

MANAGE Internship: Cultivating Experiences for Future Professionals



Rooted in Research, Growing Through Experience: My Internship at MANAGE

I am Sakshi Pundir, from Himachal Pradesh and completed Masters in Agricultural Extension Education from Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University (RPCA), Pusa, and Bihar.

 [Sakshi Pundir](#)



My motivation to apply for the MANAGE internship stemmed from a deep desire to expand my understanding of agricultural extension, particularly under the mentorship of the renowned extensionist Dr. Saravanan Raj. His pioneering work in digital extension, capacity building, and innovative outreach strategies has always inspired me. I saw this internship as a golden opportunity to directly learn from his visionary insights and contribute meaningfully to the field.

Moreover, MANAGE's reputation as a national-level apex institute with a strong academic and practical framework made it the ideal place to bridge my classroom learning with field-level applications. As a master's research scholar focusing on the *"Agricultural Extension System in Himachal Pradesh,"* I was especially keen to explore diverse extension models and policies that could enrich my thesis and overall academic development.

Before joining MANAGE, I had high expectations regarding exposure to cutting-edge extension innovations, hands-on involvement in research and policy analysis, and opportunities to interact with experts from across India. I expected to work in a dynamic, intellectually stimulating environment where I could engage in meaningful tasks rather than routine deskwork.

Internship Experience

During my internship, I was primarily involved in conducting an in-depth study on the *"Agricultural Extension System in Himachal Pradesh."* This included reviewing literature, analyzing government schemes, identifying stakeholder roles, and understanding existing bottlenecks in extension delivery mechanisms.



I also conducted stakeholder analysis, compiled state-level extension statistics, and benchmarked them against the DFI committee recommendations.



Additionally, I contributed to reports and infographics on extension models and participated in developing an interview schedule for stakeholder analysis. My responsibilities also involved data collection, thematic coding, and summarizing best practices from other states for potential replication in Himachal Pradesh.

One challenge was the vast amount of data I had to review and synthesize within tight deadlines. Balancing literature review, field insights, and policy analysis was mentally demanding. However, time management techniques, prioritization, and peer discussions helped me stay on track. Another challenge was adapting to a new work environment and understanding the expectations at a national-level institution. But with consistent support from the team and a proactive attitude, I adapted quickly and became more confident and efficient in my tasks.

Learning Environment

The atmosphere at MANAGE was intellectually vibrant, professionally enriching, and highly encouraging, ensuring mutual respect, knowledge sharing, and open dialogue. Interns were treated not just as students, but as budding professionals whose inputs were genuinely valued. Daily interactions with Dr. Saravanan Raj, Dr. S. Rahalya, and fellow interns from various parts of the country created a multidisciplinary and collaborative ecosystem. Regular review meetings, brainstorming sessions, and resource-sharing mechanisms fostered a culture of continuous learning. I felt a strong sense of academic freedom and professional responsibility, which motivated me to perform to the best of my potential.

Dr. Saravanan Raj's feedback on improving my research framework and writing style was particularly helpful in refining my approach to academic writing. The feedback I received was mostly positive, especially regarding clarity in writing, timely submissions, and active participation. Constructive criticism was always offered respectfully, pushing me to improve without undermining my confidence.



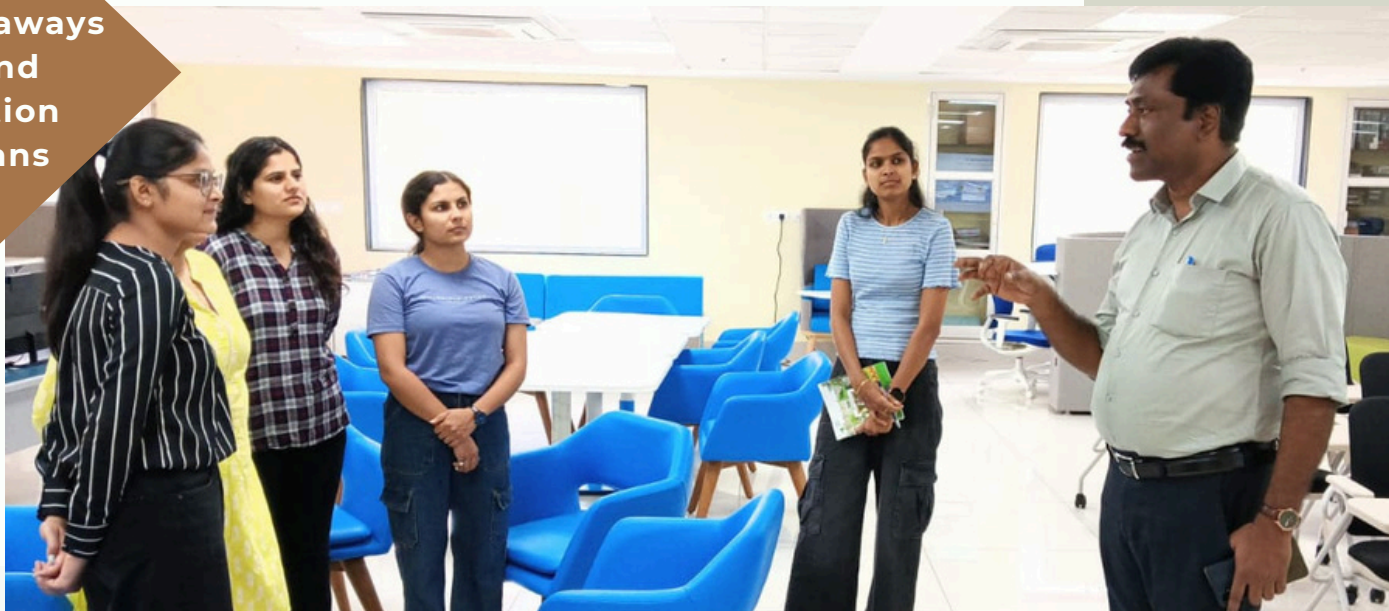
Skills and Knowledge Gained

The internship closely aligned with both my academic pursuits and long-term career goals. As someone aiming to work in agricultural policy or research-driven rural development, this exposure added practical dimensions to my theoretical knowledge. The focus on evidence-based approaches and stakeholder engagement directly enriched my work and improved my research methodology.

The task of developing a comprehensive framework for evaluating the effectiveness of agricultural extension services in Himachal Pradesh stood out and sharpened my analytical skills. It involved reviewing multiple policy documents, scientific publications, and district-level reports. One of the most insightful learnings was understanding the farmer-to-extension personnel ratio and its impact on service delivery.

I realized the urgent need for digital and community-based extension models to bridge this gap. This project not only added value to my thesis but also broadened my perspective on the systemic reforms needed in hilly and remote areas. The internship helped me understand how national institutions like MANAGE function and influence grassroots-level changes through training and policy inputs. I gained clarity on career opportunities in agricultural extension, research organizations, and development agencies, reaffirming my commitment to contributing to this sector.





The expert interactions at MANAGE were a treasure trove of insights. From lectures by extension scientists, policymakers, and grassroots practitioners to informal discussions with senior researchers, each interaction helped me build a nuanced understanding of real-world extension challenges. I also learned how to present my work more professionally and pitch research ideas effectively during group presentations.

The most significant takeaway was realizing the transformative role that a robust and inclusive extension system can play in rural development. I understood the importance of contextualizing extension strategies based on geography, resources, and socio-economic dynamics. Additionally, I learned that technical knowledge alone is not enough, communication skills, policy awareness, and collaborative approaches are equally vital.

The internship reinforced my commitment to work towards making agricultural knowledge more accessible, especially in underserved regions like Himachal Pradesh. I plan to apply these learnings in both my academic thesis and future career. The research tools, analytical frameworks, and stakeholder engagement strategies I acquired will be integrated into my thesis work and future research projects.

I also aim to contribute to policy advocacy using evidence-based insights to suggest reforms in extension systems. The internship has equipped me to better communicate with farmers, researchers, and policymakers, which I will utilize in extension-related jobs, higher studies, or even doctoral research.



What I appreciated the most was the academic freedom and respect interns received. Our ideas were taken seriously, and we were encouraged to think critically, suggest alternatives, and innovate. The exposure to real-life problems and practical solutions grounded the entire learning process. The access to institutional resources, expert mentorship, and a well-structured internship format ensured that every day was productive. The balance between independent work and guided sessions helped develop both my confidence and competence.

My internship journey at MANAGE was a transformative experience that bridged the gap between academic theory and practical application. It was a blend of intellectual stimulation, mentorship, and real-world learning that shaped my perspective on agricultural extension. It gave me not just professional insights, but also personal growth, instilling confidence, discipline, and a deeper sense of purpose. Truly, it was a milestone in my academic and career path.

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