CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive and analytical in nature. It made use of qualitative as well as quantitative methods of research which helped gain a better insight into photography. The use of the qualitative method enabled the researcher to present comprehensive and detailed description of the photography practices of photographers, the gratifications derived from practicing photography and its use as a means of visual communication. Quantitative research methods enabled the researcher to describe the photography practices of the people and the satisfaction they derive from indulging in photography. The research was carried out in two phases, in the first phase the data was collected through qualitative research method of case study because conducting an in depth study of the photography practices of the photographers in the first stage enabled to gain a better insight into their photography behaviour and also helped in constructing a detailed questionnaire for the second stage of the study. In the second phase the data collection was done with quantitative research method of a cross-sectional survey. The use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods enabled the researcher to gather data rich in breadth as well as depth.

Qualitative Methods: The present research made use of the case study method to examine the photography practices of three types of photographers: professional photographers, photo- journalists and amateur photographers. Purposive sampling method was used to select the sample and in-depth interviews were carried out with the help of a semi structured interview schedule. The responses were analyzed qualitatively and are presented in a narrative format.

Quantitative Methods: The present research made use of a cross sectional survey to study the photography practices of the people. Probability sampling method of area sampling was used to select the sample. The data was collected by personally administering a structured questionnaire to the respondents. The data was analyzed
quantitatively and subject to statistical procedures. The data is presented in the form of tables and figures and the results are discussed using inferential statistics.

**Phase I**

**Research Method: Case Study**

In the first phase of the study the case study method was adopted, the reason for using the case study method was that, the target group i.e. the photographers, were a special and unique group of individuals who needed to be studied in detail in order to get an insight into their photography practices, which only the case study method would have afforded. The analytical nature of the study justified the use of qualitative method like the case study, which helped to gain a better understanding of the area of present research which was ‘photography as visual communication’, which has been under-researched. The case study method allowed the researcher to answer the questions as to why photographers indulge in photography i.e. what are the motivations or reasons for practicing photography and how is photography practiced by these photographers.

**Population of the Study:** The photographers (professionals, photo-journalist, and amateurs) in the tricity of Chandigarh Panchkula and Mohali served as the population for the multiple case study analysis.

**Sampling Unit:** each photographer in the tricity served as the sampling unit.

**Sampling Procedure:** Non probability sampling was used by the researcher to select sample for the multiple case studies. Purposive sampling method was used to choose photographers for the in-depth interview.

**Sampling Method: Purposive Sampling method** was used to select five photographers from the three different categories owing to their experience in the field of photography and their willingness to contribute to the study on photographers by sharing their experiences.

**Data Collection Method:** The researcher used semi-structured interview, as it gives a certain degree of flexibility to the interviewer and interviewee, which facilitates a conversation style of interviewing. The purpose of choosing this method was to give the
photographers an opportunity to share their views about photography and get them talking openly about their photography practices. The idea was to let them narrate their story in their own words. The researcher has the freedom to ask follow up questions to gain a better understanding of the issues being discussed. The questions helped the researcher to keep the focus on the area of discussion. Photographers were asked to substantiate their claims on a given topic by giving real examples that helped the researcher gain clarity of thought. The interviews were conducted in a natural setting which proved to be advantageous, as the photographers were comfortable and in mood to talk at length. Multiple interview sessions with the photographers were conducted until the information started getting repetitive in nature and no new inputs were being added.

An effort was made by the researcher to triangulate the data collection with the observation of photographers in their natural setting/environment. Besides that, before interviewing the photographers, researcher collected background information about them. The researcher read up on the news stories, visited their Facebook profiles, blogs and websites to gain a better understanding of their nature of photography. The researcher was also invited by photographers to exhibitions, meetings and events organized by them, which was very helpful in gaining a better perspective of their work and nature of photography.

The researcher asked each photographer to share one photograph each, which was representative of the nature of their photography. The photographers were also asked to elaborate on as to what they intended to communicate to the viewer through that photograph. In total 15 photographs with their interpretations from the photographer who clicked it, were collected to be used in the survey. Out of these 15 photographs, nine photographs were randomly selected. These photographs were used by the researcher to elicit responses from the respondents, who answered the questionnaire in the cross sectional survey. The purpose of this exercise was to examine whether the viewer (decoder) succeeds in decoding the photographic message as encoded by the photographer (encoder).

**Data Collection Tool:** An interview schedule served as the data collection tool. The interview schedule was divided into four sections, the first section contained questions
regarding the demographic profile of the photographer, the second section was to do with the photography practices, the third section was about the need gratification and the fourth section dealt with the psychographic profile of the photographers. The need gratification and the psychographics were tested on a Likert scale. Sociability, self-esteem, locus of control and shyness tests were used to determine the psychographic profile of the photographers.

**Data Presentation** - The data is presented in an interpretative and narrative format.

**Data Analysis:** The responses were analyzed qualitatively. The researcher made use of the three methods of data analysis i.e. pattern matching, explanation building and cross case analysis. The interview transcripts were data mined in order to arrive at similarities and differences in the nature of the photography practices of the different categories of photographers. The data gathered from the interviews was categorized into themes and sub themes and then the researcher tried to establish linkages.

**Phase II**

**Research Method: Cross Sectional Descriptive Analytical Survey**

The present study used a cross-sectional survey to collect information regarding the everyday photography practices of people and how they use photography as a means of communication and what satisfactions or gratifications they derive from indulging in the practice of photography.

**Population of Study:** For the purpose of the present study all people residing in the tricity i.e. Chandigarh, Panchkula, Mohali were treated as the population. The number of samples to be collected from each of these cities followed the logic of probability proportionate to size (PPS), in order to ensure that the sample that is selected is representative of the population in the three cities. According to this principle the number of respondents to be selected from Chandigarh came out to be 370, 75 for Panchkula and 55 for Mohali.

**Sampling Unit:** The sampling unit for the preset study was an individual.
Sample Size: For the purpose of the survey the researcher limited the size of the sample to 500 respondents.

Sampling Procedure: Probability sampling method was used by the researcher to select the sample for the cross sectional analytical survey.

Sampling Method: The researcher used multistage area sampling method to select the sample of respondents for the survey.

The steps involved in the selection of sample for the present study were:

Step I: The sectors of the three cities of Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali were selected as the Primary sampling units (PSUs). A list of sectors in these three cities was obtained and sectors were randomly selected through generating a list from a website called randomizer.com.

Step II: The secondary sampling units were sub-sectors in each of these three cities.

Step III: The tertiary sampling units were the households within each sector. A list of households in each of these sectors was obtained and a sample was randomly drawn.

Step IV: An individual from a household was chosen to administer the questionnaire on the basis of the first-adult approach, which involves the selection of the first adult contacted.

Data Collection Method: The researcher used a personally administered questionnaire to elicit responses from the respondents.

Data Collection Tool: The tool for data collection for the cross sectional survey was a structured questionnaire that contained both open ended and close ended questions and scales. At the end of the questionnaire the researcher showed every respondent one photograph at a time and asked him/her to write what he/she thinks is the message that the photographer wishes to communicate in terms of the theme of the photograph, in order to see whether the viewer (decoder) succeeds in interpreting the photographic message as encoded by the photographer (encoder).

Pilot Study: The questionnaire to be administered in the cross sectional survey was pre-tested on 30 people from the target population to improve the instrument of data
collection i.e. the questionnaire on the basis of the feedback received from the participants. The participants were asked whether they faced any difficulties in filling up the questionnaire, if yes, then what were these difficulties, they were also asked to make suggestions for improving the questionnaire. The participants reported that the faced problems in understanding some questions, due to the technical jargon used, thus an attempt was made to simplify the language of the questions and make them easier to understand, and the use of technical words was minimized. It was also felt that the participants were reluctant to answer open ended questions, and frequently asked the researcher to give them a choice of answers to choose from, taking a cue from this, an attempt was made to reduce the number of open ended questions and convert some of them into close ended question with pre-determined options, to choose from.

**Data Presentation:** The data is presented in the form of graphs and tables.

**Data Analysis:** The data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The data collected through close ended questions was coded and entered into SPSS computer software of *Statistical products and Service Solutions*, followed by a statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, were used to elucidate the findings and results of the study. Chi square test of association, and correlation were used. For this study, a five percent (0.05) level was determined as the accepted level of significance for statistical analysis. The open ended questions were analyzed qualitatively. Data mining was done to arrive at dominant themes that emerged from open ended responses.