

Organized by: PDS

Date: 17th February 2026

Time: 11:30 am – 4:30 pm

Participants: 51 Design Students and 6 Faculty Members

Venue: Zapurza Museum of Art & Culture, Agalambe, Pune

## 1. Introduction

As part of an interdisciplinary academic initiative, a field visit was organized to the Zapurza Museum of Art & Culture to attend the "Living Lightly Utsav." This event was held to mark the International Year of Rangelands & Pastoralists (2026). The exhibition provided a unique, shared space for dialogue between pastoral communities and academic institutions across various disciplines, including design, architecture, ecology, and sociology.

The visit aimed to expose design students to the intersections of culture, craft, and ecology, offering them a deeper understanding of how traditional practices inform sustainable design, material cultures, and climate resilience.

## 2. Objectives of the Visit

**The primary objectives of the visit were:**

- To engage with the concepts of mobility, commons, and landscape systems through the lens of pastoral communities.
- To study traditional material cultures, particularly wool traditions and regional crafts, and understand their relevance to modern design and sustainability.
- To participate in an interdisciplinary exchange where ecology meets economy and culture meets craft.
- To observe how museum curation, exhibition design, and visual storytelling are utilized to communicate complex socio-ecological narratives.

## Activities During the Visit

**Documentary and Visual Narratives Screening** (*Reference Photo: 12:20 PM - Students in the screening room*) The visit commenced with an immersive video screening session. Students gathered in the museum's audiovisual room to watch presentations documenting the lives, mobility, and landscape systems of pastoral communities. This session provided critical context for the exhibition, allowing students to visually connect with the environments and traditions that shape pastoral material culture before seeing the physical exhibits.

**Gallery Walk and Interactive Dialogue with Designer** (*Reference Photo: 03:08 PM - Crowd interacting with community representatives in traditional attire*) In the afternoon, students and faculty participated in a rich, interactive session within the gallery space. The students had the opportunity to engage directly with representatives of pastoral communities, who shared insights into their traditional practices, clothing, and crafts. This shared dialogue bridged the gap between theoretical sustainability concepts and lived realities, allowing students to see firsthand the resilience and ingenuity of these communities. The session highlighted the importance of inclusive, human-centric approaches in design and research.

**Campus Exploration and Reflection** (*Reference Photo: 03:31 PM - Group photo outdoors by the water*) Following the indoor sessions, the group explored the broader Zapurza campus, taking in the architectural and landscape design of the venue itself. The visit concluded with a group gathering and reflection session by the water, where students discussed their observations on how exhibition design and physical spaces can facilitate cross-disciplinary learning.

## Learning Outcomes

Through this visit, students gained the following key learnings:

- A broadened perspective on sustainable practices, viewing climate resilience through the traditional knowledge of pastoral communities.
- Insights into interdisciplinary design, recognizing how geography, anthropology, and ecology directly influence material culture and craft.
- An appreciation for exhibition and spatial design as tools for fostering dialogue and preserving intangible cultural heritage.
- Practical awareness of how distinct knowledge systems—from academic institutions to indigenous communities—can collaborate and inform future design solutions.

## Conclusion

The educational visit to the "Living Lightly Utsav" at Zapurza was a deeply enriching experience. It successfully expanded the students' understanding of design beyond standard industrial applications, grounding it in ecological awareness and cultural preservation. By interacting directly with pastoral communities and viewing thoughtfully curated exhibits, students gained a holistic perspective that will significantly contribute to their development as empathetic and culturally aware design professionals.

