

BY: DR VIGNESHWARA VARMUDY

SALT: NEEDS PROPER MONITORING

India is the third largest salt-producing country in the world. Despite this, recent rumours of shortage have triggered panic buying and selling of salt, especially in states of West Bengal, Bihar and Meghalaya. Rumours about the shortage of the most essential item in the kitchen of every household have made the way for an increase in its price. In this regard, an attempt is made here to highlight the exact position of salt industry in India.

Salt is an essential ingredient in food. Hence, it is considered as a central subject in the Constitution of India and appears as item No. 58 in the Union List of the Seventh Schedule. Because of this, Central government is responsible for controlling all aspects of this industry.

Why salt is needed?

1. Salt is most effective in stabilising irregular heartbeats and is essential in regulation of blood pressure.
2. Salt is essential for balancing the sugar levels in the blood.
3. It is vital to the extraction of excess acidity from the cells in the

body, particularly the brain cells.

4. It is vital for the generation of hydroelectric energy in cells in the human body.
5. Salt is essential for absorption of food particles through the intestinal tract.
6. It is essential for the prevention of muscle cramps.
7. It is vital in making firm



Production of salt at salt pans located at Marakkanam, Viluppuram district, Tamil Nadu

bone structure.

8. Salt is needed for the prevention of gout and gouty arthritis.

9. Sea salt contains about 80 mineral elements that the body needs.

10. Iodine added to salt also aids in the transmission of information in the nerves and muscles.

11. Salt contains sodium ions that the body requires in order to perform a variety of essential functions.

World production

About 120 nations are actively engaged in salt production. China stands first in its production followed by the USA and India. The total production of salt in 2012 was 282 million tonnes whereas it was 261 million tonnes in 2011.

Salt production in India

The main sources of salt in India are sea brine, lake brine, sub-soil brine and rock-salt deposits. Sea water is an inexhaustible source of salt.

At present, salt is produced along the coasts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal. Here, it is produced by solar evaporation of sea brine or a combination of sea brine and sub-soil brine. It is also produced through lake brine in Sambhar Lake. However, production along the coast is limited by weather and soil conditions.

Salt production centres

Salt is being produced in 52 districts in India. State/district-wise production localities are given below:

1. Gujarat—Surendranagar, Rajkot, Patan, Jamnagar, Porbandar, Kutch, Anand, Bharuch, Bhavnagar, Ahmedabad, Amreli, Junagarh,

State	Private sector	Co-operative sector	Public/joint sector	Total
Gujarat	17,538.4	1884.3	1.2	19,423.9
Tamil Nadu	2464.2	20.9	185.2	2670.3
Rajasthan	1630.0	26.2	168.7	1824.9
Andhra Pradesh	980.6	18.1	4.6	403.3
Maharashtra	124.7	35.7	0.0	160.4
Odisha	26.6	7.2	0.0	160.4
Karnataka	8.1	11.4	0.0	14.5
West Bengal	12.8	1.1	0.0	13.9
Total (including others)	22,182.3	2604.9	359.7	24,546.9

Source: Salt Department, government of India

Year	Production
2000-01	15,651.3
2001-02	14,284.0
2002-03	17,879.2
2003-04	14,882.4
2004-05	14,761.2
2005-06	18,969.0
2006-07	17,898.2
2007-08	17,845.2
2008-09	19,151.2
2009-10	23,951.3
2010-11	18,610.1
2011-12	22,179.1
2012-13	24,546.9

Source: Salt Department, government of India

Valsad, Surat and Navsari

2. Rajasthan—Ajmer, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Nagaur, Barmer and Sikar

3. Tamil Nadu—Tuticorin, Ramanad, Nagapattanam, Villupuram, Cuddalore, Kanyakumari, Pudukottai, Tanjavur, Turuvallur and Kancheepuram

4. Andhra Pradesh—Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam,

State	Target	Production
Gujarat	183.59	194.24
Tamil Nadu	27.00	26.70
Rajasthan	24.00	18.25
Andhra Pradesh	3.30	4.03
Maharashtra	1.75	1.60
Karnataka	0.14	0.15
Odisha	0.10	0.34
West Bengal	0.10	0.04
Goa	0.02	0.02
Total (including others)	240.00	245.47

Source: Salt Department, government of India

East Godawari, Krishna, Prakasam and Nellore

5. Maharashtra—Mumbai, Mumbai suburban district, Thane, Raigad and Sindhudurg

6. Karnataka—Uttar Kannada

7. West Bengal—Midnapore

8. Odisha—Ganjam and Balasore

9. Goa

10. Diu and Daman

The whole Gujarat is a major producer of salt followed by Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan. Gujarat contributes 76.7 per cent to the total produc-

tion, followed by Tamil Nadu 11.16 per cent and Rajasthan 9.86 per cent. The total area worked for the production of salt in India during 2012-13 was 355,075 acres whilst it was 336,958 acres during 2011-12. The total production of salt in India during 2012-13 was estimated at 24.54 million tonnes.

As far as ownership pattern is concerned, a major portion is under the control of private sector followed by cooperative sector and public/joint sector. There are about 11,799 salt manufacturers engaged in the production of common salt in India.

In terms of source-wise production, 19.20 million tonnes are produced through sea and remaining 5.34 million tonnes from island sources. State and sector-wise production of salt during 2012-13 is shown in Table I.

In terms of category-wise production, category I (more than 100 acres) is producing the maximum, which

was 16.26 million tonnes in 2012-13 followed by category IV (up to 10 acres) and category III (cooperative societies). It is estimated that 87.6 per cent of the total number of salt manufacturers are small-scale producers (less than 10 acres), 5.8 per cent are large-scale producers (more than 100 acres) and 6.6 per cent are medium-scale producers (between 10 and 100 acres). However, on an average, 62 per cent of the total production is from

Table IV
State-wise Production of Iodised Salt in 2012-13

('000 tonnes)			
State	Refined salt	Un-refined salt	Total
Gujarat	2709.18	1252.45	3961.63
Rajasthan	478.52	688.68	1167.20
Tamil Nadu	276.48	726.14	1002.62
West Bengal	0.00	26.67	26.67
Tripura	0.00	8.43	8.43
Odisha	0.00	4.18	4.18
Karnataka	0.00	7.79	7.79
Jammu & Kashmir	0.00	1.36	1.36
Andhra Pradesh	0.00	0.66	0.66
Total (including others)	3464.18	2716.89	6181.07

Source: Salt Department, government of India

Table V
Supply of Edible Salt to Top 10 States in 2012-13

State	Volume ('000 tonnes)	Percentage of share in total
Uttar Pradesh	828.5	14.02
West Bengal	682.7	11.55
Bihar	605.5	10.25
Tamil Nadu	515.9	8.73
Maharashtra	375.9	6.36
Andhra Pradesh	323.8	5.48
Gujarat	295.4	5.00
Assam	290.1	4.91
Delhi	261.9	4.43
Karnataka	250.0	4.23
Total (including others)	5907.6	100.00

Source: Salt Department, government of India

large-scale producers followed by 28 per cent from small-scale producers.

Over the years, salt production in India has been increasing even though there have been ups and downs in several years as can be observed from Table II.

Consumption of salt

In India, salt is used both for domestic and industrial purposes. For

Table VI
Export and Import of Salt Since 2000

Year	Export volume ('000 tonnes)	Import (tonnes)
2000-01	1056.8	14,934
2001-02	1613.5	37,230
2002-03	1365.9	5763
2003-04	1222.4	12,093
2004-05	2204.4	75,649
2005-06	2976.4	23,584
2006-07	1897.5	26,451
2007-08	1893.1	28,327
2008-09	2438.7	30,645
2009-10	2895.7	27,864
2010-11	2867.9	12,298
2011-12	3771.8	172,42.8
2012-13	5003.6	18,105.6

Source: Salt Department, government of India

industrial consumption, about 10.7 million tonnes of salt is used and the remaining goes for human consumption both in India and abroad. Depending upon the demand, the target production is fixed. From Table III it is evident that during 2012-13, real production was higher than the target fixed for the period.

Production of iodised salt

A survey conducted by UNICEF and the Ministry of Health shows that now 71 per cent of population in India has access to adequately iodised salt as against 51 per cent during 2005-2006. The production of iodised salt, which was 2.834 million tonnes during 1992-93, has increased to 6.181 million tonnes during 2012-13. So far, 820 salt iodisation units have been established with a capacity of about 17.8 million tonnes per annum. This capacity is more than sufficient to meet the edible salt requirement of the country, which is estimated at 6.127 million tonnes.

Because of the preference of the consumers for refined/washed

iodised salt, the production has increased, which was 3.464 million tonnes during 2012-13 as compared to 3.142 million tonnes in 2011-12. Table IV shows data on state-wise production of iodised salt during 2012-13.

Major consuming states

As far as the supply of edible salt to different states is concerned, Uttar Pradesh is in the first position followed by West Bengal, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and the others. Table V shows data on the supply of edible salt during 2012-13 in top ten states.

Exports and imports

Exports of salt have been brought under OGL since 1987. India is exporting salt to more than 80 coun-

tries and the major importers are Japan, China, Bangladesh, Qatar, Vietnam, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Nepal and Thailand.

During 2012-13, the exports to Japan were 184.44 million tonnes and to China were 91.22 million tonnes. The total volume of exports during 2012-13 was 500.366 million tonnes.

As far as the port-wise exports are concerned, Kandla handles maximum volume followed by Jakhau, Tuticorin, Mundra, Navlakhi and Bhavnagar. On the other hand, India is also importing salt, especially from Pakistan, under OGL over these years. The total volume of imports during 2012-13 was 18,105.6 tonnes valued at ₹ 52.38 million. Table VI shows the volume of exports and imports of salt from 2000 to 2013.

India has the potential to increase the production of salt as it

has a very long coastline and additional land is available to improve this industry. So what is needed is planned strategy. Here, care has to be taken by the working community, as salt industry is labour intensive where about 111,000 labourers are employed daily. In this regard, the government has to concentrate on labour welfare programmes. Along with these, steps are needed for arranging equitable distribution and monitoring the quality and prices, promotion of technological development, maintenance of standards and improvement in quality of salt, promotion of exports and pre-shipment inspection, rehabilitation of salt workers affected by natural calamities, etc. ■

The author is associate professor in economics Vivekananda College, Puttur, Karnataka

support@ efyindia.com

Do you have a query,
suggestion or a complaint?

You can e-mail it to
support@efyindia.com
and we will take care
of the rest.



electronics
FOR YOU
www.electronicsforu.com

COMPONENTS, PRODUCTS, MACHINERY
ELECTRONICS
BAZAAR
www.eb.efyindia.com

OpenSource
FOR YOU
www.linuxforu.com

FACTS
FOR YOU
www.ffymag.com

EFY
SINCERELY YOURS
www.efyindia.com