:: CHAPTER IX ::

PROBLEMS OF TANNING INDUSTRY

9.1 INTRODUCTION

9.2 PROBLEMS
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9.1 INTRODUCTION

All industries face some problems regarding their working. Tanning industry which is one of the very important industries faces the following problems.

9.2 PROBLEMS

1) DRAGGING OF DEAD BODIES OF ANIMALS AFFECTS THE QUALITY OF HIDES (GRAIN SIDE)

The present system of disposing of the dead bodies of animals as found in several villages is far from satisfactory. The body is dragged out of the village and skinned at any place. The village Mahar is never a tanner and hence he does not understand the value of the hide from a tanner's point of view.

The dragging causes various injuries to the hide or the skin, leaving dragging marks which spoil the grain. Frequently a long time elapses before the skinning begins. During this time the hide or skin is exposed to the ravages of Vultures. The putrefying action of heat, damp and the surrounding filth causes what is technically known as taint-a form of incipient decay. In several cases the flayer does not know his art well. He has no interest in the flesh of dead animals. This leads to a tendency of leaving superfluous fat and flesh on the hide or the skin, especially the former. The origin of the flaw is in essence
a form of loading resorted to with the object of adding to the weight of the hide.

2) **DAMAGE TO HIDES AND SKINS OWING TO SKIN DISEASES, INSECTS, BRANDLING, GOADING ETC.**

Hides and skins are damaged owing to various causes. The damage occurs in various forms. There are several skin-diseases which affect the animals. Some very small insects also live on the animals clinging firmly to their skin. The damage is seen in the form of holes, open sores, boils and pimples, scars fully or incompletely healed up, mangy or scaby appearance ....etc.

Branding is resorted to by agriculturists as a remedy against many kinds of cattle diseases and also as a protection against theft of the animals. Animals, especially those used for draught purposes are often goaded—Sometimes so severely that they bleed and suffer badly. Such branding and goading damages the skin of the animals.

Animals moving about here and there or grazing often enter thorny bushes or try to pass through thorny wires; they rub against rough surfaces when they have an itching sensation. The use of yoke, putting heavy loads on their backs hardens the crust of animal skin. Damage occurs in the form of scratching or rubbing of the grain of the hide, splitting, thinning, crust-hardening, uneven surface or dents.

Such damages lessen the value of hides and skins.
3) **CARELESS FLAYING OF CARCASS BY FLAYERS, REDUCES THE VALUE OF HIDES AND SKINS**

Flaying plays a very important part in the determination of the price of hides and skins. Flayers in Maharashtra (Kolhapur district) know their work, but owing to their carelessness and want of forethought a lot of money is lost to the trade.

The price of hide is small compared to that of the meat. Many butchers to get more customers do their work hurriedly and carelessly. In order to get every bit of meat they make cuts in the hide. If they do their job a little more carefully, they can recover all the meat without damaging the hide. The hides from big slaughter houses especially from the commissariats are worse flayed than those from the local slaughter houses.

A few cuts and holes in a skin or hide diminish its value by 5% to 10%. It has been found that the standard of hide flaying in the Kolhapur district is poor. The flesh side of the hide often gets scored and even cut by careless use of flaying knives. The knife cuts make long and sometimes deep dents into the substance of the hide and occasionally even slit the hide through and through. The butcher's cuts and scores reduce the tensile strength of the leather produced from the hides or skins so damaged. If the leather is finished on the flesh side its appearance is also marred. Although such leather may not be rendered
altogether useless it reduces its economic value to a great extent. The tanner or the leather worker is required to use his skills to mend or to avoid the damaged part. But such damaged hides become absolutely useless for high types of leather required for belting, straps... etc. On account of this, such damaged raw hides or skins go down in the gradation for selection.

Reasons for such poor work in the slaughter houses are various and they may be classified as under-

A) Flayer's lack of skill and general negligence.

B) Unsuitable implements, insufficient space and dim light. Lack of suitable arrangements for skinning the animal.

C) System of buying slaughtered hides before the animal is slaughtered etc.

Nearly 40% of the value of our hides and skins is lost due to bad flaying and delayed and careless curing.

4) **CATTLE SLAUGHTER IN THE OPEN CREATES HYGIENIC AND POLLUTION PROBLEMS**

In Kolhapur district there is only one closed slaughter house. It is in Kolhapur city. In other villages or cities, butchers slaughter the cattles in the open. It is unhygienic. Sufficient lighting facilities are not available. Skinning is done on rough flooring. This badly affects the grain side of the hides. Adequate water facilities are not
available in a majority of places where cattles are slaughtered. Waste from the slaughter houses is not picked-up immediately by the local governments. It leads to air pollution. Cold storage arrangement for meat and hides is not available anywhere in the district.

Skilled workers are not available in sufficient numbers in Kolhapur district to slaughter the cattles and flay the carcasses.

5) RAW MATERIAL PROBLEMS
A) HIDES AND SKINS
1) The basic raw material of tanning industry in Kolhapur district is raw hides and skins of animals. This raw material is a by-product of the slaughter houses. Animals are slaughtered in the slaughter houses for their meat and not for the recovery of hides and skins. It means the main product of the slaughter houses is meat, and hides and skins are only a by-product.

Flaying and handling of hides and skins, therefore are not important things for butchers. They are careless in flaying and handling of hides and skins. Facilities for their proper preservation are also inadequate.

A general practice is to slaughter the old, weak or starving cattles. Hides of such cattles are definitely of poor quality. Many a times hides are taken from the
cattle which die due to starvation, disease or old age. The hides and skins of such cattle are also of poor quality. In some developed countries e.g. U.S.A., England special animal husbandries are maintained for getting hides and skins of standard quality. But in our country there are no animal husbandries specially for getting hides and skins of standard and high quality.

In many villages there are no facilities for flaying the hides of carcasses. Therefore the dead body of a beast is brought to the nearest flaying centre or to a flayer in a nearby village. But this is a time killing activity. Putrefaction of hide begins if a lot of time elapses before the body is flayed.

In some parts of Kolhapur district there are no transport facilities to bring a carcass to the flaying centres. So the carcass is dragged to a flayer or the flaying centre. While dragging a carcass, the hide gets scratched and torn. As a result its quality suffers.

In some parts of Radhanagari and Bavda Tahsils when an animal dies the dead body is buried in the farms or thrown in the jungle to be eaten by other animals. This is a great loss to the tanning industry of Kolhapur district. This is not an isolated case. On the national level, such loss runs into millions of hides. A nation-wide survey conducted in the year 1986-87 by Central Leather Research Institute, Madras found that about 9 million hides and quite
as many skins are lost to the industry, that is, are left unused due to various socio-economic reasons.

2) Every year thousands of pieces of tanned leather are produced in Kolhapur district by the tanners, but sufficient quantity of raw hides is not available in the district. So some tanners bring raw hides from the Bombay market or from the markets of Karnataka or Gujarat States by paying a high price. They have to bear the transport costs also. So the cost of production of tanned leather increases. In Kolhapur district, the price of raw hides increases day by day, so the cost of production of tanned leather also increases.

3) In cities like Madras, Kanpur, Calcutta big modern, mechanical, Chrome tanneries are established. These tanneries produce a variety of superior quality leather. This leather is sold in the market for a good price. These tanneries earn huge profits. These tanneries purchase a large number of raw hides and skins from various markets of Maharashtra by paying high prices. Tanners from Kolhapur district therefore also have to purchase raw hides and skins by paying such high prices. This increases the cost of production and the selling price of tanned leather in Kolhapur market.
4) A large and widespread demand for hides and skins from the big tanneries in the state and from other states, e.g. Madras, U.P., West Bengal etc. has raised their prices. The hide dealer is able to pay an advance and is also able to pay a higher price than the village tanner. The result is that the local tanner who was formerly at least sure of getting hides produced in his own village can at present get only the rejected hides, because for good hides he can afford to pay neither the high price nor any advance. Even when he can find the money to pay the high price he never attempts to do so, for he knows that after tanning it, he will not be able to realise even his costs. This is largely due to his ignorance of the modern developments in the processes and techniques of the industry.

5) Though a large number of goats and sheep are slaughtered in Kolhapur district to obtain meat, the skins of these animals are not available to the tanners in Kolhapur district at a reasonable rate. All the skins are collected by the Muslim traders and sent to Madras or Kanpur. They get a high price there. So a very limited number of skins is tanned in Kolhapur district.

6) Though our cattle wealth is very large, the quality of the hides produced is not quite satisfactory. Inspite of the efforts made by the animal husbandry department and other government agencies, the hides and skins have
not shown much improvement in quality. Their quality is generally poor. Their prices, however, are generally high.

Most of the hides obtained by tanners in Kolhapur district are from fallen animals. Their quality is inferior.

B) BABHUL BARK

The supply of babhul bark is inadequate as compared to its demand. So day by day the price of babhul bark is increasing. Due to it the cost of production of tan leather is also increasing. To obtain wood and babhul bark, thousands of babhul trees are cut by the people, but the planting of new babhul trees is negligible. In future it would create acute shortage of babhul bark.

C) MYROBALAN

Myrobalan is required for tanning raw hides and skins. Sufficient quantity of myrobalan is not available in Kolhapur district. Tanners' Co-operative Society purchases myrobalan in other districts and brings it to Kolhapur. Cost of transport of myrobalan to Kolhapur is high, it increases the selling price of myrobalan. If high priced myrobalan is used for tanning purposes, it increases the cost of production of tan leather.

Myrobalan is purchased in auctions by the society. The initial price from where the auction starts is fixed at a fairly high level. Bidders have therefore to offer in
their bids, prices which are higher than the initial price. This increases the purchasing price of myrobalan, which in turn increases the selling price. The cost of production of leather also increases.

6) TANNERS' LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE NATURE QUALITY AND EFFECT OF TANNING MATERIALS USED

Among the various tanning materials used, turwad bark, babhul bark and myrobalans are generally used more than any other materials. But very little is known about the quality, nature and effect of the tannage produced by the various tanning materials and hence their right application is not understood by the majority of the tanners in Kolhapur district.

A great deal of wastage takes place in our tanneries. Tanning materials once used are thrown away without knowing what amount of tannins is left in them. Freshly used tanning material is not completely exhausted of its tannin contents. Turwad bark contains 15% to 18% tannins, while babhul bark contains 12% to 14% and myrobalan 25% to 30%. It is estimated that the spent tan materials which are thrown away, contain as much as 6% to 10% tannins. Even if 4% to 7% of the recoverable tannin from the spent material is thus wasted, there would be quite a heavy loss to the industry as a whole in the district...
Another difficulty experienced by the village tanners is related to the tanning materials. Formerly tanners were able to collect tanning materials from the jungles nearby and it used to cost them nothing, but their own labour. Owing to the restrictions of the forest department they cannot do so now.

Prices of raw materials like turwad bark, babhul bark, myrobalans are high and almost beyond the reach of the small tanners. Day by day their prices are rising higher and higher.

7) USE OF TRADITIONAL RAW MATERIALS AND PRIMITIVE METHOD OF TANNING

Tanners in Kolhapur district use raw materials like babhul bark and myrobalan for tanning raw hides. It takes a long time for tanning the hides. Most of the tanners do not use tanning extracts and chemicals which hasten the process of tanning. Besides this, tanners tan the hides by their primitive and crude methods and with old fashioned tools and equipments. So the leather produced in Kolhapur district is rough and inferior in quality and mainly used for soles of chappals and boots by the cobblers.

8) SHORTAGE OF PURE AND CLEAN WATER FOR TANNERIES

Plentiful supply of good water is essential for the successful working of a tannery. Dirty water makes the leather flat, precipitates chalk in the fibres of the skin,
making it impossible to be removed by any subsequent process. It tends to weaken the tanning solution, to discolour skins, to waste fat liquors and to make dyeing patchy and uneven.

Adequate water supply is therefore of prime importance to the tanners, and often a limiting factor in the size of many tanneries. For tanning process each hide requires 200-250 litres of water and each skin requires 50-60 litres of water.

During the summers there is a severe shortage of water. Tanners are unable to get adequate, pure and clean water for their tanneries. Therefore they use water even from gutters or nalhas which carry the village waste. It affects badly the quality of leather; colour of tanned leather becomes blackish. It reduces the selling price and profits of the tanners.

9. MANPOWER (LABOUR) PROBLEMS

In Kolhapur district, traditionally, the Dhor and Cobbler families are engaged in manufacturing leather, footwears and other leather articles. There is a shortage of skilled workers in tanning and footwear making industries.

Most of the workers who are employed in these industries are illiterate, unskilled or semi-skilled and untrained. They are unable to adopt innovations in the
methods of production. They do their work on piece-work (rate) basis. The wages they earn are very low, resulting in their poverty. It affects the productive capacity of the workers. It has been the experience in many tanning and footwear making units, that when the workers get wages, they do not go to work for some days. They spend the amount of wages foolishly in mirth, dalliance and drinking. It affects the production of tanning as well as footwear industry.

ADVERSE EFFECTS OF ABSENTEEISM

A) ON INDUSTRY

Absenteeism in industry stops machines, disrupts processes, creates production bottlenecks, hampers smooth flow of continuity of work, upsets production targets, results in production losses, increases direct overhead costs, increases workload of the inexperienced, less experienced or sub standard workers employed as substitutes. Absenteeism, on the one hand, directly contributes to the rise in production costs, while on the other it deprives the industry of its hard-earned reputation due to deterioration in quality of goods-produced and the delay in supply to valued customers.

B) ON WORKERS

Ill effects of absenteeism on those who cause it are equally baneful. Frequent absenteeism adversely affects the economy of the worker himself. It reduces his earnings and
adds to his indebtedness, decreases his purchasing power, makes it difficult for him to meet the necessities of life, leading to personal problems of attitude and morals, and in many cases loss of employment and resultant disaster for his dependents.

Workers in tanning industry of Kolhapur district are not organised. They have not formed their Unions to solve their problems. They live and work in extremely dismal conditions. Most of the workers are indebted. Consequently, their standard of living is very low. The workers live and work in such surroundings where there is air and water pollution. They work with old fashioned tools and equipments. The workers of this industry have a bad habit of changing the tanneries every now and then. They generally do not remain for a long time in the same particular tannery. It means the labour turn-over rate is high. The very serious affliction of the labour is that the Factory and Minimum Wages Acts are applicable to them only on papers without implementation. They do not get welfare amenities, medical facilities, provident fund facilities, allowances, bonus etc. Leave rules are not applicable to them.

Tanners in Kolhapur district do the tanning work at the places of their residence only, where they live along with the members of their families and labourers they employ. They have to face the problem of water and air
pollution. The environment around the tanneries is unhygienic and unhealthy.

10) UNWILLINGNESS OF THE EDUCATED MEMBERS OF TANNERS' FAMILIES TO ENTER THE TANNING BUSINESS

Another problem faced by this industry is that the children of tanners who are educated go in search of government or other jobs. They do not wish to carry on the traditional family business. Their parents also wish to see their children get some job somewhere, rather than enter their business. They feel that a career in the tanning business is not lucrative and bright. They also get jobs fairly easily owing to the reservation of jobs for the backward castes. So the number of educated members of tanners' families entering the tanning business is negligible.

During the process of tanning an obnoxious smell is emitted. Equally obnoxious smell spreads owing to the putrefying flesh, fat, dung etc. lying around. It pollutes the air. Due to the use of the vegetable tanning materials the hands, feet and nails of the tanners and workers become black. They themselves become conscious of it and feel embarrassed about it when moving about in the society. Therefore, not only the educated but also the uneducated do not like to work in the tanning industry. From 1982, the industry continues to suffer from acute lack of workers and manpower.
People from high castes have entered the footwear manufacture and selling business. But they have not entered the tanning business, because they consider the tanning work low in nature and to be done by backward castes.

11) **NON-FAVOURABLE APPROACH OF LIDCOM**

On 1st May 1974, Leather Industries Development Corporation of Maharashtra established its branch in Subhash Nagar, Kolhapur to develop the tanning and leather footwear industries in Kolhapur district. LIDCOM has planned so many gainful and attractive schemes for the development of tanning and footwear industries. But these plans are actually not implemented by the officials of the LIDCOM in Kolhapur.

Besides helping tanners and cobblers, LIDCOM is competing with the cobblers. LIDCOM have started production and selling centres in Kolhapur for Kolhapuri Chappals. But unfortunately, for many years this centre and centres in other places in Maharashtra are running in losses. LIDCOM'S Kolhapur branch could not minimise the dominance of the middlemen in footwear industries. It has not started any training centre to train the workers in footwear manufacture. The tanners in Kolhapur district expected that LIDCOM would start common facility centre in Kolhapur for tanners. But such centre is also not started by LIDCOM.
In short the Kolhapur branch of LIDCOM is a MIRAGE to the leather and footwear manufacturers of Kolhapur district.

Directors of LIDCOM are not concerned with the tanning or footwear manufacturing industries. They are white collared people.

12) INFRASTRUCTURAL PROBLEMS IMPROPER DRAINAGE SYSTEM, PROBLEM OF TANNERY WASTE, UNDEVELOPED ROADS ETC.

Each one Kilogramme of raw hide or skin gives 25 to 30 litres of effluent. Every day thousands of litres of effluent is yielded from tanneries in Kolhapur district. Disposal of effluent is a serious problem. It goes through open gutters and through nalhas, often into rivers. It pollutes drinking water. Government is pressuring the tanners in cities to construct effluent treatment plants but economically it is beyond the reach of tanners.

In cities there is the problem of disposing of tannery wastes like meat and fats clinging to the hides, used lime, small tan-stuff etc. Municipalities or Corporations do not pick-up these tannery wastes immediately. Proper arrangements have not been made for the disposal of tannery wastes. This leads to air pollution.

The tannery sheds and residential houses are built in a haphazard way without any proper planning. They are near to each other, so tanners and their family members suffer due to polluted air and bad smell from the tanneries.
Previously tanneries were established on the outskirts of the cities and villages but now due to expansion of residential areas they are in the heart of the cities and villages. So everywhere the air pollution and water pollution problem is serious. It poses a threat to the health of all those people working in and living around the tanneries.

Except in Kolhapur city where there is a closed slaughter house, in other places in the district, cattles are slaughtered in the open where internal organs of the animals are strewn all over the place. This pollutes the air there.

13) **FINANCIAL PROBLEMS**

Kolhapur district holds the unique position of being the largest producer of leather in the state. It supplies leather to the local footwear industry as also to that in other districts of the state. Kolhapuri leather chappals are exported to foreign countries. However, the share of export from Kolhapur is very much limited owing to the shortage of finance.

Finance has always been a problem in tanning as well as footwear industry. These industries require huge investments. As in any other industry, in these two industries also finance is their life blood. It must circulate in adequate quantity so that they attain a healthy position.
in the market. Some financial corporations like the Mahatma Phule Backward Class Development Corporation and the Khadi and Village Industries Development Corporation give financial assistance. But it is very meagre. Subsidy is given only once when loans are sanctioned for the first time. Banks and other financial institutions do not give enough assistance. Tanning and footwear industries have therefore to rely on private source like bhisis, money-lenders or agents who charge high interest.

Banks and other financial institutions have not studied the profitability of these industries. They do not know the export potential of these industries. They are reluctant to provide financial assistance to them. Besides, complicated and lengthy procedures followed by the banks in granting financial assistance to the tanners and cobblers, and the red tapism in the banks deter the tanners and cobblers from approaching the banks.

In states like Tamilnadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal the government and the banks have been giving a lot of financial assistance and incentives for the development of these industries. But the Government of Maharashtra does not give sufficient financial assistance nor incentives to the industries.

Owing to inadequate finances the tanners and cobblers are unable to expand and modify their business, they are unable to adopt new scientific methods of production. They
work with, the age-old tools and equipments and follow the age-old techniques. Thus, the shortage of finance affects the production and the quality of the product.

In Kolhapur district about 99% tanners produce tan leather with the old bag tan method. There is only one modernised small scale mechanical unit viz. Messrs S.H. Vhatkar and Co. which produces chrome leather. Other units for want of adequate finances, have to be content with their lot, producing only the bag tan leather. Even where they get loans, they find it difficult to repay them, they are not regular in repayment. This acts as a hindrance to get further loans in future.

14) MANAGERIAL PROBLEM

As far as the management is concerned traditionally the families of the tanners manage the tanning industry in Kolhapur district. Tanning units are small and they are scattered. Most of the owner tanners along with members of their families work themselves in their tanneries. So, separate management is not found in the tanning industry.

15 SHIFTING AND EXTENSION PROBLEMS

In cities like Kolhapur, Ichalkaranji, Peth Vadgaon there is a large number of tanning units. With increase in population the cities are expanding. As a result the tanning units which were once away from the cities find themselves
surrounded by new residential colonies. On the one hand there is no scope for the tanners to expand their tanning units. On the other residents of the surrounding colonies complain about air and water pollution from the tanneries. There is an urgent need to shift these units. Government of Maharashtra has established Industrial Estates at Shiroli and Gokul Shirgaon but no site is reserved for tanning industries in these Industrial Estates.

Small tanners are not ready to shift their tanneries from their original places. Government is also not keen in shifting these tanning units, because government has to bear the expenses of about Rs.10 crores towards construction of buildings for storing raw materials, liquid tanks, lime tanks and providing water and electric facilities. Tanning industry requires ample water and electricity for production purposes.

16) MARKETING PROBLEMS

Marketing is the economic process by which goods and services are exchanged and their values determined in terms of money prices.

Adam Smith pointed out that, "the end of all production is consumption and that nothing happens in our country until somebody sells something. Hence the selling aspect becomes the nerve centre for all human activity. Marketing is the kingpin that sets the revolving of the economy". Marketing is the beating heart of many operations.
There are local markets as also a district market in Kolhapur district. The local markets are found in the village where tanners live and do the tanning work. Cobbler living in these villages usually purchase the leather they require from the local markets. Cobbler living in nearby villages also usually purchase leather from these nearby local markets. They purchase the leather by the estimation method, and partly in cash and partly on credit.

The main drawback of the local markets is that they lack balances and weights. So the transactions—selling and purchasing—are carried on by following the age-old estimation method. One is therefore not sure if he has struck a proper deal, not sure if the deal is proper and fairly profitable. Tanners also purchase raw hides and babhul bark in local markets on estimation and the myrobalan by weight.

The district leather market is at Kolhapur. It is not convenient for the tanners from Gadchinglaj, Hasoor-Caapmu, Nandni....etc. The places are very much away from the district market. Tanners have to bear high transport costs to bring the tanned leather to the district market.

Formerly, the district tan leather market was located in Raviwar Peth in Kolhapur city. In 1971-72, it was shifted to its present location at Jawahar Nagar. The shifting has affected adversely the profit margins of the tanners who
come to the market from other towns and from nearby villages. There is a tough competition among the tanners to sell the tanned leather. Small tanners prefer to sell it in cash only because of the shortage of capital they always face.

The district market lacks many amenities which tanners and others very badly require. Not only that there is no accommodation for shops available, but also that there is no common shed under which tanners could establish their shops. The tanned leather is sold in the open, on the roads. The market also does not have warehouses where the leather could be stored. There are no rest-houses; no balances and weights available.

The lack of warehousing facility compels the tanners—especially those coming from villages or other towns—to sell the tanned leather at a low price, to avoid transport expenses they would have to bear if they have to carry the leather back home and back to the market once again.

Some cobblers in Kolhapur district sell their footwears to big shopkeepers through agents. It is the agents who make better profits than the cobblers. There are hundreds of footwear shops in Kolhapur and in other cities in the district. The shop-keepers owning these shops do not make the footwears, nor do they employ workers for making them. They purchase the footwears from small
cobblers or from the agents on wholesale basis and sell them in their shops on retail basis by advertising them as their own products.

Cobblers complain that the tanners sell them the leather at a very high price; and the consumers grumble that the prices of the footwears are high.

17 TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

The tanning industry is a technology-based industry. The technology is continuously developing. Services of technicians who can continuously keep track of the developments and guide the tanners are very much necessary. Unfortunately there are no technicians in Kolhapur district who can fulfill this need of the industry. This industry is local resource based industry. But due to the lack of technical know-how, production of finished leather cannot attain the required quality to push the products into international market.

Up-to-date information regarding the latest innovations and developments in the production of leather and leather goods is not readily available to the local tanners and footwear manufacturers. In Kolhapur city leather and footwear manufacturers have to employ technicians from Madras and Bombay and have to pay them high salaries. This increases the cost of production. But the small tanners and footwear manufacturers cannot avail of their services.
In states like Tamilnadu and West Bengal technology in tanning and footwear industries and in other leather goods manufacturing industries is growing very fast as compared to the technology in tanning and leather industries in our state. These states produce leather and leather products of superior quality to meet the requirements of the international market. Their Governments provide necessary assistance to these industries in almost all respects. Our state Government does not provide technical assistance to the tanning and footwear manufacturing industries in Kolhapur district. The LIDCOM branch in Kolhapur has also not done anything in this direction.

18) WORKING CONDITION PROBLEMS

It is seen that the majority of footwear and tanning industrialists and workers live in small cottages. Traditionally, the Dhor and Cobbler families are engaged in manufacturing leather and footwear respectively. Places of their work and of their residence are the same irrespective of whether they live in villages or in cities. All of them and the workers they employ live and work in very wretched and dirty conditions.

Even where, as in Kolhapur, tanning units have been shifted to distant places outside the cities, tannery sheds and residential houses are built without any proper planning. There is no proper ventilation nor are their working places adequate and proper. Roads are also not developed properly.
Effluents from the tanning process tend to pollute the soil, water sources and air. This is detrimental to the health of those who live and work there.

19) SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Tanners and workers in tanning business work with their hands. Due to lime and tan liquid, their hands, nails and feet becomes black. Though the hands are washed with clean water and soap, the black colour does not disappear. When they again work in the tannery the coating of black colour increases. The tanners and workers when they mix with other people, feel embarrassed.

Educated children of the tanners and workers do not like the black hands, nails and feet of their fathers or brothers. Outlook of other people to the tanners and workers in tanneries is contemptuous.

20) UNHEALTHY RIVALRY IN TANNING AND FOOTWEAR INDUSTRIES

There is an ugly rivalry among the tanners as well as among the cobblers. It affects the tanning and footwear manufacturing industries. A progressive unit is affected by the unethical ways and means adopted by other tanning and footwear units in Kolhapur district. Many tanning and footwear units try to attract the skilled employees of other tanning units and footwear units by promising them attractive and higher wages in-order to do harm to the
progressive unit. As a result there is an unnecessary cutthroat competition among the tanners as well as among the cobblers. It raises the cost of production and affects the production of industries.

The workers also do not try to understand where their welfare lies. Every now and then they change the unit (owner) and due to this they do not get stability. The worker is being crushed by the dirty tactics of the industrialists. As a result the workers as well as industrialists suffer; they cannot make progress.

21) **HEAVY TAXES**

Heavy taxes also adversely affect the leather and footwear industries in Kolhapur district. The Government of Maharashtra has been levying heavy taxes on the leather and leather products in comparison with those in other states. The Government is levying an excise duty of 12% and valorem on the organised units and this is considered to be a major deterrent to the modernisation of footwear industry.

Municipal Corporation of Kolhapur and Municipalities of Ichalkaranji, Peth Vadgaon and Gadinglaj levy heavy octroi duties on raw materials i.e. raw hides, babhul bark, myrobalan etc. Kolhapur Municipal Corporation levys high
Octroi duty on tan-leather brought by various tanners to the district market. This octroi tax is very burdensome for the tanners.

African Wattle extract is a superior tanning raw material. It reduces the period of tanning and increases the weight of the tanned-leather. But there is a high import duty of 68% on the wattle extract, so the small tanners in the district do not use the wattle extract. There is also a high export duty on the leather chappals, it is 72%. This is a great hurdle in the attempts made to increase the export of leather chappals.

22) EXPORT PROBLEM

Only a small quantity of Kolhapuri leather chappals is exported to the foreign countries because of the lack of foresight, lack of market intelligence, high cost of production, poor quality of the product, high export duty etc.

23) TENDENCY AMONG FEMALE WORKERS TO GIVE UP THE WORK OF CRUSHING BABHUL BARK AND MYROBALAN

Previously a large number of women were engaged in the work of crushing babhul bark and myrobalan. Now many women have left this work. Their number has very much gone down. There is an acute shortage of women workers in the tanning industry.
Women workers left the work of crushing babhul bark and myrobalan because it was very laborious and for this work they were paid very meagre wages. Now some women have entered the business of selling vegetables and fruits. Some others work as a farm workers or do other odd jobs. Migration of skilled female workers from the tanning business to other fields is not a good sign for the tanning industry.

24) CUT THROAT COMPETITION AMONG LEATHER FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY, RUBBER, PLASTIC AND PV.C. FOOTWEAR INDUSTRIES

Non-availability of suitable hides and skins in sufficient quantities and the economy of production and ware have compelled the man to search for alternative materials. As a result of the progress made in the chemical industry, many synthetic materials have been produced to take the place of leather. Besides, with the help of automatic machines and moulds it has become possible to manufacture in single process various articles from the synthetic materials. In this process, no cutting is required; nor are required any stitches, nor any joints, nor still, fastening with adhesives. Moulded plastic or P.V.C. articles like buckets, jugs, containers, footwear have brought in a revolution in our life.
Many varieties of P.V.C. footwears are produced. They may not be durable, but they are cheap. There is a great demand for them, especially from the people belonging to the middle and poor classes. Many other articles like suitcases, watch-straps, belts etc. which were formerly made from leather are also available nowadays in synthetic materials. There is a tough challenge to the leather and footwear industry.

As a result, demand for leather footwear as well as for other leather goods and consequently that for the tanned leather is decreasing day by day.

In our country where still a majority of the population lives below the poverty line, it is illogical to expect people to go in for costlier leather goods in place of goods made from cheaper synthetic materials. Leather chappals and shoes are costlier due to the high cost of the tanned leather.

25) **ABSENCE OF LEATHER TECHNICAL INSTITUTE AND COMMON FACILITY CENTRE IN KOLHAPUR DISTRICT**

In Maharashtra there are very few leather technical institutes where training in tanning process and guidance is given to the tanners. Tanners in the district cannot be expected to go to such institutes situated in far off places. There is also no common facility centre in the district, a centre with modern tanning machinery like drums, fleshing
machines, shaving machines, splitting machines, embossing machines... etc. which the tanners could use.

26) ABSENCE OF CO-OPERATIVE TANNING AND CO-OPERATIVE PURCHASING OF BABHUL BARKS

Gandhiji's famous saying, that organisations never die due to lack of funds, but always due to lack of right people, is fully applicable to the co-operative societies of tanners. Co-operative society of tanners in Peth Vadgaon went into liquidation due to the lack of right leadership. Nowhere in Kolhapur district is tanning of raw hides and skins and purchasing of babhul bark done on co-operative basis.

Past experience of tanners in Peth Vadgaon regarding Co-operative efforts is not satisfactory.

27) GENERAL PROBLEMS

A) Leather industry is one of the most important industry of our country. It occupies an unique position among the leading industries of India. It earns a considerable amount of foreign exchange every year. Many countries were far quicker in revolutionising their industry. Inspite of our vast resources in material, men, market etc. the advance made in developing the leather industry is not quite commensurate.
B) A nationwide survey conducted in 1986-87 by the Central Leather Research Institute, Madras found that about 9 million hides and quite as many skins are lost to the industry. They are left unused due to various socio-economic reasons.

C) Lack of capital and technical know-how, non-availability of sophisticated machinery and equipment at reasonable price and lack of knowledge in improved methods of manufacture are the various factors that have contributed to the slow pace of the progress of the industry. Lack of co-ordination between the industrialists and the Government departments in understanding their problems and in providing relief is another major factor (problem) which has obstructed the growth of the industry.