CONCLUSION

The present study in field of sociology of higher education has come to focus some important dimensions of post-graduate student community in India. It has sought to ascertain the important aspects of student community at higher level of education and its members that have rarely touched upon by the previous studies conducted by Indian social scientists in general and sociologists in particular. Quite a few aspects of post-graduate student community have been touched upon in the present study such as personal and social traits, educational profile, educational satisfaction, educational and occupational aspirations. These aspects of student community in general and post-graduate students in particular are not only of academic interest, but also of applied value in understanding students’ academic activities and their roles in India. Many issues and problems thrashed out in the course of discussion of the findings could be looked upon as providing leads to more structured and organized research in the field of sociology of higher education and more particularly in the area of academic field. Generally academic field consists of three such pillars as students, teachers and administrators. Activities of each of these sections would have implications for the other section and in turn these need to contribute for the betterment of a given society.

This section is intended to summarize the major findings of the present study to provide intricacies and realities pertaining to the students who are pursuing post-graduate education. The sample size of the present study is consisting of 250 post-graduate students studying in different post-graduate departments located on Jnanabharathi Campus of Bangalore University. The post-graduate students for the study are selected based on the systematic random sampling. And the care has been taken in selecting 125 female and 125 male
students in order to maintain gender equality, the term post-graduate student in this study is referred to a student who is undertaking a course at a post-graduate department of studies in Bangalore University.

It has already been mentioned that the sample students are drawn from Bangalore University is known for the best quality it is maintaining in education and socializing students to perfection. Its certificates command a great respect all over the country and also in abroad. So every year there will be a huge rush for Bangalore University admission. Thus, Bangalore University, since it has established in 1886 as Central College Bangalore and converted into Bangalore University in 1964 is maintaining a good profile. It has neared the status of “Potential for Excellence” which is reserved for top 10 universities in India by University Grants Commission. These facts make a seat in any course in these universities a status symbol and a life time’s dreams for brilliant students. So there is a huge rush in every year for an admission in this university. Bangalore University in engaged in different academic oriented activities and also have tie up with various universities in India and abroad to engage in academic pursuits. Here also it maintains its typical quality of education. It provides all assistance to the learners including a good library with rich collection of books on various subjects and well managed laboratories with most sophisticated equipments available in India. The study group in the present investigation is the students in post-graduation, the highest level of education in India by any standard. In view of the paucity of an empirical literature on a section of society that is of high significance, an empirical portrait or profile of the post-graduate students is attempted in the thesis.
The term profile in the present study is used as a means of recording the outcome of education in the form of a comprehensive statement referring to the range of a post-graduate student’s educational experience, competencies and interests. The general expectation of a profile appears to rest on a model which includes some final assessment with a structured reporting format and some consistent academic approach to recording. Higher education has provided the wisdom and expertise which equip young people for their future roles as social leaders. This remains valid since higher education must uphold the education and values which mould socially responsible citizens. There is a very clear and new emphasis on the role and responsibilities of the student community in this effort. Students are now the prime clients of higher education and, as such, their views on merit, the relevance and quality of teaching, training and research are under scrutiny. On the other hand, they are faced with great uncertainties which prevent them from realizing their aspirations and fulfilling the potential of their qualifications. Since students will be tomorrow’s leaders, it is essential that their opinions be articulated and widely disseminated amongst all partners concerned with development. Without the support of young people who feel positive about the principles and modalities chosen to advance this process, its future could be gravely compromised.

It needs to be noted with concern that, the university post-graduate students who constitute an important section of the society have not received the scientific attention which they truly deserve. Apart from a few sketches of the profiles of Indian school and college students that focus on the personal details, student-teacher relationship and statistical accounts, surprisingly, there is virtually nothing known about the academic traits or role activities of university post-graduate students. As such, the sociology of higher education in India is beset with unwarranted speculations and unfounded notions. Under these circumstances, a strong need was felt to conduct an empirical enquiry on different dimensions of
higher education in India. Such studies are viewed as instrumental in filling up the vacuum that exists in the body of knowledge on academic field. It is because of these considerations, the present study could be viewed as significant from academic and sociological points of view.

Social profile in the present study consists of personal and family background. Our exploration of the post-graduate students began with the construction of personal profile of the respondents. With the help of information pertaining to age, gender, marital status, religion, caste and place of origin of the respondents, an attempt is being made to find the personal background and upbringing of the post-graduate students. The analysis reveals that typical post-graduate student is young, unmarried and ruralite coming from intermediate and lower castes. The findings further seem to indicate that, as expected it is the women from higher castes, who are more prone to be taking post-graduation as a career than their low caste counterparts. However, strangely, among men, it is those from low castes who have out numbered their brothers from higher castes. It may thus be stated that those women from higher castes have resources, both financial and intellectual to pursue a post-graduate career which may land them in a high profile academic career in the future, which suits the temperament, aptitude and lifestyle of higher class women.

It is acknowledged that, to be a post-graduate student one has to have a relatively higher levels and grades of educational attainments and creative aptitude that are normally assumed to be going with the urban background. However, several empirical sketches have negated this assumption by revealing the fact that, ruralites many a time are more accomplished and committed individuals. The findings of the present study seem to support the latter view as majority of the respondents studied are from rural background. It may also mean that ruralites are temperamentally better suited for academics rather than high profile professions,
business or entrepreneurship, where urbanites could be having an upper hand. The findings with regard to the size of the family reveal that, more than three-fourths of the respondents come from families with six or less members. Such moderate families certainly hamper the higher educational aspirations of its members. In other words, such families provide its members some limited sources to achieve their higher educational attainments. The fathers of such families are assumed to be lowly educated.

This could be supported by the finding that, as many as 70 percent of the post-graduate students have fathers with low level of education. In consonance with this more than one-half of them are having fathers who are self employed. Thus, more numbers of students are drawn from lower social origin notwithstanding a significant proportion of representation from moderate and slightly declining proportion from high social origin as well. An attempt is also made in the present study to ascertain the implications of social origin for such variables as age, rural urban background and gender. Based on the findings, it may be stated that, those from high social origin owing to the advantages in terms of family background and social status they enjoy, are in the post-graduate career at an early age compared to their counterparts from low social origin. Coming to deal with social origin and nativity, more numbers of students with high social origin are hailing from urban areas. At the same time greater proportion of rural students in the study belonged to low social origin. The present study also focuses on the under representation of urban men and rural women. The reasons for such phenomenon on may be due to unwillingness of urban men taking to post-graduation, but on the contrary, in case of rural female students, the situation could be quite different, as they are denied of opportunities, do not receive the required encouragement to take to higher education leading to highest academic degrees. To conclude it could be stated that social origin as an important composite
variable dealing with socio-economic status appears to be having significant implications for the age and rural urban background of post-graduate students.

The chapter on educational profile of post-graduate students is one of the core chapters in the present study. It focuses on place of schooling attended, type of institution studied, educational grades achieved, basis for admission, motivation and support, medium of instruction and time devoted to study by the post-graduate students. The place of schooling for them is predominantly villages, whereas place of colleges is town or cities. This is quite expected, owing to their rural background and availability of primary education in villages and town. People do not go to cities for primary education unless the family itself is relocated to cities which are a rare possibility. In case of place of college, majority of the sample students have reported to study in town based colleges followed by a significant proportion in city based colleges. When it comes to type of institution in which they have studied, the data seem to suggest that majority of the post-graduate students have completed their primary, secondary, intermediate and graduate level of education in government institutions. It is observed from the data that as the level of education increases among students, the chances of joining government institutions also increase. This trend could be attributed to state Government’s efforts to establish more and more educational institutions, particularly at graduate level, to facilitate the educational aspirations of the student population. At the same time it could also be attributed to the generally held assumption that, the private institutions offer more amount of donations which the students cannot afford.

To begin with, the educational grades or academic achievement or performance of post-graduate students at their graduate level, which is determinant factor in joining or securing a seat at university post-graduate department of studies and research centers, is taken into account. An attempt as such, is made in
this study to ascertain the extent of level of the educational grades by considering their marks obtained in their degree examinations and variations along with such traits as age, gender, rural-urban background social origin. While analyzing the educational grades of post-graduate students, it was found that overwhelming majority of them got first class, whereas a small proportion of them secured second class and only 3.2 percent got distinction, which is above first class. It is assumed that competition to perform better in the modern world commensurate with the grades achieved by them. The data on educational grades and age was cross tabulated in order to ascertain the correlation and a significant association was found between the two.

When it comes to rural urban background an overwhelming majority of the urban post-graduate students have secured first class marks compared to their semi-urban and rural counterparts. Further, they are also in the frontline to achieve distinction marks as well. However, the students drawn from rural areas are relatively found more in second class category compared to their urban counterparts. Thus, in the case of students getting different educational grades, the place of birth of students appears to be very significant. Irrespective of place of origin overwhelming majority of the students getting first class is something which needs to be explained. This is made possible partly due to loose valuation, and partly due to both students and teachers taking first class as taken for granted. Students getting distinction and second class might have happened by almost default. On the whole, educational grades do not really matter much, given the state of affairs in the university education system.

The study was to explore the distribution and the effects of social origin on academic achievement of post-graduate students. In the light of the findings, two observations could be made here; on the one hand we have more distinction achieved students from higher social origin, indicating the conducive atmosphere
for them to perform better and a sizable proportion of low social origin achieving first class showing their competitive tendency at higher level of education, on the other. However, it is recommended that a campaign may be lunched for the awareness of parents to enhance their socio-economic status in order to see their children perform at distinction level.

Overall with regard to educational grades the picture that emerges out of analysis is mixed, in the sense that the grades student obtain in the examination does not depend only on age, rural and urban background or even on gender. Because, evaluation in different subjects applies different yard sticks, subjects which involve practical exam, students have a tendency to score high marks. The same is not said to be possible in courses which are essentially theoretical and students write essay type answers. The grades also depend upon the standards of valuation, which have been substantially relaxed in recent times on the part of the students they have picked up the knack of getting mobilized and demand high grades no mater how they really are performing in the examination. Notwithstanding these limitations the analysis seems to throw light on how exactly grades are correlated with age, gender, and medium of instruction, rural and urban background and socio economic status.

Higher education in India has peculiar overtones, right from admission to the completion of course. The bases for higher education are so varied that it may appear as determining other academic traits of the post-graduate students. In all, the bases for admission to university education are classified into three categories as merit, donation and reservation. The analysis reveals that majority (71.6 percent) of the post-graduate students have earned their admission to post-graduate education through merit and another 20 (20.8) percent have secured such admission through reservation. It can be attributed to the fact that now the trend is toward merit to which younger generation looks for. There is growing concern for
getting more and more marks in the examinations among the children as well as parents. Even educational institutions look for meritorious students as the seats allotted are based on the merit of the entrants. The data on basis for admission and gender suggest that higher proportion (80 percent) of the female students got admission on merit compared to their male counterparts (63.2 percent). Thus, compared to boys slightly higher percentage of girls got admission on merit and a higher percentage of boys compared to girls got admission on reservation. Girls are merit oriented, while boys are reservation oriented. Similarly, higher proportion of urban students getting through merit is not surprising compared to rural students as urban students have a greater and easy access to educational facilities and quality instruction. Further, the analysis shows that merit does not depend entirely only on socio-economic status, though the higher proportion of students of low and moderate categories have reported reservation as a basis for admission. This analysis goes to confirm that it is students from low social origin have a tendency to depend upon reservation for getting preferential treatment both in admission and jobs.

Having considered several aspects of post-graduate education as a process and function, an attempt is made here to ascertain empirically motivations and support the post-graduate students receive from others in pursuing the higher education process. The post-graduate students were asked as to who motivated or inspired them to take to post-graduate course. It is quite possible that, they could be self-motivated or would have conceived a post-graduate career by themselves for themselves. The data pertaining to this reveal that, one-half (50.4 percent) of the post-graduate students were self motivated and thought of post-graduation by themselves, which may be taken as quite gratifying.

Medium of instruction is one of the serious problems, found in the field of higher education. In all civilized countries, the medium of instruction is the mother
It is argued that normally the medium at the pre-college stage being the mother tongue; it is academically unsound to ask the students to switch over to English as the medium instruction as soon as they enter the university campus. Such switch over, could affect the quality of education. Contrary to this argument, the data on medium of instruction of the respondents since their primary education to post-graduate education indicate that, the percentage of switching over to English medium from regional languages is in increasing trend. Medium of instruction continues to be English though for practical reasons teachers use English and Kannada while providing instruction and delivering lectures. Students have a choice to write examination either in Kannada or English. It is generally assumed that rural students prefer Kannada to English, similarly urban and high income status students prefer English to Kannada. Compared to boys, girls prefer English to Kannada, this being the state of medium of instruction at post-graduate level. It has been found that high percentage of both boys and girls prefer English to Kannada, and the correlation between medium of instruction and gender is not significant. On the whole, it can be concluded that the correlation across the variables has been found significant in some cases, whereas in majority of cases not significant. This study paves the way for further studies which could examine in far more detail, the correlations across the wide variety of factors which together mould and shape students behavior in higher education.

Coming to the amount of time that students devote to study or preparation for the examination, it determines students’ performance and ultimately the grades they are able to get. At present there is a wide spread feeling that reading habits of students are declining and frequently students get hooked to computer, and get glued to television and other sources of information and entertainment. Reading original books and reports is rarely taken seriously. Given the state of students’ mind, an attempt is made to analyze whether age has anything to do with the time spent on studies. It may be found from the data that young age students (61.2
percent) of the sample spend less hours of time for their studies. Further, a high percentage of old students that is 65 percent of them spend 4-6 hours compared to 35 percent of young students spending the same time. It is heartening to observe old students excelling young in spending more than 10 hours for their studies. The analysis shows that age and the number of hours devoted to study are increasingly related. This also goes to show that 4-6 hours of study hours is preferred by more number of students.

Another correlation examined in the study is gender and its correlation with number of hours of study devoted for studies by the post-graduate students. Overall analysis shows that girls have a tendency to spend less time compared to boys. This goes contrary to what is widely believed. As far as the reading habits of boys and girls are concerned, girls are known to be bookish and spending more quality time on studies compared to boys. Boy’s time and attention are often divided due to their involvement in co-curricular and extra curricular activates. This seems to be changing as girls are seen often to be equally involved in other activities, not necessarily connected to studies. Gender differences, are not significantly reflected in the study habits and the time devoted to studies.

The data pertaining to number of hours spent on study rural urban background and social origin has been cross tabulated in order to understand the statistical association. The picture that emerges out of this analysis is irrespective of rural urban background and socio economic status majority of students of the sample reported to spent 3-5 hours. A student spending unreasonably more hours that is above 7 hours figures least percentage in all the three categories is a common trend. Therefore, the correlation between rural urban background, social origin and the time spent on the studies is not significantly correlated. As already point out in the preceding pages that the time spent on studies is a very sensitive and subtle aspect of student behavior. It needs to be further investigated whether
students at the post-graduate level do really plan their preparation for the examination and the manner in which they go about studying.

The chapter on educational and occupational aspirations is the core chapter in the present investigation. It focuses on the proposed educational and occupational career paths as well as educational satisfaction that one derives from his or her post-graduate course. Educational aspiration means practically what educational qualifications one desires to attain and how long one is willing to pursue education, generally higher the motivation of students, higher will be educational aspirations and vice versa. Students with low motivation will not be able to perform well because such students may be unwilling to learn new things and in the process they may turnout to be unfavorable for education. Thus, educational aspirations naturally depend upon a wide array of matters.

With regard to ambition of the post-graduate students, the data seem to indicate that majority of the respondents are keen to settle in life. Most of them have the future strategy of acquiring jobs. A good number of students aspire to pursue still higher education after completing their post-graduation. These are positive features of the post-graduate level of education. As regards the chances of achieving their respective goals after post-graduation, the data indicate that little over one-half of the respondents had expressed the chances as bright. However, a completely different pattern of response emerges while seeking related information pertaining to whether studying in post-graduation has brought some changes in life. The data seem to suggest that more than three-fourths of them agree to the role played by post-graduate education, which they are pursuing at present, in bringing about changes in life. Coming to the aspirations pertaining to their results and studying abroad, most of them were intended to get first class and above marks in their ensuing post-graduate examinations. And majority of them expressed their desire to go abroad, provided an opportunity, for higher studies.
Fascinatingly, students are more desirous in attending and competing for NET to other competitive examinations like SLET and UGC. As they believe passing NET would enhance their opportunities of getting a teaching job anywhere in the country as well as paving a way for developing a research career. It is quite reasonable, in the modern competitive world, to expect that all of them are familiar with computer and its uses in the changing technological world. However, 13 of them do not have any knowledge of computers. Two hundred thirty seven of them (94.8 percent) possess computer knowledge. As to their exposure to different packages 52.3 percent are exposed to Basics, 47 of them knew Excel along with Basics, 20 have exposure to the packages namely, Basis, SPSS and Excel.

A modest attempt has also been made to construct a scale of educational aspirations of post-graduate students based on their responses discussed above in this chapter. The responses to these statements by each respondent were scored using suitable scoring techniques and based on the score so arrived at, the research scholars were classified as those with ‘high’, and ‘low’ educational aspirations. The data pertaining to educational satisfaction so ascertained indicate that categorically, more than three-fourthly (81.6 percent) of them are recognized with high level of educational aspirations and nearly one-fifth (18.4 percent) of them are identified with low level of educational aspirations. As mentioned earlier the relationship between educational aspirations and variables such as age, gender, rural-urban background and social origin have been tested. The classification of these variables is same as that of the earlier ones. To begin with, the data on educational aspirations and age has been cross tabulated and the relationship between the two is found to be significant at 0.05 level. It is observed from the data that, young students (84.2 percent) are aspiring educationally more than that of their older counterparts. It could be attributed to the fact that old students tend
to aspire less due to their growing age which could have its implications for their job opportunities in the near future. The same trend could be reversed in the case of young students as they have plenty of time to aspire and compete for the better things. It means higher the age lower is the aspiration. Lower the age higher is the aspiration. Thus, age of the post graduate students would have its own implications for their educational aspirations. Quite expectedly, higher proportions of high social origin have reported higher aspirations and low social origin students have reported low aspirations. Thus, in case of educational aspirations, the opinions have established significant relation with age and social origin. However, the gender and rural-urban background are neutral.

Educational satisfaction among the post-graduate students was ascertained by employing a scale consisting of several statements. The data pertaining to educational satisfaction so ascertained indicate that post-graduate students are distinctively categorized. More than three-fourths (78.0 percent) of them have enjoyed high level of educational satisfaction. However, more than one-fifth (22.0 percent) of them had low level of educational satisfaction. Coming to the personal background of the post-graduate students, the analysis reveals that age and gender of post-graduate students could not have significant bearing for the degree of educational satisfaction. Thus, no statistical association was found between educational satisfaction and age and gender of post-graduate students in the present study. However, rural urban background appears to be of greater relevance in determining the level of educational satisfaction among the post-graduate students with those from both rural and urban background being distinctly divided along the degree of educational satisfaction.

While considering the occupational aspirations, it is learnt from the data that teaching appears to be the most preferred assignment which was opted by most, followed by Scientist and Administrator and Social work. In the present
employment scenario there are not many candidates who would prefer to go for teaching, and considering that there is acute shortage of teachers. It is a feel good factor to know that majority of them wants to become teachers. The student community by and large seems to have disliked being politicians but still few of them have preferred. Even though majority of the students prefer to choose government jobs, they are not averse to the concept of self-employment than salaried job. The number of students who prefer self-employment is 60 percent. It is believed that university education had not just prepared them to be able to face paid employment but had also prepared them for the challenges of self-employment and therefore be job creators rather than job seekers.

Attitudes of post-graduate students toward various components like society, higher education, politics, media and social change constitute an important thrust of the present study. Attitudes toward society comprise of marriage, dowry, selection of mate and age at marriage as such. With regard to essence of marriage, majority of them have reported that marriage is essential. However, it is fascinating to observe that nearly one-fourth of the sample, think that it is not essential. It can be inferred that marriage continues to occupy a very important place. Regarding the type of marriage, it can be found from the data that majority of the post-graduate students prefer arranged marriages. Thus, students would like to go with the state of existing social situations. Students’ attitude towards dowry is another aspect examined in this study. It can be noticed from the data presented that an overwhelming majority (89.2 percent) of the sample reported against dowry and only 10.8 percent reported to favor dowry. In choosing a life partner what qualities of a life partner are taken into consideration, is a matter of concern indeed. It can observed that of the given qualities majority of the sample given more weight age to character rather than education, physical appearance, status, caste, religion and liberal attitudes. The above analysis shows that character of the person outsmarts all other qualities, because 60.4 percent of them have given more
importance to character of a life partner. Regarding their preferred age at marriage, majority (60 percent) of the sample prefers low age at marriage for females between 18 to 23 years. However, one-half (49.6 percent) of the respondents preferred 24-27 years as ideal age at marriage for males, correspondingly significant proportion (36.8 percent) of the respondents preferred the same age group suitable for females.

Students’ attitude towards higher education is a matter of lot of debate and discourse. A study like this concerning on post-graduate students in higher education legitimately includes teacher student relationship for serious analysis. It is observed that majority reported to respect the teachers. Being respectful could also mean maintaining distance from the teachers as students are seen hardly interacting with teachers both in the class and outside as well. In this context it is interesting to find majority are concerned about declining standards. Declining in standard of education is certainly not because of students. Because more often they are in the receiving end and it is a responsibility of educational administrators, teachers and parents and public at large, to see that standards are maintained and mediocrity is least tolerated. The decline is so striking that it confirms the fact that the increasing numbers of students have become increasingly aware of this situation. It is high time that steps are to be taken to retrieve this situation.

The role of students in politics has been a subject of extensive and intensive social research. One of the things that need to be examined is how students are connected with political issues. It appears that majority (66.8 percent) of the sample does not belong to any political party. Overall it can be inferred that student participation in voting is very significant because lesser percentage of students reported to have voted in all the elections from Parliament to Gram
Panchayath. The analysis of student participation in political processes remains marginal.

The students’ perception and attitude towards the structure and function of mass media throw up certain interesting conclusion. Majority of the sample students reported to look up to mass media for learning and deriving knowledge. Media is a source of entertainment as was reported by the least percentage of the sample. The sample students also reported that the relationship between society and media is mutually beneficial because society in reflected in the content of the television programs and the influence of television, radio and print media reflected in the changing attitudes and developments. Majority of the students have not reported negatively on the role of mass media in society. Another conclusion that emerges in this context is the student perceptions of reality shows. The analysis shows that students have reported to be rather unclear about the impact of reality shows on society at large.

Student population has been always in the forefront of movements for social change. One thing that clearly emerges out of the analysis of students’ attitude and perception is that majority of the sample population favor rapid macro-social changes. Strangely students do not favor rapid changes of micro-social situations. Be it with regard to westernization, modernization and the influence of foreign culture on native culture. Majority of the students reported to be conservative with regard to social values, preferences and beliefs about family relations. This shows that native values, culture need to be protected against the onslaught of foreign and the alien cultures. Social changes are required but majority of the sample seem to report that they have to be tailored to suit Indian native situations.
The major findings summarized and discussed above could be viewed as of immense applied value. The scales and indices, devised and developed specifically for the study to ascertain and measure various traits of post-graduate student community could be considered as a significant methodological contribution to the study sociology of education in general and higher education in particular. It may be added that the present study brings rich empirical data to bear on the phenomenon of post-graduate education in Indian context.