



National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



A Week of Discovery: Reflections from an NYPDP Participant's Journey

Rahul Kumar

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

 **Rahul Kumar**

When we first arrived at MANAGE, Hyderabad, a wave of anticipation filled the air. From diverse corners of India, we came together, young professionals united by a common goal: to redefine agricultural extension. The warm hospitality and seamless organization on Day 1 set the tone for a transformative week ahead.

Key Learnings



Day 1: Foundations of Purpose and Connection

The training began with an energizing ice-breaker led by Dr. Raahalya, where laughter and introductions created an instant sense of camaraderie. An inspiring video on MANAGE's journey grounded us in the legacy we were about to become part of.

Dr. Saravanan Raj's powerful session set the tone with a clear message: "Be humble. Be a lifelong learner. Build networks." His emphasis on developing expertise, engaging farming communities, and driving bottom-up change left a lasting impact.

In the afternoon, Dr. Meghajit's session on gender and inclusion challenged our assumptions and underscored that equity is not an add-on, but the foundation of sustainable development.

By the end of Day 1, as we posed for group photos, we realized something had shifted, we were no longer just participants; we had become a cohort.

Day 2: Technology Meets Vision

Day 2 deepened our engagement with digital transformation in agricultural extension. Dr. Saravanan Raj returned with a visionary session on ICTs, emphasizing digital storytelling and tools that connect knowledge to rural realities. Platforms like Crop Disease Doctor and Smart PLS 4.0 were eye-opening for many. Ms. Anamika Sharma's insights into value chain extension and Dr. Sivakumar's session on scaling models grounded our tech enthusiasm in solid frameworks.



The highlight was Dr. Ramanjaneyulu's powerful talk on ecological agriculture, urging us to view farming as a system of soil, community, and sustainability. Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman's policy session emphasized advocacy, extension isn't just about farmers; it's about influencing systems. The day concluded with Dr. Aditya Sinha introducing AI research tools like Consensus.app and Research Rabbit, marking our evolution from learners to innovators.

Day 3: Ground Realities and Indigenous Wisdom

On Day 3, we stepped into the field with a visit to Access Livelihoods in Hyderabad. Through songs and stories, we saw how tribal women, smallholders, and youth are being empowered through FPCs, digital Krishi Sakhis, and social fellowships. It was a reminder: empathy is as vital as technology in extension.



Back at MANAGE, Ms. Divina Matla's session on Indigenous Food Systems reframed food as identity and resilience. Dr. Saravanan Raj traced the evolution of agri-innovation; from radio to RAFTAAR Startups and Shramajeevi TV, sparking our entrepreneurial spirit. Dr. Mahesh Chander spoke on organic farming and gender, emphasizing pluralism and the vital role of women in agriculture. That evening, we weren't just reflecting, we were planning to take these ideas home.

A Memorable Moment; Celebrating Saravanan Sir's Birthday: Amidst a week of learning and transformation, one of the most heartwarming moments was the surprise celebration of Saravanan Sir's birthday. As a mentor and visionary guiding our NYPDP journey, his presence had already left a deep impact on us. The celebration brought a personal, joyful touch to the professional atmosphere. As we gathered with smiles, claps, and a beautifully arranged cake, we sang birthday wishes with genuine warmth. Sir's humble words and kind smile reflected the same values he taught us all week; gratitude, simplicity, and leadership through service. It wasn't just a birthday celebration; it was a celebration of a mentor who continues to inspire the next generation of changemakers in agricultural extension.



Day 4: Global Horizons and Future Tech

Day 4 expanded our outlook. Sessions with educators from UC Davis, Texas A&M, and the University of Saskatchewan introduced us to GREs, SOPs, and global academic pathways. Dr. Parmveer Singh's candid talk on mentorship and personal growth stood out for its honesty and inspiration. Visiting C-DAC was a highlight of the NYPDP journey. We explored how advanced technologies like AI, Blockchain, and Supercomputing are shaping the future of agriculture. Tools like Vishleshak and Haritapriya showed us the power of data-driven farming. This visit opened our eyes to the possibilities of tech-enabled extension. It inspired us to think beyond traditional methods and embrace innovation for empowering farmers in smarter, more sustainable ways.

Day 5: Reflection, Readiness, and Renewal

By Day 5, the week felt both full and fleeting. Dr. Saravanan Raj urged us to pursue research that solves real-world problems. Dr. Raahalya highlighted the true impact of academic publishing beyond just metrics.



Dr. Sindhura's session on digital well-being reminded us to balance ambition with self-care. Dr. P.V.K. Sasidhar's session on Monitoring & Evaluation equipped us with practical tools, while the FGD demo taught us the power of deep listening.

Ms. Iniya's presentation on agri-tech startups brought everything full circle, from grassroots to innovation. The valedictory ceremony wasn't just a closure; it was a beginning. We left as not just trainees, but future changemakers.

Training Experience

The NYPDP at MANAGE wasn't just training, it was transformation. Over five days, we became a community. We explored the past, engaged with the present, and envisioned the future of Indian agriculture. We leave as lifelong learners, committed to humility, innovation, and purpose.



Change in Perspective

This training transformed how I view agricultural extension. I no longer see it as a one-way flow of information from lab to land. I now see it as a vibrant, people-centric process that involves listening, innovating, empathizing, and collaborating. As a Research Scholar, I'm leaving this program not just with knowledge; but with clarity, direction, and purpose. I now understand that the true goal of extension is not just adoption of technology, but empowerment of communities. This wasn't just a training for me, it was a shift in mindset. And that change, I believe, will stay with me throughout my career.



Training Environment

From the very beginning, the atmosphere at MANAGE was welcoming, energizing, and deeply motivating. The lush campus, well-organized sessions, and constant encouragement from the facilitators created a space where we felt comfortable to express, question, and explore. There was a perfect balance of professionalism and warmth; each day brought intellectual stimulation, but also genuine human connection. Whether it was the early morning chai conversations, the engaging group activities, or the late evening reflections, the environment encouraged us to learn not just from the experts, but from each other. Over five days, MANAGE didn't feel like just an institute, it felt like a vibrant learning community, where every participant's voice mattered and every experience was valued.

What I Appreciate



As a participant of the NYPDP training at MANAGE, what I appreciated most was how the program blended knowledge, inspiration, and practicality so seamlessly. Each session felt thoughtfully designed, not just to inform us, but to challenge and inspire us. I especially valued the diversity of topics, from digital innovations and ecological agriculture to gender inclusion and indigenous wisdom.

The field visit was a powerful experience that grounded everything we had learned in real-world context. I also appreciated the openness and warmth of the facilitators, who created a space where we could ask questions, share ideas, and grow together. What truly stood out was the sense of community, we weren't just attending sessions; we were building connections, expanding our vision, and finding our purpose. This wasn't just a training, it was a turning point in how I see my role in agricultural extension.

Networking

One of the most enriching aspects of the NYPDP training at MANAGE was the opportunity to connect with peers from across the country. Coming from diverse regions, disciplines, and professional backgrounds, each participant brought a unique perspective to the table.



Through group discussions, collaborative activities, and informal conversations, I gained insights into the real challenges and innovations happening on the ground in different parts of India.

These peer interactions expanded my understanding of agricultural extension beyond theory, into lived experiences. We exchanged ideas, shared tools, discussed research, and even debated policies. It was through these conversations that I began to see the strength of collective learning. I also appreciated how the program encouraged networking, not just for professional gain, but for building a support system of like-minded changemakers. I'm leaving this program not just with contacts, but with lasting connections and a deeper sense of shared purpose.

Main Takeaway



As a participant, my most significant takeaway from the NYPDP training at MANAGE was the realization that agricultural extension is not just about transferring knowledge, it's about transforming lives. This training completely changed how I view my role as a professional. I understood that effective extension goes beyond technology and information, it involves empathy, listening, and truly engaging with the needs of farming communities.

Another powerful insight was the importance of collaboration and continuous learning. Whether it was through peer discussions, expert sessions, or field visits, I learned that innovation happens when we bridge gaps between research, policy, and grassroots realities. The training helped me see myself not just as a researcher, but as a potential changemaker, capable of contributing to a more inclusive and sustainable agricultural system. This wasn't just about gaining skills, it was about discovering purpose. And that, for me, is the biggest takeaway.



Action Plan

- I will integrate ICT tools like Crop Disease Doctor, Consensus.app, and Research Rabbit into my research and extension activities.
- I plan to adopt participatory, farmer-centric approaches in fieldwork to ensure community involvement and ownership.



- I will consciously apply a gender and inclusion lens in data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- I aim to support and mentor rural youth interested in agri-tech and startup ecosystems.
- I will align my research with real-world agricultural challenges, not just academic goals.
- I intend to organize peer learning sessions in my department to share tools and insights from the training.
- I will collaborate with FPCs, Krishi Sakhis, and grassroots innovators to strengthen outreach efforts.
- I will maintain digital well-being and balance, inspired by the session on mental wellness.
- I will continue to build and nurture a professional network with fellow participants and mentors.
- I plan to explore global learning opportunities and stay updated on emerging trends in extension and agri-innovation.





Participating in the MANAGE NYPDP was nothing short of a turning point in my professional journey. When I first arrived at MANAGE, I was eager but unsure what to expect. Over the next five days, that uncertainty transformed into inspiration. I met young professionals from all over India, each passionate about changing agricultural extension. Through engaging sessions and heartfelt field visits, I realized extension isn't just about sharing information, it's about truly understanding farmers, empowering communities, and using technology wisely. The talks, the stories, and the friendships we built all sparked a new sense of purpose in me. By the end, I didn't just feel prepared to apply what I learned, I felt empowered to become a changemaker in my own community. This journey wasn't just training; it was a new beginning.

Mr. Rahul Kumar

Ph.D. Agricultural Extension Education
Department of Extension Education
Acharya Narendra Deva University of Agriculture & Technology (ANDUAT)
Kumarganj, Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh
e-mail: gmrahull007@gmail.com

MANAGE - Center for Agricultural Extension Innovations, Reforms and Agripreneurship (MANAGE- CAEIRA)
National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad- 500 030, INDIA
<https://www.manage.gov.in/caeira/caeira.asp>



MANAGE-CAEIRA



MANAGE-CAEIRA



MANAGE-CAEIRA