Grey Literature on Caste-based Minority Community in India

Jyoti Bhabal
SHPT School of Library Science; SNDT Women's University, India

Background

According to the ancient Hindu scriptures, there are four "varnas' (groups). Manusmriti has mentioned four varnas: the Brahmins (teachers, scholars and priests), the Kshatriyas (kings and warriors), the Vaishyas (traders), and Shudras (agriculturists, service providers, and some artisan groups). Offspring of different varnas belong to different Jātis (Castes). Another group excluded from the main society was called Parjanya or Antyaja. This group of former "untouchables" (now called Dalits) was considered either the lower section of Shudras or outside the caste system altogether. (Caste system in India, n.d.)

Despite its constitutional abolition in 1950, the practice of 'untouchability' – the imposition of social disabilities on persons by reason of birth into a particular caste – remains very much a part of rural India. (Narula, Smita, n.d.)

The communities that are socially deprived due to their caste are categorized as Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Class (OBC) , Denotified and Nomadic Tribes (DT/NT). In this study all these communities together will be discussed as CBM.

Today the educated CBM are trying to use intellectual and organizational means to fight the caste system. Some visible efforts are: using conferences and media, publication of books and journals, forming discussion groups, action groups and building websites to create awareness. They educate themselves on the constitutional and legal rights of the CBM and fight for their implementation and extension using national and international forums. They internationalize CBM issues to get world attention and support. (Melliyal Annamalai, 2002)

There were and are documentations on various issues, actions, and movements among CBM. Most of these are at local level. This paper highlights the life cycle of such documentations in the form of grey literature available in the libraries of Mumbai.

Grey Literature (GL): Grey literature is defined as 'semi-published material for example reports, internal documents, theses, etc. not formally published or available commercially and consequently difficult to trace bibliographically. (Harrold's Librarian's Glossary and Reference Book, 2000)

The Internet is now a major source for dissemination and retrieval of grey literature and often serves as the initial introduction to a topic area. Some of the examples of e-grey literature are institutional archives and repositories, search portals and databases, e-print archives and directory of institutional links. (Rajendiran, P, 2006)

Objectives of the study:

- To find the grey literature available on various issues of CBM in the seven libraries of the city of Mumbai.
- To understand the post-acquition life cycle of grey documents on CBM in these libraries.
- To know the effort/ measures taken by the libraries to enhance the use of grey literature on CBM issues.

Sample:

Libraries that were chosen for survey were the ones that were catering to the student community. These libraries were SNDT Women's University Library, New Marine Lines (SNDT Library), Jawaharlal Nehru Library of University of Mumbai Library, Santacruz (MU Library), The Aditya Birla Memorial Library of Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work, New Marine Lines (NNCSW Library), Central Library of Indian Institute of Technology, Powai (IIT Library), Library of International Intstitute of Population Studies, Deonar (IIPS Library), Sir Dorabji Memorial Library of Tata Institute of Social Science, Deonar(TISS Library), Indira Gandhi Institute of Development and Research Library Goregon (IGIDR Library).

Methodology:

A structured questionnaire was prepared to collect data on total GL collection of library on CBM, its format and its language. Some of the questions were related to technical processing of GL on CBM such as mode of acquisition, its classification, cataloguing, and maintenance. Some of the questions were asked to know the user and use of GL on CBM; further special efforts undertaken related to acquisition, analysis, storage, and dissemination of GL on CBM

Online questionnaires were sent to each library to gather basic information about their grey collection from acquisition till dissemination. In addition, the various issues related to the life cycle