



National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



NYPDP: A Celebration of Extension and the Moulding of New Extensionists

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Participated in the MANAGE-NYPDP at Kerala Agricultural University (KAU), Thrissur during September 30 to October 5, 2024.

 [jeena-paul](#)

NYPDP was one program I eagerly waited to attend. I came across it when MANAGE invited applications for the Odisha edition. I was extremely excited, primarily because it was organized by MANAGE, Hyderabad and secondly, it was exclusively for extension students. Unfortunately, I couldn't apply at that time as I had another training scheduled during the same period. But I made a promise to myself; wherever the next program is conducted, I will definitely attend it.

Gladly, the next edition was hosted in Kerala, at my own university. I didn't think twice. I applied, got selected, and what followed was nothing short of a revelation.

Key Learnings

Even though I am a passionate scholar of Agricultural Extension, I didn't truly understand the value of my subject until I attended NYPDP. As a 2022-admission student, I studied the new ICAR BSMA syllabus, but only through this program did I realize that the curriculum change wasn't just an update, it was a revolution in the discipline.



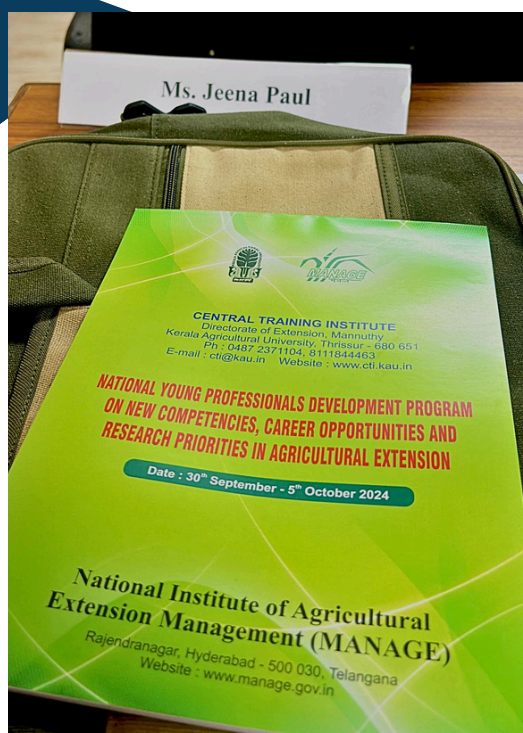
The program was meticulously structured, with a focus on new curriculum areas such as policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation, and advanced research methodologies. Learning directly from the architects of this change felt like a dream. The visionaries behind the transformation; Dr. Saravanan Raj, Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman, Dr. Sethuraman Sivakumar, Dr. Jiju P. Alex, Dr. P.V.K. Sasidhar, Dr. Mahesh Chander, and contributors like; Dr. Binoo P. Bonny, Dr. Sreeram Vishnu, Dr. Archana Bhatt, Dr. Suchiradipta Bhattacharjee, and other esteemed faculty members including Dr. Archana Raghavan Sathyan, Dr. Vikram Koundinya, Dr. S. Ram Kumar, Ms. Swati Nayak, and Mr. Parmveer Singh, enriched the program with insightful and engaging sessions.

The sessions on policy formulation and stakeholder engagement offered much-needed clarity, beyond what textbooks could provide. Sessions on career opportunities and competencies for *New Extensionists* were both surprising and reassuring. As a student who occasionally doubted career prospects in extension, these sessions reaffirmed that I had chosen the right path.



One moment that stood out was when Dr. Saravanan Raj asked all 50 participants to write down the job role they aspired to. Surprisingly, we came up with 50 different roles! That activity alone underscored the breadth of possibilities in agricultural extension and one of the key purposes of the program, to open our minds.

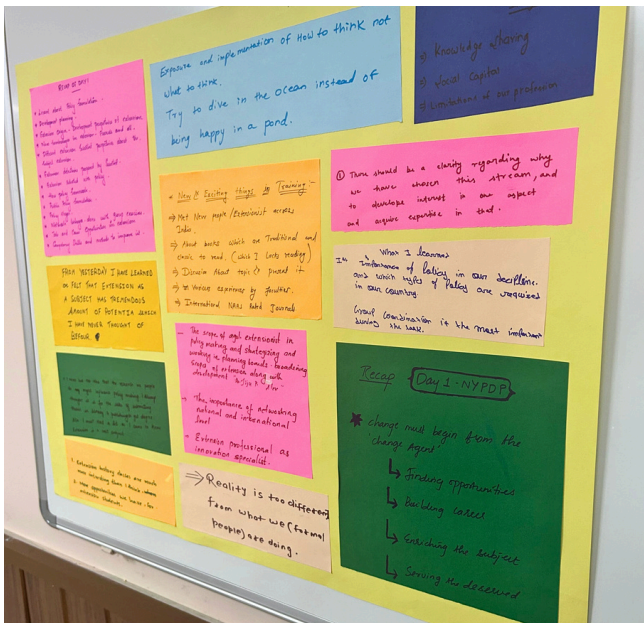
Sessions on emerging research traditions expanded our understanding of what's possible in extension research. We also explored advanced methodologies like Social Network Analysis (SNA), Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), and Thematic Analysis, equipping us with tools to match the evolving research landscape. Additional sessions on global opportunities and collaborations showed us that agricultural extension is truly a global science with societal relevance.



Training Experience

The five-day training was tightly packed from 9 AM to beyond 6 PM each day. Surprisingly, not once did I feel tired or bored. In fact, it was more engaging than regular classroom learning. Perhaps it was because the sessions revealed a new dimension of my subject, one I had never seen before. I was fully engaged, eager to learn, and actively participated in every interactive session. I made sure to clear even the smallest doubts with the speakers. It was a genuinely enriching learning environment.

Though I chose Agricultural Extension with interest during my M.Sc. and now continue as a Ph.D. scholar, I hadn't fully realized the depth of the subject's societal impact. Extension is a social subject, it works with people, for people, and its research has the potential to influence policy and create real change.



The most powerful realization I had was: *"Change must begin with the change agent."* As extension professionals, we must constantly evolve to be effective. The New Extensionist concept from GFRAS and the New Extensionist Learning Kit (NELK) offer a roadmap to acquire essential competencies and navigate our work with purpose.

Training Environment

Hosting the program at my parent university made it easier to attend without logistical difficulties. Central Training Institute (CTI), Mannuthy of KAU was fully equipped to host 50 young extension professionals from six states and ten universities. Although the program was conducted in Kerala, most participants were from northern states, making it a cultural and linguistic exchange as well. It was a refreshing and eye-opening experience to interact with peers from across the country.

What I Appreciate

I deeply appreciate the theme and exclusivity of the program; by extensionists, for extension students, and for the future of extension. NYPDP's focus on new competencies, career paths, and research priorities was exactly what we needed, even if we didn't know we needed it.

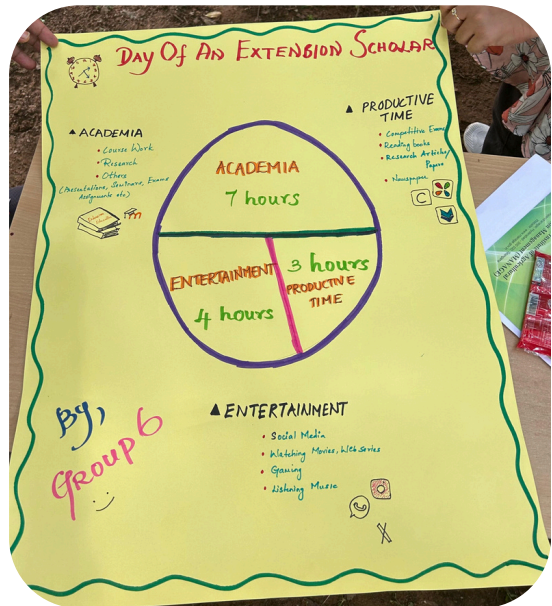


All of us who participated will remain forever grateful to MANAGE, Hyderabad, and Dr. Saravanan Raj for envisioning and executing such a transformative program. As an extension student, I feel truly blessed to have access to these learning opportunities, resources and insights that students in other disciplines might never receive.



Networking

One of the most exciting parts of the training was meeting and working with a diverse group of students. From the icebreakers to the group activities, every interaction was designed to foster collaboration. We were divided into mixed-university groups to encourage new ideas and cross-learning. The group chart activity allowed us to pool our knowledge and learn from each other's experiences and perspectives.



Even after the program ended, many of us stayed connected, exchanged research ideas, and even began collaborating on publications. That's the real strength of NYPDP, it builds a community of extensionists who continue to grow together.



Main Takeaways

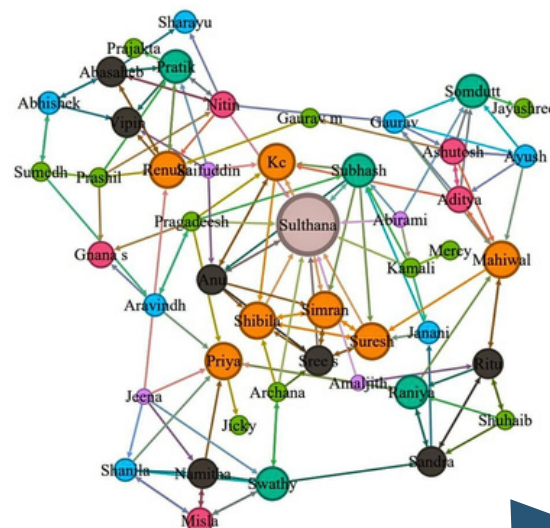
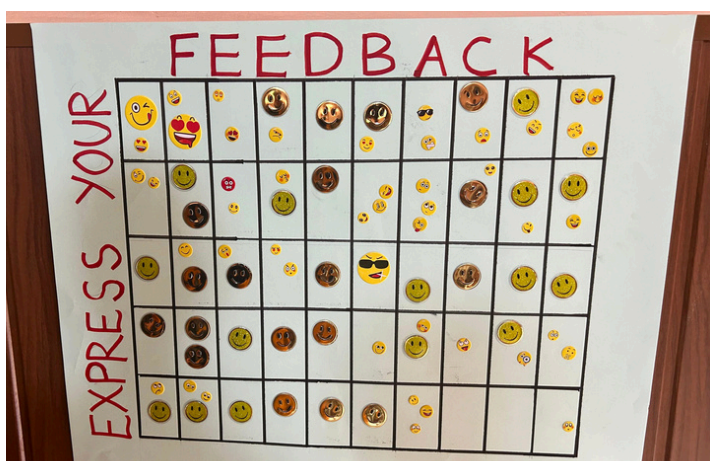
- Understanding the importance and depth of the curriculum reform in Agricultural Extension.
- Discovering unexplored career opportunities and the competencies needed to pursue them.
- Gaining clarity on emerging research methodologies and trends in extension.
- Realizing the power of self-driven growth through increased visibility and contributions.
- Recognizing the broad societal impact of extension in policy, biodiversity, entrepreneurship, and more.



Action Plan

Before NYPDP, my career vision was limited to becoming an Assistant Professor or working in the Department of Agriculture. The program opened my eyes to a wider spectrum of opportunities.

When Dr. Saravanan Raj asked us to identify a career path aligned with our interested extension course, I chose '*Technology Commercialization and Incubation*', with a job title of '*Scaling-Up Expert*'. This role involves a mix of business, technical, leadership, and managerial skills, often working with agri-startups or incubators. It also aligns with my current research topic. I now plan to deepen my understanding of the startup ecosystem and work towards offering smarter, more scalable solutions to the farming community.



Attending NYPDP changed how I see my career. I now see opportunities, identify solutions, and make better decisions. The five-day training was both inspirational and transformative.



I am grateful to Kerala Agricultural University, Dr. Darsana S., and Dr. S. Helen for collaborating with MANAGE. Immense thanks to Dr. Saravanan Raj and MANAGE, Hyderabad for providing this opportunity, to Dr. Raahalya for coordinating the program, and to all the organizers for making the training smooth and successful.

I am especially thankful to the fellow extension students who shared their passion for the subject. From attending NYPDP to interning at MANAGE, Hyderabad, my journey has been magical. I am committed to continuing this path and contributing meaningfully as a *New Extensionist*, equipped with relevant skills and a renewed sense of purpose.

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