



## National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

### Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



**The Unwritten Chapter: MANAGE Wrote a New Beginning in My Life by Fostering Healing and Learning**

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



**Ragul Prasath**



**Day 1:** The first day laid a strong foundation by introducing the new competencies required in agricultural extension and highlighting career opportunities at both national and global levels through interactive group discussions. A key learning was the importance of integrating gender perspectives and social inclusion into extension practices. One group activity involved developing an inclusive course plan for extension workers, encouraging us to think critically about curriculum design. Another engaging discussion focused on time management challenges and opportunities faced by students and faculty, along with suggestions for curriculum improvements to better support academic and professional growth.

**Day 2:** We explored the critical role of ICTs and digital tools in agricultural extension, particularly their potential to enhance outreach, efficiency, and impact. The sessions provided valuable insights into value chain-based extension approaches, highlighting the need to link farmers effectively with markets. We also gained exposure to innovative strategies for scaling social research and promoting ecological agriculture, aligning extension practices with sustainability and climate-resilience goals.

**Day 3:** A field visit to Access Livelihoods provided firsthand exposure to community-based models that empower marginalized producers, offering a real-world view of inclusive development. Back at MANAGE, we deepened our understanding of organic farming, entrepreneurship, and the critical role of gender equality in fostering rural innovation. We also explored how incubation centers can serve as catalysts for agri-tech startups, driving innovation and sustainability in rural areas. The session on indigenous food systems added a fresh and thought-provoking perspective, emphasizing the importance of local knowledge in designing culturally relevant extension strategies.



**Day 4:** This day focused on career and research opportunities in agricultural extension, both within India and internationally. We interacted with scholars from global universities and gained valuable insights into modern research methodologies in extension, along with discussions on real-life challenges faced in the field. In the afternoon, we visited C-DAC, where we explored emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain, and big data applications in agriculture. The day concluded with an enjoyable exploration of Hyderabad city, adding a cultural dimension to our learning experience.

**Day 5:** On the final day, we explored emerging research trends in agricultural extension and learned how to design and evaluate extension projects effectively. A key highlight was the hands-on demonstration on conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), which provided practical insights into qualitative data collection and community engagement techniques.



The session equipped us with valuable skills essential for field-based research and participatory extension work.



## Training Experience

The five-day training was a truly transformative experience, both personally and professionally. It helped me rediscover my passion for agricultural extension and appreciate the vast scope and impact of this field. The sessions were thoughtfully curated, blending theory, field exposure, and interactive group activities in a way that kept us engaged and inspired.

I gained valuable insights into modern tools, innovative research approaches, and their real-world applications. Beyond the academics, I built new friendships, felt a deep connection with nature at the MANAGE campus, and found myself thinking more positively and purposefully. This program has given me new clarity and confidence in shaping a meaningful career in extension. I'm genuinely grateful for the opportunity and the experiences that will stay with me for a lifetime.

## Change in Perspective

The program completely transformed my understanding of agricultural extension. Earlier, I viewed extension primarily as the process of transferring technologies to farmers. But now, I realize it is a dynamic and multidimensional discipline, encompassing communication, community development, participatory research, policy advocacy, entrepreneurship, digital innovations, and social inclusion. This shift has allowed me to see the subject in a positive, empowering, and futuristic light. I now truly believe that agricultural extension is the cornerstone for sustainable transformation of rural India.

## Training Environment



The environment at MANAGE was truly refreshing and serene, filled with an unmistakable sense of positive energy. Surrounded by nature, I felt a deep sense of calm, hope, and clarity awaken within me.



The lush green campus, the peaceful early mornings, and the friendly atmosphere created a space that nurtured both learning and self-reflection. Staying away from social media and embracing the quiet moments helped me feel mentally peaceful and present. The inspiring learning spaces and supportive environment played a pivotal role, not only in enhancing the training experience but also in helping me reconnect with myself. It wasn't just a place of learning; it was a space of renewal.

### What I Appreciate

What I appreciated most about the program was its thoughtfully structured design, each session built upon the last, gradually enhancing my knowledge, skills, and confidence. The combination of group activities, field exposure, expert interactions, and peer discussions created a rich, well-rounded learning environment. I especially valued how the program encouraged us to look beyond academics, urging us to engage with real-world challenges and opportunities in agricultural extension. It not only broadened my understanding but also helped me make valuable professional connections, opened up new career pathways, and inspired me to reassess and refine my goals with greater clarity and purpose.



## Networking



One of the most rewarding aspects of the program was the opportunity to connect with fellow extension scholars from across India. These peer interactions offered rich insights into regional perspectives, diverse challenges, and innovative solutions being implemented in different parts of the country.

Through these exchanges, I gained not only a broader understanding of the field but also greater confidence in expressing myself. I formed meaningful friendships and expanded my professional network, connections I believe will play a vital role in future collaborations, research endeavors, and professional growth.

### Main Takeaway

The biggest takeaway for me was the powerful realization that agricultural extension is neither weak nor limited, it is the backbone of sustainable rural development. It serves as the vital link that connects research, policy, practice, and people. I now understand that extension is a dynamic discipline that demands both innovation and empathy. This shift in perspective has strengthened my belief that we, as extension professionals, must work collectively to elevate the discipline and amplify its impact on the lives of farmers.

### Action Plan

This program has inspired a major shift in my mindset, from being just a job seeker to aspiring to become a job creator. I now plan to implement Agri-Clinic and Agri-Business Center (ACABC) models in collaboration with a few like-minded friends. The exposure, expert sessions, and brainstorming activities during NYPDP gave me the confidence to pursue this path. Additionally, I am committed to sharing my learnings with fellow students and farmers in my region, so the ripple effect of this training reaches the grassroots level.

## My MANAGE NYPDP Journey



Before attending NYPDP, I was going through a low phase in life, struggling with personal challenges and lacking a clear direction. But those five days at MANAGE felt like a rebirth, a turning point that completely transformed my mindset. I began waking up early, enjoying peaceful morning walks, speaking more confidently in English, and even made the conscious decision to uninstall Instagram to focus on my personal growth.

I made wonderful friends, gained clarity about my future, and started seeing myself in a new light. The MANAGE environment gave me not just knowledge, but healing, hope, and a renewed sense of purpose. I'm truly grateful for this space of learning and self-discovery, and I sincerely hope to be part of more such programs in the future.

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