PREFACE

The study here intends to delve deep into the problem of rural "non-development" and "misery-go-round" of rural people. It probes into the persistence of rural distinction and accentuation of economic "ill-fare" of the rural masses in spite of repeated attempts of decentralised planning. It focuses on the stark realities of all planning efforts, which are surrogate mirrors of the concern for rural poverty, of all decentralisation, which are not 'attempts' but rhetoric, which have largely turn out to be a 'non-system.'

It has been my intent here to analyse the problem of rural development and prospects of decentralisation for the rural sector but always with a holistic point of view. Because the multi-faceted character of rural development warrants a multi-dimensional exercise, which can not be triggered off by the outside central authorities.

There is no dearth of literatures on rural development and poverty. But most of them suffers from several limitations, much of it are defensive of the "status quo" dominated both by managerialism and marginalism. But the present study is devoted to study different aspects of rural non-development and rural poverty, its socio-economic characterisation and institutional mechanisms of its perpetuation.
It is based upon a holistic approach. It attempts to remedy the strategic deficiencies and shortcomings subsisting in the planned approach to rural development. It deals with the most fundamental issues. It provides a detailed discussion of both the methodological and organisational aspects of micro level planning with suitable illustrations drawn from field studies. The methodology and approach of this study is analytical and discursive. I have consciously tried to minimise the technical jargons hopefully without sacrificing the accuracy and spirit. In pursuing the concern I do freely cross the academic boundaries between disciplines and freely include whatever mixture of facts and concepts from any of the disciplines is called for by my articulation and write in an analytical style which involves 'polemical speculations' in an attempt to taking on a vast panorama of the political economy of Rural Development and Decentralisation. The study is addressed towards equipping the local planners with a "pennon and a sword" in the realm of planning.

My own book on the same title "Rural Development through Decentralisation" (1990) has been the starting point of this dissertation. Further, my edited volume "Regional Economic Development and Decentralisation" (1992) has generated interest in me and provided me the incentive to pursue the work.
Besides, this study based upon the product and by product of the exercises made for preparing papers: (a) presented in various international advanced Summer Institutes and conferences that I attended particularly in countries such as Holland (1980), West Germany (1984), Italy (1984), Sweden (1986), UK(1990) and Italy (1994), (b) presented in various conferences and seminars held in India and (c) published in different reputed journals in India and abroad.

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