



National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



Sprouting Insights from National Young Professionals Development Program

Priyavadhana

Participated in the MANAGE-NYPDP at MANAGE Hyderabad during June 09-13, 2025.

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Each day of the NYPDP was thoughtfully structured to build a comprehensive understanding of contemporary agricultural extension.

Key Learnings



Day 1: The program began with an in-depth overview of emerging trends shaping the field of extension, such as climate-smart agriculture, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the increasing role of technology. We explored the new competencies essential for modern extension professionals, including skills in data analytics, digital communication, and participatory methods that go beyond traditional advisory roles.

Day 2: The focus shifted to career opportunities within agricultural extension, helping me appreciate the diverse pathways available from government services and research to the private sector and agri-startups. This session highlighted how extensionists can leverage interdisciplinary skills and adapt to changing agricultural landscapes.

Day 3: This day was particularly engaging as it introduced cutting-edge digital tools and technologies such as mobile apps, IoT devices, and AI-driven decision support systems. These innovations are revolutionizing how extension services reach farmers and optimize crop management.

Day 4: We delved into policy frameworks governing agricultural extension, gaining an understanding of how national and regional policies influence the implementation of extension programs. The importance of aligning extension practices with sustainable agriculture goals was emphasized. Discussions around participatory approaches underscored the value of empowering farmers through inclusive decision-making and co-creation of knowledge.

Day 5: The final day culminated with sessions on networking, collaboration, and interdisciplinary research. I realized the critical role of partnerships among researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and farmers. These interactions fostered a broader perspective on how teamwork and knowledge exchange can drive innovation and sustainable outcomes in agriculture.

Overall, the progressive flow of the training enriched my understanding at multiple levels from practical skills and tools to strategic thinking and collaboration equipping me to contribute effectively to the future of agricultural extension.

Training Experience

The five-day training was an enriching blend of interactive learning and practical application. Each day was carefully designed to balance theoretical concepts with hands-on activities, ensuring that the knowledge imparted was both comprehensive and applicable. Expert-led lectures provided deep insights into current trends and foundational principles of agricultural extension, while group discussions fostered a collaborative atmosphere where diverse perspectives were shared and debated.

Case studies based on real-world scenarios allowed us to analyse challenges and strategise solutions, making the learning highly contextual and relatable. The inclusion of field examples and demonstrations further bridged the gap between classroom learning and ground realities, helping us connect theory with practice.

The training environment was supportive and stimulating, encouraging participants to actively engage, ask questions, and reflect critically on the topics covered. This open and inclusive setting not only enhanced understanding but also motivated us to think innovatively and adaptively, preparing us to face the complexities of modern agricultural extension.

Overall, the dynamic mix of methodologies kept the sessions lively and engaging, making the entire five-day program a deeply satisfying and inspiring learning journey.



Change in Perspective

Before attending the NYPDP training, I perceived agricultural extension primarily as a one-way communication process, where extension agents delivered information and recommendations to farmers. My understanding was largely limited to traditional approaches focused on improving crop yields through direct advice and demonstrations.

However, the program fundamentally transformed this perspective. I now see agricultural extension as a dynamic, multi-faceted, and collaborative discipline that goes far beyond simple knowledge transfer.



The training highlighted the increasing importance of integrating technology, digital tools, and data-driven decision-making to address complex challenges such as climate change, resource management, and market access.

Moreover, I gained a deeper appreciation for the role of participatory approaches that empower farmers as active partners rather than passive recipients.

Extension today involves facilitating dialogue, co-creating solutions, and building networks among diverse stakeholders, including researchers, policymakers, entrepreneurs, and the farming community to foster sustainable agricultural development.

This broadened view has inspired me to approach extension work with a more holistic mindset, recognizing the socio-economic, environmental, and policy dimensions that shape agricultural innovation and rural livelihoods. The training emphasized that modern extension professionals must be adaptable, tech-savvy, and skilled in collaboration to effectively serve the evolving needs of farmers and contribute to national food security goals.

The atmosphere during the NYPDP training was warm, inclusive, and highly conducive to learning. From the very first day, there was a palpable sense of enthusiasm and mutual respect among participants, trainers, and organizers. The environment fostered open communication, where everyone felt comfortable sharing their ideas, asking questions, and engaging in meaningful discussions without hesitation.



The trainers were approachable and supportive, creating a positive space that encouraged curiosity and active participation. The diversity of participants, from different states, academic backgrounds, and experiences added richness to the conversations and broadened perspectives, making the learning experience truly interdisciplinary.

The venue was well-equipped, providing a comfortable and distraction-free setting that allowed us to focus fully on the sessions. Breakout groups and informal networking times further enhanced the collaborative spirit, enabling participants to connect beyond formal lectures and build lasting professional relationships.

Overall, the friendly and stimulating environment played a crucial role in keeping motivation high throughout the program, making the five days not just educational but also enjoyable and inspiring.

What I Appreciate

What I appreciated most about the MANAGE NYPDP training program was its holistic approach to agricultural extension, seamlessly integrating the latest research, emerging technologies, and practical applications. The inclusion of digital tools and innovations such as IoT, mobile applications, and AI, was particularly valuable, as it equipped me with knowledge that is highly relevant in today's rapidly evolving agricultural landscape.

Additionally, the opportunity to learn directly from experienced experts and practitioners added immense value. Their real-world insights, coupled with evidence-based strategies, made the sessions impactful and credible. I also greatly valued the program's emphasis on participatory and inclusive extension methods, which reinforced the importance of empowering farmers as active stakeholders.

Beyond content, the program's design fostered a collaborative learning environment, where peer interactions and group activities deepened my understanding and encouraged exchange of diverse ideas. This not only enhanced the learning experience but also helped build a strong professional network.

In essence, the program was well-rounded, forward-looking, and practical; qualities that made it stand out and truly beneficial for shaping the careers of young extension professionals like myself.

Networking



The peer interactions during the NYPDP were incredibly enriching, as they provided a platform to exchange diverse ideas and perspectives drawn from varied regional and academic backgrounds. Through collaborative discussions and group activities, I gained insights into different approaches and challenges faced in agricultural extension across India.

These exchanges not only broadened my understanding but also fostered a sense of community and support among fellow young professionals. The structured networking sessions underscored the value of building interdisciplinary connections and partnerships, which are vital to collaboratively addressing the multifaceted challenges in agriculture. I now appreciate how a strong professional network can open doors to joint research, knowledge sharing, and innovative solutions, ultimately strengthening career prospects and impact in the field.

Main Takeaway

The most profound takeaway from the training was the recognition that agricultural extension is an ever-evolving field that demands continuous learning and adaptability. I realized that to effectively serve farmers and rural communities, extension professionals must embrace innovation, particularly digital technologies such as mobile platforms, remote sensing, and AI-based tools. These technologies have the potential to enhance precision, outreach, and responsiveness in extension services.

Moreover, the training emphasized that successful extension is not a one-way process but a collaborative effort requiring empathy, communication, and inclusivity. This mindset shift has inspired me to view extension as a dynamic, transformative process integral to sustainable agricultural development.

Action Plan

Moving forward, I am committed to incorporating the digital tools and participatory methodologies learned during the program into my daily extension practice. This includes leveraging mobile applications and data analytics to provide timely, customized advice to farmers and encouraging their active participation in decision-making processes.



Furthermore, I plan to engage more actively in policy discussions by applying the research frameworks and evidence-based insights gained through the training. By fostering collaborations with researchers, policymakers, and fellow extensionists, I aim to contribute to initiatives that promote sustainable, inclusive agricultural growth in my region. Ultimately, I envision my role evolving into that of a facilitator and innovator, bridging gaps between science, policy, and farming communities.

Acknowledgement

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