

Living Lightly

Journeys with Pastoralists

Exhibition. Delhi

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Website: www.livinglightly.in

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From The Organiser's Desk

The national exhibition and event on pastoralism, organized in New Delhi by Sahjeevan and FES, concluded with promising ideas, thoughts and suggestions for the future of pastoralism in India. This was a remarkable event that brought together pastoralists from Ladakh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Telengana, North Karnataka, Maharashtra, Kashmir, and Arunachal Pradesh! It brought in academics from India, Kenya, the United States and Europe, policy makers that included the Union Minister of Agriculture, Shri Radha Mohan Singh, and the Minister of State for Agriculture, Shri Purshottam Rupala, the Minister for Women and Child Development Shrimati Maneka Gandhi, senior politicians such as Shrimati Sonia Gandhi, representatives of civil society, actors from across the country, media and any number of school children. Amongst the most common refrains from senior ministers, bureaucrats and citizens was that they had no idea of the many faceted dimensions to pastoralist contributions!

For a variety of reasons, Indian pastoralism exists in marginal spaces – physical, social, economic and political. This marginalization is in part linked to their mobile lifestyles. And it is this very mobility that lies at the heart of their neglect by State and society, both rooted in cultural norms that sees such mobility as an earlier, less civilized mode of social and economic organization than more settled agriculture. However, a large part of a pastoralist's mobility and migratory cycle allows her to forage in areas that are otherwise un- or under-utilized, and when pastoralism compliments agricultural land uses, it enables significant increases in total economic output from a given area.

Alpine and sub-alpine pastures that are not used by other communities support up to 8 months of the pastoralist migratory cycle in the Himalayas. Buffalo herding maldharis in Kutch District, of Western Gujarat, spend the entire year in the Banni, an area that has almost no cultivation. The Raikas



Illustration: Sushama Durve

and Rabaris of Rajasthan spend large amounts of time in post-harvest, densely cultivated lands, grazing their sheep and goats on a crop residue that has no other claimants, and sheep herders in the Deccan Plateau utilize a combination of crop residues, village commons and roadside foraging to sustain the black sheep of the region. Similar accounts exist for duck herders in Tamil Nadu; cattle in the Nilgiris, and camels in Jaiselmer.

Pastoralists have tended to graze their animals in those areas where cultivation poses significant challenges – either because of a lack of water, or because the winter is simply too severe to permit the survival of cultivated plants. As mentioned above, pastoralists have bred a remarkable range of animals and birds to handle these conditions. But the pastoralist presence has also helped shape these areas as biodiversity rich areas that we value today.



Illustration: Sushama Durve

The economic returns from Indian pastoralist communities are equally large, but not computed. The production of wool, draught animals, dairy, meat and eggs under pastoral systems are known to be more adaptable to the range of conditions experienced in India, than do hybrids. The bulk of India's milk is now produced in industrial dairies and India will likely become the biggest producer of milk in the near future. What is less recognized, is that India's milk production per animal is much lower than global averages, 3.2 versus 6.8 kgs per animal. Five of India's indigenous cattle, five – Gir, Rathi, Tharparkar, Red Sindhi and Sahiwal -- are known producers of high volumes of milk, and are potential contributors to raising India's average milk yield. These are breeds that have evolved in the specific context of breeding practices followed by pastoralists. Barring hybrid animals bred by India's scientific establishment, every indigenous breed of domesticated bird or animal has roots in Indian pastoral systems. And many of these have been bred to deal with environmental conditions that are specific to different parts of the country. Pastoralists contributions to both the milk and the meat economy are significant. Shepherd managed sheep and goats constitute more than 80% of this form of meat produced in the country, which in itself is one of the fastest growing sectors of the agrarian economy.

Pastoralism may also hold lessons for how we hope to adapt to future climate change. Pastoralist movements are often in response to climate events – snow fall in the upper reaches of the Himalaya, rainfall in the Banni grasslands of Kutch or the Deccan Plateau. These are often finely tuned migrations, involving hundreds of thousands of animals, and over long distances, and inherently represent a capacity to adapt to climatic events. The capacity for such adaptation could become increasingly

necessary as rainfall becomes more and more unpredictable. These are communities that have been responding to climatic variability for many hundreds of years and inherent in their decisions is an understanding of how ecology and economy intertwine in climatically uncertain environments. There may be much to be learned from such communities, as we encounter heightened levels of climatic variability.

However, mobility has also costs that pastoralist communities are forced to internalise, such as the absence of effective schooling. Are schooling and mobility mutually exclusive activities or can lessons from mobile schools inform government policy to permit more effective delivery of such services? Do pastoralists continue to be as marginal as often suggested? Or are pastoralists finding ways of more constructive engagement with mainstream societies? And are mainstream societies more or less tolerant of pastoralists, given the very real benefits one might associate with them?

The range of discussions, conversations, and observations on all the above issues by a variety of participants at the exhibition and consultations, suggested that there was need for a central clearing-house of pastoralism; For an institutional space, that would facilitate interaction and exchange amongst various stake-holders working on pastoralism. Thus, emerging from the shadows of the exhibition is the idea of establishing a collaborative platform. And the contours of setting up a centre for pastoralism is germinating. Meanwhile, the exhibition itself will continue to travel to different regions, encouraging regional conversations and policy discourse as well as a greater engagement with the science, economy, knowledges systems and culture of pastoralism.



Illustration: Sushama Durve

Lead Curator's Note

'A roti if you don't turn, will burn.
Horse tied to a place will loose its pace,
A leaf stuck to the soil will rot,
Knowledge that does not travel will shrivel' So we stay moving
with our herds..'

It is the powerful simplicity of what Jaisingkaka said to me some years ago that carried the seed for this exhibition. A Rabari from Kutch, he has herded his animals for more than 45 years, walking more than 3000 kms each year, across India's belly from the western tip of India to the edges of Orissa. Like him, millions of pastoralists roam the ever shrinking pastures of India, even as they continue to tread lightly on this land. And they carry with them compelling tales of living and herding, even as everything seems to be working against them! These stories too needed to move on and touch many of our settled and frenetic lives.

We will be surprised to know how pastoralism intersects our lives - our food, our textile fibres, crafts, our cultural landscape, all through the many invisible gifts that we receive from them. Each day. The exhibition 'Living Lightly ~ Journeys with Pastoralists' was designed to generate many conversations - amongst pastoralists, between pastoralists and other citizens, students, scholars, artists and government functionaries. Conversations on why our futures are so closely woven with the future of our shrinking grasslands, our indigenous livestock breeds, and the mobile lives of pastoralists.

Through a fusion of testimonies, oral archives, music and poetic forms, crafted narratives, film exhibits and performances, the exhibits gave expression to the fluidity of the pastoralists'

syncretic lives. And their voices reached us through many artists, scientists, and practitioners, from India and abroad, who grazed across the landscape of this exhibition, and gifted it with their extraordinary talents, skills and knowledge.

For 16 days, amidst the vast green spaces and galleries of IGNCA, this multi curated, multi media exhibition was also accompanied by a range of significant events every day. An Academic conference, stakeholder consultation, pastoral goshtis, student round tables, school workshops, photographer's colloquium, a film festival.....the back to back events energised the pastoralists, enthused visitors, stimulated students, and exhausted the organizers!

The exhibition has been envisaged to continue as a travelling exhibition - as it travels to other pastoral regions, we promise to gather new narratives, shed some, and hopefully regenerate the 'commons' in our lives.

As many visitors realised and remarked, this exhibition was not an exposition of a forgotten 'past'. It was a fertile connection with a 'present' that lives alongside us. And spoke to us of a 'future' that can possibly carry all of us through, even as we grapple with the complex world we have created for ourselves, as we sit heavily on this land!

Sushma Iyengar



Inauguration

Living Lightly, Journeys with Pastoralists opened to much anticipation on the 2nd of December, 2016 at IGNCA, New Delhi. The event was jointly organized and supported by organizations including Aarti Foundation, Agrocel Industries

Pvt. Ltd. Asha Kiran Trust, Bharat Rural Livelihood Foundation (BRLF), Mr. Donald Peck (UK), Excel Industries Ltd., FES, Food and Agriculture organization (FAO), Ford Foundation, Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBF), Kesar Group, Khamir, Sahjeevan, Shroff Family Charitable Trust, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Tata Power Community Development Trust, Transpek Industries Ltd.



The intimate inaugural ceremony in the amphitheatre of IGNCA, was attended by 300 guests including senior representatives from the partners, sponsors and organisers of the event. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Cooperation, Shri Radha Mohan Singh arrived dot on time, welcomed by the strains of a Jodiya Pawa - played live by Wadha Rava Allarakha, the herder musician from Gujarat. Dressed in a white dhoti with a colourful coatie, he mingled easily with an array of traditional colours and attire of the 55 pastoralists who came from across the country. On stage, he was joined by Shri Vinod Chavda, the young Member Parliament from Kachchh, Dr. Amrita Patel, Chairperson of Foundation for Ecological Security, Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar, President of Sahjeevan, and Ms. Sushma Iyengar, Lead Curator.

The inauguration kicked off symbolically with the Monpas, Bakarwals, Raikas, Gaddis, Jats, Gujjars, Kurubas, Dhangars, Kurumas,

Changpas and Bharwads coming together to pour bundles of raw sheep, camel, yak, and goat wool brought from their regions, into a ceremonial basket. This was followed by the Minister formally launching the book A World Without a Roof - a graphic book of 4 stories on pastoralism from India, authored and illustrated by Sarita Sundar and Somesh Kumar.

Following the book launch, came the much awaited announcement from FSSAI's (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) that they had cleared the way for camel milk to be sold in the market. Mr. Pawan Kumar Agarwal, CEO, FSSAI released the notification to loud cheers, and Mr. Hardeep Singh from GCMMF (Amul Dairy) elevated the cheer when he stated that with FSSAI clearance, Amul would begin procurement and marketing of camel milk this year! A step that will not only benefit the economy of camel pastoralists, but also benefit the general populace who have long been unaware and deprived of the therapeutic qualities of camel milk. Sachin Sachdeva, the master of ceremony, gave the audience a taste of camel milk - its nutritional qualities, the process that preceded the announcement by FSSAI, the history of camel herding and the significance of this announcement.

The Chief Guest, Hon Cabinet Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Radha Mohan Singh spoke about the many invisible contributions of pastoralism, the growing challenges to their livelihood, and the need to conserve their practices, knowledge systems, and lifestyle of mobility. He assured the pastoralists that the Centre would take up the issue of their access to forests and the implementation of the FRA with the States. Sushma Iyengar spoke about the pastoralists who inspired her to initiate this exhibition. And hoped that the exhibition would inspire society and governments to recognize and engage with the immense science, economics, regenerative capacities, knowledge, and spiritual growth that governed



Shri Radha Mohan Singh, Union Minister of Agriculture, Government of India, launches the book 'World Without a Roof' along with Dr. Sudarshan Iyengar, Shri Vinod Chavda, Pawan Kumar Agarwal, Gunda Indira, pastoralist from Telengana and Sushma Iyengar

the mobility of pastoralists. Sandeep Virmani, Founder and Trustee, Sahjeevan thanked the Minister, all the pastoralists, partners, visitors, and the team for the effort they had made in bringing this exhibition to Delhi. The Programme concluded with the Minister cutting the ceremonial ribbon to the exhibition galleries, and Sushma walking him and the guests through the exhibits, installations and film.

There was more to come in the evening and guests were served special camel milk chocolates. They kept themselves warm with multiple servings of Camel milk kheer as they waited for Ankit Chadha to come on stage for his inaugural performance of the Dastangoi on Pastoralism.



Shri Radha Mohan Singh inaugurates the exhibition, while Dr. Amrita Patel and Shri Vinod Chavda look on

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The Exhibition

Visiting an exhibition is an embodied experience; we do not passively 'watch' an exhibition; we actively move through it, and it is only through our activity that the exhibition experience manifests itself. The exhibition and the visitor are like partners in a dance with a beginning, an end and an en-riching experience in between.

Regan Forrest, Visitor Experience Manager, Australia.



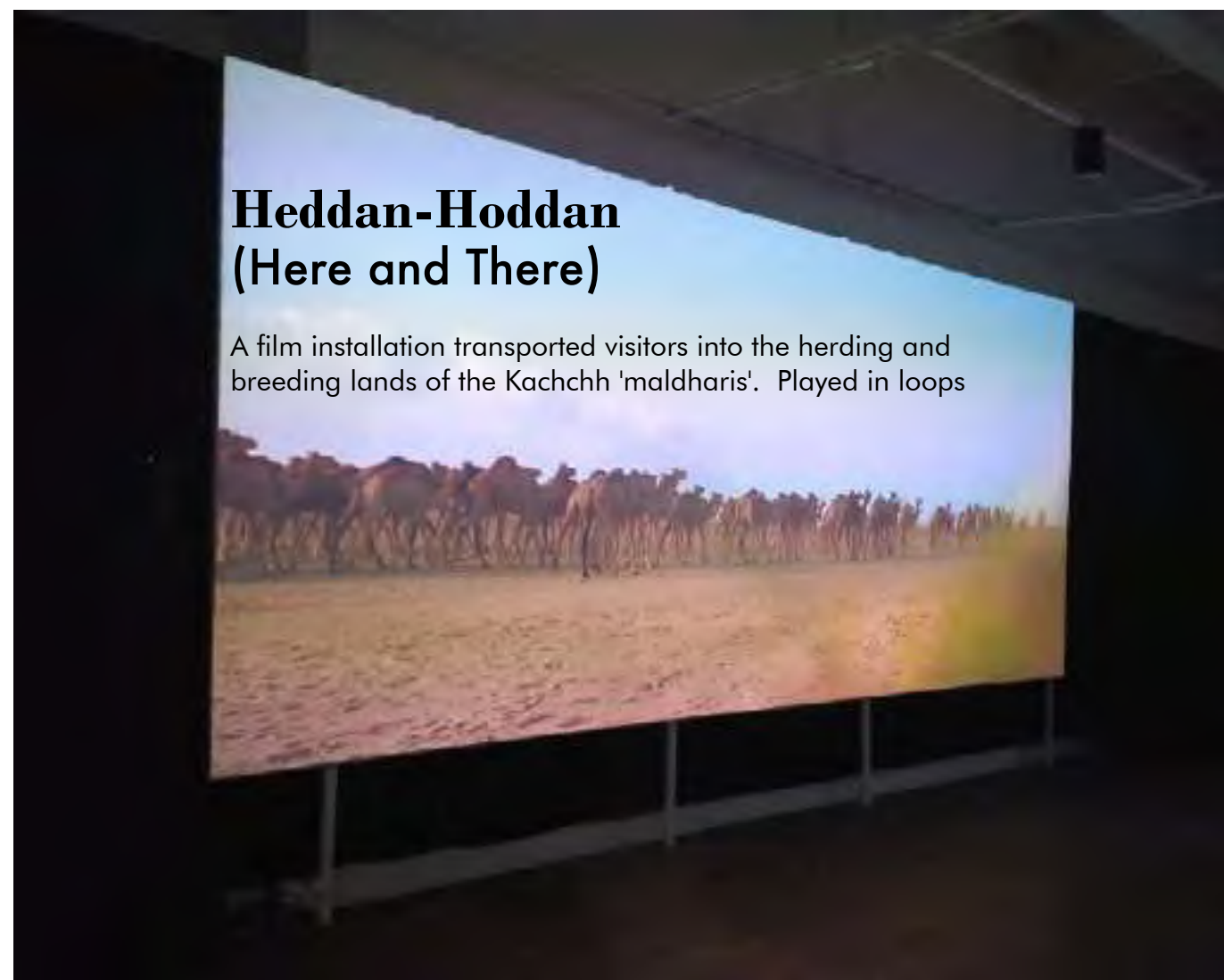
The context for the exhibition, through film, performance, craft and music installations, was created by presenting a map of movements. The map was researched and coordinated by Varsha Mehta along with experts from across the country. For the first time, it traced the geography, topography, ecology, migration paths, and animal breeds of pastoralists in India, and stood at the entrance of the exhibition galleries.

A symbolic installation of the herding stick, animal bell, and shoes - accompaniments of every herder's journey - guided visitors through the various exhibits. While visitors tended to hurry towards the colourful craft exhibits, volunteers from Manzil would gently steer them towards their first halt - a 360 degree film projection.*

every hour, a series of four short films projected on 360 degree screens enveloped the visitors as they swirled on their seats to follow the buffalo breeders of Banni, dive into the mangrove creeks to meet the swimming 'Kharai' camels and their Jat herders, cross the White desert to find the grass islands on which the Kankrej cows breed, and converse with the Debbaria Rabaris who herd their sheep and goat across 1700 kms from the west of India to the east.

The 45 minute film experience gave viewers the feel of the land, the breed and the herder. They discovered a culture of the commons in Banni - stories of lost animals returned to owners by those who find them, even after months - returned to the owner alongwith all the earnings from the milk while she was lost! Of evolved norms for sharing rain with pastoralists and animals deprived of rain; Of conflicts within the community when some try to privatise the Commons, and conflicts resolved simply by blessing young girls. Of the resilient Banni buffalo in arid lands -which survives the drastic changes in temperatures and the irregular availability of grasses and water. And survives by grazing at night without the herders!

The camels are creatures designed by evolution and nature to survive with little. But when they see green abundance across the creeks, they decided to swim! **Viewers were fascinated to see the film on the Fakirani Jats who have evolved a unique animal called the Kharai Camel, that has combined the desert ability to live without fresh water while also browsing the mangroves for long periods of time.** The mangroves are considered the most productive ecosystems, next to rainforests. The de-serts produce the least. In Gujarat, and in parts of Pakistan around Karachi, the deserts adjoin the mangroves; this happens only here, in the entire world. And the fakirani Jats have become a specialised community who can live in the mangroves, sleep on machans in the swamp and derive all their nourishment from camel milk.

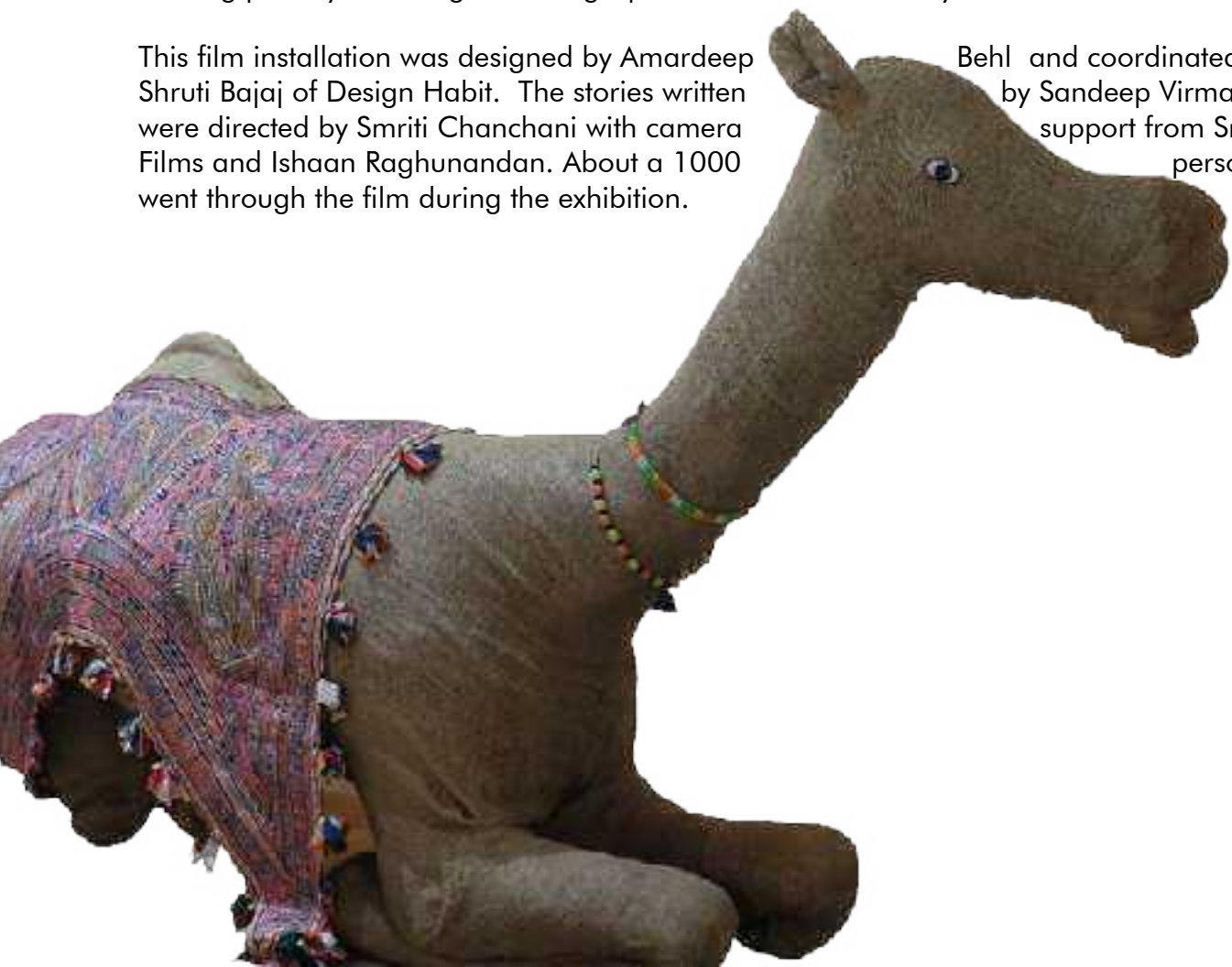


From camels in the mangroves, the screen jumped to cows in Brazil! A century ago, the Brazilians took cows from Gujarat, and developed the gene to produce an astounding 52kilograms of milk daily. They called it the Guzerat (from Gujarat) and market it now as an answer to climate variability which is reducing milk supply from hybrid animals. This is none other than the Kankrej cow. In droughts the Kankrej walks hundreds of kilometres to better pastures and diseases don't come easy. Tall, hardy and beautiful with crescent shaped large horns, he boasts of the famous Savai-Chal (one and a quarter gait). It's sturdy frame with long hind legs steps ahead of the hoofs of the front legs, unlike most other breeds, making it plough the fields faster. Even today Muslim pastoralists of Kachchh supply bullocks to Hindu farmers of Saurashtra - a practice that has bound the families into brotherhood from several generations.

And finally the film walks with the **Debharia Rabari women - women in black - who are at the fore-front of herding, holding the reins of their camel; home and babies wrapped on it, following their flock of sheep and goats, speaking to none as they move briskly across highways, farms, ragged terrains, lakes and forests.** They speak here of their long journeys which take them through many eco-systems and cultures and has made them great taxonomists! They share tales of love and hostilities on their journeys, of the complete absence of fear in their lives, of homes that get made every night, and of lives lost to deadly and callous highways. Of why their search for pastures has lengthened and why the usurped and degraded Commons has made their herding journeys the longest amongst pastoralists in India today.

This film installation was designed by Amardeep Shruti Bajaj of Design Habit. The stories written were directed by Smriti Chanchani with camera Films and Ishaan Raghunandan. About a 1000 went through the film during the exhibition.

Behl and coordinated by
by Sandeep Virmani
support from Srishti
persons



Rooh ji Rehaan *A gathering of souls*

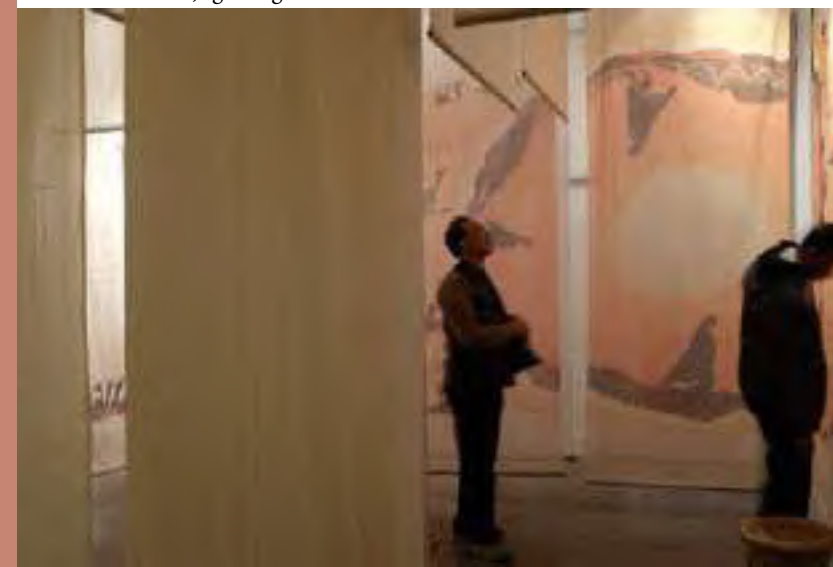
Music & Poetry

Welcome to this rooh ji rehaan – a gathering of souls - where poems, songs and stories are shared, questions asked, yearnings expressed. Living closely with the elements, as herders do, can bring forth deeper inquiries. Where have we come from? Why are we here? Cast the gaze of a poet around you and every element of the landscape – moon, mountain, camel, cloud, hurricane or river – begins to glow with hidden meanings. You hear many voices here - Sindhi, Kutchi, Gujarati, Hindi - some of recent poets and some of poets who lived many centuries ago, who stay alive because they are sung, shared and quoted in the day to day lives of the herder communities of Kutch.

So take a pause. Allow stillness. Move with heart. Let the song speak to your soul. O sweet beloved, come here soon! Where souls meet and speak with intimacy Forgive my faults, see my naked truth Come, let this long separation end

With these words, Shabnam Virmani and Vipul Rikhi, curators of 'Rooh ji Rehaan' invited visitors into an immersive space where they briefly experienced the psycho-spiritual, philosophic universe of a maldhaari, and how she understands herself and her world.

Photo Credits: Jogi Panghaal





Living Lightly-2016 brought a glimpse of the music of Kutchi Maldhari through Rooh Ji Reyan, literally a gathering of souls. This section had two parts - live music by herder musicians from Kutch on two evenings, and a music and poetry installation designed by Oroon Das. It blended art, music, and poetry to create an immersive space for visitors to lose themselves in, and find themselves anew.

The installation moved from midnight to midnight across six vistas, each evoking the Sky, Mountain, Desert, Rain, Wind, and Rivers. Every vista consisted of artwork illustrated by Roy Varghese - inspired by numerous poetic texts (by Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, Mekan Dada, Kabir, Mirabai, and others) as well as pastoral lives - transporting the joys and hardships of pastoralist's physical and spiritual journeys into the exhibition. Wayee, Kafi, and Bhajans sung in Kutchi, Gujrati, Sindhi, and Hindi could be followed with a book of lyrics, and heard on individual MP3 speakers provided to the visitors even as ambient music played in the background as one waded across the vistas. Visitors were left enthralled, some flowing through the installation and finding a corner to meditate, some singers breaking into spontaneous song at the end of the 'walk, through the installation, and some demanding to buy the music at any cost! The delighted organizers, not having foreseen such a turn of events, soon made arrangements for the music to be available for purchase!



Artist Celebrating Pastoralism

Photo Credits: Jogi Panghaal



Photos of Van Gujjars by Michael Benanav

There are few places on earth that can compare with the beauty of pastoral lands. Stunning landscapes, robust breeds, and elegant people has moved many photographers, from India and abroad, to wander into the heart of pastoralists. They have made the hard journey and emerged with exceptional photo essays. The exhibition invited Christina Noble, Kalyan Varma, Michael Benanav, Monisha Ahmed and Sankar Sridhar to give us a peek into their personal journeys and carry us to into the life and lands of the Gaddis, Dhangars, Van Gujjars, Changpas Bakarwals, Raikas.

Michael Benanav from the US has lived and walked with the Van Gujjars, and has movingly captured their struggle on being ousted from the Rajaji National Park. His exhibits gave insights into the intimate relationships the Van Gujjars share with earth other and their Buffaloes. Christina Noble from the UK, had spent time with the Gaddis in the Himachal Pradesh in the nineteen eighties. Her images sweep the high altitudes of the Himalayas to bring out the edgy and precarious herding

journey the Gaddi shepherds make with their sheep and goat during the summer months. Kalyan Verma's lens follow the Dhangars of Maharashtra to bring out the unique world view and rituals of the Dhangars who worship the wolves - the very wolves who prey on their sheep! - because they believe that the wolves keep them and the food chain in balance. Monisha, who is an anthropologist, was invited to share her photo documentation of the shifts in herding patterns with the success of the pashmina, even as the Pashm goat - also called the Changthiang - becomes the favoured breed over sheep and yaks. Sankar Sridhar, the reticent writer and photographer who has documented pastoral communities across India, generously shared his photographs to lend the exhibition a visual panorama of pastoralists in the Himalayas and the semi arid plains of Rajasthan.

Photo Essays by Young Pastoralists

The most celebrated photographers in the exhibition were an unlikely group of young pastoralists! A couple of years ago, 20 youth from various pastoral communities turned the gaze on themselves and embarked upon a new journey, camera in hand. Ishaan Raghunandan, a young photographer from Bangalore was invited to spend time with these young boys and girls in their habitats, and teach them photography skills on a point and shoot camera. The outcome of this learning journey - for both Ishaan and the youth - was a collection of more than 2000 photographs. Of which 200 were curated into a special photo exhibition.



Photo Credits: Jogi Panghaal



Photo Credits: Jogi Panghaal

What are the hopes and dreams of the pastoral youth, as the outside world closes in around them? How do they view their geographies which continue to conserve and nurture pastoral practices? What are their choices as they lurch between the practicalities and seeming comforts of a settled world and the diminishing returns of their own, more sustainable livelihood. The exhibits raised many questions for everyone - the visitors, the youth themselves, the organizers, and Ishaan himself who was moved to write a diary of his experiences with the young herders, called 'Understanding Pastoralism'.



Smt. Sonia Gandhi, President of Indian National Congress, visits the exhibition.



Photo Colloquium

Pictures speak a thousand words, but they can hardly ever match the redolence of words spoken in person. The photographers exhibiting at LL had spent weeks, months, and years living alongside pastoral people. Their experiences had influenced their work, their lives, and lives of many others. Most of the photographers warmed to the idea easily, while a couple needed a bit more cajoling!

Michael, Christina, Monisha, Shankar, Ishaan and his pastoralist students enthralled an audience comprised of Pastoralists, visitors, and organizers as they recounted their journeys. Christina traveled back in time to describe the beautiful yet treacherous routes that the Gaddis used (and still do) travel with their herds. Ishaan and the young maldharis spoke about their own experiences of being a teacher and a student; just as the roles kept getting reversed, the relationship formed into friendship and led each on a path of self-discovery. Monisha narrated how the ecosystem of Ladakh is changing driven by the economics of Pashmina trade. The audience left with lumps in their throats and many with tears in their eyes, induced to a large extent by Michael's moving tale of the Van-Gujjars and their deep personal and collective struggles on having been ousted from the Rajaji National Park.

Common Ground Paintings by Jo Bertini

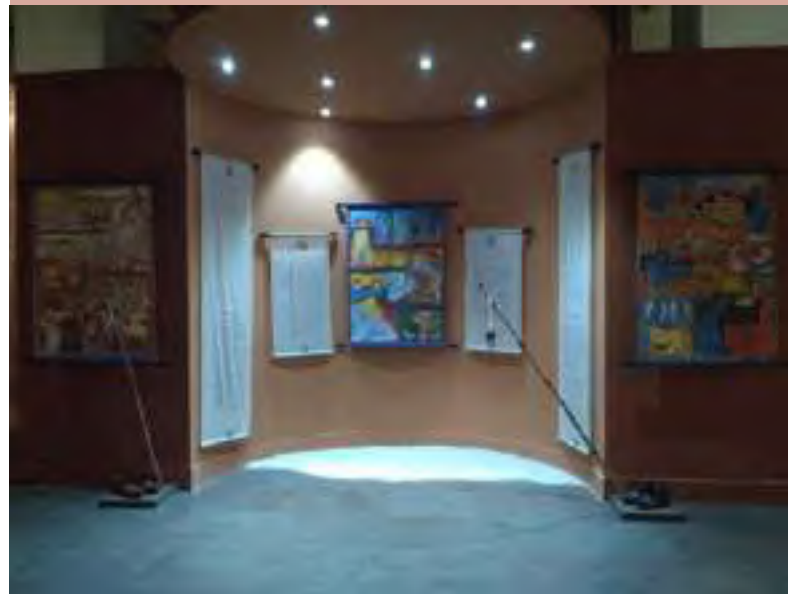
Jo Bertini is an artist on the move - she has been living and moving amidst camels for the past two decades. Here, she exhibited her paintings which she created while travelling to the herding communities in Rajasthan and Kutch with Carole Douglas. Framed beautifully by the textiles of the communities that she was painting, Jo's works resonated with the visitors. The Australian High Commission sponsored Jo Bertini to present her art in the Living Lightly Exhibition, and organized a 'talk and walk' by her on December 3rd.



Photo Credits: Jogi Panghaal

Genesis Stories

Genesis stories from pastoralists found expression in Tapas Upadhyay's art works. The stories and art panels inspired Amar Chitra Katha - India's largest selling comic book series - to show interest in creating illustrated books on pastoralism.



While Lord Shiva was deep in meditation, Parvati was busy creating forms in clay. When Shiva opened his eyes, she showed him her new creature with five legs and asked him to blow life into the creature. Shiva pushed the fifth leg into the body of the creature, creating a hump on the back and then gave it life. A camel was born into the world! Shiva then took the perspiration and dirt off his arm, and with his fingers made two human figures and blew life into them as well - Sambhal and Jambhal. The Rabaris and Raikas of Rajasthan believe they are descendants of Sambhal, made from the sweat of Shiva, born only to look after the camels.

The Kurma sheep pastoralists in Telengana believe their origins are from two tear drops of Lord Shiva. And the Gaddis in Himachal Pradesh believe that their flocks of sheep and goats were created from the dirt that Shivji took out from his body and threw into the ground!



Film Screenings Some Place Else

Someplace Else, celebrated the cinematic experience of pastoralism through the screening of five films at the Living Lightly exhibition at IGNCA, Delhi from December 10 to 18th. While there have are scores of documentaries on pastoralism and shepherds across the world, there have been only a handful of feature length films that have trained their lenses on pastoralism. This section was curated by Sanjay Barnela, a film maker and educator at Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore, and coordinated by Varun Ram from Srishti Films.

As Sanjay and his team started wading through websites, youtube links and got in touch with film-makers in India and in other countries, especially Iran, Spain and Portugal, they found a mixed collection of cinema which explored the picturesque and hard worlds of nomadic pastoralists. Some films made the final cut because they were the first of their kind, some because they changed the way we look at pastoral communities, while others were selected for being great films, but not readily available on the digital or retail platforms.

The screenings premiered with an extremely evocative production from Ladakh titled *Shepherdess of the Glaciers*, which was screened twice on public demand! The film was made by Stanzin Dorzai, who traces the life of his sister who is the shepherdess herding her animals in solitude, through the hostile weather and harsh terrains. This was followed by a Mongolian films *Story of the Weeping Camel*, then a Marathi feature film *Khwada* by Bhaurao Karhade, who, himself is a Dangar pastoralist from Maharashtra. The week ended with the musically delightful *Latcho Drom* and critically acclaimed *Ainda Ha Pastores*, a Portugese film made by Jorge Pelicano.



Photo Credits: Jogi Panghaal

Kudraj Ji Kalaayi

The Hands of Nature

Craft Narratives

This section telescoped the crafting traditions which have sprung from pasturelands across Kachchh. The light, hard and mobile lives of pastoralists and their animals, have gifted us with a wealth of colours, dyes, yarns, techniques, material, taste and textures. The exhibits drew attention to the highly developed sense of aesthetics found in maldhari communities; almost an innate need to decorate their otherwise minimalist lives.

Each of the crafted exhibit - designed and crafted by many artisans ~ primarily told stories of enduring relationships between Maldhari and artisan communities of the Kachchh region. The crafted narratives highlighted the relationships that exists between herders who use the crafts, and artisans who supply them while also recognising that some artisan/herder relationships have all but disappeared. As Carole Douglas the co-curator of Kudraj Ji Kalaayi from Sydney, said "the artisans have honoured the past, celebrated the present and envisioned the future of herder- artisan relationships through a range of static displays/installations, interpretive panels, text, graphics, and live demonstrations. In essence, this is a series of 'conversations' between herders, their animals, their daily needs and the artisans, their tools, materials, products and customers (the herders)"



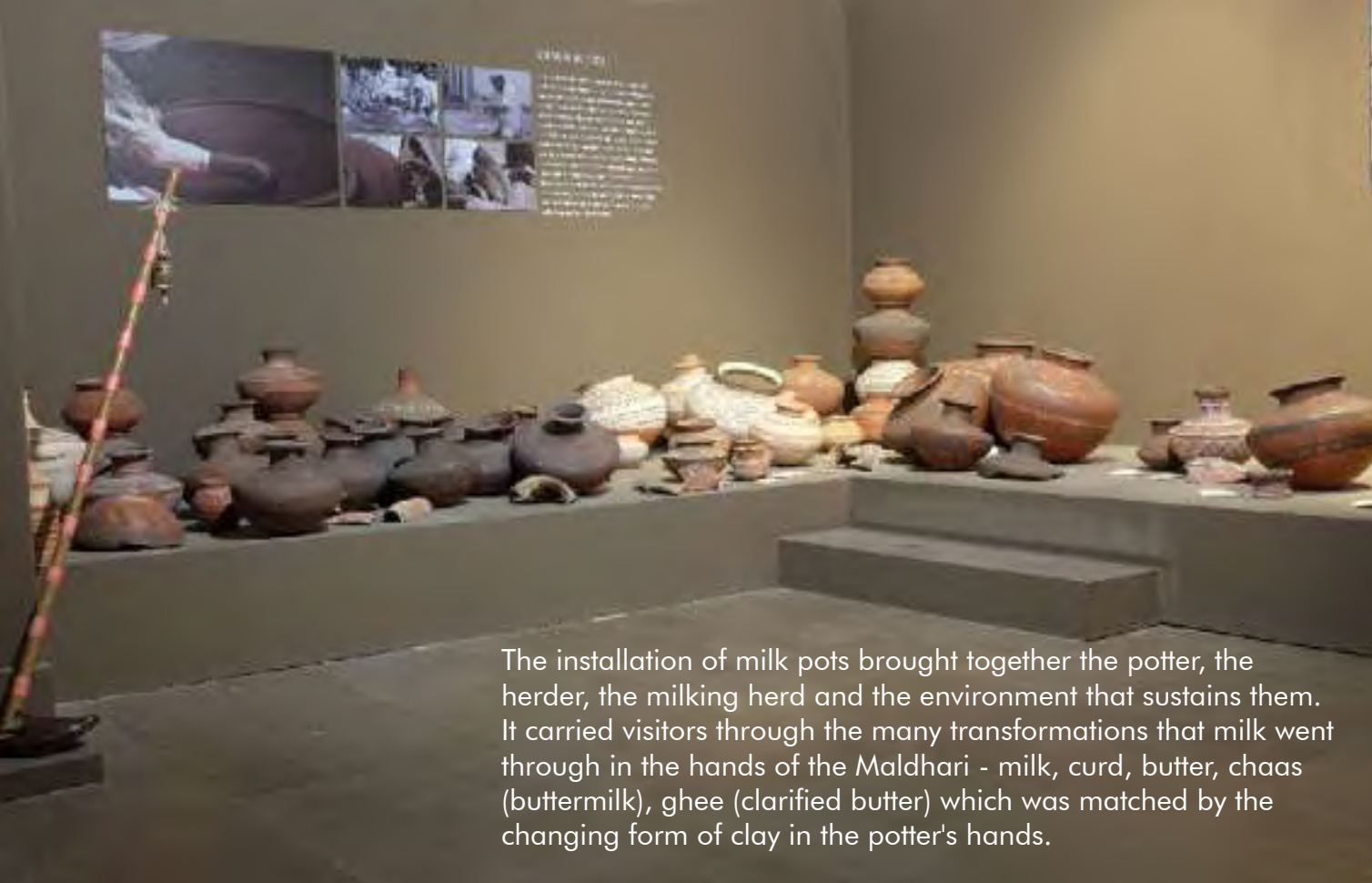
Photo Credits: Jogi Panghaal

Visitors walked under a canopy created by 992 women pastoralists from different communities, each contributed one patch in their unique embroidery. This was their signature on this exhibition. Each patch representing their place in the fabric of Maldhari life in Kutch.

They moved between the visual and aural installation of crafted copper bells which are an intrinsic part of herding life; where bell tuning is a finely honed art that begins with the artisan, and refined by the pastoralist.

Photo Credits: Nipun Prabhakar





The installation of milk pots brought together the potter, the herder, the milking herd and the environment that sustains them. It carried visitors through the many transformations that milk went through in the hands of the Maldhari - milk, curd, butter, chaas (buttermilk), ghee (clarified butter) which was matched by the changing form of clay in the potter's hands.

Photo Credits: Jogi Panghaal



The cloth, needle and the thread travelled everywhere with the herders. This is a life embroidered - embellishing blouses, veils, skirts, cradles, pillows, quilts, coin purses, shoes, sacks, bags - reserving some of the finest work for their animals, with exquisite trappings and saddlery. These objects were in display from the special collection of Mr. A. A. Wazir.

Photo Credits: Jogi Panghaal



The birth of ajrakh in the land of pastoralists, for the pastoralists, was captured in a free flowing exhibit of ajrakh printed textile panels specially created by the younger generation of ajrakh artisans - Sufiyan Khatri and Nasir Khatri. Much has changed - water, cloth, the urban Indian who loves ajrakh, and the Khatri's clientele - but the younger generation Ajrakh artisans in Kutch are keen to revive the relationship with young maldharis in Kachchh and new experiments are beginning to take shape.

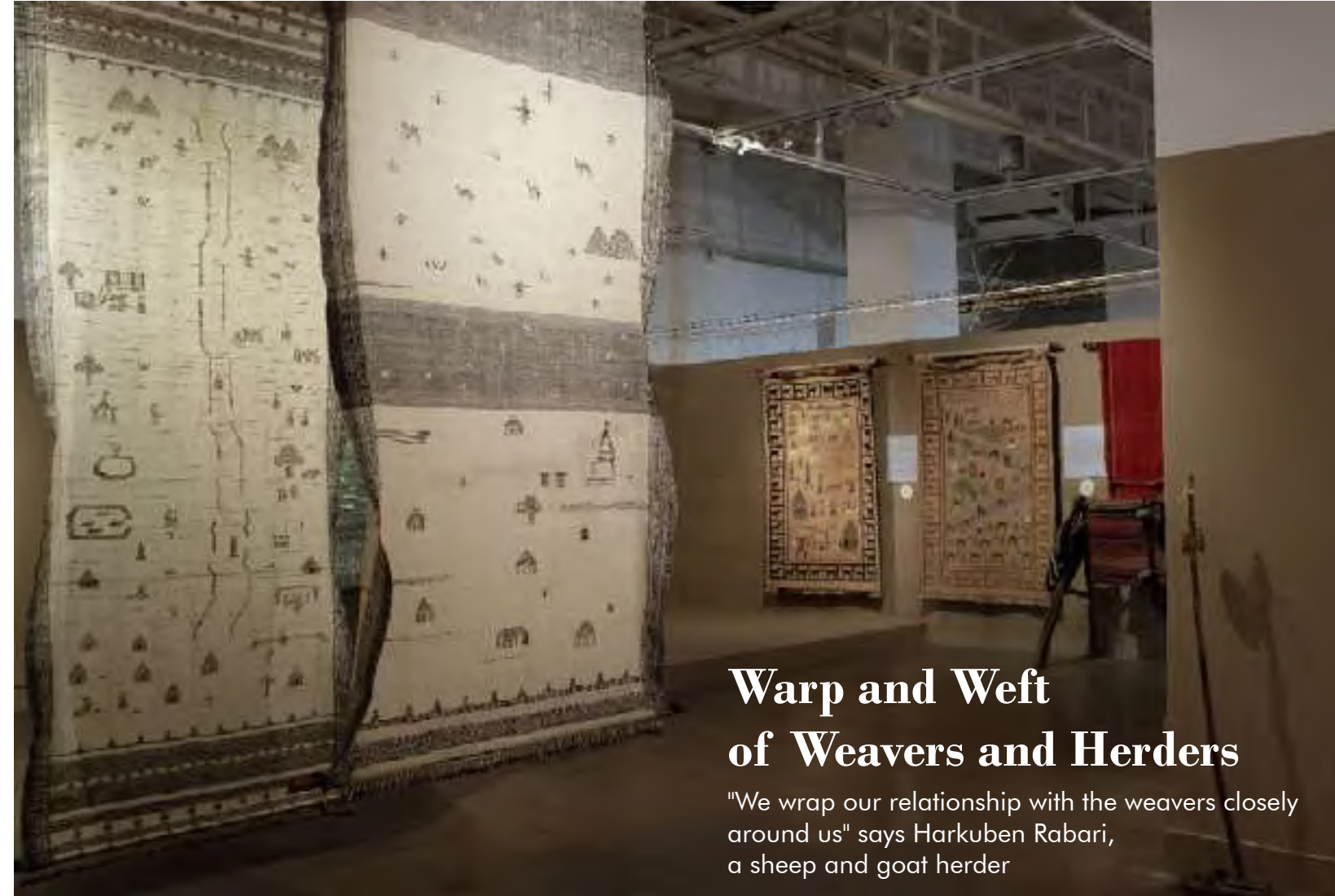
Photo Credits: Jogi Panghaal



The exhibition showcased Erroll Nelson Pires' special collection of camel girths called *tang*. Collected over many decades from Rabari and Rajput herders who are expert ply split braiders, these camel girths made of goat hair yarn are special because of their strength and beauty. The technique which was used to make the tang was ply-split braiding. In this technique, the plies of one yarn are opened sufficiently to be inter-worked with another yarn by pulling it through. This leads to fabric of great strength which is very necessary for a camel belt.



The show stopper seemed to be the embroidered panels tracing a year's journey of the camel and her herder, as they traverse through a range of eco systems. The exquisitely embroidered camel trails were the outcome of a series of workshops and conversations women embroidery artisans of Kachch had with the nomadic camel pastoralists in the region. Over a period of six months, six artisans from QASAB partnered with camel herders to create these panels. Meghuben Rabari who led this process, also facilitated visitors through a guided walk around these panels.



Warp and Weft of Weavers and Herders

"We wrap our relationship with the weavers closely around us" says Harkuben Rabari, a sheep and goat herder

Photo Credits: Jogi Panghaal

The Rabaris, who largely bred the indigenous and wooly sheep breeds called Marwadi and Makdi till recently, have had a symbiotic relationship with the weaving community of Vankars in Kutch for many generations. The weavers specialised in weaving the thick and coarse wools of these breeds, and even today are settled in close proximity with the Rabaris. However, the Rabaris find no market for their indigenous wool even as the market and weavers have switched to the imported, low cost, machine-spun wool from the Merino sheeps of Australia.

A new initiative is taking shape in the wake of this exhibition. Inspired weavers have begun to work closely with the Rabari community to develop a range of locally shorn, hand spun marwadi wool that is purchased by the weavers to create an authentic products for the contemporary market. This marks the beginning of a new relationship that is seeded in the past and will carry its new growth into the future. It is a bold beginning and its success will benefit both communities, hopefully restore the value of the resilient Marwari sheep and redefine old skills and celebrate enduring ties.



"Bhediya is a ritual cloth woven especially for the Rabari Maldhari to offer to their the 'Bhediya' Mataji after the first shearing of the sheep wool, once the monsoons are over. On this day, at the crack of dawn, the wool is sheared and then spun by the Rabaris. We the weavers meanwhile set our warps, and then weave this into a sacred cloth before the sun has set. We are then invited by the Rabaris to make a combined offering of the cloth to the Bhediya Mata in their habitat. All this in a day!

Inspired by the original Bhediya, I created a new one here using naturally dyed cotton and local wool. While the traditional piece is plain and quickly made, we invested more time in order to illustrate this continuing relationship

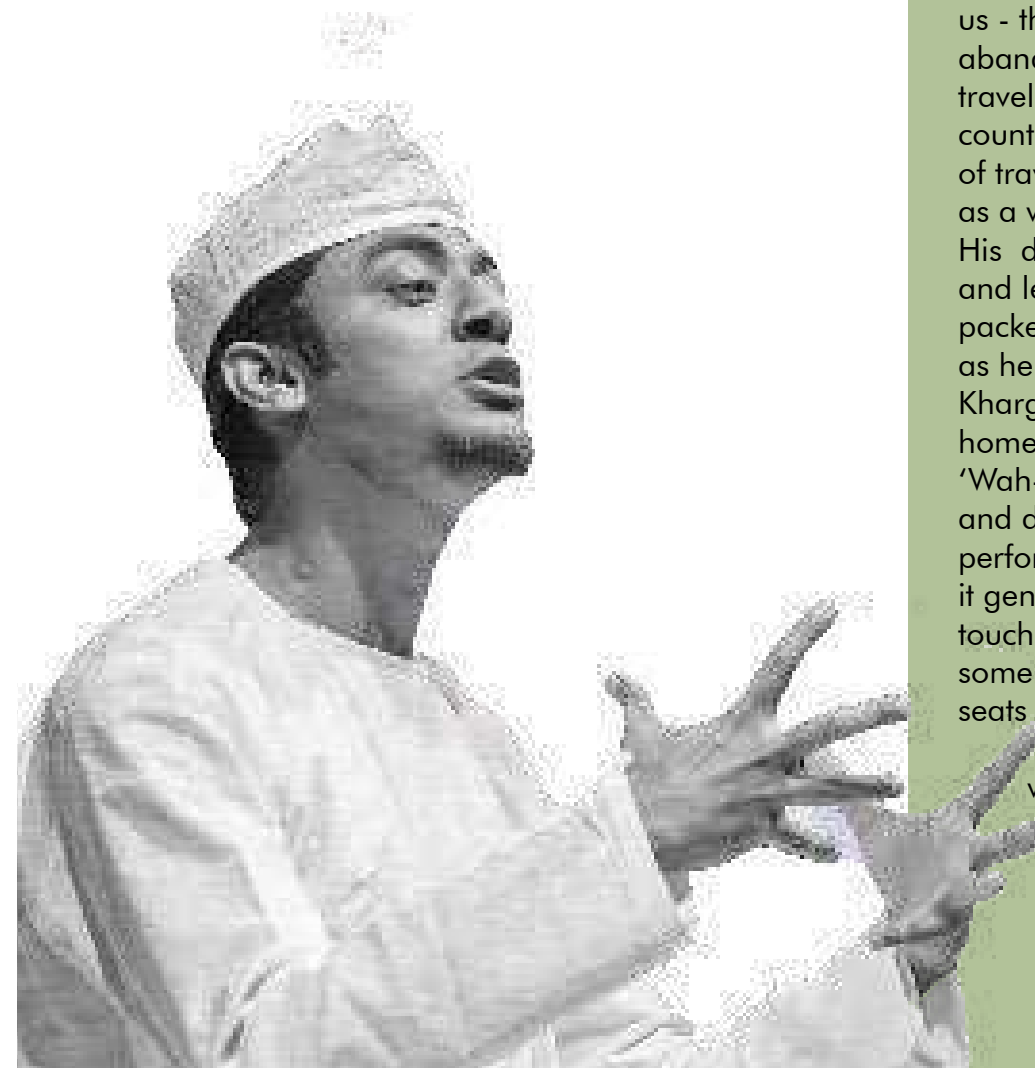
From the bottom of the work where I have depicted the rising sun in the shrub forests, the story leads us through the day and into the night. The Maldharis spend their days out grazing, but on the day of shearing they all return with their sheep and goats. Footprints show this movement. Then we see the shearing that was always carried out in the Rabari habitat. Moving further up the piece we come to the weavers' area where the Rabaris hand over the wool. Then we move to the warping before we come to the loom where the Bhediya is finally made.

Such sharing highlights a relationship that is not based purely on material exchange. It highlights a much deeper relationship that is based on long-term social and religious bonding."

Artisan: Shamji Vishram Valji
Village Bhujodi, Kachchh

Dastangoi

Dastan-e-khanabadosh



Visitors were regaled with 'Dastan-e-Khanabadosh' (the story of wanderers) - A compelling performance of Daastangoi by Ankit Chadha. Ankit was commissioned to develop a satirical story around the produce we, as society, receive from pastoralist's through their resilient life of movement and mobility, and the hostility they receive from us - the settled world - compelling them to abandon herding and sedentarize. Ankit travelled to different pastoral regions in the country, listening to their stories and tales of travel to understand pastoralism, both as a way of living and a production system. His dastan wrapped all these experiences and learnings together; and he performed to packed houses on cold Delhi winter evenings as he unwound his yarn of Kacchap Singh, Khargosh Kumar, and their views on life, home, mobility, and worldly possessions. 'Wah-wahs' reverberated as he performed and drew him backstage-hugs aplenty! The performance, story and the introspection it generated, impressed all; but the most touched were the pastoralists themselves, some of who not only insisted on front row seats during all his 3 performances, but also found it difficult to believe that this was a 28 year old talented Delhi lad bringing out the truth and wisdom of pastoralism, but a sufi saint himself!



हमारे देश, हमारी सभ्यता का एक हिस्सा जिसे हम नष्ट कर रहे हैं। एक प्रवाह जिसे हम जड़ बना रहे हैं, एक यात्रा जिसे हम रोक रहे हैं, इस प्रदर्शनी में इस यात्रा को गहरी समवेदना से अंकित किया गया है। विषय वास्तु और शिल्प कला में संजोया अद्भुत है। काश हम सब इतना “हल्का” जीवन जी पाते।
धन्यवाद
योगेन्द्र यादव



"Kudos! Mesmerised by the documentation of the pastoralists; their culture, food, lifestyle...their quest as they shift from here to there...answers the many questions of our own nomadic should. Rooh ji Rehaan is outstanding!"

Geetha Narayan, Founder & Director, Srishti School of Art Design and Technology, Bangalore



"This is the most significant exhibition that has taken place in the capital in many years" -
Rajiv Sethi,
Designer, Scenographer and Art Curator



“परंपरागत ज्ञान में टिकाऊ विकास छुपा है। प्रदर्शनी में ऐसी बहुत सारी चीज़ें हैं, जिसे देखकर आप महसूस करेंगे कि आधुनिक विकास के पास प्रकृति का विकल्प नहीं है।”

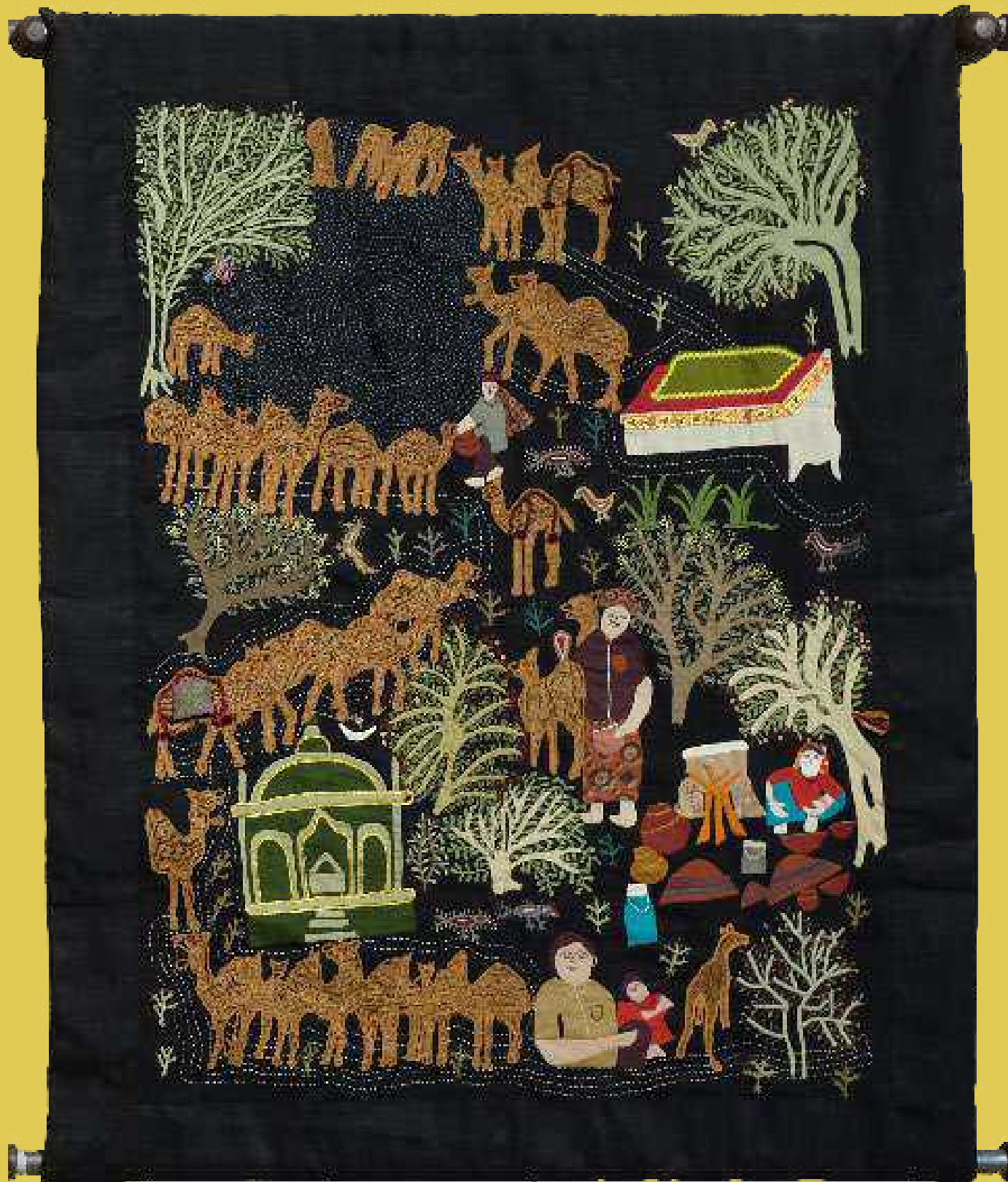
Shri Ram Bahadur Rai, President, IGNCA Trust



“ Stunning! One word to describe the experience. It is not just what is displayed but the entire ambience and presentation of the eternal question about life - Who Am I answered so beautifully by the pastoralists drawn from their reverence of the environment which they reside in....”

Aeshwarya Thakur, Architect





The Accompanying Events & Conversations

Goshtis

This was the very first time in recent history, that fifteen pastoralist communities from ten States of India - from Arunachal Pradesh to Kutch, Kashmir to Telengana - met for seven long days to exchange their practices, concerns, stories and love. Dressed in their traditional attire, the pastoral groups congregated in the amphitheatre of IGNCA and held the stage as they shared the uniqueness of their lifestyle, their economy, their science of herding and breeding, their songs and their values.

Many of the sheep breeding pastoralists were themselves amazed at the versatility of this animal as it moved across the Country; the Rabaris of Kutch shared how their Gari and Bharadi breeds walk 3400 km in a year across eight states; they learnt of the upswing in the economy of the black wooly sheep, from the Kurubas and Kuruma of north Karnataka and Telangana. And the Monpas from Arunachal Pradesh were eager to share the process of making Yak cheese with the Raikas from Rajasthan who came with their camel milk cheese.

Each community spoke about the exchange relationships they enjoy with farmers across the country. In turn, farmers who had also come from various parts of the Country, explained that a few days of penning the herding sheep, goat, camel and cow dung in their farms improved their productivity for the entire



year. The dung from free ranging animals gave their soil many more nutrients than the chemical fertilisers they used or the dung of their own stall fed animals could give.

The pastoralists discussed policy issues animatedly. They listened to Neelkanthmama, a Kuruba leader, explain the process they undertook to ensure that the Karnataka government created a compensatory policy for the death of small ruminants, the only State in India to do so. Kachchh pastoralists explained the genetic virtues of the Banni buffalo breed that they have developed, and how the National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR) recognised their breed, bringing prestige and financial benefits to the community. They listened to the struggle of the Dhangars of Maharashtra to gain Scheduled Caste status for their community.

The Raikas from Rajasthan and Jats from Kutch spoke of how they hope to save their camel from extinction by marketing their Camel milk. **And this led to many concerned voices on how the low fat content in camel milk would curtail its procurement by dairies, and unless the Government revised the prescribed standard of fat content, camel milk would not reach the public.** Everyone rejoiced with the Changpa herders from Ladakh when they spoke of the





the Changpa's reducing their sheep for the more lucrative Changthangi goat - leaving the goats vulnerable without having the warmth of the sheep in the cold temperatures of the Himalayas.

The opportunities they wanted to collectively explore were the huge amounts of sheep wool they now sheered and lay waste due to the lack of markets for local sheep wool. They lamented that the wool corporations had not invested in the huge diversity of Indian wools, allowing international sheep wool varieties like Marino take over the Indian wool markets. Some hoped that the milk of their livestock found a mobile market as this milk had higher medicinal values compared to dairy animals because they grazed/browsed the wild. And they all agreed that they lived in some of the most beautiful regions of the country and would be happy to explore playing host to travellers.

A common concern that was heard repeatedly was the issue of education for their children, and the shrinking commons. The Bakarwals shared the experience of the mobile schools that the J&K government had experimented with. They all



deeply wanted their children to go through an educational process; and they believed equally, that sending their children to sedentary schools would make them incapable of learning the immense life skills of a mobile pastoralist, once they settled in one place. Each of them explained how their movement enriched the economy and food security in the Country - without owning any private property; by simply living off the Commons.

Finally Abdul Ghani Sama from Kutch shared a poem he made to conclude the session, the last refrain echoing their shared values...

यही है मालधारी

चलते गिरना, गिर के उठना
मालधारियों की फ़ितरत है
नवसर्जन की शक्ति जो रखती
हमको पालती वो कुदरत है
प्रकृति, पशु, परिंदे और प्रेम
इन सब में हम सहमत हैं
मालधारी रहेंगे तब तक
जब तक कुदरत की रहमत है...

Academic Conference

India is home to a large number of pastoral groups, including those in the arid and semi-arid parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka, as well as the mountain tracts in the Himalayas in the north and the Nilgiris in the south. And yet, there is relatively little research in India on pastoral systems. A three-day conference was organized on the sidelines of the exhibition to provide an opportunity for policy and scientific discourse among researchers working on pastoral systems in India and internationally. And for them to develop an agenda for future research.

Under the banner Living-Lightly: Pastoral Futures in a Changing World, hosted by Sahjeevan and Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) this three day academic conference was organized at IGNCA New Delhi, India between 8 and 10 December 2016. The conference was convened by Ashwini Chhatre, Abi Vanak, and Vasant Saberwal.

60 practitioners, representatives of national and international organizations, scientific and research community, and masters/doctoral student researchers congregated in Delhi amidst the sound, colour, flavours of the Exhibition. It was perhaps for the first time that experts from various range of disciplines relating to pastoralism - education, economy, technology, history, anthropology, climate change, livestock breeding, and ecological resource management - sat in the same room to share their insights.

Six keynote sessions threw up learnings and discussion on ~

- Contribution of Pastoralism to the Economy
- Indigenous Knowledge and Breeding System
- Ecological Dynamics of Grasslands
- Technology and Pastoralism
- Engagements with Markets and Engagements with the State
- Pastoralism and Climate Change



Roy Behnke's keynote address gave the conference an appropriate opening by locating the role of pastoral economies in a nation's economy. From his extensive research in Kenya, he showed how pastoral outputs are most likely to be a large contributor to national GDP outputs, and with the lack of data, pastoral systems are labeled as inefficient.

Ilse Rolfensson unlocked the dimensions of pastoral indigenous knowledge. **She showed that the pastoral indigenous knowledge is actually beyond breeding, and was a complex system, culture/group specific, and involves refined breeding techniques based on understanding animal behaviour.**

Caroline Dyer's paper which turned the attention of the group on 'alternative' educational systems for mobile pastoral communities created an animated discussion on the need for mobile schools, as well as educational pedagogy and curriculum for pastoral children, drawing upon their livelihood skills and knowledge systems.

Ced Hesse shared a fascinating case story from his work in Kenya and Tanzania elaborating on the steps used in digital resource mapping. **He emphasized that participatory**

digital resource mapping can be used as an excellent tool in recording pastoralists traditional knowledge and also equip pastoralists to effectively communicate the value of their needs to government officials and thus help design by laws and finance investments in public goods.

Jayashree Ratnam generated tremendous interest when she spoke about the fundamental and historic problems of land classification - how significant areas in India were not recognized as the Savannas, thus escaping protection, conservation and development as pastoral ecosystems.

Carol Kerven, provided an overview on how market conditions influenced pastoralists' perception in Africa. Her paper looked at how pastoral communities are capable of taking rational decisions as per market dynamics and are opportunistic to market conditions.

Arun Agrawal, brought out the varied strategies adopted by agri pastoralists to cope with the changing climate. He traced, in detail, the adaptation strategies of agro-pastoralist community. He elaborated on the range of adaptation strategies - namely mobility; livestock storage; mix of agriculture and pastoralism or mixed animal herds; joint



actions and collective undertakings: market exchange etc - required to address different levels of risks. Arun also noted that migration forms an efficient solution to high-risk, low productivity environments

Each session had other eminent researchers presenting their perspectives. Of particular interest was a dedicated session where Masters and Doctoral student researchers shared their research. Detailed report can be viewed [here](#)

The conference concluded with a consensus to establish a Centre that would be responsible for multi disciplinary pastoral ecosystem research in India. Participants agreed to collaborate to create an India data base for anthropological, political, economic, legal, institutional issues and provide access to researchers and agencies who could use it. The conference generated a specific interest in undertaking joint research along pastoral migratory routes and corridors, and generate support for young scholars across India to be able to commit themselves to research in the pastoral ecosystems of India.



Shri Parshottam Rupala, the Minister of State for Agriculture, Government of India is greeted by pastoralists from Gujarat and Rajasthan, while Shri Vinod Chawda and Dr. Purendu Kavoori look on.



Stakeholder's Consultation

A consultation: "The future of India's Livestock Sector: What is the role of pastoralists?" was held at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi from 14th to 16th December 2016 as part of the Living Lightly exhibition. This consultative platform, organized by the Foundation for Ecological Security and the Rainfed Livestock Network in India, brought together officials from the Government of India, academic scholars from India and abroad, field practitioners, and pastoralists from across India. Over 90 participants from India and several other countries participated in this consultation. One of the highlights was the large number of pastoralists from across the country from Ladakh to Tamil Nadu, Gujarat to Orissa who participated. Also present were a pastoralist from Uganda, a shepherd from Germany and a livestock farmer from Austria.

Presentations at the consultation were wide and varied and began with Dr. Ilse Kohler Rollefson presenting the Kullu Call which calls for greater recognition to pastoralists and extensive livestock production systems, their produce and their rights. This was followed by three panels which saw Indian and International speakers making academic presentations. On the second day pastoralists from several different states, Ladakh, Himachal, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh shared their perspectives. While speaking about the challenges they faced while herding, they also spoke about the varied ways in which they managed to overcome them.

In the forenoon Shri Purshottam Rupala, the Minister of State for Agriculture, Government of India along with Shri Vinod Chawda, Member of Parliament from Kutch visited the consultation. The Minister who insisted on first listening to

the pastoralists before he spoke, connected immediately to the pastoralists in the room admitting that while governments and society struggles to live 'naturally', 'organically', they have ignored and neglected the only ones who continue to be connected to a natural and organic life - the pastoralists. **Sitaben Rabari a pastoralist from Kutch immediately pointed out that "We are not farmers, we are pastoralists. Our life style is different, we migrate. Our needs and concerns are different. We will remain neglected until your Ministry accepts our identity as pastoralists, not farmers."** Neelkanth Kurubar, a Kuruba from Karnataka, said "land is often handed over to industry in the name of development and the country's economy. However, we too contribute significantly to the economy in the form of milk, meat, wool and manure, however instead of land for our grazing animals, our access to grazing lands for our animals is constantly diminishing, and we are losing whatever common grazing lands we had.

Participants concurred that for pastoralism to attract its due attention, investment and policy initiatives, a separate department or Mission for pastoralists should be ideally considered under the Ministry of Agriculture. The Minister responded favourably, requesting a report of the proceedings, and expressing his strong interest in continuing this dialogue.

The consultation also deliberated on the need to value and assess pastoralists' contributions to the economy and to society, understand the complex set of challenges that pastoralists face as they get marginalised at all levels, and develop a long term perspective on pastoralism, and what it had to offer to the next generation. This was perhaps the first time that such a composite group of people had come together to discuss the present and future of pastoralism and pastoralists. And the sessions concluded with a team of experts drawing up a set of summary recommendations. Dr. Purendu Kavoori, Azim Premji University and Dr. Nitya Ghotge from Anthra facilitated the discussions through the three days.

Participants of the Stakeholder's Consultation pose for a group photograph.





Neelkanth Kuruba, pastoralist from North Karnataka interacts with school children

School Workshops

IGNCA was enlivened every morning for 10 days by the presence of school children from public and private schools of Delhi. Flow India, an organization that works extensively on education design for school students was invited to facilitate ten workshops to introduce school students and young adults (13-16 years) to the land, lives and livelihood of pastoralism. **The form and content of the exhibition was designed to engage young students with the unique life relationships, eco-system and increasing relevance of pastoralism today, and in the future.** The on-site workshops and exposure to the practices and unique world views of pastoralists, provoked numerous questions and discussions on the pastoralists' vision of coexistence amongst the youth, for whom climate change is a very palpable concern.

Vikas, a 12 year old boy from the MCD School , Mehrauli asked, "When these pastoralists keep moving from one place to another and don't have access to banks and atms on their journey, then what is happening to them during demonetization?!" Many questions popped up around the

contribution of nomadic pastoralists to the environment, economy and society. From expressing amazement at the bond between a Maldhari and her buffalo after the watching the film, to appreciating Jo Bertini's artwork, to asking questions like, "why do Maldharis use leather if they love animals so much?" the students immersed themselves into this world without a roof!

Flow India designed the workshops around themes and ideas of material needs, ecological conservation, economic production, arts, music, and crafts; **students were encouraged to draw upon the narratives in the exhibition to explore the concept of a 'home', movement and mobility, as well as human response to eco systems.** They were skilfully led by the facilitators to introspect on their own urban lives and its invisible but deeper connections to pastoral livelihoods. Researchers, practitioners, and pastoralists themselves collaborated with facilitators from Flow India to deliver the workshops. In all about 250 students from schools run by private, government, and NGOs attended the workshops.





FRA Workshops

A tall, well built man with a long beard wearing a sherwani and distinctive pugree explains, “we Van Gujjaras are buffalo breeders. We migrate into the alpine during the summers and return to the lower Himalayas crossing the Rajaji National Park. We have done this for centuries, ever since they migrated from Kashmir with their animals. In 2009 the Forest Department permanently stopped us from crossing the National Park, seriously compromising our security, profession and lifestyle.”

The Gujjars of Savai Madhapar were resettled outside their traditional home, the Ranthambore National Park, in Rajasthan around the same time. Their Buffalos milk yields reduced to less than half, in the sedentary farms they had to settle into. Most of the Gujjars have had to give up animal keeping altogether, bringing their breed close to extinction, explains Ambalal.

Almost all the pastoralists present in the meeting organised by MOTA FRA cell, Vasundhara and Sahjeevan had similar stories of discrimination and harassment. They were surprised that the Forest Department could not see the benefits their animals brought to the ecologies of the National Parks and the very wild species they hoped to protect. As Magan Raika from Rajasthan explains, “if our lifestyles are dangerous for the forests, how is it that the only forests left in the country are where there are pastoralists?! We protected the forests

even before the Forest department came to manage them!”

It is precisely this understanding that has been enshrined by our lawmakers in the 2006 Forest Rights Act. The seminar on ‘FRA and Pastoralism’ organised for the very first time, since the Act was promulgated, listened to over 15 pastoralist communities from 10 states of India. Madhu Sarin, who was a member of the drafting committee of the Act explained that as pastoralists are in minority in many villages and cannot set up VLC’s (Village Level Committees, the legal entity to accord rights) and travel through several villages and even districts and states, their claims should be facilitated by the Collector as Chair of the District Level FRA Committee. This amendment was made in 2012. Sandeep Virmani from Sahjeevan explained that the Act recognised that sustainable wealth generation can flourish when land is managed as ‘commons’ and the Act provides Community rights Titles to such communities over the forests. Tushar Dash from Vasundhara, explained that while many tribals have been given their individual and community rights over forests, no pastoralist community has yet been granted title.

The Banni pastoralists of Kutch shared how 46 settlements of 2500 sqkm have laid a single claim over the entire grassland. While the village, block and district committees have approved their claim, they are yet to receive their titles. They have already begun preparing their management plans on how to regenerate the neglected landscape.

All the communities agreed to form a fund for working towards their community claims and took a pledge to work together towards their rights. The representatives from FRA cell of Ministry of Tribal Affairs asked the organisers to provide a list of pastoral communities across the country, so that they can provide guidelines and instructions to the states to expedite pastoralist rights.



Student Roundtables

Two Round Table discussions created a more informed engagement with pastoralism for students and faculty of Architecture, Planning and Fashion Design Institutes. Interactive spaces in the form of round tables were offered to the Department of Planning in CEPT, Ahmedabad, and the National Institute of Fashion Design, New Delhi.

Mapping Movement

Organized by Prof. Gauri Bharat, CEPT.

Herded animals in Indian cities are seen through a range of lenses – from being a nuisance to traffic and making cities dirty to being symptomatic of the incomplete modernity that characterizes our part of the world. This roundtable brought together 11 students and built environment professionals to move beyond such simplistic narratives and take a closer look at urban pastoralism - herders, their free grazing animals and their various relationships as they live on the edge of urban habitats. The round table on 'Mapping Movements' was organized and anchored by Prof. Gauri Bharat from Centre for Environment Planning Technologies (CEPT), Ahmedabad and facilitated by Prof. Neekanth Chaaya, Architect and Educator. While they initiated the round table discussion with students - mainly from architecture and planning schools - by going through the Living Lightly exhibition, they led the participants to reflect on pastoral mobilities and ecosystems as well as their own spiritual, material and political dependencies on them. **This round table was a beginning for students to track pastoral movements in India's cities, trace their conflicts and struggles as they move and contribute to the cities' food and economy, and as young professionals in habitat planning, begin to explore the need for research and urban planning for livestock and their herders.**



Material Making and Pastoralism

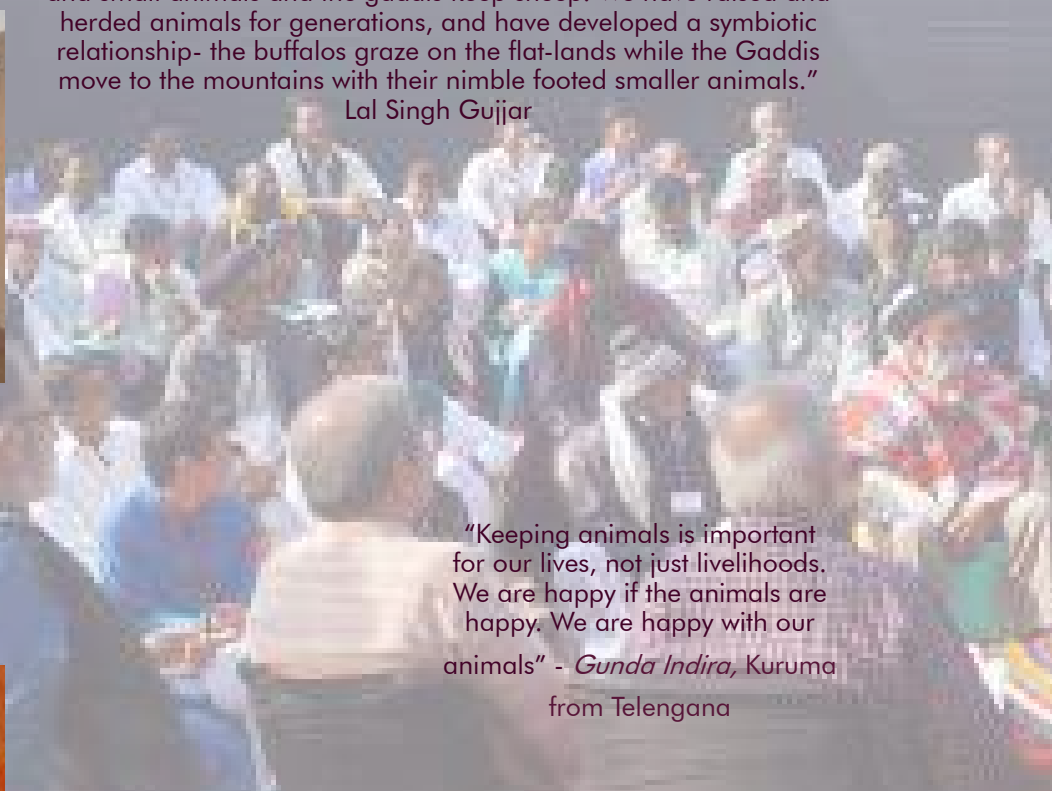
Organized by NIFT and Khamir

This round table which saw 18 participants, sought to give young fashion designers a very rich and provocative exposure to material making, using the culture of pastorals in contemporary times. It enabled aspiring design professionals to discover both, the varied raw material they receive from pastoral systems as well as the minimalist and no-waste designs emanating from pastoral cultures. The discussions encouraged young designers to challenge their own affinities, perspectives and choices in what gets called as the 'craft sector'. More importantly, **it led them to look at the influences of the environment and ecology on the Maldhari life; and how this gets contextualized within the design process.**

The round table was led by Mr. Jogi Panghaal, designer and educator, and Archana Shah, Designer and Founder of Bandhej. As two of the principle designers of the products on display in the craft bazaar organized by Khamir, they took the participant students and faculty of NIFT into a learning journey on the design process, values and approach they followed in putting together the sheep wool and natural leather collection for the exhibition. Many of the students were immediately inspired to work with the raw material emerging from pastoral livelihoods. And members of the NIFT faculty, participating in the round table, felt that they would like to introduce a more holistic understanding of the design eco system within their curriculum.



"We Gujjars and Gaddis are both pastoralists. Gujjars keep Buffalos and small animals and the gaddis keep sheep. We have raised and herded animals for generations, and have developed a symbiotic relationship- the buffalos graze on the flat-lands while the Gaddis move to the mountains with their nimble footed smaller animals."
Lal Singh Gujjar

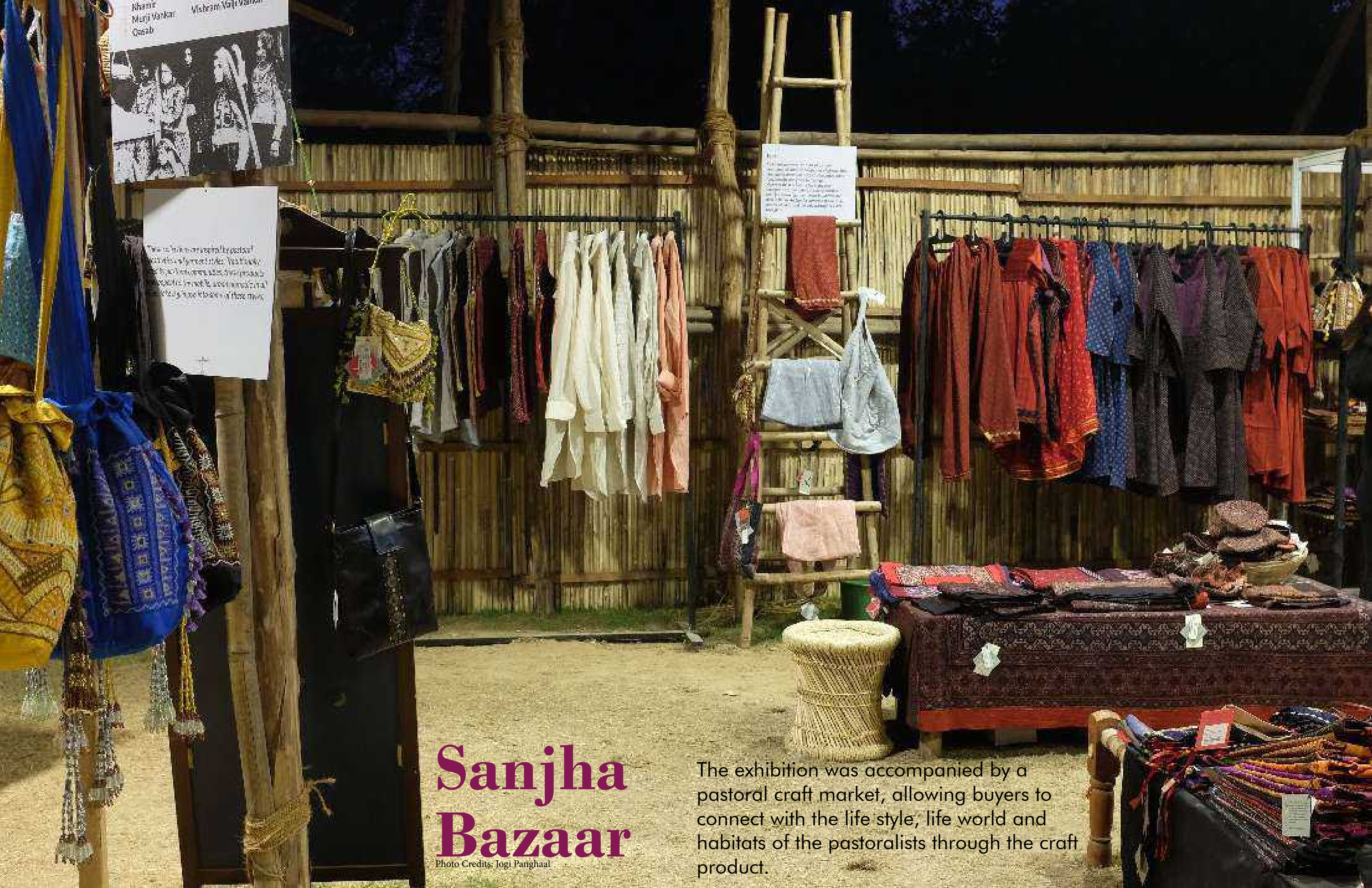


"We are extremely grateful that Living Lightly has brought us, pastoralists living in the remotest of lands in India to a common platform, and given us recognition for our traditional profession. We request FES and the other organizations to please work to implement FRA in J&K"
"- Bakarwal, a Pastoralist from Jammu and Kashmir



"Hindus and Muslims in Kutch have always been united. This unity was fundamental to our successes in negotiating with the government on issues of access to PF under FRA"
Abdul Ghani





Sanjha Bazaar

Photo Credits: Jogi Panghaal

The exhibition was accompanied by a pastoral craft market, allowing buyers to connect with the life style, life world and habitats of the pastoralists through the craft product.



The exhibition was accompanied by a pastoral craft market, allowing buyers to connect with the life style, life world and habitats of the pastoralists through the craft product. We celebrated the unique fibres of the camels, sheeps, goats and yaks, bred and herded by our pastoralists. And connected with the material culture of pastoralists through the craft skills, material and aesthetics that poured into the products on display here.

The Craft Shop was named Sanjha Bazaar - 'Commons' Market. This curated market place was visualized to be a seamless bazaar which brought many pastoral regions, materials and crafts into a creative commons, as it were. Bamboo, earth and grass became the backdrop to the colorful and striking craft products which were on offer. Sanjha Bazaar which was organized by Khamir, and curated by Meera Goradia, invited twelve regions and organizations working with pastoral crafts to share space - each representing different pastoral groups and bioregions from 7 States of India.

The bazaar told multi layered stories about material objects from pastoral lives, across geography and times, ancient lands and routes. It brought together a collection of objects that demonstrated four distinct phases of change that has



Shri Parshottam Rupala, the Minister of State for Agriculture, Government of India, going through the Sanjha Bazaar along with Shri Vinod Chavda

informed pastoral lives and their material culture.

There was a collection of exquisite printed textiles, embroideries, garments from near history with stories of their making, use and identity. This included products that were, or are still being used by the Pastoralists; and products that they were using, but no longer making and which had now become part of a heritage collection of museum quality. The collections came from Mr. Wazir of Kachchh, Monisha Ahmed and Wangchukfrom Ladakh and the Gongadi collection from DGMPs Telengana specifically.

A second set of products demonstrated the change that traditional pastoralist-artisans had brought about in objects themselves, in response to developments in taste, technology, prices and materials. Many products from the produce, techniques and aesthetics of the pastoralists were adapted and reinterpreted for reinterpreted and adapted for contemporary use. Crafts came from Lok Pashu Palak Samiti from Jodhpur, Avani from Kumaon, Peoli Designs from Almora, Mitran from Belgaum, Sama from Ladakh, Kalaraksha, Shrujan and Qasab from Kachchh.

The third set of objects were created by a new generation of artisans who have had education in modern design schools like Kalaraksha Vidyalaya. These

'artisan designers' or 'design artisans' engaged with the material and theme of pastoralism and created new possible directions in their specific craft universes.

And the fourth set of objects were created with an active collaboration between designers and artisans. These were innovations which focussed on the purity and revival of raw material drawn from the pastoral livestock breeds. **The highlights were desi sheep wool stoles and shawls designed by Shyamji Vankar, Murji Hamir from Kachchh, sheep wool and ajrakh jackets by Archana Shah and natural leather bags and shoes designed by Ranabhai Paba and Jogi Panghaal. Lac turned wood memorabilia from Srishti Verma, and unique apparels by Shabri Wagle designed with a host of Sindhi women artisans - all commissioned by Khamir - were added attractions.**



Photo Credits: Himansh Sang

While the sales were initially slow due to the recent demonetisation, interest and curiosity grew in the last week, with the bazaar finally registering sales of 43 Lakhs! Many well craft connoisseurs of Delhi, and known designers like Ritu Kumar, Rajeev Sethi, Neeru Kumar and Sanjay Garg visited the shop and left with a promise of new collaborations in the near future.

Nestled amongst the dazzling crafts in the bazaar, was a book corner which surprisingly attracted many visitors and buyers! **A host of authors working with pastoralists had lent their books for sale and browsing. Books by Christina Noble, Michael Benanev, Sagari Ramdas and Nitya Ghotge, Ilse Rolfensson, as well as books published for the LL exhibition found eager buyers.**

Photo Credits: Himansh Sang



Leather shoes designed by Jogi Panghaal



Craft Workshops

The craft workshops organised by Khamir to enable visitors to learn about the materials, techniques, aesthetics, practicalities, and textures of pastoral crafts while, hopefully, changing the way they perceive hand crafted objects.



Leather workshop
 "Pastoralist communities in Kutch have kept on moving with their animals in search of feed and water for centuries now. Movement demanded strong legs as much as they did a sturdy pair of shoes. Meghwals, a community of leather artisans in Kutch, have long moved along with Maldharis, turning readily available animal skin to products of beauty and daily use. Rana Marwada, one of the best leather artisan in Kutch is seen here teaching some of the secrets of cutting, shaping, and sewing leather to a fortunate few."

Braiding:

"Life on remote and semi-arid lands can be hard, almost unbearable, unless one is resourceful. Centuries of life on deserts have instilled a culture of ingenuity among pastoral people in Kutch and Rajasthan. These pastoralists have braided camel hair, goat hair, or sheep wool yarns into strong flat ropes, known as Tangs. These tangs, traditionally used for a variety of purposes including tying saddles or loads and indispensable to Maldharis until about 30 years ago, now find themselves replaced with cheaply and readily available ropes. The art of braiding also faces extinction save for a few who carry on practicing it. Errol Pires, , is one of those handful few who has been worked to revive the art and teach it to many. He is seen here doing what he does best, i.e. teaching split-ply braiding to workshop participants"



Spinning workshop

"Pastoralists across the country use blankets in one form or the other. Blankets woven from wool are good to lie upon or beneath it; it can also be wrapped around or used to carry loads! Deccan pastoralists weave deccan sheep wool into Blankets commonly known as Gongadis. The wool, however, needs to be spun into strong yarn before they can be woven, a gongadi woven out of expertly spun yarn outlasts the more everyday ones by decades. Kuruba pastoral women in Telangana have perfected the art of spinning and were in attendance to educate some of the visitors in the art of spinning wool"





Pastoral Food

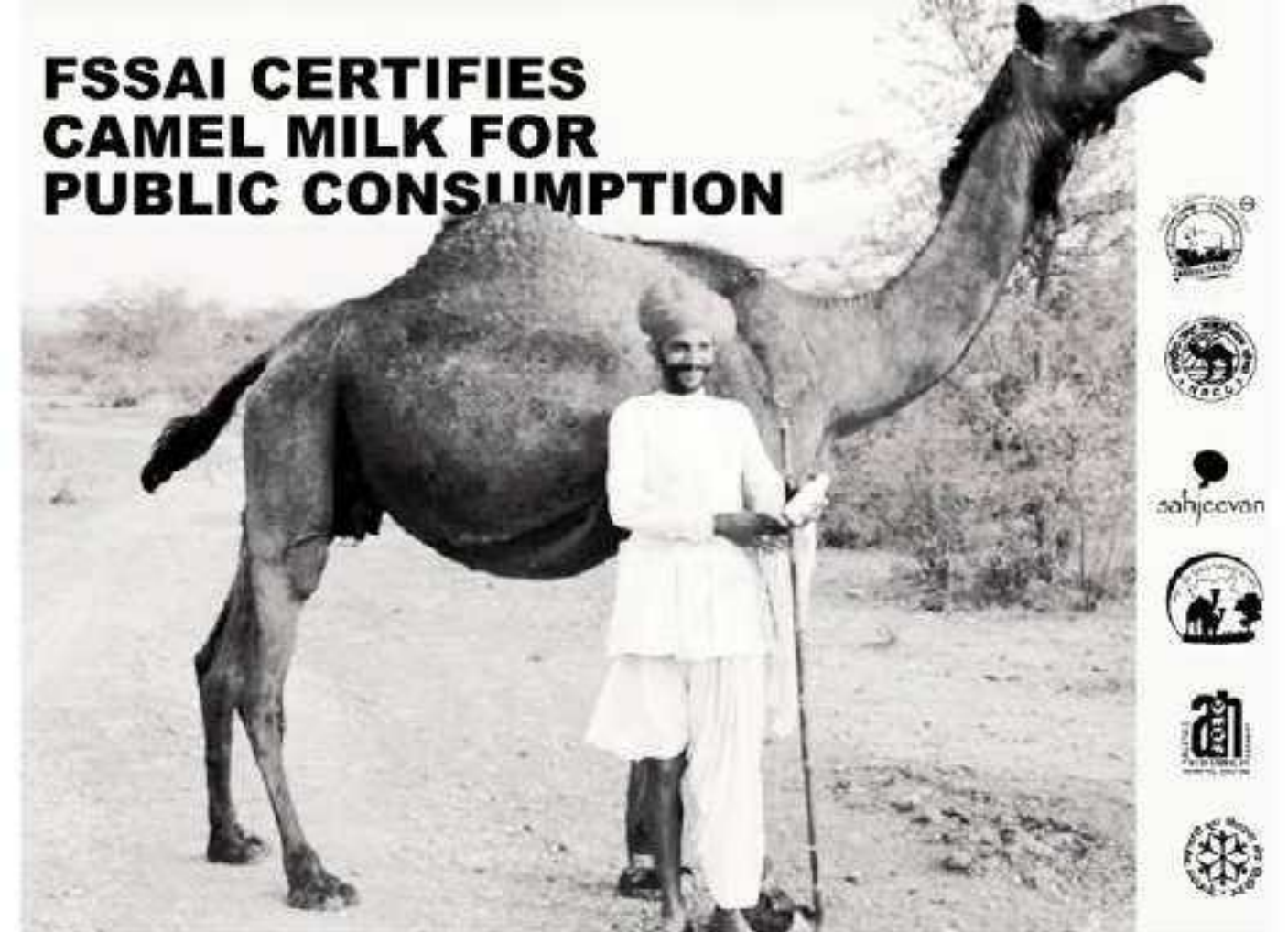
Khanabadosh

Wanderer

Food and everyday cuisine are integral to all pastoral cultures, more so with Pastoral communities, being producers of food products themselves! Such cuisines are especially interesting since pastoralism is generally practiced on lands which are not very hospitable for agricultural cultivation and agricultural produce. Pastoral animals browse and graze a huge biodiversity in our forests and grasslands, and squeeze the essential goodness. Not surprisingly, the milk of free ranging animals - cows, buffaloes, camels, goats, yaks are more nutritious and healthier than stall fed, farming animals. And pastoralists have, for centuries, experimented with milk, meat and bread in their 'open' kitchens as they set up their settlements under the sky.

The food section called 'khanabadosh' (literally means eating while wandering) through the pastoral food cafe and workshops presented a **mélange of interesting interplays**. It invited visitors to eat the minimalist 'maldhari' thali from Kutch at the food cafe, introduced camel milk and all its goodness to the Delhi palates, engaged visitors with 'infobites' on milk from animal breeds in pastoral systems, and taught camel cheese making skills to interested participants. Lok Pashu Palak Sangh (LPPS), a Rajasthan based organization of camel breeders, which has been promoting camel milk for many years now, developed a range of camel milk cheeses which was made available here. **Anne Bruntse, a well known camel cheese expert from Kenya** partnered with LPPS to develop the cheese and cheese cakes. She also conducted three camel cheese making workshops on the grounds of IGNCA and demystified the process for many curious onlookers.

FSSAI CERTIFIES CAMEL MILK FOR PUBLIC CONSUMPTION



Camel milk is scarce; quantum of its global production is just 0.2 percent of cow milk production. This is because camels, largely, inhabit regions of harsh climates and are herded by communities that have perfected the art over generations. Camel milk, for these communities, is special food and it enjoys a nectar-like status in their cultures. Full bodied, low in fat, and slightly salty, this milk is full of nutrients, being an especially bountiful source of Vitamin A, C, E, Magnesium and Zinc. Camel milk is highly revered for its therapeutic values too and is known to counter oxidative stress, alleviate autism, and treat diabetes. It is not the fat content in camel milk but the other micro-nutrients that make camel milk nourishing and wholesome.

In spite of all this, camel herders in India have found it hard to generate a living out of camel milk sales. This is primarily because camel milk, until very recent times, was not formally recognized as an edible food item and hence had not market infrastructure support. Efforts made by civic society organizations such as Sahjeevan and LPPS finally bore fruits, and on 2nd December 2016, the day Living Lightly opened at IGNCA, FSSAI, India's apex food regulator, recognized Camel milk as an edible food.

Pastoral Games

Pastoralists have found some of the most unique ways in which they entertain, educate and engage each other during their long halts and journeys - in solitude or in the 'satsang' of other pastoralists. The 'Bagh-Bakri' (tiger and goat) finds many versions as it plays itself out amongst pastoralists in the himalayas, the Deccan, and the semi arid plains of western India. In the Sindh influenced areas of Gujarat and Rajasthan, pastoralists pass on Sindhi folk tales and verses through a complex game of riddles and word play called 'guzzaratu'. This exhibition too would have remained vacant without the spirit of play and games! And so, a game installation, quizzes and traditional pastoral games kept idle rambblers, children, and serious looking visitors entertained.



Game Installation called 'Stake' ~ A life size board game was developed and installed in association with Fields of View. The game drew on the dynamic relationships that pastoralists share with their ecosystem, other economies and changing phenomena such as climate or government policies, that lend contours to these relationships.

The game which had three kind of players (industrialists, farmers, and pastoralists) challenged players to work amongst themselves and restrict their combined resource consumption, while also pursuing their own interests over six turns. The group of players that succeeded in balancing their self-interests with the interests of the wider community would survive and win, while the groups that could not, perished together. In some play groups, players started pursuing single-minded self-interest, but soon realized it was not sustainable and put brakes on their individual consumption, while in yet others, self-interest led to an expedited fall into the deep and dark abyss of doomsday!

Breed Quiz: Pastoralists, over generations, have developed distinctive breeds of animals. These breeds and their contribution to the economy and the ecology lie at the heart of pastoral systems. The concept of a breed is, however, not simple to explain to an average visitor. Hence, a quiz, created by *Digital Jalebi*, was developed to introduce visitors to the concept of breeds and present a glimpse into how two different breeds of the same species can be so different from each other. The short quiz presented through a touch screen display was a big hit, and many of the visitors were seen replaying the game many times over, trying their best to score a perfect 10!



Craft games – The craft store had several wonderfully hand-sculpted interpretations of traditional games (such as Bagh-bakri and Nau-Kakri) from different pastoral regions of the country. These games were available to visitors to play at the store or to buy.





"A great effort, also an eye-opener! City-dwellers need these kind of exhibition more often. Wish this had been more widely publicized. Next time, more engagement for children" Amrita Jolly



"My daughter and I are so glad we grabbed the opportunity to visit the exhibition. Fortunately for us we went through the whole thing with the master herself. It was quite an eye opener. Keep up the good work."- Kiran Sohal



Grazing & Browsing



"Easily one of the best exhibitions I have ever seen. The content is in unbelievable detail, the range of issues covered is extensive and the design and dissemination is done with both flair and intensity. It is truly a labour of love for the pastoralist and her way of life. AN ABSOLUTE MUST-SEE!" - Madhulika Banerjee

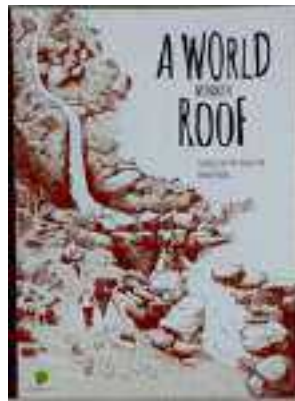
"Last week I went to one of the best exhibitions of this year "Living Lightly". The organisers showed the music, food, jewellery, clothes, art and living of 15 pastoral communities in India: the sheep nomads from Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh, the camel herders of Gujarat and Rajasthan among them. In that one hour I learnt a great deal about the communities of people and animals that inhabit India. "

Maneka Gandhi, Minister of Women Empowerment and Child Development, Government of India



Books

The exhibition released four publications on Pastoralism



World without a Roof

'World without a Roof' is a graphic book for beginners on pastoralism that draws on the lives of pastoralists from across India, bringing to us fascinating stories of their values, life, dilemmas, travails and triumphs. Evocatively illustrated by

Somesh Kumar and authored by Sarita Sundar with Arvind Lodaya, the book carries a forward by Ilse Rolfensson, who works extensively with camel herders in Rajasthan and an afterword by Sushma Iyengar, the lead curator.



Rooh Ji Rehaan

'Rooh Ji Rehaan' ~ the soulful installation of music and poetry from pastoralists in Kachchh ~ was accompanied by a beautifully designed book of the Sindhi / Kachchhi poems/lyrics, with translations in english by Shabnam Virmani and Vipul Rikhi. Drawing the listener to

follow the song with the word, this book which has been designed by Smriti Chanchani, came with a recording of the songs.



Capturing Pastoral Futures of Young Maldharis

'Capturing Pastoral Futures of Young Maldharis' is a diary by young photographer, Ishaan Raghunandan, who lived with the pastoralist youth, teaching them photography, transforming their gaze, while he himself reflects on the changes that churned within him. The book has been designed by Sharad Dhuliya.



Pastoral Times

'Pastoral Times' - our event newspaper - gave interesting nuggets of information on pastoralists from across the world, also peeking into countries who are shaping policies to safeguard

pastoralist lifestyles and contributions. This was designed by Bhawna Jaimini.

Media

On the Move

An exhibition offers a glimpse into the everyday life of India's pastoral communities...[Read More](#)

The pastoral closet

An exhibition on pastoral life brings indigenous wool, organic Kala cotton and other untold stories to Delhi...[Read More](#)

In A Nation Pained By Farmers' Suicides, What Keeps Animal-Herders Buoyant?

An ongoing Delhi event on India's pastoral groups focuses on new-age dynamics of Gujarat's Kutch...[Read More](#)

The wandering pastoralists of Kutch have a lot to teach us. Are we listening?

Oce upon a time, there was a sage named Dhoramnath. He undertook a unique penance upon the Dhinodhar Hill in Kutch....[Read More](#)

Kharai Camels facing extinction

If we are going to preserve the Kharai breed, we will have to preserve the mangrove habitat...[Read More](#)

Celebrating lives of pastoralists

A recent exhibition 'Living Lightly,' celebrates their life through panel discussions, film, art, and poetry, among other avenues...[Read More](#)

Living Lightly: The Journey With Pastoralists

Milk, butter, cheese and wool: we take these for granted while there's little that is known about the issues faced by communities...[See Here](#)

Dastaan on Pastoralists; Interview with Ankit Chadha

Ankit Chadha is a Delhi-based performer of "Dastaangoi", the art of storytelling that evolved across the Muslim world before coming to the Indian Subcontinent...[See Here](#)



Varsha Mehta



Nimish Gor



Aditi Thacker



Amrita



Paresh Mangalia



Abdul Ghani

Kirit Jadeja

Siddharth Tataria



Monikka Agarwal

Pankaj Joshi



Harish Hurmade



Chetan Jha and Dibyendu Mondal



The Organising Team Who Herded All

Shrikant



Asif Raima



Ramesh Bhatti



Mahendra Bhanani



Jayhari



Abhishek Dwiwedi



Shouryamoy Das



Ayesha Seth



Juhi Pandey



Nilam Sompura



Nipun Prabhakar



Krupa Dholakia



Vimal Mehta



Dhara Pithadia



Hitesh Tokar



Aziz, Paresh, Madan, Akhtar, Bilal



Aarati Halbe and Bhawna Jaimini



Punita, Sangita, Mamata, and Bhawna



Carole Douglas



Somesh Kumar



Roy Verghese



Tejsi Marwada



Naseer Khatri



Sandeep Virmani



Kaladhar Mutwa



Archana Shah



Vipul Rikhi



Tapas Upadhyaya



Meera Goradia



Amardeep Behl



Sharada Mushti



Shabri Wable



Shabnam Virmani



Sarita Sundar



Arvind Lodaya



Shamji Vishram Vankar



Shruti Bajaj



Jogi Panghaal



Meghuben



Surajat Ranjan Das



Meena Raaste

Many many pastoralists, artisans, and musicians, especially from Kutch, have been the primary owners, donors, contributors, and creators of every exhibit, story, information, knowledge and insight that visitors experienced in this exhibition. Their stories and experiences were brought to you by the some of the people you see here.



Sufiyan Khatri



Maavji Jaagariya



Sushama Durve



Khaled Khatri

Some Of The Faces From Our Creative Commons



Sushma Iyengar



Oroon Das



Varun Ram, Ayush, Smriti Chanchani, Ishaan



Sarah Kaushik

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Sahjeevan

Since the last 25 years, Sahjeevan has been inspiring and supporting marginalised communities to revive their traditional ecological knowledge systems, engage with relevant technologies and scientific methods to conserve their ecological resources, and strengthen their livelihoods. Based in Kutch, the organization has influenced local governance institutions, communities and the region as a whole to conserve biodiversity, regenerate tradition water systems based on local geo hydrological solutions, revitalise pastoralism, promote indigenous livestock breeding practices, and strengthen resilience through rain fed agriculture. The organization is headed by Dr. Pankaj Joshi.

Contact: sahjeevan@gmail.com

Foundation for Ecological Security (FES)

Spread across diverse ecological and social geographies, FES works towards conservation of nature and natural resources through collective action of local communities. The crux of FES efforts lie in locating forests and other natural resources within the prevailing economic, social and ecological dynamics in rural landscapes. Globally, FES hopes to see an increasing influence on two fundamental issues in governing shared natural resources a socio-ecological systems approach and a Commons paradigm, which together could have far-reaching impact on world views on development.

The organization is led by Mr. Jagdish Rao
 Contact: ed@fes.org.in









Sahjeevan

Sahjeevan came into being in 1991 as an institution that aimed to empower the disadvantaged - primarily women, through development and management of Natural Resources. With time, the organization's course had minor changes, constantly responding to evolving socio-economic and ecological complexities of Gujarat, especially Kutch.

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