CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION

The present study was done with the college and university teachers belonging to SC/ST group to understand their information needs with respect to their academic and professional matters, and to identify the information sources referred to for fulfilling these information needs. The study has highlighted the role of academic libraries in fulfilment of the academic and professional needs of the SC/ST teachers.

The study is concentrated on the three aspects of the academic and professional development of the SC/ST teachers, namely, teaching and related activities, research and publication, and academic development and career advancement.

About 200 SC/ST teachers and 42 libraries (37 college libraries and five university libraries) were surveyed. Data was collected in the form of questionnaires, discussions and observations.

The information needs of the teachers as analysed in this thesis showed that research was one area of high level of information requirement. The second area was application of ICT. It was followed by other well recognised information needs about rules and regulations and soft skills. The present study has tried to investigate on various academic and professional needs of college and university teachers belonging to the SC/ST category. Top three needs of the SC/ST teachers were research and publications, knowledge of rules and regulations and ICT applications. These areas require immediate attention of the SC/ST teachers.

The sample selected had the following characteristics: 1) most of the teachers were in their 30s and 40s and were in the midpoint of their career, 2) respondents covered were first generation who had acquired higher level of education in their families, 3) for most of the teachers schooling was done in vernacular medium. Some of them felt inadequacy
4) their nuclear family structure was strength as well as weakness in their professional development. Women teachers especially found it hectic to balance their family responsibility and professional duties. It affected their research and publication activities and involvement in other professional matters, 5) majority of the teachers had at least basic training in ICT. The younger generation of the SC/ ST teachers was using ICT applications better compared to the older teachers.

The study has identified gender differences. Faculty, age groups and teaching experiences also made a difference. More male teachers needed information about teaching and application of ICT in teaching and career advancement. Female teachers were more concerned with the various rules and regulations, research, financial assistance and opportunities in the administration. However, both, male teachers as well as female teachers required information about enhancement of soft skills. The older teachers were involved more in the management of curricula. The teachers felt that they needed to write papers as their age increased.

All universities had teachers’ unions. The University of Mumbai and the University of Pune had an association of teachers belonging to reserved category. However these unions were generally engaged in issues related to pay and promotion matters of the teachers. The respondents covered were involved in ad-hoc committees. Their representation in statutory and executive committees was less.

The SC/ ST teachers felt that reservation policy had played an important role in their status. Some teachers felt that healthy environment in the institute and effective library services helped them in their career. On the other hand some teachers felt that they could not grow in the profession due to non-supportive environment in the institutes, lack of guidance, lack of English language skills, and poor ICT skills.

The role of the academic library was delineated in the process of fulfilment of the various academic and professional needs of the SC/ ST teachers. Libraries were generally utilised more during teachers’ research work for the purpose of literature search. According to the
responses from the SC/ ST teachers and from librarians, the teachers preferred more print
documents than non-print documents. Through the discussions and observations it was
realised that teachers did not find their libraries rendering services other than traditional
ones. Libraries never received priority when the teachers had to clarify their doubts, both
in academic and in their profession. However the younger generation of the librarians had
taken interest in serving faculty in non-traditional ways.

Print material was used compared to non-print material. Many colleges had basic
infrastructure that did not support use of e-resources in teaching and other activities.
College libraries lacked e-databases.

Amongst the formal information sources, books and journals were used most. In case of
informal sources of information, personal communication was preferred for most of the
time. Books were issued for sufficient amount of time to the teachers. Teachers did not
have to pay for except printouts and photocopies.

Google had become the replacement for the library in literature search for most of the
teachers. However, the teachers were not proficient in the use of search engines. This can
be filled through training. Though teachers felt that they could find everything through
the Internet, they did not use the same facility for locating information related to rules
and regulation, and to find financial assistance.

Libraries had provided various facilities including teachers’ reading room, computer, the
Internet access, e-databases. However, use of such facilities was not promoted from time
to time. Library programmes especially for the faculty were almost absent.

In colleges and universities, teacher-library/ librarian relation was to a certain extent
cordial. However a few comments were made by the teachers regarding their comfort
level with the upper cast librarians.
Considering the findings of this study, the researcher feels that libraries can play important role in the empowerment of the SC/ ST faculty. The SC/ ST teachers could not be segregated from others solely on the basis of their castes and tribes, but the SC/ ST teachers would be benefitted if special attention is given to the professional needs of this group of faculty members. Amalgamation of the latest resources in library activities and little more proactive stance on the part of the academic libraries would project the library’s importance and existence in the mind of the faculty members. The library could be a collaborative partner in the furtherance of academic and professional development of the faculty members.