

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

My dear readers of Journal of Extension Education,

The United Nations has declared 2019-2028 as the '*Decade of Family Farming*'. As per FAO, 'Family Farming', which includes all family-based agricultural activities, is a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family labour. Small family farms would be playing a vital role in achieving food security for 9 billion people by 2050, as world agricultural production will have to increase by 70 per cent. Statistics say that globally, there are around 525 million family farmers, and they account for over half of all agricultural production. Of the 17 SDGs of the UN, 10 are directly related to family farming. These family farms are estimated to represent over 90 percent of the world's farms. For India, which accounts for over 24 % of the world's family farms, this exists as one of the most important factors in food production.

Rural youth and women, who face numerous challenges in family farms, need to be at the centre of any development strategy during this 'decade', for improving their access to advisory services, credit facilities and markets.

While discussing the bottlenecks faced by smallholder farmer groups in the arid and semi-arid lands to raising production and productivity, Kamanga (2014) had listed the following areas:

1. Limited to no access to inputs: improved variety seeds, information, crop protection inputs, and financial services;
2. Limited skills and knowledge in good agronomic practices required to exploit the full potential in improved inputs (particularly seeds);
3. Limited knowledge of market requirements;
4. Limited knowledge in harvesting and post-harvesting management;
5. Limited access to labour-saving machinery for land preparation and harvesting, to minimise the drudgery of labour-intensive agriculture;
6. Limited capacity to operate as economic units that appeal to value chain players

Extension services have a predominant role to play in all the aforementioned constraints. Innovative technologies and indigenous knowledge possessed by the farm families may have to be carefully integrated while developing strategies to overcome these constraints.

This issue of JEE has papers on topics such as SWOT analysis of milch buffalo rearing system in the wetlands of Kerala, assessment of a mobile application for dog breeders and group dynamics assessment of farmer producer companies. Do send your feedback on these papers to editorextension@gmail.com