

Elephants Are not Enemies of Humans



Thimali Umanda Dassanayake

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To

My beloved Mother, Father and Sister and Dr. Varunadatta Edirisinghe,
Senior lecturer Of Classical Languages department at University of
Peradeniya, who encouraged me to work on this topic

Foreword



In an increasingly complex global future, the "Hemamala Upahara" book project, led by Mahamaya Girls' College, stands as a turning point in girls' education. Over a decade, it has successfully nurtured thousands of children to become young authors.

This year, by collaborating with other schools, we aimed to provide students with a wealth of new experiences. The goal was to develop multi-faceted skills, including communication, values, and creative growth. As a result, children have written books that pay tribute to Princess Hemamala, who brought the Sacred Tooth Relic—the supreme symbol of the Buddhist world—to the Hill Country (Kandy).

I extend my gratitude to everyone involved, including the students who contributed their creativity and the teachers who guided them.

Shashikala Senadhira

Principal

Mahamaya Girls' College

Congratulatory Message

It is a great honor for me, as the Governor of the Central Province, to send a congratulatory message for the launch of the books created through the Hemamala Tribute Book Creation Project initiated by Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy.

Education is the fundamental foundation for the progress of society, and it is further strengthened through books and literary creations. It is clearly commendable that students' talents, creativity, and intellectual abilities are emerging through projects such as this.

I believe that this book creation project will provide valuable knowledge and a precious literary contribution not only to the students but to the entire society. Furthermore, I hope that through such efforts, future writers who will bring pride to Sri Lanka will emerge.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation and blessings to the Principal, the academic staff, the students, and everyone involved who dedicated themselves to this successful endeavor. I wish this project and the book launch ceremony great success.

Sarath B.S. Abeykoon

Governor, Central Province

Emeritus Professor, University of Peradeniya

2026-05-10

Congratulatory Message

I highly appreciate the noble and outstanding effort of the Principal and the academic staff of Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy, the student daughters, the students of other participating schools, and everyone who dedicated themselves to plan and implement this book publication project. The project was organized under the leadership of Mahamaya Girls' College, Kandy, with the participation of other schools in the Kandy Zone, with the aim of encouraging children toward book creation within the current school system, as a tribute to Hemamala Kumariya who brought the Sacred Tooth Relic to Sri Lanka.

For several decades, Sri Lanka has been committed to providing free, compulsory, quality, and equitable education to all children, thereby producing a future generation of intelligent and skilled citizens. In such a context, this book creation program for school children helps develop creative ability, critical thinking, and other positive qualities for a balanced and well-rounded personality, and contributes to building a future knowledge-based society.

May all activities of the Hemamala Tribute Book Creation Project be successful through the blessings of the Sacred Tooth Relic.

Pradeep Nilanga Dela

Diyawadana Nilame,

Sri Dalada Maligawa.

2026.05.10.

Elephants are not enemies of Humans

Abstract

Every living being in our world, is unique in their own way. Some of them are skilled builders while others are talented singers. None of us are identical, but carry many elements of similarities. Yet, as we are unique from each other, conflicts are a natural part in our environment. However, we cannot live by excluding other living beings as we are all part of the web of life, and thus, is connected to each other. The world is the home for every one of us, and we are supposed to share it without harming to the biodiversity of the Earth. It is a strenuous task, but we must do it for the benefit of everyone. This paper intends to focus on one of the most unique members of the animal Kingdom, who is the Elephant. Elephants have mesmerized humans since ancient times due to their unique characteristics related to them¹. This paper intends to explore their nature by exploring ancient historical accounts on them and compare them with modern accounts in order to provide a solution for the Human- Elephant conflict in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: HEC, Elephant intelligence, Historical accounts, Current studies, Animal abuse, Solutions, Psychological impact.

01.Introduction

Elephants have been admired as well as feared throughout human history. They were also subjected to extreme cruelty in order to showcase the power of humans over the wild (Shelton 2006).² In the present context, elephants have become a controversial topic in Asian countries such as Sri Lanka and India with the rise of the human-elephant conflict (Gunawansa et.al,2023)³. The main reason for this conflict is that, due to the rapid growth of both humans and elephant populations and as a result, both groups struggle to share the limited land resources and major causes include Land usage change, habitat loss and crop raiding behavior(Gunawansa et.al,2023).As a result of this devastating problem, approximately, 125 humans and 370 elephants losses their lives annually, since 2019.It is also noted that, Sri Lanka has the highest recorded elephant deaths and second highest human deaths due to Human -Elephant conflict or

¹ Shelton, Jo Anne. "Elephants as Enemies of Ancient Romans." *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies*, vol. 32, no. 1, 25 Mar. 2006, pp. 4–12. Accessed 29 Oct. 2024.

² Ibid

³ Gunawansa, Thakshila.D., et al. "The Human Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka: History and Present Status." *Biodiversity and Conservation*, vol. 32, 17 June 2023, pp. 3026–3027. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

HEC. (Gunawansa et.al,2023)⁴. Gunshot wounds are the main cause for the death of elephants in Sri Lanka and third main cause is accidents created by man-made transportation methods (Fernando,2024)⁵. though it is relatively low whereas, use of explosives such as jaw bombs had contributed to the death of 59 elephants (Gunawansa et.al,2023)⁶. Elephants are severely important for the eco-system as they are agents of seed dispersal and increases habitat measures. it is said that, they have played a key role in the food chain and they diversify savannah environments when they are allowed to freely move. Their absence may cause a cascade of changes in extinctions in eco- system (Poole, first published ,1996).⁷ Furthermore, they have an economic value since, tourism contributes by 5% of country's GDP and one elephant worth \$11million (Wijesinha)⁸. Hence, they should be protected for the wellbeing of the eco- system as well as the economy of the country. Analyzing the behavior of them might have a profound impact on solving the problem and previous or old accounts on their behavior and habitats is important in this aspect (Lindsay,1996)⁹.

i)Objective

The objective of this research is to focus on the nature of Elephant society and their customs and how to do it in a productive manner through analyzing ancient documentation. this paper does a comparative study of Greco-Roman historical accounts on behavioral patterns of Elephants with modern accounts and how it will aid to overcome the crisis

ii)Methodology

In order to execute this research, I did a close reading of Three primary resources Which are *Pliny's "Naturalis Historia"* Book 8, *Strabo's "Geographica"* book 7 and, "*Histoire Naturelle*", which was written by the French author *Georges Louis Leclerc Comte de Buffon* (Pub.1801)

⁴ Ibid. pp 3024.

⁵ Fernando, Prithiviraj. "Trains and Elephants: May Never the Twain Shall Meet." *Daily Mirror Online*, 25 Oct. 2024, p. 1. Accessed 4 Nov. 2024.

⁶ Gunawansa, Thakshila.D., et al. "The Human Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka: History and Present Status." *Biodiversity and Conservation*, vol. 32, 17 June 2023, pp. 3024. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁷ Poole, Joyce. "The African Elephant." *Studying Elephants*, edited by Kadzo Kangwana, Nirobe, Kenya., African Wildlife Foundation, 1996, p. 6.

⁸ Wijesinha, Rohan. "Sri Lanka: Where People Need Elephants and Elephants Need People." *The Sunday Morning*, p. 3. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁹ Lindsay, Keith. "Studying Elephant- Habitat Interactions." *Studying Elephants*, edited by Kadzo Kangwana, Nirobe, Kenya., African Wildlife Foundation, 1996, p. 91.

along with secondary resources which include observations from videos done on the subject matter by different individuals and also government data by looking into the study reports done by the African wildlife foundation thus, it is qualitative research based on close reading, gathering information from Government data bases and online media observations in order to examine how these ancient authors perceived Elephants, and do a comparative analytical study on the modern perspective on them.

iii)Literature Review

This part of the research focuses on the current researches done on the human- elephant conflict. I analyzed the journal articles Composed by authors such as Thakshila.D. Gunawansa et. al, which focuses on the causes for the HEC, legal actions taken to protect elephants, measures taken to mitigate HEC, destruction done to human and elephant lives due to HEC and how the Sri Lankan elephant is an endangered sub species of Asian Elephant. Furthermore, the Thesis composed by Ajith Wasantha Liyanage focuses on how to develop a sustainable solution for the issue, by analyzing weather, there is a relationship between development projects and changes in nature in Hambantota area and HEC in the area whereas, the article “*Human -Elephant conflict and mitigation methods using participatory rural appraisal techniques :A case study of Kuda Bellankadawala and kelegama Grama Niladri division in Tathagata divisional secretariat division*” by K.V.D. Edirisooriya and A.P.S.S. Bandara focuses on subject areas such as, the environments where Elephants prefer to live, their food habits, destruction done to human properties and lives, Elephant populations in different Asian countries, main crops grown in the focused area and human -elephant conflict vulnerability increases during the dry season due to the lack of food resources. The paper also focuses on the use of effectiveness of electric fences in the area and an insight to the nature and attitudes towards the problem in old and new settlements. Other researches Such as Dinesh Wisuperuma and Jinadasa Kaputhota focus on the religious and cultural significance of elephants in Sri Lanka, by referring to how they were used in pageants, warfare and building construction. According to these researchers they were also imported and exported between countries and shared as gifts. It is interesting to note that even in the ancient Greco- Roman world, elephants were seen in a similar way, which was a mixture between fear and admiration. Moreover, they were exploited in order to establish human dominance over the wild life (Shelton ,2006).¹⁰

iv)Research Problem

It is apparent that, all above mentioned researches has focused on issues such as causes for human elephant conflict, what is the role of urban development projects in rising conflict between humans and elephants, the destruction done to the both parties due to this vexed

¹⁰ Shelton, Jo Anne. “Elephants as Enemies of Ancient Romans.” *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies*, vol. 32, no. 1, 25 Mar. 2006, pp. 4–12. Accessed 29 Oct. 2024.

question, what is the attitude of people towards the issue, Cultural and Economic importance of elephants and their role in what are the food habits of Elephants and the hyraces within the elephant society and how an elephant herd works. Nonetheless, none of them, focuses on the factor that, general behavioral qualities and traits of elephants in general should be taken in to consideration If this aspect is looked upon, there is a huge possibility that, it would solve a burning issue in our country. This should not be limited to exploring their food habits, habitats, family bonds and mating but also their psychological patterns and the inner works of their brain.

02.. How Greeks and Romans saw Elephants and how similar it is to the modern context

This topic may be strange for some readers and one might question why look into foreign accounts and also the accounts of ancient Greeks and Romans, who might have hardly encountered Elephants when we can have firsthand experience and look into our own resources? It is an important question to be answered because, it opens the door to a portal which is never or barely explored. First of all, it shades a new light on the subject as it looks at a different aspect of the subject which would give a potential solution to the issue and secondly, it fills the gaps in literary resources we have as resources on the subject is scanty and we lack much knowledge on the subject and is highly paranormal and spiritual (Wisuperuma 2011, Peiris, 2001)¹¹¹² whereas Pliny and Strabo has a more natural touch on the subject which is close and can be easily understood to the modern readers .

This explanation brings us back to the question how ancient Greeks and Romans saw Elephants and the rest of the passages will describe it. The description will start from looking into pre-historic times and then progressing in to historic times with reference to Books of Pliny and Strabo. Elephants have lived in the Apennines along with Rhinos and Hippopotamus during the Pliocene and Pleistocene ages. The climate was same all over the earth during this era which was similar to the tropical climate. However, at the end of the Pliocene, earth became much cooler and icy that it was hostile to mammals. Many animals including many Elephant subspecies such as *Elephas antiquus*, *E. meridionalis* and *E. primigenius* went to extinction After millennia, their fossilized remains were found from sites in Rome. They were interpreted to be the remains of elephants who were a part of Hanibal's army, which were later proven to be actual fossils. These remains led to the creation of numerous myths related to creatures such as Cyclopes and Odontotyrannus. These can be presented as the first interpretations of Mediterraneans on Elephants (Manni,2001¹³). During the historical era, they were both tolerated

¹¹ Peris, Merlin. "Abusing of Elephant: Pseudo- Specification and Prognostication in Ancient Lore." *Gajah*, vol. 20, 2001. *Faculty of arts, University of Peradeniya*. Accessed 13 Nov. 2024.

¹² Wisuperuma,Dhanesh . "Elephants in Sandesa Kavyas".Journal of Royal Asiatic society of Sri Lanka,Vol 57,2011, pp.71-94,JSTOR ,<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23732414>.Acesssed 27.Nov.2024.

¹³ Manni, R. "The Elephants in Rome: History, Legends and Anecdotes." *The World of Elephants- International Congress, Rome*, 2001, pp. 397–399. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

and tormented. The conceptualization of Elephants in Roman context is based on warfare. They were seen as machines of terror, War elephants traumatized Romans even after centuries of the event. Especially with relevance to the Punic wars. It seems that these ideologies made Romans to think Elephants as their enemies. This is clearly brought out by satires of poets such as Juvenile where he refers to Elephants as “*Gaetula Belua*” or the “Monstrous African Beast” (Shelton,2006)¹⁴. There could be many reasons for that, which includes how Hanibal used elephants to terrorize Romans. According to Pliny, Hanibal made war captives to fight with Elephants in exchange of freedom.

“Clara est unius e Romanis dimicatio adversus elephantum, cum Hanibal captivos nostros

Dimicare inter sese coegisset. Namquam unum qui supererat obiecit elephanto, et ille dimitti pactus si interemisset, solus in harena contemptum adlaturam poenorum dolere confecit. Hanibal cum famam eius dimicationes contemptum adlaturam belius intellexeret, equites misit qui abeuntem interferent.

“There is a famous story of one of the Romans fighting single handed against an elephant, on the occasion when Hanibal had compelled his prisoners of our army to fight duels with one another. For he pitied one survivor against an elephant, and this man, having secured a promise of his freedom if he killed the animal, met it single handed in the arena and much to the chagrin of the Carthaginians dispatched it. Hanibal realized that reports of this encounter would bring animals in to contempt, so he sent horsemen to kill the man as he was departing” (Pliny, book VIII, p. 14-15, passage VII)¹⁵.

during the 3rd century Elephants were displayed in arenas and they were taught to perform different “tricks” and to work with humans This was an advantage on their part, as they were “trainable”, unlike Bears who could be only taught to play tricks or Lions who was seen as the “fiercest,” Elephants could be trained to do work which assisted human efforts to gain security and prosperity. Furthermore, tamed elephants created close bonds with humans and also was subjected to torture, (Shelton ,2006). which might be a reflection of the centuries old grudge between the two parties due to warfare. It is said that, apart from performing tricks elephants were used to perform mock battles, in which they were brutally tormented or killed with the use of Javelins (Shelton ,2006). Which justifies Hanibal’s fear. These accounts can be proven by looking in to Pliny’s account on circus elephants and elephants who were domesticated.

“Elephantos Italia primum vidit Pyrri regis bello et boves Lucas appellavit in Lucinis viso anno Urbis CCCCLXXIV, Roma autem triumpho v annis ad superorium numerum additis eandem plurimos anno DII Victoria L. Metelli pontifices in Sicilia de pontis captos CXLII

¹⁴ Shelton, Jo Anne. “Elephants as Enemies of Ancient Romans.” *Concentric: Literary and Cultural Studies*, vol. 32, no. 1, 25 Mar. 2006, pp. 4–12. Accessed 29 Oct. 2024.

¹⁵ Pliny. *Natural History Book VIII*. translated by H. Rackham, edited by T.E. Page et al., vol. 3, London, The Leob classical library, Harvard university press.

fuere aut, ut quidam CXL travencti ratibus quas doliorum consertis ordinibus inposuerat. Verrius cos pugnasse in circo interfectosque iaculis tradit ,paenuria consilii quoniam neque ali placuisset neque donari regibus ;L. Piso inductos dumtaxat, in circum atque ,ut contemptus corum incresecrent ,ab operariis hastas praepiliastas habentibus per circum totum actos nec quid deinde iis factum sit auctores explicant qui non putant interfectos.”

“Italy saw elephants for the first time in the war and called them Lucan oxen because they were seen in Lucinia ,280 B.C.; but Rome saw them at a date five years later., in a triumph and also a very large number that were captured from Carthaginians in Sicily by the victory of pontiff Lucius Metellus 252 B.C. There were 142 of them, or by some accounts 140, and they had been brought over on rafts that Metellus constructed by laying decks on rows of casks lashed together. Verrius records that they fought in circuses and were killed with Javelins, because it was not known what use to make of them, as it has been decided not to keep them nor to present them to native kings; Lucius Piso says that they were merely led into circuses, and in order to increase the contempt felt for them, were driven all round it by attendants carrying spears with a button on the point. The authorities who do not think that they were killed do not explain what was done with them afterwards” (Pliny, book VIII, passage VI)¹⁶.

These all passages bring us to the conclusion that, Romans had a negative impression on elephants as they encountered them as war opponents and was exposed to their destructive force. As a result, they had inbuilt contempt with Elephants. Which they likely have expressed by torturing the captivated Elephants in arenas. It is clear that, they were seen as foes because of this pre constructed notion. However, it seems that, the Romans later on studied their nature and understood their uniqueness as an animal species. Gradually, they noted the positive aspects of this majestic creatures, which we see in the opening lines of Pliny’s *Naturalis Historia* book VIII which starts with describing Elephants and then he goes on for 13 passages on describing how it’s intelligence is second only to man, how they can be taught, their rituals, mating, family bonds, how they can bond with humans, importance of ivory, how Romans first encountered them and how they were used in shows and how they feared human hunters and on the African Elephant who beats the Indian Elephant in height. Of these, the first encounters and how they were used in shows is already discussed thus, I will focus on how Pliny describes their habitude, on chosen passages from the book. which begins with the first page of the book and draw comparisons with descriptions given by Greek author Strabo and French author Buffon and also modern studies. Pliny starts his book by saying

“Ab reliqua transeamus animalium et primum terrestia.

Maximum est elephans proximumque humanis sensibus ,quippe intellectus illis sermonis patrii et imperiorum obientia, officiorum quae didicere memoria, amoris et gloriae voulduptas ,immo vero quae etiam in homine rara, probitas, prudentia, Aequitas, religio quoque siderum solisque ae lunae veneratio.

¹⁶ Ibid.pp 12- 14

“Let us pass to the rest of animals, and first those who live on land

The largest animal is the elephant and it is the nearest to man in intelligence; It understands the language of its country, and obeys orders, remembers duties that it has been taught and is pleased by affections and marks of honor, nay more it possesses virtues rare even in man honesty, wisdom, justice and also respect for stars and reverence for the sun and moon” (Pliny, book VIII, passage I)¹⁷.

It is apparent that, the author has special admiration for elephants which is brought to light through these words. It is clear that the writer identifies elephant as a special animal who is capable of remembering tasks, understand the human language and can be trained to work under supervision of humans and more superficially, even the ability to practice a religion. The same pattern is seen in Strabo’s description though slightly different. His chief focus is on Elephant training and capture in India and it is relatively long and descriptive.

“The chase of the elephant is conducted as follows: they dig a deep ditch round a treeless tract about four or five stadia in circuit and bridge the entrance with a very narrow bridge; and then, letting loose into the enclosure three or four of their tamest females, they themselves lie in wait under cover in hidden huts. Now the wild elephants do not approach by day, but they make the entrance one by one at night; and when they have entered, the men close the entrance secretly; and then, leading the most courageous of their tame combatants into the enclosure, they fight it out with the wild elephants, at the same time wearing them down also by starvation; and, once the animals are worn out, the boldest of the riders secretly dismount and each creeps under the belly of his own riding-elephant, and then, starting from here, creeps under the wild elephant and binds his feet together ; and when this is done, they command the tamed elephants to beat those whose feet have been bound until they fall to the ground; and when they fall, the men fasten their necks to those of the tamed elephants with thongs of raw ox-hide ; and in order that the wild elephants, when they shake those who are attempting to mount them, may not shake them off, the men make incisions round their necks and put the thongs round at these incisions, so that through pain they yield to their bonds and keep quiet.

Of the elephants captured, they reject those that are too old or too young for service and lead away the rest to the stalls; and then, having tied their feet to one another and their necks to a firmly planted pillar, they subdue them by hunger; and then they restore them with green cane and grass. After this the elephants are taught to obey commands, some through words of command and others through being charmed by tunes and drum-beating. Those that are hard to tame are rare; for by nature the elephant is of a mild and gentle disposition, so that it is close to a rational animal; and some elephants have even taken up their riders who had fallen from loss of blood in the fight and carried them safely out of the battle, while others have fought for, and rescued, those who had crept between their fore-legs. And if in anger they have killed one of their feeders or masters, they yearn

¹⁷ Ibid. pp. 2

after him so strongly that through grief they abstain from food and sometimes even starve themselves to death.

They copulate and bare young like horses, mostly in the spring. It is breeding -time for the male when he is sized with frenzy and becomes ferocious; at night time he discharges a kind of fatty matter through the breathing- hole which he has besides his temples. And it is breeding time for females when this same passage is open. They are pregnant eighteen months at the most and sixteen at the least; the mother nurses her young six years. Most of them live long as very long -lived human beings, and some continue to live even to two hundred years, although they are subjected to many diseases and are hard to cure.....”
(Strabo book VII, passage 42-43, pages 70-73¹⁸).

The rest of the passage continues to discuss the cures for eye diseases in elephants and he suggests bathing eyes with cow’s milk and or giving wine to them could be a solution. In the following pages the copied pages of the original text are attached for further reference.

¹⁸ Strabo. *The Geography of Strabo, Book 7*. translated by Horace Leonard Jones, edited by T.E. Page et al., vol. 7, London, The Leob classical library, William Heinemann LTD, London. Accessed 13 Nov. 2024.

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42. Θήρα δὲ τῶν θηρίων τούτων τοιάδε. χωρίον ψιλὸν ὅσον τεττάρων ἢ πέντε σταδίων τάφρῳ περιχαράξαντες βαθείᾳ γεφυροῦσι τὴν εἴσοδον στενωτάτῃ γεφύρᾳ· εἴτ' εἰσαφιᾶσι θηλείας τὰς ἡμερωτάτας τρεῖς ἢ τέτταρας, αὐτοὶ δ' ἐν καλυβίοις κρυπτοῖς ὑποκάθηνται λοχῶντες. ἡμέρας μὲν οὖν οὐ προσίασιν οἱ ἄγριοι, νύκτωρ δ' ἐφ' ἓνα ποιοῦνται τὴν εἴσοδον· εἰσιόντων δέ, κλείουσι τὴν εἴσοδον λάθρα, εἴτα τῶν ἡμέρων ἀθλητῶν τοὺς ἀλκιμωτάτους εἰσάγοντες διαμάχονται πρὸς αὐτούς, ἅμα καὶ λιμῶ καταπονοῦντες· ἤδη δὲ καμνόντων, οἱ εὐθαρσέστατοι τῶν ἡνιόχων λάθρα καταβαίνοντες ὑποδύνουσιν ἕκαστος τῇ γαστρὶ τοῦ οἰκείου ὀχήματος· ὀρμώμενος δ' ἐνθένδε ὑποδυνει τῷ ἄγρῳ καὶ σύμποδα δεσμεῖ· γενομένου δὲ τούτου, κελεύουσι τοῖς τιθασοῖς τύπτειν τοὺς συμποδισθέντας, ἕως ἂν πέσωσιν εἰς τὴν γῆν, πεσόντων δ' ὠμοβοῖνοις ἱμᾶσι προσλαμβάνονται τοὺς αὐχένας αὐτῶν πρὸς τοὺς τῶν τιθασῶν· ἵνα δὲ μὴ σείόμενοι τοὺς ἀναβαίνειν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἐπιχειροῦντας ἀποσειοῖντο, τοῖς τραχήλοις αὐτῶν ἐμβάλλονται κύκλῳ τομάς, καὶ κατ' αὐτὰς τοὺς ἱμάντας περιτιθέασιν, ὥσθ' ὑπ' ἀλγηδόνων εἴκειν τοῖς δεσμοῖς καὶ ἡσυχάζειν· τῶν δ' ἀλόντων ἀπολέξαντες τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους ἢ νεωτέρους τῆς χρείας τοὺς λοιποὺς ἀπάγουσιν εἰς τοὺς σταθμούς, δῆσαντες δὲ τοὺς μὲν πόδας πρὸς ἀλλήλους, τοὺς δὲ αὐχένας πρὸς κίονα εὖ πεπηγότα, C 705 δαμάξουσιν λιμῶ· ἔπειτα χλόῃ καλάμου καὶ πόας ἀναλαμβάνουσι· μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα πειθαρχεῖν δι-

¹⁹ Strabo. *The Geography of Strabo, Book 7*. translated by Horace Leonard Jones, edited by T.E. Page et al., vol. 7, London, The Leob classical library, William Heinemann LTD, London. Accessed 13 Nov. 2024. Pp 70

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δάσκουσι, τοὺς μὲν διὰ λόγον, τοὺς δὲ μελισμῶ
τινι καὶ τυμπανισμῶ κηλοῦντες· σπάνιοι δ' οἱ
δυστιθάσεντοι· φύσει γὰρ διάκεινται πρῶως καὶ
ἡμέρως, ὥστ' ἐγγὺς εἶναι λογικῷ ζῳῷ· οἱ δὲ¹ καὶ
ἐξαίμους τοὺς ἡνιόχους ἐν τοῖς ἀγῶσι πεσόντας
ἀνελόμενοι σώζουσιν ἐκ τῆς μάχης, τοὺς² δὲ³
ὑποδύντας μεταξὺ τῶν προσθίων ποδῶν ὑπερμα-
χόμενοι διέσωσαν· τῶν δὲ χορτοφόρων καὶ διδα-
σκάλων εἴ τινα παρὰ θυμὸν ἀπέκτειναν, οὕτως
ἐπιποθοῦσιν, ὥσθ' ὑπ' ἀνίας ἀπέχεσθαι τροφῆς,
ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ ἀποκαρτερεῖν.

43. Βιβάζονται δὲ καὶ τίκτουσιν, ὥς ἵπποι,
τοῦ ἔαρος μάλιστα· καιρὸς δ' ἐστὶ τῷ μὲν ἄρρενι,
ἐπειδὴν οἰστρῷ κατέχηται καὶ ἀγριαίνῃ· τότε
δὴ καὶ λίπους τι διὰ τῆς ἀναπνοῆς ἀνίσκιν, ἣν
ἔχει⁴ παρὰ τοὺς κροτάφους· ταῖς δὲ θηλείαις,
ὅταν ὁ αὐτὸς οὗτος πύρος ἀνεργῶς τυγχάνῃ.
κύουσι δὲ τοὺς μὲν πλείστους ὀκτωκαίδεκα μῆνας,
ἐλαχίστους δ' ἑκκαίδεκα· τρέφει δ' ἡ μήτηρ ἕξ
ἔτη· ζῶσι δ' ὅσον μακροβιώτατοι ἄνθρωποι οἱ
πολλοί, τινὲς δὲ καὶ ἐπὶ διακόσια διατείνουσιν
ἔτη· πολύνοσοι δὲ καὶ δυσίατοι. ἄκος δὲ πρὸς
ὀφθαλμίαν μὲν βόειον γάλα προσκλυζόμενον,
τοῖς πλείστοις δὲ τῶν νοσημάτων ὁ μέλας οἶνος
πινόμενος, τραύμασι δὲ ποτὸν μὲν βούτυρον

¹ Instead of οἱ δέ, *moz* and *Corais* read *ταῖς γάρ*.

² Instead of τοὺς, *moz* and *Tschucke* read *οἱ*.

³ Before ἐπεδύντας *Dhímoz* insert *καί*.

⁴ Instead of ἔχει, *F* and *Meineke* read *ἴσχει*.

¹ The so-called "must" (frenzied male) elephant discharges an abundance of dark oily matter from two pores in the forehead (see "Elephant" in *Encyc. Britannica*). "True,

Strabo's description on Elephants, which is a detailed description on capturing elephants and domesticating them, brings out few interesting factors about emotions and psychological aspects of Elephants, first of all, they have close bonds with the members of It's heard and due to this reason, they, risk their own lives to save the members of the pack. They are also animals who value their freedom and honor as which was discussed with extracts from Pliny, thus, it might be difficult to tame them at once. It seems that, ancient Indians as well as ancient Romans

overcame this issue by use of violence. Which is even not unheard today. It is also important to note that, both Strabo and Pliny talk about, how elephants can create close bonds with humans. As above mentioned, Strabo says that, elephants become grief stricken when, they kill or lose their guardians to the extent of killing themselves. Pliny gives a similar account related to their emotions.

“Perncialia nec quia desit illis amoris vis namque traditur unus amasse quendam in Aegepto corallas vendetem ae(ne quis voglariter electam putet). Mire gratum Aristopheni celebrissimo in arte grammatica , alius Menandram Syracusam incipientis iuventiae in exercitu Ptolamaci desiderium , eius quotiens non videret incidia testatus .et unguentriam quendam dilectam Iuba tradit. Omnium amoris fuere argumenta Gaudium ad conspectum blanditiaeque inconditae stipesque quas populas dedisset servatae et in sinum effusae.nec mirum esse amorem quibus sit memoria. Idem namque tradit aguntium in senecta multos post annos qui rector in iuventa fuisset ; idem divinationem iustitiae ,cum Bocchus rex triginta elephantis totidem in quos saevire institureat stipectibus adligatos obiecisset ,procusantibus inter eos qui lacesserent nec potuisse effici ut crudelitatis alianae ministerio fungerentur.”

“They are devoid of strong affection ,for it is reported that one elephant in Egypt fell in love with a girl who was selling flowers and,(that nobody may think that it was a vulgar choice) who was a remarkable favorite of very celebrated scholar Aristophanes; and another elephant is said to have fallen in love with a young soldier in Ptolemy’s army, a Syracusan named Menander , and whenever it did not see him to have shown it’s longing for him by refusing food. Also, Juba records a girl selling scent who was loved by an elephant. In these cases, the animal showed their affection by their delight at the sight of the object and their clumsy gestures of endearment, and by keeping the branches given to them by the public and showering them in the loved one’s lap. Nor it is surprising that, animals possessing memory are also capable of affection ,for the same writer records a case of an elephant’s recognizing many years later in old age a man who has been It’s Mahout in its youth, and also instance of a sort of justice ,when king Bocchus tied to stakes thirty elephants which he intended to punish and exposed them to a herd of same number men running out among them to provoke them to attack, and it proves impossible to make them perform the service of ministering to another’s cruelty”.(Pliny, Natural History, BookVIII,passage V)²¹

Here, both Strabo and Pliny had focused on few common factors. Both admits the factor that, Elephants are intelligent animals who can be considered most rational of animals, and very much close to humans in this aspect. They also have a very good memory and able to be affectionate. They also value affection and respect given to them. They are also teachable and obeys and understand orders as well as to remember them. They are also loyal to their owners and can be

²¹ Pliny. *Natural History Book VIII*. translated by H. Rackham, edited by T.E. Page et al., vol. 3, London, The Leob classical library, Harvard university press. Pp.12-13

tamed and will be more obedient if treated with compassion. The French author Buffon gives a similar account of Emotions of these animals.

“To this prodigious strength he joins courage, prudence, coolness and exact obedience; he preserves moderation even in his most violent passion; he is more constant than impetuous in anger he does not forget It’s friends, he never attacks any but those who have given him offence; he remembers favors as long as injuries. Having no taste for flesh, and feeding chiefly on vegetables, he is not naturally, an enemy to other animals. He is by them all. Since all of them respect him, and has no cause to fear him. For these reasons men have at all times a veneration for this great, this first of animals, ancients considered the elephant a prodigy, a miracle of nature; they have much exaggerated his natural faculties; they attributed to him without hesitation not only intellectual but moral virtues²²,”

In this context too, we are driven to observe the same aspects, which is that these animals are capable of possessing memory, endurance, calmness and loyalty. As a result, they were seen as special by our ancestors and they attributed human qualities to them as far as going to say they practice a religion. He also states that; they can be tamed through kindness.

“He uses himself to man without reluctance. Not so much by force as by good treatment²³.”

Again, the aspect of understating is highlighted. Furthermore, the same qualities of memory and gratitude is highlighted.

“He is like him susceptible of gratitude and capable of strong attachment²⁴”

In these lines, the author highlights the similarities and differences between the two animals in terms of height and intelligence. He clearly admits the factor, that the two animals are vastly different in terms of the latter factor. This factor is further highlighted in the following extracts which is in the translation as well as the original work in order to compare it with the translation.

“L’éléphant est si nous voulons ne nous pas compter, l’être le plus considerable de ce monde,

Surpasse tous les animaux terrestres en grandeur et li approche de l’homme (b)par l’intelligence, autant au moins que la matière peut approcher de l’esprit l’elephant, le chien, le castor,&(et) le singe,sont de tous les etres animes ceux²⁵”

²² Buffon. *Buffon’s Natural History*. translated by Miliner and Sowerby, vol. IV, Quadrupeds-Birds- Fishes, Halifax. Accessed 27 Oct. 2024.pp. 62-63

²³ Ibid.pp.62

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Buffon, M. Le. comte De. *Histoire Naturelle Generale et Particulire*. 1801. vol. IV, Aux-Deux - Ponts, Chez Sassons & Compagnie, p. 188. Accessed 17 Nov. 2024.

The translation done by Milner and Sowerby of the same passage

“The Human race expected, the elephant is the most respectable of animals. In size he surpasses all other terrestrial creatures and in understanding, he is inferior only to man. Of all brute creation, the elephant, the dog, the ape and the beaver are most admirable for their sagacity²⁶.”

It is apparent that, elephant was seen as a special animal, by the European biologists even during the 18th century and they had developed interest and admiration in studying elephants. This was mainly because of their strength, enormous size and other admirable character traits which they have which are unique to them which are highlighted in above extracts. The following are the original description.

“Le chien n’a donc que de l’esprit (qu’on me permette, faute de termes ,de profaner ce nom) le chien ,dis-je, n’a donc l’esprit d’emprunt ;le singe n’en a que l’apparence ;&(et)le castor n’a du fens que pour lui feul &(et) les fiens L’elephant leur est superieur a tous trois ; il renuit leurs qualites les plus eminentes La main est le principal organe de l’adrese du singe :l’elephant au moyen de sa trompe qui lui fert de bras &(et) de main, &(et) avec laquelle il peut enlever faifir les plus petites choses comme les plus grandes les porter a sa bouche ,les poser sur son dos ,les tenir embaressees ,ou les lancer ou loin a donc le meme moyen d’adrese que le singe ;&(et) en meme temps il a la docillite du chien, il est comme lui susceptible reconnoissance &(et) capable du’un fort attachment,il s’accoutume aisement a l’homme ,se soument monis par la force que par les bons traitemens²⁷.”

For further reference I refer to the translation given by Milner and Sowerby

“The genius of the dog is borrowed, being instructed by man in almost everything he knows; monkey has only the appearance of wisdom, and the beaver is only sensible with regard to itself and those of Its species. The Elephant is superior to either of these – he unites all of their eminent qualities. The hand is the principal organ of the monkey’s dexterity ; the elephant with his trunk ,which serves him instead of arms and hands, with which he can lift up ,and size the smallest ,as well as largest objects ,carry them to his mouth place them on his back or throw them far off has the same dexterity as the monkey ,and at the same time the tractableness of a dog; he is like him susceptible of gratitude and

²⁶ Buffon. *Buffon’s Natural History*. translated by Miliner and Sowerby, vol. IV, Quadrupeds-Birds- Fishes, Halifax. Accessed 27 Oct. 2024.pp. 61

²⁷ Buffon, M. Le. comte De. *Histoire Naturalle Generale et Particulire*. 1801. vol. IV, Aux-Deux - Ponts, Chez Sassons & Compagnie, p.191. Accessed 17 Nov. 2024.

capable of strong attachment; he uses himself to man without reluctance ,and submits to him ,not so much force as by good treatment.²⁸”

He reflects the same notions as Pliny and Strabo, but states that he rejects the superficial qualities attributed to them by ancient authors apparently, he is referring to Pliny, when discussing the issue of elephants practicing a religion.

que d'un coup de son corps il fait breche dans un mur,que terrible par la force, il est encore invincible par la feule reresistance de sa masse ,par l'epaisseur du cuir qui la couvre ;qu'il peut porter surson dos une tour armee en guerre &(et) chargee de plusieurs hommes ;que feul il fait mouvoir des machines & (et) transporte des fardeaux que six chevaux ne pourrioient remuer ; qu'a' cette force prodigieuse il joint encore le courage, la prudence, le sang-froid l'o beissance exacte ;qu'il conserve de la moderation ,meme dans ses passions les plus vives ;qu'il est plus constant qu'impetueux en amour (d);que dans la colere ,il ne meconnoit pas ses amis ;qu'il se souvient des biensatis aussi long -temps que des injures ; que n'aynt nul' gout pour la chair & (et) ne se nourrissant que de vegetaux ,il n'est pas ne l'ennemi des autres animaux ;qu'enfin ,il est aime de tous, puisque tous le respctent &(et) n'ont nulle raison de le craindre.Aussi les hommes ont-ils eu dans tous les temps pour ce grand, pour ce premier animal une espece de veneration. Les Anciens le regardoient comme un prodige, un miracle de la Nature (& c'est en effect son dernier effort). Ils ont beaucuop exagere ses sa cultes naturalles; ils lui ons attribute sans hesiter des qualites intellectuelles &(et) des vertus morales. Pline, Aelien, Solin, Plutarque &(et) d'autres plus modernes n'ont pas craint de donner a' ces animaux des moeurs) rainsonnees une religion naturelle &(et) inne (e), l' observance d'un culte, l'adoration quotidinne du soleil &(et) de la lune²⁹.”

The translation given by Milner and Sowerby is given in the beginning of page 10 of this article for more clarification though it might not have all the details of the original text, as it focuses on the most important sections of it. Nonetheless, one can compare the two and come to a general idea of the context. Furthermore, the extract proves the fact that, Buffon too acknowledges the fact that, Elephants are admirable creatures which have wonderful and unique characteristics, which makes them special among other animals. It is also not generally hostile to any living being unless injured or insulted and they love respect and good treatment.

However, sadly none of the authorities have taken measures to generate a sustainable solution for the issue at least taking consideration of these accounts or modern studies on the subject they are converted into empty and useless piles of papers while we attempt to solve the problem by applying unstable and temporary solutions. People are in tears due to the loss of their property

²⁸ Buffon. *Buffon's Natural History*. translated by Miliner and Sowerby, vol. IV, Quadrupeds-Birds- Fishes, Halifax. Accessed 27 Oct. 2024.pp. 62

²⁹ Buffon, M. Le. comte De. *Histoire Naturelle Generale et Particulire*. 1801. vol. IV, Aux-Deux - Ponts, Chez Sassons & Compagnie, p. 194-195 Accessed 17 Nov. 2024.

and loved ones whereas the elephant population in the country reduces day by day. Furthermore, Elephants are subjected to abuse and harassments today similar to in ancient Rome. They are seen as enemies by some local populations. The HEC has become an aggravated issue because, *“people continue to build houses and other developments along elephant corridors and environmentally sensitive areas”* (Wickramasinghe,2023)³⁰ According to the data from the department of wildlife, quoted by Kamanthi Wickramasinghe (above mentioned). the situation is devastating.

“Data from the department of wildlife conservation indicates that, over 100 elephants had died during the first quarter of 2023 Around 67 elephants have succumbed to gunshot injuries, illegal electrocution and elephant crackers.

However, subject minister Pavithra Wanniarachchi announced that, over 238 elephants has been killed as of July this year and that, many elephants were killed after being tortured³¹. ”

This incident clearly highlights the factor that, the notion that elephants a enemies has not changed a lot since the time of the ancient era and it is a burning issue which needs a permeant solution.

³⁰ Wickramasinghe, Kamanthi. “Sri Lanka: The Killing Feild of Elephants.” *Daily Mirror Online*, 5 Oct. 2023. Accessed 4 Nov. 2024.

³¹ Ibid



A picture of an she elephant – Hist. Naturelle pp.189³²

³² Plance, Voyez. *L' Elephant La Femelle*, 1801. Accessed 17 Nov. 2024.

However, Modern researchers such as Thakshila Gunawansa (2023), Joyce Pool (1996) and Cynthia Moss (1996) also agree on the point that, Elephants are intelligent beings who can be trained and taught to live in harmony with people. They can be also taught different skills and abilities which proves the point of view of these ancient authors. Following are some evidence and arguments that proves this factor.

First of all, let us look into the social structure of an Elephant heard. According to the above-mentioned researches they are extremely sociable and have close bonds within the clan led by a matriarch. The male Elephants keep away from the heard and live solitary lives. The article, “The human elephant conflict in Sri Lanka; history and present status” brings out these factors in these words.

“Elephants are friendly and social animals that live in groups known as clan or heard. Elephants form a deep family bond and live in tight matriarchal groups of related females. The heard is led by the oldest and often the largest female, the matriarch. The Sri Lankan elephant heard typically consist of 12-20 singles or more. And many include young juvenile, nursing, lacting, and other adult elephants.

Males leave the family unit between 12 and 15 years and may lead solitary lives or temporarily live with other males. Elephants have a very structured social order, and male and female elephants have very different social lives³³.”

If one refers back to Pliny and Buffon one would find a similar accounts.

“Elephanti gregatim semper ingrediuntur ;ducit agmen maximus natu ,cogit actae Proximus ,amnem transituri minimos praemittunt,ne maiorum ingressum attrente alevum ereseat gurgitis altitudo”

“Elephants always travel in heard; the oldest leads the column and the next oldest brings up the rear. When going to ford a river they put the smallest in the front, so that the bottom may not be worn away by the tread of the larger ones, thus increasing the depth of water³⁴”.

Buffon says that,

“In a wild state, the elephant is neither bloody, nor ferocious, his manners are social; he seldom walks alone; the oldest leads the heard and next in age drives them, and forms are

³³ Gunawansa, Thakshila.D., et al. “The Human Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka: History and Present Status.” *Biodiversity and Conservation*, vol. 32, 17 June 2023, pp. 3029. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

³⁴ Pliny. *Natural History Book VIII*. translated by H. Rackham, edited by T.E. Page et al., vol. 3, London, The Leob classical library, Harvard university press. Pp.10-11

rear: the young and the weak are in the middle. The females carry their young, and hold them close to their trunks³⁵”

The original text goes as

“Dans l’état de sauvage, l’elephant n’est ni fanguinaire, ni féroce li est d’un naturel doux, et jamais il ne fait abus de ses armes ou de sa force il ne les emploie, il ne les exerce que pour se défendre lui-même ou protéger ses semblables ; il a les mœurs sociales, on le voit rarement errant ou solitaire il marche ordinairement de compagnie ; le plus âgé conduit la troupe le second d’âge la fait aller et marche le dernier les jeunes et les faibles sont au milieu des autres ; les mères portent leurs petits et les tiennent embrassés de leur trompe³⁶”

In the next part of the discussion, comparisons are made between all the above-mentioned extracts and modern resources. First of all, the articles of the technical handbook “Studying Elephants” composed by the “African wildlife foundation” which is a collection of articles composed by expert biologists who are or had worked in the field on the African Elephant in order to make aware people on the subject area. The first chapter of the book is named as “The African Elephant” and it gives an introduction remarkably similar or mostly identical to Pliny’s and Buffon’s introduction to nature of Elephants which states that Elephants are intelligent animals. Here is the introduction given by Joyce Poole in the above-mentioned article

“Elephants have captured man’s imagination and respect for thousands of years. In some ways we can draw parallels between humans and elephants, like humans’ elephants have the capacity to modify their habits dramatically and their need for space often bring them into direct conflict with expanding human populations. Elephant like our own species are known for their intelligence, close family ties and social complexity. In other ways, they remain mysteriously different. Their uncanny ability to communicate with one another over long distances.³⁷”

One can clearly note the repeated patterns within these descriptions, yet there are more and more patterns to explore, thus, the rest of the chapter focuses on this matter. As above mentioned, all Pliny, Strabo and Buffon highlight the factor that, Elephants have a remarkable sense of memory and they are able to remember injuries as well as damages done to them, and individuals who involved in them. As above said, they are creatures who observe the repeated patterns and this is a key factor in understanding them. Authors such as Pliny states that elephants know why they are hunted and modern scholars have acknowledged the factor that, first impression and interactions are very important when it comes to elephants and elephants tend to be more violent and aggressive in areas where they are harassed. This factor is

³⁵ Buffon. *Buffon’s Natural History*. translated by Miliner and Sowerby, vol. IV, Quadrupeds-Birds- Fishes, Halifax. Accessed 27 Oct. 2024. pp. 63

³⁶ Buffon, M. Le. comte De. *Histoire Naturelle Generale et Particuliere*. 1801. vol. IV, Aux-Deux - Ponts, Chez Sassons & Compagnie, p.197-198. Accessed 17 Nov. 2024

³⁷ Poole, Joyce. “The African Elephant.” *Studying Elephants*, edited by Kadzo Kangwana, Nairobi, Kenya., African Wildlife Foundation, 1996, p. 6.

highlighted in the chapter 7 of the same book, which is named as “Getting to know a population” which was composed by Cynthia Moss. It goes into detail description on how to study an Elephant population.

“Remember, Elephants can move very fast and if you are working in an area where they have been hunted, poached or harassed they are more likely to charge.....If you are trying to gain the confidence of the elephants you might find yourself erasing all the patient work you have carried out by suddenly changing your behavior in order to dart them .Elephants definitely have very long memories and one experience can make them wary of vehicles or even of individual researches for years after³⁸.”

Pliny states that they are aware of why they are hunted which does not appear much as an exaggeration after referring to the observations mentioned in the above study

Mirum in plerisque animalium scire quare petantur sed et fere cuncta quid cavent”

“It is remarkable in the case of most animals that they know why they are hunted, but also almost of all know what they must beware of³⁹.”

This extract clearly highlights the factor that they are aware of the dangers and always ready to charge in potential threats and as they have a long-time memory, one should be extremely cautious when dealing with them. On the other hand, there are plenty of expert as well as individual observations, which suggests that they can be taught and create affectionate bonds

³⁸ Moss, Cynthia. “Getting to Know a Population.” *Studying Elephants*, edited by Kadzo Kangwana, Nairobi, Kenya., African Wildlife Foundation, 1996, pp. 58–59. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

³⁹ Pliny. *Natural History Book VIII*. translated by H. Rackham, edited by T.E. Page et al., vol. 3, London, The Leob classical library, Harvard university press. Pp.7-9

with humans as presented by video 1 and 2 which are attached below.



(Video 1 <https://youtu.be/foahTqz7On4?si=sMkgxexBZ6KTRmub>)



(Video 2 <https://youtube.com/shorts/5fJ5pr5bTkI?si=VBXCLVRJkFUTvTb8>)

The first video depicts an elephant who has taught to draw and he is named as “Suda-the painting elephant”. The elephant in the description is shown drawing an elephant in a remarkably beautiful manner for an elephant, though it gets distracted and lead back to work. He looks like a little toddler who should be put back to reading or writing when they zoom out from what is being taught. Yet, he expresses a vast sense of concern in what he is doing through his eyes. His expressions while drawing is almost human like. It seems that he gives special attention to every tiny line he draws with extreme care which is spectacular. It also proves the statement that, they can be taught different skills which was previously noted by authors such as Pliny, Strabo and Buffon as above mentioned.

The second video depicts an elephant calf wanted to being petted. It perfectly projects the extremely playful and adorable nature of baby elephants. It also brings out the factor that, they can have strong bonds with humans as discussed by the former mentioned authors. There are plenty of examples to discuss the playful and curious nature of elephant calves which makes them interesting to study. They like to explore like any infant. The following clip depicts another calf being curious about the presence of a human in their presence and it becomes mischievous and attempts to explore what is going on. At the beginning it is behind other elephants and then it seems that it gets curious after hearing the voice of the reporter. When it encounters the reporter, it seems that, it wanted to be more friendly with him. There is another calf is cuddling to him as a sign of affection.



(video 3 https://youtu.be/oXaJlpts_IY?si=LyuFg5Rm_R5sdpm3)

It is most likely that, they sensed he is not a threat for them and he was genuinely caring for them. They might have felt that; he is trying to help them genuinely as humans or other animals' sense who will potentially stand with them in problems. Finally, they are not, always aggressive and can taught or be tolerant in some occasions. They can be taught to be graceful in asking favors such as depicted in the below clip.



(Video 4 <https://youtube.com/shorts/Ciq1ocFLQtE?si=Nujf7QgSSD0HKJSS>)

Here, an elephant is asking a bottle of milk from a tourist. It is impatient and wants it quick, but is careful enough not to attack the person while he is preparing it. He insists the person to be quick, but does not become aggressive. However, one should know what makes elephants aggressive in order to understand the root of HEC.

03.What makes Elephants Monsters

The main cause for the human-elephant conflict in our country is the competition for resources such as water, shelter and food ⁴⁰(Gunawansa et.al,2023) (Edrisooriya and Bandara2021)⁴¹

⁴⁰ Gunawansa, Thakshila.D., et al. "The Human Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka: History and Present Status." *Biodiversity and Conservation*, vol. 32, 17 June 2023, pp. 3025-3052 Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁴¹ Edrisooriya, K.V.D., and A.P.S.S. Bandara. "Human -Elephant Conflict and Mitigation Methods Using Participatory Rural Appraisal Techniques: A Case Study of Bellankadawala and Kalegama Grama Niladari Division in

2021), (Fernando 2000⁴²). To understand the problem, First, one should take into consideration where they like to dwell and what are their food habits. The English translation of Buffon's natural history describes their habitats and food practices of elephants in this manner

“These animals are fond of banks of rivers, deep valleys, shady places and marshy grounds; they cannot subsist a long while without water, and make it thick and muddy before they drink it.....Their common food is roots, herbs, leaves and young branches; they also eat fruit and corn⁴³”

“Ces animaux aiment le bord des (r)uves (l) ,les profondes vallees,les lieux ombrages et les terrains humides,;ils ne peuvent se paffer d’eau et la troublent avant que de la boire ,ils en rempliffent souvent leur trompeleurs alimens ordinaires sont des raeins ,des herbes,des feuilles,et du bois tendre ;ils magnet aussi des fruits et des grains⁴⁴”

This description clearly brings out that they love areas where there are plenty of water and can keep away themselves from the sun. This factor is proven if we look at ancient accounts of elephant locations in our country. During the ancient kingdom period, they inhabited mainly the wet zone of the country, and the hilly areas of the dry zone. During this era, the dry zone was extensively used for agriculture. Humans built large irrigation projects and reservoirs in the dry zone at this point of history. They used elephants for cultural purposes, wars, pagents and also as work animals and they were excluded from centers of civilization also their domestication would have depleted the population of elephants in surrounding areas (Fernando,2000)⁴⁵. Furthermore, as they were captured and domesticated, Sri Lanka was a hub for elephant commerce in both exporting and importing elephants. This was mainly because of the value of Sri Lankan elephants as war machines and other labor work (Fernando 2000)⁴⁶ Strabo is one of the oldest European authors to mention elephants in Sri Lanka which might hint the factor that, our

Thabuththegama Divisional Secretariat Division.” *Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, vol. 2, no. 1, Feb. 2022. Accessed 27 Oct. 2024.

⁴²Fernando, Prithiviraj. “Elephants in Sri Lanka: Past, Present and Future.” *Loris*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2000, pp. 36–39. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁴³ Buffon. *Buffon's Natural History*. translated by Miliner and Sowerby, vol. IV, Quadrupeds-Birds- Fishes, Halifax. Accessed 27 Oct. 2024.pp. 63-64

⁴⁴ Buffon, M. Le. comte De. *Histoire Naturelle Generale et Particulire*. 1801. vol. IV, Aux-Deux - Ponts, Chez Sassons & Compagnie, p.200-201. Accessed 17 Nov. 2024

⁴⁵ Fernando, Prithiviraj. “Elephants in Sri Lanka: Past, Present and Future.” *Loris*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2000, pp. 36–39. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁴⁶ Ibid

elephants were popular among foreign nations. gifts in India. He quotes from Eratosthenes on Sri Lanka and elephants in the land.

“As for Thaprobane, it is said to be an island situated in the high sea within seven days, sail towards the south from the most southerly parts from India., the land of the Coniaci; that it extends in length about eight thousand stadia in direction of Aetheopia and it also has elephants. Such are the statements of Eratosthenes but my own description will be specially characterized by the addition of statements of other writers, whenever they add any accurate information⁴⁷”

14. Τὴν δὲ Ταπροβάνην πελαγίαν εἶναί φασιν
νησόν, ἀπέχουσαν τῶν νοτιωτάτων τῆς Ἰνδικῆς
τῶν κατὰ τοὺς Κωνιακοὺς πρὸς μεσημβρίαν
ἡμερῶν ἑπτὰ πλοῦν, μῆκος μὲν ὡς ὀκτακισχιλίων¹
σταδίων ἐπὶ τὴν Αἰθιοπίαν ἔχειν δὲ καὶ ἐλέφαν-
τας. τοιαῦται μὲν αἱ τοῦ Ἐρατοσθένους ἀπο-
φάσεις. προστεθεῖσαι δὲ καὶ αἱ τῶν ἄλλων, εἴ
C 691 πού τι προσακριβοῦσιν, ἰδιοποιήσουσι² τὴν
γραφὴν.

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Here, he refers to the factor that, Sri Lanka was inhabited by elephants, but his chief focus

is on how elephants were used in the Indian context, which was not very different from our context. He states that they were usually reserved for royalty, but this was not always true. First, he states that,

“No private person is permitted to keep horse or elephant. The permission of is either royal privilege, and there are men to take care of them”⁴⁹

But in another place, he states this by quoting from another author.

“A woman is highly honored if she receives an elephant as a gift from a lover, but this statement is not in agreement with that of the man who said that, horse and elephant were possessed by kings alone⁵⁰”

⁴⁷ Strabo. *The Geography of Strabo, Book 7*. translated by Horace Leonard Jones, edited by T.E. Page et al., vol. 7, London, The Leob classical library, William Heinemann LTD, London. Accessed 13 Nov. 2024. Pp 20-21

⁴⁸ Strabo. *The Geography of Strabo, Book 7*. translated by Horace Leonard Jones, edited by T.E. Page et al., vol. 7, London, The Leob classical library, William Heinemann LTD, London. Accessed 13 Nov. 2024. Pp 20

⁴⁹ Strabo. *The Geography of Strabo, Book 7*. translated by Horace Leonard Jones, edited by T.E. Page et al., vol. 7, London, The Leob classical library, William Heinemann LTD, London. Accessed 13 Nov. 2024. Pp 68-69

⁵⁰ Ibid. pp 74-75

Here is the actual context for reference for the two extracts from the original text.

41. Τρίτον τὸ τῶν ποιμένων καὶ θηρευτῶν,
οἷς μόνοις ἔξεστι θηρεύειν καὶ θρεμματοτροφεῖν,
ὧνιὰ τε παρέχειν καὶ μισθοῦ ζεύγη· ἀντὶ δὲ τοῦ
τὴν γῆν ἐλευθεροῦν θηρίων καὶ τῶν σπερμολόγων
ὀρνέων μετροῦνται παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως σίτον,
πλάνητα καὶ σκηνίτην νεμόμενοι βίον. ἵππον
δὲ καὶ ἐλέφанта τρέφειν οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἰδιώτῃ·
βασιλικὸν δ' ἐκάτερον νενόμισται τὸ κτῆμα, καὶ
εἰσιν αὐτῶν ἐπιμεληταί.

51

(extract 1)

ζεσθαι κτῆμα ἐλεφάντων ἄρμα· ἄγεσθαι δ' ὑπὸ
ζυγόν¹ ὥς² καὶ καμήλους· γυναῖκα δ' εὐδοκιμεῖν,
εἰ λάβοι παρὰ ἐραστοῦ δῶρον ἐλέφанта. οὗτος
ὁ λόγος οὐχ ὁμολογεῖ τῷ φήσαντι μόνων³ βασι-
λέων εἶναι κτῆμα ἵππον καὶ ἐλέφанта.⁴

44. Τῶν δὲ μυρμήκων τῶν χρυσωρύχων δέρματα
ἰδεῖν φησιν οὗτος παρδαλείς ὅμοια. Μεγασθένης
'06 δὲ περὶ τῶν μυρμήκων οὕτω φησίν, ὅτι ἐν Δέρδαις,
ἔθνει μεγάλῳ τῶν προσεφών καὶ ὀρεινῶν Ἰνδῶν,
ὁροπέδιον εἴη τρισχιλίων πῶς τὸν κύκλον στα-

¹ ζυγόν CDFh, ζυγῶν other MSS.

² ὥς, Jones inserts from conj. of Tzschucke and Groskurd ;
Corais emends καὶ καμήλους to ἀχαλίλους (" without bridles ") ;
Kramer and Meineke merely place an asterisk before the two
words

52

(Extract 2)

⁵¹ Strabo. *The Geography of Strabo, Book 7*. translated by Horace Leonard Jones, edited by T.E. Page et al., vol. 7, London, The Leob classical library, William Heinemann LTD, London. Accessed 13 Nov. 2024. Pp 68

⁵² Ibid pp.74

These descriptions clearly bring out the factor that, there was absence or small incidents of HEC in the past, because, first of all, elephants had enough space to live, and secondly, the remaining animals were either domesticated or used for economical and personal reasons. Yet, it seems that, elephants wanted to keep away from people for the same reasons. Pliny states that, Elephants usually, hid from humans.

“It is said that, when an elephant accidentally meets a human being who is merely wandering across its track, in a solitary place, it is good tempered and peaceful and will actually show the way; but that when on other hand it notices man’s footprints before it sees the man himself it begins to tremble in fear an ambush”

“Elephans homine obvio forte in solitudine et simpliciter oberrante elemens viam traditur, idem vestigo hominis animadverso prius quam homine intermessere insidarum metu⁵³ .”

In the previous extract from Strabo, we encountered how brutal was the process of taming elephants. They were bound in painful possessions, starved and locked in to a small area. Pliny gives a similar account on how brutally they were treated in shows and arenas. Thus, non should be surprised at this reaction. These accounts can also give a picture on what, formed the modern relationship between the two parties. Elephants had been subjected to numerous acts of cruelty, but as they had enough space to protect themselves, they could avoid possible threats. The cruelty upon them took a different turn during the colonial era in our country. During this era, the civilization in the dry zone collapsed and it was relocated to the wet zone. The author Prithiviraj Fernando explains this era as a time where wet zone became densely populated. Furthermore, he states that, large scale land usage changes through growing cash crops took place during this era. He also mentions that, the solution for elephant inhabitation was to engage in systematic killing of elephants by shooting and as a result they took refuge in the areas where there were reservoirs in the dry zone. (Fernando ,2000)⁵⁴ Here is the description given by Ajith Wasantha Liyanage

“Gradually, elephant population has begun decreasing with human activities It is said that, during 19th century, there were 19,500 wild elephants in Sri Lanka and hundred years later, indiscriminate capture, hunting for pleasure and destruction of elephants as agricultural pests catastrophically reduced the figure to 2000⁵⁵”

⁵³ Pliny. *Natural History Book VIII*. translated by H. Rackham, edited by T.E. Page et al., vol. 3, London, The Leob classical library, Harvard university press. Pp.8-9

⁵⁴ Fernando, Prithiviraj. “Elephants in Sri Lanka: Past, Present and Future.” *Loris*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2000, pp. 36–39. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁵⁵ Liyanage, Ajith Wasantha. *The Possibility for Developing a Sustainable Stratergy to Solve the Conflict between Local People and Elephants in Hambanthota District, Sri Lanka*. May 2012, pp. 16–17. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

By looking at this account, one can get an idea on the amount of callousness practiced on these beings during the era. It might have been a very traumatizing experience as according to the same documents elephants are highly sensitive in seeing the dead bodies of their kind.

“Further, they may become aggressive if they come across the dead body of another elephant, Elephants are very aware of death and fascinated by the dead bodies of their kin. They show specific reactions when they encounter an elephant carcass or merely dry elephant bones⁵⁶”

This clearly highlights the factor that, elephants can be easily provoked by killing their kin and it is a traumatizing experience for them. This could be a chief reason for the escalation of HEC in our country, it is possible that, as elephants are long lived creatures according to authors such as Pliny and Strabo, they remember what happened during their life time and might also pass in to later generations and as we saw before, they have been subjected to numerous forms of torture. With that description we come to the modern era. In the modern era, with the development of western medicine to the population increasement. Started to mushroom. The dire need to feed these people, forced the authorities to re- develop the dry zone for agriculture. By this time elephants were forced to live in the dry zone for more than two centuries and by this time, trends have changed from the colonial era, and there was a huge need to protect the remaining elephants, but at the same time, people had to take their habitat for which they have lived for a long time (Gunawansa et .al)⁵⁷

“Over the past 200 years, human land use has forced elephants from the wet and fertile reigns of the south west of the island to much drier reigns” (Liyanage ,2012)⁵⁸.

Humans have used elephants for their benefits for nearly a millennium and exploited their land during the past century which brings us to the question, what do you feel if your home is suddenly broken down for a development project without prior notice or compensation? Will you not protest against it? Elephants are faced with a similar situation in HEC, as they are now forced to share their area and resources with humans. This has catastrophic results on both humans and elephants and it has aggravated during the past few years. Currently, Sri Lanka has the highest annual elephant death rate and second highest human death rate due to HEC. The human death rate has increased by 42% during the past three decades. Crop raiding has a direct impact on the livelihoods of people as elephants destroy crops and nearby property. They also pose a threat to human lives as they live in areas located to elephant habitats which makes them vulnerable to conflicts with elephants. It is also noticeable that, the death rate in humans had increased during the last few years frequently. From 1992. From 1992 to 2001 there were 54 human deaths, and it was 62 from 2002-2011, during 2011-2021 it was 93 and during 2021- 2023 the numbers exceeded 100. In 2021 it was 142. (Gunawansa et.al). Overall, within 30 years, 2,111 humans and 5,949 had died from

⁵⁶ Ibid pp.86

⁵⁷ Gunawansa, Thakshila.D., et al. “The Human Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka: History and Present Status.” *Biodiversity and Conservation*, vol. 32, 17 June 2023, Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁵⁸ Liyanage, Ajith Wasantha. *The Possibility for Developing a Sustainable Stratergy to Solve the Conflict between Local People and Elephants in Hambanthota District, Sri Lanka*. May 2012, pp. 16–17. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

HEC and a total of 27,343 cases of damage were reported from 1992- 2021. (Gunawansa et.al)⁵⁹. The most affected areas are Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Ampara, Moragolla, Batticaloa and Kurunegala. The elephant raiding frequency changes according to seasons. The dry season has serious damages while the wet season has low damages and again the post rainy season has severe damages. This clearly reflects the factor that, the conflict arisen when there is lack of food and water. The issue is also mainly because, they need a lot of food. One elephant can eat up to 200kg of grass per day⁶⁰. As a result, the agrarian population see elephants as unwelcomed pests which encourages them to use illegal methods to kill them, such as use of jaw bombs, which kill the most of calves (Gunawansa et. al,2023⁶¹). Another method is the use of poisoned food such as pumpkins lead with chemicals. 64 elephants were killed using electrocution and 48 were killed using gunfire and 4 with toxic chemicals in 2021⁶². During the past 30 years, there were various development projects in the area, which was launched without considering the issues related to HEC. Moreover, there is a number of practical aspects which have not been taken into consideration. According to the actual sufferers of the problem, Elephants can easily attack villages though measures such as electric fences are created. According to them, these fences are created using timber, so they are broken by elephants within few months. It is said that Elephants use a big dry tree to trople over a section of the fence and then simply walk over it. Furthermore, it was highlighted that, as it works with the use of battery it does not work at night, which is the most crucial time which elephants become active. Moreover, as a result of these villagers are force to finish all their duties and work by day and cannot go out even in emergencies such as in cases of mothers giving birth to babies and sick people who should wait until the morning to go to the hospital. It also affects the life of school children. (Liyanage ,2012)⁶³ Hence, the HEC is a problem which needs a sustainable solution.

04.Possible solutions

There are many solutions such as the use of Electric fences and other more traditional methods such as the use of Light-based deterrents, Autistic deterrents and agricultural deterrents, which has less effectiveness though it might keep away the animal or distract it for a certain time period. The use of guard houses might save the crop but, this put the lives of many working age

⁵⁹ Gunawansa, Thakshila.D., et al. "The Human Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka: History and Present Status." *Biodiversity and Conservation*, vol. 32, 17 June 2023, pp 3025-3038 Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁶⁰ Liyanage, Ajith Wasantha. *The Possibility for Developing a Sustainable Stratergy to Solve the Conflict between Local People and Elephants in Hambanthota District, Sri Lanka*. May 2012, pp. 16–17. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁶¹ Gunawansa, Thakshila.D., et al. "The Human Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka: History and Present Status." *Biodiversity and Conservation*, vol. 32, 17 June 2023, pp 3025-3038 Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Liyanage, Ajith Wasantha. *The Possibility for Developing a Sustainable Stratergy to Solve the Conflict between Local People and Elephants in Hambanthota District, Sri Lanka*. May 2012, pp.96-97 Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

men in danger and their families will find it difficult to overcome the economic loss and will lose their loved ones forever (Gunawansa et.al 2023)⁶⁴, ⁶⁵Liyanage,2012).

On the other hand, the use of trench excavation would be more effective, as it keeps away the elephant from trespassing the area. However, it might create other issues such as accidents and requires enormous labor (⁶⁶Gunawansa et.al,2023) Translocating or sending elephants to protected areas is another possible solution, but this creates other issues such as the capacity of bearing and environmental changes such as in the case of droughts, insect outbreaks and floods. Furthermore, it creates a competition between elephants in the area and the newcomers and in some cases these elephants have returned to their dwelling places. Capturing and domestication too can be a solution, though letting them to the wild can turn them into problem animals though it keeps them in close ties with humans and important in preserving them (Fernando ,2000)⁶⁷.

On the other hand, studying vocal communication of elephants might give us a sustainable solution for the issue. This practice came to use during the 1980's. When looking at the vocal codes, there are, differences between the audible vacillations such as trumpets and screams and these infrasonic low rumbles. If one can study this, it will give a deep understanding of their social organization and it also carries critical components of each elephant's complex social life (Mccomb,1996)⁶⁸ This would be the most agreeable solution as we already had a culture of domesticating elephants and we even developed a special language to communicate with them. One can simply listen to the sounds and record it with the use of a good microphone or tape recorders. Then one can observe their reactions to the recordings and come to a conclusion. This can be done in this manner: One can organize field visits and observe elephants as the first step. This can be done by visiting a forest area or a national park. If you are visiting a forest area you can consult the locals and if it is a national park, you can consult the wardens. You would be restricted the vehicle if you are visiting a national park. There are also other important factors to consider. Elephants have mediocre eyesight but has a keen sense of hearing and smelling. If you are in an area where they are harassed, they will most likely charge. Furthermore, if one is in area where elephants run at the sound of vehicle engines, one will have to stop the vehicle and

⁶⁴ Gunawansa, Thakshila.D., et al. "The Human Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka: History and Present Status." *Biodiversity and Conservation*, vol. 32, 17 June 2023, pp 3025-3038 Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁶⁵ Liyanage, Ajith Wasantha. *The Possibility for Developing a Sustainable Strategy to Solve the Conflict between Local People and Elephants in Hambanthota District, Sri Lanka*. May 2012, pp.96-97 Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁶⁶Gunawansa, Thakshila.D., et al. "The Human Elephant Conflict in Sri Lanka: History and Present Status." *Biodiversity and Conservation*, vol. 32, 17 June 2023, pp 3039-3041 Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁶⁷ Fernando, Prithiviraj. "Elephants in Sri Lanka: Past, Present and Future." *Loris*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2000, pp. 43, Accessed 28 Oct. 2024

⁶⁸ Mccomb, Karen. "Studying Vocal Communication in Elephants." *Studying Elephants*, edited by Kadzo Kangwana, Nirobe, Kenya., African Wildlife Foundation, 1996, pp. 112–115. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

walk on foot. This can be done with the help of a tracker or a guard. It is also important to make your presence familiar to elephants. It is also important to note possible risks. Elephants would simply attack in a serious charge, but would first imply in other situations. They can be also provoked by sudden changes in your behavior (Moss,1996)⁶⁹ One can also use the option of audio and video recording to overcome these issues. Here, it is important to use wind barriers in recording sounds (Mccomb,1996)⁷⁰. However, there is a vastly neglected area in this study field and that is the aspect of psychological impact, which includes generational trauma, Separation from loved ones (Fernando, 1993)⁷¹ and aspects related to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. (PTSD). According to the European Society of Veterinary Ethology, some animals such as cats and dogs' express anxiety towards certain noises (ESVCE) they express symptoms such as hiding, trembling, pacing, panting and restlessness. They can also turn violent and engage in sudden attacks most probably out of panic and depression⁷² or as a defense mechanism. (Nijenhuis et al.1998)⁷³. These symptoms were highly visible in animals who were exposed to war related situations. The main causes are noise of sirens, alarms, thunder, shots and fireworks. This can be also caused by changes in daily routine and obviously the loss of guardians. As above mentioned in the article by Thakshila Gunawansa (2023), acoustic deterrents such as tins, drums and metal objects are used to scare them off from paddy fields. According to the given information, it is apparent that it can have more harmful effect on Human – Elephant encounters. Furthermore, the article “Recent Elephant Conservation Efforts in Sri Lanka: A tragic story” by A. B. Fernando (1993) clearly highlights the factor that, elephants change their behavior and movements drastically in unfamiliar surroundings. In the previous article by Prithviraj Fernando and Ajith Liyanage, it was clearly stated that, Elephants who were translocated returned to the areas where they were before and they get easily traumatized by dead bodies of other elephants. These factors clearly highlight the strong attachment in addition to these previously mentioned details from historical accounts to newspaper articles brings out on details

⁶⁹ Moss, Cynthia. “Getting to Know a Population.” *Studying Elephants*, edited by Kadzo Kangwana, Nirobe, Kenya., African Wildlife Foundation, 1996, pp. 58–59. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁷⁰ Mccomb, Karen. “Studying Vocal Communication in Elephants.” *Studying Elephants*, edited by Kadzo Kangwana, Nirobe, Kenya., African Wildlife Foundation, 1996, pp. 112–115. Accessed 28 Oct. 2024.

⁷¹ Fernando, A.B. “Recent Elephant Conservation Efforts in Sri Lanka: A Tragic Story.” *Gajah*, vol. 10, 1993, p. 19. Accessed 11 Feb. 2025.

⁷² “The Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Related to War Events in Companion Animals.” *European Society of Veterinary Clinical Ethology*, p. 2. Accessed 11 Feb. 2025.

⁷³ Nijenhuis, Ellert R.S., et al. “Animal Defensive Reactions as a Model for Trauma- Induced Dissociative Reactions.” *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1998, pp. 243–247. Accessed 11 Feb. 2025.

how they were brutally exploited in warfare and trade and how they were targeted for hunting during the colonial era and finally, their habitat too was taken by humans. It is more likely that, this cycle of oppression resulted in the uncontrollable violence and unpredictability in modern elephants. Probably as a result of this issue, modern solutions in solving the issue have taken a new path. This includes attempts to co-exist with them by offering them food and respect them for protection. There are also beliefs among south Asian rural populations such as elephants protect property from thieves and if elephants eat from their paddy, it will enrich the coming cultivation. In my opinion, if one gets rid of the superstitious elements of these practices, they can be added to the list of existing solutions (Kazi Ranga national park report, 2024)⁷⁴. though traditional mechanisms such as fences, distractors, ditches and guard houses are important in mitigating the issue temporarily, people in consequence should focus on the above-mentioned methods of observing the nature of elephants and co-existing with them through understanding. In this process, first, they should be to maintain the existing security methods for the safety of the people while analyzing the productivity of the new methods and then applying them to curb the issue permanently. In this study, accounts of ancient authors such as Strabo, Pliny and Buffon would be extremely useful as they give massive insight on evolution of Human- Elephant relations in the least superficial way and it gives fairly reliable accounts on behavioral patterns of elephants which could be used as comparative studies on modern accounts. It also gives instructions on how to treat them and how should we deal with them. All of them agree on the fact that, they can be trained to live in harmony with us through kind treatment and respecting their boundaries. It is said that some indigenous tribes still co-habit with elephants merely by respecting their habits and through understanding and engaging in cultivation practices which suits this purpose. This is essential for tracing the transformation of human- elephant contacts and what lead to the present status of the conflict and these accounts are able to verify our understanding of Elephants.

05.Conclusion

Elephants have fascinated humans since ancient times. It was also not limited to a certain region of the world. This is mainly because elephants were used in warfare and were important in foreign trade. This led to humans to analyze them more as they were useful in warfare and domestic labor, thus they wanted to examine their nature for domestication. Later on, with rapid population growth, humans took their natural habitat. In this process, many elephants were brutally killed and this might have vastly affected their behavior and movements and as they are sensible animals with a good memory capacity, it is possible that, this cycle of exploitation has affected their psychology which has made them uncontrollably violent. In Mitigating the issue of HEC, the current methods of prevention should be used to protect people, in the process of working out with more new and efficient methods. In the process, it is essential to examine every possible solution which requires vast area of study, which includes the beginning of the issue and the evolution of it. In this aspect one can use historical accounts to understand the evolvement which might also provide a solution to the issue. In This study I chose Livy, Strabo and Buffon

⁷⁴ *Range States Workshop on Human- Elephant Conflict Mitigation*. 31 Mar. 2024.

as primary sources to analyze the changes in the context as well as it provides a solution for the issue. All the three authors agree on the point that, elephants can be trained and less threatening by proper understanding of their boundaries and habits. In this pursuit one can use modern technological devices in order to observe their ways.

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Thimali Umanda Dassanayake

Afterword

With the approval of the Ministry of Education, this research-based project has empowered thousands of student authors for over ten years. Educationists recognize it as a program that significantly enhances the quality of school education.

In alignment with modern educational reforms, encouraging students to author a research work is a milestone in this journey. In this digital age of "Smart" technology, the modern school must demonstrate through research that books and technology should be used together. This is because the unique joy a child receives from a book cannot be replaced by anything else.

To prevent children from drifting away from books—which remain our primary educational tool and storehouse of human knowledge—Mahamaya Girls' College has spearheaded the "Hemamala Upahara" project for many years. Its primary objectives are to foster academic discipline, promote values, and pay tribute to Princess Hemamala, who fulfilled a historic mission to empower women.

We express our gratitude to the Principal, teachers, parents, alumni of Mahamaya Girls' College, representatives of other schools, the Diyawadana Nilame, and the staff of the Sri Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic) for their support.

Seneviratne Mahalekam
(Project Creator)

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