



# THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF EMPLOYEES IN THE LEATHER INDUSTRY

**\*Dr. T. AASIF AHMED**

**\*Post Doctoral Research Scholar, SunRise University, Alwar and Asst. Professor & Research Supervisor  
in Economics, Mazharul Uloom College, Ambur- 635802**

## Abstract

This study offers information on several Solid Waste Management (SWM) models that can help the leather industries in different place deal with the rates of solid waste generation and reorganize management strategies. To efficiently and economically collect and recycle various waste types, creative methods should be used. Waste should be recycled using efficient treatment techniques as opposed to being dumped in landfills or burned outdoors in order to recover valuable materials and reduce the negative effects on human health. These wastes have the potential to pollute the ecosystem and negatively impact both human and animal health if they are released into the environment without following the correct leather wastes procedures. Since leather industrial wastes are unused and untreated, they are typically disposed of by burning, dumping, or haphazard land filling, according to most reports. Because these untreated wastes produce more greenhouse gases, they exacerbate various climate change issues. The objectives of this paper are to prevent or minimize leather solid waste, safeguard human health, preserve natural resources and energy, and clean up garbage when necessary.

**Key Words:** Industrial Wastes, Economic & Ecological Analysis, ISWM.

## Introduction

The industrialized world generates enormous amounts of waste annually. Over the past few decades, industrial waste creation has skyrocketed globally, and there are no indications that this trend will abate. The leather industries in particular, generate enormous amounts of solid wastes and associated effluents annually. As the population keeps growing, so does the need for leather products. Thus, in order to meet the leather products needs, the leather sector has grown significantly in the majority of the countries. The leather industry in India produces a substantial yearly output of over 3 billion square feet of leather, or roughly 13% of the world's total leather hides and skins.

India ranks fourth globally in terms of exporting leather goods. In 2022–2023, India exported \$5.26 billion worth of leather goods, including shoes. The export of shoes, including leather and non-leather, makes up over 51% of the total exports from the Indian leather and footwear sector (2022–23). The States of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana, and Delhi are home to India's main centers for the manufacture of leather goods and footwear.

The leather manufacturing process generates a variety of solid wastes which are well described in a UNIDO reference document. In the present report, we only selected the wastes having a chemical composition comparable to finished leather:

- Wet blue (WB) splits, trimmings and shavings,
- Leather trimmings,

## Leather Wastes Problems

Many developing countries making the transition to industrialization lack the resources or technology necessary to properly dispose of their waste without harming the environment. These solid wastes should be handled by the industries that generate them. Several tactics and strategies must be used to manage industrial solid wastes. Many small and large industrial facilities simply dump their waste, which is usually hazardous and toxic, near water sources and in open spaces. Over the past thirty years, numerous examples of these sectors causing significant and long-lasting environmental harm have come to light.

One of the biggest issues the leather manufacturing sector faces is the influence on the environment. Water, energy, and chemicals are all needed in large quantities for the intricate process of producing leather, which can be harmful to the environment. All parties involved in the leather industry—manufacturers, suppliers, and consumers—must work together to address the environmental effects of the industry. Adopting ethical and sustainable production methods, cutting back on the use of dangerous chemicals, and supporting circular economy models that reduce waste and encourage recycling are a few of the alternatives.

Risks to health and safety are a major problem and obstacle in the leather manufacturing sector. Hazardous chemicals are exposed to by workers in the leather industry, which can lead to a variety of health issues. The following are a few ways that the production of leather might be hazardous to one's health or safety:

- A variety of dangerous compounds, such as formaldehyde, chromium, and solvents, are present in the leather manufacturing industry. These substances may irritate skin, lead to respiratory troubles, and result in various health concerns.
- Sharp knives and machines are among the physical risks that workers in the leather industry must deal with. Additionally, they might have to lift big objects or work in odd postures, both of which can cause musculoskeletal diseases.
- The loud machinery used in the leather making process might result in hearing loss and other health issues.
- High-temperature procedures are used in some phases of the leather-making process, which can lead to worker dehydration and heat stress.
- Bacteria and fungus, which can lead to infections and other health issues, are a potential source of exposure for workers in the leather industry.

Employers are required to make sure that workers have the proper training and protective gear in order to address health and safety hazards associated with the leather manufacturing industry. In order to reduce the likelihood of mishaps and injuries, employers must also have safety procedures and safeguards in place. Additionally, reducing exposure to dangerous compounds and enhancing worker safety can be achieved by using safer chemicals and production techniques in the leather industry.

### **Conclusion:**

India's industry plays a significant role in both environmental degradation and health risks. Large waste piles that frequently contaminate soil and water sources result from the industry's excessive production of waste that is not sufficiently recycled or composted. The Indian government has passed a number of laws and regulations to regulate the industry in an effort to address the problem, but because of opposition from the sector, progress has been sluggish. An overview of India's industrial waste management issue is given in this article, along with suggestions for improvement.

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