



National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



My Reflective Journey through NYPDP at MANAGE: A Path of Commitment, Growth, and Change

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“Rooted in Purpose, Growing with MANAGE”

The National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP) aims to explore the vast scope and emerging global opportunities in Agricultural Extension, while identifying career pathways, essential skills, and strategies for competency enhancement. Through expert-led sessions and practical engagements, the program equips young professionals with the tools and insights needed to thrive in a rapidly evolving agricultural landscape, both nationally and internationally.

Key Learnings

Daily Insights and Takeaways

Day 1: The first day was a power-packed experience filled with interactive sessions, thought-provoking discussions, and inspiring takeaways.



A major highlight was the session by Dr. Saravanan Raj, Director (Agricultural Extension), MANAGE, who shared his personal journey, emphasizing resilience, self-motivation, and excellence in the field. His words, “When we start motivated, nobody stops you”, left a lasting impression. He reminded us: “When nobody celebrates you, learn to celebrate yourself. When nobody compliments you, compliment yourself. It’s not up to others to keep you encouraged, it’s up to you. True encouragement comes from within!”.

Another eye-opening session focused on New Competencies and Job Opportunities for Agricultural Extension, where I gained a deeper understanding of global perspectives and the richness of the subject. The session explored various courses and related opportunities, opening my eyes to the diverse career pathways available within agricultural extension. The brainstorming sessions explored key areas, including:

- Professional Specialization & Excellence
- Challenges Faced by Students & Extension Faculty
- Bridging Curriculum Gaps in Universities
- Emerging Job Prospects in the Field

Day 2: Dr. Saravanan Raj emphasized that “The world believes in action,” setting a powerful tone for understanding emerging research priorities in agricultural extension. These included climate change, food security, digital innovation, AgTech, gender studies, urban agriculture, agro-tourism, and extension innovations. He expanded our perspective on the breadth of extension research, highlighting its linkages with governance, advisory methods, capacity building, policy formulation, and environmental concerns.

Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman stressed that “Extension professionals must move beyond traditional roles and engage in evidence-based policy discussions,” as he discussed the new capacities required for today's dynamic environment. His message resonated deeply, emphasizing the need to develop not just competencies (task-oriented skills) but broader capacities (the ability to innovate and lead). He encouraged us to explore platforms like Coursera, EdX, AgMOOC, and the GFRAS New Extensionist Learning Kit (NELK) for continuous capacity development. His reminder, “If you don’t read, you can’t write,” emphasized the importance of lifelong learning. Dr. Sulaiman also highlighted the importance of engaging with key policy actors, farmers, agri-businesses, cooperatives, and government bodies to drive innovation and scalability in extension practices. We were introduced to the fundamentals of writing effective policy briefs, short, focused, evidence-based documents that prioritize meaning over method and relate to the bigger picture. A quote that left a lasting impression was: “We need a bigger toolbox for policy engagement.” His sessions reaffirmed my belief that agricultural extension is not just a profession but a meaningful path to impact and transformation.

Dr. Sreeram Vishnu introduced us to the fascinating world of Social Network Analysis (SNA) in behavioural science research. His session unravelled the theoretical foundations, core concepts, and practical significance of SNA, especially within agricultural extension. I gained valuable insights into how network structures influence decision-making and information flow among stakeholders, along with a hands-on understanding of key software tools.



Day 3: An eye-opening experience, filled with insightful sessions on sustainable livelihoods, research methodologies, and advancements in Agri-Tech. The visit to Access Livelihoods Consulting (ALC) emphasized the critical role of community-driven extension models and value chain development in transforming rural livelihoods. Through ALC's approach, I learned how empowering small farmers, weavers, tribal communities, and livestock holders through sustainable agriculture and entrepreneurship can create lasting impacts.

The session on Digital Krishi Kendra showcased the growing role of technology-driven advisory services. Leveraging digital platforms for real-time, accurate information is crucial for scaling agricultural extension services. Dr. P. Sethuraman Sivakumar's session on Research Methodology highlighted key goals of scientific research, measurement approaches, scaling methods, and the challenges of scaling agricultural innovations, insights that will shape future research practices.

An exciting session on Advancements in Agri-Tech with M. Kumar introduced us to Artificial Intelligence, Block-chain, Big Data, and IT innovations in agriculture. It was fascinating to see how these technologies are transforming productivity and decision-making.

Day 4: Sessions on the day were enlightening, allowing us to explore global perspectives, engage in self-reflection, and harness our creativity. Graduate Study & Career Opportunities in Extension Education (USA): Dr. Vikram Koundinya, Ms. Sravani Reddy, and Ms. Laxmi Prasanna Kandi provided valuable insights into global career opportunities in extension education and evaluation, expanding our horizons significantly.



Experience Dilemmas, Mentorship & Overcoming Challenges: Dr. Parmveer Singh's reflective session emphasized self-connection and resilience. It was a powerful reminder that growth often stems from overcoming challenges and seeking mentorship. Extension for Organic Farming, Entrepreneurship & Gender Equality: Dr. Mahesh Chander's session highlighted creativity in extension work. A quote that resonated deeply was: *"If you can't do great things, do small things with love and commitment!"*.

It captured the essence of making meaningful contributions, no matter the scale. Exploring Policy Pathway Engagement & Key Competencies: Dr. Suchiradipta Bhattacharjee emphasized how understanding key competencies can empower extension professionals to influence real-world agricultural policy. Her advice: *"Embrace creativity in every aspect of your work, it is the key to making a lasting impact."*

Day 5: Dr. S. Raahalya introduced the transformative potential of bibliometric analysis and AI-powered tools in enhancing research processes. These tools streamline research writing, literature reviews, data analysis, and journal selection, revolutionizing agricultural research practices. Dr. P.V.K. Sasidhar's session on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) competencies highlighted that M&E is not just about accountability, it's about learning and continuous improvement. We were introduced to essential frameworks such as:

- Logical Framework
- Bennett's Hierarchical Framework
- Input and Result Framework

Understanding these frameworks deepened our knowledge of how systematic M&E practices can ensure the success and sustainability of extension programs.

The focus group discussion on Assessment of Core Competencies of Agricultural Extension Professionals in India allowed us to actively reflect on the key skills needed for extension professionals today. The visit to the MANAGE Incubation Centre was another highlight. It demonstrated how extension professionals can nurture innovation and entrepreneurship, further expanding the role of extension in agricultural development. The final day reinforced that agricultural extension is a dynamic, ever-evolving field that demands continuous learning, innovation, and the integration of entrepreneurial thinking to support sustainable agricultural growth.



Empowering Agricultural Extension: A Five-Day Journey

The MANAGE training experience was nothing short of transformative. It served not only as a platform for professional learning but also as a journey of personal growth. The program challenged me to reflect deeply, push my boundaries, and embrace the habit of continuously updating and upgrading myself. Over the five days, I felt myself evolving, not just as a scholar, but as an individual committed to making a meaningful impact in agricultural extension.

The sessions were enriching, highly interactive, and empowering, almost like a professional boot camp designed to sharpen our skills while encouraging introspection. Each day brought fresh perspectives that helped me realign my career aspirations with clarity and confidence.

What truly elevated the experience was the outstanding hospitality. From the moment we arrived, we were welcomed with warmth and care. The environment was positive, inclusive, and filled with enthusiasm. The thoughtfully prepared food and the genuine efforts of the organizing team made us feel valued and at home. Altogether, the five days at MANAGE were an inspiring blend of learning, reflection, connection, and transformation, an experience I will carry forward with gratitude.

"The best training programs don't just fill minds—they ignite them."



A Paradigm Shift: Redefining Agricultural Extension—A Global Perspective

The training significantly broadened my understanding of agricultural extension. Before attending the program, I viewed agricultural extension in a limited sense, as merely a channel for transferring information. However, the MANAGE training illuminated how extension today is far more dynamic, playing a strategic, interdisciplinary, and global role in advancing food security, climate resilience, sustainability, and inclusive rural development.

It emphasized that extension is no longer just about information delivery, it's about facilitating innovation, building capacities, influencing policy, and fostering behavioural change. The global case studies, emerging research priorities, and insightful policy discussions we engaged in during the sessions helped me appreciate how agricultural extension now serves as a bridge between research, practice, and society, not just at the local level, but on a global scale. This has inspired me to think beyond boundaries and aspire to make contributions that are both impactful and far-reaching.

“Agricultural extension is no longer confined to fields and farms, it is a global platform for change, innovation, and empowerment.”

Training Environment

Where Warmth Meets Wisdom: The Training Environment at MANAGE

The training environment was incredibly vibrant, inclusive, and uplifting. Each session was thoughtfully designed to spark meaningful discussions, critical thinking, and personal reflection. The resource persons were not only knowledgeable but also approachable and genuinely enthusiastic, making the learning process more engaging and comfortable.

What truly stood out was the exceptional hospitality of the MANAGE team. From the warm welcome on day one to the consistently well-organized logistics, delicious food, and thoughtful care throughout the program, it truly felt like a second home. The campus was spotless, peaceful, and beautifully maintained, offering a refreshing environment that supported both learning and relaxation. The overall atmosphere fostered not just learning but also a sense of belonging and mutual respect, making the experience both memorable and fulfilling.

“A great environment doesn't just teach you; it transforms you.”

Appreciating the Thought Behind Training

What I appreciated most was the meticulous curation of sessions and speakers. They not only imparted valuable knowledge but also shared real-life experiences and actionable insights that resonated deeply. The perfect balance between technical content, career guidance, and personal development made the program truly holistic, ensuring it wasn't just an academic exercise but a journey of practical growth.

The training followed a thoughtfully crafted schedule that kept us consistently engaged and energized. Each session was power-packed, blending knowledge with interaction in a way that made every moment meaningful. The dynamic flow of the program left no room for boredom, each day felt exciting, immersive, and purpose-driven. It was a truly stimulating learning experience that kept us curious and inspired from start to finish.

"Behind every impactful experience is thoughtful planning and purposeful intention."



Networking

***The Power of Peer Connections
and Networking Opportunities:
From Strangers to a Network
for Life***

Coming alone from my university, I initially wondered how I would blend in or connect with others. To my surprise, everything turned out to be the opposite of what I had feared. I interacted with nearly everyone, shared stories, exchanged ideas, and formed true friendships that I will cherish forever. The participants were incredibly warm, welcoming, and collaborative, and I had the privilege of engaging with scholars from diverse corners of the country, each bringing their own unique experiences and insights. These interactions were not only intellectually enriching but also personally meaningful.

Through open conversations and shared learning moments, I was able to build valuable connections, not just with peers but also with seasoned professionals and domain experts. The expert speakers were approachable and engaging, making learning a warm and collaborative experience. I truly believe I've gained a network for life, one that will continue to inspire and support me in my academic and professional journey. This program didn't just offer knowledge, it created a strong sense of belonging, where an extension family was formed.

A special thanks to Dr. Saravanan Raj, our Program Director, and Dr. Raahalya, our Program Coordinator, whose warmth, support, and friendly presence made me feel truly welcomed. They didn't just coordinate a program, they created an environment where every participant felt seen, heard, and valued.

“The best part of learning is not just the knowledge gained, but the relationships built along the way. Every conversation was a spark. Every connection is a seed for future collaboration.”



Main Takeaway

My Most Significant Takeaway: A Vision Beyond Boundaries

When I first stepped into this training, I expected knowledge, maybe some networking, and a few new insights. But now, as I reflect back, I realize, this journey was so much more than that. It wasn't just training; it was a transformation. The most profound takeaway from the MANAGE NYPDP program was the realization that agricultural extension is no longer confined to traditional outreach, it is a transformative, multidisciplinary force that connects knowledge, people, and purpose on a global scale.

The sessions challenged me to think beyond academic frameworks and view extension not merely as a subject but as a vibrant, evolving career path that demands innovation, empathy, and continuous learning. I discovered that today's extension professionals are not just educators, they are facilitators, policy influencers, and change-makers.

“The future belongs to those who prepare for it today.”

That's exactly what MANAGE prepared me for. These five days weren't just about gaining knowledge, they were a wake-up call to think bigger, act wiser, and stay committed to making a meaningful difference. I'm returning with more than insights, I carry with me clarity of purpose, confidence in my path, and a deep commitment to contribute meaningfully to the world of agricultural extension.

Heartfelt gratitude to the inspiring mentors, dedicated organizers, and the entire MANAGE family for creating an unforgettable experience that reshaped how I see my future. This journey doesn't end here, it's just the beginning of a lifelong learning journey, one driven by vision, impact, and service.

"Your life does not get better by chance. It gets better by change."

Action Plan

Carrying the Torch Forward: Applying What I've Gained

The MANAGE NYPDP training has empowered me with more than just knowledge, it gave me direction, clarity, and the courage to grow beyond limits. Moving forward, I plan to apply these learnings in every step of my academic and professional journey:

- Adopt a people-centric approach: I will approach extension activities with empathy, inclusion, and a deep commitment to grassroots realities.
- Read more, write more: The sessions reignited my curiosity. I plan to read extensively, stay updated, and express myself through research, blogs, and knowledge-sharing platforms.
- Communicate for change: Using tools of behavioural change communication and storytelling, I aim to connect, engage, and influence meaningfully.
- Remain a lifelong learner: I will embrace every opportunity to upskill, explore policy engagement, and seek solutions with sustainability in mind, while also staying updated with global developments, tools, and approaches in extension and innovation systems.
- Build and nurture networks: The bonds I formed during this program are just the beginning, I'll keep learning from and growing with this community.
- Take the road less travelled: Most importantly, I'm ready to step out of my comfort zone, explore non-traditional opportunities, and take bold risks that align with my purpose in agricultural extension.

*This training was not just a pause for learning, it was a launchpad for becoming.
"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail".*

*A journey that began with curiosity ended with clarity, confidence, and purpose.
Five days. Countless insights. A lifetime of transformation.*



MANAGE NYPDP was more than a training, it was a turning point. It sparked new dreams, expanded my vision, and gave me the courage to chase the road less taken. From strangers to lifelong connections, from lectures to life lessons. It shaped not just my professional path, but the core of who I am becoming.

Every experience leaves a footprint, this journey left a legacy.

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