CHAPTER - VI
SUMMARY, MAIN CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The green revolution almost affected each and every aspect of households concerned with agriculture sector in Punjab. It is generally held that production and productivity of Punjab agriculture increased manifold. But all the sections related to agriculture sector were not equally benefited. It seems that agricultural labour did not get its due share in the increased income of the agriculture sector. Consequently, the local agricultural labour started withdrawing from agriculture sector and shifted to non-agricultural occupations to find livelihood or better livelihood. Hence, it is important to be familiar with that how and why local agricultural labour changed their old occupation in the context of changing socio-economic scenario in rural Punjab.

6.1 Objectives of Study
The specific objectives of the study are as under:
1. To know the structure of employment of withdrawn agricultural labour.
2. To find out the various causes of occupational change by the agricultural labour.
3. To examine the various types and locations of new occupations joined by the withdrawn agricultural labour.
4. To know the different attributes of withdrawn agricultural labour and making the inter and intra district comparisons.
5. To make suggestions, if any, on the basis of the study.

6.2 Methodology and Sampling Design
Bathinda and Jalandhar districts have been chosen for studying the selected theme. The information regarding socio-economic parameters of both the districts revealed that the district Jalandhar
was comparatively more developed than Bathinda district in Punjab. Hence, both the districts may serve to a substantial extent as true representatives of the Punjab state.

Further, one village from each sub-division of both the districts, i.e., Bathinda and Jalandhar was taken for primary study. The number of sub-divisions in Bathinda district is three, whereas, in Jalandhar district it is five. Hence, the total number of selected sampled villages was eight in both the districts. Firstly, all the villages of each district were divided into two parts, i.e., first part consisted of villages, which were located relatively nearby the main city of the area and the another part constituted the villages that were situated comparatively far from the same city, as it was tentatively observed in preliminary survey related to this study that the extent of occupational change of local agricultural labour was stimulated by their proximity to the cities.

The number of the villages that fell into the category of villages that were located nearby the main city was small as compared to the number of villages that were located relatively far from the same city in both of the districts. Therefore, in Bathinda district, only one village ‘Lehra Khana’ (18 Kms away from Bathinda city) has been drawn randomly from Bathinda sub-division to represent the first part of villages (i.e., located relatively nearby Bathinda city). Subsequently, two more villages, i.e., ‘Malwala’ (30 Kms away from Bathinda city) and ‘Dyalpura Bhai Ka’ (50 Kms away from Bathinda city) were chosen randomly from Talwandi Sabo and Rampura Phul sub-divisions, respectively, representing the second part of villages. Since most of the villages of Bathinda sub-division are located nearby Bathinda city than any other villages of the remaining sub-divisions
(Talwandi Sabo and Rampura Phul). Consequently, one village each from Talwandi Sabo and Rampura Phul sub-divisions was drawn randomly to represent the villages located far off from the Bathinda city. Moreover, Bathinda sub-division has the major industrial set up, e.g., Guru Nanak Dev and Guru Gobind Singh Thermal Plants, the National Fertilizers Limited, etc. and has offered facilities like markets, roads, etc. On the other hand, Talwandi Sabo and Rampura Phul sub-divisions did not have advantage of either major industrial set up or other important infrastructural facilities. The one and only major industry away from Bathinda, i.e., ‘Oil Refinery’ by Hindustan Petroleum Corporation is yet to be completed in Talwandi Sabo sub-division.

Similarly, in Jalandhar district, two villages, i.e., ‘Sarai Khas’ (08 Kms away from Jalandhar city) and ‘Patara’ (12 Kms away from Jalandhar city) have been chosen randomly from Jalandhar-II and Jalandhar-I sub-divisions, respectively, to represent the villages located relatively nearby the main city, i.e., Jalandhar. Similarly, three more villages namely ‘Bir Baloki’ (40 Kms away from Jalandhar city), ‘Bilga’ (45 Kms away from Jalandhar city) and ‘Kang Kalan’ (60 Kms away from Jalandhar city) have been selected randomly from Nakodar, Phillaur and Shahkot sub-divisions, respectively, representing the villages that were situated relatively far from the same city. Moreover, Jalandhar-II and Jalandhar-I sub-divisions have got relatively major industrial hubs comprising Sports Goods Industry, Hand Tool Industry, Auto Parts Industry, Rubber Goods Industry, Surgical Instruments Manufacturers, etc., and contain better economic and social infrastructural facilities, thereby, causing concentration of economic activity in this area as compared to the Nakodar, Phillaur
and Shahkot sub-divisions that led the group of villages located distantly from Jalandhar city.

Furthermore, with the help of village panchayats, related officials and some prominent villagers having information about occupations of people of the village, a complete list of WALHs was prepared. By adopting stratified random sampling technique, they were categorized on the basis of strata of employment adopted, i.e., Government/semi Government service, industrial sector, independent occupations started taking financial help, independent occupations started without financial help, and other occupations such as helpers to mason, helpers in workshops/shops, etc. Finally, 10.00 per cent of the data of each category of employment was drawn as sampled WALHs. A detailed schedule-cum-questionnaire was prepared for collecting information from the workers (households) in the eight sampled villages.

During the preliminary survey, we found that in Bathinda district, the total number of agricultural labour households that changed their occupation, were negligible before 1990, while a major shifting took place during mid 1990s, whereas, in Jalandhar district, the occupational shifting of agricultural labour households was at the highest in late 1980s, though they kept on shifting in the 1990s and so on. Hence, the time period taken to study this problem relates to 1990-91 to 2005-06. Data for the present study were collected in the year of 2006-07.

We have taken agricultural labour household as defined by Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee (1956), i.e., a household that derives bulk of its income from agricultural wages known as agricultural labour household. In this study, word ‘households’ is also
used as labourers and workers and it is assumed that head of the family represents the whole family.

6.3 Summary

Summary of the main findings is given as under:

6.3.1 Structure of Employment

The study mainly highlights the employment opportunities to the withdrawn agricultural labour in different districts including sub-divisions and at their native villages in non-agricultural sector comprehensively and minutely.

To describe the structure of employment of WALHs in selected districts, the various occupations adopted by them were divided into five major categories, though some of them may overlap. ‘Industrial sector’ was the category that comprised of workers engaged in large or small industrial units such as Thermal Plants, Sports Goods Industry, National Fertilizers Limited, biscuit making factories and relatively some medium or small units like, kilns, rice shellers, etc. The occupations that were started by labourers as their own small production units/independent jobs (like tiny flour mills, oil mills, cycle/scooter workshops, etc.) with financial help taken from formal and/or informal sources of credit were categorised as ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’. The next category was of ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ consisted of various occupations such as masons (small-contractors), vendors, rickshaw pullers, hand pump installers, PCOs (Public Call Offices) owners, photo studios owners, and well diggers, etc. Though, WALHs used their past savings in both the cases. Next comes ‘service category’, which included all services of Government/semi Government sector, etc. The withdrawn workers who did not adopt
any of the occupations discussed above and worked as masons, helpers (labourers) to mason, drivers of hired taxies, helpers in shops, in small repairing units, etc. were kept in ‘others’ category.

The analysis of data specifies that in both the districts taken together, the major proportion of sampled WALHs came to be 32.14 per cent in the category of ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ followed by two categories ‘industrial sector’ and ‘others’ with 23.41 per cent in each case. On the other hand, ‘service category’ involved 12.30 per cent of the total labour households, whereas, the percentage share of ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ turned out to be just 8.73 per cent.

As regarding the categories of employment ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ and ‘others’, a higher proportion of workers were found in Bathinda district (35.52 per cent & 30.26 per cent, respectively) as compared to Jalandhar district (30.68 per cent & 20.45 per cent, respectively). Although, in both the districts, these two categories emerged as major categories soaking up more labour households than the remaining other categories. The tilt of most of the withdrawn households towards these two categories of employment in both the districts taken together indicates the increasing casualisation of labour employment after shifting to non-agricultural occupations as their main occupations, where, either they found high paid work or sometimes the same wage rate. Even sometimes, they worked at lower wages than that of as agricultural labour. The labour when left the agriculture sector did not adopt ‘industrial sector’ (19.73 per cent) in substantial number because of lack of new set up of any industrial units in sampled rural sector of Bathinda district. A few industrial units were concentrated nearby or
in the premises of Bathinda city itself. Moreover, most of the industrial workers were found working in kilns in this district.

In Jalandhar district, one fourth of the total sampled households were found in ‘industrial sector’ as this district has more industrial set-up than that of Bathinda district. Altogether, industrial units remained inadequate to absorb the surplus labour. Therefore, it can be said that more industrial units need to be set up especially the new cottage and small-scale industry in both the districts in the given circumstances. A small proportion of withdrawn workers (8.73 per cent on the whole) either who were having some pieces of land or other assets along with some entrepreneurial skills, were able to initiate with ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ in both the districts. While on the whole, only 5.15 per cent of the total WALHs got financial assistance from formal sources of credit (scheduled commercial banks and cooperative societies) while, rest of them (17.06) depended upon informal sources of credit (money lenders, relatives, friends, landlords, traders, etc.). It implies that there is a need to create awareness among rural labourers about formal sources of credit. In addition, terms of credit need to be clearer and softened so that needy rural households may have easier and approachable access to them and they can exploit their skills and raise their economic standard. A bit more than one tenth part of the total sampled households who got employment opportunities in ‘Government/semi Government service’ category show that there was lack of creation of job opportunities in this sector by Government. Moreover, 36.50 per cent of the total sampled withdrawn workers were illiterate, due to which they could not get better earning jobs.
6.3.2 Structure of Employment at Places Located Nearby and Away from City

Analysis of data reveals that the percentage of total withdrawn labour households from places nearby Bathinda city were found involved in ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ and their proportion was found to be 38.88 per cent, while that of ‘industrial sector’ and ‘others’ categories of employment came to be equally important with 22.22 per cent in each case and for ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ and Government/semi Government service’ resorted to 11.11 per cent and 5.55 per cent, respectively. On the other hand, out of the total WALHs that hailed from the places located away from Bathinda city were found to be equally involved in ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ and ‘others’ categories of employment as their percentage came to be 32.25 per cent in each case. The labour households who joined ‘industrial sector’ turned out to be 19.35 per cent while for ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ and ‘Government/semi Government service’, it was observed 9.67 per cent and 6.45 per cent, respectively. Further, the data highlight that the withdrawn labour households that came from places located nearby the city, most of them were found to be predominantly involved in ‘independent occupations started without financial help’. On the other side, the withdrawn workers that belonged to far off places from city, most of them were found to be engaged in a higher proportion in ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ and ‘others’ categories of employment. In this case, the adoption of these categories of employment increased because of two nearby market places, i.e., Sangat Mandi and Rama Mandi, though these places were
far off from Bathinda city but they served in creating the demand for occupations taken under the mentioned categories (as masons, painters, drivers and labourers to masons, etc.). As regarding to engagement of labour households in ‘industrial sector’ a higher proportion of them were found working at places nearby the city as compared to the places located away from the city. It may be because of concentration of industry mainly nearby Bathinda city.

Regarding the employment in ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ and ‘Government/semi Government service’ categories, there weren’t any major differences between places located nearby and away from the city in Bathinda district. The weak economic status of almost all the WALHs and lack of professional qualifications remained the major causes behind the low level of employment, respectively in ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ and ‘Government/semi Government service’ categories in both the cases. The data also reveal that in Jalandhar district, the withdrawn labour households that hailed from places nearby the city, most of them (28.57 per cent) were found to be involved in ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ followed by ‘industrial sector’ (25.71 per cent) category of employment, whereas, the percentage of those who were found involved in ‘Government/semi Government service’, ‘others’ and ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ categories of employment came to be 20.00 per cent, 14.28 per cent and 11.42 per cent, respectively. On the other hand, in case of places located away from the city, this percentage accounted for as high as 30.55 per cent for ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ followed by 25.00 per cent each in ‘industrial sector’ and ‘others’ categories of employment. While the
percentage of withdrawn labour households who joined ‘Government/semi Government service’ and ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ categories of employment turned out to be 13.88 per cent and 5.55 per cent, respectively.

In both the cases, i.e., places located nearby and away from the city in this district, ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ and ‘industrial sector’ categories provided more employment. While ‘Government/semi Government service’ category remained higher in the context of providing more employment to WALHs in places located nearby as compared to remotely located places from the city. The reason behind this may relatively be the higher literacy rate of nearby villages as compared to the away-located villages from the city. While the labour households living in the places located remotely from the city were found to be involved more in ‘others’ category of employment as than those residing nearby the city but it was reverse in the case of ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ category. Being relatively aware, the labour households of nearby places got knowledge related to new ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ and were successful in taking some financial help from formal and informal sources of credit in addition to using their own past savings. The reasons behind more labour households found to be in ‘others’ category of employment at places located away from the city may be unavailability or low availability of jobs in other categories of employment and/or not having skills to get into other occupations. Similarly, in case of less engagement of withdrawn labour in ‘others’ category at places located nearby the city, in this district, remained relatively more chances to get in all other categories of employment as the earnings were relatively more in other categories.
Taking both the districts together, the higher percentage of WALHs belonging to places located nearby the city, were found to be employed in ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ (32.07 per cent), whereas, in case of places located remotely from the city, this percentage also remained higher at 30.55 per cent than all other categories. While the second major category of employment for WALHs at places located nearby the city came to be the ‘industrial sector’ with 24.52 per cent and the same category was joined by 22.38 per cent of the households at places located away from the city. On the other hand, the percentage share of WALHs that were found to have joined ‘others’ category of employment came to be 28.35 per cent in case of places located away from the city, whereas, it was found to be 16.98 per cent in case of places located nearby the city. The WALHs that were found to be working in ‘Government/semi Government service’ category of employment accounted for 15.09 per cent at places located nearby the city as compared to the places located far off from the city, where it came to be 10.44 per cent.

Overall, the data reveal that ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ in both the cases were prone to be adopted by the maximum number of withdrawn workers for which nearby cities and market areas served as stimulants. Apart from it, around one fourth of the total workers were found to be employed in ‘industrial sector’ category of employment at places located nearby the city as major part of the industry in Bathinda and Jalandhar districts was mainly concentrated only in or around these cities, which provided more opportunities of employment to the WALHs. Though a good proportion of workers (around one fifth) were also found engaged in
‘industrial sector’ at places located away from the city also but these households were found to be working mostly in small/medium units of production, like kilns, rice shellers, flour mills, etc. The higher proportion of workers in ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ category in nearby places as compared to the places located away from the city remained mainly due to higher literacy rate of workers in their places. The proximity of a village to the city imparted them exposure and knowledge in ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ and relatively better knowledge about credits from formal sources of credit, etc. Similarly, relatively a higher proportion of labourers in ‘Government/semi Government services’ at places located nearby the city came to be due to comparatively a higher literacy rate of the withdrawn workers in these places and most of them were belonging to SC (M & V)/SC (R & O), mainly because of reserved quota in Government and semi Government recruitment schemes. The category of employment, i.e., ‘others’ has been adopted by less number of labour households in nearby places as compared to the far off places from the city. Reasons behind it, firstly, the wages were found to be relatively low in this category as compared to most of the other categories of employment. Secondly, the labour households must have found employment opportunities in other categories of employment as they were easily available at places located nearby the city. Thirdly, due to weak financial status of withdrawn labour households, their illiteracy, lack of awareness as well as scarce collateral assets and lack of decision making power may have pushed them only towards ‘others’ category of employment only at places located away from the city.
6.3.3 Causes of Occupational Change

As regards the percentage of occupational change, it has been found that on the whole, in Jalandhar district, being relatively developed (i.e., on the basis of higher literacy ratio, industrial set up, prevalence of NRI, etc.), this share was found to be higher (94.77 per cent) than Bathinda district (77.44), whereas taking both the districts together, it came to be 88.77 per cent. Further, all the members of most of the labour households (withdrawn) did not change their old occupation completely as they use to do work for more time during the peak season of agriculture even the withdrawn casual workers join the family to collect foodgrain for them and fodder for their cattle, if any. Besides, lady members of some of the labour households particularly in Bathinda district also get engaged in work of plucking the cotton during kharif season despite the fact that the family earns bulk of their annual income from non-agricultural occupations.

As regarding to the main causes, it has been found that ‘low rate of wages’ and ‘worker education & reservation in Government jobs’ played major role in occupational change of agricultural labour in both the districts taken together as 59.92 per cent and 13.88 per cent labour households withdrew from agriculture sector, respectively due to these reasons. Besides, there also remained factors such as ‘seasonal unemployment’ (10.31 per cent), ‘problem of regular payment’ in agriculture sector (7.14 per cent) and ‘others’ (8.73 per cent) that added in making the mind of agricultural labour to change their old occupation. Causes such as ‘low rate of wages’, ‘seasonal unemployment’ and ‘problem of regular payment’, etc., performed as push factors. Causes such as ‘worker education & reservation in Government jobs’, worked as pull factors. Though, these factors (pull
factors) affected the labourers in both the districts chosen for study but they were found to be more stimulants in Jalandhar district as compared to Bathinda district mainly because of the higher literacy rate of labourers in former district (71.03 per cent).

Overall push factors were found to be playing major role in occupational change of agricultural labour, although, pull factors were also responsible in it.

Moreover, some other factors/causes like relatively more number of working days in non-agriculture sector, to remove social stigma of caste, IT revolution, etc. also helped agricultural labour in its occupational change.

6.3.4 Causes of Occupational Change at Places Located Nearby and Away from City

Taking both the districts together, as regards to the major reasons, i.e., 'low rate of wages' and 'worker education & reservation in Government jobs', the responses of labour households of places located nearby the city (62.26 per cent and 16.98 per cent, respectively) were observed in higher proportion as compared to that of belonging to places located away from the city (56.71 per cent and 10.44 per cent, respectively). It was due to their (residing in places nearby cities) feeling of understanding the discrimination in view of low rate of wages due to influx of migratory labour and mechanization of agriculture, etc. Further, they were aware of availability of more opportunities and information of non-agricultural occupations. Furthermore, it remained easy for educated workers in availing of job opportunities in Government/semi-Government sector as it is generally observed that awareness and development is found more in rural areas nearby urban sector as compared to remote areas.
6.3.5 Types of Independent Occupations Started Taking Financial Help

Regarding types of ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’, it has been found that in case of Bathinda district, on the whole 71.42 per cent of total WALHs adopted ‘cycle/scooter workshops’ category of employment. On the contrary, this percentage came to be 53.33 per cent in case of Jalandhar district. The category of occupation, i.e., ‘others’ (driving their own vehicles such as tractor, jeep, running tiny spinning mills, etc.) was adopted by 28.57 per cent of the total households in Bathinda district but in Jalandhar district, this percentage was found to be 20.00 per cent. While 13.33 per cent labour households found involved each in ‘PCOs/photo studios’ and ‘tiny flour mills/oil mills’ categories in Jalandhar district, whereas, not even a single household adopted any of these categories in Bathinda district. Only a few households resorted to these occupations who might have other sources of income in district Jalandhar. Both the districts taken together, there had been main concentration of withdrawn labour households towards ‘cycle/scooter workshops’ followed by ‘others’ category of occupations and the reason remained was the easy access to both the occupations in village economy. Moreover, they could be started with less finance that was manageable by the sampled households.

On the whole, in both the sampled districts, most of the labour households adopted ‘cycle/scooter workshops’ as new occupation as their percentage came to be 59.09 per cent followed by 22.72 per cent that joined ‘others’ category of occupations and the percentage of households who resorted to ‘PCOs/photo studios’ and ‘tiny flour mills/oil mills’ remained just 9.09 per cent in each category.
6.3.6 Types of Independent Occupations Started Without Financial Help

In case of Bathinda district, two categories of employment, i.e., ‘painters/tailors/barbers’ and ‘others’ (vendors, rickshaw pullers, running tea stalls, etc.) emerged involving higher proportion (33.33 per cent in each category) of labour households. Likewise, in Jalandhar district also ‘painters/tailors/barbers’ (42.59 per cent) and ‘others’ (35.18 per cent) categories of employment topped in view of involving higher proportion of labour households. It has been found that in Jalandhar district, due to more education and awareness, agricultural labour left its old occupation in younger age as compared to Bathinda district. In Jalandhar district, younger generation got motivated more as compared to the older ones in adopting occupations like ‘painters/tailors/barbers’. While the involvement of labour households in categories of occupations, i.e., ‘masons’ (small-contractors) and ‘hand pump installers and well digging’ remained more or less in the same proportion in both the districts.

On the whole, in both the sampled districts, it came to be the ‘painters/tailors/barbers’ category of occupations which was adopted by most of the labour households as their percentage came to be 39.50 per cent followed by the category of ‘others’ occupations where the proportion of labour households accounted for 34.56 per cent, further, 13.58 per cent labour households were found to be involved in ‘hand pump installation and well digging’ and the lowest, i.e., 12.34 per cent labour households were found involved as ‘masons’ (small-contractors). The reason behind adoption of ‘painters/tailors/barbers’ and ‘others’ categories of occupations was the young persons who preferred the less tiring independent jobs as they were found reluctant
to join jobs which required hard work. Rest of the categories of occupations, i.e., ‘masons’ (small-contractors) and ‘hand pump installation and well digging’ require relatively hard work, more finance and experience. The WALHs were weak (financially and having less experience) in these areas due to which, they were found to be in lower proportion in these categories.

6.3.7 Types of Others Category of Occupations

Both the districts taken together, a large proportion of labour households (44.06 per cent) were found to be absorbed by ‘helpers to mason’ category of occupations, followed by ‘other occupations’ such as drivers of hired taxies/tractors/tongas, workers working in others’ shops, etc. (22.03 per cent), further 18.64 per cent were found to be engaged as ‘masons’ and 15.25 per cent turned out to be ‘working in repairing units’.

6.3.8 Locations of New Occupations Joined by WALHs

It has been found that on the whole, taking both the sampled districts together, the percentage of WALHs that have migrated and settled permanently alongwith their families came to be 2.77 per cent. There were no large differences between both the districts. Whereas, in the category of ‘migrated alone’, the proportion of labour households remained 3.96 per cent in case of both the districts taken together. In Jalandhar district, 5.11 per cent workers came to be ‘migrated alone’ and it came to be 1.31 per cent in Bathinda district. This difference may be due to the presence of NRI and relatively better education level of withdrawn workers in Jalandhar district as compared to Bathinda district. The proportion of commuters turned out to be higher at 48.80 per cent as compared to the labour households working in their native villages (i.e., 44.44 per cent) taking
both the districts together. Similarly, in Jalandhar district, this percentage came to be 49.43 per cent in case of commuters and it was found to be 42.61 per cent related to working in their native villages, whereas, this proportion came to be more or less same, i.e., 48.68 per cent for ‘working in native villages’ and 47.36 per cent in case of ‘commuters’ in Bathinda district.

6.3.9 Different Occupations Adopted by Commuters

The analysis of data related to both the districts taken together shows that the higher proportion of workers (37.09 per cent) was found to be working as commuters in ‘masons and helpers to mason’ category which indicated the increasing derived demand for factors of production as the demand for new houses and other construction activities were on rise in sampled area. The data also highlight that the proportion of commuters as ‘industrial labourers’ to the total commuters was found to be 28.22 per cent followed by 16.93 per cent working as employees in ‘Government/semi Government service’ category.

6.3.10 Financial Help Taken by WALHs

The results show that in Bathinda as well as in Jalandhar districts, ‘relatives and friends’ remained the major source among all formal and informal sources of credit (7.89 per cent & 10.22 per cent, respectively). Further, the second major source of credit in Bathinda district was found to be ‘money lenders’ (6.57 per cent), whereas, it remained ‘commercial banks’ (5.68 per cent) in Jalandhar district. The percentage share of ‘money lenders’ also accounted for 5.11 per cent in Jalandhar district. While in case of both the districts taken together, ‘relatives and friends’ (9.52 per cent) remained the highest source of credit followed by ‘money lenders’ (5.55 per cent) and
‘commercial banks’ accounted for 4.36 per cent only. Whereas, the percentage share of ‘others’ and ‘cooperative societies’ came to be very low, i.e., 1.18 per cent and 0.79 per cent, respectively.

Main reasons behind this outcome remained the weak economic status of withdrawn households as most of them did not possess any collateral asset required for security for taking loan from commercial banks as well as cooperative societies. Besides, they did not complete the terms of credit due to lack of knowledge and adequate documents. Moreover, the terms of credit found to be complex mainly for less educated or illiterate labour households. Hence, they preferred to seek help from their ‘relatives and friends’.

6.3.11 Category-wise Growth Rates

The growth rate of real income was found to be the highest in case of ‘Government/semi Government service’ category among all categories of employment, whereas, it came to be either negative or less than one per cent related to ‘agricultural labour’ category.

6.3.12 Income Before and After Occupational Change

Related to income before and after occupational change, taking both the districts together, this figure came to be Rs 1546.82 before occupational change and Rs 2591.56 after occupational change. This change showed good increase in income while getting the occupation changed but there were also some of the cases of withdrawn workers who changed their occupation and got no money increased and the occupational change was adopted due to the reasons like fixed hours of working, more independence and no social stigma of caste, etc. in non-agricultural occupations.
6.3.13 Major Attributes of Withdrawn Agricultural Labour

As regards to the age at the time of occupational change, the results reveal that in overall, the percentage of withdrawn workers (75.79 per cent) was found the highest in the age group of 20 to 30 years than that of other age groups, i.e., 14 to 20 years (1.98 per cent), 30-40 years (21.82 per cent), and 40 years & above (0.39 per cent). It indicates that the workers belonging to 20 to 30 years age group were relatively more energetic, active and capable of taking bold decisions. Further, they were compelled to increase their income source to meet the rising expenses because of the responsibilities for their families, i.e., health care, education, etc. Besides, a higher percentage of withdrawn workers in 20 to 30 years age group in the sampled villages which were located nearby the major cities, i.e., Bathinda and Jalandhar was found because of relatively better information to them regarding employment opportunities than the workers residing in far away places from the cities. The presence of NRI in Jalandhar district was also found to be a stimulating factor in providing information and exposure to new occupations to this age group, which was negligible in Bathinda district. Moreover, the nearby market areas were also observed inspiring this age group to change their occupation.

Regarding caste-wise division, it was found that more than 90.00 per cent labour households belonged to SCs in both the districts taken together.

Related to marital status, it was found that 96.05 per cent and 92.61 per cent of the total workers found to be married in Bathinda and Jalandhar districts, respectively. Analysis of data concludes that increasing needs of the families forced married agricultural workers to
find new sources of higher paying occupations.

Regarding education, data reveal that there remained more withdrawn literate workers in Jalandhar district (71.03 per cent) as compared to Bathinda district (46.06 per cent). The difference of literacy between both the districts brought about changes in proportion of occupational change of agricultural labour in both the districts, which remained 94.76 per cent in Jalandhar district and 77.44 per cent in Bathinda district. It shows direct relationship between literacy and occupational change of agriculture labour as proved by statistical test of correlation with the exception of Phillaur sub-division. Moreover, there were some of the workers who had graduation/post graduation or were having some professional degrees and/or diplomas in Jalandhar district but not even a single such worker was found to be there in Bathinda district. It was also found that the presence of graduate/post graduate/professional degree holders in Jalandhar district added in higher ratio of workers to be in Government/semi Government service (15.34 per cent) as compared to that of in Bathinda district (5.26 per cent). The study also highlights that a major proportion (36.50 per cent in total) of withdrawn workers was illiterate and around 45.00 per cent gained education level up to 8th class only, thereby indicating that the condition of withdrawn labour households was not good enough to attain higher education and thereby better paying jobs.

Further, as regards to source of information of new occupation, the results reveal that taking both the districts together, the sources of information, i.e., ‘relatives’ and ‘friends’ emerged as the highest among all sources related to provide information to the labour households about new occupations (52.38 per cent and 30.95 per
cent, respectively), whereas, all other sources, i.e., ‘newspapers’, ‘employment exchange offices’ and ‘others’ (special radio & television programs, accidental meeting with some successful persons, etc.) were found giving information to 6.74 per cent, 5.15 per cent and 4.76 per cent of the total labour households, respectively. The data symbolize that a low literacy level pushed the sampled agricultural labour households to have information about new occupations from ‘relatives’ and ‘friends’. Similarly, it had also been found that the sampled villages selected for the study, which were relatively located nearby district headquarters, any other city, market area, etc. were found to be taking information from ‘newspapers’.

In case of years of occupational change, the data highlight that the proportion of total sampled WALHs who joined the non-agricultural occupations during 1990 to 1995 was found to be 28.57 per cent, whereas, it came to be the highest at 40.87 per cent in 1995 to 2000 and it turned out to be 30.55 per cent during 2000 to 2005. The analysis of data shows that occupational change remained at its peak level in mid-nineties in relatively developed places (Jalandhar district), whereas, it was found to be substantial during 2000 to 2005 in moderately less developed places (Bathinda district).

6.4 Main Conclusions

The main conclusions of the study are as follows:

The tilt of most of the WALHs (nearly 56.00 per cent) towards the categories of employment, i.e., ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ (32.14 per cent) and ‘others’ (23.41 per cent) in both the districts taken together implies the increasing casualisation of labour employment in the new occupations as compared to the old one. The reason behind adoption of the former category of occupations
was acquiring skills by experience and formal education & finance were not a prime requisite to start new occupations in the later category that is why more labourers were noticed in this category. In the new occupations, either they found higher earnings or sometimes the same wage rate. They also reported working in non-agricultural occupations even at lower wages earned than in previous occupation in the peak seasons of agriculture.

There was dearth of setting up of cottage and small-scale industry in both the districts. A small proportion of total withdrawn workers (8.73 per cent on the whole) who were having their own pieces of land or some other assets alongwith some sort of entrepreneurial skills, were only able to start with ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ in both the districts. Though, Jalandhar district provided better employment opportunities in ‘industrial sector’ than Bathinda district. Moreover, 36.50 per cent of the total sampled withdrawn workers were illiterate, due to which they could not get better wage earning jobs in both the districts taken collectively.

Regarding structure of employment at places located nearby and away from city, results reveal that ‘independent occupations started without financial help’ in both the cases (places located nearby and away from city) were prone to be adopted by maximum number of withdrawn workers but nearby cities and market areas served as a better stimulant. Apart from it, around one fourth of the total workers were found to be employed in ‘industrial sector’ category of employment at places located nearby the city as major industry in Bathinda and Jalandhar districts was mainly concentrated only in or around these cities, which provided opportunities of employment to the WALHs. Though a good proportion of workers (around one fifth)
was also found engaged in industrial sector at places located away from the city also but these households were found working mostly in small/medium units of production, like kilns, rice shellers, flour mills, etc. The higher proportion of workers in ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’ in nearby places as compared to the places located away from the city came due to relatively a higher literacy rate of workers (located nearby the city), availability of opportunity of exposure and training in new occupations in this category and relatively better knowledge about credit from formal sources, etc. Similarly, relatively a higher proportion of labourers in ‘Government/semi Government services’ at places located nearby the city might be due to comparatively a higher literacy rate of the withdrawn workers in these places. Further, most of them were belonging to SC (M & V)/SC (R & O), and Government provided them a reserved quota in Government and semi Government recruitment schemes.

The category of employment, i.e., ‘others’ had been adopted by lesser number of labour households in nearby places as compared to the far off places from the city. The reasons behind it were, firstly, the wages were found to be relatively lower in this category as compared to most of the other categories of employment. Secondly, the labour households found employment opportunities in other categories of employment as they were easily available at places located nearby the city. Thirdly, due to the weak financial status of withdrawn labour households, their illiteracy, lack of awareness as well as scarce collateral assets and lack of decision making power had pushed them towards ‘others’ category of employment at places located away from the city.
It is concluded that a higher literacy ratio, industrial set up and migration (out-migrants), etc. had direct relationship with the occupational change of agricultural labour. This change remained higher in Jalandhar district (94.76 per cent) as compared to Bathinda district (77.44 per cent) due to relatively better position of the former district in the context of these variables than the later one. Further, in each district, this change remained stimulant to nearby cities.

There remained major role of push factors ('low rate of wages', seasonal unemployment', 'problem of regular payment', etc.) behind the occupational change of local agricultural labour. Further, it has also been found that due to the development of capitalistic type of relations in Punjab agriculture, free wage worker came into existence; an important feature of capitalism. This increased awareness and exposure was evident even among the so called lower caste agricultural labourers. They started daring oppositions to all those prevailing situations, which their elders had accepted. So, due to the increased awareness in the agricultural labourers' families, mainly the new generation preferred to withdraw from the ancestral occupation and shifted to the other occupations. For this occupational change some pull factors (worker education and reservation in Government sector, etc.) also contributed in this change but they were more stimulating in Jalandhar district as compared to Bathinda district. Since the literacy rate of labourers in the former district (71.03 per cent) was observed more than that of labourers in later district (46.06 per cent).

Besides, the withdrawn workers who were residing at places located nearby the cities had relatively better understating of low rate of wages due to the influx of migratory labour and mechanization of
agriculture, etc. than those who were from places located away from the same cities. Further, they were aware of availability of more opportunities and information of non-agricultural occupations at their places (located nearby the cities).

Regarding the adoption of several types of ‘independent occupations started taking financial help’, there has been main concentration of withdrawn households towards ‘cycle/scooter workshops’ followed by ‘others’ category of occupations and the reason was easy access to both the occupations in village economy. Moreover, they can be started with meager finance that was manageable by the sampled withdrawn households.

As regards to the types of ‘independent occupations started without financial help’, it has been found that behind adoption of ‘painters/tailors/barbers’ and ‘others’ categories of occupations the workers in young age preferred the less tiring independent jobs as they were found to be reluctant to join jobs, which required physical hard work. Rest of the categories of occupations, i.e., ‘masons’ and ‘hand pump installation and well digging’ require relatively hard work, more finance and experience. The WALHs were weak in these areas due to which they were found to be in a lower proportion in these categories of occupations.

There were found no large differences between both the districts in proportion of migrated withdrawn families. Whereas, in the category of migrated alone, the proportion of labour households that ‘migrated alone’ remained higher (5.11 per cent) in Jalandhar district than that of in Bathinda district (1.31 per cent). This difference were due to the prevalence of NRI, better transport system and relatively better education level of withdrawn labourers in Jalandhar district as
compared to that of Bathinda district.

It was important to know about the different occupations adopted by commuters as the analysis of this sort of segregation of occupations indicates the relative demand for each occupation outside the native village in rural village. A higher proportion of commuters (48.80 per cent) as compared to the withdrawn labour households working in their native villages (i.e., 44.44 per cent) on the whole, indicate that there weren’t adequate avenues of employment in non-agriculture sector, in the native villages for the withdrawn labour because of which they were found to be working outside their native villages. Further, the low percentage share (2.77 per cent in totality) of WALHs that migrated and settled permanently alongwith their families faced the lack of finance to settle down outside their villages, moreover, they had to take care of their old parents residing behind in the villages. Similarly, the low proportion of withdrawn labour that ‘migrated alone’ also indicated the lack of exposure and finance with them.

A higher proportion of commuters (37.09 per cent) working as ‘masons and helpers to mason’ category highlight the demand for factors of production as the demand for new houses and other construction activities were on rise in sampled area.

The withdrawn labour households could not satisfy the terms of credit to get credit from formal sources due to lack of knowledge, inadequate documents and weak economic status, hence, they preferred to seek help from their ‘relatives and friends’.

The ‘Government/semi Government service’ category got the highest rate of growth of real income being a part of organised sector and ‘agricultural labour’ category being a part of unorganised sector
and mainly adversely affected by ‘seasonal unemployment’ in ‘agriculture sector’ achieved lower rate of growth.

There was increase in income after occupational change of agricultural labour on an average basis but in some of the cases of withdrawn workers, this income did not increase and they continued their withdrawal from agriculture sector due to some other reasons like relatively fixed hours of work, more independence in non-agricultural occupations, etc.

It is concluded that education level, age at the time of occupational change, marital status and caste (SCs) of withdrawn agricultural labourers remained major attributes during their occupational change. Out of these, education attained by them served as pull factor. While age at the time of occupational change and marital status of workers worked as push factors. Last but not the least, caste factor (stigma) also remained as push factor for withdrawn workers belonging to remote areas though observed declining with the passage of time, whereas, it was found to be negligible in the areas nearby cities.

Further, as regarding to source of information of new occupation, the results reveal that the sources of information, i.e., ‘relatives’ and ‘friends’ emerged as the highest among all sources related to provide information to the labour households about new occupations.

Furthermore, it is ascertained that the occupational change had begun in 1980’s and it remained at its peak level in mid-nineties, whereas, in relatively developed places it was at its fascination in early 1990s and in moderately less developed places it was found to be good during 2000 to 2005.
6.5 Suggestions

Since there is no more increased intake of labour in agriculture sector and the distressed labour is compelled to leave it. There is need to create new avenues of employment either in agriculture sector itself by the way of diversification or in non-agricultural sector in rural areas. Occupations related to rural artisans should be reestablished and/or promoted with the help of Government and its institutions as with the entry of capitalist relations in village economy, the occupations of these artisans almost have been destroyed due to competition of their products with the products of large/foreign big companies. It was also noted in the study that a substantial section of artisans joined as agricultural labourers after the failure of their business, e.g., shoe making, weaving, earthen pottering, etc.

In addition, there should be development of cottage and small scale industries. These cottage and small scale units based on agricultural products should be promoted providing them with the required equipment and training. These units would develop both backward and forward linkages in rural areas. The government should help them in getting financial assistance from various financial institutions at low interest rates.

Besides, the government should make the procedure and terms of credit, simple and approachable for illiterate and/or less educated households as well as for the development of production units.

The government should concentrate on generating employment opportunities alongwith keeping proper control on private units for better working conditions of labour employment in the economy, even though Government of India had adopted the liberalization/privatization policy.
Further, the schemes like National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)-2005, Prime Minister’s Rozgar Yojana (PMRY)-1993, Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SJGSY)-1999, Jawahar Gram Smriddhi Yojana (JGSY)-1999, etc., should be implemented effectively so that the poor labour households can get employment for maximum days in a year.

Furthermore, there should be better schooling for their children at village level at affordable costs so that the labour households will have more employment opportunities in future.