ONLINE EDUCATION: TEACHING IN A TIME OF CHANGE

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Education Post Covid: Online but Off Grid for India’s Migratory Pastoralists

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• Abstract (300 words):
The COVID 19 pandemic has imposed fresh new challenges for educational institutions. Across the world, these institutions are looking at ways to reorganize themselves, go online, reorganize curriculums, make classroom sessions “safe”, stagger sessions. The problem is aggravated by the fact that public transport, school buses and similar modes of getting to school themselves pose a risk of catching the disease. At the other end of the social spectrum, for communities such as migratory pastoralists, attending regular school has always been a challenge. A primary reason being, they are often several kilometers away with their families and animals on migration with no schools nearby.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s) through their SDG 4 promise quality education and lifelong learning opportunities to citizens of the 193 countries who are signatories. Additionally, in India, the Right to Education promises free and compulsory education to all children between the ages of 6 to 14. However, education is mainly considered as being delivered through schools.

For several pastoral communities school enrollment is a problem as schools themselves are designed for children who do not migrate. Curriculums are also designed for
nonmigratory populations. For those who do manage to attend school, the education received can mean an exit from pastoralism and their traditional livelihood.

Distance, remote and online education seem to offer the solution for pastoral communities to get educated and help countries meet their targets of SDG 4. The questions this paper looks at are the barriers, challenges and opportunities for this kind of education and is based on the association and experience that Anthra – an NGO in India has had working closely with migratory pastoral families for several years.

**Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Nitya Sambamurti Ghotge is a veterinarian by training. She is one of the founder Directors of ANTHRA, an NGO based in India working primarily on issues of livestock development in the wider context of sustainable natural resource use. Anthra works with small and marginal livestock owners especially with women from these marginalized communities. Nitya’s research interests are interdisciplinary spanning veterinary sciences, ecology and the social sciences. Her work includes research, training and policy advocacy on different aspects of livestock development especially on systems of health care as well as planning for gender sensitive and sustainable ways of farming and livestock rearing. A special focus for her now is pastoral and nomadic communities, the animals they rear, their lives and their livelihood. She has significant publications on the themes of livestock development, biodiversity and systems of veterinary medicine. She is currently a guiding group member of Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock which is an international partnership of livestock sector stakeholders committed to the sustainable development of the sector.