

Child Labour in Football Stitching Activity in India

A case Study of Meerut District in Uttar Pradesh



Context of the Present Study

The revelation of child labour engaged in football stitching activity in Sialkot region of Pakistan and Jullander and Meerut districts of India way back in 1995-96, prompted major stakeholders to incorporate effective mechanisms to work out ways and means to eradicate child labour from football stitching activity. Even after a decade of continuous implementation of World Federation of Sports Goods Industry (WFSGI) code of conduct for eradicating child labour from football stitching activity, several studies point out the presence of child labour in this activity especially in the unorganized home-based units of Jullander and Meerut in India. The guiding market forces of acquiring maximum profits by contractors/sub-contractors and manufacturers encourages employment of children in spite of the WFSGI code of conduct for its members.

The observations of the studies (Refer Background Studies on Child Labour in Football Stitching Activity-Section II of the present Study) strengthens the viewpoint that the vulnerability of stitchers community, due to prevailing economic and social realities make it virtually impossible to eliminate all cases of child labour from sports industry especially in the labour intensive activity of football stitching even in highly monitored region of Jullander and Batala in Punjab. The condition is much worse in Meerut region which has received limited attention due to its highly unorganized sector as majority of football manufacturing units are home based without the purview of any monitoring mechanism.

Objectives of Present study

As a follow up of the observation of several research studies, news reporting and other media analysis, the present study examines to assess the presence of child labour in the football stitching activity in Meerut district of India. Major objectives of the study are to examine:

- The extent of child labour in the appropriately selected villages and urban areas in Meerut district.
- Socio-economic profile of families whose children are engaged in the football stitching activity.
- Working conditions, income and other health hazards associated with the football stitching activity.
- Identification of possible networks between sub contractors, contractors, sports manufacturers and buyers of match-grade footballs in Meerut district.

Methodology and Research Organization

The research study is based on examination of previous studies and a field survey conducted during November 2007- January 2008 in appropriately selected villages and urban areas of Meerut city.

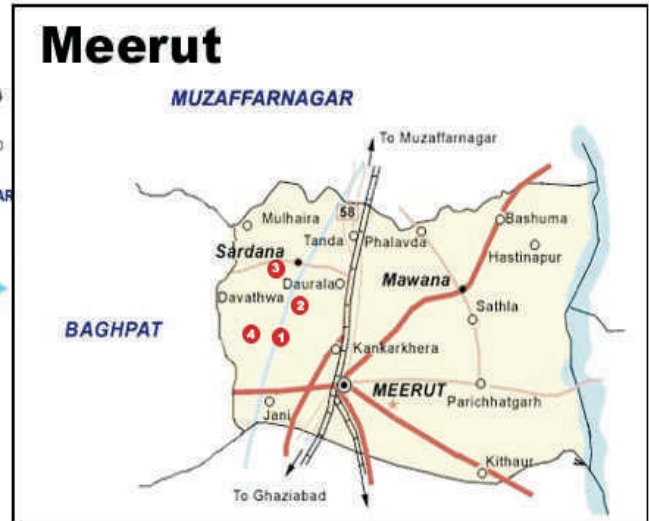
The study is based on both secondary data, field observations and primary data collected through a detailed field survey from appropriately selected households, children and other stakeholders. The secondary sources of information include several reports prepared by ILO, National Labour Institute-NOIDA, ICN, Tata Consultancy Services, Global March against Child Labour, BBA and other media reporting. Information was also collected from several national and international websites. A detailed literature review of the periodicals like annual reports, quarterly newsletters and other media publications was conducted. All documented records from various newspapers, journals and websites were scanned minutely. The information was supplemented and validated on the basis of primary information collected during the field visits and field surveys in the sample selected villages.

The primary sources of information in selected villages of Meerut and Jullander were collected through field visits and an intensive field survey, conducted with the help of questionnaires, focused group discussions and field observations. The selection of villages for the field survey and field visit was undertaken appropriately to have proper representative sample. (Refer Table No.1 and Map No.1). The map shows the spatial distribution of villages selected for the in depth survey.





INDIA



Villages Surveyed for Survey

1. Davathwa
2. Kamalpur
3. Buddh Vihar
4. Siwal Khas (Town)

A total of 79 households were randomly selected for survey in three villages and one urban locality in Meerut district. The villages and urban locality was selected keeping in view the information ascertained from secondary sources indicating prevalence of home-based units for football stitching activities. 69% of the rural households from the sample were having home-based football stitching activity, while only 33% households from urban locality had football stitching activity. Thus a significant proportion of households from the adjacent villages were having home-based football stitching activities as one of the major source of income, which were not monitored by ant SGFI team in Meerut district.

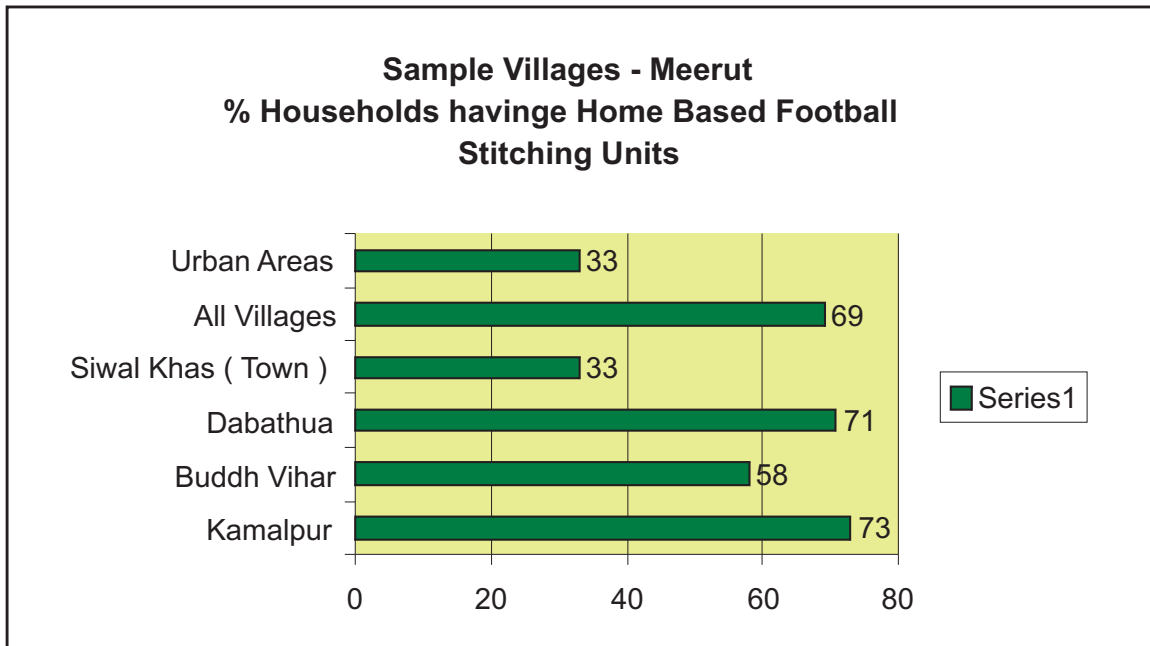


Table No.1
Sample Survey Details

District	Villages Selected for Field Survey	Number of Households Surveyed	Home Based Units/ Stitcher HH Observed		Contractors/ Sub Contractors Surveyed
			No	%	
Meerut	Kamalpur	33	24	73	5
	Buddh Vihar	17	10	58	3
	Dabathua	17	12	71	2
	Siwal Khas (Town)	12	4	33	1
All Villages		79	50	63	11
		67	46	69	10
	Urban A.	12	4	33	1

Source: Field Survey Data Conducted during November-2007 to January 2008

The respondents covered during the observation field visits and for an in-depth field survey include.

- Randomly selected sample households.
- Home-based Units having football stitching activity
- Children and family members working as football stitchers
- Contractors / Sub contractors who deliver raw materials in the home based units.

The methods of field survey included field observation, group discussion and filling up of structured questionnaires for different stakeholders. The survey also included an analysis of the family profile of child labourers engaged in football stitching activity. Indicators related to their socio-economic background were considered while collecting the information (Refer Questionnaire-1).

The field visits (for observation and survey) were preceded by an orientation programme imparted to the survey assistants for collecting information from the field. The gender sensitization and child interaction were particularly focused. The data collected through the primary and secondary sources were analyzed

statistically. The results were tested through sample design techniques. Diagrammatic representation of data through pie diagrams and bar graphs have been presented with the help of various measures of central tendency, deviations and other averages. The documentation is supported by photographs and in-box interviews, observation of officials, other stakeholders and target groups.

Match-Grade Football Stitching Regions in India

The match-grade football stitching activity has its roots in Sialkot region of Pakistan. After partitioned in 1947, many of Sialkot's business groups migrated across the border into Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, settling in Jalandhar and Meerut city. (Refer Map No.2).

Meerut

Meerut is one of the important industrial towns of the western Uttar Pradesh. It is situated about 85 kms from Delhi. Sports manufacturing units are mainly concentrated in and around Meerut city and adjacent villages. These industries came into existence mainly after partition, when some families belonging to Sialkot (presently in West Pakistan) migrated and settled in and around Meerut city. These families, having sufficient knowledge of manufacturing of sports items, started units to meet the local requirements initially, however now sports equipments are also exported from Meerut. Meerut has one of the largest Muslim populations among the major cities of India (close to 45%). These communities are concentrated in Meerut city and its border villages

Jalandhar

Situated about 370 km north-west of New Delhi on National Highway, once popularly known as GT (Grand Trunk) Road between the rivers Ravi and Sutlej, is the city of Jalandhar. Basti Nau in the city, has one of the biggest sports goods markets. Industrial production of sports goods began on a small scale during the late forties. Over the years, the sports goods industry has grown at an impressive rate and of late, Indian sports goods are also exported to different countries. Rough estimates suggest that today Jalandhar has more than one hundred industries and about 20,000 small-scale industries. About 60 per cent of the manufactured sports goods comprise of different kinds of inflatable balls. Besides these, the other sports goods that are largely manufactured are badminton racquets and shuttle cocks, cricket bats and balls, different kinds of gloves and protective equipment.

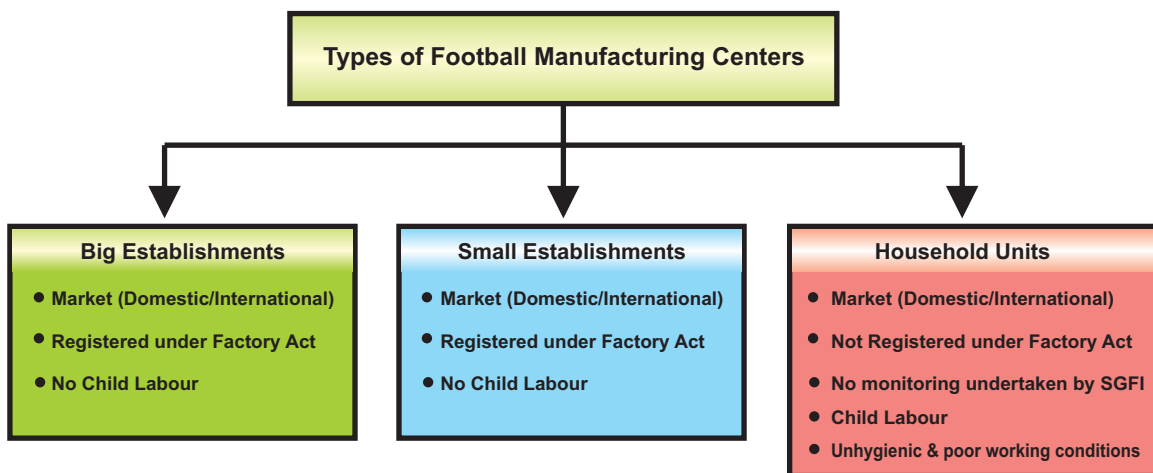
Sports and Football Manufacturing Units

The sports businessmen started manufacturing sports equipments in registered and unregistered manufacturing units. Some of these units, by virtue of their long experience in the field, have built up a good brand name of their products, thereby getting orders from domestic market as well as from other countries. Major sports products manufactured are, Cricket Bats/ Stumps (wickets)/ Balls/ Batting Pads/ Wicket keeping Gloves/ Helmets, boxing Gloves, punching gloves/ bags/ balls, Badminton Racket, Shuttle cock for indoor & outdoor games, Badminton Nets, Football, Basketball, Volleyball, Handball, hockey sticks/ balls/ pads/ helmets and tennis ball/ nets/ table. Most of India's sports goods are exported to the United Kingdom, The United States of America, Germany, France and Australia from these two regions. The Indian sports goods industry manufactures 318 items. However, major items that are exported are inflatable balls, hockey sticks and balls, cricket bats and balls and boxing gloves. Major manufacturers and distributors of sports equipments including match-grade footballs are concentrated in these two cities (Refer List of List of Manufacturers and Distributors of Sports Equipment from Jullander and Meerut).



In these sports manufacturing centers, three kinds of establishments are usually found:

- i. **Big establishments:** These are generally geared to exports besides catering to the domestic market. Most of these are registered with regular monitoring systems.
- ii. **Small establishments:** These usually manufacture sports goods for the domestic market. Both the big establishments as well as the small establishments are registered either under the Factories Act, 1948, or under the Shops and Establishment Act of the state of Punjab.
- iii. **The unregistered units:** These are found particularly in the urban pockets of Jalandhar and Meerut. These units are mostly small home-based units which are usually run by the family members, but at times with the help of a couple of hired employees. These units do not have a direct access to market instead they are supplied raw materials through contractors/ sub contractors. It has been seen that many a times when the big establishments - especially exporters - are unable to cope with large orders from their foreign clients, these establishments distribute a share of the production to these small unregistered, home- based units through contractors/ sub contractors. These units do not fall under the purview of regular monitoring from SGFI. Child labour and exploitation of labour are usually found in these unregistered household units, to maximize profits by contractors/ sub contractors and manufacturers.



Background Studies on Child Labour in Football Stitching Activity:

BBC and Other Newspaper Reporting- 1995-96

The revelation of British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and several international newspapers in 1995-1996, that many of the world's match-grade footballs were being produced by children in the football manufacturing center of Sialkot in Pakistan, created, furore among sports loving people, especially just before the commencement of 1996 European Football championship. An International Labour Organization (ILO) study in the Sialkot region of Pakistan in 1996 estimated that more than 7,000 Pakistani children between the ages of 5-14 years were stitching footballs on a regular, fulltime basis. The establishment of engagement of children in producing match-grade footballs forced the International Federation of Football Association (FIFA), World Federation of Sports Goods Industry (WFSGI), the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and other leading football manufacturers such as Nike, Adidas, Reebok, Mitre (UK) and other leading manufacturers to adopt effective measures to stop using children to stitch the match-grade footballs in Sialkot region of Pakistan, in order to save their brand image.

Christian Aid and SACCS Study Report- 1997

Christian Aid (UK based NGO) in collaboration with the South Asian Coalition on Child Servitude (SACCS) in their report in 1997, revealed that children in large numbers were also engaged in sports goods industry in India. A report released by SACCS In 1998 "A Sporting Chance: Tackling Child Labor in India's Sports Goods Industry" on the eve of 1998 Football World Cup, estimated 25,000 to 30,000 children were engaged in Jallunder-Batala region of Punjab and Meerut region of Uttar Pradesh, the two major manufacturing centers of match-grade footballs in India¹. The reports were contested by the Sports Manufacturers Associations in India. However these reports had devastating consequences as major buyers like Adidas, Mitre and Umbro started questioning and seeking assurances from the major football manufacturers of India that child labour is not used for the manufacturing of footballs. A leading buyer company PUMA even took their business out of India in order to save their brand image.

Follow-up Efforts by FIFA and SGFI

The SACCS and Christian Aid reports prompted manufacturers to initiate several measures to salvage the image of the sports manufacturers in the eyes of FIFA, WFSGI and other branded international buyers of match-grade footballs. The measures adopted were:

- Commissioning of independent research study on the prevalence of child labour in sports industry. The research was commissioned by the Federation of Industrial Commerce and Chambers of India (FICCI a leading business partners in India). The research was conducted by the reputed researchers of Government of India, V.V. Giri, National Labour Institute in Jullender region of Punjab. Their research report, 'Child labour in the sports goods industry; Jalandhar, A Case Study', was published in September 1998². The report established the presence of about 10,000 children below 14 years of age in the stitching of footballs in the district of Jullendar in Punjab state of India. It revealed that around 1,350 children were engaged as full time labourers, while the rest were engaged as part time along with schooling for the stitching of footballs. Other producing areas like Meerut in Uttar Pradesh were not included in the study. The report also provided a wealth of information on the wages, health situation and other socio-economic conditions of the community engaged for football stitching.
- Formation of Sports Goods Foundation of India (SGFI) in 1998. Initially SGFI was conglomeration of 25 sports goods exporters which has now increased to 32 members. The SGFI was supported by FIFA from 1st January 2000 for initiating social protection and monitoring programme to oversee the activities of football manufacturing units and condition of stitchers in India. The monitoring programme was prepared in consultation with the Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID-Chandigarh), WFSGI, Save the Children and UNICEF. It involved Swiss firm called Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS) to monitor the manufacturing units. As per the guidelines contractors were supposed to list details of football stitchers -name, age, location-of the home-based stitchers hired by them etc.; SGS then cross-checks the locations and details of stitchers made available by the manufacturers by making inspections and sudden home visits. SGFI members contribute 0.25% of their earnings from football exports every month for social protection and monitoring programmes. Under the social protection programme, the SGFI has also adopted four "transitional" schools set up under the National Child Labour Project to help working children enter the school system.
- The manufacturer of footballs was entered into an agreement for adoption of WFSGI code of conduct³. The code of conduct includes;
 - No person shall be employed at an age younger than 15 (or 14 where the law of the country of manufacture allows) or younger than the age for completing compulsory education in the country of manufacture where such age is higher than 15.

1. Christian Aid, A sporting chance - Tackling child labour in India's sports goods industry, May 1997, page 3.

2. V. V. Giri National Labour Institute, Child labour in the sports goods industry: Jalandhar, A Case Study, Noida, September 1998. This survey was jointly supported by FICCI and ILO-IPEC.

3. WFSGI Code of Conduct - Guiding Principles, http://www.wfsgi.org/_wfsgi/new_site/about_us/codes/code.pdf.



- On the issues of monitoring and verification, the code notes that: Members are encouraged to establish their own internal management systems to monitor the standards outlined in their own code of conduct and to implement action plans for continuous improvements in factory working conditions in their own operations and those who supply them. Members are also encouraged to have factories monitored by appropriately qualified external third party organizations.

India Committee of Netherlands (ICN) Report - 2000

The India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN) presented a report in June 2000 entitled "The Dark Side of Football: Child and adult labour in India's football industry and the role of FIFA"⁴. The report highlighted the pathetic conditions of child labour in sports industry in Punjab in spite of the efforts undertaken by SGFI. The summary of the report shows that many children are still working in and around the cities of Jalandhar and Batala in Punjab. It indicated that wages are often still far below the official minimum wage of Rs. 82 (2US\$) per day, and that women earn on an average Rs. 4 or 5 less than men for stitching per ball. This report also criticizes the present FIFA-sponsored monitoring system implemented by SGFI. The report concluded that the contractual agreements between the ISL (the licensing organization of FIFA) and all licensed football importing companies, who buy their footballs, are violated on the issues of (hiding) child labour, wages below the official minimum rates, misuse of advances paid to workers, obstacles to the right to organize for seeking appropriate wages, exemption from existing labour legislation and lacking health standards and sanitary facilities⁵.

Global March against Child Labour Report, May 2002

The Global March against Child Labour Reports – 2002 entitled "Football Dreams Stitched with Children's Hands: India, China and Pakistan still Harbour Child Labourers and Unfair Labour Conditions" were released to the press, just before the commencement of the Football World Cup 2002⁶. The report created ripples among the football sports lovers and questioned the efforts of FIFA, WFSGI, ICFTU and ILO in eliminating child labour from football stitching activities. Several football manufacturers and buyers were put on back foot with the revelations.

The reports revealed that the efforts to improve labour conditions through the monitoring and rehabilitation programs of FIFA, UNICEF, ILO and the SGFI have thus far yielded only limited results, particularly in India and Pakistan, the key centers for football stitching. The hands of children are still employed to stitch footballs, even at the price of their education and often their health. Adult football stitchers are still receiving less than the minimum wage, even though the footballs they stitch are sold at higher price. Women still face discrimination in wages, often earning five rupees less than men. The report indicated lack of freedom for collective bargaining by the stitchers to seek better wages and working conditions. The report on Pakistan revealed that child labor was involved in the stitching of Coca Cola and Adidas footballs both of which were major sponsors of the FIFA 2002 World Cup, in the peripheral areas of Sialkot region of Pakistan, contrary to the claims that Sialkot sport industry has been freed from child labour after strict monitoring by FIFA and other leading football manufacturers.

4. India Committee of the Netherlands – June 2000, "The dark side of football: Child and adult labour in India's football industry and the role of FIFA. <http://www.antenna.nl/liw/iv.html>

5. Ibid.

6. Global March against Child Labour, May 2003 "Football dreams stitched with children's hands: India, China and Pakistan Still Harbour Child Labourers and Unfair Labour Conditions".

7. Tata Consultancy Services, Social Sector Group, May 2002, "Child Labour and Labour Rights in the Sporting Goods Industry: A Case for Corporate Social Responsibility"



Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Report- Social Sector Group – May 2002

International Committee of the Neitherlands (ICN) contracted the services of the Social Sector Group, TCS to do an objective assessment of the ground realities as a follow up of ICN -2000 study. The TCS study entitled "Child Labour and Labour Rights in the Sporting Goods Industry: A Case for Corporate Social Responsibility" was aimed to (re)examine the issue/problem of child labour and other labour standards in the football industry in India⁷.

Major findings from the study reiterated the presence of child labour in football stitching activity even in Jullandar and Batala areas of Punjab, in spite of tall claims of FIFA supported SGFI monitoring mechanism. Wage disparity between workers in registered and non-registered units was huge. Gender variation in wages in the home-based units was also observed by the study.

BBA STUDY 2006 on Child Labour in Sports Industry in Meerut , Uttar Pradesh

The exposure of child labour engaged in sports industry of Meerut city and its surrounding regions was highlighted by the an Indian NGO, Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA, Save Childhood Campaign) for the first time on the eve of FIFA World Cup 2006.

Kailash Satyarthi, Chairperson of BBA stated that “big branded companies outsource work to small contractors, who take unfair advantage of the poor in villages and small towns like those around Meerut, who then employ little children to churn out footballs at the cost of their health and education. Children as young as six are employed in the football-manufacturing industry right across Meerut city and adjacent villages.

On the eve of FIFA World Cup 2006, the Children working as football stitchers in factories and home based units in Meerut district, sent a memorandum to Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and other football associations requesting sports goods companies, “to ensure that no child was employed in the football-making industry. They have also appealed to these bodies to make sure that former working children are properly rehabilitated. We wish that football becomes an instrument of pleasure, harmony and unity for all in the world. However, we appeal that this should not happen at the cost of our childhood, education and development.

Tehalka Report

Shalini Singh of Tehalka Journal published a comprehensive report entitled “No Free Kicks in Meerut” in July 2006 on the child labour engaged in football stitching activities in Meerut district. The report sums up the condition of stitchers of football communities as follows:

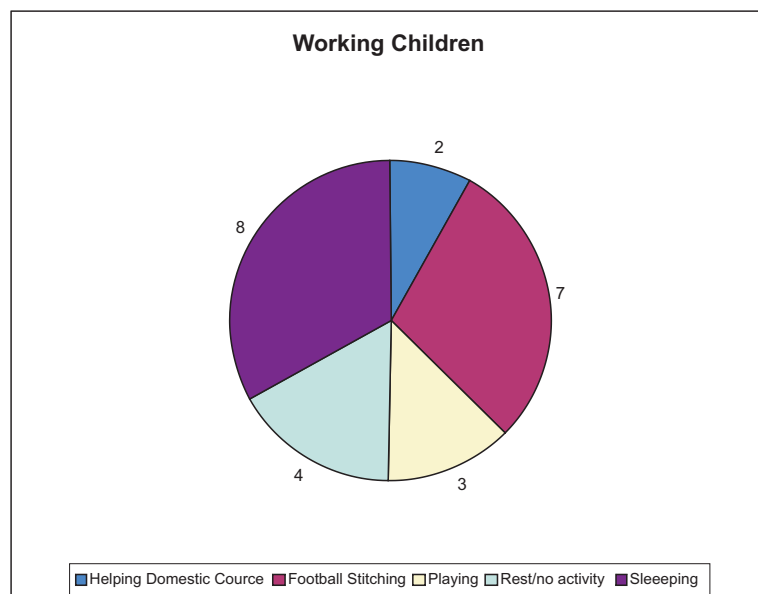
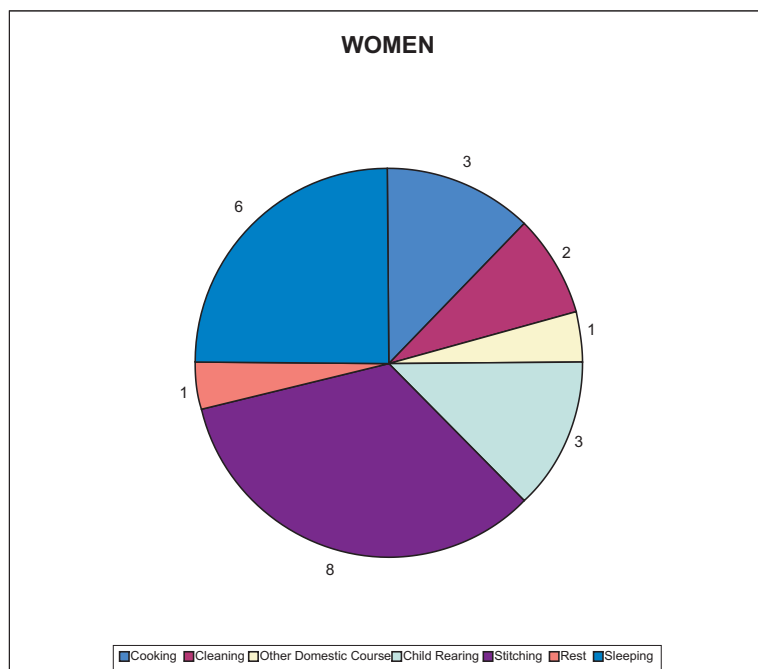
““The cost of the beer bottle that three friends can knock back watching a World Cup match at a South Delhi pub, is what Ishwari's family of 17 makes in a month – just around Rs 1,000 (US\$25) stitching footballs in Kherkhi village near Meerut. Waking up early to deal with the household chores, the women and older children of the family settle down, after the men go out to work, to an arduous seven-hour routine. Ishwari, who is in her sixties, says the men don't mind their women doing this work since it doesn't involve their leaving the house except to bring raw materials and deliver the finished goods. The family's one financial buffer is its small plot of agricultural land – most others in the football-stitching trade in the 50-odd villages around Meerut have no such additional sources of income.”

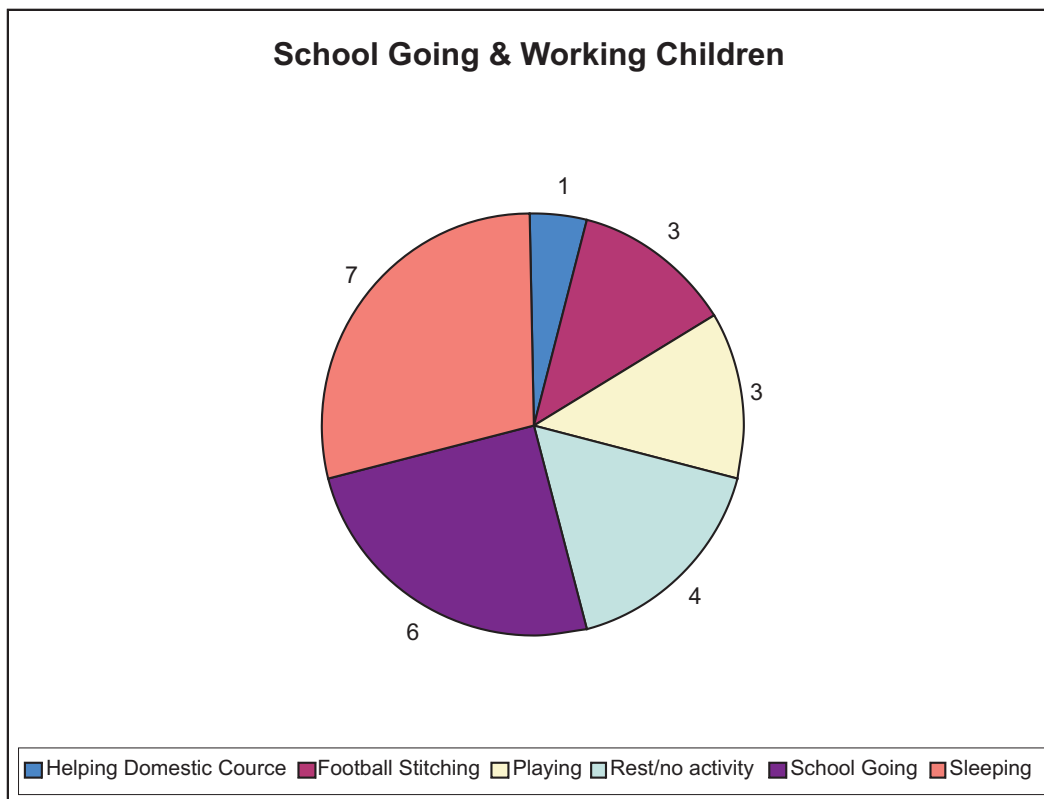


Football Stitching Activity: Working Environment and Process

Football stitching activity is usually home based activity, where all family members work together in home-based units usually located in the home of the family members. Since the family has few rooms even for their requirements, the work place is adjusted within the living rooms. Majority of the rooms are too small and the presence of working table for the stitching further makes it congested. Rooms are usually made of mud structure and light in the rooms are inappropriate for stitching activity. In the absence of electricity the activity of stitching is undertaken in dark and dingy rooms which affect eyes. All family members sit in the congested room together and continue the work activity for 8 to 10 hours per day during the peak seasons. A sample of day and night activity of women and children is given below.

Day & Night Activity of Women & Children Engaged in Foot Stitching Activity



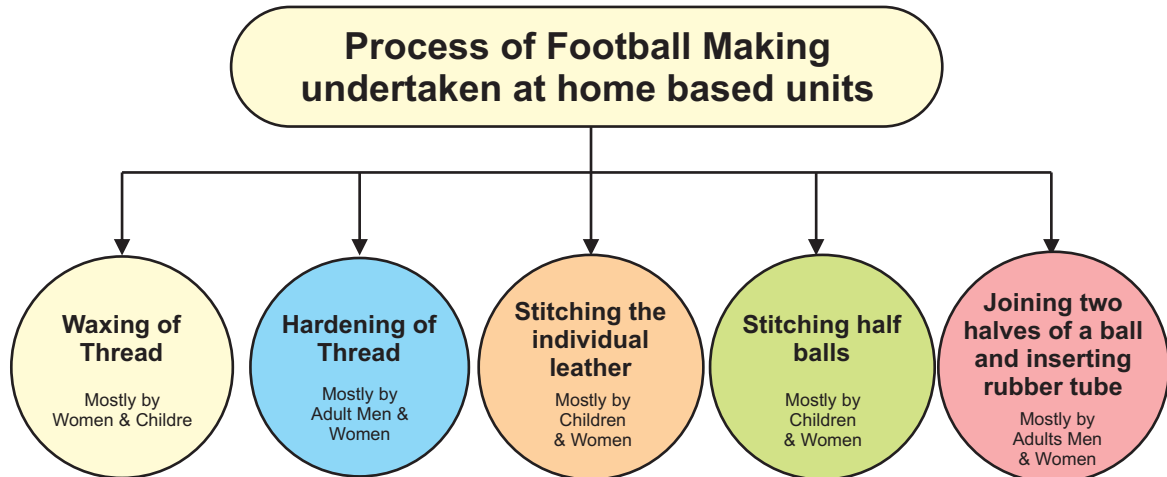


Process of Football Making

Raw materials like thread, wax, cut leather pieces and design of football is provided by the contractor/ sub contractor to the households. Leather pieces are cut in the main manufacturing unit with the help of machines. Home based activity for completing the football is

- **Waxing Thread**
- **Wax for hardening the thread**
- **Stitching the individual leather/ synthetic panels as per design**
- **Stitching half balls (Locally called as Khokha)**
- **Joining two halves of a ball and inserting rubber tube**
- **Stitching blind parts of the ball. (It requires careful puncturing the holes , so that rubber tube is not punctured)**

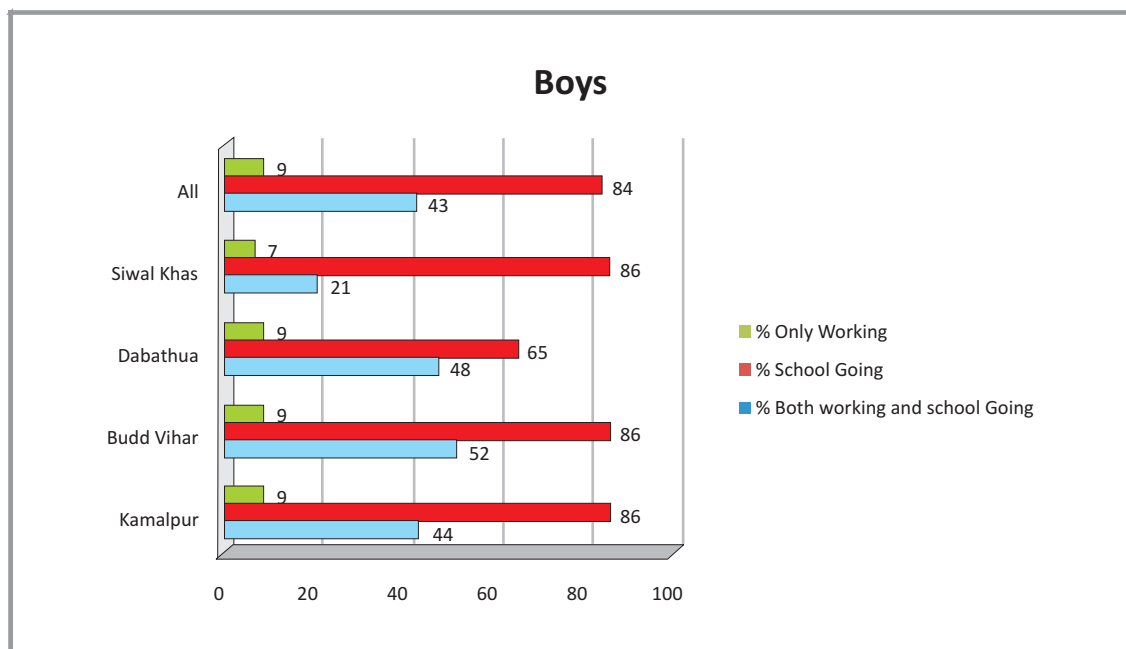
The process observed indicated that children (6+ years) and women are regularly hunched over a wooden apparatus for hour's together, darting needles in and out of the colourful pentagonal pieces of rubberized/ leather/ synthetic material. In this process of inserting needles nimble fingers of children are usually punctured from sharp needles. Fingers have cuts from the waxed silk thread that is used to suture the material. The whole process is undertaken in unhygienic conditions, where the light is dim. Thus there is inevitable damage to the sight, brought on by the long hours of arduous squinting.

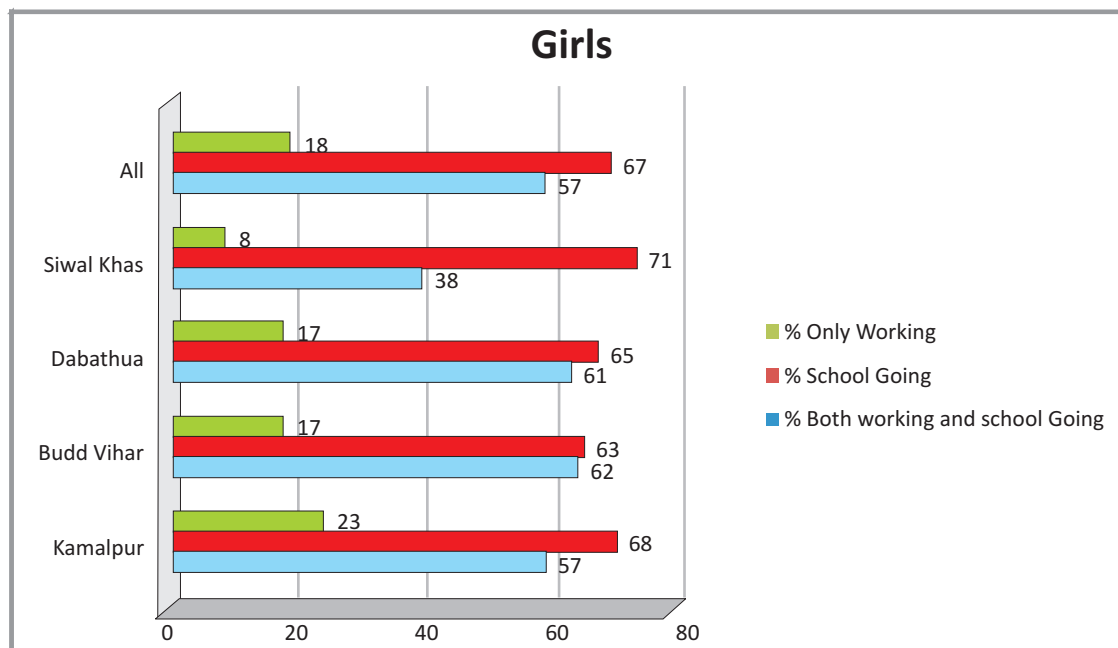


Magnitude of Child Labour in Football Stitching Activity in Meerut

The survey results point out the prevalence of child labour in football stitching activities in the selected sample households. 9% of boys and 18% of girls aged 6-17 years were pursuing full time football stitching activity. A significant proportion of boys and girls (43% and 57% respectively) were engaged in both football stitching as well as school going activity. However the results also indicated that 84% boys and 67% girls were attending schools, which seems to be comparatively better situation. The role BBA activists who have started Bal Mitra Gaon (Child Friendly Village) campaign seems to have worked as even among Muslim households the trend of sending children to schools has increased. However gender gap in school enrolments still persists as proportion of girl school going children were lesser compared to boys. (Refer Table No. and Graphs)

Children Aged 6-17 Years among Sample Households





Table

Village	Children in 6-17 Age Group		% Both working and school Going		% School Going		% Only Working	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Kamalpur	43	44	44	57	86	68	9	23
Budd Vihar	21	24	52	62	86	63	9	17
Dabathua	21	23	48	61	81	65	9	17
Siwal Khas	14	13	21	38	86	71	7	8
ALL	99	104	43	57	84	67	9	18

Source: Field survey data collected from sample households

Football Stitchers Profile

Traditionally and culturally football stitching is being done by Muslims and landless backward and scheduled caste labourers (called as dalits). Workers for the football stitching activity usually belong to economically poor sections among Muslim population and particular scheduled caste community among the Hindu and Sikh faiths⁸. Majority of these workers are landless depending solely on labour activity. It is difficult to get labour assignment throughout the year in the agricultural and construction sector, hence these people have to depend on other activities. The sports businessmen exploit these conditions and engage their family for football stitching at wages lower than the stipulated rates.

8. The prevailing cultural and traditional beliefs among the Hindus do not allow people to touch leather items, hence Muslim and Scheduled caste community are usually engaged for football stitching activity.



These labourer have no bargaining power as they have no other work for sustaining their livelihood, so whatever work at whatever wages fixed by the contractors are acceptable to them. Wages are paid per piece basis, hence the whole family including children work together for stitching footballs in order to stitch as many footballs as possible.

The demand for footballs during World Cup/ Continental football cup or any other tournament increase sharply. The registered units are unable to meet the demand from the registered units, which usually is monitored by the SGFI. Hence contractors/sub contractors are always on the look out to identify vulnerable families to undertake the football stitching activity to bridge the demand and supply gap for the footballs. The contractors/ sub contractors provide raw materials to the families for completing the stitching of the footballs in family units. The demand sometimes goes as high as making 20,000 to 25000 footballs per day. Even in this rare, bumper event, the wage per unit is hiked by a mere 50 paise. With no union, bargaining power or alternate means of sustenance, the villagers accept whatever wages are paid. If they refuse to work at the going rate, someone else will readily agree to do so for less – this way, at least, they're earning “something

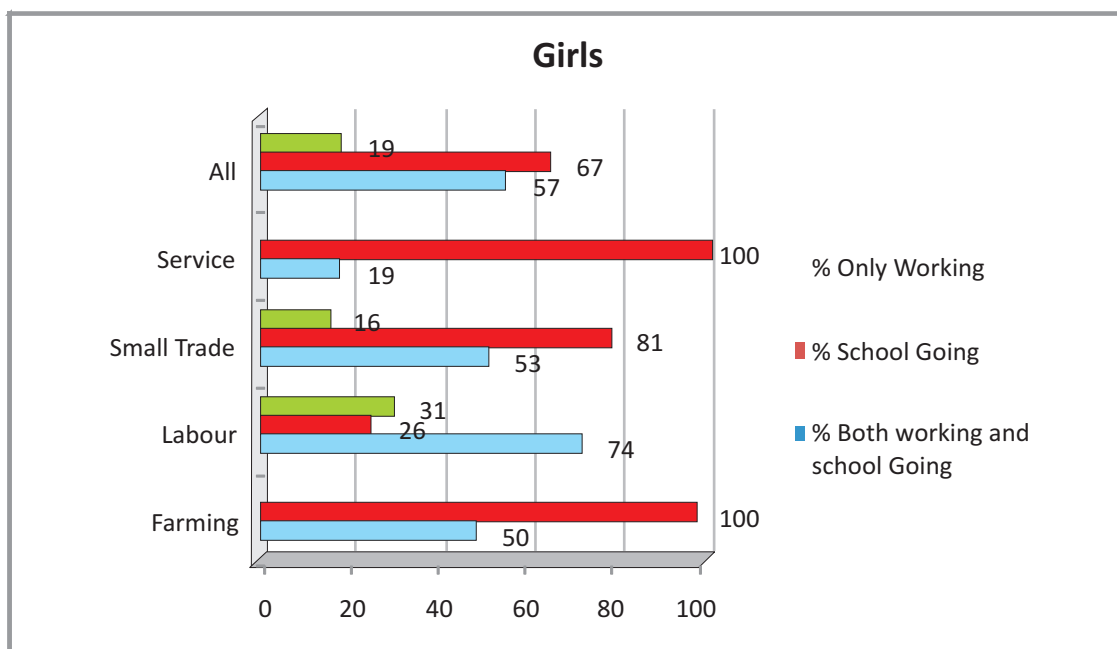
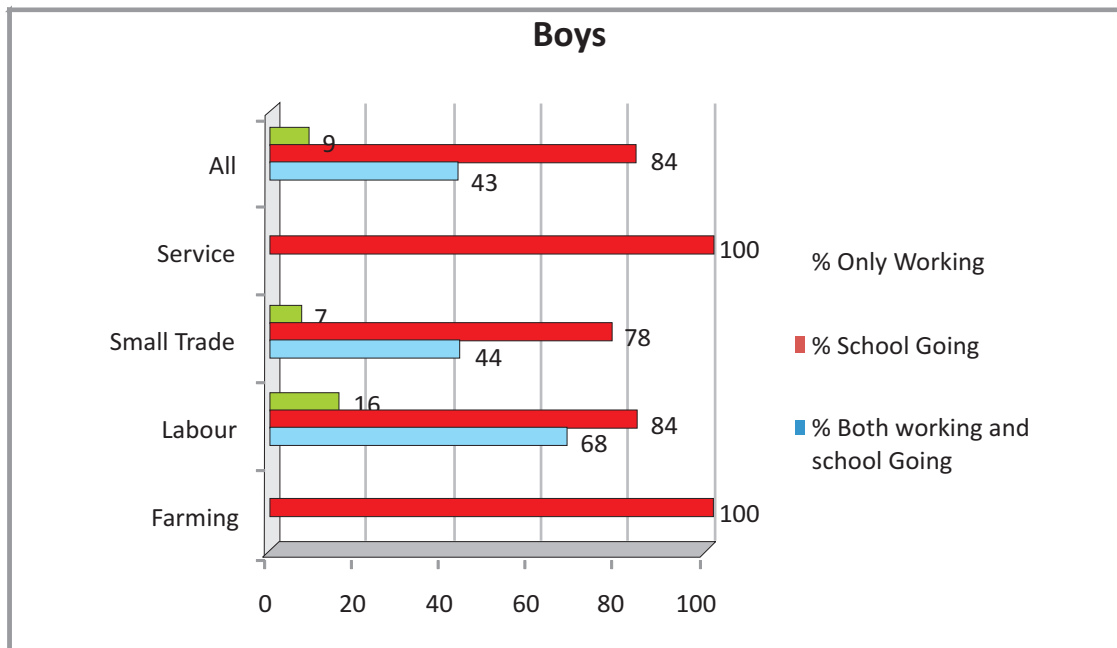
Occupational Classification and Child Labour in Football Stitching

An analysis of occupation wise proportion of households having home-based football stitching activity testifies that the activity is more prevalent among landless labourers, followed by households having small trade activities. The football stitching units were fewer among farming and service households. Thus the results suggest close relationship between households have no land and pure dependence on labour activity with the prevalence of football stitching units. The percent of girl children engaged in football stitching activity was much higher among labourers and small traders as compared to farming and service community. As expected all children from farming and service community were attending schools. Gender gap in sending children to schools was exceptionally high among labourers. Thus the study points out vulnerability of labourers and small traders for engaging children in the football stitching activity. (Refer Table No. and Graph No.)

Table

Occupational Groups and Magnitude of Children in Football Stitching in Meerut

Occupation	%Hous eholds having Football Stitching Activity	Children in 6-18 Age		Both working and school Going		School Going		Only Working	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Farming	33	4	6		50	100	100		
Labour	84	37	39	68	74	84	26	16	31
Small trade	61	41	43	44	53	78	81	7	16
service	22	17	16		19	100	100		
ALL	63	99	104	43	57	84	67	9	19



Income Classification and Child Labour in football Stitching

An analysis of income of households and presence of home-based football stitching units in the households depicts close relationship as majority of households having less than Rs 3000 income per month had football stitching units. Households having less than Rs 1000 income per month engaged all children for fulltime work for football stitching activity. Similarly households with less income had lesser proportion of children enrolled in schools, thus increasing their vulnerability for employing them in full time football stitching. (Refer Table No. and graph No)

Table
Income Levels of Households and Child Labour Magnitude in Meerut

Income Group	%House holds having Football Stitching Activity	Children in 6-18 Age		Both working and school Going		School Going		Only Working	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Less than 1000	100	4	5					100	100
1000 - 2000	100	25	27	36	44	76	44	12	30
2001 - 3000	91	30	31	57	68	87	58	7	16
3001 - 4000	26	27	26	56	69	96	85		
Above 4000	9	13	15	15	40	100	100		
ALL	63	99	104	43	57	84	67	9	18

Even after a full day's work the children can only produce a maximum of two footballs and earn at best Rs. 3-5 per football, which is 40 times less than its retail price. They are paid a pittance for their labour” Entire families, including minor children, are often involved in stitching footballs. Six to seven members of a family work long hours to produce around 10 balls; they barely manage to earn Rs 30-40 a day. If a stitch comes undone, the contractors deduct the repair cost from the labourers' wages. In case of severe damage, such as a punctured bladder, the entire cost is recovered from the makers.

The World Cup season or any other tournament forces children to be taken out of school; the increased demand has necessitated their being kept home to stitch the balls that will fetch their families an additional income. Murid Khan says that there is only one primary school in the village. Private schools charge, at a minimum cost of Rs 500 per child each month, inclusive of fees and stationary which is unaffordable. With more than three children per average household, providing for their education is hard. Work is the one viable option many families see for their kids. Eight-year-old Sunita, who helps her mother, sister and brother stitch footballs, says she was enrolled in Class 3 but was unable to attend school due to constant pressure from parents to help them in football stitching.

Most of the football stitchers are under-paid. The pay depends of the contractor or their skills, however, the study shows that about half of the stitchers in India are living below the poverty line. About 90% of the households belong to the 'untouchables' (scheduled castes in India) or Dalits and marginalized Muslim community.

The observations of the above studies strengthens the viewpoint that the vulnerability of stitchers community due to prevailing economic and social realities make it virtually impossible to eliminate all cases of child labour from sports industry especially in the labour intensive activity of football stitching. The guiding market forces of acquiring maximum profits by contractors/ sub-contractors and manufacturers encourages employment of children in spite of the WFSGI code of conduct for its members.

Health Hazards among football stitchers

The survey conducted also highlighted stitching as major health hazard as children were found with cuts on their fingers that had become septic. Since their earnings are per item produced, the children try to stitch as fast as they can with no fixed hours. They have to sit for long hours in a hunched position that often causes them to suffer severe backache. Inadequate lighting in the work place had ruined the eyesight. Many of them suffer from loss of eyesight, chronic back and neck pains, cuts on their fingers and even deformation of their fingers. For younger children, these conditions can last for their lifetime since proper treatment is usually not given. Due to high morbidity, some respondents stated that they had to leave the football stitching job for some months to regain their health. There is no public healthcare system and workers have to depend on private medical care from the Meerut city, which is expensive and beyond their reach.

"I have been stitching footballs for as long as I can remember," confided Geeta, a young girl from Kamalpur village, who estimated her age to be between 10 and 12 years old. "My hands are constantly in pain. It feels like they are burning.

Table
Health and Morbidity among Football Stitchers in Meerut

Nature of Health Problems	Percent Adult Respondents	Percent Children Respondents
Average Number Hours devoted for Football stitching per day.		
4-5 Hours	21	35
5-6 Hours	35	20
6-7 Hours	24	25
Above 7 Hours	30	20
Observed finger cuts	10	35
Suffering from continuous backache	45	35
Tiring of Eyes	65	39
Pain in hands and fingers	85	79
Feeling allover pain	35	26

To make matters worse, there is no public health care system.



Identification of Network of Contractors, Manufacturer and Buyers

The situation is compounded by the fact that the workers are only in touch with the contractor, who is the middleman. They have little idea about who owns the final product, or the destination of the footballs that they stitch. Moreover, since there is no written agreement, the child laborers/ adult labourer do not get any benefits laid down in the law. These home-based units are never monitored by the SGFI.



Child Labour
in Football Stitching
Activity in India



List of Football Suppliers – Meerut

Sahni Sports

Address: 632/2, Jagriti Vihar, Meerut,
Uttar Pradesh - 250 004, India
Phone: +(91)-(121)-4003164/2603708
Fax: +(91)-(121)-4006149
Website: <http://www.sahnisports.com>

New Jandial and Company

Address: A-5, Sports Complex, Delhi Road,
Meerut, Uttar Pradesh - 250 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(121)-2530414
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/newjandial>

Garg Sports International

Chaitanya Puram, Near Indira Gate,
Navchandi, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh - 250 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(121)-2700237/3298723
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/gargsports>

Greenland Enterprises

72-73 Rajvansh Vihar, Sarai Kazi Village Road,
Garh Road, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh - 250 003, India
Phone: +(91)-(121)-3258922
Fax: +(91)-(121)-2763465
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/greenland>

Competent Sales

24. Chippi Tank Begum Bridge Road, Meerut,
Uttar Pradesh - 250 001, India
Phone: +(91)-(121)-2643236

Hans Rubber And Sports Ltd.

Address: Guru Nanak Nagar, Delhi Road,
Meerut, Uttar Pradesh - 250 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(121)-2513677/2510077/2511247
Fax: +(91)-(121)-2510827
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/company/400546/>

Jay Export House

Address: 53/8, Shastri Nagar, Meerut,
Uttar Pradesh - 250 004, India
Phone: +(91)-(121)-2772202/4000832
Fax: +(91)-(121)-2772202
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/jayexports>

Stag International

Address: A-19/20, Udyog Puram, Partapur,
Delhi Road, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh - 250 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(121)-2440976/2440993/2441035
Fax: +(91)-(121)-2441009/2660095
Website: <http://www.staginternational.net/>

Maxwel Exporters

Address: B-5, Sports Complex,
Delhi Road, P.O. Box - 366, Meerut,
Uttar Pradesh - 250 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(121)-2510459/2520854
Fax: +(91)-(121)-2511783
Website: <http://www.maxwelexporter.com/soccer-training-aids.html>

National Sports

Address: B- 1 Sports Complex, Delhi Road,
Meerut, Uttar Pradesh - 250 001, India
Phone: +(91)-(121)-2512148/2400574
Fax: +(91)-(121)-2512275
Website: <http://www.national-sport.com/>

List of Football Suppliers- Jalandhar

Behari Lal And Company

Address: 66, Basti Nau, Jalandhar,
Punjab - 144 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2252590
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2258370
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/belco>

Sports Syndicate, Jalandhar

Address: Basti Road, Jalandhar,
Punjab - 144 001, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2650347/2650716/2650795/309099
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2651412/5081709
Website: <http://india.sportgoodsindia.com/>

Sports Syndicate

Address: Basti Road, Jalandhar,
Punjab - 144 001, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2650347/2650716/2650795/3090992/320200
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2651412/5081709
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/sports-syndicate>

Khorana Sports Industries

Address: Basti Nau, Jalandhar,
Punjab - 144 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2255559
Website:
<http://www.indiamart.com/khoranasports>

Golden Sports and Games

Address: W. X. -53, Basti Nau,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2253293
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2209969
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/goldensports-games>



Ceela International

Address: Ceela Complex, B-11, Sports and Surgical Complex,
Kapurthala Road, Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 021, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2651243/2650806/2650250 Fax: +(91)-(181)-2650053
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/ceela>

Goodwin Sports, Jalandhar

Address: 15-16, Dilbagh Nagar Extension,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2203304/2209307
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2250665
Website: <http://www.sportsgoodsexportersindia.com/>

Em Cee Cee Sports Agencies Pvt. Ltd.

Address: Jonex House, Sodal Road,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 004, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-5065134/5065130
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2293743
Website: <http://www.jonexsports.com/>

Union Sports International

Address: New Rasila Nagar, Basti Danishmandan,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-9876085819
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/unionsports>

Soccer International Ltd.

Address: Basti Sheikh Road,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2254118/2250416/5095904/5091806
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2252398/5085329
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/soccerinternational/>

Crimson International

Address: C-90, Sports and Surgical Complex,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 001, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2651020/6541020
Fax: +(91)-(181)-5013915
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/crimsonint>

Big Boss Exim Company

Address: Amar Nagar,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 701, India
Phone: +(91)-(98)-72329842
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/company/716730/>

Rugby Exports India

Address: G. T. Road, Bye Pass,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 004, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2294008
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2294010
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/company/625192/>

Bhami International

Address: Khurla Kingra, Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 013, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2685321 Fax: +(91)-(181)-2685321
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/company/871203/>

Anand Gymnastic Works

Address: Basti Nau, Jalandhar,
Punjab - 144 001, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2202944
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/company/764124/>

Ishar Dass Mahajan and Sons

Address: 1/1, Basti Nau, Jalandhar,
Punjab - 144 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2255198/2255328
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2255030
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/company/441970/>

Beat All Sports

Address: S/114-115 Industrial Area,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 004, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2290075/2295184
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2291046
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/company/378211/>

Gomti Agrico

Address: Near Jalandhar Model School, Tanda Road,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 004, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2291116/2283116
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2291116
Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/company/926575/>

Avran Exports

Address: 17, Shakti Nagar, Jalandhar,
Punjab - 144 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-5075244
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2404050

Amar Nath Mahajan & Sons

Address: S-128, Industrial Area,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 004, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-5089097
Fax: +(91)-(181)-5058860

Bhaizada & Son

Address: S. 6, Industrial Area, Jalandhar,
Punjab - 144 004, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-291841/293123
Fax: +(91)-(181)-290749

Kamal Brothers Jalandhar

Address: 18, B, Ganesh Nagar, Basti Nau,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 002, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-253103
Fax: +(91)-(181)-254557

D. C. M. Sports Industries

Address: 82, F. C. I. Colony, Near G.T. B. Nagar,
Jalandhar, Punjab - 144 003, India
Phone: +(91)-(181)-2270268
Fax: +(91)-(181)-2270268



Hans Raj Mahajan and Sons

Address: G.T. Road, Suranussi, Jalandhar,

Punjab - 144 027, India

Phone: +(91)-(181)-2670701/2671549/2671262/2671263/2672077

Fax: +(91)-(181)-2670702/2402507

Website: <http://www.hansraj-india.com/>

Sports Syndicate, Training Aids

Address: Basti Road, Jalandhar,

Punjab - 144 001, India

Phone: +(91)-(181)-2650347/2650716/2650795/3090992/320200

Fax: +(91)-(181)-2651412/5081709

Website: <http://www.indiamart.com/sstrainingaids>





**Bachpan
Bachao
Andolan**

L-6, Kalkaji, New Delhi-110 019 India
Ph.: 91 11 26224899, 26475481
Fax: 91 11 26236818
Email: info@bba.org.in
Website: www.bba.org.in