



National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

(A program of the MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services)

MANAGE NYPDP Mentors Diaries:

Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)

(An Autonomous Organization of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India)

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Policy Engagement for Agricultural Extension



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01 About the MANAGE NYPDP Program

NYPDP has brought a new awakening among extension students in India, and this is clearly visible from the increasing interest among Master's and PhD scholars in extension in enrolling in this programme. There is no other programme in India that explicitly targets extension students and enhances their capacities in the new competencies they need to be an effective extension professional.

02 Relevance of policy engagement in agricultural extension

Engaging with policies is essential for extension, as favourable policies are often needed to upscale new knowledge. Earlier, the role of extension was focused only on disseminating new technologies among farmers by creating awareness and enhancing their capacity to use them through demonstration and training, so that they adopt new technologies. But there is an increasing awareness that often a lack of supportive policies constrains the adoption and scaling up of new technologies. Therefore, extension has to engage with policies to promote their adoption and scaling up, as well as the adoption and scaling up other types of knowledge.



03

Extension and its implications for policy development

Extension has never been a local subject; it has always been a global subject, and every country in the world has some form of Extension and Advisory Services (EAS) that support its farmers in producing food efficiently. The public sector EAS primarily relies on the National, Provincial/State, and local governments to fund its operations. Governments should have policies and programmes to finance their public extension or to collaborate with and support private and NGO extension. Having specific policies in this regard helps to ensure a continuity of funding and other forms of support, including suitable mechanisms for engaging with different actors to deliver quality extension services.



Why Extension should engage with Policy and How?

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INDIA

"National Young Professionals Development Program on New Competencies,
Career Opportunities and Research Priorities in Agricultural Extension

MANAGE and CCS Haryana Agricultural University

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04 Extension Policy and Implementation

The extension policy, or, better framed, the National Extension Policy, is part of the national development policy in general and of the agricultural and rural development policy in particular. Agricultural extension is one of the policy instruments which governments use to strengthen the agricultural sector. The extension policy should include the mission and goals for agricultural extension, the responsible agencies and personnel, the clientele to be served, the broad programmatic areas to be addressed, and other relevant guidelines. For its effective implementation, it must be developed in consultation with all stakeholders and implemented alongside other policies affecting agricultural development, including research, inputs, and markets. While Having a policy is good, but it should be followed up with implementation guidelines to ensure it is implemented.



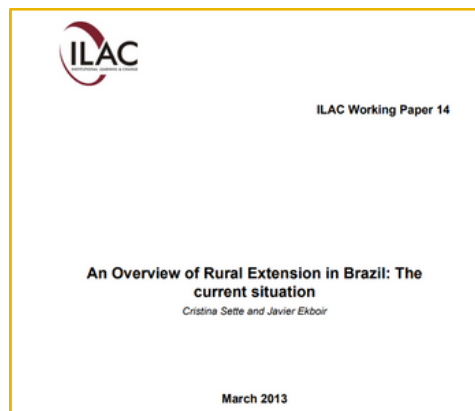
**POLICY
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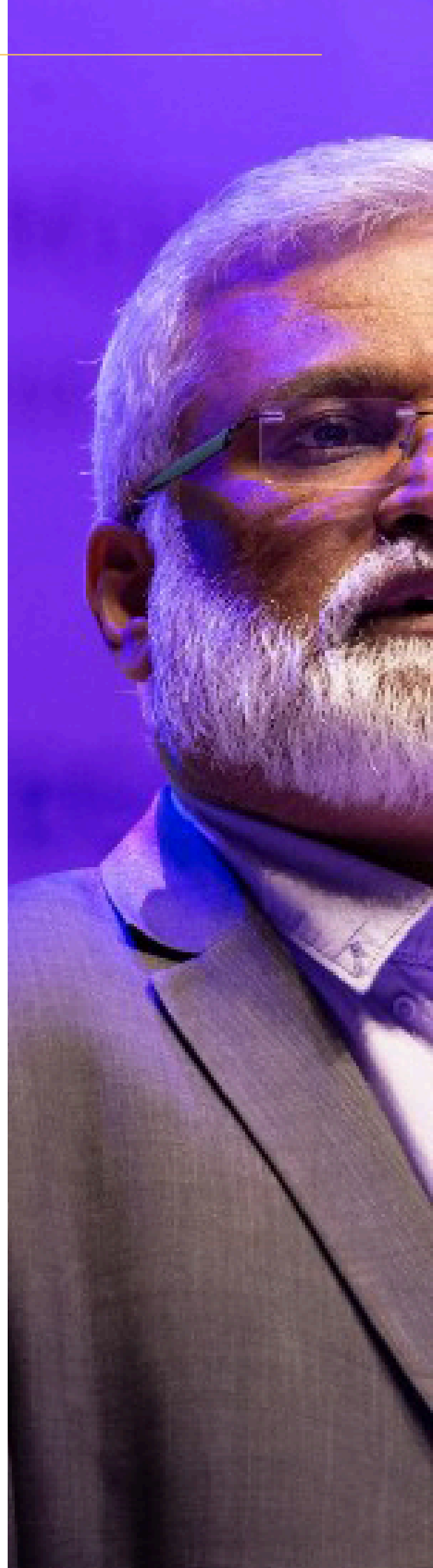
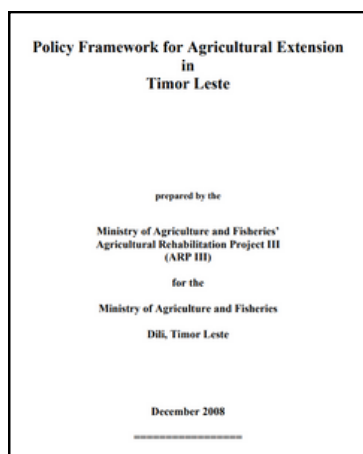
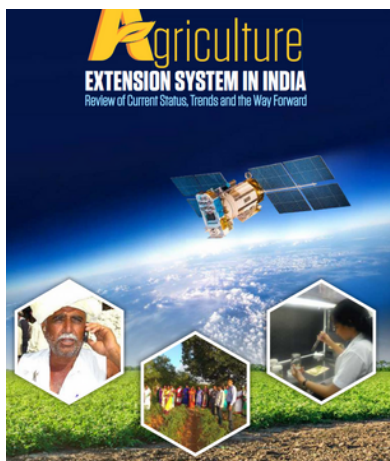
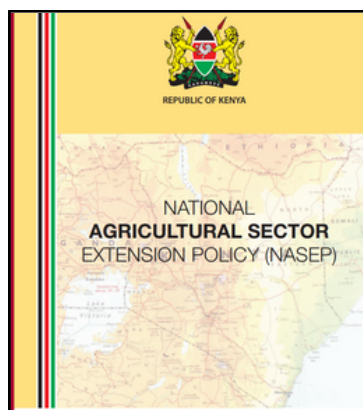
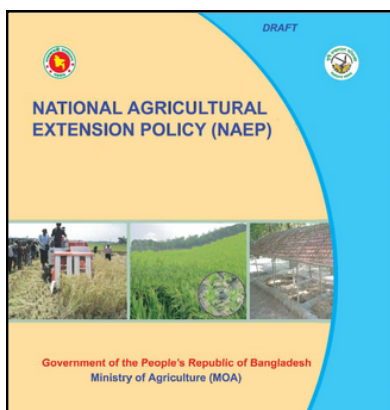
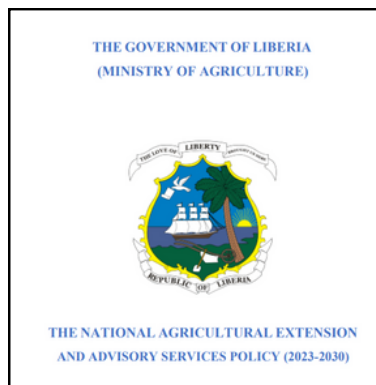
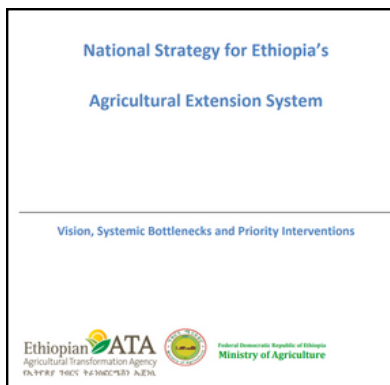
Where actions speak louder than words.

05 Need for a National Extension Policy and Its Potential Benefits

Only very few countries have an explicit national extension policy. In most cases, extension is mentioned in a few paragraphs in the national agricultural policy. Both the USA and South Korea have a legislated extension policy. In some countries, provisional extension policies exist in the form of decrees and proclamations. Although the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) recommended to all countries that they adopt an extension policy as early as 1990, very few countries have done so. But in recent years, many countries have developed their extension policy. These include South Africa, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Malawi, Kenya, Brazil, Uganda, Ethiopia, and Liberia.

One of the main advantages of an extension policy is that it provides direction to the state and other stakeholders on investing in extension and the priorities it should address. Having a policy also ensures continuity of investments and operations even when different parties come to power (often through elections). It also provides a framework for its operations, especially in areas related to client focus, priority programmatic areas, human resource deployment, and partnerships. India doesn't have a national extension policy, though some efforts to develop a policy framework were made in 2000.





Changing Role of Extension and Its Key Drivers

The role of extension has broadened currently to include several other functions beyond the transfer of technology. These include mobilising farmers as groups; promoting entrepreneurship; linking farmers to markets; facilitating access to credit, inputs and output services; mediating conflicts, especially in group settings; and engaging in advocacy for policy changes.

This transformation in extension functions is primarily driven by the new challenges that farmers currently face, such as climate change, low output prices, declining quality and availability of land and water, changing consumer preferences for more diverse and quality produce, etc. To address most of these challenges, there is a need for collective action and better coordination among the varied agencies.



Strengthening Policy Influence of Extension Research

Extension research has historically sought to understand the factors influencing adoption and the performance of varied extension approaches, especially given limited sample sizes. Many of these studies are through MSc and PhD student thesis work. Only a few extension studies have generated policy-relevant evidence that could influence policy. Definitely, there is a need to strengthen policy-relevant research in extension. One approach to do this is to improve the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of extension and use the resulting data to identify findings with state and national-level policy implications. Another approach could be to use systematic reviews using available evidence on specific topics. Beyond conducting policy-relevant research, there is a need to enhance capacities to communicate policy-relevant evidence through policy briefs and engage with policy actors.

Capacities Needed for Effective Policy Engagement

To effectively engage with policies, one needs to interact with policy actors and understand which policy-relevant questions bother them and what evidence they need to answer them. Extension professionals should also understand the sector, including the range of stakeholders and the functions they perform. Having these will help them frame policy-relevant questions to generate evidence. They should then be able to interact effectively with policymakers (who actually draft) and policy actors (who have a stake in the policy and vary in their interests and influence), and organise policy dialogues to influence policy. Teachers should facilitate participation of extension students as observers in policy dialogues to help them understand how these events are organised.

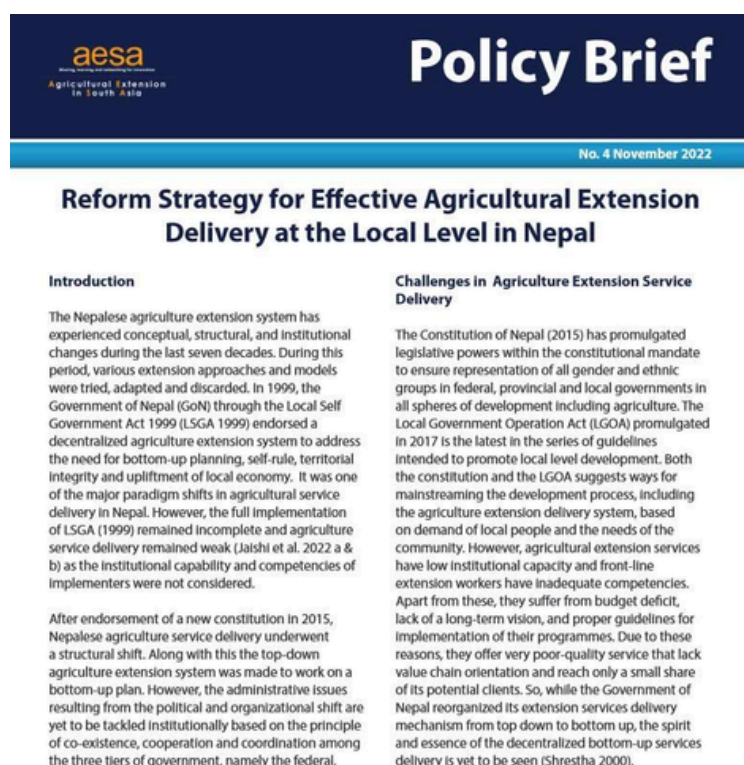


As discussed earlier, we always call policy dialogues multi-stakeholder dialogues, as they are platforms for engaging with and listening to the interests and perspectives of all stakeholders on a common issue. In policy dialogues, there will be very little time for each stakeholder to share their views, and so one needs to know how to communicate their key messages effectively in a very short time. Extension professionals should learn to moderate policy dialogues and serve as a neutral facilitator, encouraging diverse stakeholders to speak. They could also help draft policy briefs to be shared and engage stakeholders in further discussion and generate consensus on key issues.

10

Policy Briefs and Their Use in Influencing Agricultural Policy

Policies provide directions to the state on how investments and programmes should be designed and implemented. It also guides action by different agencies in addressing an issue. A policy brief is a concise summary of a particular issue and it suggests varied policy options to deal with it and provide most relevant recommendations to address the issue. It is often aimed at government policy makers and others who are interested in formulating or influencing policy. Ideally, it should be short, 2-4 pages, and should be based on firm evidence. Ideally, every extension research project, especially at the PhD level, can contribute policy-relevant evidence, and researchers should learn how to write a policy brief.



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11 Courses and Resources for Policy Communication Skills

Several online resources can help one learn how to write policy briefs.

1. FAO's resource on [Writing Effective Policy Briefs](#).
2. Laura ffrench-Constant's "[How to plan, write and communicate an effective Policy Brief: Three Steps to Success](#)".
3. IDRC's resource on [How to Write a Policy Brief](#).
4. Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESAs) network's [Policy Brief Submission Guidelines](#), and its [Template](#) for writing policy brief.



12 Policy Competency Development in the New Curriculum

In the new ICAR extension curricula, a course on Policy Engagement Extension (2+1) is prescribed for the PhD level. This course aims to (a) orient students on the importance of policies in shaping extension's performance, (b) discuss ways of generating policy-relevant evidence to influence policies, and (c) develop capacities to engage with policy actors and the policy development process. Definitely, this course will provide a basic understanding of the importance of policy engagement in extension. Students should utilize several online resources, especially the GFRAS Policy Compendium, to understand how extension policies are developed and the FAO resource on Multistakeholder policy dialogue to promote innovation in agrifood systems: A training guide to know more about the topic.



13 Strategies for Universities to Prepare Graduates for Emerging Extension Roles

The universities should encourage students to read more (especially other than conventional text books) and learn more through participating in events outside universities including in online mode (example: NYPDP, Social Science related workshops in top institutions such as IITs, IIMs, etc.). Of course, internships in local/national/international NGOs, private consultancy firms, national and international research organisations, can also add value. They should also take more online courses. While the new curriculum is definitely an improvement over the previous curricula recommended by the ICAR, all the skills needed for a new extensionist could not be imparted only through academic teaching. These days, several online courses help students deepen their understanding of specific topics and broaden their research skills. AESA Network has launched an initiative to provide a platform for learners to share and learn about extension competencies developed through enrolling in a specific course via its [course review section](#). The faculties and universities could encourage students to learn and [share their learning](#) through such platforms.



Suggestions for Young Professionals in Agricultural Extension

Apart from the suggestions provided above, I would request that young professionals pursue internships and explore non-traditional extension jobs in the increasingly pluralistic extension landscape. There are several job openings in the private sector, CSOs, private foundations supported by CSR Grants, and several international research and development agencies, including the CGIAR.



Professional Competency in This Area and Its Development

My previous and current professional engagement is with policy-focused research centres, namely the ICAR-National Institute of Agricultural Economics and Policy Research (NIAP) and the Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP). So, I have 30 years' of experience in policy research, organising policy dialogues, and developing policy papers and briefs. I was also part of developing the new ICAR curricula, and I have participated in several policy working groups and policy consultations related to extension in India and globally.



Citation

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MANAGE launched its flagship National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP) in 2024, in partnership with agricultural universities across India. The program is designed to cultivate next-generation competencies, explore emerging career pathways, and identify research priorities in agricultural extension. NYPDP orients young scholars toward contemporary themes in extension research, practice, and policy, fostering leadership among future extension professionals in an ever-evolving agricultural landscape. As of September 2025, eleven successful NYPDP cohorts have trained 603 young professionals from 72 universities across 22 states, nurturing a vibrant and interconnected community of emerging extension leaders. Collaborative editions with institutions such as SDAU (Gujarat), SOA (Odisha), KAU (Kerala), CAU (Meghalaya), CCSHAU (Haryana), RAJUVAS (Rajasthan), and KVAFSU (Karnataka) have significantly enriched the program, creating a robust ecosystem of experiential learning and academic exchange.

This publication, “MANAGE NYPDP Mentors Diaries: Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow’s Agricultural Extension”, captures the insights and experiences of mentors with the NYPDP participants. It serves as a source of inspiration and guidance for future generations committed to strengthening agricultural extension and building resilient, sustainable farming communities

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