

# Preface

*Economic liberalisation is now a fait accompli for most countries of the world. However, some developing countries have experienced declining growth rates, shrinking shares in world trade, growing unemployment and poverty in the wake of economic liberalisation. There have been a steady and steep erosion of existing job security measures. In many countries, there is a rising trend towards casualisation and contractualisation of the labour force. Also while proportion of safe and secure jobs has declined, there has been an increase in less secure jobs in the informal sector. In the rural sector, the problem is relatively more serious because the rural workers in developing countries are largely unorganised. In fact, trade unions and other rural workers organisations in developing countries face several challenges in the wake of economic liberalisation. These include education and skill formation for upward mobility of the workers, strengthening the workers' organisations in terms of membership and training facilities and influencing the Government to adopt appropriate pro-worker policies and social safety nets through dialogue.*

*The Government of India has ratified ILO Convention No. 141 which emphasises on promotion of rural workers organisations and their participation in socio-economic development projects of the Government. But it has not taken any serious measures to give full effect to it in terms of law and practice.*

*The book has five chapters. Chapter-I gives an introduction and objectives of the study. Chapter-II analyses the nature, pace and extent of economic liberalisation achieved so far. Chapter-III analyses the socio-economic conditions, capabilities and organisational needs of rural workers. Chapter-IV examines the impact of economic liberalisation on agricultural and other rural workers with special emphasis on small and marginal farmers, landless labourers and non-farm workers in the informal sector. Chapter-V analyses the emerging issues and policy implications, while indicating the roles of rural workers' organisations,*

*Government and the ILO in preparing the rural workers to meet the challenges of economic liberalisation and globalisation.*

*This book is based on both analysis of secondary data and perceptive views of trade union leaders. The results were discussed in a seminar held at NIRD, Hyderabad in which representatives of all the leading trade unions and rural workers' organisations including some NGOs participated. The relevant points made by them have also been incorporated. I am grateful to all the participants who contributed towards enrichment of the quality of this study.*

*I congratulate Dr. T. Haque and Mr. D.P.A. Naidu for bringing out this book which provide necessary guidelines for the trade unions and other rural workers organisations to meet the challenges of economic liberalisation in effective as well as productive manners. The book would be of great help not only to trade unions, but also to concerned government and non-government organisations in guiding them to adopt suitable policies and strategies for protecting the interests of rural workers who constitute the vast majority of total working population in India.*

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