

Our final peer review paper is Nalini and Natarajan's discussion of the use of solar energy in Tamil Nadu and the role of co-operatives. The paper starts with the vexed problem that as one of the largest producers of electricity, India still has problems with access to power and energy, with 237 million people — many in rural communities — without access to electricity. Added to this is the majority reliance on coal. The authors suggest that solar presents as a more inclusive energy source, both in extending coverage and mitigating carbon emissions, and that energy co-operatives could be the way sustainable energy production and use could be promoted.

In recent years, central and state government in India have provided incentives and started initiatives to make solar power competitive with fossil-fuel-based power. Nalini and Natarajan point to the success of energy shifts in Germany and provide examples of where there have been some changes in behaviour through the promotion of alternative energy sources for irrigation of crops for farmers (Solar Pump Irrigators' Co-operative Enterprise — SPICE); domestic power supply (Grace Co-operative Housing Society); and a village community energy project in Rajasthan.

The paper presents a summary of a quantitative study that exposes the merits and viability of solar power — in relation to, for example, diesel generators, and also to consider off-grid/on-grid. The authors conclude with ways in which co-operatives can endorse and develop the deployment of solar power projects.

Parwez's paper on contract farming in India also poses the question of how co-operatives can support local agriculture. Here again, there is support for the introduction of co-operatives and this short article brings to our attention the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers Union Ltd (Amul) as an 'ideal' model for co-operative based contract farming; a model replicated over the last 30 years or so. There are now over 1,700 village dairy co-operative societies and almost 700,000 producer members and the paper provides some food for thought on the future development of dairy production, specifically in the implications for ensuring positive social and economic development.

The current issue rounds off with a review of a recent publication from Massimo de Angelis (Conaty) and Tom Gray's short review of Bivona's publication on "the structural ills of neo-liberalism".

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References

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- Slaen, T., Mantere, V., & Helin, K., (2014). *OPERA: A Guide for More Efficient Meetings*, (translated by L. Tollet). Stockholm, SW: Integrated Consulting Group.