After the colonial era, India launched a programme of planned economic development with massive public sector investment and a system of control imposed on the private sector. The result of these efforts has been the persistence of a huge but unproductive primary sector, slender industrial sector and a bloated tertiary sector in the economy. The process of industrialisation through public sector investment continues to be inefficient, disarticulated and regionally concentrated in and around a few urban conurbations. The growth impulses generated through market mechanism at a few urban nodes got impounded mostly within the urban limits instead of being diffused to the neighbourhood.

Similarly the urbanisation process has been essentially constrained by anaemic agricultural base and disarticulated process of industrialisation. The centres of urban agglomerations continue to be stultified, mainly concerned with distribution and other services rather than with production. They continue to be the focal point of the "suction mechanism" for commodities, income, capital and flow of labour force. Redistribution of population in space has merely led to urban accretion rather than functional urbanisation. The great majority of towns are floundering in the quick-sand of 'bazzar economy', which
continue to devour without digesting the surplus labour from the hinterland. Their growth happens to be unproductive and inequitous. Thus the process of industrialisation and urbanisations, which was supposed to reduce poverty in the rural economy remained ineffective.

There is a growing amnesia on rural "non-development" and rural poverty. Lack of political will to address the basic human existential problems largely explains the rural poverty and sufferings. A common man easily can observe that most often the policy statements of government of India do not really reflect their intentions. Indian democracy provides an illusion of benevolence for concealing the ruthless exploitation of their own people, for once, having secured power through vote, the present politico-bureaucratic-industrial Raj has proved itself to be no less despotic than its colonial and imperial predecessors. The only difference is a well-orchestrated facade of good intentions and promise of a brighter future through pious policy pronouncements and euphoria of "trickle-down effect."

Many developing countries, including India have given a very low priority to agricultural development and to relieving poverty in rural areas, concentrating on industrial development instead of rural development. Nearly in all developing nations there is searching of capital and public funds. These public funds usually go to benefit groups with "political visibility" and power.
All answers to economic problems are political questions. The political leaders want to stay in power. It is the political elite and economic rich who decides and influences the leaders length of stay rather than the scattered and weak small farmers and rural poor. The urban rich and elite class are much more threat to the political system than the small farmers and innocent people in the villages.

The desire to retain power, of course is not the only reason, why rural development has not been given a high priority in India. The desire to achieve a high standard of living by following a western route, with the emphasis on imitative industrialisation has been the real cause of rural backwardness. On an average 20% of the total investment of most of the developing countries goes to the 70 to 80 per cent of the population who live in rural areas. This development strategy is a gamble. The ‘maybe’ benefits do not trickle down to the rural poor.

The Indian political elites are always pride over the past culture and history, so do our planners wallowing amidst documents and propaganda containing false data and informations over preparedness to coast into the 21st century. The present economic policy, which is being pursued for last couple of decades by government of India, which continues to emphasise on rural development and at

the same time increasingly tending to adopt the policy of free market mechanism seems to be chauvinistic but hollow and deceptive. It is the country where the "star-culture" flourishes at the cost of rural development, truculent exploitation of the rural labourers and peasants, demolition of huts of beggars and slum dwellers and at the cost of rapid depletion of natural resources and environmental crisis. All plans and policies have excessively concentrated on the modern sector at the expense of traditional and informal sector where the majority eke out their living.

It is saddening to note that after a long span of 45 years of planning, with several tinkering in plan techniques, the rural poverty has remained as grave as before. The rural sector has been struggling hard to extricate itself from the abysmal troughs of poverty and squalor. The rural sector has remained closer to the subsistence level and painfully sensitive to the vagaries of the monsoon and other natural calamities. Floods, cyclones, drought and other calamities are the perennial problems of the rural people, who at best enjoy a fragile existence. Environmental degradation is rapidly endangering the life support system and quality of life of people in large parts of the country.

The present system has been unmindful of the social, and ecological aspects of economic development.

It is ironic that rural development is paid only a lip service. Rural folk and tribal mass are being choused
by the government by various populist rural development schemes. Beautification of metropolies and urban nodes has created concrete jungles stifling the cry of the rural mass into nothingness. All welfare drives are declared but to cajole the rural poor and luring slogans are given to bottle the rural discontent and grab their wealth in a round about way. 'Land reform' measures, 'rural industrialisation', 'grassroot planning' peoples empowerments etc., continue to be political rhetorics. The martinalised is merely treated as the beneficiary to receive "doles" but not as a matter of right. The idea of peoples participation has become a mockery in as much as the 'party machine' trying to domesticate the rural toiling class through their elected representatives. Rural people are constantly being divested of their rights to livelihood.

There is emptiness in all the slogans for rural development. It reveals the true intentions of the pattern structure and its vested interest in maintaining the status quo, where a few individuals can dominate the rest of the community. In a democracy all programmes and activities are carried out in the name of the people and especially of the under privileged. The fact that almost all benefits of development gravitate to the elites reveal the extent of the dichotomy between preaching and practice. Despite the fact that much importance has been accorded to planning from below in all five year plans of India, the actual performance in respect of formulation
and implementation at local level has been far from being satisfactory. A close look at the rural economy by and large suggest that almost everything has gone wrong. All policies have remained irrelevant for rural people. Disease is wide-spread, health services is very poor, agricultural productivity is very low, villages are inaccessible, village money lenders exploit the poor farmers, land ownership is skewed, natural disasters plagues the village people, energy crisis accentuates, child-selling accurs, poverty perpetuates, bureaucracy is archaic, administration is unimaginative and usually in colonial styles. An every widening hiatus between planning and achievements persists. Hence the rural people by and large continue to be both fatalists in their attitude and defeatists in their psychology.

By way of analogy, therefore, one can conceive of rural development activities as the game among a group of highly trained players, carefully selected for the aff of their interests with the requirements of modern capitalism, that is watched by a vast number of spectators involving all the people some of the time and increasingly, some of the people all of the time. And surrounding this game, with its interested public, is the State(in the garb of mixed economy), the presence of which ensures the legitimacy of the game and guarantees, through resources derived from the spectators, that the prerogatives and
interests of the owners of the field are always protected and advanced.

1.1 DETERMINANTS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT:

A fair knowledge about the determinants and their degree of impact on rural development is warranted on the part of the functionaries concerned with rural development. In the absence of a satisfactory index of measuring rural development we usually adopt the conventional variable i.e. "out put" as the proxy measure of rural development, on a priori basis. Total output function of the rural economy can be specified as:

\[ Y = (N, E, K, T, O) \]

Therefore:

\[ \Delta Y = (\Delta N, \Delta E, \Delta K, \Delta T, \Delta O) \]

Where:

- \( Y \) = level of output
- \( N \) = Natural resources harnessed
- \( E \) = Employment generated
- \( K \) = capital invested
- \( T \) = Technology adopted
- \( O \) = Organisational framework
- \( \Delta \) = 'Change in' variables.

This function depicts that rise in output depends on and determined by the use of natural resources, employment level, volume of capital invested and technology involved.
But in reality several factors to affect and determine the height on the scale of development. There are many physical technological, economic, social, cultural, institutional, organisational and political factors that shape the level and set the pace of rural development. These factors do operate at household, village, block, district, state, nation and even at world levels. The real determinants of rural poverty are mostly non-economic and non-quantifiable factors. Rural poverty refers to the "assetlessness" and "deprivation" of rural people. It has been observed that neither Y nor its determinants i.e. N, K, T, O have any connection with rural poverty. Only rural employment generation (E) seems to have little on rural poverty. This conceptual confusion essentially has led to the failure of "trickle down effect." The rural development is a multi-dimensional riddle and rural poverty is a multi-faceted malaise which call for a multi-directional approach. Therefore, the approach to rural development should not be at macro-level. It should instead, aim at micro-level spatial planning.

The real determinants of human welfare are:

(1) the degree to which people can secure an adequate livelihood through self-employment without uprooting themselves from the communities in which they are
born or subordinating themselves to giant faceless organisations.

(ii) the degree to which local, social and cultural traditions are preserved and provide the individual with identity and continuity to protect him from future shock.

(iii) the efficient and equitable health care delivery system, educational facilities and other social overheads

(iv) the extent to which the local ecological balance and environmental values are protected against the inroads of modern technology.

(v) the extent to which local people are free from exploitation and human drudgery.

(vi) the extent to which local communities acquire the status of well-integrated self-governing units.

In the rural areas of almost all developing countries, poverty is defined as severe deprivation of basic needs, and most importantly by inadequacy of nutrition. It is linked to landlessness. Majority of the rural poor have become increasingly clustered on low potential land. Pushed into marginal areas, the poor have no chance but to overexploit resources available to them in order to survive. Survival thus takes precedence over the concern for future viability of the land in particular and village ecosystem in general. Majority of the poor live in highly vulnerable areas - flood-prone, cyclone-prone, arid and semi-arid
step slopes and remote areas where even today a man cannot reach by bicycle. The retreat of the poor to fragile lands with low agricultural potential is the result of combination of several factors; population pressure, modernisation of agriculture, urban sprawl and inappropriate macro-economic polities which have distorted relative prices against labour intensive technologies and products produced by the rural poor. Rural poor in India suffers from assetlessness. Their major asset is their labour. Because of low wage they do not have any economic power. The caste system, illiteracy, ill health, male domination, the prevailing value system based on religion, social dogmas conspire to accentuate their economic deprivation and social neglect.

The relationship between rural poverty, environment and development is a "vicious circle." Poverty of the village people leads them to over utilise and over burden their natural environment in which development eventually depends. In reality, however, there are certain structures behind the aggregates of this relationship. And these structures should be accurately analysed, when one searches for solutions to escape the vicious circle. In this study therefore, rural poverty, rural under development, ill health environmental problems and energy crisis are structurally defined in order to detect options for development that may simultaneously contribute to rural development poverty alleviation, better standards
of living prevention of environmental deterioration and depletion of natural resources. Thus any strategy of socio-economic development in India which neglects rural people and rural areas can not be successful. Rural development is in fact essential to the development of the country as a whole. It is a multi-dimensional process involving the reorganisation and reorientation of entire economic and social systems.

In developing countries it was common to think of development only in economic terms. Development and economic development were considered to be synonymous. In 1970s an awareness grew in the third world that some of the economic, social and environmental changes which are coming with economic growth are undesirable. Slowly and painfully people came to realise that development is more than economic growth. Economic development to be synonymous with rural development, attention has to be paid to the effects that economic growth is having on rural communities and on its energy base and environmental factors. Prominent questions that emerge are:

1. Do rural common people have enough purchasing power, enough food, to eat, and water, to drink and adequate fuel to use and shelter to live.
2. Do the benefits of development percolate to the rural poor.
3. Does it reduce the incidence of rural poverty and destitution.
(4) Are adequate health care, educational facility and other social amenities available to the rural majority?

(5) Does it result in depletion of energy sources and deterioration of environmental standards?

The wellbeing of the people depends on how the government and planners deal with these issues. This thesis looks at some of these important issues in the context of rural development. It aids understanding these national issues and articulates the political choices that are desirable on these issues.

Two basic premises are fundamental to the decentralised framework:

(1) The problems of rural development have to be viewed from a holistic perspective and the efforts to solve them have to be multi-faceted.

(2) The overall rural development can be brought about only with effective people's participation, backed by the coordination of technical and other services necessary for securing the best from such initiative and self-help.

1.2 THE REAL ISSUES:

Plan points out a precise path to pursue a predetermined goal. Planning as a process involves the application of a rational system of choices among feasible courses of investment and other development possibilities based on the
consideration of economic and social costs and benefits. As a quantitative exercise, planning is a process of determining an optimal mix of alternative investment activities so as to maximise the objective function under the given constraints. It contributes to development mainly through direct provision and allocation of scarce resources by the government, regulation and direction of resource allocation decisions in the private sector, coordination of public and private actions and guiding the use of private resources through the manipulation of market forces. Planning can be carried out at national and state level (macro planning) at the level of individual unit of production (micro-planning) and at an intermediate level (meso-planning). India's approach to development planning has been predominantly macro-oriented which emphasises national goals and priorities. Central planning in India has adopted three types of strategies for rural development.

1) Growth-oriented strategy
2) Welfare-oriented strategy and
3) Integrated development strategy.

This has reduced planning to a set of sterile exercise where the plans and programmes are formulated mechanically without considering the resource base, development potentials, needs and aspirations of the people at the grass roots. The national planners really do not know whether their targets can, in effect be achieved and what it takes to achieve them. And the planners at sub-national levels do not know what the effect of their plans would be on aggregate input requirements and aggregate output of the country as a whole. Thus for successful and effective planning it is necessary that the macro and micro plans are harmonised at some intermediate (region/area) level. To make the developmental planning effective, two pronged approach, which works simultaneously in a coordinated way from the grass roots level up and the national level down, should be followed. Decentralisation, is needed to make plans realistic and to permit wider people's participation.

(a) Brutal Centralism:

Perpetuation of poverty in India has revealed a number of weaknesses of the development strategy adopted by the planners and policy makers. India, like many other developing countries, after its independence regarded unified centralised planning as highly desirable. It was mainly the contribution of colonial rulers. Centralised economic planning, intervention and control have been viewed by the national
government as the correct path to follow despite frequent and increasingly detailed accounts of their negative or negligible effects. A widely held suspicion against the mechanism of decentralisation is that the market is immoral and anarchic and that its impersonal operation rewards the few at the expense of many. Clearly this is not an economic debate; there are powerful political reasons for strengthening the centralisation process more.

The central planning has many serious deficiencies. It is difficult to perceive the complex variety of factors that affect the success of projects in local communities throughout the vast country. In its attempt to cope with uncertainties, it has created highly standardised procedures or through the fear of making mistakes it did nothing about urgent decisions that are essential for the implementation of local schemes. Above all it designed all rural development projects without thoroughly understanding local, social, economic, physical, and organisational conditions which ultimately generated opposition among the local groups or encountered such apathy that most of the schemes were destined to failures. So the excessive centralisation is the cause of poor performance of plan targets. Inspite of considerable economic development in terms of higher production, income and employment in different sectors of the economy the problem of alleviating rural poverty persists with same gravity. The conventional
welfare approach have had the effect of perpetuating and reinforcing the rural backwardness and dependency. All the welfare measures have benefitted the rural people marginally, but pitiably that has been confined to the upper crust of the weaker section and has not percolated to the lowest of the low for who it was primarily intended. The main shortcomings of centralist philosophy are:

1. It is elitist in character.
2. It basically thrives on urban-bias and rural neglect.
3. Its solutions to rural development are imperfect.
4. It contains the seeds of political totalitarianism.
5. It does not help in attaining or preserving the crucial values.
6. It does not offer a chance of progress in terms of real determinants of human welfare.

Despite the slogans of decentralisation, the inertia of the past still carries the day. Ignoring our realities we are directing our efforts primarily towards an imitative industrialism. The path is at once undesirable, counter unaffordable, productivity ecologically unsound. The large scale centralised approach with its heavy emphasis on capital intensive industrialisation still takes up most of the investible capital. This approach has not served the poor. For them we need to create one permanent productive job. It is imperative to search for and adopted
village scale and family-suited technologies, sophisticated in their conception and simple in their application.

(b) **Rural Poverty**

In the process of accepting instant imported developmentalism, India has fallen into the subtle but dangerous habit of relying on remedies without diagnosing our disease or rather relying on a readymade diagnosis. The transplantation of growth models, without taking into consideration the resource endowment of the country and imperatives of socio-economic settings, institutional and structural characteristics, has no substantial effect on poverty and inequality prevailing in the Indian economy. The vicious circle of poverty and backwardness is more closely related to and its incidence is more pronounced in the rural India: It is basically a rural phenomenon, infectiously spreading to the urban informal sector through rural exodus. Even a foreign tourist can perceive the gravity of rural poverty by observing the millions of urban poor, spending their life in railway stations, bus stands, footpaths, slums, squatter settlements, who never think to go back to their villages even in extreme adverse conditions. Without going into factual data one can safely realise how grave and perennial is the problem of rural poverty. It is complex in origin as well as in its manifestations, such as: sub-marginal
subsistence, malnutrition, illiteracy, disease, high infant mortality, low life expectancy, lack of skill and many ruinous forms of escapism. Rural poverty continues to be a social and moral scandal and a dragon economic growth. It remains stubborn and persistent question that appears to defy solution. In fact it is a great social, moral, economic and intellectual challenge.\(^3\)

Over the period of 45 years of planning the rural development has always been assigned a pride place in the development scheme of priority. There is no dearth of anti-poverty programmes and sub-plans. But the achievement of welfare state assuring a minimum standard of living to its teeming millions still remains a distant goal. The variety of measures for rural upliftment and administrative reforms envisaged in different Five Year Plans have marginal effect on this economic ailment. It is really intriguing how the economy has so far failed to respond adequately to all the stimuli extended under different schemes of development.

In India the sociological, economic and political dimensions of rural poverty are closely interwoven. The social, political and economic structures forms the parts of the entire social system. Each one of these structures function as a subsystem of the organic whole. The socially

and economically dominant castes are in position to influence the administrative machinery both by easy entry and effective access. In the same vein they are able to exploit the machinery so as to derive the maximum possible benefit. In other words the three subsystems are so strongly interlocked that the poor remain outside the enclosure, which is very strongly biased in favour of the elites. The rural poor is one among those who occupy low social status in the hierarchical set-up. He hardly enjoy any participation in the policy-formulating and programme implementing machinery. The institutional and power arrangements in India, howsoever democratic it may be has turned out to be oligopolistic in nature, consequently the entry of rural poor in that machinery is highly restricted.

(c) Technological Dualism:

India lives in her village and earns her livelihood from agricultural land. The direction, rates and regional pattern of agricultural development in India were determined to a large extent by the legacy of a stunted agricultural sector within the structure of colonial under-development. The requirement of imperialist exploitation disrupted the symbiotic relationship between the agricultural sector and small household and village industries. The colonial rule exerted considerable influence and imposed serious
constraints on the available technological options during the post-independent period which in turn determined the space relations. The exogenous imposition of high technology in isolated enclaves of dysfunctional development in India permitted to persistence of lower forms technology. They coexisted in an imperfectly integrated organism. This dualism in the technology front had its inevitable manifestation in the space in the form of rural urban dichotomy.

The issue of big technology in an appropriate technology is the main concern of the present decade. The ravishing and stultifying impact of giantism has been forcefully brought out by savants like schemator. There are dangers of technocratic myopia based on elitist premises, negligent of local needs, priorities and cultural values. Growing threats to ecosystem, depletion of non-renewable energy sources, environmental pollution are real menaces. Both in the global and natural perspectives, planning of a type geared to a more rational utilisation of local resources is imperative. In the national context industrialisation of western type may be able to deliver goods. Husum Nair in her book, "The lonely Furow" has pointed out that even if the whole industrial apparatus of USA were to be transplanted in India overnight, it could take care of only one-third of its population. So we have no effective alternative to labour-intensive approach, which is in harmony with small in beautiful" thesis. All this
entails planning for local resources use of a very sophisticated nature and organisational and educational efforts on the widest possible scale. Therefore, PR is an effective instrument for accomplishing these goals.

(d) **Rural Energy Crisis:**

Significant majority of the rural population of India living below or just above the poverty line has not yet crossed the "fuel-gathering" stage. The worry about the cooking fuel is the most common problem for rural people. Fuel cost is very high for rural people. So cooking fuel in India's villages have always been limited to the energy sources available from the immediate environment. As a result fire wood is now being consumed more rapidly that it is being regrown. It results in a vicious energy crises, which necessitates each family to devote more time and labour for searching for fuel wood. As forests are badly damaged vast areas of top soil one left exposed to rain and flood. Soil erosion contributes not only silting of water ways and eventual flooding downstreams but also reduces the land productivity, on which village people survive. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by increasing tendency to burn animal dungs, which were formerly used as vital soil fertilisers. Thus, the depletion of traditional fuel energy and non-affordability of the commercial alternatives worsens the energy starvation
of the poor villagers and simultaneously undermines their capacity to produce food for their own survival. All energy prescriptions and policies suffer from naive illusions and "elitist bias". Making simplistic national energy plans is quite irrelevant, because rural energy crisis is region specific. Longterm solution to rural energy starvation lies in developing alternative viable and environmentally sustainable sources of renewable energy, which can be achieved only through decentralisation.

(e) **Rural Environment:**

Rapid population growth, environmental degradation and deepening poverty are reinforcing each other in a "downward spiral" in the developing countries. If current predictions of population growth, prove accurate and patterns of human activity on the planet remain unchanged, science and technology, shall not be able to prevent either irreversible degradation of the environment or continued poverty for much of the world.  

Environmental deterioration is associated with rural poverty in number of ways. Ecologically overstressed societies with population explosions, are further impelled to more intensification of pressure on their natural environment in an attempt to survive. In all the

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third world countries, activities of rural poor such as unscientific cultivation, land clearing, excessive tree-cutting, over gazing, over fishing and various forms of remissions and discharges cause environmental degradation. So there is a causal link between rural poverty and environment. Three dimensions of economy-environment linkages can be distinguished:

(i) **Scale dimension:** It refers to the scale of economic activities (due to heavy population pressure) relative to the regenerative and adaptive capacity of the environment. Scale dimension can be analysed either narrowly (village-level) or broadly (national level or global level).

(ii) **Maldistribution dimension:** It refers to the relationship between ownership and use of land, forest, water public infrastructures etc. and the resulting environmental pressure.

(iii) **Misallocation dimension:** It refers to the market failure and public policy, the popular example of which are environmental externalities emanating from private activity. It can be analysed either at national-level or at global level.

It is very important to establish relative roles of each of these three dimensions in poverty environment linkage since policy recommendations with respect to accommodating both poverty reduction and environmental
conditions could be quite different depending on the relative strength of each dimension.

(f) **Rural Health:**

Health care system of India is strongly urban-biased. The priorities of promoting rural health care has not yet been translated into budget priorities. The modern hospitals only deal with the tip of the iceberg. The medical profession has neither the training nor capacity to deliver health care to the common rural people. The sophisticated urban medical services monopolised by the elite class in the presence of an archaic administrative structure, has ended up in a poor caricature of the western model. Health care has remained a profitable business. Thus the failure to deliver health care especially to the rural poor who form the majority of the Indian population is because of appropriate policies and lack of professional and political will. In spite of the inadequacy of rural health services and prevalence of inefficiency and inequity in the health care system, there has been no governmental initiative to improve its delivery mechanism.

The problem does not lies so much in inadequacy of health services, but in the inability to make them reach to the rural common people through over professionalised and over-bureaucratised health system both in the public as well as the private sector. Thus the policy makers,
irrespective of their emphasis on market forces or non-market forces, should be concerned with the following three questions:

1. Does it improve the access to maximise the quality of health care for rural people?
2. Does it minimise the cost of health care for rural people?
3. Is it politically and otherwise feasible and socially acceptable?

Decentralisation has the answer to these questions. Unless the people are involved in the health planning, it is impossible to evolve a meaningful and cost-effective health care system that can provide adequate amount of appropriate health care to the people.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

There exists an avalanche of literatures on rural development, poverty, and decentralised planning in India. From the review of relevant literatures done in the chapter to follow it is observed that major problem with most of the studies is the total neglect of what may called an integrated approach. Research on rural development suffers from several limitations: much of it is atheoretical, frequently ahistorical, usually apolitical, defensive of the status quo and dominated both by marginalism and managerialism.
There is absence of a holistic approach, which attempts to disentangle the web of causality in order to understand the occurrence of a phenomenon and its consequences.

There have indeed been few broad-ranging structural analysis of the overall rural development and of the political and economic forces that influence its trend, structure and content. The present study is an humble attempt which goes some way towards filling this gap.

It is highly imperative to find answers to the riddle of rural non-development and undertake a diagnostic probe into the realities of India's plan exercise in the context of rural development. The present study attempts to:

(1) examine how the general problem of poverty and backwardness are related to the nature of India's economic system and whether and to what extent they are influenced by the policies of the State.

(2) focus on the role that politics plays in solving certain awesome problems which have accompanied economic development of third world countries. It aims to analyse how the politico-economic system are handling serious development problems connected with the living standard population growth, health, education, energy, environment and depletion of natural resources.
(3) formulate a formal link between rural energy, rural health, rural poverty and environmental externalities and makes out a case for an ecosystem approach and inter generational set of criteria for efficient management of natural resources.

(4) put a probing insight into the major strategies of rural development and present a brief account of its performance and failures during the post-colonial-plan period of India.

More specifically it aims:

a) to review the important group-specific and area-specific developmental programmes adopted by the government and to distill important lessons from such experience.

b) to identify the lacuna and shortcomings of the decentralisation strategy adopted by the government.

c) to find out the determinants and factors which improves the efficacy of decentralisation process.

d) to simulate the future scenario of various facets of rural developments, and construct a methodology in order to formulate micro and macro level plans.

e) to provide a synthesis between multi-objective programming and multi level planning.

f) to emphasise the need for having a functional "participative model."
The study largely concentrates on some neglected aspects of the functioning of Indian economy with particular focus on the rural sector, which are relevant for an understanding of the relationship between poverty, energy environment, health literacy, employment in the rural economy. It makes a modest attempt to raise some of the neglected but major issues pertaining to rural development rather than to give definitive solutions.

1.4 PREVIEW OF CHAPTERS:

The study is expected to be a comprehensive treatise on rural development covering all important aspects of rural development and polemics of decentralisation. The entire study is organised into ten chapters.

The introduction chapter articulates the crucial issues of rural development in the context of decentralised planning in India. It makes an exposition of concepts, determinants of rural development and objectives and hypotheses of the study. The second chapter on review of literature makes an attempt to review the important literatures existing on various aspects such as rural development, rural poverty, rural health, rural energy and environment.

The third chapter probes into the problems of stagnation, poverty and backwardness among the developing
countries. It puts a searching look into the plan strategies and present a brief account of its success and failure.

The fourth chapter is devoted to examine the level of rural development: It measures the trend and incidence of rural poverty in various states by regression models and interstate disparity by composite indices. It analyses the inefficiency and equity aspects of the existing health care system in rural areas.

The fifth chapter makes a critical review of India's long experience of decentralised approach to rural development, particularly with reference to establishing various rural institutions, adopting various strategies and approaches for rural development and implementing various poverty eradication programmes in rural areas and to infer the implications of such policy interventions.

The chapter six addresses the political background of the strategy of rural development in particular the connection between the government and the rural people. It makes a modest attempt to reveal the political, economic, spatial and environmental dimensions of decentralisation process in India. It analyses the present profile of district planning in different states and highlights the problems and future prospects of decentralisation in India.
In chapter seven an analytical insight is put into the functioning of the rural ecology. This chapter highlights the rural energy crisis and implications of depletion of natural resources for rural people. By focusing on the future prospects of energy supply and environmental services, it makes out a case for having an ecosystem approach and intergenerational set of criteria for efficient management of natural resources.

Chapter eight highlights the problem of coordination and integration in the decentralisation process and provides a theoretical synthesis between multi-objective programming and multi-level planning in a decentralised model. It emphasises the need for having a "functional" peoples participation and regional information system in order to ensure the efficacy of decentralisation process for rural development, in India.

Chapter nine tries to present an "appropriate methodology" suited for both planning and implementation at the sub-national levels in India. This methodology pertains to concepts, scope, stages and actions involved in the various stages of planning, particularly at the local level, and responsibilities of various functionaries. It simulates the future scenario to have an idea as to how the rural economy would behave in the future at the end of the planning horizon.
The last chapter makes a summary of the entire exercise, derives some useful conclusions and brings out important policy implications therefrom. It makes out a strong case for the resurrection of the planning in strategy in the framework of democratic decentralisation in order to ensure rural development and poverty eradication.