



National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



Sowing Futures: Youth, Skills and Science in Agricultural Extension

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

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The National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP) equips aspiring extension professionals with modern competencies, career direction, and research foresight to meet emerging agricultural challenges. It offers training in ICT tools, participatory methods, climate-smart extension, behavioural communication, and agribusiness; skills vital for 21st-century agriculture.

The program supports career mapping across research, development, agribusiness, and extension services, while emphasizing key research areas such as digital agriculture, gender inclusion, sustainable agri-food systems, and impact evaluation. NYPDP aims to build a future-ready cadre of socially conscious, professionally skilled extensionists capable of driving sustainable rural transformation.

Key Learnings

Day 1:

- Gained insights into job opportunities and required competencies in Agricultural Extension. Understood how to identify one's subject expertise within key extension areas.
- Learned about the GEYSI model (Gender Equality, Youth, and Social Inclusion) to analyse gender dynamics, enhance women's decision-making skills, and promote inclusive practices.
- Participated in the World Cafe method; an interactive, participatory tool for group discussion that encourages idea exchange and collaborative thinking.

Day 2:

- Explored how ICTs are revolutionizing agricultural extension through faster, wider information dissemination.
- Identified key digital competencies; Platforms: mKisan, e-NAM, Kisan Suvidha, Digital Green, Agri Stack, AgMOOCs; Skills: Digital literacy, data management, e-content creation, cybersecurity, virtual facilitation.
- Understood the concept of agricultural innovation incubation and the support provided by RKVY-RAFTAAR, NAIP-BPD Units, MANAGE-CIA, a-IDEA, etc., in areas like agri-tech, precision farming, and sustainable agriculture.
- Introduced to emerging research approaches such as Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping, TOE (Technology-Organization-Environment) framework, and SEM (Structural Equation Modelling).
- Gained practical insights into changing farmer roles and the importance of aligning extension services with farmers' evolving needs.

Day 3:

- Visited Access Livelihoods Consulting, an NGO working with marginalized communities for sustainable agriculture.
- Learned about their 45-day training cum internship program focused on eco-friendly products, rural-urban market linkages, and sustainable consumer engagement.



Day 4:

- Understood how to select relevant research problems using updated statistical tools and applications.
- Explored modern applications of Agricultural Extension, including AI, Machine Learning, Deep Learning, Big Data, and ICTs for social development.

Training Experience

My five-day training under the National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP) at MANAGE was both enriching and transformative. Each day offered a well-curated blend of expert lectures, interactive sessions, real-world case studies, and peer discussions; all of which broadened my understanding of the dynamic field of agricultural extension.

Overall, the training was highly relevant, practical, and forward-looking. It has significantly strengthened my capacity as a young extension professional and equipped me with the tools to contribute meaningfully to the agricultural sector.



Change in Perspective

The NYPDP training at MANAGE significantly changed and broadened my perspective on agricultural extension. Before the training, I primarily saw extension as a process of technology transfer and information delivery to farmers. However, the program revealed that agricultural extension today is much more multidimensional and dynamic. How my perspective changed;

- **From Teaching to Facilitating:** I now understand that extension is not merely about delivering knowledge, but about empowering communities, enabling co-creation of solutions, and facilitating behavioural change.
- **Inclusion of ICT and Innovation:** The training exposed me to the transformative role of digital tools, AI, and ICT-based platforms in reshaping how agricultural information is shared and services are delivered.
- **Role in Rural Transformation:** I began to see extension not just as an agricultural service, but as a key driver of rural development, promoting youth entrepreneurship, gender inclusion, and sustainable livelihoods.
- **Career and Research-oriented Perspective:** I became aware of the wide range of career and research opportunities in extension, including roles in policy-making, incubation, agribusiness, and development sectors.
- **Community-centric and Sustainable Outlook:** The concept of community-based and climate-resilient extension systems highlighted the importance of localization, sustainability, and active farmer participation in decision-making processes.

Training Environment

The atmosphere during the NYPDP training at MANAGE was exceptionally motivating, collaborative, and inclusive. From the very first day, the environment was welcoming and intellectually stimulating, fostering a strong sense of learning, curiosity, and peer connection. The sessions were not lecture-heavy; instead, they encouraged dialogue, group activities, and experience sharing. This made learning more participatory and enjoyable. The experts and trainers were highly approachable and passionate. They created a safe and encouraging space for questions, discussions, and the exchange of ideas.

What I Appreciate

What I valued most about the program was its balance of technical content, practical skills, and personal development. It was an empowering experience that inspired me to contribute more confidently and creatively to agricultural extension and rural transformation. Interacting with a diverse group of fellow participants broadened my perspectives, enriched my understanding, and helped me build meaningful professional connections.

Networking

Peer interaction and networking were among the most enriching aspects of the NYPDP training. Engaging with fellow young professionals from diverse academic, regional, and institutional backgrounds provided new insights, collaborative ideas, and a strong sense of community.



I gained exposure to different extension models, local innovations, and success stories from across the country, which deepened my understanding of the varied challenges and solutions in agricultural extension.

Main Takeaway

The most important lesson I took away from this training is that developing new competencies, such as digital literacy, entrepreneurial thinking, and climate-resilient advisory skills is essential to effectively serve today's farmers. The emphasis on inclusive and participatory approaches shifted my role from that of a "service provider" to a facilitator, enabler, and change-maker within rural communities.

Additionally, the exposure to emerging trends like ICTs in agriculture, incubation models, and community-based extension highlighted how adaptable and impactful the extension system can be when aligned with farmers' real needs.

Action Plan

The NYPDP training at MANAGE has equipped me with valuable knowledge, practical skills, and a broader vision for agricultural extension. I plan to apply these learnings in the following ways;

- **Strengthening Farmer Engagement:** I will adopt participatory extension approaches such as Farmer Field Schools and community-led innovation platforms to actively involve farmers in identifying challenges and co-creating solutions.
- **Integrating Digital Tools:** With the digital competencies gained, I aim to promote the use of ICTs, mobile-based advisories, and e-extension platforms to deliver timely, need-based information, especially to farmers in remote and underserved areas.
- **Supporting Youth and Women in Agri-Innovation:** Inspired by sessions on incubation and entrepreneurship, I plan to mentor rural youth and women to explore agri-startups, value addition, and market linkages, thereby contributing to more inclusive and empowered extension models.



My journey through the MANAGE NYPDP was truly transformative and inspiring. It broadened my understanding of agricultural extension, equipped me with cutting-edge skills, and connected me with a passionate network of peers and mentors. This program ignited a renewed sense of purpose to become a change-maker in rural development through innovation, inclusion, and knowledge-sharing. It wasn't just a training, it was the beginning of a lifelong mission.

"The NYPDP training at MANAGE was a transformative experience that equipped me with forward-looking competencies, deepened my understanding of inclusive and digital agricultural extension, and connected me with a vibrant network of young professionals. It has inspired me to be not just a practitioner, but a catalyst for innovation and rural transformation."

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