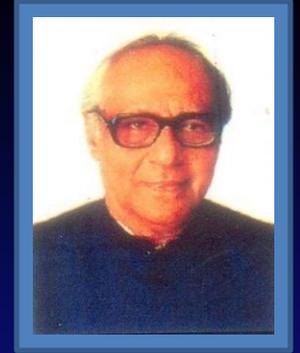


Prof. Amalendu Bandyopadhyay

(Very Brief Bio-data)



- 1. Date of Birth** : 1st February, 1930
Present age : 87 + years
- 2. Present Position** : Professor & Senior Scientist
M. P. Birla Institute of Fundamental Research
M. P. Birla Planetarium, India
- 3. Past Position** : Director, Positional Astronomy Centre
(Govt. of India), India
- 4. Academic Honours** :
 - i.** Elected Member of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) Of Paris in 1979.
Member of the following Commissions of the IAU :
 - a)** Ephemerides Commission
 - b)** History of Astronomy Commission
 - ii.** Elected Life Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society of London in 1988.
 - iii.** Elected Member of the British Astronomical Association of London in 1991.
- 5. Foreign Deputation** :
Presented research papers at the International Astronomical Symposiums in various countries of the world.

**Wiping Out Age-Old Superstitions
Involved with Astronomy
In India
Through Diverse Public
Outreach Programmes**

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INTRODUCTION

India is a vast democratic country and no doubt, considerable progress in science and technology has already taken place here. In India, irrationality still account for a large section of population. Most of them fall prey to various age-old superstitions involved with astronomy at every step and do not feel the urge to prove the existence of sound logic behind these. However, those who consider themselves modern and highly educated also do have still belief in various superstitions involved with astronomy.

1. Astrology

It is a fact that superstitions like strong beliefs in astrology are deeply entrenched in our society. Leaving aside the uneducated masses as superstitious in such beliefs, we find political leaders, business men, even highly educated people also have strong faith in astrology.

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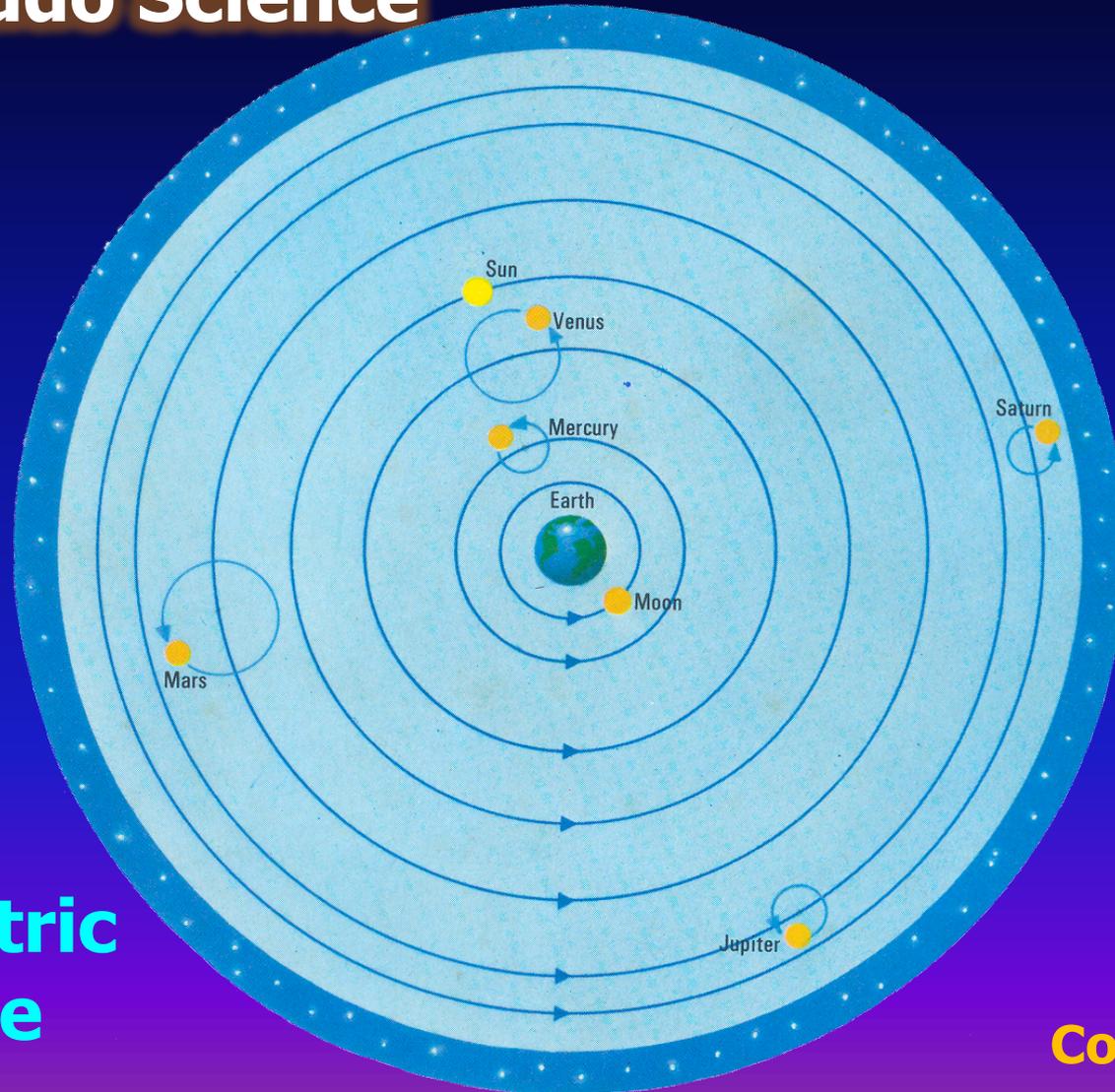
1. Astrology

As an Astronomer I have been asked many questions repeatedly.

Most frequent of them are as follows :

- i) Do planets affect human lives?**
- ii) How can a horoscope tell so much information about the person and his/her future?**
- iii) Is astrology a branch of modern science of astronomy ?**

2. Convincing Logic Against Astrology As Pseudo Science




**Geocentric
Universe**

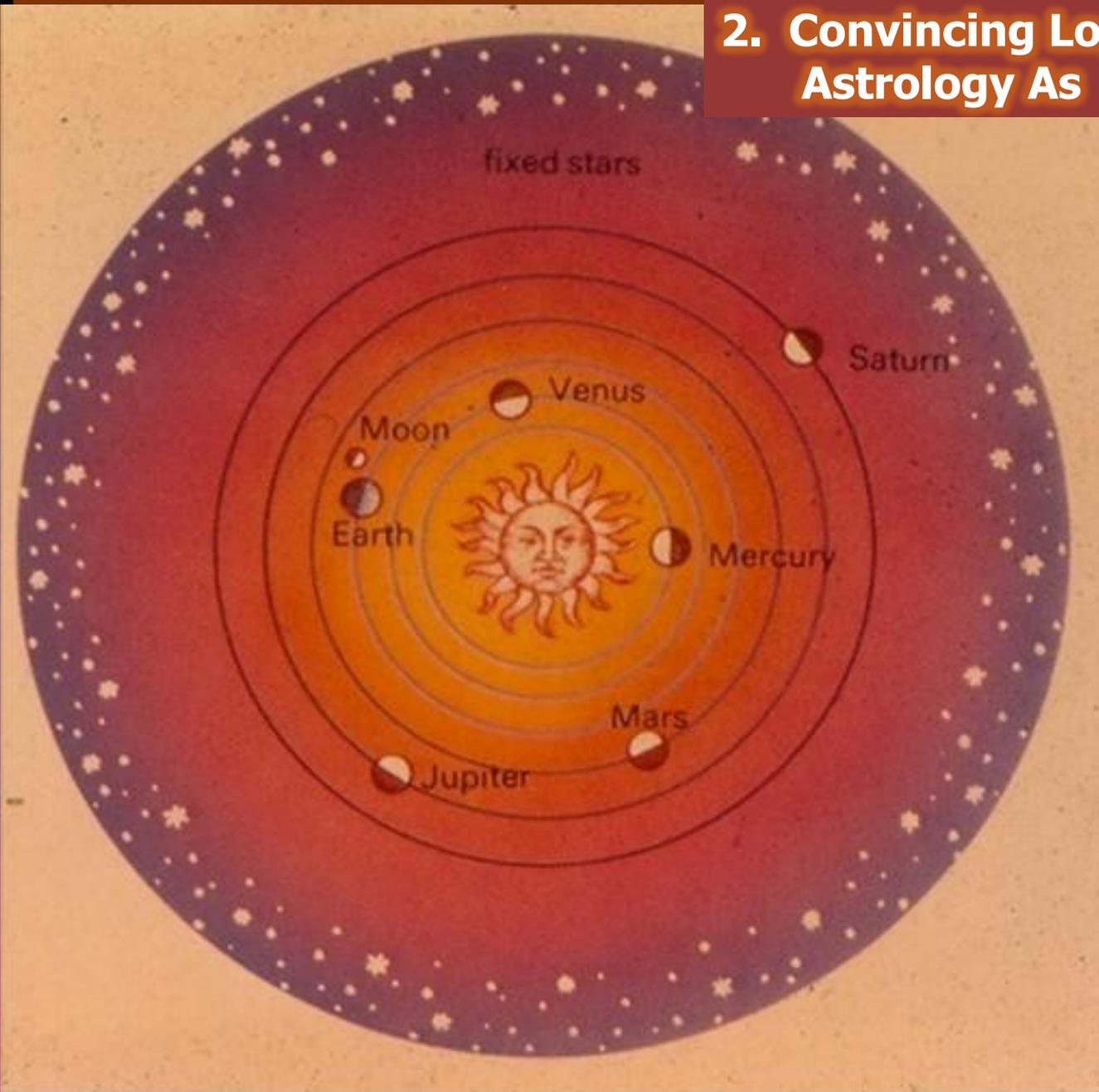
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2. Convincing Logic Against Astrology As Pseudo Science

In India as well as elsewhere in the world, astrology was born at a time when human imagination was structured by geocentric cosmology. It is on the basis of this hypothesis that astrology first took shape. Astrologers considered only seven among the celestial objects to be so effective to influence human life – the Sun, the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

Contd....

2. Convincing Logic Against Astrology As Pseudo Science



**Heliocentric
Universe of
Copernicus**

Contd....

2. Convincing Logic Against Astrology As Pseudo Science

Copernicus introduced the heliocentric theory in 1543, later Galileo established it on a solid foundation. Today even a school child knows that the Sun is at the centre of the solar system and the planets revolve round the Sun. Not only is modern astronomy firmly rooted in this theory of the solar system, it is on the basis of this theory that humans have actually set foot on the Moon.

Contd....

2. Convincing Logic Against Astrology As Pseudo Science

And yet the astrologers merrily go on preparing horoscopes on the basis of the discarded geocentric hypothesis. Despite such a grand revolution in the theory of the solar system, astrologers have not changed an iota of their age-old ideas. Moreover, the Moon is a satellite of the Earth, it is not a planet and the Sun is not a planet at all – it is the star nearest to us. Therefore how can one call astrology a scientific discipline?

3. Planetary Configurations And Serious Errors of Astrologers

Many of us perhaps remember the configuration of eight planets on 10 March, 1982. On this date, positions of eight planets were on the same side of the Earth within a narrow angular span. Indian astrologers had all vociferously warned countrymen that the world was coming to an end that day. Two US Astrologers wrote a book on this and predicted that the configuration of planets on 10 March, 1982, would raze a town in the State of California to the ground.

Contd....

3. Planetary Configurations And Serious Errors of Astrologers

This book sold almost two lakh copies ! And yet, nothing happened on that special day, it passed off as uneventfully as any other day. Astronomers, however, had made mathematical calculations long ago to show that the configuration of the eight planets would not affect the Earth at all.

The results of modern studies indicate that astrology is scientifically proved to be totally wrong.

4. Other Types of Superstitions Involved With Witnessing Of Solar Eclipse, Comet And Meteor Showers



Photograph of
Diamond Ring Total Solar Eclipse
on 24 October, 1995 from Iradatganj

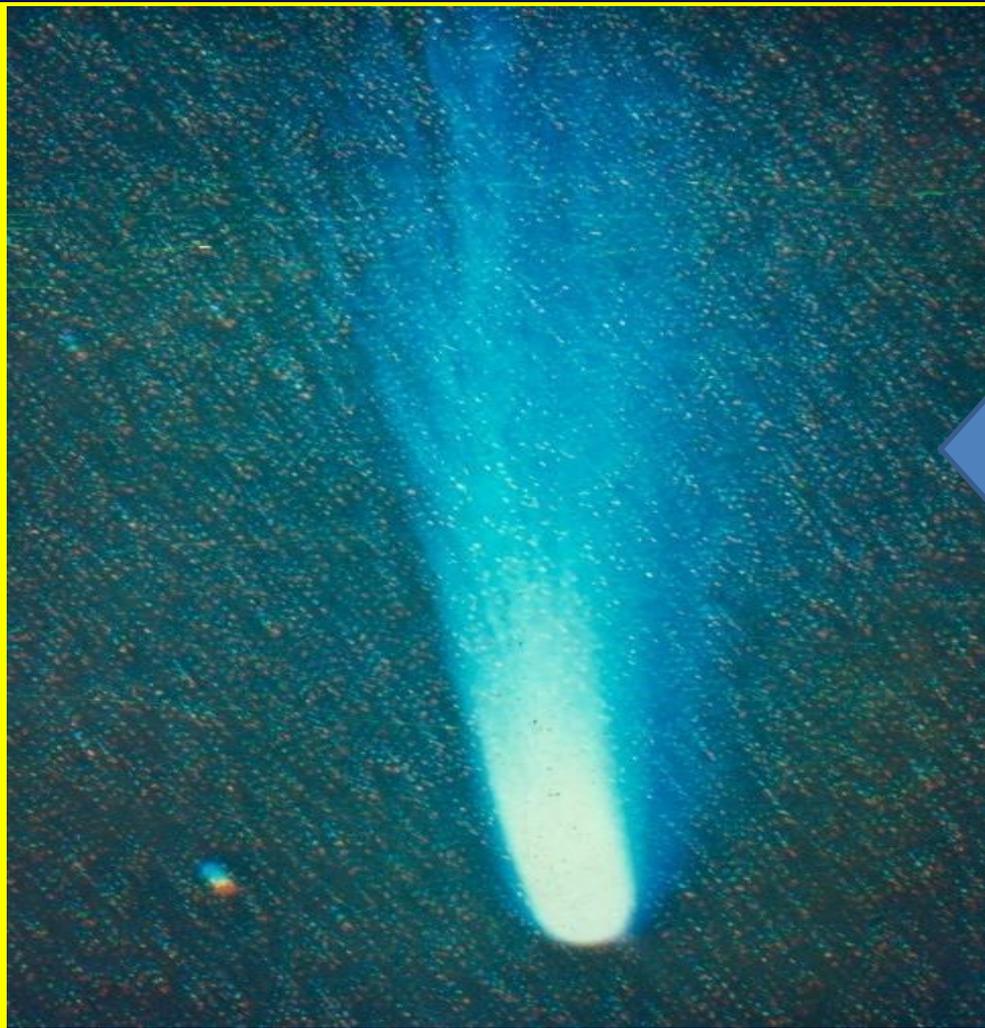
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4. Other Types of Superstitions Involved With Witnessing Of Solar Eclipse, Comet And Meteor Showers

In India, instead of watching the rare celestial drama of a total solar eclipse, a spectacular comet and wonderful meteor showers, most of the people lock themselves in their houses, because they consider such astronomical events as inauspicious and as portents of evil and in doing so they deprive themselves of divine joy of witnessing astronomical wonders.

Contd....

4. Other Types of Superstitions Involved With Witnessing Of Solar Eclipse, Comet And Meteor Showers



Halley's Comet
Photographed
On
6 April 1986

Contd....

4. Other Types of Superstitions Involved With Witnessing Of Solar Eclipse, Comet And Meteor Showers



Leonid Meteor Showers

November 17-18, 1998

Photograph taken from a location very near to Kolkata

5. Wiping Out Age-Old Superstitions Through Diverse Public Outreach Programmes

Public outreach programmes can be planned in the following ways much ahead of the astronomical event :

- i) By publishing lucid write-ups on such events in popular newspapers and journals.**
- ii) By broadcasting suitable scripts over Radio.**
- iii) By telecasting programmes with wonderful colour photographs on these events on various TV Channels.**
- iv) By delivering of lectures by experts at different schools, colleges and other locations with the aid of showing beautiful colour slides on these events.**



Thank You