



National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



"The Change Within: A Journey of Self-Realization"

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When I first stepped onto the peaceful MANAGE campus, I carried with me a quiet anticipation, a mixture of curiosity, eagerness, and uncertainty. I was there as a participant in the National Young Professionals Development Programme (NYPDP), hoping to learn something new about agricultural extension. What I didn't expect was how deeply this experience would transform not just my understanding of the subject, but also my outlook on life, purpose, and self-growth.

Key Learnings



Day 1: The first day began with a powerful session by Dr. Saravanan Raj. Right from the start, his words struck a deep chord with me. He spoke with such passion, clarity, and conviction that it felt as though he wasn't just addressing the group, he was speaking directly to me. One particular question he asked, *"What's stopping you?"* hit me hard. It felt like a mirror was held up to my fears, hesitations, and all the self-doubt I carried. That question didn't just linger, it stayed with me, echoing through every session that followed, urging me to reflect, evolve, and grow.

Day 2: Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman led a session on *"New Capacities for Agricultural Extension."* His insights opened my eyes to the evolving landscape of the field, how it's no longer confined to traditional roles but expanding into diverse and dynamic areas. For the first time, I saw the field not as a narrow academic domain, but as a wide canvas filled with opportunities, internships, and career paths that felt both exciting and achievable. I started to envision a future I could actively shape.

Day 3: Our visit to Access Livelihoods Consulting (ALC) was a grounding experience. Seeing how social enterprises are transforming lives at the grassroots level gave me a new perspective on the true impact of extension work. Later that day, Dr. P. Sethuraman Sivakumar spoke about measuring and scaling social research, which made me think critically about the value and purpose of the work we do. Mr. M. Kumar Sir from C-DAC introduced us to emerging technologies like AI, Blockchain, Machine Learning, and Big Data, tools that are revolutionizing agriculture in real time.

Day 4: Dr. Vikram Koundinya, along with Ms. Sravani Reddy and Ms. Laxmi Prasanna Kandi, discussed higher education and research opportunities in the U.S., turning distant dreams into realistic goals. Dr. Parmveer Singh shared his journey through dilemmas and turning points, reminding us that uncertainty is part of growth. Dr. Mahesh Chander's emphasis on organic farming, entrepreneurship, and gender inclusivity reminded me how extension work is rooted in justice and sustainability. Dr. Suchiradipta Bhattacharjee helped us understand how critical it is to engage with policy frameworks. Her session made me realize that extension isn't just about fieldwork, it's also about systems thinking and advocacy.

Day 5: Dr. Rahalya delivered an engaging session on key topics in agricultural extension research. She introduced us to bibliometric analysis and demonstrated how certain software tools can help track research trends. It gave us a clear idea of how to study the impact and direction of research. Next, Dr. P.V.K. Sasidhar spoke about Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) for extension professionals. He explained that evaluation isn't just about reviewing, it's also about planning ahead. His simple and practical approach made the topic easy to understand. He also conducted a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) activity, which gave us hands-on experience in collecting detailed insights.

Change in Perspective



Over the five days, I didn't just learn about agricultural extension, I rediscovered it. I've always quietly let others undermine my subject, not because I didn't value it, but because I didn't fully understand its depth. This training changed that. For the first time, I saw the purpose and potential of agricultural extension, and I felt a deep sense of regret for not standing up for it before. But more importantly, I felt pride. I now know what this subject stands for, what it can do, and what I can contribute to it.

Training Environment

Through it all, the MANAGE campus was more than just a venue, it was a space that nurtured learning and reflection. The serene surroundings, disciplined schedule, and supportive atmosphere made it an ideal environment to grow, think, and dream. It's a place I now hold close to my heart, one I hope to return to again in some capacity.



What I Appreciate

What I appreciated most throughout this experience was the dedication of the organizers and resource persons. Their sincerity, warmth, and love for the subject were evident in every interaction. Dr. Saravanan Raj, especially, left a lasting impression, not just with his ideas, but with his vision of transforming mindsets and cultivating future leaders.

Networking

Through peer interactions and networking, I learned how to express myself more confidently while also learning how to listen deeply. Meeting participants from across the country, each with their own journeys and aspirations, made me feel both connected and inspired. Our shared conversations, both inside and outside the sessions, brought new perspectives and friendships that I'll always carry with me.

Main Takeaway

If I had to choose one major takeaway from this program, it would be this: the change I've been seeking all along doesn't lie outside, it lies within. For years, I looked outward for direction, for motivation, for someone to guide me. But through this training, I've come to realize that I am capable of pushing myself forward. The transformation I want must start with me and only I can make it happen.

Action Plan

Moving forward, I am committed to applying the knowledge and skills I've gained, not just academically, but purposefully. I no longer see research as something to complete for the sake of a degree. I want to engage in meaningful work: action research, experimental models, interventions that genuinely benefit people. I won't let any opportunity for learning, be it seminars, conferences, or training, pass me by. This training stayed true to one of the most powerful principles of extension: *"not what to think, but how to think."* That shift, learning to think critically, curiously, and courageously, is what I take back with me.

My MANAGE NYPDP Journey



If I had to sum up my MANAGE NYPDP journey, I'd say this: *"It was not a lesson, but a quiet awakening. Not a roadmap, but a compass handed back to me to find my own way, with courage and clarity. It didn't hand me answers, but gifted me better questions. It didn't change the world around me, but it changed the way I now see it, and the way I see myself within it. I arrived with questions and quiet hopes. I leave with purpose, pride, and a spark that will keep glowing."*

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