PREFACE

The hill state of Himachal Pradesh has diverse agro-climatic conditions which are varying from low hill sub-tropical regions to high hill alpine regions. This has bestowed the state with vast potential for growing different varieties of field crops, fruits, plantation crops and rearing livestock. The state also emerged as a leading hilly state of the country particularly in the production of fruits, vegetables, off-season vegetables and seed potato and is considered as a ‘Role Model’ for development of other hill states.

Due to heavy dependence on agriculture, the limited land and the agricultural based economy, the farming sector in the state is characterized by the pre-dominance of marginal and small holdings. The concentration of these holdings is continuously increasing. These accounted for 78.4 percent of total holdings during 1970-71 which have increased to 84.5 percent during 1995-96. The human pressure on land is continuously increasing, consequently more and more holdings are becoming marginal. With the existing technology of crop and animal husbandry, it seems that there is no possibility of making small and marginal farmers economically viable, without diversified cropping pattern and simultaneous adoption of livestock poultry, sheep and goats rearing, bee keeping etc. and other allied activities.

The viability is generally considered to be a situation where the resources generated from a particular enterprise are enough to meet out the investment demand for that enterprise. In case of agriculture it means that the income generated by way of production of various crops are enough to meet out the demand of fertilizers, seeds, plant protection materials, hired human and bullock labours etc. Presently, the concept of viability of farms, especially small and marginal ones, has gained considerable importance. It is due to the fact that the farming conditions and over all economic scenario have substantially
changed from the past when only subsistence farming was the practice. In the past there were no purchased material inputs and therefore it was possible to carry out farming without any financial considerations. Holding sizes were large and question of farm viability never arose. But, with changing scenario of agricultural practices in the state, the issue of viability in tribal and non-tribal areas has become important.

In order to work out the status of viability and study related issues of marginal farms, the present study has been divided into Eleven chapters. Chapter-1 deals with Introduction, Concepts, Importance and Objectives of the Study. Chapter-2 presents the Methodology of the Study regarding Sampling and Coverage of the Study Area, Analytical Tools, Cost Concepts, Concepts and Definitions, Analysis of Data etc. Chapter-3 contains the Review of available Literature whereas Chapter-4 deals with present Scenario of Operational Holdings in Himachal Pradesh, Districts and Category wise. Chapter-5 is devoted to the General Features of the Study Areas, both Tribal and Non-Tribal while Chapter-6 presents the Socio-Economic Profile of Sample Farmers. Chapter-7 deals with the Viability of Small and Marginal Farms in Himachal Pradesh. Chapter-8 contains the Diversification of Agriculture on Small and Marginal Farms in Himachal Pradesh. Moreover Chapter-9 deals with Sustainable Agricultural Development of Small and Marginal Farms in Himachal Pradesh and Chapter-10 presents the Government Initiatives for Making Small and Marginal Farms Viable and Constraints faced by Farmers while Chapter-11 reveals Summary and Suggestions of the present study.