

Report on Workshop



A Capacity-Building Workshop on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) and Nature Education for Seasonal Teachers.

Organised by: [Himalayan Pastoral Trust](#)

In Collaboration with: [Nature Classrooms](#)

Venue: Batapora, Srinagar, J&K, India.

Dates: 4th–5th May, 2026

Executive Summary

Himalayan Pastoral Trust (HPT), under its *Grasslands to Classrooms* initiative, organised a two-day collaborative educational engagement titled **“Reimagining Education in Grasslands”** to strengthen seasonal mobile schooling systems serving pastoral communities in Jammu & Kashmir. Conducted in partnership with Nature Classrooms, Bangalore, the project combined foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) with nature education to support teachers working in some of the most dynamic and underserved educational landscapes.

At its core, this initiative sought to reimagine education not merely as curriculum delivery but as a context-responsive, culturally rooted, and ecologically meaningful process. It recognised that pastoral children live and learn in landscapes where mobility, environment, and traditional ecological knowledge are central to everyday life, and therefore education must also reflect these realities. This workshop became a pioneering step in creating one of the first collective spaces dedicated specifically to seasonal teachers, combining pedagogy, reflection, practical learning tools, and environmental engagement.



Background

Jammu & Kashmir home to largest pastoral migrations in south Asia continue. Pastoral communities move seasonally across mountains, grasslands, and forests in response to grazing cycles, climate, and livelihood patterns. This mobility has historically shaped identity, knowledge systems, and socio-economic life. However, mobility also creates significant barriers to formal education. The J&K Government under Samagra Shiksha has established, seasonal educational centres (functional for six months) across migratory routes and grasslands to support continuity of learning for children from pastoral communities. Mostly these teachers are members of these pastoral communities and migrate alongside the families they serve. Despite their deep familiarity with community realities, they are rarely equipped with educational approaches specifically designed for mobile, multi-grade, and seasonal learning environments. As a result, they continue to replicate educational frameworks of settled-school approaches, often overlooking the environmental and socio-cultural contexts in which pastoral children live.

For pastoral children, education cannot be disconnected from grasslands, migration routes, livestock, seasons, biodiversity, and indigenous knowledge. Yet these realities remain largely absent from mainstream pedagogy. Simultaneously, foundational literacy and numeracy remain critical priorities, especially in contexts where educational disruption is common. Recognising this dual need strengthening FLN while contextualising education HPT conceptualised this workshop as a pilot intervention to bridge foundational learning with nature-based, inquiry-led, and culturally relevant pedagogy.

About the Organisers

The **Himalayan Pastoral Trust** is a grassroots organization working across the Northwestern Himalayas on sustainable livelihood, climate action, and education among pastoral Communities. **Nature Classrooms** is a Bengaluru-based initiative that focuses on bringing meaningful, age-appropriate, and contextual nature education into diverse teaching-learning contexts across India.

Participant Details

A total of **25 participants** attended the workshop. All participants were seasonal teachers representing 10 different districts of Jammu & Kashmir.

Resource Persons

The workshop sessions were facilitated by the following resource persons:

Priyanka Prakash	Shahid Saleem
Javid Chohan	Shaista Mushtaq
Shafiq Qureshi	Farhana Manzoor

Coordinators

The workshop was coordinated by:

- Yameen Nazir
- Nadeem Saleem
- Maleen
- Suhail Rasool

Structure of the Workshop

The workshop was broadly divided into four major sections designed to combine theory, observation, participation, and inquiry-based learning practices.

Section I: Oral Discussions and Conceptual Sessions

The first section focused on oral talks, reflective discussions, and conceptual understanding related to foundational and nature-based learning. Sessions included:

- Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)
- Nature Education and Learning About Nature
- Nature-Based Learning Approaches
- Stages of Nature Learning
- Connecting Seasonal Changes and Connections with Nature Learning

These discussions encouraged teachers to reflect upon how education for pastoral children can move beyond textbook-based instruction and explore concepts that become rooted in lived ecological experiences.

Section II: Individual Activity-Based Learning

The second section focused on helping participants understand nature through observation and sensory engagement. Teachers actively participated in hands-on activities that demonstrated experiential learning methods suitable for mobile schools and outdoor learning spaces.

Activities Included:

- Sensory Mapping Activity
- Bird Flash Card Activities
- Bird Watching Activity
- Guided Observation Exercises
- Introduction to Citizen Science

These activities emphasized close observation, curiosity, excitement, listening, speaking, explaining, noticing patterns, and connecting children with their surrounding environment.



Section III: Group Activities and Collaborative Learning

The third section involved collaborative group activities designed to encourage reflection on teaching practices and learning environments in seasonal schools.

Group Activities Included:

- Understanding the stages of nature learning
- Designing the ideal learning content for pastoral children
- Imagining an ideal seasonal teacher
- Designing an ideal seasonal school learning environment
- Bird Survivor Game
- Puzzle Games and collaborative learning activities
- Numeracy-based activities focused on writing numbers, identifying shapes, and learning the names and differences between rectangles, squares, and other basic geometric forms

Through these exercises, teachers explored how learning spaces can become more engaging, contextually meaningful, and learner-centric. These initiatives also build self-confidence and collaborative teamwork by promoting cooperation and a sense of shared achievement, thereby enabling inclusive participation from all students.



Section IV: Inquiry-Based Learning and Understanding Change

The final section focused on inquiry-based learning approaches aimed at helping children observe and understand environmental and social change around them. Discussions centered on:

- Understanding changes already taking place within pastoral landscapes and communities
- Encouraging children to observe seasonal and ecological changes critically
- Exploring ways to respond positively to change
- Increasing children’s awareness, understanding, and connection with their environment

This section highlighted the importance of helping pastoralist children improve their critical thinking and problem-solving skills and become active observers and learners within their own ecological and cultural contexts.

Participant Feedback

The workshop received highly positive feedback from participants. Most teachers appreciated the hands-on activities, collaborative discussions, and local storytelling components integrated into the sessions.

Participants shared their interest in exploring nature-based education further and highlighted the relevance of these approaches in seasonal and mobile school settings. Many participants suggested that more such workshops should be organized in the future to continue strengthening innovative teaching practices among seasonal teachers.

Conclusion

The workshop “*Reimagining Education in Grasslands*” created a collaborative learning space for seasonal teachers to reflect upon and reimagine educational practices in mobile school environments. By combining nature-centered learning experiences, inquiry-based learning, sensory observation, collaborative activities, and ecological understanding, the workshop encouraged teachers to rethink how practical strategies can be applied to make teaching more engaging, inclusive, and contextually meaningful for children living in mobile and migratory environments.

By bringing together seasonal teachers, pastoral realities, foundational learning, and nature education, the project laid the groundwork for a new educational conversation in Jammu & Kashmir, one where education moves with communities, grows from landscapes, and respects the knowledge systems children already carry. This was not just about improving classrooms. It was about rethinking what education can mean in grasslands.



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