



# National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

## Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



### Empowered To Excel: A Transformative Training Program

#### **Nandha kumar J.**

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

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*The moment I stepped into this training program, I expected sessions, schedules, and maybe a certificate at the end. What I didn't expect was a complete shift in perspective, purpose, and the way I approach Extension as a subject. This wasn't just another program; it was a creative collision of ideas, people, and experiences that redefined Extension for me. From thought-provoking sessions to real-world insights, every moment was a step toward becoming a better version of myself as an extensionist, more confident, more curious, and more committed to growth*

## Key Learnings

**Day 1:** The first day began with a warm and inspiring welcome, setting the tone for a meaningful journey. Dr. Saravanan Raj introduced us to MANAGE's vision and outlined 19 career pathways in agricultural extension, alongside the essential skills for growth. His session opened our eyes to the vast landscape of opportunities available in this field. Dr. Meghajit's session on gender equity highlighted the significance of inclusion in building a sustainable agricultural system. The interactive workshops, especially on time management and group problem-solving offered practical tools for both personal and professional development. A key message of the day; 'succeeding in agricultural extension requires not only technical skills but also emotional intelligence and systems thinking.

**Day 2:** We delved into the fast-evolving landscape of agricultural extension, digital tools, agri-tech, sustainability, research, and policy. Dr. Saravanan Raj's session on using social media in extension and the "4 Cs" of communication was insightful.



Ms. Iniya V shared findings on agri-tech startups in Tamil Nadu, showing their impact on rural empowerment. Dr. Sethuraman simplified research methods, while Dr. Ramanjaneyulu urged us to prioritize climate resilience along with food security. Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman emphasized public-private partnerships and policy engagement, while Dr. Aditya Sinha introduced powerful AI tools for research. These sessions were deeply motivating and equipped us to become future-ready extension professionals.

**Day 3:** This day blended field experience with academic insights. At Access Livelihoods, we observed how farmer groups, particularly women-led ones build inclusive, sustainable businesses. Mr. Rakesh's session grounded us in grassroots realities. Back at MANAGE, Ms. Divina Matla's work on traditional food systems highlighted the value of local knowledge and tools like Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping. Dr. Saravanan Raj's session on inclusive agri-entrepreneurship was particularly inspiring, especially his insights into youth innovation hubs. Dr. Mahesh Chander's session emphasized the role of authenticity in organic farming, entrepreneurship, and gender equity. We ended the day with local sightseeing and delicious street food, a joyful memory.



**Day 4:** International exposure marked this day. Experts like Dr. Vikram Koundinya (UC Davis), Mr. Samrat Sikdar (Mississippi State University), and Ms. Laxmi Prasanna Kandi (Texas A&M) shared their global academic journeys and practical advice for aspiring scholars.

Dr. Parmveer Singh from the University of Saskatchewan stressed the importance of mentorship. Later, Dr. Arun Balamatti from ICRISAT discussed real-world research priorities and skills for today's extensionists.





The visit to C-DAC was enlightening, we explored how AI, cybersecurity, and big data are transforming agriculture. The day ended with a boat ride on Hussain Sagar Lake and a celebratory biryani dinner; perfectly blending learning and leisure.

**Day 5:** The final day was a blend of reflection and application. Ms. Rahalya introduced us to impactful research metrics like the H-index and emphasized quality over quantity in publishing. Dr. Sindhura's session on mental health, digital detox, and work-life balance was both timely and relatable. Dr. Saravanan Raj shared research priorities, climate change, food systems, and digitization connecting our academic efforts to global challenges. Prof. Dr. P.V.K. Sasidhar simplified Monitoring & Evaluation using logical frameworks and FGD tools. Ms. Anamika Sharma introduced us to value chain extension and network analysis. The program concluded with a heartfelt certificate ceremony, group photos, and warm goodbyes.

## Training Experience



The five-day program at MANAGE was a transformative journey. Every session enriched me academically and emotionally. The expert-led discussions, peer interactions, and field visits expanded my understanding of extension far beyond the classroom. The excellent facilities and warm hospitality made the experience even more comfortable and enjoyable. I left the program feeling deeply inspired, empowered, and committed to contributing meaningfully to this field.

## Change in Perspective

Before the training, I saw extension primarily as a mechanism to transfer agricultural technology.



Now, I see it as an interdisciplinary, human-centered field, rooted in communication, empathy, behavioral science, and innovation. It's about empowering communities, addressing global challenges, and making systemic change. This experience transformed my understanding and gave me a renewed sense of purpose.



### Training Environment

From my first visit to MANAGE during my undergraduate tour, I felt connected to the serene and inspiring campus. The training halls were well-equipped, the food was delicious and nutritious, and the accommodation was excellent.

The thoughtful coordination and encouragement by Dr. Saravanan Raj and Dr. Raahalya made the environment inclusive and energizing. This wasn't just a training, it was a lifelong memory.

### What I Appreciate

I am deeply grateful to all the resource persons. Their clarity, openness, and wisdom created a nurturing learning space. Each session went beyond textbooks, these mentors made us believe in ourselves. I carry not just their knowledge, but their passion and commitment to serve.

### Networking



The program introduced me to a national network of peers and mentors. Meaningful discussions, collaborative learning, and shared laughter created strong bonds. These connections felt like family, and parting was truly emotional. The friendships formed will continue to support and inspire me on my professional path.



## Main Takeaway

One of the most significant takeaways from this training was the realization that agricultural extension is not merely a technical field, it is a human-centered, interdisciplinary domain that demands a blend of scientific knowledge, communication skills, empathy, and systems thinking.

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## Action Plan

- Apply tools like M&E frameworks, SEM (Structural Equation Modeling), Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping, and Network Analysis in my research.
- Use digital platforms to disseminate knowledge, especially through AI and the "4 Cs" model of communication.
- Promote inclusive leadership, sustainability, and climate resilience in all agricultural initiatives I engage with.
- Stay actively connected with peers and mentors to co-create solutions for rural transformation.
- Advocate for greater visibility and value for agricultural extension in academic and policy spaces.





## My MANAGE NYPDP Journey



My MANAGE NYPDP journey was truly a remarkable experience that blended deep learning with personal growth. The training sessions were thoughtfully designed and expertly delivered, broadening my understanding of agricultural extension, from research methodologies and digital tools to policy engagement and sustainable development. Each day challenged me to think critically and apply new concepts, equipping me to become a more effective and innovative extension professional. Along the way, I had the opportunity to connect with like-minded peers from across the country. These interactions added a valuable social dimension to the program, making the learning environment both supportive and enriching. This journey not only expanded my knowledge but also inspired me to contribute meaningfully to the future of agriculture.

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