

Agricultural and Rural Development in the 1990s and Beyond : What should India Do and Why?*

V. Kurien

Dr. Wadhwa, the members of the faculty of the Gokhale Institute, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

This Institute has been a pioneering institution. It is a striking example of the impact that an institution of research and learning can make as a whistle-blower --drawing society's attention to issues critical to its people and, thereby, in influencing the way public policy on such issues gets formulated. I am happy to be here.

By making these remarks, I think I am leaving no doubt in your minds that I am an admirer of this Institute. Even so, I would be dishonest if I were to say that I was entirely delighted in accepting this invitation. Indeed, it was with some reluctance that I could overcome my apprehensions about accepting this honour of addressing you today.

The reason behind my apprehension was that I have a deep dislike for economists. I am credited to have made a public statement - which, incidentally, I have not denied yet -- that a world without economists would be a lot better place for the human kind. May the tribe perish-for they never are where the action is!

Now, when I first heard from Dr. Wadhwa, I quickly inferred that he could not have known the views that I have harboured in my mind about economists. I was torn between the horns of a dilemma. I had no intention of keeping him in the dark on the matter. Nor, in the stage of my life at which I am poised, I felt inclined to change my views either on economists or, for that matter, on anyone else. It was, therefore, that I was apprehensive about accepting to deliver his lecture.

* Text of Rao Bahadur R.R. Kale Memorial Lecture delivered at the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune, on 17th July, 1992.