



Elephants Slavery



**Living Conditions of Private Elephants
(At temples & with private individuals)
Solution to the problems**

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About us:

Elsa Foundation is a non-profit charitable trust that focuses on the conservation of biodiversity, prevention of cruelty to animals, and animal rights issues involving both domestic and wild animals. It opposes keeping wild animals in captivity.

We have travelled to several countries to study best practices and implement them in India.

The foundation supports various government bodies, in informed policy-making and decision-making on critical issues impacting biodiversity and the rights of animals.

Our work areas are research, advocacy, awareness, publication, support in policy and decision-making.

Website: www.elsafoundationcharity.org



Illegal Capture and Sale of Elephants from North-East India to South India
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IMPORTANT LEGAL, BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS FOR THE COURTS TO CONSIDER



ELEPHANTS COURT CASE GUIDE



CONNECTING THE DOTS

Root cause of human fatalities caused by
captive elephants.



CAPTIVE ELEPHANTS ARE **VICTIMS** OF
HUMAN ABUSE
Media Reports

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There is not a single aspect that is beneficial for an elephant when it is forcefully kept in captivity

Elephants are keystone species that are directly responsible for survival of many other species in the forest

Capturing wild elephants and forcing them to live in captivity not only destroys the elephant species, it is also a huge threat to biodiversity

Part 1

- **Executive Summary (plus) Why elephants should remain in forests ?**

Part 2

- **Root cause of all the problems**

Part 3

- **How did so many wild elephants came under custody of temples and private owners ?**

Part 4

- **How elephants suffer in private custody (at temples and with private individual)**

Part 5

- **Final notes**

Part 6

- **Solution to the problems**

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ACRONYMS

AWBI – Animal Welfare Board of India

CWW – Chief Wildlife Warden (State Forest Department) (a.k.a. **CWLW**)

CZA – Central Zoo Authority (Agency under MoEF)

FD – Forest Department

HC – High Court

HEC – Human Elephant Conflict

MoEF – Ministry of Environment & Forests (Central Government)

N.E. – North East States

OC – Ownership Certificate (given to the owner of a Schedule 1 wild animal)

PCA Act – Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act - 1960

SC – Supreme Court

TN – Tamil Nadu

WP Act – Wildlife Protection Act - 1972

WCCB – Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (Agency under MoEF)

PART-1
Executive Summary
+
Why elephants should
remain in the forests

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a proposal that recommends the rehabilitation of the captive elephants in private custody (temples and private owners) in a protected sanctuary. Elephants even though are kept in captivity in cities and towns, they are still wild animals and cannot be domesticated like a cow (or) goat. It is highly unethical and cruel to keep such an intelligent, large social wild animal in isolated captivity.

The following topics are analysed along with pictures, tables, graphs and recommendations are provided:

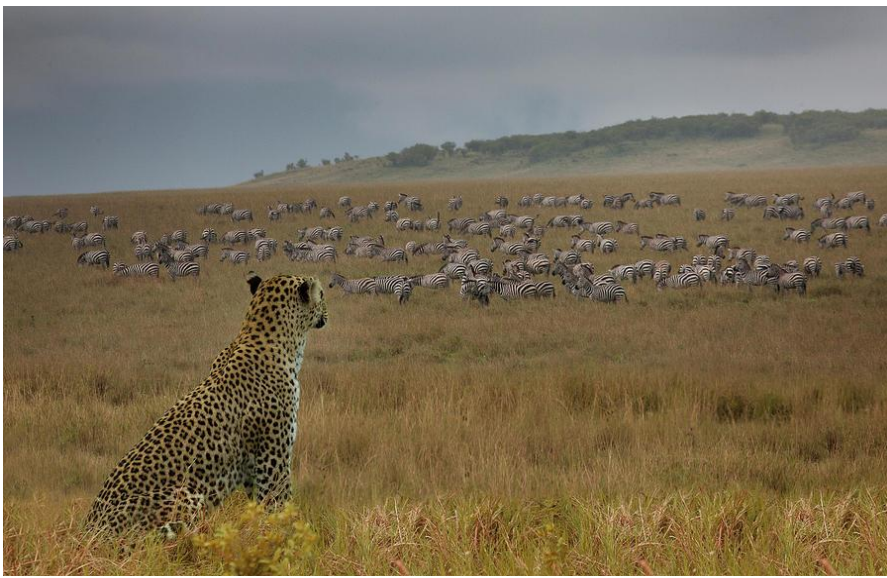
- + Importance of keeping elephants in the forests
- + How so many wild elephants came under captivity?
- + Legal violations (Wildlife Protection Act and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act)
- + How elephants suffer in captivity (serious impact on physical and mental health)
- + How elephants' social, biological, and behavioural aspects are ignored in isolated captivity
- + Captivity curtails the growth of the wild elephant population
- + Captivity takes away the most important gene pool of elephants from the wild.
- + Stakeholders and their action in promoting illegal trade and illegal use of elephants
- + Danger to public
- + Solution case studies

2 WHY ELEPHANTS SHOULD REMAIN IN THE FORESTS?



Image: Boon Loot Sanctuary

Why elephants should remain in the forests?



3 WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?

The presence of multiple species of plants and animals in a habitat that is perfectly suitable for them. The habitat (mountains, forests, lakes, rivers etc.) that provides plenty of food and water for their living - all these components as a whole is called biodiversity. It has three components 1. Ecosystem diversity. 2. Species diversity 3. Genetic diversity.

4 WHAT IS ECOLOGY?

Ecology is a science that studies how plants, animals and their environment (collectively called an Ecosystem) are interdependent for their survival, their interactions and their relationships.

Ex: The elephants' dung is carried by dung beetles and stored underground in small holes. For dung beetles, dung is the food. After consuming a portion of food, the leftover dung becomes natural manure for the forest plants and grass. This dung nurtures the plants and grass growth in the forest. These plants and grass are in turn consumed by deer, buffalo, zebra and other herbivorous animals. These animals drop the seeds in various locations and promote tree growth in the forests



Elephant footprints serve as frog nurseries

5 ELEPHANTS' ROLE IN BIODIVERSITY AND ECOLOGY

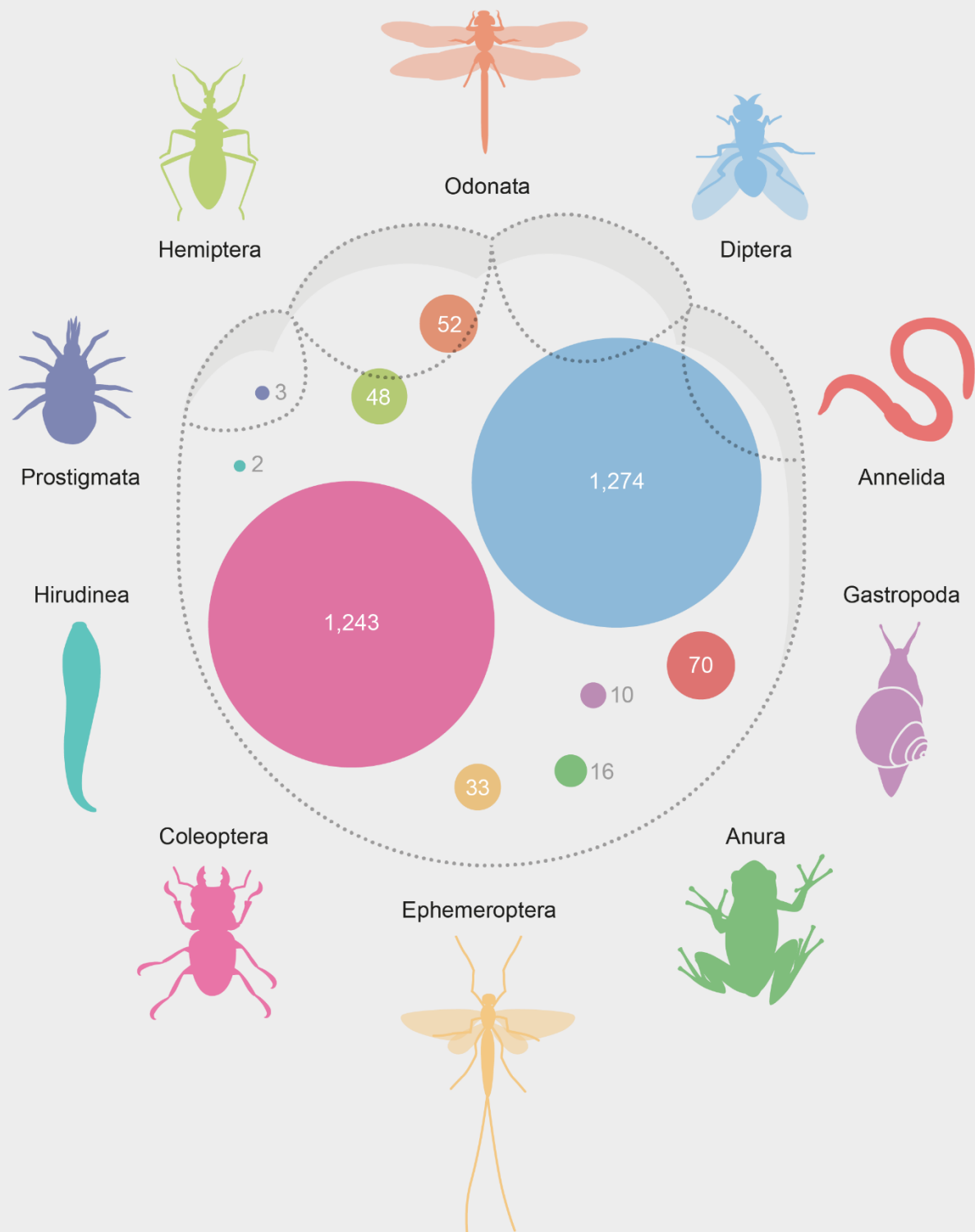
Elephants play a major role in conserving biodiversity and maintaining an ecosystem balance. Several species of plants and animals depend on elephants for their survival.

Dung piles and puddles generated by elephants act as a small ecosystem / microhabitat supporting various small organisms such as insects, lizards and frogs.

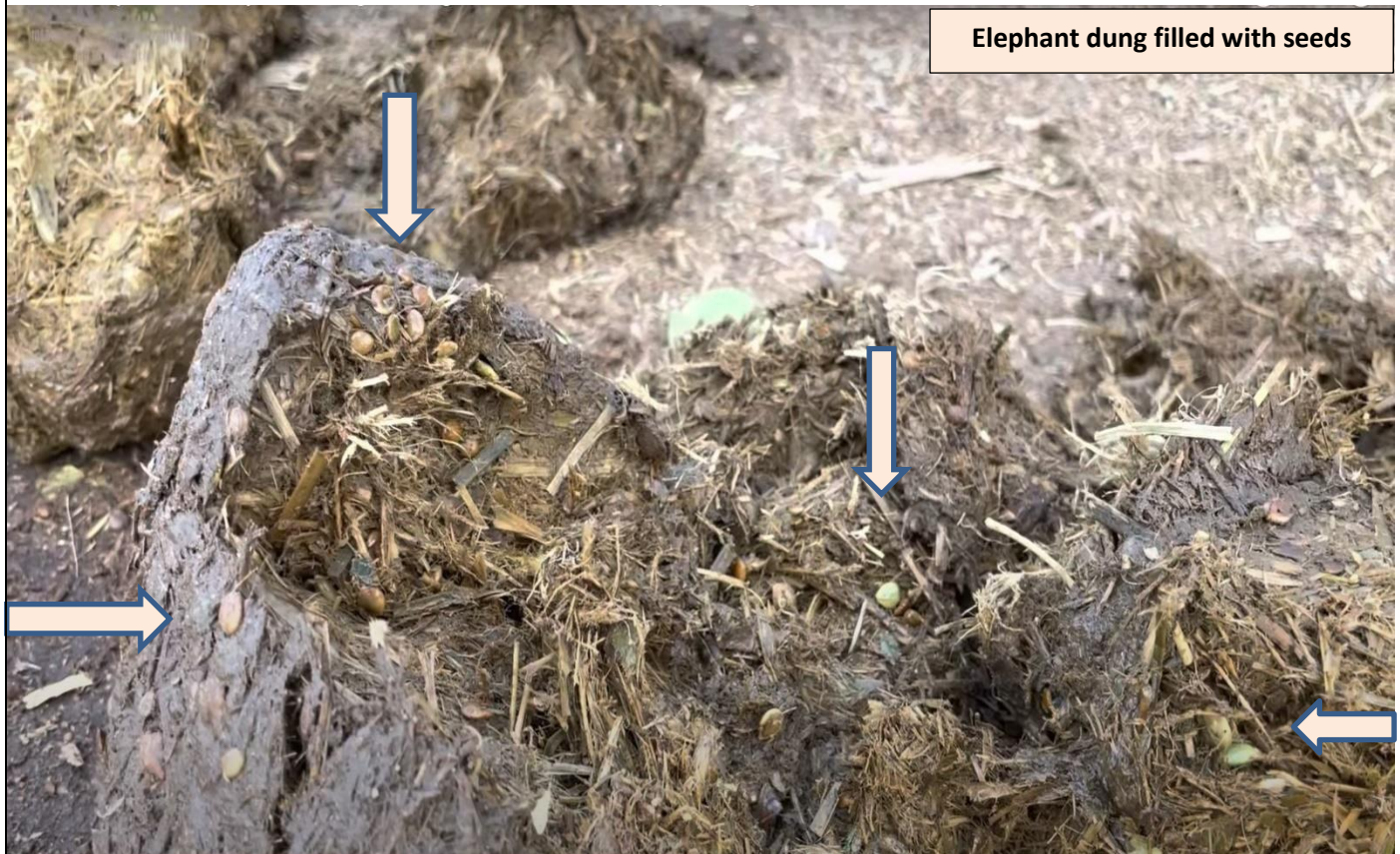
"Aside from these frogs, I also found a broad array of invertebrates including beetles, termites, ants, spiders, scorpions, centipedes, and crickets in many of the elephant dung piles, suggesting that a dung pile can become a small ecosystem on its own." (*Ahimsa Campos-Arceiz; 2009*)

The Pool Party in a Pachyderm Print

Thousands of animals were found in 30 elephant footprints. Animals represented in the data below are grouped by order.



Credit: Amanda Montanez; Source: "Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) Footprints as Habitat for Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Communities in Kibale National Park, South-West Uganda," by W. Remmers, et al., in African Journal of Ecology; August 2016.



Elephant dung filled with seeds

Large quantities of seeds are spread through elephant dung. Dung nurtures the germination of seeds and promotes growth of trees. Elephants are classified as **Keystone Species** and as **Ecosystem Engineers** due to their enormous contribution to biodiversity and ecology

Image: Campos-Arceiz



Three species of frogs were discovered to live in the dung pile (source: Campos-Arceiz)

- *Ornate narrow-mouthed frog *Microhyla ornate*
- *Narrow-mouthed species *Microhyla rubra*
- *A frog Species in the *Sphaerotheca* genus.

6 HOW DO HUMANS AND ALL OTHER LIVING ORGANISMS BENEFIT FROM ELEPHANTS?

Elephants grow trees, shrubs, plants, grass and also develop micro-habitats

Parts of trees, shrubs, plants and grass consumed by humans & several organisms

Trees consume carbon, reduce global warming and protect the ozone

Reduced warming protects humans and all organisms

Trees give oxygen

Humans and all organisms breathe oxygen

Humans drink and cultivate with water
Animals use water for drinking and as their habitat for living

Trees give rain

Rain fills the rivers, lakes, ponds and increases ground water level



7 ELEPHANTS ENHANCE THE CARBON STOCKS OF FORESTS

Carbon stocks of forests

- Mg C/ha
- Tons of C/ha

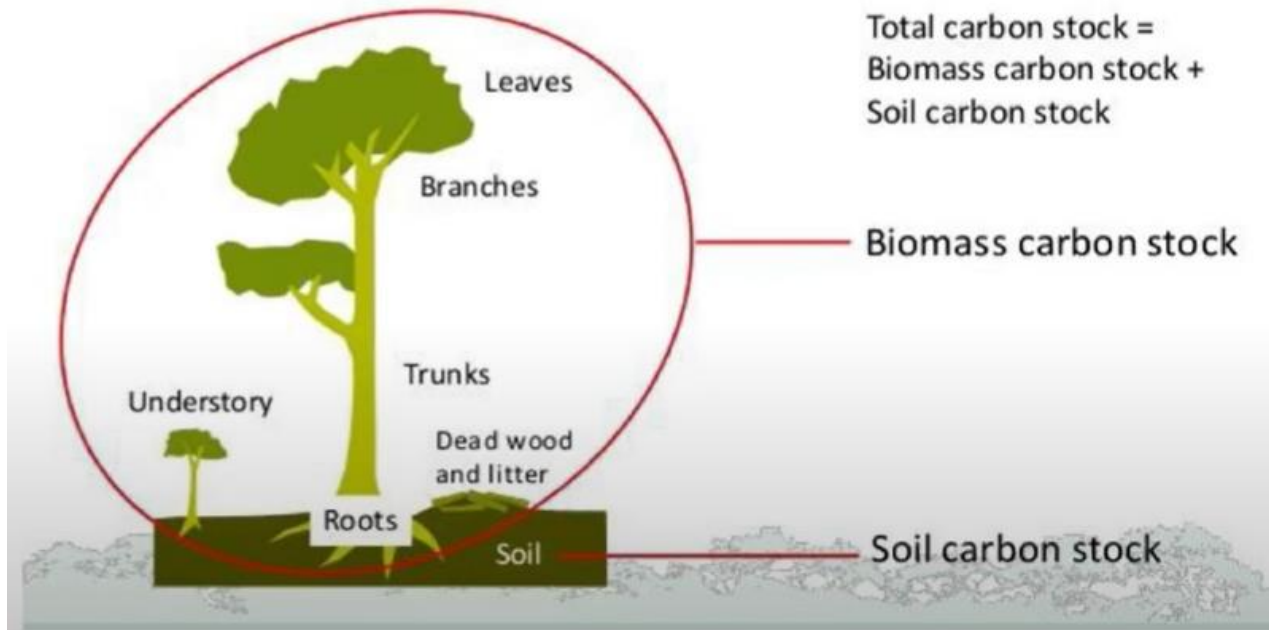


Image: Center for International Forestry Research

The carbon stock refers to the amount of carbon stored in forests in the form of biomass & soil.

More the carbon stock, the higher would be the forest's capacity to absorb and sequester carbon dioxide (CO₂) through photosynthesis.

CO₂ is the main harmful greenhouse gas in the atmosphere.

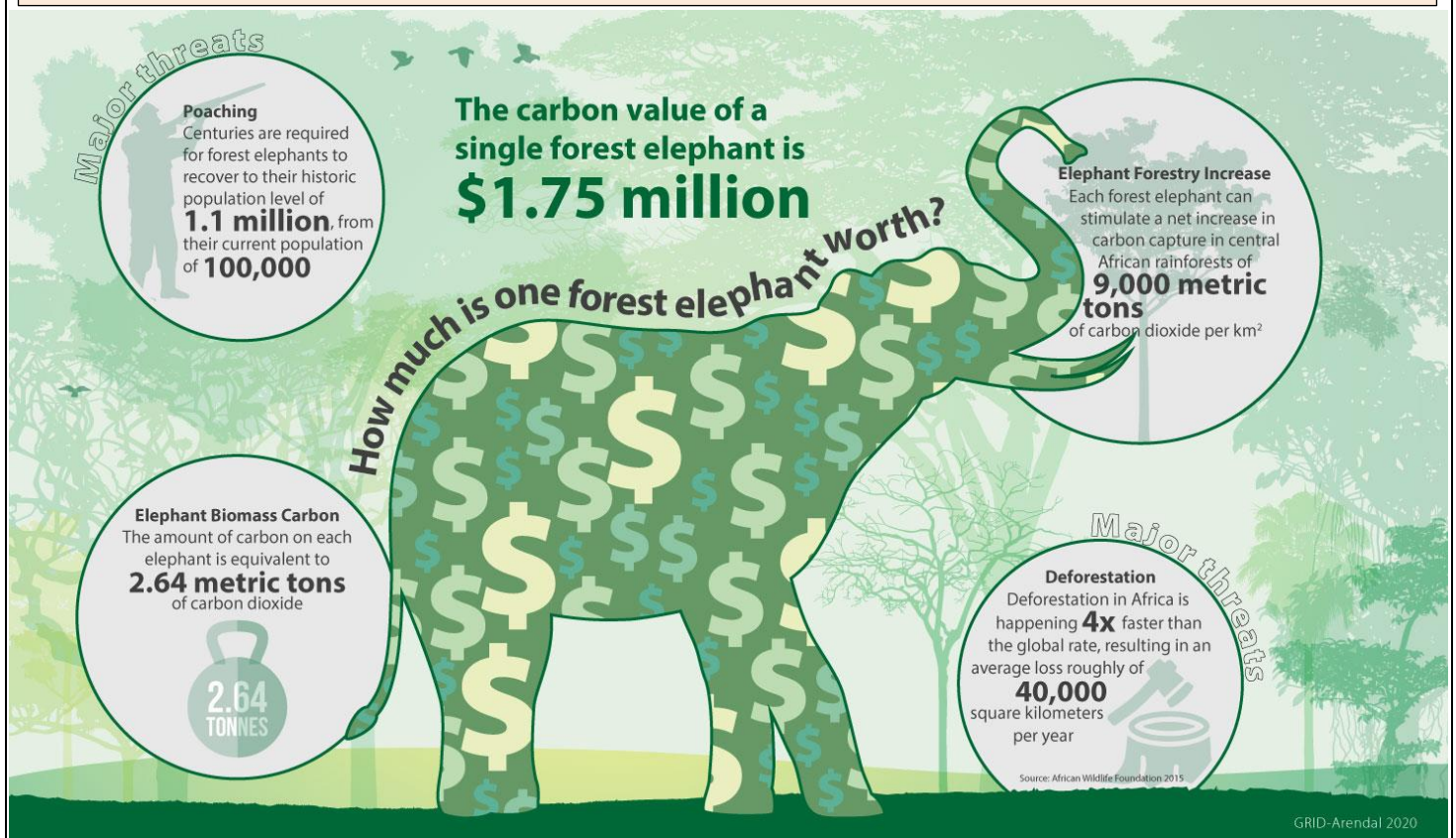


Image: Ralph Chami, International Monitory Fund

Carbon stocks in central African forests enhanced by elephant disturbance

[Fabio Berzaghi](#) , [Marcos Longo](#), [Philippe Ciais](#), [Stephen Blake](#), [François Bretagnolle](#), [Simone Vieira](#), [Marcos Scaranello](#), [Giuseppe Scarascia-Mugnozza](#) & [Christopher E. Doughty](#)

Nature Geoscience **12**, 725–729 (2019) | [Cite this article](#)

Abstract

Large herbivores, such as elephants, can have important effects on ecosystems and biogeochemical cycles. Yet, the influence of elephants on the structure, productivity and carbon stocks in Africa's rainforests remain largely unknown. Here, we quantify those effects by incorporating elephant disturbance in the Ecosystem Demography model, and verify the modelled effects by comparing them with forest inventory data from two lowland primary forests in Africa. We find that the reduction of forest stem density due to the presence of elephants leads to changes in the competition for light, water and space among trees. These changes favour the emergence of fewer and larger trees with higher wood density. Such a shift in African's rainforest structure and species composition increases the long-term equilibrium of aboveground biomass. The shift also reduces the forest net primary productivity, given the trade-off between productivity and wood density. At a typical density of 0.5 to 1 animals per km², elephant disturbances increase aboveground biomass by 26–60 t ha⁻¹. Conversely, the extinction of forest elephants would result in a 7% decrease in the aboveground biomass in central African rainforests. These modelled results are confirmed by field inventory data. We speculate that the presence of forest elephants may have shaped the structure of Africa's rainforests, which probably plays an important role in differentiating them from Amazonian rainforests.

8 IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE DONE TO BIODIVERSITY AND ELEPHANTS

Elephants are classified as keystone species and umbrella species, which means many other species (both plants and animals) in the wild, depend on the elephants for their survival.

Removing elephants from the wild causes serious damage to the elephant species and to the bio-diversity (biodiversity comprises ecosystem diversity, species diversity and genetic diversity).

From the elephants' point of view, keeping them in temples (or) private processions does not have a single positive aspect to consider. The details of the negative impacts are documented in this proposal.

**PART - 2
ROOT CAUSE OF ALL THE
PROBLEMS:
CONTROVERSIAL
SECTION IN THE
WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT
THAT PROMOTES ILLEGAL
ELEPHANT CAPTURE AND
TRADE**

Please read
“Elephants Court Case Guide”
published by the foundation
to know about the controversial
section in the [Wildlife Protection Act](#) that
promotes elephant capture and trade
and
violations of various laws and rules by
elephant owners (temple & private), illegal
traders and forest departments,
plus total lack of implementation of laws
by FDs and the Central Ministry of
Environment and Forest

e-mail to get the guide:
contact@elsafoundationcharity.org

**PART-3
HOW SO MANY WILD
ELEPHANTS CAME UNDER
PRIVATE CUSTODY
(TEMPLES AND PRIVATE
OWNERS)?**

9 HEAD COUNT OF CAPTIVE ELEPHANTS IN ALL STATES

As per the data collected from all states and submitted to SC, by MoEF, in 2018

Details of Captive Elephant based on the information send by States and Union Territories

S.No.	State	Captive elephant in Forest Department Possession	Zoo/ Rehabilitation	Private Custody			Total Elephant in Private Custody (C+D+E)	Details of Ownership Certificate of Elephants in Private Custody (C, D & E)			Grand Total (Captive Elephant) (A+B+F)	No. of Elephant with Age Details	
				Private Individuals	Circus	Temple/Religious Institution		Owner Certificate issued by State	Ownership Certification issued by other State	No ownership certificate/ Certificate under process		Yes	No
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
1.	Haryana	-	3	0	0	1	1	0	1	-	4	4	0
2.	Delhi	-	-	4	-	-	4	3	-	1	4	0	4
3.	Kerala	39	-	479	-	-	479	249	96	134	518	509	9
4.	West Bengal	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	100	98	2
5.	Tamil Nadu	49	3	41	6	39	86	53	32	1	138	124	14
6.	Odisha	13	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	21	21	0
7.	Uttar Pradesh	25	20	73	-	-	73	28	7	38	118	41	77
8.	Karnataka	98	38	16	4	28	48	13	6	29	184	0	184
9.	Rajasthan	-	-	110	-	3	113	46	58	9	113	113	0
10.	Jharkhand	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	0	10
11.	Assam	150	3	752	-	-	752	417	-	335	905	454	451
12.	Puducherry	-	-	2	-	-	2	-	-	2	2	0	2
13.	Bihar	5	2	59	-	-	59	15	-	44	66	58	8
14.	Meghalaya	2	0	6	0	0	6	1	0	5	8	4	4
15.	Punjab	3	0	13	0	0	13	13	0	0	16	16	0
16.	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17.	Chandigarh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.	Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19.	Maharashtra	Not furnished	2	5	0	6	11	1	0	10	13	0	13
20.	Manipur	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
21.	Goa	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	10	0	10	10	0
22.	Andhra Pradesh	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0
23.	Tripura	4	0	60	0	0	60	7	0	53	64	0	64
24.	Andaman & Nicobar Island	63	0	0	0	0	0	63	0	0	63	63	0
25.	Chhattisgarh	9	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	9	0
26.	Gujarat	-	-	21	12	19	52	22	29	1	52	24	28
27.	Uttarakhand	28*	-	-	-	-	-	0	-	-	28	0	28
28.	Madhya Pradesh	60	1	13	25	0	38	38	0	61	99	75	24
29.	Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	-	-	109#	0	109
30.	Nagaland	1	0	14	0	0	14	15	0	0	15	14	1
Total		659	86	1678	47	96	1821	1012	239	723	2675	1643	1032

* 7 private elephant under the possession of State Forest Department due to High Court Uttarakhand order

Government of Arunachal Pradesh has 109 captive elephants, however the detail of elephants has not been provided by the states.

- No specific information provided

10 ILLEGAL SOURCES OF OBTAINING ELEPHANTS

The Wildlife Protection Act does not have any provision for selling (involving a commercial transaction) an elephant to private parties (or) temples

Source-1

Before Dec 1996: North east state governments capturing of wild elephants, taming them and selling to private timber merchants, plus, private parties directly capturing wild elephants and taming them for timber hauling



**After Dec 1996: Total ban on tree felling in forests all over India in Dec 1996 by Supreme Court (Godavarman case).
Timber elephants (headcount around 2000) lose their jobs due to this ban.
Governments (central & state) do not initiate any elephants rehabilitation sanctuaries (or) soft release in to the wild plan**



North East states, private owners selling their timber elephants directly and also at Bihar Sonepur mela to South India's temples and private owners (people capturing juvenile wild elephants, just for selling also happens)



**Elephants transported several thousand kilometers to
Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karanataka**



**Sale of elephants among temples and private owners in
these three states**

Source-2

Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka forest departments selling captured (due to HEC and calves separated from herd) and tamed elephants to temples and private parties.

Note: There are multiple instances in which the elephants were transported from main land to Andaman and vice versa

11 BARBARIC TAMING OF CAPTURED WILD ELEPHANTS

The first step towards slavery is the brutal attack on elephants by multiple forest department mahouts for several months to break the wild spirit and instil the fear of humans so that the wild elephant starts obeying the humans' commands.

Multiple forest staff attack the elephant at the same time



Poking in sensitive areas near eyes (both images by Kalyan)



Unable to bear the horrifying attacks the elephant climbs on the cage (image by Kalyan)

The taming of an elephant



12 WILD ELEPHANT KILLED BY BRUTAL ATTACKS BY FOREST STAFF



Images by Mike



13 INJURIES CAUSED DUE TO TAMING



Images by Nitin

14 PARTIAL LIST OF ELEPHANTS KILLED DURING TAMING

In multiple incidents, in the above-mentioned barbaric taming process, the elephants are killed by government staff (the keepers). Here is a partial list of elephants that are killed in the taming process.

2003: A young bull elephant was chained and beaten for 18 days and was killed by Chhattisgarh State Forest Department staff. As per eyewitness statements, a total of 18 elephants were killed in this manner in Chhattisgarh, within a year.

2006: In Peppara sanctuary in Kerala state, a wild male elephant (nicknamed Kola Kolli) was killed inside the wooden cage (kraal) during taming.

2013: A pregnant elephant was captured from Thiruvannamalai (Tamil Nadu state) and brutally attacked inside the kraal at Mudumalai. The elephant delivered a calf prematurely and the calf died very soon

2015: Three wild elephants were captured in the Sindu-Durg district of Maharashtra state. During the brutal taming process, two of them were killed inside the cage in Maharashtra.

2016: The wild elephant captured in Madukkarai, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu state, nicknamed 'Madukkarai Maharaj' was killed inside the Kraal (cage) at Varagaliyar forest department camp, two days after it was captured. This animal had suffered multiple fractures on its skull, broken its tusks and multiple other injuries while trying to free itself from the kraal.

2018: Juvenile male elephant separated from its mother and was killed while it was brutally attacked for taming, in Sidhi forest, Madhya Pradesh state

2019: A bull elephant around 35 years old (called "Bin Laden") was killed in the brutal capture and taming process in Assam.

15 ILLEGAL SALES OF TAMED ELEPHANTS FROM NORTHEAST STATES

Involvement of Assam Forest Officials, South Indian Temples and Private Parties in Illegal Wild Elephant Trade, in Violation of Wildlife Protection Act and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

Below: Snippets From Central Government “Wildlife Crime Control Bureau” Report

Study on illegal sale and transfer of live elephants from Assam

Chaturbhuja Behera, IFS

Regional Dy. Director, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, Kolkata

Abstract:

Assam has a glorious history of its association with elephants, of taming wild elephants for domestication and harbouring maximum number of wild and captive elephants. Abrupt fall in the forestry activities since 1996 and subsequent deterioration in economic conditions of the elephant owners have spurred sale of captive elephants from the state in the face of public outcry, administrative and legal restrictions, and have created inter-state nexus for smuggling.

To study the cause and process of smuggling, the dynamics of demand and supply in the

5.5. Gangs and network of elephant trafficking:

Some of the business men of Bihar and UP settled in Assam have developed links with the local agents in Assam for facilitating the transfer of elephants. Some of the elephant smuggler groups are dealer in coal, timber and auctioned vehicles. They engage locals to mediate with the elephant-owners and settle the negotiations for transactions after paying advance. **The official formalities of getting NOC, health certificate, DNA testing, transport permit etc. are done by the local agents with the help of the Government officials. The agents have developed close links with the officers dealing with the relevant jobs, which ensure the sale without any impediment.** The business-men are quite conversant with the transporters, the buyers in Bihar & UP and know how to evade or circumvent checks on the forest check posts at the Assam-WB border. **Temples, religious organizations and political parties place their demand through messengers and sometimes directly through Government officials.**

Rules Governing Captive Elephants' Management

- MoEF Guidelines to create the care and management of captive elephants rules - 2008
- Tamil Nadu Captive elephants management & maintenance rules 2011
- Kerala Captive elephants management & maintenance rules 2012

Note: The above rules can be downloaded from the foundation's website

16 ILLEGAL SALE & RENTING OF CAMP ELEPHANTS BY TAMIL NADU FOREST DEPARTMENT

TN FD sold wild government camp elephants to private parties & temples in Violation of Wildlife Protection Act and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.

WPA Section 39: Wild animals, etc., to be Government property

Tamil Nadu Forest Department Report (2002) by forest vet Dr. Krishnamurthy:

Among the captive born calves, 22 nos, mostly female calves were given to various temples in Tamilnadu. Several Calves mostly bulls were sold to private owners in Kerala. Three calves were donated abroad by the GOI, as a goodwill gesture. More than 7 calves were sent abroad through the Arignar Anna Zoological Park for getting as exchange other species of animals.

Tamil Nadu Forest Department Report (1993) by forest vet Dr. Krishnamurthy:

1) Hiring of elephants:

When the animals do not have work, can be hired. There is demand for elephants for temple processions, for dragging timber and for Movie films.

Fixing of Fair Price:

The fixing of fair price for the elephants intended to be disposed off by negotiated sale, should be done in consultation with the Forest Veterinary Officer, as he is the competent authority for the annual valuation of the Departmental elephants. The book value is only the intrinsic value of the animal, and is for write off purposes in the event of death of the animal or transfer to other departments.

The market value is not constant. It depends upon the current demand. Since most of the elephants are sold to temples or to other countries or for exchange for other animals, I wish to suggest the following guideline for fixing the fair price.

In our department, we had been acquiring many animals by capture from wild. Of late most of our animals are captive born.

WPA Section 39: Wild Animals are Government Property

ELEPHANT CORRIDOR

CM mumbo-jumbo against law?

AMIT S. UPADHYE

DC | BENGALURU

Feb. 7: In a move triggered by the advice of astrologers and roundly criticised by wildlife experts, Chief Minister B.S. Yeddyurappa is all set to 'donate' a baby elephant to a temple in Puducherry.

A government order has been issued last week from the office of forest minister Vijay Shankar to expedite the transfer of an eight-year-old female elephant, Prakruti, from Sakrebail



Elephant Camp in Shimoga to a temple in Puducherry.

Forest department sources told *Deccan Chronicle* that the GO was made in ten days, without any proposals from either party.

Wildlife experts are crying foul saying animal exchange programmes are organised between zoos and biological parks based on need.

Donating an elephant, a schedule I animal under the Wildlife Act, is a criminal offence. Officials said that this is why it is being described as an 'animal exchange' programme. In

return the Sakrebail camp will get an old and ailing elephant from the temple at Puducherry.

"Plans to shift the pachyderm are being rushed through even before a GO was issued from Puducherry. Even the central government has not been informed about the GO," the official said.

When contacted, Project Elephant director A.N. Prasad said that no such proposal had been received from the Karnataka government until Friday.

8/2/2011

Female elephant Prakruti was brutally and cruelly separate from its family in the government Sakrebail elephant camp in Karnataka and sent to Thirunallar temple that falls under Puducherry Union Territory (UT), in 2011

From 2011 the elephant is suffering in isolated captivity in this temple

Petitions and meetings were done by the foundation with the temple & UT stake holders to send this elephant back to its forest camp but no actions were taken

Another Wildlife NGO had also prepared a detailed report on the appalling living conditions of this elephant and sent petitions to Karnataka FD, but there is no further action from FD.

18 CRUEL, GRUESOME TRANSPORT FROM NORTH-EAST STATES TO SOUTH INDIA

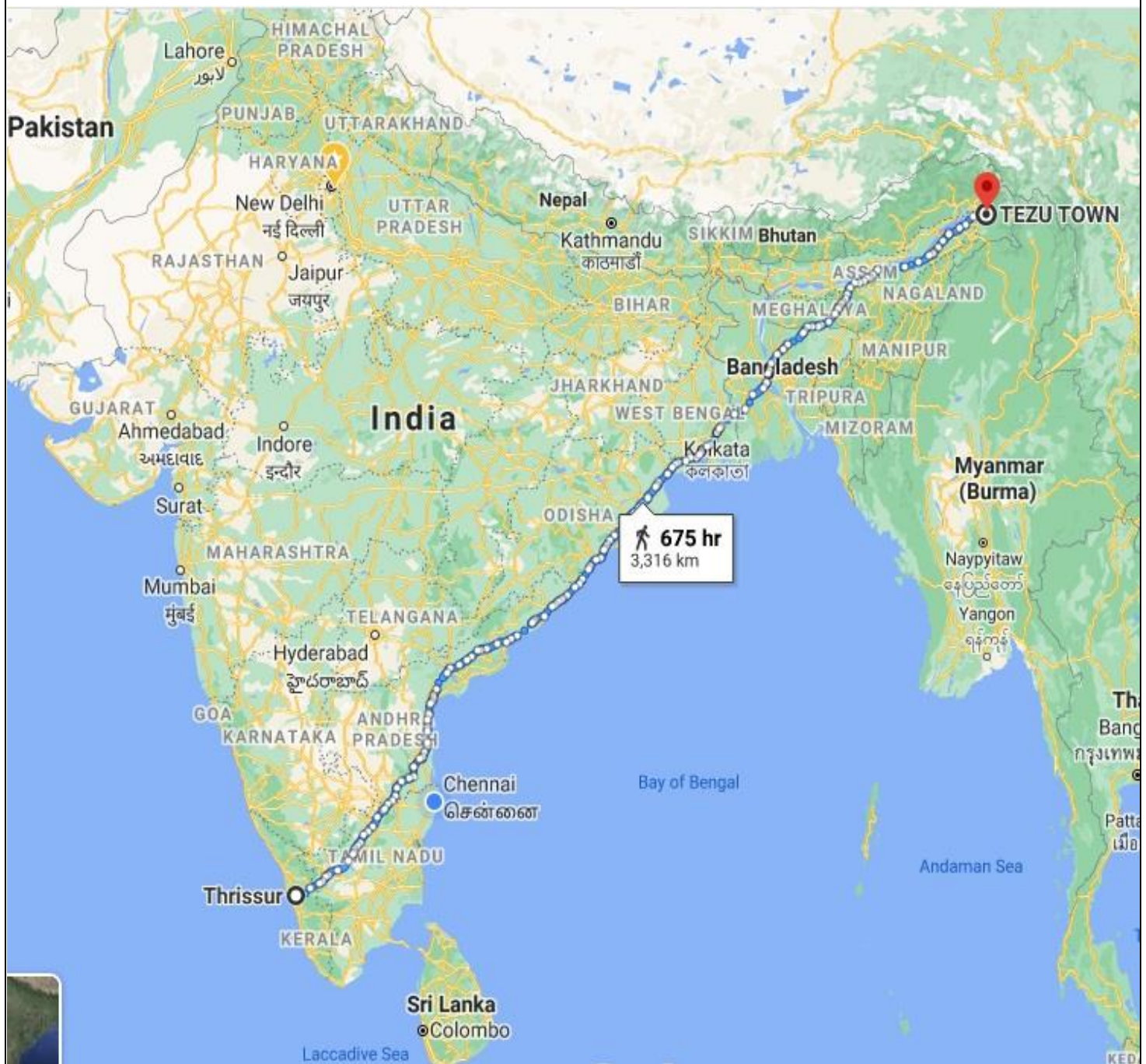
Elephants, when they are smuggled, undergo the cruellest and the most gruesome transportation. The elephants are forced to travel from 3000 to 4000 km. in open trucks in the scorching sun, without proper food, water, rest and veterinary care for several weeks.

Elephants are not comfortable, travelling in trucks as they don't have any grip to stand when the truck moves fast.

More than 1000 animals had been mercilessly transported in this barbaric manner

The travel includes crossing several check posts in several states and invariably bribing many officials to transport the animals illegally.

For example, the travel distance from Tezu (Lohit district of Arunachal Pradesh) to Thrissur (in Kerala) is 3316 kilometres. Lohit district is known for timber hauling using elephants and Thrissur has the maximum no of smuggled elephants.



19 DANGERS TO ELEPHANTS DURING TRANSPORT

Many times, elephants have had fatal injuries such as breaking their skull, by hitting the front cabin of the truck when the truck hits a speed breaker at a very high speed.

Image - Elephant fell from an overturned speeding lorry and sustained serious injuries



Dangerous transport, without any safety, on a highway

Elephant suffers a head injury during transportation and dies

[Press Trust of India](#) Updated: July 22, 2012, 3:09 pm IST

Kottayam: An elephant that suffered a serious head injury while being transported in a truck died late last night after writhing in pain for hours at Kumarakom near Kottayam.

The tusker, Soman, had his forehead dashed against the cabin of the truck in which it was being carried when the vehicle hit a speed-breaker.

The wooden frame within which the jumbo was made to stand broke when the speeding truck hit the speed-breaker and a piece of broken wood spiked deep into one of its limbs.

The driver and the mahout, who were inside the cabin of the truck, were unaware of the injury suffered by the jumbo and kept on moving at full speed, local people and police said.

However, on seeing the "moving tragedy", a group of people blocked the truck when it reached Illikkal junction and told the mahouts and the driver of the suffering of the animal.

Following this, fire and police personnel and veterinarians were called in but their efforts to get the elephant to stand up on its own, failed.

Hours later, a crane was brought and the jumbo was lifted out and laid down on the roadside. Though IV fluid and medicines were administered, it died late in the night after battling for life for several hours.

PART - 4
HOW ELEPHANTS SUFFER IN
PRIVATE CUSTODY
(At temples and with
individual owners)

20 CRITICAL PROBLEMS ELEPHANTS FACE IN TEMPLES AND PRIVATE CUSTODY (partial list)

The below table compares the sociological, psychological and biological needs of a wild elephant with an elephant forced to live at a temple, or under private custody.

Wild Elephant	Temple, Private Elephant
Social life: Female elephants live their entire life along with their natal herd. Male elephants live with their herd till the age of about 15 years (i.e. till they reach adulthood)	Denied an opportunity to live with its natal herd
Reproduction: Elephants' reproduction cycle regular	Opportunity for reproduction denied.
Conservation of keystone species done. Elephants calve only once in 5 years leading to a very slow reproduction, so allowing elephants to live in the wild is very important for conservation.	Goes against the conservation of keystone species, as no reproduction happens.
Contagious Disease: Chances of getting infected with such diseases are very rare	There is a high chance of elephants getting infected by humans. For example, TB spreads from humans to elephants. This leads to the risk of life for the animal
Mud bath: Elephants do regular mud baths to remove the parasites on their body and for cooling their body	The opportunity to do a mud bath is prevented as the majority of them don't have access to freshwater sources.
Musth: Musth is a condition in male elephants that occurs for about 3 months every year. During this period the elephants have a very high level of testosterone and are highly aggressive. Liquid secretion at the temporal gland is observed. Musth is a sign of a healthy male elephant. Musth is an indication of mating season.	During musth, the male elephants are chained on all four legs and made to stand like a statue for several months. Mating is denied This causes serious damage to the physical and psychological well-being of the elephant.
Learning: Elephants learn various aspects of their life by imparting knowledge from their natal herd. For example, the species of plants to feed, migratory routes, water hole locations, predators, alternate forests for feeding etc.	An elephant kept in the temple is completely denied this learning opportunity.
Human control: As the elephants roam free, they are completely free of human interference.	Elephants are tamed in a kraal for several months with brutal attacks to obey the command of the mahout (elephant keeper). Every time a mahout is changed, the brutal attack repeats to instill a sense of fear in the elephant, to obey the new mahout. In several places post musth, brutally attacking the male elephant, is a procedure followed every year, as the mahouts think the elephant will not obey them after musth.
Diet: Elephants in the wild consume more than 100 species of plants. This gives them all the necessary nutrients needed for their physical health	Temple elephants' diets are restricted to just 2 (or) 3 species of plants. Manmade artificial food is also fed. All the above lead to severe malnourishment

Wild Elephant (continues.....pg. 2)	Temple, Private Elephant (continues.....pg.2)
<p>Chaining: This scenario does not prevail. The animals roam freely.</p>	<p>Elephants are chained 24 hours a day. This is an extremely cruel way of keeping an animal.</p>
<p>Psychological well-being: The animals live a natural life leading to excellent psychological well-being</p>	<p>Cruel practices, lack of proper diet, artificial atmosphere, lifelong separation from family and brutal taming methods lead to serious psychological stress on the animal. The animal becomes insane and exhibits stereotypic behaviours such as continuous head bobbing, body swaying etc.</p>
<p>Bathing: The elephants have the opportunity to bathe in a river or pond with fresh water. Showering, using their trunks and immersing their whole body in water to subside the heat, is done.</p>	<p>In most cases, the animals are denied an opportunity to get access to a lake or river. They are bathed using a hosepipe.</p>
<p>Drinking water: The animals have an opportunity to access fresh water from a lake or river</p>	<p>In many temples, water is given in a bucket (or) using a hosepipe. Also, water is given at the discretion of the mahout not when the elephant really needs it.</p>
<p>Physical exercise-Walking: Elephants on average walk 20 km every day for food and water. This gives enormous physical exercise needed for such a large mammal</p>	<p>Except for a small walk near the temple, the elephants are chained 24 hours a day denying the opportunity for any form of physical exercise that leads to serious problems such as arthritis, obesity etc.</p>
<p>Neck exercise: Wild elephants frequently browse on leaves on tall trees by lifting their head and it gives exercise to their neck</p>	<p>Temple elephants never get this opportunity and lack neck exercise which is vital for their health.</p>
<p>Lack of sleep and rest: This scenario does not arise</p>	<p>Temple elephants, when kept inside the shed are chained on two opposite legs (or) three legs. This prevents them from lying on the ground and sleeping (which is the method for long-duration sleep) (or) even sitting on the floor. Elephants with serious arthritis problems also are denied an opportunity to rest by lying down (or) sitting, leading to a prolonged painful life. This is very cruel.</p>
<p>Danger to human life: This scenario does not arise except in accidental close encounters with humans in which the animal attacks for self-defence.</p>	<p>Multiple instances of captive elephants attacking people that resulted in fatalities are recorded. This includes incidents in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, a Jain temple pontiff in Maharashtra etc.</p>
<p>Foot infection: As the elephants walk in mud, the scope for foot infection is absent.</p>	<p>As the elephant is kept on hard concrete surfaces 24 hours a day, the animal gets frequent, serious foot problems (see photos)</p>
<p>Browsing and grazing: The opportunity for browsing and grazing is plentiful.</p>	<p>Browsing and grazing opportunity is completely denied.</p>
<p>Health condition ignored: This scenario does not apply to wild elephants</p>	<p>Health condition is ignored in several cases. Sick elephants are forced to work and are subjected to enormous cruelty</p>

Wild Elephant (continues.....pg. 3)	Temple, Private Elephant (continues.....pg.3)
<p>Complexity in medical treatment: This scenario does not arise, except on very rare occasions of treating a wild elephant that was affected due to natural causes</p>	<p>Unlike cats (or) dogs, providing medical treatment to the largest land mammal is very complex. Any damage caused in its body might lead to a fatal end due to the complexity of the healing process. Proper medical devices, accessories, equipment etc. are not available for treating elephants. For example, a broken leg of a dog can be analysed with an x-ray and further treatment can be attempted. In the case of elephants such options are very rare at present.</p>
<p>Body temperature regulation problems: elephants have a very weak thermoregulatory system owing to very minimal sweat glands (only around toenails) and due to intra-abdominal testicles, which are otherwise external in the case of most mammals. The body temperature of elephants is 37 degrees Celsius and their comfort zone is 22-25 degrees Celsius. In the dense forest, this temperature (22-25 degrees) prevails even during peak summer ensuring the animal is not affected by heatstroke. Also, the presence of lakes, rivers and wet mud bath ensures temperature regulation in elephants.</p>	<p>Heatstroke is a major problem in captive elephants. In the cities temperature easily go above 40 degrees Celsius in summer. Also, most of the captive elephants are kept in a tin-roofed / asbestos-roofed shed. Such sheds retain the heat and produce the effect of a burning oven. Without any provision of the river (or) lake (or) wet mud bath to cool down, constrained inside a burning shed the animal undergoes immense suffering.</p>
<p>Work like a machine: This scenario does not arise</p>	<p>Temple elephants are forced to bless devotees and beg for alms from them for several hours a day. They are forced to work like machines with nonstop trunk movement to accomplish the above activities. This money begged is the main source of income for mahouts, so the animals are mercilessly made to beg despite their illness (or) injuries to their legs and feet. (see photos)</p>
<p>Biodiversity exposure: Wild elephants are on constant travel in search of food and water. They travel several hundred kilometres every year. On this journey, they encounter a wide variety of ecology (plain grasslands, mountains, dense rain forests, lakes, rivers, ponds etc.) They are also exposed to a rich variety of species such as tigers, deer, bison, bears etc. This exposure gives immense knowledge about interacting with various components of biodiversity.</p>	<p>Captive elephants are completely denied this wide spectrum of exposure and they are kept in appalling conditions leading to mental insanity.</p>
<p>Biodiversity protection: Elephants are keystone species that protect various forms of life (both plants and animals). Their presence is extremely important in a forest</p>	<p>Converting wild elephants into captive elephants destroys biodiversity.</p>

21 A STRANGE CUSTOM FOLLOWED ONLY IN THREE STATES

The custom of keeping elephants cannot be claimed as a Hindu religious custom. Except for Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, temples in other states (25 states and 8 union territories) do not have this practice of keeping elephants (except in a few exceptional cases).

Kerala has the maximum number of commercially exploited elephants and temple elephants. Even Kerala got so many elephants only after timber hauling was banned by the Supreme Court in Dec. 1996.

Around 1000 logging elephants from northeast states were illegally transported and sold to Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu temples and for individuals.

The exchange of elephants among the three southern states also happened.

No religion teaches violence (or) instructs to do cruelty to any living being. This is a barbaric, illegal act done in the name of custom (fake).

If the government had strictly enforced the law and banned the sale of elephants from the northeast (or) the sale of elephants by state forest departments to temples, how would these temples (or) private parties acquire a wild elephant?

The above scenario indicates the high level of illegal activities done by temples and private people.

Such a matter of serious concern involving a highly endangered schedule I animal is completely ignored by the government agencies who are supposed to enforce the law and create rehabilitation centres for such timber logging elephants (or) release healthy elephants in the wild.

22 NON-EXISTENCE OF ELEPHANT VETERINARY DOCTORS

Even temples and private owners in small towns (or) villages also keep elephants in captivity.

Elephant veterinary treatment is a very highly specialized field. In the entire country, only very few doctors are specialized in this area.

In many small towns and villages that keep captive elephants, due to the non-availability of elephant specialist doctors even interpretation of the test results of blood, urine and faecal matter is not possible.

The elephants in captivity do not get this veterinary care and they eventually undergo prolonged suffering and die a painful, horrifying death.

23 NON-AVAILABILITY OF MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

Due to the huge size of elephants, diagnosing aids and medical equipment is not available for elephants. For example, a CT scan, X-Ray, Ultra Sonography, Pathology lab etc. are not available for elephants. This makes treatment of serious injuries and critical medical conditions impossible.

There is only one specialized elephant hospital in the entire country run by NGO WSOS in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. All these factors contribute to the appalling painful life of injured, diseased elephants. Finally, these elephants die miserable death without getting even basic veterinary care.

24 EXPERT TEAM NEEDED TO HANDLE CAPTIVE WILD ANIMALS IN REHAB CENTERS

Handling wild animals in captivity is a highly complex subject. Exclusive educational qualification is required for handling wild animals in captivity.

Globally captive wildlife rehabilitation centres have the following qualified members to manage the captive animal

- 1. A wildlife biologist**
- 2. A wildlife veterinarian**
- 3. A wildlife diet and nutrition expert**

Elephant rehabilitation centres in various countries including the NGO Wildlife Trust of India's Assam centre, follow this protocol of engaging an expert team.

25 MAHOUTS (elephant keeper) LACK OF EDUCATION AND CRUELTY

Mahouts are either school dropouts (or) only have a basic level of school education.

It is shocking to see that forest departments which are supposed to protect this highly endangered Schedule I species, had supplied elephants to temples and private people who have zero qualifications in such specialized areas.

The result of such unqualified people handling a wild animal had resulted in unimaginable cruelty (explained in detail in the previous sections) and even the death of elephants (please refer to photos and news in the appendix)

Elephants that are injured, sick, or blind are mercilessly paraded for money.

Every time a mahout is changed, the elephant is brutally attacked, for the new mahout to show his dominance and for the elephant to obey his commands.

Several elephants are regularly subjected to this horrifying brutality due to frequent changes of mahouts.

When several advancements are happening in the field of captive elephants' rehabilitation such as the Protected Contact method (no direct contact with humans), states such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala are still following the old-style barbaric methods in handling captive elephants.

26 MAHOUTS MAIN SOURCE OF INCOME IS FROM ELEPHANT BEGGING

As the mahouts are paid a meagre amount as a salary, they force the elephants to beg.

The elephants in the temple are forced to beg continuously from the devotees. With the Ankush (bullhook) the mahout pokes the trunk of the elephant to perform the actions of blessing the devotees and then collecting money from them.

Without any rest, the elephants are forced to do this unnatural act, non-stop, for several hours every day.

Private elephant mahouts make the elephant stand outside a temple, for begging, in the scorching heat, on a tar road for several hours. The mahouts take a rest by working in shifts, but the elephant is forced to work the whole day without any rest. This is extremely cruel.



Temple elephant injured on multiple spots due to brutal attacks on face, trunk and near eyes using sharp metal bull hook (ankush) by the mahouts

27 MAHOUTS ALCOHOL ADDICTION AND KILLING OF ELEPHANTS

The majority of the mahouts are alcohol addicts and this leads to enormous cruelty when they are in an inebriated state. This has reached an extent where elephants got killed.

ELEPHANT TORTURED TO DEATH IN INDIA

TUSKER TORTURED TO DEATH IN INDIA

A news report in the national daily THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS dated 26 February, 2004.

Pathanamthitta (Kerala state in India)

A 45 year old tusker by name Manikantan owned by a timber depot proprietor at PANAGAD near KULANADA in PANDALAM was allegedly tortured to death by the Mahouts (Elephant Keepers) on Monday afternoon(22 February 2004). The incident occurred when the elephant was taken for a bath in the Achencovil river near KULANDA.

According to eye witnesses the tusker was severely beaten by the three heavily drunk Mahouts (Elephant keepers) for hesitating to go to the river and even after reaching the bathing ghat (bathing place) the animal was tortured. Local people saw several cut wounds on the body of the pachyderm(elephant).(express news service report).

Elephant tortured by mahouts dies at Punnathurkotta



Published: 21st July 2012 11:40 AM | Last Updated: 21st July 2012 11:40 AM

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By Express News Service

In yet another case of alleged cruelty to elephants, by ill-trained mahouts, a captive elephant at the elephant sanctuary, under the Guruvayur Devaswom, died at Punnathurkotta in Guruvayur on Friday.

The 22-year-old Arjunan had been undergoing treatment for the past three months after it was subjected to torture, in the name of training by new mahouts.

28 NOT ALLOWED TO REST OR SLEEP ON THE FLOOR

After their duty, the elephants are tethered (chained) in their shed. The mahout moves out of the shed frequently and for night sleep. During this time the elephants are chained on two legs (or) on three legs which makes it impossible for an elephant to lie down (or) sleep on the floor.

Even elephants with serious arthritis and foot infection are never allowed to lie down (or) sit on the floor. This situation leads to the animal's standing for its entire life with no opportunity to rest on the floor. Such animals undergo prolonged suffering, with the intensity of the infection and disease increasing multifold. They finally die a painful death, without any relief provided till it is killed in this condition.

29 FORCED TO LIVE IN HOT SHEDS

Body temperature regulation problems:

Elephants have a very weak thermoregulatory system owing to the presence of very minimal sweat glands (only around toenails) and the presence of intra-abdominal testicles which is otherwise external in the case of most mammals. The body temperature of elephants is 37 degrees Celsius and their comfort zone is 22-25 degrees Celsius. In the dense forest, this temperature (22-25 degrees) prevails even during peak summer ensuring the animal is not affected by heatstroke. Also, the presence of lakes, rivers and wet mud bath ensures temperature regulation in elephants.

In contrast, in a temple (or) private ownership **heatstroke** is a major problem in captive elephants. In the cities, the temperature easily goes above 40 degrees Celsius in the summers. Also, most of the captive elephants are kept in tin-roofed / asbestos-roofed, wall sheds. Such sheds retain the heat and produce the effect of a burning oven. Without any provision of the river (or) lake (or) wet mud bath to cool down, constrained inside a burning shed the animal undergoes immense suffering.

30 HOBBLE CHAIN CRUELTY

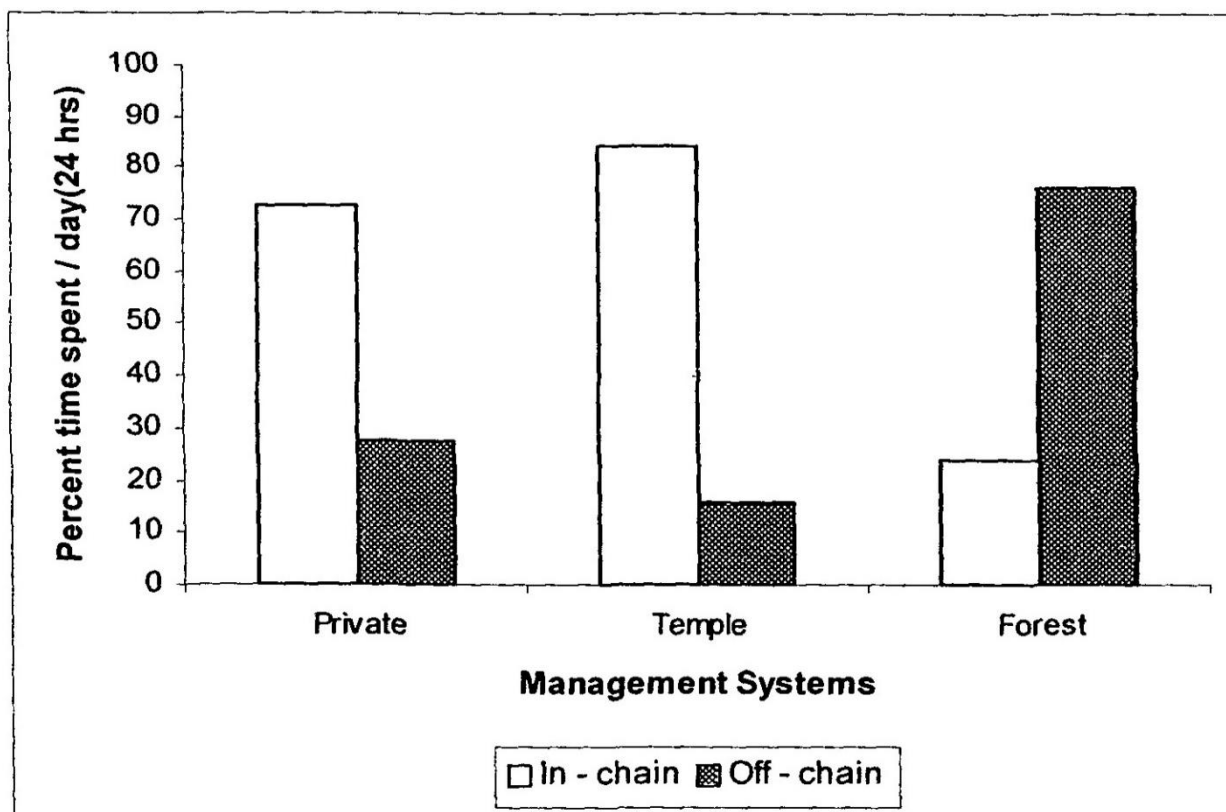
When the elephant is forced to stand with hobble chains (8-shaped chains) it has to balance its several tons' weight in an **abnormal position and cannot move an inch**.

Several elephants in temples and the elephants that are used by private owners are forced to stand in this abnormal position for several hours every day, without any rest with severe pain in legs and joints. This also leads to complex problems such as arthritis.



31 PERCENTAGE OF THE TIME THE ELEPHANTS ARE CHAINED

Percentage of time in a day the elephants kept in-chain and off-chain in the three captive management systems of Tamil Nadu



Source: Studies on The Status and Management of Captive Asian Elephants in Tamil Nadu (PhD Thesis)

The above graph clearly shows that the temple elephants are chained close to 90% of the time every day and private elephants are chained close to 75% of the time every day.

Such chaining leads to a complete lack of exercise, standing in one position like a statue for the majority of the time in a day. Such conditions lead to complicated psychological and physical health problems as described in other sections.

32 LIFELONG ISOLATION IS THE HIGHEST FORM OF CRUELTY AND TORTURE

Elephants are social animals that share a very close bond with their natal herd. Female elephants live with their herd for their entire life. Male elephants live with their herd till they reach adulthood (for about 15 years). When elephants are captured, brutally tamed and sold to temples / private people, this sensitive family bonding is broken.

Lifelong isolation of the elephants in a strange, 'city' environment with no animal of its species to interact with, is an extremely cruel and inhumane act.

Such horrible living conditions and brutal attacks by mahouts make several elephants mentally insane and lead to complex psychological problems such as continuous head bobbing, body swaying, leg pacing etc. Extremely abused elephants (for commercial benefits), unable to bear the torture, had become mentally insane and had killed the public and the elephant keepers (mahouts) in multiple instances. In several incidents, the elephants were also killed by mahouts due to brutal attacks on elephants.

Elephants separated and isolated in a concrete jail for their entire life, exhibit severe psychological illnesses such as continuous head bobbing, body swaying etc.



33 FORCED TO LIVE IN AN UNHYGIENIC ATMOSPHERE



34 FORCED TO LIVE IN HORRIBLE LIVING CONDITIONS FOR DECADES, DEVELOPING MULTIPLE HEALTH PROBLEMS

Expert opinion sought on temple elephant

which is forced to live with legs chained in a cramped concrete shed for past 20 years.



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Published: 10th March 2020 05:47 AM | Last Updated: 10th March 2020 05:47 AM

| [A+](#) [A](#) [A-](#)

By SV Krishna Chaitanya

Express News Service

CHENNAI: The state forest department on Monday told the Madras High Court that expert opinion has been sought on Sriperumbudur temple elephant, which is forced to live with legs chained in a cramped concrete shed for past 20 years.

Elephant in famed Tamil Nadu temple develops health problems in 'cramped' shelter

Forest officials say that despite reminders, the officials of Adi Keshava Perumal have failed to build a spacious shelter for the temple elephant.



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Published: 18th August 2019 04:48 AM | Last Updated: 18th August 2019 08:04 AM

| [A+](#) [A](#) [A-](#)



The swollen leg of Sriperambadur temple elephant. | EXPRESS

By S V Krishna Chaitanya

Express News Service

35 CAPTIVE ELEPHANT DISEASES, INFECTIONS AND INJURIES

Normally temple elephants do not receive proper and timely veterinary care. Standing on the hard concrete floor 24 hours a day results in complex foot pad & nail problems. When the elephants are chained and beaten to tame them, they try to escape by pulling the chains, this too causes serious injuries on their legs. The non-availability of elephant expert doctors is a major setback in treating these health problems at the initial stages. Chaining on the wounded legs is also a major contributor to leg injuries. Critical health problems captive elephants have include eye infections, footpad infections, leg infections, arthritis, obesity, abscess, injuries, poor body condition, overgrown foot pads & nails etc. Untreated animals suffer for a prolonged period and die a painful death. Many elephants with eye problems become fully blind.



Foot and nail – critical problems (images below by Elephant Aid International)

Lack of walking and standing on a hard surface the whole day leads to overgrown footpads and nails. Such condition results in **infection, lameness and osteomyelitis**.

Osteomyelitis is a bacterial infection that causes the toe bones to disintegrate, leading to the elephant's physical collapse and subsequent death. Elephants with such foot conditions live an unimaginable painful life and eventually die without any treatment provided to them.

COMPARISON

Healthy nails



Healthy foot pad



Over grown nails



Cracked nails



Pictures of captive elephants with leg and foot injuries, infection of food pads and nails

(Osteomyelitis - image on top right by Elephant Aid International)



Above: Injury caused by chaining with sharp metal spikes poking the skin



Elephant with eye infection that results in blindness



Blind elephant forced to participate in temple rituals dislocated its limb due to a fall.

It suffered for several months unable to stand and finally died a painful death.

Injury caused by spiked chain (see chain image in Case Study-1 at the end of this book)



Auto driver owned this. Due to lack of treatment and nutritious diet, the elephant died a painful death



Quacks doing dangerous, harmful treatment for foot and eyes, which is never heard of in veterinary science

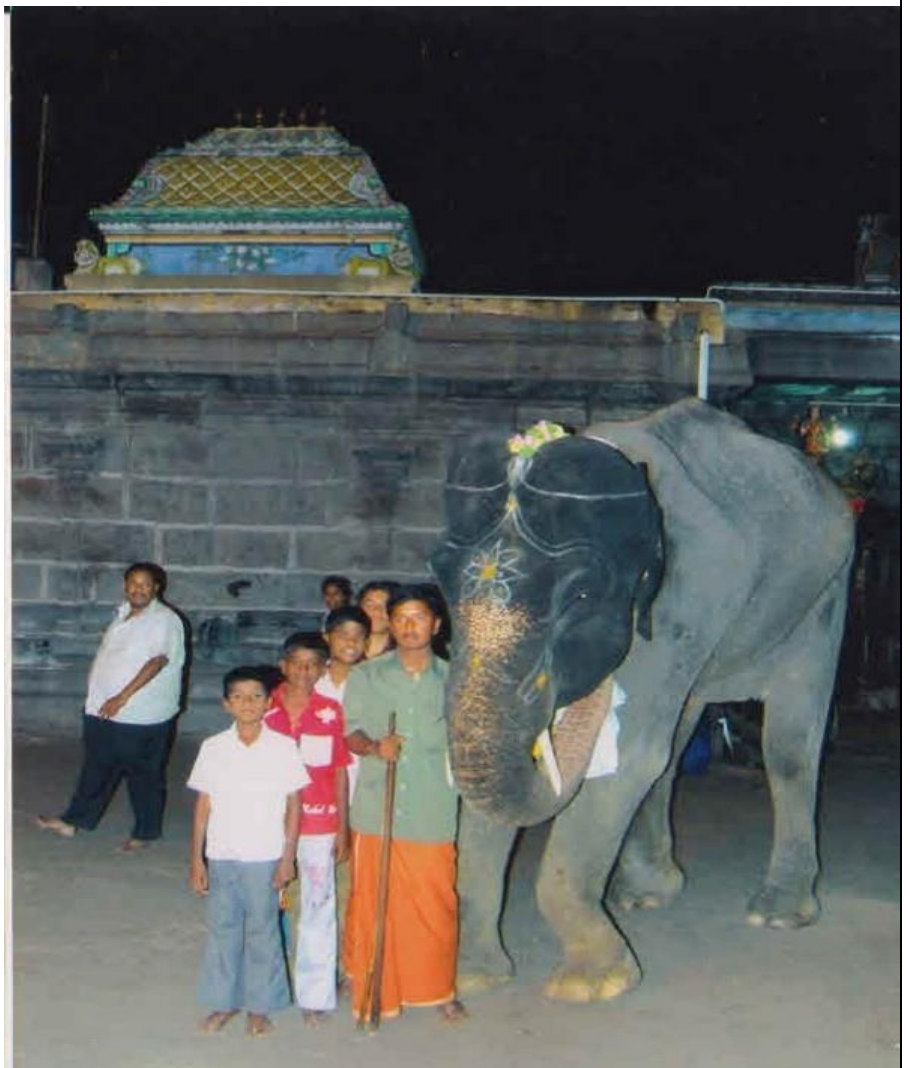


The eyes of the elephants were treated with an ointment of spicy ingredients,



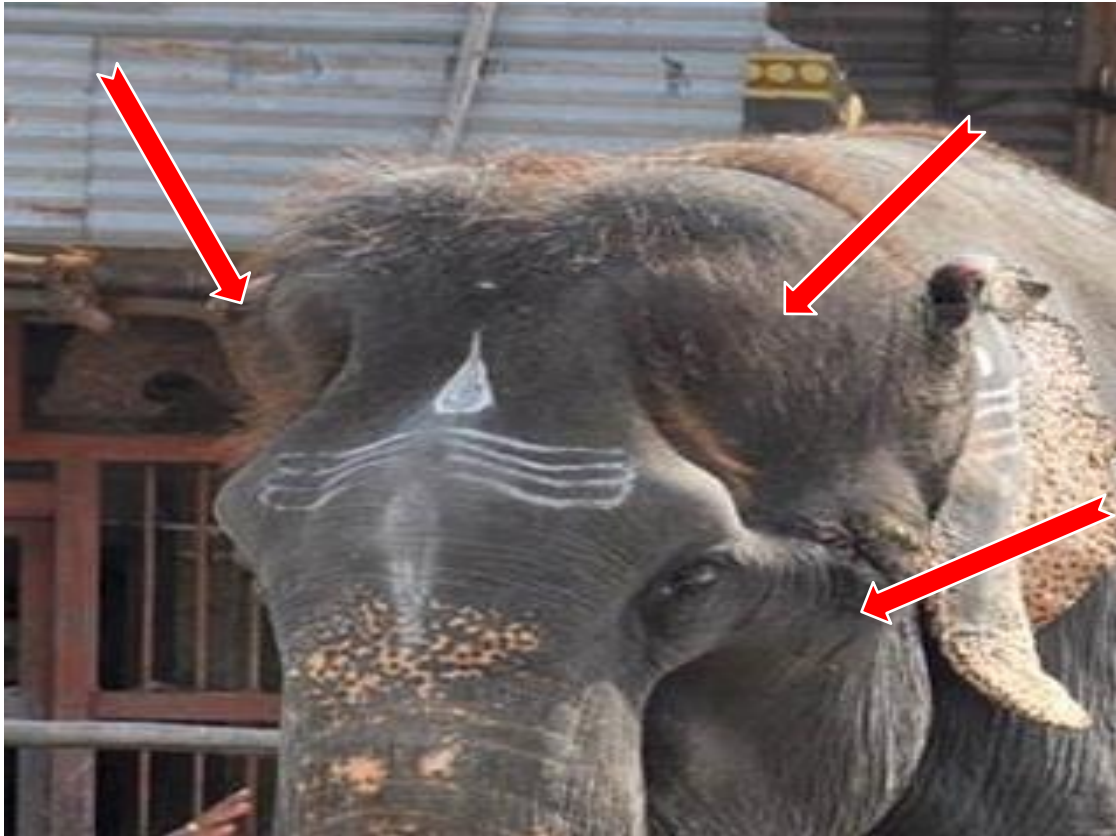
Due to lack of treatment and proper natural diet temple elephant died a painful death due to multiple organ failure and foot rot

Physically challenged elephant (front left leg) used for temple duties. Even this elephant died a miserable death



Private elephant used for begging

Deep concave temporal and buccal depression indicating poor "Body Condition"



Ridged pelvic girdles and depression next to it indicating poor "Body Condition"

>Tail hair that helps elephant, to drive away parasites missing.

>Tail thin and bony, individual joints palpable



Privately owned begging elephant with huge abscesses, without medical care and proper diet, died an agonizing death on the road



FORCING ELEPHANTS TO CONTRACT DISEASES, INFECTIONS AND INJURIES

From the few sample cases discussed in this PART, it is very obvious that elephants are forced to live in tiny concrete sheds with their legs chained for 24 hours. They develop multiple health problems such as arthritis due to lack of movement, obesity due to lack of exercise, foot infection due to concrete floor, overgrowth of the nail & stiffened footpad due to lack of walking. They also become victims of contagious diseases such as tuberculosis (TB), which they contract from humans, who are touching the elephant while giving money or food items.

36 CONSEQUENCES OF PROLONGED CHAINING AND STANDING ON HARD SUBSTRATES

Documented facts by various elephant scientists

The forefeet of elephants have a digit-grade structure and hind feet are semi-plantigrade (Mikota et al, 1994) implying weight-bearing by the digits of the forelegs and sole & digits of the hind legs. Thus, an elephant that is severely restricted in its movement due to chaining cannot have a choice in its decision to shift weight from the fore/ hind legs by assuming suitable postures such as lying down/spreading its feet to a suitable distance to distribute weight uniformly.

Kurt and Garai (2007) suggest the formation of deformed limbs to be a consequence of abnormal postures caused by chaining on uneven substrates. Restricting movement and/or keeping the elephant on cold, damp concrete surfaces is thought to lead to degenerative joint diseases in elephants (Mikota, et al., 1994).

Abrasions caused by continuous chaining can result in skin cracks and wounds which are difficult to heal in elephants; chain scars occurred more on the hind feet as chains exert pressure when pulled by the elephant (Kurt and Garai, 2007).

Overgrown nails/cuticles and excessive footpad growth, are linked to inadequate exercise leading to poor wear and tear of the feet, necessitating regular feet trimming procedures such as the trimming of the pad, filing of the cuticle/ nails (Mikota, et al., 1994).

According to Varma (2009) and Buckley (2008), captive elephants in natural habitats— large spaces with earthen natural substrate— required little foot care. According to the authors, joints stiffen in elephants made to stand for long periods on concrete; in a confined environment and also liquid waste from the elephant is difficult to remove, which can lead to infection. The rocking/ swaying stereotypic movements exhibited by elephants result in pressure on feet and nails with consequent tissue damage and thin footpads.

Non-human animals such as elephants undergo trauma in close confinement captive situations: such situations include loss of control by the elephant over its life, deprivation in the form of social isolation, chaining and restricted movement, among other features. Trauma is described as a form of stress in which the animal experiences a physical/ psychological event that is perceived to be life-threatening. Manifestation of such stressors includes behavioural expressions such as stereotypy, increased aggression, etc. (Bradshaw, 2007).

Increased frequency of stereotypic behaviour was observed among elephants that were chained (both fore and hind legs) as compared to the same elephants being let loose in a fenced place (penned) (Friend, et al., 1999).

The rear feet of “penned” elephants (free to move inside a fenced sanctuary) were cleaner and healthier as the elephants’ excreta (dung/ urine) did not accumulate around their feet (Friend, et al., 1999).

Severe and chronic cases of foot/leg problems in elephants in zoos have led to euthanasia of some elephants: of the sixteen captive Asian elephants euthanized in a span of ten years (1977-1987) in the U.S., nine were euthanized due to severe pododermatitis (Mikota, et al., 1994).

The study by Friend et al., (1999) observed penned elephants (free to move inside a fenced sanctuary) appearing to be more relaxed— a previous study (Delmeier, et al., 1985) on confined calves (Holstein bulls) showed such calves performing increased locomotor behaviours as compared to those which were left free in a yard.

In a study of foot problems, the most number of foot ailments, considered to be major, were observed in elephants in temples of Tamil Nadu (Subramaniam et al., 2010). The same authors suggest the practice of keeping elephants on hard substrates to be a cause for foot ailments which initially appear as minor problems, if neglected, lead to major ailments of the foot.

Unhygienic/ unsanitary conditions of the tethering site were said to be one of the predisposing factors for foot ailments such as pododermatitis/ abscesses/foot rot (Subramaniam et al., 2010).

37 NO RETIREMENT

Elephants under the custody of temples and private owners do not have retirement. They are forced to work till their death even when they are old, sick, blind, physically challenged etc.

The Kerala elephant management rules that say “Elephants should be retired at age 65” and Tamil Nadu rules that say the retirement age is 60 are of no use to the elephants, as the elephants are in miserable unrecoverable condition at this old age (normal life span of a wild elephant is 70 years)

Having been abused their whole life, if the retirement is given above 60 or 65 years, then the elephants will be like critically ill patients battling for their lives.

38 DANGER TO HUMAN LIFE

Captive elephants due to enormous psychological and physical stress become insane and many times this leads to danger to human life. The killing of mahouts in multiple incidents in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and the killing of the Jain temple pontiff of Nandani Mutt in Jaysingpur, Maharashtra due to a captive elephant attack is a warning about the dangers of keeping a wild animal in captivity.

Photos of captive elephants attacking people



39 TRICHY, SAMAYAPURAM TEMPLE IS NOTORIOUS FOR ABUSING ELEPHANTS

Elephant (Masini) was living with its herd in a natural atmosphere in Mudumalai forest elephant camp. She was forcefully separated from its herd and was gifted to the Samayapuram temple by the Ex. Chief Minister Jayalaitha of Tamil Nadu

This elephant unable to cope with the brutal torture by the alcohol addict mahout, social isolation and artificial atmosphere in temple had become mentally insane and had killed the mahout.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

Samayapuram temple elephant tramples its mahout to death

TNN | May 26, 2018, 11:03 AM IST



TRICHY: Tragedy struck the Samayapuram Mariamman temple in Trichy when temple elephant Masini trampled its mahout G Gajendran, to death on the temple premises in full view of shocked devotees on Friday morning.

The 12-year-old female elephant crushed the 42-year-old mahout under its legs at 11 am when devotees were moving towards the sanctum sanctorum for worship. "Masini was brought to the temple at 10.50 am by Gajendran. In the next ten minutes, it turned violent and pushed the mahout to the ground and trampled him. His body was taken out later," superintendent of police, Trichy district, Zia Ul Haq told TOI. Police said that devotees ran helter-skelter to safeguard themselves and in the chaos two women and a child were injured. Temple employees closed the gates

of the area to prevent a rampage by the elephant.

A video of the elephant trampling the mahout is also in circulation. The video shows Masini stamping Gajendran multiple times, while someone raises an alarm. The incident triggered panic among the people in and around the temple. "Masini was generally very calm and cooperative. I wonder what provoked it to go out of control. The mahout usually brings it to the temple in the morning and takes it back to its shelter by night," said a local resident, V P Muniappan.

On getting information, a team led by regional joint director of animal husbandry, Trichy Dr A Murugan rushed to the temple. He said that Masini got furious after someone allegedly pulled some hair from its tail, when it was blessing a couple who got

Barbaric punishment to innocent elephant Masini:

As a punishment, this elephant was brutally attacked by a group of 10 to 15 mahouts (based on Forest Dept's request) after the fatality happened.

A high court direction ordered shifting this elephant back to its home territory (Mudumalai elephant camp). The shifting happened seven months after the fatality (in Jan 2019). It was shocking to know that the elephant had injuries all over the body, had lost several hundred kilograms of weight, had huge swellings on the leg and was unable to walk even after seven months, while it was returned to Mudumalai elephant camp.

Please refer to foundation's book **"Root cause of elephant attacks on humans"** to know the facts in such cases.



The above is a male elephant (Mariappan) was kept at Samayapuram temple before the arrival of Masini.

It was forced to stand like a statue, with three legs permanently chained for 24 hours of a day.

The animal lived in this horrible condition, for 7 long years. The animal was never taken for a walk in these 7 long years.

Only after intervention of animal welfare NGOs the animal was finally shifted to Anamalai elephant camp (its birth place)

This case clearly shows that the temple authorities, mahout were not capable of handling a wild elephant (or) had any kind of interest in the welfare of the elephant

In-spite of this notorious past, another elephant Masini was given to this temple, by the forest department. Masini elephant's attack on mahout and the death of mahout could have been prevented if the forest department had not given Masini to this temple and the mahout who are abusive.

40 DOCTORS ISSUING FAKE FITNESS CERTIFICATES

Adding to the appalling medical conditions described in previous sections, there are several cases in which doctors without analyzing all the problems (or) without having any expertise in elephants' medical conditions (or) even seeing the elephant, a "fitness certificate" is provided to parade the elephant in processions and religious ceremonies

Home > Cities > Kochi

Kerala veterinary doctor booked for 'issuing' fitness certificate to injured elephant for parade

The Forest Department has decided to register a case against the veterinary doctor who issued a fitness certificate to an injured elephant paraded at a temple festival last week.



Published: 27th March 2018 01:05 AM | Last Updated: 27th March 2018 03:41 AM

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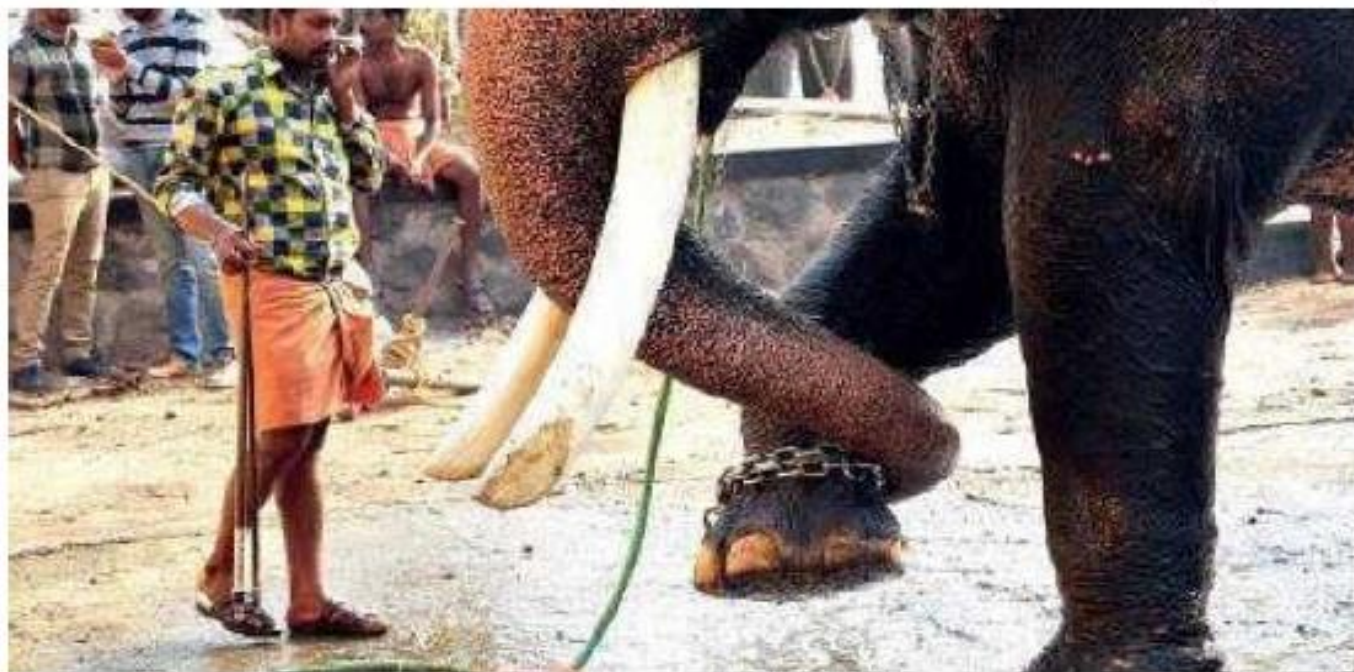


Image used for representational purpose. (Express File Photo)

By Express News Service

KOCHI: The Forest Department has decided to register a case against the veterinary

41 ELEPHANTS KILLED FOR INSURANCE CLAIMS

Multiple incidents of elephants being killed for insurance claim has surfaced in news articles.

Elephant's death in Kerala forces probe: Was a jumbo killed for insurance claims?

Following the death of over 20 captive elephants in Kerala this year, the Forest Department formed a committee to investigate the deaths.



NEWS WILDLIFE | SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 03, 2018 - 13:03

42 SKEWED MALE: FEMALE RATIO IN FOREST CAMPS DUE TO EXCESSIVE SELLING

Both the forest camps of Tamil Nadu (Annamalai and Mudumalai) have a skewed ratio of male: to female elephants.

That is, the number of male elephants is very high compared to female elephants. This is due to the excessive selling of female elephants to temples by the forest departments.

The temples in Tamil Nadu & Karnataka feel that controlling a female elephant is easy when compared to a male elephant, so they prefer female elephants.

43 TEMPLES CONTINUE TO COLLECT FUNDS IGNORING THE FACT THAT ELEPHANT PURCHASE IS ILLEGAL

It is shocking to observe that Govt Officials violate the laws and plan to purchase a wild elephant and also collect donations for the same.

The news article also says a Government Order (GO) was issued that, an elephant donor has to deposit 10 lakhs.

This gives a clear picture that neither the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) nor the temples are bothered about the laws, the enormous cruelty they are inflicting on a wild animal, the unethical act of separating a social animal from its family etc.

This also clarifies that the temple management members are not educated about the laws prohibiting the purchase of wild elephants

Plans afoot to buy elephant calf for Tiruvannamalai Arunachaleswarar temple

Published: Sep 04, 2019 08:30 AM by Tharian Mathew

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A A

Officials of the Arumigu Arunachaleswarar temple in Tiruvannamalai have sought donations from the public to purchase an elephant calf following the death of 'Rukku' last March.



'Rukku', the former elephant of Tiruvannamalai Arunachaleswarar temple, who died last March

Tiruvannamalai: The officials said, "Plans are afoot to request donors to buy and donate an elephant calf to the temple after which it would be trained in all temple rituals."

The Tamil Nadu government had recently passed a GO which stated that the elephant donor had to deposit Rs 10 lakh with the temple after handing over the elephant.

Asked if the upkeep of the animal would be met from the deposit amount, temple Joint Commissioner R Gnansekaran said "upkeep of the animal would be met from donations from the public." Asked how much it would cost to maintain the animal a month, he said, "We spent around Rs 1 lakh a month for Rukku when it was alive."

'Rukku', the deceased pachyderm, was donated by former chief minister J Jayalithaa to the temple in 1995 when it was seven years

**PART- 5
FINAL NOTES**

44 FINAL NOTES

Violation of the Wildlife Protection Act and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, seeing elephants as a profit-making commodity, bribes at various levels and complete lack of interest in the conservation of this Schedule I endangered animal, all these factors have led to such deplorable conditions of elephants.

The aggressiveness shown by the forest departments in capturing hundreds of wild elephants, brutally taming them and selling them for monetary benefits (violating the laws) is not seen when the rehabilitation of the elephants is of paramount importance. The elephant rehabilitation process was completely ignored by the forest departments, which made a huge profit by selling them.

Elephants are not small mammals (or) birds that can be secretly smuggled in a small box. Elephant inter-state smuggling happened in explicit public view when elephants were transported in trucks.

The officials did not initiate any action when the smuggling happened, which had led to more than 1000 elephants being illegally transported from North East states to South Indian states and other parts of India (such as Gujarat, Rajasthan etc.).

The forest officials have miserably failed in their duty in this issue.

The government agencies who are stakeholders, in this case, did not have any concern about ethics, elephants' welfare, biological needs, psychological needs, sociological needs, living conditions, medical treatment, conservation of the species etc.

Stakeholder agencies who are responsible for this tragedy:

Project Elephant

This agency is the central government's apex body under the Ministry of Environment and Forests, which was formed to protect the elephants, provide plans and strategies to state forest departments and handle the problems related to elephants across the country. Unfortunately, this body has failed in its duties in this matter.

North East States Forest Departments

Several countries in the world, that do not have elephants use modern machinery for tree felling and timber hauling as they don't have elephants to do such operations.

Even in Africa (which has the world's largest wild elephant population) taming of elephants for timber hauling is never done.

Instead of using such modern machinery, the forest departments continued to capture wild elephants to be used for tree felling and timber hauling. More than 2000 elephants were brutally captured violating laws and the importance of the conservation of an endangered species was completely ignored.

Post ban on tree felling (in Dec 1996) the government did not make any attempts to rehabilitate the captive elephants that went jobless (or) release healthy animals back to the wild.

Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu Forest Departments

Selling forest camp elephants to temples and private parties, allowing illegal transport of elephants inside the state, allowing private parties and temples to buy illegally smuggled elephants, not taking action on offenders, not seizing the elephants that are illegally brought into the state etc. are also the main root causes of this deep-rooted problem.

Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious Departments

Allowing temples to purchase elephants through an illegal process completely ignores all the problems documented in this report.

These religious departments do not employ any wildlife biologist (or) even engage them on a contract basis to provide a regular report on the condition of the huge number of elephants they hold in captivity.

They do not engage an elephant veterinary doctor on a full-time (or) even on a contract basis to do regular health checkups for their elephants. It is up to the temples to handle the problem if there are any health issues.

Adding to the irony, there are no officers assigned at Tamil Nadu HR & CE department's head office, to look after the issues related to temple elephants, to monitor their health and welfare regularly.

This clearly shows that the department is completely ignoring the importance of conserving these highly endangered 'Schedule-I' elephants, the mandatory requirement of regular inspections and working towards the improvement of their living conditions and health.

WRONG APPROACH

Always action is taken only after court intervention

The government agencies (mentioned here) that are expected to act on seeing any violation of laws, always act on the issues only when an NGO highlights the problem and takes the matter to court. This attitude is a huge drawback in making any progress in elephant welfare

The elephant that is mentally insane is forced to perform temple rituals risking peoples' lives

Elephant Deivanai – Thiruparankundram Temple Madurai, Tamil Nadu	
Date	Details of Attacks and Fatalities
Mar-2018	Attack 1: two mahouts Ganapathi Subramaniam and Kanagasundaram and they are seriously injured
July-2018	Attack 2: assistant mahout
May-2020	Attack 3: Killed Mahout Kalidas
June-2020	Elephant shifted to M.R.Palayam rehabilitation center, Trichy
Jul-2020	Attack 4: Threw mahout Charan at MR Palayam rehab. centre. The mahout sustained serious spine injuries
Feb-2021	Elephant given back to Madurai Temple
Feb-2021	Elephant was not sent to Thekkampatti rejuvenation camp of 2021, for temple elephants of Tamil Nadu.
Dec 2021	Attack 5: Attacked a temple employee

The above table clearly shows the mismanagement Tamil Nadu Forest Department and the Hindu Religious Endowments Department.

An elephant that had attacked mahouts in five incidents and killed one mahout at temple premises is sent back from the government rehabilitation centre, Trichy, TN and is forced to perform rituals at the temple risking the lives of the general public and the mahouts.

Multiple petitions sent by the foundation to the government stake holders were ignored and the elephant continues to suffer at the temple and also posing a risk to human life.



Illegally procured female elephant Deivanai kept at Thiruparankundram Temple, Madurai.

Forced to stand like a statue with two diagonally opposite legs chained to stone poles.

Please read the report “Connecting the dots” published by the foundation, to know the reasons behind elephant attacks on mahouts.

PART - 6

**SOLUTION TO THE
PROBLEMS**

Shifting all the captive elephants in private custody (temples and individuals) to a protected (fenced) sanctuary could solve a majority of the problems faced by the elephants.

Even though replicating a 100% wild atmosphere is not possible in a sanctuary, the sanctuary can satisfy most of the basic requirements of an elephant. Therefore, as an interim solution towards the freedom of these elephants, a “Protected Contact Sanctuary” model is proposed. A long-term solution is also discussed in the ‘Recommendation’ section.

Case Study – 1 Follows....

Comparing the life of elephant Sunder which was highly abused at a temple and later lived its life happily and peacefully in a sanctuary operated by Karnataka Forest department in **Bannerghatta, Bangalore.**

At the temple, private custody: Isolated from its species and confined within four walls



In the sanctuary: Socialising with other elephants in a natural habitat



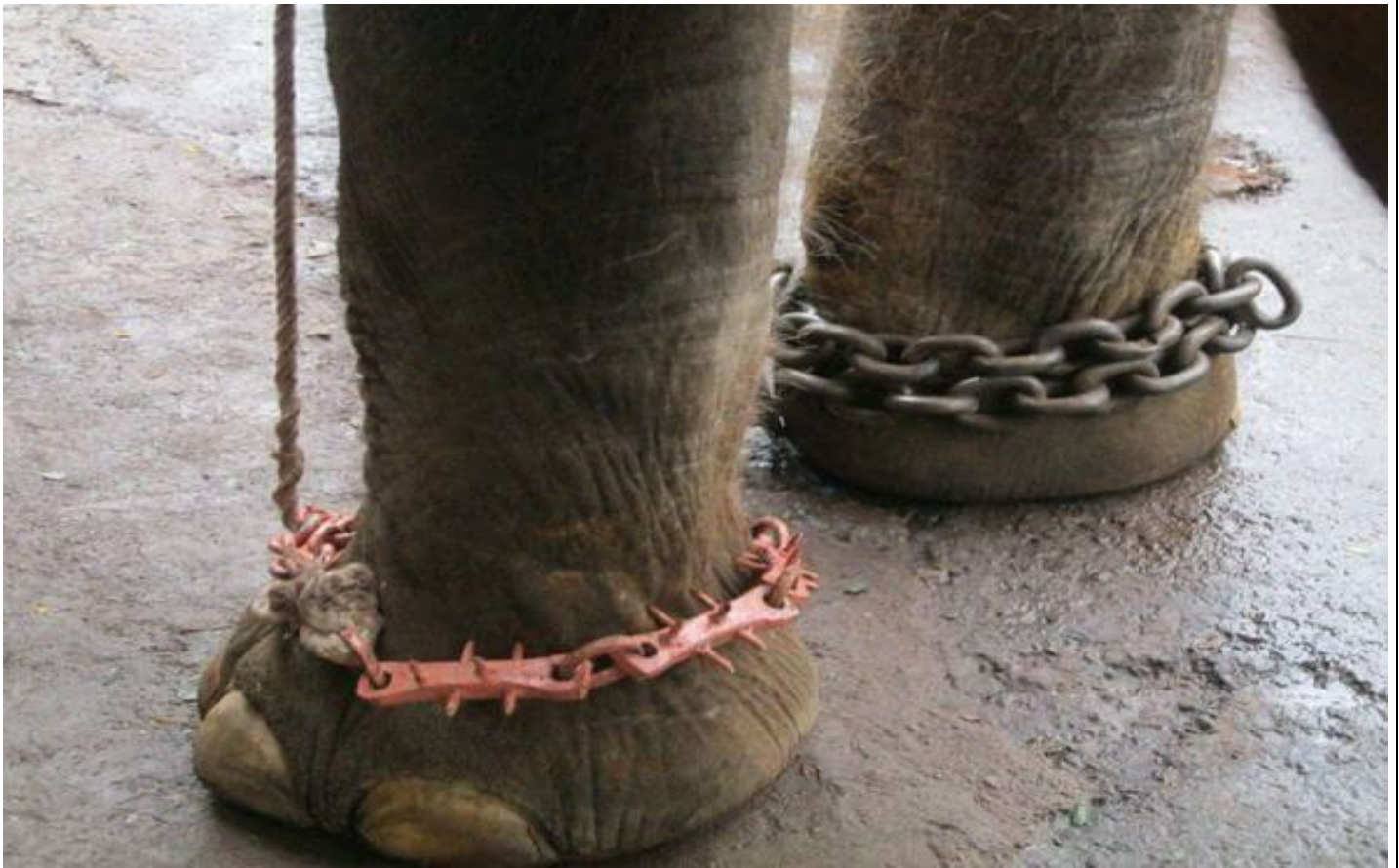
At the temple, private custody: Forced to perform artificial activities such as blessing devotees, collecting money for several hours every day



In the sanctuary: Away from the human crowd, socialising with its species and acting as per its wish



At the temple, private custody: Chained and restricted for life



In the sanctuary: Roaming chain free in a vast area



At the temple, private custody: Isolated and confined to a small hot tin roof shed for the entire life



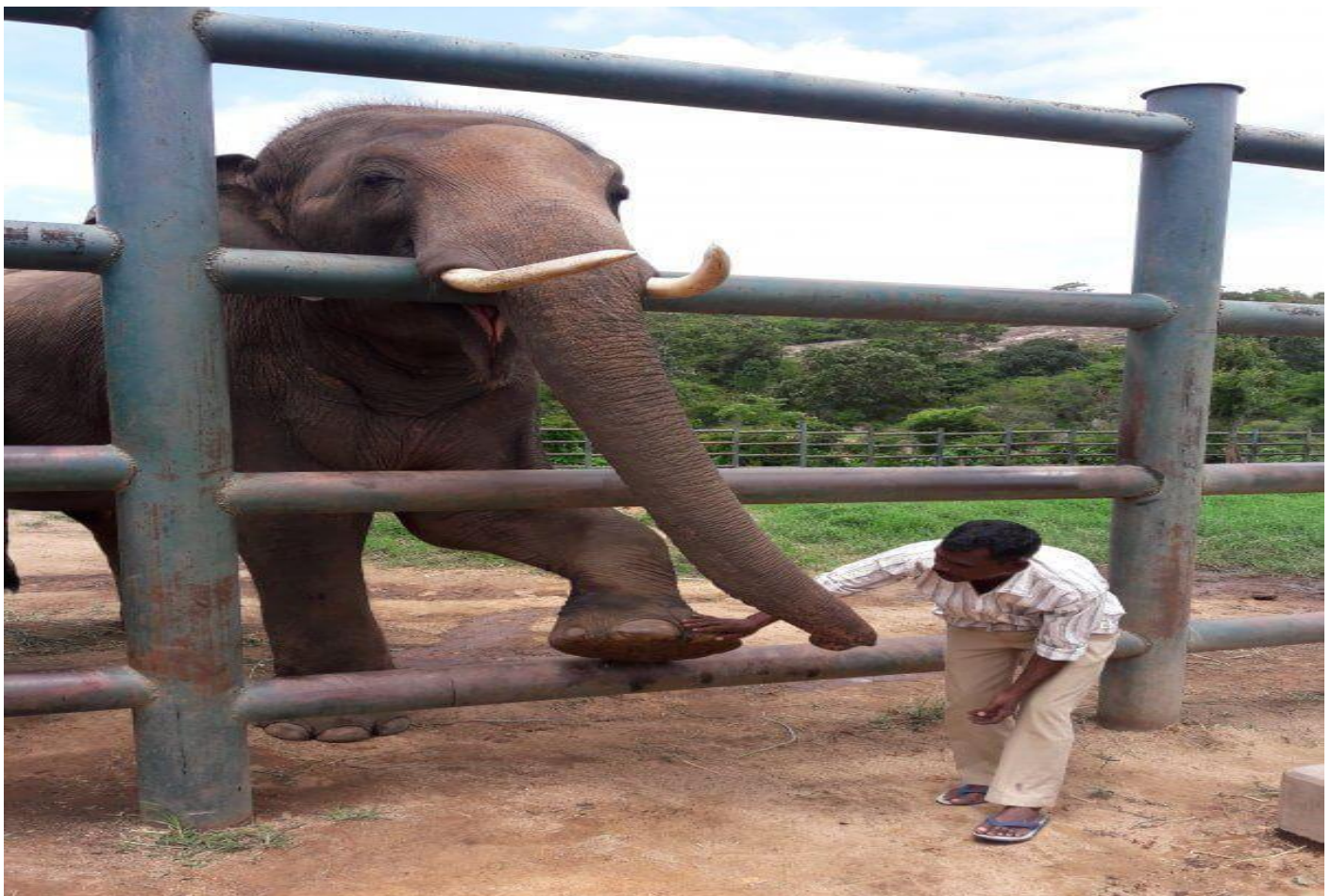
In the sanctuary: Unrestricted plus opportunity to exhibit natural behaviour in a vast natural environment



At the temple, private custody: Chained, human-dominated, threatened, beaten and brutally tamed



In the sanctuary: Safe, chain-free, human dominance-free, “**Protected Contact**” interaction for medical treatment



46 “PROTECTED CONTACT METHOD” WITH NO HUMAN INTERACTION WITH THE ELEPHANT

Advanced elephant rehabilitation methods include the “Protected Contact Method” in which the concept of a mahout is not there. (Photo in the previous section)

In this method, a human is never allowed to come in direct contact with the elephant.

The elephant is touched by a veterinary doctor only on a need basis for treatment. Even during such treatment, the elephant and the humans are separated by a large barricade, removing the fear of the elephant thinking that humans are dominant, they will attack me and I need to obey their orders.

A protected contact method was implemented for a rescued temple elephant Sunder in Bangalore Bannerghatta biological park sanctuary. See photo in case study section.

Such “Protected Contact” fenced sanctuaries are also there in **Brazil** and **USA**

Case Study 2 and 3 follows.....

Case study 2 - Images of private begging elephants rehabilitated at Ban Santour sanctuary, Haryana, India.

(Operated by the Haryana government and the NGO Wildlife SOS)

Case study 3 – Images of rescued elephants (from circuses, zoos) in 2700 acres sanctuary in Tennessee USA. This is a “No Mahout”



Case study 3 – Elephant Sanctuary of Tennessee, USA (2700 acres' facility)



47 RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the facts presented in this document it is very clear that religious institutions and private owners keeping an elephant violate the fundamental ethics of treating a living being with compassion and also subject such large mammals to unimaginable cruelty. Such actions go against the core principles and philosophies of any religion.

It is very clear from the facts and pictures presented in this document that an intelligent social animal such as an elephant cannot be restricted by chains within four walls of a small shed.

Even the very basic sociological, psychological and biological needs of an elephant cannot be met at temples / private custody.

Multiple legal violations pointed out in this document also clearly explain that religious institutions and private parties holding elephants do a serious violation of various laws of this land.

We strongly recommend that the religious institutions and private owners need to approach the forest department immediately and voluntarily hand over the elephants they hold, to the forest officials.

The agencies (mentioned in the section “Root cause of these problems”) responsible for this tragedy, need to join hands to give at least a basic relief to these poor suffering creatures by building fenced sanctuaries and permanently transferring the elephants to such a sanctuary. Such a sanctuary will act as a rehabilitation centre for abused elephants.

The majority of these elephants originally belonged to various forest departments. They were sold to private parties and temples by the departments. The Forest department on their part needs to take charge of these elephants and maintain them in a large fenced sanctuary (rehabilitation centre).

These actions need to be done on the highest priority.

Important benefits of having the elephants at a rehabilitation centre:

- Can have a centralized animal hospital with all the facilities at the fenced sanctuary (see the image on the next page)
- Can have elephant expert doctors, biologists, and nutritionists working full-time to maintain the health of the elephants at the highest standards.
- This rehabilitation centre will act as a learning centre for students from a biology background

Long-term solution:

On a long-term basis, the elephants (if disease-free) need to be re-introduced to the wild, to support the conservation of this highly endangered Schedule-I animal and allow these suffering elephants to lead normal wildlife, which they deserve.

A soft-release approach needs to be followed in this.

Scientific publications on captive elephants released into the wild in other countries are given in the appendix. Such captive elephants’ re-introductions to the wild were done in Botswana and Thailand.

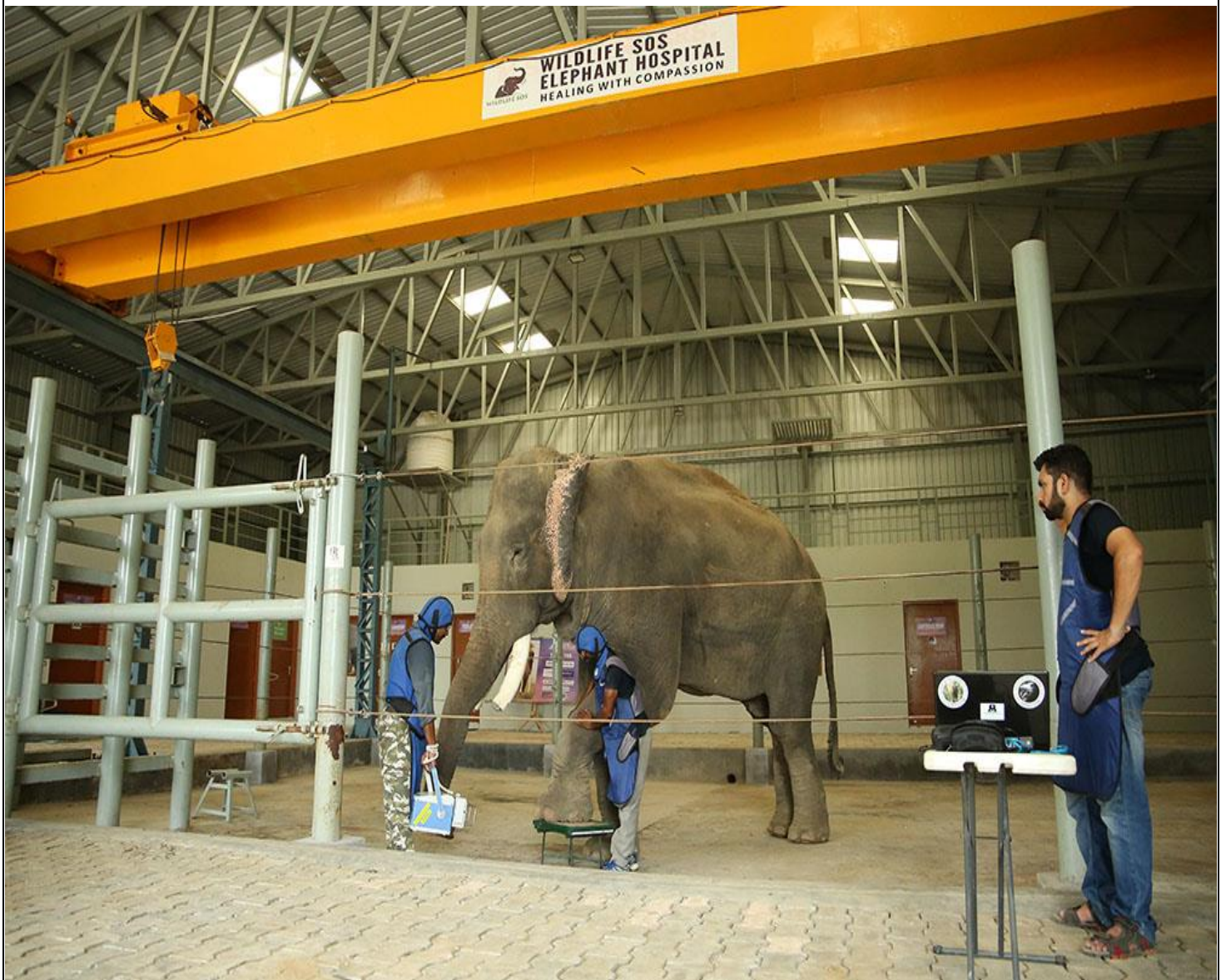
Reintroduction of other rescued captive wild animals into the wild is not new and it is successfully done in several countries. Here are a few examples.

- Orangutans, Javan langurs, Moloch gibbons and Grizzled leaf monkeys in Indonesia
- Chimpanzees in Tanzania
- Gorillas in Gabon
- Cheetahs in South Africa.

Across the globe, several countries are supporting and encouraging this re-introduction process but unfortunately in India, there is a deep mental block to do this and reintroduction is never attempted. This mental block needs to be removed. In India, orphan wild elephant calves and wild rhino calves are reintroduced into the wild by the Wildlife Trust of India (NGO) in Assam.

Such actions if done, will increase the reputation of all the institutions supporting this great initiative and also will hold high the philosophies and teachings of the religion.

This will bring a huge relief to the suffering animals and support the conservation of this endangered species. The recommendations given here need to be implemented immediately.



NGO Wildlife SOS's rescued elephants' hospital in Uttar Pradesh

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www.elsafoundationcharity.org

1. Living Conditions of Private Captive Elephants and Solution to the Problems
2. Foundation’s Report - Illegal Sale of Elephants from North East to South India
3. Elephants are victims of Human Abuse
4. Connecting the Dots – Root Cause of human fatalities caused by captive elephants
5. Multiple inspection reports of several temple elephants, that recommend rehab of elephants
6. Database and Ownership of Tamil Nadu captive elephants
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Appendix follows

- Scientific publication and information about captive elephant reintroduction into the wild.

BOTSWANA – 1

Scientific papers published on the release of captive elephants into the wild successful survival in Botswana

Totally 10 captive elephants were released in the wild

Animals 2013, 3, 370-385; doi:10.3390/ani3020370

OPEN ACCESS

animals

ISSN 2076-2615

www.mdpi.com/journal/animals

Article

The Release of a Captive-Raised Female African Elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) in the Okavango Delta, Botswana

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Published: 29 April 2013

Simple Summary: Managing captive elephants poses a significant challenge because of their complex social behaviour. While wild female elephants live in close-knit family groups of related individuals, captive herds often consist of unrelated animals. Some of the elephants in captive groups may be excluded by their companions and experience increased aggression, so that their welfare is compromised. There is no easy solution to this problem and novel approaches are required since slaughter of captive elephants is not publicly acceptable. We show that captive-raised female elephants can be released into the wild, survive and reproduce, and suggest that this management option should be explored further for female elephants currently held under various captive conditions.

The Social and Ecological Integration of Captive-Raised Adolescent Male African Elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) into a Wild Population

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Abstract

Background: A rapid rise in the number of captive African elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) used in the tourism industry in southern Africa and orphaned elephants in human care has led to concerns about their long-term management, particularly males. One solution is to release them into the wild at adolescence, when young males naturally leave their herd. However, this raises significant welfare concerns: little is known about how well released elephants integrate into wild populations and whether they pose a greater threat to humans than wild elephants. We document the release of three captive-raised adolescent male African elephants in the Okavango Delta, Botswana.

Methodology/Principal Findings: Despite having been part of a herd of working elephants for at least eight years, the three males progressively integrated into the complex fission-fusion society of wild bull elephants. In the three years following release, they showed no tendency to be closer to human habitation, and there were no significant differences between wild and captive-raised adolescent males in the total number of social interactions, size of ranges and habitat use. However, the captive-raised elephants sparred less and vocalised more, and spent more time alone and in smaller social groups. Thereafter the released elephants continued to expand their ranges and interact with both mixed-sex herds and males. One male was shot by farmers 94 months after release, along with ten wild elephants, on a ranch outside the protected area.

Conclusions/Significance: We show that captive-raised adolescent male elephants can integrate into a wild population. Long-term studies are required to determine the longevity, breeding success, and eventual fate of released male elephants, but we identified no significant short-term welfare problems for the released elephants or recipient population. Release of captive-raised mammals with complex social systems is a husbandry option that should be explored further.

Citation: Evans K, Moore R, Harris S (2013) The Social and Ecological Integration of Captive-Raised Adolescent Male African Elephants (*Loxodonta africana*) into a Wild Population. PLoS ONE 8(2): e55933. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0055933

Editor: Brock Fenton, University of Western Ontario, Canada

Received: September 8, 2011; **Accepted:** January 8, 2013; **Published:** February 20, 2013

THAILAND

About 84 captive elephants were re-introduced into the wild

The below information is extracted from the Thailand government website

https://www.elephantreintroduction.org/eng/about_en.html#board

https://www.elephantreintroduction.org/eng/act_en.html

A partial list of captive elephants released in the wild (including elephants used for commercial interest and used for begging in streets)

January 14, 1997 Her Majesty the Queen graciously released the first 3 elephants, Pang Bualoi, Pang Malai and Pang Boonmee to the Doi Pha Muang Wildlife Sanctuary Area after they fully recovered to a good condition

February 10, 1998, Her Majesty the Queen secondly returned two elephants to the Doi Pha Muang Wildlife Sanctuary Area in Lumpang Province

March 18, 1998 Pang Sungwal and Pang Noi got Her Majesty's compassion in returning into the forest

February 18, 1999 Ex-Governor of Lampang Province and Director of the World Wildlife Foundation International (Thailand) presented Pang Kammool and Plai Song, to Her Majesty the Queen. The cow elephant and her young boy were adopted into elephant reintroduction program since then.

February 19, 1999, Her Majesty the Queen returned two elephants to the Doi Pha Muang Wildlife Sanctuary Area in Lumpang Province

February 10, 2000 Thanks to Her Majesty's Compassion, Sidoyali, Pang Boonma, Pang Khammool Yai, Pang Chumpi, Pang Thongbai, Pang Boonmee, Pang Kongma, Pang Bua Nguen and Pang Buatong are brought into the elephant reintroduction program. Currently, these nine elephants are under the physical recovering process.

Pang Durian, a young orphan whose mother had been killed by a shot, received the royal compassion to bring into the program on February 10, 2000. Pang Durian was brought up with babysitting elephants, Pang Bua Ngeun and Pang Buathong before returning to Kang Kra Charn National Park, Petchburi Province

..... **2000** Plai Sri Sakorn, an orphan elephant being wounded from a shot was presented to Her Majesty. Plai Sri Sakorn had been under medical treatment and lived with his three babysitters in Mae Yao National Lumpang province in order to adjust itself to natural forest.

February 10, 2001 To promote friendly ties between Thailand and Denmark, under royal command of His Majesty the King and Her Majesty the Queen, Her Royal Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn accompanied Queen Magreth II of Denmark and Prince Henrik on the royal visit to release a cow elephant "Pang Boonrod" into Doi Pha Muang Wildlife Sanctuary Area.

Captive Elephants

Analysis of critical problems faced by captive elephants and solutions to the problems.

Elsa Foundation