A White Touch to a Refreshed Green Revolution

Why in news?

November 26, 2021 was celebrated in Anand, Gujarat as the 100th birth anniversary of Verghese Kurien, the leader of India's 'white revolution'.

What is so significant about November 26?

- **White Revolution -** Dr Kurien started the 'Operation Flood' which increased the incomes and the wealth of millions of cattle-owning small farmers in India, many of them women.
- **Farmers' protest –** it also marked one year from the day when farmers, who have been the beneficiaries of Green Revolution, began a non-violent protest to force the government to withdraw the new laws it made.
- The protesting farmers feared the new policies would enable corporations to make more profits and marginalise farmers further.

Purposes of the two revolutions

- **Purpose** - The purpose of the green revolution was to increase the output of agriculture to prevent shortages of food whereas the white revolution was meant to increase the incomes of small farmers in Gujarat, not the output of milk.
- **Principle** - The green revolution was largely a technocratic enterprise driven by science and the principles of efficiency whereas the white revolution was driven by political leaders and principles of equity.

What is the Amul cooperative model about?

- Dr Kurien was instrumental in developing the 'Amul' brand for marketing of the milk & milk products of Khaira Milk Union.
- Kurien's Model of Co-operative capitalism permeated into the lives of millions of dairy farmers to get empowered.
- He made all efforts to standardise the technology for processing of buffalo milk getting it the much deserved international recognition.
- Amul has successfully competed with the world's largest corporations and their well-established brands.
- The enterprise achieved its outcome of empowering farmers because

equity and efficiency of production process was always kept in the foreground.
- This revolutionized the production, procurement and marketing of milk and other farm produce in India through co-operative institutional set up.

What guidelines were proposed for inclusion and environmental sustainability?

- The Institute of Rural Management Anand convened a workshop to celebrate his 100th birth anniversary to discover what can be learned from the white revolution to regreen the green one.
- **Inclusion and equity** - Inclusion and equity in governance must be hardwired into the design of the enterprise.
- Increase in the incomes and wealth of the workers and small asset owners in the enterprise must be the purpose of the enterprise, rather than production of better returns for investors.
- **Social aspect** - The 'social' side of the enterprise is as important as its 'business' side.
- Therefore, new metrics of performance must be used, and many 'non-corporate' methods of management learned and applied to strengthen its social fabric.
- **Local systems' solutions**- the local systems' solutions must be preferred over global (or national) scale' solutions.
- The enterprise must be embedded in the local community from whom it gets its environmental resources, and whose well-being it must nourish by its operations.
- **Practicality** - Science must be practical and useable by the people on the ground rather than a science developed by experts to convince other experts.
- **Steady evolution**- Sustainable transformations are brought about by a steady process of evolution, not by drastic revolution as large-scale transformations imposed from the top can have strong side-effects.
- Large-scale farming using modern scientific methods was the approach in the Soviet Union and in the United States to improve agricultural outputs, but it wiped out peasants and has swept off small farmers.
- The essence of democratic economic governance is that an enterprise must be of the people, for the people, and governed by the people too.

References

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2. https://icar.org.in/node/5278

