

In The Name Of the Most High

**Will the policies in science and technology
excluding ethical and cultural attitudes lead to a
sustainable development?**

Abbas Sahebghadam Lotfi, PhD
Advisor to minister and the Director General of the
National Institute for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (NIGEB)

For the regional forum on:
“Science and Technology Policy for Sustainable Development”
Tehran, January 21-23, 2006

Snapshot

In the beginning of the new millennium, the policies and the operational goals in science and technology are undergoing fundamental changes in accordance with ethical concerns and an essential need for the moral elevation of human and the society.

Science and technology need to go beyond their classical definitions to assist a renovation of the human being's spiritual life throughout restoring the unchanging moral values.

Regarding its functional principles, the higher education is, to a large extent, expected to serve as a pacemaker in this way.

**Why
changes?**

The sophisticated informational developments have forced the strategic planners to take into account people's cultural and religious values and their influences in all science and technology policies adopted.

It is expected today that the ethical concepts are authorized to supervise the policy-makings in science and technology upon a wise public desire for “science” to be once again replaced with “knowledge”.

Unless this takes place, human seems to be having to experience a new round of metamorphosis due to an enlargement of the science, technology and information in the absence of the constructive interchanges with the reality of the living world.

**Where are
we going?**

“Question everything”, the famous quotation of Albert Einstein, seems to be the key manifest of the modern life.

Everyone who lived the second half of the twentieth century will always remember how uncontrolled learning led to the biggest manmade disaster ever, the atomic bombardment of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Einstein later claimed in his last days that if it happened for him to be born again, he would live as a shoemaker and not a physicist making equations and formulas!

It's time to question the manifest: why and how should man know more every other day? Unless a wise answer is given to this question, human will only promote his fall by his scientific advancements.

Today's world

The history of the twentieth century seems to have involved informative lesson for the mankind. Gradual changes in the atmosphere of the international community have been turning out during the last decade:

1. Globalization, a convertibility of today's society from the work-based and the capital-based to the informational and the knowledge-based.
2. Onset of commitment in wealth and power systems.
3. Emergence of ethological and ideological crises.
4. Availability of the information highways.

5. The exceedingly increasing rush of innovations and consequently a lifetime decrease of the scientific findings.
6. Replacement of technology with the cultural values as the new sources of the economical merit.
7. Prevalence of the virtual reality.
8. Culture production rather than culture consumption.
9. Concentration of the strategic investments to improve the academic efficiency.
10. Variety of the roles and the functions of education and the flexibility of the educational programs

Approaches

According to these developments, the higher education which is in fact the policy-maker of science and technology, should revise its social approaches in the current transitional period to the rejuvenation of religion, ethics, divinity and humane values.

It was underlined by the majority of the scientists taking part in the World Conference of Higher Education that the higher education should adopt diverse patterns in order to let the local and the global cultures go along.

Dialogues among the educational systems via a science and technology exchange network will best serve this goal.

The higher education in the new world should be able to come by the reality of the virtual learning.

The higher education in the new world will have to stay independent. Nevertheless, it should try to keep receiving the public and the governmental supports and in return, try to undertake more responsibility to the people and the governance.

The higher education in the new world will need to produce job-making resourceful graduates. It will be asked to take a notable part in resolving problems like poverty, illiteracy, violence and environment destruction.

The higher education in the new world must keep retaining enough locomotion and flexibility which comes along with foresight and continuous quality control together with an ongoing improvement of methods in all the aspects of it.

It should work at fulfilling the educational justice and contribute to the nations' culture and spiritual life.

At the time when the world is challenging with the ideological and ethical crises, the higher education is supposed to disseminate the bio-social values in both areas of the local cultures and the universal horizons.

Thank you!