



Science for Society

Science for Man

Science in Thinking

# BREAKTHROUGH SCIENCE SOCIETY

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## A Voluntary Organization Committed to the Cause of Science, Culture and Scientific Outlook

To  
The News Editors

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Professor Amitabha Datta, President of Breakthrough Science Society West Bengal Chapter issued the following statement in response to a news item published in newspapers regarding the introduction of *vastu* in undergraduate and postgraduate programs of IIT Kharagpur, and the publication of *vastu* prescriptions in a science journal published by IIT Kharagpur:

In a workshop recently organized in Kolkata with the theme ‘*Vastu* in Global Perspective’, it was announced that IIT Kharagpur has decided to introduce *vastu-shastra* in the undergraduate and post-graduate programs in Architecture. Topics like sacred diagrams, 9 circuit placements or the *nabagraha mandal*, sacred altars, etc., will be taught, and the students will be asked to do projects and assignments on these topics. The recent issue of a journal published by the ‘Ranbir and Chitra Gupta School of Infrastructure Design and Management’, IIT Kharagpur, advised people to follow *vastu* practices in day to day life—like keeping idols of ‘*Hanuman*’ and ‘*Ganesh*’ in front of the house. An article titled “A to Z of *Vastu Vidya*” by Prof. Joy Sen claims that these idols can protect us from “evil powers”!

We believe that the curricula in all academic institutions should contain only those material which have been arrived at through thorough investigation, and are well tested following scientific procedures. Through which research work have the utility of “sacred diagrams”, “sacred altars”, or “*nabagraha mandal*” been tested, and the character of “evil powers” identified? It is highly objectionable to introduce untested beliefs into academic curricula because the students will be marked on the basis of their adherence to these beliefs.

In science it is an established practice to publish articles only after a thorough ‘peer review’ process in which other scientists check if the content of a paper have been obtained through proper scientific investigation. It is clear that this journal has violated this practice and has published articles that are based on untested beliefs. We strongly protest against such attempts to propagate unscientific beliefs and superstitions through a journal published by a prestigious Institute, and demand that the journal should immediately be withdrawn from circulation.

This is not an isolated incident. We are now witnessing a concerted effort to infuse unscientific, mythical beliefs into the common peoples’ minds in the name of science. We appeal to the science-loving people of the country and particularly the members of the IIT community to protest against the move and to stop the introduction *vastu* in the syllabus.

**News by** Dr Sarifa Khatun, Office Secretary, Breakthrough Science Society West Bengal Committee.  
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