

**ANDHRA PRADESH**

# The new Master Plan-2041, benefits real estate developers

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VISAKHAPATNAM

The Greater Visakha City Committee of Communist Party of India (Marxist) has described the VMRDA Master Plan – 2041 as a ‘Real estate Master Plan’ to convert agricultural lands for non-agricultural purposes in a big way. The move would rob the people, belonging to the middle class and lower classes, of their dreams of owning a house.

Addressing a media conference here on Thursday, City Committee secretary B. Ganga Rao and city secretariat member RKS V Kumar alleged that the proposed master plan would result in real estate agents exerting pressure on farmers to sell their agricultural lands at nominal rates and convert them into real estate ventures. The farmers would be deprived of their lands and migrate to the city to work as migrant labourers.

The CPI-M City Committee opposed the VMRDA Master Plan – 2041 and sought that a new draft reflecting the ground realities should be prepared with decentralisation as the focal point. The draft was translated into Telugu only four days ago and the 45 days time given for ‘objections’ and ‘suggestions’ was too short.

They alleged that the State government had reduced the process of inviting suggestions and objections to a ritual by deliberately avoiding extensive discussions on the master plan as its main objective was to make profits.

They said that there were 35 agricultural mandals under VMRDA and 41% of the people in these mandals were workers. The agricultural lands in these mandals would be converted into farm houses, golf and race course and amusement parks. The lands would be in the possession of a few individuals. The farmers, who lose their lands, would migrate to the city in search of work and the population of the city would increase further.

The draft states that the proposal was to provide basic infrastructure at a cost of ₹1.40 lakh crore. This is nothing but jugglery of figures to deceive the people. They said that the BRTS roads, taken up 12 years ago, and the project to bring 400 MGD of Godavari water to the city, remain incomplete.

The other objections to the draft master plan include: agricultural lands going into the hands of investors in the name of setting up industries. APIIC already holds 40% of vacant lands, the draft ignores CRZ norms and the zoning regulations have been relaxed to allow commercial establishments in residential areas and it could lead to pollution.