

## **REPORT ON THE CORRUPTION AND MALPRACTICES OF LAND BOARD GROUP**

### **Land Pricing:**

There is a pattern found that the sellers who approach the land board with original pricing ranging from 10 lakhs, 20 lakh are not entertained and tactfully sent away by the members (essentially local Tamil aurovilian), under the pretext that AV doesn't prioritise purchase in that area. Later, certain local brokers from the village like Kalivaradhan, Black Ezhumalai, Krishnamurthi, a land board staff related to members and certain others are tipped off by these members, who brings the very same sellers and quote a pricing ranging above 50 lakhs and then closed at a very exorbitant price.

The pricing is intentionally hiked by the Local Tamil aurovilian members of Land board. The rest of the members go along with them. The land board never entertains a direct seller and doesn't consider a pricing below 30 lakhs by default even for a land that is not worth a higher price. The pricing is easily approved by FAMC since these tip off Kalya from FAMC who justifies the LB members for approval from other members of FAMC. The land deals that are personally brought by the sitting members, their friends, personal brokers, etc., are only considered for purchase without considering the lands that are really required for AV.

### **Land Board staff:**

The land board staff, who does the liaising work with the revenue department and other functions of the land board are comprised of 100% local Tamil aurovilians or staff who are related to members from local villages. They enjoy absolute freedom with availing money on a voucher, waiving the requirement of producing the bill for the purchase, etc., this allows unaccounted liquid money going out of land board. The members consciously encourage such practices, for the reasons best known to them. When one of the current land board member insisted on production of bill for a release of huge sum of liquid cash, she was heckled and bullied by the other members and a superior working group was asking her to go for mediation to work in harmony with the group rather than addressing the issue raised. This evidences how deep this corrupt practice must have gone, to enable them to easily brush it aside.

### **Handling of Encroachment issues:**

While the land board is keen on owning the purchasing of lands and possession of the donation funds raised for land purchase, they always find excuses to pass on the land encroachment issues and litigation to the Foundation office, making them a scapegoat for non-action. In the matters of land encroachment issues, the local village staff and the local Tamil aurovilian members tip off the encroacher about the vulnerability/shortcoming in land documentation, informing of legal or police action taken against them prior hand, personally bribing the authorities for non-action, etc., which results in never ending failure in concluding the encroachment action and breeding of more and more new encroachments of AV land.

If we take a list of all the encroached lands, the encroachers are closely related to or connected with or from the same caste of the local Tamil Aurovilians. In most of the cases, the members and staff themselves are instrumental in facilitating such encroachments. The local Tamil aurovilians also bring in their stubborn caste affinity inside Land board and create an invisible reservation of caste system in land board, especially for a particular caste, which is dominant in local village. All the brokers, local staffs and the people hired are inevitably from the same caste being brought in by the local Tamil aurovilian members. This defeats the very purpose of AV and establishes an invisible caste dominance

in land board, besides robbing off a significant amount of AV money to the pockets of a same clan, who are operating in gangs.

**Modus operandi of dealing with boundary issues and land grab:**

Only the Tamil members in the land board deals with the extra boundary / land claims with AV land borders and always decides in favour of the village claimant, thus easily giving up AV land. The absence of an imposed legal consequence on the land board members and staff, in these cases, is breeding a facilitated land grab pattern. The other non-Tamil members are only silent spectators or yes men of these majority folks in land board. The land board is run by the staff and the local members of the surrounding village, making the information and documents vulnerable to leakage, for their own benefits. In fact, one of the land board member Banu's brother has grabbed around 3 acres of land opposite Dinesh Bakery in city area, after she became the land board member, still no action has been taken against her by the group themselves or the superior working groups. In this case, she was believed to have stolen the details from the land board and gave away to her brother to facilitate land grab.

**Other most prevalent issues:**

The local land board members use the land board salaried staff for their personal works, since two of the land board members Banu and Padmanabhan have their own real estate brokerage business. The surveyors and land workers are also used for their personal business deals outside AV. One of the staff Krishnamurthy is the Nephew of one of the member Rajavelu and closely related to other member Banu and belongs to the same caste of the third member Padmanabhan. Krishnamurthy was fired once by the previous land board for certain corrupt malpractices, who was hired again by the new team. Another staff Adhimoolam is again the relative of Banu, who is swindling a considerable amount of liquid cash over a period of time. This breeds corruption, misuse of land board staffs, conniving with the swindling of the land board liquid cash funds, spent for day to day business, by the staff workers with the knowledge of the supporting members.

**Pending litigations:**

The lands involved in the court cases are the land purchases that have been technically and materially compromised by the members who have been handling such purchase deals. There are cases where after the registration the members have shockingly forgotten to collect the original parent documents from the sellers, which was later taken advantage of by the sellers, resulting in AV losing acres of lands. Lands where the members have purposefully compromised to benefit the sellers. This needs to be investigated to find the trail of corruption involved. This is only a tip of the ice berg, the actual volume of corruption could be found only through a forensic audit of accounts and thorough investigation of land documents and land purchase/ exchange transactions from the year 1996 till date. Most of the litigations arose from the 1996 team's transactions, which has been set as a tradition and continued till date.

**Requirement:**

A Forensic audit of all the land board spending including daily expenditures but not limited to land purchase. Land board has around 4 financial service accounts and a couple of bank accounts, the transactions of which needs to be thoroughly audited through a forensic audit to track the trail of corruption in Auroville land board. In the event if the above issues are raised before any other superior working groups, it is simply dismissed since majority of the group members have some form of corruption/ malpractice or the other to hide, besides ostracizing such person in the community

alleging psychological grounds. Hence, the questioning members/residents are intimidated from bringing out such malpractices to the community. With this hidden agenda, all the malpractices have been consistently shoved under the carpet since long. Stringent punitive action need to be ensued against the corrupt members and staff, else, there would not be a deterrent effect to stop corruption.

**Urgent action required:**

The land board currently has around 13 crore funds left and there is some 200,000 euros sid to be coming in through Mandakini – Lucien – brun, the fund raiser for land purchase. The members Helena, Padmanabhan, Rajavelu, Yuval, Banu are rushing into personally brought purchase deals to exhaust this fund before the GB sets up a land task force. Hence, land purchase needs to be stopped immediately to save that fund and Forensic audit of Land board accounts and transactions need to be ordered at the earliest possible, besides freezing any transaction on the lands till a finality is arrived in the investigation. The task force has to be set up immediately besides external investigation as aforesaid.

The concerned local landboard members and staff are very intimidating powered by their connections and man power from the village and in Auroville working groups, hence, exposing the author of this report may endanger the personal safety of self and family. Therefore, discretion is humbly requested.

Submitted at the feet of the Divine Mother.