

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Of late, there is a general concern that public extension is not doing enough and is not always relevant in many developing countries. Bureaucratic inefficiency and poor planning & implementation of extension programmes have been the major contributing factors, besides decreasing donor support and staff shortages.

A recent World Bank publication on '*Agricultural Extension — Generic Challenges and Some Ingredients for Solutions*' has expressed serious concerns over the plight of public extension. In Asia, the growth rate fostered by the green revolution has slowed down and agriculture is facing a crisis in many parts of the developing world. In this context, agricultural extension faces two major challenges – **information & organization** and **extension funding & delivery**.

As for the former challenge, extension has an important role to play in providing improved skills, information, and ideas in order to develop an agriculture that will meet complex demand patterns, reduce poverty, and preserve or enhance ecological resources.

As for the latter challenge, the major difficulties in extension funding and delivery face happen to be:

- problems in establishing the cause & effect necessary to obtain political and financial support and
- liability for public service functions beyond agricultural knowledge and information transfer

While seeking immediate solutions to these problems, the policymakers in developing countries such as India have difficult choices to make on what public extension should do. They may have to look for viable alternatives to public financing by involving the private sector, local authorities and producer groups. Eventually, I am sure, they may have to involve a variety of stakeholders in forging contracts and collaborative partnerships, pluralistic arrangements have the potential to help resolve these issues.

This issue of JEE contains papers on a variety of topics such as constraints in adopting eco-friendly conservation practices, how agricultural students perceive the instructional methods and on working conditions of women journalists. I hope the JEE readers find them interesting.

Chief Editor