

**REPORT  
OF  
THE SAURASHTRA SALT WORKS LABOUR  
ENQUIRY COMMITTEE  
1952**



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1955

## PERSONNEL OF THE COMMITTEE.

Shri H. V. Trivedi.	Ex-M. L. A. (Saurashtra).	Chairman.
Shri B. V. Desai.	M. L. A. (Saurashtra).	Member.
Shri. C. G. Dave.	Industry and Supply Department, Government of Saurashtra.	Member.
Shri. M. B. Dave.	Assistant Commissioner of Labour, Government of Saurashtra.	Secretary.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY.

#### 1. *Appointment of the Committee.*

This Committee which has come to be known as the Saurashtra Salt Works Labour Enquiry Committee was appointed by the Government of Saurashtra by Resolution No. LAB/1-14/A dated the 9th November, 1951 of the Industries and Commerce Department (Labour) with the following personnel:-

Shri Harshadray V. Trivedi	Ex-M. L. A. (Saurashtra)	Chairman.
Shri Bhupatray V. Desai.	M. L. A. (Saurashtra)	Member.
Shri Chunilal G. Dave.	Industry & Supply Department, Govt. of Saurashtra.	Member.
Shir M. B. Dave	Asstt. Commissioner of Labour, Govt. of Saurashtra.	Secretary.

#### 2. *Terms of reference.*

The said resolution defined the scope of the work of the Committee in the following terms:-

“Attention of Government being drawn to the present Working conditions in the salt pans, after careful consideration of all the aspects of the question specially in view of the extent of vast areas of salt works, difficult availability of sources of reliefs on the site, situation of the site of the salt works which are far away from means of communications and natural hard conditions of the work, it is felt, a duty is imposed on the Government to find out ways and means for relief and welfare of the workers engaged on the salt pans. Before taking steps in this direction Government thinks that these conditions may be enquired fully by a Committee of Enquiry.

2. Government is therefore pleased to appoint a committee of Enquiry consisting of the following gentlemen:-

- |   |            |
|---|------------|
| (i) Shri Harshadray Trivedi                           | President. |
| (ii) Shri Bhupatray V. Desai.                         | Member.    |
| (iii) Shri Chuni'lal G. Dave.<br>of Industries Deptt. | Member.    |

The Assistant Labour Commissioner, Bhavnagar will act as secretary of the above committee.

3. The Committee shall enquire into, report and make recommendations for the improvement in the existing conditions of labour in various salt works in the State of Saurashtra on the health, efficiency and standard of living of the workers and on the relations obtaining between employers and employed with special reference to-

- (i) Migration and source of labour supply;
- (ii) Employment of workers and its nature;
- (iii) Hours of work and rest interval;
- (iv) Working conditions including provision of health, safety and welfare measures;
- (v) Wages and earnings of workers;
- (vi) Indebtedness of workers;
- (vii) Holidays and leave;
- (viii) Conditions and terms of service including the continuity of service, provident fund, gratuity etc.
- (ix) Housing of workers;
- (x) Working conditions of women and children;
- (xi) Health and welfare of the workers including facilities for the education of workers' children, adult education, medical-aid, recreation etc.

- (xii) Trade unionism;
- (xiii) Industrial relations;
- (xiv) Workmen's compensation and;
- (xv) Maternity benefits "

### *3. Proceedings of the Committee and the issue of Questionnaire.*

The Committee after its formation could not commence its work before the 1st February, 1952 on account of the pre-occupation of the Chairman and a member of the Committee with the general election work. The Committee could start its work only after the end of the general elections in Saurashtra i. e. 1st February, 1952.

The preliminary meeting of the Committee was held on the 29th January, 1952 when the terms of reference and several matters of procedure were discussed. With a view to collect full and upto-date information regarding the conditions of labour prevailing in the salt industry in Saurashtra, the Committee at its second sitting at Dhrangadhra framed a fuller questionnaire concerning matters arising from the terms of reference of the Committee. The questionnaire was issued to about 30 bodies and persons alongwith covering letters. They were all requested to send their replies within a month of the receipt of the questionnaire. A copy of this questionnaire will be found in Appendix I at pages from 131 to 143 of this report.

### *4. Nature of response received.*

Although the questionnaire was issued in the month of February, 1952 we did not receive the replies from the salt works inspite of our pressing reminders and reluctant extension of time until we actually visited the salt works concerned. This delay greatly handicapped our work. The following table contains information regarding the number of bodies and persons addressed and the number of Replies received to the Committee's questionnaire. Most of the bodies and persons to whom the questionnaire was sent have given the replies and in this way a considerable amount of useful information has been collected.

	Gohilwad		Zalawad		Madhya Saurash.		Halar		Sorath.	
	No. add-ressed.	Rep- lies rec- eiv- ed.	No. add-ressed.	Rep- lies rec- eiv- ed.	No. add-ressed.	Rep- lies rec- eiv- ed.	No. add-ressed.	Rep- lies rec- eiv- ed.	No. add-ressed.	Rep- lies rec- eiv- ed.
Salt Manufa- cturers Associations,	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...
Salt Works Trade Unions,	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	1	...	...
Management of the Salt works.	3	3	6	6	4	3	7	4	2	1

### 5. *Visits of the Committee.*

The Committee visited all the principal units of the salt industry in Saurashtra viz. the inland salt works on southern shore of the lesser Rann of Kutch, and the marine salt works on the sea-coast of Saurashtra. The Committee visited the following salt works.

Name of the works.	Place.	District.	Character of the works
1 Sir George Lloyd Salt Works (Kuda Salt Works)	Kuda	Zalawad	Inland.
2 Mahalaxmi Salt works	"	"	
3 Gandhi Salt Works.	Jesda	"	
4 Ambika Salt Mfg Co-op. Society.	"	"	
5 Dehgam Co-op. Society.	Dehgam	"	



6	Bharat Salt Works.	Venasar.	Madhya Saurashtra	Inland
7	Maharaja Salt Works	Lavanpur	Madhya Saurashtra	Marine
8	Maharaja Salt Works	Versamedhi	"	"
9	Malia Salt Works	Maliya	"	"
10	Prabhat Salt Works	Zinzuda	Halar	"
11	Digvijay Salt Works	Jamnagar	"	"
12	Halar Salt & Chemical Ind.	"	"	"
13	Jai Laxmi Salt Works	Nagna	"	"
14	Salt & Allied Chemical Works	Dhu Vav Road	"	"
15	Nawangar Salt & Chemical Industries	Salaya	"	"
16	Bhavnagar Salt & Industrial Works	Bhavnagar	Gohilwad	"
17	Junagadh Salt & Allied. Chemical Works	Bherai	"	"
18	Nawab Sidi Mohmedkhan Salt works	Jafrabad	"	"
19	Saurashtra Salt Mfg. Co.	Porbandar	Sorath	"
20	Saurashtra Salt & Chemicals	Mangrol	"	"

As the salt works are usually working from October to July and the Committee had commended its work only from the month of February, the visits of the Committee to the various units had to be arranged in such a way as to coincide with the period of the manufacturing operations. In view of this the Committee desired to visit all the principal works before the end of the current season and accordingly its programme of visits was planned.

The Committee also visited workmen's quarters of the works and contacted labour in order to have intimate knowledge about their working and living conditions. At some places, we addressed the labour explaining

the scope of the present inquiry bringing home to them the necessity of discipline, greater efficiency and increased production in national interests. Such personal contacts gave confidence and satisfactions to the labour as a whole with the result that it extended its sincere co-operation for which we are grateful. This greatly facilitated our work.

As we felt that it would be useful to us to examine the conditions of life and work existing in the salt works other than those coming within our purview, we visited the Government Salt Works at Kharaghoda and the Tata Chemicals Salt Works at Mithapur, though they fall within the jurisdiction of the Bombay State. The time of our visit to Kharaghoda coincided with that of Sht. S. C. Agarwal, Salt Commissioner, Government of India and so the Committee took an opportunity to meet him and to have his views on the conditions of labour existing in the salt industry in India.

#### *6. Persons examined.*

In absence of the salt manufacturers' association in Saurashtra the Committee examined the representatives of the individual salt works at their places of work. On the side of labour the following two trade unions representing the salt labour were examined (i) The Dhrangadhra Chemical Works Kamdar Sangh, Dhrangadhra (ii) The Saurashtra Salt Works Kamdar Sangh, Jamnagar. Where there was no trade union, the workers selected at random from those of the works were examined on the premises of the works.

We had a meeting with the Deputy Secretary, to the Government of Saurashtra, Industry and Supply Department (Labour) and the Chief Inspector of Factories and Boilers, Government of Saurashtra and discussed with them the questions relating to the applicability of factory, maternity benefit and payment of wages legislation and other allied subjects. We also requested the Deputy Director of Health Services, Government of Saurashtra to undertake an investigation and to submit a report on the incidence and prevalence of occupational diseases in the salt industry which he kindly did. We are grateful to all of these for their valuable assistance.

### *7. Meetings of the Committee and Report.*

In view of the large significance of the tasks set before us we have attempted to make unanimous recommendations as we felt that at this juncture any difference of opinion amongst the Committee might endanger the cause of labour and industrial peace and production of salt. We are glad to say that we have reached full unanimity in all our decisions.

On resuming our task we held two preliminary sittings among ourselves in order to discuss and settle the matters connected with our procedure and programme of the work. Then we visited various salt works with a view to know the conditions of labour existing in those salt works. Finally we held two meetings between ourselves for the purpose of preparing our conclusions and recommendations to be incorporated in our report.

While preparing this report we have kept in view the present state of the salt industry and labour. The report starts with the introductory chapter on the salt industry in Saurashtra and then existing state of labour legislation in the industry is discussed. We have attempted to give the labour conditions prevailing in various salt works in the state in two chapters. We have also discussed the need of enacting a separate labour legislation for the salt industry. We have dealt with in our report all the important aspects of the salt labour and indicated our opinions on all the labour problems of the salt Industry. A summary of our recommendations has been given in the last chapter of this report.

## CHAPTER II

### SALT INDUSTRY IN SAURASHTRA

#### *8. Importance of salt.*

Salt is an essential commodity of daily use for the people at large. It is widely used for food, industry and agriculture. In India the principal use of salt is for domestic consumption and only a small quantity of it is used for the purpose of industry and agriculture. Unlike India in other advanced countries like U. S. A., Russia, U. K. Germany Japan, etc., a large quantity of salt is used for the needs of industry and agriculture apart from its use for food. Its consumption in industries is a general

indication the country has made an industrial progress. In India its use in the industries particularly in chemical industries is growing from day to day with the industrialisation of the country and the increase in population. Out of the total production of salt of 3 million tons, ( 84 million Maunds ) in India 26, 29000 tons ( 7, 15, 92000 Mds-) are used in the country and the remaining is available for export to the foreign countries. The average annual consumption per capita in India is 12 lbs. for human consumption and 2 lbs. for industrial use. As such the salt plays an important part in the national economy of the country.

### *9. History and development of the industry.*

From times immemorial salt was being manufactured in Saurashtra on tidal flats and swampy lands on its 700 miles sea-coast and in the interior on the southern border of the little Rann of Kutch. The salt industry in Saurashtra was flourishing and providing employment to a large number of persons till the beginning of nineteenth century. A mention is found in the books of history regarding the flourishing conditions of this industry and the salt produced in Saurashtra has been highly commended for its quality. Till the beginning of the nineteenth century India was self-sufficient in salt and the salt industry was also in flourishing condition. With the advent of the British rule in India the industry received a set back owing to the policy of the then Government of restricting the manufacture of salt only by the licensees of the Govt. and encouraging its imports from abroad. The industry in Saurashtra disappeared to a large extent at the end of the nineteenth century. Again the last two world wars gave some fillip to this industry and accelerated its development. After the achievement of independence and integration of states, the industry in Saurashtra developed leaps and bounds and contributed to a large extent in making the country self-sufficient in salt. Thus the present salt industry in Saurashtra is of recent development though it has its origin to the ancient times.

Among the principal salt producing states of India Saurashtra is the only state where all the factors essential for the production of salt are existing. The advantages which Saurashtra has got are the high winds, good tidal rise, absence of large rivers which discharge fresh water into

the sea and dilute the sea water, low rainfall and humidity, strong winds, sun-heat and adequate supply of concentrated sub-soil brine in case of inland salt industry. Saurashtra is thus an ideal place for the manufacture of salt. At present it produces about 25 percent of the total production of salt in India, and has become one of the principal producing centres of salt in the country. Saurashtra produces about 7,38,000 tons out of the total Indian production amounting to 30,00,000 tons. The figures regarding production of salt in Saurashtra are in the following table.

Year.	Production of Salt. Tons.
1947	219284
1948	279528
1949	338000
1950	454888
1951	522342
1952	738000

The above figures show that the production of salt in Saurashtra has steadily increased from 1947. The production of salt in 1951 in Saurashtra has reached above the target of 1955-56 fixed by the Government of India. Over and above the production mentioned above the local Agarias on the sea coast of Saurashtra manufacture a considerable quantity of salt, which is consumed in the surrounding areas of the sea coast and is sent to the western-coast ports of India. The causes for such a rapid development of the industry in Saurashtra are the advent of political freedom and consequent integration of the native states into Saurashtra, the abolition of salt duty by the popular Government, the removal of restrictions on the manufacture of salt imposed during the British rule, discouragement and removal of monopolies, the industry being a paying one to the manufacturers and lastly the policy of the Government of India to make India self-sufficient in salt. India which was importing a large quantity of salt from the foreign countries has become today a country exporting salt within a short span of four years of freedom. The development of this industry has got a bright future in Saurashtra and is likely to develop to a larger extent in the near future.

10. *Close connection with economy of state*

The salt industry has become one of the major industries of Saurashtra and occupies the place next to the Textile industry from the point of view of the value of salt produced, the number of persons employed and the capital invested. Unlike it was in the ancient times, it has become one of the big organised industries ranking next to the Textile industry. The industry affords employment to a large body of men and women and will offer further employment if the industry will get a further fillip. The economy of Saurashtra is thus closely linked up with the development of salt industry in the State.

11. *Location of the industry.*

Salt is manufactured on the tidal flats near the creeks and the swampy lands on the 700 miles long sea coast of Saurashtra and in the interior on the southern border of the little Rann of Kutch falling within the Saurashtra State. The State is divided into two regions, one comprising the sea coast of Saurashtra and another in the north on the border of the lesser Rann of Kutch. These areas are open, barren and sandy tracts and do not contain any plantation life. Thus the areas of the state which are only waste are being used for the manufacture of salt in Saurashtra. The areas congenial for the development of the salt industry in the state are vast and are not likely to get congested in the near future. The salt which is manufactured in the tracts bordering on the Rann is of a higher quality than that which is being produced on the sea coast with the sea brine. The details regarding the size and location of the industry in these two regions of Saurashtra are given below.

Name of Salt Works.	No. of pans. in 1952	Total acreage of salt works.	Place.	District	Estimated No. of persons employed.	Year of establishment.
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*Inland Region.*

1. Sir George Lloyd Salt Works (D. C. W. L.)	319	5400	Kuda	Zalawad	1600	1923
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Name of salt Works.	No. of pans. in 1952	Total acreage of salt work.	Place	District	Estimated No. of persons employed	Year of establishment
2. Gandhi Salt Works	130	1280	Jesda	Zalawad	650	1948
3. Mahalaxmi S. W.	78	350	Kuda	"	390	1948
4. Ambika S. Mfg. Co. Co-op. Society Ltd.	80	250	Jesda	"	400	1952
5. Bajana Mitha Agar Udyog Sahkari Mandali Ltd.	114	500	Bajana	"	575	1952
6. Dehgam Agaria Sahkari Mandali Ltd Dehgam.	71	250	Dehgam	"	355	1952
7. Bharat Salt Works.	50	287	Khakhrechi	Madhya Sau.	250	1952
8. Jogad Agar Sahkari Mandali, Halvad.	65	250	Jogad	Zalawad	325	1953
9. Malaniyad Agar Sahkari Mandali, Halvad.	78	100	Malaniyad	"	390	1953
10. Ajitgadh Agar Sahkari Mandali Halvad.	36	150	Ajitgadh	"	180	1953
11. Tikar Agar Sahkari Mandali Ghantila	72	100	Tikar	"	360	1953
12. New Ambika Agar Sahkari Mandali Lilapur.	20	50	Lilapur	"	100	1953
13. Venasar Agar Sahkari Mandali Khakhrechi	22		Venasar	Madhya Sau.	110	1953
14. Khakhrechi Agar Sahkari Mandali Ghantila	20		Khakhrechi	"	100	1953
<b>Total</b>	<b>1155</b>	<b>8967</b>			<b>5785</b>	

Name of salt Works,	No. of pans, in 1952	Total acreage of salt works	Place	District	Estimated No. of persons employed	Year of establishment
<i>Marine Region.</i>						
15. Maharaja Salt Works	69	729	Lavanpur	Madhya Sau.	259	1928
16. Maharaja Salt Works	100	1850	Versa Medhi	"	280	1950
17. Digvijaysinhji S. W.	182	878	Jamnagar	Halar	368	1936
18. Halar Salt & Chemical Works.	296	2000	"	"	268	1947
19. Nawanager Salt & Chemical Industries	103	1215	Salaya	"	205	1948
20. Jaylaxmi Salt works (Nagna) Jamnagar	180	1400	Nagna	"	323	1950
21. Jodia Salt Works.		1200	Jodia	"	Closed	
22. Malia Salt Works.	62	120	Malia	Madhya Sau.	230	1945
23. Junagadh Salt & Allied Chemical Works	110	500	Bherai	Gohilwad	166	1950
24. Saurashtra Salt Mfg. Co.	123	1514	Porbander	Sorath	420	1948
25. The Salt & Allied works	80	1800	Dhu Vav	Halar	...	1951
26. Bhavnagar Salt &	163	2220	Bhavna-Gohilwad gar		404	1943
27. Nawab Sidi Moh-med Khan	277	3100	Jafrabad	"	457	1944
28. Prabhat Salt Works	50	354	Zinzuda	Halar	...	1952
29. Saurashtra Salt and Chemicals.	25	50	Mangrol	Sorath	Closed	1951
Total	1820	18930			3430	
Grand Total,	2975	27897			9215	



On account of the existence of the condition necessary for the manufacture of salt by solar evaporation on the sea coast and the southern border of the little Rann of Kutch, the salt industry is mainly concentrated on the long sea shore of Saurashtra and the border of the Rann falling within the State.

## 12. *Organisation of industry.*

The salt works as they are to day in Saurashtra are owned and managed by private limited companies or private proprietors and the Co-operative societies of Agarias registered under the Co-operative Societies Act. Till 1950 all the salt works were owned and managed by the private proprietors or private limited companies. Recently a tendency has grown amongst the Agarias to form co-operative societies for the manufacture of salt in the inland salt works on the border of the Rann and ten co-operative salt manufacturing societies have been formed. A few more are likely to grow up in a short period. So far as the organisation of the marine salt works is concerned, such co-operative societies do not exist because of the investment of large capital in such salt works. The formation of the co-operative societies for the manufacture of salt in the inland salt works is easier because a small investment is required and the salt manufacturing area is divided into small units called Pans and given to the Agarias for the manufacture of salt with his own capital and equipment. This is different in case of marine salt works which is a unit as a whole and requires large capital investment and complex management. At present there is no Saurashtra Salt Manufacturers' Association in Saurashtra. It is understood that it was formed in 1950 but it did not function any longer.

## 13. *Salt Manufacturing season.*

The salt industry is seasonal in character and the salt works are working from October to July. The manufacturing season is mainly dependant upon and following the monsoon season. As soon as the monsoon season is closed the salt works commence working and close down before the beginning of the rainy season. During the monsoon season the works are unable to work because of the flooding of the areas of the works and other climatic reasons of manufacture. During

the course of the year the salt works work normally for 250 days though some of them work for 200 days or even less. The necessity to work the salt works only for nine month and not perennially in Saurashtra arises from the fact that Saurashtra is situated in moderate rainfall region of the country.

## 14. MANUFACTURING PROCESS OF SALT

### I Inland Salt Industry.

#### (a) *Commencement of the season.*

On the close of the monsoon season *i. e.* about the end of September or beginning of October the season of salt manufacture commences and the employers of the salt works send an information regarding the commencement of the season in the surrounding villages where the Agarias are residing. Immediately after the arrival of the Agarias at the works the management of the works allots the salt pans to them who are called pan holders. As soon as allotments of pans are made the Agarias undertake the manufacturing operations. Since the pan holders themselves have to make provision for the materials and the equipments necessary for the manufacture of salt at their own cost and these they buy from the advances given by the employers to them. The panholders whom the advances are given by the employers buy the materials and the equipments necessary for the manufacture of salt at their own cost from such advances.

#### (b) *Construction of brine wells.*

In case of inland salt works the supply of brine is obtained from a well constructed by the panholders as near as to the pans. Such wells measure 20/30 feet in depth and 6/7 feet in diameter depending upon the nature and the strata of the soil when the sufficient brine is not likely to be got near the pan the wells are located at such places where ample supply of brine is believed to be obtained. Some times such wells are situated at distance of 5000 to 7000 feet away from the pans. In most of the cases there is only one well attached to a pan, but when one well is not enough to feed a sufficient quantity of brine other wells are also

sunk as near as to the pans. During the monsoon when inundation takes place in this part of Rann, these wells which are Kutcha and have no walls over them, are filled up with sand, clay and silt and the pan holders have to sink wells, a new from year to year. The sinking operation of a well takes from 7 to 8 days if three adult workers are engaged in the operation. Normally from season to season the panholders select the same place for the well which he used in the preceding season. When they feel that sufficient quantity of brine will not come or the well is unworkable due to its mouth having got broader the well previously used by them is abandoned and attempt for another. The inside of the well is incased with 'Kantwa' made of bamboo or baval wood in order to prevent the sides of the well from falling in. After the completion of the well he puts on a super-structure known as Dhenkwa or Mandan depending upon the system employed by the pan holders to draw the brine from the well whether by human labour or by bullocks respectively. A Dhenkwa consists of a long wooden bulley (stick) to a thinner end of which is tied a rope with an earthen pot or a leather vessel, supported by two vertical wooden posts at the  $\frac{2}{3}$  of its length from the thinner end of the bulley and is counter-poised at its thicker end with the weight of a muddy lump or stone. Dhenkwa is worked by human labour and is used when the supply of brine is less. On those wells which give copious supply of brine the system of drawing brine with the help of a pair of bullocks and a 'Kos' is employed. In such cases the panholders fix a super-structure known as Mandan made of wood, which consists of the supporters and brine is lifted by a pair of bullocks in a big leather vessel called 'Kos' two ends of which are tied to the ropes running on the wooden pulleys fixed in the super-structure of the well. The initial density of brine from these wells varies from  $13^{\circ}$  Be to  $20^{\circ}$  Be according to the nature and strata of the soil.

(c) *Construction of the Channels.*

The brine from the well is fed into the condenser by an earthen channel 9" to 12" wide, and 3" deep. The length of this channel depends upon the distance of the well from the condenser. Three adult workers prepare these channels within  $\frac{4}{6}$  days. Some dry twigs or sods known as Jawara are used in the preparation of the embankment of the channel so that the impurities from the brine deposit on them.

*(d) Preparation of the condensers.*

Then the panholders engage in the construction of a condenser or reservoir known as gamdu. The condenser measures eighty feet by eighty feet with an earthen dike of 16 inches. There is only one condenser for each crystallising pan. The floor is slightly sloped towards the crystallising pan. It is then puddled and stamped thrice, which is known as kharvan to make the floor impervious to percolation of brine. The embankment of the condenser is about 15 to 18 inches high and is covered from the inside with dry twigs and sods so that the impurities deposit on these sods. After completing the condenser and its embankment the panholders fill the condenser with brine to a depth of 5 to 6 inches. The quantity of brine that is stored in the condenser is about 20,000 gallons and it is allowed to evaporate till it reaches the density of  $2^{\circ}$  Be. The operations of constructing and filling the reservoir with the brine, take about a fortnight, provided three adult workers work on them 9 hours a day.

*(e) Preparation of Crystallising Pan.*

The crystallising pan measures about  $250 \times 80$  ft. and are laid out parallel to the condenser at a distance of 5 to 6 feet with their length in the direction of the wind so that the waves are created on the surface of the brine. The distance between the two pans in a line is about 50 feet and between the two rows of pans is about 100 feet which place is used for stacking of salt and laying out the railway siding. It is cleaned of silt, sand and clay and the weeds removed. An earthen embankment of 12' to 15' height is made round the pan and the floor is levelled with a slope towards the farther end of the pan. The pan is connected with a condenser with a hollow bamboo pipe of three fourth inches diameter. Through this feeding channel the brine is let in and is allowed to dry for two days. Then the floor is puddled and stamped as done in case of the condenser. Puddling means the walking over on the floor of the pan by the men keeping their feet at right angles. Again the brine is let in and is allowed to dry. The thin crust of salt which is formed is again puddled so as to embed it into the floor of the pan. The process of puddling is repeated till the floor becomes hard and

impervious to percolation of brine. The floor is allowed to dry and if it is found free from cracks or impressions, it is considered fit for the crystallisation of salt. The preparation of the pan takes about 12 to 14 days. In all the preparation of well condenser and the pan takes about 30 to 32 days.

(f) *Working of condensers and pans.*

The brine lifted from the well is flowing through a channel to a condenser where it is allowed to evaporate for nearly twelve days till it attains the density of 22 Be. As the summer approaches the evaporation takes very rapidly and so the brine attains density very soon. While the brine is in the condenser, it gets rid of its impurities. Then the concentrated brine is gradually led into the pan through a small feeding channel and great care is taken to see that the brine in the pan does not get diluted. Initially the pan is filled with a concentrated brine to a depth of two to three inches and this level is maintained till the brine is evaporated to a density of 25° Be. Then the pan is flooded to a depth of 4 to 5 inches with brine. When the crust of salt is formed, it is broken and raked with a wooden rake. The process of raking and spreading out of salt is undertaken on the alternate days till the end of the season. This process is employed to obtain Vadagra Salt. If not employed, flake salt is obtained. After six weeks from the first flooding of the pans, supply of brine is stopped and the density of the brine is allowed to rise to 29° Be. Then the mother liquor is drained into the pits known as Farans and the salt becomes ready for harvesting.

(g) *Harvesting of Salt.*

As soon as the salt is ready in the pans the Agarias collect the salt and heap it into long ridges in the pans to allow the mother liquor from the salt piles to drain out, which is ultimately led into the farans at some distance, from the pans. When the mother liquor is completely drained off, the salt is carried in the baskets by the panholders outside the pan where it is stacked. Then it is loaded into the wagons or motor trucks as the case may be. The work of the pan holders ends with the stacking of the salt outside the pans. During the months of April and May salt is transported to the central storage.

In the inland salt works two types of salt are manufactured (i) Vadagra salt (ii) Ghasia salt. Vadagra salt is heavy type and have large crystals ranging from half inch to three-fourth inch. The crystals are hard, white and transparent. It is easily transportable over long distances and entails less loss in handling than other varieties of salt. The Ghasia salt is a light flaky variety which does not require any raking and spading operations like Vadagra salt but is taken out as soon as it is formed like flakes. In the inland salt works mostly the Vadagra type of salt is manufactured owing to its carrying good market. In 1952 only the Ambika Salt Manufacturing Co-operative Society, Jesda had manufactured the Ghasia variety of salt in small quantity.

## II Marine Salt industry.

The marine salt works in Saurashtra start working from the middle of the month of September and continue the salt manufacturing operations till the first week of June when the works close down for the rains. During the rainy season they are under Water. when the salt manufacturing season begins, they have to draw out the waters accumulated in reservoirs, condensers, and crystallising pans by pumping or gravity or some other means and to repair them for the operations of salt manufacture. These preliminary operations take about six weeks.

The marine salt works situated near the creeks of the sea obtain the brine from sea water which is a raw material for the manufacture of salt. When the fortnightly high tides in the sea come and the sea water is rising into the creeks the brine comes into the big reservoirs adjacent to them through the sluice gates. These sluice gates have got such a contrivance that they open inside owing to the force of the tidal water and close down when ebb sets in due to the pressure of the sea water inside the reservoirs. The reservoirs have a depth of two to two and a half feet and are capable of storing brine which may last till the next fortnightly tide at one filling. When the brine is let in into the reservoirs its density varies from 2° Be to 3° Be. The brine in the reservoirs is allowed to remain there till it attains the density of 5° to 6° Be. by evaporation due to solar heat. When it is found that the brine in the last condenser has attained a density of 20° Be, it is led to the crystalli-

sing pans through a long earthen channel so that it gets concentrated. It is allowed to evaporate in the crystallising pans till the formation of salt. Salt is harvested when the crust of salt is formed to a thickness of two to three inches. It is dug and heaped into small piles in the crystallising pans. The bittern i. e. mother liquor is drained out of the crystallising pans through a channel different from the brine intake channels and a fresh brine is taken into for the purpose of washing the salt piled in them. Then the salt is washed and loaded into the trolleys which carry it to the main storage. For the heaping purposes many of the works are using the conveying belts and some of them have erected the crushing plants to crush the whole salt.

In the marine salt works a multiple irrigation system is followed and from 4 to 7 crops of salt are taken in one season depending upon the climatic conditions and other favourable factors existing in the area. The type of salt which is produced in these salt works is locally known as Kurkutch and is of heavy type with well formed crystal of uniformly good quality.

### CHAPTER III

#### LABOUR LEGISLATION IN SALT INDUSTRY.

15. The State of Saurashtra came into existence in February, 1948 by the integration of various small and big covenanting states numbering more than 200 known as Kathiawar. Before the formation of the Saurashtra State salt works were established by the private proprietors and companies in big states like Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Morvi, Junagadh, Porbandar and Dhrangadhra and had been working with the financial assistance and under the patronage and liberal industrial policy of such states. In this way the development of salt industry took place to certain extent during the course of the preintegration period. These covenanting states in Saurashtra in consonance with their policy towards the working class did not at all attempt to improve conditions of labour employed in salt industry in as much as it did not endeavour to ameliorate the conditions of other industrial labour. There was some enactment of labour legislation like the Factories Act, Workmen's Compensation Act,

Maternity Benefit Act, in some of the covenanted states and where there was such legislation there was no adequate machinery for the implementation of this labour legislation. In addition there was a complete absence of legislation which would help in the prevention of economic exploitation of the poor and ignorant working class.

16. Immediately after the constitution of the Saurashtra State the popular Government of the State enacted a number of labour legislations for the benefit of the working class as a whole in accordance with its progressive policy with regard to labour. Today the following important labour legislations are in operation in the State :

1. Factories Act, 1948.
2. Payment of Wages Act, 1936.
4. Bombay Maternity Benefit Act, 1929.
5. Indian Trade Unions Act, 1925.
6. Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.
7. Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923.
8. Minimum Wages Act, 1948.
9. Employees State Insurance Act, 1948.
10. Employment of Children Act, 1938.
11. Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946.

Owing to the enactment and enforcement of this labour legislation in the state the general conditions of industrial labour and their standard of living had appreciably improved. Though the industrial labour obtained protection from economic exploitation under these legislations the labour employed in the salt industry did not come under most of these legislative measures due to the nice legal technicalities and it has been neglected for one or the other reasons upto now. This labour did not receive any of the benefits which were conferred upon other industrial labour by such labour legislations.

17. Though the salt industry affords employment to more than nine thousand workers there is no comprehensive labour legislation regulating the conditions of labour in the industry. As stated above



out of a number of labour legislations passed by the Government for ameliorating the conditions of industrial labour and their welfare, only the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 and the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 apply and that is only in respect of the marine salt works. They confer very little benefit on the salt labour since they envisage and define only the conditions of employment and the industrial relations between the employers and employed. We are given to understand that other labour legislations do not apply to this industry because the salt pan industry lacks any premises which are envisaged in respect of other industries. The salt industry labour is deprived of the substantial benefit which other legislations aim to confer upon the industrial labour. The salt industry is thus practically immune from any legislative control as far as regulation of labour conditions in them is concerned. The salt industry has got some resemblance to agriculture and distinguishes itself slightly from other industries. The salt industry has some special features which differentiate it from other industries. The special features are as follows:—

- (i) In the salt industry the recruitment is made on a family basis rather than on an individual basis. Mostly all the members of the family unit are provided with suitable work.
- (ii) Unlike the labour in other industries the salt labour is residing on the salt works.
- (iii) Since the workers are residing more or less on their places of work, the management of the salt works and the labour force employed by them are having more personal touch with each other than that in other industries.
- (iv) The salt labour is recruited from such a strata of society as belonging to the backward classes. It is simpleton, illiterate and ignorant.
- (v) The salt labour is absolutely unorganised and helpless. It is easily vulnerable to economic exploitation.

- (vi) Unlike the labour engaged in other industries, the salt labour does not come under most of the protective labour legislations because the salt works having no premises are not considered factories for which all the labour legislations are meant. In case of inland salt works the pan-holders are considered by the employers as independent contractors.
- (vii) So far as the payment of wages to the pan-holders and their sathis is concerned, in inland salt works, the payment of their wages is made at the end of the season. The pan-holders are paid certain sums of advances by their employers from month to month for their day-to-day expenditure.
- (viii) The cash wages which the salt labour receive, can not be called adequate in view of their strenuous work and fall short of a living wage. Since it is unorganised it cannot make any bargain with the employers for the improvement in their standard of living.
- (ix) Unlike the other industries, the salt industry is largely dependent upon the forces of nature like sun-heat, wind, rain, adequate supply of brine from wells and therefore there should be a flexibility in hours of work, rest interval, holidays, leave etc.
- (x) The salt manufacturing process is indetical to that of agriculture which largely depends upon the forces of nature rather than those of human beings.

In view of these special features of the salt pan industry, it distinguishes itself from other industries.

18. The labour conditions in salt works are completely unregulated and vary enormously from one place to another. There is no common uniform standard in the conditions of workers. The mode of employment and recruitment and the system of payment of wages, is also different from works to works. It is therefore essential that the labour conditions prevailing in salt works must be brought to regulations and uniform

standard as far as possible. The conditions of life and employment of labour employed in salt industry are different from those existing in other industries in respect that the salt industry is more or less analogical to the agriculture. This contention of analogy has been substantiated by the employers and labour employed in the industry. Therefore it seems that it would be very difficult to fit the salt industry labour into the general frame work of industrial labour legislation without creating serious handicaps and anomalies and compelling a refashioning of the conditions of life and employment in salt industry. For example it would be meaningless to extend the provisions of Maternity Benefit Act, the provisions of hours of work, leave with wages, rest intervals, spreadover etc. to the labour employed in inland salt works. Because the women workers cannot be presumed to have continuous service of nine months like the labour of perennial factories to receive the Maternity Benefits. The mode of working in inland salt works is very irregular due to the fact that the panholders have to work intermittently and their working is largely dependent upon the forces of nature like high winds, sun-heat, existence of concentrated brine etc. Since the salt works are located at places far away from the towns and villages it is very essential that the housing accommodation medical facilities and educational facilities for the children of the workers should be provided to the workers. The provision of these amenities should not be left to the good wishes of the employers but the employers should be compelled to provide these facilities which are the basic needs of the salt labour. The existing labour legislation does not envisage the provision of these amenities by the employers. The committee therefore feels that a separate labour legislation should be enacted for the labour engaged in salt pan industry and that it should be enacted by the Government of Saurashtra. Since there are small uneconomic holdings managed by Agarias individually this labour legislation should cover only those works whereon 20 or more persons are employed.

19. The salt industry as it exists in Saurashtra to-day is divided into two classes for the purpose of investigations and recommendations of the committee.

- (1) Inland Salt Works and
- (2) Marine Salt Works.

This classification is essential because the raw material used, method of production, recruitment and employment, system of payment of wages and their location are quite different from each other.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Existing Conditions of Labour in Marine Salt Industry

20. Salt was being manufactured on the long sea coast of Saurashtra since long by solar evaporation by Agarias in small individual units and the industry was running on a small scale. The development of the industry on an organised scale took place in the recent times and bigger units with complex management were established. So far as the development of the marine salt industry on an organised scale in Saurashtra is concerned, it may be incidentally mentioned here that Shri Kapilram H. Vakil who is named as the father of the salt industry of Saurashtra, established the first marine salt works at Mithapur in 1927. Since then the marine salt industry has begun to develop gradually in the state and in 1951 the marine salt works totalled to fifteen in the state. This rapid development of the industry can be ascribed to the very suitable climatic conditions of the state, availability of cheap labour, transport facilities, abolition of excise duties, patronage of the states and the last but not the least industry being a remunerative one. At present there are 15 marine salt works the details of which regarding their acreage, location and the holding of pans have been shown in the preceding chapter. These works are situated along the 700 miles long sea coast of the state. Owing to their location on the sea coast and drawing the brine which is a raw material for the manufacture of salt from the sea water, they are called the marine salt works. The conditions of labour prevailing at present in the various salt works in the state are described in the following paragraphs.

#### *1. Madhya Saurashtra District.*

##### **A—The Maharaja Salt Works, Lavanpur and Versa Medhi.**

#### *21. Description.*

There are two marine salt works owned and managed by the Rajputana Agency Ltd. one at Lavanpur and another at Versamedhi in

Madhya Saurashtra District. The Rajputana Agency Ltd. is a private limited company. The salt works at Lavanpur was established in 1928 and the works at Versamedhi was started recently in 1950. These works are situated at a distance of six miles from Navlakhi port and 22 miles from Morvi and fall on the Vankaner Navlakhi branch line of the Western Railway in Saurashtra Region. Both the works are adjacent to one another. The total acreage of both the works are 2579 out of which 729 acres belong to Lavanpur works and 1850 acres belong to Versamedhti works. The Lavanpur factory works 69 pans and Verskmedhi works 100 pans.

### 22. *Employment.*

The skilled labour such as carpenters, muccadams, turners, fitters, pump-men, drivers etc. are recruited directly by the management and employed on a monthly salary basis. The works employ recruiting muccadams to recruit the unskilled labour required to the works. These muccadams are the employees of the works who are employed and paid directly by the management of the works. These muccadams meet all the requirements of the works with regard to labour supply. Each muccadam has got a gang of workers who are working under the direct supervision of the muccadams concerned and the muccadam in turn receives the instructions regarding the carrying out of the work from the officer in charge of the works. Each muccadam is entrusted particular task which he has to get done through his gang of the workers and he is paid according to the terms of the contract between the works and the muccadam. Muccadam in turn pay the stipulated wages to their workers according to the task performed and the number of persons employed as the case may be. The employment figures for the years 1950 and 1951 are given below :

	1950				1951			
	Men	Women	Chil- dren	Total	Men	Women	Chil- dren	Total

#### *Lavanpur Factory.*

1. No. of persons working in open working i. e. salt pans, hēaps-etc.	131	158	...	289	118	125	...	243
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	1950				1951			
	Men	Women	Children	Total	Men	Women	Children	Total
2. No. of persons working under shelter i. e. crushing plant pumping station and workshop.	16	...	...	16	16	...	...	16
3. Total No. of workers working in the factory	147	158	...	305	134	125	...	259

*Versa Medhi Factory.*

1. No. of persons working in open working.	140	164	...	304	130	140	...	270
2. No. of persons working under shelters.	10	...	...	10	10	...	...	10
3. Total No. of workers working in the factory.	150	164	...	314	140	140	...	280

It will be seen from the above figures that the employment in 1951 has fallen by 46 and 34 persons at the Lavanpur and Versamedhi works respectively as compared to the year 1950. Women are not employed for the work under shelters seemingly because of the placing and working of the machinery under these shelters. The works do not employ any children.

All the workers except some muccadams and other skilled workers like carpenters, fitters, drivers, etc. are temporary and their services are terminated at the end of the season and renewed at the beginning

of the season. The skilled workers are employed on a permanent basis. Over and above the figures shown above the works employ casual labour in the busy periods of the season.

Persons under the age of 18 years are not employed in any of the works. Most of the workers belong to the Koli and Muslim communities and there are also few Harijans. No figures regarding absenteeism, turn-over, length of service have been found available with the management of the works and so it is not possible to give here the same.

*23. Working conditions, hours of works and shifts.*

The works has got one crushing plant for crushing the whole salt and one attached workshop for the work of the repairs. These do not come under the Indian Factories Act, 1948. However the working conditions hours of work shifts etc. are regulated in these sections according to the provisions of the Factories Act.

Both the units work only one shift of 8 hours so far as the working in the salt pans and heaps is concerned, the shift hours in those two units are 8-0 A. M. to 12-0 Noon and 2-0 P. M. to 6-0 P. M. Changes in these timings are made according to the seasonal changes and the requirements of the works. There is a spreadover of 10 hours a day and a weekly off is observed. Generally Sundays are closed holidays and the workers also get holidays without wages on certain festivals. The workers are not given leave with wages.

In neither of the units are there rest shelters for the workers. The reason for their absence is given by the employers that the workers return to their homes during rest intervals. No laterines or urinals are provided at the places of work within the precincts of these units.

The workers themselves are making arrangements for their requirement of drinking water at the places of work. In absence of an adequate arrangement for the supply of drinking water at the places of work the workers usually take with themselves containers of drinking water when they proceed to the work in the morning and afternoon.

Standing Orders under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946, have been certified for both these units.

#### 24 *Wages and earnings.*

The skilled workers like turners, fitters, drivers, etc. are employed on monthly basis and paid accordingly. Their monthly earnings seem to vary from Rs. 60/- to 100/- p. m. No deductions are made from their earnings for closed days. The unskilled labour is employed on time rate basis and piece rate basis. The rate of wages for those who are employed on a time basis are paid Rs. 1/12 to males and Rs. 1/8 to the females, perday. In 1950 these rates for males and females were Rs. 1/8 and 1/4 respectively. Subsequently these have been raised in 1951. These time rate workers are employed on such jobs as heaping, loading into the barges and such other works.

The piece rate workers are employed for the works of digging, heaping, washing salt and loading it into the trollies and they are paid at a rate of nine annas per trolley of 1½ Tons. These jobs are done collectively by a group of the workers and the total earnings for the task during a day are equally distributed amongst themselves under the supervision of the muccadam concerned. In this way the workers earn from Rs. 1/8 to Rs. 2/- per day. These rates are inclusive of the D. A. and no separate D. A. is being paid to these workers.

As regards deductions it has been found that there is almost no deduction from the wages either by the muccadams or works. Wages for the preceding month to the time rate workers and monthly salaried workers are paid in the first week of the following month. The workers who are employed on a piece rate basis are given the advances without interest during the whole of the season and their accounts are settled at the end of the season—No overtime is worked in any of these units and no bonuses whether attendance bonus or production bonus or profit bonus are paid to any of the workers.

#### 25. *Housing and welfare work.*

The works are conducting one grain shop for the workers. Sales to individual workers are limited to the grain articles and quantities fixed by Government under the fair price grain shops scheme. These supplies are given at rates fixed by the Government. The workers purchase their



other requirements from the shops of private merchants in the labour colony and other neighbouring towns. These merchants are charging exorbitant rates because of the absence of any village or town nearby where the workers can do their marketing.

The works provide housing facilities to the labour employed by the works for the whole season. These are pucca and kutcha houses. The total number of houses is 269. The pucca houses have been built up with back to back walls and so they are not properly ventilated. The kutcha houses are of mud, bamboo sticks and country tiles. These houses have got single room tenements which consist of a room and a common verandah for all the tenements. No rent is being charged by the works. Sanitary arrangements like latrines, urinals, washing facilities are conspicuously absent in these labour colonies. The works draw their water supply from a pipe line laid out from Dahisara to Navlakhi which is running adjacent to the works. The workers are supplied necessary water from a rectangular cement tank built by the works, near the houses of the workers. It was found that the workers were given limited quantity of water which cannot be considered sufficient for the drinking and washing purposes of an average family. The streets are quite dirty and filthy and it seemed that the same are not being swept or cleaned either by the workers or works.

The works maintained a vernacular school upto the fourth vernacular standard and one teacher is in charge of the school. The workers have been found reluctant to send their children to the school for primary education and so there is meagre daily attendance.

The management is rendering first aid medical help to the workers and no dispensary is maintained or no part-time qualified compounder or a doctor has been employed. The works do not run any other welfare activities like running of a canteen or a co-operative society and other recreation facilities etc.

#### **B. Malia salt works, Malia**

##### *26. Description.*

The Malia Salt Works is situated near the Haripura village in the Malia Mahal of the Madhya Saurashtra District. The works is a

proprietary concern owned by three partners. It was established in the year 1945 and consist of 62 salt pans and acreage of 120. The works takes approximately three crops of salt and manufactures about 15000 tons of salt in a season. The works did not reply the questionnaire of the committee. The committee collected the information as regards labour conditions in the works which is given below as supplied by the works during the visit of the salt works.

### *27 Recruitment and employment.*

The workers are recruited through the recruiting Muccadams who are salaried employees of the works. Each muccadam has a gang of 25 workers who work under the direct control and supervision of the Muccadams. The works do not exercise any control over these workers. The wages are paid directly to the workers in the presence of the Muccadams.

Out of the total of 280 workers employed in the works 250 workers are employed through Muccadams and are designated as temporary while the remaining 30 are employed directly by the works and are permanent. The following persons are permanent workers.

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| (a) 7 Muccadams.      | (g) 1 Driver on trolley.  |
| (b) 4 Chokidars.      | (h) 1 Cleaner on trolley. |
| (c) 1 Line man.       | (i) 4 truck Drivers.      |
| (d) 2 Engine Drivers. | (j) 5 Cleaners.           |
| (e) 2 Oil-men.        | (k) 1 Extra workman.      |
| (f) 2 Cleaners.       |                           |

Nearly half the total employment in the works consist of women and the adolescents between 15 and 18 years of age are also employed. Information regarding the length of service of the workers was not available but as all the unskilled labour was discharged at the end of the season, no such workers could possibly have more than a few months' continuous service to his credit.

Nearly all the workers belong to Miana clan of Muslim community and come from the surrounding villages. The salt manufacturing season

commences from the first week of October and ends in the first week of July. About 150 workers are staying at the salt works in the off season, during which they do fishing.

28. *Hours of work and working conditions.*

The daily hours of works are 8 and the arrangement of hours of work is from 8-0 A. M. to 12-0 Noon and 3-0 P. M. to 7-0 P. M. with a rest period of three hours from 12-0 Noon to 3-0 P. M. These timings are altered according to the seasonal changes. The works works for 6 days and a weekly holiday on Sunday is observed which is not a paid holiday to the unskilled labour. The monthly paid and permanent staff is given the weekly off with wages. About 18 festival holidays are observed and the unskilled labour does not get any wages for the same while the salaried and permanent workers get them with wages. The ordinary labour is not given the leave with wages and the skilled labour is given leave with wages according to the requirements of each worker.

The workers draw their water supply from a river which is one furlong away from the works till the end of March and then it is brought by the works in motor trucks and supplied to the workers at the works. No latrines and urinals are provided. There is no provision of rest for the workers.

There are no standing orders defining the conditions of employment of workers.

29. *Wages and earnings.*

The earnings of the monthly paid workers range from Rs. 55/- to 80/- per month.

The daily paid workers who are on time rates are paid at Rs. 1/5 to men, Rs. 1/1 to women and Rs. 1/1 children who are between 15 and 18 years of age and work for full working hours.

The work of digging, washing, heaping and loading salt are done on piece rates. The rates for digging, washing and heaping salt in the

pans are Rs. 1/8 per motor truck of 2½ tons capacity. The rates for loading of salt are Rs. 1/8 per motor truck of 2½ tons capacity. The workers do the piece rate tasks collectively and distribute the total earnings of such tasks. The earnings of the piece rate workers per day approximate more or less those of time workers.

**A contract for bagging and weighing is given,**

The wages are paid directly to the workers and the wage period is weekly. If the sum of payment is above Rs. 5/-, deduction at 0-0-3 per rupee is made towards Dharmada. Advances are given to the workers according to their needs without interest and recovered from the wages at the time of payment.

**Bonus is paid to the permanent workers.**

*30. Housing and welfare activities.*

Out of the 250 workmen about 100 workmen come from the neighbouring villages round about the works. No housing is therefore necessary for their labour. The remaining 150 workers live in the temporary huts erected by the workers using thatch and dung. The conditions of these huttings were entirely unsatisfactory. It is stated that the workers are given the materials free of cost to erect these huts for themselves. Those workers who stay at the works draw their water supply from a nearby river till the end of March, and thereafter the works supplies it which is brought in the motor trucks of the works from the nearest source of water. Latrines and washing or bathing accommodations are not provided. The works has made an arrangement with a doctor at Malia to visit the works on alternate days. Medicine and other simple injections are supplied to the doctor by the works.

The works has not provided any other amenities for education, recreation etc. A school upto the fourth vernacular standard is at Haripura village which is situated about half a mile from the works.

It is reported that the workers of the works are very disobedient and do not observe any discipline within the works. If any disciplinary action is taken by the works against the worker doing the misconduct, the supervisory staff of the works is threatened with the criminal assault. It

was stated that the manager was attacked twice with knife and one of the supervisors was assaulted once with knife. In view of this management fears to enforce any discipline within the works.

## II Halar District

31. Halar district is an important centre of the salt manufacturing industry in Saurashtra. There are as many as seven marine salt works out of a total of 15 marine works, in the state. The district is very important both from the point of view of the production of salt and also from the number of persons employed. For purposes of our enquiry all the salt works in the district were covered and the detailed information has been collected for all the major salt works of the district.

### A. Halar Salt and Chemical Works, Jamnagar.

32. The Halar Salt and Chemical Works, Jamnagar was established in 1947 and is managed by four private proprietors. The works has got 2000 acres of land and works 298 salt pans. The following statement shows the number of persons employed during the year 1950 and 1951.

Year.	No. of persons employed.			
	Men.	Women	Children	Total
1950	122	75	...	197
1951	179	89	...	268

It will be seen that there is about 50 percent employment of women and none at all of children. Out of the total number employed in 1950, 167 were working in the open spaces and 30 under shelters. While in 1951, 228 out of 268 were employed in open workings and 40 persons were working under shelters. About 33 percent of the labour force employed is coming from the contiguous areas in which the works is situated. The other 67 percent is drawn from the distant surrounding areas. The works also employ labour which is purely casual and occasional during the times of busy season. The skilled workers are kept on permanent basis and unskilled labour is employed temporarily for the period of the season. The above workers are employed and paid directly by the works. They

also employ the muccadams who had employed 44 persons in 1950, 20 men and 24 women and in 1951, 225 persons out of which 112 were men and 113 were women. The muccadams' labour was employed and paid directly by the muccadams. The works has standing orders for their workers. The works has no statistical information regarding the length of service, absenteeism, labour turn-over etc. The workers are mostly Harijans, Kolis and Vaghers. During the off season about 66 percent of the labour of the works migrates to their native places and the remaining which has settled down in the neighbouring areas does not migrate during the off season. Persons above the 18 years of age are recruited and employed either by the works or muccadams and retire at the age of 60 years depending upon physical vigour they possess. The works maintains weekly attendance cards in which the attendance of the workers is noted every day. So far as the recruitment of the workers is concerned the workers are recruited through the recruiting muccadams who procure necessary salt labour for the works. The muccadams are the monthly-paid employees of the works. They exercise the supervisory control over their workers, who are otherwise the employees of the works.

### 33. *Working conditions.*

The factory has fixed three shifts of 8 hours each. The first shift commences at 6-0 A. M. and ends at 2-0 P. M. and the 2nd and 3rd shifts work from 2-0 P. M. to 10-0 P. M. and 10-0 P. M. to 6-0 A. M. respectively with a rest interval of half an hour. The factory works for six days and Sunday is observed as a rest day. Workers are given annual leave with wages as per Factory Legislation and about six festival holidays are given to the workers. Monthly rated workers are paid wages for these festival holidays while daily rated workers are not given this benefit. No latrines or urinals are provided for the workers in work places. It has been stated by the employer that the workmen go in the open on sea side where tide water washes refuse every day. The workers obtain drinking water from the pipes provided by the works. There are sheds on the jetty which are used by the workers as resting sheds and no separate sheds except these have been provided. The conditions of these sheds have not been found satisfactory. There is a crushing plant in the works in which the whole salt is crushed,

### 34. *Wages and earnings.*

The workers who are on time rate wages are paid Rs. 1/12 to men and Rs. 1/6 to Rs. 1/8 to women and 0/12 annas are paid to the children per day. These are the consolidated rates of wages inclusive of all allowances. There is no distinction between the day or night work, as far as rates of wages are concerned. The labour which is being employed by the muccadams receives also the same rates of wages, as labour employed by the works in the same or similar occupations. The workers who are employed on piece-rate basis are doing the jobs of digging and washing the salt and filling it in the trollies. The rate of wages per trolley of .75 ton of salt is 0-14-9. The workers are working in groups and distribute the total earnings made by the group amongst themselves. The total earnings of individual piece-rate workers are more or less the same as those of the time rate workers.

The skilled workers are employed on a monthly basis and their income vary from Rs. 60 to Rs. 100 per month.

The piece rate work of individual muccadam is recorded in the books of the supervisors and at the end of the day slips showing the work done by individual muccadam are issued to him. The muccadam in his turn records the work of individual groups under him who are paid their wages accordingly.

The works does not make any deductions from the wages of the workers and thumb impression or receipt is taken in acknowledgement of receipt of payment from the workers. Wages are paid every week on Saturday. Workers are presenting their attendance cards to the cashier who pays them immediately. Advances are given to the workers without charging interest and recoveries are made by installments. The works does overtime work for break-down and overhauling of the machinery and when the relievers do not turn up for shift work. Such cases are not frequent. Workers are paid the ordinary rates for the overtime work. The management of the works is in favour of the statutory minimum wage for the salt industry.

### 35. *Housing and welfare.*

All the workers have been provided with housing facilities by the works. There are 117 rooms. The houses are of pucca cement block walls with a roofing of asbestos cement sheets. There is only one room of 10' x 10' in floor area with a very low roof. No ventilation or lighting is provided. The rooms are single tenements and their conditions are not satisfactory. They are built up back-to-back walls with no plinth. No latrines or washing facilities are provided. Cement tanks for storage of water are built up from which the workers obtain their water supply. There is a grain shop run by a licensee in which rationed grains are sold at the controlled rates.

The works have engaged a part time doctor who attends to labour as and when required. For the supply of tea and light refreshments to the workers a restaurant is run by a private merchant at the works. The building of this restaurant has been rented to the restaurant keeper on a nominal rent. No creche is provided for the women workers' children, but as the management has stated, moveable wooden cradles are given to the needy workers. There is neither a school nor any sort of recreation facilities. There is a trade union named the Saurashtra Salt Works Kamdar Mandal, Jamnagar affiliated to the Saurashtra Branch of Indian National Trade Union Congress. Some disputes between the works and the labour regarding wages, D. A., etc. have been referred to the Industrial Tribunal for adjudication. In September, 1951 the workers had struck work for a couple of days and the strike was subsequently withdrawn.

### **B. The Digvijaysinhji Salt Works, Jamnagar**

#### 37. *Description.*

The Digvijaysinhji Salt Works, was established on the 15th August, 1936. It is a proprietary concern and is being managed by the Kamdar Dixit & Co. It is situated at Bedi Port, Jamnagar. It works 182 salt pans and the acreage of the works is 878. It possesses a crushing factory for crushing the whole salt.



### 38. *Recruitment and employment.*

This factory employed 357 and 368 persons in 1950 and 1951 respectively. Of the 357 persons employed in 1950, 182 were men and 75 women and no child was employed. Out of 368 persons employed in the year 1951, 188 were men 180 women and no child was employed. It is noticeable in respect of this unit that no child is being employed for work in this salt works. It is very clear from the figures that nearly half of the working labour force is women in this works.

The unskilled labour recruited through the muccadams and the skilled labour like Mistry, Pumpmen, Fitters, Muccadams etc. is being recruited directly by the management. So far as the supply of the unskilled labour is concerned, it is the muccadams who are held responsible for fresh engagements or disengagements.

The unskilled workers are temporary and skilled workers are permanent. The workers belong to Harijans, Kolis and Wagrirs. Migratory period is in the October and July.

### 39. *Hours of work and working conditions.*

The working hours in this works are from 8-0 A. M. to 12-0 noon and from 1-0 P. M. to 6-0 P. M. Only one shift per day is worked. The number of working hours is 9 with a spread-over of 10 hours. Tuesdays are usually closed holidays. In addition to these closed holidays, holidays are given on important local religious festivals. The crushing plant in this salt works is very well ventilated and lighted. The machinery in the plant is so arranged that there remains available space for the free movement of the workers. If proper care by the worker is taken, there is no likelihood of occurring an accident. There is one rest shed near the crushing plant which is poorly maintained. The same is being used by the workers as a creche also. The workers who are expected to work actually in the salt pans cannot take the advantage of this rest shed or a creche. The relations between the employers and the employees are regulated by the standing orders of the works which deal with attendance, classification of workers, conditions of leave etc.

There is no separate labour section to look into the labour matters but the manager himself is looking into these matters. Since the majority of the workers work in open places during the greater length of their working hours, no question regarding ventilation and lighting arises. The permanent workers (monthly-rated) are given the weekly holidays with pay while the daily wage earners do not get the same. There is no system of giving annual leave with wages to the daily rated workers. The provision of latrines and urinals are conspicuously absent in the works. No adequate system of supplying drinking water to the workers in the pans is existing. The workers themselves are making arrangements for the same. No maternity leave is given.

#### 40. *Wages and earnings.*

The wage period is a month for all the workers and wages are paid before the 7th of the following month. No fines are inflicted or imposed. The skilled workers like fitters, pumpmen, muccadams etc. who are recruited directly by the management of the works are permanent and paid monthly. Their rates of salaries are as follows ;

(i) Foremen	Rs. 100/- to Rs. 135/-	p. m.
(ii) Blacksmiths Fitters.	" " "	" "
(iii) Oilmen.	" 53/- to " 62/-	" "
(iv) Drivers.	" 64/- to " 80/-	" "

Some jobs like heaping, washing, loading etc. are done at piece rate wages by the workers of the muccadams. The rates are as follows :—

Heaping and washing of salt in the pans. 0-9-0 per tipping wagon of 27 cubic feet i. e. 3/4 ton capacity.

Loading of salt in the Tipping wagon of 3/4 ton capacity. 0-3-0 per tipping wagon.

Loading of the barges. 30-0-0 to Rs. 40-0-0 per Barge according to the capacity of Barge.  
60-0-0 per Barge for uncrushed salt.

The time-rate wages for the labour recruited through muccadams are varying from Rs. 1-8-0 to 2-0-0. The payment to the muccadam's

labour is being done directly by the works in presence of muccadams. The Independence Day and the Republic Day namely the 15th August and 26th January of the year are observed as holidays with pay. A pagree amounting to Rs. 40 to 50 per worker is paid at the close of the season and Rs. one is being paid to each worker on Diwali.

#### 41. *Housing and sanitation.*

All the workers employed by the works are housed in the houses provided by the works. No rent is charged. No street lighting is being provided. Latrines and urinals are absent. Workers and their families use the open area for this purpose. Common water taps have been provided. Water is freely supplied to the workers. The conditions of housing in this salt works cannot be regarded as being unsatisfactory both from the point of view of structural constructions, the floor space permitted, lighting, ventilation etc. There are 206 units of houses for the workers. Free medical aid is provided to all the workers and their families. Whenever necessity arises, doctor is being sent for. Since the workers are residing on the salt works, there is no need of canteen. The works maintains a primary school for children. Two teachers are in charge of the school. Education is free, the school books and stationery are given free to the deserving boys and girls. There are no arrangements for recreation and entertainment of the workers and their families.

There is no provision for Provident Fund or Gratuity in the works. There is no trade union of the workers employed by the works.

#### **C Jay Laxmi Salt Works Ltd. Nagna, Jamnagar.**

#### 42. *Description.*

The above works belongs to a private Ltd., company. It is situated near Nagna village about 8 miles from Jamnagar. It has been established on the 17th October, 1950.

#### 43. *Employment.*

The total number of workers employed in the works in 1951 was 323. Out of which 99 were men and 224 were women. Out of this total number of persons employed 132 workers were on piece rate wages.

Nearly all the workers employed are working in open spaces. In this works a large number of employees about 60 percent are females. They are mostly employed in the loading and such other jobs. The unskilled workers are temporary i. e. for the duration of the season and they are recruited through the muccadams. The workers who are recruited and employed through muccadams are paid directly by the works.

The skilled workers are recruited and employed directly by the management and they are the monthly paid employees. The works does not maintain any statistics of absenteeism, length of service labour turn-over etc. The workers come from Vagher, Meghwar and Koli communities. About 10 percent of the workers working in the factory is permanently settled in neighbouring areas. Generally the workers enter into the service at the age of 18 and leave it when they become physically unfit for the work. About 90 percent of the labour employed is migrating to their homes during the monsoon when the salt works is closed for the rainy season. It has been stated that during the monsoon they do cultivation on their lands if they have any. The labour employed by the works is recruited through the muccadams who meet the requirements of the works in their labour supply. These muccadams are the salaried employees of the works.

The work of the earth-filling, excavation, etc. is given on contract and the contractors concerned employ and pay the workers recruited by them.

#### 44. *Working Conditions.*

The factory works only one shift of 8 hours a day and working days are six in a week. Sundays are observed as holidays and no wages are paid to the unskilled labour for the same. The working hours are from 9-0 A. M. to 1-0 P. M. and 2-0 P. M. to 6-0 P. M. with an interval of one hour, from 1-0 P. M. to 2-0 P. M. for rest. Festival holidays are observed and no payments to the daily rated workers for these holidays are made. Generally no overtime work is done and if it is done workers are paid at double the ordinary rate of wages. There are no shelters, urinals, latrines, creches or sheds provided in

the work-places. The workers utilise the water taps maintained in the works for drinking water during the working time.

45. *Wages and earnings.*

The skilled labour is employed on monthly-rated basis and unskilled labour is employed on a daily-rated basis. The earnings of the skilled labour are varying from Rs.-60 to 100. Unskilled labour is paid Rs. 1/12 to men and Rs. 1/8 to women per day. Weekly payments are made on each Saturday. Wages are paid directly to the workers and their thumb impressions and acknowledgements are taken. Advances are given to the workers if the works deems it fit and no interest is charged for the same. No deductions from the wages are made.

46. *Housing and welfare activities.*

The works has provided housing for its workers. The number of units is 76 and the congestion is about three adult workers per room. The houses are the pucca houses with cement blocks and a roof of asbestos sheets. No rent is being charged. They contain only one room measuring about 10'x10'. About 228 workers are housed. Water is being obtained from the water storage tank which is being fed through a pipe line laid out by the works. No sanitary arrangements and washing facilities are provided. These quarters are about 2 to 3 furlongs from the works. The works has engaged a doctor who is rendering medical aid to the workers when required. These medical facilities are given free of charge and extend also to the families of the workers. A ration shop is run for the supply of rationed articles on no-profit-no-loss basis. A canteen is also run by a private merchant. A flour mill is also maintained for the grinding of the grains for the employees and the rates for the same have been found reasonable.

**D. Navanagar Salt & Chemical Industries, Salaya.**

47. *Description.*

The works is situated at Salaya about 45 miles from Jamnagar in Halar District. It is owned and managed by Mohanlal Bajaj. It was established on the 9th December, 1948.

#### 48. *Employment.*

The works employed 205 workers, 70 men and 135 women in 1951. Nearly all the workers work in open spaces and a very small number work under shelters in pumping stations. The workers are recruited through muccadams and employed and paid directly by the management. These workers come from Vagher, Kharva and Koli communities and 90 percent of them migrate to their homes for cultivation during the off season. They generally join the service at the age of 18 and retire when they are physically unable to work. 10 percent of these workers has permanently settled down in the neighbouring areas of the salt works. The muccadams who are recruiting the labour for the works are the monthly salaried employees of the works and they supply the labour force needed to the works. Over and above the figures mentioned above regarding the persons employed by the works the works employ other casual labour occasionally when the urgency of the work demands such employment. The works has not got any figures regarding absenteeism, labour turn-over and other details regarding the employment.

#### 49. *Working conditions.*

The factory works a shift of 8 hours from 8-0 A. M. to 12-0 noon and 2-0 P. M. to 6-0 P. M. and a rest interval from 12-0 to 2-0 P. M. is observed. It works for six days in a week and Sunday is observed as a weekly off. Festival holidays are also observed as holidays but daily rated workers are not paid for the same. Monthly rated workers get this benefit and other benefits of sick leave and casual leave according to the needs of such workers.

The working hours are 8 hours and the total spread over is 10 hours. There is a poorly maintained shelter for the workers. Latrines and urinals are not provided in the works. There is a water storage tank in the works from which the workers obtain the necessary water.

Standing orders for the workmen have been certified by the Certifying Officer. Overtime work is not generally done and whenever

it is done, the workers are paid double the wages for the additional period of the work.

#### 50. *Wages and earnings.*

Male workers are paid at a rate of Rs. 1-12-0 per day and women workers are given Rs. 1-3-0 perday. These wages are for the unskilled labour. The wages for skilled labour have been found to be varying from Rs. 50/- to 90/- per month. The above wages are consolidated wages and cover all kinds of allowances. The factory does not make any deductions from the wages of the workers. The wage period of unskilled workers is generally a week and of the skilled labour a month.

#### 51. *Welfare activities.*

The works have rented six quarters of the railway gangmen in which imported skilled labour has been housed. Other workers are residing in Kutcha houses, the conditions of which have been found quite unsatisfactory. No rent is being charged for these houses.

Sweet water pipe line has been laid out by the defence department during the last war from Suihan lake to Sykes jetty where the salt works is situated. The works utilises this pipe line for their water supply. Water storage tank has been provided from which the workers draw their water supply.

The works has the latrines which were built by the defence department during the second war. They are not maintained clean and are found filthy. The workers do not use them.

Free medical aid is given as and when occasion arises. The works keeps one First-Aid-Box.

No other amenities are given to the workers. In 1950-51 there was one ordinary strike, by the workers for increments and certain facilities. The works acceded to their demands and the strike was withdrawn.

### **E. The salt and Allied Works, Dhu Vav.**

52. This Salt works is situated near the Dhu Vav village near Jamnagar in the Halar District. This salt works is established recently. The management of this works has not replied the questionnaire issued by the committee. During the visit of the committee at this works it was observed that the conditions of labour and the rates of wages obtaining at this works were found the same as those prevailing in other salt works in the Halar District.

### **F. The Prabhat Salt Works, Zinzuda.**

53. The works is situated near the Zinzuda village in the Halar District. It is a private proprietary concern. It has 354 acres of land and 50 salt pans. At the time of the enquiry the works had completed its construction and was about to start manufacture of salt.

### **G. The Jodia Salt Works, Jodia.**

54. This Salt works is situated near Jodia town in the Halar District, and possesses 1200 acres of land on lease from the Government. It is owned by the proprietors of the Nawanagar Salt and Chemical Industries Salaya. The works has not till started any operation of the salt manufacture.

## **III GOHILWAD DISTRICT.**

### **A. The Bhavnagar Salt and Industrial Works Ltd., Bhavnagar**

#### **55. Description.**

The works was established in 1943 by a private limited company named Messrs Kamdar and Company Limited, Bhavnagar. It is situated near the new Concrete Jetty on the Bhavnagar Port. It has got 163 salt pans and 2220 acres of land. Its production is about 95000 tons. More land has been leased out to the works and the works is still to be extended.

#### **56. Employment.**

The works had employed 360 workers, 180 men and 180 women in 1950 and 202 men and 202 women in 1951. All the workmen are



recruited through the recruiting muccadams of the works. They are employed and paid directly by the works. These muccadams supervise over the work of the workers and do not exercise any other control over them. All the workers are time-rated workers and no piece rate work is done by the works. Besides the workers mentioned above, the works engages casual labour during the busy periods of the manufacturing season. No children are employed.

The employment of all the workers except some skilled workers and muccadams are for the duration of the season. Their services are terminated at the end of the season and renewed at the commencement of the season. Skilled workers are engaged on a permanent basis and they are not discharged during the off season. Muccadams function only to the extent of recruitment of the workers and supervision of the work done by the workers.

The works does not maintain the statistical information regarding the length of service, labour turn-over, absenteeism etc. The employer gives the reason that the nature of the work is seasonal and the workers are engaged temporary i. e. for the duration of the manufacturing season.

The workers belong to Harijan and Koli communities. Some come from the neighbouring villages and others from round about Morvi, Navlakhi, Kutch and other parts of Saurashtra. About 25 percent of the workers have their homes in the contiguous areas and the remaining workers are coming from distant places. The workers come for work in the month of October and go away to their homes in July. The workers above the age of 18 years are engaged and they are not taken on work when they are found physically unfit for the jobs. Contract labour is employed only for the masonry and building works and no control is exercised over this labour by the works.

#### 57. *Working conditions.*

The works works one shift of 8 hours. The shift commences at 9-0 A. M. and ends at 6 0 P. M. with an interval of one hour from 12-30 P. M. to 1-30 P. M. These timings vary in summer and in winter according to the climatic changes. A weekly rest day is observed and the workers

are not paid for the same. Festival holidays like Holi, Diwali, Satam, Atham, Shivratri etc. are observed as holidays and no wages are paid for these days, to daily rated workers. Only Republic holiday is given with wages to the workers. It is stated by the employer that the workers work for 5 days on an average. An annual leave with wages is granted to the workers at the rate of one day for 20 days presence. It is stated that as the workers live close to the factory and they go to their quarters for meals during the interval no rest shelters have been provided. No latrines or urinals have been provided at the work-places. It is pointed out that the operations are carried on in open spread areas latrines and urinals are not required and that the workers refuse to make use of them.

The works obtains the water supply from the pipe line of the Bhavnagar Port. Owing to the drought and scarcity conditions prevailing since last three years they do not get sufficient water supply from this source, in summer. Therefore they have arranged to fetch it from the outside in their own trucks. The workers draw the supply of drinking water from the water storage tanks provided by the works. The Certifying Officer has already certified the standing orders for the workmen of the works. No overtime is worked.

#### 58. *Wages and earnings.*

So far as the unskilled labour is concerned man workers are paid Rs. 1-14-0 and women workers are paid Rs. 1-12-0 per day. These are the consolidated wages and no other allowances over and above these wages are given. No, piece rate work is done by the works. The maternity allowances are given to the women workers who become entitled to them under the Maternity Benefit legislation. The earnings of the skilled workmen employed in the crushing plant, the pumping stations and the workshops are running from 60-0-0 to 100-0-0 Rupees.

Bonus is paid to the workers and its quantum is linked with the presence put up by each worker. Since no overtime is worked in the works, no question regarding its rate arises. The wage period fixed is monthly and advances are given every week. No deductions are made from the wages and payments are made on working days, at the places of the work. Payments of wages are made directly to the workers and

thumb impressions or receipts are taken from the workers in acknowledgements. No interest is charged on the advances given and their recoveries are made at the time of the payment of wages.

### 59. *Housing and welfare.*

All the workers except those who are settled in the contiguous areas have been given the housing accommodation free or rent. The houses are of pucca type and built up back-to-back-walls. One tenement consists of one room measuring 12'x12' with a verandah of 12'x5'. The verandah is common for all the tenements. There are 238 units of houses.

The occupants of these houses draw their water supply from the water storage tank provided in the works. There are no proper washing facilities and sanitation facilities are absent. Further the works has got 24 rooms of 14'x14' with one kitchen for the skilled labour.

The works maintains one dispensary in charge of a unqualified compounder and the doctor is sent for when occasion arises. Medical aid is given free. There is no creche for the children of the women workers. It is stated that the wooden cradles are supplied at the places of work. Works Committee has been constituted under the provisions of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 and it is understood that it is functioning properly. The works has paid two claims of compensation one of Rs. 1260/- and another of Rs. 1374/- in 1950 under the Workmen's Compensation Act. In 1951 No accident has been recorded.

### **B. The Nawab Sidi Mohmedkhan Salt Works, Jafrabad.**

#### 60. *Description.*

This salt works is situated adjacent to the Jafrabad town about 12 miles away from the railway station of the Rajula city in Gohilwad District. The N. S. M. Salt Works, as it is called, was established in 1944 by the Kathiawar Industries Ltd. Sherbaug, a private limited concern, who are at present its proprietors. The managing agents of the company are the Dilawar Syndicate Ltd. The works has 3100 acres of land

on lease from the Government and works 277 salt pans. The company has got the extension programme of the works and has secured additional land on lease from the Government for the same.

### 61. *Recruitment and employment.*

The recruitment of all the workers is done directly by the works at the commencement of the season when the workers present themselves at the premises of the works and are recruited. No contractors or muccadams are employed for recruiting labour. Generally the workers who have worked during the last season are preferred for employment and when such workers do not present themselves in sufficient numbers, workers themselves are asked to bring their friends and relatives and new labour is recruited. The works had in its employment in 1950, 345 workers; 123 men, 192 women and 30 children. In 1951 they employed 457 total number of workers out of which there were 188 men, 234 women and 35 children. The following table shows the number of persons employed in 1950 and 1951 in open working and under shelters.

Working space.	1950			No. of persons employed, 1951				
	Men.	Women	Chil- dren.	Total	Men.	Women.	Chil- dren.	Total
Working in open spaces.	89	192	30	311	141	234	35	410
Working under shelters.	34	...	...	34	47	...	...	47
Total.	128	192	30	345	188	234	35	457

It will be seen that as compared to 1950, there has been an increase in employment by about 31 percent in 1951, and more women workers are employed than men workers. Women are mostly engaged on the jobs of carrying, loading and heaping of the salt.

All the workers are employed on a daily rated or monthly salaried basis. There were 20 men workers in 1950 and 25 in 1951

on a monthly salaried basis and the remaining were employed on a daily rated basis. No workers were engaged on piece rate basis.

The workers belong to Kharva, Kolis, Muslims and Harijan communities and a large number of them come from the local labour. Very few workers are outsiders. It is stated that during the sowing, harvesting and fishing seasons about 75 per cent of the workers relinquish their work in salt works and do the work of sowing, harvesting and fishing. During these periods the salt works experiences an acute shortage of labour and the salt manufacturing work suffers. It is also pointed out by the works that during these seasons the workers do not turn up for work in the factory if they are paid double the wages. Another cause for the large absenteeism amongst the workers is stated to be the restriction of the communities and the tendency of the community leaders to prohibit the members of the community from pursuing the work other than their ancestral profession.

The works has standing orders for their workmen. The workers are classified as permanent and temporary. In 1950 and 1951 90.24 per cent and 90.98 per cent of the labour force employed was temporary and 9.76 and 9.02 per cent permanent respectively. Temporary workers are not given any notice of termination of service while permanent workers have to be given notice of discharge and are also entitled to certain privileges. The common age at which the workers enter employment in the works is between 16 and 60.

#### 62. *Working conditions.*

Salt pans and heaps are in open areas and so no question of ventilation and lighting arises in those areas. Working conditions in the sheltered premises have been found satisfactory. Ventilation and lighting are adequate. The works has got its own water works and supplied drinking water to the workers through the taps provided at various places. The works provides temporary rest sheds wherever the work is in progress. Sanitary arrangements are not adequate. Latrines have not been provided in the works. It is stated that the workers are not habituated or willing to use them.

It is working only one shift of eight hours a day. The hours of work in this shift are from 8-0 A M. to 12-0 noon and 2-0 P. M.

to 6-0 P.M. with a rest interval of two hours from 12-0 noon to 2-0 P. M. The spreadover is of 10 hours. Usually Sunday is observed as a weekly holiday for which the daily paid workers are not paid. Overtime work is done whenever necessary and paid in accordance with the factory legislation.

The Gandhi Jayanti, Independence day and Republic day are observed as paid holidays in addition to the weekly holidays. The daily rated workers are given annual leave with wages according to the provisions of the Factories Act. The permanent workers are given a privilege leave of 20 days and a casual leave of 10 days per year.

Two representatives who are elected from the workers are representing the grievances of labour to the management and negotiate with them on day-to-day labour problems.

### 63. *Wages and earnings.*

The permanent workers are employed on a monthly rated basis and their wages vary from Rs. 60/- to Rs. 150/- per month.

The temporary workers are on daily rated basis and are classified into skilled and unskilled. Skilled and semiskilled workers are paid from Rs. 2/- to Rs. 4/- per day. While unskilled labour is paid from Rs. 1/4 to Rs. 2/ per day. The above rates are inclusive of all allowances and no other allowance is paid. Bonus is paid to the workers and its quantum is dependent upon the profits made by the works every year.

The monthly rated workers are paid monthly within three or four days of the following month and the daily rated workers get their payment fortnightly on the third or fourth day after the end of the wage period. The payment of wages are made on working days and no deductions from the wages are made. Wages are paid directly to the workers and their signatures are taken for the receipt of the wages. Advances are occasionally given without interest and recovered from the wages of the workers.

### 64. *Housing and labour welfare.*

The majority of the workers are from the town itself where they have their own houses. The conditions of these houses have been found

similar to those of the peasants in rural areas in Saurashtra. A few houses have been built by the management for labour, recruited from outside sources. These houses are pucca houses with an accommodation of a living room and a verandah. The arrangements for the supply of water and sanitation are common. The houses are provided free of rent, sanitation and lighting charges. It is stated that the workers do not make use of the latrines provided by the works and prefer to answer their calls of nature in the open.

The works provides free medical treatment to the workers as and when occasion arises. There is however a Government dispensary in Jafrabad not far away from the works where the workers can receive treatment. There are Government schools in the town and the children of the workers avail of these educational facilities. As the sufficient recess of two hours is given to the workers, they go their homes which are hardly one or two furlongs, during the rest interval for their meals. It is stated that the question of making provision of canteen in the works does not arise.

The employers have stated that women with children do not come for work so the creche for the children of the women workers is not provided.

### **C. The Junagadh Salt & Allied Chemical Works, Bherai.**

#### **65. *Description.***

The works is owned and worked by Shri Abdulhussein Mulla Jivajee Harianwala of Junagadh. It was established in 1950 and is situated about three miles away from the Rajula City and one mile from Bherai village in the Babariawad sub-division of the Gohilawad District. It has got 500 acres of land for salt manufacture and work 110 salt pans.

#### **66. *Employment.***

The total number of workers employed directly and indirectly by the works can be seen from the table below:

	1950				1951			
	Men	Women	Chil- dren	Total	Men	Women	Chil- dren	Total
(a) Labour directly employed.	30	20	5	55	60	40	8	108
(b) Labour employed through agency.	45	25	10	80	30	20	8	58
Total.	75	45	15	135	90	60	16	166

Out of the total 135 workers in 1950, 55 workers were employed on piece rates and 80 on time rates while in 1951 out of 166 total workers, 108 were on piece rates and 58 on time rates.

Women and children are employed mainly as labourers. All workers are classified as temporary and no accurate information regarding length of service, labour turn over and absenteeism is available. The labour is mostly drawn from the neighbouring villages and belongs to Agaria and Koli communities. Generally the workers enter the employment at the age of 16 and work in the works till they remain physically fit to work. The workers come for work in the month of October and return to their homes in the month of June.

Earth work and certain operations of salt manufacture are done on the contract basis and the contract labour is recruited employed and paid by the contractors.

#### 67. *Working conditions.*

Works works only one shift of eight hours. The timings of the shift are from 8-0 A. M. to 12-30 P. M. and 2-0 P. M. to 6-0 P. M. with a rest interval of one and a half hour. Sunday is observed as a weekly holiday for which the daily rated workers are not paid. The festival holidays are observed and not given as paid holidays. Leave with wages is granted to the workers who need it. Temporary rest shelters are provided at two or three places the conditions of which have been found satisfactory.



The works has installed water storage tanks at three places from which the workers draw their supply of drinking water. No latrines have been provided. No overtime work is done.

68. *Wages and earnings.*

Majority of the labour employed in this salt works is unskilled labour and the rates of wages vary from Rs. 1/4 to Rs. 2/- per head per day. The piece rates are Rs. 10/- per pan and -/10 for three-fourth of a ton of salt. The earnings of a worker fall between Rs. 32/8 and Rs 50/-per month. Wages are paid directly to the workers recruited and employed by the works and through the contractors to the labour recruited and employed by them. Advances are paid to the workers without interest and recovered by instalments at the time of the payment.

69. *Housing and welfare.*

About 20 to 25 workers have been housed in Kutcha and semi-pacca houses for which no rent is charged. The conditions of these houses have been found very unsatisfactory. Some workers are coming from a nearby villages for work. They come for work in the morning and go away in the evening to their homes in the villages.

The workers who stay at the works draw their water supply from the water storage tanks in the works. The latrines and other sanitation accommodations are conspicuously absent. Only first aid equipment is kept at the works and no other medical aid is rendered.

#### IV SORATH DISTRICT.

##### A The Saurashtra Salt Manufacturing Co. Porbandar.

70. *Description.*

The works is situated opposite to the port at porbandar in Sorath District. It is owned and managed by Shri R. G. Kamdar. It has got 123 salt pans and its acreage is 1514. The works was established in February, 1948.

## 71. *Employment.*

In 1950, 380 workers were employed out of which 190 were men and 190 women. In 1951, the employment figures was 420 which consisted of 210 men and 210 women. No children are employed. All the workers work in open and are employed on time rate wages. There is absence of piece rate work system. There is no salt crushing plant. The workers are recruited, employed and paid directly and there is no intermediary for recruitment or employment.

About 30 per cent of the total workers is settled in the neighbouring areas and the others come from Navlakhi, Morvi and Kutch. This outside labour comes in the beginning of the season and migrates to their homes in their native places at the end of the season before the monsoon sets in. Most of the workers come from the Harijan, Koli and Kharva communities. Only the adult workers are employed and they are refused employment when they become physically unfit for the work.

Generally the workers who have worked in the previous season are employed and when old workers do not turn up for work in sufficient numbers, new hands are employed. There are no figures regarding absenteeism, labour turn over or length of service available with the works.

## 72. *Working conditions.*

Only one shift of eight hours is worked. The timings of this shift are from 8-0 A. M. to 1-0 P. M. and 2-0 P. M. to 5-0 P. M. A rest interval from 1-0 P. M. to 2-0 P. M. is observed during which time workers return to their homes for lunch.

The factory works for six days in a week and a weekly off is observed which is not a paid holiday. Workers are given festival holidays like Holi, Shivratri, Diwali etc. without wages. Only a republic day is observed as a paid holiday.

The workers are given an annual leave with wages at the rate of one day for 20 days presence put up by the workers. The employer stated that no rest sheds were required because the workers go home during

the rest interval. There are no latrines or urinals provided at the places of work. It has been stated that the workers work in open spaces, so latrines or urinals are not required. The workers draw the supply of necessary water from the water taps provided by the works. No overtime is worked in the works.

### 73. *Wages and earnings.*

All the unskilled workers are employed on time rate basis and their wages are 1-14-0 for men and 1-12-0 for women. No work is done on piece rates. The earnings of the skilled workers vary from Rs. 55 to 100 per month. Maternity benefits are paid to the women workers who become entitled to them. Workers are paid the wages at the end of the four weeks and no deductions are made therefrom. Wages are paid directly to the workers and thumb impressions for their receipts are taken. Bonus is paid to the workers according to the number of days put up by them during the season. Advances are given to the workers and the sums are recovered from the wages at the time of the payment. These advances do not carry any interest.

### 74. *Housing and welfare.*

The works have provided houses to 70 per cent of its labour force and the remaining 30 per cent has settled in the neighbouring villages in which these workers have got their own houses. There are 160 units. Each unit consists of one room and a verandah. The verandah is common for all tenements. The houses are of pucca type built up with back-to-back walls. No sanitation is provided. There is also an absence of washing facilities. Water is supplied to the workers through water taps from the water works owned and maintained by the works. The works do not charge any rent for these houses. One dispensary is maintained by the works and a qualified compounder is in charge of this dispensary. Doctor is sent for as and when occasion arises. No charge is levied for the supply of this medical relief. There is no creche but it is stated that the works supply cradles to those who require them. The works maintain a grain shop from which 15 seers grains are supplied to each worker at reasonable prices. The works committee

has been constituted under the Industrial Disputes Act and it is stated that it functions properly. There occurred two accidents in 1950 and a compensation of Rs. 129 was paid to the injured workers under the Workmen's Compensation Act. In 1951 there was no accident.

#### **B. The Saurashtra Salt and Chemicals, Mangrol.**

75. The works is situated about two miles away from the Mangrol town on the sea shore. It is a very small salt works and has 50 acres of land and 25 salt pans. A stone mortar dam is built by the Government in the land occupied by the works, and the works has therefore stopped the manufacture of salt and is closed.

### **CHAPTER V.**

#### **PRESENT LABOUR CONDITIONS IN INLAND SALT INDUSTRY.**

76. The natural climatic conditions on the southern border of the little Rann of Kutch in Saurashtra have been found favourable for the manufacture of salt of high quality and the inland salt industry is mainly located in this part of the State. Salt was being manufactured in this part since ancient times. Historical records mention their existence as far as A. D. 1669-70 when the Emperor Aurangzeb in 27th year of his reign guaranteed the Jhala Chieftains of Halvad who had established a salt works at Kuda, their right to manufacture salt. This right of manufacture of salt was also recognised by the Marathas and remained unimpaired during the British Rule till 1874. The Britishers also recognised this right of manufacture in 1908 and the proclamation of Queen Victoria also recognised it in 1858. The then British Government thought to derive revenues by imposing excise duties on salt and direct control over the manufacture of salt as far as possible. The Government established the Pritchard Salt Works at Kharaghoda in 1822 and adopted the policy of restricting the Indian states to manufacture salt. With a view to prevent the smuggling of salt from the Indian states to the British territory and to safeguard the revenues from salt, the Government imposed certain restrictions on the salt

manufactured in Indian states in 1874. The Government of India restricted the former Dhrangadhra State to manufacture salt only upto 90,000 and 40,000 maunds per year in 1880 and 1883 respectively. In 1900 the state was prohibited to manufacture Baragra type of salt and given in lieu of it annual compensation of Rs. 7,000 only. It was permitted to manufacture Ghasia variety of salt which had not so much market as Baragra. In 1915 the State approached the Government of India with a request to allow the State to manufacture Baragra type of salt. After protracted negotiations the Government of India acceded to the request of the Dhrangadhra State and permitted it the manufacture of salt in 1922-23. Sir George Lloyd, the Governor of Bombay performed the formal re-opening ceremony of the Kuda Salt Works on the 30th October, 1923 and renamed it the Sir Lloyd George Salt Works. Since the State was manufacturing Baragra salt in excess of its requirements for the Soda ash factory, the Government of India with a view to avoid the risk of its being smuggled into the British territory consented to purchase the surplus production of salt and sell it along with Kharaghoda salt.

On the assumption of power at the centre by the popular Government and the abolition of the excise duties on salt, the salt industry made a rapid progress and other inland salt works came into existence. As seen above the Sir George Lloyd Salt Works has its origin to the medieval period and was the only inland salt works in Saurashtra till 1948. After 1948 other inland salt works were established by the private proprietors and companies and the co-operative societies of Agarias, in view of the salt industry having become free for the private enterprise and the abolition of the excise duties on salt. There are to-day 14 inland salt works with 8967 acres of land and 1155 salt pans employing over 5700 persons. Out of these 14 units there are 11 in Zalawad District and three in Madhya Saurashtra District. Three owned and managed by the private proprietors, 1 belong to a public limited company and 10 are owned and managed by the co-operative societies formed by Agarias. The conditions of labour prevailing in these salt works are detailed in the following paragraphs.

## Zalawad District.

### A. The Sir George Lloyd Salt Works, Kuda

#### 77. *Description.*

This salt works is situated on the border of the little Rann of Kutch in the north of Saurashtra. It is located just adjacent to Kuda village which is about nine miles from the Dhrangadhra town and about 24 miles west from Kharaghoda in the Bombay State. A railway siding is extended from the Dhrangadhra Railway Station to this salt works. As stated before it has its origin to the medieval times and it is known as Kuda Salt Works. It was formally reopened in 1923 by the Governor of Bombay, Sir Lloyd George and was renamed as Sir George Lloyd Salt Works, Kuda. It was owned and managed by the former Dhrangadhra State till 1939 when it was sold to the Dhrangadhra Chemical Works Ltd., Dhrangadhra. Since then it is managed and worked by the said company.

#### 78. *Employment.*

The work of the manufacture of salt in the works is done on the contract basis. The salt pans are allotted to the Agarias on certain conditions which are agreed between the works and the Agarias at the commencement of the season. The conditions of the contract are not reduced into writing and the whole contract remains implied between the parties. The panholders work the salt pans themselves with the help of their family members and in very few cases they employ Sathis when the unit of their family is too small to work the salt pan. Under the terms of the contract they have to provide all the materials and implements required for the manufacture of salt at their own cost. Usually one pan is allotted to one Agaria but sometimes it is allotted to two Agarias.

The works works about 320 salt pans and had made allotments of pans to 494 persons in 1950 and 465 in 1951. Talking a basis that about five persons work on each pan, about 1600 persons work on the 320 salt pans of the works. Most of these persons are the family members of the panholders and a very small number of this constitute Sathis. The details regarding this have not become available. Usually the pans are

allotted to those Agarias who have worked in this works from year to year. Women and children are also employed. Their numbers of employment have not become available. During the busy periods of the season the panholders rarely employ any extra labour and mostly they work amongst themselves on the basis of collective labour. It is stated by the employer that the pan holders are the independent contractors and work for themselves. According to them they are not the employees of the works. At the time of storage of salt the works employ their labour for loading and unloading the wagons and this is drawn mainly from the panholders and their families. Most of the labour working in the works belong to Koli community and come from the villages on the border of the little Rann of Kutch. About 45 per cent of this labour is permanently settled in the contiguous areas of the works. It comes to the salt works in October and goes back to their homes in June when the season is over.

#### 79. *Working conditions.*

The workers work in the open owing to the peculiar nature of the manufacturing process of salt and so the question for lighting, ventilation, congestion, flooring etc. does not arise at all. The factory and other labour legislation is not enforced in this works. The works do not consider the persons engaged in it as their workmen. No hours of work, rest intervals, or holidays have been fixed and no muster roll is maintained for them. The workers work at times convenient or suitable to them. According to the estimate of the works the workers work from six to eight hours a day.

No latrines or urinals are provided. The workers draw their water supply from a masonry storage tank and other mobile water tanks maintained by the works.

#### 80. *Wages and earnings.*

The panholders are paid on a piece rate basis. The rate was Rs. 9-5-7 per ton or 0-5-4 per Bmd. of salt produced by them for the seasons 1949-50 and 1950-51. In addition to this the works paid Rs. 400 per saltpan to the panholders for each of the season. The total rate worked out to be approximately 0-6-6 per Bmd. of salt manufactured

by them. It is stated that the works give a sum of Rs. 400/- per pan to the panholders in the season with a view to compensate the expenses borne initially by the panholders in the construction of wells, condensers and crystallising pans. Taking an average production of 6000 Bmds. of salt per pan the average gross earnings to the panholder amounts to about Rs. 2438-0-0 per pan in the season. From this the works deduct the sum of advances given by them to the panholders for their day-to-day expenditure during the season. The pan holders have also to pay back from this sum amounts which they have taken on credit from the private money-lenders. It seems that the average earnings of the panholder and his family do not amount to more than what an average industrial worker earns. During the season of 1948-49 the rate was Rs. 8-8-0 per ton plus Rs. 400/- which worked out approximately to Rs. 0-6-0 per Bmd. This rate was increased to 0-6-6 in 1949-50. The pan holders who engage Sathis pay from Rs. 75/- to 125/- per season including their maintenance, clothing and foot wear charges.

The works have to engage some labour for loading, unloading and stacking operations. This labour is engaged on time rate wages and is drawn from the families and relations of the panholders. The rate of wages varies from Rs. 1-4-0 to Rs. 1-12-0 per day.

The panholders are given the advances from month to month during the season and the accounts are finally settled at the end of the season. Books are given to the panholders in which the sums given as advances, the total production of salt in the season and the sums due to them are written. No interest is charged for the advances given to them. Panholders purchase their requirements on credit from a Modi recognised by the works, who recovers the dues of the panholders directly from the works from the advances to be given to the panholders. Receipt or thumb impression as the case may be is taken in acknowledgement of payment from the panholders.

In view of the absence of weighing machine and the necessity of lifting the huge quantity of salt in a short haulage period, the system of measurement is adopted for taking out the weight of the salt. The scale of measurement is one cubic feet equal to 70 lbs. of salt. Wagons are



loaded properly and levelled by pressing a patti over the wagon filled with salt. Formerly some deductions from the sums of the final accounts were made for Dharmada. It is understood that the total sum of these deductions has amounted to Rs. 13000/- at the end of the year 1950 and the same is lying with the management of the works. It is reported that this sum would be utilised to finance consumer's co-operative society of Agarias of this works.

### 81. *Housing and welfare activities.*

At the beginning of the season the area of the salt works happens to be swampy because of the inundation of these tracts during monsoon. Therefore in the out set the panholders erect their huts from Bamboo and Kans or Dila on a dry piece of land as near as to the work place. Later on when the land becomes dry they shift their houses near their pans and build them with mud walls and thatched roofs. Normally the panholders build one hut on each pan but some build more than one according to their requirements. The panholders themselves have to provide the materials required for building these huts at their own cost. The conditions of these huts were quite unsatisfactory and the sanitary accommodation was conspicuously absent.

The works has its own water works and laid down a pipe line to some distance into the salt works where a masonry water tank has been built up, for the supply of water to the labour. The workers residing nearby draw their water supply from this tank while those working on distant pans get the water supply from the mobile rail water tanks provided by the works. No accommodation for washing and bathing exists for the labour in the works.

The works keep the first aid box and if and when further medical aid becomes necessary, the works make necessary arrangements from Dhrangadhra.

There is a Government primary school at Kuda but it is stated that the children of the workers cannot take this advantage of the school because of its situation far away from the residences of the workers.

A modi recognised by the works runs a provision shop from where the workers buy their day-to-day requirements. He has made an arrangement with the works to sell the commodities to the workers on credit and to recover the dues from the payments made to them by the works.

The labour in this works was completely unorganised but recently it has joined the parent labour organisation the Dhrangadhra Chemical Works Kamdar Sangh. A dispute between the management and labour regarding certain demands of the workers has been referred to the Industrial Tribunal which has not till given its award in the matter.

### **B. The Gandhi Salt Works, Jesda.**

#### **82. *Description.***

The works was established in the year 1948 and is situated about 3 miles from Jesda village in the Dhrangadhra Taluka of the Zalawad District. It belongs to the Gandhi and Company, Dhrangadhra which is a private proprietary concern. The works has got 1280 acres of leased land and work 130 salt pans each measuring 255 'in length and 100 in width.

#### **83. *Employment.***

On commencement of the season the men of the works go round the villages in which the Agarias have their homes and inform them about the starting of the salt manufacturing season. The Agarias who desire to work, present themselves at the works on the day fixed for allotment of the salt pans. Generally preference in allotment of pans is given to those who have worked in the previous season and whose work is found satisfactory and good in that season. The deficit if any, is made up by selecting fit persons who have past experience in the manufacturing of salt from those present at the time of allotment of pans. The panholders have to sign an agreement with the works which is given in appendix "II". Normally one pan is held by two panholders but some panholders hold individually a single pan. There were 107 men panholders and 13 women panholders in 1950. These figures had increased to 189 and 17 respectively in 1951. The panholders work on the pans with aid of their

family members and Sathis. Materials and equipment are provided at their own cost. Taking the average number of persons working on each pan at five, the employment figures of the works in 1951 comes to about 1030 persons. Children are not employed as panholders in the work of the manufacture of salt. The details regarding the employment of women and children and Sathis have not become available. It is understood that most of the panholders work on the pans with the aid of their family members and only some who do not have sufficient number of family members to work the pans, engage Sathis. The details regarding the employment of women, children and Sathis have not been available.

The labour working in the salt pans belong to the Koli community and come from the surrounding areas of the works. There are also engaged Harijan workers who do the work of loading, unloading and lifting of the salt for two and a half months in the season. These Harijans come from the nearby villages. The salt manufacturing season commences from the middle of the September, and lasts till the first week of July. During the off season the labour migrates to their homes where most of them indulge in the Agricultural operations.

The works has no standing orders at present but they, it is understood, will be framed shortly.

#### 84. *Working conditions.*

The working hours are not regulated and the workers work according to their convenience and choice. It is estimated that they work from seven to nine hours a day. Women and children are freely allowed to work at night. The employer has stated that the workers rest for a day in a week to do washing, buy ration, visit their villages or relatives and to perform other sundry work. The workers are not given the leave with wages. The works supply drinking water to the Agarias. There are no latrines or urinals for the workers. Two sweepers have been engaged by the works to maintain general sanitation in the areas of the works.

#### 85. *Wages and earnings.*

The panholders are engaged on a piece rate basis. The rate is Rs. 0-6-6 per Bmd. of production of salt. The average yield of salt

per pan is about 6000 Bmd. or 225 tons in a season. During the course of the season the works give the advances at 6 per cent interest to the panholders every month to enable them to purchase their day-to-day requirements. At the end of the season when their final accounts are made, the sums of advances along with those of interest are deducted therefrom. The works also keep some amount of each panholder from his final accounts at the end of the season in order to induce him to come to the works in the next season. The panholders are given the diaries by the works in which their individual accounts are written.

The works have no weighing machine and so the weight of the salt is found out by a measurement-cum-weight method. At the beginning of the haulage season the motor trucks which are to be used for transport of salt are filled with salt and wooden stick is passed over them to level the salt in the trucks. Then the salt contained in each truck is weighed and its containing capacity is found out in Bmds. This basis is taken out in presence of the panholders and representatives of the works, and the transport contractor. The weight of the salt produced by the panholders is arrived at on this basis and salt of each panholders is weighed by the works. The earnings of a Sathi employed and paid by the panholders vary from Rs. 75 to 125 including food clothing and footwears in the season. The amount is paid to the Sathis at the end of his employment period.

During the haulage period the works engage casual labour and its rates of wages are Rs. 1-12-0 for men workers and Rs. 1-80 for women workers per day. Its wages are paid weekly and no deductions are made.

The works make the payments directly to the persons having a claim for them and the signatures or thumb impressions of the recipients are taken in acknowledgement of the receipts.

#### 86. *Housing and welfare activities.*

During the whole season the workers live in their huttings erected on their respective pans. The huts are made of mud walls and thatched roofs. There is only a living space and no sanitation accommodation exists. The panholders make these huts with their own labour and cost. The pan holders erect the huts according to their requirements.

The Agarias draw their water supply from three large iron cisterns fitted with taps, installed at three different places by the works. No washing or bathing facilities exist in the works.

There are no special medical facilities in the form of a dispensary or hospital. However a first aid box is kept but there is no qualified first aid. It is stated that in the emergency cases doctor is sent for from Dhrangadhra or the patients are removed to the State Hospital at Dhrangadhra and the medical charges are borne by the works.

The Agarias obtain the rationed articles from their own villages. They purchase other commodities from a Modi at Jesda village recognised by the works. He is allowed to charge one anna per rupee as his commission over the cost price of the articles, at his shop.

In the works there is no facility available for the education of workers and their children.

There is no works committee but 10 persons from the Agarias are made Agewans or Patels. The Agarias carry on their work in the works according to the advice given by these Agewans or Patels. If the Agarias have to say anything, they approach the works management mostly through these Agewans or Patels.

### **C The Mahalaxmi Salt Works, Kuda.**

#### **87. Description.**

This salt works has been established on the 1st October, 1948. It is situated interior into the Rann areas about four miles away from the Kuda village in the Dhrangadhra Taluka of the Zalawad District. The works belongs to a private proprietor and possesses about 350 acres of leased land and 78 salt pans.

#### **88. Employment.**

At the outset of the season the works enter into a contract for the manufacture of salt with the Agarias who are allotted the pans. The contract is for the salt manufacturing season and is not written. Generally allotment of pans is made to the Agarias who have worked in the previous season in the works and have been found efficient at work. One salt pan is allotted to two Agarias who work on it with the aid of

their family members and their own materials and equipments. The panholders who do not have sufficient number of family members to work the pans engage Sathis. The statistical information regarding the persons employed by the panholders have not become available. There were 54 and 78 panholders in 1950 and 1951, respectively in the works. It is stated that about five persons are required to work on each salt pan and therefore 270 persons in 1950 and 390 in 1951 were estimated to be employed in the works. The works has stated that each panholder is considered as an independent contractor and therefore he and his men do not enjoy the status of workmen of the works. Most of the panholders and their men belong to the Koli community.

The works also engages casual labour in the haulage period of the season for lifting and heaping purposes. This labour comes from the Harijan community. The labour engaged in the works is permanently settled in the contiguous areas of the works. There are no standing orders for the labour engaged in the works. The salt manufacturing season of the works commences from the month of October and ends in June every year.

#### 89. *Working conditions.*

The working hours for the labour engaged in the works are not fixed. It works according to its convenience and choice. It is stated that the workers work from six to eight hours at an average per day. No prescribed rest intervals or weekly rest days are observed. The workers do not get any leave with wages or maternity leave. They do not work on festival holidays.

The workers have to work in the open spaces and therefore the lighting, ventilation and flooring question does not arise. Latrines and urinals are not provided in the works and the arrangement for free supply of water is made by the works. Women and children are not prohibited to work during the night time.

#### 90. *Wages and earnings.*

The panholders are paid on piece rate basis. The rate is Rs. 0-6-6 per Bmd. of production of salt. The yield per pan is estimated to be about

6300 Bmds. They are given the advances without interest from month to month during the course of the season, and the final settlement of their accounts is made at the end of the season. The sum of such advances is Rs. 100/- per pan per month. At the time of the final settlement these sums of advances are deducted from the final accounts, and the rest is paid directly to the panholders. No deduction is made from the final accounts of the panholders.

The works have no weighing machine and so the weight of the salt produced by the panholders is calculated on the measurement-cum-weight basis. The basis is taken out at the beginning of the haulage period, by finding out the containing capacity of the motor trucks which are to be used for the haulage of the salt. According to this basis the weight of the salt of each pan is calculated. In order to ensure that the motor trucks carry uniform quantity of salt the levelling stick is passed over each of them after filling them with salt. From the total weight of the salt of each pan a moisture deduction at the rate of 3½ per cent is made. The Sathis engaged by the panholders are paid from Rs. 75/- to Rs. 125/- per head per season including food, clothing and foot-wear.

The casual labour which is employed by the works for lifting and stacking purposes is paid from Rs. 1-8-0 to Rs. 1-12-0 per day. The wage period in case of this labour is weekly. The signatures or thumb impressions of the workers are taken in acknowledgement of the receipt of the payment.

#### 91. *Housing and welfare activities.*

The works do not provide any housing accommodation to its labour. The panholders erect the huts of mud walls and thatched roofs on the pans at their own cost. These huts have only small living space and do not have separate cooking or sanitary arrangements. The conditions of these huts have not been found satisfactory. Sathis live with the panholders. The casual labour makes their own housing arrangements. The works make arrangements for the supply of water to the workers. They bring water from Kuda village in the motor trucks and supply it to the labour.

There is no sanitary arrangement and the workers answer their calls of nature in the open spaces. No bathing or washing facilities are provided. The works have no dispensary and only the first-aid is offered to the workers. The workers make their own arrangements for the supply of their requirements. Most of them buy from the shop at Kuda from where the workers of the Sir loyed George Salt Works purchase.

#### **D. The Bajana Mitha Agar Udyog Sahkari Mandali Salt Works, Bajana.**

##### *92. Description.*

The works is situated about four miles to the north of Bajana town on the border of the little Rann of Kutch in the Zalawad District of the State. The works belongs to a salt manufacturing co-operative society of Agarias under the name of the Bajana Mitha Agar Udyog Sahkari Mandali Ltd., Bajana. The works came into existence on the 29th August, 1950. The society possesses 500 acres of leased land for the manufacture of salt works and 114 salt pans.

##### *93. Employment.*

The society has allotted one salt pan to each of its 140 members for the manufacture of salt in the salt manufacturing season. Thus there are 140 panholders in the works. Each panholder works on his salt pan with the assistance of his family members and materials and equipment of his own. It is estimated that about five persons work on each salt pan at an average and therefore about 570 persons are engaged in the works. The panholders come mostly from Koli, Muslim and Patidar communities and are permanently settled in the areas adjoining to the works. All of these panholders belong to the age group of 20-60 years.

At the beginning and end of the season the panholders employ extra labour for short duration to construct the brine wells, condensers and salt pans and to transport the salt from the salt pans to the central storage.

The panholders who do not have sufficient family members to work the pans employ Sathis. It is stated that the number of such Sathis in the works is negligible.



94. *Working conditions.*

The workers have to work in open spaces so the question for lighting, ventilation, congestion and flooring does not arise at all. The working hours and period of rest are not prescribed and regulated. They work according to their own choice and convenience. Normally the workers prefer to work in the cold part of the day because the sun becomes very hot in the noon in this part of the State. They begin work in the early hours of the day and go for the rest before noon. Again they resume work in the afternoon and work till sunset. It is estimated that they work for about eight to ten hours a day, though they work intermittently and interruptedly in the whole of the season. No weekly-offs are observed. They do not work on no-moon's days and their festival days. They neither get leave with wages nor maternity leave. Water is supplied to the workers by the management of the works. There are no latrines or urinals for them. It is stated that the Sevagram type latrines would be made in the new season and that the installation of boring well for washing and bathing purposes is under consideration of the management.

There are no standing orders for the works. There is no prohibition on the employment of women and children during night time.

95. *Wages and earnings.*

At the end of the season the society sells the whole production of the season in lot to the highest bidder and distributes the proceeds amongst the panholders in proportion to their production after deducting therefrom the administrative and other charges of the society. In the season ending in June, 1952 the panholders received Rs. 8-6-0 per Bmd. production of salt. The average yield per pan is estimated to be 6000 Bmds. of salt.

During the season the society gives advances to the panholders from month to month for their day-to-day expenditure. No interest is charged by the society on these advances. The sums of advances are deducted from their final accounts which are done by the society at the end of the season when the salt is sold off.

No other deduction from the proceeds of the salt is made by the society. The society has no weighing machine for making the weighment of salt of panholders. The installation of such a machine, is understood to be under the active consideration of the society. At present the weight is taken out by the measurement-cum-weighment method, which is taken in other salt works.

The Sathis engaged by the panholders receive from Rs. 75/- to 125/- including food, clothing and foot-wears per season.

The casual labour which is employed by the panholders during the busy periods of the season is paid Rs. 2-0-0 each per day.

The panholders are directly paid their payments and the receipts or thumb impressions are taken in acknowledgement of the payments.

96. *Housing and welfare.*

The workers live in the huts erected by them as far as near their salt pans. These huts are made of mud walls and thatched roofs and built at the cost of the panholders. There is only a living space and no sanitary and other accommodations exist. The Society makes arrangements for the free supply of water to the workers. No medical facilities exist in the works. However efforts are made by the management to give the medical relief and other assistance to the workers as far as financial position of the society permits. There is no provision for the schooling of the children of the workers. It is understood that the society desires to start primary school for the children of the workers in the next season.

There is no grain shop or provision store run either by the society or a private merchant at the works. The workers buy their requirements from the Bajana Town.

97. The conditions of labour in the salt works of the remaining nine salt manufacturing co-operative societies of Agarias are more or less similar to those prevailing in the Bajana Mitha Agar Udyog Sahkari Mandali Salt Works at Bajana. Therefore it is not necessary to describe them here in order to avoid repetitions.

## CHAPTER VI.

**RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OF LABOUR.**

98. We shall now discuss in this chapter the main aspects of the employment of labour in the salt industry and deal with important matters relating to employment such as, sources of labour supply, recruitment, migration, leave and holidays, labour turnover, absenteeism etc.

99. *Sources of labour supply.*

The salt industry in Saurashtra draws its labour force mostly from the state and it is rarely found that the workers domiciled in other states are in the employment of the industry. The industry for its need of labour largely depends upon the surrounding rural areas, where the labour conversant with the technique and work of the manufacture of salt is more or less found. When the industry finds it difficult to get sufficient number of workers proficient in the salt manufacturing work, from the adjoining villages, it imports its labour from the other districts of the state. The areas bordering on the little Rann of Kutch and round about are the principal sources of labour supply for the industry on which it falls back upon for its need of labour when it feels shortage of labour in the neighbouring areas. All the salt works except two employ the labour from the surrounding rural areas. The salt works at Bhavnagar and Porbandar recruit a part of their labour from Morvi, Navlakhi and Kutch areas.

100. The salt manufacturing work is considered very hard and strenuous work. The workers engaged in it have to live and work under the extreme conditions like cold, sunheat and storms. These require a good stamina and a high degree of tolerating power on the part of the workers engaged in it. In view of this only the harder communities like Agaria, Koli, Harijan, Vagher, Muslim, Kharva etc. prefer to enter the employment in the salt works. The cultivators and landless labour belonging to these communities in the rural areas generally constitute a large bulk of the salt labour. In the inland salt works of the Zalawad District a majority of the workers belong to the Agaria Koli community. Formerly the Agaria community predominated in these works but recently the workers from other communities like Rajput, Patel, Harijan etc. are also found in the employment. The salt works at Bhavnagar, Bherai and Jafrabad in the Gohilwad District have their labour from the Agaria,

Koli, Kharva, Muslim and Harijan communities. Nearly all the workers in the salt works at Malia come from the Miana clan of the muslim community. The salt works at Lavanpur and Versamedhi have most of their labour from the Koli and Muslim communities. Some labour from the Harijan community is also found in these works. Most of the labour in the salt works of the Halar District belong to the Koli, Kharva, Vagher and Harijan communities. While in the salt works at Porbandar the workers from Koli, Kharva and Harijan communities are found.

101. The industry meets the requirement of labour chiefly from the cultivating and landless labour class of the mofussil areas. The salt manufacturing season generally begins in the month of October and closes in the month of June. In Saurashtra ordinarily the agricultural operations are undertaken in monsoon and so the cultivators and the landless workers in the villages find themselves engaged in the agriculture work during this season. In the month of October when the salt manufacturing season is to commence and the agricultural season nears its completion, the younger members of the cultivators' families and the landless workers in absence of any work in the rural areas begin to drift to the towns and the industrial centres in search of work and settle there till the monsoon when they return to their villages for agricultural operations.

102 Since the salt manufacturing season and the agricultural season does not overlap each other, the industry is fortunately placed in better position as compared to other industries with regard to the supply of labour and receives full benefit of this process of migration. It has also not to face the difficulties like the shortage of labour, higher absenteeism amongst the workers, migration during the working period which other industries are likely to encounter at certain periods of the year. As such the salt industry has got a nice seasonal adjustment with the agricultural season in such a way that it acts complementing to the agriculture giving employment to the landless workers during the period of their unemployment and contributes to some extent to the rural economy. In view of the conditions as they prevail at present in the rural areas and the industry with regard to the supply of labour we have nothing to recommend except to say that the industry should continue to draw its labour supply from the cultivating and landless labour class of the mofussil areas.

**Recruitment**103. (a) *Inland Salt Works.*

In the inland salt industry there is no intermediary for the recruitment of labour and the labour is recruited direct by the management of the salt works. The general procedure adopted for the recruitment of labour is to circulate an information in the surrounding villages where the Agarias have their homes that the salt manufacturing operations are to be undertaken in the works in the season, so many salt pans are to be worked and such and such rates will be given and the Agarias should present themselves at the works on such and such date for the allotment of the salt pans. The management of the salt works circulates this information through Agarias who happen to visit the works or by sending letters to the prominent Agarias in the villages who had worked in the previous season. The Agarias usually go to the works where they have worked in the previous season. From amongst the Agarias who present at the works on the date of allotment the manager or the superintendent or other official of the works makes the allotment of pans to those who appear to be skilled and experienced in the manufacture of salt depending upon the number of the salt pans to be worked by the works in the season. It is the general practice that the Agarias who have worked in the previous season are allotted the pans in the current season. The Agarias who are allotted the salt pans are called the panholders.

104. The panholders who find the need of employing Sathis recruit them by selecting persons of their choice from the Agarias. So far as the recruitment of casual labour required to the panholders and the works is concerned, the panholders meet this requirement from nearby villages where they go and select the workers and the works select it from the families of the panholders, or Agarias on the works.

105. We have found that the present method of recruitment in the inland salt industry is free from abuses and works satisfactorily both in the interest of the employers and the labour so we have nothing to recommend on this subject.

106. (b) *Marine Salt Works*

In the marine salt works two types of workers are required skilled or semi-skilled and unskilled. Skilled or semi-skilled workers are comparatively in small percentage while the unskilled workers constitute a great bulk of the labour force employed in the industry. The former are directly recruited and the latter are recruited through an intermediary. Recruitment of skilled and semi-skilled workers is made by advertising the requirement amongst those working in the works who in their turn bring the requirement to the notice of their relatives, friends and acquaintances. The new comers are selected after they go through the trade taste. Sometimes selection of the skilled and semi-skilled workers is made from the improvers.

107. Most of the salt works recruit their unskilled labour through intermediary called muccadams. The only salt works which recruit the unskilled labour directly is the Nawab Sidi Mohmedkhan Salt Works at Jafrabad. It appears that as the supply of labour is not localised in the areas of the salt works because of their situation in the isolated places, the industry would have adopted this method of recruitment of labour. There is no distinct class of salt workers as such and the workers as required to the industry are drawn from the cultivating and the landless labour classess of the villages. These workers drift to the industry when the salt manufacturing season begins and return to their villages on closure of the industry for the monsoon. The muccadams are generally the monthly salaried employees of the works enjoying more or less the status of permanent employees. At the commencement of the salt manufacturing season they contact the workers interested in obtaining the employment in the salt industry in the villages and import them to the salt works according to the requirement of the industry. They also meet the demand of the industry in the supply of labour from time to time during the season. There are a number of muccadams in each salt works and each muccadam has a gang of workers, numbering from seven to twenty five. In some cases the workers in the gang are found from the same families while in others the gang is a mixture of the members of various families.

108. These muccadams function not only as recruiting agencies but have other duties also to perform. During the course of the salt manufacturing season they carry out the work entrusted to them through their gang of workers and exercise supervision over the work of their gang of workers. In some these muccadams remain as witness to the payment of wages to their workers while in others they actually receive the payments from the works according to the number of days attended by their workers or the task performed by them and disburse the same to their workers. They receive the instructions about the work to be performed during the day from the supervisors of the works in the morning and give an account of the work done by them through their workers for the day at the close of the work in the evening. The muccadams have all the powers to engage or disengage and retain or dismiss the workers in their respective gangs. They decide who from his gang has to come on work and who not. The workers of their gang are granted the leave at their discretion and convenience. They exercise all the powers with regard to their labour which are exercised by the employers in respect of their employees. In short they are the formidable combination of recruiting agents, foremen or supervisors and sub-employers. When the muccadams have such a big array of powers at their command, it is apparent that in view of their mental make-up and education they misuse these powers for their own sake and furthering the interest of their relatives and friends; some times they become prone to show favouritism to their own men while at others they exact some money from their workers for engagements in the season and reemployment in the succeeding season. Some of the muccadams keep share in the income of the gang. When the workers are required to borrow money, in difficulties or at other times, these muccadams advance money to them and charge exorbitant rates of interest on such advances. We have felt that the recruitment and employment of labour in the industry through the crude system of intermediary like muccadams is fraught with serious evils and that these evils must be eradicated in the interest of labour at large employed in the industry. We therefore suggest that the works should make a direct recruitment and employment of the labour required to the works without any intermediary

between and that the muccadams should have nothing to do with the recruitment, dismissal, discharge, engagement or wages of the workers and the granting of leave to them.

### 109. *Migration.*

The salt industry as it is today in Saurashtra is characterised by the mass migration of labour twice in the year. On close of the monsoon when the salt manufacturing season begins, the salt labour migrates from their homes in the villages to the principal centres of the salt industry in search of work. Before the outset of the rainy season as soon as the salt manufacturing season is completed, mass migration of salt labour takes place when the workers leave for their homes from the works. The apparent cause of such mass migration of labour twice in the year is the postponement of the salt manufacturing operations during the monsoon period. Looking to the method presently adopted for the manufacture of salt and the natural and climatic conditions prevailing in our country it is not possible to continue the working of the salt industry in monsoon. Saurashtra is not exception to this and all the salt works close down for the monsoon. The main reasons for this closure can be mentioned as follows:—

- (a) On account of the rains the rain water flow into the condensers and crystallisers and dilutes the concentrated brine in them.
- (b) The low temprature, the higher humidity and cloudy weather in the monsoon diminish the rate of evaporation of brine.
- (c) The initial density of sea water which is a raw material in the marine salt works is much less in monsoon than it is at other periods of the year due to the rains and the flow in the sea of fresh water streams.
- (d) During the rain the whole little Rann of Kutch on the border of which all the inland salt works in Saurashtra are located is inundated with flood waters of big rivers like Bhambhan, Benas, Falku, Rupan, Saraswait etc. which flow into it combined with the sea water forced into the Rann area by the strong south



west gales of the season. This rises upto a level of one to seven feet and turns most of the Rann areas into a broad expanse of water. All the inland salt works at this period of the year are practically under water.

110 Because of the natural and climatic reasons the manufacturing operations in the salt industry are not carried on and the industry requires to be closed for the most part of the monsoon season. The closure of the industry during monsoon is largely responsible for the mass migration of salt labour at the commencement and the end of the salt manufacturing season. We consider that though the closure of the industry during monsoon is a fundamental cause for the mass exodus of labour twice in the year, there are other social and economic factors which are no less responsible for the process of migration.

FIRSTLY the living conditions in the salt works are at present so deplorable and unattractive that the workers try to get away from the salt works as long as they can and as often as they can.

SECONDLY the wages which the workers receive are so low that there hardly remains any savings with them at the end of the season on which they can fall back upon during the period of their unemployment in the monsoon.

THIRDLY since the industry is located in secluded places, there are no avenues of employment except the industry itself which the salt workers can resort to during the period of their unemployment in the industry. In order to escape from this forced unemployment they undertake migration from the salt works to their villages where there are chances for them to obtain employment in the agricultural operations which are in full swing in the monsoon.

FOURTHLY there are no inducements in the salt works which encourage the salt labour to remain in the works during the period of their unemployment i. e. social insurance against unemployment, invalidity and sickness, payment of retainer, provision of amenities for workers' recreation, decent housing accommodation etc.

FIFTHLY the present unhealthy and unhygienic atmosphere and outlook in the salt works during monsoon can hardly attract the salt labour to continue in the salt works for the duration of their unemployment

111 Now we examine whether it is possible to prevent this mass exodus of labour twice in the year and to make it stable in the industry. The workers in the salt industry come from the cultivating and landless labour class of the villages. Most of these workers have a little stake in agriculture and are pushed to the salt industry on account of the unemployment conditions in the villages during the salt manufacturing season. Those who come from the cultivating class have little to do with the agriculture. They are the younger members of the cultivators' families driven to the salt work for want of work in agricultural operations which are attended by the other members of their families. There are also some workers mostly in the inland salt works, who really own land and engage themselves in its cultivation during the agricultural season of the monsoon. The number of such workers form a small percentage of the total labour force employed in the industry.

Our enquiries have also shown that the bulk of the labour employed in this industry has little stake in the agriculture and migrates to their villages for the purpose of rest, recreation and social and religious ceremonies and in the hope of earning something by obtaining employment in the agricultural operations.

Fortunately the agricultural season coincides with period of the closure of the industry and so the workers during the unemployment do not find it difficult to obtain employment in the villages. The salt workers are pushed rather than pulled to the villages during their period of unemployment. When they find themselves in distress they resort to the villages which they regard and accept as a source of social security.

In the years to come due to the extension of irrigation facilities in Saurashtra the cultivators who join the salt industry today, will find the agricultural occupation a full year job and may not be in a position to join the industry so it is desirable that the cultivating class should be discouraged to get into the salt industry particularly when a large number of landless workers are on hand.

It is our considered opinion that instead of tossing this labour between their villages and industry it should be stabilised in the industry. The measures like the decent living wage, good housing accommodation, provision for the future and social security, subsidiary employment during the closure of the industry etc. should be adopted for bringing about the stability of labour in the salt industry.

### 112. *Employment.*

We shall now briefly describe the nature and extent of employment in the salt industry in Saurashtra. According to the committees estimates something like 9000 persons are employed in the salt industry in the state. The industry is the second largest employer of labour after the textile industry in Saurashtra. The figures of employment are given below.

#### ESTIMATED-EMPLOYMENT IN SALT INDUSTRY IN SAURASHTRA

District.	Name of the works	Men	Women.	Children.	Total.
1	2	3	4	5	6
INLAND REGION.					
1	Zalawad Sir George Lloyd Salt Works Dhrangadhra Chemical Works Ltd.) Kuda.	—	-	—	1600
2	„ Gandhi Salt works, Jesda	—	—	—	650
3	„ Mahalaxmi Salt Works, Kuda.	—	—	—	390
4	„ Ambika Salt Mfg, Co. Co-operative society Jesda	—	—	—	400
5	„ Bajana Mitha Agar Udyog Sahkari Mandali Bajana.	—	—	—	575
6	„ Dehgam Agaria Sahkari Mandali Dehgam.	—	—	—	355
7	„ Jogad Agar Sahkari Mandali Halwad.	—	—	—	325

8	Zalawad	Malanigad Agar Sahkari Mandali Halvad	—	—	—	390
9	„	Ajitgadh Agar Sahkari Mandali, Halvad.	—	—	—	180
10	„	Tikar Agar Salt Mfg. Ghantila.	—	—	—	360
11	„	New Ambika Agar Sahkari Mandali Lilapur.	—	—	—	100
12	Madhya Saurashtra.	Bharat Salt Works,	—	—	—	250
13	„	Venasar Agar Salt Mfg. Khakhrechi	—	—	—	110
14	„	Khakhrechi Agar Salt Mfg. Ghantila.	—	—	—	100
TOTAL			—	—	—	5785

## MARINE REGION.

15	Madhya Saurashtra	Maharaja Salt Works, Lavanpur.	134	125	—	259
16	Madhya Saurashtra	Maharaja Salt Works, Versamedhi.	140	140	—	280
17	Halar	Digijaysinhji Salt Works, Jamnagar.	188	180	—	368
18	„	Halar Salt & Chemical Works, Jamnagar.	179	89	—	268
19	„	Nawanagar Salt & Chemical Industries, Salaya.	70	135	—	205
20	„	Jaylaxmi Salt Works, (Nagna) Jamnagar.	99	224	—	323
21	„	Jodia Salt Works, Jodia.	Closed.			
22	Madhya Saurashtra	Malia Salt Works, Malia	120	160	—	280

23	Gohilwad	Junagadh Salt and Allied Chemical Works, Bherai.	90	60	16	166
24	Sorath	Saurashtra Salt Mfg. Co. Porbandar.	210	210	—	420
25	Halar	The Salt & Allied Works, Dhu Vav.	Not available.			
26	Gohilwad	Bhavnagar Salt & Industrial Works, Bhavnagar.	202	202	—	404
27	„	Nawab Sidi Mohmedkhan Salt works Jafrabad.	188	234	35	457
28	Halar	Prabhat Salt Works, Zinzuda.	Not available.			
29	Sorath	Saurashtra Salt & Chemicals, Mangrol	—	Closed.		
Total.			<u>1620</u>	<u>1759</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>3430</u>
GRAND TOTAL						9215

NUMBER OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN OPEN WORKINGS  
AND UNDER SHELTERS IN SALT INDUSTRY  
IN SAURASHTRA.

District.	Name of the works,	open	Under workings.—shelters	Total.
<b>INLAND REGION.</b>				
Zalawad,	1. Sir George Lloyd Salt Works Kuda (Dhrangadhra Chemical Works	1600	...	1600
„	2. Gandhi Salt Works, Jesda.	650	...	650
„	3. Mahalaxmi Salt Works, Kuda.	390	...	390
„	4. Ambika Salt Mfg. Co.-op. Society Jesda.	400	...	400
„	5. Bajana Mitha Agar Udyog Sahkari Mandali, Bajana.	575	...	575
„	6. Dehgam Agarfa Sahkari Mandali Dehgam.	355	...	355

Zalawad	7	Jogad Agar Sahkari, Mandali Halved, Jogad.	250	....	250
"	8	Malanigad Agar Sahkari Mandali Halvad.	390	....	390
"	9	Ajitgadh Agar Sahkari Mandali Halvad.	180	....	180
"	10	Tikar Agar Salt Mfg. Ghanila.	360	...	360
"	11	New Ambika Agar Sahkari Mandali, Lilapur.	100	...	100
Madhya Saurashtra.	12	Bharat Salt Works, Khakhrechi.	250	....	250
"	13	Venasar Agar Salt Mfg. Co., Khakhrechi	110	...	110
"	14	Khakhrechi Agar Salt Mfg. Co.	100	..	100
			<u>5785</u>		<u>5785</u>

## MARINE REGION.

Madhya Saurashtra	15	Maharaja Salt Works, Lavanpur	243	16	259
,	16	Maharaja Salt Works, Versamedhi	270	10	280
Halar	17	Digvijaysinhji Salt Works Jamnagar	343	25	368
"	18	Halar Salt & Chemical Works Jamanagar.	228	40	268
"	19	Nawanagar Salt & Chemical Ind; Salaya.	193	12	205
"	20	Jaylaxmi Salt Works ( Nagna ) Jamnagar.	302	21	323
"	21	Jodia Salt Works, Jodia.	- closed, -		
Madhya Saurashtra	22	Malia Salt Works, Malia.	280	...	280
Gohilwad	23	Junagadh Salt and Allied Chemical Works, Bherai.	166	...	166
Sorath	24	Saurashtra Salt Mfg. Co. Porbandar.	420	...	420

Halar	25 The Salt & Allied Works, Dhu Vav.	Not available.		
		Information		
Gohilwad	26 Bhavnagar Salt & Industrial Works, Ltd., Bhavnagar.	404	not correct,	404
	27 Nawab Sidi Mohmedkhan Salt Works, Jafrabad.	40	47	457
Halar	28 Prabhat Salt Works Zinzuda.	Not available.		
Sorath	29 Saurashtra Salt & Chemicals, Mangrol.— closed —			
Total,		3259	171	3430
GRAND TOTAL		9044	171	9215

It appears from the above figures that the employment of labour in the salt industry in the State compares favourably with regard to other industries in the State and the employment of women in the industry is comparatively higher in this Industry than in other industries. A large majority of workers employed in the industry has to work in open workings and a very small percentage of them is employed under shelters.

### 113. *Employment of women and children.*

A striking feature of the salt industry is that it employs a considerable number of women and children. In proportion to men it engages more women and children than any other form of organised industry. About 4000 women and children are estimated to be employed in the industry. The reasons for the employment of women workers are firstly the basis of recruitment in the salt industry is the family and recruitment of individuals, though countenanced is not encouraged—secondly most of the works in the salt industry is unskilled like loading, unloading, lifting the salt etc. and the women workers—majority of whom come from the villages are familiar to such work, thirdly as far as possible work is provided to all the members of the family, men, women and children, fourthly the employers give facilities to the male workers to live on or in the vicinity of the salt works and so the male workers bring their families with them; fifthly since the income of the salt worker is not adequate women members of his family have to seek employment to

balance the family budget and supplement the earnings of their family. Generally the employment of children is discouraged because the work in the salt works is considered a very hard job and requires a good amount of stamina on the part of the workers. They are employed only as helpers to the adult workers. It is stated by some employers that they have to engage children to satisfy their parents. When we visited one of the inland salt works we saw some of the workers' children picking up the stones from the heaps of salt. We were told that the children were engaged by the panholders and paid by them. The employment of children tends to deprive the children of all the benefits of education and opportunities which the children should have in having a free life as a child.

114. The women workers have also been found working during odd hours of the night. In the inland salt works, the panholders live with their families on the salt pans and therefore it is natural that the women members of their families help them in the manufacture of salt. Ordinarily women workers have to perform two duties. They have to work in the salt works and also assume responsibility for household work including rearing and upbringing of their children. In view of this it is necessary that they should not be made to work for long hours of the night. We have felt that some restrictions should be placed on the employment of women and children in the interest of conserving and protecting their health.

115. There exists legislative restrictions and prohibitions on the employment of women and children in most of the industries. There is no reason, in our opinion why the similar restrictions and prohibitions should not be introduced in the salt industry also. We therefore make the following recommendations:--

- (i) No child under the age of fourteen should be employed in any salt works.
- (ii) No child or young person who has completed his fourteenth year but is under the age of 18 years should be employed in any salt works without being certified fit by a medical officer approved by the Government.



- (iii) The women workers should not be employed or called upon to work in any salt works between 8-0 P. M. and 6-0 A. M. provided that they may be allowed to work upto 10-0 P. M. under special circumstances with the prior special permission of the Government.

*Absenteeism and labour turnover.*

116 While discussing the subject of migration in foregoing paragraphs we have observed that the salt labour in Saurashtra is migratory in character and the labour force employed in the industry is quite unstable. Every industry has to face more or less problem of instability, for a variety of reasons but the salt industry has to face it in a large measure because the industry is partially seasonal and its labour usually migrates at the commencement and end of the salt manufacturing season. For absenteeism and labour turnover in the salt industry no information has been received by us from the employers of the industry though we had asked the same from them in our questionnaire. It appears that the salt concerns would not be collecting such information and so they would not have been in a position to supply us the data regarding absenteeism and turnover, in their works. During the course of our visits to the salt works we made enquiries regarding the rate of absenteeism and labour turnover in each of the works visited by us. We have found that the rate of absenteeism and labour turnover are comparatively higher in salt industry than those in other industries, where the labour is stable and less migratory. It is well known that the high rates of absenteeism and excessive labour turnover do incalculable harm to both the industry and labour. Absenteeism cuts into the income of the worker when it is the general practice that they are not paid for the days they remain absent, and excessive labour turnover affects him in his skill and efficiency and deprives him of various advantages of continued employment. The employer suffers from these in reduced production, more spoilt work and maintenance of an additional complement of workers. They also affect the efficiency and discipline of the works. The main causes for the higher rate of absenteeism and the excessive labour turnover in the salt industry are sickness, fatigue and urge of exodus amongst workers,

difficulty of getting leave, family circumstances, living and working conditions, unsympathetic attitude of the management towards the labour and dissatisfaction with wages. Many of these causes can be avoided if proper measures are taken by the employers, the Government and labour unions. Improvement in working and living conditions, provision of leave with or without wages, adoption of an enlightened policy by the management, adequate wages, protection from sickness and full use of employment exchanges are some of the measures which will reduce labour turnover in the industry. We therefore suggest all concerned with the salt industry to adopt these measures so that the present high rate of absenteeism and excessive labour turnover in the industry can be appreciably reduced.

### *Leave and Holidays.*

117. When the higher rate of absenteeism amongst the workers and the large percentage of labour turnover characterise the labour employed in the salt industry the need of making an adequate provision for leave with or without pay and holidays for the workers should hardly be emphasised. Since the salt workers come from the rural areas and maintain the closest link with their village homes, the provision of leave and holidays will induce them to return to their villages and have rest and recuperation for some time. This will not only benefit the health of the workers but give them an element of joy, happiness and relief from monotony and drudgery of work. First we shall deal with holidays and then leave.

#### *(a) Holidays.*

118. At present there is a very irregular system of observing holidays in the salt industry. There does not exist any legal provision of observing the weekly rest days and holidays are observed according to the convenience of the works and the need of the workers. In the inland salt works no weekly offs are observed but the workers generally do not work on full moon day, nomoon day and festival days like Shivratri, Holi, Uttrayan, etc. The workers do not get wages for these holidays. In the marine salt industry most of the works keep weekly offs while others do not observe any weekly rest day. Nearly all the works give festival

holidays like Shivratri, Holi etc. to their workers. These weekly and festival holidays are without pay for the daily rated and piece rate workers and with pay for the monthly rated workers. In other industries the piece rated and daily rated workers do not get any wages for the weekly offs. We do not think it proper to deviate from this system in respect of the salt industry. Accordingly we recommend that no wages should be paid to the daily rated and piece rated workers in the salt industry for the weekly off days. So far as the festival holidays are concerned, we are of the view that the piece rated and daily rated workers should be given the wages for the festival holidays which can not be adjusted with weekly rest days. We are given to understand that some industries in Saurashtra have adopted this system of paying the festival holidays to their piece rated and daily rated workers. We do not recommend to enact any legal provision on this point, but we leave this point to be decided by collective bargaining between the employers and the labour according to the economic condition of each unit. However we suggest to the employers to observe the following festival holidays in their works and to introduce as far as possible the above system of paying these holidays to their piece rated and daily rated workers.

- ( i ) Diwali.
- ( ii ) New Year's day.
- ( iii ) Utterayan.
- ( iv ) Republic Day.
- ( v ) Gandhiji's Anniversary.
- ( vi ) Shivratri.
- ( vii ) Holi.
- ( viii ) Dhuleti.
- ( ix ) Ram Navmi.
- ( x ) Akhatrij.
- ( xi ) Mohurram.
- ( xii ) Idd.

(b) Leave.

119. The inland salt works at present do not have any system of leave with or without pay for their workers. On the other hand

marine salt works have a partial system of leave for their workers. The standing orders framed for these works under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 contain provisions for granting three kinds of leave to the workers: (i) privilege leave (ii) Casual leave and (iii) leave without wages. Most of the marine salt works have a system of granting the leave without wages for their workers. The standing orders as certified by the Certifying Officer, Rajkot under section 5 of the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946 provide (i) that service for a total period of twelve months in the works shall qualify a workman for a total period of one month's leave with or without wages and that the grant of such leave shall depend upon the exigencies of the works and shall be at the discretion of the works, (ii) that a casual leave for 10 days in a year shall be granted to the workman, (iii) holidays with pay shall be allowed in accordance with the provisions of the Factories Act, 1948. The first two kinds of leave are given without pay by almost all the salt works to their workers while the third kind of leave is given only by one or two salt works. In the salt industry there is no legal provision for leave with pay for the workers apart from what has been provided in the standing orders framed for the works. In other industries workers are given the leave with wages in accordance with the provisions of the Factories Act, 1948. As Factories Act is not enforced in the salt industry in Saurashtra, the workers employed in the industry do not get the benefit of leave with wages as provided in the Act. When other industries give their workers leave with wages, though under a legal provision, we subscribe to the view that the salt industry also should give such leave to their workers. We therefore recommend that the workers employed in the salt industry should be given the leave with wages subject to the following conditions.

120. In view of the seasonal character of the industry and peculiar mode of employment and working in the inland salt works the scheme of granting such leave should be somewhat different from that provided in the Factories Act, 1948. We therefore recommend that a legal provision for leave with wages for the workers employed in the salt industry should be made subject to the following conditions,

- (a) The workers who have put in 120 days attendance in the season shall be entitled to get a leave with wages at the rate of;
  - (i) if an adult, one day for every twenty days of presence and
  - (ii) if a child, one day for every fifteen days of presence.
- (b) Such leave should be given to the workers after they put in 120 days of presence in the season.
- (c) The workers who do not enjoy such leave or are not given such leave should be paid the wages for the days of leave at their credit at the end of the season.
- (d) The number of instalments in which the leave is proposed to be taken shall not exceed three.

*Terms and conditions of employment.*

121. The terms and conditions of employment are generally defined in the standing orders framed for the industrial establishments under the Industrial Employment ( Standing Orders ) Act, 1946. The Act provides for the adoption of the standing orders in the industrial establishments wherein more than one hundred workers are employed. This Act has come into operation in Saurashtra since the inception of the State and the standing orders under the Act have been adopted by many industrial establishments in the State. In most of the marine salt works standing orders have been framed to define the terms and conditions of employment between the employers and their workmen but none of the inland salt works has any standing orders to regulate the terms and conditions of employment between the employers and workmen of such salt works. It appears that in view of the mode of employment and working in the inland salt works being enormously different from those in other industries, the standing orders for these works could not have been framed. It is also the contention of some of the employers of these works that the Industrial Employment ( Standing Orders ) Act, 1946 does not extend to

the inland salt industry because of the absence of employers and workmen relationship between such works and the labour employed in them. We have studied the Industrial Employment ( Standing Orders ) Act, 1946 and have also examined the method of employment in these works. We have felt that the Act covers the establishments of the inland salt industry also. We have been greatly surprised with the apathy which has been shown by the employers of the inland salt works in contrast to those of the marine salt works in adoption of the standing orders for their labour. If the Act fails to apply to the inland salt industry, due to any nice legal technicalities we are of the opinion that the Act should be modified to include also the labour of the inland salt industry.

122. At present the conditions of employment in the inland salt works are generally governed by an agreement written or oral as the custom prevails in each of such salt works. The agreement is entered into between the employers and the panholders, ( i. e. allottees of salt pans ) at the commencement of each salt manufacturing season. A specimen copy of a written agreement is given in appendix 'II' of this report. Where the agreement is not written, the conditions and terms of employment, are more or less the same as are included in the written agreement, differing slightly from works to works according to the circumstances and customs prevailing in each works. The general aspect of the agreement remains the same throughout all the works. It seems that the employers have adopted the system of written agreement in order to reimburse them from the loss arising out of the breach of agreement by the panholders. The terms of this agreement seem to be very onerous and oppressive to the panholders. The agreement as such is not an agreement in a pure sense defining the rights and liabilities of both the parties but it seems to be the bond setting out the obligations to be fulfilled only by the panholders. In this dynamic age of twentieth this bond appears nothing short of a slavery bond of the medieval times. In view of this there is very urgent necessity of adopting the standing orders defining the conditions and terms of employment of labour in the inland salt works as they are done in other industrial establishments including marine salt works. The Model Standing Orders as given at present in the rules made under the Act do not conform to the conditions obtaining in the inland salt

works because the nature of employment and working of these works are quite different from those prevailing in other industrial establishments. It is therefore essential that there should be a different set of Model Standing Orders for the inland salt industry. We therefore recommend that the Government should set out different Model Standing Orders for the inland salt industry and that the present system of writing or making an agreement should be scraped off and replaced by the Standing Orders adopted on the basis of the Model Standing Orders for the inland salt industry set out under the rules of the Act.

*Relationship between the employers and panholders in the inland salt industry.*

123. This point has become recently a subject of big controversy amongst the employers and the representatives of labour. As the industry has some sort of resemblance in working with the agriculture and the method of employment is some what different from that in other industries some people distinguish the existing relationship between the works and the panholders from that of an employer and a workman and say it that of a principal and a principal while on the other hand some style it as that of an employer and a workman. It is not yet finally decided whether it is of a principal and a principal or an employer and a workman. The issue appears to be doubtful and requires a very careful consideration. It is understood that it is the same issue which appealed to the Government to withdraw temporarily the enforcement of the labour legislation in the inland salt industry. In order to understand the relationship between the works and the panholders it is necessary to examine how and in what manner the salt manufacturing operations are undertaken by the panholders and to what extent the management of the works interfere in these operations directly or indirectly at different stages of the manufacture of salt.

124. We have seen in the previous paragraphs that in the inland salt industry the salt pans which are to be worked in the season are allotted to the Agarias by the employers for the manufacture of salt on certain conditions. These conditions are not always written and very often they remain implied between the works and the panholders except

that of a rate of salt to be paid by the former to the latter which is settled between them at the beginning of the season. The persons whom the allotments of the salt pans are made and who hold them from the works for the manufacture of the salt during the salt manufacturing season are called panholders ( Pattawalas ). As soon as the work of allotment of salt pans is completed, the panholders engage themselves in the salt manufacturing operations. According to the terms of the contract as settled between the works and the panholders at the outset of the season the latter have to provide all the labour and the materials at their own cost for the manufacture of salt during the season. The panholders work on the salt pans with their family members and rarely employ helpers ( sathis ). The panholders who have no adult family members or are disabled or women, engage helpers ( sathis ) to work their salt pans. The helpers or sathis are generally employed for most part of the season and are paid by the panholders. The panholders help each other in the preparation of brine wells, condensers and crystallisers in the beginning of the season and at the end in the ridging and collecting the salt from the pans. So they are rarely required to employ extra labour during the season. If any extra labour is employed for such work, it is paid by them. Where the bullocks are required to be employed for drawing the brine from the wells they are their own and if they do not have, they work with Dhenkwas. During the season they receive the periodical advances from the works for their day-to-day expenses. At the end of the season when the salt becomes ready and is stacked by them outside the salt pans its weight is decided by measurements and handed over to the works. The works calculate the price of salt at a rate as fixed between them at the outset of the season, deducting the advances made by them during the season pay the balance to the panholders. There are no restrictions over the working hours, and rest intervals of the panholders and their men nor are they required to work a particular number of days and observe weekly offs. No muster rolls are maintained for the workers engaged in the manufacturing work. The works have not to see whether the labour employed by the panholders are regularly paid or not. The panholders employ in the manufacturing work the persons of their own choice and their freedom and movement are not restricted by the works as it is the case in respect of the workers of other industries,



provided they make satisfactory arrangements for the manufacture of salt. The panholders are required to observe and comply with only the following conditions :—

- (a) they cannot take away or market the salt produced by them.
  - (b) the quality of salt manufactured by the panholders must be of a particular standard and for the manufacture of such salt the panholders must act according to the instructions given by the works with regard to the manufacturing work,
  - (c) the panholders must work the pans allotted to them
  - (d) they must give all the salt produced by them to the works at the rate settled between them at the outset of the season.
- On the other hand the works are obliged to supply them the necessary water and to give periodical advances from time to time in the season. Several works make arrangements of a provision shop through private merchants to meet the day-to-day requirements of the panholders. The works have the right of accepting or rejecting the salt of the panholders and the salt which is rejected by the works cannot be taken away or marketed by the panholders.

125, Now we may turn to enquire into the controversial issue in light of these facts. The employers of the inland salt industry state that the relationship between the works and the panholders is other than that of the employer and workman. They advance the following arguments in justification of their contention.

- (a) The panholders are not paid any wages or salaries for the work they do, as the workers in other industries are paid. The panholders receive the price for the salt produced by them at the end of the season at the stipulated rate.
- (b) The management of the works does not exercise any control over the movements of the panholders and their method of salt manufacturing work except advising them

on the technique of the manufacture of salt; while in the contract of employment the employer exercises full control over the employees' movements during the execution of work and the method adopted by the latter in the performance of work.

- (c) The contract which is entered into between the works and the panholders at the outset of the season specifies only the production of a firm result i. e. the production of a particular quality of salt at a fixed price and contains no onerous conditions determining the hours of work, rest intervals, employment of labour, method of work etc. In case of a contract of employment employees are subjected to oppressive conditions i. e. the employees must work or work not at particular periods of a day and obey the orders given by the employers as regards the execution of work etc.
- (d) The relationship between the works and the panholders as arises out of the contract between them is identical to that obtaining between the landlord and a tenant, lessor and a lease, licensor and a licensee, the state and agriculturist and a principal and a principal rather than that between the employer and an employee.
- (e) Since the inland salt works are not factories within the definition of the term 'factory' defined in the Factories Act, 1948 and are not subjected to periodical inspections by the Factory Inspectorate of the State, the relationship between the works and the panholders is presumed to be otherwise than that of the employer and a workman.
- (f) The relationship between the panholders and the labour employed by them for the execution of work is of an employer and a workman but the relationship of the works with the panholders is only of a principal and a principal.

126. On the other hand the representatives of labour represented that the works exercised control over the panholders in that the management examined the density of brine in the condensers and crystallisers and the salt under the manufacturing process from time to time. They further stated that the advances made by works did not carry interest and so in reality they represented the wages to be paid to the panholders.

127. Now we may see what should be the criteria for distinguishing the contract of employment from other contracts of similar nature. These have been clearly distinguished by Samuels in his Industrial Law on page 7 ( 1949 Edition ) which is found as follows:-

“ The contract of employment has to be distinguished from certain other agreements to which it bears a resemblance at certain points. Its difference from the contract of apprenticeship has already been explained. The point of difference between the agency contract and an employment contract is that whereas in both there is a contract to do certain work the employment contract in addition gives the employer generally a full right of control over the employees' movements during the performance of that work, and of regulating the manner in which the work should be done e. g. determining the hours and place of work. An independent contractor is in somewhat similar position to an agent vis-a-vis an employee, an independent contractor being ‘ one who undertakes to produce a firm result, but so that in the actual execution of the work he is not under the control of the person for whom he does it, and may use his own discretion in the things not specified before-hand’ ( Pollock TORTS P. 80 ) “ where A lends B an article or materials by means of which B can perform his own ( B's ) behalf and not subject to A's orders, the contract is one of bailment. And, lastly as compared with the relation created by a partnership agreement, it is laid down that the receipt by an employee of a share of the profits by way of remuneration shall not constitute a partnership between the employer and employee. The simple test to be applied, in judging whether it is the relationship of employer and employed that exists or some other relationship, is whether one of the parties is under the

control and bound to obey the orders of the other; if so, there is the employment relationship ”

This clearly shows that the criteria for distinguishing the relationship of an employer and a workman from that between the employer and an independent contractor is how far the former exercises the control over the latter in the execution of work and regulates the manner in which the work is done.

128. It is found that the works exercise the control over the manufacturing process from beginning to the end. When the brine well is dug and brine is taken out the brine is tested by the works by means of a hydrometer and if it is found of a particular density the well is passed by the works, to feed the condensers and the crystallisers. The brine in the condensers and the crystallisers is also examined by the chemists of the works. The management also gives instructions to the panholders as to how they should undertake the manufacturing operations. The panholders are bound to comply with these instructions otherwise their pans are stopped. In short the panholders do not work independently of the works. We are therefore of the view that the relationship of the works with the panholders is of an employer and an employee.

129. We are also supported in our opinion by the recent decision of Honourable the Industrial Tribunal (Saurashtra) on the preliminary objection raised by one of the parties to the industrial dispute in one of the inland salt works of Saurashtra. Honourable the Tribunal has held that the Agarias must be classed as workmen within the meaning of the expression defined in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. It is worthwhile to mention here in support of our view paragraph 14 of the decision of Honourable Tribunal.

“In Halsbury’s laws of England the relationship of an employer and an employee is described in para 131 at page 64, 1911 Edn. as follows —

“Whether or not, in any given case, the relation of master and servant exists is a question of fact; but in all cases the relation imports the existence of power in the employer

not only to direct what work the servant is to do, but also the manner in which the work is to be done.'

"Then later on at page 67 in para 134 the distinction between a contractor and a servant is stated as follows:—

"The relation between employer and contractor is not to be considered the same thing as the relation between master and servant. A contractor is to be regarded as a person carrying on an independent business. (a) To distinguish between an independent contractor and a servant, the test is whether or not the employer retains the power, not only directing what work is to be done, but also of controlling the manner of doing the work. If a person can be overlooked and directed in regard to the manner of doing his work, such person is not contractor (b) and it makes no difference that his work is piece work (c) A sub-contractor is not the servant of the contractor employing him; (d) yet, a person may occupy the position of sub-contractor and of servant to the same employer (e)."

130. Moreover the panholders are not free to take away or market the salt. They are prohibited even to take away or market the salt rejected by the works. Where the grocer shop is maintained; the works have arranged with grocer to give articles of consumption to the panholders on credit. The works make payments direct to the grocer by deducting from the advances to be given to them. All these go to prove that the panholders are not the independent contractors as the employers contend but the workmen of the works in the real sense. The fact that the works provide some amenities like supply of water, provision of grocery shop, maintenance of conservancy staff for sweeping, regular payment of advance bearing no interest to the panholders etc. shows that it is done to fulfil some of the obligations imposed upon the works as an employer of the panholders. We are therefore of the opinion that the relationship between the works and the panholders is of the nature of an employer and employee rather than that of an employer and a contractor.

## CHAPTER VII

*Hours of work, working conditions and provision of essential facilities.*

131. Now we proceed to deal with the problem of hours of work and working conditions in the salt industry. We shall discuss in this chapter the important subjects relating to the health and sanitation of the workers like hours, rest intervals, rest days, provision of latrines and urinals etc.

**I Hours of work, rest intervals, rest days and spread overs**

132. We have seen in the foregoing chapters that the salt industry is out of the purview of the enforcement of the factory legislation in Saurashtra. As such there is no statutory regulation regarding hours of work, rest intervals, rest days, spread overs etc. in the salt industry in Saurashtra. The hours of work, rest intervals, rest days, spread overs etc. are fixed in the various units of the industry according to the need of the employers and convenience of the workers.

During the initial period of the application of factory legislation in Saurashtra the factory inspectors of the State subjected the salt works to periodical inspections supposing that the salt works were covered under the definition of 'factory' as defined in the act and tried to enforce the legislation as far as possible in the industry. In view of the subjection of industry to periodical inspections of the factory inspectorates and the employment in the marine salt works being similar to those in other industries most of the employers particularly of the marine salt works held the view that the Factories Act was applying to their industry and tried to comply with the provisions of the Act. In order to comply with the provisions of the Act these employers effected the necessary changes with regard to the working hours, rest intervals, rest days and spread overs in their works. It was easier for marine salt works to adopt such changes than the inland salt works because the methods of working and the employment in the marine salt works are similar to those in other industries The inland

salt works protested against the regulation of the hours of work, rest intervals, spreadovers and rest days in their salt works in view of the mode of working and employment different from that in other industries and did not undertake any change in their works. Due to this today we find that the provisions of the Factories Act regarding the hours of work, rest intervals, spreadovers and rest days are more followed in the marine salt works than the inland salt works. Now we may survey the position with regard to these in both the sections of the industry.

(a) *Inland Salt Industry.*

133. Since the hours of work, periods of rest intervals or rest days have not been prescribed for the workers working in the inland salt works, either statutorily or otherwise, they work very irregularly. Sometimes they have to put long hours of work without adequate periods of rest intervals. They rarely enjoy rest days and the spread overs are also very long. All these seriously affect the health of the workers employed in the industry. We felt that these should be regulated as they have been in other industries, and put a suggestion before the employers and the labour of the industry that the working hours, periods of rest intervals and rest days and spreadovers required regulation so far as possible in conformity with those in other industries. The employers stated that in view of the peculiar mode of working of the industry and the method adopted for the employment of the labour it was not feasible or desirable to regulate these and if any attempt would be made to regulate them, the quality and the production of salt would be adversely affected resulting in loss to both the Agarias and the industry. On the other hand the panholders appeared to hold the view that under the existing method of working and employment in the industry any restriction over their present freedom to work at their choice would affect their earnings by less production of salt in the season, because presently if the panholders work diligently and put more labour, they could produce more salt and ultimately earn more. They also explained that the regulation of work under the present system of working and employment would be achieved at the cost of the earnings of the panholders. We found that there was some truth in these arguments and came to the conclusion that so long as the method of employment and

working was not revolutionised it was not possible or feasible to regulate the working hours, rest intervals etc. for the labour employed in the industry. We also examined whether it was feasible and possible to change the whole present method of employment. We suggested that the labour in this industry should be employed in the same way as the labour in other industries is employed. The employers seemed to be quite reluctant to revolutionise the present mode of employment according to our suggestion and stated that this proposition was not workable and if given effect to, it would seriously affect the production of salt and would raise the present cost of production. The panholders hesitated to accept it only because in that they were losing their independence and becoming mere labourers like those in the factories. This was due to the fact that bulk of them were coming from the cultivating class which enjoyed a great deal of freedom in their work.

134. It is astonishing to find that the panholders under the present system of working, are required to maintain the bullocks to erect the huts and to provide other equipment for the manufacture of salt at their own cost in consideration of the salt price settled with the employers in the beginning of the season while the employers get the good return without maintaining equipment like the bullocks, baskets, spades etc. which their brothers in other industries are maintaining. Though we are not in favour of immediately introducing the novel system of employment, we are of the view that this new method is worth considering and adaptable in the interest of the health and welfare of the labour. If it becomes possible and feasible to introduce the system of employment which we have suggested above, all the labour in the industry in our opinion would be placed at par with the labour of other industries in respect of working hours, rest intervals, spreadovers and rest days with slight modifications in view of the working conditions of the industry. Now we may turn to the main aspect of the problem and see whether the working hours, rest intervals etc. can be regulated under the present method of working and employment. As the labour in the industry is presently employed, the system of employment is greatly distinguished from that followed in other industries. In contrast with the workers in other industries the panholders in this industry enjoy some what semi-independent status.



Obviously the panholders are not subjected to the control of the employers to the extent workers in other industries are done. They have the freedom to adopt the method of work of their own choice. The employers exercise the control over them only so far as the manner adopted by them and the materials used by them for the manufacture of salt are concerned. Moreover they work their pans mostly with the help of their families and other big tasks like digging the wells, preparing condensers and pans, ridging and collecting the salt are done by them on the principle of collective co-operation. Sathis and extra labour are rarely employed. In the beginning of the salt manufacturing season the panholders are required to work for long hours for the early preparation of wells, condensers and pans and filling up the condensers and the crystallisers as soon as possible so that the process of evaporation may take place earlier which would give them greater production of salt and earnings in the season. Once the wells condensers and crystallisers are prepared and the latter two are filled up with brine to a certain level, the panholders put up the normal hours of work about 8 to 10 hours a day. Again when in the month of February the process of evaporation takes place very rapidly they are required to work long hours for drawing the brine from the well. The work of lifting the brine is done in the early hours of the morning from 2 to 3 A. M. till 10 A. M. and again in the afternoon for scientific reasons. The process is laborious and taxing the energy of the workers because the flow of brine in the well is slow and therefore they have to work intermittently and have to use the flat or small vessel for bringing it out on the surface. Because of all these reasons we are of the view that the working hours, rest intervals, spread overs and rest days for the workers working on the pans should not be regulated so far as the present method of employment and working are followed. We also hold the opinion that the labour employed for the work other than that of the pan or connected with it should be put on par with the labour of other factories as regards their working hours, spreadovers, rest days and periods of rest intervals.

(b) *Marine Salt Industry.*

135. The position in the marine salt works with regard to workers' working hours, rest intervals, spreadovers and rest days is quite in contrast

with that in the inland salt works. The present position with regard to these in the marine salt works is given below. The information is based on the replies given by the employers to our questionnaire issued to them.

**Hours of work, spreadovers and weekly holidays in marine salt works in Saurashtra.**

Name of the salt works.	Hours of work per day	Hours of work per week	Spread over Hours.	Is there a weekly or fortnightly holiday.	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Navanagar Salt & Chemical Industries, Salaya.	8	48	...	Weekly (Sunday)	
2 Jaylaxmi Salt Works Ltd., (Nagna) Jamnagar.	8	48	...	„	
3 Saurashtra Salt Mfg. Co. Porbandar.	8	48	9	„	
4 Bhavnagar Salt & Industrial Works Ltd, Bhavnagar.	8	40	9	„	
5 Digvijay Salt Works Ltd. Bedi Port, Jamnagar.	9	54	10	Weekly (Sunday)	
6 Junagadh Salt & Allied Chemical Works, Bherai.	8	48	9½	Weekly (Sunday)	
7 Halar Salt & Chemical Works Jamnagar.	8	48	8	„	The works have 3 shifts (with rest interval of ½ an hour)
8 The Maharaja Salt Works Ltd, Lavanpur.	8	48	10	weekly	
9 The N. S. M. Salt works, Jafrabad.	8	48	10	weekly (Sunday)	

It will be seen from the above that the working hours, rest days, periods of rest intervals and spreadovers in the marine salt industry approximate to as far as possible those provided in the Factories Act.

136. However it has been observed that at certain periods of the season they are not followed due to the contingencies of the works, such changes involve long hours of work, short periods of rest, absence of rest days and long spreadovers for the workers employed in the works. When the method of working and employment in the salt works are similar to that in other factories, we see no reason why the hours of work, rest intervals, spreadovers and rest days for the workers employed in the works should not be regulated. Such regulation in our opinion should be provided in the proposed labour legislation for the salt industry. We are of the view that the hours of work and the rest days should be the same as they are in case of other factories, while the spreadovers and rest intervals should be longer in view of the fact that usually the workers go to their homes which are nearby for taking their meals during rest intervals.

## *II Working conditions in the industry.*

137. The workers while at work have to perform their tasks under oppressive and intolerable conditions like excessive heat, cold storm etc, and are frequently exposed to accidents. They should be protected from oppressive conditions of work and the occurrence of accidents should be avoided. In the interest of the health and safety adequate measures should be taken to prevent the occurrence of accidents and to secure their safety against oppressive conditions. Since the method which is adopted in our country for the manufacture of salt is solar evaporation method, most of the workers have to work in open and extensive lands as the farmers have to do on their fields and the use of machinery and mechanical process is very little. The inland salt works at present do not make any use of the machinery but its use in the future cannot be ruled out. The marine salt works are required to employ the machinery only for pumping out the brine crushing the whole salt, transporting and heaping the salt and in the workshops of the works. Therefore the problems of ventilation, lighting and spacing etc, are not so complex, in the salt works as they are in other industries where mechanisation of the manufacturing process is largely adopted. In the salt works these problems relate only to pump houses, crushing plants, workshops and stacking of salt.

138. We are of the view that when and where the machinery is employed and the manufacturing process is mechanised, the measures which are taken in other mechanised industries for the safety and health of the workers should be adopted in this industry also. In the marine salt works it was seen that the work-shops and the crushing plants lacked adequate spacing, lighting and ventilation, proper guarding of machinery etc. and these do not compare favourably with those in other factories, governed by the Factories Act. We also observed that the women and children are not prohibited to approach the unguarded machinery when the machinery is in motion. We consider that some measures are necessary for improving these conditions in the interest of health and safety of the workers. We suggest that the conditions with regard to these should be brought in line with those obtaining in the factories governed by the Factories Act.

139. In the salt industry a large number of workers are employed for loading, lifting, unloading of salt and its transport from one place to another. They perform this task by carrying the salt in the baskets on their heads. Sometimes with a view to perform the task earlier or to earn more they carry the head loads beyond their normal capacity. This endangers their health. Therefore it is our suggestion that the maximum load should be prescribed for men, women and children beyond which they should not be permitted to carry at a time on their persons.

140. The carrying of salt from the salt pans to the central storage by means of a mechanised transport is a special problem of the salt industry. In the marine salt works small diesel engine and the tipping wagons are used for such transport. No restrictions are observed over the speed of the engine and rash driving is not uncommon which involves accidents sometimes inflicting serious injuries to the workers. Such accidents also happen due to improper maintenance of rail tracks. We therefore suggest that the speed of such transport within the salt works should be restricted having regard to the capacity of the rail tracks and periodical inspections of the rail tracks should be undertaken.

141. It sometimes happens that the workers hang to the tipping wagons or the engine and fall down when the salt carrying train is in

motion. It is necessary that the workers other than those in charge of such train should not be allowed to travel by such trains.

142. - In our survey of the salt industry in Saurashtra, we paid particular attention to discover the existence and incidence of occupational disease, which is suspected to be in this industry. Unfortunately no definite or reliable evidence could be collected on the subject on account of the absence of regular periodical examination of workers, and of scientific research directed towards determining the degree of prevalence of the disease. We requested the Deputy Director of Health Services, (Health Branch) Government of Saurashtra to investigate and report on the subject. He and other District Health Officers have investigated on the existence and incidence of the occupational disease in several salt works. Their investigations report are found in appendix "III" of this report. It appears from these reports that the workers on account of their constant touch with the highly concentrated saline water in the salt pans and with the salt crystals, develop little cuts and abrasions on their feet and legs. These little cuts and abrasions are not given healing time and they develop into ulcers. The investigating authorities have suggested the controlling measures for protecting the workers from such affections. Amongst others they have suggested the wearing of gum-boots by the workers to protect their feet and legs from injuries as well as the irritant effects of warm saline water. We also observed during our enquiry that the workers working in the pans had the soles of their feet and the skin on the legs soft because of their remaining in saline waters and on account of this softness hard and rocky crystals of salt created the abrasions on their feet and legs. We found the workers working in the salt pans in some of the salt works putting on the canvass shoes with rubber soles to protect them from the injuries. These shoes are not supplied by the employers but are of their own. The workers working on the salt stacks also develop these injuries on account of their working barefooted. We shall consider the prevalence and incidence of occupational disease in the industry in the succeeding chapter while dealing with the occupational disablement of the workers. We consider that the use of the gumboots would inconvenience the workers in their work and would also be costlier. In our opinion the canvass shoes upto above the

ankle with rubber soles would serve the purpose. The employers can get such shoes prepared in the rubber factories.

143. All the inland salt works are located on the southern border of the little Rann of Kutch and so the climate is found extreme during winter and summer. The work of lifting the brine in the early hours of winter is inevitable and essential on scientific grounds, but the work in the noon of the day in the summer can be avoided. The authors of the Salt Experts Committee, Government of India (1950) describe on page 120 of their report the climate of summer noon in this part of the state in the following words,

“We recognise the inconvenience caused to the labourers during the period of excessive summer heat, but the conditions are no worse than those in other works where the hours are so adjusted as to allow a recess during the hottest part of the day. It should be possible for Kharaghoda to adopt the same practice and avoid working between the hours of noon and 3 P. M.

5. 11. 2

“ We appreciate the difficulties of working when the dust-storms occur. On some days it may not be possible to work when a dust-storm is blowing continuously and makes working conditions intolerable, but we consider that on most days it should be possible to conduct normal operations. No records are available, as far as we are aware of the number of days on which the dust-storms blow or of their intensity or peak hours. It was mentioned to us that these storms usually blow between 12 noon and 4 P. M. and this is the vary period which we ourselves have suggested for recess, when the work may be suspended.”

We are quite in agreement with the committee in their above observations. We are therefore of the opinion that the work during 12 noon and 4 P. M. must be suspended in the interest of the health of the workers and a provision to that effect should be incorporated in the proposed labour legislation for the industry.

### III Working of shifts and payment of overtime.

144. The salt works generally work single shifts during the day. The single shift in which the work is carried on during the day ordinarily lasts

from the morning to evening with a rest interval of two to three hours in the midday. Sometimes more than one shift is worked in the crushing plants and workshops to meet the urgency of work. It is understood that the workers of the first shift are employed in these shifts in view of the paucity of the supply of workers in the salt works areas. These workers are paid at the single rate of their wages for the time they work over their working period. We are of the opinion that the workers should be paid at the double rate of their wages for the period they work over and above their normal working hours. We are not in favour of putting a ceiling over the period of the overtime work because of the paucity of the skilled labour in the salt work areas and the fact that the occasions of overtime work are few. We also hold the view that the extensions of work beyond 12-0 night must be prohibited because of the *deterious* effects of the night work on the health of the workers.

#### IV Provision of essential facilities.

##### (a) *Supply of water.*

145. The salt industry always feels the paucity of the supply of sweet water because on account of the location of the industry in the saltish strata of land it is not possible to secure sweet water from the wells in the areas of the salt works and the necessary supply of sweet water is obtained from a distant place. It has not yet been finally decided whether there is any possibility of having a source of sweet water at any depth in the areas of the salt works. Such experiments are worth trying and if they become successful, the present difficulty of the supply of sweet water in the salt works can be avoided. Nearly all the salt works draw the supply of water from a distant place. Some get it through a pipe line laid out by the works or the Government while others obtain it from a nearby source in the mobile water tanks.

In both the inland and the marine salt works the employers make the necessary arrangements for the supply of sweet water to the labour employed by them. In the inland salt industry iron or masonry cisterns are installed at two or three different places in the works which are kept filled with water. In this industry the workers are residing on their respective salt pans with their families. They meet their requirements of water from these cisterns maintained in the works. On the other

hand in the marine salt industry labour draws its water supply from water storage tanks or common water taps from the pipe line, installed by the works near the residential places of the workers. During our enquiry we observed that the supply of water to the labour was not adequate. In few salt works it was rationed and distributed according to the number of persons in the workers' families. In view of the inadequacy of the supply of water in the works the workers, and their family members can not be expected to remain clean by taking regular baths. In some of the works we found that the workers were taking water by dipping their containers in the tanks. No arrangements are found in the marine salt works for the supply of drinking water to the workers during working hours. The workers while going for the work usually take the drinking water for themselves and their family members in earthen pots. In the inland salt works also when the workers work collectively for collecting, loading and stacking salt, they make their own arrangements for the supply of drinking water. It is our considered opinion that the employers should make adequate arrangements not only for the supply of water near the residential places of the workers but they should be supplied drinking water while they are at work. As far as the supply of water to salt labour is concerned, we desire to make the following suggestions.

- (a) The employers should provide and maintain at convenient places in the salt works a sufficient supply of water for all workers.
- (b) The water which is to be used for drinking purposes should be sufficiently chlorinated
- (c) The source of supply of water should not be farther than one furlong from the residence or place of work of the workers.
- (d) The water storage tanks or other containers should have taps round about down below and locking arrangement on the covering at the top so that the workers take water through taps and not by dipping the vessels in the tanks or containers.
- (e) In the inland salt industry where the bullocks are employed for drawing the brine from the wells troughs



for the bullocks should be maintained within reasonable distance from the salt pans.

- (f) In the inland salt industry when the workers and their family members are required to work at places other than their respective salt pans, the employers should make necessary arrangements for the supply of drinking water to them.
- (g) Water should be supplied free by having regard to the paucity of water in the salt industry and the needs of the workers.
- (h) The places of the supply of water should be kept clean and free from insanitary conditions.

(b) *Latrines and urinals—sanitation.*

146. In all the salt works visited no provisions have been made for any sanitary arrangement for the workers. It was found that the workers were answering the calls of nature in the open. This does not seem to be desirable. It lacks in privacy and certain amount of insanitary conditions are brought into existence round about the salt works. Besides fouling the air this lack of sanitation causes the infection of hook-worm amongst the workers. Most of the employers still cling to the old discredited argument that even if sanitary arrangements were provided they would not be made use of by the workers because of their longtime habit to answer the calls of nature in open and prejudice against the use of latrines and urinals. It was also stated by the employers of the inland salt works that in view of the inundations of the whole area during monsoon it was not possible to build the pucca latrines and urinals of permanent nature. The Committee suggested that they should be of mobile type so that they could be safely removed when the inundation set in. We are therefore definitely of the opinion that the latrine and urinal accommodations should be adequately provided for the use of the workers in the works. We have felt that the provision of latrines and urinals for the use of the workers in any industrial establishment is such an elementary need that no statutory provision in this behalf should exist. We are therefore definitely of the opinion that the adequate latrine and urinal accommodations should

be provided in the works for the use of the labour employed in the industry. We can not but emphasise that the salt works should be immuned from all dirt, creta and such other insanitary things.

(c) *Rest shelters.*

147. No rest shelters for taking the meals or for use during intervals are provided except in one or two salt works. Those works who have them have not created them with a preplan. They are found at odd places and generally the workers do not make use of them. During intervals many a worker do not go to their quarters and make use of pump houses or such other sheltered places for taking their meals and rest. We are therefore of the view that the rest shelters should be provided at convenient places for the use of the workers.

(d) *Washing and bathing facilities.*

148. Almost all the salt works make arrangements for the supply of necessary water to their labour but there does not appear to exist proper washing and bathing facilities for use of the workers. It is found that generally the workers make their own arrangements for washing and bathing by putting flat stones near the water storage tanks. Ordinarily the males take their baths in the open sitting on these stones or their sleeping cots. While the females erect some sort of privacy from the males and take the baths. We feel that this position is quite unsatisfactory and adequate facilities for washing and bathing should be provided to the workers. Due to lack of such facilities combined with paucity of water in the works a large body of these workers do not prefer to take daily baths. Proper washing and bathing facilities for the workers in the works will add to the health, comfort and efficiency of the workers. We therefore recommed that the employers should be statutorily asked to provide adequate washing and bathing facilities for their workers either in the labour colonies or in place of work within the reasonable distances from the workers' residences. There should be separate arrangements for men and women.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WAGES AND EARNINGS.

149. Now in this Chapter we shall examine the wages and earnings of the workers employed in salt industry. We shall hereina

discuss the important issues allied to the problem of wages and earnings such as the need for fixation of minimum wages in the salt industry, method of payment, calculation of wages, wage period, paydays, retainer, etc.

*Problem of Wages.*

150. The problem of wages occupies an important place in an industrial economy. It determines in a large measure the competitive power of an industry for the commodities produced and has a great bearing on its structure. The industry pays the wages in lieu of the service rendered by the wage earners and such wages consist of money in most of the cases but sometimes they are in the form of goods or both. If the expression 'wage' is defined in a narrower sense of the past century, it should be defined to mean an income of the employees for the services rendered by them, accrued as a result of the fulfilment of a contract of employment between the employers and employees. Apart from the importance attached to the wages in the sphere of industrial economy, the wages have perhaps a greater significance for the labourer who receives them than any other feature of the structure of the industry. They largely determine the manner and the extent to which their recipients are able to provide food, clothing and housing for themselves and their dependants. The problem of wages is as such closely related to the standard of living of the labourer and the nature of his standard of living largely depends upon the wages received by him. His standard of living is influenced by another factor namely the provision of the services rendered, to labouring class by the state, common or co-operative agencies, etc. In our country to-day such services are limited and the wages received by him exercise a decisive influence on his standard of living. Any diminution in his real wages lowers his already meagre standard of living. On the other hand a steady upward trend in his wages induces him to have a better and decent living for himself and his family. It is therefore natural with him that he is more concerned with the problem of wages than any other labour problem. There is no wonder in that he always opposes any move to diminish his wages with all his efforts and attempts to hold tenaciously to his present wages and to seek to get his wages increased. The problem of wages to-day has assumed such an importance that it has become a pivot round which all the labour problems

revolve. It closely relates to the problem of efficiency, living or fair wage, profit sharing, fatigue, production etc. As a consequence it has become at present a chief point round which most of the industrial disputes are centred. There is no gain saying that this problem should be handled with a great tact and care, otherwise the economy of the nation is seriously endangered.

*Present wage position in salt industry.*

151. The discussion of the wage position in the industry is fraught with special difficulty in view of the peculiar nature of employment of workers and complete absence of information on the subject. We have already discussed the peculiar nature of employment of the workers in this industry as different from the system of employment followed in other industries and do not find it worthwhile to describe it here again. The lack of statistical information as regards the wages and earnings of the workers is attributable to the two reasons, firstly before the advent of the political freedom and formation of the State of Saurashtra, the industry did not attract the attention of the public and was not subjected to any official or non-official enquiry owing to the political conditions prevailing at that time in this part of the country. It was only after 1947 that the attention of the Government as well as of the public was focussed on the industry. Secondly the employers of the industry have not yet realised the need of maintaining the statistical data relating to the wages and earnings of the workers employed in the industry.

*I Inland Salt Works.*

152. The system of wages and their method of payment in this branch of the salt industry radically differ from those obtaining in other industries, because of its nature of working being semi-agricultural in character and its nature of employment being entirely different. In this branch of the salt industry there are three main categories of workers namely (i) the panholders employed by the employers, (ii) Sathis employed by the panholders and (iii) unskilled labour employed casually by the employers or the panholders.

153. The panholders are usually paid on a piece rate system. The unit of work adopted for the calculation of wages is a Bengali Maund

of salt produced and their rates of wages are related to this unit of work. The rates of wages are always uniform for all the panholders in an establishment but they differ slightly from unit to unit.

154. The Gandhi salt works at Jesda and the Mahaxmi Salt Works at Kuda presently pay the rates of 0-6-6 per Bmd. of salt produced. While in Bharat Salt works at Venasar the rates are 0-5-0 per Bmd. The basic rate in the Sir George Lloyd Salt Works (Kuda Salt Works) at Kuda is only 0-5-6 per Bmd. but the payment of an additional sum of Rs. 400 per pan in a manufacturing season works out the rate approximately at 0-6-6 per Bmd. of salt produced. It appears that the payment of Rs. 400 per pan in a season represents the cost of construction of wells, condensers and pans borne by the panholders and the compensation to the panholders who have not been able to tap sufficient quantity of brine only due to their sheer ill luck inspite of their digging a number of wells and suffered in production of salt. In case of salt works run by the co-operative societies of Agarias the panholders receive a much higher rate than that received by them in the privately owned salt works. The reason is obvious that in the former the panholders share in the profits of the co-operative societies after making due allowance for the expenses of the societies in a season. The panholders in these societies at Dehgam, Bajana and Jesda have received about 0-8-6 per Bmd. of salt production in the manufacturing season of 1951-52. In view of the fact that the panholders are expected to bear the entire cost of production of salt and the rates of wages they receive are fixed having a regard to this, it is essential to work out their net earnings in order to assess the present rate of their standard of living. Ordinarily about 220 tons or 6000 Bmds. of salt are manufactured in a pan of an average size, which is generally shared by two panholders. Taking Rs. 0-6-6 as an average price paid by the employers to the panholders the gross earnings of the panholders per pan amount to an approximate sum of Rs. 2437 per pan in a manufacturing season. Out of this sum the panholders are required to spend a substantial amount after the men and materials needed for the manufacture of salt. We give below the details of such expenditure which we collected from the data available during the course of our enquiry.

## ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE PER PAN INCURRED BY PANHOLDERS.

Heads of expenditure:	For average production of 220 tons or 6,000 Bmd of salt per pan in a salt manufacturing season.	
	Expenditure	
	Rs.	Rs.
(a) Preparation of salt pans and brine wells.		260.
(i) Cost of cleaning the pans.	50.	
(ii) Cost of cleaning the channels.	38.	
(iii) Cost of making farans.	15.	
(iv) Cost of making reservoirs.	10	
(v) Cost of digging well and providing Kantva ( Casing ).	105	
(vi) Cost of Kharvans	42.	
(b) Cost of implements and other accessories.		782:
(i) Cost of the counter-poised wooden beam ( Mandan ) & other necessary materials.	42	
(ii) Cost of earthen pots, ropes and earthen pipes.	20.	
(iii) Cost of pair of bullocks ( Depreciation )	150.	
(iv) Cost of leather vessel ( Kcs )	30.	
(v) Cost of fodder etc. for bullocks.	500.	(Fodder price has now come down and it will be about Rs. 300 )
(vi) Cost of spade, rake, shovel, baskets etc.	40.	
(c) Labour Charges.		140.
(i) Wages of Sathi	—	
(ii) Charges of a Sathi.	—	
(iii) Feeding the pans with brine.	—	
(iv) Ridging of salt.	40.	
(v) Heaping of salt.	100.	

(a) Miscellaneous Charges.		60.
(i) Interest paid to the money lenders.	—	
(ii) Cost of temporary huts.	30.	
(iii) Other expenses.	30.	
Total....	...	... <u>1242.</u>

As stated above, the panholders realise Rs. 2437 from the employers as the price of the salt produced by them on an average per pan and after deducting an expenditure of Rs. 1242 from this sum, a balance of Rs. 1195 is left with the panholders as their net earnings per pan. This net return of Rs. 1195 is shared between the two panholders who hold the pan, giving each Rs. 597/8 for the season. As such an average income of a panholder is estimated to be at Rs. 597/8 for the season or about Rs. 66/- per month. Since at least four persons are required to work on each salt pan, each earns about Rs. 298 for the season or Rs. 33 per month.

As this report is written, most of the employers of the inland salt works have announced a reduction in the rates of wages of the panholders by one anna for the manufacturing season of 1952-53. On account of this reason, the net earnings of the panholders are likely to go down by Rs. 187 per season i. e. each panholder would earn about Rs. 504 per season or Rs. 42 per month. Taking the basis of four workers per pan, the earnings per capita would be Rs. 252 per season or Rs. 28 per month. We consider that the return which the panholders receive in consideration of the hard and strenuous labour put up by them and their families, for nine months of the year, is extremely low and requires immediate improvement. This is a matter which in our opinion deserves immediate and careful attention. This view of ours is also supported by the authors of the report of the Salt Experts Committee 1950 who state on page 127 of their report as follows :—

“ For the year 1938-39 the price paid to the Agarias for salt was Rs. 3-6-5 per ton (Re. 0-2-0 per Md.) and their realisation from an average production of 220 tons (6,000

Bmds.) per pan was Rs. 750. The net return per pan which was shared between ten families of Agarias was Rs. 437 giving each family Rs. 218-5. For the season 1947-48 the rate paid was Rs. 2,250 per pan ( Re. 0-6-0 per Md. ) which yielded to the Agarias a sum of Rs. 2,250 per pan of 220 tons ( 6 000 Mds. ) of salt. The net return per pan which was shared between two families of Agarias was Rs. 696 or Rs. 348 per family. Economically the Agaria is therefore, much worse off today than before the War. Though he receives a rate which is 500 percent higher than before the War, his net earnings has increased only from Rs. 218-5 to Rs. 348 or about 60 percent. We consider that this question of payment to the Agarias needs to be closely examined so that they may receive adequate relief and their economic conditions may improve.

Though the above has been said for the Agarias employed in the salt works at Kharaghoda, it easily becomes applicable to the inland salt works in Saurashtra because there is not much difference in conditions of employment and wages prevailing in the salt works at Kharaghoda and those in Saurashtra.

155. Some panholders employ Sathis to help them in their work of manufacture of salt, who generally find everything with the panholders including food, clothing and footwears during their employment in the season and are paid a lump sum as remuneration. This sum varies from Rs. 80 to 125 per season.

156. As stated by us in the previous chapter the panholders employ some unskilled labour to help them prepare a brine well, condenser and a crystalliser and in the lifting operations of salt from the pans. Employers also employ such labour for the haulage of the salt from the works to the central storage for the last two months of the season. This labour is of casual nature and is mostly drawn from the families of the Agarias working in the salt works. The rate of wages of these casual workers varies from Rs. 1-4-0 to Rs. 1-12-0 per day. The rates of wages for male workers and women workers are different, males receiving two to



four annas per day more than the women workers. There is no system of paying dearness allowance and their wages are consolidated wages. There is no practice of paying profit bonus to the labour in these salt works.

157. (b) *Marine salt works.*

The wage rates of the workers in this section of the industry are not based on any principle but differ according to the skill and experience of the workers on the one hand and the employers' financial position on the other. There are no regular grades or scales of promotion even in case of permanent or semi-permanent workers. A vast majority of the workers in these salt works work on a time-rate basis, although the work of washing and heaping the salt in the pans and transporting it to the central storage, is done on a piece rate basis, in some of the salt works. The rates of wages vary from works to works and even in the same works the rate varies on account of the consideration of the experience and skill of the workers. In the salt works at Porbandar and Bhavnagar all the workers are time rated. While in other works both the time rate and piece rate system of wages exist side by side. The rates of wages for the time rated workers vary from Rs. 1-4-0 to 1-14-0 per day. Male workers and women workers get different wages, males receiving higher wages than the women workers. The earnings of the piece rate workers approximate to those of the time-rated workers though their work seems to be exacting and strenuous. The earnings of the skilled workers like drivers, fitters, blacksmiths, carpenters, muddams etc. range from Rs 60 to 125 per month depending largely upon experience and seniority. In these salt works no dearness allowance is paid and the wages are consolidated wages. Profit bonus is paid in very few works and where it is paid it is restricted to monthly paid staff and is dependent upon the profits earned.

158. *Need for statutory regulation of wages in the industry.*

In this industry no scientific principles are adopted in the fixation of wages of the workers, the only determining factors, being the supply and the demand of the workers and the prevailing rates of wages in the areas round about the centres of the industry. The excess of supply

over the demand of the workers being a regular feature of this industry, it has had an important influence on the determination of the wages of the workers and became a contributory factor in keeping the wages of the salt labour at a low level.

159. Comparing the present wages of the labour employed in the salt industry with those obtaining in other major industries in the State it is clearly found that the wages of the salt labour are much lower than those of their counterparts in other industries. The total minimum emoluments of the lowest category of the workers approximate between Rs. 50 and Rs. 60 per month of 26 working days, in most of the major industries in the State while in the salt industry the earnings of the workers do not go beyond Rs. 50 per month, as we have seen in the previous paragraphs.

160. The cost of living index has not been scientifically prepared for Saurashtra and so it is difficult to assess the minimum income, based on a scientific data, required to the wage earner to keep him fit. However the rates of wages and dearness allowance prevailing in other major industries give an indication that in view of the present abnormal rise in cost of living a lowest category employee should receive at least Rs. 52 per month. This view is also substantiated by the rates of wages which have been fixed by the Government of Saurashtra in specified employments under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948.

161. It is generally agreed that collective agreements provide the best method of determining the wages and we are in complete agreement with this view. In our country where the labour organisation is still in infancy and weak, this method of determining the wages has achieved little success, in case of organised industries like textile, iron and steel, jute, engineering etc. much less in case of an unorganised industry like salt. Where no collective bargaining is possible and the labour organisation is weak or absent to look after the interests of labour, the determination and regulation of wages become necessary through an external authority. In the salt industry since the labour is completely unorganised and lacks collective bargaining it clearly stands in need of the protection from an external authority like the State. An exceptionally

low level of wages and very cheap and unorganised labour exposed to exploitation in the salt industry make out a strong case for considering it as one of the sweated industries. With a view to prevent the payment of unduly low wages and to give protection to the labour employed in sweated employments, the International Labour Organisation adopted a convention of minimum wages, a relevant portion of which is given below.

“Each member of the International Labour Organisation which ratifies this Convention undertakes to create or maintain machinery whereby minimum rates of wages can be fixed for workers employed in certain of the trades or parts of trades (and in home working trades) in which no arrangements exist for the effective regulation of wages by collective agreement or otherwise and wages are exceptionally low.”

In compliance with this convention of I. L. O. the Government of India passed the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. While referring to the schedule of sweated employments mentioned in this Act, it is observed that the salt industry is not included in the schedule simply because the salt industry, it appears, did not attract the attention of the Government at the time of the passage of the enactment. It is worthwhile to note here that the Government of Bombay has recently included the salt-pan industry in the schedule of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 and has fixed the minimum wages for the labour employed in the industry. The Committee in view of what has been stated above has come to the conclusion that the labour employed at present in the salt industry is sweated labour and strongly recommend that it should be brought within the orbit of Minimum Wages Act, 1948 as early as possible.

162. The fixation of the minimum wages in the salt industry will reduce not only the number of wage rates in occupations of lower wage units but also the wide variations in those occupations from works to works. It will definitely improve the present inadequacy of wages to which we do not attach any sanctity under any theory of the determination of wages. There is no doubt that the fixation of minimum wages will pave the way for the introduction of standardisation of wages which will eliminate other disabilities of the present wage structure in the salt

industry. It will also prevent the diminution in the wages and indirect cuts in the real wages of the wage earners. In the opinion of the Committee the fixation of the minimum wages at present and the standardisation of wages later on will definitely improve the health, well-being and the general efficiency of the workers and will raise the general standard of living of the salt labour.

### Method of wage Calculation

163. When the time rate system of payment is in vogue it is easy and simple to calculate the wages of the workers since the wages are linked with the time put up by the workers. Where the workers are paid on piece rate basis, the problem of the method of wage calculation is fraught with some difficulties. We shall discuss here the method of the calculation of wages only in respect of the piece rate work done in the salt industry.

#### (a) *Inland Salt Works.*

164. In order to understand the method of wage calculation in the inland salt industry it is necessary to describe at some length the system of payment of wages prevalent in case of the panholders, before dealing with this question.

The panholders are paid on a piece rate basis, the unit of work being a Bengali Maund of salt manufactured by them. As such their earnings are linked up with the quantity in Bengali Maunds of salt produced by them. In order to understand the method adopted for the calculation of their wages it is necessary first to describe in some details the system of payment of their wages as existing today. As is the case in agriculture the manufacturing process in the inland salt industry takes a long time as much as six months for the production of salt. The case is reverse in other industries where the manufacturing process does not entail much time for the manufacture of the finished article, though in the marine salt industry it takes some more time in taking a crop of salt but there the workers are the least concerned directly with the production of salt. The reasons for this are obvious. In the former the forces of nature like the wind and the sunheat over which human

beings have no control play an important role for the manufacture of the finished article, like salt while in the latter largely man-made forces work for the manufacture of a finished product. Under these conditions the panholders are required to invest a nice amount of capital after men and materials needed for the manufacture of salt before they receive the return in the form of the price of salt manufactured by them. In absence of any capital with the panholders they receive it from the employers in the form of the monthly advances approximately Rs. 80 to 100 per month, depending upon their requirements. These advances do not carry interest except in one salt works which charge them 6 per cent interest on such advances. The employers give these advances to the panholders for their day to day expenditure till the final settlement of their accounts, which is always done at the end of the season in the month of July. In reality these advances are not the advances in the real sense of the term but represent the wages to be paid to the panholders. When the salt becomes ready, it is weighed and the price of the salt produced by the panholders at a rate fixed and settled between the employers and them at the commencement of the season is credited to their accounts. The total sum of advances received by the panholders during the season is deducted by the employers from their total earned emoluments and the balance is paid over to them.

We have stated above that the unit of payment to the panholders is generally Bengali Maund and their output is paid on the basis of weighment of salt. In absence of weighing machines the weight of the salt is taken out by measurements. In the George Lloyd Salt Works (Kuda Salt Works) at Kuda a standard of the measurement cum weighment has been adopted according to which the weight of the salt is taken out every season. The standard is one cubic foot of salt equivalent to 70 lbs. of salt. In this works salt is loaded direct into the wagons kept on the siding. The management puts marks on the inner side of these wagons to show the demarcation upto which the wagons should be filled up. Since the wagons already show their floor area in square feet on their outer side, it becomes easy to find out the cubic feet and the weight of the salt on the basis of the standard adopted. In other inland salt works salt is transported to the central storage in

motor trucks hired or contracted by the management. In each season when the salt becomes ready for haulage, the salt containing capacity of these motor trucks to be used in haulage, is found out in relation to weight and standardised in presence of some head men of the panholders. In most of the salt works visited during the investigation we came across loud complaints by the workers regarding the inadequacy of the weighment of salt. It was reported that under the present method of weighment of salt, there was much chance of overloading and the panholders were suffering a loss in their incomes.

165. The panholders of the George Lloyd Salt Works (Kuda Salt Works) at Kuda represented that several wagons had their doors damaged or holes in their bottoms and thereby they were suffering in their earnings. Moreover under this system there was greater scope of underloading on account of the collusion between the panholders and the junior supervisory staff and thereby dishonesty among the latter is encouraged in that they allow the underloaded truck to be passed on to the central storage. It was stated by the employers that the headmen of the panholders acted as check weighers and a special care was taken to see that the salt was weighed as accurate as possible in that the damaged wagons were not filled up and a wooden stick was passed over the motor trucks for the accuracy of the weighment of the salt. They seemed to be in favour of installing the weighing machine for the weighment of the salt but thought that this was not practicable in view of the difficulty of getting machines at present and also the inability of the smaller salt works to purchase them, within their smaller finances. When normal times return and weighing machines become available, it is desirable that the weighing machines should be installed in the larger salt works.

166. We consider that the adoption of a proper mechanical weighing device will eliminate the unrest and misunderstanding prevailing at present among the panholders. So long as such weighing device is not installed, there is no alternative in our opinion but to continue the present crude system of weighment with all its risks to be minimised to the least. Till such time we suggest that the union officials or the representatives of the panholders should act as check weighers and the

standard of measurement cum weighment or the salt containing capacity of motor trucks or other containers should be got certified by the weights and measures inspectors of the districts.

It was also noticed that the present system of weighment of salt was the greatest source of unrest among the panholders. We have given due consideration to the problem of weighment of salt in the light of the views expressed by the employers and labour and recommended that the salt works working more than 100 salt pans should be required to have the production of the panholders weighed through a proper mechanical weighing device.

(b) *Marine Salt Works.*

167. The workers engaged in digging, washing, heaping in and loading of the salt from the pans are paid on a piece rate system. The unit of payment to these workers is generally the tipping wagon. The size of the tipping wagon is generally uniform but in one or two salt works the tipping wagons of the larger size were in evidence. The capacity of the tipping wagons was found to be 27 cubic feet while of the larger size 36 cubic feet and they contained .75 ton and one ton respectively. It is observed that the rate of the payment is not linked up with the capacity of the tipping wagon and shows wide variation as between the tipping wagons of the same capacities. Though the occupation of digging, washing and heaping of salt in the pans and the loading of salt from the pans into the tipping wagons are different, the basis of payment in case of both is the tipping wagon and the rates are also the same for both with some variations in one or two salt works. Where the contract system prevails, gangs of workers varying from five to twenty-five are employed to do these jobs, and are paid together on the basis of their production through the contractor or head gangman, who distribute the wages to the individual workers. The only exceptions to this are to be found in the salt works at Porbandar and Bhavnagar where the workers employed on these jobs are paid on a time rate basis. As we have seen above the most usual method of payment to the piece rate workers is to pay according to the tipping wagons loaded and not according to weighment.

The system is attended with the risks of underloading and overloading and the dishonesty on the part of the lifting clerk or muccadams on account of their collusion with the contractor or the head gangman. We therefore recommend that the workers working on these jobs should be paid on the basis of weightment instead of the tipping wagons. This may be as much in the interest of the workers as of the industry itself in that the chance of dishonesty, favouritism and collusion between the contractor or the headman and the lifting clerks or muccadams will be eliminated, While the exact conscientious workers will be benefited in payment.

168. The method of recording the production of the piece rate workers is of the most obsolete type in both the inland and the marine salt works, particularly so in the case of the latter. In a very few salt works production slips are given to the workers showing their day-to-day production.

In most of the salt works no production slips are given and the production is recorded in the note books maintained by the clerks or muccadams of the employers. The workers do not keep with them any records by which they can check their production. The payments are made to the workers on the basis of the figures recorded in such note books and sometimes the figures recorded in these do not tally with those said by the workers resulting in the creation of misunderstanding, doubts and dissatisfaction amongst the workers. We therefore consider that it is the most essential to introduce the system of giving production slips to the piece rate workers to obviate the above disadvantages.

### **Method of Payments.**

#### *(a) Inland salt works.*

169. In the inland salt works the labour is generally paid directly by its employers. The management of the works make payments to the panholders and its casual labour without any intermediary between them while the panholders pay directly to their Sathis, and labour employed by them. The management generally takes acknowledgment or receipt of wages paid to its labour, Whereas the panholders



neither takes such acknowledgment or receipt nor maintain any records of wages paid by them. The works are not expected to supervise the payments made by the panholders and in case of their own workers wages are rarely distributed in presence of their responsible officers. The works ordinarily make payments from the counters of the offices temporarily erected in the works for the duration of the season,

(b) *Marine Salt Works.*

170. In the marine salt works the workers employed by the works are directly paid by the management. Thumb impressions or receipts are taken from the workers. Wages are paid from the counters of the works office. At the counter the names of persons are called out and each person is asked to place his thumb impression or sign in payment register and then he is paid the amount. Ordinarily the payments are made by the cashiers or pay clerks.

Where the labour is employed through the contractor or head gangman; as is always the case in respect of the piece work, wages are paid to the contractor or the head gangman who goes to receive the payment from the works. The amount thus received by him is distributed by him among the workers in proportion to the work put up by them on each day. Workers who work in gangs generally consist of members of the same family. In case of the workers working in gangs no acknowledgment or receipt of wages paid is taken from them except that given by contractor or head gangman. The distribution of wages amongst the gangmen is a difficult task because the head gangman has to take into account the work put up by each individual worker. It was also noticed in few works that the workers employed through a contractor or head gangman were paid directly by the works in the presence of the contractor or the head gangman, at the rates fixed and settled between the works and the contractor or head gangman.

We are of the view that the present system of wage payment as it exists to-day in the industry, particularly with regard to contract labour, contains dangers like the misappropriation, less payment, illegal deductions etc. and therefore recommend that all the workers whether employed

by the works, panholders or contractors should be paid directly by the management and their receipt or thumb impression should be invariably taken in acknowledgment. We also emphasise on the need of maintaining the pay rolls of the workers showing all the details of payment and distributing the wages in presence of the responsible officer of the establishment.

### **Wage periods and pay days.**

#### **(a) *Inland Salt Works.***

171. The panholders are paid the advances ( Haptas ) every month from the beginning to the end of the season. An information is sent to the panholders to the effect that the monthly advances will be given on so and so date and they come to receive the payments accordingly. At the end of the season their accounts are settled and the balance of their earnings is paid to them. It was observed that the panholders were not paid their final dues till all the salt is hauled to the central storage and they had to wait unnecessarily for a pretty long period at the works for the final settlement of their accounts. The employers seemed to think that the panholders and their family members after completion of the work of the season on their pans, found the work of lifting and stacking of salt with the works and thereby supplemented their earnings. They also argued that in view of the short supply of casual labour in the areas of the salt works they had to depend upon the panholders and their family members for the supply of such labour to be engaged in lifting and stacking operations. The Committee has considered these contentions of the employers for the need of continuing the present practice of making payments at the close of the season in the interest of the management and labour and feels that the panholders should not be made to stay compulsorily for the only reason that the season is not closed. Some of the panholders are agriculturists and after the close of the salt manufacturing season they engage themselves in the agricultural operations. If they are made to stay for a longer time in the works after the completion of their work, they would lay behind in the agricultural operations which immediately follow. We think that the panholders should be given the option whether they like to stay in the

works to supplement their earnings or they wish to return their homes for agricultural operations after the completion of their work. We regret to note that in one of the works the panholders did not receive the final settlement of their accounts for 1951-52 season, till the end of September, 1952. Their chief handicap, it appears, is lack of funds. We therefore recommend that the panholders should be paid their dues within a week of the completion of their work.

172. Sathis are paid by the panholders generally at the end of their employment period but sometimes their wages are given when the panholders receive the final settlement of their accounts from the works. We think it very essential that the Sathis should be paid their dues within two days of the completion of their employment period.

173. The casual labour employed by the works and the panholders is ordinarily paid its wages weekly. This labour in few works is paid every day after the completion of their work. There is no doubt that daily payment unnecessarily increases clerical work and leads to great absenteeism and unstable domestic economy. The pay day is not fixed and it is any day in the succeeding week which is fixed looking to the convenience of the management. We hold the opinion that the wage period in respect of the casual labour should not exceed a week and the pay day should be a day preceding the weekly off day, if any to facilitate the labour to make purchases of their day-to-day requirements on the off day.

(b) *Marine Salt Works.*

174. In all the principal centres of the industry the wage period is not uniform and varies from works to works. The works at Bhavnagar, Porbandar and Lavanpur observe monthly wage period for all the workers. The Digvijay Salt Works at Jamnagar has also adopted a monthly period. In the salt works at Maliya and Nagna and the Halar Salt Works at Jamnagar the wage period is a week for both the time-rate workers and the piece rate workers. The Wage period in the salt works at Jafrabad is a fortnight. Ordinarily the wages are paid in the succeeding week of the completion of the wage period. We consider the monthly wage period too long in view of the low earnings of the workers and the

weekly wage period too short entailing the increase of clerical work and great deal of inconvenience to both the management and labour in adjusting their accounts and suggest that fortnightly wage period should be adopted. We are of the view that in no case the wage period should exceed a month and the wages of the workers should be paid within a week of their becoming due, where less than one thousand workers are on the muster roll. One more suggestion which we like to make in this connection is that the pay day should be the day immediately preceding the weekly off observed in the works so that the workers are facilitated to go to the markets in the neighbouring towns or villages for the purchase of their requirements. We are satisfied to note that in majority of the works the payment of wages is made on working days. However we express the view that the wages of the workers should be paid invariably on the working days and in no circumstances it should be on off days, because it is likely to cause inconvenience to the workers coming from neighbouring villages and to result in irregularity.

#### *Wage deductions.*

175. In the inland salt works it was seen that the deductions other than those of sums advanced to the panholders during the course of the season for their day-to-day expenditure were being made from the earnings of the season. In one salt works a levy called Dharmada was till recently collected from the panholders at the rate of pie or two per rupee on his earnings on the close of the season. The total sum of these deductions amounted to an approximate sum of Rs. 13000 and is lying with management of the works. It is reported that the twelve years National Savings Certificates were purchased of this sum in favour of a son of the superintendent of the works but subsequently on representation of the panholders they were cashed and the amount was transferred to the works. The management has stopped the deduction of Dharmada from the last season. It was stated by the employer that this deduction was made with due regard to the wishes of the panholders and the total collections were to be utilised for building a temple for the panholders in the works. We think that this accumulated sum should be utilised for the welfare of the panholders and their families. We suggest that it should be transferred to the consumers' co-operative

society of Agarias as its initial capital, which the works and their Agarias intend to form in the near future. In another inland salt works we came across a system under which certain portion from the earnings of the panholders is held back as deposits so that the same Agarias come to works in the next manufacturing season. The sums thus held back are returned to the Agarias if they turn up for work in the next season. We incline to name this system nothing short of deduction and view it prejudicial to the interests of the Agarias. In our opinion the Agarias should have all the freedom to select his place of work in the succeeding salt manufacturing season, having regard to his present status of temporary workman. It was also noticed in some of the inland salt works that a deduction on account of the moisture from the weight of the salt produced by the panholders, is made by the employers on the basis of certain per centage say  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent or 3 per cent on the weight of the salt and this is a constant source of complaints by the workers. It is evident that this deduction results ultimately in the lesser earnings of the panholders. It has been pointed out by the employers that this deduction has got the justification. Because, firstly the salt weighing operations begin soon after the salt is stacked outside the pans and at that time it consists fair amount of moisture, secondly the employers have to sell it on the basis of the weight generally when it gets dry and a considerable amount of difference between the two weights on account of the moisture results in loss to them unless they are compensated by moisture allowance in the first weight of the salt. We do not see any justification for this deduction because salt is kept in ridges in the pans for a number of days to drain off the bittezn and the weighing operations begin only when the salt is taken out of all the salt pans, and it is considered devoid of moisture. Moreover the excessive summer heat largely helps in drying up the salt.

So far as the position with regard to the deduction from the wages of the workers in the marine salt works is concerned, we are given to understand that no deductions are made from the wages of the workers employed in the works. However during our investigation we found a case of deduction in one of the salt works where a sum called Dharmada was deducted from the wages of the workers.

The deductions on account of fine, damage or loss caused to the employer and such other causes are quite absent in the inland salt works and rarely found in the marine salt works.

The Committee is therefore of the opinion that the deductions on account of Dharmada or deposit or moisture should be forthwith put an end to and the deductions on account of fines, advances, house rent and such other concessions should be regulated by law.

*Application of Payment of Wages Act to the salt industry.*

176. We have already discussed elsewhere the present position with regard to the enforcement of the Payment of Wages Act vis a vis the salt industry. Now we shall examine the question whether it is possible or feasible to apply the Payment of Wages Act to the salt industry and if not what other measures should be taken to meet the needs of the industry and to remove the present irregularities with regard to the payment of wages, which appear to exist to-day in some of the salt works.

As distinguished from the conditions with regard to the system of payment, wage period, employment of workers in the inland salt industry, the conditions in the marine salt works are quite identical to those prevailing in other industries. This position makes us to think in favour of the applicability of Payment of Wages Act to the marine salt works. Several concerns were consulted during the course of our enquiry with regard to the desirability and feasibility of the application of the Payment of Wages Act to the marine salt works. They appeared to think that the Payment of Wages Act applied to their works and some of them seemed to comply with the provisions of this act as far as possible. This is due to the fact that in the early period of the enactment of this law the inspectors of factories had visited these works and tried to enforce the provisions of the Payment of Wages Act. The consensus of the opinion appeared to be that the payment of Wages Act should be made applicable to the marine salt works. We are also in favour of the applicability of the Payment of Wages Act to the marine salt works.

It is argued by several persons that the salt works are not the factories according to the interpretation put by the Government of India

and other State governments to the term 'factory' defined in the factory legislation and so the difficulty will arise in application of the Payment of Wages Act to the marine salt industry. In our opinion this is a legal technicality and can be removed by making necessary modifications in the definition of the term 'factory' provided in the Payment of Wages Act, 1936. We hold the view that even if this argument is conceded, though we do not, the Payment of Wages Act can be applied to the marine salt works under section I (5) of the Act which reads as follows :

“The Provincial Government may, after giving three months' notice of its intention of so doing, by notification in the official Gazette extend the provisions of the Act or any of them to the payment of wages to any class of persons employed in any industrial establishment or in any class or group of industrial establishments”.

In our opinion the words “other establishments in which articles are produced, adapted or manufactured, with a view to their use, transport or sale” in section 2 (ii) (f) cover also the meaning of salt works. We therefore recommend that the Payment of Wages Act should be extended to the marine salt works.

*Inland salt works.*

177. The system of payment, wage period and employment conditions in the inland salt industry are different from those in the marine salt works and other industries and therefore they call for a separate regulation for the payment of wages of the workers employed in it. The seasonal settlement of accounts, payment of advances, absence of deductions like fines and damage or loss to the employers, are the chief characteristics of the industry. Therefore we are not in favour of extending the Payment of Wages Act, 1936 to this section of the industry. The employers and the representatives of labour whom we met, appeared to be in agreement with this view. However, we consider it very essential to make some legal provisions having sufficient regard to the peculiar features of the industry in payment of wages in order to eliminate some irregularities in payments found at present in the industry.

Undue delay in final settlement of panholders' accounts, deductions of charity from the final accounts and the deductions from the weight of the salt produced are some of the irregularities which we came across during our enquiry and which should be remedied in the interest of the labour. We therefore recommend that the proposed labour legislation should contain the provisions relating to the regulation of the payment of wages to the workers employed in the inland salt industry. The principal provisions should be as follows :

- (i) The panholders should be paid his emoluments within a week of the lifting of salt from his pan.
- (ii) The Sathis employed by the panholders should be paid their dues within two days of the termination of their employment.
- (iii) The wage period of the casual labour employed by the panholders or employers should not exceed one month, and the wages of such labour should be paid within a week of the expiry of the wage period provided that where the number of such labour exceeds one thousand in any wage period, the time limit should be extended to ten days.
- (iv) The employers should be allowed to make the following deductions from the wages of the workers paid by them.
  - (a) Advances. (b) House rent. (c) Services. (d) Damage or loss to the employer, (e) Provident Fund. (f) Fines.
- (v) The employers should be prevented to make deductions other than those legalised from the wages of the workers.
- (vi) The employers and the panholders should be required to maintain the necessary records of payments and deductions made in respect of their labour.

178. *Differential in wage rates for male and women workers.*

The salt industry compares favourably with other industries in regard to the employment of female labour in that a large force of women workers is engaged in it. This is simply because of the reasons



that most of the work in the salt industry is unskilled and does not require much technique and most of the jobs like, loading, unloading, stacking and transporting of salt in the industry are more suited to the females. The industry employs nearly 4000 women workers in the total employment of about 9000 workers. Our enquiry disclosed that the women workers were employed at a lower rate than the male workers. In one of the marine salt works this difference is as much as seven annas in the rates of daily wages for male and women workers. It was stated that the female workers always do less work in comparison with their counterparts. We fear that this misconception would have arisen out of the mistaken idea of superiority of men over women in our social life. We have observed during our visits of the salt works many women workers putting up more work than the male workers. We will remember that at the time of our visits to the Gandhi Salt works at Jesda and the Halar Salt Works at Jamnagar the stacking and loading operations were going on and we observed that the female labour was giving much more out put than the male labour.

We suggest that the principle of equal pay for equal work should be accepted as the basis for fixing the rate of wages and recommend the same wage for women workers as for men workers. We hope that the employers would not interpret the above principle to the disadvantage of the female labour.

*Retainer for salt workers.*

179. Some representatives of the workers placed an idea before us as regards the payment of retainer to the salt labour during the off season. They stated that the system of paying retainer during the off season is in practice in the sugar industry. According to them the case for payment of retainer in salt industry is stronger than that in sugar industry because the salt industry is closed down for a much shorter period than the sugar industry. We have examined the case of retainer in the salt industry very minutely and have come to the conclusion that the present position of the industry does not permit the immediate introduction of the scheme of retainer in case of the unskilled labour in the industry. The salt industry is usually located in the mofussil areas and most of its labour comes from the agricultural class.

The unskilled labour of the industry does not remain idle or unemployed during the off-season. Since the off-season of the salt industry coincides with the season of agricultural operations the unskilled workers have a large prospect of employment in their own villages during the off-season of the industry. This class of labour preponderates in the industry and the payment of the retaining allowance to it will increase the cost of salt to an appreciable degree. However we recognise that the introduction of the payment of retaining allowance to this labour will go a long way in stabilising it in the industry and diminishing its mobility. It will also decrease the pressure on the employment situation in the villages.

So far as the skilled workers are concerned, their case for the retaining allowance is strong. Because a skilled worker can hardly find employment for a short period of three months in other industry, and, the number of such workers is also small. It is found that most of the works generally do not terminate the services of such monthly paid employees at the end of the manufacturing season and pay them salaries during the off-season. We recommend that the following categories of the skilled employees should be paid a retaining allowance at the rate of 50 per cent of their consolidated wages.

( i ) Drivers.

( ii ) Fitters.

( iii ) Carpenters.

( iv ) Turners. etc

*Special problems of inland salt industry.*

180. The inland salt industry as it exists to-day in Saurashtra, has the important problems which should not be left over while discussing the problem of wages and earnings relating to the salt industry as a whole. These problems are (a) the justification of advances made to the panholders during the whole of the manufacturing season, (b) need for their regulation and (c) the interest charged on them. They became exactly the controversial issues when they were discussed with the management and labour of the industry. We feel that we should discuss these questions in

some details so that the misapprehensions as regards them in the minds of the parties concerned can be dispelled.

(a) *Justification of advances.*

181. As pointed out previously the employers, give the panholders monthly advances for their day-to-day expenditure during the manufacturing season till the settlement of the accounts of the season is received by the latter. It was stated by the employers that they were not under obligation to give these advances and the panholders were expected to invest their own finances for the manufacture of salt. They also expressed the opinion that in view of the panholders having no finance as much as fifteen hundred rupees for investment in the manufacture of salt during the season and little credit of the panholders in the local markets the employers made available out of grace the facility of monthly advances to the panholders. They cited the example of the Government Salt Works at Kharaghoda where the advances were not given to the panholders by the employers but advances were made to them by an independent body called the Agaria credit co-operative society. They compared the panholders with the farmers who leased the land and invested their own capital for its cultivation. They pointed out that on each season the farmers were not given the advances by the state for cultivation of land but taccavi loans were advanced to them only when the agricultural seasons had failed. In our opinion this analogy is based on the wrong fundamentals. The farmers are guaranteed the ordinary rights of land tenancy and have got an independent status with full rights to dispose off their products while the panholders have no rights of permanency and are subjected to a strict discipline of the industry with no freedom to sell their manufactured product. We also drew the attention of the employers to the fact that when there was no Agaria credit co-operative society in the Government Salt Works at Kharaghoda these advances were given by the works. A large sums of money which are advanced to the panholders are utilised by them purely for the manufacture of salt. In reality the advances represent more or less the wages to be paid to the panholders for the work put up by them. We therefore hold the view that it is a fundamental basis of the contract of employment between the employers and panholders that

the former will make available to the latter all the finances necessary for the manufacture of salt having regard to the work performed by the latter on their salt pans.

*(b) Need for their regulation.*

182. All the inland salt works in Saurashtra have a custom of paying monthly advances to the panholders during the manufacturing season. Sometimes these advances fall short of the requirements of the panholders and the latter are required to borrow additional sums from the private money-lenders who charge extortionate rates of interest and exploit them. If they do not borrow from the private money lenders, their work of manufacture suffers and consequently their production and earnings are seriously affected. This calls for some sort of regulation in the payment of advances to the panholders. We therefore recommend that the sums of advances to be paid to the panholders should be regulated by law. We have examined the requirements of the panholders for the manufacture of salt during the season and have arrived at a conclusion that in view of the present high cost of labour and materials a minimum sum of Rs. 100 per pan should be disbursed every month to the panholders for their day-to-day expenditure.

The employers stated that such a legislation would place the works in difficulty because many panholders in the initial period of the season after receiving the advances from the works gave up the work and went away. In our view there is some truth in this argument and we have to suggest that the panholders should be given the advances only after they put up some initial earth work. In such cases the employers can also resort to the proceedings in the civil court against the defaulters for the breach of the contract of employment.

We would like to make one more suggestion in this respect that since the panholders have to spend more in the beginning of the season on the construction of brine-well, condensers, crystallisers etc. they should be given higher sums of advances during this period of the season than any other period of the season.

*(c) Whether advances should bear any interest.*

183. All the inland works except one do not charge any interest on these advances. The one that charges the interest on advances does at the rate of 6 percent and it is collected from the final accounts of the panholders at the end of the season.

For the reason that the sums of advances are utilised solely for the manufacture of salt and they more or less represent the wages to be paid to the panholders for the work put up by them these advances in our opinion should not bear any interest.

*A case of compensation for rejected salt in the inland salt industry.*

184. During the course of our enquiry in the inland salt industry several panholders complained that the employers did not accept all the salt manufactured by them having said that the salt was not fit for human consumption and usually a portion of the salt was rejected by the employers. They added that since they were not permitted to take away or market the rejected salt and had to abandon it on their salt pans, they should get some compensation in lieu of it. The employers stated that many panholders with a view to earn more, collected the spoilt salt and tried to give it to the employers. In our view there is some truth in the statement of the employers. Moreover the salt manufactured in this salt industry is mainly used for edible purposes, a meticulous care should be taken by its manufacturers for its purity. We understand that some standards have also been prescribed for the quality of salt to be manufactured by the salt industry. We therefore can not accede to the demand of the workers to market or to take away the rejected salt and leave the matter of compensation for such rejected salt to be decided between the parties through the collective bargaining.

## CHAPTER IX.

### Housing.

185. We now proceed to consider the problem of housing for the labour employed in the salt industry. Health and housing are closely interlinked and they exercise a direct influence in the industrial efficiency.

There is no doubt that provision of better and decent housing to an industrial worker results in his higher efficiency and lower incidence of sickness in him and his family. Therefore the need of housing is considered as one of the important and vital needs of an industrial worker. The significance of the industrial housing has been widely recognised by all the industrially advanced countries. This fact has not yet been understood in our country and very little by way of providing better and decent housing accommodation to the industrial workers has been done either by the Government or the employers or other agencies. It is a matter of satisfaction that recently the importance of industrial housing has been recognised and adequate steps are taken by all the agencies for the improvement of the housing conditions of industrial labour.

## *II. General housing conditions in salt industry.*

186. We have described in details the housing conditions of salt labour prevailing in each establishment in the previous chapters. We shall now take a birds eyeview of those conditions with regard to the inland and marine salt works.

### *Inland salt works.*

187. In the inland salt works, unlike their counterparts in the marine salt works, the employers do not at all provide the housing accommodation to their labour. The employers of these salt works seem to think that each panholder is an independent contractor and so he is expected to make the necessary housing accommodation for himself and his labour. These salt works are always located in isolated places far interior on the border of little Rann of Kutch and so the labour engaged in them does not have the advantage of private housing which other industrial labour can avail of. Under such circumstances the workers of these salt works make their own arrangements regarding their housing for the duration of the salt manufacturing season. At present they live in the huts constructed by themselves at their own cost to suit their requirements near their respective salt pans. Generally one hut is erected on each salt pan to accommodate all the persons working on that salt pan. These huts are made of mud walls, thatched roof and mud floor. They do

not consist of more than one room of an average size. These huts are always prepared somewhat underground with a view to protect the inhabitants from the atmospheric changes of heat, cold and winds. At the end of each salt manufacturing season they are abandoned by the Agarias and they get destroyed when in monsoon the whole of the Rann in which these works are situated is submerged with waters of big rivers flowing in the Rann. On account of the destruction of their old huts in the course of the inundation of the area during monsoon the Agarias have to repeat the process of building their huts in each salt manufacturing season. This involves a large amount of recurrent expenditure for housing on behalf of the Agarias and extra labour to be put in by them in each season.

#### *Marine salt works.*

188. In the marine salt works housing accommodation is provided to a small percentage of workers who live at the works. This accommodation is exclusively provided by the employers and house about 30 per cent of the salt labour. It seems that they provide this accommodation to their labour in view of the non-existence of an alternative private housing in the vicinity of these salt works. The rest of the workers live in the huts erected by them at their own cost round the salt works, as is the case in the inland salt works.

The salt works at Malia, Bherai, Dhuvav do not have any housing accommodation for their labour and labour exclusively lives in the huts constructed by it near the works.

One of the salt works at Jamnagar and the salt works at Nagna provide housing to nearly 60 percent of its imported labour. The rest live in the neighbouring villages or in the huts erected by them near the salt works. In both these salt works the type of the quarters provided to the labour is similar. Rooms have been built in lines and with back-to-back walls.

In the salt works where the housing accommodation is provided tenements are built in barracks and they are single room tenements. In most of such salt works these tenements are built on a plinth of 9 inches to

one foot. They consist of one room measuring 10 feet  $\times$  10 feet with 4 feet common verandah in front for all the tenements. The verandah is not closed and is used for sleeping. The walls are generally made of bricks or cement hollow blocks. In some salt works manglore and country tiles are used for roofing while in others asbestos sheeting and corrugated galvanised sheets are provided as roofing. In many salt works the quarters are built back-to-back. The floor is kutchra which requires frequent renovation. Windows are usually  $2\frac{1}{2}' \times 2'$ . In two salt works some quarters were noticed with only one room of  $10' \times 10'$ . In these quarters there was no arrangement for ventilation and built back-to-back. They have very low roofs and have not been found fit for habitation. A number of low roofed rickety structures with walls and roofs of flattened oil drums and tins have also been found.

Latrines and urinals are absent and no lights are provided. Drinking water is obtained from the water storage tanks or water taps in the labour camps. There are no bathing or washing facilities. Since the recruitment in the salt works is done on a family basis one family is given one quarter and no rent is charged.

#### *Need of housing in salt industry.*

189. The need of housing for the labour employed in the salt industry is enormously felt because generally the salt works are situated in places completely isolated from the populated urban and rural areas where practically housing accommodation for the labour is conspicuously absent except that provided by the employers. Several marine salt works provided housing accommodation to their labour but the percentage of such housed labour is too small and a large mass of the labour employed in the works live in the huts erected by themselves round about the works. The employers of the inland salt works do not at all provide housing accommodation for their labour and the labour in these works exclusively lives in the huts constructed by it on the salt pans of the works. These employers contend that each panholder is an independent contractor and so he is expected to make the housing accommodation for himself and his labour. In our opinion this argument of the employers of the inland salt works does not



hold ground in view of what we have discussed in the preceding chapters with regard to the status of the salt panholders. We again reiterate that it is our firm conviction that they are the workmen of the employers and should be treated as such for all purposes connected with the labour legislation. Unlike other industries, this industry is located far into the interior on the border of the little Rann of Kutch and on the barren marshy lands on the sea coast and so the labour of this industry does not have the advantage of private housing which the labour of other industries can have. A complete absence of private housing accommodation in the vicinity of the salt works combined with an inadequate provision of housing accommodation from the employers create the slums and insanitary settlements of labour round the salt works. Moreover the Agarias and their families live in the huts erected by them for about nine months of the year under the conditions of extreme heat and cold, storms and high winds which are the normal climatic features in the inland salt works. It is really exacting to the workers and their families to live in these improvised and insanitary huts under such rigorous climatic conditions. It is observed that since these huts are erected by the Agarias themselves at their own cost, they are always too small to accommodate themselves and their families and devoid of sanitation facilities which are considered necessary from the modern standard of health and decency. We feel that the continuance of this state of affairs with regard to the housing of the salt labour is deplorable from the modern standard of living conditions and it requires to be changed in consonance with the present trends of housing accommodation for the industrial labour. The Committee has examined the question of housing of the salt labour in details and has come to the conclusion that the Government should take immediate steps to provide the labour with better housing accommodation with all necessary sanitation facilities.

During the course of our enquiry when we discussed with the employers of the inland salt works, the question of housing for their labour, they contended that in view of the peculiar conditions prevailing in the inland salt works in contrast with those in the marine salt works, it was not possible or practicable to make a provision of pucca housing for

their labour. In support of their contention they put forth the following two arguments :

- 1 That it is not feasible to construct the houses of permanent nature in the areas of the salt works because of the annual inundation of the areas during the monsoon season.
- 2 That if the labour quarters are built on the sites which are not affected by such inundation, the workers on account of the long distances between their places of work and their homes, will not be able to pay sufficient attention to their work, which like an agricultural work requires the constant attendance and consequently the production of the salt and the earnings of the workers will receive a serious setback.

We are in agreement with the first argument of the employers and have to suggest that the annual inundation of the salt works being a natural phenomenon the labour quarters should be built on high level sites out of the belt of the inundation as near the salt works as possible. With regard to second argument of the employers we are inclined to think that though the agricultural work and the work of salt manufacture are similar in respect of the need of the care and attendance to be given to them, an agriculturist is not required to disturb his home life and live on his fields with his family. Ordinarily he goes for his work in the fields from his home in the village and returns to his home after finishing it. When an agriculturist does this in the interest of his family life, we are at a loss to understand why the Agarias should not adopt that way of life in the larger interest of happiness of himself and his family. We also think that the location of the houses of the Agarias at some distance from the places of their work will not result in the loss of production and the earnings of the Agarias as some employers argue, but on the contrary they will rise on account of the improvement in the present living conditions of the Agarias, though they will be slightly inconvenienced due to the situation of their houses at some distance from their places of work.

*Responsibility for providing housing accommodation.*

190. Now the question arises as to who should assume the responsibility for the provision of housing accommodation for the labour employed in

the salt industry. The employers of this industry, disclaim direct responsibility for the provision of housing for their labour, although some of them have voluntarily provided housing accommodation to their labour. They urge that the housing of the poor is on par with the medical and other social services for which the state assumes positive responsibility and so the primary responsibility for housing the salt labour rests entirely with the Government. Some persons have expressed the view that the employers should bear this responsibility. We have given due consideration to this question and feel that on account of the complete absence of private housing in the vicinity of the salt works and the urgent need of making adequate provision for the housing of the salt labour, the employers should assume large portion of this responsibility. Now it is recognised that the housing of the labour should be a charge on the industry. It is necessary in the opinion of the Committee that the employers of the salt industry should be statutorily called upon to discharge the duty of providing houses to their labour as is the case in respect of plantation industry, and the necessary provisions with respect to this and relating to the standard and specification of accommodation to be furnished, selection of sites, fixing of rents etc. should be incorporated in the proposed labour legislation for the salt labour.

*Financial aspect of the problem.*

191. The implementation of any scheme of housing for industrial labour requires a big investment of capital and the employer can not be expected to discharge his duty of providing housing to his labour without imposing a heavy burden on his resources and competitive power. So it is essential that the Government should step in to assume some responsibility in the form of subsidising the housing schemes and providing the necessary capital finance for housing of the industrial labour. This responsibility is being increasingly accepted by the Government. It is understood that recently the Government of India has evolved a subsidised housing scheme for the industrial labour which provides for the grant of subsidies and loans to the state Governments, statutory housing boards, employers and co-operative societies of industrial workers. This scheme envisages the grant of subsidies to the employers and co-operative societies of workers,

to the extent of 25 percent of the actual cost of construction of housing schemes undertaken by them and the grant of loans to them upto  $37\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of the cost of construction at  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent interest per annum or at the option of the borrowers upto 50 per cent of the cost of construction at 5 per cent interest per annum repayable in 15 years. We suggest that the employers of the salt industry should fully take the advantage of this scheme of housing for the industrial workers. This scheme will be found in appendix "IV" appended to this report. We feel that the workers will pay economic rents for the provision of housing accommodation and assume their share of responsibility in the housing of the salt labour.

192. In the urban areas the problem of scarcity and high cost of land sites and costly building labour presents difficulties in implementing a scheme of housing programme but in case of salt industry which is exclusively situated in places far from the urban centres the land and building labour are likely to be available at cheap rates and these will entail a little burden on the industry. Where the Government land is available, Government should agree to lease or sell such land on concessional terms to the employers or co-operative societies of the salt labour.

193. It is obvious that the strict and immediate enforcement of the provisions relating to housing envisaged in the proposed salt labour legislation will result in the overburdening of the financial resources of the industry. Keeping this in view and despite our recommendation of imposing statutorily the obligation of housing the entire bulk of the salt labour on the employers, we hold the view that this housing programme should be spread over a period of ten years at the end of which all the labour employed in the industry will be housed.

194. It is needless to state here that all sort of encouragement and help should be given to this class of industrial labour to build their own houses on co-operative principles in the vicinity of the salt works.

*Relation between rent and wages.*

195 The success of the housing programme for the industrial workers depends in no small measure on the payment of economic rents by them

and the payment of economic rents is closely related to the earnings of the workers. The Committee has examined these considerations in respect of the salt industry from all aspects of the problem and has come to decision that in view of the present small earnings of the workers it will not be possible for them for some time to come to pay the economic rents which can be assessed about Rs. 8-0-0 per one roomed single storeyed tenements and Rs. 12-0-0 for two roomed single storeyed tenements. Therefore we are inclined to suggest that so long as the workers are not able to pay economic rents for the provision of the housing, the employers should bear the burden of this short-coming. It is suggested in this connection that the amount of rent chargeable to the workers for the houses should in no case exceed 10 percent of their earnings. Looking to the present earnings of the workers we place the figure ranging from Rs. 3 to 5 per month depending upon the quality of the houses supplied and the availability of the services rendered.

*Standard of housing accommodation.*

195. We recognise that the present living conditions of the salt labour need be improved radically in the interest of the health and and happiness of the salt workers and their families. The huts in which large number of the salt labour resides are no better than hovees put up haphazard and provide base shelters and have rarely any amenety. It was observed that some of the labour quarters were not fit for human habitation without making substantial improvements on them. The public health authorities should be empowered to deal expeditiously with houses considered in their opinion unfit for human habitation and to arrange for demolition or immediate conversion to the non-residential uses.

With regard to the provision of accommodation in the houses to be constructed for the salt labour we are of the opinion that there should be two types of houses, one room and two rooms tenements. The former should comprise one living room, a kitchen a verandah, a latrine and a bathing place and the latter should have an additional living room. The living rooms should be of a minimum size of 120 sq. feet in floor area. Single room tenement should be considered as the

minimum requirement for an average family of a salt worker. To conform to this standard of accommodation the present labour quarters which are found in some of the marine salt works will have to be substantially improved. In addition we emphasise on the urgent need of making proper provision for latrines, water supply and washing and bathing facilities. In case these can not be supplied in each tenement, they can be made available by providing these facilities for the general use at suitable places in the labour colonies. In some of the inland salt works the workers are expected to keep the bullocks for the drawing of the brine from the brine wells and so adequate provision should be made in the proposed houses of the workers to accommodate the bullocks and their fodder.

197. Lastly we recommend that the workers residing in the premises provided by the salt works on rent should be conferred upon the ordinary rights of tenancy and they should not be prevented by the employers from exercising these rights, so long as they act within the limits of the law of the land.

## CHAPTER X.

### **Welfare Activities and Social Legislation.**

198. We now propose to discuss the welfare activities and social measures undertaken by the employers, Government and other agencies for the economic betterment and social well-being of the workers employed in the industry. The provision of cheap sanitary and adequate housing accommodation to the labour is one such measure which we have dealt with in the preceding chapter so far as the salt industry in Saurashtra is concerned. Therefore it is not necessary to deal with this subject in the present chapter. In this chapter we shall consider only other welfare work and social legislation for the salt workers under different headings in the following paragraphs with special reference to (a) educational and medical facilities, (b) provision of bathing and washing amenities, (c) pensions, provident funds and gratuities, (d) provision of creches and canteen, (e) entertainments and recreational facilities, and (f) social legislations like Workmen's Compensation Act and Maternity Benefit Act.

*Gratuity, pension and provident fund schemes.*

199. The salt industry in the State does not have any scheme for the old age pensions, gratuities or provident funds for the workers. The advantages of these superannuation benefits are to help the workers to be steady in their service with their establishments and to make provisions against the risks of invalidity of the old age. They are also intended to make adequate provision after deaths of the bread winners for their family members and to protect them from economic distress. These social security measures go a long way in diminishing the labour turn over and the migratory character of the labour which is a chief characteristic of Indian labour and to help in achieving its stability in the industry. The employers of the salt industry like those of other industries in Saurashtra have not yet recognised the need and importance of conferring these benefits upon their labour. They always take the protection under the partially seasonal character of the industry. There are also some difficulties found in introducing these schemes in the salt industry because of the annual system of payment of wages in the inland salt industry, discontinuity in service of the workers due to causes of nature, migration of labour and the peculiar nature of employment and working in the inland salt works. We think that these difficulties can be overcome by making suitable modifications in the existing system of these benefits as they are introduced in other industries, if at all the employers have mind to introduce them. Although we recognise that some form of provision for old age is essential for the workers employed in this industry, we consider that the circumstances and the present state of development of the industry do not allow the immediate introduction of these superannuation benefits in the salt industry. We are satisfied to note that in course of time this industry will also be covered under the Employees' Provident Fund Act, 1952 which has been extended to certain basic industries.

*Provision of educational facilities.*

200. During the course of our tours of the salt works both inland and marine we found that there was nearly complete absence of education not only amongst the workers employed in them but amongst their

children also. This lack of education amongst the workers and their children can be largely attributed to the scanty provision of educational facilities in the salt works and the areas round about them from where the supply of the workers of the industry is drawn. All would agree with our view that this state of affairs is deplorable and this disability must be liquidated at the earliest in the interest of the salt labour employers and public at large. The Royal Commission on Labour observed this aspect of the industrial labour in our country and has made recommendation for the elimination of illiteracy from the workers and making provision for the education of their children.

201. In the salt industry educational facilities for the workers' children are altogether inadequate. During our survey of the industry we found that out of the 22 salt works in Saurashtra only two provided schools for the children of their workers. These are the Digvijay Salt Works at Jamnagar and the Maharaja Salt Works at Lavanpur. We were much impressed with the educational facilities provided at the former for the workers' children. The school building is very decent and well ventilated. The employers have supplied all the equipment of a school and provide the school children all the materials of study. It appeared that the employer was taking keen interest in the education of the workers' children. In the Maharaja Saltworks also we found the educational facilities for the workers' children satisfactorily. The expenditure of these schools is borne by the employers of the works,

During our enquiry we came across a view expressed by some employers that if the schools were provided in the salt works for the education of the workers' children, the workers would not send their children to the schools owing to their backwardness and old prejudice against the education. We have noticed in the above two works that the workers have begun to appreciate the value of education in the case of their children and take good advantage of these educational facilities provided in the works. It is our considered opinion that if the schools are provided for the education of the workers' children in the salt works and the workers are induced to send their children to the schools there is no reason to believe that the workers will not take the



full advantage of these educational facilities available to them. On the whole the facilities for the education of the workers' children in the salt industry have been found quite inadequate. The problem of education for the workers' children in the salt industry deserves special attention not only from the employers but from the Government also. The Committee is of the definite opinion that education of the children of the workers in the salt industry should not be neglected at the hands of the Government or the employers and that they must receive at least the primary education. Looking to the urgency and the importance of this problem no delay should be brooked either by the Government or the employers to start the primary schools in the salt works.

The employers of some works pointed out that the workers could send their children to the Government primary schools in the nearby villages but they were not interested in the education of their children. We could see that the children of these workers who reside with their parents on the salt works can not avail these educational facilities on account of the vast distances between the works and the schools and absence of transport facilities for going and coming to the schools. In some works even these facilities are not available.

202. Now the question arises whether the responsibility of imparting education to the workers should be the responsibility of the Government or of the employers. If the employers are held so responsible whether the employers of the salt industry can be statutorily asked to assume this responsibility against the employers of other industries who are not statutorily required to hold this responsibility. Some employers took the view that the education of the citizens of the state should be the sole responsibility of the Government and they should not be made to share that responsibility with the Government. The consensus of the opinion seems to be that while the responsibility of imparting the primary education to the citizens rests with the Government the employers must also share in this responsibility. We are in complete agreement with this view and recommend that in view of the location of industry in

isolated places where the people other than the salt labour are not ordinarily found residing. The employers of the industry should be statutorily asked to provide the educational facilities for the primary education of the workers and their children. With regard to this view we make the following further observations.

- (a) Where the children between the ages of six and fourteen of the workers employed in the salt works exceed 25 in number the employers of such works should be statutorily required to maintain a primary school for such children.
- (b) All the expenses for the maintenance of such school should be borne by the employers.
- (c) The education department of the Government should leniently deal with such schools in the matter of recognition and liberally aid them as they do other private primary schools.
- (d) The school building should be well-ventilated and be sufficiently large to accommodate the children attending such schools.
- (e) The employers should supply all the equipment of a school and provide the materials of study to the children free of cost.
- (f) Since the ignorance amongst this class of workers is required to be banished without any loss of time, it is essential that the education should be free and compulsory.
- (g) If the Government of Saurashtra is not in a position to start compulsory primary education in the whole of Saurashtra, there is no reason why the primary education should not be made free and compulsory for this class of people and the programme of education, should not be enforced.

- (k) The schools should be located within a reasonable distance of the residential places of the children.
- (i) In view of the migration of most of the workers during the off season of the industry, the off season should be treated as vacation period. The education department of the Government should accommodate this change within their general frame work of rules and regulations of vacations in the primary schools.

### *Adult education.*

203. Nearly the whole mass of the workers employed in the salt industry is illiterate and steeped into stark ignorance and conservatism. This disability on the part of the workers is perilous not only from the point of view of the industry but from the national point of view. It also seriously affects the efficiency of the workers. Under the present state of affairs with regard to the education of the workers we like to emphasis that the education of these works must receive special attention and a school of adult education should be introduced in these works. The illiteracy prevailing amongst these workers must be liquidated as soon as possible and all efforts should be directed to that end. We are given to understand that the Government of this State has prepared a programme of adult education and the same is under implementation in various parts of the state. We suggest in this matter that this branch of the governmental activities should pay special attention to the education of this mass of the industrial workers and should extend their activities to the areas of the salt works. As we are proposing the establishment of the primary schools in these salt works, the necessary equipment for the extension of adult education scheme for school building and other equipment of class will be found in these schools and as such the Government will not have any difficulty in extending their scheme of adult education to these areas. We can not but subscribe to the general view that the workers who are zealous enough to learn, should not be starved of education for want of educational facilities. We like to suggest in this matter that the timings of such adult education classes should not

conflict with the working hours of the workers and the classes should be in session at times convenient to the workers.

In the opinion of the Committee the employers of the salt works can help in good measure in this big task of national importance by affording reasonable facilities like the use of their premises and the equipment of schools, wherever this is possible, for the conduct of adult education classes

*Provision of medical facilities.*

204. During our enquiry it was found that the provision of medical facilities for the workers employed in the salt industry was very meagre. Since the salt industry is located at secluded places far away from the populated urban or mofussil areas, it is felt that this important need of the salt workers must receive special attention not only from the Government but from the employers also. At present the salt workers for their need of medical aid largely depend upon the scanty provision made by the employers for such aid. Only in two works the employers maintain small dispensaries in charge of compounders for rendering the medical aid to the workers employed in the works. In other salt works the employers keep a drug box containing few important drugs like tincture iodine, quinine and certain other patent mixtures. There does not exist any arrangement for the regular visits by the qualified doctors in any of the works. Some of the works bear all the expenses of the medical aid rendered to the workers through private practitioners while others simply transfer the cases of serious illness to the nearest Government hospitals or leave the workers to make their own arrangements for medical aid. On the whole the medical relief in the salt industry is entirely inadequate and an improvement is urgently called for. We feel that under the present arrangements the workers can not secure proper medical aid and care and sometimes their treatment is likely to be neglected. We attach the special importance to the provision of medical facilities for the workers in the salt industry, because owing to the location of the salt industry in isolated places there will not be any other medical facility for the workers except that provided by the works. We therefore suggest that in each of the salt works

there should be a well equipped dispensary in charge of a qualified compounder for the use of the workers. As regards the responsibility for providing the medical facilities to the salt labour we are inclined to hold the view that though the Government is primarily responsible for making provision of medical facilities for the citizens of the State the employers can not be absolved from assuming the responsibility for providing medical relief to the workers and their dependants. We therefore recommend that the employers should be statutorily asked to make provision for the medical facilities for their workers. We do not propose to compel the salt works to keep a full time doctor because there will not be enough work for him in the salt works and it will be very expensive too. We suggest that the works should make arrangements with the medical practitioners in the nearest towns for their regular bi-weekly or weekly visits to the works. It is needless to state that such facilities should be free not only to the workers employed in the works but also to their dependants who reside with them on the salt works. In this connection we like to point out that in cases of serious illness the works should make all arrangements for the transfer of patients to the nearest hospitals and render all possible aid at their expense to such patients.

#### *Recreational facilities.*

205. The value and importance of the recreational facilities for the industrial workers can not be overestimated. The provision of such facilities aims to relieve the workers of monotony and drudgery of the work and to impart in them an element of joy and relief as well as to utilise their leisure properly for their social, cultural and moral betterment. It also makes for better efficiency of the workers while they are at work and weans them away from social vices like drink and gambling.

An average salt worker in Saurashtra has to live in lonely places of the salt works far away from the populated areas and his work is very laborious and full of drudgery. The provision of such facilities will introduce an element of pleasure and relief in them. The employers of the salt works have not made any provision for recreational facilities of any kind for their workers. The workers themselves make their own arrangements for their recreation and entertainment by arranging Bhajan and

Rasda parties. They also celebrate their own festivals in their own ways. As their incomes are low, they can not be expected to spend more on these activities. Therefore they undertake such activities for their recreation, which entail little expense on their part. We are therefore of the definite opinion that no efforts should be spared by employers, the Government and other agencies to provide these workers with adequate recreational facilities. We hope the employers will take necessary steps in this direction. So far as the employers are concerned we leave it to generosity and enlightenment to provide their workers with the adequate recreational facilities.

#### 206. *Marketing facilities.*

As has been said before the salt works in Saurashtra are situated in isolation far from the public markets in the towns and villages, the workers market their day-to-day requirements either from the shops found in the works or from the markets in the nearby towns or villages. Where the shops are available in the works, most of the workers purchase their requirements from these shops because of the credit facilities allowed to them at these shops. These shops are licensed by the management to private shop-keepers. Some works maintain their own grain-shops for their workers, and sell the food grains at cost or concession prices. The articles generally supplied at these shops of the works are the rationed articles of food and nothing else. Where there are the private shop-keepers, they charge exorbitant prices for the materials sold to the workers, in view of their allowing the credit to the workers and monopolising the business within the areas of the salt works. It is noteworthy that the shops managed by the private merchants are a fruitful source of exploitation of workers. In many cases, particularly in the inland salt industry, these private merchants recover the dues of the workers for the materials purchased by the latter, directly from the employers who in turn deduct the amount of such dues from the advances or wages payable to the workers. Generally no vouchers are given to the purchasers. We suspect in this collusion between the officials of the works and the private merchants for the exploitation of the workers. In our view this practice should be immediately discontinued. The employers should make the payment of

advances and wages directly to the workers and it should be a condition with the licensed merchants that they must give the vouchers to the purchasers.

We think that the relief from this exploitation of labour is possible only if the consumers' co-operative stores are opened in the salt works areas. The system of housing and the constant touch of the workers with one another are very congenial factors existing in the salt industry which help to create an atmosphere for the development of healthy co-operation. But the prime requisites of co-operation viz. mutual trust and confidence and above all education amongst the promoters of the co-operative movement are lacking amongst the salt workers. It would take some time before co-operative consumers' stores are started in the areas of the salt works to meet the requirements of the salt workers in their daily necessities of life. We hope that co-operative department of the Government of Saurashtra would make a start in this direction in some of the salt works where the managements of the salt works are sympathetic and are likely to take keen interest in co-operative movements of the workers. So long as such co-operative stores can not be opened, we are of the opinion that the management of the salt works should conduct the provision stores on no-profit no-loss basis. We strongly recommend that the present practice of leaving the salt works shops to be run by unscrupulous and greedy private merchants must be stopped in the interest of the salt labour.

#### 207. *Provision of creches and canteens.*

The position in regard to provision of creches for the children of the women workers in the salt industry is that though a large body of women workers is employed in the industry, there is no provision of creches worth the name in any of the salt works. The women workers use to keep their children with them while working near the places of work or leave at home with the elderly or non-working members of the family. Sometimes they drug them with opium and leave at their homes. Cases have not been found few in which the women workers entrust their young children with their older boys or girls at home. We think that all this is due to lack of

facilities in the works for looking after the children during the working time of women workers. Some employers stated that it was not possible to make provision for the creches because the areas of the salt works were very extensive and the places of work changed from day to day. We suggest that a mobile creche consisting of a tent with necessary equipment and a woman in charge should be introduced. The tent can be moved from place to place in the works and the children near about can be looked after while their mothers are working in the vicinity. We understand that such creche is utilised in the plantations industry. We consider that it should be made compulsory for the works to provide creches for the children-in-arms at convenient places in the works, and that attendant women should be employed to look after the children at the expense of the employers. The introduction of a creche system in the salt industry would contribute towards the education of salt workers from early childhood in personal cleanliness and hygiene.

208. As far as the provision of canteen, tea-stalls and refreshment houses in the salt works is concerned, we have felt that the provision of these facilities is not necessary in the salt works because the workers usually go to their homes during the rest intervals and the periods of such intervals are also generally long to permit the workers to go to their quarters for the lunch and rest. However it is left to the employers and workers to make necessary provision for these facilities according to their need and convenience.

*Payment of maternity benefits.*

209. The Bombay Maternity Benefit Act 1929 (Bombay Act No. VII of 1929) as adopted by Ordinance No. XIV of 1948 has come into force in the State of Saurashtra from the 20th August, 1948 and applies to all the factories covered under the Factories Act. It appears that this act is not enforced in the salt industry on account of the conflict of views on the application of the Factories Act to the salt industry. The principle of paying the maternity benefits to the women workers during their anti-natal and post-natal periods is widely recognised and the necessary legislation has been enacted almost in all the states to confer the benefit upon the women workers employed in various industries.



At present there is no system of paying maternity benefit to the women workers in any of the salt works in Saurashtra. The Committee is of the opinion that a large number of women workers is employed in the salt industry and they should not be deprived of the maternity benefit which is given to women workers of other industries.

210. As the Bombay Maternity Benefit Act 1929 which is adopted and enforced in this State stands at present, its extension to the salt industry in the opinion of the Committee would not confer any substantial benefit to the women workers employed in the industry because the salt industry being a seasonal one it would be difficult for women workers employed in it to satisfy the qualifying period of nine months provided in the Act. The Committee has felt that the Act is most defective in case of seasonal factories and confers very little benefit upon the women workers employed in the seasonal industries. We therefore suggest that instead of extending the present Act of maternity benefit to the salt industry the provisions regarding the payment of maternity benefit to the women workers of the salt industry should be incorporated in the proposed labour legislation for the salt labour.

211. With regard to the conditions for the payment of maternity benefit to the salt labour to be laid down in the proposed law we like to make the following suggestions.

- (a) The benefit should be payable in cash and should not be less than ten annas per day.
- (b) The period for which the benefit is to be paid should be eight weeks, four weeks before and four weeks after the confinement as provided in the present law.
- (c) The women workers claiming the benefit should have put in a qualifying service of four months.
- (d) The breaks in continuity of service due to compulsory unemployment in the off season, casual absence, playing off, strike or lockout or such other causes, should be condoned for the counting of the qualifying period of service.

- (e) The employers can not discharge or dismiss a pregnant woman working within a period of five months before her confinement without assigning sufficient cause for her dismissal or discharge to the satisfaction of the Inspector in charge of the administration of the Act.
- (f) The provisions regarding the tendering of the notice to the employers, resumption of duty after the expiration of maternity leave, production of pregnancy and birth certificates should be the same as they are found in the present law.

212. We should hardly recommend that the women workers employed through contractors or any other agencies should also be given the benefit of the Act and proper provisions should be made in the law for the accurate maintenance of the registers and paysheets by the contractors in respect of their workers so that the law cannot be evaded.

*Employment injury compensation.*

213. The incidence of accidents in the salt industry is comparatively very low due to the less hazardous nature of the industry. This is due to the meagre or no use being made of the machinery in the manufacturing process of the industry. However the industry is not quite immune from the incidence of accidents and sometimes accidents happen involving the life of the injured persons. Most of such accidents occur owing to the lack of provisions in the industry for safety of workers and prevention of accidents. The rate of accidents in the marine salt industry is higher than that in the inland salt industry simply because of the reason that no machinery is used in the inland salt industry while some machinery is used in the marine salt industry in lifting of the brine, stacking and crushing the salt and its transport. During our enquiry we could find that the salt industry also involves the risks of accidents and sometimes of fatal nature

214. The Workmen's Compensation Act provides for the payment of compensation to the injured and the dependants of the deceased workmen for the accidents arising out of and during the course of the employment. The Act applies to Saurashtra and is enforced as far as possible in the State. The Act covers only the employments shown in

Schedule II appended thereto. While perusing this list of employments, it is found that the employment of salt industry is not separately mentioned in the schedule and item No. (ii) and (iii) of the schedule can be interpreted to include the employments of the salt industry. Grave doubts have been expressed in some quarters with regard to the existing conflicts of view on the question whether the salt industry can have any premises. It is stated that the employments of the present salt works are not under these two items of the schedule because of the lack of premises in these works and absence of relationship of an employer and a workman between the salt works and their workmen in the inland salt industry. We have examined this view in details and have come to a conclusion that items (ii) and (iii) of schedule II of the Act include the employment of the present salt works in Saurashtra. We are entirely satisfied that the present salt works do not lack any premises and that the relations between the inland salt works and their workers are of the employers and workmen. We are therefore of the view that the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 applies also to the present salt works in Saurashtra. It appears that these arguments have been put forward with a view to avoid the payment of compensation to the workers employed in the industry.

215. However a legal opinion differs from our view it is our strong recommendation to the Government that adequate steps may be taken to give the benefit of this important piece of labour legislation to the salt labour. It is needless to state here that a social insurance legislation for the factory labour has been enacted by the central Government and has been put into operation in certain parts of our country. We are given to understand that the social insurance scheme under this legislation will be extended shortly to this State and that the salt labour will also be covered under the scheme.

*Incidence and prevalence of occupational diseases in salt industry*

216. During our visit of the salt works in the State it was brought to our notice that there was an evidence of the prevalence of an occupational

disease in the industry. As the matter was one for medical research to determine we could not express our definite opinion on the subject. With a view to seek the opinion of the medical men on the incidence and prevalence of an occupational disease in the salt industry, we requested Dr. J. K. Bose the Deputy Director of Health Services, Government of Saurashtra to investigate into the matter thoroughly and to furnish his opinion which he kindly did. The District Health Officers of the State also carried out an investigation and offered their opinions on the subject. These opinions are found in appendix "III" of this report. It is difficult for laymen like us to give an opinion on the subject, but the results of investigations conducted by these medical men show that the occupation of a salt worker is attended with some sort of skin disease. These learned medical men have not been able to come to definite opinion on the incidence and prevalence of an occupational disease in the salt industry simply because they are only general medical men and not the experts of the industrial diseases.

They have suspected only the prevalence of an occupational disease. We therefore recommend to the Government to undertake further research on the matter through the experts of industrial diseases.

If the work in the salt industry is found to give rise to any of the occupational disease through the research made by the experts of the industrial diseases, the Government in our opinion should take adequate steps for the protection of the health of the salt workers from such diseases and to add these diseases to the Schedule III of the Workmen's Compensation Act to enable the workers affected by them to receive compensation for their disablement.

## CHAPTER XI

### **Indebtedness**

217. The Committee now proposes to deal with the question of the indebtedness of the workers employed in the salt industry. It is an undeniable fact that an average industrial worker is in debt. We do not know how far this fact applies to the salt labour. We regret to note that we have not been able to collect the data on

this important aspect of salt labour. However we have drawn the conclusion from the economic conditions of the salt workers that the salt labour is not free from this disability. It is found that the economic conditions of the workers employed in the salt industry have not improved and the standard of living has not materially gone upward for many of the workers are running into debts. The Committee has tried to investigate the causes of high incidence of indebtedness amongst the salt workers. The main causes of indebtedness are firstly the seasonal character of the industry, secondly the extravagant habits and vices, thirdly borrowing at usurious rates of interest, fourthly lack of sparetime employment and low level of wages, fifthly illiteracy and the prevalence of stark ignorance amongst the salt labour. We shall discuss here only some of these. Since the workers are illiterate and education is nil amongst them, they have no discrimination in the matter of their expenditure. Very often they spend away large amounts in deaths and marriages and sometimes in social and religious customs without having regard to their incomes. While we regard such expenditure mere extravagance we should bear in mind that the worker is a part of our social organisation and has to perform certain social obligations and to meet conventional necessities. The main cause seems to be the low level of wages which do not leave any margin to meet the extraordinary expenditure on sickness, death, marriages, festivals, ceremonies etc. While we decide the wages of the salt workers we should take this fact into consideration.

Till recently the salt worker was addicted to drinking and spent a good portion of his income on this evil. Prohibition has been recently introduced in Saurashtra and it has greatly helped in the amelioration of his economic conditions. All the same we are not in a position to say that he has left off this evil completely but that it has controlled this vice and his spending propensity on this vice.

218. The salt worker as he stands at present has not got good credit in the market and so it is difficult for him to purchase his day-to-day requirements on credit from there. Since he has no credit elsewhere, he has to buy per force his requirements from the shops of private merchants recognised by the employers in the works. These unscrupulous and greedy private merchants charge extortionate rates for

the materials purchased by him and try to exploit him as far as possible. We were told by employers, particularly of the inland salt industry that such shops were being run by them only to meet the requirements of the salt workers. We have found that the position is far from the truth. The employers deduct from the advances and wages payable to the workers, the latter's dues to the merchants and pay such deductions directly to the merchants. The workers are hardly given the credit slips or vouchers for the materials purchased by them. These merchants also act as money-lenders to the salt workers. Sometimes a collusion has been suspected between the merchants and the officials of the works to exploit these workers. We are satisfied that the above system is no less responsible for aggravating the cause of indebtedness amongst the salt workers. We are of the view that the present system of the private merchants should be discontinued and the employers should conduct the provision stores for their workers on the no-profit no-loss basis. We think that if this is done, the salt workers will have more money on hand which he can utilise for his other requirements.

219. The growth of co-operation in all its aspects amongst the salt workers and the legislation for the regulation of money lending can be considered important measures to check indebtedness amongst these workers. We hope that the legislation for the regulation of money lending will be enacted and placed on the statute book of the State. So far as the co-operation amongst the workers is concerned, the Government Co-operative Department can play a great part in promoting the co-operative movement based on thrift and self-help. For this movement to succeed it is necessary that the employers should take a keen interest in the co-operative movement of the workers.

220. As long as the salt worker is steeped in ignorance and a prey to undesirable social and religious customs, it is difficult for him to come out of the indebtedness. His intensive education is the only solution for making him prosperous and happy. There is no doubt that the trade unions of the salt labour can play a very important part in education, uplift and progress of the salt workers.

## CHAPTER XII

**Trade Unionism and Industrial Relations.**

221. Now we propose to deal with the position with regard to trade unionism and industrial relations in salt industry. We shall discuss these problems in the present chapter.

222. So far as the salt industry in Saurashtra is concerned, the trade union movement amongst the workers engaged in it is very weak. The reasons for this are attributed to the seasonal character of the industry and the apathy of the employers for the organisation of the labour. Due to the seasonal working of the industry the labour does not remain stable and so the problem of organising the labour in this industry is fraught with great difficulties. The employers also look askance at all attempts to form the labour organisation. The workers engaged in the industry have been found nearly unorganised and helpless. Recently the sense of consciousness has enveloped them and their apathy of the bygone age is disappearing. They have now begun to realise the necessity of labour organisation and a few of them at Kuda and Jamnagar have formed the labour organisations. The new ideas which cropped in the hearts of the factory labour of Saurashtra after the formation of this State, have found an echo in the hearts of this labour also and it would be now difficult for the employers of the salt industry to hold their labour in their present conditions any longer. There are at present two labour organisations.

- (i) The Dhrangadhra Chemical Works Kamdar Sangh, Dhrangadhra.
- (ii) The Saurashtra Salt Works Kamdar Mandal, Jamnagar.

Both these unions are registered unions. Recently these unions had placed certain demands on behalf of their members before their employers. On failure of the conciliation proceedings the matters of dispute were referred to the Industrial Tribunal for adjudication. In some matters adjudicator's awards have already come, while in others the adjudication proceedings are pending. We are satisfied to note that the

workers of one of the marine salt works have received a bonus and an increase in the wages through their union

223. It is a matter of satisfaction that these unions have been able to organise the salt labour and protect its interests. In two adjudications Honourable the Industrial Tribunal gave an award favourable to the salt workers. It is worth noting that Honourable the Industrial Tribunal has recently decided a crucial point of the inland salt industry. They have given the decision of the employers' and the workmen's relationship between one of the inland salt works and their labour. We have nothing to offer except to say that all efforts should be made to develop the healthy trade union movement amongst the salt labour.

#### *Industrial Relations.*

224. Normally the frequency of strikes is a sure indication of relationship obtaining between the employers and the labourers. But this criteria can not be used in case of this industry to judge this relationship because the labour in this industry is completely in an unorganised state illiterate and helpless while the employers are extremely powerful. So far as the collective bargaining between them is concerned, the balance is not equally struck between the employers and the labour of this industry. Due to this strikes are found very rare in these salt works. In view of the weaker position of the labour, the workers can not ventilate their grievances before the management. They are afraid that if such grievances will be ventilated and reliefs will be sought for, they will be punished either by dismissal or victimisation. We feel that there is some truth in this apprehension of the workers. However it can be said that on the whole the relations between the employers and the labour in these salt works are fairly cordial.

Recently a sense of Trade Unionism has grown up amongst the workers of these salt works and they strive to organise themselves into trade unions. These trade unions will aim to secure for the workers of this industry adequate wages, shorter hours of employment, satisfactory conditions of work and proper safeguards for health and life, either by collective bargaining or pressure of public opinion or legislation. As a result of this new development in the industry the present cordiality



between the employers and labour which has originated out of the fear on the part of the labour rather than the genuine confidence in each other would crush down and the industrial disputes would arise between them from time to time. The state has made adequate provision to deal with this situation under the legislative enactment of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 which is already in force in Saurashtra since the inception of this State. It is understood that during the course of the proceedings under the said Act in respect of an industrial dispute between one employer of these salt works and his workmen it was contended by the employer that the Agarias working in his salt works are not workmen within the meaning of the definition given under the said Act.

225. During the course of our enquiries some of the employers of these salt works contended that the Agarias employed by the works were the independent contractors and not their employees and therefore they did not fall within the expression "workman" as defined in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. This contention was also raised as a preliminary issue by the Dhrangadhra Chemical Works, Dhrangadhra during the course of the adjudication proceedings (Adjudication No. 23 of 1951, Saurashtra) before the Industrial Tribunal in respect of an industrial dispute between the works and its Agarias. It was held by Honourable the Industrial Tribunal that the Agarias employed by the works must be classed as "workmen" within the meaning of the expression defined in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. We subscribe to the decision of Honourable the Industrial Tribunal and are inclined to hold that the Agarias are the workmen under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 as stated above. We should like to recommend to the Government that if the Agarias of these salt works are deprived the benefit of this important piece of labour legislation for one or the other reasons, the Government in the interest of the industrial truce in this important industry of the state, should take adequate measures to cover these Agarias under the provisions of this Act.

## CHAPTER XIII, SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS.

The Committee was entrusted the work of conducting an enquiry into and reporting the existing conditions of labour in various salt works in the State of Saurashtra and making recommendations for their improvement. The committee has dealt with the various aspects of the investigations in accordance with its terms of reference in the preceding chapters. It shall now proceed to give a brief summary of the recommendations contained in the preceding chapters.

### LABOUR LEGISLATION IN SALT INDUSTRY.

1. A separate labour legislation should be enacted for the labour engaged in the salt-pan industry and the enactment should be undertaken by the State Government,

2. The proposed labour legislation should cover only those salt works wherein 20 or more persons are employed.

( PARA 18 )

### RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYMENT OF LABOUR.

3. The industry should continue to draw its labour supply from the cultivating and landless labour class of the mofussil areas.

( PARA 102 )

4. The present method of recruitment in the inland salt industry is free from abuses and works satisfactorily in the interest of both the employers and the labour so we have nothing to recommend on this point. Agarias themselves were of the view that present system should continue as it gives them larger independence.

( PARA 105 )

5. We have felt that the recruitment and employment of labour in the marine salt industry through the crude system of intermediary like muccadams is fraught with serious evils and that these evils must be eradicated in the interest of labour at large employed on the industry. We therefore suggest that the works should make a direct recruitment and employment of the labour required to the works without any intermediary between and that the muccadams should have nothing to do

with the recruitment dismissal or discharge or wages of the workers and the granting of leave to them.

( PARA 108 )

6. It is our considered opinion that instead of tossing this labour between their villages and industry it should be stabilised in the industry. The measures like the decent living wage, good housing accommodation, provision for the future and social security, provision of subsidiary employment during the closure of the industry, etc. should be adopted for bringing about the stability of labour in the salt industry.

( PARA 111 )

7. No child under the age of fourteen should be employed in any of the salt works.

( PARA 115 )

8. No child or young person who has completed his fourteenth year but is under the age of eighteen years should be employed in any salt works without being certified fit by medical officer approved by the Government.

( PARA 115 )

9. The women workers should not be employed or called upon to work in any salt works between 8-0 P. M. and 6-0 A. M. provided that they may be allowed to work upto 10-0 P. M. under special circumstances with the prior permission of the Government.

( PARA 115 )

10. We recommend to adopt the measures like improvement in working and living conditions, provision of leave with or without wages, adoption of an enlightened policy of the management, adequate wages, protection from sickness and full use of employment exchanges to reduce the present high rate of absenteeism and excessive labour turnover in the industry.

( PARA 116 )

11. We recommend that no wages should be paid to the daily rated and piece rated workers in the salt industry for the weekly off days.

( PARA 117 )

12. We are of the view that the piece rated and daily rated workers should be given the wages for the festival holidays which can

not be adjusted with the weekly rest days. We do not recommend to enact any legal provision for this but leave this to be decided by collective bargaining between the employers and the labour according to the economic condition of each unit. We suggest to the employers to observe the following festival holidays in their works:

1 Diwali	2 New Year's Day	3 Uttarayan
4 Republic Day	5 Gandhiji's anniversary	6 Shivratri
7 Holi	8 Dhuleti	9 Ram Navmi
10 Akhatrij	11 Mohrum	12 Id.

(PARA 118)

13. We recommend that the workers employed in the salt industry should be given the leave with wages.

(PARA 119)

14. We recommend that a legal provision for leave with wages for the workers employed in the salt industry should be made subject to the following conditions :

- (a) The workers who have put in 120 days attendance in the season shall be entitled to get a leave with wages at the rate of :-
  - (i) if an adult, one day for every twenty days of presence and
  - (ii) if a child, one day for every fifteen days of presence.
- (b) Such leave should be given to the workers after they put in 120 days of presence in the season.
- (c) The workers who do not enjoy such leave or are not given such leave should be paid the wages for the days of leave at their credit at the end of the season.
- (d) The number of instalments in which the leave is proposed to be taken shall not exceed three.

(PARA 120)

15. If the Industrial Employment ( Standing Orders ) Act fails to apply to the inland salt industry, we are of the opinion that the Act should be modified to include also the labour of the inland salt industry.

(PARA 121)

16. We recommend that the Government should set out different Model Standing Orders for the inland salt industry and that the present system of writing or making agreement should be scraped off and replaced by the Standing Orders adopted on the basis of the Model Standing Orders for the inland salt industry set out under the Rules of the Act.

( PARA 122 )

17. We are of the opinion that the relationship between the inland salt works and their pan-holders is of the nature of an employer and an employee rather than that of an employer and a contractor.

( PARA 130 )

#### **Hours of Work Working Conditions and Provision of Essential Facilities.**

18. We are of the view that working hours, rest intervals, spreadovers and rest days for the workers working on the pans in the inland salt industry should not be regulated so long as the present method of employment and working are followed. We also hold the opinion that the labour employed for the work other than that of the pan or connected with it should be put on par with the labour of other factories as regards their working hours, spreadovers, rest days and periods of rest intervals.

( PARA 134 )

19. We are of the view that in the marine salt industry the hours of work and the rest days should be the same as they are in case of other factories while the spreadovers and rest intervals should be longer in view of the fact that usually the workers go to their homes which are nearby for taking their meals during rest intervals.

( PARA 136 )

20. We are of the view that when and where the machinery is employed and the manufacturing process is mechanised the measures which are taken in other mechanised industries for the safety and health of the workers should be adopted in the salt industry also.

( PARA 138 )

21. It is our suggestion that maximum load should be prescribed for men, women and children beyond which they should not be permitted to carry at a time on their persons.

( PARA 139 )

22. We suggest that the speed of the mechanised salt transport train within the salt works should be restricted having regard to the capacity of the rail tracks and periodical inspections of the rail tracks should be undertaken.

( PARA 140 )

23. It is essential that the workers other than those in charge of the mechanised salt transport train should not be allowed to travel by such trains.

( PARA 141 )

24. In our opinion the canvass shoes upto above the ankle with rubber soles should be supplied to the workers working in the salt pans and salt heaps.

( PARA 142 )

25. We are of the opinion that the work in the inland salt works during 12-0 noon and 4-0 P. M. in summer must be suspended in the interest of the health of the workers and a provision to that effect should be incorporated in the proposed labour legislation in the salt industry.

( PARA 143 )

26. We are of the opinion that the workers should be paid at double the rate of their wages for the period they work over and above their normal working hours. We are not in favour of putting a ceiling over the period of the overtime work because of paucity of the skilled labour in the salt works areas and the fact that the occasions of overtime work are very few.

( PARA 144 )

27. We also hold the view that the extension of work beyond 12-0 night must be prohibited, because of the detrious effects of the night work on the health of the workers.

( PARA 144 )

28. It is our considered opinion that the employers should make adequate arrangements not only for the supply of water near the residential places of the workers but they should be supplied the drinking water while they are at work. As far as the supply of water to the salt labour is concerned, we desire to make the following suggestions.

- (a) The employers should provide and maintain at convenient places in the salt works a sufficient supply of water for all workers.
- (b) The water which is to be used for drinking purposes should be sufficiently chlorinated.
- (c) The source of supply of water should not be farther than one furlong from the residence or place of work of the workers.
- (d) The water storage tanks or other containers should have taps round about down below and locking arrangement on the covering at the top so that the workers take water through taps and not by dipping the vessels in the tanks or containers.
- (e) In the inland salt industry where the bullocks are employed for drawing the brine from the wells troughs for the bullocks should be maintained within reasonable distance from the salt pans.
- (f) In the inland salt industry where the workers and their family members are required to work at places other than their respective salt pans, the employers should make necessary arrangements for the supply of drinking water to them.
- (g) Water should be supplied free by having regard to the paucity of water in the salt industry and the needs of the workers.
- (h) The places of the supply of water should be kept clean and free from insanitary conditions.

29. We are of the opinion that the adequate latrine and urinal accommodations should be provided in the works for the use of the labour employed in the salt industry. We can not but emphasise that the salt works should be immune from all dirt, excreta and such other insanitary things.

(PARA 146)

30. We are of the view that the rest shelters should be provided at convenient places for the use of the workers.

(PARA 147)

31. We recommend that the employers should be statutorily asked to provide adequate washing and bathing facilities within the reasonable distances from the workers' residences. There should be separate arrangements for men and women.

(PARA 148)

### WAGES AND EARNINGS

32. The Committee has come to the conclusion that the labour employed at present in the salt industry is sweated labour and strongly recommends that it should be brought within the orbit of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 as early as possible.

(PARA 161)

33. We recommend that the inland salt works working more than 100 salt pans should be required to have the production of the panholders weighed through a proper mechanical weighing device.

(PARA 166)

34. We recommend that in the marine salt works the workers working on the jobs of digging, washing, heaping in and loading the salt from the pans should be paid on the basis of weighment instead of tipping wagons.

(PARA 167)

35W consider that it is the most essential to introduce the system of giving production slips to the piece rate-workers showing their production.

(PARA 168)



36. We are of the view that the present system of wage payment as it exists to-day in the industry, particularly with regard to contract labour contains dangers like the misappropriation, less payment, illegal deductions etc. and therefore recommend that all the workers whether employed by the works, panholders or contractors should be paid directly by the management and their receipt or thumb impression should be invariably taken in acknowledgement. We also emphasise on the need of maintaining the pay rolls of the workers showing all the details of payment and distributing the wages in presence of the responsible officer of the establishment,

(PARA 170)

37. We recommend that in the inland salt industry the panholders should be paid their dues within a week of the completion of their work.

(PARA 171)

38. In the inland salt industry we think it very essential that the Sathis should be paid their dues within two days of the completion of their employment period.

(PARA 172)

39. We hold the opinion that in the salt industry the wage period in respect of the casual labour should not exceed a week and the pay day should be a day preceding the weekly off-day if any, to facilitate the labour to make purchases of their day-to-day requirements on the off-day.

(PARA 173)

40. We suggest that fortnightly wage period should be adopted in the marine salt industry. We are of the view that in no case, the wage period should exceed a month and the wages of the workers should be paid within a week of their becoming due where less than one thousand workers are on the muster rolls.

(PARA 174)

41. We suggest that the pay day should be the day immediately preceding the weekly off observed in the works. We express the view

that the wages of the workers should be paid invariably on the working days and in no circumstances it should be on off-days.

(PARA 174)

42. The committee is of the opinion that the deductions on account of Dharmada or deposits or moisture from the wages or production of the workers should be forthwith put an end to and the deductions on account of fines, advances, house rent and such other concessions should be regulated by law.

(PARA 175)

43. We recommend that the payment of wages Act, 1936 should be extended to the marine salt works.

(PARA 176)

44. We recommend that the proposed labour legislation should contain the provision relating to the regulation of payment of wages to the workers employed in the inland salt industry. The principal provisions should be as follows.—

- (i) The panholder should be paid his emoluments within a week of the lifting of salt from his pan.
- (ii) The Sathis employed by the panholders should be paid their dues within two days of the termination of their employment.
- (iii) The wage period of the casual labour employed by the panholders or employers should not exceed one month, and the wages of such labour should be paid within a week of the expiry of the wage period provided that where the number of such labour exceeds one thousand in any wage period, the time limit should be extended to ten days.
- (iv) The employers should be allowed to make the following deductions from the wages of the workers paid by them:
  - (a) Advances.                      (b) House rent                      (c) Services
  - (d) Damage or loss                      (e) Provident Fund                      (f) Fines.

- (v). The employers should be prevented to make deductions other than those legalised from the wages of the workers.
- (vi) The employers and the panholders should be required to maintain the necessary records of payment and deductions made in respect of their labour.

(PARA 177)

45. We suggest that the principle of equal pay for equal work should be accepted as the basis for fixing the rates of wages and recommend the same wages for women workers as for men workers.

(PARA 178)

46. We have come to the conclusion that the present position of the industry does not permit the immediate introduction of the scheme of retainer in case of the unskilled labour in the industry.

(PARA 179)

47. We recommend that the following categories of the skilled employees should be paid a retaining allowance at the rate of 50 per cent of their consolidated wages.

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| (i) Drivers.   | (ii) Carpenters.  |
| (iii) Fitters. | (iv) Turners etc. |

(PARA 179)

48. We hold the view that it is the fundamental basis of the contract of employment between the employers and the panholders in the inland salt industry that the former will make available to the latter all the finances necessary for the manufacture of salt having regard to the work performed by the latter on their salt pans.

(PARA 181)

49. We have arrived at a conclusion that in view of the present high cost of labour and materials a minimum sum of Rs. 100/- per pan should be disbursed every month to the panholders for their day-to-day expenditure in the inland salt industry. We suggest that since the panholders have to spend more in the beginning of the season on the

construction of brine wells, condensers and crystallisers etc. they should be given higher sums of advances during this period of the season than any other period of the season.

(PARA 182)

50. We are of the opinion that the advances given to the panholders in the inland salt industry should not bear any interest.

(PARA 183)

51. We can not accede to the demand of the workers in the inland salt industry to market or to take away the rejected salt and leave the matter of compensation for such rejected salt to be decided between the parties through the collective bargaining.

(PARA 184)

## HOUSING

52. We feel that the continuance of the present state of affairs with regard to the housing of salt labour is deplorable from the modern standard of living conditions and it requires to be changed in consonance with the present trends of housing accommodations for the industrial labour.

(PARA 189)

53. We have come to the conclusion that the Government should take immediate steps to provide the labour with better housing accommodations with all necessary sanitation facilities.

(PARA 189)

54. We suggest that the annual inundation of the salt works being a natural phenomenon in the inland salt industry the labour quarters should be built on high level sites out of the belt of the inundation as near the salt works as possible.

(PARA 189)

55. We feel that on account of the complete absence of private housing in the vicinity of the salt works and the urgent need of making adequate provision for the housing of the salt labour the employers should assume large portion of responsibility of housing the salt labour.

(PARA 190)

56. We express the opinion that the employers of the salt industry should be statutorily called upon to discharge the duty of providing houses to their labour as is the case in respect of plantation industry and the necessary provisions with respect to this and relating to the standard and specification of accommodation to be furnished, selection of sites, fixing of rents etc. should be incorporated in the proposed labour legislation for the salt labour.

( PARA 190 )

57. We suggest that the employers of the salt industry should fully take the advantage of the scheme of housing for the industrial workers undertaken by the Government of India, for the housing of their labour.

( PARA 191 )

58. We feel that the workers will pay the economic rent for the provision of housing accommodation and assume their share of responsibility in the housing of the salt labour.

( PARA 191 )

59. Where the Government land is available, Government should agree to lease or sell such land on concessional terms to the employers or co-operative societies of the salt labour.

( PARA 192 )

60. We hold the view that the housing programme for the salt industry should be spread over a period of ten years at the end of which all the labour employed in the industry will be housed.

( PARA 193 )

61. All sort of encouragement and help should be given to the salt labour to build their own houses on co-operative principles in the vicinity of the salt works.

( PARA 194 )

62. We are inclined to suggest that so long as the workers are not able to pay economic rents for the provision of housing, the

employers should bear the burden of this shortcoming. The amount of rent chargeable to the workers for the houses should in no case exceed 10 per cent of their earnings.

( PARA 195 )

63. The public health authorities should be empowered to deal expeditiously with houses considered in their opinion unfit for human habitation and to arrange for demolition or immediate conversion to the non-residential uses.

( PARA 196 )

64. With regard to the provision of accommodation in the houses to be constructed for the salt labour, we are of the opinion that there should be two types of houses one room and two rooms tenements. The former should comprise one living room, kitchen, a verandah, a latrine and a bathing place and the latter should have an additional living room. The living rooms should be of a minimum size of 120 square feet floor area.

( PARA 196 )

65. We emphasise on the urgent need of making proper provision for latrines, water supply and washing and bathing facilities for the workmen.

( PARA 196 )

66. In the inland salt industry adequate provision should be made in the proposed houses of the workers to accommodate the bullocks and their fodder.

( PARA 196 )

67. The workers residing in the premises provided by the salt works on rent should be conferred upon the ordinary rights of tenancy.

( PARA 197 )

#### WELFARE ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL LEGISLATION.

68. Although we recognise that some form of provision for old age is essential for the workers employed in the salt industry, we consider that the circumstances and the present state of development of the

industry do not allow the immediate introduction of the superannuation benefits in the industry.

( PARA 199 )

69. The Committee is of the opinion that the education of the children of the workers in the salt industry should not be neglected at the hands of the Government or the employers and that they must receive at least primary education.

70. We recommend that in view of the location of industry in isolated places where the people other than the salt labour are not ordinarily found residing the employers of the industry should be statutorily asked to provide the educational facilities for the primary education of the workers and their children. With regard to this view we make the following further observations.

- (a) Where the children between the ages of six and fourteen of the workers employed in the salt works exceed 25 in number the employers of such works should be statutorily required to maintain a primary school for such children.
- (b) All the expenses for the maintenance of such school should be borne by the employers.
- (c) The education department of the Government should leniently deal with such schools in the matter of recognition and liberally aid them as they do to other private primary schools.
- (d) The school building should be well-ventilated and be sufficiently large to accommodate the children attending such schools.
- (e) The employers should supply all the equipment of a school and provide the materials of study to the children free of cost.
- (f) Since the ignorance amongst this class of workers is required to be banished without any loss of time, it is essential that the education should be free and compulsory.

- (g) If the Government of Saurashtra is not in a position to start compulsory primary education in the whole of Saurashtra, there is no reason why the primary education should not be made free and compulsory for this class of people and the programme of education should not be enforced.
- (h) The schools should be located within a reasonable distance of the residential places of the children.
- (i) In view of the migration of most of the workers during the off season of the industry, the off season should be treated as vacation period. The education department of the Government should accommodate this change within their general frame work of rules and regulations of vacations in the primary schools.

( PARA 202 )

71. We suggest that the adult education branch of the Government should pay special attention to the education of the salt labour and should extend its activities to the areas of the salt works.

( PARA 203 )

72. We suggest that the timings of the adult education classes should not conflict with the working hours of the workers and the classes should be in session at times convenient to the workers.

( PARA 203 )

73. In the opinion of the Committee the employers will afford the reasonable facilities like the use of their premises and the equipment of schools, wherever this is possible, for the conduct of adult education classes.

( PARA 203 )

74. We suggest that in each of the salt works there should be a well-equipped dispensary in charge of a qualified compounder for the use of the workers.

( PARA 204 )



75. We are inclined to hold the view that though the Government is primarily responsible for making provision of medical facilities for the citizens of the state, the employers of the salt industry can not be absolved from assuming the responsibility for providing medical relief to the workers and their dependants.

( PARA 204 )

76. We recommend that the employers of the salt industry should be statutorily asked to make provision for medical facilities for their workers.

( PARA 204 )

77. We suggest that the works should make arrangements with the medical practitioners in the nearest towns for their regular bi-weekly or weekly visits to the works.

( PARA 204 )

78. The medical facilities should be free not only to the workers employed in the works but also to their dependants who reside with them on the salt works.

( PARA 204 )

79. In cases of serious illness the works should make all arrangements for the transfer of patients to the nearest hospitals and render all possible aid at their expense to such patients.

( PARA 204 )

80. We are of the opinion that no efforts should be spared by employers, the Government and other agencies to provide these workers with adequate recreational facilities.

( PARA 205 )

81. We leave it to the generosity and enlightenment of the employers to provide their workers with the adequate recreational facilities.

( PARA 205 )

2. In our view the practice of recovering the dues of the workers directly from the employers by the private merchants, for the purchases made by the workers from such merchants, should be immediately discontinued.

( PARA 206 )

83. It should be a condition with the licensed merchants that they must give the vouchers to the purchasers from their shops.

( PARA 206 )

84. We hope that the co-operative department of the Government of Saurashtra would make a start in helping the salt workers to start co-operative consumers' stores in some of the salt works where the managements of the salt works are sympathetic and are likely to take keen interest in co-operative movement of the workers.

( PARA 206 )

85. So long as the co-operative consumers' stores can not be opened, we are of the opinion that the management of the salt works should conduct the provision stores on no-profit no-loss basis.

( PARA 206 )

86. We strongly recommend that the present practice of leaving the salt works shops to be run by the unscrupulous and greedy private merchants must be stopped in the interest of the salt labour.

( PARA 206 )

87. We suggest that a mobile creche consisting of a tent with necessary equipment and a woman in charge should be introduced.

( PARA 207 )

88. We consider that it should be made compulsory for the works to provide creches for the children-in-arms at convenient places in the works and that attendant women should be employed to look after the children at the expense of the employers.

( PARA 207 )

89. We have felt that the provision of canteens, tea stalls and refreshment houses is not necessary in the salt industry, however it is left to the employers and workers to make necessary provision for these facilities according to their need and convenience.

( PARA 208 )

90. The Committee is of the opinion that a large number of women workers is employed in the salt industry and they should not be deprived of the maternity benefit which is given to women workers of other industries,

( PARA 209 )

91. We suggest that instead of extending the present Act of maternity benefit to the salt industry, the provision regarding the payment of maternity benefit to the women workers of the salt industry should be incorporated in the proposed labour legislation for the salt labour.

( PARA 210 )

92. With regard to the conditions for the payment of maternity benefit to the salt labour to be laid down in the proposed law we like to make the following suggestions:—

- (a) The benefit should be payable in cash and should not be less than ten annas per day.
- (b) The period for which the benefit is to be paid should be eight weeks, four weeks before and four weeks after the confinement as provided in the present law.
- (c) The women workers claiming the benefit should have put in a qualifying service of four months.
- (d) The breaks in continuity of service due to compulsory unemployment in the off-season, casual absence, playing off, strike or lockout or such other causes, should be condoned for the counting of the qualifying service.
- (e) The employers can not discharge or dismiss a pregnant woman working within a period of five months before her confinement without assigning sufficient cause for her dismissal or discharge to the satisfaction of the Inspector in charge of the administration of the Act.
- (f) The provisions regarding the tendering of the notice to the employers, resumption of duty after the expiration of maternity leave, production of pregnancy and birth

certificates should be the same as they are found in the present law.

( PARA 211 )

93. We recommend that the women workers' employed through contractors or any other agency should also be given the benefit of the Act and proper provisions should be made in the law for the accurate maintenance of the registers and paysheets by the contractors in respect of their workers so that the law can not be evaded.

( PARA 212 )

94. We are of the view that the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1923 applies also to the present salt works in Saurashtra. However a legal opinion differs from our view it is our strong recommendation to the Government that adequate steps may be taken to give the benefit of this important piece of labour legislation to the salt labour.

( PARA 214-215 )

95. We recommend to the Government to undertake further research in the incidence and prevalence of an occupational disease in the salt industry through the experts of the industrial diseases.

( PARA 216 )

96. If the work in the salt industry is found to give rise to any of the occupational diseases through the research made by the experts of the industrial diseases, the Government in our opinion should take adequate steps for the protection of the health of the salt workers from such diseases and to add these diseases to the schedule III of the workmen's Compensation Act to enable the workers affected by them to receive compensation for their disablement.

( PARA 216 )

### INDEBTEDNESS.

97. We are satisfied that the present system of the licensed shop keepers in the salt works is no less responsible for aggravating the cause of indebtedness amongst the salt workers. We are of the view that the

system of private merchants should be discontinued and the employers should conduct the provision stores for their workers on the no-profit no-loss basis.

( PARA 218 )

98. The growth of co-operation in all aspects amongst the salt workers and the legislation for the regulation of money-lending can be considered important measures to check indebtedness amongst the salt workers.

( PARA 220 )

### TRADE UNIONISM AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS.

99. We recommend that all efforts should be made to develop the healthy trade union movement amongst the salt labour.

( PARA 223 )

100. We are inclined to hold that the Agarias are the workmen under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. We recommend to the Government if the Agarias are deprived of the benefit of this Act, the Government in the interest of the industrial truce in this important industry of the state, should take adequate measures to cover the Agarias under the provisions of this Act.

( PARA 225 )

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance and sincere co-operation that we have received from the managements and the labour of the units surveyed. But for such co-operation and assistance the Committee would not have been able to present this report. We also wish to thank Sjt. D. K. Badheka, the Deputy Secretary, Industry and Supply Department (Labour) to the Government of Saurashtra, Sjt J. B. Shah, Chief Inspector of Factories and Boilers and Dr. Bose, Deputy Director of Health Services, Government of Saurashtra, who have rendered help by furnishing the necessary information on the technical and legal aspects of the enquiry. We owe a special word of thanks to the managements of the Government Salt works at Kharaghoda and the Tata Chemicals Ltd., Mithapur not only for the manner in which our request

for the visits of their salt works was readily complied with but also for the trouble taken by them in furnishing the information and data relating to the conditions of labour obtaining in their salt works. We are also grateful to them for their ready co-operation and hospitality extended by them during our stay at their works. We express our deep thanks to Sjt. S. C. Agarwal, Commissioner of Salt, Government of India, New Delhi whose visit to Kharaghoda coincided with our visit of that place for his agreeing to meet us and to express his views on the conditions of labour existing in the salt industry in India.

We wish to place on record our warm appreciation of the work done arduously by our Secretary Sjt. M. B. Dave who impressed us with his knowledge and clear understanding of labour problems both in their theoretical and practical aspects. He was of considerable assistance to us in the drafting of this report. We also desire to place on record our high appreciations of the efficient manner in which the staff of the office of the Assistant Commissioner of Labour, Bhavnagar have discharged their duties. They cheerfully and ungrudgingly met the demands made on their time and energy by the committee.

We must acknowledge our thanks to Shri C. J. Patel, Senior Clerk and L. A. Dodia, Typist in the office of the Assistant Commissioner of Labour, Bhavnagar for the care and expedition with which our reports have been typed and compared.

We sincerely regret the delay in the submission of our report but we venture to submit that the causes of this delay were beyond our control.

HARSHADRAI, V. TRIVEDI  
*Chairman.*

BHUPATBHAI, V. DESAI  
*Member.*

CHUNILAL G. DAVE  
*Member.*

M. B. DAVE  
*Secretary,*

Dated Bhavnagar the 10th February, 1953.

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**GENERAL APPENDICES**

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**APPENDIX I**

Saurashtra Salt Works Labour Enquiry Committee,  
Government of Saurashtra.

**QUESTIONNAIRE RELATING TO ENQUIRY.**

Name of Concern :—

Location :—

District :—

Province —

Name of Proprietor or Managing Agent :—

Date of establishment :—

**A EMPLOYMENT.**

State the average daily number of workers (other than the clerical supervisory staff) employed by you directly in 1950 and in 1951 as follows :—

---

Men		Women		Children	
1950	1951	1950	1951	1950	1951

---

- (a) Total No. of workers.
- (b) No. of workers on piece-rates.
- (c) No. of time-rated or salaried workers.
- (d) No. of persons working in open working.
- (e) No. of persons working under shelters.
- (f) No. of salt pans worked.



2. Please state whether you employ labour directly or through any other agency. Please furnish details in the following statement:—

No. of persons.	Men.		Women		Children	
	1950	1951	1950	1951	1950	1951

- (a) Employed and paid directly.
- (b) Employed and paid through contractors.
- (c) Employed through contractors but paid directly.
3. Are the workers classified as permanent and temporary? If so, give the percentages of permanent and temporary workers during 1950 and 1951. Have permanent workers (other than clerical and supervisory) any special privileges. If so, what are they?
4. If you have statistical information regarding the length of services of your employees (other than clerical and supervisory) please give it in the following form:—
- (a) Those with service between 0 and 1 year :
- (b) Those with service between 1 and 5 years :
- (c) Those with service between 5 and 10 years :

(d) Those with over 10 years' service.

5. What according to your estimate is the proportion of your labour which is permanently settled in the contiguous areas in which your salt works is situated.
6. What are the principal classes or tribes to which your workers belong? Please mention the areas from which the workers are chiefly drawn.
7. What are the periods of seasonal migration of workers in your works and the estimated percentage of migration in different periods in the year when migration takes place on a large scale?
8. Is it usual for labour from neighbouring areas to seek jobs in your salt works? If so, for what reasons?
9. What is the most common age at which workers enter employment in your salt works and at what age do they mostly retire from employment?
10. Do you maintain service or registration cards for all or some of your workers? If so, please send as specimen copy.

11. Is it your practice to issue a service certificate to a worker who leaves your salt works ?

### **RECRUITMENT**

12. Please explain the system of recruitment of labour in your salt works.
13. Do you employ contractors? What are their functions? Please mention whether you employ any other type of contractors for work in your salt works. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the system of employing such contractors ?
14. Do you exercise any control over contract labour ? If so, in what respects ? Please give details.
15. Do you employ recruiting Sardars ? If so, what are their functions ? On what basis are they paid ? Please describe in details the advantages and disadvantages of this system. Are you in favour of its retention ?

### **ABSENTEEISM AND LABOUR TURN-OVER.**

16. Supply figures of absenteeism in your concern for the years 1950 and 1951. What are the causes of absenteeism and how would you reduce it ?

17. State the labour turnover in your salt works for the years 1950 and 1951 in the form below

Average daily No. employed during the year.	Total No. of workers who left during the year due to:—		
	Retirement.	Dismissals.	Voluntary exits.
1950.			
1951.			

18. Have you any apprenticeship scheme in any of the departments of the salt works? If so, please furnish details.

#### B. WORKING CONDITIONS.

19. (a) Please describe briefly the arrangements for lighting and ventilation, or state the conditions of ventilation, lighting (natural and artificial) congestion (i. e. floor area for workers) flooring, protection against heat etc.
- (b) Please give details regarding water supply, latrines, urinals, washing and bathing facilities etc. provided for workers employed in the pans and

in the factory, separately.  
Have latrines and urinals  
been provided separately  
for men and women? If  
so, please give their  
numbers.

20. Are any special arrangements made for the workers to take their meals or for taking rest at the site of work? If so, are there separate arrangements for men and women.
21. (a) Have you a system of granting leave with or without pay? If so, please give details.
- (b) What is the weekly holiday? Is the weekly holiday paid for? How many holidays in the year are granted in addition to the weekly holidays? Are these with or without pay?
22. Are there standing orders governing the relationship between the employers and employees in your salt works? If so, please supply a copy of the same.
23. Have you a Labour Officer? If so, what are his functions? If not, what machinery you

set up for recruiting labour and for enquiring into their grievances?

24. Are you in favour of the establishment of a statutory machinery for the investigation and settlement of labour disputes? If so, what type of machinery would you suggest?

### C. HOURS OF WORK.

25. What are the hours of work per shift or per relay in your salt works?
26. What is your estimate of the actual hours for which the workers in your salt works work on an average per day?
27. How many days in a week does the worker work on an average?
28. What is the spread-over in each shift or relay?
29. Please specify the hours of work, the rest intervals and the weekly day of rest of each shift of workers.

### D. WAGES AND EARNINGS

30. Please furnish a schedule of basic wage rates and allowances for important occupations in your salt works. What changes have occurred in basic wage rates ( of both time and piece rate workers ) and allowances

since 1950? Are there differential rates of wages for men women and for day and night shift workers in the same occupation? If so, please give details.

31. Does the contract labour receive the same rate of wages as labour directly employed by you in the same or similar occupations? If possible, please supply a comparative statement showing the rates paid by you and by the contractor for the same task in important occupations.
32. What is the rate per ton or maund ( Please specify Katcha or Pacca ) paid? Has there been any change in the rate per ton in recent years? If so, please give details.
33. If you have contractors, please state how the rate per ton paid by them to the workers compares with the one paid by you?
34. What are the various benefits in kind paid to the workers in addition to wages? If possible, please evaluate them in terms of money for the wage period.

35. Are you in favour of weighing of the worker's production and paying the workers accordingly as against the present wagon filling or any other system? If not, please give details of the difficulties of paying according to weight.
36. What arrangements exist in your works for checking the overloading or underloading of the wagons or tubs? Are the workers compensated for the overload or deductions made for underload? Please give details.
37. Are pay slips showing the workers' production and the wages given to them in the case of piece workers? How are the complaints and disputes regarding the alleged under-payment dealt with?
38. Please give details of dearness and other allowances, bonuses etc. paid to workers since 1950 and state which of these are temporary and which permanent. Are any conditions attached to the payment of these allowances and bonuses?
39. Is any overtime worked in your works? If so, how is it calculated and paid for? Is overtime work



compulsory? Do you maintain any registers for recording overtime? Are these available to the workers or their representatives for inspections? ( Please state the maximum extent of overtime done by workers on any day in the past years. )

40. What are the periods of wage payment for different kinds of workers? How long after the end of the wage period are wages paid? Please describe the method and manner of wage payment.
41. (a) Please state the various items on account of which deductions are made from wages? Are deductions made from wages on account of loading of unsatisfactory material? Are wages paid on a working day or on a holiday? Please state how long on an average the worker has to wait to receive his wages after arrival at the paycounter?
- (b) Is there a fine fund? What was the amount outstanding to its credit at the end of the year

1951 and how it is utilised? Who is in charge of its disposal? If no separate fund is maintained please state whether fines are credited to the general revenue account of the works?

42. In regard to labour directly employed are wages paid directly to them or through gangmen, Sirdars or any other agencies. Are receipts or thumb impressions taken in acknowledgement of receipt of payment from workers? Have you heard any complaints of commission being charged to workers at the time of payment? If so, please give details.
43. (a) Do you give any advance against wage? If so, how are the recoveries made? Is any interest charged? If so, at what interest?
- (b) Is it usual for money lenders to visit the works for the collection of debts due by the workers? Is there any machinery for redemption of debts?
- (c) Are the workers indebted? Give an idea of their

indebtedness and the causes responsible for the same.

- (d) What is the average extent of indebtedness per head in your works, whether to the workers or outsiders ?

44. Are you in favour of a statutory minimum wage in your works ? If so, what is the minimum you would suggest for the least skilled occupation ? Should there be a different minimum for men and women ?

#### E. HOUSING.

45. (a) Give details of housing provided with reference to:—
- (i) Proportion of workers housed.
  - (ii) Rentals.
  - (iii) Types of houses.
  - (iv) Congestion.
  - (v) Sub-letting.
  - (vi) Sanitation and water supply.
- (b) If workers live in their own houses or in houses provided by private landlords or public bodies, state their conditions carefully.

**F. WELFARE ACTIVITIES.**

46. Please give a detailed account regarding the facilities provided for medical relief, education, indoor and out-door recreation, entertainment ect. of workers and their families.
47. Is there periodical medical examination of the workers?
48. Have you made any arrangements for the supply of refreshments and cooked food to workers? If so, please give details.
49. Do you maintain a creche for the benefit of your women workers? If so, give details regarding accommodation number of cradles, supply of milk, clothing etc. to workers' children.
50. Do you run a grain-shop for your workers? What are the commodities supplied and how do their prices compare with market prices?
51. Are there any co-operative credit societies for the workers? If so, please give details.

**G. PROVISIONS FOR WORKERS' FUTURE.**

52. Have you instituted a provident fund, gratuity or pension

scheme for safeguarding the future of the workers? If so, please give full details with number of workers covered by the scheme, the number of beneficiaries in the year 1950 and 1951 etc. If you have made no provision for the future of the workers, what form, in your opinion should it take?

#### H. TRADE UNIONS AND STRIKES.

53. Have your workers formed any trade union? If so, have you recognised it? State membership, monthly subscriptions etc. Has there been any agreement regarding wages, hours of work, employment, dismissal etc.? Please supply a copy of agreement, if any.
54. Is there any works committee? Please describe its constitution and give an account of its activities.
55. Please give details of strikes in your salt works during the last two years and the results.

#### I. GENERAL.

56. Please give the number of accidents, cases of occupational diseases and amount of compensation paid under

Workmen's Compensation Act in 1950 and 1951.

57. Are you in favour of the extension of the Payment of Wages Act, Maternity Benefit Act, Factories Act and Workmen's Compensation Act to the salt works? If not, give reasons.
  58. Is the drink and drug evil rampant among the workers? If so, have you any suggestions for the eradication of the evil?
  59. Is there a maternity benefit in existence?
  60. Please give your opinion regarding the efficiency of the workers of your salt works and how does it compare with that obtaining in other salt works situated in other states of the Indian Union?
  61. Does the concern come under the Factories Act? If so, are the provisions of the Factories Act complied with? Give dates of visits of the Factory Inspector during the past two years and extracts, etc. from the remarks in the Factory inspection Book.
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### APPENDIX III

#### INVESTIGATION REPORTS ON INCIDENCE AND PREVALENCE OF OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES IN SALT INDUSTRY SUBMITTED BY DISTRICT HEALTH OFFICERS, GOVERNMENT OF SAURASHTRA.

*(A) Report of the District Health Officer, Central Saurashtra District. Relating to the Maharaja Salt Works Lavanpur and Varsamedhi.*

Kindly refer to your letter No. B/40-1/4054/59 dated 2nd May 1952 and endorsement No. B/40-1/4719/23 dated 24-5-52. I visited the Maharaja Salt Works at Lavanpur and Varsamedhi on the 28th May 52 in order to investigate the reported incidence of occupational diseases like dermatitis among the persons working inside the salt-pans.

It was noticed that many workers in the salt-pans had dermatitis and some had multiple small ulcers on their feet. These workers were working bare-footed in the salt pans containing highly concentrated saline and also crystals of salt which gave constant irritation resulting in dermatitis and ulcers.

During the investigation it was learnt that in most of these patients the dermatitis healed and was completely cured in off season and it reoccurred during the period in which persons were working in the salt-pans.

Controlling measures: (1) It is suggested that the arrangement may be made for adequate water supply for washing the legs (both morning and evening) after their work is completed daily.

(2) Gum-boots may be provided for the workers if possible.

The water supply was not safe and adequate and other sanitary arrangements for the workers were not satisfactory.

It is found that water supply from Dahisara to Navalakhi was collected into a masonry cistern and no distributing taps are provided

on each side of the cistern with the result that the labourers climb up the cistern and dip their own dirty utensils into the cistern and make the water dirty.

No latrines are provided for the labourers and they are living in very insanitary huts.

There was no Medical Officer appointed to look after the workers.

These points were discussed personally with the Inspector of Factories, Madhya Saurashtra, Rajkot, on the 2nd July 1952 and he stated that he can accompany me for visiting the salt works in July if further detailed investigations are required.

*(B) Report of the District Health Officer, Sorath District (Dr. J. K. Bose, Deputy Director of Health Services, Government of Saurashtra) Relating to Saurashtra Salt Manufacturing Co. Porbandar.*

Kindly refer to your letter No. B/40-1/4054/59 dated 1st/2nd May 1952.

The Saurashtra Salt Manufacturing Co. at Mithapur Porbandar was visited by me on 14-5-52 accompanied by the Chief Inspector of Factories & Boilers, Government of Saurashtra, Rajkot, in order to investigate the reported incidence of occupational diseases among its workers.

The investigation report is given below :

It was noticed that almost all the labourers working in the salt pans had either multiple small ulcers or sores (resulting from ulcers which had already) healed all over their feet and the lower portions of their legs. These workers have to stand bare-footed in the salt pans containing warm and highly concentrated saline water, while they scrape up salt crystals from the beds of the salt pans and arrange them in piles with the help of the rakes and spades. These salt crystals, appreciably large in size, are hard and rocky with sharp jagged edges. These salt crystals often strike the workers on their feet and legs (while they are engaged in scraping up these crystals into piles) and cause minute cuts and abrasions which

would heal quickly under normal circumstances, do not get opportunity to heal as they are constantly bathed in warm saline water which acts as an irritant to them and interferes with their healing process, with the result that these cuts and abrasions gradually develop into ulcers.

Controlling measures :—It is suggested that wearing of gurm-boots by the workers should protect their feet and legs from injuries as well as the irritant effect of the warm saline water.

Sanitary arrangements provided for the workers numbering about 350, were also inspected and were found to be most unsatisfactory. There was no provision for latrine of any kind, resulting in indiscriminate soil pollution, which is likely to encourage fly breeding, infection of hookworm and cause out-breaks of dysentery, cholera etc. There is no arrangement for quick disposal of refuse which is allowed to accumulate in the compound for about 2 months before it is removed.

Arrangements for drinking water and bathing facilities were also found to be inadequate.

The rooms in which the labourers have to live, were found to be ill-ventilated and over-crowded.

*(C) Report of the District Health Officer, Gohilwad District  
Bhavnagar Relating to Nawab Sidi Mohmedkhan Salt  
Works Jafrabad.*

We carried out investigations at Jafrabad Salt works, 'Nawab Sidi Md. Khan Salt Works' on 9-6-52 and gathered the following information in connection with the skin diseases among the labourers in the above mentioned Salt works.

Total No of labourers employed 450 according to the information supplied by the works manager. They are all temp. daily wage earners. They are paid on an average of Rs. 1-6-0 to Rs. 1-8-0 per day.

Out of this 75% of labourers are female and 25% of labourers are male.

### Various stages in the manufacture of salt:

1. Letting in the tidal sea water in the reservoir by means of gates put in between the creek and the reservoir.
2. Lifting the water from the reservoir to the condensers by means of pump.
3. There are 60 condensers.

After the stage of condensing where the specific gravity of sea water increases gradually and finally it is stored in "Feed Kyaras." Here the specific gravity of sea water is 24."

4. From the Feed Kyaras water goes to the pans where it is allowed to crystallise.
5. After the crystalization in salt pans the salt is gathered by workers entering the salt pans barefooted by means of wooden spades.
6. Then comes the levelling of floor of the salt pans by means of wooden spades. The workers lift the salt so manufactured in the mechanically driven trollies bring at the stocking area.

From here the workers fill up the baskets with salt by spades. Here also workers were barefooted.

### Investigations.

The investigation as regards the dermatoid condition of the salt works.

We examined workers at all the stages and found that more workers were suffering from the ulcers of the sole of the foot at the stage of stocking less at the stage of pans. Again the ulcers were more common in women (at the stage of stocking where the majority of labourers are female). It was also more common amongst new comers of tender age.

Again it was found that workers employed at salt pans were also suffering from the same disease, but to a lesser extent. (No female labourers were employed.) There were also bare-footed.

### **Conclusion.**

The diseased condition is due to the following factors working simultaneously in order of importance :

1. Constant mechanical irritation of the sole of the foot.
2. The barefooted workers.
3. Sex. Females are more liable because of tender sole.
4. Workers newly employed.
5. No intermittent washing and rest period.

### **Remedies suggested.**

1. It will be more advisable if males are employed and experienced workers taken up regularly for the job of lifting and stacking.
2. The labourers should be compelled to use canvas shoes.
3. Workers of tender age may not be employed as far as possible.
4. Salt free platforms with sheds must be provided for workers to rest while not on actual job, near the place of work.
5. They should be given salt free platforms with sheds washing and drinking facilities at the platform.
6. Regular interval of rest after half an hour's work.

Following sanitary defects were also found at works.

1. There was no facility at reasonable distance and in sufficient number so as to encourage the workers to attend to the natural calls at the factory.
2. There was very meagre number of latrines, and urinals for the workers. These again were far away from the place of work.

3. There was no facility for the workers to have drinking water at the place of work.
4. There was no shed for the workers where they can take their afternoon meals and rest.

N. B. As the Factory Inspector was not available we could not carry on investigations in details.

*(D) Report of the District Health Officer, Gohilwad District  
Bhavnagar Relating to Bhavnagar Salt Works, Bhavnagar.*

We carried on the investigations on Bhavnagar Salt Works, Bhavnagar on 18-6-1952 and gathered the following information in connection with the skin diseases among labourers in the above mentioned salt works.

Total number of labourers employed 450 according to the information supplied by the works manager. They are all temporary daily wage earners. They are paid an average Rs. 1-14-0 to Rs. 2-8-0 per day.

Out of this 50% of labourers are males and 50% labourers are females.

**Various Stages in the Manufacture of Salt.**

1. Letting in the tidal sea water in the reservoir by means of gates put in between the creek and the reservoir.
2. Lifting of the water from the reservoir to the condensers by means of pumping.
3. After the stage of condensing where the specific gravity of sea water increases gradually and finally it is stored in "Feed Kyaras". Here the specific gravity of the sea water is "24".
4. From the "Feed Kyaras" water goes to the pans where it is allowed to crystalise.
5. After the crystalization in salt pans the salt is gathered by workers, entering the salt pans bare footed by means of spades.

6. Then the workers lift the salt so manufactured in the lorries driven by bullocks, at the grinding machine.

From here they fill up the baskets with spades and bring to the stacking area.

Salt is stacked by means of mechanical contrivances.

### **Investigations**

The investigation as regards the dermatoid condition of the salt works at work.

We examined the works at all the stages and found that workers were suffering from the ulcers on foot.

### **Conclusion.**

The diseased condition is due to the following factors working simultaneously in orders of importance:

1. Constant mechanical irritation of the skin of foot.
2. Barefooted workers.
3. Sex. females are more liable because of tender skin.
4. Workers newly appointed.
5. No intermittent washing and rest period.

### **Remedies suggested :**

1. It will be advisable if males are employed and experienced workers taken up regularly for the job of lifting and breaking salt in the salt pans.
2. They should be compelled to use canvas shoes.
3. Workers of tender age may not be employed as far as possible.
4. Salt free platforms with sheds must be provided for workers to rest while not on actual job near their place of work.
5. They should be given salt free platforms with sheds washing and drinking facilities at the platforms.



6. Regular interval of rest after half an hour's work.

Following sanitary defects were also found at works,

1. There was no facility at reasonable distance and insufficient number so as to encourage the workers to attend to the natural calls at the factory.
2. There was very meagre No. of latrines and urinals for the workers. These again were far away from the place of work.
3. There was no facility for the workers to have the drinking water at the place of work.

Factory Inspector was available at the works.

## APPENDIX IV.

### OUTLINE OF THE SUBSIDISED HOUSING SCHEME OF GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

#### Introduction.

1. The Scheme contemplates building of houses for accommodating industrial workers and other low-income groups through the agency of the State Governments, statutory housing boards where they exist, employers and registered cooperative house building societies of industrial workers. The assistance which the Central Government proposes to give towards the programme is by means of subsidies and loans on relatively easy terms.

2. The Scheme also envisages loans at concessional rate of interest to :—

- (I) Co-operative house building societies of low income groups ( other than industrial workers ) and middle-income groups,
- (II) Local authorities and improvement trusts for acquisition of land and clearance of slum areas.

#### Specifications.

3. Accommodation will be of two types :

- (a) In cities of moderate size where land values are not exorbitant, single-storeyed tenements containing one living room, and in certain cases two living rooms, a kitchen, a verandah and a bathing space with water tap. A water flushed latrine to be shared between two tenements, will also be provided.
- (b) In larger cities where land values are very high, multi-storeyed buildings where each tenement will comprise a living room, a kitchen and a verandah. Community latrines and bath rooms will be provided for a group of flats.

The living rooms will be of the size of not less than 120 Sq. ft.

4. These are the minimum specifications which must be complied with. The amount of subsidy and the calculation of standard rent are based on the costs as estimated in Annexure A.

### Finance.

5. The Central Government will grant subsidies as follows :—

- (a) to the extent of 50% of the actual cost of construction including the cost of land for housing scheme undertaken by the State Governments or statutory housing Boards, and
- (b) to the extent of 25% of the actual cost of construction of housing schemes undertaken by employers and registered Co-operative societies of industrial workers.

6. The Central Government will grant loans as follows :—

- (a) to the State Governments and statutory housing Boards upto 50% of the cost of construction including the cost of land repayable in 25 years at  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$  per annum, and
- (b) to employers and co-operative societies of industrial workers upto 37% of the cost of construction at  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$  per annum or at the option of the borrowers upto 50% of the cost of construction at 5% per annum, repayable in 15 years.

7. No loan or subsidy will be admissible for cost of land unless the land has been newly acquired for the construction of houses under the scheme.

8. No loan or subsidy under this scheme will be admissible for housing of employees of the Central or the State Governments except where employed by corporations or companies coming within the scope of the Employees Provident Fund Act.

The loans to cooperative house-building societies, local authorities and improvement trusts referred to in paragraph 2, will be at  $\frac{1}{2}\%$  above

the current rate of the Central Government borrowing and may be taken to be  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$  per annum for 1952-53. Such loans will be given through State Governments.

### RECOVERIES :

9. The calculation of rent of these tenements takes into account Sinking Fund charges on 50% of the total cost calculated on 40 years basis at  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ , the interest charge at  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$ , maintenance charge at  $1\frac{1}{2}\%$  of the cost of construction, municipal rates and taxes at  $12\frac{1}{2}\%$  of the rent in case of single-storeyed; and 25% in case of multi-storeyed houses. It has already been stated that loans issued by the Central Government will be payable, in the case of the State Governments and statutory housing boards within 25 years, and in the case of employers and cooperative societies of industrial workers within 15 years. In general, the rent chargeable will not exceed 5% of the total capital cost. On this basis the standard rent for the different types will be as follows :-

- (a) One-roomed single storeyed tenements Rs. 10-4-0 per mensem,
- (b) Two-roomed single storeyed tenements Rs. 14-8-0 per mensem,
- (c) Dormitories-Rs. 5-4-0 per head per mensem,
- (d) One roomed tenements in multistoreyed buildings Rs. 16-10-0 per mensem.

10. It is estimated that the rents at (a) and (d) work out on the average at 15% of the wages of a worker both in the moderately sized towns and larger cities of India. In the case of two roomed tenements it works out at about 20% but then larger accommodation is being provided for bigger families with the possibility that there may be more than one earning members.

### HOUSING THROUGH COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES.

11. Cooperative societies of low-income groups (other than industrial workers) and middle-income groups may obtain loans under the provision of this scheme at  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$  repayable in 15 years for the purpose

of building houses for their members. Such loans will be issued through State Governments who will also guarantee amortisation of loans.

### SLUM CLEARANCE.

12. It is recognised that acquisition and clearance of slum areas should be an integral part of the housing programme which aims at providing decent accommodation for the lowest income-groups. In order to enable local authorities and improvement trusts to undertake bold slum clearance programme, loans will be made available by the Central Government through the State Government concerned at  $4\frac{1}{2}\%$  repayable in 15 years to provide the initial outlay for the purpose. The rehousing of the slum-dwellers will be tied up with the housing programme under this scheme. The slum area, thus cleared, may be disposed of either in the open market or set apart for sale or lease to middle and low-income groups for self-aided housing schemes. Such schemes will be subject to approval of the State Government concerned. The amortisation of loans to local authorities and improvement trusts will be guaranteed by the State Government concerned.

### Housing Programme for 1952-53.

13. There is a provision in the current year's budget for Rs. 9 crores for industrial housing schemes. It is proposed to allocate the amount as follows:—

Subsidies	...	...	Rs. 306.5 lakhs.
Loans	}	...	„ 593.5 lakhs.
		...	„ 900.0 lakhs.

14. Under this scheme the programme of construction will be as follows:—

(a) by the State Governments and housing boards			
Type A/1	One roomed single storeyed tenements	...	4000
„ B/4	Two roomed single storeyed tenements	...	1000
„ C/4	One roomed tenements in multistoreyed buildings	..	4000
	Dormitories.	...	111
			9111

(b) by the employers and cooperative societies of industrial workers :

Type A/1	One roomed single storeyed tenements	...	10,000
„ B/4	Two roomed single storeyed tenements	...	3,000
„ A/4	One roomed tenements in multistoreyed buildings.		4,000
	Dormitories	...	444
			<hr/>
			17,444
			<hr/>
	Grand Total		26,555
			<hr/>

In addition to the target of 26,555 housing units under the subsidised scheme, we expect about 10,000 housing units to be constructed by cooperative house-building societies (other than those of Industrial workers) and by the State Government employers who have taken advantage of the industrial housing schemes hitherto in force. The housing programme of the current year may therefore aim at building 37000 housing units in round figures.

For the above, subsidies will be payable as follows:—

(a)	to the State Governments and statutory housing boards,	Rs. 159	Lakhs
(b)	to employers and co-operatives of industrial workers.	„ 147.5	„
		<hr/>	
		Rs. 306.5	„

**Loans will be admissible as follows:**

(a)	to the State Government and statutory housing boards,	Rs. 159	Lakhs.
(b)	to employers and co-operatives of industrial workers	Rs. 282.25	„
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		Rs. 381.25	„

**Loans will be admissible to :**

(a)	Cooperative housebuilding societies other than those of industrial workers.	Rs 75	Lakhs
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(b) local authorities and improvement trusts for acquisition and development of lands and slum clearance.	Rs. 75 lakhs
(c) the State Government and employers for projects under the previous schemes already approved	Rs. 62.25 „
	<hr/> Rs. 212.25 lakhs

**Legislation :**

14. A National Housing Act is proposed to ensure uniformity of housing policy throughout the country, and to remove difficulties arising under the Land Acquisition Act whether in respect of the assessment of compensation or for taking immediate possession of land, or the Cooperative Societies Act or the various Rent Acts. It is intended that the provisions in the proposed National Housing Act will in specific matters mentioned therein, supersede the provisions to the contrary in the general acts to which a reference has been made.

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