

## **Issues related to saltpan workers**

**SHRIMATI KANIMOZHI KARUNANIDHI (THOOTHUKKUDI):** Sir, the Union Government owns more than 14,000 acres of salt-producing land in Tamil Nadu. The land is leased and further sub-leased. Since the price of lease is unaffordable, the lease holders do not pay the workers enough and they are treated like bondage workers. Most of them lack any targeted social security scheme. They do not have basic amenities in the saltpan such as clean bathrooms etc. They suffer from many occupational diseases. And women workers especially develop many health issues relating to uterus and other complications because of their working conditions.

The Union Government under the Salt Cess Act, 1953 used to levy the Salt Cess of one per cent on salt rate. It was later abolished. This was used for the saltpan workers. I would request the Government to create a separate fund for the welfare of the saltpan workers so that the funds could be used in certain beneficial projects for these workers and their children. This fund can also be used for the treatment of occupational health hazard diseases. I request the Government to also ensure that saltpan leases are given at an affordable price to the workers? cooperatives, specifically to the women cooperatives.

Thank you.