

EDUCATION & PRACTICE OF BIOETHICS: AN INITIATIVE TO BUILD A JUST, SUSTAINABLE & HEALTHFUL SOCIETY

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Introduction:

Morality is a unique feature enabling human life to differentiate right-wrong, good-bad and just-unjust. Ethics is the science of morality. Bioethics is the study of moral principles governing behavior, action and choice of individuals, institutions and societies and influencing everyday decision and policy making in personal and social life. In practice Bioethics is the art of logical application of acquired knowledge-skill and science-technology of a society for greater good of humankind. Bioethics conducts research on issues arising from application of knowledge-skill and science-technology in the society and intends to resolve those issues to make the world a better place to live in. The aim of Bioethics is highest attainable wellbeing but not at the expense of environment and other forms of life. The objective of Bioethics is to build a socio-economically productive and ecologically sustainable community that strives for ethical-cultural-political efficiency. The goal of the discipline is production of rational individual and promotion of bioethical maturity of society. The philosophy of Bioethics is that the medical profession has scope of greater contribution to social progress by innovative service-mix which builds capacity of human life to cope with environment and maintain a state of equilibrium on which health/wellbeing depends.

Aim:

The faculty of Bioethics may be developed in a community through education, practice and research. It is essential to maintain unity of education-practice-research for logical development of the faculty. It is also necessary to achieve a consensus on definition as well as educational materials of Bioethics so that practice of the discipline can address bioethical issues of both personal and social life. Newly developing faculty of Bioethics has the scope of (i) understanding human life and knowing its relationship with environment and (ii) finding out root causes of loss of health/wellbeing and making plan for combating those causes.

Method:

The discipline of Bioethics in collaboration with un-fragmented medical science, environmental health science, behavioral sciences, biomedical science and other health related sciences intends to organize Bio-Medical-Social Action in a community to ensure greater good of the society.

Discussion:

Scientific study reveals that human life is a product of gene and environment. Interaction of gene with environmental components gives rise to bio-molecule, cell, tissue, organ and body which are biological existence of human life. Human body with integration of mind develops into an individual who behaves as a member of family, local-national-global community, society and the world order constituting psycho-social existence of human life. The biological and psycho-social existence of human life together constitutes human system. Health/wellbeing depends on capacity of different components of human system to cope with environment and attain a state of equilibrium. Loss of health/wellbeing means loss of the state of equilibrium. The principal causes of loss of health/wellbeing are disease, environmental crises and psycho-social problems. The later two - environmental crises and psycho-social problems arise from irrational human behavior. Therefore it is obvious that disease and irrational human behavior are root causes of loss of wellbeing.

Practice of Bioethics intends to maintain the state of equilibrium between human life and environment by organizing biological, medical and social action which together could be called Bio-Medical-Social Action. Biological action influences the control mechanism of different components of biological existence of human system. We should think about biological action seriously but proceed cautiously by analyzing the risks and benefits of the action critically. Medical action has to reduce burden of disease through (i) hospital based personal health service approach ensuring highest good of the diseased individual (ii) public health institution based impersonal service approach ensuring maximum benefit of the greatest number and (iii) community based unitary family health service approach ensuring ethical provision of health care and medical social work for a defined community. Social action has to address (i) environmental crises e.g. pollution, loss of biodiversity, global warming and climate change and (ii) psycho-social problems e.g. poverty, illiteracy, corruption, crime, terrorism, injustice, inequality, child abuse, gender discrimination, political instability, conflict, violence, misuse of knowledge-skill and science-technology. Well-developed faculty of Bioethics in a society has the ability to reduce burden of disease as well as irrational human behavior that causes environmental crises and psycho-social problems.

Conclusion:

The faculty of Bioethics is supposed to facilitate education, promote practice and conduct research in a planned way to bring a change in the state of health/wellbeing of the people living in the community. In doing so Bioethics faculty has to form Bioethics associations and committees at different level of the society to protect human research participants, to improve patient-centered care, to establish sound professional practices and to establish sound science and health policies for citizens. Therefore it may be said that education and practice of Bioethics in a community is an initiative to build a just, sustainable and healthful society where people have opportunity for enjoying the highest attainable physical-mental-social wellbeing.

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