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Title: Regarding the problems of salt pan workers of Villupuram in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI S. RAJENDRAN (VILUPPURAM): Madam Speaker, thank you for this opportunity. I would like to represent the grievances of the salt pan workers of my constituency.

First of all, I would like to mention that in India, our hon. Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Puratchi Thalaivi Amma is the first person who has introduced Amma Drinking Water, Amma Unavagam, Amma Cement for the benefit of the poor and needy people. Buoyed by the success of the above, Amma Salt is an affordably priced quality common salt which also was introduced. Amma is more concerned about the upliftment of all the weaker sections including salt workers in Tamil Nadu.

Marakkanam is a coastal panchayat town and taluk in Villupuram district. The 110 kilometre stretch from Marakkanam to Chennai is called South Buckingham canal. People of ten villages are engaged in salt production. The total salt pan area in Marakkanam is 2900 acres. Most of the workers are from Scheduled castes. Adhidraavidar Workers Cooperative Societies are involved in salt production.

Madam, more than 60 per cent and 40 per cent salt pan land belongs to the Central Government and State Government respectively. Hundreds of lessees are involved in salt manufacturing. A majority of salt workers borrow money at an exorbitant rate of interest. After a year long hard work, the salt produced by the manufacturers is around 25000 tonnes which was washed away recently in the floods.

माननीय अध्यक्ष : शून्यकाल में एक पेज ही लिखकर लाइए, दो पेज नहीं।

SHRI S. RAJENDRAN : When they were about to sell their products as a whole, the stock was washed away. Now their livelihood has become a big question mark. I urge upon the Government to send an expert team to estimate the actual loss and take steps to provide immediate relief to all the affected workers.