



## National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

### Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



#### "From Curiosity to Clarity: My NYPDP Expedition"

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Participated in the MANAGE-NYPDP at Central Agricultural University- College of Post Graduate Studies in Agricultural Sciences (CAU-CPGSAS), Umiam, Meghalaya during November 11-15, 2024.

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When I joined the first year of my Ph.D. in Agricultural Extension, I was driven not just by the ambition to earn a degree, but by a burning need to learn beyond the usual, to explore what lies outside the rigid boundaries of traditional government job tracks. I had already been through numerous skill-based trainings, yet I felt something was missing: exposure, direction, and clarity.

At the time, I was surrounded by a system that subtly nudged everyone toward a predictable path, prepare for ARS, become an Assistant Professor, aim for government service. While each of these is a noble pursuit, I found myself questioning whether that was all there was to Extension. I wanted to discover what else this discipline could offer.

Could there be a place for innovation, entrepreneurship, policy advocacy, or international research? Could Extension be more than a ladder into a “safe” job?

That’s when the National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP) by MANAGE came into the picture, a program that promised to go beyond textbooks and syllabi. I didn’t register to add another certificate to my portfolio. I registered with hope: Hope to challenge my own assumptions; Hope to unlock new pathways; Hope to expand my understanding of what being an Extension professional truly means.

Little did I know that NYPDP would reshape my mind-set completely. Through immersive sessions, honest reflections, and exposure to real-world models, I found not only answers to my questions, but new questions to pursue. It pushed me to adapt quickly, collaborate with diverse teams, and solve problems. I discovered that every interaction, every responsibility, became a chance to refine my abilities and broaden my perspective.

Looking back, I realize that joining NYPDP was not just about professional development; it was about personal transformation. I entered the program with curiosity and a bit of uncertainty, but I emerged with clarity, confidence, and a renewed sense of purpose. This diary captures that journey, from narrow thinking to wide horizons, from institutional learning to personal awakening. It’s not just about the five days I spent at CPGS Meghalaya, it’s about the mindset shift that will guide the rest of my career.





### ***Day 1: Reigniting Passion***

Dr. Saravanan Raj welcomed us not just into a program but into a movement. His session wasn't about facts, it was about feeling. He taught us that passion for our discipline isn't optional; it's essential. He made us reflect on why we chose Agricultural Extension in the first place. Was it love, default, or confusion? For me, it was all three. But by the end of the day, his words lit a flame of conviction.

*"Curiosity leads to impact"*, he said and suddenly, I believed it.

### ***Day 2: Beyond the Binary – Gender and Research***

Dr. Loukham Devarani and Dr. Krithika Sundaram brought an entirely new dimension. They reminded us that research isn't only about outcomes; it's about inclusion, fairness, and representation. Gender-sensitive extension isn't just theory, it's a necessity. Dr. Krithika's insight into AI tools and NGO-based knowledge management reshaped my perception of data. It became not a number game, but a narrative game.

Then came Dr. Sucharita Bhattacharjee, whose words weren't a lecture, they were a revelation. She showed us how evidence, when wielded properly, becomes policy. I started seeing myself not just as a student, but as a potential changemaker.

### ***Day 3: Complexity Meets Capability***

Day 3 was a ride through the future. Dr. R.J. Singh took us through simulation tools in extension research. I felt like I was stepping into tomorrow's agriculture, where data tells stories and simulations forecast realities.

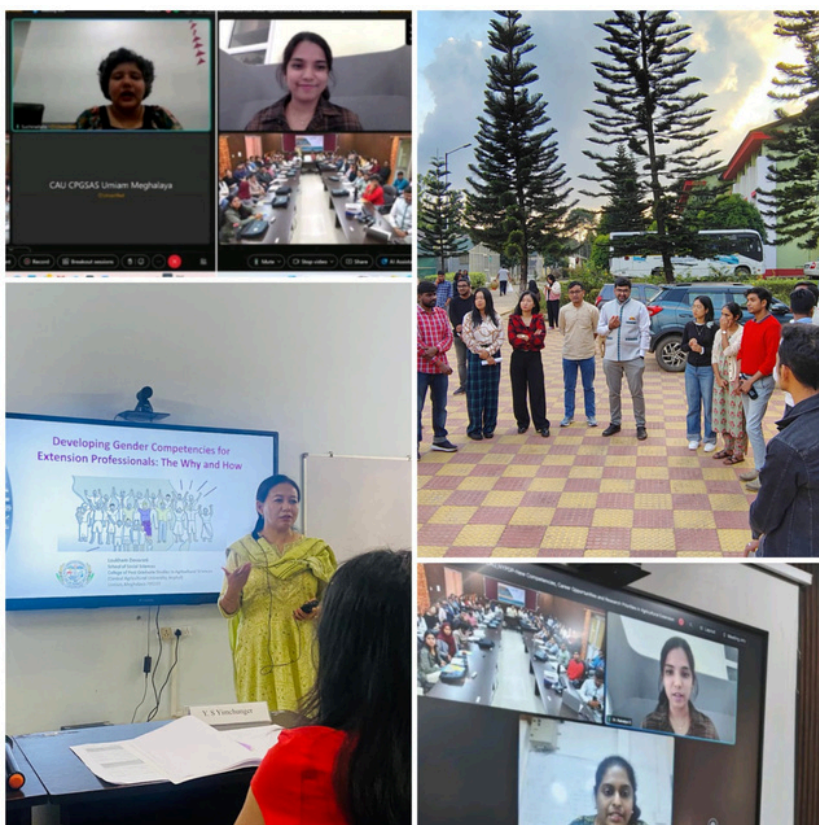
Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman V emphasized skills beyond degrees. He reframed extension agents as facilitators of behavioral change, not just information deliverers. This shift in perspective was monumental, it made me want to upskill immediately.



## Day 4: Scaling Up - Globally and Locally

We dived into global trends with Dr. Parmveer Singh, who made transdisciplinary research seem not only relevant but irresistible. Then came Dr. Sitanshu Sekhar Das, his tools for scale and instrument development were like giving a compass to a wandering sailor.

Dr. P.V.K. Sasidhar's session on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) helped us realize that measurement is meaning, that without understanding our impact, efforts are incomplete. In the end, we learned the magic of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), transforming something we thought we knew into something we could master.



## Day 5: Deep Dives and Deeper Dreams

Dr. Mahesh Chander's lectures were like peeling an onion of insights. One layer was about agripreneurship, another about gender equality, and yet another about organic agriculture. The questions he posed were piercing:

*"Do you have what it takes to be an extension professional in the organic space?"*

The answer? *"Not yet. But I will."*

Dr. M.B. Tengli's session on SmartPLS and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) didn't just teach a tool, it gave us a language to decode complexity. It was like learning how to listen to the silent screams of data.

## Change in Perspective

This wasn't just a training. It was a mirror. It made me look within, assess my standing, and envision where I want to go. I no longer wonder, "*Is Extension in me worth shaping the future?*", now I ask, "*How far can I go in this?*".



## What I Appreciate

What surprised me the most were the conversations during tea breaks, the field visit to Shillong's Cherry Blossom Festival, and the camaraderie that grew each day. People I'd never met became companions in growth.

Special thanks to Dr. M.B. Tengli, our coordinator, he was a guide and encourager throughout the NYPDP training program. As each participant shared their thoughts, questions, and laughter, I realized we're not alone in our doubts or dreams.

## Major Takeaways

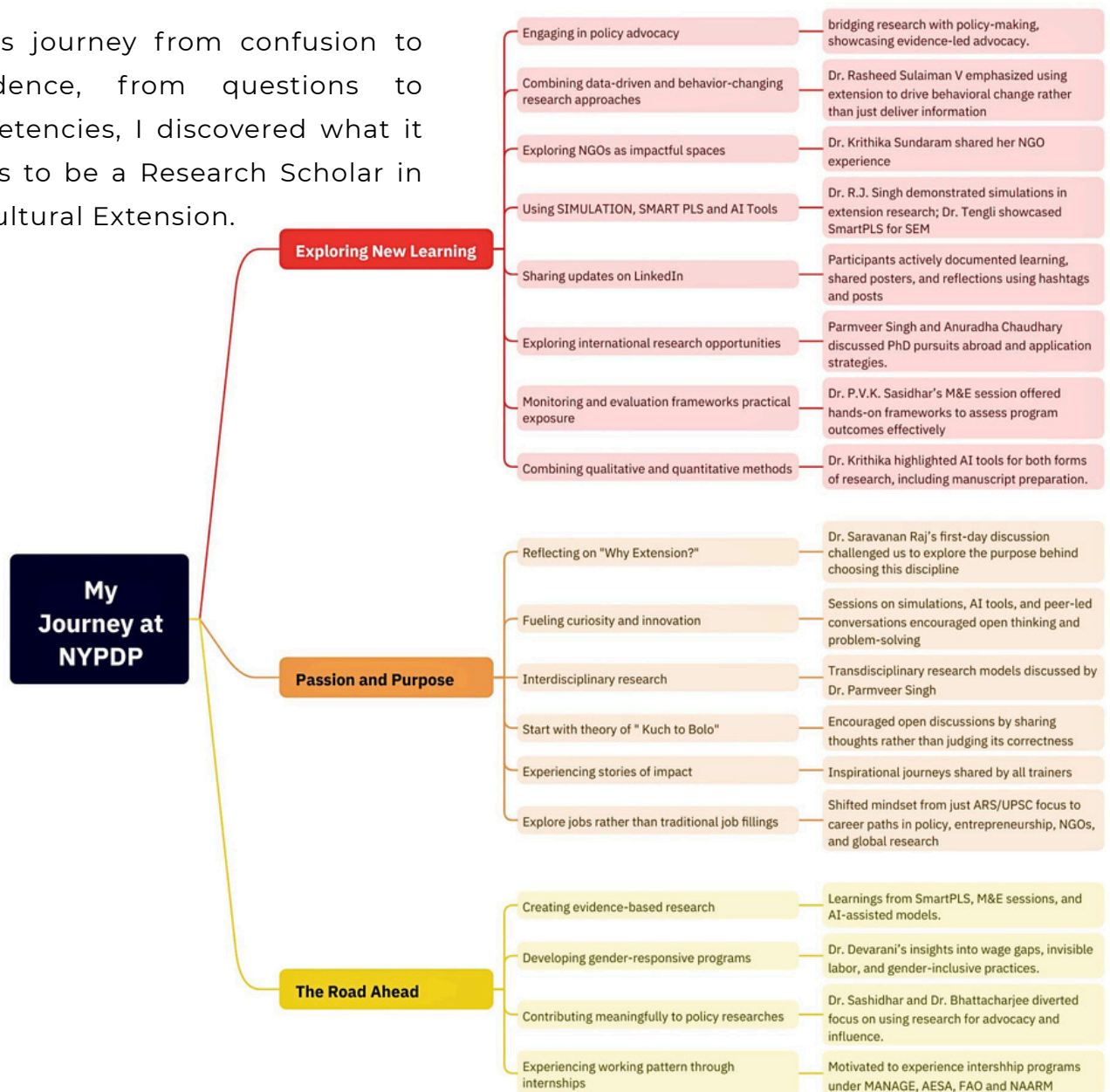
- Passion is the fuel; purpose is the map.
- Gender isn't a checkbox; it's a lens.
- Policy begins with awareness, not authority.
- Competency is built, not born.
- The future of extension is data-driven, inclusive, and dynamic.





## My MANAGE NYPDP Journey

In this journey from confusion to confidence, from questions to competencies, I discovered what it means to be a Research Scholar in Agricultural Extension.



Grateful to MANAGE-CAEIRA, Dr. Saravanan Raj, Dr. Mahesh B. Tengli, and every speaker who showed us the way, thank you for giving us the light.

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