5. METHODOLOGY

As the present study deals with analysis of trends in features stories with respect to the variables of text, context and reader, the study was conducted in two stages involving two distinct methodologies. The variable of text was analyzed in the first stage of the study that involved a quantitative content analysis; this was followed by the second stage i.e. a cross-sectional analytical survey that helped analyze the variables of context and reader. The data for stage one was collected through an analysis of two centenarian newspapers and for stage two the tool of questionnaire was used. Although two centenarian newspapers have been chosen for both stages of the study, however the present study is not a comparative study. The present study entails an analysis of trends in text, context and reader of the feature stories and does not aim to compare them in the two newspapers.

5.1 STAGE 1: CONTENT ANALYSIS

Research method: A quantitative content analysis was undertaken to determine the trends in feature stories.

Population: All the centenarian newspapers.

Sampling Procedure: The sampling procedure used for content analysis of feature stories in centenarian newspapers was non-probability. Judgement sampling was used under the non-probability sampling as the study required content analysis of centenarian newspapers.

Sample: Two newspapers were chosen for the study, the Times of India and The Tribune. The Times of India was established in 1838 as The Bombay Times and Journal of Commerce as a bi-weekly became a daily in 1850 and came to be known as the Times of India in 1861. The Tribune was established in 1881. It started as a weekly and became a daily newspaper in 1906. The choice of these two centenarian publications is based on following factors.

The Times of India was chosen for the present study keeping in mind the fact that is the most widely circulated English-language daily in the world and the most widely read English-language newspaper in India. In 2008, the newspaper was certified by the Audit Bureau of Circulations (India) as the world’s largest selling English-language daily. The newspaper was also declared as the most widely read English-language newspaper in India, according to the Indian Readership Survey report of
2008. Besides being the only English-language to feature in the top ten newspapers of the country. The Times of India continues to be the most widely read English-language newspaper in India according to the latest figures of Indian Readership Survey (2012,Q4).

The Tribune was chosen for the study keeping in mind the fact that from the time of its inception until date, it has had a stronghold in the north region of the country. Established as a biweekly in 1881, the newspaper came out from Lahore. After the Partition of the country, post-Independence, the newspaper’s operation shifted to Shimla and later to Ambala in 1948. It moved to its present home Chandigarh in 1969. Although the newspaper has had wide readership in the region since its inception, the present study takes into account the fact that in the year 2008, The Tribune was declared the most widely read and circulated paper in the north region (Punjab, Haryana excluding NCR town of Gurgaon and Faridabad, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh) of the country according to the Indian Readership Survey (2008). The Tribune continues to be the most circulated and read newspaper in the region according to the latest IRS reports.

Since the present study commenced in the year 2008, the readership and circulation figures of the same year have been considered for both newspapers.

Sampling of Time: The period chosen for the content analysis was from the year 1930 to the year 2009. This time-period was chosen for content analysis keeping in mind the fact that the twentieth century saw the phenomenal rise of feature writing and feature stories both in international and Indian journalism. From the rise of tabloids, to the Sunday feature magazines to coming up of feature syndicates the 1900’s hold special significance in the evolution and change that came about in the feature stories.

Sampling of Content: Six issues per year were chosen for each newspaper by using a constructed week method. One issue from alternate months was chosen i.e. first Monday of January, first Tuesday of March, and so one in order to guard against skews in data that might arise from day of the week or time of the year. Keeping in mind the feasibility factor, issues from alternate years were picked up for the span of eighty years. Each issue was analyzed keeping in mind the segmentation of main edition, magazine section/feature pullouts and the local city edition.

The Chandigarh editions of both newspapers began in the last two decades; (Chandigarh Tribune in the decade 1990-99 and Times of Chandigarh in the decade
2000-09) therefore the time of trend analysis for the Chandigarh editions was in accordance with the years in which they started appearing.

In addition, the regular magazine/feature pullouts/supplements sections for the Times of India begins appearing from decade 1950-59, therefore the time period for this section is from 1950-2009.

**Pilot Study:** A pilot study was conducted by undertaking a content analysis on the newspaper editions for the first decade of the time under analysis. The pilot study helped finalize the content categories. Some categories that were overlapping were removed, and some that didn't have adequate representation were added.

The intra coder reliability was 0.9. Minor corrections were made in the operational definitions.

**Content Categorization**: The analysis of feature stories was done on the parameters of i) dominant theme/type of features ii) writing style iii) readability ease iv) positioning or the pages on which they appear v) verbal and visual element vi) text breakers vii) headlines - typographical patterns, font and length viii) source of feature stories. Under each parameter the content was categorized under a set of categories enlisted below

i) **Types of Features**: Types of features were divided into 14 categories based on dominant themes.

1. News features
2. Science and Technology features
3. Utility features
4. Personal experience features
5. Lifestyle features (food, fashion, home decors, travel)
6. Art and Culture feature
7. Health feature
8. Problem features
9. Business and Economy features
10. Commemorative features
11. Reviews
12. Personality sketches and biographical features
13. Others/Miscellaneous (Astrological Features, Photo Features, Career features, Hobby Features, Philosophical Features, History and Literary Features, Sports Features)
ii) **Writing style of features:** Writing Styles were divided into four categories
1. Informative
2. Descriptive
3. Analytical
4. Argumentative

iii) **Readability Ease:** The readability ease was categorized into seven levels according to the Flesch Reading Scores (FRS).
1. Very Difficult (FRS 0-29)
2. Difficult (FRS 20-49)
3. Fairly Difficult (FRS 50-59)
4. Standard (FRS 60-69)
5. Fairly Easy (FRS 70-79)
6. Easy (FRS 80-89)
7. Very Easy (FRS 90-100)

iv) **Positioning of Feature Stories:** The pages on which the feature story appeared was divided into three categories
1. Front Page
2. Back Page
3. Inside Page

v) **Verbal Visual Ratio:** Measured in sq.cm, not divided in any categories.

vi) **Feature Story Titles/ Headlines:** The Feature Story Headline was analyzed based on Typographical Pattern of Headline, font of headline and Length of headline

- a) **Typographical Pattern of the Headline**
  1. Inverted pyramid and Pyramid pattern
  2. Waistline Pattern
  3. Centered and Set Centered Pattern
  4. Flush left
  5. Flush Right
  6. Free Style

- b) **Font of the Headline**
  1. Black letter or Text type
  2. Roman
3. Slab Serif
4. Script and cursives
5. Decorative and Nouveau
c) Length of Headline
1. Single Head
2. Composite Head

vii) Text Breakers
1. Box
2. Box Story
3. Strap Line
4. Bold Text
5. Multi Column Lead
6. Drop Cap
7. Dingbat
8. Paragraph Sub Heads
9. Sub Headlines
10. Slug

viii) Source of Feature Stories
1. Staff (Feature stories with staff reporters and by lines were put in this category)
2. News Agencies
3. Syndicates
4. Miscellaneous
5. No Source

Unit of Analysis: The unit of analysis for determining the verbal visual ratio within the feature story was a column square inch, while for other categories of content it was one feature story.

Quantification System: For counting the number of feature stories nominal level was used, for verbal visual ratio, the ratio level was used.

5.2 STAGE II: SURVEY

Research method: Descriptive and analytical cross sectional survey to study the variables of context and the reader.

Sampling Procedure: Probability sampling procedure

Sampling method: Area sampling method was used for the present study that entailed a readership survey. The sample was chosen in proportion to the population
of Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula. According to the Census 2011, the population of Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula was in the ratio of 1.88 : 1.76 : 1. (Total Population figures according the Census 2011 report are Chandigarh: 1054686, Mohali: 986147 and Panchkula: 558890). Thus, 200 respondents were chosen each from Chandigarh and Mohali while 100 respondents were taken from Panchkula. Further, the choice of sectors to be taken from the three cities was done through draw of lots. For the choice of number of households, the list of total number of households from each sector was procured and the number of household to be approached was chosen proportionately. A random list of house numbers was then generated for each sector with back up household numbers. The households were approached according to the random list generated. Out of the residents of these dwelling units only the Times of India and The Tribune readers were approached. A criterion in choosing the respondent from every household was eldest member of the household. This criterion was fixed keeping in mind the nature of study. Since the focus was that, the respondents should be able to comment on the change in feature stories, thus people who had considerable years of newspaper reading experience had to be chosen. In cases where the residents of the chosen dwelling unit didn’t turn out to be the readers of either newspaper, the next household in the list of randomly generated house numbers was approached. In cases where the eldest member of the household was not available, a maximum of two turnaround times was kept and thereafter the next house number in the randomly generated list was approached.

Population – Residents of Tricity – Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula

Sample size – The total sample size was 500. The population of Chandigarh, Mohali and Panchkula was in the ratio of 1.88: 1.76: 1. (Census 2011). Thus, 200 respondents were chosen each from Chandigarh and Mohali while 100 respondents were taken from Panchkula

Sampling unit – One individual per household.

5.3 DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Stage I

The stage I involved a content analysis of feature stories on various parameters. Ease of Readability of Feature Stories was measured using the Flesch reading ease formula and a scale of seven levels of readability ease was used based on the score generated from this formula
Flesch Reading Ease Formula \[ \text{FRE} = 206.835 - (1.015 \times \text{ASL}) - (84.6 \times \text{ASW}) \]
Where: \( \text{ASL} = \) average sentence length (the number of words divided by the number of sentences) \( \text{ASW} = \) average number of syllables per word (the number of syllables divided by the number of words).

**Stage II**
The data collection tool for Stage II of the study was a personally administered questionnaire as it was felt that the nature of the study calls for personal interaction with the respondent. It comprised both close-ended and open-ended questions. Filter questions were introduced for readers and non-readers. Scales were incorporated for in-depth inputs...

**Pilot Study:** A pilot study was conducted on a sample of 100 respondents. The pilot study helped in making the questionnaire more effective by streamlining the number of questions and constructing the scales. The number of items in self-constructed need gratification scales was reduced to avoid overlapping. The Locus of control scale was also streamlined to avoid repetition.

Following scales were constructed for the purpose of readership survey:

- **Need Gratification Scales:** Five basic needs were identified- cognitive, affective, personal integrative, social integrative and escapist needs- using the Katz et al Process model. For each need, five statements were drafted, each statement having a 5-answer format ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Individual scores for each need were summated. The alpha reliability for each of the five scales constructed was as follows. [Cognitive: 0.876, Affective: 0.811, Personal Integrative: 0.830, Social Integrative: 0.874, Diversion: 0.878] The alpha reliability of the total scale was 0.74

- The socioeconomic status was determined as a summated score on the sub factors of education, income and occupation. These sub factors were also categorized into classes. Where the sub factor of occupation was concerned, a list of various occupations was prepared and submitted to 25 people drawn from a cross section of population who were asked to rank the given occupations as per their perceived status in society. Each occupation was then ranked as per the average arrived by the judges. The socio economic status was thus divided into four levels low socio economic group, low to medium group, medium to high group and high socio economic group

- Psychographics of the respondents, specifically sociability, self-esteem and locus of control were evaluated through summated scores.
Sociability was measured by a seven item, Likert-type scale consisting of anchor points ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree developed by A. Bellamy and C. Hanewicz (1998) Social Psychological Dimensions of Electronic Communication, Electronic Journal of Communication, 4, 1-16. Summated scores range from seven to 50. The higher the score, the higher the sociability. The alpha reliability for this scale is .89.

Self-Esteem was measured on a 10-item, 5-point Likert scale developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1960. The scale was sourced from the Rosenberg Trust. Scores range from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 50-the more the score, the more the self-esteem. The alpha reliability of this scale is .95.

Locus of Control was measured on a 17 item, 5 point Likert scale, modified version of the original 24 item scale developed by Levenson (1974) Seven items were deleted because they were found to be considered repetitive during the pilot study. Scores range from 17 to 85. Higher scores indicate an internal orientation and lower scores indicate a belief that external factors control the rewards that an individual gets. The alpha reliability for this scale is .97.

5.4 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Data has been analyzed in SPSS and MINITAB, Software offering statistical packages. The data has been presented in the form of graphs, figures and trend analysis plots.

For Stage I of the study, the data has been presented decade wise in the form of bar diagrams and trend plots. For each newspaper, data has been analyzed and presented in three segments – main edition, feature pullouts/supplements and Chandigarh edition.

For Stage II data has been presented in the form of tables and figures.