

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. 97
ANSWERED ON 02.12.2024**

Auroville Foundation

***97. Dr. D Ravi Kumar:**

Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government initiated any action regarding land exchange activities undertaken by the Auroville administration, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the post of Secretary to the Auroville Foundation Office (AVFO) is vacant and if so, whether the Government provides a detailed explanation for the criteria and procedures followed for appointment of the Secretary, AVFO;
- (c) whether the Government has any plan to address the lack of transparency within the Auroville administration in handling visa issues for residents;
- (d) the measures being taken by the Government to ensure that all future land exchanges by the AVFO are conducted in a fair and transparent manner with the necessary approvals from the residents' committee; and
- (e) whether the Government has any plan to nominate local Member of Parliament as an ex-officio member of the Executive Council of the Auroville Foundation?

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF EDUCATION
(SHRI DHARMENDRA PRADHAN)**

(a) to (e): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (E) IN RESPECT OF
LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 97 FOR REPLY ON 02.12.2024
REGARDING “AUROVILLE FOUNDATION” RAISED BY DR. D RAVI KUMAR,
HON’BLE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**

(a) to (e) Auroville Foundation is a statutory body, notified on 29th January, 1991 as per the Auroville Foundation Act, 1988. With an aim to develop Auroville Universal Township, a Master Plan was developed by Resident’s Assembly, further endorsed by Governing Board and subsequently approved by Ministry of Education.

One of the core objectives of the Master Plan is to secure land for multi-fold development of Auroville Foundation. A robust need-based process, endorsed by the Governing Board, is followed by the Auroville Foundation for land consolidation. The Ministry of Education has also provided a checklist/principle to be followed by the Governing Board to ensure transparent process of land transactions. Further, Auroville Foundation follows a consultative procedure for land acquisition through purchase/exchange, appropriately consulting different stakeholders including the Working Committee.

Ministry of Education has notified the Recruitment Rules in 2011 regulating the method of recruitment of Secretary, Auroville Foundation. As per the Rules, methodologies for recruitment of Secretary are Deputation, Promotion, Contract Basis, and on Foreign Service (for persons serving in Universities, Deemed Universities, and Higher Education, Research, and Training Institutions). Further, the selection of Secretary is based on the recommendation of Search-cum-Selection Committee. Secretary, Auroville Foundation is appointed via following due process and the present incumbent was accordingly appointed vide order dated 1st June 2021. Further Ministry of Education has issued tenure related orders on 4th July 2024.

To ensure thorough verification and compliances of rules and regulations issued by Government of India from time to time, visa procedure followed by Auroville Foundation has incorporated multiple steps including - submission of visa applications; initial review by Working Committee; upload of details on Auroville Foundation website; verification by designated authority; final approval and recommendation letter; and submission to Foreigners Regional Registration Office (FRRO) for further necessary action. This process ensures a transparent and robust system for visa-related matters with multiple checks and balances.

Auroville Foundation consists of three authorities, namely (a) the Governing Board; (b) the Residents’ Assembly; and (c) International Advisory Council. Members of these authorities are filled as per prescribed rules and regulations of Auroville Foundation Act. There is no provision of “Executive Council” in Auroville Foundation as per the said Act.
