CHAPTER FIVE

MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study was to shed light on the information needs of foreign women living in Malaysia, with special reference to the Sudanese women community. The research questions were

1. What are the main information needs of Sudanese women community living in Malaysia?

2. What are the main sources of information for these Sudanese women?

3. Do they use the library, and if no, what types of material do they use in the library?

4. What are the major barriers to meeting their information needs?

The sample for this survey was ninety women of the Sudanese community in Malaysia. The data was collected through the questionnaire and 73.3% of the questionnaires were returned. The findings of the study, based on an analysis of the returned questionnaire were presented in the previous chapter and summarized in the following pages.

Summary of the Findings and Discussion

It was found that a large number (48.5%) of the Sudanese women community respondents were housewives.
The Main Information Needs of the Sudanese Women Community

This study had determined that the main information needs of the Sudanese women were related to continuing their education, had the highest score of 63.6% of respondents. The care of their family health had 40.9% of women respondents. Whereas the chances of education of children was been chosen by 33.3% of respondents as their concern. Another 22.7% of the women respondents picked child-care as their target concern. Some 18.2% of women respondents acknowledged parenting and the issues related to it as their information need, while 9.1% of respondents chose the youth problems as their information need.

It is worth noting that the respondents had combinations of information needs. From the results, women indicated that basically they were receiving the information they needed, with a low uncertainty though some indicated that an insufficient amount of information had been received. All these information needs identified in this study have clearly fitted into the information needs reviewed in the literature. The results of the study also indicated that there are some unique information needs of women in general.

The Main Sources of Information

The sources of information, as inferred from the results of the study, were mainly the "contact with family and friends" chosen by 40 women. The "radio" was the second choice because 25 respondents indicated that they used it in order to meet their information needs. Another 30.3% women stated that the "library" was their source for information while 19 women respondents stated that the "television" was the source of
their information. Another 16 respondents declared that the newspapers were their sources of information. Another group, comprising of 7 women, mentioned that they had other sources than the ones included in the study. The results about the health seeking behavior and sources of information regarding health-care services showed that the respondents were highly concerned about "their family's health". It was noticed also regarding the sources they used that they were getting reliable health care information. Their dependence on others' experiences was indicated by 24 respondents, their dependence on their own previous experience was indicated also by 23 respondents.

Based on the results of the study, the respondents stressed their desire to continue their education. This could be an aspect of an overall change in the way women live nowadays. It is related to such social and economic trends as smaller families, longer life spans, increased leisure time, greater participation by women in the work force, redefinition of sex roles, and more female headed households, all changes which have profound implications for the life style of today's woman. It is worth noting that the increase in the number of older women participating in higher education in recent years has been remarkable. We could infer that the respondents depended on contact with family and friends as their source of information, which reflects the strong ties between the members of the Sudanese community and the extent to which people were ready to exchange and accept information. The respondents had combined more than one sources, or information needs. This indicates that a single source or one information need would not satisfy their needs.
The Use of the Library by the Sudanese Women Community Living in Malaysia

The library is a major provider of information provision and will continue to play its role as a repository of information. This is true as it was chosen by the majority of the student respondents and few women who had access to it as their main source of information. Most of the student respondents indicated that they never had had library user instruction programs. Although information sources other than the print format were available in most libraries, the usage of CD-ROMs and other electronic format among students was low as shown in the results. This shows that other facilities available in the library were not fully utilized by them. Thus students need guidance on the best and most appropriate sources for them in the library.

The Internet which may open a whole new world of information to students and other users of the library and could easily overwhelm information seekers with its vast amount of information, its use among students was considerably good as it came as their third choice.

Types of Materials Used by the Sudanese Women Community in the Library

The students used the library as a place for reading and for research purposes. From the results we could infer that the student respondents were aware of the library’s role. The results of the study had revealed that 60% of the respondents of the community were using books as their main materials in the library. Another 33.28% women respondents used the journals, as they were useful for students who are conducting research work, and 22.10% respondents indicated that they use the Internet as a material
for meeting their information needs. 7.19% women used the newspapers and women stated that they use other materials that were not mentioned in the study.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are seen as important and should be taken into consideration:

1) These results provide useful preliminary information for policy makers and administrators both in Malaysia and Sudan. It is hoped that they will be fully made use of.

2) The researcher believes that more studies need to be conducted and focus should also be given on meeting the information needs of foreign women living in Malaysia.

3) It is recommended that an appropriate plan be constructed to help the foreign women communities living in Malaysia, and the Sudanese women community in particular, to access and benefit from the many information services available in Malaysia.

4) It is hoped that free lessons of Bahasa–Melayu would be organized for foreign women communities. Information about libraries, their services, and facilities are to be provided for membership of the libraries against nominal fees. Transport to the libraries, leaflets and pamphlets about the available opportunities of education should also be provided to the public. Ministry of Culture, Art and Tourism in Malaysia could organize lectures programs, culture nights about Malaysia to enlighten people with the information services available.

5) The Sudanese community should establish a special school that follows the Sudanese schools curricula to increase the chances for children education. This is because twenty
respondents expressed that the chances of their children education was their main concern in Malaysia.

6) The library should render help to students in different forms such as providing compulsory library user instruction programs for them in order to guarantee the minimum use of its facilities and services.

Conclusions

This empirical research has focused on the information needs of foreign women living in Malaysia, with special reference to the Sudanese women community living in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya. According to the findings of the study a list of critical mostly combinations of information needs, sources and types of materials used in the library were provided. The information needs were generally not met because of certain difficulties such as lack of appropriate information, lack of finance, barriers of languages and finally the in adequacy of the library services provided. Though some indicated that an insufficient amount of information had been received.

The results of the study have significant implications on the policy and practices of information provision to foreign women. Nevertheless, more in depth research needs to be carried out. As Durance (1989) pointed out there must be continuous research on information needs that will result in better knowledge base and more thorough understanding of information needs. Kularatne (1997) has stressed in his study that information is vital for research and development, and information which is meant for dissemination should not be withheld, but should be readily available.