Foreword

As an environmental economist, I have always been puzzled by one issue: why don't we think fundamentally and use environmental education as a long-term strategy to reduce the anthropogenic forces affecting natural and ecological resources. This monograph brings out evidences from a field study on the experience of the NGO sector in this regard.

The first question posed in this book is about the role of environmental education. It was in 1982 that the UNCED conference drafted Agenda 21, which included some specific programmes on environmental education. Since then, both internationally and nationally, several concrete programmes were initiated at two levels — as an integral part of curriculum in different stages of formal education, and in various forms of non-formal education — to create public awareness, capacity building in dealing with the problems and so on.

It is in this context that the role of non-governmental organisations is equally important. A large number of them, spread all over the country, have been enabled by the governments and bi-lateral and multi-lateral donor agencies to reach out to the different sections of the society, be it a slum, a market place or urban complexes. Their objectives include creating awareness about environmental hazards and deteriorating situation, educating people on the need for social movements to abate the problems, reducing conflicts, and getting associated with formal school education system.

This book, based on an intensive field study carried out in the city of Bangalore, draws some rich lessons for designing further improvements in the process of NGO involvements in environmental education.

Prof. K. Yeshodhara carried out the study during her stay at ISEC. The financial support extended by Sir Ratan Tata Trust has enabled the research study and its publication. I am sure this research work will find a useful shelf space in the minds of environmentalists as well as policy-makers.

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