The present thesis entitled "Trade Unions: An Organizational Analysis" is the outcome of my long and fruitful association with my esteemed guide Prof. G.S. Bidarkoppa during which I developed an inclination toward the study of structure and functioning of trade unions. My earlier study on trade union leadership inspired me to take up this study on the structure and function of unions for which I sought guidance from Prof. G.S. Bidarkoppa. It is due to his keen interest and constant encouragement that the study took its present shape.

During my study on trade union leadership, particularly during the field work, I felt that I am missing an important link that could provide an integrated insight into the actual functioning of union leadership and that was the organizational context. Union leaders were studied as actors in the system of industrial relations, focusing particularly on their roles and strategies as representatives of unions in industrial relations. However, during the survey of literature it was noticed that empirical works on Indian trade unionism from organizational perspective are virtually non-existent, though there was considerable amount of theorizing on organization of trade unions in the Western context, right since the work of Robert Michels. Further, during the field work of study on union leadership, exposure to the functioning of union organizations reinforced my interest in the study of organizational structure and functioning of trade unions. I could realize that this is an area where empirical research is needed not only to understand the structure and functioning of unions, but also to attempt to make certain suggestions based on the findings that could improve the effectiveness and efficiency of unions. Unionism as an area of academic and scientific interest has been full of speculations and arm-chair theorizing with little empirical knowledge regarding the structure and functioning of unions, extent of much discussed oligarchy and democracy in unions and their implications for effectiveness of unions, the indices and determinants of union democracy and so forth. Thus, it was felt that the basic research questions that need to be answered empirically are how are the unions structured internally? how do they function? is iron law of oligarchy tenable? how democratic are the unions? What are the indicators and determinants of union democracy? study was taken up. So, when I approached Prof. G.S. Bidarkoppa, Chairman,
Department of Social Work, Karnataka University, Dharwar, seeking his guidance in my endeavour to answer these questions, he readily agreed to kindly guide me and provided me with valuable suggestions. Discussions with my esteemed teacher and guide of earlier doctoral degree Dr. K. Chandrasekharan M.A., D.Phil (Frankfurt), Retired Senior Professor of Sociology, Karnataka University, Dharwar also provided me with useful insights into the subject that stood me in good stead throughout my study. Inspite of quite a distance between the place where I work and the place of my guide, Prof. G.S. Bidarkoppa, I have received the grooming and training in the discipline and research that I would cherish throughout my career. Finally, the acquaintance I gained with the literature while reviewing and the first hand knowledge I acquired about unions, union leadership and union democracy have been assets of immense value to me as a teacher of industrial relations at Gulbarga University, Gulbarga.