Chapter-IV
CHAPTER-IV

DEVELOPMENT OF FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY IN AGRA

AGRA: A BRIEF PROFILE

Agra is famous all over the world not only for the beauty of Taj, but also for footwear production. Agra is the goal of a pilgrimage to the creative best. Craftsmen, who are descendants of those who worked under the Mughals, know Agra for its superb inlay work on marble and soapstone. Though its political significance ended with the transfer of the capital to Delhi in 1634 by Shah Jahan, its architectural heritage and artistic crafts have definitely secured international fame. Besides the Taj, Agra is also famous far and wide for its carpets, gold thread embroidery and particularly for leather footwear.¹

1. Location:

The district of Agra is situated in the extreme southwest corner of the State of Uttar Pradesh. It lies between the parallels of 26° 44' and 27° 25' north latitude, and 77° 26' and 78° 32' east meridians of longitude. Rajasthan bounds it on the west; it is bounded on the south for some distance also by Rajasthan, and thereafter by Madhya Pradesh. The district of Firozabad bounds it on the east and it is surrounded by districts of Mathura and Etah in the north.

2. History:

Agra, the royal seat and capital of yesteryears, the city of Mughal, might and splendour is only 200 kilometers away from
Delhi. Agra derives its name from Agra Vans (Aelo Grove), where Lord Krishna used to sport with his female friends in his boyhood and early youth on the banks of river Yamuna. Agra’s chequered history goes back to the times of Mahabharata, but its modern history begins from 1505 when Sultan Sikander Lodi of Afghan Dynasty chose it as his capital city. Sikandrabad, the place where Akbar is buried, takes its name after him.

It is during the Mughal era that Agra gained the greatest eminence. Babar defeated Sikander Lodi at Panipat in 1526 and founded the modern Agra in 1558 on the left bank of the river Yamuna. Akbar built the fort and part of the palace inside it. The famous edifices of Fatehpur Sikri were also his creation. Jahangir, his successor, held his court most of the time.

With Shah Jahan begins the greatest epoch of Mughal architecture. Shah Jahan built the master piece Taj Mahal, besides many other such magnificent buildings, such as, Jama Masjid and Red Fort at Delhi, and Moti Masjid at Agra.

After emperor Shah Jahan’s death, Delhi became the seat of government and Agra gradually lost its political and cultural eminence, but never the magnificence of its monuments. In 1803, it came into British possession.

During the first unsuccessful uprising and revolt of 1857, Agra did not play any significant part. The present day Agra is like any other leading Indian city and a business and tourist centre and still retains the grandeur and elegance of its historical monuments. Agra went ahead in footwear production leaving other cities behind. Nowadays, it has become a prominent centre for footwear production.
3. **Languages:**

Main languages spoken in Agra are Hindi, Punjabi, English, Sindhi and Urdu.

4. **Geographical and Physical Features:**

The district is divided into four parts separated by important rivers. First part comprises of tehsil Etmadpur which lies to the north of Yamuna, the second lies between the Yamuna and the Utangan, covering tehsils Agra, Kiraoli, Fathehabad and more than half of tehsil Kheragarh. The third lies in the southeast between the Yamuna and Chambal, comprising the whole of Bah tehsil. The last is the remaining tail-like portion of tehsil Kheragarh, cut off by the river Utangan. An off-shoot of Vindhyan hills stretches into tehsils Kiraoli and Kheragarh. Fatehpur Sikri in Kiraoli tehsil is famous for its red rocks. There is limited forest area in the district. The important trees are babool, ber, neem and peepal.

5. **Rivers, Canals and Waterways:**

The important rivers of the district are the Yamuna and its two large affluents, the Chambal and the Utangan. The Yamuna first touches the frontier of the district in the north of Kiraoli and for some distance separates tehsil Kiraoli and Agra from the Mathura district. The Chambal rises in the northern slopes of the Vindhyan hills near Mhow in Madhya Pradesh and enters the district at Samauna in the extreme west of tehsil Bah. It flows along the boundary as far as Etawah through its famous ravines, where it joins the Yamuna. The Utangan enters the district in Kiraoli tehsil. For the first 14 miles, it follows roughly the boundary between Agra and Bharatpur, thereafter it crosses the Kheragarh tehsil and flows along the Dholpur border. It re-enters
the district near village Nibhora and separating Fatehabad from Bah joins Yamuna ten miles east of Fatehabad.

6. **Towns and Villages Around:**

   The district at present comprises of 6 tehsils and 15 Community Development Blocks. It has 15 towns and 940 villages (904 inhabited villages and 36 uninhabited villages).³

7. **Population**: Approximately 3,611,301⁴

8. **Area**: 4,027 square kilometers.⁵

9. **Transport Linkage:**

   Agra has linkage with rest of India by airways, railways and roadways. It has an airport 9 kilometer southwest of the city. It is called Kheria Airport. Aircrafts of Indian Airlines and Sita World Travel carry the air traffic that includes passengers and cargo. Flight bookings are made at the Indian Airlines office situated quite adjacent to Hotel Clarks-Shiraz, which is a luxury hotel of the five star standard. Most of the dignitaries stay here and avail the air travel facilities offered by the nearby airlines offices.

   On the railway map of India, Agra lies on the main route of Delhi joined to both South and West India. All trains going to South and West India stop and pass through Agra. It has also a well-connected route to eastern part of India joining Bihar, West Bengal, Assam and other States. In fact, it is a big railway junction of the Northern Railway.

   The city has several railway stations, viz., Agra Cantonment, Idgah, Agra Fort, Yamuna Bridge (across the river), Agra city (north of town), and Raja Ki Mandi (northwest of old Agra).

   The bus station of Idgah is the main roadways centre. Most buses leave from Idgah Bus Terminal, situated a short distance northeast of Agra Cantonment Railway station. The roadways
transport serves important cities of India in different States, viz., Ajmer, Bikaner, Delhi, Varanasi, Gwalior, Jaipur, Bharatpur, Jhansi, Mathura and Udaipur. Buses to various cities start from the Agra Fort Bus Stand located in southwest of the Agra Fort. Deluxe buses to Jaipur, Delhi and elsewhere leave frequently from other places.

Despite all the rip-offs, cycle, rickshaw are still a good way to get around the city. Auto-rickshaw can be hired. Agra is easy to zip around by bicycle; there are rental shops all around, including Shah Jahan Lodge in Taj Ganj. One can hire a car and driver from any one of the numerous places.

10. Commercial Centre:

Agra is one of the largest commercial centres of Uttar Pradesh and a lot of business activities take place in a number of merchandize. Besides footwear, Agra is a trading centre of cloth, small engineering products, etc.

Agra is also one of the oldest centres of education in the country. The Agra University, now named as Bhimrao Ambedkar University, is situated here. There is also one of the oldest medical colleges in Agra. Students from inside India and outside the country come here to pursue different courses of study in the university and the medical college.

Confectionary of Agra called Petha (a sweet dish) is famous all over the world. It has become a big trading centre for this sweet. Agra has worked hard to rediscover itself by recycling the foreign exchange, it earns from tourists, into industrial development and investing the same. This has brought economic progress and has led to growth of Agra into a city of over three million.
EVOLUTION OF AGRA AS A FOOTWEAR CENTRE

The history of the origin of footwear industry in Agra is very old. It is related with the Mughal reign. First footwear in India was made in Agra. The art and culture of footwear industry was given birth by Akbar the Great. In 1530, Babur, the Great Mughal emperor, established the Mughal rule and culture in India. The spice called ‘Hing’ was a major ingredient of the food of Mughals, which was then imported from Afghanistan and Iran in leather containers that are generally called ‘Mushak’. These were then dumped.

The leather containers gave an idea to those craftsmen of Agra to design and use leather for protecting their feet. That is why the main market of footwear is now called ‘Hing Ki Mandi’. The models of footwear in ‘Mempton Institute of England’ can prove that the initial design of footwear in India was made in Agra. The footwear industry has been maintaining its value and importance since that time till today.

FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY IN MUGHAL PERIOD

The footwear industry in Agra has an old link with the Mughal period. During that period, the industry has seen the splendours of the Mughals and the entrenchment of the mighty British Empire, which gave it a fresh lease of life. Even today, Agra is a big centre of this industry.

The industry has prospered in the past on the grace of the courts and the elites of this region. It has served them with all delicacies. The embroidered footwear with velvet and silk cloth studded with golden threads were among the much-talked articles of the time. These were known to be ‘Salem Shahis’. However, it
does not mean that the industry did not care for the interest of the
general people. The common mass were also getting products of
their liking that were suitable to their social status.

But it cannot be denied that under monarchy, the industry
was adopting a discriminatory policy of production. Even today,
when the socio-economic cum political pattern has vastly changed,
the industry still follows the discriminating production policy as
the society today is very much segmented into the rich and poor.

FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY UNDER THE EARLY
BRITISH RULE

It is revealing from the above description that the footwear
industry in Agra grew under the patronage of the courts and it has
suffered setbacks with the decline of the dynasty. So, with the
withering of the Mughul rule, the industry too declined and it
waited for the rise of another rule.

When the Britishers established themselves, the industry
once again became a place of humming and bustling. During this
period, this industry gained a phenomenal rise. With the settlement
of the British forces at Delhi and Agra, the demand for the
footwear started increasing. The result was that the patterns of
footwear underwent a change. The British style footwear came in
fashion and the demand for such types of footwear was so much
pressing that it was not possible for the British manufacturing
firms alone to face this increasing demand of footwear. The
demand was ever increasing and this brought the involvement of
the indigenous producers in the footwear making business.

Footwear with country made (generally bag tanned) leather
was made in indigenous styles. The rich used the indigenous
footwear prepared from velvet cloth richly embroidered with silk
or gold threads. This was the special product of cottage industry in Delhi and Agra in those days.

Later, using raw hides and skins, artisans in Agra first started preparing English style footwear and assisting the footwear makers who came with English Army. They took over Agra Fort and started staying there. These local artisans very soon learned the techniques of footwear making and started fulfilling Army’s requirements. They also started modern English style footwear for local market.

They soon mastered the new techniques of producing British styled footwear. Their rapid adaptation to new techniques and changed environment provided them a better economic life. This proved good as their earnings increased tremendously, their standard of living went up and their business expanded.

They started producing footwear for people of different age groups. The variety in production was also brought in. The canvas was introduced for packing upper of the footwear and turning leather for the sole. So, the footwear gained popularity specially because of providing new designed footwear at unaltered cheap cost.

During the British rule, the leather industry progressed with a steady pace and the footwear was the main to contribute to this recovery. During this period, the leather industry did not remain restricted to footwear alone. Its area of work increased vastly. Many other articles, such as, leather bags, belts, buttons and suitcases, etc., came to limelight and captured the eyes of the consumers who always kept their eye over novelties.
FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY IN AGRA AFTER INDEPENDENCE

The independence of the country left a sorry note over the footwear industry of the city. In the pre-independence era, the Muslims largely manned the footwear industry, but the partition of the country resulted in the mass exodus of the Muslims and this shattered the industry. Many renowned establishments were closed down and the production suffered. But the National Government through its planned policy reviewed the industry.6

A number of significant steps were taken to revive the industry. The government established institutions to provide the industry with financial, technical, training and marketing support. Important among these institutions are discussed below:

1. Central Footwear Training Institute (CFTI):

The Government of India established CFTI at Sikandra, Industrial Area in Agra under Small Industries Development Organization, Ministry of Industries, with financial assistance from Ford Foundation, United States of America.

Initially, this institute provided and is still providing trained manpower to the footwear industry. Thousands of people got benefited in various ways from this institute. Designing, physical testing, insole making, training in various activities ranging from pattern cutting to grading, machine operations, product development, finishing and fashion prediction were among the several activities that this unit did. These functions are still performed by this institute.

Besides performing the above functions, the institute helps the industry in designing, range building, pattern cutting and grading activities for the manufacture of footwear. The institute
has made a great contribution in the product quality and product development. It used the capabilities of manufacturers fully and properly.

CFTI in Agra started extending its service to the artisans’ level also. With highly subsidized rate of job work, the artisans started feeling confident of making good quality shoes at a rate which made them earn much more than what they were earning in the past.

CFTI understood the requirements of manufacturers, established the techniques to make them more efficient, bridged the gap between demand and supply and also provided the right infrastructure to make them face the competition more efficiently. This institute in Agra is doing all this still today.

It was on 1st Jan 1996, when the ‘Central Footwear Training Centre’, was converted into ‘Central Footwear Training Institute’, as a Government of India Society, under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary cum Development Commissioner (Small Scale Industry), with an objective of quicker implementation of managerial decisions to make it more proactive for the industry rather than reactive.

Experts from different trade often visited and still visit this institute to update and share the latest happenings in various fields related to footwear.

Quick and prompt service at an affordable cost and through professionalism is the buzzword in this institute. Today also, it is helping a lot to footwear manufacturers. Moreover, it is also improving the quality and design of footwear and introducing new techniques of production, such as, modern machines of footwear production, use of CAD in shoe making, etc.^{7}
2. **Leather Development and Marketing Corporation (LAMCO):**

LAMCO was established to assist the footwear industry in Agra. Uttar Pradesh State Leather Development and Marketing Corporation proved very beneficial for small-scale units. It developed new designs of footwear. The endeavours of the corporation have been fruitful and the industry has been making strides under its patronage. The Corporation has been assigned the following objectives, which it performed to re-establish the footwear industry in Agra. The corporation is performing these functions even today.

1) LAMCO is operating a shoe Last bank and a raw material depot from which it supplies shoe lasts on usual basis, and raw material, such as, leather of all types, thread laces, lining material, eyelets, etc., on credit to small artisan units.

2) Leather finishing and other such facilities are made available to the small artisans at nominal charges at various Common Facilities Centres established by LAMCO in various districts of the State.

3) The Corporation provides marketing facilities to the small artisans. For household products, it has established its own depot in major cities, besides developing a good dealer network. In case of institutional products, LAMCO procures orders from various organizations through tender and other means, and makes supplies after getting these produced in small units in order to order basis.

4) The Corporation has established a direct Vulcanising and High Frequency Flow Moulds Plant and Modern Design
Development Centre for catering to the quality upgradation and design development needs of the small units.

5) It conducts training programmes for the traditional artisans for making them aware of modern production techniques and generates skill upgradation.8


NLI, established at Nunuhai in Agra, also helped a lot in this direction for the development of leather and leather products. Various training programmes by experts were conducted by this Institute. Even today, it is helping the footwear manufacturers in Agra.

4. Bharat Leather Corporation (BLC):

BLC also assisted in the development of leather products. It utilized the leather thoroughly in the State of Uttar Pradesh by providing it to footwear manufacturers. BLC in Agra is also assisting the footwear manufacturers even today.

Thus, with the cooperation of the government, the industry again emerged with a great promise to play an effective role in the economic restructuring of the country. The manufacturers fully exploited the domestic market and also explored the foreign markets. The large-scale exports from Agra to Russia and East European countries provided a further fillip to the Indian footwear industry. From cottage and small-scale units, there came up large-scale footwear manufacturing units in Agra in order to meet the growing demand of footwear.9

MODERNIZATION IN FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY

With the help and assistance of the Government of India, through the above mentioned agencies and institutions, the leather industry in Agra made rapid strides towards becoming a
modernized industry. It came out of the huts of the artisans and adorned the premises of the rich, who had both the ideas and the capital with them. They had talent to undertake risk and transact business on a large-scale. Among this class of persons, M/s Das Brothers, Pyare Krishna and Mohan Krishna are the pioneers of this industry. They gave status to the industry by setting up ‘Stuart Boot and Equipment Factory’. They also turned their eyes on the processing of leather and set up a factory along with the Taj Tannery in the vicinity of the historical monument of love, the Taj Mahal. In this way, the ‘Factory System’ paved its way into the leather industry.

Indeed, there was a great change in the organizational set up of the footwear industry. The individual efforts gave a way to corporate endeavour. The process of modernization continued unabated under the inspirations of the pioneers. While picking up the clue, Mr. Dar Sayed Musa Raza, introduced machines in the footwear industry. Production by machines enhanced the output, quality and finishing of the product which also pushed up the demand. The demand for the Agra footwear increased tremendously from far and near areas.

The market of Agra footwear reached the eastern outskirts of the country, such as, Burma, Sri Lanka and the Gulf countries. With the introduction of mechanical devices in the footwear making, the leather industry underwent a phenomenal progress. All essentials of the development were present in the industry. There was caliber, honesty, and sincerity of purpose, new ideas and the flow of capital. All these qualities were used and they brought for the optimum results to the industry. The entrepreneurs of the time were present to see the progress going around them and they established contacts with foreign countries to secure novelties.
The industry also spread in one of the parts of Agra, known as Dayalbagh, where one of the religious organizations came out with socio-economic experiments. Under this programme, the people of Dayalbagh developed both agriculture and industry in the city. They started their industrial pursuit at the time when it was not conducive to any economic development. It was around thirties of the past century when they came out with their industrial plan.

There was world-wide depression and economic activities were at their lowest ebb. But in a masterly manner, they carved their way out of the ordeals and emerged to be a national contributory to the leather industry of the town.

Dayalbagh gave new dimensions to the industry by using waste material for the production of bye-products, such as, leather buttons. However, footwear remained the main product of this unit of the leather industry of the city. The Dayalbagh footwear industry laid emphasis on the attributes of good quality and durability. This paid huge dividend to the industry as it earned enormous goodwill.

Dayalbagh also entered into the processing fields and established its own tannery. They also imparted technical training to workers and artisans in their own leather schools. At present, the tannery is closed under the Pollution Control Act.¹⁰

The leather industry of Agra today is a mechanized industry with abundant skilled labour and other infrastructure facilities. Its product, predominantly the footwear, is of a quality second to none in the world.
CLASSIFICATION OF FOOTWEAR UNITS IN AGRA

Agra is the main centre of footwear in the Northern part of India. The industry is in the form of small-scale and household units, registered companies, individually owned by sole traders. In fact, the industry is mostly in the form of cottage units where different types of footwear and footwear components are produced in households and sold to big manufacturers on daily basis in the market.

These units of footwear production in Agra are mainly located at Nai Ki Mandi, Tajganj, Bodla, Jagdishpura, Raja Mandi, Shahganj, Nanuhai, Loha Mandi, Chakkipat, Mantola, Hing Ki Mandi, and Sadar Bhatti.

The footwear industry in Agra can be classified in the following three groups:

1) Leather tanneries where raw material (leather) was prepared, but nowadays, all the tanneries in Agra are closed under Pollution Control Act.

2) Footwear factories, which are engaged in manufacturing of footwear and footwear components.

3) Leather goods units where suitcases, belts, ladies purses, etc., are produced.

Agra is the greatest market for closed shoes (finished and unfinished) in Asia. There are generally four types of units—which are producing footwear in Agra. These are as follows:

1) Large-scale and registered companies that are producing footwear for national and international market, such as, Neelson International, Kapsons International, Foot Style, etc.
2) Organized and registered small-scale units that are producing footwear for local and national markets, viz., J. K. Enterprises, Hero Footwear Factory, etc.

3) Cottage unregistered units that have average level of production. A large number of them are producing footwear in residential houses and are supplying to local market, viz., Manoj Footwear, Saheb Singh, etc.

4) Dalia wale (basket wale) that produce nominal number of footwear per day. They put it in a basket and carry to the local market to sell them. Some local manufacturers come under this category.

The main market for selling and purchasing footwear is Hing Ki Mandi in Agra. Everyday buyers and sellers from different parts of the country meet here and carry out the business transactions in bulk. The chief mode of marketing of footwear is through commission agents. The number of registered companies, unregistered units and capital investment is given in the following table.

**TABLE-14**

**Number of Footwear Units and Capital Investment in Agra Footwear Industry**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registered Companies</td>
<td>1600-1700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unregistered Units</td>
<td>6000-7000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Investment</td>
<td>Rs. 6,567 lakhs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Central Footwear Training Institute, Agra.

The table given above shows the number of registered companies and unregistered units in Agra. It is evident from the table that the number of registered companies in Agra is about one fourth of the unregistered units. The number of registered
companies in Agra is 1600-1700 while that of unregistered units stands at 6000-7000. Let us have a look on the newly established units in Agra in the last decade.

The table given below reveals the number of units established in Agra during the last ten years.

**TABLE-15**

**Number of Footwear Units Established in Agra during the Last Ten Years**

(Decade: 1992-2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Registered Companies</th>
<th>70-75</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Small-Scale and Cottage Units</td>
<td>900-1000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *District Industrial Centre, Agra.*

The above table shows new established footwear units in Agra during the last ten years. It is evident from the table that during the last ten years about 70-75 registered companies and 900-1,000 unregistered units have been established in Agra.

**PRESENT POSITION OF FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY IN AGRA**

Footwear industry of Agra is the traditional, hereditary and main industry of this historic city. The leather manufacture in Agra includes a wide range of leather footwear, footwear uppers and other footwear components. Besides footwear, production of purses, bags, and garments has also been started, but it has not been of importance in comparison to footwear. Among the major footwear products, closed shoes and shoe uppers are produced in Agra on a large scale.
Every person, whether rich or poor, young or aged, uses footwear. Agra fulfills the footwear requirement of national and international market. There is a lot of variety for consumers in Agra footwear market. There are 5,000 shops of footwear in Agra. Everybody, rich or poor, can purchase footwear from Agra according to his pocket size. Even the big and renowned dealers of footwear get the supplies in a vast range from Agra. In fact, no retail shop can function without the Agra leather footwear. Today, Agra is an industrialized city and the dirty and polluted water of river Yamuna proves its industrial character.

The pattern of footwear industry in the city is that of a mixture of small-scale units and large-scale units producing footwear with the help of mechanical devices. Thus, footwear industry of Agra comprises cottage units, small-scale units and registered companies.

In cottage units, the leather shoes are mostly handmade by small artisans while mechanized footwear is manufactured in a few big factories. However, the production of leather footwear is carried out on a large scale in small co-operative units scattered in every part of Agra. Lakhs of artisans are working in this trade and practically every man in Agra is attached with this industry in someway or the other.

The small units usually employ almost all the members of the family. But it is very regretful that the Government has not deemed it fit to declare this industry as a ‘Cottage Industry’ and to extend to this trade the benefits enjoyed by the cottage industry in India.

In fact, to a marked extent, the industry largely exists in the houses of workers. The strength of such workers comes to 60% of the total working force in Agra. They work at their residence for
the whole day and then go to the market for the disposal of the commodities they produce. A few of them make footwear on contract basis while a small fraction of them is engaged as regular workers in the large establishments.

Many large-scale manufacturers are using modern machinery due to increasing demand of footwear in the international market. Some large-scale units are also using CAD and CAM techniques in manufacturing of footwear. The scholar visited ‘Fashion Footwear Factory’ of Agra and saw that footwear designs were being produced with computer.

The major institutes, which are engaged in designing and manufacturing of footwear, are as follows:

1. Central Footwear Training Institute (CFTI), Sikandra, Industrial Area, Agra
2. National Leather Development Programme, (NLDP), Sadar Bhatti, Agra
3. Council for Leather Exports (CLE), Sanjay Place, Agra
4. Government Leather Institute (GLI), Khandari, Agra
5. Shoe Design Centre, LAMCO, Sadar Bhatti, Agra

Export Promotion Industrial Park at Mathura Road in Agra is presently under construction.

TANNERIES

There are seven tanneries in Agra. Out of these, six tanneries were producing leather upper part of footwear and one tannery was producing leather for sole making. At present, all the tanneries are completely closed under Pollution Control Act. The tanneries have been closed for the safety of Taj Mahal. These tanneries are as follows:

1) Agra Tannery
2) Wasan Tannery
3) Mahajan Tannery
4) Taj Tannery
5) *Dayalbagh Tannery
6) *Park Exports
7) *Hits Exports

*The footwear manufacturers owned these tanneries combining with their footwear factories as the source of raw leather.

The closure of tanneries has created shortage in the availability of raw materials in Agra itself. Therefore, the Agra footwear manufacturers have to purchase leather from Kanpur, Kolkata, Chennai and Jalandhar. Nowadays, Agra footwear manufacturers are using Micro Foam in place of leather because of shortage of leather.

PRODUCTION OF AGRA FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY

In the State of Uttar Pradesh, Agra is the leading centre for production and export of footwear. It produces all kinds of footwear, such as, Moccasins, Derby, Classic Boots, Sandals, etc., for men, women and children from cow, buffalo and goat leathers. Agra is generally famous for closed footwear that are produced in Agra on a large scale. According to CLE, about 2,00,000 pairs of footwear are produced in Agra per day. Footwear uppers are also produced in Agra on a large scale. But chappals are not produced much in Agra.

About 30,000 small manufacturers make 10-12 pairs of footwear daily and sell in the local market. There are over 50 modern production units with per day manufacturing capacity of about 2000-3000 pairs.
A large number of small units in Agra produce footwear for all India level marketing organization, such as, Bata, Carona, etc. Approximately 40% of the total footwear marketed by Bata comes from Agra.\(^\text{19}\)

Footwear produced in Agra is always in demand because the cost is low as well as it is durable, but the demand decreases in rainy season. It is called dull season. The demand of plastic footwear is high in this season because it does not get damaged in the rainy season. Leather footwear catches moisture in rainy season, therefore, the demand is low in this season.\(^\text{20}\) 60% of footwear produced in Agra is used for domestic consumption and 40% is exported.\(^\text{21}\)

**EMPLOYMENT IN FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY OF AGRA**

Footwear industry in Agra is spread in almost every part of Agra; therefore, many persons are employed in it. The employment in footwear industry is given below:

**TABLE-16**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment (in Registered Companies)</th>
<th>75,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employment (in Unregistered Units)</td>
<td>1,25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,00,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Central Footwear Training Institute, Agra.*

The table given above shows the employment in Agra footwear industry. It is revealed from the table that about 75,000 persons are engaged in registered companies while employment in unregistered units is about 1,25,000. Thus, total number of workers in Agra footwear industry is about 2,00,000.\(^\text{22}\)
In Agra, nearly 60% of the population is dependent on the footwear trade, predominantly in hand made cottage footwear industry.\(^{23}\)

**EXPORT OF FOOTWEAR FROM AGRA**

Earlier footwear was produced in Agra to meet the local demand, but now it is also exported. The estimated shoe business from Agra is more than 100 million US\$ every year.\(^{24}\) The annual export of footwear from Agra is about Rs. 470 crores.\(^{25}\)

The major importing countries of footwear from Agra are United States of America, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Australia, Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, etc.\(^{26}\)

For increasing exports, the small industrial units are using new techniques of production and modern machines.

Former USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) had been the major importer of shoes from Agra till 1990’s. This led to creation of huge production capacities mainly for shoe uppers in Agra. After the disintegration of USSR and opening of their market economy, the pattern of their buying also changed considerably. This situation served as a severe setback to the Agra footwear industry as it lost export of over Rs. 400 crores for shoe uppers and shoes taken together at one go. The industry was badly shaken. However, this compelled the footwear manufacturers to step forward their production capabilities matching to the demands of West European buyers by infusing designing capabilities, upgrading technical skills of their man-power, as also for modernizing their production units.\(^{27}\)

After the disintegration of Russia, new markets, such as, Germany, Europe, etc., were explored. Today, Europe is the largest buyer of footwear from Agra.\(^{28}\)

Let us see the export of footwear from Agra region from the year 1992-93 to 2001-02 in the table given on the next page.
### TABLE-17

**Export of Footwear from Agra Region from the Year 1992-93 to 2001-02.**

(Value in million US$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Export of Footwear</th>
<th>Percent Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992-93</td>
<td>23.13</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-94</td>
<td>23.46</td>
<td>1.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-95</td>
<td>37.27</td>
<td>58.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-96</td>
<td>46.84</td>
<td>25.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>37.75</td>
<td>-19.41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>43.90</td>
<td>16.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>48.83</td>
<td>11.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>54.74</td>
<td>12.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>65.75</td>
<td>20.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>98.13</td>
<td>49.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>479.80</strong></td>
<td><strong>+175.55</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Council For Leather Exports, Agra.*

The table given above shows the export of footwear from the Agra region during the last ten years. It is evident from the table that the export of footwear from Agra region increased by 75 million US$ over the course of the period 1992-93 to 2001-02. There is a decline of 19.41% in the year 1996-97. This was because of closure of tanneries that affected the export badly. But the footwear manufacturers started purchasing it from other places and the export of footwear again increased. The table clearly shows the increase of 16.29%, 11.23%, 12.10%, 20.11% and 49.25% respectively from the year 1997-98 to 2001-02. The export during the current year, i.e., 2002-03 is Rs. 560 crores (119.15
million US$) approximately, which is 21.42% higher from the previous year.

1. Share of Agra Footwear Industry in India’s Exports:

Now let us have a glance on the share of Agra in total exports of footwear.

**TABLE-18**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Export of Leather Footwear from India (in million US$)</th>
<th>Export of Leather Footwear from Agra (in million US$)</th>
<th>Share of Agra City in Total Exports (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1992-1993</td>
<td>164.23</td>
<td>23.13</td>
<td>14.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td>204.25</td>
<td>23.46</td>
<td>11.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-1995</td>
<td>302.49</td>
<td>37.27</td>
<td>12.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995-1996</td>
<td>340.44</td>
<td>46.84</td>
<td>13.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1997</td>
<td>337.45</td>
<td>37.75</td>
<td>11.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-1998</td>
<td>281.90</td>
<td>43.90</td>
<td>15.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-1999</td>
<td>320.25</td>
<td>48.83</td>
<td>15.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>377.39</td>
<td>54.74</td>
<td>14.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>381.37</td>
<td>65.75</td>
<td>17.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>395.39</td>
<td>98.13</td>
<td>24.82%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** As Shown in Table 12 and 17.

The table given above shows the share of Agra in total export of footwear during the last ten years. It is revealed from the table that the share of Agra footwear industry in India’s leather footwear export is increasing. The average share of footwear export from Agra stands at 15.02% of the total footwear exports of India. In value terms, share of Agra in total export in footwear of
India has increased 10.74% during the last ten years. However, the share of footwear is staggering from the year 1993-94 to 1999-2000. There are many reasons responsible for it. These are as follows:

1) All the tanneries are closed in Agra, so there is a problem of lack of raw materials.

2) The Agra footwear industry has to face stiff competition from low to upper price segmented markets like China, Taiwan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, etc.

3) Agra has to face severe competition from Kanpur also. Although Kanpur was earlier famous only for saddlery and harness products, but today it has also become famous for footwear production. Kanpur is called the leather capital of Northern India. The leather chappals of Kanpur are also very famous. Moreover, all the tanneries in Kanpur are not closed. Hence, there is no shortage of raw materials.

4) There is absence of newcomers in Agra. The old artisans are not aware of the new techniques of production, and if they are aware of new techniques, they are reluctant to leave old techniques.

5) Finance is not easily available for Agra footwear manufacturers, so they cannot produce many pairs of footwear at one time. This affects the export.

6) The packing of product is not attractive and there is marketing problem also.

7) There are no footwear design institutes in Agra. Although CFTI and NLDP have helped to improve design of the products, yet there is lack of FDDI in Agra.
The second meeting of the Leather Development Council was held in Kanpur for advising the State Government on the development of leather industries and export promotion of leather and leather products. The Minister for Small Industries, Mr. Saraswati Pratap Singh, presided over the meeting. The following points emerged in the meeting to increase the export of leather and leather items:

- Construction and repairs of the roads in industrial areas and export intensive areas will be taken up on top priority by the local bodies/State Government.
- Electric feeders having more than 75% industrial load to be exempted from power cuts.
- The State Government will approach the Government of India to start regular air services from Agra and Kanpur.
- CLRI has submitted a proposal to Ministry of Commerce for establishing an International Standard Testing Laboratory for footwear, especially for safety footwear.
- The exporters hailed the export policy of the Government of Uttar Pradesh and felt that the measures had created a healthy environment for export growth.
- Based on the CLRI technology for carcass utilization, efforts are being made to set up such centres throughout the State.
- In Agra an EPIP (Export Promotion Industrial Park) is being developed by UPSIDC (Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Corporation).
- Strengthening of leather technology department will be taken up with the assistance of NLDP.
- The exporters desired that the 'export houses' should also be eligible for assistance under Export Freight Rationalization.
Scheme of the State Government. The State Government will consider this demand.

- For eco-label finished leather, consent from Pollution Control Board is a must.
- Telecom Department will be requested to sort out the problems being faced by telephone users in Agra and Kanpur so that the Internet facilities of VSNL (Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited) could be better utilized by the leather exporters.

WEAKNESSES OF AGRA FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY

The Agra footwear industry is not a fully developed industry. There are many weaknesses in this industry, which hinder its growth. These weaknesses are as follows:

1. Use Of Primitive Methods of Production
2. Absence of Newcomers and Marketing Professionals
3. Low Quality of Hides and Skins
4. Limited Range of Footwear
5. Uneducated Entrepreneurs
6. Absence Of Quality Control Measures and Scientific Management
7. Lack of Product Design and Development Centres
8. Untrained Labour

1. **Use of Primitive Methods of Production:**

Footwear Industry of Agra, being a traditional industry, uses primitive methods in producing footwear. People have been manufacturing footwear for a long time. The child gets the training of making footwear from his father or from other members of his family. He does not join any footwear institution for it. This is the reason that the technique of production is also traditional. There is
outdated technology in many factories. The result is that the
design is old, hence, the demand of the footwear in the
international market is also low. Footwear manufacturers cannot
face the competition in the world market. The worst result is that
export does not increase rapidly.

Small manufacturers use handcrafted technology in spite of
knowing the fact that machines can be used. They are not aware
that machines give smoothness and finishing to the product.
Further, computer helps in developing new designs for it. In fact,
to effectively compete in the world market under growing
competition, the leather industry requires constant modernization
to be in a position to produce better quality product at cheaper
prices. Modernization is the need of the hour, especially for the
survival of the industry.

Modernization, in the context of small industries means
replacement of old machines, removal of obsolete technology and
equipments, and adoption of modern concepts in management,
productivity, marketing and market appraisal, both domestic and
foreign. It should include modernization of management
techniques, including attitudes, skills of personnel at all levels, of
products in terms of designs, standardization, modernization of
organizational structure and technology.

A large part of footwear manufacturers belong to small-scale
and cottage units. They adopt handcrafted technology. The people
engaged in hand made shoe sectors are economically very poor and
predominantly minority class people. The hand made shoe sector is
scattered in every corner of this city and most of the hand made
factories are actually situated in the residential areas.

The people, who are producing footwear at their homes, form
a group of 4 to 5 persons, or sometimes all the family members do
this work of producing footwear. A lot of women population is also earning their daily wages through this sector.

The condition of the hand made shoe industry in and around Agra, which was termed as Mecca not long before, is deteriorating over the years. Although during eighties, hand made footwear from Agra attracted huge business from the domestic and export market. Yet, today the demand of machine made products is increasing. Medium class factories in Agra are also not using the new techniques of production.

When the scholar visited 'Hero Footwear Factory', she noticed that old machines were being used in producing footwear and modern machines were not being used. Almost all the work of footwear production was carried on by manual labour. The traditional footwear manufacturers are unable to purchase modern machinery of production due to lack of finance.

But some of the large-scale manufacturers in Agra have started adopting new techniques of production. When the scholar visited 'Basant Overseas' in Agra, she saw that modern machines were being used. Some other large-scale manufacturers, such as, Amar Shoes and Leatherwares, Dawar Shoe Factory, etc., also use modern machinery and computer system to prepare latest design of footwear. They also consult about the design of the product from NLDP and CFTI. Unfortunately, only large-scale manufacturers in Agra are using new techniques of production.

The slow pace of modernization is there on account of low productivity and lack of quality control measures. In a fiercely competitive world, Agra's place in India can only be ensured if productivity increases substantially, i.e., in line with that of its competitors all over the globe. This can be done with the
introduction of new technology and continued upgradation of production techniques.\textsuperscript{34}

2. Absence of Newcomers and Marketing Professionals:

There is absence of newcomers in the footwear industry of Agra District. The industry has been developed as a traditional industry in which the children adopt their fathers' work. That is the reason that there is absence of newcomers in Agra.

Skilled and trained persons are not entering in this field. Moreover, if one gets training in footwear design and development, he does not want to establish his factory in Agra, or does not want to cooperate with the footwear manufacturers in Agra.

Further, there is lack of marketing professionals in Agra. Since most of the units are of localized nature and confined to small scale and cottage sector, hence, they are not in a position to employ the persons who have the marketing experience and expertise in the field because of financial constraints, as they operate at a very small margin. The entrepreneurs also do not possess adequate and up to date marketing information. They mainly depend upon the middlemen to sell their leather goods which is not advantageous, as substantial part of profit is shared by them.\textsuperscript{35}

3. Low Quality of Hides and Skins:

The quality is not good; this seems true, as the Indian hides and skins, to some extent, have been found to carry a number of ante-mortem and post-mortem defects. Animal husbandry practices are poor, animals are not vaccinated, care is not taken to avoid
stretches caused by shrubs/fences, and there is inadequate protection against sun blisters, lice and ticks, etc.

Further, carcasses are dragged to the places of disposal and poor flying and curing practices are adopted. These all things have resulted in inferior quality of hides and skins, which in turn results into poor quality of footwear.

4. **Limited Range of Footwear:**

Since the technique of production is old, hence, machines used in the footwear factories are outdated. That is why Agra footwear manufacturers produce limited range of footwear. It affects the export of footwear.

Generally, footwear of three colours is produced in Agra: black, brown and dark brown. Only a few large-scale manufacturers produce the footwear of other colours. They produce footwear in several designs, colours and look, and use latest techniques to develop the design of product. The demand of their product is also in international market. But the manufacturers producing footwear at their residential houses produce footwear of old design and sell it in local market. So, there is limited range of footwear in Agra. This is one of the greatest drawbacks of Agra footwear industry.

5. **Uneducated Entrepreneurs:**

The footwear industry, being traditional, is run by uneducated entrepreneurs. Most of the uneducated manufacturers are not adopting new techniques of production due to their illiteracy. Still, some persons do not force their children to go to school, thinking that they would earn their living by producing footwear.
The manufacturers, who are running their factories in their residential houses, are very poor. They are not able to send their children to school or in any training institute. Although the education in Government schools is not costly, yet they do not understand the importance of education. Because of their illiteracy, they produce the footwear of old design. The footwear produced by them is sold only in the local market.

Let us have a look on the number of illiterates and decadal decrease in illiterates in Agra.

**TABLE-19**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>No. of Illiterates 1991</th>
<th>No. of Illiterates 2001</th>
<th>Decadal Decrease in Illiterates</th>
<th>Absolute Decrease in Illiterates</th>
<th>Percentage Decrease in Illiterates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agra</td>
<td>1,121,127</td>
<td>1,052,618</td>
<td></td>
<td>68,509</td>
<td>6.11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Census of India, 2001.*

The above table shows the change in the number of illiterate persons in Agra in the last decade. It is evident from the table that there is decrease in the number of illiterate persons in ten years. Number of illiterate persons has gone down by 68,509, yet the decrease in percentage is only 6.11%.

6. Absence of Quality Control Measures and Scientific Management:

The machines used in footwear industry are outdated. Hence, the quality of the product is not good. Moreover, there is absence of quality control measures in footwear industry of Agra district. Therefore, the footwear produced in Agra is of low quality when compared to international market.

A large portion of footwear is produced in small-scale and
cottage units. The small-scale manufacturers cannot afford quality control measures. There is no FDDI in Agra, which may help in quality control and standardization of footwear. The Agra footwear manufacturers try to make design of footwear as is prevalent in foreign market, but attention is not paid on the improvement of quality. The result is that style and design of footwear is almost the same as foreign footwear but these are not as comfortable as foreign footwear.

There are many reasons behind low quality of the product. The major reason is the inferior quality of raw material used. Animal husbandry practices are not good; hence, the quality of raw material is not good. Another major reason responsible for it is that the majority of the people belong to medium class, not only in Agra, but all over India. Some of them are very poor. They cannot afford to buy costly footwear, so the manufacturers in Agra have to make footwear at lower cost. They cannot adopt quality control measures, as it becomes costly for them.

The footwear produced in Agra is durable and cheap. It is also demanded in foreign market, but if quality control measures are also adopted, the demand in international market will rise and India will be able to earn more foreign currency. Some famous companies like Liberty, Bata, etc., use quality control measures and standardization in footwear. The demand of their product is much in foreign market.

Scientific management is also not adopted in Agra. Today, footwear industry needs qualified personnel for research. Qualified persons are also needed for design and development of product. Although some people have devoted time in bringing new techniques of production and their efforts bore fruit, yet small-
scale manufacturers have not adopted it. Some techniques have also been brought from abroad, but the pace is very slow.

7. **Lack of Product Design and Development Centres**

There are a few centres in Agra which help in the development of footwear industry, viz., CFTI, NLDP, etc. CFTI is a training institute and NLDP is a leather development institute. Both these institutes help in the design and development of product, yet there is need of FDDI in Agra.

CFTI is situated in industrial area of Agra, while most of the factories of footwear are located in Hing Ki Mandi, Loha Mandi, Shahaganj, Bodla, Sadar Bhatti, etc. Although footwear is produced in almost every part of Agra, but only a few units are located in the industrial area. If one wants to get training, he cannot go so far. NLDP, situated at Sadar Bhatti is not far for footwear manufacturers, but it does not give training. It carries out research only. Hence, there is need of FDDI in Agra.

FDDI will help footwear manufacturers to learn the modern methods of footwear production and help to understand the proper procedure and latest techniques of production. In fact, there is no such institute even in India capable of providing training on the creative design of footwear. This is a major handicap. For some years to come, India may continue to depend upon designs to be provided by customers abroad, at least with regard to pattern making and pattern interpretation.

Only very recently, the industry has started taking initiatives in this direction with the establishment of Footwear Design and Development Institute-TATA Institute at Dewas in Madhya Pradesh and IILP (Indian Institute of Leather Products) at Chennai for providing such training. Not only there is need of FDDI in Agra but also a great need for a Research Institute like CLRI.
8. Untrained Labour

The footwear industry in Agra is facing shortage of trained manpower. Apart from machines, material and money, one of the major inputs in any industry is manpower. Manpower or human resource plays a vital role in the production and delivery of goods to optimum capacity. Most of the labour engaged in footwear industry is untrained, and therefore, cannot play any active role in the process of modernization.\(^{38}\)

It is a fact that an educated man performs his work better than an uneducated man. The modern footwear sector needs trained manpower for designing and product development. During the course of investigation, the scholar visited a number of factories some small-scale, some cottage units, while a few registered companies. A large number of labour working in those units were uneducated but they were doing their work properly. They were not trained in any institution but they got training from their work. It is not possible for a factory owner to provide training to all his labour but it is necessary at the supervisory level.

The labour in developed countries like America and Japan is not untrained because the manufacturers provide them training. Therefore, the quality of product produced in other countries is good. Some large-scale manufacturers provide training to labour at their own cost, but this is not possible for small-scale manufacturers.

Although, the city of Agra is still well known for its leather goods, especially for footwear all over the world, yet the industry needs Government’s care and attention.

The present chapter highlighted the development of Agra footwear industry as well as its weaknesses. The next chapter is devoted to the ‘Legislative Provisions for Labour Welfare, Safety and Security.’
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9. Central Footwear Training Institute, Agra

10. By courtesy of the Director, Information Centre, Agra (Uttar Pradesh)

11. Council for Leather Exports, Agra

12. District Industrial Centre, Agra

13. Central Footwear Training Institute, Agra


15. Central Footwear Training Institute, Agra

16. District Industrial Centre, Agra

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24. Council for Leather Exports, Agra
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