

Co-operatives and self-help organizations and their
potential role for poverty alleviation and food security
in the emerging megacity Hyderabad, India

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Abstract

Co-operatives and self-help organizations have great potential to contribute towards urban development, poverty alleviation and food security. Co-operatives can empower the poor and help them to improve their livelihoods by meeting their needs through jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprises. However, co-operatives have frequently failed and their potential for development, poverty alleviation and food security has often not been realized. This background study of the cooperative sector in Hyderabad reviews important developments and structures of the cooperative sector in Hyderabad as well as important stakeholders, their motivations and behaviour. The cooperative sector and its potential role for urban development is described and analyzed by means of case studies: providing an overview of different types of co-operatives in the emerging megacity Hyderabad, India, and analysing under what kind of preconditions these co-operatives and self-help organizations are likely to contribute towards poverty alleviation and food security. In particular, the study intends to analyze the influence of the institutional environment and the urban context on the performance of co-operatives, as only limited research has been done in this field. Co-operatives and self-help organisations are analysed as bottom-up self-help strategies to combat poverty and contribute towards food security. As instruments for the governance of cooperation and the organization of investment, co-operatives and self-help organisations are further analysed as potential strategies for climate change adaptation of the poor and lower-income groups. The study has been conducted as part of the research project “Hyderabad as a Megacity of Tomorrow”, under the BMBF (Federal Ministry of Education and Research, Germany)-funded research program “Research for Sustainable Development of the Megacities of Tomorrow”. Travel expenditures for the empirical work in Hyderabad have been kindly financially supported by the Eiselen Foundation, Ulm.

Keywords

co-operative societies, self-help organizations, collective action, megacities, Hyderabad, urban development, food security, poverty alleviation, climate change mitigation and adaptation