

# Ashok Khosla delivers Verghese Kurien Memorial oration

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Xavier School of Management organised the 4th 'Dr Verghese Kurien Memorial Oration on Sustainable Development'. Organised under the aegis of Fr Arrupe Center for Ecology and Sustainability (FACES), XLRI, in memory of the founder of AMUL Dr Verghese Kurien, otherwise known as the Milkman of India, the oration aims to provide a platform to listen to and learn from thought leaders, social entrepreneurs, development sector professionals and policy makers who have made a significant contribution to the idea of an empowered, prosperous and sustainable society.

Dr Ashok Khosla, eminent environmentalist and founder & chairman, Development Alternatives Group delivered the oration on the topic The Machine Revolution: Fulfilling the Aspirations of Rural India.

In his speech, Dr Khosla said, "Some 70 years ago, Dr Verghese Kurien created



Amul, one of the most successful social enterprises in history. The 'White Revolution' brought enormous quantity of protein into the diets of India's population, complementing the massive quantity of calories provided by the 'Green Revolution'. The efforts of scientist/practitioners like Dr Kurien have certainly enabled large numbers of our fellow citizens to live healthier and more productive lives. Beyond nourishing food, people also have other basic needs such as water, energy for lighting and cooking, shelter, clothing, knowledge, health care and, above all, livelihoods and jobs."

Emphasising on the topic of his oration, 'The Machine

Revolution', Dr Khosla said, "Improving lives means improving productivity. Productivity of labour, productivity of the land, and productivity of resources, such as water, energy and materials. And improving productivity needs technology, to extend and multiply the capabilities of the human and animal effort on which the large numbers of our marginalised compatriots solely depend. Technology means tools, instruments, methods and know-how, all of which can be subsumed under the metaphor of a "machine". Some of the machines needed for improving the economic performance of rural communities already exist, resulting from the 200 years of experience worldwide since the industrial revolution. Others, needed to address the different life and livelihood issues that are peculiar to the rural economy, must be invented and delivered to a widespread market. This requires "disruptive innovation" of the kind pioneered by the Green and White

Revolutions: a new "Machine Revolution".

To explain how 'machines' and institutions that can bring about the kinds of impacts on the lives and livelihoods of India's rural poor, Dr Khosla gave example of TARAlife, a social enterprise recently set up by the Development Alternatives Group in his speech.

TARAlife is the latest initiative of the globally recognized 35-year-old social enterprise Development Alternatives Group to motivate and help entrepreneurs create local industries and sales channels for basic needs and aspirational products, and simultaneously generate jobs, income and purchasing power in rural areas. It is a new enterprise was launched on 17 March 2017 as a market-based solution to poverty, hunger and environmental destruction with the purpose not only to deliver good financial returns on investment but also make much needed transformational economic, social and environmental contributions to India's future.