INTRODUCTION

The term 'Industry' is often used by itself to denote manufacturing. The term 'Manufacturing' includes those activities by which man changes the form or nature of raw materials converting them into more useful products. The transforming operations are conducted in factories to which are brought raw materials from various sources regions and from which go finished products to diverse market regions. Industry can be classified into four groups i.e. extracting, processing, assembling and servicing. Each group requires specific inputs (raw-material, labour, capital and water) from specific sources for its operation and provides specific outputs for purchase in specific market and areas (Hamilton, 1967),

Industrial geography is one of the youngest and well established branches of economic geography. Industrial geography is the study of the distribution of manufacturing industry. In broadest sense 'industrial geography' is concerned with the interpretation of present distribution pattern global, continental, national or regional. The geographic approach using the map as the chief tool of analysis is eminently suited to this type of study.

Leather is a unique commodity that links grass root level of villages with high societies and traditional practices with emerging technologies. For many developing countries, leather and leather manufacturers constitute an indispensable and dependable source for export trade and foreign exchange
earning. For India, leather is a high priority industrial sector and foot wear exports, an extreme focus area. India has, just four decades since independence made significant gains from the leather trade, progressing from the status on an exporter of 90% plus raw hides and skins to that of an exporter and predominantly leather product manufacturer.

Buoyed by good past performance and encouraged by expanding world market for leather articles, India is on move for increasing its market share from the present of around 3% (http://leather.web.india.com) Earning foreign exchange apart such trade expansion would mean generation of substantial employment, skill building, and entrepreneurship development and widely spread socio-economic benefits.

For India, therefore the growth of the leather industry is a direct contribution to rural advancement and socio-economic development. Leather industry has been one of the traditional industries operating in India and is essentially located in centuin states, but dispersed as cottage industries in rural areas. Indian leather industry is both in the organized as well as unorganized sector. 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 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.
Over the period of the last twenty years and particularly so in the last ten years, leather industry has become the fourth largest foreign exchange earner in the country. Exports from the leather sector accounted for 4.4% 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. (B. Bowwonder, S. Sadhulla and Akshay Jain).

In Maharashtra leather industry increasing last four decades. For promotion and boosting the leather industry and people engaged in industry, Government of Maharashtra established a company under the company act, 1956. The corporation has four production centers in Maharashtra, at Amravati, Hingoli, Kolhapur and Satara. They produce various leather goods like computer bags, briefcases, purses, shoes, scandals, belts, handbags. The corporation sold these goods at shops situated at Mumbai, New Mumbai, Dhule, Jalgaon, Nanded.

In present study work, we are going to elaborate the Leather industry in Kolhapur district. Kolhapur district is located in southern part of Maharashtra. Its geographical extension it from 15°43' to 17°7' North latitude and 73°40' to 74°42' east longitude.

Kolhapur is well known for jaggari, sugar industry, engineering industry, Mahalaxmi temple and spicy missal. It was a princely progressive state ruled by
heirs of Chhatrapati Shivaji. For tourists besides other attractions Kolhapuri chappal, a footwear is also an attraction which is also a popular product for export. Considering the popularity and increasing export potential the Shivaji University of Kolhapur has applied for patent to protect intellectual property rights.

Kolhapuri chappal a foot wear play prominent part in leather industry of Kolhapur district. The chappal is named as Kolhapuri as is mainly marketed in Kolhapur. The Raja of Kolhapur encouraged its production and its use. But it is a product of nearby towns of Maharashtra and Karnataka border areas such as Athani, Nippani, Mirja, Jamkhandi, Kapshi etc. In these towns every household contributed in the process of chappal productions.

Kolhapur chappal is being used by rural rustic politicians, wrestlers etc. as status symbol. It is very robust and hence popular in farmers. Its look is masculine. Designs of chappals attract youngsters. Now a days chappals are accepted by ladies as designer decorative product.

The leather used for chappal gives cooling effect to foot.

Besides leather chappals, the district also engaged in producing leather garments, belts, computer bags, purses, shoes, scandals.