



**The awe-inspiring story of an ordinary man with extraordinary conviction and grit. Meet the man behind one of India's legendary brands.**

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**T**here are achievers... and there are achievers... However, few manage to leave an imprint which is impossible to obscure because of their sheer strength of character and conviction. One such is **Dr. Verghese Kurien**, ex-chairman of GCMF Ltd (Amul) and best-known as the 'Milkman of India'. According to Dr. Kurien, 'If one does not dream, how will he/she dare? And if they won't dare... how will they know who are they, and what are they capable of?'

### Operation Amul

Dr. Kurien impressed a new conduit for the farmers of this country. Using the name, 'Operation Flood', he very effectively empowered the farmers of Anand district in Gujarat, organising them and helping them gain control over milk production,

# Making of a Legend

procurement and marketing. One of the ways in which he accomplished this is by allowing tasks to be managed by qualified professionals while letting the farmers lay down all the rules, in the process, totally ruling out money-grubbing middlemen. The model was a runaway success so much so that Dr. Kurien was asked by the then Prime Minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri, to replicate it all over the country. In this manner, Dr. Kurien became the chairman of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), with its headquarters at Anand, and a household name throughout India. And in due course, India beat the US and became the country that produced the maximum quantity of milk.



many competitive brands flooding the market, Amul awaits the future with renewed vigour and zeal. "Amul knows the 'Taste of India' and hence, it will retain a certain quality that our people cherish, and will continue making their experience with dairy products 'an AMUL (wonderful) experience!," explains R.S. Sodhi, Chief General Manager of GCMMF

been instrumental in securing the livelihood of several villages across the country. These co-operative units have not only been a source of assured employment and competitive advantage, but their success has instilled a great deal of confidence and self-esteem among the rural people. Amul has also played an intrinsic part in women's empowerment, providing occupation to millions of women in Gujarat. For the girl child, Amul has been synonymous with the cause of education and consequent emancipation.

### Eye on the future

With a rise in consumer expectations, Amul too has witnessed a quantum leap in growth and development. Apart from stirring the white revolution



So successful was the Amul model that Dr. Kurien was told to replicate it all over the country.

### Secret Ingredient

If one looks back, the secret ingredient behind the success of Amul is none other than the strong dictum of 'Brand Power' that Dr. Kurien fostered. In his 2005 Annual Meeting speech, Dr. Kurien famously said, "A cooperative without a 'brand' can never aspire to survive, let alone thrive, while marketing commodities in today's competitive environment."

Also, we must not forget that Amul was the only brand that lucratively produced milk powder out of buffalo's milk, while other national dairies continued to do so using cow's milk. It's the same with Amul's other dairy products. Today, in spite of the

Ltd (Amul) India. Amul is one of the only Indian dairy brands to be marketed overseas as well. Indeed, their export revenue has crossed the 100 crores mark. If at all proof is needed, the Amul co-operative strategy is used in modules by management students across the country.

### Mother of Corporate Social Responsibility

It could be easily said of Amul that here's a brand which initiated the very concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). After all, the brand is built around the concept of rural empowerment. True, Amul has actively participated in the lives of villagers. By creating co-operative units, the company has

in the country, the company has seen the birth of not only dairy-based products but also a variety of Indian delicacies, low-fat milk and milk-products and more. "Innovation cannot be mandated or forced out of people. It is everywhere, a function of the quality of people and the environment," says Dr. Kurien. And, as the company comes up with newer, better products, it becomes imperative for the company to hire even more skilled professionals. This in turn has ensured brand loyalty over the years. The company's sole aim now, is to work on quality—"making it better". Of course, by "making it better", Amul continues to become "bigger". ■