CLARISSA
Child Labour Action Research Innovation in South & South Eastern Asia

EMERGING EVIDENCE REPORT 5

MAPPING OF CHILDREN ENGAGED IN THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOUR IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN OF THE LEATHER INDUSTRY IN BANGLADESH

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July 2021

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This mapping of children in the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in the leather sector of Bangladesh was conducted in May–August 2020. WFCL are not always obvious and, without better understanding of where, why and how it is happening, the exploitation and abuse of children in the workforce in Bangladesh will continue. This mapping provides a detailed assessment of where children are working in the leather supply chain in Bangladesh, what they are doing, how they came to be doing it and what their conditions of work and experiences are.

Furthermore, and critically, it evidences the children's perceptions of themselves and others as child labourers – the jobs and areas of the sector that they feel comprise WFCL, and the jobs they feel are the most difficult or dangerous to do and that children should not have to do.

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Suggested citation

Maksud, A K M; Hossain, K.R.; Sayed, S. and Arulanantham, A. (2021) *Mapping of Children Engaged in the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Supply Chain of the Leather Industry in Bangladesh*, CLARISSA Emerging Evidence Report 5, Brighton: Institute of Development Studies, DOI: 10.19088/CLARISSA.2021.005

Photo credits

Pages 16 and 23 – Khandaker Reaz Hossain; pages 26, 38 and 39 – A K M Maksud; pages 27 and 28 – Rasel Khan.

ISBN: 978-1-78118-821-7
DOI: 10.19088/CLARISSA.2021.005

This report has been funded with UK aid from the UK government (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, formerly the Department for International Development). The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of IDS or the UK government.

The Child Labour: Action-Research-Innovation in South and South-Eastern Asia (CLARISSA) is a consortium of organisations committed to building a participatory evidence base and generating innovative solutions to the worst forms of child labour in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Nepal.

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FOREWORD

The national Child Labour Survey in 2013 estimated that there are 3.45 million working children in Bangladesh, including 1.28 million children engaged in hazardous child labour, or the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2015).

The leather industry is a major employer in Bangladesh and, as the second largest exporter in 2014–2015, is a priority sector for the Government of Bangladesh. It needs cleaning up. Human Rights Watch reported that the sector is responsible for air, water, and soil pollution, leading to serious health problems for the population. There are also serious concerns about child labour in the leather industry, with children performing hazardous tasks and working long hours, often without safety measures, in very dangerous work environments. Pay is low and the children are exposed to various types of exploitation.

The worst forms of child labour are not always obvious and, without better understanding of where, why, and how it is happening, the exploitation and abuse of children in the workforce in Bangladesh will continue. Grambangla Unnayan Committee and ChildHope UK conducted the 'Mapping of Children Engaged in Worst Forms of Child Labour and Modern Slavery in the Supply Chain of Leather Industry in Bangladesh' to gain a deeper understanding of where children are working, what they are doing, and what their experiences are within the leather industry.

The study is part of the Child Labour: Action-Research-Innovation in South and South-Eastern Asia (CLARISSA) programme, operating in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Nepal, and led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). CLARISSA is listening to children in WFCL and working with them to reduce the danger, exploitation, and abuse they face in the workplace.

During this study, the research team, led by A K M Maksud, collected data on where children are engaged in the supply chain of the leather industry, observing the 'micro steps' that make up the complex chain of the Bangladesh leather industry in order to find the 'hidden' children. The study combines direct experiences and empirical data to draw a comprehensive and vivid picture of where children can be found in leather production units and related services.

Our experience has shown that when we listen to children about the realities they face, and ask them to think of solutions, they come up with new ideas that we could never have thought of. We aim to put children's ideas into action by working closely with children and adults directly involved in the leather industry in Bangladesh to support the Government of Bangladesh in its commitment to eliminate WFCL. Collective efforts to do this will mean that our leather shoes and clothes will no longer be tainted by the exploitation of the children who made them.

We thank all the research respondents, especially the children, for sharing their experiences and thank the research team for their commendable efforts amidst the challenges of Covid-19. We also thank the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and Terre des hommes Bangladesh for their inputs and support.

Jill Healey
Executive Director, ChildHope UK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Children engaged in the worst forms of child labour (WFCL) in the leather industry in Bangladesh, along with their families, cooperated with the research team in conducting this mapping. They cannot be named, for their own protection, but we express our deep respect, admiration, and gratitude to them. We are grateful to them for giving their valuable time, sharing their personal experiences, and for trusting us.

We also express our heartfelt thanks to the representatives of different Bangladesh leather industry stakeholders who gave us their insights about the industry, including three officials of the Bangladesh Tanners Association – Ms Rehana Akter Ruma (Additional Secretary), Mr Mizanur Rahman (Deputy Secretary) and Md Alauddin (Chief Coordinator); Professor Monirul Islam Khan (Department of Sociology, University of Dhaka); Dr Mahfuzul Haque (Former Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of Bangladesh and Adjunct Faculty, Department of Development Studies, University of Dhaka); Mr Chowdhury Md Mohaimen (Project Coordinator, Bangladesh Child Helpline-1098, Child Sensitive Social Protection in Bangladesh (CSPB), Department of Social Services, Ministry of Social Welfare, Government of Bangladesh); Ms Jamila Akhter (Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF-Bangladesh); Professor Md Abdur Rahman (former Professor and Head, Department of Public Health and Informatics, Jahangirnagar University, Dhaka, Bangladesh and former Director, National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM), Dhaka); Mr Md Rayhan Sarker (Lecturer, Institute of Leather Engineering and Technology, University of Dhaka); Mr Mohammad Abdul Kayum (Decathlon Sports Bangladesh – buying house for exporting leather goods); Mr Imran Nazmul Kopol (Manager of Operations, Centre of Excellence of Leather Skills); Mr Sha Alam (Monitoring Officer, Nari Maitree); Mr Mahtab Uddin (Human Resources Officer, Noakhali Tannery); Mr Md Shukkur Ali (Leader of Tannery Workers Union); Mr Md Faruk Hossain, Mr Shirajul Islam, and Mr Nurunnobi, (intermediaries of Child Labour for Leather Industry).

We owe a special debt of gratitude to the field organisers and notetakers at Grambangla Unnayan Committee and to volunteers from the community; especially, Mr Md Rasel Khan, Ms Aysha Akter Shume, Mr Md Abdul Azim Shikder, Mr Md Shahinur Rahman, Ms Swapna Akter, Ms Sonia Shikder, and Ms Shireen. We are thankful to Ms Marzia Fatema and Ms Sabrina Alamgir for their relentless efforts in data processing and assisting in the writing of this report. We would like to thank Ms Rumana Afroz Srabony for her constant support in maintaining safeguarding protocols. Without these peoples' tireless support, it would have been very difficult to conduct this study effectively.

The research team of Grambangla Unnayan Committee has greatly benefited from Mr Mohammad Abul Bashar (Senior Instructor, Institute of Leather Engineering and Technology) and Mr Md Abdul Moktadir (Lecturer, Institute of Leather Engineering and Technology, Dhaka University) in enhancing our knowledge of the Bangladesh leather industry supply chain – and in getting us connected with critical stakeholders. We are also grateful to Ms Jill Healey (Executive Director, ChildHope UK), Mr Sunday Dogo (Child Safeguarding, Learning and Participation Manager, ChildHope UK), Mr Sudarshan Neupane (Regional Programme Coordinator – Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Nepal at Terre des hommes Foundation), and Dr Jiniya Afroze (Country Coordinator, CLARISSA Bangladesh at Terre des hommes, Bangladesh) for their input and support. We thank Jodie Thorpe and Cindy Berman for their insights and review of this paper. Finally, we thank Professor Danny Burns (Programme Director of CLARISSA, Institute of Development Studies) for giving his valuable time, technical input and resources to conducting this study.

A K M Maksud,
Executive Director, Grambangla Unnayan Committee

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BSCIC Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation

CETP Central Effluent Treatment Plan

COEL Centre of Excellence for Leather Skill Bangladesh Limited

FY fiscal year

ILO International Labour Organization

LWG Leather Working Group

NGO non-governmental organisations

WFCL worst forms of child labour

Section 1:

INTRODUCTION

1 INTRODUCTION

The leather sector in Bangladesh contributes about 2 per cent to industrial production and 0.6 per cent to the country's GDP (Ministry of Commerce and International Finance Corporation 2019). The sector is the second largest export industry in the country (*ibid*.). Leather and leather products exports have increased 32.8 per cent to US$745.6m in FY2014 from US$561.3m in FY2013 (General Economics Division 2020). In FY2017, the leather industry accounted for 3.5 per cent of Bangladesh's annual exports of US$1.2bn, or about 0.6 per cent of the global export market. The industry directly and indirectly employs 850,000 workers (Asian Development Bank 2018). The leather industry has strong export potential for driving the economy towards higher growth along with the growing interest of local and foreign investors. The total export of leather goods is assumed to grow at 25 per cent per annum for the period 2017–21 and the growth rate is expected to increase to 30 per cent for the period 2021–25 (Ministry of Commerce and International Finance Corporation 2019).

The leather industry in Bangladesh is struggling to achieve its targets, however, because many manufacturers and exporters do not have international Certificates of Compliance from forums like the Leather Working Group (LWG) (Patwary 2018). Despite the operationalisation of the Central Effluent Treatment Plan (CETP) there are also ongoing concerns around solid waste management, which is causing considerable pollution. According to the Blacksmith Institute and Green Cross Switzerland (2013), Hazaribagh is one of the top ten most toxic places in the world. Tanneries in Bangladesh commonly use outdated and inefficient processing methods and dump toxic waste, including carcinogen hexavalent chromium, into nearby canals and rivers. Sector workers' homes are built next to these contaminated waterways (*ibid*.).

Moreover, this billion-dollar industry has a problem with child labour. The national Child Labour Survey of 2013 estimated there are 3.45 million working children in Bangladesh, 1.28 million of whom are working in hazardous conditions (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics 2015). A recent survey of eight slums in Dhaka city found that 34.6 per cent of all children living in slum areas are engaged in the worst forms of child labour (WFCL). It was also found that 59.1 per cent of children engaged in WFCL are directly or indirectly linked to the global supply chains of garments and leather products (Maksud, Hossain and Arulanantham 2019).

Figure 1: Study locations

Credit: Khandaker Reaz Hossain

Bangladesh is committed to eliminating WFCL and has signed the International Labour Organization (ILO) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182). According to Article 3 of this convention (ILO 1999), WFCL comprise:

a All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;

b The use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances;

c The use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; and

d Work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

Moreover, Article 4 of the same convention says, 'The types of work referred to under Article 3(d) shall be determined by national laws or regulations'. Activities under paragraph (d) are referred to as 'hazardous work' and children so engaged are classified as engaged in hazardous labour. An order of the Government of Bangladesh issued on 13 March 2013 identified 38 processes/activities which are hazardous for children (Ministry of Labour and Employment 2013). The Bangladesh government has ratified ILO C-182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour), but has not ratified ILO C-138 (Minimum Age of Child Labour).

The Government of Bangladesh has recently stated that the formal leather production sector in Bangladesh is 'clean' (of child labour) (*Dhaka Tribune* 2021); however, that is open to debate. What is not open to debate is that the informal leather sector is littered with children in WFCL.

With the support of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office of the UK Government (FCDO, formerly DFID), Grambangla Unnayan Committee/ChildHope UK, as part of their work implementing the Child Labour: Action-Research-Innovation in South and South-Eastern Asia (CLARISSA) programme, conducted this mapping study of children in WFCL in the leather sector of Bangladesh in May–August 2020.

The purpose of the study was to determine the nature and extent of the engagement of children in WFCL in the leather sector in Bangladesh, and as such to inform the localities and target groups for CLARISSA programme activities and interventions. More specific objectives were to:

i Provide a comprehensive mapping of leather production units and related services, whose labour force includes children working in WFCL;

ii Assess the extent to which brokers/intermediaries bring children into these leather production workplaces;

iii Identify sites and target groups for CLARISSA participatory processes, activities, and interventions;

iv Generate an understanding and mapping of the leather supply chain in Bangladesh;

v Generate an understanding of children's pathways into WFCL; and

vi Identify what different actors, and especially children themselves, consider to be WFCL – plus identify hidden domains of WFCL.

In relation to the second objective, it quickly became clear that intermediaries would not be a major focus of this study and that most children's employment was brokered through neighbours, family, friends, or simply the children's proximity to a workplace – rather than through a professional intermediary or broker.

This work represents a scoping based on detailed interviews with children. It is not substantively participatory, but lays the foundations for the CLARISSA participatory work that will follow.

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Section 2:

OVERVIEW OF THE LEATHER INDUSTRY SUPPLY CHAIN

2 OVERVIEW OF THE LEATHER INDUSTRY SUPPLY CHAIN

A 'supply chain' consists of all the parties involved, directly or indirectly, in fulfilling a customer request. A supply chain includes not only the manufacturers and suppliers of a product, but also the transporters, warehouses, retailers, and customers, as well as all functions of an organisation, including but not limited to, new product development, marketing, operations, distribution, finance, and customer service (Chopra and Meindl 2013).

The global leather supply chain starts at a farm, usually in a developing country, and ends with consumer or industrial products. According to Joseph Strasser (2020), the supply chain of the leather sector in Bangladesh can be summarised as follows:

- **Farmers rear cattle, livestock dealers buy cattle and take them to the *Haat* (market), butchers then buy the animals, which are taken to slaughterhouses. After slaughtering, raw hides are sold either to individual suppliers or wholesalers. Individual suppliers and wholesalers then sell hides to tanneries and commercial exporters.**
- **Raw hides are processed in tanneries – which requires chemicals (which are supplied by importers or traders). Wet blue leather, the product of the first stage of processing, is sometimes sold to commercial exporters. Alternatively, foreign buyers purchase at the end of processing, buying both the crust and finished leathers from tanneries. Local buying houses buy both crust and finished leathers, or only finished leather.**
- **Leather product manufacturers purchase only finished leather (from tanneries and buying houses). Finished leather is used to produce a range of different products.**
- **Local manufacturers sell leather products to local buying houses, local wholesalers and retailers, or to foreign buyers. Local buying houses sell leather products to local wholesalers and retailers, or to foreign buyers. (Local supply chain of the leather industry). Foreign buyers, on the other hand, purchase and process crust leathers in their own tanneries for manufacturers to then turn into leather goods. Manufacturers also collect finished leather from traders directly.**

The study that follows focuses on the micro processes which make up this complex supply chain.

Section 3:

METHODOLOGY AND CHALLENGES

3 METHODOLOGY AND CHALLENGES

This study is based on detailed interviews with children. Selection was targeted to locations known to contain children working in WFCL. The sample was not selected to be statistically representative but was targeted to gain a deeper understanding of children's working conditions; the types of work children perform; the risks they face; the levels of exploitation and abuse they encounter; and the day-to-day struggles of working children (including those resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic).

Building on a sector scoping carried out by Md Abdul Moktadir and Mohammad Abul Bashar, locations for mapping were selected (in relation to processes or parts of the leather supply chain throughout Bangladesh). In Dhaka, the main locations identified were four slums (Gajmohal, Balur Math, Kalunagar, and Beribandh) in Hazaribagh and Kamrangirchar Thana – where the tanning industry has been present since the 1950s and where many leather industry processes are performed.[1] Other locations were Kaptan Bazar in Sutrapur Thana; Hide *Aarot* (a storehouse for raw hides) area at Posta in Lalbagh Thana, and Matuail-Jatrabari (an area of the packaging industry, waste recycling and goat markets) in Jatrabari Thana. Interviews were conducted, in addition to those in the four slums, in the newly relocated tannery industrial area at Hemayetpur in Savar Upazila (sub-district) where major industrial tanning processes are carried out (using modern technologies). Other locations for interviews were: Gabtali cattle market in Darus Salam Thana, the footwear markets of Bhairab Upazila in the Kishoreganj district, the salt cultivation area at Moheshkhali Upazila in the Cox's Bazar district, and salt industry and cattle rearing locations in the Jhalokathi district.

Some 153 children working in the leather industry were interviewed, of whom 128 were involved in participant observation (i.e. were observed while they worked). Additional interviews were carried out with some parents, factory owners, farmers, slaughterhouse owners, traders, academics, public health experts, local and global buyers, members of different leather associations, and representatives from ministries and departments of the government, UN agencies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These interviews were carried out in order to supplement information provided by the children and contributed useful contextual information. They are not, however, reported as findings in this report, which focuses on the children's perspectives.

Interviews were conducted using different data collection tools, such as guidelines and observation checklists.

At the beginning of the mapping exercise a series of discussions was conducted with stakeholders, including community members, factory managers /owners, slum managers, slum owners, community leaders, religious leaders, and raw hide, crust leather, finished leather and leather products traders. These meetings helped to smooth the mapping process and provided further contextual information for the research team. Members of the community, the researchers, and other stakeholders took part in a transect walk through the areas and neighbourhoods of the tannery and leather industries, with the aim of observing the community and introducing the research team. The walk helped raise awareness of the study within the community, particularly of the levels and scope of children's involvement in it. It was also an opportunity for the researchers and data collectors to observe the children.

A 'snowball' technique was applied to find children engaged in the leather industry, with the help of those children identified at the initial stage of mapping. After each interview with a child the interviewer then asked him or her to tell them about another child known to them who is also working within the leather sector – particularly a child conducting different types of activities than the interviewee. This helped the researchers to identify more children to interview.

Participant observation was undertaken, with researchers observing 128 (of the 153) children to explore the nature of the work they performed. The children's activities and their working conditions were observed and recorded against a checklist – including factors such as gender, health, equipment, or protective gear used by them, work conditions or exposure to hazards. As well as participant observation, detailed interviews with the children were conducted.

The confidentiality and consent of all the children involved was maintained and documented. Throughout the data collection process safeguarding and research ethics were maintained and consent forms (in Bangla) explained the interview process to the children and their guardians

1 *Thanas* (areas covered by a police station) are under the Dhaka South City Corporation of Dhaka district. An *upazila* (sub-district) is an administrative unit like a *thana*, but *upazilas* are located outside any of the areas of city corporations of Bangladesh. A district is an administrative unit consisting of several *upazilas*/*thanas*.

in easy language, to enable informed consent. Where children and/or guardians were illiterate the consent form was read to them. Parental or guardian consent was taken for interviews that took place at participants' homes or in a dedicated interview studio, and when interviews were conducted at factory premises, employers' or supervisors' consents were taken. No actual names were used in data processing or reporting, and interviewees' identities were kept confidential. During all the interviews a notetaker/observer was present alongside the interviewer. Participants were clearly informed that they would receive no cash benefit or in-kind payment for their participation. Interviewees were also informed that they could decline participation or end the interview at any point. Most participants were motivated by the research objective of promoting the wellbeing of working children in Bangladesh. Some employers were reluctant about child workers being interviewed as they were concerned about harming their factory's reputation.

To mitigate this, interviewers talked with owners and supervisors about the research purpose and gave assurances that the identity of the workplace and/or employers would not be disclosed. Most interviews took place in the children's work break-times or when they were not working. In some cases, participants chose to be interviewed at home, at a time convenient to them, rather than at their workplace. During all interviews auditory and visual privacy was maintained. Before each interview a safeguarding risk assessment was undertaken. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, interviews were conducted in a variety of ways. Whilst some were conducted face-to-face (whilst maintaining social distancing and using face masks and gloves), others took place in a studio, utilising a protective glass screen. Other interviews were remote (Facebook Messenger, Skype, or Zoom). Key informants were interviewed on a one-to-one basis (following safety guidelines).

A child participates in an interview using Facebook Messenger: the interviewer was sitting 1–3km away

3.1 Challenges

Data collection took place during the Covid-19 pandemic. To mitigate this, an interview studio with a protective glass screen was established in Hazaribagh, where much of the study was focused. Respondents and interviewers sat on either side of the screen. Other interviews were conducted online using Zoom, Skype or Messenger. When the use of studio or remote interviews was not possible, however, interviewers visited factories to meet respondents. It was, at times, very difficult to maintain social distancing as community members and respondents were reluctant to use protective measures. Researchers went to great lengths to help respondents understand the risks of Covid-19.

Factory owners were often suspicious of the study team and were reluctant to allow them to meet child labourers. When they did allow a meeting, employers often wanted to answer on behalf of the children, or would use body language and eye contact to discourage them from talking. When interviewed at home, away from employers, the children were found to be much more forthcoming.

Determining the true age of child labourers was another challenge. It emerged that children working in factories had been taught to lie about their age (if asked by outsiders). During one interview, a boy of about 12 or 13 years said he was 18 (as he was afraid of losing his job if he revealed his true age). However, after rapport building, most of the children eventually shared their true age.

Section 4:

SOCIOECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF THE CHILDREN

4 SOCIOECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND OF THE CHILDREN

Most of the children involved in the study were aged 14 to 17, with one-fifth being 11 to 13 years. A smaller minority were aged only seven to ten years. Four-fifths of the children involved in the study were boys.

The children interviewed came from a range of neighbourhoods to work in the leather industry. Areas identified can be seen in Table 1.

Most of the children were observed to live in shed-style houses made of corrugated tin, but a considerable number lived in semi-cemented houses. Some lived in a single room of a building. Additionally, a small number of the children lived on tannery premises. More than half of the children involved in the study were living with their parents. Others lived with other family members (husband, grandparents, siblings, sister-in-law, cousin, etc.). Some of the children lived alone and some with their *mahajan* (owner of a small production unit or shop) or employer or other member of staff from their workplace.

Most of the children had access to drinking water directly from the tap, but some fetched drinking water from distant places like mosques. Some of the children drank boiled tap water. A very small number of the children lived in households with a direct water supply to their house. Slightly more than four-fifths of the children had running water in the toilets they used, but others had to fetch water from outside, for example a tube well. Almost all the children had access to shared washing and bathing facilities in their household, but others washed and bathed some distance away, or on the roof of their house, or at a nearby tube well. Those children who lived in tanneries or in warehouses had washing and bathing facilities in their workplace. Only one child was found to have no washing and bathing facilities. About four-fifths of the children were found to have access to shared latrine facilities in their residential block.

A large majority of the children were unmarried.

Almost all the children were not currently studying. The small number who were studying attended school only to sit exams and reported not having any spare time to study. Nearly one-fifth of the children had never attended school. Almost half reported attending primary school but not passing the final year (Class V). Slightly more than one-fifth of the children passed Class V. The rest of the children reported attending a secondary school (Classes VI–IX). Only one child was found to have passed secondary school, achieving the Secondary School Certificate (Class X). Most of the children reported that they had to start working to aid their family's financial situation. Others reported leaving school to work due to a lack of interest in studying. Others reported never having had the opportunity to attend school at all. More than four-fifths of the children reported being unable to write a letter, i.e. were found to be illiterate.

The approximate average income of the children interviewed was Tk.7,721 (US$90.8)[2] per month. The lowest monthly income was Tk.1,000 (US$11.8) and the highest monthly income was Tk.20,000 (US$235.3). The children were also asked about their household's monthly income. The approximate average monthly income in respondents' households was Tk.16,191 (US$190.5). The lowest income was Tk.3,500 (US$41.2) and the highest income was Tk.49,000 (US$576.5). Therefore, it can be inferred that on average nearly half of their household's income was earned by the child. In some cases, however,

Table 1: Neighbourhoods

Neighbourhoods that children came from to work in the leather industry	
Dhaka city neighbourhoods	Gajmohal, Trish Foot, Shikaritola, Puran Thana, Keraniganj, Jhawchar, Shakhari Bazar, Posta, Gulistan, Islambagh, Matuail, Kamlapur, Abdullahpur, and Shaympur
Savar Upazila neighbourhoods	Horindhara and Hemayetpur
Bhairab neighbourhoods	Uttar Mondorampur (local name), Moddhompara and Charesshor

2 US$1 = Tk.85.0: the conversion rate throughout is that of when the study was conducted, i.e. May–August 2020.

Box 1: How the children's earnings are used

- Given to their family (earnings given to parents/ grandparents, etc.) – most of the children reported spending their income on their family, but this varied from child to child and some of them did not necessarily know how the money was used.
- Given to family for using towards rent, utilities, food.
- To service debt.
- Retained in part or full (rarely) by child for personal expenses.

the children could not give specific information about their household's total earnings. In some households the child was supporting the whole family.

The children were asked some questions on disability using the Washington Group on Disability Statistics short set of questions: 7 per cent reported visual disabilities and 3 per cent reported hearing disabilities; 9 per cent reported a physical or mobility disability; 8 per cent reported some difficulty in remembering or concentrating; 7 per cent reported difficulty with self-care, such as washing or dressing; 5 per cent reported difficulty in communicating – for example, understanding or being understood.

Most of the children who had migrated had originally come from two coastal districts: Bhola and Noakhali. Others had migrated from Mymensingh, Kishorganj, Rangpur, Dhaka, Khulna, Comilla, Munshiganj, Barisal, Pirojpur, Madaripur, Tangail, Rajbari, Lalmonirhat, Lokkhipur, Bhairob, Gaibnadha, Chattogram, Panchagarh, Chandpur, Shariatpur, Sylhet, Habiganj, Manikganj, Kuakata and Brahmanbaria. One child had migrated from India (to work with his uncle). Reasons given for migration to Dhaka included to find work and support their family (following some kind of financial crisis); to avoid starvation; due to political issues; to pay off debts; to flee abuse, after being orphaned; or because their homes had flooded. Some of the children said that they had no interest in farming so had travelled to Dhaka in search of other work or to learn a trade. Other children did not know the reasons behind their coming to Dhaka, as they had come with their families when they were very young.

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Section 5:

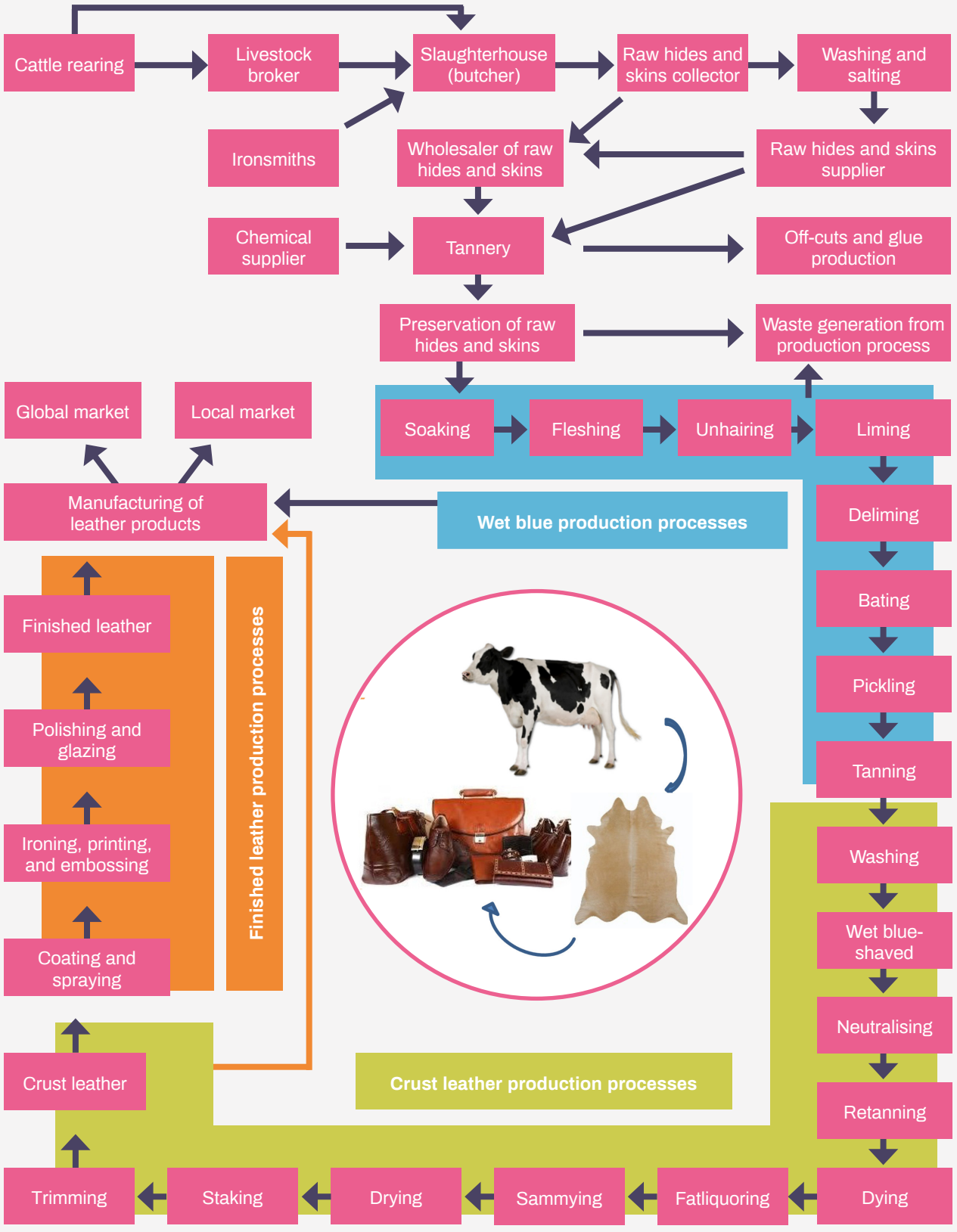
THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CHILDREN'S ENGAGEMENT IN LEATHER SUPPLY CHAINS

5 THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CHILDRENS' ENGAGEMENT IN LEATHER SUPPLY CHAINS

The study team investigated every stage of the leather industry supply chain in Bangladesh and found that children were involved throughout. Figures 2 and 3 demonstrate each stage of the leather supply chains of (a) leather processing, and (b) processing of by-products and waste. These figures were drafted by the research team based on a CLARISSA leather sector scoping study conducted by Mohammad Abul Bashar and Md Abdul Moktadir (Institute of Leather Engineering and Technology, University of Dhaka) (CLARISSA 2020) – and then updated and validated by the primary data/ findings of this mapping.

Manually dyeing leather using chemicals

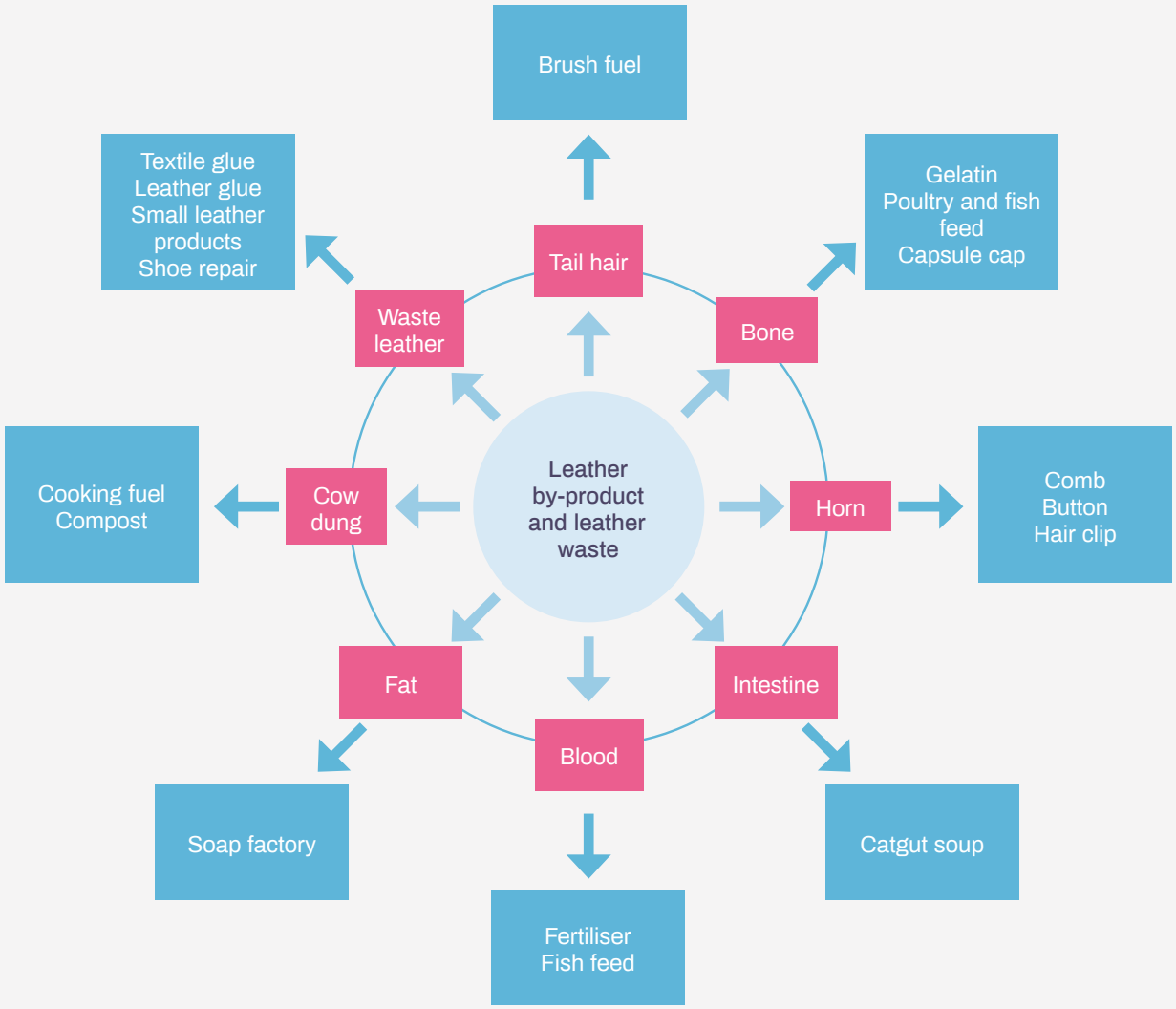
Figure 2: Stages of the leather industry supply chain in Bangladesh



Light blue = Wet blue leather production processes
Light green = Crust leather production processes
Orange = Finished leather production processes
Pink = All individual processes (all indicated in same colour)

Source: Authors' own.

Figure 3: Stages in the manufacture of products from leather by-products and waste (supply chain)



Source: Authors' own.

The research team identified and interviewed child labourers working in each stage of the leather and leather by-products supply chains – illustrated in Figures 2 and 3. Short case studies of all the children involved in the study, working in each stage, can be found in Annexe 2. Locations for interviews were chosen to ensure representation of all the key stages in the supply chain.

Below are some short case studies, illustrating children's roles in WFCL:

- **Flaying: Khokon is 17 years old and works in Kaptan Bazar, Nowabpur in Dhaka. His job is flaying the cow hides after slaughtering. He also cleans the stomach and intestines of the cattle and disposes of cow dung and other waste materials generated from the slaughtering process.**
- **Salt cultivation: Raihan is 11 years old and lives in Mogvail, Cox's Bazar. He works in the production of salt during the salt season. During the rainy season he works as a salt carrier, carrying salt to boats on his shoulders.**
- **Cleaning raw hides: Nazir is 17 years old and lives in Balurmath, Hazaribagh. His job is to wash raw hides with acid. He mixes the acid and puts it into a drum with the hides and washes it for 40 minutes.**
- **Fleshing: Zaman is ten years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His job is to process raw hides. He immerses pieces of raw hide in a barrel**

and adds a mixture of acid, water, chemicals, and dye. Following this, he along with some other boys take it in turns to continually rotate the barrel by hand before removing the hides.

- **Fleshing and shaving using machinery:** Monir, an orphan, is 15 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Hemayetpur, Savar. His job is de-fleshing raw hides using a large machine. First, he removes the blade from the machine and sharpens it using a stone, and then replaces it. With the hides laid on a big tray, he starts the machine and they gradually pass through and the meat and fat residues are removed.
- **Pickling:** Mostak is 16 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Hemayetpur, Savar. His job is in pickling raw hides. He dips the hides into a mixture of water and different types of chemicals for four hours and then removes them.
- **Milling:** Rokeya is 11 years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. Her job is milling leather for making gloves. Water, soda, acid, and other types of chemicals are mixed in a big bucket and the pieces of leather are added to it. She then uses her feet to mix or 'tumble' the pieces of leather. This softens the leather. She then washes the leather and carries it up four storeys to the roof to dry, bringing it back after it has dried.
- **Dyeing:** Noyon is 11 years old. His main task is to spray finished leather with coloured dye, but he also works in milling, mixing chemicals, drying, and trimming leather. In addition, he fetches tea and snacks from local teashops for the factory owners several times a day.
- **Embossing:** Mehedi is 16 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate in Hemayetpur, Savar. For 'iron embossing' he needs to perform three steps. First, he softens and cleans the

Laying leather out in the open to dry

leather with a vibration staking machine. Then he performs three different processes using three different plates, and a hydraulic leather embossing machine to produce embossed leather.

- **Re-dyeing leather:** Hemayet is 16 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Jhawchar, Hemayetpur, Savar. His job is to dye leather different colours as required by the buyer. He also carries sacks of chemicals, on his head, between the chemical shop, the storeroom and the dye-mixing drum.
- **Manufacturing gloves from finished leather:** Rini is 14 years old and works as a sewing machine operator at a glove-making factory. She assembles the gloves and sews in the lining. Momen is 11 years old. He trims excess leather off the gloves with sharp scissors after the sewing process.
- **Manufacturing footwear:** Forkan is 13 years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His jobs are hand-stitching boots and gluing soles to uppers. He has become addicted to the fumes given off by the adhesive and regularly abuses 'Dandy' (inhales glue fumes from a polythene bag) during his leisure time.
- **Manufacturing leather jackets:** Yasin is seven years old and lives in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He works as a shoelace maker. After making the shoelaces he attaches them to the shoes. He also works as a sewing machine operator for jacket making.
- **Manufacturing belts:** Liakat is 13 years old and works in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His job is to make holes in belts using a small leather punch machine.

Use of modern technology in dyeing leather where child labour was also found

- **Collection of hair for fuel (*bhushi*[3] for boilers):**
  Hasan is 12 years old and works in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He works with a production unit that produces glue from hide off-cuts and other parts of the animal. Hasan loads them into a small boiler: after boiling for two to three hours, the leather melts and releases a thick, sticky liquid, which exits the boiler through an outlet at the bottom. He collects this in a container and pours it into a tray to dry in the sun.

Please see Annexe 2 for a full summary of all the 153 children involved in the study. This mapping finds evidence of WFCL in almost all processes, i.e. 103 out of 107 processes (96 per cent) along the supply chain – from animal slaughter and flaying, to tanning processes and manufacturing leather products.

3 The local children mentioned the word *bhushi*, meaning dried hairs of cattle. After the liming and dehairing process of the hide, the hairs from the hide are separated and collected for drying. The dried hairs are used as fuel to the boilers.

The tannery process: liming and dehairing raw hide

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Section 6:

MICRO PROCESSES IN LEATHER GOODS PRODUCTION

6 MICRO PROCESSES IN LEATHER GOODS PRODUCTION

Research team members documented various micro processes involved in the production of five types of leather goods. These were: gloves, footwear, moneybags, jackets, and men's belts. This exercise involved extensive time in the field.

6.1 Leather gloves

Researchers observed 21 micro steps in the production of leather gloves. Children were found to be involved in most of these production processes. In most cases, children had a specific task, but some children were involved in multiple processes. Tasks that are more technical or require physical strength are often allocated to boys. Age is also a factor for employing children in a specific role. See Table 2 for an overview of children's involvement in glove production.

Table 2: Children's involvement in glove production – an overview

SL	Micro steps in glove production	Children's involvement
1	Mixing chemicals in drum (known as 'chemist')	Boys aged 15–17 years
2	Soaking leather in chemical mixtures in preparation for dyeing	Adult workers, boys and girls aged 5–8 years
3	Washing leather in dry wash machines	Adult workers and boys aged 10–12 years
4	Putting 1,500–1,600 small pieces of leather into a drum and infusing with chemicals	Adult workers and boys aged 10–12 years
5	Milling hides (manually, by stamping or using a machine)	Manual – boys and girls aged 8–12 years Machine – boys aged 10–12 years
6	Machine cutting of leather (various glove pieces)	Boys aged 11–17 years
7	Manual cutting of finger pieces using scissors or sharp blades	Boys and girls aged 6–12 years (mostly girls)
8	Cutting lining cloth	Boys and girls aged 6–12 years (with adult mentors)
9	Sewing	Adult workers, boys and girls aged 15–17 years
10	Trimming excess thread after sewing	Boys and girls aged 5–8 years
11	Sorting faulty/reject leather before glove-making (called TC). Involves using a table fitted with powerful lightbulbs	Adult workers and boys aged 15–16 years
12	Flipping over or turning over gloves – using pipes – after sewing	Boys and girls aged 6–12 years
13	Adjusting fingertips using a pipe/metal object	Boys and girls aged 6–12 years
14	Finishing – polishing finished gloves using a machine	Boys and girls (mostly boys) aged 12–17 years (with adult mentors)
15	Checking – looking for defects	Adult workers, boys and girls aged 15–16 years
16	Sewing labels	Adult workers, boys and girls aged 17–18 years
17	Making/setting – sorting left glove from right glove	Boys and girls aged 4–5 years
18	Making up bundles of gloves	Boys and girls aged 4–5 years
19	Matching pairs of gloves and bagging them (polling)	Boys and girls aged 4–5 years
20	Organising gloves packed in a carton ('cartoning')	Boys and girls aged 4–5 years
21	Carrying cartons to vehicles for transport	Adult workers and boys aged 15–17 years

6.2 Leather footwear

Researchers observed 19 micro steps in the production of leather footwear, in which children were involved. Both boys and girls, aged 8–18 years, are involved in a variety of steps in the manufacturing process. Children work in shoe factories as apprentices under the guidance of adult workers. Employers can pay child apprentices a lower rate than adult or independent workers, so children are often employed as apprentices and remain so. In some cases, children were found to have been employed as apprentices without monetary remuneration for several months, receiving only food as payment.

A child might be involved in two or three steps of the manufacturing process. Most factories have machines for these processes, but these cost money to run (Tk.1,500–2,500 (US$17.7–29.4) per day). Generally, children carry out the tasks manually, unless the factory receives an order for a thousand or more units. See Table 3 for an overview of children's involvement in shoe production.

Table 3: Children's involvement in shoe production – an overview

SL	Micro steps in shoe production	Children's involvement
1	Buying crust and finished leathers from Hemayetpur and Islambagh (children accompany factory owners and adult workers and do the lifting, carrying, and pushing loaded rickshaws)	Boys and girls aged 17–18 years
2	Marking shoe patterns onto leather using dies and pencils	Boys and girls aged 10–14 years
3	Cutting leather according to the pattern using scissors, blades, or machines	Manual – boys and girls aged 10–14 years Machine – boys and girls (mostly boys) aged 15–17 years
4	Sole lasting – gluing or sewing (manually or by machine) the heel to the sole	Boys and girls aged 8–12 years
5	Gluing the outsole to the heel	Helpers – boys and girls aged 8–14 years Main role – boys and girls aged 15–18 years
6	Buying the midsole (known locally as the 'insole') from other factories (children accompany factory owners and adult workers and do the lifting, carrying, and pushing loaded rickshaws)	Boys aged 17–18 years
7	Fixing the midsoles (insoles) with glue or by sewing	Gluing – boys and girls aged 8–18 years Sewing – boys and girls aged 15–18 years
8	Fixing the insole to the midsole	Boys and girls aged 8–18 years
9	Gluing or sewing upper to sole	Boys and girls aged 8–18 years
10	Punching holes for eyelets (using a machine or by hand)	Boys and girls (mostly boys) aged 15–18 years
11	Fixing the *ripits** on the holes of the upper part of the shoes	Boys and girls (mostly boys) aged 12–18 years
12	Threading shoelaces through eyelets	Boys and girls aged 8–12 years
13	Attaching buckles or buttons to the upper	Boys and girls aged 8–12 years
14	Lasting – using model feet (made of plastic, wood, or metal) to check the shape of the shoe. Adjustments are made using pliers, hammers, etc.	Boys and girls aged 10–18 years
15	Cleaning excess glue and dirt from shoes using thinner	Boys and girls aged 8–18 years
16	Polishing shoes	Boys and girls (mostly boys) aged 12–18 years
17	Boxing paired shoes	Boys and girls aged 8–15 years
18	Organising boxed shoes in a carton ('cartoning')	Boys and girls aged 8–15 years
19	Carrying cartons to the selling spots or vehicles	Boys and girls aged 17–18 years

* The local workers use the term *ripit* to mean 'metal eyelet' of a shoe or handbag.

6.3 Leather moneybags

Researchers observed 21 micro steps in the process of producing leather moneybags. Children were found working in most of these production processes. Both boys and girls are involved in multiple steps of production. See Table 4 for an overview of children's involvement in moneybag production.

Table 4: Children's involvement in moneybag production – an overview

SL	Micro steps in moneybag production	Children's involvement
1	Designing the moneybags according to clients' demand or designing factories' own catalogue	No children are involved: this process is mainly done by the skilled and experienced workers
2	Buying crust and finished leathers from Hemayetpur and Islambagh (children accompany factory owners and adult workers and do the lifting, carrying, and pushing loaded rickshaws)	Boys and girls aged 17–18 years
3	Cutting leather to size using a pattern	Boys and girls (mostly boys) aged 16–18 years
4	Folding the edges of leather pieces	Boys (mostly) aged 15–18 years
5	Applying glue to the folded edges	Boys and girls aged 8–14 years
6	Laying out the glued pieces to dry	Boys and girls aged 7–14 years
7	Applying second layer of glue	Boys and girls aged 8–14 years
8	Fixing celluloid with leathers using glue or other types of adhesives	Boys and girls aged 8–14 years
9	Attaching various elements – card holders, coin pockets – with adhesive	Boys and girls aged 8–14 years
10	Attaching zips to moneybags	Boys (mostly) aged 15–18 years
11	Sewing various parts of the moneybag (both manually and by machine)	Boys (mostly) aged 14–18 years
12	Burning the edges of the moneybags to stick the threads	Boys (mostly) aged 15–18 years
13	Trimming edges with a sharp blades or scissors	Boys and girls aged 8–15 years
14	Sewing and attaching the lining	Boys (mostly) aged 17–18 years
15	Attaching buttons	Boys (mostly) aged 17–18 years
16	Attaching labels	Boys (mostly) aged 15–18 years
17	Checking	Boys and girls aged 15–18 years
18	Cleaning or polishing using thinner	Boys and girls aged 8–15 years
19	Packing finished products	Boys and girls aged 8–15 years
20	Loading products into a carton and sealing carton with tape	Boys and girls aged 8–15 years
21	Carrying cartons to selling spots or vehicles	Boys aged 17–18 years

6.4 Leather jackets

The researchers observed 27 micro steps in the process of producing leather jackets. Children were found to work in most of these steps, performing multiple tasks. See Table 5 for an overview of children's involvement in jacket production.

Table 5: Children's involvement in jacket production – an overview

SL	Micro steps in jacket production	Children's involvement
1	Buying crust and finished leathers from Hemayetpur and Islambagh (children accompany factory owners and adult workers and do the lifting, carrying, and pushing loaded rickshaws)	Boys and girls aged 17–18 years
2	Dealing with the buyers for getting orders	No children are involved: this job is mainly done by the owners, representatives from business development team, and designers
3	Drafting a pattern (using pencil and paper) according to ordered size and design	No children are involved: the designers lead this process
4	Developing the patterns by cutting the drafted paper	No children are involved: the designers lead this process
5	Cutting out jacket pieces by machine	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 17–18 years
6	Machine-sewing front part of jacket	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 13–18 years
7	Machine-sewing left sleeves	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 13–18 years
8	Machine-sewing right sleeves	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 13–18 years
9	Machine-sewing cuffs	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 13–18 years
10	Machine-sewing back	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 13–18 years
11	Machine-sewing collar	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 13–18 years
12	Machine-sewing yoke	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 15–17 years
13	Machine-sewing pockets	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 15–18 years
14	Hemming the jackets	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 15–18 years
15	Jointing the zipper plate	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 15–18 years
16	Pasting glue or other adhesive with the zipper plate	Boys aged 13–15 years
17	Fixing the runner of the zipper	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 13–18 years
18	Cutting and attaching foam for shoulder pads	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 13–18 years
19	Attaching the jacket lining	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 17–18 years
20	Trimming excess threads	Boys aged 13–18 years
21	Checking for defects	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 13–18 years
22	Cleaning using thinner	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 17–18 years
23	Polishing using chemicals	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 17–18 years
24	Making logos of brands of leather products by using leather and hydraulic machines	Alongside adult workers, boys aged 17–18 years
25	Packing finished products	Boys aged 13–15 years
26	Packing wrapped jackets in a carton and sealing with tape	Boys aged 15–18 years
27	Carrying cartons to the selling spots or vehicles	Boys aged 17–18 years

6.5 Men's belts

The researchers observed 19 micro steps in the process of producing belts where children were involved. Children were found to perform multiple tasks in the process, according to the needs of production. See Table 6 for an overview of children's involvement in leather belt production.

Table 6: Children's involvement in leather belt production – an overview

SL	Micro steps in men's belt production	Children's involvement
1	Buying semi-chrome and chrome leathers from Islambagh and Hemayetpur (children accompany factory owners and adult workers and do the lifting, carrying, and pushing loaded rickshaws)	Boys and girls aged 17–18 years
Back part of belt		
2	Cutting semi-chrome leather to size	Boys aged 15–18 years
3	Applying glue to leather pieces	Boys aged 15–18 years
4	Laying out the leather pieces to dry	Boys aged 15–18 years
5	Shape one end of each leather piece	Boys aged 15–18 years
6	Lightly hammering backs of leather pieces to soften and trim edges	Boys aged 15–18 years
7	Applying latex glue to leather pieces	Boys aged 15–18 years
Front part of belt		
8	Cutting chrome leather to size	Boys aged 15–18 years
9	Attaching front and back pieces of belt	Boys aged 15–18 years
10	Hammering lightly to help pieces adhere	Boys aged 15–18 years
11	Applying a chemical to aid dyeing	Boys aged 15–18 years
12	Trimming belt edges	Boys aged 15–18 years
13	Dipping belts into dye (known as 'S Colour')	Boys aged 15–18 years
14	Sewing belt edges	Boys aged 15–18 years
15	Attaching buckles	Boys aged 15–18 years
16	Punching holes for buckle	Boys aged 15–18 years
17	Packing finished products	Boys aged 15–18 years
18	Packing wrapped belts in a carton and sealing with tape	Boys aged 15–18 years
19	Carrying the cartons to the selling spots or vehicles	Boys aged 17–18 years

Section 7:

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH

7 WORKPLACE SAFETY AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH

When the children were asked about working at night, most understood the question to be about a night shift, rather than their working day extending into evening hours; however, interviewees reported that when workloads are high, they must continue working into the night. The children described the effects of this as tiredness, weakness, and burning eyes, although some of them reported that they enjoy working at night because temperatures are cooler. A considerable number of the children talked of specific risks they experience when working at night, such as being targeted by thieves who attack them for their mobile phones and moneybags. The children also reported being at higher risk of injury when working at night (due to fatigue – a hand becoming caught in a machine, spilling acid or chemicals on their skin, etc.). Girls mentioned sexual harassment on their way to and from work at night. For this reason, they usually travel in groups. Conversely, some of the boys expressed that they feel less exposed to risks when working at night.

Some of the children involved in the study reported working in direct sunlight for four to five hours a day (e.g. if they are responsible for leather drying). Some of the children reported that they work in direct sunlight for up to eight hours every day.

When asked about their work environment most of the children reported working in a crowded, noisy space, and some reported being surrounded by noxious smells and poisonous gases. Other children spend long periods standing in water to mill and dye leather. Most of the child workers reported that they work in a dangerous environment. Working with chemicals is obviously dangerous.

Most of the children reported being at risk of accidental injury or falling at their workplace. Carrying drums of leather up multiple flights of stairs is risky when loads are heavy and there is no handrail. Other children mentioned risks such as being burnt, injury from sharp blades, and severe headaches induced by fumes. Most of the children reported having experienced injuries; for example, cuts to hands or fingers whilst working. Two individuals reported suffering fractures after their hands were caught inside a machine. This caused them to be hospitalised for more than a month. About half of the children reported having to lift or carry heavy loads. Slightly more than half of the children reported having to use heavy machinery or sharp tools in their job.

Box 2: Firoz and Miraz – case study

Firoz and Miraz are two tannery workers aged 16–17 years old. One of their tasks was to carry barrels of hydrochloric acid from the shops to the tannery. They would suspend the barrel between bamboo poles with rope, carrying it on their shoulders from pickup point to delivery point. Unfortunately, a year ago they were involved in an accident: the barrel became unbalanced, dropped to the floor, and broke open. Both boys were badly burned, Firoz more so, being closer to where the barrel fell. They suffered burns on their chest, hands, and feet, and both of them were in hospital for over a month. Their treatment cost each around Tk.75,000 (US$882.4). The factory owner paid Tk.45,000 (US$529.4) to each boy in compensation and the remaining treatment costs (and their family expenses while they could not work) were paid through loans. Initially these came from other workers at the factory (approx. Tk.60,000/US$705.9) which were repaid through a loan from an NGO. Both boys are back at work now and pay monthly instalments towards paying off the loans.

Most of the children said that scolding, threats, and other forms of verbal abuse are very common in their workplace. Some of them reported being physically abused by their employers for being slow or making mistakes. One girl reported being sexually abused at work.

Many of the children involved in the mapping study were forthcoming about physical health problems they experience. Some also reported mental health problems, such as poor memory (which can lead to reduced wages). Common ailments experienced by the children in this study were fevers, colds, coughs, headaches, etc. Almost one fifth said they had experienced coughing and headaches in the last 12 months. Other common health problems reported included diarrhoea, asthma, shortness of breath, vomiting, typhoid, and jaundice. Some of the children complained of problems with their eyesight or earache. Some reported problems like dizziness, stomach pain, heart problems, toothache, weakness, throat pain, kidney stones, chikungunya,[4] and shoulder pain. One of the children had had surgery and another had been pregnant in the last 12 months. Some of the children reported accidents such as cuts or burns.

4 A viral disease transmitted to humans by infected mosquitoes.

Almost one third of the children had not sought any treatment for their health problems. Those that did seek help consulted their local pharmacy (e.g. they usually share their health problems with non-qualified medicine retailers). Others did not visit pharmacies as they had no money to buy medicine. Doctors are generally avoided due to lack of money, and/or parents not being available to take them. Only one fifth of the children reported having consulted a doctor for health problems. Very few of the children stated they got health-related advice from their workplace, and one child said that he went to a *Kobiraj* (a traditional healer) for treatment.

The children were asked about their use of tobacco products, drugs, alcohol, yaba,[5] dandy,[6] etc. and almost half of the children reported using either tobacco products or another substance.

When asked about their food consumption in the previous 24 hours, food commonly mentioned included rice, fish, lentils, bread or flatbread, and vegetables. Very few of the children had eaten meat. Some of the children reported they had gone hungry for a portion of the day; for example, most of them reported not eating lunch. Very few of the children stated they could afford to eat three meals a day and many reported going to work on an empty stomach. Some of their employers provided money for a light mid-morning snack but this is all that many of the children interviewed eat until the evening. Most of the children reported eating the same kind of food throughout the year and that, even if they did not like the taste of certain foods, they ate whatever they could get and had no other option.

Box 3: Kutubuddin – case study

Kutubuddin is 17 years old and lives in Hazaribagh. Some years ago, he fell off the roof at his workplace (whilst spreading out fish feed to dry). He suffered a head injury and since then has had memory loss, fainting spells, and an inability to answer questions. Currently, he is working in a glove factory from dawn till dusk, cutting and folding glove pieces, for which he receives no fixed salary (his employer pays him a sporadic wage – Tk.20/50/70/100 (US$0.24/0.59/0.82/1.18) depending on his mood). The employer claims it is a kindness to employ a disabled boy. Kutubuddin's mother is a street beggar, and his father is a rickshaw puller.

5 Tablets containing methamphetamine and caffeine.
6 Glue-sniffing.

Carrying leather to produce leather products

Handling chemical and glue
for leather processing without
protection

Section 8:

CHILDREN'S PATHWAYS TO WORK, EXPERIENCES AS WORKERS, AND PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD LABOUR

8 CHILDREN'S PATHWAYS TO WORK, EXPERIENCES AS WORKERS, AND PERCEPTIONS OF CHILD LABOUR

Most of the children involved in this study reported that their current job was their first job, some of them reported attending school prior to their current job, and others said they had been in agricultural work before joining the leather industry. Some children described working in a different role within the leather industry or its supply chain, prior to their current job.

Almost half of the children said they started working in the leather sector because of the financial position of their families. Many children had moved to Dhaka with their families because of poverty. Some of their families have large loans, and the children work to help repay them.

Most of the children said that the decision for them to start working was taken by their parents, who needed them to contribute money to the family (to avert hunger and great poverty). A large number of the children reported that the decision for them to work in the leather sector in particular was also decided by relatives (e.g. elder siblings were engaged in the sector), or prompted by friends already working in the sector. Once in the leather sector, a third of the children reported feeling they have no alternatives – either because they are not skilled in any other areas, or simply have no access to alternatives (i.e. have no one to recommend them to employers in other sectors). Some alternative work options mentioned by the children were driving, working in a tea shop, working for Grameenphone (telecommunications company), or working in construction, or in a tailor shop. Other children reported having become skilled in their current job in the leather sector, so it was now easy for them to continue. It was also reported by the children that the pay is better in the leather industry than in other sectors and some of them talked about wanting to move onto more skilled work in the leather sector. One child planned to become a cutting master one day (a high-salaried position), so was working hard and staying in his job.

Large numbers of the children said they do not like their work but had no choice as their earnings were needed by their families. For those children who reported not liking their work, the reasons given included not being able to pursue their education, dirty work environments, long hours, and work-related risks to their health.

Most of the children (three quarters) did like some aspects of their work; for example, being able to leave on time, and the owner allowing rest time. Some aspects of work were preferred: specific tasks cited as preferable varied widely (one child said he likes to cut meat, but was not allowed to do this work, and another said he likes manufacturing bags as the pay is higher).

Work tasks that the children specifically reported **not** liking included coming into contact with chemicals, touching raw hides with their bare hands, carrying hides, working in direct sunlight, cleaning cow intestines, sitting continually in one place, tasks that involve bending down, and working in dusty environments.

In terms of what aspect of their own work was the hardest, the children cited: mixing chemicals (which can splash in their faces and eyes); working with machines (they are afraid of getting their hands trapped); carrying products (e.g. from the ground floor to third floor – a risk of fall and injury); working with gases in front of a fire (which frightens them); and working with glue. Also, the children mentioned different types of work being hard, such as folding belts, folding hides, cutting and pasting hides, making musical instruments, working in direct sunlight, dying hides, stamping leather with their feet, turning over gloves, cutting the bones of cows, slaughtering, sewing shoes, etc. When asked about their perceptions of the toughest jobs being performed by other children in the leather sector, many children responded that there were no other children engaged in more difficult work than them. Others cited the following as the toughest work: working in direct sunlight, cutting hides, soaking hides in chemicals and removing fur from tails, working with acid, using heavy machines, fleshing hides, carrying heavy loads to upper floors, melting rubber (for making shoes), working manually (without machines), and hammering nails into shoes.

Box 4: Hatem – case study

Hatem is 16 years old and works in a shoe factory in Bhairab. Some years ago, Hatem undertook a three-day trial at the factory (before he was employed). His employer gave him a Tk.20,000 (US$235.3) advance, which was supposed to be deducted monthly from his salary; however, the employer does not make the deductions. Hatem earns Tk.300 (US$3.5) per dozen shoe uppers he makes. Recently, he was offered a job earning Tk.500 (US$5.9) for the same task but because he has not paid off the advance and he cannot afford to pay it back, he could not accept the offer of better work. In this way he is bonded in his current job and will not be able to leave.

Regarding children's working hours, three quarters of the respondents reported working eight hours or more per day, with most working around 12 hours per day (8am to 8pm). Some of the children reported working 15 or 17 hours and a very small number of children said they work six or less hours a day. For those children working long hours, some reported starting at 8am and finishing at midnight. More than half of the children said they work six days a week and one third of children said they work seven days a week.

In relation to gender and types of work, most children stated that both boys and girls do the same jobs, with the exception of boys being more involved in tasks which need greater physical strength like carrying heavy loads. Boys are more often responsible for dyeing leather, drying it in the sun, and transporting it. The research team also found that factories manufacturing some products (e.g. leather jackets and belts) are reluctant to employ girls, because they prefer boys to do the finishing work (involving tasks that are seen to be more skilled). Girls are favoured for manual work such as sewing and cutting.

In terms of seasonality, during Eid-Ul-Adha, the demand for child labour increases in hide processing factories, and about one and a half months before Ramadan there is another peak in demand from product manufacturers. During winter, the demand for child labourers to work drying hides decreases. For those whose work depends on numbers of orders or level of sales, there is no peak season.

Regarding their general perceptions around the harmful effects of child labour, children cited their smaller, less developed bodies; namely, the high volume of sound and vibration of machines they are exposed to, as well as toxic fumes, exposure to chemicals, and carrying heavy loads are not appropriate for a child's body.

With regard to missed opportunities as a result of being child labourers, most children talked about the loss of their education, as well as the lack of opportunities for play and recreation. Some could not say what they might have missed out on, and others claimed not to lose out at all. One child said:

> *Because of starting work at an early age I lost my childhood; I got deprived from education. But I have no other choice. My mother is sick and there is no one else in family for earning, so I'll have to work.*

Most children did not know the legal age limit for work. One child said, 'In our factory a worker of any age can work but in the big factories, there is age limit.' Another said, 'One should start working at the age of 18 or above; but what can we do? Our situation forces us to start working at an early age.' Similarly, the children did not have a very clear idea of acceptable working hours for children, but many cited less hours than the ones they themselves worked. None of the respondents had any knowledge of laws regarding child labour.

Tasks that the children felt they should not have to perform are: drying hides in the sun; cutting leather; carrying heavy loads; and processing hides using acid and chemicals. Some of children said that none of the tasks in the industry were suitable for children. According to the respondents, employers hire children because they can pay them less than adults. Employers can also insist on a child working extra hours (in a way they cannot with an adult).

In terms of the benefits for children, of them working, the children talked about benefits to their family as personal benefits for themselves. Some children said that with their earnings, their family can repay debts. Others said they can keep some of the money to spend on themselves. Some said that their income allowed them to have good food. Others said that they were learning by working and this would lead to a good position in the future. However, there were those who reported feeling nothing positive about working at such a young age.

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Section 9:

CONTRACTS, PAYMENTS AND FAMILY LOANS

9 CONTRACTS, PAYMENTS, AND FAMILY LOANS

The research team found that none of the children involved in the study had an employment letter or contract. The mode of payment to children was found to depend on the types of products they were involved in. Children were paid either a daily, monthly, or piece rate. Those paid a piece rate are found to often be exploited, as they are too young to count their products, are not given a chance to count them, or are unable to challenge their employer on the amount. In most cases, boys and girls are paid the same. Rather, payment varies according to age, experience, and types of tasks. Most children are paid directly, rather than to a family member. In relation to social norms surrounding work and earning potential, some respondents said that only boys can work in shops (girls can only work in factories).

Children were asked about the role of intermediaries or brokers in finding them employment or facilitating their migrating to Dhaka. Most children reported that they had met their employer or manager through a relative, or through friends, or neighbours. None got a job with the help of professional agents or brokers.

9.1 Family loans and the burden of repayment

Children were asked whether they or their families had ever borrowed money from a moneylender, relatives, friends, or any other source. Some respondents were unaware of whether their families borrowed money, and about a quarter said that they did not borrow money from any source; however, this study found that nearly two thirds of the respondents' households have loans. One fifth of the children reported borrowing money from relatives (brother, uncle, grandmother, aunt). Forty per cent of the children in the study mentioned loans from formal microcredit institutions such as BRAC, Grameen Bank, Shakti Foundation, POPI, and other NGOs. More than one tenth of the children's families/households took loans from local cooperative societies and about one tenth borrowed money from friends and neighbours.

A considerable portion of the children's families took loans from traditional moneylenders (known as *mahajons*) or *khala* ('aunts'), who charge high interest. People depend on these moneylenders when they have a financial emergency. Both types of traditional moneylenders, i.e. *mahajons* and *khala*, generally charge the interest rate on a monthly basis, and the rate of interest varies from 5 to 20 per cent per month (60 to 240 per cent per year). In cases of this type of informal lending, the rate of interest is fixed on a one-to-one basis between the lender and borrower, and is based on the level or urgency of the borrower as perceived by the lender. Desperate demand in seeking a loan by the borrower encourages the lender to increase the lending rate. Other sources of loans were landowners, factory owners, or small grocery stores.

The number of loans per family ranged from one to four. Of families that have taken loans, more than half of them took only one loan, about a third took two loans, nearly one tenth took three loans, and slightly less than one tenth took more than four loans. Larger loans were taken out from NGOs such as POPI,[7] and other microfinance organisations.

About a third of households (28.8 per cent) took loans amounting to Tk.10,000 (US$117.6). Approximately a quarter of households have loans exceeding Tk.60,000 (US$705.9). Slightly more than one tenth of households have loans of between Tk.10,000 (US$117.6) and Tk.20,000 (US$235.3). Slightly less than one tenth of households have loans between Tk.20,000 (US$235.3) and Tk.30,000 (US$352.9). About one fifth of respondents have loans totalling between Tk.30,000 (US$352.9) and Tk.40,000 (US$470.6). And about one tenth of them took loans of between Tk.40,000 (US$470.6) and Tk.60,000 (US$705.9).

In terms of interest rates, NGOs usually apply a fixed rate of 12.5 per cent per year on loans repaid in weekly instalments. Local/informal moneylenders generally apply a rate of 5 to 20 per cent per month (60 to 240 per cent per year) on loans to be repaid via very regular instalments. One respondent said his family had to pay Tk.150 (US$1.8) per day, otherwise the moneylender would take away their refrigerator. Some respondents said their families are bound to the lender and they work

7 See People's Oriented Program Implementation (POPI).

off their loans, for example by pulling rickshaws (bonded labour[8] or modern slavery[9]).

Taking out loans or borrowing money is usually linked to an emergency. Some respondents said that their families had taken loans to cover costs resulting from the Covid-19 crisis period, others when a parent fell sick; further reasons mentioned were buying agricultural land, buying a refrigerator, repayment of previous loans, paying rent, or sending money in a foreign currency through a broker to a person who is working abroad.

Many children said they were not able to repay the loans taken out by their families, and paid only the interest on the loan. Some children said that repayments for loans they have taken from their employer were automatically deducted from their salary. Generally, the children take loans for their families/households.

More than one quarter of the children who have family loans reported having to leave school because of the burden of loan repayments. Among the children whose families have received loans, about two fifths think that their earnings are helping their family to repay them.

8 **Bonded labour** is 'The condition of any person whose liberty is unlawfully restricted while the person is coerced through any means to render labour or services, regardless of compensation, including those who enter the condition because of the absence of a reasonable alternative, where that person or a relation initially agreed to pledge his labor or service as repayment for an advance of any kind' (Kara 2017: 16).

9 'Slavery persists in the twenty-first century. This modern-day slavery takes various forms and achieves certain ends but its outcomes are always exploitative in nature: appropriation of labor for productive activities resulting in economic gain, use of the enslaved person as an item of conspicuous consumption, sexual use of an enslaved person for pleasure and procreation, and the savings gained when paid servants or workers are replaced with unpaid and unfree workers. Any particular slave may fulfill one, several, or all of these outcomes for the slaveholder (Bales 2009: 18). **Modern slavery** is the severe exploitation of other people for personal or commercial gain. Modern slavery is all around us, but often just out of sight. People can become entrapped making our clothes, serving our food, picking our crops, working in factories, or working in houses as cooks, cleaners or nannies. From the outside, it can look like a normal job. But people are being controlled. Forty million people are estimated to be trapped in modern slavery worldwide. Modern slavery takes many forms. The most common are: human trafficking, forced labour, debt bondage/bonded labour, descent-based slavery, slavery of children, forced and early marriage (Anti-Slavery International 2021).

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Section 10:

COVID-19: THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

10 COVID-19: THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

The Covid-19 pandemic and resultant lockdowns caused the closure of most leather supply chain factories and workplaces for three months in 2020. This left children in the leather sector without work and pushed families into crisis, with reduced income impacting their ability to buy food and pay rent. Even in cases where factory owners did not lay off their entire staff, a large-scale decrease in demand for leather products reduced workloads overall, and as such many owners reduced the salaries of those workers still in employment.

Almost half the children interviewed for this mapping reported not being able to buy food during this period, and consequently eating only once per day. Others reported having to take out loans to pay their rent. Only about 2 per cent of respondents received support through a government food support programme during the lockdown.

Children who lost their jobs were not able to move elsewhere to look for alternative work due to government Covid regulations/lockdowns. Some families sold assets such as household items, furniture, or animals to manage family expenses.

Some factory owners provided rice and lentils to their workers to help them feed their families during the crisis. Fear of being judged by the community or a sense of shame prevented some family members of children engaged in WFCL from accessing emergency support or alms. Some of them sought government relief but were unsuccessful. Other families took loans from local moneylenders or landowners, at high interest, with short repayment periods imposed and, in some cases, also requiring the mortgaging of valuable goods.

Section 11:

PROPOSED LOCATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONS

11 PROPOSED LOCATIONS FOR INTERVENTIONS

One of the primary objectives of the mapping study was to identify sites and target groups for CLARISSA participatory processes, activities, and interventions in order to inform the programme's chosen locations for fieldwork and participatory processes with children. Participatory processes and interventions will include the collection, and collective analysis of, children's life stories, the establishment of 18-month long action research processes, and (subsequent) child-led, action research driven, interventions and pilots.

The study identified the following locations as places where children are undertaking WFCL in the leather sector:

- **Slums around the Hazaribagh leather processing zone in Dhaka. This zone comprises hundreds of leather processing factories, in which children are heavily engaged. There are also lots of slums in this area, where the children and their families both live and work. The slums are as follows: Gojmohal, Balur Math, Kalunagar, Sanatangarh, Trish Foot, Bou Bazar, and Kamrangirchar/Beriband.**
- **Slums around the Savar Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) Leather Estate (Savar Upazila, Dhaka district). Savar BSCIC Leather Estate is a newly created (2003) leather processing and leather product manufacturing zone, comprising around 100 leather factories (moved from Hazaribagh). Although only about 35 per cent of the industry has been moved here, a large number of children are working and living in the area (the government has relocated the formal leather industry to here, but a whole network of informal businesses has sprung up around it). The major concentrations of child labour are in Jhauchar, Harindhara, and Hemayetpur.**
- **Slums around Posta and Islamabad (Lalbagh Thana) – the centre for trading of raw hides in Dhaka city. A large number of children are working here. Work includes manual fleshing, salting, raw hide trading and transportation. More than 200 trading shops (*aarot*) are also located in this area.**
- **Gulistan/Fulbaria/Kaptan Bazar Business area. This area comprises Fulbaria and Siddique Bazars, which are famous for shoe trading. Huge numbers of children are working here, in more than 700 shops. Furthermore, there is a large slaughterhouse at Kaptan Bazar, near to Fulbaria, where large numbers of children are engaged in the leather supply chain.**
- **Slums around Matuail-Jatrabari. These areas comprise the leather packaging industry, the Bata shoe factory, and the Jatrabari goat market. Children are engaged in various jobs here linked with leather products and marketing.**
- **Bhairab Footwear Manufacturing and Trading Centre. The Bhairab Bazar (Bhairab Upazila in Kishoregnaj district) is a shoe trading centre outside of Dhaka. A large number of shops and trade centres are located in this area, employing many children.**

Because of the concentration of WFCL in the leather sector in these locations, it is recommended that they form the short list for the choice of implementation locations.

Section 12:

CONCLUSION

12 CONCLUSION

WFCL are not always obvious and, without better understanding of where, why, and how it is happening, the exploitation and abuse of children in the workforce in Bangladesh will continue. This study provides a detailed assessment of where children are working in the leather supply chain in Bangladesh, what they are doing, how they came to be doing it, and what their conditions of work and experiences are.

This mapping provides a powerful picture of where children can be found in leather production units and related services. It informs the CLARISSA programme of the localities and target groups, so that activities and interventions can be decided. Not only does this study identify where children in WFCL in the leather sector in Bangladesh are located, it also reveals children's living conditions, their health, and the many risks they encounter through their involvement in the sector. Furthermore, and critically, it evidences the children's perceptions of themselves and others as child labourers – the jobs and areas of the sector that they feel comprise WFCL, and the jobs they feel are the most difficult or dangerous and that children should not have to do. It documents both children's assessments of the harmful effects of child labour (and the opportunities they feel they have missed as a consequence of their work), and the benefits of them working.

This mapping illustrates both the drivers and the dynamics of child labour in the leather industry in Bangladesh. It provides a high level of detail around children in WCFL in the leather supply chain, finding evidence of WFCL in almost all processes, i.e. 103 out of 107 processes (96 per cent) along the supply chain – from animal slaughter and flaying, to tanning processes and manufacturing of leather products.

It finds that not only are most children working 12–14 hours a day, six days a week, but whilst doing so they are exposed to dangerous chemicals and adhesives and/or are working with heavy machinery and cutting tools. Children as young as eight years old are found to be undertaking these forms of highly hazardous labour. Most of the child workers interviewed reported that they work in a dangerous environment, and most of the children said they were at risk of accidental injury or falling at their workplace.

Almost half of the children involved in this study said they started working in the leather sector because of the financial position of their families. Many children had moved to Dhaka with their families because of poverty. Some of their families have large loans, and as such the children work to help repay them. Almost all the children are not in education.

A high proportion of the children said they do not like the work they do, but had no choice as their earnings were needed by their families. For those children who reported not liking their work, the reasons given included: not being able to pursue their education, dirty work environments, long hours, and work-related risks to their health.

Furthermore, the global pandemic has exacerbated the economic hardship of working children and their families, and many children are faced with the stark choice to either undertake dangerous work or starve.

This mapping found that children in WFCL are mainly found in the small informal businesses located in slums and slum neighbourhood areas. Most of these businesses have less than ten workers (including the children), and operate in a working space of less than 200sq. ft. Almost all of them operate either under subcontracting agreements with large, medium, small, micro, and cottage industries, or produce leather products to be sold for the local market. Most of these businesses operate a set of micro processes, and a considerable portion of working children have multitasking abilities. These small economic units frequently carry out various different types of businesses; for example, trading raw hides, preserving raw hides, production of glue, tanning, dyeing, drying, trading, sewing, manufacturing, etc.

Whilst it is not yet clear how best to engage with the complex causes of children in WFCL in the leather sector in Bangladesh, this study has identified in detail the nature of their engagement in WFCL, and where WFCL are located. The nature of how CLARISSA activities and interventions will seek to address causes will be determined through the participatory action research processes that will take place from 2021.

Contrary to the findings of this mapping, the *Dhaka Tribune* reported on Tuesday, 23 March 2021 that the Bangladesh Minister for Labour and Employment had declared six industrial sectors – tanneries, glass, ceramics, ship recycling, export-oriented leather and footwear, and seri-culture – as being free from child labour. Representatives of local leather industry associations who were interviewed insisted that their businesses are strictly regulated, and that WFCL do not exist in their sector. While formal production of branded goods may now be better regulated, what is

beyond dispute (and clearly evidenced by this mapping) is that the informal leather sector is rife, not only with child labour, but with the worst forms of child labour. Furthermore, informal production units are likely supplying processed and or unprocessed leather into the formal leather sector, and are definitely driving large unbranded domestic and regional markets.

Far greater attention needs to be paid to the tens of thousands of small businesses which exist in the shadow economy. Whilst this is much more challenging than engaging with a handful of large exporters, it is essential as the informal sector is where WFCL are found, and this is where the focus is needed. Much greater attention is also needed in relation to the economic drivers that push children into these workplaces.

When we listen to children about the realities they face, and ask them to think of solutions, they come up with new ideas that others could never have thought of. This new evidence on the dynamics of WFCL in the leather supply chain, and in the urban neighbourhoods of Bangladesh, will allow CLARISSA to run targeted, child-led, participatory processes and, in turn, to deliver innovations which will increase children's options to avoid WFCL. The findings identified through this mapping, via the engagement with 153 working children, will be used as the first step in delivering a series of programme activities to counter the drivers of WFCL in Bangladesh, which can, in due course, be taken to scale.

Our findings will also help the Government of Bangladesh, the leather industry, and civil society to plan for, and implement specific actions to eliminate WFCL, in line with the Child Labour Elimination Policy of 2010, the National Children Policy 2011 (Section 9: Steps to Mitigate Child Labour), the National Plan of Action to Eliminate Child Labour (2020–2025), Bangladesh's eighth five-year plan, and the Sustainable Development Goals – especially SDG 8.7 (elimination of WFCL).

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ANNEXES

ANNEXE 1 NUMBERS AND CATEGORIES OF RESPONDENTS AND PARTICIPANTS BY METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

Annexe Table A1: Category of respondents and participants of the study

SL	Category of respondents and participants of the study	Method of data collection	Number
01	Children engaged in the leather industry	Detailed interview	153
02	Children engaged in the leather industry	Participant observation	128
03	Parents of children engaged in WFCL modern slavery in the leather industry	Key informant interview	2
04	Adult workers in the leather industry	Key informant interview	2
05	Employers of children in WFCL	Key informant interview	
06	Owner/manager/employers of finished leather goods industry	Key informant interview	1
07	Owner/manager of tannery	Key informant interview	1
08	Academics in relation to leather engineering institutions/public health institutions/child labour	Key informant interview	3
09	Child labour brokers for the leather industry	Key informant interview	2
10	Representatives of buying houses for exporting leather goods	Key informant interview	1
11	Representatives from the Centre of Excellence for Leather Skill Bangladesh Limited (COEL)	Key informant interview	1
12	NGO representatives	Key informant interview	1
13	Leader of Trade Unions (Tannery Workers Union)	Key informant interview	1
14	Representative from Ministry of Labour and Employment/ Ministry of Environment/Ministry of Industry/ Ministry of Industries/UN agencies (ILO, UNICEF)	Key informant interview	2
15	Representative from UN agencies (UNICEF)	Key informant interview	1
16	Representative from Bangladesh Tanners Association/ Bangladesh Finished Leather, Leather Goods & Footwear Exporters Association	Key informant interview	3

ANNEXE 2 THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CHILDREN'S ENGAGEMENT IN LEATHER SUPPLY CHAINS (FULL SUMMARY OF CHILDREN INVOLVED IN THE STUDY)

The study team investigated every stage of the supply chain of the leather industry in Bangladesh – and found that children were involved throughout. A summary of the situation of each child involved in the study (by supply chain step) is given below.

Processing raw hide into finished leather

Cattle rearing

Belayet is 17 years old and lives in Purba Para. His main task is helping to rear cows. He feeds and bathes the cows and then sells them at the market with his father.

Mohiuddin is 17 years old and lives in Dakkhin Para. He works as a shepherd, rearing cows. He starts at 6am each day, taking cows to graze. He also cuts grass to feed the cows. In the afternoon he feeds the cows and brings them in from the field to the cowshed. He also clears up cow dung.

Keramot is 16 years old and lives in Gajmohal, Hazaribagh. His main job is clearing cow dung, which he disposes of in the canal. He also feeds and waters cows.

Selling cattle

Rohim is 14 years old and works, with his father, selling cattle (cows and goats). His father is a cattle trader, or *Bepari*. Rohim is responsible for feeding the cattle, before they are sold.

Slaughtering cattle

Milon is 16 years old and works in Kaptan Bazar, Gulistan in Dhaka. He works for a slaughterhouse, with his uncle, who found him the job. He works with a team of five others to restrain and slaughter animals. He holds the back legs whilst the slaughterer uses a sharp knife to kill the animal. He also sells meat (beef and mutton), cutting it up according to the needs of the customer.

Arif is 15 years old and works in Kaptan Bazar, Gulistan in Dhaka. He works at a meat shop. His responsibilities include: slaughtering cows, flaying hides, cutting meat, and trimming away fat. He slaughters and processes two cows each day.

Flaying

Hasinur is 17 years old and works in Kaptan Bazar, Gulistan in Dhaka. His job is flaying cattle hides. He cuts the hide from the back legs and hangs the cow up. Then he flays the hide from the body using his hands and a small knife.

Khokon is 17 years old and works in Kaptan Bazar, Nowabpur in Dhaka. His job is flaying cattle hides. He also cleans the stomach and intestines of the cattle and disposes of cow dung and other waste materials generated from the slaughtering process.

Making tools for slaughtering and cutting meat

Delwar is 17 years old. He works as a blacksmith making *chapati* (a knife for slaughtering cows and cutting leather), side knives, and car springs. He starts a fire in a machine, known locally as *part-tin,* and then beats the hot iron until it is flat, before cutting it to size. He also increases the heat of the machine, known locally known as a '*hawa* machine', by hand using coal as fuel. Then he washes the iron products with acid water.

Collection and transportation of raw hides from slaughterhouse to warehouses (*Godowns*)

Mojibor is 17 years old and works in Shahid Nagar, Posta in old Dhaka. He works at a raw hide warehouse. His responsibility is to carry raw hides from the slaughterhouses to the raw hide warehouse.

Salt cultivation fields and salt transportation

Raihan is 11 years old and lives in Mogvail, Cox's Bazar. He works in the production of salt during the salt season. During the rainy season he works as a salt carrier, carrying salt to boats on his shoulder.

Jalil is ten years old and lives in South Mogvail, Cox's Bazar. He works at a salt production unit. Salt farmers preserve processed salt in the field. When the price of the salt increases during the rainy season, they sell it. During this time, he works as a salt carrier carrying salt to boats.

Salt production industry

Motin is 17 years old and lives in Jhalokati, Barisal. He works in the salt manufacturing industry. He loads unprocessed and raw salt (*Krut*) into a basket and lifts it into a salt processing machine. After processing, he packages the salt before loading the packets into a sack for weighing.

Nahid is 17 years old and lives in Jhalokati, Barisal. He works in salt processing. First, he fills a basket with raw salt and lifts it into a salt processing machine. This process is repeated three times. Then he mixes iodine with the processed salt, packages it, and weighs it.

Carrying salt from salt factories to raw hide warehouses

Jamal is 17 years old and he works in Lalbagh/Islambagh, Posta in Dhaka. He transports raw hides from the slaughterhouses, and salt from factories, by van. He also salts hides and loads them onto trucks for transfer to Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Jhawchar, Hemayetpur, Savar.

Cleaning raw hides

Kader is 17 years old and works at Posta, Lalbagh in old Dhaka. He performs two major tasks in raw hide processing: transporting hides from slaughterhouse to warehouse; and washing raw hides to remove blood and dirt.

Nazir is 17 years old and lives in Balurmath, Hazaribagh. His job is to wash raw hides with acid. He mixes the acid and puts it into a drum with the hides, and washes it for 40 minutes.

Salting

Zaman is ten years old and works in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His job is salting raw hides at the *Chamrar Aarot* (raw hide collection, salting, and storing house). He spreads the hides, one by one, on the floor and covers them with salt. Each hide requires about 1kg of salt. Once salted, they load the hides onto trucks for transport to Hemayetpur, Savar for further processing.

Cleaning and disposal of waste material

Barkat is 16 years old and works in Shanir Akhra, Jatrabari in Dhaka. He works at a slaughtering and meat selling house. His major responsibilities include cleaning and disposal of waste materials (blood, bones, stomach, intestines). He also washes meat with water before displaying it for sale and cutting it up for customers.

Soaking

Wahidul works in Paschimpara, Jhawchar Union in Savar Upazila. His job is to soak raw hides to clean them, removing various unwanted contaminants such as dirt, blood, flesh, grease, and dung. According to him, soaking also rehydrates the skins and hides and improves softness and elasticity. When hides and skins are received from the tannery, they have been dried to preserve them. Wahidul immerses the raw hide in a drum of fluid comprising water, sulphate, sodium bisulphate, liquid detergent (LD), etc. The hides are left in the mixture for about 12 hours and then transferred to another drum for the fleshing process.

Liming and dehairing

Haider is 17 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Jhawchar, Hemayetpur, Savar. He carries hides on his shoulder and transfers them to the drum for liming. The drum contains a mixture of water and lime. According to him, the liming process helps remove hair, fat, and other contaminants from the hides.

Mosiur is 17 years old and works in Harindhara, Savar. His job involves cutting the edges of the raw hides, liming, dehairing, and fleshing the leather. First, he washes the hides with clean water before immersing them in a mixture of lime, sodium, and water to remove the hair. Next, for fleshing, they are immersed in another drum to which he adds various chemicals and rotates it for five minutes each hour for 72 hours. (The working hours of a child engaged in this process vary from 8 hours to 17 hours. After one child's work shift, another child will continue his work.)

Fleshing

Bazlu is 17 years old and works at Islambag, Puran in Dhaka. He works at a raw hide collection and processing shop. After collecting raw hides from the slaughterhouse, he washes them with clean water to remove blood, mud, and other contaminants. He then removes any remaining meat and fat from the hides by hand with a small knife.

Enayet is 17 years old and works at Lalbagh, Puran in Dhaka. He works at a raw hide collection shop. According to him, fleshing removes meat and fat residues from the flesh side of the skin. He uses a sharp knife or blade to do this. He also salts the raw hides. He sells the fat

he removes to customers, and feeds the meat scraps to stray dogs.

Noman is 17 years old and works at Harindhara, Jhawchar Union in Savar Upazila. His job is to flesh raw hides. He immerses the salted hides in a drum full of a mixture of water and chemicals. He soaks them for 12 hours so that all tissue, meat, and fat residue are removed. He then removes the hides from the drum and washes them with fresh water.

Zaman is ten years old and works at Gajmahal in Hazaribagh. His job is to process raw hides. First, he immerses 20 pieces of raw hide in a barrel and adds a five-litre mixture of acid, water, *Krug* (a kind of chemical), *Kushum Rong* (a kind of dye). Following this, he and some other boys take it in turns to continuously rotate the barrel by hand before removing the hides. Throughout this process, a foul smell emits from the hides.

Fleshing and shaving using machinery

Saiful is 17 years old and works at Hemayetpur in Savar. He works in a big tannery where modern technologies are used. He operates an automated machine which de-fleshes and shaves unwanted meat and fat residue from the hides. After several days of salting, he brings the hides for fleshing and shaving. He lays the hides individually in a tray. The tray is automatically pulled forward through a passage where a sharp blade cuts the unwanted meat and flesh from the hide.

Monir, an orphan, is 15 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate in Hemayetpur, Savar. His job is de-fleshing raw hides using a large machine. First, he removes the blade from the machine and sharpens it using a stone. He replaces the blade and starts the machine, laying the hides on a big tray. The hides gradually pass through the machine and the meat and fat residues are removed. This process enables a hide to be stored for longer: leaving the meat and fat on the hide accelerates putrefaction.

Bating

Tofazzel is 17 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Jhawchar, Hemayetpur, Savar. His job is part of the bating process. Bating makes the hides pliable and prepares them for tanning. It involves removing the roots of hairs and other unwanted materials from the hides. Tofazzel mixes different types of chemicals with water and then puts the hides in a big drum. He then rotates the drum for five minutes every hour, for six hours. He removes the hides from the drum and sends them for the wet blue process, or tanning.

Deliming

Yousuf is 16 years old and works at Harindhara, Jhawchar, Hemayetpur, Savar. His job is to delime pelts. This process follows liming and removes alkali from the hides and results in a de-swelling of the fibres.

Rasel is 16 years old and works at Shayampur Bazar, Harindhara, Savar. His job takes place after the liming process, when the hides are immersed in another drum, in a mixture of water and different types of chemicals. The drum is rotated for nine to ten hours and then emptied ready for the next process.

Pickling

Mostak is 16 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Hemayetpur, Savar. His job is pickling raw hides. He immerses the hides in water mixed with chemicals for four hours and then removes them.

Moktar is 17 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Jamjam City, Hemayetpur, Savar, where his father brought him to work. His job is pickling raw hides. This process follows washing, soaking, dehairing, fleshing, and bating. A mixture of water, acid, and salt is made, in which the hides are immersed for four hours and then taken out for further processing.

Staking

Kislu is 16 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Hemayetpur, Savar. His job is staking leather. According to him, staking is a mechanical process that increases the pliability and softness of leather. The hide travels through a machine on a conveyor belt and is pounded by several thumb-sized, rounded pins that stretch the fibres in every direction, thus separating the fibres and softening the leather.

Tanning

Meraj is 17 years old. He trims the uneven edges of wet blue leather, a task locally known as *Sata Kata*. After trimming the leather, he folds pieces and carries them on his head to the drying ground or roof. Here they are spread out to dry in the sun. He returns in the evening to collect the leather and carry it back to the factory.

Reaz trims the edges of wet blue leather and puts the pieces in a drum to dry. After drying he puts them in another drum to mix with a colour. Then he spreads them out in the sun for four to five hours to dry. It is then put in another drum to be softened.

Hasib is 15 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Jhawchar Union, Hemayetpur, Savar. His job is to tan leather. According to him, tanning (the process that turns raw hide into leather) makes the leather more durable and less susceptible to decomposition. Hasib immerses the hides in a drum containing a mixture of water and chromium. After 24 hours he removes them to complete the tanning process.

Shahin is 17 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Hemayetpur, Savar. He has several jobs (unloading hides when delivered to the factory, the fleshing process), but his main job is in producing wet blue leather. He loads the hides in a drum and adds a mixture of water and chemicals, particularly chromium. After three days of processing, the hides have been turned into leather.

Tipu is 17 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Harindhara, Hemayetpur. He works in different parts of the leather production process: soaking, fleshing, liming, deliming, and tanning. For example, he mixes chemicals with water and rotates the various drums.

Shaving

Rasel is 16 years old. According to him, through the liming process the hide is dehaired and the pelts are separated. He also works in the fleshing and deliming of hides. Later, chemicals are used to remove odours and dirt from the hides and to make them soft. He then folds the hides according to size and stacks them (known locally as *laat dewa*). The children carry the stacks of hides to be dried in the sun for 20 to 30 minutes. Then they shave the leather.

Selling chemicals

Jahangir is 14 years old. He works as a salesman with a chemical store at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He sells chemicals in liquid and powder forms and mixes chemicals for customers. According to him, he sells sodium, lime, busan, formic acid, and others.

Manik is 16 years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He mixes chemicals and dyes with water for dying wet blue and crust leather, as part of the glove-making process.

Selim mixes chemicals and colours with water in a big bucket. After immersion he removes the leather and transports it by van to a nearby ground for drying. He lays out the leather and secures it with nails (toggling), and then brings it back to the factory after drying.

Milling

Aleya is ten years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. She washes leather with water following the milling process. She then takes the leather to a nearby open space for drying, and carries it back to the factory afterwards.

Rokeya is 11 years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. Her job is to mill leather for making gloves. Water, soda, acid, and other types of chemicals are mixed in a big bucket and the pieces of leather are added to it. Rokeya uses her feet to mix or 'tumble' the pieces of leather to soften it. She then washes the leather with fresh water and carries it up four storeys to the roof to dry, and brings it back after drying.

Drying (in the sun)

Ebadul is 12 years old and lives at Balurmath, Hazaribagh. His job is to dry wet leather in the sun. He pegs out the leather using nails on a piece of flat wood. Sometimes he removes fur from the tails of cattle, sorting the fur by colour.

Drying (by hanging)

Shahjahan is 16 years old and works at Hemayetpur, Savar. He works with his father at the tannery, drying leather using the setting technique. He mentioned that in Savar, drying techniques include sammying, setting, hang drying, vacuum drying, and toggle drying. He said that sammying and setting are used to reduce the moisture content mechanically before another technique is used to dry the leather further. After drying, the leather is known as crust. Crust is a tradable product.

Measuring

Rubel is 17 years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His main job is to measure pieces of leather using a machine. He also selects the appropriate pieces for export, to be trimmed and measured with an anti-cutter. After measuring, he folds and packs them for export.

Dyeing

Noyon is 11 years old. His main task is to spray finished leather with coloured dye, but he also works in milling, mixing chemicals, and drying and trimming leather. In addition, he fetches tea and snacks from local teashops for the factory owners several times a day.

Munni is 14 years old. Her main job is to mix chemicals and coloured dyes (red, blue, yellow, black, etc.) in a drum to which she adds about 200 pieces of leather. She uses her feet to stamp on the leather (milling) for about one hour to help the leather absorb the chemicals and dye. Afterwards carries the wet leather to the roof to dry in the sun. After drying, she takes it back to the factory.

Shahid is 14 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Hemayetpur, Savar. He works at a leather dyeing unit. When he arrives, he sweeps the floor before mixing the *yam* and *polish* chemicals. Then he lays out goat hides on a bamboo scaffold (*mancha*), and sprays them with the chemical mixture. The *mancha* can take 42 goat hides at a time.

Momin is almost 18 years old (17 years and nine months) and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Hemayetpur, Savar. He uses different chemicals for dyeing leather; for example, *PEU, mymuja, ODP, thanda* (cold) soda, *Bangla* soda, *hyphu,* ammonia, sulfate, *bushan, GLS*, and dye. Once the dye is mixed, he uses it to dye the leather.

Rokon is 16 years old. He mixes different types of chemicals in a drum and then immerses several goat hides and stamps on them (milling or *recum*) before washing them. Sometimes he carries the wet hides to the roof, where he lays them out and pegs (toggling) them to a piece of wood to dry in the sun.

Joynal is 16 years old and works at Jhawchar, Hazaribagh. His main task is to dye the crust leather. He prepares a mixture of various chemicals and other materials (leather binder, filler, wax, pigment, lacquer, water). To dye up to 1,000sq. ft of crust leather, he needs eight litres of the mixture. Before spraying, he takes the crust leather to a nearby factory for softening using a machine (known locally as 'hear cell'). Softening improves the quality of the colour when dyed. He then brings the leather back to the dyeing factory and sprays it with the dye he has mixed. He uses a variety of colours. After drying in the sun, the leather is used to make shoes, bags, belts, etc.

Belayet is 17 years old living in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He adds the leather to a container of colour, chemicals, and water. He then carries the dyed leather outside to dry in the sun, and pegs it to a piece of wood using nails.

Dyeing finished leather

Amir is 16 years old and living in Balur Math, Hazribagh. He works in the finishing process unit. He dyes leather shoes.

Trimming wet blue leather

Razu is 14 years old and living in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His work is known locally as *Shata Kata*, which involves cutting the uneven edges off wet blue leather.

Manufacturing finished leather products

Shahjahan is 16 years old and works at Hemayetpur, Savar. He works with his father in leather drying, through the setting technique. He mentioned that apart from working in drying, he also works in finished leather production, using modern technologies. The finished leather is then used by leather goods producers to make different leather products.

Transporting crust and finished leather

Barek is 17 years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His main job is loading and unloading vehicles at the factory. In addition, he works in leather drying – laying out the wet leather on the ground and pegging (toggling) the pieces to a piece of wood. In the afternoon he brings the dry leather inside and folds it ready for the next stage.

Embossing

Mehedi is 16 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Hemayetpur, Savar. After hanging the leather on hooks or over bars to dry at room temperature, he collects it for embossing. 'Iron embossing' is a three-step process: (1) he softens and cleans the leather with a vibration staking machine; (2) he performs three different processes using three different plates; and (3) he uses a hydraulic leather embossing machine to produce embossed leather.

Neutralising

Habib is 16 years old and works at Harindhara, Hemayetpur, Savar, Dhaka. He works in neutralising

leather, a process which removes residual chemicals and prepares the leather for further processing and finishing. First, he immerses the leather into a drum and washes it with clean water. Second, he adds different types of chemicals, including sodium, and rotates the drum for about two hours.

Re-dyeing leather

Hemayet is 16 years old and works at Savar Tannery Industrial Estate, Jhawchar, Hemayetpur, Savar. His job is to dye leather different colours as required by the buyer. He also carries sacks of chemicals, on his head, between the chemical shop, the storeroom and the dye-mixing drum.

Re-tanning

Muksed is 16 years old and lives in Horindara, Hemayetpur. He works with wet blue leather in the re-tanning or pulling process. He weighs the leather so that he can measure the chemicals accurately. For 100kg of leather, he requires the following weight of chemicals (local names are given): *LD* (10kg), *chrome* (25kg), *chrome synten* (15kg), *DR6* (20kg), *JLS* (5kg), *RF* (5kg), *baikaf* (10kg). At first, he puts the wet leather in an electronic drum with the *LD*, and then washes it with clean water. The leather is then mixed with the *chrome*, *chrome synten*, and *DR6* for one hour in an electronic machine. Next, the leather is mixed with the *JLS* for 30 minutes, and the *RF* and *baikaf* for one and a half hours. After that he keeps the leather wet.

Collection, sorting by size, and selling of waste leather materials

Hanif is 15 years old and works in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He works with a small business enterprise, or small shop. The owner collects off-cuts from factories and manufacturers, which he buys at a bulk rate. Hanif brings the leather to their shop and sorts it by size (e.g. *gorda mal* grades I, II, III, and IV). Though small pieces are considered waste material by large producers, they are used as raw material for producers of small items such as moneybags and key rings.

Disposal of waste leather

Razib is 13 years old and works in Trisfoot, Gajmahal, Dhaka. His main task is to sweep the floor and gather waste leather and other materials. He takes this material to a nearby canal and disposes of it.

Manufacturing leather goods from finished, crust, and wet blue leather

Manufacturing gloves

Riya is 15 years old and works in Hazaribagh. Her job is to turn gloves 'right side out' after sewing.

Amin is 16 years old and works as a helper at a glove-making factory in Hazaribagh. He folds pieces of leather after cutting them with a machine.

Rini is 14 years old and works as a sewing machine operator at a glove-making factory. She assembles the gloves and sews in the lining.

Borsa is 14 years old. She performs various tasks in glove-making. She uses different types of leather for the upper and bottom parts of the glove, and crushed leather for the inner part. To prepare the leather for sewing she softens it manually (milling) by stamping on it or beating it with her hands. She cuts the leather to size and folds it into a bundle ready for sewing.

Bristi Akter works as a sewing machine operator at a glove-making factory. She assembles and sews gloves. After sewing she cuts the excess thread and packs the gloves in polythene.

Momen is 11 years old. He trims excess leather off the gloves with sharp scissors after the sewing process.

Zakir is 13 years old. He does whatever task the *mahajan* (owner of the production unit) orders him to. This includes attaching pieces of lace with adhesive, cutting off excess threads after sewing, dyeing wet blue leather, drying leather, and folding it.

Robin is 14 years old. Robin's main job is to cut leather to size for glove-making using a machine with a sharp dice (or knife). He also cuts the excess thread after the gloves are sewn. After the dyeing process he carries leather to a nearby field to dry, pegging (toggling) it out in the sun, and returning later to carry it back to the factory.

Keya is eight years old and works in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. She works in multiple areas of the glove manufacturing industry. She uses a coloured pencil to draw out the shape of the glove before cutting the leather pieces with scissors or an anti-cutter. She sometimes works in leather dyeing – working with dye, chemicals, and water. She also softens the leather with her feet in the milling process. In addition, she attaches torn parts of leather with adhesives.

Roksana is 12 years old and lives in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. She works at Helena Tannery at Hazaribagh. She assembles gloves and sometimes cuts the extra thread after sewing.

Shamim is 12 years old and lives in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He makes gloves and cuts excess thread from the gloves. Sometimes he sews a piece of cloth to the gloves. In addition, he dries wet leather in the sun and loads/unloads materials.

Hafizul is 13 years old and works in Balurmath, Beribadh, Hazaribagh. He works in glove-making. After making the gloves he turns the glove inside out and cuts excess thread from gloves. After that, he dries the gloves in the sun and sometimes dyes the finished gloves. Sometimes he also sews leather.

Morium is 15 years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He works in glove-making, especially in sewing gloves, cutting off excess threads with simple tools after sewing.

Manufacturing travel bags

Rohim is 12 years old and works in bag manufacturing in Hazaribagh. His job is to glue two pieces of leather together to make the upper part of a bag.

Mili is 17 years old and works in bag manufacturing in Hazaribagh. Her job involves sewing across the side of a bag.

Nilu is 14 years old. She bends a piece of leather and attaches it to the body of the bag with adhesive to make the strap.

Mira is 12 years old. She works as a helper in a travel bag factory. She folds pieces of leather and carries leather to a nearby field for drying, bringing them back again in the afternoon.

Fazlu is 15 years old and lives in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He performs multiple tasks in the production of trolly bags. He stitches the front and back pieces, cuts the lower part of the bag, and makes the pocket inside (known locally as *lailing potti*). He attaches the zip and uses glue and other adhesives to harden the leather. He attaches four rings to the side of the bag. Also, he attaches rings onto the belt, which is locally known as 'refitting'. In addition, he fixes the rope of the handle and then stitches them using a sewing machine.

Footwear

Nokib is 12 years old and works in Hazaribagh. He uses a machine to cut leather to size for the soles of shoes.

Mobarek is ten years old. He cleans dust from the newly manufactured shoes using a towel. He also polishes and packs shoes.

Sagor is 16 years old. His main job is to attach the rubber sole to the upper part of the shoe. He spreads glue on the rubber sole and then holds the sole in front of a machine emitting very hot air. The hot air softens the glue and rubber sole, making it easier to stick the sole to the upper. He presses the two parts together using simple tools. Then he sends the shoe to the sewing machine operator for stitching. Some shoes and boots require a wooden heel to be attached. Again, he uses adhesive to fix the heel to the sole, securing it with a nail while the adhesive sets. Later, he removes the nail with pliers.

Forkan is 13 years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His jobs are hand-stitching boots and gluing soles to the upper part of the shoe. It should be mentioned here that he has become addicted to the fumes given off by the adhesive and regularly abuses *Dandy* (inhaling fumes of the glue from a polythene bag) during his leisure time.

Farida is 17 years old. She is a home-based worker and does piecework for a fixed rate. She sews the upper part of the shoe, fixes eyelets onto the shoe, and attaches the sole to the upper part of the shoe with glue.

Momena is 14 years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. Her job is to attach the sole to the upper part of the shoe. She also fixes eyelets to the shoe before packing the shoes in polythene bags or paper boxes.

Shika is 15 years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. She fixes eyelets onto boots and also hand stitches beads onto children's shoes.

Rifat is 16 years old and works in Balurmath, Hazaribagh. His job is to prepare the upper part of the shoe. He cuts pieces of leather to size to make back belts. Then he sews together the outside and inside cover of the upper part of the shoe. He also fixes magic tape or a push button onto the back belt of the shoe.

Putul is 11 years old and lives in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. Her job is pasting the shoe insole. After pasting, at 11am she takes the insoles to dry in the sun, then at 2pm she collects them. Her other jobs include cleaning the factory,

bringing tea for the owner, unloading materials from vehicles, and anything else the owner asks of her.

Mostafa is 17 years old and lives in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His job is in making shoe soles. First, he softens the leather part of the sole then attaches it to the middle and upper sole, locally known as *fibar*. Then he attaches the insole to the upper part of the shoe.

Halima is 17 years old and lives in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. Her job is in making the upper sole. She does multiple tasks in the process including: sewing joints, folding, fixing eyelets, labelling the shoe, stitching (known locally as *polling*), and cleaning the shoe (locally known as *lailing*).

Keramot is 14 years old and lives in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His job is attaching different pieces of the shoe using adhesive. He also attaches the sole, helps with the packaging, and cuts excess thread from the shoe.

Hakim is ten years old and lives in Balurmath, Hazaribagh. His job is in packaging shoes. He folds the shoe's sole and attaches the shoelaces. Also, he organises the shoes at the factory.

Moni is 16 years old and lives in Boubazar, Dhaka. Her main task is to cut excess thread from ladies' shoes. She uses a machine that emits hot air to burn off excess thread. Other tasks include gluing leather to leather for making shoes, and packaging finished shoes. Besides these activities she also makes decorations for ladies' shoes (e.g. flowers), and sets them with pearls or stones.

Zobeda is 12 years old and works in Shikaritola, Hazaribagh. She makes insoles. First, she cuts the wet blue leather to size with scissors or an anti-cutter. Then she glues the insole pieces together to make a thicker insole. Next, she dyes the insoles in a bucket of water and brown dye. She then takes them onto the roof to dry in the sun, bringing them back inside after three to four hours. Finally, she packages them in packs of 50 to sell to clients.

Rumana is 16 years old and works in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. Her job is attaching eyelets and different types of ripit pins to shoes such as moccasins.

Niam is 15 years old and lives in Balurmath, Beribadh, Hazaribagh. His primary job is to attach the sole to the upper part of the shoe using adhesive with the aid of a hot air machine to soften the glue. Then he puts pressure on the shoe, so that the glue adheres properly. The shoe is then left to cool. His other task is to remove the outer part of the shoe from metal moulds.

Moly is 16 years old and lives in Mach Para, Matuail. Her job is to attach leather to the upper belt of the shoes.

Laboni is 15 years old and lives in Matuail, Dhaka. Her job is to check the finished shoes to be sure the sewing has been done properly. She also packs the shoes, filling around 150 to 200 cartons of new shoes daily.

Khairul is 16 years old and works in Balurmath, Jhawchar, Hazaribagh. He attaches the rubber sole to the leather upper with a machine.

Monzu is 17 years old and lives in Abdullahpur, Dhaka. His job is applying adhesive to the sole. First, he cleans the sole carefully and then spreads hot glue all over the surface of the sole.

Towhid is 16 years old and lives in Bhairab, Kishoreganj. His job is pasting (applying adhesive). First, he applies the gum (*pitto* pasting) by hand to the sole before using a fire station to burn it. Next, he spreads gum (*FR* pasting) over the surface of the upper part (*fiber*) of the shoe and attaches the sole. Finally, he puts pressure on the shoe with a heavy tool so that the glue adheres properly.

Sattar is 17 years old and lives in Bhairab, Kishoreganj. He works as a sewing machine operator, stitching the sides of the upper belt of shoes.

Manufacture of moneybags

Rumi is 16 years old. His job is to cut leather into pieces to make moneybags.

Farid is 17 years old and performs multiple tasks in the manufacture of moneybags in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. First, he cuts out the different pieces of the bag. He then attaches the pieces together using adhesive, and sewing by hand, and with a machine. Finally, he attaches the zip and buttons.

Manufacture of leather jackets

Badal is 14 years old. He works as a sewing operator in jacket manufacturing. His role is to stitch different pieces of leather to make a jacket.

Litu is 14 years old. His job is to make multiple different parts of a jacket; for example, the front, yoke, upper and lower coping, left and right sleeves, cup (bust-shaping aspects, e.g. armpit side edge, etc.), collar, ham sewing,

placard, button/zipper plate, back part, lining, front pocket, left pocket, right pocket, runner, etc. He also makes parts of large travel bags and ladies' bags at the same factory. For example, the upper part, zip, pasting, fixing round ring, upper, side upper, under upper, runner, sewing different parts of a bag, fixing ring of a belt, etc.

Yasin is seven years old and lives in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He works as a shoelace maker. After making the shoelaces he attaches them to the shoes. He also works as a sewing machine operator for jacket making. Other tasks he performs include bringing refreshments (e.g. tea, cigarettes, water, etc.) for his employer. He also carries his employer's daily living essentials to his house.

Popy is 13 years old and works in Jhawchar Bazar, Hazaribagh. Her job is first to make paper patterns for different size shoes, and then to cut the leather according to the pattern. Then she uses adhesive to attach the pieces of leather.

Ead is 16 years old and lives in Bhairab, Kishoreganj. His job is pasting. First, he uses adhesive to join two types of leather to make the upper part of the shoe (*dudh* pasting). Next, he applies a type of print to the leather. Finally, he cuts the leather to size and stitches the pieces to improve the finish.

Helal is 17 years old and lives in Bhairab, Kishoreganj. His job is to stitch the upper sole of a shoe.

Rafikul is 14 years old and lives in Bhairab, Kishoreganj. His job is to attach the sole to the upper part of the shoe. He uses a kind of gas to attach the sole with the upper and then applies pressure using a tool called *longa*. This helps the two pieces to adhere properly.

Kamran is 14 years old and lives in Purbo Para. His job is making the upper part of the shoe. He uses a metal template to cut the leather to the correct shape. Next, he trims the upper portion of the shoe with scissors and stitches the edges.

Tushar is 16 years old and lives in Bepari Para. His job is to attach the shoe's insole. He uses a sample to cut the piece that sits between the insole and the upper sole (called the *fibar*). Then he glues the *fibar* to the sole.

Mohidul is 17 years old and lives in Moddhom Para. His job is to attach the shoe's sole. First, he trims the sole to remove excess leather. Then he applies glue inside the sole and attaches it to the upper.

Rashid is 17 years old and lives in Bhairab, Kishoreganj. His job is to soften leather using a hot air gun so that a shoe-maker can use that piece of leather for the soles of shoes.

Joynal is 17 years old and lives in Bhoirob. His job is to attach the upper part of the shoe to the rubber sole, performing several tasks within this process. He buys the sample, known locally as *sid*, for Tk.270 (US$3.2) per piece, and uses it to cut the sole to size. He softens the leather (known locally as *solution*) and applies glue (pasting). He cuts the *fibar* (the piece that sits between the insole and the upper sole) and trims the edges. Finally, he attaches the sole to the shoe and trims the edges.

Manufacturing belts

Kamal is 16 years old and lives and works in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He works in belt-making, in several micro processes. First, he cuts a strap from semi-chrome leather (hide tanned through natural processes, and then re-tanned with chromium salts) and trims it to size. Next, he applies adhesive to the belt before cutting another piece of the same size and shape. Finally, he presses the two pieces together until they adhere together before trimming, dyeing, punching holes, affixing the buckles, and packing in a polythene packet.

Liakat is 13 years old and works in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His job is to make holes in belts using a small leather punch machine.

Manufacturing ladies' bags

Joya is 12 years old and lives and works in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. Her main duty is to attach the D-ring to the strap on ladies' bags. In addition, she attaches zips using special tools, fixes the zip runner, cuts off excess threads, and sweeps the floor at the end of the day.

Manufacturing musical instruments

Miron is 17 years old and lives in Shakhari Bazar. His job is to make drums, one of the most popular musical instruments in Bangladesh. He makes the outer shell with bamboo and then attaches leather to it. Then he attaches the body part of the drum. Finally, he tightens the leather using rope and attaches rings in the middle of the drum (known locally *kather chari*). He also tightens binder ropes using iron rings.

Debash is 18 years old and lives in Shakharibazar, Islampur. His job is to make the outer shells of drums. First, he attaches leather to the body of the drum. He then attaches ropes, which are mainly made of leather, around bamboo rings to tighten the leather.

Alok is 15 years old and lives in Shakharibazar, Islampur. He makes *tabla-baya* (musical instruments) and drums. To make the drums (*tabla*), he cuts out circles of leather, which have been measured and marked out beforehand, using a sharp knife. Next, he uses glue to attach the leather to the instruments, and pins the edges of the leather to stretch and secure it whilst the glue dries. Then he wraps a metal ring in leather and stitches it to the edges of the *tabla-baya*. Finally, he ties the edges with a thick rope which is used to hang the drum.

Nimai is 12 years old and lives in Shakharibazar, Islampur. His job is in *tabla*-making. First, he cuts small circles of goat's leather with a sharp knife to make the edges of the *tabla*. Then he places a metal ring at the centre of the leather, and applies glue and heavy pressure to securely attach it. After that he makes the outer belt of the *tabla* from cow's leather and tightens it using a thick rope.

Sasanka is 17 years old and lives Shakharibazar. His job is making a very popular musical instrument called a harmonium. He attaches leather to the bellows of the harmonium.

Govinda is 14 years old and works in Shakharibazar, Old Dhaka, Kotwali Thanan, Dhaka. His job is making harmoniums. He makes the outer and inner bellows of the harmonium from leather. The bellows supply air to the reeds inside. He also makes seals for the air holes, positioned above each reed, from leather. These seals act like valves. He uses adhesive to attach the leather pieces to the instrument.

Dilip is 13 years old and works in Shakharibazar, Puran, Dhaka. He works in manufacturing drums. Each drum has two drumheads made of leather – either goat, cow, or buffalo. The drumhead is placed over the opening of the drum, which is then held in place by turning screws called 'tension rods'. The head's tension can be adjusted by loosening or tightening the rods.

Manufacturing diary covers, notebooks, and leather folders

Mohammod Shakil is 17 years old and lives in Gopibagh. His job is to make diary covers, notebooks, and leather folders. First, he puts the metal mould (or template) on the leather and cuts the leather according to the shape. Then he stitches the leather and uses glue to attach it to the diary cover, notebook, or folder.

Leather book binding

Nurul is 17 years old and lives in Gopibagh, RK Machine Road. His job is in book binding. First, he cuts the leather to size, applies glue to attach the hardboard, and then stitches it. Then he attaches the paper to the cover, also using glue. He also cuts the paper using a cutting machine.

Manufacturing *Jaynamaz* (prayer mats)

Ekram is 14 years old and lives in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He works as a *jaynamaz* or prayer mat maker. First, he cuts the leather to size and then applies a design before printing the design onto the mat.

Manufacturing jewellery boxes

Malek is 15 years old and lives in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His job is to attach leather to the surface of jewellery boxes.

Marketing leather goods

Trading/marketing footwear

Atik is 17 years old and lives in Bhairab, Kishoreganj. He sells shoes in the local market, after collecting them from the manufacturers. He carries the shoes in a basket on his head; others carry the basket on their shoulders. He receives Tk.25 (US$0.3) commission for every dozen pairs of shoes he sells. Depending on the availability of work, he could sell 20–30 dozen pairs per month.

Mohsin is 16 years old and works in Gulistan selling shoes. He buys the shoes from Fulbaria Market and then sells them on in Gulistan.

Selling belts

Mukul is 15 years old and works in Gulistan selling belts. He buys the belts by the dozen from the big market in Gulistan. One dozen Chinese-made belts cost Tk.1,800 (US$21.2), whereas locally made belts are Tk.1,200 (US$14.1) per dozen. He can sell them on for Tk.250 (US$2.9) and Tk.150 (US$1.8) each, respectively. He sets up a display and calls loudly to people, encouraging them to buy. Some days he might sell ten Chinese-made

belts and 15 locally made belts, but on other days he could sell none.

Selling moneybags

Zabbar is 17 years old and works in Gulistan. He sells moneybags at the roadside. He buys moneybags in bulk at trade prices from Gulistan trade market. He sells them on, making between Tk.200 (US$2.4) and Tk.300 (US$3.5) profit per day.

Selling shoes

Khalek is 11 years old and works on Gopibagh Bazaar Road, Dhaka. He is a street vendor selling second-hand shoes from a bamboo basket. They are mostly stolen (e.g. from a mosque or public transport), or thrown away and found in a dustbin or rubbish dump.

Selling leather keyrings

Harun is 17 years old and works in Gulistan selling leather keyrings in the market. He buys them at a low price from the supplier and sells them on for profit.

Business and production activities related to the leather sector

Selling meat – beef and mutton

Hasinur is 17 years old and works in Kaptan Bazar, Gulistan, Dhaka. His work involves flaying cattle hides, and chopping and selling meat. He uses a knife and a *chapati* (a heavy, sharp knife) to cut the meat into pieces.

Khokon is 17 years old and works in Kaptan Bazar, Nowabpur, Dhaka. His work involves flaying cattle hides after slaughter and cutting meat into pieces.

Manufacturing boxes (shoe packaging)

Kamal is 13 years old and lives on Moylar Road, Jatra Bari. First, he prints the company label onto the paper, known locally as 'flute paper'. He cuts the paper to size to fit the 'dying machine' and nails it using a 'tinning machine'. Then he folds and glues the paper into a box shape.

Sorting tail hair (brush production)

Suraiya is ten years old and works at a tail-processing house in Balurmath, Hazaribagh. The slaughterhouses sell cattle tails to tail-processing houses. First, Suraiya immerses the tails in salt water and leaves them for three days. Next, she separates the hair from the tails by hand before sorting them by colour. Then she washes them in water, dries them in the sun, and then immerses them in liquid chemicals and dye. Once dyed, they are again dried in the sun. The owner sells the hair to makers of shaving brushes or paintbrushes.

Mahmuda is 16 years old and lives at Boubazar, Hazaribagh. Her job is the process of collecting and sorting cow tail hair by colour. First, she mixes chemicals with boiling hot water in a big pool. After boiling the tail, she picks and sorts the hair by colour, i.e. black and white, and then carries it outside to dry for two or three hours. After that she ties the tail hair and puts the bundles in a sack.

Collection of hair for fuel (*bhushi* for boilers)

Hasan is 12 years old and works in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. He works with a production unit that produces glue from hide off-cuts and other parts of the animal, such as the head and ears. The owner of the unit buys these pieces at a bulk rate and Hasan loads them into a small boiler. After boiling for two to three hours, the leather melts and releases a thick, sticky liquid, which exits the boiler through an outlet at the bottom. He collects this in a container and pours it into a tray so it can be dried in the sun. The resulting glue is sold in powder form in sacks of 20kg or 10kg. A by-product of this process is the hair, which comes loose from the skin during boiling, and Hasan collects this and lays it out to dry. It is then used as fuel for the boiler, along with off-cuts of dried crust leather.

Glue production

Nurul is 12 years old and lives in Balurmath, Beribadh, Hazaribagh. He puts small off-cuts of raw hide (from goat or cow skulls and ears) in an iron drum or boiler to boil for making glue. He also works in the production of *sirisa* paper (sandpaper), made using the glue produced from the off-cuts, pulverised glass, and strong paper or card.

Tarik is 17 years old and works at Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. His job is making *siris* (glue) from off-cuts of cattle legs. The hides are salted after flaying, so his first step is to desalt the hides by immersing them in a drum of lime water. He then hangs them to enable the water to drain off. Next, he immerses the hides in a boiler for five to nine hours, after which the *siris* – a thick, sticky liquid – is released and leaves the boiler via an outlet at the bottom. Tarik collects this and pours it into a tray to dry in the

sun, which takes three to four days. Examples of how the *siris* is used include: as an adhesive in making shoes, bags, belts, or moneybags; as an ingredient in paint and varnish; in paint for textile-printing; in making other gums and adhesives; and in cotton-making to strengthen the yarn. Hasan also collects the waste hides and lays them out to dry. These are used as fuel for the boilers.

Fish and cattle feed production

Zemima is 16 years old and works in Gajmahal, Hazaribagh. Her job is in producing poultry and fish feed from hide off-cuts. First, she boils the off-cuts in a big vessel for a period of time and then removes the pieces and lays them to dry in the sun. Next, she uses a grinding machine to turn the hides into a powder, known locally as *shutki*. Finally, she packs the *shutki* in sacks to be sold as poultry and fish feed.

Crushing cattle bones

Mozammel is 16 years old and lives in Matuail. His job is to carry and break down bones from cattle using a machine. The pieces are used to produce fish and cattle feed.

Cleaning cattle intestines

Imran is 14 years old and lives on Moyla Road, Jatrabari. His job is to wash cow intestines (*Shatpalla*). First, he cleans out any remaining cow dung before soaking the intestines in salt water for three hours, which removes the odour. A small intestine needs 2kg of salt. Next, he cleans off any remaining fat before storing them in a pool of water. Finally, he washes the intestines with salt a second time before cleaning thoroughly and packing them for export to Thailand, Bangkok, or Singapore.

Fatima is 16 years old and lives in Mridha Bari, Jatrabari. Her job is to wash cow intestines (*shatpalla*). First, she soaks them in a tank of salt water for a day. Next, she cleans off any remaining fat using a sharp knife. Finally, she cleans the intestines again before sending them for packing.

Repairing umbrellas

Rimon is 14 years old and works in Merul, Jhilpar. His job is to attach two small pieces of leather to the top of an umbrella. One piece is attached from below, and one above, to strengthen the cloth. This process is known locally as *chatir tak lagan*.

Composting cow dung

Barek is 16 years old and works in Konapara, Demra. His job is to make compost from cow dung. First, he dries it in the sun. Next, he puts 50kg of dung into a drum to which he adds two litres of water per day for three months. Next, he adds a chemical (known locally as 'waste compost') and molasses, which quickly improves the quality of the compost. Finally, he sells the compost.

Screen printing

Mizan is 15 years old and works in Muslim Para, Bhairab. His job is to print a company logo onto the upper sole of the shoe. He does this using a metal printing block or template (known locally as 'plate') of the company's logo.

Producing soap

Sarwar is 14 years old and works in Babu Bazar, Balur Ghat, Keraniganj. He works at a soap factory, melting fat to make soap. First, he cleans any dirt from the fat and puts it in a pan on the stove, stirring it whilst it melts. Once the fat is melted, he stores the liquid in a drum.

Collecting and processing bull genitals

Lokman is 14 years old and works in Moylar Rasta, Matuail, Jatrabari. His job is to collect bull genitals. First, he removes the fat before washing and drying them in the sun on an iron stand (*lohar akra*). These are then stored in a factory. According to the informant, these processed genitals are used in manufacturing biodegradable surgical suture thread (catgut).

Repairing shoes

Krishna is 17 years old and works in Sayedabad, Dhaka South City Corporation, Dhaka. He is a cobbler (*Muchi*[10]). He repairs shoes using a variety of techniques such as sewing, nailing, and patching torn or worn areas.

Nasir is 16 years old and works in West Ulon, Rampura, Dhaka North City Corporation, Dhaka. He repairs shoes by sewing, nailing, and patching torn or worn areas. He also polishes shoes.

10 A caste-based, hereditary occupational group who flay and preserve hides, hand-stitch shoes, repair shoes by sewing or patching, sew soles (especially on old shoes), sew soles to the upper of the shoe, etc.

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CLARISSA works by co-developing with stakeholders practical options for children to avoid engagement in the worst forms of child labour in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Nepal.

The participatory processes which underpin the programme are designed to generate innovation from the ground which can sustainably improve the lives of children and their families.

The programme's outputs are similarly co-designed and collaboratively produced to enhance local ownership of the knowledge, and to ensure that our research uptake and engagement strategy is rooted in the direct experience of the people most affected on the ground.