



सत्यमेव जयते

**Report of the
Comptroller and Auditor General of India
on
Economic and Revenue Sector
for the year ended 31 March 2019**



**लोकहितार्थ सत्यनिष्ठा
Dedicated to Truth in Public Interest**

**Government of Gujarat
Report No. 3 of the year 2020**

lesser receipt of interest of ₹ 1.93 crore²² during 2014-19.

2.1.8 Conclusion

The applications for obtaining/renewal of accreditation for its colleges were not made in time. There is lack of fire safety mechanisms and special provisions for disabled/ *Divyang* persons in the JAU buildings. Incorrect data was provided by JAU to ICAR for the purpose of ranking. 67 crop varieties released by JAU received poor response from farmers and seeds multiplying agencies and JAU commercialised only five varieties. Deficiencies were found in registration of seed varieties released by JAU under PPV&FR Act leading to loss of Intellectual Property Rights. JAU has been manufacturing and selling insecticides in violation of the provisions of Insecticides Act and Insecticide Rules. Overall quality of publication of research work is poor as can be gauged from various measurement indicators of research work.

2.1.9 Recommendations

For better achievement of its objectives of education, research and extension education, JAU may:

- *make necessary retrofitting/ construction to make its building NBC compliant;*
- *submit correct data to any ranking authorities;*
- *bring about systemic changes to improve its performance on release of commercially viable crop varieties, and encourage farmers and seed multiplying agencies to adopt these improved varieties;*
- *act promptly to register/renew its new released crop variety under PPV&FR Act to protect its IP rights;*
- *manufacture and sell insecticides only after complying with statutory provisions.*

INDUSTRIES AND MINES DEPARTMENT

2.2 Implementation of welfare programmes for salt workers

2.2.1 Introduction

Salt is one of the most essential and common household compounds used in food and also in industries. Salt²³ is a Central subject, listed in the Union list. India is the third largest producer of salt in the world after China and USA

²² Difference between actual interest earned on Fixed Deposit with banks and interest receivable on the funds parked with GSFS for the similar amount and period.

²³ Commissioner of Salt under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion), Government of India (GoI) has been entrusted with the task of manufacture, supply and distribution of salt by Union Agencies and regulation and control of manufacture, supply and distribution of salt by other agencies.

with an average annual production of about 300 lakh ton²⁴. Gujarat is the highest producer of salt, with around 81 *per cent* of the total salt production of the country. Salt-production in Gujarat is carried out in 15²⁵ out of 33 districts but mainly concentrated in Amreli, Bharuch, Bhavnagar, Devbhoomi Dwarka, Jamnagar, Kachchh, Patan and Surendranagar districts.

Salt workers are either independent marginal salt producers or hired labourers for salt lease units lease holders. In Gujarat there are around 1.10 lakh salt workers²⁶. The State Government leases land to individuals, co-operative societies and private firms for production of salt. There were around 2,508 (2017-18) salt manufacturing units in Gujarat varying in plot sizes from less than 10 acres to more than 100 acres. The total land registered under salt cultivation ranged between 4.28 lakh acres (2014-15) to 4.66 lakh acres (2017-18). Salt production normally starts from October and extends up to June next year during which period the salt workers with their families stay at the salt manufacturing sites in the arid desert or coastal areas. Various study reports²⁷ have highlighted the precarious conditions of salt workers and lack of basic infrastructure facilities like drinking water, food, housing, health and education. Further, due to typical geographical conditions of the desert, direct contact with inhalable salt dust *etc.*, and glare due to intense reflection of sun light by salt crystals causes various health disorders. As per a study²⁸ by National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH), Ahmedabad there is high prevalence of work-related health hazards *viz.*, fissures, ulcers, wound infection, callosities and eye problems among the salt workers.

2.2.2 Organisational Set Up

The Industries and Mines Department (IMD) headed by the Principal Secretary is the nodal department for implementation of welfare schemes for salt workers. The Principal Secretary is assisted by Industries Commissionerate (IC). At District level, District Industries Centres (DIC) headed by General Managers (GM) act as the nodal office for implementation of welfare schemes for salt workers.

For providing necessary infrastructural facilities for salt industry and welfare of salt workers in the state, the Government of Gujarat (GoG) established (July 2000) a State Level Empowered Committee (SLEC) under the Chairmanship of Minister (Salt Industries). In the districts, a District Level Empowered Committee (DLEC) functions under the Chairmanship of District

²⁴ Source: Annual Report 2018-19, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

²⁵ Amreli, Anand, Bharuch, Bhavnagar, Devbhoomi Dwarka, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Kachchh, Morbi, Navsari, Patan, Porbandar, Surat, Surendranagar and Valsad.

²⁶ As per data of Labour and Employment Department, Government of Gujarat.

²⁷ Like (i) Report prepared by Justice M. B. Shah, Former Judge, Supreme Court of India and Chairman, Gujarat State Law Commission named "Salt Production at the cost of health of Agariyas & their family members – A need for special legislation –In the State of Gujarat" in May 2014, (ii) Report prepared by CARE INDIA named "A Pinch of Salt-A study of Salt workers of Kachchh, Patan, Rajkot and Surendranagar Districts of Gujarat", (iii) Report: Evaluating Overall social and health status of salt workers in experimental salt fields at Bhavnagar, Gujarat based on a pilot survey conducted in March 2015 with support of CSMCRI-CSIR and Medical College, Bhavnagar.

²⁸ Prevention and control of occupational health hazards among salt workers working in remote desert areas of Gujarat and Western Rajasthan.

Collector and General Manager, District Industries Centre as Member Secretary.

The proposals for welfare works are forwarded by the district offices to the respective DLEC which recommends them to the SLEC for approval. The IC receives proposals approved by DLECs or directly submitted by the line departments, Associations and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) and puts up before SLEC for approval. Subsequent to its approval, proposal for budget provision is made and fund is received by the IMD. IC passes the fund onto the respective line departments/NGOs, Associations which had submitted the original proposal. The line departments take up execution of the works/schemes following procedures/rules of their respective departments.

2.2.3 Audit Scope and Coverage

The implementation of welfare programmes for salt workers was audited between January 2019 and July 2019 covering a period of five years from April 2014 to March 2019. Audit covered all the seven districts²⁹ where welfare works were taken up during the period 2014-19. Audit examined records of the IMD and the line departments responsible for providing road connectivity, water supply, housing, health, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), education, rationing, hygiene, protection against natural disasters, *etc.* Audit also undertook (between February and August 2019) joint site visits to salt manufacturing sites, Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), Primary Health Centres (PHCs)/ Community Health Centres (CHCs), schools and residential hostels for children of salt workers in the seven districts with the staff of the concerned line departments, IMD.

2.2.4 Audit Objectives

The audit was carried out to obtain a reasonable assurance as to:

- Whether any baseline survey was conducted and adequate planning was made for execution of welfare schemes/programmes for salt workers;
- Whether the works/schemes were executed economically, efficiently and in an effective manner;
- Whether the programme was successful in fulfilling basic needs of salt workers; and
- Whether proper monitoring of schemes/works was done and any evaluation/impact assessment was carried out.

²⁹ Amreli, Bharuch, Bhavnagar, Kachchh, Morbi, Patan and Surendranagar.

Audit Findings

Audit observations are discussed in succeeding paragraphs.

2.2.5 Planning

2.2.5.1 Survey and baseline database for salt workers

For effective implementation of welfare scheme, it is necessary to conduct a baseline survey and have a database of the population of salt workers and their location, facilities available and required by them. Such a survey and database are a pre-requisite for the IMD to prepare a long-term plan and set up priorities for works.

During the course of Audit, it was observed that no comprehensive facility survey³⁰ was conducted by IMD or any other agency of the State to ascertain the kind of facilities available to salt workers and their requirements in salt producing districts. The line departments carried out works based on limited survey conducted for their work requirement. There was a lack of holistic approach at the state level to take up schemes for welfare of salt workers and piece-meal works/ schemes are taken up on *ad-hoc* basis as per the proposals received from the district level authorities/ associations/ NGOs. This deprived the department of an opportunity to

- identify the location wise availability *vis-à-vis* requirement of basic amenities so as to focus and put coordinated efforts on such identified clusters/villages of salt workers
- adopt a bottom up approach³¹ and make a long-term perspective plan for undertaking welfare works for salt workers.

The fall out of this can be seen in the deficiencies in providing basic amenities as discussed in succeeding paragraphs. All DICs accepted (February 2019 to August 2019) that survey was not carried out.

2.2.6 Financial Management

The GoG provides fund to the Industries and Mines Department for implementation of welfare activities for salt workers. During 2000-2014, ₹ 305.20 crore was spent on various schemes for salt workers. Out of this, the major amount (₹ 206.86 crore) was on construction and maintenance of roads in salt producing areas followed by provision of drinking water through pipelines and tankers (₹ 27.91 crore), educational facilities (₹ 22.47 crore), provision of safety kits, identity cards/family cards, cycles and conduct of awareness camps (₹ 8.94 crores), health facilities (₹ 5.26 crore) and Others (₹ 33.76 crore) including money sanctioned to NGOs, Associations of Salt Manufacturers *etc.*

³⁰ Survey showing nature and extent of the facilities available and required.

³¹ Planning from bottom level based on ground level requirement.

During the period 2014-19, the details of grant provided by the Government and expenditure incurred on schemes for salt workers are given in **Table 1** below:

Table 1: Details of grant allotted and expenditure incurred for implementation of welfare schemes of salt workers during 2014-19

(₹ in crore)

Year	Grant allotted	Expenditure incurred							Saving
		Roads	Water Supply	Health	Education	Housing	Safety kit, Solar Pumps and Others	Total	
2014-15	30	5.01	0.00	8.09	0.19	0	1.71	15	15
2015-16	30	0.61	0.00	12.08	15.27	0	2.04	30	0
2016-17	31	1.80	1.36	0.13	11.69	0	0.03	15.01	15.99
2017-18	30	15.37	3.41	4.57	0.00	0	2.95	26.30	3.70
2018-19	7.46	0.00	0.07	0.00	1.57	0	5.82	7.46	0
Total	128.46	22.79	4.84	24.87	28.72	0	12.55	93.77	34.69

(Source: Information provided by Industries and Mines Department, Gandhinagar, Figure for 2018-19 as per revised estimate)

Audit observed that despite the fund availability, these remained unutilized in three out of five years during 2014-19 mainly due to non-adoption of bottom up approach besides lack of long-term perspective plans as discussed in the preceding paragraph. Further, it was also due to lack of co-ordination with the line departments leading to holding up of proposals at various levels and lack of sufficient proposals as discussed later.

2.2.7 Provision of Basic Amenities for Salt Workers

2.2.7.1 Drinking water supply

The working season for salt workers is from October to June. Availability of drinking water at salt pans in desert/ coastal areas is limited and therefore, it is necessary that timely arrangements are made for supply of water in desert areas as its delay may causes severe health, hygiene and survival problems for salt workers and their families. Gujarat Water Supply and Sewerage Board (GWSSB)³² is responsible for providing drinking water to the salt workers. GWSSB supplies water through pipeline-based schemes or through water tankers. Where there is no water supply by GWSSB, the salt workers depend on private water suppliers paying a huge amount of their earnings. The details of works related to water supply sanctioned by SLEC during the period 2014-19 and their status are given in **Table 2** below:

Table 2: Details of water supply works sanctioned during 2014-19 as on August 2019

Year	District for which sanctioned	Name of the work	Fund sanctioned (₹ in lakh)	Work status
2014-15	Surendranagar	Construction of water tanks in Odu village	31.40	Completed
2016-17	Surendranagar	Construction of water storage tank at Kharaghoda village	32.81	In progress
	Morbi	Supply of drinking water to salt workers through tankers	23.27	Completed

³² Under the Narmada, Water Resources, Water Supply and Kalpsar (NWRWSK) Department, GoG.

Year	District for which sanctioned	Name of the work	Fund sanctioned (₹ in lakh)	Work status
2017-18	Patan	Supply of drinking water to salt workers in Santalpur Taluka through pipeline	340.70	Not yet started

(Source: Information provided by Industries and Mines Department)

The overall scenario of water supply to salt workers was as shown in **Table 3** below:

Table 3: Details of water supply status by GWSSB during 2014-19 as on August 2019

District	Water supply through	Whether functioning and water was made available to the salt workers
Patan	1. Garamadi Group Water Supply Scheme. One water supply scheme-Santalpur Taluka Group water supply scheme sanctioned by SLEC in 2017-18 at a cost of ₹ 3.40 crore could not be taken up as it was to pass through Forest Area 2. Water tankers	Garamadi Group water supply scheme was functioning and in other areas, water was supplied through tankers
Bhavnagar	1. Vallabhipur Zone Water Supply Scheme (VZWSS) and 2. Bhavnagar-Ghogha Water supply scheme (BGWSS) 3. Water tankers	VZWSS and BGWSS are functioning partly. Water supply through tankers.
Surendranagar	1. Narmada Based Regional Water Supply Schemes 2. Water tankers	Narmada based Water supply schemes are functioning. For salt workers in areas not covered under these schemes water is provided through tankers.
Kachchh	1. In Gandhidham Taluka, through Vira Sanghad Group Water Supply Scheme 2. Water tankers	Vira Sanghad Group Water Supply Scheme was only partly functioning. In Bhachau and Rapar taluka, salt workers were provided water through tankers.
Amreli	No Water supply	
Bharuch	Water tankers	Water was supplied through tankers
Morbi	1.Lavanpur-Navlakhi Area Salt Cess Water Supply Scheme and Bagsara-Jaydeep Vistar Water Supply Scheme 2. Water tankers	Both the schemes are functioning. Other areas are covered through water tankers.

The audit findings in respect of water supply schemes in five salt producing districts are discussed below.

Water supply in Surendranagar District

Lack of planning and co-ordination among departments

GWSSB submitted (June 2016) a proposal to SLEC for water supply to salt workers through water tankers in Kharaghoda Range and Jesda-Kuda Range desert area for the period 2012-13 to 2016-17 at a cost of ₹ 5.09 crore (for water already supplied during 2012-16 and for supply planned for 2016-17). In the SLEC meeting (June 2016), GWSSB proposed to provide 60 *per cent* of cost sharing for expenditure incurred by it every year for supply of water to the salt workers. The SLEC did not accept the proposal and stated (June 2016) that GWSSB should have separate plan for water supply on permanent basis in its budget. Audit observed that GWSSB had not made (September 2019) separate provision for water supply to salt workers in its budget. Audit also observed that subsequently, the SLEC also did not pursue the matter with GWSSB and thus the matter remained unresolved.

GWSSB stated (September 2019) that being a policy matter, the decision was required to be taken by the Water Supply Department. Thus, even after more than three years (since June 2016) due to lack of planning and co-ordination between the departments, basic framework issue remained unsettled and no water supply scheme was planned.

Water supply in Kachchh District

Failure of Vira-Sanghad Water Supply Scheme

In coastal areas near Sanghad village, (Anjar Taluka), large number of salt workers face lot of difficulties in getting drinking water and depend on available wells in nearby areas for their water needs, which contain high level of Total Dissolved Solids.

GWSSB undertook (August 2007) Vira-Sanghad Water Supply Scheme for supply of water through pipeline to nearly 4,000 salt workers in 14 salt units near Sanghad village at a cost of ₹ 99.39 lakh. The project mainly included drilling of tube well at Sinogra village as a source, laying of pipe lines, construction of underground sump at Nagalvadia village and storage reservoir at Kanta weigh bridge of 1.6 lakh litre capacity each. Water was to be pumped from Nagalvadia sump to reservoir at Kanta (Weigh Bridge) for further supply to various salt units. Under the scheme, daily 1.6 lakh litre water was planned to be supplied. As water could not reach the reservoir at Kanta (Weigh Bridge), additional work (construction of sump at Jogninar, laying of pipes, electrification of sump, *etc.*) was taken up between 2012 and 2018. However, the scheme could not deliver water as envisaged in the scheme. Against the requirement of 3.95 crore litres³³, only 59 lakh litre water was supplied between June 2018 and 2019. Thus, even after spending ₹ 72.11 lakh, the salt workers were forced to make their own arrangements for drinking water.

³³ There are 395 days between June 2018 and June 2019 and 1,00,000 litre water is required per day.

GWSSB stated (July 2019) that due to less rainfall in Kachchh district, local source was dried and hence people of Vira village did not allow to draw enough water from the water tank. It also stated that only if water supply from Narmada is increased, water could be provided to Vira-Sangad salt area from Vira village. The reply of GWSSB was not convincing as poor technical planning of the scheme and non-management of source of water, led to non-achieving of the desired benefits. Further, water was also not supplied by GWSSB through tankers. This suggests lack of monitoring over the schemes by GWSSB and by IMD.

Water supply in Bhavnagar District

In Bhavnagar district, water is supplied by GWSSB to salt worker through Vallabhipur Zone Water Supply Scheme (VZWSS) and Bhavnagar-Ghogha Water supply scheme (BGWSS). VZWSS executed in 2009 was to provide water supply to 37 salt units of Vallabhipur and Bhavnagar taluka.

Complaints regarding non-functioning of pipe lines and non-availability of water at the salt units were put up before DLEC, Bhavnagar in January 2016. In September 2018, DLEC directed GWSSB to take up survey for identification of areas where water was not available and report thereon. However, no progress was reported thereafter (May 2020).

Office of the Public Health Division, GWSSB, Bhavnagar stated (May 2019) that only four to five units get water through tankers from Vallabhipur Water Supply Scheme as the pipe line network was disturbed due to widening of Adhelai-Nari National Highway and less availability of water due to corrosion of the pipe line. The Division also assured that pipe line network would be re-laid for the scheme. Further, the Division also informed that Vallabhipur Augmentation Water Supply Project was sanctioned by GWSSB to provide adequate water to Madhiya Sub Head works for which tenders have been floated.

For BGWSS, the Division stated that the scheme executed in 2008 was to provide water supply to 14 units of Ghogha and Bhavnagar Taluka. However, only nine units get water under the scheme while five units could not get water due to technical problem since 2009. It further stated that additional pumping station at village Avaniya would be constructed to provide water to remaining five units. During the joint site visit of salt units by Audit with the DIC staff (May 2019) at five³⁴ lease holders (10 acres) near Bhavnagar, it was noticed that availability of drinking water was a major issue.

Thus, even after a lapse of four years, GWSSB failed to take remedial actions and provide water to salt workers.

Proposal for providing Water tanks and storage tanks not finalized for years

Audit noticed that two proposals relating to water supply to salt workers in Bhavnagar district were put up before DLEC. One related to purchase of truck

³⁴ Akwada Khar Vistar near Jat School, Akwada Salt pans, Avaniya, Ghogha Ganeshgad and Kumbharwada.

chassis and water tankers (₹ 16.21 lakh), which was placed before DLEC in July 2015 while the other for purchase of 264 water tanks (₹ 21.12 lakh) for providing water to salt workers in 47 salt units, which was placed before DLEC in January 2016. DLEC recommended (March 2016) both proposals to SLEC. However, none of the proposals were taken up in any meeting of SLEC held during 2016-19. This shows lack of urgency towards development of basic infrastructure for water supply.

DIC, Bhavnagar stated (May 2019) that the matter would be followed up.

Water supply in Amreli District

In Amreli district, there was no water supply scheme run by GWSSB for salt workers. Gujarat Majoor Sangh, Chanch, an NGO associated with the welfare of salt workers put up a request for supply of water to salt workers of Amreli District in November 2013. DLEC directed (November 2013) GWSSB to undertake a survey and prepare a water supply scheme for salt workers. GWSSB, Amreli Division submitted (October and December 2014) a plan and estimates of ₹ 73.77 lakh to the Construction Circle, GWSSB, Bhavnagar for the same. However, the plan and estimates remained under protracted correspondence among, Public Health (PH) Works Division Amreli, PH Circle GWSSB Bhavnagar and Chief Engineer Office, GWSSB and was not yet finalised (August 2019). Thus, the scheme could not be taken up even after six years since November 2013. As a result, the salt workers were deprived of basic amenity of drinking water.

Office of the PH Division Amreli stated (September 2019) that the estimates were at approval stage. The reply suggested lack of monitoring over the progress of the schemes by GWSSB and IMD.

Water supply in Patan District

GWSSB provides water through tankers in Patan District to around 1,631 salt workers families staying in desert areas and villages near the desert as there were no pipeline-based Water Supply Schemes.

Audit observed that no water was supplied during 2014-15. Further, there was delay/short supply of water in all other years during 2015-18. Only during 2018-19, water was supplied timely to the salt workers but not supplied for the entire working season.

Office of the PH Division, GWSSB, Radhanpur stated that non supply and delay in supply was due to non-finalization of tenders for supply of water through tankers or delay in issue of work order to the agency. Reply was not convincing as the tendering process could have been started well in advance to ensure water supply to salt workers from beginning of their working season.

2.2.7.2 Road Connectivity

Proper road connectivity in the salt pan areas is important not only for the mobility of salt workers but also for delivery of other essential services to

them. The Panchayat divisions under the Roads and Building Department are responsible for construction and maintenance of approach roads to the salt lease site/ salt units. Details of road works sanctioned by SLEC during 2014-19 are shown in **Table 4** below:

Table 4: Details of road works sanctioned by SLEC during 2014-19

Year	District	Name of the work	Fund sanctioned (₹ in lakh)
2014-15	Morbi	Construction of causeway for approaches to salt units in Bagsara area in Maliya- Miyana Taluka	87.68
2015-16	Surendranagar	Construction of CC road from house of Karsanbhai Gandubhai to High School in Tikar (Desert)	2.62
	Amreli	Construction of Approach road and pitching for road joining salt unit Shri Jay Chamunda Nimak Utpadak Sahakari Mandli Limited, Chanch village Ta. Rajula to Chanch-Khera-Patva-Samdhiyala road km 0/0 to 2/0	58.19
2016-17	Amreli	(1) Construction of seven cc roads in salt workers areas in Chanch village (2) Construction of nine roads in the District	(1) 23.74 & (2) 155.86
	Kachchh	Construction of nine roads joining salt works in Anjar, Gandhidham and Bhachau Taluka	2,600.73
2017-18 & 2018-19	Nil		

(Source: Information provided by Industries and Mines Department)

Out of the seven districts checked in Audit, the audit findings relating to conditions of roads connecting the salt units in three districts and their subsequent impact are discussed in succeeding paragraphs:

Health service to salt workers affected due to bad roads

Medical services are provided to the salt workers through Mobile Health Units (MHUs) in far off salt pan areas in salt producing districts.

The office of the Chief District Health Officer, Bhavnagar operates one MHU under PHC, Adhelai to cover all the salt workers and their families in 27 salt units around Bhavnagar. However, during monsoon the health services through MHU could not be operated in 22 salt units due to damaged condition of the approach roads. Similarly, the salt workers in Patan, Morbi, and Kachchh districts are also affected as roads in salt producing areas were not maintained properly as detailed in **Appendix XIV**. Office of the Additional Director, Public Health has taken up (September 2019) the issue of bad roads with R&B department, Gandhinagar. No action was taken by the R&B department (September 2019).

Road maintenance not attended in Bhavnagar district

Based on the proposal of District Salt Manufacturers' Association, DLEC, Bhavnagar recommended (January 2016) to SLEC a proposal for maintenance of 16 approach roads costing ₹ 43.90 crore for salt units in Bhavnagar district. The District Panchayat was to bear 20 *per cent* of the cost *i.e.*, ₹ 8.78 crore and

Industries & Mines Department to bear 80 per cent of the cost i.e., ₹ 35.12 crore.

SLEC instructed (June 2016) DIC, Bhavnagar to fix priority of roads and re-submit the proposal. The matter remained under correspondence and was discussed again in DLEC meeting held on 24 September 2018, where the Association represented that maintenance of these roads was very important as in its absence, production of salt and transportation was badly affected. Based on this, DLEC instructed (September 2018) Member Secretary to send the proposal to IC/ SLEC for reconsideration. The DLEC again instructed (26 February 2019) R&B District Panchayat to take up the matter with the IC. However, no progress was found on records thereafter. Thus, work of maintenance of these approach roads to salt units could not be taken up.

Road works in Amreli district

SLEC approved (June 2016) a proposal of Panchayat Division, Amreli of R&B Department (Division) for construction of nine roads for salt units in Amreli district costing ₹ 1.55 crore. The fund was released by DIC to the Division in March 2017. However, even after lapse of two and half years, the work is still at estimate stage (May 2019). This shows lack of urgency by the line department and need for monitoring over execution of sanctioned proposals by IMD.

Road works in Kachchh district

In Kachchh district, Audit visited (12 and 16 July 2019) along with the officials of DIC Bhuj at various approach roads³⁵ joining salt pans with main road in Anjar Taluka and observed that all these roads connecting upto 10 acres salt workers sites to main road were in bad condition.



Office of the Panchayat Division, Bhuj of R&B Department stated (July 2019) that works on these roads were carried out during 2009-10 and guarantee

³⁵ Road connecting (i) NH to Nani Chirai salt units and from salt units to 10 acres salt workers sites, (ii) NH to Moti Chirai salt units and TM salt works, (iii) TM Salt Works to Chirai Salt Works, and (iv) Bajaj Salt Private Limited to Chirai Co-operative Mandli, Sahajanand Salt Works, Yadav Salt & Chemicals Works, Chamunda Salt Work, Shri Ram Salt Works, Saraswati Salt Work, Shiv Shakti Salt Works (Bhachau) and connecting to 17 10 acres agariyas.

period of these roads had already expired. It was further stated that proposal for maintenance of these roads would be taken up.

2.2.7.3 Housing Facilities

The salt workers make temporary huts/shelter during their stay of eight months in remote locations having harsh weather conditions. The accommodation is often not good enough to protect them and their families against extremities of temperature and high velocity of winds. The Central scheme Namak Mazdoor Awas Yojna was in operation up to end of 12th Five Year plan *i.e.*, 2012 for providing proper housing to salt workers. SLEC considered (July 2012) the fact of closure of the scheme and accorded in principle approval to state housing scheme for the salt workers. The Government's commitment to provide houses to the salt workers was again reiterated in the subsequent meeting of SLEC (January 2014).

Audit noticed that even after five years of decision of SLEC, no housing scheme was launched for salt workers. Audit visited (May-July 2019) houses of salt workers at salt leases in Bhavnagar, Kachchh and Bharuch districts with the staff of DICs and observed poor condition of houses of salt workers.

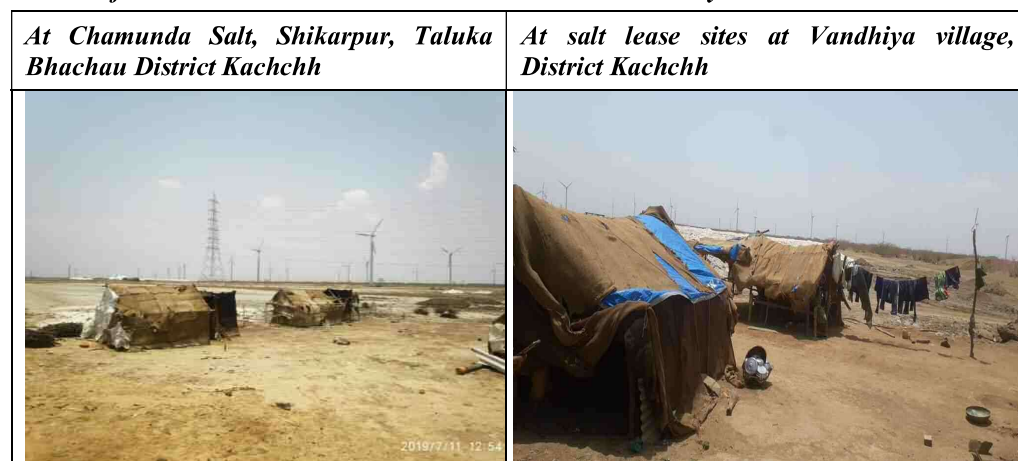
As shown in **Table 1**, funds of ₹ 34.69 crore remained un-utilized during 2014-19 and no provision was made for housing facilities during this period.

No condition in salt lease for housing to salt workers

The administration of salt leases is carried out by the IMD. The IMD has also laid standard terms of salt leases in October 2010. Audit observed (February 2019) that there is no condition in the salt lease that salt units should provide proper houses at salt lease site to the salt workers. As a result, the salt workers were either left at the mercy of salt unit owners for their basic housing requirement or have to manage themselves.

In reply, the IMD stated that the matter has been noted for making a provision in the lease agreement.

Houses of salt workers in Kachchh district: Photos taken in July 2019



Temporary Shelter facilities: Delay in decision making in providing tents to salt workers

In the SLEC meeting (June 2016), a proposal by Gujarat Gram Shram Yogi Kalyan Board (GGSYKB) for providing 1,000 water proof tents at the cost of ₹ 90 lakh to salt workers during 2016-17 was discussed. The SLEC approved purchase of 100 tents on trial basis at a cost of ₹ nine lakh. Audit noticed that no fund was released by the IMD and the purchase could not be made. In January 2018, the SLEC again instructed GGSYKB to carry out a market survey for tents suitable for the weather conditions in which salt workers work. In June 2018, an NGO (Agariya Hit Rakshak Manch) informed SLEC that students of Nirma University and Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology (CEPT) have carried out research on tents. Though SLEC instructed GGSYKB to study the matter, the purchase of tents is yet to be taken up (August 2019) even after lapse of three years since submission of the first proposal.

2.2.7.4 Health facilities

Due to geographical conditions and nature of work, salt workers suffer from many health hazards specifically eye morbidities, skin and musculoskeletal disorders. Office of the Commissioner of Health (CoH) and Health department of District Panchayats provide health services to the salt workers through Community Health Centres (CHCs), Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and Sub Centres (SCs), established in various talukas and villages. In the remote villages (coastal or desert areas) where PHCs/SCs are not available, medical facilities are provided through Mobile Health units (MHUs). There are 13 MHU operated in 13 Talukas in seven districts checked in Audit. Besides this, medical camps are organized for providing services of specialists. As per the details of diagnostic and curative services provided through MHU (Agariya) furnished by the office of CoH, Gandhinagar, 57 to 61 *per cent* of salt workers were suffering from various diseases.

The details of works sanctioned for providing health facilities to salt workers during 2014-19 are given in **Table 5** below:

Table 5: Details of works relating to Health facilities sanctioned during 2014-19

Year	District for which sanctioned	Name of the work	Fund sanctioned (₹ in lakh)
2014-15	Surendranagar (one PHC and 15 SCs)	Construction of one PHC, 70 SCs and prefabricated structure	2,004.85
	Morbi (19 SCs)		
	Kachchh (34 SCs)		
	Bharuch (2 SCs)		
2015-16 & 2016-17	Nil	Nil	Nil
2017-18	Various Salt Producing districts	Operation of 20 Dhanvantri Arogya Rathes in salt producing areas in the state	456.60

(Source: Information provided by Industries and Mines Department, Gandhinagar)

The work of construction of 44 SCs was completed by December 2018 and construction of 13 SCs was in progress (October 2019). In case of 10 SCs, the work could not be taken up due to problem of land acquisition and three SCs were dropped from the list. The work of PHC at Surendranagar was yet to be

started (October 2019). In respect of Dhanvantri Arogya Rath, IC placed fund of ₹ 4.56 crore with Health Department in August 2017 for procurement of vehicles which was in progress (November 2019).

The observations relating to health facilities to the salt workers are discussed in succeeding paragraphs.

Arrangement of Medical Health Unit and Medical Camps in salt areas

As medical facilities are normally not available at remote locations, health services are provided to the salt workers by office of the Chief District Health Officer (CDHO) in each district through operation of MHUs attached with PHCs/CHCs. Further, due to non-availability of services of specialist doctors, SCs, PHCs and CHCs, medical camps are arranged periodically at the salt pans in coastal/desert areas. The frequency of operation of MHUs is critical considering far off locations of work sites from the PHCs/SCs.

Audit observed that good efforts were made by CDHOs to provide medical services to salt workers in five districts (Bhavnagar, Surendranagar, Kachchh, Amreli and Bharuch districts) out of seven districts checked in Audit despite limited staff and other resources. However, no medical camps were held in Bharuch and Amreli districts during 2014-19. In Morbi and Patan districts, the services of MHU were provided once or twice in a month in various villages of salt workers due to absence of MHUs coupled with vacant post of medical staff.

The DLEC, Morbi recommended (November 2016) a proposal for procurement of three vehicles for MHUs at a cost of ₹ 38.86 lakh. Though the proposal was approved by SLEC and forwarded to IMD, the same was not yet finalised for want of compliance to remarks of IMD. DLEC (February 2019) again instructed DIC to complete the procedure for procurement of MHU.

Office of the CDHO, Morbi stated (August 2019) that frequency of MHU would be increased after getting vehicle. Office of the CDHO, Patan stated that medical officer and paramedical staffs were required to be appointed to increase the frequency of MHU on weekly basis.

No condition for medical facilities to salt workers working in salt units

The IMD has prescribed standard terms for salt leases in October 2010. Audit observed that the standard terms do not provide for medical facilities to salt workers by the lease holders. As a result, the lease holder was not made responsible to provide medical aid or first aid treatment at the work site to any salt worker in the event of any medical exigency. Further, there is no provision for providing group medical insurance for them. In addition, the lease conditions do not provide for ensuring the salt workers and their families inoculated against cholera, plague or other epidemic diseases and vaccinated against smallpox at the time of employment; if they are not inoculated/vaccinated within the specified period.

It is notable that these conditions are explicitly provided in the standard contract of the State (R&B) Department.

2.2.7.5 Integrated Child Development Services

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) is a centrally sponsored scheme operated through Anganwadi and focuses on six services aimed at children in the age group of 0-6 years and pregnant/lactating mothers³⁶.

As per various study reports mentioned in **Paragraph 2.2.1**, nutritional status among the children of salt workers is very low. Special focus is needed for their immunization and health check-ups. As the children of salt workers spend their childhood in salt pans away from the mainstream area, an early education about health and hygiene is also necessary.

During audit, it was noticed that:

- During 2014-19, not a single proposal was put up in the SLEC by District Programme Officers (DPO) for providing ICDS services for children, pregnant women and lactating women of salt workers.
- While most of the salt clusters in villages are covered under ICDS, the salt clusters located in the desert areas in Patan, Amreli, Surendranagar and Kachchh Districts were left out of ICDS.
- In Patan, take-home ration was provided weekly to the children of salt workers in the desert areas through special van. No such facility was provided in other three districts (Amreli, Surendranagar and Kachchh).
- In the five meetings held between July 2016 and July 2018, DLEC, Patan directed District Programme Officer (DPO), ICDS to start ICDS activities and Anganwadis in Mobile vans/ tents in desert area for benefit of children and mothers of salt workers suffering from malnutrition. However, the Woman and Child Development Department did not explore the possibility of operating mobile Anganwadis in these desert areas.

DPOs (ICDS) at, Patan, Kachchh and Bharuch agreed to cover children working in deserts also. DPO, ICDS, Patan and Bharuch also agreed to plan mobile Anganwadi.

2.2.7.6 Education facilities

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) is a Government of India's flagship programme for achievement of Universalization of Elementary Education. For children of salt workers living in extremely remote, inaccessible or scattered habitations, education facilities are not easily available. Special strategy and efforts are required to identify and provide them with minimum elementary education. State Project Director, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has undertaken various

³⁶ ICDS focusses on six services viz.(i) Supplementary nutrition (ii) Pre-school non-formal education (iii) Nutrition and Health Education (iv) Immunization (v) Health check-up and (vi) Referral services.

initiatives such as establishment of seasonal hostels for children who stay in villages when their parents migrate for salt manufacturing, arrangement of Day Care schools (tent school) at work sites in various districts and provision of transportation facilities to children who have to travel beyond a specified distance. SSA has also developed online Migration Monitoring System to track and monitor migrating students from one cluster/ block/ district to another cluster/block/ district.

The details of works sanctioned by the SLEC for providing education facilities during 2014-19 are given in **Table 6** below:

Table 6: Details of works relating to education facilities sanctioned by SLEC during 2014-19 alongwith their status as on January 2020

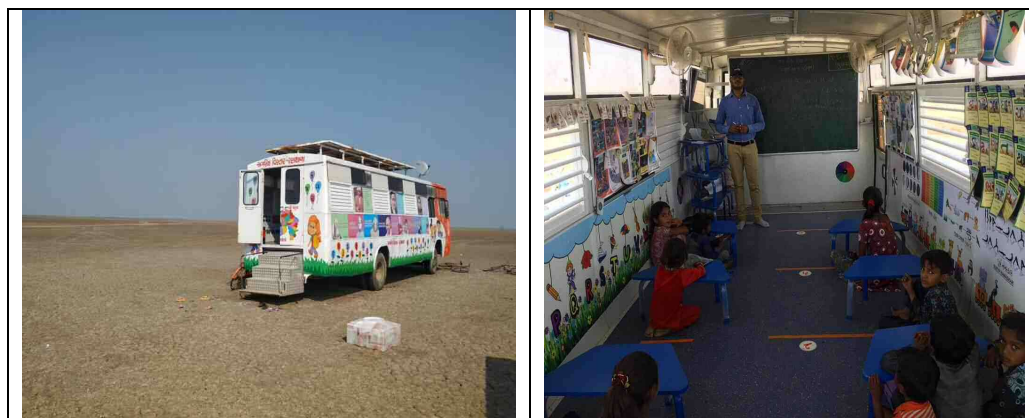
Year	District	Name of the work	Fund sanctioned (₹ in lakh)	Latest status as on January 2020
2014-15	Surendranagar and Bharuch	Providing uniforms, Construction of school building, Prayer hall, Computer halls, Library, Water tanks in various schools in Surendranagar and Bharuch district and providing educational facilities in five residential schools in Surendranagar district.	193.68	Completed
2015-16	Surendranagar	Providing uniforms, Construction of school building, Prayer hall, Computer halls, Library, Water tanks	389.54	In Progress
2016-17	Kachchh and Amreli	Providing school bus, Providing benches in Ashramshala, construction of rooms	30.14	Completed
2017-18	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
2018-19	Surendranagar	Providing concrete block at school M. B. Patwari, Village Bajana	5.25	Completed

(Source: Information provided by Industries and Mines Department, Gandhinagar)

The overall quality of water in Amreli, Bhavnagar, Kachchh, Patan and Surendranagar districts is saline as per Central Ground Water Board (CGWB). Thus, special focus is needed to provide safe drinking water to the students in the schools in these areas. During joint site visits (April to July 2019) of 30 schools and four SSA residential hostels along with officials of DICs in villages near the salt workers clusters in these districts, Audit observed that RO water facility was not provided in 12 schools and four SSA residential hostels. In 18 schools though RO water facility was provided, these were not functional. Further, computer labs constructed in 31 schools were not functional in Surendranagar, Bhavnagar, Kachchh and Amreli Districts.

Good Practice

Audit visited seasonal hostels for children of migrating parents constructed by SSA authorities in various salt producing districts and found that the hostels were providing intended benefits to the children of salt workers.



“School on Wheels” in desert area of Patan District

GoG also launched (July 2018) an innovative pilot project of “School on Wheels” for children of salt workers staying with their parents in desert areas. Under this project, 30 scrap buses of Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation were modified with PVC flooring, writing desks, and a writing board to be used for teaching children. Audit visited two such Schools on Wheels in remote desert area of Surendranagar and Patan districts and observed that the children of salt workers were benefitted from the project.

2.2.7.7 Rationing facilities

In the remote areas where the salt workers spend most part of the year, regular supply of essential commodities including food is practically non-existent. SLEC sanctioned (January 2014) ₹ two lakh to Gujarat State Civil Supplies Corporation Limited, Gandhinagar for operation and maintenance of mobile rationing van for salt workers for the year 2013-14. However, it also decided (January 2014) to close mobile rationing van and hand it over to Labour Department or Social Welfare Department or any other Department. No reasons were recorded by SLEC for this decision. After 2013-14, no work for providing ration facility to salt workers was sanctioned by SLEC.

Thus, abrupt closure of mobile rationing van facility without making alternative arrangements resulted in deprival of rationing facilities to salt workers at a fair price. The matter was taken up by Audit (November 2019) with the office of the Director, Food and Civil Supply, Gandhinagar. Their response was awaited (June 2020).

2.2.7.8 Sanitation facilities

As per various study reports³⁷, hygiene is a serious issue for salt workers as toilet facilities are normally not available for salt workers at salt pans.

Audit observed that, due to lack of proposals there was little progress in providing sanitation facilities to salt workers. During 2014-19, SLEC received only two proposals for sanitation (one in Kachchh District and one for

³⁷ Study Report: Evaluating Overall social and health status of salt workers in experimental salt fields at Bhavnagar, Gujarat based on a pilot survey conducted in March 2015 with support of CSMCRI-CSIR and Medical College, Bhavnagar.

Bhavnagar District). Of this, SLEC approved (January 2018) one proposal of Gandhidham taluka in Kachchh District for providing of 100 number of toilets for salt workers at the cost of ₹ 27.25 lakh. The work was completed (December 2019). In case of proposal for Bhavnagar district, the SLEC approved bathrooms and toilet blocks in 10 salt work pans (against 47 proposed) on trial basis with sanction of ₹ 34.40 lakh (80 *per cent* of total cost of ₹ 43 lakh). SLEC instructed (June 2016) the District Salt Manufacturers Association, Bhavnagar to bear the remaining 20 *per cent* share (₹ 8.60 lakh). The proposal was not implemented so far for want of pending details sought by IMD from the Association (October 2019). Thus, issue of sanitation was almost left uncovered under the welfare programme for salt workers.

Further, there was no coverage of salt workers under the Swachchh Bharat Mission³⁸ launched by GoI in October 2014. During joint site visits (May-July 2019) of the lease site of 17 salt units in Bhavnagar District and nine units in Kachchh district, it was observed that none of the salt units provided toilet facilities to salt workers. Thus, the salt workers and particularly women faced difficulties and were deprived of their privacy and hygiene. Panchayat and Rural Development Department accepted (December 2019) the observation.

In case of salt units, providing toilet facility to salt workers do not directly fall under the functional area of any line department. The Industries and Mines Department and the Panchayat and Rural Development Department were required to take initiative for providing toilet-hygiene facilities. Audit observed that the condition of providing toilets and bathrooms for hygiene and sanitation were not prescribed in the standard salt lease agreements prepared by IC/ IMD in October 2010. Thus, it was not mandatory for lease holders for construction of toilets and bathrooms. IMD accepted the audit observation.

Gujarat Matikam Kalakari and Rural Technology Institute, an agency under IMD endeavours to promote the concept of appropriate technology for the rural development and for the benefit of rural artisans and cottage industries. However, the IMD did not involve the institute and utilize its procurement or providing movable toilets to salt workers.

2.2.8 Non-utilization of Departmental resources or use of modern technologies

Innovative, low cost modern technologies may bring many solutions to rural problems. There are a number of Central Government organizations like National Institute of Rural Development, Council for Advancement of People's Actions and Rural Development, National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), Structural Engineering Research Centre (SERC) working on low cost rural development technologies, like low cost toilets (NEERI), Low maintenance fuel efficient stove (NEERI), Small wood gasifier (Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru) for providing domestic and street lights in remote areas *etc.* No such initiative has been taken to improve lives of salt workers through low cost modern technologies.

³⁸ The main objectives of the mission *inter alia* were construction of individual and community toilets, to eliminate open defecation and make India Open Defecation Free (ODF) by 2019.

Good Practice

With a view to reduce fuel expenses of salt workers on withdrawal of underground brine or sea water and encourage use of renewable source of energy, GoG launched (October 2017) a subsidy scheme for salt workers on purchase of solar pump. Under the scheme, salt workers having land of less than 10 acres, were provided a subsidy of 80 *per cent* by the government and balance 20 *per cent* was to be borne by the salt workers. The scheme received positive response and during 2017-20 (up to October 2019), GoG sanctioned total 778 applications for solar pumps and granted subsidy of ₹ 15.82 crore.

2.2.9 Monitoring of lease conditions for ensuring safety, security and welfare of salt workers

The salt leases are issued by the District authorities for which the IC has prescribed (October 2010) standard lease agreement. For salt workers working at big salt units (above 10 acres), their welfare can be ensured through monitoring of salt leases issued by the concerned District authorities. As per the standard agreement, Salt unit owners have to (i) make arrangements for drinking water, (ii) develop cyclone early warning system with light and sound and construct sound cyclone relief shelter for salt workers and shift them to safe places in case of cyclone, (iii) provide safety kit like gum boots and goggles to the salt workers. During audit of office of IC and DICs, it was noticed that no inspection of these salt units was carried out by the IMD during 2014-19 with a view to check compliance of the above lease conditions. Thus, compliance of lease conditions by salt unit owners could not be ensured.

2.2.9.1 Non-inclusion of lease conditions for payment of minimum wages, PF and insurance to salt workers

The welfare of the salt workers who are hired by big salt units (above 10 acres), their protection against economic exploitation can be ensured through provision of condition for minimum wages, provident fund and insurance by the unit owners in their lease agreement and monitoring of compliance to the lease terms. Audit observed that the standard lease condition does not include any such provision. On the other hand, these conditions are provided by the R&B Department, GoG in all their contract agreement for ensuring housing facility, medical aid, hygiene and sanitation of labourers deployed by the contractors in their works. Inclusion of such terms and conditions and their monitoring by the IC office can greatly improve the working and living conditions of salt workers.

2.2.10 Functioning of DLECs

For successful implementation of the salt welfare scheme, it was necessary that meetings of DLECs are held regularly, proposals are submitted by the line departments, NGOs, Association of Salt manufacturers and finalised by DLEC/SLEC promptly. During audit of DICs, the following were noticed:

Meetings of DLEC not held regularly

The meetings of the DLECs were not held regularly as shown in **Appendix XV**. DLEC, Amreli held only one meeting during 2014-19. DLEC, Morbi, did not hold any meeting during 2014-15 and 2015-16 and DLEC, Bhavnagar did not hold any meeting during 2014-15 and 2016-17. The matter of regular quarterly meetings of DLEC and sending sufficient proposals to SLEC was taken up (February 2017) by the IC with the Chairmen of DLECs. However, situation did not improve. In response to audit observation, DICs agreed (August 2019) to hold meetings regularly.

Less receipt of proposals

The work proposals are drivers for the implementation of the programme. More proposals during a year results in more welfare works. In Districts/Talukas for which proposals are not received, welfare works are not carried out. During 2014-19, meetings of DLECs in the districts except Surendranagar were held without many proposals (**Appendix XV**). As discussed in preceding paras, this resulted in gaps in creation of infrastructure and providing basic amenities for the salt workers and their families. During 2014-19, proposals were received in the seven test checked districts relating to drinking water supply, education, tents and road connectivity. However, no proposals were received for health, housing, ICDS, shelter houses, *etc.* Further, for road connectivity and education facilities, proposals received were stray proposals without any comprehensive coverage in salt manufacturing areas.

Deficiencies in functioning of DLEC

The functioning of DLEC was not result oriented. Audit observed that 36 out of 73 proposals received in meeting of various DLECs were held up at various levels³⁹ due to reasons like proposals with incomplete details, non-compliance of remarks raised by IC, *etc.* This indicated lack of co-ordination among IC, DIC, line departments, District Associations of Salt Manufacturers, *etc.*, (**Appendix XVI**).

Audit also noticed that there was no follow up, compliance of instructions was not watched and progress was not reviewed in subsequent meetings. The matters remained unresolved and no outcome could be achieved. Most of the proposal for welfare works brought before DLECs remained pending and not finalised for long periods. As a result, the proposed welfare works could not be carried out.

After this was pointed out, DICs stated (February 2019 to July 2019) that the observations were noted for future.

³⁹ Various levels such as DIC/IC, DLEC and Implementing agency.

2.2.11 Formation of SLEC: Important functionaries not included

The SLEC formed by the Government includes 34 members like Secretaries of line departments, Associations of Salt units, NGOs, *etc.* Audit observed that following Departments of the State Government shown in **Table 7** though having functional jurisdiction over area of the salt workers were not included in SLEC:

Table 7: Departments having functional jurisdiction over the area of salt workers but not included as a member in SLEC

Department	Important area in execution of welfare scheme for salt workers
Panchayat, Rural Housing and Rural Development Department	As desert or coastal area of working for salt workers fall under the jurisdiction of Panchayat Authorities, the Panchayat, Rural Housing and Rural Development Department has a key role to play in the planning and implementation of the scheme.
Social Justice and Empowerment Department	Many of the salt workers belong to nomadic tribe (<i>Vichrati Jati</i>)/SC/ST. As the Social Justice and Empowerment Department allots funds and executes various schemes/works for welfare of these communities, it needs to be involved in planning and implementation of the schemes.
Food and Civil Supply Department	As salt workers work in desert/ area far from towns/cities, availability of grocery items is a major issue of concern. Thus, Food & Civil Supply department has important role to play.

Non-inclusion of these functional departments deprived IC of their assistance in improving planning and implementation of the welfare programme and making them more effective.

Industries and Mines Department (IMD) replied (October 2019) that Panchayat, Rural Housing and Rural Development Department and their district offices send the proposals for welfare of salt workers, when required. However, Audit found that in spite of sanitation being a key requirement for salt workers, there was no proposal in SLEC for providing sanitation /toilets (barring two proposals submitted by NGOs in Kachchh and Bhavnagar) during 2014-19.

IMD further stated that Social Justice & Empowerment department covers salt workers under their schemes. Audit observed base level works regarding water supply, housing, sanitation *etc.*, are yet to be taken up. Regarding involvement of Food and Civil Supply department, it was stated that salt workers bring the items as per their requirements at the time of going to desert and Food and Civil Supply Department operates rationing van. However, no details were furnished by IC in support of this.

Participation of these departments in SLEC would aid planning, coordination, convergence and cost sharing of the welfare schemes.

2.2.12 Economic condition of salt workers

The salt workers are the backbone of the salt industry. However, they do not have access to formal credit for meeting salt production expenses and depend on private money lenders/ traders for finance, ration supply, crude oil supply, water supply *etc.* In turn, they lose bargaining power in deciding the cost of salt produced and do not get profit at the end of the season. They receive only one to two *per cent* of market price of salt they produce while the rest is taken away by the traders. Further, low access to information and illiteracy prevent them from adopting alternative livelihood options. In view of the above, financial assistance through nationalized banks, other Government financial institutions is necessary to keep them away from the debt trap of private money lenders and to ensure improvement in their economic conditions.

During audit, we noticed that there were no efforts on improvement of economic condition of salt workers and they continue to live in a hand-to-mouth position.

2.2.13 Conclusion

Gujarat is the leading producer of salt in the country. The salt workers are either independent marginal salt producers or hired labourers for salt lease units. Audit reviewed the implementation of welfare programmes for the benefit of salt workers. Audit observed that the welfare schemes were implemented without conducting survey and proper database on clusters and amenities required for salt workers in the state. No long term or short-term plan for welfare schemes were formulated. The meetings of District Level Empowered Committee (DLEC) were not held regularly. There was lack of coordination among DLEC, IC, line departments, *etc.*, which led to non-finalisation of proposals for works such as water supply and roads. Housing and sanitation did not get priority. The line departments did not submit sufficient proposals and their involvement was very limited. No monitoring mechanism was in place to oversee the welfare of salt workers by salt unit owners. The inspection of lease was not carried out to ensure compliance of conditions relating to safety of salt workers. The lease agreements did not include conditions for providing of houses, sanitation and medical facilities to salt workers. As a result, the extent to which the programmes helped improve the lives of the salt workers was not ascertainable.

2.2.14 Recommendations

The Government may:

- *undertake a complete location wise survey on population, facilities available vis-a-vis required and plan to undertake the welfare works for salt workers accordingly;*
- *complete the approved works like drinking water supply schemes, construction of roads, etc., in a time bound manner.*

- *bridge the gaps by including terms in the lease agreements relating to conditions like providing drinking water facilities, housing, health, hygiene and sanitation, etc.*
- *strengthen the monitoring mechanism for compliance of lease conditions by the salt unit owners.*
- *Launch a scheme for providing credit to salt workers.*

FORESTS AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

2.3 Compensatory Afforestation

2.3.1 Introduction

Deforestation or degradation in our forests is an important factor in creating ecological imbalance. The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980, was enacted with the objective to conserve the forests of the country and develop ecological security, environmental stability and sustainable development. The Act restricts de-reservation of forest or use of forest land for non-forest purpose. The Act provides a framework whereby if no alternatives are available and demand for forest land arises for non-forestry purposes, minimum forest land is diverted. Under this Act, Compensatory Afforestation (CA) is one of the important conditions stipulated by the Union Government while approving proposals for diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes. CA refers to afforestation and regeneration activities to compensate for the forest land diverted for non-forest purposes and is an additional plantation activity other than plantation activities normally carried out by the Forest Department. As per the Guidelines (2004) of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), GoI, CA shall be done over equivalent area of non-forest land (NFL) received from the user agency or in exceptional cases CA may be raised over degraded forest land (DFL) twice in extent of the forest area being diverted.

Process of diversion of forest land

At the state level, the Land wing of Forest and Environment Department (F&ED), GoG headed by the Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (APCCF) is responsible for scrutiny of the proposals for diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes. Subject to the fulfilment of the conditions specified in the in-principle approval, the land is diverted after getting permission from Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF & CC), GoI or from F&ED, Government of Gujarat (GoG) as the case may be. The process of diversion of forest land is shown in the flow chart below: