



## National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

### Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



#### My MANAGE NYPDP Journey: A Transformative Experience in Agricultural Extension

##### **Upadhyayula Sai Sreelekha**

Participated in the MANAGE-NYPDP at Rajasthan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences (RAJUVAS), Bikaner, Rajasthan during February 10–14, 2025.

 **Sai Sreelekha Upadhyayula**

*The five-day training brought together young minds from across the country, creating an intellectually stimulating environment that blended academic rigor with practical exposure and cultural exchange.*

- Understanding Agricultural Extension Today: Gained insights into the current trends, challenges, and evolving roles within the agricultural extension landscape, including new career avenues both in India and globally.
- Policy & Evaluation Tools: Learned practical frameworks for policy engagement, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and how they inform evidence-based decision-making in extension.
- Acquired Hands-on Knowledge of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Had the valuable opportunity to actively participate in a simulated FGD session, which provided a comprehensive understanding of how FGDs are conducted in real-world extension research. Through group-based exercises, we explored the process of selecting participants, framing open-ended questions, facilitating discussions, and documenting responses. This practical exposure helped me grasp the nuances of group dynamics, moderation techniques, and how to extract meaningful insights from community interactions. It was an engaging and insightful experience that strengthened my qualitative research skills and prepared me to apply FGDs effectively in field-level assessments and participatory rural appraisals.





- **Bibliometric Analysis:** Gained exposure to bibliometric analysis, a valuable tool for mapping research trends, identifying knowledge gaps, and supporting evidence-based academic publishing.
- **Inclusion and Empowerment:** Understood the importance of GEYSI (Gender Equality, Youth, and Social Inclusion) in program design, promoting inclusive, equitable, and youth-driven development.
- **Livelihood and Entrepreneurship:** Gained exposure to livelihood promotion strategies and entrepreneurship models that are critical for rural development and economic resilience.
- **Practical Exposure:** The visit to NRCC (National Research Centre on Camel) offered firsthand experience in livestock extension, demonstrating innovations in camel health, breeding, and value chain development.

### Training Experience

This was one of the most enriching and impactful learning experiences of my academic journey. The training didn't just offer knowledge, it expanded my worldview. The interactive sessions, expert lectures, group activities, and informal peer interactions made the experience intellectually invigorating and socially rewarding. The excellent hospitality, nutritious food, and comfortable accommodations added to the positive learning environment.





## Networking

The opportunity to engage with young professionals from diverse states and academic backgrounds added immense value. Peer interactions enhanced my communication skills, broadened my perspective, and helped build lasting connections. We shared ideas, cultures, and professional goals, creating a network that I believe will continue to grow beyond the training.



Beyond academic learning, the training also offered me a memorable cultural experience. Exploring the rich heritage of Rajasthan, its traditional cuisine, historic palaces, and vibrant local culture, was truly enriching. Sharing these moments with new friends added joy to the journey, creating bonds and memories that I will always cherish. It was a perfect blend of learning, laughter, and cultural discovery.

## Change in Perspective

Before this training, I often encountered the perception that Agricultural Extension is a less valuable or underappreciated discipline, mainly seen as limited to technology transfer and advisory services. However, the program helped me realize the vast potential it holds as a field rooted in innovation, empowerment, and policy influence.



I came to understand the importance of building strong capabilities in communication, research, and leadership. Agricultural Extension is not just relevant, it is essential. This program completely shifted my perspective. I now see extension as a multidisciplinary, innovation-driven, and policy-relevant field, one that plays a crucial role in global food systems, rural prosperity, and climate resilience. It opened my eyes to dynamic career pathways in policy, research, entrepreneurship, innovation management, and digital agriculture.



## What I Appreciate

What stood out to me was the diversity of topics and the depth of expertise of the resource persons. Sessions led by Dr. Saravanan Raj, Dr. Manjunatha BL, Dr. Sreeram Vishnu, Dr. Meghajit Sharma, Dr. Vikram Koundinya, Ms. Sravani Reddy, Dr. Suchiradipta Bhattacharjee, Dr. P.V.K. Sasidhar, Dr. Mahesh Chander, Dr. Srajesh Gupta and others were not only informative but deeply inspiring.





I particularly appreciated the balance between theoretical insights and hands-on learning, ranging from FGD simulations to Social Networking Analysis (SNA) and project design in GEYSI.

Additionally, the proactive support and coordination by Dr. Rahalya, Dr. Maina kumari, and Dr. Sunil Jangir made the entire experience seamless and impactful.

### Main Takeaway

The biggest takeaway for me is that Agricultural Extension is not static, it is dynamic, inclusive, and filled with opportunity. This field requires continuous learning, a global perspective, and the courage to innovate. The training reaffirmed my passion for working at the intersection of grassroots development and policy influence.

### Action Plan

As I continue my Ph.D. research, I plan to:

- Apply FGD and M&E frameworks to strengthen my study design.
- Focus on publishing in impactful journals with global relevance.
- Integrate gender and youth perspectives into my work.
- Explore internships and collaborative projects that bridge policy, technology, and community development.

This training has set a new benchmark for my academic and professional aspirations, and I am determined to build on the momentum it has created.

## My MANAGE NYPDP Journey



The MANAGE NYPDP was a milestone in my journey, a blend of learning, self-discovery, and collaboration. It not only strengthened my academic foundation but also gave me the clarity and confidence to navigate the evolving terrain of Agricultural Extension. My heartfelt thanks to MANAGE, RAJUVAS, and all the organizers and resource persons who made this journey so meaningful.

As we move forward, let us remember: *'To make a real difference, we must combine passion with purpose, theory with practice, and learning with action.'*

**Ms. Upadhyayula Sai Sreelekha**

Ph.D. Agricultural Extension Education

Department of Agricultural Extension and Communication

B.A. College of Agriculture, Anand Agricultural University

Anand, Gujarat

e-mail: [usreelekha2299@gmail.com](mailto:usreelekha2299@gmail.com)

MANAGE - Center for Agricultural Extension Innovations, Reforms and Agripreneurship (MANAGE- CAEIRA)

**National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)**

Rajendranagar, Hyderabad- 500 030, INDIA

<https://www.manage.gov.in/caeira/caeira.asp>



MANAGE-CAEIRA



MANAGE-CAEIRA



MANAGE-CAEIRA