FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

My dear readers of Journal of Extension Education,

As we all are aware, India had witnessed several nation-wide public extension programmes starting from the launch of Community Development Programme in 1952. Since then, the public extension system has been criticized for not effecting changes in its focus and approach, in line with the changing agricultural scenario and needs, over the years.

However, it is interesting to note that in spite of its shortcomings, a worldwide study of agricultural research and extension institutions carried out by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), based on 80 studies worldwide, had estimated that the annual median rate of return was an average of 63 per cent for extension expenditures , while it was 48 per cent for agricultural research expenditures (Alston et al. 2000). The most common drawback attributed to public extension systems is that the focus has been predominantly on transferring production technologies of major food crops with little attention given to the market potential of high-value crops.

A World Bank study conducted in 2006 on enhancing agricultural innovations , had reported the following six findings, which hold good even today:

1. Markets, not production, increasingly drive agricultural development.
2. The production, trade, and consumption environment for agriculture and agricultural products is growing more dynamic and evolving in unpredictable ways (e.g., due to energy costs, biofuels, climate change).
3. Knowledge, information, and, especially, proprietary technologies are increasingly being generated and diffused through the private sector.
4. Exponential growth in the development of information and communications technologies (ICT) has transformed the capacity of some farmers, especially large-scale commercial farmers, to take advantage of new technologies being developed elsewhere.
5. The structure for agricultural technology generation has markedly changed in many countries.
6. Agricultural development is increasingly taking place in a globalized setting.

Taking this in to account the public extension systems need to play a pro-active, facilitating role in working with farmers, the smallholders, rural youth and women farmers, in particular. This would enable making farming profitable for them thereby retaining them in agriculture.

Many constraints plague the agricultural extension system limiting its progress. Concerted efforts need to be made overcome the identified constraints in order to achieve sustainable agricultural development. 'Constraint analysis' dominates this issue of JEE, which I hope you would find interesting. Do send your feedback to ***editorextension@gmail.com.***

Chief Editor