

## **1500 to 1700 Acres Land of Farmers being purchased by a Private Company for Thermal Power Station in Niwari Block of Tikam Garh MP**

A company is establishing a thermal Power project in the Niwari Block of Tikam Garh. It is one of the poorest and most backward districts of the country. Some agency has been engaged to the job of mediation and preparing the local farmers. Through their communication skills they are convincing local population for selling their land. The plant will change the overall picture of the area. Not all promises are known. They tell that if you give your land, here will be free World Class Hospital, and Best education for your children.

It will need about 1500 to 1700 Acre land in Niwari Block of Tikam Garh about 35 km from Jhansi. Land acquisition has started and should be completed in one to two years time. Farmers are told to cooperate, or their land will be taken with force. SDM Shri RK Gohat is telling the local people that an MOU has been signed between the company and State government, the district administration has nothing to do with this. Farmers are free to sell and negotiate. The Government has not decided any rate. These are small farmers. Their number will be around 1500. Some even have half a bigha land. Two hundred acre of land is already purchased. It is good agriculture land close to Pareekhka Dam in Jhansi, UP. There is already a power station at the dam. Jhansi is in UP and Tikam Garh is in MP. Distribution of power is yet not known. Orcha, famous tourist place is in the Niwari Block.

Wheat, ground nut , mustard and lentils etc crops are grown here. In Devri Kalrav panchayat farmers like Banke Banskar, Amaan Banskar, Dabloo Banskar, Ram Gopal Tiwari, Krishna Ahirwar, Ashok Ahirwar. Achoo, Matoley, Khushi Ram, Sita ram Ahirwar have already sold their land in price range of 70,000 to 2.5 Lac per acre. Sub Registrar for land sale sits at Niwadi. Tahsil dar has his office here. The farmers are affected by continuous drought and land does not yield much. What is point of living here. The money will help in paying off old loans. Some farmers are calculating. Then they will move away to cities like Delhi for living. Bijore is different, farmers here like Mharam Yadav, Ashok Gupta, Mahesh Gupta do not want to sell their land at current price. They think that land will now go anyway. They want better price at Government rate. It should be sufficient to purchase land and house somewhere. They fear sliding in to poverty after land is gone. Hence better deal is expected. Many are not even aware that their land is next on the list. If it was done by the state, there would be declaration in the News papers, and individual farmers informed.

Farmers are also scared that ash will completely disturb their lives. The Fishing community in neighboring villages guesses that their earning will be finished since ash will kill the fishes. Most of them are guessing all kinds of possibilities. But nobody is aware of full facts. Local people are not informed about the details. No government officer of company person is caring to inform the public the full impact of the scheme. How will it affect their lives of people, what will happen to their health and water. It's already drought prone area of Bundelkhand. Tikam Garh is known for feudal and caste divided society and alarmingly low sex ratio. Surrounded by Jhansi, Lalitpur and Chattarpur. A group of local residents has decided to find out the details and demand for justice for the people.

Some questions being asked by local people include

What will be effect of the thermal plant on women, children, and environment, what will be done for land coming under residential area?

Was the scheme discussed with the local gram Sabha and panchayats? Was their approval taken?

Who decides the rate of land? Is it as per government norm, or farmers are being individually contacted? Here the powerful get better deal but the poor are marginalized?

Bundel Khand is chronic drought prone area. Its precious agriculture land will further shrink.

Will there be any legal agreement between the Company and the communities on the promises made like hospital, schools, free electricity, jobs, plantation and rehabilitation etc?

How can state government sign an agreement without consulting local communities, if it is the case of farmers land?

Has some formal announcement made in the area with loud speaker, duggi, leaflets and panchayat sammellan, women sammellan? Right to information of the people is violated?

Most Farmers have small land holdings; their compensation for land will be inadequate to meet their rehabilitation need? Is there any plan for Rehabilitation?

Have the DM and other official issued the notification, since some Government land will also be involved?

There is complete lack of information on the Thermal power. Most of the information is based on the informal discussions. It is requested that all the concerned persons and agencies will take initiative to explore the full details and implications of the project. Your help may be needed if violations of Rights and Entitlement occur.