Executive Summary

The present research studies photography as a means of visual communication, as a medium of representation of reality and need gratification and as a compensatory mechanism. The results of the multiple case study analysis reveal that there is an association between the demographic variables (gender, age, level of education, occupation, socio-economic and marital status), psychographic variables (sociability, self-esteem, shyness and locus of control) and nature of photographs clicked by the photographers. However, no association was found between the demographic variable of income and nature of photographs. It was found that the nature of photography and category of the photographer are associated as every photographer’s decision with regard to theme, decisive moment, size and colour are determined by the genre of photography they pursue. All photographers believe in photography’s capacity to depict reality provided the photographer is honest in his endeavour. Photographers consider photography to act as a means of compensation but their use of photography as a compensatory mechanism differs across categories. Professional photographers use photography to fill the emptiness in their lives and to preserve the memory of things they love, while photo-journalists use photography to overcome the loss of a something or someone, whereas amateur photographers use photography to distract themselves from problems and tensions, to release stress and to deal with pain and loss. Almost all photographers derive high cognitive, affective and escapist need gratification, majority of the photo-journalists and amateur photographers drive high whereas most of the professional photographers derive medium to high personal and social integrative need gratification.

The results of survey show association between demographic variables of gender, age, level of education, occupation, socio-economic status and the marital status and the nature of photographs but no association was found with the demographic variable of income. Psychographic variable of shyness was found to be associated with nature of photographs but no association was found between the psychographic variables of sociability, self-esteem, locus of control and the nature of photographs. Photography is regarded as a medium of representation of reality by almost three-fourth (67.5%) respondents. (51%) respondents consider photography as a means of compensation and (31.5%) respondents are ambivalent and (17.2%) respondents do not regard photography to be compensatory mechanism. A one-way ANOVA test of association
between the nature of photographs and the nature of need gratification shows a significant variance between cognitive, affective personal and social need gratification and the nature of photographs clicked (F (3.322) = .006) \( p < .05 \), (F (3.228) \( p = .007 \) < .05), (F (5.248) = .000 \( p < .05 \)) and (F (2.513) \( p = .029 \)), < .05 but no significant variance was found between escapist need gratification and the nature of photographs clicked (F (2.073) \( p = .068 \)) > .05). A one tailed Pearson test of association between frequency of photographs taken and the degree of need gratification indicates that there is a negative correlation between the frequency of photographs clicked and the degree of need gratification.

Cameraphones are the most popular photographic equipment (48.42%) as they give the freedom to click photographs whenever one feels like, this result is substantiated by the fact that mood (73.15%) emerged as the most common factor that influences the frequency of taking photographs. A little less than half of the respondents (42.61%) practice photography frequently. A significantly large number of respondents (80%) use photography for communication and an equally large number of respondents (81%) claim that they succeed in communicating emotions of affection, love, care, bonding, togetherness, joy etc. through sharing photographs on social media web like Facebook, personal webpages, blogs, Twitter and YouTube as well as showing photographs to one another on cameraphones, computers, laptops and tablet screens, replacing the practice of maintaining albums due to the cost and effort involved. Digital manipulation of photographs is becoming common as (47%) respondents admitted to resorting to digital manipulation to enhance the quality of photographs clicked through cameraphones and to make photographs more attractive and appealing. A little less than half of the respondents (44%) believe that colour sets the mood of the photograph and a little more than one third of the respondents (35.7%) feel that colour helps in attracting the viewers towards the photographs. A little more than half of the respondents (54.9%) think right photograph size ensures clarity of the subject. Almost one third (33%) respondents regard choosing the best angle crucial for clicking a good photograph and a quarter (25%) respondents consider incorporating all elements important while clicking photographs vital. On an average (20%) respondents were able to decode the photographs as encoded by the encoder, respondents brought in their personal interpretations while decoding the photographs which resulted in different interpretations of the photographs due to the difference in the communication skills, attitude, knowledge level and socio-cultural position of the encoder and decoder.