

How a Brahmin-Only Township Was Allowed in 21st Century Karnataka

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A township strictly meant for Brahmins claims to revive the “lost traditions” of the Brahmin community. The architecture, the lifestyle and culture will ensure a “Brahmanic way of life.”

Welcome to *The Vedic Village- Shankar Agraharam*, a ‘Brahmin only’ housing project that was planned in the outskirts of Bengaluru in 2013. With the launch of the township, national and international media picked up the story and reported the disturbing trend of ‘segregated housing’ and ‘housing apartheid’ in India. A group of activist lawyers wrote to the state government and human rights commission to immediately scrap the project because it promoted caste-discrimination.

Three years down the lane, *Vedic Village* is nearing completion and has received the ‘proud’ approval of the Department of Town and Country planning in Karnataka. Project managers even claim to have sold 900 units of the planned 1800 in the integrated township.

Special Anniversary Offer

UGADI 2016

Bookings OPEN from April 08, 2016

30 x 40 = 1200 Sq. Ft

LIMITED 50 SITES Only

*Contact office for special discount & offer details

The booking have been opened from April this year and UGADI special offers are available for interested customers (Photo: Vedic Village [Website](#))

The Sanathana Dharma Parirakshana Trust that is funding and developing the project is backed by the Brahmin community. The trust believes in: emancipation of the living conditions of the Brahmin community and to closely work towards creating a liveable environment, and assets for the future generation of the community.

Source: www.vedicgraham.com

The housing project is not open to non-brahmins, but that isn't the only problem with the project. The website and the brochures repeatedly emphasise that it is a township for the 'superior'.

Our plots are clearly earmarked for Brahmins only...Our motto, to give the highest to the highest in all respects.

Source: www.vedicgraham.com

Note :

1. Xerox Copies of the Form can also be used.
2. Form may be downloaded from www.vedicagraharam.com
3. Please fill in block letters only

I. PERSONAL DETAILS

1. a) Gothram :
b) Surname :
c) Name :
d) Father's / Husband's Name :
2. Date of Birth & Age :

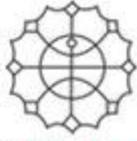
Buyers need to fill up a detailed application form and identify their *Gotra* along with their surname. (Photo: Vedic Village [Website](#))

The sales and marketing representative of Shankar Agrahara explained that non-Brahmins are allowed to visit as friends or relatives. The domestic staff and the work force in the township could also be non-brahmin.

To own property, any one member of the family has to be a Brahmin. The domestic staff and the workers could be non Brahmins, because we cannot do that much screening. The Brahmins will not sweep roads anyway. We will have to understand that there are some restrictions within the community as well.

Nitesh, Sales and Marketing Executive, Shankar Agrahara Vedic Village

The builder's website highlights "eleven reasons" to buy a Brahmin plot in Bangalore. The most prominent being: "it is considered the birth place of Indian IT revolution started by a Brahmin Mr N R Narayana Murthy...making it a land of opportunities."

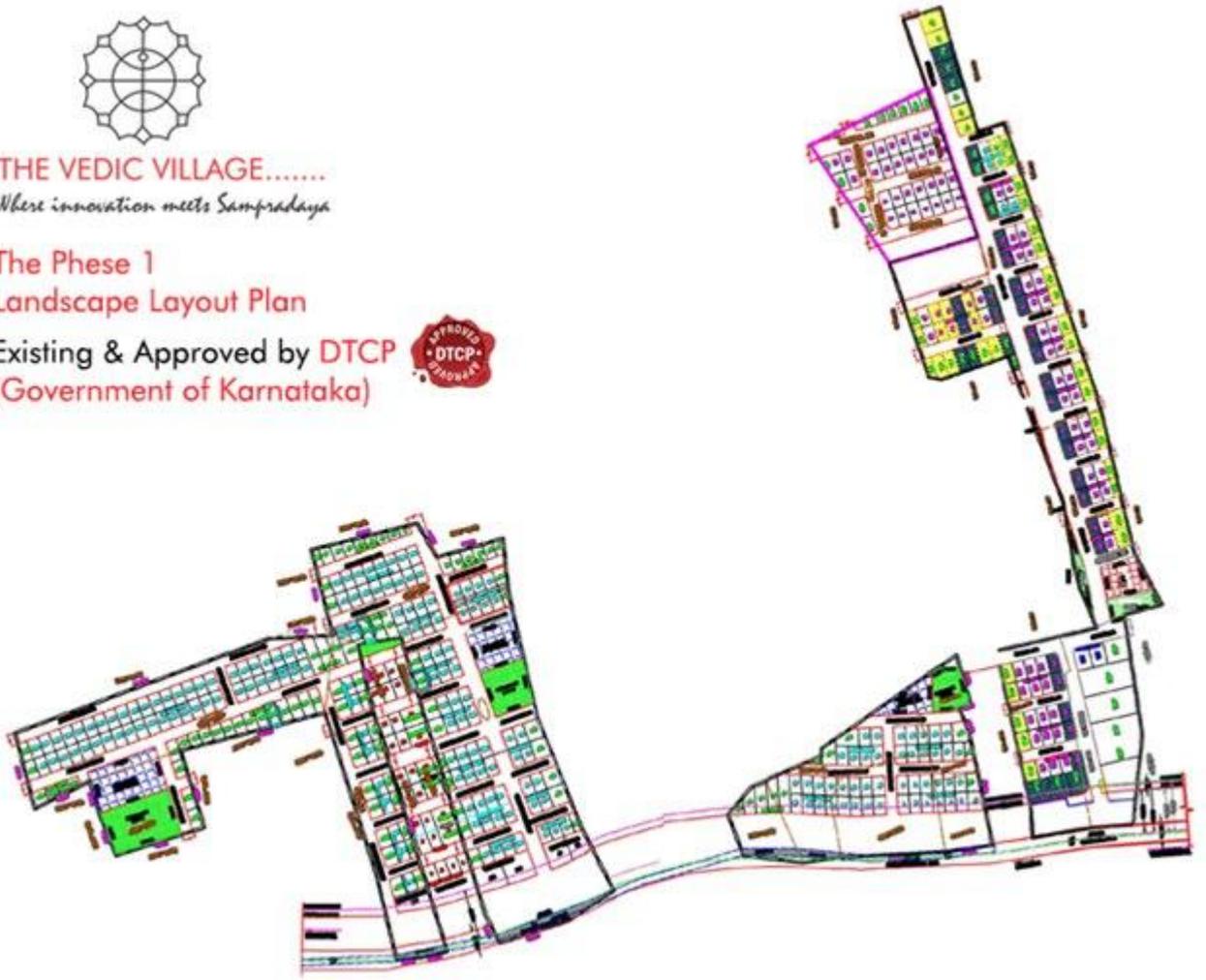


THE VEDIC VILLAGE.....

Where innovation meets Sampradaya

The Phese 1
Landscape Layout Plan

Existing & Approved by DTCP
(Government of Karnataka)



Despite extensive media reporting, the *Vedic Village* project is nearing completion, with the approval of the Department of Town and Country planning, Karnataka (Photo: Vedic Village [Website](#))

Bengaluru-based Supreme Court lawyer and activist KV Dhananjay was amongst the first to raise a voice against the discriminatory housing project. He wrote to the state government, the Human Rights Commission and the Home Ministry in Delhi. The Ministry of Home Affairs said it had referred the matter to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. There have been no further updates in the case.

Karnataka is the only state in India which has multi-level, multi-layered and strict laws against land use.

There are multiple authorities that need to clear a project and they are empowered to stall or scrap any construction or project that misuses land resources. With its mandate, Shankar Agrahara is completely against the law. Built on agricultural land, it does not justify any public interest. But what is appalling is that the project hasn't been stopped.

KV Dhananjay, Supreme Court Lawyer

The *Vedic village* project received approval during the BJP rule in Karnataka. In 2013, the Congress government took power under Siddaramaiah, a supposedly socialist, secular, anti-caste chief minister. However, nothing seems to have stopped the completion of the township. Segregated housing is not new to India. From muslim ghettos like Juhapura that emerged in Gujarat after the 2002 communal riots to the “[dream homes for elite Muslim brotherhood](#)” in Delhi and townships for Dalits in Ahmedabad, who find it hard to live with dignity in the community spaces, the trend is certainly not on the decline.

Termed as “[neighbourhoods of exile](#)” by urban sociologist Loic Wacquant the Brahmin, Jain, Parsi, Dalit or Muslim-only colonies claim to revive the cultural ethos. In reality, however, all they do is pose a serious threat to the social fabric and the idea of living in non-discriminatory, inclusive neighbourhoods.

Update:

The Quint's story on the 'Brahmin only township' in Karnataka has ignited a storm on its [social media platforms](#). There are those who are shocked to hear about a township where non-Brahmins are not allowed to own a house. And others that are disturbed and angry about the fact that the housing project is still in execution despite objections.

