

Role of SGFI in Empowerment of Children-A Case of Identification and Rehabilitation of Child Labour

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About SGFI...

25 Sports Goods Manufacturers in 1998 voluntarily decided to have a Monitoring System in place to ensure Prevention & Rehabilitation of child labour in Sports Industry.



...ensuring children their child hood

These SME exporters of sports goods joined hands together voluntarily and created the Sports Goods Foundation of India (SGFI) in 1998 as an NGO. It is a non-profit making organisation committed to the prevention and rehabilitation of child labour in the sporting goods industry. Today SGFI membership consists of 33 manufacturers and exporters of footballs/volleyballs/rugby. These members are responsible for approximately 95% of the total exports of these inflatable balls. All members of SGFI are voluntarily contributing a fixed percentage of their exports of inflatable balls every month. Under the guidance and cooperation of agencies such as the WFSGI (World Federation of Sporting Goods Industry) and UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), the SGFI identifies child labour and helps children to phase out of ball stitching work as quickly as possible, without causing any economic hardship to the families concerned, and provides them with educational and other opportunities. SGFI initiatives include the monitoring of home stitching, an education programme, health promotion, Self Help Groups (SHGs), and the recycling of underutilised goods within communities etc.

Sports Goods Industry in India...

Sporting Goods Industry in India is spread over the length and breadth of the country. There are major manufacturing concentrations in and around Jalandhar, Delhi, Agra, Moradabad, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai. The Indian sports goods industry has expanded to include the areas of Meerut, (Uttar Pradesh) and Gurgaon, (Haryana). Most of India's sports goods are exported to the United Kingdom, The United States of America, Germany, France and Australia.

The Sports Goods Industry cluster of Jalandhar is a unique example of transplanted cluster, where a major segment of an existing cluster shifted lock stock and barrel (the entrepreneurs, the workers and the raw material suppliers) to a new location due to political division of the country in the year 1947. The origin of the Sports Goods Industry in India can be traced back to Sialkot (Now in Pakistan) that was the sports goods production center in pre-partition days. The Industry was founded by Sardar Bahadur, Sardar Ganda Singh Oberoi in the year 1883 on 13th April at Sialkot and sports equipment became the first Indian industrial products to be exported in 1885. The items taken for manufacturing in the beginning were tennis, footballs, cricket bats, balls and field hockey, with passage of time new items were added and industry at Sialkot progressed and people flourished beyond imagination until the division of the country checked the boom.

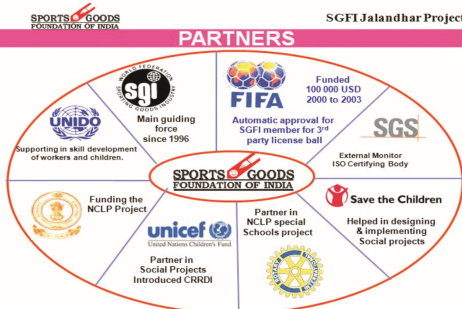
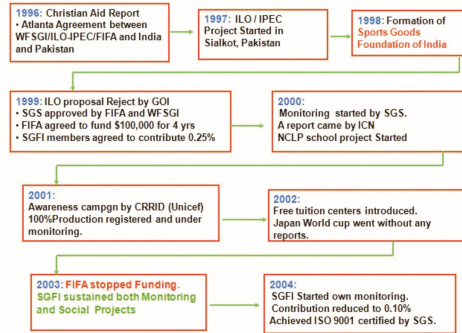
Specific objectives of SGFI:

- To prevent and progressively eliminate child labour in the manufacture or stitching of footballs.
- To ensure that any child labour found in the field is immediately reported and admitted into the various schools run by the foundation.
- To facilitate an attitudinal change in the community as well as the worker's families with regard to the importance of education and evils of child labour.
- To promote education in the inflatable ball stitching community.

Scope of Operations....

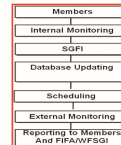
As of October 2010, SGFI membership consisted of 33 manufacturers and exporters of footballs/volleyballs/rugby balls. These members were responsible for approximately 95% of the total exports of footballs. SGFI monitored production in 3,300 different locations involving 15,000 stitchers. Out of these, 40 were centers at which more than eight stitchers came together under a single roof to work and 3,260 were units that had fewer than eight stitchers working on footballs. SGFI has undertaken 145000 monitoring visits since 1999.

The SGFI Journey.....



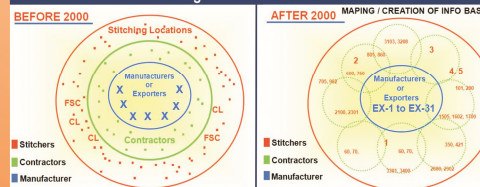
Process of Identification of Child Labour

As per the monitoring process specified in the Atlanta Agreement, manufacturers of inflatable balls are required to formally register all the contractors, stitchers, stitching facilities, and locations to which work is contracted out. This is done to ensure that all stitching locations are clearly identified and open to inspections. Each manufacturer is required to establish an internal monitoring department with a specified process. The manufacturers are supposed to train their inspectors in monitoring the location and age of all stitchers.



To ensure that all the required data is captured and recorded, formal reporting formats have been designed. The manufacturers are required to provide their internal monitoring reports to independent third parties. The independent third parties in turn monitor and validate the internal monitoring reports provided by the manufacturers. The independent monitoring agencies also provide periodic reports to the Coordinating Committee and to the World Federation of Sporting Goods Industry, which disseminated these reports to customers and consumers in Europe, the Americas, and Asia. These reports are also made available in the public domain.

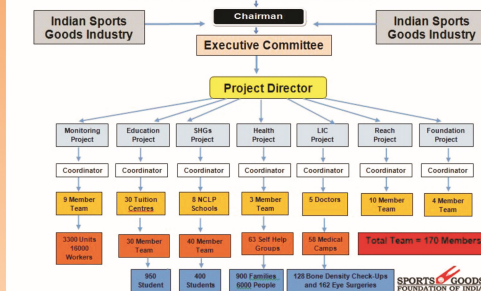
Manufacturing Scene before and after 2000....



Initiatives for Rehabilitation of Child Labour

True to their claim of being a solution based NGO rather than being just an advocacy group, SGFI not only identifies the child labour but also endeavours to rehabilitate the children by its various interventions. SGFI has set up mechanisms to address problems of child labour like 'free tuition centers', 'transitional schools', 'awareness raising' among the parents of children involved, empowering the families through 'formation of self help groups', provision of 'computer education' for children etc.

SGFI's Organisation Structure



Conclusion

The concept of CSR has gone beyond the traditional philanthropic approach and looks into strategic cooperation. However, the SME sector is yet to consider CSR as a tool for business enhancement. This is mainly because they are forced to prioritize short-term survival over longer-term strategic measures, and they often have few managerial and financial resources to invest in such measures.

The initiatives like SGFI present a solution for these kinds of strategic challenges for the SMEs. The cooperative effort of SMEs in Sports Goods Industry in Jalandhar for dealing with problem of child labour has shown a path to SME sector for dealing with external environmental problems collectively. The members of SGFI had joined hands to tackle the bottlenecks in their export businesses during late nineties. Over the years, they realised the importance of corporate social responsibility and today the CSR arm of sports goods industry in Jalandhar i.e. SGFI has widened its scope of activities beyond just monitoring and rehabilitation of child labour. SGFI is continuously exploring the solutions and is developing mechanism for the betterment of skilled labourers; who are facing the threat of unemployment because of mechanisation of football/inflated ball stitching.

The members of SGFI have realised the benefits of corporate social responsibility and involvement in community projects has become a way of life for them; which is manifested in the extension of scope of activities of SGFI beyond just monitoring of child labour. The current vision of SGFI is to foster and energize social responsibility initiatives of the Indian Sporting Goods Industry.

Acknowledgement:

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