

MODERN BELIEF AND INNOVATIVE THINKING

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Abstract: This article analyzes the intrinsic connection between societal development and innovative progress, particularly emphasizing the necessity for a balanced approach between religious belief, secularism, and science. The author interprets the concept of modern belief as a form of social consciousness that must align with the needs of a new era. Innovation is considered not merely a technological achievement but also a renewal in social demand and thought. The concept of “marginal thinking” in belief is introduced to examine the complex psychological and social aspects of transitional periods. Moreover, the decisive role of the education system in fostering innovative progress is highlighted, alongside the promotion of modern approaches that ensure harmony between science, critical thinking, and belief among the younger generation. The article also examines the social risks arising in the sphere of belief and methods of their prevention, based on the “Concept of State Policy on Ensuring Freedom of Conscience and Religious Affairs in the Republic of Uzbekistan.”

Keywords: Innovative thinking, modern belief, marginal thinking, harmony of religious belief and secularism, processes of social modernization, interrelation of science and belief, foundations of democratic society, educating the new generation.

Today, social development is progressing more rapidly than ever before, as an objective demand of societal advancement. The increasing emphasis on scientific and technological development is visibly encompassing all aspects of social life. Indeed, the intense innovative competition driven by the market economy compels nations and peoples across the world toward dynamic renewal. Even seemingly “stagnant” sectors, which on the surface may appear resistant to modernization, are compelled to develop under the influence of innovation. The field of religious life is a striking example of this phenomenon.

Modernization, in fact, has encroached upon religious values as well—values that are typically based on predefined norms and expectations. Today, there are many advocates of the modernization of religion, including Islam. They aim to strengthen their positions across various domains by promoting missionary activities, combating ideologies like Wahhabism that call for a return to early Islam, reconciling religion and science, and integrating religious belief with secularism. As emphasized in the Law No. 1037 of the Republic of Uzbekistan, approved on February 25, 2025, titled “Concept of State Policy on Ensuring Freedom of Conscience and Religious Affairs in the Republic of Uzbekistan,” any attempt to introduce religion-specific rules into legally regulated social relations, deny equality of human rights and interests, neglect social norms, limit citizens’ access to scientific and cultural achievements, or propagate ideas that undermine societal unity and secular values may lead to disunity, legal violations, infringement of others’ rights, the erosion of patriotism, and family disputes.

It must always be remembered that innovation is not an artificially constructed or randomly implemented process; it involves the practical application of emergent necessities that increasingly become integral to life, thereby influencing both social development and relational systems. This, first and foremost, necessitates changes in human belief. Such influence is neither simple nor immediate and may require certain periods or stages. Philosopher A. Erkayev refers to such phenomena in belief as “marginal thinking.” According to him, during periods of profound transformation or renewal, marginal states of belief may be observed among older generations. Following Uzbekistan’s independence and the transition to a market economy, many individuals of this demographic found it difficult to abandon Soviet-era values and embrace the beliefs and attitudes aligned with the new era. This significantly impeded the internalization of democratic principles and civil society within their consciousness. Therefore, according to Erkayev, overcoming such marginal belief was a fundamental challenge for the Uzbek model of development.

According to general sociological laws of social development, economic relations are considered the primary determinant of societal progress. Accordingly, scholarly literature notes that all innovative activity and research must primarily target and transform economic life: “Innovation is a collection of new ideas, inventions, discoveries, and novel approaches, developed through human intellect and industrial experience, implemented in production, and yielding socio-economic benefits. Only those innovations that are commercialized, implemented in practice, and bring measurable socio-economic results may be considered true innovations.” Fully agreeing with this view, it should be added that this principle is especially relevant to today’s renewal processes aimed at establishing a democratic society based on market economy relations. Indeed, without broadly applying scientific and technical innovations to social domains, it is impossible to advance these renewal processes.

Moreover, in today’s era of renewal, where internal and external competition is intensifying due to market economy relations, it becomes increasingly essential to expand innovative activities, enhance training of competent specialists, and base production processes on scientific achievements. Therefore, in these circumstances, it is appropriate to emphasize that the central responsibility for ensuring the primacy of innovative factors in social development lies with the education system.

This assertion is based on the premise that any innovation demands a new way of thinking. New thinking, in turn, is inextricably linked to the educational process and cannot develop without it. Thus, the education system is one of the critical determinants of innovative development. A society’s innovative growth can only be ensured when the education system prepares future generations who are well-versed in science, capable of nonstandard thinking, possess a broad worldview, and are committed to contributing their knowledge and skills to social development—youth who embrace scientific pluralism as a core belief. As long as any education system is directed toward fostering new knowledge, thinking, and beliefs in youth, we must not forget, in the words of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, that “...the most important task of the education system is to nurture a new generation who possess profound knowledge of science and their field of expertise and are necessary for today’s world.” It is only through education and upbringing that it becomes possible to foster deep knowledge, critical thinking, and a broad worldview, alongside a firm belief grounded in unwavering conviction.

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