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Vaastu Shastra: Effect on Village, Town and City Planning

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Abstract: The detailed concepts of designing and building villages towns and cities as enumerated in ancient texts act as a mirror even in today's context of town planning which as of now faces the wrath of myopic planning. Modern planners unfortunately have ignored these ancient guidelines as if they were of no consequences.
The foundation of shaping ancient cities, as laid down by great sages, was entirely dependent on the social, political, religious and spiritual transformations, wherein we cannot get evidence of anyone succumbing to the pressure of political or other influences to spoil the very system prevailing those days.

I. INTRODUCTION

The present urban environmental deterioration can be arrested with the implementation of those conditions as laid down in Vaastu science right from planting of trees to the laying of roads, buildings and their subsidiaries.

Therefore, Vaastu principles must be an integrated and indispensable discipline in the town planning and architectural profession in this country or elsewhere.

Sage Bhringu has described in depth the science of town planning in his samhita. These upashaastras run into 10 volumes and are further fragmented into 32 branches all dealing in the application of engineering and architectural knowledge. Ancient human habitations of India were usually located on the banks of rivers, especially the Ganges and her tributaries essentially for ritualistic and sanitary purpose including for communications with other cities, the water being the passage. The concept in fact helped to foster and encourage commerce which ultimately resulted in establishment of townships. Rivers of Punjab played a pivotal role in establishing terrestrial duties of the Vedic Aryans.

II. SELECTION OF SITE

Vaastu Shastra has laid down strong emphasis on the selection of a proper site for establishing a new village city and is classified under three categories

A. Barren land used to be callled as jangala where wind is hotter and soil is black.
B. Anupama ascribing for a beautiful land which is surrounded by rivers and where the climate is fresh and cool with prescribed soil characteristics.
C. Sadharana category, the average quality where huge stretches of useless land existed.

Sage Shukracharya was remarkable in saying that the Capital city should be developed in such a geographical location where various kinds of trees, water bodies, rivers, plants, shrubs and green vegetation exist, including cattle in great numbers.

Sage Manasara emphasizes that the site for establishing a city should be determined from its pleasant smell, taste, shape, direction, sound and touch the topography should have and inclination towards North and East compounded with higher ground levels in West, South West and South.

If a river adjoins the site, it should in North of Easter side and should flow from West to East and from South to North. Also, the site should have water table at depth equal to a man's height with his arms raised above his head. He further says that the side should also comply with a moderate temperature during summer and winter.

Those days even meteorological data was directions in India predominantly prevails from South-West to North-East. If the terrain of land slopes in the opposite direction, i.e., from North-East to South-West the land and building would be exposed to the severity of storm and rain.

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III. SITE PLANNING

Site planning after the selection of site, as the first act, land was ploughed on an auspicious day with the help of specific pair of oxen having white spots on the head and knees. The next step was determination of orientation by means of Shankustaapana and flxation of Vaastupurushmandala, the appropriation of which depended upon the size of the town.

There are 32 kinds of Mandalas, from the one consisting of single square to that consisting of 1024 (32x32) squares. The whole of Vasastupurushmandala used to be fragmented into 81,64,49 padas or land parcels and pushed into different zones. The innermost square or pada was called Brahmastaan (for temple), the next one was called Daivika (for public building), the belt of Gods, the third one was called Manushya (for residences), the belt of humans and forth one was called Palshacha (business and commerce), the belt of demons.

Different zones or squares used to be occupied by different classes of human beings, but the central zone was always occupied by a temple, palace and other administrative buildings.

Fixation of peripheral limits of a town used to be determined by configuring the alignment pattern of main streets which resembled the arms of cosmic cross, attributed to avenues planted with shady trees. The largest arm used to be aligned to East West and named Mahakala or Vamana. The other roads used to aligned to North and South. Roads running from East to West ensured purification of streets by the sun's rays throughout the day and the North-South road provided a perfect circulation of air and benefit of cool breeze. There also used to be ring roads surrounding the whole city or town and were called a Mangalavedi Shape of the sites thus made available were of course in the form of square or rectangular and nothing else.

Vaastu describes 12 types of village shapes from Manduka to Nityamangala. There were about 20 types of towns and cities starting from Padma category to Girinagar type. The words Pura and Nagar in fact belong to Vedic Vaastu periods and the magnificent city of Pataliputra, which had a long river front exceeding nine miles. Shriranagam at the centre of river Cauvery, 18th century city of Jaipur designed by Maharaja Jayasimha, the brain behind jantramantars in India and city of Dawaraka built by celestial architect Vishwakarma on the instructions from Lord Krishna are all Vaastu and value based concepts which without an lot of doubt, will act as traditional linkages to the development of modern cities, towns or even small residential layouts within a developing city.

IV. SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATION

Now a days the planner did not follow the discussed parameters, so that the new town are coming not upto the desired planning standards. The planning must have constructed at least 60% of the discussed parameters to achieve the better results. Old norms definitely have some values and characters to be adopted for new Villages, Cities and Town planning.

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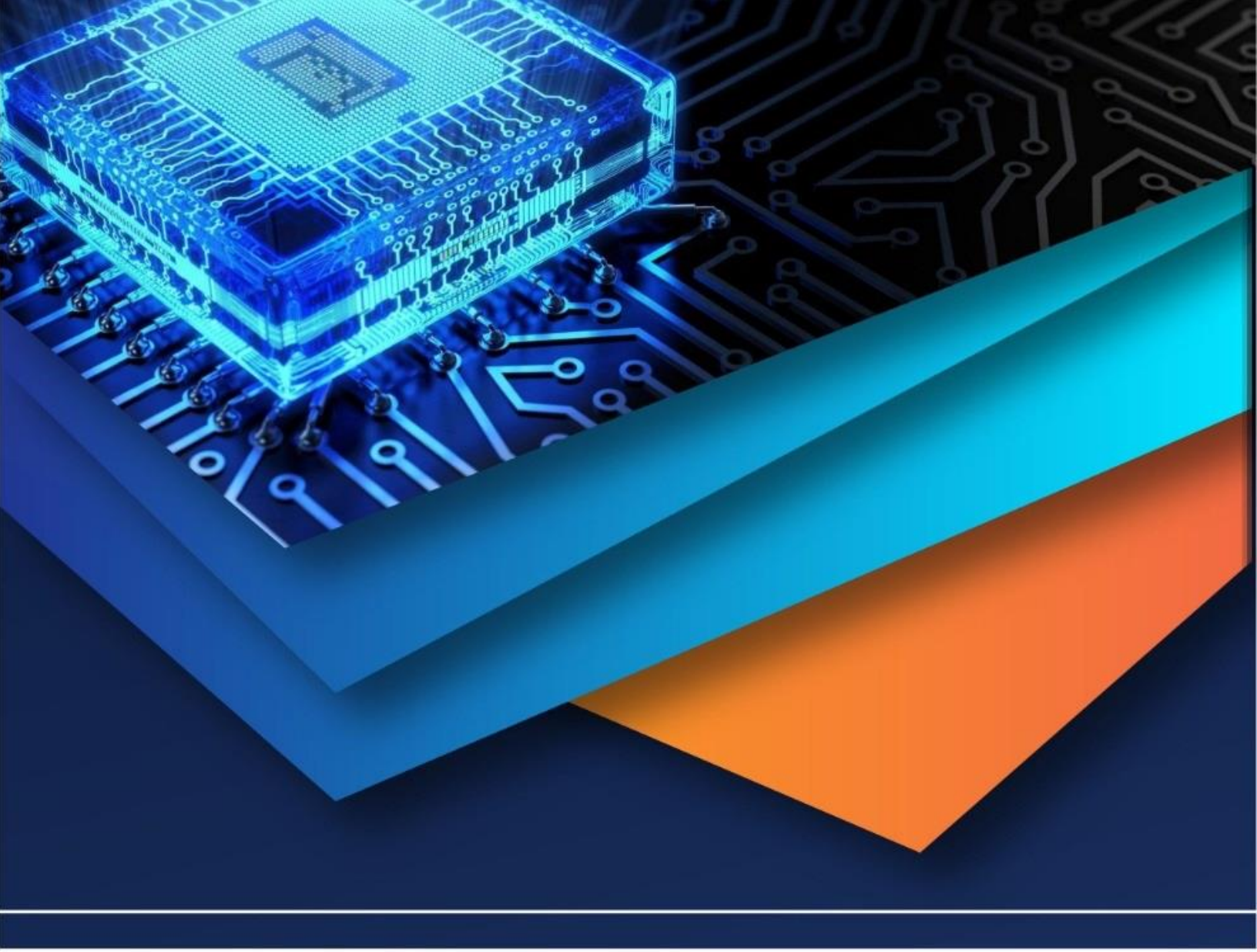

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