This thesis charts the shift in photography from a tool for memory preservation to a means of communication and staying connected, associated with the digitalization of photography and its coupling with telecommunication devices. The present research aims to study how photography is used for visual communication. The various areas that the research explores are: photography as a means of visual communication, photography and need gratification, photography as a medium of representation of reality and photography as a compensatory mechanism. Other themes that the current research investigates are: nature of photographs clicked, nature of photographs in relation to demographic and psychographic variables, difference in the nature of photography across different categories of photographers i.e. the professional photographers, the photo-journalists and the amateur photographers. The thesis is grounded in Berlo’s SMCR Model of Communication, Ritual View of Communication, Uses and Gratification Perspective, and Psychoanalytic Perspective, Structural Constructionist Perspective and Constructionist Perspective of Photography. The present study is analytical in nature. The study made use of quantitative as well as qualitative methods of research. A multiple case study analysis of three types of photographers, through a semi-structured interview, with the help of an interview schedule and a cross sectional descriptive analytical survey of 500 respondents from Chandigarh, Panchkula and Mohali through a personally administered questionnaire was carried out. The results of the present study confirm photography as a means of visual communication, a medium for representation of reality, as a compensatory mechanism and a medium of need gratification.

Key Words: photography, visual communication, encoder, decoder, representation, reality, compensatory mechanism and need gratification.