



MANAGE Agricultural Extension “Evening4Learning (E4L)” Webinar Series



Theme: “Agricultural Extension: An Exciting Profession for Future”



Topic: : “Agricultural Extension: Evolving Curriculum and Opportunities”



Schedule:

19-11-2022, 19:00-19:45 PM



About the Program

The MANAGE Agricultural Extension “Evening4Learning” Webinar Series is aimed at enhancing knowledge and professional engagement in the field of agricultural extension. The twelve-day series is structured with each day focusing on a distinct topic under a common theme, allowing participants to gain comprehensive insights into key areas of extension. The program is intended for a diverse audience, including postgraduate and doctoral students, agricultural faculty, and industry professionals. It covers broad themes ranging from entrepreneurship and sustainability to emerging technologies in agriculture.

MANAGE
Agricultural Extension
Webinar Series
(Online)

19-30 November 2022
19.00-20.30 pm (IST)

Agricultural Extension
To meet the new challenges in the agri-food systems



Speaker

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 Saravanan Raj

About the Speaker

Dr. Saravanan Raj is the Director (Agricultural Extension) at MANAGE, Hyderabad. He heads the Centre for Agricultural Extension Innovations, Reforms and Agripreneurship (CAEIRA) and serves as the CEO of MANAGE–Centre for Innovation and Agripreneurship (CIA), a Centre of Excellence in Agri-Business Incubation and knowledge partner for implementing the RKVY-RAFTAAR scheme of the Government of India. He is also working as the CEO of MANAGE–Fisheries Innovation and Startup Hub (MANAGE–FISHub), a national-level incubation and innovation hub established with the support of the Department of Fisheries (DoF), Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying (MoFAHD), Government of India. He specializes in public-private extension, privatization of extension services, institutional pluralism, ICTs and digital media in agricultural extension, extension innovations, and agri-startups and policy issues. With extensive experience in agricultural extension, innovation, and entrepreneurship development, he has played a key role in promoting digital and market-oriented extension approaches and strengthening the agri-startup ecosystem in India.

Background

Agricultural Extension has undergone significant transformation over the past several decades in response to changing agricultural, socio-economic, technological, and institutional contexts. Traditionally viewed as a mechanism for transferring technologies from research institutions to farmers, extension has progressively evolved into a broader and more dynamic system that supports agricultural and rural development through knowledge facilitation, capacity building, innovation promotion, and stakeholder engagement.

Historically, agricultural extension emerged as a social innovation and rural development approach before becoming closely associated with technology transfer during the Green Revolution era. Over time, the extension landscape expanded beyond the exclusive domain of public sector agencies to include a diverse range of actors such as private agribusiness firms, non-governmental organizations, farmer producer organizations (FPOs), self-help groups, development agencies, and agri-startups. This institutional pluralism has contributed to more diverse, demand-driven, and participatory extension approaches.

Rapid advancements in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have further transformed extension delivery systems. Extension services have progressed from conventional advisory methods and SMS-based communication to internet-enabled platforms, mobile applications, social media, digital advisory services, artificial intelligence, and other emerging technologies. These developments have enhanced the reach, timeliness, and effectiveness of agricultural information dissemination and farmer support services.

Consequently, the role of extension professionals has expanded considerably beyond technology dissemination. Modern extension systems emphasize community mobilization, innovation facilitation, entrepreneurship development, value-chain strengthening, gender and social inclusion, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, climate resilience, regenerative agriculture, and digital transformation. Extension professionals are increasingly expected to function as facilitators, innovation brokers, knowledge managers, market connectors, and capacity builders who support farmers in improving productivity, profitability, sustainability, and resilience.

Emerging Trends in Agricultural Extension include:

- Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS)
- Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) and farmer collectives
- Digital Agriculture and Digital Transformation
- Regenerative and Ecological Agriculture
- Co-innovation and Co-creation Approaches
- Community-managed Sustainable Extension Models
- Value Chain-based Extension Models
- Entrepreneurship and Startup-led Extension Services
- Farming-as-a-Service Models
- Nutrition-sensitive and Gender-responsive Extension

These developments indicate that extension is becoming increasingly multidisciplinary and demand-driven

Need for Change in Agricultural Extension Curriculum

Agricultural Extension has evolved far beyond its traditional focus on technology transfer and advisory services. Contemporary agricultural development is increasingly influenced by factors such as digital transformation, climate change, market integration, entrepreneurship, value chains, gender inclusion, and innovation systems. At the same time, the extension ecosystem has become more pluralistic, involving public agencies, private sector organizations, NGOs, farmer producer organizations (FPOs), agri-startups, and development institutions.

However, extension education and training programmes have not always kept pace with these rapid changes. Traditional curricula often emphasize conventional extension theories and methods, while providing limited exposure to emerging areas such as digital agriculture, innovation management, agribusiness development, policy engagement, impact assessment, and entrepreneurship promotion. As a result, there is a growing need to equip extension graduates with multidisciplinary knowledge, practical skills, and future-oriented competencies that align with the evolving roles of extension professionals.

Recognizing these emerging demands, several national-level consultations and initiatives were undertaken to modernize agricultural extension education. The objective was to develop a curriculum that better reflects contemporary field realities, strengthens employability, and prepares extension professionals to function as facilitators, innovation brokers, knowledge managers, capacity builders, and development practitioners in a rapidly changing agricultural sector.

Restructuring and Revision of the Postgraduate Programme in Agricultural Extension

To address emerging challenges and opportunities in the agricultural sector, organizations such as MANAGE, ICAR, Agricultural Universities, Agricultural Extension in South Asia (AESAs), and other stakeholders collaborated to review and restructure postgraduate programmes in Agricultural Extension. The curriculum revision process aimed to align agricultural extension education with global developments, evolving professional requirements, and the changing agricultural innovation landscape.

The revised postgraduate curriculum places greater emphasis on several contemporary and interdisciplinary domains, including:

- Global Agricultural Extension Landscape
- Organizational Development
- Capacity Development and Facilitation
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Extension
- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Assessment
- Policy Engagement and Advocacy
- Social and Behavioural Research Methodologies
- Technology Commercialization and Innovation Management

- Agribusiness Incubation and Entrepreneurship Development
- Branding, Marketing, and Value Addition
- Educational Technologies and E-Learning
- Risk Management and Livelihood Development

The revised programme seeks to develop competencies required for working in diverse settings such as government extension systems, development organizations, agribusiness firms, international agencies, digital agriculture platforms, innovation support institutions, farmer producer organizations, and startup ecosystems. By integrating these emerging themes, the restructured curriculum aims to create future-ready extension professionals capable of contributing effectively to agricultural transformation, rural development, and sustainable livelihood enhancement.

Emerging Opportunities for Agricultural Extension Professionals

The scope of agricultural extension has expanded significantly beyond conventional technology transfer and advisory services. Rapid changes in agriculture, digital technologies, innovation ecosystems, organizational structures, and development priorities have created diverse career opportunities for extension professionals across national and international organizations. Modern extension professionals are increasingly expected to function as innovation facilitators, organizational development experts, gender specialists, digital extension practitioners, knowledge managers, and capacity builders.

One of the most promising areas is **Innovation Systems and Innovation Management**, where professionals can work as Innovation Specialists, Innovation Managers, and Innovation Platform Facilitators. These roles require the ability to engage with Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS), facilitate multi-stakeholder platforms, build partnerships, and strengthen innovation capacities among farmers and institutions. Opportunities are available in organizations such as CGIAR centres, ICRISAT, MANAGE, Digital Green, NGOs, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), incubators, agri-startups, and development projects.

Area of job Specialization	Job Opportunities (Job Title)	Competencies Required	Opportunities in Different Organizations	Sources for Competencies
Enabling Innovation	• Innovation Specialists • Innovation Managers	• Capacity to engage in innovation systems. • Facilitate skills for Innovation Platforms (IPs) and engage IP members. • Capacity building skills	• Organizations like CGIAR, ICRISAT, MANAGE, Digital Green, NGOs, FPOs, Incubators, Agri-Startups, etc.	• Online Open Course by World bank group • TAPedia by FAO for Agricultural Innovation Systems (AIS), • Udemty and Coursera, Trainings on Innovation.

Another emerging area is **Organizational Behaviour, Development and Management**, which focuses on strengthening institutions and managing collaborative development initiatives. Career opportunities include Organization Development Specialists, Managers, Sector Leads, and Team Leaders. These positions demand competencies in team building, leadership, decision-making, negotiation, conflict management, organizational development, and analytical problem-solving. Such professionals are increasingly sought by multinational organizations, agribusiness firms, NGOs, development agencies, and FPOs to lead multi-sectoral teams and institutional transformation processes.

Area of job Specialization	Job Opportunities (Job Title)	Competencies Required	Opportunities in Different Organizations	Sources for Competencies
Organizational Behavior and Development	OD Specialists, Managers, Sector leads and team leads	• Strong experience in building and managing teams. • Organizational skills and decision-making skills, expert problem-solving skills. • Negotiation and Conflict Management Skills. • Capacity Building Strategies. • Leadership and Collaborative skills. • Analytical skills.	• Multi-national organizations for leading multi-sectoral teams • Agri-business firms, • NGOs, • Farmer Producer Organizations etc.	• Internships • Online Courses in Udemy, Coursera, Udacity and through MOOCs.

The growing emphasis on inclusion and equity in development programmes has created substantial opportunities in **Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion**. Organizations are recruiting Gender Specialists, Gender Consultants, and Gender Experts to design, implement, and monitor gender-responsive programmes. These roles require expertise in gender analysis, sensitization, capacity building, social inclusion strategies, and programme management. National and international development organizations, government agencies, and donor-supported projects increasingly recognize the importance of integrating gender perspectives into agricultural and rural development initiatives.

Area of Job Specialization	Job Opportunities (Job Title)	Competencies Required	Opportunities in Different Organizations	Sources for Competencies
Gender Mainstreaming	• Gender Specialist • Gender Consultants • Gender Experts	• Gender Assessments. • Gender awareness and sensitization techniques • Designing Gender based capacity building programmes. • Gender-sensitive programme formulation and Implementation.	Many international organizations like: • UNDP • FAO • World bank • CGIAR • Digital Green • NGOs	• International Courses in Gender Mainstreaming • Certificate Courses on Gender training • Online Courses in Udemy, Coursera

The rapid growth of opportunities in **Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)** and Digital Extension. With the expansion of digital agriculture, e-learning, social media, and knowledge management systems, organizations require ICT4D Specialists, Knowledge Management Experts, Digital Extension Specialists, Educational Technology Professionals, and Social Media Managers. Key competencies include digital service design, e-agriculture capacity building, content development, online learning facilitation, ICT tool deployment, and knowledge management. International organizations, IT firms, media companies, agritech startups, and development agencies are actively seeking professionals with these capabilities.

Area of Job Specialization	Job Opportunities (Job Title)	Competencies Required	Opportunities in Different Organizations	Sources for Competencies
ICTs for Agricultural Extension	• ICT Specialist	• Validation and adaptation skills of the agricultural digital services.	• International Organizations like ICRISAT, FAO, CGIAR	• Internships
	• Knowledge Management Expert	• Plan, organize and conduct Agriculture capacity development workshops.	• Organizations like MANAGE, IT Firms designing programmes for Agriculture, Digital Green NGOs	• DA-ICT offers MSc in ICT in Agriculture
	• Social Media Manager	• Facilitation of various ICT tools (mobile apps), social media and website designing.	• KM Media Agri Start-ups	• E-learning on Digital Agriculture (MOOC) by World Bank
	• E-Learning Expert	• Working with EdTech and solutions.		• Certificate Courses and Trainings by ICRISAT.

Overall, the future agricultural extension professionals must possess interdisciplinary knowledge, digital competencies, facilitation skills, leadership abilities, and an innovation-oriented mindset. As agricultural systems become increasingly knowledge-intensive, market-driven, and technology-enabled, extension graduates will find expanding opportunities across research organizations, development agencies, agribusiness enterprises, digital agriculture platforms, innovation support institutions, and community-based organizations. These emerging domains offer exciting career pathways for professionals willing to continuously upgrade their skills and adapt to the evolving agricultural development landscape.

Strategies for Developing Future-Ready Competencies

The rapidly changing agricultural extension landscape requires students and young professionals to continuously strengthen their technical, digital, interpersonal and professional competencies. Competency development should go beyond classroom learning by combining practical exposure, continuous learning, interdisciplinary engagement and experiential opportunities. The following approaches can help build the skills required for emerging career opportunities in agricultural extension and allied sectors:

- **Gain practical exposure:** Pursue internships, field projects and experiential learning opportunities in emerging areas of agricultural extension.
- **Strengthen digital competencies:** Enroll in online courses and use digital learning platforms to develop skills in ICTs, digital extension and emerging technologies.
- **Build interdisciplinary knowledge:** Engage in interdisciplinary research and learning to understand agricultural challenges from multiple perspectives.
- **Develop innovation skills:** Explore new approaches, technologies and innovations that can improve extension delivery and farmer engagement.

- **Enhance social and behavioural competencies:** Develop knowledge and skills related to gender, inclusion, communication, teamwork and organizational development.
- **Strengthen problem-solving abilities:** Participate in field-based activities that encourage critical thinking, decision-making and practical problem-solving.
- **Continuously update knowledge:** Regularly access digital resources, webinars, courses and professional networks to keep pace with emerging trends.
- **Align skills with future opportunities:** Identify changing job-market requirements and develop relevant technical, digital, managerial and professional competencies.
- **Learn through collaboration:** Work with researchers, extension professionals, farmers, startups and other stakeholders to strengthen professional and interpersonal skills.
- **Build career readiness:** Combine technical knowledge with practical, digital and professional competencies to improve employability and support long-term career growth.

Key Highlights

- **Transformation of Agricultural Extension:** Extension has evolved from a conventional technology-transfer approach into a multidisciplinary, demand-driven and participatory system, emphasizing innovation, entrepreneurship, value chains, inclusion, climate resilience and digital transformation.
- **Emerging Trends and Changing Roles:** Key emerging areas include Agricultural Innovation Systems, FPOs, digital agriculture, regenerative agriculture, co-innovation, value-chain extension, startup-led services, and gender- and nutrition-responsive extension. Extension professionals are increasingly functioning as facilitators, innovation brokers, knowledge managers and market connectors.
- **Need for Curriculum Reform:** The changing extension landscape has created a need to modernize agricultural extension education. The revised postgraduate curriculum incorporates ICTs, monitoring and evaluation, policy engagement, innovation management, entrepreneurship, agribusiness, marketing, value addition, risk management and livelihood development.
- **Expanding Career Opportunities:** Agricultural extension professionals can pursue emerging roles in innovation management, organizational development, gender and social inclusion, digital extension, knowledge management, agribusiness, development organizations, FPOs, startups and international agencies.
- **Building Future-Ready Competencies:** Students and young professionals were encouraged to strengthen their technical, digital, interpersonal, leadership, innovation and problem-solving competencies through internships, experiential learning, interdisciplinary research, online courses, professional networks and continuous upskilling.

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YouTube Link:
<https://youtu.be/YfGisOEI2o?t=1>

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