STANDARDS AND NORMS FOR ELEPHANT OWNERS
DRAFT FOR COMMENT

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Introduction

In India, captive elephants are possessed by the Government agencies (mostly Forest Department), zoos, circus companies, temples and many private individuals. Number of elephants in captivity in India is estimated to be 2260-2860. Elephants are used for various purposes, such as transport, carriage of load, forestry works (patrolling, logging, etc.), tourism, entertainment, ceremonies and festivals, hunting and capturing of wild animals, etc.

It is widely accepted that elephants are very sensitive creatures and that they need special treatment. To ensure that the owners would treat the animal in a proper and humane manner, some sets of standards are called for. Standing orders for the management of elephants do exist in forest departments in many states. As far as the elephants in zoos are concerned, the Central Zoo Authority has prescribed standards and norms for all zoos vide the Recognition of Zoos Rules, 1992. But no such standards exist for the care of hundreds of privately owned elephants. An attempt has been made in this paper to present a draft for standards and norms for elephant owners. It is expected that this draft will be thoroughly scrutinised by various experts and interested persons and a suitable document will emerge for the benefit of the elephant owners, law-enforcers and all those who are interested in the welfare of the elephant.

2. Standard and Norms for privately owned elephants.

2.1 It may be recalled that elephant being in Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, all elephant owners are required to obtain a certificate of ownership from the Chief wildlife Warden (CWLW) of the State in accordance with Sections 40 and 42 of the said Act. The proposed standards and norms for elephant owners should, therefore, be made a part of the conditions for the grant of the said certificate of ownership. This will ensure that such standards and norms have the sanctity of law and any violation of the same becomes an offence punishable under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

2.2 The following standards and norms are being proposed for the grant of the ownership certificate for captive elephants. These have been designed mainly after the Recognition of Zoo Rules, 1992. The 'Act' refers to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (53 of 1972) as amended from time to time.

Standards and norms subject to which certificate of ownership under Section 42 of the Act shall be granted:

The Chief Wildlife Warden (CWLW) shall grant a certificate of ownership with due regard to the interests of protection and conservation of elephants, and such standards, norms and other matters as are specified below :-

1. The primary objective of owning any elephant shall be the conservation and welfare of elephant and no owner shall take up any activity that is inconsistent with the objective.

2. No person shall acquire or dispose of any elephant in violation of the Act or rules made thereunder.

3. No owner shall allow any elephant to be subjected to the cruelties as defined under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 (59 of 1960) or permit any activity that exposes the animals to unnecessary pain; stress or provocation.

4. No owner shall exhibit or put to use elephant that is seriously sick, injured, infirm or in advanced stage of pregnancy.

5. (a) The owner shall provide a stable (*Pilkhana*) for the elephant in a clean and healthy environment. Cattle and other livestock must be excluded from the vicinity of the elephants.

(b) Each captive elephant must be ensured a minimum floor area as specified below:

Category	Minimum Floor Area
Weaned Calf (Height below 1.50m)	5m X 2.5m
Sub-adult Elephant (height 1.50m to 2.25m)	7m X 3.5m
Cow Elephant with unweaned calf.	9m X 5m
Adult Elephant (Height above 2.25m)	9m X 5m

(c) In case of covered sheds, the height of the structure should not be less than 4.80m. Corrugated iron sheets or asbestos sheets should not be used for roofing of elephant stables.

(d) The stable should be protected against cold and hot winds.

(e) The floor of the stable should not be wet and uneven.

(f) Elephant should not be made to stand on ground saturated with urine and filth. The floor of the stable must be treated with phenyl solution at least once a week. Proper arrangement of drainage of excess of water and arrangements for removal of excreta, leftover food items and residual water shall be made.

6. The owner shall have at least one full time mahout incharge of the elephant. Only such mahouts should be engaged who possess a certificate of training recognised by the CWLW or have passed successfully in a test to be conducted by the CWLW or an officer authorised by him.

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7. The owner should have arrangement with a qualified Veterinary Surgeon for visiting the elephant once every week.

8 (a) The owner shall ensure timely supply of wholesome and unadulterated feed in sufficient quantity to each elephant, according to the requirement of the individual elephants, so that no animal remains under nourished. Variety in feed should be ensured.

(b) Each captive elephant should be supplied with a minimum feed as specified below:-

Height of Elephant	Green Fodder		Ration
Below 1.50m (weaned calf)	Not less than	100 kg.	As prescribed by Vety Doctor.
1.50m to 1.80m.	-do-	150 kg.	-do-
1.80m to 2.25m.	-do-	200 kg.	-do-
Above 2.25m	-do-	250 kg.	-do-

(c) If the owner possesses facilities for grazing of elephant to the satisfaction of the CWLW or the officer authorised by him, the limits for cut-fodder as prescribed above, may be reduced to 25%. However, the elephant should not be used for uprooting trees, shrubs or grasses for the purpose of collection of its fodder.

9. The owner shall ensure continous availability of drinking water to the elephant. Elephant should preferably be fed from a river or any other source of running water. In any case, the elephant should not be made to drink water from a tank or pond used by other cattle and livestock. Tanks or ponds should be periodically cleaned.

10. The mahout shall ensure that the elephant gets a thorough bath every day.

11. The condition and health of the elephant shall be checked every day by the mahout. If any elephant is found sick, injured, unduly stressed or pregnant (in case of cow elephant), the matter should be reported to the veterinary doctor for providing treatment expeditiously.

12. Routine examination including parasitic checks shall be carried out regularly and preventive medicines including vaccination be administered at such intervals as may be prescribed by the veterinary doctor or the CWLW.

13. The owner shall arrange for medical check-up of the staff responsible for upkeep of the elephant at least once in every six months to ensure that they do not have infections of such diseases as may infect the elephant.

14. The owner shall maintain history sheets and treatment cards in respect of the elephant.

15. The owner must inform the CWLW or the nearest forest office within 24 hour in case the elephant is found to be suffering from anthrax, rinderpest, H.S., surra or any other contagious disease, and must follow the instructions given by the said authorities regarding the treatment of the animal or disposal of the carcass.

16. The owner of a cow elephant must take prior permission of the CWLW or the officer authorised by him before mating her with a bull elephant for the purpose of breeding. He should immediately inform the said authorities as soon as the cow elephant delivers a calf.

17. The owner must take prior permission of the CWLW or the office authorised by him before undertaking castration/sterilization/vasectomy/tubectomy or any other population control measure for the elephant. He should not take any of these measures without help from a competent veterinary surgeon.

18. The owner of a bull elephant shall ensure that in case of musth, the elephant is secured properly and does not become a hazard to the public at large. The elephant should be checked up by a veterinary doctor. Drugs or intoxicants should not be used to suppress musth except on a written prescription by a competent veterinary surgeon. An elephant in musth must not be put to any work.

19. The owner shall neither cut nor dispose off the tusks of a bull elephant without prior approval of the CWLW or the officer authorised by him. The tusks should not be cut except by a Veterinary surgeon.

20. The owner shall not forcibly wean any elephant calf below 2 years or age from its mother.

21. The owner shall not put any cow elephant having pregnancy of 12 months or above to any work. Similarly, any cow elephant having a suckling calf of age below 6 months should be kept off work. The owner shall also not put any elephant below 5 feet of height to any work.

22. The owner shall not permit the use of nylon ropes or chains/hobbles with spikes or sharp edges for tying the elephant. Weight of chains and hobbles must be commensurate with age and health of the elephant. The owner should not permit any gear or harness which may expose the back or other sensitive organs of the elephant to pain and injury.

23. The owner shall not permit his elephant to be trained by a trainer who is not approved by the CWLW or the officer authorised by him.

24. The owner shall follow the provisions relevant to elephants in the Prevention of Cruelty to Animal Act, 1960 and the rules made thereunder, particularly regarding transportation of elephants, and also use of elephants for performance in circus and cinema or for timber hauling or for carriage of loads.

(Remarks: It is being assumed that the said rules would be amended suitably to make them relevant to the elephants).

25. The owner shall make his elephant available for inspection by the CWLW (or the officer authorised by him) or the officers authorised by the Animal Welfare Board of India, whenever demanded by the said authorities.

26. The owner shall report within 24 hours regarding the death of the elephant to the CWLW or the officer authorised by him. Postmortem of a dead elephant should be carried out by a competent veterinary surgeon and report submitted to the

CWLW (or the authorised officer) within 15 days of the death. The ivory, bones and other parts of the carcass should not be sold away without prior permission of the CWLW.

27. The certificate of ownership may be cancelled and the elephant confiscated by the State Government, if the CWLW is convinced that the owner has violated any of the conditions of the certificate of ownership.

Appendix - I -- Care of departmental elephants in West Bengal

Most of the captive elephants in West Bengal are located in Jaldapara Sanctuary. The Standing Order issued by the Chief Wildlife Warden of West Bengal in 1992 for maintenance of the departmental elephants is quite interesting and worth quoting.

GUIDELINES FOR MAINTENANCE OF DEPARTMENTAL ELEPHANTS

It is seen that in spite of earlier instructions issued, departmental elephants are not being managed as per standard guidelines, leading to bad health and consequent loss of such elephants before the normal lifetime. It should be remembered that good elephant is not available even at any price. The elephant being a very specialised animal cannot change its behaviour to suit the requirements of man.

If we are to get best output from them, we have to amend our behaviour and timings of work and take proper care of these elephants. The following guidelines are, therefore, issued to follow by all officers and staff under whom the departmental elephants are placed:-

1. Elephants should not be put to work between 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. in summer and 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. in winter which are inconvenient hours for the elephants to work.

2. No elephant should be put to duty both in forenoon and afternoon - this ruins the animal.

3. The working hours of an elephant should not exceed 5 hours a day to allow it sufficient time for grazing, fodder collection, bath and rest.

4. As soon as the elephant comes back from duty its *gaddi, gadela,* saddles, etc. are to be removed immediately because it is as tiring for an elephant to remain saddled as being in work.

5. Pregnant elephant should not be used with *gaddi*, etc. after 12 months of pregnancy. It can, however, be used upto 15 months for duty on bare back.

6. After a calf is born, the mother elephant should not be put to use upto 3 months of delivery, after which it can be put to light duty, say for 3 hours a day. In any case, such elephant should not be used at night.

7. All calves should be weaned away from the mother after 18 to 24 months of delivery, when they attain a height of 4 feet.

8. A baby elephant requires about 10 to 14 hours of sleep in the early months. This should not be lost sight of.

9. There should be a log book and a diary for each elephant. The log book should indicate the movement of elephant from place to place on hour to hour basis; and the diary should record in addition any other incidents, treatments, etc. This log book and diary should be checked by the superior officers at the time of the local visits and their remarks regarding the elephant including instruction, if any, should be noted there under their dated signature.

10. The ration register for the departmental elephants should be made upto-date daily with the record of issue and receipt duly posted in such register. The inspecting officers should check this register as well as the stock as frequently as possible.

11. The feeding of ration of elephant should be made in presence of the highest rank of staff or officer whoever happens to be present in the location at the time of feeding. The inspecting officer should also make it a practice to check the quality and quantity of ration being fed to such departmental elephants. The mahout should also be present at the time of feeding.

12. The fodder for the elephant has to be cut by the grass cutter and given to the elephant and not uprooted by the elephant, as the latter reduces the future stock and makes the elephant tired.

13. The daily bathing of the elephant should be properly supervised to ensure proper rubbing of the skin and the sole of the feet which is essential for good health of the elephant.

14. The elephant should not be allowed to drink water immediately after a long march on hot days and bathing of the elephant should also be done after half an hour of rest on completion of a long march.

15. *Gaddi, gadela*, etc. of the elephant should be of proper quality and this should be checked and inspected by the superior officers while using the elephant every time.

16. It should be ensured that leather *peti* and *dumchi* are of proper quality and fittings.

17. The *Pilkhanas* should be cleaned regularly and the elephants should not be kept on rotten debris to avoid infection. Periodically all such debris should be removed and burnt by throwing them in a pit."