



# National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

## Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



### MANAGE NYPDP- Prepping Tomorrows' Agricultural Extension Catalysts

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Participated in the MANAGE-NYPDP at MANAGE Hyderabad during December 22-27, 2025.

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## Introduction

The National Young Professionals Development Programme (NYPDP) aptly fulfills its designation by bringing together participants from various Indian states for a transformative experience. This initiative transcended mere training in competencies, career opportunities, and research priorities within Agricultural Extension; it constituted a five-day journey of self-discovery, networking, and personal development. My expectations for the program were surpassed.

## Key Learnings from Each Day of the Programme

### Day 1

Day 1 The program commenced with enthusiasm, offering sessions that provided a novel perspective on agricultural extension and self-reflection. Participants were encouraged to engage in dialogue, which alleviated anxiety. The group activity facilitated familiarity, discussion, and mutual learning.



## Day 2

Day 2 began with a recap session titled "Unlearn, Learn, and Will Apply," emphasizing the significance of unlearning and application, rather than mere acquisition of knowledge. Exposure to the dynamic and evolving role of extension, along with digital tools and platforms for competency acquisition, broadened our knowledge base. Group activities and interactions with interns and alumni facilitated the exchange of knowledge and experiences.



## Day 3

Day 3 addressed research methodology through sessions on the Delphi technique and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The storytelling session was particularly engaging and interactive. The practical FGD session provided hands-on experience in conducting such discussions. The monitoring and evaluation session enhanced understanding of their utility in extension program planning and research. Sessions on gender equality, entrepreneurship, and organic farming reinforced the understanding of inclusive and sustainable extension approaches.



## Day 4

Day 4 commenced with reflective notes on key learnings from the preceding days. The focus was on extension opportunities and essential skill sets in the development sector, alongside the applicability of qualitative research methods such as Social Network Analysis and Textometry in Agricultural Extension. A visit to Pragati Exotica expanded our understanding of operating an entrepreneurial venture, including associated costs, challenges, and opportunities. A tour of The Statue of Equality provided a sense of serenity and peace.



## Day 5

The final day synthesized the understanding of extension as a global subject. A significant insight from the Policy Engagement session was that extension professionals are tasked with influencing policies, not formulating them. We were introduced to global extension platforms such as AESA, APIRAS, and GFRAS, and learned the prerequisites for drafting a policy brief. Commitment Cards facilitated the consolidation of learning outcomes. The valedictory session was both reflective and emotional, as participants shared their five-day experiences. The programme concluded with a certification ceremony.



### A Five-Day Experience

From the initial excitement of fulfilling a long-held aspiration to participate in the programme to the emotional conclusion, this journey has been remarkable. It has been a journey of learning, expression, confidence building, networking, self-discovery, and gratitude. The well-structured, meticulously planned training programme left an indelible impression, which will remain etched in my memory. The peer connections established in a short span have opened avenues for future research collaborations.



## Change in Perspective

The internalization of external perceptions that categorized the discipline as peripheral to the pure sciences and offering limited opportunities underwent a transformation following the program. I now perceive my discipline as a nexus, integrating various fields and presenting substantial global opportunities, contingent upon the acquisition of requisite competencies. To effect change, one must first undergo personal transformation.

## Atmosphere and Environment

The lush-green campus, complemented by world-class accommodations and dining, fostered a sense of appreciation and value. The meticulously curated sessions, dedicated faculty and resource persons, and the dynamic sequence of activities-blending theoretical knowledge, practical insights, group exercises, and exposure visits-cultivated a creative and seamless learning environment that stimulated curiosity, critical thinking, and self-awareness.



## Peer Interactions and Networking

Engagement with diverse participants from eight states facilitated the exchange of ideas and the potential for future research collaborations, alongside cultural exchanges and recreational activities. The group exercises provided a secure environment for open dialogue and collective learning



## What I Appreciate

The program encouraged each participant to express their opinions without fear, fostering a supportive environment that transcended language barriers and built confidence. The faculty and resource persons were highly inspirational and dedicated. The emphasis on the principle, "Be the change you want to see in the world," was particularly impactful.



## Most Significant Takeaway

- The processes of unlearning and application are as crucial as learning itself.
- Documentation is a highly rewarding skill.
- Adopting a mindset that views challenges as opportunities is essential.
- Specialization is pivotal for securing employment in any sector.
- While everyone holds opinions, action is paramount.
- Honesty, commitment, and consistency are not mere qualities; they constitute the core of human character that should be embraced by all.
- The greatness of a discipline is defined by its professionals.

## Action plan

As previously stated, "While everyone holds opinions, action is paramount." This initiative began with active engagement on LinkedIn for internships and exploring courses on online platforms while deciding on a subject for specialization. It involved analyzing job descriptions rather than job titles. I will recommend the program to my juniors and classmates as part of my contribution to strengthen the NYPDP legacy.



## A Sense of Gratitude

As I previously cited Everett M. Rogers in my feedback session address, “Change agents don’t impose change, they facilitate it.” In this context, I wish to convey my profound gratitude to Dr. Sarvanan Raj (Director, Agricultural Extension, MANAGE) for his dedication, sincerity, and commitment to the field of Agricultural Extension, as well as for the successful implementation of the NYPDP program aimed at cultivating the next generation of young professionals. His additional session on the evening of Day 4 exemplified his passion for the discipline. I also extend my sincere appreciation to Dr. S. Raahalya (MANAGE Fellow) for her dedicated efforts in delivering the sessions and ensuring the smooth execution of the entire program. I am grateful to the esteemed resource persons for their impactful sessions and to all the coordinators and staff for their earnest efforts. I thank all my NYPDP peers for this memorable experience.



## My MANAGE NYPDP Journey

My journey fulfilled my long-held aspiration of attending the program, which taught me 'How to think, rather than what to think.' It was a personally and professionally transformative experience that illuminated the potential of extension and the ways in which I could contribute to it.



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