



Reflections and lessons learned on the science-policy interface

SED 4-2
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The value of scientific knowledge



- Some of the major global and local challenges require decision making based on scientific knowledge.
- Science is critical to our understanding of the drivers of global change and of its complex impacts.
- Science is fundamental to the legitimacy of political efforts and to the creation of a growing slate of available and affordable solutions.

Challenges and barriers - Uncertainties



- There are some uncertainties associated with knowledge related to planetary problems.
- But uncertainty in scientific, financial or technological issues is something that human society has dealt with for long.
- Despite these recent advances, it is well known that scientific knowledge today is not being incorporated effectively in the formulation and implementation of policies .

Challenges and barriers – The gap

Decision makers

- Do not always comprehend scientific phenomena, which often do not lend themselves to ease of matching with practical decision-making frameworks.
- Desire to achieve immediate results, because they are often held accountable on the basis of quick and easily measured results.

Scientists

- Are often not familiar with the complexities and practical problems associated with policy-making.
- Are focused on research and publishing in peer-reviewed journals.

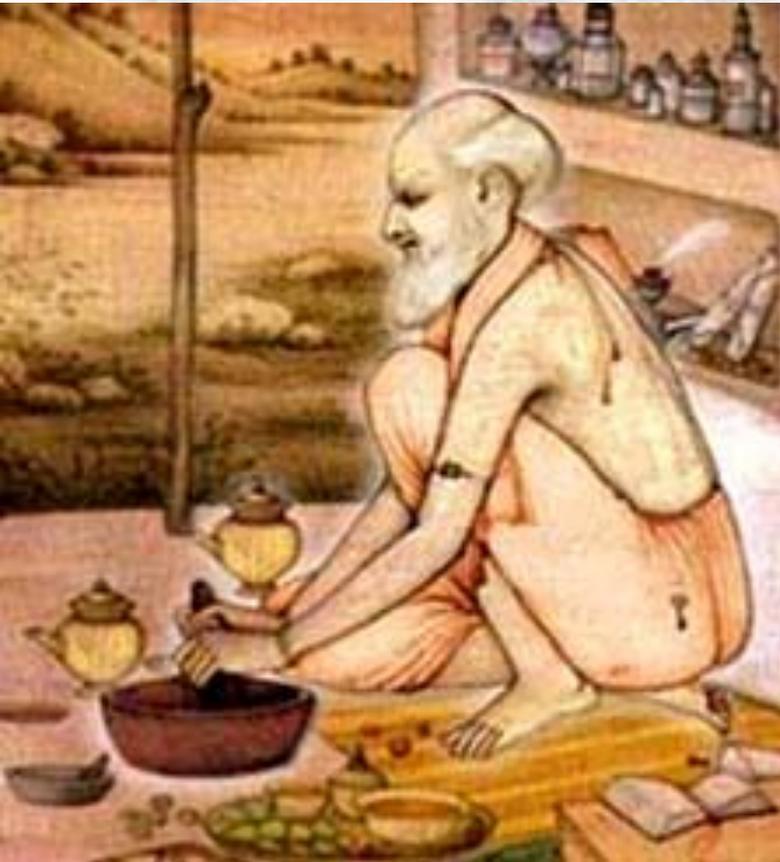
The way forward



Closer interaction between the two communities would ensure that:

- scientists frame their findings to match the needs of policy makers
- scientists recognize the gaps in the political understanding of issues
- scientific agendas are set more closely attuned to ongoing policy needs
- policy makers better appreciate the value of scientific knowledge as a means to achieving the best possible decisions

The way forward



Adequate funding for policy-relevant research can close the current gap. In the case of climate change:

- Adequate research on impacts by sector and region would raise awareness and lead to more informed adaptation measures and higher urgency in mitigation.
- It is also important to realize the relevance of indigenous and traditional knowledge for decision making. Funding of research which brings about a fusion of modern science with traditional knowledge would have very large benefits.