

these patta holders' economic status. The change was only on paper as these small holders lost possession to the land grabbers for which they received a meager compensation. For the land grabbers the amount was negligible amount as they were dealing with a hundred or even a thousand times the extent and amount. From being honest, hard-working labourers these Tamil migrants had become a party to the systematic land grab mechanism functioning in the State.

The above shows how a person or a family of a person, having no right over these lands and sometimes living in a distant town or area came into possession of vast extent of land in these tracts. If we go by the perception of the local people, existence of many cases involving politicians, officials drawn from various departments and influential persons with high-end links stands established. The records clearly show the same. **Although individual cases of land grab came to notice, these cases are consciously not included in this Report as the same was not part of the brief given to this Committee.**

The connivance of the Government officials in the above illegal activities cannot be ignored. The Kerala Promotion of Tree Growth in Non-forest Areas Act, 2005 was also misapplied and misused in the land grab processes. Even though large tracts of Shola forests were destroyed and planted with Eucalyptus Grandis, Forest Dept. took no cognizance and no action. The decision in the Forest Dept. to plant Eucalyptus Grandis on Revenue lands to supply to the paper industry was another excuse. The eco-system of the whole tract of Kurinjimala Sanctuary was impacted adversely by undertaking Wattle and Eucalyptus Grandis plantations in sensitive Shola forests and grasslands. Further, those with vested interest took advantage of the confusion between Revenue and Forest departments regarding the status of the land. These vested interests destroyed Shola