

## Co-ops. should help farmers double their income: Modi

Agri push: Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaking at the birth centenary celebration of cooperative leader Laxman Rao Inamdar. R.V. Moorthy R\_V\_Moorthy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked cooperatives to come up with innovative business ideas to help farmers double their income by 2022, emphasising that the “cooperative spirit” should be kept alive and strengthened. He was addressing cooperatives in New Delhi at a function marking the the birth centenary of Maharashtra-based cooperative leader Laxman Madhav Rao Inamdar.

“It is natural for the cooperative sector to grow and shine in India. There are several sectors where the cooperative sector can help make a positive difference. See what best practices to adopt and give up the old ones and move ahead,” he said.

### Boost economy

He asked cooperatives to venture into new business areas like beekeeping and seaweed farming to help farmers double their income by 2022 and boost the rural economy. Stating that farmers are facing many problems, Mr. Modi said there was a need to establish a system to ensure farmers buy and sell at wholesale rates.

Observing that cooperatives were mainly present in sugar and dairy sectors, the Prime Minister said the cooperative system suited to India and there was a need to foray into new areas.

He said sectors like neem oil production and beekeeping are fertile grounds for cooperatives to step in. Even in fishery sector, additional work can be provided to fishermen during off-season by encouraging them to go in for seaweed farming, he said, adding that seaweed was in great demand in the pharmaceutical sector.

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