

**International Extension Education Conference  
Department of Extension Education, Institute of Agricultural Sciences,  
Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi, India  
27-30 January, 2016**



*“International Extension Education Conference” was organized by Department of Extension Education, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), Varanasi (<http://ieecbhu.in/>) with support from ICAR, Virginia Tech, Wageningen University, NABARD, ICSSR, DBT, INSEE, and the Ohio State University during 27-30 January, 2016. Dr Pachaiyappan K, who participated in this Conference, shares his personal impressions here.*

## CONTEXT

Scientific conferences and seminars, often act as an important source of motivation and professional upgradation; as a periodic tool for updates and to explore newer ideas, themes and working avenues; especially in the field of agriculture and allied sectors where emphasis on applied research takes major lead. The objectives of this conference are as follows:

- Invite worldwide scholars and stakeholders on agricultural education and extension to share their expertise and experiences
- Analyze the present situation of extension teaching, research and extension services
- Build the future course of action.



This conference was the brain child of the organizing secretary Dr Kalyan Gadhei in his extended effort to sustain and build up the professional association of his scientific fraternity with his international acquaintances. This event was conceived and planned after his international visit; with the purpose to establish a platform to discuss about facets of the discipline of extension education in global perspective; an effort which has been a whopping success.

## THE PROGRAM

### Inaugural Session

The inauguration session was graced by Dr Martin Muller, Professor and Head & Chair, Group of Education and Competence Studies, Wageningen University, Holland, Prof. G Trivedi, Former VC, RAU, Bihar and Dr V V Sadamate, Former Member, Planning Commission, GoI along with the Director, Dean of Institute of Agricultural Sciences, BHU. The guests spoke their intentions and ideologies on traditional, contemporary and futuristic agricultural and allied extension concepts; which happens to be a common phenomenon in all such conventions.

### Technical session

The conference was organized under five themes viz., Extension Education, Extension Research, Agricultural Extension and advisory services, policy issues and sustainable development; with 26 sub-themes. There were a total of 24 technical sessions conducted concurrently in three venues except for the plenary.

### Keynote address

Dr Martin Mulder, presented two papers viz., “Emerging Trends in Competence-Based Extension Education Science” and “Publishing research in scholarly journals and assessment of research output”. In his paper, Dr Mulder expressed his views and experiences about the importance of competence based extension education in Agriculture. His explanations were based on proven theories of competence and his practical experiences with his team in enhancing competence in extension science including research publications, where many of budding researchers required vast trainings.

Dr Anne M Adrian delivered a lecture on “eXtension: Serving Extension educators with innovation and professional development”. Dr Adrian shared her experiences on “eXtension”; about its genesis, their foundation, and their three-I initiatives (Issues, Innovation, Impact) of the products in extension education etc. She explained about the recent products of the eXtension foundation like “Ask an Expert System” and their future projects on e-mediated data sharing, knowledge management etc. This concept of eXtension is going to be the means for future extension research in India, hence needs special focus.

Dr V V Sadamate, presented on “Future Agril. Extension Strategies: For Enhanced Performance” and Dr C Satapathy, Director, Amity University discussed on “Youth in Agriculture”. Dr G Trivedi, Dr Deepak De, Former Head, Dept. of Extension Education, BHU and Dr G Trivedi, were also among the keynote speakers. Dr Sadamate dealt his topic with fifteen different futuristic strategies required in agricultural extension for enhanced services and research performance of the discipline.



## Lead paper presentations

Dr Niraj Kumar, Professor, XIBM, Bhubaneswar; Dr S K Jha, Principal Scientist, NDRI, Karnal and Dr Sankar Acharya Professor, BCKV, West Bengal presented lead papers on “Branding Agricultural Education: Indian Context”, “Tendency to Treat Extension as ‘Scapegoat’ for failure on the ‘Transfer of Technology’ Front: A Candour Reckoning of the Issues from an Indian Perspective!” and “Social Entropy and chaos in farm metabolism of India: Application of Social Physics in Extension Education” respectively.

## Valedictory Session

The valedictory program was conducted in the forenoon of 30 Jan 2016. Dr Mangala Rai, VC, GBPUA&T, Pantnagar, was the chief guest while, Dr Anne M Adrian, Director of Programs for eXtension, Auburn University, USA and Dr Saket Kushwaha, VC, LNM University, Dharbhanga were the guests of Honour. The conference declared 15 recommendations including e-readiness in extension, development of offline and online resources in extension education, emphasis on right research mix of traditional and modern issues in agricultural extension, extension research & education as a credible partner in adoption levels of agricultural technologies, and blending extension education niche areas of agriculture and allied subjects etc.



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## MY IMPRESSIONS

1. Apart from technical comments, being in the initial phase of my scientific career, the conference provided me with good exposure to many themes and promenades on extension education and research;. Topics such as eXtension, branding agriculture, competence based extension education science etc., were apparently interesting and useful.
2. This conference has definitely ignited a righteous path in my scientific career and I am expecting to attend similar events in future. Platform provided at the conference, gave enough chances to interact with the extension fraternity - pan India with noted professors, research scientists, members in management positions, planners and of course students in contemporary research. The international delegations in this conference were impressive and interacting with them was a profound experience; I suppose not only for me.
3. Besides the technical sessions, a separate session on “research scholars – scientists interaction” was organized by the team. This effort is to be appreciated and the idea shall be taken by all societies and universities regularly engaged in organizing conferences; as in many such events,

research scholars form a significant proportion. Apart from research related issues, many students were seeking clarification about scope and job opportunities in extension education, which should have been balanced by the moderators.



4. The total program was meticulously planned and organized, as the organizing team has been dedicating more time in this process, since 2014. “Starting from, Contact numbers in the back side of participation tags to logistical support to and fro”, every single element has been taken utmost care. Special appreciations to the students of BHU, who formed the “force on foot” and were available round the clock to all the needs and necessities of the participants.
5. There were approximately 270 registrations and somewhere around 150 presentations, including keynote addresses, lead papers, other oral presentations and posters. There were 24 sessions including plenary and the number of presentations per session averaged to 6 or 7. In some sessions there were more than 10 presentations while few had one or two only. Time allotment for the presentations went like this: for key note speakers and lead paper presentations – 15 min to + 10 min for discussion and for others – 5 min to 8 min for discussion. Overall, the chairs and co-chairs of all the sessions maintained stringent time limits irrespective of the speaker’s eminence.
6. Any agency planning for event of this stature should have taken a prior consensus among similar bodies like major societies, universities etc., to decide the date, month, and venue etc. Such an incredible effort by the organizing team might have gained more value and appreciations if had there been an increased audience. I take the liberty to cite the recently held extension conferences at Varanasi (same department), Ludhiana (GADVASU) and Bangalore (UAS) as reasons for this account. Too many conferences on extension issues within short period reduce the impact of the event. The various societies may arrive at consensus to have only one or two conferences in a year.
7. Apart from the key notes and lead papers, around 500 abstracts were received and rationally distributed under the five said themes. Invited lead papers and abstracts were compiled in souvenir format and that was released and distributed to all. A rapid glance on the topics of research paper abstracts evidences that, a great number of contemporary researches are on ICT based furtherance in extension education, assessment of unconventional research methods & models, economics / market / climate change mediated issues in extension education etc., which necessitated my opinion to ponder on possible advancements in present extension curricula at graduation and post-graduation levels.

8. Geographical representations of International delegation were to North America, Europe & African sub-continent. Had there been representations from Latin Americas, Middle East and western Asia, at least minimal in numbers, the very objective of this conference might have reached its absoluteness. Otherwise, I sincerely appreciate the conference at its every single front.



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9. The venue, Varanasi which is considered as spiritual capital of India, had its own impact on the participants. Being a core tourism spot, the venue influenced the delegation even beyond their scientific attention, which was carefully balanced by the organized team, honour you! But the tourism clout to visit places and do purchases cannot be overruled, and the author himself is no exception.

*Dr Pachaiyappan K, is a Scientist in the Division of Extension Education, ICAR – Indian Veterinary Research Institute, Izatnagar – 243122, India (Email ID: [pachaiyappank@gmail.com](mailto:pachaiyappank@gmail.com), Phone: +918859785311).*

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