

Note on Field Visits

The Pastoralists and Aadhaar project is a study of how nomadic pastoralists interact with Aadhaar and are likely to benefit from, or be excluded by, Aadhaar. The study proposes a detailed survey of individuals engaged in nomadic pastoralism as well as focus group discussions with members of nomadic pastoralist communities. The surveys and focus group discussions are intended to be carried out in the three areas known to hold the heaviest concentrations of nomadic pastoralists in the country – Gujarat and Rajasthan, the Deccan plateau (spanning parts of Telangana, Karnataka and Maharashtra), and the northern cluster across Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Jammu and Kashmir.

The study was initiated on the ground with workshops in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh, organised by the ISB-Sahjeevan team along with local partners in each state. The purpose of the workshops was primarily to pilot the survey questionnaire and to identify specific locations (villages) where the survey and the group discussions could be carried out. The participants were nomadic pastoralists contacted and invited by the partner organisations.

Himachal Pradesh:

The first workshop was conducted in Himachal Pradesh, at the Sambhaavana Institute, Palampur, Kangra, 4-5 January 2018.

The workshop was attended by about 40 participants - pastoralists from mainly Kangra, Chamba, Kullu and Sirmaur districts of Himachal Pradesh. Most of the participants were also part of the Ghumantoo Pashupalak Sangh, a civil society body that represents the interests of nomadic pastoralists.



The workshop began with an introduction of the study being undertaken by the Indian School of Business, followed by a general discussion on Aadhaar and the pastoral experience of interactions with the state. This discussion yielded fruitful insights into the context and nature of these interactions, and some of the specific instances of exclusion that the participants had faced.

After the introductory discussion began the exercise of identifying known pastoralist villages, where the surveys and group discussions could be conducted. This was done with the aid of Census livestock information at the village level – participants were asked to validate the villages identified by the ISB team as likely having pastoralist presence, based on the size of their livestock populations.

Finally, the participants were taken through the extensive survey questionnaire, with questions on the respondent's personal and family details, information on their livestock ownership, migratory habits, access to government services, the status of their enrolment and use of Aadhaar.

Gujarat:

The second workshop was conducted in Gujarat, at the MARAG premises, Gopnaad, 9-10 February 2018. MARAG (Maldhari Rural Action Group) works with pastoralists in Gujarat and serves as our partner for this study.

The workshop was again attended by the ISB-Sahjeevan team, the MARAG team, and 27 participants from Banas Kantha, Dwarka, Bhavnagar, Kachchh, Patan, Rajkot and Sabar Kantha districts of Gujarat. They included some non-migratory / erstwhile-migratory pastoralists, amongst nomadic pastoralists.



The format of this workshop was largely similar to the first workshop in Himachal Pradesh –the study was introduced to the participants followed by lengthy discussions on the motivations of the ISB study and the implications of Aadhaar to their lives. As in the previous workshop, the ISB-Sahjeevan team piloted the survey questionnaire and discussed the scope of the focus group discussions.

The workshops were primarily intended to pilot the survey questionnaire and identify locations for the surveys to be carried out. However, they also enabled us to gauge the initial attitudes of the two groups of pastoralists towards Aadhaar and other state actors and institutions. The field visits demonstrated the chequered and contentious history of nomadic pastoralists' interactions with state authority and their consequent attitudes towards Aadhaar, which ranged from indifference to outright mistrust. The results of the survey will yield greater detail on the complexities of this relationship.