

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

***My dear readers of Journal of Extension Education,***

*Wish you all a very happy New Year!*

In the recently concluded eSARD-2019 conference (International Conference on Extension for Strengthening Agricultural Research and Development), it was surprising to note that papers were solicited on a relatively new topic, 'ethics' under the Conference theme, 'Extension Education and Research'. Ethics, a much ignored part in social science research, are 'moral principles that control or influence a person's behaviour' as per the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.

The European Commission (2018) has formulated certain ethical guidelines when conducting studies with human subjects as participants in social science research. These guidelines are to be followed besides avoiding serious ethical breaching such as plagiarizing and fabrication of data. I am listing a few below.

- Whenever we are collecting personal data directly from research participants, we must seek their informed consent
- Give participants a clear explanation of the aims, overall purpose, methods and implications of the research.
- Explain that participation is voluntary.
- Explain who is funding the research and for what purpose.
- Disclose who will benefit from the research.
- Make a clear commitment to treating personal and sensitive information confidentially
- Offer to provide respondents with further information about research if they ask for it
- Give the name and contact details of the contact person who can answer any queries participants may have.

As professionals of Extension Education, we may have to follow these guidelines primarily while conducting face-to-face interviews, wherein we directly ask questions and obtain responses or while conducting focus groups, wherein a small group of homogenous respondents are interviewed together.

As of now, ethical clearance for conducting such interviews and Focus groups is not insisted upon in most of the developing countries. Many social scientists argue that since there is no apparent harm inflicted while conducting research (unlike health-related research, similar to the *Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment*), ethical clearance for such research is unnecessary. However, this situation might change in future, as ethical issues are becoming crucial in social research. Following the aforementioned easy-to-follow ethical guidelines could be a right step in this direction.

This issue of JEE contains articles on diverse topics including willingness of farmers to participate in innovation platforms, crowdsourcing knowledge and erosion of traditional seed supply systems.

Do send your feedback on these papers to [editorextension@gmail.com](mailto:editorextension@gmail.com).