

STRUCTURE OF EMPLOYMENT OF WITHDRAWN AGRICULTURE LABOUR: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

The study highlights the employment opportunities to the withdrawn agricultural labour at different places in non-agricultural sector comprehensively and minutely. In this study, an effort has been put to know the structure of employment of withdrawn agricultural labour and examine deeply the occupations adopted by them alongwith their limitations for not being able to join some higher earning jobs/occupations, etc. it has been found that in the new occupations, either they found higher earnings or sometimes the same wage rate. They got even 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 selected area of study. It has also been found that nearby cities and market areas served as a better stimulant to provide more opportunities of employment in categories of employment such as 'independent occupations started with financial help' 'independent occupations started without financial help', 'Govt/semi Govt Service' and 'industrial sector'.

Key Words: Agricultural labour, withdrawn agricultural labour, locations, non-agricultural occupations

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Introduction

The phenomenon of major shift from agricultural to non-agricultural activities needs to be given special attention for drawing implication regarding the improvement and worsening of employment situation in rural areas (Papola, T. S. 1994). The rural workforce structure had more or less remained unchanged for the first two and a half decades since independence, and subsequently, it started shifting to the non-agricultural occupations; it reached the highest level ever in 1989-90 (Jha, P. 1997). The deterioration in living of standard of agricultural labour households is expected due to the falling agriculture share in the state. Casualisation is on rise among both female and male labourers, while male labourers are more prone (Rao, K.H. 1998). There were altogether 147 non-farm activities in which the agricultural labour households were engaged. Rural Non Farm Activities (RNFAs) were emerging as an alternative in the state of Punjab (Sidhu, H.S. and J.S. Toor 2002). The sharp rise in unemployment in the country originates from large-scale structural adjustment in some previously over employed sectors. The RNFS has significant potential for absorbing rural labour (Bharat, T. 2002). The increase in non-agricultural activities has been much lower than declining the use of labour in agricultur (Gosh, J. 2003). Technological advancement alongwith institutional changes in agriculture sector lead to shrinking of employment and convert the under-employed into openly unemployed seeking work somewhere else (Saxena, M. 2004). Moreover, the workforce pushed out from agriculture does not get absorbed elsewhere, 'manufacturing' and 'service category' are just not able to accommodate it (Mehta, J. 2004). Further, a large number of people went to nearby urban centers for work as this fetched those regular cash as against the seasonal flaws in agriculture (Sriram, M. S. and S. Parhi 2004). Agriculture sector has stopped absorbing more labour employment in agriculture sector (Jha, B. 2006). The urban size of each territory and the distance to a large city change the economic structure and the behavior of employment growth (Ana et.al 2009).

In this scenario, to find livelihood for the family, the effect of occupational change of agricultural labour on the structure of employment in rural area seems to be obvious.

During a period of five years (1999-2000 and 2004-05) rural non-farm employment enhanced by 16 million of which nearly 50 per cent was in the form of self employment, five million as casual employment and just three million as regular employment (Himanshu, 2011). On the one hand, share of labour force in agriculture starts diminishing faster than its share in

output; on the other hand absorption of labour in the urban economy has been slow (Hans, P. 2012)

All these aspects need to be reviewed and the major objectives of this study are to know the structure of employment of withdrawn agricultural labour at different places. It will also be tried to examine the occupations adopted by them alongwith their limitations for not being able to join some higher earning jobs/occupations in selected areas of Punjab state.

Methodology and Sampling Design

Bathinda and Jalandhar districts have been chosen on the basis of some socio-economic parameters to study the selected theme. 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 was three, whereas, in Jalandhar district it was 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.

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 in Talwandi Sabo sub-division. Likewise, in Jalandhar district, two villages, i.e., 'Sarai Khas' (08 Kms away from Jalandhar city) and 'Patarā' (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.

Further, 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 Withdrawn Agricultural Labour Households (WALHs) was prepared to describe the categories of employment of WALHs in selected districts. Furthermore, by adopting stratified random sampling technique, 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, shellers, godowns, 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 taxis, helpers in shops, in small repairing units, etc. were kept in 'others' category. 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.

The definition of agricultural labour household is taken 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. Data for the present study were collected in the year of 2006-07.

Structure of Employment of Sampled WALHs in Bathinda District

Data in Table 1 show that in Bathinda sub-division, the proportion of withdrawn households in 'independent occupations started without financial help' was found to be 38.88 per cent, which emerged as the highest among all categories. The share of 'industrial sector' and 'others' came to be equally important, i.e., 22.22 per cent in each category. The proportion of agricultural labour that joined 'independent occupations started taking financial help' turned out to be 11.11 per cent, whereas, it remained just 5.55 per cent in 'Government/semi Government service' category.

The reason of the highest share of WALHs in 'independent occupations started without financial help' was attributable to nearby location of the selected village to the market area of Bhucho Mandi, which offered more employment opportunities in this category. Moreover, with the passage of time, they got work experience and subsequently improved their skills either informally from others and/or by the trial and error method in 'independent occupations started without financial help'.

The setting up of Guru Gobind Singh Thermal Plant, Lehra Mohabbat was one of the reasons of employment in the categories 'industrial sector' and 'others'. In Bathinda sub-division, there was not even a single sampled worker who was professionally qualified. Moreover, inadequate generation of employment opportunities by Government caused lesser proportion of employment in 'Government/semi Government service' category.

The data reveal that in Talwandi Sabo sub-division, 'independent occupations started without financial help' emerged as the category offering highest employment with a share of

52.00 per cent. When workers changed their old occupation and shifted to non-agricultural occupations such as masonry, painting (colouring of walls, etc.) and well digging, etc., in the beginning, they assisted the skilled labourers but afterwards they became skilled and their income also got hiked by virtue of gaining experience alongwith them. The sampled households who opted for 'independent occupations started without financial help' were benefited by nearby location of two markets, i.e., Rama Mandi and Sangat Mandi offering more employment opportunities in this category. The agricultural labour that adopted 'industrial sector' category got employment in kilns; their percentage share came to be 16.00 per cent. The reason behind this was employment of most of the family members at one and the same place and also the kilns were situated nearby their native village, moreover, no formal education was required for this occupation as 56.00 per cent (Table 5) sampled labour households were found to be illiterate from this sub-division. 'Independent occupations started taking financial help' category involved 12.00 per cent of total withdrawn households. Most of them used their own plots of land to start new occupations and sought financial help either from formal or from informal sources of credit as described by our sampled households. The other category of employment, i.e., 'others' accounted for 12.00 per cent and only 8.00 per cent labourers got chance to get employed in 'Government/semi Government service' category. Location of the village nearby market area fetched out labourers in the category 'others'. The reason behind lesser proportion of total withdrawn workers in 'Government/semi Government service' was their illiteracy and additionally, not even a single person of the total sampled literate labourers were found to be professionally

Table 1: Structure of Employment of WALHs in the Sampled Districts

(numbers)

Category of Employment	Sub-divisions of Bathinda District			Bathinda District	Sub-divisions of Jalandhar District					Jalandhar District	Total (Bathinda+ Jalandhar)
	Bathinda	Talwandi Sabo	Rampura Phul		Jalandhar-II	Nakodar	Phillaur	Jalandhar-I	Shahkot		
Govt/semi Govt Service	1 (5.55)	2 (8.00)	1 (3.03)	4 (5.26)	5 (16.12)	4 (22.22)	9 (11.84)	8 (22.22)	1 (6.66)	27 (15.34)	31 (12.30)
Industrial Sector	4 (22.22)	4 (16.00)	7 (21.21)	15 (19.73)	8 (25.80)	1 (5.55)	20 (26.31)	9 (25.00)	6 (40.00)	44 (25.00)	59 (23.41)
Independent Occupations Started Taking Financial Help	2 (11.11)	3 (12.00)	2 (6.06)	7 (9.20)	6 (19.35)	1 (5.55)	5 (6.57)	2 (5.55)	1 (6.66)	15 (8.50)	22 (8.73)

Independent Occupations Started Without Financial Help	7 (38.88)	13 (52.00)	7 (21.21)	27 (35.52)	9 (29.03)	7 (38.88)	22 (28.94)	11 (30.55)	5 (33.33)	54 (30.68)	81 (32.14)
Others*	4 (22.22)	3 (12.00)	16 (48.48)	23 (30.26)	3 (9.67)	5 (27.77)	20 (26.31)	6 (16.66)	2 (13.33)	36 (20.45)	59 (23.41)
Total	18 (100.00)	25 (100.00)	33 (100.00)	76 (100.00)	31 (100.00)	18 (100.00)	76 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	15 (100.00)	176 (100.00)	252 (100.00)

*Indicate workers as helpers (labourers) to mason, drivers on hired taxies, helpers in shops, in small repairing units, etc.

Note- Figures in the parentheses refer to percentages.

Source- Primary Survey

qualified.

Regarding the structure of employment of WALHs in Rampura Phul sub-division, the data indicate that the category of employment consisted of various occupations such as helping masons, driving hired taxies and working as repairers in workshops, etc., i.e. 'others', emerged as the biggest category of employment with a share of 48.48 per cent. 'Industrial sector' (Kilns and rice shellers) and 'independent occupations started without financial help' were found providing employment equally good, i.e., 21.21 per cent in each case. The workers who were engaged in 'independent occupations started taking financial help' got a share equal to 6.06 per cent and that of 'Government/semi Government service' provided employment only to 3.03 per cent of the total withdrawn labour households.

A long distance of 50 kms of the selected village under this sub-division from major city and the district head quarter, i.e., Bathinda was the reason as to why WALHs did not get more opportunities of employment in 'industrial sector' as substantial number of industrial units were concentrated in or around urban periphery. The same reason was also true in case of 'independent occupations started without financial help'. The low proportion of withdrawn agricultural labourers engaging in 'Government/semi Government service' was the undesirable outcome of households being illiterate and their share accounted for 60.60 per cent (Table 5) in this sub-division. Most of the sampled households being financially weak were not found in mentionable numbers in the category of 'independent occupations started taking financial help'. Formal education and finance were not a prime requisite to start new occupations in 'others'

category of employment that is why more labourers were noticed in this category.

Comparison among Sub-divisions of Bathinda District

Analysis of data shows that regarding involvement in 'independent occupations started without financial help', the Bathinda and Talwandi Sabo sub-divisions depicted the highest degree of engagement of withdrawn workers, whereas, in Rampura Phul sub-division, the category of employment 'others' was found to be absorbing maximum number of labourers. The main reason behind this difference among the sub-divisions was their distance from major city, i.e., Bathinda (district head quarter) and nearby market areas alongwith different levels of literacy ratio (Bathinda: 61.22, Talwandi Sabo: 44.00 and Rampura Phul: 39.40 per cent, Table & Chart-5.4). Bathinda (18 Kms away from district H.Q.) and Talwandi Sabo (30 Kms away from district H.Q.) sub-divisions having located nearby district head quarter had gained the benefit of having comparatively nearby location and higher literacy rate than Rampura Phul sub-division (50 Kms away from district H.Q.).

As regards to the category 'industrial sector', there was no difference in quantitative terms between Bathinda and Talwandi Sabo sub-divisions as both provided employment to withdrawn households in the same ratio, but the withdrawn households of Bathinda sub-division were found to be employed in Guru Gobind Singh Thermal Plant, Lehra Mohabbat and were paid higher as compared to the households engaged in kilns and rice shellers belonging to Talwandi Sabo sub-division. Sampled households in Bathinda and Talwandi Sabo sub-divisions were more advanced in educational awareness and to some extent financially better placed than that of Rampura Phul sub-division, because of this the employment share of WALHs in 'Government/semi Government service' and 'independent occupations started taking financial help' was higher in Bathinda and Talwandi Sabo sub-divisions but abysmally lower in Rampura Phul sub-division.

The data also highlight that in whole of the Bathinda district, the major categories of employment were 'independent occupations started without financial help' and 'others' which absorbed most of the withdrawn agricultural labour. Since the percentage share of 'independent occupations started without financial help' remained 35.52 per cent and that of 'others' constituted 30.26 per cent. The percentage share of 'industrial sector' accounted for 19.73 per cent and relatively lower proportion of withdrawn workers was soaked up by 'independent occupations started taking financial help' and 'Government/semi Government service' category,

the share of which came to be 9.20 per cent and 5.26 per cent, respectively.

The weaker financial status, lack of entrepreneurial skills, illiteracy/low education level of withdrawn workers and concentration of major industry in or around the city of Bathinda were mainly the reasons of lower proportion of WALHs being found in 'independent occupations started taking financial help', 'Government/semi Government service' and 'industrial sector', respectively. The basic reason of choosing of categories 'independent occupations started without financial help' and 'others' occupations remained the minimal requirement of good financial status and education to start work in these occupations as 53.94 per cent (Table 5) of the total sampled WALHs from this district were found to be illiterate and even out of literates not a single labourer was professionally qualified for any field.

Structure of Employment of Sampled WALHs in Jalandhar District

The data in Table 1 highlight that in Jalandhar-II sub-division, 'independent occupations started without financial help' came out with the highest share of 29.03 per cent followed by 'industrial sector' with slightly lower share, which turned up to be 25.80 per cent. The reason behind higher absorbability of WALHs in 'independent occupations started without financial help' and industrial sector' categories of employment was attributable to the location of sampled village of this sub-division nearby Kartarpur and Jalandhar cities. They were benefited by the way of having more employment opportunities in the city (district head quarter) itself. Besides, the concentrated industrial area on the Kartarpur to Jalandhar grand trunk (G.T.) road also helped in the same way, where withdrawn workers were found to be working in biscuit making units, while some of them reported working in units of sports goods industry in the city Jalandhar.

The sampled withdrawn workers who were in a position to seek financial support from formal and/or informal sources of credit joined the category of 'independent occupations started taking financial help' as their percentage came to be 19.35 per cent. The percentage share of withdrawn workers who resorted to 'Government/semi Government service' category turned out to be 16.12 per cent followed by 'others' category whose share found to be 9.67 per cent.

Regarding structure of employment in Nakodar sub-division, the data specify that the category of employment 'independent occupations started without financial help' obtained higher share of providing employment to withdrawn workers with 38.88 per cent followed by the category 'others', which came to be 27.77 per cent. The sampled households of this sub-division who were either illiterate (22.22 per cent, Table 5) or obtained just primary education were found

to be in 'others' category of employment, as neither education nor any specific skill of work was primarily required to start an occupation in this category. The share of 'Government/semi Government service' came to be 22.22 per cent. The withdrawn labour households turned out to be 5.55 per cent each in 'industrial sector' as well as 'independent occupations started taking financial help'. The reason of withdrawn workers joining 'Government/semi Government service' category was due to higher proportion of Scheduled Castes (94.44 per cent, Table 3) among them. In addition, some of them had professional degrees and/or diplomas. 'Inadequacy of assets' was the main reason of low adoption of 'independent occupations started taking financial help' by withdrawn labour households. Longer distance of 38 kms from industrial hub (Nakodar) and village being located on link road were found to be noted reasons for lesser proportion of withdrawn workers in 'industrial sector'.

Pertaining to structure of employment in Phillaur sub-division, the data in Table 1 expose that 'independent occupations started without financial help' came to be the highest category of employment with 28.94 per cent followed by 'industrial sector' and 'others' categories of employment engaging withdrawn workers equal to 26.31 per cent each. Bilga being a large enough sampled village of Phillaur sub-division, having well spread market, due to which the labourers not only got employment opportunities in non-agriculture sector, but also most of them got job opportunities without having to dislocate elsewhere, became the main reason why withdrawn labourers adopted 'independent occupations started without financial help' in this sub-division, as expressed by our sampled respondents. Many workers who were literate and younger as compared to others got opportunities of employment in manufacturing units, i.e., in cotton processing, furniture manufacturing units and knitting, etc. While some of them migrated alone to their working place (Ludhiana). Category 'others' included most of the workers who were found to be working as helpers to mason, driving hired three wheelers and pulling rickshaws, etc. The share of 'Government/semi Government service' category remained 11.84 per cent of the total sampled withdrawn workers. This share came to be higher because persons with professional qualification in this sub-division were 6.57 per cent (Table 5). Moreover, the proportion of SCs was also higher at 94.73 per cent (Table 3). The share of 'independent occupations started taking financial help' was noted just 6.57 per cent due to weak financial status of labour households alongwith lack of entrepreneurial skills.

Related to the structure of employment of WALHs in Jalandhar-I sub-division, the data

indicate that the benefit of this area was due to its location nearby Rama Mandi adjoining Jalandhar because of which WALHs not only got employment opportunities in 'independent occupations started without financial help' (30.55 per cent) but also in 'industrial sector' (25.00 per cent). Those households who joined 'industry' were noted to be working in sports goods industry, pipe-making units of production, etc. either in Jalandhar or in outskirts of the city. Moreover, the literacy ratio of sampled WALHs of this sub-division was 77.78 per cent, which not only contributed towards placing labourers in the above said occupations but also in 'Government/semi Government service' category (22.22 per cent). Only 5.55 per cent of the total sampled households resorted to 'independent occupations started taking financial help' because of their meagre assets.

In Shahkot sub-division, the data indicate that 'industrial sector' emerged as having the highest share, which came to be 40.00 per cent. Although there was no big industrial set up near the area selected for study under this sub-division but withdrawn households were noted working relatively in low paid jobs as in kilns and rice shellers basically because they were located nearby the sampled village. The second category of employment absorbing WALHs was of 'independent occupations started without financial help' with 33.33 per cent followed by the category 'others' having a share of 13.33 per cent. Workers in both of the categories were found working in their native as well as in nearby villages. Most of them were found to be working as masons, helpers to masons, vendors and driving three wheelers/vans connected with some private schools, etc. The categories of 'Government/semi Government service' and 'independent occupations started taking financial help' turned out to be equally important as the ratio of each was observed to be 6.66 per cent. The low ratio of employment in both of these categories was due to low education level and lesser assets availability with WALHs. Because of this, most of the sampled labourers adopted other categories of occupations.

Comparison among Sub-divisions of Jalandhar District

It is clear from the data in Table 1 that all of the sub-divisions of Jalandhar district, except Shahkot, absorbed more labour in 'independent occupations started without financial help', whereas, in Shahkot, small/medium units in 'industrial sector' emerged as providing employment to large proportion of total sampled WALHs. 'Industrial sector' emerged as a second major category of absorbing employees almost in all the sub-divisions except Nakodar. While in Nakodar sub-division, second comes the category of employment 'others' followed by

'Government/semi Government service' category to provide employment to withdrawn workers. After the major categories of employment such as 'independent occupations started without financial help' and 'industrial sector', the 'Government/semi Government service' followed by 'others' played major role in Jalandhar-I and Jalandhar-II sub-divisions. It was only Jalandhar-II sub-division, which showed good results in the category 'independent occupations started taking financial help' (19.35 per cent), while in case of other sub-divisions it remained even below 7.00 per cent in providing employment opportunities.

Related to structure of employment of WALHs on the whole in Jalandhar District, data highlight that the major category of employment was 'independent occupations started without financial help' with 30.68 per cent followed by 'industrial sector' the share of which came to be 25.00 per cent. While 'others' became the third major category offering employment opportunities to 20.45 per cent of the total sampled withdrawn labourers. Then it was 'Government/semi Government service' category, the share of which accounted for 15.34 per cent followed by 'independent occupations started taking financial help' with 8.50 per cent. Some sampled villages in this district were located nearby the industrially rich areas, which increased employment in 'industrial sector'. Although the ratio of literate sampled withdrawn workers remained 71.02 per cent (Table 5) in this district. Out of them, who were professionally qualified, made contribution towards 'Government/semi Government service' category; their proportion came to be 4.54 per cent (Table 5) in this district. Additionally, a higher proportion of reserved categories' population also helped this trend. Weak economic status and/or inadequacy of assets among most of the sampled households remained the reason for their lower proportion in the category of 'independent occupations started taking financial help'.

Overall Structure of Employment of Sampled WALHs

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. The 'Government/semi Government service' category involved 12.30 per cent and 'independent occupations started taking financial help' turned out to be just 8.73 per cent.

Comparison between Bathinda and Jalandhar Districts Regarding Structure of Employment

Regarding the category of employment 'independent occupations started without

financial help', a higher proportion of workers were found in Bathinda district (35.52 per cent) as compared to Jalandhar district (30.68 per cent) followed by 'others' (30.26 per cent in Bathinda and 20.45 per cent in Jalandhar district) category of employment. 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 indicates the increasing casualisation of labour employment after shifting to non-agriculture 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 in agriculture. The labour when left the agricultural sector did not get adequate jobs in 'industrial sector' (19.73 per cent) because of lack of new set up of any industrial units in sampled rural sector of Bathinda district. Some 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. One fourth of the total sampled households were found in 'industrial sector' in Jalandhar district as this district has more industrial set-up than Bathinda district. Altogether, industrial units remained inadequate to absorb the surplus labour. Therefore, it can be said that there was scarcity of cottage and small scale industry in both the districts. A small proportion of withdrawn workers (8.73 per cent) of the total either who were having some pieces of land or other assets and alongwith some entrepreneurial skills, only were able to adopt 'independent occupations started taking financial help' in both the districts. On the whole, only 5.15 per cent (Table 4) 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.) to start new occupations in 'independent occupations started taking financial help'. A little 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 job opportunities in this sector. Moreover, 36.50 per cent (Table 5) of the total sampled withdrawn workers were illiterate, due to which they could not get better wage earning jobs.

Structure of Employment at Places Located Nearby and Away From City

Analysis of data in Table 2 depicts that relatively a large majority of WALHs from places nearby Bathinda city were found involved in 'independent occupations started without financial

help' as 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 were residing away from the places located away from Bathinda city 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' category of employment turned out to be 19.35 per cent while for 'independent occupations started taking financial help' and 'Government/semi Government services', it was found to be 9.67 per cent and 6.45 per cent, respectively.

Table: 2: Structure of Employment at Places Located Nearby and Away from City

(Number)

Category of Employment	Bathinda District		Jalandhar District		Total (Bathinda+Jalandhar)	
	Nearby Bathinda	Away from Bathinda	Nearby Jalandhar	Away from Jalandhar	Nearby their Respective Cities	Away from their Respective Cities
Govt/semi Govt Service	1 (5.55)	2 (6.45)	7 (20.00)	5 (13.88)	8 (15.09)	7 (10.44)
Industrial Sector	4 (22.22)	6 (19.35)	9 (25.71)	9 (25.00)	13 (24.52)	15 (22.38)
Independent Occupations Started Taking Financial Help	2 (11.11)	3 (9.67)	4 (11.42)	2 (5.55)	6 (11.32)	5 (7.46)
Independent Occupations Started	7 (38.88)	10 (32.25)	10 (28.57)	11 (30.55)	17 (32.07)	21 (31.34)

Without Financial Help						
Others*	4 (22.22)	10 (32.25)	5 (14.28)	9 (25.00)	9 (16.98)	19 (28.35)
Total	18 (100.00)	31 (100.00)	35 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	53 (100.00)	67 (100.00)

*Indicate workers as helpers (labourers) to mason, drivers on hired taxis, helpers in shops, in small repairing units, etc.

Note-The average of all sample households in nearby and far off villages has been taken separately to represent the structure of employment in their respective locations & Figures in the parentheses refer to percentages.

Source-Primary survey

Further, the data (Table 2) highlight that the withdrawn labour households that belonged to places located nearby 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 places far off from city, most of them were found to be engaged in a higher proportion in 'independent occupations started without financial help' (32.25 per cent) and 'others' (32.25 per cent) categories of employment. In the case of away located places, 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.). Related to the 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 was because of concentration of major industry mainly in or nearby Bathinda city. Regarding the employment in 'independent occupations started taking financial help' and 'Government/semi Government service', there weren't any major differences between the 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 were the major causes behind the low level of employment in 'independent occupations started taking financial help' and 'Government/semi Government service',

respectively.

The data also reveal that in Jalandhar district, the withdrawn labour households that belonged to 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 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 (Table 2).

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 context of providing more employment to WALHs at places located nearby as compared to places located remotely from the city. The main reason behind this observed to be the higher literacy rate in nearby villages relative to the away located villages from the city. While the labour households living at places away from the city were found to be involved more in 'others' category of employment as compared to the places near the city but it was reverse in the case of 'independent occupations started taking financial help' category. Being relatively aware of education, the labour households of nearby places might have taken training related to new 'independent occupations started taking financial help' and had been 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 were unavailability or low availability of jobs in other categories of employment and/or not having skills to get into other occupations requiring more skills.

Table 3: Caste-wise Division of Withdrawn Agriculture Labour Households

Caste	Sub-divisions of Bathinda			Bathinda District	Sub-divisions of Jalandhar District			
	District				Jalandhar- II	Nakodar	Phillaur	Jalandhar- I
	Bathinda	Talwandi Sabo	Rampura Phul					
Scheduled Caste	16 (88.88)	21 (84.00)	28 (84.84)	65 (85.52)	30 (96.77)	17 (94.44)	72 (94.73)	30 (83.33)
Backward Caste	2 (11.11)	4 (16.00)	4 (12.12)	10 (13.15)	1 (3.22)	-	3 (3.94)	5 (13.88)
Scheduled Tribes	-	-	1 (3.03)	1 (1.31)	-	1 (5.55)	-	-
General	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (1.31)	1 (2.77)
Total	18 (100.00)	25 (100.00)	33 (100.00)	76 (100.00)	31 (100.00)	18 (100.00)	76 (100.00)	36 (100.00)

Note- Figures in the parentheses refer to percentages.

Source- Primary Survey

Taking both the districts together, a higher percentage of WALHs belonging to places located near 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. While the second major category of employment 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 16.98 per cent in case of places located near the city whereas, it was found to be 28.35 per cent in case of away located places from 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 WALHs of places located far off from the city, where it came to be 10.44 per cent. (Table 2)

Overall, it is revealed from the data (Table 2) that 'independent occupations started

without financial help' in both the cases were prone to be adopted by the maximum number of withdrawn workers. Apart from it, around one fourth of the total workers were found to be employed in 'industrial sector' category of employment at places located near 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) were also found engaged in industrial sector at

Table 4: Financial Help Taken by WALHs

(Number)

Source of Credit	Sub-divisions of Bathinda District			Bathinda District	Sub-divisions of Jalandhar District					Jalandhar District	Total (Bathinda + Jalandhar)
	Bathinda	Talwan Sabo	Rampura Phul		Jalandhar-II	Nakodar	Phillaur	Jalandhar-I	Shahkot		
Commercial Banks	-	1 (4.00)	-	1 (1.31)	5 (16.12)	1 (5.55)	-	3 (8.33)	1 (6.66)	10 (5.68)	11 (4.36)
Cooperative Societies	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 (2.63)	-	-	2 (1.13)	2 (0.79)
Relatives and Friends	3 (16.66)	-	3 (9.09)	6 (7.89)	6 (19.35)	4 (22.22)	3 (3.94)	4 (11.11)	1 (6.66)	18 (10.22)	24 (9.52)
Money Lenders	-	3 (12.00)	2 (6.06)	5 (6.57)	-	-	7 (9.21)	-	2 (13.33)	9 (5.11)	14 (5.55)
Others*	-	1 (4.00)	-	1 (1.31)	-	2 (11.11)	2 (2.63)	-	-	4 (2.27)	5 (1.98)

Total	3 (16.66)	5 (20.00)	5 (15.15)	13 (17.10)	11 (35.48)	7 (38.88)	14 (18.42)	7 (19.44)	4 (26.66)	43 (24.43)	56 (22.22)
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Note-Figures in the parentheses refer to percentages.

*Refer to neighbourers, commission agents, etc. Source- Primary Survey

Table 5: Education Level of Withdrawn Agricultural Labour

(Number)

Education Level	Sub-divisions of Bathinda District			Bathinda District	Sub-divisions of Jalandhar District					Jalandhar District	Total Bathinda+ Jalandhar)
	Bathinda	Talwandi Sabo	Rampura Phul		Jalandhar-II	Nakodar	Phillaur	Jalandhar-I	Shahkot		
Illiterate	7 (38.88)	14 (56.00)	20 (60.60)	41 (53.94)	6 (19.35)	4 (22.22)	27 (35.52)	8 (22.22)	6 (40.00)	51 (28.97)	92 (36.50)
Up to 5 th Class	4 (22.22)	4 (16.00)	7 (21.21)	15 (19.73)	7 (22.58)	7 (38.88)	21 (27.63)	5 (13.88)	4 (26.66)	44 (25.00)	59 (23.41)
6 th to 8 th Class	6 (33.33)	5 (20.00)	5 (15.15)	16 (21.05)	11 (35.48)	3 (16.66)	13 (17.10)	11 (30.55)	1 (6.66)	39 (22.15)	55 (21.82)
9 th to 10 th Class	1 (5.55)	1 (4.00)	-	2 (2.63)	5 (16.12)	2 (11.11)	6 (7.89)	4 (11.11)	3 (20.00)	20 (11.36)	22 (8.73)
11 th to 12 th Class	-	1 (4.00)	1 (3.03)	2 (2.63)	2 (6.45)	-	-	5 (13.88)	1 (6.66)	8 (4.54)	10 (3.96)
Graduation/Post Graduation	-	-	-	-	-	-	4 (5.26)	2 (5.55)	-	6 (3.40)	6 (2.38)
Professional Degree/Diploma	-	-	-	-	-	2 (11.11)	5 (6.57)	1 (2.77)	-	8 (4.54)	8 (3.17)
Total	18 (100.00)	25 (100.00)	33 (100.00)	76 (100.00)	31 (100.00)	18 (100.00)	76 (100.00)	36 (100.00)	15 (100.00)	176 (100.00)	252 (100.00)

Note-Those workers who got some professional qualification, their basic educational qualifications are not shown in the table.

- Figures in the parentheses refer to percentages

Source- Primary Survey

places located away from the city 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 at places located nearby as compared to the places located away from the city was due to relatively higher literacy rate of workers residing nearby cities. In addition the proximity of a village to the city benefited

them in getting exposure and training in new occupations under this category. They also got relatively better knowledge to get credit from formal sources of credit. Similarly, relatively a higher proportion of labourers in 'Government/semi Government services' at places located nearby the city was due to a higher literacy rate of the withdrawn workers at these places than those residing as located remotely from the city. Moreover, most of them were belonging to Schedule Casts (Table 3) and Government offered them a reserved quota (Article 14 read with Article 16 of the Indian Constitution) in Government and semi Government recruitment schemes. The category of employment, i.e., 'others' has been adopted by more number of labour households at places located away from city than the places located nearby from the city. The labour households found employment opportunities in 'others' category of employment as these opportunities were easily available at their native place and required relatively less skill.

Main Conclusion and Policy Implications

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. 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. Besides, the weak economic status of almost all the WALHs and lack of professional qualifications were major causes of low level of employment in 'independent occupations started taking financial help' and 'Government/semi Government service', respectively. Though, Jalandhar district provided better employment opportunities in 'industrial sector' than Bathinda district. As many as 53.94 per cent of the total sampled WALHs from Bathinda district were found to be illiterate and even out of literates not a single labourer was professionally qualified for any field. Moreover, 36.50 per cent of the total sampled withdrawn workers were illiterate in both the districts taken collectively, due to which they could not get better wage earning jobs.

Regarding structure of employment of WALHs at places located away and nearby their main cities 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 may be due to comparatively a higher literacy rate of the withdrawn workers in these places. Further, most of them were belonging to SCs, and Government offered them a reserved quota in Government and semi Government recruitment schemes. The category of employment, i.e., 'others' has been adopted by higher proportion of labour households in places located far off as compared to the places located nearby the city. The labour households found employment opportunities in 'others' category of employment as these opportunities were easily available at their native place and required relatively less skill.

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. There should be development of cottage and small scale industries in rural Punjab. 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.

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