Chapter-VII
CHAPTER-VII
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Footwear industry of Agra provides employment to lakhs of people, and thousands of manufacturers have been engaged in this industry for a long time. Thousands of units have staked an investment of crores of rupees in this business.

The footwear industry of Agra occupies an important place in the national economy of India. All types of footwear are manufactured here. Both light and heavy types of shoes of various varieties are manufactured here. With the commencement of the rule of East India Company in India, the footwear industry in general, and Agra footwear industry in particular, underwent a radical change.

During the twentieth century, Agra footwear industry began to progress rapidly due to the availability of skilled artisans and efforts of men possessing extra-ordinary caliber. Since then, the industry has made rapid strides, and there has been all-round development of this industry. The production has gone up in quantitative terms. Changes have also come in the styles, designs and quality of the footwear manufactured in Agra. The shoe product of Agra is not only in demand domestically, but also internationally. Agra has thus become an important centre of India’s footwear export. The Agra footwear industry is also a foreign exchange earner and contributes in its own small measure to the national economy.

However, as the industry came of age, a large number of labour got absorbed into it. As footwear became the main profession of Agra walas, generation after generation of skilled
workers got absorbed into this profession. The industry today employs two lakh of persons of both gender—men and women. But women were found in residential units only.

Production units in the industry have also increased tremendously. These units are in the organized sector as registered entities, as well as in the unorganized sector as sole traders. The workers in these units are the most important asset for any organization and though the footwear industry developed by leaps and bounds, scant attention was paid by the employers to the working conditions and welfare of the human resource, over which their profit earning enterprise is dependent. The study has made an attempt to identify the problems of the human resource of the Agra footwear industry, i.e., the workers, and the following findings emerge as conclusion of the study.

**FINDINGS**

1) The leather industry of India is a traditional, hereditary and primitive industry. It is mainly in the form of cottage units. It developed fast after the First World War, which gave rise to the demand of army boots and other military leather goods. After the First World War, the demand for leather products decreased. But the outbreak of Second World War again gave a good fillip to the tanning industry, particularly chrome tanning. Chennai was the first to introduce chrome tanning in the country in 1993. After independence, the leather industry got government's patronage and various schemes were formulated for the development of this industry.

2) The place of Indian footwear industry is second in the world. The first place is occupied by China. The third, fourth and fifth place are occupied by Indonesia, Brazil and Italy.
respectively. The share of these countries in total world production of footwear is 60.65%, 7.85%, 6.09%, 6.01%, and 5.31% respectively.

3) Availability of sufficient quantity of raw material, as well as cheap labour force, has contributed a lot in the development of this industry. Further, government policy support and increasing demand of footwear in the foreign markets helped to develop it fast. Various institutions, like CFTI, CLRI, FDDI, NLDP, etc., have given strength to this industry.

4) A large number of tanneries are concentrated in the State of Tamil Nadu, where more than 50% tanneries of India are located. West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh occupy second and third place respectively. Many tanneries were closed in India, especially in Agra, under the Pollution Control Act, 1996. It affected the production badly. But tanneries were reopened and equipped with the mandated effluent treatment plants at many places. Unfortunately, the tanneries in Agra have not opened till now because of the safety of the Taj Mahal.

5) The Indian leather industry has the capacity to process about 1200 million pieces of hides and skins per year. 680 million pairs of footwear are produced annually in India. A large part (nearly 60-65%) of production of leather products is in the small/cottage sector. India produces more footwear for gents, while the world’s major production is in ladies footwear.

6) The footwear industry in India is labour oriented. It employs the workers mostly from the weaker section of the society. It is spread over the organized as well as unorganized sectors. The leather industry in India employs 2.5 million people.
7) During the last ten years, the export of leather products from India is fluctuating. The main reasons are: closure of tanneries in 1996 and increasing competition from China, where labour is very cheap. Germany is the major importing country. India exports 19.31% of leather products to Germany. United States of America, United Kingdom and Italy are other major buyers of footwear from India. The respective share of these countries stands at 15.98%, 13.19%, and 12.35%.

8) Footwear units of India are scattered in almost all the parts of the country. Kanpur, Chennai, Agra, Delhi, Karnal, Mumbai, Unnao, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Jalandhar, Noida, Ambur, Kolkata, Ranipet, Vaniyambadi, Trichy and Dindigul are the major footwear producing cities in India. But, the major concentration is in the northern region. Agra, in this region, is one of the largest footwear producers. The footwear industry of Agra is as old as Mughal rein. It grew under the patronage of courts. Closed shoes are produced in Agra on a large scale.

9) There are some weaknesses in Agra footwear industry, which have created hindrance in the development of this industry. These are: use of primitive methods in production, absence of marketing professionals, low quality of hides and skins, limited range of footwear, lack of scientific management, uneducated entrepreneurs, lack of product design and development centres, absence of quality control measures, etc.

10) In spite of the above-mentioned weaknesses and the mass closure of tanneries in Agra, the export of footwear from Agra during the last ten years has increased by 75 million
US$. The main reason is the constant efforts of skilled labour in Agra, who have always produced and are still producing good quality and durable footwear.

11) The number of such workforce in Agra footwear industry comes to 2 lakh. A large part of workers engaged in this industry are skilled artisans. Another class belongs to a community known as ‘Jatavas’. Only a few are villagers and others are semi urban and urban. The percentage of labour in Agra footwear industry comes to 8% of the total work force in India. Yet they are suffering from various problems, viz., problems related to working conditions, safety, welfare and social security, etc.

12) During the survey of 30 units, it is found that registered companies have proved better in providing necessary conditions of work to the labour in comparison to unregistered units, which consists of small-scale and cottage units. The manufacturers of registered companies, viz., Metro and Metro, Fashion Footwear, Basant Overseas, etc., are providing a few welfare facilities to their labour. But the manufacturers of unregistered units have not adopted all the necessary measures for the welfare of the labour. It is also found during the survey of 30 units that the labour engaged in unregistered units are facing many problems. It is noteworthy that the condition of labour working in units operating in residential houses is even more pitiable.

13) A large part of labour in footwear industry is found to be illiterate. It is revealed by the survey that a major part of workers engaged in Agra footwear industry are uneducated. The illiterate workers form a great part, i. e., 50.65%. This
is the reason that they are not aware of their legislative benefits and are being exploited in the hands of employers.

14) They work in unhygienic conditions and dirty atmosphere. There is lack of proper cleanliness in most of the footwear units. The floor of most of the units is kaccha and is not cleaned properly. Kaccha floor creates a lot of dirt and dust that is harmful for workers' health. The factories are not whitewashed properly. The atmosphere in almost all the unregistered units is found to be unhygienic. The workers are working in the same environment. As a result, they are suffering from various diseases, such as, tuberculosis, asthma, short sightedness, long sightedness, cataract, etc.

15) There is inadequacy of proper ventilation in Agra footwear industry. The rooms in most of the footwear factories are not big and airy. The condition of ventilation is somewhat good in a few factories where the rooms are airy. There are 2-4 windows in these rooms. But the rooms in many factories are found to be small and congested.

16) Adequate temperature is not maintained in most of the footwear units. Inadequate temperature is responsible for reducing workers' efficiency. Further, the place where workers work, is found to be congested. Lack of proper space at the place of work hinders the proper development of workers. Congestion generally leads to liver problem, which weakens their legs and enlarges their belly.

17) There is no arrangement of suitable and adequate lighting in Agra footwear industry. The condition of lighting is found to be bad and insufficient in all the unregistered units taken for survey. Only one bulb of 100 watt in each room is found in all the small-scale and residential units. The natural lighting
is also inadequate. The lighting is found to be sufficient in all the registered companies taken for survey.

18) The condition of latrines and spittoons is found to be quite unsatisfactory in Agra footwear industry. Neither these have been constructed properly nor are cleaned with detergent. The condition is found to be somewhat better in registered companies. Spittoons are not found in any of the units taken for survey.

19) Drinking water facility is also not up to the mark. Only the employers of registered companies have kept water coolers. Earthen Pots (Pitchers) are found in common use in unregistered units. A few footwear manufacturers have kept water in tanks. Municipality water is filled in these pitchers and tanks. Earthen pots and tanks are not regularly cleaned and not replaced at regular intervals. The water is found to be dirty and polluted. The workers consume such dirty water. Therefore, the workers in Agra footwear industry are suffering from indigestion.

20) All the welfare facilities mentioned in Section 42 to 50 of Factories Act, 1948, viz., washing facilities, facilities of storing and drying of clothes, canteens, etc., are found neither in registered companies nor in unregistered units. In fact, these welfare facilities are not applied on small-scale units, as they employ fewer labour. But, even the registered companies in Agra are providing only a few welfare facilities to their labour and that too is unsatisfactory. First aid boxes are found in all the units taken for survey. A few units are providing facility of lunch rooms, rest rooms and also the facility of sitting. But the condition of rest rooms is
found to be unhygienic. The atmosphere in these rooms is found to be dirty. There is no proper ventilation.

21) Welfare schemes like housing facilities, educational facilities, family welfare facilities, etc., are found to be totally negligible. These welfare facilities do not apply on small-scale and cottage units. Medical facility is found to be satisfactory to some extent in registered units and entertainment facility also is found to be satisfactory.

22) Safety measures, such as, fencing of all dangerous and moving parts of the machine, persons above 18 years not to operate machine, non slippery floor, screens and goggles for workers, fire extinguishers, safety officers, etc., are not adopted by most of the footwear manufacturers. These safety measures are to be followed in the units where the work is of dangerous type. These are not necessary for the leather industry, because the machines used in footwear industry are simple, like stitching machines, sole and upper cutting machines, etc., that do not create much noise. But, necessary safety measures like fire extinguishers, training to workers, etc., were not found in most of the footwear units taken for survey.

23) The workers are deprived of social insurance and social assistance in Agra footwear industry. Various social security schemes, like The Workmen's Compensation Act, The Employees' State Insurance Act, The Maternity Benefit Act, The Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Act and The Payment of Gratuity Act, are not available for workers in all the registered companies taken for survey. Hence, the workers engaged in the manufacturing of footwear cannot avail the benefits under these Acts.
24) The scheme of Family Pension-Cum-Life Insurance, introduced in 1971, is also applicable to the footwear industry. The scheme provides monthly pension to the dependents of the deceased, and in addition to that, it provides three other benefits, viz., Life Assurance Benefit, Retirement Benefit and Withdrawal Benefit. The labour are not getting any benefit from this scheme.

25) The wages provided to labour is not enough to meet both their ends. A large majority of the workers fall in low-income group. Even the wages of a skilled worker is fixed at Rs. 1,497 only in Agra footwear industry. It is found that the skilled labour are getting low wages than this. The condition of contract labour is even worse. Contract labour are easily available in Agra footwear industry. Hence, they have to work at low wages. Therefore, they are not able to take nutritional food. This is giving rise to several diseases in labour, viz., malnutrition, dysentery, etc. Further, the workers are not getting bonus, dearness allowance, gratuity, etc.

26) Housing conditions of labour are also not good. A large part of labour live in slums under unhygienic conditions. The facility of water, ventilation, lighting, etc., is far from satisfactory in these slums. On account of this, the workers are suffering from various diseases, viz., diarrhoea, short sightedness, etc. Some labour come from villages. The manufacturers of registered companies have not given housing facility to their labour. The condition of the government houses is better, but unfortunately, these are not available to labour under survey.
27) It is revealed by the survey that trade unions, though supposed to be the main well-wisher of workers, are just on paper. The labour being unorganized, have not formed their trade unions in Agra. Labour Office in Agra does the same work as trade unions do, viz., to fix the minimum wages of labour, to protect their interests, etc. It is found that the team of Labour Office visits various footwear units and inspect the conditions of work. If the conditions are not found good, they instruct the manufacturer to take proper steps, and if he does not do so, strict actions are taken against him. They also ask from workers their problems and provide them with appropriate solutions. But, the team of Labour Office, as told by the Deputy Labour Commissioner, Mr. B. K. Singh, visits 4-5 footwear units in a week. That means, they can go 210-270 units in a year, while there are 1600-1700 registered companies and 6000-7000 unregistered units in Agra. Hence, the scholar felt a great need of trade unions in Agra.

28) A large part of workers are found under debt. They were in the clutches of the money lenders.

1. **Verification of the Hypothesis:**

   The study has been conducted to test the following six hypotheses:

   1) That Agra footwear industry has vast potential for growth.
   2) That the potential has not been fully exploited because of the unhygienic working conditions for labour.
   3) That the labour in Agra footwear industry is suffering from numerous problems.
4) That the manufacturers/employers are following the various Acts and have taken proper measures for the welfare of labour or they have ingeniously circumvented the statutory provisions concerning the welfare of labour in the industry.

5) That there is low productivity on account of miserable working conditions of labour in Agra footwear industry.

6) That improvement in working conditions will result in higher productivity, increased output, growing employment, and the economic development of the region.

On the basis of the survey of the Agra footwear industry, the scholar found that the first hypothesis is correct on the basis of results. The Agra footwear industry has vast potential for growth, as Agra is the greatest marker for closed shoes in Asia.

The second hypothesis is correct to some extent. The potential has not been fully exploited. The condition of labour in small-scale and cottage units is far from being satisfactory. But the condition of labour in registered companies is somewhat good.

The third hypothesis is borne out true from the findings of the study. The labour engaged in footwear industry of Agra district is suffering from various problems.

The fourth hypothesis is not totally correct, as the footwear manufacturers of registered units have taken some steps to solve labour problems and improve their conditions, either to satisfy government officials or under the pressure of workers. But these measures are thoroughly inadequate and have not been adopted by the manufacturers of small-scale and cottage units. Only a few large-scale manufacturers are following the various Acts and Provisions, that too to a certain extent.

The fifth hypothesis is quite correct. The labour in Agra footwear industry are facing many problems and their health is not
good. Hence, the productivity is low.

The sixth hypothesis is also quite correct. If the working conditions are improved, the production will be high, the employment opportunities will increase and this will result in economic development of the region.

On the basis of the above findings, it can be concluded that the Agra footwear industry can progress rapidly if due attention is given to the solution of industry's human resource as regards their working conditions, welfare, social security, labour compensation, etc. Problems, whether personal, social or industrial, bring dissatisfaction among labour, and thus needs to be solved immediately.

Rapid growth of industries in the later half of the eighteenth century established the neo-factory system which undermined the position of labour against the machines. Consequently, the labour lost its identity. Earlier, neither the government nor the law courts took special note of these problems because they laid too much emphasis on the policy of non-interference and freedom of contract. Thus, with the lapse of time, the situation tended to worsen and the society was so much adversely affected that the government was compelled to take some action to remedy these problems.

Some philanthropic agencies, like Servants of Indian Society, Social Service League and some industrial social workers, raised their voice against these problems. They were successful in mobilizing the public opinion in support of their viewpoint. Since our independence in 1947, when the goal of socialist democracy was kept in forefront, the industrialists began to feel the importance of labour in the industry. The government as well as some employers also realized that machines are not capable to do
all the work. There are some tasks that cannot be accomplished without labour.

The Government and the Planning Commission, while drafting the First Five Year Plan, gave much importance to the workers for achieving the targets of the plan. Not only this, but the government went ahead to say, “to get the maximum production, working conditions of the workers must be improved to a great extent, especially in labour intensive industries.” But the condition of labour did not improve much.

Workers also started to form their own organization to fight against exploitation at the hands of the industrialists. They became alert as how to protect their interests. Sometimes, if employers did not accept the conditions demanded by labour, the labour went on strike. This created industrial unrest. In the beginning, the efforts of the workers were not very successful because of their weak bargaining power and lack of resources on which they could rely for their livelihood in the absence of wages. As a result, they formed trade unions to protect their interest. As mentioned earlier, the trade unions are not found in Agra.

Some more employers also realized the seriousness of the problem and the necessity of mitigating these evils, for they affected the production of the industry. They felt that investment on labour welfare was a policy worth pursuing because a contented worker would produce better yields and would increase his efficiency.

But some manufacturers do not realize the importance of labour even today. Labour work in the factory without taking rest. Yet employers do not take care of them. They do not understand that a satisfied worker can work more efficiently. Most of the manufacturers in Agra do not get their factories clean, do not pay
proper wages to labour and do not adopt necessary safety measures.

Still there are some residential houses in Agra where the shoes are being manufactured only with the help of labour. There are no machines in these factories. These factories cannot survive without labour. Good health of a labour depends upon the environment where he works. Hence, it is essential for the employers to improve the condition at labour’s working place.

Although some changes were noticed by the scholar in two years. When the scholar visited the footwear factories in the year 2001, in the starting of the research, the condition of labour was found to be very pathetic. By the middle of the year 2003, the scholar found that the condition of labour has improved a little. But these steps have been adopted only by the manufacturers of some registered companies and also by a few small-scale manufacturers.

A large part of labour in Agra footwear industry belongs to small-scale and cottage sector. All of their problems have not been solved till now. The worker, being an architect of a nation’s destiny, must occupy a proper place in the society, so that he should have opportunities and resources for efficient work.

Now the labour problems have reduced in many industries. But there is a need to solve all the problems of labour working in the footwear industry of Agra at the earliest. For higher productivity and sound industrial relations, it is extremely essential to give the labour rank of partners in the industry. Their advice should be taken regarding production and selling decisions.

The workers must be increasingly associated with the management of industrial undertaking, so that they develop an awareness of the problems of industry and begin to feel that they
have a positive contribution to make towards the operation of the firm. Such realization will automatically enhance the productivity.

The employers should convince their labour that they should tell him about every problem being faced by them so that they may solve these problems. The employers should not deduct the salary of labour if he is absent due to sickness. The employers’ attitude towards their labour should be familiar and atmosphere inside the factory should be healthy.

If employers adopt all these things, the labour would feel satisfied and most of the labour problems can be solved. Welfare amenities are also necessary for workers. The welfare work is a humanistic approach. Welfare measures and various social schemes raise their standard of living. They work whole-heartedly. It raises the morale of labour and brings happiness in them. It also develops a sense of responsibility in the labour. Hence, not only the employers, but also the State Government and trade unions, should come forward in this direction. In this way, the life of the labour will become comfortable and enjoyable.

SUGGESTIONS

The present study is based on the problems of labour in footwear industry of Agra district. The study has led to significant foregoing findings with regard to the problems of labour in the footwear manufacturing units and defaults in the implementation of various welfare measures and social security schemes in Agra footwear industry. On the basis of these findings, the following suggestions are being made with a view to solve the problems of labour and improve their conditions in footwear industry of Agra.
1. Suggestions Regarding Sanitation Facilities:

Sanitation needs to be given utmost attention in footwear units, as it has its direct impact upon the efficiency of the workers. The sanitary facilities in the footwear factories are found to be quite hopeless. This aspect of working conditions should not be ignored. No one wants to work in a dirty environment. It is suggested that every employer in Agra footwear industry should employ a Safaiwala, especially for cleaning the factory, to remove dust and dirt, to throw dust and waste material in the dustbin, etc. This will improve labour's health, save them from various diseases, bring their interest towards work and will also bring happiness and loyalty towards employers. The following steps need to be taken in this regard:

1) The floor inside the factory should be pucca. The government should give instructions to footwear manufacturers to build pucca floor inside the factory.
2) In every unit, dust and dirt should be removed daily. For this, there should be proper arrangement to clean the floor and to remove all the scrap materials arising from the day’s work from the working place.
3) Dustbins should be kept inside the factory so that labour may use it.
4) The official agency should inspect the footwear units more frequently to check and ensure that the employers have maintained the normal standard of cleanliness in their industrial units.
5) The inspectors should take actions against those employers who do not get their factories properly cleaned.
6) The study reveals that one of the main factors causing high level of dust and dirt is the location of manufacturing units. A number of footwear units in Agra are situated on the main road. These factories need to be shifted to the industrial area.

2. Suggestions to Improve Lighting Conditions in the Footwear Units:

Adequate lighting should be available near the place where the workers work. Unfortunately, the lighting conditions in footwear units are not satisfactory, regarding both, natural and artificial lighting. The following measures are needed in this regard:

1) Side windows should be built in the factories for natural lighting.

2) If it is not possible for manufacturers to build side windows for genuine reasons, they should arrange for artificial lighting.

3) There should be at least one bulb per worker or one tube light for a pair of workers. This norm is unfortunately not followed, and four to five workers work in one room with one bulb.

4) The lighting should be such that there is no shadow and darkness at the place where labour work. Nor should the lighting fall directly on the eyes of the workers.

5) The manufacturers should install generator for use and use it when there is no electric supply. This will not only help to operate fans and light for the workers, but will also maintain continuity of production.
6) Some concession in electricity charges can be considered for footwear manufacturers, especially for small and marginal manufacturers.

3. Suggestions to Overcome the Problem of Inadequate Ventilation:

The problem of inadequate ventilation is acute, particularly in small and household units, where workers work in an environment devoid of any outlet for the stale air or inlet for fresh air and natural light, except the doors.

Ventilation conditions in registered footwear companies are however, comparatively better. The following measures are considered necessary for providing proper ventilation at the workplace of labour in small-scale and cottage units.

1) The legal provision for creating windows and ventilation in the rooms should be strictly enforced by the concerned authorities.

2) The problem of ventilation is serious in units where house accommodation is used by manufacturers for industrial purpose. Such places need changes in their building plan, to provide ventilation in adequate measure to the workers in such a way that regular movement of fresh air continues.

3) If it is not possible for manufacturers to build windows, etc., for proper ventilation, artificial ventilation should be maintained and extraction of polluted air by use of exhaust fans should be arranged. Similarly, fresh air circulating arrangements in each room should be made.
4. **Suggestions to Maintain Adequate Temperature inside the Factories and to Remove Humidity:**

Adequate temperature at the place of work increases workers' efficiency. India has diversity of seasons, the temperature is not stable all the year round. It changes from season to season. During the survey of footwear units, the scholar found no arrangement of normal temperature in many footwear units in every season. This prevails in registered as well as unregistered units. The following steps should be taken to maintain the adequate temperature in the footwear units:

1) In a country like India, the temperature in summer season becomes very high. Hence, the manufacturers should bring it down to a bearable level for the workers with the help of sufficient number of electric fans, exhaust fans, coolers, etc. During winter season, the temperature should be kept warm by suitable heating system.

2) Humidity can be controlled by use of fresh air and purified water.

3) The senior officers should make frequent visits to various factories to check the conditions of temperature and humidity in the factories. If the conditions are found to be unsuitable for workers, the manufacturers must be taken to task.

5. **Suggestions to Improve the Condition of Latrines, Urinals and Spittoons in Agra Footwear Units:**

The survey reveals that in most of the footwear units, there is facility of latrines and urinals, but the condition is found to be
very unsatisfactory. The following measures are needed in this regard:

1) The number of latrines in all the footwear units is found to be 2-3 that is not sufficient for the workers. The number of these should be increased. Further, there are no separate latrines for male and female workers in Agra footwear industry. The employers are advised to construct separate latrines for female workers.

2) It is also noticed that these are neither properly cleaned nor washed. Hence, they give out bad odour that is harmful for the workers. These should be cleaned with detergents daily and with disinfectants once in a week.

3) The facility of spittoons is found to be totally negligible in all the units taken for survey. Spittoons at convenient places should be provided to workers.

4) Those employers, who do not adopt the measures regarding cleanliness of latrines and spittoons, should be fined.

6. Suggestions Regarding Welfare Facilities:

A large number of workers in footwear manufacturing units are not getting welfare facilities, such as, washing facilities, canteen, cold water in summer and other facilities. Although the manufacturers of registered units are providing some welfare facilities to their labour, like facility of cold water, rest room, etc., but they too are not providing all the welfare facilities to the workers as required under legislative measures. There is still a need for improvement in these units also. Provision of welfare facilities is a must for raising the standard of labour and to give them equal place in the society. The following measures should be adopted in this regard:
1) The manufacturers of registered companies should provide adequate and suitable facilities for washing clothes, separate and adequately screened facilities for the use of male and female workers, facilities for storing and drying clothing, etc. There should be facility of lunch rooms wherein more than 150 workers are ordinarily employed, and a canteen is also required in the footwear units, where more than 250 workers work. The manufacturers of unregistered units are unable to provide all the above-mentioned facilities because of their low margin of profit. Hence, the association of small-scale and marginal manufacturers should create a labour welfare fund in which all the employers should contribute an amount according to their capacity based on their annual earnings. This money can be used for the welfare of labour.

2) Small-scale manufacturers should establish tea stalls in which some necessary foodstuff may be kept and provided to the workers at subsidized rates.

3) The condition of rest rooms in the units taken for survey should be improved. The government should get the rest shelters constructed in the area of the factories so that the workers may rest in it.

4) The employers who are not providing the minimum welfare facilities as prescribed under the law, should be strictly dealt with.

5) As far as the medical facilities are concerned, a separate hospital/dispensary for the labour should be opened with the co-operation of footwear manufactures and the Government Labour Department.
6) The State Government should also formulate various schemes for the welfare of the labour. Education facility is also necessary for labour. Hence, the government should make proper arrangements in co-operation and consultation with the employers. The manufacturers should know that the base of vocational education makes the workers efficient and trained. Facility of adult education should also be expanded.

7) One thing that is of utmost importance is that the workers should be provided group insurance. If there is any injury or untimely death of a labour in harness, his family members should be provided compensatory amount by the insurer. Such group insurance is common for industrial workers in the country. Moreover, the employer should provide job to his dependants. This will create a feeling of loyalty in the working class and they will work without any tension, for the future of their family would be safe.

7. Suggestions to Improve Labour's Health:

Health measures save workers from various diseases. During the course of investigation, almost all the workers were found to be suffering from one disease or the other because of the lack of health facilities and unhygienic working conditions. Legislative health measures, if adopted by the employers, reduce labour absenteeism, improve morale of workers and results in increased productivity per employee. Without proper health, a worker is not able to produce to his full capacity. Hence, it is essential for the employers to adopt the following measures:

1) Pure drinking water prevents various diseases in workers. For the good health of labour, safe drinking water should be available for them. The municipal tap water is not only polluted, but when stored for the drinking use of workers in
tanks, further become hazardous to health. If possible, the employers should install submersible pump or jet pump. Small-scale manufacturers can install hand pump so that fresh water is available for drinking all the time.

2) Overcrowding affects the health of labour. The provision of Factories Act, 1948, should be followed by manufacturers strictly and ensured through checking inspection by the government officials.

3) Waste in the factories should be minimized.

8. Suggestions Regarding Safety Measures:

Safety measures too are not adopted in Agra footwear industry. Safety of industrial worker is as important as his health. By adopting safety measures, employers can reduce the number of accidents that occur inside the factory. The following measures should be adopted.

1) In some footwear units, particularly old ones, the production is being carried out by use of old and obsolete machines. Such machines have now become dangerous for the workers. There is a need to modernize the production process through modern machinery. New machines are safe and secure for the workers. Moreover, the use of computerized machines will revolutionize the production process and increase the quality and output. Hence, the employers should switch over to modern mechanical and computerized gadgets of production for reasons of safety and security of workers, as well as, higher output and good quality of the product.

2) The manufacturers should set up fire extinguishers in their factories where more than 50 workers are working in the factory. There should be at least two gates and the opening should be large.
3) The higher officers of the Safety Department should visit the factories and see that whether various laws and provisions relating to health and safety of workers are being followed or not. The manufacturers, who do not adopt various and safety measures for the welfare of their labour should be punished.

9. **Suggestions to Overcome the Problems Relating to Social Security:**

Social security includes social insurance and social assistance. Various social security schemes include The Workmen’s Compensation Act, The Employees’ State Insurance Act, The Maternity Benefit Act, The Employees’ Provident Funds and The Miscellaneous Provisions Act. The workers in Agra footwear industry are not getting benefits of these Acts. Employers are not following the provisions of these Acts for the betterment of labour. To overcome this problem, the government should strictly order the employers to follow these Acts. To ensure compliance, government should send inspectors to the footwear units frequently. They should also check the records to see if the manufacturers earmark the money for the employees’ social benefit or not. If employers are found to be neglecting, strict action should be taken against them.

10. **Suggestions to Improve Housing Problem:**

The solution of the housing problem has become extraordinarily difficult. A crisis like this can be met only by the united efforts of the government, employers and employees, and therefore, provision of housing should be taken as a ‘joint responsibility of employers, State and other agencies’. The following suggestions are worth mentioning here:
1) There is a need to build low cost houses for the workers. These should be provided to the workers on rent/hire purchase basis on soft terms. The main problem is of finance. The State Government, employers and local authorities should jointly finance for it. Thus, labour colonies should be built for the social benefit of the labour.

2) If the newcomer comes from a distant place, the employer should provide him housing facility and other necessary facilities.

3) The municipality should also provide to these housing colonies with safe water, light and drainage facilities.

11. Suggestions to Reduce Noise Problem:

There is not much noise of machines in Agra footwear industry. There are stitching machines, sole cutting machines, etc., that produce low noise. But the cumulative effect of all the machines together along with the noise created by generators is very high and is unbearable and harmful for the labour. Unbearable noise reduces the efficiency of labour and may cause partial or full loss of hearing capacity. Hence, the following steps need to be taken in this regard:

1) The generators should be located far from the work area to a separate distant place.

2) If that is not possible, the manufacturers should construct a separate room with noise absorbing walls.

3) There should be separate rooms for machine operators and manual workers.

4) If the generator is too close to the workers and is not possible to change its place, the workers should be given ear
plugs so that noise may not affect their mutual health and hearing capacity.

12. **Suggestions to Improve Wage Standard in Agra Footwear Industry:**

Low wages to labour in Agra footwear industry is a serious problem of the workers. As a result, they are not in a position to conveniently make their both ends meet. They are not able to provide for themselves and their family the basic requisites of life. Under-nutritious food and unhygienic living conditions ultimately make them suffer from numerous diseases. Not only this, the workers in Agra footwear industry are not getting bonus also. Reasonable wages, as per the minimum wage fixed by the government, should be provided. For this, the following steps should be taken:

1) The officers of Wage Board should visit the footwear units frequently to inspect whether the employers are paying reasonable and fair wages to workers or not. With the help of the Wage Board, the government will be able to know the various aspects of the wage structure prevailing in footwear industry and also about the rate differences of contract labour. Such units, which do not pay minimum wage, should be proceeded against under the relevant Act.

2) The officers should also check the financial accounts of the factories so that they may find out the actual profits available for distribution as bonus to the labour.

3) The employers in footwear manufacturing units try to avoid their responsibility by not providing bonus to the workers. The Payment of Bonus Act, 1965, extends to the whole of India and is applicable to every factory and to every other
establishment wherein 20 or more workmen are employed on any day during an accounting year. During the survey, the scholar found that a large number of factories are employing more than 20 workers. Yet the workers are deprived of bonus.

To remove this problem, government should issue bonus cards to workers. The date of joining should be mentioned on the card. The workers can take bonus from the employers by showing the cards. If the employers try to avoid it, strict action should be taken against them.

4) The employers should set up their own marketing network in Agra and should not sell the product to intermediaries and middlemen. In this way, the sale as well as the profit will increase and they will be able to raise the wage level of labour. The government agencies can also help in establishing a marketing network devoid of middlemen for the footwear manufacturers in Agra.

5) The prices of essential commodities increase day by day. Hence, the labour of footwear industry should be provided dearness allowance to neutralize the impact of price-rise. Further, to solve this problem, the government or manufacturers association should organize their consumer stores, where the workers may be able to get essential commodities at lower rates.

6) It has been noticed that the employers maintain duplicate register of wage payment and for the attendance records. All these malpractices should be checked by surprise visits of the government officials. The employers, who indulge in this, should be heavily punished.
7) The workers, moreover, do not get payment on due time. Irregular wage payment is practiced by many manufacturers. This puts the labour in hardship and plunges them in unnecessary debt syndrome. The Labour Department should order the manufacturers to change the wage payment system and make timely payment of wages. This will also reduce absenteeism.

13. Suggestions to Establish Healthy Relations between Employers and Labour:

The relationship between the employer and labour is found to be unhealthy in Agra footwear industry on account of the various problems between them. There is a need to establish healthy relations between employers and labour. The following suggestions may be given in this regard:

1) The idea of Works Committee and Joint Management Councils should be popularized. This will help in improving the relations between the two, i.e., the employer and the employees.

2) The employers should create such an environment inside the factory that the labour may work efficiently. The employers should listen to the problems of labour attentively and should find an appropriate solution to these problems.

3) Labour should be given proper respect so that they feel themselves as the members of the organization. The employers should also take them into confidence while taking the decisions related to production.

4) Workers are also human beings. They should not be considered as servants and they should be given equal importance.
14. Suggestions to Remove the Problem of Job Dissatisfaction among Labour:

It is a fact that a satisfied worker can work more efficiently than an unsatisfied worker. The following points, if implemented, can improve the position:

1) Every worker should be assigned the work of the nature in which he has the required skill and proficiency. Some workers have skills to do other kinds of work equally well. To break the monotony in work, there should be variety in work for such labour so that they may not feel bored and put their heart in doing the work. This will not only drive his interest towards work, but also result in increased production.

2) The atmosphere inside the factory should be friendly. For this, the manufacturers should organize periodical get together in which all the labour of the factory-rural, urban, newcomers, etc., should be introduced to one another so that they get mixed up as a family of workers.

15. Suggestions to Remove the Problem of Job Insecurity among Labour:

During the course of survey, the scholar found that there was job insecurity among the labour. Hence, the workers lacked interest in work and there was a fair degree of labour turnover in the industry. The following suggestions may be given to remove the problem of job insecurity among labour:

1) Scarcity of raw material is a factor that causes job insecurity in labour. The solution to this problem lies in the hands of the government. The use of non-leather raw material, such as, plastic, PVC, etc., in making footwear, should be
emphasized. This will remove the fear of losing the job in workers, as the raw material being synthetic, will be easily available and the labour will get work daily. Further, this will bring more employment opportunities.

2) The closure of tanneries in Agra has left many workers unemployed. The Government should re-open these tanneries by setting effluent treatment plants.

3) The employers should make provisions for granting leave to workers when they fall sick and not are in a position to work for some days. They should not deduct their salary for those days.

4) The employers should convince their labour that their job is permanent and that they will not be turned out of their job without any specific reason. The employers should realize the importance of labour. They should not underestimate the capacity of labour.

16. Suggestions to Remove Other Types of Problems of Labour:

Some other types of problems were also found. The following suggestions may be given to remove these problems:

1) During the survey, about 60% workers were found to be in the clutches of money lenders. To solve the problem of indebtedness, Co-operative Credit Societies should be established by the State Government to extend credit facilities to labour. In the presence of Co-operative Society, the workers will not feel any need to go to money lenders to borrow money on exorbitant rates.

2) The labour should be given the retirement and old age benefits. Generally, these benefits are not available to casual
and contract labour. If a worker is working for a long time, he should not be deprived of these benefits.

3) The efficient and skilled workers should be given more salary. This will motivate others to emulate him.

4) All the workers of the factory should also be given a reasonable share in profits. This will bring industrial peace and prevent strikes and lockouts.

Labour is the most important factor of production and if employers do not solve the problems of labour, they feel themselves insecure. Hence, the employers should not ignore their problems and should try their level best to find proper solution to the problems of labour. This will make them secure, and the peace in the industry will not get disturbed.

Our constitution guarantees social justice to the people of India. Social justice means achievement of socio-economic objectives. Labour legislation is one of the most progressive and dynamic instruments for achieving socio-economic progress. If our industry follows these legislative norms, its economic development will grow by leaps and bounds, as no other resource matches the human resource to take the nation forward.