| **MEDIA RELEASE** 28th November 2023 | **Press Relations:** press@auroville.services  **National press:** +91 95857 10457  **Website:** [www.auroville.media](http://www.auroville.media) |
| --- | --- |

| **Critical Alert: Land Exchange Threatens Core Values and Assets of Auroville** |
| --- |

*Auroville, Tamil Nadu - Auroville, a globally recognized symbol of unity, environmental rejuvenation, and sustainable urban living, is threatened to the core by malpractices revolving around controversial land exchanges.*

In a startling turn of events, Auroville faces a crisis that strikes at the very heart of its foundational values while suggesting possible financial mismanagement. A covert land exchange deal involving 10 acres of the community's cherished AuroOrchard organic farm has emerged, raising grave concerns about transparency, accountability, and the potential erosion of Auroville's ethos. This press release seeks to shed light on the circumstances of this alarming transaction and its far-reaching implications.

Key points of this land exchange are:

* **Secretive Land Exchange:** 10 acres of AuroOrchard, a vital and historic part of Auroville's land, were exchanged with a private developer without community consultation, and without informing the people living on the land.
* **Disregard for Foundational Principles:** The deal bypassed the core principles of Auroville, including collective decision-making and respect for the vision of the Mother, Auroville's founder. This land was bought by the Mother herself in 1965 with the mission of growing food for Auroville.
* **Impact on Essential Infrastructure and Food Security:** The land exchange threatens crucial infrastructure of AuroOrchard, including the main borewell, advanced irrigation system, goshala (sanctuary for cows), an occupied residential building, orchards, fields, the main gate and road, and a majestic and venerable banyan tree. This not only compromises the farm's central infrastructure but also strikes a blow to Auroville's vital food security, given the farm's status as one of the most productive and dynamic in the community. This heartless decision will also severely impact the lives of people living in homes on the land, and cows living and grazing on the land.
* **Significant Financial Disparity:** The exchanged AuroOrchard land, worth an estimated Rs. 65 - 105 crores at market value, was traded for plots valued between Rs. 10 - 20 crores, indicating a massive financial loss for Auroville.
* **Potential Ethical Violations:** The secretive nature of the deal, orchestrated by the Office of the Secretary to the Governing Board and their appointed Land Officers, raises serious questions about ethical conduct and intentions.
* **Undermining the Development of Auroville:** The rushed start of the Crown Road project without securing necessary lands in advance has led to inflating land prices and damaging of Auroville’s iconic assets. This effectively hinders the growth of Auroville, making it more difficult for Auroville to develop according to its vision.

The Working Committee of the Residents’ Assembly, voicing the community's concerns, strongly condemns this opaque transaction. The essence of Auroville's ethos – unity, sustainability, and communal harmony – is under threat. The transaction also hints at a severe financial undervaluation, potentially causing a loss of Rs. 50 - 90 crores.

There is a pressing need for immediate intervention by higher authorities to reevaluate and reverse this land exchange. The Auroville community stands firm in its struggle to uphold the values and sanctity that have defined it since its inception, and denounces malpractices and potential conflicts of interest, which are currently deeply threatening Auroville’s future.

Your support in highlighting this critical issue and aiding in the preservation of Auroville's integrity is essential.

\*\*\*

*For pictures, visit:* [*www.auroville.media/land-exchange-threatens-core-values-and-assets-of-auroville*](http://www.auroville.media/land-exchange-threatens-core-values-and-assets-of-auroville)

**Media Contact**

For more information on Auroville, please visit [www.auroville.media](http://www.auroville.media)

**Social media**

Facebook and Twitter: @aurovillenews

Instagram: @auroville\_news

**Contact**

**General information:** media@auroville.services

**Press relations:** press@auroville.services

**National press**: +91 95857 10457