

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Of late, extension practitioners are employing a range of participatory methods and media - from community radio to video and modern ICTs - to ensure more equitable access to information for farmers and rural communities.

Integrating the power of media such as rural radio, mobile phones and ICTs with local knowledge and communication systems can give rural stakeholders, more power to take action and change their lives for better.

Surprisingly, radio still is one of the most widespread means of communication in rural areas, capable to reach illiterate audiences and the most disconnected groups in the country.

In its recent publication on "Communication for rural development" (2014), FAO has highlighted the phenomenal success of the first farm radio of Bangladesh that was assisted by FAO.

The Krishi radio, with the slogan, "My Radio, My Voice", was launched in 2012 and within a year had an estimated listenership of over 40000 local residents.

Though the agricultural officers initially ran the radio, a team of community volunteers currently performs the production and broadcasting tasks. Community members, local authorities, cultural groups and NGOs also participate in the radio management committees.

Further, during the devastating cyclone that struck the southern coast of Bangladesh in 2013, Krishi Radio contributed to save people's lives and assets by spreading information about cyclone shelters, crop harvesting and other disaster preparedness measures in areas isolated due to power failures.

The experience of Krishi Radio has proved successful in developing demand-driven communication services, agricultural research & policies and empowering local actors and enabling inclusive decision making at the community level.

Our extension practitioners should therefore keep in mind the usefulness of radio, which is still a force to reckon, with several advantages such as localized delivery of information, wide coverage and accessibility in rural areas and low production costs, while formulating communication strategies for rural development.

This issue of JEE contains a potpourri of articles on self-help groups, gender equality and entrepreneurship of farmers. I am sure the readers will find them interesting.

Chief Editor