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THE GREEN REVOLUTION: THE UNTOLD PROCESS OF ITS SUCCESS

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Poster presentation at the 53ru Annual Conference of the
German Society of Economic and Social Sciences in Agriculture (GEWISOLA)
"How much market and how much regulation does sustainable agricultural development need?"

Berlin, September 25-27, 2013

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Green Revolution: The Untold Story of its Success

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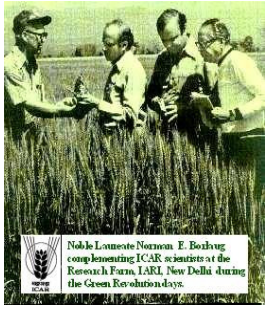
Rationale: **Forty years after, we re-examine the Green Revolution through the importance of vision, leadership and institution –building as the agriculture community is still faced with the task of addressing the recurrent issue of food security amidst emerging challenges like climate change**

Context and Driving Factors

- **Political turmoil**: humiliating defeat of India by the Chinese on one side, a looming food crisis and the United States threatening to cut food aid to India
- **Grain production**: per capita grain production in Asia was 194 kg in 1961, compared to the 868 kg of the US. Indian Food Corporation had no food reserves at all, and the deficits had to be met with imports
- **Droughts:** the situation worsened in India with two consecutive droughts in 1965/66 and 1966/67.
- **Importing HYVs:** C.Subramanian, with consultations with Norman Borlaug, took the decision to import 18 thousand tons of seeds and corresponding amounts of fertilizer



Process of Implementation

- **Political consensus**: Initial intense policy struggle on the price front between the Food Ministry on one hand and the Finance Ministry and the Planning Commission
- **Policy reforms:** appointment of Dr B.P. Pal, a plant breeder, as director-general of the ICAR, increase in pay scales of scientists and targeted and time-bound research
- **Institutional reforms:** provision of the minimum support price to the farmers, incentives and investments in new technology and organizations
- **Extension services:** initiation of national demonstrations through large scale information campaigns using radio, press, and cinemas.
- **Farmer incentives:** two hectares of each field selected and in case of crop failure with HYV, provisions made for compensation to the farmer

Impacts

- **Food self-sufficient :** in the growing season of 1983-84, India was proudly announcing itself as a self –sufficient food grain producing country
- **Limited coverage:** criticized for remaining as pocketed achievements in the parts of conducive agricultural conditions
- **Ecological criticisms:** degradation of land and irrigation water due to excess use of inputs and weakened natural protection systems
- **Indirect effects :** significant decline in the proportion of landless households, reduction in the number of large landholders and increase in number of small and marginal farmers

Lessons learnt**: i) strategy of sustaining a long-term agricultural growth through building of strong infrastructures and institutions ii) creating capacities and making policy environments where leadership and driving forces are created both at the local and the policy level iii) cutting subsidies and increase investments in agricultural R&D, rural infrastructure, and education**