



MANAGE Internship: Cultivating Experiences for Future Professionals

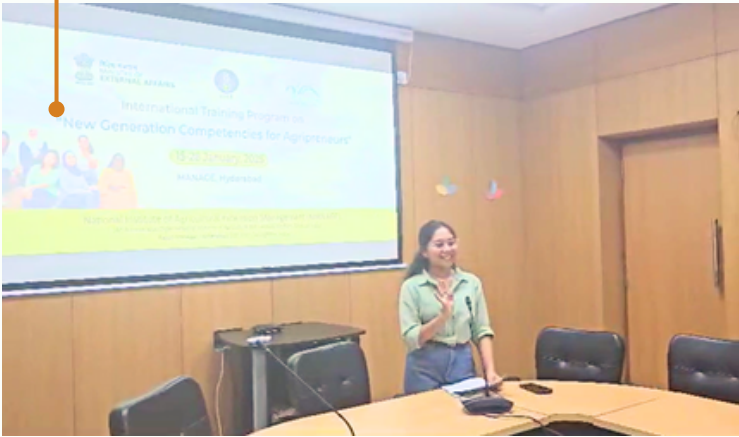


My Internship Journey: From Hopeful Start to Meaningful Growth

Hello, my name is Sonam Chandrakar and I'm from Raipur, Chhattisgarh. I hold a Master's degree in Agri-Business Management from the College of Agriculture, Indira Gandhi Krishi Vishwavidyalaya (IGKV), Raipur, Chhattisgarh.

 [Sonam Chandrakar](#)

Pre-Internship Expectations



Before joining, I was excited and a little nervous. I expected to learn about how incubation centers support startups, how mentoring or funding works, and what kind of help startups actually receive. I expected to gain clarity on how ideas turn into businesses. At the same time, I wanted to understand where I could fit in—how I could contribute with my background and interests.

I was also curious to see what kind of responsibilities I'd get as an intern. Most of all, I just wanted to grow—both personally and professionally.

Internship Experience

During my internship at MANAGE-CIA, I got to explore different roles and take part in meaningful work that went way beyond what I expected. I was excited to help wherever I could, but I didn't realize just how much I would learn and grow.



One of the most exciting parts of my role was working on podcast production and interviews—something I had never done before. I was involved in everything from planning and scripting to recording, editing, and publishing. As of April 21, 2025, we've published one podcast and three interns interview on the official MANAGE-CIA and MANAGE-CAEIRA YouTube channel.

These experiences taught me how to tell stories, speak confidently, and share the journeys of inspiring startup founders. I also took on coordination responsibilities for the Saturday webinar series and Cohort 5 activities, including conducting virtual verifications for four startups—Orgofiber, Cognite Technologies, Artion Technologies, and Farm Prosperity. These sessions gave me real insights into how startups work, manage challenges, and stick to their goals.



A highlight of my time was visiting Zensattva Paustik Jeevan Pvt. Ltd., ni-msme, Yousufguda, Hyderabad, Telangana. A health and nutrition startup, meeting the team and seeing their work up close was truly motivating.

Alongside all this, I am handling social media pages of MANAGE-CIA. I didn't have much experience in this area before, but I learned a lot thanks to the support and feedback from mentors.

This internship wasn't just about doing tasks—it was about stepping out of my comfort zone, learning something new every day, and being part of a space that's working to bring change in the agri-startup world. It's been a journey I'll always value.

Learning Environment



The environment at MANAGE-CIA is very open and supportive. I was surprised by how much freedom and trust interns are given. It wasn't like the typical internship where you only do backend work.

Here, I got the chance to explore real tasks, take ownership, and learn by doing. Each day brought something different—some days it was about writing content, other days we were planning a podcast or coordinating with startups. There's always something going on, and the learning just never stops.

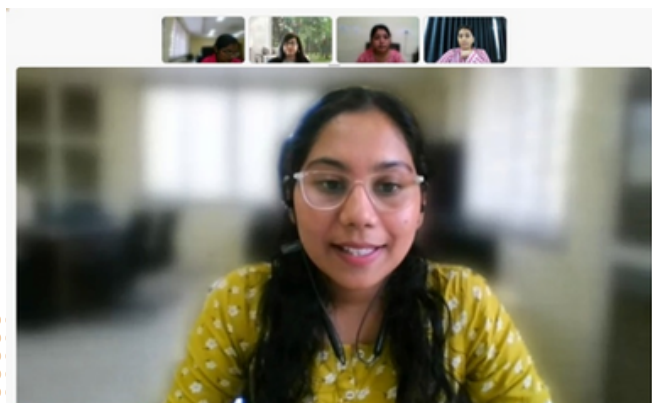
Everyone around is so helpful that you don't feel like just an intern—you feel like a part of the team also I've been really lucky in terms of mentorship during this internship. Dr. Saravanan Raj, Director (Agricultural Extension) has played a major role in shaping my confidence. He always encourages interns to take initiative, be creative, and not be afraid of making mistakes. That kind of environment really helps you grow.

Our supervisors were equally supportive—they would correct us when needed, but they also appreciated our efforts. Feedback was always constructive and kind. My fellow interns—Jeena, Arvind, and Maithri—were a great team to work with. We helped each other, shared tasks, and kept the energy positive even on tough days. It never felt competitive, only collaborative.

Skills and Knowledge Gained



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More importantly, these projects taught me a lot about myself—my communication skills, my creative side, and areas where I still need to improve, like public speaking and content editing. These projects pushed me out of my comfort zone, and I'm so glad they did.



This internship gave me exposure I never expected. I got to coordinate and participate in four major programs, including two international ones—the "Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Training Program" funded by Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, with 21 participants from 14 countries, and "Capacity Building Training Program for Agricultural Value Addition and Marketing Linkages" for Ministry of Trade and Industry officials of Malawi funded by Ministry of Trade and Industry, Government of Malawi where I had the opportunity to meet five officials of Malawi. These were amazing networking opportunities where I interacted with experts from different backgrounds, heard global perspectives, and learned about agricultural innovations from other parts of the world.

We also worked with participants from national programs like the "Commercialization of Horticulture Technologies for Entrepreneurship Development" Training Program funded by Department of Horticulture, Government of Odisha and the Cohort 12 training program. These interactions helped me build over 500 LinkedIn connections, which I see as a valuable network for my future. More than just contacts, these interactions broadened my mindset and made me more confident in dealing with diverse groups.



If I had to pick one major takeaway, it would be discovering my potential in podcasting, interviews, and social media. I had never imagined myself in such roles, but this internship gave me the push to try, and I ended up really enjoying it. It made me believe in the power of learning by doing. I realized that we all have hidden skills—we just need the right platform and support to explore them. This internship gave me both.

One thing I really appreciate is the trust MANAGE-CIA places in freshers. They don't treat interns as just temporary helpers. We were given real responsibilities and opportunities to contribute meaningfully. I also loved the learning environment—everyone is approachable, ideas are welcomed, and you're always encouraged to try new things.

And of course, I can't thank Dr. Saravanan Raj enough for creating this kind of culture. His leadership style and constant motivation truly make this internship stand out. I genuinely feel grateful for being part of this experience.





To put it simply, this internship was a journey of stepping out of my comfort zone, trying new things, failing sometimes, learning a lot, and growing every single day.

As Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam once said:

“Determination is the power that sees us through all our frustrations and obstacles.”

This internship taught me the value of determination, effort, and trusting the process. It went beyond what I expected. I thought I'd just get some basic exposure to incubation work. But what I got was real involvement, real learning, and real growth. I didn't think I'd be doing podcasts or talking to startup founders directly—but I did. I didn't think I'd coordinate international programs—but I did. This internship gave me more than I hoped for, and I feel lucky to have experienced it. To conclude my experience so far once again I would like to thank Dr. Saravanan Raj, Director (Agricultural Extension) for shaping this internship into such a valuable and inspiring journey. His visionary leadership, mentorship approach, and unwavering belief in young talent truly set the tone for everything that makes this program special.

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