



Minutes of Meeting on Mapping of Pastoral Routes across Tamil Nadu State

The meeting on Mapping of Pastoral Routes across Tamil Nadu was organized by the Tamil Nadu Federation of Pastoral Peoples Sangams (TFPPS) under the leadership of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi, State President, on 2 November 2025 at Maruthanganallur village, Sivagangai district.

Pastoral people, representatives of pastoral associations from Sivagangai, Ramanathapuram, Coimbatore, and Virudhunagar districts, NGOs, government officials, and volunteers participated. A total of 35 members attended the meeting.

On 1 November, a pastoral team of 10 volunteers interacted with migratory pastoralists in and around Manamadurai town of Sivagangai district.



Discussions and Key Points

Members shared their seasonal migration patterns and the challenges faced during migration.

Earlier, herds of sheep and goats used to walk long distances, but now pastoralists hire trucks for transport. They face hurdles with highway police, speeding vehicles causing accidents, loss of animals, and lack of insurance coverage for livestock.

Mr. Suresh from Kurnthanmichan village, Sivagangai district shared that herders migrate to distant places up to Mannargudi (Thanjavur) and Nagapattinam districts—travelling more than 200 km between January and February, coinciding with the paddy harvest, and returning by August.

The Kurumbagoundar pastoralists mentioned that 15 families with about 15,000 sheep migrate from Palani (Dindigul district) to Palakkad (Kerala) between January and June. They return once the southwest monsoon begins. They expressed concern over Anthrax and Brucellosis outbreaks, inadequate veterinary support, and calf theft faced by Pulikulam cattle herders in Virudhunagar district.

Discussion was held on low-cost movable shelters for young animals using iron wires, which provide better aeration than the traditional Kodappu made of palm leaves. Mr. Kishore, designer of a portable animal inspection platform, demonstrated a model for detecting the weight and health status of sheep and goats.

Mr. Pandi, pastoralist from Ramanathapuram district, explained that tank bund encroachments and water siphoning in Kadambodai village deprive animals of drinking water during summer. He demanded that water for livestock be released during summer months by opening the Vaigai river, as is done for irrigation farmers.

The issue of hiring labourers during migration, where advance payments and monthly wages lead to bonded-labour-like practices and unnecessary police or court cases, was also discussed.

Participants highlighted that tree planting along highways affects animal migration routes, as herds are penalized for damaging new saplings.

The need for dedicated animal corridors or underground tunnels under highways was emphasized. The Madrid city model (Spain) was cited, where pastoralists safely move through planned routes.

Pastoralists raised complaints against lower-level forest officials who demand money or block grazing access during migration.



Recommendations

Enactment of a Separate State Act for Pastoral Welfare, similar to that of Karnataka, to prevent harassment of herders.

Formation of an Exclusive Government Authority / Board for the welfare and rights of pastoral communities in Tamil Nadu.

Ensuring insurance coverage, vaccination, and veterinary services for migratory livestock.

Recognition and mapping of traditional migration routes for official approval.



Other Discussions and Participants

Ms. Sug-naya shared her experience implementing the Forest Rights Act 2006 in coastal mangrove regions, enabling non-tribal women to access forests and fish.

Dr. Saravanan, Assistant Director of Animal Husbandry, explained various government schemes and vaccination drives.

A senior Professor from the Veterinary College elaborated on disease prevention measures and the importance of veterinary extension services for mobile pastoral communities.

Mr. Sakthipandian from Tamil Nadu Start-Up Hub emphasized the need for start-up support and venture capital for innovative livestock-based enterprises.

Mr. P. Vivekanandan from SEVA / IYRP South Asia participated and shared valuable suggestions on pastoral mapping and coordination with district-level associations.

The workshop discussions were moderated by Dr. Jagadeesan Krishnan, who also delivered the vote of thanks.

Prepared by:

Mr. Rajiv Gandhi

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