

Micro-Planning - Need of the Hour



It was way back in 1995 I had completed about 10 years' service, when I was working as Manager, Technical Inputs in Katraj Dairy. We were pretty busy in increasing the milk procurement. During 85-95 the milk procurement increased from 1 lakh ltrs to 4-5 lakhs ltrs. a day. We were faced with a problem of disposal of the milk as there was no demand for the same. In the process we had to adopt closure of the milk collection. However, from the dairy farmer had to milk the cows regularly as failure to do so would have affected the health of the cow. The poor farmer had left no option to dispose of the milk by any means. Some farmers were throwing their milk on the roads. The dairy farmers were incurring heavy losses which hurt us. There were occasions when Worli Dairy in Mumbai had to dispose of the extra milk in the Arabian Sea. Everyone was worried.

We also see similar tendency in agriculture. When the Soya bean crops get higher rates, next year the area under soya bean increases substantially and the market is flooded with soya bean. Prices fall and the producer suffers

losses. Similar is the case with other crops. There has to be planning and when the producer is incapable of planning it himself the Government should provide necessary guidance to avoid such situations. Agriculturists should have a broader view. They should leave mean mindedness.

We blame the nature especially the monsoon for failure of agricultural crops but do not take effective steps to preserve rain water which runs to ocean. Think of Israel where every drop of water is considered precious and used judiciously.

In 1995, a Minister from Switzerland Govt. visited India and he also paid visit to Katraj Dairy. The Hon. Minister expressed a desire to see the process of milk collection in the village and hence I had taken him to one of our rural dairy collection centre. It was a one-hour journey. On the way I took up the opportunity and briefed the Hon. Minister about the problem of surplus milk and the losses incurred by the dairy farmers as the dairy cannot collect it for want of demand. I inquired with him how about the situation in Switzerland and their experience of surplus milk procurement. The Hon. Minister was kind enough to explain the whole experience lucidly. He said that they had to suffer this situation way back in 1975 and after a great deal of study came out with the solution.

He explained the whole story by citing an illustration. He said in this car we are four people – forming a universe for illustration. What will be our normal requirement say 1 ltr. per person i.e. 4 ltrs. If there is one ltr. surplus naturally the milk producer will be at loss as he will not be able to realize even his cost of production. Or alternately he should be in a position to export it where there is a need. In the process the loss / profit will be

governed by the prices prevailing in the export market. In such a case the dairy farmer is open to profit / loss as the case may be. Through this example he narrated the importance of Micro planning concept.

There is one more alternative for accommodating the excess production. Either the Government may create a buffer stock or it may appeal the affluent society to step up their consumption or stock it in excess of their immediate needs vice versa. I recollect that during the World War II when the soldiers on the front were starving of eggs, the then rules had appealed the masses to minimize their consumption of eggs and this appeal was honoured by the public. When India was facing shortage of food grains Late Lal Bahadur Shastri had appealed to skip one time eating of rice on Wednesday night and the public also responded wholeheartedly.

Concept of Micro Planning

He explained the concept of Micro-planning which seeks to reach the objectives set at national level by assuring greater equality in the distribution of educational services, a better fit between these services and the needs of local communities, and the more efficient use of available resources. Micro level planning is a kind of percolation of planning activities. It is process from the centre to the sub-state levels, i.e. district, sub-division, block and village level. The micro planning should encompass all aspects like micro biodiversity, micro finance, micro economics etc.

Micro-planning is a crucial aspect of development. Micro planning is essential a special development planning which tends to utilise all available resources – natural, human and others to the fullest extent.

Micro-planning is a comprehensive planning approach where in the community prepares development plans themselves considering the priority needs of the village. Inclusion and participation of all sections of the community is central to micro-planning, thus making it an integral component of decentralized governance. For village development to be sustainable and participatory, it is imperative that the community owns its village development plans and that the community ensures that development is in consonance with its needs.

Keeping the same thread, he said first decide the likely demand. How much production is required? Who will produce it? What will the cost of production? What will be the supply price? It should be within the affordability limits of the potential consumer. Excess will have to be exported. And then based on the export rate outcome the producer will either earn profit or loss as the case may be. This will have to be borne by the producer. When this phenomenon was explained to the dairy farmers, they became cautious. The success of the Micro planning lies in stricter implementation of the plan without bringing in emotions. The execution of the micro planning should be reviewed periodically and corrective actions wherever necessary should be taken dispassionately.

This led to the scientific approach to the dairy activity. Dairy farmers were given scientific inputs. They were introduced to the newer technology in dairy. The need for planning at various levels such as village, block, district, state, country as a whole. The policy makers addressed this issue with the upto data input and the problem of surplus wasting was sorted out. The Hon. Minister further stated that this is not the case only milk, but in various economic activities that we pursue need to

be studied from this angle. He also stressed that we should attach highest importance of the quality of our output. Whether it is education, any other production etc.

On this back drop when I look back, I find even in 2020 we have not learnt any lesson from the others experience. Man has bestowed with a very important feature of thinking ability. A wise man learns a lesson from any failure and takes corrective steps. We have not learnt any lesson from the experience of Switzerland. I would like to give one more example of Israel. Once it is decided that 250 ltrs of water per person per day is available then if one uses more water than this one has to pay heavy charges which are uneconomic. In India it has been observed that for excess uses fines are provided but those are so minimal one can afford it. The Israel Minister of Dairy gets minute data everyday evening as to how much milk - fat and SNF wise- has been produced in the country so that he can plan strategy for disposal as well as production of the milk. They use advanced technology for authentic data collection. We have in India superior brains having international reputation in IT sector (We have Param Computer developers) and achieving similar fit in India should not find a difficulty.

Once late Hon. Annasaheb Shinde – the then Central Agricultural Minister narrated a similar story of dairy activity. The master mind who researched for the increase in the productivity of milk yield was an Indian (Sardarji) working in Switzerland, and he was on visit to India. He said that in that country if the cow gives less than 35 ltrs milk a day she sent to the slaughter house as she becomes uneconomic. The normal yield there was about 80-85 ltrs a day. Hon. Annasaheb had an opportunity to interact with him about how we in India can increase the

milk yield by transforming their quality embryo by artificial insemination in India cows by bring it to India by air? He instantly said 'No'. The reason ascribed by him was quite interesting. He said that in India when you plan a water supply scheme, you account for only the human population and do not consider the livestock population. The point is our planning should be so through it should account for all the requisite ingredients properly attended.

Today, we read in newspaper that at Nasik the farmers have thrown onion on the roads because they are not getting remunerative prices. Similar is the case for dairy farmers when they do not get remunerative price for their milk produced, they just express their anger by pouring it on the roads. When there was shortage of engineering colleges in the state of Maharashtra, the Engineering education was opened to the private sector. The private sector invested a lot and started several engineering colleges and after a short period the demand for engineering colleges fallen. Last year there were over 67000 vacancies in the Engineering Colleges as a result their entire economy collapsed. It happens in every walk of life.

This happens for every commodity as the market works on the fundamental laws of economics. i.e. the Law of Demand and Supply. When the supply increases naturally it adversely affects demand and the prices fall. Reverse is the case when the supply shrinks.

The private sector's prime concern is to earn profit. They are least concerned about the quality of their product. There are many colleges both engineering / medical in private sector where the teaching staff, laboratories, etc. are not as per the prescribed standards. In order to earn income, the results are also liberal. In the process the

product that turns out is of low quality. Then on this backdrop how can one expect standard work from these graduates. Therefore, we should attach highest importance to the quality and not to the quantity.

In every field we will have to appoint knowledgeable person of high calibre and then and then only we can expect better results.

Here I would like to make one more point. The electricity generation in India for quite some time is less than the demand. Therefore, the Govt. has created National Electricity Grid and, in that surplus, generated from any State is pulled and supplied to the needy states at a pre-decided price. Why can't we think of similar National Grid for other commodities like Milk Grid, tomato Grid etc. This will be helpful to those states where there is technical knowhow and entrepreneurs to use it for value addition and earn more.

In conclusion, I am of the considered view that even today, we are lacking in proper approach to planning and which should be discussed by the experts and draw out a strategy which will take all the probable events in account and addressing those issues come out with a scientific policy in every field. It is not enough that our policy is good but the Government should implement it with all sincerity without looking to the political benefits. If it happens then and then only India has a bright future.

Let us be optimistic, a day will dawn when the Indian planning machinery will get galvanized and something positive will come out. If it so happens, I will be the happiest person.



Quotes

“The time to repair the roof is when the sun is shining.”

– John F. Kennedy

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.”

– Pablo Picasso

“Unless you have definite, precise, clearly set goals, you are not going to realize the maximum potential that lies within you.”

– Zig Ziglar

“By Failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail.”

– Benjamin Franklin

“Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes; but no plans.”

– Peter F. Drucker

“A man who does not plan long ahead will find trouble at his door.”

– Confucius