CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION
1.0 General Introduction

Man has another fundamental need beyond the physical requirements of food and shelter; the need to communicate with his fellow human beings. This urge for communication is primal one, and in our contemporary civilization, a necessity for survival.

Man's desire to communicate with his fellow men led to the development of language; this very desire led to the development of the modern newspaper.

There was always news, but the etymology of the word is not exactly known. Three derivations can be given to news, in general. Firstly 'What of new?' which became new's and when the apostrophe was dropped became 'news'. Secondly, whatever information came from North, East, West and South was 'news'. Thirdly, 'news' is the plural of new.

1.1 Sources of information dissemination

The key and popular sources of information are television, radio and newspaper. The factor common to all three media, of course, is information. While they treat information differently, fundamentally what is information for one medium is information for the other two. But there are differences which give each medium certain advantages over the other and which require special abilities.
Between radio and newspaper, one of the most obvious differences is the time interval between the occurrence of an event and the reception of it by the public. The radio newscast can be given within minutes after an event happens and new developments can be reported quickly. This immediacy is not possible for the newspaper. Television shares with radio certain advantages of immediacy, since its cameras can give a visual and aural report of an event as it happens.

In comparison with the newspaper both radio and television suffer because they lack completeness and comprehensiveness in their coverage. The typical radio and television news programme gives only the highlights of an event. People who want fuller details, and there are many of them, have to go to a newspaper.

Moreover there are many areas of news not covered at all either by radio or by television. The news appeal of radio and television is primarily to the mass; newspapers, because they carry a great volume and variety of information, have an appeal not only to the mass but to special groups as well.

On the other hand, radio and television have an advantage over the newspaper in that people can absorb the information with little effort. To get the information from
a newspaper requires some mental concentration; to get it from radio or television requires very little. One disadvantage is, the opportunities for being misunderstood are more numerous for radio and television than for the newspaper.

The newspaper can be read anywhere and anytime. The permanent form of newspaper is of value, too, because readers can check back over stories to make sure they have the facts in mind correctly and can clip items which they might like to have for future reference.

There are a number of important subjects which are written about only in newspapers or for which, at least, the newspaper is a major channel of communication. From art and religion to science, from sports and entertainment to crime and no field is left unscrutinised by newspapers. For the majority of the people the newspaper is the only printed matter that comes to their home and from which they get their poetry and prose, their commercial and sports news. No other medium of communication operates so persistently and so extensively in its range and scope as does the press.

Because of the unique advantage of portability of information and adaptability to individual convenience in reading time, newspapers have been able to maintain their prime position in disseminating information.
1.2. Role of the newspaper in community

No body would disagree with Walter Lippmann's dictum that "the primary function of the press is to inform". ¹

The newspaper reader must be informed of happenings of a serious nature all over the world. It is not enough to report such events as floods and wrecks and other disasters, or juicy scandals in high life. The readers must be told about political and social developments in far places.

The political scientist Bernard C. Cohen has made an interesting point. It is this: "The newspaper may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about". ²

The local newspaper must offer a source of pure information, but its responsibility does not end there. It must also offer guidance and leadership to its community.

The local editor can perform an important service.


2. Ibid, p.5.
He can help to develop a healthy climate of opinion in his community. No other medium of information has anything like that power.

A newspaper does have some attributes of a living being. It has a heart, a character, even a soul. Every newspaper should retain a distinctive and individual flavour.

The press acts as a watch-dog in a democratic setup. The press is one of the most important channels of communication between the Government and the people. A democratic government has to implement its programmes with the involvement of the people. For this the people should become aware of their responsibilities in general and facilities available to them. The government on its part has to be fully conscious of the aspirations of the people and also the way they react to government policies and programmes. The press helps in a tremendous way in this interaction.

In this context it is worth mentioning about the commendable performance of Telugu newspapers in freedom movement. The contribution of Telugu newspapers for the development of language is also remarkable.

Once the Government was also been changed only
because of the active role played by one of the Telugu daily newspapers. All such incidents show the power a press has on the community.

1.3. Significance Of The Study

Desire for information is not of recent origin. Many citations are possible from mythology in this direction. Emphasis on information could be seen in the historical monuments in the form of inscriptions. In the modern period dissemination of information is possible through many media. The quality and the quantity of information available through different sources of media is highly delicate to evaluate. A blanket statement that one media is better than the other is only simplifying a complex problem. However, newspapers stand above the other media by virtue of their first appearance. There exists a tough competition for the newspapers from other media.

It is the right time to look how strong is the newspapers as the source of information. It is an established fact that newspaper was a source of information during the early days. The competition of radio was effectively faced by newspapers raising their heads above. Then came the television holding the existence of the newspapers doubtful. Video magazines are the last to come
in to the field. It is now clear that the newspapers are still on the top.

It is obvious that newspapers have been facing different types of competition from other media. This competition is changing from time to time. Evaluation of newspapers as a source of information, though is not new, is necessary for different frames of time.

Information seeker is the boss. Evaluating information seekers in a particular region and extrapolation of the results can provide a significant insight into the problem of newspapers as a source of information. Results of such a study can provide the salient characteristics of information seekers. Managers of newspapers can find very critical and useful details from such studies. Suitable modifications in organising a newspaper useful to future generations is also possible through the findings of such studies. Conclusions drawn from studies of this type can help in holding the newspapers in high esteem.

In India, very limited number of readership studies have been conducted to warrant generalisations especially in highlighting the importance of mass media as sources of information. Hence the present study has been taken up to study the newspaper as a source of information from different angles.
1.4 Objectives of the study

The major objectives for the present study are

1. To design suitable methodology to evaluate newspaper as a source of information.

2. To statistically analyse the results of the responses for a qualitative and a quantitative understanding of the problem.

3. To assess the targeted sample in terms of the quest for information.

4. To observe how utility of information can play a role in selecting a newspaper.

5. To correlate between the type of information and quest for information among the targeted sample.

6. To understand how quality of information can have a bearing on information seekers.

7. To find how important information has become a part of daily life of people.

8. To make an objective assessment of the responses of people vis a vis as a source of information using the Delphi technique.
9. To analyse the tastes of subscribers of newspapers by using a non-conventional technique.

10. To examine the potential of a newspaper as a source of information through personal interview of the relevant people.

11. To draw useful conclusions from the study for the benefit of information seekers and managers of newspapers.

1.5. Hypotheses

The present study is intended to test the following hypotheses.

1. Users consider newspaper as prime source of information and hence people subscribe to newspapers.

2. Information available from newspapers has a great utility.

3. Users of newspapers are inspired in their own to read newspapers.

4. Users prefer newspapers which publish more information that too immediately.
5. People read more than one newspaper.

6. People share their newspaper with others, resulting in resource sharing.

7. Subscribers read newspapers critically.

8. Newspaper information helps the subscribers to take timely decisions.

9. Newspaper, television and radio form major sources of information in the decreasing order.

10. Subscribers prefer regional information to other information on priority basis.

1.6. Methodology

Besides utilising the data from primary and secondary sources, data collected through different below mentioned methods has also been used for analysis.

1.6.1. Direct Questionnaire:

Identified suitable secondary data is generally difficult for a specific objective. For the present work data from similar works of secondary source is difficult to find and also sufficiently accurate secondary data is not
readily available. Out of the different methods of primary data collection mainly direct personal interviews, indirect oral interviews, direct questionnaire method is employed as one of the primary sources. After careful analysis of the objectives of the present study, data from primary sources and their analysis are found to be more suitable. Responses of subscribers of newspapers are collected through a designed questionnaire.

1.6.2 Design of questionnaire

The main objective of the present work is to assess newspaper as a source of information as stated in Section 1.5. This hypothesis is put to test by conducting a survey in Tirupati town, having a population of about two lakhs. Subscribers of three newspapers being published from Tirupati town viz., Andhra Jyothi, Eenadu & Udayam are approached to elicit first hand data about newspapers as a source of information. Out of different techniques of collecting data from a selected source of respondents, the method of collecting data through a pre planned and designed questionnaire is employed for the present study.

A questionnaire for the present study is designed by keeping in mind the ideal data desired from the answers to the questionnaire. The procedure of drafting
questionnaire explained by Gupta (1978) is used as a reference as the target respondents are people who are subscribing the vernacular (Telugu) newspapers, the questionnaire is formulated in Telugu by carefully drafting in simple language. The questions are arranged in a logical order, so that a natural and spontaneous reply to each question is induced. A draft form of the questionnaire is evaluated through a pilot sample by selecting 10 respondents. The responses received through the pilot study are analysed for the purpose of a final draft of the questionnaire. The final form of the questionnaire as drafted in this manner is used for the study after making number of copies. An English translation of the questionnaire used for the study is given in Appendix.1. The questionnaire consists of 51 questions covering different features like personal data, utility of information, importance of information, quality of information, quest for information and type of information.

1.6.3. Direct Personal Interview

The primary data collected through questionnaire are to be augmented through direct personal interview of eminent people connected with information science for an effective interpretation of the hypotheses. Under this technique, the investigator comes in contact with the persons from whom
the information is to be obtained. For a comprehensive interview suitable questions are to be planned to collect the desired information. Information thus obtained through direct personal interview is first hand and original in character.

For the present study, direct personal interviews are planned with managers/administrators/users in the field of information. The managers/administrators/users identified and interviewed for the present work are University librarian, Librarian of regional public library, sub editors of the three Newspapers selected for the study, District Public Relation Officer of State Government, an extensive user of newspapers for information and a Professor teaching information sciences.

The interviews are conducted by using a set of 12 structured questions. The planned set of 12 questions is placed before informants and opinions are collected through an audio system for scrutiny and analysis. The set of structured questions is given in Appendix-II.

1.6.4. Analysis of information in newspapers:

A conventional approach to examine a proposed hypothesis is to use primary and secondary sources of data.
This time-tested approach is quite satisfactory to arrive at a meaningful thesis. For the present study in addition to the conventional approach and another approach coined here as non conventional approach is also utilised. As the main emphasis in the present work is the assessment of newspaper as a source of information, the three selected newspapers of a particular time frame are analysed to test the identified objectives. For this purpose issues of the 3 newspapers over a span of a complete week are collected in the month of April 1994.

8 parameters of information titles are selected through the literature and through a pilot observation of available newspapers. The parameters in their order of preference are given in Table 4.6.2. Information reported under each one of the selected parameters is tabulated day wise for the newspapers collected and presented in Table 4.4.1. Each citation is considered as one item of frequency for the analysis. This approach is identified as the right approach for the present study as the description of information measured as length of the column in print is less important than the number of citations of the relevant parameter.
1.6.5. Selection of Newspapers

Any study of this type requires data regarding the information sought, the information available and the information not available from people looking for information. Such data can be gathered by either meeting people at random and collecting opinions or by contacting subscribers of newspapers being published. However, a systematic survey requires authenticated opinion which is possible through the subscribers. For the present study, subscribers of different newspapers are taken as the target group. There are as many as newspapers are being published in India out of which papers are prominently seen on the news desks. The newspapers which are generally read in Tirupati town are The Hindu, Indian Express -English Newspapers and Andhra Jyothi, Andhra Bhoomi, Andhra Prabha, Eenadu and Udayam -Telugu newspapers. Out of these newspapers Eenadu, Andhra Jyothi and Udayam are having local Tirupati editions. It is observed that in the field of expanding information science field more exhaustive data can be collected if the target group is in the form of subscribers of local language. For these reasons the 3 local Telugu newspapers namely Andhra Jyothi, Eenadu and Udayam are selected for the study.
1.6.6. Size of the Sample

An obvious decision that has to be taken of a sampling technique is about the size of the sample. Though contacting all the subscribers (census) of the selected newspapers in Tirupati can given an exhaustive and accurate picture, it is not possible. Only a proportionate or representative size of the sample can be surveyed. Experts have suggested different sizes of samples for such surveys. It is stated (Gupta, 1978) that appropriate sample size depends on various factors relating to the subject under investigation like the time aspect, cost aspect and the degree of accuracy desired. More emphasis is to be given to the representative aspect than proportionate aspect. For the present work keeping in mind the limitations involved and circulation of the selected newspapers in Tirupati sample size of subscribers of Andhra Jyothi (110), Eenadu (120) and (70) of Udayam is selected. Accordingly stated number of questionnaires are distributed. However inspite of the best efforts only 72 subscribers of Andhra Jyothi, 94 of Eenadu and 64 of Udayam have returned the duly filled in questionnaires. The same are used for the analysis.

1.6.7. Selection of Samples

Several types of subscribers are considered for the present study. Commercial, educational, business,
recreational and household subscribers are evaluated to select the suitable sample. Complexity in the readership has become a parameter in selecting the sample other than household subscribers. Subscribers of the three selected newspapers in different localities of Tirupati are selected at random for the present study. Care is taken to see that the sample represents people of different walks of life are covered in the study. The random aspect of sampling is envisaged by giving the instruction that anyone in the house can respond and fill up the questionnaire.

1.6.8. Delphi Technique

The questionnaires received from the target group are analysed to assess the objectives stated in Section 1.4. Two different approaches have been made for the analysis of questionnaires. One approach is to statistically analyses the responses received through the questionnaires. The statistical techniques employed are covered in Section 1.6.10.

The second approach employed is to evaluate each of the questionnaires by using the Delphi technique. The responses received from different households for different questions is very complex. In the absence of objective evaluation of the responses, it is difficult to draw
appropriate conclusions from the study. For an objective evaluation, different questions in the questionnaire are to be given a suitable weightage. Identifying suitable weightage is a complex problem. Delphi technique can solve the problem. Delphi technique may be characterised (Linstone and Turff, Ed) as a method of structuring a group communication process so that the process is effective in allowing a group of individuals, as a whole, to deal with a complex problem.

For the present study weightages for different questions are finalised through the Delphi technique by conducting a meeting session of the Delphi group. For the Delphi group 5 people from different walks of life connected with information field are involved. The people involved are an exhaustive reader of newspapers, a professional, a student, a business person and an expert from information science. After exhaustive discussion the Delphi group has decided the weightages and the weightages are given in Appendix I. A total weightage of 1000 points is used for the study.

1.6.9. Division of Questionnaire

The designed questionnaire incorporates questions in a convenient order for the respondent. The relevant questions are conveniently placed in different divisions for
analysis, by the Delphi group. The divisions made are quest for information, utility, importance, type and quality of information. Weightages for each of the divisions is decided by the Delphi group after thorough discussion. The points allocated are 1. Quest for information - 300, 2. Utility-300, 3. Importance-200, 4.Type-100 and 5. Quality-100. Analysis of the assessed responses through Delphi technique division wise and total is made using the statistical techniques.

1.6.10. Statistical Techniques

Different Statistical techniques mentioned below are employed to analyse the data.

* Mean, Mode & Median;
* Standard Deviation;
* Absolute skewness;
* Karl Pearson's coefficient of skewness; and
* Rank Correlation Coefficient.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

The scope of the present work extends to study who reads, what content is read and how much, the gratifications that reading brings and how best the newspaper is serving
the society, with reference to the three Telugu daily newspapers published from Tirupati town.

The present study has the following limitations:

1. Area of coverage of opinions is limited to Tirupati urban area.
2. Only vernacular papers are covered.
3. Three newspapers published from Tirupati are studied.
4. Other sources of information like television and radio are not included in the present study.
5. This study is made during 1992-94.
6. The sample size of subscribers is 300.

Due to constraints on the availability of time and resources, the study is limited to the above aspects.

1.8. Profile of Tirupati

Tirupati was known by its ancient name Tiruvengadam and the Hill on which the world renowned temple stands was known as the Vengadam Hills. It is now called 'Tirumala'. 'Tiru' means sacred and 'mala' means mountain. The 'Celebrated Tirupati Pagoda' claims its distinction and
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uniqueness of being the most sacred place of pilgrimage in India with its fame & popularity transcending the State boundaries. It has also become a symbol of spiritual and cultural integration with thousands of pilgrims from all walks of life and from all parts of India pouring in every day through out the year.

Tirupati is located on the latitude of $13^\circ - 14^\circ$N, longitude of $79^\circ - 25^\circ$E and at a height of 500 feet above the Mean Sea Level, in Chandragiri Taluk, Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh.

Tirupati is located on the northern bank of river Swarnamukhi in Chittoor — the southernmost district of Andhra Pradesh State. The town lies at a distance of 562 Kms by road from the State Capital, Hyderabad and 68 Kms, from the district headquarters town of Chittoor.3

The most important and common characteristic of the Tirumala - Tirupati is the Devasthanam. Major contribution of the Devasthanam was initially towards education with the result Sri Venkateswara (S.V.) University came into existence in Tirupati. The functional characteristics of Tirupati town can be described as

educational, commercial and cultural - in that order. In a way it can be said that the main stay of the economy of the town is the money generated from the pilgrims in many ways.

Apart from being a pilgrim town, Tirupati is also an important centre for higher education in the Rayalaseema region, as it is the seat of Sri Venkateswara University which was established on 2nd September 1954.\(^4\)

According to 1991 census the total population of Tirupati is 1,89,030 which includes 97,563 males and 91,467 females. The total number of literates is 1,30,119 in which 74,575 are males and 55,544 are females.\(^5\)

There are around twenty five educational institutions, which provide educational facilities to various types of students. These educational institutions include three Universities, one deemed University, many junior and degree colleges, music and dance college, engineering and medical colleges and institutions of technical sciences, yoga and allied sciences.


1.9 Organisation of the dissertation

The relevant material from the study is presented in the present thesis under Five Chapters. Introduction to the problem, significance of the study, hypotheses, objectives and methodology are covered in Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 covers various aspects of newspapers and information therein with an idea to give an overview of the subject under the title 'Overview'.

Relevant literature appropriate to the present work is reviewed and presented as 'Review of literature' in Chapter 3.

Results and discussion on the results are provided in Chapter 4 under different subdivisions.

The last Chapter provides conclusions drawn based on the hypotheses and objectives and suitable recommendations made.

Bibliography, formats of questionnaires used are appended to the thesis as Appendices.