Situation Analysis of Salt Workers in Tamil Nadu

UNDP United Nations Team for Recovery Support – Project to improve the socio-economic conditions of salt workers in Tamil Nadu

Vrutti Livelihoods Resource Centre
111, 1st Main, Central Excise Layout,
Boppasandra, Bangalore 560094
Ph: 080 23419616, Fax 080 23417714
www.vrutti.org
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We especially acknowledge the financial assistance from UNDP for undertaking this study. We thank the UNTRS team for their assistance and the support extended to the team to complete the study.

We trust that this report will provide enormous insights into the realities of salt workers’ living and working conditions and the situation of the marginal salt producers who are not able to earn reasonable return from the salt production. In the context of the widening imbalances in the incomes, growth, access to benefits and services, across sections of the society, the development strategies need to be ‘socially inclusive’, and this study assumes significance. This study is an important step towards making the salt value chain effective, inclusive of the poor and marginalised. To this effect, we feel is an important contribution to the sector, as very little information is available that is systematic and based on field realities.

The aim of this study is to focus the attention of the policy makers, programme planners, researchers, academia and development agencies on this neglected and highly marginalised and vulnerable segment of the society, who in fact contribute in a major way in supplying an important ingredient for our day to day consumption.

I, on behalf of the study team, thank all who contributed to this study directly and indirectly.

N. Raghunathan
Director, Vrutti, Livelihood Resource Centre
Catalyst Development Initiatives, Bangalore, India
Email: raghu@cms-india.org
Website: www.vrutti.org
**ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIF</td>
<td>American India Foundation</td>
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<td>BOBP</td>
<td>Bay of Bengal Programme</td>
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<td>CDI</td>
<td>Catalyst Development Initiatives</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organisation</td>
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<td>CRS</td>
<td>Children Reward Scheme</td>
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<td>CRY</td>
<td>Child Relief and You</td>
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<td>CRZ</td>
<td>Coastal Regulation Zone</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organisation</td>
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<td>CZM</td>
<td>Coastal Zone Management</td>
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<td>FACE</td>
<td>Federations of Associations for Community Empowerment</td>
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<td>GHCL</td>
<td>Gujarat Heavy Chemicals Limited</td>
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<td>GoG</td>
<td>Government of Gujarat</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEAVEN</td>
<td>Health Environment Agriculture and Village Education Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>LIC</td>
<td>Life Insurance Corporation of India</td>
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<td>MSP</td>
<td>Marginal Salt Producer</td>
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<td>NCRC</td>
<td>NGO Coordination Resource Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NMAY</td>
<td>Namak Mazdoor Awaas Yozana</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Scheduled Caste</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCO</td>
<td>Salt Commissioner’s Organisation</td>
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<td>SEWA</td>
<td>Self Employment Women Association</td>
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<td>SHG</td>
<td>Self Help Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEAP</td>
<td>Tsunami Emergency Assistance Programme</td>
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<td>TV</td>
<td>Television</td>
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<td>TN</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>UNTRS</td>
<td>United Nations Team for Tsunami Recovery Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>VC</td>
<td>Value Chain</td>
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<td>VMSP</td>
<td>Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producer</td>
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1. Summary

Tamil Nadu is the second largest producer of salt in India, next only to Gujarat. The salt in the state is produced from salt pans along the seacoast. Tuticorin and Nagapattinam are the two major salt producing districts, accounting for about 80% of the state’s salt production. An estimated 32,000 acres of land is used for salt production in the state, providing livelihoods for large numbers of people along the coast. Salt workers working in different clusters along the seacoast are one of the most disadvantaged groups in the state. Most work as wage earners in salt pans and do not have any influence within the salt value chain. They do not have access and control over the resources associated with salt production, mainly the salt pans. Thus, they are inexorably caught in a vicious cycle of debt and dependence that ensures that they remain economically poor and socially powerless. Those that were affected by the Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004 were reportedly worse off as many lost several months of production as the pans were flooded (mainly in Nagapattinam District). There has been very little systematic and grassroots level study done to understand and assess the situation of salt workers in Tamil Nadu.

The United Nations Team for Recovery Support (UNTRS), as a part of its ongoing support for rehabilitation and development in the tsunami affected areas of Tamil Nadu, has been exploring possibilities of supporting the cause of salt workers in the state of Tamil Nadu. Though the concerns and recommendations emerging out of the study by SCO and BOBP gave a broad idea of issues, there were general in nature and did not address the specific issues and dynamics of each salt producing state. Hence, a rapid assessment of the situation of salt workers in Tamil Nadu was proposed by UNTRS. Vrutti, a livelihood resource center of Catalyst Development Initiatives (CDI), Bangalore was commissioned by UNTRS to undertake the study. The purpose was to obtain field insights and explore ways to improve the socio-economic conditions of the salt workers in the state of Tamil Nadu.

The objective of the study is to understand and assess the socio-economic and working conditions of the salt workers, and to identify potential interventions towards improving their socio-economic conditions, strengthening existing livelihoods and improving their working conditions, efficiency and quality of work. Given the lack of information on the numbers and issues, the study was undertaken as a qualitative research using value chain approach, with consultations and case studies being the key tools for the study. The study involved extensive consultations at the state, district and field level with various stakeholders involved in the salt value chain. Field level consultations were taken up in Tuticorin and Vedaranyam, where close to 70% of state salt production takes place.

Key Findings:

The results of this rapid assessment reveal that a large number of people involved at the salt production in the salt value chain, live in an extremely serious working and living conditions, leaving them in a cycle of poverty and vulnerability. The situation reflects very high levels of violation of human and labour rights of these people. The conditions of the women and children among these communities are serious areas of concern.

The study identified the following profiles of people as the most marginalised and vulnerable segments of stakeholders in the Salt Value Chain in Tamil Nadu: (a) Salt Workers – who are engaged as labourers in the salt pans, by lease/sub-lease holders and factories (b) Vulnerable
Marginal Salt Producers – are those who produce salt in areas less than one acre of land, obtained through lease/ sub-lease. In this category, the entire household puts in labour in their own/ leased land. (The study has defined this category as Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers, different from regular Marginal Salt Producers, as they are most vulnerable among the MSPs, who operate in salt pans even up to 10 acres). These workers and VMSPs operate at the bottom of the value chain, providing the critical base work and contribution to the entire value chain processes.

The study estimates that the numbers of salt workers in the state would be in the range of 60,000. Of which, about 40,000 work directly in salt pans, and the balance work in loading, packing and transport activities in the value chain. These labourers are spread out in the salt producing areas of Tamil Nadu, with 93% being in two locations – Vedaranyam and Tutucorin. This estimate is higher than that of the SCO office.

An analysis of the socio-economic profiles of the salt workers and VMSP reveal that most (over 70% in all these areas studied) are from the socially disadvantaged groups, i.e. Scheduled Castes. The incomes of the household are in the range of Rs. 10,000 per annum, with both husband and wife working on the salt pan. The work has is mainly seasonal, with very little/no option for off-season alternate livelihoods. Indebtedness is at a very high level, with the interest rates being in the range of 60% per annum, with most accessing credit from informal sources. With the level of indebtedness and the incomes, most workers and VMSP families are entangled in debt trap. There seems to be an unsaid bonded labour in many workers families. In a few locations, child labour is reported, particularly in the packing and transportation of salt. There is discrimination in the wages paid to women compared to men for the similar kind of work undertaken.

The dwelling places of the salt workers and VMSPs are usually isolated as they are settlements (looks more temporary and kutchha houses) in the periphery of the salt pan areas. Access to services (particularly sanitary, drinking water) and basic needs are extremely poor.

In terms of working conditions, the processes followed in Tamil Nadu are highly primitive and involves intensive manual labour, in very hot and windy conditions for most part of the day. Most workers have problems related to eye sight due to reflections of sunlight from the salt crystals. There are also many reported cases of skin diseases, urinary infections and even abortion of foetus, reportedly due to tremendous heat and standing continuously in salt water. Most have physical disabilities even before they reach the age of 55, due to their hazardous nature of the work. There are no places for taking rest and even those which are constructed by the Salt Department are being used by large producers for storage and other purposes.

The labourers get into the salt pans very early in the morning; the children are left behind without any support or care. It can be widely observed among children skin infections, running nose, and symptoms of malnutrition.

The salt pan work is considered as menial. Most workers are from the socially disadvantaged sections of the society. Due to lack of other opportunities, low education levels and less accessibility and exposure, most continue the salt work.

There are few efforts towards building social institutions and processes for self help. There are associations and unions which are mostly political and leave out workers and VMSP. The development interventions have been isolated and sporadic, with support coming in recently after tsunami.
The awareness of Government schemes and level of access of these are extremely low among salt workers. The actors in the value chain, i.e. lease holders, do not necessarily pass on information and help these workers to avail their entitlements. Moreover, salt being considered as an industry, the policies and priorities are mostly industry related (on productivity and efficiency) and very little that are workers’-centric.

Apart from these vulnerabilities, the industry is also highly disaster-prone, as these are located along the coastal areas. It experiences frequent threats of cyclones and high tidal waves, and the recent one being tsunami. The disaster preparedness measures are not in place. Even when the tsunami rehabilitation measures were taken, reportedly large quantum these benefits were availed by lease holders and large producers and very little/ no benefits reached the workers. Most workers reportedly were without the work for almost 6-8 months.

There is very little understanding of issues related to salt workers and VMSPs, including the numbers. There are reportedly monopolies and cartels, particularly at the traders and lease-holder level. This lack of information along with the stakes to keep them confidential is making the salt workers and VMSPs highly marginalised. Unless there are efforts to address these immediately, the subsequent generations too are likely to fall in to this poverty and vulnerability trap.

The review of various government programs and their civil society-led initiatives, it is clear that there are a number of small, sporadic initiatives that have been taken on the field, to address various issues related to salt workers and MSPs. The Gujarat Model of interventions by Government, NGOs, Networks, Industries and government initiatives have given ideas on how to address some of the critical issues and problems of salt pan workers. It is clear from Gujarat experiences that the Government need to give high priority in their agenda as done by Gujarat and supported by the civil society and industries initiative, the issues and problems can not be addressed in a holistic manner. There has been increased focus of the organisations on salt work in Tamil Nadu post-tsunami. It is now important that these initiatives be streamlined, coordinated and synchronized well so that the issues related to salt workers and VMSPs are effectively addressed. There seems to be clear roles emerging for all the various stakeholders in making these development initiatives efficient and effective. These are discussed further in the subsequent sections.

**Key Pointers of Intervention:**

Based on field assessment of the situation of salt workers and marginal salt producers in the state of Tamil Nadu and further consultations with variety of stakeholders, the study team of Vrutti suggests the following as a possible intervention design, with a view to improve the socio-economic conditions of the salt workers in Tamil Nadu. The main target group for support in the salt value chain would be the Salt Workers and the Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers, who operate within 1 acre of saltpans. These two profiles are highly marginalised and vulnerable to household shocks and disasters. The study team suggests the following goal and purpose of a possible holistic intervention in the state of Tamil Nadu:

**Overall Goal:** Improved quality of life of Salt Workers and Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers in Tamil Nadu

**Objective of the Intervention:** Salt Workers and Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers have safe, secured and sustainable livelihood and are able to ascertain their rights and entitlements
Key areas identified for support are: workplace based interventions, household level interventions, society/ area level interventions, sectoral level interventions.

A preliminary intervention design and a logical framework are given in the main report. This includes a logical framework for the UNDP/ UNTRS, along with the embedded one for the field based intervention to test a model.

Key strategies suggested by the study team are:

- Rights-based empowerment approach:
- Synergizing strengths and efforts through People-Public-Private Partnerships models
- Field interventions at the grass root level (such as collectivisation, household level awareness, services, etc.), and simultaneously taking up larger sectoral work at the state level
- Integrated approach where interventions are comprehensive (all areas of support), building on existing strength of the people and institutions
- Value chain approach to involve various stakeholders, rather than excluding/ working against the chain. It is important to make the value chain work for the marginalised; making it a ‘inclusive value chain’
- Development of locally appropriate technologies and providing space for adaptation/ adoption at the field level.
- Imbibe important learning from other models, particularly Gujarat and other development interventions
- Combination of technology, social and management processes going together to make this happens, rather than initiation of isolated interventions.

The work is extremely difficult, complex and there needs to be multiple skills and expertise coming together to make this happen. The work has to be taken up at different levels – grass root, district, state and national level. The SCO, other line departments of the government, industry, CSOs and organisations such as UNDP/ UNTRS need to come together to take this forward. It is impractical to undertake all these at one go. It is suggested that the work is taken up in phases, with a few areas taken for piloting to learn and move forward. The study team suggests that in the pilot phase for about a year or so, two levels of operations could be taken up:

In two to three clusters of villages where large numbers of salt workers present, i.e. Tutucorin, Vedaranyam and Marakkanam – commission interventions related to household level, area level and workplace level in the design given above. The stakeholders who need to be involved could be the department, industry and leaseholders, CSOs and the workers. The work will involve collectivisation, awareness building, household level financial services and linkages at one level and working with lease holders, and government to sensitize and work together to deliver services better.
At the state level, SCO can initiate the process of census and issue of identity cards for the salt workers. Initiatives related to coordination among stakeholders in these clusters would be important. Stakeholders can work towards identifying and developing technologies that are worker-centric, undertake policy research that could help workers and develop resources for future use. Support of agencies such as UNICEF to address the issues of child labour both at the field level through the field based model and also at the state level would be very useful. Dissemination of the information so far obtained and that come out from the pilot initiatives would be an important task to replicate the processes within and outside the state.

Key result areas suggested for support are:

- **Field based intervention models** effectively addressing the critical needs of Salt workers and marginal salt producers (at workplace, household and area level) through rights based approach demonstrated in three locations in Tamil Nadu (see embedded LFAs)

- **Policies and actions of stakeholders** including govt., (SCO, other departments) donors, UN agencies, private companies influenced in favour of these marginalized communities, at various levels (district, state and national)

- **Technological options** (through new and adaptive) for improving working conditions of salt workers developed and disseminated

- Comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date knowledge base on the salt industry in Tamil Nadu and the country developed and available for any stakeholder for use

The result areas for field based models suggested for the three locations are:

- **Enhanced and safe livelihoods** of salt pan workers and marginal salt producers through essential inputs and services at the workplace

- Income sources diversified; standard and regular income ensured through existing and alternative livelihood options

- **Sustainable access to financial and support services** for enterprise promotion and business development opportunities (through linkages)

- **Effective and sustainable CBOs** and networks exists and functional addressing the issues of salt workers and marginal producers in a sustainable way

- **Capacities built and platforms created** to demand rights and realize their entitlements (including children), particularly at area level (infrastructure, etc.)

Based on learning from these pilot initiatives, the stakeholders can plan for future course of action. The learning from these could also provide some important pointers for salt workers initiatives in other areas, and also for unorganized industry labourers in other industries too.
2. Background and Rationale for the Study

Tamil Nadu is the second largest producer of salt in India, next only to Gujarat. The salt in the state is produced in saltpans along the seacoast. Tuticorin and Nagapattinam are the two major salt producing districts in the state, accounting for about 80% of the state’s salt production. An estimated 42,000 acres of land is used for salt production in the state, providing livelihoods to a large number of people along the coast. The salt Commissioner’s Office is the nodal department for salt production in the country. Technology for salt production in the country is largely primitive.

Salt workers, working in different clusters along the seacoast, are one of the most disadvantaged groups in the state. Most work as wage earners in saltpans and do not have any influence within the salt value chain. A smaller number are able to lease the pans from absentee landlords. They do not have access to credit, technology, skills, or market linkage. Most do not have access to and control over the resources associated with salt production, mainly the saltpans. As a result they are inexorably caught in a vicious cycle of debt and dependence that ensures that they remain economically poor and socially powerless. To make matters worse, workers, mainly in Nagapattinam district, affected by the Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004 lost several months of production, as the pans were flooded.

Very few efforts have been made to study and assess the situation of salt workers in Tamil Nadu. The recent report1 by the Salt Commissioner’s Office (SCO), along with Bay of Bengal Program (BOBP) was one of the pioneering studies that mapped areas and identified critical areas of support. The study was undertaken across six states of India and provided an overview of the salt industry in the country. Key recommendations emerging out of this study are given in Box 1.

The United Nations Team for Recovery Support (UNTRS), as a part of its ongoing support for rehabilitation and development in the tsunami affected areas of Tamil Nadu has been exploring possibilities of supporting the cause of salt workers in the state of Tamil Nadu. Though the concerns and recommendations emerging out of the study by SCO and BOBP are common across different states, each salt producing state has specific issues and dynamics. Thereby, a rapid assessment of the situation of salt workers in Tamil Nadu was proposed by UNTRS. Vrutti, a livelihood resource center of Catalyst Development Initiatives (CDI), Bangalore was

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**Box 1: Key Recommendations from the study by Salt Commissioner’s Office and Bay of Bengal Program (2006-07)**

- Create a database on salt workers; undertake a full census
- Register all salt workers
- Guarantee employment; fix minimum wages.
- Improve workplace amenities (such as access to potable drinking water, mobile clinics, protective gear, sanitation, rest sheds).
- Strengthen awareness on family planning. Recruit health workers from the salt workers’ community.
- Set up a group insurance scheme. Improve and widen credit access.
- Set up child crèches and schools. Mobilize NGOs for the purpose.
- Modernize the industry without marginalizing small-scale salt units.

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1 Source: Study on the Socio – Economic Status of Workers in the Salt Industry in India, BOBP-IGO, March 2006, Pages 204
commissioned by UNTRS to undertake the study. The study, a rapid assessment, was undertaken during the period Oct-Nov 2007. It sought to obtain field insights and explore ways to improve the socio-economic conditions of the salt workers in the state of Tamil Nadu. This is the report of the situational assessment.

3. Objectives and Scope of Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- Understand and assess the socio-economic and working conditions of the salt workers;
- Identify potential interventions to improve their socio-economic conditions, strengthen existing livelihoods and improve their working conditions, efficiency and quality of work.
- Develop a project design for improving socio economic condition of salt workers in TN

The scope of the study included the following four key areas:

- Arriving at the estimate of the number of salt workers in the state of Tamil Nadu, and developing a profile of salt workers.
- Assessing the socio economic status of salt workers in Tamil Nadu.
- Assessing the policy environment influencing the Salt Value Chain; particularly the socio economic status of salt workers.
- Identifying successful interventions & strategies relating to improving socio economic condition of Salt Workers in Gujarat, worth replicating in context of TN.
4. Methodology

4.1. Approach to the methodology

To enable quality outputs and optimal use of time and available resources, the following approaches were agreed upon:

**Qualitative vs. Quantitative Assessments:** There is very little information on salt workers. That which is available is spread across various sources and is too diverse. From available sources it is not possible to derive pointers to address problems of the community. To understand the situation, the players, operations and dynamics, the study requires in-depth qualitative assessment. In addition quantitative assessments would also be required to understand the scale and uniformity across the study area, which was through secondary data review and consultations at various levels.

**Secondary Data vs. Primary Data:** A few studies conducted earlier have identified some issues related to salt workers and the trade. The annual report of the salt department, government of India and the data available with the Anusuya Foundation, an NGO working in Marakkanam area were used to get broad information on the salt sector. However, no study provided the comprehensive details required to address the objectives of this assignment. This necessitated collection of primary data from the field.

**Covering Different Typologies:** The profile of salt pans, salt workers and producers vary widely among the salt-producing districts of Tamil Nadu. The socio economic conditions and work place dynamics vary from one salt producing centre to another. Gender, accessibility, economic and social status, literacy, etc. affect the livelihood of the salt workers. Accordingly, the program approaches would need to be different for different centres, in a general community setting.

**Statistical Validity Vs learning for a Purpose:** The study did not aim to provide a statistical validity to findings across the state, rather to understand the dynamics of the sector from the largest production centres. In these centres, large numbers of persons are involved and there are various typologies of salt workers, producers and traders. Hence, samples were selected purposively so that learning from different typologies would be available.

**Participatory Assessments:** The approach adopted by the study was participatory with salt workers and marginal salt producers themselves assessing the situation and highlighting the problems and needs. The tools and methods adopted for the assessment facilitated discussions (like focus group discussions, use of some case studies, marginal salt producers’ enterprise survey, debriefing, etc.).

4.2. Steps Followed in the Study:

Given the nature and scope of the assignment, the study adopted the methods of consultation and review of literature as key basis for arriving at the assessment. The steps followed in the study are given below.
These methods were finalized based on a joint meeting held with the members of UNTRS team and the advisory group\(^2\).

The SCO-BOBP report, along with the consultations with SCO and the reports given by the department formed the basis for the study. An extensive literature search with various organizations, including the UNDP, documents from Salt Commissioner’s Office, State

\[\text{Diagram: Method Followed In the Study to Arrive at Pointers for Intervention}\]

Government Officials associated with salt workers, websites of various agencies and resource centres were undertaken. This literature review provided the following details:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Estimation of numbers of salt workers in the state, spread, profiles.
  \item Salt production details and key clusters.
  \item Issues and problems related to the salt industry and salt workers.
\end{itemize}

\(^2\) Advisory Group for Salt Workers Study was formed by UNTRS, with members being SCO, UNDP/ UNTRS, NGOs (FACE, Women’s Collective and Anusuya Foundation)
Situation Analysis of Salt Workers in Tamil Nadu and Developing Project Outline for Improving their Socio-Economic Status – Dec 07

- Extent of damages occurred in tsunami and the responses by agencies
- A short-list of key geographical areas and issues to be studied in the primary survey.

Field consultations were done in Nagapattinam (particularly Vedaranyam) and Tutucorin, as these two centres are the largest salt producing clusters. Large numbers of salt workers are working in these centres in all typologies of salt pans (such as marginal, medium, large and industrial units). Household case studies and enterprise surveys were conducted. Focused group discussions were held with various stakeholders at the district level, along with stakeholders’ consultation meetings to share and validate the study findings.

The household level data generated by Anusuya Foundation, an NGO working in Marakkanam was also used in the study. Based on the field level consultations and case studies, the key gaps in the value chain and the salt workers conditions were derived.

An analysis of policies related to the salt workers was reviewed to get an insight on the policy gaps. A literature review of the Gujarat Model of interventions provided learnings from the intervention. By bringing together gaps emerging from the field, policy analysis and lessons from other interventions, the pointers for potential interventions to improve socio-economic conditions of the salt workers were derived.

The key findings and potential for interventions were presented to the Salt Commissioner and later to the steering group at UNTRS Office in November 2007. This report incorporates their feedback.

### 4.3. Sources of Information:

The key sources of information used for arriving at the estimates, assessment of conditions and generating pointers for interventions are given below. The study tried to triangulate the data with sources as much as possible to arrive at figures that are close to the field reality.

In all, the study covered 11 staff from different organisations at Chennai, five field level NGOs, one salt factory, nine labour unions, three marginal producers association, one cooperative society, five traders, five district level SC offices, ten case studies of marginal salt producers and 32 case studies of salt workers.
4.4. **Field Process Followed in Vedaranyam and Tutucorin:**

In each of the study locations (Vedaranyam and Tutucorin), the study team followed very detailed systematic and participative processes to arrive at the conclusions regarding the critical gaps and the pointers for interventions. The following diagram provides a brief of the processes followed and the key outputs emerging from each of these processes.

**UNDP Salt Study - Field Process Protocol**

**PROCESSES**
- Review of secondary data/reports
- Discussions with stakeholders, key sources (telecon)
- Move to district NGO Consultation
- Secondary data review
- Field Visit - VC consultation
- Consultation with Federation and NGO
- Field Case study and interactions with Govt.
- Debrief with NGO, Fed Representatives

**COVERAGE WITHIN PROCESSES**
- SCO-BOBP Report - TN and District at a Glance
- NGOs (Face, Women’s Collective) NCRC, etc.
- VC players at various levels
- Rapid interactions
- Production to Consumption - various profiles
- Protocol for Mapping VC
- Workshop with Key Rep of Federation and NGOs
- Workshop Checklist
- Case study of various profiles
- Interviews with VC players
- Interviews with Govt. and others
- Checklists to be used

**KEY OUTPUTS OF PROCESSES**
- Salt producing areas in the district
- Issues related to salt production
- District profile
- Key contacts at district
- Finalise schedules
- Salt producing areas in the district
- Issues related to salt production
- Key players in the salt value chain
- Map of Value Chain
- Various players, places, profiles
- With some idea about numbers
- Ready data for sampling for case studies
- Profile of district, VC map, profiles of players, numbers - validated
- Case study profiles developed, Issues of salt workers understood
- Deviations from SCO report understood
- Pointers for intervention - developed
- Case studies - different profiles highlighting issues
- Perceptions of the stakeholders
- Pointers for intervention
- Issues and data validated
- Pointers concretised

**UNDP Salt Study - Field Process Protocol**
4.5. The Study Team:

The team for the study involved people who have long years of experience in social development and livelihood improvement sector, combined with experiences of working in Tsunami affected areas.

Names of members of the Study Team and their CVs in the Annexure
5. Overview of Salt Industry

5.1. About the Salt and Salt Industry in India

The word ‘salt’ generally refers to ‘common salt’ or Sodium Chloride [NaCl]. Sodium (Na) is a highly unstable metal that can burst into flame and chlorine (Cl) is a poisonous gas. But the two combine to give sodium chloride or salt that is physiologically absolutely necessary for human life. Chemically, it is 60.66 percent chlorine and 39.34 percent sodium.

In India, a country known for its geologic diversity, salt is produced from diversified sources – seawater to mining of salt deposits, using diversified techniques, viz., the traditional or solar evaporation method and modern methods like vacuum evaporation. Production of salt from the seawater or sea brine, as is commonly referred to in the salt production terminologies, is the dominant method of salt production in India.

Salt falls under the list of Central subjects in the Constitution of India and appears as Item No. 58 of the Union List of the Seventh Schedule. Salt is declared as an item of food under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. The Salt Cess Act of 1953 is the governing legislation for the industry. The Act is implemented through the Salt Commissioner’s Organization, Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion), Government of India.

The area under salt production in India is 318,718 acres. Out of which 275,244 acres are under recognized and 43,474 acres are under un-recognized units of the SCO. The SCO used to issue licenses for salt producing units till 1996 and those units having licenses are considered recognized units. The procedure of issuing license was stopped in 1996 and units that came into existence thereafter are not registered and are considered as un-recognized units by SCO.

Production of salt during the year 2005 was 199.23 lakh tons. The private sector was the dominant producer with a contribution of 98 percent of salt production while the public/joint sector contributed the rest. Small salt producers including cooperative societies accounted for nearly 34 percent of the total production during 2005.
In India, salt is produced mainly for (1) domestic consumption, (2) industrial consumption and (3) export. In 2006, 33 percent of the total salt produced was utilized for domestic consumption, which includes human and animal consumption. The industrial sector, mainly the chlorine-alkali industry consumed nearly 52 percent of salt. About 15 percent of the total salt was exported.

5.2. About Salt Industry in Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu State is endowed with the second longest coastline, about 1,000 km (13% of the country’s coastline). It is also the second largest salt producing state in the country after Gujarat. In Tamil Nadu salt production takes place in the coastal districts of Villupuram, Kancheepuram, Nagapattinam, Ramanathapuram, Tutucorin and Kanyakumari. These coastal districts have unique physical, social, ecological and environmental features that influence and are influenced by salt production, salt producers, workers and other players in salt value chain.

There are 3,464 salt producing units in Tamil Nadu, of which 1,195 are recognized and 2,369 unrecognized by the SCO. Total area under salt production both in recognized and unrecognized units is 41,917 acres (registered units have 33,856.43 acres and unregistered have 8,060 acres).

The salt industry in Tamil Nadu has different typologies of producers. The social systems among workers and traders at different layers define systems of production, marketing, credit and service arrangements. Though the salt sector has industrial status, it has various dimensions and features of unorganized industry that pose many issues and problems to the salt workers and the marginal producers.

5.3. Salt Pan Areas and Salt Production in Tamil Nadu – District-wise

To understand the Tamil Nadu situation of salt pan areas and the salt production status, district wise and production center wise data was collected and analyzed by the SCO. This analysis clearly indicates that Tutucorin and Vedaranyam are major production centres in terms of area and production. As per the SCO report the salt workers estimated are less in the study area of Tutucorin, Vedaranyam and Marakkam.

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3 Socio-Economic Status of Workers in Salt Industry in India, Report, 2006
4 Annual Report, 2006, Salt Commissioner’s Office

Vrutti, Livelihood Resource Centre
Bangalore, India
### District wise salt production for the year 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone (as per SCO geographical categorisation)</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Area Cultivated in acres</th>
<th>Production in tonnes</th>
<th>No of labour engaged</th>
<th>Production/ labour (Tons/labour/annum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chennai(South)</td>
<td>Thanjavur</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>9,393</td>
<td>7,425</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,458</td>
<td>114,118</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>116,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuddalore</td>
<td>Villupuram</td>
<td>2,729</td>
<td>79,383</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>90,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>11,825</td>
<td>549,716</td>
<td>29,398</td>
<td>579,106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuticorin</td>
<td>Tuticorin</td>
<td>8,401</td>
<td>573,186</td>
<td>592,000</td>
<td>1,165,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>13,167</td>
<td>782,868</td>
<td>597,100</td>
<td>1,379,968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagapattinam</td>
<td>Kanyakumari</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>7,461</td>
<td>1,337</td>
<td>8,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>466</td>
<td>7,461</td>
<td>1,337</td>
<td>8,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>33,856</td>
<td>1,454,243</td>
<td>528,927</td>
<td>2,075,170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

56.24 percent of Tamil Nadu’s salt production is in Tuticorin and 23.42 percent is in Nagapattinam, (Vedaranyam). Hence, these two districts were taken as samples for the study. Marakkanam in Villupuram district were also included in the sample as the majority of the salt workers are dalits and reported to be very poor and marginalized.

### 5.4. Profile of Major Salt Producing Districts of Tamil Nadu

Tuticorin, Nagapattinam (Vedaranyam) and Marakkanam have different typologies of salt producers such as marginal, medium, large, large salt factories of both private and public sector undertakings, cooperative societies, and sub-lease producers. Many types of salt workers are involved in various production and post-production activities. Of these three districts, two districts were visited and studied and Marakkanam was studied based on the data provided by Anusuya Foundation. The profiles of these districts were given separately as below:

#### Tuticorin District:

Tuticorin has 20,000 acres of saltpans covering Tuticorin town, Arumuganeri, Kayal Pattinam, Kulasekarapatinam, Vepalodai and Vamppar spread over twenty-two villages. The study found out that Tuticorin has the highest number of salt workers in the state and it produces the maximum salt production in the state. The saltpans are developed in lands leased either by central government or by the state government. Central Government leased lands are by and large taken up Salt Producers’ Cooperative Societies and private producers (large, medium and marginal). The State Government lands are leased to the Tamil Nadu Salt
Corporation. Apart from this, about 8,000 acres of private lands are converted into salt pans. There is a trend in converting the salt pan area for house sites near Tutucorin town, given the increase in demand for housing, and conversion of salt pan areas into parking lots for the Tutucorin Port. Most of the salt workers in Tutucorin once migrated from Ramnathapuram and settled in the sub-urban areas and in the villages. The vast majority of the workers in Tutucorin are engaged on wage employment basis. The salt workers belong to the backward and scheduled castes and are poor and the marginalized. The age group of the workers is between 35 and 55 years. The system of engaging both husband and wife in pairs to work in the salt pan is widely practiced in Tutucorin. This ensures their continuous attendance in the salt pans. The labour productivity is higher in Tutucorin as they have better skills. The salt workers of Tutucorin are in demand from other states like Andhra Pradesh. The labourers are organized into labour unions on political party lines. These unions bargain better wages negotiate annual bonus payment and other welfare benefits from the owners of salt pans. The salt workers face many problems related to health, housing, and higher education to children. Tutucorin is well connected to railway transport system and hence transport of salt is much easier compared to other places like Vedaranyam.

**Nagapattinam District – Vedaranyam:**

During the 1930s British government levied heavy tax on salt production in India. Mahatma Gandhi started the salt *sathyagraha* movement against the British government. This salt *sathyagraha* ignited the national struggle for India’s freedom. In Tamil Nadu Dr. Rajagopalachari led the salt *yatra* and Sardar Vedarathinam Pillai from Vedaranyam took part in the *yatra*. Hence, Vedaranyam finds a place in the history of freedom struggle.

Vedaranyam has 10,350 acres of salt pan area. Out of which 7,000 acres of state government lands are with two major private salt factory units. One is SANMAR with 3,500 acres and the other is Gujarat Heavy Chemicals Ltd with 3,500 acres of salt pans. The remaining 3,000 acres of Central Government land is leased to 750 units, who are marginal, medium, large producers and Cooperative Society producers. In addition to these, another 350 acres of state government land is used by two other private units. Vedaranyam faces lack of infrastructure facility like rail transport system and other facilities for the workers and the marginal producers.

The salt pans in Vedaranyam are spread over a stretch of 12 kilometres in a contiguous manner. There are 29 villages engaged in salt production in Vedaranyam. The distance between the habitations and location of the salt pans ranges between 0.5 to 5 kilometres.

One third of these villages have landless households who work in salt pans. The majority of the people living in these villages belong to backward caste. A few scheduled caste communities also work in salt pans. There are sub-lease holders who un-officially lease the land from the official lease holders of the government. These sub-lease holders pay Rs. 5,000 per acre of salt pan as lease amount to the official lease-holders. In Vedaranyam ADB – TEAP has intervened to support the Marginal Salt Producers whose salt pans and infrastructure facilities were damaged due to Tsunami in 2004. The financial assistance and support was routed through Vedaranyam Town Panchayat with the facilitation of an NGO called HEAVEN.
Villupuram District – Marakkanam:

The people of ten villages are engaged in salt production in Marakkanam in Villupuram district. Majority of the workers are from the schedule caste communities, who are socially marginalized and economically poor. Salt pan work has been their primary source of livelihood for over 20 years. The total salt pan area in Marakkanam is 2,900 acres of which 1,500 acres are with a private industry called Padma Chemicals.

60 percent of the salt pan lands in Marakkanam belong to Central Government and 40 percent belong to State Government. There are two Adhidravidar Workers Cooperative Societies involved in salt production and one is not functioning. It was reported that there are 92 lessees, but the actual number of lessees will be about two hundred. This is because the prevalence of practice of sub-lease to others. It was found out from the study that the majority of the salt workers in Marakkanam borrow money from moneylenders at an exorbitant rate of interest. There is monopoly of trade in salt with one trader who has been controlling the price and market of salt. The age group of men in salt works is between 45 years and 60 years.
6. The Salt Value Chain

6.1. About Salt Production

The process of salt production in Tamil Nadu is by solar evaporation. Salt production is a seasonal activity. The season occurs in the period between the two consecutive monsoons. Immediately after ending of the first monsoon, saltpans are attended to and prepared for producing salt. Production happens in the saltpans for a period of approximately ten months till the next monsoon. However, the actual harvests of salt in pans happen for 160 – 220 days in a year. Rain affects production of salt. In the event of a good single day rain, the saltpans go out of work even for a week. The lesser the number of rainy days and the salt harvesting days are more and vice-versa.

6.2. About Salt Production

Typologies of Salt pans: These can be categorized based on

- The **scale** of production in a particular unit: Based on the scale, the saltpans can be classified into the following categories – Sub-marginal (up to 1 acre), marginal (up to 10 acres), medium (10 to 100 acres) and large (more than 100 acres). Apart from these, there are factories such as SANMAR, Gujarat Heavy Chemicals Limited (GHCL) that own saltpans, with about 3,500 acres each.

- **Ownership** of the pan: Based on the ownership, there are three types of salt pans, i.e. leased land, private land and sub-leased lands. Under the leased land, the lease could be obtained from the Central Government (SCO) or from the state government. Sub-lease from the main lessee is practiced in many cases. Apart from these, there are reported encroachments of lands for saltpans.

- The **type of salt that is produced** in the saltpan: Here the saltpans can be divided into two major categories, i.e. edible salt and industrial salt. Edible salt takes lesser number of days for harvesting (i.e. about a week) as it is harvested with lesser concentration of salt compared to industrial salt.

- There is also a type based on the type of brine that is used in the saltpan, which could be either sea brine or bore well brines.

Each typology of saltpan brings-in different dynamics that affect the numbers and types of labourers used level of costs and returns, and the working conditions. These are explained in the following section on value chain analysis.

6.3. Value Chain Analysis and Salt Value Chain

The approach of value chain analysis provides an excellent base for understanding the actors, enterprises, problems, issues and opportunities that exist at various levels in the chain from production to consumption system. Most enterprises on which poor and marginalised are dependent for their livelihoods are a part of larger value chains and therefore any improvements that can be made in each level of value chain have the potential to add value to the poor and marginalised.
Salt Value Chain – Production to Consumption for Different Varieties of Salt Produced in Tamil Nadu (Read from below, starting from production)

Production (Food Salt)
- Pumping water into wells - 1 (15-18 deg)
- Pumping water into pan - 1 (12 deg - 20 deg)
- Draining water into pan - 2 (22 deg)
- Collection of salt in the baskets (24 deg)

Marginal producers - up to 10 acres (Category 3)

Medium producers of salt, 10 - 100 acres (Category 2)

Large producers of salt; min of 100 acres; for consumption and industrial use (Category 1)

Storage
- Transportation of salt to storage yards, head loads using baskets
- Storage through heaping in the yard
- Protection through palm leaves

About 35,000 labourers

Packing
- 500 gms/kg retail packs
- Traditional packing
- Polythene packs provided by the manufacturers
- Bagged in synthetic bag of 60 kg each
- Piece rate basis (wages)
- Spaying of iodine

About 5,000 labourers
mostly adolescents

Children also engaged for petty wages

Storage
- Transportation of salt to storage yards, head loads using baskets
- Storage through heaping in the yard
- Protection through palm leaves

Production (Industrial Salt)
- Pumping water into wells - 1 (15-18 deg)
- Pumping water into pan - 1 (12 deg - 20 deg)
- Draining water into pan - 2 (22 deg)
- Collection of salt in the tables (26 - 29 deg)

Factors taken land on lease from govt. / own land for their own production and part marketing

See next page for further links in the value chain
Continuation of the value chain (read from below, starting with each type of salt, from previous page; reference given for each line of salt)

Production Processes:

In the salt sector, different types of producers and enterprises have been identified at production level. They are marginal, large individual and large industrial enterprises. Each of the value chain operates differently based on the type of enterprises. In case of marginal salt enterprises, they sell to the local agent, who in turn sells to the big traders, who in turn sell it to the wholesale dealer in different places from where it goes to the retailers. The marginal enterprises are operating on a very low margin as the traders control the purchases and sales.
Salt production essentially has two processes in the field. First the brine is condensed and then crystallization takes place. There are two types of salt – food salt and industrial salt. Industrial salt is of larger crystal size and the food salt has smaller crystals. The production process of both varies. For producing food salt, the brine is condensed in single pans to the level of $20^\circ$ and then transferred to the crystallizer. But in the case of industrial salt the brine is be kept in a series of condenser pans (at least three in number) at $29^\circ$ before being transferring to the crystallizer.

Productivity of salt is dependent on the temperature, relative humidity and the density of the brine used. In certain areas in certain time, sea brine flows into canals and gets collected in wells. This brine is condensed and used for salt production. This study came across one such production area in Vedaranyam in Nagapattinam district. The subsoil brine is normally found to be of higher density than the sea brine and there is a growing trend of mixing or replacing sea-brine with sub-soil brine.

**Salt Collection, Packing and Transportation:**

Collecting salt from the pans and transporting it to loading centres is a labour intensive process. Both male and female labourers are involved in this process. Mechanization has happened only in loading and transportation of salt. Labourers have to do all the works in open sunlight.

Salt collected from the pans is pulled to the collection table near the pans and then transported by head loads to the stocking points. It is the task of the producer to bring salt to the stocking points. From the stocking points, salt is bagged in either 50 kg or 100 kg bags and then loaded in load vehicles and taken by the traders. It is the traders’ task to look after loading of salt and transporting it to other places.

**Payment to labourers:**

Practices differ from place to place on how payment is made and the minimum work turnout for a labour and use of labour groups in the value chain. The salt value chain given above depicts the type of players in the value chain. In case of marginal producers, quite a good percentage of them work as a labourer cum producer.

In case of Vedaranyam, the general practice among the marginal salt producers is to fix rate contract to labourers for producing salt. However, in case of industries labourers are paid daily wages. In Tutucorin, the general trend is to pay daily wages to labourers and fix minimum target of daily/weekly production.

**Sale:**

Individual enterprises sell their food salt to private local traders, value add and packet and sell it to wholesale traders with in Tamil Nadu and other places. They also produce industrial salt and sell to the industries like SANMAR etc.

There are large salt industries that produce industrial salt and to use their own chemical industries. There are industries like GHCL who produce and sell both food salt with minimum quantity and industrial salt with maximum quantity.
7. Estimation of Salt Workers in Tamil Nadu

An estimation of salt workers in Tamil Nadu is extremely difficult. Given that there are different typologies of saltpans, producers have different ways of operating the saltpans, especially engagement of labourers. There are labour contract systems followed by the industry, production of salt by contract system, sub-lease holders, marginal producers who also work as labourers and also engage workers on daily wage basis, etc. The productivity varies across locations. There are many issues related to formal reporting of number of workers and the areas under production. Given these, the estimation of salt workers becomes a complex task. The study therefore used a combination of group consultations at the field level, visits to select locations, consulting with various stakeholders across the value chain, case study of different profiles of workers and marginal producers, consultations with the state and central department officials and review of available literature to arrive at the estimates. These estimates are on a conservative side, but will certainly be the minimum in the state.

Key reasons for difficulties in estimation of salt workers are:

i) Salt department has data for the area registered with the SCO. Since the industry has been de-licensed from the year 1996, there are quite number salt producers who have not registered themselves and are unaccounted for in government data.

ii) The salt workers, though classified under industrial workers, are yet to form any association on their job lines. Their trade union affiliation is to various political parties. Given this calculation of number of workers in this field is difficult.

iii) With the expansion of area under salt by large producers, the lands adjacent to new saltpans become saline and hence are forced to convert the saline agricultural land as saltpans and hence there is increase in the area under salt. However, these areas don’t get accounted immediately in any government records.

iv) In Tutucorin, saltpans closer to the harbour and industrial units are getting converted to parking lots for vehicles and storage place for containers as returns from this business is more than saltpans. In some places at Tutucorin, saltpans have been converted into house layouts also.

After intense consultation with various stakeholders and triangulation of data, the area under salt and the work force in saltpans were assessed. This estimate was triangulated against productivity-based calculation.

This study has estimated that the salt workers in Tamil Nadu, including the transport and packaging workers are in the range of 60,000. The detail of workers in area wise is given in the table below. Further it is estimated that of the 60,000 salt workers, 40,000 are marginal salt producers (labourers cum producers), and salt workers working with marginal salt producers. Another 20,000 workers work with large industrial and individual producers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box 3: Estimates of Salt Workers in Tamil Nadu – The Study Estimates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Numbers</strong> – about 60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 20,000 – working in factories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 40,000 – working as labourers with marginal salt producers or labourers cum producers (&lt;3 acres)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The SCO report of 2006, estimated that the Tamil Nadu salt industries employed 16,482 workers. Total salt production in the year was 20,75,170 tons. If the productivity of a labour in the saltpan is assumed to be 70 tons/worker/year, the labour force required to produce this quantity of salt works out to 29,645. In addition, quite a number of labourers are involved in packaging and loading of salt as also in filling the unprocessed and processed salt in packets. There are substantial areas that have not been registered with the SCO. The work force in these areas also has to be taken in to consideration. If all these categories of labourers are considered, the estimate of 60,000 labourers appears realistic.
8. Profile of Salt Workers and Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers – Working Definitions

In the entire salt value chain in Tamil Nadu, the study identified two profiles of people who are highly marginalised and vulnerable – the salt worker and the vulnerable marginal salt producer. The working definitions used for identifying this group in the salt value chain are as follows:

**Salt Worker**, a person who:

- is engaged directly and physically in the salt value chain, mainly in the operations relating to salt production, packaging, storage and transportation
- is engaged for the most part of the year in this work
- derives major part of his/her annual income from the value chain
- is either adult male or female and sometimes children (particularly in packing)

**Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers** (defined for the purpose of the study), a person who:

- is involved in salt production in saltpans of up to 1 acre
- engages himself and family
- in most cases has leased/sub-leased the land for saltpan from the government
- is engaged for the most part of the year with these work
- derives major part of his/her annual income from the value chain

The study has specifically defined this category as Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers (VMSP), distinctly different from regular Marginal Salt Producers (MSP), as they are most vulnerable among the MSPs, who operate in saltpans even up to 10 acres.

The study tried to understand the socio-economic conditions of these profiles of salt workers and vulnerable marginal salt producers in detail.

Key profile and characteristics of the Salt Workers and Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers:

- women and men; in some places children
- age group of people – for male about 40 to 55 and women about 30 to 50
- more than 75% are from socially disadvantaged sections of the society
- mostly illiterate or having up to primary level of education
- earn an income of about Rs. 10,000 per year for the family from the salt work, with little or no off-season alternate employment
- have one or the other health issues due to occupational hazards such as eye, skin, gynecology related
- family highly indebted; mostly in a debt trap; paying high levels of interest rates to informal sources
- stay in isolated locations; and society views them as doing undignified work
- workers earn largely based on the quantity of salt produced on a weekly basis or number of days employed in the factories
- very low awareness on their rights and entitlements, with no support for accessing these
9. Socio-Economic Conditions of the Salt Workers

9.1 Social Profile of Salt Workers

Most of the salt workers in Tutucorin and Marakkanam belong to the scheduled caste communities, i.e. 75% and 72% respectively. In Vedaranyam 75% of the workers belong to backward communities and the remaining 25% belong to scheduled caste communities. In Tutucorin most of the labourers are migrants from other places, mostly from villages in Ramanathapuram district settled down in Tutucorin over a span of twenty years. There are observable differences between the labourers of backward communities and the scheduled caste communities. This is particularly true in Tutucorin district. The backward communities have social structures, friends and relatives in other livelihoods whereas the people who belong to scheduled castes are mostly migrant settlers and have practically no contacts with the external world other than their work and their settlements. This makes them unaware of the developments elsewhere and of their entitlements.

9.2 Income Pattern of the Salt Workers:

For salt workers and their families, their primary source of income is salt work. A worker gets a maximum of 180 to 200 days of employment in a year. Salt pan workers cannot ordinarily have multiple sources of income as salt work demands a lot of time leaving them with little time to pursue any other occupation. In case of contract production of salt, a husband and wife couple produces 25 tons of salt per month. In the off season, i.e. during monsoon, a small percentage of workers get employment in agriculture for about 50 days in a year. (90 percent of the salt pan workers are either landless labourers or marginal farmers). Being in a delta region, Vedaranyam has higher scope for such employment. Both male and female go for work as agriculture daily labourers. They also go for work as unskilled labourers in construction and other allied activities. Their annual income from all the sources put together, including saltpan work is about Rs.18,000. This is a general trend in Vedaranyam and Marakkanam saltpans. It was reported, that with this level of income the salt workers families are not able to come out from the poverty situation.

The wage fixation method is slightly different in Tutucorin. Every two years, the labour unions and the producers associations negotiate the wages to be paid and rates are agreed upon. Apart from daily wages, labourers are entitled to 9 days of leave wages, provident fund and a pair of goggles and gum boots. Marginal producers however don’t pay PF contribution.

Though the wage pattern is uniform across the saltpans, some companies fix rate contract and pay as per the work turnout by each labour. Provident fund contribution is being made by companies that employ workers in their pans as per the industrial labour act. However, the Salt workers said that only a meagre percentage of workers get provident fund benefits as only a limited number of salt workers stick to one employer for more than three years. The salt workers do not have high awareness of the benefits of provident fund said that the employers rake up one or other issues and disallow workers to continue their service for more than three years. Bonus payments are also negotiated annually during Deepavali festival. The daily wage rate paid for male worker is Rs.105 and Rs.95 for female worker for similar activity done in the salt pans. Salt
pan workers usually work as a pair and hence a family of two earns Rs.200 per day. This earning computed for 180 days of work along with the bonus amount of Rs.3,000 per family (as was paid last year) and their off seasonal earnings in other works, works out to Rs.42,000 to a family. However, this is applicable to those salt workers who work in Tutucorin town salt pans. In rural areas like Arumuganeri and in the surrounding areas, the male worker is paid Rs. 80 to Rs. 90 per day and Rs.65 to Rs.75 per day to female worker.

In Tutucorin district, workers get employment in godowns in the port and allied works during off season. As these works need high stamina, to which most the salt workers don’t measure up, only a fraction of the male population have assured income in off-season. Others go as unskilled labourers in construction and allied activities. In rural salt pan areas, the salt workers go as agriculture daily labourers during off season. Female salt pan workers in the town mostly stay in home during off-season, as they don’t get any alternate employment in their locality.

9.3 Indebtedness

A salt pan worker gets wages for between 160 to 220 days of work in a year. As explained earlier, salt work is highly hampered by rain and hence the number of days of engagement in any particular year in salt pans is inversely proportional to the number of rainy days in that particular year. It was reported that usually if it rains on any particular day, workers are denied wages for that day even if they had already put in a couple of hours of work in the pans. In order to meet the off season cash requirements the salt workers have to borrow money to meet their ends. In the absence of any organized credit facility available to them, they borrow from money lenders in the area. It was reported that the interest rate ranges from 60 percent to 120 percent. Salt producers pay advance to workers during the beginning of the season and the amount is adjusted while disbursing the weekly payments. The workers continue to take advances from their employers as and when money is required and hence the advances with the employer seldom get settled. If the salt workers wish to switch over to other pans, they have to settle their dues before leaving the employer. This is an indirect way of retaining the salt workers by the employers.

Contract producers (cum workers), as observed in Vedaranyam, fail to get fair price for the salt when they sell back to the pan owner. Contract rate per ton of salt is agreed during the beginning of any particular year based on conservative price estimates. The contract producers don’t get fair price for the salt produced by them from the land owners even if there is appreciable price hike during the year.

It was reported that 90 percent of the salt workers avail loans from the money lenders. The survey data available reveals that in Marakkanam 46 to 66 percent borrow money from the money lenders and about 38 percent borrow from friends and relatives. Only 4 percent of the workers have access to SHG and banks loans.

9.4 Children at Work in Saltpans

Involvement of children in saltpans is by and large not practiced. However, this study has found that young boys and girls even at the age of 10 years go for salt packing work for supporting the family income along with elder boys and girls. These young children are paid on piece rate and there appears to be no industry standards for this work. The children earn about Rs. 20-40 per day. Children of salt pan workers who are into contract production, as found in Vedaranyam, assist in transportation of salt in morning hours and on school holidays. This affects their academic work as they are forced to do this drudgery work before getting to school in the
morning. However, this is not very widely practiced as most of the parents want to take their children out of salt work.

9.5 Housing Conditions

Salt pan workers mostly live in colonies close to the salt pans where they are working. Most of the houses are small kutcha houses that are either fully thatched or have mud walls with thatched roof. These colonies lack basic sanitary and drinking water facilities. The salt pan workers put up their settlements in a vacant government land all along the highway, which is left for future road expansion or other vacant land of the government earmarked for other purposes. Small numbers of people live in rented houses with rent ranging from Rs.200/- to Rs.300/- per month. This study came across a small settlement of migrant workers at Mullakad, who are living very close to the pans of a corporate salt producer with hardly any amenities.

Most colonies are electrified with a single bulb. Some houses even have television sets with cable connection. They owned these even before the Tamil Nadu government distributed free TV sets.

9.6 Working Conditions in Saltpans

Salt production processes followed in Tamil Nadu are very primitive and involve intensive manual labour in the pans. The workers suffer many occupational related health problems. They are required to expend a lot of physical energy in the production process. Working in saline water most of the time, they suffer skin infection and burns. They lose their eye sight at an early age, because of the reflection of sunlight by the salt crystals. Abortion of foetus is quite common among women due to the tremendous heat in the saltpans. It is reported that the life expectancy of salt pan workers is low. They are prone to disabilities even before they attain the age of 55 because of the hazardous nature of their work.

Salt pan work is considered as undignified even by those working in saltpans. They are unhappy about their occupation on account of the odd hours of work the industry demands, the working conditions and health hazards. They desire to get out of this work or desire at least their children should not do this kind of work. However, due to lower education levels of salt workers, particularly among SC communities, the employment potential is low and are unable to get out of this business. A small proportion of the children among salt workers of the SC communities are able to acquire better education and get out of the salt pan work. For the children of salt workers of backward class communities chances to leave the industry are a lot brighter.

In most of the pans husband and wife are employed as couples. As minimum work turnout targets are fixed, flexibility between the couple is possible; workers also prefer to work as couples. From the owner’s point of view, this arrangement brings in responsibility at the household level, and the work gets done by sharing within family. The couples go to the field early in the morning between 02.00 and 04.00, depending upon the season, and stay in the pans till noon. Men are often in the salt pans till evening. Women mostly get into transportation of salt from pans to the loading points and get back home. Men after finishing transportation of salt get into salt collection from the pans. Work load is shared in such a way that the couple gets work every day in the week except Sundays which is the weekly off for them. However, the supervisor, who is called Kankaanis in local language, normally works and paid for seven days.
It was observed that companies don’t engage workers directly, rather they give contract to labour contractors. The Salt Industry called TAC has engaged a labour contracting company for the supply and management of workers.

Almost all the workers own a bicycle and they go to work in the morning by bicycles. Men take their wives along with them on their bicycles. Women mostly get back home earlier than men and have to walk back home. Single women who go to work have to walk all the way to the pans. For some women it is few kilometres of walk every day to get to work and back.

All the salt pans are located on the coastal areas and the temperature is very high during the production periods of salt. The temperature goes up to 40-45 degree centigrade. The relative humidity is also quite high in costal areas. It can be observed that they have to sweat out in the hot sun that they don’t have any shade to take rest. The rest sheds constructed with the aid from salt department also have been used by large producers for other purposes. As potable water is not available in the immediate vicinity of salt pans, drinking water has to be brought from outside. It was reported that a few large producers have arrangements to make drinking water available near the work spots. Small and medium producers face difficulty in supplying drinking water to labourers. Toilet facilities are unavailable in the work spots and women find it extremely difficult to cope up with these working conditions.

Given the kind of environment the workers all the more require places for rest and shade, but in most of the areas these basic facilities are absent and hence affect the health conditions of the workers. The workers also expose themselves to high windy weather at times on the coastal areas.

As the labourers get into the salt pans very early in the morning, their children are not taken care of. The children eat whatever is available at home and go to school on their own. The elder children take care of the younger ones and parental care to them is not adequate. Though the salt pan workers eat three meals a day, they cook only once a day. Some families cook during noon and take the same food till next morning and others cook in the evening and take the food till next noon.

The labourers seldom visit hospitals and their awareness of health care is very low. It can be widely observed in the salt workers settlements that children are affected with one or more early childhood disease. Running nose, skin infections and other symptoms of malnutrition can also be seen among the children. The Village Health Nurses from the health department visit these settlements and administer vaccines to children and also provide pre and post natal care to women. Mothers uniformly reported that vaccinations are given to their children up to one year of age. The workforce attaches limited importance to taking care of their bodies that they visit hospitals only when they become very weak and it becomes impossible to attend work. The stringent stipulations of the employers towards salt pan workers for regularity in attendance to work and the casual mindset of the workers towards personal care are reasons for this.

As the salt pan work requires getting into work very early in the morning, workers from far away places cannot work in salt pans. Though majority of the workers in the salt pans have migrated from other places long back, they have settled in colonies in the immediate vicinity of the pans. However, it was reported that workers from other villages also work in loading of salts in the loading points and in the salt processing units. Young boys and girls in the salt processing centres travel long distances from their homes to attend work.
The salt pan workers reported that there is absolute communal harmony among them and there is no preferential treatment or discrimination between the labourers on caste lines. However, it was observed that people of backward communities, particularly Nadars, a caste in Hindu community, become supervisors (‘kankaanis’). It was also evident that these Nadars caste community are more enterprising than the rest that they get into supervisory roles.

9.7 Gender Discrimination in Wages

In most of the salt pans the women labourers undertake similar kinds works in salt pans as men, but are paid less. The wage for male worker is Rs. 80 and for female is Rs. 40 at Vedaranyam. In Tutucorin the wage rate for men is Rs.105 and for female Rs.95 in the salt pans located near Tutucorin town.. In case of villages the wage rate for male is Rs.80 and female is Rs.60; the difference in wages is between Rs. 20 to Rs.40

9.8 Disaster Prone Region:

As the salt pans are located all along the coastal areas of Bay of Bengal, they are vulnerable to threats like cyclone, Tsunami and high tidal waves. The salt pans need to be protected against these calamities, there by protecting the salt workers livelihoods. Disaster preparedness measures are not in place. After the tsunami disaster preparedness is being talked about but much more needs to be done on the ground for the communities to be prepared and equipped to face these disasters.
10. Issues Related to Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers

Salt producers who produce salt in an area of up to one acre and sell to local traders are considered as vulnerable marginal producers. These producers are from backward, most backward communities or are dalits. Family labourers are involved in salt production. The average production of salt per annum/acre is about 1,500 Bags (150 tonnes).

The factors influencing production are quality of brines, seasonal conditions, capacity of storage and condenser and labour. The income from salt production depends on market price which is highly fluctuating; during the last five years the price of salt was hovering around Rs. 100 to 600 per ton. The month of Sep 2007 witnessed a steep hike in market price at Rs. 600 per ton.

The costs and returns for a marginal salt producer of 1 acre land are given in the table. As can be seen, in the lowest and average scenario, the returns are very minimal and mostly in loss, even after where the opportunity cost of labour is not considered. Due to these fluctuating patterns in incomes and costs, most marginal producers find themselves in a debt trap.

Key shocks of the marginal producers:

- Fluctuating market price Rs. 100 – Rs.600/- per ton.
- Loss of work from monsoon ranges from 2-7 months.
- Natural disasters like incessant rains, floods, tsunami etc

| Costs and Returns of Vulnerable Marginal Producers |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| Process                          | Cost  |
| Preparation                      | 5,000 | Contracted out one time |
| Engine maintenance               | 2,000 | Per annum               |
| Diesel                           | 5,000 | Per annum               |
| Lease Amount                     | 175   | Per annum               |
| Depreciation-Engine              | 6,887 | @ Rs. 20,000, 3 years   |
| Opp cost of labour               | 27,000| 2 labour for 150 days, @ 90/ day |
| Cost of credit (@ 20,000)        | 5,400 | ROI - 3% per month     |
| Total                            | 51,242|                        |
| Sale - 150 tons (lowest level)   | 15,000| @ 100 per tonne        |
| Sale - 150 tons (highest)        | 90,000| @ 600 per tonne        |
| Sale - 150 tons (average)        | 56,250|                        |
| Income (lowest level)            | 36,242| - High loss            |
| Income (highest)                 | 30,758| - Reasonable           |
| Income (average)                 | 5,006 | - High loss            |

Traders who deal with marginal salt producers are highly monopolized and hence have high degree of control over the price of salt. Marginal producers have less area for the storage and cannot afford to have salt storage facility. Therefore they are forced to sell and not wait for increase in prices.

The marginal salt producers mostly use the underground brine for salt production. They use either a diesel pump or electric pump to pump water from open / bore wells. As salt production falls under industrial activity, the electricity tariff is as per industrial consumers. Those owning diesel sets have to spend even more money than those with electric pumps.

As there is drastic reduction in the workforce for salt pan works and there is demand for getting labourers for salt pan work. Marginal producers cannot afford to accommodate migrant labourers since they cannot provide a dwelling for them. For sustaining the labourers with them, they resort to practices like paying credit to the labourers who are left free only when they settle the dues. For their credit needs they have to depend on moneylenders and the interest rate is in the
range of 50% to 60%. Since the production technology is still primitive, there seems no scope for improving their productivity.

The salt production is seasonal and salt cannot be stored in bulk for long time without adequate cover. The marginal producers market their salt (mainly edible salt) through the local traders. Private producers sell it to the chemical industries in Andhra Pradesh, Chennai, Mettur where the chemical salt is produced for various industrial uses like petrochemical, detergent powder etc. The industrial producer like SANMAR, Dharangadhara Chemical Works, TAC etc use their production for their own use.

While on one hand marginal producers are disadvantaged from the lack of alternate markets and inability to wait for good price, the Tamil Nadu Salt Corporation Ltd. has been producing and selling salt at a good rate. The operational modalities of this institution could be replicated or TN Salt Corporation can expand their areas of operation to enable marginal producers to sell their produce at a reasonable rate.

TN Salt Corporation provides labour welfare measures to the salt workers in their salt pans in Vallinokkam. The labour welfare measures includes weekly holiday on Sunday with wages, medical facilities, 12% Employees Provident Fund, Gumboot, National holidays and Bonus to workers.
11. Shocks and Disasters – Tsunami and Response

11.1 Tsunami and its Effect on Saltpan work:

On the morning of 26th December 2004, a massive earth quake measuring 9.0 on the Richter scale hit the west coast of Northern Sumatra in Indonesia. It set off a giant Tsunami, which travelled across the Ocean causing an immense human toll and massive damages in countries surrounding the Indian Ocean. Tamil Nadu, where 376 villages were affected, was state with the largest number of affected villages. The majority of those affected on the coast were fisher-folk. They suffered the brunt of the disaster, lost houses, livelihoods, household goods and assets like boats and nets. The Tsunami brought the salt industry in the limelight as the issues and problems of the salt manufacturers and the workers in Tamil Nadu got noticed. The government responded to address the damages to salt pans and the problems faced by the salt workers in a rather limited manner as part of tsunami relief and rehabilitation. Special schemes like TEAP came in to support the marginal salt workers in Vedaranyam.

11.2 Tsunami Relief Activities by SCO

Tsunami had impact on many salt pan units and factories that were functioning all along the east coast of Tamil Nadu. It was reported that the Salt Commissionerate took some measures for the relief and rehabilitation of the affected salt manufacturers and workers.

The worst affected area in the east coast was Vedaranyam besides Marakkanam and Cove long. A committee was immediately formed to assess the damages caused to the salt works. On the recommendation of the Committee, the Salt Commissionerate disbursed a total amount of Rs.1,65,51,652 as ex-gratia to the 563 affected salt manufacturers in Tamil Nadu for reclamation of their affected salt works as it was affected badly.

Further, due to damages to the salt works, hundreds of salt workers in the affected areas were left without job in the post Tsunami period. Taking their livelihood into account, for the first time, the Salt Commissionerate disbursed an amount of Rs.60,18,500 as compensation to 1593 salt workers in Tamil Nadu for the man days lost by the labourers and loaders in Vedaranyam.

In Vedaranyam, the infrastructure like roads and channels were also damaged in the onslaught of Tsunami. The Government of India spent about Rs.109.20 lakhs for the improvement of affected roads, channels.

The stakeholders meeting brought out the issue that the compensation amount paid was more to the salt manufacturers and less to the workers. The assistance by and large went to the salt producers who were economically better-off. In contrast the salt workers face very many problems and drudgeries in the saltpans and they should have been given greater the relief and support compared to the producers.

11.3 Asian Development Bank (ADB) – The Tsunami Emergency Assistance Project (TEAP)

Due to Tsunami the saltpans, channels, ponds were damaged/silted affecting salt production and thereby seriously affecting the livelihoods of the people. It was reported that about 2500 acres...
belong to 916 households in about 10 habitations were affected under Tsunami in Vedaranyam and most of them were marginal salt producers.

The ADB-TEAP Project has supported the Tsunami affected marginal salt producers through Vedaranyam Town Panchayat with the facilitation support of an NGO – HEAVEN which began in the year 2006. An assessment was made with regard to the conditions of the families affected by tsunami before intervention as below:

- The poverty levels of these affected families (federation members) were poor and deprived due to seasonal income with annual incomes less than Rs.12,000 per annum. This is because of 4-5 months of monsoon rains which affected the salt production and no work.
- Majority of the salt pan bunds were eroded and internal feeding channels from the main channel were silted due to tsunami. This resulted in the desertification of several hundred acres of salt pans. Ultimately many of the salt pan holders have become indebted to money lenders.
- Silted internal channels which prevented the irrigation of sea water resulted in the production of low quality salt and thereby very less profit.

Key outcomes reported by ADB from their interventions: It was reported that the ADB – TEAP Tsunami interventions have resulted in the following outcomes:

- Desiltation of all internal brine feeding channels resulted in increased salt production period from 5 months to 8 months. The following are the reasons:
  - Desiltation of internal brine channels allowed brine into channels one month before the normal time. The beneficiaries wait for the high velocity wind (Visaham wind) during the month of April – May to get the brine into channels, but after desiltation a slow wind from the sea did irrigate all the pan area. However, they still require storage tanks to store the sea water.
  - All pans are irrigated with raw brine from the sea resulted in producing in high quality of salt and increase production from 3 lakhs to 4.5 lakhs tonnes.
  - Increased salt production per acre from 100 tonnes to 150 tonnes.
  - The cost of pumping water from ponds to the pans was reduced by about 60%.
  - Additional area of 500 acres was brought under salt production.
  - There are signs of coming out from the indebtedness by the marginal producers after increase in salt production due to the project interventions.
  - The marketing networks have been developed like those to private chemical and fertilizers units, private dealers and Tamil Nadu Salt Marketing Corporation.

So far about 116 lakhs been used for various interventions for the marginal salt producers in Vedaranyam. It is felt that a lot of support has gone directly to the salt producers to build the infrastructure facilities, but still there are problems in getting the fair price for their salt. It was also felt that less support was extended to the salt workers to improve their working conditions keeping the gravity of problems that the salt workers face in the industry.

11.4 NGO Interventions - FACE

It was reported that 214 marginal salt producers who were affected by Tsunami disaster were supported by FACE to bring back 189 acres of salt pans by reconstruction of bunds, storage
tanks, condensers and interlinking of channels. FACE also, supported construction of twelve worker’s rest sheds. Plastic sheets were provided to place on the bund to reduce wastages of salts and cleanliness.

11.5 Disaster preparedness

The saltpans are located in the disaster prone area and the risks arising from the disasters will have to be foreseen to safeguard the salt industry. There is a need to address the issues of equity and gender while compensating people in salt work affected by the Tsunami or other natural calamities. Community led disaster management systems should also be in place to be better prepared in the event of future disasters. Early warning systems for the salt producers, salt workers would help them be prepared to protect the salt storage and other facilities in the saltpans.
12. Development Support for Salt Workers

To address the key issues and problems faced by the salt industry there are interventions led by central government, Salt Commissionerate Office, state government schemes, industry and other special interventions by NGOs, donors and salt industry themselves. These schemes and programmes of government, NGOs have touched only a fraction of a large problem encountered by the workers, marginal producers and the salt industry.

The central government tried to address the issues of salt workers by brining out schemes and programmes at national level through Salt Department. They are housing schemes, education to children etc. Some of these schemes and measures are described as below:

12.1 Government Schemes:

Namak Mazdoor Awas Yojana (NMAAY)

With a view to ameliorate the working conditions and living standards of labourers employed in Salt Industry, a central sector scheme called ‘Namak Mazdoor Awas Yojana’ was launched during 2003-04 to provide dwelling houses to salt workers. It was proposed to construct 5000 houses in the salt manufacturing states through out India. The approximate plinth area of the house is 22.2 sq. meter at a cost of Rs. 50,000. Out of which Rs. 45,000/- (90%) is given as Central assistance and Rs.5000/- (10%) has to be borne by the worker or other stakeholder. In Tamil Nadu, it was proposed to construct 735 houses in 10th Plan. The government of India has so far released an amount of Rs.3,08,98,500. The scheme is to be continued from the 11th plan beginning from April 2007. In Tamil Nadu 600 houses are proposed to be constructed under this scheme for the period 2007-08.

The Children Reward Scheme (CRS)

The Scheme intends to support the education of children of the salt workers. Low level of awareness and motivation among the implementers are impeding the implementation of this scheme to its optimum potential. The cash rewards for the children of meritorious children are given as below:

- 6th std to 7th std – Rs.1000
- 8th & 9th std – Rs.1500
- 11th & 12th std – Rs. 2000

It was reported that during 2006-07, only nine cash rewards were given in Tamil Nadu. The approach to the education of salt worker’s children should be systematically developed to include enumeration of children of salt workers, proportion going to the school, proportion of drop outs, and study of the reasons for children not attending the schools.
As it was estimated that there are about 60,000 workers who are poor and marginalized in the Salt Industry and their housing and other civic facilities are very poor. Compared to the magnitude of the problems of salt workers, the schemes initiated will only touch a fraction and much more welfare measures are to be planned in an integrated manner by involving all the stakeholders like state, central, Civil Society Organizations and the industries.

A systematic assessment of educational needs of the children of salt workers will have to be done and plans for addressing the issues drawn and implemented with the support of state government and the involvement of salt workers and the NGOs in the area.

**Unorganised Labour Welfare Boards**

The Tamil Nadu Government has created a separate board for unorganized manual labourers under the Ministry of Labour and Employment that aims at meeting welfare needs of the unorganized labourers. The Unorganized Labour Board is functioning under the Labour Commissioner. There are about 42 works/activities that are covered under the Unorganised Manual Labourers Welfare Boards. At present many Unorganised Manual Labourers Welfare Boards are functioning in Tamil Nadu for the labourers in coir ropes making, papad making, and cycle rickshaw pulling, artificial diamond polishing and food industries.

The labourers have to register themselves through the labour Inspector at the Taluk Level to become a member in the board to avail the government benefits and schemes.

The workers engaged in salt pans are also considered as unorganised manual labourers. These Unorganised Manual Labour Welfare Boards provide welfare measures /schemes like accident insurance, educational assistance to children, marriage assistance, maternity assistance, pension schemes, etc. The intention of the scheme is good, but it needs to be streamlined to reach and benefit all the manual labourers involved in different types of works.

Currently there is no initiative exclusively for salt workers. Concerned NGOs working in the district could organize the salt workers and facilitate formation of a separate Board for them under Unorganized Manuel Labourers Board. This will enable the workers to get all those benefits extended by the government.

**Identity Cards for Salt Workers Families:**

It was reported that the district collector of Villupuram has announced an initiative to identify all the salt workers in Marakkanam and arranged to issue identity cards to them. This will enable them to access the special benefits if any extended to the salt workers. *Similar interventions could be initiated in all the districts in the coastal areas to issue the identity cards to the salt workers.*

**Nagapattinam District Administration Initiatives towards Salt Workers Welfare:**

Nagapattinam District Administration has initiated measures to address the welfare needs of the salt workers through various state schemes of the departments in the district. This is a right move towards improving the socio-economic conditions of the salt workers. The district has planned to address the following needs of salt workers:
Providing safe drinking water at worksites
Housing for salt workers (351 houses nearing completion under 10th Plan; proposed to cover more in the 11th Plan).
Creating alternative livelihoods to the workers during off season
Organizing health camps
Issuing identity cards for salt workers
Providing education assistance to children
Providing life insurance for the labourers under LIC

The NGOs who are working to improve the conditions of the salt workers need to involve and collaborate with district administration for effective implementation of the planned interventions.

12.2 NGOs Interventions:

A very few NGOs are involved in addressing the issues of salt workers in Tamil Nadu. The study team had individual interview with the chief functionaries of the NGOs who are already working with salt workers to improve their socio-economic conditions. The NGO initiatives are still less when compared to the magnitude of the problems faced by the salt workers. The details of their interventions and experiences are summarized as below:

FACE (Federation of Associations for Community Empowerment) Vedaranyam

FACE has intervened in Vedaranyam and Tutucorin for improving salt workers and marginal salt producers. It has organized the labour unions and federations for salt workers in these areas.

- **Formation of Saltpan labourer union:**
  FACE has organized a Labour Federation which was registered under Tamil Nadu State Society’s Registration Act 27 of 1975. They were capacitated to become a vibrant force of community to take up issues and problems related to salt workers. Presently the Federation at Vedaranyam has more than 4000 members. The Federation has been converted into a Labour Union which was registered under Trade Union Act. *A lot of further initiatives are required to strengthen the labour unions to improve the socio-economic conditions of the salt workers.*

- **Advocacy Initiatives:**
  FACE has highlighted the issues and problems affecting the life of the salt workers. They have facilitated a series of advocacy workshops together with the community to identify and prioritize their issues. Some of the issues taken up by them are broad gauge train facility at Vedaranyam which will help transport salt to far off places. They raised need for setting up Saltpan Manual Labourers Welfare Board. FACE has highlighted the need for addressing the facilities required for salt workers in saltpans. *The present level of advocacy interventions is very limited and needs to be increased to bring the attention of policy makers to this community and to turn the policy in to practice.*
HEAVEN (Health Environment Agriculture and Village Education Network) Vedaranyam

HEAVEN, NGO has collaborated with ADB–TEAP (Tsunami Emergency Assistance Project) since July 2006 to support the Tsunami affected marginal Salt Producer’s Federations in Vedaranyam. The NGO collaborated with Vedaranyam Town Panchayat and played facilitative and supportive roles to strengthen the Marginal Salt Producers Association. They have taken up interventions like capacity building to the Marginal Salt producers Federations and salt workers, forming SHGs, grading of SHGs for revolving fund support, monitoring various support given to SHGs like iodization of salt plants. They have formed 51 women SHGs in the ADB supported project and have strengthened their capacity. The interventions towards improving the workers conditions in salt pans to be addressed and the problem of marketing of marginal producer’s salt to be addressed for regular market and price.

Anusuya Foundation for Women and Children, Chennai

Anusuya Foundation for women and children was established in 2002. It seeks to serve the cause of under privileged women and children of India. More particularly it seeks to work in the field of child labour, bonded labour, trafficking in human beings, helping women and children in situations of violence or serious social conflicts, promoting the rehabilitation of those with physical impairment or disability, and to generally promote the rights of women and children as defined in International Charters. It was reported that Anusuya Foundation has highlighted the issues affecting the socio-economic conditions of the salt workers in Marakkanam and has collaborated with the district and other agencies to improve the conditions of the salt workers who are socially marginalized and economically weaker sections. The following issues were highlighted by Anusuya Foundation.

- During the Tsunami relief the lessee got the benefits and not the salt workers.
- Alcoholism among the salt workers is a major problem in Marakkanam which needs to be addressed.
- Need for a residential hostel for the children of scheduled caste salt workers at Marakkanam.
- The serious health problems among the salt workers need to be addressed
- Need to organise better education for the children of salt workers.
- Iodization of salt should be improved in Marakkanam.
- Cooperative society for salt workers/salt producers are failures and need to be looked into for corrective measures.
- Unequal wages for men and women paid in salt works at Marakkanam.
- The prevalence of oppressive lease system in salt industry should be studied and corrected.

The Anusuya Foundation for Women and Children has conducted household survey for nine hundred and thirty five households. They were analyzed by the study team and the findings are incorporated in to the study. The Foundation needs to work on a mission mode to address the issues of salt workers in Marakkanam and the organization needs to bring in resources and expertise to work on the issues in the field.
Women’s Collective – Tutucorin

Women’s Collective has its Head Office at Chennai and is working with women with the objective of creating awareness among women on their rights, children’s rights and unorganized sector labour rights; empowering them and ensuring their participation in local governance. They made their presence in Tutucorin after the Tsunami and have organized women into SHGs and are doing developmental interventions. They have selected 60 women from their SHGs and provided soft loans to the tune of 8 lakh for taking lease lands from Gandhi-Irvin Association (women producers). The women have leased about 60 acres of salt pans and they are the owners. It was reported that the women are earning a good income from the salt to take care of their family needs and children education and health.

12.3 Experiences from Other Models – Gujarat:

Gujarat is the largest producer of salt in India and ranking 2nd highest exporter in the world. The interventions made by NGOs and Networks, Government and Industries are collected through secondary data, discussions with some of the interveners and from the notes of the UNTRS team. The interventions made by Gujarat for the salt workers and salt industries are summarised as below:

Government of Gujarat has formed an Empowered Committee under Industry Department for policy support to salt industry and salt workers. It helped to give special attention to address the problems and issues faced by the salt pan workers and salt industries. The GOG, NGOs and the Salt Industries carried out many activities to address the issues faced by the salt workers and the industry, which are listed as below:

Education
- Scholarship for Salt Worker’s Children
- School Buses for Salt Worker’s Children
- Provision of Computers, Chair and Tables for Salt Workers Children
- Additional rooms in primary schools
- Education for Disable Children

Health
- Health Infrastructure – Fecko Machine for eye care of Salt Workers

Housing and related Support
- Electricity supply to houses constructed for salt workers
- Solar lights in houses constructed for Salt Workers
- Shopping Centre in housing schemes of Salt Workers

Work place Advancement
- Tools and equipments library to enhance access of salt workers to tools and equipments
- Protective tool kits for Salt Workers
- Temporary houses for Salt Workers
- Cycles to Salt Workers
Drinking Water
- Pipeline for drinking water – besides Water Supply through mobile tanks
- Provision of underground drinking water storage tanks

Salt Work related
- Revolving fund support for Salt Production activity
- Quality Testing laboratory for Salt Workers
- Technical training to salt workers in collaboration with CSMRI
- Installation of stainless steel submersible pumps (being corrosion and rust free) in Salt Pans
- Metal road to rail track

Alternate and Diversified Livelihoods
- Revolving fund support
- Market linkages for diversified livelihood products

Social Services
- Schools (Balwadis) for children of Salt Workers; Appointing teachers on priority basis
- Mobile Fair Price Shops – Distribution of Ration Cards and Supply through Mobile Vans
- Mobile Health Care Facility
- Mobile Drinking Water Facility – Water Tank
- Houses for Salt Worker Families

Disaster Preparedness
- Multi purpose Shelter – Prepared for Natural Calamities, Rest Place and to function as Balwadi/Anganwadi
- Warning system for Natural Calamities

Infrastructure
- Roads for salt units
- Assistance for Electricity facility
- Jetty

Others
- Census of salt workers
- Facilitating formation of District Level Association of Salt workers – CBOs

AHRM (Agariya Hith Rakshak Manch):

AHRM is a network of voluntary organizations and concerned individuals advocating for the rights of the salt pan workers and marginal salt producers. The network has a major representation of salt pan workers and marginal producers on its board of management. The importance of such a network could possibly be stressed further as it plays a very important role in advocacy for salt workers in Gujarat. AHRM is an active member in the High Level Empowered Committee. They carry out many educational, health and advocacy related activities as below:

- Awareness generation through Radio, CD and cassettes;
- Effective use of Right to Information Act to know movement of Mobile Vans – Healthcare, PDS and Water;
• Multi utility Information Centers at district level. It also provides health and para-legal services;
• Multi stakeholders Consultations.

GANTAR:

The ‘Gantar Model’ of supplementary schools and seasonal hostels for the children of the Agariyas, who are salt pan workers. The scheme has greatly helped the children of salt workers and their family to address the children needs. The scheme details are listed as below:

Education
• Supplementary schools for children between 6 to 10 years to study at place of migration (with linkage with formal school to study in off season)
• Seasonal Hostel for children 10 + to 14 years to stay back in village, when parents migrate and study in formal schools
• Non formal education for school drop outs – to complete education and also vocational training

The Government of Gujarat, with the support of Civil Society Organizations, Salt Industries, has done targeted interventions to Salt Pan Workers and contributed to address the issues and problems that affect the life and the livelihoods of the marginalised Salt workers in Gujarat.

SEWA – NGO experience in Gujarat:

The NGO - SEWA has been organizing salt workers since 1990. Currently around 15,000 salt workers have been organized by SEWA in Surendranagar district of Gujarat. Based on a study conducted by SEWA on the living and working conditions of the salt workers, the major interventions for salt workers based on their immediate needs are:
• Operating 35 child care centers for the children, where around 1440 children are attended to from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.
• Operating 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.
• 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.
12.4 Conclusion – Development Support for Salt Workers and VMSP

The review of various government programs, other civil society-led initiatives, it is clear that there are a number of small, sporadic initiatives that have been taken on the field, to address various issues related to salt workers and MSPs. There has been increased focus of the organisations on salt work in Tamil Nadu post-tsunami. It is now important that these initiatives be streamlined, coordinated and synchronized well so that the issues related to salt workers and VMSPs are effectively addressed. The learning from Gujarat has been useful to design interventions. There seems to be clear roles emerging for all the following stakeholders in making these development initiatives efficient and effective:

(a) **Salt Commissioners Office at various levels** – devising workers-centric policies, sensitisation of industries and leaseholders, regulating and ensuring the delivery of these welfare measures and creating enabling environment (among CSO, industry, associations, etc.) to enable effective delivery of coordinated programs. Need to undertake a census to ensure that all workers and VMSPs are identified and incorporated in the list, ensuring that they obtain identity cards which is the most important tool for accessing various entitlements

(b) **Lease holders and Factories** – ensuring that the welfare measures reach the target group effectively; facilitating the process, reporting to SCO on progress of these

(c) **Civil Society Organisations/ NGOs** – awareness and demand creation at the salt workers and VMSPs; capacity building, building their voice and ensuring effective response through sensitisation of key stakeholders in government, lease holders, factories, etc.; facilitating access to entitlements

(d) **Associations, Trade Unions, CBOs** – facilitating communities to ensure program benefits flow to them effectively; negotiating with stakeholders; being an effective bridge between communities and stakeholders; undertaking few programs related to area and sectoral level work

(e) **Line Departments and District Administration**: To extend the social development and other welfare programs to the salt workers and VMSPs. Incorporating this as a segment while planning, programming and monitoring and evaluation.

(f) **Resource Centres and Academic Institutions**: To include salt industry one of their areas of research, information collection and sharing, so that the issues related to salt workers and VMSPs are systematically assessed and shared widely.

(g) **UNTRS/ UNDP/ UNICEF and other similar organisations**: Sectoral level coordination, information sharing and undertaking research and development that can help in developing technologies and processes that can make the salt workers and VMSP living and working conditions better.

(h) **State Level Committee**

(i) **Network of NGOs**
13. Environmental Aspects

Coastal environment plays a vital role in nation's economy by virtue of the resources, productive habitats and rich biodiversity. India has a coastline of about 7,500 kms. The coastline of Tamil Nadu has a length of about 1076 kms constitutes about 15% of the total coastal length of India and stretches along the Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea.

The study team interacted with different development agencies, NGOs, communities in Tamil Nadu and brought out the following things related to environmental aspects in Salt pans in the coastal areas:

a) The salt pans are in existence for a long time. In general the coastal areas do not have adequate potable underground water for drinking purpose. The underground water in most of the open wells and the bore wells close to the salt pans are salty in taste. It can not be attributed to the existence to salt pans.

b) Many opine that the Agriculture land is getting affected in the coastal areas due to intrusion of salt water in to agriculture land. This is not due to the existence of salt pans.

c) Also, there are very few literatures relating to study of Impact of Salt Pans on Nearby Environment. Even Assessment Study of Department of Environment, Govt of Tamil Nadu has no reference to environment impact of Salt Pans.

A Study of Salt pan Increment in Gulf of Cambay, Gujarat using GIS has thrown some light on the environmental impact due to salt pans. The study is summarized as below:

Initially, salt farms started close to tidal creeks from where seawater could be pumped in and spread over large tracts. When the plains near to tidal creeks were no more available, lands a little farther were also bought up for salt farming. The 50 m aquifer was known to be salty while the deeper one was better and potable. Pumps are set up to draw water from the shallow aquifer and the groundwater replaced the tidal water in many salt farms.

As more and more water was drawn from the under ground over the years, the ground water turned saltier and even the deeper layers turned salty. The 250-mg/L chloride isoline migrated miles away from the coast and people adapted themselves to drinking water with high chloride.

In many villages near the coast, even that water became unavailable. Now, every drop of water has a pinch more of salt. It was also observed from ground truthing that in 'Bhavnagar bhal' (Bhavnagar dry lands), agriculture is nearly non-existent.

It was also observed that there are changes in land use and land cover of this region. Mangrove showed increasing trend from 1995-2000 and then decreased in 2001. Conditions are ideal for mangrove afforestation in Bhavnagar and in 2003 it showed growth of 28 Sq. Km. Salt pans have increased area over the years 1995 to 2003. The area showed increase in agricultural land with reclaimed mud flats.
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It is summarized that the salt pans in the long run will have environmental implications such as salination of groundwater leading to shortage of drinking water and salination of agriculture land.

Implications of Coastal Zone Management Notification:

CZM notification would replace the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) 1991, under Environment (Protection) Act 1986. CZM builds on experience of implementation of CRZ and emphasizes on ensuring that the livelhoods of coastal populations are not unduly hampered. This implies that the notification focuses on the livelihood interests of Salt Workers and Marginal Salt Producers, who are considered to be one of the most vulnerable amongst the coastal communities. The notification has put “Salt Pans” in the list of activities requiring access to shore line. However, a close look at the proposed notification reveals quite different scenario:

- Along with Salt Pans, there are host of other activities including beach tourism that is in the list of activities requiring access to shore lines. Tourism and industrial activities are likely to compete with Salt Pans i.e. conversion of lease hold salt pans (during renewal of lease) to other economically promising activities.

- Construction of Sea Walls has been advocated as a key strategy to protect coastal zones. This is likely to affect access to sea water/brine for salt production.

- Although there are several areas classified under CMZ1 and CMZ2, Salt Pans which depend on – large area of land has not been exclusively put under any category. This could be put under CMZ2, as typically Salt Pans are nothing but extension of sea shore.

- CZM defines Set Back Line (like Vulnerability Line/Hazard Line) that would help in restricting new activities after the Set Back Line (towards the sea). There are six parameters that would be taken into account in delineating the Set Back Line. Although the new notification is concerned about livelhoods of Coastal Communities, availability of Salt Pans (purely a sea based activity) is not considered as a parameter for deciding Set Back Line. This implies that many Salt Pans which are slightly away from the sea will have to compete with other activities for land, which would be allowed after Set Back Line. This may also affect Salt Producing Units drawing saline ground water for salt production that may not be close to sea.

- There is a proposal to set up a National Board for Sustainable Coastal Zone Management. However, in the composition of board, there is no representation relating to Marine Salt Sector.

This is only a quick interpretation of implications of proposed CZM Notification on Salt Industry with focus on Salt Workers and Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers. There would be need for detail consultation and studies to take up advocacy efforts to protect the interest of Salt Workers & Marginal Salt Producers. Based on the above interpretations, some of the advocacy efforts that could be immediately taken up are:
• Representation of Salt Workers Federation, SCO Office, Salt Workers Union and Salt Industry (may be by rotation) in proposed National Board

• Set Back Line could be drawn where existing/potential Salt Pan activities ends – need to be included as a parameter to decide Set Back Line

• Salt Pans to be in the list of under CMZ2

• Legal measures that lease hold salt pans can only be again leased out as salt pans (would protect salt pans being converted for other use)

Provision of alternate strategy other than sea walls (or appropriate technical measures) to not to affect access to sea water/brine for salt industry could be thought of.
14. Conclusion

The results of this rapid assessment reveal that a large numbers of people involved at the salt production in the salt value chain, live in an extremely serious working and living conditions, leaving them in a cycle of poverty and vulnerability. The situation reflects very high levels of violation of human and labour rights of these people. The conditions of the women and children among these communities are serious areas of concern.

The study identified the following profiles of people as the most marginalised and vulnerable segments of stakeholders in the Salt Value Chain in Tamil Nadu: (a) Salt Workers – who are engaged as labourers in the salt pans, by lease/ sub-lease holders and factories (b) Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers – are those who produce salt in areas less than one acre of land, obtained through lease/ sub-lease. In this category, the entire household puts in labour in their own/ leased land. (The study has defined this category as Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers, different from regular Marginal Salt Producers, as they are most vulnerable among the MSPs, who operate in salt pans even up to 10 acres). These workers and VMSPs operate at the bottom of the value chain, providing the critical base work and contribution to the entire value chain processes.

The study estimates that the numbers of salt workers in the state would be in the range of 60,000. Of which, about 40,000 work directly in salt pans, and the balance work in loading, packing and transport activities in the value chain. These labourers are spread out in the salt producing areas of Tamil Nadu, with 93% being in two locations – Vedaranyam and Tutucorin. This estimate is higher than that of the SCO office.

An analysis of the socio-economic profiles of the salt workers and VMSP reveal that most (over 70% in all these areas studied) are from the socially disadvantaged groups, i.e. Scheduled Castes. The incomes of the household are in the range of Rs. 10,000 per annum, with both husband and wife working on the salt pan. The work has is mainly seasonal, with very little/ no option for off-season alternate livelihoods. Indebtedness is at a very high level, with the interest rates being in the range of 60% per annum, with most accessing credit from informal sources. With the level of indebtedness and the incomes, most workers and VMSP families are entangled in debt trap. There seems to be an unsaid bonded labour in many workers families. In a few locations, child labour is reported, particularly in the packing and transportation of salt. There is discrimination in the wages paid to women compared to men for the similar kind of work undertaken.

The dwelling places of the salt workers and VMSPs are usually isolated as they are settlements (looks more temporary and kutcha houses) in the periphery of the salt pan areas. Access to services (particularly sanitary, drinking water) and basic needs are extremely poor.

In terms of working conditions, the processes followed in Tamil Nadu are highly primitive and involves intensive manual labour, in very hot and windy conditions for most part of the day. Most workers have problems related to eye sight due to reflections of sunlight from the salt crystals. There are also many reported cases of skin diseases, urinary infections and even abortion of foetus, reportedly due to tremendous heat and standing continuously in salt water. Most become invalid even before they reach the age of 55, due to their hazardous nature of the
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work. There are no places for taking rest and even those which are constructed by the salt department are being used by large producers for storage and other purposes.

The labourers get into the salt pans very early in the morning; the children are left behind without any support or care. It can be widely observed among children skin infections, running nose, and symptoms of malnutrition.

The salt pan work is considered as menial. Most workers are from the socially disadvantaged sections of the society. Due to lack of other opportunities, low education levels and less accessibility and exposure, most continue the salt work.

There are few efforts towards building social institutions and processes for self-help. There are associations and unions which are mostly political and leave out workers and VMSP. The development interventions have been isolated and sporadic, with support coming in recently after tsunami.

The awareness of Government schemes and level of access of these are extremely low among salt workers. The actors in the value chain, i.e. lease holders, do not necessarily pass on information and help these workers to avail their entitlements. Moreover, salt being considered as an industry, the policies and priorities are mostly industry related (on productivity and efficiency) and very little that are workers’-centric.

Apart from these vulnerabilities, the industry is also highly disaster-prone, as these are located along the coastal areas. It experiences frequent threats of cyclones and high tidal waves, and the recent one being tsunami. The disaster preparedness measures are not in place. Even when the tsunami rehab measures were taken, reportedly large quantum these benefits were availed by lease holders and large producers and very little/ no benefits reached the workers. Most workers reportedly were without the work for almost 6-8 months.

There is very little understanding of issues related to salt workers and VMSPs, including the numbers. There seems to be high stakes in keeping the information confidential in the value chain and keep these communities less exposed to outside world. There are reportedly monopolies and cartels, particularly at the traders and lease-holder level. This lack of information along with the stakes to keep them confidential is making the salt workers and VMSPs highly marginalised. Unless there are efforts to address these immediately, the subsequent generations too are likely to fall in to this poverty and vulnerability trap.

The review of various government programs and the civil society-led initiatives, it is clear that there are a number of small, sporadic initiatives that have been taken on the field, to address various issues related to salt workers and MSPs. The Gujarat Model of interventions by Government, NGOs, Networks, Industries and government initiatives have given experiences on how to address some of the critical issues and problems of salt pan workers. It is very clear that unless Government give high priority as it was done by Gujarat and supported by the civil society and industries initiative, the issues and problems can not be addressed in a holistic manner. There has been increased focus of the organisations on salt work in Tamil Nadu post-tsunami. It is now important that these initiatives be streamlined, coordinated and synchronized well so that the issues related to salt workers and VMSPs are effectively addressed. There seems to be clear roles emerging for all the various stakeholders in making these development initiatives efficient and effective. These are discussed further in the subsequent sections.
The study team recommends that some of the Gujarat experiences on improving the salt workers could be followed in Tamil Nadu. They are: a) Need to set up an Empowered Committee at the state Level for policy support to take up all the issues of salt pan workers in Tamil Nadu; b) there is scope for organizing Network of NGOs to work on salt pan workers issues through advocacy and lobbying at various levels. Many issues and problems related to health, education, housing, work place advancement, drinking water, Social services to workers, infrastructure; c) conduct of Census for the enumeration of Salt Workers etc could be taken up in a similar way as it was done in Gujarat.

An exposure visit with selected representatives of NGOs, Government line departments, Salt Industries and the staff of Deputy Commissioner’s of Salt, Chennai office could be carried out. By doing this the potential stakeholders can be motivated to learn from experiences; understand the methods, procedures and details of interventions made by Gujarat Government, NGOs and Net works and Salt Industries for addressing the problems and issues of salt workers in TN.

15. Preliminary Intervention Design

Based on field assessment of the situation of salt workers and marginal salt producers in the state of Tamil Nadu and further consultations with variety of stakeholders, the study team of Vrutti suggests the following as a possible intervention design, with a view to improve the socio-economic conditions of the salt workers in Tamil Nadu.

The main target group for support in the salt value chain would be the Salt Workers and the Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers, who operate within 1 acre of saltpans. These two profiles are highly marginalised and vulnerable to household shocks and disasters.

The study team suggests the following goal and purpose of a possible holistic intervention in the state of Tamil Nadu:

Overall Goal:
Improved quality of life of Salt Workers and Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers in Tamil Nadu

Objective of the Intervention:
Salt Workers and Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers have safe, secured and sustainable livelihood and are able to ascertain their rights and entitlements

Key areas identified for support are:
- Workplace based interventions
- Household level interventions
- Society/ area level interventions
- Sectoral level interventions

A preliminary intervention design is given in the next two pages.
**Goal**

**Objective**

**Focus**

**Key Strategies**

- Rights based empowerment approach - Voice and Response, Creating demand through awareness, collectivisation, and effective response through sensitisation and linkages
- Synergising strengths and efforts - govt., civil society, community organisations and industry - People-Public-Private Partnership
- Field interventions; simultaneously efforts and policy and planning levels
- Integrated approach; comprehensive interventions; building on existing strengths and bases
- Value chain approach to involve key stakeholders, with focus on salt workers and marginal producers (inclusive approach)
- Learning from other models; adaptation
- Combination of technology, social and management processes

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**Levels of Intervention**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of interventions</th>
<th>Salt Work Related</th>
<th>Household Level - Social and Economic</th>
<th>Area/ Cluster level Interventions/ Support</th>
<th>Sectoral level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Off-season ALH</td>
<td>- Credit - Savings - Insurance</td>
<td>- Health - Education - Housing in linkages with govt. and others village level service providers</td>
<td>- Insurance - CBDRM</td>
<td>- Critical infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial services</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Sensitive policy, programs and actors towards salt - long term leasing - effective imp of schemes - platforms/ forums - Min assured price - ID Cards - NREGA - Dist Admin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic Services</td>
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<td>- Roads - Drinking water - Sanitation through linkages</td>
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<td>Social Protection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- CBOs - Federations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>- Community org and networks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Infrastructure and services that are critical</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- CBOs - Federations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocacy &amp; Coordination</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Critical infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tech R&amp;D KM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Sensitive policy, programs and actors towards salt - long term leasing - effective imp of schemes - platforms/ forums - Min assured price - ID Cards - NREGA - Dist Admin</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Adapt tech, customise</td>
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**Improved quality of life of the Salt Workers and Marginal Salt Producers**

**Salt workers and Marginal Salt Producers have safe, secured and sustainable livelihood and are able to ascertain their rights and realise entitlements**

**Salt workers and Marginal Salt Producers and their Families spread across in Tamil Nadu**
Key strategies suggested by the study team are:

- Rights-based empowerment approach:
- Synergizing strengths and efforts through People-Public-Private Partnerships models
- Field interventions at the grass root level (such as collectivisation, household level awareness, services, etc.), and simultaneously taking up larger sectoral work at the state level (such as census, technology development, etc.)
- Integrated approach where interventions are comprehensive (all areas of support), building on existing strength of the people and institutions
- Value chain approach to involve various stakeholders, rather than excluding/working against the chain. It is important to make the value chain work for the marginalised; making it a ‘inclusive value chain’
- There needs to be locally appropriate technologies and provide space for adaptation/adoption at the field level.
- Important learn from other models, particularly Gujarat and other development interventions
- There needs to be a combination of technology, social and management processes going together to make this happens, rather than isolated interventions.

A logical framework for the UNDP/UNTRS is developed based on these inputs.

### Preliminary Logical Framework for the Intervention for UNDP/UNTRS

**Embedded Logframe, with LFAs of Field Based CSOs Contributing to Achievement of Result 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Intervention Logic</th>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td><strong>Goal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved quality of life of salt workers and vulnerable marginal salt producers in Tamil Nadu</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td><strong>Purpose/ Objective</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Salt workers and Vulnerable Marginal Salt Producers have safe, secured and sustainable livelihood and are able to ascertain their rights and realise entitlements</td>
<td>Substantial increase in proportion (from baseline) of SW and VMSP reporting - access to quality basic services; increase in household incomes</td>
<td>Outcome Studies of the program, Case Studies, Independent situation assessments</td>
<td>- Occurrence of natural &amp; man made disasters could adversely affect benefits on a large scale</td>
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<td>Sustainable community based organisations and networks of SW and VMSP addressing needs of these group and representing in policy forums and govt-industry platforms</td>
<td>Government orders and notifications</td>
<td>- Macro economic and market related policies and factors could affect saleability of products and margins</td>
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<td>Government, salt industries and other stakeholders have enabling policies in favour of SW and VMSPs</td>
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<td>- Community level disturbances that could affect relationships and work on the field</td>
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<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Intervention Logic</td>
<td>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</td>
<td>Means of Verification</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 1   | Field based intervention models effectively addressing the critical needs of Salt workers and marginal salt producers (at workplace, household and area level) through rights based approach demonstrated in three locations in Tamil Nadu (see embedded LFAs) | Field based models in three locations achieving their Purpose | Monitoring and end-of-project reports of the field interventions | - Community level disturbances that could affect relationships and work on the field  
- Occurrence of natural & man made disasters could adversely affect benefits on a large scale |
|     |                   | The processes and outcomes of these models documented and disseminated to stakeholders | Periodical reviews by UNDP and the SC Office | |
| 2   | Policies and actions of stakeholders including govt. donors, UN agencies, private companies influenced in favour of these marginalized communities, at various levels (district, state and national) | Numbers, types and levels of organisations and issues related to SW and VMSP raised through various platforms by UNDP/UNTRS | Program monitoring documents | - Same as above |
|     |                   | Field actions undertaken by these agencies, facilitated by UNDP/UNTRS | Workshop Reports/ meeting minutes | |
| 3   | Technological options (through new and adaptive) for improving working conditions of salt workers developed and disseminated | Numbers and types of problems of SW and VMSP addressed through technological solutions | Program monitoring documents | - Same as above |
|     |                   | Numbers of SW and VMSPs accessing these and benefiting using these solutions in the field models | Workshop Reports/ minutes | |
|     |                   | Numbers and types of other agencies incorporating these solutions for the improvement of conditions of SW and VMSP | Reports from other agencies | |
| 4   | Comprehensive, accurate and up-to-date knowledge base on the salt industry in Tamil Nadu and the country developed and available for any stakeholder for use | Numbers and types of issues related to SW and VMSP on which knowledge sources are developed | Program monitoring documents | - Same as above |
|     |                   | Numbers and types of media in which these information in available | Information sources (such as website, CD, publications, etc.) | |
|     |                   | Numbers, types of organisations and their satisfaction levels in using these knowledge | User satisfaction studies | |
## Situation Analysis of Salt Workers in Tamil Nadu and Developing
### Project Outline for Improving their Socio-Economic Status – Dec 07

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Intervention Logic (Period of about two years)</th>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Field based intervention models</td>
<td>1.1 Finalization of field intervention models and scale within UNDP/UNTRS</td>
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<td>1.2 Advertisement, selection and approval of field based interventions</td>
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<td>1.3 Situation assessments and community level planning by field org.</td>
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<td>1.4 Finalization of project plans, with outcomes and budgets</td>
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<td>1.5 Field implementation of the work as per plans</td>
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<td>1.6 Periodical visits and reviews by UNDP/UNTRS, with others stakeholders</td>
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<td>1.7 Experience sharing (peer learning) among field interventions</td>
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<td>1.8 Evaluation of the field interventions</td>
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<td>1.9 Documentation of experiences</td>
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<td>1.10 Dissemination of field experiences through workshops, publications</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Advocating and coordinating for policy influencing</td>
<td>2.1 Deciding on the areas of policy influencing (long-term lease, inclusion in NREGA, minimum assured prices, ID cards, Census, etc.)</td>
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<td>2.2 Preparation of adequate documents to support areas for policy influencing</td>
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<td>2.3 Meeting, workshops and other methods to highlight these issues</td>
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<td>2.4 Research/ studies as required to build evidences</td>
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<td>2.5 Follow up with each agency to move towards implementing the actions</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Technologies for improving workplace</td>
<td>3.1 Identifying areas for improving workplace - based on local needs and priorities</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3.2 Scouting for technologies - for adaption or developing new technologies</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3.3 Developing or customisation of technologies</td>
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<td>3.4 Field trials for technologies, including the social processes</td>
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<td>3.5 Review of results and updating technologies</td>
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<td>3.6 Training agencies on the new/ adapted technologies</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3.7 Documentation of processes, technologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Knowledge management on Salt Industry</td>
<td>4.1 Information needs assessment at various levels -- community to govt.</td>
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<td>4.2 Collation of existing information, checking their validity</td>
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<td>4.3 Identifying gaps and collecting new information</td>
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<td>4.4 Developing various stakeholder-friendly materials for sharing information</td>
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<td>4.5 Creating websites, publications, platforms for sharing, etc.</td>
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<td>4.6 Periodical updates</td>
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<td>4.7 Building capacities and providing tools at various levels for sustaining knowledge accretion and sharing</td>
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</table>

### Embedded LFA for Field Based Models - Contributing to Result 1 of the Program LFA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Intervention Logic</th>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Objective</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Salt workers and Marginal Salt Producers in the project area (Tutucorin, Vedaranyam and Marakkanam) have safe, secured and sustainable livelihood and are able to ascertain their rights and realise entitlements</td>
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### Key Results

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Intervention Logic</th>
<th>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
<th>Assumptions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Enhanced and safe livelihoods of salt pan workers and marginal salt producers through essential inputs and services at the workplace</td>
<td>Proportion of salt pans that have all basic facilities to ensure safe livelihoods for VMSP and SW.</td>
<td>Program monitoring documents, Interviews with key stakeholders</td>
<td>- Community level disturbances that could affect relationships and work on the field, - Occurrence of natural &amp; man made disasters could adversely affect benefits on a large scale</td>
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<td>Proportion and type of salt workers accessing these services (protective gears, rest house, site utilities, water, sanitation, etc.)</td>
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<td>Community based mechanism for monitoring and ensuring these in the project area functioning effectively</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Income sources diversified; standard and regular income ensured through existing and alternative livelihood options</td>
<td>Numbers and types of diversified income sources identified, for different categories of communities</td>
<td>Program monitoring documents, Interviews with key stakeholders</td>
<td>- Same as above</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Numbers and types of diversified income sources adopted by communities, and levels of income</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Numbers and types of strategies adopted by SW and VMSP to improve their income from salt pans; and level of improvement in their income</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Sustainable access to financial and support services for enterprise promotion and business development opportunities (through linkages)</td>
<td>Numbers and types of financial and other supports identified, for different categories of communities and made available</td>
<td>Program monitoring documents, Interviews with key stakeholders</td>
<td>- Same as above</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Level of access to these services by SW and VMSPs</td>
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<td>Benefits arising out of use of these services (access to credit, reduced cost, etc.)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Effective and sustainable CBOs and networks exists and functional addressing the issues of salt workers and marginal producers in a sustainable way</td>
<td>Existence of at least one CBO of SW and VMSP in each salt pan area and their collective at district level</td>
<td>Program monitoring documents, Interviews with key stakeholders</td>
<td>- Same as above</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Types of issues addressed by these CBOs and solved in favour of them</td>
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<td>Representation of CBO members in various forums within Govt., industry, etc.</td>
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As given earlier, the work is extremely difficult, complex and there needs to be multiple skills and expertise coming together to make this happen. The work has to be taken up at different levels – grass root, district, state and national level. The SCO, other line departments of the government, industry, CSOs and organisations such as UNDP/UNTRS need to come together to take this forward.

It is impractical to undertake all these at one go. It is suggested that the work is taken up in phases, with a few areas taken for piloting to learn and move forward. The study team suggests that in the pilot phase for about a year or so, two levels of operations could be taken up:

In two to three clusters of villages where large numbers of salt workers present, i.e. Tutucorin, Vedaranyam and Marakkanam – commission interventions related to household level, area level and workplace level in the design given above. The stakeholders need to involved could be the department, industry and leaseholders, CSOs and the workers. The work will involve collectivisation, awareness building, household level financial services and linkages at one level and working with lease holders, and government to sensitise and work together to deliver services better.

At the state level, SCO can initiate the process of census and issue of identity cards for the salt workers. Initiatives related to coordination among stakeholders in these clusters would be important. UNDP/UNTRS can work towards identifying and developing technologies that are workers-centric, undertake policy research that could help workers and develop resources for future use. Support of agencies such as UNICEF to address the issues of child labour both at the field level through the field based model and also at the state level would be very useful. Dissemination of the information so far obtained and that come out from the pilot initiatives would be an important task to replicate the processes within and outside the state.

Based on learning from these pilot initiatives, the stakeholders can plan for future course of action. The learning from these could also provide some important pointers for salt workers initiatives in other areas, but also for unorganized industry labourers in other industries too.
16. Annexure – Study Team CVs

**Adviser: N. Raghunathan**

Post graduation in management (IRMA) and Bachelor of Agriculture Engineering, having more than fifteen years experience in the development sector; twelve in consulting, research, capacity building and implementation of development projects / programmes; has worked closely with national and international research institutions such as National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI), International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), IIM, Natural Resources Institute (NRI) in an action research programme in Andhra Pradesh. Has led/ managed many assignments with variety of agencies – World Bank, UN agencies, State Governments, NGOs, community based organisations, international non-governmental organisations, etc; Founder Director of Catalyst Management Services, a consulting and research firm; and founder Director of Catalyst Development Initiatives (CDI) that houses Vrutti Livelihood Resource Centre (focusing on NRM, micro small and medium enterprises, work place advancement). Core focus areas are: livelihoods, development research and program management. Specialist in strategic and business planning; Domain experience includes natural resource management, micro finance, enterprises, health and disaster management.

**Team Member: Jangal Jayaram**

Post graduation in Cooperation with specialization in rural credit, rural credit institutions & management and has done General Management Programme in IRMA; more than twenty five years of experience in the development sector; six years as programme coordinator in a project support and management unit of Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation an Inter-cooperation in their Natural Resource Management Project Karnataka State; Has 15 years experience in working with a large NGO - MYRADA and involved in project planning, implementation and assessment of different development projects in the three southern states of India; Four years of experiences in Agriculture Man Ecology (AME) in promoting sustainable agriculture practices through NGOs and Networks in the rainfed areas of Southern India. Has led/managed many assignments with variety of agencies – UN agencies, State Governments, National and International NGOs, Community Based Organizations etc. Currently working as Manager, Vrutti Livelihood Resource Centre and leading/managing livelihood related assignments and projects. Core management focus areas are: baseline studies, project planning and management, monitoring, and impact assessment studies. Domain experience includes natural resources management, micro finance, micro enterprises, community based organizations and networks.

**Team Member: G.H. Manuel**

Post graduation in business management and Bachelor of agriculture Engineering, having more than ten years experience in the development sector, working with non-governmental, community-based and consultancy organizations in bilateral, multilateral and government supported projects in India. Involved in implementation, action research, capacity building and management support assignments and has used result-based management principles and tools in development projects; has served as a team member in many assignments with various organizations – UN agencies, National and International NGOs, Community Based Organizations and their networks. Areas of expertise include Situation Needs Assessment Studies, Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Institutional Appraisals, Organization
Development, Field Research and Data Management. Thematic expertise includes livelihood and sexual & reproductive health.

**Team Member: N. Johnson Thangaraj**

Graduation in Agricultural Engineering, having more than ten years experience in the development sector, working with non-governmental, community-based and consultancy organizations in bilateral, multilateral and government supported projects in India. Involved in implementation, action research, capacity building and management support assignments and has used result-based management principles and tools in development projects; has served as a team member in many assignments with various organizations – UN agencies, National and International NGOs, Community Based Organizations and their networks. Areas of expertise include Situation Needs Assessment Studies, Project Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Institutional Appraisals, Organization Development, Field Research and Data Management. Thematic expertise includes livelihood and sexual & reproductive health.

**Team Member: Jitesh Panda**

He has over 14 years of experience of working in the areas of livelihood promotion mainly in India. He has long experience of directly planning and implementing livelihoods related interventions with the community. He has been also supporting different development focused organizations including Government, International NGOs, Bilateral & Multi Lateral Organizations in the field of Livelihoods and Micro Finance. Different thematic areas in which he has worked in the past includes Disaster Management, Micro enterprise Development, micro Finance, Sustainable Agriculture, Watershed Development and Participatory Irrigation Management. He has been involved in different aspects of project management including planning, designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. He has also been a trainer in micro Finance and also facilitated workshops relating to livelihoods and micro Finance in India. Besides this he has been involved several feasibility studies and sector focused studies that has contributed to policy and planning processes.

He is currently working as Senior Consultant with Vrutti Livelihoods Resource Centre, Bangalore (part of Catalyst Group). Prior to joining Catalyst Group; he co founded Shristi – a State level NGO focusing on micro Finance and Livelihood issues in Orissa and worked in Vikash – a State Level NGO in Orissa. He has hands on experience of understanding livelihood issues and designing/implementing livelihood projects. Jitesh has studied Post Graduation in Rural Management from Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA), with background in Fishery Science from Orissa University of Agriculture & Technology (OUAT).
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For further information contact UNDP
Apex towers, 4th floor, No. 54, 2nd Main road, R A Puram, Chennai - 600 028, India