7.1 SUMMARY

The central theme of this work is to study the occupational mobility and pattern of socio-economic change in rural areas of the Hajo Block. Occupational mobility is a socio-economic process generated by urbanization and industrialization acting as a pull factor on the one hand and pressure of population on agricultural land leading to high man-land ratio combined with lack of employment opportunities in the rural areas acting as push factor on the other.

The detailed analysis of the above problem made in the foregoing chapters are summarized as follows:

The first chapter deals with the introduction to the work comprising the statement of the problem, significance, objectives, methodology and a brief overview of the relevant literature. The whole work is done by empirical-inductive approach combined with hypothetico-deductive method taking Gaon Panchyats as the spatial units of the study.

The second chapter deals with the geographical background of the study area, which is divided into three physiographic divisions. These are (i) The Built-up Plain interspersed with swamps and bills in the north, (ii) The Active Flood Plain in the south and (iii) The Charlands in the middle of the Brahmaputra. The river Brahmaputra flows through the southern boundary. The Puthimari and the Sessa rivers flow through the northern and southern part of the study region.
The climate of the region is similar to that of the other parts of the Lower Brahmaputra Valley and is characterized by the hot moist summer and cool dry winter. The monsoon climate has a profound effect on the agricultural activities of the region with a heavy summer rainfall and scanty winter downpour.

The chapter three deals with the general landuse pattern comprising nine standard categories. All the categories of landuse pattern are not equally distributed all over the block. The variation is caused due to the physical as well as the socio-economic factors. During the period 1971 and 1991, there has been a significant change in all the eight categories except the category of ‘fallow land other than current fallows’. There is increase in the category of forest land, land put-to non-agricultural uses and net sown area, while decrease has been observed in the categories of barren and uncultivable land, permanent pastures and grazing land, land under miscellaneous tree crops and groves not included in net area sown, cultivable waste land and current fallow land. Most significant feature is that the area under forest cover is too meager (1.72 per cent) to maintain the ecological balance of the region. Remarkable changes have occurred in the category of net areas sown, which increased from 40.62 per cent in 1971 to 52.86 percent in 1991 recording 12.24 per cent increase. It is most significant that in spite of higher percentage of net sown area the agricultural land per capita is only 0.12 hectare due to the high density of rural population (453 persons per sq.km) engaged in agriculture causing tremendous pressure of population on agricultural land. Another salient characteristics is that, instead of high pressure of rural population on agricultural land, the area sown more than once has been decreased due to the occupational mobility of large number of primary worker (19.3 per cent) from agriculture to non-agricultural economic activities.
The analysis made in the chapter four reveals that the landholding structure witnesses persistent change during 1971-91. The total number of operational holdings and operational areas increased by 51.76 per cent and 30.13 per cent respectively within this period, which, in other words, reveals that the study area has been experiencing remarkable increase in both number and area of operational holdings. Higher number of operational holding is found in the Panchayats having higher density of rural population while least change is observed in the panchayats with lower density of rural population. Higher increase of areas under operational holdings is observed in the areas f extensive wetlands due to impact of human interference. Sub-marginal, marginal and small holdings increased by 55.29 per cent, 38.18 per cent and 25.31 per cent respectively while medium holding and big-holdings decrease by 10.43 per cent and 42.54 per cent respectively. The region experiences an overall spatio-temporal change in the average sizes of all categories of land holdings including the average sizes of plots.

The excessive dependence of large number of working population on agriculture leads to the fragmentation of land holdings as well as scattering of plots to a minimal size. The decline in the average size of holding and the increase in the number of fragmented plots are due to the impact of rapid growth of population and the system of generational sub-division and fragmentation of holdings. More than 85 per cent of the plots are of less than 0.5 hectares size and only 2.63 per cent are of more than 4-hectare size. The percentage of landholding with one or two fragmented plots is high and with three or four fragments is low. Per farm fragmentation is lower in lower size group of holdings and higher in higher size group of holdings whereas per hectare fragmentation is higher in lower size group and lower in higher size group
of holdings. Out of the total population of the block, scheduled castes account for 9.75 per cent and scheduled tribes only 1.38 per cent. A sizeable number of immigrant population i.e. to the extent of 14.81 per cent is a significant demographic feature of the study area. The remaining 85.19 per cent are indigenous, but out of this 83.81 per cent are non-tribal indigenous people who have a dominant role in the politico-cultural as well as in the socio-economic milieu of the Hajo Development Block. The decadal growth rate during 1971-91 was as high as 47.18 per cent. Influx of immigrant peasants from Bangladesh coupled with the inflow of native people in search of secondary occupations in the silk industry of greater Sualkuchi area are some of the important factors contributing to the rapid growth rate of population in the Hajo Block. Hajo Block exhibits limited diversity in respect of population composition. The locational diversity can be observed to some extent in the case of immigrant people who concentrate in the riverine tracts of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries. Scheduled caste people are mostly found in the areas near to swamps, rivers and beels where fishes are found. On the other hand, indigenous non-tribal and scheduled tribe people are concentrated in the built-up areas connected with better transport network. The region has only two religious groups – the Hindu and the Muslim but their language is same. Culturally there are some distinctions not only between the Hindu and the Muslim, but also between the indigenous tribal (though in small number) and indigenous non-tribal. The block as a whole is lagging behind in respect of literacy and education which is found to be only 47.38 per cent in 1991. Hajo Block has undergone considerable densification (23.38 per cent) during 1971-91. The unprecedented densification took place in the Pub Bongshar No. 1 (48.24 per cent) due to the
immigration of large number of secondary workers from the neighbouring districts to join the fast growing handlooms and textile industries.

The total work participation rate in the study region is found to be 32.75 per cent. The decrease of work participation rate in the primary sector from 81.50 per cent in 1971 to 61.77 per cent in 1991 reveals that the region has experienced a high degree of occupational mobility within these two decades. However, there is a glaring gender disparity in the work participation rate as the female work participation rate is only 18.68 per cent against the male work participation rate of 45.65 per cent in 1991. Spatial variation in work participation rate reveals that the rate is found to be low in the Panchayats having higher percentage of Muslim and scheduled caste population. Work participation rate is found to be higher in the Panchayats predominantly inhabited by the indigenous Hindu community and it is more so in the areas of higher percentage of tribal population.

A sizeable number of workers accounting for 19.73 per cent have left agriculture and its allied activities and shifted to either secondary or tertiary activities as a result of which workers in the primary sector decreased from 81.50 per cent in 1971 to 61.77 per cent in 1991. On the other hand, the secondary work force increased from 5.22 per cent in 1971 to 14.87 per cent in 1991. The working force in tertiary sector also increased from 13.28 per cent in 1971 to 23.36 per cent in 1991. The resulting increases are 9.65 per cent and 10.08 per cent in secondary and tertiary occupations respectively. Again the Hajo Block witnesses a glaring spatial disparity in the distribution of all categories of workers. The percentage of primary worker is highest in Ramdia No. 2 (83.77 per cent) and lowest in Pub Bongshar No. 1 (24.20 per cent). The worker engaged in secondary occupation in Pub Bongshar No. 1 is as high
as 58.93 per cent, whereas it is only 2.27 per cent in Ramdia No. 2. The real cause lying behind this fact is that a large number of working population in Pub Bongshar No. 1 have been engaged in handloom and weaving industry pertaining to pat and muga silk which have increased the percentage of secondary workers to a great extent. The multidimensional occupational avenues of tertiary occupation act as pull factors for vertical mobility of work force. Pub Bongshar No. 2 ranks first regarding the percentage of tertiary workers which is 36.48 and Ramdia No. 2 ranks lowest with only 13.96 per cent.

The highest percentage of volume of change in occupational structure have been observed in Pub Bongshar No. 1 (53.47 per cent) which is more dynamic. Dynamic changes are found in the Pachim Bongshar Panchayat (20.40 per cent) and the Pub Bongshar No. 2 Panchayat (25.54 per cent). Semi dynamic changes have been observed in the three panchayats viz. the Hajo No. 1 Panchayat (10.23 per cent), the Hajo No. 2 Panchayat (15.15 per cent) and the Ramdia No. 1 Panchayat (14.45 per cent). Least dynamic change has been observed in the Ramdia No. 2 Panchayat where the volume of change has been found to be only 6.35 per cent.

The foregoing analysis also reveals that (i) the highest concentration of primary worker is found in Ramdia No. 2 (83.77 per cent) which is predominantly inhabited by the Muslim immigrant people; (ii) the highest concentration of secondary worker is found in Pub Bongshar No. 1 (41.74 per cent). The second cluster of concentration is found in the Pachim Bongshar (20.66 per cent) and Ramdia No. 1 (11.98 per cent) panchayat; (iii) the highest concentration of tertiary worker is found in the Pub Bongshar No. 2 panchayat (23.67 per cent) followed by Hajo No. 2 (23.21 per cent) and Pachim Bongshar (16.81 per cent). The flourishing pat and muga silk
industry of Bongshar-Sualkuchi area provides remunerative earning to the factory owners as well as workers and weavers. As a result, highest concentration of this category of worker is found in the Pub-Bongshar No. 1 Panchayat. Being nearness to Guwahati city and well developed transport network, rapid growth of trade and commerce resulting in vertical mobility of occupation have caused the highest concentration of tertiary workers in the Pub-Bongshr No. 2 Panchayat.

So far sectoral distribution of working population is concerned, the forging analysis reveals a marked variation in spatio-temporal dimension. It is observed that as high as 61.77 per cent of the total workers in the block are engaged in primary sector against 14.87 per cent in the secondary and 23.36 per cent in the tertiary sector. Again, out of the total working population of the block, 50.13 per cent are cultivators, 10.42 per cent are agricultural labourers, 1.16 per cent are engaged in livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantation, orchards and allied activities and only 0.06 per cent are engaged in mining and quarrying. Among the secondary workers, 10.7 per cent workers are absorbed in manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairing in the household industry while a mere 2.36 per cent are engaged in manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairing. However, only 1.81 per cent workers are engaged in construction. Out of the total working population, 3.01 per cent are engaged in transport, communication and storage, 5.41 per cent in trade and commerce, while other services provide employment 14.94 per cent of the workers.

The percentage of primary workers decreases from 81.50 in 1971 to 61.77 in 1991, the decrease being 19.73 per cent and secondary worker increased from 5.22 per cent in 1971 to 14.87 per cent in 1991, the increase being 9.65 per cent. Again tertiary workers have increased significantly from 13.28 per cent in 1971 to 23.36 per cent in
1991, the increase being as high as 10.08 per cent within the two decades. Primary workers dominate the Ramdia No.2 (83.77 per cent), Hajo No.1 (74.28 per cent), and Ramdia No.1 (70.04 per cent) panchayats. Secondary workers dominate the Pub Bongshar No.1 (58.93 per cent) panchayat. Although prevalence of tertiary workers is not observed in any panchayat, the Pub Bongshar No. 2 (36.48 per cent) and Hajo No.2 (31.15 per cent) panchayats witness the existence of significant percentages of tertiary workers.

The whole process of occupational mobility is guided by two factors – push factor and pull factor. With very limited resources, the working capacity of only 32.75 per cent workers who have to bear the burden of livelihood for 67.25 per cent non-working and dependent people is not at all adequate to push the economy upwards in order to get rid of chronic poverty and stagnation. Out of bare necessity of money, large number of rural people are compelled to be absorbed in non-agricultural activities whatever available in the neighbouring towns or elsewhere. Hard work and less income have compelled the rural mass to switch over to the economic activities other than the primary activity. Out of great distress, the increasing number of working population do a variety of works in the neighbouring towns or elsewhere which may provide them an assured monthly income. The whole process of such mobility is guided either by vertical mobility when people become educated or by horizontal mobility when people do varieties of low-grade non-agricultural works as they do not get proper education. Urban centers as well as industries are ready to pull them by offering job opportunities. The principal shift has been from agriculture and fishing towards manual labour, largely unskilled, in connection with construction and
industry. Desire for better standard of living is also affecting occupational mobility of agricultural population.

The foregoing study also reveals the following facts:

(i) The highest numbers of workers (69.19 per cent) engaged in primary occupation belong to the age group of 45-59 years.

(ii) The highest percentage (39.05) of secondary workers has been found in the age group of 30-44 years followed by the age group of 15-29 years, where 34.76 per cent of the total workers have been employed.

(iii) The highest percentage of workers in the tertiary occupation representing 40.91 is found in the age group of 30-44 years followed by the age group of 45-59 years and 15-29 years where 31.62 per cent and 20.67 per cent tertiary workers are found.

High growth rate of rural population ultimately leads to the acute scarcity of arable land during 1971-91. As a result, the physiological density remarkably increased from 563 in 1971 to 744 in 1991. But it is most encouraging to note that the ongoing process of occupational mobility significantly decreases the agricultural density from 110 in 1971 to 97 in 1991. Though there should have been a high intensity of cropping in the study area as a result of high density of total rural population (453 per square kilometer), it is not found to be high at the expected level due to the shift of some of agricultural workers to non-agricultural jobs. The statistical analysis made to test the relationship between the density of rural population and intensity of cropping also proves that there is no significant correlation between the density of rural population and intensity of cropping due to the occupational shift of a large number of agricultural workers from primary to secondary or tertiary occupation.
occupation. The analysis further reveals that there is a negative correlation between the percentage of primary workers and that of the secondary workers and also the percentage of workers in the primary sector is negatively correlated with that of the tertiary sector.

So the fourth hypothesis postulated on the assumption that the workers in the primary sector have been pressed by the scarcity of land to join either in the secondary or the tertiary sector provided they get better opportunities of earning livelihood leading to the decrease of them in the former and increase in the later two, has been found to be valid.

The present study also reveals that the intergenerational occupational mobility is highly significant. More than 81 per cent of the total working population in the first generation (grandfather) were engaged in agriculture and its allied activities, which decreased to only 41.57 per cent in the third generation (grandson). So, there has been a generational decrease (39.93 per cent) of primary workers during the period 1971 to 1991. On the contrary, the numbers of secondary workers have been increased from 5.22 per cent in the first generation to 15.49 per cent in the third generation. Likewise, the number of tertiary workers increased from 13.28 per cent in the first generation to 42.94 per cent in the third generation, the degree of increases being 10.27 per cent and 29.66 per cent in secondary and tertiary sector respectively. Higher education in the third generation leads to vertical mobility, absorbing the people in higher level jobs, while less educated people are influenced by the horizontal mobility as more and more of them tend to join the petty jobs in order to achieve assured wage or salary. Such out-ability from the father’s traditional occupation to other categories of occupation leads to rural transformation in the socio-economic and cultural spheres. Horizontal
mobility is higher in the Pub Bongshar No.1 panchayat (47.41 per cent), which is developed in respect of silk industry. Vertical mobility is higher in the Pub Bongshar No. 2 (40.53 per cent) and Hajo No. 2 (37.65 per cent) which are nearest to the Guwahati city.

The foregoing study identifies the intra-regional variation in spatial distribution of social amenities, at panchayat level. On the basis of the existing social amenities levels of development have been ascertained. Some panchayats which are occupationally more dynamics viz. Pub Bongshar No.1, Pub Bongshar No. 2, Hajo No.2, Ramdia No. 1 and Hajo No. 1 are availing of more social amenities.

Among the educational amenities, all the degree colleges are also located within the panchayats of Hajo No.1, Hajo No.2 and Pub Bongshar No.1. However, lower categories of educational amenities are more or less uniformly distributed in all the panchayats of the block. Higher categories of healthcare amenities are either found in the Panchayats having more non-agricultural population or in the panchayats where urban centers are located. Most of the villages are provided with pure drinking water. But percentage of village having this facility is more in the occupationally dynamic panchayats. Areas with less developed transport and communication system with less social amenities are identified with little occupational mobility. It is interesting to observe that most of the households, even those of the poor are electrified in the panchayats having more occupational mobility of the workers. The panchayats having more agricultural population with less occupational mobility are lacking in the consumption of electricity, which is one of the prime indicators of general economic development.
7.2 CONCLUSION

The indepth study on Occupational Mobility and Pattern of Socio-Economic Change in the Rural Areas of Hajo Block made in the foregoing chapters is concluded with the following major findings, suggestions and generalization.

7.2.1 Major Findings

(1) In spite of large-scale occupational mobility from primary to secondary and tertiary occupation, the net area sown had increased from 40.62 per cent in 1971 to 52.84 per cent in 1991 as a result of higher growth of population.

(2) Per capita agricultural land was as low as 0.17 hectare in 1971, which had further decreased to 0.12 hectare in 1991 as a result of high density of rural population depending mostly on agriculture. This finding proves the validity of the first hypothesis.

(3) In consequence of the cause of the above finding No. 2, the study area has been experiencing remarkable increase in the number of operational holdings during 1971-91 and also in area of operational holdings in some of the panchayats in which there were wasteland lying vacant earlier and also in those panchayats where there had been consolidation of holding as a result of out-migration of some of the members of a family.

(4) However, it is interesting to find that in some of the panchayats in which there were wet land lying vacant earlier and also in those panchayats where there has been consolidation of holding as a result of out migration of some of the family members, the area of operational holding has slightly increased as a special case which would again decrease in the subsequent generation due to the increasing number of family members.

(5) More than 85 per cent of the fragmented plots are of less than 0.5 hectare. Only 2.63 per cent of the plots are of more than 4 hectare size.
(6) Out of the total population of the block, scheduled castes account for 9.75 per cent, scheduled tribes only 1.38 per cent and immigrants 14.81 per cent. Both scheduled caste and immigrant people have a significant role in the dynamics of its rural transformation.

(7) It is most encouraging to note that the agricultural density of the study region has remarkably decreased from 110 in 1971 to 97 in 1991. Accountable decrease of primary workers (19.73 per cent) in one hand and consequent increases of secondary (9.65 per cent) and tertiary workers (10.08 per cent) on the other resulted in the decrease of agricultural density. This occupational shift resulted in the decrease of intensity of cropping from 155 per cent in 1971 to 136 per cent in 1991. On the other hand the marked increase of physiological density from 563 in 1971 to 744 in 1991 is the result of high growth rate of rural population over time.

(8) The highest percentage of workers (65.19) engaged in the primary occupation belongs to the age group of 45-59, while the highest percentage of workers in secondary (39.05) and tertiary (40.91) sectors have been found in the age group of 30-44 years.

(9) The region has experienced a high degree of occupational mobility as a result of which a sizeable number of workers accounting for 19.73 per cent have left agriculture and its allied activities and shifted to either secondary or tertiary occupations. This is because of the fact that high pressure of population on agricultural land in the region where there is still the prevalence of traditional agriculture compels the surplus primary workers to be absorbed in occupations other than cultivation leading to occupational mobility of the workers. Thus the fifth hypothesis is verified to be valid.

(10) The whole process of occupational mobility is guided by two factors – push factor and pull factor. Scarcity of arable land, hard work and less income, insecure and inadequate yield, surplus work force in the primary sector, chronic poverty and stagnation compel the cultivating people to switch over to the economic activities other than primary sector. On the other hand secured and remunerative
wage and salary with plenty of leisure facility pull more and more people to secondary and tertiary occupation in the recent past. This finding validates the fourth hypothesis.

(11) The process of occupational mobility is again influenced either by horizontal mobility when workers are lacking in education and skill to do a variety of low grade works in the secondary or tertiary sectors or by vertical mobility, when people are educated, to do higher level jobs in the government and non-government institutions.

(12) A good number of the primary workers, even illiterate, left agriculture and joined the secondary sector as carpenter, weaver and designer in the silk industry which resulted in a significant negative correlation between the percentage of primary workers and the percentage of secondary workers. On the other hand, all the workers are not at all eligible to get jobs in the tertiary sector due to lack of proper education and skill. However, new generation after getting proper education, directly gets into the tertiary sector without having their any previous attachment with the primary occupation. So it bears poor negative correlation between primary worker with that of tertiary worker.

(13) Intergenerational occupational mobility reveals that workers in the primary sector declined by 39.93 per cent while those in the secondary and tertiary sectors increased by 10.27 per cent and 29.66 per cent respectively from the first to the third generation.

(14) As a result of large-scale occupational mobility, intensity of cropping decreased from 155 per cent to 136 per cent during the reporting period. This finding proves the second hypothesis.
206

(15) Dynamic vertical mobility from the primary to the tertiary jobs are generally found in those areas where the educational level is high. Thus education causes vertical mobility, which in turn creates opportunities and family resources to pull workers from the farm toward more lucrative tertiary jobs. This finding clearly shows that the third hypothesis is true.

(16) Significant transformation in the provisions of modern amenities and services had taken place in the areas where the degree of occupational mobility is higher, whereas it is comparatively less significant in the occupationally less mobile areas during 1971-91. Thus the sixth hypothesis is found to be valid.

7.2.2 SUGGESTIONS

1. As more than 85 per cent of the operational holdings in the study region are of sub-marginal and small sizes, the existing cropping pattern with dominance of rice, which is not economically viable should be replaced by alternative cropping pattern like that of either inter-cropping with coconut, black pepper, betel-leaf, ginger, turmeric, pineapple etc. which may make these marginal and small holdings economically more viable or pisciculture, poultry farming, horticulture and vegetable gardening etc. for better agricultural landuse and management.

2. In order to check further subdivision and fragmentation of agricultural land holding, law of inheritance should be revived in such way that non-cultivating inheritors of the family are debarred from owning the equal shares of land with the cultivating inheritors of land.

3. The educated unemployed youth still in the rural area should be trained in innovating techniques of agriculture and also in processing the agricultural commodities to produce secondary output, transporting and selling such products in the market. The government should provide all necessary infrastructures like that of irrigation, roads, and communication, marketing facilities, credit facilities etc. to develop small scale agriculture on the basis of the above models suggested.

4. Extensive agricultural training programme should be launched in order to train up all the peasants illiterate or educated.
5. Industrial technology of *pat* and *muga* silk handloom industry should be modernized for higher output and outflow which may provide multidimensional occupational avenues to the rural people of the region which is suffering from acute scarcity of land for agriculture.

6. Lastly, well integrated strategy for rural development should be formulated to develop the rural economy in the line suggested above.

It may be generalized that workers in the primary sector specially agriculture are immobile unless they do not get opportunities for alternative occupations on the one hand and the primary workers who get opportunity for alternative jobs are mobile, on the other and more is their mobility, the more is the socio-economic transformation in the rural areas. In the case of Hajo Block, there has been horizontal mobility of the less educated primary workers to alternative jobs, whereas there has been vertical mobility of the educated persons, both of which have brought spectacular on going process of transformation in the rural areas during the last two decades at the cost of agriculture requiring an integrated rural development programme including agricultural development for sustainability of such a process.