

MANAGE Induction Training Program

Inculcating the Professionalism for Future



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Introduction

The Induction Training Program for the Newly Recruited Meghalaya Agricultural Service (MAS-III) Officers of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of Meghalaya, and conducted by the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad, from October 1–14, 2025 was a deeply enriching experience.

The program's primary objective was to inculcate better technical and functional competencies among agricultural extension professionals, while also developing leadership capacities, digital proficiency, team spirit and ethical behaviour. It aimed to strengthen professional effectiveness and align officers with the evolving paradigm of agricultural extension - one that goes beyond technology transfer to human development.

Key Learnings from Each Day

Each day at MANAGE unfolded new insights, shaping both my professional understanding and personal growth as an extension professional. The sessions were thoughtfully designed to blend technical, institutional and human development aspects.





Evolving and Changing Roles of Agricultural Extension

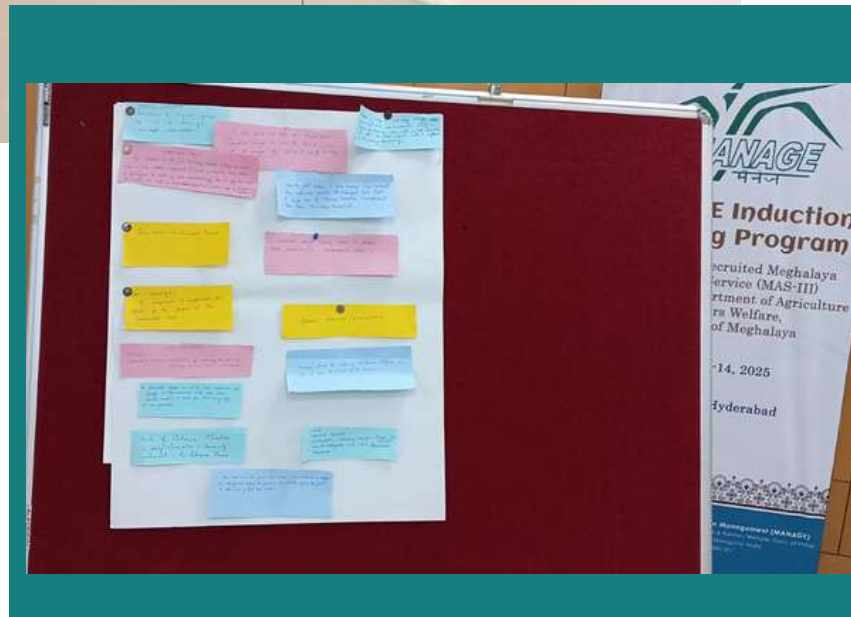
The program began with a thought-provoking session on the Evolving and Changing Roles of Agricultural Extension and Next-Gen Global Practices, conducted by Dr. Saravanan Raj, Director (Agricultural Extension), MANAGE. He beautifully laid the foundation for understanding how the role of extension has shifted from traditional technology transfer to human development, facilitation and empowerment. His discussion on participatory approaches, farmer-led innovations and digital integration inspired me to view extension as a dynamic and inclusive process that connects knowledge with compassion. Through global examples, he showed how different countries are reimagining extension systems to address emerging challenges like climate change, market volatility and livelihood diversification.



Role of Extension for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation



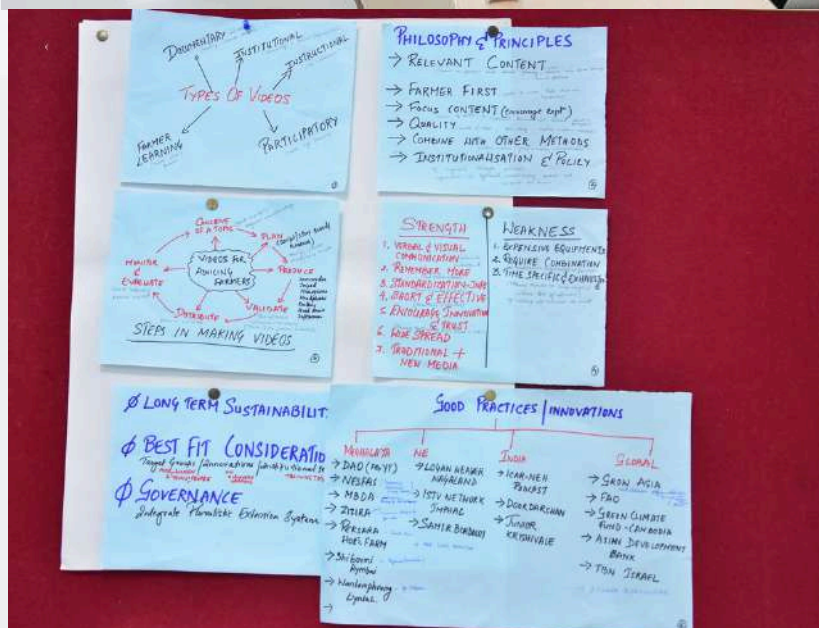
The next session on Role of Extension for Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation by Dr. N. Balasubramani, Director (CCA), MANAGE, emphasized the critical role of extension professionals as facilitators of climate resilience. He discussed the importance of crop diversity, resource conservation and climate literacy, linking environmental sustainability with livelihoods.



He encouraged us to integrate the eight missions of India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and respective state-level action plans into extension programs. The session offered practical guidance on promoting climate-smart interventions such as the use of resilient seeds, sustainable inputs, biochar-fortified natural resource management and energy, policy and institutionally smart approaches, all of which are crucial for building adaptive and sustainable farming systems.

FPOs: Farmers Mobilization – Formation – Market Connect

The session on FPOs: Farmers Mobilization – Formation – Market Connect by Dr. K. C. Gummagolmath, Director (M&E), MANAGE, was deeply inspiring. He explained how Farmer-Producer Organisations (FPOs) are transforming farmers into entrepreneurs and change-makers by enabling them to act collectively. We learned about the process of mobilizing farmers, registering producer companies and managing them as business entities. Dr. Gummagolmath shared success stories of Somnath Farmer Producer Company, Bhumitra Self-Reliant Farmers Producer Company and Sahyadri Farms, demonstrating how collectivization, value addition and leadership can solve persistent issues such as labour scarcity, poor storage, and middlemen exploitation.



The story of Mr. Vilas Vishnu Shinde, Chairman and MD of Sahyadri Farms, who began with milk pooling and expanded into GAP-certified grape exports, illustrated how vision and unity can restore dignity and sustainability to Indian farmers.

Integrating Gender and Nutrition in Agricultural Extension

A powerful session on Integrating Gender and Nutrition in Agricultural Extension was delivered by Dr. Veenita Kumari, Deputy Director (Gender Studies), MANAGE. She emphasized that gender inclusion is not a formality but a necessity for equitable agricultural growth. Through interactive discussions, she introduced us to key theoretical concepts such as gender mapping, gender blindness and gender equity, helping us understand their significance in agricultural development.



Although the session was conceptual, it clearly emphasized the importance of bridging gender gaps and designing gender-responsive extension programs. Dr. Kumari also discussed the Nutri-Smart Value Chain and highlighted the upcoming 2026 International Year of Women Farmers, reminding us that empowering women is key to building resilient rural economies.



Market-Led Extension and Supply Chain Management



The session on Market-Led Extension and Supply Chain Management by Dr. Shalendra, Director (Agricultural Marketing), MANAGE, helped us understand how value chain-based extension bridges production and marketing, ensuring that farmers benefit from market opportunities. He emphasized digital marketing platforms, price forecasting tools and market intelligence systems, which can reduce dependency on intermediaries and improve farmers' profitability.



ICTs and e-Governance in Agriculture

In the session on ICTs and e-Governance in Agriculture, facilitated by Dr. G. Bhaskar and Dr. Srinivasacharyulu Attaluri, we learned about various digital platforms, mobile applications and e-extension tools that can strengthen communication and data-driven decision-making. A deeply impactful session on Soft Skills, Motivation and Emotional Intelligence by Mr. S. Tirumal Reddy reminded us of that technical knowledge alone is not enough for effective extension. Using the metaphor of the five natural elements — earth, fire, water, sky and air, he connected each element to core human qualities: stability, passion, adaptability, openness and empathy. The session helped us reflect on our leadership style, communication, and self-awareness, reinforcing that empathy, patience and humility are vital for connecting with farming communities.



Seven Days, Seven Groups and Seven Insights

Another highlight of the training was the group exercise “Seven Days, Seven Groups and Seven Insights,” where seven teams brainstormed and developed 49 innovative ideas, later consolidated into seven actionable strategies for implementation in Meghalaya.

These included Aquaponics Systems for sustainable food production, Biopolymer Seed Coating for seed vigor, ICT-based extension for timely communication, FPO empowerment for collective marketing, Soft Skills development for empathetic leadership, Millet promotion for nutritional security and Soil Testing Kit utilization for better soil health management. These takeaways form a roadmap for innovation and action, combining technology, local wisdom and human values to build a more inclusive and sustainable agricultural system in Meghalaya.



Institutional Visits and Inspiring Technologies

Visit to the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR)



राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण विकास एवं
पंचायती राज संस्थान
National Institute of
Rural Development & Panchayati Raj



At the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), we explored aquaponics systems, renewable energy models, vermicomposting, biogas plants and eco-friendly housing showcasing how appropriate rural technologies can promote sustainability and self-reliance.





Access Livelihoods Consulting (ALC)

Access Livelihoods introduced us to the Beehive model, which empowers over 75,000 producers across India under the brand Creyo, demonstrating the strength of collective action and social entrepreneurship in building resilient livelihoods.





Visit to ICAR – Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR)



The Indian Council of Agricultural Research–Indian Institute of Millets Research (ICAR–IIMR) showcased Nutrihub, an agri-business incubator promoting millet-based enterprises and value addition for rural youth and entrepreneurs. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research–Indian Institute of Rice Research (ICAR–IIRR) and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research–Indian Institute of Oilseeds Research (ICAR–IIOR) demonstrated innovations in soil testing kits, biopolymer seed coating technologies, and oilseed processing units, emphasizing productivity and quality enhancement.



Visit to ICAR-Indian Institute of Rice Research (IIRR) Hyderabad



The Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Indian Institute of Rice Research (ICAR-IIRR) demonstrated innovations in soil testing kits and latest development in rice cultivation. We gained knowledge on advanced breeding techniques, pest and disease management, sustainable agronomic practices specifically for rice and the role of research in supporting rice farmers and improving food security



Visit to ICAR-Indian Institute of Oilseeds Research (IIOR)



भाकृअनुप - भारतीय तिलहन अनुसंधान संस्थान
ICAR-Indian Institute Of Oilseeds Research
ISO 9001:2015 Certified



Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Indian Institute of Oilseeds Research (ICAR-IIOR) demonstrated innovations in biopolymer seed coating technologies, and oilseed processing units, emphasizing productivity and quality enhancement.



Visit to ICAR - Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA)

Indian Council of Agricultural Research–Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (ICAR–CRIDA) deepened our understanding of watershed management models designed for dryland ecosystems, advanced agricultural research, development practices and Innovative techniques in crop management, soil and water conservation, climate-resilient farming, and sustainable agricultural practices tailored for dryland conditions.



Visit to National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB)



National Fisheries Development Board
Welcome to the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB),
promoting sustainable fisheries development in India.
#NFDB #SustainableFisheries



National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) deepened our understanding of Fishery development programs, sustainable aquaculture practices and application of modern technology in fish farming and processing, including GIS and remote sensing techniques



Visit to National Institute of Plant Health Management (NIPHM)



The National Institute of Plant Health Management (NIPHM), broadened our knowledge of aquaponics, biosecurity measures, integrated pest and disease management, importance of plant health in ensuring agricultural productivity and environmental safety, showcasing the latest research and technologies in plant health management.





Visit to International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

Visits to the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) deepened our understanding of climate-smart agricultural practices, biochar-fortified natural resource management (NRM).





Technologies to Apply in Field Work

In the field, I plan to integrate practical and adaptive technologies that address local challenges while promoting sustainable growth. My focus will be on introducing climate-resilient practices, including millet-based cropping systems and integrated farming models suited to hilly terrains. I will make effective use of digital tools to deliver timely advisories, facilitate market access and improve communication between farmers and extension personnel. I also aim to capture and showcase local innovations through documentation ensuring that traditional wisdom and new ideas are shared widely. By combining modern technology with local knowledge, I hope to promote a farming system that is productive, sustainable and locally empowered.

Methodologies with Farmers

I plan to use participatory and inclusive methodologies that put farmers at the heart of learning and decision-making. I will apply approaches such as Farmer-to-Farmer learning, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), and training games and interactive activities to make learning more engaging and practical. Through these methods, I want farmers to be active partners, sharing ideas, solving problems collectively and contributing to the design and adoption of sustainable agricultural practices.



Training Experience

The training was a truly transformative journey, combining professional learning with personal growth. Each session offered new insights, blending technical knowledge, leadership development and practical exposure in a way that was both engaging and inspiring. It strengthened my understanding of agricultural extension as a dynamic field that connects science, people and purpose. Working closely with fellow officers fostered a sense of teamwork, collaboration and shared learning, while the exposure visits and interactive exercises enhanced my confidence and interpersonal communication.



Change in Perspective

The program profoundly changed my perspective on agricultural extension. I now see it not merely as the transfer of technology, but as a process of facilitation, empowerment and human development. It helped me understand that effective extension begins with empathy and ends with empowerment, enabling farmers to become active participants in innovation and decision-making. I realised that an extension professional must serve as a knowledge broker, bridge and catalyst for change, connecting research with reality, science with society and policy with people. This shift in mindset has inspired me to approach my role with greater purpose, inclusivity and commitment to building resilient farming communities.



Atmosphere and Environment

The atmosphere at MANAGE was vibrant, motivating and truly nurturing. The sessions were interactive, punctual and well-coordinated, creating an environment that encouraged curiosity, participation and growth. What stood out most was the warmth and humility of the MANAGE faculty and staff- they guided us patiently at every step, making us feel comfortable and valued throughout the program.



The serene campus, coupled with the genuine hospitality of the people, created an environment that inspired both learning and reflection. It felt like a place where knowledge met kindness- where professionalism blended beautifully with human connection. This positive atmosphere made the entire training journey not only enriching but also deeply memorable.



Collaboration with MANAGE

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Back-at-Work Plan

After returning to the field, I plan to apply the knowledge gained from MANAGE through focused and collaborative initiatives. I aim to strengthen ICT-based advisory systems to deliver timely weather, pest and crop information to farmers in hilly and remote areas. Efforts will also focus on enhancing Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) for collective marketing, value addition and stronger market linkages. I plan to promote climate-smart and millet-based farming practices to improve productivity and resilience. Recognizing the significant role of all stakeholders in Meghalaya's agriculture, efforts will be made to strengthen participation and leadership in agri-entrepreneurship and value chain development, ensuring inclusive growth and equitable opportunities for all. I also intend to collaborate with research institutions and partner agencies to ensure timely access to quality inputs such as seeds and planting materials. Finally, I will document and share local farmer innovations and best practices to encourage peer learning and wider adoption across communities.



Experience During Hyderabad Visit

The Hyderabad visit was an enriching and memorable experience, combining professional learning with cultural exploration. Visits to MANAGE, ICRISAT, IIMR and other institutions offered valuable insights into innovation, sustainability and farmer-centred development. Beyond academics, Hyderabad's warm and vibrant atmosphere made the journey truly unforgettable.

I enjoyed Hyderabad's rich flavours and vibrant culture — from savouring Hyderabadi biryani, mutton soup and mandi at Pista House and sweets from Madhur Sweets, to exploring Shilparamam, Charminar and Golconda Fort. The evening walk at Durgam Cheruvu Bridge, the light show at Hussain Sagar and visits to Ramoji Film City and Wonderla added delightful moments of joy and relaxation to the experience. The hostel stay at MANAGE was comfortable and warm, with thoughtful hospitality and delicious meals. Meeting new friends, seniors and juniors made the experience even more special. Overall, it was a wholesome journey of learning, culture and connection, leaving me inspired and grateful.

What I Appreciated Most



What I appreciated most about the training was the thoughtful design and balance between technical know-how and human values. The program was well-structured and meticulously organized, ensuring that each session built meaningfully. The commitment and dedication of the MANAGE team were evident in every detail — from the planning and coordination to their constant guidance and encouragement throughout the program. I am grateful to the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of Meghalaya and MAMETI for providing and facilitating this valuable opportunity. A Special thanks to Dr. Saravanan Raj and Dr. Sandipamu Raahalya for their inspiring mentorship and support.

I especially appreciated the effort to bring in eminent speakers who shared valuable insights on a wide range of topics. Their engaging sessions added both depth and perspective to the program. This holistic approach made the training truly professionally enriching and personally inspiring.

Peer Interaction and Networking

The program fostered a genuine sense of team spirit, collaboration and shared purpose among all participants. Interacting with colleagues from different regions of Meghalaya allowed us to exchange diverse ideas, share field experiences and learn from one another's perspectives. Group discussions, joint exercises and field visits created a space for mutual learning and cooperation, helping us develop collective problem-solving approaches to real-world agricultural challenges. Beyond professional networking, these interactions also built friendships and trust- forming a strong foundation for future collaboration and support as we continue our journey together as officers of the Meghalaya Agricultural Service.



Most Significant Takeaway

The most significant takeaway from the training was realizing that agricultural extension is about transformation, not just information; it's about how we connect, inspire and empower farmers. The session on soft skills and emotional intelligence deeply resonated with me and reminded me that true effectiveness lies in balancing knowledge with compassion. The program also reminded us that "learning is the first step to earning- not just wealth, but wisdom," and that "growth begins when discomfort ends." It inspired me to embrace change, keep learning and serve the farming community of Meghalaya with empathy, integrity, and purpose.

My MANAGE Journey in a Few Lines

My journey at MANAGE was truly a journey of transformation where learning met purpose. It taught me that agricultural extension is not merely about delivering technology, but about serving people with empathy, driving change through innovation and upholding integrity in every action. It was an experience that strengthened both my professional vision and personal values, reminding me that true progress begins with compassion and commitment.





MANAGE organised a comprehensive fourteen-day Induction Training Program for the newly recruited Meghalaya Agricultural Service (MAS-III) Officers of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of Meghalaya. The program was designed to inculcate strong technical and functional competencies among agricultural extension professionals, while simultaneously nurturing leadership qualities, team spirit, and a commitment to professional excellence. Emphasis was placed on enhancing digital skills, strengthening documentation capabilities, and fostering positive values and behavioural transformation essential for effective extension service delivery. Over the course of the program, participants were exposed to a diverse range of themes including the changing roles of agricultural extension, global good practices and innovation in extension, gender and nutrition-sensitive approaches, climate change adaptation, ICT applications in extension, and key soft skills for professional development. Structured institutional visits further enriched the learning experience by providing hands-on exposure to relevant technologies, methodologies, and innovative practices that officers can meaningfully apply in their engagement with farmers across Meghalaya.



MANAGE - Center for Agricultural Extension Innovations, Reforms and Agripreneurship (MANAGE- CAEIRA)
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