A PINCH OF SALT

A Study of Salt Workers of Kutch, Patan, Rajkot and Surendranagar Districts of Gujarat

Conducted For:
CARE INDIA

Conducted By:
Saline Area Vitalization Enterprise Limited

રણ કાંઠાના ગામોની ઓળખ આપતા રાભડિયા કવિની કવિતા

રણકાંઠાની
આ નળ કાંઠાની ધરતી
લવણ પકવતી ધરતી
આ ધરમ નિતરતી ધરતી

ચાર રાજ્યને બે થાણાથી, દેહ પોતાનો ઘડતી,
સબળી, નમણી નેતાગીરી, રોડ ભૂખને રડતી. રણ ૦ ૧

"દફ્તર બા'રૂં કેમ દસાડા" વાત થતી ચોફરતી,
ઉદાર દિલ, દરબારી આંખો, મહેમાનો નોતરતી. રણ ૦ ૨

આવળ, બાવળ, કેર લીમડો, તરૂ વધુ એ ધરતી,
નાર, ગધેડા, નમણા ઘોડે, અહોરાત એ રમતી. રણ ૦ ૩

ડાંગર, ઘઉંને કપાસ બાજરી, ખેતર દેતા પકાવી,
જીરૂ ઝીણું, મોટું તે તો, રૂપેણ જાતી ભરખી. રણ ૦ ૪

મીઠું મીઠું, મીઠા કેરા પહાડ પીરામીડ રચતી,
ખારાશ અગરિયાની એડીને વજ્ર સરીખી કરતી. રણ ૦ ૫

નગવાડાની વાવ અત્યારે, આવવરૂને અમથી,
ઝીંઝુવાડાની નગરી કિલ્લે, અતિ અદ્‌ભૂત છે નક્શી. રણ ૦ ૬

કણબી, કોળી, નાડોદાને જૈન જતની વસતી,
મુસલમાન, ઝાલા, હરિજનને રાણા, ઠક્કર ગઢવી. રણ ૦ ૭

મેરા, બજાણા, ખારાગોઢા, ઝાડીયાણા, ને ઝેઝરી,
સુરેલ, ખેરવા, આદરિયાણા, નવરંગપુરા એ નગરી. રણ ૦ ૮

ઝુંઝા ઝીંઝુવાડે ઝબકે, વાલેવડે વાલ્મીકી,
રોઝડા વનમાં ગંગકુઈને, વણોદ વનરાજ સુમરી. રણ ૦ ૯

મકવાણા ઝાલા કહેવાય, શક્તિ કથાને કથતી,
રાજબાઈ માડી, ઝીંઝુવાડે, ભક્ત હૃદયમાં વસતી. રણ ૦ ૧૦

ધામા, સલવાસ, જૈનાબાદ, ને છાત્રોટ, વાલેવડા પાટડી,
ગેડિયને ઝીલાણંદ કેરા, મેળામાં થાય ભરતી. રણ ૦ ૧૧

કબર સંત માધોજી કેરી, કીધા કામો કરતી,
સંત મુનીને પુંજીરામની, આણ રહે છે ફરતી. રણ ૦ ૧૨

ખારીને, લુ ઝરતી, તો યે, મીઠાશ હૃદયમાં ભરતી,
માલીકના, માનવ વસવાટે નિસદ્દિન રેતી હસતી. રણ ૦ ૧૩

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

SNEHAL- (Sustained Nutrition, Education, Health and Livelihood Project) is a multi dimensional development project extended from CARE India's earthquake rehabilitation initiatives in Kutch, Rajkot, Patan and Surendranagar district in Gujarat.

The SNEHAL programme aims at achieving significant and sustainable development in livelihood security of poor and marginalized primary producers engaged in salt, charcoal, and fish and milk production. The post-earthquake situation has changed the livelihood rehabilitation demands of these communities. Further, the change in the economic policies in times of liberalization and globalisation has created a need for defining the programmatic approach in development initiative. In this context CARE-Gujarat office invited Saline Area Vitalization Enterprise Ltd (SAVE), to study the present status of salt workers and identify issues that can be addressed through SNEHAL programme.

The study provided opportunity to meet and discuss the issues related to salt workers in Gujarat. The study team was fortunate to get inputs from all the different stakeholders across the region and types. The team believes that it is the efforts and sensitivity of all stakeholders towards the salt workers issue that made this report a comprehensive report. The team would like to thank all who spent quality time with study team in discussions of various aspects of the salt industry.

The study is a result of contribution of many individuals, NGOs, research organisations, salt associations, traders and salt department. The team would like to thank all those who contributed towards the study. The team would like to express special thanks of Shri. Arvindbhai Acharya - for giving an overview of salt industry and salt workers with historical perspective and development alternatives. The perspective on little Rann of Kutch and its degradation aspects could not have been understood without discussions with Shri. Devjibhai Dhamecha.

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1) Uday Gaikwad

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GLOSSARY

1	**Agar**	Salt pan
2	***Agaria***	Salt worker
3	***BC***	Beaume Centigrade- Unit for measuring degree of brine
4	***Darbar***	Head of princely state
5	***Dantal/ Dantari***	A wooden rake used for breaking the salt crust. The no. Of teeth depends on type of salt.
6	***Gamdu***	A network of series of rectangular ponds which act as Condenser. The brine water is circulated through these for increasing the degree of brine. The no. Varies according to quality of brine.
7	***Gando baaval***	A name of shrub: Prosopis juliflora
8	***Kampari***	A iron plough used for breaking the clotted salt heaps.
9	***Karkatch***	A salt variety –produced in marine salt units. It has smaller crystals.
10	***Koli***	A backward community involved in salt making since tradition.
11	***Makardam/ Mukadam***	A middleman or leader of salt worker team
12	***Paatas***	Rectangular pond in which salt crystallize from brine.
13	***Pagali***	A process of stamping land to make it hard
14	***Pavada/Tagara***	Used for collection and loading the salt in truck/tractor.
15	***Poda***	Variety of salt, which is made by creating a salt surface to keep the salt free from dusting.
16	***Raan***	Desert
17	***Vadagaru salt***	A type of salt, with large size crystals
18	***Zipta***	A variety of local shrub grass used for enhancing the process of salt crystallization

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CHAPTER - I
Background of the study

1.0 Introduction

CARE India is one of the worlds leading Non Government Organisations endeavouring sustainable Livelihood for the poor and marginalized communities. In India CARE has been working for the last 54 years in the field of Health, Nutrition, Education, Micro Finance, Natural resource and Emergency. CARE has relaunched its operations in Gujarat after a gap of five years following the devastating Earthquake in January 2001.

Besides undertaking the relief measures CARE has designed an integrated Health, Education and Community Development Programme with a purpose to enhance the Livelihood security of the Vulnerable Communities in Kutch, Patan, Rajkot and Surendranagar districts. The Goal of the Programme is ***to enable people to bring about significant and sustainable improvements in health and education through 5600 anganwadi centres with focus on livelihood and disaster mitigation among 15000 vulnerable households in 100 villages.***

salt workers are identified as one of the target communities for **SNEHAL** (Sustainable Nutrition, Education, Health and Livelihood) programme initiated by CARE-Gujarat. The salt workers called *'Agarias*" in Gujarati language are not only vulnerable people in the region but they also face physical and economic exploitation by other communities. The exploitation is keeping them away from accessing their basic rights for living life with dignity. The purpose of the SNEHAL programme as defined by CARE is to empower these communities to effectively negotiate and jointly undertake development activities with service providers, enhance income generation opportunities, equip the communities with knowledge and infrastructure to effectively cope with disaster situation and establish greater synergy among project stakeholders for sustained programme impact.

With a view to develop greater understanding of the target communities in order to formulate projects, allocate resources and study the impact of the intervention among the target communities, a planning - research exercise was commissioned to SAVE – Saline Area Vitalisation Enterprise, a technical service organisation, engaged in rural development activities in salinity affected regions of the state.

1.1 Aim and Objectives

- *Provide overview of community customs/practices/attitudes and assess their socio-economic –political status.*
- *Identify and analyse feasibility of Salt specific livelihood options pursued by salt workers under different institutional arrangements.*
- *Map the CBO (traditional/formal)/NGOs present in the project area and assess the initiatives of the Government, NGOs and co-operatives for salt workers.*
- *Identify and Analyse administrative and legal issues in undertaking Salt production and sale.*
- *Draw lessons from earlier interventions of different organisations and identify effective strategies for improving livelihood security of the salt workers.*

1.2 Focus of Study

The study has focused on a holistic approach to bring improvement in the living standards of the saltpan workers engaged in the trade, covering following aspects:

- Socio - economic
- Health
- Educational
- Gender
- Legal

1.3 Scope of the Study

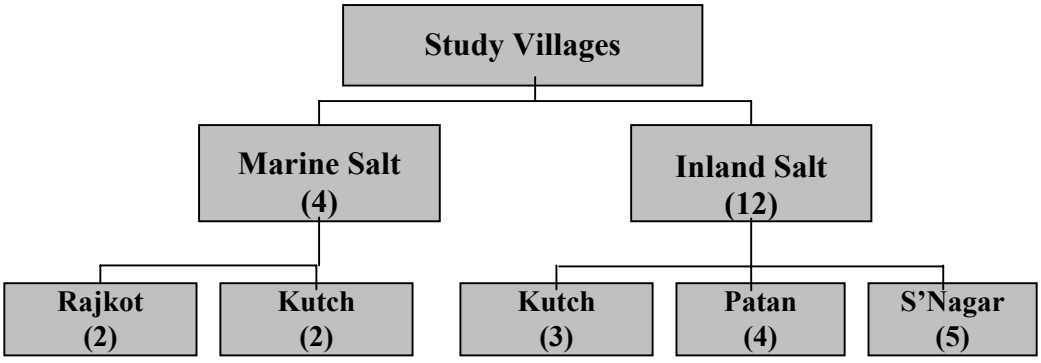
As mentioned earlier, saltpan workers are one of the target communities of SNEHAL programme. The findings of the study would increase the understanding about the conditions of saltpan workers in the programme area of CARE. The study is carried out with emphasis on the programmatic approach of CARE which focuses on institutionalisation of interventions through forming CBOs, supporting networks for advocacy, developing micro level plans for health, education and livelihoods, establishing linkages between self help groups (SHG) and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and leveraging resources from the ongoing projects of the government.

1.4 The Research design

The salt production centres in Gujarat are spread all along the coast and around Little Rann of Kutch (LRK). The salt produced in coastal area and LRK region is respectively known as marine and inland salt. The research design looked into conditions of people engaged in both the types of salt production process. Totally 16 villages were selected for the study i.e. four villages each from the four districts covered by SNEHAL programme. Of these 16 villages, four villages had people engaged in marine salt production and remaining 12 villages in inland salt production process.

The external environment responsible for the present status of marine and inland salt industry was understood by stakeholder analysis and production and market analysis. The critical analysis of the role perceived and performed by each stakeholder was done to understand the critical gaps, which can be addressed to improve the overall situation of the salt workers and their livelihood.

Selection of villages for study



Note : The figure shown in brackets indicate No. of villages.

1.5 The Research Questions

The present study has focused on investigating the livelihood and basic needs of the saltpan workers from different perspectives, which includes the rights perspective, the market and future of salt industry. These perspectives have been formed through collecting information from and interactions with primary stakeholders i.e. saltpan workers, secondary and tertiary stakeholders. The conditions of primary stakeholders is further analysed from gender and human rights aspects. The following is the details of information collected under each perspective from different stakeholders.

Table 1.1 : Details of the information collected through the study

Sr. No.	*Perspective*	*Information*	*Stakeholder*
1	Fundamental Rights	- Living and working conditions at work site - Access to basic amenities of health, education, drinking water and shelter. - Special rights and access to entitlements	Agaria families, NGOs
2	Socio-economic	- Profile of salt workers - Status of salt workers - Impact of culture and customs on livelihood condition. - Impact of access to health services, education and information on earnings. - Credit sources, terms & conditions and indebt ness scenario - Impact of credit source on livelihood. - Migration - Risk factors in salt production - Impact of natural disaster on salt workers. - Alternative livelihood options. - Impact of NGO work on livelihood.	Agaria families, NGOs, Eminent workers
3	Gender	- Status of women - Role division of work - Gender specific health problems - Vulnerability of single women	Agaria women worker, single women, NGOs
4	Market	- Market demand, advantages and constraints - Market chain, economics and price realisations - Production systems - Impact of globalisation - Scope for export market - Market prediction mechanisms. - Regulatory mechanisms - Tax and levies applicable to salt industries	Salt works, Traders, Salt department, Financers and processing units, Salt co-operatives, Salt works associations
5	Future	- Impact of environmental degradation on production process and output - Information needs - Possibility of diversification - Livelihood options for present salt workers	NGOs, Research institutions, Salt workers, Salt works, Exporter, Regional salt associations

1.6 Methodology

The study is a mix of quantitative and qualitative information derived using appropriate Rural Research Methods. During the study work, collection of existing literature and information from the NGOs, Government census and reports and discussions with resource persons from the NGOs was carried out. Based on literature review a preliminary investigation was carried out to develop research tools. The tools covered the information pertaining to the status of salt workers and industry across the region, views of the different stakeholders about the future and issues in salt industries. The investigation tools were developed to cover information at various levels and from different stakeholders engaged in salt trade. Before field-testing, the research tools were shared and modified based on the suggestions received from the representatives of CARE.

1.7 Research tools

As mentioned earlier, the research tools developed for qualitative as well as quantitative information collection were

1. For qualitative data: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with salt workers from the sample villages
2. Structured Interviews with agencies, individuals working directly or indirectly with the Salt workers.
3. For quantitative data: Household survey forms.
4. Case studies of individuals, NGO efforts and innovations

The qualitative information was collected through interview guideline prepared for group discussions and interactions with specific stakeholders. The information collected range from general information of the area, salt production system, markets, regulatory frame works, present status, support system required and perspective for change. The stakeholders interviewed include NGOs, functionaries of Salt department of GOI, CSMCRI (Central Salt and Marine Chemical Research Institute) - Bhavnagar, salt co-operatives, salt works, associations of traders, individuals and companies engaged in salt industry.

The group discussions with primary stakeholders were carried out to understand their working condition, access to basic needs and entitlements, credits facilities, earnings, difficulties faced in salt production, effectiveness of the Government and Non Government programmes.

The secondary information was collected through available literature on saltpan workers and salt making around the world, India and Gujarat. The assessment and evaluation reports, documentaries and review note pertaining to salt production, processing and functioning of salt industry were referred for identification of finer issues.

A sample survey of the households was conducted with families engaged in salt making activity to validate the findings of regional variations in conditions of communities involved, salt production system and perception of the *Agarias*. Since the salt production is done in inland and on coast, the sample was taken from the villages selected to cover both the types of the salt production system.

Household survey sample was randomly selected from the population, to gather descriptive details about saltpan workers. The sample for the study was selected from 16 villages of all the four districts covered under the SNEHAL programme **(Annexure – 1)**. Totally 116 Salt worker families were surveyed by using household survey forms.

1.8 The study Area

The present study has been conducted in four districts covering population of salt workers in Gujarat. The districts covered under the study include Kutch, Patan, Rajkot and Surendranagar **(Pls. refer the map)**. Based on literature review and secondary information available, the study team along with representatives of CARE had selected 10 taluka for the study. The details of the villages and taluka covered are:

Table 1.2 : Details of the district wise villages covered under the study.

District	*Taluka*	*Villages*	*No. of villages*
Kutch	Rapar, Anjar, Gandhidham	Sukhpar, Taga, Vira, Kidana zone, Chudva	5
Patan	Santalpur, Sami	Rajusara, Piprala, Gotarka, Koddha	4
Rajkot	Maliya	Venasar, Varsamedi	2
Surendranagar	Halvad, Dhranghadhra, Patdi – Dasada	Jogad, Enjar, Kuda, Naradi, Kharagodha	5
Total	9 Talukas		16 Villages

1.8.1 Salient Features of the Study area

The study area forms part of coastal Kutch & Rajkot and area on the periphery of Little Rann of Kutch (LRK) adjoining the – Kutch, Patan, Rajkot and Surendranagar district. The proximity to the Rann or the sea makes land and water saline, which is not suitable for agriculture. This has promoted large number of salt production units and wasteland with *prosopis juliflora* in the study area. These are the areas where salt production is carried out along with Charcoal production from *Prosopis juliflora*. The LRK where both seawater and fresh waters from rivers accumulates during monsoon provides breeding ground for prawns. The prawns and fish catching becomes seasonal activity in the LRK.

The 16 study villages comprise population of 42,000 persons belonging to nearly 8,000 house holds. The sex ratio widely varies from one district to another in the range of 877 to 994 female per 1000 male. The sex ratio is below 900 in Kutch and Surendranagar district. The Darbars, Ahirs, Rabaris and Patel dominate the population among upper caste. The population covers 5% to 15% schedule caste (SC), mainly Koli, Thakore and Vaghary community. The population of SC is highest in Rapar taluka, Kutch district and minimum in Maliya taluka of Rajkot district. Among the minority, Muslims from various clans have measurable population in Santalpur and Rapar talukas of Kutch district.(Ref : Table No. 1.3)

The strong caste based discrimination by the Darbars and Patel adversely affects the access and use of common property resources by poor in the region. The Darbars dominate the population who own most of the land and manage to keep social, economic and political power with them. The Kolis and Thakores are resource poor and depend on the upper caste for their livelihood. Few Koli families own land but the quality and size of landholdings do not allow them to depend on agriculture for fulfilling the annual requirements and hence they have to work as an agriculture labourer. During rest of the period Kolis work as salt and charcoal worker with trader. The Muslims are marginalized and have similar situation like kolis. They are mostly engaged in salt making activity in Santalpur and Adesar area. The Muslims from Maliya taluka are engaged in fisheries in the LRK during monsoon.

The other backward community including Ahirs, Rabaris and Vaghris depends on farm labour, animal husbandry and salt loading –unloading activity.

PAKISTAN

RAJASTHAN

RANN OF KACHCHH

KACHCHH

LAKHPAT

NAKHATRANA

BHUJ

NALIYA (ABADASA)

MANDVI

MUNDRA

ANJAR

Bhachau

RAPAR

SANTALPUR

SAMI

PATDI

Maliya

Miyana

Halvad

Dhrangadhra

LAKHTAR

SURENDRANAGAR

WADHWAN

MULI

DHOLKA

LIMBDI

VANKANER

DHROL

JAMNAGAR

DWARKA

PADDHARI

CHOTILA

SAYLA

RAJKOT

DHANDHUKA

KHMBHALIYA

LALPUR

KALAVAD

LODHIKA

JASDAN

BOTAD

KOTDA SANGANI

KALYANPUR

JAM JODHPUR

GONDAL

JAMKANDORNA

GADHADA

VALABHIPUR

BHANVAD

BABRA

UMRALA

BHAVNAGAR

PORBANDAR

UPLETA

KUTIYANA

DHORAJI

JETPUR

VADIA

LATHI

PALITANA

SIHOR

GHOGHA

RANAVAV

BHESAN

AMRELI

LILIYA

GARIYADHAR

MANAVADAR

JUNAGADH

VANTHALI

VISAVADAR

DHARI

SAVARKUNDLA

TALAJA

KESHOD

MENDARDA

MANGROL

MAHUVA

MALIYA

TALALA

KHMBHA

RAJULA

UNA

VERAVAL

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PALANPUR

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KHEDBRAHMA

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VADGAM

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SHIHOR

PATAN

RADHANPUR

SIDDHPUR

KHERALU

IDAR

HARIJ

CHANASMA

MEGHRAJ

VISNAGAR

HIMMATNAGAR

SABARKANTHA

MAHESANA

VIJAPUR

MALPUR

MODASA

PRANTIJ

BAYAD

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GANDHINAGAR

DHANSURA

BALASINOR

SANTRAMPUR

KADI

LUNAVADA

AHMEDABAD

THASRA

JHALOD

SANAND

KAPADVANJ

SHAHERA

DEHGAM

PANCHMAHALS

MEHEMDABAD

KHEDA

NADIAD

GODHARA

DAHOD

MATAR

SAVLI

KAALOL

LIMKHEDA

DEVGHAD BARIA

ANAND

PETLAD

HAALOL

JAMBU GHODA

CHOTA UDEPUR

BORSAD

WAGHODIYA

KHAMBHAT

VADODARA

JETPUR

M.P.

PADRA

DABHOI

SANKHEDA

JAMBUSAR

KARJAN

TILAKVADA

NASVADI

AMOD

SINOR

RAJPIPLA

VAGRA

BHARUCH

NARMADA

JHAGADIA

DEDIAPADA

ANKLESHWAR

VALIA

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BARDOLI

VYARA

VALOD

MAHUVA

NAVSARI

GANDEVI

DANG

CHIKHALI

VANSDA

AHWA

VALSAD

DHARAMPUR

PARDI

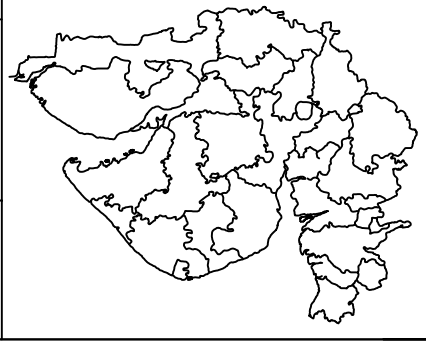
DAMAN

UMARGAM

MAHARASHTRA

GULF OF KHAMBHAT

ARABIAN SEA

Map Showing:	Gujarat. 	Gujarat, INDIA. 	SCALE:	
Project Talukas covered under Study of Salt Workers, Gujarat, INDIA				N
SAVE Saline Area Vitalization Enterprise Ltd. Ahmedabad.			NOTE:	DRG.NO

The area is one of the driest in the state with average annual rainfall ranging between 350 to 450 mm. The multiple-disaster including drought, cyclone and earthquake pose continuous threat to the life of poor and marginalized communities. The low rainfall condition along with sparse irrigation facility limits the scope for agriculture base livelihood, which is persuaded by only 7% of the population in the study villages. Among the marginalized communities animal husbandry, agriculture labour, salt and charcoal making and fisheries are main income generating occupations.

Female family members dominate the agriculture labour work in the study villages. The employment in agriculture labour work is higher in Patan and Surendranagar due to groundwater based irrigation. The situation of limited employment opportunity in agriculture sector is forcing people to opt for livelihood activities like charcoal and salt making. Nearly 24% of the total population in the study villages are dependent on other income generating activities like salt, charcoal making and fisheries. The ceramic industry in Morbi and Vankaner provides additional employment opportunities to the migrant workers from this region.

The average literacy rate in the study area is as low as 35%, while that among marginalized community and women is much lower. The low literacy rate leads to economic exploitation of the weaker section, as they do not have any other alternatives for skilled jobs.

Table 1.3: District wise profiles of study area villages

District	*No. of Villages*	*No. of House holds*	*Population*	*% literate*	*% Cultivator*	*% Agri. labour*	*% Other worker*
Kutch	5	2585	12740	37	4	4	25
Patan	4	1015	5156	24	18	17	11
Rajkot	2	597	2709	41	6	4	25
Surendranagar	5	3648	20614	37	5	10	26
Study area	16	7845	41219	35	7	9	24

(Source : Census of India, 2001)

CHAPTER - II
The Salt workers

2.1 The Community

The villagers living along the Little Rann of Kutch and on the coastal areas have in some measure, been associated with salt manufacturing operations. The community in the focus of the study are known as *Agarias* in local language meaning those who work in Agar (the saltpan) and hence are occupational group belonging to various community, religion and class. Among the local salt workers ***Chuwaliya koli*** is the most dominant caste, which is engaged in salt manufacturing activity. Other backward castes/communities like Vaghris, Bharwads, Rabaris, Ahirs, Sipahis, Fakirs, and Muslims are engaged in allied activities like transport, loading and unloading, grinding and packaging activities. Muslims and dalits are also engaged in this industry in large numbers. There are about 50,000 Agariyas who are engaged in salt production process in the region notified as Wild Ass Sanctuary in Rann of Kutch.

Though the occupation of salt making is not attached with particular caste, the Chuwaliya kolis living in Surendranagar and Kutch are recognized as traditional salt makers in the region. The Chuwaliya Kolis and other Kolis are associated with the salt making occupation since many decades i.e. the beginning of the salt making activity in the region. They have mastered the skills of making salt of different varieties by learning from their forefathers. Apart from Kolis, Muslims are directly involved in salt manufacturing. The Muslims dominate in salt making activity in parts of Adesar and Santalpur talukas of Kutch and Patan district respectively.

2.2 Demographic distribution

The labour intensive salt industry engages the salt workers on a seasonal basis. The salt industry in Gujarat employs on an average about 75,000 to 1 Lakh labourers every year. Apart from salt making activity, the salt industry offers employment in other related activities like loading, transporting, grinding and packaging of salt. There is a high degree of variation in official estimates about the salt workers in Gujarat. For the years-2002 the estimates by salt department (GOI) stands at 55,300 workers while those according to the state Industry commissioners record of 2001-02, there were 67,000 salt workers.

To overcome the ambiguity about the population of salt workers, the state Government in 2001 started the process of issuing identity cards to the salt workers. A total 10,449 identity cards were issued till March 2001. This was again interrupted due to complaints received about wrong selection of salt workers. The issue was raised in Empowerment Committee (GOG) by *Agaria Heet Rakshak Manch*, a network of NGOs and agarias, who suggested establishment of a revised set of criteria and a procedure for identification of salt workers. This involved identification of salt workers through the respective gramsabha of the villages.

The average population of salt workers at village level varies from one region to the other. In Surendranagar, there are about 13,801 salt workers spread across 46 villages located on the periphery of LRK having on an average 250-300 families per village. Among them 8,600 workers are located in Dasada taluka. The reduction in salt making activity in

Surendranagar, owing to emergence of marine industries in Kutch, is forcing many salt workers to migrate to Kutch region. In Rajkot district the population of salt workers is concentrated in Maliya taluka where 10-12 villages have an average population of 25-30 families engaged in salt production. The salt makers in Patan district are restricted to 20-25 families per village in Santalpur and Sami talukas. The majority of salt producer belong to 8-10 villages in Santalpur taluka. As compare to other salt producing districts the No. of salt workers per village is higher in Santalpur. In Kutch region, majority of salt producers are migrant labourers from Bhachau and Rapar talukas and Surendranagar and Patan districts. The details of estimated numbers of salt workers are given in table 2.1

Table 2.1: The Demographic spread of salt workers in the study area.

Sr. No.	District	Salt producers	Engaged in loading, transport etc.	Total
1	Kutch	7438	3718	11156
2	Patan	19031	9928	28959
3	Rajkot	3629	1785	8414
4	Surendranagar	15341	7675	23016
	Study area	45439	23106	71545
	State	67166	34937	102103

(***Source:*** *Salt industry in Gujarat-2002, Commissioner of Industries, Gandhinagar)*

2.3 The status of salt workers

The primary salt producers "agarias" are the bottommost part of the flourishing and revenue earning salt industry in India, living under highly exploitative and sub-human conditions.

The *Agarias* engaged in salt production, spent eight months of a year in remote locations devoid of any infrastructure for housing, health, education and drinking water. Additionally, the economical and physical exploitation by moneylenders and traders makes their condition worst. The indebtedness and market practices have converted *Agarias* from primary producers to wage labourers. They receive only 10% of market price towards physical labour input in salt making, while the traders and others share nearly 98-99% of market price. Under economically bonded situation all the labour rights of salt workers are violated. Apart from this, the economic vulnerability leads to their exploitation by others in the region. There are many more people in the 'exploitation channel' of *Agarias*. Some of these are local ration shop owners, Crude oil suppliers, water suppliers etc. The low access to information and illiteracy limits them from thinking about alternative livelihood options.

The absence or limited access of *Agarias* to basic amenities of education and health leads to a highly deprived state of being. Due to eight months of migration and non-availability of education facilities forces an *Agaria* child working in an *agar* at the age less than even 14 years. In addition, adverse working condition causes several diseases and occupational hazards. The Absence of adequate health facilities creates severe damage to quality of human life.

2.4 The observations

The agriculture, agriculture labour, charcoal making and fishing are main income generating occupations for Kolis (Thakor) and Muslims engaged in salt trade. Earlier these communities were working as agriculture labourers. However, the shrinking work opportunities in agriculture sector owing to uncertainty of rains and mechanisation of operations has increased their dependency on salt and charcoal making.

The living condition of the saltpan workers has improved in comparison to the previous generations. The increased ease in transportation and communication has correspondingly increased the opportunity to migrate from Surendranagar and Santalpur to Kutch region. However with rising costs and increasing needs of the family, indebtedness of the people has not reduced.

2.4.1The relevance of salt making

The salt making is a family business, where all members of the family participate, at one or the other stage of salt production process. They have maintained their skills at a high level of efficiency over successive generations and hence their services are very much in demand in the present salt industry. Usually, the entire family including husband, wife and children have to continuously work between months of September and April/May. It is an important source of employment for the poor during the non-agricultural season. The villagers living in the coastal areas and the region adjoining to LRK are either unemployed or under employed for this part of the year, as their agricultural is rain-fed and they have small landholdings. A majority of the villagers continue to remain under-employed even during the peak agricultural season due to recurring droughts and limited irrigation facility.

The household survey of 116 families indicate that engagement in salt production contribute 69% to 100% to the annual income of the households. A small proportion of households (37%) are engaged in their own cultivation, which in a sense shows that land available for cultivation is very less, considering the ingress of salinity into the cultivable land. These households are engaged in the salt industry either as salt producers (agarias) or as daily wage labourers.

The commonality among salt producers is that most of them produce salt for public or private companies, private traders and co-operatives through receiving credits for production. Only few agarias produce salt on their own and sale it in the open market. The salt producers also engage as daily wage labourers in loading and unloading of salt. Apart from the salt producers other households who have little agriculture land too work as daily wage labourer in loading and unloading work. Thus the competition for employment opportunities in post salt production activity is more due to unskilled nature of the jobs and overcrowded labour market due to absence of alternative income generation activities.

The employment opportunity for salt producers in loading and unloading, crushing and packaging units are available in both inland and marine salt producing region. However, they have to face stiff competition in this sector due to reduction of employment opportunities in other sectors. Only 12% of the primary producers are engaged in the loading and unloading activity. There are no primary producers engaged in crushing and packaging industries, as the jobs in crushing and packaging are concentrated around the railway- salt loading centres where the salt companies establish their crushing and packaging plants for convenience. In the study area the crushing and packaging activity was found around Dhrangadhra, Kharaghoda in Surendranagar district, Adesar, Bhachau and Gandhidham in Kutch district and Santalpur in Patan district.

CHAPTER - III
The salt

3.1 Salt - The product

The relationship between salt and human exists since time immemorial. With the highest number of primary consumers on the globe, salt is an essential commodity for human with any type of food cooking habits. Apart from serving to add taste to food, salt is an important raw material for production of range of chemicals.

Salt is physiologically absolutely necessary for human life, but in the past prior to the Industrial Revolution the known mineral salt sources were limited, so much so, that its supply was a critical demographic power factor for most communities, until industrial means of extraction from brines were devised. It was only available as visible and exposed rock outcrops in arid regions or as dried out salt cake on the shores of some seas and salt lakes. In areas with wet climates, recovery of salt dissolved in brine become impossible. It is probably this, more than any other reason that many of the great civilizations first developed near deserts and desert climates, for example the Mediterranean region, at the edges of the "arid" zones.

Solar evaporation on vast flat coastal areas was considerably easier, than manually quarrying and hacking of rock salt. Though the technology was not easy and was handed down from generation to generation. A large share of the world's consumption of salt - is still made by the ancient methods of trapping seawater or salt spring brines and evaporating the brine and concentrating the salt, either artificially or under the sun's heat.

The specific gravity of a Sodium Chloride crystal is 2.16 and the saturated brine at 25 C contains 26.7% salt. It has a specific gravity of 1.2004. At 15 C a saturated solution contains 26.5% salt, and has a specific gravity 1.203. Hence a solution saturated at a higher temperature is specifically lighter, even though it contains a greater quantity of salt. It is this explanation that allowed salt makers to crystallize "blocks" or briquettes of salt on the surfaces of ponds, using floating elements such as sticks and straws to form the crusts of salt. It should be noted that with most other substances, crystallization couldn't occur at the surface of the solution because their solubility increases more rapidly while their specific gravity decreases.

3.2 The production process:

Salt is produced mainly by solar evaporation of seawater, sub-terrain and lake brine. The sources of brine- the main raw material for salt production is available from seawater and in land sub – terrain water. The salt is identified as *Marine salt* if brine source is seawater and *Inland salt* if brine is from sub-terrain or lake.

Production and quality of salt depends mainly on availability and quality of brine. If there is good availability of brine, greater content of brine and TDS in the water then crystal salt (*Vadagaru*) is obtained and if there is less water and less proportion of brine then *"Karkatch"* salt

"Some of the industries are technology intensive, others are machine intensive and some are labour intensive. Salt industry is labour intensive industry, where mechanization will not reduce the demand for labour"
- Dr. Viren Doshi, Bhansali Trust.

is produced. Thus the sub-soil brine having high density of brine is suitable for *Vadagaru* production, while seawater having low density of brine is suitable for *"Karkatch"* variety.

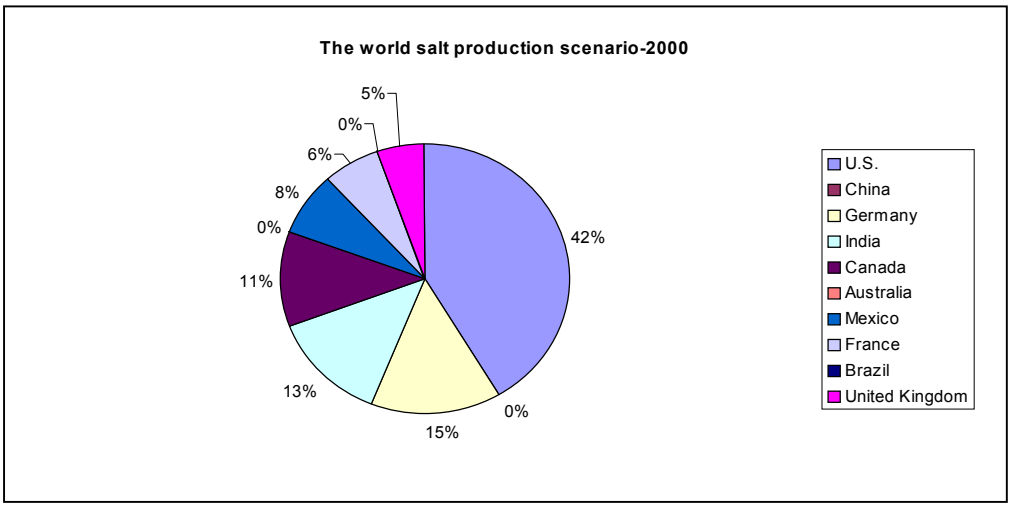


Fig 1: The global salt production

The production process of *"Karkatch"* salt is tedious and expensive while crystal salt is comparatively easy to produce. The demand of *"Karkatch"* salt for edible purpose is good as it is in the powder form. (Pls. Refer maps of production process)

3.2.1 The History of Salt production

The salt production industry is one of the oldest industries on the globe. The production of salt is mentioned in a 4,700-year-old Chinese publication the Peng-Tzao-Kan-Mu, probably the earliest known treatise on pharmacology. A major portion of this writing was devoted to a discussion of more than 40 kinds of salts, including descriptions of two methods of extracting salt and putting it in usable form that are amazingly similar to processes used today.

The history of modern mechanized salt production processes started in USA, in early 1800s when the salt production was done in less than ideal climates, by building movable, covered sheds over the evaporating pans, protecting the salt and brine from precipitation.

Mechanical evaporation in multiple effect open "grainer" pans began in about 1833, along with methods to purify the brine before evaporation. This allowed salt makers to produce a clean, white, desirable salt product. Further developments during the 1800s produced the concept of crystallizing salt in enclosed vacuum pans. Though the salt industry has gone through modernization and mechanization, the proliferation of mechanical techniques by and large is restricted to developed countries where the availability of labour is a main constraint.

The commercial production of salt in India started some 150-200 years ago by the former princely states of Saurashtra and Kutch in Gujarat. The salt business was one of the important revenue for the state of Dhranghadhra and Kutch, who were producing and supplying salt to entire India.

3.2.2 Present scenario of salt production

The salt is produced all across the continents in the world in varying capacity. The world salt production is lead by United Sates followed by China, India, Canada, Australia, and Germany. At world level, India ranks 4th to 7th in production. The Indian salt industry contributes 7-8% of the world salt production (Ref: table 3.1 & 3.2). The salt production in the year 2002 was estimated about 225 Million metric tonne. Every year, the world salt

production has 2-5 % fluctuations. The liberalization of global trade has boosted the export and import of salt from one country to other. During 2001-2003 India exported 8-10% of salt to Asian and African countries. During post liberalization period the total export from India has increased from less than half a million to 1.5 million tonne. The marine salt produced along Gujarat and Tamilnadu having port facilities at Kandala and Tuticorin offer bright future prospectus for the industry.

Table 3.1: World Salt Production

(Million metric tons, includes salt in brine)

Country	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994	1993	1992
USA	43.9	44.8	45.6	45.0	41.3	41.5	42.3	42.2	39.8	39.3	36.1
China	35.0	31.0	31.3	28.1	22.4	30.8	29.0	29.8	29.7	29.5	28.1
Germany	15.7	15.7	15.7	15.7	15.7	15.8	15.9	15.2	10.5	12.7	12.7
India	14.8	14.5	14.5	14.5	12.0	14.3	14.5	12.5	9.5	9.5	9.5
Canada	13.0	12.5	11.9	12.7	13.3	13.3	12.2	11.0	11.7	10.9	11.2
Australia	10.0	9.5	8.8	10.0	8.9	8.8	7.9	8.1	7.7	7.7	7.7
Mexico	8.7	8.9	8.9	8.2	8.4	7.9	8.5	7.7	7.5	7.5	7.4
France	7.1	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.1	7.9	7.5	7.5	7.0	6.1
Brazil	7.0	6.0	6.0	6.9	6.5	6.5	5.4	5.8	6.0	6.2	5.3
UK	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.7	7.0	6.8	6.1
All Other	64.5	69.3	58.5	58.0	59.1	54.4	53.8	52.5	53.1	41.0	53.8
Total	225	225	214	211	200	207	201	199	190	187	184

(***Source:*** *U.S. Geological Survey Mineral Commodity Summaries, January 2003)*

Table 3.2: Salt production in India and world

Sr. No.	Details	Unit	Year		
			2001	2002	2003
1	***World***	000'tonne	209043	205950	210535
2	***India***	*000'tonne*	*14824*	*17879*	*14882*
3	***India Production as %age of world***	*Percentage*	*7.09*	*8.68*	*7.07*
4	***Export from India***	000'tonne	1613	1365	1222
5	***Export as %age of total production***	Percentage	10.9	7.6	8.2

(***Source:*** *Annual report-2003, Salt department)*

3.3 Varieties of Salt

Different kinds of salt are produced to suite its use. The salt produced is mainly divided in to two groups based on its end-use viz. salt for edible purpose and other for industrial purpose. In Gujarat three major type of salt is produced. The first kind is the large grained and harder variety known as the *Vadagaru*. The second variety consists of smaller crystals known as *Poda* and the third, which is composed of even finer crystals of salt called *Karkatch*. These three varieties are grown in different regions because of the differences in the quality of brine and production preferences. The *Poda* and *Vadagaru* variety are produced mainly in the inland salt belts, while *Karkatch* is produced in the marine belt. The production methods across the three varieties differ slightly.

The *Vadagaru* salt is mass-produced in certain areas, while in others both *Poda* and *Karkatch* variety is prevalent. The *Vadagaru* salt is formed after it is fed gradually with brine for a period of about 3 to 4 months. The production of *Poda* and *Karkatch* varieties involves differences in the quality of brine and manual operations. The *Poda* salt production process involves the use of a different dantal *(an tool used in making salt)* and takes a month longer

than the production of *Vadagaru* salt. The *Karkatch* production process takes much less time and the salt crystals are removed from the brine itself and allowed to dry in heaps. From a single pan, one to seven crops can be harvested every season. This however varies according to conditions of the pan and is highly region specific.

3.4 The Consumers

The salt is the universal need of the human and cattle living on the earth. Apart from the human and cattle consumption the salt has its application in the industries as well as in food products for human consumption. The salt is consumed both for the domestic purposes (common salt) and by the industry as the base or as an intermediate. It is estimated that the consumption in each of these two sectors is almost equal i.e. 50:50.

In present day iodisation of the edible salt is made compulsory and hence needs processing for making it edible. The raw salt is used as an input for preparation of various alkalis based chemicals, washing powder and dye industry. Apart from this chemical industry, the salt is also consumed in food industry in producing dairy products, fish curing, drugs and pharmaceuticals and canned food products.

Both chemical and food industries demands observance of stringent quality norms (**Ref-annexure-5**). In India, one third of the salt used in industries is consumed by Soda ash and caustic soda industries. Both these industries need raw salt with minimum content of calcium and magnesium. The marine salt containing 14 to 0.5 % of calcium and 0.30 to 0.50% magnesium are preferred for soda ash and caustic soda industries. The stringent norms restrict use of inland salt for industry due to high calcium and magnesium content. The *Vadagaru variety* produced in inland is high in calcium and magnesium content that has property of absorbing moisture in crushed form. Presently, this salt is consumed as edible salt in the form of crystals. However, the market demand for *Vadagaru* salt is facing competition from free flow salt produced using marine salt. The details of salt use are given in the **Annexure - 6**.

During the process of salt production various by-products, which precipitate before or after completion of, salt production. These by-products include gypsum and britten (high density liquid remaining after salt production). Both these by-products are useful for various industries. The Gypsum is widely used as soil conditioner by fertiliser industry. The Gypsum is produced and sold to farmers and fertiliser companies in Kutch region by marine salt producers, whereas the practice of recovery and selling gypsum is not very wide spread among inland salt producers. The britten is rich in chlorides and sulphates of Bromine and magnesium, which is used as a raw material for industries producing magnesium and bromine based chemicals. At present there is a limited use of britten for production of these chemicals. However, there is an ample scope for production of chemicals from britten produced from inland salt processes. The details of the existing salt and by-product based units in Gujarat are shown in the table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3: No. of industrial units in Gujarat consuming salt and britten.

Sr. No.	*Name of the product*	*No. of Units*	*Sr. No.*	*Name of the product*	*No. of Units*
1	Soda Ash	4	***7***	Isopropyl Bromide	1
2	Caustic Soda	8	***8***	Magnesium Chloride	6
3	Gypsum	44	***9***	Epsom salt	1
4	Liquid Bromine	7	***10***	Magnesium Sulphate	2
5	Potassium Bromide	1	***11***	Liquid Chlorine	8
6	Sodium Bromide	1		***Total***	83

***(Source:** Department of Industries, GOG, 2002)*

CHAPTER - IV
The Salt Production Process

4.1 Introduction

The type of salt produced in India and Gujarat use solar evaporation method. The saline brine of 4 to 16 BC densities obtained from either sub-soil or seawater is exposed to fractional crystallization using solar energy. During the process the density of brine increase from 4-16 to 25 BC. Beyond 20 BC density the salt starts precipitating from the brine in the sequence of calcium, magnesium and sodium in the form of sulphate and chloride. When brine density reaches 25 BC finally sodium chloride (Nacl) or salt precipitates in the form of crystals.

In Gujarat, salt production activity is carried out in the Little Rann of Kutch (LRK) and along the entire coastline. Based on the location of the salt production the salt is identified as inland salt and marine salt. The marine salt production with contribution of 80-85% dominates the salt production in Gujarat. The inland salt is produced in LRK using sub-soil brine, while marine salt is produced using either sub-soil or seawater. All three salt varieties i.e. *Vadagaru, Karkatch* and *Poda* can be produced at both the location; however the *Vadagaru* and *Poda* variety has advantage under inland condition, while *Karkatch* salt is easy to produce under marine conditions. In the present scenario, more than 70% of the total inland salt production is *Vadagaru* while entire marine salt units produce *Karkatch* variety.

The entire process *of* production is handled by the *Agarias*. The preparation *of Paatas*, filling brine and the harvesting of the crop are done by agarias. The *Agarias* are traditionally associated with the salt manufacturing. Both the earthwork labourers and the agarias are migratory in nature, arriving at the salt works at the beginning of the salt manufacturing season (October-November) every year and going back to their villages to take up work in the agriculture operations. Once the rain sets in July. The labour required for earthwork and the agarias are employed every season on a contract or daily wage or piece rate basis. The labour required for sales and dispatch are also employed on contract or daily wage basis as and when required for filling, weighing, stitching and loading the bags Into wagons or trucks.

4.2 Production process of Inland Salt

The LRK is a piece of land formed due to evacuation of the sea over a long period of time and hence is a depression. The region remains submerged under the water collected from the sea tide and westward flowing rivers till the end of month of August or mid September. By the end of September, the land dries up and become approachable.

In the inland salt production process, the season *for* salt production lasts for about nine months in a year, from September to May. At the beginning of the season the salt producers, normally a pair of agaria (husband and wife) scout for the suitable location of land for making saltpan - a site of 10 acres. Usually, preference is given to previous year location unless they have experienced shortage of brine at that site. Following this, they shift their family to the Rann with the ration for a month. Exceptions are found in parts of Dhranghadhra, Halvad and Maliya taluka where, the salt workers do not shift their families due to proximity of the saltpans to the villages. Only male

members operate the saltpan activity leaving family in the village. Once they reach the Rann, they erect a temporary make shift type of shelter in which they stay for 8 to 10 months. After reaching there with family the pre-production preparation starts.

Stage-1: The Pre-production

The entire pre-production stage is labour intensive work, where every member of the family has to participate. The labour in pre-production stage for inland salt production is higher than the marine salt production as they have to remove the mud and prepare the saltpan washed by the water during monsoon.

The pre-production process for salt production in inland comprise of two steps.

1. Digging of well and installation of pump
2. Preparation of saltpan and condensers.

The selection of site and installation of pumps are done solely by the male members. The site selection is done using own experience and knowledge. The “non-scientific” approach for the site selection for brine well increases the risk of failure of well and the salt crop. It is observed that most of the *Agarias* in the region have lost a lot of money in failed wells and early deterioration of pumps. Due reducing availability of quality brine, the *Agarias* are required to select fresh sites every alternate year. The *Agarias* leave coverings or marks (poles plugged into drill pipes) over the well sites at the end of the harvest in May, to facilitate easy excavation in the following year. The wells, which are source for brine, are 6 to 9 mts. in depth and 3 mts. in diameter. Usually, the well is kept close to the salt pan, but many a times in the event of non-availability of suitable quality brine, requires well digging at a distance of 1 to 1.5 Km. In this situation the supervision work of the *Agaria* increases a lot. On an average each well yields 7,000 to 16,000 lts. of water in a day.

The second step is that of preparing the land for laying salt pans and condensers at the sites, which involves digging up the land near the pump, clearing plots and loosening the soil mainly by hiring tractors and labourers. Once land is ready for laying saltpan, the reservoir cum condensers, locally known as *Gamdus* are made by bunding the land. The number of condensers varies depending up on the density of brine. Usually, for a site of 10 acres, typically 8 to 10 *Gamdus* are made adjacent to one another. Subsequently, a saltpan with similar bunds is prepared near the network of *gamadus,* which serves as a crystalliser and is locally known as *Paatas.* Later on a channel is laid to connect the entire work, *pump-Gamdu*-Paatas. The entire network is prepared in 10-15 days for which about 150 person days are required. The labour demand increases during site preparation stage. The *Agarias* use their “personal" contacts in nearby villages to get labourers. In fact, *Agarias* and a set of labourers often form teams and work together.

During the process of preparation of the site, simultaneously arrangements are made for the grass locally called “*Zipta”* that is used for keeping on the inside of the saltpan to keep the water free from dust and also for developing initial crystals. The *Zipta* are either collected from the Rann or purchased. Initially about one tractor load of grass is required for 10 acres of plot. This grass is kept on the bunds and in side the pan by women and children.

Stage-2: Production Stage

Once the *Gamdus* and *Paatas* are made, small quantity of brine is let into the *Paatas* and the bed is puddled and tamped to make it hard. Women labourers dominate this activity, which is locally termed as *paglee* and they use their bare foot for this purpose. The tamping is done several times till the bed is hard and almost impermeable. It was observed that the saltpan in Santalpur region has hard soil and hence the *paglee* operation is minimized as compare to Surendranagar and Dhrangdra districts. The entire process from selection of sites, installing pumps to the - hardening *of the* saltpan bed lasts for 40 to 45 days. After completion of this operation the saltpan is ready for preparation of salt, which is a tedious and time-taking operation requiring close monitoring by the *Agarias*. At least in the inland salt production areas, these operations are labour intensive and no mechanization has been attempted. The pumped brine is led by gravity through the channels to the *Gamdus.* The first *Gamdu* is filled up and the brine is allowed to concentrate by gradual evaporation. Brine flows from one *Gamdu* to another, through small inlets that ensures slow movement of brine. Thus, each *Gamdu* possesses brine of different concentration. The process of filling up all the *Gamdus* takes about a month. During this process of filling up the *Gamdus* the pump sets are run for 24 hours daily and the brine of 24 BC from the *Gamdus* are then fed into the saltpan or *Paatas*.

For production of *Vadagaru* type of salt the *Paatas is* first filled to a depth *of* about 4-5 inches for evaporation and deposition of salt. For the first salt clusters to form, the *Agarias* immerse *Zipta* grass stems, which are known differently in different areas, in the saltpan. The salt clusters are formed around the stem. Brine of slightly lower concentration is charged into the pans to keep the density 25 to 26 BC and the level of 6 inches of brine is maintained in the pan. The first salt crystals appear after about 15 days of feeding the 24 BC brine.

After another 10 days, the crust formed is broken up and raked by a wooden rake, called Dantal *to* prevent the formation of flakes of salt and to obtain the large grained crystals. When the salt is under formation every alternate day it is raked by means of wooden rake and on the next day smoothened by Pavdi to prevent conglomeration of salt crystals. This process goes on for about 45 days after which the supply of brine is stopped and the density of water is allowed to increase up to 30 BC. The bittern or mother liquor is drained out into open spaces of vacant *Gamdus.* Many *Agarias* recharge the *Paatas* even after this stage to allow the crystals to grow further till about the middle of March.

For production of *Poda* type of salt the process is modified slightly during initial stage of crystal formation. In preparation of *Poda* type of salt, the water from the Paatas is drained out after formation of 1 to 2 inch of crystal layer and the surface along with crystal is rolled. Once again the *Paatas* is filled with water and Dantal *and* Pavdi operation similar to production of *Vadagaru* salt is continued. This process of producing salt over salt layer helps keeping the salt crystal clean and white that helps gaining higher market price.

The production of *Karkatch* type of salt is faster than other two types. It simply requires charging 2 to 3 inch depth of 24 BC water in the *Paatas* and maintaining the water level by adding new water to Paatas. The process of Dantal *and* Pavdi is continued for first 45 days after that the water supply is stopped and density is allowed to increase up to 28 BC. Once it reaches 28 BC the water is drained out of *Paatas* and fresh water of 24 BC is charged up to

level of 1 inch above the salt layer. The salt is collected in the water by creating salt raw parallel to the length of the *Paatas*. The salt is removed after the water is drained out. Once again the process is repeated with 24 BC water. The small crystal sizes of *Karkatch* type ease the *Iodisation* process. During entire season a saltpan produces salt, ranging from 500 to 800 tones *Vadagaru* salt.

The last stage in the production process is that of collection and storage of salt and at this stage, the labour is used intensively. Labour is in very high demand during the heaping season and the wages rise during the harvesting process. The salt is collected within the pans in heaps and then lined into trucks of traders/ buyers and transported out. The salt is again unloaded either near the crushing and refining plots owned by the traders or at the railway loading centres and heaped again. **(Ref: Annexure –7)**

4.3 Marine salt production process

In the marine salt the production season lasts for about seven to eight months. Big salt manufacturers own the marine salt works. Unlike the inland salt production process, mechanization though not full but semi has been undertaken in the production process. The marine salt production units hire seasonal workers for whole season. These workers perform all kinds of activities on saltpan. In the beginning of the season, the workers get small amount as wages and the same increases as the production of the salt increases. The maximum daily wage reaches up to Rs. 50/-at the end of the season. The pan owners of 100 to 500 acres prefer to hire workers through labour contractors or 'Mukadams' or 'Patels'. The Mukadam or Patel gets a commission of one or two rupees per labourer. They supply daily wagers as well as seasonal workers for different set of activities. Big private companies employ workers on salary basis for fetching water with a pump or a bore-well, circulation of water in ponds and as supervisors. The remaining labourers are hired from surrounding villages as daily wage earners.

In the marine salt, in the first stage the brine is obtained from sea, which has an initial density of 3 BC, though it varies slightly from place to place depending on the inflow of fresh water from rivers. The seawater is admitted by sluice gates at high tides through creeks or man made canals to low-level reservoirs or small creeks. The reservoir has a fairly large capacity and generally is capable of holding at least a substantial portion of water for the whole season's requirements. During the initial planning of the salt works, natural depression near the seacoast is often used as a reservoir.

There is no special treatment given to the soil of the reservoir because natural environment are used as much as possible, except extra supervision to minimize the losses of brine due to loose soil conditions. The early stages of concentration till 14 BC are carried out in the reservoir and evaporating ponds. In typical marine salt works, the seawater is evaporated in four stages, each stage having a higher degree of concentration. The layout and preparation of the last series of evaporating ponds in which the brine density is raised from 14 BC to 22 BC are important. In large salt works, the brine leaves the last evaporating pond at about 22 to 24 BC, which means that the brine is evaporated to a tenth of its original volume. In the preparation of the base of the evaporating pond, the gypsum formed is tamped in to soil, the base is then hardened as much as possible to avoid losses of valuable concentrated brine by percolation. To accelerate evaporation, the brine in the evaporating ponds is channelled to circulate in a zigzag manner by embankment. The size of the evaporating pond varies

depending on the total evaporating area, climatic conditions, humidity, wind velocity, slopes of the land etc. The density of the brine is 20 to 24 BC before it is fed to the evaporating ponds.

This is followed by crystallisation process in the pond. The area of crystallisation pond and evaporating pond is kept in the ratio of 1:2 to 1:5. Normally the crystallising ponds are situated below the evaporating ponds to allow a natural flow of brine into them wherever possible, but occasionally it has been necessary to pump the evaporating brine into the crystallising ponds. The location of the crystallising ponds is decided to ease the harvesting, storage and transport of the salt. Another important aspect of the location of crystallisation pond is the minimum level of dust gathering due to wind. On an average 500-600 tonnes salt is produced per saltpan by a pair of *Agaria* during a season. During last decade, the preparation of crystallising pond has seen increase in the use of machines like tractors, rollers and bulldozers for bunding and compacting operations.

The salt harvesting is one area where there is minimum amount of mechanisation have taken place. In both marine and inland salt centres the manual labourers are used for removing salt from the pans. The occupational hazards related to salt harvesting is higher in inland salt production as the salt workers has to collect and heap the salt when the concentrated brine is still in the saltpan, whereas in the marine saltpans, the salt is removed after draining the water from the saltpan.

The salt collection process from the marine saltpan is more tedious as compare to inland salt production. The salt worker has to perform several additional operations before removing salt from the pan. First of all they have to remove the water from the saltpan after which the salt layer is broken with the metal hoe and shovels. The disintegrated salt is then collected in to small heaps, which is again washed by diverting water from the evaporating pond. Once the washing is competed, the salt is again heaped and made ready for loading in to trucks.

In marine salt production, new emerging practice of drilling shallow bore well for getting brine of high degree. This lead to reduction in the labour requirement as one requires less amount of water circulation. These trend along with increasing use of machine in preparation of evaporating and crystallisation ponds lead to under employment in the rural area. This will have serious consequences on the livelihood of poor *Agaria*, who depends on salt production to earn their living.

4.4 Risk Associated with Salt production

The risk in salt production exists in pre-production, production and post-production stages. The changes in climatic condition and environmental degradation pose main risk to quality, quantity and transportation of salt produced. The overall risk involved in inland salt production is higher than the marine salt production.

4.4.1 Risk due to climatic condition

The prolonged rainfall, cyclone and strong winds conditions have major impact on quantity of production. While the prolong rainfall and cyclone affects the quantity of production, the wind

has major impact on the quality. The impact of prolonged rainfall conditions and wind are more on inland salt, whereas, the marine salt production has major risk from cyclone.

4.4.2 Risk due to Environmental degradation

The salt production by solar evaporation needs brine (saline water). The continuous supply of brine is an essential condition of salt production in both inland and marine salt production system. As mentioned earlier, the source of brine is seawater and sub-surface water pumped from ground. The availability of quality brine is major risk of the inland salt production units.

4.5 The Risk associated with Inland salt

The inland salt production units faces risk from both climatic as well as environmental degradations due to its unique location and production system. The Little Rann of Kutch (LRK), where the inland salt units, produce salt is a land locked area with elevation slightly above mean sea level. The entire LRK remain submerged during monsoon under 2 to 6 ft water brought by the westward flowing Banas, Rupen, Sarswati rivers and high tide seawater. Usually, the LRK area remains submerged under water during June to September, after which it dries up and available for salt production. However, under situation of prolonged rainfall conditions in the region or in the catchments of flowing rivers the LRK remain submerged till October and saltpan cannot be operated till the land dries up. This delays the salt production in LRK. Moreover, the inland salt units produce *Vadagaru* salt, which is single crop salt. The shortening of season does not allow time to grow the salt crystal to desired size. The possibility of extending production beyond month of May is difficult due to high temperature conditions, which affect the living conditions and increase the pumping cost of water due to higher water requirement posed by fast evaporation process. Apart from this the extension of production season has implication on time available for transportation before beginning of monsoon. On an average the prolonged rain season can reduce production by 10 to 20%.

The second type of climatic risk is associated with winds. With on set of summer season, strong winds start blowing from the seaside, which creates sand storm situation in the LRK during February to April. Incidentally, this period is the peak season for salt production. The heavy dust storm makes the salt crystal dull and spoils the quality of salt ready for dispatch. The dust falling in the saltpan reduces the whiteness of the salt crystals, which is a major factor deciding quality of salt. The reduction in whiteness also affects the rates in open market. In case of forward selling practices, traders deduct the rate based on quality parameters.

4.5.1 The availability of brine

The continuous supply of water during salt production is essential condition. In inland salt production unit uses brine hidden in the ground. The brine with density of 14 BC and above is pumped and fed in to the saltpan. The available brine is a saline deposit that is formed under sea condition. This brine quality and quantity varies place to place with in LRK region. At present there is no scientific method used for accessing the brine, which is resulting in failure of brine source during the production. This forces the salt worker to dig

other well for brine at the earliest. However, in situation where the brine is not struck in near places the entire salt production fails. The salt workers from Santalpur and Dasada reported incidents of failure of brine source more than once in a year or every second or third year.

Another serious implication of environmental degradation is increasing depth of brine. The trend in all region shows that the brine depth has increased from 20-25 ft to 40-70 ft. In many areas in Santalpur the depth of brine has reached to 70-80 ft from 30 to 40 ft a decade ago. This implies higher pumping expenditure. The economic analysis indicate that the salt production from pumping brine using diesel pump from depth exceeding 50 ft is not economically viable at present market.

4.6 Risk in Marine Salt Production

As mentioned earlier, the risk in marine salt production is limited to the impact of cyclone, which is a regular phenomenon on the coast of Gujarat. The risk to life is more in marine salt units. The super cyclone of Kandala during 1998 took more than 10,000 lives and caused heavy damages to the saltpan and salt workers. However, the risk to salt production is low under marine salt units, which produce the *Karkatch* salt that gives 10-12 crops in a season rather than one crop like in *Vadagaru* salt production.

CHAPTER - V
Overview of Salt Industry

5.1 An overview of Indian Salt Industry

India is the third largest salt producing country in the world, next to the United States and China. In India the major salt producing states are Gujarat, Tamilnadu and Rajasthan. Gujarat alone contributes around 70 per cent of the total salt production in the country. Though India has long history of salt production, the industry has really developed in post independence period. Overall salt production trends in India have registered growth from 1.9 Million tonnes in 1947 to 17.8 million tonnes in 2002.

In India salt is generally manufactured by solar evaporation of seawater and sub-soil brine. According to the source of brine, Indian salt works can be classified as inland (using brine springs or lake brine) or marine. In the inland salt works rich brine is obtained either from the salt lakes such as those in Rajasthan or subsoil sources as in the Little Rann of Kutch from shallow wells, deep tube wells, pits and percolation canals. In the marine salt works, brine is obtained from sea, which has an initial density of 3 degree BC, as it varies slightly from place to place depending on the inflow of fresh water from rivers.

The production of both inland and marine salt through a solar evaporation process, assuming a sufficient quantity of brine is available is dependent on primary factors and secondary factors. The primary factors are initial density of the brine, evaporation duration, average temperatures, humidity, dew point, wind velocity, vapour pressure and dissolved solids. The secondary factors are layout of the salt works (ratio of condenser to *Paatas* surface), method of salt collection (single irrigation or accretion), speed of extraction and cleaning of the saltpans, impermeability of the soil (in the salt pans) and timing and kind of manual operations performed.

The average annual salt production of India ranges between 12 and 17 million tonnes, which constitutes 7-8% of the world's production. Nearly 90% of salt produced is distributed every year in the market, which covers 5 million tonnes for human consumption, 6-7 million tonnes for industrial use and 1.2 million tonnes for export. Thus every year 2 to 5 million tonnes of salt produced remain undistributed and unutilised in India.

The salt export has increase from 0.15 million tonnes in 1949 to 1.2 million tonnes in 2003. The changes in export policy during 1987 from channelling through State Trading Corporation (STC) and Hindustan Salts Limited under Open General License (OGL) have not altered the export trend initially. However, the salt export has grown at a moderate rate due to lack of separate infrastructure for salt shipment at the Kandla and Tuticorin ports, located close to salt production centres. Post Tsunami disaster, the demand for Indian salt has gone up in international market and during 2005-2006 this demand is expected to reach to about 1.5 million tonnes. India also satisfies the salt demand of adjoining countries of Nepal, Bangladesh and Bhutan. The industrial demand in the country has steadily grown from 6.4 million tonnes to 7.5 million tonnes during year 2001 to 2003.

The area allocated for salt production in India is highly under utilised. Out of the total land 0.54 million acres land allocated for salt production only 0.3 million acres is utilised to produce salt. This suggests that the large area of land allocated to private companies remains unutilised.

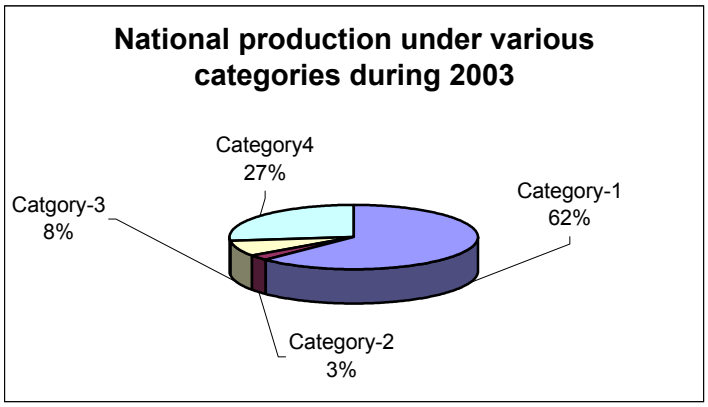
5.2 Salt Production process

In India, the labour intensive solar evaporation process is the main source of salt production. There are more than one Lakh workers engaged in the salt industry. As in the case of production, the Gujarat with 54% of the total work force has the maximum share in employment too.

Officially, salt is produced in India by recognized units (with license from Salt Department) and non-recognized units. The later contributed up to 27% of the total production in 2003. These units are categorized in four categories, I to IV, based on area of operations as mentioned below-

Category I: Comprise leases and licenses for plots of over 100 acres. The salt works under Category-I is owned by huge public limited and private limited companies.
Category II: Comprises of plots between 10 and 100 acres, owned by either Private trader or manufacturer.
Category III: Comprise of licensed co-operatives societies who own less than 250 acres of Land.
Category IV: Comprises of leaseholders who hold 10 acre of land and who do not require licenses. The Agariyas can lease out their pans to other Agariyas for salt Farming.

Fig 2 National salt production under category-I to IV in 2003.



The salt production under these categories operates in public/joint, private, co-operative and unrecognised structure. The contribution of public sector has reduced substantially over the years and now it accounts only 3% of the total production.

5.3 Salt Industry in Gujarat:

5.3.1 The Salt Production Centres:

The favourable climatic and topographical conditions make salt production possible all along the coastal Gujarat and in Little Rann of Kutch (LRK). Salt production units in Gujarat are located in thirteen districts covering 36 talukas spread across the coastline and periphery of Little Rann of Kutch (LRK). On the basis of location and source of the raw material i.e. brine, the salt industry in the state is divided in to two major type viz. Inland salt industry and Marine salt industry. The units under Inland salt industry are located along the periphery of the Little Rann of Kutch where the sub surface water is used as a source. The list of the districts and taluka where salt production activity takes place is given in **Table – 5.1**.

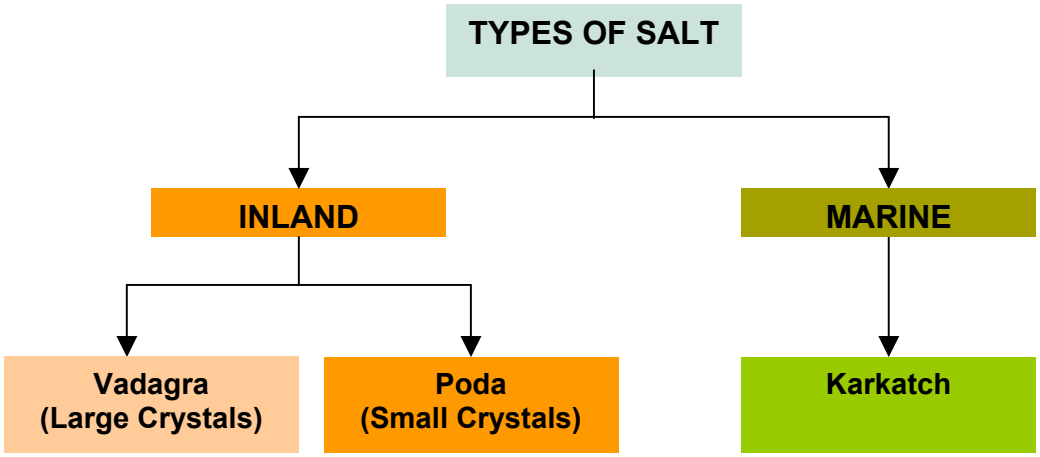
Table 5.1: Salt production centres in Gujarat

Sr. No.	Name of the district	Name of taluka
1	Ahmedabad	Dhanduka and Dholera
2	Patan	Santalpur
3	Surendranagar	Dasada, Dhangadra,Halvad
4	Rajkot	Maliya, Morbi
5	Kutch	Bhachau, Anjar, Mundra, Mandvi, Abdasa
6	Jamnagar	Jodiya,Jamnagar,Khambhaliya,Dwarka
7	Junagadh	Porbandar,Una
8	Amreli	Rajula,Jafrabad
9	Bhavnagar	Mahuva,Talaja, Bhavnagar, Ghogha
10	Kheda	Khambhat
11	Surat	Olpad
12	Bharuch	Jambusar,Amod,Vagra,Hansot
13	Valsad	Navsari, Gandevi,Valsad,Pardi,Umargam
Total	**13 Districts**	**36 Taluka**

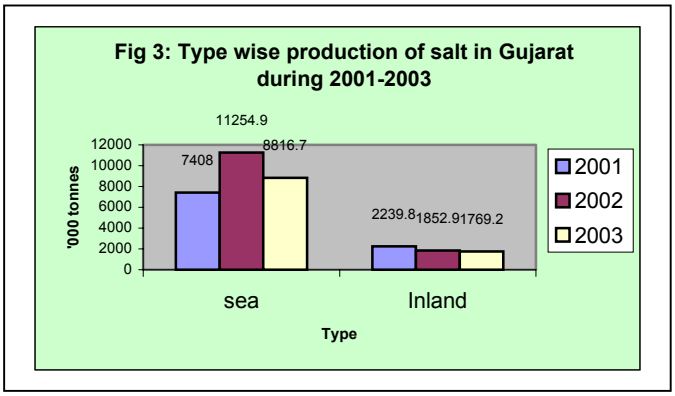
***(Source:** Department of Industries, GOG, 2002)*

5.3.2 The Salt Production

The salt industry in Gujarat produces three types of salts. The Inland salt production centres produces two types of salts locally know as *"Vadagaru"* and *"Poda"* salts. These varieties of salts are mainly used as edible salt. This has high percentage of calcium and magnesium, which restricts its use in industries. The total annual production of *"Vadagaru"* salt contributes 15-20% of the salt produced in Gujarat.



The marine salt industries produce "*Karkatch*" salt, which has its use in both industries and for human consumption. This salt is exported from Kandla to various destinations in the world.



The average annual salt production in Gujarat ranges from 9 to 13 million tonnes. Similar to the country's salt production pattern, **the salt production in the state is done through both recognised and unrecognised units. The unorganised units contributed 16% of the total state production in the in 2003 (Table – 5.2).**

Table 5.2: Different type of Salt production units in Gujarat (year 2002)

District	Details	Type of Units						Total
		EOU	Public limited	Co-operative	Captive units	Private	Small Unit	
Gujarat state	**A**	**4**	**2**	**109**	**32**	**537**	**1894**	2578
	B	**13810**	**23895**	**22144**	**110762**	**180679**	**18940**	370230
	C	**3.73**	**6.45**	**5.98**	**29.92**	**48.80**	**5.12**	100
Kutch	**A**	3		10	2	144	825	984
	B	8810		1330	1219	61217	8250	80826
	C	10.90	0.00	1.65	1.51	75.74	10.21	100
Patan	**A**					37	125	162
	B					4525	1250	5775
	C	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	78.35	21.65	100
Rajkot	**A**			7		58	375	440
	B			1153		16098	3750	21001
	C	0.00	0.00	5.49	0.00	76.65	17.86	100
Surendranagar	**A**		1	80	1	57	325	464
	B		23595	15364	5428	5870	3250	53507
	C	0.00	44.10	28.71	10.14	10.97	6.07	100
Study area	**A**	**3**	**1**	**97**	**3**	**296**	**1650**	**2050**
	B	**75**	**25**	**88.99**	**9.38**	**55.12**	**87.1**	**79.52**
	C	**8810**	**23595**	**17847**	**6647**	**87710**	**16500**	**161109**
	D	**63.79**	**98.74**	**80.60**	**6.00**	**48.54**	**87.12**	**43.52**

***(Source:** Department of Industries, GOG, 2002)*

Note:
A: No. of Units
B: Area in acre C: Area as % of state total
D: % of No. of units against total

The salt production area is classified into five sections, areas licensed for export-oriented units, public sector, co-operative sector, captive salt works and the private sector. The private sector is further divided in two sector viz. Private companies and small units. In year 2002, the export oriented units (EOU) in the state produced salt in 3.73% of the area, the public sector in 6.4 %, the co-operative sector in 6 %, the captive salt works in 29.92 %, the private sector in 49 % and 5 % by small units. What seems very apparent is that in a large proportion of the State Government land, the salt is produced by the private sector.

5.3.3 Expansion of Salt Industry

The salt industry in Gujarat has seen two-dimensional expansion. In the initial phase the expansion is done in physical area in land during which the new areas were leased out on the coast for salt production. The second expansion occurred in terms of technological up gradation and beginning of the mechanisation of the salt industry with increasing participation of private companies like Tata, Nirma and others. **During 1997-2002, the land under different tenures for the manufacturing of salt has increased from 0.27 million acres to 0.37 million acres, an increase of 96 thousand acre. Large proportion of this**

land being used is under the State Government and offered to companies for marine salt production along the coastline. This expansion strategy has marginalised the real primary producers who are dependent on the salt production for their livelihood in absence of any other sustainable livelihood.

5.3.4 Structure of Salt Industry in Gujarat

The structures of the salt industry evolved over a period of last hundred years. The pre-independence era have seen, salt manufacturing by Agariyas on the land which were the property of the different rulers and the agarias were the workers who cultivated salt on a piece rate basis. After independence, there have been marked changes with the ownership being largely with either the Central or the State Government. The major shift in ownership occurred after independence where in the land owned by state and central Government were leased out to individuals, co-operatives and private sector. It is interesting to note that over successive periods, while there has been a change in the ownership of land, but the status of *Agarias* continue to be that of piece-rated workers.

The ownership of these saltpans has also changed the salt economy in the region. Under the exiting arrangements, salt lands are leased to four types of producers, viz; public, private, co-operative and individual manufacturers. The Hindustan Salts Limited, in Kharaghoda is the only Public Limited Company in Gujarat and most of the salt is manufactured in the private and the co-operative sector.

The structure of the salt industry in Gujarat very clearly shows that the private manufacturers dominate the industry with a strong base in the marine salt works. As shown in the table 5.1 at the state level only 5.12 per cent land is available for small units, where the primary producers are directly producing the salt. In most of the other category although the salt is produced by the *Agarias*- the primary producer but they are paid as a labourers. Thus most of the primary producers producing salt are in fact labourers who are paid less than the minimum wages applicable. The salient features of salt production of under various structures is given in **Annexure – 8.**

CHAPTER - VI
The Environment

6.1 Stakeholder of the Salt Industry:

In order to understand the possible areas of intervention, covering socio-economic aspects, it is necessary that the whole process of salt production is clearly understood and the critical points of exploitation be plugged to improve upon the livelihood situation of the salt workers. This necessitated clarification about the roles of the various players in the whole trade. The study classifies two sets of the stakeholders. The players who are direct beneficiaries and ironically the direct sufferers have been classified as the primary stakeholders. The secondary stakeholders are those who play an important and some times detrimental role for the primary stakeholders. Based on this, following stakeholders in the salt industry, each operating within a defined territory, were identified.

The primary stakeholders includes

1. ***The Agarias*** (Salt workers) or primary salt producers who manufacture salt. These *Agarias* operate in either one of the four categories: (i) Licensed public limited companies; (ii) Licensed private limited companies; (iii) Licensed co-operative societies of salt farmers and (iv) licensed and unlicensed proprietors. These *Agarias* are one of the major stakeholders in the industry in terms of income and employment, and they handle all the production responsibilities. Though the *Agarias are* they hardly have any bargaining power and control over the market. No salt maker sells his/her salt in the market, where the price of the salt becomes 50 times higher than production price. Thus the salt worker who put highest labour in salt production end up receiving only 1% of market price as his/her labour.

2. ***The Private salt manufacturers***, who constitute the powerful salt lobby, are another important set of stakeholders. They have their own trading firms where they handle marketing and distribution. These manufacturer and traders manage the entire salt market. There is a very strong cohesion among them, which controls the salt procurement price. The *Agarias* are highly dependent on the traders and private manufacturers for credit, which provide economic power to them, which is used to purchase the salt produced by the *Agarias* on the conditions and price favourable to them. However due to increasing demand of marine salt in the market, the number of traders in Inland salt are reducing at a very fast rate. According to local information, in recent times the number of private manufacturers in Dhrangadhra and Santalpur talukas is on decline. In Dhrangadhra the manufacturers have reduced from more than 100 to 20 within last five years. The withdrawal of these traders has made the *Agarias* jobless. In Dhrangadhra, the salt manufacturers having wagon quota in railways are able to make money through selling their own quota to others.

3. ***The public limited companies*** who operate on a smaller scale are one of the stakeholders in the industry. In the study area Hindustan Salts Limited (HSL), Kharaghoda is the only PSU. The HSL holds lease of 23,000 acres of land and have 300 *Agarias* as its employee. The *Agarias* employed by HSL produce salt, which is purchased by HSL. During fifties the salt marketing was the monopoly of HSL with marketing of salt all over India. However, at present they are facing tuff competition from private companies who produce salt at much cheaper rate. The production cost of HSL is very high due to its binding to provide all benefits to it employees. In the recent past HSL has reduced production from own land and employee and is directly purchasing salt from open market at much cheaper rate of Rs.70-80/tonne.

Apart from these main stakeholders the study has identified secondary stakeholders who are involved indirectly in salt trade. They are:

4. ***The Central Salt Department*** regulates production and distribution operations. It maintains quality specifications, production records, labour and price estimates, cess and royalty records, distribution details and also handles the allotment of licenses to manufacture salt.

5. ***The State Government,***
    a. **The revenue department** that leases out land for salt works through the district administration.
    b. **The rural labour commissioner** under labour commissioner ensures the operation of labour welfare schemes and enforcing minimum wage act. The role of rural labour commissioner has become critical after Supreme Court order about ensuring better living condition for *Agarias.* The second important function of rural labour commissioner for ensuring enforcement of minimum wage act is grossly violated by the industry.
    c. **Gujarat Rural Workers Welfare Board (GRWWB)** is functioning for the social economical educational and cultural development of agriculture and rural workers of the state. It runs 45 salt workers welfare centres in the state. In these centres the activities like Balwadi, library first aid and recreational and cultural activities are performed.
    d. ***District Industrial Centre (DIC)***: The DIC has two functions. The first is related to development of salt industry at district level and other is related co-ordination of salt workers welfare schemes operated through state funds. The application for new lease for salt production is considered only if it receives recommendation from DIC. The effectiveness of Rs.1500 Lakh funds, allocated by the State Government will depend on DIC. Since DIC deals with industry, many people have doubts about its sensitivity for improving the living condition of the *Agarias.*

6. ***The Salt Co-operative societies*** on a small scale are also important stakeholders who are directly engaged with *Agarias*. There are about 100 co-operatives in the parts of Surendranagar and Kutch districts. The salt co-operatives plays important role in providing credit and market linkages for salt produced by the members. However during last decade the co-operatives in Surendranagar have closed production due to non-renewal of the lease and bad management practices by functionaries. There are complaints by the co-operative members that the functionaries of the co-operatives were purchased by the traders by offering them high commissions. The salt cess concessions offered to co-operatives have attracted promotion of the fake co-operatives in Kutch and Surendranagar districts by the private traders and companies. The well-to-do agarias are used by traders as functionaries of the fake co-operatives, who manage to exploit the small and poor agarias. In the entire process the traders siphon the benefits which co-operative receive in the name of *Agarias.*

Salt Co-operatives in Surendranagar - A model of drought relief programme

The history of emergence of salt Co-operatives in Surendranagar dates back to 1952. It was a year of severe drought in entire Saurashtra region. The Government started the relief work in Saurashtra. During this period, there was a continuous demand of relief from villages surrounding the LRK. However, the Government was struggling to identify suitable relief work in the region. A innovative thought of formation of salt co-operative was proposed by Lt. Bhupat bahi Desai (MLA) to Shri. Dhebarbhai, (Chief Minister of Saurashtra state). The proposal was accepted by the Chief Minister and first salt co-operative started in village Bajana, taluka Dasada. The salt production started immediately with financial help of Rs. one lakh by the state bank of Surashtra.

The novel thought of formation of salt co-operative, as a solution against relief measure was successful to provide employment in the region. The success of Bajana salt co-operative was soon replicated in surrounding villages.

7. The major stakeholders, however in the salt industry are ***the traders*** who are very powerful. These private traders who possess the right connections and sufficient capital for the risks involved in the trade, dominate the whole business. Large traders who have greater transport access and control over the salt sites dominate the entire salt procurement process.

8. ***The Non-Government Organisations (NGOs)*** and the activists group, who have been working towards the welfare of the *Agarias*, have also come up as one of the most important stakeholder in the industry in recent times. The NGOs act as a pressure group and also works directly with salt workers. The NGOs intervene in ensuring basic needs of salt worker at work sites through direct intervention and promotion of awareness about salt workers rights to influence policy. Many NGOs have started intervening in the production and market system to ensure market access for the *Agarias*. The major intervention of second type of NGOs is in the areas of credits, production system and technology development.

9. ***The Central Salt and Marine Chemical research Institute***, Bhavnagar is the prime institute established in 1952 with a vision to provide technological support to boost the salt production in the country. The institute has expanded their vision to cover technology development for enhancing the salt production and by-products in the country. At present the institute has established a model salt farm in Kharaghoda, Surendranagar and extending technological support to salt producers in Halvad and Maliya taluka through SEWA and ANANDI. The institute has greater relevance in present situation of salt production where salt industry can improve the quality of its produce to enhance the use of salt by industries and export. However, the salt associations in both marine and inland salt production have doubts about the role of CSMCRI in salt industries. The inland salt-producing units blames that CSMCRI being marine research institute works only with marine salt units. At the same time, the marine salt units and association think that the institute has to do more to provide technical inputs in process and product improvement and in the process contribute to the industry. Both inland and marine salt producers agree that they need support in research and development.

10. ***Indian Railway (IR)*** plays a crucial role in the distribution of salt from the production centres to various locations in the country to fulfil the mandate of equitable distribution of edible salt across the country. IR distributes nearly 40% of the salt produced, in different parts of country.

Refer **Annexure – 9** flow chart to get an overview of role played by various stakeholders.

6.2 Regulatory framework

During the British India salt production/trading was a Government monopoly. In recognition of the symbolic defiance of the State monopoly during the Independence struggle salt duty was abolished and a Directive Principle was incorporated in the Constitution of India that salt should remain free of duty. Salt also ceased to be an article of monopoly. Salt, an "essential item" is a Central subject under the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution and all aspects of the salt industry are controlled by the Central Government through the Salt Commissioner Organisation. But working conditions of the workers are within the purview of the State Governments also.

6.2.1 The Salt Policy

In the post independence period, Government was keen to make India, self-sufficient in salt. The Government tried to develop the salt industry to its full potential, improving the quality of salt and making sufficient grades to provide for all classes of consumers. The Government set up three special Committees in 1948, 1950 & 1958 to review the progress of the salt industry and to suggest measures for its expansion and development.

The 1948 Committee Report was largely geared towards bringing the Central Government in direct control of salt production in matters of quality, prices, distribution and modernising processes. For this purpose, private salt works of Saurashtra, Kutch, Bombay, Travancore, Madras, Orissa and West Bengal and Government salt works of Sambhar, Didwana, Pachpadra and Kharagoda were promoted. To control quality, model factories and research stations were to be established. The policy recommended that all table and a good proportion of industrial salt should be manufactured economically by solar evaporation method only and artificial evaporation in open and direct-fired pans was discouraged.

The Committee formed in 1950, recommended removal of production permission and licenses for production of salt on ten-acres of land and less, to push the production. This recommendation was accepted by the Government as a result of, which a large number of unlicensed small manufacturers came into the industry, since they were permitted to produce, store and transport salt without any restriction, and were exempt from the payment of the minimal cess. This has also resulted in competition between the big units and small producer in the market. The indiscriminate production of salt, by the unlicensed salt manufacturers, adversely affected the organised salt industry.

On the recommendation of the Committee formed in 1950 the Government permitted production of salt on 10-acres of land without any license. The Government also passed the Salt Cess Act, 1953, which provided for the levy and collection of cess on salt for the purpose of raising funds. The Government also formulated a code of principles under which assistance from the cess proceeds was to be spent for labour welfare schemes and development works in salt industry.

In the year 1954-55 a five-year programme was prepared for the development and welfare of the salt industry. On the recommendations of the Salt Committee, in the year 1958, a Salt Development Fund was established, under the Act, to be operated by the Central Salt Board. There is a common fund as above which meets the administrative expenses, measures for development and the welfare of salt workers under the Act. There is no clear separation of the funds and the result is that the administrative expenses constitute almost about 80% of the total expenditure. This is despite the fact that the Government of India gives budgetary support to the Salt Department.

The third committee formed in 1958, chaired by Manubhai Shah, for the first time noticed the need for production of different varieties of salt as well as encouraging the production of all by products. This was the first committee that looked into the status of salt workers. The committee recommendation were instrumental in defining the role of the state Governments in ensuring payment of a fair wage to all labour laws, help set up co-operatives and give them concessions.

These recommendations ensured that all manufacturers of salt had to obtain licenses or register them selves with the salt department regardless of area covered, except those who manufactured salt for domestic or local use. The salt department was thus able to control all salt-producing units located in a particular area.

A high level Salt Enquiry Committee constituted in 1980 made a comprehensive review of the functioning of the salt industry. The committee gave recommendations for pricing of salt based on review of the production costs for different regions. The committee also looked into the operation of the Salt Cess Act and the proposed measures for fixation of wages and labour welfare. For the first time an attempt was made to look closely into the cost of production being incurred by the primary salt producers and their labour welfare measures. The earlier committees were more involved in expanding the area and increasing production to meet the growing industrial demands. Though a reference was made in the 1958 report towards fair payments of wages to the labourers engaged in the industry, it is not known whether the respective State Government took any action. The committee noted that the production cost of salt depends on external factors, which is beyond human control, but at the same time noticed that the amount of price margins exists in the salt rate is unethical. The committee proposed price surveillance mechanism and also proposed declaration of fair price for the salt similar to agriculture markets. However, the Government of India did not accept the important recommendation for pricing of salt, revision of salt cess structure and license period. The Government accepted the recommendations for increasing production & maintenance of quality standards through improved technology; insurance to salt works against salt losses arising from natural calamities and iodisation and fortification of salt; stock maintenance and movement of salt in loose by road for edible purposes. All these are favourable to the salt traders. The 1980 Committee also reviewed the progress of research and development (R & D) of model salt farms including the operation of marine salt farms, research stations and regional quality control laboratories as well as the working of the Salt Department and examined the feasibility of decentralization of salt industry.

The rapid capital inflow into the salt industry allowed salt manufacturers to capture an increasing share of an expanding market and also have a say in policy decisions. This is evident from the fact that two major issues, put forth by the 1980 High Level Enquiry Report on excess margins and salt cess, were not accepted, as it would have siphoned off a part of the profits of the industrialist. The 1980 Committee, pointing out the high margin apportioned by the industrialist and traders, recommended a price surveillance system that would assist purchasing salt at fair prices, so that no form of cartelisation takes place. This allowed the traders to exploit the primary salt producers or *Agarias*, who get measly amount for the salt they produce*. (Uma rani & Sudarshan, 2001)*

The issues of increase in salt cess was again discussed in the Central Advisory Board meeting in 1993, attended by industrialists from marine and inland salt works, salt department officials and 18 MPs from Gujarat. The industrial and salt manufacturers lobby and the Government of Gujarat vehemently opposed the increase in salt cess from Rs. 3.50 per tones to Rs. 10 per tones. Their argument was that Government had withdrawn the subsidy payable to iodised salt manufacturers and it would not be possible for the industry to bear any additional increase in the form of cess on salt. The issue, till date, remains unresolved.

6.2.2 Lease Policy for Salt

Both the central and state Government is responsible for offering land for salt production if land is available with them. However, in most cases the state revenue department allocates the available wasteland for the salt production on lease. Usually the lease for salt production is given for maximum period of 20 years with a minimum application for 10 acres. On behalf of the state revenue department, the district collector has powers to offer lease up to 140 acres for the application recommended by the district industrial development centre. For more than 140 acres of land, one has to take permission from the state revenue department.

In both cases, on securing the land required for salt production on lease from the State Government, every person intending to set up salt works in the area exceeding 10 acre has to obtain a license from the Salt Commissioner, Government of India, Jaipur. No license was required for areas upto10 acre. However, from July 1996, the Central Excises and Salt Act, 1944 has been amended, deleting all provisions relating to salt. The salt industry has thus become de-licensed from July 1996 (GOG, 1999).

In Gujarat, the Government wasteland along the seacoast and on the periphery of LRK is offered on lease. The Government of Gujarat has given lease up to 10 acre to individual agarias, 100-500 acre to Private companies and co-operatives and more than 500 acre to export oriented units and big companies. Prior to declaration of wild ass sanctuary, in 1974, Government of Gujarat and India have given lease in the LRK zone for a period of 20 years. Most of these leases have already expired.

The present lease scenario in the India and Gujarat is highly skewed in favour of big traders (**table 6.1**). In Surendranagar DIC 944 lease application for 10 acre land is pending while DIC has sanctioned 83,000 acre land to different private companies.

Table 6.1: Area allocated for salt production under different category

Category	*India*		*Gujarat*	
	Area in acre	**% of total**	**Area in acre**	**% of total**
Category-I 100 acres & above	448877	88.70	326426	93.57
Category-II 10 acres & above but below 100 acres	23596	4.66	1430	0.41
Category-III below 10 acres	33453	6.61	20973	6.02
Total	505926	99.97	348829	100

(***Source:*** *Annual Report 2003-04, Salt Department)*

The market trend indicates that more and more companies like to purchase salt from open market, as the salt production in the captive units is costlier due to implementation of labour laws for wages and benefits. At present the current salt in open market is available at Rs. 150-200/tonne, while the same costs to the company around Rs.300/tonnes. Thus in many cases companies produce their requirement through traders by offering the leased land on contract. In entire process, trader gets maximum benefits and the primary producers- the *Agaria* gets less than minimum wages.

Table 6.2: Category wise area allocated and used for salt production

Category	India		Gujarat	
	Area in acre	Area utilized	Area in acre	Area utilized
Category-I 100 acres & above	448877	234480	326426	189465
Category-II 10 acres & above but below 100 acres	23596	15351	1430	771
Category-III below 10 acres	33453	22179	20973	11929
Total	505926	272010	348829	202103

(***Source:*** *Annual Report 2003-04, Salt Department)*

Looking at this situation the *Agarias Hitrakshak Manch* – a network of NGOs and salt workers demands changes in lease policy in favour of *Agarias* through a law of agriculture, where the cultivator is considered to be owner of the land. Another change that is required in lease policy for inland salt producing area is that for reduction in size of minimum amount of lease land. According to an estimate the salt worker in LRK uses only 2-3 acre land out of 10-acre lease land for salt production. Thus nearly 1/3 land remains unutilised. If the minimum offered for lease is reduce from 10 acre to 3 acre more agarias will get lease.[1]

The renewal of lease in LRK is a major issue of salt producers in LRK. As mentioned earlier in 1974, the LRK zone was declared as "Wild Ass" sanctuary by the forest department under forest conservation act, which reads that - any commercial activity in the protected sanctuary, is a punishable offence. This has made the salt production activity illegal. This has serious repercussions on the renewal of the pre-1975 lease issued in the *wild ass* sanctuary. Unfortunately the maximum leaseholders inside the sanctuary are the small producer having 10-acre lease and salt co-operatives of small producers. The illegal status and non –renewal of lease are the biggest constraint faced by these small *Agarias* in accessing credit from banks for salt production.

6.3 Tax and levy on salt industry

6.3.1The salt cess

Salt tax was an important source of revenue for British Government in India. Before, 1923, when salt tax was Rs. 2.50/ 20 Kg, the salt tax was contributing 1/3 of total revenue earn by the British Government In India. In 1924-25, salt tax was reduced to Rs.1.25/ 20 Kg. still its share was 9.85% of the total revenue.

The primary essence of the Salt Cess Act, 1953 is to safeguard financial concerns attached with the growth of industry (**Ref: annexure-10**). The labour intensive nature of the industry demands taking care of health, working conditions and basic security of its labour. The salt cess act, 1953 reads purpose of the cess as **"**An Act to provide for the levy and collection of cess on salt for the purpose of raising funds to meet the expenses incurred on the salt organization maintained by Government in connection with the manufacture, supply and distribution of salt."

The Section (3) & (4) of Salt Cess Act, 1953 are inter related, where the section (3) prescribes how and from who the cess and levy to be collected and section (4) specifies the utilisation of the cess proceeds.

At present the salt department collects salt cess on the basis of 'quantity of salt produced', as recommended by the Salt Committee (1958). The Government of India now levies a cess

[1] Discussion with Mr. Devjibhai Dhamecha, convener Dhrangadhra Prakruti Mandal.

on salt at the rate of Rs. 3.50 per tones. However, under the Salt Cess Rules, 1964, exemptions were granted from the levy of cess, on small-scale salt manufactures (units with area not exceeding 10 acres), co-operative societies and salt exported from India. There is also a 50 percent concession in the rate of cess for units with areas exceeding 10 acres but not exceeding 100 acres in extent. In view of the above exemptions, the large section of salt producing units under the category of "Non-Licensed Sector" (Presumably cooperative societies and 10 acres) enjoys freedom from paying cess on salt produced by them.

As mentioned above, the Section (4) of the Salt Cess Act specifies that cess proceeds. The proposed mandate for utilization of the proceeds has wide range. It includes the expenditure of the salt department, the development measures for enhancing manufacturing, supply and distribution of salt. In addition to this, the cess proceeds would also meet expenses for the establishment and maintenance of research stations, model salt farms and salt factories, and fixing the grades of salt, promoting and encouraging cooperative effort among salt manufacturers and promoting Labour welfare.

The Government of India also formulated a Code of Principles under which assistance from cess proceeds was to be extended for labour welfare schemes and development works in the salt industry. The code was reviewed periodically to either liberalize the provisions or to expand its scope for extension of assistance, or to remove bottlenecks.

6.3.2 Royalty

Currently, the State government charges royalty at the rate of Rs. 8 per metric tonne. In contrast to salt cess, the royalty rates are revised thrice during 1993 to 1999 from Rs.1 to Rs.8. In case of no production a minimum royalty for 20 tonne/acre has to be paid.

The royalty of salt produced by leaseholder up to 10 acre of land, co-operative societies holding lands up to 500 acre with individuals holding land less than 10 acre and salt exported are exempted from the royalty.

In the latest development 4% Value Added Tax (VAT) will be added on the salt. This will create an additional burden on the salt manufacturers. The VAT will also increase the packaging cost of the salt. Although the impact of VAT on packaging material will be felt by all packed commodity, the proportion of increase in salt packing will be more than other commodity. i.e. for packing of salt worth Rs. 50 will add Rs. 2 on the packing.

6.3.3 Implication of Salt Cess norms

During the period of 1953 to 2005, the salt industry in the country has seen changes in more than one aspect. The major ones are the production, area covered and no. of units. All these aspects have registered many fold growth. It is interesting to note that since its inception in 1953, no revision have taken place in the norms for salt cess. During the period of 1953 to 2005 the market rates of the salt have increased from Rs. 12-15/tonne to Rs. 300-400/tonne but the salt cess amount remained unchanged at Rs.3.50/tonne. This salt cess that is levied was fixed in 1947, and it roughly accounted a quarter of the production cost of salt (Aggarwal, 1976) has now become mere 1% of the market price. This is a rare and unique example of cess on any industry in the country. More over, the concessions offered under the salt cess act are misused to save salt cess by creating fake co-operatives. The cess concessions offered to the co-operatives and less than 10 acre of salt production units has tempted the big traders and companies to exploit the primary producers.

The change in salt cess act in 1964, where in the unit for calculation of salt cess changed from area to production has promoted under utilization of the land resources available for the

production of salt. In 2003, only 2.7 Lakh acre of total 5.05 Lakh acre available with recognised units was utilised for production of salt. The big companies having lease area between 100-500 acres have cornered the land available for salt production. Since they do not have to pay salt cess on the area basis they can afford to keep land non productive, at the same time the primary producer under unrecognised units have to really on the mercy of these companies for their livelihood as getting new lease is becoming difficult for them.

The present salt cess structure needs modification. The total salt cess collection in the country has increased from Rs.81 Lakh in 1950-51 to Rs. 277 Lakh in 2002-03 (ref: table-). While the expenditure on labour welfare and development works increased from Rs.3.90 Lakh in 1950-51 to Rs. 137 Lakh in 2002-03, while that on administration increased from Rs. 38 Lakh in 1950-51 to Rs. 9.04 crores in 1997-98. At the time of independence in 1950-51, administrative expenses accounted for 91% of the salt cess and they still comprised more than 80% of the total expenditure during the nineties, Leaving behind a very small proportion to be utilized for labour welfare and development works. The department argued that, in view of the exemptions granted in the rate of levy of cess, no surplus is available in the salt cess proceeds after meeting the expenditure on the maintenance of the Salt Organization. Still, the Government of India allocates some funds for assisting the salt industry every year (GOI, 1996).

6.4 Iodisation Programme

The National Iodine Deficiency Control Programme launched by Government of India envisages prevention & control of IDD in the country through supply & consumption of iodised salt in place of common salt for edible purpose. Salt Department has been identified as a Nodal agency for implementing the programme in so far as creation of iodisation capacity, quality monitoring at production sources and equitable distribution in the country. Policy initiatives taken by Government over the last one decade have helped in moving closer towards the goal of Universal Salt Iodisation (USI). In India except Kerala and Gujarat all other state have either fully/partially-banned sale of non-iodised salt.

According to the state order the responsibility of iodisation of salt lies with the producer. Initially, the expenditure for the Government supported the iodisation process, however at present the entire cost of iodisation has to be bear by the producer. The Potassium Iodite (KI) – the fortificant used in the salt iodisation process in the country is produced indigenously by importing iodine. The iodisation of salt cost Rs. 45 per tonne to the salt manufacturer. The entire process of iodisation of salt has been debated since its inception. The two issues which occupy the debate about iodised salt are 1) universal need of iodine consumption across the country and 2) preservation of iodine in the salt till it reaches human consumption. The salt manufacturer lobby is also raising their voice for exemption of excise duty on KI and also demanding Iodisation at the user point for which they have rationale of high evaporation rate of KI under the hot climatic conditions at the salt production centres and during transportation.

CHAPTER - VII
Major initiatives for Salt workers

7.0 Introduction

The salt department, NGOs and salt association are engaged with *Agarias* for improving their quality of life. The major initiatives till dates focus on improving living condition particularly at work site, awareness building among *Agarias* about their entitlements, access to credits, market and technological know how. The state Government and salt department together is a major funding source for schemes and programmes related to improvement of basic amenities at work site. The NGOs engagement with *Agarias* increased after 2001 earthquake mainly through funding of international NGOs like IOM, CARE and CONCERN. Most of NGOs are dependent on funding from INGO except few like SEWA, who works with state Government.

7.1 Government initiatives

The Government initiatives for salt workers welfare schemes are guided by the Code of Principles, which is revised, on regular basis by the Central Salt Board. The present Code of Principles and provides for several schemes to benefit the salt workers, which include:

- Water supply scheme including provisions of water coolers, storage tanks, and water tankers mounted on trailers etc.
- Construction of labour rest sheds, crèches, toilets, etc
- Provisions of augmentation of medical facilities including conducting General Health-Cum-Eye camps.
- Provision of Community Centres and recreation facilities including sports, TV sets and 16 mm projectors etc.
- Provision of or augmentation of educational facilities for children of Salt workers.
- Housing facilities.
- Provision of audio-visual aids for improvement of skills in production of salt.

Notwithstanding the above schemes, it has been widely reported that the Salt Commissioner is providing only for water supply and for the rest, they are depending on the State[2]. Welfare schemes are not a priority for them, though it is so stipulated under the Salt Cess Act[3]. The thrust of the Salt Commissioner is for improving the skills in the production of the salt and its quality control.

[2] It is further reported that the thrust of the Salt Commission is for improving the skills in the production of the salt and its quality control (DGLW, 2000)

[3] As per clause 4 of the Salt Cess Act that there is no bar on utilization by the Labour Ministry of the cess collected under the Act. It is directed under the clause that "*the proceeds of the duty levied under this Act, reduced by the cost of collection as determined by the Central Government, shall, if Parliament by appropriation made by law in this behalf so provides, be utilised on all or any of the following objects, namely: (a) meeting the expenditure incurred in connection with the salt organisation maintained by the Central Government; (b) meeting the cost of measures taken in connection with manufacture, supply and distribution of salt by Union agencies and the regulation and control of the manufacture, supply and distribution of salt by other agencies; and in particular, measures for: (i) the establishment and maintenance of research stations and model salt farms; (ii) the establishment, maintenance and expansion of salt factories; (iii) fixing the grades of salt; (iv)promoting and encouraging co-operative effort among manufacturers of salt; and (v)promoting the welfare of labour employed in the salt industry.*

Group Insurance Scheme for Salt Workers-Gujarat

- Under the Scheme Rs.25000 is paid in case of accidental death or complete disability. Rs.12500 is paid in case of partial disability. This has since been discontinued
- 45 salt workers welfare centers are being run where activities such as balwadi, primary health, sports and culture programmes are run
- State Government is also running balwadis during salt production season at 50 places. Rs.22500 is provided as assistance for the construction of pucca house and Rs.3000 for tent accommodation.
- Financial assistance is also given for serious diseases, for arranging tours for salt workers.

The Government initiatives for labour welfare are implemented through Department of labour and Rural Workers Welfare Board. The state labour welfare department in co-ordination with the salt department implements the welfare schemes for salt workers (**Ref : Annexure-11)**. The Gujarat Rural worker welfare Board implement welfare schemes includes for salt workers in 13 districts and 35 taluka benefiting nearly 45000 salt workers. The welfare schemes available for agarias range from providing welfare centres, child crèches, education, health services and protective tool kits, supply of drinking water. Most of these benefits are given through salt associations in the region.

The three important initiatives of the state Government needs mention are - 1) Group Insurance Scheme, 2) Shelter and 3) provision of identity cards to *Agarias*. The insurance scheme for *Agarias* is operation since 1993 and has covered 46,000 salt workers. This insurance scheme is implemented in association with SEWA who is engaged in formation of salt co-operatives in Surendranagar district.

The state budgetary allocation for *Agarias* welfare scheme has increased from Rs. 500 Lakh to Rs. 1500 Lakh after Supreme Court ordered[4] the state Government for effective implementation of entitlements for *Agarias* in 2001. The majority of these funds will be utilised for construction of 25,000 pucca houses for *Agaria* families around the salt production centres. Initially, a scheme for construction of 1300 houses in Kutch, Patan and Surendranagar is planned. However, it could not be roll out in time due to practical difficulties faced in identification of the agarias.

It is reported that some of the bigger producers in Kutch region do provide certain welfare measures to their workers, but with major focus on the welfare of those who are engaged in packaging and forwarding operations, vis-à-vis the workers in the production sites.

[4] Based on the film "*Namak Ke Ansu"* a person named Mr. Narendra Malav approach supreme court for intervene. After seeing the movie supreme court issues a *suo-moto* notice in 2001 to all state Government, to ensure effective implementation of entitlement schemes for *Agarias*. As a result of this an empowered committee was formed in Gujarat headed by minister of industries. The empowerment committee meet every three months for planning and review the progress made in the implementation of welfare schemes. The committee has representation from all state departments, salt department and NGOs working with salt workers. As an initiative towards decentralization of the committee district level development committees are formed headed by respective collectors.

7.2 The effectiveness of Government Initiatives

The labour entitlements for the salt workers are well defined in salt cess act, 1953 and exist since those days. However, instead of provision of such defined entitlements the salt workers are still living in sub-human condition. The effectiveness of the Government programme is hampered due to lack of identity of *Agarias.* Unfortunately a holistic definition of *Agarias* does not exist. At present all those who are engaged in salt production, transport, grinding and packaging are considered as salt workers. This is particularly complex in Kutch and Patan district, where the salt workers who do perform salt production are migrants from Surendranagar. These migrant salt workers work as contract labour with local leaseholder who is investor and trader in salt production system. Due to lack of clear definition of salt workers, the benefits are taken by the leaseholder. In addition to this strong hold of salt traders and associations that manage to use the cess proceeds for infrastructure developments, which ultimately help the traders. Most of the expenditure of Salt Commissioner Office is spent to create better infrastructure for the industry, by way of construction of sheds, loading platforms, bridges etc. However, sufficient attention is not paid to the welfare activities except for providing drinking water. The efforts are hampered by poor human resource deployment and lack of strategic vision for sustainability of the efforts and remote and scattered settlements. The under utilisation of the available and allocated funds is a major draw back of the state government schemes. The state tenth plan outlay (2002-07) has made provision of Rs. 3350 Lakh for development of salt industry in the state, against which out of total planned expense of Rs.930 Lakh only Rs. 708.50 Lakh could be utilised during period of 2002 to 2005[5]. (**Ref : Annexrue-12)**

The Empowerment Committee (GoG) has a major impact on planning and implementation of the entitlement schemes. The major efforts of the empowerment committee are on use of funds for welfare schemes rather than development of infrastructure. The empowerment committee has also enable to ensure outreach of the schemes to true *Agarias* through effective monitoring. The performance of Government schemes is improving, however it has to go a long way to fulfil the needs of the *Agarias.*

7.3 NGO initiatives and its impact

The salt workers are facing two pressing needs – one related to access to basic needs at the work site and other is to ensure reasonable price for the labour they do for producing salt. Till 1998, the *Agarias* issues were discussed by organisation like Sharmik Vikas Sansthan in Surendranagar, Bhansali trust in Radhanpur and some individuals[6]. The development agencies had very little exposure to the occupational vulnerability of *Agarias*. However, two major disaster events in the region in 1998 and 2001 in the form of Kandala super cyclone and Kutch earthquake exposed the vulnerability of *Agarias*. Initially, NGO engaged in relief and rehabilitation activities continued to work with them providing basic needs of health and education. During this period, the NGOs engaged with salt workers could able to identify the issues related to living condition and livelihood. The NGOs like Gantar, SEWA and ANANDI took initiative to bring the salt workers issues in public domain and work towards reducing their vulnerability by providing services related to health and education needs. National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) tried the first market intervention programme with salt workers on the AMUL pattern. This was the first attempt towards economic empowerment of the saltpan workers. Though NDDB model failed to sustain, it has given an important vision and direction about market access as a tool for economic empowerment of the salt workers. Later on SEWA and ANANDI continued to work towards economic empowerment through

[5] STATEMENT - II-A SCHEMEWISE OUTLAYS for ANNUAL PLAN 2005-2006, Dept. of industries, GOG)

[6] Shri.Arvindbhai Acharya, ex. MLA from Vadhvan town, Shri. Devjibhai Dhamecha and Bhavanishin Zala-union leader are among the prominent workers.

women self-help groups with learning from NDDB experience. The scale and focused approach of working with salt workers increased after, 2001 earthquake. International Organisation for Migration (IOM) initiated the systematic programme for salt workers. The IOM- programme brought NGOs working in Kutch and Rajkot district in rehabilitation programme. During this phase ANANDI, PVK, PRAYAS, YMC, SETU, COHESION and SAMARTH initiated development programme along with rehabilitation programme. Parallel to this, the network organisation like JANPATH initiated networking of like-minded organisation and *Agarias* under the umbrella of "*Ágaria Heet Rakshak Manch"*(ARHM). The Manch took initiative in policy advocacy and awareness building about *Agarias rights.*

The major initiatives by NGO with salt workers can be divided in to four areas

1. Providing services related to basic needs like education and health AS BY GANTAR, PRAYAS, YMC AND SAMARTH.
2. The post earthquake reconstruction work has provided opportunity to PRAYAS and YMC in Kutch district to built shelters for *Agarias* working on a contract basis with leaseholder.
3. Livelihood interventions like credits and market linkages as by SEWA, ANANDI AND NDDB
4. Strengthening alternative livelihood opportunities through combination of Natural resource management and SHG programme. COHESION and many others are doing this.
5. The rights based approach by JANPATH, which is trying to address policy advocacy and representation of AHRM, bring awareness among salt workers about their rights and increase access to welfare schemes.

7.4 Effectiveness of NGO initiatives

a) The Education and Health

The intervention in the education and health services sectors by NGO is proving to be one of the most successful models of improving living condition for accessing the basic right of children of *Agarias*. The education and health services provided by GANTAR though effective, has limited coverage. The model is able to generate awareness about education in the community. Interestingly, the major issues of *Agarias* particularly health of women is related to large number of deliveries and related health issues, however no NGO is seen engaged in working on these critical issues. The *Agaria* families are totally unaware about family planning methods across all the regions.

SEWA has been organizing salt workers since 1990. The organisation is engaged in health related work. It operates 35 childcare centres and a Mobile Health Van that visits the salt workers on the site as well as villages. The health van provides curative health services, referral services as well as immunization.

b) Shelter Programme

PRAYAS and YMC did the intervention for shelters at work site in marine salt production units. Though the shelters provided were able to ensure the safety and better living condition for the migrant *Agarias,* the major issue arising is of the ownership of the shelters. The complex situation of identification of *Agaria* in Kutch is the major constraint faced by the NGOs working for shelter programme.

c) Community Mobilization

The community mobilization initiative by JANPATH through *Agaria Heet Rakshka Manch* and promotion of *Agaria association by Abhiyan* SETU Adesar has mixed success and impact. The main work done by these two organisations is related to community institutions, which are promoted to bring awareness about the entitlements of *Agarias* and provide platform for policy advocacy. The model is in a position to take advantage of enabling platforms such as " Empowerment Committee for Agarias" to push policy advocacy issues. The institution is successful in influencing the implementation strategies of welfare schemes and monitoring and evaluating them. There is a need to increase the membership of *AHRM* in Kutch region to strengthen the organizational base across the salt producing region.

d) Alternative livelihoods

The NGOs in all four regions are indirectly working with *Agarias* on strengthening alternatives livelihood system and fulfilling the credit needs through informal lending mechanism. The major interventions were done in improving the income from agriculture through small-scale agriculture system and petty shops and small-scale entrepreneurship development. However, there are doubts about sustainability of these efforts as most of the programmes are input oriented. The NRM related alternative livelihood in agriculture has major drawback due to drought prone region.

There is a scope for increasing animal husbandry in entire region, however no significant work has been done to develop it as an alternative livelihood system. The charcoal production is another ongoing income generation activity in the region. In Santalpur, VIKSAT is working towards improving the productivity and quality of charcoal through use of Kiln, which can produce charcoal from agriculture waste and gandol bawal. The experiment has potential for scaling up, but would need marketing support under present situation of deregulation of cutting of *prosopis* by the forest department (GoG).

e) Credit, Market and technology linkages

SEWA and ANANDI have taken a different route of market intervention and technology improvement through women credit groups. The experiment by ANANDI in Maliya block has been able to provide an opportunity for women to sell their salt in open market. The sustainability of such intervention should be worked out before expansion.

SEWA has been organizing salt workers since 1990. Currently around 15,000 salt workers have been organized by SEWA in Surendranagar district of Gujarat. The major interventions for salt workers based on their immediate needs are:

SEWA is successful in organizing women for production of salt from Kharaghoda and Halvad. SEWA provide credit and purchase their salt back at predefined rates based on grades. The salt produced by the women co-operative does not compete in open market but instead of that is get consumed in industry by virtue of contract with Guajrat Alkalies Chemicals Ltd. The SEWA model can be replicated on large scale with assuring timely release of credit and better monitoring system for quality production.

SEWA adopted two-prong work approach to work with saltpan workers. The approach has been able create local and district level institutions that provides credit, marketing facilities; managerial and technical support services. These services have boosted the production capacity and marketability of products of rural producers and have enabled them to earn a regular minimum supplementary income of Rs. 2000 per month.

1. Support for tools and equipments to the salt workers: SEWA has set up a tools and equipments library from which the salt workers can have access to the needed tools and equipments.
2. Support for revolving fund: Each salt worker from a group is provided with a revolving fund of Rs. 35,000/- to undertake salt production.
3. Technical inputs: SEWA in collaboration with Commissionerate of Industries, Government of Gujarat has set up a testing laboratory for salt workers to periodically test the salt crop at intervals to ensure quality. SEWA in collaboration with Centre Salt and Marine Research Institute also provides technical trainings to salt workers.
4. Market linkages: SEWA Gram Mahila Hat, the marketing organization provides market linkages to the salt workers.

The major concern about most of the NGO initiative is its sustainability as it is highly dependent on external funding. In the present scenario the funding pattern in NGO sector involved with salt workers is as follows.

1. Most of the NGOs depend on INGO funding for interventions with salt workers. This is one of the most unsustainable approaches. The engagement with salt workers reduces once the funding stops. This can be seen in the case of IOM support programme region.
2. SEWA uses Government schemes and funds for operation no other NGOs are using Government funds. This approach is more sustainable than the dependency on external funding. It also solves the problem of under utilization of Government funds. However, this has limitation of outreach. The smaller organisation with limited human resources cannot able to reach beyond 8-10 villages. Over and above it reduces the efficiency of existing infrastructures for health and education.
3. As an innovation, GANTAR has adopted sponsorship approach for child education programme. The possibility of funding sustainability through sponsorship approach is yet to be checked.
4. The PRAYAS engaged in education has collaborated with local salt associations, who provide expenditure for books, teacher's salary and uniform. This is an innovative concept with approach of corporate responsibility. However, this approach may limit NGO from going against the interest of the salt traders who provide finance for such schemes.
5. The *Agaria Heet Rakshak Manch* is a membership-based organisation. Unless it creates large membership base it has to depend largely on external funding for its sustainability.

CHAPTER - VIII
Economics of Salt Trade

8.0 Introduction

The economics of salt production is governed by production cost, price realised and market. Each of this is examined in detail to identify the critical control points and probable intervention points for improving the economic gain of the producer.

The salt production requires three resources. The land, labour and credit. The land for the salt production is provided by the Government on the leased to individual or company. The land is used for salt production with help of the physical labour of the primary producer having strength to work in hard condition and credit source provided by the trader or company. Having access to these three requirements, one can start salt production. However, the economic of the salt trade depends on primary and secondary factors. The primary factors include the location of the production unit and type of salt produced. The secondary factors includes the ownership of the saltpan, the structure under which salt is produced, the quality, end consumer, need for employment, availability of infrastructure and global productions.

To understand the economic of the salt, we have looked in to production cost, price realised and markets.

8.1 The production cost

The production cost of salt is influenced by brine and labour input. These two varies according to the location of the salt unit and type of salt to be produced. The location can be either inland area or marine area. The production of inland salt requires lifting of brine from the ground, which add to the cost of production. The cost of lifting the brine also varies from one place to another due to depth of the water. In case of study area, the pumping cost of the brine is the highest in Dasada taluka where brine is at more than 70 ft. depth. This on an average requires 11-12 barrel of diesel to produce 1000 tonne of salt. In the case of marine centers, the seawater is converted in to brine by natural process. However, in many places in marine salt production is done using both ground water with seawater to increase the density of the brine. In such cases they need to pump ground water brine. However, in the study area the marine salt centers have electricity facility, which is cheaper than the diesel.

The other factor that influences the cost of production is the labour. The labour requirement depends on quality of brine and the type of salt being produced. If the brine is of low density it requires more condensers, which increases the initial investment of the preparation, which in turn increases the production cost for *Agarias*. In case of marine salt production and inland area of Santalpur where the available brine range from 10-14 BC require more condensers as compare to inland salt production unit. The labour cost for marine salt production center is higher. In addition, the poor brine availability leads to lower discharge, which consumes more diesel for drawing brine.

The salt type influence the labour required for production. Usually the labour in *Karkatch* salt production is more, as there are more than one crop is taken and hence need more operations related to salt collection.

The salt production cost is worked out based on the information collection from various district is given in **table 8.1** below. (**Ref : Annexure-13)**

Table 8.1: Regional variation in cost of production in the study area

Area	*Type of salt*	*Average production per saltpan in tonnes*	*Production cost (Rs.)*	*Production cost /tonnes (Rs.)*
Surendranagar-Dasada	Inland-*Vadagaru*	1000	82900	82.90
Surendranagar-Dhranghadhra	Inland-*Vadagaru*	1200	62400	56.00
Patan-Santalpur	Inland-*Vadagaru*	1200	74000	61.00
Kutch-Adesar	Inland-*Karkatch*	1100	70400	64.00
Kutch-Anjar,	Inland-*Karkatch*	3000	239000	68.30

(***Source:*** *Complied from the information collected during the study)*

8.2 The price realised by *Agaria*

The secondary factors influencing the economic of salt, affect the price realised by *Agarias*. The price realised by the *Agarias* varies depending on the ownership of saltpan, the structures under which the salt is produced and the quality. Interestingly the price realised by *Agaria* in the study region varies from Rs.50 to 300 for *Vadagaru* variety and Rs. 50 to 200 for *Karkatch* variety. The traders operating in the market control the price.

The entire salt production is done on piece rate basis, where the rates for the salt are decided before the production. The rate is decided based on the chemical and physical appearance of the salt. The rate also depends on the ownership of the saltpan. The agaria producing salt on own saltpan gets marginally higher rate than the agaria working on saltpan owned by company or traders. Usually a difference of Rs. 5 to 10 per tonnes is found in the price in inland salt production.

> The economic exploitation of agaria is historical fact. Even during 1902, when salt was sold in market at Rs.2.50/ 20 Kg. the primary producer was getting only 5 paise for producing 20 Kg.

The major variation in the price realised by the *Agaria* is found due to the structure under which salt is produced. In the existing scenario, *Agaria* receive maximum price for the salt produced for the public sector units (PSU). However, there is only one PSU in the study area - The Hindustan Salts Limited (HSL), which covers about 300 *Agarias* in Kharaghoda, Surendranagar district. Presently, HSL purchase salt from agaria at rate of Rs. 300/tonnes. There are more than 2000 *Agarias* associated with about hundred salt co-operatives spread mainly in Surendranagar and Kutch districts. The member *Agarias* gets price ranging from Rs. 100 to 110 per tonnes for inland salt and Rs. 200 to 225/tonne for marine salt. The companies operating in the region offer two sets of prices. In case of Dhrangadhra Chemicals Works (DCW), which purchases the salt from the open market at Rs., 89/tonne, while the Oswal and Silver salt companies in Adesar-Kutch, who offer their saltpan for salt production, offer Rs.55/tonne. The low rates offered by these companies is

due to reducing number of producers in Adesar and surrounding area, which has created a market where the company can get agarias who can work at lower rates. The traders operate in almost all the region and are the major the source of finance for salt industry in Surendranagar and Patan districts. The traders always purchase the salt at a price which is 20-30% lower than the prevalent market price. The traders purchase salt and sell it to bigger trader or companies. The rates offered by the trader range from Rs. 40 to 70 for *Vadagaru* salt and Rs. 30 to 65 for *Karkatch* salt. The primary salt producer are highly dependent and favour to produce salt for traders due to two reasons 1) assurance of purchasing all the salt and 2) timely provision of diesel, which reduces risk of failure.

In the study area any salt trade is done under one of the four major structures i.e public sector, private sector, co-operatives and sub-contract. During the study following price variation were found in the region. Based on information collected during the study, the variation in the price realised by the producer is given in the table.

Table 8.2: Regional variation in price realised by Salt workers

Area	*Type of salt*	*Production cost /tonnes*	*Price realised by Agaria*
Surendranagar-Dasada	Inland-*Vadagaru*	82.90	By-trader Rs. 80 By Co-op Rs. 100-110 By HSL- Rs. 140-300
Surendranagar-Dhranghadhra	Inland-*Vadagaru*	56.00	By trader- Rs.70 By company-Rs.90
Patan-Santalpur	Inland-*Vadagaru*	61.00	By Company Rs. 70
Kutch-Adesar	Inland-*Karkatch*	52.90	By company Rs.55
Kutch-Anjar	Inland-*Karkatch*	68.00	By company Rs. 200

(***Source:*** *Complied from the information collected during the study)*

The analysis indicate that the salt produced in inland region under companies in Santalpur, Patan district is non-profitable, while in Dhrangadhra and Dasada, the rates are higher due to presence of local market and co-operatives. In Santalpur and Adesar, the agarias are highly dependent on the company, as it owns most of the saltpans. There are very few traders engaged in the salt production. The monopoly of the salt companies is forcing *Agaria*s to agree with the rates that are lower than the production cost.

The third factor influencing the salt production is the salt quality. At present the procurement price of the salt varies from one variety to another. The market price for the *Vadagaru* variety is higher than other two varieties. At present the procurement price offered by local trader for *Vadagaru* variety range from Rs. 52 to 90. The Hindustan salt and SEWA co-operative gives price according to salt grade. They have fixed four grades depending on the content of magnesium and calcium. The grade range from A to D with grade “A” having highest price of Rs.100-110 and “D” grade with the lowest price of Rs. 60. The *Vadagaru* salt produced in Santalpur receives lower rates as compare to Surendranagar. On an average a pair of *Agaria* produce 800-1000 tonnes of *Vadagaru* salt.

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8.3 Market

The type of market-form determines the prosperity or deprivation of any producer. As in other unorganised sector, the distance between the primary producer and the market is too large to allow direct participation of the primary producer in the market. It was observed that the *Agarias,* who produce salt, does not know about the market mechanism.

The salt has two distinct markets of edible salt and industrial salt. The edible salt demand value processing in the form of iodisation before it gets in to market, while industrial salt

demands stringent quality. Both this is beyond the control of primary producers due to decentralised and remote nature of production. The high investment and cost of iodisation forces the primary producer out of the market processes. The quality of salt is within the control of the primary producer but he does not take much care about maintaining the quality, as the price for the produce is fixed at the beginning of the salt production process.

Though the *Agarias* produce the salt, they lose control over the produce once salt reaches the processing site. Beyond this the traders control the entire chain and hence most of the financial benefits are accrue the traders and company. The price of salt also increases once the salt gets out of the reach of salt workers.

There is no price control mechanism for salt in India. There is a huge gap of 100 times between the price realised by the primary producer and price paid by the consumer of edible salt. At present the edible salt is sold in the market at Rs. 7000 /tonnes against which the *Agaria* receive only Rs. 70/tonnes. Similarly, the industrial consumer purchase salt at Rs. 400-500 per tonnes for which the *Agaria* gets Rs. 70-110 only.

Since Gujarat is producing 70% of the total salt in the country, the salt merchants from Gujarat control the entire national market price. The situation of large amount of production in concentrated area allow them to work in consultation with each others to create a lobby that can create artificial shortage and surplus situation in the market. This mechanism helps the traders and merchants to keep the rates in their favour. This also makes the salt price very volatile. The rate of salt was Rs. 90/unit during last season suddenly rose to Rs. 400/unit during current season. However due to forward selling practices, the *Agarias* do not get benefit from the better price realisation of salt.

Based on the information collected during the study, we have calculated the profit margins for each type of structure operating in salt industry. The analysis clearly shows that except public sector unit no other structure is making loss in salt business. The main reason for PSU losses is high management and overheads cost.

The companies dealing in both iodised and non-iodised salts, sale their salt at the rate of Rs. 500 and Rs. 300 respectively. These companies have their own crushing, iodisation and packaging plants. The respective net profit in iodised and non-iodised salt is Rs. 197 and Rs. 57. The local traders and co-operatives sell their salt to the companies or bigger traders having crushing and iodisation plant. The respective net profit for traders and co-operative is Rs. 56 and Rs. 24. (**Ref: Annexure-14)**

It is interesting to note that the profit margin is higher for iodized salt, which make it a monopoly business. The control over iodisation process, act as a controlling mechanism for controlling market price.

The market rates beyond trader are not very clear. The supplier from the producing zone supply the salt to the distributor in other state through the commission agents who charge 20% commission on the F.O.R price from the seller. The distributors further distribute the salt to the local traders and retail booths. The details of market chain for inland and marine salt are given in **Annexure 15- A & B.**

CHAPTER - IX
Socio-Economic status of salt workers

9.0 Introduction

In 1930 Mahatma Gandhi led Dandi Yatra to abolish salt tax imposed by British. The living condition of the *Agarias* is still the same as that was in 1930. The *Agarias* are an occupational group that represents various caste and religions and is dominated by Koli (Thakor), Muslims, Sipahi and Harijans. At present people from other castes and communities have joined the occupation. The population of the *Agarias* is the highest in Gujarat as the state produces more than 70% of the salt produced in the country. The estimation of population of *Agarias* is highly uncertain, as different sources have estimated the same ranging from 70,000 to 1,00,000 persons.

The present, practices and policies in salt manufacturing have its implications on livelihood and rights situation, apart from economic and social status of "*Agarias".*

The killer cyclone at Kandla in 1998 had killed more than 10,000 *Agarias* working on the Gujarat coastline along Kutch district. This event has focused the attention of the responsible citizens, community representatives and NGO towards the living conditions of the *Agarias*. The following disaster of earthquake in Kutch has identified the *Agarias* as one of the most vulnerable communities in the region. The increased concern about *Agarias* resulted in the public litigation in the Supreme Court, which has given directives to the state government to ensure effective implementation of welfare schemes for the a*garias*. In the present situation the resource allocation has increased and has strengthened the monitoring mechanisms. However, there is still need for higher level of efforts to make the poor *Agarias* live a life with self-respect and dignity.

9.1 Social status

9.1.1 Profile of Salt workers in Gujarat

The salt production related activities in Gujarat is dominated by Kolis (S.T. in Kutch and O.B.C in rest of Gujarat), followed by Muslims and Dalits (S.C.). Other backward castes/communities like Vaghris, Bharwads, Rabaris, Ahirs and among Muslims Sipahis, Fakirs are engaged in allied activities like transport, loading and unloading, grinding and packaging. There are migrants from tribal districts of the state. The Koli Patels and Dalits, migrated from Surendranagar are highly dependent on the salt industry of Kutch. As mentioned, the workers are mostly from socially and economically backward castes, while the saltpans are owned by upper castes. They are compelled to work on saltpans as seasonal labourers, in the absence of better income generation opportunities.

The Kolis belong to one of the most backward communities in Gujarat, found all over the state. The Chuwaliya kolis belong to Chuwal region. There are hierarchies in the Koli community with the Desi Kolis being the higher ups and the Parakara Kolis[7] being looked down upon by the Desi Kolis. The Nirasi Kolis, owing to their refugee status and the perceived fear from them were given land outside the main villages. Their settlements are separate from the other villagers and even to this day are looked down upon.

[7] *Parakara Kolis are more or less confined to the Waghad region –Rapar and Bhachau and can be considered to be among one of the most backward communities in the region. A study by Gram Swaraj Sangh estimates the total number of Parakara Kolis to be 5,000.*

Similarly, study team came across three-sub caste among the Muslims. Most of the Muslims working in salt industries belong to Raja, Bhatti and Ingorka Muslims. Some Harijan who are not traditional salt workers and they undertake this activity only when they are unable to get other work, either as a farm hand or manual work in towns.

These communities are largely looked down upon by the higher castes. The higher caste comprises of Durbar, Patel and Brahmin. In most of the villages having a mixed population the Kolis live in a separate hamlets in the village, which obviously had lesser amenities than the other areas. However, the Ahirs and Bharwads, considered higher in village caste hierarchy do have occupational relationship with kolis.

The social backwardness of salt making communities lead to their physical and economic exploitation by the higher caste, particularly Darbars, who are historically involved in the salt trade. While the lower caste communities are forced to work on the saltpans owned by Darbars at the rate desired by them. In places where the population of Ahirs and Bharwads are in majority, they have cornered the jobs, which are relatively less strenuous like salt loading/unloading, grinding and packaging. The district and caste-wise profile of people involved in salt trade is given in table-below

Table 9.1: District and caste wise profile of people involved in Salt trade

District	*Salt Traders/ Money Lenders*	*Salt making*	*Salt Collection*	*Salt Loading*	*Grinding & Packaging*
Surendranagar	Darbars	Koli	Koli	Koli, Harijan	Koli, Harijan, Muslim
Patan	Darbars, Brahmins	Koli, Muslim, Ahirs	Koli, Muslim	Koli, Muslim, Bharwad	Koli, Ahirs
Kutch	Luhanas, Marwaries, Patel and Darbars	Migrated Koli, Muslim	Bharwad, Ahirs, Koli, Migrated Adivasis	Bharwad, Ahirs, Koli,	Ahirs, Bharwad
Rajkot	Luhanas, Marwaries, Patel and Darbars	Koli, Muslims, Ahirs	Koli, Muslim, Ahirs	Koli, Muslim, Ahirs	Koli, Muslim, Ahirs

9.1.2 Culture of Salt worker

The harsh living conditions for more than eight months and uncertainty about the success of salt production activity has created strong superstitions, customs and addictions among saltpan workers. The activities related to salt production are guided by ritual rather than scientific method.

For an *Agaria* digging a well is a divine process. They do not follow any scientific method to identify the source of water but instinctively select a place. Many times they fail to strike water

According to Devajibhai Dhamecha, a well-known naturalist based at Dhangadhra, there are seven persons involved in the exploitative cycle of *Agaria*. These are:

1. **Salt trader:** Who provide credit to *Agaria*. In many situations the trader is not directly familiar with *Agaria*.
2. **Middleman:** Who pass on the credit to salt worker given by trader. He also provides land for salt production in many situations.
3. **Ration shop owner:** Who provides ration to *Agaria* on credit. He calculates the interest for entire season and settles final accounts with high prices.
4. **Crude oil provider:** Who transport the crude oil to the saltpans and gets very high price of the crude oil.
5. **Provider of water:** Who provides potable water at saltpans site by charging very high prices.
6. **The president and secretary of salt cooperative:** They are corrupt and have a nexus with local salt traders. They managed to get high posts in three – four salt cooperatives simultaneously.
7. **The transporter**: Who load and unload the salt produced by *Agaria*: Irregularity and mismanagement performed by him led to low prices of produced salt.

Of the seven exploiters, some of them are *Agaria* themselves. For example, the president and secretary of salt cooperative are salt workers also. Devajibhai adds that if we manage to remove one or two members of this vicious circle, the Salt worker will be benefited.

and are forced to move to another location leading to a repetition of the exercise. “Women are blamed if the well turns to be barren.”

The living condition of salt workers makes the marriage of male salt worker difficult. This has given birth to culture of dowry to girl’s parent among Koli community. The amount varies from Rs. 30,000 to Rs. 60,000. This system of paying money to get (buy) a wife always gives him an upper hand. Whenever a conflict arises within the family he makes her suffer by saying that “she has been purchased”. The torture, both physical injury and mental anguish, makes the woman lose her self-esteem and autonomy. On the other hand, though poor, a girl child is welcomed because many a times their dowry becomes the only way to pay-off the family debts.

The addiction to liquor and gambling is common among the saltpan workers. This has serious implications on the business and their savings. After eight months of strenuous work when they return to village before monsoon they are in mood of relaxing. This period when there is no work available for them. The women gets engaged in charcoal making or agriculture labour work, while the men spent most of their time in gambling and drinking liquor.

9.1.3 Community Institutions

The community institutions existing among the agarias are their respective social institutions, which are empowered to take decisions in any social conflict within the community. These social institutions are regional and caste specific in nature. There are no community institutions, which would provide help during either economic or natural crisis and hence dependency of these communities on Government support is very high. However, during earthquake of 2001 in Kutch, the social organisations of Kolis as part of rehabilitation process, helped many Koli families in accessing the Government schemes for shelters.

In Dhranghdra-Surendranagar, the social organisations called “*shree samastha Thakor Koli Samaj”,* belong to Chuwaliya Kolis have raised the issues related to livelihood of the *Agarias* at state level. The social forums in Surendranagar are quit active in politics too. In one of the election, the *Agarias* from Enjar village were able to get the road constructed by threatening the authority to boycott the election. The *Agarias* from *Enjar* village are highly mobilised, which forced the state Government to start the distribution of Identity cards from this village.

However, besides one or two organised village like Enjar, the situation of the community-based organisations is very poor.

The leadership among salt making communities are with the prosperous *Agarias* - who are mostly working as makardam or secretary in co-operative societies. These leaders are local leaders who influence the other salt workers in community. The local leaders i.e. makardam and secretaries play role as a middleman in finalising the salt rates and conditions. These local leaders also intervene in case of any conflict arising due to salt quality, rates and deduction or sharing of losses due to natural disaster. The salt traders keep these leaders happy by paying them good rates so that they can serve the interest of traders/companies during the process of deciding the rates and conflicts. No women leaders are found among Koli community. However, the formation of self-help groups by ANANDI and SEWA in Surendranagar and Rajkot district is creating more awareness among the women. The women have started organising themselves in the local groups. As a result of this process the vocal women leaders have begun raising issues with Government officials and traders.

9.2 The Agaria Women

The a*garia woman* has an important place in *Agaria* family*.* The *Agaria woman* belonging to Maliya, Halvad and Dhrangadhra region do not work in saltpan on regular basis as the saltpans are closed to the villages, while those *Agaria woman living* in Dasada, Santalpur and Kutch region live most of her life in remote saltpans. They are mostly illiterate and hardly exposed to the outer world. The *Agarias* cannot think about producing salt without taking help from their women counterpart. To justify her position she has to work for more than 10-12 hours every day, give birth to more number of children and at the same time they also face domestic violence due to addiction of liquor. Apart from working in saltpan for seven to eight months, women play important role in charcoal making activity carried out during four months of summer.

9.2.1 The Status of Agaria women in family

The women of all age groups belonging to salt workers family become pray to gender based discriminations. Women livelihood is highly insecure in absence of husband due to the practice of hiring a pair - husband and wife, for salt work. The prevalence of this practice, a single woman has to close her option of earning through salt production irrespective of any amount of work experience and expertise in salt production. In case of a widow of salt worker, the life becomes miserable and she has to depend on the kinships for her livelihood. It is said that due to occupational health problems, the life expectancy of male agaria is always lesser than their female counter part. About 350 widows living in small salt production centers of Patadi, support this assumption.

The salt production work demands eight to nine months long period of migration. At the salt production site, the situation of woman gets aggravated, as she has to take part in the day-to-day production activities in addition to the conventional role of house keeping and child rearing.

The study team observed that the eldest girl child bears responsibility of siblings and hence always tend to be illiterate. The women were forced in to salt making activity after their marriage. In fact, in Koli caste groom side has to pay dowry to the girl's father. In addition to this, the groom has to agree and take oath that he will not involve his wife in salt production activity. However, after marriage every woman is forced to work in saltpans. The heavy physical labour in removing salt from the pans under condition of poor nutrition for her and the children is affecting their health. The women health is further degraded due to more pregnancy, that are expected in a situation of high rate of child mortality among the salt workers families.

Among the salt producing families role of women in decision-making is nullified by the fact that there are no choices to be made. They have to undertake salt production or Charcoal making, two options available for subsistence. Both the options have equal amount of hardships for the men and women.

9.2.2 Role of Women in salt production

At the pan site women contribute on an average eight hours per day labour, including help in production cycle. In production cycle, woman is involved from preparation stage to production stage. She has to do tiring work of preparing the *Paatas*. It requires formation of bunds with use of mud paste (*garo)* and compacting it with trampling. Since the quality of salt produced depends on these two processes, in case of poor quality production, the blame is put on the woman. In inland salt producing area, woman bears responsibility of collecting *Zipta* grass if available in surrounding.

> ***"Agariyo agnani madi moone agariya shid ne aali***
> ***Kooee gadaavto ne taapa karaavto***
> ***Paataa bandhavto daadi daadi***
> ***Maadi moone agaruya ne sheed ne aali"***
>
> A well-known folk song in Gujarati, sung by the women saltpan workers explaining their plight. This means
>
> "Saltpan worker is ignorant, mother why did you marry me off to him; He makes me dig the well and do the tedious job bringing the soil out, for days together I have to work on making the salt pans, Mother why did you marry me to a saltpan worker?"

During the salt production stage women also bears responsibility of monitoring the engine and stopping accumulation of dust particles in the salt. Since engine run for 12-24 hours for eight months, it becomes difficult for women to manage the household and monitoring of engine together. Though women contribute equal amount of physical labour, the traditional role of women in production cycle is restricted to invisible, intensive, unskilled work. Similar to agriculture operations where women are not allowed to operate plough that have visibility and symbolizes strength, in salt production cycle women is not allowed to operate Dantari in salt pan.

The type of salt produced influence the working hours of women staying in saltpan. The women working in marine salt production has to work for more than eight hours mainly due to more number of harvesting where women are involved in lifting the salt.

9.3 The Children

Almost all the *Agarias* have more than four children. Some have as many as seven-eight children. The children are favored due to high labour requirement in the work, insecurity about ability to work in old age and high mortality rate.

9.3.1 The status of Children

Child labour and poverty goes hand-in-hand. In a situation where the labour work is the only source of earning for poor people, the child labour becomes an obvious phenomenon. Similar situation exist for *Agaria* child. The remote living conditions for more than eight months not only deprive them from their basic child rights of survival, development and protection but also force them in child labour.

The *Agaria* children have to start life in remote saltpan locations where they face problems of access to vaccination and nutritional food. It was observed that the incidents of child death are very common among *Agaria* child. In Surendranagar and Patan district, death up to 5-6 years age is reported among the *Agaria* family. Many of those who could survive are not able to attend school due to long migration season, except those whose parents have saltpan close to " Rann shala" or "salt pan school" run by NGOs.

Devoid of their child rights and heavy demand in salt work, most of the *Agaria* child becomes child labourers. The household study of 116 families showed that 18 families in Surendranagar, Kutch and Patan involved their children in salt making. These children work from 6 to 10 hours every day. The child labour is more among salt workers in Kutch district, who are migrated from Jamnagar, Surendranagar and Patan. The long distance of migration and high labour in marine salt, forces the parents to take their children along with them. The child labour is lower in Surendranagar, where the salt workers leave their children in village with old parents.

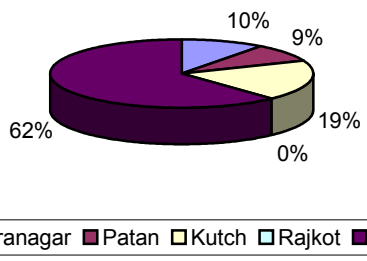
9.3.2 Role of Children in Salt Production

The children accompanying their parents have to help their parents in taking care of smaller ones when parent are working and also extend help in salt production. Usually, children ranging between age of 10-16 years are found bearing responsibility of monitoring the machine, removing dust from the saltpan. The girls are made to take responsibility of helping in cooking and care taking. The adolescent boys are asked to work in collection of salt.

9.4 Economic Status

The choice of salt production under most harsh climatic conditions itself is a strong supporting evidence of their lower economic status. The salt making business is opted only by those families who do not have any other source of income which allow them to stay with society. The study finding indicates that the *Agarias* engaged in salt production

Fig 4: Land Ownership among Agarias in study area



activity from range of less than 5 years to more than 30 year. This indicates the fact that the activity of salt production is a compulsion rather than a choice. Among the study districts almost 50% of the total household surveyed were in the profession for more than 25 year, whereas in Patan and Kutch district people having less than 5 years of involvement indicates the impact of reduction in income from other sources. Considering the migration of *Agarias* from Santalpur taluka to the Kutch, the information indicates that the other better income resource in Santalpur are depleting at a very fast rate.

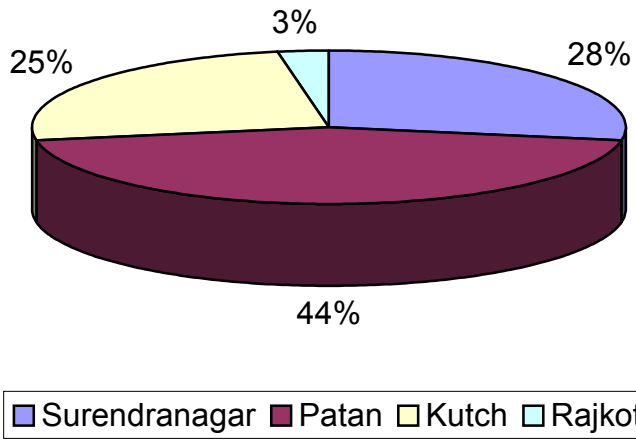
The poor economic status of *Agarias* is further degraded by the economical and physical exploitation by moneylenders and traders. Although *Agarias* are primary salt producers, the indebtedness and other market practices have converted them in to wage labourers. They receive only 1% of market price towards physical labour input in salt making, while the traders and others share nearly 99% of market price. Under economically bonded situation all the labour rights of salt worker are violated. The condition of resource poorness along with low access to information and illiteracy stops them from thinking about alternative livelihood options.

9.4.1 Dependency on Salt production

The communities involved in salt trade are traditional agriculturist, whose primary occupation are linked with income through combination of small landholding, agriculture labour and charcoal making. However, reduction in land holdings due to expansion of the families along with mechanization of agriculture has resulted in shrinking income from agriculture. Almost 62% of them have become landless with the highest rate of land alienation in Santalpur taluka. (Ref: Fig. 3)

Additionally, the region experiences drought every 2nd-3rd year. The situation together has reduced scope of expansion of the agricultural resources and thus the Kolis and Muslims are left with no option to survive but to shift to either salt farming as a primary source of income or charcoal making. Although most of the salt workers interviewed mentioned agriculture as their main occupation, the data reveals 91% of the 116 families surveyed that salt making activity contributed more than 80% of annual income earned by the family. *Agarias* strongly believe that the salt making activity does offer them at least food security for eight months, which is not available to other families engaged in labour work. Thus salt industry offer a significant amount of employment opportunity in the region for those who want to take up hard labour work.

Fig 5: District wise landless Agarias in study area



To understand the willingness to continue in salt making activity and importance of salt making as an income generation activity among the agarias, the survey team asked them that if they get the opportunity to work in any other occupation giving same income as the salt work, would they still like to work in the salt pans?

Their response is presented as below:

Yes: Why they will like to continue in salt making business?	**No: Why they will not like to continue in salt making business?**
Positive: 1. Source of permanent income 2. Ensures continuous income for eight months 3. Has own Patta land 4. Work area near their home villages where they stay 5. Good occupation for this area 6. No other alternative occupation available in the area 7. Traditional work and hence easy to learn and do 8. Good experience of working in salt pans 9. Get Rs. 50 per day as wages only physical labour to be offered no financial risk **Negative:** 10. Bonded labourers hence cant leave 11. Poverty	1. Very difficult job 2. Less Income and more hardships (company pays very less) 3. Agriculture work, coal work is easier than salt work 4. Affects health. eyes & legs are 5. If have independent pattas then no need to work like bonded labour 6. Have to work under sun, in dust- is very tedious job 7. Have to undertake financial risks 8. Lack of security 9. Highly dependent on others 10. Increasing competition for employment 11. Lack of water source at the salt sites 12. Impact on Children education

The salt makers believe that their economic condition has certainly improved in comparison to the previous generations. However, with rising costs and increase in the needs of the family, it is difficult to undertake savings. The debts among the salt workers have increased. The two main reasons that contributed are reduction in profit margins in salt production activity and remarkable increase in the prices of other commodities essential for living. Therefore it is difficult for the worker to gain profits against the hard inputs.

9.4.2 Increased competition for Employment

The post earthquake reconstruction programme have seen flow of skilled and unskilled labourers in the region for construction activities. Many of these labourers, who came from neighboring state and areas that does not offer employment opportunities, have stayed back to work in labour-intensive work like agriculture and salt. These migrant labourers are mostly from tribal belt of Gujarat, who migrate with entire family and work at much cheaper rate than the existing one. In addition to this, deregulation of cutting of *prosopis juliflora* was followed by nearly 40% dropped in market price of charcoal. This has reduced income from charcoal making. This is the second major occupation among the majority of salt workers i.e. Kolis and Harijans. This situation is posing a serious threat to the livelihood of the landless families.

9.4.3 Wage Particulars

The salt production work in study area is given on contract basis or on piece rate basis. Their wages are low and the saltpans are only open for eight months of the year so to make two ends meet they have to depend on local moneylenders, for their credit needs, who charge exorbitant rates of interest. Recent case filed in high court by the union of saltpan workers in Kharaghoda against Hindustan salt Ltd, a PSU, claiming that HSL is paying

wages below minimum wage declared by the Government on regular basis. Though HSL salt workers are regular employees and also getting relatively higher rates for their produce compare to other saltpan workers.

The seasonal workers, work during the whole season and perform all activities on pan. In the beginning of the season the worker gets an advance of Rs.3000 for a couple, In Kutch region, the pan owners of 100 to 500 acre prefer to hire workers through labour contractors or *Mukadams* or *Patels*. The *Mukadam* or *Patel* gets commission of three or four rupees per laborer. They supply daily wagers as well as seasonal workers for different activities. Big private companies employ workers on salary basis for fetching water with pump or bore-well, circulation of water in ponds and as supervisors. The rest are hired in large numbers from surrounding villages as daily wagers who are assigned work as required. These companies hire migrant laborers from other states and transport them to different part in Gujarat.

In some parts salt worker is like sharecropper, who is paid Rs.3000/- every month that includes the cost of diesel to pump out water and payment to the labourers working on the pans. The account is settled at the end of the season. Teams of labourers load and unload salt and transport it between the saltpans and the destinations. The wages of the workers differ with the carrying capacity of the trucks and number persons in the team. The rate for loading a truck, range from Rs. 14 to 17 per tonnes. On an average a team of 15-20 persons can load 5 trucks in a day. The workers at grinding and packaging units are either time rated or piece rated. Daily wageworkers get Rs. 50 to 80 and are paid every weekend; seasonal worker gets about Rs.400 to 500 every week, which is settled in the account at the end of a season. Workers in the allied activities are generally paid at weekends. After the settlement at the end of the season, the salt makers earn Rs. 5000 to 20000.

9.5 The Living conditions

The primary salt producer of flourishing and revenue earning salt industry in India, live under highly exploitative and sub-human conditions. The *Agarias* engaged in salt production spent eight months of a year in remote location devoid of any infrastructure for housing, health, education and drinking water. Children are brought up on salty lands with no educational activities. (**Ref : Annexure-16)**

9.5.1 Health Issues

The health of saltpan workers suffers enormously from the saline environment in which they live and work. The main factors aggravating their health problems are:

- The constant exposure of bare skin to saline water has its consequences.
- The constant exposure to strong sun glare creates eye sight weakness.
- The remote living condition without any availability of entertainment.
- Poor nutrition and drinking water
- Poor access to health facilities

The efforts for promoting safety kits and tools are limited by ways of working and cultural taboos. The operational practices adopted by salt workers create practical difficulties in using the safety kit items like gumboots, sunglasses and necessary tools. The survey

indicates that in Kutch district where the workers uses protection kits are less exposed to dieses than in Patan district where no *Agaria* was found using gumboots or sunglasses. The survey reported severe eye and skin ulcer problems in agarias working in Santalpur area. The lack of body protection mechanisms leads to health hazards such as blisters, burns, cuts, eye burning, falling hair, headaches and many other ailments. Lower legs and feet develop lesions like ulcers and wart. Skin problems occur like scaling, atrophic scars, keralodermia, callositites, cracks and fissures. This results into higher absorption of salt into body, which could be one of the causes of high blood pressure.

9.5.2 Type of health problems

The salt workers have maximum complains of eye and feet diseases. The related problems of sight impairment and blindness caused by the reflected glare of the sun off the salt crystals are very common among saltpan workers. The second major problem is faced is of skin diseases, which range from simple cuts to deep wounds in feet. They develop skin ulcers which are very painful and do not heal up.

The National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH), Ahmedabad, carried out a study of 143 salt workers (103 men and 40 women) from a salt manufacturing site in the Little Rann of Kutch and a control group of 128 person (76 men and 52 women) from a nearby village. The skin abnormalities were observed in 51.74% salt workers as compared to 11.71% control person, whereas the eye abnormalities were noted in 45.45% of workers and 33.59% of control person. In addition to this, high prevalence of hypertension was observed in both – the control sample and exposed groups. The control person had a prevalence of 13.15% in men and 19.23% in women, whereas in the salt workers it was still higher – 40.77% and 30.0% for both men and women. The exposed group also showed an overall high prevalence of hypertensive retinopathy (22.3% in men and 17.5% in women) as compared to control persons.

The poor nutrition and deplorable living condition lead to low life expectancy and high infant mortality. In Surendranagar and Patan district study team was able to identify every third family having case of child death. The poor diet of the workers results in higher morbidity, which include a high incidence of tuberculosis. Inadequate availability of fresh water due to salt contamination of the local water table lead to higher incidence of diseases.

The pregnant women suffers maximum during pregnancy period. Usually the pregnant women stay in saltpan and have to work till last week of the expected date. The lack of nutritious food intake results in complications during pregnancy. The lack of access to anti-natal health service increases the risk for women.

In LRK region, salt worker and their family members have to stay continuously for more than eight months. The vast area with thin population and lack of entertainment leads to mental disorders among the sensitive persons. The mentally disturbed/disordered persons are common in villages around LRK region.

9.5.3 Access to Health Facilities

The *Agarias* who live for more than eight months in remote locations needs easy access to health facilities. Looking at the remote location a special need of health services to the *Agarias* is identified long ago. At present, apart from regular health services available at village level for entire population, a special health services for salt workers exists in the region. In the region Government department, NGOs and Public Sector Salt Unit, provides special health services. The existing health services carry out vaccination and other special programmes.

In Santalpur town, local salt association have created a new referral hospital using Rs. 25 lakh received from the salt cess. However, there is a shortage of staff, which hampers treatment during emergencies. The Government health programme for salt workers uses existing block level health infrastructure with an additional facility of mobile health van, which is meant for regular visits to salt pan site located in little Rann of Kutch. Similarly, the Kutch small-scale salt association has provided a mobile health van to take care of agarias at the work site.

In Surendranagar district Gantar, an NGO and Hindustan salt Ltd. offer medical services. Hindustan salt runs a hospital at Kharaghoda.

Both Government and NGO engaged in health services offer general health services without targeting specific needs according to age group or gender. Two specific health needs in the areas of health intervention health needs of women and psycho support services needs immediate attention.

9.6 Drinking water

The provision of free water is responsibility of Government and companies procuring salt, however in most of the locations drinking water is not available to *Agarias*. In some locations around Surendranagar district, Government supply water tankers in saltpans, but this service is not very reliable.

Drinking water is one of the most expensive basic amenities for the *Agaria*. The drinking water is accessed through two sources. i.e. 1) water supply from local water bodies and 2) purchase water from tanker. Except in Surendranagar, the source for drinking water is private water supply for which *Agaria* have to pay Rs. 400-600 per month. In Surendranagar co-operatives and Hindustan Salt supply water free of cost from local source through pipeline. In Surendranagar ridiculously, the water charges are collected based on no. of *Paatas* instead of considering No. of persons. The water is supplied at the rate of Rs.600/month /*Paata*. The water-tanker supplies water every third day and empty water (approx. 500 lits.) in storage tanks. In situation of large family size, the limited quantity of water available, constrains the personal hygiene, which has special impact on women during menstrual periods. The salt department in association with local salt association have laid infrastructure for water supply, but the supply of water is yet to be started. In Kutch district, the salt association has provided small water storage tanks for water needs of saltpan workers.

9.7 Education

Providing education to *Agaria child* is the biggest challenge. The long period of migration by the *Agaria* family is the main constraint faced by the children in continuing their formal education. The lack of education closes options for the *Agaria* child to develop other skills, which can help him/her escape the vicious circle of poverty.

The remote location of settlement hampers their access to adult education camps arranged at village level. There is high demand for education by the *Agarias*. During the visit to study areas the *Agarias* showed readiness to pay fees up to Rs. 500 per annum if someone take responsibility.

Innovative Schooling...

Gantar a well known NGO in education sector in Gujarat is working for education of agaria children. Agarias engaged in salt production in little Runn of Kutch have to migrate for eight to nine months. During the working season, the children of Agarias have no option but to leave the village schools during migration. Gantar has worked out an innovative solution to the problem. Why not take school to work site of Agarias?

Gantar is running 10 schools at the places of their migration. The schools known as *"Raanshala"* are temporary structures in small tents and huts in the middle of LRK. The teachers of the schools called B*aldost*. The *Baldosts* are mostly the educated youth of agarias trained by GANTAR .The teaching method is also innovative. Each student is asked to make list of ten things they want to know . The common elements from the whole list is noted and explained by the teacher everyday. These keep children attracted to attend the school.

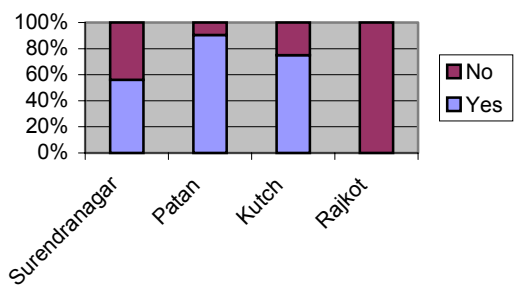
When the migration period is over, the children have a chance to enroll in the schools of their villages. Gantar keep the attendance record of the children so that they can easily enter into the exams at the end of the year.

Almost 50% of the *Agarias* surveyed were illiterate. The illiteracy among migratory *Agarias* to Kutch is 85%. In the four districts the literacy rate is higher in Rajkot and Patan compare to Surendranagar and Kutch districts. There is a disparity in girl and boy child. Among the sample household studied 155 children comprising 101 boys and 54 girls were studying in the school. Almost 45% of them were attending the regular primary village school, while 7% were involved in Rann shala of GANTAR. Though the children of *Agarias* study in regular schools in the villages, they have to leave the school in case entire family is migrating for salt production. In study sample 32% children were either dropout from school or not attending schools, due irregular attendance. The dropout phenomenon ranges from lowest of 17% in Kutch to 41% in Patan district. Such children face difficulties in re-admission and appearing for examination. GANTAR along with running schools for children of *Agarias* also carry out advocacy with education department to provide teachers for the students who have migrated in Rann with their parents. The dropout rate is highest in Surendranagar and Patan district.

9.8 Migration

Migration for salt making is regular phenomenon in Surendranagar and Patan district. The migration starts from the end of September till end of May. Two types of migration take place among *Agarias*. In the first type of migration - every year, 35,000 men and women from Surendranagar and Patan district migrate to Kutch district to work as contract labourers. Apart from them, the Kolis usually migrate within Kutch and only in times of extreme difficulties, they migrate out of Kutch.

Fig 6: Districtwise migration



In this type of migration entire family moves along with children. They live for eight months in saltpan site. Many saltpan sites have pucca houses with drinking water and electricity facility. The information about availability of work is received through the *Mukadam*, belonging to the same community of workers. The *Mukadam* shoulders the responsibility of taking the family to Kutch.

The second type of migration occurs from the villages around Surendranagar and Patan districts. In this type of migration depending on the workload and distance from native villages, the family members shift and live at the saltpan sites. They live in a makeshift type of temporary shelter. This type of migration is very harsh, as they have to work in all type of weather conditions without proper shelter.

Both type of migration adversely affect the education of the children and access to health facilities. The work load of women get doubled during migration period as she has to contribute to the salt making as well as take care of food and water. According to household survey, maximum amount of agarias from Patan district fall in second type of migration. In this saltpan sites are at a distance of 12 to 20Km from their respective native villages. Apart from people migrating from within the districts, the study team came across tribal families in Adesar-Kutch working in salt loading activity.

9.9 Need for Alternative livelihoods for salt worker

During last decade, the inland salt production is gradually reducing. The main reasons are increasing cost of production due to increased pumping cost, competition from marine salt and non-renewal of leases due to wild ass sanctuary. The present status has created a situation where the number of traders in inland salt business are reducing very fast due to competition from marine salt and shrinking market of edible salt due to inclination towards free flow salts. The salt workers, who are producing inland salts are facing alarming situation as on one hand the reducing number of traders reduces the investors in salt production and other hand the production cost for inland salt is fast crossing the limits of economic viability due to increase in brine pumping cost. This has threatened livelihood of approximately 50,000 salt workers including the indirect workers engaged in inland salt production. The study of 116 salt workers under the present study showed almost 51% respondents are willingness to leave the salt making business if they can remain occupied and earn same amount of income.

The semi-arid nature of the region restricts the scope of alternative livelihood for the people from the salt works. In fact the analysis indicate that number of people seeking employment in salt industry are increasing due to reduction in employment in other sectors. It is also true that working in salt industry is considered as the last livelihood option in the region. The people working in such low status occupation must be in it as they are not able to access other better occupations.

Another major difficulty is the sheer number of salt workers who need to be economically rehabilitated. The present status of human and infrastructure development in the study region does not provide such an opportunity. This is limiting the scope of offering any better livelihood options. However, there are following options, which can be explored. These are:

1. To create better working and economic environment in salt production industry with strategic intervention.
2. Strengthening the agriculture based income.
3. To explore some limited scopes of alternative livelihoods based on wasteland.
4. Providing marketing support for fishery activity for Muslim and Koli salt workers.

9.9.1 Strengthening agriculture production

About 40% of the salt workers families own small land holdings. The livelihood of these families can be enhanced through creating agriculture diversification models with agro-forestry and agro-horticulture plantation. The horticulture plantation models can be successful in Maliya, Halvad and Dhrangadhra region. It is reported that some of the NGOs in Halvad are producing spirullina- an algae having medicinal value. This can be a good source for income for salt workers.

9.9.2 Wasteland development

The increasing desertification in the study region offer a scope of wasteland based income generation activities. This will cater the needs of the employment and also create enabling environment to reverse the trends in agriculture production. The improvement and sustainability in agriculture sector can create large employment in future.

The proposed policy of privatization of wasteland offers an opportunity to involve the salt co-operatives and groups of salt workers to form producer companies for charcoal, Ratanjyot- a raw material for bio-diesel or any other suitable species having medicinal values.

The wasteland development programme can also provide opportunity for gottary and fishery through development of fodder plots and ponds.

9.9.3 Marketing Support for Fisheries

The inland fishery in LRK region is one of the subsidiary activities of many salt workers from Maliya and Santalpur region. Particularly the Muslim salt workers are engaged with this activity. The prawns cultivated in the LRK area has very good market demand, but due to lack of access to market, the fisherman are not able to get good price for their catch. The market trends, similar to salt exist in prawn business. The trader offers credit for boat and implements against which the fishermen have to sell their product to the trader. The Government has given fishing licenses to many fishermen in the region. A credit, technology and marketing support can increase the profit margin to these fishermen. Along with this, fishing can provide income-generating activities to other people for preparing nets and repairs of boats.

CHAPTER - X
Issues in Salt Industries in Gujarat

10.1 The sinking status of inland salt industry

The inland salt industry accounting for nearly 20% of the state salt production is on the verge of dying. The inland salt, which is having its major market as edible salt, is facing market competition from the marine salt. For two reasons of quality and high production cost the inland salt is not able to stand in competition with marine salt. The high calcium and magnesium content in the inland salt hinders the scope of accessing industrial market.

The lack of lease ownership posed by uncertainty around renewal of lease keep the salt producer away from investing in the physical infrastructure required for improving the quality of salt. In addition to this, the quality improvement in inland salt variety results in reduction in production quantity (Ref: Discussion with CSMCRI scientist,) and hence is not providing any incentives to the *Agarias* producing salt on piece rate basis.

The inland salt is produced using sub surface brine, which require lifting of the brine. The cost of pumping the brine is a single major factor that brings difference in the production. The increasing rates of diesel along with increase in depth of brine level makes huge difference in the production cost of inland salt. The competition in production cost of inland salt, further becomes unfair in a situation, where most of the salt production centres in Kutch have electric connections, which as energy source is far cheaper than the diesel.

In near future, the recession in inland salt industry will have impact on the livelihood of about 10,000 *Agaria* families engaged in inland salt production. Since the inland salt industry is a traditional centre of salt production, the *Agarias* involved in inland salt production do not have any other skills, which can help them in sustaining their livelihood. In the present situation, almost 50% of the traders in Dhrangadhra providing informal credit for salt production in LRK have closed down their business. The only option they have is to migrate to marine salt production centres in Kutch. However, looking at the trend of increasing mechanization of marine salt industry gives indication of reduction in use of manual labour. The future scope of absorption of these *Agarias* in marine salt industry may prove to be just a distant possibility.

10.2 The availability and quality of brine

The brine is the raw material for production of salt in inland salt production system. The brine, which is pumped from the ground, is becoming poor in quality and quantity. This has major impact on the cost of salt production. The present system for investigating for source of brine does not include any scientific method. This has serious impact on the labour and investment for *Agarias*. In many incidences the brine source deplete during the salt farming season and the *Agaria* have to dig a new well for getting brine. Many a time they have to dig more than one well for brine and end without getting brine source. This has serious financial consequences on the production cost. The failure of well during production system causes reduction in final output.

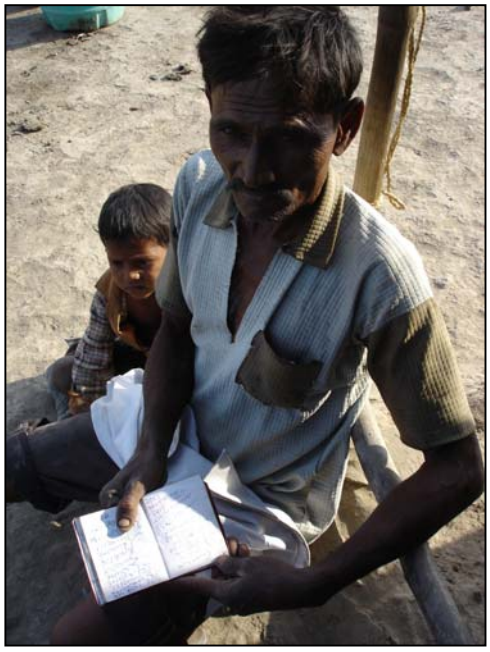
10.3 The identity of Agarias

According to definition of *Agaria* – any person who is involved in salt production is considered a*garia*. However, in practice Government leases the land for salt production out to an individual who wishes to take up salt production and hence any individual irrespective of leased land amount is considered an *Agaria*. In such situation all salt producers ranging in category of less than 10 acre, 10 to 100 acre and above 100 acre are considered

categorised as *Agarias*. The salt production on 100 acre and more is done by the *Agarias* hired by the lease owner. However, on the Government record, considers the leaseholder as an *Agaria*. Usually the large leaseholders are traders who offer the leased land on contract to agarias for producing salt. The registration of the leaseholders as agaria allow them to have access all the welfare schemes run by Government for agarias. This category of leaseholder usually belongs to upper caste that has linkages with government officials. The financially sound situation helps them in cornering the benefits of the schemes meant for *Agarias*. This phenomenon is particularly more prevalent in Kutch and Rajkot districts, where salt traders cum leaseholders have cornered the housing and drinking water schemes. The government had given huge compensation for earthquake affected salt works. In reality, the leaseholders have recovered the cost of repairs from the pockets of the *Agarias* working on contract. This ambiguity play crucial role in keeping the real *Agarias* away from accessing their entitlement as, by the time the information regarding new schemes reach them, the targets for the scheme gets completed.

10.4 The access to credit

The entire salt production in private and co-operative sector by primary salt producers is dependent on the informal credit from moneylender cum trader. Thus interlocking the various markets of labour, credit and produce between trader/company and the *Agaria*. This interlocking has resulted in complete control of the trader/company over the *Agaria*, who get indebted to them and they produce and supply salt to them at depressed rate every year. The easy and timely access to credit for purchase of crude oil is essential particularly in case of inland salt production, where lack of water availability due to shortage of crude oil can lead to heavy losses to the production. According to local *Agarias* one of the reason for failure of Sabarmati Salt Works (promoted by NDDB, on the pattern of AMUL) was lack of timely supply of advances to *Agarias*, which has delayed the purchase of crude oil leading to failure of production and quality.



The interaction with the primary producers in Halvad revealed that *Agarias* have option to obtain credit from SEWA co-operative or from trader. In such situation primary producer prefers to take credit from trader. The main reason forwarded is that the trader continues to provide even if some thing wrong happen with quality. In similar case SEWA stops offering credit for the next season.

The primary producer requires credit for two main purpose of purchases i.e. drinking water and crude oil. Both of which require timely access to money. The private traders manage these two credit needs of *Agarias* without charging any interest, against which they purchase the entire produce at much cheaper rate.

The participation of formal banking sector in salt industry is limited to big companies who own the assets in the form of machinery, land and plants. The lack of small primary producers' access to credit from formal banking sector is lack of security that is asked by the banks against credit.

10.5 Technology input for up gradation

The technology used for salt production has not changed except replacement of bullock driven draft for water pumping by diesel engine. Apart from this single change the entire salt production system is unchanged since many years. Similarly, the process of salt making and implements used too has not changed. The lack of technological up-gradation in the production system and implements keeps the production level very low. One reason for no demand for technology up gradation must be to due to, free and easy access to raw material i.e. saline water, which does not put the resources used at risk. The lack of technology for up gradation not only affects the salt quantity, but it also affects the quality of the production. In case of inland salt (*Vadagaru*) the production is done using total crystallization method which lead to concentration of Magnesium and Calcium impurities in salt, that makes salt unsuitable for industrial use. Thus lack of technological inputs curtails the industrial market for *Vadagaru* salt.

10.6 Access to Basic amenities

At most of the locations across the little Rann of Kutch, the *Agarias* living at the saltpans pay proportionately very high price for accessing the basic amenities like health and drinking water. For e.g. the average cost of drinking water purchased for one family per month ranges from Rs. 400-600, which makes 15 to 20% of the monthly advance (we can call it earning) Rs.3000. In contrast to this, the same amenity is accessed in village or town on highly subsidized rate, which does not even, equals earning of one-person day.

Although drinking water is available by paying high cost, the health services are very difficult to access even with paying high cost. The Government health infrastructure across the region is paralysed either due to shortage of staff or absence of staff to run the infrastructure. The salt workers have maximum complains of eye and feet diseases. The related problems of sight impairment and blindness caused by the reflected glare of the sun off the salt crystals are very high. The second major problem is faced of skin diseases, which range from simple cuts to deep wounds in feet. They develop skin ulcers which are very painful and do not heal up.

The scenario in education is worst in areas except in location where NGO run the schools in desert. Thus education remains a distant dream for child of *Agaria* as far as he continues working in this profession.

10.7 Risk against Disaster

The *Agarias* working in saltpans in coastal area are highly vulnerable to cyclone. The number of *Agarias* killed during 1998 cyclone is unknown. The *Agarias* live for more then eight month on highly vulnerable location and faces maximum risk of being affected in case of cyclone. However there is no life insurance coverage available to the *Agarias*. The study team have not come across any *Agaria* having life insurance. Similar to human life, the salt production is also highly susceptible to the climatic conditions. Under high rainfall conditions produced salt tends to wash out. Under normal rainfall condition 8-10% salt is washed out which is stored under open sky. There are no insurance schemes available for salt. The lack of insurance coverage put *Agarias* in a debt-ridden situation in case of any disaster.

10.8 Distribution of Salt

The distribution of salt takes place to the various destinations of consumption and for export through railways, by roads and sea. Apart from domestic salt distribution, railways also offer its services for the salt export to adjoining Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. Figure.3 showing salt distribution by different modes for period 2001 to 2003, indicate reduction in salt transported by rail. The railways offer subsidy on the freight for distribution of salt ranging from 10% to 25%. In the rail budget 2003, 135% increased in rail fright for salt was imposed. This has adversely affected the salt industry in Kutch region during 2004. As a result of the increase about 4000 salt manufacturing units in Kutch are forced to close down and an equal number of units are now facing closure (Ref; Economic times August, 2004). The railway freight is a decisive factor in pricing the salt produced at different locations. The increased tariff rates has created an advantageous situation for salt producers located at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu and Nagore in Rajasthan, as they get buyers in nearby areas compare to Gujarat and hence their market rates are cheaper than salt produced in Gujarat. Even in case of dispatch to Assam or West Bengal, producers in Rajasthan have to pay the Railways only half of what the Gujarat producers dole out.

As a result, the salt producers in Kutch are bearing losses on the selling price. While the cost of production is Rs 125 per tonne, the selling price is sometime as low as Rs 100 per tonnes. According to traders, the Railways supply more wagons for transportation of salt during the off-season that is between July and November. During the peak season, however, the number of wagons conspicuously decline.

Any change in railway policies regarding freight and availability of wagons lead to lowering of labour rates at production centres as there will be surplus stock available in the market. This is an advantage situation for trader and manufacturer to negotiate with the salt producing *Agarias*. In the absence of any other livelihood income source, *Agarias* have to agree to rates and terms and conditions proposed by manufacturers and credit providers.

10.9 Human V/s Environment issue in LRK

The plantation of "gando bawal" by forest department in LRK, is the main culprit which reduced area of murad grass the main food of wild ass, which has reduced the population of wild ass.

The inland salt industry is facing two major problems linked with environmental issues in the region, which threatens the existence of inland salt industry in Gujarat. The problem of availability of brine is posing big threat to the inland salt industry as it can stop the production of the salt itself. The issue of availability of brine is discussed in the previous chapters. The second and most threatening issue is the conflict of interest between in the environmentalist and the salt producers about the wild ass sanctuary and salt production in LRK. Looking at the nature of the issue the researcher believe that both issues have solution.

After declaration of wild ass sanctuary in little Rann of Kutch, in 1973, the lease of land given earlier for salt production are not renewed. Of the total land leased for salt production falling under the wild ass sanctuary, the salt production on 34% and 21% of land is carried out by Co-operative and small units respectively. The delay in decision-making regarding salt production activity in LRK region is suspending the process of lease renewal. Under this situation the poor primary producers who own lease in LRK region is confused about the future. At present, the salt produced by the *Agarias* on the leased land is illegal production. Interestingly, however the salt department and state government recognize the production of salt in LRK as legal and take cess and royalty on the salt produced. The illegal status of salt production creates biggest hurdle for *Agarias* in accessing credit from the formal financial

"The wild asses are destroying the agriculture crops in the irrigated area around Dhrangadhra. The population of the wild ass is highest around Dhrangadhra".

system for salt production. This increases *Agarias* dependency on local traders who in turn bind them with conditions to sell their produce, sharing in loss and transportation of salt. This all together reduces their income by 30-40%, compare to the prevalent market rates.

10.9.1 The Little Rann of Kutch

LRK, spread over more than 4840.89 Sq. Km is a unique land feature, which has evolved due to past geological event. The unique environmental condition in the LRK provides habitat for wild ass, varieties of reptiles and other creatures. The wild ass is identified as endangered species in the region. On the other hand, it also provides flat land with shallow water of high salinity, which is favorable for salt production.

The history of salt production in LRK dates back to time immemorial. The rights over salt manufacturing in LRK region was granted to the salt producers by the erstwhile rulers of Surendranagar and Kutch. The British Government also continued to recognize these rights until they intervene in restricting the quantity of salt produced to safeguard the interest of salt exporting companies from abroad.

10.9.2 The Wild Ass sanctuary issue

"The population of wild ass in LRK has increased from 362 to 3500 in spite of salt production activity. This suggests that the salt activity does not affect the wild ass."

The state forest department declared the LRK region as wild ass sanctuary in 1973[8]. As a result of this development the revenue department has closed the process of issuance of new lease and renewal of existing lease for saltpans in the LRK. The declaration of sanctuary has affected the salt production units working in Surendranagar to Bhachau and Rapar taluka Kutch. This has made the entire salt production in LRK as "unauthorized production" and the lease owners have become "unauthorized occupants". The illegal status of operation has affected 1651 saltpan covering 1,11,491 acre land under private traders, salt co-operatives and small (less than 10 acres) salt producer. Overall, issue has affected more than 50,000 salt workers who are directly or indirectly involved in salt production activities in the region. In addition, nearly 1500-2000 fishermen, who catch prawns in the region, are affected. In present situation, majority of issued lease have expired, but they have continued the salt production.

The problem is compounded by a Public Interest Litigation's filed in the Gujarat High Court, in which Government of Gujarat is reported to have filed an affidavit stating that the Government has no intension of de-notifying the sanctuary, putting the future of salt workers in the area into uncertainty. (Uma Rani and Sudershan Iyanger, 2001)

[8] In 1973, the area covering Little Raan of Kutch ands adjoining areas are declared as a wild ass sanctuary under the Gujarat wild animals and wild birds (protection) act, 1963.

10.9.3 The impact of sanctuary on livelihood

The sanctuary borders 107 villages covering Surendranagar, Rajkot, Patan and Kutch districts. Due to arid and dry region, the agriculture operations are limited to some sporadic irrigated pockets around Dhrangadhra and Bhachau taluka. The people living in the villages around LRK are dependent for employment on salt manufacturing and fishing activity. At present there are about 74 villages on the border of LRK engaged in salt production. The salt manufacturing activity has been stopped in many villages in Halvad, Dhrangadhra and Maliya taluka. In village Jogad of Halvad taluka were 12 salt co-operatives producing salt a decade ago, but now they have stopped the salt production as lease were not renewed. In many villages of Halvad and Dhrangadhra taluka, the village wasteland is also covered under the wild ass sanctuary, which has reduced the villagers' access to wasteland. The people, dependent on charcoal production have to bribe the forester for cutting the *prosopis* and graze their animals on the village land covered under sanctuary. The fisherman mostly, Muslims from Maliya taluka are engaged with fishing in this region during monsoon are also facing similar situation.

The area around Dhrangadhra has good irrigation facility. The agriculturist in the region around Kuda and Nimaknagar complain that the wild ass and dear destroy the agriculture crops in the region. They have to stay in the field during the crop season other wise the entire crop gets damaged.

10.9.4 The Debate

The issue of wild ass V/s Agaria is debated since the formation of the sanctuary. The environmentalist favour throwing the salt workers out of the sanctuary area while the salt workers argument is that they the growing population of wild ass instead of continued salt production activity indicate that the salt production does not create any interference for proliferation of wild ass. There are people who believe that the interest of both the interest group should be addressed. In 1999 a detail Ecological Study of the wild ass sanctuary was carried out by GEER foundation. The report did mentioned about the negative impact of salt production on wild life and flora, but also proposed demarcation of salt zones in the sanctuary area. The salt zones propose to cover an area of 58,892 hectares (1,42,518 acre) within the sanctuary area are proposed in Surendranagar, Patan, Kutch and Rajkot. The details of the zones are given in **table-10.1**. The report indicates the salt production activity in these zones can be allowed with shifting of some of the existing saltpan in the region. However, the affidavit by the state Government against the PIL is stopping the state Government to declare this area as de-notified area. Similarly Mr. Arvind Acharya (Ex. MLA) who has in depth study of salt industry in LRK has opinion that "There is a beautiful co-existence between the wild ass and salt workers is possible in the region, since the wild ass does not eat salt and the salt workers does not kill wild ass". In discussion with him he suggested that if small area of about 8-10% demarcated for salt industry would take care of livelihood of the people dependent on LRK for salt production.

> *"There is a beautiful co-existence between the wild ass and salt workers. The wild ass does not eat salt and the salt workers does not kill wild ass"*

Table 10.1 : Proposed zones for salt works in Surendranagar, Patan, Rajkot and Kutch district.

Sr. No.	*District*	*Zone*	*Area in ha.*	*Location*
1	Surendranagar	Tikar	2,775	In north of Nava Ghantila, Tikar and Khod
2		Ejal-Koparni	5,638	In North and NW of Ejal, Malania and Koparni
3		Kuda_sultanpur	33,225	In north of Kuda, Nimaknagar, Narali, Jesra,Malwan,Thala and Sultanpur
4		Jinjuwada	2,658	West of Jinjuwada village
5	Patan	Santalpur	2,720	In SW part of Jiladiya Bet and in east of Piparala village
6	Kutch	Hadikiya creek	8,880	In the west of railway bridge of Surajbari and North of Hidkiya creek
7	Rajkot	Sothern creek zone	2,820	SW of WAS village
		Total	58,892 (including for roads in Surendranagar)	

(***Source:*** *Ecological survey of wild ass sanctuary, 1999, GEER foundation)*

CHAPTER - XI
The path ahead...

11.0 Path Ahead:

The primary focus of the study was to arrive at deeper understanding of life and living of agarias in the context of salt industry and design possible interventions to improve their quality of life.

The broad strategy on the one hand is to address the issues of the livelihood by enhancing productivity and income through technical, credit and market interventions as well as explore alternative livelihoods and on the other increases their access to basic needs like water, shelter, health and education.

Based on earlier discussions five broad areas of interventions emerge.

11.1 Livelihood aspects:

The major issues in inland salt productions are:

Improvement in present salt production system

1. Impurities in salt.
2. Higher production costs due to heavy fuel costs.
3. Uncertainty of lease title leading to limited or no investment in infrastructure (mainly due to conflict arising out of wild life sanctuary).
4. Risk involved in possible failure of brine well.
5. Risk due to natural calamities and failure of salt crop.
6. Dependence for credit on traders and large salt manufactures.
7. Problems of transportation facilities road and railway.
8. Limited or no access to markets and market information.

The strategy to improve livelihood conditions should include efforts for cost and risk reduction, productivity enhancement and better realization of produce.

Following measure are proposed:

1. Resolution of ownership issues and access to land on lease for longer period.
2. Reduction of costs by increasing access to institutional credit (SHG?), alternative source of energy (gas/solar pumps etc.) to reduce energy costs.
3. Improvement of production processes to reduce impurities and production outputs.
4. Insurance against failure of crop due to natural calamities.
5. Professional technical services to identify sites with possibilities of sufficient and sustained quantity of brine.
6. Access to reliable salt transportation services. (Collective transportation facility partly owned by the agarias?)
7. Setting up Community Resource Center to act as training, research, extension and service infrastructure for salt and related activities.

Under present condition asymmetry in information is resulting in problems of accessing entitlements, increase risk in livelihood activity, elimination from the process of decision making and establishing the rights. The asymmetry of information can be reduced through creating a platform for easy access to information which would help agarias improve their

income, reduce financial risk in salt production. A multi-facility center can be created which can offer following service

1. A salt quality-testing laboratory which can act as a tool for negotiating the rate.
2. Geohydrological survey service to reduce risk of failure of wells for brine.
3. Transport service for salt and other commodity.
4. Provide information and market linkages for primary producers.
5. Research and technology development support system for salt trade.
6. Support system for lab to field and field to lab research projects for research institute.
7. Credit and market linkage facility for unorganized trades in the region.
8. Training and awareness programme for agarias, charcoal making and fisheries.

Alternative Livelihood initiatives:

1. Ownership and sale of by-products by agarias.
2. Access and development of wasteland and common property resources.
3. Improvement in agriculture and fisheries activities being carried out by agarias during time other than salt production (June-September).
4. Transportation services.
5. Cottage industries to address basic needs of the region.
6. Exploration of saltpans for cultivation of food for fish seeds.

11.2 Accessing Basic needs

Another major concern is limited or no access to basic needs to live life with human dignity. One observes poor access and quality of services of shelter, water, health and education. The harsh conditions and remote areas of habitation make it difficult to ensure delivery of services.

There is no dearth of schemes the question is of effective implementation. In order to ensure effective implementation and wider spreads of services following suggestions are made:

1. Identification and registration of agarias.
2. Wide spread information dissemination and awareness generation about entitlements among agarias.
3. Initiation an strengthening of organisations agarias at various levels, which can understand, articulate and address the issues of exploitation and inhuman living conditions. (Agaria Hitrakshak Munch)
4. Initiation of community based health workers with special focus on health needs of women and different age groups. Need to focus on physiological counseling support.
5. Pilot projects on nutrition garden for agaria family in LRK.
6. In education up scaling of Rann Shala (desert school) of GANTAR and establishment of boarding schools for both boys and girls.
7. Special mobile shelters with water storage facilities.
8. Improvement in design of tools for salt making.
9. Effective implementation of public distribution system with greater monitoring by community based groups and NGOs. Explore possibilities of setting up grain banks system.
10. Entertainment networks for agarias.
11. Access to entitlements can be
    - Land allotment priority to experienced agaria.
    - Emergency shelter scheme for agarias working in marine salt industries.
    - Producer Right on the brine.
    - Create enabling environment for policy advocacy for agarias
    - Mukadam sensitisation programme.

- Census of agarias in Gujarat.
- Standardization of wages according to minimum wage act.
- Electrification and drinking water in LRK.
- Minimum support price for salt.
- Promotion of railway quota.

Various actors including CBOs, NGOs, Technical service providers, research institutions, Government organisations and private sector organisations could collectively take the above-mentioned initiatives.

CARE shared the finding and recommendations of the study in stakeholders workshop organised on 19th May 2005. The major recommendations of the workshop are:

a. Setting up of Township

The saltpan workers live in remote and scattered areas where it is difficult to ensure doorstep delivery of benefits and sustainable development. The strong recommendation came from the government that possibility of creating a township for saltpan workers should be explored. For this purpose government may consider setting up Coastal Area Development Authority (which specifically include Rann of Kutch). About 1000-2000 hectares of land can be developed with residential facilities and infrastructure for schools, hospitals and other amenities, so that it is feasible and possible to target the needs of the salt workers. The salt workers can become a part of the township on a voluntary basis. This would make the improvement in the salt quality and also would result in producing valuable by-products from the waste of brine. Cost could also be reduced by developing better method to reduce seepage of brine in the saltpans.

b. Establishing salt workers Board

The allocations by the government for the saltpan workers generally end up spending on infrastructure and benefit goes to the processing units. In order that interest of salt workers are served an expenditure is directly incurred on them, a separate board should be set up for the welfare of Salt Pan Workers.

c. Empowered Committee

An empowered committee has already been established under the Industries Department. To adequately represent the needs and welfare of the salt workers, a sub-committee can be established, with Agariya Heet Rakshak Manch (Network of like-minded organizations and Salt Pan Workers created to advocate for the rights of Salt Pan Workers) playing a central role in it. CARE will also be one of the members of the Empowered Committee to take ongoing initiatives forward.

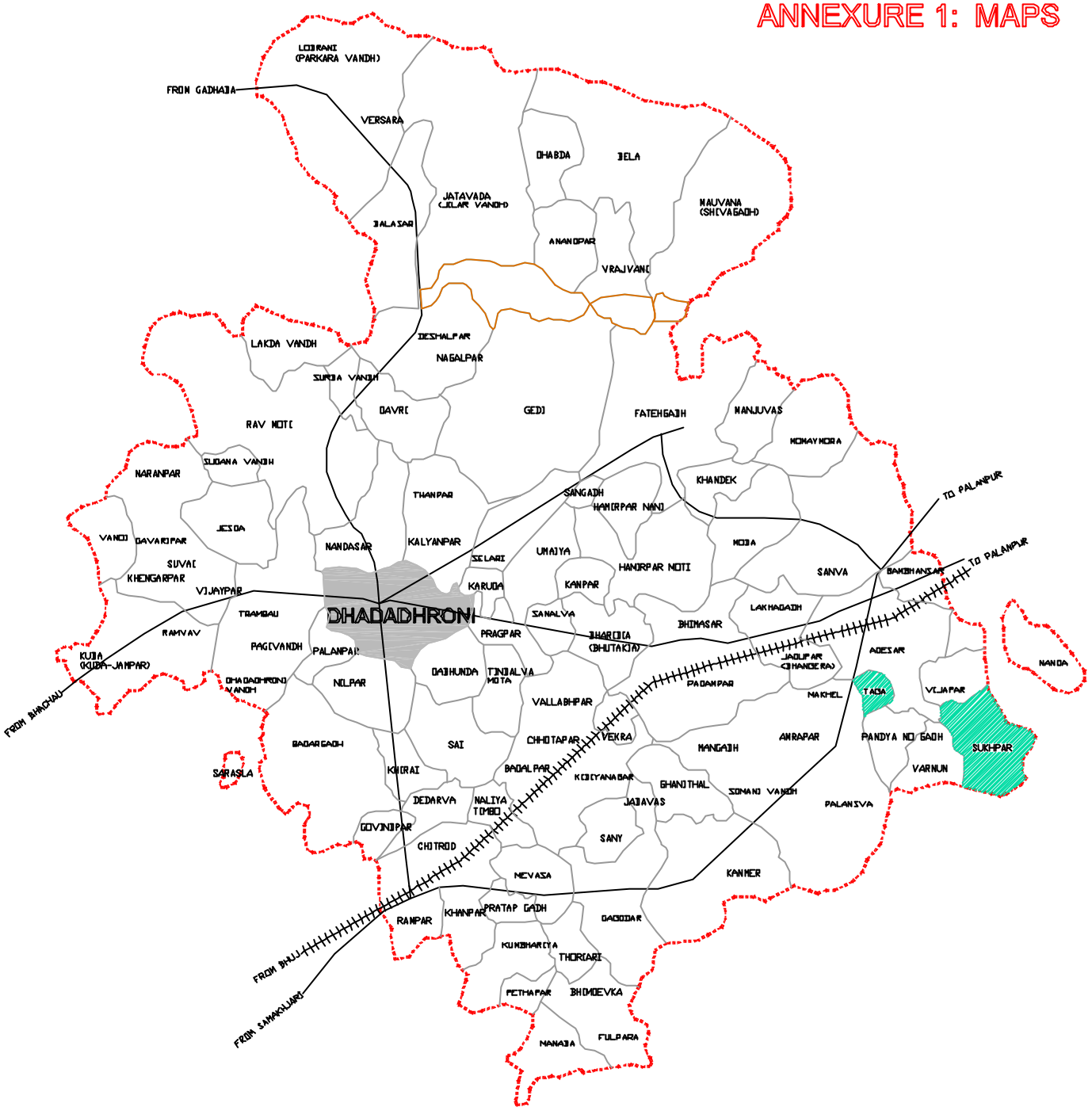
d. Identity of salt workers:

The issue of proper identification of the salt workers has major ramification for them as they are often excluded from government benefits and welfare schemes. The Manch, in consultation with the government will draw up a list of eligibility criteria for the agaria workers and will identify those workers that can be included in the list. The list so consolidated may be submitted to the Industries and Labor Department of State Government.

e. Issuance of Licenses to Salt workers:

In view of reported divergence in allocation of licenses, the department must initiate action and should consider canceling all the previous issued licenses if they are not salt producers. Fresh licenses will be issued to agarias based on their proper identification. (For details of workshop, Pls. refer **Annexure – 17**)

ANNEXURE 1: MAPS



LEGEND

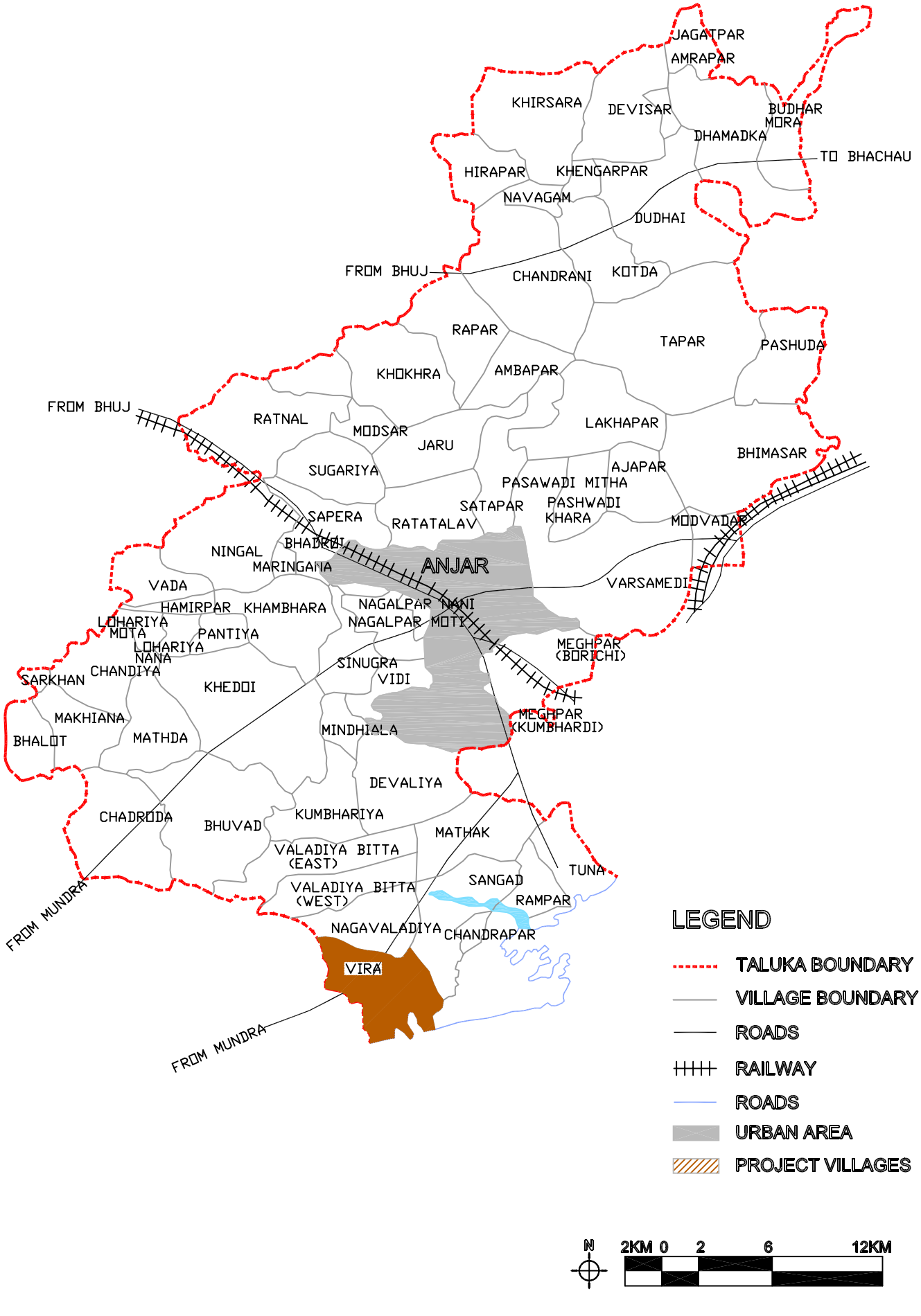
- TALUKA BOUNDARY
- VILLAGE BOUNDARY
- ROADS
- RAILWAY
- RIVER
- URBAN AREA
- PROJECT VILLAGES

N

3KM 0 3 9 18KM

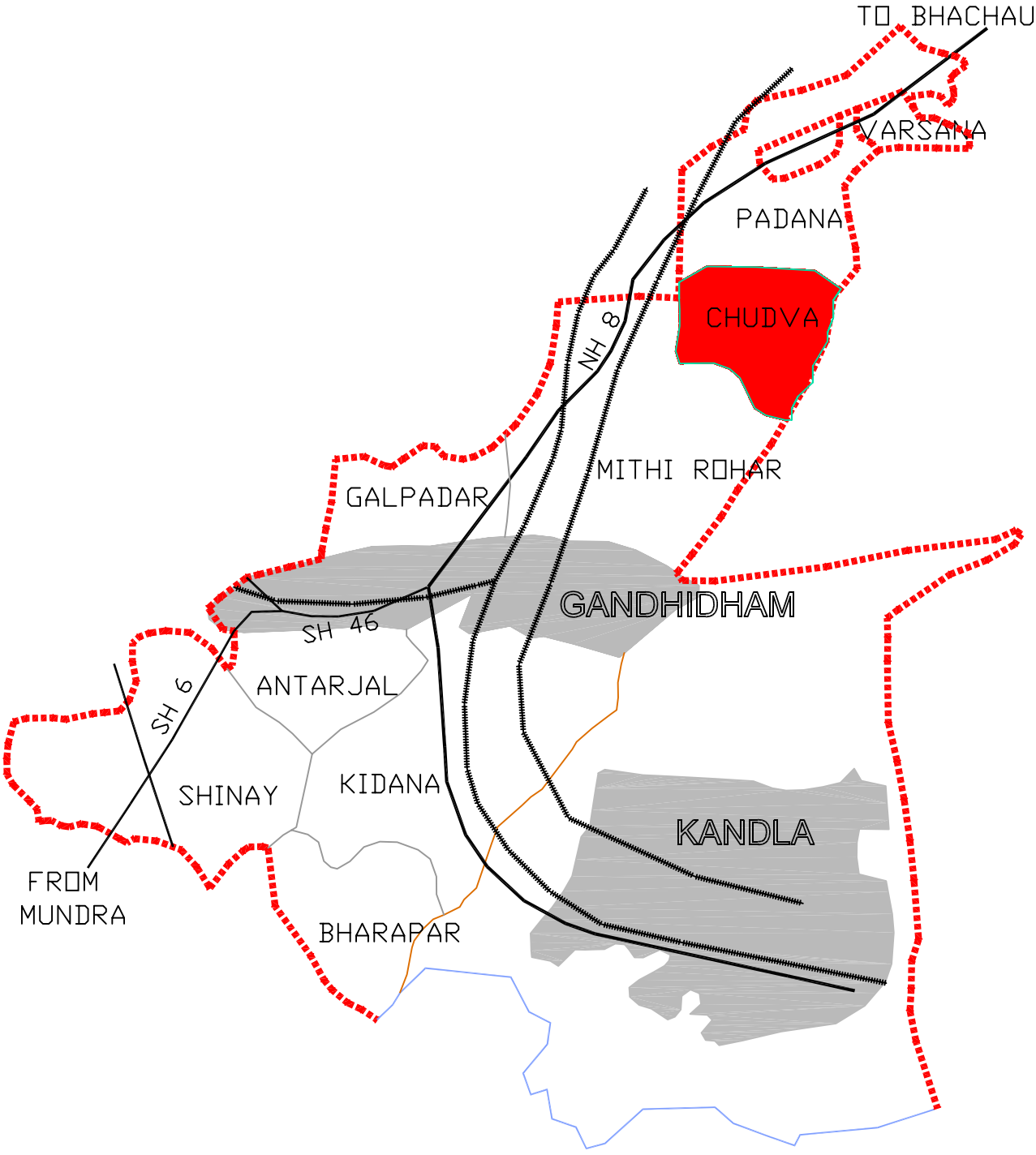
MAP 1 RAPAR TALUKA BASE MAP (KACHCHH DISTRICT)

MAP SHOWING VILLAGES COVERED UNDER THE STUDY ON SALT WORKERS



MAP 2 ANJAR TALUKA BASE MAP (KACHCHH DISTRICT)

MAP SHOWING VILLAGES COVERED UNDER THE STUDY ON SALT WORKERS

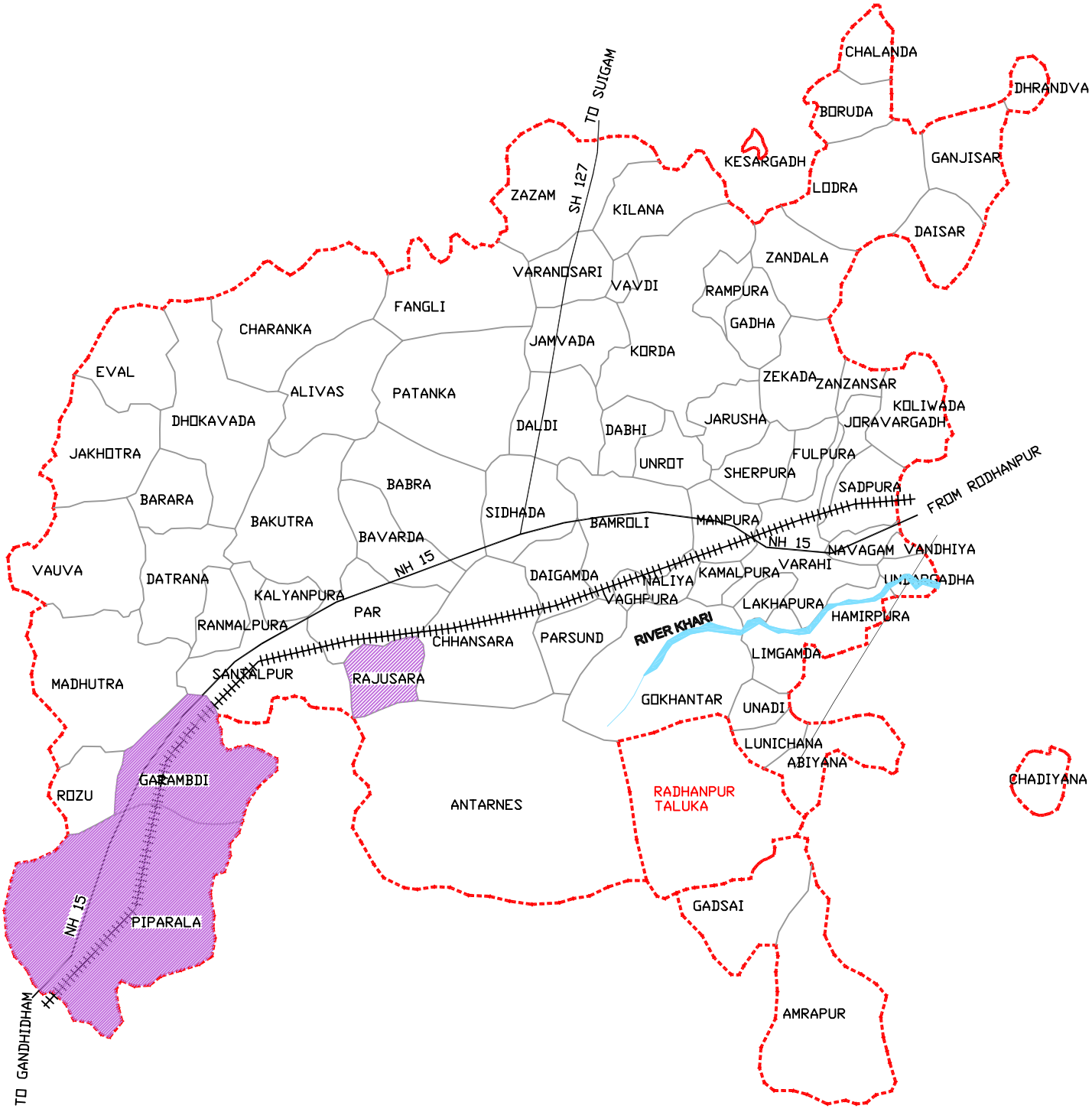


LEGEND

- TALUKA BOUNDARY
- VILLAGE BOUNDARY
- ROADS
- RAILWAY
- RIVER
- URBAN AREA
- PROJECT VILLAGES

MAP3 GANDHIDHAM TALUKA BASE MAP (KACHCHH DISTRICT)

MAP SHOWING VILLAGES COVERED UNDER THE STUDY ON SALT WORKERS



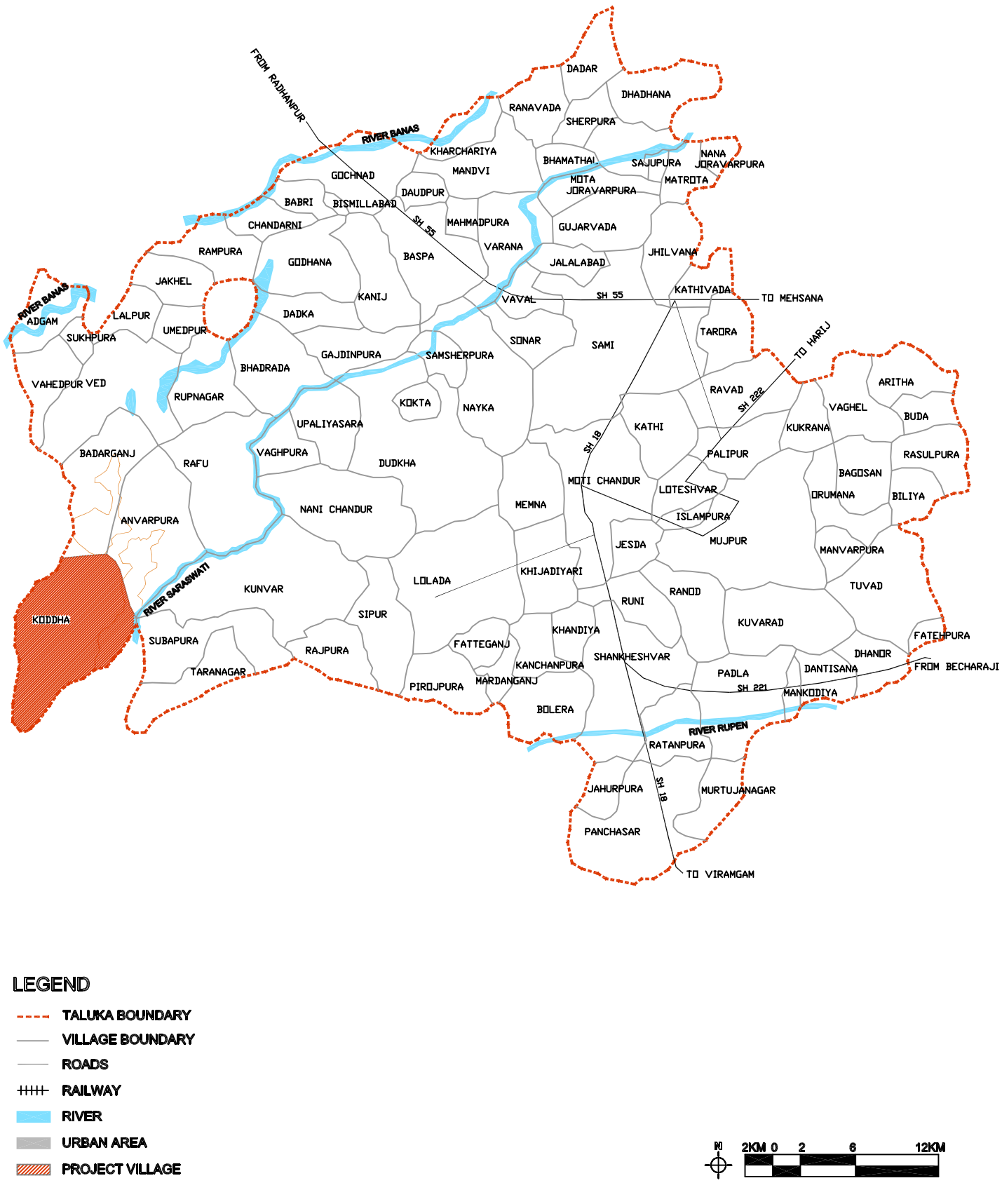
LEGEND

- TALUKA BOUNDARY
- VILLAGE BOUNDARY
- ROADS
- RAILWAY
- RIVER
- URBAN AREA
- PROJECT VILLAGE

N 2KM 0 2 6 12KM

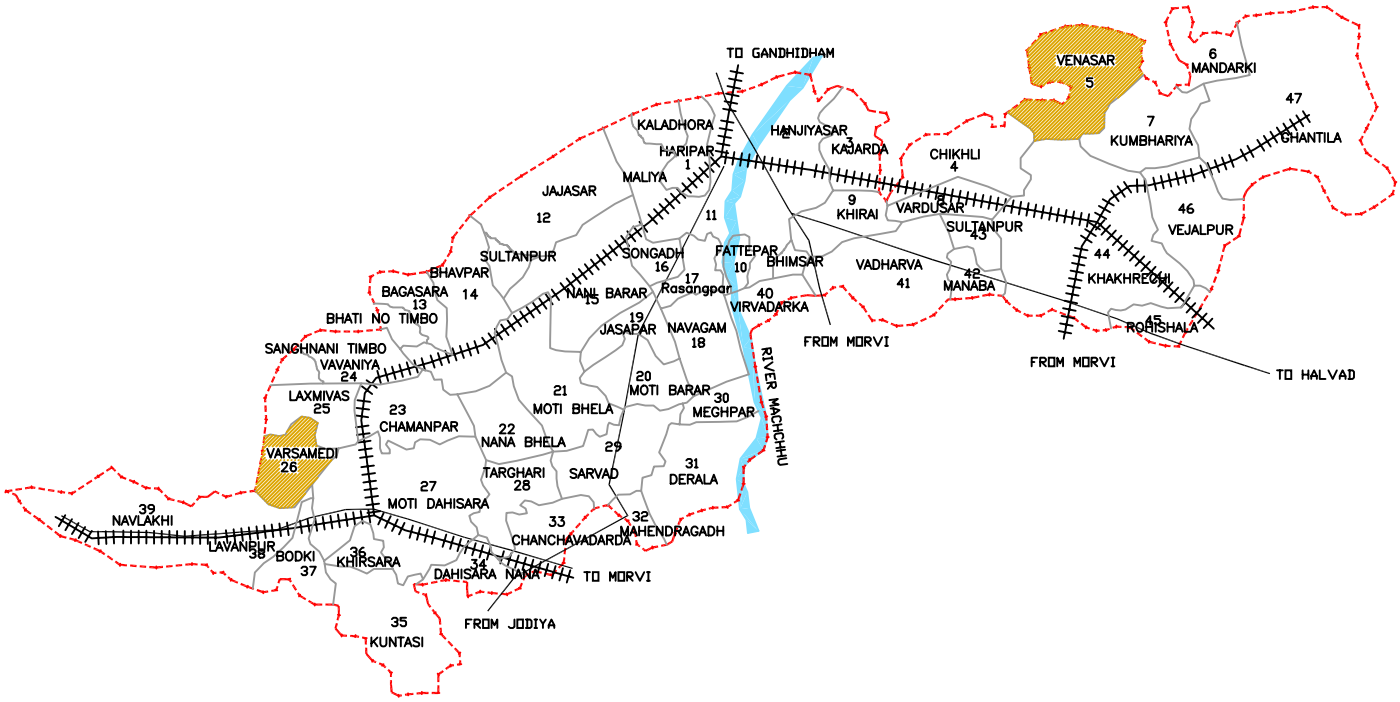
MAP 4 SANTALPUR TALUKA BASE MAP (PATAN DISTRICT)

MAP SHOWING VILLAGES COVERED UNDER THE STUDY ON SALT WORKERS



MAP 5 SAMI TALUKA BASE MAP (PATAN DISTRICT)

MAP SHOWING VILLAGES COVERED UNDER THE STUDY ON SALT WORKERS

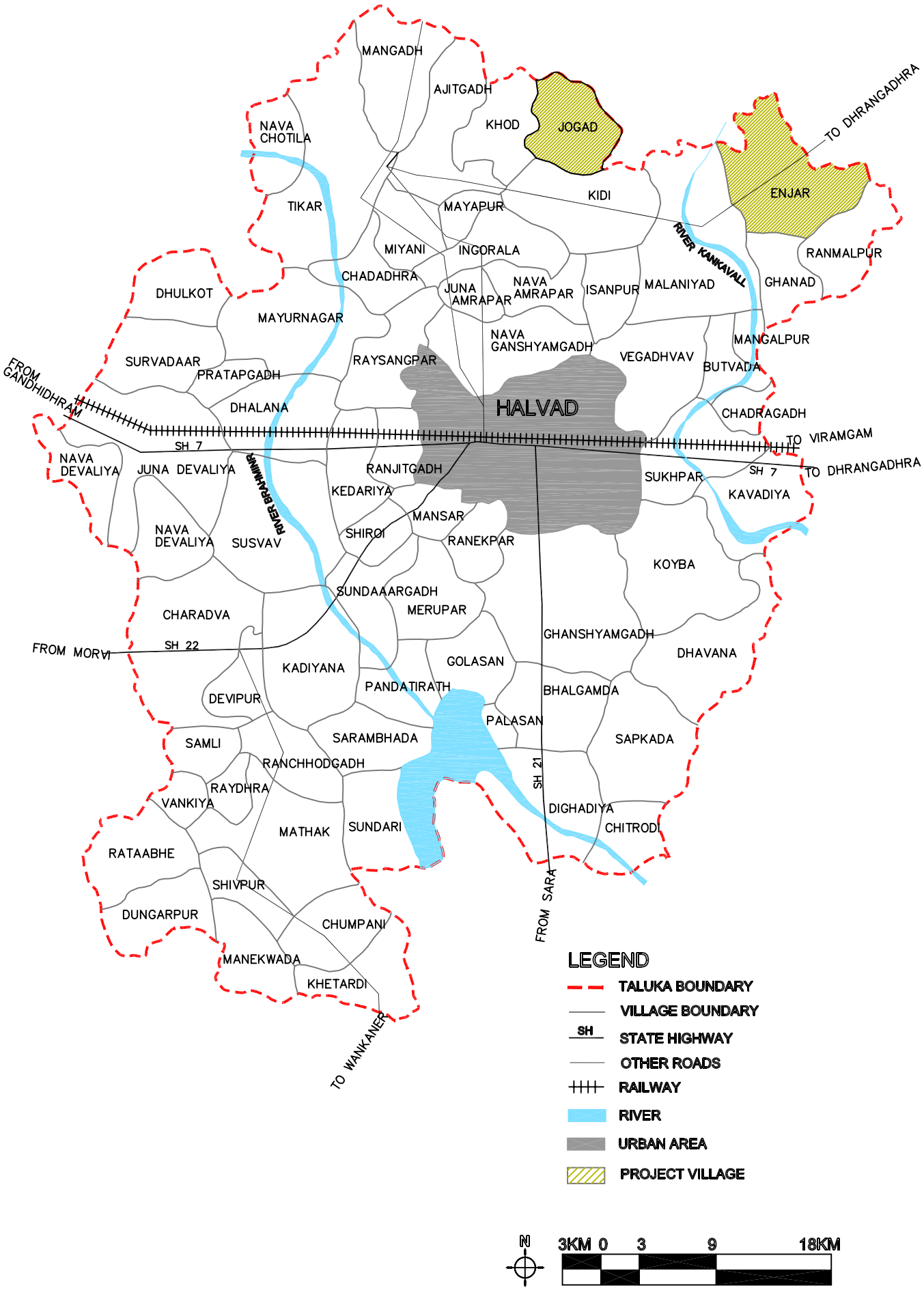


LEGEND

- TALUKA BOUNDARY
- VILLAGE BOUNDARY
- ROAD
- URBAN AREA
- RIVER
- VILLAGES COVERED UNDER THE PROJECT

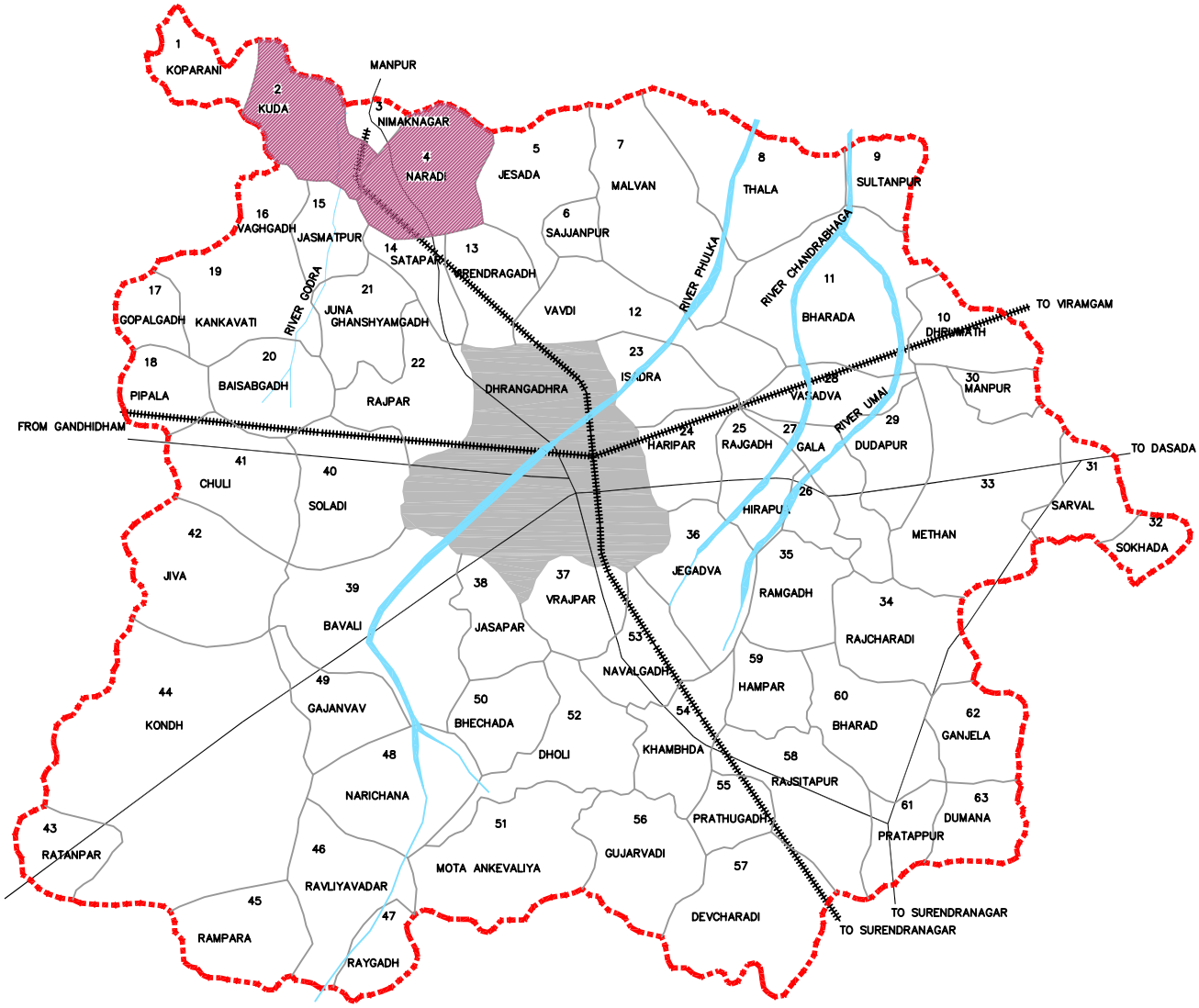
MAP 6 MAILYA TALUKA BASE MAP (RAJKOT DISTRICT)

MAP SHOWING VILLAGES COVERED UNDER THE STUDY ON SALT WORKERS



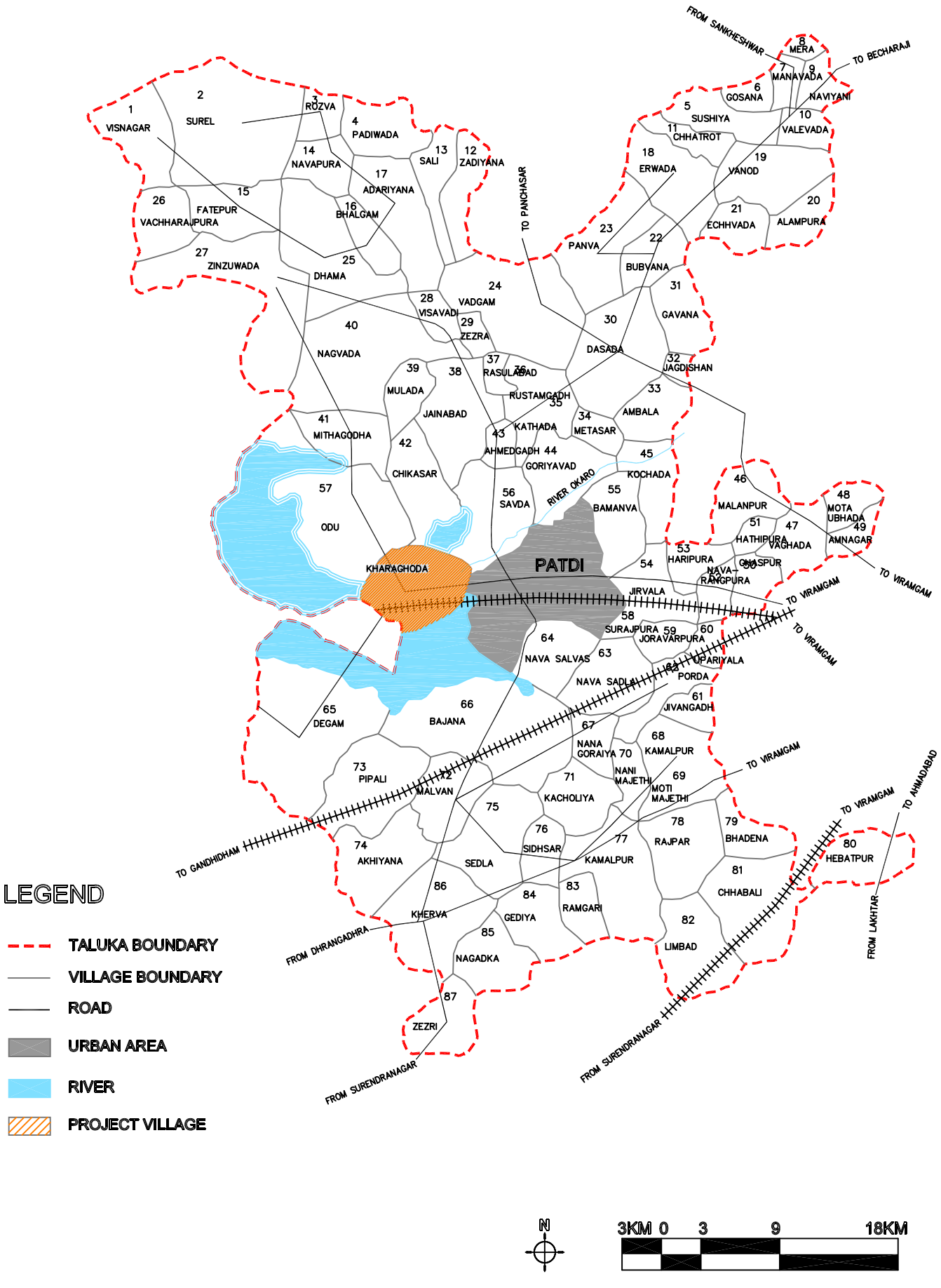
MAP 7 HALVAD TALUKA BASE MAP (SURENDRANAGAR DISTRICT)

MAP SHOWING VILLAGES COVERED UNDER THE STUDY ON SALT WORKERS



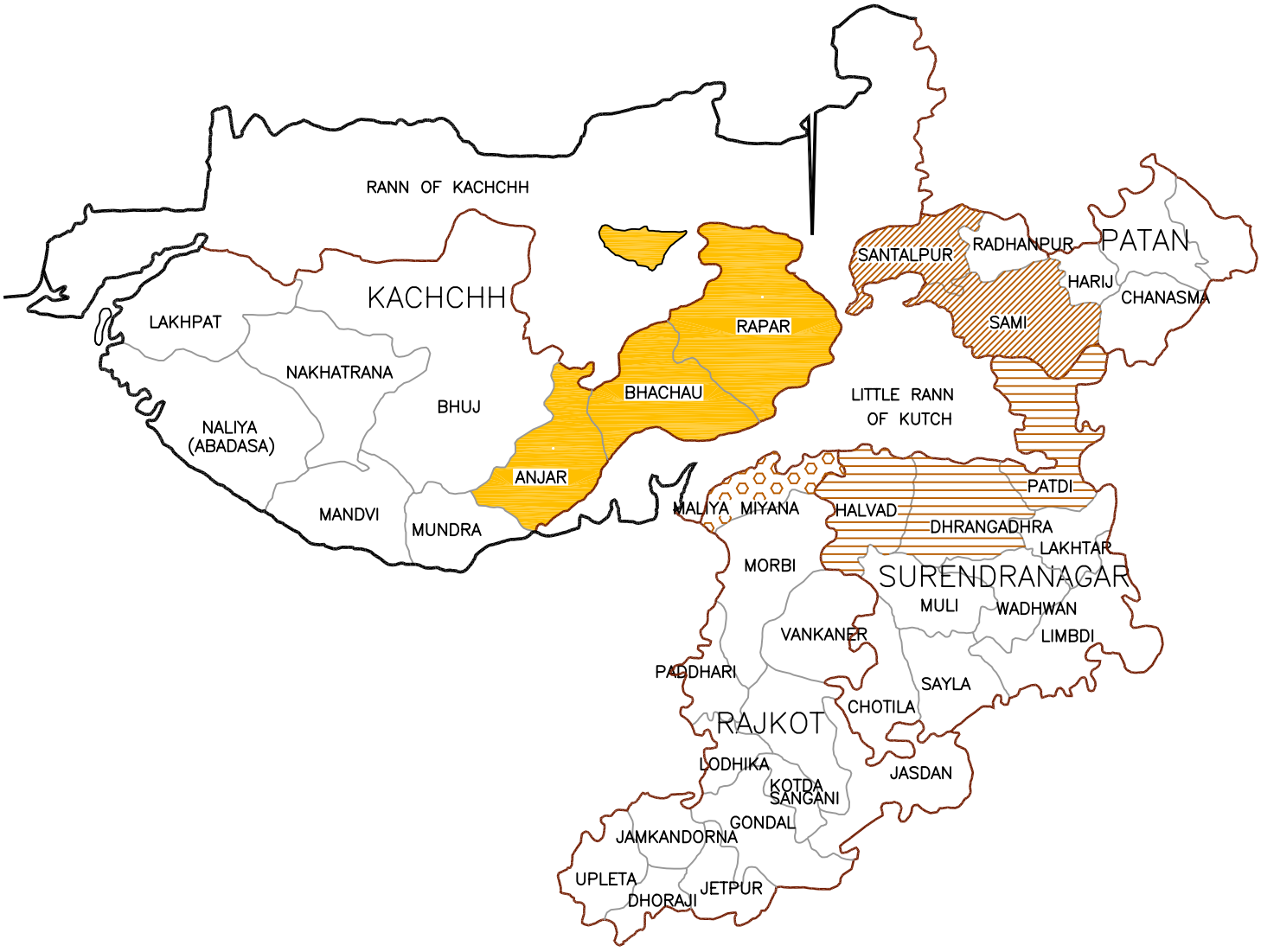
MAP 8 DHRANGADHRA TALUKA BASE MAP (SURENDRANAGAR DISTRICT)

MAP SHOWING VILLAGES COVERED UNDER THE STUDY ON SALT WORKERS



MAP 9 PATDI-DASADA TALUKA BASE MAP (SURENDRANAGAR DISTRICT)

MAP SHOWING VILLAGES COVERED UNDER THE STUDY ON SALT WORKERS



LEGEND

TALUKA BOUNDARY

VILLAGE BOUNDARY

Talukas under study in Kachchh District

Talukas under study in Patan District

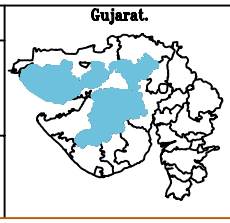
Talukas under study in Rajkot District

Talukas under study in Surendranagar District

Map Showing:

Project Talukas covered under Study of Salt Workers, Gujarat, INDIA

SAVE
Saline Area Vitalization Enterprise Ltd.
Ahmedabad.



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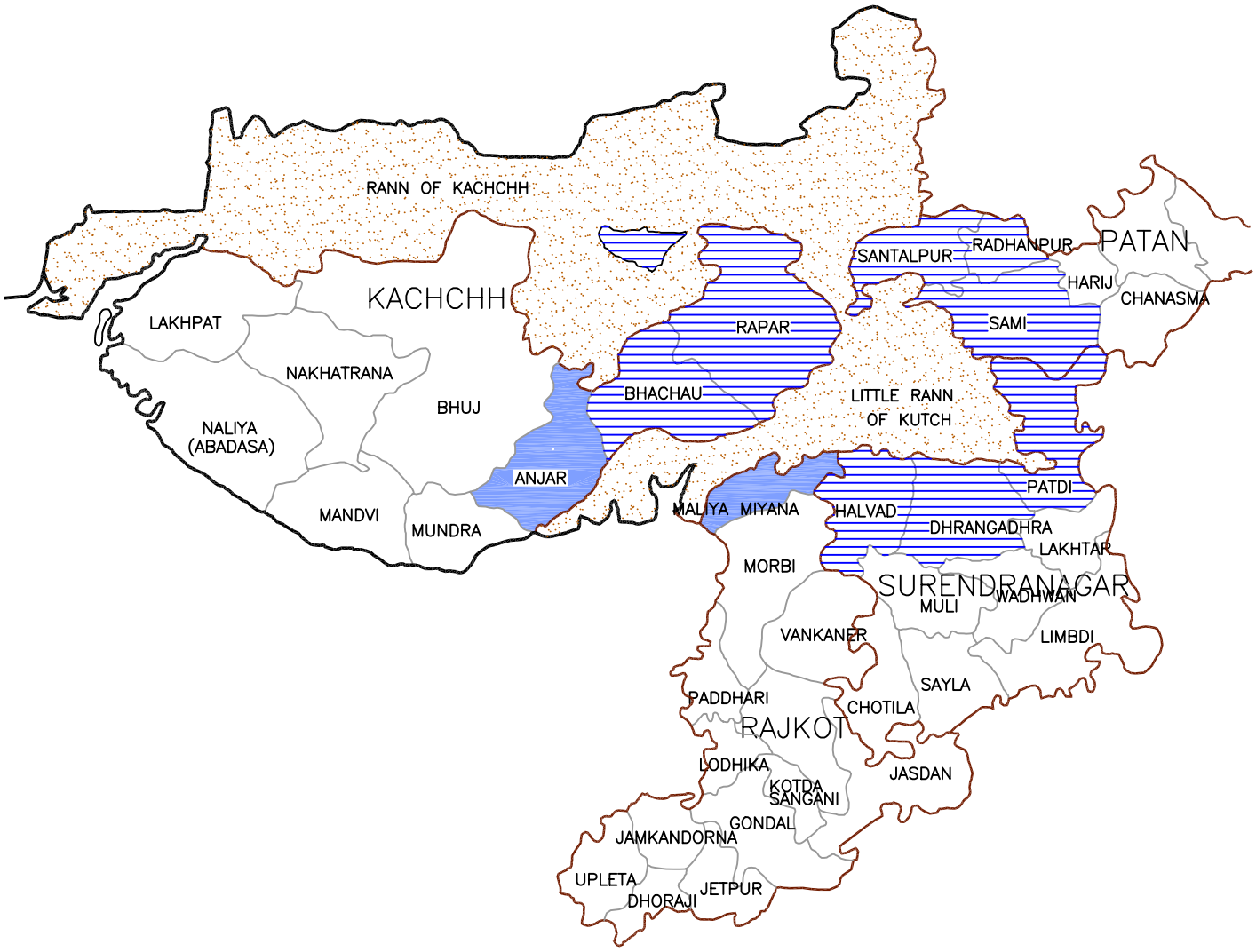


LEGEND

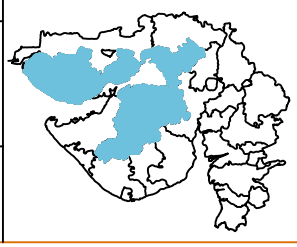
TALUKA BOUNDARY

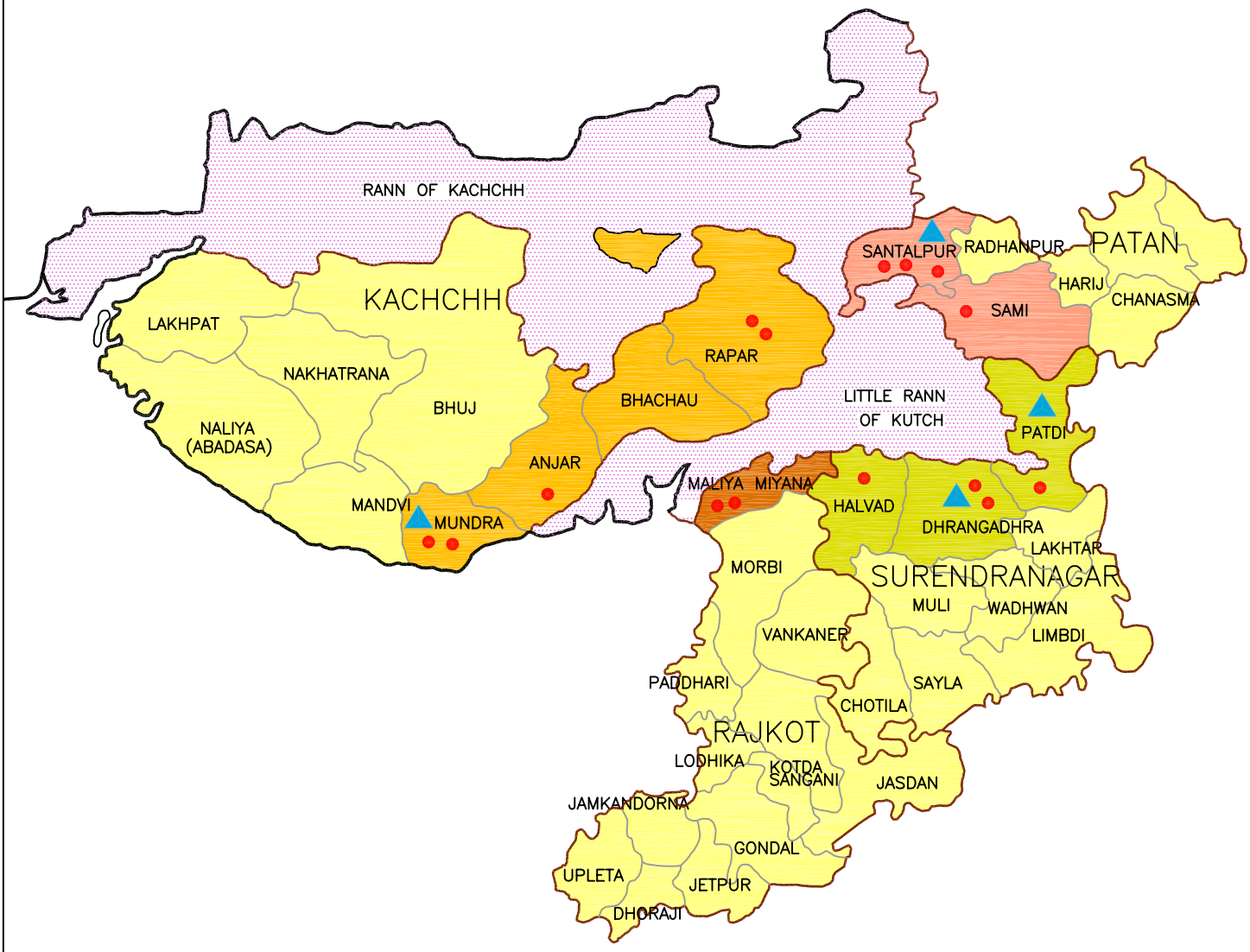
VILLAGE BOUNDARY

MARINE SALT PRODUCTION TALUKAS

INLAND SALT PRODUCTION TALUKAS

MARINE AND INLAND SALT PRODUCING AREAS

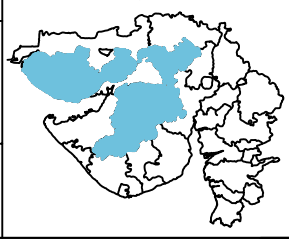
Map Showing: Project Talukas covered under Study of Salt Workers, Gujarat, INDIA SAVE Saline Area Vitalization Enterprise Ltd. Ahmedabad.	Gujarat. 	Gujarat, INDIA. 	SCALE: NOTE:	N DRG.NO

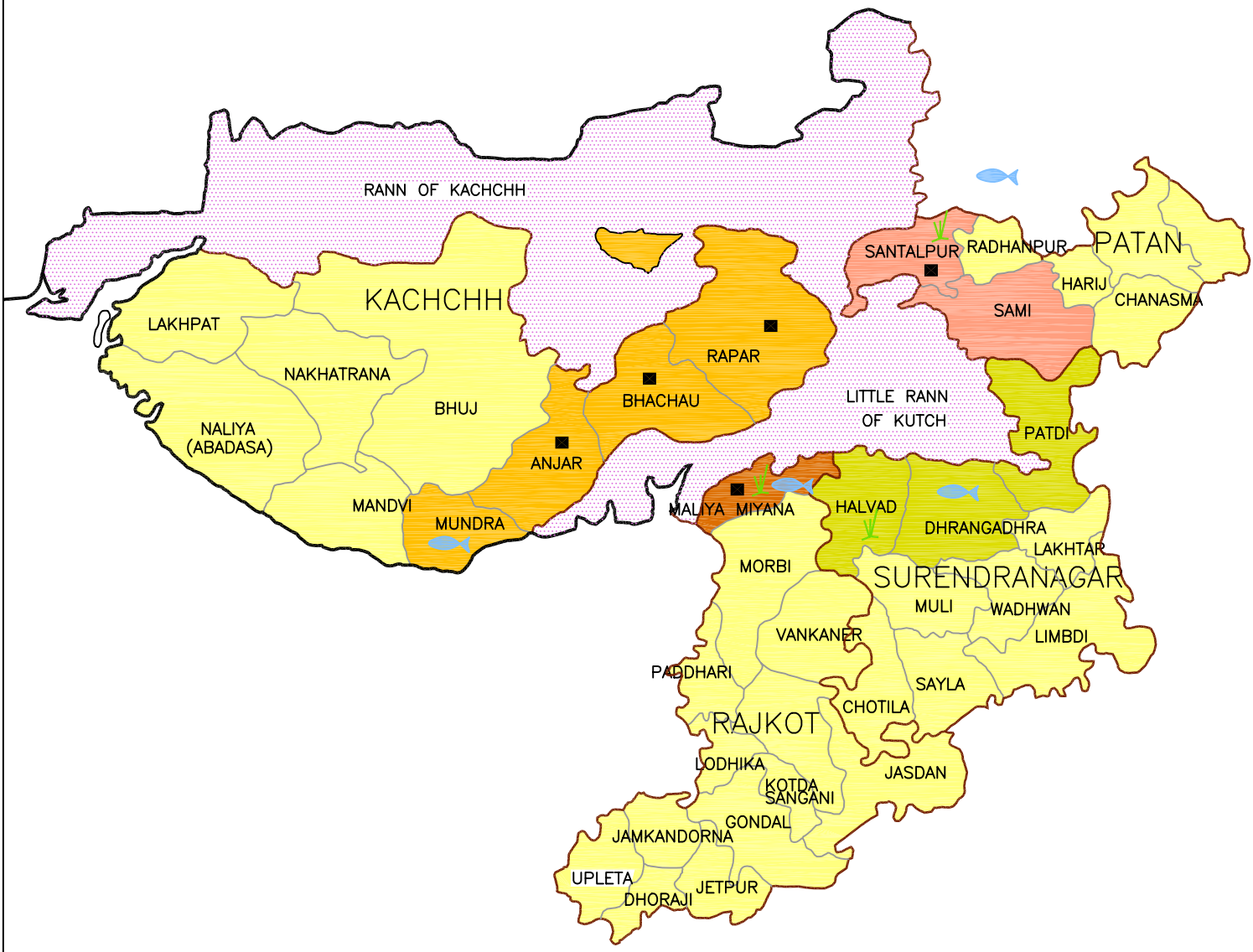


LEGEND

- TALUKA BOUNDARY
- VILLAGE BOUNDARY
- ROAD
- URBAN AREA
- RIVER
- PRESENCE OF NGOs
- SALT QUALITY CONTROL LABORATORIES

PRESENCE OF NGOs/ORGANISATIONS IN THE STUDY AREA

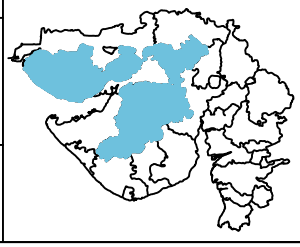
Map Showing:	Gujarat. 	Gujarat, INDIA. 	SCALE:	
Project Talukas covered under Study of Salt Workers, Gujarat, INDIA				N
			NOTE:	DRG.NO
SAVE Saline Area Vitalization Enterprise Ltd. Ahmedabad.				



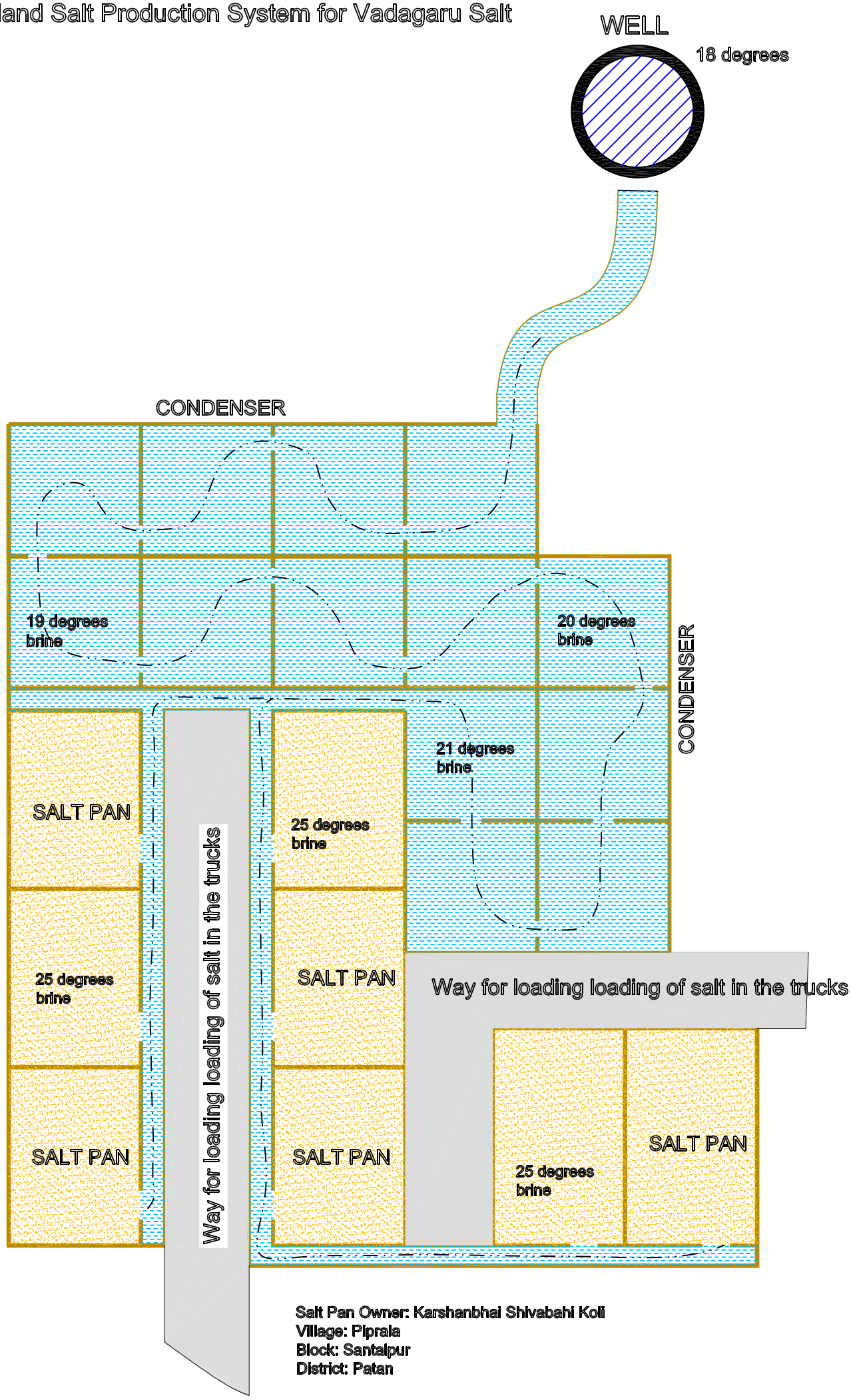
LEGEND

- TALUKA BOUNDARY
- VILLAGE BOUNDARY
- ROAD
- URBAN AREA
- RIVER
- CHARCOAL MAKING
- AGRICULTURE/AGRICULTURAL LABOUR
- FISHING

ALTERNATIVE LIVELIHOODS IN THE STUDY AREA

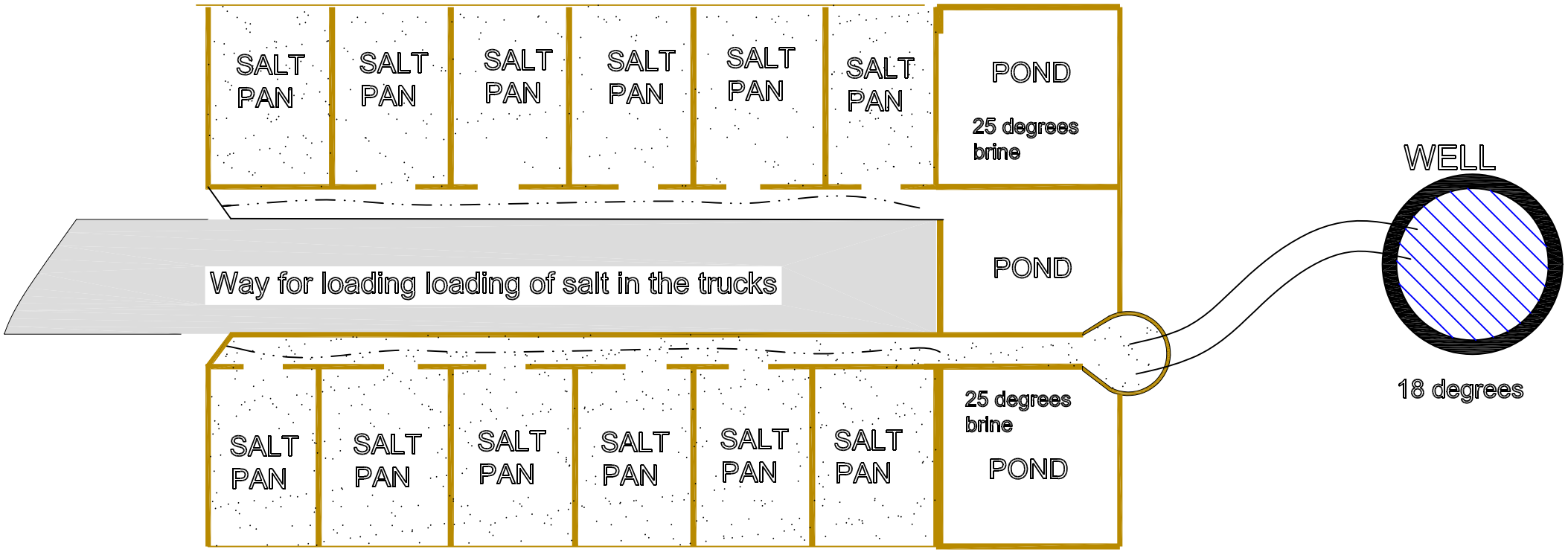
Map Showing: **Project Talukas covered under Study of Salt Workers, Gujarat, INDIA**	Gujarat. 	Gujarat, INDIA. 	SCALE: N NOTE: DRG.NO
SAVE **Saline Area Vitalization Enterprise Ltd. Ahmedabad.**			

Inland Salt Production System for Vadagaru Salt



Salt Pan Owner: Karshanbhai Shivabahi Koli
Village: Piprala
Block: Santalpur
District: Patan

Inland Salt Production System for Karkatch Salt



Salt Pan Owner: Shambhubhai Momaiya
Village: Sukhpar
Block: Rapar
District: Kachchh

ANNEXURE – 2

CASE STUDIES

CASE STUDY 1

Name: Suleimaan Vali Mohammad
Occupation: Salt Farming, Charcoal making
Village: Rajusara, Taluka: Santalpur, District: Patan

The Raja Muslims of Rajusara and Chhanisara villages of Santalpur taluka have been involved in the salt production activity since a very long time. The Raja Muslims are comparatively more affable and aware than other communities engaged in the production of salt. These Muslims believe that they originally belong to Pakistan and their forefathers had migrated from Pakistan many years back. Along with the Raja Muslims, many villagers have their own saltpans as well as agricultural land in the village and they generally give their lands either to their relatives or friends belonging to other communities for salt production. In Rajusara village itself there are 36 Raja Muslims who have their own salt pans with proper land related agreements and documents. They have been producing salt on their land since many years now and thus they also possess the legal rights to do take up this activity on their land.

The SAVE team got an opportunity to interact with one such affable and aware Raja Muslim by the name of Suleimaan Vali Mohammad. The household of Suleimaan Vali Mohammad comprises of six members. Apart from salt farming, the members of the household also take up charcoal production, drive chhakkadas, or work as agricultural labourers to earn their living. The family starts the activity of salt production in winter season, which is carried on till the end of summer season. During monsoon season, the members mainly earn their livelihood by working as agricultural labourers and through charcoal making activity. The family is able to earn about Rs. 25,000 per annum through salt production activity.

"we have the all the required skills to produce good quality of salt. If we get access to good machines, timely credits and good contacts to sell the produced salt then we can easily compete with the local traders."

With regards to the salt farming activity, Suleimaanbhai says that since the very beginning, his community (Raja Muslims) has depended on salt making as a primary occupation. The community possesses both, the knowledge and ability to do this tough and difficult task of producing good quality of salt. He says that if they have the determination, then they can produce salt of the quality desired by the trader. But the worst part is that despite producing salt of very good quality, the rates for all types of salt remain the same and therefore they do not strive very hard towards achieving the quality of salt. Suleimaanbhai adds that we have the all the required skills to produce good quality of salt. If we get access to good machines, timely credits and good contacts to sell the produced salt then we can easily compete with the local traders.

Answering to the health related issues of the salt workers, Suleimaanbhai says that as the salt workers have to work constantly for eight months in the salt farms to produce salt, the required nutrition is not obtained through the food they get to eat. This is the very reason for a high prevalence of premature death of infants or death of the female during childbirth. In addition, there is also absence of the adoption of family planning measures in the families of the salt workers. Owing to uncertain lifespan and high infant mortality rate, the salt workers usually feel insecure about their children. They believe in increasing the number of children to ward off this feeling of insecurity. As a result of this, the number of children in any family of salt workers, residing in the Rann area would be seen to be high.

CASE STUDY 2

Village: Koddha, Taluka: Sami, District: Patan

Village Koddha of Sami taluka, Patan district falls on the border of the Little Rann of Kutch. Many years back, salt making was a major activity in this village. But the present situation is such that the salt making activity has been completely stopped. The SAVE team was eager to know the reasons for the discontinuation of the salt production activity in the village and to get this information, the team visited the village twice.

While interacting with the villagers of Koddha, the team got to know that the salt production activity in the village had been stopped since the past five years. The Government, in the Rann, closer to their village, had allotted the villagers land on lease. The villagers would produce salt in this allotted land. But the major question for the village was transportation of the salt produced. In order to take the salt upto the railway wagon, it had to be first brought right upto either Radhanpur or Harij. This practice would turn out to be very expensive for the traders.

They only had the option to sell the entire salt to the darbars of village Jhinjhuwada. But the darbars would take the salt at a meager rate of Rs. 6.20 per sack, which was so low, that the activity did not turn out to be economically viable for the villagers of Koddha.

Further, the desert of village Jhinjhuwada lies right opposite to that of village Koddha where the commanding darbar community have illegal possession of majority of the land there. The darbars would use tractors to pave the way for transportation of salt. But the villagers of Koddha were promptly refused to use the roads made by the darbars. A river also runs between the desert area of villages Jhinjhuwada and Koddha. It is an uphill task to take salt on the other side of the river. There have been several incidences of the salt being washed away due to flooding in the river.

In this way finally, the villagers of Koddha lost almost all the opportunities and chances of selling the salt they produced. The only had the option to sell the entire salt to the darbars of village Jhinjhuwada. But the darbars would take the salt at a meager rate of Rs. 6.20 per sack, which was so low, that the activity did not turn out to be economically viable. The salt workers of village Koddha could also not avail the railway quota from village Jhinjhuwada to sell their salt. Thus due to the prevailing unfavourable conditions and out of compulsion, the salt workers of the village were forced to abandon their long followed occupation of salt production.

If one happens to visit the village, it will be possible to see piles of salt lying in the vicinity of the village even today, the quantity of which must be worth 1000 trucks. Over a period of time, due to constant exposure to strong winds and rains, these piles of salt have turned red in colour. These plies are infact testimony to hard work and money gone in vain.

At a time when there were about 80 to 90 households in village Koddha, 25 households amongst them were engaged in the salt making activity. Today when the number of households has increased to 150, not a single household takes up this activity. And at present the villagers mostly migrate to other areas to earn their livelihood.

According to the villagers, even today they would still desire to undertake salt production activity. They on need that some trader would be ready to given them credit for initial investment along with shouldering the responsibility marketing. And within this time span of getting the right opportunity, the villagers optimistically hope that they should not forget the skills of producing salt.

CASE STUDY 3

Name: Allauddinbhai Rauma
Occupation: Labour work in the salt farms, Fishing
Village: Piprala, Taluka: Santalpur, District: Patan

Piprala village of Santalpur taluka is considered to one of the major villages where salt making forms an important occupation. The village lies adjoining the desert of the Little Rann of Kutch. A majority of the people of village Piprala work as labourers in the salt pans of the Little Rann of Kutch near Santalpur. In addition to salt farming and agriculture, charcoal making and fisheries are the other major occupations adopted by the people of the village. People belonging to the Muslim and Koli communities of the village engage in salt farming as well as fisheries.

The saltpans of the village are located in the desert adjoining the village. Initially many people of the village had their own salt pans. But today very few of them actually have ownership of their saltpans as they saltpans have been largely sold to either other people or to the salt traders. And so most of the villagers engaged presently in salt making activity either take credit from the trader for salt production or serve as labourers in other salt pans to earn their living.

Allauddinbhai Rauma of Piprala village works as a labourer in the saltpans for most part of the year and additionally take up fishing during the monsoon season. During monsoon season, the Little Rann of Kutch receives rainwater as well as the water of the sea due to ingression, creating an ecosystem, which is highly favourable for prawn cultivation. The local people, particularly the Miyana Muslims catch the prawns and sell them to the trader. These prawns have a huge market right upto Veraval. Other than prawns, a good variety of fish are also caught from this area.

The fishermen of this area have been provided assistance from the department of Fisheries of Patan distict. The fisheries department has planned to build 100 shelters for the fishermen of the area. But owing to the problem of allocation of land to build the houses, presently the project has been put on a hold.

"Risks and difficulties involved in the salt production activity are quite high. In comparison to that, if adequate arrangements for credit and market are made available in case of fishing activity, then the activity can yield good dividends."

At present the villagers engaged in fishing activity have to work with just one boat, which is shared amongst five people. They are able to get a credit of Rs.20,000 from the agent of the trader for one season. But against the credit availed, they have to sell their catch to the trader from whom credit is sought. Allauddinbhai is able to take up two activities in one year - salt farming as well as fishing. But the fishing activity is of greater importance to him as compared to salt farming. He feels that risks and difficulties involved in the salt production activity are quite high. In comparison to that, if adequate arrangements for credit and market are made available in case of fishing activity, then the activity can yield good dividends. In case of fishing, the equipments required for the activity are provided by the agent of the trader. But Allauddinbhai feels that if they have their own equipments then it would not only make their task easy but would also increase the profit earned from the fishing activity.

According to Allauddinbhai, they have to face harassment from the forest department while carrying out fishing activity in the Little Rann of Kutch. As per the Forest Department, the area of the Little Rann of Kutch has been declared as a sanctuary and therefore carrying out any economic activity in this area is prohibited. He further adds that, despite the ban by the Forest Department, in monsoon season, around 15,000 to 20,000 people still come in the area for fishing.

CASE STUDY 4

Name: Ambubhai Patel
Occupation: Service in a salt laboratory, Photography
Village: Navagam Kharagodha, Taluka: Patadi-Dasada, District: Surendranagar

On its very first visit to Surendranagar, the SAVE team visited Gantar's campus at Patadi. While talking to Gantar's staff members, SAVE team also got an opportunity to meet Ambubhai Patel, a journalist from village Kharagodha. Ambubhai is a photo journalist working with the Gujarati daily- Gujarat Samachar. He captures the daily happenings in the lives of the local salt workers through the medium of photographs and presents them with touching captions. Yet it is quite ironic that in spite of being such a good photojournalist, Ambubhai does not have a camera of his own.

Usually the Patel community of this area is not involved in salt production activity but as the economic condition of Ambubhai's parents was not sound, and due to lack of other options, they used to take up salt production activity to earn their livelihood. Thus Ambubhai has a deep attachment for the salt workers of this area as he has witnessed their plight through his own eyes and experiences. Ambubhai works with the office of the Salt Association as a chemist. Though he draws a salary from the Salt Association, yet whenever required, he does not hesitate to present the truth regarding the salt trade through his photo stories. Ambubhai's wife works as a "Baldost" in the schools run by Gantar for the children of saltpan workers.

Ambubhai furnished the SAVE team with in depth information regarding the social and economic condition of the saltpan workers of the area. He informed that there have been isolated attempts of awareness creation amongst the salt workers. However they have not been successful in making efforts to raise their voices collectively and in unity.

"If the Government intends to take any progressive measures for improving the salt trade then it should close down the trade itself and instead encourage the salt workers towards adopting other alternative sources of livelihood."

Ambubhai added that the male members of the family are directly involved in the salt production activity. As this activity calls for neck breaking and extensive hard work in harsh conditions, its direct impact is felt on the health of the male salt worker whose body gradually withers away and thus he dies quite early. On the other hand the woman lives comparatively longer. The average life span of the male varies from 40 to 50 years while it is usually between 60 to 70 years for the female. This is the reason why the number of widows is found be much higher in the family of a salt worker. With the death of the male member, the family also loses the source of income and living. Left with little option, the widow starts to work at the nearby storage plots of salt where she is mainly involved in piling and loading of salt till the time her health permits. But with the passage of time, due to constant hard work, the health of the woman also begins to deteriorate and the condition of the family, which is dependent on her earnings for survival, becomes utterly miserable. The widows of the salt workers also do not have ration cards due to which they are not able to get any benefits from any government schemes.

According to Ambubhai, if the Government intends to take any progressive measures for improving the salt trade then it should close down the trade itself and instead encourage the salt workers towards adopting other alternative sources of livelihood. This would help to end the drudgery in the lives of the salt workers. The livelihood options should be made available for the salt workers within their own local areas. Ambubhai feels that even if the salt trade in this area is stopped, yet salt production in India will not cease. Besides the production of marine salt, which is comparatively less tedious than the Vadagaru salt, should be increased as this would help to compensate the market need of salt.

CASE STUDY 5

Name: Jerambhai Devabhai Savalia
Occupation: Secretary of Narayanpura Cooperative Society
Village: Kharagodha, Taluka: Patadi-Dasada, District: Surendranagar

The history of the Salt Cooperative Societies formed in Patadi and Kharagodha reveal a strange history. During the golden days of the salt industry, the cooperative societies also thrived and prospered. The salt produced by the cooperatives would send right upto to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Nepal.

The local salt workers were members of these cooperatives. The land, which used to be allotted to these workers by the government, would actually be allotted in the name of the cooperatives, of which they were members. Infact all members of the same cooperative would have adjoining plots. Whatever incentives a salt worker would receive from the government, would be in the name of the cooperative society. In those days the cooperative used a play a pivotal role in bargaining with the local traders and companies, to safeguard the interests of its members.

"In the beginning we were members of Soni salt cooperative society. Later when our people were allotted land in their names and we had gained enough experience of working in a cooperative, we all got together and formed our own cooperative."

However the scenario changed drastically since 1973, when the Little Rann of Kutch was declared a Wild Ass Sanctuary because most of the land owned by the cooperatives came under the jurisdiction of the sanctuary. As a result the renewal of lease of the land belonging to the cooperatives was also stopped.

Jerambhai Devabhai Savalia is the head of the Narayanpura Cooperative Society of Navagam Kharagodha. The cooperative was started in 1971. According to Jerambhai, initially members associated with the cooperative would give their saltpans to Hindustan Salt, where they had formed a cooperative called the Soni Cooperative. (The cooperative was named after the name of its head, who was a Soni) Jerambhai says, that in the beginning they were members of this cooperative. Later when other people were allotted land in their names and they had gained enough experience of working in a cooperative, the members got together and formed their own cooperative.

The Narayanpura Cooperative has its office in Kharagodha. The cooperative has a total of 233 members and 300 acres of land in its name. It is important to note that the cooperative also has women as its members. It is not necessary that every member of the cooperative carry out salt production activity. In all, there are 40 such members who take up the salt production activity and this salt is produced on a total of 140 acres of land. In the initial days when the cooperative used to make good profits, its members would be given dividends. But in the present times when survival itself has become difficult, the cooperative is not able to pay any dividends to its members.

Jerambhai informs that the cooperative is not bound to work for any trader. It assists its members to get reasonable rates for their product. In case a member is interested in selling his salt to a particular trader, then in such circumstances the head and secretary of the cooperative try to help the member in getting proper rates from the trader. The salt workers have been able to get government assistance due to the efforts of the cooperative. In 1975, the cooperative was given oil engines by the government. Prior to that, the cooperative was given tents and tarpaulin sheets by the governments. But government aid or benefits through a cooperative have now been stopped.

The salary of the secretary of the cooperative is paid by the cooperative itself. The secretary is entrusted with the task of maintaining the accounts, looking after the administration and taking

care of the equipments of the cooperative and keeping records of the property, owned by the cooperative. in order to meet its expenses, the cooperative gets Rs.1000 for each saltpan. If need occurs, it also gains by renting vacant plots and thus putting them to effective use.

The cooperative is managed by a committee of 11 members. Every 12 months, the members of the cooperative gather for a meeting and a new committee is elected in the meeting. On the other hand, the meeting of the committee members is held every three to four months. This particular cooperative was also a member of the district level organization. However, this organization has now been dissolved. In the past, the cooperative used to deal and interact with the Commissioner of Cooperatives. But now the renewal of lease of land has stopped.

CASE STUDY 6

Name: Narayanbhai
Occupation: Labour work in the saltpans and agriculture
Village: Jogad, Taluka: Halvad, District: Surendranagar

Village Jogad of Halvad taluka in Surendrnagar district is a village in the desert area. The village had suffered extensive damage during the earthquake. However, post earthquake, the entire rehabilitation work of the village was carried out by the Centre for Environment Education, Halvad. The newly rehabilitated Jogad village is divided into five parts. Apart from salt farming, agriculture and animal husbandry are the other major occupations followed by the people of the village. There was a time when the people of Jogad were highly famed for their salt production but today they take up this activity only out of compulsion.

The legs of Narayanbhai would be directly exposed to the water, causing the skin of his feet to warp. Even today when he sets his feet in the saltpans, he experiences unbearable burning sensation in his feet.

Narayanbhai resides in the new rehabilitated built part of Jogad village. He has been involved in the salt production activity since the past 50 years. The repercussions of doing hard labour work continuously for eight months in the harsh environment of the saltpans have been felt on his health. While working in the saltpans, he would have to stay in brine water for long hours. His legs would be directly exposed to the water, causing the skin of his feet to warp. Even today when he sets his feet in the saltpans, he experiences unbearable burning sensation in his feet. He has to work in the saltpans even at this old age. In order to shoulder the responsibilities of his family, he has no option but to bear the burns and pain and keep doing the work till his body would allow.

Narayanbhai's grandsons are also involved in the salt production activity. Narayanbhai informs that the land of this area is dry and arid. This kind of land and climate hardly favours the growth of crops and therefore only crops like Bajra, Juwar and a few pulses can be taken up for agriculture. To add to their woes, the wild asses destroy whatever crops they manage to grow. Also, ever since the declaration of the Little Rann of Kutch as the Sanctuary, the people cannot take any measures against the asses causing destruction. In such circumstances, working in the saltpans for eight months at least assures them of a continuous income for that period. So in spite of having a dislike for the work, they still prefer to stick to the salt production activity. So much so, that they would continue to bear the physical pain caused by working in the saltpans as they would at least be able to earn something to keep on living.

CASE STUDY 7

Name: Porus Palia
Occupation: Palia Salt Works, Dhangadhra
Town: Dhangadhra, Taluka: Dhangadhra, District: Surendranagar

During its first visit to Surendranagar district, the SAVE team met Porus Palia. Porus Palia is the son of Mr. Minu Palia, a veteran in the salt trade and having his own salt works, the Palia Salt Works. Porus Palia was educated in Mumbai and at present he has been vested with responsibility of running the Palia Salt Works.

As told by Porusbhai, the entire salt industry concerning production of Vadagaru salt is on a downfall and witnessing a silent death. Majority of the land of this area, in which the salt production activity used to take place, has been declared as land being part of the Wild Ass Sanctuary. In order to protect a handful of wild asses (about 3700), the entire salt making activity in this area has been declared as illegal. He feels that government has a much greater sensitivity towards the wild asses, than the human beings, as it has turned a blind eye towards the plight of the people associated with the salt trade.

"The salt industry in this area is dying, mainly because it has to face a very stiff competition from the marine salt industry. The expenses incurred while producing salt using marine water comes to Rs. 30 per tonne while the expenses of producing Vadagaru salt are Rs. 70 per tonne, which is more than double of the marine salt."

Porusbhai says that salt industry in this area is dying, mainly because it has to face a very stiff competition from the marine salt industry. The expenses incurred while producing salt using marine water comes to Rs. 30 per tonne while the expenses of producing Vadagaru salt are Rs.70 per tonne, which is more than double of the marine salt. Also, marine salt has a huge market and the facilities available for its transportation are also good. On the other hand, the Vadagaru salt has a niche market, which is traditionally limited to Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Nepal. Even this market is on a decline as preferences of people are changing. Thus, the Vadagaru salt in these states is fast being replaced by other types of salt. Since this industry is facing odds from all directions, its survival is very difficult.

Several interventions have been made in this trade keeping in mind the interests of the salt worker. Presently, SEWA has been making efforts in this direction to protect the interests of the salt workers. But Porusbhai feels that in terms of prices, it will not be able to withstand the tough competition in the market. SEWA has been concentrating on improving the quality of salt by processing it. But this will only lead to an increase in the overall cost of production of salt, thereby making it difficult to compete in the market.

The introduction of compulsory iodisation of salt has further affected the salt trade. The earlier practice involved packing the salt in jute bags. However in case of iodised salt, it is necessary to pack the salt in plastic bags to prevent evaporation of iodine from the salt. This has led to an increase in the packaging cost of salt.

Porusbhai feels that with the availability of water from Narmada in the area, the salt workers have now got an option to the salt making activity. The salt workers, who have been rendered without any work due to a slump in the salt trade, will now be able to find work in agricultural sector, which is flourishing due to the arrival of Narmada water. At present, the downfall in the salt trade is forcing the traders to release the salt workers, who have been working for them since many years. Porusbhai says that he too has asked his salt workers, who have been associated with his salt works since the time of his father, to search for other alternative means of income. He feels that that they would manage to find some work in the now thriving agricultural activity in the region or probably work as masons in the construction activity.

CASE STUDY 8

Name: Agaria Vikas Samiti (Committee for development of Salt workers)
Nature of work: An organization of the salt workers of the Adesar area
Work area: Villages of Adesar area, Taluka: Rapar, District: Kutch

Setu-Adesar was formed after the earthquake hit Kutch, for coordinating the post earthquake relief and rehabilitation measures. It is infact one amongst the entire chain of the Setus established in Kutch after the earthquake. With the completion of relief work, Setu has taken up projects, which aim towards achieving long-term progress of the region. The salt workers of Adesar are considered to be a major community undertaking salt production as an economic activity. The saltpans in this area are in the possession of two-three major companies. Due to the monopoly of these companies in this area, the salt workers here are subjected to severe exploitation. The **Agaria Vikas Samiti** was thus formed with the efforts of Setu-Adesar in order to unite the unorgansied salt workers, into an organized association.

The Committee had 21 members from villages Sukhpar, Taga, Varnu, Vijapar, etc of Adesar area. Setu-Adesar used to arrange several meetings to form this committee.

When the SAVE team visited the salt pans in Adesar, there the team got information on this committee, formed with the help of Setu. Thus the team went to meet Nathabhai Ahir of Sukhpar village for further information. Nathabhai informed that he was a salt worker who has been working for the Silver Company, one of the major companies of the area), since the past 17 – 18 years. Nathabhai had served as the president of the committee but now he is no longer associated with the committee. (As revealed from the talks with Nathabhai, the committee does not exist at present, which is denied by the Setu people, according to whom the committee is very much in existence.)

"Agaria Vikas Samiti had 21 members from villages such as Sukhpar, Taga, Varnu and Vijapar. They had tried to organised under the one banner. The owner of the companies used various means to put pressure on the Committee. In the end, due to differences and lack of unity amongst them, the Committee had to be finally dissolved."

Nathabhai Said that Agaria Vikas Samiti had 21 members from villages such as Sukhpar, Taga, Varnu and Vijapar. They had tried to organised under the one banner. The owner of the companies used various means to put pressure on the Committee. In the end, due to differences and lack of unity amongst them, the committee had to be finally dissolved. The committee presently has its office at the Setu center.
In the past, the committee had received a Village Development Fund (VDF) of Rs. 1 lakh from Setu. The members of the committee had to manage this fund and they even used the money for several development and welfare work. But now the entire committee is in disarray. In the near future there are no intentions of forming any such association or committee.

When the Committee was active, many important issues concerning the salt workers, such as, the very question of the ownership of their land, providing them with drinking water facility in the saltpans, were discussed through the medium of the Committee. Several attempts were also made in this regard. One of the positive achievements due to these attempts was that the local companies started providing the salt workers drinking water at their own expense. The constant efforts of the Committee reaped results when the companies began to provide its salt workers with a kit comprising of shoes, socks and goggles.

CASE STUDY 9

Name: Pethabhai Koli
Occupation: Salt farming (Owner of Salt farm)
Village: Kidana zone, Taluka: Gandhidham, District: Kutch

During their visit to Kidana zone, the SAVE team met Pethabhai, a salt worker. Pethabhai originally belongs to Haripura village of Maliya taluka. There is family has land of 25 acres in the village which is shared amongst six brothers. He comes to this area for work, as there are no sufficient means of income in his village. When he initially came to work as a labourer in the saltpans of this area, he managed to obtain land on lease, in which he made his salt pans.

As a salt labourer When Pethabhai realised that there was hope of getting land, he submitted an application for the same. After a long procedure finally his application was approved. He had to spend a good Rs. 11,000 for one saltpan and got the land on lease for the 20 years.

As a salt labourer When Pethabhai realised that there was hope of getting land, he submitted an application for the same. After a long procedure finally his application was approved. He had to spend a good Rs. 11,000 for one saltpan and got the land on lease for the 20 years. The period of lease of his land will get over in the next six months. The procedure for renewal of lease has to be initiated one year prior to its expiry, if the lease has to be renewed. Also there is no new land in the area that can be available on lease.

The coastal land near Pethabhhai's saltpans belongs to the Kandla Port Trust. Pethabhai has encroached some of the land belonging to the Port and built his salt pans on that land, which he knows is illegal. If the port would order him to vacate the encroached land, then he will have to abide by it and close the saltpans. Pethabhai is well aware of this fact and thus he is prepared to confront this situation whenever it comes.

Pethabhai uses two sets of engines to extract water from the bore. For the supply of electricity he has an access to the three-phase connection, which is mainly provided to the industrial sector. For producing salt, the electricity bill amounts to Rs.15,000 to Rs.23,000 per month, which can further increase to anywhere between Rs.22,000 to Rs.23,000 during a favourable season. Earlier when diesel engines were used for extracting water, the average expenses of running the engine would come to about Rs.24,000 per year (4 barrels of diesel).

They usually require about 6 to 7 workers for their work. Pethabhai has employed nine workers in his saltpans this season and most of them are his relatives. Other than this, one tanker driver also has to be employed in this work. His relatives stay in the single room houses built by PRAYAS under the IOM project for the salt workers.

The labourers are given wages on per tonne basis. On every tonne the labourers are paid Rs.20. When the labour work is ongoing, the labourer is given some advance amount to meet his daily needs and the accounts of the advance paid are also maintained. When the season ends, the quantity of salt produced by the worker and the advanced paid to him is compared and the accounts are finally settled. These labourers mostly come from areas around Jamnagar, Maliya, Halvad and Jhinjhuwada.

The salt workers have always faced great problems if a disaster like a storm or cyclone would strike in the region. Many salt workers had lost their lives in the cyclone that struck Kandla, a few years back. As per Pethabhai, during the Kandla cyclone, the water had reached right upto the roof level of their houses in this area. The effect of the strong winds blowing at that time was such that roofs of the shelters were blown away with the winds.

ANNEXURE – 3

NGO MAPPING

Details of Voluntary organisations Spread across the Patan, Surendranagar, Rajkot and Kutch districts of Gujarat contacted during the salt workers' study

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Surendranagar district

1. Voluntary Organisation: Self-Employed Women Association (SEWA)

Work area : Surendranagar district and Santalpur taluka of Patan district
Contact Person : Trupti Trivedi, Programme Co-ordinator
Address: C/o JEEVIKA Project, Shakar-II, Nr. Ellise Bridge, Ahmedabad
Phone No.: Mobile: 9824079368

Activities :

SEWA has been organizing salt workers since 1990. Currently around 15,000 salt workers in 50 villages have been organized by SEWA in Surendranagar district of Gujarat. SEWA provide health services in 50 villages with intensive credit, insurance and market & technology support for salt workers is extended in 20 villages 1500 villages. SEWA is one of the NGO which largely uses Government schemes for salt workers entitlements. The major interventions by SEWA for salt workers are :

- In health services SEWA is operating 35 child care centers, where around 1440 children and provide Mobile Health Van that visits the salt workers on the site as well as villages. The health van provides curative health services, referral services as well as immunization.
- Support for tools and equipments to the salt workers: SEWA has set up a tools and equipments library from which the salt workers can have access to the needed tools and equipments.
- Support for revolving fund : Each salt worker from a Group is provided with a revolving fund of Rs. 35,000/- to undertake salt production.
- Technical inputs: SEWA in collaboration with Commissionerate of Industries, Government of Gujarat has set up a testing laboratory for salt workers to periodically test the salt crop at intervals to ensure quality. SEWA in collaboration with Centre Salt and Marine Research Institute also provides technical trainings to salt workers.
- Market linkages: SEWA Gram Mahila Haat, the marketing organization provides market linkages to the salt workers.
- SEWA implements group insurance scheme for the salt workers, which has benefited 2500 salt workers. The insurance schemes which covers accidental death and physical imparities.

2. Voluntary Organisation: Centre for Environment Education (C.E.E.), Halvad

Contact person: Mr. Ayub Saresiya, Associate Project Officer
Address: Umiya park society, Sara road, Halvad
Phone No.: 02758 – 260324/261901 Mob.: 9825823740

Activities:
The Centre for Environment Education – Halvad has been working in the northern part of Halvad taluka since the earthquake of 2001. In the post – earthquake period, the organisation was engaged in massive relief and rehabilitation work in the area. As part of the relief and rehabilitation work, the organisation focused on building permanent shelters and providing basic infrastructure facilities for earthquake affected villages.

Post earthquake, the organisation has been engaged in long term rural development activities in the region and is presently implementing projects related to natural resource management, in addition to the Water and Sanitation project promoted by Wasmo, in association with the

Government of Gujarat. Under the WASMO project water committees have been formed in each project village. The project is being implemented by the organization in association with the water committee at village level. The project focuses on sustaining the existing water resources of the village with the help of a strong water committee formed, to maintain the infrastructure constructed during the project period.

The organisation does not directly work with the saltpan workers of Halvad taluka. Some saltpan workers of the area are however, members of the Self Help Groups, Community Based Organisations and water committees promoted by the organization, to carry our rural development activities and are thus benefited from various activities of organisation. In addition to this, the saltpan workers who also own agricultural land get benefits of the natural resource management activities carried out by organisation. The Centre for Environment Education, Halvad has proposed the use of windmills as an alternative to the conventional diesel pumps, to extract brine water from the sub soil for saltpan workers. This proposal, if implemented in the near future, would help to reduce the production cost of salt.

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3. Voluntary organisation: Gantar – Patadi

Contact person: Mr. Prashant Raval
Address: Gijubhai Bal Academy, HSBC campus, Patadi - Dasada road, Patadi
Phone No.: 02757 – 227836 / 227560

Activities:
Gantar works in 10 villages of Patadi–Dasada taluka, of Surendrnagar district. The activities of Gantar-Patadi are mainly concentrated on education and welfare of children of the saltpan workers. The salt workers of this region have to migrate to the Little Rann of Kutch (LRK) for salt production and since this migration is usually with the entire family for eight long months, its direct impact is felt on their children. Due to lack of basic amenities like health and education in the Rann, the children of salt pan workers are actually deprived of access to any type of educational facility. To address this fundamental need of children, Gantar has constructed makeshift schools in the Little Rann of Kutch with the aim to provide education to the children of the salt pan workers living in the Rann. To run the schools, Gantar has trained *Baldosts*, to impart quality education to the children. These *Baldosts* are usually, local educated youths, who not only teach, but also help the children improve their overall development.

Gantar has also made efforts to provide primary health facilities to the saltpan workers of the neighbouring areas. It has made arrangements for a regular visit, to the Rann, by an appointed doctor. Due to Gantar's constant advocacy for providing primary health facilities to the salt workers, the Government has now decided to take up the responsibility of providing medical facilities to the saltpan workers of the Little Rann of Kutch area.

Gantar is an active member of the "Agaria Hitrakshak Manch" (AHM), promoted by Janpath – a network of organisations. Gantar has been involved in the advocacy, awareness creation and strengthening peoples' opinion through the medium of the "Agaria Hitrakshak Manch". Owing to an order issued by the Supreme Court of India, Gantar has been made a member of the monitoring committee of various Government schemes for the saltpan workers.

Patan district

1. Voluntary organisation: Gantar - Santalpur

Contact person: Mr. Parth Raval, Narayanbhai
Address: Lohana Mahajan wadi, Varahi – Santalpur road, Santalpur, Dist.: Patan
Phone No.: 02738 - 209050

Activities:
Gantar–Santalpur is active in 20 villages of Santalpur taluka adjoining the Little Rann of Kutch (LRK), with the salt pan workers as the main focus of their activities, who migrate to the Little Rann of Kutch for salt production activities. Since getting an access to education is not possible for the children of the salt workers during the seven to eight month long migration, Gantar has established five schools in the Little Rann of Kutch so as to ensure that their children are not completely deprived of education. The teacher of the school is called a *Baldost*, who is trained at the Patadi campus of Gantar. A *Baldost* is not just a teacher but is also entrusted to help in the overall development of the children of the saltpan workers.

To address the health issues concerning the salt workers, Gantar tries to link them with the local Primary Health Centres (PHC) and Community Health Centres (CHCs) of the area. Gantar has also been promoting the Self Help Groups comprising of the local women as the members of the groups under the Swa Shakti project which helps provide credit support \to the women members through these groups. Tool kits have been distributed to the local salt pan workers by the Gram technology department of Gujarat through Gantar.

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2. Voluntary Organisation: Bhansali Trust, Radhanpur

Contact person: Dr. Viren Doshi
Address: Bhansali trust, Radhanpur, Ta. Radhanpur, Dist. Patan
Phone No.: 02746 – 277249 (O), Mobile: 9825859444

Activities:
The Bhansali trust is actively engaged in various rural development activities in Patan district. The trust has helped to form Self Help Groups in 25 villages of its work area. The Trust has been working with salt workers of Santalpur taluka since the past 7 to 8 years. The Trust has formulated a programme called 'The Salt workers' Integrated Development programme' for the salt workers of Santalpur taluka.

The Bhansali trust is an active member of the "Agaria Hitrakshak Manch" (AHM) promoted by Janpath. Having become a member of the "Agaria Hitrakshak Manch" (AHM), the trust has changed its strategy of work with the salt workers. The Trust has started raising issues related to the salt workers through the platform of the "Manch".

The Bhansali trust is actively involved in providing health facilities to salt workers of Santalpur taluka. The Trust has organized the services of a mobile health van for salt workers working in the Little Rann of Kutch. The Trust also participated in a study, conducted by the NIOH – National Institute of Occupational Hazards, concerning the health issues of the salt workers. The study has brought forth many eye opening facts regarding the occupational health hazards faced by the salt workers.

The Bhansali trust has prepared a status report on salt workers, which includes the charter of demands on various issues pertaining to the life and living of the salt workers.

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3. Voluntary Organisation: VIKSAT, Santalpur

Contact person: Laxmanbhai, Coordinator
Address: Opposite Kamal hotel, Santalpur, Ta. Santalpur, Dist. Patan
Phone No.: 02738 – 222650

Activities:
VIKSAT has been implementing the Water and Sanitation project promoted by WASMO in various villages of Santalpur taluka. Under this project, VIKSAT, in association with the local water committees of the project villages, has constructed physical structures to provide facilities related

to drinking water and sanitation, which would in future be managed by the respective village water committees comprising of local villagers.

Under the Wasmo project, VIKSAT has helped form Self Help Groups in various villages and the local salt workers are members of these Self Help Groups who can avail the benefits by the activities of VIKSAT. VIKAST is presently making efforts in encouraging and promoting alternative livelihood options to help improve the economic condition of the villagers. In one such effort, a Self Help Group of Chanisara village of Santalpur taluka has started charcoal production using an iron kiln. VIKSAT obtained this innovative technology from a Maharastra based organization called ARTI – Appropriate Rural Technology Institute. The youths of Chanisara village were sent to Pune for training on charcoal production using an iron kiln. The members of the Self Help Groups of Chanisara village are now busy with the activity of charcoal production and VIKSAT has taken the responsibility of assisting in finding the market for charcoal produced.

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4. Voluntary Organisation: Cohesion Foundation Trust, Varahi

Contact person: Mr. Khengarbhai Rangi, Coordinator
Address: Shivam society, Varahi, Ta. Santalpur, Dist. Patan
Phone no.: 02738 - 224557

Activities:
The Cohesion Foundation Trust is currently implementing the Water and Sanitation project promoted by Wasmo in various villages of Santalpur taluka of Patan district. The project involves provision of pure and safe drinking water and sanitation facilities by constructing physical structures for the same, which have to be managed by the local water committees formed in the village. Capacity building and training of the members of the local water committee formed by the villagers, is undertaken to enable the committee to manage further work without assistance once the project is completed.

The Cohesion trust has promoted Self Help Groups in 40 villages which have been divided into clusters of two. The women of the salt worker families are also members of these groups and get the benefits from the activities of organisation.

Kutch district

1. Voluntary Organisation: SETU – Adesar

Contact person: Bharat Dodiya, Team Leader
Address: Setu – Information Centre, Fatehgadh Road, Adesar, Ta. Rapar, Dist. Kutch
Phone No.: 02806 - 287613

Activities:
After the earthquake of 2001, relief and rehabilitation work took place in Kutch district on a large scale. However, for any work to be executed, availability of crucial information and data regarding the extent of damage to life and property was required. This need was felt by many, particularly the Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan (KNNA), which was engaged in relief and rehabilitation work on large scale in Kutch. To fulfill this need of authentic information and to foster long term development in the region, the KNNA established 23 Setus in Kutch, which cover almost the entire district.

Setu-Adesar is one amongst the 23 Setus set up by the Kutch Nav Nirman Abhiyan. It covers 9 villages of Adesar, where the salt workers of the region are concentrated. These villages fall in the area of operation of Setu – Adesar. Setu has conducted an in depth study of 100 families of salt workers and subsequently prepared a data base of the information obtained. In addition to this, Setu has prepared a narrative report which includes case studies on the salt workers of Adesar area.

In Adesar, most of the land for salt production is owned by private companies. The salt workers of the area have no option but to work in the saltpans of the company. Setu–Adesar had tried to organise the salt workers of Sukhpar, Taga, Varnu villages under the banner of 'Agaria Vikas Samiti' (Committee for development of Salt workers). The Samiti had initially managed to get 21 members who were then trained by Setu. Setu has provided the Samiti with one lakh rupees as village development fund which the members of the Samiti have to manage. The members of the Samiti have raised their voice in the past in many meetings with the government and non – government officials on the issues concerning the salt workers. But the local salt companies pressurised the salt workers to withdraw their names from the Samiti. As a result, the Samiti does exist but has virtually become non functional. (Pls. refer the case study of 'Agaria Vikas Samiti'.)

Setu – adesar has also made interventions to ensure regular education to school going children of salt workers. It also helps to provide salary to a teacher of local school from the Agaria Vikas Samiti.

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2. Voluntary Organisation: SETU – Mathak

Contact person: Hanif Juneja, Mukesh Patel
Address: Setu – Information center**,** Village: Antarjal, Ta. Anjar, Dist. Kutch
Phone No.: 02836 - 248539

Activities:
Setu–Mathak is presently engaged in collecting information on salt workers of their area of operation for the purpose of preparing a database. As far as the issues related to the salt workers are concerned, Setu–Mathak is basing its efforts on the experiences and experiments done by Setu-Adesar in this regard. However, the issues of the salt workers are different in comparison to those in Adesar. A majority of the salt workers who work in the local saltpans are migrant labourers. Setu–Mathak is therefore trying to identify new strategies to address the different issues of the salt workers.

Currently, Setu–Mathak is preparing a status report on the salt workers of their area of operation. While preparing the status report, the volunteers of Setu–Mathak are also trying to understand the underlying issues of the migrant salt workers. They have in fact started working in the direction of issuing Ration Cards to the migrant salt workers.

3. Voluntary Organisation: Yusuf Maherali Centre, Bhadreshwar

Contact person: Dharmendrabhai, Coordinator
Address: Bhadreshwar, Ta. Mundra, Dist. Kutch
Phone No.: 02838 – 282375 / 282375

Activities:
The Yusuf Maherali Centre (YMC) was setup in the memory of the well known socialist and freedom fighter Yusuf Maherali of Maharastra. So the main base of the Centre is therefore in the state of Maharastra. Bhadreshwar, being the ancestral town of Yusuf Maherali, the Yusuf Maherali Centre in Maharastra also started its activities in this region. The target communities of the Centre are salt workers and fishermen of the Coastal belt near Bhadreshwar. The Yusuf Maherali Centre has built 100 houses for the salt workers under the livelihood recovery project funded by IOM – International Organisation for Migration. While working with the local salt worker families, the major thrust of the Centre is on activities which can help to generate livelihood options for the salt workers.

The salt production activity in Bhadreshwar attracts a good number of migrant labourers from other regions. The migrants mostly come from Rajkot, Surendranagar and Jamnagar districts. The local people of the area are mainly engaged in loading and unloading of salt after salt production. The local Ahir communities, especially the Ahir women are involved in this activity. The Yusuf Maherali Centre has helped to organize the local Ahir women by promoting Self Help Groups in their villages. Through Self Help Groups, the Centre provides them with credit to undertake small scale

economic activities at village level. For example, in village Vira, the Centre had initially lent Rs.10,000 as a revolving fund to the Self Help Group of the village. The revolving fund was distributed amongst the members of the group for various economic activities such as setting up of a vegetable shop, grocery shop, home based economic activities etc. The efforts of the Centre have helped 40 members of the Self Help Group to leave the cumbersome work of loading and unloading of salt. The Centre has also promoted home based small scale production activities such as soap making, Papad making etc. These products are then marketed by the YMC at local as well outside markets.

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4. Voluntary Organisation: PRAYAS, Anjar

Contact person: Bhadresh Raval, Hirenbhai
Address: 60, Marutinagar, Near Yadavnagar, Meghpar road, Anjar – 370110
Phone No.: 02836 - 246493

Activities:
In Kutch district there are 425 registered saltpans along the belt from Gandhidham to Anjar. The condition of the salt workers in Kutch is quite different from their counterparts in Patan, Rajkot and Surendranagar districts. PRAYAS has had a long term involvement with the salt workers of Kutch region. PRAYAS has helped in the formation of the 'Kutch Agaria Hitrakshak Manch'. PRAYAS has also constructed houses for the salt workers under the livelihood recovery project funded by the International Organisation for Migration - IOM. Along with the houses, it has also built five schools for the children of salt workers, of which three are functioning at present. The schools are managed by the Kutch Small Scale Manufactures Association.

PRAYAS has also been trying to address the health issues of the salt workers of the region. It organises vaccination camps for the children of the salt workers. The general hospital at Adipur organises a meeting of the stakeholders for discussing the health issues of salt workers, on the second and fourth Friday of every month which is regularly attended by a representative of PRAYAS and wherein the representative gives suggestions for the improvement in medical facilities to be provided to the salt workers. PRAYAS has also distributed tool kits to the salt workers during implementation of the IOM project.

ANNEXURE – 4: Data collection format

Salt Workers' Study
Conducted by SAVE – Saline Area Vitalisation Enterprise
Questionnaire for Salt Workers' Family

Field Investigator : _____ Date: _____

Village: _____ Taluka: _____ District: _____

Section - 1: Family details

1. Name of respondent: _____

2. Caste: _____ 3. Religion: _____ 4. No. of Family members: _____

5. Family details:

Sr No.	Name of Family members	Sex	Age	Relationship	Education
1					
2					
3					

Section - 2: Occupational details

1. Do you have agriculture land ? i. _____ Vigha ii. No Land

2. Major agriculture crops: _____ 3. Approximate yield: _____

4. Do you have irrigation facility ? i. Yes ii. No

5. Do you have livestock ? i. Yes ii. No

6. If yes, than details of livestock:
i. Cow: _____ iv. Goat: _____ vii. Horse: _____
ii. Bullock: _____ v. Sheep: _____ viii. Poultry: _____
iii. Buffalo: _____ vi. Donkey: _____ ix. Others: _____

7. Details of occupations and the times period of same:

Sr. No.	Occupation	Time period of work	Working days	Rate per day (Rs.)	Annual Income (Rs.)	No. of family members involved
1						
2						
	Total					

Section - 3: Salt production activity

1. From how many years are you engaged with salt production activity ?_____Years

2. How many members of your family are involved in salt production ?
i. Male: _____ ii. Female: _____ iii. Children: _____ iv. Total: _____

3. Where do you produce salt ? i. Coastal area ii. Inland area

4. Which type of salt are you producing ? i. Vadagaru ii. Karkutch iii. Others: _____

5. Method of Salt production: i. Own *Pata* ii. Rented *pata* iii. Labour Work iv. Others_____

6. How many *pata* owned by you ? i. Own _____ ii. Rented _____

7. Average are a of each *pata* ? _____

8. Time of one *pata* for lease ? _____ Year

9. Is the lease of land renewed after the termination of lease period ? i. Yes ii. No

10. If no, what is the reason ? _____

11. How many times in a year salt production is being done ? _____

12. Production in one time ? _____ Tonne

13. No. of working house in a day: i. Male: _____ ii. Female: _____ iii. Children: _____

14. Have ever take any steps to improve the quality of salt production ? i. Yes ii. No

15. If yes, then which steps ? _____

16. Have you producing bi – products of salt ? i. Yes ii. No

17. If Yes, types of salt products: i. _____ ii. _____ iii. _____

18. Which tools are you using for salt production ?
i. Engine ii. Dantal iii. Gum boot iv. Hand gloves
v. Pavada - Tagara vi. Cap vii. Goggles: _____ viii. Others:____

19. If you are using engine than how much money you spend for crude oil ? Rs. _____

20. How many hours a day are you using the engine ? _____ Hours

21. Is the usage of salt is same in every period of Salt production ? i. Yes ii. No

22. If no, then in which stage there is a major change ? i. Initial ii. Medium iii. Last

23. The average use of engine in this stage : _____ Hours

24. Are you migrating for salt production ? i. Yes ii. No

25. If Yes, then type of migration ? i. With family ii. Husband and wife iii. Male members

26. If yes, distance of migration place ? _____ Km. 27. No. of months: _____ Month

28. which types of things you chose to carry with you during the migration period ? _____
_____

29. Where do you get the water during the migration ? _____

30. How much money you spend to purchase the water ? Rs. _____

31. If you are working in others' *pata* then type of work ? i. Pagardar ii. Partner iii. Labourer

32. Monthly income from the work : Rs. _____

33. No of working months in a year : _____ 34. No of working days in a month: _____

35. Have you take help of your relatives or neighbors during the salt production ? i. Yes ii. No

36. If yes, then in which type of help in the work ? _____

37. What is the remuneration for the help ?_____

38. What is your annual investment for salt production work ? Rs. _____

39. Where do you get the money for initiation of salt production activity ? i. Own ii. On credit

40. If 2, then what is the source of credit ?
i. Bank ii. Money lender iii. Relatives iv. Trader v. Salt Cooperative vi. Others _____

41. Terms and conditions of the credit:
i. _____
ii. _____

42. The amount of *Kharchi* by trader ? Rs _____ 43. Period of *Kharchi*: _____

44. Impact of credit on your work:
i. On price ii. One marketing iii. Other impact : _____

45. What is the time for final settlements ? _____

46. What is your exact profit after pay back al the debts ? Rs. _____

47. Who bare the loss due to natural calamity ? _____

Section IV: Salt marketing

1. According to you which are the major market places for Salt ? _____

2. In which month you marked the Salt produced by you ? _____

3. To which you sale the salt ? i. Local trader ii. Big trader iii. Salt cooperative
iv. Processing unit v. Company vi. Others_____

4. The selling price of the salt ? (clearly mention the unit of sales)
i. Local trader _____ ii. Big trader _____ iii. Salt cooperative _____
iv. Processing unit_____ v. Company_____ vi. Others _____

5. If you are selling to trader than every year you are selling to same trader ? i. Yes ii. No

6. If no, then reason: _____

7. What is the average loading of salt per truck ? _____ Tonne

8. How many persons are involved in the carting process ? _____

9. What is the price of carting process ? Rs. _____

10. Who bare the cost of carting ? i. Salt worker ii. Local trader iii. Big trader
iv. Half and Half v. Company vi. Others _____

11. Any deduction by Salt trader marketed salt ? i. Yes ii. No

12. If Yes, then what is the percentage of deduction ? _____

13. Who sale the by products of salt ? i. Trader ii. Salt worker iii. Others: _____

14. What is the price of by product ? Rs. _____ 21. Who get the money ? _____

15. What is the market price get by trader of the salt sold by you ? Rs. _____

16. If there any price difference when you sold the salt to the credit provider ? i. Yes ii. No

17. If yes, then what is the difference ? Rs. _____

18. Is the salt produced by you sold immediately ? i. Yes ii. No

19. If no, then for how many days it remains as it is ? _____ days

Section V: Details on health issues

1. Is there any disease in your family due to salt production activity ? i. You ii. No

2. If yes, then which types of diseases : i. Common diseases ii. Severe diseases

3. If 1, then what are the common diseases due to Salt production ?
i. Cough / Cold ii. Fever iii. Skin diseases iv. Eye problems v. Others _____

4. If 2, then what are the severe diseases due to Salt production ?
i. Respiratory diseases ii. Eye problems iii. Skin ulcer
iv. T.B. v. Others - 1: _____ vi. Others -2: _____

5. What are the diseases that are very common to females ?
i. _____ ii. _____ iii. _____ iv. _____

6. Is there any accidents occurring due to salt production activity ? i. Yes ii. No

7. Which type of accidents that are ?
1. Wounds 2. Burns 3. Cuts
4. Skin problems 5. Others -1: _____ 6. Others -2: _____

8. Which are the preventive measures you take ?_____
_____

9. What is the remedy available at work place for accidents ? _____

10. Have you ever approached to doctor for treatment ? i. Yes ii. No

11. The distance of place of treatment : _____ Km.

12. Are you admitted in hospital if there is a severe health problem ? i. Yes ii. No

13. Is there any facility for treatment of pregnant woman at work place ? i. Yes ii. No

14. If no, what is the effect ? _____

Section VI: Details on education status

1. The no. of school going Children: i. Boys:_____ ii. Girls:_____

2. Which type of school does your children go for education ?
i. Government school ii. Private school iii. Innovative school experiment

3. What is the impact of your occupation on the education of your children ?
i. Dropped the school ii. Irregular attendance iii. Any _____

4. If 1, How many of you children have to left the school ? i. Boys : _____ ii. Girls : _____

Section VII: Government schemes and other legal informations

1. Are you aware of the Gov. schemes for Agarias ? i. Yes ii. No

2. Have you any way benefited by any Gov. scheme ? i. Yes ii. No

3. If yes, then type of benefit ? _____

4. Have you get any help from voluntary organisation ? i. Yes ii. No

5. If Yes, then which type of help ? _____

6. Are you a member of any Salt cooperative ? i. Yes ii. No

7. If Yes, then are you aware of laws of cooperative ? i. Yes ii. No

8. Are you daily regularly attend the meeting of cooperative members ? i. Yes ii. No

9. Have you get any benefits from cooperative ?_____

Section – 8: Other information

1. What is the effect on your life if you are obscured from the society for a long time ? _____
_____

2. Which are the tools for recreation in the Saltpans ? _____

3. What are the means of communication in the Saltpans ? _____

4. Given a choice and similar income will you go for Salt as an Occupation? i. Yes ii. No

5. If Yes, then reason:
1. _____
2. _____

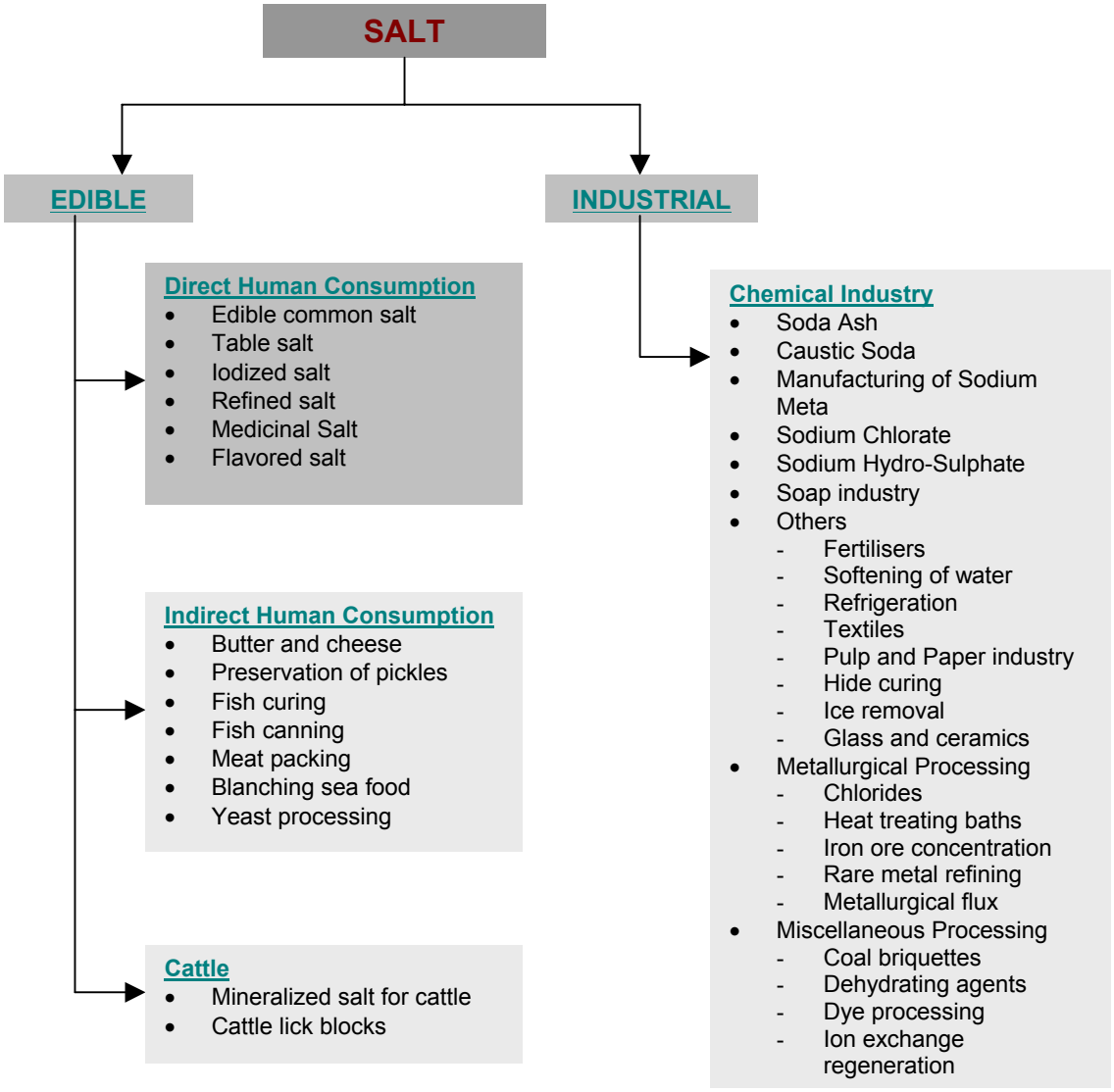
6. If No, then reason:
1. _____
2. _____

7. How can the Salt production Occupation be promoted to yield more income ?
1. _____
2. _____

ANNEXURE – 5: ISI (BIS) Specification of Salt For Various Industries

Name of the Industry	Purity (Per Cent) Nacl (Min.)	Name of Impurities	Permissible Limits (Max.)
Alkali Industry (Caustic Soda and Soda Ash)	98.5	$CaSo_4$ $MgCl_2$ $MgSo_4$ Fe_4+ Insoluble Moistures	0.2 per cent 0.1 per cent 0.6 per cent 20.0 ppm 0.2 per cent 4.0 per cent
Tanning Industry	97.0	Insolubles Solubles Alkalinity Na_2Co_3 Fe_4+ Moisture	1.0 per cent 2.0 per cent 0.5 per cent 20.0 ppm 6.0 per cent
Soap and Dyestuffs Industry	98.5	$CaSo_4$ $MgCl_2$ $MgSO_4$ Fe_4+ Insoluble Moistures	0.03 per cent 0.03 per cent 0.01 per cent 10 ppm 0.05 per cent 1.0 per cent
Canned Fruits and Food	99.97	Ca+Mg Cu Fe_4+	0.1 per cent 1.5-2.0 ppm 1.5-2.0 ppm
Fish Curing	98.0	Soluble	1.5 per cent
Drugs and Pharmaceuticals	99.5	So_4 Pb and Cu Fe_4+ As Br, Ba, Mg, Ca	600.0 ppm 5.0 ppm 40.0 ppm 10.0 ppm Pass I.P. test
Dairy Industry	99.6	Ca Mg Alkalinity Na_2Co_3 Na_2Co_3 Na_2Co_4 Insoluble Fe_4+ Cu Pb As	0.01 per cent 0.01 per cent 0.1 per cent 0.3 per cent 0.03 per cent 10.0 ppm 2.0 ppm 2.0 ppm 1.0 ppm
Table Salt	97.0	Water Insoluble Acid Insoluble Ca Soluble Mg Soluble Fe_4+ Soluble Co_3 Soluble Pb As Moisture	2.2 per cent 1.48 per cent 0.05 per cent 0.1 per cent 50 ppm 0.20 per cent 2.5 ppm 1 pmm 0.5 per cent
Edible common Salt	96.0	Soluble Insoluble	3.0 per cent 1.0 per cent

ANNEXURE – 6: Uses of Salt



ANNEXURE – 7: Calendar of Salt production process

Sr. No	Period	Activity	Who is involved ?	No. of days	Resource Used	Expenditure	
						Labour	Material
1	September/ October	Well digging	Men, children	3	Kodari, Tagara,Pavda	1050	
2		Construction of channels	Women	2	Kodari, Tagara,Pavda	300	
3		Soil loosening process	Women and children	8	Water,tractor	800	1700
4		Preparation of Crystaliser-gamdu	Women	10	Kodari, Tagara,Pavda	1000	
5		Construction of paatas	Women	10	Kodari, Tagara,Pavda	500	
6		Pagali- Compacting the paatas	Women				
7		Putting Zipta grass on bunds	Children	5		500	1500
8		Filling of Condenser	Men		Water,	250	1000
9		Putting Zipta grass in the crystaliser	Men and women	10	1 tractor grass	3000	
10		Removal of Grass	Men and women	4		400	
11	Octo-March	Dantari operation	Men	90	Pavdi,Khampari, Diesal,oil	4500	64800
12		Removal of water from the crystallizer after salt production	Men	2		100	
13		Drying of salt		3		150	
		Heaping of salt	Men and women	8		2000	
		Loading of Salt	Men and women	10	Pavda & tagara,tractor	6400	
						20950	69000

ANNEXURE – 8: Comparison between various structures of Inland Salt industry

Salt production by Agaria under various structures In Inland salt Industry

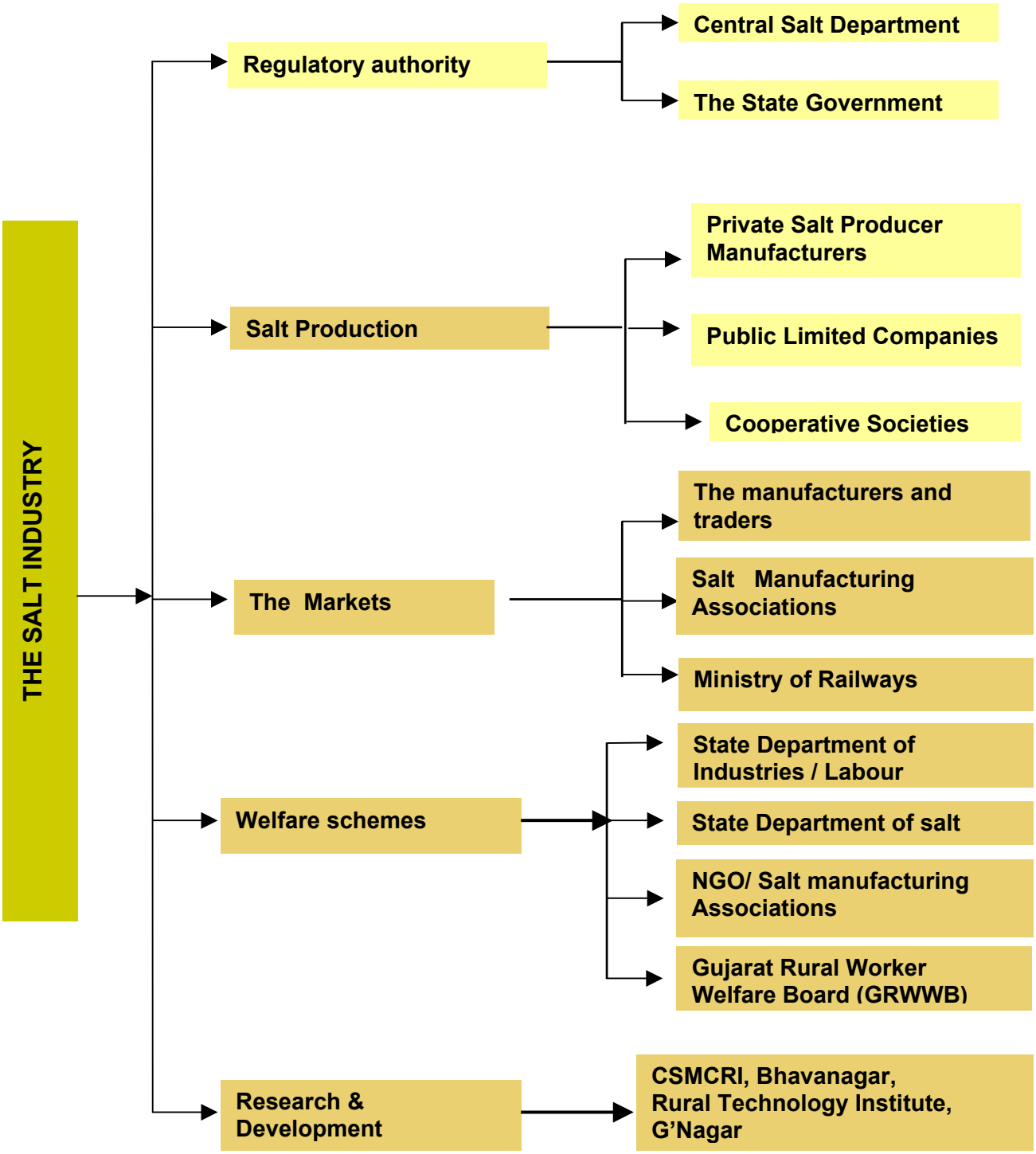
Details	Hindustan Salt	Company	Pvt. Trader	Co-operative
Position of Agaria	Employee of company	Previously in DCW they were full time employee now they are vendors. In Adesar region work as a labourers on companies land.	In Surendranagar Labour contactor. Not applicable for Adesar region	Member of the society.
Land ownership	Company	Company or own	Salt worker / Co-operative / on rent	Co-operative
Contract	Oral	Signed on stamp paper	Signed on stamp paper	For credit stamp paper is signed
Credit	Offer advance for preparation and living expense	Advance for preparation and living expense	Advance for preparation & living expense	Offer advance for preparation and living expense
Interest on advances	Not charged	Charged indirectly	Not charged	As per rule
Implements	Owned by salt worker	Own in Santalpur. Provided by company Adesar	Owned by salt worker	Provided by Co-operative
Machine ownership	Company	Salt worker	Salt worker	Co-operative or member's own
Maintenance of machine	Bear by company	By salt worker	By salt worker	By member
Crude/Diesel	Provided by company but cost is adjusted	Arranged by company but cost is adjusted	Arranged by salt worker but cost is adjusted	Arranged by salt worker but cost is adjusted
Water	Water is supplied by company at free of cost	Not applicable. In Adesar and Santalpur by tanker @ Rs.600/month	Provided by tanker. The water charges are taken on the basis of No. of Paatas. @ Rs.600/pata/month	Provided by Co-operative free of cost
Choice of production	No choice. Salt makers are asked to produce particular quality and grade.	NA in Surendranagar. No choice in Adesar and Santalpur	No choice.	Available with salt maker
Middleman	No middleman. However company's union offers the Paatas.	NA for S.Nagar In Adesar middleman exists between company & agaria.	No middle man	In many case secretary of the co-operative act as middleman.
Payment	Settled through union based on piece rate and quality after deducting the advances.	In S.Nagar settled directly against quantity purchased. In Adesar and Santalpur given through middleman after deducting the expenses.	Given on piece rate against production.	Co-operative help producer sell his salt. Co-operative charge Rs. 1000 as fee.

Rate	Highest in the sector.	At market rate in S.Nagar.In Adesar and Santalpur range between Rs. 55 to 70/tonne.	. Nearly 30% lower than market rate.	Offer services to member to sell in open market. Participate in the negotiation. SEWA offer 50 paise more than market rate
Fixing of rate	At the beginning	NA for S.Nagar. At the beginning	Rates are fixed in before offering credit	At the time of selling.
Transport Expense up to plot	Bear equally by both	Bear by company in S.Nagar and Adesar	Equal share of salt maker	Bear by purchaser
Deduction if any	Yes	70 Kg per tonne for moisture	Yes; 5%	As per quality
Loss		NA for S.Nagar.In Adesar and Santalpur fortified by company	Salt worker have to pay for the loss	To be born by members.
By product/Brine ownership	Company	Company	Salt maker	Salt maker
Protective kit	Provided by company	NA in S.Nagar. Provided by company	Not provided	Own

Salt production by Agaria under various structures In Maine salt Industry

Details	Lease holder /Company/Co-operative
Agaria status	Contract labour
Land ownership	Company or own lease
Contract	Signed on stamp paper
Credit	Offer advance for preparation and living expense
Interest on advances	Charged indirectly
Implements	Primary producer
Machine ownership	Company /lease holder/Co-operative
Maintenance of machine	By company /lease holder/Co-operative
Crude	Company /lease holder/Co-operative but adjusted later
Water	by tanker @ Rs.600/month
Choice of production	No choice available
Middleman	Middleman exists between company and salt maker.
Payment	Given through middleman after deducting the expenses of crude and water supply.
Rate	Rs. 25-30 /tonne
Fixing of rate	At the beginning
Expense for transport to up to plot	Bear by company /lease holder
Deduction if any	5% per tonne
Loss	Bear by company /lease holder/ Co-operative
By product/Brine ownership	Company /lease holder/ Co-operative
Prevention kit	Primary producer

Annexure – 9: Stake holders of Salt industry



ANNEXURE – 10: The Salt Cess Act, 1953

THE SALT CESS ACT, 1953

(Received the assent of the President on the 26th December,1953, and brought into force on the 2nd January, 1954- Ministry of Production notification No.SRO.2378 dated 29th December, 1953).

NO.49 OF 1953

An Act to provide for the levy and collection of a cess on salt for the purpose of raising funds to meet the expenses incurred on the salt organisation maintained by Government and on the measures taken by Government in connection with the manufacture, supply and distribution of salt. BE it enacted by Parliament as follows :-

1. Short title, extent and commencement. (1) This Act may be called the Salt Cess Act, 1953.

(2) It extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

(3) **Definitions:-**In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,-

(a) **"manufacture"** in relation to Salt includes collection, removal, preparation, steeping, evaporation, boiling or any one or more of these processes, the separation or purification of salt obtained in the manufacture of saltpetre, the separation of salt from earth or other substance so as to produce alimentary salt, and the excavation or removal of natural saline deposits or efflorescence; and the work "manufacturer" shall be construed accordingly and shall include not only a person who employs hired labour in the production or manufacture of salt but also any person who engages in its production or manufacture on his own account if the salt is intended for sale.

Explanation – In this clause, "saltpetre" includes rasi, sajji, and all other substances manufactured from saline earth, and kharinun and every form of sulphate or carbonate of soda;

(b) **"salt"** includes swamp salt, spontaneous salt, and salt or saline solutions made or produced from any saline substances or from salt earth;

(c) **"salt factory"** includes-

(i) a place used or intended to be used in the manufacture of salt and all embankments, reservoirs, condensing and evaporating pans, buildings, and waste places situated within the limits of such place, as defined from time to time for the purposes of the Central Excise and Salt Act, 1944 (1 of 1944).
(ii) all drying grounds and storage platforms and tore houses appertaining to any such places;
(iii) land on which salt is spontaneously produced,
(d) **'prescribed'** means prescribed by rules made under this Act.

3. Levy and collection of cess on salt- There shall be levied and collected in such manner as may be prescribed a cess in the nature of an excise duty at the rate of fourteen naya paise per forty kg. and salt manufactured in any salt factory whether owned by Govt. or not.

4. Application of Proceeds of cess- The proceeds of the duty levied under this Act, reduced by the cost of collection as determined by the Central government, shall, if Parliament by appropriation made by law in this behalf so provides, be utilized on all or any of the following objects, namely :-

(a) meeting the expenditure incurred in connection with the salt organisation maintained by the Central Government;
(b) meeting the cost of measures taken in connection with the manufacture, supply and distribution of salt by Union agencies and the regulation and control of the manufacture, supply and distribution of salt by other agencies, and in particular measures for-

(i) the establishment and maintenance of research stations and model salt farms.
(ii) the establishment, maintenance and expansion of salt factories;
(iii) Fixing the grades of salt;
(iv) promoting and encouraging co-operative effort among manufacturers of salt; and
(v) promoting the welfare of labour employed in the salt industry.

5. Validation of charges levied on salt before the commencement of this Act- The charge in respect of the manufacture or production of salt imposed by the rule made by the Central Government under section 37 of the Central Excise and Salt Act, 1944 (1 of 1944) and published with the notification of the former Finance Department (Revenue Division) No.3, dated the 29th March, 1947, shall be deemed to have been levied under this Act as if this Act was in force on the day on which the charge was so imposed and accordingly-

(a) any sum paid or payable by way of such charges shall be deemed to have been paid or payable in accordance with law; and
(b) no claim shall lie in any court for the refund of any sum so paid.

6. Power to make rules- (1) The Central Government may by notification in the Official Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(2) In particular and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for-
(a) the assessment and collection of the cess levied under this Act,
(b) The determination of the cost of collection of the cess;
(c) The manner in which accounts relating to the proceeds of the cess shall be maintained;
(d) The manner in which the proceeds of the cess may be applied on the objects specified in section 4;
(e) The exemption from the whole or any part of the cess levied under this Act-
(i) In respect of salt exported from India;
(ii) In respect of salt manufactured by any specified categories of small manufacturers; and
(iii) In respect of salt utilized in the manufacture of any other product of industry.

(3) Every rule made by the Central Govt. under this section shall be laid as soon as may be after it is made before each House of Parliament while it is in session for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two successive sessions, and if before the expiry of the session in which it is so levied or the session immediately following both Houses agree in making any modification in the rules or both Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall therefore have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect as the case may be, so however, that any such modification or amendment shall be without prejudiced to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY
NOTIFICATION

New Delhi the 6th June, 1964

S.O. 2167- In excercise of the powers, conferred by Section 6 of the Salt Cess Act, 1953 (49 of 1953), and in supercession of the Salt Cess Act, 1953 the Central Govt. hereby makes the following rules, namely :-

1. Short title :- These rules may be called the Salt Cess Rules, 1964
2. Definitions :- In these rules, unless the context otherwise requires,
    a. "Act" means the Salt Cess Act, 1953 (49 of 1953)
    b. "Agent" means any person who is recognised by the Salt Officer as the person expressly or impliedly authorised by the salt manufacturer to be his agent in respect of his salt factory or of the salt manufactured in his factory.
    c. "Cess" means of the cess levied and collected under section 3 of the act;
    d. "Cooperative Society" means, a Co-operative Society registered under the Cooperative Societies Act, 1912 (2 of 1912) or under any law for the time being in force);
    e. "Form" means a form appended to these rules;
    f. "Licence" means a licence issued under the rule 103 of the Central Excise Rules, 1944 and a "licensee" means a person or group of persons holding individually or jointly, a licence;
    g. "Salt Officer" means an officer of the Salt Department not below the rank of an Inspector having jurisdiction over the land or premises where salt is manufactured;
    h. "Salt Works" means an any defined area within a salt factory which used for the manufacture of salt and which is separately registered as such in public accounts;

1. Cess when and by whom payable: - The cess shall be paid by the manufacturer in advance subject to the provisions contained in Rule 5.
2. Manner of payment of Cess :- All payments on account of cess shall be made by way of demand draft issued by a scheduled bank, payable in favour of designated officer of the Salt Department or paid through challan to the credit of "038-Union Excise Duties- Salt" directly in designated banks in advance, every fortnight.
3. Removal of salt from factory :- Save as otherwise provided no salt shall be removed from any salt factory, whether for the consumption or for manufacture of any other commodity, unless the cess due thereon has been paid in advance.
4. 'Provided that a manufacturer shall maintain a Personal Ledger Account (PLA) in Form-G and debit day-to-day cess charges on the consignments removed and shall furnish a monthly cess account in Form-H along with extract copy of the Personal Ledger Account, Invoices and Bills to the Salt Officer.
5. Provided further that the said manufacturer may open an "Account current" with the Salt Officer and keep in such account, at all times, an amount sufficient in the opinion of the Commissioner to cover the amount of cess leviable on salt intended to be removed from the place of manufacture or storage during a period of fifteen days; the account current being settled by the Salt Officer at intervals not exceeding one month; Provided also that the Salt Officer shall scrutinize the monthly cess account in respect of the said manufacturer and make necessary entries in his record';
6. Omitted
7. Omitted
8. Salt once removed not to be brought back :- No. Salt which has been removed from a salt factory in accordance with these rules shall be brought back into it without proper intimation to the Salt Officer.
9. Exemption from payment of cess :- In the following cases, salt shall be exempt from payment of cess to the extent specified against each.

   (a) Salt exported by sea from India.....the whole.
   (b)Salt manufactured by any person or group of persons in a salt work, the area of which does not exceed 4.04686 Hectare..... the whole.
   (c) Salt manufactured in a Salt Work by a cooperative society the area held by each individual member thereof being 4.04686 Hectares or less..... the whole.
   (d) Salt manufactured in a salt work the area of which exceeds 4.04686, but does not exceed 40.4686..... one half.
   (e) Salt manufactured in a salt work by a cooperative society the area held by each individual member thereof being more than 4.04686 Hectare not more than 40.4686 Hectares..... one half.
   (f) Salt despatched from India to Nepal through the agencies of the State Trading Corporation of India Ltd., New Delhi and Salt Trading Corporation Ltd., Kathmandu, Nepal..... the whole.
10. Storage of Salt :- Every manufacturer shall keep all salt in the salt factory heaped or stacked in an orderly manner so as to facilitate the estimation of quantity.
11. Maintenance of stock account :- Every manufacturer shall-
    (a) maintain true and correct account of the stock of salt in the factory in such form and in such manner as may be specified by the Commissioner; and
    (b) When so required by the Salt Officer, permit inspection of the account of produce it for his inspection.
12. Deleted
13. Submission of returns :- Every manufacturer shall submit to the Salt Officer on or before the tenth of every month a return in form 'E' of all stocks of salt manufactured in and issued from the Salt Factory during the previous month.
14. Recovery of cess short levied :- Where through inadvertance error or misconstruction of the part of the Salt Officer, or through any mis-statement as to the quantity of description of such salt on the part of manufacturer or his agent or for any other reason cess, has been short levied or corroneously refunded the persons chargeable with the Cess so short levied or the

person to whom such refund has been erroneously made, shall on written demand made by the Salt Officer within three months from the date on which the cess was short-levied or refunded, pay the deficiency or repay the amount refunded.

15. Refund of cess :- No cess which has been paid and of which a refund, in whole or in part, is claimed in consequence of the same having been paid through inadvertance, error or misconstruction shall be refunded, unless a written claim is made with Salt Officer within three months from the date of the payment or adjustment, as the case may be.

16. Expenditure from cess :- All expenditure of a capital nature shall be debited to the Head "40 Capital. Out-lay on Industrial Development Salt." All other expenditure shall be debited to the various sub-heads and detailed heads prescribed under the Head "35-Industries-Salt."

17. Cost of collection of cess :- The Commissioner shall work out at the close of each financial year the expenditure on the collection of cess in respect of all salt factories and the amount so worked out shall with the approval of the Central Govt. be treated as the cost of collection of the cess.

18. Proforma account :-
    1. After the close of each financial year the Commissioner shall compile in form ‘F’ a proforma account outside the Govt. account showing the receipts into and the expenditure from the cess account during the year and the balance remaining at that end of the year.
    2. The proforma account shall be audited by the Pay & Accounts Officer(Salt) or any other Officer duly authorized by him in this behalf.
    3. A copy of the proforma account duly audited and certified by the Pay & Accounts Officer (Salt) or such officer shall be forwarded to the Central Govt. on or before the end of January following the financial year to which the accounts relates.
    4. The account shall also be incorporated in the annual Administration Report of the Salt Organisation.

ANNEXURE – 11:

Welfare scheme for Salt Workers

State Government has implemented following various scheme for the 45801 Salt workers locates in 35 Talukas of 13 Districts of the state through Gujarat Rural Welfare Board.

(a) Scheme of salt Workers Welfare Centers:

Under this scheme, 45 Salt workers welfare centers are established in the salt production areas. Activities of Balvadi, library primary health, sports and cultural are run in such centers. The honorary workers of these centers are making publicity and fill up the forms of schemes of labour and other departments.

(b) Seasonal Balvadi-cum-Ghodiyaghar Scheme:

During the salt production season, Balvadi-cum-Ghodiyaghar are run for the salt workers children at the salt production places. There are such 50 balvadi-cum-ghodiyaghar in the state; while at 14 places where the residential quarters of salt workers are near the salt production places, balvadi-cum-ghodiyaghar are sanctioned on the permanent basis.

(c) First Aid Boxes for Salt Workers:

130 boxes of first aid boxes are provided to avail the salt workers, the emergency treatment at the working place, and due training is also provided to such workers. Medicines are provided intermittently.

(d) Kacha/ Pacca Quarter scheme for salt workers:

Under this scheme, financial assistance of 75% is given for the construction of Pacca house on their plot, so as to, protect them from for cold, heat and rain. Till now 474 tents of tarpaulin have been provided at the coast of Rs. 8.28 lakhs.

The new scheme viz Agaria Awas Yojna for betterment of Salt Workers has also been introduced with Central assistance of 70%. An outlay of Rs.1500 lakh is provided for Annual Plan 2005-06.

(e) Quarters for Rest Room scheme for salt Workers:

Assistance is given for Rest Room construction Rs. 36000 per such unit are sanctioned the Board gives 75% of the rest 25% to be bear by the salt unit. Thus such Rest Room were built in Valsad District during 1997-98 and the Board had expended amount of Rs. 54000/- .

(f) Identity Cards to Salt Workers:

Out of 45801 salt workers in the State the work of providing I card to 18738 Salt workers is on hand of which 10449 salt workers have already been given I cards till March 2001 . The same is under process.

(g) Scheme for total development of salt workers:

Under this scheme activities like awareness camp, financial assistance for the serious disease, tour arrangement, welfare, development and organizing activities are run.

Group Insurance Scheme for Salt workers :

Under this scheme, 45801 unorganized salt workers between the age group of 18 to 60 years are provided insurance coverage of Rs. 3000/- in the case of natural death and Rs 6000/- in the case of accidental death. From 16-10-95 Rs. 25000/- in case of accidental death. 25000/- in case of complete disability and Rs 12500/- in the partial disability is provided. Rs. 3000/- in natural death, Rs. 25000/- in accidental death and permanent disability.

ANNEXURE – 12:

All India Salt Cess receipts and Expenditure
(All India Figure in Million Rs.)

Year	Receipts			Expenditure			
	Salt Cess	Misc. Receipts	Total	Administration	Works	Ex- Gratia loan	Total
1950-51	8.10	1.56	9.66	3.80	0.39	0.00	4.19
1960-61	8.30	1.63	9.93	3.15	2.26	0.00	5.41
1970-71	12.18	1.75	13.93	4.79	0.96	0.78	6.53
1974-75	12.34	1.86	14.20	5.92	0.95	0.25	7.12
1975-76	11.67	1.83	13.50	7.46	1.43	0.06	8.95
1976-77	11.32	2.00	13.32	7.17	1.51	0.55	9.23
1977-78	12.78	2.35	15.13	7.30	3.14	0.48	10.92
1978-79	13.30	2.82	16.12	7.31	4.59	0.40	12.30
1979-80	13.40	3.36	16.76	7.80	4.72	1.73	14.25
1980-81	12.21	3.70	15.91	8.46	8.10	1.19	17.75
1981-82	13.58	3.77	17.35	9.14	5.05	0.45	14.64
1982-83	12.97	3.50	16.47	11.00	5.54	0.84	17.38
1983-84	13.63	3.15	16.78	12.55	7.15	0.50	20.20
1984-85	15.76	5.52	21.28	14.06	7.09	0.69	21.84
1985-86	17.04	4.43	21.47	15.51	7.00	1.06	23.57
1986-87	15.81	4.73	20.54	18.28	7.00	1.05	26.33
1987-88	16.99	4.66	21.65	19.16	8.35	1.98	29.49
1988-89	18.99	5.03	24.02	20.72	8.02	0.99	29.73
1989-90	19.08	5.46	24.54	21.80	7.95	1.14	30.89
1990-91	19.52	5.43	24.95	23.44	8.03	3.52	34.99
1991-92	19.75	19.98	39.73	25.84	8.66	1.08	35.58
1992-93	21.89	12.71	34.60	28.64	7.85	0.26	36.75
1993-94	22.70	12.38	35.08	32.90	6.97	0.00	39.87
1994-95	22.75	8.75	31.50	35.39	7.32	0.10	42.81
1995-96	24.63	9.41	34.04	41.73	9.44	2.70	53.87
1996-97	24.52	17.20	41.72	46.44	7.27	3.95	57.66
1997-98	24.32	13.85	38.17	61.95	6.81	3.67	72.43
1998-99	23.31	9.28	32.59	70.29	9.45	43.79	84.11
1999-00	26.48	62.99	89.47	74.95	15.61	7.93	98.49
2000-01	24.84	7.44	32.28	77.07	21.97	5.56	104.6
2001-02	26.87	8.68	35.55	80.66	11.59	4.3	96.55
2002-03	29.74	14.24	43.98	86.42	14.87	4.54	105.83
2003-04	27.77	12.75	40.52	83.70	13.76	-	97.46

(***Source:*** *Various Annual Reports, Salt Department, and Government of India, Ministry of Industry)*

ANNEXURE – 13: Economics of salt production

Income of Agarias in various Inland salt units

Sr. No.	Type	Vadagaru	Vadagaru	Vadagaru	Karkatch	Karkatch
	Working with	**Trader**	**Trader**	**Trader**	**Company**	**Individual-Agaria**
	Area	**Patan-Santalpur**	**Surendranagar-Khraghoda**	**Surendranagar-Dhrangadra**	**Kutch-Adesar, Rajkot-Maliya**	**Kutch-Anjar++**
	Average Production in tonne	**1200**	**1000**	**1200**	**1100**	**3000**
	Details	**Amount**	**Amount**	**Amount**	**Amount**	**Amount**
A	**Labour**					
1	Well digging	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	-
2	Preparation of network of salt pan	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	-
3	Production operation	18,000.00	15,000.00	15,000.00	18,000.00	-
	Total-Labour	**21,200.00**	**18,200.00**	**18,200.00**	**21,200.00**	**-**
B	Material					
1	Grass	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	-	-
2	Diesel	48,600.00	60,500.00	44,000.00	36,000.00	-
3	Oil	500.00	500.00	1,500.00	1,000.00	-
4	Implements	700.00	700.00	700.00	-	-
	Total-material	**52,800.00**	**64,700.00**	**49,200.00**	**37,000.00**	**-**
C	**Production cost**					
1	Transport					
2	Heaping	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	-	-
3	Loading	6,400.00	8,000.00	9,600.00	-	-
	Total-transport	**8,400.00**	**10,000.00**	**11,600.00**	**-**	**-**
D	**Drinking water expense**					84,000.00
	Drinking water	2,400.00	2,400.00	-	2,800.00	2,100.00
	Total- drinking water expense	**2,400.00**	**2,400.00**	**-**	**2,800.00**	**2,100.00**
	Grand total-Expense	**84,800.00**	**95,300.00**	**79,000.00**	**61,000.00**	**86,100.00****
	Rate/tonne	**67.00**	**100.00**	**70.00**	**55.00**	**30.00**
	Income					
	Price of salt*	**80,400.00**	**110,000.00**	**84,000.00**	**60,500.00**	**105,000.00**
	Profit/loss	**(4,400.00)**	**14,700.00**	**5,000.00**	**(500.00)**	**18,900.00**

Note :

* The final settlement is done after deduction of advances of Rs. 3000/month for food and incidental expenditure. This expenditures are not deducted in above profit/loss account. Considering this amount all agarias are making loss.

** In marine salt units, the production is carried out using three pair of agarias. This is total expenditure of food and drinking water for three pair. The profit is shared by three pair.

++ In marine salt units of Kutch, the agarias are contract labourer. They do not have any share in inputs for salt production. They receive labour per tonne production.

ANNEXURE – 14:

The economic of salt production for Private companies, Traders, Co-operatives and Hindustan salt.

Salt production economy for company Production unit: Private Company			
Sr.No	**Details**	**Rate/tonne**	
		Iodized	**Industrial**
1	Procurement from agaria	80.00	80.00
2	Loading	8.00	8.00
3	Transport	50.00	50.00
4	Iodisation and crushing	20.00	-
5	Packing	25.00	25.00
6	Loading in railway	8.00	8.00
	Production cost	**191.00**	**171.00**
7	Salt cess	3.50	3.50
8	Royalty	8.00	8.00
	Net Production cost	**202.50**	**182.50**
	Price realised to company	**500.00**	**300.00**
	Agent commission @20%	**100.00**	60.00
	Net profit realised	**197.50**	**57.50**
	Market		
	Distributor	500.00	
	Local trader commission	50.00	
	Local trader sell price	550.00	
	Retailer commission @20%	110.00	
	Net retail price to consumer	**660.00**	

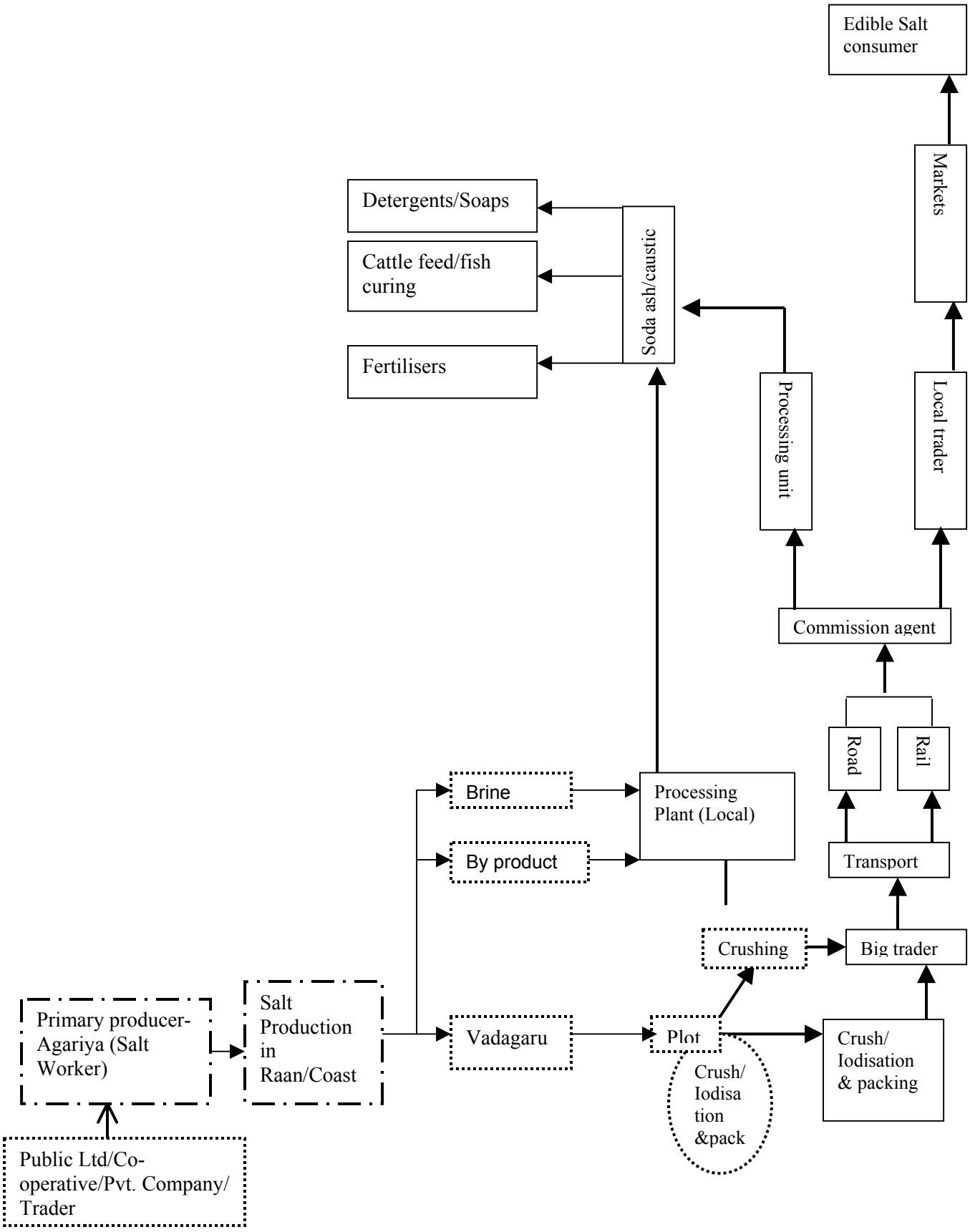
Salt production economy for Trader Production unit: Trader		
Sr.No	**Details**	**Rate/tonne**
		Iodized
1	Procurement from agaria	80.00
2	Loading	8.00
3	Transport	50.00
4	Iodisation and crushing	-
5	Packing	-
6	Loading in railway	-
	Production cost	**138.00**
7	Interest on investment @6%	6.00
8	Salt cess & royalty	-
	Net Production cost	**144.00**
	Price realised to company	**200.00**
	Agent commission @20%	**-**
	Net profit realised	**56.00**

Salt production economy for Hindustan salt Production unit : Hindustan salt			
Sr. No	**Details**	**Rate per tonne**	
		Iodized	**Non-Iodized**
1	Procurement from agaria*	300.00	300.00
2	Loading	16.00	16.00
3	Transport	30.00	30.00
4	Iodisation and crushing	25.00	-
5	Packing	20.00	-
6	Loading in railway	10.00	10.00
	Production cost	**401.00**	**356.00**
7	Salt cess	3.50	3.50
8	Royalty	8.00	8.00
	Net Production cost	**412.50**	**367.50**
	Price realised to HSL	**500.00**	400.00
	Agent commission @20%	**100.00**	80.00
	Net profit realised	**(12.50)**	**(47.50)**

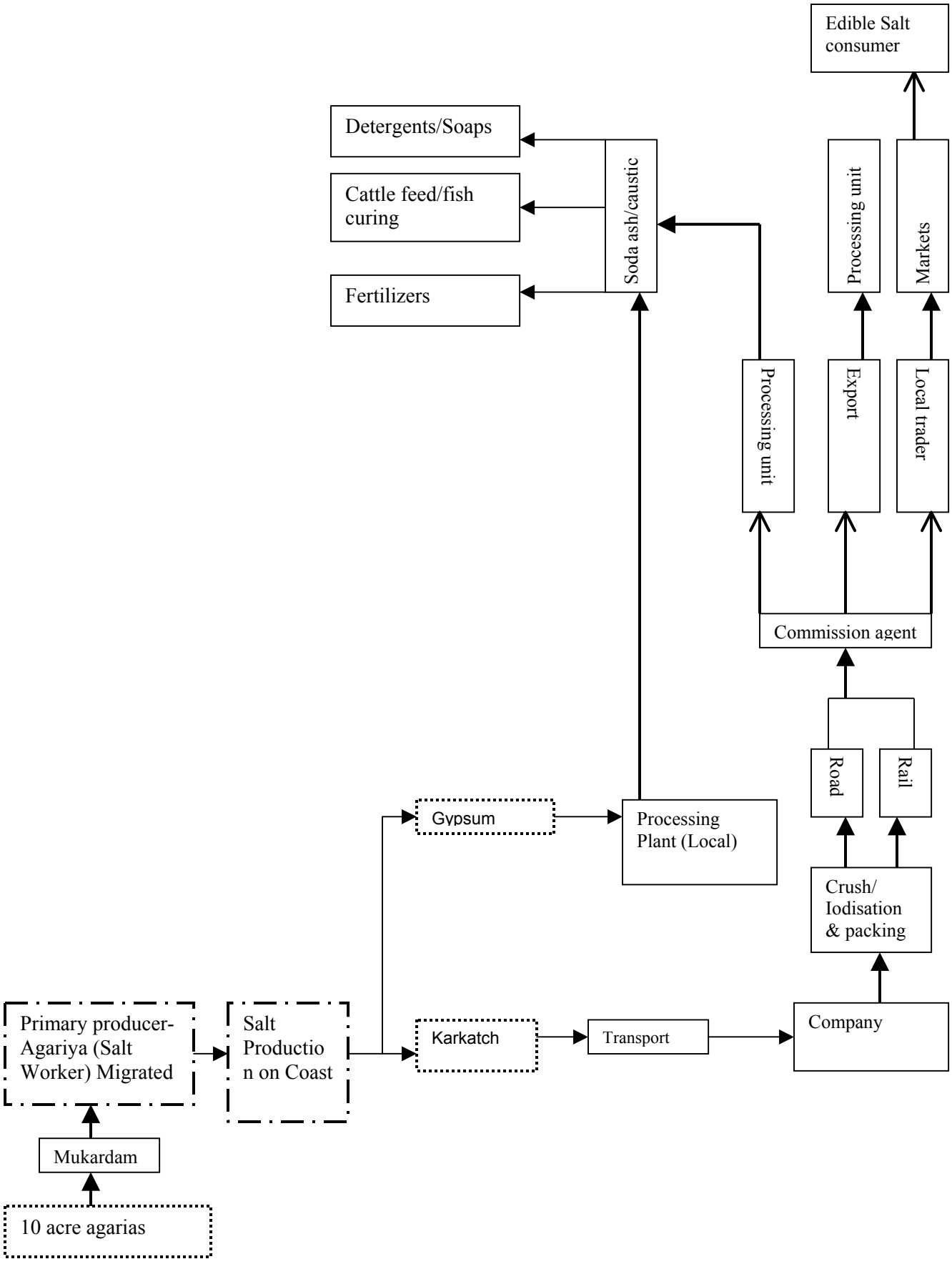
Salt production economy for Co-operative Production unit: Salt Co-operative		
Sr. No	**Details**	**Rate per tonne**
		Non-Iodized
1	Procurement from agaria	110.00
2	Loading	16.00
3	Transport	50.00
4	Iodisation and crushing	-
5	Packing	-
6	Loading in railway	-
	Production cost	**176.00**
7	Management overheads	100.00
8	Royalty & Salt cess	-
	Net Production cost	**276.00**
	Price realised to Co-op.	**300.00**
	Agent commission @20%	**-**
	Net profit realised	**24.00**

* Includes the agarias PF and other benefits and companies overheads and management cost.

ANNEXURE – 15 A: Value chain for Inland salt -Vadagaru



ANNEXURE – 15 B: Value chain for Marine salt production



ANNEXURE – 16: Living conditions at saltpan site

Regional comparison of facilities available at saltpan site

Facility	Kutch		Patan	Rajkot	Surendranagar
	Marine	Inland	Inland	Marine	Inland
Taluka covered	Bhachau, Anjar, Gandhidham	Adesar	Santalpur	Maliya-Miyana	Dasada, Dhangadhra, Halvad
Shelter	Pucca houses	Make shift type temporary houses	Make shift type temporary houses	Make shift type temporary houses	Make shift type temporary houses
Drinking water	Tanker supply-Salt worker charged by salt pan owner	Tanker supply-Salt worker charged by salt pan owner	Tanker supply-Salt worker charged by salt pan owner. Drinking water pipe line is laid but not functioning.	Tanker purchased by salt workers. They pay directly to the supplier.	Water pipe line for Agarias working for Hindustan salt. In other place arranged by the salt workers.
Health care	Provided by salt association and NGO	Not provided	Government health mobile and health worker visit every ten –fifteen days.	No service.	Government health mobile and health worker visit every ten –fifteen days.
Sanitation	Community toilet	No toilet facility	No toilet facility	No toilet facility	No toilet facility
Lighting	Available through power supply	Power supply is not available but they run dynamo on engine to operate bulb and music system	Power supply is not available but they run dynamo on engine to operate bulb and music system	Power supply is not available but they run dynamo on engine to operate bulb and music system	Power supply is not available but they run dynamo on engine to operate bulb and music system
Transportation	Trucks that come for transportation. Tractors working in salt pan for bunding work.	Trucks that come for transportation. Tractors working in salt pan for bunding work.	Trucks that come for transportation. Tractors working in salt pan for bunding work.	Trucks that come for transportation. Tractors working in salt pan for bunding work.	Trucks that come for transportation. Tractors working in salt pan for bunding work.
Tools for production	Owned by salt workers	Owned by salt workers	Owned by salt workers	Owned by salt workers	Owned by salt workers
Protective kits	Provided by the salt pan owner	Provided by NGO.	Purchased by salt workers	Provided by NGO.	Provided by department.
Fuel/fire wood	Collect fuel wood from wasteland.	Collect fuel wood from wasteland.	Collect fuel wood from wasteland in raan.	Collect fuel wood from wasteland.	Collect fuel wood from wasteland.
Education	Schools up to class 5 at salt pan site run by salt association.	No schools.	Informal schools run by GANTAR.	No schools at the salt pan location.	Raan shala by GANTAR in 10 villages in Kharaghoda. Boarding school in Dhangadra.
Provision	From nearest town on weekly basis.	From Adesar on weekly basis.	From Santalpur/village shop.	From village shop/PDS.	From nearest town.
Entertainment	Radio	Radio, Music system	Radio, Music system, TV	Radio	Radio, Music system

ANNEXURE – 17: A brief report of Multi – stake holder consultation

Sustained Nutrition Education Health and Livelihood Project (SNEHAL)
Workshop on Salt Workers – Issues, Challenges and Areas of Intervention

1. Background:

1.1 Though poverty estimates across different states in India has declined in last one decade, significant proportion of socially excluded communities still live in precarious conditions and faces severe challenge in fulfilling their basic needs such as physical safety, food, shelter clothing health and education services. While these are recognised as most critical facets of livelihood security, the practitioner's attributes slow and low level of improvement in livelihood security of these communities to their limited access to basic services and or denial of rights. Moreover, it is reasoned that lack of access to rights has perpetually escalating vulnerability among the socially excluded communities.

1.2 For poor and marginalized communities, recent development paradigm calls for integration of sustainable livelihood framework and rights based approaches for enhancing their development indices and hence livelihood security. In fact, it is assessed that the two are complementary to each other i.e. while the rights approach is associated with broader conceptualisation of poverty, with emphasis upon social differentiation and inequality, the livelihood framework suggest focus on livelihood outcomes for the poor. Linking livelihoods and rights approaches provides ample potential to reinforce a balanced approach that takes account of the key social, political, environmental and economic considerations.

1.3 Based on need to have people centered policy and enabling service delivery on rights and HLS framework, Care India as part of its SNEHAL project initiative organised one-day workshop. The workshop was organized to discuss and analyse the underlying reasons of poverty, issues, challenges and identify potential measures for enhancing livelihood of salt workers on May 19, 2005 at the Gandhi Labour Institute, Ahmedabad. The workshop was intended to serve as a platform for fostering collective learning through sharing of a research based study on Salt and also plan for the welfare of the salt workers. This report presents the discussions and detailed outcome of the day's workshop.

2. About CARE:

2.1 CARE is one of the worlds leading humanitarian organisations fighting global poverty across 72 countries. In India, the organisation is operational since 1950, to facilitate lasting change in the well-being and social position of the vulnerable groups, especially women and girls.

2.2 Keeping organization mission in focus and paradigm shift in development,CARE's in its programming reflects integration of rights and household livelihood security approach. Strategically, it intends to address underlying causes of poverty and social injustice through the programs for achieving mission statement by:

- Confronting unequal power relations and discrimination
- Increasing representation and participation in local governance
- Influencing critical policies, programs and services

3. SNEHAL Project: An Introduction

3.1 Gujarat is one among various priority States, where CARE has reinitiated its operation after 1996 following devastating earthquake in January 2001. Subsequent to rehabilitation of

earthquake-affected community in Kutch district, the organization is currently implementing SNEHAL – Community Empowerment Project designed for a period of three years.

3.2 In accordance with CARE's program focus, the project has been situated around the development premises of bringing improvement in livelihood security of vulnerable community in four districts of Gujarat i.e. Surendranagar, Patan, Rajkot and Kutch through deliberation on rights based approach and application of household livelihood framework. Universally, the project focuses on women, children and adolescent girls, with specific focus on salt workers, fishing communities, subsistence farmers, charcoal makers and pastoral communities.

4. Workshop Objectives:

4.1 The objective of the workshop was to:

- Share the findings of the study by providing an overview of the agarias and assessing their socio-economic and political status.
- Study the feasibility of the menu of options for empowering the salt workers' community.
- Map the institutions and CBOs available at the local level and assess the initiatives of the government, NGOs and cooperatives for salt workers.
- Identify and analyze administrative and legal issues in undertaking salt production and sale.
- Draw lessons from interventions undertaken by other organizations and identify effective strategies for improving the livelihood security of the salt workers.

5. Methodology:

5.1 To capture issues, challenges and identify potential measures for ensuring livelihood security of salt workers, almost all-major stakeholders of the salt industry were invited to participate in the day's workshop. The participants included salt workers, representatives from NGOs, Industries, research institutions and government functionaries, directly involved in salt related issues. Purposefully, to make the workshop more meaningful, top government officials including Principle Secretary, Labor and Employment were specially invited to participate in the workshop.

5.2 Ongoing study commissioned by CARE to Saline Area Vitalisation Enterprise (SAVE) to assess underlying causes of poverty and identify potential measures needed to bring about improvement in livelihood security of salt workers was used as base for facilitating and guiding the consultative process. All stakeholders were invited to provide critical feedback on the study findings, reflect on the issues not addressed by the study and provide suggestive action to improve quality of life of salt workers.

6. Study on Salt Workers – Major Findings

6.1 The study was undertaken in 10 blocks, covering 16 villages in the four districts of Surendranagar, Rajkot, Patan and Kutch. It reflected on following aspects of the salt industry and primary salt producer i.e. Agariya:

a. Overview of Salt Industry

6.2 The salt is produced all across the constituents in the world in varying capacity. India is the third largest salt producing country in the world, after United States

and China. The country produces about 12-17 million tonnes of salt every year, of which 5 million is utilized for human consumption, while 6-7 million tonnes is used for industrial purposes and about 1.2 million tonnes of salt is exported. Of various states, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu holds major share of salt produced in the India.

b. Salt Industry in Gujarat

6.3 Although there is no reliable census on salt workers, it is estimated that the total number of agarias in Gujarat is between 70,000 and one lakh. It is reported that workforce engaged in this occupation in Gujarat contributes around 70% of the total salt production in the country. Following table provides the details about the salt production in state of Gujarat.

Details	India	Gujarat
Total Area (in acres)	5,42,977	3,70,230
Area under cultivation (in acres)	3,12,501	2,24,449
No. of production units	10,347	2,772
Productions (million tonne)	17.8	13.17

Source: Study conducted by Saline Area Vitalization Enterprise Ltd. (SAVE)

c. Salt Producing Units In Gujarat:

6.4 In the State, the marine salt industries produce *Karkatch* salt, while the inland salt industries produce *Vadguru* salt and *Poda* salt. Salt producing units having an area exceeding 10 acres are covered under the provisions of the Salt Cess Act, and are recognized units with licenses from the Salt Department. Salt producing units with area upto 10 acres are exempted from this Act, and comprise the non-recognized units.

Category I: Comprises of salt works on plots over 100 acres, owned by large public limited and private limited companies.

Category II: Comprises of plots between 10-100 acres, owned by private traders and manufacturers.

Category III: Comprises of licensed cooperative societies who own less than 250 acres of land.

Category IV: Comprises of unlicensed plot upto 10 acres owned by leaseholders. This category accounts about 27% of the total salt production.

6.5 In most of the cases, the state government owns the land used for salt production. The land is leased out to companies under different tenures however between 1997-2002, it has expanded from 0.27 million acres to 0.37 million acres. It is observed that this expansion has marginalized the saltpan workers, who are the primary salt producers and dependent on the production for their daily livelihood.

d. STAKEHOLDERS IN SALT INDUSTRY

(Pls. Refer annexure –9 for figure)

e. Profile of the Salt workers in Gujarat

6.6 While the members of the upper castes own the saltpans, the agarias are usually from the socially and economically backward castes. The Kolis, Muslims and Dalits dominate salt production activities and other backward communities such as Vaghris, Bharwads, Rabaris and Ahirs are engaged in allied activities like transport, loading, grinding and packaging.

f. Issues of Salt Worker

a. Gender Issues:

- Salt making jobs are given out by only hiring a husband-wife pair. Single and widowed women cannot work in this profession even though they may have considerable experience in this field.
- The eldest daughter in the family has the responsibility of looking after her siblings and therefore always tends to be illiterate.
- There is a high child mortality rate and men have low life expectancy due to the various occupational hazards they are exposed to. The women suffer from RCH-related problems and anemia.

b. Economic Issues

- Work is given to salt workers on a piece-rate basis with a high dependence on credit supply from the traders. Even though agariyas are primary salt producers, such kind of processes led them into debt situations and forced them to become wage laborers with trader taking control of labor and produce.
- Many complains are received that Agarias do not get minimum wages. In fact there is a high level of financial exploitation, with the salt pan workers receiving only about Rs.7-10/100 kg for the salt they produce while the prevailing market price for edible salt is about Rs. 700/100 kg. Moreover, the moneylenders determine the quality and quantity of salt produce.
- There is a considerable risk for the agarias in the salt production. With no insurance coverage, they bear the consequences crop loss in events such as cyclones and windy conditions, prolonged rains, and the non-availability of a steady supply of brine.
- There is an asymmetry of knowledge of market information – the agarias do not know where and how to sell the crop, and the entire knowledge and resources lies with the traders and merchants. In fact such status also force the salt workers to sell off salt by-products for free to the traders. Traders thus control labor and produce by extending credit and advance payment for production.

c. Living Conditions

- Consequent to migration for eight months of a year, the Agarias engaged in inland salt production have to live in remote location, often, devoid of infrastructure for housing, health, education and potable water.

d. Health Issues

- The health of saltpan workers suffers enormously from the saline environment, in which they live and work. The workers gets exposed to various occupational hazards, especially for the eyes and skin, due to limited availability and use of safety kits in harsh climatic conditions.
- Poor nutrition and deplorable living conditions lead to low life expectancy and high infant mortality.
- Inadequate availability of fresh water due to salt contamination of the local water table lead to higher incidence of diseases.

e. Drinking Water:

- In many cases there is an acute shortage of drinking water and availability of water is the main issue in terms of cost and quality.
- Drinking water is one of the most expensive basic amenities for the Agarias as they have to spend about 15-20% of their income on drinking water. The expenses on hiring tanker are in the range of Rs. 400-800 per month.
- In situation of large family size, the limited quantity of water available, constraints personal hygiene, specifically affect women during menstrual periods.
- In Surendranagar, the water charges are collected on 'patta' basis, and not on the basis of the number of members per family.

f. Education:

- The education among agarias is very low with disparity among girls and boy child. Though the children study in regular school in the villages, they have to leave the school in case entire family migrates for salt production. Such children face difficulties in re admission and appearing for exams.

g. Migration:

- The migration starts from end of September and lasts till end of May. Migrants typically work as contract laborers with traders or companies. Women accompany the men during migration and have to bear the burden of salt making as well as taking care of food and water requirements of the family.
- Due to the change in charcoal regulations, there is an increase in migrant labor and competition in the salt labor employment.

h. Inland Salt Production:

- The inland salt production is largely concentrated in Little Rann of Kutch (LRK), however the production is governed by uncertainty as far as quality and availability of brine is concerned.
- The inland salt production is undergoing recession due to inflating rates of diesel, hence higher cost of production and severe competition with marine salt. While marine salt costs about Rs. 25/tonne, inland salt costs about Rs. 100/tonne.
- Lease issued in year 1973 for producing salt in little Rann of Kutch has not be renewed for long on account of its declaration as wild ass sanctuary. However salt workers still depend on this area for salt production, which is considered to be an illegal activity by forest department. Due to confusion about the legal status of the area, salt departments on the other hand still recognize this as a legal activity and collect cess and royalty on produced salt.

i. Technology

- Salt production is a labor-intensive activity. It is noticed that technological interventions have not kept pace with the scale of the industry in terms of enhancing productivity and the use of by-products.

7. Debated Issues at workshop:

a. Salt Production Vs. Salt Industries

7.1 The salt workers occupation largely resemble to that of agriculture, fisheries etc., however inspite of its similarities to these occupations, it is situated within the umbrella of State industries department. The debate is whether the occupation should be part of the industries or the labor department. One of the realities is that the salt workers occupation is more inclined towards unorganized sector – long working hours, hazardous conditions, basic amenities, which are governed at the

discretion of the employer. Considering this, the rules to look after their quality of life should largely fall under the aegis of the Labor department than within the industries department.

7.2 There are certain critical implications associated, if salt occupation is shifted and brought within the purview of labour department. The primary concern is that the workers would be deprived of the welfare schemes that are provisioned by the industries department. Secondly, it is easier to enforce regulations, if it remains part of industries department. In the unorganized setup, on the other hand, there are no kinds of norms or provisions available to protect the salt workers from exploitation.

b. Entitlements vs. accessibility to services

7.3 There are various provision/entitlements that have been created for the welfare of salt workers by the government, however accessibility to these provisions is a major issue. The primary reason being that the services are designed for implementation in the revenue villages, while the agariya's migrate for almost 6-8 months in a year in remote saltpans. The location of these saltpans doesn't carry the status of a revenue village and hence the salt workers get deprived of their entitlements. Though the government has mobilized its resources to improve salt workers access to various services after the Supreme Court ruling, with few exceptions, it is debated that these services are still not reaching to the targeted communities. The government argues that it is challenging in uniformly delivering the services to the salt workers in scattered saltpans distantly cut off from the revenue villages.

c. Proxy vs. identification of real Agarias:

7.4 Government has initiated the process of identifying the salt workers for better targeting of the various services based on designated criteria on an experimental basis in Anjar block of Kutch district. The stakeholders debated that these criteria's, however, suffers from various anomalies and shortcomings, which may ultimately lead to percolation of the benefits to non-Agarias. The concern is whether the criteria can lead to identification of real Agarias. It was apprised that unless appropriate criteria are evolved and methodology is worked out, it is difficult to reach real Agariya and accord them beneficiary status for provisioning of various services.

d. Present Occupation vs. alternative livelihood option

7.5 With poor access to quality of life, there are growing apprehensions among the salt workers of whether to continue with this occupation or to explore other livelihood options. Considerable number of stakeholders also observe that current occupation imposes limitation as far as livelihood improvement is concerned and hence alternatives should be explored. The debate is however whether alternative livelihood options can contribute in improving the livelihoods of the salt workers. It was argued that salt industry in Gujarat is occupying significant position in the state's economy and provides ample opportunities for the salt workers to bring about improvement in their livelihood status by continuing with the same occupation. Further, provisioning of alternative livelihood options would hardly impact upon the quality of life of the Agarias, unless basic services are accessible to Agarias

8. Suggestions for improving the quality of life of Salt Pan Workers:

A. Recognition of Saltpan Workers as Citizens of the Country

a. Identification of Salt Pan Workers

8.1 To effectively reach out and deliver the services, criteria for identification of Agarias should be developed involving concerned stakeholders. During the identification process, Panchayat in gram sabha should be delegated the authority to validate the enumerated list of Agarias and recognize them as citizen of the country by including them in the voter list. The concerned government on the other hand should issue them with identity cards for reference purpose and targeting the services to real Agariyas for eg. outreach of Government schemes. Saltpan workers need both, long and short-term interventions, thus, this list for the government becomes crucial for making welfare interventions available to real salt workers.

b. Health

8.2 Looking at the RCH-related issues, high infant mortality and occupational hazards, there is a need to focus on delivering more comprehensive health services on site during 8 months of migration period of aghariya. Further, wherever mobile units are used, quality aspects should be checked on a regular basis. It should be ensured that these units halt for sufficient time so that the agarias can visit them and avail required services.

c. Occupational Health Hazards:

8.3 Protection kits with sunglasses, gum boots, etc should also be made available as per the requirement of the family members and not one each family by the government.

d. Education:

8.4 High rates of illiteracy need to be tackled. However, creating hostel and residential facilities may not be a practical solution, as the girls do need to look after their families as well. Incentives and facilities need to be provided at the site itself to encourage education. For example, the concept of a common kitchen can be explored so that the girls can spare time for studies after cooking hours.

e. Food:

8.5 Agaria families get necessary items in subsidized rate through village PDS in their respective villages through ration cards for a period of about 4 months when they are in the main habitations. They are deprived of cost subsidized necessary items when they are out in the Rann for more than 6 months. The reason being that the ration cards is not considered valid to procure subsidized basic items through PDS in villages neighboring to Rann or place in which they stay during the period of migration. So, instead of ration card, necessary items should be available at the work site to Agarias on the basis of the identity card issued to them.

B Addressing the underlying causes of poverty

a. Gender Focus Planning:

8.6 The issue of saltpan workers needs to be looked through the gender lens as salt production is a family-centric occupation and not confined to the male members. Consequently, women experience special problems as a result of this occupation. Their needs, especially those connected to RCH and anemia needs to be addressed emphatically. Measures such as availability of Trained Birth Attendants (TBAs) in the absence of government infrastructure can work effectively. Also, there is a need to minimize incidence of psychological trauma, which the agarias goes through while working in harsh conditions by extension of entertainment and leisure facilities.

b. Credit:

8.7 Salt production is quite a cost intensive process and requires sizable capital investment every year. The poor Agarias get credit from the moneylenders who are normally the salt traders. They have to pay high interest rate for the loan and the salt pan worker usually falls in to the debt trap. In order to get rid off the debt trap, they should be organized into collective, registered as cooperative and establish linkage with the banks so that credit facility can easily be availed by them.

c. Insurance:

8.8 Salt production is susceptible to climatic and other vagaries. Cyclonic conditions, prolonged rains and strong winds can destroy the crop. In case of inland salt production, for people to initiate the activity, they have to first dig well carrying sufficient brine concentration. However, there are no guarantees that the brine of sufficient concentration will be available in the well. It is possible that even after the brine is located, the well dries up before the extraction is complete. Risks such as these have financial implications. Insurance provides scope to reduce these risks. Currently, general insurance is available in a limited extent to the workers and it needs to be expanded both in scale and scope.

d. Reducing the cost of Salt production:

8.9 Reduction in inland salt production costs would substantially help in raising the income levels of salt producers. To enable the salt workers in this aspect, Government should provide support in terms of provisioning and granting permission for use of gas as an alternative fuel to diesel at the worksite. If needed be, diesel at a subsidized rate should also be made available to salt workers at the work site.

e. Technological Extension to increase the skill level:

8.10 There have been various technical innovations that have been successfully carried out by institutions engaged in salt research. These successful cost effective technologies have not yet reached the salt workers and should be extended to salt workers to enable them bring down the cost of salt production.

f. Quality control in Salt Production:

8.11 While good quality salt is high in demand by the industries, majority of the salt workers are not aware and trained about the finer processes involved in producing good quality salt. Consequently, they do not fetch good price of their produce in the market. According to industrial sources, if the salt workers ensure quality control in salt, there exist great potential for them to fetch remunerative price for their produce. Awareness generation and education on improving the quality and value addition need to be considered.

C Resolving Ownership & Legal Issues

a. Land Rights*:*

8.12 The Government of Gujarat had issued 10 acres of leased land to the saltpan workers long back in LRK, validity of which has already expired. It is believed that the lease was not renewed to salt workers due to declaration of LRK as wild ass sanctuary. Under current arrangements, the salt workers do not hold any land right to produce salt. Though out of compelling reasons many of the salt workers are still deriving their livelihood from these pans, it is considered as an illegal activity by the government. Since these factors have an implication on increased vulnerability of salt workers, the Govt. should issue new leases to the real Agarias based on their identity cards.

b. Salt production in LRK:

8.13 Further, since the saltpans in LRK have been already plotted by BISAG through the remote-sensing method, an amicable and legal solution can be worked out taking both the wild life and revenue departments for legally initiating salt production in the area.

c. Transportation:

8.14 The Indian Railways is an important player in the distribution of salt to other states and its freight charges have a direct bearing on the market price of salt. In the present context, the freight charges in Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan are considerably lower than that of Gujarat. The Government may be persuaded to think in reducing the freight charges on transport of Salt.

d. Regulating Market Price:

8.15 Currently, there is a contractual practice where the agarias neither have control over pricing nor have knowledge of market price due to practices of middle men. To start with atleast the corporate sector can make a beginning to buy salt directly from the group of salt producers. Alternatively, the possibility of the government collecting the salt from such workers and selling it under a common brand can be explored so that the workers get a better price for the salt.

e. Setting Procurement norms:

8.16 Corporate bodies specifically those involved in salt production and marketing should set basic norms and standards for the manufacturers in salt production and its processes. This will push the manufacturers in adhering to the needs of the agarias and help in improving the quality of life in a long run.

9. Recommendations

a. Setting up of Township

9.1 The salt pan workers live in remote and scattered areas where it is difficult to ensure doorstep delivery of benefits and sustainable development. The strong recommendation came from the government that possibility of creating a township for saltpan workers should be explored. For this purpose government may consider setting up Coastal Area Development Authority (which specifically include Rann of Kutch). About 1000-2000 hectares of land can be developed with residential facilities and infrastructure for schools, hospitals and other amenities, so that it is feasible and possible to target the needs of the salt workers. The salt workers can become a part of the township on a voluntary basis. This would make the improvement in the salt quality and also would result in producing valuable by-products from the waste of brine. Cost could also be reduced by developing better method to reduce seepage of brine in the salt pans.

b. Establishing Salt Workers Board

9.2 The allocations by the government for the salt pan workers generally end up spending on infrastructure and benefit goes to the processing units. In order that interest of salt workers are served an expenditure is directly incurred on them, a separate board should be set up for the welfare of Salt Pan Workers.

c. Empowered Committee

9.3 An empowered committee has already been established under the Industries Department. To adequately represent the needs and welfare of the salt workers, a sub-committee can be established, with Agariya Heet Rakhyak Manch (Network of like-minded organizations and Salt Pan Workers created to advocate for the rights of Salt Pan Workers) playing a central role in it. CARE will also be one of the members of the Empowered Committee to take ongoing initiatives forward.

d. Identity of salt workers:

9.4 The issue of proper identification of the salt workers has major ramification for them as they are often excluded from government benefits and welfare schemes. The Manch, in consultation with the government will draw up a list of eligibility criteria for the agaria workers and will identify those workers that can be included in the list. The list so consolidated may be submitted to the Industries and Labor Department of State Government.

e. Issuance of Licenses to Salt workers:

9.5 In view of reported divergence in allocation of licenses, the department must initiate action and should consider canceling all the previous issued licenses if they are not salt producers. Fresh licenses will be issued to agarias based on their proper identification.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Sr. No.	Name	*Department / Organization*
Government Sector		
1	Shri Vinod Babbar	Labour Secretary, Labor and Employment Department
2	Shri Bipin Bhatt	Rural Labour Commissioner, Rural Department
3	Dr. H. G. Sadhu	National Institute of Occupational Health
4	Shri M. O. Bhatt	Assistant Labour Commissioner
5	Shri Dilip Soni	Government Labour Officer
6	Shri M. D. Mehta	Joint Commissioner, Women & Child Development
7	Shri Vivek P. Bhatt	Government Labour Welfare Officer (Salt), Gujarat Rural
8	Dr. G. K. Jadav	Deputy Director (Rural Health) Commissionerate of
9	Dr. M. K. Shah	Medical Officer, (Rural Health) - Commissionerate of
10	Shri N. D. Joshiyara	Director, Industrial Safety and Health
11	Shri D. A. Patel	Assistant Director, Industrial Safety and Health
NGO Sector		
12	Shri Bhimdev K. Vala	Agariya Hitrakshak Munch
13	Shri Harinesh Pandya	Agariya Hitrakshak Munch
14	Shri Viren Doshi	Bhansali Trust
15	Ms. Suzanne Krouger	Centre for Environment & Education
16	Shri Mohan Krishna	Centre for Environment & Education
17	Shri Rajesh Kapoor	Cohesion
18	Shri Devjibhai Dhamecha	Dhangadhra Prakruti Mandal
19	Shri Mahendra Jetmalani	DISHA
20	Shri Sukhdevbhai Patel	Gantar
21	Shri Prashant R. Raval	Gantar
22	Ms. Niharika Dabhi	Gantar
23	Ms. Pial Raval	Gantar
24	Ms. Alka Mehta	Migrant Worker's Development Trust
25	Shri Sanjay Singh	Migrant Worker's Development Trust
26	Shri Vasant Parikh	Karuna Setu Trust
27	Shri Bhadresh Raval	PRAYAS
28	Shri Khalid	PRAYAS
29	Shri Bharat Patel	SETU-Bhadreshwar
30	Shri Usman I. C	SETU-Bhadreshwar
31	Ms. Poonam Kathuria	SWATI
32	Shri Sujit Kumar	VIKSAT
33	Shri M Shriniwas	VIKSAT
34	Ms. Uma Rani	GIDR
35	Shri Dharmendrabhai	YMC
36	Shri Sachin	YMC
37	Mr. Rajesh Shah	SAVE
Salt Industry		
38	Shri V. G. Akalkar	GACL
39	Shri S. B. Patel	GACL
CARE Team		
40	Shri Philip Vegas	Director, MOLD Unit, CARE – New Delhi
41	Ms. Veena Padia	Project Director – SNEHAL, Care-Gujarat
42	Shri Amrendra Singh	Manager, MOLD Unit, CARE-New Delhi
43	Ms. Rakhi Mehra	Program Associate, CARE-New Delhi
44	Mr. Jayendra Rathore	Regional Manager - SNEHAL, Care-Gujarat
45	Mr. Sharad Mahajan	Regional Manager - SNEHAL, Care-Gujarat

46	Mr. Mohd. Zulfiqar Khan	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer – SNEHAL, Care-Gujarat
47	Mr. Devashish Bhattacharya	Program Support Manager - SNEHAL, Care-Gujarat
48	Ms. Afroz Pathan	Project Co-ordinator - SNEHAL, Care-Gujarat
49	Ms. Vandana Solanki	Project Co-ordinator - SNEHAL, Care-Gujarat
50	Mr. Bharat Chowdhry	Project Co-ordinator - SNEHAL, Care-Gujarat
51	Mr. K. K. Trivedi	Project Co-ordinator - SNEHAL, Care-Gujarat
52	Mr. Prafulla Ratha	Project Co-ordinator - SNEHAL, Care-Gujarat
53	Mr. Rajesh Patnaik	Project Co-ordinator - SNEHAL, Care-Gujarat

ANNEXURE – 18: News Clippings

TIMES OF INDIA
6/4/2005

GUJARAT

Sabarmati Ashram refuses to host photo show on salt workers

By Radha Sharma
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: What could be more ironic than the Sabarmati Ashram refusing to host an exhibition of photographs depicting the plight of salt workers.

The proposed exhibition, which will now be held on the footpath outside the Sabarmati Ashram, coincides with the conclusion of the Dandi Yatra re-enactment on Wednesday morning, and will be inaugurated by noted Gandhian Chunibhai Vaidya.

"The ashram's management has refused to allow for the exhibition. This is unfortunate as Gandhiji dedicated his life to improve the life of marginalised people like the salt workers," said Harinesh Pandya, secretary of the Jan Sangarsh Manch.

However, Amrut Modi of Sabarmati Ashram claimed that the organisers had always wanted to hold the exhibition on the footpath itself. "Their idea must be that more people would come to see it," Modi refrained.

TOI

Salt workers from different districts in Ahmedabad

The photographer, a salt-worker, Ambu Patel, said "I am part of the tragic and helpless existence of salt-workers. My pictures depict the pain and the cry for help of this community."

A group of widows, representing the cause of 300-odd widows of Kharaghoda area of Surendranagar district, have also landed in Ahmedabad for the inauguration of the exhibition. And, they are seeking some kind of justice for themselves.

"My husband died nine years ago after which I spent my entire lifetime doing back-breaking work of manufacturing salt. Today, I cannot toil so hard. I have two sons. While one is a paralytic, the other has deserted me. There are times when I and my sick son have to go hungry," said a widow Manguben Agechaniya.

Stressing that free government medical facilities be made available to them, Manguben added, "When I take my son to Surendranagar hospital, they prescribe medicine worth Rs 1,500. These have to be bought from private drug stores, as their usual answer at the hospital is 'there is no stock'."

Similar is the case of Jayfa Pirubhai. whose husband has been missing for the past one decade. She had to take a loan of Rs 20,000 on the promise that her elder son, Mohsin would work in the salt pans. "But since Mohsin is too young, many a time he is not able to take the stress which such work accompanies," said Jayfa, who has lost her eye-sight to years of labour in the salt pans.

મીઠા ઉત્પાદનને સ્વરોજગાર ક્ષેત્ર તરીકે સ્થાન આપો

પરકમ્મા

દિલીપ રાણપુરા

અસંગઠિત કામદારોનો વ્યાપ એટલો મોટો છે કે તેમને સંગઠિત કરવા તેમના શ્રમનું મૂલ્ય પૂરતું મળવું તે માટે સમજવું એ બહુ - બહુ લાંબા સમયનું કામ બની જાય છે અને ત્યારે થાય છે કે શાસકો જે કામ દસકાઓ પછી કરવાનું છે તે કામ 'આજ' કરવાની વૃત્તિ કેમ નહિ રાખતા હોય ? જો એવી વૃત્તિ રાખે તો ઘણી સમસ્યાઓનો ઉકેલ આવી જાય અને સમાજમાં શાન્તિ તો સ્થપાઇ જાય પણ દરેક ક્ષેત્રમાં નવાં નવાં સંશોધનો અને તે દ્વારા પ્રગતિ અને પ્રકાશના નવાં માર્ગો પણ શોધાવા લાગે... આ આવા સંગઠિત ક્ષેત્રે કામ કરનારી કેટલીક સ્વૈચ્છિક સંસ્થાઓ છે તેમાં 'જનપથ' પ્રેરિત અગરિયા હિતરક્ષક મંચ પણ છે. તેમાં અગરિયાના સર્વગ્રાહી હિતો તરફ લક્ષ દોરતા અને પરિણામે રાજ્યને પણ લાભ થાય અને એક અસંગઠિત વર્ગ કંઇક સાથે પડે તેની પ્રવૃત્તિ કરે છે. તેમની કેટલીક માગણીઓ અંગે થોડી વિગતથી છણાવટ કરીએ અને વધુ રચનાત્મક સૂચનો મેળવીએ- ખોળીએ.

ગુજરાત સરકારની મીઠું પકવવાલાયક જમીન સરકારે સ્વરોજગાર પ્રાપ્ત અગરિયાઓ અને તેઓની સહકારી મંડળીઓને જ ભાડા પટ્ટેથી આપવી જોઇએ કારણ કે મીઠા ઉદ્યોગનું સ્વરૂપ સ્વરોજગાર ક્ષેત્રને અનુરૂપ છે. અગરિયાના હિતમાં એ જરૂરી છે કે ખેડૂતોની જેમ ખેડે તેને જમીનની માફક મીઠું પકવે તેની જમીન એવી નીતિ સરકાર દ્વારા ઘડવામાં આવે. આવા કાયદેસરના અગરિયાઓ અને મંડળીઓ પાસેથી મીઠું ખરીદવા માટે ટેકાના ભાવની જાહેરાત સાથે સોલ્ટ કોર્પોરેશન જેવી એજન્સીની રચના કરી ખરીદીની વ્યવસ્થા, આર્થિક અને સામાજિક રીતે પછાત અગરિયાઓનું શોષણ અટકાવવા આમ કરવું જરૂરી છે. મંડળીઓને ઓછા વ્યાજે અને સરળ પદ્ધતિએ ધિરાણની વ્યવસ્થા કરવામાં આવે, કારણ કે મીઠાની ઉત્પાદન કિંમત ઓછી હોવાથી ધિરાણની વધુ જરૂર પડતી નથી. અગરિયાઓને મીઠા ઉત્પાદન પ્રક્રિયામાં ઘણાં કુદરતી અને કૃત્રિમ જોખમ હોય છે તેથી તેમને વીમાનું રક્ષણ આપવું જરૂરી છે. સ્વરોજગાર પ્રાપ્ત અગરિયાઓ અને મંડળીઓને રોયલ્ટી વગેરે વેરાઓમાંથી મુક્તિ આપવાનું વલણ રાખવામાં આવે. મીઠા પ્રસંસ્કરણ એકમો પાસેથી અને વેપારીઓ પાસેથી સરકાર વેરો લઇ શકે છે. પરંતુ મૂળ ઉત્પાદક એવા અગરિયાઓ પાસેથી વેરો ન લેવો જોઇએ. ગુજરાત સરકારે મીઠા ઉત્પાદન અને અગરિયાઓને લગતી બાબતોનું સંશોધન કરવા ઉચ્ચ કક્ષાની સંસ્થાની સ્થાપના કરવી જોઇએ અને તે સત્વરે કાર્યાન્વિત થાય તે માટે ચીવટ રાખવી જોઇએ. મીઠાની નિકાસને પ્રોત્સાહન આપવા નિકાસ પરિષદ જેવી એજન્સીની રચના કરવામાં આવવી જોઇએ. અગરિયાની સામાજિક, શૈક્ષણિક અને આર્થિક કલ્યાણ માટે અગરિયા કલ્યાણ બોર્ડ જેવું સર્વાંગી વિકાસને સમાવિષ્ટ કરી લે તેવું સ્થાપવું જોઇએ.

આ માગણીઓ અગરિયાની સુવિધાઓ માટે પણ બીજી કેટલીક માગણીઓ છે જે પેચીદી નથી. પણ તેને કોઇક રીતે પેચીદી બનાવી દીધી છે. ઘુડખર અભયારણ્ય અને મીઠું પકવવાની જમીન અલગ અલગ છે, એટલે અભયારણ્યમાં ઘુડખરના સંરક્ષણની યોગ્ય બેટ વિસ્તારોની જમીન રાખવી જોઇએ. આમ કરવાથી અભયારણ્યનો સારી રીતે વિકાસ થઇ શકશે. બાકીની કાંઠાની તરફની મીઠું પકવવાલાયક જમીન મીઠા ઉદ્યોગ માટે ફાળવી શકાશે. આ પ્રશ્ન વિધાનસભામાં ઠરાવ પસાર કરાવી ઉકેલી શકાય. કચ્છ રણ સ્થાપન પરિષદ જેવું સત્તાતંત્ર રચવામાં આવે અને યોગ્ય વહીવટી અધિકારીની નીચે પૂરતા મહેકમ સાથે મીઠું પકવવાને અને તેમની મંડળીને 'પકવે તેની જમીન'ના ધોરણે જમીન ફાળવવામાં આવે. રણમાં વહી જતું વરસાદી પાણી હયાત તળાવ હોય તો તેમાં અને ન હોય તો નવા બનાવીને સંગ્રહિત કરવામાં આવે તો અગરિયાઓને રણમાં દૂર સુધી પાણી મળી શકે. મીઠું પકવવાલાયક જમીનોનું આયોજન એવી રીતે કરવામાં આવે કે જેથી પકવેલ મીઠાને ખેંચતી વખતે ટૂંકા નજીકના રસ્તાઓ બનેલા હોય. રણની જમીનમાં ઉપરોક્ત સૂચિત પરિષદના તંત્ર દ્વારા ગેરકાયદેસર થયેલા દબાણો તાત્કાલિક દૂર કરવામાં આવે અને પરિષદ પાસે તે માટે કાયમી જરૂરી પોલીસ દળ તૈયાર રાખવામાં આવે.

મીઠા ઉત્પાદનને સ્વરોજગાર ક્ષેત્ર તરીકે અનામત રાખવા નીચે મુજબના સબળ કારણો છે. આ ઉદ્યોગ શ્રમપ્રધાન છે. દરેક ઉત્પાદક એકમ અગરિયા કુટુંબ દ્વારા સંચાલિત હોય છે. કુટુંબના સભ્યો જ વર્ષ દરમિયાન જરૂર મુજબ કામ કરતા હોય છે. આ શ્રમ કાર્યમાં બીજા કોઇ ટેકનિકલ નિષ્ણાતોની ખાસ જરૂર હોતી નથી. અગરિયા કુટુંબ જ પોતે સંપૂર્ણ ઉત્પાદન લેવા સક્ષમ હોય છે.

આ ઉદ્યોગમાં સરળ ગ્રામીણ, હાથથી હાથ દ્વારા સંચાલિત ટેકનિકનો ઉપયોગ થાય છે. કોઇ ભારે યંત્ર સામગ્રી કે ટેકનિકની જરૂર પડતી નથી. કૃષિ કરતાં પણ સરળ પદ્ધતિથી ઉત્પાદન થાય છે. આ ઉદ્યોગમાં મૂડી રોકાણની જરૂર હોતી નથી. સમગ્ર દેશના ૧૩૦ લાખ ટન મીઠાના ઉત્પાદન માટે કુલ ઉત્પાદન કિંમત ફક્ત આશરે ૬૫ થી ૧૦૦ કરોડ રૂપિયા જેટલી જ છે, અને કેન્દ્રીત ધોરણે મીઠાનું ઉત્પાદન થાય તે માટે પછી પૂ. બાપુની દાંડીકૂચ હતી તે સ્થાન આપણે ભૂલી જવા જેટલા નગુણા ન બનીએ. સ્વરોજગાર પ્રાપ્ત અગરિયા કુટુંબો દ્વારા સ્વરોજગાર ક્ષેત્ર તરીકે લેવાતા ઉત્પાદન ઉપરાંત ખરેખર અગરિયાઓ જ જેના સભ્ય હોય તેવી સરકારી મંડળીઓને પણ ઉત્પાદન માટે છૂટ આપી શકાય. મીઠા ઉત્પાદન ઉદ્યોગને અનામત રાખવામાં આવે તો લાયસન્સની જગ્યાએ મોટા ભાગના અગરિયાઓ ગ્રામીણ, અશિક્ષિત, કે અર્ધશિક્ષિત અને આર્થિક અને સામાજિક રીતે પછાત હોવાને કારણે આમ કરવું જરૂરી છે. મીઠા ઉદ્યોગ ઉત્પાદનને નોકરશાહી, ભ્રષ્ટાચાર અને તુમારશાહીમાંથી મુક્તિ અપાવી ઉત્પાદનને વેગીલું બનાવવા આમ કરવું જરૂરી છે. ઉદ્યોગને અનામત રાખવામાં આવે તો સ્વરોજગાર પ્રાપ્ત અગરિયા કુટુંબો દ્વારા સ્વરોજગાર ક્ષેત્ર તરીકે લેવાતા ઉત્પાદન ઉપર હાલ ૧૦ એકર જમીન ધરાવતા ઉત્પાદકો ઉપર જેમ વેરો નથી તે જ રીતે કોઇ વેરો હોવો ન જોઇએ. કારણ કે મોટાભાગના અગરિયા ઉત્પાદકો પછાત હોવાના લીધે વેરામાફીને પાત્ર છે. અગરિયાઓને તેમના પકવેલા મીઠાના દર વર્ષે ટેકાના ભાવ મળવા જોઇએ અને સૂચિત સોલ્ટ કોર્પોરેશન ઓફ ઇન્ડિયા જેવી નિયત એજન્સી દ્વારા ખરીદી કરી શકે તેવી ગોઠવણ કરવી જોઇએ. નિકાસ બજાર વિકસાવવા માટે ભારતીય મીઠા નિકાસ નિકાસ પરિષદ જેવી એજન્સીની રચના કરવામાં આવે. આથી વિદેશી હૂંડિયામણ પણ મળશે. અગરિયાઓના કલ્યાણ માટે બોર્ડ બનેલ છે. તેમાં અગરિયાઓને અને તેઓની મંડળીઓને ઉચિત અને પ્રમાણસર પ્રતિનિધિત્વ અને સત્તા આપવામાં આવે.

મેસર્સ હિન્દુસ્તાન સોલ્ટ લિમિટેડ, ખારાઘોડા જાહેર ક્ષેત્રની કંપની પાસે ભાડાપટ્ટે લીધેલી ૨૩ હજાર એકર જમીન ઉપર જમીન છે. તે પૈકી માત્ર ૫૦૦ એકર જમીનમાં થઇ શકે તેટલું ઉત્પાદન થાય છે. માત્ર ૬૫ હજાર ટન જે દેશના મીઠા ઉત્પાદનનો નગણ્ય હિસ્સો ગણાય. વળી કંપનીને આઠ કિ.મી. પછી પણ તેને ફાળવેલી હોવાથી પકડની જમીન બિનઉત્પાદક બનેલી છે. આ જાહેર સાહસો બંધ કરી તેના ૧૯૦૪ અગરિયાઓને સહકારી મંડળીમાં રૂપાંતરિત કરી ૨૩ હજાર ઉપરાંત એકર જમીન પૈકી જરૂર મુજબની જમીન આ મંડળીને ફાળવવાની ભલામણ સાથે વધારાની જમીન અન્ય સ્વરોજગાર પ્રાપ્ત અગરિયાઓ અને બીજી મંડળીઓને ફાળવવા ગુજરાત સરકારને પરત સોંપી દેવી જોઇએ. કારણ કે કંપની તેનો પૂરતો ઉપયોગ કરી શકતી નથી તેમ ભવિષ્યમાં પણ કરી શકે તેમ લાગતું નથી. જેથી આટલી બધી જમીન બિનઉત્પાદક પડી રહે છે. કંપનીનો વહીવટ અને ઉત્પાદનના પ્રમાણમાં અગરિયાઓને ચૂકવાતી મીઠાની કિંમતના પ્રમાણમાં અત્યંત વધારે છે. કંપની પોતાના ઉત્પાદન ઉપરાંત વેપાર પણ કરે છે. જેથી નફો બતાવી શકે. નફો બતાવવા માટે આ પ્રકારના આર્થિક વ્યવહાર યોગ્ય છે. આ જાહેર સાહસ, અન્ય કેટલાંક જાહેર સાહસોની જેમ ધોળા હાથી સમાન છે. દેશના મીઠા ઉત્પાદનમાં બિલકુલ નગણ્ય હિસ્સો છે. કંપનીએ રોકેલી જમીન જાણે આઠ કિ.મી. રસ્તા પહોળો 'કારણે આજુબાજુના ઉત્પાદકોને તેમના જમીનમાં તૈયાર થયેલું મીઠું વધારે અંતર વહન કરવું પડે છે. આ કંપની બંધ કરવાથી જરૂરિયાતવાળોને જમીન ફાળવી શકાય. મીઠાનું ઉત્પાદન વધારી શકાય. માણસોને રોજી મળે અને તેના આનુષંગિક બીજા વ્યવસાયો ખીલે... ભલે મફતના ભાવનું મીઠું કહેવાયું, પણ જીવનમાં સ્વાદમાં તેનું કેટલું મહત્ત્વ છે!

SANDESH : AHMEDABAD

રાજયના એક લાખ અગરિયાઓના શોષણનો સિલસિલો યથાવત

ગાંધીજીનું માન જાળવવું હોય તો અગરિયા પરના કરવેરા પાછા ખેંચો

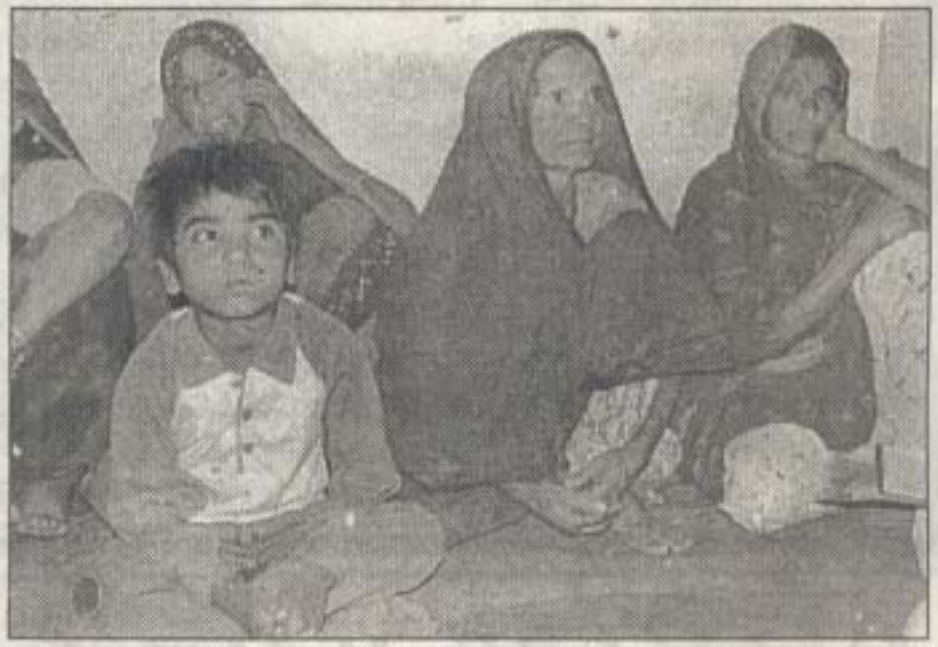
અમદાવાદ, મંગળવાર

ગાંધીજીની યાદમાં દાંડીયાત્રા કાઢી હોય તો ગાંધીજીનું સન્માન જાળવવા મીઠુ પકવતા અગરિયાઓ પર લદાયેલા આકરા કરવેરા પાછા ખેંચી લેવા જોઈએ. સૌથી વંચિત અગરિયાના સમૂહ માટે અગરિયા હિતરક્ષક મંચ દ્વારા આ

- અકાળે અવસાન પામતા અગરિયાઓના સ્વજનો વેરવિખેર થઈ જાય છે
- ખેડૂતની જેમ વીમા કવચ અને કલ્યાણ બોર્ડ રચવા માગણી

માગણી કરવામાં આવી છે. સૌથી વધુ મીઠુ પકવતા કચ્છ- સુરેન્દ્રનગર વિસ્તારના ખારાઘોડાના અકાળે અવસાન પામતા અગરિયાઓની વિધવા બહેનોએ પણ સરકાર તેમના માટે કલ્યાણકારી યોજનાઓ જાહેર કરે તેવી માગણી કરી હતી.

દાંડીયાત્રાના ૭૫ વર્ષ નિમિત્તે અગરિયાઓની સ્થિતિ પર યોજાયેલી પત્રકાર પરિષદમાં સ્વૈચ્છિક સંસ્થાઓના અગ્રણીઓ સુખદેવભાઈ પટેલ, હરિલેશ પંડયા વગેરેએ માહિતી આપતાં જણાવ્યું હતું કે, આઝાદી પછી પણ અગરિયાઓની સ્થિતિમાં તસુભાર ફરક પડયો નથી. એક લાખ જેટલા અગરિયાઓના શોષણનો સિલસિલો યથાવત રહેવા પામ્યો છે. જો સરકારો ગાંધીજીનું સન્માન જાળવવા ઈચ્છતી હોય અને અગરિયાઓ ઊંચા આવે તેવું કરવા માગતી હોય તો મીઠા પરનો સેસ અને જમીનની રોયલ્ટી જેવા કરવેરા નાબૂદ કરવા જોઈએ.



પ્રતિકૂળ પરિસ્થિતિમાં કામ કરીને અકાળે મોતને ભેટતા અગરિયાઓની વિધવા અને બાળકોએ દર્દભરી આપવીતી રજૂ કરી હતી. (તસવીર : શૈલેષ સોલંકી)

અગરિયાઓને ખેડૂતોની જેમ વીમાનું કવચ, તેમના પકવેલા મીઠાની ટેકાના ભાવે ખરીદી, પીવાના પાણીની સગવડ, અગરિયા કલ્યાણ બોર્ડ તથા મીઠુ પકવે તેને જ જમીનના હક આપવા જોઈએ તેવી માગણી કરી હતી.

મીઠાના કારણે અનેક જાતના રોગનો ભોગ બનતા અગરિયાઓનું આયખુ અકાળે જ ટૂંકાઈ જાય છે. ફકત ખારાઘોડામાં જ ૩૫૦ જેટલી અગરિયાઓની વિધવા છે. તેમાંના એક રૂખીબેને પત્રકારો સાથે વાત કરતા જણાવ્યું હતું કે, અગરમાં પુરુષ વિના કામ શકય નથી. તેથી આજીવિકાનો મુખ્ય સ્ત્રોત બંધ થઈ જતા છૂટક મજૂરી કામ વિના કોઈ છૂટકો રહેતો નથી. બાળકો ભણી શકતા નથી. સરવાળે જીવન ધૂળધાણી થઈ જાય છે. સોમા નામના એક બાળકે આપવીતી રજૂ કરતા કહ્યું હતું કે, તે અગરિયાનો પુત્ર છે તેના પિતા અચાનક મૃત્યુ પામ્યા હતા. એ પછી તેની માતા અન્ય વ્યક્તિ જોડે પરણી ગઈ હતી. પોતે અનાથ બનીને જયાં આશરો મળે ત્યાં જીવન ગુજારે છે.

અગરિયાઓની આ સ્થિતિ પર બુધવારે સવારે ૧૦ વાગે ગાંધી આશ્રમની ફૂટપાથ પર એક પ્રદર્શનનું પણ આયોજન કરવામાં આવ્યું છે.

ગાંધીજીએ સસ્તા મીઠા માટે દાંડીકૂચ કરી તે મીઠામાં જ નફાખોરી

દાંડીયાત્રાના ૭૫ વર્ષ પછી પણ અગરિયાઓનાં 'નમકનાં આંસુ'

સુપ્રીમકોર્ટની ગુજરાત સરકારને અગરિયાઓની સ્થિતિ પર નોટિસ

અમદાવાદ, સોમવાર

૧૯૩૦માં ગાંધીજીએ મીઠા પરનો કર વધતા દાંડીયાત્રા કરી હતી ત્યારે મીઠું પકવતા અગરિયાઓની જે સ્થિતિ હતી તેમાં ૨૦૦૫માં પણ કોઈ જ ફરક પડવા પામ્યો નથી. હાલ જે દાંડીયાત્રા થઈ રહી છે તથા અન્ય ઉજવણીઓ ચાલી રહી છે તેમાં 'નમકના આંસુ' પાડીને જીવતા અગરિયાઓને ક્યાંય યાદ કરવામાં આવ્યા નથી. આ મામલો સુપ્રીમકોર્ટના ધ્યાન પર આવતા રાજ્ય સરકારને એક નોટિસ પણ આપવામાં આવી છે જેમાં અગરિયાઓ માટેના કલ્યાણકારી પગલાંઓ ક્યા લેવાયા તેની પણ તપાસ કરવાનું કહ્યું છે.

સમગ્ર દેશના કુલ મીઠા ઉત્પાદનમાં ૭૫ ટકા ફાળો છે તેવા ગુજરાતમાં કુલ એક લાખથી પણ વધુ અગરિયાઓ આ વ્યવસાય પર આજીવિકા મેળવે છે. વિવિધ જિલ્લાઓમાંથી કચ્છ અને સુરેન્દ્રનગર જિલ્લાઓમાં સંપૂર્ણ રણ વિસ્તારમાં મીઠું પકવતા અગરિયાઓનો જીવન સંઘર્ષ દર્દનાક છે. કચ્છના નાના રણમાં કુવા ગાળીને મીઠું પકવવામાં આવે છે. આ સાથે મીઠું પકવવામાં જમીન પરના પાટા પણ હોય છે. એક પાટામાં ૧૦ એકર જેટલી જમીન હોય છે જે સરકારે લીઝ પર આપેલી હોય છે જેમાં અગરિયો તેની પત્ની અને કુટુંબ સાથે મીઠું પકવે છે. સાત થી આઠ મહિનાની સિઝનમાં તેઓ ૪૦૦ ટન મીઠું પકવે છે. જેની એક કિલો દીઠ પડતર કિંમત ૮ પૈસા માત્ર હોય છે. આ મીઠું વેચતા તેને કુલ ૩૨ હજાર રૂપિયા જેટલી આવક થાય છે તેમાંથી ૫૦ ટકા રકમ મોટર ચલાવવાના ડીઝલના ખર્ચમાં અને પીવાનું પાણી રણમાં મંગાવવાના ટેન્કર માટે ત્રણ હજાર રૂપિયા આપી દેવા પડે છે. સરવાળે જે રકમ હાથમાં આવે તે સરેરાશ આઠ મહિનાની માંડ દોઢ હજાર રૂપિયા જેટલી હોય છે. ચોમાસાના ચાર મહિનાના ખર્ચનો પ્રશ્ન ઊભો જ રહે છે. વેરાન રણમાં મીઠાના ખારા પાણીમાં કામ કરવામાં ચામડીના રોગનો ખતરો હોય છે. કોઈ પગમાંથી મીઠાનું પાણી અંદર જતા તે બ્લડપ્રેશરમાં પરિણમે છે. શાકભાજી અને દૂધ નહિવત્ મળતા વિટામિન એની અછત સર્જાય છે. પરિણામે સ્થિતિ એ હોય છે કે, દેવાના બોજમાં ડૂબેલા અગરિયાઓનો શ્રમકાળ ટુંકાઈ જાય છે. ફક્ત સુરેન્દ્રનગરના ખારાઘોડામાં ૪૦૦ વિધવા અગરિયા બહેનો છે. તેઓ પણ વચ્ચાની મારી હજુ નમકના આંસુ જેવા વ્યવસાયમાં જોડાયેલી છે. ગાંધીજીએ મોંઘુ મીઠું લોકોને ના મળે તે માટે નમક સત્યાગ્રહ કર્યો હતો પરંતુ વાસ્તવિકતા એ છે કે અગરિયાને જે મીઠાના કિલોએ ૮ પૈસા મળે છે તે બજારમાં ૮ રૂપિયે કિલોએ મળે છે. મીઠાને આયોડાઈઝ કરવાના નામે તેનો ભાવ વધારી દેવામાં આવે છે. ૮ પૈસાના ૮ રૂપિયા લેવામાં આવે છે. પરિણામે ગાંધીજીએ કરેલા સત્યાગ્રહનો હેતુ માર્યો જાય છે.

સુરેન્દ્રનગરના ખારાઘોડામાં જ અગરિયાઓની ૪૦૦ વિધવાઓ

અગરિયાઓને પૂરતો ભાવ મળતો નથી અને ગ્રાહકને તોતિંગ ભાવ ચૂકવવો પડે છે.

કોંગ્રેસે કરેલી દાંડીયાત્રાની ઉજવણીમાં આ વાત સદંતર ભૂલી જવાઈ છે. જો કે સુપ્રીમ કોર્ટમાં આ સંદર્ભે થયેલી જાહેર હિતની એક અરજીમાં રાજ્ય સરકારને નોટિસ આપીને અગરિયાઓ માટે લેવાયેલા પગલાં તેમના બાળકોના શિક્ષણ અને આરોગ્ય સહિતના પ્રશ્નોમાં કેવા કલ્યાણકારી યોજનાઓની વિગતો માગવામાં આવી છે. સરકાર જે પગલાં લે અથવા યોજના બતાવે તે યોગ્ય છે કે નહીં તેનું મોનિટરીંગ કામ સેવા અને ગણતર સ્વૈચ્છિક સંસ્થાઓને સોંપવામાં આવ્યું છે. દાંડીકૂચ ૧૯૩૦ અને અગરિયાની આજ-૨૦૦૫ નામનું ખુદ અગરિયા એવા અંબુભાઈ પટેલની તસવીરો સાથેનું એક પ્રદર્શન અગરિયા હિતરક્ષક મંચ દ્વારા આગામી બુધવારે ગાંધી આશ્રમની ફૂટપાથ પર યોજાશે. જેમાં ઘોરી મજૂરી અને કાળા લોહીની જિંદગીનો ચિતાર રજૂ કરાશે.

અગરિયાઓનું ૮ પૈસાનું કિલો મીઠું બજારમાં પહોંચતા ૮ રૂપિયે કિલો થઈ જાય છે

ગુજરાતમાં આયોડાઈઝ મીઠાની જરૂર છે ખરી?

અમદાવાદ, સોમવાર

અગરિયાઓ દ્વારા પકવાતા સાદા મીઠાને આયોડાઈઝ કરવા માટે મોટી કંપનીઓ મીઠું સાફ હોય ત્યારે સ્પ્રીન્કલીંગ વખતે આયોડિનનો એડ કરે છે જેના કારણે મીઠાનો ભાવ વધી જાય છે પરંતુ એક નિષ્ણાતના અભ્યાસ પ્રમાણે રસોઈમાં વઘાર વખતે જે મીઠું નખાય છે તે રસોઈ ગરમ હોવાના કારણે આયોડીન તેમાંથી તુરંત જ રાસાયણિક પ્રક્રિયાને કારણે ઉડી જાય છે અને તેનો કોઈ લાભ ગ્રાહકને મળતો નથી.

આયોડાઈઝ મીઠું ટેબલ સોલ્ટ લેવા ટેવાયેલા હોય તેમના માટે જ ઉપયોગી બને છે. મીઠામાં આયોડિન નહીં હોવાના કારણે ફેફસાં કે ગોઈટર નામનો રોગ થાય છે તેમ કહેવાય છે. જો વાસ્તવમાં આમ હોય તો રાજ્યમાં લાખો લોકો આ ગળામાં થતા આ રોગથી પીડાતા હોવા જોઈએ પણ વાસ્તવમાં આ રોગ મેદાની વિસ્તારના લોકોને થતો નથી. ડુંગરાળ પ્રદેશમાં તેની શક્યતા જ રહે છે. આમ છતાં રાજ્ય સરકાર દ્વારા ગ્રાહકોના અને અગરિયાઓના ભોગે આયોડાઈઝ મીઠાના વેચાણને જ ફરજિયાત કરવા હિલચાલ થઈ રહી છે. ઉદ્યોગ વિભાગના રાજ્યકક્ષાના મંત્રી અનિલભાઈ પટેલે સોલ્ટ ૨૦૦૫ સેમિનારમાં આવી સંભાવના વ્યક્ત કરી હતી.

ગરમ રસોઈમાં મીઠું નાખતાં તેમાંથી આયોડીન ઊડી જાય છે

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