



MY MEETING NOTES

**MANAGE Training Programme on
Shaping the future of extension with digital media
22-26 August 2016
National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management, (MANAGE)
Hyderabad**



MANAGE organized a training programme on “Shaping the future of extension with digital media” during 22-26 August 2016. Archana Bhatt, Misha Madhavan M. and Veerendra Jonnala share their experiences here.

THE CONTEXT

Over the last one decade, the digital media applications have emerged not only as tools for information dissemination but also as a medium for interaction among individuals and organizations for rural development irrespective of their varied geographical locations. Foreseeing the potential of digital media in agricultural extension services, MANAGE organized this training to provide exposure and understanding on various digital media initiatives. Thirty participants engaged in agricultural research and extension participated in this programme.



THE PROGRAMME

The Programme Coordinator, Dr. Saravanan Raj, Director, Agricultural Extension, MANAGE, welcomed the participants. This was followed by an introduction of the participants in pairs, each introducing the other. This was followed by a card exercise where participants' expectation from this training programme was collected. A WhatsApp group of all the trainees, facilitators and programme coordinator was made for sharing information on presentations and activities scheduled for the week.

Presentation by Resource Persons

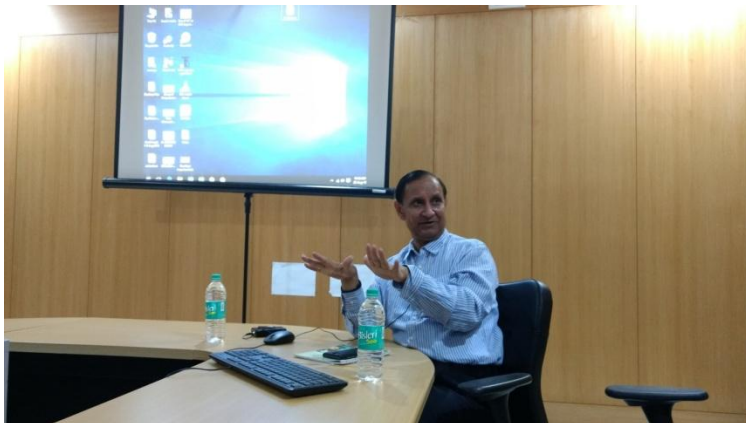
Dr. Saravanan Raj (MANAGE) in his presentation on social media highlighted its role in democratization of information. Dr. Srinivas Attaluri, (MANAGE) elucidated on the use of ICTs for agriculture, especially the potential of social media for sharing of agricultural information.

Mrs. Shashikala Ravikumar threw light on the various initiatives of IFFCO Kisan Sanchar Ltd. (IKSL). She discussed about the issues related to content management, especially how one-minute voice messages are developed.

Dr. C. Kathiresan and Mrs. M. Krishnapriya (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing) presented on the development of Content Management System (CMS), especially the working of Vikaspedia and how CMS can be utilized in agricultural extension.



Dr. Shaik. N. Meera (Indian Institute of Rice Research) emphasized the need for linkages among the various stakeholders in the agriculture system to perform three major functions, namely pooling of all the available information, integrating the diverse ICT tools for information dissemination and real time update of the information database.



Dr. V. P. Sharma (MANAGE) in his presentation on Cyber Extension narrated his personal experiences with promoting ICTs in the state Departments of Agriculture. He also talked about the various initiatives across the diverse states of the country.

Mr. Pritam K Nanda (Digital Green) emphasized on the potential of digital video in revolutionising agricultural extension services in the country especially in the remote corners where other digital services have less penetration. Dr. Rasheed Sulaiman V, (Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy) talked about the different dimension of the digital divide prevalent in India. While glorifying the use of digital media among the farming community by drawing experiences from specific projects, we need to understand more clearly, who is accessing what type of ICTs for what purpose, he emphasised.



Exposure Visit

The trainees visited the Technology Enhancement Unit of NAARM (National Academy of Agricultural Research and Management). Dr. G. R. Ramkrishna Murthy gave an account of digital media applications in agricultural education and extension and how it could be applied for content enrichment, evaluation, distance education, creating virtual learning environment, MOOCs, vocational education, establishing global linkages and many more. After this, the trainees had hands-on experience on the latest educational technology like operation of interactive white board. They also learnt about the practical use of digital media.



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Recap Sessions

Several recap sessions were organized in between the sessions to re-emphasize the key learning from each session. To further re-capitulate on the key learning, a small quiz was conducted among the participants on the last day of training. Four teams were made and each team was asked to prepare two questions regarding the knowledge they gained in the past sessions. Every team came up with good questions and it was an informative way to have the recap of the knowledge shared throughout the training.

Hands-on Experience

Apart from learning the theoretical aspects, it is also important to have practical experiences. Mr. Veerendra Jonnala (Freelance ICT4D Practitioner) took many technical sessions on the practical use of various digital media tools and techniques. A brief review of various image and video formats as well as different editing softwares was presented along with the information regarding copyrights and creative commons. An exercise was conducted on video making through script writing and outdoor shooting. A demonstration session on audio editing software “Audacity” was also done This helped us to understand how to edit an audio file and integrate it with video editing. Another technical session focussed on the aspects related to creating a Youtube channel and uploading and editing videos. For sharing of information, a session on creating and writing blogs through Wordpress was also conducted. Trainees had hands-on experience in the computer lab wherein they created blogs related to their respective fields. This session actually made them learn how to write a blog and add related links to it for sharing the information to various clients.

Experience Sharing

Many trainees who had actually utilized digital media in their respective area of work shared their experiences. Mr. Suprabandh Babanrao Bhavsar, (KVK, Sagroli) shared his experiences in the use of ICT in the form of SMS Advisory services, Audio clips, KVK website, e-newsletter “Krishivrutta”, Blogs, Facebook & Google+ page, WhatsApp Farmer Groups and Farmer Database.



Mr. Nizam. S. A., Mr. Happy Mathew. K and Mr. George. K. Mathai (Department of Agriculture, Kerala) shared the initiatives of the state Department of Agriculture on digital media applications such as websites, farmer registration, mKisan, agromet advisory services, kiosks, social media initiatives, Farm and Community Radio services and TV programmes, video blogs in Youtube, Online Farm Mechanization System and other services.

Mr. Prosenjit Barman, Asst. Director of Agriculture, West Bengal, spoke about the digital initiative “Matir Katha” which is an ICT-based service to provide expert advice in the form of audio and video

messaging to the farmers with the usage of android tablets by the Agricultural Technical Assistants. Dr. Uma Sah, IIPR, Kanpur, also shared her experiences on the development of the institutional website with various other ICT initiatives i.e. Pulse Farmers' Corner, e-Dalhan Gyan Manch and the voice messaging service called "Dalhan Sandesh".

Videos & Energising Activities

Several videos were shown and few energizing activities were organized in between the scheduled training sessions. One of the most popular and viral youtube video "Charlie Bit my finger" was shown in the beginning so as to throw light upon the global outreach of social media and its impact on netizens. Various other videos touching the human sentiments were shown to the trainees like "The Tree: Lead India". Another very heart touching video that paid tribute to Indian farmers was also shown to the participants.



Many energizing activities were also planned and carried out throughout the training programme. The trainees were divided into four groups and five unrelated words were given to each group. The groups were asked to form a story by using these five words given to them within ten minutes. The participants were very creative in making interesting stories related to their routine life and the professional life.

Another interesting energizing activity was done wherein the trainees were asked to enact life situations like engaging in a war, playing football, laughing, crying, etc. which helped in opening up the participants and refreshing up before the session. An energising session was held wherein the trainees had to transfer the marble kept in the spoon from one person to another while holding the spoon through one's mouth. Apart from energising, the exercise also inculcated the team spirit and cooperative feeling among the respective groups.

Feedback

Feedback is very important in any programme for further improvement. Feedback was taken from the various trainees through video interviews as well as in written form. The trainees expressed the views on the overall training programme, what they learnt in the training sessions, their stay and food at MANAGE.

Take Home Message & Action Plan

Trainees presented their take home messages and their action plan based on the training.. One of the trainees, Mr. Suprabandh B. B. from K. V. K. Sagroli, Maharashtra talked about his plan wherein he will

create database of farmers of his working area with all personal details integrated with soil, water, crop, animals, etc. *Words of Wisdom*

Smt. Usha Rani, IAS, Director General, MANAGE, was present as the chief guest during the valedictory programme. She talked about the integration of modern digital media tools and techniques with traditional extension methods. She stated that an extension professional needs to work as a researcher and vice versa to derive immediate solutions for problems of farmers. They must work



closely with the farmers and learn from both success as well as failure in utilizing digital media for them. They should learn from the field experience and inculcate adult learning techniques to transfer the technology at the doorstep of farmers. Regarding the training programme, she said that to make a training successful and fruitful, long-term commitment from the trainers as well as the trainees is very important. She wished good luck to all the participants and told to implement the experience they gained from the training.

OUR REFLECTIONS

- Digital media has provided new opportunities for extension to enhance its reach and effectiveness and extension staff should have hands-on experience with the use of media. The training provided several opportunities for participants to learn about different digital media applications which they can use in their work environment.
- Participants play a key role in the success of any training programme. The vibrant group of different stakeholders representing different levels from the Agriculture and allied sectors, from Kerala to Jammu Kashmir made this training a platform for sharing their experiences.
- Each and every session in this programme was well organized and it ensured that the trainees attention was retained all through the week. Energizing activities and thought provoking videos helped in retaining attention and ensuring everyone's participation.
- Mobile application like WhatsApp is one of the most-used communication tool by all of us nowadays. So the creation of a WhatsApp group including all the trainees and facilitators on the first day of training programme helped in communicating about different matters and in sharing some ideas.

- Technical sessions by the resource persons who are highly competent with the digital media applications gave a new insight to the participants.
- Until we practice what we learnt the learning wont complete. The practical session conducted in the computer lab ensured the completeness of learning by the trainees. The blog creation was done very creatively by the trainees.
- A visit to NAARM helped the participants understand more about the digital technologies used in education as well as extension. Participants got an opportunity to learn about the use of interactive white board.



- “Video shooting and editing can be done so easily”, many trainees commented proudly during the closing function. The hands-on experience session helped everyone to be competent in video making
- The experience sharing session was highly useful to gain more about what we can do in the field level with digital media and motivated others to do similar interventions in their work environment.
- Take-home messages presented by the participants at the end of training programme was really interesting and it was found that everyone gained something new and taking back those new things they learnt during the training time to make their new action plans.
- Good stay and good food in MANAGE was really appreciable which made the trainees feel happy during the time spent at MANAGE

FINAL REMARKS

This five-day training programme surely helps the trainees in shaping their future extension activities. In this digital era, the extension functionaries cannot go ahead without enough competency in handling the digital media. This programme ensured the development of knowledge and skill of the trainees with respect to the digital media. Attitude change also came among the participants as Dr. K Sashindran Nair pointed out “I was using the blog and Audacity software for my personal use before, but now I will start using it for professional purpose including the extension activities.” The training

could meet the expectations of the participants and helped them in gaining insights into utilizing digital media in their respective work area.

Ms. Archana Bhatt and Ms. Misha Madhavan M. are PhD Research Scholars at National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI), Karnal, and Mr. Veerendra Jonnala is a Freelance ICT4D Practitioner. They could be contacted at archanabhattach1991@gmail.com; mishamadhavanmsy4@gmail.com; and veerendra.j010@gmail.com respectively.

**AESA Secretariat: Centre for Research on Innovation and Science Policy (CRISP),
Road No 10, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad 500034, India
www.aesa-gfras.net Email: aesanetwork@gmail.com**