



National Young Professionals Development Program (NYPDP)

MANAGE-University Alliance for Advancing Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

Reflections That Cultivate Tomorrow's Agricultural Extension



From Learning to Leadership — The NYPDP Journey

Ms. Dhanalakshmi M

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 **Dhanalakshmi Manimuthu**

Introduction

Key Learnings

The five-day National Young Professional Development Programme (NYPDP) held at MANAGE, Hyderabad, from 22nd December to 27th December 2025, was a meaningful and enriching learning experience for me. The programme began by helping me reflect on my own strengths, limitations, and professional aspirations, which gradually enhanced my confidence and clarity about my role in Agricultural Extension.

Throughout the programme, I gained practical insights into the changing dimensions of extension, where the focus is no longer limited to technology dissemination alone, but extends to participatory approaches, entrepreneurship development, gender sensitisation, digital tools, monitoring and evaluation, and policy linkages. The interactive lectures, group discussions, hands-on activities, and field-based learning sessions made the concepts more relatable and application-oriented. Exposure to research prioritisation, qualitative research techniques, monitoring and evaluation tools, and impact assessment strengthened my understanding of how academic research can be aligned with field realities and development needs.

Regular recap sessions and group presentations improved my communication skills and helped me overcome hesitation in expressing ideas. Interactions with peers from diverse academic backgrounds highlighted the importance of teamwork, networking, and shared learning.

On the whole, my experience in the NYPDP programme helped me build a more confident, thoughtful, and professional perspective. It enhanced my trust in my own abilities and guided me to move ahead with a stronger sense of responsibility, direction, and dedication as an aspiring Agricultural Extension professional.

Day 1

During the reflection session Day 1 led by Dr Saravanan Raj, I came to realise that personal awareness is crucial for professional development. This session prompted me to introspect and identify my strengths, weaknesses, and areas needing improvement as I prepare for a career in Agricultural Extension. The discussions highlighted that modern extension work requires not only technical expertise but also soft skills like communication, adaptability, leadership, and problem-solving.

The group exercise conducted during the session illuminated the evolving challenges faced by extension professionals and underscored the importance of continuously enhancing skills in response to social, technological, and policy changes. Interactions facilitated by Dr Sandipamu Raahalya and NYPDP alumni encouraged open communication, helped me overcome my hesitations, and boosted my confidence in sharing ideas. Listening to alumni stories also provided insight into the varied career paths available in extension beyond traditional roles.



This session made it clear to me that having a clear purpose and self-direction is vital for effective leadership in Agricultural Extension. I learnt that an extension professional must be self-aware, professionally skilled, and ready to seize new opportunities in research, development, entrepreneurship, and policy engagement. Session I laid a solid foundation for the program by helping me align my personal growth with the changing demands and opportunities in the field of Agricultural Extension.

Day 2

Day 2 with Dr. Raahalya Unlearn–Learn–Apply framework provided me with a clear path for my academic pursuits and long-term career planning. This approach highlighted the necessity of discarding outdated methods, embracing new insights, and applying them effectively in real-world extension scenarios.

The session prompted me to consider the importance of continuous learning in extension, as it adapts to the evolving needs of farmers and technological progress. Dr Saravanan Raj emphasised the importance of identifying specific research priorities and areas of specialisation, which clarified for me that impactful research should be problem-focused, relevant, and in line with field realities. Through discussions on ICTs and digital tools, I came to understand that modern agricultural extension increasingly depends on digital platforms, data-driven decision-making, and innovative communication strategies to engage a wide range of stakeholders.



The session on next-generation extension methods expanded my perspective on how digital tools and advanced social research techniques can enhance extension efforts and improve impact evaluation. The group exercise fostered creative thinking and allowed me to explore new ideas on effectively integrating technology into extension services. This session made me realise that adaptability, digital proficiency, and a willingness to innovate are crucial traits for a future-ready extension professional. I recognised that extension roles are evolving beyond traditional fieldwork, requiring professionals to serve as facilitators, researchers, and digital communicators in a rapidly changing agricultural environment.

Day 3

Day 3 provided me with a comprehensive and practical insight into how research quality, inclusiveness, and sustainability impact the effectiveness of Agricultural Extension. Dr Parmveer Singh's session on the Delphi Technique enlightened me on the systematic application of consensus-based decision-making in research and development planning, particularly for intricate agricultural challenges that necessitate expert opinions and iterative analysis.

Prof. (Dr.) P. V. K. Sasidhar's sessions on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact Assessment highlighted the significance of evaluating outcomes rather than merely focusing on implementation. I realised that ongoing evaluation is crucial for understanding the relevance, efficiency, and long-term effects of extension programs, and that evidence-based assessment enhances accountability and decision-making.



Dr. Mahesh Chander's sessions on gender equality, entrepreneurship, and organic farming expanded my view on inclusive and sustainable development. I recognised the importance of gender-sensitive, market-orientated, and environmentally responsible extension strategies. Engaging in the Focus Group Discussion improved my qualitative research skills and demonstrated how community interactions can yield valuable insights for credible extension and effective policy development.

Day 4

Day 4 broadened my perspective on the wide range of career paths available to Agricultural Extension professionals beyond the conventional roles. Dr Krithika Sundaram's presentation highlighted how extension experts are increasingly involved in development organisations, NGOs, and social research projects. I learnt that modern extension work encompasses program design, documentation, impact evaluation, and community interaction, rather than solely focusing on technology dissemination.



Dr Sreeram Vishnumoorthy's (KAU) sessions on qualitative research methods greatly enhanced my analytical viewpoint. Understanding Social Network Analysis helped me grasp how relationships, information flow, and stakeholder connections affect development outcomes. The introduction to Textometry demonstrated how textual data, such as interviews, reports, and narratives, can be systematically analysed to derive meaningful insights in social science research. These methods allowed me to view qualitative research as a structured, scientific, and effective tool for comprehending complex social realities in agriculture and rural development

The field visit to C-DAC in Hyderabad was particularly insightful. It introduced me to the use of ICTs, artificial intelligence, machine learning, and digital tools in the agricultural sector. I realised how technology-driven solutions can aid decision-making, knowledge dissemination, and innovation in extension systems. This visit helped me link theoretical learning with practical technological applications. Overall, this session deepened my understanding of extension as a multidisciplinary and forward-looking profession, integrating development practice, qualitative research, and digital innovation to effectively tackle agricultural and rural challenges.



Day 5

Day 5 offered me a thorough insight into the interconnectedness of innovation, entrepreneurship, and policy engagement within Agricultural Extension. The discussion on Agri-innovation through incubation illuminated the pivotal role of incubation centres in converting research concepts and technologies into viable solutions for farmers and rural youth. I discovered that extension professionals are not just facilitators of technology transfer but also catalysts for innovation ecosystems that nurture startups, agri-businesses, and value-chain development.

Dr Rasheed Sulaiman's session highlighted the significance of policy engagement and evidence-based advocacy. I realised that extension professionals play a vital role in converting field experiences, research outcomes, and farmer needs into insights relevant to policy. This session made me aware that effective agricultural policies rely on credible evidence derived from thorough research, monitoring, and evaluation, with extension professionals serving as a crucial link in this chain.



Training Experience

The NYPDP training programme, conducted over five days, was a highly enriching experience that played an important role in my personal and professional development. The programme offered a supportive and participatory learning environment that encouraged active involvement, improved my communication skills, and strengthened my self-confidence. Each day was carefully structured and logically connected, allowing learning to progress gradually through self-reflection, research orientation, interactive discussions, experiential activities, and field exposure.



This systematic approach helped me develop greater clarity and confidence in my understanding of Agricultural Extension and its practical relevance. In addition to academic learning, the programme provided a valuable platform for peer interaction and professional networking. Meaningful engagement with fellow participants, alumni, and experienced resource persons enabled the open exchange of ideas, experiences, and career aspirations. These interactions broadened my perspective and helped me appreciate diverse viewpoints within the field of extension.

Most importantly, the NYPDP helped me gain clarity of purpose, enhance my practical competencies, and build strong self-belief as a future extension professional. The training motivated me to move beyond theoretical knowledge and focus on applying my learning in a purposeful and impactful manner. The NYPDP experience has inspired me to approach my academic and professional journey with greater responsibility, confidence, and commitment.

Change in Perspective



The NYPDP programme helped me realise that Agricultural Extension offers diverse professional opportunities across multiple sectors, especially when one develops specialised expertise in specific areas. I now view extension as a discipline that promotes creativity, leadership, and problem-solving, rather than being confined to traditional service-oriented roles. This new understanding has encouraged me to see extension as a platform for innovation and meaningful impact, where professionals can actively contribute to sustainable development and social transformation.

Before participating in the programme, I largely perceived Agricultural Extension as a field-level discipline with limited career options, mainly associated with academic pathways or competitive examinations. However, the NYPDP experience completely reshaped this perception by presenting extension as a dynamic and interdisciplinary profession. I came to understand that it goes beyond conventional boundaries by integrating research, policy engagement, digital technologies, entrepreneurship, and community-based development.

Atmosphere and Environment

The learning environment at MANAGE, Hyderabad, was both professionally enriching and personally motivating. The programme created a space that encouraged curiosity, open communication, and active participation at every stage. Continuous interaction with mentors, faculty members, alumni, and fellow participants made the learning process collaborative and engaging. The balanced combination of interactive classroom sessions, practical demonstrations, and field-based exposure helped bridge theory with real-world extension practice. Discussions were open and inclusive, allowing participants to freely share ideas, ask questions, and reflect on their learning experiences.



The supportive atmosphere and positive peer interactions strengthened my confidence and helped me develop clarity in my professional outlook. The dynamic and encouraging environment at MANAGE played a key role in making the NYPDP experience meaningful, growth-oriented, and professionally inspiring.



What I Appreciate

What I found most valuable in the NYPDP programme was its emphasis on learning through application rather than theory alone. Each session encouraged me to think about how concepts could be translated into practice within real extension contexts. The use of interactive discussions, practical exercises, and real-world illustrations helped me develop a deeper understanding and greater confidence in my role as a future agricultural extension professional.

Equally enriching were the opportunities to interact with experienced faculty members and alumni, whose field-based experiences offered insights beyond academic textbooks. Their guidance and feedback supported my self-assessment and motivated me to improve continuously. By effectively integrating academic learning with field exposure and leadership development, the programme created a comprehensive learning experience. The NYPDP strengthened my practical competencies, sharpened my research focus, and played a significant role in shaping my professional growth.

Peer Interaction and Networking

Networking during the NYPDP programme was one of the most valuable aspects of the entire learning experience. Interacting with participants from diverse academic backgrounds and regions allowed me to gain exposure to varied perspectives, ideas, and approaches within agricultural extension. These interactions helped me understand how extension practices differ across contexts and how interdisciplinary thinking strengthens problem-solving and innovation. Open discussions with peers created a supportive space to share experiences, challenges, and aspirations, which encouraged self-reflection and mutual learning.

Listening to others' journeys helped me reassess my own goals and recognise new possibilities for growth. The programme also provided meaningful opportunities to connect with alumni and professionals, offering guidance, inspiration, and potential mentorship. Through collaborative activities and informal interactions, I learnt the importance of teamwork, communication, and relationship-building in professional development.

The connections formed during the programme extended beyond academic exchange, fostering a sense of community and long-term professional association. The networking experience at NYPDP enriched my learning, strengthened my confidence, and reinforced the value of collaboration and shared knowledge in building a successful career in Agricultural Extension.



Most Significant Takeaway

My most important takeaway from attending the NYPDP at MANAGE, Hyderabad, is the realisation that agricultural extension is not limited to conventional field activities, but is a broad, evolving, and interdisciplinary profession with strong national and global relevance. The programme helped me understand the value of self-discipline, clarity of purpose, and continuous self-improvement in shaping a successful professional career. Through interactive sessions, expert guidance, and peer learning, I learnt that true impact in extension, research, and policy emerges when technical knowledge is combined with the right attitude, confidence, and commitment to society.

The mentorship of experienced resource persons and the exchange of ideas with fellow participants inspired me to view challenges as opportunities for growth. Overall, NYPDP strengthened my motivation, broadened my perspective, and encouraged me to pursue my future career in agricultural development with greater confidence, responsibility, and determination.



Action plan

After participating in the NYPDP at MANAGE, Hyderabad, I plan to apply the insights gained by strengthening my academic and professional work through research-orientated, innovative, and community-centred approaches.

I intend to integrate digital extension tools, participatory methods, and evidence-based practices into my research and field-level activities to enhance their relevance and impact. I will focus on developing expertise in specific areas of agricultural extension, such as monitoring and evaluation, qualitative research methods, and policy analysis, enabling me to contribute meaningfully to development programmes and policy discussions.

The exposure to interdisciplinary perspectives has encouraged me to actively seek collaborations with peers, institutions, and professionals for joint research and extension initiatives. The guidance and motivation received during the programme will continue to inspire me to maintain high standards of professionalism, continuous learning, and social responsibility. I aim to translate the knowledge, skills, and values gained from NYPDP into practical actions that contribute to sustainable agricultural and rural development.



My MANAGE NYPDP Journey

My journey as a participant in the NYPDP at MANAGE, Hyderabad, was a deeply enriching and transformative learning experience. The programme provided a unique platform to interact with enthusiastic and talented peers from diverse academic and regional backgrounds across India, fostering a spirit of collaboration, mutual learning, and professional bonding. Each session was thoughtfully designed and offered valuable exposure to contemporary issues, innovative practices, and emerging perspectives in agricultural extension and rural development.

The guidance of experienced mentors and resource persons helped bridge the gap between theory and practice, while group discussions and experiential activities enhanced my critical thinking, communication skills, and confidence. Beyond academic enrichment, the NYPDP journey strengthened my professional outlook and reinforced the importance of commitment, adaptability, and lifelong learning.

The networking opportunities created during the programme have laid the foundation for long-term professional relationships and collaborations. Overall, this journey at MANAGE has strengthened my passion for agricultural extension and motivated me to pursue my future career with clarity, responsibility, and determination to contribute meaningfully to agricultural and rural development.



Ms. Dhanalakshmi M

IInd year M.Sc. Agricultural Extension Education,
Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology,
Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU),
Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu .
e-mail: dhanalakshmi2001mani@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>