Foreword

In an interview to 'The Post' during one of my memorable trips to South Africa, I commented that the aim of my study was to 'strengthen Indian knowledge on the country'. I sincerely hope this work provides an insight into how South Africa in the post-apartheid era has been able to cope with the enormous task of building a new non-racial and democratic country.

On a more personal level, the study has certainly been an enriching experience. The two fieldtrips conducted to South Africa that enabled me to travel around the country, experience life in African townships, Indian and White areas, attend political rallies, local council proceedings, workshops and conferences, toyi-toyi at rallies, visit polling stations during the 2000 elections have been very exciting, exhilarating, nostalgic and educative.

Local government is an interesting level from which to view the nature of transformation in South Africa. This study is based on the belief that the dynamics of change from racially segregated society and polity to a non-racial and democratic arrangement is best reflected at the local level. The study attempts to look closely at the development of a de-racialized and democratic system in new South Africa with special reference to the racially and culturally diverse city of Durban. It probes into the factors that prompted reforms in the local structure. It traces the local government debate and the objectives behind the establishment of local structures and offers an explanation of the basic design of the South African local government system.

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