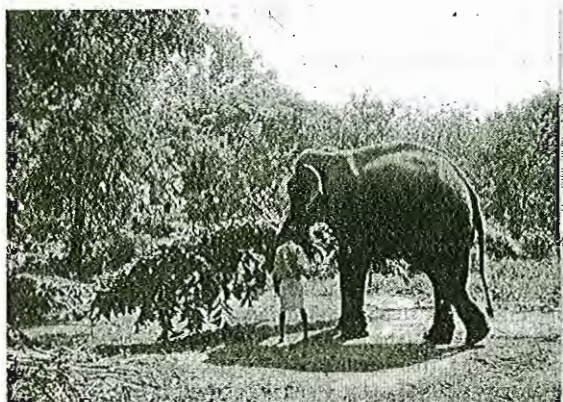


Training on Captive Elephant Management : A Report

Jacob V. Cheeran

The Elephant Study Centre which is under the auspices of Kerala Agricultural University, College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Mannuthy has organised a Mahout Training course as part of its mission. The objectives of the centre is to compile all information about Asian elephants and then to conduct detailed study and research on selected areas.



Carrying fodder by a tusker, Kerala style.

Elephants are inevitable component of many social and cultural activities in Kerala. It is estimated that about 600 captive elephants are being maintained by different devaswams and individuals in Kerala. Although elephants are made use of extensively, systematic scientific studies on elephants are lacking. Ethnic information regarding them are also not properly compiled and documented. Formation of an 'elephant interest group' under the elephant study centre will attain these goals.

Objectives of the Elephant Study Centre

1. To understand the influence of elephants in the social and cultural scenario of Kerala.
2. Study the extent of utilization of elephants in non-conventional areas.

Training on Captive Elephant Management

A training programme on Captive Elephant Management was organised by the Elephant Study Centre of the Kerala Agricultural University. Prof. Dr. Jacob V. Cheeran, Chairman Elephant Study Centre of the University, conducted the course at the College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Mannuthy. The course was conducted for a period of one week from 4th September to 9th September 2000.



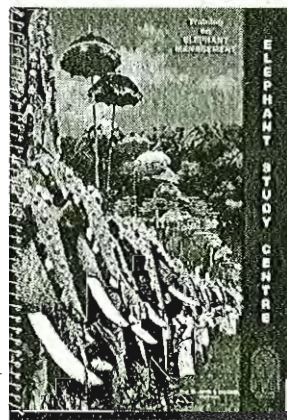
Dr. K. Shyamsundaran Nair, V.C. inaugurating the function.

The University has been doing several training programmes, this programme got a special attention and a person not less than the Hon. Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr. K. Shyamasundaran Nair, himself inaugurated as well as distributed the completion certificates on the final day.

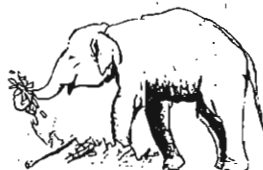


Dr. Krishnamoorthy taking a class.

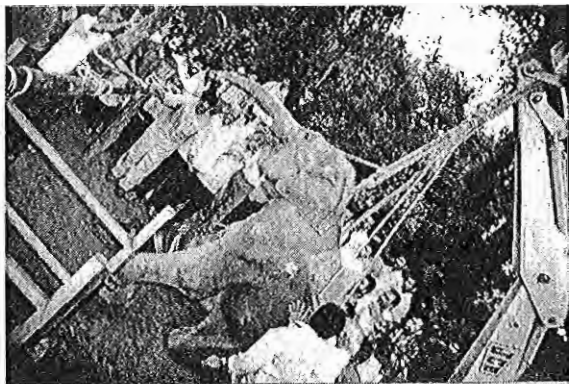
The training was intended for the veterinarians and there was participation from Himachal Pradesh to Kerala (Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Assam and Kerala.) A total number of 12 participants were present. A resource book was distributed covering nearly 40 topics and appendices.



The participants were taken to the Guruvayoor Temple Elephant having 50 Elephants, for training. The various management practices of Kerala were demonstrated to the trainees. There was also discussion on the differences of training practices in various parts of the country. A clinical case of automobile accident on an Elephant calf was also shown to the trainees.



* Course Director, 135, Nehru Nagar, Thrissur 680 006, Kerala.



A case of automobile accident in an elephant calf.

Classes comprised of capturing, training, immobilization, translocation, nutrition, musth and handling during musth, anaesthesia and surgery. The faculty for the course was Director Prof. Cheeran, J.V., Dr. Krishnamoorthy, Professors K.C. Panicker, R.K. Kaimal, KNM Nair, and George Mathen.



Discussion Trichur Zoo.

The course was for a period of 6 days and at the end, all the participants were unanimous on the practical utility of the course, but they also felt that the course should have been of longer duration and include more practicals and field trips.

The Elephant Study Centre

Elephant study centre programmes and projects

The tiny State Kerala has 600 captive elephants. They are almost a domestic animal however much needs to be done to get enough scientific data regarding its care and management.

Kerala Agricultural University entered the elephant research with a big bang on 24th April 79 darting a rogue bull.

Now the total number of elephants, tranquilized and translocated are 396.

Research Projects :

1. Tranquilization of elephants
2. Nutrition of elephants
3. Physiology of elephants
4. Musth in elephants
5. Diseases in elephants

Research papers : 93 numbers - popular articles, Radio talks, TV Programmes.

MVSc - theses : 4 : Genetics (1), Physiology (2), Medicine (1), and Parasitology (1)

Ph.D. - theses : 2 : Nutrition (1), Musth (1)

Training Programmes :

Elephant tranquilization 19 batches in Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu for Zoo Veterinary doctors
Mahout training.

Publications :

1. Asian elephant - Book
 2. Elephant - Book in Malayalam
- Technical bulletins

Chapters in books : 2 numbers

Extension Activities :

Translocation of wild elephants in Karnataka.
Radio collaring of elephants in Tamil Nadu.
Consultancy to various State Governments, National Institute,

Devaswams and Elephant owners

International Seminar/workshops attended (paper presentation / session chairing) :

International : Hawaii, Yangoon, Bangkok, Jaldappara, Bangalore, (2) England, New York, Mudumalai, Lownana State University (U.S.A.)

Wildlife training (Faculty on elephants) Mudumalai (TN) Kanha (U.P.)

Membership in professional bodies :
International

IUCN. Asian elephant specialist group
Veterinary specialist group
Conservation breeding specialist group
Universities federation of animal welfare
OIE- Paris (expert group on wildlife disease)

National

Project Elephant - steering committee
Central Zoo Authority
State Zoo Advisory Board
State WWF committee
Zoo Outreach Organisation - managing committee
Working plan advisory committee for Wildlife Sanctuaries.

Other activities :

1. Asiad 1982 - Elephant contingent 1982 - cultural troupe
2. 108 Elephant Gaja Pooja at Coimbatore - 1987
3. Gajamela of 101 elephants for 10 years continuously for the Kerala State Government. Since 1991
4. Elephant cultural team to Bangalore - Miss Universe contest - 1998
5. Gajapooja with 60 elephants at Salem 1999
6. Many elephant shows in several parts of Kerala both for Government & NGOs