

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

*My dear readers of Journal of Extension Education,*

A couple of months ago, when the Executive Council (EC) of Extension Education Society decided to re-introduce Special Issues of Journal of Extension Education (JEE), 'Indigenous Technical Knowledge' (ITK) was the overwhelming favourite-theme of all the members for the inaugural issue. This was probably stemmed from the fact that ITK, in spite of the importance given to its preservation in the recent times, has been disappearing alarmingly fast. There is no gainsaying the fact that ITK still has the potential to offer solutions for many of the problems being encountered due to unsustainable 'modernization' of agriculture in the last few decades.

Recent studies show that 80% of the world's population depends on indigenous knowledge to meet their medicinal needs and at least 50% rely on indigenous knowledge for food supply. Agricultural extension therefore has a predominant role to play in collecting, documenting and applying indigenous strategies to help in enhancing food security, while protecting the natural resources. Further, the importance given to centralized solutions with the help of formal R&D set-ups need to give way to decentralized R&D efforts in rural environments involving the local people, at least for a few appropriate farm technologies. Only such initiatives can offer feasible solutions to the real problems being faced by the farmers.

In order to resolve these issues, the Institute of Development Studies, UK had come up with the following six proposals for the national and international research organizations in the early eighties and appreciable progress has been made only in few of these proposals, over the years.

- (1) *Rural exposure for extension and research staff*: This could be arranged for the professional personnel during initial training and at intervals thereafter, so that they appreciate the difference between their way of looking at the world and that of the people who were supposed to benefit from their work.
- (2) *Checklists*: Checklists could be used to draw attention to factors such as implications for rural women, affordability of an innovation, social significance, risk and labour requirements, which might otherwise not be considered in determining research priorities or extension advice.
- (3) *Local-level influence on research priorities*: To improve the criteria chosen in research and then to see they are acted on, producers could sit on the boards of agricultural research institutions.
- (4) *A cafeteria system*: Farmers could be offered different packages and left to decide for themselves which they would adopt.
- (5) *Starting with indigenous practice* : A more radical and difficult proposal is that research should take existing indigenous practice as its starting point, seeking to refine this in various ways and then to feed results back into the system.
- (6) *Experimental work in rural conditions*: The process might be taken a stage further, perhaps through full-blown experimental work on farmers' fields and with farmers' collaboration.

The research and development institutions of the country need to have a sincere look at these proposals and initiate action on those which are feasible.

From this Special Issue, **Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs)** have been assigned to papers published in JEE. A DOI provides a persistent and unique link for each research paper making easy for JEE authors to track when and where their research is cited, discussed, shared, bookmarked, or used across the web.

The papers in this special issue deal with various dimensions of ITK. I hope the JEE readers find them interesting. Do send your feedback to [editorextension@gmail.com](mailto:editorextension@gmail.com)