CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Telugu is one such regional language, which is spoken by, approximately eight crore people. Thus Telugu newspapers particularly medical journalism in Telugu papers has a potential of influencing these members.

Therefore, in view of the reflections made above, it is necessary to examine the nature and trends of medical journalism in print media in Telugu and the expertise of the contributors.

Hence, in the present study a humble and modest attempt is made to examine the content and coverage of medical journalism in Telugu News papers and the professional characteristics of the contributors.

Aims and Objectives

The present study aims at understanding the nature and trends of medical journalism in Telugu newspapers. In view of this the following broad objectives are framed to determine the scope of the study and to facilitate a scientific study.

The Study Objectives are

1. To briefly sketch the nature, content and challenges of medical journalism;

2. To profile the socio-demographic professional characteristics of the journalists in Telugu print media;
3. To examine the contents of health and medical journalism in Telugu newspapers during a select period;
4. To identify the nature, and level of health and medical reporting coverage in Telugu Newspapers;
5. To study the editorial content on Health and medical issues of the Telugu newspapers;
6. To examine readers response to medical journalism in Telugu Newspapers on Health and Medical issues; and
7. To ascertain the content and coverage of advertisement and special features in Telugu newspapers.

Method of Study

The present study is based on both sample survey and content analysis methods.

The universe of the study is newspapers (Daily) in Telugu language, which have largest circulation in the state. There are as many as eight such newspapers in Andhra Pradesh.

The first three newspapers which have larger circulation in the state was considered for the study and these papers will be analyzed for duration of one calendar year. The period of study thus, was the year 2010. Three Telugu dailies namely, Eenadu, Andhra Jyothi and Sakshi were selected for this purpose. For the purpose of profiling the medical journalists, the office as well as the field staff concerned of the selected papers is considered.
The study is based on both empirical and secondary data. The empirical part refers to profiling the medical journalists (both field and office of the selected newspapers). For the purpose of data collection in this regard, mailed questionnaires will be employed. The secondary data relates to medical journalistic reports, editorials, advertisements and letters to the editors.

Appropriate statistical tools and procedures will be adopted for the purpose of analysis of primary as well as secondary data. In addition, the secondary data is analyzed by adopting content analysis method to pursue some of the objectives.

**Major Findings**

**Profile of the journalists in Telugu Print Media**

The profile of the journalists in Telugu Print Media is based on 90 journalists working in different Telugu dailies in Andhra Pradesh.

- It was found that majority of the journalists are male members (94.4 percent). The representation of the women journalists was found to be only 5.60 percent.
- The average age of the journalists was found to be 37.4 years, 61.0 percent of the journalists were found to be in the age group of 20 - 35 years.
- Journalists in Telugu print media were found to represent all the three major religions of the state viz. Hindu, Muslim and
Christian; though the journalists of Hindu religion were found to be in majority.

The journalists of Hindu religion were found to represent three broad caste categorial viz. Scheduled Castes, other backward castes and other castes; and the Scheduled Tribes. However, the representation of journalists was found to be in small numbers from the Scheduled Tribes (1.1 percent); Scheduled Castes (6.7 percent); and other backward castes (32.6 percent).

Majority of the journalists were found to be only graduates (54.44 percent) and with less (3.33 percent) educational attainments. It was found that only 11.11 percent of the journalists were with post graduate qualifications in journalism.

The average years of experience of the journalists was found to be 12.4 years. Our study revealed that 55.6 percent of the journalists were with less than five years of experience; and 11.1 percent of the journalists had more than 15 years of experience.

It was observed that the journalists were of two categories. One category represents field oriented journalism and one referred as reporters and the other category is referred as Desk Staff. In our study, it was found that 29.2 percent of the journalists were field staff (reporters) and the larger percentage (70.8 percent) were desk staff.
A majority of the journalists (90 percent) were found to be in regular employment in the Telugu print media; and only ten percent of the journalists were found to be on temporary basis.

Our study revealed that a majority of the journalists (76.7 percent) have claimed that they were not 'qualified health reporters.' It was found that only 23.3 percent of the journalists have stated they are qualified health journalists. But only 7.8 percent have stated that they have attended a Course/ training on health reporting / editing.

**Health Coverage in Telugu Print Media**

The coverage of Health items in Telugu print media was found to be only 3.03 percent to the total items in a year.

The larger percent of health coverage (46.6 percent) will be once in a week; and twice a week (27.7 percent). However, everyday 18.8% of the items will be on health.

The low priority for health coverage was attributed to two beliefs. It was found that 62.2 percent of the journalists believed that health reporting / coverage will also promote sales and circulation of the newspapers. The other belief was found to be that health coverage will not be appreciated by the readers (73.3 percent).

The major constraints of health journalism in Telugu print media were found to be the barriers of language (4.4 percent) and the appropriate terminology in Telugu language for medical
Lack of trained health journalists was found to be a major challenge in health journalism in Telugu print media. 58.8 percent of the journalists under reference were found to be of this opinion.

In this context it was found that 55.6 percent of the journalists believed that health journalism is not a rewarding career; only 23.3 percent of the journalists were supposed to be qualified for health journalism; only 78 percent of the journalists attended a course/training in health journalism and 47.7 percent of the journalists donot consider that health journalism is not a specialized branch of journalism.

The present study revealed that 98.8 percent of the journalists believed that health news / items are necessary in language press. They further believed that health news/ items are credible (96.7 percent) based on scientific evidence (87.6 percent) and the facts reported are cross checked (83 percent).

To ensure quality, credibility, reliability, a larger percent (42.2 percent) of health items are assigned by desk. It is further found that the investigative health reporting was only 18.9 percent and 33.3 percent of health reports were filed by reporter’s own initiative.
The reliance on press meets and press notes for gathering health information/news was found to be very less in the case of health journalists in Telugu print media. It was found that health reports were filed based on press meets (10.0 percent); press notes (8.88 percent); field investigation (23.3 percent) and source based (57.77 percent).

Nature of Health Journalism in Telugu Print Media

It is observed that the health reporting in Telugu print media was broadly under six heads – news items, stories, features, editorials, response from the readers and advertisements.

- It was found that health news items constitute only 3.03 percent to the total news items during the year 2010.
- Health news coverage was found to be relatively more during the rainy season (3.59 percent) and winter season (3.42 percent) than in other seasons.
- The news focus on health coverage was found to be more on the days of universal/national health importance like No Smoking day. It was found that there were 44 such days in a year.
- Health features were found to be of health awareness promoting nature and of health counseling nature.
- Our study revealed that of the total 3383 items on health appeared in the year 2010, 71.38 percent of the items were health news items; 7.33 percent were features on health.
awareness promotion; 16.73 percent were on health counseling and 4.55 percent were on health stories.

> It was further found that in the year 2010 there were 1021 editorials in the three dailies under reference of which 1.86 percent of editorials were on health issues. Other three papers under study Eenadu paper carried more number (3.04 percent) of editorials on health issues.

**Content of Health Journalism in Telugu Print Media**

> Our study revealed that the broad and health news coverage included such areas as disease incidence and prevalence. Under this area incidence and prevalence of Swine Flu, dengue fever and Malaria in the Tribal agency area of Coastal region were prominently reported. Invention of a vaccine to prevent to Swine Flue, performance of rare surgical intervention by hospitals and the health intervention strategies announced by the State were the other issues covered in the health news / items.

> Our study revealed that coverage of health items under the item - health stories was more elaborate, poignant, critical and instructive in content and mature. Often, it was found these stories were carried out in front page of the news paper to catch the attention of the public as well as policy makers.
The Health stories while appreciated the well intended policy/strategy of the state, it was found that they were critical in the implementation of the schemes with regard to service delivery, poor administration, corruption, misplaced priorities, under utilization of funds etc.

It was observed that Arogya Sri – a highly publicized people oriented popular scheme, national Rural health Mission, medical education in the state and the neglect of health care on tribal areas were successfully published on these stories with appropriate, attractive and attention drawing captions in Telugu language.

➢ Out study revealed that features on health were special articles meant to provide awareness and counseling on various health issues of public interest.

➢ It was found that each paper employed a panel of different health experts of different health disciplines to provide health counseling.

➢ The health features, it was found that broadly addressed such health issues of general life style health issues, issues of gynecology, issues of chronic and contagious diseases and other miscellaneous health issues of popular interest.

➢ It was found that out of the total 484 health features, features on life style health issues were more popular (44.42 percent); followed by miscellaneous health issues (36.16 percent) and issues are gynecology (15.7 percent).
Our study revealed that features on health issues related to nutrition, obesity, cardiac related problems, behavioral aspects and sexology were more popular in the life style health issues.

The features on miscellaneous health issues covered such topics as skin care, cosmetics, dental care, arthritis, kidney problems etc.

- It is observed that the features on health indicate the changing life style; raising standards of living; lack of information on health services and facilities for medical diagnosis; health consultation for second opinion and the apprehensions about the cost and reliability of medical treatment.

- Features on health were found to be more on women related health issues (52.1 percent); followed by health issues of children (25.5 percent); features of health issues of the aged were found to be only 9.5 percent.

- It was found that features on health also covered the other alternative traditional systems of medicine like Ayurveda and Homeopathy.

- The analysis of editorial content revealed, that the editorials on health issues have repeatedly highlighted the inadequate health man power, health service delivery, corruption and lethargy of authorities and misplaced priorities of certain popular and most acclaimed schemes. It was observed that editorials on health were wrote during the rainy and winter season. Further, it was observed that the editorials were not effective enough to
stimulate public response as most of them were cast with political connotations.

**Readers Response**

It is observed that letters to the editor is a major means of readers response to the published items on the newspapers.

➢ Our study revealed that of the total 1433 letters to the editor in the year 2010, only 4.18 percent of the letters to the editor were found to be on health issues.

➢ It was found that majority of the letters on health (60.0 percent) were written from rural areas; the urban response was found to be only 13.3 percent.

➢ The response from the women readers too was found to be lukewarm. It was found to be only 8.33 percent.

➢ Cheap liquor, adulteration, seasonal health problems, need for rural health practitioners were some of the issues raised by the readers.

➢ Sixty percent of the readers' response was found to being the form of suggestions; and only 40.0 percent were critical on their response.

➢ It was found there habitual letters writers to the editorial column. It was further observed that the editorial policy is not very encouraging towards readers response on health issues.
Advertisements on Health

Our analysis revealed that the advertisements on health were mostly issued by the agencies like pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies corporate hospitals etc., advertisements health products; and the advertisements issued by the Central / State / Local governments.

- The advertisements by the Government were found to constitute 8.35 percent to the total advertisements on health. The advertisements were however, found to be larger than the other one. Mostly they were issued on certain national and universal days of health celebrations, or on special occasions on public interest.

- Health product advertisements were found to take large share in health advertisements (53.41 percent). They were merely consumer, cosmetic oriented products.

- Agencies like Corporate Hospitals, fertility clinics therapeutic centres and pharmaco were found to issue 36.72 percent of advertisements.

- It is fond advertisements were being issued in multi colours and on full pages also, some time on front page too.
CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the present study enable us to draw a few humble broad concluding generalizations.

The analysis and findings suggest that the “Health journalism in Telugu Print Media” is still in a ‘Formative Stage.’

The reluctance of the management, editorial policy and the journalists to consider health journalism as market oriented, career rewarding and as a specialization lends support to such generalization. The lack of trained health journalists; desk assigned features, stories and news on health lend further support for this conclusion.

Our second conclusion is that the health journalism in Telugu Print Media is discharging a positive role in sensitizing the public in the matters of health. It is also depicting the trends of changing social life styles, social inequalities social exclusion and social inclusion in the realm of health.

Our third conclusion is that the priority and importance accorded to health in Telugu Print Media is in line with the importance given to health in National budget allocation.

Our final conclusion is that the readers response is by and large a true measure of journalism. The fact that many letters from rural areas speak of the tragedies of cheap liquor seasonal diseases, scarcity of health professionals is the testimony for health journalism in Telugu Print Media, which deserves encouragement.