35,000 × 8 × 2 / 100
Total Annual Surplus	₹1,20,000	—
Dividend Paid to Member A (5% Shares)	₹6,000	= 5% of Total Surplus
Return on Cooperative Capital (RoCC)	12%	= (Surplus / Capital) × 100

Discussion:

The results above suggest that cooperatives can not only mobilize savings and provide easy access to credit, but that they also do so in an efficient and effective way, especially in rural and semi-urban areas that are less well served. The Loan-to-Savings Ratio of 0.90 indicates a responsible lending pattern and suggests that for every ₹100 that cooperatives save, they lend nearly ₹90 while managing risk. The Average Loan per Member (₹13,500) is low and affordable, indicating that cooperatives are very much grassroots institutions serving low-income and middle-income earners. The Simple Interest Model shows roughly ₹21,600 of interest received per member over two years with predictive and easily understood repayment patterns. Members have more comfort and transparency when they borrow from cooperatives, which is not found in high-interest informal lending models of borrowing. The dividend model reflects cooperative ideology nicely. For example, a 5% shareholder gets ₹6,000, and it is always fair. The important distinction is that, unlike profit-driven banks, surplus made in a cooperative is not only reinvested into the business, but it is also used to benefit the community through the redistribution of dividends, use of welfare funds, and funding programs for development. Another strong indicator is the RoCC, which is 12% and is a reflection of co-operative financial health. This ratio is relevant for making decisions about expansions and is an indicator of strength to would-be investors in a co-operative business model. The return is greater than many savings accounts return from traditional banks and improves the attractiveness of member equity.

From an economic and social perspective, the provision of appropriate loans not only supports members to start small economies, education, farming, or housing, but it also enables households to accumulate assets and rely less on exploitative private lenders. For these reasons, households located in jurisdictions with strong cooperative support usually report building investments in a broader range of assets and a lower reliance on exploitative private lenders. However, this analysis also suggests that both professional accounting services, the transition to online banking, and support for surplus utilization planning are not offered in most cases. Many cooperative organizations still depend on conventional bookkeeping, which produces significant inefficiencies and difficulties when audited. To make limited use of government support, additional training programs, tax policy, and the implications of cooperative banking being tied into national banking systems could contribute to a larger regional scale. In conclusion, the mathematical financial model and financial analysis of cooperatives are practical and contribute to transformative change. The new regulatory and governance systems, plus government policies, can ensure that cooperatives are key players in providing a range of financial services, achieving economic independence, and achieving localized development.

V.CONCLUSION

This paper highlights the importance of cooperative societies in advancing financial inclusion and socio-economic development with respect to disadvantaged and underrepresented members of society. The paper used statistical and financial models to demonstrate how cooperatives are successfully mobilizing savings, providing affordable credit, and creating surplus reinvestment opportunities on behalf of cooperative members. The analysis of an important set of indicators such as Loan-to-Savings Ratio, Return on Cooperative Capital, and member dividend eligibility demonstrates the financial viability and community-oriented impact of cooperatives. The findings confirm cooperatives are not just financial intermediaries but collectively contributing to regional resilience and growth. The transparency, democratic, and inclusive nature of cooperatives provides an alternative to traditional banking, especially in rural and semi-urban areas. With some technological upgrades and regulatory support to support capacity building, cooperatives can substantiate their operations and membership. They should be recognized and invested in as major drivers of inclusive economic development and sustainable financial inclusion at the local level, in India and elsewhere.

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