

CHAPTER - II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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2.1 Introduction :-

The present chapter deals with the review of literature on castes in Leather Industry.

Sunanda Patawardhan has studies changes among India's Harijans in Poona city. The term-scheduled caste is used for five scheduled caste taken up for present study Mahar, Mang, Chamar, Dhor and Halar. This study give broad view of how ordinary harijan lives, what are his religious beliefs, Marriages, how for they are able to get the opportunities for Education offered by Government.

The universe of this empirical study is the Harijan of Poona city. A hundred families each from three major castes Mahar, Mang, Chamars, and thirty from the two different castes Dhor and Halars were sampled with purposive sampling method. Questionnaire and interview scheduled were used.

The main focus of study was on the nature of social inequality with special reference to the Harijans in the changing system of stratification in India. With theoretical focus and scope of study the degree of differential Development and social Mobility as expressed by Mahar, Mang and others, have been pointed out.

The Conclusions are as follows :

1. The notion of pollution and purity is less evidence in urban centres.
2. The allover perspectives that there is increasing possibility for upward mobility for all the Harijans.

3. Discontinuous seen in Urban area. They are seen shift to non-traditional occupations.
4. The scope and degree of social mobility is increased in last few decades.
5. The politisation of a community has been successfully used as effective means of mobilization by some castes.
6. Schedule caste carry hereditary profession because it is profitable in modern settings.

A.B.Mukherji has a book entitled 'The chamars of Uttar Pradesh : A study in social geography'. This study deals with the spatial processes and patterns of the social parameters of the Chamar of Uttar Pradesh. Forming 26% of the population of Scheduled Caste, most of the chamars are landless agricultural, Labourer. This determines values of socio-economic, socio-cultural and socio-demographic attributes which characterize them as autonomous social group. How and why these attributes which vary, through space and what their implications are in the understanding of the agrarian socio-economic structure are some of the questions and answered in the study.

- 1) In Uttar Pradesh number of scheduled castes is large and all of them are differentiated on the basis of socio-economic attributes recognised in the census data.
- 2) The fundamental fact in the social geography of scheduled caste is its exploited and backward condition
- 3) The social geographical structure in three pillars of the social group are the scare, resources and region. . .

Dr.R.B.Patil has presented in his thesis Industrial Labour in Ichalkaranji. The chamar is cobbler also have shifted from their

traditional occupation of making footwear and leather goods those who are still residing in villages are receiving payment in cash and not in kind. Again there is less demand for their services as many villages are also using factory made footwears. He has referred the following studies. The studies in rural area also show same thing in sarangapur near Allahabad. For the chamaras leather work is traditional occupation but none of them were engaged in it from 1920. With the coming of large shoe factories, there has been a decline of the shoe making trade as a cottage industry. Further some of the chamars have deliberately given up holding hide because this was one factor which give them low status.

Similar trend has been observed in Cohns study which is based on Sonapur of Uttar Pradesh. He observes that the chamaras are a wide spread and numerically important part of population of north India. However only a small number of this extensive caste derives its income from the traditional occupation and the great majority make their living as agriculture labour and increasingly in the 20th century as urban labourers.

Thus, chamar have changed from their traditional occupation and accepted farming and industrial occupation.

In the village Rajpur near Delhi by 1957 lot of chamars improved of the 93 Chamarmen, 48 supported themselves and their families by their farming either their own or on other lands. Of the 45 Chamarmen who did not live on farming, 34 worked as regular employers in the nearly sugar mill and the remaining were scattered through a range of occupations.

Apart from these situations of Chamars in other states, in Maharashtra also similar trend has been found Fulmali conducted a study of 462 Chamar householders from Dhule, Amaravati, Nagpur,

Solapur, Pune, Ratnagiri and Aurangabad district of Maharashtra. His finding shows that most of the balutedars including Chamar were freed from the static baluta system during the British rule because of commercialization, industrialization and marketilization. Out of 462 families investigated there were only 3.24 percent balutedar (in traditional occupation) found in village. 64 percent follow leather occupation and were non-balutedars 29.87 percent follow non-leather occupation and 2.16 percent were non-workers (head of families)

The studies in rural area as Saragpur near Allahabad, Sonapur in Uttar Pradesh, Rajpur near Delhi and Maharashtra indicate the decline of traditional occupation for the chamars. It shows that the trend is prevelent all over India.

Satish Kumar Sharma has a book entitled in The Chamar Artisans. His study is focused on two significant issues. One, how can the socio-economic position of artisans carrying out caste significant occupations be improved? For that Govt. of India has created a special Ministry of Human Resources Development which has among other things of well identified objectives of helping the down traoddens of the Indian society. Two, traditional development is an effective alternative for the socio economic development of the artisans in order to view to change. The study focuses on spatial mobility and it's consequences.

Some of the objectives of Study are :

1. The main focus of study is how are socio-economic positions of artisans carrying out the specific occupation before and after independence.
2. Industrialization and its impact on Artisans
3. To study geographical mobility and its consequences.

4. The researcher hypothetically contends that since shoe making has been exclusively occupation of Chamars for centuries together, development of shoe industries and creation of demand for skill in shoe making in market will definitely open up new avenues for the traditionally endowed occupation. The economic gains which these worker derived out of their important bearing up on their families and even in getting employment in some and other area of economic activities.

The study working conditions, problems and prospects

Universe of study : The study is conducted at Karnal.

The Researcher selected state owned industrial unit and two privately owned industrial units in Hariyana. The workers from Govt. 35 or private industry workers were selected as sample and these were interviewed.

The Findings are :

1. The present study shows that shoe makers are many a time better off than their older generation.
2. They have a better future with increasing industrialization and state intervention in the solution of their problems.
3. Their own struggle on economic and political fronts can bring greater changes and make them more mobile.
4. The alternative that industrialization of specific kind can bring about changes can not be justified in view of the existing state of affairs. But the same alternative can be successful only with improvement in the existing factory system based on capitalist mode of production.

B.V.Bhosale has a book entitled 'The Charmakars in Transitions' Charmakar is an important social category and occupational group

which forms integral part of social system in Indian society. The book has traced the origin of Charmakars, issue of migration, occupation challenges, status of education and protective discrimination policy and participation of charmakars in politics and Dalit movement. It is for first time the role of Caste Associations of Charmakars is traced 1914 onward. It brings clearly the stress and strain in community in different issues.

The main focus of study is on Charmakars engaged in traditional occupation and to explore their problem in terms of buying tanned leather, meeting technology demand and its application financial and labour problem, entry of non-chamakars in traditional occupation, their relation in traditional occupation and attitudes toward non-traditional occupation.

The universe of the study is the charmakars community of Maharashtra. The researcher had selected four state area from Maharashtra, Mumbai, Solapur, Kolhapur and Mantheran. In addition, four villages were identified Dindori (Nasik), Bedkin (Aurangabad), Bhogav (Kolhapur) and Paratsinge (Nagpur) to cover the rural sample.

The population of the Charmakaras is maximum in urban area and therefore the study focussed mainly on urban Charmakars but the author has also made an attempt to understand the status of rural charmakars.

The author first contacted the community leaders of caste in every geographical area chosen and then list of charmakars engaged in traditional and non-traditional occupation was prepared for the selection of the samples.

The snow ball method of sampling was used.

In urban and rural areas interview scheduled was administrated by researcher to head of family. In urban areas 145 head of families were interviewed in rural area 26 head of families were interviewed.

The findings are :

1. The urban Charmakars are migrated from village to cities because of famine, poverty, landlessness, inadequate agriculture production, low, agriculture wages, low income from traditional occupation, unemployment and lack of educational facilities.
2. The rural population of charmakars decline due to growing migration to cities and it is increasing in urban centres.
3. The skilled traditional labourer can be further classified into two categories a) Skilled traditional labourer working in his home b) Skilled traditional labourer working with other charmakars.
4. In rural area the position of charmakars is pitiable.
5. The rural and urban charmakars do not use technology in their occupation because of lack of education, capital, technology, and small size of business.
6. The charmakars have absence of trade union.
7. In rural area the hand made goods are not in demand in local and national market so there is decrease in profit and growing competition.
8. Education is one of force of the social change among charmakars.
9. In the pre independence period, the participation of scheduled castes in politics was absent.
10. The traditional occupation of Charmakars is in danger because of growing industrialization, modernization, opening our modern

economy, there is no policy of state to protect the marginal artisans.

T.Rajaretnam : - his Article women in household Industry :-

Role of women as household workers engaged in Manufacturing activities :

The definition of household industry is given in the census -

" A household Enterprises is one which is conducted by the head of household and by members of the household at home or within the village in rural area and only within the precincts & house where the household lives in Urban Areas."

Household Industry : "The activities performed related to production, processing, repair. The goods produced are meant partly or wholly for sale and not for consumption within the household.

Household Industry : Vandana N.Devakar has presented in her thesis - Employment opportunities to female work force in Agriculture & allied sector - A case study of Kavate Mahankal Taluka.

Household Industry is defined as an Industry conducted by the head of household himself/herself and or by members of the household at home or within the village in rural area and only within the precincts of home where the household lives in urban areas. The large proportion of workers in household industry should consist of member of household including the head.

The main criteria of a household industry is the participation of one or more members of a household. The criterion will apply in urban areas too. Even if the industry is not actually located at home in rural area there is great possibility of village limits in the urban areas. Where

organized industry takes greater prominence the household industry should be confined to the precincts of the houses where the participants live. In urban area even if the members of household by themselves run an industry but at a place away from the precincts of their home; it will not be considered a household industry.

Castes in Leather Industry :- E.K.Pol has presented in his thesis "Tanning Industry in Kolhapur District :-

As elsewhere in India the leather Industry is traditionally followed by the people of the depressed classes. The following are the main communities from depressed castes which are engaged in the leather industry. Mahar, Dhor, Chambhar and Mang. Though the four castes belonged to depressed class these are no inter-marriage among them. There is also hierarchy among them.

The four depressed castes formed a part of what was known as the Balute System. Which prevailed in the village till about fifty years back, but due to the spread of education, the opening of new avenues of employment and occupation. The changing economic conditions and new social awareness. The traditional village society and social system slowly began to disintegrate.

Under the Baluta system people from different occupational castes provided their services to the people in the villages. These were Blacksmiths, Carpenters, Potters, Barbers, Washermen, Fishermen, Brahmin priests, Garaos and Mulani's who along with the people of the depressed castes. Viz. the mahar, chambhars, Mangs formed a part of balute system in different regions the occupational caste farming the balute system differed a bit they were mostly twelve in number. The balutedars as they were called had the hereditary right to provide certain services to people in return of which they were paid in kind generally by

got food-grains from the farmers. Where shares of food-grains were also traditionally fixed. The Mahars got highest share besides sweeping the village roads and keeping the village clean. They also flayed and disposed of the bodies of dead cattle. The chambhars made footwear and leather articles the agriculturists needed. The share the Balutedars got is known as 'Baite' in the Vidarbha and Maharashtra region it is known as 'Gharaki'

Transactions also took place among the people of the depressed communities. Dhors got raw hide from the Mahars and Chambhars got tanned from Dhor, these transactions were generally made in cash.

Increasing use of iron tools, oil engines, electric motors, for drawing from wells and irrigating the lands so also improvement in the economic conditions of farmers who could purchase essential commodities on cash payment hastened the disintegration of the balute system.

General public agriculturists etc. required various leather goods of daily use but the real impetus the industry got was from the various Kings and their huge armies which besides soldiers had a large number of horses and elephants these armies were in constant wars with another. As such they always to be on the alert and in trim condition.

They needed harness and saddlery, thongs, straps, whips, hunting whips, leather sheaths for swords leather armour, various footwear etc. they also required big leather bag, water bags or pakkals, small clubbers, to carry oil, which was required to light torches during nights.

The Kings had people from Dhor and Chambhar communities in their services while people from both the communities prepared leather articles which the armies required.

Agriculture is main occupation of large number of people. Agriculture required various articles such as whips, bell-belts for their

cattles, straps, thongs, for flaking bullocks leather belts, leather collars, fringers, forehead, blinkers for the protection of the eyes of bullocks etc. they also required leather buckets or mots for drawing water from wells to irrigate their lands people from the Dhor community made these articles agriculture lived in villages. As such tanning and leather industry flourished in many villages.

With the estd. of British rule in India leather Industry had to diversity its production shoes and boots of varies types wheels the british and their armies required were in great demand and leather industry had to meet this demand.

Besides footwear of various types like chappals, vahanas, Jutas etc. the main leather products the industry produced were saddlery and harness, pakkaf and leather buckets of mots.

T.K.Nag : Article in village leather Industry : Footwear and Leather goods :-

Footwear and leather goods including leather gauns, hand gloves etc. are important products where many large number of traditional artisans engaged. Approximately 80 percent of above items are produced in the country in unorganised sector. Among the total productions 50 percent products belong western types of shoes, which from major part of export India footwear category where items like Kolhapuri chappals & leather goods like purses, ladies & gents bags products with Shanti Niketan designs made using vegetable tanned sheep/ goat skins. Kolhapuri chappals, Clemba sandals, Deshi Jutas, Jaipuri Majudies etc. Kolhapuri chappals are becoming popular in developed and third world countries.

It will be beneficial as well as required to provide minimum infrastructural inputs like improved tools & equipments series for

common facility centre as well as supply of standard raw material & chemicals such scheme may be undertaken in collaboration with NGO's /KVIB at around 50 selected centres in country in Karnataka state - Belgaum, Bijapur, Athani, Nippani, Bangalore and in Maharashtra state - Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur, Pune, Solapur, Thane, Wardia, Nagpur, Amravati, Uasmanabad, Ahmadnagar.

P.C.Nayar in Articles - Village leather Industry :-

Rationalization of Village leather Industry :

Charmalaya :

These centres should work as outlets for tanned leather and sell it to the footwear maker (cabbler) at reasonable price. This will not only retain the decentralised nature of industry but also make available quality leather for making footwear and other leather goods to small artisans.

These charmalayas at block level can work as procurement cum-sale agencies where good number of cabbler having marketing problems are working the floor prices for various types of products made for of the charmalaya tanned may be fixed and they may be purchased from artisans this shall not only relieve the artisans from the clutches of the private traders but shall make available proper regular earnings to the artisans and quality products to the user at reasonable rates such charmalayas should also be entrusted with the responsibility of developing new design in footwear and other leather products. Efforts should be made to make the footwear making a general job in place of present specialised type of job based on caste instead the charmalayas should manufacture components of footwear is soles, insoles, upper pattas, upper designs etc. of standard size and supply the same to interested needy women / children for assembling pasting in the same

fashion components for purses, bags, etc can also be supplied to children at school & ladies at home. After some mutual training this will not only increase the production but

- 1) Make available a source of income to needy population particularly women who have spare time during the time.
- 2) Train the children in footwear making who may take it as their source of living in future and
- 3) bring the work above traditional caste job will help in reducing discrimination caused due to castes since it shall be only assembling work such activities would be beneficial from the national, economic & social welfare point of view.

Selected charmalayas could be used as training centres. Selected charmalayas may be provided plants & other equipment so that residual material of the carcass could be converted into materials fatstallow bone ash glycerol etc. and the whole body of dead animal could be used it would be easier to introduce new techniques and tools of such nation wide of charmalaya are established. Thus the charmalaya would be conversion house and serve as outlet for leather goods manufactured in the decentralised nature of industry and simultaneously make available regular work optimum wages learning to the artisans it would be a nucleus of all leather activities of block and would be producing wealth from western real sense of the term.

KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES COMMISSION :-

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a statutory body created by an Act of Parliament (No.61 of 1956 and as amended by Act No.12 of 1987). Established in April 1957, it took over the work of the former All India Khadi and Village Industries Board.

OBJECTIVES :-

The broad objectives that the KVIC has set before it are :

1. The social objective of providing employment.
2. The economic objective of producing saleable articles, and
3. The wider objective of creating self-reliance amongst the people and building up of a strong rural community spirit.

FUNCTIONS :

The KVIC is charged with the functions of planning, promotion, organisation and implementation of programmes for the development of Khadi and other village industries in the rural areas in co-ordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.

Its functions also comprise building up of a reserve of raw materials and implements for supply to producers, creation of common service facilities for processing of raw materials as semi-finished goods and provisions of facilities for marketing of KVI products apart from organisation of training of artisans engaged in these industries and encouragement of co-operative efforts amongst them. To promote the sales and marketing of Khadi or products of Village Industries or handicrafts, the KVIC may forge linkages with established marketing agencies wherever necessary and feasible.

The KVIC is also charged with the responsibility of encouraging and promoting research in the production techniques and equipments employed in the Khadi and Village Industries sector and providing facilities for the study of the problems relating to it. including the use of non-conventional energy and electric power with a view to increasing productivity, eliminating drudgery and otherwise enhancing their

competitive capacity and arranging for dissemination of salient results obtained from such research.

Further, the KVIC is entrusted with the task of providing financial assistance to institutions and persons who are engaged in the development and operations of Khadi and Village industries and guiding them through supply of designs, prototypes and other technical information.

In implementing KVI activities, the KVIC may take such steps as to ensure genuineness of the products and to set standards of quality and ensure that the products of Khadi and Village Industries do conform to the standards.

The KVIC may also undertake directly or through other agencies studies concerning the problems of Khadi or Villages Industries besides experiments or pilot projects for the development of Khadi and Village Industries.

The KVIC is authorised to establish and maintain separate organisation for the purpose of carrying out any or all of the above matters besides carrying out activities relevant to its functions and programmes.

LARGE PRODUCTION BASE :-

KVI sector has achieved a major landmark by reaching turnover of Rs.10,193,34 crores during 2002-03. The growth rate of the sector has been 14.39% during the year which is highly encouraging looking to the performance of private sector. Production of Khadi has witnessed upward trend changing direction of decline in the previous years.

INDUSTRIES UNDER THE PURVIEW OF KVIC :-

1. "Khadi" means any cloth woven on handloom in India from

cotton, silk or woollen yarn handspin in India or from a mixture of any two or all of such yarns.

2. "Village Industries" means any industry located in a rural area which produces any goods or renders any service with or without the use of power in which the fixed capital investment (in plant and machinery and land and building) per head of an artisan or a worker does not exceed Rupees fifty thousand.

RURAL AREA :-

1. Any area classified as Village as per the revenue records of the state, irrespective of population.
2. It also includes an area even if classified as town, provided its population does not exceed 20,000.

B.Bowonder, S.Sadhulla and Akshay Jain have carried out a project entitled "Evolving an ICT Platform for a Traditional Industry : Transforming Artisans into Entrepreneurs"

The details of the project are as follows :

Introduction :-

Leather Industry occupies a place of prominence in the Indian economy in view of its massive potential for employment, growth and exports. There has been increasing emphasis on its planned development, aimed at optimum utilization of available raw materials for maximizing the returns, particularly from exports. Leather industry has been one of the traditional industries operating in India and is essentially located in certain states, but dispersed as cottage industries in rural areas. Indian leather industry is both in the organized as well as unorganized sectors. The predominant decentralized nature and small size makes it difficult to change this industry. As small scale, cottage

and artisan sector account for over 75% of the total production it was technologically very under developed in design, manufacturing, packing, and logistics. This makes it necessary to be careful while designing solutions for overcoming the weak technological base. The global competition has been the major driver that forced the leather industry to upgrade its technological base. Though traditionally, the Indian leather industry has been an exporter of tanned hides and skins, it has, in the early seventies, set its sights on becoming a major player in the leather products segments. Over the period of the last twenty years and particularly so in the last ten years, it has become the fourth largest foreign exchange earner in the country. The industry has become an area of export thrust with footwear having been identified as an area of extreme focus. Exports from the leather sector accounted for 4.4 per cent of India's total exports in 2000-01. The industry uses primarily indigenous natural resources with little dependence on imported resources. India is endowed with 10% of the world raw material and export constitutes about 2% of the world trade. It employs 2.5 million persons.

An Overview of the pre-project scenario of Kolhapuri footwear industry

A cluster of villages namely Athani, Nippani, Saidapur, Miraj, Chikodi, Madhubhavi, Malgaom, Jhamkhandi and Ananthpur, on the border of Maharashtra and Karnataka States, may not ring familiar bell, but Kolhapuri, the distinctive, sturdy footwear, which is a product of these not-so-familiar villages, is certainly a household name. These villages are the land of the skilled makers of the world-renowned Kolhapuri sandals. The skilled craftsmen and artisans engaged in the 100-year-old profession of manufacturing this distinctive footwear belong to the socially backward and downtrodden class - the Samara

class. This brought in the social dimension also into the change process.

The manufacture of Kolhapuri footwear from tanned leather is a traditional occupation that has assumed the proportions of a cottage industry with hundreds of families being involved in this vocation. In Athani, for example, there are over five hundred families involved in footwear manufacture. Every member of the household contributes to the process by being involved in any of the following activities like cutting the leather, dipping it in water for soaking, stitching the 'patta' or weaving the 'veni'. The jobs are clearly divided within the family with the men doing the cutting, the women doing the stitching while children weaving the 'veni'. The entire family works laboriously and produces approximately 35 to 45 pairs of Kolhapuri chappals per week. These chappals are sold either to Khadi Village Industries Development (KVIC) or to Leather Industries Development Corporation of Karnataka (LIDKAR) with the artisans earning about Rs. 10 per pair.

The leather used is bag-tanned locally or in areas around Athani. In fact, the supply is far short of the demand. This leather, however, has a lot of problems in quality. It has to be soaked in water, and then hammered to smoothen it out and then the chappals are made in this condition, which is then dried out. A fairly good quality of bag-tanned leather would have an area of around 15 sq.ft. and weigh approximately 8 kgs. Animal tails, tanned and shredded, are used for stitching the chappals. The entire process of tanning the leather takes about 35 days, which is indeed quite long.

The manufacturing techniques are very traditional and conventional. The sides are cut when the leather is semi wet. The top-sole patterns are prepared and they are stitched along with heel after attaching them temporarily using a unique 'mud' taken from nearby river. A piece of canvas is also placed in between to increase the

stiffness of the sole. The 'patta' pattern are pre-fabricated in various designs and then attached to the top sole. The 'anghtha' or toe-ring is also cut and then stitched to form a ring. The artisans use very crude group-grading techniques for different sizes e.g. the diameter of the 'anghtha' is "two fingers" for sizes up to size 7 and "three fingers" for sizes from size 8 upwards. Moreover, once these chappals dry out, they shrink resulting in smaller sizes and fit.

Origin of the project :-

The leather industry cluster making Kolhapuri footwear was in Athani. This is a region where the summer months are scorching and the summer sun relentless. The land here is semi-arid and dry where the dusty and black soil swirls. The monsoon here is short but enough for good sugarcane cultivation. The location is shown in **Fig. 3**. The people of Athani are mainly involved in their traditional handicraft of distinctive Kolhapuri footwear manufacture for over hundred years. Decades of skill are focused at the fingertips of these artisans as they shape intricate traditional patterns handed down from generation to generation, into making this unique footwear. But like any other society of artisans in India, those of Athani also belong to the socially backward and downtrodden classes, like the Samara class. Kolhapuris, made from the local bag-tanned leather, have achieved a prominence of their own with emphasis on a natural and rugged look with ethnicity. Before 1940, the footwear manufactured were of a thicker variety and suitable for a rough terrain. Then, one of the families crafted an ingenious design – thinner, lightweight, flexible, with supportive side-flaps, and beautiful upper decorated with intricate weaves, braids and knots. They were called as Kolhapuris, now a household name. Athani is well known only for her Kolhapuri industry, and almost all families in the region practice this profession.

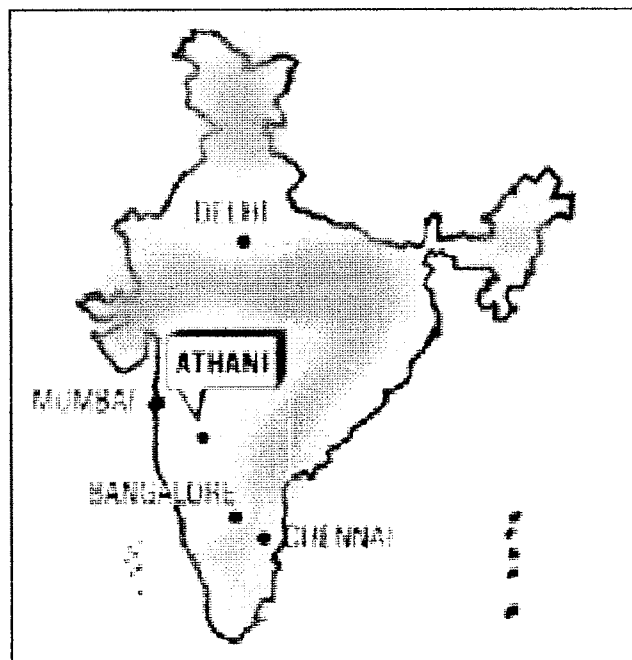


Fig. 3 Location of Athani

Changed Scenario :-

Kolhapuri footwear was in great demand till few decades ago and was exported to many countries in Europe. But because of the gradual degradation of their quality, the exports stopped, and they face a shrinking market. This along with the continuous rising cost of living and raw materials for their trade have pushed these artisans into a cycle of cheap materials, poor quality and still lower price. This marginalization further led many families to abandon their traditional craft for better livelihood, without any clear solutions to their problems.

Leather technology has been one area that Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Government of India, focused from 1950 onwards. CLRI, Madras being one of the most intensive leather research establishments working exclusively on leather technology had a national responsibility here. The organization working with the objective of serving as a reliable consultant to leather sector needs to take some

concrete steps to save this vanishing cottage industry. With the support of UNDP assisted NLDP and under LTM, the CLRI started its rescue operation. CLRI's association with the artisans of Athani started with Leather Technology Mission, which looked ways and means of improving the quality of leather, used to manufacture the Kolhapuri footwear with improved tanning methodologies. This was followed by the NLDP programme, which covered product improvement and then marketing.

The first contact

The Athani artisans used vegetables tanned buffalo hide, generally known as bag-tanned leather for manufacture of their product, sourcing it from in and around the region. The quality of this leather used to be poor. Also the tanning process used to take 35 days which was much longer than usual. Through the minor process changes suggested by the CLRI and further training imparted to the artisans for improved processing of bagtanned leather resulted in leather quality improvement and reduction in processing time to about 15 days. To achieve this, four scientist from the CLRI stayed there in Athani, worked with the artisans, looked into their leather manufacturing process, identified the mistakes undergone, demonstrated their new process with small process changes and nudge them toward the new method. This task was not at all easy one. It involved a lot of talking, convincing & persuasion and trust building activities. According to one of the scientist the project took around one whole year. Agencies like the KVIC and the LIDKAR also helped the process along. The second phase of this project was sponsored by NLDP. NLDP, with the objective of fostering and enhancing the traditional and new skills of workers and artisans engaged in the leather sector, especially the tiny and small unorganized units and promoting their available links with the organized sector, supported the

project of standardization and quality enhancement of Kolhapuri Footwear.

Project Conceptualization :-

As one of the requirements for the project to succeed was that the scientist to know the exact reasons for low quality and high inconsistency in the end product. For this a CLRI team visited the place, collected the required data and then studied them. Also to understand the methods the artisans employed, two expert artisans from Athani were invited to CLRI and requested to make Kolhapuri footwear according to their method, which was closely followed and observed. Of this detailed study came some astonishing facts. The artisans were following traditional and conventional practices for manufacture of their footwear. This was leading to low quality end product with high inconsistency. CLRI scientists exclusively looked into each of such practices and the problem associated with them. Also they came up with the suggested measures to overcome the problems, as shown in the **Table 1**.

Table 1: Traditional Practices followed by Athani Artisans

S.No	Traditional Practice	Effect & Problem	Measures suggested
1	Did not had a standard pattern of sizing. Used fingers and hand for sizing	Inconsistent sizing of footwear. Customer cannot look for size 7 or 9 in a Kolhapuri = he has to try the chappal on	CLRI, therefore introduced standard sizing for the products it was developing
2	The sides were cut when the semi wet condition of leather	Once these chappals dry out, they shrink resulting in smaller sizes and fits	The last shapes, size and fittings were standardized. The project supplied plastic last with a toe differentiation to 1200 families
3	The top and bottom soles pattern were prepared and they were stiched around the edges with the heel	When the edges frayed the heel piece use to fall off	The pattern of stitching had been modified. The modified stitching now begin with a line across the middle from heel to toe
4	The stiff base of the chappal was achieved by stitching together layers of leather. A piece of canvas was also placed in between to increase the stiffness of the sole	The stiff base turns soggy in water	CLRI suggested the use of TRP soles as its natural color would not only give a leather look but also improve the sole abrasion and water proof properties
5	The layers of leather stitched to form sole were temporarily attached using a unique 'mud' taken from a near by river.	The layer use to separated within some time of use causing discomfort	Use of adhesives like neoprene instead of clay was suggested
6	The 'angutha' or the toe rings were another problem area. The two ends of the rings were stiched one above the other and pushed between the layers of leather	This caused discomfort to the wearer	The artisans were taught to tie the two end of the toe ring with zigzag type of joint
7	The artisans use very crude grouping techniques for different sizes. e.g. the diameter of 'angutha' is "two fingers" for size up to 7 and "three fingers" for sizes from 8 onward	Again this lead to inconsistency in the end product	CLRI designed templates for sole, insole, half sole, instep bar, toe ring strap etc. as a guide for marking, essential for fine finishing

Project Implementation :-

After such a detail case study and analysis the immediate need for enhancing the quality and standardize the sizing system of Kolhapuri

Footwear was very clear. Shoe Design and Development Centre (SDDC), CLRI embarked on the task, sponsored by NLDP, to standardize the Kolhapuri footwear manufactured at Athani with the introduction of relevant lasts and templates. Also the various measures suggested by CLRI earlier were incorporated in the process, improving the manufacturing technique. Once the lasts and templates were developed, two more artisans were invited to CLRI and they were requested to follow the CLRI method of manufacture by providing adequate training of new techniques developed. Once it was observed that the artisans were able to absorb the inputs provided by CLRI, onsite training at Athani was conducted for 20 families. The families were provided with a set of lasts and templates. The artisans during the pilot production in December 1996 fabricated about 400 pairs of chappals. These chappals were given to identified users in order to assess the comfort and for wear trials. Based on the feedback from the users, minor modifications were provided to the families. Artisans already trained at CLRI were used as trainers who demonstrated sequentially the various steps involved in manufacture of Kolhapuri chappals using CLRI method right from cutting of leather up to final assembling using the lasts. The demonstration was carried out using leather available both at Athani and the leather developed using CLRI method. The programme was conducted in the vernacular and even the elderly among the artisans accepted to adopt the new techniques. About 2800 pairs of chappals were fabricated during the second pilot production. The final products were fabricated during the second pilot production. The final products were checked for quality and only those, which passed the quality checks, were accepted for marketing by LIDKAR. As a follow up of the tremendous response received from the artisans for standardization and enhancement of quality of Kolhapuri chappals at Athani, 1000 families

in the region were trained with NLDP support.

Extension of project under SIDE-NLDP Programme of UNDP :-

But much more than the technological problems, the social obstacles were daunting. The atmosphere in the region was considerably politicized, the general attitude was one of expecting ‘free deals’ – grants, subsidies etc. CLRI therefore saw the need for associating another organization having strengths in this area. Dealing with a group of local artisans who are not very educated required an organisation that operates at grass-root level with experience in extension and having rural linkages. For this ASCENT was approached to participate in a co-operative effort to develop the overall economic well being of the artisans engaged in making Kolhapuri chappals.

ASCENT initially conducted small workshop with a few representatives, selected by the artisans themselves, to jointly analyze the problems and the possible solutions. Initially, the key issues emerged were – lack of capital and poor raw materials for good quality products. Most artisans wished to leave the trade and wanted training in alternate vocations. One key problem seen, though not discussed, was the fact that there was intense rivalry among the artisans, and as a consequence mutual distrust and lack of cooperation was high. Even when the artisans selected the representatives for the workshop, they still had apprehension that these representatives would gain some benefits and would not share these with others. Only after repeated clarifications from ASCENT, representatives were assured that the workshop was for everybody’s benefit. Among the issues raised in the workshop, it was seen that due to the high raw material costs, many artisans took recourse to buying cheaper materials of much poorer quality. Consequently, prices for the chappals dropped further, leading to a vicious cycle of lower prices, poorer materials, even lower prices and much lower

incomes. Another major issue, lack of capital was traced to the fact that most artisans had taken loans from banks, and a majority had come to defaulters. Loans from private moneylenders were too prohibitive in terms of interest. Hence getting money for any capital needs was very difficult. One issue was puzzling – if markets were poor, why was the price of raw materials high? On further discussions, it appeared that a few artisans and traders were able to find ‘better markets’ – markets, which fetched higher prices for the chappals, and so could absorb higher raw material prices. Thus the issue shifted from poor markets to lack of knowledge of markets. As discussions continued, the group worked on what could be done to overcome these problems. It was finally agreed that initially an effort would be made to develop adequate savings within groups of artisans, which would in turn be used for loans among themselves. It was also agreed that the groups would be of women, and that for ease of interaction, each group would limit itself to 15-20 members. Further opportunities for training, both in chappal making as well as in other trades, would be explored as and when possible.

The self-help Groups :-

While in the workshop it was agreed that the groups would be formed for saving and credit, when it actually came to forming the groups, initially there was much resistance. Most artisans did not understand the idea of saving and using that money for credit – the question asked was, “Why should we pay interest on our own savings if we take it out?” With a lot of clarifications, two groups could be formed at first. Ranjana Sannakki was the leader of the first one, named Bharatiya Mahila Sangh. The main motive was to help the artisans become self-reliant so that they could help themselves in most areas, and also to help create an atmosphere of trust among group members, to enable future working together in the group for production. Over a

period of time ASCENT representatives worked with the groups, providing informal training on the role of the groups (SHG's), the procedures and processes. For instance, in the beginning the groups did not meet regularly – the women just sent the money every week through someone or the other. Saving alone was not the motive for the group formation. The SHGs were also meant to foster a feeling of unity and friendship, in turn leading to greater cooperation, and this could not be achieved unless members met regularly, talked of many things other than just the savings and loans. This point was important enough for ASCENT to make regular meeting an essential qualification for participating in any future training, so much so that in an initial training provided by CLRI, members of one group were not chosen as it did not meet regularly. Such strictness in enforcing group processes paid off in the next three months. Though initially members did not appreciate these processes, as groups grew they understood the importance of meeting together, following systematic procedures, and most of all, assessing any situation in terms of what themselves could do instead of depending on others - the Government, the Panchayat, the traders, etc. So remarkable was the progress in self-confidence and the closeness among the group members that they could organize a whole 'Sangama' of nearly 400 people, a festival of confidence of SHG members with various other development agencies, with just a little support from ASCENT.

Today there are ten SHGs – nine in Athani and one in Nippani, each with savings over Rs. 10,000, and with two having savings over Rs. 15,000. Members have taken loans from the SHGs for both personal and roduction purposes. An interesting feature has been inter-group loans, which helped members of one group to complete production work for exports. The impact of the SHGs has gone beyond just savings and

the self-confidence of the members. For the first time, women artisans were given a clear role, and were in public view. Many SHG members have shifted from the earlier dependent attitude to more self-reliant one. One example is the fact that many members have acquired electric connections for their homes, paying the necessary fees and taxes to do so. Earlier, the attitude was that it was the responsibility of the Government (who provided the houses) to pay the amounts and provide electricity, and that the artisans could not pay. In reality, the amount was not so large that the artisans could not pay – it was just that too many promises of free gifts had been made (and broken). Even more important is the fact that women are now getting accustomed to taking part in decision making processes. This has spread from the SHGs to many homes, and recently to pricing and costing chappals, hitherto a male prerogative. Recent costing and pricing for chappals have been made by SHG members themselves.

The Production System :-

Simultaneously with the efforts of ASCENT in forming SHGs, CLRI organized a series of training programme – in production methods, in varied designs, in sourcing alternate materials, and in developing products for International Trade Fair Participants for these programme were selected jointly by SHG members, ASCENT and CLRI. In a departure from earlier customs, both men and women were selected for training. This, for artisans of ATHANI, was a radical change. In earlier programmes, it was exclusively the men who attended the training, and the women hardly saw any place outside Athani itself. The development of the SHGs had given the women a considerable degree of confidence, and the process of inclusion in training by CLRI carried this further. There was also a thought that, as the SHG members were exclusively women, why not select women for the training as well?

In this matter ASCENT felt that as both men and women participated in the chappal production process, the focus of development should be the family as a whole. Women needed special support in some areas, but focusing on the women alone might, in the longer term, create more tensions in the family. ASCENT had a firm belief that development should not be accompanied by conflicts in the family and community, as far as possible. Hence in the strategy it was decided early on that for all activities other than the savings and credit, both women and men would be involved and again as far as possible, couple would also be given to women-headed homes, in that some women would be selected when their husbands were absent.

Artisans went on participate in the Delhi shoe fair in July 1999, and in the GDS International Shoe fair in Dusseldorf, Germany. By this time the artisans were more ready to understand the concepts of costing and pricing and for the first time artisans team received export orders worth about US\$ 20,000. These have been produced and dispatched. Artisans subsequently participated in IILF, 2000 at Chennai, and at the Swadeshi Vigyan Mela at Delhi in Jan-Feb 2000.

The development of the catalogue, incorporating new designs has continued on a regular basis. Efforts are now being made to link up with a few larger buyers in Delhi, Calcutta and Bangalore, so that the artisans do not depend on exports alone, which can be a fluctuating market.

Export orders are not new for a chappal once patronized by the erstwhile Maharaja of Kolhapur, from where it derives its name. Mainly produced in Athani and Nippani in Karnataka and Miraj in Maharashtra, Kolhapuris were once a favored export item.

Between 1974 and 1979, several consignments of Kolhapuris

were exported to the US during summer for 60 and 70 cents a pair. Once private companies entered the fray, both the quality and export sales to that country dropped drastically. They now sell in the US at \$7 to \$12 a pair and in the Indian market for up to Rs. 250 a pair. The market is expanding. But the supply chain is not strong enough to cope with the expansion and the potential for development. The changing fortunes of Kolhapuri's are also changing the life style of over 6,000 traditional craftsmen of Athani and Nippani in Karnataka.

- **Asian Centre for Entrepreneurial Initiatives (ASCENT) –**

Social Support Ascent – a Bangalore-based non-government organization with a difference. Ascent is an establishment launched by executives and business people with an interesting method of working, in the downtrodden of this nation. They believe not in charity, but in self-dependence: and making every project seems like a business deal instead of a one-side charity mission. They believe that a person who has put lot of his own knows better how to take care of it. Thus, Ascent felt that instead of giving the people of Athani money and food, they would be better off if they were taught how to improve their work and lifestyles, so that they also hold place of their own in this industry, and all their own accord.

- **National Leather Development Programme (NLDP) –**

Sponsors This is a unique programme undertaken by the Ministry of Industry and launched in April 1992. With the assistance of UNDP, this is a programme drawn for integrated development of the Indian leather industry, and possessing very clear objectives for developing footwear manufacture, human resource areas, R&D sectors, environment friendly technologies and many more encompassing all regions of the industry. When Athani traditional craft of making

Kolhapuri and Bandh toe sandals slowly started sinking in this fast-paced world, NLDP, along with other groups of common interest launched on a project aimed at a revamp of the trade; without taking away the skill and craftsmanship of decades standing. This is the NLDP – Athani Project.

Benefits :-

Any intentional change is brought forward with some future benefits in mind. The technical and social intervention made within the artisan community of Athani region has reaped the following benefits.

- **Increased market accessibility with the help of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)**

The better product needs better and bigger market. This is done through both the traditional marketing practices and use of new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). With the help of ASCENT, the project has made a digital move by creating their own Web-site, toeholdindia.com. This is a big leap bringing the whole world with their ambit.

- **Increased earning / standard of living**

With enhanced quality of Kolhapuri footwear and new designs created the artisans can not only realize higher per unit value but with increased productivity and decreased waste over all profits also increases. This has a direct and straightforward effect on the lives of the artisans i.e. improved standard of living.

Conclusion :-

The main reasons for the rapid diffusion of the innovation and the consequent technological change have been the following:

- Training a number of people and creating a social network that

facilitate

communications in a community of people

- The rich experience the interface-managing agent (like the Central Leather Research Institute) has and their reputation among the community.
- The economic benefit of the innovation has been substantial whenever benefits of diffusion are rapid. ICT has immense potential to modernize a traditional industry provided the interventions are conceptualized by experts and has a good understanding of the customer needs.

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