FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

My dear readers of Journal of Extension Education,

These days, we hear a lot about data-driven farming. Data-driven farming is the use of data to augment decision-making in farming systems and thus improve food system outcomes such as crop yields, profits, environmental sustainability and food security. Many studies (Fabregas et al. 2019) support the perception that the future of agriculture depends on the adoption of new technologies that gather, transfer, manage, and analyze data.

In a recently published paper in *Nature Sustainability*, Mehrabi et al (2021) had reported that substantial gaps still exist in the availability of, and access to, data services for the world's farming populations, especially the smallholders and have outlined the following recommendations for for governments, agricultural development organizations, funders, entrepreneurs and academics.

Invest in 'last-mile infrastructure' innovation:

Closing the coverage gap will require continued innovation in terms of energy, cell towers, and other infrastructure -innovations such as Google's *Loon*, Elon Musk's *Starlink* or Greg Wyler's *One Web*.

Increase handset affordability:

Business model innovation will be required to provide handsets that are both affordable and capable of a seamless broadband experience, particularly for women and underserved groups in rural communities.

Make data access universal: Innovation in infrastructure can help to reduce the cost of deploying the last-mile infrastructure, to ensure data accessibility to all farmers.

Identify interim solutions:

The lean front-end, interim solutions such as SMS-based advisories and alerts, and interactive voice response services that can run on low-end mobile handsets, offer an important opportunity for addressing bundled issues of productivity, market connectivity, financial transfers, credit access, input use and within-season management, across large areas of farming landscapes globally. While espousing the uses of data-driven agriculture, experts also caution that (Maru et al, 2018), mobile phone 'apps' alone cannot introduce digital and data-driven agriculture to farmers. Successful 'apps', therefore, need to use localized and specific data to provide localized and specific solutions for the farmers.

This issue of JEE has papers on topics such as factors affecting the adoption of silvopastoral system in Zimbabwe and climate change strategies in Bundelkhand, India. Do send your feedback on these papers to editorextension@gmail.com

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Chief Editor