



SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

# A RURAL MANAGEMENT

Admissions 2026-28



When the MA in Rural Management program was launched in September 2023 at the Shiv Nadar Institution of Eminence (deemed to be a university), there were broadly 5 extremely pertinent questions raised about it:

- Will there be an interest among young people to seek admission for the program?
- 2. Are there not many similar programs already running across the country? What would be our USP?
- 3. If we are seeking students from disadvantaged regions and communities, how will they pay the fees?
- 4. If they are unable to do so, will there be enough donor support for the program?
- 5. And will there be interest among potential employers to hire students graduating from the program?

3 batches since the launch of the program, we are delighted to report great success on each of these matters of legitimate concern. The main reason we were confident of success was our assessment that there is an enormous felt need among employers for well-rounded professionals who understand the unique challenges and opportunities of rural India. In recent years, rural India has been a focus of great national attention. It has been witness to major crises like farmers' suicides; it has also been a hub of enormous dynamism, becoming the largest and fastest growing market for India's industrial sector. Central and state governments also invest hundreds of thousands of crores every year to provide better amenities and secure livelihoods to rural Indians.

We had strong feedback from a multitude of stakeholders that there are many young people in our country, with huge potential and a burning desire in their hearts, to lead the process of rural transformation. What they are looking for is an opportunity and some support to be able to play that role. It was also very clear that existing academic programs were neither being able to attract the desired profile of students nor were they meeting the specific requirements of potential employers.

Our experience with the first 3 batches has far exceeded our initial expectations. From the very first batch we have had hundreds of applications for the program and the number has grown with every passing year as word has gone out far and wide. For the third batch we received 346 applications, of which we interviewed a total of 219 candidates. Finally, only 40 made it through what is a highly competitive admissions process.

You will not find a comparable classroom in any Indian university with the richness of diversity that we have at the SNU RM program. Our students are some of the most outstanding that we have encountered in several decades of teaching. But they come from socio-economic backgrounds quite different from those usually found in leading universities. Coming from 15 States, they belong to India's most disadvantaged regions and communities and also include more women than men.

What makes our students really stand out is the understanding they show of the challenges of rural India and their unique experience of life in that context. More than anything else, their selection is a testament to their potential to be leaders of a transformative process of change in rural India.

Similarly, our faculty are unique in having lived and worked in rural India for many decades. They carry a deep commitment to a process of radical reconstruction of India's rural landscape, a profound empathy for the struggles of the most disadvantaged people of this country, as also the experience and capacity to mentor young people who may be stepping out of their regions for the very first time.

And all of this requires that we adopt a deeply innovative pedagogy, whose goal is "teaching to transform", a transformation which necessarily needs to be internal, so that it can also be social. So our pedagogy seeks to deeply incorporate the lived experience of our students, building upon it to teach them how to be reflective practitioners, with a focus on real-life solutions to India's most pressing problems. This makes for an extremely lively, interactive and engaging classroom, where there is so much to learn for both students and faculty, given the extraordinary richness and diversity in what the students bring to the learning process.

What is also unique about our program is that two full semesters are devoted to field education, including internships with the very best practitioners in rural India. Running threads of the entire program are the themes of gender and ecology, which provide a critical lens through which to examine development paradigms.

Another distinguishing feature of the program is that all its courses not merely aim to build professional competencies but pay equal attention to cultivating the necessary value-systems that develop compassionate human beings, with the capacity for deep listening and necessary sensitivities to the worldviews of those they will be working with in future. The ultimate aim is to build a large and growing community of reflective practitioners committed to the goal of rural transformation and to working in close co-ordination with each other and all relevant stakeholders to achieve this larger goal.

#### **Placements**

Our program has been crafted with specific inputs from potential employers. Thus, demand for our students is built into the program. The proof of the pudding, of course, came when our first batch graduated in May 2025. We achieved a 100% placement record, with each and every one of our students getting placed within a matter of days, with some students being vigorously sought after by several competing employers. The placement process was intentionally rigorous, designed not just to test aptitude but to match purpose with practice. Students went through multiple stages, from written tests to thematic group discussions and in-depth interviews. Several organisations reported being impressed by the clarity, conviction, and field-readiness of students, with some going so far as to revise their compensation structures in order to hire our students. This is reflected in the striking testimony of some of the employers:

I must have conducted hundreds of such interviews over the past many years, but I can say in all honesty that I have not come across people who are so intimately familiar with the realities of rural India and within whom I could sense a fire burning inside to change the destiny of this country. Many congratulations to you Sir and your entire team for initiating this program, which is truly the need of the hour

**-B. Sireesha,**Programs Lead, Bharat Rural Livelihoods
Foundation

We express our sincere appreciation for the hospitality and logistics support extended to us on our visit to SNU. We are very impressed with the Rationale/ Process of student selection, sincerity of purpose amongst the candidates, the systems/processes which operated seamlessly and of course the infrastructure. I am sure the SNU RM students will create a niche for themselves in society.

-Vikas Vaze,CEO, Shroff Foundation Trust

Dear Students, Thank you all for participating in the AKRSP India campus placement drive at Shiv Nadar University. It was a pleasure interacting with such bright, and passionate individuals. From the pre-placement talk to the written test, group discussion, and personal interviews – the entire experience was truly enriching for us. We appreciate the enthusiasm, curiosity, and professionalism each of you brought to the process.

**-Pramod Vishwakarma,** HR Lead, Aga Khan Rural Support Program, India

We are deeply impressed by the quality of training and knowledge imparted through the Rural Management program. The level of engagement, commitment, and depth of understanding demonstrated by the students has been truly exceptional, unlike anything we've experienced before. We sincerely look forward to building a lasting partnership with the RM program at SNU in the years ahead.

-Sweta Saha, HR Lead-The Harsha Trust Foundation. So if you are a young person with a passion for and commitment to serving in rural India, this is the program for you! Preference will be given to applicants from disadvantaged regions and communities. Preference will be given to women candidates. 50 seats are open for admission.

# A large number of scholarships are available for qualified and eligible students.





The first semester is an introduction to relevant theoretical concepts and tools, the foundational understanding students require to be able to understand rural India, appreciate the challenges of rural management and be able to find possible solutions. 6 courses are offered in the first semester.

# **Political Economy of India's Development** 5 credits

As India won a hard-fought independence from British rule, the government and the people set about trying to build a free nation, where each person would at least have access to the basic needs of life, in an atmosphere of freedom, liberty and equality of opportunity. This course is a reflection on the last 8 decades, the achievements and the failures, a review of the most important government policies and programs, the thinking behind them and why, how and in what ways these need to change. Building upon the political economy perspective of the "founders" of Economics from the 18th and 19th centuries, even while incorporating the exciting new insights of 20th and 21st century heterodox economists, the course provides a unique trans-disciplinary framework. We also introduce students to ideas from beyond academia, to help them understand how solutions to rural India's most important and neglected problems, such as water, food and livelihoods, could potentially be crafted.

# **Understanding Indian Society** 5 credits

This course is focused on understanding Indian society through multi-dimensional structures of power, which characterise social relations. The course recognises that the history of both the social sciences and of social movements shows that it is remarkably difficult to sustain sensitivity to the plurality of power relations. This course introduces students to the challenges of "intersectionality", the multiplicity and mutual entanglement of different dimensions of power, deepening an understanding of each structure (class, caste, gender, religion, language etc), while teasing out their various intersections.



# **Reflective Practice** 5 credits

The main aim of the MA in Rural Management program is to create a large cadre of "reflective practitioners" who can be powerful catalysts for change in rural India. The course on Reflective Practice involves students learning about both the inner and social transformation required for enduring change to occur in society, and the imperative complementarity between the two. The course will, therefore, introduce students to creative ways in which they can challenge the structures of power that are embedded in society at every level, including the transformation of their own consciousness, which has internalized and ingrained the logos of these structures.

### **Research Methods** 5 credits

This course provides a comprehensive introduction to research methods used in social sciences. The course equips the students with capabilities for formulating a research problem and identifying research questions, collecting data, analysis and interpretation of data using quantitative and qualitative methods and presenting the findings in the form of reports, research papers or dissertations. The emphasis throughout the course is that a mix of inter-disciplinary and quantitative-qualitative methods will give useful insights and conclusions for policy.



# Reflective Practice Labs: Values for Engagement 1 credit

Reflective Practice Labs are the program's living laboratories of learning to enable students to become reflective practitioners. The first in a two-part sequence, this course invites students to inquire: Who am I in relation to the communities I wish to serve? What values and assumptions shape my understanding of justice, equity, and change? How can I listen across differences with humility and respect? The course nurtures critical self-awareness, inter-personal trust, and emotional safety within diverse peer groups. Through storytelling, dialogue, mapping exercises, and collaborative reflection, students learn to recognise their own social locations and cultivate inclusive, ethical ways of engaging with others. Integrating practices of Tai Chi—a meditative martial art that enhances balance, attention, and grounding—the labs train students to connect mind and body as they prepare for the emotionally complex contexts of rural fieldwork.

### **Reflective Communication:** *Manan, Shravan, Kathan* 1 credit

This is the first in a two-part sequence of courses that views communication as an ethical and relational act, central to leadership in rural management. The course begins with the affirmation that students already carry rich vocabularies and idioms from their communities. It does not replace these voices but hones them, helping students express their experiences, convictions, and visions for change, across academic and professional settings. Inspired by the Indian pedagogical triad of manan (reflection), shravan (listening), and kathan (narration), the course cultivates habits of mindful expression, deep listening, and creative articulation. Through journaling, storytelling, collaborative translation, and oral presentations, students learn to weave clarity with empathy and confidence with humility.



The second semester is a deeper dive into the most important and neglected management challenges in rural India, enabling students to understand the problems, as also critically assess the various attempts at finding solutions to these problems. 6 courses are offered in the second semester.

# **Agriculture, Livestock, Forests** 5 credits

This course provides a detailed understanding of the management challenges in agriculture, livestock and forests, which engage nearly 50% of India's workforce and are the largest sources of livelihoods in rural areas. The "Green" and "White" revolutions marked a fundamental break in the way these activities are organised. They firmly established a high cost and high external input framework, which has become the new normal. This course takes a critical look at these frameworks, highlight their limits and the brings out the need to look beyond them. The course emphasises the diversity of Indian agriculture, livestock systems and forests and the need to adopt a differentiated approach to meet the challenge of this diversity.

# **Ecology, Water, Climate Change** 5 credits

This course introduces students to the basic concepts of ecology as an integrative discipline and the evolution of the notion of sustainable development. In the current context of climate change and the challenges posed by planetary boundaries in the era of the Anthropocene, the course examines alternative perspectives of food security, sovereignty, food justice and nutritional security on the one hand, and water and environmental security on the other, showing how an integration is possible only using an ecological lens.



#### Health, Nutrition, Education

#### 5 credits

The course equips rural development practitioners with enough knowledge and strategic skills to work on health and nutrition interventions in rural areas. Students learn the political economy of health and nutrition and the impact and consequences it has for disadvantaged communities. They are familiarized with the state of health and health care services in rural India, the various social determinants of health and to draw lessons from the better performing states. The module on education traces the history of education policy and its outcomes since Independence. It grapples with the deep impact of socio-economic inequalities on education, how the most progressive policies are lost to poor implementation and possible ways in which to turn around the languishing public school system, integrating the rich alternatives in pedagogy that have evolved in multiple contexts over time.

### Management of Institutions

#### 5 credits

The absence of powerful institutions of the disadvantaged sections of Indian society is widely regarded as a key factor explaining the persistence of deprivation. This course covers a wide range of such institutions such as Panchayati Raj Institutions, Self Help Groups and their Federations, Farmer Producer Organisations, cooperatives, etc. We also cover important social movements which have impacted state and national policies. The course also teaches students the basics of business management practices such as marketing, HR, finance (including financial services in rural areas, insurance), etc. and basics of project management such as: What is a project cycle? How are development projects designed? What are the key elements of a project proposal? What are the planning and monitoring tools for project management?



# Reflective Practice Labs: Strategies for Transformation 1 credit

Building upon the inner work of the first semester, this course moves from self-awareness to skilful action. It equips students with applied tools, ethical grounding, and embodied awareness for meaningful field engagement. How does one listen across asymmetries of power, intervene ethically in moments of conflict or vulnerability, or facilitate dialogue without reinforcing hierarchies? Tai Chi remains integral, grounding students in balance and presence while preparing them for the emotional complexity of rural work. This course transforms reflection into ethical action, enabling students to enter the field not merely as managers or researchers, but as facilitators of collective change.

### Reflective Communication: Professional & Digital 1 credit

The second part of the Reflective Communications course carries students' voices from personal and community expression into professional and institutional spaces. It focuses on applied communication—how to write, speak, and present with confidence and integrity while remaining true to one's values. How does one translate lived experience into a compelling CV, field report, or interview conversation? Students learn to craft CVs, job applications, reflective field diaries, and concise reports as meaningful expressions rather than formulaic outputs. They also practise interviews, group discussions, and public presentations, understanding communication as a form of ethical presence in the world of work and policy.





During the third semester, students travel to select field locations across the country, where they learn from our carefully selected partners, who over several decades, are recognised as the best practitioners on each of these themes and have crafted solutions to some of the most difficult management challenges facing rural India. This is not just field-surveys or village immersion, it is practical, solution-centred Field Education. 4 courses are offered in the third semester.

### **Sustainable Agro-ecological Transitions 5** credits

The crisis of farming in India grows deeper by the day. The Green Revolution served the country well by building a buffer stock of foodgrains but 50 years on, it has unleashed multiple crises of its own. Declining productivity, soil health, water levels and quality, amidst malnourishment and a diabetes epidemic, necessitate a fundamental rethink. This course not only helps students understand the multiple dimensions of this but also enables them to learn the art of crafting sustainable agro-ecological transitions away from chemical farming in a truly hands-on manner.



### **Violence against Women and Girls**5 credits

This course enables students to deeply engage with the structural and cultural drivers of gender-based violence and develop applied skills for supporting survivors, designing interventions, and advocating for gender justice in diverse rural contexts. Students engage with grassroots women's organizations, live and learn alongside women's collectives, and interact with state mechanisms and civil society networks. The curriculum integrates feminist theory, intersectional analysis, legal literacy, participatory action methods, and ethnographic writing.



### **Building and Nurturing Women's Institutions**5 credits

The course designed to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the formation, management, and scaling of women-led SHGs and their Federations in rural areas. The course highlights the significance of women's leadership in community development, focusing on financial independence, sustainable livelihoods and local governance reform. Through field visits, practical demonstrations, and interactive sessions, students gain hands-on experience in organising SHGs, financial planning, bookkeeping, and implementing livelihood interventions.



# Participatory Water Management and Sanitation 5 credits

This course introduces students to the innovative approach of watershed management, participatory groundwater management and community-owned and managed, decentralised and sustainable drinking water and sanitation systems. Through hands-on field visits, practical demonstrations, and interactive classroom sessions, students gain a rounded understanding of practical solutions to existing and emerging challenges to water security and sanitation from a multi-dimensional perspective



The fourth semester is devoted to Internships with partner organisations in their field of work in rural India. The internship period in the field is 11 weeks. The final 5 weeks of the semester are spent at the university writing out a project report based on the internship.

Our expectation from the internship is that it will further build the understanding of our students on the challenges facing rural India, where they gain a deeper knowledge of the roots of these problems and the possible ways in which solutions can be crafted for the same. For our partners, these internships provide an opportunity to engage our students in tackling any challenges that they might be facing, any kind of study that they may require to be done related to their work or to help build an understanding of issues that may be new to their work. The central purpose of the internship is to add value to the work of our partners, while contributing to a greater understanding of rural management challenges among our students.

#### **Core Faculty**

The program is taught by some of the most eminent academics, practitioners and thinkers the country has known, covering the entire gamut of issues taught under this program. Most of them have spent their entire professional lives working in, and around issues related to, rural India

- 1. Dr. Mihir Shah, Distinguished Professor and Chair
- 2. Dr. Himanshu Kulkarni. Professor of Practice
- 3. Shri P S Vijayshankar, Professor of Practice
- 4. Dr. Sandali Thakur, Associate Professor
- 5. Dr. Bhargabi Das, Assistant Professor
- 6. Dr. Gurkirat Kaur, Assistant Professor
- 7. Dr. Ajmal Khan, Assistant Professor
- 8. Dr. Venkat Ramanujam, Assistant Professor
- 9. Shri Rahul Jain, Fellow

#### **Advisory Group and Guest Faculty**

- 1. Dr. Darryl W. Reed, Distinguished Professor, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, SNU
- Dr. Gita Sen, Distinguished Professor & Director, Ramalingaswami Centre on Equity & Social Determinants of Health, Public Health Foundation of India
- 3. Dr. Rajeswari Raina, Professor, School of International Relations and Governance Studies
- 4. Shri SM Vijayanand, IAS retd, Former Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala
- 5. Ms. Sushma Iyengar, Founder, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan
- 6. Shri Gagan Sethi, Founder & Chair, Janvikas and Centre for Social Justice
- 7. Shri Vipul Mudgal, Head, Common Cause
- 8. Shri Apoorva Oza, Global Lead, Aga Khan Foundation
- 9. Shri Biraj Patnaik, Executive Director, National Foundation for India
- Shri KJ Joy, Senior Fellow, Society for Promoting Participative Ecosystem Management

- 11. Shri Shashi Bhushan, Director, SATHI Network
- 12. Dr. Sabyasachi Das, CEO, RRA Network
- 13. Prof. Dipa Sinha, Azim Premji University
- Dr. Satish Deshpande, former Professor, Department of Sociology, Delhi School of Economics
- 15. Shri Sunil Chavan, Director, Dr. ML Dhavle Trust
- 16. Prof. Seema Purushothaman, Azim Premji University
- 17. Dr. Ramesh Bhatti, Centre for Pastoralism, New Delhi
- 18. Prof. Richa Kumar, IIT Delhi
- Shri Ghanshyam Darne, Savitri Jotirao College of Social Work, Yavatmal
- 20. Dr. Yogesh Jain, Public Health Physician

#### **Selection Criteria and Process**

Basic Qualification: Bachelor's Degree in any discipline

In the application form, candidates are expected to answer questions related to their reasons for applying for this program, how they hope to benefit from the program, as also their future plans. The selection of students for the program involves the following stages:

- their answers to the questions in the application form are evaluated
- candidates shortlisted on the basis of their application forms are called to the university for a written test, interview, and group discussion which is the final step in their selection.

#### **Selection Timeline**

- Applications for the program are now open and will close on 1st April 2026
- Shortlist of candidates for interviews will be announced by 15th April 2026
- Shortlisted candidates will appear for a written test, interview, and group discussion at the university campus in May 2026
- Final list of selected candidates will be announced by 5th June 2026
- Program begins August 2026

#### **Application Instructions**

- Applicants will be required to pay a non-refundable application fee of Rs. 1000.
- All interested applicants shall apply online. Please follow the instructions carefully.
- Online upload of following documents is required
- Passport size colour photograph
- Current CV
- All Mark sheets/Degree Certificates (10th Standard onwards)

### **Fees Structure (2026-2028)**

	2026-27	2027-28	Total
Tuition Fees	₹ 4,10,000	₹ 4,10,000	₹ 8,20,000
Other Fees	₹ 2,28,500	₹ 1,01,500	₹ 3,30,000
Admission Fees	₹ 25,000		₹ 25,000
Refundable Security Deposit	₹ 25,000		₹ 25,000
Total Fees	₹ 6,88,500	₹ 5,11,500	₹ 12,00,000

The total fees for the program is Rs. 12 lakh, payable in four instalments over 2 years.

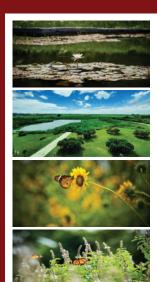
### **Scholarships**

A large number of scholarships are available for qualified and eligible students. An extremely vital role has been played by Indian philanthropy in sustaining the RM program. Outside of the Shiv Nadar Foundation, the biggest contribution has been that of the Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation. Many other foundations and individuals have also provided substantial support to the RM program.

We are now building up a Rural Management Scholarships Fund (RMSF), which will provide long-term stability and sustainability to the program. Students from the first three batches have happily committed that they will start contributing to the RMSF as soon as they get their first job after they graduate from the program. For them this is an expression of their strong sense of solidarity with the RM program and their contribution to the growing RM community and its robust future. This will be in the form of a voluntary undertaking given by the students regarding the amount they will contribute as monthly instalments and the duration for which they will make these contributions to the RMSF. We expect students of subsequent batches to also carry forward this proud tradition.

#### Life in the University

Students participate in and help organize a wide range of intellectual activities, like academic seminars, exhibitions, on-going research projects, library, publication and other outreach activities in SHSS and any other School or Department that ignites an academic interest in them. The students are encouraged to participate in all intellectual and performing arts and sports activities promoted in the University.



#### **BOTANIC GARDEN**

Designed and established Dr. Jyoti K Sharma, the Thematic Botanic Garden is the first of its kind in North India. It has more than 600 plant species, including rare species from mountains and humid areas, which are difficult to grow in the warm tropical climate of NCR. The conceptualisation of the park is unique. It assembles a particular group/theme/category of plants in one place, which otherwise is Impossible in a classical Botanic Garden. For example, rare fruit plants no longer found in markets, including fruits of Barhai, Khirnee, or Kalth, can be observed in the Fruit Planes Ganden.

<b>4</b> Schools	<b>50</b> Programs Offered
<b>~4000</b> Students	<b>~300</b> Faculty Members
286 Acres Campus	<b>10+</b> Research Centers
<b>4200</b> Alumni	<b>155+</b> Labs and Studios

#### **INDOOR SPORTS COMPLEX**

The state-of-the-art Indoor Sports Complex has won NDTV's Design and Architecture Awards in 2017. The building has table tennis, basketball, and badminton courts on the ground floor. It is equipped with a unisex gym, four squash courts, and a 200-meter-long indoor running track on the first floor. Additional activities include wall climbing, billiards, football, chess, and playing carrom wile relaxing on bean bags.

#### **LIBRARY**

The library houses 40,000 academic resources and textbooks, and has a light reading section to encourage the habit of reading among students. Its facilities include discussion rooms, 24/7 study room, wi-fi access, and a digital database that provides access to e-books, periodicals, and dissertations made available from various national and international archives.









#### **SACRED GROVE**

Located near the Dargah on the eastern side of the campus, this Date Palm Grove consists of 900 individuals covering an area of 0.75 hectares. According to the elders of Chithara village, these are 300-400 years old, relics from Mughal invades who came from West and camped here in the wetland area. The seeds of date left along their camping trail, which later grew into date palm trees spreads across through North India, including Shiv Nadar University's campus.

#### **LAKE**

The campus lake is part of the Dadri wetlands, also called the Bil Akbarpur wildlife habitat. The lake was almost dried up when the University was founded. Its immediate revival has allowed a rich number of fish and aquatic plants to thrive in it, such as Nitella, Chara, and Hydrilla. The lake attracts resident and migratory birds mostly in winters.

- secoles HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

SHIV NADAR UNIVERSITY
DELHI-NCR
BIODIVERSITY MAP



WILD INTERACTIONS











CAMPUS HOTSPOTS



DATE PALM GROVE









CACTI GARDIN

BUTTERFEY GARDEN WETLAND BIODIVERSITY GARDEN MULBERRY ASSEMBLY

PARTICIPATION AND THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PARTICIP



Students from the Tea Gardens of Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal performing a Sadri (Chota Nagpuri) dance at the World Indigenous Peoples' Day celebration.



Dr. Ananya Mukherjee, Vice-Chancellor Shiv Nadar University, launching the 2024-26 student profile book at the student induction



Dr. Mihir Shah, Distinguished Professor and Chairperson of the MA-RM Program, addressing a large number of partner organizations from all over the country at the Experience Sharing Workshop



Shri Kuldip Singh, CEO, Bharat Rural Livelihoods Foundation, which has provided bulk of the scholarships, addressing the Workshop





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