8. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

8.1 STRENGTHS OF THE CURRENT STUDY

The present research thesis deals with the trend study of feature stories in two centenarian newspapers with respect to the variables of text, context and reader. Feature stories have emerged as an essential ingredient of the newspapers and the present study looks at this evolution of text in past eighty years across various parameters in content, presentation and sourcing of feature stories. Besides analysing the trends in text, the study also looks at the trends in reader and context by undertaking a readership survey thus bringing together the variables of text, context and reader. The findings of the study that suggest a close connect between the evolution of text and reader preferences moulded by his context, can help develop a new text, context and reader mechanism to study the evolution newspaper content and to reinvent or restructure the present content.

The present study used a two stage methodology to look at the trends in text, context and reader. Stage I involved a content analysis of two centenarian newspapers, spanning over eighty years. The findings of the content analysis helped gauge the trends in subject matter, writing style, readability, positioning, typography, design and source of feature stories. The results provide a multidimensional and holistic approach to understand how the text of the feature stories evolved. As the study spans across eighty decades i.e. 1930-2009, it also brings in the changes that occur from pre Independence era to the post Independence era and the present era.

Stage II involved a readership survey where not only the reading preferences of the respondents were gauged but also the nature and extent of need gratification derived from reading of feature stories was analyzed. The variable of context was also evaluated using the survey and the findings revealed that the feature reading was driven by the internal and external context of the reader. The findings of the study in this respect not only helped bring out the reader preferences but also the underlying reasons that guided these preferences. The study of influence of internal and external context of the reader helped establish the link between mental state of the reader, the events that happen in his environment and how the two guide his choice of content.

The study brought together the observations of content analysis and the opinions of the readers by putting across a series of questions to gauge the reader's approval and disapproval of the change that has occurred in the feature stories over the span of
eighty decades. All the parameters that were evaluated in the content analysis were covered in this part of the study and the trends/changes in text were then seen vis-à-vis reader's approval and disapproval of the changes that occurred in the feature stories. The findings of the study thus not only put forth the trends in text, context and reader but also establish and verify a connection between the three variables.

8.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The present study looks at the variable of text, context and reader with respect to the trends in feature stories. The variable of 'context' has been studied with respect to the internal and external context of the reader in the present study and can be looked at with a wider scope in future research.

The present study takes into account two newspapers; further research can include more newspapers for a study of trends across a wider plane and for comparative analysis of trends. In term of studying the variable of reader, the present study used a cross sectional survey, future research can use longitudinal study by constructing a reader panel and evaluating the reader preferences over a period.