

Science, Technology, Society and Communication

– Prospect of social sympathy and communication activities for science and technology –

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2nd Policy-oriented Research Group: Hajime Nagahama, Terutaka Kuwahara, Akio Nishimoto

The Study Group of Science, Technology, Society and Communication

This NISTEP REPORT No.17 summarizes the results of two years and four months of discussion by "The Study Group of Science, Technology, Society and Communication (STSC Study Group)", which was organized by NISTEP.

The theme of this study has a wide variety of related themes and includes many issues in different areas, so it was difficult to converge the discussion completely within the planned study period, but we believe that a summary of discussion so far will give many suggestions for further study on this issue based on the results of this study. Therefore, although this report may have many insufficiencies in terms of analysis of issues and depth of consideration, we plan to keep the study going, including analysis of individual issues. We would appreciate your valuable comments and suggestions to this report.

In advancing this study, the members of STSC Study Group and visiting scholars gave us diversified and highly suggestive opinions through 11 meetings, including lodge-together meetings, and individual private meetings.

This study was the first study for 2nd Policy-oriented Research Group on "how social communication on science and technology should be," and its objective was to know how far this theme covers and what specific problems it has.

We think that the objective of the study has been largely achieved. The main themes and problems are the following five items:

- (1) Research and analysis of people's awareness and attitude to science and technology.
- (2) The realities of people's communication on science and technology, and how it should be.
- (3) The idea of "Science and Technology Triangle" as a communication model for science and technology.
- (4) The idea of local "Science and Technology Communication Center (STCC, tentative name)" and "Center of Sympathy (COS)" as points of contact between "scientists and engineers" and "ordinary people" and their assistants
- (5) Roles of governmental and local governmental organizations, mass-media, enterprises, and universities in supporting communication on science and technology.

Based on this study, we will continue the research on people's awareness and communication issues, and dynamic analysis of the "Science and technology Triangle", aiming at more specific plans for "Science and Technology Communication Centers" and "Centers of Sympathy".

As a means of obtaining useful basic data, it will be important to conduct a comparative study on perception of people in Japan and other countries on science and technology. Analysis of questions about individual issues will be also useful to understand people's ideas and orientations with regard to science and technology.

Furthermore, case studies on a variety of social events will be useful to specifically know perception of people, how well they understand science and technology, and levels of

various social supports for science and technology. In the process, the validity of our "Science and Technology Triangle" communication model will be checked.

We hope the way of communication on science and technology shown in this study will become a starting point to make many "Science and Technology Communication Centers" and their core "Centers of Sympathy" in Japan, to activate communication on science and technology in Japan, to develop active cooperation with similar organizations in other countries, and to broaden the ring of global sympathy for science and technology.