



MANAGE Internship: Building Competence Through Experience



A Journey of Learning, Growth, and Gratitude

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 [Thirumalai Nambi S](#)

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”

— Benjamin Franklin

Coming Full Circle: From Participant to Being Part of MANAGE

“MANAGE is a place I now hold close to my heart, one I hope to return to again in some capacity.” These were the words I wrote in my diary as I completed the National Young Professionals Development Programme (NYPDP), an experience that became a significant turning point in both my personal and professional journey. The programme not only broadened my understanding of agricultural extension research, practice, and policy but also inspired me to strive towards becoming a better version of myself. Little did I know that this aspiration would soon become a reality through the opportunity to join MANAGE-CIA as an intern. So, returning to MANAGE felt like a homecoming.



My academic and research interests in Agri-startups further strengthened this aspiration. Through my research, I developed a keen interest in understanding the startup ecosystem and its role in agricultural transformation. However, I felt the need to move beyond academic learning and gain practical exposure to the diverse stakeholders, processes, and institutional mechanisms that support entrepreneurship and innovation in agriculture. Recognizing MANAGE-CIA as one of India’s leading agribusiness incubation centres, I believed it would provide an ideal environment to deepen my understanding of the ecosystem, apply my knowledge in real-world settings, and learn. With the same enthusiasm and sense of purpose that I carried as an NYPDP participant, I joined MANAGE-CIA as an intern, looking forward to a journey of continuous learning, professional growth, and meaningful contribution.

My First Steps, Built on Trust



The MANAGE clock always seems to run faster than the rest of the world, and it swept me along from the very first day itself. My first task as an intern was to refine a concept note for the National Workshop on Reimagining India’s Agri-Incubation Ecosystem: Innovations, Good Practices and Future Pathways. What initially appeared to be a simple writing assignment soon evolved into an opportunity to become part of the workshop organizing team. At MANAGE, I quickly realized that the best introduction to the work culture is to become actively involved in the work itself.

Being involved in the planning and execution of a national event was both exciting and challenging. It provided me with a firsthand understanding of the effort, coordination, and attention to detail required behind the scenes to organize a successful programme. More importantly, the trust that Dr. Saravanan Raj Sir placed in me by assigning this responsibility from day one gave me a great sense of confidence and accountability. It made me feel that we were not merely interns observing activities from the sidelines, but individuals expected to contribute meaningfully to the team's efforts. As the preparations progressed, I found myself assisting with various aspects of organizing the programme from designing the workshop brochure and coordinating schedules to hosting activities and documenting the proceedings.



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Each task, whether big or small, became a valuable learning opportunity. Being part of an organizing team for the first time gave me a deeper appreciation of the planning, coordination, and commitment required to conduct a successful event. It helped me realize the importance of the countless activities and the efforts of the people working behind the scenes contributions that often go unnoticed when we participate in programmes as attendees.



Finding My Place in the Extension Community

The most memorable experiences of my three-month internship journey was being part of MANAGE Dialogue 2026: International Workshop on the Future of Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services. More than just an event, it was a unique learning experience that exposed me to the diverse and evolving landscape of agricultural extension. Engaging with the perspectives of experienced practitioners provided reflections and insights that are rarely gained through conventional classroom learning, making the experience both intellectually enriching and personally transformative. For me, it was the first opportunity to participate in a programme of this nature, where discussions extended beyond technical subjects to broader questions concerning the purpose, relevance, and future direction of agricultural extension.



A particularly inspiring aspect of the workshop was its inclusive environment. As a young professional sharing the same platform and discussion spaces with experienced professionals, researchers, and practitioners without hierarchical barriers created a strong sense of belonging and confidence. Equally valuable were the networking opportunities the workshop offered. Interactions with international experts, extension practitioners, researchers, and development professionals from across the country became some of the most enriching moments of the event. Beyond the knowledge shared, the humility, openness, and genuine curiosity of senior professionals to engage with students left a lasting impression on me.

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MY MEETING NOTES

The MANAGE Dialogue 2026
International Workshop on the Future of Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services
National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad
24-26 February 2026.



In this meeting note, Thirumalai Nambi reflects on his experiences and key takeaways from The MANAGE Dialogue 2026: International Workshop on the Future of Agricultural Extension and Advisory Services.

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“We learn not from experience alone, but from reflecting on experience.”

— John Dewey

Documenting Good Practices, Discovering Great Lessons

Another important task entrusted to me during the internship was documenting and writing good practice notes on various MANAGE-CIA programmes. At first, I viewed it primarily as a writing assignment. However, as I began interacting with programme documents, reports, and the people involved, it gradually became an opportunity to understand the deeper purpose and philosophy behind each initiative. Learning about the intention with which these programmes were conceived, the challenges they sought to address, and the way they evolved over time was particularly fascinating.

What appeared from the outside as a single programme often represented years of learning, and continuous refinement. Exploring the multiple approaches, strategies and events that contributed to the development of each programme helped me appreciate the complexity involved in designing meaningful interventions within the agricultural innovation ecosystem. Through this exercise, I gained an appreciation for the planning, strategic thinking, and persistent efforts that take place behind the scenes. It strengthened my understanding of how institutions create impact over time and highlighted the importance of documenting experiences so that valuable lessons can be shared, replicated, and improved upon in the future.



Stories Behind the Numbers

Data analysis, infographic development, and creating a comprehensive database of MANAGE-CIA startups constituted another important component of my internship. At first glance, these appeared to be straightforward technical assignments. However, once I began working on them, I realized the considerable time, effort, and attention to detail required behind every dataset and every piece of information. Working on the startup database provided me with a broader understanding of the diversity and scale of the MANAGE-CIA incubation ecosystem.

Journey Behind the Success

Documenting the success stories of entrepreneurs was one of the most interesting assignments during my internship. Beyond collecting information about startups and their achievements, it provided an opportunity to understand the personal and professional journeys behind each venture. As I interacted with entrepreneurs and reviewed their experiences, I realized that every startup had a unique story shaped by challenges, risks, failures, learning experiences, and perseverance. As part of the internship, I also had the opportunity for a startup field visit to Maharashtra. Travelling to a new state and navigating language differences was an enriching experience in itself. Observing the functioning of startups and interactions with the startup founders were particularly insightful.

Sharing the Journey



Conducting outreach sessions and sharing my experiences from the National Young Professionals Development Programme (NYPDP) with juniors was one of the proudest moments of my internship journey. Having once been a participant sitting in the audience, listening to the experiences of others and aspiring to be part of similar opportunities, it was a fulfilling experience to now stand before students and share my experience.

Learning, Adapting, Evolving

One of the biggest adjustments for me was learning to manage multiple responsibilities simultaneously. Constantly shifting between different tasks and priorities was a new experience. At times it was challenging, but over time, I slowly adapted to the pace and learned the importance of time management, prioritization, and flexibility. In this context, a piece of advice often shared by Dr. Saravanan Raj Sir stayed with me: "When you enjoy what you do, work stops feeling like an obligation." As the internship progressed, I gradually began to understand the deeper meaning behind these words. Over the course of three months, I had the opportunity to explore multiple dimensions of work and develop a wide range of competencies. One of the most significant areas of growth was in my writing skills, something I have always wanted to improve.

Skills, Trust, and Growth

The internship exposed me to different forms of professional writing, including concept notes, proceedings reports, meeting notes, workshop documentation, and success stories. Each assignment challenged me to think differently, communicate clearly, and adapt my writing to different audiences and purposes.



The internship also helped me improve my public speaking and communication skills. Opportunities to host sessions, introduce speakers, conduct outreach programmes, and interact with diverse stakeholders gradually helped me overcome hesitation and self-doubt. Alongside these, I developed practical skills in designing, data visualization, coordination, professional communication, and navigating workplace culture.

What made the experience particularly meaningful was the trust placed in us. Throughout the internship, we were encouraged to take initiative, handle responsibilities independently, and contribute our own ideas. Rather than being restricted to predefined assignments, we were given opportunities to learn through ownership and participation. This trust motivated me to perform better, challenge myself, and discover capabilities that I had not fully recognized before.



Many of the learnings came not only from the tasks assigned to me but also from observing the people around me. Being part of a diverse team was a learning experience in itself. Every individual brought unique perspectives, strengths, and approaches to work. Watching how different people approached challenges, managed responsibilities, communicated ideas, and collaborated with others broadened my own understanding of professional work. Equally important was witnessing the effort and coordination that went into even the smallest activities. It helped me understand how institutions function and how meaningful outcomes are often the result of collective effort rather than individual contributions.

“Every person you meet knows something you don’t; learn from them.”

— H. Jackson Brown Jr.

I am truly grateful to all my mentors and colleagues who made this journey enriching and memorable. I am sincerely grateful to Dr. Saravanan Raj, Director (Agricultural Extension), MANAGE and CEO, MANAGE-CIA, for creating an environment that continually strives for improvement and pursues excellence. His vision, energy, and unwavering commitment to strengthening agricultural extension, promoting agripreneurship, and nurturing young professionals have been truly inspiring. I owe special thanks to Ms. Usha Sree, Manager, MANAGE-CIA, whose constant support and practical guidance helped me navigate challenges and adapt to the work environment. I also extend my gratitude to Dr. Raahalya, Innovation Scaling Specialist, MANAGE-FISHub, whose valuable insights, constant encouragement, and willingness to provide guidance whenever needed have greatly enriched my learning experience. I am grateful to Dr. Vetri Selvi, MANAGE Fellow, whose guidance helped me appreciate the importance of attention to detail and approaching every responsibility with sincerity and commitment. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to Mr. Srinivas, Ms. Priyanka, and Mr. Karunakar, whose readiness to guide and assist whenever required created a welcoming and supportive environment. I am also grateful to my fellow interns, whose companionship, countless discussions, shared responsibilities, exchange of ideas, and willingness to support one another made this journey both enjoyable and enriching. Whether through professional guidance, practical assistance, or simple words of encouragement, all of their contributions played an important role in making this internship a rewarding and memorable experience



“Success is a journey, not a destination.” — Arthur Ashe

As I complete the first three months of my internship journey at MANAGE-CIA, I look back with a deep sense of gratitude for the opportunities, experiences, and learning that have shaped me thus far. These months have provided far more than professional exposure; they have broadened my perspectives, strengthened my skills, challenged me to step beyond my comfort zone, and helped me grow both personally and professionally. Every task, interaction, and experience has contributed to my understanding of the agricultural innovation ecosystem and the values that drive meaningful institutional work.

At the same time, I recognize that this journey is only halfway through. With three more months ahead, I look forward to making the most of new responsibilities, exploring new learning opportunities, and contributing more meaningfully to the work of MANAGE-CIA. The experiences of the past months have given me confidence, direction, and a stronger sense of purpose, and I am excited to continue this journey with the same enthusiasm, curiosity, and commitment that brought me here in the first place.



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