

## THE GANDHIDHAM CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

(ESTD. 1953)

"CHAMBER BHAVAN", Plot No. 71, Sector 8, Post Box No. 58,

GANDHIDHAM - Kachchh - 370 201.

Phone : +91-02836-220977, 220735 • Mobile : 99250 37814 • Fax : 220888

e-mail : info@gccikandla.com • Website : www.gccikandla.com

No. GCCI / 383

Date: 20.11.2017

Shri C R Chaudhary Minister of State for Commerce & Industry Dept. of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Udyog Bhavan, New Delhi	Shri Ramesh Abhishek, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Dept. of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Room No. 57, Udyog Bhavan, New Delhi	Shri Ravinder, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Dept. of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Room No. 134, Udyog Bhavan, New Delhi
Dr. Rajeev Kandpal Salt Commissioner Office of The Salt Commissioner, 2 - A, Lavan Marg, Lavan Bhavan, Jhalana Doongri, Jaipur - 302004		

Sub: Closure of the Salt Commissioner organization- is it necessary?

Dear Sir,

The Gandhidham Chamber of Commerce & Industry is a pioneer organisation of Kandla - Gandhidham complex in Kachchh-Gujarat since 1953 with the main objective to serve as a bridge between local trade and industry fraternity and State / Central Govt. for the resolution of problems and also to endeavour for the welfare of citizens and township in public interest.

It is a matter of concern that Indian Government is in process of closing Salt Offices across India as a part of reorganisation of various government departments. Reorganisation is a welcome exercise, however closing of salt offices certainly deserved re-consideration as submitted below:

Salt is the Central subject in the Constitution of India. Union Government is responsible for controlling production, distribution and supply of Salt. A perusal to the parliamentary proceeding of 1949 reveals that the Constituent assembly felt that Salt is an important and sensitive commodity, it is being produced only in three states, whereas it is required by everyone rich and poor and decided to keep it under the domain of the Union Government. Though situation in India has since changed from salt importing country to salt exporting country, India being the third largest producer of salt in the world but only three states namely Gujarat, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu continued to remain only three states in the country producing salt surplus to their requirements. Gujarat is the largest, contributing about 80% of the Salt produced in the Country. At present only 25% of the Salt produced in the country is used for edible purpose and rest is used for nonedible/industrial consumption and exports.

Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion through office of the Salt Commissioner, an attached office discharge responsibility of the Union Government and has been monitoring production, distribution of salt, monitoring, quality, price and exports to foreign countries. Salt Commissioner has been declared as nodal agency for implementing Nation Iodine Deficiency Disorder control Program launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for production, distribution and quality control of the iodised salt.

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The Salt Commissioner has been delegated with statutory power to issue export worthiness certificate and arrangement for transport of salt under Railways Goods Act, 1989. Railways is charging subsidized freight for non-refined salt based on the movement sponsored by the Salt Commissioner under Priority C of the Railways transportation. This concession was granted at the instance and a lot of persuasion by the then CM of Gujarat during 2003. Infact he complained to Sri L. K. Advani as the then Railways Minister Mr Nitish Kumar did not respond to his request of granting concession to the Salt industry in Gujarat particularly in Kutch district before announcing Railway budget during 2003-04. Since Gujarat and Rajasthan are located in the western corner of the country, transportation of salt and its equitable distribution in all nook and corner of the country is still a challenge and has to be regularly monitored by the Salt Commissioner organization.

The Government of India is contemplating to close Salt department, a small cell in the DIPP will be create to collect statistics relating to the production, sale and price of salt from 12500 salt producer in 200 clusters spread across 9 states in the Country. The Salt Test Laboratories will be transferred to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. However it is not clear:

- Who will the nodal agency for the planned development of Salt Industry in India particularly in the States where substandard salt is still produced?
- Who will provide technical guidance to the salt workers to improve their skill,
- One of the functions of the Salt Test Lab is to analyze, brine, bittern and to impart training for developing skill of Salt worker, issue export worthiness certificate for industrial/edible salt. Can Ministry of Health and Family discharge this function? Perhaps necessary powers are to be delegated to them by the Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- Does Government wants to continue with graded freight concession for different variety of salt by Rail? If yes, then who will certify quality of salt loaded in wagons to enable Railways to grant concession?
- Who will monitor quality of salt under "Quality Control and export inspection Act, 1963" & issue export worthiness certificate?
- Who will coordinate with the State Government(s)/ Railways in event of shortage of salt in a particular State?
- Will there be separate agencies for monitoring production, skill development, dispatch/transport and quality of all variety of salt & Industry will have to approach multiple agencies to resolve their issues?

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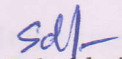
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- What if the State Government starts transferring salt land presently used for salt production for other purposes important to their States?
- How union Government proposes to discharge its constitutional responsibility enshrined in the Constitution of India as a Central subject.
- Government of Gujarat is required to obtain NOC from the Salt Commissioner under their Gujarat Land Revenue Code 1966 for the allotment of land on lease or its renewal for the production of salt

In view of the above, we once again request to reconsider the decision to close salt offices in longer interest of general public and salt industries.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,



Babubhai B. Humbal  
President