Progress Report

Digital Marketing Skills for Agri-Startups

Batch - VIII

Centre for Innovation and Agripreneurship (CIA)
National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE)
(An Organisation of Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India)
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad-500030, Telangana, India

Program Director

Dr. Saravanan Raj
Director (Agricultural Extension) &
CEO, MANAGE-CIA, MANAGE,
Hyderabad

Program Advisors

Ms. V. Usha Sree
(Manager)
Mr. Saurabh Kumar
(Business Executive)

Program coordinator

Ms. Sonam Chandrakar
(MANAGE-CIA Intern)
Ms. Kasaram Priyanka
(Data Entry Operator)

The Program

MANAGE-CIA launched the eight batch of its Digital Marketing Skills for Agri Startups training program on September 25 March, 2025. The program had 26 participants, the group consisted of Students, Agripreneurs, Researchers and Agri professionals. The program held in online during May 14-27, 2025.

Program Objective

The 10-Day Online Program aims to provide participants with:

Foundational Knowledge – A solid understanding of digital marketing concepts, trends, and strategic approaches.

Technical Skills – Hands-on learning in website development, SEO, SEM, web analytics, and mobile marketing.

Platform Proficiency – Practical exposure to social media tools, online marketing platforms, and email marketing techniques. Content & Engagement Strategies – Insights into content marketing and customer engagement to build and grow digital presence.

Sessions and Topics

The program was conducted online through WebEx platform, covering total 8 sessions and 3 days one-on-one mentoring session on various topics such as:

Session	Topic
Session 1	The Role of Digital Marketing in Accelerating Agri Startup Growth
Session 2	Digital Branding for Startups: Building and Managing Your Brand in the Online World
Session 3	An experience-sharing session on effective strategies to grow faster on Instagram.
Session 4	Relationship-Driven Digital Marketing for Agri Brands: Email, Influencer & WhatsApp-Vernacular Strategies
Session 5	AI Tools for Content Creation & Predictive Marketing
Session 6	Enhancing Online Presence through Strategic SEO Practices
Session 7	Your Startup's First Digital Step: Building a Website that Works
Session 8	Amplifying Agriculture Narratives through Short Form Videos on Social Media
Session 9,10,11	One-on-One session

Session Wise Report

Inauguration: 14th may 2025, (03:00 pm- 03:30 pm)

The inaugural session began with a warm and engaging welcome, fostering interaction among participants to set a collaborative tone for the program. Dr. Saravanan Raj, Director (Agricultural Extension) and CEO of MANAGE-CIA, delivered the inaugural address, emphasizing the critical role of digital tools in driving the growth of agri-businesses. He encouraged participants to actively engage and make the most of the learning opportunities throughout the program. This was followed by a brief introduction to the objectives and activities of MANAGE-CIA by Ms. Usha Sree, Manager at MANAGE-CIA, who outlined the Centre's role in nurturing agri-startups and promoting innovation in the agricultural sector. The session concluded with a vote of thanks by Ms. Sonam Chandrakar, Intern at MANAGE-CIA, acknowledging the presence and contributions of all dignitaries and participants.

Organising Team

Dr. Saravanan Raj
Director (Agricultural Extension) &
CEO, MANAGE-CIA, MANAGE, Hyderabad

Ms. V. Usha Sree
(Manager)

Mr. Saurabh Kumar
(Business Executive)

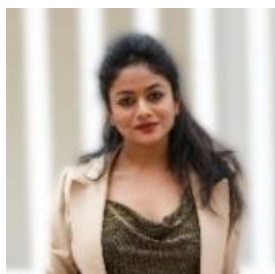**Ms. Sonam Chandrakar**
(MANAGE-CIA)

Ms. Kasaram Priyanka
(Data Entry Operator)

Mentors

Ms. Haritha
Digital Marketing Trainer

Ms Monisha Muralidhar
Social Media & PR

Mr. Vivek Shah
Agri-Content Creator

Ms. Sowmya S
Digital Marketing Trainer

Dean Dutta
Founder and CEO Digicides

Mr. Kumar B
Co-founder & CEO at DrPashu

Mr. Ayush Prashar
Founder of Nextdot

Session 1- The Role of Digital Marketing in Accelerating Agri-Startup Growth

Objective of the Session

The session aimed to help participants understand the basics of digital marketing, explore its various tools, types, and strategies, compare digital methods with traditional marketing techniques, and learn how to apply these insights to accelerate the growth of agri-startups.

Key Takeaways

A clear distinction was drawn between marketing and sales—where marketing focuses on creating awareness and generating interest, while sales is about converting that interest into actual deals.

Participants were introduced to push and pull marketing strategies. Push strategies involve direct promotion and distribution, whereas pull strategies rely on attracting audiences through SEO, advertisements, and consistent branding. The session also highlighted the differences between traditional marketing—such as TV, radio, and print—and digital marketing, which is more targeted, measurable, and cost-effective.

Core concepts of digital marketing were covered, including SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and SEM (Search Engine Marketing) for increasing visibility on search engines through organic and paid means. SMO (Social Media Optimization) and SMM (Social Media Marketing) were discussed as ways to build social media presence and run effective promotional campaigns. The session also introduced tools and platforms for website creation, such as Wix, WordPress, and Hostinger, with an emphasis on design, structure, and user experience (UX).

Participants learned basic graphic design skills using Canva—leveraging ready-to-use templates and customizing them with brand elements to create engaging visuals. The use of Google tools such as Google Analytics, Google Search Console, and Google Keyword Planner was demonstrated to track

website performance and improve digital strategies based on data insights.

In terms of agri-startup applications, the session emphasized selecting the right platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn for outreach, sharing relevant and useful content to engage audiences, and regularly analyzing digital performance metrics to make data-driven decisions and optimizations.

Session summary

By the end of the session, participants were equipped with foundational digital marketing knowledge and tools that can significantly boost their visibility, enhance engagement with target audiences, and contribute to sustained business growth in a competitive digital landscape.

Session 2 - Digital Branding for Startups: Building and Managing Your Brand in the Online World

Objective of the Session

The session focused on helping participants understand digital branding as more than just logos and colors. It emphasized the importance of personal storytelling and consistent visibility in building trust and engagement. The session aimed to show how agri-startups can leverage digital branding to grow, connect with their communities, and scale their businesses, while also guiding participants on identifying their next steps toward building an authentic and consistent online presence.
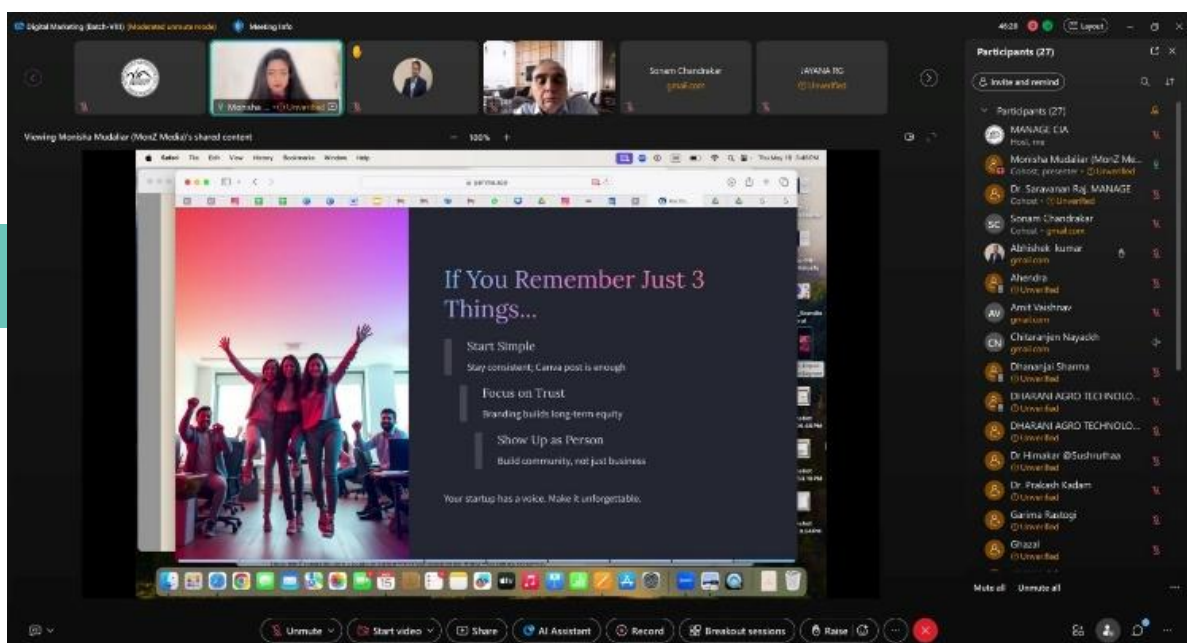
Key Takeaway

Participants explored brand-building strategies that go beyond visual identity. Tools like SEO, hashtags, Google Business, and online directories were recommended to increase discoverability. A strong emphasis was placed on authenticity—encouraging startups to share their journey, including both victories and challenges, to build a deeper
connection with their audience. Engagement tactics such   as

responding to messages, conducting polls, asking questions, and going live were highlighted as effective ways to establish trust and maintain an active dialogue with followers.

It was reinforced that digital branding is much more than just having a logo. It's about creating a consistent presence and delivering a meaningful experience. Founders were encouraged to make their stories visible, using platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube to share behind-the-scenes glimpses—such as harvesting, farm life, and local impact—bringing their startup's mission closer to the audience.

Three key takeaways were: start small by focusing on one or two digital platforms while sharing helpful and visual content consistently; define a specific niche to reach a targeted audience instead of trying to appeal to everyone; and incorporate the founder's voice, face, and personal journey to make the content relatable and memorable.

Session Summary

The session concluded by reinforcing that digital branding should feel human, honest, and helpful. Founder-led storytelling and showcasing real impact can help agri-startups build strong connections with both rural and urban communities. Importantly, participants were reminded that building a brand doesn't require a large budget—just clarity of purpose, consistent messaging, and genuine connection.

Session 3- An experience-sharing session on effective strategies to grow faster on Instagram.

Objective of the Session

The session focused on providing actionable insights into growing and managing an impactful Instagram presence. Led by Mr. Vivek Shah, it aimed to equip participants with strategies for increasing followers, engaging authentically with audience, and leveraging Instagram features effectively to boost visibility and brand growth.

Key Takeaway

One of the highlights was how Mr. Shah achieved 35K followers in a short span by consistently posting engaging and audience-focused content. He shared the importance of tailoring posts to resonate with a specific target group, maintaining a consistent posting schedule, and collaborating with relevant brands to boost credibility and reach. Authenticity was emphasized throughout the session, particularly through sharing behind-the-scenes content to foster deeper audience trust and connection.

Participants gained valuable insights into how the Instagram algorithm works—favoring consistent posting, meaningful engagement, and the strategic use of hashtags. Best practices around content creation were discussed, advising against spammy behavior and encouraging genuine interaction with followers. The session also emphasized the power of Instagram Reels and Stories in expanding reach and increasing engagement, thanks to their algorithmic preference and visual appeal.

An effective hashtag strategy was outlined, suggesting a balanced use of both popular and niche specific tags to improve discoverability. Additionally, the importance of tracking Instagram analytics and insights was underscored. Regular monitoring of metrics such as engagement rates, reach, and follower demographics can help refine content strategies and ensure alignment with audience preferences.
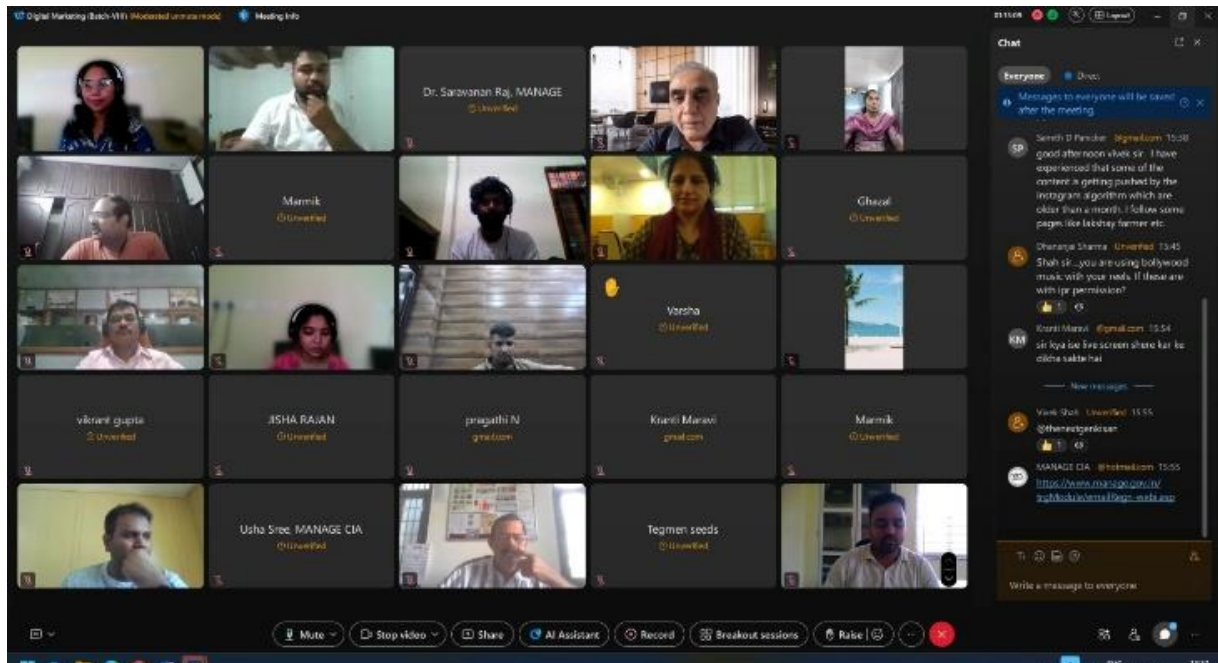
Session Summary

The session provided a comprehensive roadmap for Instagram growth, covering content creation, algorithm insights, and audience engagement strategies. Mr. Vivek Shah's practical experiences and proven methods offered participants a clear and realistic guide to building a strong, authentic, and effective Instagram presence—whether for personal branding or growing a business.

## Session 4- AI Tools for Content Creation & Predictive Marketing

Objective of the Session

The session focused on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the landscape of content creation, branding, and marketing decision-making. It emphasized the growing importance of prompt engineering for achieving better AI outcomes and provided participants with hands-on experience in using a wide range of AI tools. The aim was to demonstrate how AI can streamline and enhance digital marketing efforts, from ideation to execution.

Key Takeaways

Participants were introduced to a variety of AI-powered platforms and their real-world applications in digital marketing.

The session explored tools that assist in social media content creation, graphic design, keyword research, video production, data analytics, and presentation development. Each tool was discussed in terms of how it could improve efficiency, creativity, and consistency in digital workflows.
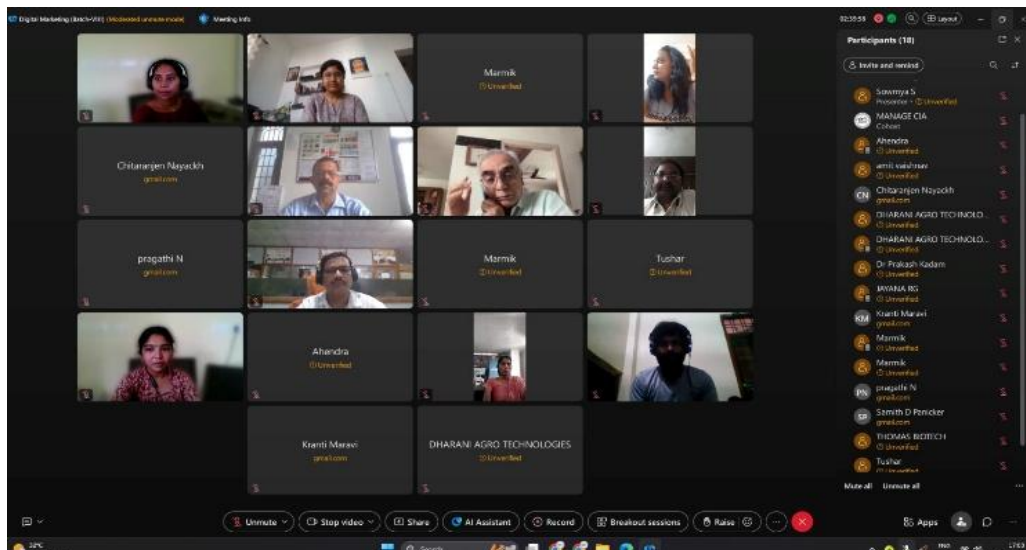
AI Tools and Their Applications

ChatGPT: Used to generate social media captions, posts, and long-form content quickly and effectively.

Freepik AI: Provides AI-generated thumbnails and graphic templates, helping marketers design visually appealing content.

Steve AI: Converts written content or blog posts into engaging animated or live-action videos.

Google Trends: Assists in keyword research and tracking search trends for better SEO strategies.

Google Data Studio: Helps visualize marketing data through interactive dashboards.

Looker Studio: Offers advanced analytics and business intelligence solutions for deeper data insights.

Mystic: Generates high-quality AI visuals that can enhance branding and marketing collateral.

DeepSeek AI: Transforms text prompts into AI-generated images using deep learning technology.

Magic Studio: Includes tools for photo editing, background generation, and more, useful for content creators.

GravityWrite: Produces AI-driven blog posts, ad copy, and SEO content with minimal input.

Gamma / Presentation AI: Creates polished, professional presentations automatically using AI-powered design suggestions.

Session Summary
The session delivered valuable insights into how AI can be a game-changer in content creation and digital branding.

With practical demonstrations and hands-on learning, participants gained a clear understanding of how to integrate AI tools into their marketing strategies to enhance creativity, productivity, and overall campaign impact—from concept to completion.

Session 5- Relationship-Driven Digital Marketing for Agri Brands: Email, Influencer & WhatsApp-Vernacular Strategies

Objective of the Session

The session aimed to help participants understand how to build effective, relationship-driven marketing strategies tailored specifically for rural and agri-based audiences. The focus was on knowing your customer—"the farmer"—and designing communication that is personal, vernacular, data-informed, and trust-building.

Key Takeaways

A core message was the importance of deeply understanding your farmer—considering age, literacy, language, internet usage, and digital behavior. Marketing in rural and agri contexts must go beyond just promotion; it requires ongoing engagement, trust-building, and clear communication that resonates with the local context.
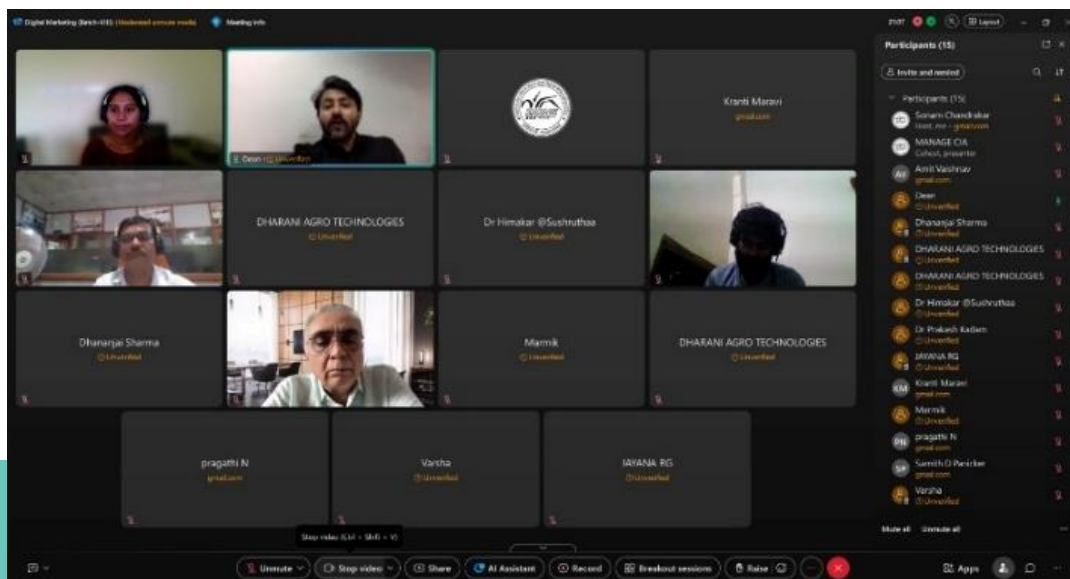
Participants learned how to educate customers using simple, local-language content to build awareness and trust. Tools like WhatsApp were highlighted for their high reach and familiarity in rural areas. Sending personalized voice notes, videos, and updates in the local language can significantly improve communication and customer connection.

When it comes to social media, it's crucial to identify where your audience spends time—such as Facebook or YouTube—and create content that is both relevant and easy to consume. The session stressed the need for consistent engagement, not just during promotions, but as an ongoing relationship-building effort.

Collecting digital usage data—like how often farmers use WhatsApp or Facebook—was encouraged to enable targeted, meaningful outreach. Understanding the demographics of your user base, including region, crop patterns, and digital accessibility, helps in shaping better communication strategies.

Using vernacular strategies and region-specific content increases comprehension, trust, and action among rural audiences. Ultimately, it's not just about reach but about building relationships through consistent, clear, and respectful communication.

Session Summary

Effective marketing for agri-startups hinges on knowing your farmer, using the right digital channels, and maintaining regular, vernacular, and data-informed outreach. When communication is human, personalized, and rooted in local context, it lays the foundation for lasting trust and adoption.

Session 6- Enhancing Online Presence through Strategic SEO Practices

Objective of the Session

The session focused on understanding both on-page and off-page SEO strategies that help boost website visibility, improve ranking on search engines, and drive organic traffic. Participants learned how to optimize content elements like meta titles and descriptions, use the right image formats, and leverage external platforms for SEO benefits.

Key Takeaways

Starting with on-page SEO, the session highlighted the importance of crafting effective meta titles—each page should have a unique title under 60 characters, with one primary keyword to enhance relevance. Complementing this, meta descriptions should also be unique, keyword-rich, and crafted to entice clicks. Superlatives and action-oriented phrases can help improve click-through rates from search engine results.

Participants learned that the meta title appears as the blue clickable link on search engine result pages (SERPs), making it a crucial element for visibility. For better website speed and performance, the use of modern image formats like WebP is recommended over older formats like JPEG or PNG, as faster loading times improve SEO rankings.

The session also delved into off-page SEO tactics, such as engaging in Q&A forums like Quora to answer relevant questions and include your website link. This improves visibility and drives traffic. Social media promotion, link building, and publishing client testimonials help build domain authority and trust.

A consistent Quora strategy, such as regular posting with contextual links, was emphasized as a valuable way to improve discoverability. Additionally, blogging was encouraged to target niche keywords, boost engagement, and support content

indexing. Lastly, Google reviews and ratings were highlighted for improving local SEO credibility, with more positive reviews enhancing trust and rankings.

Session Summary

The session provided a practical roadmap for optimizing SEO both on and off your website. From crafting strong meta tags to building links and engaging communities, these strategies empower agri-startups and small businesses to grow their digital presence effectively and sustainably.

Session 7- Your Startup's First Digital Step: Building a Website that Works

Objective of the Session

To provide a foundational understanding of the importance, structure, and strategy behind building an effective website that enhances brand presence, engages users, and drives conversions.

Key Takeaways

A website is the digital face of your brand—building trust, communicating value, and driving conversions. To create an effective site, start with a clear strategy: define its purpose, target audience, desired user actions, and success metrics.
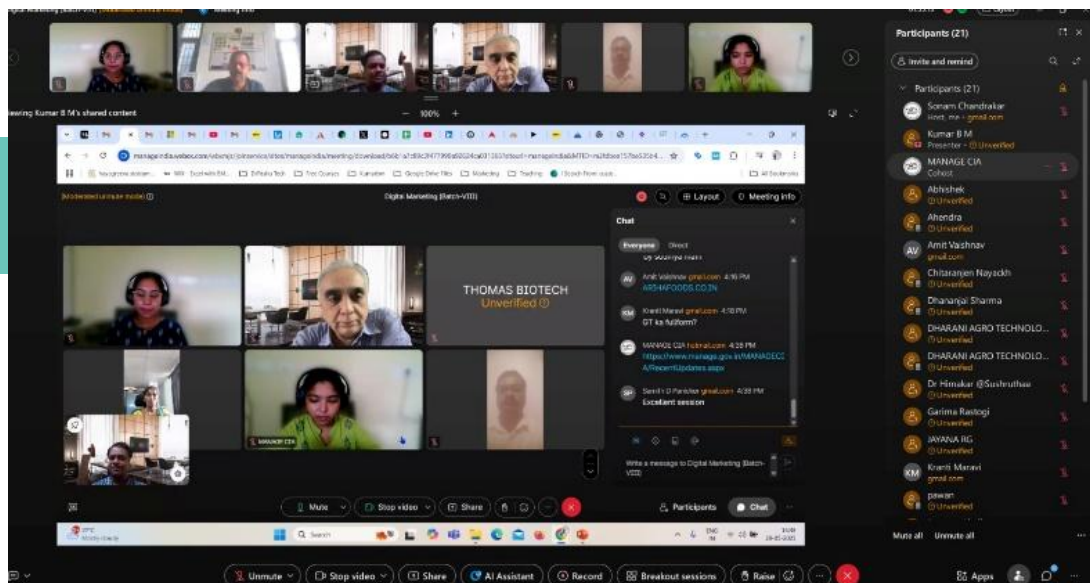
Key pages to include are: Homepage (quick pitch), About (your story), Services (what you offer), Contact (easy reach), and Blog/FAQ (SEO boost). Begin by selecting a domain, reliable hosting, essential plugins, and plan for regular maintenance.

Choose the right platform: WordPress (flexible, SEO-friendly), Wix (easy setup), Webflow (custom design), or Shopify/WooCommerce (e-commerce). Optimize performance with tools like GTmetrix and ensure fast load times.

Your site should tell a clear story: what you do, who it's for, and what action to take. Use content that addresses pain points, emphasizes benefits, and includes strong CTAs. Prioritize mobile-first design with responsive layouts and fast loading.

For visibility, apply basic SEO: use keywords in headers, write clear meta descriptions, add alt text to images, and keep URLs clean.

Session Summary

Building a great website is not just about aesthetics—it's about strategy, clarity, performance, and usability. A well-thought-out website not only reflects your brand identity but also serves as a powerful tool to attract, engage, and convert your target audience. With the right foundation and consistent updates, your website can become a long-term asset for business growth.

Session 8- Amplifying Agriculture Narratives: Mastering Short-Form Videos, Social Media Promotions & Canva Design

Objective of the Session

Empower participants to leverage short-form video, social media, and Canva to enhance storytelling in the agriculture sector.

Key Takeaways

The session emphasized a "Start Now" approach—prioritizing consistency and creativity over professional equipment, encouraging participants to begin with tools already at their disposal. A strong content strategy was highlighted, focusing on understanding audience needs, delivering authentic value, and applying the AIDA framework (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) to agri-marketing content. Participants also explored the WhatsApp API for automating communication, the MAGNET strategy for agricultural startup growth, and efficient techniques for creating Reels and Shorts with minimal resources.
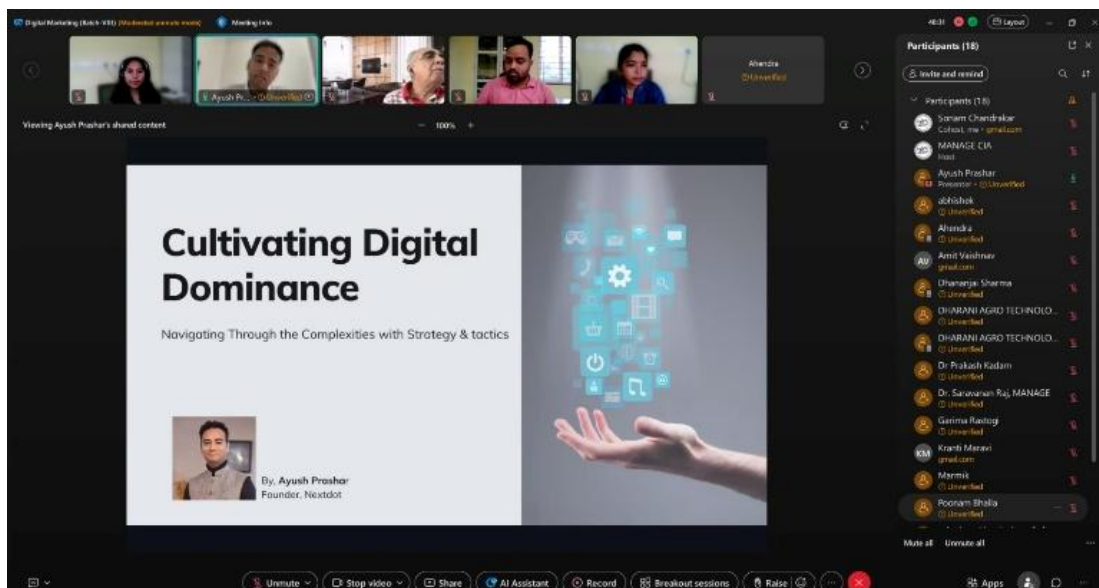
Authenticity in content creation was stressed as essential for building trust, while video marketing was presented as a powerful tool for boosting visibility and conversions. Hands-on learning included live Canva demos, content creation exercises, real-world agri-startup case studies, and an interactive Q&A addressing content challenges.

Highlights

Topics covered included Content Strategy, AIDA Framework, WhatsApp API, MAGNET Strategy, Reels, Canva design, and value-driven content creation. Participants gained skills in digital storytelling, short-form video production, smart outreach, visual branding, and collaborative learning.
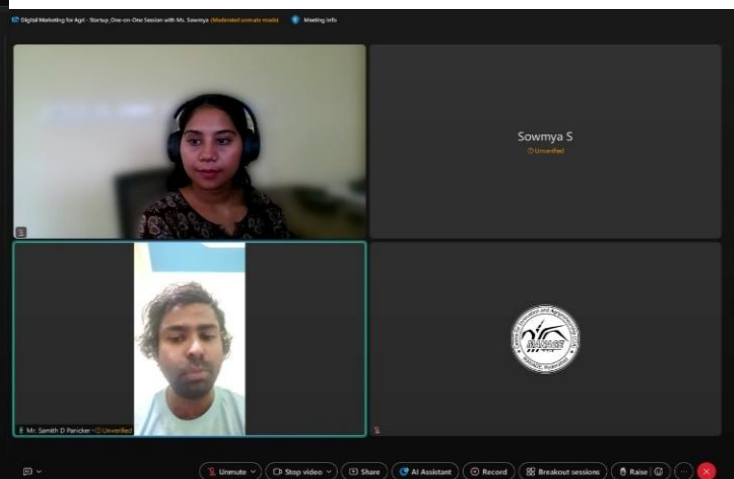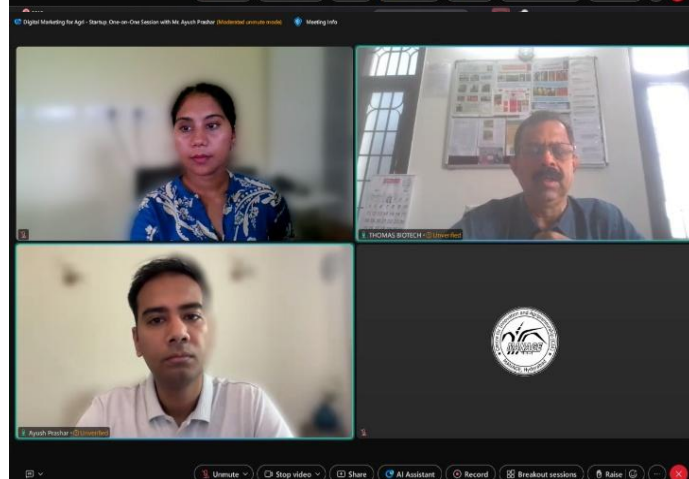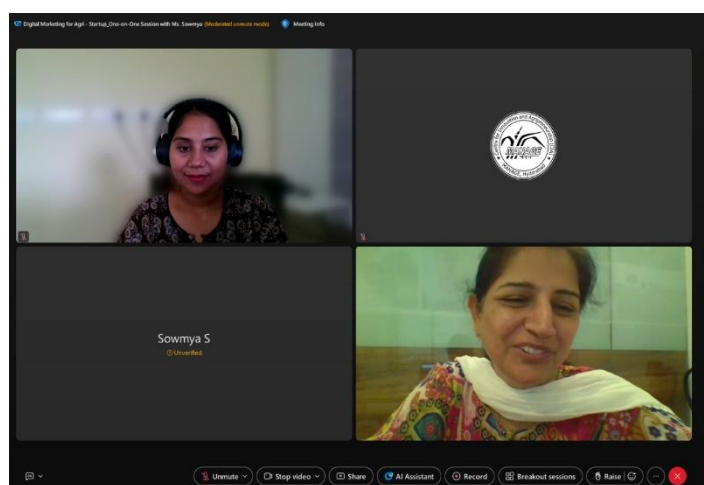
Session Summary:

Participants left with the confidence to create impactful content using available resources. They gained practical knowledge, ready-to-use frameworks, and tools, while also engaging in peer networking and sharing content strategies tailored to Agri-communication.

3-Day One-on-One Mentoring Session Summary

A 3-day one-on-one mentoring session with selected expert mentors. A total of 14 participants engaged in personalized discussions, choosing mentors based on their specific needs and areas of interest.

Each session provided a valuable opportunity for participants to seek guidance, address challenges, and explore strategic solutions tailored to their agri-startup journeys. The interactive format allowed for in-depth conversations, covering topics such as marketing strategies, content creation, business development, and growth planning.

These one-on-one interactions helped strengthen clarity, direction, and confidence among participants—setting the stage for actionable outcomes and sustained progress in their entrepreneurial paths.
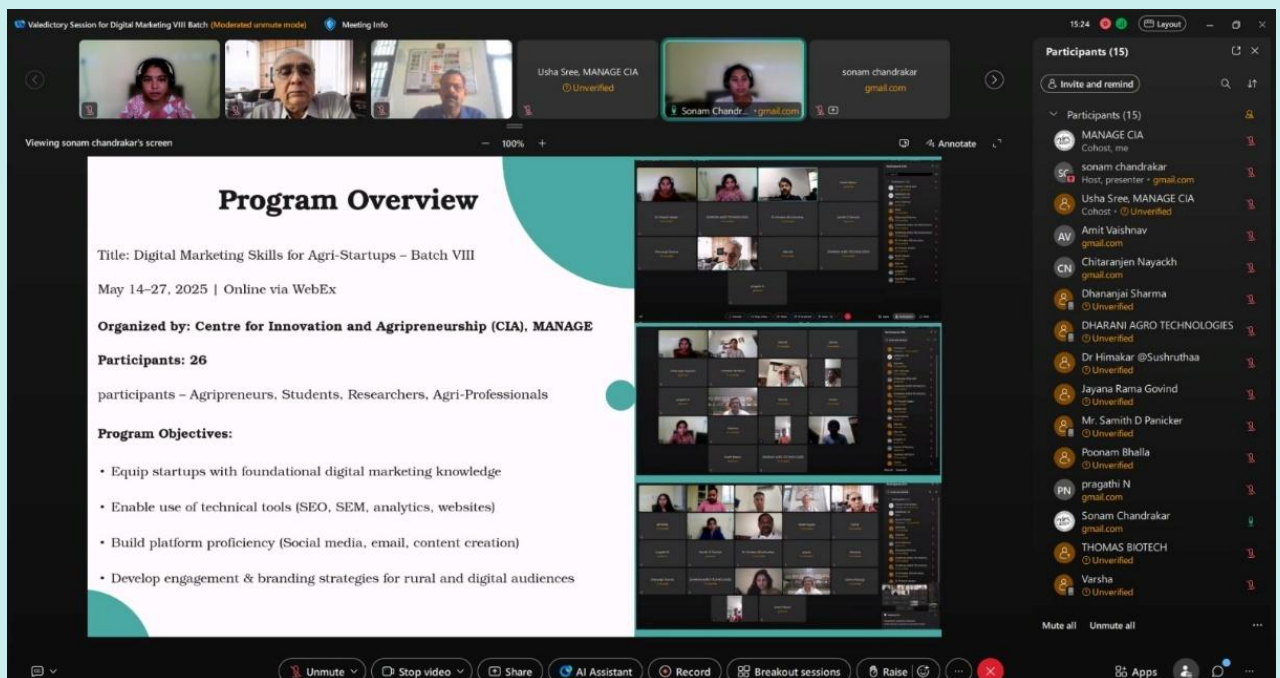
Valedictory Session Summary

Valedictory Program that brought together participants and mentors for a collective reflection. The session began with a brief summary of the program highlights, followed by participant feedback, where attendees shared their key learnings and takeaways.

Participants expressed how the sessions helped them understand the basics of digital marketing, sparked curiosity to explore the field further, and introduced them to new AI tools useful for content creation and marketing. The feedback reflected a strong sense of learning, growth, and enthusiasm for applying digital tools in their agri-startup journeys.

Mr. Saurabh Kumar, Business Executive, delivered the valedictory address, appreciating the participants' active engagement and encouraging them to implement their learnings. Ms. Priyanka followed with a warm vote of thanks, acknowledging the contributions of the mentors and the curiosity shown by the participants.

The session concluded on a high note, with words of encouragement and a call to stay connected with MANAGE as they continue their entrepreneurial journey.

SUMMARY

The Digital Marketing Training Program provided participants with actionable skills and strategic insights across digital branding, SEO, website development, AI content creation, and social media marketing. Through practical sessions and personalized mentoring, participants gained the confidence and clarity to apply digital tools effectively, enhance their online visibility, and build a sustainable digital presence tailored to their start-up goals. The program laid a solid foundation for long-term growth in a competitive digital landscape.

Key Benefits Include

Segment	Key Advantage
Digital Branding	Built founder-led, authentic brand presence across platforms.
SEO Practices	Improved online visibility using structured metadata, keyword research, and backlinks.
AI Tools Mastery	Learned how to use ChatGPT, Freepik AI, Steve AI, GravityWrite, and more.
Instagram Growth Strategy	Understood how to grow and engage followers organically and collaborate with brands.
Website Creation	Gained clarity on structure, tools, and SEO-optimized content for website success.
Agri-focused Marketing	Applied rural-vernacular strategies using WhatsApp, local content, and storytelling.
Short-form Video Skills	Learned to create engaging Reels and promotional visuals using Canva and phone cameras.
Mentoring Support	Received personalized feedback and guidance tailored to each startup's needs.

Prepared by: Ms. Sonam Chandrakar, Program Coordinator & MANAGE-CIA Intern

Designed by: Ms. Maithri K, MANAGE-CIA Intern

Centre for Innovation and Agripreneurship (CIA)
(A Centre of Excellence in Agribusiness Incubation and Knowledge Partner of RKVY - RAFTAAR)
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Hyderabad, India
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