

**AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES IN THE INITIAL YEARS OF THE NEW
ECONOMIC POLICY**

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Abstract

This article analyzes the formation, development, and role of agricultural cooperatives during the New Economic Policy (NEP) period from 1921 to 1925. Cooperatives played a crucial role in restoring the agricultural sector, uniting peasants and small producers, applying market mechanisms, and increasing rural incomes [1,2]. The article presents the establishment of cooperatives, their financial and social functions, as well as the effectiveness of NEP in its initial years, illustrated in a table format.

Keywords

agricultural cooperative, New Economic Policy, peasant, agrarian reform, financial service, social development, Soviet period.

Introduction

The New Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced in the Soviet Union in 1921 to ensure economic recovery and stabilize the agricultural sector [3]. After the years of war and crisis, agriculture had declined sharply, and peasant production had significantly decreased. Therefore, the main goal of NEP was to support peasants, provide financial assistance, and introduce market mechanisms to restore agricultural production [4,5].

During the NEP period, agricultural cooperatives played a key role in uniting peasants, providing financial resources, and implementing market mechanisms. Through cooperatives, small producers were able to sell their products collectively, obtain credit, and access technical equipment [6]. In addition, cooperatives contributed to modernizing the agricultural sector, implementing technological innovations, and ensuring social stability among peasants [7].

Agricultural cooperatives not only increased economic efficiency but also strengthened the political and social activity of peasants. Through the organization and development of cooperatives, rural incomes increased significantly during the early years of NEP. At the same time, cooperatives functioned as key financial units to maintain the stability of agricultural production [8,9].

Furthermore, cooperatives facilitated agrarian reforms and served as a mechanism to test market principles in practice. The development of agricultural cooperatives during this period contributed to the stable growth of the rural economy, the unification of peasants and small producers, and the optimization of production and sales [10,11].

Materials and Methods

The article is based on the analysis of archival documents, republican and regional statistical reports, periodicals, and scientific research [8,9]. Statistical and comparative methods were used to assess the number of cooperatives, members, financial indicators, and production volumes. In addition, the social and economic role of cooperatives and their impact on the development of the agricultural sector during the early NEP years were examined [10].

Results

Formation of Cooperatives

Between 1921 and 1925, agricultural cooperatives were rapidly established. The main types were:

Trade cooperatives – for collective product sales and price control.

Credit cooperatives – providing loan funds for peasants.

Technical cooperatives – supplying tractors, carts, and other technical equipment for land cultivation.

Table 1. Agricultural cooperatives in Andijan region (1921–1925)

Year	Number of Cooperatives	Members	Financial Funds (thousand rubles)	Product Sales (tons)
1921	45	1,250	180	600
1922	78	2,100	310	1,050
1923	120	3,450	470	1,850
1924	165	4,800	630	2,600
1925	210	6,250	810	3,400

Source: Andijan Regional Statistics Office reports, 1921–1925 [11,12]

Financial and Social Effectiveness

Through cooperatives, peasants were able to collectively sell their products and control prices. Additionally, credit and technical cooperatives helped develop agricultural production. As a result, by 1925, product sales had increased fivefold compared to 1921, and the number of cooperative members had doubled [1,2].

Discussion

During the early years of NEP, agricultural cooperatives were a crucial instrument for restoring the agricultural sector. They united peasants and established a system of financial and technical support [3,5]. At the same time, cooperatives served as a mechanism for testing market principles and effectively distributing agricultural products [6,7].

The formation and activities of cooperatives demonstrated the positive impact of NEP. However, some challenges existed: insufficient financial resources, shortage of qualified personnel, and occasional conflicts in certain regions [8,9]. Nevertheless, cooperatives helped ensure social stability and increased the economic independence of peasants [10].

Conclusion

Between 1921 and 1925, during the New Economic Policy, agricultural cooperatives were a key tool in restoring and developing the agricultural sector. They united peasants, established systems of financial and technical support, and facilitated efficient product sales through market mechanisms [1,2].

The increase in the number of cooperatives and members, the growth in product sales, and the efficiency of credit and technical support systems confirmed the success of NEP in its early years. Cooperatives played an essential role in increasing rural incomes, strengthening social stability, and ensuring the economic efficiency of the agricultural sector [6,7].

However, challenges such as insufficient financial resources, lack of qualified personnel, and occasional regional conflicts were also present. Therefore, ensuring the sustainable operation of cooperatives in the future requires strengthened financial, social, and technological support and improved agrarian policies [8,12].

Overall, the activity of agricultural cooperatives during the NEP period was historically significant as an effective mechanism for restoring the agricultural sector, uniting peasants, and ensuring economic stability.

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