



**PROPOSAL FOR AVOIDING 24 /7 CHAINING OF
CAPTIVE ELEPHANTS AT GOVERNMENT
ELEPHANT CAMPS, IN KERALA, INDIA**



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Front cover: Elephant chained 24/7 at Kodanadu camp, Kerala. Elephant keeper using a stick to threaten the elephant and enforce his orders.

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Background:

The captive elephants at forest camps in Kerala are chained in two legs for 24 hours and made to stand like a statue. Elephants kept in such condition have developed serious health problems and psychological problems. Chained elephants non-stop head bobbing is an indicator of serious psychological illness. Without having any consideration for even basic living condition of these giant animals, the elephants are tortured for their lifetime by keeping them chained 24 hours a day.

The current condition in which elephants are kept in camps is a violation of “Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960” and also of the “Captive Elephants Management Guidelines” issued by Project Elephant, Ministry of Environment & Forests.

Suggestions

Elephants walk up to 20 kms. in a day, in the wild. Elephants need this physical exercise for their physical and psychological well being. There are best practices followed in other captive elephant facilities in India and abroad, details and photos are provided here.

Method 1 to avoid chaining:

Captured and tamed wild elephants in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are not chained 24 hours. During day time these forest camp elephants are allowed to move in to the forest area with long “Drag Chains” (These chains are tied to one leg of the elephant. When the elephant moves, the chain is dragged along with it. This is done to track elephant movement inside forest). This can be witnessed in Mudumalai and Anamalai elephant camps in Tamil Nadu and in Bannerghatta elephant camp in Karnataka. The elephants get an opportunity to graze wild feed, which includes various species of plants that form a healthy diet. The camp elephants also mate with wild elephants. Such living conditions very closely replicate their wild living conditions and supports the welfare of the elephants.

Method 2 to avoid chaining:

Another cruelty free method of handling captive elephants is by constructing huge elephant sanctuaries by fencing a large area of forest. Such sanctuaries for rescued circus elephants and begging elephants exist in India and also in other countries. Here is the list of elephant sanctuaries.

- 1.) NGO Wildlife SOS & Haryana forest department's sanctuary in Bansantour, Haryana
- 2.) "Elephant Sanctuary", Tennessee, USA
- 3.) "Global Elephant Sanctuary" Brazil.
- 4.) "Elephant Nature Park" Thailand.

We suggest that the forest department consider such positive approach and chain free elephant management practices and replicate the same in Kerala. If there are constraints in creating a chain free environment, the state can transfer the elephants to other elephant camps in neighboring states and fund for their monthly maintenance.

Appendix- WSOS elephant sanctuary:

(Photos - next page)

Photos from Wildlife SOS elephant sanctuary in Bansantour, Haryana, India.

Rescued elephants are allowed to roam free in their natural environment in this fenced sanctuary.

This natural environment is highly enriching for the elephants to exhibit the natural behavior.



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24/7 chaining of
captive elephants
at government
elephant camps in
Kerala, India.

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