Chapter 1:
Introduction

1.1 The research problem

The most important differentiation in human societies is based on gender difference, that is, the biological distinction between men and women. There is some sort of identified division of labour based on gender in all types of societies. Mair (1999) is of the opinion that the biological division of humans into males and females is the basis of the most elementary social stratification everywhere. Gender is defined in the context of socially and culturally accepted behaviour and relations between male and female. In the traditional societies, the gender roles are more rigid as compared to the modern industrial societies. The gender roles also vary with reference to castes and classes, that is, the socio-economic strata of the society.

Social or, more specifically, gender division of labour is an important aspect of human social organization. The knowledge of how work is distributed between men and women in a particular society yields insights, among other things, into its [i] quotidian life, [ii] time use and time budgets, [iii] patterns of work and leisure, and [iv] social inequalities.

Anthropologists propose that historically men and women have different roles because of their biological differences. In the opinion of functionalists in sociology smooth functioning of the family and its continuity necessitates the assignment of different roles to men and women. This results in social differentiation. As women bear children, they were given the role of socializing the offspring in addition to home making. Consequently, the role of bread winning for the family was given to men.

Conflict sociologists, on the other hand, assert that confinement of women to domestic roles and their subordination were due to the emergence of private property. As men were engaged in economic activities, they became property owners. As a result, they dominated women by depriving them of economic independence and control over wealth.
The feminists argue that gender differentiation is not biological rather it is cultural. It means assignment of domestic roles for women and non domestic roles for men was not due to their biological differences. However, it was due to cultural practices and consequent pattern of socialization.

Thus, there are various viewpoints regarding gender role differentiation. Women were restricted to the roles of reproduction and home making to large extent in past societies. Men were held to be the bread winners. Men enjoyed supremacy over women, both in family and in society. Contrasting this scenario of male supremacy over status and wealth, the contribution of women to family and community has largely gone unnoticed.

Women have always significantly contributed to the economy all over the world. In older times women contributed significantly in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry etc. However, their contributions have not been properly evaluated and duly recognized. In this regard Bennholdt and Thomson write that,

> Women do two- thirds of the entire world’s work. In exchange they receive ten percent of all income and own a mere one percent of the entire world’s means of production. On the contrary, men perform one- third of the world’s work and are rewarded with ninety percent of the income and ninety one percent of means of production. (Quoted in Meis, Thomson 1988:159)

The present scenario reflects nothing different. In spite of their major share in familial and societal responsibilities, women are being treated as inferior and passive beings even now. As Rosaldo and Lamphere have maintained that,

> Everywhere we find that women are excluded from certain crucial or political activities, that their roles as wives and mothers are associated with fewer powers and prerogatives than that of the roles of men. It seems fair to say, then, that all contemporary societies are to some extent male dominated,
although the degree and expression of female subordination vary greatly.

Sexual asymmetry is presently a universal fact of human life (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974: 24-5).

As historical records show, the position of women has been culture-specific in that it varied from society to society and time to time. However, women have been accorded a lower position in all major spheres of life throughout the ages. This is well exhibited in the opinions of early thinkers. For instance, in the opinion of Aristotle female nature is afflicted with a natural defectiveness. For St. Thomas, a female is something deficient.

Similarly Hindu law maker Manu asserted that, “Since woman is weak, she is unfit to enjoy freedom.” She should always be kept under a man’s protection. Such opinions present different shades of reflections of cultural beliefs of people in general. In other words, inferiority of women is not inborn; rather it is enforced on them by cultural practices and consequent attitudes prevalent in a community.

As Beauvoir rightly puts it, “One is not born a woman, one becomes one.” (Beauvoir 1984:77) Right from the birth and throughout her formative years, society forces a woman into a place, a status and a role. Therefore, it becomes difficult for her to deviate from the pattern, which is associated with its own images and values.

In case of the traditional Indian society, the division of labour has been based on gender and age. According to the cultural norms, children particularly girls and the aged persons are not assigned any physical work that requires hard labour. But the range of activities of the adult persons is determined by gender. Generally, the adult males are assigned the roles in the productive process so that they can cater to the material needs of women, children and the aged persons. On the other hand, the women are assigned household roles like cooking of food, cleaning the house, care of children, sick and the elderly etc. Thus the division of work among men and women is not arbitrary; rather it is socially and
culturally defined. However, in actual practice this normative framework is not followed rigidly as in many situations women are involved in work which supplements productive activities. Moreover, women’s involvement in some production related work does not diminish their role in household work, because culturally only women are supposed to carry out such work in the Indian society. Thus women are burdened with dual roles- household work and economically productive work.

However, the female labour participation rates as shown in the Census of India and other governmental publications are grossly underestimated. Most of the work performed by women is invisible and it remains unaccounted. As most of the women’s work is unpaid hence it is not included under the category of ‘work’ in various reports and the proportion of women workers is always shown to be very less. The rural women who are not regularly engaged in all the agricultural activities but are involved in some work during the peak season like processing and storing of food grains etc. are not considered under the category of ‘workers’ and hence their labour participation rates are reported to be very low. The rural women play roles which are supportive to the production process, but most of such work remains unaccounted. Thus, women’s work participation in Indian villages is underestimated to a great extent.

The role of women in the production process is also overlooked or unreported because their abstaining from work is considered an important indicator of husband’s status. That is why the Jatt women are not visibly involved in the production process in the Punjab villages; rather they participate in some activities which support the production process but always remain in the background. On the other hand, women from Scheduled Castes and economically weaker sections of society are openly engaged in a number of agricultural activities due to two main reasons. Firstly, the economic compulsions force them to take up remunerative work so that they can support their families and secondly, they do not have any
fear of loosing social prestige (which they anyhow do not possess in Indian society). Thus, women of lower socio-economic strata are most overworked. They perform a dual role both in the household and in productive process, but still not much economic and social value is attached to their work. This suggests non-recognition of women’s work participation.

The present study attempts to figure out the gender division of labour in agricultural households as it exists in the Malwa Region of Punjab. In terms of research design, it is a descriptive study situated at the intersection of sociology of work, peasant studies and women studies.

It is important to grasp why such an investigation is called for. In the last few decades, Punjab has experienced radical changes in its rural economy and society under the impact of green revolution, the processes of cultural modernization, political militancy, and in-migration and out-migration. It is, therefore, imperative to discover and document what changes are taking place at the grass roots in the Punjab country side. To this end, the present study focuses on questions relating to the gender division of labour in rural Punjab. One finds few studies in this area of research. Where such studies do exist, they have an etic bias, that is, they tend to use preconceived categories to identify work and labour, ignoring people’s own conceptualizations. The present study gives due weightage to how people define labour, work, non-work and leisure. Thus, it has a pronounced social anthropological orientation.

1.2 The status of women in India

Historical records show that the position of Indian women varied through the ages. The proper understanding of the status of Indian women needs a survey of such documents that throw light in this regard. The position of women at different times is presented here under various historical periods.
The Vedic Period

The position of women during the Vedic Period was almost equal to that of men. Both boys and girls were allowed to undergo upanayana sanskara (sacred thread ceremony) which initiated them into education. Women had many other opportunities as well. As Rameshchandra Dutt writes:

Hindu women…inherited and possessed property; they took shares in sacrifices and religious duties; they attended great assemblies or state occasions; they also distinguished themselves in science and learning; they were considered as intellectual companies of their husbands, as friends and loving helpers in the journey of life of their partners, in the religious duties and the centre of their domestic bliss. Hindu wives were honoured and respected in ancient times. (Quoted in Bhushan and Parsad 1993: 12)

Rigvedic society was a free society in terms of gender relations. Women had many rights. The unmarried girls had the right to inherit their parental property. Brides were given enough freedom to select their partners. There was a provision for widow remarriage. The system of niyog was allowed for childless women. Regarding the position of women in this period, Shastri (1952) writes Rigveda does not mention anywhere the practice of the burning or burial of widows with their dead husbands

Moreover, during this period women could take part in activities like agriculture, teaching, craft etc. In history, the vedic period was a golden period in terms of status of women. They enjoyed equal status with men and freedom.

The Age of Upanishads

During the period of Upanishads, the overall status of women was not similar to that of the Vedic period. Educational and spiritual training were restricted to only upper caste girls. Women could attend public functions. Only educated brides could select their partners.
The women of lower strata were denied freedom and many opportunities which were enjoyed by women of upper strata. During this period the *purdah* system was unknown but widow remarriage was practiced. At this time women came to be valued as only wives and mothers. Their main duty was to beget children, preferably sons. Women had to bear all the sufferings that could arise for the sake of husbands, children and their families. They had no individual rights and freedom. As quoted in Aitareya Brahmana “Wife is friend, daughter is trouble and son is the beam of light in the heaven.” (Quoted in Chourasia ed. 1992:20)

**The Age of Smrithis**

The status of women in this age declined further. Women were strictly confined to the four walls of the home. Women were made to be totally dependent on men. It was laid down that she should be protected either by father or husband or son throughout her life. She was physically weak, so she was confined to domestic work only. As Manu stated,

> By a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her house. In childhood, a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent. She must not see to separate herself from her father, husband or son; by leaving them she should make both families contemptible. She must be always cheerful, clever in the management of her household affairs, careful in cleaning her utensils, and economical in expenditure. (Quoted in Sharma 1993:219)

She was believed to be impure that is why she was not allowed to read the *Vedas* and to attain spiritual knowledge. Opportunity to get education was denied. During this period, child marriages were practiced but widow remarriages were prohibited. Women had no right regarding the property. “A wife, a son, and a slave these three are declared to have no property; the wealth which they earn is (acquired) for him to whom they belong.” (ibid.)
However, the wives and mothers who were devoted and disciplined were respected. The position of women at this time was inferior in general.

**The Age of Puranas**

The position of women in this age was much similar to the age of *Smrithis*. In this period also the status of women was low. They were denied freedom and equal rights. Marriage was the prime goal of life for girls. Women’s duties as wives and mothers were regarded more important than any other duties. The daughter was believed to be a burden and source of worry. Even widows were not allowed to marry again. However, upper class women were permitted to get education which designed especially for girls, that is, they were allowed to learn music, dance, painting and the like.

**The Epic Age**

The status of women in this age was much similar to the age of *Upanishads* and *Puranas*. The women of the upper castes enjoyed certain opportunities. They were allowed to pursue education, learn some of the skills like painting; dance etc. and they had the choice to select their life partners.

The women of other castes were denied freedom and equal rights. They were generally treated as weaker sections and women were not supposed to be independent in any respect. They had just to follow in the footsteps of their husbands or their fathers or sons. The recognition of women was in the role of wives and mothers only. The life struggle of Sita and Draupadi, the well known female characters of this age clearly indicates the existence of male domination.

**The Age of Jainism and Buddhism**

This age in Indian Society is considered a little progressive one. The status of women was a little satisfactory. During this time female education and freedom for spiritual matters was encouraged. It was possible that women become missionaries and even they could
remain unmarried. Buddhism believed in self culture and restraint and allowed every individual whether man or woman who is able to develop these qualities to achieve salvation. The same is true with Jainism.

**The British Period**

This period brought some changes in the traditional Indian social structure. The significant change was in the attitude of people towards women. It gave birth to new conceptions of social justice and human rights. This actually paved the way for social reforms in India. The reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Rai, Maharishi Karve, Pandita Ramabai, etc. fought strongly to introduce a new value system in our country. During this period the reform movements supported by the British Government helped to eradicate the evil practices like child marriages, sati custom, female infanticide, etc. They also encouraged female literacy and employment.

The new British education system brought new ideas of over belief in individual conscience over external authority. It gave birth to new conceptions of social justice and human rights. The change in the attitude of people towards women was brought by the national freedom movement. Mahatma Gandhi referred to the women as “The better half of mankind” and believed that: Woman is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has right to participate in minutest details of the activities of man and she has the same right of freedom and liberty.

**The Post Independence Period**

A new hope emerged in the lives of Indian women with the country’s independence. The Constitution of India brought women on par with men by eliminating sex discrimination. Women were given equal opportunities. Article 39 of the Constitution provides equal rights for women to earn a livelihood and provision for equal pay for equal work. Various legislations have been enacted in order to remove the disabilities of women that caused
exploitation and to make provisions for their better living. After independence, the Central Social Welfare Board and *mahila mandals* were established with the intention of promoting the welfare of women. Under Five Year Plans since 1951, various women development programmes have been undertaken.

A national committee was established by the Government of India in 1971 to submit a report on the status of women, so that better plans could be introduced in this regard. It submitted its report on the socioeconomic position of women along with the recommendations for their upliftment. To promote employment opportunities especially for rural women, the programmes like IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme), DWCRA (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas), TRYSEM (Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment), etc; have been introduced.

In addition, various legislations have been implemented. This was done in order to remove the disabilities of women that caused exploitation and to make provisions for their better living. For instance, the special Marriage Act (1954) prohibits the child marriage by fixing the age limit as 18 years for girls and 21 years for boys. The Hindu Marriage Act (1955) provides equal opportunities for both husband and wife. The Hindu Succession Act (1956) bestows on women the right of absolute ownership over property; it also makes a provision for women to make a “will”.

The Hindu Adoption Maintenance Act (1956) permits any Hindu woman to adopt a son or a daughter. It also makes the consent of the mother necessary along with that of the father to give a son or daughter in adoption. The Maternity Benefit Act (1961), The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act (1971) etc. have also helped in improving the position of women. Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (1986) prohibits indecent representation of women in all publications and advertisements.
The Suppression of Immoral Trafficking in Women and Girls Act (1950) was amended in 1986 and called “The Immoral Traffick (Prevention) Act (1986). According to this Act, the practice of prostitution has been made an offence which has to be dealt with sternly. This made the penal provisions more rigid and effective also. Some studies argue that, as a result of these legislative measures and development programmes, the status of Indian women is said to be improved somewhat.

Some scholars believe that these programmes and legislations have helped Indian women only notionally and not in reality. These scholars argue that still a majority of Indian women are illiterate, powerless and unemployed. It is also pointed out that women in general are dictated largely by the patriarchal values. Their position in the family is subordinate to the male members. D’Souza (1975) says that “In India as in other countries, there is a great discrepancy between the idealized concept of women and the real life situations in which women find themselves.”(Quoted in Sudha 1999:11)

Another group of researchers do not find any significant improvement in the status of Indian women. They feel that unless there is a radical change in the Indian social structure, legal measures and development programmes are only of marginal help for improving the position of Indian women. As pointed out by Andre Beteille (1974)

There are equally sharp differences of opinion about the changes taking place in the position of women in India. Some regard these changes as profound and pervasive; they point to that increasing participation of women in public life and to the changes introduced in the legal status. Others maintain that the position of women has changed very little and that Indian society continues by and large to be a male dominated society. (Quoted in Devaki 1975:61)
It is true that there are variations in the status levels of women. In other words, all sections of Indian women do not enjoy the same status whether high or low. Such a variation is influenced by factors such as education, employment, and economic background, place of residence, religious background and sub cultural differences.

**Women as in Guru Granth Sahib**

From time immemorial woman has been getting a raw deal from the society. The most powerful voice that rolls in favour of woman was that of Guru Nanak Dev. In no era, woman has been given the respect as she has received from the house of the Sikh Gurus.

The Gurus have never given importance to the physical beauty of the woman, but they have seen her on the basis of her virtues. They do not regard her as a low being but complete in herself. Guru Nanak Dev says that how can one, who gives birth to kings, be low. He also founds her as a basis of all the relations. In *Assa Di Waar* he says that man has emerged from this utensil, got married, gave birth to new generation, and learnt to survive in the world from her. It is due to the woman that man leads a disciplined life.

Woman has got her own distinctive independent status. If we look into the history the Sikh women have taken up arms to defend their territory, religion and themselves. In *Guru Granth Sahib*, wife has been given a position of high esteem. It is also written that there is no culture, no aesthetic sense where there is no girl in the house.

**1.3 Conceptual Framework**

According to the *Penguin dictionary of sociology*, the concept of division of labour has been used in three ways: “(1) in the sense of the technical division of labour, it describes the production process; (2) as the social division of labour, it refers to differentiation in society as a whole; (3) as the sexual division of labour, it describes social divisions between men and women (Abercrombie et al 1988: 74).”
References to the social importance of division of labour are found as early as Plato, Aristotle and Xenophon (Michie:2001). The real scientific investigation of the phenomenon, however, begins in modern times with Adam Smith, Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, and Max Weber.

Adam Smith (1723-1790), the Scottish Moralist, focused on the technical division of labour highlighting its role in increasing labour productivity and efficiency. Auguste Comte (1798-1857) regarded division of labour as good and bad, integrative as well as divisive, for society as a whole. Karl Marx (1818-83) went on to emphasize the negative side and Durkheim the positive side of division of labour in modern society. According to Marx the division of labour produced conflict and was the main cause of social class inequality, private property and alienation. On the other hand, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), who fixed the concept of division of labour in the social science lexicon, saw in it the basis of a new kind of social solidarity, the “organic solidarity” of the modern industrial societies as compared to “mechanical solidarity” of primitive societies. Max Weber (1864-1920) pointed to the emergence of the rational-bureaucratic organization of work as a characteristic feature of modern industrial society.

Grint (1998) has defined work as follows:

Work tends to be an activity that transforms nature and is usually undertaken in social situations, but exactly what counts as work is dependent on the specific social circumstances under which such activities are undertaken and, critically, how these circumstances are interpreted by those involved. Whether any activity is experienced as work or leisure or both or neither is intimately related to the temporal, spatial and cultural conditions of its existence. (Grint 1998: 6)
Work tends to be an activity that transforms nature, and is social. But, as Grint quickly notes, such characterization is overly abstract. Whether an activity is experienced as work or not varies across cultures, space and time. For example, Grint mentions domestic work and unemployment, which are often classed as non-work in the contemporary west, but not elsewhere. More specifically, Grint attributes the varying meanings of work to power and discourse in the tradition of Foucault:

We should consider the past and present definitions of work as symbols of cultures and especially as mirrors of power: if what counts as work is glorified or despised or gender-related, then the language and practice of work allows us to read embodied fragments of wider social power ………

….the meanings of work do not inhere within the practices of participants but are created, challenged, altered and sustained through the contending discourses…” (ibid: 6-8).

It follows that any essentialist definition of work is doomed to failure. As Form and Miller (1964) realized long ago: “What is the meaning of work and life ….none of the answers seems fully satisfying.”

It will be interesting at this stage to see how work is related or contrasted with other allied concepts like labour, occupation, employment, leisure, etc.

Hannah Arendt (1958), a student of Heidegger, distinguishes between labour and work in her book *The Human Condition*. According to her, “labour is bodily activity designed to ensure survival in which the results are consumed almost immediately; work is the activity undertaken with our hands which gives objectivity to the world.”(ibid: 7) On the other hand, R.Brown in a paper entitled *Work* contrasts work with occupation. “Work has transformative capacity, says Brown, while occupation is something which locates individuals within some form of market” (Brown 1978: 56). Another distinction made is between work and
employment. The latter is defined as wage labour or paid job. Comments Grint: “In general, most sociological accounts of work have actually concerned themselves with paid employment; hence sociology of work has actually been related to industrial sociology or the sociology of employment or the sociology of occupations” (ibid: 9). Actually, employment is only one form that work takes, and the two concepts cannot be held to be identical. Regarding the opposition of work versus non-work, Grint Remarks:

The difference between work and non work [or leisure] seldom lies within the actual activity itself and more generally inheres in the social context that supports the activity. By implication, therefore, what counts as work cannot be served from the context necessarily changes through space and time. (ibid: 11)

In the Census of India 2001 work has been defined as

Participation in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages, or profit. Such participation may be physical or mental in nature. Work involves not only actual work but also includes effective supervision and direction of work. It even includes part time help or unpaid work on farm, family enterprise or in any other economic activity. (Census of India 2001: 25-6)

The whole population has been divided into three categories: main workers, marginal workers and non workers. Main workers are those who have worked for 6 months or 183 days during the last one year. Marginal workers are those who have worked for less than 6 months (may be for one day) during the last one year. Non workers are those who have not worked at all during the last one year.

The term work is rather indeterminate and contentious. For example, in the very opening chapter of his book The sociology of work, Grint makes the following remark: “This chapter demonstrates the difficulties of delineating the world of work from the sphere of non-
work and argues *that no unambiguous or objective definition of work is possible.*” (1998: 6) *(emphasis added)*

Given this difficulty, we have chosen to follow Anthony Giddens (2001), and the Central Statistical Organisation of India (as reported in Rajesh Bhatia: 2002) in deciding upon a working definition of the concept of work.

Giddens offers formal and operational definition of work. This is what Giddens writes:

We can define work, [i] whether paid or unpaid, as being the carrying out of tasks requiring the [ii] expenditure of mental and physical effort, which has its objective the [iii] production of goods and services that [iv] cater to human needs. An occupation, job, is work that is done in exchange for a regular wage or salary. In all cultures work is the basis of the economy (Giddens 2001:376). Housework, which has traditionally been carried out by women, is usually unpaid. But it is work, nevertheless- often very hard and exhausting work. Voluntary work, for charities or other organizations, has an important social role. Having a paid job is important for all the reasons listed above- but the category of ‘work’ stretches more widely (ibid: 376)

In terms of Giddens’ eminently inclusive definition, all productive activities- paid and unpaid, formal and informal, economic and cultural, domestic (housework) and non-domestic (occupation, or job)- fall within the broad category of work.

In a survey conducted in 1999, the Central Statistical Organisation (2002; also Bhatia), listed 154 activities performed by men and women in nine groups, which were further classified into three categories: SNA- related activities, SNA- extended activities, and non-SNA activities. The System of National Accounts (SNA) views the entire gamut of human activities as either economic or non –economic, drawing a line called production
boundary between the two. The criteria is whether a particular activity is rewarded monetarily
and/or the product marketed or not. The SNA has been modified over the year, with the latest
version of 1993 recognizing all production of goods whether for sale in the market or for own
consumption and recommends in its inclusion in the calculation of national income even
though these are problems in collecting the precise information about these activities in
practice. But the SNA continues to exclude the production of services like cooking, cleaning,
maintaining own household or community, taking care of children, sick and elderly members
in the household. As indicated these activities are mostly done by the women in the
household who spent a large amount of there time and energy on these activities, which are
no less important or productive. Explaining the time use indicators Bhatia (2002) has
identified three major categories, that is, SNA, extended –SNA and non –SNA activities.

The SNA activities comprised of three groups of activities, viz, (I) primary production
activities, such as crop farming, animal husbandry, forestry, fishing, processing, and
storage, mining and quarrying; (II) secondary activities and (III) trade, business and
services activities. The extended-SNA includes three groups of activities, viz, (IV)
household maintenance, management and shopping for own household, (V) care for
children, the sick, elderly and disabled for own household and (VI) community
services and help to other households. The non-SNA activities consists of (VII)
learning activities, (VIII) social and cultural, mass media, etc, and (IX) personal care
and self- maintenance activities.

The role of a man and a woman in society is influenced by a variety of factors. These
factors vary with the region, religion, culture, climate, historical beliefs, living principles and
experiences, across the globe. Therefore, gender role in society can be defined as the role
portrayed by an individual with respect to a combination of factors or any one of them,
depending on the living conditions. These factors can be categorized as:
roles based on the classification into male and female and roles based on physical character and/or sexual and psychological orientation, either as a result of social bonding or social preferences.

For instance, males are more interested in or perform physically tough activities like, working in heavy industries, and defence services while females perform tasks like raising children, cooking, and embroidery and so on. While these roles are defined and mostly classified in many societies, this distinction becomes rarer in developed societies like the US or Western Europe.

Education, household work, child care, professional commitments, societal issues are the various responsibilities or activities in a normal social framework. These roles were segregated on the basis of sex, but now it is more of a choice and based on the interest of an individual. However, there are many societies in the world which continue to stick to the traditional gender roles. A female is usually expected, obliged to do, or interested in household work, child care and education, leaving professional and social roles more for the males.

1.4 Objectives of the study

As the title suggests, the study is concerned with the gender division of labour in agricultural households in rural Punjab. In other words it is intended to find out how work is distributed among men and women, of different age categories, types of families, marital status and agrarian strata, in agricultural households in the Punjab countryside. The specific objectives of the present research are as follows:

i. The main objective of the study is to grasp and describe the gender division of labour as it exists in the different strata of agricultural households in the Malwa region of Punjab.
ii. The gender division of labour will be studied in terms of time allocation for work and leisure for men and women.

iii. An attempt will be made to ascertain if disparities exist in the way work is distributed between gender groups.

iv. Similarly, an attempt will be made to determine how patterns of work and leisure vary among different age groups, type of families and marital status of the respondents.

1.5 Methodology

The present study is essentially a descriptive study and will avoid specific hypotheses for the simple and sufficient reason that few studies on Punjab are available in the chosen field of research. Certain working hypotheses, for example, that women are withdrawing from agricultural operations, that large landholders now prefer supervision to manual work; that migrant labour has significantly displaced local labour in agricultural operations; that women continue to be burdened with housework despite their education and (sometimes) employment outside home – will indeed be kept in mind, but they will not restrict or constrain the inquiry.

Since the study is empirical, the primary data has been collected from three villages from nine blocks of Patiala District of Punjab. District Patiala was chosen as the researcher belongs to this area and could interview the respondents in their own dialect and establish a rapport with them. A list of villages of these blocks was procured from village directory of Patiala district and villages were ranked according to the levels of socio-economic development. The criteria used to determine these levels were as follows:

(i) Distance from a town/city

(ii) Institutional facilities

(iii) Land-ownership pattern
(iv) Number of farm machinery

(v) Literacy rate.

The villages were assigned scores based on the above mentioned criteria and were accordingly classified as developed, moderately developed and less developed. From the three lists of villages, one village from each list was selected randomly for the study. Keeping in view the time and financial constraints of the researcher, a random sample was drawn from the agricultural households of each village for the purpose of present research. The lists of households were procured from the Panchayat records of the respective villages.

In terms of the size of population, the villages differed from each other significantly. Ditupur is composed of 156 agricultural households, Lang 328 agricultural households and Sular Gharat 91 agricultural households. Because of the significant variation in the number of agricultural households of the three villages, it was considered appropriate to draw 30 percent random sample from Lang, 40 percent from Ditupur and 50 percent from Sular Gharat. Thus a total of 99 households were selected randomly from Lang, 63 from Ditupur and 45 from Sular Gharat.

As the present study is concerned with gender division of labour in agricultural households, the first step was to collect information about the family composition of the households selected for the study. This was necessary to know about the number of males and females in each household. As in the Punjab villages, the children are not expected to contribute to agricultural or household work it was considered appropriate to select males and females above thirteen years of age in the sample. Accordingly from the lists of the family members of selected households, one male and one female of thirteen years and above were selected randomly for the study. For the purpose of drawing the random sample, the lottery method was used at different stages, that is, at the level of village selection, household selection and the selection of the respondents.
Interviews with the male and female members of the selected households were conducted with the help of an interview schedule which incorporates (with suitable modifications) Central Statistical Organization’s (CSO) checklist of 154 activities classified as SNA, extended -SNA and non -SNA activities, as described in the preceding section.

In addition to interviews of the selected respondents from agricultural households, twelve case studies were conducted for the landless agricultural labourers. As the number of landless labourers in the three selected villages was too less, it was deemed fit not to include them in the sample for data collection through interviews as no statistical tool could be used for the data collected from such small numbers. Therefore, it was decided to conduct case studies of a few landless labourers, both males and females from these villages.

Further, the technique of observation was also used to collect qualitative data from the villages. In the present study the technique of observation has been used along with the techniques of interview schedules and case study method in order to collect comprehensive information about various aspects of gender division of labour. Thus, substantive qualitative data was gathered through field observations and informal discussions with friends and family members of the respondents.

The data collected with the help of interview schedule have been classified and tabulated in the chapter presenting the quantitative analysis. Averages and percentages have been worked out for the interpretation of data. The qualitative data collected through case studies and observations have been presented in a separate chapter.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The present research work has been carried out by a research student who had meager resources at her disposal. That is why it was not possible to select more than three villages for the study. Moreover, a larger sample of respondents also could not be drawn due to the above mentioned constraints. It was quite difficult to establish rapport with the respondents,
especially the females of lower agrarian strata. The females of this stratum were over worked as they had to engage themselves in the agricultural activities along with their household responsibilities. For most of these women from the economically weaker section, the day begins at 4 a.m. and their work continued well beyond 9 p.m. Therefore, they had very little time to talk to the researcher. In such a situation, the researcher generally had to go to the fields and try to talk to these women for half an hour or so to collect the relevant data for the research work. On many occasions the researcher had to assist these females in their household work to establish rapport and gain their confidence. For example, the researcher had to assist the female respondents in cutting and chopping of vegetables, washing clothes, household cleanliness and cooking while engaging them in conversation.

Due to the constraints of the study it was not possible to have a larger sample and therefore it was not possible to draw any generalizations from the inferences drawn on the basis of this research work. Therefore, the analysis of data of this research work points to certain trends in the time use pattern of males and females in agricultural households of the Malwa region of Punjab. However, the findings of the present study have been corroborated by the findings of studies conducted in various states of India as well as by those studies conducted in the foreign countries. This might not be sufficient evidence to draw generalizations but the conformity of the findings of the present study with those of other studies provides a clear picture about the trends in the time use pattern among males and females of agricultural households.

1.7 Chapter Scheme

The present study has been divided into seven chapters.

The first chapter deals with Introduction to work and methodology. In this the definition of work, objectives of the study and research questions have been dealt with. The
discussion on methodology consists of techniques and methods of data collection and its analysis.

The second chapter presents the Review of Studies relevant for the present study. In the beginning of the chapter different theoretical formulations have been described. The theories have been grouped into three general categories according to the primary causal processes thought to govern the gender division of labour that is, nature, culture and economic. The theories under the category of nature describe the biological, social and religious nature of men and women. The theories dealing with culture tend to emphasize the importance of socialization and ideology. The theories related to economy focus on economic power, conflict and gender inequality. The chapter also includes discussion on the concept of patriarchy which is considered to be one of the major factors affecting gender inequalities and division of labour. Some of the Indian and foreign studies have been discussed in this chapter.

The third chapter The setting and the sample describes the geographic, demographic and socioeconomic profile of the villages. The second part of the chapter describes the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the respondents. The last section of the chapter describes the characteristics of the surveyed households for example the structure of the house, nature of accommodation, sources of drinking water, type of fuel used for cooking and the availability of assets.

Chapter four is about Glimpses of Punjabi society and everyday life in Punjab villages that is, the every day routine in Punjabi households. It deals with the time spent on daily basis on the different activities by men and women. A brief account of fairs and festivals, rural sports, pattern of dwellings, dress and diet and wedding ceremonies of Punjab have been included. Moreover, a description of cropping pattern and agricultural activities has also been
presented in this chapter. It describes the general pattern of every day routine in rural households of Punjab villages.

Chapter five Gender and work analysis presents the statistical analysis about patterns of work. The data collected with the help of interview schedule have been classified and tabulated in this chapter presenting the quantitive analysis. Averages have been worked out for the interpretation of data. It focuses on nature of activities undertaken by men and women of different agricultural households. Further it describes the time allocation for work and leisure by the members of the family.

The sixth chapter Observations and case studies related to work pattern analyses the data and people’s perception about work. The qualitative data collected through case studies and observations have been presented in this chapter. The observations made during the field work have led to the confirmation of the findings arrived at in the earlier chapter on the basis of quantitative analysis of data.

The last chapter seven Conclusions: Patterns of work and leisure in agricultural households in rural Punjab presents the summary and conclusions derived from the study.

Glossary of words is given at the end to facilitate the reader. The terms have been translated by taking the help of Punjabi English Dictionary.