

## **Empowering the Vulnerable Salt Pan Women Workers in Thoothukudi District**

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### **Abstract:**

Empowering the Vulnerable workers is the important issues in Tamilnadu specially in Tuticorin District. It is a revolutionary Dimension of Industrial relation specially in salt pan areas. Women workers welfare includes over all welfare facilities to take care of well being of salt pan women workers and in order to increase their standard of living wherever they are situated and thirsting for their livelihood of empowerment. It does not means to constitutes monetary benefits of the employers alone to provide the needs and necessity but it can also be provided by the government, non government agencies and trade unions.

Salt pan work provides generally a source of lower income to the men and women workers in Thoothukudi. The salt pan women workers are facing vulnerable situation of their domain illiterate women workers have no other source of income from any other field. The salt pan is the only source for the vulnerable women workers in Thoothukudi District. Since they are living in the marginalized and wage based oppressed conditions. It must be changed into empower their economic conditions.

The present study aims at understanding the degree of marginalized and vulnerable women workers in salt pan towards fulfilling the objectives, a small study has been conducted in the district of Thoothukudi in order to find out the realities faced by the salt workers under the scourging sun which shows the major issues to constraints to reduce their poverty level while empowering the high wage rate to fulfill basic needs of their families and produce significant empowerment gains in the salt pan.

**Keywords:** Thoothukudi, Salt pan, Women workers, Empowerment, Degree of Vulnerability.

### **Introduction:**

A great majority of salt pan women workers are living under the line of the poverty. Since their deprived of adequate access to the basic needs of life such food, shelter, health, education, security, employment, justice and equality. The vital role of issues of sustainable livelihood, social and political participation of vulnerable groups exist as the major problem in the area of Thoothukudi District salt pan. The Trade unions, Government and salt pan employers have failed to guarantee workers right and their life in the consideration level. But they must be provided just and necessary awareness right to make known the social welfare that offered to them through various schemes.

In order to alleviate the vulnerability situations of the women salt pan workers, must break the underling poverty and make on empowerment weapon as a major barrier to have the power of progress in their needful life as they satisfy their job with the high level of income.

### **Empowerment of Salt Pan Women Workers**

The salt pan women workers are the self employed people. They aim at economic opportunities for their livelihood. The salt pan women workers designed to improve the quality of living. Empowerment of Salt Pan women workers satisfy themselves as they fulfill the daily needs of socio economic condition of their families. Salt pan women workers introduce themselves enormously in the sustainable energy solution means to borrow profitable costs. Salt pan can give women workers the salt produces tools, access and voice to better realize profit and maximize their personal and community livelihoods. The indicator gives the message that salt pan workers in Thoothkudi District is 51,647. Peoples are working in the salt pan. Among them women salt pan workers are 38,318 recording to the year 2011. And the remaining are the breadwinners of the salt pan women workers. Based on Rao Salt

analysis among 400 populations, the sample size was 381. The achieved confidence level is 95% with the maximum point of view 6% salt pan women workers has to be empowered with higher rate of wages from the vulnerable conditions to satisfy their job.

### **Literature Review:**

Oxfan (1995) According to him, “empowerment involves challenging the forms of oppression which compel millions of people to play a part in their society on terms which are inequitable or in ways which deny their human rights.

K.V. Jeyaraj (1805-1878) quoted that “A history of salt monopoly in madras presidency. The study point and that monopoly system on salt were first introduced by regulation - 1 of 1805 in the Madras presidency and continued upto 1878. This system increased the revenue of the Government. The East Indian Company rationalized it into logical chain of government control reading to better government, which led to more consumption which in its turn resulted in more revenue.

Sen and Grown (1987), Batliwala, (1994), Binath & Elson (1999) focused on Feminist perspective in social science promotes the empowerment of women as well as vulnerable communities but variations appear regarding the concept and extent of interventions for empowerment of women. Women’s empowerment requires systematic transformation is not just among institutions, but fundamentally in those supporting patriarchal structures.

Godgil (165) stated that ‘basically unorganised labours whether in the rural or urban areas is conterminous with poverty because whether if the marginal farmers or land less labourers or migrant urban slum workers, they are such involved in a set of survival activities on the margin of poverty.

### **Objectives of Study:**

1. To assess the most vulnerable salt pan women workers.
2. To know the level of satisfaction of economic empowerment of women workers working salt pan.

### **Methodology:**

#### **Scope of the Study:**

In this study the researcher has analysed the vulnerability of salt pan women workers with the satisfaction level of economic empowerment in Thoothukudi District.

#### **Collection of Data:**

The survey method was used to collect the required data for this study purpose. The relevant information and data were obtained and collected on various aspects from the sample respondents through personal interview with the concerned and using the aid of schedules conducting pilot survey.

### **Data Analysis & Interpretation**

#### **Year wise working experience of Salt Pan Women Workers:**

The year wise determining the calculation of the most important one to know the their vulnerable conditions prevailing in their working place as they rendered their service so many years in the salt pan. It shows how to empower their lives through various social schemes.

**Year wise working experience of Salt Pan Women Workers. (In Percentage)**

S.No	Years	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 5	24	6
2.	5 – 10	52	13
3.	10 – 15	38	9.5
4.	15 – 20	60	15
5.	20 - 25	124	31
6.	25 - 30	122	30.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Based on field survey (2017 – 2018)**

Figure 1.1 clearly indicates the yearly wise working experience distribution of Salt Pan Women Workers. All the salt pan women workers are surveyed in the yearly working group of 5 to above 30 years.

**Figure 1.1**

Year wise working experience classification of sample Respondents

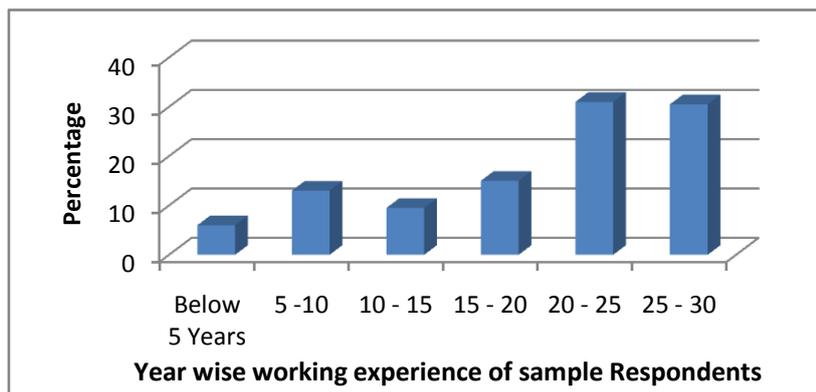


Table 1.1 Clearly shows that out of 400 respondents 6% of 24 respondents having below 5 years working experience. 13% of 52 respondents having 5 - 10 years working experience. 9.5% of 38 respondents having 10 - 15 years working experience. 15% of 60 respondents having 15 - 20 years working experience. 31% of 124 respondents having 20 - 25 years working experience. 30.5% of 122 respondents having 25 - 30 years working experience.

**Marital Status – wise classification of sample respondents**

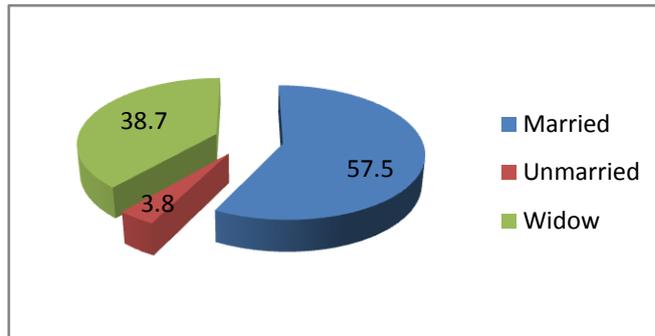
The Marital Status can be taken as the important social characteristics of salt pan women workers since the individual responsibilities increase after marriage and when they become as the widow. Because of the vulnerable position they are able to empower themselves saving.

S.No	Marital Status	No. of Respondent	Percentage
1	Married	230	57.5
2	Unmarried	15	3.8
3	Window	155	38.7
	Total	400	100

**Source: Based on field survey (2017 – 2018)**

**Figure 2.1**

Marital Status – wise classification of sample respondents



It is very apparent from Table 2.1 that out of 400 respondent 230 respondent constituting 57.5% are married and the remaining 155 of them having 38.7% are widow and the low balance 15 of them having 3.8% are Unmarried. It is understood that the majority of the respondents are earning to equip their vulnerable conditions.

Table 3.1

**Daily Wages Classification of Sample Respondents**

Wages of Salt pan women workers depending upon the different areas of the work. The following table shows breadwinner of the salt pan women workers and daily in Thoothukudi District

S.No	Daily Wages	No.of Respondents	Percentage
1.	100 – 150	Nil	-
2.	150 – 200	15	3.7
3.	200 – 250	207	51.8
4.	250 – 300	278	69.5
	<b>Total</b>	400	100

Source: Based on field survey (2017 – 2018)

**Figure 3.1**

**Daily Wages Classification of Sample Respondents in Percentage**

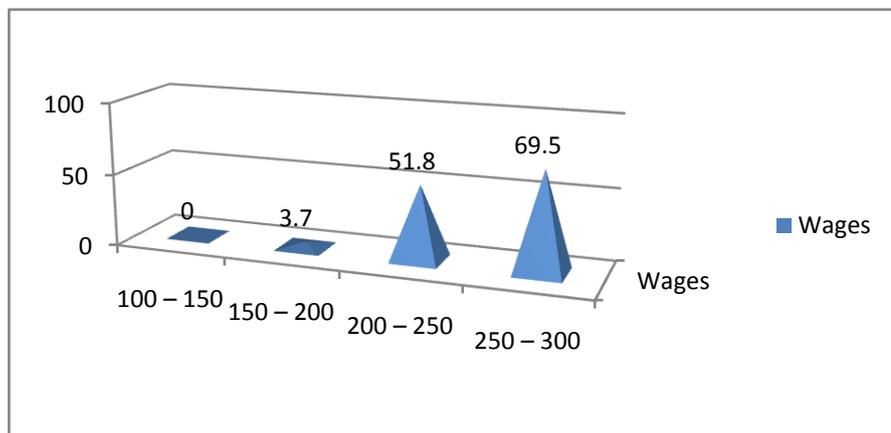


Table 3.1 clearly indicates that 69.5% of 278 respondents are getting wages above Rs.250/- and 51.8% of 207 respondents are getting wages below Rs.200/- the remaining which shows vulnerable group has to be empowered.

**Vulnerable Salt Pan Women workers in Percentage**

Category	Percentage of Salt pan workers	Daily wages area
<b>I – Most Vulnerable</b>		
Poor Earning daily wages of working conditions	3.7	Arumuganeri Areas
<b>II – Most Vulnerable</b>		
Average Earning of daily wages of working conditions	51.8	In between Tuticorin Areas
<b>III – Most Vulnerable</b>		
Daily better earnings of working conditions	69.5	From Tuticorin to Tharavaikulam Areas

Analysis and discussion:

Women workers of salt pan in Thoothukudi has their under privileged conditions below poverty level which will not quench the thirst of their daily basic needs of their livelihoods. It is the reality and daily fact of the bread winner of the salt pan women workers who comes to work very far and interior village to work. The above indicator shows the three dimensions of the vulnerability of the salt pan women workers has to be empowered equally with high rate of wages nearly Rs.400/-. The salt pan owners, Government and trade union has to empower the lives of the poor earners to balance the vulnerable conditions then can mobilize their saving and satisfy maximum with their job as their empower the economic needs.

**Conclusion:**

The Salt Pan Women workers vulnerability makes them to realize their insolvent conditions to meet their basic needs of their children and themselves. In order to bring an empowerment of salt pan women workers and their breadwinners lives the Government has to make some arrangement with the social welfare projects and workers welfare scheme to increase their daily wages. Though they work hard under the scourging sun & stand in the salt and do their works day by day there must be justice shown in the vulnerable sections of the salt pan women workers. As the result of fare wages the women and breadwinners can have hope, self confidence and self sufficient to withstand and empower themselves to educate their children. In order to empower everyone’s life as they give their whole life for the important means of salt productions. Let us also aware of their future pillars of education, health and livelihood. If the Government takes necessary steps and shows the ways and means to empower their life then they can have the bright future in their lives.

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