

Set in southern part of India, the experimental township of Auroville is geared up to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2017. It was founded in 1968 by Mirra Alfassa and is meant to be a universal town with people from different backgrounds and nationalities living in peace and progressive harmony. Although spiritual in its origin, it is a secular, non-religious community. It is unique in its existence, because unlike other intended communities, Auroville is legally recognized by the Government of India through its Auroville Foundation Act, 1988 (AFA), and remains a functioning, and expanding project. AFA provides a basic governance model and a legal entity to Auroville and its “citizens”. [1] While the township [2] is eventually intended for 50,000 residents, currently as of 2016, there are approximately 2,500 citizens, from 49 countries, with two-thirds from India, France and Germany.

One of the basic tenets of the 4-point charter [3] provided by its founder is the lack of ownership. The key tenets of this are: 1) Auroville does not belong to any individual in particular, 2) Constant focus on education and progress, 3) Connecting past and future, through learning from past and discovering future, 4) Site of material and spiritual research. Thus Auroville is a unique setting not just in the nature of its processes and products, but also in its form of organization. The lack of ownership of land and business by individuals but owned collectively in first point of the charter, creates a setting similar to concept of ‘Commons’ (à la Hardin, 1968).