IMPACT: International Journal of Research in Business Management (IMPACT: IJRBM)
ISSN (P): 2347–4572; ISSN (E): 2321–886X
Vol. 13, Issue 11, Nov 2025, 1–8

A STUDY ON HEALTH PROBLEMS OF SALTWORKERS IN RAMANATHAPURAM DISTRICT

Dr. T. Sivakumar

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce (A&F), Mar Gregorios College of Arts & Science, Mogappair West, Chennai, India

Received: 13 Nov 2025 **Accepted:** 18 Nov 2025 **Published:** 21 Nov 2025

ABSTRACT

There is now a national and international market for the salt made at Ramanthapuram. In Ramanthapuram District, salt workers are involved in a variety of salt producing processes. Adversities in the environment and environmental conditions are encountered by salt workers. The reorientation of health care service delivery should be guided by the reallocation of adequate resources. Better care for the salt workers and access to necessary health treatments are probably guaranteed by this. In addition to potentially reducing the need for complex specialized care, a stronger emphasis on preventive and early management of health issues may also advance health fairness by enhancing economic and social lowering discrimination and giving communities the tools they need to enhance their health. Salt workers' current circumstances are no better than those of other industrial workers. Being a saltpan worker is a dangerous job. According to the survey, 1% of salt workers have occupational illnesses, with 30.77% of them experiencing skin and eye conditions. According to the salt workers, they lack adequate medical facilities to treat occupational illnesses.

KEYWORDS: *Salt Workers, Saltpan, Health Care Service, Health Problems, Occupational Diseases.*

INTRODUCTION

A prominent unorganized sector in Ramanthapuram is the production of salt, which employs about 51,647 people. Salt workers do a variety of salt manufacturing tasks, such as loading, weighing, grinding, packing, or transporting salt; stacking salt crystals at pan edges; and sweeping salt crystals with a wooden spade. Both the environment and environmental conditions present challenges to the workforce. The reorientation of health care service delivery should be guided by a robust primary health care approach supported by the reallocation of adequate resources. Better care quality and increased access to necessary health services are anticipated benefits of this. By strengthening social cohesion, lowering discrimination, and enabling communities to improve their health, a stronger emphasis on prevention and early management of health issues is likely to lessen the need for complex specialist care teams and may even advance health equity.

Salt Industry at Ramanthapuram

Ramanthapuram's salt has become more popular both domestically and abroad. Private business owners, state and federal governments, and cooperative societies all produce salt in the research area. Of the 25 lakh tons of salt produced by private units

in 2019, 82,300 tonnes were sold to Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. About 30,000 acres make up the salt-producing region in and around Ramanthapuram. Salt is produced for roughly nine months of the year, depending on the monsoon.

Salt Production Trend in Ramanthapuram District

Salt producers often depend largely on the export market, which has been trending downward in recent years. The processed salt's quality was subpar, and the producers suffered as a result of their lack of attention to detail. The market price of salt was skyrocketing despite its poor quality, and Gujarat became the new export market. A few years ago, there was a steady market demand for Ramanthapuram salt in nations like Malaysia, South Korea, and Singapore; however, because of the salt's high quality and reasonable cost, these nations have now focused on Gujarat.According to a source in the Salt Department, Ramanthapuram Seaport shipped 11,500 tonnes of salt in July 2015; however, this year's July exports decreased to 9,857 tonnes. According to the source, Ramanthapuram shipped 71,084 tonnes of salt in 2014–15, but in 2015–16, exports dropped precipitously to just 36,918 tonnes (The Hindu, 2016).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gupta, P., & Jaiswal, K. K.et al, (2020). To evaluate the financial performance of Indian public and private sector banks, this paper looks at several financial factors, including profitability, liquidity, and stability. Three public sector banks and three private sector banks were analysed in the study using secondary data from 2015 to 2019. The findings indicated that although public sector banks have made great strides, they still lag behind private sector banks' performance standards. In comparison to public sector banks (5.12133%), private sector banks were judged to be more successful in controlling non-performing assets (2.02300%).

Dubey, S., & Puri, Y.et al, (2021). Using the CAMEL Approach, the study looks at the financial performance of five Indian public and private sector banks, concentrating on the areas of earnings capacity, liquidity, asset quality, capital sufficiency, and managerial effectiveness. Punjab National is ranked lowest, and Kotak Mahindra is ranked highest. Private banks predominate; Bank of Baroda and HDFC Bank come in third and fourth place, respectively.

Singh, Y., & Milan, R. et al, (2023). The performance of public sector banks in India is examined in this study, with an emphasis on the relationships that exist between bank-specific characteristics and performance. The results of the analysis of financial data from 2009 to 2019 show that the following relationships exist: asset quality hurts bank performance; inflation and liquidity are inversely related; capital adequacy and interest margin are positively and inversely related; GDP growth is positively and inversely related to interest income; inflation rate is inversely related; and banking sector reforms are not significantly related.

OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

- The nature of employment in salt pans and salt production in Ramanthapuram District.
- The occupational diseases health hazards, if any, and the workers welfare schemes.
- Measures to solve the problem of salt workers and their diseases

Hypothesis for the Study

- **H_{01}:** There is no significant difference between types of problems with the employers and major health issues for the salt workers.
- **H_{02}:** There is a significant difference between working hours and major health issues of salt workers.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study's primary goal is to critically examine the issues facing Salt Pan and industry workers. As a result, the information provided by the employees and supported by secondary data is given more weight. As a result, both primary and secondary data form the basis of this study.

Problem Focus

In cooperation with the Department of Salt, Government of India, and owners of salt-manufacturing facilities, the occupational health camps were set up at Ramanthapuram. The sites were chosen based on the overall amount of salt produced at each location. Employees of neighbouring salt production facilities were asked to participate in a free health examination. The study did not include the workers who did not show up on the days of the health camp. In addition to the salt in the environment, salt workers are subject to environmental challenges. Information regarding their workplace health issues is lacking. Before independence, the economic circumstances of salt workers were appalling. With a half-satisfied appetite and a starving stomach, they spent the day between mud and slush. They lacked a cozy home and a place to sleep. Even after gaining independence, their progress fell short of expectations and plans. The reason for this was that the welfare of the salt labourers was not given much thought. The welfare of the workers in pans is directly within the jurisdiction of the Indian government. It is the duty of the State Governments to enforce the labour welfare laws in the private salt industry. They haven't shown much interest in the issue thus far. Because labour is typically local and the sector is seasonal, the producers have not Salt workers currently face no better working circumstances than those of other industrial workers. They have consistently been in the grip of employers and moneylenders. All year long, they are unable to find enough job. Actually, a large number of salt workers live in poverty. They are not only undernourished but also under clothed and under housed as a result of their extremely low income.

Problems Faced by Salt Workers

Due to a lack of other employment opportunities, salt workers are observed migrating to other saltpans in order to make a living. Furthermore, the salt workers are not skilled enough to perform any other type of labour. Since youngsters relocate with their parents and work as salt labourers, child and teenage labour is increasing in the saltpans. In light of these issues, some female salt workers quit their jobs with their employers and relocate inside this district. The majority of salt workers deal with issues including pay and working hours. In certain saltpans, female employees have sexual issues with their employers. These kinds of issues involving salt workers' employers are categorized under

Table 1: Types of problems with Employers

S. No.	Problems	No. of Respondents	Percent
1	Sexual Problems	13	8.7
2	Problems Related to Wages	92	61.3
3	Working Hours Problems	18	12
4	Bonus Problem	27	18
5	**Total**	**150**	**100**

(Source: Primary data)

It is evident that the primary issue facing the salt workers was one of pay. The second most significant issue was then dangerous job. The salt workers' least significant issue was the bonus problem.

Health Problems

Saltpan work is a dangerous line of work. Some salt workers inhale salt powder, which can lead to sinus issues. Some people can develop lung issues. Minor occupational injuries to the salt workers' hands and feet lead to the development of ulcers. According to Haldiya et al. (p1139), the prevalence of hypertension is higher in workers with ulcers (15.6%) than in those without ulcers (4.3%). Their blood pressure may be impacted by the possibility of salt absorption from these ulcers. Frequent and chronic back discomfort is one of the main issues facing female salt workers. because loading tasks and moving salt to platforms are primarily performed by female employees. Injuries to the arms and legs and eye irritation are more prevalent issues among female salt workers.

Table 2: Working Hours of Salt Producers

Hours	Salt producers	Percent
Less than 6	5	1.4
7-8	50	40
9-11	20	28.6
12-13	29	18.6
14-16	9	10
17 hours above	37	1.4
Total	**150**	**100**
(Source: Primary data)		

Presents the distribution of working hours among the 150salt producers. The majority of the respondents, 60 producers. (40 per cent), work between 7-8 hours per day, followed by 30 producers (28.6 per cent) who work 9-11 hours. A smaller proportion of producers, 19 producers (18.6 per cent), work between 12-13 hours and 10 producers (10 per cent) work between 14-16 hours. Only 9 producers (1.4 per cent) work for 6 hours or less and the same number work for 17 or more hours, representing the least common working hour ranges. This indicates that most salt producers work between 7-11 hours a day, with a few working long hours (16+), while only a small proportion of producers work shorter hours.

Table 3: Major Health Problems

S. No	Factors	SA	A	N	DA	SDA	Total
1	I often suffer from skin irritation and rashes due to salt exposure.	52	47	28	15	8	150
		34.7	31.3	18.7	10	5.3	100
2	Long working hours in high temperatures cause frequent fatigue and dehydration.	58	49	22	13	8	150
		38.7	32.7	14.7	8.7	5.3	100
3	I experience joint or muscle pain because of continuous physical strain at work.	55	51	24	12	8	150
		36.7	34	16	8	5.3	100
4	Eye irritation and vision problems are common due to salt glare and wind.	49	53	27	13	8	150
		32.7	35.3	18	8.7	5.3	100
5	My overall health has deteriorated due to working conditions in the salt fields.	61	44	26	11	8	150
		40.7	29.30	17.3	7.3	5.3	100

Table 3 The analysis of the data reveals that the majority of salt workers experience significant health issues due to their working conditions. A large proportion of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they suffer from skin irritation and rashes (66%), fatigue and dehydration (71%), and joint or muscle pain (71%) as a result of continuous physical strain and exposure to extreme conditions. Similarly, 68% of the workers acknowledged problems such as eye irritation and vision issues caused by salt glare and wind. Most notably, about 70% of the respondents felt that their overall

health has deteriorated due to prolonged exposure in salt fields. These findings clearly indicate that salt field working conditions have a substantial adverse impact on the workers' physical well-being.

Table 4: Types of Problems with the Employers and Major Health Problems of Workers

Variables	Problems	N	Mean	S.D.	F Value	Sig.
I often suffer from skin irritation and rashes due to salt exposure.	Sexual Problems	13	3.45	0.73	3.862	0.011
	Problems Related to Wages	92	3.62	0.79		
	Working Hours Problems	18	3.84	0.68		
	Bonus Problem	27	3.28	0.74		
	Total	**150**	**3.55**	**0.74**		
Long working hours in high temperatures cause frequent fatigue and dehydration.	Sexual Problems	13	3.68	0.64	4.125	0.008
	Problems Related to Wages	92	3.74	0.70		
	Working Hours Problems	18	3.95	0.67		
	Bonus Problem	27	3.32	0.75		
	Total	**150**	**3.67**	**0.71**		
I experience joint or muscle pain because of continuous physical strain at work.	Sexual Problems	13	3.52	0.72	3.674	0.013
	Problems Related to Wages	92	3.63	0.69		
	Working Hours Problems	18	3.78	0.71		
	Bonus Problem	27	3.35	0.77		
	Total	**150**	**3.57**	**0.72**		
Eye irritation and vision problems are common due to salt glare and wind.	Sexual Problems	13	3.39	0.65	4.019	0.009
	Problems Related to Wages	92	3.58	0.70		
	Working Hours Problems	18	3.82	0.66		
	Bonus Problem	27	3.29	0.73		
	Total	**150**	**3.52**	**0.69**		
My overall health has deteriorated due to working conditions in the salt fields.	Sexual Problems	13	3.74	0.70	4.211	0.007
	Problems Related to Wages	92	3.81	0.66		
	Working Hours Problems	18	3.95	0.71		
	Bonus Problem	27	3.48	0.69		
	Total	**150**	**3.74**	**0.60**		

The table 4 shows that the results were significant between the types of problems with employers and the major health issues faced by salt workers in Ramanthapuram District. For all five health factors skin irritation ($F = 3.862$, $p = 0.011$), fatigue and dehydration ($F = 4.125$, $p = 0.008$), joint or muscle pain ($F = 3.674$, $p = 0.013$), eye irritation ($F = 4.019$, $p = 0.009$), and overall health deterioration ($F = 4.211$, $p = 0.007$) the p-values are below 0.05, indicating statistically significant relationships. This implies that workers experiencing different types of employer-related problems (particularly wage and working hours issues) report varying degrees of health problems. Specifically, workers facing working hour and wage-related issues exhibit higher mean scores, signifying more severe health impacts. Hence, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected, confirming that employer-related problems significantly influence the health conditions of salt workers.

Table 5: Working Hours and Major Health Problems of Workers

Variables	Problems	N	Mean	S.D.	F Value	Sig.
I often suffer from skin irritation and rashes due to salt exposure.	Less than 6	5	2.84	0.64	6.237	0.005
	7-8	50	3.41	0.73		
	9-11	20	3.68	0.70		
	12-13	29	3.87	0.75		
	14-16	9	4.02	0.68		
	17 hours above	37	4.10	0.55		
	Total	**150**	**3.65**	**0.72**		
Long working hours in high temperatures cause frequent fatigue and dehydration.	Less than 6	5	3.05	0.58	8.145	0.008
	7-8	50	3.49	0.70		
	9-11	20	3.78	0.74		
	12-13	29	3.96	0.72		
	14-16	9	4.11	0.66		
	17 hours above	37	4.25	0.60		
	Total	**150**	**3.73**	**0.70**		
I experience joint or muscle pain because of continuous physical strain at work.	Less than 6	5	3.12	0.59	7.084	0.003
	7-8	50	3.44	0.68		
	9-11	20	3.69	0.73		
	12-13	29	3.88	0.70		
	14-16	9	4.02	0.65		
	17 hours above	37	4.18	0.60		
	Total	**150**	**3.67**	**0.69**		
Eye irritation and vision problems are common due to salt glare and wind.	Less than 6	5	3.08	0.61	5.968	0.011
	7-8	50	3.39	0.66		
	9-11	20	3.61	0.68		
	12-13	29	3.82	0.71		
	14-16	9	3.96	0.68		
	17 hours above	37	4.05	0.60		
	Total	**150**	**3.64**	**0.67**		
My overall health has deteriorated due to working conditions in the salt fields.	Less than 6	5	3.16	0.57	8.557	0.001
	7-8	50	3.54	0.66		
	9-11	20	3.79	0.70		
	12-13	29	3.98	0.71		
	14-16	9	4.15	0.65		
	17 hours above	37	4.22	0.62		
	Total	**150**	**3.81**	**0.68**		

Table 5 examines the difference between working hours and major health issues of salt workers. The results indicate that for all five health-related factors, there are statistically significant differences among groups based on working hours skin irritation ($F = 6.237$, $p = 0.005$), fatigue and dehydration ($F = 8.145$, $p = 0.008$), joint or muscle pain ($F = 7.084$, $p = 0.003$), eye irritation ($F = 5.968$, $p = 0.011$), and overall health deterioration ($F = 8.557$, $p = 0.001$). Since all p-values are below the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected. This confirms a significant relationship between longer working hours and worsening health conditions. Workers who engage in salt production for 12 hours or more daily reported higher mean scores (3.87–4.22), indicating more severe health issues such as dehydration, muscle pain, and eye irritation. Hence, it can be concluded that prolonged exposure to extreme working conditions leads to greater health deterioration among salt workers.

FINDINGS

- It was found that problems relate to wages were higher with 61.3 percent.
- 28.6 percent workers work for 9-11 hours daily.
- Most salt workers reported facing severe health issues due to their work environment. Notably, 66%experiencedskin irritation and rashes, and about 71% suffered from fatigue and dehydration caused by prolonged exposure to heat.
- Around 70% of respondents reported joint or muscle pain and eye irritation, while another 70% agreed that their overall health has deteriorated due to harsh working conditions, indicating significant occupational health risks among salt workers.
- A significant difference was found between the types of problems and health issues of salt workers ($F = 4.211$, Sig. = 0.007), with those facing working hours–related problems experiencing the most severe health impacts, while wage and bonus issues had comparatively lesser effects.
- A significant difference was found between working hours and major health issues of salt workers (highest $F = 8.557$, Sig. = 0.001). Workers labouring over 12 hours per day reported more severe health problems, including fatigue, joint pain, and overall health deterioration (Mean ≈ 4.0), whereas those working less than 8 hours showed lower mean scores, indicating better health conditions.

Suggestions

- Since the salt workers remain unemployed for eight to nine months without getting other alternative works in the off season, subsistence allowance and retaining fee may be given to the salt workers during off seasons for 15 weeks.
- Since a vast majority of the salt workers are prone to occupational diseases, a separate hospital with all facilities should be established for their benefit on Ramanthapuram.
- The employers should be statutorily asked to make provision for medical facilities. Such medical facilities should be made available to the salt workers at a nearby place.
- Separate toilet facilities for male and female workers should be provided in the salt pans.
- The Government should provide welfare measures and health's one assures to all the workers.

CONCLUSION

The salt workers believe that their medical facilities for addressing occupational ailments are inadequate. It has been discovered that one-third of them seek medical care in government hospitals. They lament that in order to receive medical care for occupational illnesses, they will have to reduce their workload and thereby forfeit their income. Most employees believe that their workplace does not have separate restrooms and urinals for men and women. Among salt workers, the prevalence of work-related symptoms was 55.1%. The prevalence of dermatological symptoms was 31.3%, the prevalence of ocular symptoms was 40.6%, and 52.8% of salt workers had symptoms like headache, giddiness, dyspnoea, and joint and muscle discomfort. The most prevalent ocular symptoms were burning in the eyes (30.3%),

redness of the eyes (37.5%), and glare (45.5%). A smaller percentage of employees also reported experiencing eye pain, photophobia, and excessive eye watering. Itching, ulceration, skin thickness, fissures, and burning were among the dermatological complaints that the salt workers reported. Male employees primarily complained of skin thickness over their palms. Other system symptoms, such as headaches, giddiness, joint and muscular discomfort, and general

REFERENCE

1. *Annual Report 1993-94, Salt Department, Government of India.*
2. *Annual Report for the year 2002-03, Salt Department, Government of India.*
3. *Bal Ram, Marketing Aspects of Salt, Hindustan Salts Limited, Jaipur, May 11-2, 1984.*
4. *Monthly Abstract of Statistics, Vol. 60, No. 7, July 2007.*
5. *Varadharajan, Report for the First Regional Conference on salt Production and Marketing, Madras, 3-4 January, 1984.*
6. *Indian Journal of occupational Medicine – August 2006 volume 10 – Issue 2.64. www.tnsalt.com and www.thehindu.com*
7. *Raman Sachdev, Murali L. Mathur, K.R. Haldiya, Health Problems in Salt Workers of Rajasthan, ICMR, Ahemedabad, India, 2002.*
8. *The Hindu, 29 August 2016.*
9. *The Tamil Nadu Salt Exports from Ramanthapuram.*