

# LIVING LIGHTLY





## Living Lightly Journeys with Pastoralists **2nd – 18th** December, 2016

Indira Gandhi National Center for the Arts, New Delhi

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Lead Curator Sushma Iyengar | Venue

Partner IGNCA, New Delhi INDIA |

Organized by Sahjeevan & Foundation for  
Ecological Security

### The Resilient World of Pastoralism

Humans have herded animals on rangelands for thousands of years. This occupation, better known as Pastoralism, has survived millennia of climatic variability, low availability of pasture, and droughts. Its co-existence with agriculture has led to the formation of a deeply synergetic relationship between herders, livestock, farmers, and the land creating an ecosystem that sustains livelihoods and supports food security.

Pastoral systems, across the world, have developed distinctive identities marked by resilience and a gait that leaves minimal carbon footprints. Many researchers believe these systems are vital to addressing challenges

that envelop the water-food-energy nexus, particularly that of generating a thriving economy without degrading the ecosystem. India is home to many pastoralist systems; more than 200 communities and 6% of the total population is engaged in varying forms of pastoralism. However, the general public remains uninformed not just of the low carbon footprints, but also of how deeply each of our lives are dependent on the livestock breeds, milk, meat, wool, and leather that originate in pastoral systems. This unfamiliarity is a result of both inadequate research and an exclusive emphasis on intensive agriculture and sedentary livestock systems.

### Future of Pastoralism

The future of pastoralism depends on ecological restoration, revival of traditional governance systems, and resolution of resource conflicts in ways that facilitate the integration of pastoralism, agriculture, and silviculture. The Central government and many State governments of India have acknowledged the significance of productivity of indigenous livestock breeds under conditions of climatic variability and low availability of dietary resources; and they have now initiated efforts to support these breeds. Spaces that celebrate these magnificent breeds and communities will complement such policies by sparking public awareness for these pastoral systems.





## The Project

This project, for the first time in India, brings a curated exhibition on the lands, lives, and livelihoods of pastoralism. It aims to enable a better understanding of the unique potential of pastoralism and will employ a series of traveling exhibitions to highlight stories of trials, triumphs, and temperaments of major herding communities in India. The first phase of this project will culminate in an exhibition on pastoralism in Kutch, a region well known for its vigorous livestock breeds and an elegant 'maldhari' culture.

This project, through these exhibitions, aims to catalyze grass-root initiatives to conserve indigenous breeds, their eco-systems, and the worlds of pastoralists. Subsequent project phases will delve into pastoralism of other regions in the country including Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, the Himalayan regions (Kashmir, Himachal), and the North East. It is expected to lead to enhanced community interest and investment in pastoralism in the decades to come.

## The Exhibition: Form, Content, and Objectives

The exhibition captures the life and livelihood of Indian pastoralists - their remarkable history of mobility, the eco systems which nurture their life-world, their science, the economics of herding, and their culture. Titled "Living lightly: Journeys with Pastoralists", this exhibition is being held at IGNSA, New Delhi, from 2nd - 18th December, 2016. The exhibition is designed to blend different forms of expression to craft a panorama of pastoral lives in India. Pastoral music, arts, poetry, photographs, live performances, and films will create trails that will take rambles to the heart of a pastoralist's world. Pastoralists from regions across the country will be in attendance to share their tales, histories, and culture. A range of pastoral products curated from regions across India will be available in a craft store, products that can be touched, felt, selected, and

bought! Aromas of pastoral foods will surface from food kitchens and waft around, drawing people into discussions over endless servings of chai, chaas, and cheese. Books, posters, games, and photo-essays will enable a deeper exploration of the world of pastoralism. The exhibition is partnering schools, universities, and institutions to hold workshops, public talks, and round tables that reach out to students and youth.

## Consultations

This exhibition is accompanied by an academic conference and a stakeholder consultation. The academic conference will see researchers from India and some renowned scholars from regions across the world focus on the need for a concerted effort towards a better understanding of the histories, structures, and dynamics of these pastoralist systems. It will review existing and ongoing research in India, develop an agenda for future research, and initiate a dialogue on the future of pastoralism and Commons.

A stake-holder consultation is being held during the exhibition which will see policy makers and practitioners across the country come together and deliberate on the way forward for pastoralism.



Associate Curators: Carole Douglas (Craft narratives ), Shabnam Virmani & Vipul Rikhi (Music & Poetry),  
Ankit Chadha (Dastangoi performance), & Meera Goradia (CraftStore)

For more details contact: [secretariat@livinglightly.in](mailto:secretariat@livinglightly.in)

