

## **Elevated Grid Cities, a designer's dream?**

By Danish Azar Zuby

It gives me immense excitement to know the distances between planets and other heavenly bodies etc., especially converting light years into miles. A galaxy called Andromeda is about two million light years away from ours. A light year when converted into miles is about six billion miles therefore if we multiply the two we get the distance between Andromeda and our galaxy which comes out to 12,000,000,000,000,000 miles. What a fantastic and incredible distance! Can we imagine travelling such a distance today?

Andromeda is one of the infinite galaxies that we have discovered so far. It makes me extremely sad to know that in such a boundless infinity of space and time, we as a living species possess a unique position on our planet earth; yet we are hurriedly heading for a self-destruction.

The saddest part is that the cause of destruction is ourselves. The question why and where we are going wrong can lead us to quite illuminating debates but surprisingly today we have all reached a unanimous decision that we are heading for a major disaster if the situation is not contained immediately.

Fertile soil is eroded and flushed away by the rivers or it is covered with concrete and tarmac. Water logging, salinity, deforestation and desertification have all assumed phenomenal proportions. While there is no control on the population the capacity of the earth to grow food is reducing phenomenally. Because of our environmental carelessness and ignorance, thousands of living species have become extinct more are endangered. The holes in the ozone layer, the acid rain, the air and sea pollution, globally changing climates, the ecological disasters, all continuously remind us of one thing and that is "Conservation." Many archaeological findings indicate that the lost civilizations lacked an awareness of the biosphere and the ecosystems.

"Decentralisation" of the cities is perhaps not a new idea but I feel that it's high time that some attention is given to it in order to generate more ideas, and to save the obliteration of life on this planet. The idea of Elevated Grid Cities can be termed as a designers dream. The cardinal rules are conservation and preservation of Earth, its biosphere and its eco-systems. The cities should be constructed many storeys high in the form of grids. Grid is suggested so that sunshine can be received by shaded areas of the earth at one time or another. The preliminary ideas obviously do not give the answer, but serve as a general direction with certain principles in mind. The cities could be like Doughnut rings or like the Olympic rings interwoven into each other or simply honeycomb pattern.

Can Karachi City have its own grid city extension is perhaps a utopian dream... Theoretically speaking it is a curative solution as the city is expanding at a phenomenal rate, probably unmatched by any city in the world and considering that the administration has failed miserably as far as strategic planning and governance is concerned.

It is envisaged that future city planners could carve out a direction from the proposed strategies. Another most important factor that deserves consideration in the EGC is the utilization of all the present day urban products, peripherals and paraphernalia. It would be a sin and rather impossible to disregard all that we have done so far therefore it is imperative to form a bridge from present day chaotic urban societies to EGCs.

On the EGCs, there would be normal tarmac roads to use normal cars, the exhaust, however would need immediate attention. But there can be bullet trains or free gravity cars for commuters. Land will be allocated to settlers to create any dream house that they desire. There will be normal- Airports, Helipads or Train networks. Local grid governments will have to be formed for administration along with proper zoning of industrial areas, commercial and business areas, community living and recreational areas. Perhaps there will have to be passes to come down to mother earth for agricultural activities and picnicking.

The most crucial problem that comes to mind as *soon* as we start to think in terms of EGCs is the transportation. If an EGC is several hundred square

miles then to get from one point to another would become a difficult unless a new transportation system is invented. Perhaps some sort of gravity car system will have to be developed to get from one grid junction to another and so on, but to get from one extreme to another some kind of air travel or surface jet-train will have to be designed.

Efforts will have to be made to develop urban paraphernalia and its products which can be recycled and no or little refuse is left. Infrastructure for urban refuse or cargo transportation could be created out of hydro/pneumatic tubular network.

In a nutshell we have to leave mother earth alone. The more we fool around with nature the more abrupt will be our end. We can build our cities high above the ground so as to minimize earth degradation. No matter what the fate of the EGCs but we must attack the trends of Urbanization now, develop new community living/life styles. We need to devise new strategies to halt population explosion and by law limit a family to maximum three or four. To plan and reverse mass migration. To form strategy for free education and recreation systems. To disarm people and governments, direct nuclear power for the welfare of life on this planet. We must unite to save our home this earth now!

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