



National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



Beyond Technology Transfer: A Transformative NYPDP Learning Experience at MANAGE

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Introduction

The National Young Professional Development Programme (NYPDP) at MANAGE was a comprehensive capacity-building initiative aimed at shaping young professionals into competent, ethical, and future-ready agricultural extension practitioners. The programme combined conceptual learning, research orientation, career guidance, innovation exposure, policy engagement, and experiential learning. Through expert lectures, interactive sessions, peer learning, field exposure, and reflective activities, NYPDP expanded participants' understanding of agricultural extension as a people-centred, development-oriented, and innovation-driven profession. The programme fostered leadership qualities, professional discipline, critical thinking, and a strong commitment to inclusive agricultural and rural development.

Key Learnings from Each Day of the Programme

Day 1 Diary: An Inspiring Beginning at MANAGE

The first day of the programme marked a powerful and inspiring beginning to the NYPDP journey. From the moment I entered the MANAGE campus, I sensed a distinct institutional culture characterised by professionalism, discipline, and a strong orientation towards growth and excellence. The campus environment itself created a positive mindset, instilling a sense of responsibility and seriousness towards learning.

Following this, Dr. Saravanan Raj interacted with us and delivered an insightful session that significantly reshaped our understanding of agricultural extension. He explained the true meaning of extension, its evolving role in agricultural and rural development, and its relevance in the present socio-economic and technological context. The session highlighted emerging competencies, interdisciplinary skills, and diverse career opportunities within the field of agricultural extension. It helped us realise that extension professionals today function as change agents, innovators, facilitators.

Throughout the day, valuable lessons related to personal and professional development were emphasised. The importance of time management, teamwork, self-discipline, professional conduct, and institutional ethics was clearly highlighted.

Interactions with participants from diverse academic and states further enriched the learning experience. These exchanges broadened my perspective, enhanced my communication skills, and highlighted the importance of diversity and collaboration in professional growth.

The programme was formally initiated under the guidance of Dr. S. Rahalya and Dr. Saravanan Raj, Director (Agricultural Extension), MANAGE. Their leadership, vision, and experience provided strong motivation and clear direction regarding the objectives and expected outcomes of the programme. Overall, Day 1 laid a solid foundation and inspired a strong sense of purpose for the days ahead.



Day 2

Day 2 Diary: Expanding Horizons through Career Planning and Digital Extension

Day 2 of the NYPDP was highly informative, interactive, and career-oriented. The day began with a recap session conducted by Dr. S. Rahalya which helped consolidate the key learnings from Day 1. This reflection-based approach provided clarity and helped align participants with the objectives of the programme.

A major focus of the day was career planning and job opportunities. Dr. Rahalya shared valuable information about various professional websites, employment portals, and networking platforms that can be used to identify career opportunities aligned with individual interests and qualifications. This session significantly enhanced our understanding of strategic career planning and professional networking.



After that , Dr. Saravanan Raj delivered an insightful lecture on “Research Priorities in Agricultural Extension, ICTs, and Digital Competencies for Agricultural Extension: Navigating New Frontiers.” The session highlighted the growing role of information and communication technologies in strengthening extension services. He explained how digital platforms, ICT tools, and innovative outreach methods are transforming agricultural extension and improving service delivery to farmers.

Later in the day, interactions with participants who had already joined the NYPDP provided practical insights into the programme’s impact. They shared personal experiences, behavioural changes, and professional growth achieved through the training. An intern fellow also shared hands-on experiences and learning outcomes, which proved highly motivating.

Additionally, senior participants from SHUATS interacted with us and offered valuable suggestions for professional development, including involvement in projects, participation in webinars, and continuous learning under institutional mentorship. Overall, Day 2 expanded our horizons by linking academic learning with real-world career pathways and digital competencies

Day 3

Day 3 Diary: Learning through Collaboration, Evaluation, and Innovation

Day 3 offered a balanced blend of theoretical understanding, practical exposure, and motivational learning. The day began with a session by Dr. Parveer Singh on “Building Consensus for Research and Practice.” The session highlighted the importance of collaboration, coordination, and stakeholder participation in research and development initiatives. It emphasised how consensus-building is crucial for achieving sustainable and impactful outcomes in agricultural extension programmes.

This was followed by an engaging session on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) conducted by Dr. P. V. K. Sasidhar. He explained the importance of M&E in assessing programme effectiveness and improving decision-making. A practical demonstration of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) provided hands-on exposure to qualitative data collection techniques and group dynamics.

Later, Dr. Mahesh Chander delivered an inspiring session on Gender Equality and Organic Farming. He discussed inclusive development and agripreneurship opportunities, illustrating how farmers can enhance income through value addition. His example of finger millet transforming from a neglected grain into a premium product through branding and marketing was particularly impactful.

He concluded with a powerful message:

“Find a path for yourself. Script your own success story.”



This message deeply inspire me to think independently, creatively, and responsibly about their future.



Day 4

Day 4 Diary: Broadening Perspectives through Extension, Research Methods, and Field Exposure

Day 4 began with a reflective exercise where participants documented nine key insights, encouraging self-assessment and learning consolidation. The academic sessions began with Dr. Krithika Sundaram, who delivered an enlightening lecture on “Beyond Technology Transfer: Extension Professionals in the Development Sector.” She emphasised that extension today is people-centred and development-oriented, requiring professionals to act as facilitators, capacity builders, and change agents.

This was followed by Dr. Sreeram Vishnu’s session on Textometry and Social Network Analysis, which introduced advanced qualitative research methods used to analyse communication patterns and stakeholder relationships within extension systems.

The day also included a field visit to Pragati Exotica Farm, where we gained exposure to high-value horticulture, bonsai cultivation (60–80 years old), indoor plant management, and international plant trade. This visit offered practical insights into specialised agribusiness models.

The visit to the Statue of Equality, Hyderabad, was spiritually enriching and reflective, reinforcing values of harmony, inclusiveness, and unity. Overall, Day 4 blended academic learning with experiential and value-based exposure.



Day 5

Day 5 Diary: Reflection, Commitment, and the Way Forward

The final day marked a meaningful conclusion to the programme. The day began with Dr. Saravanan Raj's session on "Democratising Innovation and Technology Transfer: Agri-Innovation through Incubation and Startups." He highlighted inclusive innovation, incubation ecosystems, and the role of extension professionals in promoting agri-startups.

This was followed by Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman's session on Policy Engagement for Agricultural Extension, which emphasised evidence-based policymaking and advocacy.



The Commitment Card Activity (Head, Heart, Hands) enabled deep reflection and transformed learning into actionable commitments. The programme concluded with feedback sharing, take-home messages, action planning, and certificate distribution, symbolising growth, gratitude, and readiness to serve.

A Five-Day Experience

The National Youth Professional Development Programme (NYPDP) at MANAGE was a deeply enriching and transformative learning experience for me, both professionally and personally. The programme provided a structured, disciplined, and intellectually stimulating environment that encouraged continuous learning, reflection, and self-development. From the very first day, the institutional culture at MANAGE instilled a strong sense of responsibility, professionalism, and purpose.

The training offered a well-balanced blend of conceptual clarity, practical exposure, and reflective learning. Expert sessions helped me understand agricultural extension beyond traditional technology transfer, highlighting its evolving role in development, innovation, policy engagement, and inclusive growth. Exposure to research methodologies, digital competencies, monitoring and evaluation tools, and career planning significantly strengthened my academic and professional outlook.

One of the most valuable aspects of the programme was the emphasis on real-world relevance. Field exposure and experiential learning bridged the gap between theory and practice, while sessions on entrepreneurship, policy engagement, and innovation expanded my understanding of emerging opportunities in the extension and development sector. The reflective activities encouraged me to critically analyse my learning and convert it into meaningful commitments.

Equally important was the opportunity to interact with peers from diverse academic, social, and regional backgrounds. These interactions enhanced my communication skills, broadened my perspective, and reinforced the importance of teamwork and collaboration. The guidance and mentorship provided by experienced faculty members created a supportive and motivating learning atmosphere.

Overall, the NYPDP strengthened my confidence, clarified my career direction, and reinforced my commitment to serve as a responsible and ethical agricultural extension professional. The programme has equipped me with the knowledge, skills, values, and motivation required to contribute meaningfully to agricultural and rural development.

Atmosphere and Environment

The training environment at MANAGE during the National Youth Professional Development Programme (NYPDP) was highly professional, disciplined, and motivating. From the first day itself, the campus culture reflected punctuality, order, and a strong commitment to excellence, which created a focused and positive learning atmosphere. The structured schedule and systematic conduct of sessions encouraged seriousness and responsibility towards learning.

The classroom environment was interactive and learner-centred. Faculty members promoted discussions, reflections, and group activities, enabling active participation rather than passive learning. Activities such as recap sessions, reflective exercises, focus group discussions, and experience sharing enhanced critical thinking and communication skills. This participatory approach made learning meaningful and engaging.

Another important aspect of the training environment was its inclusiveness. Participants from diverse academic and regional backgrounds interacted freely, fostering peer learning, teamwork, and mutual respect. Such diversity enriched discussions and broadened perspectives.



The guidance and mentorship provided by experienced faculty members further strengthened the learning environment. Their approachability, real-world insights, and emphasis on ethics, professionalism, and personal development created a supportive and inspiring atmosphere. Overall, the training environment at MANAGE was holistic and empowering, nurturing not only academic growth but also discipline, leadership qualities, and a strong sense of purpose among participants.

Change in Perspective

Before participating in the National Young Professional Development Programme (NYPDP), my understanding of agricultural extension was largely limited to the dissemination of technologies and advisory services to farmers. However, the programme significantly transformed my perspective by presenting extension as a comprehensive, people-centred, and development-oriented profession.

Through expert sessions and reflective activities, I came to understand that agricultural extension goes beyond transferring scientific knowledge. It involves empowering farmers, strengthening institutions, facilitating innovation, engaging with policies, and addressing social and economic challenges in rural areas. I learned that extension professionals today act as facilitators, researchers, innovators, and change agents who connect farmers with markets, technologies, startups, and policymaking processes.

Overall, the programme helped me recognise agricultural extension as a dynamic and evolving field that requires technical competence, empathy, professionalism, and continuous learning. This shift in perspective has strengthened my motivation to contribute meaningfully to agricultural and rural development as a responsible extension professional.



Training Environment

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What I Appreciated Most

What I appreciated most about the National Young Professional Development Programme (NYPDP) at MANAGE was its holistic and purpose-driven approach to learning. The programme went beyond theoretical knowledge and focused equally on professional values, personal development, and real-world application. The emphasis on discipline, punctuality, and ethical conduct created a strong foundation for professional growth.

I particularly appreciated the quality of faculty interaction. Experienced resource persons shared not only academic insights but also practical experiences, which made the sessions highly relevant and inspiring. Their approachability and encouragement of open discussions created a supportive learning environment. Sessions on agricultural extension, digital competencies, research priorities, monitoring and evaluation, gender inclusion, and policy engagement broadened my understanding of the field and its evolving role.

Another aspect I valued deeply was the participatory learning process. Activities such as reflective exercises, group discussions, focus group demonstrations, field visits, and commitment card activities encouraged self-reflection and active involvement. Interactions with peers from diverse backgrounds enriched my perspective and strengthened my communication and teamwork skills.



Overall, I appreciated how the programme instilled clarity of purpose, confidence, and motivation, preparing me not only as an extension professional but also as a responsible and committed individual ready to contribute to sustainable agricultural development.



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