



The Historical Experience Of Implementing New Technologies In Cooperative Enterprises Of Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This article analyzes the experience of developing and introducing new technologies in the production sector of cooperative enterprises operating in Uzbekistan during the years of Soviet power. The gradual development of rationalization and inventive movements during this period is studied. Also, the unique aspects of the activity of the handicraft cooperative and its role in solving the socio-economic problems of the country are highlighted. The article was prepared on the basis of archival sources.

Keywords: *Economy, cooperative, artel, craft cooperative, cooperator, rationalizer, new technology, mechanization, production, scientific and experimental institute, laboratory, raw materials, consumer goods.*

INTRODUCTION

Studying the activities of handicraft cooperatives as a part of the national economy in the context of today's market economy holds great importance. The relevance of the topic is determined by the opportunity to objectively assess the emergence and functioning of the cooperative movement in the history of Uzbekistan. To date, the rationalization and inventive activities of handicraft cooperatives during the Soviet era in Uzbekistan have been scarcely studied. Cooperative artisan associations, in addition to producing mass consumer goods and providing household services for the population, continuously sought ways to improve production tools and equipment as well as labor organization. The distinctive feature of cooperatives was their initiative and approach to production management freedom which made rationalization and inventive activities one of the main directions for cooperators.

During the Soviet period, handicraft cooperatives in Uzbekistan, integrated into the unified planned mechanism of the national economy, supplied the population with a wide range of consumer goods, including footwear, clothing, and household items. To increase production volumes and address raw material-related issues, cooperators conducted research to improve production processes. In particular, under the New Economic Policy, the handicraft industry successfully engaged in producing local tools for agriculture, carpet weaving, construction materials, leatherworking, pottery, and yarn and textile weaving.

According to the Decree "On Inventions," adopted by the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR on June 30, 1919, copyright for inventions belonged to the inventor and was confirmed by a certificate of authorship issued by the Committee on Inventions. Furthermore, if an invention did not concern state security, all citizens and institutions were allowed to use it. As a result of this



policy across the country, bureaus for inventiveness and rationalization began to be established in both state and cooperative enterprises.

As noted above, the issue of introducing new technologies into the production processes of manufacturing cooperatives had not been previously studied. Therefore, this study is presented primarily based on primary archival sources, following the principles of historical analysis and scientific objectivity.

RESULTS

According to data on handicraft production in 1922, the handicraft industry, which had significant importance even in the pre-revolutionary period, became a crucial factor in addressing the shortage of goods in Turkestan. This situation, undoubtedly, held great significance. If the handicraft industry was considered not as a competitor to large industrial enterprises but within the framework of the existing real conditions that is, providing materials and tools that could be utilized by artisans without harming factories and plants it was noted that this approach yielded positive results. By January 1921, the officially registered members within the artels numbered 24,597. In 1922, due to changes in economic policy, the number of artel members increased to 29,925, marking an almost 18 percent growth [7:2].

In the early 1920s, as a result of the process of cooperative organization of artisans, an entire system emerged, which maintained a unique role until the 1960s in providing the population with mass consumer goods and household services. The handicraft cooperative system included regional cooperative associations, mutual aid and insurance funds, cultural funds, and other structures that not only organized artisans but also played an important role in resolving their socio-cultural and economic issues.

It is known that the handicraft cooperative had a scientific-experimental institute with laboratories operating in various production sectors. For 1935, the laboratory research directions were as follows: the leather laboratory focused on developing substitute materials for shoe soles; the food laboratory worked on producing syrups from currants and melons; the metal laboratory mastered methods of coating iron with aluminum; and the X-ray laboratory researched methods of preserving perishable products using ultrashort waves, ultraviolet, and X-ray radiation. In addition, experiments were conducted in ceramics and chemistry. The dye laboratory studied plant-based dyes for wool, particularly noting that research in Central Asia and the Caucasus had not been sufficiently conducted [9:5,10].

According to the 1935 work plan of the ceramics laboratory of the Uzbekistan handicraft cooperative, tests were planned for glazes and dyes prepared from mineral raw materials for dishes, ceramics, and porcelain products. Furthermore, clay samples from the Samarkand and Rishton regions were to be tested and analyzed [9:14]. Specialist Trusevich was issued a certificate to conduct field trips to collect soil samples from the Qizilqiya, Kuvasoy, and Shurob stations [9:18]. It should be noted that, upon the proposal of the Uzbekistan handicraft cooperative, the ceramics laboratory of the scientific-experimental institute (NEKIN) was established in 1934.

According to the USSR Council of People's Commissars (CPC) decree dated January 27, 1936, "On Expanding the Production of Mass Consumer Goods in Handicraft and Disabled Cooperatives," the USSR CPC tasked handicraft and disabled cooperatives with increasing the production of mass consumer goods, utilizing local raw materials more broadly, developing sales of their products, and



organizing individual artisans in cities into cooperatives. However, it was noted that these tasks were not sufficiently fulfilled, and therefore tax incentives were granted to artels. Products manufactured from new types of raw materials by handicraft and disabled cooperative artels were exempt from turnover taxes, budget surcharges, and income tax on profits from sales for a period of two years [8:17].

By the decree of January 9, 1942, of the USSR CPC and the USSR Ministry of Finance, it was required to master new types of products primarily made from local raw materials. These included new types of pottery, metal buttons, military items, axes, internal and hanging locks, and pile textiles. Additionally, various products were to be produced from school notebooks and sewing industry waste, while felt production was reorganized entirely [10:19]. Workshops for preparing sheepskin coats from wool were established in Tashkent, Samarkand, Kokand, Bukhara, and Andijan [10:20].

By 1942, many artels in Bukhara province showed initiative in producing mass consumer goods. The “Aydin,” “XVIII Party Conference,” and “Marani” artels launched workshops producing 1,000-1,500 kg of household soap daily from meat plant and dairy-fat factory waste. The “Guliston” artel in Qamashi district opened workshops for leather processing, woolen clothing, carpet weaving, and rope production. The “Yangi Hayot” artel in Qarshi began producing high-quality tooth powder. Workshops producing soap, rope, and cleaning products were organized by the “Oliy Sovet” artel in Romiton district and the “Mehnat Kuchi” artel in Guzor. Under the leadership of artist-master Umarov, the “Namuna” artel in Gijduvon expanded pottery production, producing plates, cups, vases, jugs, and other items, which sold well in urban and district markets. The “12th Anniversary of October” artel in Karman produced various paints, plaster, and lime. The “Aydin” artel in Bukhara introduced new types of perfumery products [11:3].

Artisans in Uzbekistan produced a wide range of consumer goods for the population. According to the head of the administration in Uzbekistan, over 40,000 artisans were active in the cooperative system during this period. In 1946, Uzbek artisans contributed more than 370 million rubles worth of various products to the country, with significant support from the state in the form of raw materials and credit, complementing state industrial production. The share of mass consumer goods in the total output of the handicraft industry reached 93 percent [13:14].

In subsequent years, artisans began producing a number of new products not previously manufactured, including various furniture items, nickel-plated beds, haberdashery, tableware, children’s bicycles, strollers, and other goods. Particular attention was paid to the production of national products in high demand among the population, such as silk fabrics and traditional headwear. Some artels of the Samarkand and Khiva handicraft cooperatives, renowned for their craftsmanship, engaged in carpet production. In addition, the production of agricultural tools and implements by artels was also of great importance [13:15]. Large artels made extensive use of mechanization and successfully organized production efficiently. For example, the silk artel in Margilan was a technically equipped large enterprise. One of the handicraft artels in Tashkent launched a new brick factory, with production aimed solely at meeting population needs [13:16].

The end of the war and changes in market conditions required the cooperative system to completely revise its plans. With factories and plants shifting to consumer goods production, artels had to stop producing some products. Due to re-evacuation, the number of workers sharply



declined, state orders decreased, and the system was deprived of the main source of raw materials [14:4]. The production workshops of artels were not sufficiently equipped, and manual labor predominated in the production process. During 1947-1948, some labor-saving mechanisms were introduced in certain artels; however, their further development, especially in remote areas, stalled due to insufficient energy infrastructure [14:7].

On October 25, 1948, at the expert-technical council of the Handicraft Cooperative Administration, the production technology and main part drawings for the “Flying Bat” lantern at the “Krasny Metallist” artel in Tashkent were discussed. Expert engineer V. Kotlubay presented a technological process consisting of 32 parts and 54 assembly operations, and the project was approved [12:195].

At the meeting of the scientific-technical council of the Handicraft Cooperative Administration under the USSR SSR CPC on May 22, 1948, a standard design for a mine furnace with a capacity of 2,000 tons for the Angren coal mine, prepared by the design bureau, was discussed and approved. For other coal grades in Central Asia, including Qizil-qiya and Toshkomir mines, engineer Muravyov was recommended to prepare the furnace designs [12:288].

In March 1950, the reconstruction project of the wood production plant of the “Udarik” artel in Kokand, valued at 49,268 rubles in 1945 prices, was submitted to the Handicraft Cooperative and reviewed. Due to the low quality of the project, it was not approved [12:27].

At the meeting of the expert-technical council of the Uzbekistan Handicraft Cooperative on November 1, 1950, the technical project for the restoration and reconstruction of the drying workshop of the “Klara Zetkin” knitting artel was discussed. The project cost amounted to 1,088,441 rubles at 1949 prices and was approved for implementation according to the meeting decision. The conclusion on the technical project indicated that the recommended “Forching” drying equipment for the artel had been tested at the sock-knitting factory of the Uzbekistan Ministry of Light Industry and showed good results during a two-year trial period [12:23].

According to the information from the representatives of the Uzbekistan disabled cooperatives at the 10th republic-level meeting on September 10, 1952, the Fergana region disabled cooperative association organized the production of toys from papier-mâché [2]. However, despite several appeals to the management, they were unable to obtain the necessary raw materials. In this situation, the process of organizing the new type of production came to an end [15:111].

DISCUSSES

In order to implement the decisions of the Fifth Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, held on August 18-21, 1953, the Central Council of the Handicraft Cooperative of the country adopted a resolution aimed at sharply increasing the production of mass consumer goods, improving their quality, and enhancing the system of household services for the population. During the process of implementing this resolution, it was established that “in 1954-1955, in order to increase the production of mass consumer goods, all cooperative organizations should improve and reconstruct their operations, increase production capacity, specialize and mechanize cooperative enterprises” [4:46].

For example, at the “Red Star” artel in Andijan, the installation and operation of the MID-4 pasta press equipment led to an increase in the production volume and improvement of pasta quality, while at the “Stakhanovets” artel, equipment for producing gas-fired bricks was installed



[5:13]. To mechanize the “Tailors” artel in the region, a plan was approved to acquire 20 sewing machines from the Handicraft Supply Administration, with financing of 40,516 thousand soums provided through a loan from the State Bank [5:30]. Nevertheless, in some artels, due to the lack of highly qualified specialists, technical and organizational work was not implemented at the required level.

However, the activities of the artels were affected by a shortage of personnel, the untimely introduction of new technologies into production, and, most importantly, raw material scarcity. While state enterprises were fully financed from the budget, artels were allocated a limited amount of funds and had to independently source raw materials to continue their activities.

As of December 9, 1957, enterprises under the Fergana Regional Handicraft Council had fulfilled their annual gross production plan ahead of schedule and had taken on an additional obligation to produce products worth 1,600,000 soums by the end of the year [6:1]. However, the planned production of fired bricks was not completed. This situation occurred because the clay reserves for brick production coincided with the Eskikhuwa archaeological site [6:2].

Although the production plans for main product types were largely fulfilled, and the number of artels that did not meet their plans decreased, some enterprises could have operated efficiently if they had been supplied with raw materials and resources on time. Certain types of raw materials, particularly sugar for confectionery products, were received late by the artels, and the improper planning of transportation resulted in additional costs for transporting materials from Fergana to Kokand. Similar issues existed in metal supply: the “New Force” artel in Kokand transported 30-40 percent of its metal from Fergana, and the paint supply for bed workshops was unsatisfactory.

Nevertheless, new bed models, including semi-nickel beds, were introduced into production, which significantly increased the production of children’s beds. The adoption of new furniture models led to the serial production of cupboards, mirrored wardrobes, and bookcases. Additionally, collective farms were supplied with agricultural equipment, and furniture production and sewing workshops were fully mechanized [6:4].

CONCLUSION

By the 1950s, the USSR handicraft cooperative system encompassed 12,667 enterprises, 1,844 thousand workers, 2 scientific research institutes, 22 experimental laboratories, and 100 design bureaus, producing 31.2 billion soums’ worth of 33,444 product types [1:102]. By this time, the USSR handicraft cooperative system had two scientific research institutes with more than 3,000 scientific staff, as well as experimental and testing facilities, which prepared rationalization proposals for cooperative enterprises and engaged in the implementation of new technologies.

Within the Uzbek handicraft cooperative system, the technical-design bureau actively worked on introducing new models and technologies into production, exerting a positive impact on the processes within the sector.



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