SUMMARY, FINDINGS & SUGGESTIONS

Public libraries under the auspices of special component plan are not paid due attention which they deserve. The information needs of disadvantaged 'particularly' Scheduled Castes are varied and ever expanding. The latest view with regard to public libraries is that they should cater to the information needs of the community. In other words, they should act as community information centers.

The present study aims at understanding the information needs of Scheduled Caste communities. It also aims at understanding the role of public libraries in providing required information to scheduled castes in the vicinity of SCP libraries. There are 100 SCP libraries in Andhra Pradesh cutting across the length and breadth of the State. For the purpose of the present study, 33 SCP libraries were selected on the basis of purposive random sampling giving weight age to each region of the state—Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana. Vishakapatnam and Nellore from Andhara region, Anantapur and Kurnool from Rayalaseema and Nalgonda and Warangal from Telangana region were selected for this study. Since the SCP libraries were situated in areas where SC population is predominant, such libraries were taken for the present study. In order to assess the user practices of SCP libraries, basically from SC community, 360
respondents are chosen through purposive random sampling. The investigator has personally visited the SCP libraries under study and distributed two sets of questionnaires—One set for the librarians and the other for Library users.

6.1. Summary:

Exploitation of information resources is very much essential for the socio-economic development of the disadvantaged sections of the community. The SC Community is lagging behind socially and economically because of lack of proximity to knowledge and information resources relevant to them. The Government of India in tandem with State Governments started Special Component Plan. The Plan envisages fruitful utilization of SCP grants for the welfare of SC Community. As part of the scheme, the Government of Andhra Pradesh allocates grants to public libraries. These libraries are situated in locations predominantly inhabited by SC communities. The state Government provides grants to district central libraries, which in turn procure books and other reading material and distribute them to SCP libraries.

The purpose of present study is to study the services offered by SCP libraries, information needs of SC community, library materials, physical facilities, and finance and extension services. Six sample districts were taken from three regions of Andhra Pradesh-Andhra,
Telangana and Rayalaseema. Data is collected from 33 libraries situated in these districts through questionnaire method. Two sets of questionnaires were prepared, one for the librarians and the other for SC user community. The questionnaire one was distributed personally to 33 librarians or in-charge librarians of these libraries. The questionnaire two was distributed to 360 visitors of these libraries. The purposive sampling method has been adopted. The data thus collected was analyzed through simple statistical techniques and inferences were drawn.

6.2. Findings of the study

The present study gives a dim picture of SCP libraries in achieving their objectives. Some of the important findings emanated from the present study are:

1. Majority of the library users (65.28 per cent) belong to the age group of 21-35 years (Table: 5.10).

2. High percentage of users (67.22 per cent) possesses collegiate education (Table: 5.11).

3. Majority of the users belong to Rs. 10,000-30,000 income per annum group. It is quite ironical that the number of users declined with increase in the level of income (Table 5.13).

4. Majority of the users visit the libraries daily. The users with other frequency of visits are less when compared to daily visitors (Table 5.14).
5. The convenient time for visiting the library is 8.00 am to 9.30 am for majority of the users (Table 5.19).

6. Eighty Three percent of the users are satisfied with the newspaper collection in the libraries under study (Table 5.29).

7. About 72 per cent of the users expressed their approval for the literacy promoting activities undertaken by the special component plan libraries (Table 5.55).

6.3. Hypotheses Testing

1. The aim of public library system is to provide the right information to the right reader at the right time. The present study reveals that the collection and procurement of books and materials in the SCP libraries is not at all in tune with the changing information needs of Scheduled Castes. The growth of Public libraries in terms of collection and development is quite unsatisfactory. Hence, the hypothesis that the SCP library development in Andhra Pradesh is progressing on satisfactory lines is rejected.

2. The study reveals that the services provided by SCP libraries in Andhra Pradesh are not at all satisfactory. Hence, the 2nd hypothesis is rejected.

3. The users of information system are multifaceted character, with multiple personality. This is revealed by the present study. Hence the hypothesis 3rd is accepted.
4. The Scheduled Caste community is satisfied with certain aspects of services of libraries under study like newspaper collection, fiction collection, but not with professional literature. Hence Hypothesis no.4 is partially proved.

5. Regarding the physical facilities in the libraries under study as observed by the researcher and as per the mixed responses of the users, are partially satisfactory but not fully accepted. Hence the hypothesis no. 5 is not fully accepted.

6. The library materials in the SCP libraries are not compatible with the information needs of the Scheduled Caste communities. Hence the hypothesis no. 6 is not accepted in the light of the study.

7. The present study reveals that the extension services offered by the SCP libraries have mixed reactions. In certain aspects like promotion of Literacy, Cultural Programme awareness and vocational information, the extension services are satisfactory. But in rest of the aspects it is quite unsatisfactory. Hence, the hypothesis is partially accepted.

6.4. Suggestions for improving SCP libraries

1. The present study revealed that there is vide gulf between the SCP libraries and information needs of SC community. They stand in isolation from each other. The relationship between the library and
community it serves is of paramount importance. Therefore, they should work together as complimentary bodies.

2. SCP libraries should become community-based centers for information and culture. Their role as centers of information is a crucial factor for the development of the community.

3. The SC communities under study do not have skills and value orientation to use the library services. The library cannot ignore the socio economic and cultural environment in which it is operating. These libraries, thus carry the responsibility to develop appropriate and responsive services to the community especially scheduled castes.

4. The library should become a center for dissemination of information. In other words it should become an active agent to deliver library services to the disadvantaged sections of the society. The library should undertake the information and referral services on a regular basis.

5. Audio-visual aids should be extensively used in the delivery of library services. The visual media is an effective instrument to convey new ideas and practices related to the community.

6. Services like library displays, exhibits, lectures and discussions, demonstrations, folk ads, music concerts addressed to SC groups may be developed to solve their special problems.
6.5. Areas for further research

There is need for carrying out further research comprehensively on various segments of the disadvantaged community. Such studies will yield pragmatic results very much useful to government in planning of information needs of this sections. Based on the research the Government can reorient its public libraries and if necessary amend the A.P. Public Libraries Act. This type of research definitely helps in establishing secular society.